Reentry Roadmap

A 25 Point Strategy Toward Restoration

Bob Taft, Governor
Thomas J. Stickrath, Director
June 5, 2006

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to announce the Department of Youth Services’ official plan for reentry: The ‘DYS Reentry Roadmap; A 25-Point Strategy Toward Restoration’. The Roadmap is a comprehensive approach that starts the day a youth arrives at our reception facility, and focuses on establishing a continuity of care that will transition to the community.

Although reentry is not a new concept, no best practice or comprehensive national model exists for juveniles. I believe the reentry process for youth in the juvenile justice system is a top priority and I am eager to begin implementation of the DYS Roadmap. In the past, correctional systems traditionally opened the doors to offenders, while closing them to communication with community stakeholders who have a vested interest in their youth. Under the new approach to reentry, each youth will receive an individualized reentry plan that will involve input from the youth, family, victims and the community. This new plan will create a clear framework of goals and expectations for all involved

I am encouraged with the dedication of the community to partner with DYS as we work together to increase the success of youth released from Ohio’s juvenile justice system.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Stickrath
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STANLEY J. ARONOFF
MICHAEL MORRISON
Legislative Counsel

May 4, 2006

Dear Constituents,

As the current President, and President Elect, of the Ohio Judges Association, we are writing in support of the Department of Youth Services Statewide Reentry Initiative. We understand and support the need for collaboration between the community, the courts and the Department of Youth Services. It is imperative that we develop a multi-systemic process that originates in the community and follows the youth into the Department of Youth Services. This process will reengage the youth with community resources prior to their release, thus creating a seamless continuum of care.

We embrace the importance of assessing and identifying the criminogenic needs of youthful offenders while in the community, utilizing community stakeholders in developing a comprehensive community based plan and using this information to transition the youth into the appropriate level of programming in the Department of Youth Services. We believe that creating a continuum of care that is client focused will provide the best opportunity for successful transition of our youth back into our communities.

As Judges, we are entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining public safety while also protecting the rights of the youth entrusted to our care and custody. We believe that the collaboration identified in the Department of Youth Services Statewide Reentry Initiative effectively links community stakeholders, the courts, and Department of Youth Services as a multi-systemic model that supports public safety while also creating a vehicle for successful reentry.

We are committed to the Department of Youth Services Reentry Initiative and applaud your efforts to make this program successful.

Sincerely,

Judge Paulette J. Lilly
President
Ohio Judges Association

Judge David E. Stucki
President Elect
Ohio Judges Association
All youth committed to Ohio’s juvenile system will eventually return to their communities. In 2005, nearly 2,000 youth were released onto parole. Unfortunately, statistics predict that within 1 year, 30% of those youth released will come back to DYS or be committed to the adult correctional system. After three years, the number jumps to 50%.

In order to ease the transition back home and increase the chance of success, it is essential to begin planning for a youth’s reentry as soon as possible.

A successful reentry plan is created through the collaboration of the youth, family, community stakeholders, juvenile courts and the Department of Youth Services. The ‘Reentry Roadmap’ is a 25 point strategy that will guide DYS and community partners in the development of comprehensive, individualized plans to transition each youth within the juvenile justice system back home.
The Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) will commit the leadership team to an overall philosophy and mission for Reentry that is grounded in evidence-based practices, consistent with community reentry goals and executed throughout the agency through our performance goals and strategic planning processes.

DYS will develop a continuum of training to support reentry that enhances pre-service, in-service, leadership and professional development for all staff to include cross-training between institutions, parole regions, central office administration, and the community.

DYS will recruit and train volunteers to provide services during a youth’s stay with DYS, as well as, support the transition from the institutions back to their home community.

DYS will recommend that Family and Children’s First Councils establish a Reentry sub-group to enhance county service delivery plans to assist all youth in successfully returning to the community.

DYS and Ohio’s juvenile courts will develop a State-wide Risk/Need Assessment System that will be used throughout Ohio’s juvenile justice system to more consistently assess each youth’s security risk and treatment need level.

DYS will create a more comprehensive and collaborative reception and intake process that incorporates community recommendations, assessment and diagnostic information into the Reception Assessment Summary (RAS).

Individual reentry plans will be created for all youth. Each plan will involve youth, family, victims, the community and DYS to engage youth to actively participate in achieving their individual programmatic outcomes.

DYS will create an improved and comprehensive case communication process for staff and community partners that is easy to use and understand.

Within the first 90 days of a youth’s arrival to DYS, the Release Authority will hold face-to-face reentry reviews with every youth to assess their individualized plan, institutional goals, and community expectations. The review will include family members, community partners, and victim representatives.

DYS will evaluate the current practices of the Release Authority and make necessary procedural changes in an effort to better serve youth, staff, victims and families and promote public safety.

DYS will ensure that each youth has a regularly scheduled reentry review to address all security and program concerns during the youth’s institutional stay. This review process will continue as the youth transitions back to the community on parole supervision.

DYS will enhance treatment program delivery so that youth are afforded the opportunity to engage in a variety of treatment programs in a manner that allows them to work on more than one treatment goal at a time.
DYS will redesign the incentives and sanctions process and tie them to our youth recognition and progressive discipline programs while applying them consistently within every institution and region.

DYS will work to expand vocational and job skills training programs in the institutions that will build marketable skills for our youthful offenders. In addition, we will be developing relationships in the community to increase employment opportunities for released youth.

DYS will establish transitional reentry programs for every institution to prepare youth to return to the community and to link them to community services.

DYS will explore the establishment of a structured, supervised and community based reorientation (furlough) program.

DYS will work to establish centralized institutional programs for youth returning to DYS on parole violations.

DYS will work with the community to develop alternative community sanctions for youth who have committed parole violations that could return them to DYS.

Upon a youth’s commitment, DYS will engage the community to educate and assist families and nontraditional families in preparing for the youth to return home.

DYS will develop a strategy to assist communities in developing resources, bridging local service gaps and training staff in the use and application of collaborative endeavors between state agencies and funding streams.

DYS will embrace evidence-based parole practices tied to outcome measures for youth that assist in enhancing our youth’s rehabilitation.

DYS will continue to explore and utilize expanded uses of technology to increase communication, enhance public safety and offender accountability.

DYS will improve our participation in community policing by partnering with state agencies and law enforcement.

DYS will establish and define a philosophy for community service and work detail programs.

DYS will evaluate and empirically track outcome measures for reentry programs and initiatives.