The Bluegrass Reentry Council Strategic Plan

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Executive Summary

**Background:** The overcrowding of jails and prisons and high recidivism rates are issues America is facing nationwide. Successful reentry into society following incarceration is a solution to this crisis. In response, in 2011, the Kentucky legislature passed House Bill 463 which mandated reentry councils across the state. The purpose of the councils are to address the current issues facing citizens returning from the justice system, develop a network of resources and service providers within their home area, and communicate and advocate for returning citizens by communicating issues to the community and their leaders.¹ This analysis will develop a strategic plan for the Bluegrass Reentry Council.

**Research Design/Results:** I conducted a full-day strategic planning workshop with the Bluegrass Reentry Council board at their annual meeting. As a result of the workshop, the Board identified its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The Board developed the following:

- **Mission:** The Bluegrass Reentry Council is a collaborative group dedicated to helping individuals affected by incarceration. It achieves this through advocacy, community outreach, education, and resource referrals.

- **Vision:** Our vision is supportive communities, reduced recidivism, and self-sufficiency for successful reentry.

- **Values:** Reduce Stigma, Remove Barriers, Reliable Resources, Respect and Recognize People’s Rights. Additionally, the Board set five main goals for the

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¹ “Our Groups.” Kentucky Department of Corrections
Topic and Justification

Reentry into society after incarceration is the social policy problem this analysis will address. Specifically, this analysis will develop a strategic plan for The Bluegrass Reentry Council that addresses this social policy issue within Kentucky. Given that almost all inmates will be released into society following incarceration, it is essential that they are prepared to reintegrate and be contributing members of their communities. Reentry programs are thought to also help reduce recidivism rates which are currently 45.3% within three years of release according to the Kentucky Online Offender Lookup, also known as KOOL. Recidivism rates are the number of prisoners who after release, go back to prison or jail for committing a new crime or violating parole.

The overcrowding of jails and prisons has been in the news nationwide over the past five years, and the United States incarcerates a larger percent of its population than any other country in the world. Investing in reentry programming creates better outcomes for people with criminal records, as well as benefiting the state by reducing recidivism costs and increasing tax revenues when these Kentuckians find employment.

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2 “KOOL,” Kentucky Department of Corrections.
In 2011, the Kentucky legislature passed House Bill 463 which mandated reentry councils across the state. The bill was sponsored by twelve Democratic representatives, including John Tilley, Greg Stumbo, Rocky Adkins, Tom Burch, Larry Clark, Jesse Crenshaw, Robert Damron, Martha King, Arnold Simpson, Thomas Thompson, and Brent Yonts. There are 11 reentry councils across the state (Figure 1.1). These groups work to connect local services to people facing reentry. They share resources and connect stakeholders to assist in the reentry process. I provided a strategic planning workshop to the Bluegrass Reentry Council which serves the State’s second largest city, Lexington, as well as numerous prisons and jails in its jurisdiction. The Bluegrass Reentry Council covers Anderson, Franklin, Woodford, Mercer, Boyle, Lincoln, Garrard, Jessamine, Fayette, Scott, Harrison, Bourbon, Nicholas, Clark, Madison, Powell, and Estill counties.

Figure 1.1
The Bluegrass Reentry Council is a 501(c)3 organization. According to the Kentucky reentry website, the basic purposes of each council are:

• To address the current issues facing returning citizens;
• To develop a network of resources and service providers within their area;
• To communicate and advocate for returning citizens by addressing issues to the community and their leaders.4

These councils are unique because although mandated by the state, they are not given any state resources. The councils are led by volunteer boards and have no staff. According to the Kentucky Reentry website, “They [the councils] are made up of individuals and organizations networking together to share information and improve the reentry process. The members may be organizations and/or individuals that provide services and/or have interests in helping. Each group is focused toward ex-offenders coming back to their areas, the issues involved, and making their community safer.”5 Only two of the eleven reentry councils have 501 (c) 3 status. The Bluegrass Reentry Council Board is comprised of representatives from the healthcare, corrections, clothing, employment, and vocational rehabilitation industries. These board members are voted on by attendees of the Council meetings.

This analysis will assist the Bluegrass Reentry Council in achieving its goals and enabling them to better serve their jurisdiction. Given the unique nature of the Council and my initial interaction with the Board, it was evident that they lacked structure and a strategic plan to guide their activities. Upon the initial presentation to the Board of the

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4 “Our Groups.” Kentucky Department of Corrections
5 Ibid
Bluegrass Reentry Council, it seemed apparent that they were interested in a strategic planning workshop. It was not until the facilitated workshop, that it became apparent they had not conducted a strategic plan in the past five years and lacked direction. It became evident that there was need for strategic planning. This analysis aims to develop a strategic plan for an organization whose efforts create a safer environment for law enforcement, allow for the court system to operate more efficiently, and shift towards an incarceration system that focuses on rehabilitating inmates to be contributing members of their communities.

**Problem Statement**

Prison overcrowding has been a statewide issue over the past decade. Some states have declared a state of emergency due to the excessive overpopulation of prisons. California Governor Schwarzenegger proclaimed a state of emergency in 2006.\(^6\) Similarly, Nebraska’s prisons are at 163% capacity; if this number remains the same, the state will have to declare an emergency in 2020.\(^7\) If states do not address this issue, costs will continually rise and prisons will become increasingly dangerous.

In 2017, the Kentucky Department of Corrections’ expenditures were $570,415,701.\(^8\) Meanwhile, recidivism rates are currently 45.3% within three years of release, according to the Kentucky Online Offender Lookup (KOOL).\(^9\) Kentucky has

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\(^6\)“Governor Brown Issues Proclamation.” State of California. 2013
\(^7\)Fargen, Bridget. “Senators Consider Changing Timeline on Prison Overcrowding Emergency.”
\(^8\)“Kentucky Department of Corrections Annual Report”. Kentucky Department of Corrections. 2017.
\(^9\)“KOOL,” Kentucky Department of Corrections.
prioritized improving reentry services as a solution to this problem. One solution was the mandate of the reentry councils across the state.

People with criminal records, law enforcement, court officials, correctional staff, employers, and citizens at-large are all stakeholders in the reentry process. Successful reentry into society could have positive financial impacts on states and help maximize taxpayer dollars.

By having effective reentry services, people with criminal records will become productive members of society which will reduce interactions with law enforcement, shrink court dockets, and decrease overpopulation in prisons. Additionally, successful reentry will help strengthen state economies by the increase in tax revenue from people with criminal records finding meaningful employment and reduce the amount of taxpayer dollars spent on incarceration by lowering the recidivism rates.

Certain populations bear a greater share of the burden of the problem. Groups that are disproportionately represented in the prison system are also overrepresented in the reentry process. Although African Americans only make up 12% of the United States adult population, they represent 33% of the prison population in 2017. Similarly, people of Hispanic origin represent 16% of the United States population but 23% of the incarcerated population.

While high recidivism rates are not a novel issue, today’s highly connected society is better equipped to address the problem and provide reentry services. For example,

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11 Ibid
online platforms such as InDeed.com and LinkedIn help provide free employment services. The reentry councils act as a place to network and highlight resources to be shared among practitioners working within reentry. As the overcrowding crisis continues, states are likely to place a larger focus on providing reentry services to assist people who have recently been released from incarceration.

Prison overcrowding, recidivism rates, and unsuccessful reentry are the social policy problems the Bluegrass Reentry Council seeks to address. The issue covered in this analysis is the need for a strategic plan for the Bluegrass Reentry Council to help them better address these social policy problems. By producing a strategic plan, the Bluegrass Reentry Council should operate more efficiently and have more success in fulfilling its mission. If the Council lacks direction and is unable to coordinate and relate reentry services to the public, it is unable to maximize their ability help the reentry process and people affected by incarceration.

Review of Literature

Reentry services include wide-ranging resources to help inmates have a successful reentry to society. These services include housing, education, cognitive behavioral therapy, mental and physical health, substance abuse treatment, financial literacy and family-based programs.\textsuperscript{12} Currently, the availability of these services varies drastically between states and cities. The following scan of literature highlights the research done on the availability of reentry services. The literature overwhelmingly

\textsuperscript{12} “CSG Justice Center: Collaborative Approaches to Public Safety.” National Reentry Resource Center
support the notion that investing in reentry programming is a net positive benefit, and community buy-in and support is critical to successful reentry. A majority of the literature scan focuses on reentry services because it is the social policy problem addressed by the Bluegrass Reentry Council; however, the literature scan also reviews studies regarding strategic planning and the effects it can have on an organization such as increased efficiency.

**Cost/Benefit Analysis**

When asking governments to allocate funding to reentry programming, they will often request to see the cost savings from the proposed allocation. Numerous studies support the idea that the benefits of investing in reentry programming outweigh the costs. Both academic studies and government reports have found similar conclusions.

Dr. Brandon Welsh from the University of Massachusetts studied the economic argument to providing correctional services in his study, "Monetary Costs and Benefits of Correctional Treatment Programs: Implications for Offender Reentry." Dr. Welsh conducted an economic analysis during his review of fourteen previous studies on the costs and benefits of providing treatment services. Twelve of these studies were conducted in the United States and two were completed in England. Thirteen of the fourteen studies Dr. Welsh evaluated found that there is a cost savings benefit to investing in correctional treatment to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Dr. Welsh’s study is unique in that it places a large focus on treatment programming during the time of incarceration and focuses little on programming after release.

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In 2006 The Urban Institute Justice Policy Center conducted a cost benefit analysis, focused on jail inmates. The study used a cost benefit analysis to estimate the likely effects of providing reentry programming to inmates returning from local jails and the conditions under which reentry programming is most likely to be cost-effective.\textsuperscript{14} The study’s cost calculations of crimes includes not only the costs of the criminal justice system process but also the costs to the victim, such as pain and suffering which makes it unique among other reentry services literature. The findings suggest, “only small reductions in recidivism would be necessary in order for public agencies to recoup their investment in jail-based reentry.”\textsuperscript{15} This finding was not dependent on the cost environment or offender population.

In 2018, the Executive Office of the President of the United States Council of Economic Advisors issued a government report titled, “Returns on Investments in Recidivism-Reducing Programs.”\textsuperscript{16} The Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) studied three main reentry programs focused on mental health, substance abuse, and education. In order for the CEA to determine that a program is cost effective it must save at least one dollar in crime and incarceration costs for each dollar spent. The study found that both substance abuse and mental health treatment programs have a total return of $1.47 to $5.27 per taxpayer dollar.\textsuperscript{17} The CEA did not find consistent or significant results when analyzing education programs. The findings argue, “We calculate that educational programming needs only a modest impact on recidivism rates

\textsuperscript{14} Roman, John, and Aaron Chalfin. “Does It Pay to Invest in Reentry Programs for Jail Inmates?” 2006.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid
of around 2 percent in order to be cost effective.” These programs are conducted while individuals are still incarcerated with the goal to reduce recidivism and assist with successful reentry to society.

**Community Buy-In**

Case studies have also shown that community buy-in is critical to successful reentry programming. In 2011, California passed Assembly Bill 109, “The Public Safety Realignment Act.” The bill was in response to the growing prison population that was at 200% capacity at the time. Additionally, the state was under federal court order to reduce the prison population to 137.5% capacity. A study analyzed the impact of the bill on reentry. It concentrated on three main themes: community investment in preventative efforts, restorative efforts, and long-term reintegration efforts. The study argues that government cannot tackle this problem alone; communities must step in to support the reentry process.

These community investments were critical to California’s success. Preventative efforts focus on at-risk youth. These efforts highlight the importance of investing in education and aiming for high school completion. The authors add, “Youth programs such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Conservation Corps, Youth Build, as well as neighborhood-based strategies that involve sports, arts, literacy, and job training, are just a few examples of programs that can generate a positive return on investment.”

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18 Ibid
20 Ibid
The community-based restorative efforts focus on the person while he/she is in state custody to prepare him/her for reentry upon release. The article emphasizes that education, vocational skills, cognitive thinking, and reentry plans are important to invest in during incarceration. The final theme from the study is long term reintegration efforts. These efforts focus on the post-incarceration programming. California found that this was the greatest opportunity for cross-sectional collaboration between the criminal justice system and the community.\textsuperscript{21} Community organizations can assist with affordable housing and employment opportunities which continue to be two of the largest barriers for people with criminal records. For example, the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) in California invested in the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) which provides employment services such as skill training to people with criminal records. According to a random assignment evaluation conducted by MDRC research firm, “after three years of follow-up, CEO was shown to create statistically significant reductions in all measures of recidivism for individuals recently released from prison, including arrests, convictions, and incarceration.”\textsuperscript{22}

\textbf{Strategic Planning}

While the prior review of literature exhibits the benefits of reentry programming, this literature scan now aim to review the literature on the benefits of strategic planning for organizations. A 2000 article by Torben Juul Andersen researched the impacts on performance from strategic planning and autonomous actions in three different industries: food and household products, computer products, and banking. The article

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid
found that strategic planning has positive performance effects across all industries, while autonomous actions only had positive performance effects in one.\textsuperscript{23}

“The Relationship between Strategic Planning and Firm Performance” studied the effects of strategic planning on performance with a focus on the impact of specific strategic planning steps. The study found positive performance results from strategic planning in both financial and non-financial performance indicators. Researchers evaluated the following strategic planning steps: defining firm’s corporate purpose, scanning of business environment, identification of firm’s strategic issues, strategy choice and setting up of implementation, evaluation and control systems.\textsuperscript{24} The study found that each step had a positive relationship with performance. This literature emphasized the importance of approaching each step thoroughly and intently.

A 2006 article by Sascha Kraus, Rainer Harms and Erich J. Schwarz evaluated the performance implications of elements of strategic planning for small businesses including: time span, formalization, frequency of control, and use of planning instruments.\textsuperscript{25} For small businesses, the study found that the use of planning instruments was relatively low and encouraged increasing awareness for small organizations. Additionally, they found that a higher degree of formalization is related to a higher degree of performance.\textsuperscript{26} Meanwhile, the other elements did not have significant higher performance results.

\textsuperscript{24} Arasa, Robert, and Peter K’Obonyo  “The Relationship between Strategic Planning and Firm Performance." 2012.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
Having the appropriate participants in the strategic planning process is critical for its success. Some organizations only include upper management, while other organizations include all employees and even outside stakeholders. A 2004 article by Mikko Ketokivi and Xavier Castañer from Cornell University studied whether strategic planning can diminish position bias, “the extent to which they [management] direct their attention toward the immediate goals and priorities attached to their position.”\textsuperscript{27} The results found that having employees participate and communicate throughout the strategic planning process diminishes managerial position bias. The article suggests that if management wants to remove position bias, it should incorporate all employees into the strategic planning process.\textsuperscript{28}

\textbf{Conclusion}

By having effective reentry services, people with criminal records will become productive members of society which will reduce interactions with law enforcement, reduce court dockets, and decrease overpopulation in prisons. Additionally, successful reentry will help strengthen state economies by the increase in tax revenue from people with criminal records finding meaningful employment and reduce the amount of taxpayer dollars spent on incarceration by lowering the recidivism rates.

The studies cover a variety of barriers that people with criminal records face including employment, housing, and education. The literature supports the claim that the benefits of reentry services outweigh the costs. Studies find that providing incarcerated individuals with services to succeed upon release will lower recidivism rates, consequently, saving states money. These studies support the idea of having an

\textsuperscript{27} Ketokivi, Mikko, and Xavier Castañer. “Strategic Planning as an Integrative Device.” 2004.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
organization such as the Bluegrass Reentry Council which acts as a network of reentry resources. Additionally, the literature supports the positive effects of organizations utilizing strategic plans. By having more efficient outcomes from the Bluegrass Reentry Council, it will subsequently help the social policy problem overall.

Research Question, Hypothesis and Data Plan

Conducting a strategic plan requires asking multiple questions to the individuals involved in the process. First and foremost, the organization must ask if strategic planning would be beneficial for them as an organization. The organization will look internally and analyze what type of plan is needed for best achieving its mission. After deciding to move forward with strategic planning, the organization should the primary research question which is: how does the Bluegrass Reentry Council plan to fulfill its mission? A data plan will then ask a series of questions that help answer the primary research question.

This analysis collected the data needed to develop the strategic plan through an all-day strategic planning workshop with Bluegrass Reentry Council (BRC) Board. The Board is comprised of ten members. Given that the Council does not have any staff, board members were the best source of collecting information and data. These board members come from a variety of backgrounds and bring a unique perspective. I facilitated guided conversations and activities that lead the Board to reflect on where the Council is currently, dream of where it wants to be in relation to its mission, and develop steps of how to reach their goals. This facilitated conversation took place at the board retreat in January 2020.
In order to assess where the Bluegrass Reentry Council (BRC) currently is, I used a SWOT analysis. This tool asks the following questions:

*What are Bluegrass Reentry Council’s strengths?*

*What are Bluegrass Reentry Council’s weaknesses?*

*What are Bluegrass Reentry Council’s opportunities?*

*What are Bluegrass Reentry Council’s threats?*

After addressing where BRC is now, I lead the Board through a mission, visions, and values activity. This will determine where BRC desires to be. We walked through:

*What is Bluegrass Reentry Council’s mission?*

*What is Bluegrass Reentry Council’s vision?*

*What are Bluegrass Reentry Council’s values?*

In order to determine how to reach their goals,

*How does Bluegrass Reentry Council plan to achieve these goals?*

*What are the next steps?*

*How will the Council measure its progress?*

By facilitating these conversations and asking these questions, I was able to collect the data and information to develop a strategic plan for the organization.
Research Design

My research design was people driven. One of the most crucial variables in having a successful strategic plan is having buy-in from the people who will be executing it. In knowing this, my findings are driven from the information provided to me by the board members of the Bluegrass Reentry Council during the planning workshop. I lead the members through conversations and activities that lead the Board to reflect on where the Council is currently, dream of where it wants to be, and develop steps of how to reach their goals. This was done through conducting a SWOT analysis, determining Mission, Vision, and Values, and developing an action plan and metrics/evaluation.

I intentionally chose when to conduct the strategic planning session to align with new board member elections for 2020. I worked to gain a spot on the agenda at the Board’s “kick-off” retreat in January. Speaking at the kick-off retreat allowed me to interact with the newly formed Board before they have developed habits, routines, and their own set of opinions. If the Board has buy-in at the beginning of their appointment term with fresh ideas and excitement for the opportunities ahead, they are more likely to execute the plan.

Given that buy-in from Board members is essential to the success of the analysis, I developed relationships with current board members and meeting attendees months prior to the facilitation of the strategic planning workshop. Since my initial proposal to the Board to provide a strategic planning process, I attended monthly meetings and interacted with the Bluegrass Reentry Council on social media and via email. Engaging with the organization and showing my dedication to making the Council
better, will help show to the members that I am dedicated to helping them achieve their goals.

During my initial interactions with the Board, it was evident that they could benefit from strategic planning. Large audiences participated in the Council meetings, yet the structure seemed to be lacking. When I visited the Board meeting, it seemed unorganized. For example, the Board did not have an organized process to vote on whether to participate in strategic planning. They did vocalize that they knew they would benefit from this type of exercise and seemed to be eager to participate.

After the facilitated discussion and guided exercises with the Board, I began my analysis. Knowing that Board participation is on a volunteer basis and they are time constrained given most of them have additional full-time jobs, I ensured the board that my strategic plan was concise, easy to read, and used graphics that made the plan understandable. The finalized strategic plan was available in printed and PDF format so that members could access it at their convenience.

These research methods will help lead BRC to answer the primary research question which is: How does the Bluegrass Reentry Council plan to fulfill its mission? The strategic planning process will ensure that the plan is Board-driven, simple to follow, and easy to evaluate. This will assist the Board in achieving its mission in a thoughtful manner.

**Analysis and Findings**

**SWOT Analysis:**
Before the strategic planning workshop, I sent an anonymous Qualtrics survey to the board members’ emails asking the four questions of a SWOT analysis. I received feedback from six of the ten members. Given that this was only sixty percent, I shared the responses given and members were able to suggest additional responses during the workshop.

Strengths:

- Meeting Attendance
- Diversity
- Resource Sharing
- Networking (2)
- Committed board (and is growing)
- Regular attendees
- Passionate attendees
- Good at gathering people

Weaknesses:

- Lack of structure
- Lack of tangible goals
- Lack of money (2)
- Community change
- Lack of goals and objectives.
- We basically meet each month, often with a guest speaker, but there isn't a lot of follow-up or actions that the Council takes
- At times we don't have enough space for everyone
• Lack of collaboration on projects

Opportunities:
• Find our purpose
• Continued growth in meeting participants
• Increased collaborations with change agents in the community
• Establish 2020 goals
• We could benefit from having some committees
• Some projects outside of our monthly meetings
• Raising some money
• Open to anyone
• Networking

Threats:
• Unable to affect change
• Conflicting priorities
• Continuing on without any organization or direction

Mission, Vision Values:
Because the Council did not have any prior mission, vision, or value (MVV) statements, we began the exercise with no prior baseline. I provided the board members with the definition and purpose of each. I also provided examples of each from large corporations. These resources helped them initiate the process. This section took longer than expected due to the lack of prior MVV statements, however the Board was extremely engaged in developing the purpose and goals of the organization during this workshop.

Mission: The Bluegrass Reentry Council is a collaborative group dedicated to helping individuals affected by incarceration. It achieves this through advocacy, community outreach, education, and resource referrals.

Vision: Our vision is supportive communities, reduced recidivism, and self-sufficiency for successful reentry.
Values:

- Reduce Stigma
- Remove Barriers
- Reliable Resources
- Respect
- Recognize People's Rights

Goals/Action Steps:

After the SWOT discussion and mission, vision, values workshops, I challenged the Board to determine goals for the upcoming year. We began this process by reviewing the opportunities and weaknesses the Board shared. This allowed the Board to think critically about what goals would help overcome obstacles, take advantage of opportunities, and lead them to fulfill the mission. Each board member shared an idea for a goal. Many of their goals overlapped or could be combined. The Board decided to set five goals for 2020.

Once the overall goals were determined, we walked through each goal and discussed specific action steps to reach each goal. With each action step, the Board determined who would be responsible for each step and how they would measure its success.

To keep the members’ names anonymous, I have replaced their names with Person A, B, and C respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Step</th>
<th>Party Responsible</th>
<th>Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule Posts</td>
<td>Person B</td>
<td>• Monthly calendar of scheduled posts/content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Count of likes, followers, shares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule Email Blasts</td>
<td>Person B</td>
<td>• Monthly calendar of scheduled email blasts/content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Count of list serve participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Upload agendas to website & social media a week prior to the meeting

Person B

- Count of months that the meeting agenda is uploaded to website and social media a week prior to the meeting
- Count of likes, followers, shares

### Determine a 2nd to Person B with access to the list serve in case of Person B’s absence

Person B

- Determine 2nd by May

### Goal 2: Increase Funding by $1,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach to funders, foundations, and grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Resource Event (A conference where vendors/providers of reentry services could host exhibits and providers could attend. The Board would recruit sponsors for the event in order to raise funds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propose Member Board Fee for individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm 501 (c ) 3 Status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person A/Person C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and pursue 1 possible external funding opportunity each quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track acquired funding through each pursued opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count of partnerships developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count of dollars raised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count of attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propose at board meeting by May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track acquired funding if the proposed fee is passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm 501 (c ) 3 status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File 990-N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activate PayPal Link on Website

Person C

- Track acquired funding through the PayPal link

Explore Amazon Smile, Kroger Rewards

Person C

- Present to the Board the benefits of pursuing Amazon Smile/Kroger Rewards by May
- Track acquired funding if the Board decides to pursue

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**Goal 3: Engage with Youth Systems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Party Responsible</th>
<th>Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organize Tour of Juvenile Facility</td>
<td>Person F</td>
<td>- Establish connection with contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Decide on date with board members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour of Juvenile Facility</td>
<td>Person F</td>
<td>- Count of board members present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post- Tour Debrief</td>
<td>Person F</td>
<td>- Allot time for Board to debrief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Brainstorm 5 ways to better engage with youth reentry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Person F</td>
<td>- Count of youth engagements following the ideas developed in the debrief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Following Meeting</td>
<td>Person B</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Updates from meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Count of months email is sent following meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● List of attendees</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Count of responses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Meeting Structure</th>
<th>Person A</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Welcome (15 min)</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Count of months meeting structure is executed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Speaker or Training (30 min)**</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Count of speakers or trainings provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Breakout Groups (30 min)**</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Count of attendees before and after structural change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Announcements (15 min)</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Develop Ways &amp; Means Committee</th>
<th>Person A</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Count of committee members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Track committee meeting minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Track outcomes of committee</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Develop Marketing Committee</th>
<th>Person A</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Count of committee members</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Track committee meeting minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Track outcomes of committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Speaker or Training Ideas:**

- Reentry 101
- Harm Reduction
- Expungement

**Breakout Group Ideas:**

- Transportation
- Housing/Clothing
- Employment/Training
- Health care/Food
## Goal 5: Data Tracking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Party Responsible</th>
<th>Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collect contact names/numbers/emails for all participating members and develop Resource Guide</td>
<td>Person D</td>
<td>● Track number of online access and copies distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to develop tracking mechanism</td>
<td>Person D &amp; Person E</td>
<td>● Developed mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document Success Stories</td>
<td>Person D</td>
<td>● 1 Success Story Per Month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recommendations:**

At the end of the workshop and in my follow up emails, I shared some tips for implementation. Keeping the implementation recommendations short and concise, will help them be remembered and utilized. The first recommendation was to ensure the mission, vision, and values are shared not only amongst board members, but also with participants at large. Second, I challenged the Board members to reference the strategic plan at their monthly board meetings in order to hold them accountable to the goals and action steps they set. Third, I suggested that the Board create a tracking
mechanism in order to monitor their metric outcomes. Not only will this allow the Board to see their progress, but it could also be useful in any grant or foundation applications which ask for program outcomes or evaluation plans.

1. Post your mission, vision, values on all online forums, including social media and website
2. Reference your strategic plan at your monthly board meetings to ensure accountability
3. Create a tracking mechanism to organize your metric outcomes such as a Microsoft Excel sheet

Reflection

After completing the SWOT analysis, it was clearly evident that the Bluegrass Reentry Council needed a strategic plan because the group had never formally defined their mission, vision, and values. This presented a challenge to lead the group with no prior MVV statements to examine, however it was exciting to see the Board discuss and decide on these organization defining items.

Through the planning workshop, the Board decided on the five goals explained above. Each of these goals relates back to the overall mission and vision that the group came to a consensus on. The biggest challenge when crafting the goals and action steps was defining the metrics. Due to the nature of the council’s work, the Board members had to be creative when developing measurement metrics. For example, given that it is hard to follow the people impacted by incarceration through their reentry journey, the Board decided to place a larger emphasis on sharing success stories at their meetings to track the impact.
Limitations and Conclusion

The strategic planning process for the Bluegrass Reentry Council had several limitations. The first limitation is that the Council does not have any staff members. Given that, my time spent with the Board was limited, as it was all volunteer hours. The Council could have benefitted from more than a one-day workshop; however, that was the only volunteer time that the Board was able to contribute.

The largest limitation was that the strategic plan only included opinions of the Board. While numerous stakeholders are involved in the work of the Council and attending the Council meetings, only board members were involved in the strategic planning process. This was partially due to the fact that it is not a “membership” organization, so it would be challenging to know whom to include. However, in the future, I would suggest that more stakeholder opinions be considered.

Additionally, given the time constraint of the capstone paper and presentation, I will not be able to share any metrics from the strategic plan results. I would encourage any Martin School student who is interested in doing a strategic plan in the future to give enough time to review a portion of the metrics before presenting their results. Using metrics would enable one to better determine the success of the strategic plan facilitation and final product.

Throughout the process, there were many lessons learned. Given the unique nature of this organization not having any dedicated staff, this analysis utilized the board’s volunteer time. However, in the future, the workshop would have benefitted from more than one day of discussion. The workshop was a lot of content and discussions to
fit into one day and by the end of the day Board members were becoming worn out. Utilizing technology would also have been useful. While I had a presentation prepared and printed and an easel with large post-it notes, it would have been easier with a projector. Making edits to the mission statement for example, became challenging when using markers. Utilizing an online document would have been more legible and easier to follow along with.

Overall, I saw the Board grow excited to achieve their goals and acknowledge the impact the Bluegrass Reentry Council could make for people affected by incarceration. By spending the time to think through strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, the Board was able to create goals that will strengthen the organization not only for 2020, but for the years to come. Additionally, developing mission, vision, and values allows for board members and participants of the Bluegrass Reentry Council to remember their core purpose for the work.

In conclusion, having clearly defined mission and goals should lead the Bluegrass Reentry Council to success in the upcoming year. I hope to see the Bluegrass Reentry Council continue to utilize strategic plans in the years ahead.
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