

2019 Reentry Events

- January 23, 2019, the Department of Correction sponsored the **Delaware Correctional Reentry Symposium**. This event brought together community service providers throughout the state as well as other state agencies and DOC staff for an introduction to Executive Order 27. The DOC Chiefs' of Planning, Research, and Reentry, and Community Corrections presented on Evidence Based Practices and what they mean to Reentry Service Providers. The providers were given the opportunity to decide where their services best fit in the three phase, seven decision point model adopted by DCRC. There was also a brief presentation on the DOC Behavioral Health Service System, SSI/SSDI, and a discussion on building criminal justice and behavioral health partnerships.
- August 28, 2019, The Criminal Justice Council in partnership with the Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission's (DCRC) Communities of Support Subcommittee facilitated a “**Reentry Roundtable**” discussion to identify reentry funding priorities, challenges, and solutions related to reentry. This event provided an open forum for community and state agencies to collaborate. Sixty people attended representing forty-two statewide partners. The event began with an introduction and welcome by the Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission (DCRC) Chairs. Then, attendees were broken into five groups and tasked with listing the statewide reentry gaps and barriers, and corrective strategies. Once these tasks were completed, all participants came together to vote on what corrective strategies were the most important. The strategies that received the most votes as to importance were: training DOC staff statewide in core correctional practices, having the right people doing the right work; housing options, need for a resource directory, programs at probation; and better representation from justice involved (peers).

The groups also identified what is working:

- The Department of Corrections is taking a holistic approach to reentry and engaging the community.
- The Department of Correction and the State Legislators are focusing efforts on reentry and criminal justice reform
- Pre-release involvement
- Organization and services collaborating and working together to achieve shared outcomes
- Increased awareness
- The number of reentry programs available
- The DOC has become more flexible in supporting innovative programming
- Education and training

- September 23, 2019, the Department of Correction hosted a conference entitled “**The Intersection of Mental Health and Criminal Justice: Evidence Based Practices for Serving Justice-Involved Individuals.**” This event brought together various mental health and substance use disorder service providers in order to inform them of Delaware DOC’s focus on evidence based practices and the risk, need, responsivity principle. The morning began with an introduction and welcome by DOC Commissioner Claire DeMatteis. This was followed by a presentation on Risk, Need, Responsivity and why it matters for Justice Involvement. This was followed by a presentation on Texas Christian University (TCU) Mapping Enhanced Counseling. The day ended with the attendees drafting a regional systems process flow. This conference was successful in introducing DOC’s guiding principles on reentry to the greater service provider community. It is expected that these education efforts will continue in 2020.
- September 25, 2019, Partners in Reentry Coalition of Delaware, Inc. hosted the annual **Need for Partnership**. This year’s topic was the Need of Partnership in Legislation. The topics included educating community providers on how ideas become a proposed bill that is passed into law, the rules for nonprofit organizations and State employees when it comes to advocacy, and an overview of the current legislation impacting reentry. PIRCOD wishes to educate the community on the relevancy of the legislative process and how a citizen’s involvement can influence the outcomes associated with the mitigation of barriers associated with reentry.
- July 25, 2019, the first of the **What’s Next** series was held in Wilmington. Over 59 participants representing family and reentry services providers attended. The panel discussion focused on family reunification and how formerly incarcerated individuals can re-integrate into the family unit and household. The discussion involved the sharing of experiences from various perspectives (formerly incarcerated, a family member, a reentry services provider, probation, and community social services provider). Attendees provided feedback on their experiences. Of significant concern were the limited supports and services available to the older population being released from incarceration after serving a decade or more. The audience supported the recommendation that family reunification includes engaging family members in discussions and release planning of incarcerated inmates.
- October 23, 2019, the “**What’s Next?**” Series hosted by the Delaware Department of Justice in partnership with DCRC Communities of Support Subcommittee had over 60 participants in Western Sussex County (Seaford) representing family and reentry services providers. Panel discussion involved the sharing of experiences from various perspectives (formerly incarcerated, a family member, a reentry services provider, probation, and community social services provider). Attendees provided feedback on their experiences and expressed frustration around the lack of affordable housing options in Sussex County.
- December 28, 2019, the **Adult Expungement Information Session** was held in collaboration with Delaware Department of Justice, Office of Defense Services, APEX Program, ALCU of Delaware, Destiny Community Development Corporation, Delaware Coalition for Smart Justice, and Delaware Center for Justice.

The Adult Expungement Reform Act (Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 37) passed in June 2019, a momentous occasion for many Delawareans who have struggled to secure jobs, housing, and a higher education due to having a conviction history.

Previously, Delaware only allowed adults convicted of certain misdemeanors to have their records expunged after they have received a pardon or if their arrest never led to a conviction at all. Starting December 28, 2019, the Adult Expungement Reform Act expanded that path by allowing more people to get their records expunged after they have paid their debt to society.

This event helped inform the community about the new law and the steps individuals must take to get their adult records expunged. Legal professionals were on hand to provide answers regarding their individual cases.