

Leon County Five-Year Strategic Plan to Reduce Recidivism



Fiscal Year 2012 - 2016

Statement of Vision

To utilize innovative rehabilitation methods to empower current and former inmates in their self-development to become productive members of the Leon County Community thus reducing recidivism and providing for order and enhanced safety.

Presented by the:
Leon County Recidivism Task Force

(A Committee of the Public Safety Coordinating Council
Commissioner Akin Akinyemi, Chair)

I. Background

On December 7, 2009, at their annual retreat, the Leon County Board of County Commissioners identified as one of their top priorities for 2009/2010 a “Comprehensive Program to Address Recidivism Reduction, County Re-Entry Program for Inmates, and Diversion, Including Youth Programs.” In support of this priority, the Public Safety Coordinating Council (PSCC) established as one of its 2010 objectives to “convene a working group of residents with interest in recidivism and community correctional rehabilitation to study ways to reduce jail population and report to the PSCC as needed.” Under this direction, the Leon County Recidivism Task Force was created.

In May, 2010, the Leon County Recidivism Task Force conducted its first meeting.

Recidivism Task Force Members

- Chuck Hobbs, Chair
- Wilson Barnes
- Kristen Bowen
- Sonia Fancher
- Cathy Jones (staff)

II. Statement of Purpose

Inherent to the quality of life within any community is the perception by residents that they are being effectively served through the established public safety entities. For the county this includes the public safety provided by the Board of County Commissioner’s designated Chief Correctional Officer who oversees the operations of the jail. The county jail is a fundamental component of the criminal justice system and has the capacity to function as a warehouse providing a safe and habitable living space for those individuals who have been arrested and are awaiting arraignment, bond, or trial, and for those individuals who have been convicted of a crime where the sentence does not warrant incarceration over a period of one year; or potentially as a temporary living space that provides programming in the confines of its campus that assist those incarcerated to improve themselves through education and a myriad of life skills classes.

The concept of rehabilitation to reduce inmate recidivism is a relatively new phenomenon within the criminal justice system. Historically the federal, state, and local detention facilities have served as institutions intended to house both those awaiting trial and those convicted of a crime. These institutions were created with a two-fold purpose: to keep the residents of communities safe from those who are unable to follow societal laws, and to gain retribution from criminals by taking away their rights to walk amongst those who have not committed crimes. As this

concept of punishment developed it was later intended to serve as a deterrent for aspiring criminals.

Today, the concept of rehabilitation is universally recognized, widely accepted, and continually studied both in the United States and abroad. With the realization that our country is spending over \$37 billion on state facilities alone and that five states spend more on corrections than they spend on higher education, the concept of rehabilitating inmates versus merely gaining retribution has been gaining in popularity.

With the basic concept of providing rehabilitation in an effort to reduce recidivism and thus reduce crime making our community safer and saving taxpayers' money, the Leon County Recidivism Task Force presents its findings and suggestions.

III. Statement of Need

There is no one causal factor for criminality and thus no single solution to the problem of crime. Because of this reality crime has existed since the creation of law and will continue to exist as long as society holds itself to the standards of prescribed rules. This, however, should not be construed to mean that society should not attempt to stop crime via those methods allowable by law.

According to the Pew Center on the States' "Prison Count 2010," the number of state prisoners dropped for the first time in forty years during the 2009 calendar year. Although this was not a significant drop numerically, it did indicate changes within the corrections system.

...there are reasons to suspect that the decline in 2009 could be a harbinger of a prolonged pattern. Since the start of the nation's prison expansion, the landscape of sentencing and corrections policy has changed dramatically on several fronts:

Advances in supervision technology. Global Positioning System (GPS) monitors, rapid-result drug tests and ATM-like reporting kiosks offer authorities new technologies to monitor the whereabouts and activities of offenders in the community. These capabilities are giving lawmakers, judges and prosecutors greater confidence that they can protect public safety and hold offenders accountable with sanctions other than prison.

Advances in the science of behavior change. Research has identified several strategies that can make significant dents in recidivism rates, including cognitive-behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing and the use of swift and certain but

proportional sanctions for violations of the rules of probation and parole.

Development of more accurate risk assessments. Analyses of huge volumes of data have helped isolate the specific factors that predict criminal behavior, such as antisocial values and thinking patterns. While no risk assessment tools are foolproof, today's "third generation" tools do a good job of distinguishing high-medium- and low-risk offenders and of pointing the way toward case management plans that will the cut the chances of re-offense.

Polls show support for prison alternatives. The public is supportive of using community corrections rather than prison for nonviolent offenders. In a 2007 voter poll, for example, 71 percent of Texas respondents said they preferred "a mandatory intensive treatment program as an alternative to prison," a level of support that went up to 83 percent when respondents were told the diversion of lower-level offenders could help avert \$1 billion in new prison costs.

Increasing focus on cost-benefit analysis. Across all areas of government, policy makers are demanding to know what results programs are producing, not just what funding levels are or how many people are being served.

Budget pressure. Corrections costs have quadrupled in just the past 20 years, and now account for 1 of every 15 state general fund discretionary dollars. Corrections has been the second fastest-growing category of state budgets, behind only Medicaid, and nearly 90 percent of that spending has gone to prisons.¹

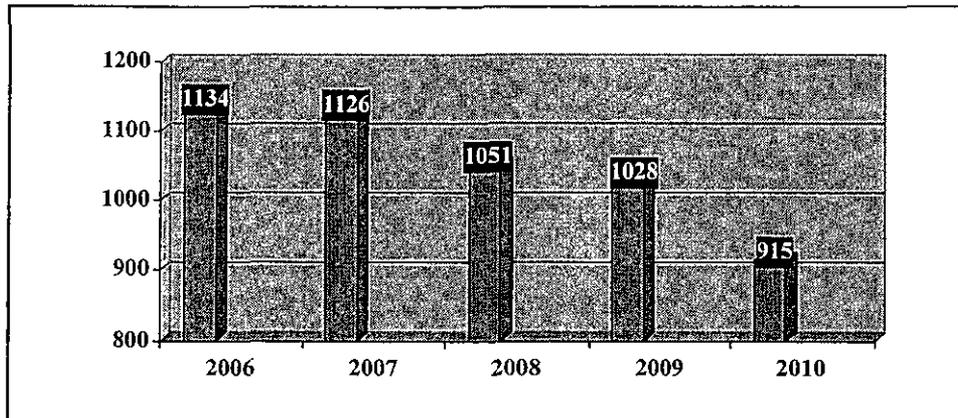
Whereas this report was produced with data from state prisons across the country, the findings mirror data from various Florida counties in regards to a decreasing crime rate thus indicating a decreasing jail population. Attachment 1 shows comparative data between Leon County and seven like-sized Florida counties regarding the crime rate during the calendar years of 2008 and 2009. Note that six of the eight counties show a decrease in crime during year 2009. In addition, Attachment 2 shows a decline in the actual number of arrests made in these counties from 2008 to 2009. The data from these reports indicates that the day-to-day jail populations of each of the counties should have decreased during year 2009.

¹ Pew Center on the States, Public Safety Performance Project; "Prison Count 2010: State Population Declines for the First Time in 38 Years" Revised April 2010.

Specifically for Leon County the following table summarizes Uniform Crime Report data for years 2008 and 2009.²

Summary of UCR Data			
Leon County	2008	2009	% Change
Population	274,892	274,803	0.0
Total Arrests	14,275	11,969	-16.2
Total Index Offenses	13,873	12,836	-7.5
Violent Rate	839.6	742.0	-11.6
Non-Violent Rate	4,207.1	3,929.0	-6.6
Index Rate	5,046.7	4,671.0	-7.4

The data indicates a decrease in total arrests and total index offenses. This decrease in arrests coupled with the use of both passive and active GPS monitoring and the SCRAM Alcohol Monitoring units has assisted in a decreased daily population count at the Leon County Jail. The following chart shows a decline in jail population of 19% from March 1, 2006 to March 1, 2010.³



Daily jail and prison population is a definitive and is easy to quantitatively determine. Recidivism, typically defined as an individual's return to crime within three years following a criminal conviction, is not as simple to research. Many factors render this analysis more difficult including interstate movement, lag time between case disposition and recording in criminal history databases, and a general lack of resources to allow local jails to track their recidivism rates.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics has reported that "Two studies come closest to providing 'national' recidivism rates for the United States. One tracked 108,580 State prisoners released from prison in 11 States in 1983. The other tracked

² Florida Department of Law Enforcement (2010). Crime in Florida – Leon County; Uniform Crime Report Data, 2008 and 2009.

³ Leon County Sheriff's Office (2010). Data Submitted to the Public Safety Coordinating Council, March 16, 2010.

272,111 prisoners released from prison in 15 States in 1994. The prisoners tracked in these studies represent two-thirds of all prisoners released in the United States for that year.”⁴

The rearrest statistics⁵ for these studies were startling as detailed below.

Rearrest Rate	1983	1994
Total for All Offenders	62.5 %	67.5 %
Violent Offenders	59.6 %	61.7 %
Property Offenders	68.1 %	73.8 %
Drug Offenders	50.4 %	66.7 %
Public-Order Offenders	54.6 %	62.2 %

Additional recidivism studies have reported similar findings. In 2006, the bipartisan Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons, published *Confronting Confinement* a United States prison study. The study determined that “... 67% of former prisoners are rearrested and 52% are re-incarcerated, a recidivism rate that calls into question the effectiveness of America’s corrections system, which costs taxpayers \$60 billion a year.”⁶ Furthermore, the report’s Summary of Finding and Recommendations concludes that “What happens inside jails and prisons does not stay inside jails and prisons.”⁷ The report continued to state that each year “... 13.5 million people spend time in jail or prison, and 95 percent of them eventually return to our communities.” In conclusion, the Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons made the following statement.

We all bear responsibility for creating correctional institutions that are safe, humane, and productive. With so much at stake for our citizens’ health and safety, with so many people directly affected by the conditions in our prisons and jails, this is the moment to confront confinement in the United States.

Based upon the literature review and discussions with experts it is the opinion of the Leon County Recidivism Task Force that the current trend of a decreasing local jail population, while positive for the community, is not a significant trend and will fluctuate annually without intervention. The potential to further the decrease in jail population, however, could be positively effected through the

⁴ United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics “Reentry Trends in the U.S.: Recidivism” (2002)

⁵ United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics “Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1983” (1989)

United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics “Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994” (2002)

⁶ Family Education Network: U.S. Prisons Overcrowded and Violent, Recidivism High (2007)

⁷ Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons. *Confronting Confinement: Summary of Findings and Recommendations* (2006)

implementation of a strategic plan detailing a local reentry initiative to reduce recidivism among those individuals incarcerated at the Leon County Jail.

For purposes of this document, the Leon County Recidivism Task Force has applied the following standard definition of recidivism: the tendency of an individual to relapse into crime within a three year period following a criminal conviction.

IV. Five Year Target Goals to Reduce Recidivism

The Leon County Recidivism Task Force has adopted the following goals as a means to reduce recidivism by 50% by the year 2015.

- A. Create a coordinated system to assist individuals awaiting trial and after criminal conviction that augments existing services, increases rehabilitative programs, and provides an infrastructure to ensure transitional assistance is provided upon reentry.
- B. Establish an infrastructure of innovative rehabilitative programming to increase opportunities for successful reentry into the community.
- C. Create a community infrastructure to ensure deterrence programs for juveniles.
- D. Implement a formal evaluation process that monitors the effectiveness of service delivery programs.
- E. Create a strong community connections infrastructure for ex-offenders that incorporate churches, social service programs, and businesses.
- F. Increase employment opportunities for ex-offenders.
- G. Secure the financial sustainability of rehabilitative programs and reentry assistance.

V. Strategic Plan: Goals, Objectives, Tasks, Timeline

GOAL 1		
<i>Create a coordinated system to assist individuals awaiting trial and after criminal conviction that augments existing services, increases rehabilitative programs, and provides an infrastructure to ensure transitional assistance is provided upon reentry.</i>		
Objective(s)	Task(s)	Timeline
Establish infrastructure to oversee system and maintain accountability.	Identify/Coordinate/ and/or Create an Office of	January, 2012

	<p>Rehabilitation and Reentry.*</p> <p>Hire a full-time Rehabilitation and Reentry Coordinator to oversee the process.</p> <p>Establish a Recidivism and Reentry Community Investment Team. (see VI. "Implementation Strategy" for further details)</p>	<p>January, 2012</p> <p>February, 2012</p>
Assess existing rehabilitative services.	<p>Create database of existing services provided throughout the community.</p> <p>Determine gaps in current programming.</p> <p>Determine funding allocations for existing services.</p> <p>Identify potential opportunities for re-allocation of funding to create a more effective service delivery structure.</p> <p>Create and implement additional rehabilitative services.</p>	<p>June, 2012</p> <p>August, 2012</p> <p>June, 2012</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Assess existing reentry services	<p>Create database of existing services provided throughout the community.</p> <p>Determine gaps in current programming.</p> <p>Determine funding allocations for existing services.</p> <p>Identify potential opportunities for re-allocation of funding to create a more effective service delivery system.</p> <p>Create and implement additional reentry services</p>	<p>June, 2012</p> <p>August, 2012</p> <p>June, 2012</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

** It is the recommendation of the Recidivism Task Force that the initial funding for the Office of Rehabilitation and Reentry and the Rehabilitation and Reentry Coordinator position come from the PSCC's 2012 budget allocation.*

GOAL 2		
<i>Establish an infrastructure of innovative rehabilitative programming to increase opportunities for successful reentry into the community.</i>		
Objective(s)	Task(s)	Timeline
Assist inmates in maintaining positive family and community bonds.	Establish educational opportunities for family members and friends of offenders to positively impact reentry.	December, 2012
	Create child-parent bonding oriented visitation programs.	December, 2012
Implement structured rehabilitative programming that augments existing programs within the jail.	Establish inmate education program to encourage participation in rehabilitative programs.	August, 2012
	Establish reward system to encourage participation in rehabilitative programs.	March, 2013
	Establish therapeutic communities within the pod structure.	December, 2013

GOAL 3		
<i>Create a community infrastructure to ensure deterrence programs for juveniles.</i>		
Objective(s)	Task(s)	Timeline
Assess existing juvenile deterrence programs.	Create database of existing services provided throughout the community.	June, 2013
	Determine gaps in current programming.	June, 2013
	Determine funding allocations for existing services.	June, 2013
	Identify potential opportunities for re-allocation of funding to create a more effective service delivery structure.	Ongoing

	Create and implement additional juvenile deterrence services.	October, 2013
Reduce the entrance of juveniles into the criminal justice system due to Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC).	Identify potential at-risk youth to determine the extent to which DMC exists.	February, 2014
	Develop intervention strategies to address DMC.	September, 2014

GOAL 4		
<i>Implement a formal evaluation process that monitors the effectiveness of service delivery programs.</i>		
Objective(s)	Task(s)	Timeline
Establish criteria and goals for effective programming and delivery.	Compare commonly accepted goals for effective rehabilitation and reentry programs.	March, 2012
	Work with Community Investment Team to establish goals.	May, 2012
Establish data collection and evaluation methodology.	Create uniform tracking database.	June, 2012
	Establish uniform reporting structure from agencies providing rehabilitation and reentry programs.	June, 2012
Establish an outcome evaluation and reporting methodology.	Create comparative table of goals and actual outcomes.	August, 2012
	Provide bi-monthly reports to the PSCC; and quarterly reports to the BOCC.	Bi-Monthly; Quarterly

GOAL 5		
<i>Create a strong community connections infrastructure for ex-offenders that incorporate churches, social service programs, and businesses.</i>		
Objective(s)	Task(s)	Timeline
Provide effective referral to community services upon reentry.	Engage inmates pre-release to accept services.	Ongoing

	Establish uniform reporting structure from community partners to monitor ex-offender participation.	December, 2012
Ensure community investment in positive reentry programs.	Establish ongoing advocacy and education program on positive reentry as a cost savings measure for taxpayers. Engage community members to serve as mentors for ex-offenders.	Ongoing January, 2013

GOAL 6		
<i>Increase employment opportunities for ex-offenders.</i>		
Objective(s)	Task(s)	Timeline
Increase the presence of ex-offender friendly employers.	Create a database of existing ex-offender friendly employers.	September, 2012
	Work with community and civic agencies to increase the database of ex-offender friendly employers.	Ongoing
	Create an advocacy program that educates the local businesses on incentives to hire ex-offenders such as tax credits, bonding, and the reentry support system.	February, 2013
Create opportunities for ex-offender participation in micro-enterprises.	Identify database of current micro-enterprises.	November, 2012
	Establish business development mentoring program.	June, 2013
	Identify funding sources for the creation of micro-enterprises.	Ongoing

GOAL 7		
<i>Secure the financial sustainability of rehabilitative programs and reentry assistance.</i>		
Objective(s)	Task(s)	Timeline
Demonstrate positive financial	Perform semi-annual cost	Semi-annually;

impact of recidivism reduction.	savings analysis.	March and September
Identify additional funding sources.	Work with Community Investment Team and County Grant Coordinator to locate appropriate grant and funding opportunities.	Ongoing

VI. Implementation Strategy

A. Office of Rehabilitation and Reentry

The effort to effectively reduce recidivism will require involvement from the criminal justice system, local government, and the community as a whole. This cannot be accomplished without a concerted effort and focus being placed on the goals of the strategic plan. In order to facilitate this process, it is the recommendation of the Recidivism Task Force that an Office of Rehabilitation and Reentry be created to oversee the implementation of the Board of County Commissioner’s priority of creating a “Comprehensive Program to Address Recidivism Reduction, County Re-Entry Program for Inmates, and Diversion, Including Youth Programs.”

B. Recidivism and Reentry Community Investment Team

Without the participation of the Leon County community the strategic plan will not be effective. The Recidivism Task Force makes the following recommendations to achieve full community participation.

1. Create a Recidivism and Reentry Community Investment Team compose of representatives appointed by the following entities.

- a. Leon County Board of County Commissioners
- b. City of Tallahassee
- c. Leon County School Board
- d. Leon County Sheriff’s Office
- e. Tallahassee Police Department
- f. Florida State University School of Criminology
- g. FAMU School of Sociology and Criminology
- h. Florida State College of Social Work
- i. FAMU Juvenile Justice Institute
- j. Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
- k. Public Defender’s Office, 2nd Judicial Circuit
- l. State Attorney’s Office, 2nd Judicial Circuit
- m. Workforce Plus
- n. Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce
- o. Capital City Chamber of Commerce
- p. United Partners for Human Services

- q. Southern Christian Leadership Conference
 - r. Tallahassee Equality Action Ministry
 - s. Council of Neighborhood Associations
 - t. Representative(s) of the Recidivism Task Force
2. Create a structure of subcommittees to facilitate the work of the strategic plan.
- a. Service Provider Subcommittee
 - b. Advocacy and Education Subcommittee
 - c. Employment Subcommittee
 - d. Data and Evaluation Subcommittee

VII. Conclusion

Paramount to the quality of life in our community is the safety of our residents. Any holistic public safety program must include a plan for the reduction of recidivism. Reducing recidivism most assuredly requires effective reentry programs, but it must also include a concerted effort to rehabilitate the inmate while in custody. This two-tiered approach to recidivism reduction will provide long-term cost savings to the taxpayers.

Like-Sized County Comparison - Crime Report
January - December 2009 (With Comparative Data from 2008)

	Population	Total Crime Index	% Index Change 08/09	Murder	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny
LEON									
2008	274,892	13,873		14	154	732	1,408	3,688	7,229
2009	274,803	12,836	-7.5	10	145	541	1,343	4,010	6,349
Alachua									
2008	252,388	12,586		4	134	353	1,512	2,747	7,179
2009	256,232	12,823	1.9	5	149	374	1,498	2,858	7,253
Escambia									
2008	313,480	15,080		22	161	692	1,852	2,993	8,524
2009	312,980	15,499	2.8	18	193	636	1,884	3,265	8,750
Lake									
2008	288,379	10,032		12	104	216	1,418	2,337	5,376
2009	291,993	9,134	-9.0	12	95	195	1,047	2,071	5,256
Manatee									
2008	322,780	17,653		12	91	758	2,026	3,766	10,115
2009	328,466	15,930	-9.8	26	101	615	1,817	3,323	9,374
Marion									
2008	329,418	10,414		22	165	312	1,577	2,365	5,469
2009	330,440	10,391	-0.2	12	164	266	1,469	2,384	5,724
Osceola									
2008	273,709	12,094		10	51	309	1,208	3,643	6,229
2009	272,788	11,694	-3.3	11	44	256	1,353	3,491	6,064
St. Lucie									
2008	276,585	10,008		11	98	348	1,051	2,559	5,548
2009	272,864	9,070	-9.4	9	98	238	883	2,435	5,131

*Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement (2010); Crime in Florida - Statewide County Report, 2009 Florida Uniform Crime I

Like-Sized County Comparison – Arrest Totals
 January – December 2009 (With Comparative Data from 2008)

	Population	Total Arrests	% Arrest Change 08/09	Arrest Rate per 100,000	Total Adult Arrests
LEON					
2008	274,892	14,275		5,192.9	12,707
2009	274,803	11,969	-16.2	4,355.5	10,831
Alachua					
2008	252,388	20,331		8,055.5	18,319
2009	256,232	18,654	-8.2	7,280.1	17,244
Escambia					
2008	313,480	24,044		7,670.0	21,500
2009	312,980	19,983	-16.9	6,384.8	17,692
Lake					
2008	288,379	13,521		4,688.6	11,868
2009	291,993	12,728	-5.9	4,359.0	11,185
Manatee					
2008	322,780	21,747		6,737.4	19,450
2009	328,466	20,777	-4.5	6,325.5	18,781
Marion					
2008	329,418	20,196		6,130.8	18,498
2009	330,440	18,792	-7.0	5,687.0	17,522
Osceola					
2008	273,709	19,124		6,987.0	17,415
2009	272,788	15,633	-18.3	5,730.8	14,256
St. Lucie					
2008	276,585	18,472		6,678.6	15,957
2009	272,864	15,809	-14.4	5,793.7	13,281

*Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement (2010); Crime in Florida –Florida Arrest Totals and Index Arrests by County, 2008