



State Reentry Council Collaborative Quarterly Meeting Notes (February 13, 2024)

Director of Reentry Services Lateisha Thrash, NCDAC Rehabilitative and Reentry, read the “Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest Reminder”.

Secretary Todd Ishee, NC Department of Adult Correction, gave brief overview of the Executive Order 303 and Reentry 2030 via Powerpoint, forming a Joint Reentry Council making up several departments (DHHS, Commerce, Agriculture, Transportation, DPS, Revenue, DIT, etc. within DAC and to include Post release supervision and TREC. He discussed the growth of the Medicaid Expansion and how it will encompass all offenders prior to releasing from prison. Mr. Ishee talked about the Commercial Driver’s License Training being offered at Greene Correctional and how it was going to be great for DAC; offender’s leaving prison with CDL license to drive commercially. He also discussed the Women’s Field Minister Program at NCCIW and the educational challenges such as HiSET (more completions lead to more graduates). Also, Hope University expanding bigger that is it now and the executive order assisting with expanding our Local Reentry Councils in NC. Lastly, Correction Enterprises efforts assisting with reentry and the CDL’s for offenders.

Chief Deputy Secretary Maggie Brewer, NCDAC Rehabilitation & Reentry and Correctional Services, she officially introduced Lateisha Thrash, Director of Reentry, as the new chair for the SRCC. She gave some brief/quick updates on CDL program and introduced some partners in the audience. She discussed how the agency signed a contract (RFP process) with a company set to start on March 1, 2024. Some of the criteria: six months within release date and complete all 4 weeks. The cohort will only have 8 to 10 offenders and upon completion will receive their Class A CDL’s. As part of the contract, the company will assist with them obtaining their CDL license. She explained it is huge as it relates to the reentry process. She opened the floor up for any questions or concerns.

Deputy Secretary George Pettigrew, NCDAC Rehabilitation and Reentry Services, opened by stating he is excited about what is going on with reentry. He stated the event with the Governor at the mansion was very energizing for us. He began to discuss what the Executive Order 303 asked the state to do. He stated it has ordered us to create a Joint Reentry Council to come up with the Strategic Plan and to reach certain goals. He stated this plan will help to energize SRCC. He read over the goals; 1) Improve the economic mobility of formerly incarcerated people by increasing the number of local reentry councils and providing access to educational, technical training, apprenticeship, work-based learning, and employment opportunities; 2) Improve mental and physical health by expanding access to behavioral health and substance use disorder services pre-and post-release and ensuring that all eligible incarcerated people obtain Medicaid upon release; 3) Expanding housing opportunities for formerly incarcerated people, and 4) Remove barriers to successful community reintegration, especially for those returning to historically underserved communities. Our goals align with that for 2030. It will help us with the recommendations we need to complete that are still in process. He discussed July 31, 2024, as the



submit date to the Governor for the Strategic Plan. This order also, mandates who will be on the Joint Reentry Council involving all departments and their appointees. He also discussed the progress report by December 2024 to the Governor and is sure the goal can be accomplished. Mr. Pettigrew informed the attendees of the first JRC meeting on February 15, 2024, and the plan of meeting monthly until the objective is completed. He discussed the purchasing of Narcan to be given to offenders upon release. 2030 is a big deal and a national effort. We are the third state working on Reentry 2030 efforts, with Nebraska being the fourth. He wrapped things up by mentioning the Reentry 2024 Conference being held at the Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley Hotel.

Chief Deputy Secretary Brandeshawn Harris, NC Department of Adult Corrections Operations, she thanked everyone for taking the time out of their day and for working hard at streamlining the approach for reentry.

Director of Reentry Services, Lateisha Thrash, NC DAC Rehabilitation and Reentry Services, she reiterated about the upcoming Reentry 2024 Conference in April 2024. She advised everyone if they have not registered then encouraged them to go on the DAC web site and register. She provided a few highlights of the conference: 1) Second Chance Employer Lunch and Learn Fair on Monday with opportunities for Chaplains who serve statewide and offenders meeting there to share, will have a legislative panel and we are bringing back our Justice Involved Panel-Incarceration to Transformation. We want to bring them to the table to share their success. We have over 55 presentations that was presented and we will be reaching out to the one's that submitted as it relates to presenting. Mrs. Thrash informed everyone about the ramp in reentry simulations since last August. If anyone is interested in being a participant or a volunteer, then reach out to Nicole Spruell to get involved. As you have heard Reentry 2030 is not taking the place of SRCC; it is here to stay.

Policy Advisor, Ziev Dalsheim-Kahane, Office of the Governor, he began by informing everyone that reentry is Governor Cooper's top priority. He let everyone know if they have any questions about the Executive Order, they could reach out. He talked about the order leveraging the executive branch to improve reentry in NC and the largest obstacles like education, health care and employment. He continued to talk about the reentry council that the executive order creates an additional cabinet agency, the Office of State Human Resources they do great work around state government hiring justice involved people. The governor is a believer in second chances and reentry has been a passion of his since working as Attorney General. He thanked everyone for the work they do.

Director of Reentry Services Lateisha Thrash, NCDAC Rehabilitation and Reentry Services, began discussing the four (4) Implementation Workgroups (local, executive, communication, legislative) and two of them are here, the local and the executive. I want them to give a brief overview of their group.

- **Director of Administration Lindsay Jackson**, First at Blue Ridge Transitional Housing, discussed her role as lead of the Local Implementation Workgroup with SRCC. She stated they just had



their first meeting last month and now is the time for anyone interested to get involved. We all work in different roles, and we can collectively bring things to the table. We will begin working on the recommendations that are still in progress.

- **Assistant Secretary for Equity and Inclusion Angela Bryant**, Division of Health and Human Services, she discussed her role as the lead of the Executive Branch Implementation Workgroup with SRCC. She stated she has been working with the group about four years now and how she has received strong support from about nine different areas, DMV, DHHS, Aging and Homeless, Justice Initiative Staff, justice involved persons, etc.

Mrs. Thrash asked the attendees to be a part of these workgroups. We need your expertise, and we value your ideas and thoughts as it relates to reentry. She did inform everyone about April being Second Chance Month and Chef Jeff will be back at the conference.

Legislative Liaison Corey Slife, NCDAC Legislative Affairs, she stated Rehabilitation and Reentry Team always provides her with the tools when going to speak with the legislators as it relates to rehabilitation and reentry efforts. Executive Order Reentry 2030 will help legislators to have a newfound focus on things needed for rehabilitation and reentry efforts. It will help them look at SRCC legislative recommendations going into the short session. We need to continue to develop relationships so we can all push towards a common goal. She did not have much to update us on, due to legislators are taking a break right now.