



Louisiana Reentry Collaboration

Reducing Recidivism & Improving Public Safety

Louisiana Reentry Collaboration

Reducing Recidivism & Improving Public Safety

Scope

This white paper is to document the vision of reentry services for individuals with criminal histories who are under supervision or who are returning to Louisiana communities following a term of imprisonment. All criminal justice stakeholders must recognize the value of prison programs prior to release and through a period of transition services. This paper is designed to summarize the organized collaborations between the Louisiana Reentry Advisory Council (RAC), Department of Public Safety and Corrections (DPS&C), Local Reentry Coalitions, Reentry Alliance of Louisiana (REAL), and Louisiana's Prison Reentry Initiative Steering Team Association (LA-PRISTA).

History

The DPS&C's reentry initiatives formally began in 2001 as the Corrections Organized for Reentry (CORE) initiative, which was piloted at Dixon Correctional Institute. Through CORE, the DPS&C began to incorporate rehabilitation and treatment opportunities for those incarcerated, following the *Transition from Prison to Community* model from the National Institute of Corrections. The initiatives of CORE showed initial promise for reducing the likelihood that an offender would return to criminal behavior upon release after being given the support and resources to better prepare them for reentry.

The very beginning of collaborative efforts started with Prison Fellowship Ministries in 2007, when with support, communities established reentry coalitions across the state. Many of those coalitions continue to exist today to coordinate support and services for those returning to the community from prison. In 2008, the Louisiana Legislature established the Louisiana Reentry Advisory Council (RAC), as an advisory council to the Secretary of the DPS&C. The RAC is charged with identifying reentry barriers, best practices, and with making recommendations to DPS&C on how best to address the needs of prisoners returning to Louisiana communities.

In 2015, following the Louisiana Government Efficiencies Management Support (GEMS) project and the state's initial work with Criminal Justice Reform and Reinvestment through the Louisiana Sentencing Commission, DPS&C began to look at how to build upon existing education, treatment, and training to better prepare the incarcerated population to return to Louisiana communities.

Since 2001, DPS&C has built upon initial reentry work and identified opportunities for improvement in providing rehabilitative programs and services. Recently, a formal plan has emerged for more systematic approach, which ensures a continuous transition of offender treatment and training from reception through the completion of community supervision (probation and parole). This approach recognizes the importance of cultivating the necessary partnerships with community agencies, the faith-based community, service providers, employment services, victims, local law enforcement, families, and other significant stakeholders to provide collaborative efforts to reduce recidivism in Louisiana and improve public safety.

It is this history that has formalized today's efforts and the following summarized collaboration for improved public safety.

I. Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative (LA-PRI)

LA-PRI is the model for ensuring every individual with a criminal history will have a plan for transition from prison or supervision to community that will be developed beginning at reception into the system and that will provide access to the tools needed to successfully reintegrate into the community.

LA-PRI is a statewide systemic effort to more fully implement the *Transition from Prison to Community* model. Started in 2015, the LA-PRI is based on the principles set forth in the Report of the National Reentry Policy Council and focuses in 4 specific areas Assessment, Treatment, Preparation, and Transition.



- a. *Assessment* – In 2014, Louisiana received a grant to develop and implement a Risk Needs Responsivity (RNR) tool specifically developed for Louisiana’s unique and diverse correctional population. The Targeted Interventions to Greater Enhance Re-Entry (TIGER) tool is in its infancy stages as a web-based RNR tool that was developed in partnership with LSU, DPS&CC, and the Office of Technology Services (OTS). With this tool in place, DPS&C has the ability to assess not only an offenders risk but their needs across 15 different domains and provide responsive treatment/programming to those in state custody.
- b. *Treatment* – Louisiana’s correctional population is unique because many of the state offenders are housed at the local level, which makes providing appropriate treatment for those in state custody challenging. In 2018, the decision was made to operate a local level reception center at Raymond Laborde Correctional Center. The scope of this project was focused initially on the Tier 1 LA-PRI parishes, which are later defined. The local reception center, using the TIGER tool, enables DPS&C to develop Reentry Accountability Plans (ReAPs) for those offenders processed through the center. These plans outline appropriate and responsive programming/treatment, while identifying for DPS&C appropriate areas for programmatic expansion. While still in its infancy and focused in specific parishes, this model is promising for expansion for better provision of treatment opportunities
- c. *Preparation* – The transition from incarceration back to society is a very important, yet difficult for the majority of the state’s prison population, as evidenced by a 5 year recidivism rate of over 40%. Being responsive to these difficulties, DPS&C continues to expand services to prepare offenders for release. In addition to the local reception center and the TIGER tool implementation, DPS&C has expanded the use of regional reentry centers, increased the number of transition specialists operating in local jails, and expanded upon the availability of Day Reporting Centers for those on supervision. DPS&C continues to engage other state agencies, such as the Office of Motor Vehicles, Department of Children and Family Services, Louisiana Housing Corporation, Louisiana Community and Technical College System, Louisiana Department of Health, Medicare, and other community stakeholders to expand the state’s ability to address needs and remove barriers for the state’s prison population as they prepare for and return to Louisiana communities. One example of this effort is the commitment by DPS&C to pilot a local prison consolidated housing model. In 2018, the first consolidated housing was

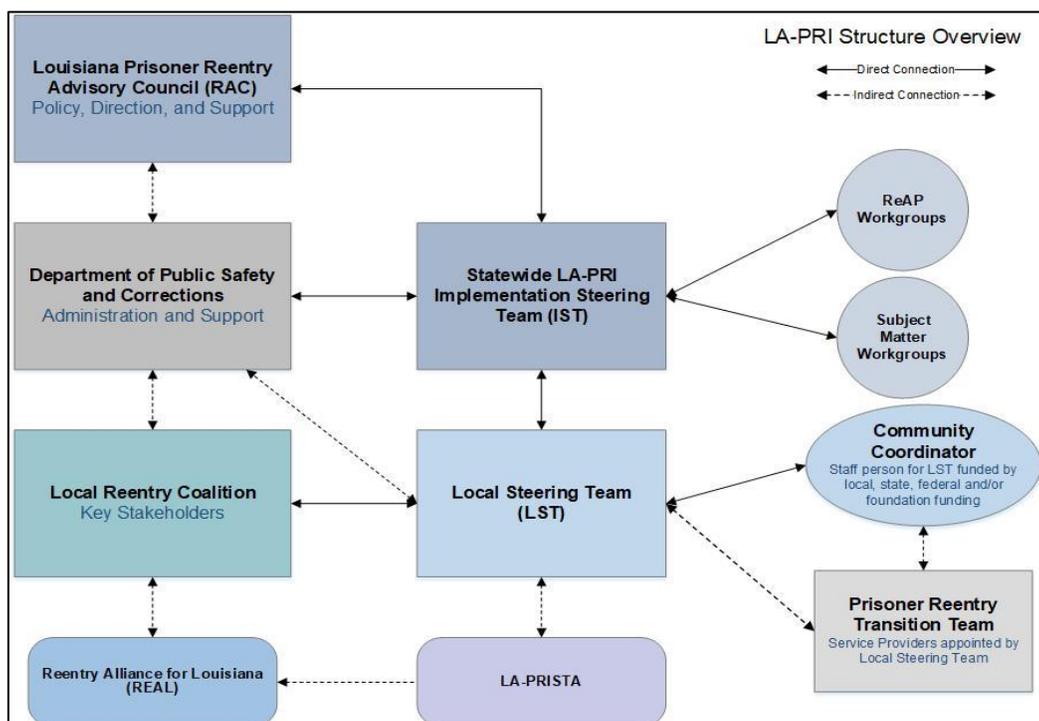
implemented at the Plaquemines Parish Detention Center, where offenders returning to Orleans and Jefferson Parish are housed prior to their release. This model provides for reentry services at the Plaquemines Parish Jail for this population, while also making preparation efforts significantly easier, including referrals and post release support to be established prior to an offender's release.

- d. *Transition* – In the past, once an offender released from DPS&C's custody, much of the information related to that offender stayed with the institution. A combination of policy and procedures that contributed to "silo'd information" and a lack of communication/collaboration with community providers made an offender's transition from prison to the community difficult. In 2009, DPS&C began an attempt to assist with offender transition from local jails to their communities by opening Regional Reentry Programs. These programs offer pre-release preparation and discharge planning and are located in partner facilities in a given region of the state. The goal of these programs are to identify needs and connect the discharging offender with resources to meet their transition needs, while working with community partners through in-reach initiatives.

The model includes a Strategic Planning for Prisoner Reentry (SPPR) Framework, which organizes the work into three phases (Getting Ready - the Institutional Phase, Going Home -the Reentry Planning Phase, and Staying Home - the Community Supervision Phase) and seven decision points. The SPPR also includes twenty-six 'Targets for Change' to help state and local reentry efforts identify assets, barriers, and gaps in order to inform goals and expectations, as well as policy, procedure and potential legal reforms that may be needed.

II. LA-PRI Collaboration Partners

The work of reentry in Louisiana is certainly dependent upon inner agency collaborations previously mentioned, but as important to the success LA-PRI is the collaboration between DPS&C and community stakeholders. The chart below highlights some of the partnerships that are key to the success of prisoner reentry in Louisiana as it relates to LA-PRI structure.



III. Reentry Advisory Council

In accordance with RS 15:1199.4, the Reentry Advisory Council (RAC) was established. The RAC is comprised of twenty-two members, which includes inter-agency and bipartisan members, including criminal justice agencies and legislators. The RAC is comprised of individuals and organizations from whom the RAC has sought – and will continue to seek - advice and counsel on how to improve the success of Louisiana’s returning citizens. These supporters and stakeholders will assist the reentry reforms by acting as conduits for communication and a mechanism for building community awareness, support, and participation.

The RAC meets quarterly and is charged with the following:

1. Identify methods to improve collaboration and coordination of offender transition services, including cross-agency training and information sharing that improves offender outcomes.
2. Establish a means to share data, research, and measurement resources in relation to reentry initiatives with relevant agencies.
3. Identify funding areas that should be coordinated across agencies to maximize the delivery of state and community-based services as they relate to reentry.
4. Identify areas in which improved collaboration and coordination of programs and activities will result in increased effectiveness or efficiency of service delivery.
5. Promote areas of research and program evaluation that can be coordinated across agencies with an emphasis on applying evidenced-based practices to support treatment and intervention programs for offenders.
6. Conduct a review of existing policies and practices and make specific recommendations to the legislature for systemic improvement.
7. Create and support local reentry councils in collaboration with community stakeholders throughout the state.
8. Commence offender reentry public education campaigns.
9. Enhance the role of faith and community-based services for formerly incarcerated persons.
10. Provide coordination of reentry initiatives across the state and ensure eligibility for Second Chance Act grant opportunities sand other reentry grant opportunities.

IV. Department of Public Safety & Corrections

DPS&C works closely with RAC in meeting the legislatively mandates charges of the council, while also partnering with its members on specific issues. In addition to its work and representation on the RAC, DPS&C staff work closely with reentry coalitions, ReAL, and LA-PRISTA to encourage continued and ongoing collaboration and communication on matters of mutual interest.

Implementation Steering Team

As LA-PRI became formalized in 2015, DPS&C established the Statewide Implementation Steering Team (IST). While the initial team was made up of representatives of all facets of DPS&C operations, the team today is a working committee reporting to the Reentry Advisory Council. Its membership represents non-justice state agencies, law enforcement associations (i.e. Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement, the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the Louisiana District Attorney's Association, the Louisiana State Troopers Association, and the Louisiana Association of Chiefs of Police), human services organizations, and local parish reentry coalition representatives including faith-based partners, advocates and former prisoners. IST is charged with implementing the LA-PRI model within DPS&C, as well as working with other state agencies and community partners.

The overarching role of the IST is to:

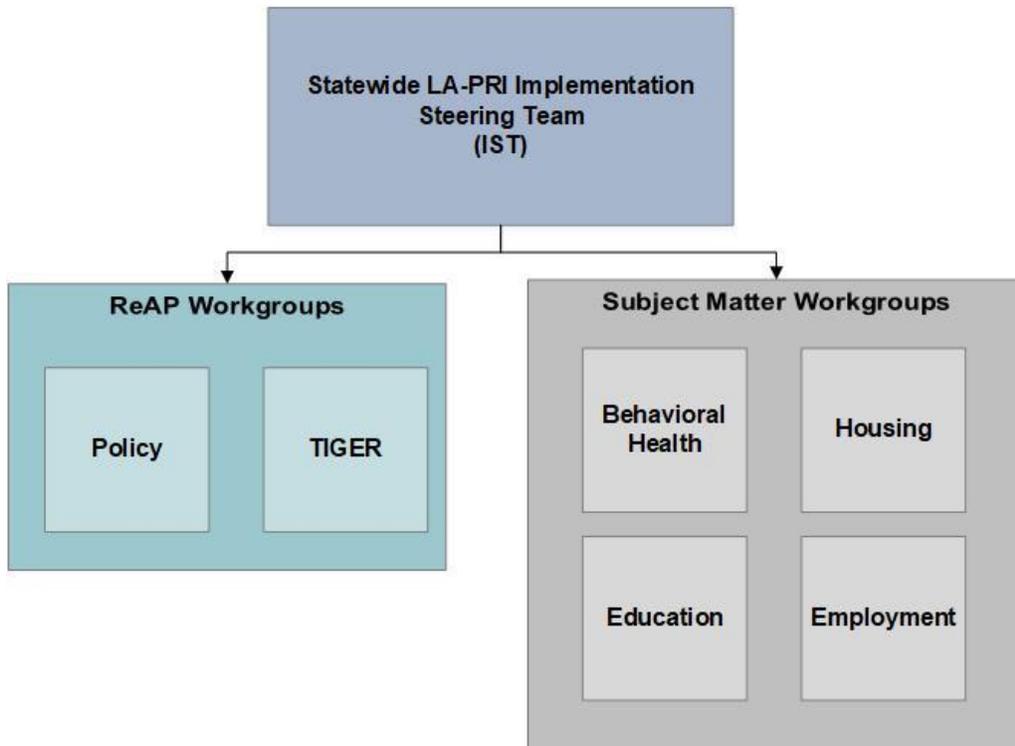
1. Identify barriers that may hinder the successful transition of returning citizens and develop policies, procedures, and programs to overcome such barriers;
2. Identify methods to improve collaboration and coordination of offender transition services, including cross-training, sharing information and creating policies, procedures, and programs that measure offender reentry management with well-defined, performance-based outcomes;
3. Consult with state and local agencies, organizations, and community leaders with expertise in the areas of prison facilities, parole decision-making, reentry, and community supervision to collaborate on offender transition issues and ways of improving operations;
4. Consult with professional associations, volunteer and faith-based organizations, and local treatment and rehabilitation agencies to collaborate on offender transition and ways of improving operations;
5. Provide recommendations as to how the Governor's Office and other state departments and agencies may assist the RAC in overcoming the barriers it has identified to the successful transition and reintegration of offenders returning to communities; and
6. Provide recommendations on how state laws may be improved in order to contribute to the successful transition and reintegration of offenders into society and reduce recidivism.

Based on initial research by DPS&C's team on this project, it was identified that five parishes (Caddo, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Orleans, and St. Tammany) produced nearly 50% of the state's prison population. As a result, the initial LA-PRI work is focused on these Tier 1 parishes where implementation of the structured initiative is expected to produce the greatest impact for the state.

Additionally, through an *Innovations in Re-Entry Initiative* grant from BJA, DPS&C was able to fund 10 part-time community coordinators in all Tier 1 parishes and the following Tier 2 parishes: Bossier, Ouachita, Calcasieu, Lafayette, Rapides, Terrebonne, Lafourche, and Livingston. These coordinators are also tasked with improving collaboration with partners.

The IST can also be credited for creating a formal reentry plan (ReAP) as a single case plan to help better communicate an offender's risks and needs between incarcerating institutions, Probation & Parole and community partners. The ReAP is currently being automated by OTS to facilitate ease of information sharing with stakeholders.

The IST also coordinates its work through workgroups, as highlighted in the chart below:



ReAP Workgroups

Given the critical importance of transition planning across the spectrum of the reentry process, from intake to prison through discharge from correctional authority, the ReAP process requires a work group that is comprised of prison, community supervision and community justice leaders and service providers is needed to implement the process with fidelity. This committee will work to ensure that all stakeholders’ perspectives and inputs are taken into account when developing the new processes and policies around transition planning.

Subject Matter Workgroups

Housing, employment, education and mental health/substance abuse services for returning citizens are paramount for improved offender and system outcomes. These service areas are the top priority of the RAC and as such will benefit from specific forums for agency and community stakeholders to meet and determine the state’s and each community’s assets, barriers and gaps around housing and employment and work to maximize the assets, overcome the barriers, and eventually reduce the gaps in the services in these areas.

IV. Local Reentry Coalitions

As mentioned, the development of reentry coalitions initially began in 2007. Since that time, many jurisdictions have active reentry coalitions doing successful reentry work across the state. In other jurisdictions, coalitions are being developed by the community with support from DPS&C, ReAL, LA-PRISTA, and existing coalitions. These coalitions are asked to adopt, inform, support and implement the LA-PRI model in their parish/region as a part of their overall mission. The coalitions should work to educate the community on how the initiative will create safer neighborhoods and better citizens.

These coalitions are encouraged to develop local steering teams that model the statewide IST mentioned previously.

Local Steering Teams

Develops, oversees, and monitors the local implementation process of the LA-PRI model and coordinates local community involvement in the overall statewide LA-PRI development process. The Steering Team should consist of members of the larger local reentry coalition and operate within and reporting to this coalition. The Steering Team is organized under three co-chairs:

- Warden/Superintendent of a state or local correctional facility.
- Probation & Parole Representative
- A Community Representative drawn from the large number of local faith, human service, and planning organizations who are critical to the local effort.

Each Steering Team includes representatives or service providers associated with the LA-PRI partner government agencies representing the service modalities that must be included in successful reentry planning. These representatives are active on the Steering Team because of the expectation for multi-agency collaboration and the encouragement and support of agency leaders who empower their active participation. The three co-chairs of the Steering Team will work with a local Community Coordinator, who will be resourced for each site as the LA-PRI is implemented using a combination of local, state, federal and/or foundation funds. The Community Coordinator will staff the Steering Team under the guidance of the co-chairs.

V. Re-Entry Alliance for Louisiana

The Re-Entry Alliance for Louisiana's (REAL) mission is to educate Louisiana citizens on every aspect of reentry, to disseminate accurate information to all involved in reentry and to support regional coalitions of service providers for returning citizens ultimately improving the public safety and economy of Louisiana.

Founded by individuals who volunteer, working directly and indirectly with formerly incarcerated persons (FIPs), REAL was established in 2014 with the purpose of developing and eventually coordinating a larger network of groups and organizations who are dedicated to providing reentry services. With a network of partners from Shreveport to Houma, REAL is an overarching resource to those in the reentry community; providing connectivity, information, confidence building and education about the barriers and opportunities that exist for FIPs returning to their communities. Board members are invited to many communities across the state providing organizational support as these grass root organizers formulate their community's formal reentry response or move to improve services, positively impacting the safety of their community and reduce the number of FIPs who recidivate.

For that purpose, REAL organizes the statewide REAL Help Conference. This annual event is open to the public and provides those working in reentry and its communities a place to network, information share, receive training and additional education by experts in their fields. REAL has been fortunate to be able to attract knowledgeable speakers and panel members to its conferences from throughout the country; and because of this, the conferences each year have grown in attendance and impact. At the conclusion of each conference, the Board Members of REAL review surveys and other feedback from attendees to ensure continuous improvement and new topics to explore.

REAL's goal is to provide an overarching resource to all people that are working in reentry and communities providing connectivity, information, training and education about the barriers and opportunities that exist for people returning to their communities.

VI. Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative Steering Team Association

LAPRISTA is the LA-PRI Steering Team Association was established by a consortium of LA-PRI local steering teams to share best practices, training and technical assistance in order to maintain fidelity to the model and assist new regions of the state adopt and implement the model. It is comprised of members from local LA-PRI steering teams and created to promote high fidelity implementation of the LA-PRI model through convening stakeholders and delivering training, technical assistance, tools and resources to local parish implementation steering teams (ISTs) who are implementing the LA-PRI model. LAPRISTA is invested in supporting the success of the LA-PRI initiative and its goals of reducing recidivism through high evidence-based practice in Louisiana. The facilitation and training LAPRISTA provides to the framework and all of its evidence-based elements are necessary to accomplish the tasks under the four (4) phases of the LA-PRI Community implementation. The DPS&C encourages, but does not require, local and regional reentry coalitions and partners to take advantage of this training and technical assistance. Participation in a highly structured analysis of community needs both from an organizational and direct services needs perspective, is critical to informing all partners of how best to spend scarce funding and time to best effect. LAPRISTA has established training and technical assistance, as well as documentation and data that has been shared with and approved by the DPS&C to ensure consistency.

The LAPRISTA training plan that is available to interested coalitions is as follows:

PHASE ONE

1. Local reentry network receives training on the LA-PRI Framework from LAPRISTA
2. Network adopts the Framework and agrees to form a LA-PRI Steering Team
3. Search Committee for Steering Team formed
4. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Pipeline 1 and Pipeline 2 Data, Community Coordinator Job Description provided

PHASE TWO

1. Steering Team formed, Co-chairs in place
2. Six priority committees forms (employment, housing, education, behavioral health mental health, and substance abuse) plus family reunification and legal
3. Training for Steering Team and Committees on Roles, Responsibilities and Community Assessment
4. Additional funding for Community Coordinator Developed

PHASE THREE

1. Community Coordinator in place
2. Community Needs Assessment (CNA), Inventory of Assets, Barriers and Gaps complete/updated. This is updated annually to ensure a current needs assessment is in place and to provide ongoing training and orientation to those newly involved in reentry work.
3. Training provided on DPSC Overreaching Policy, Case Logic Model and Collaborative Case Supervision and Management
4. Comprehensive Community ReEntry Plan (CCRP) developed including Collaborative Case Management and Supervision model developed

PHASE FOUR

1. Implement the LA-PRI Framework with fidelity
2. Deliver Evidence-Based Services by targeting Moderate-to-High Risk/Need
3. Track performance metrics per agreements with DPSC, develop shared measurement systems
4. Demonstrate a reduction in recidivism

LAPRISTA is supported by SocialWorx Institute, who provides organizational development and capacity building support to establish basic governance structures in LA-PRISTA and provide LA-PRI technical assistance support to Steering Teams as needed.

SocialWorx convenes stakeholders and provides training and technical assistance to strengthen communities working collaboratively.

VII. Conclusion

The reentry collaborative highlighted throughout this document is not intended to be all inclusive of the work that each of the noted partners is facilitating on behalf of this state. However, it is essential to reflect the role of each partner and the importance of collaboration on reentry efforts; thereby improving public safety by reducing crimes committed by former offenders and in turn, reducing recidivism. The success of each returning citizen can be attributed to the efforts of the Louisiana Reentry Advisory Council (RAC), the Department of Public Safety and Corrections (DPS&C), Local Reentry Coalitions, Reentry Alliance of Louisiana (REAL), and Louisiana's Prison Reentry Initiative Steering Team Association (LA-PRISTA) working in partnership to move Louisiana forward.