



**Transition Planning for Homeless Persons
Leaving Local Jails Initiative
Austin/Travis County, Texas**

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION STEPS
FOR ENHANCING TRANSITION PLANNING
FROM TRAVIS COUNTY JAIL AND TDCJ-TRAVIS STATE JAIL
September 18th, 2012**

Recommendation 1:	Explore development of an effective homeless services coordinated information and referral system that will allow creation of appropriate transition plans and referrals at jail release.
Recommendation 2:	Provide resources in jails to ensure transition planning services for persons who have a history of homelessness or substantial risk of homelessness prior to their release.
Recommendation 3:	Establish more formal working relationships between community-based providers and local jails to ensure sustained relationships and effective coordination as well as set accountability measures and goals.
Recommendation 4:	Develop strategies that connect homeless persons to effective services and housing options upon release including supportive housing as well as reunification with families and utilization of affordable housing units.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Explore development of an effective homeless services coordinated information and referral system that will allow creation of appropriate transition plans and referrals at jail release.		
OBJECTIVE:	ACTION STEPS:	LEAD:
1.1 Connect jails/transition service providers to ECHO's exploratory work on this issue.	a. Add representatives from criminal justice entities to this conversation including: Probation, Mental Health Public Defender's Office, Inside Out of Travis County, Commitment to Change and Downtown Austin Community Court	Ann Howard Jo Kathryn Quinn
1.2 Explore how current "centers" could be better utilized now to provide emergency transition services or links to services for homeless persons being released from local jails	a. Review report/key findings of UTSSW study on "reentry information and referral one-stop shops" key findings and recommendations b. Include this discussion item in meeting identified in 3.2	Jeri Houchins

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RECOMMENDATION 2: Provide resources in jails to ensure transition planning services for persons who have a history of homelessness or substantial risk of homelessness prior to their release.		
OBJECTIVE:	ACTION STEPS:	LEAD:
2.1 Increase transition planning services for at TCJ and TDCJ-State Jail to serve this population	a. TCJ: Follow up with Danny Smith and Mary Moran to learn more about the new reentry planner position, determine how we can help make connections with stakeholders and maximize this resource	Darla Gay
	b. TDCJ-TSJ: Determine the current status of Reentry Specialist	
	c. TDCJ-TSJ: Meet with Warden and share report and recommendations	Ann Howard Jo Kathryn Quinn
	d. TDCJ-TSJ/TC CJP: Monitor TC budget request by the Inside Out program for additional staff and determine how homelessness may be addressed with this reentry planning services	
2.2 Develop appropriate screening/needs assessment including housing needs assessment tool	a. Review UT SSW student report/key findings regarding Integrative Intake System (for homeless services) to determine how it relates to utilization in local jails	Ann Howard
	b. Work with BJA Mental Health Planning Grant next steps in examining housing assessment tools	Ann Howard Jo Kathryn Quinn
2.3 Provide intervention services while incarcerated and link homeless persons to coordinated community-based services in a cohesive strategy	No action recommended yet	
2.4 Build capacity to provide income stability services including employment readiness and/or benefit enrollment/re-enrollment/maintenance strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECHO to develop a local SOAR Training opportunity Provide information to Mary Moran of TC Jail to begin providing support to learn more about benefit enrollment/maintenance in the interim 	ECHO Ann Howard Jessie Aric Darla Gay

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Establish more formal working relationships between community-based providers and local jails to ensure sustained relationships and effective coordination as well as set accountability measures and goals.

OBJECTIVE:	ACTION STEPS:	LEAD:
3.1 With existing providers:	a. Collect examples of MOU's/working agreements to review	
3.2 With local homeless shelters and homeless service providers	a. Set up meeting with local jails and ARCH and Salvation Army to begin discussions on how to create working relationships	Ann Howard/ Jo Kathryn Quinn/ Mary Moran
3.3 With ECHO and local Continuum of Care (and Homeless Management Information System):	No action recommended yet	
3.4 Develop cross or shared training opportunities with correctional staff, probation, reentry planning case managers/specialists, behavioral health partners and homeless service providers.	a. Host a brown bag lunch and facilitate a meeting to learn what they would like to do/learn about	Ann Howard Jo Kathryn Quinn

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**RECOMMENDATION 4:
Develop strategies that connect homeless persons to effective services and housing options upon release including supportive housing as well as reunification with families and utilization of affordable housing units.**

OBJECTIVE:	ACTION STEPS:	LEAD:
1. Explore development/utilization of housing specialist and/or benefit specialists to support transition planning and case mgmt. programming at these jails	a. Identify and assess how housing locators/housing specialists are utilized in our community and how they can be maximized, leveraged or enhanced	ECHO Housing Work Group
2. Increase supply of PSH for frequent users of cj systems/jails and enhance/maximize funding for longer term transitional housing	a. Monitor/update on implementation of Travis County BJA Justice Reinvestment grant for 23 units of PSH for frequent users of the Travis County Jail	Ann Howard
3. Develop advocacy strategies to encourage more landlords/housing providers to reduce the barriers of criminal backgrounds	No recommendations yet	
4. Develop strategies that will increase our local capacity to provide effective behavioral health services for persons leaving these jails to enhance continuity of care.	a. Partner with BJA Mental Health Planning grant next steps	
5. Explore reentry strategies in public housing that encourages family reunification.	a. Review report/key findings of UT SSW study on this issue	Jeri Houchins

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INITIATIVE NEXT STEPS:		
OBJECTIVE:	POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:	LEAD:
1. Disseminate final report to key stakeholders and partners	1. Final report to all stakeholders who participated in the project. 2. Meet directly with TDCJ SJ warden 3. Meet with Sheriff Hamilton 4. Present at CJC 5. ECHO—Prevention, Housing WG, Membership Council, Board 6. A/TCRRT Planning Council	Ann Howard Jo Kathryn Quinn Darla Gay
2. Reconvene partners in January 2013 for updates and review of next steps		ECHO/A/TCRRT