



**Innovation:**

Missouri  
Reentry  
Process  
Steering Team

**Background:** In 2002, recognizing the increasing number of people returning to their communities after serving time in prison and the challenges associated with their reentry, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) created the Transition from Prison to Community Initiative (TPCI). This initiative proposes a guide to state corrections departments to assist in creating more effective and restorative reentry processes for both people leaving prison and victims of crime while substantially lowering recidivism rates.<sup>1</sup> Missouri was the first state to implement this reentry model in 2002 and renamed it the Missouri Reentry Process (MRP).

Major reform in Missouri began in 2005 when Governor Matt Blunt signed Executive Order 05-33 which established a permanent interagency MRP Steering Team.<sup>2</sup> This order clarified that the Steering Team's role was to "integrate successful offender reentry principles and practices in state agencies and communities resulting in partnerships that enhance offender self-sufficiency, reduce re-incarceration, and improve public safety."

**How it works:** The Missouri Reentry Process (MRP) connects state and local officials to address reentry for each community in the most effective and restorative way. This model reworks the

philosophy of corrections and reentry so that people are more likely to succeed upon release from prison, thus improving public safety and reducing recidivism.<sup>3</sup> MRP is headed by the state-level Steering Team, which includes members from multiple state agencies with a stake in community well-being. In addition, community based organizations specializing in various parts of reentry services are included in the process. The Steering Team then works together to determine the most effective reentry policies and practices.<sup>4</sup> Two major reforms made through the MRP Steering Committee include Transitional Housing Units and Transition Accountability Plans.

Transitional Housing Units (THUs) are special units inside the correctional facility where people are housed for the last 180 days of their incarceration, and include programs such as employability/life skills training, cognitive skills training, parenting training, substance abuse education, long-distance dads programs, and training on the impact of crime.<sup>5</sup> These programs are also accompanied by mental health assistance, personal identification assistance, faith-based community partnerships and many other community organizations at the local level.

Another major component of MRP is Transition Accountability Plans (TAP), which identify individual challenges and opportunities for each person and sets goals and boundaries to help the person succeed rather than return to prison. All people being released from prison participate in these TAPs. These plans are shared with case

managers in the Department of Corrections and with community-based organizations who work with people being released.

In addition to the THUs and TAPs, Missouri established the Missouri Sentencing Advisory Commission in 2005 to provide more information to probation officers and judges on each person to help make more effective release, reentry, and revocation decisions.<sup>6</sup>

**Results:** THUs have been implemented in 12 prisons within Missouri,<sup>7</sup> and 44 Community Steering Teams have been set up across the state to provide community reentry support and application of state Steering Team policies. Continued development of partnerships is strengthening opportunities for people reentering society and providing new opportunities as well.<sup>8</sup>

The Department of Corrections Research Unit found that over 5 years, people who participated in the THU program for 5 months or more were 8-to-10 percent less likely to recidivate.<sup>9</sup>

**Challenges:** A law was passed in 2005 allowing Missouri Department of Corrections to collect “intervention fees” from people on probation or parole to help pay for reentry fees, and in 2008, the Community Reentry Funding Project was launched by Missouri to utilize revenue generated from these fees.<sup>10</sup> Such fees can be prohibitive for people who cannot afford to pay them, making it more difficult for these people to access the services they need, and possibly resulting in more returns to prison on parole violations. Rather than charging people for these services or denying service because of inability to pay, Missouri should continue to find ways through justice reinvestment practices to pay

**"The whole area of aftercare - that is the availability of needed treatment and services for people with various needs, substance abuse addiction, housing, is very important and has a disproportionate impact on African-Americans coming out of prison, who tend to be poor, have even more limited prospects than many of the whites coming out, and in many ways face more obstacles."**

**Richard Rosenfeld, University of Missouri-St. Louis**

Elia Powers, "Out of prison -- now what? Reentry programs help those returning to community life," *St. Louis Beacon*, March 28, 2010.

for these important and ultimately cost-saving services.

### **Policy Implications:**

- **Collaboration among agencies is key to a successful reentry program.** One of the key pieces to making this program successful is the involvement of multiple state agencies, rather than relying solely on the Department of Corrections, creating engagement at all community levels. Recently, the Missouri Veterans Commission and Department of Veterans Affairs were added to the Missouri Reentry Process collaboration to “ensure incarcerated veterans are aware of veteran benefits and are able to receive assistance for a successful transition into the community.”<sup>11</sup>
- **Providing reentry services works.** Studies show that people who receive services like employment, housing and substance abuse treatment upon returning to their communities are less likely to return to prison. Case planning beginning when a person becomes incarcerated and wraparound services that start before a person is released and continue upon return to community can be even more effective.

**For more information on the Missouri Reentry Process, please visit:**  
<http://doc.mo.gov/mrp/mrp.php>.

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Corrections, *Transition from Prison to Community Initiative* (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Corrections, 2002).

<http://nicic.gov/pubs/2002/017520.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Julie Boehm, "Missouri Makes Its Move Toward a New Reentry Philosophy," *Topics in Community Corrections Annual Issue 2007*, Annual Issue (2007): 66-73.

[www.courts.mo.gov/pressrel.nsf/fa1bcbaea6d7c117862567670079a321/945c2838831a3c69862574730049cd2b?OpenDocument](http://www.courts.mo.gov/pressrel.nsf/fa1bcbaea6d7c117862567670079a321/945c2838831a3c69862574730049cd2b?OpenDocument)

<sup>3</sup> Missouri Department of Corrections, "Missouri Reentry Process: About MRP," March 2011.

<http://doc.mo.gov/mrp/mrp.php>.

<sup>4</sup> Missouri Department of Corrections, "Missouri Reentry Process: About MRP," March 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Prison Transition, "Handbook: State of Missouri," March 2010.

[www.prisontransition.com/handbook/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=115:state-of-missouri&catid=35:appendix-i-capsule-descriptions-of-tpc-implementation&Itemid=115](http://www.prisontransition.com/handbook/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=115:state-of-missouri&catid=35:appendix-i-capsule-descriptions-of-tpc-implementation&Itemid=115)

<sup>6</sup> Missouri Court System, "Missouri leads nation in reducing prison populations with double-barrel attack on recidivism," Press Release, June 25, 2008.

[www.courts.mo.gov/pressrel.nsf/fa1bcbaea6d7c117862567670079a321/945c2838831a3c69862574730049cd2b?OpenDocument](http://www.courts.mo.gov/pressrel.nsf/fa1bcbaea6d7c117862567670079a321/945c2838831a3c69862574730049cd2b?OpenDocument)

<sup>7</sup> Missouri Reentry Process Steering Team, *Report to the Governor 2010* (Jefferson City, MO: MRP Steering Team, 2010).

<http://doc.mo.gov/documents/mrp/GovReport2010.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Missouri Reentry Process Steering Team, 2010

<sup>9</sup> Missouri Reentry Process Steering Team, 2010

<sup>10</sup> Dan Hanneken and Carey Kaltenbach, "Missouri Communities: Enhancing Reentry Interventions in Tough Economic Times," *Corrections Today*, (2010): 34-37.

[www.aca.org/fileupload/177/ahaidar/Hanneken\\_Kaltenbach.pdf](http://www.aca.org/fileupload/177/ahaidar/Hanneken_Kaltenbach.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Missouri Reentry Process Steering Team, 2010