

Arkansas Community Correction
Community Based Coalition
Handbook



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INTRODUCTION

This handbook contains some information that will hopefully give you guidance on your journey to forming a coalition.

Each local coalition must define their purpose that meets the needs of the state and local communities. Establishing a community network of government agencies, businesses, and citizens to ensure a successful transition for returning citizens is important. This can be accomplished by providing resources and services.

It is also critical that the coalition collaborates, coordinates, communicate and show a commitment to their mission. This can be done by:

- Showing respect and involving others
- Developing a well thought out plan
- Sharing information and knowledge
- Maintaining a pledge to do your best.

We appreciate and applaud your efforts for wanting to give others a second chance.

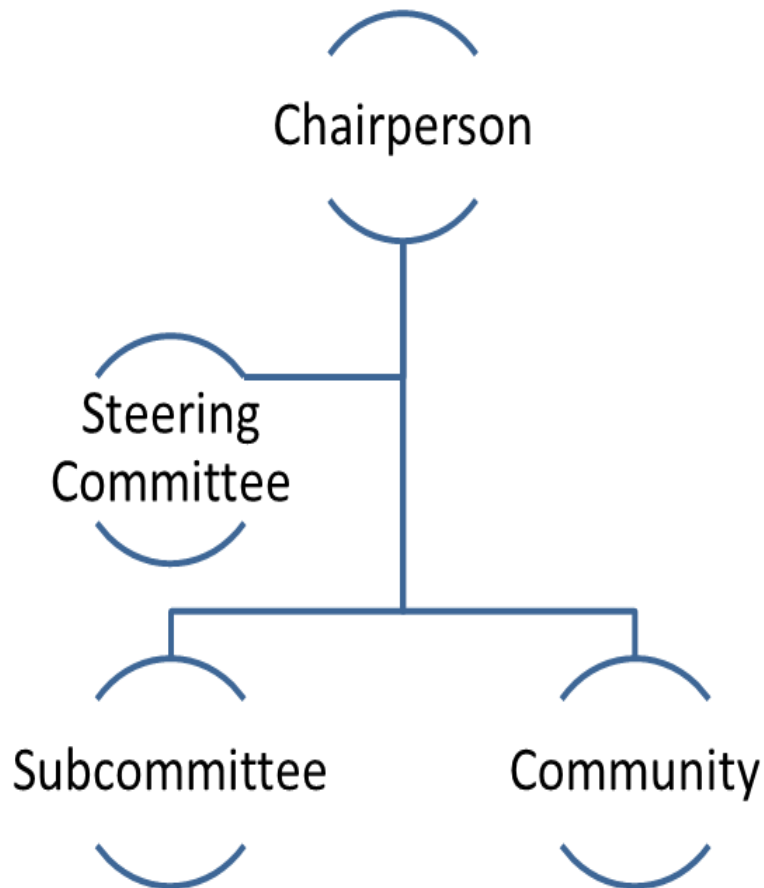
WHAT IS A COMMUNITY BASED COALITION?

A reentry coalition is a group of community and faith-based organizations, state and local policy makers, volunteers, collaborators, corrections, and other government agencies within a local community that are networked with a common purpose and agreed-upon objectives/outcomes that achieve the goal of addressing the needs of men and women released from prison and their families.

THE COMMUNITY BASED COALITION STRUCTURE

The CBC structure is critical to the survival and effectiveness of the organization. The leadership structure will aid the CBC in moving forward.

- Each CBC must be registered with the ACC Reentry Department for effective CBC building;
- CBC steering committee should be diverse to help deter the CBC from becoming one-sided;
- The ACC Area Manager, Reentry Officer, or other ACC/ADC representative should have a role on the steering committee;
- CBC's will be plotted on the ACC area map, which indicates whether they are active or non-active in the region.



THE ROLE OF A CHAIRPERSON

The chairperson is the leader of the coalition. They are elected or appointed to the position. The committee will vote on the length of the term. The chairperson must keep the focus on the returning citizen while leading the committee members. They must engage the community and educate them on the needs of the returning citizen. They must also:

- Be the voice for the returning citizen
- Must have an established influence in the community and have the time to do the work;
- Chair the Steering Committee;
- Recruit CBC steering committee members;
- Serve as the organizer and carry out leadership tasks;
- Handle administrative responsibilities;
- Coordinate meetings;
- Disseminate information to steering committee;
- Duties of the chairperson can be delegated to members of the steering committee.
- Memorandum of Understanding with ACC will be required.

THE ROLE OF A STEERING COMMITTEE

A steering committee is the driving force providing leadership/direction to the CBC. It is a representative of the community.

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

Each committee will have a chairperson. The chairperson must be very knowledgeable in the field for which they are selected. Some of the fields include:

- Addiction
- Education
- Employment
- Family Reunification
- Financial
- Human Services
- Medical
- Mental Health
- Mentoring
- Transportation

THE ROLE OF SUBCOMMITTEES

Subcommittees are formed from the steering committees. Each chairperson of a steering committee selects individuals with expertise in specific areas to help on projects/issues and return with the findings or suggestions.

THE FIRST STEP

Now that you know the roles of the coalition, the next step is to establish the vision statement, mission statement goal and set up meeting procedures. The Arkansas Community Correction Volunteer Coordinator has experience and can offer guidance to you in this area.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision is the image in the future that members of the organization would like to see - *Every returning citizen becomes a successful and productive member of society.*

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission is the overall purpose of the organization – *Commit, communicate, coordinate, and create opportunities for reentry using a program that has been shown to reduce recidivism.*

GOAL

The goal is the end result of the organization's work – *Reduce recidivism by 25% in the next 5 years.*

MEETING PROCEDURES

Meetings should be as informal as possible to produce a relaxing atmosphere and held monthly. This is the opportunity for individuals to get together to discuss issues of common concern and to make decisions. The chairperson should plan meetings well, so that they are taken seriously.

- All staff members and/or volunteers should be informed about the meeting (by word-of-mouth, emails, notice board, social media etc...);
- Provide details of the venue and time;
- Ensure that all necessary records and equipment are available at the meeting;
- Distribute the agenda of the meeting on time, so that everyone attending will know what to expect;
- Prepare an attendance register and other relevant documents before the meeting; and
- Evaluate the meeting venue and its conditions.

It is important to keep a written record of the meeting. It should include:

- The date, time and place of the meeting;
- A list of people who attended the meeting and a list of the people who were absent;
- Adoption of previous minutes;
- Discussion on issues from the previous meeting;
- Discussion on new issues;
- Tabling of relevant mailing;
- Decisions taken on operational matters;
- The closure of the meeting; and
- The date, time and place of the next meeting.

BARRIERS TO A SUCCESSFUL REENTRY

Although you will more than likely not be involved in the first two phases of reentry, these barriers are listed to give you a better understanding. As a coalition your main focus will probably be concentrated on the third phase. The main goal of reentry strategies is to provide individualized reentry plans that coordinate programs and services within in the prison (jail) with appropriate resources and service providers within the community. The strategies should focus on what needs are to be met during the Pre-Release, Post-Release, and Transitional phases for returning men and women. Below is list of barriers that must be overcome for a successful reentry. ADC/ACC staff work to make sure that the below listed barriers are removed or workable upon release:

Pre-Release (Phase 1)

- Compile of list of service providers and their contact information that can ideally be given to inmates before they leave prison or jail. This requires that plans to meet reentry needs begin prior to inmates' release.
- Develop a Discharge Plan (work with the Department of Corrections)
- Conduct an Assessment Screening (identify inmates' prevalent needs)
- Form a partnership with the Probation and Parole division in your district
- Offer pre-release training that prepares inmates for life on the outside. This can include spiritual development, life skills, and family reconciliation.

Post-Release: The First 72 Hours (Phase 2)

- Immediate sustenance needs
- Housing, clothing
- Identification documents (e.g., birth certificate, driver's license)
- Mentoring support
- Arkansas Community Correction supervision/reporting
- Substance abuse/addiction screening
- Health care (mental health, medication, etc.)

Transitional Plan (Phase 3)

- Case management
- Education (GED, diploma, college)
- Job skills training
- Employment
- Personal development
- Church/spiritual development
- Family/children
- Mental health counseling
- Addiction counseling (outpatient/residential treatment)
- Legal support
- Transportation
- Referrals to other services, court dates

KEYS TO DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY BASED COALITION

- Forge relationships with key community leaders.
- Keep evolving and re-evaluating the mission.
- Build relationships through social activities, such as a retreat or dinner event.
- Host special events that will increase public awareness and draw attention to the purpose of the CBC.
- Make it a primary goal of the group to get organizations in the city to collaborate, cooperate, and share resources.
- Be committed to listening to others.
- Engage churches and recruit new church.
- 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, transportation, mental health issues, identification, substance abuse, education, mentorship, faith involvement, etc.
- Be productive during monthly meetings. Instead of focusing on the issues at hand, focus on the solutions and finding ways to overcome obstacles.
- Maintain the "spirit of CBC."

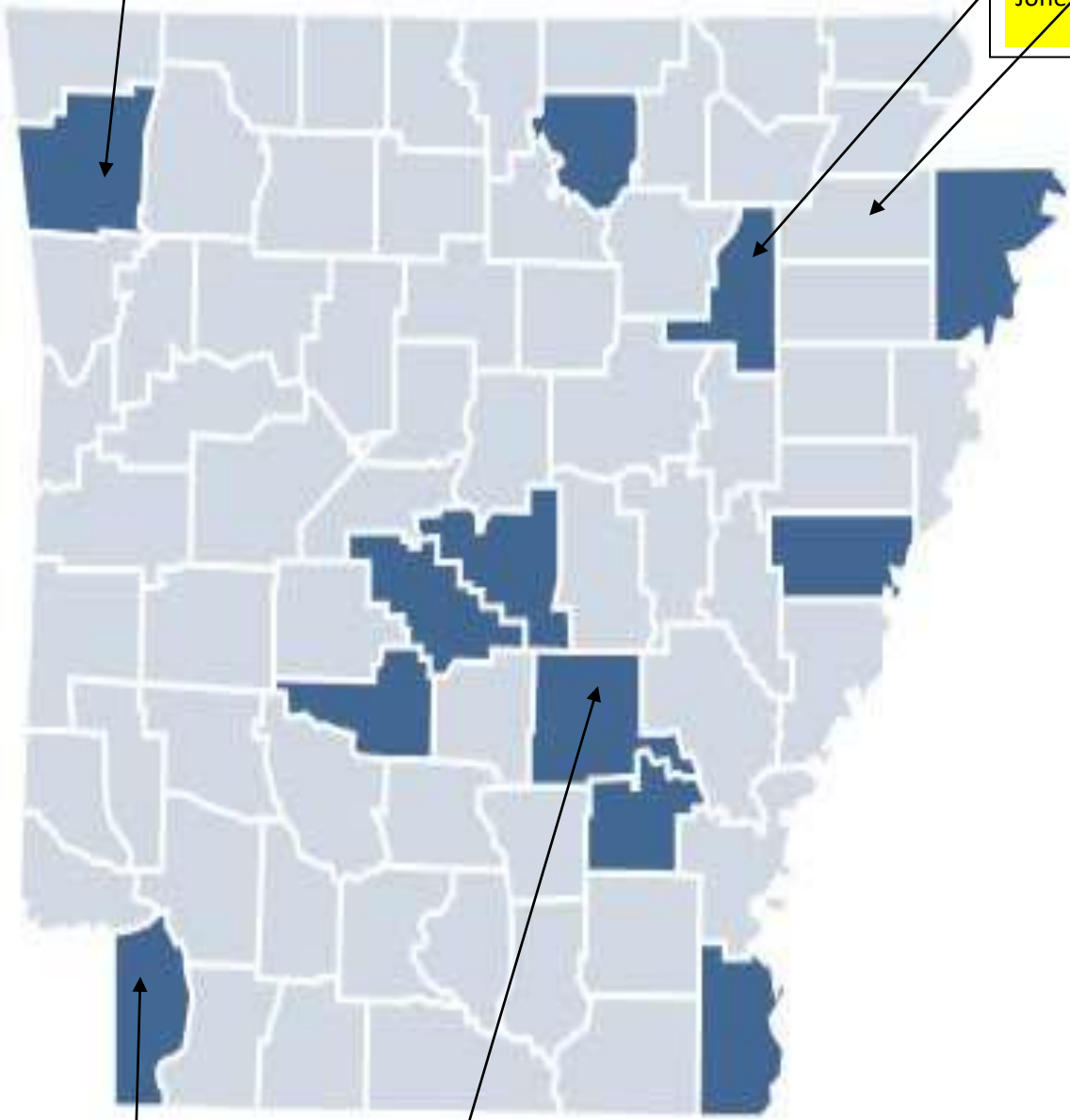
 Operational  In the Process

Arkansas Coalition Map

Northwest Arkansas Coalition – Rogers – Area 1

Newport – Area 3

Jonesboro – Area 4



Texarkana – Area 13

Pine Bluff Reentry Coalition – Area 11