

# Executive Summary

## I. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide recommendations for establishing a reentry center for Greater Hartford. Up to 95% of people who have been incarcerated in Connecticut will return home one day. After release from incarceration, CT residents face many barriers to fulfilling their basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, safety, health and wellness. Smart reentry planning and coordination of services benefits everyone by improving public safety and reducing the collateral consequences as well as the costs of people cycling in and out of the criminal justice system.

Reentry is a local and national priority. According to the Council of State Government Justice Center 2017 bulletin on national progress in reentry, in recent years nearly half of U.S. governors cited reentry and reducing recidivism as priorities in their 'State of the State' addresses<sup>1</sup>. Nonprofit and municipal leaders in Hartford began laying the groundwork for a reentry center several years ago. The vision for what is needed has been clear from the start; there needs to be a coordinated hub in Hartford to facilitate returning citizens access to much-needed resources and services upon release from Connecticut prisons and jails. Another consistent element in earlier proposals has been a focus on individuals who are released at the end of their sentences and are not under any form of community supervision. Overall, this group has a high risk of recidivism and lacks the most basic supports available to individuals who are released to community supervision.

This planning report builds upon prior planning efforts and involves many of the same leaders. It aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of the needs of returning citizens in Greater Hartford and information on best practices in reentry so as to inform the next phase of implementation of a Greater Hartford Reentry Center.

The specific goals of this plan are as follows:

**Goal One:** To provide a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative review of current policies, challenges, resources and practices impacting residents who are returning from prison or jail to the Greater Hartford region.

**Goal Two:** to examine best practices in reentry for establishing a reentry center and creating a more comprehensive, coordinated and efficient reentry system that will contribute to reduced recidivism for returning citizens to the Greater Hartford region.

**Goal Three:** to use the data to propose a basic roadmap for the implementation phase of this center.

With funding from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, this planning process was able to utilize an "action research" approach, involving formerly incarcerated individuals as research assistants and as focus group participants, along with advisors from government agencies and key reentry stakeholders from different sectors of the City and State.

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<sup>1</sup> *Making People's Transition from Prison and Jail to the Community Safe and Successful: A Snapshot on National Progress in Reentry* (2017). New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, p.4.

## II. What the Numbers Tells Us about the Population of Returning Residents in Greater Hartford

### Recidivism Rates for Connecticut.

Despite much recent progress in criminal justice reform, recidivism rates in Connecticut have remained high. In 2011, 63.2% of people who were released from prison or jail were rearrested within three years and 54.4% were convicted of a new crime<sup>2</sup>. This is slightly lower than the national average of 67.8%<sup>3</sup>.

Individuals who were released at the end of their sentences (EOS) in 2011 had higher rates of new convictions (25%) at the 12-month rate compared with those who were released to community supervision (21%). At the 36-month rate, the difference in rates narrowed, but still on average the rates were slightly higher for the EOS group (53%) compared with those on community supervision (52%).

### Who is Currently Incarcerated from Greater Hartford on July 31, 2017

- The three towns with the highest proportion of inmates of all the towns in Greater Hartford are Hartford (59%), East Hartford (10%) and Manchester (9%).
- By far the majority of inmates from Greater Hartford, excluding Hartford (93.8%) and from Hartford (96.3%) are male.
- Most inmates from Greater Hartford are between the ages of 25-38 (n=1375), or fall into the age groups 18-24 (n=414), or 39-53 (n=833).
- The proportion of pretrial to sentenced inmates for the total current incarcerated population from Greater Hartford was just over one quarter, or 26.5%.
- A majority of individuals who are currently incarcerated from Greater Hartford had a controlling offense classification of either 'persons' (40.6%) or 'public order' (28.3%). Over half (55.5%) were sentenced to between 1 and five years.

### Annual Number of Community Releases from Prison or Jail of Greater Hartford Residents

According to data from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving's Community Indicators Project, from 2009-2015, the average annual number of community releases from CT DOC of Greater Hartford residents was 2,765 and releases of Hartford residents was 1,501. On average, releases of Hartford residents represented 55% of the total releases for Greater Hartford.

### Number of Individuals and Number of Releases in 2016

In 2016, the total number of sentenced community releases (not individuals) from a prison or jail of Greater Hartford residents was 3,121. Hartford Correctional Center had the most releases of Greater Hartford residents when compared with all prison or jail facilities in CT, with 792 releases, representing 25.4% of the total releases. In 2016, a total of 2,141 individuals from Greater Hartford were released from a prison or jail facility to either community supervision or at the end of their sentence.

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<sup>2</sup> Kuzyk, I. and Lawlor, M. (2015) Recidivism in CT, 2008 releases. Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division, Office of Policy and Management. Retrieved August 1, 2017, from:

[http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/cjppd/cjsac/20150424recidivism\\_report\\_february\\_2015.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/cjppd/cjsac/20150424recidivism_report_february_2015.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> National Institute of Justice, Recidivism [website] Retrieved August 15, 2017, from:

<https://www.nij.gov/topics/corrections/recidivism/Pages/welcome.aspx>.

## Greater Hartford Reentry Center Plan

- For Greater Hartford, excluding Hartford (n=1078), the racial/ethnic breakdown of returning residents in 2016 was 55.3% White, 26.6% African American, 16.9% Hispanic, 0.8% Asian and 0.4% American Indian.
- For Hartford (n=1063), the racial/ethnic breakdown of returning residents in 2016 was 46.5% African American, 44.3% Hispanic, 8.7% White, 0.4% American Indian and 0.1% Asian.

### **End of Sentence (EOS) Releases and Individuals**

In 2016, there were 1,261 EOS releases from a prison or jail, involving 1,219 Greater Hartford residents. These EOS releases constituted 40.4% of the total releases of Greater Hartford residents. A little over half (51.5%, n=650) of these EOS releases were of Hartford residents, involving 623 unique individuals.

### **Substance Use Treatment Needs**

Treatment Programming and Assessment Instrument (TPAI) scores inform us that in 2016, 77.6% of returning residents from Greater Hartford, excluding Hartford and 76.7% from Hartford had a score of 3 or above on their substance abuse assessment indicating a need for some-level of substance abuse treatment. Those who were released EOS had slightly lower treatment needs at 75.4% for Greater Hartford and 76.6% for Hartford.

### **Mental Health Needs**

At least 28.4% of Greater Hartford returning residents, excluding Hartford, and 22.4% of Hartford returning residents had some level of current mental health treatment needs. The percent was slightly higher among the EOS population, with 33.4% of those from Greater Hartford, excluding Hartford and 30.4% of those from Hartford. (Please note that this number does not include those who have had a past mental health illness, but are currently not in need of treatment).

### **Healthcare Needs**

A sizeable percentage of returning residents from Greater Hartford, excluding Hartford (26.4%) and from Hartford (28.0%) had medical needs which require periodic or regular access to nursing care, with a small percentage (under 1.0%) requiring ongoing 24-hour care for possibly an extended period of time. Those who were released EOS appear to have slightly higher medical needs.

### **Education Levels**

Among Greater Hartford returning residents in 2016, excluding Hartford, only 3.7% had attended one or more college courses and 36.7% had obtained a high school diploma, whereas for Hartford only 2.6% had attended one or more college courses and 30.0% had obtained a high school diploma. A majority scored at the 9th through 12th grade level, specifically 54.8% of Greater Hartford returning residents, excluding Hartford and 54.6% of Hartford returning residents.