



Josh Stein
Governor

Leslie Cooley Dismukes
Secretary

State Reentry Council Collaborative Meeting Minutes August 12, 2025

Leslie Cooley Dismukes, Secretary of NCDAC, convened the meeting by extending a warm welcome to members and expressing sincere appreciation for their continued engagement and dedication to reentry initiatives. Secretary Dismukes emphasized the strategic importance of establishing a full-time position exclusively focused on housing initiatives, noting that stable housing is a critical determinant of successful community reintegration. The position will oversee comprehensive efforts, including the development of affordable housing, the expansion of transitional housing options, and the cultivation of strategic partnerships with developers to increase housing availability. Secretary Dismukes also highlighted the Council of State Governments Report, emphasizing its alignment with the department's current strategic objectives. Key priorities for the new position include enhancing collaborations with builders, recruiting additional transitional housing providers, and expanding support services for individuals returning to the community. These initiatives underscore NCDAC's commitment to addressing housing as a cornerstone of reentry success and community stability.

George Pettigrew, NCDAC Deputy Secretary of Rehabilitation and Reentry, provided updates on the Reentry Simulation program, which has received strong positive feedback from leadership. Multiple departments have expressed interest in hosting future simulations, offering opportunities for cross-agency collaboration. Strategic partnership opportunities were identified with the Department of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, and Department of Administration. These efforts have successfully increased awareness of the challenges faced by returning citizens and have fostered meaningful stakeholder engagement. Deputy Secretary Pettigrew also provided an update on the Reentry 2030 Initiative, noting the next JRC meeting is scheduled for September 11 at All Saints Chapel in Raleigh. The meeting will feature the launch of a public-facing data dashboard to track reentry strategies and outcomes. FY2024-25 data is being finalized to ensure accurate, transparent, and measurable reporting of progress toward Reentry 2030 objectives.

Deputy Secretary Pettigrew discussed the work release expansion, highlighting a 23% increase in participation since the implementation of the recent executive order, with a long-term target of 56% by 2030. Collaboration with the N.C. Department of Commerce was identified as essential to achieving workforce readiness goals and supporting broader reentry objectives. Emphasis was placed on the continued alignment of subcommittee efforts with state-level strategies, reinforcing the SRCC's role as a collective, system-wide initiative driving meaningful reforms to improve outcomes for returning citizens.

Tim Griffith, Correction Enterprises Senior Evidence Advisor, and Torrey Leach, Correction Enterprises Workforce Development Manager, presented on the NC Jobs Exploration & Transition (NCJET) program. NCJET is designed to connect incarcerated individuals with employment opportunities prior to release and integrates with the NCWorks Online system while maintaining necessary security protocols. The program provides tools for resume creation, job searching, career exploration, access to "Second Chance Employers," and skills and values assessments for employment



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alignment. Piloted at the Correction Enterprises Tag Plant in Raleigh, the program has already facilitated successful job placements for participants post-release. Correction Enterprises employs approximately 1,300 incarcerated individuals across multiple industries and provides training in soft skills, financial literacy, and certifications such as OSHA-10, CDL, and apprenticeships. Expansion plans include installing NCJET kiosks in 24 facilities statewide by November and strengthening partnerships with workforce development boards to ensure seamless transitions to NCWorks. Feedback from participants and employers highlighted increased confidence and reduced anxiety, while discussions addressed challenges related to job timing, certification requirements, and expansion of second-chance hiring networks. Next steps include statewide access expansion, dashboard launch, and enhanced follow-up to support post-release employment continuity.

Eric Haddock, State Reentry Coordinator, N.C. Department of Commerce, provided an overview of the Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS). He highlighted the division's mission to connect talent with employment and detailed its infrastructure, including a \$130 million annual budget, approximately 450 staff, 20 local workforce development boards, and over 80 NCWorks career centers. DWS administers federal workforce programs including WIOA, Veterans initiatives, and Trade Adjustment Assistance, providing services such as career assessments, résumé and cover letter preparation, interview coaching, labor market analysis, and support for individuals with criminal records. Employer incentives, including the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the Federal Bonding Program, were reviewed as tools to facilitate hiring of individuals facing employment barriers.

Lateisha Thrash, Director of Reentry Services, NCDAC Division of Rehabilitation and Reentry, The meeting concluded with a focus on the vital importance of collaboration, innovation, and ongoing engagement with community partners to advance reentry initiatives. Feedback from stakeholders and participants was highly positive, highlighting the programs' effectiveness and their measurable impact on individuals returning to the community. Notable outcomes included reductions in recidivism, improvements in decision-making, strengthened critical thinking, and more constructive behavioral patterns. Participants' questions regarding program logistics, eligibility, funding, referral processes, transitional housing integration, employment support, and peer mentorship were addressed thoroughly, ensuring clarity and understanding. Facilitators recognized the contributions of staff, partners, and presenters, sharing success stories that illustrated the collective impact of the reentry programs.

Leadership extended sincere appreciation to all attendees for their active participation and commitment to enhancing reentry outcomes, after which the meeting was formally adjourned.

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