



Community Partners in Action

Testimony to the Appropriations Committee on 3/24/09

Re: Prison Re-Entry

By: Maureen Price-Boreland

Good afternoon. My name is Maureen Price-Boreland, Executive Director of Community Partners in Action, a non-profit organization serving the Greater Hartford Area since 1875. Our agency is also a member of Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CT Nonprofits) and I am on the Board of Directors. CPA is a non-profit who stands by our mission of **“Building Community by providing services that promote accountability, dignity and restoration for people affected by the criminal justice system”**

Our organization maintains a strong belief that all our programs must be driven by the philosophy that: **people can change; prevention and intervention are preferable; program decisions must be knowledge-based; community groups and citizen volunteers are crucial partners with us in this work; and mutual respects must mark all our relationships.**

CPA provides a myriad of services to include, re-entry, resettlement, mediation, young offenders, alternatives to incarceration, prison arts, family reunification, community services, Jail Re-interviews, HIV/AIDS education, work release and juvenile services.

CPA recognizes that well coordinated re-entry services are critical to the returning offender population. To that end, CPA has been a part of efforts by State funders, sister community organizations, foundations, workforce development board, faith based organizations, legislative, executive and judicial activities in developing and expanding a myriad of services to meet the needs of the Incarcerated and Re-Entry population.

Evidenced based re-entry services should include:

- *Informal social controls- family, peer, community influences**
- *Duration – 12-24 months**
- *Comprehensive- address the myriad of needs and risk factors of the population**
- *Continuity- Interventions in prison or community should build on each other**
- *Communication- of offender responsibility/behavioral contracts**
- *Support-mechanisms for support; family, peers, AA, mentors etc.**
- *Offender Responsibility- A system of sanctions and incentives**

CPA is especially focused on providing programming that has been deemed best practices and our agency, along with several other non-profits in the network have evolved into providing stable and proven programs for both our adult and juvenile participants.

Specifically on the model of re-entry and diversionary services, I would like to highlight a few programs in the agency: Resettlement, Public/Private Re-entry Project (PREP), Hartford Mediation Program and Community Court.

PREP is a model re-entry program- Federally funded re-entry project- Stats since November 2006, 431 have been placed in jobs at an average wage of \$9.60 hr. with a job retention rate of 71%. This program's main focus is job placement and we do this through collaboration with the, Workforce Development Board, Urban League, SAND Inc., Families in Crisis and Our Piece of the Pie. Services include risk assessment, mentoring, retention services, training placements and of course job placements.

The Resettlement Program- provided direct pre-post re-entry services to 117 females last year. The main goal is to facilitate re-entry for females from York in a supportive and comprehensive manner. Services include assistance with temporary and permanent housing, economic support, family reunification, educational and employment assistance.

Hartford Mediation Program- resolves approximately 1,000 disputes annually. The staff currently provides dispute resolution services at Weaver High and from time to time provides services at Bulkeley, Prince Tech and Hartford High.

Community Court- Provides about 26,300 community services hours annually in the Hartford area.

Our client success has included Smith College graduates, Local Firefighters, Renowned artist, past and present CPA employees, managers and employees at several fast foods, chefs, truck drivers, construction workers etc.

CPA provides these services with a staff of approximately 160, 65% of those being minority and a vast majority live in the Greater Hartford Area. Our agency has had employees who have gone on to become federal and state judges, attorneys, correctional officers, probation officers, CSSD and Department of Correction employees at all levels and so on.

Re-Entry services have come a long way in Connecticut with strong partnerships between CSSD, Department of Correction and the Non-Profit Network. There is room for that work to continue to develop and CPA along with most of the Non-Profits in the network are prepared to be part of that journey.