Performance Evaluation & Innovation (PEI)

2018 Annual Performance Report

Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry
Department of Health and Human Services
March 2019

Cuyahoga County
Together We Thrive

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Executive Summary

The 2018 Office of Reentry Performance Report's purpose is to provide a snapshot of services provided by OOR, year-end review, and to identify key issues for program services.

The rate of incarceration has quadrupled over the past four decades and Ohio's prison population has risen by more than 50,000 inmates over the past 30 years. There has been an influx of reentrants released from prison and many are being released without post-supervision, or services to assist them with this transition. The Office of Reentry has undertaken pilot projects and contracted program services to assist with reentry transition, which many of them have demonstrated promising results. However, due to budgetary constraints we lack the resources to scale up these projects and properly meet the needs of this growing reentry population.

In 2018, the office spent $ 1,600,000 on programs, funding a total (9) reentry services. The OOR only serves a fraction of reentrants returning to Cuyahoga County. Many of these programs has the capacity to service 100-150 individuals per year, meaning that we have limited capability in the number of reentrants served in Cuyahoga County. The data tables provided in this report outlines each of our contracted programs performance measures and whether, or not, the program was successful or unsuccessful in meeting its targeted goal.

According to the tables, many of our vendor's programmatic efforts were a success but little is known about how effective their program models were, in reducing recidivism. This continues to be a challenge for the OOR and criminal justice policymakers. Recidivism rates are an important set of data, but to properly measure it has proven to be complex and requires clear, quantitative indicators, as well as, a careful examining approach. First, there is no uniform definition of recidivism. Secondly, the average reentry program does not have access to a criminal record database to track recidivism.

Looking back at our highlights for the year, we celebrated a very successful Inaugural Reentry Week and was awarded (3) grants; $50,000 by the Cleveland Foundation to host our first Public Service Fellow, $ 1 million grant from the Department of Justice through the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) for Second Chance Act (SCA) funding, and $6000.00 from Credit Builders Alliance (CBA). Highlights of our contracted programs include; Chopping 4 Change opening, "The Comeback Café," in the County's Virgil E. Brown Building, and the expansion of our Open Door Transitional program which was exclusively serving men is now serving women. To be more resourceful, we are now disseminating legislation information and updates that impacts the criminal justice population via our electronic monthly newsletter. Together with a wide-range of stakeholders we continue the ongoing objective of educating the community and public on a range of issues that surround reentry. We also participated in many outreach events and hosted different informational forums.

Overall, our findings confirm that strides are being made in many of these problem areas and there is sufficient evidence to support our stance that a successful reentry can only be achieved by utilizing a collective impact approach that integrates numerous stakeholders all working together in a more coordinated systems level approach.

Agency Description

Because reentry now calls for a broad system approach the OOR, has shifted its emphasis to serve as a convener, funder, planner, and barrier breaker for the returnee population.

OOR's mission is to address systemic barriers, challenges, and policies that impede a successful transition. We serve as the backbone support for the community wide-reentry movement within Cuyahoga County to improve reentry efficiency and program service effectiveness.

We are a small office of (6) individuals and do not provide direct services, but we are a funding source for (7) contracted programs; Recovery Resources Reentry Redirection Program, Aspire Greater Cleveland Adult Basic Education, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries Chopping 4 Change Culinary Program, Towards Employment New Employment Transitions Program (NET), Oriana House's North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center and Adult Transition Model (ATM), Effective Leadership Academy's Reentry Continuum Mentoring for Juveniles, and YMCA/Y-Haven's Open Door Transitional Housing Program. We also partner with Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas for (2) specialized court dockets; Reentry Court, and Veterans Treatment Court as an alternative measure to reduce commitments to prison.

We utilize a collective impact approach, involving stakeholders from many different sectors who are all committed to find and support comprehensive solutions to complex issues through structured collaboration.

History of Reentry in Cuyahoga County

In 2001 the Urban Institute examined prisoner reentry on the state and local level. This work entitled, ***Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Ohio*** was part of a larger national study entitled, ***Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry*** and this report outlined many issues concerning formerly incarcerated individuals and the barriers faced when transitioning back into the community. The former Mayor of Cleveland at that time was Jane L. Campbell and she decided to undertake the challenge of combatting many of these reentry issues by the creation of the City of Cleveland Reentry Initiative. In her State of the City address on February 20, 2003, Mayor Campbell made a commitment statement to "change the pattern of community reentry." Mayor Campbell with the assistance of Craig Tame, Chief of Health and Public Safety solicited financial support of The George Foundation and established a Reentry Advisory Committee in November 2003.

In early 2004, the City of Cleveland Reentry Initiative with the financial support from the George Gund Foundation issued Requests for Proposals to develop and coordinate a community based strategic planning process. Based on the input from the Reentry Advisory committee members many different subcommittees were established such as: Data Collection, Analysis and Evaluation; Education, Advocacy and Community Participation; Finances, Initiative Management, and Service System. These subcommittee members input, and recommendations were presented in an all-day strategy session held in April 2005. As a result, a two-day forum was coordinated hearing directly from the community and receiving their direct feedback concerning reentry issues, problems arising from these barriers, and recommendations for next steps. The Greater Cleveland Strategy was comprised of thirteen key recommendations and was released by the City of Cleveland in July 2005, and the creation of the Office of Reentry was one of the top priorities within this strategy. The Office of Reentry's role was considered pivotal to the success of the entire plan and assumed the leadership role in Cuyahoga County's Reentry arena in January 2009**.**

2018 Year End Review

This has been a year of acceleration for the Office of Reentry.

In 2018, we celebrated our Inaugural Reentry Awareness Week in Cuyahoga County, which was organized by the Office of Reentry. Cuyahoga County's Administration is committed to improving and strengthening the reentry system, so in 2017, we received proclamations from our County Executive, along with County Council, designating the week of April 23-27, 2018, as Cuyahoga County Reentry Awareness Week. This week-long celebration was surrounded by media and included a televised interview on a segment of WKYC Channel 3's We the People, and live radio interviews with Crystal Bryant, Director of the Office of Reentry. Multiple articles were also written on reentry programs such as; Chopping for Change, and Comeback Café located at the County's Virgil E. Brown Building from various media outlets. We concluded Reentry week by Hosting our 6th Annual Public Meeting, focused on the theme of "Not just returning but advancing for citizens with criminal backgrounds." We collaborated with the following stakeholders: American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio, Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, Towards Employment, NorthStar Neighborhood Reentry Resources Center, Edwins Leadership and Restaurant Institute, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries, The Housing Research and Advocacy Center, Cleveland Leadership Center, Cleveland Financial Centers, Stokes: Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future, Reach Success Inc, and Newton Gravity Marketing.

Because we function as the backbone support to Cuyahoga County's Reentry Network, we were consistently engaged in different activities within the community and attended (14) outreach events that engaged about (1,550) people over the course of the year. Our communications person, Katrice Williams, taught eight CQE trainings and Record Sealing Workshops for (243) attendees. We also worked with Legal Aid in conducting 10 "expungement clinics" to assist individuals to seal the records of more than 150 cases. We collaborated with Legal Aid Society of Cleveland and Towards Employment.

We received a small grant of $6000.00 dollars from Credit Builders Alliance (CBA), an innovative non-profit social enterprise that is assisting low- to – moderate- income households by educating them on the importance of having good credit, helping them to build strong credit scores, and obtaining other financial assets. On August 24th, OOR and CBA hosted a full day entrepreneurial convening with investors, non-profit organizations, and community development organizations that was open to the public. This event attracted about 68 attendees.

Our office was also awarded other grants as follows; $50,000 by the Cleveland Foundation to host our first Public Service Fellow, and $ 1 million grant from the Department of Justice through the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) for Second Chance Act (SCA) funding. This Reentry Initiative grant is designed to reduce recidivism and create safer neighborhoods. It will be accomplished by improving the overall reentry network through improved systems coordination and identifying system gaps and barriers. Furthermore, as part of this initiative, the OOR, in partnership with Case Western Reserve Law School, will create a Second Chance Reentry Law Clinic. We are collaborating with Case Western Reserve University, Case Western University Law Clinic, Community Assessment and Treatment Services (CATS), Towards Employment, and North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center.

On Tuesday, September 25th, the Office of Reentry and special guests educated residents of Oriana House, a community corrections and chemical dependency treatment agency, about their voting rights by hosting a Voter Engagement event. The OOR also organizes events annually and partners with other

entities, as well as Cleveland VOTES, to engage the community around voting. The office has also started working with Cuyahoga County Corrections Center staff to assist with the process of collecting absentee ballots. We collaborated with Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, and The Khnemu Group Inc.

The Greater Cleveland Reentry Leadership Coalition is one the oldest organizations of its kind in Ohio. It was established prior to the inception of the Cuyahoga County's Office of Reentry, to deliver structured oversight to organizations and service providers who were providing services to returning citizens. It experienced an abrupt change in leadership, since the untimely passing of Valeria Harper, former Leadership Coalition Chair and chief executive officer of the county's Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board. The Reentry Coalition had been without a chairperson until mid-year Councilman Blaine Griffin was asked to assume Ms. Harper's role as Chair, and Assistant Director of the Department of Health and Human Services, David Merriman, became Vice Chair.

In 2019, we'll focus on reaching more objectives and goals through our current contracted programs and new initiatives. The office has partnered with Cleveland Neighborhood Progress to craft an asset map, which will provide a gap analysis of Cuyahoga County's reentry arena. We have also newly collaborated with Design Impact; a non-profit social innovation firm who will begin to create an equity-based strategic and operational plan for the community-wide reentry movement.

Findings (Program Data)

Table 1—Aspire Greater Cleveland Adult Basic Education Program

- Program Exceeded Target Goals
- 1875 was targeted goal for instructional hours, program met goal by 1932.25 hours
- 125 was target goal for # of students enrolled 12 hours, program met goal by 208 hours
- Table shows # of Instructional hours, # Students Passing Sections of GED, # Passing GED Test
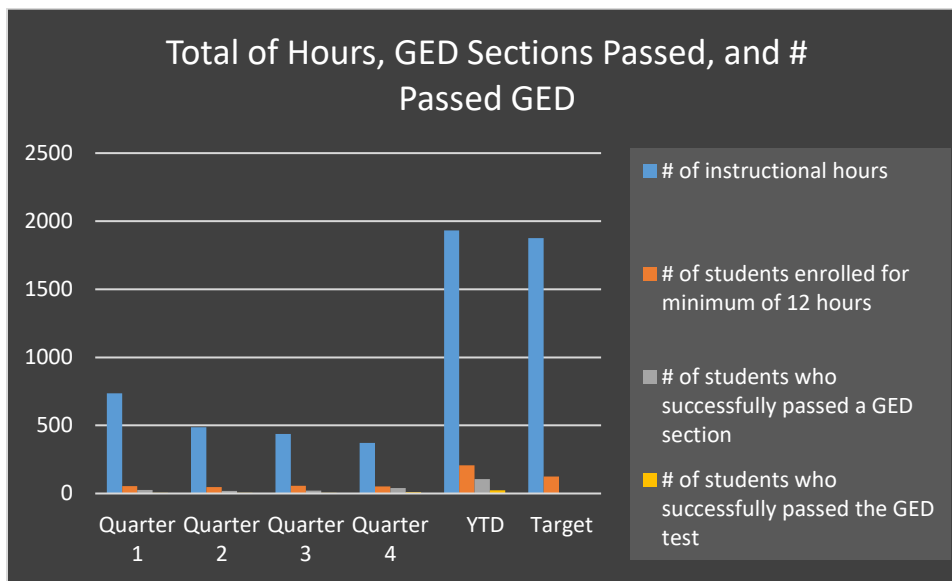
Table 2— Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries Chopping 4 Change Culinary Program

- Did not meet target goal of C4C new enrollments, percentage of completion was 73%
- Did not meet target goal of Culinary Training new enrollments, percentage completion was 64%
- No annual target goal set for other performance measures
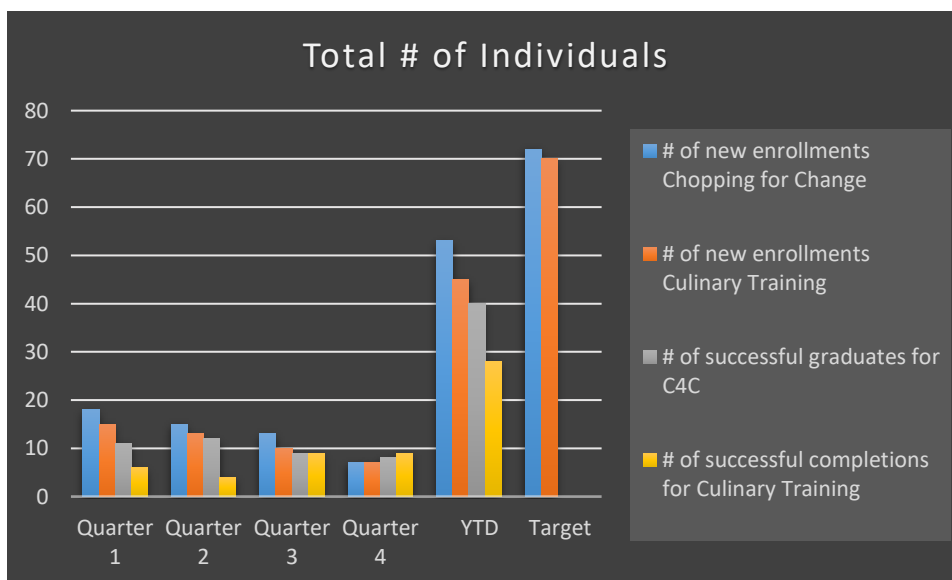
Table 3—Effective Leadership Academy Reentry Continuum Mentoring for Juveniles Program

- Program Exceeded Target Goal
- 75 was targeted goal for individuals completing program, program met goal by 129
- Annual target goal was only set for # of individuals completing program
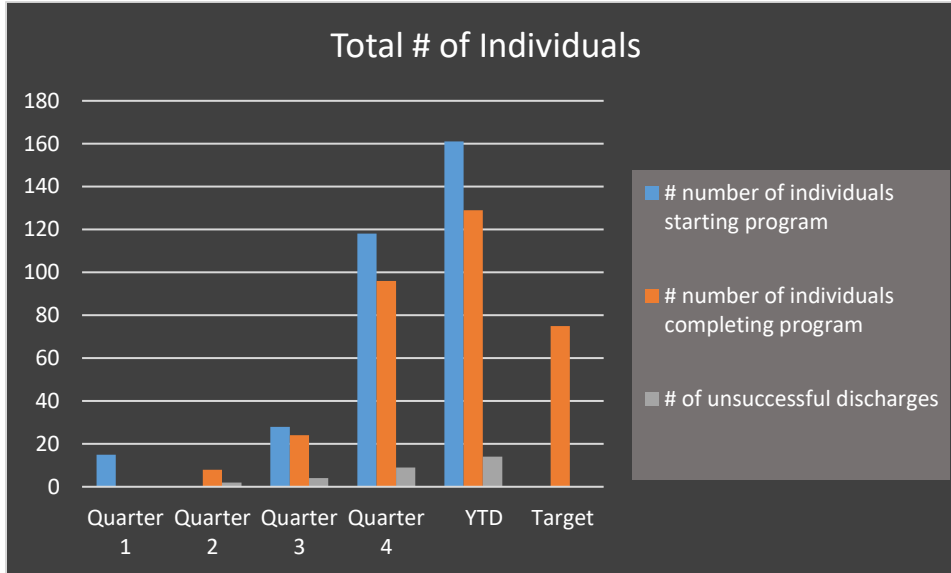
**Table 4— Oriana House North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center and (ATM) Program**

- Program Exceeded Target Goals
- 1800 was targeted goal for New North Star members, program met goal by 1882
- 200 was targeted goal for individuals attending ATM orientation, program met goal by 202
- No annual target goal set for # of Enhanced Members
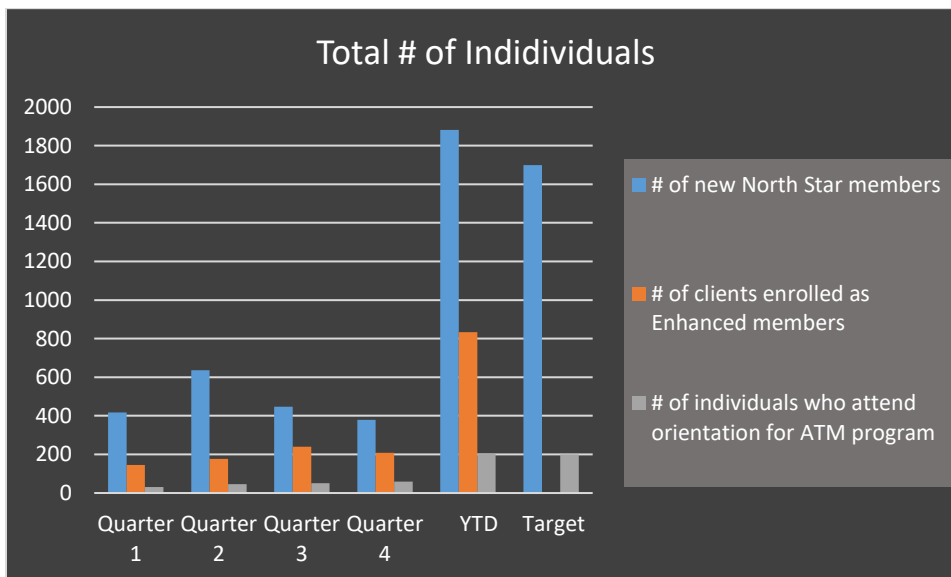
Table 5—YMCA/Y-Haven Open Door Transitional Housing Program

- Program Exceeded Target Goals
- 60 was targeted goal for participant served, program met goal by 143
- 45 was targeted goal for # of clients current in program at month end, program met goal by 49
- 35 targeted goal for # of men served, program met goal by 110
- 10 was targeted goal for # of women served, program met goal by 33


Total # of Individuals
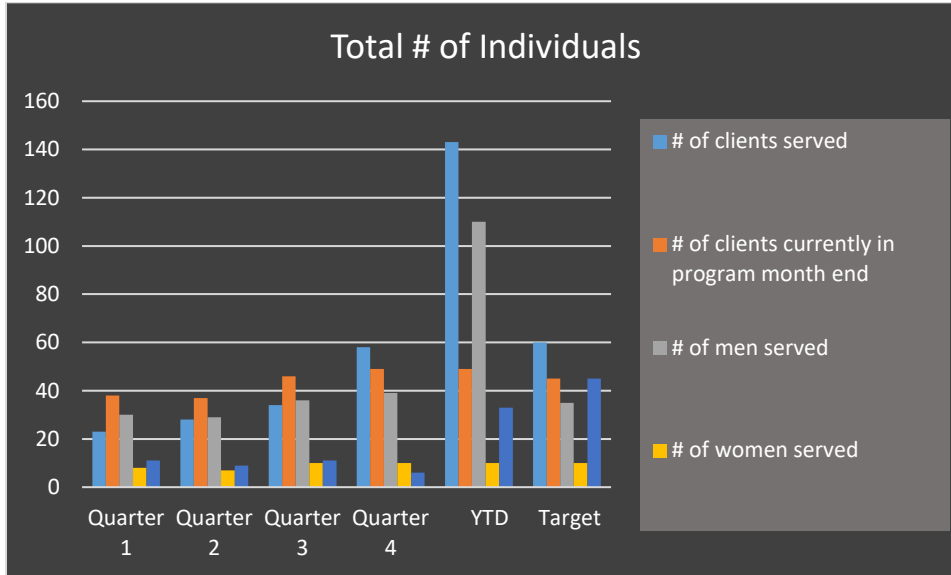
Table 6—Recovery Resources Reentry Redirection Program

- Program Exceeded Target Goal
- 300 was targeted goal for participant referrals, program met goal by 456
- No annual target goals set for # of participants enrolled, or # of participants assessed


Total # of Individuals
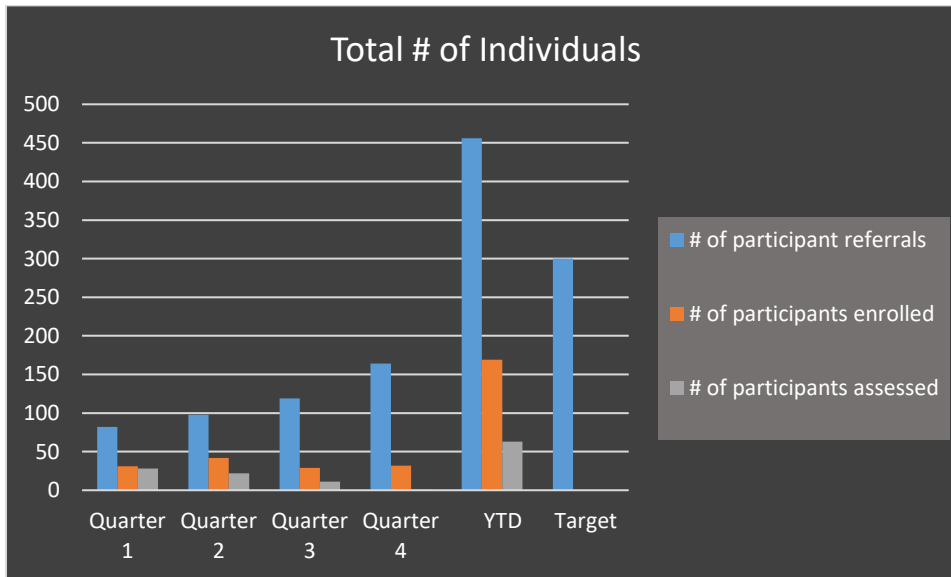
Table 7— Towards Employment New Employment Transitions Program (NET)

- Program did not meet annual target goal of starters, percentage of completion was 73%
- Met challenges with service interruption surrounding circumstances in Cuyahoga County Jail
- No annual target goal set for other performance measures
- Job retention retention and follow up reported is part of previous 2017 contract and terms
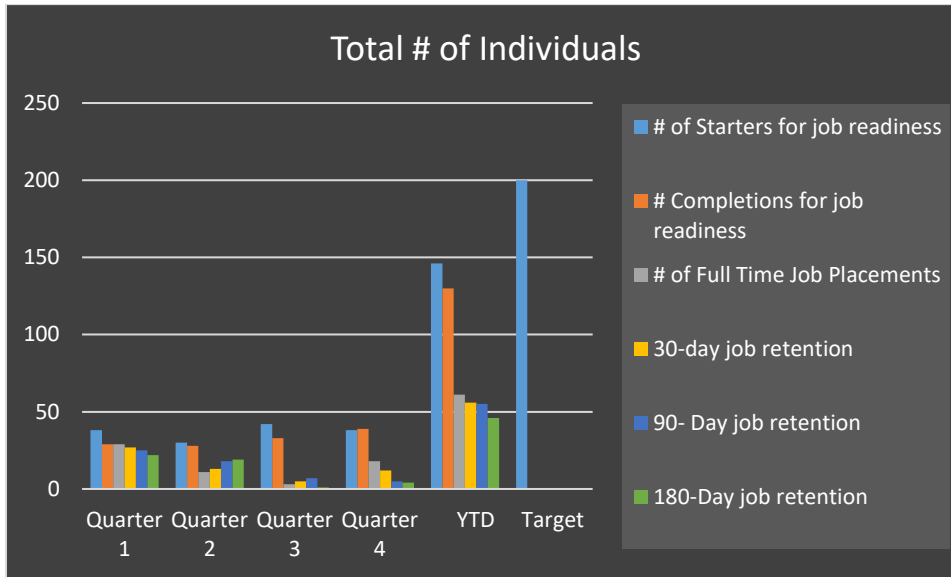
Table 8—Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Veterans Treatment Court Program

- Program Exceeded Target Goal
- 40 was targeted goal for New Vets accepted into program, program met goal by 183
- No annual target goals set for # successful discharges, docket size, or # of unsuccessful discharges
- Docket continues to grow in size and ended the year at 183
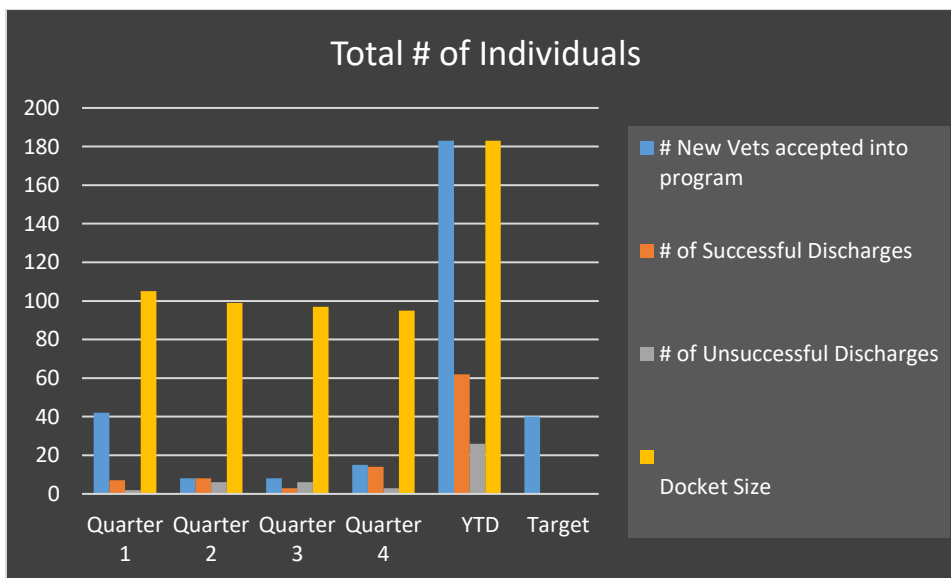
Table 9-- Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Reentry Court Program

- No annual target goals set
- 30 new clients were admitted in 2018, clients served in 2018 total is 51
- Total of ineligible and awaiting eligibility decision is 1,225
- Total Prison Monies saved using 2017 per diem $72.23, is $948,452.13
- Year to Date Saved State of Ohio from incarceration costs is $12,957,390.13
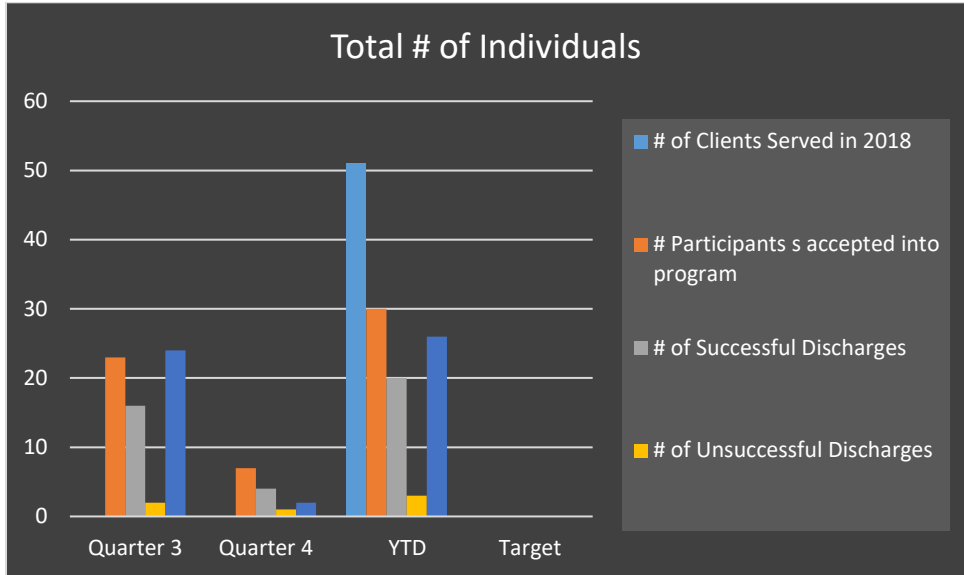
OOR Demographics of Clients Served

Figure 1-Gender

- In 2018, OOR Contracted Programs serviced 4150 individuals in programming. Of these 79% were male, and 21% Female
- The 4150 counts do not include repeat visitors or current clients, it only includes new clients
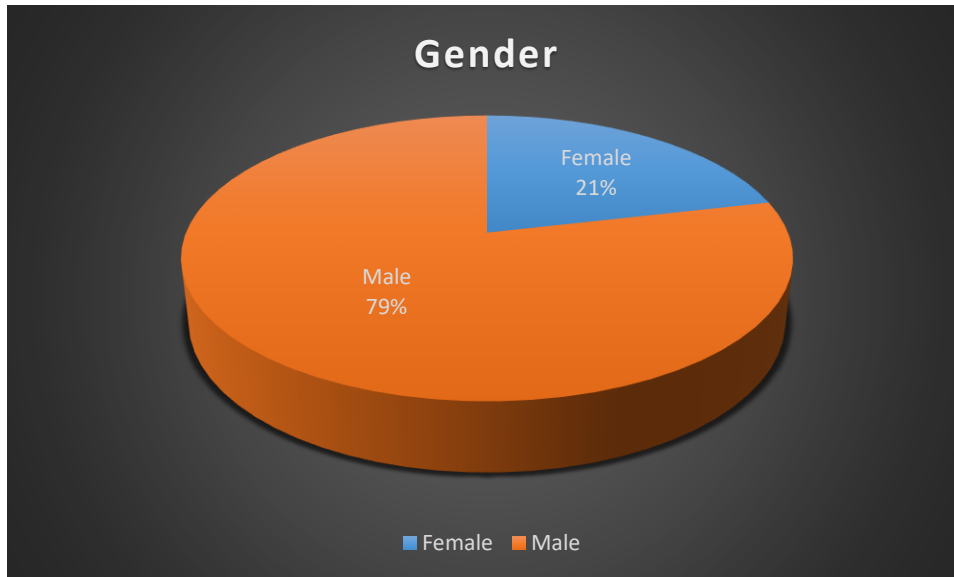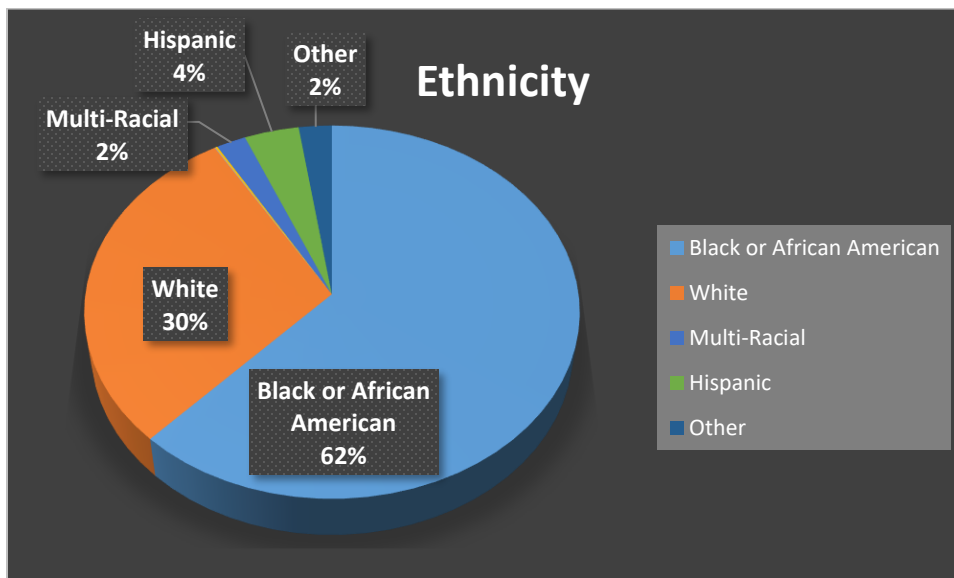

Figure 2-Race

- In 2018, OOR programs serviced 183 Veterans

Recommendations

Based on the data provided in this report, the Office of Reentry along with the assistance of PEI will continue to improve on monitoring and evaluation of contracted programs. Every program did not have targeted goal numbers or bench marks created within the contracts, which should be utilized as a road map to achieve goals. Although, many of the vendors either met or exceeded their targeted goals, there is a need to improve on the development of performance measures that are built into each contract, to ensure a more accurate read on how well the program logic model is working.

OOR will continue to monitor data received by each vendor, but it is important to consider different challenges that some vendors face in meeting their specified goals. Many of the vendors administer their services inside institutional facilities and sometimes unforeseeable conditions are experienced within these facilities, which can directly impact their provided services and meeting their targeted goals. Therefore, the OOR has opted to employ monthly, rather than quarterly reporting, as a proactive measure to staying informed of challenges. In cases, where a challenge has persisted for a couple of months, a meeting may be needed to discuss alternatives, or a detailed plan of corrective action should be implemented as a form of corrective measure.

In data collection and reporting, it is imperative that OOR standardize a survey for collection of demographics during initial assessment of a client. These data should be collected for a variety of characteristics of the population—e.g., # of clients served or referred, age, race, gender, city of residence, veteran status, and top (5) service needs of clients.) These data are necessary for forecasting, gap analysis, and real-time assessment of services needed for the reentry population. These data should be collected throughout the year, compiled into an annual report by each program, and turned into the Office of Reentry by the end of January the following year.

There can be some inconsistency in estimating the overarching needs of the average ex-offender from year to year, especially when it is compounded by the increased trend of ex-offenders leaving prison without supervision. Because of this, it is an added benefit for the OOR to collect and compile data of the top (5) service needs of clients. This will assist OOR with proper planning and forecasting of; outreach events, educational forums, and programming needs from year to year.

Lastly, I recommend that the next budget cycle include additional funding for the Office of Reentry to hire (1) additional full-time staff member. The information presented in this report demonstrates a growing trend within the reentry population, and it is crucial for our government agency to be in position to properly address this growing trend and attend to their diverse needs. To meet this direct demand would require another (FTE), which would increase our wherewithal to handle such an endeavor.

Questions about this report should be directed to Vikki Pope at Vikki.Pope@jfs.ohio.gov