MARYLAND RE-ENTRY PARTNERSHIP

Enterprise Baltimore Helps Ex-Offenders Successfully Rejoin Their Communities

Summary

The Maryland Re-entry Partnership provides ex-offenders the tools to successfully build a better life after prison. Launched in 2001, it is part of a national five-year pilot in eight cities, partially funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Unlike the other pilot initiatives, which are hosted in the correctional system, the Maryland Re-entry Partnership is led by a nonprofit, Enterprise, and is a collaboration among government agencies, community-based organizations and nonprofit entities. The Maryland program targets male ex-offenders returning to several Baltimore City communities and, as of this writing in 2004, has successfully served almost 300 ex-offenders with training in basic life skills and support services that will help them build productive lives and avoid re-incarceration.

Services to ex-offenders date back more than a century. Notably, the Salvation Army has long offered re-entry support, including shelter housing and job training and employment. Across America, Goodwill, other nonprofit and faith-based organizations have created programs for ex-offenders that include connections to social and supportive services. State correctional institutions, too, have provided training and education services, often in partnership with local educational institutions. The DOJ funding is going to programs that identify and fill the gaps between these somewhat isolated services to create best practices for state-of-the-art programs in re-entry.

The spectrum of services offered by the Maryland Re-entry Partnership is similar to other programs and includes transitional housing, substance abuse treatment, physical and mental health care, employment and training, educational programs and life skills training. But two aspects of this initiative are quite innovative. First, the Maryland Re-entry Partnership brings both the community and the correctional services to a combined and coordinated effort. There is deep and meaningful integration among the partners. Second, the partnership boasts an unusually strong foundation of community support and participation. The service providers are based in the ex-offenders’ home community, and they employ residents of the community. In many cases, they employ ex-offenders as well, giving their services resounding credibility with new clients.
The founding partners include Enterprise, the Maryland Division of Correction, the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation, the Maryland Parole Commission, the Mayor’s Office on Criminal Justice, the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development, the Baltimore Police Department and three local community-based organizations. As of June 2004, 24 organizations from government, nonprofit and private sectors had joined together to support this effort, each in its area of expertise.

Second, whereas most programs begin just prior to the prisoner’s release, the Maryland Re-entry program can begin up to two years before release with supportive services and case management that help the participants plan and prepare for a more effective transition. This is due to the meaningful participation of the correctional services agencies. In addition, the case management process is implemented in two phases: pre-release planning; and structured re-entry/reintegration, which includes intense casework and peer counseling. This process can last up to two years after release and also includes meaningful involvement of the parole agencies.

As a result of these innovations, ex-offenders rebuild their lives, and the Maryland Re-entry Partnership is being hailed as a model.

**Community Need**

The Maryland Re-entry Partnership responds to the need for innovation in addressing one of the most profound challenges facing our society: recidivism. The cycle of incarceration and re-entry into the community has a devastating impact on poor inner-city neighborhoods and the families who live there. The challenge is daunting:

- Incarceration rates have increased fourfold over the past 25 years.
- More than 600,000 people leave state and federal prisons each year.
- Maryland’s recidivism rate exceeds 50 percent.

Although numerous government-funded initiatives focus on reducing crime and rebuilding blighted neighborhoods, until recently none had specifically focused on providing key supports to ex-offenders. Moreover, although ex-offenders interacted regularly with public and private service systems, there was very little communication or collaboration among the service providers.

Baltimore was ripe for innovation to serve this population. The Maryland Re-entry Partnership grew out of intense concern by state, local and community-based agencies that the 14,000 ex-offenders released annually from the state’s correctional facilities needed better preparation to productively re-enter their communities. The number and concentration of ex-offenders focused the concern of politicians and community leaders. An estimated 68.5 percent of Maryland’s ex-offenders return to Baltimore City; of those, 60 percent are clustered in the five zip codes targeted by this program. The partners that previously had served this population in isolation were willing to collaborate and design a new approach. And finally, the Maryland Division of Correction was actively seeking a community leader to take on the development and management of a new community-based, case management model that would
provide ex-offenders with a seamless and successful transition from prison to community. That leader was Enterprise, and that initiative came to be known as the Maryland Re-entry Partnership.

**Implementation and Program Description**

In 2000, the founding partners developed a memorandum of understanding, formalizing their roles and establishing a structure. Initial funding came from government and other sources as well as some funds earmarked by Enterprise. Agreements for case management and supportive services were executed between Enterprise and each community-based organization. Foundations involved in programs serving ex-offenders were included in the program development, and slowly, the necessary additional funds were raised.

In 2001, a process evaluation verified that the model was sound, identified data needs, and helped identify and address issues requiring immediate attention: expanding the service network, modifying programming to meet participants’ needs and addressing intergenerational criminality. Also that year, the program was formally launched.

In 2003, program staff began using a battery of assessment tools to gauge client needs and to identify appropriate services. In March 2004, pre-release services were added and implemented. Program staff received training in technical assistance and family intervention. A database was developed to effectively track participant status and outcome measurement. The Maryland Division of Parole and Probation devoted two agents exclusively to supervise the program’s participants. Also in 2004, with great pride, the Maryland Re-entry Partnership graduated its first class of 41 men.

Maryland Re-entry Partnership has the following goals:

- Enhance public safety by reducing recidivism.
- Build the capacity of ex-offenders to be productive citizens.
- Link ex-offenders to necessary support services.
- Increase community and correctional capacity to address ex-offenders’ needs.
- Identify resources to meet those needs.
- Reduce intergenerational crime through family reunification.

Participants are recruited as early as two years prior to their release date through the existing Maryland Division of Correction (DOC) case management process. Under this process, the inmates undergo a needs assessment and a program plan is developed. The inmates are transferred to the Metropolitan Transition Center in Baltimore City. There, in addition to traditional programs, such as education and vocational training, they are assigned to pre-release programs, such as employment readiness, life skills and victim/offender impact classes.

During this process, and no later than 75 days prior to release, DOC’s case management staff screens the inmates statewide for eligibility for the Maryland Re-entry program. To be eligible, an inmate must plan to reside in one of
the target zip codes and have no convictions of an offense against a child or for sexual assault. In addition, he must not be assigned to administrative or disciplinary segregation, nor be classified to maximum security. (The program also serves a limited number of “walk-in” participants – ex-offenders who contact one of the community-based organizations directly for service. In these cases, the community case manager screens the individual for eligibility and contacts the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation to verify his supervision status, so he may be admitted to the program.)

**Pre-Release**

**Within 75 days prior to release:**
- In addition to services offered through the DOC’s case management process, a transition assessment is conducted with the client and his community case manager, in collaboration with the case management staff.
- The team develops an aftercare case plan to guide the client’s participation for the next two years.
- Local service providers facilitate employment and life-skills training for each client and provide mental health assessments as necessary.

**Within 30 days prior to release:**
- An exit orientation is held to brief the client on the re-entry/reintegration phase.
- Representatives of community-based service providers, the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation and the Baltimore Police Department discuss their respective roles. The client asks questions and offers feedback.
- In subsequent sessions, the aftercare plan is presented and explained.
- The housing plan is finalized, and the client is scheduled to return to a verified home address or transitional house.

**Structured Re-entry/Reintegration**

- Upon release from the Maryland Transition Center, each program participant is met at the prison gate by the community case manager or community advocate, unless other arrangements have been made.
- At this point, participants are under the care of a community case manager, who takes them to the participants’ homes or to transitional housing.
- Arrangements are made for reporting to the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation, obtaining identification – such as a driver’s license, a social security card and a birth certificate – receiving a physical exam and participating in monthly support group meetings.
- Implementation of the case plan begins, clients report to scheduled appointments and are linked to services.
- Participants can remain in the program for up to two years after their release. If the client is under the supervision of the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation, the team supporting him works closely with his parole agent to discuss reintegration successes and issues. After completing the plan, the ex-offender graduates from the program, but can continue to access support services and personnel.
Organization and Service Area

The Maryland Re-entry Partnership was originally managed by the partner organizations through a steering committee, an operations committee and work groups. Although the partnership, with an annual operating budget of about $600,000, continues to receive support from partner organizations, Enterprise is now its driving force. Initially targeting male ex-offenders returning to three neighborhoods in Baltimore City – Druid Heights, Sandtown-Winchester and Greater East Baltimore – it has expanded to include Harlem Park/Upton and Garrison/Park Heights.

The 13-member staff includes a program director, four community case managers, seven community advocates and a program assistant. The program director, employed by Enterprise, serves as liaison to law enforcement agencies, service providers, public safety committees and various workgroups. She also supervises a program assistant, who is employed by Enterprise as well. The community case managers and advocates are employed by community-based organizations, but have dotted-line reporting relationships to the program director. Community case managers design case plans tailored to meet the unique needs of individual clients. They work with the clients and community advocates to implement each plan. Community advocates assist the case managers with the overall case management and work most directly with the clients. The case managers and the advocates maintain close working relationships with each other and with their clients to ensure the plans are being implemented and, most importantly, are effective.

The success of the Maryland Re-entry Partnership is due in no small part to the experience, dedication and passion of its staff, community case managers and community advocates. Several of the case managers and advocates are ex-offenders, giving them keen insight into the challenges facing each client and the skills needed to overcome the obstacles of reintegration.

Partners

The partners of this program embraced the innovative approach and the opportunity to work with one another collaboratively. The Maryland Re-entry Partnership includes a spectrum of talented, proven and trusted service providers. Organizations that had participated as a partner of September 30, 2004, included:

- A Step Forward (transitional housing)
- Alternative Directions (supporting female ex-offenders)
- Bureau of Governmental Research – University of Maryland College Park (evaluation)
- Center for Fathers, Families and Workforce Development (STRIVE, employment services)
- Christopher Place (transitional housing)
- East Baltimore Community Corporation (construction skills training)
- Maryland Institute for Employment Training Professionals (provider training)
- National Center for Victims of Crime (victim awareness)
- Patrick Allison House (transitional housing)
- People Encouraging People (mental health services)
Respect Outreach Center (life skills training)
Tuerk House (substance abuse treatment)
Urban Institute (evaluation)

Also critical to the partnership’s success is the support from key financial and administrative partners and community-based organizations. Those who had participated as of September 30, 2004, included:

- The Abell Foundation
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Baltimore City Health Department
- Baltimore City Police Department
- Baltimore Community Foundation
- Baltimore Equitable Insurance Foundation
- Community Building in Partnership
- Druid Heights Community Development Corporation
- East Baltimore Community Corporation
- Empower Baltimore Management Corporation
- Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention
- Harlem Park/Lafayette Square Village Center
- Living Cities, Inc.: The National Community Development Initiative
- Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
- Maryland Division of Correction
- Maryland Division of Parole and Probation
- Mayor’s Office of Employment Development
- Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice
- Project Garrison
- The Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc.

Financing

Development and implementation of this program has been possible thanks to a variety of supporters. Also as of September 30, 2004, these included:

- The Abell Foundation ($175,000)
- Annie E. Casey Foundation ($10,000)
- Baltimore Anonymous Donors ($30,000)
- Baltimore City Police Department ($50,000)
- Baltimore Community Foundation ($20,000)
- Baltimore Equitable Insurance Company ($25,000)
- Empower Baltimore Management Corporation ($165,000)
The Maryland Re-entry Partnership has leveraged more than $1 million of in-kind services and more than $225,000 of in-kind staff support as of September 30, 2004, from:

- Baltimore City Health Department
- Community Building in Partnership
- Druid Heights Community Development Corporation
- East Baltimore Community Corporation
- Maryland Division of Correction
- Maryland Division of Parole and Probation
- Project Garrison
- Urban Institute

The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services awarded $1 million to support this program over three years under its Going Home: Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention. This funding was routed through the Baltimore City Police Department to Enterprise and includes:

- $525,000 for the continuation and expansion of the program, including community-based staff and services for female offenders
- $380,000 to fund service providers
- $45,000 to support the Maryland Division of Correction’s pre-release curriculum
- $30,000 for program evaluation
- $20,000 to enhance the role of victims’ rights organizations in this initiative

**Sustainability Features**

The key to success in the Maryland Re-entry Partnership was the development and management of working relationships among the myriad organizations that must serve this population if re-entry is to be successful. That is also key to sustaining any program like this one. Enterprise continues to facilitate the ongoing development and implementation of this partnership, including identifying and mobilizing partners. We will fill this intermediary role through June 30, 2005.

- Enterprise ($250,000)
- Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention ($276,000)
- Living Cities, Inc.: The National Community Development Initiative ($240,000)
- Mayor’s Office on Criminal Justice ($150,000)
- Mayor’s Office of Employment Development ($75,000)
- The Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc. ($105,000)
As a long-term sustainability strategy, Enterprise and its partners are helping local community organizations and service providers increase their abilities in critical areas. This effort is aimed at providing a prepared, formalized, self-sustaining service provider network to be tapped into as needed by the Maryland Division of Correction.

To support this network, a state funding structure – similar to the state’s Neighborhood Grant initiative – is envisioned to provide grants to service providers and community-based organizations, so they can provide services to ex-offenders. This structure is expected to become operational in 2006. Finally, the Governor’s office and the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services were so impressed with the Maryland Re-entry Partnership that they created a position to develop similar re-entry programs throughout the state, based on the best practices from this initiative.

**Program Status and Accomplishments**

In 2001, the University of Maryland Bureau of Government Research, in collaboration with the Urban Institute, conducted a process evaluation that found the model to be empirically sound in all key areas: institutional treatment, pre-release and transition planning, post release and reintegration.

The original goal of the Maryland Re-entry Partnership was to serve 325 men by June 2005. The program is well ahead of its goal, and staff expects to exceed that number by the end of 2004. The men served by the Maryland Re-entry program are finding the support they need to stay out of prison and build successful lives. An impressive 70 percent stay with the program until graduation. And only one in five of those are back in jail within three years. That is a vast improvement over the recidivism rate for the Maryland Division of Correction, which at almost 52 percent has one in two ex-offenders reincarcerated within three years. In addition, the initiative is achieving substantial cost savings for the state. Whereas housing one inmate costs the state approximately $25,000 annually, the Maryland Re-entry Partnership spends only about $3,000 annually per ex-offender.

The Re-entry Partnership’s success has made Maryland and Enterprise national leaders and innovators in the development of re-entry models. Local and national lawmakers, service providers, academicians and community organizations have made site visits and professional inquiries. Representatives of the partnership have participated on panels and facilitated workshops at numerous national forums and conferences.

In late 2004, the initiative, its clients and staff will be highlighted in a PBS documentary on recidivism and also will be the central focus of a special program produced by Maryland Public Television. In addition, it will be featured on CBS’ “60 Minutes II.” As of September 30, 2004, the program has been reported on Maryland Public Radio and on the local station, WJZ-TV’s “On-Time,” which also aired on seven Infinity Broadcasting radio stations in the Baltimore-Washington market.
This publicity is most helpful because it educates others working to help ex-offenders. To further the expansion of the best practices learned in this partnership, Enterprise is planning the creation of a package of tools that will help others design and implement a similar program.

**Key Lessons**

Replicating an initiative successfully requires a thorough understanding of the local environment and the willingness to adapt successful features to fit. As with any program area, however, there are key issues to keep in mind when tackling a re-entry partnership. First, ensure that there is a genuine collaborative spirit among partners and that they are committed to the effort. The Maryland Re-entry Partnership attributes much of its success to this factor. Participation by and the support of the community are critical. Also, ensure that the partners can provide the logistical support needed to help this population. Provide service providers with specialized training for working with ex-offenders. And designate a lead agency – one that will serve as spokesperson and coordinator. Someone must lead the effort and communicate regularly to all parties. Finally, prepare for a dose of disappointment. Some recidivism will occur, no matter how great the effort.

In order for an initiative such as this to sustain itself and grow beyond a pilot stage, it must successfully meet the challenges of solidifying and managing a large public-private collaborative that meets unique client needs. It must remain focused on:

- Actively addressing barriers and stigmas associated with ex-offenders to ensure the effective and unbiased delivery of client services
- Building the capacity of partners providing support services
- Continually improving the delivery of support services needed by ex-offenders
- Creating and maintaining collaborative and respectful relationships among all partners

**Future**

The Maryland Re-entry Partnership is expanding. Five new staff in the community-based organizations and seven new service providers will enable the program to serve an additional 115 people per year, allowing it to serve 325 clients annually.

In addition, the partnership is designing a third-year mentoring component that will match graduates with newly released offenders. Ideally, this will expand support for the newly re-entering ex-offenders while keeping the program’s graduates engaged.

As of this writing, the Urban Institute is collecting and analyzing key data to measure the overall effectiveness of this five-year pilot, scheduled to end in 2006. Currently, the partners are designing a plan to sustain the initiative well into the future, using public and private funding and the increased participation of community-based organizations.
Finally, the partnership is collaborating with Alternative Directions to provide services to female ex-offenders returning to the targeted communities.

**Enterprise Baltimore**

Enterprise’s relationship with the City of Baltimore – its leaders, residents, institutions and community groups – is long-standing. For nearly 15 years, Enterprise has provided affordable rental and home-ownership opportunities throughout the city by working with local government and private and nonprofit organizations. This increasingly strong network has constructed or rehabilitated nearly 3,000 affordable homes for low-income residents. In 1994, community groups, government and businesses worked together to win a federal Empowerment Zone designation, which has brought extra resources to many struggling neighborhoods. Additionally, Enterprise Baltimore has been collaborating for the past six years with the city, community-based organizations and residents of the neighborhood of Sandtown-Winchester to improve not just housing, but also schools, health care, employment, public safety and the commercial/retail base, in an initiative called Neighborhood Transformation.

**Contact Information**

Maryland Re-entry Partnership  
Rada Moss, Program Director  
Enterprise  
312 N. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., 3rd Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
Phone: 410.230.2115  
Fax: 410.230.2290  
Email: rmoss@enterprisefoundation.org