



Austin-Travis County Reentry Roundtable

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

PLANNING COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, May 9th, 2022

12:30 – 2 p.m.

Zoom

Attending: Donald J Tracy (Austin Community College, Chair), Jennifer Tucker (Goodwill Industries of Central Texas, Past Chair), Joe A. Ramirez (Texas Veterans Commission, RAP Representative), Amanda Cassidy (Reentry Advocacy Fellow), Sonja Burns (Community Representative), David Clauss (American YouthWorks), Juanita Garcia (Travis Co Public Defender), Carl F. Hunter II (Building Promise USA), Cathy McClaugherty (Travis Co Justice & Public Safety), Hank Perret (Community Representative), Peter Valdez (City of Austin Community Court), and Alex Villarreal (Integral Care)

Guests: Leila Blatt (Texas RioGrande Legal Aid), Misty Campbell (Austin Community College), Beverly Johnson (Helping Hands Through Connects), David Johnson (Grassroots Leadership), Shelley MacAllister (Unite Us), Lori Mellinger (Empowering Women Out of Prison), Mary Mergler (Texas Appleseed), Kaleigh Phelan (Capital Area Private Defender Service), Kenneth Normington (Lee College), Paola Silvestre (Indeed)

Support: Madeleine Jordan-Lord and Kelly Nichols (WNA)

Meeting packet: <https://app.box.com/s/o0ixkjazofr9i1gl6zsj4fstr9zjcwpm>

Guest sign-in form: <https://forms.gle/CFe2dsz37ij6vJ3L9>

I. 12:30-12:45 p.m. – Welcome – Don Tracy

- a. Guest Introductions – Don Tracy
- b. Advocacy Fellow Update – Amanda Cassidy

May will be a busy month of professional development for Amanda. She started a Reentry Peer Support training this morning hosted by Via Hope. She is also participating in a trip to DC with the Hogg Fellowship cohort.

- c. Why are we here today? – Don Tracy
- d. Connecting activity: Rapid Coordination

Space to share a question, problem, emerging opportunity with the entire group and identify some potential collaborations

Mary Mergler: Texas Appleseed is leading a legislative campaign related to reentry, especially related to expanding access to record sealing

- Would like to connect and collaborate: Kaleigh, Joe, Paola, Misty

Cathy McClaugherty: shared announcement about open seats on the Homeless Response

Leadership Council

- Would like to connect and collaborate: Misty
- Announcement will be sent out again in meeting follow-up

II. 12:45 – 12:50p.m. – Voting Items – Don Tracy

a. April 2022 Minutes

A motion to approve the April 2022 minutes was made by David Clauss and seconded by Cathy McClaugherty. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote with no abstentions.

III. 12:50-1:20 p.m. – Strategic Planning Overview – Kelly Nichols & Paulette Blanc, MEASURE

Kelly shared the [Strategic Planning overview and detailed timeline](#). The detailed timeline describes MEASURE's equity-centered focus group process as well as multiple strategic planning sessions open to Planning Council members and guests that will be held this summer.

Reentry Roundtable is coming up on 20 years of existence! Kelly offered that this Strategic Plan is an opportunity to be really clear on what the Roundtable's goals are and how we measure success and impact. Planning Council members added that we should intentionally align our efforts with other key stakeholders in the reentry ecosystem.

IV. 1:20 – 1:50p.m. – Breakout Conversations & Report Out: *What is currently happening in the Austin/Travis County reentry ecosystem that demands creative change?*

Report out notes:

- Fundamental issue of housing, challenges of maintaining services when folks are pushed out of the city
- Reentry plans for individuals that really work for them, connect prior to release, establish warm handoffs
- Better connecting with county jail
- Housing is the biggest problem
- Discharge planning, some plans are not successful but having a plan when getting discharged is very important
- Misconception of thinking everyone knows everyone in the reentry space; Understanding who does what and what that means in practice
- Can we legislate our way out of this? Legislation should be part of the solution, but it is not the only piece
- What role does the Roundtable place in advocacy? Things come up that require advocacy for change, what is the Roundtable's scope
- TDCJ should play a role in making sure folks have housing when they are released from jail or prison
- Needing to meet basic needs first—housing, clothes, food
- Engagement and retention of clients, incentives, creative way to connect with people post-release, more tangible benefit, have something to walk out with
- Navigating service delivery for folks in unsafe environments
- Social coordination, understanding the reentry ecosystem, and understanding where are

the gaps?

- Understanding the impact—understanding success in connecting folks to core services and understanding where there are still gaps
- Housing
- Legislation
- Employment—rural versus urban dilemma? Where is the housing? Where are the jobs?
- What is a livable wage in Austin with the current cost of living?
- TDCJ resource booklets are extremely outdated

V. 1:50-2 p.m. – Member Updates and Announcements

- a. Presentation on Women’s Diversion Focus Group Findings at Travis County Commissioner’s Court, afternoon of Tuesday, May 24th
- b. Reentry Roundtable’s Faith Convening was very successful with around 50 attendees and a morning of fruitful conversation.
- c. Texas Correctional Education Conference—September 30th in Huntsville, TX

NEXT MEETING

Monday, June 13, 2022

12:30 – 2 p.m.

Zoom