Erie County Reentry Coalition's
Reentry Advisory Coordinating Committee
Recommendations and Implementation Plan
4/5/19

Executive Summary

The Reentry Advisory Coordinating Committee (RACC), a subset of leaders, providers, and individuals with lived experience from the larger Erie County Reentry Coalition, has developed a set of recommendations and an implementation plan to strengthen reentry services in Erie County. These recommendations directly respond to the findings of a federally-funded year-long study of the county's reentry system published in March of 2018.

Most notably, the plan calls for establishing the Erie County Reentry Resource Center later this year in the offices of the Erie County Department of Mental Health's Forensic Mental Health Services (FMHS). This location, 120 W. Eagle Street, is next door to the Erie County Holding Center and close to other county agencies and community-based services providers.

The recommendations themselves were developed by two Workgroups of coalition members created by the RACC in August 2018. The Hub Workgroup focused on the creation of a community-based reentry center that could serve multiple populations, the development of an information system to better coordinate services, and the establishment of performance metrics to ensure accountability, quality control, and efficiency among providers. The Capacity Workgroup focused on mechanisms to ensure that the provider network was fully conversant and trained in effective evidence-based practices, the incorporation of substantial reentry strategies within the two Erie County jails, and the use of incentives to encourage individuals to participate in reentry programs during periods of incarceration, community supervision, and full release.

Over the last six months, the Workgroups have met monthly to review information collected through surveys of leading reentry providers, focus groups of the incarcerated individuals in the Erie County Holding Center and Correctional Facility, telephone calls, videoconferences, and meetings with other jurisdictions, and two site visits. Both the Workgroups and the Steering Committee were assisted by consultant Stefan LoBuglio (the author of this report) who helped identify those jurisdictions that could offer the best examples of effective reentry practices. This report summarizes some of the deliberations of the Workgroups that went into its recommendations. It also represents the completion of the work of the Workgroups.

The three recommendations from the HUB Workgroup are as follows:

1. **Establish a physical reentry hub within the offices of the Erie County Department of Mental Health's Forensic Mental Health Services (FMHS) to improve reentry success and reduce high rates of recidivism;**
2. **Develop an information system to improve coordination of reentry services between providers and correctional agencies;**

3. **Develop and report on a range of performance metrics to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the reentry system to assist individuals with employment, education, housing, and treatment outcomes along with decreasing their further involvement in the criminal justice system.**

The three recommendations from the Capacity Workgroup are as follows:

1. **Strongly support several promising efforts underway to advance jail reentry strategies within the County's two jails;**
2. **Employ real and meaningful incentives to encourage individuals to fully engage in reentry services during periods of incarceration, community supervision, and after full release;**
3. **Expand the role of the Erie County Reentry Taskforce to strengthen and sustain high-quality reentry programs and services for all individuals in need of services.**

Moving forward, the RACC accepts the recommendations of these two workgroups which have finished their work and recommends establishing two new committees to guide the implementation plan for the next three years.

The Erie County Reentry Resource Center Planning Committee (RRCPC) will address the programmatic, staffing, partnership-agreements, and cost requirements of the center. It will be co-chaired by representatives from the County Department of Mental Health, the Erie County Sheriff's Office, and a leading reentry provider.

The Reentry Information Systems Committee will include representatives from the County's Department of Information Services and Support, the County's Department of Mental Health, the Erie County Sheriff's Office, and the Erie County Probation Department. Membership on these committees will be solicited from the larger reentry coalition. Finally, while not a committee, the RACC will recommend the formation of a group of grant writers from agencies and organizations that can identify public and private funding opportunities that can assist with implementation. This group would convene to review funding opportunities.

Overview/History

In 2016, the Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable identified the need to strengthen the reentry system in Erie County as one of its nine strategic goals to ensure that the region's growth and prosperity benefited all of its diverse populations. The Roundtable, composed of the county's top elected officials, agency directors, business leaders, non-profit and faith leaders, and the philanthropic community, created the Erie County Reentry Coalition to carry out this objective. Its membership included representatives from the organizations on the Roundtable and added others who had a stake and interest in reentry including non-profit reentry providers, community activists, and individuals with lived experiences in contact with the criminal justice system. The work of both the Roundtable and the Erie County Reentry Coalition has been facilitated by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo (CFGB).

To guide its work to improve reentry services, the CFGB, on behalf of the Coalition, sought technical assistance from the US Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). In July 2016 representatives from the Council of State Government's Justice Center (NRRC) presented a national overview of the development of reentry programs and services to the coalition. The Justice Center, which oversees the National Reentry Resource Center and provides technical assistance for hundreds of BJA-funded reentry grants, summarized the state of the reentry field and the lessons learned in the more than ten years since the passage of the Second Chance Act (SCA) of 2007. SCA, signed into law by President George W. Bush in April 2008, has ushered over $500 million to support the development and evaluation of reentry programs and the creation of the NRRC.

In March of 2017, the Justice Center was funded by BJA and selected by the Erie County Probation and the Reentry Coalition to conduct a study of the state of the existing reentry services in Erie County, and to determine their adequacy, quality, and ability to meet the needs of the targeted population which includes individuals returning from local, state, and federal correctional systems, individuals under community correctional supervision (state parole and county probation), and individuals who may have had prior criminal justice contact but currently need services. Through analysis of criminal justice state and county data, scores of interviews and surveys with policy makers, agency officials, and practitioners, and focus groups with incarcerated individuals and those on community supervision, the Justice Center presented its findings in October of 2017 and finalized its report in March 2018.

While the report identified key strengths and opportunities in Erie County -- an engaged leadership at all levels of government and in the non-profit, faith, and philanthropic communities which was well represented in the Reentry Coalition; committed, experienced, and skilled service providers; a growing economy; and falling crime rates and decreasing probation and incarcerated populations -- it recommended significant improvements to address issues such as poor coordination among providers; the dearth of reentry services for individuals released from the jail; inconsistent use of evidence-based reentry practices; and a lack of overall accountability and measurement systems to assess and refine the effectiveness of services.

The report promulgated five recommendations to strengthen the Erie County reentry system:

1. Develop a coordinating committee to advise agencies and providers that administer reentry services;
2. Explore the possibility of establishing a physical or virtual reentry hub to ensure that all reentry populations have access to services and treatment in the county;
3. Determine whether correctional agencies and service providers are uniformly using evidenced-based practices and providing high-quality programming;
4. Determine standards and performance measures to guide funding decisions;
5. Investigate incentives for people to participate in pre-release reentry programming.

In response to the report, the Erie County Reentry Coalition developed a new organizational structure to move towards implementing these recommendations. The Reentry Advisory Coordinating Committee (RACC) was created to address the need for a smaller, nimbler, and

more authoritative decision-making body to develop an implementation plan. As a subset of the Coalition, the RACC was represented by organizations, agencies, and individuals playing key roles in reentry services. The selected co-chairs of the RACC were Michael R. Ranney, Commissioner of Mental Health (Erie County), and Thomas Diina, Superintendent, Jail Management Division, Erie County Sheriff's Office (ECSO).
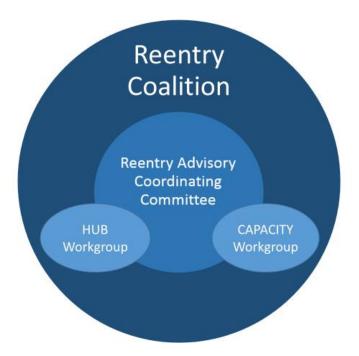
To carry out its work, the RACC created two workgroups that would focus on specific objectives directly related to the study report recommendations.   The "Hub" workgroup was tasked with three objectives:

1. Evaluate the feasibility for a physical or virtual reentry "hub" that could provide reentry services to multiple populations in need;
2. Develop systems and mechanisms to improve coordination and communication between reentry providers and agencies;
3. Develop a set of performance metrics and an accountability system that would ensure the delivery of efficient and effective reentry services.

The "Capacity" workgroup was tasked with three objectives:

1. Develop a reentry strategy to directly address the needs of individuals leaving the two county correctional facilities;
2. Develop a plan to increase the capacity of providers in Erie County to understand and deliver evidence-based reentry services;
3. Identify incentives at all stages of the reentry process to encourage individuals to fully engage and utilize reentry services.

Each co-chair led one of the workgroups with two other co-facilitators. Commissioner Ranney co-facilitated the "Hub" workgroup with Kevin Stadelmaier, Chief Attorney of the Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, and with Eric Weigel, Director of Community Integration (Erie County Department of Mental Health). Superintendent Diina co-facilitated the "Capacity" workgroup with John Rodriguez, ECSO, and with Michelle Olszowy, Principal Probation Officer, Erie County Adult Probation Department. Members of the workgroups included those on the Steering Committee and others were selected from the larger reentry coalition. The figure below depicts the organizational structure. The members of the Erie County Reentry Coalition, the Reentry Advisory Coordinating Committee, the "Hub" workgroup and the "Capacity" workgroup are presented at the end of this document.

At the August 2018 meeting of the Erie County Coalition, the workgroups were officially given their charge and subsequently met monthly to develop implementation recommendations and plans. The methodology of the workgroups efforts was multi-faceted. It involved identifying best reentry practices related to each of the workgroup's objectives occurring in other areas of the country and determining their applicability to Erie County. With the assistance of a consultant, the Workgroups participated in teleconferences with three jurisdictions on September 21, 2018, including Dutchess County of New York, Bexar County of Texas, and Hampden County of Massachusetts. The Workgroups also conducted two onsite visits to Allegheny County Pennsylvania and Hampden County Massachusetts. In December, the Reentry Program Manager in Bexar County participated in the workgroup and steering committee meetings in Buffalo. Separately, the consultant represented the workgroups at a visit to Dutchess County, and also contacted programs in Memphis, Tennessee; Los Angeles, California; and Montgomery County, Maryland.

As Erie is one of 20 counties in New York to have a state-funded reentry task force, the Workgroups contacted other Reentry Task Force Coordinators to learn about their organizational and service models. Contacts were made to Westchester, Kings (Brooklyn), and Broome County. Broome County's Jeff Pryor, who is the longest serving chair of any of the state's task forces, met with members of the Workgroup following several telephone conversations.

Finally, members of the Workgroups were keenly interested in soliciting information from the key stakeholders in reentry: providers and incarcerated individuals. As part of its work, the Capacity Workgroup surveyed the fifteen leading providers of reentry services in the County and asked 14 questions related to their services, population services, training needs, and recurring obstacles. At the Erie County Holding Center, a Deputy within the Sheriff's Office conducted

focus groups involving 258 incarcerated individuals to ask them to prioritize their reentry needs and also to discern what incentives would encourage them to participate in programming.

All of the information gleaned from the site visits, meetings, telephone calls, and surveys was deliberated at the monthly Workgroup meetings and helped to form the Workgroup's recommended implementation action plans.

A timeline of the entire planning process is provided at the end of this document along with a listing of notable accomplishments. A table is also provided to indicate which jurisdictions were benchmarked for their innovative practices with Erie County.

Hub Workgroup Recommendations

1. **Establish the Erie County Reentry Resource Center within the offices of the Erie County Department of Mental Health's Forensic Mental Health Services (FMHS).**

The Hub Workgroup identified space within the DMH Forensic Mental Health Services on 120 West Eagle Street as an ideal location to develop a Reentry Hub in Erie County and recommends conducting a more detailed feasibility analysis. This county building is located adjacent to the Erie County Holding Center, and its building entrance is 20 yards from where individuals are discharged from the both the ECHC and the Erie County Correctional Facility. The proximate location of the hub to the jail would facilitate serving the jail population – a critical objective identified in the March 2018 study report – and builds upon the existing set of county services provided to the jail population. In a data review between the Sheriff's Office and the County, FMHS found that it was already tracking and providing services to more than half of those held at the county's two correctional centers (a point-in-time review found that of the jail census of 950, 550 individuals were on its caseload). Under the current plan, the Reentry Hub would be supported by the FMHS and would assisted by two full-time discharge workers or social work interns who would be all under the supervision of the Director of Intensive Adult Mental Health Services.

In addition to the jail population, the Hub's location provides convenient access to other populations in need of reentry services. It is directly across the street from the Buffalo City Courthouse and would be easily accessible to individuals before and/or after their court appearances. Similarly, the location would facilitate a close relationship with the C.O.U.R.T.S program that provides case management and referral support to the courts including the county's seven specialty courts. Also, the federal courthouse, which hosts the federal reentry program, the Erie County Probation Office, and the Legal Aid Bureau for Buffalo are all within walking distance from this location, and staff from those agencies and programs could refer individuals to the Hub. Finally, the Erie County Task Force, whose state funding is managed by the Erie County DMH, could utilize this space for meetings and referrals for individuals on state parole.

Concerning the space, DMH has indicated that it can commit several offices and conference rooms for the Hub and has developed a sketch of proposed renovations to create a computer lab, resource room, and private meeting space. It has tentatively identified and budgeted $28,000 in renovations, and additional funding may be available from the philanthropic community to build-out and create an attractive and welcoming center. The building itself is maintained by the County and is slated for significant renovations including the replacement of windows and HVAC. As a county building, there would no cost to lease the space, and routine maintenance and cleaning would be provided by the County.

As envisioned, the Hub would provide some onsite resources and programs, but its role would be to triage services and make referrals to other County and privately-funded providers of services. This downtown location is accessible by mass transportation and is near the offices of many program providers. It is seen as a "neutral" and "safe" location for all populations to receive services. If the Hub model at 120 West Eagle Street were not deemed feasible, the Workgroup

would then consider other locations such as the jail, City Courthouse, and the Buffalo Employment and Training Center.

Supporting Factors in Recommendation

The Workgroup quickly decided to focus its efforts on developing a physical Reentry Resource Center with a strong supporting website and online services versus a virtual center solely. Both providers and incarcerated individuals clearly indicated that a physical center could best address some of the immediate and pressing needs of those recently released and needing services such as food, housing, employment, and transportation. Further, access to a virtual center cannot be presumed, as made clear in a January 7 article in The Buffalo News that cites that more than half of homes in the City of Buffalo some low-income neighborhoods lack internet access.

The Workgroup's study of the reentry "Hub" models in Hampden County and Bexar County were also formative in this recommendation. The key to the success for both these county-led "hub" models included the location (proximate to the jail and other social service agencies); institutional relationships with correctional, court, and non-profit agencies; and a range of onsite and triage referrals for services. The Bexar County Reentry Center is also located in a county building, and the program manager described the benefits of not having to pay for a lease and having the county assume responsibility for building maintenance and cleaning.

Both programs demonstrated their ability to work with a significant number of clients. In Hampden County, the After Incarceration Support System (AISS) worked with over 1,600 individuals in FY18. They averaged a daily case load of 131, of whom 77 were individuals living in the community and no longer incarcerated, and the remainder being individuals in lower security custody with the Sheriff's department. AISS averaged 32 new clients per week and 140 new clients per month. Overall, 60% of AISS clients participated voluntarily. In comparison to Erie County, the jail population of 1270 is comparable to the Erie County's census, particularly when recognizing that nearly 10% of Hampden's incarcerated population is living in a community-based facility.

In Bexar County, the Reentry Center reports that 1,000 individuals come through their doors each month. Like Hampden, many come directly from the jail which is blocks away, and others are referred to by the specialty courts, and by state and federal parole and probation officers. Bexar County is much larger and includes the city of San Antonio and has an in-custody jail population of about 4,500. The fact that the reentry center serves so many individuals demonstrates the efficacy of the "physical" model of the hub.

2. Develop an information system to improve coordination of reentry services between providers and correctional agencies.

The Workgroup recommends the development of an information system that would allow community providers, correctional agencies, and other stakeholders to appropriately share client and program-level information with the goal of better coordinating reentry services, ensuring quality control and greater accountability, and documenting and reporting results. Such systems are currently in use in other jurisdictions, and the workgroup investigated several different models. Allegheny County (Pennsylvania) and Hampden County (Massachusetts) built their own information systems, and reentry providers in Dutchess County (New York) and Hamilton County (Ohio) used and adapted commercially available software. The Workgroup recommends a county-led committee to determine what models and information systems would best serve Erie County's reentry services system.

At a minimum, the envisioned information system would provide basic client background information (such as a unique identifier, housing, education and employment background), and history of the individual's involvement in the criminal justice system, including current correctional supervision requirements. It would capture assessments that define their needs in a variety of treatment domains including substance use disorder, mental and somatic health, family support, pro-social thinking and attitudes, as well as quantifying their risk-to-recidivate. The system would provide information on treatment histories as well as current reentry service plans that were developed and matched to the assessment information. Whether the individuals are in jail, on community supervision, or under no criminal justice supervision, the system would provide information on their participation in programs including case notes, progress, completions, and failures. It would list all the key agencies and contacts involved in supporting the individual

At the program level, the system would report on programs and services offered by county agency and non-profit service providers. It would track caseloads, program participation and progress, and clients' successes and failure. It would help ensure that funded programs were operating efficiently and at full capacity. This information would be used to maintain the quality control of programs and services, and to ensure that providers comply with performance contracts.

At the system level, as will be discussed in more detail in the next recommendation, the information system would allow the reporting and monitoring of performance metrics for the reentry system. It would inform policy makers on ways to adjust and change the reentry system to achieve its goals of supporting the needs of individuals with past criminal justice involvement, while saving taxpayers costs in averting future involvement in the courts and correctional systems.

Supporting Factors in Recommendation

The Workgroup conducted a site visit and had a video conference call with county leaders in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, to learn about their use of information systems. For their reentry program, the County's Department of Human Services spearheaded the development of the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative system (ACJC) which is used in the jail, by the county probation agency, and by providers. On the latter, performance contracts require providers to use the ACJC for their client case notes and all program documentation. The system was built on a model developed for the County's Welfare System and includes a unique ID, database interaction with other agencies (particularly probation), provides a history of clients' involvement in county-funded programs and services, and allows the creation and monitoring of individualized service plans for clients both during their incarceration, their transition to the community, their period of community supervision, and continues up until the point of their full release. All contact with the clients by different providers and agency officials is recorded in the system.

The ACJC is one of several county databases that form the Allegheny County's data warehouse. Developed over 20 years ago by the County's Department of Human Services (equivalent is Erie County Department of Social Services), this data warehouse model supports the larger goals of coordinating care, improving line-level and administrative decision-making, allowing community use of open data, and facilitating research. Through the integrated data interface, Allegheny County can provide a "client view" which stitches together information concerning an individual's current and past involvement with DHS programs in mental health, drug and alcohol services, family supports centers, as well as records maintained by the public schools, court system, 911 dispatches, workforce programs, and the County Jail among many others.   The system can calculate performance metrics such as recidivism rates. The sharing of information is carefully controlled through a permission-based administrative system, and the system meets the privacy requirements of HIPPA and other federal and state privacy laws and regulations. As an aside, the County indicated that much of the work on the ACJC and data warehouse was developed by a private contractor, and that the source code is owned by the county (an offer was made to share with Erie County). The County pays the contractor approximately $1.2 million for annual updates and maintenance,

The Workgroup also conducted a video conference and site visit with representatives of the Hampden County Sheriff's Department.   While the focus of the visit was on their jail and community-based reentry programs, the workgroup was intrigued to learn that the Sheriff's Department had developed a robust case management tracking information system. Developed and refined internally for over a decade, the "Trax" system is used by Sheriff's Department staff and programs onsite in their jail and community-based facilities. The system also lists and tracks an individual reentry plan and clients' involvement in programs and services, and can report information at the client-, program-, and system-level. Unlike Allegheny County, though, this system is not used by off-site community providers, and is managed entirely by the Sheriff's Department.

Dutchess County, New York presented an alternative model of developing an information system using commercially available software. During a video conference call and during a separate site visit, the Workgroup learned that Dutchess County Probation, the Dutchess County Jail, and a non-profit reentry provider coordinated reentry services with a case management system developed by Northpoint. Northpoint, which has now been purchased by a company called Equivant, is best known for developing the Compas assessment software currently used in New York State corrections and probation along with hundreds of other jurisdictions. More recently, they have developed a "Northpointe Suite" of information systems used for case management in institutions and community-based programs. In Dutchess County, the non-profit provider, Project More, holds the licenses to use the Northpoint case management software and provides the jail and probation with access to these licenses. Compared with Allegheny County, this solution was much cheaper on the order of $10,000, although involving far fewer partners and capabilities.

Salesforce is another commercially available "client management" product and is used by CityLinks in Hamilton County for its reentry program. Typically used by sales organizations, Salesforce has been adapted by CityLinks and other non-profits to document their services and contact with clients.

Commercially-available software may have an advantage in price and timeliness over an internal effort by the County to develop its reentry system.

3. **Develop and report on a range of performance metrics to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the reentry system to assist individuals with employment, education, housing, and treatment outcomes, along with decreasing their further involvement in the criminal justice system.**

The Workgroup recommends developing a set of clear metrics that demonstrate the effectiveness of the reentry system to improve positive life outcomes of clients while reducing tax-payer costs associated with further criminal justice involvement. Recidivism (as measured by arrests, revocations, and incarcerations), institutional disciplinary behavior, successful probation and parole case closures, early releases from probation for good behavior are some of the criminal justice metrics that should be measured and reported. As important, the reentry system should track metrics that demonstrate that individuals are succeeding and improving their lives and those of their family, including such metrics as treatment enrollment, dosage, retention, and completion data, as well as employment and education advancements, family engagement, housing stability, and more.

As envisioned by the workgroup, these measures would be built into the information systems developed and chosen to support the reentry system as previously discussed. Combined with performance contracts for providers, these metrics would ensure that programs are fully accountable for achieving successful outcomes. From a quality control perspective, the performance metrics can also signal which parts of the reentry system need strengthening and expanding, and which are ineffective and should be discontinued. It can also lead to greater

efficiency in the utilization of programs; in a survey conducted of leading reentry providers, many indicated that they had the capacity to serve more individuals but were hampered by poor communication among referring agencies.

The marginal cost of incarcerating an individual in Erie County's two jails is estimated at $175per day (with an average stay of 12/106 days for unsentenced/sentenced), and the goal of these performance metrics is to demonstrate that by averting individuals from the jail, and by having the County and State avoid incurring other associated criminal justice costs (policing, courts, prosecution, public defense, incarceration, probation, and parole), the savings would more than pay the costs for the additional reentry services needed.

Supporting Factors in Recommendation

The Workgroup was impressed with the robustness of the Allegheny County information system that featured an online public dashboard of current performance metrics related to reentry and other social services. This effort is in keeping with the county's commitment to "open data" to ensure accountability and transparency. Cross tabulation tools are built into the dashboard to allow outside researchers and individuals to discern trends and performance. Measures like recidivism can be calculated easily (albeit the system does not yet communicate with the state prison system). As mentioned before, this system also supports Allegheny County's performance-based contracting system.

While not online, Hampden County tracks performance metrics through its research division and division managers. Annually, each of the Sheriff's Department's programs are responsible for submitting an annual report. For instance, the FY18 report on the After Incarceration Support Services System program runs 70 pages and includes detailed analysis of services and metrics. It even measures and reports on weapons detected and confiscated in this community-based program.

Finally, Bexar County is the example of a jurisdiction that had developed an excellent jail and community-based reentry program but had not developed a system that could track performance metrics. While the Program Manager indicated that a new system will soon be implemented, she shared with the workgroup that this was a serious weakness of their program model and indicated that Erie County would be advantaged by incorporating an information system and setting performance metrics in the beginning of its program development.

Capacity Workgroup Recommendations

1. Strongly support several promising efforts underway to advance jail reentry strategies within the County's two jails.

The Workgroup recommends fully supporting the federal grant received by Peaceprints which funds a jail reentry project called "Project Blue." Managed in partnership with the Erie County Sheriff's Office, the three-year, $1 million award will offer selected individuals in the jail reentry services and programming and continue to provide them with case management support for housing and employment and other reentry needs upon release.

The funding for this award derives from the federal Second Chance Act of 2007, and the Peaceprints grant application demonstrated its incorporation of the latest research and evidence-based practices related to effective reentry strategies required by the solicitation. The grant includes a well-defined six-month planning period during which the principal partners will receive technical assistance from the Council of State Government's Justice Center.

During this period, Peaceprints and the Sheriff's Office will complete a planning and implementation guide that will help finalize the critical elements of their jail reentry strategy, including: introducing an assessment and selection process to identify those individuals in the jail with the greatest risk-to-recidivate; creating reentry case management plans matched to assessed needs; establishing cognitive skill and other programs within the jail and coordinating with other existing rehabilitative programs; facilitating in-reach by providers and ensuring warm hand-off referrals, and defining community-based services and case management including transitional housing provided by Peaceprints. Finally, the program includes a rigorous evaluation, and during the planning process, the partners will work with their chosen evaluator to determine their evaluation methodology, data collection strategies, and performance metrics.

The Workgroup recommends that the Erie County Coalition strongly support this program and its planning process which will be led by Peaceprints and the Sheriff's Office. Wherever possible, the Workgroup encourages Peaceprints and the Sheriff's Office to make decisions on the Project Blue program that can have ancillary benefits to the larger coalition. For instance, in determining what assessment instruments to use, which cognitive behavioral curriculum to employ, what information systems to develop, what performance metrics to evaluate, and what incentives to provide for participation, the Workgroup hopes that consideration will be made about whether these decisions can support the larger recommendations made herein to strengthen reentry in Erie County on a long term sustainable basis beyond the 3 year grant.

The Workgroup recognizes and is excited by the potential of this grant award to fund and jumpstart a significant jail reentry strategy. In its visit with other jurisdictions with excellent jail reentry strategies, the Workgroup also recommends pursuing the feasibility of three specific ideas: creating full reentry units within the jail (which is currently being considered as part of Project Blue); establishing a Correctional Caseworker position within the jail staff; and exploring greater connections between health care providers in the community, with health care provided in the jail.

Longer term, the Workgroup recommends that future county planning processes for new correctional facilities include the concept of developing a continuum of lower security step-down facilities and programs that assist with the reentry process.

Finally, The Workgroup also recognizes and strongly supports other county-led initiatives and programs that support reentry. The Department of Mental Health's "Enhanced Release Under Supervision" targets individuals after arrest but before arraignment and provides mental health and substance use disorder treatment along with case management services that follow the individuals through the court process. Under a different grant program called "Mission CJ", case management services are provided to individuals in drug courts. The "Early Diversion" grant program trains law enforcement and other first responders with training in mental health and substance use disorder signs/symptoms with a focus on veterans. Essentially, it is a four-year training effort to enhance the Crisis Intervention Teams already in place in the county. In terms of the near future, the DMH has applied for a five-year grant with the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to support expanded case management t to the County's Opioid Court.

 Supporting Factors in Recommendation

The Workgroup applauds Peaceprints' leadership in advancing jail reentry by successfully obtaining a federal Second Chance Act grant that will accelerate jail reentry planning in 2019. As previously described, these are competitive awards that require applicants to demonstrate that they are incorporating the latest research and best practices in effective reentry strategies in their program design. The Workgroup recognizes that Peaceprints and the Sheriff's Office will co-lead the planning process, and offers its support as needed and requested.

In its visits and meetings with other jurisdictions with excellent jail reentry programs, the Workgroup took note of several specific commonalities. In Bexar, Dutchess, Hampden, and Allegheny counties, the jails established separate reentry units within the main correctional institutions to support the delivery of intensive reentry programs; and, as important, to create a peer culture within the living unit to encourage full engagement in services. All of these sites had well developed assessment and selection processes and standardized assessment instruments and treatment curriculum (MRT was the choice for most of the locations for cognitive behavioral programs, and Ready Set Work was the curriculum of choice for workforce readiness). They also encouraged visiting and family engagement; allowed significant in-reach by providers of community-based services, had standing memorandum of understanding with many of them that described their partnership relationships; and created warm handoffs to community providers and probation and parole agencies as individuals were released and transitioned to the community. The Workgroup was also pleased to find that these agencies also hired individuals with past criminal histories and ensured that their planning processes incorporated the voices of those with lived experiences.

During a site visit to Hampden County, the Workgroup was intrigued by four innovative ideas – two internal to the correctional agency, and one external, described as follows:

First, in the Reentry pod in Hampden, the staffing complement of two correctional officers included one who bore the title Correctional Caseworker position. This position is a grade above the standard correctional officer classification, and, as described in its job description: "includes all duties and responsibilities of a Correctional Officer with additional casework duties." It goes on to describe that the position ". . . assists in the development and implementation of programs within the inmate living units in order to meet the individual and group needs of the inmates confined."

Second, Hampden has developed a strong mentoring program and allows individuals with past criminal history to participate along with other community volunteers. It has developed a significant training program for mentors, carefully matches mentors with individuals in the program, and provides extensive oversight to ensure that the mentoring services are assisting program clients advance with their reentry goals.

Third, the Hampden County Sheriff's Department delivers health care services for its incarcerated population using a public health model. In the 1990s, it began contracting for medical services with four non-profit neighborhood health centers in the region. In this model, the same doctors and nurses from the health centers who provided medical care in the jail could continue to provide care in the community. Evaluations of this model found that the incarcerated individuals had a very high rate of continuing to receive treatment post-release, and the model won several awards for its innovations. In 2006, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funded Community Oriented Correctional Health services to provide technical assistance for state and county correctional agencies interested in adopting the Hampden model. This public health model also exists in other forms such as in New Jersey where Rutgers University operates the University Correctional Health Care (UCHC) division that provides behavioral and somatic health care to all state prisons and juvenile justice facilities.

The Workgroup recommends that the Sheriff's Office review this public health model and determine its applicability in Erie County through dialogue with the health care agencies that manage the county's federally qualified health center or other health clinics.

Related to health care, the Workgroup also recommends that the Erie County Sheriff's Office continue its efforts to enroll incarcerated individuals onto Medicaid insurance. The Office's Correctional Health Division currently has two in-house navigators that are responsible for enrolling hospitalized inmates in Medicaid. The Sheriff's Office is also currently pursuing expanding this effort by training one of its deputies as a navigator.   Additionally, the Sheriff's Office was in contact with United Health Care which provides community outreach to six of the eight Western NY counties and has assigned onsite navigators at the Niagara County jail. In Massachusetts, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst Medical School, which provides medical care in correctional facilities, recently received approval from the Federal Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services to have the costs of the navigator position directly reimbursed by Medicaid.

Fourth and final, the Hampden County Sheriff's Department has developed significant step-down programs that allow incarcerated individuals to transition from high- and medium-security

lock-up units in the jail to live in a community correctional center, or at home on day-reporting. Individuals classified to low security units, while living in a secure facility, were able to access community programs and work opportunities. The continuum of pre-release and community-based programs provides strong incentives for individuals to fully participate in reentry programming.

2. **Expand the role of the Erie County Reentry Taskforce to strengthen and sustain high-quality reentry programs and services for all individuals in need of services.**

The Workgroup recommends that the Erie County Task Force play a larger connecting role to increase the capacity and quality of reentry services offered in the County as it does in King County and Broome County. Specifically, it recommends the Task Force convene the leadership and staff of agencies, faith-based organizations, and non-profit providers for purposes of training, standardizing practices and curriculum, identifying outside resources, reviewing program and system performance metrics, and maintaining an online database of reentry resources.

Currently, the Task Force focuses solely on services provided to the state parole population returning to Erie County, but this represents a significant narrowing of its mission when the Task Force was first established more than a decade ago. As originally conceived, the Task Force had the responsibility to initiate, promote, and coordinate reentry services and programs among the county's providers and agencies. As the state introduced performance-based contracts which tied state funding for the Task Force to specific programmatic goals for state parolee services, the Task Force gradually focused all its efforts on achieving these goals and became less interested in its coordinating role and the need to ensure reentry services for other populations.

The Workgroup recommends that the Task Force improve the capacity and quality of evidence-based reentry services through improved training opportunities for reentry providers. The Task Force could use its network with other state-funded county reentry task forces to publicize training opportunities regularly held in Albany and in other regions that could assist Erie County agencies improve the delivery of evidence-based services. At its regularly scheduled meetings, it could also deliver training and up-to-date information on the latest ideas and examples of effective reentry strategies.

In addition to training, the Task Force could coordinate efforts to standardize reentry curriculum and practices among providers. The Workgroup recommends that providers of services for individuals who are incarcerated in the jails, in the prisons, on community supervision, or fully-released, recognize the value of adopting similar curricula for treatment programs that address workforce readiness, cognitive skill enhancement, substance use disorder, trauma, and other domains. Standardizing the curricula would greatly increase the opportunity for individuals to fully complete programs that they may have begun in jail and now can continue in the community. Similarly, there is an advantage for reentry providers and agencies to adopt similar assessment tools and include risk-to-recidivate instruments.

Improved coordination of providers would also position Erie County to more competitively pursue public and private funding opportunities, and this too could be a role that the Task Force plays. Also, the Workgroup recommends that the Task Force lead a regular review of the performance metrics of the reentry system. As described previously, the performance metrics can prove invaluable in maintaining an efficient, high-quality, and cost-effective reentry system. Finally, the Workgroup recommends that the task force maintain an updated online directory of reentry services and programs offered in the county.

<u>Supporting Factors in Recommendation</u>

The Workgroup found that all jurisdictions with excellent reentry services had a clearly identified organization and leader who served as a vital connector to all reentry efforts. In Bexar County, the Reentry Center Manager initiated and implemented the strategic plan to develop reentry services in the jail and in the community. She regularly convenes meetings of reentry partners, conducts trainings, has helped standardize program curriculum, maintains an online resource guide of providers, and continues to seek out additional resources. Similarly, the Allegheny Jail Collaborative Coordinator is the driving force overseeing reentry services delivered in the jail and in the community. She oversees county-funded contracts with community providers of reentry services, convenes meetings of providers and stakeholders to review performance metrics, and works with a board of philanthropic organizations to identify funding resources and opportunities. In Dutchess County, a senior probation agent and a non-profit leader co-lead the reentry efforts. In their monthly meetings of a 10-member ad hoc task force of the County's Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee, they ensure quality control over reentry services by reviewing client and program level data.

In some NY counties, the task force coordinator plays this role. In Kings County, the Task Force Coordinator leads the reentry efforts that serve both the state parolee population as well as the local population with additional funding provided by the county's district attorney. In Broome County, the Coordinator met with the Workgroup and described his ability to meet the performance contracts of the Department of Criminal Justice Services to serve state parolees, while also enhancing reentry services to other populations. Recently, he led the county's efforts to obtain DCJS funding for a jail-reentry program. As a formerly incarcerated individual, he also ensured that individuals with lived experiences remained a part of all reentry initiatives and conversations.

The need for a reentry coordinator is also substantiated by a survey conducted by the Workgroup of the 15 leading providers of reentry services in Erie County. The most striking finding was that organizations felt hampered by the lack of communication and connectedness with other providers and agencies. Indeed, some indicated that they had the capacity to serve more clients but were not getting referrals. Also, the results showed that organizations were very interested in expanded training opportunities on evidenced-based reentry programs and were interested in developing standards of practice and accountability.

3. **Employ real and meaningful incentives to encourage individuals to fully engage in reentry services during periods of incarceration, community supervision, and after full release.**

The Workgroup recommends that the individuals incarcerated at the jail receive significant incentives for participating in reentry programming. A survey of the incarcerated population found that they were most interested in incentives related to employment, housing, and transportation. Secondarily, they cited interest in mentoring and guided early-release. While the survey did not reveal interest in specific programs that addressed family needs, nevertheless, the Workgroup believes that incarcerated individuals could be incentivized by providing extra visiting privileges with family members, particularly with their children.

As the planning process for Project Blue is underway, the Workgroup encourages the implementation of real and meaningful incentives for participation. As employment and housing assistance are integral to the goals of Project Blue, these incentives are incorporated with the program model. In terms of transportation, the Workgroup encourages providing participants with temporary bus passes or tokens after release and this too is built into the budget of the program. Also, the Workgroup encourages the jail to establish a mentoring program modeled after Hampden County which would allow for carefully selected volunteers from the community to support individuals participating in the program, and to be open to recruiting individuals with past criminal histories.

Additionally, the Sheriff's Office, Peaceprints, and County Probation may want to explore whether Project Blue can utilize a local conditional release program as an incentive to participants. Under this program, individuals who are incarcerated for certain non-violent offenses are eligible for early release from the jail and placement on probation if their application is approved by a county-level "parole board." In the past this program has been under-utilized despite several efforts to publicize and encourage individuals to submit applications. Incarcerated individuals have explained that many of them would rather complete their sentences of incarceration rather than risk their ability to comply with their community supervision requirements on probation. However, Project Blue offers an opportunity to support individuals with wrap-around case management, housing, and employment support, that in coordination with probation agents, may make this a more attractive consideration for participants.

For individuals on County Probation, the Workgroup was pleased to find that the County leads the state in the percentage of individuals who early-discharge from community supervision due to their full compliance with all program and supervision requirements. It recommends highlighting and publicizing this achievement and encouraging even higher rates of success.

At the Reentry Center, the Workgroup recommends developing a variety of incentives used in other jurisdictions. In Bexar County, the Center has community providers that offer emergency food, gift cards, and transportation allowances for individuals just released from jails and prisons. In Montgomery County, Maryland, the jail issues a temporary ID for reentry participants

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at the time of release which is valid for 60 days and can be used as a bus pass and library card. As employment and housing remain the top areas of need and interest, the Hub would need to establish clear and meaningful partnerships backed up with a memorandum of understanding that would allow the Hub to enroll participants quickly in programs that provide temporary and transitional housing, and real workforce training and employment. Through a relationship with the Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, the Hub should help individuals in need of legal assistance seek out this agency.

With the establishment of a reentry center hub, Probation, State Parole, C.O.U.R.T.S., and US Probation could consider providing greater incentivizes for individuals to fully engage with their reentry plans by referring them to these community resources. As described earlier, the Hub would benefit if some of these agencies had representatives onsite at certain times including offering programs at the center.   Participants in the federal reentry program, who are eligible to reduce their community supervision period by one-year with the completion of the program, would also be incentivized to fully engage with resources at the hub.

Supporting Factors in Recommendation

The Workgroup recommendations on incentives in the jail were guided by the survey conducted by the Sheriff's Office which involved over 250 participants incarcerated at the Erie County Holding Center. The survey identified clearly that individuals were most interested in employment, housing and transportation assistance, and then secondarily, in mentoring and early release programs. Since the writing of this report, the survey has continued and has included individuals incarcerated at the Erie County Correctional Facility.

Also, the Workgroup benefitted from studying the incentives offered in other jurisdictions including Bexar County, Montgomery County, Allegheny County, and Hampden County. In states such as Massachusetts and Maryland, individuals participating in programs can earn time off their sentences for participating in reentry programs, and this is in addition to credits awarded for demonstrating good institutional conduct, often called "good time." In NY state, these additional incentives besides goodtime are not available. Longer term, the Workgroup recommends raising this as an issue with the New York State Council on Community Reentry and Reintegration for consideration of supporting statutory changes.

Finally, the Workgroup was highly impressed that Hampden County reported that 60% of their clients to their reentry center were individuals who came in voluntarily and were no longer under community supervision. In its site visit, it recognized that Hampden's development of a welcoming, clean, safe, and attractive reentry center that offers meaningful onsite services and warm handoffs with outside community providers creates strong incentives for these clients to participate in reentry programs.

Action Plan

The RACC recommends establishing two new committees to guide the implementation plan for the next three years.

The Erie County Reentry Resource Center Planning Committee (RRCPC) will establish the programmatic, staffing, partnership-agreements, and cost requirements to establish the center in the fourth quarter of 2019.   It will be co-chaired by representatives from the County Department of Mental Health, the Erie County Sheriff's Office, and a leading reentry provider.

The Reentry Information Systems Committee will determine how best to develop an information system to better coordinate reentry services among providers and to provide better accountability including the regular reporting of performance metrics. It will include representatives from the County's Department of Information Systems and Support, the County's Department of Mental Health, the Erie County Sheriff's Office, and the Erie County Probation Department. Membership on these committees will be solicited from the larger reentry coalition.

Finally, while not a committee, the RACC will recommend the formation of a Grants Committee comprised of a group of grant writers from agencies and organizations that can identify public and private funding opportunities that can assist with implementation of this coordinated plan. This group would convene to review funding opportunities.

Below is the workplan for the two committees in 2019

2019 Calendar Year

	Description	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	Erie County Reentry Resource Center Planning Committee				
1	**Select committee members and convene first meeting**	✓	✓		
2	**Define target population and expected # of individuals to be served on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis**	✓	✓		
3	**Create a programmatic plan and schedule of resources, services, and programs offered at the center**	✓	✓		
4	**Develop a staffing plan for the center beginning with staff members from the DMH IAMHS division and matched to the programmatic plan**	✓	✓		
5	**Set-up a social work intern program at the center**	✓	✓		
6	**Determine the space and service needs of partner agencies and organizations**	✓	✓		
7	**Develop a floorplan for the center that meets the programmatic and staffing plan of the center.**	✓	✓		
8	**Obtain cost estimates for physical space renovation, office furniture, and equipment including a computer lab**	✓	✓		
9	**Obtain cost estimates for program materials**	✓	✓		
10	**Obtain cost estimates for staffing**	✓	✓		

11	Collaborate with Reentry Information Services Committee on determining the MIS to support the center	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Determine performance metrics and reporting procedures	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Develop policies and procedures for the center	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Establish MOA's with key partner agencies and organizations include the Sheriff's Office, County Probation, State Parole, Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, C.O.U.R.T.S, US Probation, Federal Reentry Court, and leading reentry providers in employment, education, housing, health, and transportation services.	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Identify external resources to assist in supporting the center and develop an online director of resources	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Seek final approval for the establishment of the reentry center	✓	✓		
17	Renovate space in the center		✓	✓	
18	Purchase furniture, supplies, equipment, and programmatic materials		✓	✓	
19	Set-up office equipment including computer lab		✓	✓	
20	Train staff on programs and services offered at the center		✓	✓	✓
21	Train staff on center's policies, procedures, and protocols		✓	✓	✓
22	Implement MIS system and performance metrics			✓	✓
23	Open Erie County Reentry Service Center				✓
24	Provide year-end report on the performance of the center				✓
25	Develop a detailed 2nd year action plan				✓
Reentry Information Systems Committee					
1	Select committee members and convene first meeting	✓	✓		
2	Review goals and objectives of proposed system	✓	✓		
3	Determine what data will be captured, shared, and reported and the users of the system	✓	✓		
4	Develop scope of services document for the IT system	✓	✓		
5	Evaluate the feasibility of developing the IT system by the County with contractor assistance	✓	✓		
6	Evaluate the feasibility of adapting commercially available software to obtain an MIS system	✓	✓		
7	Conduct site visits to jurisdictions with information systems that represent best practices	✓	✓		
8	Obtain cost estimates of different options to develop and support the IT system	✓	✓		
9	Choose method of developing IT system	✓			
10	Develop IT system which includes interfaces with other databases and has the ability to grant permission as to what information is share with what providers		✓	✓	✓
11	Train staff and users on the IT system		✓	✓	✓

12	Implement and test new IT system			✓	✓
13	Produce service and performance reports from IT system			✓	✓
14	Develop a detailed 2nd year action plan				✓

Calendar Years 2 and 3

Each of the two committees will produce detailed workplans for calendar year 2020 in the fourth quarter of year 1.   Similarly the action plan for 2021 will be developed in the fourth quarter of 2020. Below are the questions that should guide the work plans of the committees in future years.

Erie County Reentry Planning Committee

1) Is the Erie County Reentry Resource Center serving the needs of individuals returning from incarceration from local, state, and federal correctional facilities, individuals on local, state, and federal probation and parole, and individuals with criminal histories but no current correctional supervision?
2) Is the number of individuals served well matched with the capacity of the center?
3) Is the center offering high-quality evidence-based programs onsite?
4) Are other agencies and non-profit providers represented on site and providing services at the center?
5) Have memorandum of understandings between the providers been established and refined to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in leveraging resources?
6) Is the center successfully triaging clients to services provided by capable providers?
7) Has the center assisted in fostering collaboration and partnership between reentry providers?
8) Are the center's services decreasing recidivism and taxpayer costs in the criminal justice system?
9) Are clients in the center advancing in employment, education, housing, family engagement goals as a result of service received?
10) Has the center assisted Erie County attract other private and public resources to further develop and strengthen the Erie County Reentry system?

Reentry Information System Committee

1) Is the Reentry Information System (RIS) accurately and efficiently tracking participation and progress in reentry programs?
2) Are providers and agencies finding the RIS easy to use and valuable as a resource?
3) Is the RIS interfacing with other criminal justice and provider databases?
4) Does the RIS have sufficient and robust administrative controls to clearly protect the privacy of treatment data and ensure data sharing complies with state and federal regulations?
5) Can clients review the accuracy and content of the information contained in their their records?

6) Is the RIS leading to improved coordinated care and services for clients among multiple clients?
7) Does the RIS lead to the more efficient use and referral of reentry services?
8) Does the RIS assist in holding programs accountable to goals set in performance contracts?
9) Does the RIS track and report on key performance metrics?
10) Can the RIS demonstrate the effectiveness of reentry services in Erie County?

Erie County Reentry Coalition					
Organization	**Last Name**	**First Name**	**Organization**	**Last Name**	**First Name**
Administrative Judge Eighth Judicial District	Feroleto	Hon. Paula	E.C. Probation Department	Feliz	Ysaias
Administrative Judge Eighth Judicial District	Isenberg	Andrew	E.C. Probation Department	McLaughlin	Brian
Administrative Judge Eighth Judicial District	Sconiers	Hon. Rose	E.C. Probation Department	Olszowy	Michelle
Back to Basics Outreach Ministries	Giles	James	E.C. Probation Department	Pilecki	Kathleen
Back to Basics Outreach Ministries	Walker	Pastor Charles	E.C. Reentry Task Force	Glen	MrGich
Bestself Health	Fung	Shavin	E.C. Sheriff's Department	Rommel	Deputy Jason
Bestself Health	Hernandez	Ivette	E.C. Sheriff's Office	Diina	Thomas
Bestself Health	Hoekstra	Barbara	E.C. Sheriff's Office	Evans	Paul
Bestself Health	Santiago	Jocelyn	E.C. Sheriff's Office	Rodriguez	John
Buffalo City Court	Amodeo	Hon. Thomas	E.C. Workforce Invest Board	Gresham	Heather
Buffalo Employment and Training Center	Glover	Otis	It Takes A Village Action	Gault	Modell
Buffalo Employment and Training Center	Smith	Demone	It Takes A Village Action	Newkirk	Beverly
Buffalo Public Schools Adult Education Division/UpSkill.org	Leopold	Lester	Justice Innovations	LoBuglio	Stefan
Buffalo Public Schools Adult Education Division/UpSkill.org	Robinson	Raynette	Leadership for Justice Innovation, LLC	O'Donnell	Denise
Buffalo Urban League	Colon	Kenneth	Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo	Curtin	Paul
Buffalo Urban League	McDuffie	Brenda	Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo	Schopp	Dave
CCNY (EVALUATOR)	Ranahan	Molly	Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo	Stadelmaier	Kevin
CCNY (EVALUATOR)	Tufte	Jessica	Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo	Vogel	Christine
Center for Employment Opportunities	Damon	Gary	Medaille College	Macur	Dr. Kenneth
Collins Correctional Facility	Kelly	Kimberly	Medaille College	Muccigrosso	Paul
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo	Beard	Felicia	NAACP	Blue	Rev. Mark
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo	Dedecker	Clotilde	New Life Residential Center	Coons	Tina
Community Health Center of Buffalo	Ansari	Dr. Lavonne	New Life Residential Center	Diggs	Antwan
Community Health Center of Buffalo	Shallowhorn	Karl	New Life Residential Center	Hamilton	Margaret
Community Resources for Justice/Buffalo Halfway House	Donnarumma	Ellen	NY Dep Corrections and Community Supervision	Jordan	Mercedes
Consultants – Educational Research	Miller	Dr. James	NY Dep Corrections and Community Supervision	Wilk	Elizabeth
E.C. Court	Eagan	Hon. Susan	NY State Division of Criminal Justice Services	Chretien	Margaret
E.C. Department of Mental Health	Grieco	John	NY State Division of Criminal Justice Services	Maccarone	Robert
E.C. Department of Mental Health	Ranney	Michael	Northland Training Center	Tucker	Stephen
E.C. Department of Mental Health	Schoelerman	Ron	Peaceprints of WNY	Allen	Lindsey
E.C. Department of Mental Health	Weigel	Eric	Peaceprints of WNY	McEachon	Cindi
E.C. Department of Social Services	Cannon	Marie	Reentry Consultant	LoBuglio	Stefan
E.C. Department of Social Services	Rybicki	Karen	Saving Grace Ministries	King	Rev. Terry
E.C. District Attorney's Office	D'Abate	Danielle	Say Yes to Education Buffalo	McClam	Tommy
E.C. District Attorney's Office	Flynn	Hon. John	Senator Kennedy's Office, NYS Senate 63rd District	Everhart	Zeneta
E.C. District Attorney's Office	Texido	Nicholas	U.S. Dist. Court Western NY Reentry Court	Calero	Christopher
E.C. Division for Youth	Kubala	Paul	U.S. Dist. Court Western NY Reentry Court	Rogers	Tammi
E.C. Executive's Office	Whyte	Hon. Maria	U.S. Dist. Court Western NY Reentry Court	SanGiacomo	Anthony
E.C. Family Court	Perry	Tiffany	U.S. Dist. Court Western NY Reentry Court	Scott	Hon. Hugh
E.C. Probation Department	Dickman	Brendon	United Health Care	Culligan	Christian

Erie County Reentry Advisory Coordinating Committee

Organization	Name
Buffalo Public Schools Adult Education	Lester Leopold
Buffalo Urban League	Ken Colon
Center for Employment Opportunities, Inc.	Gary Damon Jr.
City of Buffalo	Otis Glover
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo	Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker Felicia R. Beard
Erie County Department of Mental Health	Michael Ranney, Co-Chair Eric Weigel
Erie County Department of Mental Health	John Grieco Ron Schoelerman
Erie County Department of Social Services	Marie Cannon
Erie County District Attorney's Office	Hon. John Flynn Danielle D'Abate
Erie County Division for Youth Services	Paul Kubala
Erie County Executive's Office	Maria Whyte
Erie County Probation	Brian McLaughlin Ysaias Feliz
Erie County Reentry Task Force	Glen MrGich
Erie County Sheriff's Office	Thomas Diina, Co-Chair
Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable	Hon. Rose Sconiers
Legal Aide Bureau of Buffalo, Inc.	Kevin Stadelmaier
New York State Parole	
New York State Supreme Court, 8th Judicial District	Hon. Paula Feroleto Andrew Isenberg
New York University	Denise O'Donnell
PeacePrints	Cindy McEachon
U.S. District Court for Western New York	Hon. Hugh Scott
U.S. Probation and Reentry Court	Anthony SanGiacomo

Erie County Reentry Coordinating/HUB Workgroup

Goal: Improve access to and coordination between reentry services.

Name	Organization
Marie Cannon	Erie County Department of Social Services
Danielle D'Abate	Erie County District Attorney's Office
Zenetta Everhart	Senator Kennedy's Office
Ysaias Feliz	Erie County Probation
Hon. Paula Feroleto	NYS Courts
Jason Flores	U.S. Attorney's Office
Otis Glover	Buffalo Employment and Training Center
John Grieco	Erie County Department of Mental Health
Andrew Isenberg	NYS Courts
Kimberly Kelly	NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision
Les Leopold	Buffalo Public Schools Adult Education
Michael Ranney	Erie County Department of Mental Health
Anthony San Giacomo	U.S. Probation
Jocelyn Santiago/Ivette Hernandez	Bestself Health
Ron Schoelerman	Erie County Department of Mental Health
Hon. Hugh Scott	U.S. District Court for Western New York
Kevin Stadelmaier	Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo
Charles Walker	Back to Basics
Eric Weigel	Erie County Department of Mental Health
Elizabeth Wilk	NYS Parole

*Co-Facilitators are highlighted

Erie County Reentry Capacity Building Workgroup

Goal: Strengthen the capacity of individual stakeholders in the reentry system.

Name	Organization
Glenn MrGich	Erie County Reentry Task Force
Ken Colon	Buffalo Urban League
Gary Damon, Jr	Center for Employment Opportunities
Thomas Diina	Erie County Sheriff's Office
Hon. Susan Eagan	NYS Courts
James Giles	Back to Basics
Margaret Hamilton	New Life Residential Center
Terry King	Saving Grace Ministries
Paul Kubala	Erie County Department of Youth Services
Cindi McEachon	Peaceprints of WNY
Brian McLaughlin	Erie County Probation
Hon. Denise O'Donnell	New York University
Michelle Olszowy	Erie County Probation
John Rodriguez	Erie County Sheriff's Office
Demone Smith	Buffalo Employment and Training Center (BETC)

* Co-Facilitators are highlighted

Timetable of Key Planning Steps

2/2016	Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable defines strengthening Erie County's reentry system as 1 of 9 strategic goals to build a more equitable and inclusive community (process facilitated by Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo
4/2016	Formation of Erie County Reentry Coalition
7/2016	Presentation on national reentry best practices by the Council of State Governments Justice Center's National Reentry Resource Center
12/2016	Request for federal technical assistance approved by the US DOJ's Bureau of Justice Assistance National Training and Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC)
3/2017	Assessment and mapping study of Erie County's Reentry system begins by the CSG Justice Center
10/2017	Presentation of system strengths, core findings, and recommendations to strengthen reentry system
3/2018	Final report published: "Strengthening Reentry Services and Resources in Erie County, New York."
4-7/2018	Erie County Reentry Advisory Coordinating Committee (RACC) formed within Erie County Coalition two workgroups – Hub and Capacity – are created to address specific recommendations of report
8/2018	RACC kickoff meeting with monthly meetings of workgroups scheduled from September till December
9/2018	Best reentry practices benchmarking: visits to Allegheny County PA about jail reentry, probation reentry initiatives, and county information systems. Video Conferences with reentry programs in Dutchess County (NY), Bexar County (TX), and Hampden County (MA).
10/2018	Contact with NY counties task forces funded by the state Department of Criminal Justice Services
10/26/18	Update presentation to Erie County Reentry Coalition
11/2018	Site Visit to Hampden County (MA) & Dutchess County to view jail reentry, community reentry center, community-based step-down programs, and coordinated care assisted by information systems
12/14//2018	Hub and Capacity Workgroups Consensus Recommendations provided to RACC
4/3/2019	Reentry Advisory Coordinating Committee to review and develop consensus on recommendations which will be presented to the Erie County Coalition in February 2019.

Notable Achievements of Planning Process

1. Engagement of over eighty diverse reentry stakeholders representing county government, criminal justice and court agencies, non-profit providers, advocacy organizations, education institutions, philanthropic organizations, and individuals with lived experience.

2. Commitment to address **all** of the study report findings to strengthen reentry

3. Establishment of organizational planning structure including the Reentry Advisory Coordinating Committee and two workgroups from members of the larger Erie County Reentry Coalition

4. Benchmark site visits and video conferences with leading jurisdictions with strong jail and community reentry programs

5. Review of information platforms used by jurisdiction to share reentry service information for purposes of better coordinated care, efficiency and accountability of services, and overall system, performance assessment.

6. Detailed Survey of 15 of the largest reentry providers in Erie County to determine their needs, interests, capacity, and future plans.

7. Ongoing focus groups of incarcerated individuals to solicit their prioritized needs and interests, and to determine what incentives and support are needed to engage them in quality reentry services.

8. Peaceprints applied and received a $1 million federal award under the Second Chance Act to partner with the Erie County Sheriff's Office to develop and run a comprehensive jail reentry program.

9. Identification of a physical location for a Reentry Resource Center with the County's Department of Mental Health's Forensic Services Division

10. Preparation to seek additional private and government funding.

Reentry Innovations/Benchmark

County	Reentry Hub	Jail	Work Release	Probation	DA Office	DMH/DSS	Evidenced-Based	Treatment Data Sharing	Foundation	Task Force (NY only)
Dutchess (NY)		✓		✓			✓	✓		
Allegheny (PA)		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Bexar (TX)	✓	✓					✓			
Broome (NY)							✓			✓
Hampden (MA)	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Kings (NY)					✓		✓			✓
Montgomery (MD)		✓	✓				✓			
Westchester (NY)							✓			✓

Consultant Biography

Stefan LoBuglio
Principal
Justice Innovations

Stefan LoBuglio has worked in corrections for over 26 years as a practitioner, policy advocate, and consultant. Currently, his firm Justice Innovations provides assistance to jurisdictions in the US and internationally to strengthen their justice systems through the implementation of innovative and evidenced-based practices. Prior, Stefan was Director of Reentry and Corrections for the Council of State Governments Justice Center where he oversaw federally-funded efforts to promote successful adult reentry and improve correctional practices inside and outside of local, state, and federal institutions. At the Justice Center, he led the National Reentry Resource Center which is a project of the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance.

From 2005 till 2015, Stefan served as chief of the Pre-Release and Reentry Services Division for the Montgomery County (Maryland) Department of Correction and Rehabilitation. In this position, he oversaw the 171-bed, fully accredited Montgomery County Pre-Release Center, which provides comprehensive reentry programs for people who were formerly incarcerated in local jails, Maryland state prisons, or by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. He began his correctional career in 1992, developing reentry and community correctional programs at the 2,000-bed House of Correction in Boston for more than 12 years, eventually rising to the position of deputy superintendent of community corrections for the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department. In addition to his operational experience, Stefan has served on state-wide correctional reform taskforces in Maryland and Massachusetts, participated as an expert advisor on reentry projects, testified before the U.S. Congress, assisted in changing state legislation, and co-authored publications on reentry and recidivism.

In 2007, Stefan received his doctorate from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he focused his studies on the evaluation of correctional reentry programs. He earned an MA in public policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a BS in mechanical engineering from Duke University.