



Baltimore City's Ex-offender Initiative

Background

In October 2002, Mayor Martin O' Malley and the Mayor's Office of Employment Development facilitated the creation of the Baltimore Citywide Ex-offender Task Force to bring together diverse stakeholders to develop a citywide plan to assist ex-offenders in successfully transitioning back to the community.

With members representing more than 100 government agencies, nonprofit and community-based service providers, major foundations, advocacy groups and the faith-based community, the Task Force worked in committees including those addressing: the needs and engagement of employers; a survey of existing services; the development of a model program or process for serving ex-offenders; a review of relevant legislation; and a focus on the involvement of the faith community. Based on the work of its committees, which met for up to 18 months, the Task Force released *Baltimore Citywide Ex-offender Task Force Report and Recommendations* in December 2003. This plan seeks to integrate, enhance and expand services for ex-offenders. In March 2004, the Mayor appointed a Steering Committee to carry out selected recommendations of the Task Force.

Key Accomplishments

From October 2002 through June 2004

- ⌘ Coordinated previously fragmented resources and activities directed toward ex-offenders
- ⌘ Provided advocacy for ex-offender related legislation and policy by helping secure \$1 million in additional funding for the Maryland State Department of Education's inmate education program
- ⌘ Hosted Employer Appreciation Breakfasts to encourage additional businesses to employ and better assist this population
- ⌘ Convened Ex-offender Career Fairs
- ⌘ Attracted local and national media attention to the issues - one national radio broadcast generated additional resources for Maryland's Occupational Skills Training Center
- ⌘ Participated in U.S. Department of Justice/Workforce Development Training for offender workforce development specialists
- ⌘ Participated with Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Exit Orientations, which allow inmates to find out about services available after release
- ⌘ Supported the development of a re-entry transitional employment initiative, "Project Bridge," which brings together several nonprofit service providers to serve more than 200 ex-offenders

Generated Services

Projects spurred by the new and improved partnerships created via the Task Force

- ⌘ Partnership between The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services' Division of Parole and Probation and the Mayor's Office of Employment Development's Northwest Career Center to assist ex-offenders in connecting to occupational skills training, remediation and employment
- ⌘ Periodic job fairs hosted by the Mayor's Office of Employment Development
- ⌘ Designated ex-offender change agent in Mayor's Office of Employment Development's Eastside Career Center to assist ex-offenders in making the employment connection

Quote

"When men and women return to Baltimore, we want to make sure that they have the opportunities, support and resources they need to find employment and build new lives."

- Felix Mata, Project Manager for Baltimore City's Ex-offender Initiative