



Arkansas Community Correction

Two Union Nation Plaza Building
105 West Capitol, 3rd Floor
Little Rock, AR 72201-5731
(501) 682-9510 (501) 682-9513 (fax)

September 15, 2014

The Honorable Jeremy Hutchinson
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
201 East North Street
Benton, AR 72015

The Honorable Marshall Wright
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
P.O. Box 924
Forrest City, AR 72336

Dear Senator Hutchinson and Representative Wright:

Act 1190 of the 89th General Assembly charged the Arkansas Department of Community Correction (ACC) with the responsibility of convening joint sessions with multiple state and local agencies and community organizations for the purpose of creating “a holistic and seamless approach for reentry” for Arkansas. I am extremely pleased to present the attached Act 1190 Final Report that provides a summary of current efforts to reduce the recidivism rate of returning offenders in Arkansas and additional recommendations for policies and resources needed to improve the state’s reentry system. This effort would not have been possible without the support and participation of my fellow colleagues and extraordinary ACC staff that are individually listed in the report acknowledgements. In addition, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the effort of Senator Joyce Elliott, as it was her vision for development of a reentry system in Arkansas that led to the introduction and passage of Act 1190 of 2013.

Currently, Arkansas’ recidivism rate, defined as return to prison within three years of release, is 42.2%. To better assist the supervision population with transitioning to the community upon release from prison, a comprehensive and coordinated network of state agencies and community service providers must be created to ensure services are delivered through an integrated approach. Over the past year, ACC coordinated joint meetings with representatives from numerous state and local agencies as well as community organizations to receive input for the final report.

Early on in the process, the Act 1190 Steering Committee identified the most significant barriers for inmates upon release from prison. Committees were formed to address each of these barriers and to provide cost effective and innovative solutions to address the needs. Committees were also formed to assist in identifying funding sources, necessary policy or procedure changes as well as developing communications and public-relations material. Committees included:

- Planning and Preparation
- Education
- Employment
- Transitional Program
- Community and Coalition Partners
- Family Support and Reunification
- Housing
- Legal Barriers
- Resource Development
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health
- Healthcare
- Transportation
- Policy and Procedures
- Public Relations and Communications
- Community Reintegration Management

Committee chairs submitted reports of their recommendations for each area. ACC reviewed each report to develop the attached executive summary highlighting the recommendations we believe will enhance successful transition from prison to the community. A more comprehensive report is also attached.

During the course of the committee meetings, actions were taken to move forward with recommendations where resources were available. ACC has included in the report this list of accomplishments to compliment the recommendations. In addition to the strides made to date, much more work and resources are needed to implement an effective reentry system in Arkansas.

Legislative support for implementation of the Act 1190 Steering Committee recommendations is respectfully requested.

Sincerely,

Sheila Sharp
Director

cc: The Honorable Mike Beebe, Governor of Arkansas
Arkansas Board of Corrections
The Honorable Joyce Elliott, Senator
Act 1190 Steering Committee Chairs

ARKANSAS COMMUNITY CORRECTION

Act 1190 Final Report

Recommendations for an Improved Reentry System in Arkansas

9/24/2014



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Acknowledgements

Arkansas Community Correction acknowledges the numerous contributions of time and resources from Act 1190 chairpersons and committee members in the preparation of this final report. The chairpersons worked tirelessly to ensure committees provided thoughtful and effective recommendations for the numerous barriers to reentry that have been identified. The chairpersons for each committee were:

Planning and Preparation

Veter Howard
Kevin Murphy

Education

Dr. Dubs Byers
Melissa Rust

Public Relations and Communications

Dr. David Montague
Dina Tyler

Employment

Elizabeth Taylor
Shawntel Brown

Transitional Programs

Garland (Gene) Walker
Jack Fryer

Community Coalitions

Scott McLean
Rev. Tyrone Broomfield

Family Support and Reunification

Phyllis Silas
John Wheeler

Housing

Dale Sharp
Jim Cheek

The Good Grid

Nisha Garimalla
Kevin Murphy

Legal Barriers

Wade Hodge
Wendy Kelley

Resource Development

Jeff Jerry
Fran Flener

Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Dr. Michael Cannon
Ben Udochi

Healthcare

George Wilson
Jiva Pate

Transportation

Kim Hogue
Cindy Richardson

Policy and Procedures

Twana Porter
Dan Roberts

Additionally, this project would not have been possible without the many agency directors who directly participated or allowed their staff to dedicate their time. These directors and agencies include John Felts, Arkansas Parole Board, Ray Hobbs, Department of Correction, Dr. Dubs Byers, Arkansas Correctional School, Tony Wood, Department of Education, Bill Walker, Department of Career Education, Shane Broadway, Department of Higher Education, Artee Williams, Department of Workforce Services, Clare Bailey, Department of Information Services, Brandon Sharp, Department of Finance and Administration, Grant Tenille, Arkansas Economic Development Commission, Joy Figarsky, Department of Human Services Division of Behavioral Health, Nathaniel Smith, Department of Health, and Col. Alicia Rucker, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Finally, ACC would like to thank Senator Joyce Elliot for her vision and diligence on Act 1190. With her assistance, Arkansas is working towards creating a comprehensive reentry system to ensure offenders who are released do not return to incarceration.

Act 1190 Final Recommendations: Summary

Recommendation #1: Establish Reentry Centers to provide access to transitional programs and require reentry programming for all inmates in ADC and ACC.

- Establish reentry centers to provide reentry programming to equip inmates with the necessary skills and provide services for successful reentry during the last 6 months to one year of incarceration. Require reentry planning for all inmates being released from ADC and ACC.
 - Policy needs to be changed to require participation in reentry programming.
 - ACC's biennial budget request includes funding for 500 reentry beds. The Act 1190 Committee (the Committee) recommends additional funding for the operation of approximately 4,000 reentry beds.
 - Legislation is needed to allow transfer of ADC inmates to reentry centers within one year before parole eligibility date and release upon successful completion of reentry program requirements.

Recommendation #2: Implement a discharge planning system to develop a set of obtainable goals for each inmate from intake through supervision.

- Develop and implement a discharge planning system to establish individualized goals and deadlines for each inmate and to monitor inmate progress on required program referrals and goals during incarceration and supervision.
 - Legislative approval and funding for \$60,000 to develop and program a discharge planning system.
- Employ two discharge planning coordinators to oversee the development and implementation of the discharge planning system throughout ADC and ACC.
 - Legislative approval and funding is needed for two discharge planning coordinators.
- Use of a validated and consistent risks/needs assessment across all three criminal justice agencies; ACC, Arkansas Department of Correction (ADC) and the Arkansas Parole Board (APB).

- Completed: APB has approved the use of the ACC Arkansas Offender Risk Assessment (ARORA).
- A policy change for ADC to use ARORA is currently in discussion.

Recommendation #3: Establish a procedure for obtaining proper identification for all inmates in ADC and ACC.

- Establish a procedure with the Department of Finance and Administration, Department of Health, and Social Security Administration to aid inmates in obtaining appropriate identification prior to release from prison or community correction centers. All identification cards will be kept in the inmate file and released to him/her upon release.
 - Procedural agreement is needed between each agency and ACC.

Recommendation #4: Establish a case-management system in ADC and ACC to ensure inmates remain on track for their discharge plan.

- Implementation of a case-management system and employment of case managers in all facilities and parole areas to improve continuity of services and to ensure inmates and offenders are remaining on track with their discharge plan.
 - Legislative approval and funding is needed for additional 100 positions for case managers.

Recommendation #5: Establish The Good Grid: An Online Reentry Portal to assist in identifying community resources.

- Implement *The Good Grid* to serve as an online “one-stop shop” for offenders and community members seeking service providers in their areas. *The Good Grid* will provide job boards and resume matching, housing matching, and a comprehensive online resource directory.
 - ACC entered into an MOU with Protech Solutions, Inc. on March 25, 2014 for the development of *The Good Grid* at no cost to the state.

- Input all parole area resource directories and available statewide resource directories into *The Good Grid* and create profiles for all community service providers.
 - Resource directories have been loaded into the system.
 - The online resource directory will be available to the public in October 2014.
- Program an online resume builder that is populated with information from the electronic Offender Management Information System (eOMIS). Information will include work history (pre-incarceration), work experience during incarceration and any vocational training, education, or marketable skills obtained during incarceration.
 - The resume builder is currently being tested in ACC area parole offices and will be ready for implementation in November 2014.

Recommendation #6: Establish Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to strengthen the community support system for returning offenders.

- Establish CBOs in each area and local communities to provide support to offenders and assist with identifying local service providers.
 - Arkansas currently has 3 active CBOs and ACC has been contacted by additional communities to begin the process of establishing a new CBO.
 - Legislative approval and funding is needed for 13 CBO Area coordinators for three years and a permanent statewide CBO coordinator.

Recommendation #7: Implement a statewide mentoring programming to assist offenders prior to and after release from incarceration.

- Establish a statewide mentoring program that matches all returning offenders with a mentor in their community.
 - Development is currently in progress within ACC and ADC. Implementation will begin in October 2014 in conjunction with Mulligan Road in Pine Bluff, Ark.

Recommendation #8: Employ additional Probation and Parole officers to lower the average caseload to approximately 60 per officer to be consistent with the national recommended average.

- Additional officers are needed in ACC to allow for a reduction in caseloads to allow for better supervision and more time to devote to programming and reentry. Current caseload average for probation and parole officers is 118.
 - Legislative approval and funding are needed for an additional 201 probation and parole officers.

Recommendation #9: Focus transitional housing services on offenders most likely to recidivate and invest in innovative transitional housing services.

- Focus transitional housing resources on high- and moderate-risk offenders to ensure a structured and supportive environment upon release for those most likely to reoffend. Require transitional houses to assist offenders in obtaining treatment, employment, transportation, etc.
 - Policy Change effective August 18, 2014: Transitional Housing Facility License AD 14-23
- Establish a tiered payment scale to focus transitional housing resources for offenders most likely to reoffend.
 - Policy Change effective July 1, 2014: Transitional Housing Facility License AD 14-23
 - ACC now pays \$20.00 per day for moderate-risk offenders, \$26.00 per day for high-risk offenders, \$30.00 per day for level 3 and 4 sex offenders and does not pay for low-risk offenders.
- Utilize GPS monitoring for all offenders released to transitional houses to improve the abscond rate, enhance accountability, and improve the process for verifying invoice amounts. GPS monitoring will allow ACC to verify which offenders are residing at the assigned transitional house.
 - Policy Change: Effective August 18, 2014: Transitional Housing Facility License AD 14-23

- Develop self-governing transitional housing based on the Delancey Street Foundation model and Oxford House model.
 - Policy Change: Effective August 18, 2014: Transitional Housing Facility License AD 14-23

Recommendation #10: Performance Incentive Funding through Act 570 to promote programs that reduce commitments to ADC.

- Act 570 authorized performance incentive funding but funds were not allocated to initiate this program.
 - Allocation of funds to promote programs offered through local agencies and community organizations that reduce commitments to ADC.

Recommendation #11: Train staff as SOAR Eligibility Specialist and train ACC Probation and Parole Officers in Mental Health First Aid.

- Train ACC and ADC staff as SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery) certified Eligibility Specialist to assist inmates with benefits eligibility and applications for SSI, SSDI and Medicaid.
- Require probation and parole officers and corrections staff to complete Mental Health First Aid to learn how to respond to someone with mental health and substance abuse disorders.
 - Policy change is needed to require officers and staff to complete this training.

Recommendation #12: Increased substance abuse and mental health treatment funding for the state.

- To ensure offenders receive the appropriate treatment and care for substance abuse and mental health disorders after release, additional funding for treatment services needed.
 - Recommend an additional \$1 million in funding annually for substance abuse and mental health treatment in the community to assist with

deductibles, assessments, and treatment, which was not included in ACC's biennial budget request.

Recommendation #13: Require initial and ongoing training in reentry for all Probation and Parole officers and corrections staff working with inmates.

- To ensure probation and parole officers and corrections staff understand the importance of reentry and promote the success of reentry programs, training will provide an overview of reentry, current reentry projects, and each staff member's respective role in reentry.
 - Reentry training has been added to the Probation and Parole Academy effective June 2014.
 - Reentry training is needed in the Residential Services Basic Training (RSBT) Academy.
 - Policy change is needed requiring reentry training for corrections staff and ongoing training for all staff working with inmates or offenders.

Recommendation #14: Improve continuity of care for offenders with chronic health and mental health illnesses being released to the community.

- Establish discharge review teams that consist of parole officers, Parole Board representatives, SOAR eligibility specialists, community providers, case managers, and treatment services staff to ensure discharge plans and parole plans include the necessary substance abuse and mental health treatment services needed for each offender being released on parole.
 - Policy and procedural change is needed in ADC and ACC before an inmate's release. A procedural agreement with DBHS is currently being requested to assist with this process.
- Participation by ADC and ACC in the State Health Alliance for Records Exchange (SHARE) to improve continuity of care of inmates and offenders with chronic mental health and medical conditions.
 - Agreement with the healthcare provider for ADC and ACC is needed.
 - Funding for programming will be needed following the pilot program.

Recommendation #15: Establish a priority system for educational services for inmates in ADC focusing attention on inmates closest to release.

- Utilize a priority system based on a validated assessment to determine the intensity of education and vocational services needed for each inmate to include academic, vocational, and skills assessment inventories to assist with the development of the individual discharge plan.
 - Policy and procedural change is needed between ACC, ADC and the Arkansas Correctional School (ACS) District.
- Test all inmates for academic aptitude and vocational aptitude at intake to determine academic and vocational program referrals during incarceration.
 - Policy and procedural change is needed between ACC, ADC and the Arkansas Correctional School (ACS) District.

Recommendation #16: Utilize a Pay for Success (Social Impact Bond) model to invest in innovative reentry strategies.

- Utilize a new funding opportunity, social impact bonds, to establish a public-private partnership for funding new social services for returning offenders.
 - Services or programs to fund through a social impact bond may include as examples, drug and alcohol addiction services, case management, employment agency, and discharge planning.
 - Legislation is required to allow ACC to enter into this type of agreement.

Recommendation #17: Utilize Department of Workforce Services (DWS) programs to further prepare offenders for employment in the community.

- Provide office space at ACC's area parole offices for a DWS Workforce Specialist dedicated to assisting offenders with enrollment in programs and obtaining employment.
 - Develop a partnership with DWS to provide Workforce Specialists for ACC parole offices.

- Legislative approval and funding is needed for 13 DWS Workforce Specialists.
- Develop self-sustaining businesses to employ ACC offenders and inmates to gain work experience during and after incarceration.
 - Projects currently in progress include Southeast Arkansas Community Correction Center (SEACCC) Rose Bush program and Mulligan Road's Pine Bluff revitalization program currently funded through Arkansas Economic Development Commission and DWS.

Recommendation #18: Realign Probation and Parole officer job descriptions and responsibilities to include a focus on reentry.

- To recruit, hire new and re-train current staff to help offenders successfully return to the community after incarceration, changes to the ACC probation and parole officer job description are needed.
 - Seek approval to revise the probation and parole officer job description.

Recommendation #19: Establish family reunification counseling at each facility to rebuild family and personal relationships and provide support for families and children with incarcerated family members.

- Utilize family reunification counseling at each reentry center and ADC or ACC facility with the goal of rebuilding the family relationship and helping offenders and family members interact in a neutral space.
 - Develop partnerships with faith-based organizations and community organizations to assist with programming and support groups.
- Establish programs for children of incarcerated parents to provide support for children and other family members for learning how to handle the stresses of having an incarcerated family member and ways to assist the family member after release for successful reentry.
 - Develop partnerships with faith-based organizations and community organizations to assist with programming and support groups.

Recommendation #20: Improve offenders' ability to access healthcare through the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid.

- Assist all inmates in ADC and ACC complete the application for health insurance coverage through the Affordable Care Act.
- Change the current policy requiring the termination of Medicaid benefits during incarceration to suspension of Medicaid benefits during incarceration to be re-instated upon release.
 - Policy change is required by the Department of Human Services to facilitate this procedural change.

Recommendation #21: Establish a state tax credit program to incentivize hiring offenders in the community.

- The Federal government offered a Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) to private employers who hire targeted populations, including offenders. The program was suspended on January 1, 2014, but is expected to be retroactively reauthorized in the future. Six states have implemented a similar model and offer a state tax credit in addition to the federal tax credit.
 - Legislation and funding is needed to establish a state tax credit for employers who hire offenders. Tax credits would be based on the risk level of the offender. Employers who hire high-risk offenders would be eligible to apply for up a \$1,000 tax credit, while employers who hire moderate-risk offenders would be eligible for up to a \$750 tax credit yearly.

Recommendation #22: Develop a strategic marketing campaign using print, social, and radio media to highlight the “human” side of reentry.

- Utilize a multi-faceted marketing campaign to include media and promotional material to introduce the human aspect of reentry and highlight the successful programs throughout Arkansas.

Recommendation #23: Improve supervision and treatment strategies for Sex Offenders through treatment provider license requirements.

- Establish a licensing body to oversee Sex Offender treatment providers in the community, similar to the oversight of Mental Health providers.
 - Legislation is needed to set up the licensing body, requirements and qualifications of treatment providers.

Recommendation #24: Establish a Reentry Steering Committee to continue researching and providing recommendations for reentry.

- Continue the efforts of the Act 1190 committees by establishing a Reentry Steering Committee to continue researching and recommending ways to improve reentry in Arkansas.
 - Potential committee members will be contacted beginning November 2014

Act 1190 Comprehensive Final Report

Recommendation # 1: Establish Reentry Centers to provide reentry programming and planning.

The average length of stay for inmates released from the Arkansas Department of Correction (ADC) in 2013 was three years and eleven months. The Committees identified the need to provide a transition period from incarceration to community to allow inmates to acclimate back to a normal lifestyle. During incarceration, inmates have strict schedules and programming that result in disciplinary action if not followed. Upon release, an inmate's new found freedom can be overwhelming and difficult to manage. Reentry centers will provide the needed transition from the strict prison schedule to allow inmates to begin learning how to manage their lifestyles and daily decisions. In addition, incarceration, many times, is the result of a previous inability to manage their time before. Reentry centers will include life skills training and financial literacy to teach inmates the importance of maintaining employment and managing their time and money after release. Reentry centers will provide a physical transition from prison life to community life while maintaining a structured environment for positive change.

ACC has modeled the reentry centers after various best practices used in other states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP). Under this recommendation, all inmates will be required to participate in a reentry program provided at reentry centers situated throughout the state. This model helps inmates gradually rebuild their ties to the community and facilitates continued supervision during the transition phase. Reentry center programs will assist with job training and employment, family reunification, continued substance abuse treatment, and healthcare. In addition, the average cost per day to house an inmate at a reentry center will be \$30.62 which is substantially lower than ADC or ACC costs, resulting in costs savings for the state.

The reentry program will consist of an approximate six-month program for inmates within one year of their transfer eligibility (TE) date. Programming will include GED, Substance Abuse Treatment (SATP), job readiness (to include mock interviews by community employers), anger management, parenting and family relations, computer skills, community resources, interpersonal communication, mentoring, transitional employment programming, and thinking patterns. Each program component has been

included to address specific criminogenic risk factors. In addition to required programming, inmates at the reentry centers must work either in the facility or, once the privilege has been earned, in the community through a transitional employment program. Inmates who fail to comply with the rules at the centers will face disciplinary action up to and including revocation of their parole approval and a return to an ADC or ACC facility.

The Arkansas Parole Board (APB) releases approximately 600-700 inmates per month on parole. For Arkansas to operate a six-month reentry program with a capacity of up to 4,000 beds, the state would see multiple benefits immediately. Initially, this would result in a relief of up to 4,000 inmates from the ADC population and subsequently reduce the county jail back up. Additionally, with the significantly lower cost per day to house an inmate at a reentry center the state would see a large cost savings. As stated previously, an initial estimate of the average cost per day for inmates at a reentry center is \$30.62. To house 4,000 inmates would cost approximately \$122,480 per day compared to \$251,720 per day for housing the same number of inmates in ADC at \$62.93 per day. ACC projects that the average cost per day can be reduced when an inmate begins transitional employment programming. At this time, inmates will be required to pay a set per diem to offset costs for room and board. Initial estimates project the revised cost per day with the per diem to fall below \$24.00.

For Arkansas to see the benefits of reentry centers, amendments to Act 679 are needed. Currently, Act 679 gives the Arkansas Parole Board (APB) the authority to release an inmate up to one year early to an approved transitional house. By revising Act 679 to allow ACC and ADC to transfer an inmate up to one year early to a reentry center after preliminary approval by the APB, inmates will be required to complete additional programming focused on reentry planning prior to release on parole. Furthermore, the Committee recommends the ability to release an inmate upon successful completion of all the steps of the program. These steps will include, but are not limited to, approved employment, housing, and completion of all program referrals, such as substance abuse treatment. Only inmates that have been approved for parole by the APB will be eligible for early release.

Recommendation #2: Implement a discharge planning system to develop a set of goals for each inmate to obtain from intake through supervision.

The capacity to provide reentry programming at the reentry centers and in the prisons is incomplete, if inmates do not have a clear picture of their goals for successful reentry beginning at intake. To ensure inmates are prepared to return to the community more emphasis should be placed on the inmate program and treatment participation from intake through supervision. Establishing a discharge planning system that creates a “roadmap to success” for inmates during intake will allow ADC and ACC staff the ability to track inmate progress towards attaining specific goals throughout incarceration. This system will follow an inmate from incarceration into supervision to improve the continuity of provision of services in the community and reduce the redundancy inmates currently experience.

The development and implementation of a discharge planning system will require the addition of two positions in ACC to oversee the agency efforts. The Discharge Planning Coordinators will be involved in both the development and the implementation phases of the discharge planning system. They will be responsible for coordinating and leading agency training sessions for the new system as well as providing on-going assistance during the initial implementation. After the discharge planning system has been implemented, the coordinators will conduct quarterly quality assurance checks to ensure the system is being operated appropriately by ADC and ACC staff. The discharge planning coordinators will require \$76,068.35 annually for salary. State funding of \$60,000 will also be needed to program a discharge planning system within our EoMIS for ADC and ACC.

The discharge planning system will be built on identified areas of need, which are determined by risks/needs assessments that measure criminogenic risk factors. Numerous sources, including the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)¹, have identified the top eight criminogenic risk factors as criminal history, antisocial personality patterns, pro-criminal attitudes, pro-criminal associates, substance abuse, lack of school or work accomplishment, family or relationship problems, and lack of pro-social activities. Currently, three risks/needs assessments are used in Arkansas to measure risk factors; the ADC Social History, ACC Arkansas Offender Risk Assessment - ARORA, and the

APB Parole Risk Assessment Tool – PRAT. While each assessment measures some of the identified criminogenic risk factors, none is a comprehensive measure. An inmate that is incarcerated at ADC, released on parole by APB and supervised by ACC will undergo three separate assessments without the ability to compare changes in the outcome of these assessments. By using a consistent risks/needs assessment across all three agencies that measures all of the criminogenic risks factors, comparisons can be made and progress can be tracked for each inmate at every transition through the criminal justice system. APB has already approved the use of ARORA and has initiated the steps towards implementation.

The end product of a discharge planning system will be a hard copy of the exact needs of each inmate and offender at various points of incarceration and supervision. All of the components that will be included in the discharge planning system are outlined below.

1. Risk Assessment: Results from a risk assessment will be included on all personalized reentry plans. This score will determine the level and amount of services needed, in accordance with the RNR principle.
2. Mental Health Needs: Inmates' mental health history will be identified along with the need for continued services.
3. Healthcare Needs: Inmates' medical history will be identified along with need for continued services for chronic health needs. ACC is committed to assisting offenders in applying for insurance through the Affordable Health Care Act as outlined in our strategic plan. In accordance with HIPPA regulations, only approved personnel will have access to this area of the reentry plan.
4. Substance Abuse Treatment Needs: Continuing need for substance abuse treatment will identified for each offender along with meeting times and locations for local AA/NA chapters in his/her parole area.
5. Education and Training: Highest level of education completed. If a high school diploma (HSD) has not been obtained, automatic referral to GED. If HSD has been obtained, referral for continued education or vocational training will be made.

6. Employment: Complete work history including periods of unemployment will be collected. An interest and skill inventory will be completed to identify areas that the inmates show increased interest. This will drive program referrals to training programs that are in line with the interest inventory.
7. Housing Plan: This output will be included during the Pre-Release update. A housing plan will outline the approved parole plan address and the reporting requirements for any changes in address. If needed, assistance in locating appropriate housing in the offender's parole areas will be provided. This information will also be provided on the inmate's approved parole plan.
8. Fees and/or Fines Owed: An output of all fees and/or fines owed by the inmate will be made available at the beginning of incarceration. The inmate will be encouraged to begin a payment plan to reduce or eliminate these fees and/or fines during incarceration. This will also include child support arrears, court fees, and restitution.
9. Benefits Eligibility: This output will be included during the Pre-Release update. Eligibility status for SSI/SSDI and Veteran's benefits along with the status of benefits if they were receiving them prior to incarceration will be identified.
10. Community support: The meeting time and location of the local reentry coalition will be identified for every inmate. The conditions for release will also stipulate that, once released, offenders must report to the coalition for assessment and service referrals
11. Co-Parenting plan: For offenders with children, a co-parenting plan, signed by the offender, will be included in the discharge plan. This plan will outline any court ordered child support, custody agreements, and additional classes or resources for building a stronger relationship with an offender's children.

Recommendation #3: Establish a procedure for obtaining proper identification for all inmates in ADC and ACC.

ACC, ADC and other state agencies must be committed to assisting inmates with obtaining proper identification prior to release. The Department of Finance and Administration, the Department of Health and the Social Security Administration along

with ACC and ADC, must establish a procedure together for acquiring identification for inmates during the reentry programming. This model has been proven successful in other states, such as Wyoming, and can be implemented in Arkansas without additional funding. It is common knowledge that in today's community, an individual cannot obtain employment, open a bank account, sign a lease, or enroll in school without proper identification. While this single step will not remove the entirety of the barrier to employment, housing, and education, it is a start. Establishing a procedural agreement with each agency would not require additional funding but this process can be streamlined through the use of agency interfaces that allow each agency to share information electronically through a secure network. This will allow ADC and ACC to submit request for identification directly to SSA, DFA, or DHS and vice versa. ACC has met with multiple state agencies, including SSA, DFA, and DHS in regards to setting up an interface between agencies. Cost estimates for each interface have been set at \$30,000. State funding is being requested to support the necessary programming.

Recommendation #4: Establish a case management system in ADC and ACC to ensure inmates remain on track for their discharge plan.

To establish and fully manage the discharge planning system and ensure individual discharge plans are maintained and monitored, ADC and ACC must establish a case-management system and employ case managers at all facilities. Correctional case-management has been used in other state Departments of Correction for numerous years to ensure inmates complete the various program and treatment requirements during their incarceration. Currently, ADC and ACC treatment staff monitor an inmate's progress through treatment case plans, however, progress on other goals, such as obtaining identification, applying for SSI/SSDI benefits or completing required program referrals are not being thoroughly monitored. By employing case managers at ADC and ACC, routine audits of inmate's discharge plans would ensure they are completing all requirements and preparing for reentry.

Case managers would be responsible for conducting initial and ongoing assessments, periodic classification reviews, discharge planning review, and program referral status. Additionally, case managers would provide transitional services such as

assistance with applications for identification, housing, and community program referrals. Regular audits of inmate's case files will be completed to ensure he/she is on track for completion of required programs. This will alleviate the burden of inmates being denied parole because they have not completed a required program referral, thus allowing more inmates to meet parole eligibility on time. The recommended caseload for effective case management is 100-200 offenders per case manager. This will require the addition of approximately 90-100 positions statewide to accommodate the current population in the custody of ADC and ACC.

Recommendation #5: Establish The Good Grid: An Online Reentry Portal to assist in identifying community resources.

ACC recognizes that continual unemployment, unstable residency, poverty, mental illnesses and substance abuse exacerbated by the lack of unified community services are major drivers of recidivism. One of the significant hurdles to reentry is the offenders' inability to navigate through the various state agencies and community organizations when seeking needed resources for reentry. *The Good Grid* will be a cutting edge tool to serve as a one-stop portal for delivering services to returning offenders and be designed to systematically address and reduce barriers to reentry which is expected to lower recidivism in Arkansas.

The following narrative outlines the need for implementing an online integrated reentry portal in Arkansas:

"I just came out of prison and I have two children. My husband isn't paying anything and he's supposed to! Our baby has autism and I have no insurance. I haven't got a second job. Even if I find one, I have the kids and I don't know how I'll pay for child care. I barely have money for food and rent. What I do have runs out in the first two weeks and I have to depend on loans from my friends and relatives - it's stressful."

This narrative is one of many difficult situations offenders face after leaving prison. After speaking with some offenders, it quickly became clear that a focus on one aspect of

support alone, such as education, could be successful only if other related problems were simultaneously addressed. For instance, many do not have access to transportation; many have substance abuse problems; others have combinations of these plus a multitude of other poverty-related troubles with which to deal.

The biggest issue is the lack of a centralized location where all of these problems can be addressed in a cohesive, integrated manner. In spite of the existence of many organizations and non-profits ready to help, services are generally duplicative, fragmented or inadequate because of the current inability to share information. It is extremely difficult for offenders to get integrated, collaborative support. This process of an integrated approach to reentry will begin within the reentry centers and continue into the community with the support and resources of *The Good Grid*. *The Good Grid* will provide the information-sharing ability to address these issues and equip community service providers to address the needs of returning offenders.

The following features will be available through *The Good Grid* to assist probation and parole officers, offenders, families and community service providers. The last two features will be used to incentivize community service providers to participate.

1. *Online Resource Directory*: A comprehensive directory of service providers, businesses, volunteers and social organizations that form a trusted, safe environment for delivering reintegration services. It also serves as a hub for several community outreach programs and organizations to exchange information and create workflow for addressing and managing specific cases. Residents at an ACC center and volunteers have transcribed all parole area resource directories and statewide directories to develop the online resource directory. Currently, information for 15,057 community service providers has been entered.
2. *Case Management*: A state-of-the-art Community Reintegration Case Management System that is integrated with ACC's outreach operations for offenders. This system will assist ADC and ACC with sharing case management notes with approved community service providers.
3. *Resume Builder*: An interface with *The Good Grid* and eOMIS will assist in building individual resumes for each offender. Resumes will contain information

for work history, education history, jobs performed while incarcerated and vocational training or certifications.

4. *Jobs & Resume Smart Match:* An intelligent Jobs & Resumes matching system to facilitate quick and relevant job searches. The system also has the ability to obtain jobs postings daily from more than 10,000 job boards and perform semi-automated job matches and recommend jobs and inform employers and applicants of the status of their postings and job searches. Employers can post full-time, part-time and ad-hoc jobs for regular employment, contracting and freelancing opportunities. The *Smart Match* feature is being tested in an area parole office before full implementation.
5. *Housing Match:* A directory of available housing (permanent and transitional) options to facilitate searches for available housing statewide. A semi-automated matching system will notify an offender when an available housing option has been posted.
6. *Training:* An Online training and certification system for customized skills development. An interface with the Department of Workforce Services will allow access to services and programs available through their agency, such as the Career Readiness Certificate program.
7. *Agency Interfaces:* Integrated data exchange mechanisms with all cooperating government agencies and non-profits to securely share relevant data and provide cooperative services. State funding will be needed to support the necessary development and programming of agency interfaces.
8. *Volunteer Management:* A collaborative Volunteer Management System that signs up volunteers and service organizations to mentor and support the offenders as they navigate their way back into society. ACC will use this feature to obtain volunteers and track their hours as well.
9. *Crowd-Funding:* An informative crowd-funding service that allows funders to donate and review the progress of the projects and causes for community organizations they follow and is universally accessible by beneficiaries, providers, audit groups, foundations, media outlets and online communities. Crowd-funding

can used to secure monetary and in-kind donations for community service providers. This feature will also assist ACC offices in obtaining in-kind donations.

Offenders without internet access will be able to access *The Good Grid* at the area parole offices. An education block will also be included in the GED program during incarceration to teach offenders how to use the site and the many tools available to them through *The Good Grid*. Inmates will also receive a flyer upon release with steps for accessing the features on *The Good Grid*.

ACC does not, however, plan on this tool replacing the role of the parole officer in assisting offenders in finding services. We believe that low-risk offenders who have the ability to use this tool on their own will be able to utilize it without the assistance of an officer, which will in turn allow the officer to focus his/her attention on high and moderate-risk offenders. The online resource directory also will help officers while offenders are in prison awaiting parole and when they transfer to other area offices while they are on parole. Parole officers can identify services in the offender's new community before the transfer has taken place to ensure there is no gap in services during the transfer. A phased roll out of *The Good Grid* will begin in the fourth quarter of 2014 with the online resource directory being the first feature available to the public.

ACC has partnered with Protech Solutions, Inc. for the development and implementation of *The Good Grid*. Protech Solutions, Inc. has a proven track record building large case management and integrated management systems. It is a nationwide and global information technology service provider for development, maintenance, and enhancement of automated systems. Protech has been in existence since 1995 and built systems for multiple clients, including Arkansas, New Jersey, Delaware, and Massachusetts state agencies. The company strives to provide solutions that reduce cost, improve margins, and create capacity for future growth.

Recommendation #6: Establish community based organizations (CBOs) to strengthen the community support system for returning offenders.

One of the major predictive factors of success upon return to the community is the strength of an offender's support system, whether from family, friends, or the community. Unfortunately, many times family or personal relationships have been

strained or broken due to an offender's criminal history, and they return to the community without any support system. This typically results in offenders returning to their old habits and old associates and re-engaging in criminal behavior. To break this cycle of criminal behavior, the community can serve as the support system for returning offenders through Community Based Organizations (CBOs). CBOs will serve as the support for guiding the returning offender through the many barriers and difficult situations that are faced upon release to the community. ACC's mentor program was developed through research of other successful mentoring programs, such as Kansas Department of Corrections. Through the establishment of CBOs and the mentoring program, ACC believes that offenders will have access to the necessary support system for breaking the cycle of the revolving door of criminal behaviors.

CBOs have proven to be an effective tool within the community in numerous states, including North Carolina and Rhode Island. Arkansas has three active coalitions at present and an additional two communities have contacted ACC with an interest to establish more. ACC will assist communities in Arkansas to establish a CBO which brings together the key stakeholders in the community to assist returning offenders identify community resources and available services. Multiple CBOs will be located throughout the state to ensure all offenders have access regardless of their area of residence. With the assistance of the Act 1190 Community Coalition committee, a Community Based Organizations Handbook has been developed (Appendix A). Within Arkansas, a CBO is defined as a "collaboration of organizations within a local community, consisting of entities and/or individuals that represent the face of the community, coming together for the purpose of addressing the critical criminogenic needs of the formerly incarcerated through agreed upon objectives and outcomes²." CBOs will serve as the support system and resource center for returning offenders. All community stakeholders for reentry will be brought to the table to provide resources for returning offenders and to systematically reduce the barriers that are currently in place.

ACC's vision for CBOs is that they will guide offenders through the critical transition period after release and provide resources for employment, housing, substance abuse treatment, etc. and then continue their support until an offender is a contributing member of the organization and the community. ACC envisions the

following organizations and groups to be involved in every CBO: local community leaders, such as mayors or city directors; county judges; law enforcement; business owners; non-profit organizations; churches and other faith-based organizations; at-large community members; hospitals; local universities and community colleges, local state agency employees such as ACC, ADC, DWS, DHS, Office of Child Support Enforcement, etc.; and offenders.

CBOs must be structured with a clear governing body and guidelines for them to be successful and sustainable. All CBOs will be required to register with ACC, and establish a Steering Committee and an anchor organization. The Steering Committee will serve as the governing body and provide leadership for the coalition. It is recommended that the make-up of the Steering Committee be representative of the members of the organization and the community at-large. The *Arkansas CBO Handbook* further outlines the role and responsibilities of the Steering Committee.

In addition to a Steering Committee, each CBO will identify an anchor organization to assist with logistics and support. The anchor organization must have the requisite time to devote to such tasks as coordinating monthly meetings, disseminating information to members, and recruiting new members for the CBO to ensure a representative sample of the community and inclusion of all stakeholders in the community that are addressing reentry issues.

If state funding is approved for performance incentive grants, funds will be used to assist CBOs and other community service providers during initial implementation phases. ACC is requesting \$100,000 annually to be used for performance incentive funding with a portion used for community-based grants for which CBOs, community service providers, and new transitional houses will be able to apply for to promote the use of evidence-based practices within their community and also to train CBO members. Examples of allowable uses for these funds will be employment services, job training, and substance abuse and mental health treatment for offenders or contracted training for the entire coalition. Funds will be used exclusively for services that target high and moderate-risk offenders.

To assist the new CBOs and ensure the active CBOs understand and adopt the new guidelines laid out in the *Handbook*, ACC needs to employ 13 Area CBO

Coordinators. The CBO Coordinators will be located in each of the Area Parole Offices and will be responsible for identifying potential anchor organizations in each area. Because there are multiple counties in each parole area, CBO Coordinators will be responsible for multiple CBOs in their assigned areas. Once anchor organizations have been identified, the CBO Coordinators will assist with identifying and approaching key stakeholders about their needed involvement. After the initial stakeholders have been identified, the CBO Coordinators will provide ongoing support for facilitating meetings and ensuring the coalition has the needed support from ACC and the community. Ongoing outreach and recruiting will be a large responsibility of the CBO Coordinators after the establishment of the anchor organization, as well as ensuring the CBOs are operating within the parameters set out by the handbook. CBO Coordinators will be utilized for up to three years to assist in the development and establishment of CBOs statewide. Once the CBO and anchor organization are well established, the role of the Area CBO Coordinators will be taken over by a volunteer within the CBO. In addition to the Area CBO Coordinators, a statewide CBO Coordinator will be responsible for general oversight of the area coordinators and all CBOs in the state. The statewide CBO Coordinator will be a permanent position within ACC to continue the monitoring and operation of all CBOs in the state. The Area CBO Coordinators will be hired at a C115 pay grade (\$29,251 plus match) and the statewide CBO Coordinator will be hired at a C119 pay grade (\$35,554 plus match).

Recommendation #7: Implement a statewide mentoring program to assist offenders prior to and after release from incarceration.

CBOs will provide valuable access to information and resources in the community for returning offenders but ACC is in the process of establishing a statewide mentoring program that will provide one mentor for every offender that is released from ADC or ACC. ACC's model is based on successful models from other states and the local model used by Pathway to Freedom. The program will consist of a pre- and post-release phase. Offenders will be automatically enrolled in the program at six months prior to release, which coincides with their parole approval and their transition to a reentry center. ACC will attempt to transfer inmates to reentry centers near the

community to which they will return making it easier for them to continue with the same mentor upon release.

ACC has developed a set of guidelines for mentors to follow and to help guide them through the process of being a mentor (Appendix B). The mentors will be asked to make at least a one-year commitment and to assist the offender in identifying and obtaining the necessary resources, such as personal identification, employment, housing, finances and avoidance of criminal behaviors. A mentor will serve as a positive presence in an offender's life that will help with the basic survival needs. The pre-release phase will consist of an initial match and visit to ensure the mentor and the offender will be able to work together. During this time, the mentor will visit the offender and begin to form the relationship. This will consist of establishing how each person can contact the other and beginning to encourage the offender to contact the mentor with questions, concerns or during a difficult situation. To assist with recruiting, training, and supervising mentors ACC needs to employ 13 Area Mentor Coordinators and one statewide Mentor Coordinator. Similar to the CBO model, the 13 Area Mentor Coordinators will be funded for three years to assist with the initial implementation of the program. After three years, the Area Mentor Coordinator positions will be transitioned to volunteer positions and filled by a volunteer who has been identified during the previous three year implementation period. The statewide Mentor Coordinator will be permanent ACC employee and continue overall supervision of the program and mentors. The Area Mentor Coordinators will be hired at a C115 pay grade (\$29,251 plus match) and the statewide Mentor Coordinator will be hired at a C119 pay grade (\$35,554 plus match).

The majority of impact will be made during the post-release phase. Mentors will meet with the offender at least every other week for one half to one hour (meeting more frequently is encouraged). Mentors and offenders will decide how they want to spend their time and can be a variety of options such as a sporting event, having a meal, or having coffee. While a mentor's primary focus will be serving as a positive role model for an offender, they can also provide practical skills such as budgeting, filling out an application, or finding suitable housing.

To volunteer with ACC as a mentor, individuals must complete an initial training and orientation phase. The training and orientation will introduce individuals to the

program and explain the guidelines and rules for participating as a mentor. In addition, ACC will teach the individuals how to handle difficult situations with an offender and how and when to report any potential violations of an offender's conditions of release or concern over potential risks to an offender's or another individual's safety.

Through the use of CBOs and mentors ACC believes that an offender will have a stronger support system while transitioning back into the community. The CBOs will also allow the community to take ownership of reentry in their areas while supporting returning offenders and their families. Mentors, as stated previously, will serve as the positive role model to walk beside the offender and provide guidance during difficult or unknown situations.

Recommendation #8: Employ additional Probation and Parole officers to reduce the average caseload to be consistent with the recommended average.

Probation and parole officers' main job responsibility is to ensure offenders on their caseloads comply with their conditions of release and reporting requirements, and maintain a crime-free lifestyle. ACC's supervision level for offenders determines the frequency of reporting and is based on each offender's risk level; minimum, medium, maximum, and annual. Minimum supervision is required to report every 3 months, medium supervision is required to report once a month, and maximum supervision is required to report a minimum of once a month and an officer is required to complete a home visit every month and make contact with the offender at his/her residence. Annual reporting supervision is for offenders who have successfully completed 6 months of minimum supervision and score low on the risks/needs assessment.

ACC has implemented a new offender risks/needs assessment, the Arkansas Offender Risk Assessment (ARORA). A pilot test conducted by the developers, JFA Associates, collected initial data on the percentage of offenders in each risk level and supervision level. The data showed that 41.7% of offenders would be on medium supervision and 30.6% of offenders would be on maximum, totaling 72.8% of offenders that must report at least monthly. ACC probation and parole officers' average caseload is currently 118 which would mean officers would have to meet more than 80 offenders

at least monthly. In addition to office visits, however, officers must also conduct home visits, serve warrants, and complete incident reports. In a normal, 160-hour work month, an officer simply does not have the time to effectively supervise 118 offenders while also completing all other required job duties and responsibilities.

The amount of time an officer spends with an offender during an office visit should be directly correlated to an offender's risk level. High-risk offenders should receive more intensive supervision, office visits, referrals and assistance with services than low-risk offenders. Research shows that providing the same level of services across all levels of supervision can actually increase the recidivism rate of low-risk offenders and only minimally reduce the recidivism rate of high-risk offenders. If the intensity of supervision is directly related to the risk level of an offender, recidivism is reduced significantly more across all levels of supervision³. In keeping with these findings, officers should spend more time working with and meeting high-risk (maximum supervision) offenders. To accomplish this, however, officers' caseloads must be reduced by funding additional probation and parole officers across the state. Reducing an officer's caseload would allow him/her to provide better supervision and direct more attention to each offender instead of the minimum amount of time thus increasing the effectiveness of supervision.

For ACC to reduce the average caseload of officers an additional 201 probation and parole officers are needed across the state. The Board of Corrections has recommended additional officers be phased in over the next 4 to 5 years. ACC has limited our request to a total of 71 field services positions in FY2016 and 109 in FY2017 along with applicable operational costs which includes 45 parole/probation officer positions in FY2016 and 80 in FY2017. These positions would be phased in quarterly over the two year period to optimize training and implementation. The request totals \$4,115,180 in 2016 and \$5,618,165 in FY2017.

This request also supports the change in risk levels expected due to the use of a new risks/needs assessment which projects the number of high risk offenders to increase from 11% of the population to 32%. The number of medium risk offenders will increase from 30% to 39%. These changes in risk levels will require more home visits and intensive supervision. Increased staffing can better manage these increases to

meet the national officer caseload standard. This will allow ACC to begin reducing officer caseloads to approximately 60 per officer and result in our officers being able to more effectively supervise the offenders in our state. The addition of these officers would allow ACC to devote more time to high-risk offenders and ensure, not only that they are complying with their conditions of release, but also that they are actively working towards becoming successful, contributing members of society.

Recommendation #9: Focus transitional housing services on offenders most likely to recidivate and invest in innovative transitional housing services.

ACC has taken numerous steps in 2014 to improve reentry services for offenders including the addition of a Transitional Housing Coordinator to oversee the licensing and monitoring of transitional houses in Arkansas. Appropriate and stable housing that provides the necessary structure and support for returning offenders is a major barrier faced by inmates seeking parole by the APB. Currently, Arkansas has 43 licensed transitional houses that house inmates released from ADC and ACC. To ensure policy and practice is inclusive of evidence-based practices many policy revisions have been made to improve the quality of transitional houses in Arkansas.

Current research has found that resources and services should be focused on the offenders most likely to recidivate (high- and moderate-risk offenders). Consistent with this research, ACC has instituted a tiered payment schedule dependent on an offender's risk level. Effective October 1, 2014, transitional houses will be reimbursed for housing ACC offenders based on risk level. ACC will reimburse up to \$20.00 for moderate-risk offenders, \$26.00 for high-risk offenders, and \$30.00 for Level 3 and 4 sex offenders. This policy change allows ACC to focus transitional housing resources on high and moderate-risk offenders to ensure a structured and supportive environment upon release for those most likely to reoffend.

In an effort to reduce the abscond rate of offenders released to transitional houses, enhance accountability, and improve the process for verifying invoice amounts, ACC will utilize GPS monitoring for all offenders released to transitional housing. The Transitional Housing coordinator will monitor the location verifications maintained by the online GPS vendor. At the conclusion of each billing cycle, invoices from transitional

houses will be reconciled with the monthly report from the GPS monitoring to ensure invoices are accurate. If an offender at a transitional house absconds, parole officers will have the ability to track his/her location using the GPS monitoring equipment.

To continue providing reentry services based on best practices and research from other states, The Committee recommended an investment in self-governing transitional houses based on the model used at the Delancey Street Foundation and Oxford Houses. This model of transitional housing uses a hierarchical structure in which senior residents teach new residents basic life skills and assist with academic and vocational training. All aspects of the transitional house are overseen by a designated resident with the only staff serving as the manager. Offenders in the self-governing transitional houses participate in training programs, such as landscaping, catering, or commercial moving, which also function as separate enterprises to help support the transitional house. Revenue from the enterprises will go towards maintaining the transitional house, room and board, and all basic necessities for offenders in the house.

The premise of this model is “each one, teach one,” which means every offender in the transitional house is not only responsible for learning basic life skills and a trade, but they are also responsible for teaching an offender at a lower level than them. For example, an offender that has an eighth grade reading level will be taught by an offender at higher reading level while also teaching another offender at a lower reading level. This creates an environment in which all residents of the transitional house are accountable and responsible to each other. An initial pilot site will be used to determine any necessary changes to policy to refine the operation of this type of non-traditional transitional housing.

Recommendation #10: Utilize Performance Incentive Funding to promote the use of evidence-based practices by community service providers.

Many local programs in Arkansas are successfully reducing the number of commitments to ADC from their counties or area of operation. Act 570 of 2011 approved performance incentive funding to reward these local programs and encourage continued support or expansion of the program. The legislation allows counties and local jurisdictions to apply for one-time grant funding to be administered through ACC for

implementation of programs to reduce the number of commitments from their areas. Further incentives will only be awarded based on a set of predetermined performance measures focused on reducing recidivism and improving public safety. Calculations of the cost savings generated by the reduction of recidivism will determine the subsequent amounts of funding for successful applicants.

While funds have not been allocated to allow ACC to award these performance incentive grants, local jurisdictions who would qualify for such funding have been identified. Columbia and Union Counties initiated a pilot program and reported results that reflected a 40% reduction in admissions to prison from these counties in 2011. The two counties also reported a 54% reduction in number of probationers, a 23% increase in Adult Education degrees and Career Readiness Certificates.

The Committee recommended, and ACC supports, funding be provided to incentivize communities and to invest in programs and services to reduce recidivism in their areas, thereby reducing the number of admissions to ADC. By reducing numbers committed or revoked to prison, communities would qualify for additional funding to continue the support of these programs. The Committee recommends the state allocate \$100,000 annually for performance incentive funding.

Recommendation #11: Train staff as SOAR Eligibility Specialists and train ACC Probation and Parole Officers in Mental Health First Aid.

According to *Guidelines for the Successful Transition of People with Behavioral Health Disorders from Jail and Prison*⁴, 16% of state prison populations are diagnosed with a serious mental disorder, compared to 5.4% of the general public. Of the individuals in state prison populations with a serious mental health disorder, 59% are also diagnosed with a substance abuse disorder while only 16% of the general public has this co-occurrence. Individuals with mental health disorders are drastically overrepresented in the corrections populations both in prisons and in probation and parole. While ACC and ADC both employ treatment services professionals who are trained for working with individuals with mental health and substance abuse disorders, correctional officers and probation and parole officers are not equipped with the training

to work with or identify symptoms or warning signs of individuals with mental health or co-occurring disorders (mental health and substance abuse).

The Department of Human Services Division of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS) has developed a Mental Health First Aid training curriculum that teaches this material. To ensure all corrections staff possess the necessary skills to respond to this portion of the population, all ADC and ACC staff who work and interact with offenders or inmates should be required to complete a percentage of their annual training hours with a focus on mental health and substance abuse disorders. The Mental Health First Aid curriculum is a national training model adopted by the Arkansas DBHS. The training curriculum teaches how to recognize the signs of addiction and mental illness, the impact of mental illness and substance abuse disorders, how to assess a situation and determine the need for help, and identifies local resources that can be used as referrals for individuals with a mental illness or substance abuse disorder. DBHS has already trained some local law enforcement agencies in this curriculum.

To assist the offenders who are being released with mental health disorders, ACC and ADC need to identify and train current SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery) certified Eligibility Specialist to assist inmates with the applications for Social Security benefits. The application process for SSI/SSDI benefits should begin 60-90 days prior to release, which will help ensure offenders begin receiving the necessary benefits as soon after release as possible. The SOAR Specialists will also assist with enrollment in Medicaid and other necessary benefits program. In addition to enrolling eligible offenders in SSI/SSDI and Medicaid, offenders should have an appointment made with a mental health service provider in the community to ensure they maintain their medication schedules.

Equipping ADC and ACC staff with the tools for working with inmates and offenders with mental health and/or substance abuse disorders will allow them to better respond to incidents involving this population. This training will allow all staff to conduct triage while emergency calls are made. Additionally, providing a SOAR specialist will assist inmates with the extensive process of applying for benefits and track the inmate's application and current status of benefits eligibility.

Recommendation #12: Substance Abuse and Mental Health treatment funding.

As noted in the previous recommendation, a large percentage of the incarcerated and supervised population, suffer from substance abuse or mental health disorders or both. During incarceration, inmates receive treatment services for both of these disorders through the medical contractor for ACC and ADC, but upon release inmates must rely on insurance to cover the expenses of treatment provided by community service providers. While the Affordable Care Act requires insurance policies to cover this type of the treatment, the deductibles and/or copays continue to make these services out of reach for offenders. The Committee recommends additional funding be allocated for the state to provide substance abuse and mental health treatment to offset the cost of high copays and deductibles for returning offenders with these disorders. An additional \$1 million in funding for substance abuse and mental health treatment in the community would provide assistance with deductibles, substance abuse and mental health assessments, and treatment services. These funds would be used to provide services that are outside the scope of ACC's treatment professionals.

Furthermore, offenders who are referred for mental health or substance abuse assessments while on parole are currently place on a waiting list for approximately 60 days due to inadequate funding for treatment staff. ACC included in its biennial budget requests funding for an additional treatment staff. ACC requested funding for 22 Substance Abuse Program Leaders (SAPLs) and six Assistant Treatment Program Leaders. Under the Board of Corrections' recommendation, these numbers were reduced to seven SAPLs and two Assistant Treatment Program Managers. The Committee recommends additional funding for the full 28 positions requested by ACC. These positions would be phased in quarterly over a two year period to optimize training and implementation. By employing additional treatment staff within ACC, the current wait list for assessments would be reduced and offenders would have access to the necessary services more quickly.

Recommendation #13: Require initial and ongoing training in reentry for all Probation and Parole officers and corrections staff working with offenders.

With the increased attention and efforts being made for reentry programs and services in Arkansas it is imperative that ACC and ADC staff understand all aspects of reentry and their respective roles in reentry. Additional training blocks in all academies, as well as, ongoing in-service training should be required for all staff who work and interact with inmates and offenders on a regular basis. The ACC Training Department has already included a reentry block in the probation and parole academy conducted at the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy, however, no additional training is currently required after that initial block.

The reentry block for probation and parole officers is taught by ACC Reentry Services staff and includes an overview of reentry, the role of the officer in reentry, and the current projects of reentry services. The overview explains the many aspects of reentry including housing, employment, education, transportation, family support and risks/needs assessments. The lesson plan was developed specifically for probation and parole officers to teach their roles in offender reentry. To date, two blocks have been taught at the probation and parole academy.

Similar to the reentry training added to the probation and parole academy, training will be added to the basic training for correctional officers in ACC and ADC. This block will follow the same format covering an overview of reentry, the correctional officers' roles in reentry, and current projects. Specifically, the role of the correctional officer will discuss the importance of serving as a positive role model and supporting positive interactions with families and children during visitation.

In addition to the initial training, corrections and probation and parole staff should also be required to complete annual training covering the current status of reentry in Arkansas. Reentry services is an ever changing area that needs to be reviewed at least annually to ensure staff and officers know all of the available services and programs available for offenders and any eligibility requirements. While reentry training would be a broad overview of these services and programs, additional (optional) training courses could also be available to teach specific programs and services for staff and community

service providers. Required and optional training could be made available during the Arkansas Adult Probation and Parole Academy conferences in the Spring and Fall.

Recommendation #14: Improve continuity of care for offenders with chronic health and mental health illnesses being released to the community.

Inmates in ADC and ACC receive the necessary medical and mental health care and medication for chronic and/or mental health disorders. While incarcerated these services are more easily coordinated because the inmate is confined; however once released, ensuring an offender shows up for medical appointments, maintains his/her medication, or regularly attends treatment is much more difficult. One of the major barriers identified for returning offenders is the lack of a transitional model to ensure all necessary appointments, services, and treatments are continued once in the community. To assist with this transitional period for medical and mental health issues, The Committee recommends the use of collaborative discharge teams that review each inmate's discharge and treatment plan and ensure initial appointments are set up prior to release. The discharge review teams will also include the inmate's parole officer (through video conferencing if needed) to relay all relevant information pertaining to the inmate's case and any concerns or precautions that have been identified during incarceration. This process can be made easier through the implementation of the case-management system introduced previous recommendations

The discharge review teams would consist of the inmate's counselor, case manager, SOAR eligibility specialist, and parole officer. The team will review the inmates parole plan (PPV), current medication needs, initial and follow up appointments in the community, status of all program referrals generated at intake, and any stipulations required by the Parole Board. By engaging each of these parties, an individualized discharge plan will include all aspects of an offender's medical and mental health needs. A Release of Information (ROI) will need to be obtained from the inmate to allow these entities to discuss his/her case.

To further assist with improving the continuity of care into the community, ADC and ACC need to participate in the Arkansas State Health Alliance for Records Exchange (SHARE) managed by the Arkansas Office of Health Information Technology

(OHIT). SHARE is statewide health information exchange portal that allows participating practitioners to send electronic medical records of patients to other participating practitioners. Once again, ROI's must be obtained from the offender to allow this exchange to ensure adherence to HIPPA regulations. According to the OHIT website, SHARE has the potential to reduce "duplicate testing, promote improved management of chronic diseases, and improve care coordination⁵." Through participation in this program, ADC and ACC can obtain health records from community health care providers for inmates and health care providers can more easily request and obtain health records from ADC and ACC for offenders. The Department of Public Health at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has submitted a grant proposal to fund a pilot program for SHARE in Pulaski County. ACC and ADC have agreed to partner with UAMS for this pilot program at no additional cost to either department. Statewide implementation of the program will require additional funding, as determined by the pilot program.

Recommendation #15: Establish a priority system for educational services for inmates in ADC focusing attention on inmates closest to release.

The Arkansas Correctional School (ACS) district is the leading school district for GEDs in the state. An inmate in ADC or ACC who does not have a high school diploma or GED is required to work towards obtaining his/her GED while incarcerated. During the 2012-2013 school year, 942 ADC inmates received their GEDs while incarcerated. While these statistics are promising, the Act 1190 Education Committee believes education services can be improved if prioritized by individual need and length of incarceration. An assessment for determining the academic and vocational needs score of each inmate has been developed by the Education committee. By focusing attention on inmates closest to release, ADC and ACC can ensure that services are administered effectively and efficiently.

The assessment takes several factors into consideration to determine an inmate's academic and vocational needs score. The scores range from 3-12 for academic needs score and 5-20 for vocational needs score, with a higher score indicating a higher priority. The assessment takes into account not only the length of

incarceration but also an inmate's age, education level, work skills, job history, and vocational training history. An inmate with an incarceration length of less than two years, under 20 years of age, who has worked only minimum wage jobs in the past and received no formal training would score as the highest priority and would be placed into vocational programs and education programs ahead of an inmate who has some vocational training and 4-10 years of job history but has 8 years left to serve. Other states, such as Texas' correctional school district, have utilized a similar priority system with success.

Recommendation #16: Utilize a Pay for Success (Social Impact Bond) model to invest in innovative reentry strategies.

One of the most difficult challenges faced by state governments is funding new, innovative practices. Allocating funds for new programs can lead to a decrease in funding for current programs and services. Unfortunately, this can result in states maintaining the status quo or making only minor changes to programs that have a minimal margin of success. A new concept has been introduced in multiple jurisdictions that allows an investment in innovative, evidence-based approaches to social justice and builds new relationships with service providers. The Pay for Success model is based on a social impact bond that allows for a private-public partnership to improve social outcomes of public services.

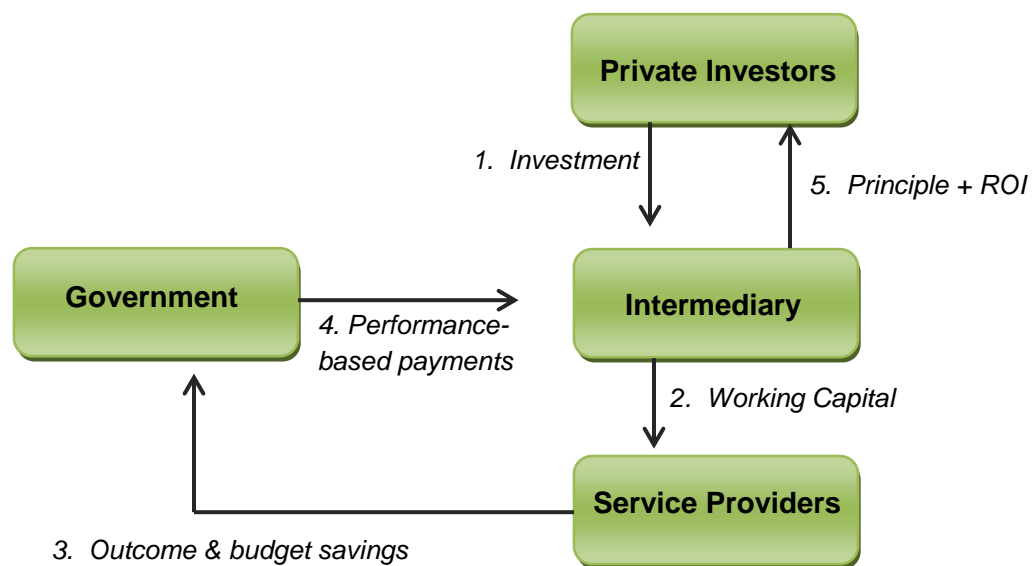
Investors provide initial capital for new social service programs and the state pays back the investment at an agreed upon rate, only if the program outcomes are successful. Payments on the investment are determined wholly on the success of the performance measures. If the performance measures meet the agreed upon target in the contract, payments are made to pay the full amount of the investment. If the performance measures exceed the performance outcome targets, payments exceed the initial investment. On the other side, if target performance outcomes are not met the state does not pay back the investment. This motivates private investors to fully support the programs and ensure all resources are available for a successful program and it motivates the public sector to fully support the program and meet or exceed the target

performance measures. The investment is paid back from the estimated savings of the reduction.

The structure and key players involved in a social impact bond are private investors, government agencies, intermediary, and service providers. As explained earlier, the private investors provide the initial capital for the programs. The service providers are contracted by government agencies to provide the programming and services to the target population. The intermediary is responsible for obtaining the private funding, overseeing the service providers, and tracking the performance measures outcomes. Figure 1 outlines the relationship between the private investor, the public sector, service providers and an intermediary.

Figure 1: Social Impact Bond Structure

(Harvard Kennedy School, Social Impact Bonds: A Guide for State and Local Governments).⁶



This model is currently being used in New York State to provide transitional employment services to high and moderate-risk offenders returning to three target areas. New York (government) has partnered with Social Finance (intermediary), The Center for Employment Opportunities (service providers), Bank of America Merrill Lynch, The Rockefeller Foundation, and The Robin Hood Foundation (private investors) to participate in the first state sponsored social impact bond. An independent researcher

has also been contracted to conduct the analysis and outcomes evaluation for the target performance measures. Through this partnership The Center for Employment Opportunities will provide transitional employment services to an additional 2,000 offenders over 4 years. Their services have undergone exhaustive research and have been supported by data as successful practices for assisting individuals in obtaining the necessary job skills for long term employment.

In addition to providing private sector funding for public sector services, social impact bonds also require rigorous measurement to ensure performance measures are being met. This will allow governments to better allocate funding for evidence based programs with strong data to support their success. For Arkansas, and reentry, this would mean an investment in a promising reentry program, such as a resource matching employment services agency or expansion of a current program that would save the state money by reducing recidivism and prison costs. Legislation would be required to allow ACC to enter into this type of agreement with a private investor and intermediary.

Potential projects to be funded through a social impact bond project include an employment agency, case-management, and discharge planning. Funding proposals for each of these projects is currently being developed for a 2-year period. Preliminary estimates include approximately \$1.1 million for an employment agency, \$2 million for substance abuse treatment services, \$5.5 million for case management, and \$300,000 for discharge planning. These proposed funds would be provided by the private investor to meet target performance measures in certain areas of reentry.

Recommendation #17: Utilize Department of Workforce Services programs to further prepare offenders for employment in the community.

Offenders cannot be successful members of any community if they are not able to obtain and maintain employment after release. There are many programs available during both incarceration and after release that teach individuals marketable job skills and soft skills that can make them more employable. The Department of Workforce Services (DWS) provides many of these programs statewide. ACC currently has a partnership with Adult Education to teach WAGE courses to prepare inmates to enter

the workforce. Additionally, some ACC facilities have a partnership with local community colleges to assist inmates with preparing for the Career Readiness Certificate exam. While these partnerships are beneficial, the lack of a partnership with DWS makes it difficult for offenders to continue moving forward in job skills training once released. Further collaboration would greatly improve ACC's ability to assist offenders in locating and enrolling in appropriate programs and training to assist them with finding employment.

For an offender, obtaining employment has multiple benefits for the individual as well as the state. Initially, employment will produce a steady income for an offender to begin providing for his/her family and making payments on monthly fines and fees. For the state, this will mean an increase in income taxes being paid and the ability to reduce the number of people on public assistance. Helping offenders find long-term employment instead of temporary or minimum wage employment would benefit the offender, the family, and the state.

As stated previously, the majority of offenders must report to their officer at least once a month. If DWS provided a staff person at each of ACC's area parole offices, offenders would have an opportunity to meet with a DWS Workforce Specialist at least monthly. Transportation is always a concern for offenders and this collaboration would allow offenders to meet with the Workforce Specialist without having to arrange multiple methods of transportation. The Workforce Specialists are trained to assist individuals with career planning and orientation, enrollment in DWS programs and career assessments. By placing a Workforce Specialist in each of the parole offices, programs would be more accessible and the offenders would have a better opportunity for contacting DWS. Legislative approval and funding for an initial 13 additional DWS Workforce Specialists is required to provide employment services to offenders at the area parole offices. The entry level salary for a DWS Workforce Specialists (C114) is \$27,858 plus match. If this model proves to be effective, the program can be expanded to include additional DWS positions in all satellite parole offices.

Alternatively, 13 funded positions for ACC to hire Employment Specialists would allow ACC to develop an in-house employment agency which partners with DWS to assist offenders in finding employment and job training courses. Funding requirements

would be the same for both options. The benefit of the first option is the working partnership between state agencies while the second option allows ACC to design an in-house employment agency tailored to meet the needs of the offender population.

ACC is also researching the ability to start individual businesses that employ offenders during and after incarceration, similar to Arkansas Correctional Industries. This idea is currently being used at the Southeast Arkansas Community Correction Center (SEACCC) in Pine Bluff where residents are growing and selling rose bushes. Residents in the program learn landscaping and gardening skills while also generating revenue for the program. Additional businesses that are being explored include commercial moving, pressure washing, catering, carpentry, and upholstery. These additional businesses would be in conjunction with self-governing transitional houses.

Another reentry project in Pine Bluff will provide employment for offenders after release, in addition to training and certification. Through a partnership with Mulligan Road, ACC will begin training 40 offenders in Pine Bluff in demolition and materials salvage. Housing will be provided and offenders will be expected to hold two jobs that include a daily 8-hour job in construction and a morning or evening position at the house. Upon completion of this program, offenders will have marketable job skills in the construction field and also be able to maintain a structured lifestyle outside of work hours. While the working partnership with DWS would provide more resources and opportunities for ACC offenders, ACC is also prepared to expand the self-sustaining businesses model as well.

Recommendation #18: Realign Probation and Parole officer job descriptions and responsibilities to include a focus on reentry.

Implementing all of the above recommendations would be ineffective if ACC did not recruit and hire individuals who are motivated and interested in helping returning offenders become productive members of the community. The focus of the job description for ACC Probation and Parole Officers is on enforcement of conditions of release and lacks any mention of reentry services. Through researching other state's recruiting and hiring process for probation and parole officers, it became clear that a focus on reentry needs to be added to ACC's recruiting and training procedures. By

making reentry a clear priority in the recruitment and interview phase, officers will understand the importance of assisting offenders and be able to balance the law enforcement aspect with the reentry aspect.

ACC will revise the current job description of probation and parole officers to include assisting offenders with their community reentry. The following statements will be recommended for inclusion in the job description, “Supervision services are provided in the community for parolees and probationers for the purpose of increasing public safety through the reduction of future criminal behavior and assisting in the transition from prison to community. Probation and parole officers will be responsible for ensuring adherence to the discharge plan, assistance in identifying a network of family and friends with a pro-social lifestyle, identifying pro-social interests and activities, and serving as a positive role model.”

Recommendation #19: Establish family reunification counseling at each reentry center to rebuild family and personal relationships and provide support for families and children with incarcerated family members.

When an individual is incarcerated, he/she is not the only person affected by the circumstances, family and children are also affected. Research has shown that more than half of United States’ incarcerated population report having at least one minor child. This equates to 1 in every 28 children in the United States having an incarcerated parent⁷. Studies have also shown that these children are more likely to be exposed to risks factors related to future criminal behavior, such as lack of school achievement and exposure to drugs or alcohol⁸. Furthermore, Shanahan and Agudelo⁹ (2012) found that inmates “who maintain contact with supportive family members are more likely to succeed after their release.” Unfortunately, family members also feel the effects of incarceration due to the loss of income, stigmatization by the community, and the lack of additional support in the household and do not always remain supportive of the inmate. If an offender has been incarcerated multiple times, it is more likely that his/her family will not serve as the support system upon release to assist him/her in reestablishing a productive lifestyle.

To promote success of the inmate and attempt to decrease children’s exposure to risk factors, part of reentry’s focus has to be on rebuilding the personal relationships

between an offender and his/her family. The family and personal relationships are one of the strongest motivators for an offender, good or bad. Programming to ensure these relationships are positive influences are needed and can be incorporated into pre-release and post-release phases. Involvement from the faith-based community and other community organizations would be extremely beneficial in this area.

Reentry centers can also be used to promote and support the rebuilding of family relationships due to their proposed locations and proximity to the inmate's area of release. Included in the programming for reentry centers will be monthly family reunification counseling. These will be organized to teach both the inmate and the family what to expect during the transition from prison to community and how to support each other through the transition. Family reunification counseling will include a time for visitation but also seminars on topics such as parenting, interpersonal communication, financial management, conflict resolution and marriage counseling. Programs will also include segments for incarcerated parents to interact with their children through trust building and group activities. The goal of family reunification counseling will be to begin reestablishing the incarcerated family member into the lives of their families.

ACC will make every effort to place an inmate in a reentry center that is close to his/her parole area. When an inmate is incarcerated it can be difficult for families to travel for visitation due to lack of transportation, work schedules, or simple unwillingness. Community churches and organizations, however, can assist with these limitations. Many churches have access to vans which can transport multiple passengers. Creating a network that would transport family members to visitation would reduce the transportation barrier for many families. ACC will attempt to partner with community churches and community based organizations to assist with transporting family members to reunification counseling and also providing portions of the programming. To further reduce this barrier, technology, such as Skype or FaceTime, can be used to allow an inmate and family to participate in reunification counseling when transportation is unavailable. This technology is compatible with the current equipment available at ADC and ACC and would result in only minimal funding requirements.

Additionally, ACC will utilize day passes and furloughs to allow approved inmates an opportunity to spend time rebuilding the family relationship at home for a predetermined amount of time. Family reunification counseling will conclude with an optional religious service available for the entire family. Community churches also have the ability to provide support groups for families and children that assist individuals with coping with the stress of having an incarcerated family member and dealing with the anger or anxiety that can come from this situation. The support groups would assist family members prior to attending family reunification counseling to begin preparing them for the visitations and programs.

Recommendation #20: Improve offenders' ability to access healthcare through the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid.

As noted previously, many inmates suffer from chronic medical or mental health disorders. While incarcerated, inmates receive treatment and services for these disorders and other necessary healthcare through the contracted medical provider. Upon release, offenders are expected to continue this treatment on their own accord. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires insurance policies to cover mental health treatment in addition to medical healthcare. With the numerous other barriers offenders face upon release, health insurance can easily fall to the bottom of the priority list. To better prepare inmates to manage their medical and/or mental health care needs, ACC and ADC must be dedicated to ensuring offenders have completed the application for health insurance through ACA upon release. This will assist offenders in obtaining coverage immediately upon return to the community. The Committee recommends that ACC and ADC ensure all inmates being released have completed an application for ACA prior to their return to the community to make healthcare more accessible upon release and to improve the continuity of care for inmates with chronic medical or mental health issues.

Ensuring inmates are signed up for ACA upon release will assist with obtaining health insurance coverage for all inmates being released, however, the burden of this work can be reduced by changing the policy regarding the termination of Medicaid benefits during incarceration. Currently, the Department of Human Services' (DHS)

policy for Medicaid benefits requires termination when an individual is admitted to ADC or ACC. During incarceration this is not a concern, because inmates receive medical care regardless of health insurance status. The only exception to this policy occurs if an inmate is admitted to a hospital for at least 24 hours, at which point they are eligible for Medicaid during that hospital stay. Termination of Medicaid benefits becomes a barrier when an inmate is released and must complete the full application process for Medicaid again. This puts an additional barrier on the offender when he/she is back in the community to go through a process that has already been completed at least once before. By changing the policy from termination to suspension of benefits during incarceration, an offender can immediately have his/her benefits re-instated upon release to the community. ADC and ACC are willing to provide the necessary information for DHS to ensure Medicaid benefits are only re-instated for inmates that have been released to safeguard against possible misuse of benefits. Incorporating both the application for ACA and the suspension, instead of termination, of Medicaid benefits would increase the number of inmates being released who have access to healthcare to ensure their medical and mental health needs can be maintained after release.

Recommendation #21: Implement a state tax credit to incentivize private employers to hire offenders.

The Department of Labor (DOL) managed a Work Opportunity Tax Credit available through the federal government which issues a federal tax credit for employers who hire targeted populations, which include those with a felony conviction. The WOTC program is currently suspended as of January 1, 2014 but six states have implemented a similar tax incentive for private employers through their state tax program. These states include California, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, and Texas. While the eligibility and maximum deductions vary greatly between each state, they offer a further incentive to employers to put offenders back to work and assist them back on the road to becoming contributing, tax-paying members of the community. Similar to the benefits of establishing an employment agency, implementing a state tax credit to encourage the hiring of offenders would have multiple benefits for the state, as well as, the offender.

These benefits include increased state income taxes and offenders being removed from public assistance programs.

A tax credit would be made available for employers who hire eligible offenders during the three years following their release. Employers would be able to apply for a tax credit equivalent to 5% of the qualified wages of the offender up to \$750 per year for a moderate-risk offender and \$1,000 per year for a high-risk offender. Once again, ACC is committed to ensuring resources are focused on those offenders most likely to reoffend. Offering a tax credit for employers would have two major benefits for reentry. First, offenders would have an incentive for hiring them and employers would have a safety net for hiring a “hard-to-place” employee. The tax credit would be available for up to 500 high- and moderate-risk offenders per year. For this program to be successful, the state would have to account for a moderate reduction in state income taxes yearly.

Recommendation #22: Develop a strategic marketing campaign using print, social, and radio media to highlight the “human” side of reentry.

Since the ACC focus on reentry was established in 2014-2019 strategic plan, the groundwork for ACC’s approach has already been laid and will be advantageous to our promotional efforts. The mission now is to put a “face” on reentry and give the public reasons to care about its success. The plan is to use news coverage, reentry videos, and public relations materials in a multi-faceted, sustained statewide campaign. Since reentry will be a continuing effort, promotional activities must also continue.

ACC will use a multi-faceted approach for major reentry events, announcements and happenings by sending news releases to all print and broadcast outlets. When something is planned or underway in a particular city, county or area of the state, the nearby newspapers will receive the release. For example, when a reentry coalition is formed in Yell County, the release will be sent to the *Yell County Record*, a well-read weekly newspaper that serves the entire county. Since smaller newspapers are chronically understaffed, a well-written and informative news release from a reputable source is likely to be well received.

In addition, Dr. David Montague, Ph.D., associate professor of criminal justice at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and a valued participant in the state’s reentry

efforts, has agreed to write a monthly column for distribution to the state's smaller papers. A published and well-respected expert in criminal justice with experience in law enforcement, high-level investigations, intelligence gathering and innovative programming for Arkansas' inmates, his column should quickly attract a devoted following. Dr. Montague's columns will highlight reentry and the people involved.

Journalists from the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, the state's only statewide daily, have expressed a keen eagerness to do articles on the "human" side of reentry. Some of those articles may appear on the front page, others in the Arkansas section and it is likely that many would be included in the paper's business section, which would be a new venue for corrections in Arkansas. In that same vein, the weekly, tabloid-sized *Arkansas Business* has indicated a high interest in doing articles that will appeal to its readers.

ACC is also publishing and distributing *Community Spirit*, a quarterly newsletter highlighting reentry in Arkansas. The first edition was released in August 2014 and included stories about the SEACCC Rose Bushes program, an organic farming program at the Patmos drug court, and welding programs at Southwest Arkansas Community Correction Center and SEACCC. *Community Spirit* will be distributed throughout the community through ACC's public website, CBOs, community service providers and *The Good Grid*.

The four commercial television stations in Little Rock, which is the state's largest broadcast market, work well with the agency and are extremely interested in doing reports that are newsworthy and have visual appeal. Reports featuring offenders remain extremely popular throughout the market. In addition, several television stations are located in five smaller markets in Arkansas, and story ideas of local interest will be pitched to them on a regular basis. Like their counterparts in Little Rock, these stations have a long-standing affinity for reports on the state's offender population.

Radio coverage in Arkansas is akin to television and print coverage. The primary market is Little Rock, with one flagship station that has an "all-talk" format. The state has well over 200 radio stations, both AM and FM, but very few actually do local news. The stations that do have been identified and will receive news releases and offers by the agency's communications staff to arrange sit-down appearances on their local news

talk shows. Additionally pre-recorded public service announcements highlighting the role of *The Good Grid* in the identifying social services in the community will be utilized to promote use of the new site.

Preliminary work is underway on a template for a series of promotional brochures and reentry videos that explain and highlight ACC's reentry efforts. The narrative will be adjusted for the audiences targeted: potential donors, mentors, volunteers, civic groups and faith-based organizations. The brochures also will be provided to a group of ACC employees and volunteers so that they can speak to civic organizations throughout Arkansas. In addition, speakers will be given talking points, statistics and success stories to share with their audiences. In essence, this will be a modified speaker's bureau that is well-versed and well-equipped to spread our message.

Reentry videos that highlight the mentoring program and reentry efforts in Arkansas are currently being developed. The mentoring video will be used to recruit volunteers to serve as mentors as well as inform the general public about the importance of creating a strong community support for returning offenders. The second video will highlight the need for improved reentry in Arkansas by outlining the recidivism statistics and the potential cost-savings for the state by reducing those numbers.

To assist with the efforts to provide support for children of incarcerated parents ACC will utilize its current partnership with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to help create a unique publication based on Dr. Montague's research. One of those studies is entitled, "If I Could Say It Myself", which is an enlightening examination of what inmates wish they could say to their children to prevent them from following the same paths as their incarcerated mother or father. The research was published in the March 2009 edition of *The Journal of Correctional Education*. By transforming the results of this research into an easy to understand format, it could be used a powerful tool in working with not only adult inmates and offenders but also with children and juveniles.

Recommendation #23: Improve supervision and treatment strategies for Sex Offenders through treatment provider license requirements.

One of the most challenging populations for ADC and ACC is the sex offender population due to the additional legal requirements placed on their release and housing. ACC has taken strides in improving our ability to manage this population by implementing specialized caseloads and the Sex Offender Aftercare Program (SOAP); however, many times this population discharges their sentence and are released without any community supervision beyond registering as a sex offender. This is a disservice to our communities and public safety.

If a sex offender is approved for parole, many community service providers refuse to work with them or the providers that will, provide treatment that varies widely. Like mental health community services providers, sex offender treatment providers should be held to a common set of licensing guidelines and regulations to ensure they are providing adequate and effective treatment for this population. Many states, such as Colorado and Texas, have implemented licensing guidelines for sex offender treatment providers.

Recommendation #24: Establish a Reentry Steering Committee to continue researching and providing recommendations for reentry.

As a result of time and effort of the Committee, many exceptional ideas and recommendations have been submitted. ACC does not want to lose the collaboration between state agencies, community service providers and faith-based organizations after the submission of this final report. To continue this teamwork, ACC has developed a structure that will allow for ten committees to continue meeting regularly and which are overseen by a Reentry Steering Committee. The ten proposed committees that will continue were created from the Act 1190 Committees. Committee members will be given the option to continue working with the reentry committees. Due to our chairpersons' and committee members' busy schedules, ACC will ask each committee to meet at least quarterly, but encourage more frequent meetings when necessary.

The Reentry Steering Committee will be made up of one or two representatives from each committee. The Steering Committee will work to reconcile recommendations

from all committees and identify additional resources that are available in the community. Steering Committee meetings will also be an opportunity to identify any need for collaboration between committees to address a newly identified barrier to reentry. This will be an opportunity to continue the collaboration between state and local agencies, community providers and faith-based organizations while ensuring these recommendations are fully implemented.

The Reentry Committees will include the following: community based organizations, education and vocational training, employment and transportation, family support and reunification, healthcare, housing, legal barriers and policy, mentoring, substance abuse and mental health, and transitional programs and volunteers. Each of these committees will focus on their assigned area to continue providing recommendations to improve the Arkansas reentry system.

Conclusion

Act 1190 charged ACC with developing recommendations that would create a holistic and seamless reentry system for Arkansas. Many states have placed a focus on reentry in recent years due to the increase in incarceration and subsequent increase in returning offenders. Arkansas has followed suit and placed a focus on reentry, as well. As demonstrated by this final report, reentry encompasses a wide range of topics and services with the goal of assisting returning offenders so they successfully acclimate to living in the community while managing their own crime-free lifestyle. Everything done during incarceration should culminate with the return of an inmate prepared for life in the community. Transitioning to the community should bring together all of the life skills, substance abuse and mental health treatment, jobs skills, education, and vocational training an inmate learned during incarceration and allow him/her to put those skills into action. Community supervision allows ACC to monitor and ensure an offender is using these skills and not falling back onto the wrong path and reoffending. Everything should be built around helping an offender live a crime-free lifestyle after incarceration.

While the recommendations in this final report are expansive, ACC believes that by implementing each of them not only will a holistic and seamless reentry system be established in Arkansas, but also the recidivism rate will be decreased, the county jail back-up will be reduced, public safety will be increased, and state prison costs will be

reduced. Reentry centers will allow ACC to reduce the costs of incarcerating an inmate during the last six months to one year of incarceration and focus key reentry programs on those offenders closest to being released. With the addition of more parole and probation officers, ACC will also be able to more effectively supervise offenders and assist with locating and making referrals for the necessary services in the community. Additionally, the state will benefit from more employed offenders through increases in state income taxes and a reduction in crime. Act 1190 started the cultivation of inter-agency cooperation that is needed for a reentry system to be successful. ACC believes that continuing the inter-agency cooperation will reduce or remove reentry barriers and offenders will be able to focus on reestablishing their lives and relationships to become contributing members of the community.

¹ Bonta, James and D.A. Andrews. *Risk-Need-Responsivity Model of Offender Assessment and Rehabilitation*. 2007.

² *Arkansas Community Based Organizations Handbook*. Arkansas Community Correction, 2014 (p.5).

³ Bonta, James and D.A. Andrews. *Risk-Need-Responsivity Model of Offender Assessment and Rehabilitation*. 2007.

⁴ Blandford, Alex. *Guidelines for the Successful Transition of People with Behavioral Health Disorders from Jail and Prison*. The Center for Behavioral Health and Justice Transformation. The Council of State Governments Justice Center. 2013.

⁵ Arkansas Office of Health Information Technology. <http://ohit.arkansas.gov/share/>

⁶ Liebman, Jeffrey and Alina Sellman. *Social Impact Bonds: A guide for state and local governments*. Harvard Kennedy School, Social Impact Bond Technical Assistance Lab. June 2013.

⁷ The Pew Charitable Trusts: Pew Center on the States. (2010). *Collateral Costs: Incarceration's effect on economic mobility*. Washington, D.C.

⁸ *When a Parent is Incarcerated: A Primer for Social Workers*. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Baltimore, Maryland 2011.

⁹ Shanahan, Ryan and Sandra Villalobos Agudelo. *The Family and Recidivism*. American Jails. September-October 2012.

Appendix A:
Arkansas Community Based Organizations (CBO) Handbook



Arkansas Community Correction

Community Based Organization

HANDBOOK

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A Community Based Organization (CBO) IS...

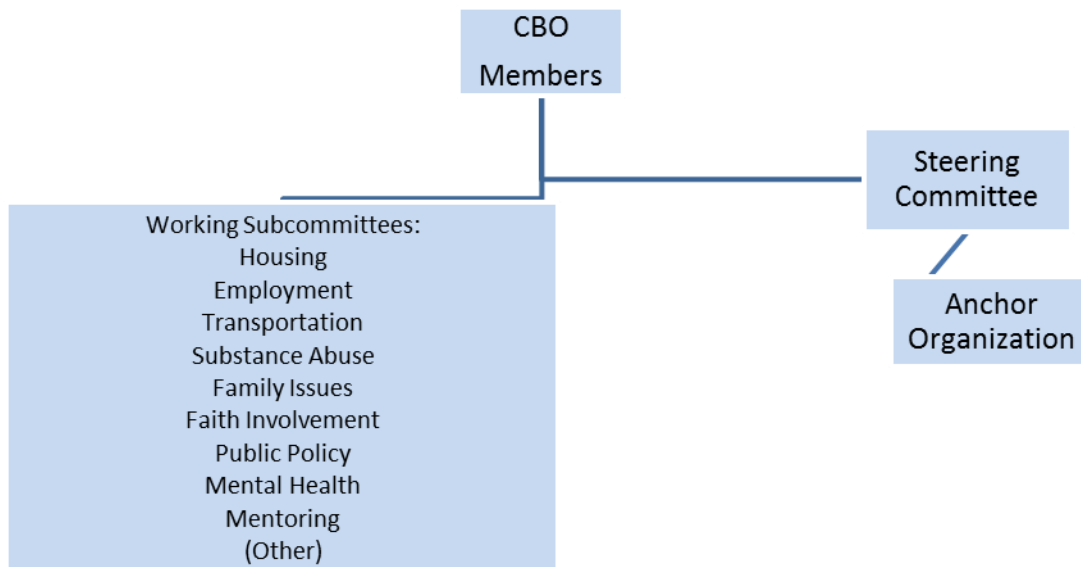
: a collaboration of organizations within a local community, consisting of entities and/or individuals that represent the face of that community, coming together for the purpose of addressing the critical criminogenic needs of the formerly incarcerated through agreed upon objectives and outcomes.

NOTES REGARDING A COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION:

- * Each CBO must be registered with the ACC Reentry Department for effective CBO building.
- * CBO's will be plotted on the ACC area map, which indicates whether they are active or non-active in the region.
- * The Reentry Solutions Website (www.reentry.solutions) is the access point for CBO's and its members through which they will be able to register and upload information regarding the services they offer to offenders.
- * The Good Grid website is the access point for offenders and their families to be able to locate and connect with service providers.
- * Regional CBO's will be based on geographical regions and high populated offenders reform.
- * CBO members should include mayors, County judges, law enforcement, business owners, non-profits (faith-based, churches, and non-faith-based), neighbor-to-neighbor, universities/community colleges, ex-offenders (who are no longer under supervision), etc., and should also have equal representation by all organizations to help deter the CBO from becoming one-sided.
- * The ACC Area Manager or other ACC representative should be on each Community Based Organization's steering committee.
- * ACC and ADC must be actively involved.

THE COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

The CBO structure is critical to the survival and effectiveness of the organization. The leadership structure will aid the CBO in moving forward. CBO's can be structured in a variety of ways, but it is recommended that each CBO consider structuring on best practices.



COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION MEMBERS

- * Any and all organizations/individuals/entities that support the mission and want to help meet the variety of needs.
- * Each member relay reentry issues and challenges of which they are aware;
- * Help set specific goals and objectives to address challenges;
- * Engage community service providers in the reentry process;

[Each CBO member (organization/individual/entity) will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)]

HOW CBO'S ARE FORMED:

CBO's form in different ways.

CBO Steering Committee forms;
Chairperson is elected; Chairperson's
Organization serves as Anchor

OR

An Anchor Organization takes responsibility for
reaching out to others in the community and
serves as Chairperson of the Steering
Committee

THE ROLE OF AN ANCHOR ORGANIZATION

- * Recruit CBO members with the goal of including all members of the community in addressing reentry issues;
- * Serve as the organizer and carry out leadership tasks;

- * Handle administrative responsibilities;
- * Coordinates meetings;
- * Chair the Steering Committee;
- * Disseminate information to CBO members;
- * Demonstrate a high level of integrity
- * Must have an established influence in the community, must be strong, and have the time to do the work.
- * Duties of the can be delegated to members of the anchoring committee.

THE ROLE OF A STEERING COMMITTEE

A steering committee is like the Board of Directors or Leadership Team, the driving force, providing leadership/direction to the CBO. It is composed of at least seven members; representative of community (different entities). Elected by CBO Members for one- or two-year terms.

- * Coordinate the direction and activities to help the CBO meet agreed-upon goals; i.e. helps keeps the CBO on track.
- * Review CBO plans and identify other efforts in the area/region that will help to mobilize community resources;
- * Identify, recommend, and coordinate additional working sub-committees and tasks;
- * Research and communicates issues, challenges, options, and other pertinent information to CBO members;
- * Help CBO members build and maintain strong relationships within the CBO;
- * Monitor and report progress to the CBO;
- * Develop working relationships with businesses, church/faith based leaders, and public agencies;
- * Serve as the public liaison for the CBO;
- * Participate in monthly **committee** and CBO meetings or conference calls;
- * Help develop a vision/mission statement for the CBO.

THE ROLE OF WORKING SUBCOMMITTEES

Working subcommittees include CBO members with expertise in specific areas, grouped by task in order to focus their efforts on one or two specialty projects, issues, research, or policies.

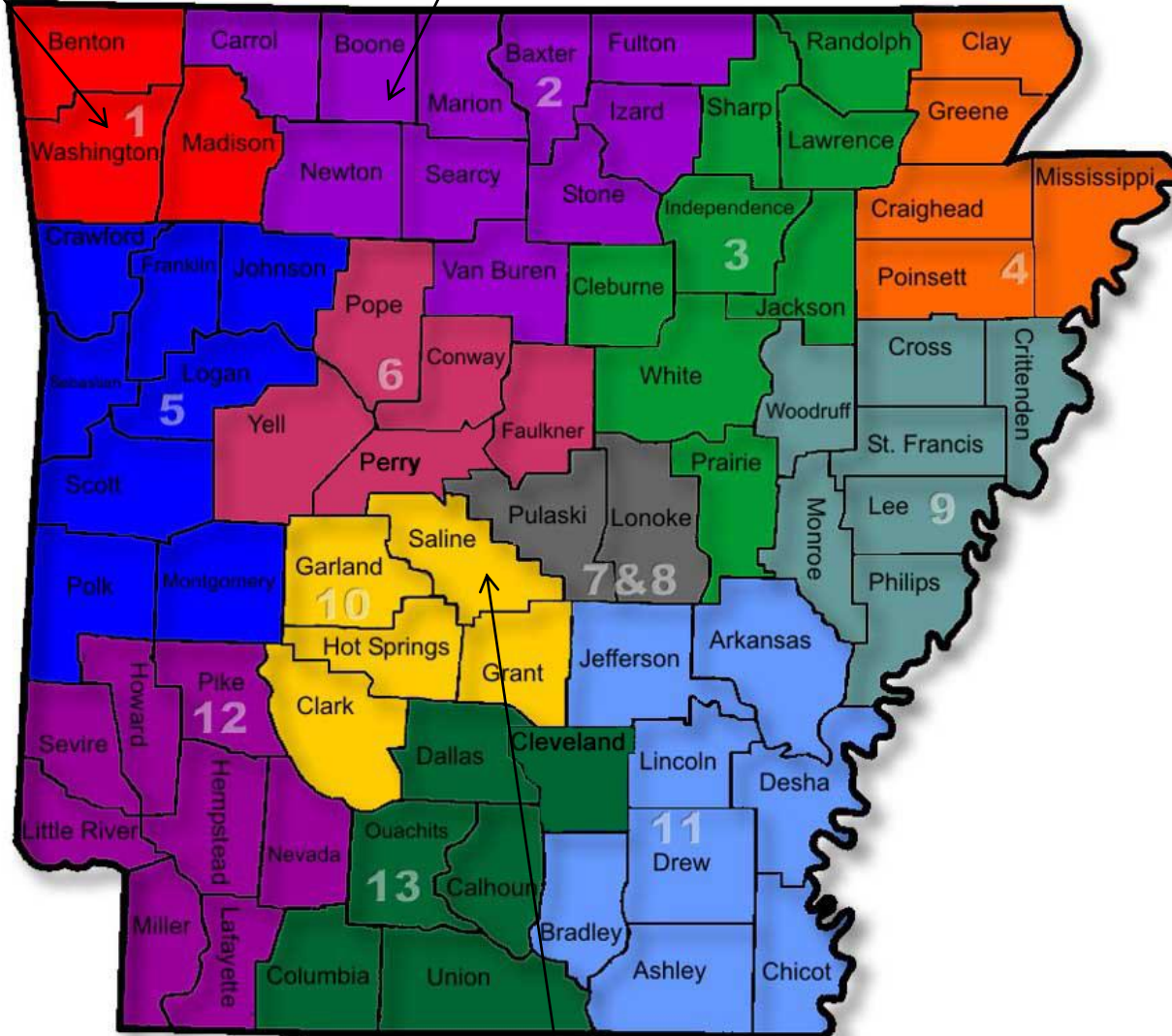
Working subcommittees may be formed to address specific topics such as housing, employment, family issues, faith involvement, public policy, etc. Each subcommittee will be given a directive to complete a task and return with the findings or suggestions.

KEYS TO DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION

- * Train members of the community.
- * Forge relationships with key community leaders.
- * Keep evolving and re-evaluating the mission. Stay open so that you can engage more people and keep them interested.
- * Be committed to bringing other voices to the CBO.
- * Maintain the “spirit of CBO.”
- * Build relationships through social activities, such as a retreat or dinner event.
- * Build strong partnerships with government agencies, such as DHS, child support, transitional housing, that offer services to offenders. Invite them to be part of the CBO.
- * Make it a primary goal of the group to get organizations in the city to collaborate, cooperate, and share resources.
- * Engage churches and recruit new church partners.
- * Host special events that will increase public awareness and draw attention to the purpose of the CBO.
- * Set goals and tasks that can be effectively measured and fulfilled. Work to provide critical services to the formerly incarcerated. Critical needs include: employment, housing, mental health issues, ID, transportation, substance abuse issues, GED, faith involvement, public policy, etc.
- * Be productive during monthly meetings. Instead of focusing on the issues at hand, focus on the solutions and finding ways overcome obstacles.

NW Arkansas
Coalition

Boone County Recovery
Project



Freedom for Life
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Appendix B:
Arkansas Community Correction
Mentor Guidelines and Application



Arkansas Community Correction

Mentoring Guidelines

With becoming a mentor, your commitment indicates that you believe in offenders and their success at re-entering society after serving time in prison. You recognize the magnitude of the responsibility that you accepted in choosing to work with offenders and agree to interact appropriately with them according to the most ethical standards at all times.

The following are guidelines you should follow during your time as a mentor to an offender:

Your Role as a Mentor to Offenders:

- At the initial stages of being paired with an offender, he/she may appear to be hesitant, unresponsive, and unappreciative of creating a relationship. The offender's attitude will gradually take a positive turn as he/she begins to realize your sincerity about helping them be successful in achieving their goals.
- Remember that the mentor-mentee relationship has an initial phase. During this phase, the offender is more interested in getting to know you. Establish how you can be in contact with each other either by phone, email or both. Be sure to give the offender your phone number and times you are most likely available to take calls. Encourage him/her to leave messages if you are not able to answer the phone when they call.
- Never criticize or preach to an offender. It could possibly affect your relationship with them in a negative manner. Listen carefully to what they tell you and help offer possible solutions without passing judgment. Think of ways to problem solve with them and avoid lecturing or telling the offender what to do. Never say "you should of" to the offender. This will only be met with resentment and possibly have a negative impact on the offender and the relationship the two of you have developed.

Discipline:

There may come a time when an offender's behavior is unacceptable. Always remember that Parole Officer is responsible for their discipline. Following are guidelines on how to deal with offenders. You should always inform the Area Coordinator about the steps you took and why you took them. And you may also contact the Area Coordinator if you have any questions or you are uncertain how to handle a situation.

- Never use abusive language or ultimatums.
- Always explain to the offender why you find his/her behavior unacceptable.
- Don't give the mentee the silent treatment for this will not solve the problem.
- Discuss your concerns with the offender and together you should come up with solutions to fix whatever the issue is at hand.

Health and Safety:

If you become aware that the offender's or another's safety is in jeopardy, report your concern the Area Mentor Coordinator who will inform the offender's Parole Officer. You should always discuss both health and safety issues with the offender at the beginning of the mentoring relationship.

Mentoring is not a permanent solution for all the problems or decisions that an offender will potentially face when re-entering their communities. You will work with the offender to establish mutual respect, friendship, motivation and measurable goals. The principle of mentoring with ACC is the need to encourage and guide offenders: a one-on-one relationship that shows the offender that they are valued as a person and can accomplish anything they put their mind to.

Please don't hesitate to ask questions if you find any part of the guidelines unclear or confusing. The Area Mentor Coordinator is available to assist you in any way possible.

Dos and Don'ts for Mentoring Offenders

Do:

- Get to know the offender and try to understand how things are for them now that they are under parole supervision.
- Be positive, patient, dependable, honest and sincere.
- Encourage, praise and compliment.
- Help guide the offender in whatever they need guidance with.
- Be an active listener. Use language that's easy to understand.
- Give concrete explanations.
- Be straight and honest. Offenders can pick up on falseness and shallowness in a person.
- Ask for opinions and participation in decision-making.
- Work with the offender. Share the knowledge you have.
- Give advice to the offender.
- Help the offender use mistakes as learning experiences.
- Take initiative. An offender who fails to call or attend meetings must be pursued and the Parole Officer notified as well as the Mentoring Coordinator.
- If you have to cancel a mentoring session, call the offender and let them know. It is important to let them know that you did not forget about them or your session.
- Be firm. Have the offender assume responsibilities and be accountable for them.
- Be fair – offenders can always pick up when you are not.
- Be consistent, but flexible.
- Be respectful and professional.

Don't:

- Use alcohol/tobacco or drugs when with the offender.
- Have firearms or weapons present while with the offender.
- Drive with offender in the vehicle without seatbelts fastened.
- Expect to have instant rapport with the offender.
- Be lenient in order to be liked – it doesn't earn their respect.
- Lecture, moralize or preach.
- Share personal information.
- Make promises you can't keep.
- Believe what the offender says is always what they mean.
- Be afraid to admit you don't know the answer or have made a mistake.
- Interpret lack of enthusiasm as a personal rejection or reaction to you.
- Lend, give, or provide money to, or borrow money from the offender.
- Purchase items for the offender.



Arkansas Community Correction

MENTORING APPLICATION

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

SSN (this is for background check purposes): _____

Driver's License Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ZIP code: _____

Telephone: _____
(Home) _____ (Cell) _____

Occupation: _____

Do you own a vehicle? YES NO

Have you ever been incarcerated? Please note this DOES NOT exclude you from becoming a mentor.

YES NO

Please give a short description and include year of conviction, charges, and if you were on probation or parole, the year you were discharged _____

Please give a brief statement as to why you wish to volunteer with the mentoring program and work with ex-offenders:

Personal References:

Name_____

Relationship: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name:_____

Relationship:_____

Phone Number:_____

Initial training, including orientation will be required. The mentoring commitment is 1 hour per week, hours are flexible and agreed upon between mentor and ex-offender, for a minimum of 1 year. This time will also include the ex-offender's incarceration and release periods. As a mentor, your support is vital to the success of the ex-offender's reentry into their local community. You may be asked to attend court hearings, and to be available at critical times, including the date of the ex-offender's release from prison.

By signing below, you agree to the above terms and also authorize the release of information for purposes of this application.

Signature_____

Date:_____