

# *Transitioning Offenders in Today's Workplace*



*A partnership of  
Iowa Workforce Development  
Iowa Department of Corrections*

***Jerry Bartruff***, Deputy Director - Offender Services  
*Iowa Department of Corrections*

***Renée Miller***, Bureau Chief - Field Operations  
*Iowa Workforce Development*

***Brenda Tart***, Workforce Advisor - Reentry Services  
*Iowa Workforce Development*



# *Identifying the Need for Reentry*



- Daily count of incarcerated persons has surpassed 2.5 million
- In 1987 the states spent 10.6 billion dollars of general funds on corrections
- In 2007 the states spent 44 billion dollars
- Adjusted to 2007 that is an increase of 127%
- Spending on education increased 21%

# *February 2008 Pew Public Safety Performance Project*



- More than 1 in every 100 adults is now confined in an American jail or prison
- 1 in 30 men between the ages 24-30 is behind bars
- Men are 10 times more likely to be incarcerated than females, but the female prison incarceration is increasing at a higher rate

## *March 2009 – U.S. Data*



- 1 in 31 adults were under correctional control in the U.S.
- 5,117,428 adults on state or federal probation or parole
- 2,293,157 adults in jail, state prisons or federal prisons
- Total 7,328,200
- \$79 per day in prison
- \$3.42 per day on probation
- \$7.47 per day on parole

# *National Data*



- 95% of offenders return to our communities
- Almost 700,000 offenders are released annually
- Nationally, more than 60% of those offenders will return to prison within 3 years

## *March 2009 – Iowa Data*



- 1 in 54 adults were under correctional control in IOWA
- 27,425 adults on state or federal probation or parole
- 14,869 adults in jail, state prisons or federal prisons
- Total 42,294 – National Rank = 46
- \$85 per day in prison = 21 days on probation or parole

# *Iowa Data*



- On April 1, 2010 - 8,380 offenders were incarcerated in Iowa's 9 institutions
- 722 are serving life sentences
- 85% have a history of substance abuse
- 40% have a mental illness diagnosis

# *2009 Releases from Institutions*



5,850 – TOTAL

Of that...

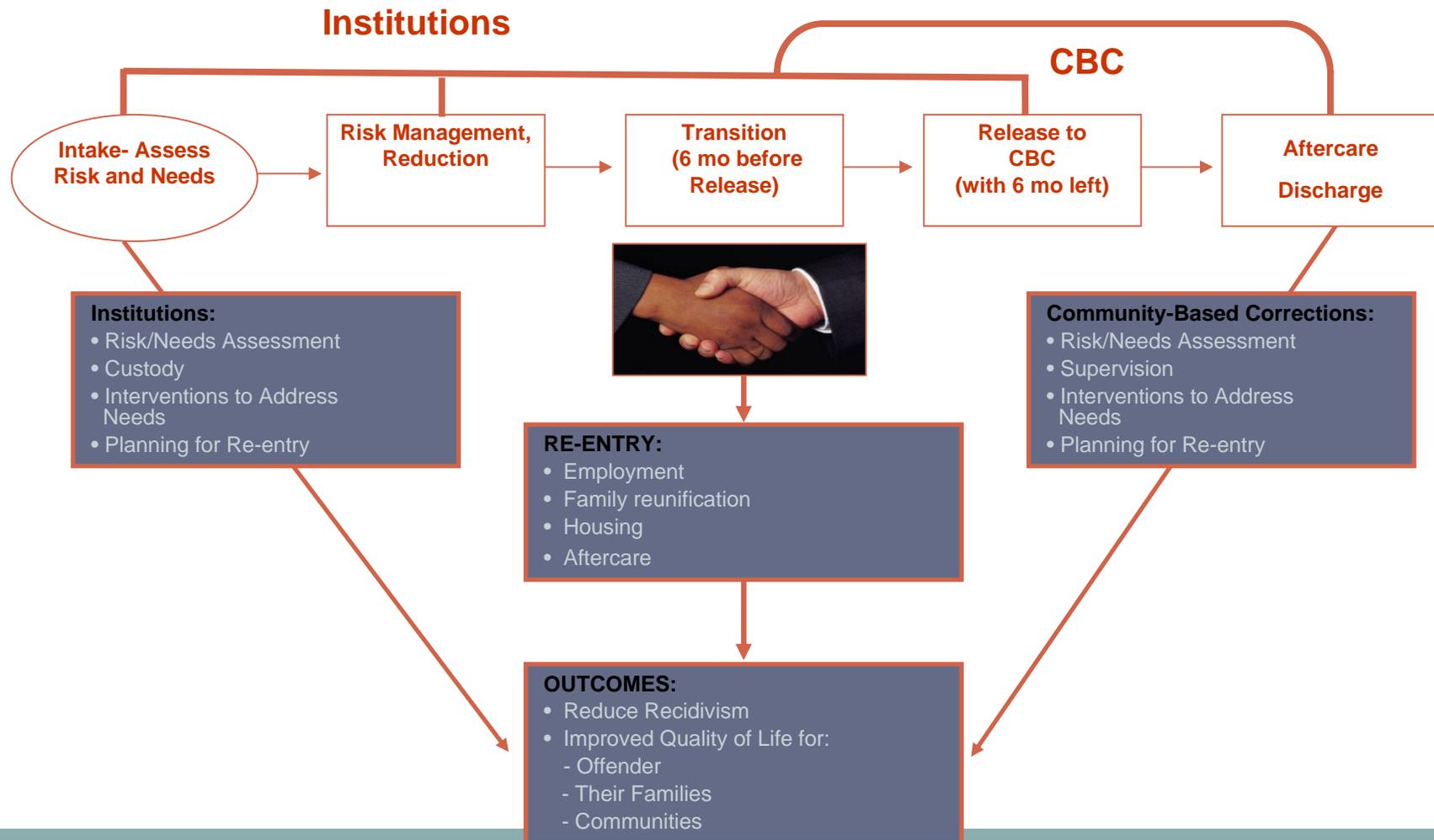
- ✦ 1,682 Parole
- ✦ 1,250 Work Release
- ✦ 1,395 Discharge

# *Iowa Recidivism*



- New convictions for aggravated misdemeanors or felonies within 3 years
  - Probation – 10.1%
  - OWI – 13.6%
  - Parole – 24.6%
  - Work Release – 33.1%
  - Prison – 36%

# Iowa Reentry Model: Utilizing evidenced based practices and creating partnerships to prepare offenders to be pro-social members of the community without supervision



# *Release Goals*



- Risk has been reduced
- At least six months left on supervision
- Employment obtained
- Stable and safe housing
- Reunited with family/pro social associate
- Treatment appointments scheduled
- Aftercare and discharge plan

# *Employment & Education*



- Time Out of Employment Diminishes Prospect for Stable Employment and Decent Wages Throughout Lifetime
- Interrupts Job Experience and Prevents Building Employment Skills
- Opportunity to Build Skills and Prepare for Job Placement in Prison
- Participation Job Training/Placement Programs Reduce Recidivism 20%
- Prison Education Program Completion Reduces Recidivism 59%
- Iowa Prison Industries Private Sector Employment Reduces Recidivism

# *Barriers and Challenges*



- Changing employer perception of offenders
- Changing the public perception of offenders
- Increasing the capacity in the institutions to provide employment skills and vocational training that meet the needs of employers in the community
- Increasing access to safe housing
- Engaging the community to providing support and accountability



# *Value Of Partnership*

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- Meet conditions of parole
- Reduce recidivism
- Improve relationships with family
- Safer communities
- Save taxpayer dollars

# *IDOC Mission Statement*



We advance successful offender reentry to protect the public, staff and offenders from victimization by creating partnerships and utilizing evidence based practices to prepare offenders to be pro-social members of our communities without correctional supervision.



# *LINKING WORKFORCE WITH OFFENDERS*



*An innovative Strategy To Improve  
Offenders' Ability To Find And Retain  
Productive Employment In Iowa*

*Career Centers  
in  
Iowa Prisons*

# *How Iowa's Program Works*



Referrals to Program Are Established Through the Reentry Case Management Process

*Risk and Needs assessments are completed - need areas include:*

- Attitudes/Orientation
- Companions/Associates
- Family/Marital
- Accommodations
- Alcohol/Drugs
- Emotional/Personal
- Education/Employment
- Financial

# *Reentry Case Plan Developed*



- Offender driven
- Offenders assigned to interventions to address needs and reduce risk
- Goals, Action Steps, High Risk Behaviors, Pro-Social Behaviors and Restorative Justice components are identified
- Transition and Release Plans are developed
- Reviewed and updated as the offender moves through the system

# *Iowa Workforce Point of Services In Prison*



- Iowa Workforce Development orientation - meeting with Workforce Advisor in group setting of 10-15 offenders
- Career and Employment Planning Assessment
- Registration with Iowa Jobs for automated job matching – once registered this is also used for the purpose of case management within our common database (I\*Works) to track all services provided
- Monthly Iowa NCRC (National Career Readiness Certificate) testing
  - a skill assessment that verifies applied skills in three core/foundational employability areas – math, reading and locating information
  - used as tool to measure applied skills and build a career pathway



# NATIONAL CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE®

## GOLD

Is awarded in **Iowa** to

### Joseph P. Sample

In recognition of verified skills in Applied Mathematics,  
Locating Information, and Reading for Information

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chet Culver".

Governor Chet Culver



Certificate #J102E3SAMPLE  
Issue Date 6/30/09

**ACT**®

# *Iowa Workforce Point of Services In Prison*



- Obtainment of Birth Certificate and Social Security Card for I-9 eligibility requirements
- Guidance on transportation issues and referral to statewide licensure reinstatement program
- Register for federal tax credit as well as information on state tax credit and federal bonding program
- Job referrals and interviews set-up upon release

# Job Development and Pre-Release Skills



- Four week basic computer class as well as 14-week Microsoft Certification through New Horizons (ICIW only)
- Onsite one-on-one career counseling with local colleges based on criminal background concerning obtainment of future employment
- Six-week effective business writing workshop
- Basic money management interactive workshop series presented in four separate modules over two months based on the 4 R's of reentry: **REVIEW, REPAIR, RENEW, REENTER**
- POETS (Providing Opportunity for Ex-Offenders To Succeed) work readiness workshops specific to an offender's challenges and barriers concerning job searching, application processes, resume/cover letter, mock interviewing, follow-up, and job retention (i.e. emotions and employment)
- Computer Lab workshops: Resume, Cover letters, and Follow-Up Thank You Letters. In addition, computer skills brush-up, typing, and simulated Outlook are provided
- Connection to community resources through an updated (monthly) Reentry Resource
  - Guide provided by Iowa Workforce Reentry Roundtable Committee

# *Wrap Around Services*

## *FBCO Partnerships*



Faith-Based & Community Organization (FBCOs) providers are an essential partner in transitioning offenders from Iowa prisons back into the community

Iowa Workforce Development and Iowa Department of Corrections have established pre-release partnerships with

- Spectrum Resources
- Creative Visions
- Urban Dreams
- Good News Ministries
- Winners Circle
- Reentry Roundtable Committee

## *Support Services Provided By Education/Treatment Staff, Reentry Coordinator/Counselor, and Workforce Advisor*



- Life Skills
- Employment plan and placement
- Clothing for interviewing
- Reentry Resource Booklet
- Mental Health Services
- Substance Abuse/Aftercare
- Family Reunification
- Mentoring services
- Transportation
- Housing
- Connection to Workforce Centers/Services in Reentry Community

# *Parole/Work Release Conditions*



- Required to be employed within 90 days
- Pay supervision fee (\$300.00)
- Set-up victim restitution payment plan within first 30 days
- Required to pay housing fee (averages \$460.00 per month in work release)
- Set-up payment plan to get driver's license reinstated
- Pay for own transportation
- Pay for required classes and continuing treatment

Not meeting conditions of a parole can result in a revocation and a return to prison

# *Offender and Family*



Researchers have found that general family acceptance and encouragement are related to Post Release success. In a study of recently released prisoners in New York City, members of the sample who demonstrated the greatest success in employment soon after release exhibited optimistic attitudes were “the ones that talked most about their family’s acceptance of them”

Studies also found that recently released prisoners who were employed within 90 days of release lead to positive outcomes concerning decreased substance use and fewer physical, mental, and emotional problems.

Sources: Nelson et al. 1999:10

Couturier 1995; Shapiro And Schwartz 2001; Sullivan et al. 2002

# Employer Engagement



- Host Lunch and Learn to educate employers on
  - tax credits
  - federal bonding
  - legal liability in hiring ex-offender
  - rehabilitative programs
  - job skills (hard and soft)
  - support systems provided to the offender per release to community
  - showcase how offenders are prepared for reentry (verifiable skills, etc.)
  - success stories
- Brochures on the myths and facts of hiring individuals on supervision
- Hold annual Reentry Career and Community Resource Fairs
- Establish PSA's showcasing
  - employers who have hired ex-offenders
  - how it has worked for them
  - benefits of hiring ex-offenders
- Documented summary of ex-offender's personal and professional history prior to interviewing/hiring whereas other candidates come with self reported information that must be verified by employer

## *Activity Report*

	<i>Rockwell</i>	<i>Mitchellville</i>	<i>Newton</i>
Participants served	265	190	251
Participants released	220	94	65
Participants working within 30 days of release	96	80	46
National Career Readiness Certificate	60	89	133
Gold	7	15	38
Silver	19	47	56
Bronze	18	19	39

# *Employment = critical part of the solution*



*According to the U.S. Sentencing Commission, the single most significant factor in reducing recidivism is post-custody employment*

Source: Measuring Recidivism, A Component of the Fifteen Year Report on the U.S. Sentencing Commissions' Legislative Mandate, 2003



# *Economy & Labor Market*

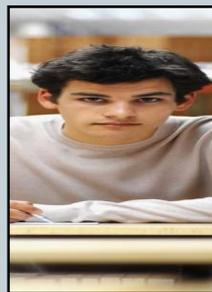
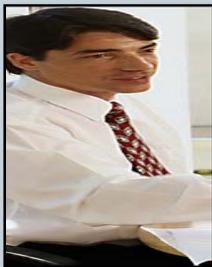


- Before the recession, IWD projected that Iowa was going to be 150,000 skilled workers short
- Look for the Opportunity
- Encouraging all Iowan's – especially special populations – to consider “Up Skilling”
- Promote a skill-based message
- Reveal core foundational skills and skill gaps
  - *research based assessment system*
- Adult Basic Education
  - *40% in workforce centers do not have basic computer skills*

# Economy & Labor Market



- Demand Driven – Emerging Occupations
- Manage talent development system from the employer's perspective
  - *Establish a common language among employers, educators and workforce professional and job seekers*
- Up-Skill for middle skill / knowledge worker jobs
  - *Some training or education beyond high school*
  - *Estimated 45% of jobs are middle skill (demand)*
  - *Estimated only 25% of workforce is prepared to do this work (supply)*



# *Iowa's Service Integration*



- Service Delivery System – Purpose
  - Demand Driven/Skill-Based
  - Efficient & Effective
  - Value-Added
- Service Delivery System – Customer Needs
  - Know Skills
  - Grow Skills
  - Get best job possible with Skills
- Service Delivery System – Functions/Teams
  - Membership
  - Skills Development
  - Recruitment & Placement

# *Iowa's Service Integration*



- Service Delivery System – Input / Output
  - Increased Volume – more people served
  - More people served with multiple services
  - Higher % of Skill Enhancement
- Service Delivery System – Outcomes
  - Entered Employment
  - Labor Market Retention
  - Earnings

# *Opportunity*



Offenders must be prepared to reenter our communities and begin new lives with as much confidence, support, and community connectivity as possible.

With job training and opportunities the value of the reentry movement in Iowa will contribute tangibly to public safety and community well being.

**IF THEY DON'T HAVE A PLAN,  
THEN THEY DON'T HAVE A CHANCE!!!**

# *Creating Safer Communities*



The idea that helping offenders live law-abiding lives is in the interests of community safety is now an idea in good currency. Americans and their political leaders are no longer single-mindedly committed to toughness and are much more convinced that efforts to help released prisoners live law abiding lives are worth both the work and the money as a means to make for safer communities and at the same time it reunites families. (Travis and Visher 2005)

Amber,

Thank you for all your help. I just finished my first day of work today as the Head of the Maintenance Dept. for the Ramada Inn in Bettendorf...I was grateful for all the training I received. I was able to get my job based on my resume and cover letter only. No application was ever filled out. The accountant at Ramada was already aware of the felon tax credits, but the manager who hired me wasn't. It all worked out. I really think your doing a great thing. Your a really good person.

Daniel Skalla

To whom it concern,

“.....I am currently employed with the Siouxland Community Blood Bank. I work in Hospital Services, where I am responsible for working with 37 local hospitals. Having this type of responsibility and trust given to me by an employer has shown me I am not only capable but have some self-worth in my community as productive citizen. I know that without this program and encouragement from Mrs. Tart , I would have never applied for this job as I felt I could not do such a job of this nature nor the ability to do it.

I am an offender and I know without hope and gaining employment so quickly after being released I would have been more likely to return back to prison.”

Sincerely,  
Stefanie Maher

# *Conclusion*



If offenders are employed, if they have stable housing, if they are involved in meaningful pro-social relationships, if they are sober and drug free they can become productive members of our communities, they can be successfully discharged from corrections, they will not return to corrections, the cost of the corrections can decrease and our communities can be safer.

# QUESTIONS?



**Jerry Bartruff**, Deputy Director - Offender Services

*Iowa Department of Corrections*

[Jerry.Bartruff@iowa.gov](mailto:Jerry.Bartruff@iowa.gov)

(319) 626-2391

**Renée Miller**, Bureau Chief - Field Operations

*Iowa Workforce Development*

[Renee.Miller@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:Renee.Miller@iwd.iowa.gov)

(515)281-9027

**Brenda Tart**, Workforce Advisor - Reentry Services

*Iowa Workforce Development*

[Brenda.Tart@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:Brenda.Tart@iwd.iowa.gov)

(515) 967-4236 x 1293