



Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable

Coming Full Circle: Building Successful Strategies for Offender Re-Entry in Austin/Travis County, Texas

Policy Reform Agenda for 2009

The Reentry Roundtable encourages the development of policies and practices that foster the rehabilitation of people with criminal histories thereby supporting families and communities and improving public safety. The Reentry Roundtable has received community input into policy reform that will improve the ability of people with criminal histories to reintegrate into the community and has developed the following recommendations:

Priority 1

1. Enhance housing opportunities for people with criminal histories.
2. Expand employment readiness and job opportunities for people with criminal histories.
3. Continue to work with Texas Department of Criminal Justice and the Department of Public Safety to ensure that every inmate leaving a TDCJ facility has at least two of the following: a DPS-issued identification card, social security card, and/or birth certificate.
4. Improve the availability and continuity of mental and physical health care between correctional facilities and the community.
5. Provide people with felony drug convictions the same access to food stamps as afforded other ex-offenders.

Priority 2

6. Ensure that organizational policies and practices within criminal justice agencies promote the rehabilitation and reentry of people with criminal histories.
7. Conduct a feasibility study, and if appropriate develop an implementation plan, for a pilot project that would convert the Travis State Jail into a state jail/ pre-parole release facility for persons returning to Travis County.
8. Promote kinship care for children whose parents are incarcerated to reduce the impact on the foster care system.
9. Create a Texas Reentry Council/Taskforce to examine best practices for cost-effective reentry strategies that enhance public safety.