



Kenneth P. Thompson
District Attorney

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY
KINGS COUNTY**
350 JAY STREET
BROOKLYN, NY 11201-2908
(718) 250-2000
WWW.BROOKLYNDA.ORG

KCRTF

Bi-Monthly Meeting

Meeting of January 21, 2015

MINUTES

Meeting Date:	Wednesday, January 21, 2015	
Meeting Time:	1:00 PM – 2:40 PM	
Meeting Location:	Counseling Services – EDNY Conference Room 210 Joralemon Street, 3rd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201	
Attendees:	Cynthia Akor (KCDA) LaToya Benjamin (KCDA) Naatifah Costello Chaz Crowder (HRA) Michael Davenport (KCDA-COM) William Glenn (The DOE Fund) Jason Jimenez (KCDA) Andrea Johnson (KCDA-KCRTF) Dana Martin (KCDA) Michelle Nelson (CSEDNY) Christopher Owens (KCDA-BYDRP) Hailey Nolasco (KCDA-BYDRP) Dr. Vanda Seward (KCDA-KCRTF) Michelle A. Yon (DOCCS)	
Co-Chair:	Christopher Owens, Director, Bureau of Youth Diversion & Re-Entry Programs, KCDA	

ITEM #	ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND ACTION ITEMS
1	Call to order	The meeting was called to order by Mr. Owens at 1:00 pm.
2	Opening Remarks	Mr. Owens called for the approval of the November 19, 2014 minutes. If there are any comments or concerns, he asked for individuals to please contact Hailey Nolasco and an amended version would be circulated.
3	Next Meetings	The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2015.
4	Introductions	Those in attendance introduced themselves.

<p>5</p>	<p>Coordinator's Report</p>	<p><i>Referral Process</i></p> <p>Ms. Seward stated that the KCRTF staff has been working diligently in their collaboration with DOCCS to revise their referral process. Although the new referral process is still in a nascent stage, it has been extremely beneficial in facilitating the Task Force's work. Prior to revising the referral process, Ms. Seward stated that it was challenging to obtain the case information or risk score numbers of soon to be released offenders. Since beginning this new process, it has become easier.</p> <p>Ms. Seward followed to explain the components of the Kings County Reentry Task Force (KCRTF) and how it is distinguished from ComALERT. KCRTF is driven by a grant supplied by DCJS, which requires us to engage clients pre-release up until 90 days after release. We will receive 30 days prior to release. KCRTF only provides services to formerly incarcerated persons who are moderate to high risk. Former offenders are classified as moderate to high risk by risk score numbers - risk to recidivate not risk to recidivate. The risk scores are used to determine what specific services can be provided to clients that would be a good fit for a new parolee. We do not believe in a one size fits all model because each parolee has a unique circumstance.</p> <p>Due to this Ms. Seward stated that the Task Force is continuously exploring their resources to see what services will best match parolees. She said "there are various things we are looking at with new incoming clients to best serve their needs. We are looking at referrals to see what the client has already done. We do not want to duplicate services, we are looking to see where there parolee has left off and what we can do from here on out."</p> <p>Ms. Seward has said that Ms. Yon from DOCCS has been very helpful in moving our process forward. She usually has a less than 48 hour turn around in responding to requests, which has been a great help to Michael Davenport's research.</p> <p>Ms. Yon encourages KCRTF staff to continue to send her emails.</p> <p>Mr. Owens stated that as this referral process reaches its final stages, the volume of the referrals the Task Force will be receiving will be increasing a great deal. Brooklyn Parole will be moving in February; due to this move Ms. Seward noted that the Task Force has not been able to put their referral process into full swing. However, she anticipates the pace of referrals to increase by mid-February and the Task Force will be able to meet their contractual obligations with DCJS.</p> <p><i>Community Resource Bank</i></p> <p>Ms. Seward indicated that we are still in the process of working on obtaining community-based organizations that are formerly incarcerated friendly. There are organizations that claim to be formerly incarcerated friendly, but only want to provide opportunities to individuals who are low-risk. The Task Force is looking for community based organizations who are offender friendly regardless of risk level. It is not conducive to our population's success when we refer them to organizations who are biased towards them. Ms. Seward specified that we need programs that understand the population the Task Force serves.</p> <p>We have to take out time as a key provider to send clients to an appropriate program. The staff has been inviting community based organizations to our offices. This is being done in efforts to show the organizations how Task Force functions with the population. Also, once the Task Force selects which community based organization to partner up with, they must then send these programs to DOCCS and federal probation as they are the supervising agencies for these persons for approval to ensure that they are compliant and not blacklisted under their regulations.</p> <p><i>KCRTF Participation Proposal</i></p> <p>Ms. Seward claimed that the Task Force is in the process of mapping out who will be a participant as opposed to who would be a committee member. The Task Force is looking to recruit people who have expertise in the various subsets of the population we are servicing (mental health,</p>
----------	-----------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

youth, sex offenders, et, al.).

The most important aspect in the participation proposal is to generate interest and have individuals with experience attended Task Force meetings.

Public Engagement Committee/Consortium

The Public Engagement Committee has unofficially commenced. It has begun through the development of consortiums. The consortiums are diverse and service oriented. They also incorporate law enforcement personnel, formerly incarcerated individuals and mental health issues.

The Kings County Reentry Task Force collaborated with Wendy Hirsh from ACCES to design a consortium on formerly incarcerated women. As women are underrepresented in this field, the Task Force plans to create a women’s group with the women who participated in the consortium. It is important to create this group for the reason that once these women reach a certain level of stability, they still have many issues they are struggling with regarding being a woman, providing for their children, keeping housing, and sustaining employment. Ms. Seward stated that it speaks volumes when you can have formerly incarcerated individuals responding to law enforcement entities in a positive arena.

Because of the success of this forum, Ms. Seward pronounced that the Task Force will be working on future consortiums targeting numerous issues to promote public education. The next consortium will be on children of the incarcerated and will be taking place tentatively in march. In this consortium, we will make use of the Sesame Street library that was donated to the Osborne Association that addresses incarceration.

Ms. Seward encouraged those in attendance to please send her ideas for topics to use for future consortiums.

Mr. Owens commended Vanda Seward and Norma Fernandes for pulling together a successful consortium within a two week time span. He declared that the consortium was “very effective and powerful”.

Sex Offender Training

The sex offender training that was scheduled to take place in January has been postponed to April 1, 2015. Ms. Seward has reached out to those who were going to participate in the training with the new date. We have acquired individuals from the NYPD’s SUMO unit (Sex Offender Monitoring Unit) to be on the panel. Bureau Chief Rodney Young has been confirmed as well as Cornelia Krieger to speak extensively on this issue. Ms. Seward will be sending out a save the date in the upcoming weeks.

The sex offender training is extremely important due to the fact that similar to the mental health population; it is a new people being serviced by the Kings County District Attorney’s office. As many people are uncomfortable in dealing with sex offenders, it is imperative to educate employees of the population in order for the services provided to be effective for our clients.

KCRTF Internet Presence

Mr. Owens proceeded to update the meeting participants on the progress of the KCRTF website. They are still in the process of its development. The website will encompass the Task Force’s community resources, what it is KCRTF does (i.e. its mission), and how KCRTF helps the community. Mr. Owens stressed that re-entry is a community process; therefore information of our services should be open to the public to educate and engage them. One of the challenges currently present in the creation of the website is pulling together the information to populate the website (pictures, text). The target date for the website to go live is set for March 1, 2015 and Mr. Owens revealed that we are still on track.

		<p>Ms. Seward is asking individuals to provide her with information on their respective organizations so that they can be featured on the KCRTF website. If they have a website, there will be a link provided on the website that would take individuals directly to their organization of interest.</p> <p>Re-entry Job Summit</p> <p>The re-entry job summit has been postponed. It was initially scheduled to take place on February 6, 2015. As of now there is no alternative date.</p> <p>NYCHA Contract</p> <p>Ms. Seward reported on the current NYCHA contract with the VERA Institute which now allows formerly incarcerated individuals with felonies back into public housing. The Family Re-Entry Pilot Program was created to reunite NYCHA tenants with family members with criminal backgrounds within a recent 3 year period. This Pilot Program is a second chance for individuals with criminal histories who have historically been excluded from applying for NYCHA.</p> <p>NYCHA has hired Yolanda Johnson-Peterkin from the Women’s Prison Association to spearhead this pilot. They are also working on putting together an education campaign and plan to expose this pilot to the public through the use of public service announcements on WBLS and Hot 97 radio stations. There will also be flyers and posted created in regards to this pilot program that will be placed at 210 Joralemon as well as Parole.</p> <p>Mentorship</p> <p>Ms. Seward spoke about the importance of acquiring mentors for clients. She indicated that a mentor is a significant asset in sustaining a formerly incarcerated individual and preventing him/her from recidivating into the criminal justice system. The Task Force staff will be referring to previous mentorship trainings and re-engage former mentors. By re-engaging former mentors Ms. Seward hopes to speed up the process of this program. She followed to state that mentors are always in need and encouraged meeting participants to recommend individuals who are committed to love, understanding, and patience.</p>
6	Fiscal Report	<p>Fiscal Report</p> <p>Mr. Davenport circulated a chart illustrating the KCDA re-entry statistics for fiscal year for fiscal year 2015. It showed the tallies of 2015 KCDA re-entry intakes and 2015 KCDA re-entry retention. The chart also exhibited the KCDA and DCJS benchmarks for 2015.</p> <p>In the past, KCDA re-entry services did not have a good grasp on the retention of their clients. Recently this has changed, the Task Force has re-engaged many of their clients Mr. Davenport stated that the Task Force is doing very well and revealed that there has been a big shift in keeping clients engaged. He presented that since July; most unsuccessful discharges have been due to parole violations versus the client disengaging due to a lack of interest. He credits the success of KCRTF retention to their moral driven criteria rather than just being driven by DCJS grant criteria.</p> <p>KCRTF does not stop engaging with their clients after 90 days, it is important for the staff to keep lines of communication open with their clients. Through these communications the Task Force can better keep data on their impact on recidivation.</p> <p>Due to our improvements, Mr. Owens hopes that the Task Force may gain an increase in their grant threshold from DCJS.</p>
7	Reports/Concerns	N/A

Chaz Crowder, Community Coordinator – Human Resources Administration

Mr. Crowder attended this meeting to provide meeting participants with information about the Human Resources Administration’s programs and services.

The Human Resources Administration is the largest social service agency in the United States and the largest city agency in New York City. Mr. Crowder spoke about the SNAP program, which is the Supplemental Nutrition Program. He explained that people in need of SNAP assistance no longer have to physically come into the office to apply for the service. Individuals can now apply for SNAP benefits by going online to XXNYC, by mail, fax/ phone, or an individual can send someone over the age of 18 to the HRA office as a representative with a letter of authorization granting them permission.

HRA also has facilitated enrollers who are community based organizations that take SNAP and Medicaid applications. Mr. Crowder stated that the interview process for applying for HRA’s programs and services have become easier. Individuals seeking services no longer have to be finger imaged and can now be interviewed by phone. Research for SNAP benefits is now completed by phone.

Through HRA’s new initiatives, clients now receive robo calls to remind them of their appointments and help them reschedule if necessary. Mr. Crowder followed to speak of health services. He said that HRA does not only assist clients with obtaining Medicaid, they also help to acquire other health insurances they are eligible for such as health first. HRA also offers individuals in need with cash assistance. In order for a person to qualify for cash assistance, they are required to prove that they are currently working a minimum of 35 hours a week.

There is other cash assistance programs offered by HRA that an unemployed individual can take advantage of - as long as they create a plan on how they will repay the monies upon obtaining employment. HRA also offers one shot deals for persons in certain circumstances (i.e. cash assistance for a gas bill after the utility has been cut off). There are also emergency grants provided by HRA for persons who qualify such as clothing or furniture grants. If an individual is on SSI the repayment on certain services are waived.

All HRA programs are based on income with the exception of the Adult Protective Services Program. This program is for persons who are mentally, physically, and emotionally unable to take care of themselves. This program works through referrals.

HRA provides HRSA services for individuals with HIV/AIDS. They are provided with the same services as any other HRA client, the only difference is that they are not mandated to work 35 hours a week program other clients are required to work. HRA provides domestic violence services, but they mainly refer individuals to the family justice center. Two of the major aspects of the domestic violence services HRA offers are child care and relocation. HRA does not assist with housing services unless a client is a victim of domestic abuse or is positive for HIV/AIDS.

Furthermore, Mr. Crowder spoke of the child support services HRA offers. Contingent on a case by case basis, if an individual cannot afford to pay what he/she owes in child support, HRA will work with NYC to match the amount a person is able to pay. Mr. Crowder explained that they cannot help individuals who owe family court for the reason that money is not owed to HRA, making it difficult to negotiate lowering amounts owed.

HRA also has a program that targets teenage pregnancy and relationship abuse. Persons who have experienced having children at a young age or abusive relationships host workshops in efforts to bring awareness through relatable real life experiences.

Mr. Owens asked if at this point in time there is a specific linkage between KCDA re-entry coordinators and HRA. Mr. Crowder responded that yes, there has been a linkage in the past with HRA and the KCDA. He is unsure of who the exact point person is, but encourages KCDA to work with him for streamlining services

		<p>Mr. Crowder asked meeting participants to contact him if there are any inquiries regarding community issues. If there are any issues or concerns regarding their specific cases, Mr. Crowder asked for individuals to call constituent services.</p> <p>In closing, Mr. Crowder revealed that HRA will be moving to World Trade 4 in the upcoming weeks.</p>
9	Old Business	No old business presented at this time.
10	New Business	No new business presented at this time.
11	Adjournment	<p>The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.</p> <p>Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 18, 2015.</p>