



**United Way of Dane County  
Safe Communities, Strong Neighborhood CST  
There is a reduction of violence towards individuals and families**

**Re-Integration Mobilization Pilot**

**I. Problem Statement**

Every year hundreds of prisoners who call Dane County home are released from prison, and return home. They are released after years of incarceration in a highly structured environment back into the community to fend for themselves. Without the ability to get a job, find a safe home, and get support, and (potentially) therapy for issues that placed them in prison, a formerly incarcerated person is highly likely to return to what s/he knows--the life he had prior to prison. This leads to a new cycle of crime, which threatens the safety of our community.

We are seeking to break the cycle of recidivism.

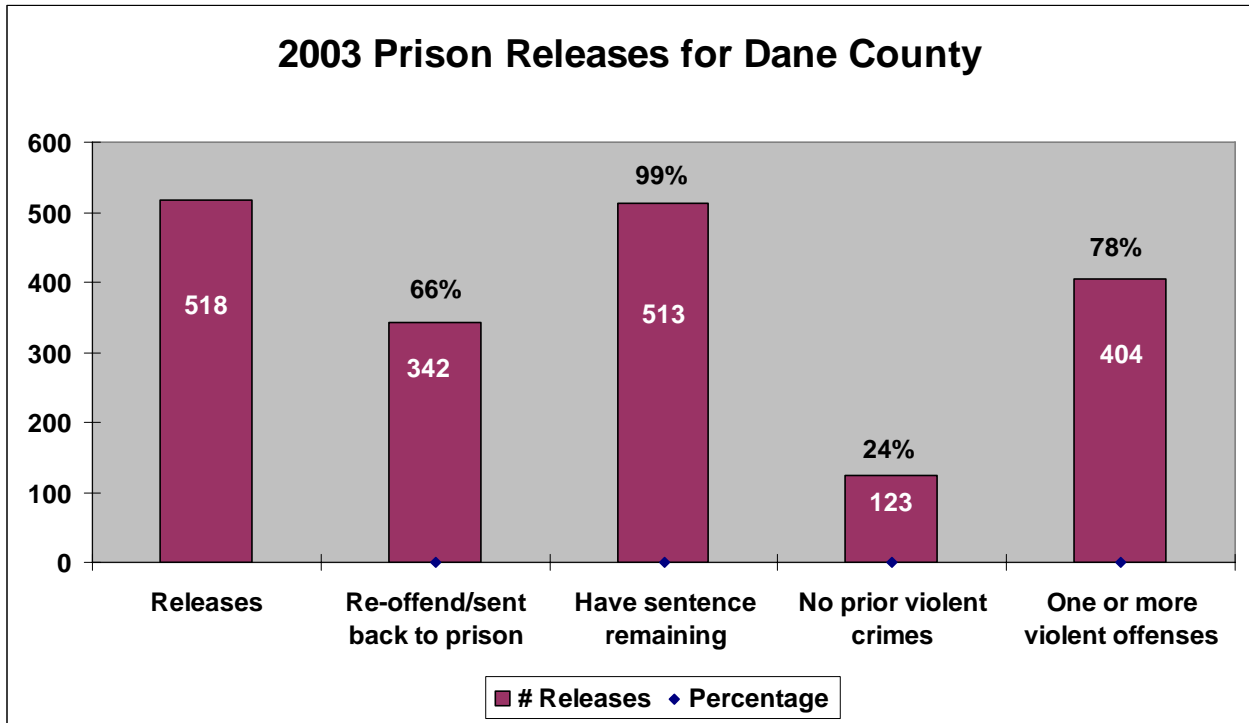
**II. Research**

- Research tells us that if a child has a parent in prison there is a 50% chance that they too will end up in prison. The cycle of crime needs to be broken.
- Without help over 50% of returning offenders re-offend within 2 -3 years of being released from prison.
- Released prisoners with the highest re-arrest rates were motor vehicle thefts (78.8%), those in prison for possessing or selling stolen property (77.4%), larcenists (74.6%), burglars (74.0%), robbers (70.2%) and those in prison for possessing, using, or selling illegal weapons (70.2%). There needs to be a reduction in crime.

Released offenders who fail to successfully reintegrate with the community and commit new crimes threaten the peace and safety of all of us. We know that criminal activity for most adult offenders actually begins in their youth. They will have had several contacts or interactions with the police and the court system prior to their adult offenses. Based on the number of interactions with the police and court systems, we can predict who will wind up in prison.

In 2004, there were 527 releases from state prisons back into Dane County. In the 2003 calendar year, there were 518 offenders released into Dane County. In 2003, 16,780 people were booked and 1,144 spent 60 or more days in the County Jail. Of the 518 released, 342 were returned to prison.

More than half of those released into the community from prison or jail commit new crimes and are re-incarcerated. This cycle of recidivism impacts not only these individuals and their families, but our community as a whole.



In April of 2005 UWDC invited 78 community members, agencies and systems to talk about the returning prisoner population. The goal of the meeting was:

- Identification of barriers facing returning prisoners
- Identification of current local resources & their capacity
- Understanding of the corrections systems and how they work together
- Ideas for what would increase the successful reintegration of returning prisoners
- Ideas for what United Way and its partners can do to reduce recidivism

From this meeting, the common needs that continually emerged were Residency, Employment, Support Systems, Treatment and better coordination of services. UWDC was identified to help in providing better coordination of services.

### III. Data Review

Community safety is an issue. If we help offenders successfully re-integrate back into the community, then they will be less likely to re-engage in criminal activities. SCSN CST reviewed several other community models on re-entry/re-integration. Several individuals from the community visited the Racine County Re-Entry program in preparation for designing our own plan. The strategies, needs and issues for each area identified as key to the successful reintegration of offenders are outlined below.

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Need</b>	<b>Issue</b>
<b>Residency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safe and adequate</li> <li>▪ Transitional and Permanent Housing</li> <li>▪ Affordable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offenders given vouchers for limited number of days</li> <li>▪ Need employment and sufficient savings to get an apartment</li> <li>▪ Landlords not always willing to rent to offenders</li> </ul>
<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More businesses to hire offenders and pay a living wage</li> <li>▪ Need benefits to pay for medications</li> <li>▪ Transportation is often needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employers fearful or have had previous bad experience</li> <li>▪ Jobs for low skills and limited education</li> </ul>
<b>Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support programs are accessible</li> <li>▪ Service providers work together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No coordination of services</li> <li>▪ Limited capacity</li> </ul>
<b>Treatment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 80% of offenders need help dealing with AODA, Mental Health, Anger Management or Domestic Violence issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack ability to pay for services and medications</li> <li>▪ Easier to choose to self medicate with illegal drugs</li> </ul>

Additional data will be gathered thru the pilot.

### IV. Hypothesis

Released offenders who fail to successfully reintegrate with the community and commit new crimes threaten the peace and safety of all of us. Once released, offenders often struggle to find employment, housing, transportation and treatment services. We will provide assistance to these offenders to help them find housing, jobs, treatment and support, to ensure a successful re-integration back into the community, and to reduce crime from this population.

**Currently the recidivism rate for Dane County is 66%. Our goal is to reduce this rate to 45% within four years of the implementation of the pilot.**

## V. Strategies and resources for the pilot

Through research into national practices and understanding our local population and market factors, we are implementing a pilot, initially allocated \$40,000 of Vision Council funding, to:

- *Assist offenders who need help* navigating through the complex and sometimes inaccessible network of services in Dane County.
- *Provide a monthly Service Fair* that allows offenders one-point access to services that are critical in their successful re-integration.
- *Resource Specialists* will ensure offenders have access to needed services.
- *Provide offenders with another person* to discuss issues or concerns and assist with the linkage to services that are available throughout Dane County.
- *Employment* is a key to a successful reintegration. Therefore, we will work with employers to educate and encourage them to hire offenders.

**Scope of Service:** Upon release, offenders will be notified to attend one of the monthly Service Fairs. At the Service Fairs, offenders will be welcomed back into the community. The Service Fairs will provide the offenders and their families with an opportunity to hear from local law officials about their responsibilities to the community and what expectations the law officials have. They will also have an opportunity for key services providers to talk about the resources that are available in these four categories: Housing, Employment and Employment Services, Treatment and Support Networks.

Service providers will be ready to make appointments or inform the offenders and their families about their services. Resource Specialists will try to make sure that the service providers who participate in the Service Fairs have available capacity to accommodate new returning offenders. We will expect the Resource Specialists to maintain close relationships with all service providers to avoid referring the offenders to services where there are long waiting lists.

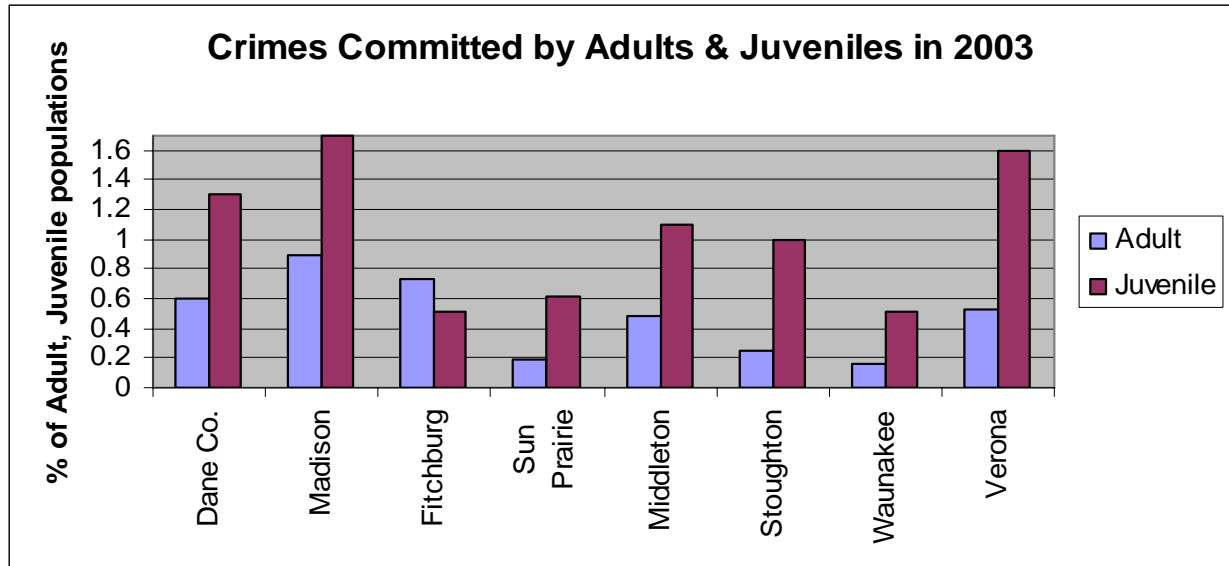
The Resource Specialists will follow-up with offenders to ensure that they have accessed the services that are needed. The Resource Specialists will work with Probation and Parole to ensure that there is no duplication of services. It is not the intent of this initiative to replace Department Of Corrections or any other social service agency in the community but to help steer the offenders to services that they need. Additional offender needs will be determined on a case by case basis.

Employment is an essential part of an offender's successful re-integration. The Resource Specialists will assemble a directory of employers willing to hire returning offenders, and will work with employers to educate and encourage them to hire returning offenders.

**Duration of pilot:** We will pilot this program for 12 months at which time, the program will be re-evaluated for continued funding. We anticipate that the Resource Specialists will provide linkages to housing, employment, support and therapeutic services to at least 100 offenders a year. We anticipate that in the first year more than 500 offenders will participate in the Service Fairs. Target date for start up of this program will be no later than March 1, 2006.

## VI. Results and Measures

In order to measure and report on the effectiveness of the identified strategies the team determined indicators and outcomes to measure results. The chart below is the indicator on crime in Dane County from our Index of Impact – approved by the Board of Directors. The ultimate goal of the reintegration pilot is to reduce crime in Dane County.



**Source: Dept. of Justice—2003: Murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, theft, arson**

The following implementation timeline was established to measure progress.

Date	Task
August 4 <sup>th</sup>	Review Draft Proposal
September 1 <sup>st</sup>	RFP presented to Vision Council
September 9 <sup>th</sup> – Sept. 30 <sup>th</sup>	RFP Available
October 6 <sup>th</sup>	SCSN Mobilization Plan presented to Vision Council for the November Board meeting
October 7 <sup>th</sup> NOON	RFP Deadline
October 6 <sup>th</sup>	Reintegration pilot presented to Vision Council
October 27 <sup>th</sup>	Reintegration pilot presented to Board of Directors
November 29 <sup>th</sup>	SCSN Mobilization plan presented to the Board for final approval
December 1 <sup>st</sup>	Funding recommendation to Vision Council
December 13 <sup>th</sup>	Funding Recommendation to Executive Committee
December 16 <sup>th</sup>	Award recipient notified

January 2006	Staff hired and training begins
February 2006	Recruitment of agencies for service fairs, agency capacity inventory and first meeting with Advisory Board
March 2006	First Service Fair
April 1, 2006	Second Service Fair/Meeting Advisory Board and 1 Quarterly Progress/Outcomes Report Due
July 1, 2006	2nd Quarterly Progress/Outcomes Report Due
October 1, 2006	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Progress/Outcomes Report Due and Evaluation of Program Strategies
January 1, 2007	Yearend Progress/Outcomes Report Due

### Key components yet to be addressed

**Employment:** We are planning a community engagement series for employers who currently employ offenders to talk about their strategies, best practices, lessons learned and the benefits of employing offenders with over 25 potential employers. Through this engagement series we are hoping to:

- increase the number of employers who will employ offenders.
- develop a support network for employers who employ offenders to continue sharing strategies and best practices.
- continue to encourage employers on the benefits to employing offenders.

**Residency:** UWDC is very actively working to improve the access to affordable housing for the homeless. The SCSN will use the strategies learned from this process to work with landlords to give offenders opportunities in housing.

**Support:** We have learned from our very successful Schools of Hope Initiative and most recently the events resulting from Hurricane Katrina, that given an opportunity, the community can and will respond in a huge way. Research has shown us that offenders who have strong support networks tend to do better than those left without support. We are seeking an organization(s) that will recruit teams of volunteers to be matched with offenders to assist them in the re-integration process.

**Treatment:** We are looking at ways we can increase Dane County providers' capacity to treat offenders. Our pilot will be helpful in informing us of the current capacity, and barriers involved in addressing this issue.