

# **Virginia Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy Pilot Programs**

**Presentation to SJR 126 Joint Subcommittee**

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## **Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs**

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- In July of 2003 the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices announced that Virginia was one of seven states selected to participate in its Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy.
  - Virginia's Policy Academy project team brought together representatives of the agencies and organizations that deliver services to ex-offenders and their families.
  - NGA assisted state teams in developing effective prisoner reentry strategies designed to strengthen public safety and reduce costly recidivism rates by improving pre-and post-release services.

## Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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- Working with stakeholders and through subcommittees, the Reentry Policy Academy participants identified barriers to successful reentry in Virginia and developed strategies to address these.
- Four subcommittees were then established based on broad categorizations of need or barriers to successful reentry.

## Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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- Financial Obligations, Housing, and Financial and Community Resources
- Social Reintegration
- Employment and Education
- Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse

## Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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- Each subcommittee identified roadblocks to successful reentry and developed workplans that included and proposed actions to address those.
- In 2006, Virginia was selected as one of four states to participate in the NGA Prisoner Reentry Continuation Policy Academy. A key to test implementation of these recommendations in five pilot programs.

## Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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- Pilot programs will be conducted in five localities.
- These pilot programs will allow for testing and evaluating implementation of the recommendations developed from Virginia's participation in the NGA Policy Academy on Prisoner Reentry.
- Pilot localities were selected on a volunteer basis.

## Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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Pilot projects will be characterized by:

- Community collaboration
- Integrated service delivery
- System of support

## Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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### Proposed Pilot Facilities

- Greenville Correctional Center
- Coffeewood Correctional Center
- Haynesville Correctional Center
- Powhatan Correctional Center
- Fluvanna Correctional Center

### Community Integration

- Norfolk/Greenville-Emporia
- Culpeper
- King G. & Planning District\*
- Richmond
- Culpeper/Richmond/Norfolk

\*Northumberland, Lancaster, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Westmoreland, Stafford, Fredericksburg, Caroline

## Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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- Pilot localities will each establish a Prisoner Reentry Council.
- Directors of local departments of social services will serve as the conveners of local reentry councils.
- Councils will include representatives of public and private agencies, businesses, community-based service providers and faith-based organizations.
- Local councils will develop a reentry plan for their locality that identifies resources available, methods for interagency coordination and implementation of policy academy recommendations.

## Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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- Each locality will have an assigned state correctional facility from which a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 50 offenders will be referred for participation in the pilot program.
- Representatives of the correctional facility and the local reentry council will meet with the offender and develop plans for their return to the community three to six months prior to release.

# Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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## Correctional Centers Reentry Activities

- Federal / Other Benefit eligibility Criteria
- Initiate Applications
- Career Readiness Certificates
- Substance Abuse Assessment / Treatment
- Medical / Mental Health Assessments & RX
- Productive Citizenship
- Portfolio of Certification
- SS# Card / Birth Certificates
- Release of Information / Health Information
- Family Connections
- Community Appointments

# Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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## Community Reentry Activities

- Coordinated job development, placement, and advancement services
- Utilization of Federal Fidelity Bonds
- Public/private partnerships with local employers
- Food Stamp Employment Training (FSET) programs
- Improved access to community medical, mental health and substance abuse treatment services
- Family Relationships
- Community Connections

## **Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs**

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- In the 12 months following release there will be ongoing contact with a team member representing the reentry council.
- Councils will develop methods for on-going communication and support for the returning ex-offender and established outcomes will be measured at one month, three months, six months and 12 months following release.
- Pilots will include family to family mentoring during the re-entry process and for 12 months following release.

## **Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs**

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### **Family to Family Mentoring**

**As well as relationship building and support, mentors will promote and facilitate ex-offender and family member skills building.**

## Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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- **Fatherhood/Motherhood**

The goal is to improve the emotional, social, mental and physical health of children through positive father/mother involvement. The focus is to get and keep fathers/mothers involved with their children and to improve the quality of their relationships.

- **Parenting**

Assist parents to enhance their parenting skills

## Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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- **Strengthening Relationships & Families**

- Communication

- Conflict resolution

- Problem Solving

## Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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### ■ Education

**Support ex-offender and family members in achieving education goals**

**Facilitate communication between home and school**

**Facilitate links with education resources in community– Race to the GED, etc**

- **Of those released from Virginia correctional facilities last year, 52% entered prison without a high school diploma or GED.**

## Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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### ■ Financial Literacy

**Assist ex-offender and family members in strengthening skills in the management of personal financial affairs including income, financial obligations, banking, savings, consumer protection, Earned Income Tax Credit**

- **Department of Correctional Education data shows 37% of those leaving Virginia prisons report money and credit a post-release problem and 21% report is somewhat of a problem.**

## Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs

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- **Most incarcerated men and women return to communities and to families.**
- **Better reentry preparation, integrated service delivery and a support system of people that care will help decrease reentry barriers and help increase the opportunity for those returning to experience restoration within and without and to be contributing member of the communities to which they return.**

**Virginia Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy**  
**Reentry Pilot Programs**

**Background**

In July of 2003 the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices announced that Virginia was one of seven states selected to participate in its Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy. Through the academy, NGA assisted state teams in developing effective prisoner reentry strategies designed to reduce costly recidivism rates by improving pre-and post-release services. Other participating states included Georgia, Idaho, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey and Rhode Island. This intensive 18-month program included an in-state policy workshop, policy academy meetings, and customized technical assistance.

In Virginia, beyond the general need to improve inmate skills and abilities to become productive citizens after release from prison, a more immediate and tangible issue is the number returning to prison. Recidivism rates have remained relatively constant over the past few years. However, although crime and arrest rates have been declining in Virginia during that same time, the state prison population continues to grow. There are two reasons for this: longer time served by offenders under truth-in-sentencing legislation adopted in 1994 and a measurable increase in the number of offenders returned to prison for technical violations of their probation and parole.

An initial step in Virginia's participation in the academy was to bring together representatives of the agencies and organizations that deliver services to ex-offenders and their families. This included: Office of the Secretary of Public Safety, Virginia Departments of Corrections, Correctional Education, Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, Health, Social Services, Housing and Community Development, Criminal Justice Services, Juvenile Justice, the Parole Board, and the Virginia Employment Commission. Additional participants included staff from the General Assembly, the Virginia Sentencing Commission, the state's non-profit Pre and Post Incarceration Services providers, and representatives of inmate and family support groups, as well as other departments and organizations that provide services at the state and local levels.

Over 20 months, the Virginia Reentry group has met together and as sub-committees to identify the specific causes for reentry failure in the state and develop strategies to address these. The overall reentry group identified and prioritized reentry barriers and needs. Subcommittees were then established, based on broad categorizations of need or barriers to successful reentry. These included:

- Financial Obligations, Housing, and Financial and Community Resources
- Employment and Education
- Social Reintegration
- Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse

Each subcommittee developed a list of roadblocks to successful reintegration, and proposed actions to address those. The sub-committees continue to meet to adjust strategies as new data becomes available. However, in order to test the impact of the strategies that have been developed, five pilot programs will be conducted.

## **Reentry Pilot Programs**

Virginia Reentry Pilot Programs will be established in five localities of the state. These pilot programs will allow for testing and evaluating the implementation of the recommendations and strategies developed from Virginia's participation in the NGA Policy Academy on Prisoner Reentry. Pilot program results will assist in decision making on the most cost effective methods to approach delivery of reentry pre- and post- release services that support decreased recidivism and quality of life improvements for released offenders, their families and communities.

Pilot programs will be developed around two primary principles, integrated service delivery and interagency collaboration. Pilot localities will be selected on a volunteer basis. This will not be a new program nor will it impose any requirements on institutions or local government agencies and their community partners. On a strictly voluntary basis, directors of local departments of social services will serve as the convening agency in the pilot localities and will bring together representatives of public and private agencies, businesses, community-based service providers and faith-based organizations to form a local reentry council. These local councils will develop a reentry plan for their locality that identifies resources available, methods for interagency coordination and implementation of policy academy recommendations. Each locality will have an assigned state correctional facility from which a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 50 offenders will be referred for participation in the pilot program.

The reentry pilots will be for 18-24 months and have three key phases. Phase I will focus on providing on a scheduled basis to inmates of the participating correctional facility information about services and obligations that affect them and their families during their time of incarceration.

Phase II of the pilots will begin three to six months before the release of participating inmates. Representatives of the correctional facility and the local reentry council will meet with the offender and develop plans for their return to the community. This planning will address financial obligations, housing, and financial and community resources, education and training, employment, health, mental health, and social reintegration and will include measurable outcomes.

Phase III of the reentry pilots will cover the 12 months following the ex-offender's return to the community. During this phase there will be contact with a team representing the reentry council. Councils will develop methods for on-going communication and support for the returning ex-offender and established outcomes will be measured at one month, three months, six months and 12 months following release. Phase III will also include a fatherhood/motherhood and family to family mentoring component in which trained mentors will walk with the ex-offenders and his or her family during the re-entry process. Mentors will serve as concerned adults who provide support and help bridge positive connections with the community.

### **Proposed Pilot Facilities**

Greensville Correctional Center  
Coffeewood Correctional Center  
Haynesville Correctional Center  
Powhatan Correctional Center  
Fluvanna Correctional Center

### **Community Integration**

Norfolk/Greensville-Emporia  
Culpeper  
King G.& Planning District Counties\*  
Richmond  
Culpeper/Richmond/Norfolk

\*Northumberland, Lancaster, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Westmoreland, Stafford, Fredericksburg, Caroline

## **Virginia Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy Pilot Program**

### **Fatherhood Initiative**

The goal of Virginia Fatherhood Initiative is to improve the emotional, social, mental and physical health of children through positive father involvement. Its focus is to get and keep fathers involved with their children and to improve the quality of fathering.

### **Family to Family Mentoring *Mentoring with a Purpose***

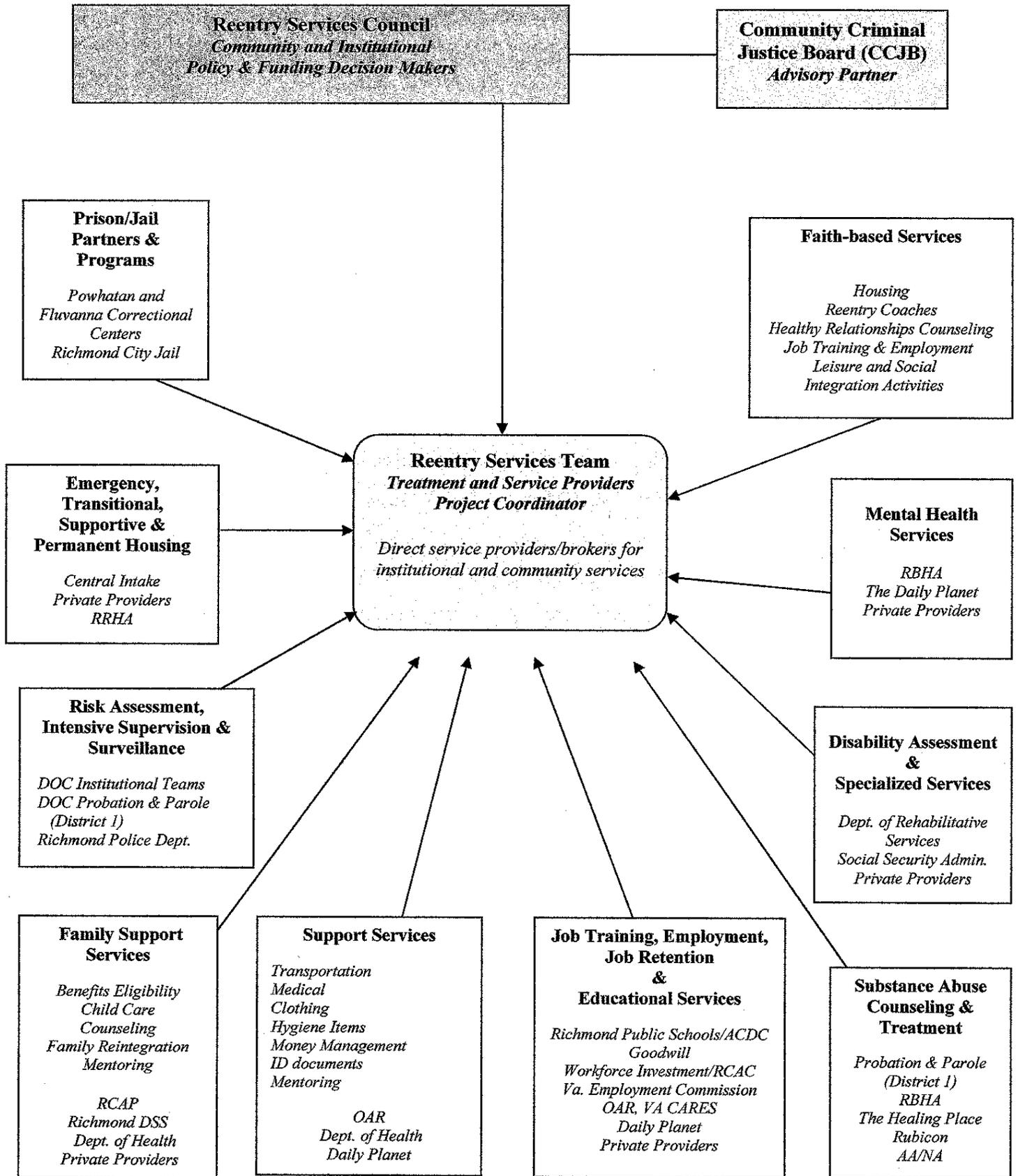
Mentors walk with the ex-offender, or the ex-offender and his/her family, during reentry to the community.

- **Team Approach**  
Mentor Teams – One to Two Mentor Families
- **Family to Family Mentor Training**  
Mentor Sponsor Organization  
Mentor Supervisor  
Mentors

Mentoring With a Purpose – As well as relationship building and support, mentors will promote and facilitate ex-offender and family member skills building in the following areas:

- **Parenting**  
Assist parents to enhance their parenting skills
- **Strengthening Marriages**  
Communication  
Conflict resolution  
Problem Solving
- **Education**  
Support ex-offender and family members in achieving education goals  
Facilitate communication between home and school  
Facilitate links with education resources in community – Race to the GED, etc
- **Financial Literacy**  
Support ex-offender and family members in basic skills in the management of personal financial affairs including income, banking, savings, consumer protection, Earned Income Tax Credit

# Richmond Offender Reentry Services Pilot



**Reentry Services Council**  
*Community and Institutional  
Policy & Funding Decision Makers*

**Community Criminal  
Justice Board (CCJB)**  
*Advisory Partner*

**Prison/Jail  
Partners &  
Programs**  
  
*Powhatan and  
Fluvanna Correctional  
Centers  
Richmond City Jail*

**Faith-based Services**  
  
*Housing  
Reentry Coaches  
Healthy Relationships Counseling  
Job Training & Employment  
Leisure and Social  
Integration Activities*

**Emergency,  
Transitional,  
Supportive &  
Permanent Housing**  
  
*Central Intake  
Private Providers  
RRHA*

**Reentry Services Team**  
*Treatment and Service Providers  
Project Coordinator*  
  
*Direct service providers/brokers for  
institutional and community services*

**Mental Health  
Services**  
  
*RBHA  
The Daily Planet  
Private Providers*

**Risk Assessment,  
Intensive Supervision &  
Surveillance**  
  
*DOC Institutional Teams  
DOC Probation & Parole  
(District 1)  
Richmond Police Dept.*

**Disability Assessment  
&  
Specialized Services**  
  
*Dept. of Rehabilitative  
Services  
Social Security Admin.  
Private Providers*

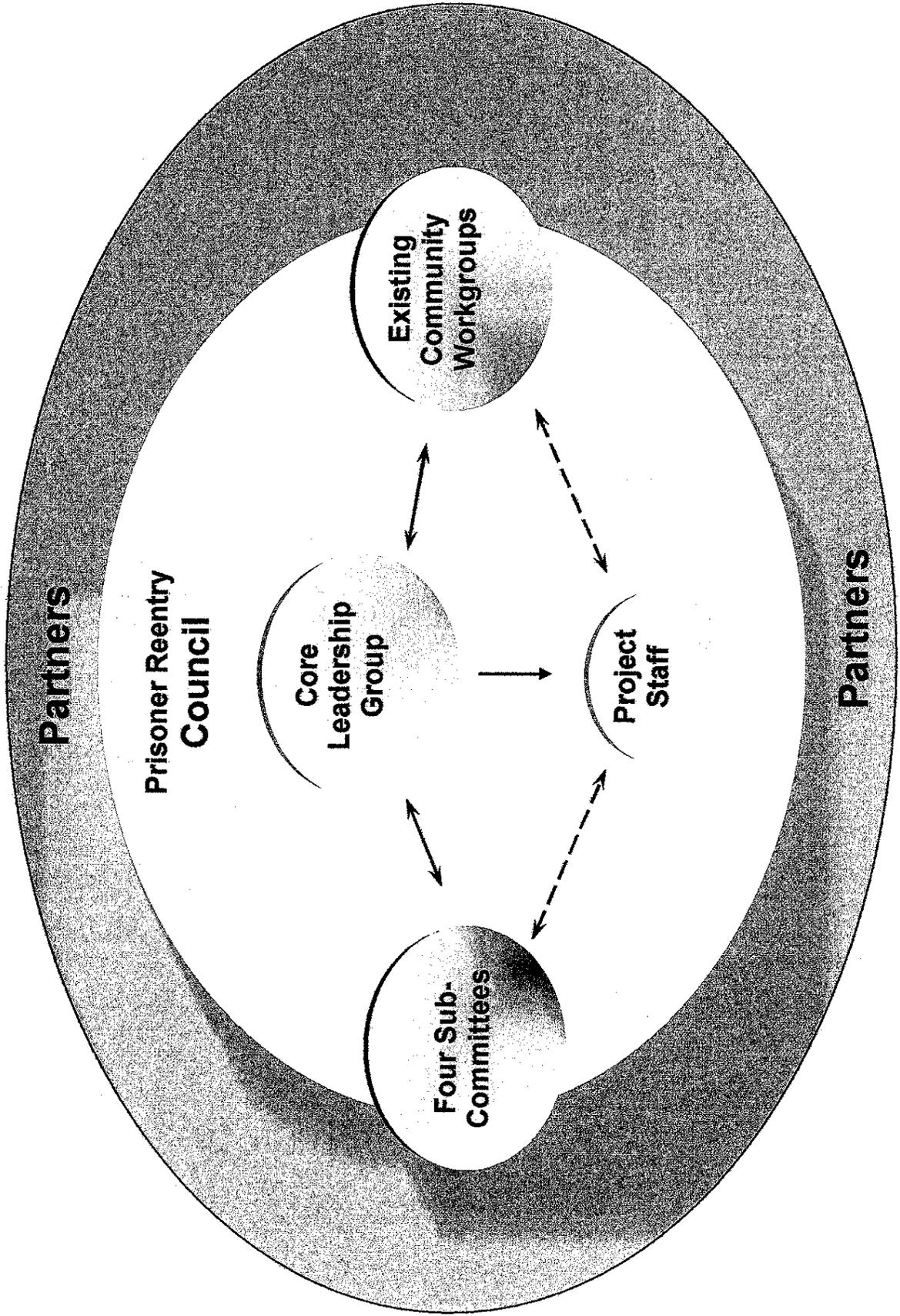
**Family Support  
Services**  
  
*Benefits Eligibility  
Child Care  
Counseling  
Family Reintegration  
Mentoring*  
  
*RCAP  
Richmond DSS  
Dept. of Health  
Private Providers*

**Support Services**  
  
*Transportation  
Medical  
Clothing  
Hygiene Items  
Money Management  
ID documents  
Mentoring*  
  
*OAR  
Dept. of Health  
Daily Planet*

**Job Training, Employment,  
Job Retention  
&  
Educational Services**  
  
*Richmond Public Schools/ACDC  
Goodwill  
Workforce Investment/RCAC  
Va. Employment Commission  
OAR, VA CARES  
Daily Planet  
Private Providers*

**Substance Abuse  
Counseling &  
Treatment**  
  
*Probation & Parole  
(District 1)  
RBHA  
The Healing Place  
Rubicon  
AA/NA*

Culpeper Prisoner Reentry Community Partnership



# **Virginia Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy Reentry Pilot Program**

## **Summary of Challenges Identified by Pilot Leadership Team December 2005**

- **Identification & Orientation of Reentry Council Partners**
- **Partner Buy-In Without Compensation**
- **Communication**
- **Bureaucracy**
- **Coordination of Players**
- **Time Commitment**
- **Identification of a pilot coordinator for each locality**
- **Early Identification of Participants from Correctional Centers**
- **Issues Surrounding Family Reintegration**
- **Development of Real Job Training**
- **Affordable/Available Housing**
- **Keeping Partners Involved**

## **Virginia Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy Reentry Pilot Program**

### **Summary of Support Needed from State Reentry Group Identified by Pilot Leadership Team December 2005**

- **Identification of Resources**
- **Contact with Potential Funders**
- **Development of a Multi-Agency Confidentiality Procedure**
- **Funding to Provide Boxed Lunches for Local Council Sessions**
- **Support Staff to Coordinate Process and Create Computerized Documents**
- **General Guidelines and Framework in Which to Operate**
- **Early Identification of Releases**
- **Birth Certificates & Social Security Cards Prior to Release**
- **Clear Participant Criteria (Random Selection/Recruitment)**
- **Identify Outcome Measures**
- **Have Representatives of State Reentry Group Attend Council Meetings (At Least Initially)**
- **Method for Communication Among Pilots to Share Issues/Practices**
- **Guidance**