

Status of Prisoner Reentry Programming

Virginia State Crime Commission
September 16, 2009

Barry Green
Director, Department of Juvenile Justice

Key Statistics

- In calendar 2008, 13,164 state inmates were released from prisons and jails
- Up from 12,675 in 2007
- There were 38,387 state inmates on June 30, 2009
 - 439 fewer than on June 30, 2008
 - Commitments to prison declined 4.7% between 2008 and 2009
- Local responsible population was 19,671 in FY2009
 - Drop of 951 in past 2 years

Prison Capacity

- As a result of budget reductions in Fall, 2008, DOC capacity declined by 1,400 beds
- Most recent reduction will result in closing of 2 additional facilities, with capacity loss of 1,100 beds
- 800 beds completed over 2 years ago at St. Brides remain vacant due to budget reductions
- Construction will be completed on Grayson County facility with just over 1,000 beds this coming Spring (operational funding not included in current budget)
- As of September 11, 2009, there were 2,858 out-of-compliance state inmates in local and regional jails
 - Expected to increase over next 2 months as 1,100 beds noted above go off line

Declining Resources

- Successful reentry requires coordinated efforts between state level correctional and other agencies, as well as local, non-profit and faith-based organizations
- Reality is that state resources are declining, state aid to localities and local revenues are stressed, and foundation/corporate support of non-profits has been reduced as result of recession

Continuing and New Efforts

- While resource reductions at all levels have impacted ability to deliver services, some programs continue to produce
- Efforts focus on preparing offenders for release from point of entry into prison, initial transition period following release, and preparing them for the longer haul in their communities
- Working with offenders to reduce technical violations and return to prison or jail

Program Reductions Due to Budget

- Closure of day reporting centers
- Funding for transitional therapeutic community halfway house beds ended
- Pending closure of Botetourt Correctional Center – 380 therapeutic community beds
- Reduction in DCE teaching positions
- Reduction in funding for PAPIS
- Closure of Diversion/Detention Centers
- And more

But Progress Continues

- (Jane Brown will present on community based programs)
- Other programs continue and some have expanded
- Examples of programs follow...

Reentry Starts on Entry

- DOC adopted COMPAS risk and needs assessment instrument
 - Assesses criminogenic factors and treatment needs to be address during incarceration
 - Reentry version will provide P&P Districts assessments for period following release

During Incarceration and Near Release

- DOC has 3 positions developing reentry plans for those with mental and medical disabilities and work to find community placements; 5 to develop community plans for those without homes to return to
- Cognitive Communities established at Powhatan CC and Brunswick Work Center for Women for those with 6 months remaining
- Reentry units established at Dillwyn, Wallens Ridge, Lunenburg and Sussex I and II
 - Concentrate on preparing for life after prison
 - Partner with Goodwill to prepare, assist in search, and counsel after release for employment
 - VEC assists with employment search training
 - Life skills and personal financial management

Preparation for Release (continued)

- Prison Fellowship operates faith-based reentry program at James River CC
 - Offenders may volunteer for program 18 months prior to release
 - Community volunteers assist in planning for support services and continue as mentors after release
 - Program for females will begin in 2010
- Require birth certificate at entry and Social Security Card prior to release – P&P verifies resident on release so DMV can issue ID
- Continue jail based community reentry transitional program (14 local and regional jails)
- Maintaining family ties through video visitation program (Wallens Ridge and New Jubilee Church in Richmond)
 - Will expand to 8 additional prisons and will include sponsorship by Assisting Families of Inmates (non-profit)

Mental Health Issues

- Mental Health Release Summary sent from prisons to P&P District 30-45 days prior to release
- MOU with CSBs continues, aiding in planning
- DOC and DRS working together to speed up process of qualifying for rehabilitation services and SSI
- Commonwealth Consortium for MH and Criminal Justice Transformation (EO #62 – 2008)
 - Brings together law enforcement, DOC, jails, social services and CSBs to improve planning for MH services
 - 33 communities completed workshops last year
- Behavioral Health and Developmental Services funding for 10 jail diversion programs

Improving Employment Opportunities

- Reminder - Va. Tech study evaluated impact of education/vocational training in prisons
 - 6.5% lower recidivism
 - 24% increased incomes
 - Higher employment rates and stability
- One-Stops Behind Walls
- Mock Job Fairs
- Expansion of Industry Based Certifications (1,104 in FY2009, plus 1,770 OSHA certifications)
- Career Readiness Certificates

Reducing Hiring Barriers

- Change in ABC regulations reducing restrictions for hiring former offenders in businesses with ABC licenses (such as convenience stores, restaurants and supermarkets)
- Modified state application to clarify that prior offenses may not restrict hiring

Reducing Technical Violators

- Evidence Based Programming – Motivational Interviewing/Effective Communications
 - 9 P&P Districts fully trained
 - Some in remaining Districts – training continues
 - 20 of 39 Community Corrections agencies currently participating (DCJS received BJA grant to implement)
- Beginning to see improvements in numbers of technical violators being returned to prison

Concerns for the Future

- While some programmatic improvements continue with no new resources, reductions in resources at state and local levels limit progress
- Unknown what final impact will be for services after offenders return home
- Uncertainties in where the bottom lies make planning more difficult
- **But** – measured progress continues
- Meeting with state, local, non-profit and faith-based representatives to continue forward movement
 - Will be preparing transition document for incoming administration



Virginia Community Reentry Program

Presentation to:
Virginia State Crime Commission

Jane B. Brown, Director
Office of Community & Prevention Partnerships
Virginia Department of Social Services

September 16, 2009

Virginia Community Reentry Program

- **The Virginia Community Reentry Program (VCRP) is an approach to reentry that grew out of the Commonwealth's participation in the National Governor's Association Reentry Policy Academy and the Reentry Policy Academy established by Governor Kaine in Executive Order 22**
- **VCPR is one among different approaches to reentry**

Virginia Community Reentry Program

Barriers were identified through the broad community input of the Policy Academy

- **Financial Obligations, Housing, Community Resources**
- **Employment & Education (Workforce Development)**
- **Family & Community Reintegration**
- **Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse**

Virginia Community Reentry Program

Subcommittees were established based on the prioritized reentry barriers

Committees developed recommendations to address the identified reentry roadblocks

Subcommittees continue to meet to adjust strategies as new data becomes available

Localities were invited to voluntarily implement the Policy Academy recommendations to determine their impact and effectiveness

Virginia Community Reentry Program



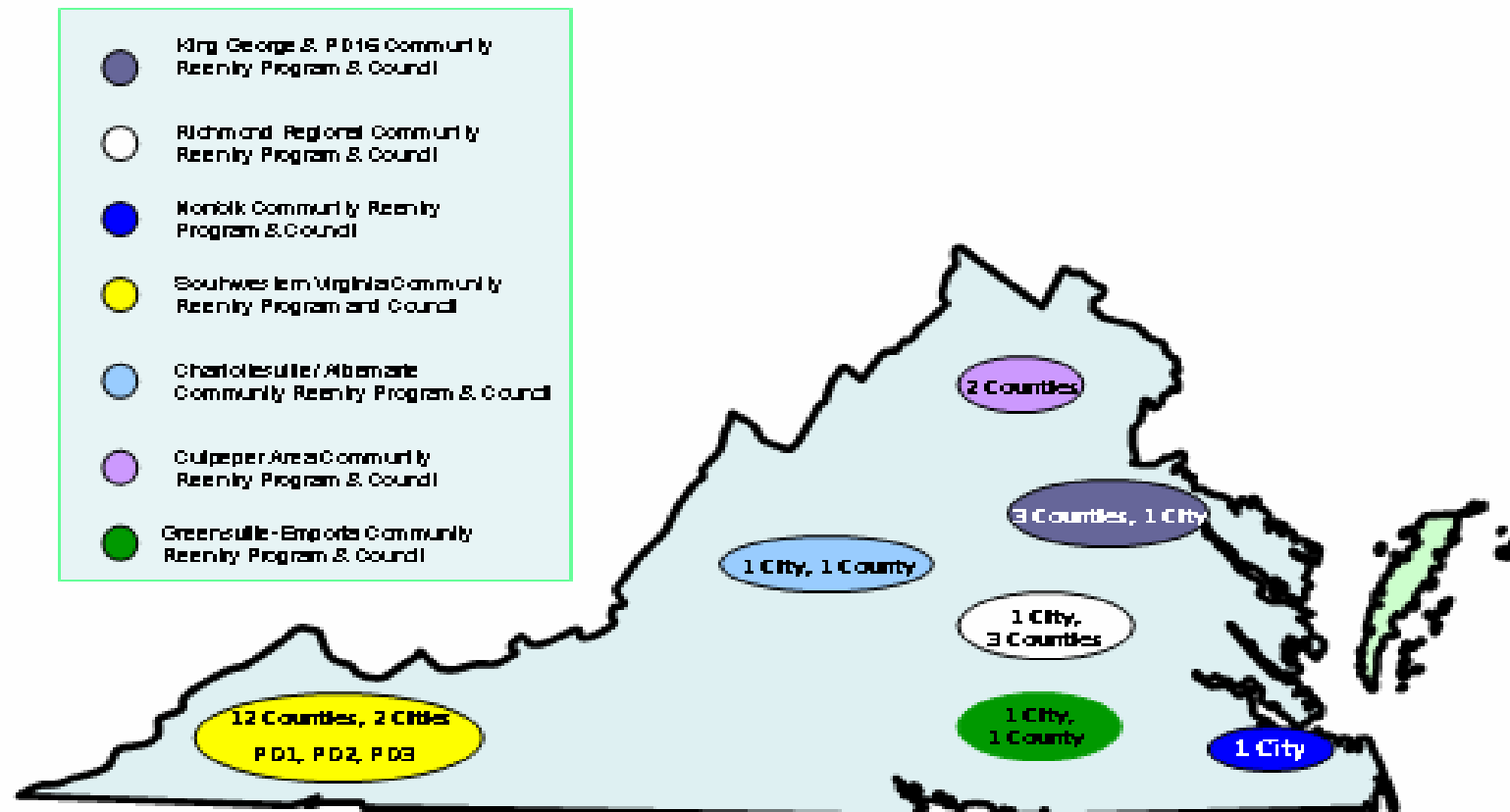
The Workforce Development Subcommittee

Virginia Community Reentry Program

- **Began as five pilot programs**
- **Expanded to seven areas of the state representing 30 localities**
- **Preliminary discussions underway in four additional localities**

VIRGINIA COMMUNITY REENTRY PROGRAM LOCAL REENTRY COUNCILS

VIRGINIA COMMUNITY REENTRY PROGRAM LOCAL REENTRY COUNCILS



Virginia Community Reentry Program

- **Incremental implementation**
Based on community resources & needs
- **Totally Voluntary**
Participating localities volunteer
Reentry council members/organizations volunteer
Program participants volunteer
- **Type of conviction is not a prohibiting factor for participation in the program**
- **Focus on barriers identified through the Policy Academy**

Virginia Community Reentry Program

VCPR is developed around four primary principles:

- **pre-release planning**
- **interagency coordination**
- **integrated service delivery**
- **positive links to the community and a system of family and community support**

Virginia Community Reentry Program

- **Participating communities establish a local reentry council**
- **Directors of local departments of social services and/or a community partner agency serve as conveners and bring together representatives of law enforcement, the courts, local government, public and private agencies, businesses, community-based service providers and faith-based organizations to form a local reentry council**

Virginia Community Reentry Program

Councils develop a reentry plan for their community that identifies

- **Resources available**
- **Methods for interagency coordination**
- **Plans for integrated service delivery**
- **Implementation of Policy Academy recommendations**



Dave Coman, Director of King George Dept. Of Social Services

Virginia Community Reentry Program

- **Community reentry councils are notified of those incarcerated persons that will be returning to their locality**
- **Representatives of the correctional facility and the local reentry council meet with the inmate and together they develop plans for the incarcerated person's return to the community**



The King George Reentry Council

Virginia Community Reentry Program

- **In the 12 months following release there is on-going contact with a representative (s) of the local reentry council**
- **Councils develop methods for on-going communication and support for the returning previously incarcerated person**



Sonya Toney and Sharon Taylor of the Richmond Reentry Council

Virginia Community Reentry Program

Core post release activities include:

- **Employment & workforce development services**
- **Assistance with locating housing**
- **Help with transportation**
- **Connection to health, mental health & substance abuse services**
- **Family and community reintegration support**

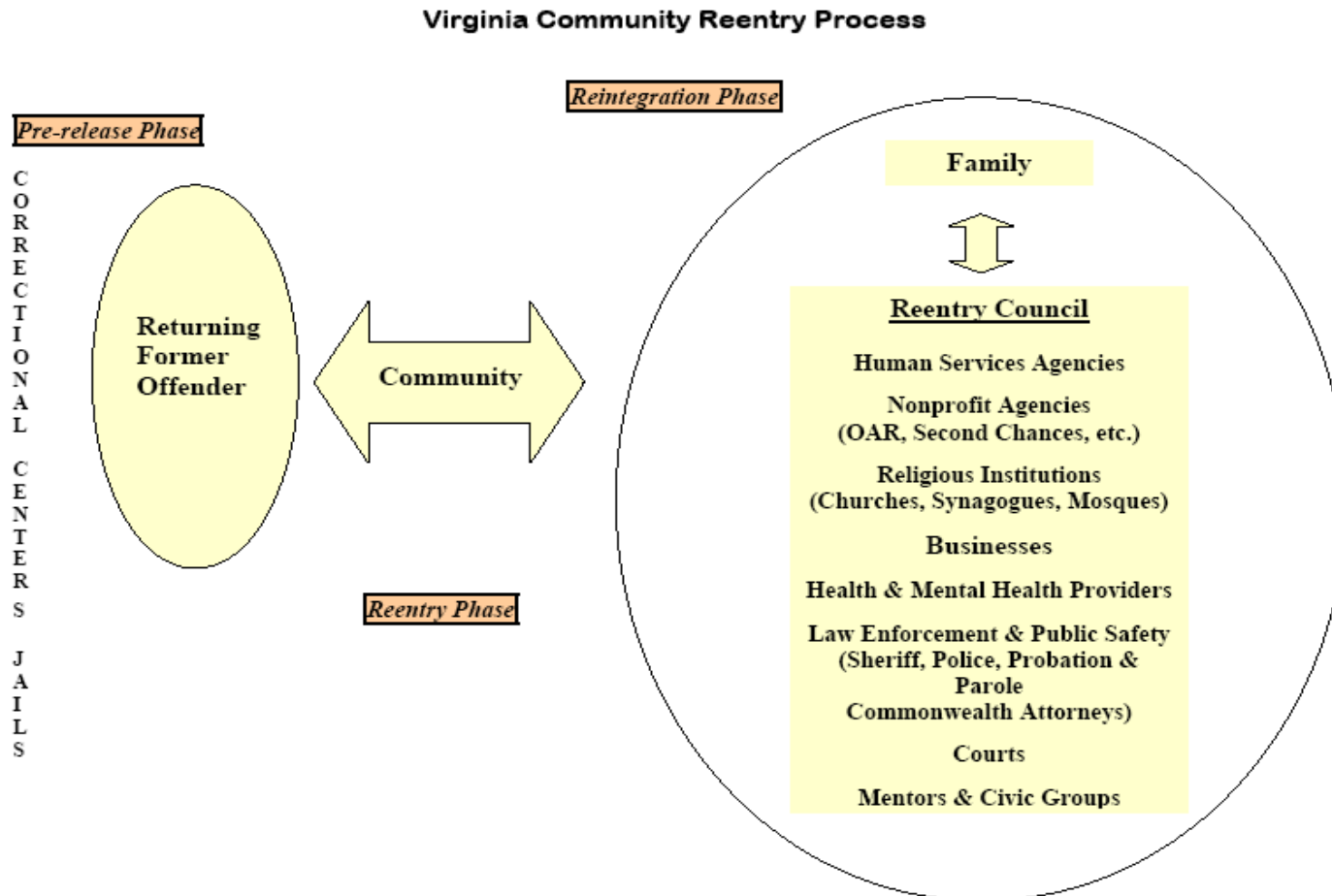


Southwest Virginia Reentry Council

Virginia Community Reentry Program

- **The VCRP approach includes individual and family-to-family mentoring during the reentry process and for 12 months following release**
- **Mentors may also serve as coaches for those returning to help them with life skills or specific skills development such as job interviewing or completion of a G.E. D.**

Virginia Community Reentry Program



Virginia Community Reentry Program

VCRP Highlights:

- **Culpeper – Served 55**
Established a support group for those previously incarcerated and their families – 35 active group participants

Successful engagement of mentors and strong community collaboration

Facility Partners: Coffeewood, Fluvanna, local jail

Virginia Community Reentry Program

VCRP Highlights:

- **Richmond – Served 26**
Well established active reentry council and partnerships (GRIP–Drug Court-Prison Fellowship)

Case management team

Expanded to Regional Reentry Council (Richmond, Henrico, Chesterfield, Hanover)

Facility Partners: Powhatan and Fluvanna
Expanding to James River, Virginia Correctional Center for Women, Richmond City Jail

Virginia Community Reentry Program

VCRP Highlights:

- **King George - Served 140**
Developed local housing partnership

Beginning a weekly men's support group for those returning to the community

Expanded - King George and PD 16 Council

**Facility Partners: Haynesville Correctional Center
(Pre-release)**

Any/all correctional centers post-release

Virginia Community Reentry Program

VCRP Highlights:

Norfolk – 283 Served

Use of the FSET (Food Stamp & Employment Training) Program for job training for 85 participants

Family reunification emphasis

Virginia Community Reentry Program

Norfolk – 283 Served (Continued)

**Raised public awareness of reentry issues
2008 Town Hall Meeting – 225 attendees**

**2009 Town Hall Meeting – September 17, 2009
Ruffner Middle School, 610 May Avenue, Norfolk, VA
23504**

**Facility Partners: Greensville and Fluvanna
Efforts are underway to establish partnerships with
Deerfield, Indian Creek and St. Brides Correctional
Centers**

Virginia Community Reentry Program

VCRP Highlights:

- **Greensville/Emporia – Medical/Special Needs**

The Greensville/Emporia focus is special needs, including medical needs. Greensville Correctional Center has a hospital, including a full-service dialysis center and a mental health treatment office. All of the inmates in these specialty treatment units depend upon accessing Medicaid coverage as soon as possible upon their release. The director of Greensville-Emporia DSS has assisted corrections staff in completing these individuals' Medicaid applications and finding appropriate housing, including nursing home care.

Facility Partner: Greensville Correctional Center

Virginia Community Reentry Program

VCRP Highlights

- **Albemarle/Charlottesville – 340 Served**

Well established reentry council

Reentry issues/clients included in Community Job Fair sponsored by Charlottesville's Economic Development Department

Implemented a medical screening protocol for all soon to be released jail inmates

Developed a mentoring program

Facility Partner: Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail

Virginia Community Reentry Program

VCRP highlights:

- **Southwester Virginia – Served 223**

Partnership with Federal Court (Reentry Court)

Partnership expansion to regional jails to establish substance abuse recovery programs that include developing and implementing reentry plans

Virginia Community Reentry Program

Program Progress for 136 Initial Evaluation Group

- **Qualitative analysis indicates communities implementing VCRP are taking different approaches in addressing the challenges of reentry from prison or jail**
- **The overall effectiveness of these approaches cannot yet be determined because many of the enrolled individuals have been out of prison for only a short time (i.e., less than one year)**
- **More time will be needed to assess the main outcome measures – recidivism and employment**

Virginia Community Reentry Program

■ Program Progress for 136 Initial Evaluation Group

The program appears to be reaching many individuals before and after their release from prison

For individuals who had been released and who had a service contact, 54% had contacts both before and after release

The most common types of service were: assessment/follow-up, mentoring and counseling, employment, and transportation

Virginia Community Reentry Program

- **Program Progress for 136 Initial Evaluation Group**

Individuals enrolled in the VCRP were more likely to have received benefits from the Food Stamp (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program) and Medicaid programs

VCRP is designed to link those previously incarcerated with appropriate social services to assist them as they work toward self-sufficiency

Members of the program group were nearly twice as likely to be receiving Medicaid benefits as comparison group members

Virginia Community Reentry Program

■ Implementation Challenges

As a volunteer program enrollment and retention are difficult issues for most localities

Data collection

Lack of dedicated resources (staff and funding)

Virginia Community Reentry Program

- **Reentry Challenges**

 - Employment**

 - Housing (Especially Sex Offenders)**

 - Health, Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services**

 - Financial Obligations**

 - Family & Community Reintegration**

 - Transportation**

 - Aging & Disabled Inmate Population**

- **VCRP Public Safety Potential**

 - Decrease in Crime**

 - Prevention**

 - Reentry Courts**

Virginia Community Reentry Program

- **Accepting personal responsibility is foundational for an offender's successful reentry**
- **95% of incarcerated persons return to the community**
- **If communities prepare and how communities prepare for returning inmates can be important public safety strategies**
- **Localities implementing VCRP report this community based collaborative approach is not only helping them address prisoner reentry but is strengthening their overall service delivery system**

Virginia Community Reentry Program

Successful reentry:

- **Improves public safety**
- **Supports families**
- **Is good stewardship of tax dollars**

Virginia Community Reentry Program

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