



Orange County Local Reentry Council

2019-2020 Yearly Report

August 31, 2019

The purpose of a Local Reentry Council, as mandated by the N.C. Department of Public Safety, is to coordinate resources in the community in an effort to provide assistance for returning citizens and their families that will facilitate a better transition from incarceration back to society. In addition to galvanizing resources, the Intermediary Agency, CJRD, opted to provide case management services to clients. The Orange County Local Reentry Council entered into its second year of operation in July 2019, building on the momentum and development of the previous fiscal year. The newly created operational structures allowed the LRC to more effectively engage clients and partnering agencies in the Orange County community. Staff continued to expand its network of partners and resources for clients, even going beyond the Orange County area.

Staff was able to secure MOAs with several transition homes in Durham County, make referrals to neighboring LRCs and work with partners to provide resources for clients. One such endeavor resulted in Durham Co. LRC paying for an Orange Co. LRC client to participate in a Heavy Machinery Operation course with Gregory Poole Equipment Company in Mebane, NC. Staff also worked to enact measures voted into place by the Executive Committee regarding policies and procedures, including referral process and direction of services.

Some notable activities during the 2019-2020 year are as follows:

- LRC continued to facilitated regularly scheduled meetings:
 - Executive Committee- Quarterly meetings. Voted in new officers, as well as, Chair and Vice Chair Persons [convened (3) times during 2019-2020]
 - Advisory Committee- Quarterly with guest speakers [convened (3) times during 2019-2020]
 - Local Reentry Council- Quarterly with guest speakers [convened (3) times during 2019-2020]
 - Subcommittees- Only “Housing Subcommittee” and “Health Subcommittee” met during the year. Other committees had trouble securing meeting time and dedicated attendance.
 - All meetings discontinued, beginning in March 2020, due to COVID-19 social distancing policies.
- LRC hosted “Reentry Simulation Event” along with Robert Lang and Project Safe Neighborhood.
- LRC provided funding for several employment skills training opportunities for our clients, such as Peer Support Specialist training, fork lift operation, among others.
- LRC continued to build new relationships in the community, including meeting with Reentry House Plus during planning stages, starting collaboration with NCCASA regarding ‘survivors of sexual assault’ study, and presenting LRC services to area programs such as IFC and Freedom House.
- Team made written request to DPS to reallocate grant funds to address needs presented by COVID-19, and was granted the ability to make needed adjustments.

Staff engaged in enrichment/developmental activities such as conferences and continuing education during the first year of operation. Events included:

- 2019 Locked up, Not Locked Out from Support: NC Veterans Incarcerated and Reentry Summit
- Cyber Security online training.

- PREA training
- Recovery and Reliance presentation

Staff supported the following events:

- DSS Job Fair and Networking Breakfast- Fall of 2020
- Project Connect resource fair
- Justice Advisory Council meetings
- LRC meetings in Durham and Wake counties
- Orange Correctional Center, Partnership Luncheon
- Orange Correctional Center, Debate Competition
- Orange Correctional Reentry Summit
- O.C. Health Dept. interview panels
- Durham LRC, Reentry Simulation
- Fathers on the Move OCC graduation
- NC Work resource meeting

Case Management

For the fiscal year of 2019-2020, the Orange County Local Reentry Council enrolled (**54**) formerly incarcerated individuals onto the LRC caseload. Of the (**54**) clients that obtained active status on the LRC caseload: (**45**) of the participants identify as **male** and (**9**) identify as **female**; (**29**) identify as **African America**, (**21**) identify as **Caucasian**, (**3**) identify as **Mixed Race**, (**0**) identifies as **Native American**, and (**1**) identifies as **Latino**.

Housing

Housing continues to be a key hurdle that is faced by those reentering into Orange County and for those who are justice involved. Twenty four clients had experienced some level of housing instability, which includes unsheltered homeless, transitional housing, emergency housing, and sober living housing. In addition to existing partnerships with area organizations, the LRC was able to expand its available Transitional/Emergency housing resources, adding (3) new partnering agencies to the list. The LRC has been able to assist (18) clients with obtaining housing assistance in the form of transitional and/or emergency housing. Permanent housing assistance, in the form of rent and/or security deposit payments, was obtained for (5) clients.

Employment

Employment continues to be another key hurdle faced by clients returning from incarceration and those impacted by prior incarceration. The LRC also continued working with NC Works Career Center, Orange Works Career Center, Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Senior Community Service. At these agencies, several clients have received help with their resumes, attended one on one hiring events, job fairs and federal bonding classes. Many of the clients seeking assistance in this area presented a variety of needs. The LRC received (17) referral/request for clients seeking assistance with employment. Three clients were assisted with obtaining disability benefits. We had (1) individual to take the Federal Bonding class to help with securing a higher paying job. Seven clients needed assistance with purchasing job related items, including clothing and safety equipment. The remaining number, of clients, was assisted through education/job skill training resources.

Education

The LRC staff worked to increase client participation in educational/job skill training resources. This push was in response to individuals being in need of gainful employment. The LRC continued to build on its partnership with Durham Tech, sending (8) clients to various trainings, including (6) to forklift training, (1) to the heating portion of their HVAC course, and (1) person to the Nurse's Assistance I course. Through a newly formed partnership with Recovery Milestones, the LRC funded training for (3) of clients as Peer Support Specialist. The LRC also partnered with the Durham County LRC to send an individual to Heavy Machinery Training, which Durham LRC paid for.

Transportation

The LRC has continued to support client's mobility by providing bus passes for employment related issues. In addition, staff has provided passes and Uber rides for emergencies, including medical appointments and employment. Some instances, needing Ubers, resulted from individuals not being on the bus line or working at hours that buses do not operate. LRC staff has also worked with the Chapel Hill Transit Authority to secure safe and reliable EZ Rider transportation for clients with disabilities.

Moving Forward/Next Steps

The Orange County LRC with support and guidance from the LRC Executive Committee and DPS will continue to streamline the referral and intake process and strengthen case note management and data entry operations. LRC staff will continue to engage professional development education, such as, trauma informed care practices and racial equity training for best practices for direct client services. LRC staff will collaborate with local community members to develop support circles for those coming home from prison; insulating returning citizens with community support to further aide in successful reentry. The LRC will implement a new Peer Support Program to enhance current case management services, by linking clients to PSS through collaborations with partnering agencies. Staff will continue to strengthen collaboration with Advisory Committee members in order to increase community outreach for the purpose of building additional resources to meet needs of LRC clients. Expanded resources include, but are not limited to, supplies for "Welcome Bags" and basic needs, developing new partnerships with local organizations, and funding for emergency housing and vocational training. COVID-19 and the guidelines needed to protect from the transmission of the virus have presented major challenges in client deliverables. Nonetheless, LRC staff will continue to develop and deploy strategies to welcome returning citizens home.