

Fresh Start

Strategic Plan

Revised March 2016

Introduction

In September, 2009, the Gallatin County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (**CJCC**) approved the creation of a task force to examine how the recidivism rate among offenders might be reduced and the ways in which successful reentry into the community might be accomplished.

Members of the Gallatin County Reentry Task Force (**GCRTF**) were selected from a variety of local organizations/agencies working with offenders, including, but not limited to, law enforcement, the legal system, job service, mental health and the Montana Department of Corrections (**MT DOC**). In addition, representatives of community-based and faith-based groups working with offenders were invited to join the GCRTF.

The GCRTF Executive Committee developed, and was guided by, the following Guiding Principles/Core Values:

- **Honesty** - truth and transparency at all times;
- **Integrity** - subscribing to the highest ethical, professional and moral standards; never using the position and associated privileges on the subcommittee for personal gain;
- **Accountability** - to the charge/task issued by the CJCC, to fellow subcommittee members and to the Gallatin County community at-large;
- **Teamwork** - cooperation, collaboration, networking and sharing the workload.
- **Commitment** - to accomplishing individual tasks, goals, objectives and the mission of the GCRTF;
- **Excellence and Quality** - in all activities, projects, meetings and reports;
- **Respect and Compassion** - to all individuals;
- **Persistence and Passion** - in service, leadership and stewardship;
- **Apolitical** - not engaging in any political or lobbying activities, unless expressly permitted by the GCRTF member's employer/agency/organization and/or by law.

Beginning in October 2009, the GCRTF created working groups with the following objectives: (1) to write a clear and concise definition of recidivism; (2) to research recidivism risk factors; 3) to identify and establish a collaborative network of community-based partners interested in reentry; (4) to examine evidence-based practices for evaluation; (5) to research educational and vocational programs known to improve reentry; (6) to select a risk/needs assessment instrument and (7) to prepare a discharge plan document that would include a list of supportive services. The Executive Committee of the GCRTF drafted the Strategic Plan with recommendations to launch

and implement a Reentry Initiative Program (**RIP**) in 2013. The Strategic Plan, containing the RIP, was carefully reviewed by the GCTF on October 17, 2012, and unanimously approved with minor modifications. The Strategic Plan was presented to the CJCC at its meeting on November 7, 2012, with a request for approval to move forward with action plans to achieve the goals and objectives as outlined.

Respectfully submitted,
Marty Lambert and Roxanne Klingensmith, Co-Chairs, GCRTF

Executive Summary

The Gallatin County RIP, renamed Fresh Start in October 2014, is a collaborative partnership of community-based service organizations, state and local government officers and employees, and volunteers. Wherever possible, Fresh Start employs recognized best practices to ensure successful offender reentry into the community. The GCRTF Executive Committee provides oversight of Fresh Start. The Executive Committee consists of local government officials, law enforcement, and community stakeholders.

Vision and Mission Statements

Vision: To eliminate recidivism by empowering healthy, productive, law abiding citizens through collaboration and effective use of evidence-based and community-based resources and services.

Mission: To reduce recidivism by promoting successful reentry in Gallatin County.

Organization History and Profile

The GCRTF was appointed by the Gallatin County CJCC in the fall of 2009 with the specific task “*to explore ways to reduce recidivism.*” The CJCC consists of 11 voting members including judges, law enforcement officials, public officials, local government representatives and service providers who make recommendations to the Gallatin County Commissioners to improve the local criminal justice system. The CJCC also includes a total of 12 non-voting advisors representing various community interest groups.

The concept of a coordinated community-based approach to offender reentry dates back to December 7, 2005, when the CJCC prioritized 26 goals (low, medium, high priority). Reentry coordination ranked #6. By March 2011, the CJCC identified recidivism reduction as a top priority. The Rev. Roxanne Klingensmith and County Attorney Marty Lambert serve as co-chairs of the GCRTF. In 2009 a total of 26 members were appointed to the GCRTF and six more were added in 2011 and 2012. In

2011, the GCRTF added an “Affiliate/Resource Members” (ARM) category. Both GCRTF members and ARM members represent key sectors in the county and state, including criminal justice officials, nonprofits, and returning citizens. As of January 1, 2016, 34 members serve on the GCRTF and nine members serve as ARM http://gallatincomt.virtualtownhall.net/Public_Documents/GallatinCoMT_CJCC_Recid/cjc_chp The GCRTF Executive Committee meets regularly and the full GCRTF meets semi-annually.

Since 2009, the GCRTF has worked with the CJCC to identify major recidivism risk factors, review evidence-based best practices and programs to reduce recidivism, establish a collaborative network of community partners and create new programs and resources. By December 2009, mission and vision statements were developed, a definition of recidivism was agreed upon, work groups met, training programs were developed in the Gallatin County Detention Center (**GCDC**), and a first draft of the Strategic Plan was completed.

The GCRTF defines recidivism as a *“return to jail or prison for a new conviction or technical violation within 36 months of release from confinement or supervision.”*

Strategic Issues and Core Strategies

In 2006, Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer directed the MT DOC to emphasize community-based corrections programs. Based in part on the Governor’s directive, increasing costs to house prisoners and high recidivism rates, in February 2011, the MT DOC introduced the Montana Reentry Initiative. The goal of the Montana Reentry Initiative is to *“analyze existing reentry strategies, programs and services in Montana and develop a comprehensive plan that improves coordination among those elements in order to create a more seamless and effective network of reentry assistance that benefit offenders and society alike.”* This initiative is also intended to educate public and private stakeholders on the importance of successful reentry as an issue for communities to address, since about 95 percent of offenders eventually return to their families and communities. The success of this initiative is dependent upon collaboration with state and local entities.

According to the ***MT DOC 2015 Biennial Report*** <http://cor.mt.gov/Portals/104/Resources/Reports/2015BiennialReport.pdf> , as of June 30, 2014, a total of 15,413 offenders were under MT DOC jurisdiction. Of the total, 74 percent were in community corrections, 17 percent were in prisons and 9 percent were under other supervision or custody. In FY 2014, annual general fund expenditures on corrections totaled \$14.5 million and MT DOC spent more than **\$37,000 per year** to house prison inmates (\$102.20/day at MSP and \$105.52/day at MWP). In comparison,

costs for Adult Probation/Parole run about are \$5.00/day and for Prerelease Centers, about \$68/day. The MT DOC releases about 1200 inmates into Montana communities per year with approximately 4 out of 10 returning to prison within 3 years. Data from fiscal years 2010 and 2011, updated September 2014, revealed the following return rate to any correctional facility: 54 percent within 1 year; 30 percent between 1 and 2 years; and, 16 percent between 2 and 3 three years. The current state-wide emphasis on community-based programs, and increased emphasis on reducing recidivism amongst the highest risk offenders, makes good budget sense and increases public safety.

The GCRTF met throughout 2011 and the spring of 2012 developing a community assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for Gallatin County's reentry initiative. According to the community assessment, which included input from offenders, the challenges and obstacles facing incarcerated persons seeking successful reentry are consistent with nationally recognized problems, and include:

- 1) Mental illness
- 2) Substance abuse
- 3) Belonging to a good support group
- 4) Availability of mentors
- 5) Housing
- 6) Cognitive restructuring
- 7) Employment
- 8) Developing positive relationships
- 9) Avoiding old peers and their negative attitudes

The GCRTF works with the MT DOC, the GCDC, Probation and Parole, and other referral sources to create an effective program to provide for successful offender reentry, and reduce recidivism, in Gallatin County, and the state of Montana.

Selected Examples of Accomplishments

1. Established a website
http://gallatincomt.virtualtownhall.net/Public_Documents/GallatinCoMT_CJCC_Rucid/cjchp
2. Established a network of community-based participating organizations and agencies
3. Prepared a comprehensive list of community resources in a brochure format that is provided to inmates upon release ("***the List***") as part of the discharge planning process; "***the List***" is readily available to family members, relatives, and friends, posted on the Gallatin County Detention Center (GCDC) homepage:
http://gallatincomt.virtualtownhall.net/Public_Documents/gallatincomt_detention/the_list0513a.pdf
4. Received private donations to hire a facilitator who assisted in developing a Strategic Plan

5. Reviewed strategic plans and programs of other reentry initiatives (Billings and Rapid City, SD); Gallatin County Sheriff's staff conducted an onsite visit to the Pennington County Jail, Rapid City
6. Finalized a draft of Strategic Plan on May 13, 2013
7. Adopted the "**Twelve Mandatory Requirements for a Comprehensive Reentry Program**" from the Second Chance Act
http://gallatincomt.virtualtownhall.net/Public_Documents/GallatinCoMT_CJCC_Rcid/PDF%20Documents/Twelve%20Mandatory%20Requirements%20SCA%203.4.2015.pdf
8. Adopted the "**Six Fundamental Principles of Evidence-Based Correctional Practice**" from the Second Chance Act
http://gallatincomt.virtualtownhall.net/Public_Documents/GallatinCoMT_CJCC_Rcid/PDF%20Documents/Six%20Fundamental%20Principles%20of%20EBP%20SCA%203.4.2015.pdf
9. Participated in the first (August 28, 2013) and follow up meetings of the State Reentry Task Force established by the 2013 Montana Legislature "*to help develop and implement programs that will increase the likelihood that offenders released from prison have the skills and community resources necessary to successfully transition back into Montana communities.*"
10. Drafted a position description for a Reentry Coordinator with a proposed budget
11. Participated as a key partner in securing the following two grants from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM), Pacific Northwest Region (PNR):
 1. **Improving Health Literacy and Personal Health Management of Inmates**, 2011-2012
 2. **Promoting Health Insurance and Enrollment Literacy with Inmates**, 2013-2014
12. Hired a Reentry Coordinator in October 2014
13. Applied and received funding from various resources
14. Established a process to access and secure emergency and transitional housing funds
15. Engaged with the work of the **Montana Commission on Sentencing** via appointment of RTF Co-chair Roxanne Klingensmith by Governor Bullock as a "Public Member" on the Commission on Sentencing
16. Collected data and worked with over 100 inmates from January 2015 – October 2015

Program Description

Fresh Start will develop and implement two different tracks working with returning citizens:

1. Track 1 – Targeted case management track (FRESH Start application and acceptance);
2. Track 2 – Discharge planning track.

Oversight Committee: The Oversight Committee (hereafter referred to as ‘Committee’) is responsible for overseeing, monitoring and evaluating the process and progress of Fresh Start. In this capacity, the Committee is committed to the mission and vision of the GCRTF and serves to enhance the effectiveness, productivity, and integrity of the GCRTF. The Committee is chaired by the Co-Chairs of the GCRTF who schedule and call the meetings as needed. The Committee keeps a record of meetings, notes of meetings, decisions and action items, all of which are a matter of public record and posted on the GCRTF website. A majority of voting committee members constitutes a quorum. A ‘Screening Subcommittee’ (hereafter referred to as ‘Subcommittee’) of the Committee will receive referrals, establish screening criteria, determine participant’s acceptance into the program, and along with other justice system officials and the Reentry Program Coordinator, monitor a participant’s progress. The Screening Subcommittee will be comprised of the following five Committee members: the two Co-Chairs of the GCRTF and one representative each from MT DOC, Gallatin County Court Services, and Alcohol and Drug Services of Gallatin County.

Reentry Program Coordinator: The Reentry Program Coordinator (hereafter referred to as ‘Coordinator’) is responsible for coordinating the Fresh Start Program for Gallatin County and serves as the single-point-of-contact for participant referrals among collaborators and partners in Fresh Start. Duties and responsibilities require close coordination, collaboration, tracking and monitoring of program participants to ensure that participants meet and follow requirements of Fresh Start. Additional responsibilities include working closely with partner agencies to ensure program participants are engaged and supported in services that include employment/training, housing, mentoring, and other comprehensive services. The Coordinator reports to the Detention Center Program Director and does not supervise other County personnel.

The Coordinator receives referrals from Gallatin County judges, attorneys, law enforcement officers, probation officers, mental health professionals, drug and alcohol abuse counselors and the MT DOC. The Coordinator utilizes an evidence-based, validated risk/needs assessment to classify applicants as high or medium risk of recidivating. The risk/needs assessment takes into account the following nationally recognized “**Central Eight**” risk and need factors identified in the Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report, October 13, 2015:

<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44087.pdf>

1. History of antisocial behavior
2. Antisocial personality pattern
3. Antisocial cognition
4. Antisocial associates
5. Family/marital circumstances

6. School/work
7. Leisure/recreation
8. Substance abuse

In addition to the risk/needs assessment, each applicant will be asked to fill out the *Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire* <http://www.theannainstitute.org/Finding%20Your%20ACE%20Score.pdf> The Coordinator compiles sufficient information on each applicant for the Screening Subcommittee to decide whether or not to admit the applicant into Fresh Start. Based on the risk/needs assessment, the Coordinator develops an individualized plan with each program participant. Each participant accepted into Fresh Start signs an agreement. The Coordinator promotes accountability through compliance with each participant's agreement.

The Coordinator assists participants in finding housing, employment and other resources and services to facilitate successful reentry. Program opportunities exist for participants to receive education in life skills, computer skills, health literacy, self-care management, health care decision-making, basic budgeting, building healthy meaningful relationships, making use of community resources, and developing positive support groups to avoid past criminal behaviors. The Coordinator monitors each participant's progress through exchanging information with probation officers, counselors, employers, and others in contact with a participant.

The Coordinator compiles and analyzes data, such as the number of applicants, the number of participants, whether a participant successfully completes the program, and whether a participant avoids recidivism within three to five years of admittance to the Fresh Start Program. The Coordinator maintains confidentiality of all program files. The Coordinator assists the Oversight Committee in educating the Gallatin County criminal justice system, family members and the community about the benefits of successful offender reentry. The Coordinator also assists the Oversight Committee with reports and applications to potential funding sources.

For applicants who are currently incarcerated, prior to discharge from a secure facility, the Coordinator works with the GCDC, the MT DOC, Probation and Parole, other court services, and the community to encourage a successful transition for the released offenders. Fresh Start identifies and provides linkage to support services from the moment the offender leaves a prison or a jail. Based on research data, choices and decisions made by an inmate within the first 48 hours of release largely determine whether or not they will recidivate within six months to a year.

Each participant in Tracks 1 and 2 will be monitored on a case-by-case basis after release from prison or jail. Participants in Track 1 will receive mentoring as well as education and guidance in basic life skills, including, budgeting, building healthy and meaningful relationships, making use of community resources, and how to develop a positive support group to avoid past criminal behaviors. The individualized plan will also address employment, housing, mental health, chemical dependency, health insurance coverage eligibility, and other programming needs as deemed appropriate. Participants in Track 2 will be monitored for the effectiveness of discharge planning in the prevention of recidivism.

By exchanging information with probation officers, counselors, employers, and others in contact with a participant, the Coordinator remains well-informed about working with the participant. The Coordinator reports to appropriate persons or agencies regarding the participant's progress or lack thereof. Coordinator compiles and documents data and statistics, such as the number of applicants, the number of participants, whether a participant successfully completes the program, and whether a participant avoids recidivism within three to five years of admittance to the program. The Coordinator keeps all program files and documentation confidential regarding the applicants and participants.

Participants: Participation in Fresh Start is voluntary and participation does not have any impact on an individual's court case, classification or release. Participants include those who have been sentenced for a crime and are living, or plan to be living, in Gallatin County. Participants have a strong desire to change their lifestyles and are committed to fully participate in, and benefit from, the Fresh Start Program.

Process

- Attorneys, judges, Gallatin County and the MT DOC probation & parole officers, and reentry coordinators, law enforcement officers, court services officers, mental health counselors and professionals, drug and alcohol abuse counselors, or family members will refer persons to the Screening Subcommittee.
- Selection criteria for participants in Track 1 will include: (1) level of risk to recidivate (medium or high); (2) level of endangerment to public safety; (3) probability of successful completion of the program; (4) level of motivation to change; (5) level of support from knowledgeable criminal justice workers; (6) probability that needs identified by a risk/needs assessment can be met; and, (7) level of community and family support.
- The risk/needs assessment will be used as a validated and standardized instrument that assesses criminogenic needs, likelihood to recidivate, and identifies potential barriers to programming and treatment.

- Once a participant is accepted into Fresh Start, the coordinator will work with referral sources to provide pertinent intake information, discuss discharge needs and create a plan for the participant.
- The Coordinator will work with participants in both Tracks 1 and Track 2, referral source(s), community and faith-based programs, to help returning citizens succeed and not recidivate.
- The Coordinator will be a liaison to the referral sources, while continually educating the criminal justice system, family members and the community about the benefits of Fresh Start.

Program Goals and Objectives

NOTE: Yellow = Accomplished

Green = Ongoing

Lined out/strike through = No longer pursuing

1. Goal #1: *To implement evidence-based interventions consistent with the Second Chance Act's "Twelve Mandatory Requirements for a Comprehensive Reentry Program," that will facilitate successful reentry and reduce recidivism of program participants by 50% over a five year period in Gallatin County*
http://gallatincomt.virtualtownhall.net/Public_Documents/GallatinCoMT_CJCC_Recid/PDF%20Documents/Twelve%20Mandatory%20Requirements%20SCA%203.4.2015.pdf
 - a. Objective #1.1 Establish a discharge planning process with all referral sources for the program participants
 - i. Engage families and relatives in discharge process
 - ii. Encourage use of 'the List' with referrals in discharge process
 - ~~b. Objective #1.2 Establish an evidence based best practice offender reentry mentoring program consistent with the Second Chance Act, "Fundamental Principles of Evidence-Based Correctional Practice."~~
 - ~~i. Develop application process and criteria for selection for the mentoring program~~
 1. For participants
 2. For volunteers
 - ~~ii. Establish guidelines and performance measures for the mentoring program~~
 - iii. Objective #1.3 Encourage the GCDC to implement a cognitive behavioral change program
2. Goal #2: *To develop and implement an administrative management plan that supports Fresh Start*
 - a. Objective #2.1 Establish an administrative core group/steering committee to lead the reentry effort in Gallatin County, acquire assessment tools and training and develop memoranda of understanding among key partners.
 - i. Identify a home site for the Gallatin County Fresh Start

- ii. Identify a supervisor for the Program Coordinator
- iii. Draft duties and responsibilities, job description, selection criteria, and policy and procedure manual for a Program Coordinator
- iv. Prepare position announcement and advertise position for a Program Coordinator
- v. Interview applicants
- vi. Hire a Program Coordinator
- vii. Establish review criteria and timetable for performance review of a Program Coordinator
- b. Objective #2.3 Continue to identify and collaborate with community stakeholders, government agencies, and non-profits to participate in offender reentry
 - i. Define roles and responsibilities
 - ii. Solicit and obtain letters of intent to participate from major referral sources, including Gallatin County Sheriff, the MT DOC, and Gallatin County Pre-release Reentry Program (Community, Counseling and Correctional Services, Inc.)
- c. Objective #2.4 Finalize draft of Strategic Plan
 - i. E-mail draft of Strategic Plan to the RTF on or before October 10, 2012
 - ii. Present draft of Strategic Plan to the RTF on October 17, 2012 for review, comments, modification and approval
 - iii. Incorporate changes to Strategic Plan by October 24, 2012
 - iv. E-mail Strategic Plan to members of the CJCC on or before November 2, 2012
 - v. Present Strategic Plan to the CJCC at the November 7, 2012 meeting
- d. Objective #2.5 Establish an Offender Screening Committee
 - i. Identify criteria for acceptance into the reentry program
 - ii. Develop the application process
 - iii. Review and select applicants
 - iv. Monitor progress of applicants
- e. ~~Objective #2.6 Establish a grant writing subcommittee~~
 - ~~i. Identify potential sources of funding for the RIP~~
 - ~~ii. Draft applications for review by the Administrative Committee~~
- f. Objective #2.7 Evaluate, modify and improve the Strategic Plan biannually

3. Goal #3: *To foster and encourage active and productive working relationships with the MTDOC*

- a. Objective #3.1 Follow progress, and participate in meetings, of the Montana Reentry Task Force.
 - i. Continue to maintain communications
 - ii. Identify a liaison to develop relationships and networking with the MT DOC and the Montana Reentry Task Force

- iii. Monitor progress of the Montana Reentry Task Force in achieving its goals and plan priorities
 - b. ~~Objective #3.2 Monitor developments and coordinate with the MDOC Reentry Program Manager (Sam Casey) and the MDOC Reentry Case Manager (Jim Pagels)~~
- 4. Goal #4: *To foster and encourage active and productive relationships with organizations, agencies and non-profits engaged in facilitating successful reentry*
 - a. Objective #4.1 Maintain relationships and networking with MT DOC, MDOC four Reentry Pilot Communities, Community, Counseling and Correctional Services, Inc, and Rebound Program, Rapid City, SD.
 - b. Objective #4.2 Maintain relationships and networking with the Law and Justice Interim Committee and the Commission on Sentencing
 - c. Objective #4.3 Maintain relationships and networking with faith-based and community-based organizations involved in offender reentry, such as Survivors, TEAM Mentoring, Bozeman Prison Ministries, Alive Again Life Recovery Mission, Celebrate Recovery, Connections, Twelve Step and other support groups
 - d. Objective #4.4 Continue to inform the Gallatin County CJCC regarding progress and accomplishments of FRESH Start
- 5. Goal #5: *Identify and implement a comprehensive evidenced-based best practice evaluation and data collection protocol (e.g., Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement, Bureau of Justice Assistance)*
 - a. Review evaluation parameters and tools used in offender reentry programs
 - b. Identify and implement a performance measurement tool that will provide a valid assessment of the impact of Fresh Start
 - c. Use the performance measurement tool to monitor progress and modify the program as needed
- 6. Goal # 6: *Oversight Committee will assist and advocate for a long-term sustainability plan.*
- 7. ~~Goal # 7: *Develop a plan for replication of the RIP in other communities.*~~
 - a. ~~Administrative Committee will coordinate the development of the plan~~
 - b. ~~Administrative Committee will coordinate regular reports about the progress of the program to the community.~~
- 8. Goal # 8: *Encourage participants to “pay it forward” by speaking at groups, mentoring others, repaying housing expenses, etc.*

Evaluation

Fresh Start will utilize an evidence-based best practice evaluation instrument to monitor and assess progress and success of program elements and interventions.

Impact/outcomes, evaluation, and plan for collecting data will follow performance metrics as specified through BJA's online Performance Measurement Tool (PMT), located at BJA-2015-4110 20 www.bjaperformancetools.org. In addition, performance measures listed in Second Chance Act Two-Phase Adult Reentry Demonstration Program will be collected where appropriate.

www.bjaperformancetools.org/help/scareentryquestionnaire.pdf.

Collection and analysis of numeric data will employ a program logic model. Logic models are commonly used for evaluation because they show relationships and accomplishments among program goals, objectives, activities, outputs and outcomes.

Data gathered to establish participant characteristics will include, but will not be limited, to the following:

- Age
- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Criminal history
- Educational history
- Incarceration history
- Employment history
- Substance abuse history
- Mental health history
- Family history
- Social and personal history
- Post-release recidivism
- Post-release employment
- Post-release housing

Program Networking and Collaboration

Every effort will be made to share information, network, collaborate and partner with other offender reentry efforts across the state, such as:

1. State Reentry Task Force
2. MT DOC
3. Law and Justice Interim Committee
4. Commission on Sentencing
5. Community, Counseling and Correctional Services, Inc
6. Gallatin County Re-Entry Program
7. MT DOC Pilot Reentry Communities
 - a. Billings Area Reentry Task Force (BARTF) – Billings
 - b. Partners for Reintegration – Missoula
 - c. Gallatin County Reentry Task Force (GCRTF) – Bozeman
 - d. Helena Community Offender Reentry Program (HCORP) – Helena

Program Sustainability Plan

To achieve long term sustainability, Fresh Start will seek funding from foundations, private donations, and federal grants.