

JTC Faith-based and Community Work Group

Statement of Purpose

The myriad of challenges faced by ex-offenders attempting to transition from jail to community and the abundance of churches, faith-based organizations, and neighborhood groups compels the Jail to Community initiative to form a faith-based and community work group. Through relationship, the faith-based and community work group exists to effectively connect ex-offenders with congregations and communities who are ready to give assistance on a holistic basis. The work group consists of representatives from engaged faith-based and community groups who intend to educate, communicate and organize neighborhoods and congregations for the holistic care of ex-offenders.

Initial Goals (90 days)

- Build membership of committed representatives from Faith-based and neighborhood groups.
- Begin to gather ex-offender release data as it relates to specific communities (maps and statistics)
 - o Where are offenders from?
 - o Where are the offenses committed?
- Learn what we can about best practices from successful Nashville prison ministries

Long Range Goals

- Awareness/Education
 - o Gather data to be used in educating and recruiting faith-based and neighborhood groups about the need and benefit of a more effective transition and about what they can do.
- Communication/Resource Sharing
- Unique Congregational Roles
 - o What can congregations or neighborhood groups offer that specific service providers cannot?
 - o Mentoring
 - o Transportation (from jail to where they are going)
 - o Spiritual Council
 - o Case Management
 - o Community
- Identify Effective Areas for Systemic Change
 - o What needs to happen in jail to give ex-offenders and congregations the best chance at effective transition
 - o Preventative work – identify areas to curb the tide of offending

Next Three Steps

- Gather more people through personal contact for the next work group meeting
- Strategy and Structure
 - o Mentoring policy
 - o Define goals and refine the how

- Set a plan for gathering data and beginning the process of educating faith-based and community groups about the important role they can play in the transition from jail to community.

Next Meeting

- June 8th 10-12 at the Neighborhoods Resource Center
- Future work group meetings are currently planned to be held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month.