

Kansas Reentry Policy Council (KRPC)

Ex-Offender Employment Task Force

Phase I: Making the Connection

May 2009 through January 2011

July 2011

Background and History of Ex-Offender Employment Task Force **June 30, 2011**

The EOETF is a part of the Kansas Reentry Policy Council (KRPC); established in 2006 to address barriers to offender success. The KRPC is a 12 member council composed of cabinet level and agency leaders who oversee the state's comprehensive risk reduction plan and communicate with state legislators regarding policies and laws impacting offender reintegration. Through the KRPC steering committees and task forces were formed to investigate barriers for offender success and implement a state plan.

The EOETF was organized and led by the Executive Director of the KRPC and the Chair of the Kansas Association of Workforce Boards (KAWB). Both leaders recognized the opportunity to build partnerships around a shared vision for utilizing effective employment and training strategies to achieve a dual purpose: reduce recidivism among released offenders; and provide employers a pool of skilled workers. This became the focus of the task force and multiple partners and stakeholder agencies were invited to participate. These agencies include:

- Corrections/Criminal Justice System
 - Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC)
 - Community Corrections
 - Court Services
- Five Kansas Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs)
- Kansas Department of Commerce
- Kansas Department of Labor
- Training Providers (Community and Tech Colleges, Community Based Organizations)

In January of 2011, the (EOETF) concluded the initial goals of the group were completed and agreed to launch a second phase for this assignment. The goals for Phase II of the EOETF are to expand the number of collaborative partners, and to strengthen and sustain the outcomes and achievement to date. The EOETF will formalize a set of specific goals during the Spring of 2011. This document serves as an introduction to the Task Force, summarizes their work and accomplishments during Phase I, and creates a map to move forward into Phase II.

Phase I Goals and Accomplishments

The EOETF identified the following goals and accomplishments for Phase I of this initiative.

Promote employment of ex-offenders in Kansas as a strategy for community integration.

- The Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) identified ex-offenders as a potential source of skilled labor and a priority population to be served
- Task Force members testified before the Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee of the Kansas Legislature and presented to the KansasWorks State Board regarding outcomes of the EOETF in leveraging resources and multi-agency collaboration.
- Identified and developed relationships with Kansas employers willing and able to hire skilled ex-offenders.
- Meet and greet hosted by Local Area V Southeast KansasWorks for employers to discuss hiring ex-offenders.

Identify federal, state, and local policy barriers.

- Recognized common barriers of ex-offenders in qualifying for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services.

- Travel limitations or restrictions for work release participants and offenders on post release supervision
- Reporting requirements for parolees often interfere with employment opportunities
- Identified employers and industries that are not able to employ ex-offenders due to legislative restrictions or industry regulations.

Identify key stakeholders and partners to integrate into the partnership.

- Partners added to the EOETF during Phase I
 - Kansas Department of Labor
 - Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services
 - Veterans Employment Services
- Partners Identified/Targeted for Phase II
 - Business and Industry
 - Adult Education Providers
 - United Way chapters in Kansas
 - Faith Based Community
 - Community Based Organizations
 - Kansas Correctional Industries

Identify resources and create connections between Corrections and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) employment and training services.

- Established High Definition (HD) connections between Correctional Facilities and Workforce Centers, utilized for training and pre-release interviews with employers.
- LWIBs designated point of contact for ex-offenders at Workforce Centers, established connections to key Corrections partners to smooth transition of clients exiting institutions
- Conducted outreach to employers through Business Services Teams at Workforce Centers

Develop partnerships to integrate ex-offenders as a pipeline of skilled workers through employment and training services.

- Partnership with Barton County Community College on training grant implementation
- Surveyed Corrections and Workforce staff the perception of their relationships. Used survey results to develop and implement cross training between both agencies
- Conducted training for Workforce Center staff
- Implemented Basic Employability Skills Training (BEST) for Corrections staff
- Established procedures for screening and connecting resources to offenders who are veterans and qualify for assistance from the Disabled Veterans' Outreach program (DVOP) and LVER
- Allowed the Department of Corrections to partner with KANSEL through the Youthful Offender Apprenticeship Grant in order to train offenders 18-24 years of age in market relevant occupations

Moving Forward- Phase II

The task force has accomplished its initial charges from the KRPC and is preparing to move forward into Phase II. At the Task Force meetings in 2011, the Phase II goals and objectives will be identified and adopted.

Initial Phase II Goals

1. Expand partnerships with Business and Industry
2. Identify the role of each existing task force member.
3. Identify new stakeholders and their roles on the task force.

4. Develop formal goals and outcomes for measurement and accountability
5. Formalize partnership relationships via Memorandums of Understanding or Agreements (MOU or MOA).
6. Continue seeking grant opportunities to serve the offender population.

Special Acknowledgement

The EOETF members would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts and encouragement of Marilyn Scafe, the Executive Director of the Reentry Policy Council (KRPC). Marilyn was extremely instrumental in the reorganization of the Task Force in May 2009 and the work that it accomplished. Marilyn retired on March 4, 2011, and her leadership will be greatly missed.

Attachments:

EOETF Meeting Summaries

EOETF Participants

Kansas Reentry Policy Council (KRPC)

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Marilyn retired on March 4, 2011 and her leadership will be greatly missed.

Background and History of Employment Task Force

According to a report published in March 2009 by the Pew Foundation, one (1) out of thirty-one (31) adults in the United States were currently under some form of correctional control. The data for this report was compiled by the Bureau of Justice Statistics for the offender population in the United States at yearend 2007.

In Kansas, the statistics showed that one (1) out of every fifty-one (51) adults were **currently** under some form of correctional control. Correctional control included: prison, jail, probation, and parole. Those statistics do not include those individuals who have a criminal history and are no longer under any type of correctional supervision.

To address the issue of a growing population of offenders, the 3R (Recodification, Rehabilitation, Reintegration) Committee was established by the Governor of Kansas in 2004. The Committee was charged by statute to study and make recommendations regarding the recodification of the criminal code, the identification of ways to rehabilitate offenders and to work with offenders on community-based supervision, and the identification of ways to restore the offender into society as a productive member. The work of this committee resulted in the development of the Kansas reentry Policy Council (KRPC) in 2006.

The KRPC charter is to work across agency lines to collaborate for offender success in the community by reducing the risk of offenders to return to incarceration or reoffend. The KRPC is a twelve (12) member council composed of Cabinet Level and agency leaders who oversee the successful execution of the State's comprehensive risk reduction plan and communicate with the state legislators regarding policies and laws impacting offender reintegration.

Under the guidance of this council, Steering Committees were formed to implement the state's comprehensive risk reduction plan. The steering committee's by established multi-disciplinary task forces to investigate and report back to them, findings regarding reentry issues, barriers, and systems that function or not regarding offender reintegration and risk reduction. The steering committees provide direction to the seven (7) task forces established and report the findings from these task forces and recommendations to the KRPC.

Kansas Reentry Policy Council (KPRC)

Risk Reduction Plan

Statewide
Policy

Legislature

ROLE: Provide oversight and funding to support the inter-agency goal of:

- Increasing public safety
- Reducing recidivism
- Averting costs of prison population growth.

Kansas Reentry Policy Council

ROLE: Oversee the successful execution of the State's comprehensive risk reduction plan by:

- Promoting inter-agency collaboration
- Investing in neighborhood-based strategies
- Improving state agency outcomes

Statewide
Implementation

Steering Committee

ROLE: Implement the State's comprehensive risk reduction plan:

- Establishing multi-disciplinary task forces
- Providing direction and guidance to task forces
- Report findings and recommendations to the KPRC

Task Forces

Detainers

Conditions of
Release

Employment

Housing

Substance
Abuse

Mental Health

Probation:
CC/CS

Law
Enforcement

Local
Implementation

KDOC
Parole
Reentry:
• Shawnee County
• Sedgwick County
• Wyandotte County

Probation
Community Corrections:
• SB 14
• SB 123
Court Services

Local Programs:
• New Communities
• Jail Reentry
• CIT
• Drug Court
• Mental Health Court

The Employment Taskforce was established by the Kansas Reentry Policy Council's Steering Committee in June 2007 to:

- Promote the employment of offenders in Kansas
- Identify federal, state, and local policy barriers
- Identify strategies for marketing offenders to employers
- Develop partnerships to develop offenders as another pipeline of skilled workers
- Identify strategies for importing this plan to other criminal justice system partners

The Task force provides opportunities in a neutral forum for decision makers, representing a wide range of state and local agencies to communicate and work together to meet the need of offenders in obtaining meaningful employment and establish them as a pipeline of skilled workers to meet the needs of the evolving labor market. The focus of the meetings revolves around these two important issues:

- Offender unemployment is the highest correlated risk factor for recidivism
- Offenders are considered an Alternative Labor Pool (ALP) that is a priority population presenting with barriers to achieving positive outcomes

And the task force prepares quarterly reports for the Steering Committee of the Kansas Reentry Policy Council. The steering Committee is charged with making recommendations to the council for legislative action regarding this concern.

The employment task force was reorganized on May 5, 2009 when the Executive Director of the Reentry Policy Council (KRPC) met with the President of the Kansas Association of Workforce Boards (KAWB). Both leaders understood the key to an effective collaboration is to build partnerships around a shared vision and they began the process of developing the Shared vision for a Skilled Workforce in Kansas which became the focus of the task force. The vision will facilitate a broad based ownership of the need and help find solutions by investigating how we are connected and how we can build upon those connections and this takes time

The shared vision was based upon the following assumptions for potential partners from the agreed upon "Workforce Development Model for Offender Success"

Corrections/Criminal Justice System

- Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC)
 - Includes all releases from State correctional facilities
 - Secretary on the KRPC
- Community Corrections
 - Probation from court
 - Intensive supervision- assessed Moderate and High Risk to reoffend
- Court Services
 - Probation from the Court
 - Both misdemeanor and lower risk felony probation supervision

Kansas Department of Commerce

- Secretary on the KRPC
- Deputy Secretary over workforce Development, is a member of the Steering Committee
- Liaison to Kansas Board of Regents and Chambers

Local workforce Investment Boards

- Independent boards representing independent plans in 5 regions in Kansas State Association of Board of Directors
- Accountability based upon federal outcome measures

Community Colleges

- Develop and implement vocational training
- Board of Regents and Tech Authority

Chambers of Commerce

- Develop employers- opportunities to educate employers
- Communicate needs for workforce to the LWIBs

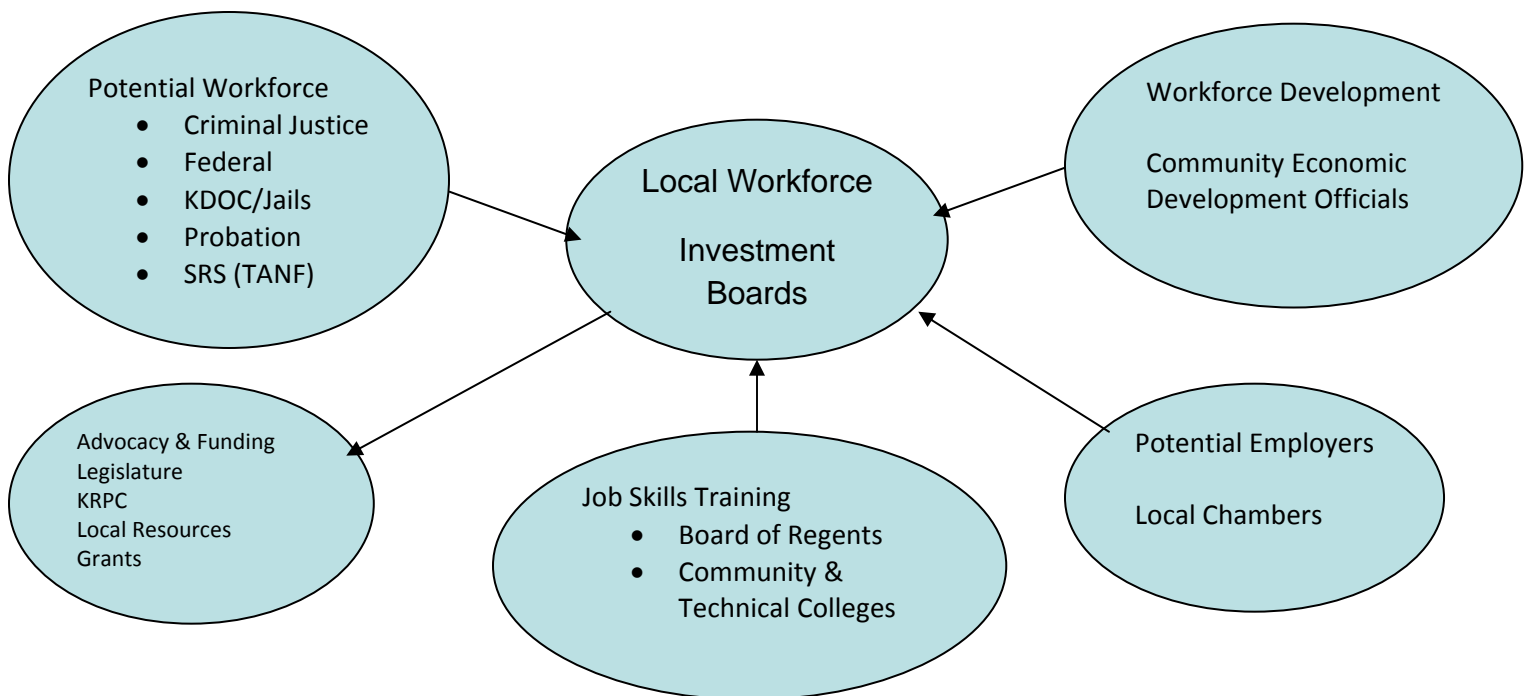
Kansas Reentry Policy Council

- State level 12 member council of Cabinet Level and agency leaders
- Charter is to work across agency lines to collaborate for offender success in the community by reducing the risk of offenders to return to incarceration or reoffend, Lack of employment is a primary risk factor
- Steering Committee members are appointed by council members. Task Forces are chartered by the steering committee. Commerce and Corrections co-chair the employment task force

Legislative and Local Policy Makers

- The 3R Committee established by the Governor in 2004 developed the KRPC with the vision of collaboration to develop resources to address the specific areas of risk for re-offenders going back to local communities

Shared Vision for a Skilled Workforce in Kansas



Meeting Highlights

May 5, 2009 (Wichita Workforce Center) 2hrs

Initial reorganization meeting to discuss Employment Model for Offenders

Goals established:

- Development of Vision
- Establishment of members for Workforce Focus Group

June 11, 2009 (Flint Hills Technical college) 4hrs

Question posed: *“How can Kansas better leverage and coordinate employment and training resources and develop effective state-wide strategies for offenders and reintegration among state agencies, Local Workforce Investment Boards and community based organizations and training providers?”*

Goals established at this meeting:

- Develop a resource and information conduit between Commerce to the Kansas Department of Corrections
- Develop a process to facilitate a smoother hand-off between corrections and workforce partners and between workforce partners
- Promote Work Opportunity Tax Credit

Group discussed a formal partnership in the form of an MOU established in the western portion of Kansas between Local workforce investment Board 1, Kansas Department of Corrections, and the Northwest Kansas Community Corrections Board as a model to be replicated throughout the state

Standing agenda items at every meeting is the continued discussion of the (3) grant projects:

1. Community Based Job Training Grant (CBJT) awarded to Barton County Community College
2. The Youthful Offender Apprenticeship Training Program Awarded to the Kansas Department of Corrections
3. The State Energy Sector Partnership Grant awarded to Kansas Department of Commerce

The first two grant awards involve programming that is specifically for the offender population and conversation regarding how this is connected to the workforce centers is ongoing. The third grant award involves potential to develop programming that includes the offender population. One project that is in process through this grant is the ReThink Energy project

August 24, 2009 (Lyon County Courthouse) 4hrs

Next Steps:

- Discussed need to ensure the offenders were registered for selective service prior to age 26 in order to benefit from federally funded programs through WIA and apply for financial aid to pursue college degrees
 - Kansas Department of Corrections has a policy to address this and this was brought to the attention of the case managers to ensure offenders are getting registered if they have not registered before being placed in custody.
- Corrections was charged with development of a Criminal Justice system Subgroup to serve as an advisory body to address questions from the task force

- Develop a training plan for workforce staff on case management for the offender population

October 13, 2009 (Cross training team)

- Met to discuss training needs of workforce staff regarding case management for offenders and to assist staff with developing a level of comfort in working with offenders
- Training will be 6 hours in length
- An offender panel will be included in the training

October 19, 2009 (Lyon County Courthouse) 4 hrs

Next Steps:

- Convene a second subgroup to discuss how to streamline the referral process from clients coming from the CJS to the workforce centers
- Training for the Workforce centers is scheduled for March 2010
- CJS will report to group in January on results of survey sent to CJS partners
 - Survey question:
- Develop process to identify completes with eh Community Based Job Training Grant to ensure proper referral and identification when the offender access the workforce center services
- Develop strategies on how to tell success stories
- It was discussed that offenders need to work on computer skills to compete in the workforce. How will we accomplish that?
- Determine who else needs to be at the table for these meetings
- Meeting time was reduced from 4 hours to 2 hours since the collaboration seems to be moving forward and multiple subgroups have been formed to address major foci of task force.
- Search for ways to get on the agendas of:
 - the State Work Force Board Meeting
 - Tech Authority meetings
 - Kansas Workforce Summit (occurs every January)

February 11, 2010 (Conference call) 2 hrs

- Subgroup to discuss streamlining handoff from CJS to Workforce Centers and Workforce Center to Workforce center will convene on March 4
- Cross training for Workforce staff was completed for LWIB 1 on Jan 13 and 25. Receiving excellent feedback from participants. Training included an inmate panel.
- CJS survey results were discussed Results of the survey revealed that Community Corrections agencies and the Kansas Department of Corrections reported the best relationship with the Workforce centers while Court Services showed the weakest and the federal probation partners fell in the middle
- The question was asked who else needs to be invited to this collaboration

Next Steps:

- SRS/TANF director will be contacted to invite them to the partnership
- An invitation to the Kansas Department of Labor will be offered to bring them into the partnership

- Cross training for LWIB III will be scheduled

March 23, 2010 (conference call) 2 hrs

Subgroup meeting to discuss how to identify offenders for appropriate handoff from the correctional system to the workforce system to reduce the lag time from release from correctional custody to engagement with the workforce centers. Below is a list of the follow-up items for consideration in the future:

- Documentation checklist will be provide to CJS
- The need to expand ABE/GED services is crucial, but budgetary constraints area hindrance
- Computer Skills training for offenders is necessary. How can we get that in the prisons
- A draft will be prepared of handoff guidelines between LWIB areas for further discussion
- BEST training will be expanded to offenders after DOC staff attend training
- Expand the use of video conferencing equipment to include the correctional facilities

Next Steps:

- Meet with the wardens to discuss the video conferencing equipment
- Train DOC staff on how to implement the BEST program
- Expand the group to include Services from the workforce centers for offenders who are Vets

April 12, 2010 (HD connections) 2hrs

- CJS team presented table of acronyms used by the different partners to remediate some of the language barrier to communicating between systems.
- Offenders at the Ellsworth correctional Facility are able to participate in the BEST training via HD connection to the Workforce Center in Topeka utilizing the ITV equipment purchased through the CBJT grant project
- SRS/TANF representative and Kansas Department of Labor representatives joined the task force
 - SRS is developing a handout for eligibility criteria and training to assist CJS partners in making appropriate referrals

Next Steps:

- Establish a committee to “tell the Story” of how the task force developed
- Develop a template on how to describe the workforce system to the CJS partners
- May 13 a meeting will convene at Ellsworth to discuss the progress of the Community Based Job Training Grant that serves offenders
- Reviewing occupation restrictions based upon a felony conviction
- April 14, the Mobile unit will be going to the Larned Correctional Mental Health Facility to conduct Work Ready Certificate Testing

May 13, 2010 (meeting at Ellsworth Correctional Facility)

- Project Director from CBJT grant, DOC and Workforce representatives met to discuss implementation of the grant project. Discussion about how to streamline referral process based upon interest assessment and to enroll participants in the work force system resulted in a streamlined process

July 14, 2010 (Flint hills Technical College) 2 ½ hrs

- Cross training for workforce staff in two regions completed
- Process to screen for appropriate referrals for the CBJT participants was established
- Vocational Training for offenders through the CBJT grant: modification being discussed of program regarding CAD based upon the feedback from this task force is being explored
- It was decided that **meetings will be held Quarterly due** to the progress being made

Next Step:

- Workforce staff are scheduled to make a presentation to the Warden's meeting on July 15, 2010 to discuss the progress we are making through our partnership and to explore with the wardens further use of the ITV equipment at LCMHF, ECF, and HCF
- Local area V requested a facilitated Meet and Greet Meeting in their region between the workforce centers and the CJs partners in their area. Meeting set for August 24 in Independence

July 15, 2010 (Warden's meeting presentation by Workforce partners)

- Goal is to connect offenders to the workforce system prior to release
- Purpose was to demonstrate to the Wardens how we can develop our connection with the Workforce system and what we have already accomplished.
- Some underlying concerns:
 - Offender's lack of computer skills
 - lack of documentation (although it is getting better)
 - desire for increased communication between both systems for more efficient case planning

Next Step:

- The wardens asked if any CJS partners were represented on the State Workforce Board. There aren't any. It was asked if there was a way for representation to be placed on the Board. Commerce will review that request.
- The Warden's realized the value of utilizing the HD equipment and were support

August 24, 2010 (Meet and Greet, Independence) 4 1/2 hrs

- Purpose: the group came together to introduce the CJS partners in LWIB V and the Work Force partners to each other to assist with the development of or strengthening of the collaboration in South East Kansas around offender employment
- 26 individual came to the meeting representing the workforce centers in the region, Community Corrections and Court Services agencies, and parole
- The meeting was a facilitated conversation to introduce all to the Employment Task Force and the KRPC mission.
- The meeting ended with the local workforce offices breaking up into smaller groups that included the CJS partners in the room that were in their areas so they could brain storm on what the next step would be in their communities to move the relationship to another level of effectiveness
- Information regarding restricted DL legislation, acronym list, and the work Ready certificate to the CJS partner represented were requested and sent after the meeting was adjourned

- Feedback received on September 20, 2010 was extremely favorable and the relationship building process has taken hold.

October 21, 2010 (Wichita Workforce Center) 2hrs

- Mike Randol, Veteran's Service Manager informed group of collaboration project with DOC for offenders who have Vet status. This will be an in-reach to identify them and conduct case planning prior to release. Preliminary introductions have been made as to who the contact person at the facilities and who the contact person (DVOP) at the workforce centers is.
- CBJT grant modification of vocational program from CAD to CERTIPORT was approved and will move forward
- Finding a way to identify offenders who had an IEP is being explored at the Reception and Diagnostic unit at the El Dorado Correctional Facility
- Report on adding corrections to the State Work Force Board was made and it was reported that there is a sincere interest at this time, but due to upcoming administrative changes it would be better to defer this topic
- Discussion about looking at Foundations for funding was held. Numerous members of the group will look into this and report back
- Skyline homes project: A pipeline of potential workers from DOC is being developed to supply employer with trained workers for this company. Currently Skyline is building cabins for the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. DOC has been building the same cabins for KDWP and the offenders have the skills Skyline can utilize.

Next Step:

- A survey for the Workforce centers will be sent out to gauge their perception of the relationship they have with the CJS and reported on at the next meeting
- Contact with Kansas Department of Labor will be made to facilitate an industry analysis of the vocational programming currently being offered in the prisons
- It was suggested that the meetings go **back to 4 hours** in length due to amount of progress being made.

October 27, 2010

- Employment Task Force made a presentation to the **State Work Force Board** regarding the work the task force is involved in.

January 19, 2011 (Topeka Workforce Center) 3 hrs

- A discussion on the accomplishments of the task force ensued and how it should move forward. It was agreed upon by those present that the work of this task force can be summarized into two Phases
 - Phase I: Making the connection
 - Phase II making the connections operational
 - Continue to make connections with the workforce teams and the Offender Workforce Development Specialist
 - Find success stories and put a 2 ½ minute video together
 - Engage Loretta Shelly in the group discussion
- Grant updates were given

- Career pathways Grant on the horizon: meeting scheduled for June 1-2 to discuss project focusing on implementing Best Practices
- Application for Technical Skills Training Grant is being prepared
- Department of Labor presented a report on the outlook for jobs for the vocational programs offered in the prisons to offenders
- On the horizon are some Transitional Training Job Grants we will have an opportunity to apply for
- Workforce Center Survey results were shared with the group
 - We need to make sure each center has a point person to assist the offender population
 - Workforce staff requested more knowledge about the criminal justice system
 - Suggestions on how we can engage employers
 - Incentives
 - Involvement

Next Step:

- The CJS and Workforce surveys will be redistributed in October 2011 to measure progress now that we have a baseline for both systems
- Develop job fairs for ex-offenders
- Establish a group composed of DOL, DOC, and workforce to digest report from DOL and come up with observations and recommendations
- Clarify task force members roles
- Decide who will facilitate the meeting with Commerce since Marilyn is retiring
- Next meeting will be in April for 4 hours place TBAJ

January 28, 2011 (Meeting in Winfield) 2 hrs

- Meeting was held to bring together the CJS partners in Cowley County with the Workforce Center staff that serve Cowley county
- The format was a facilitated discussion to get both systems to give information to each other about process and goals

PHASE II: *Operationalizing the Connections*

- **Identifying the role of each member**
- **Formalizing relationships via Memorandum of Agreements or understandings**
- **Continue to seek opportunities to jointly prepare grant applications to include serving the offender population**

Accomplishments

- Establishment of the Criminal Justice system (CJS)
- HD connections between Facility and Workforce Centers
- Cross Training for LWIB I and LWIB II completed
- Effective Hand off between LWIBs
- BEST Training for Correctional Staff
- List of CJS acronyms
- Conducted Survey for CJS on how they perceive their relationship with the Workforce centers
- Conducted Survey for Workforce staff on relationship with criminal justice partners
- Meet and Greet LWIB V
- In reach to the prisons from the Workforce center DVOPS for offender who are vets
- Facilitated Conversation in Cowley County (LWIB IV)
- Presentation to the State Workforce Board
- Presentation to the Corrections Committee for the Kansas Legislators
- Better Communication between and within all partners represented

MEMBERSHIP

Marilyn Scafe, Executive Director, Kansas Reentry Council
Keith Lawing, Executive Director, Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas
Bob Dalke, Executive Director, Kansas WorkforceOne
Renea Cavaness, Executive Director KansasWorks South East Kansas
Scott Anglemeyer, Executive Director, Workforce Partnership
Arlene Ockwood, Heartland Works
Mike Beene, State Operations Director, KansasWorks Department of Commerce
Caleb Asher, Deputy Secretary, Kansas Department of Commerce
Keith Meyers, Director of Training Services, Kansas Department of Commerce
Joey Frederickson, Kansas Department of Commerce
Gary Brown, Workforce Center Representative
Deb Scheibler, Program Director, Kansas WorkforceOne
Mike Randol, Veterans Services Manager
Cindy Villarreal, Kansas WorkforceOne
David Miller, R3 Project Director and Curriculum Specialist
Jane Howard, Barton County Community College
Julie Utt, Deputy Warden, Winfield Correctional Facility
Jim Chastain, Offender Workforce Development Specialist, Kansas Department of Corrections
Kathie Harris, R3 Project Director, Kansas Department of Corrections
Heather Sovern, Research Analyst and supervisor, Kansas Department of Labor
Inayat Noormohmad, Senior Labor Economist and Director, Kansas Department of Labor
Ruth Arensdorf, Kansas Department of SRS/TANF
Judy Kennedy, TANF program manager Kansas Department of SRS
Kelly Fuller, Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas
Terry Gosh, Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas
John Tersinar, Southeast KansasWorks

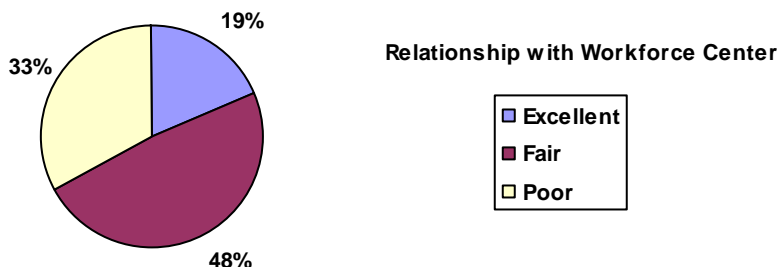
SURVEYS

Criminal Justice System (CJS): OCTOBER 2009

Workforce Center Interaction Survey

Results including: Parole, Community Corrections, Court Service, and Federal Probation

- Are you familiar with the Workforce Center in your area?
 - Of the 127 responses 89% were familiar with the workforce center in their area.
- Describe the process for referrals or engagement of services to the Workforce Center.
 - Formal referrals
 - Work with the agency designated staff (OWD staff or employment specialist) to get information regarding workforce center and programs available.
 - Contact Workforce Center personnel to set appointment (phone or via email) to meet with offenders one on one.
 - Workforce personnel present information at the agency level co-facilitated with agency staff.
 - Resource Officer makes frequent contact to keep up to date on changes in process.
 - Informal referrals
 - Offenders are informed of location and phone number of workforce center, therefore sent on their own to contact the center for services.
 - Other
 - Agency did not know there was a referral process, so no referrals are taking place.
 - Limited centers and hours cause barriers.
 - Lack of assistance with computer illiterate offenders.
- List and describe the Workforce Center programs you are most familiar with in the location you interact with.
 - Of the 127 responses, 9 were unaware of any programming or services at the centers.
 - The remaining 118 responses listed many numerous programs and services available.
- How would you rate your current relationship with the Workforce Center?



- What would you like to see in terms of furthering your relationship with the Workforce Center in your area?
 - Increase collaboration

- Updates on services and staffing contacts
 - Workshops between agency and workforce center for offenders
 - Develop a working relationship with agency job/cog specialist and employment developer
 - Liaison between workforce center and corrections agency.
 - Personnel willing to assist offender population
 - Decrease in the bureaucracy
-
- Court Services overall results show they have less knowledge or use of the workforce centers of all correctional agencies.
 - Federal Probation overall results show there has been a struggle building a relationship with the workforce centers.
 - Community Corrections and Parole overall results show there has been a tremendous amount of work in gaining employment for offenders and building relationships with the workforce centers.

Workforce Center Staff Relationships with Corrections

Personnel: October-November 2010

Summary

Workforce Center personnel in all five local areas have established relationships with the corrections system at many different levels, although those staff members indicate that their familiarity with various parts of the system could be deepened, and their relationships with all parts of the corrections system could be strengthened. There is some variation in both level of familiarity and strength of the workforce center-correction system relationship from local area to local area, although each local area scored in the middle in both familiarity with parts of the correction system and in strength of the relationship. There are clear differences in the level of familiarity with and strength of the relationship among the different parts of the corrections system. Familiarity with some parts of the correction system was reported to be very low, while most respondents have at least a passing familiarity with other parts of the correction system. In most cases, the most frequent response to the question rating the quality of the relationship was “fair”. Finally, a surprisingly large number of individuals have worked with incarcerated individuals prior to their release, but these individuals largely come from two local areas.

Open-ended responses touched on a number of different issues, but a significant number of respondents encouraged more contact with corrections personnel through means such as presentations about their workforce services at workforce center staff meetings.

Survey Design

The survey was conducted in late October and early November 2010. The survey was administered electronically via Zoomerang. A link to the survey was sent to the five local area executive directors, who were asked to distribute the link to all staff in their workforce centers who provide direct services to job seekers. Because staffing levels vary and each executive director was allowed to decide who on their staffs met the criterion, it is not possible to determine how many people received the invitation to respond to the survey. However, given knowledge of the relative staffing levels of each local area, it is clear that the 128 responses received represent a significant majority of the total number of people in all workforce centers that provide direct services to job seekers.

The survey was patterned after a survey of corrections system employees in late 2009. Questions in that original survey were modified slightly, and new questions were added so that differences among local areas and among workforce center programs/funding sources could be assessed.

Results: Local Area

All five local areas participated in the survey. The number of respondents by local area appears to be roughly proportional to the relative size of each local area. Local Area III had the most respondents (37), while Local Area II had the fewest respondents (17). The breakdown by local area is shown in Figure 1.

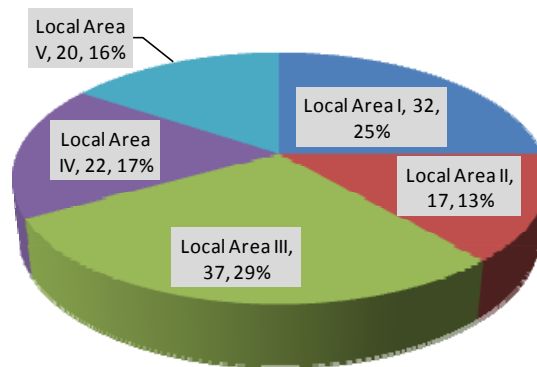


Figure 1. Respondents by Local Area

Program/Funding Source of Respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate which program/funding source they primarily worked for. Figure 2 presents the breakdown. Not surprisingly, the largest number of respondents reported that they were funded by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Nearly half of the respondents reported that they were WIA employees. In fact, when the individuals who reported themselves as both WIA and Wagner-Peyser employees are counted with the WIA employees, more than half of the respondents are WIA personnel. Most of the remaining respondents (36% of the total) are Wagner-Peyser staff.

The remaining 17 respondents selected the “Other One-Stop Partner” option. This response option did not allow respondents to specify which program they worked for. It is likely that at least some of these respondents are Veterans staff. Given recent discussions within the Corrections-Workforce Focus Group about Veterans services, in retrospect it is unfortunate that the questionnaire did not include a separate response category for Veterans staff. Respondents indicating that they work for other One-Stop partners may also work for other co-located programs, including “mandatory” One-Stop partners such as Job Corps, SCSEP, or “non-mandatory” partners like Goodwill.

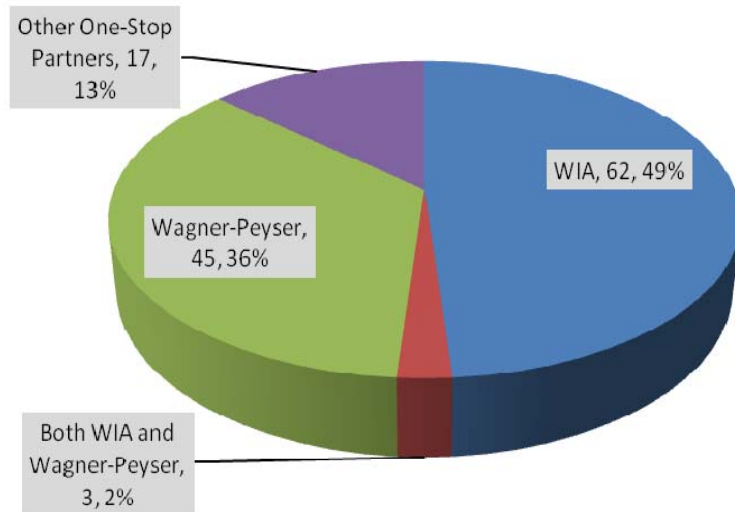


Figure 2. Respondents by Program/Funding Source

Experience with the Corrections System

Respondents were asked to assess how closely they have worked with various components of the corrections system. Respondents were given four response choices: very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely, or not at all. Respondents were asked to rate how closely they worked with each of six components: Community Corrections, Court Services, local/state Parole Offices, Federal Parole and Probation, local jails, and correctional facilities in the respondents' local areas. The results are presented in Figure 3.

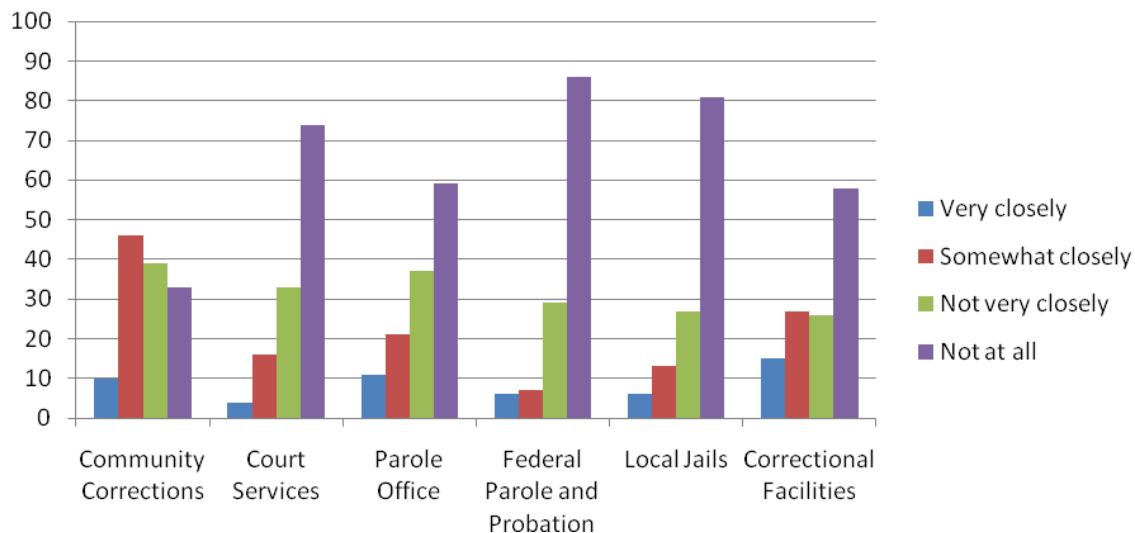


Figure 3. Respondents' rating of how closely they have worked with the corrections system

The data in Figure 3 show that most of the respondents report that they have not worked closely with any of the parts of the corrections system listed in the questionnaire. In fact, it is not uncommon for respondents to not have worked with any of these elements. For five of the

six components of the corrections system, the most frequent response was “not at all.” For three of these components (Court Services, Federal Parole and Probation, and local jails), more than half of all respondents indicated that they had not worked with that component at all. While it is clear that some contact occurs, in most cases, this contact appears to be infrequent. “Very closely” was the least selected response for all six elements of the corrections system the respondents were asked about.

Each response category was given a point value, ranging from four points for “very closely” to one point for “not at all.” This allowed for the calculation of an average score to more easily make comparisons among components of the corrections system. A higher average score indicates that the respondents have worked more closely with that component of the corrections system.

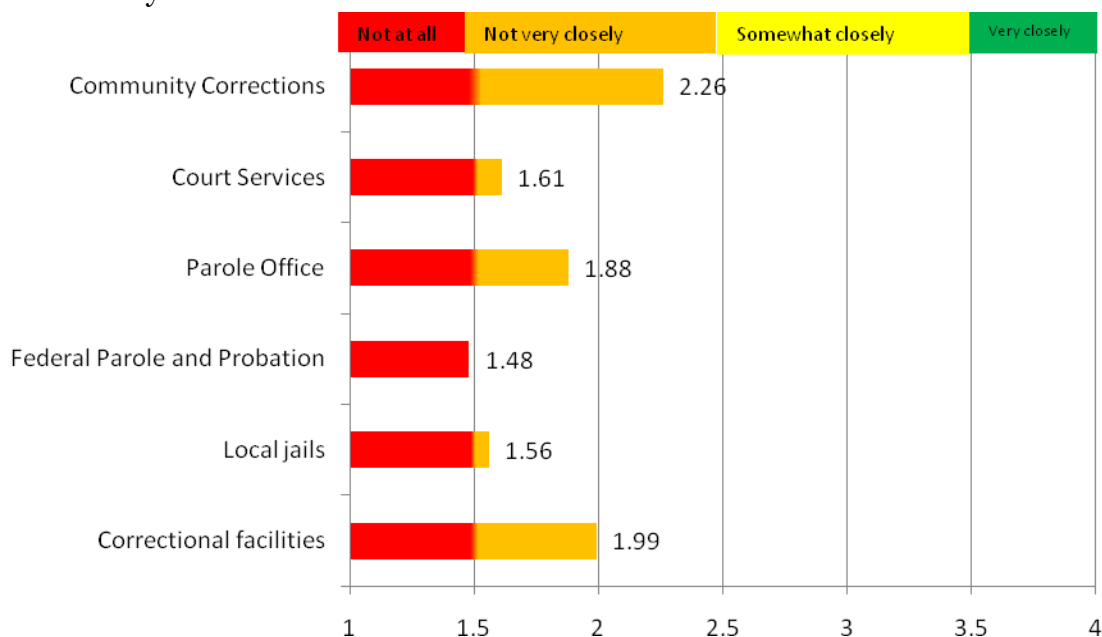


Figure 4. Average scores for how closely respondents have worked with elements of the corrections system

Figure 4 shows that average relationships with five of the six components fall into the “not very closely” range, and the average relationship with the sixth is closest to “not at all.” Community Corrections received the highest average score (2.26), followed most closely by correctional facilities (1.99) and Local/State Parole Offices (1.88). Federal Parole and Probation had the lowest average score, at 1.48 out of 4 points.

Quality of the Workforce-Corrections Relationship

Respondents were also asked to rate the quality of their relationship with each of the components of the corrections system that they were asked about in the previous question. Respondents were asked to rate this relationship on a four point scale, from excellent (four points) to poor (1 point). Since sizeable shares of respondents had not worked with each component of the corrections system, respondents were given the option to answer “NA” (not

applicable). For each of the six components, most of the respondents who had indicated that they had not worked at all with that part of the corrections system selected the “NA” response to the question about the quality of their relationship. Therefore, for five of the six components, more than 40 percent of the respondents indicated that the question was not applicable. The lone exception was Community Corrections; 27.3 percent of respondents answered “NA” to this question.

Figure 5 compares the responses for each of the six components of the corrections system. Data are displayed as percentages of respondents, with all “not applicable” responses excluded. In five of the six cases, the highest percentage of respondents indicated that the relationship was fair. In the sixth case—Federal Parole and Probation—the most common response was that the relationship was poor. Parole (local/state) received the highest percentage of excellent ratings, followed closely by Community Corrections.

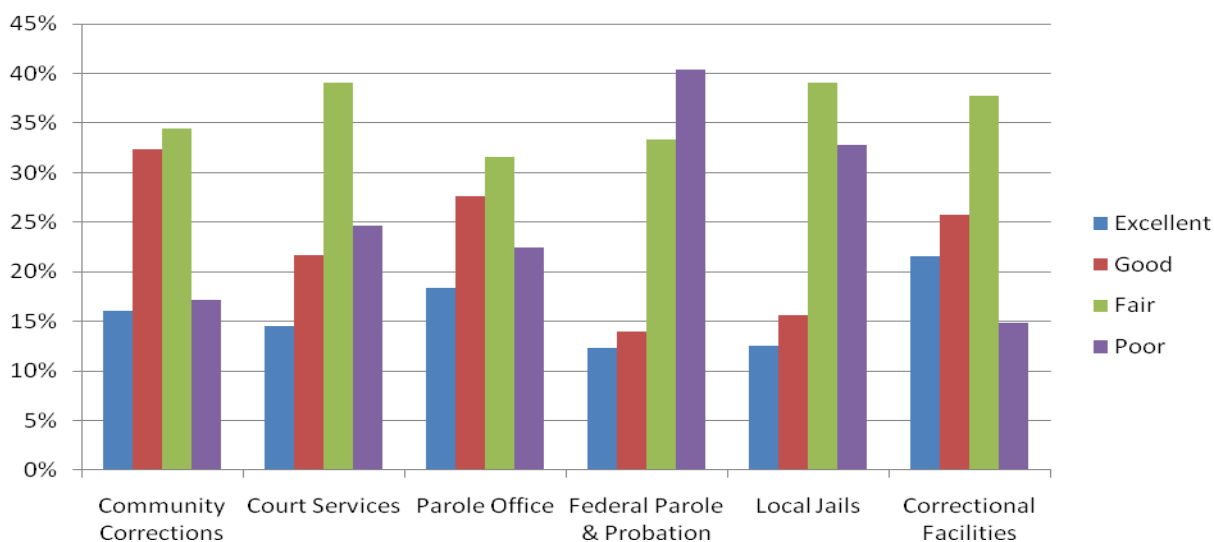


Figure 5. Respondent ratings of relationships with elements of the corrections system

There appear to be two groups within the corrections system. The first group, which includes Community Corrections, Court Services, parole offices, and correctional facilities, have higher percentages that rate the relationship excellent or good, and lower percentages that rate the relationship poor. Conversely, Federal Parole and Probation and local jails each had significantly higher poor ratings, and fewer excellent and good ratings.

This conclusion is supported by the data in Figure 6. As with the previous question, a point value was assigned to each rating, so that a poor rating was worth one point, a fair rating was worth two points, a good rating was worth three points, and an excellent rating was worth four points. An average rating was calculated from these scores for each component of the corrections system.

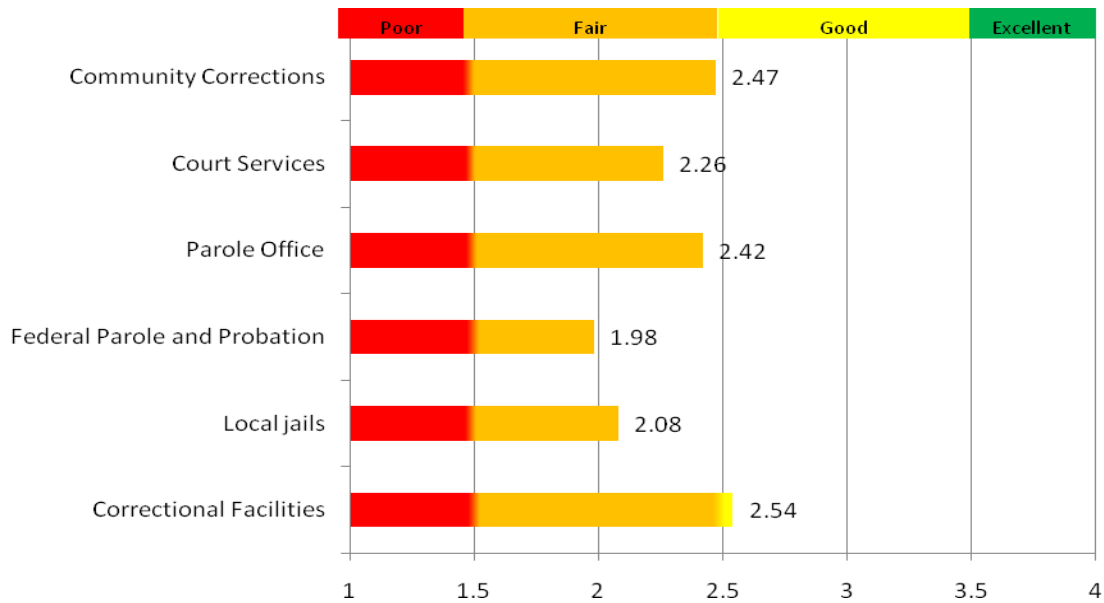


Figure 6. Average ratings of the relationship between workforce centers and components of the correction system

Five of the six components fell into the fair range. The exception was the relationship with correctional facilities, which was slightly in the good range. Of those components in the fair range, the average scores for Community Corrections, Court Services, and Parole were all noticeably higher than the average scores for Federal Parole and Probation, and local jails. Federal Parole and Probation received the lowest average rating.

Overall, the scores indicate that there is room for improvement in workforce center staff members' relationships with the various components of the corrections system. Fortunately, a closer inspection of these ratings provides evidence that the relatively low scores appear to be due not to dissatisfaction, but lack of familiarity. As Table 1 demonstrates, there is a strong correlation between the degree to which a workforce center staff member has worked with an element of the corrections system and his or her rating of the quality of their relationship. In every case, the more closely respondents report working with components of the corrections system, the higher their average ratings of their relationship with that component.

Table 1. Relationship between respondents' level of experience and rating of relationship quality

How closely have respondents worked with the each part of the corrections system?	Respondents' average rating of relationship by component (1=poor, 4=excellent)					
	Community Corrections	Court Services	Parole (Local/State)	Federal Parole & Probation	Local jails	Correctional facilities
Very closely	3.70	3.50	3.73	3.33	4.00	3.64

How closely have respondents worked with the each part of the corrections system?	Respondents' average rating of relationship by component (1=poor, 4=excellent)					
	Community Corrections	Court Services	Parole (Local/State)	Federal Parole & Probation	Local jails	Correctional facilities
Somewhat closely	2.67	3.00	3.05	2.71	2.85	2.65
Not very closely	1.97	1.93	1.90	2.06	1.83	2.00
Not at all	1.40	1.81	1.69	1.42	1.45	2.00

Sources of Customers with Criminal Backgrounds

Respondents were asked how most of their customers with criminal backgrounds reached them. The respondents were given four different response options: referrals from the corrections system, referrals from other organizations, self-referral/drop-in, or other. If respondents selected “Other,” they were asked to clarify their answer. The results are presented in Figure 7, below.

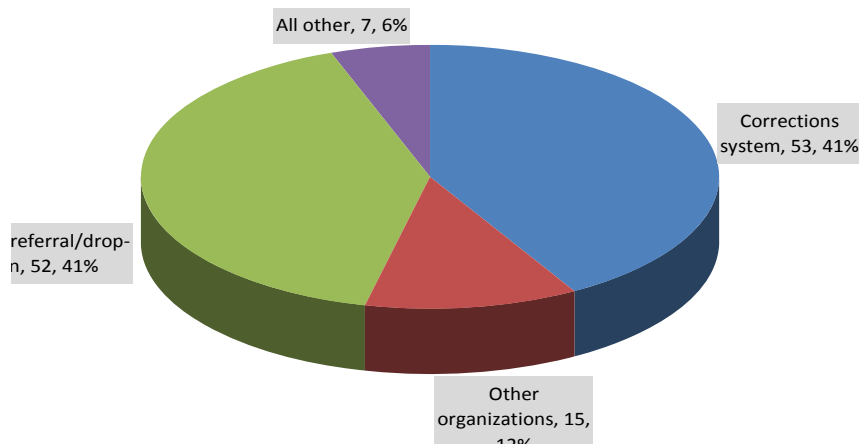


Figure 7. Primary resources of offender customers

As the figure shows, the number of respondents selecting referrals from corrections and the number selecting self-referral/drop in were virtually equal. Together, these two response categories were selected by the overwhelming majority of respondents. Respondents who selected “Other” most frequently indicated that their referrals from corrections and the number of customers who self-referred were about equal. Respondents who said that most of their referrals were from other organizations were not asked what other organizations made referrals.

Working with prisoners prior to release

The Corrections/Workforce working group members have discussed ways to increase the extent to which workforce center staff work with prisoners prior to their release. A question was added to the survey to determine how much of this work is already being done. As Figure 8 shows, nearly one-third of the respondents indicate that they do work with offenders prior to release.

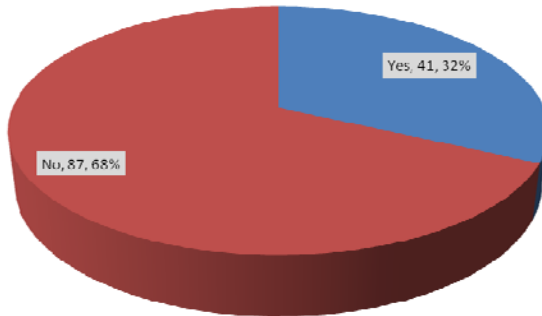


Figure 8. Number of respondents indicating that they work with offenders prior to release

There are, however, considerable differences among local areas, as demonstrated by Figure 9. While nearly 60 percent of the staff in Local Area II indicated that they have worked with prisoners prior to release, fewer than 10 percent of staff in Local Area III answered that question positively.

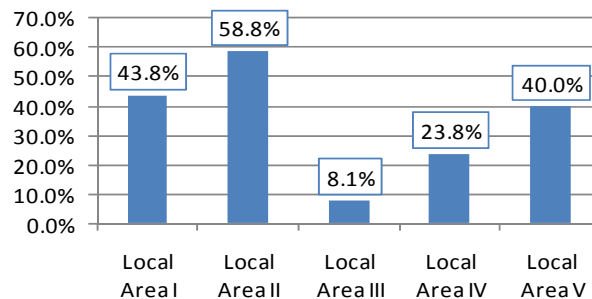
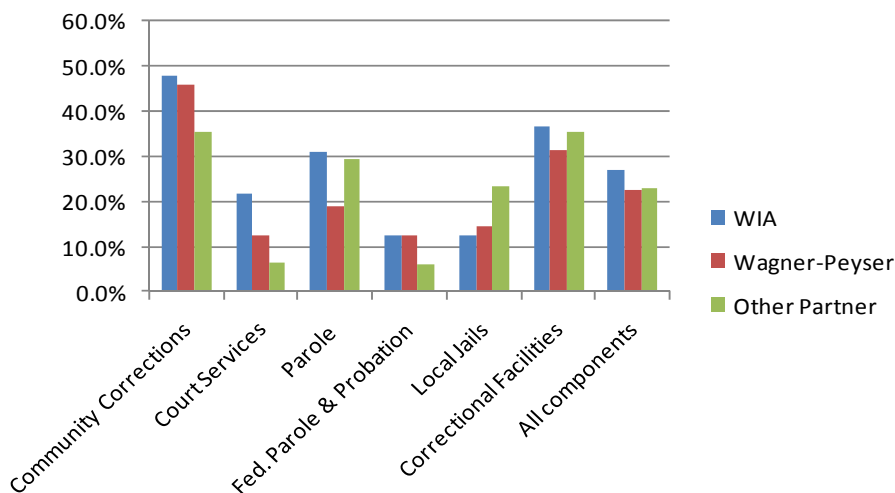


Figure 9. Percent of staff working with prisoners prior to release, by local area

Programmatic Differences

As was noted previously, the pool of respondents in each local area included staff funded by WIA, Wagner-Peyser, and other partner programs. While local Workforce Investment Boards are governed by WIA and WIA serves as the largest amount of funds directly under most local Boards' control, most workforce centers are staffed by people funded by a range of programs. WIA and Wagner-Peyser (state merit-system employees) are the two programs that employ the largest number of workforce center employees. Several other programs fund staff on either a full-time or part-time basis.

Each local area has been working to make sure that staff and programs with workforce centers act in a coordinated manner, but the nature of funding differences and reporting structures make it possible that differences may exist among programs. Responses to the question concerning how closely staff members have worked with components of the correction system and the question about staff members' relationship with these components were divided by



funding source to determine whether differences exist among funding sources.

Figure 10 displays the percentage of staff members in each program (WIA, Wagner-Peyser, or other partner programs) who indicated that they worked either “very closely” or

“somewhat closely” with each component of the corrections system. The chart shows that for most elements of the corrections system, differences among programs are relatively minor. In most cases, a slightly greater share of WIA staff indicated that they work closely with corrections programs, with the other two respondent groups falling closely behind. The most notable differences appear to be with Court Services, where the WIA percentage is nearly twice as large as Wagner-Peyser’s, and more than twice the percentage of other partners; Parole offices, where Wagner-Peyser lagged behind the other two groups of respondents; and local jails, in which the partner percentage was almost double the percentages of the other two programs. When responses for all components were combined, WIA has the highest percentage of “close” responses, with the other two groups virtually indistinguishable.

Differences among programs are even less pronounced in ratings of the relationship with various parts of the corrections system. Figure 11 displays the average rating of staff members’ relationship with each component of the corrections system by program. This average rating is calculated using the four-point scale discussed earlier in this report. The figure shows that differences in ratings among the three respondent groups are very small. In most cases, the average rating given by WIA staff was slightly higher than the average rating for the two other groups. When average ratings for relationships with all corrections system components are combined, WIA staff provide the highest ratings, followed closely other partner program staff, then by Wagner-Peyser staff. It should be noted, however, that in every case, the differences among workforce center partner programs are extremely small.

Consistent with the discussion of how closely workforce center staff members have worked with corrections, the rating for local jails seems to be area that differs most from the overall pattern. Other partner programs ranked the highest among the three groups in their rating of the relationship with local jails. This pattern is consistent with the conclusion that the more

closely one works with an element of the corrections system, the higher he or she rates the quality of that relationship.

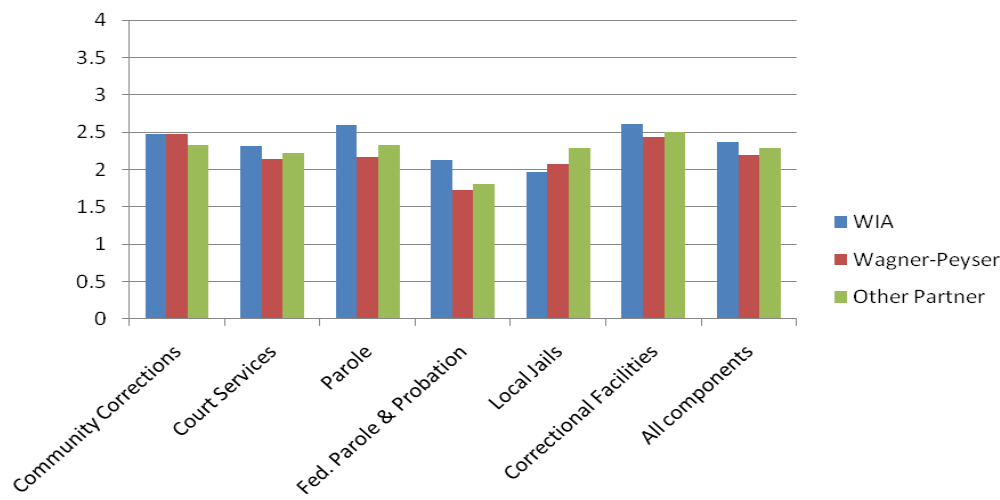


Figure 11. Differences in average rating of relationship with corrections, by program

Local Area Differences

Each local area has engaged the corrections system in some way, but it has been clear from discussions that the nature and extent of engagement varies from local area to local area. The survey was designed to help determine how these differences are reflected in closeness and quality of relationships with various parts of the corrections system. If differences are apparent, the results may be beneficial in helping to identify opportunities for training, technical assistance, or service redesign.

There are wide differences among local areas in the percentage of staff who report working closely with various components of the corrections system. These differences are demonstrated in Figure 12. Local Area I, which includes the 62 counties in Western Kansas, appears to have the highest percentage of staff members who report working either very closely or somewhat closely with the corrections system as a whole. As the figure shows, LA I had the highest percentage of staff working closely with four of the six components (Community Corrections, Court Services, Parole offices, and correctional facilities). For two of these components—Community Corrections and Parole offices—LA I’s percentage of staff working closely was significantly higher than any other local area’s percentage. Local Areas II (Northeast Kansas) and V (Southeast Kansas) tend to follow immediately behind LA I in the percent of staff working closely with corrections. LA V has the highest share of its staff reporting working closely with Federal Parole and Probation, and the second highest share of its staff working closely with Community Corrections, Court Services, and local jails. LA II has the highest share of staff working closely with local jails, and the second highest percentage of its staff working closely with correctional facilities. Local Areas III (Metro Kansas City) and IV (South Central Kansas) generally tended to have the smallest percentage of staff reporting working closely with corrections system elements.

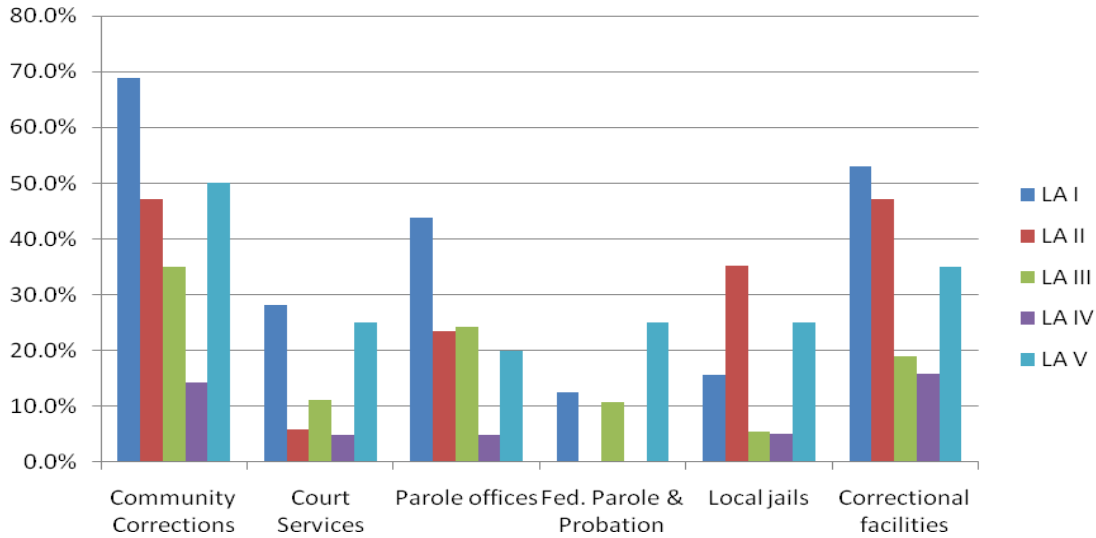


Figure 12. Percent reporting working closely with corrections components, by local area

A similar pattern is apparent for ratings of the quality of the relationship with corrections, although differences among local areas are far less marked. Using the four-point scale discussed earlier, average ratings of the relationship with each component of the corrections system and a composite average are shown in Figure 12. Local Area II staff rated their relationship with corrections slightly better than did the staff from any other local area. LA II’s average rating for all components of the correction system was 2.60, and LA II had the highest average rating for three of the six components (Community Corrections, local jails, and correctional institutions). LA V followed closely behind with an average rating of 2.48, and the highest rating for Court Services. LA I reported the highest average ratings for Parole offices, and the third highest overall rating, with an average score of 2.41. LA III followed next with an average rating of 2.38, and the highest average rating for Federal Parole and Probation. Local Area IV consistently had the lowest average ratings for each component, and its average rating for all components (1.71) was significantly lower than any other local area.

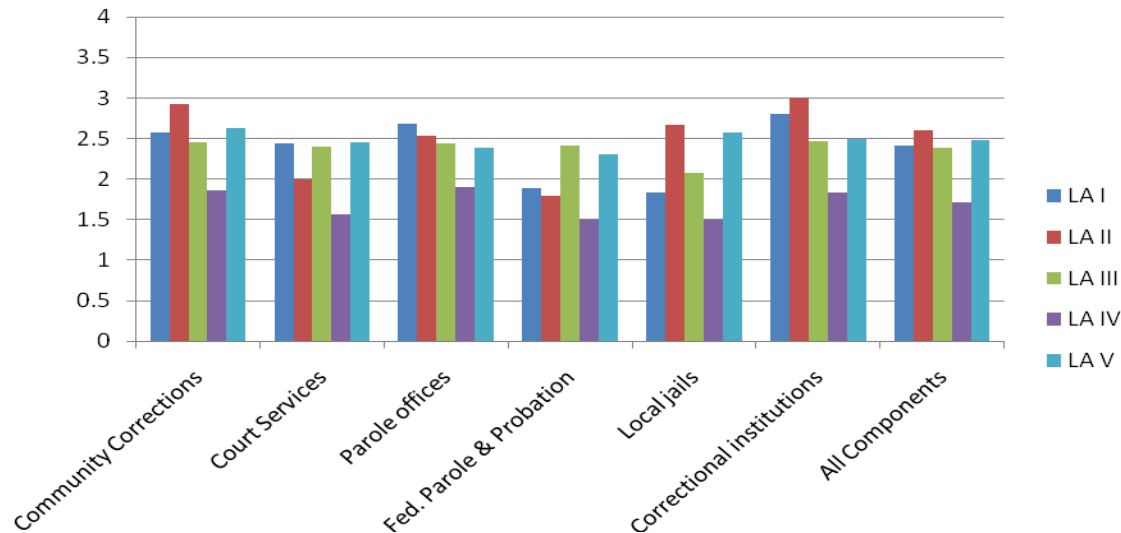


Figure 13. Average ratings of relationship with corrections, by local area

There are likely many reasons that account for differences among local areas in both amount and quality of contact between workforce centers and the corrections system. Some local areas have longstanding relationships with parts of the corrections system, and more recent funding opportunities within individual local areas, such as the Community Based Job Training Grant (CBJTG) received by Barton County Community College, have strengthened linkages with particular local areas. One additional cause may also be the Corrections Overview Training developed to help workforce center staff learn more about offender workforce development issues and the corrections system. That training has been delivered to date in LA I and LA II, which along with LA V, had the highest percentage of staff working closely with the corrections system, and had the highest ratings of the quality of their relationships with corrections. The positive correlation between this training and staff ratings of relationships suggests that extending this training to other local areas may be an important step in strengthening the relationship between the workforce development and corrections systems.

Effect of Having Dedicated Offender Staff

Local areas have considerable latitude in how they organize their staff and assign staff roles and engage customers with criminal backgrounds. Some local areas have chosen to have most customers with criminal backgrounds served by “subject matter experts” who may have earned Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) status or received other special training, while other local areas have more of a generalist approach in which customers with criminal histories may be served by any one of several customer service staff members. It is reasonable to assume that these specialists will be more likely to indicate that they work closely with the corrections system, and to rate the quality of their relationship higher than staff who are not designated offender experts in their workforce centers. A more interesting question is whether the presence of a dedicated offender specialist in a workforce center may have an effect on the strength and quality of the relationships the remaining staff members in that center have with corrections agencies.

To determine how the presence of designated offender experts affects overall relationships in workforce centers, respondents were asked the following question: “Has your office designated

a person (or persons) for working with people with criminal backgrounds?” It is important to understand that responses to this question reflect the respondents’ perceptions, which may not accurately describe the actual situation in their workforce centers.

Nearly half (45.6%) of respondents indicated that their offices had designated someone to work with people with criminal backgrounds. Although there were differences across local areas, these differences were not great, ranging from a low of 36% to a high of 55%. The fact that “Yes” responses were distributed throughout all five local areas makes it unlikely that results discussed below are due strictly to local area differences.

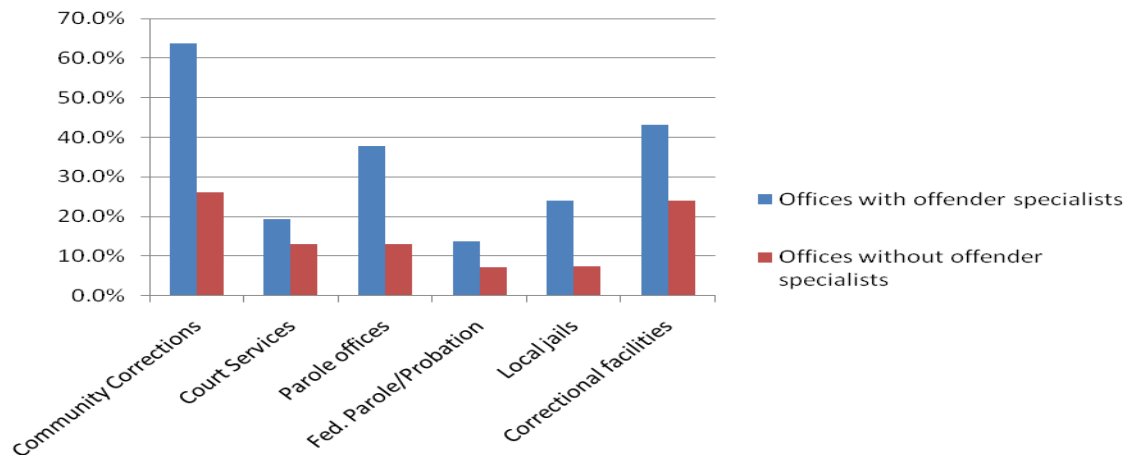


Figure 14. Percent reporting working closely with corrections with and without dedicated corrections staff in the office

Participants who report working in offices with staff designated to work with people with criminal histories are far more likely to indicate that they work closely with the corrections system and rate the quality of those relationships higher than their counterparts who report working in offices without designated corrections experts. Figure 14 shows that for each component of the corrections system, staff who work in offices that have designated offender experts are much more likely to indicate that they have a close relationship with the corrections system. This effect holds for all six components, but is most pronounced with Community Corrections, Parole offices, and local jails.

Although the effect appears weaker, the same pattern is exhibited in respondents’ ratings of the quality of the relationship. Results for all six components of the corrections system are presented in Figure 15. For each of the six components, staff members in offices with designated staff working with individuals with criminal histories rate the relationship higher

than staff in offices with no similarly designated staff.

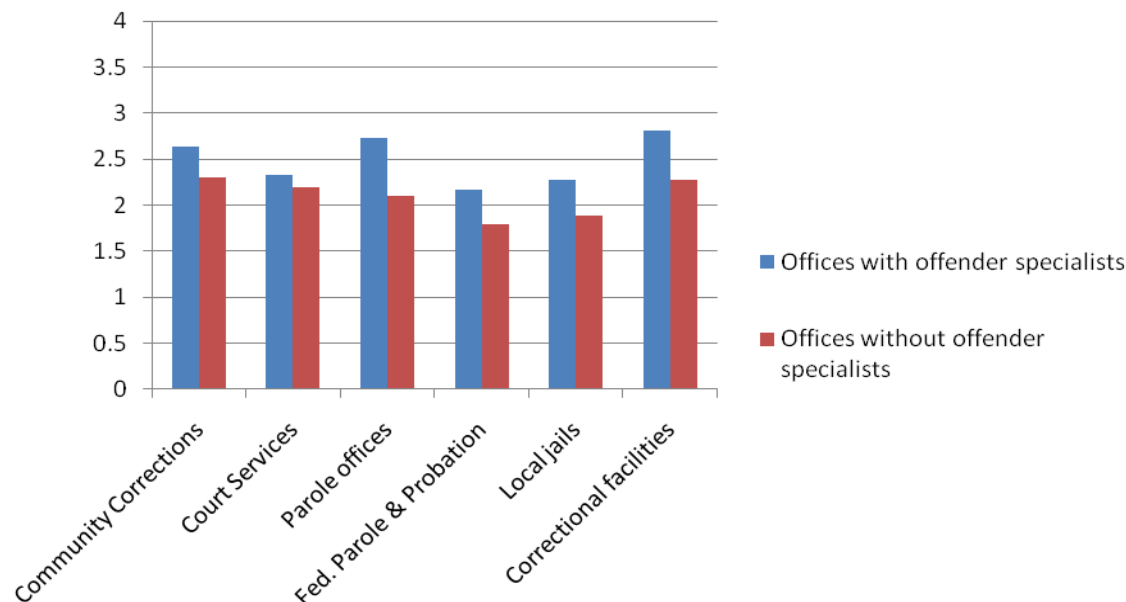


Figure 15. Ratings of relationship quality in offices with and without designated offender staff

Open-Ended Responses

The questionnaire closed with two open-ended questions, designed to gather more specific detail about changes the respondents would like to see. In both cases, respondents were very forthcoming; more than half of the respondents offered comments or suggestions on each question.

Improving the Relationship

The first of these questions addressed the relationship between the two systems; respondents were asked what would help most in strengthening their relationship with the corrections system. The overwhelming majority of responses involved increased and better communication. Respondents had several suggestions for what type of communication should take place. The most common areas of comments were as follows:

- *More knowledge about our system.* While several respondents felt that workforce staff needed more knowledge about the corrections system, even more respondents felt that the relationship would improve if people in the corrections system would learn more about the workforce development system. Comments suggested that many workforce development staff felt that corrections staff did not know what kinds of services were available or how best to contact and make referrals to workforce centers. The following are examples of comments that fell into that category:

“I believe it would help if they would know how our process works and what happens when we put the offender on our case load.”

“More information out to the different facilities about Workforce Center services and contact person at the center.”

■ *Points of contact.* Several respondents noted that points of contact were lacking on both sides of the relationship. A number of respondents felt that referrals and inquiries received from corrections showed that they could benefit from specific points of contact at each workforce center. An example of this type of comment is the following:

“More communication, a specific program name and description someone in corrections can point to when speaking with an offender rather than a vague promise of ‘Go to the workforce center. They will help you look for a job.’”

Other respondents expressed a desire to have specific contacts with parts of the corrections system, such as these respondents:

“Having a point of contact who understands my role at the one stop facility.”

“To know (who) their correctional officer is. To have someone be the representative for their office.”

■ *Coordination.* Many comments expressed a desire to work together more. Respondents felt that services could be coordinated better, through procedural changes, division of responsibilities, and even co-location. Below are examples of these comments.

“A personal visit from parole and probation officers to make sure we are providing the services they desire.”

“Reduce duplication of services.”

“Possibly meeting with officer and client so that together we are able to develop an employment plan so that the client is successful in obtaining employment.”

“I’d like to see the Departments of Commerce and Corrections develop dedicated OWDS trained staff, perhaps shared between the departments, and located at the One-Stop Centers.”

“Get them an office in our center.”

Additional Programs or Resources

The second open-ended question asked respondents what additional programs, services, or resources they felt would help them better serve the offender population in their local areas. Nearly half of the survey respondents offered suggestions. Responses to this question were more varied, but a number of themes emerged in the responses.

■ *Willing employers.* The most frequent area of responses did not involve new programs or services, but represented what most respondents feel is the most significant challenge in helping job seekers with criminal histories find work—employer willingness to hire ex-offenders. Some respondents felt that workforce centers should compile and maintain lists of such willing employers, but most of the responses in this category simply stated that there need to be more willing employers. The following represent a sampling of such responses:

“There need to be more job opportunities for them.”

“Companies that will give offenders a second chance.”

■ *Employer incentives.* Some respondents recognized that employer willingness would be enhanced if greater incentives were available. While some respondents mentioned incentives in general, at least one respondent had a specific suggestion:

“Funding for On The Job Training so that we are able to place offenders with employment opportunities which will assist them become productive citizens in the community.”

■ *Employer involvement.* Respondents also felt that offenders would be better served if employers would get more involved in providing services. For example, one respondent suggested:

“If we could get employers more involved prior to release, i.e., interviewing HD, mock interviewing, etc.”

■ *Transportation.* Some respondents noted that efforts to find employment for individuals with criminal backgrounds are complicated by lack of access to reliable transportation. The following response was typical:

“A better transportation system once they are released, most don’t have cars and/or live in hard to access areas.”

■ *Pre-release services.* Many respondents felt very strongly that more workforce services should be available to incarcerated individuals prior to their release. These comments took many forms, including more training opportunities, and workshops. The most frequent suggestion was that workforce centers should have more involvement with incarcerated individuals. While some local areas and workforce centers have established mechanisms to provide services to incarcerated individuals prior to their release, in areas where this has not happened individuals clearly thought that these linkages would be valuable. Comments such as the following were typical of these suggestions:

“More time outside the office to visit with inmates before release and introduce them to the services we offer; get the (m) familiarized.”

“The offender population needs to be ready for employment when they release. They need GED if applicable, driver’s license, social sec. card and a trade.”

■ *Staff training.* A number of responses reflected the recognition that working with customers with criminal histories requires a special set of knowledge and/or skills, which may not be possessed by all workforce center staff. Some respondents felt that the way to address such gaps is through more training for workforce center staff. The following comment was probably the clearest such statement:

“Currently most—nearly all—Workforce Center staff members attempt to serve ex-offenders, without sufficient training to do so effectively. (I) would like to see an organized, cooperative effort to assist this population (obtain) training and employment.”

■ *Dedicated offender staff.* The other suggestion for addressing the fact that not all workforce center staff are equipped to work with ex-offenders is to designate certain staff as specialists to whom most (if not all) ex-offenders are referred. Such comments were similar to the following:

“Someone designated to serve that population solely. That means handling pre-release and post release.”

“We have many ex-offenders that use our facilities and a full-time staff member dedicated to working with them would be a tremendous asset!”

Conclusion

Workforce center staff in all five regions appear to have strong feelings about the importance of serving individuals with criminal backgrounds, and their responses reflect a clear recognition that a strong relationship with the corrections system is vital to success in getting these customers employed. The survey shows that many staff members have not established strong relationships with various elements of the corrections system, and that there is room for improvement in both the frequency and quality of contacts between the two systems. Local areas that have made concerted efforts to strengthen this relationship through such mechanisms as staff training and designated offender specialist staff have seen these efforts pay off in higher levels of familiarity and stronger relationships, but it appears that each local area could benefit from additional efforts to strengthen the corrections-workforce relationship