



Austin-Travis County Reentry Roundtable

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

PLANNING COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, June 13, 2022

12:30 – 2 p.m.

Integral Care, Dove Springs

Attending: Amanda Cassidy (Reentry Advocacy Fellow), Hank Perret (Community Representative), Alex Villarreal (Integral Care)

Guests: Leila Blatt (Texas RioGrande Legal Aid), Kaleigh Phelan (Capital Area Private Defender Service), Maggie Luna (Texas Center for Justice and Equity), Mary Mergler (Texas Appleseed), Paola Silvestre (Indeed), Crystal Voepel (Travis County Mental Health Public Defender)

Support: Madeleine Jordan-Lord and Kelly Nichols (Woollard Nichols & Associates)

I. 12:30-12:45 p.m. – Welcome

a. Guest Introductions

b. Connecting activity: Impromptu Networking

Attendees paired up and responded to the prompt: *If Reentry Roundtable was wildly successful, what could a headline about the Roundtable be in 5 years?* Attendees rotated to a new partner after answering and shared with three rotations of partners.

c. Advocacy Fellow Update – Amanda Cassidy

Amanda introduced herself and her role as Advocacy Fellow. She then shared a photo and stories from her professional development trip with Hogg Academy.

II. 12:45-1:50p.m. – Shift & Share

a. Amanda Cassidy, Reentry Advocacy Fellow, Topic: Hogg Academy's Federal Policy Immersion DC Experience

Amanda discussed her trip to DC with Hogg Academy for their Federal Policy Immersion Experience. She shared about her visit to the Brookings Institute where she learned about Medicaid, vaccine initiatives, and gaming therapy. She also shared about her trip to the Office of Recovery at SAMSHA, which was very inspiring to her future career goals. Amanda also discussed her role as Reentry Advocacy Fellow in more detail and spoke about aspects of her work where she is able to support others in reentry—through facilitating Reentry Advocacy Project, responding to inquiries that come to the info@reentryroundtable.org email address, and sharing written pieces in the newsletter through her Advocacy Corner section. The group discussed other advocacy channels, such as TAJ's newsletter and an emerging Reentry Academy similar to Leadership Austin.

b. Madeleine Jordan-Lord and Kelly Nichols, Woollard Nichols & Associates, Topic: Reentry Roundtable Diversion Focus Group Report Findings

Kelly and Madeleine gave an overview of the process and findings for the Reentry Roundtable Diversion Focus Group Report. Charles Moody and Mia Greer were not able to attend the meeting, but they co-lead this process with WNA and Amanda Cassidy. In spring 2022 the Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable, on behalf of Travis County, designed and conducted focus groups to engage the feedback of local women who had previously experienced reentry from jail or prison and/or who had participated in diversion programs. Woollard Nichols & Associates and Community Coalition for Health co-designed the focus group protocol together, and Amanda Cassidy and Mia Greer facilitated the focus groups. 30 women with reentry and/or diversion experience participated. Recommendations were split into two categories—systemic issues and program design considerations. A recurring theme in the recommendations are that diversion programs should be offered more widely, with a more holistic approach, and more choice and protections for participants. [Read the full report here.](#)

c. Mary Mergler, Texas Appleseed, Topic: Clean Slate Texas Initiative
Mary shared about Clean Slate Texas, a campaign to expand record sealing in Texas. Texas Appleseed is working with advocacy organizations, like Texas Center for Justice and Equity, to try to get legislation passed in Texas to seal records through an automatic process once someone is eligible. Record sealing, or non-disclosure, allows the courts and law enforcement access to criminal records but removes access for employers, landlords, and educational institutions (anyone outside the government). Significantly more Texans with criminal records are eligible for record sealing than they are for expungement. [Click here to view their Clean Slate Texas flyer.](#)

d. Paola Silvestre, Indeed, Topic: Second Chance Hiring Goals at Indeed
Paola shared about Indeed's public commitment to address barriers for job seekers who are justice involved, job seekers with lack of education, job seekers with disabilities, job seekers with lack of resources. Indeed is providing resources to address barriers: transportation (e.g. Lyft vouchers), child care pilot. Indeed also has trained Austin Public Library workers to assist folks in creating Indeed accounts and is continuing to offer training to paid volunteers. Contact Paola for more information, and [Click here to view Indeed's Powerpoint Presentation.](#) Paola is also partnering with community organizations, such as Reentry Roundtable and Building Promise USA, to make connections to Indeed's resources and expand impact. Paola and Hank announced an upcoming Hiring Initiative for Reentry Empowerment hosted by Building Promise USA, Indeed, Community Coalition for Health, Workforce Solutions, and Reentry Roundtable. The initiative will take place over two days—the first day as training and resources, and the second day as a job fair with second chance employers. Indeed sponsoring the event with 100 laptops, Lyft vouchers, free year of hotspot, and catered lunch. Hiring Initiative for Reentry Empowerment will take place Saturday July 23, 2022: 9am - 5pm at Impact Hub Austin - North Loop (5540 N Lamar Blvd, Austin, TX 78756) and Thursday July 28, 2022: 9am - 5pm at Impact Hub Austin - Bouldin Creek (411 W Monroe St, Austin, TX 78704).

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

- a. Planning Council does not meet in July. The next meeting will be on August 8th on Zoom.
- b. Reentry Advocacy Project will be hosting RAP Meets from 1-5pm on July 23rd at Grassroots Leadership. [Click here to RSVP](#) and click here for a [flyer](#).
- c. Hiring Initiative for Reentry Empowerment will take place Saturday July 23, 2022: 9am - 5pm at Impact Hub Austin - North Loop (5540 N Lamar Blvd, Austin, TX 78756) and Thursday July 28, 2022: 9am - 5pm at Impact Hub Austin - Bouldin Creek (411 W Monroe St, Austin, TX 78704)
- d. Leila Blatt [shared a flyer](#) for Texas RioGrande Legal Aid's program focused on legal representation for parents in cases with Child Protective Services.

- e. Maggie Luna shared about Time Done Day Texas. They will be hosting an event on July 16th from 11am-4pm at Sta. Julia Church. [Click here to register.](#)

NEXT MEETING

Monday, August 8, 2022

12:30 – 2 p.m.

Zoom

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