

**Minutes**  
**Louisiana Sentencing Commission**  
**Work Group 2: Reentry**  
**Team 1 Transitional Work Program (TWP)**  
**November 17, 2011**

Participants:

Judge Jimmy Gaidry  
Sheriff Mike Cazes  
Chief of Operation Jeff Travis (DPS&C)  
Assistant Secretary Whalen Gibbs (DPS&C)  
Major Renne Brinkley (Lafourche Parish SO)  
Dr. Bobby Gaston, (Louisiana Sheriffs' Association)

Sheriff Mike Cazes agreed to be chairman for Team 1, Transitional Work Program (TWP).

The discussion centered around what would be the charge of team 1.

A review of material from prior discussion of the Sentencing Commission indicated the team will examine the structure of the TWP and evaluate the effectiveness of the program in preventing recidivism. The focus of the Team may include the following:

1. Making TWP's an option at sentencing for the court and as an option for the District Attorney either through sentencing or as part of a diversion.

Sheriff Cazes indicated that currently in WBR he has a program that allows for offenders that are ordered to serve parish jail time to enroll in a parish transitional work program in which the offender bears the cost for participation. The offender works and earns scale wages and pays for room and board and other cost associated with being in the program. This would be a good program to review for possible expansion to other areas of the state.

The team will conduct further research and report finding with recommendations.

2. Improving the ability of the current TWP to move clients to where the jobs are and their specific skills are needed.

Chief Travis and Secretary Gibbs spoke regarding the Department already adopting policies and procedures that identifies offenders that are within certain parameters of their TWP eligibility date and first making certain that they have the opportunity to participate, and secondly transfer to a program that is within the region where the offender will be eventually released, and thirdly that the transitional work

program director ensures in as much as is practical that the offender is placed into a job that utilizes any trade that has been acquired.

More discussion and review of the process to be researched and reported on.

3. Develop mechanisms that will assist clients in keeping their jobs when they are paroled or released through other means.

As reported by Chief Travis, Secretary Gibbs, and Sheriff Cazes currently in some instances the offenders is maintaining employment with the transitional work release employer after they have completed the work release phase.

The committee will work to ensure that all transitional work programs are on board with this philosophy and diligently work to achieve this goal.

4. Coordinating TWP participation with available job training programs.

This presents an excellent opportunity for dialog with the Reentry Advisory Council as members of the council are comprised of various organizations (i.e. AFL-CIO, Associated Builders and Contractors, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, Louisiana Community and Technical College System, Louisiana Workforce Commission, and the Louisiana State Building and Construction Trade. Some of the organizations have training and apprenticeship programs, as well as various employers from the private sector that we may be able to collaborate and partner. This would provide training opportunities for offenders, which would assist with meeting the demands of business and industry.

5. Examining best practices for TWP and how they might apply in Louisiana.

(No discussion but will be researched and reported on)

6. Outcome study- how are programs currently working, are they successful?

Based on current statistics offenders that participate in transitional work programs are successful from the standpoint of recidivism, which is lower as compared to offenders that do not participate in TWP.

The team also discussed the following:

- A. The need to make certain that eligible deserving offenders have the opportunity to participate in the TWP regardless as to where they are incarcerated.
- B. Expansion of work release beds, we need to make certain that additional beds that come online are in the right location (i.e., more beds needed in the SE region of Orleans and Jefferson parishes).

We had some good ground breaking discussions relative to TWP and determined that we would meet at a TWP site, and tour the facility in order that all members of the teams would fully understand the operations of TWPs. Sheriff Cazes agreed to host the tour at WBR Transitional Work Program in Port Allen.

Judge Gaidry indicated that he would touch bases with Judge Wicker to insure that Teams 1 was addressing issues that the Sentencing Commission deemed appropriate.

Chief Travis and Secretary Gibbs will meet with Secretary Le Blanc regarding TWP regarding relevant issues the Secretary desire to be addressed.

Next meeting date and time to be announced.

**Meeting**  
**Louisiana Sentencing Commission**  
**Work Group 2: Reentry**  
**Team 1 Transitional Work Program (TWP)**  
**December 6, 2011 - 9:30 am**

Participants:

Judge Jimmy Gaidry  
Joe Arabie, Director WBR TWP (Designee for Sheriff Mike Cazes)  
Chief of Operation Jeff Travis (DPS&C)  
Assistant Secretary Whalen Gibbs (DPS&C)  
Dr. Bobby Gaston, (Louisiana Sheriffs' Association)

Absent:

Major Renee Brinkley (Lafourche Parish SO – Designee for Sheriff Webre)

Director Arabie provided a tour of TWP at West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Facility. This as an all male facility with an operational capacity of 262 TWP residents (185 contract and 77 non contract). The program has been in operation for over 10 years.

The complete operation of the facility from screening, recommendation to DPS&C, intake, job placement, employment, and eventual release was explained by Director Arabie.

The facility has a multitude of employers that are involved in various occupations from skilled to unskilled.

Most employers are seeking residents that are willing to work with a good attitude and have a year or longer left on their sentence prior to discharge. They also want residents that have a trade or skill; however, given the choice of a resident that has a skill with only 4 to six months prior to being released and a resident that has 1 to 3 years with no skills prior to release, they would take the resident that has the longer period to serve in the TWP.

Mr. Arabie indicated the average stay in the TWP per resident is about 6 or 7 months. Since some offenders are eligible when they are within 3 years of their discharge date, as a committee we will review system practices and current impediments to eligible offenders being considered and recommended for the TWP at the earliest eligibility date.

Tour ended at approximately 11:30 a.m.

