



## **Orange County Local Reentry Council**

2020-2021 Yearly Report  
September 27, 2021

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 third year of operation in July 2020, which also represent the third and final year of the reentry grant awarded by the N.C. Dept. of Public Safety.

The Local Reentry County began the 2020-2021 fiscal year addressing issues heavily influence by COVID-19, including lack of housing and employment. Due to social restrictions surrounding disease transmission staff worked remotely for the majority of the year. In addition, many resources were limited and partnering agencies operated at a limited capacity. Increase concerns with emergency housing created the biggest problems in Orange County. The LRC also saw an increase of early releases from correctional facilities, particularly with elderly reentrants with chronic medical issues. Because of the increase in service needs, the LRC was able to secure new partnerships in the areas of housing and disability services.

Some notable activities during the 2020-2021 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 (4) times during 2020-2021]
  - Advisory Committee- Quarterly with guest speakers [convened (2) times during 2020-2021]
  - Local Reentry Council- Quarterly with guest speakers [convened (4) times during 2020-2021]
  - Subcommittees- Housing Subcommittee reconvened meetings in April, 2021. The focus of meeting was to address lack of temporary/emergency housing in Orange Co.
  - Executive and Advisory Committee as well as LRC meetings reconvened during the summer of 2021. Due to COVID-19 social distancing policies, meeting have been held via Zoom.
- LRC's collaboration with NCCASA and O.C. Rape Crisis Center regarding 'survivors of sexual assault' study produce a tool for service providers when working with survivors. The product (called the BLESS Tool) offers language and methods for service providers to use to help guide survivors to seeking additional services regarding past experiences with sexual assault.
- 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.
- LRC was able to establish relationships with new housing resources. MOAs were signed with Prosperity Recovery Services [transition/emergency housing services for men and women] and Dunlap Lilly [property management/landlord]. Staff also made contact with potential housing resources, located in Durham, for women.
- LRC secured a MOA with Gregory Poole Equipment Company to provide heavy machinery training for clients.
- LRC renewed all MOAs with vendors that continue to serve as Contract Services resources.
- Staff joined Sheriff Blackwood for a radio interview, on WCHL, regarding reentry in Orange Co.

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

- Diversity and Equity trainings
- Cyber Security online training
- PREA training
- DPS Pockett training (Data storage and case management software)
- LRC Standard Operating Procedures Manual Site Training, presented by DPS

## **Case Management**

For the fiscal year of 2020-2021, the Orange County Local Reentry Council enrolled (**59**) formerly incarcerated individuals onto the LRC caseload. Of the (**59**) clients that obtained active status on the LRC caseload: (**53**) of the participants identify as **male** and (**6**) identify as **female**; (**55%**) identify as **African America**, (**41%**) identify as **Caucasian**, (**3%**) identify as **Mixed Race**, (**0**) identifies as **Native American**, and (**2%**) 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 Prosperity Recovery Services in Durham to our providers list. The LRC has been able to assist (26) 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 (7) clients. LRC was able to add (1) new permanent housing resource, Dunlap Lilly, to provider list.

## **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, Senior Community Service, Step Up, and local individual employers. At these agencies, several clients have received help with their resumes and attended virtual job training, job fairs and hiring events. Many of the clients seeking assistance in this area presented a variety of needs. Out of the (59) clients on the LRC caseload approximately (80%) needed some type of employment assistance. Clients received assistance with purchasing job related items, including clothing and safety equipment. Other clients were assisted through education/job skill training resources as well as direct connections to employers.

## **Education**

COVID challenges persisted as LRC staff worked to engage client participation in educational/job skill training resources, yet despite the challenges the LRC continued to build on its partnership with Durham Tech, sending (10) clients to forklift training. In addition, (3) clients attended the Heavy Machinery training at Gregory Poole.

## **Transportation**

Due to COVID precautions and guidelines much of the one on one client transportation has been limited. Clients have still been able to access public transportation, however, with little or no cost. One-on-one transportation is determined on a case by case basis and after other options has been explored.

## **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 has attended intensive DPS Pokkett training which will provide opportunity for clients and providers pre and post release to strengthen Reentry services, including but not limited to scheduling, collaboration, and documentation. LRC staff will continue to engage professional development education, such as, language awareness and racial equity and inclusivity training for best practices for direct client services. LRC staff will continue to move forward and strengthen the mission of the Housing sub-committee to advocate for safe and stable housing access. The LRC will continue to collaborate with Peer Support Programs to enhance current case management services, by linking clients to PSS through collaborations with partnering agencies. LRC will begin to send referral and work in collaboration with Reentry Recovery staff through the Lantern Project. A new project through the Orange County Criminal Justice Department which helps those with justice involvement and a history of opioid addiction navigate reentry and obtain access to additional supports. 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 continue to present challenges in client deliverables. Nonetheless, LRC staff will continue to develop and deploy strategies to welcome returning citizens home.