

County of Berks



Reentry Strategic Plan

2016-2019



County of Berks Reentry Strategic Plan 2016-2019

The purpose of strategic planning is to determine where an organization wants to be and how it will get there. The plan allows the organization to set its course and make purposeful use of its limited resources to achieve those goals.

The development of the County of Berks Reentry Strategic Plan was funded through a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). The funding was part of Pennsylvania's Justice Reinvestment Initiative in collaboration with the Council of State Government. The County of Berks hired facilitators from the University of Cincinnati's Corrections Institute (UCCI) to assist the Reentry Sub Committee (RSC) of the Berks County Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB) in the development of the County of Berks Reentry Strategic Plan. Stakeholders from throughout the county and state criminal justice and corrections systems were invited to participate with the Reentry Sub Committee (RSC) in the planning. The group met with the facilitators from UCCI throughout 2015-2016 to 1) develop consensus on principles of effective interventions as it pertains to community reentry 2) develop a charter based on core principals of effective correctional programs (See Appendix 1) 3) analyze the current state of reentry in Berks County, and 4) to develop a four year strategic plan. This reentry strategic plan is to be part of the county's Criminal Justice Advisory Board's Strategic Plan.

**Berks County Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB)
Mission Statement**

To reduce recidivism and jail overcrowding and increase public safety through the use of cost effective and efficient reentry initiatives.

GROUNDWORK

Upon award of the grant in June 2015 the CJAB looked to hire consultants who could assist with the development of the strategic plan and also educate and incorporate principles of effective criminal justice interventions. This resulted in a contract with the UCCI. UCCI has assisted organizations to promote principles of effective interventions in corrections in all 50 states, trained over 10,000 corrections professionals in over 250 agencies, counties, states and countries around the world. Their director, Dr. Edward Latessa, is also the Director and Professor of the School of Criminal Justice at the University of Cincinnati.

Strategic Planning Timeline	
June 2015	Strategic planning grant awarded
July 2015	Preliminary planning discussion with UCCI
August 2015	Stakeholder survey
October 2015	2 day on site strategic planning meeting with RSC members and UCCI
Nov 2015- June 2016	Working groups meet regularly to establish goals and objectives. RSC meets to monitor progress and receives remote support and input from UCCI.
May 2016	2 day on site consultation with RSC and UCCI
June 2016	Finalization of the plan

CORE STRATEGIC GOALS

The Core Strategic Goals serve as the major areas in which the committee will concentrate efforts over the next four years to support its mission. These goals were established by the RSC during the strategic planning session. The Core Strategic Goals are:

Core Goal #1

Assess, develop, and maintain a systems approach to programming and reentry.

Core Goal #2

Utilize evidence-based practices and interventions to assess risks and needs and provide effective, complementary case planning and treatment programs across all levels of supervision.

Core Goal #3

Expand external resources available to reentry.

Core Goal #4

Build staff member capacity to launch and maintain evidenced based reentry programming and initiatives.

Working groups were established to develop objectives and action steps for each of the core goals. (See Appendix 2)

Systems Working Group/ Reentry Sub Committee (RSC) of the Berks County CJAB

This group has now transitioned from the Systems Working Group to the Reentry Sub Committee (RSC) of the Berks County CJAB.

Core Goal #1: Assess, develop, and maintain a systems approach to programming and reentry

Purpose:

1. Serve as the Steering Committee for the oversight and integration of the working groups in support of the reentry strategic plan objectives.
2. Establish and monitor the development and implementation of the plan in an integrated manner
3. To oversee the progress of any workgroups established for specific planning and implementation of any portion of this plan
4. To report progress to the Berks County CJAB and serve as a liaison between the Reentry Senior Team and the Berks County CJAB

Chairperson: Peggy Kershner Co-Executive Director, Berks Connections/Pretrial Services (BCPS)

Membership:

- Kevin Barnhardt, Berks County Commissioner
- Robert Williams, Chief, Berks County Probation and Parole Department (APO)
- Janine Quigley, Warden, Berks County Jail System (BCJS)
- George Vogel, Executive Director, Council on Chemical Abuse (COCA)
- Steve Weber, Berks County Court Administrator (Courts)
- Ed Michalik, Administrator, Mental Health Developmental Disabilities Program (MHDD)
- Trista Oxenreider, Berks County Court System Improvement Manager (Courts)
- Luis Resto, Director, Bureau of Community Corrections, PA Department of Corrections (PADOC)

Rehabilitation Working Group

Core Goal #2: *Utilize evidence-based practices and interventions to assess risks and needs and provide effective, complementary case planning and treatment programs across all levels of supervision.*

Purpose: Ensure that the service array for reentry is consistent with principles of effective corrections interventions.

Chairperson: Stephanie Smith, Deputy Warden for Treatment, Berks County Jail System (BCJS)

Membership:

- Dan Heydt, Deputy Chief, Berks County Probation & Parole Department (APO)
- Christine Guistwite, Reentry Director, Berks Connections/Pretrial Services (BCPS)
- Tiffany Himic, Operational Support Manager, Berks County Jail System (BCJS)
- Jessica Collins, Clinical and Counseling Supervisor, Berks County Jail System (BCJS)
- Kathy Noll, Program Analyst, Council on Chemical Abuse (COCA)

Resources Working Group

Core Goal #3: *Expand external resources available to reentry.*

Purpose: To continually assess, coordinate, plan, obtain and manage resources needed for implementation of the plan.

Chairperson: John Scolastico, Assistant Chief Adult Probation Officer, Berks County Probation & Parole Department (APO)

Membership:

- Nikki Schnovel, Co-Executive Director, Berks Connections/Pretrial Services (BCPS)
- Luis Resto, Director, Bureau of Community Corrections, PA Department of Corrections (PADOC)
- Mary Hennigh, Deputy Administrator, Mental Health Developmental Disabilities (MHDD)
- Rich Dreisbach, Regional Director, Bureau of Community Corrections, PA Department of Corrections (PADOC)
- Trista Oxenreider, Berks County Court System Improvement Manager (Courts)

Workforce Development Working Group

Core Goal #4: Build staff member capacity to launch and maintain evidenced based reentry programming and initiatives.

Purpose: Provide assistance to the reentry system of care for the development of a competent workforce necessary for actualizing the mission of the board and supporting this strategic plan.

Chairperson: Janine Quigley, Warden, Berks County Jail System (BCJS)

Membership:

- Dan Heydt, Deputy Chief, Berks County Probation & Parole Department (APO)
- Peggy Kershner, Co-Executive Director, Berks Connections/Pretrial Services (BCPS)

With the finalization of the plan the Reentry Senior Team was established

Reentry Senior Team (RST)

The Reentry Senior Team's responsibility is:

1. To meet on a regular basis to ensure progress by each department on their action steps related to each objective of the plan.
2. To report progress to the Reentry Sub Committee.
3. To serve as a liaison between the various departments and the Reentry Sub Committee.

Chairperson: Peggy Kershner, Co-Executive Director, Berks Connections/Pretrial Services (BCPS)

Membership:

- Stephanie Smith, Deputy Warden for Treatment, Berks County Jail System (BCJS)
- Dan Heydt, Deputy Chief, Berks County Probation & Parole Department (APO)
- Christine Guistwite, Reentry Director, Berks Connections/Pretrial Services (BCPS)
- Tiffany Himic, Operational Support Manager, Berks County Jail System (BCJS)
- Kathy Noll, Program Analyst, Council on Chemical Abuse (COCA)
- Mary Hennigh, Deputy Administrator, Mental Health Developmental Disabilities (MHDD)
- Rich Dreisbach, Regional Director, Bureau of Community Corrections, PA Department of Corrections (PADOC)
- Justin Loose, Chief Information Officer, Information Systems, County of Berks (IS) (ad hoc)

Appendix 1

Charter Document for Berks County Community Re-Entry Practice Principles

General Programming

Risk Principle

The risk principle pertains to the risk for recidivism (an individual's likelihood of continuing to engage in criminal behavior).

Prior to an application of a risk tool, acute barriers such as substance abuse or detoxification, active psychosis, mood/anxiety disorders must be addressed. Failure to do so will affect both the predictive validity and reliability of any instrument used to assess level.

1. Offender risk and need levels¹ are determined by psychometric instruments that have proven predictive validity. (The instrument currently being used by the Berks County Jail is the Level of Services Inventory-Revised (LSI-R))
2. Policies and practices should ensure that they are properly conducted (inter-rater reliability).
3. Changes in risk level are routinely assessed over time
4. Based on the risk tool, offenders are separated by risk levels for programming and interaction.
5. Low risk offenders are not mixed with higher level offenders (avoid contagion effect i.e. higher risk offender influencing low risk offenders).
6. Over serving low risk offenders can increase their risk.
7. Programming resources primarily target the higher risk offenders (moderate and high).
8. Dosage will be tracked and used in case planning to match up to dosage recommendations.

Need Principle:

According to the need principle, domains that are correlated to recidivism should be the primary targets of intervention. These are referred to as criminogenic (or, crime producing) needs.

1. Assessment results should be used to develop case plans focusing on the risk factors that have the greatest impact on recidivism.
2. Absent any acute needs, the primary criminogenic needs should be given priority: anti-social cognition (attitudes, values, beliefs), anti-social personality/temperament, anti-social peers, and family/marital.

¹ Smith, P., Gendreau, P., and Swartz, K. (2009). Validating the Principles of Effective Intervention: A Systematic Review of the Contributions of Meta-Analysis in the Field of Corrections

3. Programming shall target criminogenic needs associated with recidivism. They include: (1) Criminal attitudes, values and beliefs (2) Anti-social companions (3) Personality traits associated with recidivism, (4) Family influences (5) Substance abuse (6) Employment/Education (7) Leisure activities.
4. Activities/programming that does not address criminogenic needs should not be counted toward dosage.

Responsivity:

General Responsivity: Use Cognitive Behavioral Interventions

1. Cognitive behavioral interventions (CBI) have been found to have the greatest impact on reducing recidivism.
2. CBI is based on the belief that thinking affects behavior, antisocial thinking can lead to antisocial behavior, thinking can be influenced and if we change what we think, we can change how we feel and behave.
3. To be effective, CBI helps offenders identify the link between thoughts and behaviors identify personal thinking patterns that cause problematic behavior, teach thinking and behavior skills, and facilitate the practice and generalization of new skills.

Specific Responsivity: Remove barriers that hinder the uptake of CBI

1. Responsivity requires tailoring cognitive behavioral interventions to the unique features of offenders such as cultural characteristics, gender, learning style, and intellectual level, and increasing an individual's motivation where necessary.
2. Programming can be started once the acute barrier is at a level that the participant can participate in a meaningful way (i.e. the issue does not have to be completely resolved).
- 3) In facility settings such as prisons/secured community facilities at least 40% of the time should be spent in cognitive behavioral intervention tasks such as groups, school and/or work. Attempts are made to match staff and offender based on some responsivity factors (i.e. content expertise, comfort level, gender preference etc.)
3. Programs will assess and design programming to address and assist in specific responsivity issues such as motivation, mental health and trauma, cognitive abilities, language and culture, substance abuse, etc.
4. Use of rewards to sanctions should be at a ratio of 4:1

Individual Staff Skills: Core Correctional Practices in developing a structured learning model in correctional facilities, the use of core correctional practices² will serve as a foundation. These practices include use of authority, pro-social modeling, concrete problem solving, fair but firm approaches to reinforcement, cognitive behavioral tools, and effective disapproval, building professional alliances (relationship skills).

² Gendreau, P., Andrews, D. A., & Theriault, Y. (2010). *Correctional Program Assessment Inventory – 2010 (CPAI-2100)*. Saint John, Canada: University of New Brunswick

1. Staff are routinely observed and assessed on service delivery skills and coached to increase their effectiveness in the application of core correctional practices and other evidence-based approaches.
2. Periodic and regular training, coaching and supervision will be provided to continue to improve staff's knowledge and demonstration of core correctional practices and other principles of effective interventions
3. The applications of core correctional practices are not just for offender interaction, but the standard for communication for all staff to demonstrate appropriate modeling.
4. Recruitment and hiring practice shall assess for receptivity to rehabilitative values as well as experience, knowledge and skills.
5. Mid-level management is involved in conducting some aspects of the program that includes facilitation of groups, conducting assessments, carrying a small caseload, etc. to ensure their connection to direct services.

Fidelity

1. Staff should receive quality training, feedback and coaching in order to develop proficiency in delivering evidence based programming.
2. Programs and staff interventions must be routinely observed and measured to determine fidelity to the intervention being provided.
3. Provide measurement feedback: Staff and management need routinely be given measurement feedback if services are to remain effective.
4. Management must support staff in delivering high fidelity programming by allocating time for a) preparation for group interventions and b) observation, feedback and coaching by supervisors or peer coaches.

Systems Integration

1. All services targeting the criminal justice population should be designed around these stated guidelines.
2. Families and significant others are welcomed into the cognitive behavioral intervention process and viewed as an integral piece in successful community tenure. As such, they will be provided information that will allow them to reinforce CBI concepts that are utilized by the clients.
3. Inter-agency collaboration is demonstrated by inclusive programming and re-entry planning
4. Successful reentry should begin at admission, if not sooner, with assessments used to plan interventions and interventions needed to prepare offenders for release.
5. An array of services should be available to address criminogenic needs both at the jail and throughout the community corrections system. This can only be achieved with integrated cross agency collaborations.

Group Interventions

1. Program interventions will meet the criteria for dosage as outlined below and will primarily consist of Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI) within a structured learning model.* This includes the use of modeling, detailed verbal guidance, graduated practice, skill enhancement, rehearsal, role playing, problem solving and cognitive change.
2. A program manual is used.
3. Quality improvement activities will include fidelity monitoring of both CBI groups as well as individual use of core correctional practices.
4. Programming and treatment will target multiple criminogenic needs with an emphasis on tier I (primary criminogenic needs such as criminal thinking, peers and high risk personality traits)
5. Traditional psychodynamic and non-directive client centered therapies are to be avoided. (Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta et al 1990 meta-analysis)
6. Aftercare is a critical component in assisting offenders to generalize their skills in varied settings.

Dosage Recommendations

While there is an abundance of research to support the risk, need and responsivity principles, the question of how much is enough (or dosage) is a much newer area of research. Thus, recommendations in this area may change as more studies are conducted. Based on the current, albeit limited body of research, it has been recommended that the following dosage be sought for offenders in the program:

- Low risk=fewer than 100 hours of CBI-based interventions, but only in identified need areas
- Moderate risk=100-150 hours of CBI-based interventions
- High risk=200-250+ hours of CBI-based interventions

Intervention counted toward dosage must contain the following elements:

1. Targets criminogenic needs
2. Uses cognitive behavioral interventions
3. Social learning principle is used in the delivery of the material (modeling, roleplaying, feedback and graduated practice).
4. May include interventions such as:
 - a. Social Skills
 - b. Problem Solving
 - c. Anger Control/Emotion Regulation

Non-dosage activities include:

1. Psycho-educational activities
2. Self-directed studies
3. Material that target non-criminogenic targets such as empathy, self-esteem, mental health etc.

Program administrators are encouraged to continue to review the correctional literature for new dosage studies, so that as more is learned in this area, adjustments can be made.

References

National

Crime and Justice Institute & National Institute of Corrections: Implementing Evidence-Based Practice in Community Corrections: The Principles of Effective Intervention

The PEW Center of the States: Putting Public Safety First: The 13 Strategies for Successful Supervision and Reentry (2008)

Core Correctional Practices

Dowden & Andrews (2004) The Importance of Staff Practice in Delivering Effective correctional Treatment: A Meta Analytic Review of Core Correctional Practice

General Program Effectiveness Rehabilitation Programs for Offenders

Antonowicz, Ross Essential Components of Successful (1994)

Landenburger & Lippy (2007)

*Interventions based on these approaches are very structured and emphasize the importance of modeling and behavioral rehearsal techniques that engender self-efficacy, challenge of cognitive distortions, and assist individuals in developing good problem solving and self-control skills.

This document articulates basic program expectations. It is a standard for program expectation for both county and state operated programs and contracted services.

Appendix 2

County of Berks Reentry Strategic Plan Acronym/Abbreviations Guide

APO	Adult Probation & Parole Department
BCJS	Berks County Jail System
BCPS	Berks Connections/Pretrial Services
CBI	Cognitive Behavioral Interventions
CCP	Core Correctional Practices
CJAB	Berks County Criminal Justice Advisory Board
COCA	Council on Chemical Abuse
Courts	Berks County Court System
CQI	Continuous Quality Improvement
DRC	Day Reporting Center
IS	Information Systems County of Berks
LSI	Level of Service Inventory
LSI-R	Level of Service Inventory-Revised
MHDD	Mental Health Developmental Disabilities
ORAS	Ohio Risk Assessment System
PADOC	Pennsylvania Department of Corrections
PCCD	Pennsylvania's Commission on Crime and Delinquency
RSC	Reentry Sub Committee
RST	Reentry Senior Team
UCCI	University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute

Appendix 3

County of Berks Reentry Strategic Plan Working Group Organization

