

Post-Sentencing & Reentry Subcommittee Meeting Notes
April 7, 2022

Attendees:

Natalie Holbrook (Co-chair)
Lawanda Hollister (Co-chair)
Dennis Schrantz
Kat Layton
Ariana Gonzalez
Alma Wheeler Smith
Natasha Abner
Tara Dhanraj (Vera)
Angie Carpio (Vera)
Alex Roth (Vera)

Member drafted paper in response to brainstorming prompts; will share soon
Addressing other re-entry conversations around the state and the specific mission of the Washtenaw work.

Show of survey results

- 8 responses; 2 "others"
- 6 had highest score (4);
 - access/barriers to housing
 - Differences between jail and prison reentry
 - Reentry issues for people who have served long sentences
 - Probation/parole violations
 - Michigan prisoner reentry initiatives
 - Increasing community control

Discussion:

- At one time the Michigan reentry was one of the best; it is now completely reduced
- We can take a look at the last comprehensive plan to see what that group had seen relative to what's missing
- Catholic Charities has been working with MPRI; we can go to Catholic Charities to get an understanding of successes with MPRI and successor entity, Offender Success.
- Limitations with state prisoner reentry
- More of a longer-term approach; could hitch our wagon on MI-CEMI

Member-does not have a problem looking at reentry as one of the issues but have to focus on racial disparities. Some of the priorities we have identified are a part of any good reentry program, but it does not speak to disparities.

- *Ask for data from sheriff's reentry program. Who has access to it and how do they perform through the reentry program?
- Can we invite Aaron Suganuma to speak?

Co-chair - looking at reentry issues for people who have served long sentences

Member - Funding has dwindled down so much and we don't know how department of corrections decides who gets resources, and is it racially disparate?
When you consider racial disparity on PRIs and who is recommended for release, etc. we have many issues with reentry and what is contributing to disparity.

Co-chair - How can we look at racial disparity when looking at all of this?

Co-chair - can Vera find out all the parole violations technical and new crimes for Washtenaw? Can we get the actual violation? PVT data sheet?
Getting race data for this is a whole other issue. How can we look at this?

Member - We know there are racial disparities, I voted for looking at disparities in sentence recommendations because we really need to understand the front end to know who has access to resources, etc.

Member - are we required to use MDOC for data / there is a problem and a conflict of interest there.

Member - We need to get data from DOC, they likely won't want to give it over, but they have to especially if we FOIA it. We do have access to that information and the right to it, but actually getting it is another thing
PSI recommendations are not available from FOIA

Co-chair - dept has done a good job of sanitizing how they use statistics - can't imagine they use parole statistics with race. We might bump into some issues but we can probably get to somewhere through a hearing.

Co-chair - People from Washtenaw get released elsewhere, and people detained somewhere else get released in Washtenaw. How do we get accurate data with that?
If someone goes to jail here in Washtenaw, it won't be reflected in Washtenaw because they may reenter somewhere else.
We will have to come up with different avenues for different data sets

Member - Have to treat jail/prison reentry as very different things and the data as very different.

Member - Confirming there are people reentering that are not going back into Washtenaw county. Many people in Washtenaw jail did not commit in Washtenaw county.

Member - Don't have to start from scratch; there is a rich arsenal of information in the Sentencing Project's manual.
Attaching an addendum with more research questions in paper he is providing.

Does it make sense to have a group of subcommittee members to dig into this with the research?
Does this happen outside of meetings?
Yes, this can definitely be done over emails, etc.

Broad areas could include; what's happening with PSIs, jail reentry, revocations.

Co-chair - I think we can fit all of this stuff in with the broader context; looking at assessment tools, landscape analysis, knowing what there is to offer people, I think we can get there.

Co-chair sees the priorities as;

Getting really good data on disparities in jail/prison and reentry

Seeing what works with MPRI and jail reentry

Trying to get community control of funding for prison reentry (and looking at funding)

Through these, we can do a landscape analysis of what is in Washtenaw in who is using them, who has access, how can we/the programs do better? We can hear from offender success, jail folks, etc. on what they are doing right now

Member recommending doing a racial disparity index; methodology in The Sentencing Project manual.

Member - send chosen priorities to entire committee and give them deadline to agree to chosen priorities.

If we can agree today; Vera staff can send something out to everyone.

Member - Feels very strongly about creating a racial disparity index. We do not have that information and we need to have that.

Vera staff see that as part of the research they would do.

Co-chair - looking forward to pulling out research questions.

Member:

Pre-sentence recommendations

Length of prison stay; parole/release decisions

Selection by the DOC of who is eligible for offender success

Revocation/return decisions from DOC

Jail/prison reentry general

Co-chair - these are lead-ins to the priority areas

1. Access/barriers to services/needs on reentry ** including this in other priorities
2. Differences between jail and prison reentry (differences in services, reentry planning, issues specific to people serving long prison sentences)
3. Disparities in sentence recommendations/sentences (including looking at PSI recommendations)
4. Probation/Parole & violations (who gets released, who gets violated and why)
5. Increasing local control over reentry (including looking at what worked with MPRI and how to revive it locally)