

THE ADVOCATE



A publication for employees of the Arkansas Department of Correction

Reentry 2016

Special REENTRY edition Inside this special edition are updates from:

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Public Safety: A reentry message from the Director

Reentry programming and services are vital to public safety. Although our department has traditionally focused on the statutory and extremely important duty of keeping inmates in our custody, we are expanding the traditional programming we provide. We



Wendy Kelley
Director

have to work harder to create safer "free world" communities; it is an opportunity to make a difference "beyond our walls" that I am thrilled to see staff excited about.

The Reentry programming and services make sense on a number of levels: creating safer communities by reducing recidivism and saving tax-

payer's money that would otherwise be necessary for expansion. If inmates return to their communities and follow the law, the State and its citizens are safer; the ex-inmates are good neighbors. We all want good neighbors!

Thank each of you for setting the example of respect and professionalism every day in your interaction with each other and our inmate population!

Stay safe!

The Advocate Online

The Advocate online is now available on the **ADC website** at:

<http://adc.arkansas.gov/the-advocate>

The Advocate online offers the same categories as before, located in convenient bullets on the left-hand side of the page:

- News
- The Director's Corner
- Calendar of Events
- Calendar Archives
- Around ADC
- Words from the PIO
- Pinnings
- Awards/Certificates/Service
- Retirement News
- Training Academy Graduates
- New Hires and Promotions
- The Advocate Archive

Here are some examples of what you'll find on our new page:

Read a message from the Director:

<http://adc.arkansas.gov/the-directors-corner>

Read the latest news stories:

<http://adc.arkansas.gov/news>

Read about the latest pinnings:

<http://adc.arkansas.gov/pinnings>

Read about the upcoming events:

<http://adc.arkansas.gov/calendar/detail/ball-chain-2016>

The website works with Internet Explorer or Chrome. Scroll functions on the banner may require a browser upgrade. If you have problems with the display, please contact the IT Help Desk at 870.850.8900 or email at [ADC IT Helpdesk](mailto:ADC.IT.Helpdesk).

National Reentry Week

April 24-30, 2016

For more information, go to:
<https://www.justice.gov/reentry/reentry-week>

Board of Corrections Update

Security is, and always should be, the first priority of those who are given the responsibility to supervise the incarcerated. Security for citizens, employees, and inmates is paramount. Once that priority is established, our attention turns to, "Now what?" What do we do once we have a system in place that provides for reasonable safety and security? Over the course of prison history, that question has been answered in a variety of ways. In my opinion, the first priority after safety and security is preparation for re-entry.



**Dr. William
"Dubs" Byers**
Arkansas Board
of
Corrections

After being appointed to the Board, I asked Chairman Magness to assign me as liaison for reentry. The reason is simple. Most of my career has been centered around helping men and women improve their educational skills so that they have a better chance to get out of prison and stay out. Those in the field of corrections recognize that there is a certain percentage of inmates who continually

find their way back to prison no matter what kind of programs are offered. And to be realistic, there is a certain percentage who will never return to prison even if they don't participate in a single program while incarcerated. And then there are those in the middle, the 50-60 percent who, if they receive the right tools, guidance, counsel, prodding, and/or programming may stay out and never come back. Having tools to get out and stay out is best for them *and* society, not to mention helping with prison overcrowding.

ADC, ACC, and ACS have some tremendous programs available. As I travel from unit to unit, I'm always amazed at the dedicated, committed personnel who go above and beyond the call of duty to provide resources that can be used by those leaving the prison system to aid them in their fight to get back to being a "giver" instead of a "taker."

Can more be done? Absolutely! We need fewer silos of treatment and more cross-pollination of programs. More volunteers are needed to mentor before and after release. Non-profit and faith-based programs need to be recognized and supported as an integral resource in teaching character and life-coping skills. An institutional



culture needs to continue to develop that recognizes that re-entry is not assigned to a particular unit or program, but is the job of the intake officer when new commitments are interviewed.

It is the job of the classification committee as the members determine the most appropriate job and program assignment during incarceration. It is the job of the sergeant or CO1 who opens the door for inmates for them to go to chow. In other words, re-entry is *everyone's* business. When re-entry becomes my focus, your focus, everyone's focus, then maybe, just maybe, we will be able to look at the results one day and celebrate, knowing that we *all* made a difference.

Dr. William "Dubs" Byers,
Member, Arkansas Board of Corrections

ADC Reentry Update . . . by John Wheeler

As we celebrate National Reentry Week, there is much to be hopeful about when we consider the efforts being made by the Arkansas Department of Correction. Though fledgling in some cases, the efforts are being made to help inmates prepare to successfully return to society.

Last year, we identified a group of volunteers who would become Reentry Accountability Coaches (RACs). Their task is to gather information from eOMIS, interview the inmates initially, and while helping them walk through incarceration develop a good reentry plan to aid them in doing the things that will help them successfully reenter society. The RACs complete a "Reentry Report Card" on each inmate, which, at 120 days from projected release date, they receive a copy of. They also receive a copy of their Program Achievements. Records Supervisors are still encouraged to include a copy of their Program Achievements when they are actually released.

Eligible inmates have begun receiving either a Drivers License or State ID upon their release. Certain inmates are also able to apply for and receive birth certificates and social security cards which will be available to them upon release.

Reentry barracks have been identified and populated at each unit (except Work Release Units). These barracks are designed to allow inmates who are nearing their projected release date to be housed separately from inmates who have more time left. This also allows them the opportunity to begin to focus more on reentry issues. They are offered training which is designed to aid them in their reentry.

The newly opened Ester Unit is designed with a complete reentry focus. The Preparing for Success program is

housed at the Ester Unit. Currently, 106 inmates are actively participating in the program. The program curricula consists of "Thinking for a Change," "The Character Core" and the "100 Hour Louisiana Reentry Program." It is designed to address as completely as possible, all of the common criminogenic needs.

We have initiated a Veterans Barracks at the Ester Unit also. We borrowed a term from another state and have given this effort the motto of "Restoring Honor." The inmates will receive training in "Thinking for Success"; some will be tasked with raising and lowering the flags at the unit; others are creating a Veterans Memorial Yard, using a design created by inmates in the barracks. The Barracks houses veterans from all branches of service: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard.

As the opportunity affords itself, we hope to expand programming at the Ester Unit to include Advanced Principles and Applications for Life (APAL) for men and computer labs which will allow the inmates to access sites such as the Good Grid. We are also planning on educational opportunities such as Vo-Tech style training and or a more traditional educational offering.

John M. Wheeler, Deputy Warden/Reentry Director
Arkansas Department of Correction



John Mark Wheeler
Reentry Director

America is the land of the second chance - and when the gates of the prison open, the path ahead should lead to a better life.

George W. Bush

You're still in prison if you do nothing better in freedom.

Toba Beta

While we diminish the stimulant of fear, we must increase to prisoners the incitements of hope, in proportion as we extinguish the terrors of the law, we should awaken and strengthen the control of the conscience.

Dorothea Dix

Arkansas Community Corrections Reentry Update

Reentry Centers

ACC began the placement of offenders into the Reentry Program on August 31, 2015. At that time there were only two licensed Reentry facilities in the state. Since then the number of licensed facilities has grown to nine active facilities, with another currently in the application process, and two other organizations are currently seeking a venue to operate facilities. By December 31, 2015, we were able to place 100 offenders into facilities. Currently, we have over 160 active participants in the program, with an additional 24 graduates who have completed the program. Each offender within the program is required to obtain full time employment by their 45th day and, to date, we remain at 100% of offenders who have met this requirement. At the residents request we have aided five offenders in obtaining their own residences and relocating to other areas of the state so they may continue on with their employment and maintain a fresh start in returning to society.

Our efforts have been met with an overwhelming amount of support from community leaders, and we look forward to the future of the program as we continue to expand throughout the state.

ACC Mentorship Program

The Arkansas Community Correction Road to Achievement Mentoring Program is a statewide volunteer program that matches adult residents with mentors. The goal is to successfully return the resident to the community.

A mentor is a positive presence and a positive reinforcement in a resident's life. The mentor promotes, advises, and helps to guide the mentee on the road to achievement.

Training is key when matching someone with a resident who does not have an understanding of being incarcerated. Some of the objectives that are covered in the ACC Mentoring Program are:

- To understand Mentorship
- To better understand Prison Culture
- To establish Mentor-Mentee Relationships
- To utilize the Tools for Mentoring
- To establish Reentry Goals
- To know the role of the Mentor Coordinator

We are currently reaching out to civic organizations, citizens, businesses, and faith-based organizations to get

involved.

On Saturday, May 7, we will be conducting a Reentry/Mentor Workshop in Little Rock. The purpose of the workshop is to build a healthy working relationship with the community by providing information about the Arkansas Community Correction Reentry Program. Some of the topics of discussion will be:

- Overview of Reentry
- Building Coalitions in the Community
- The Good Grid
- Mentoring

We will be hosting another workshop on Saturday, May 21, in Pine Bluff.

Getting the public involved by educating and equipping them with the right tools to make the Mentoring Program a success, is our focus.

The quote by John E. Lewis sums it up. *"If not us, then who? If not now, then when?"*

Good Grid

What does a Computer Science Graduate project, a corrections agency, and a national software developer have in common? A vision to create a stronger reentry system in Arkansas through *The Good Grid*: an online reentry portal for offenders, service providers, and community organizations.

This project and partnership started over two years ago, and Arkansas is starting to see the results of a reentry portal that brings together all of the necessary partners to create a strong reentry system, including the individual returning to the community.

Protech Solutions, Inc., the company behind *The Good Grid*, has built numerous state-level child support systems in the United States, including Arkansas' system. When they started looking at the group with the highest rate of unpaid monthly support obligations, Nagaraj Garimalla, Chief Software Architect, noticed the overlap with those who are incarcerated or just recently released. At the same time, Kevin Murphy, ACC Chief Deputy Director, had an idea for an electronic resource directory available to all ACC supervision staff statewide. Additionally, Garimalla's daughter Nisha, just completed a graduate project in India which brought together service providers and beneficiaries to improve education outcomes of children in local towns. From here, the idea of

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Arkansas Community Corrections . . . continued from previous page

The Good Grid was born and continues to grow.

For the majority of individuals who are released back to the community, obstacles are in place that make it difficult to be self-sufficient. Because of this, they have to rely on family and friends to create a stable environment in which to live. At times, however, the family and friends are either jaded from previous experiences or enabling past behaviors. Through pilot projects with local parole offices, the following narrative was born. This narrative is a compilation of multiple stories, however, it truly captures the difficulty that is returning to the community for so many individuals.

"I was a fast food cook and an assembly liner and now I am a cashier, but I am trying to pay child support on two children, and I barely have enough for food and rent. I've been late on rent two months in a row, and I'm afraid I'll get kicked out. I need more money and a better job, but I don't have a car, and this is the closest job to me. On top of everything else, I just got diagnosed with diabetes, which is going to be another huge expense. I'm a hard worker, and I just need a new start in life for myself and my children."

After speaking with numerous offenders, it quickly became clear that a focus on one aspect of support alone, like employment, could be successful only if other related problems were simultaneously addressed. For instance, many don't have access to transportation to job interviews; many have substance abuse problems that prevent them from making rational decisions; others had combinations of these plus a multitude of other related obstacles with which to deal.

The biggest issue is that there is no place to go to, where all these problems can be addressed in a cohesive, integrated manner. In spite of the existence of many organizations and non-profits ready to help, the services are generally duplicative, fragmented and inadequate unless provided as an integrated whole. It is currently extremely dif-

ficult for ex-offenders to get meaningful, integrated, collaborative support. Together, ACC and Protech proposed and designed the concept of an integrated portal to address such support requirements.

The Good Grid will provide an online platform for integrated services to take place. It is divided into two separate sections which are connected by a state-of-the-art collaborative case management system.

The first section is Social Hub, which allows service providers, state agencies, volunteers, and community organizations to communicate and collaborate regarding services, events, jobs, and other opportunities. The second section is MyPortfolio, which is solely for returning offenders to organize their various needs for reentry.

MyPortfolio is organized into various subsections that allow individuals to compartmentalize different tasks while still being able to zoom out and see the whole picture. FindGood is the glue that holds these two sections together; a collaborative case management system that service providers statewide can use together. FindGood allows multiple providers to work together on a single case to ensure all needs are being met and that services are not being duplicated. Essentially, it is a statewide case management system for all partners and stakeholders for reentry in Arkansas. Other features within *The Good Grid* include, Search Directory and Reentry Wizard, which are support components for Social Hub, MyPortfolio, and FindGood.

So, what does a Computer Science graduate student, a corrections agency, and a national software developer have in common? A desire to improve the outcomes of each individual returning to the community from prison.

While *The Good Grid* is an incredible tool that can benefit all stakeholders and partners in the reentry process, it is still just that, a tool. ACC and Protech are still focused on the human element of reentry which requires outreach to service providers and extensive training on how this tool can benefit their organizations and end user, the individual.

Submitted by staff from Arkansas Community Correction



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Reentry Top Ten: Ten Facts and Figures You Might Not Know

Why is Reentry Programming important? In short, **THEY'RE COMING HOME!** Many of the inmates in our custody, will be released back into our communities. As, the Director said, "we all want good neighbors."



Solomon Graves
Public Information Officer

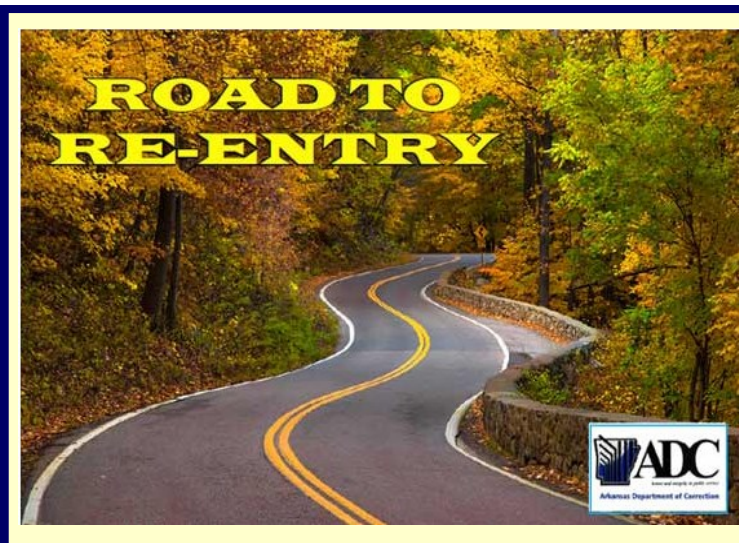
The only way that happens, is if we prepare them while we have them.

Here are Ten Facts and Figures related to Reentry:

1. Upon incarceration, every inmate should be provided an individualized reentry plan tailored to his or her risk of recidivism and programmatic needs.
2. While incarcerated, each inmate should be provided education, employment training, life skills, substance abuse, mental health, and other programs that target their criminogenic needs and maximize their likelihood of success upon release.
3. While incarcerated, each inmate should be provided the resources and opportunity to build and maintain family relationships, strengthening the support system available to them upon release.
4. During transition back to the community, halfway houses and supervised release programs should ensure individualized continuity of care for returning citizens.
5. Before leaving custody, every person should be provided comprehensive reentry-related information and access to resources necessary to succeed in the community.
6. Individuals released from incarceration may be eligible for Social Security retirement, survivors, or disability benefits if they have worked or paid into Social Security enough years or Supplemental Security Income benefits if they are 65 or older, or are blind, or have a disability and have little or no income and resources.
7. Nationally, 70 million Americans have some form of criminal record.
8. Nationally, nearly 95% of all state prisoners will be released from prison at some point; nearly 80% will be released to parole supervision.
9. Nationally, 600,000 Americans are released from incarceration annually.
10. **In Fiscal Year 2015, 8,767 inmates WENT HOME from the Arkansas Department of Correction....**

Sources:

1. <http://www.bjs.gov/content/reentry/reentry.cfm>
2. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/11/fact-sheet-white-house-launches-fair-chance-business-pledge>
3. <https://www.justice.gov/reentry/roadmap-reentry>
4. http://adc.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/Annual_Report_2015_rev1.pdf



**Did you know...
We have a Re-entry tab on our WEBSITE?**

**You will find it here:
<http://adc.arkansas.gov/re-entry>**

- ◆ Resources
- ◆ Mythbusters
- ◆ Reentry Handbook
- ◆ Occupational Handbook

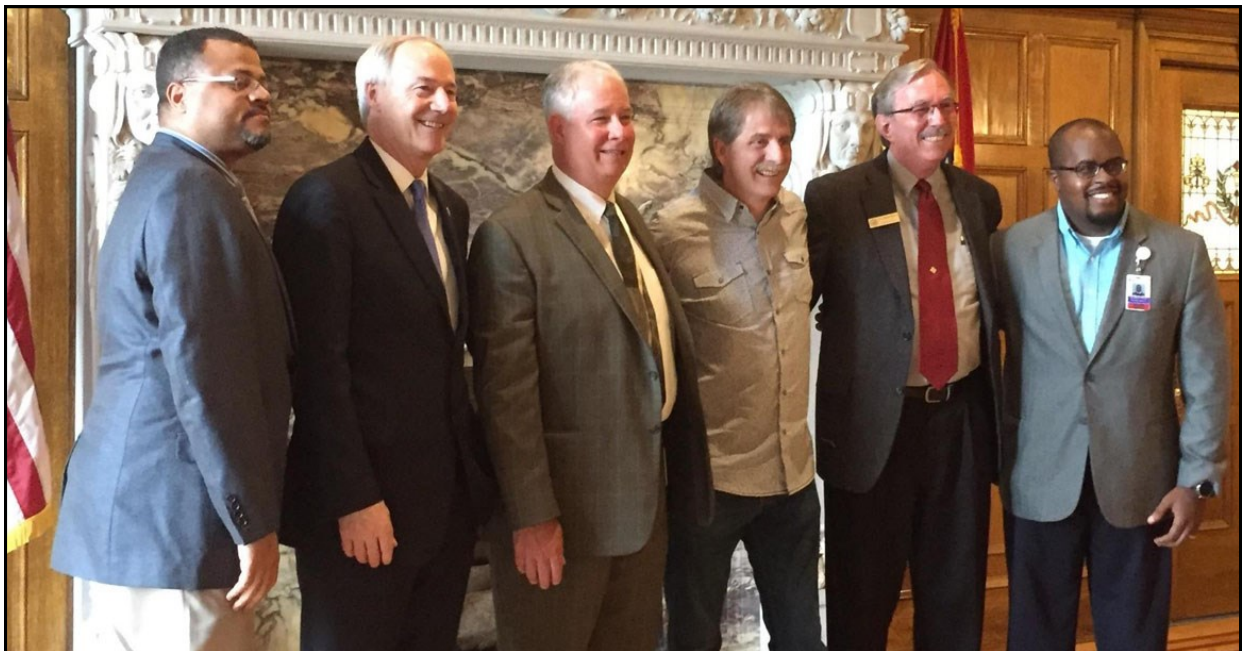
Did you know...

That the majority of the inmates in our custody will be released to communities within the State?

2015 Releases

Top Release Destination by County (Ranking based on percentage of total releases)

- Pulaski / 16.72%
- Sebastian / 5.71%
- Washington / 4.65%
- Faulkner / 4.14%
- Benton / 3.59%
- Jefferson / 3.47%
- Garland / 2.77%
- Crittenden / 2.41%
- Craighead / 2.33%
- Crawford / 2.33%



Comedian Jeff Foxworthy took time while in Little Rock for a performance, to discuss the importance of growing partnerships between state government and faith groups to address homelessness, the need for more foster/adoptive parents, and offender reentry. Pictured with Foxworthy (third from right), are Governor Asa Hutchinson (second from the left), members of ACC Management, Board of Corrections Member Dr. William "Dubs" Byers (second from the right), and ADC Public Information Officer Solomon Graves (far right). Those in attendance were challenged to think outside of the box and to ANSWER THE CALL!

ADC ADVOCATE EMPLOYEES NEWSLETTER

ADC Mission Statement

- *To provide public safety by carrying out the mandate of the courts.*
- *To provide a safe humane environment for staff and inmates.*
- *To strengthen the work ethic through teaching of good habits.*
- *To provide opportunities for staff and inmates to improve spiritually, mentally, and physically.*

The *ADC Advocate* newsletter is published monthly by the Communications Office for employees of the Arkansas Department of Correction. The publication strives to enhance communication and provide information on the development and achievements of this agency.

All employees are encouraged to submit articles, comments, ideas, letters and questions. The deadline for submission is tentatively set for the 15th of each month for inclusion in that month's publication.

Please be aware that all submitted items will be subject to editing. However, every effort will be made to maintain the writer's essential meaning.

In addition, statements contained in the *ADC Advocate* are the personal views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinion or policies of the Arkansas Department of Correction.

The *ADC Advocate* is printed by the Arkansas Correctional Industries.

Visit ADC on the Web @ www.adc.arkansas.gov

Parting Shots



At the Ester Unit each weekday the United States flag is ceremoniously raised in the morning and then lowered and folded in the evening by two inmates from the Veterans Barracks who are in the Restoration of Honor program.



Arkansas Department of Correction

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