

Testimony to House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile
Justice

Supporting HB2401

March 10, 2021

The Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission

The Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission respectfully requests the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice pass HB2401 - allowing the Secretary of Corrections to engage in public-private partnerships enabling educational and reentry programming for returning citizens. The Crime Commission and our Board of Directors wholeheartedly endorse policies and practices that ease the burden on Kansas' prisons, that creates better projected outcomes for returning citizens, while also increasing the number of available workers for Kansas businesses. Based on our collective work as an agency supporting prison reentry, the Crime Commission enthusiastically supports the Lansing Correctional Facility (LCF) Career Campus concept.

For historical purposes, the Crime Commission's Second Chance Program is a client-oriented re-entry management program working to identify and target criminogenic needs/risk to effectively reduce the risk of felons released from prison of reoffending. We have a history and a vast amount of experience in providing intensive one on one case management, job readiness training, housing assistance, access to basic services and health needs, while following an evidence-based model designed by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC). We have a history of successful collaboration with other programs to meet critical needs of ex-offenders returning to the Kansas City area. Referral participants were stabilized with assistance such as job readiness training that lead to employment, basic individual job needs like work boots and tools etc., transportation assistance bus passes/gas cards, rent, utilities legal documents and case management support. We believe it is imperative to provide re-entry assistance to reduce recidivism and make public safety a priority with our returning citizens.

Respectively,

Rick Armstrong
President/CEO
The Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission

Program Experience and Expertise

The Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 1949 at the recommendation of a Jackson County Grand Jury. Today, its mission is to advocate, develop strategies and operate innovative programs that bring people and public safety agencies together to power a safer, better Greater Kansas City community. KCMCC operates four core programs: The Greater Kansas City Crime Stoppers TIPS Hotline accepts anonymous tips for unsolved crimes in the area and is one of three most successful Crime Stoppers program worldwide; the Surviving Spouse and Family Endowment Fund (SAFE) provides no-strings-attached financial support to family members of first responders who are killed in the line of duty; the Metropolitan Community Service Program (MCSP) coordinates court ordered community service hours and partners with various community agencies to actively restore the community; and the Second Chance Risk Reduction Center. The Second Chance Risk Reduction Center was launched in 2008 as a public safety strategy to address recidivism and prevent crime. In 2010, the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City, through an Applicant Defined Grant, funded reentry and recidivism research with the University of Missouri-Kansas City and the Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission. This collaboration resulted in the study titled: Examining Offender Reentry in Metropolitan Kansas City: A Gaps Analysis. The study set a template for reentry services by prioritizing the most common and critical needs of employment, housing, and substance abuse treatment for released prisoners. The Gaps Analysis was presented publicly and was enthusiastically embraced by public safety agencies throughout the bi-state Greater Kansas City Area.

In direct response to the research highlighting the gap of inequity in available services for high risk offenders, the Second Chance Risk Reduction Center began working collaboratively with Missouri Department of Corrections (MODOC) Probation and Parole in 2010. Utilizing evidence-based practices and risk-need-responsivity methods, the primary work of Second Chance is to assist participants in their community reintegration by increasing community support, access to resources, and cognitive retraining.

In October of 2011, the Second Chance Risk Reduction Center initiated its case management, employment and housing services for the persons supervised by MODOC. Since then, SC has provided over eighteen hundred (1,800) qualifying "high risk" individuals with intensive case management referred from Missouri Probation & Parole and connected more than 4,000 additional persons with community referrals to assist in their reentry journey. SC boasts a 75% employment rate for those receiving case management employment assistance and has successfully housed at least 500 persons who did not have a sustainable home plan or experienced difficult housing issues, including 215 or 43% of whom are sex offenders. Up to this point, Second Chance participants have demonstrated an encouraging rate of recidivism of 5% while participants are enrolled for program services.