

This document is the result of 5-7 months of meetings and research by the 10 State Reentry Council Collaborative (SRCC) workgroups and presents draft recommendations. The SRCC welcomes your comments and feedback on these draft recommendations. **Note: Budget numbers in these recommendations are estimates only and have not been verified.**

All feedback will be reviewed and considered. Once the final recommendations are approved by the SRCC, they will be submitted to the NC General Assembly and the Office of Governor Roy Cooper.

In submitting your feedback, please include the following information:

- Your name
- Organization (if applicable)
- Workgroup and recommendation to which your feedback applies

We welcome any feedback submitted prior to the deadline, but all comments must be emailed to Irene Lawrence at irene.lawrence@ncdps.gov by 5pm on October 31st.

SRCC Education & Vocational Training Workgroup Recommendation #1 - Alumni Network

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

In support of the recommendation to implement the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) Reentry Education Framework, the SRCC Education and Vocational Training Workgroup recommends the creation of a network of people who have completed vocational or academic programs while incarcerated. Further, North Carolina Department of Public Safety should develop supports for the implementation of a Justice Involved Alumni Network to be operated by the Local Reentry Councils of North Carolina.

BACKGROUND

Justice-involved people have forms of expertise and credibility far superior to others. They understand the unique challenges the justice-involved face, and solutions to these challenges any one person develops will be useful for many other people, solutions that may not be universally known. Accessing those resources will empower justice-involved people to conceptualize and realize their post-release objectives, and a dedicated alumni network will maximize that access.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

A number of alumni groups are quickly developing across the country, though few beyond—at this point—an email listserv and a Facebook page. We recommend giving all of those who complete vocational and academic programs in the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) contact information for the manager of the alumni network, who can add them to both an email listserv and/or Facebook pages, one public and one private. The listserv and Facebook pages will serve as forums for questions asked and suggestions by any one alumnus. Leaders of the alumni network will post on a weekly or monthly basis in order to cultivate robust network activity. Topics will be wide-ranging, including education, housing, employment, transportation, and others.

STAKEHOLDERS

Justice-involved students who complete vocational and educational programs. A staff person at UNC-Chapel Hill will create, expand, and maintain the alumni network, email listserv, and Facebook pages.

BUDGET

This will not be a cost-intensive initiative. The responsibility for creating and maintaining the network to be become part of a job description of a UNC-CH Correctional Education position.

TYPE OF ACTION

UNC-CH's Correctional Education Program will map out the logistics and create and maintain the network.

TIMELINE

Short-term: establish an email listserv and create Facebook pages for alumni. Distribute contact information for network manager.

Medium- and long-term: hire a justice-involved person to take over the management of the network. Create content, facilitate discussions.

**SRCC Education & Vocational Training Workgroup
Recommendation #2 – Reentry Education Navigator**

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The North Carolina Governor’s Association (NCGA) should allocate \$140,000 for a pilot program creating two full-time Reentry Education Navigator positions entirely dedicated to the needs of justice-involved students. The individuals in these roles will assist individuals transitioning from incarceration to release in their local community by assisting them in identifying personal and professional goals, opportunities, enrollment in educational or vocational programs, and employment leading to a livable wage. This two-year pilot will provide competitive funding as outlined below for a NC Community College to employ and house one of the Reentry Education Navigators on their campus to assist with the reentry needs of their service area.

BACKGROUND

Just like Veterans and other populations, Justice-involved students disproportionately need social, economic, and legal support, and they also have unique needs. Just as there is support for veterans, justice-involved students will benefit from support dedicated to them.

These staff person will be familiar with issues confronting justice-involved students and have expertise in helping justice-involved students effectively navigate educational institutions. Further, the staff person will be familiar with community services and employers in the community college’s area.

A dedicated full-time staff person will begin by developing partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, such as with social service, transportation, and housing providers. Furthermore, this staff member will develop relations with NCDPS parole and probation staff to facilitate handing off formerly incarcerated people to community colleges and four-year schools as well as educating NCDPS staff about college opportunities for probationers and parolees.

In addition, a staff person will provide a safe space for justice-involved students to talk and share their experiences and difficulties. The existence of this space will facilitate a culture change on campus of acceptance, support, and sensitivity towards people who are justice-involved.

This type of support works, as programs in California have high graduation rates (97% versus the average of 59%) and higher grade point averages.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

California leads the way, although community colleges there are just forming programs. All California programs have identified a dedicated staff person as the key need for supporting justice-involved students.

Additionally, the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges supports a Reentry Navigator position at each of the state's prison facilities to ensure a smooth transition back to society and to reduce the prohibitive cost of recidivism in the state.

STAKEHOLDERS

The leadership at two community colleges.

BUDGET

\$140,000 for 100% funding for compensation. This budget is based on the funding requirements for two full-time positions during the pilot and funds the positions with the same level of compensation as the NC Community College Career Coaches.

TYPE OF ACTION

NCDPS will manage the awarding of these funds based on the criteria outlined below. The awarded College will hire the staff person.

The criteria that must be addressed by a College applying to serve as a pilot are outlined below.

- College must have a reentry missioned facility as defined by NCDPS in its service area.
- College must have or be able to demonstrate the ongoing development of a local reentry council in its service area
- College must demonstrate its capacity to support such a position on its campus and to support the partnerships required to be successful.
- Preference is given to Colleges serving at least one Food and Nutrition Service Employment and Training county.

TIMELINE

Short-term:

- Seek NCGA Funding for the program during the 2019 Long Session
- Research best practices for staff person and create a job description.

Medium term:

- Hire staff person. Staff person develops relationships with community partners and NCDPS and law enforcement.

Long-term:

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of this program for possible expansion to all reentry missioned facilities.

SRCC Education & Vocational Training Workgroup
Recommendation #3 – Professional Development for Faculty and Staff

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The North Carolina Governor’s Association (NCGA) should allocate \$25,000 for the development of online professional development modules for faculty and staff across the state who serve the current and previously justice involved. These professional development modules would be made available to all agencies and educational institutions who serve this population including community colleges, local reentry councils, universities, and workforce development agencies with the goal of better preparing front line individuals to serve this population and ensure a successful transition back into society. The development of these modules and the hosting and delivery would be managed by the NC Virtual Learning Community a joint project of the NC Community College System Office, Fayetteville Technical Community College, Surry Community College, and Wake Technical Community College.

BACKGROUND

Justice-involved students face a variety of issues regarding financial aid, registering for classes, engaging course material, evaluating transcripts, and course of study. Difficulty with any one of these issues may be fatal to academic success. Currently, North Carolina Community Colleges and UNC-system do not train advisors, registrars and other key points of contact about re-entry-specific issues. Many educational staff are unaware of these unique issues, preventing effective support and leading to reduced retention of these students.

Further, many formerly incarcerated students have experienced trauma, and trauma-informed support will be useful. Familiarizing staff with these issues will help frame relationships and develop teaching techniques responsive to justice-involved students again increasing student retention and success.

Altogether, producing and utilizing a webinar addressing these issues will empower education professionals to support justice-involved students.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

California is the only state to produced similar training modules targeting this important student population. These trainings are in their infancy and continue to be developed. One California community college has contracted with Innovative Educators, a company who is producing a webinar addressing best practices in serving justice-involved students. NC is well positioned study this implementation in a peer state and consider the procurement of this best practices content in addition to the development of content specific to North Carolina students. The NC Community College System Office Virtual Learning Community is also positioned to facilitate the development and delivery of these professional development modules.

STAKEHOLDERS

Faculty, advisors, registrars, financial aid, and any other staff at NCCC and four-year colleges and universities who work with justice-involved students as well as the NC Community College System Virtual Learning Community Office.

BUDGET

\$25,000 would facilitate the researching, development, hosting and delivery of two professional development modules by the NC Community College System Virtual Learning Community. A researcher team of those faculty and staff currently serving the population in addition to student stakeholders would be assembled to collect and synthesize information about re-entry specific issues at community and four-year colleges inclusive of existing best practices.

TYPE OF ACTION

The community college system will take the lead in managing this project. The four-year system will review the training module and incorporate information relevant to its context.

At a minimum, these modules will address the following topics:

- Trauma-Informed Care
- Terminology
- Barriers to Success

TIMELINE

Short-term:

- Seek NCGA Funding for the program during the 2019 Long Session
- Education & Vocation Committee continues research of best practices and resources around the country

Intermediate:

- Upon funding develop contract with NC Community College System Virtual Learning Community for the management of the research, development, hosting and delivery of two modules.
- December 2019 training program will be completed and made available.
- Spring Semester 2020 faculty and staff will have completed the training.

Long-term:

- Ongoing review of the implementation and incorporation of new innovative practices in the field.