



## Austin-Travis County Reentry Roundtable

*Building Successful Strategies for  
Reentry and Reintegration in Austin/Travis County, Texas*

### **PLANNING COUNCIL MEETING Minutes**

April 12, 2021  
12: 30 – 2 p.m.  
ZOOM

**Planning Council:** Jennifer Tucker (Goodwill Industries of Central Texas), Don Tracy (Austin Community College), Mia Greer (Community Coalition for Health), Carolyn Brown (Travis County Correctional Facility), David Clauss (American YouthWorks), Darwin Hamilton (Community Representative, Grassroots Leadership), Marissa Latta (Texas RioGrande Legal Aid), Cathy McClaugherty (Travis County Justice Planning) Charles Moody (Community Coalition for Health, The Rock ATX), Marsha Morgenroth (Travis County Pretrial & Adult Probation), Katy Jo Muncie (Capital Area Private Defender Service), Hank Perret (Community Representative), Louella Tate (Community Representative), Peter Valdez (Downtown Austin Community Court)

**Guests:** Kayla Bennett, Traci Berry (Goodwill of Central Texas), Sonja Burns, Michelle Davis (Department of Labor VETS), Heather Emerson (Truth Be Told, Prep to Your Door), Ana Gonzalez (Workers Defense Action Fund), Rochion Gregg (City Civil Rights Office), Diana Hernandez, Beverly Johnson, Matthew Lovitt, Yasmin Lozano (St. Edward's University, social work student), Maggie Luna (Texas Criminal Justice Coalition), Mary Moran, Mick Normington (Lee College), Wendi Power, Cecily Sailer (Aunt Bertha), Alex Villarreal (Integral Care), Steven Wentrcek (Life Safety Division Manager, Travis County Sheriff's Office)

**Support:** Kelly Nichols, Andrea Torres, Madeleine Jordan-Lord (WNA)

#### **I. 12: 30-12: 45 p.m. – Welcome – Jennifer Tucker**

- a. Guest Introductions (5 mins)
- b. Connecting Activity (10 mins)
  - i. Chatterfall; see end of Minutes for responses

#### **II. 12: 45-12: 55 p.m. – Voting Items – Jennifer Tucker**

- a. March 2021 Minutes
  - i. ACTION: A motion to approve minutes was made by Louella Tate and seconded by Don Tracy. Minutes were approved by a voice vote with no abstentions.
- b. Planning Council Member Nominations
  - i. Melissa Shearer (Travis County Mental Health Public Defender Office)
    1. ACTION: A motion nominate Melissa Shearer for membership was made by Don Tracy and was seconded by Hank Perret. Nomination was approved by a voice vote with no abstentions.
  - ii. Alex Villarreal (Integral Care)
    1. ACTION: A motion to nominate Alex Villarreal for membership was made by Marissa Latta and was seconded by Mia Greer. Nomination was approved by a voice vote with no abstentions.

**III. 12: 55-1: 10 p.m. – Overview of Member Survey Results**

- a. Full member survey results are available in 4.12.21 Meeting Packet, and the member survey results summary PowerPoint can be found in the Planning Council meeting follow-up.

**IV. 1: 10-1: 55 p.m. – Legislative Panel**

- a. Traci Berry (Goodwill of Central Texas)
- b. Ana Gonzalez (Workers Defense Action Fund)
- c. Maggie Luna (Texas Criminal Justice Coalition)

The legislative panel shared bills this session that may have positive or negative impacts on reentry. They also shared that many of these bills will not make it out of committee this Legislative Session, but it is important to stay engaged and continue the fight for progress in these areas. Panelists encouraged Planning Council members to sign up for public comment and to subscribe for committee and bill alerts to stay informed. People can sign up to follow bills at Texas legislature online <https://capitol.texas.gov/>.

Ana Gonzalez from Workers Defense Action Fund spoke on SB 14, which prevents counties and city governments from passing policies that set minimum employment policies—such as worker health and safety policies and civil rights protections. WDAF is advocating against this bill.

WDAF is currently advocating in favor of HB 1058 which creates conditional driver's permits for communities that traditionally have not have access to forms of state ID. The campaign website is <http://drivetexasadelante.org/>. Building Promises USA and Texas Criminal Justice Coalition are advocating for HB 3547 (Allen), also known as New Wings, which would expand record sealing services to many Texans who have completed their sentences but still carry the barriers of a criminal record.

**V. 1: 55-2 p.m. – Member Updates and Announcements**

- a. Mia: COVID Vaccines and Our Community Event is tonight, 4/13 from 7-8:30pm on Facebook Live
- b. Jen: Goodwill Central Texas is currently enrolling for their Building Maintenance Technician Program and recruiting for the Fatherhood Works program. Please refer anyone you think would be a good fit.
- c. Charles: Contact Community Coalition for Health if you know of anyone adversely affected by the winter storm who lives in Travis Co. and who would benefit from direct funds.
- d. Kelly: We launched reentry service provider survey! It went out to approximately 100 organizations. Advocacy Fellowship selection process is also underway—the Roundtable Exec Committee is conducting interviews this week.

**Chatterfall Connecting Activity**

**MY CURRENT MINDSET IS BEST DESCRIBED AS...**

- Hopeful
- Optimistic
- Healthy
- Hopeful
- Happy but focused
- Ambitious
- Eager
- hopeful for the future

- Motivated
- Starting off the week with good energy
- Open
- Positive
- Trailblazer
- optimistic
- Happy
- Positive
- Disappointed

**AN ISSUE THAT IS CONSUMING MY WORK RIGHT NOW IS...**

- Equity in access
- pending lawsuit
- Tracking
- Time
- Funding for hou
- funding for students in our correctional education programs at Lockhart Correctional Facility
- How to serve more people
- Civil Rights
- Budgets
- Helping a grantee
- Cooperation
- Trafficking
- Prioritizing
- Trying to get caught up with e-mails after a week off!
- Class scheduling
- DACC's facility
- Housing

**SOMETHING ON MY TO-DO LIST THAT I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO GET TO IS...**

- employment for everyone
- Chapter 2 of my dissertation
- Finding housing
- rebalancing my portfolio
- My CEU's
- Opening school paperwork
- Downsizing my clothes
- My thesis
- Updating my quarterly goals
- Balancing work
- policy finalizations
- completing a project that is dear to my life and that will transform so many lives
- sending a story pitch
- Scheduling a meeting for the city of austin re: diversion center/s

**A LEGISLATIVE ISSUE THAT MATTERS TO ME/MY ORGANIZATION IS...**

- Voting rights
- Voting rights/suppression

- expungement
- Funding
- Police Reform
- Constitutional carry, voting rights
- GED regs
- Alternative sentencing to work release
- Employing veterans
- Funding allocated for TCOOMMI Programs!
- People convicted of felonies as teenagers
- all things dealing with reentry
- industry certification programs being counted toward college measurement
- Funding
- Criminalization of homelessness

**A QUESTION I HAVE ABOUT THE CURRENT LEGISLATIVE SESSION IS...**

- Reentry/Fair Chance/Voting Rights
- Occupational licensing for ex-offenders
- How bad will it get restricting voting rights & attacking Trans kids
- What looks like it will move forward?
- Better access to services/ decriminalization of mental and behavioral health challenges
- What good will come of it? / How bad will it get?
- What legislators are on what side
- How much worse can it get in Texas
- Outcome of the voting rights
- is there anything being considered in the current cycle that will support reentry efforts across the state?
- Will anything be done that will benefit many?

**SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO LEARN ABOUT IN TODAY'S LEGISLATIVE PANEL IS...**

- how will the State better support reentry efforts?
- Faith based initiatives
- The landscape re: criminal justice reform
- Where are we with reform
- The likelihood of what will support reentry initiatives.
- what priority is being given to reentry issues?
- criminal justice reform
- CJ reform
- More on CJ reform
- Where are with Fair Chance Housing initiatives?