**Example 8.** Missouri Invites Other Stakeholders to the Table

# MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS TRANSITION FROM PRISON TO COMMUNITY INITIATIVE (TPC)

**August 21, 2002**

## THE CHALLENGE

One of the most pressing and multifaceted challenges facing state government in Missouri and across the nation is the reintegration of adult offenders who leave state prisons. In Missouri, we currently have approximately 30,000 offenders incarcerated in our correctional institutions. 97% of all Missouri prisoners will at some point be released to go home. It is in the best interest of all Missourians that when released, ex-felons reintegrate into the community safely. There is an increasing need for correctional agencies to work collaboratively with community-based organizations and service providers to strengthen the likelihood that returning offenders will not recidivate, but will become responsible parents, secure employment and contribute to their communities. How we plan for offender transition from incarceration to becoming a productive, law-abiding citizen is a strategic investment in public safety and the social and economic health of families and communities throughout Missouri.

Successful offender reintegration contributes to the achievement of Missouri Results:

- A safe, secure place to live and work
- Decreased rate of crime
- Decreased rate of unemployment
- Decreased reliance on public support
- Decreased incidence of family violence
- Increased percentage of students who achieve targeted skill levels
- Reduced deaths and injuries associated with substance abuse

Offenders come to prison with educational deficits, poor job skills and substance abuse problems that contribute to criminal behavior.

- During FY02, DOC received 15,872 admissions to prison.
- 28% (4,417) of all prison admissions were parole violator returns.
- During FY02, 14,884 offenders were released from Missouri prisons and returned home to live in communities across our state.
- **Multiple state agencies often provide services to offenders after their release, and/or to their families, e.g. 46% of high-risk parolees released in 1999 also received services from Department of Mental Health.**
- Children of incarcerated parents are five times more likely to go to prison as an adult than their peers.

75% of incarcerated offenders and 64% of community-supervised offenders have a significant history of substance abuse or dependence.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

The National Institute of Corrections' (NIC) Transition from Prison to Community Initiative is designed to help states improve offenders' transition from prison to communities, thereby increasing public safety, reducing recidivism and new victimization, and making better use of scarce state and local resources.

The TPC promotes corrections, releasing, supervision, and human service agencies to form strategic and tactical partnerships to integrate and coordinate basic policies, and to sustain and nurture those partnerships and policies over time. It will lead many agencies to seek more effective and targeted ways to use their resources to achieve important goals and results.

TPC Goals:
For released offenders to remain arrest-free over the long haul and to become competent and self-sufficient members of their communities.

TPC Premises:

- Corrections, law enforcement and human service agencies are stakeholders in the transition process. These stakeholders need to articulate and promote common interests, integrate and coordinate policies, and develop mutual ownership of an improved transition process;
- Stakeholders should freely share information relating to transition within and among stakeholders' organizations;
- Transition should be built upon proven reforms and best practices;
- Transition reforms should be affordable, transferable, and adaptable;
- Basic transition reforms should apply to all imprisoned offenders, including those given discretionary release and those who leave at the end of their prison terms; and,
- The allocation of resources for programming, supervision and services should vary directly with the level of risk that those groups of offenders pose.

## THE NEXT STEPS

1. Identify a person to serve as a primary TPC contact for your department. This person should be an individual who is authorized to represent your agency's interests and positions with this initiative. These individuals should attend a TPC briefing meeting on August 30, 2002 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.
2. The primary TPC contact along with other appropriate individuals identified by each department should attend a one-day TPC workshop on September 10, 2002 in Jefferson City.

For further information, please contact the TPC Chairperson for the Department of Corrections listed below…..