

Pinal County Re-Entry Roundtable

Hosted by Pinal County Coalition to End Homelessness

November 30, 2023

Summary of Participant Discussion

(over 60 attendees)

Opportunities to Create More Successful Reentry

We need to begin working with inmates long before they get out. We want to set them up for success—meeting them where they are at and serving their individualized needs. We need to give them opportunities the whole time, including life skills.

To help meet these goals, we should allow more non-faith-based organizations to provide services, provide increased opportunities for remote resource offerings (such as life skills, job skills, and other educational opportunities). We also need to have more mental health and substance use programs in prison as well as expanded care support models that allow for more peer support and community connection. It's important to provide continued support to ensure success by having an approach that is more like a travel companion who stays with them to provide support versus a travel agency that simply provides the options.

Clothing, transportation, and connection to employment and other services before people are released all have a large impact on successful reentry. For example, we should have a DMV representative inside to assist with identification needs before people get out. We need to also look at ways to streamline the ID process—including reinstating the affidavit process to get IDs issued more easily.

Employment opportunities are essential. We need to change the stigma around those who have been incarcerated and work to create lists of employers who can support returning citizens. We also need to provide greater access to NARCAN.

Sometimes it is our organizations and governments who make it more difficult. We need to look at where there are opportunities for us to remove barriers to success. As part of this goal, we need to increase education to our community about how the domino effect impacts all of us if we do not address this challenge together.

Priorities

Those who are incarcerated need support. This includes education, prevention, and removing judgment. We should not judge people for the lowest stage in their lives. Rather we should do our best to support their success.

A warm hand off at every step of the way is essential and not just the ninety days before they get out. There are pockets of this happening but there is not continuation across the board. Everyone is responsible for creating hope, offering training, working cooperatively, and communicating with each other.

Removing barriers to success is important. First, we need to identify barriers which can be done cooperatively with probation and the client to identify the barriers and identify how best to remove them. Actions to remove barriers include actions by the client as its important for individuals to take responsibility for themselves.

Working with the people who are impacted and who have lived experiences is critical for ensuring that we come up with the best solutions, including housing.

Everyone is responsible for making these priorities a success because it impacts all of us.