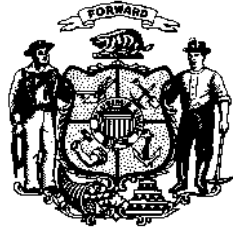


Tony Evers
Governor



State of Wisconsin

Wisconsin Council on Offender Reentry
Meeting Minutes for the Wisconsin Council on Offender Reentry
May 14, 2025 | 1:30pm – 3:00pm
Conducted Remotely via Teams

Council Members Present:

Ray Woodruff, Kari Beier, Emily Westover, Leah Fix, Michele Carter, Marlon Skenandore, Jeanne Geraci, Jerome Dillard, Sharlene Lopez

Council Members Not Present: Winn Collins, Elizabeth Lucas, Paul Manriquez, Carl Ashley, Jo Ann Hall, Andrew Murphy, Nicole Miller, Emily Hynek

Guests: Yulonda Anderson, Jennifer Loveland, Gynger Steele, Christian Braddy

Minutes: Cawley Hubner, Department of Corrections

I. Chairperson's Welcome & Council Updates

Ray Woodruff called to order the quarterly meeting of the Council on Offender Reentry at 1:33 PM on May 14th, 2025.

Ray introduced a new member to the council:

1. Leah Fix, Driver Qualification & Issuance Section Chief, Department of Transportation

Ray also introduced Yulonda Anderson, Client Services Specialist Counselor, Office of the State Public Defenders, who is expected to be an official member of the Council starting in July.

Ray also noted the following Council members terms are expiring and this will be their last meeting working on the Council.

1. Elizabeth Lucas, DOC Victim Services Director, Crime Victim Rights/Services Representative
2. Sharlene Lopez, Behavioral Health Administrator for St. Croix County, County Human Services Representative
3. Emily Hynek, District Attorney of Jackson County, District Attorney's Office Representative
4. Nicole Miller, UW La Crosse Patrol Sergeant, Law Enforcement Representative

Ray shared with the Council that April was 2nd Chance Month. 2nd Chance Month is a nationally-recognized effort to highlight opportunities and initiatives for individuals with justice involvement to

successfully return to their communities after incarceration. Ray highlighted two events to share with Council.

1. The first event was at the Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution (KMCI) Job Lab on April 29th. The Job Lab at KMCI is built on a partnership between the Department of Corrections, the Bay Area Workforce Development Board, the Department of Workforce Development, and regional employers. This event highlighted the partnership between regional employers and to coordinate with the KMCI Job Lab to provide employment opportunities for the justice involved population. The DOC now has 15 Institution-based Job Labs, which in partnership with DWD allows persons in our care the opportunity to create resumes, practice interviews, search and apply for employment on Job Center of Wisconsin prior to their release.
2. The second event was the DOC's first Friends and Family Forum hosted at Fox Lake Correctional Institution on April 9th. This event provided an opportunity for attendees to ask questions, offer feedback, and positively contribute to our state's corrections policies. A news article regarding the event was posted on [Wisconsin Examiner](#). The DOC plans to hold additional Friends and Family Forum's this year and has a web-page to discuss the Forums and Resources for friends and families of persons in our care ([DOC - Friends & Family Forums](#)).

II. Falcon Assessment – Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Kari Beier, Assistant Deputy Secretary, Department of Corrections

Kari Beier shared with the Council regarding an ongoing contracted assessment of the DOC by Falcon Correctional and Community Services that began in 2024. Falcon employs former correctional professionals to analyze DOC practices in a number of topics, not limited to the following examples: behavioral health, health care, restrictive housing, employee wellness, recruitment, and programming for the justice involved. The first step in this process was Data Gathering and Data Analysis, in which Falcon worked with the DOC's Research & Policy Unit to gather pertinent data related to the areas of review. The next step was over 20 Group Workshops and 15 onsite visits conducted by Falcon to review administration, management, Behavioral Health Services, Psych Services, etc. Falcon was able to gather information for on the ground look and evaluating DOC's practices.

Currently, Falcon is analyzing the data and information gathered and will provide a draft report of findings to the DOC for suggestions to improve DOC practices that is expected in the coming weeks. The DOC plans to make the findings of this report publicly available and will share with the Council as well.

III. Agency Budget Updates

Kari Beier, Assistant Deputy Secretary, Department of Corrections

Gynger Steele, Administrator –Division of Care and Treatment Services, Department of Health Services

Michele Carter, Administrator - Division of Employment and Training, Department of Workforce Development

Wisconsin's state government is currently in the process of crafting the Biennial Budget for 2025 – 2027 and the Chair asked departments to share relevant budgetary items included in the Governor's proposal for the Biennial Budget. The items indicated below are proposals and have not been enacted.

Kari presented on the DOC's Budgetary requests for a "New Era in Corrections in Wisconsin," which included facility changes, improvements, modernization efforts, and policies to address pressing

challenges across Wisconsin's correctional institutions. Highlights from this presentation are as follows. Budget requests from the Governor's office can be found [here](#).

- Increasing the capacity of Substance Use Disorder Earned Release Program (ERP)
- Expanding ERP to include Vocational Readiness Training
- Earned Compliance Credit for eligible individuals who have followed the rules, have not reoffended, and have complied with the terms of their sentence to earn compliance credits toward their supervision
- Investments in Community Supervision to expand support services for individuals supervised in the community
- Division of Juvenile Corrections Capital Improvements, which includes funding for a Madison based Type 1 Facility based on Act 185, expanding the Grow Academy in Oregon, WI, and funds for building a 3rd smaller facility in the Northeastern portion of the state. This also includes the closure of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools for Juveniles.
- Division of Adult Institutions Capital Improvements – Converting the Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools to an adult facility, renovating the Waupun Correctional Institution to be a “Vocational Village” based off the success seen in Michigan, converting Stanley Correctional Institution to maximum security institution, closing the Green Bay Correctional Institution, and expanding the Sanger B. Powers Correctional Center.

Gynger Steele presented on the Governors Biennial Budget recommendations for the Department of Health Services that could assist justice involved individuals in Wisconsin. All Budget requests submitted by the Governor's office for DHS can be found [here](#).

- Provide funds to support costs at the Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center (MJTC), which provides treatment for juvenile offenders transferred from DOC's Division of Juvenile Corrections. Funds would also support staffing expenses that would allow for an additional 26 juveniles to be treated at MJTC.
- Suicide Prevention & Crisis Response
 - Maintain resources for Wisconsin's 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline services.
 - Crisis Urgent Care and Observation Centers Facility Grants
 - Regional Crisis Stabilization Facilities Grants
- Peer Support Systems
 - Peer-Run Respite Centers – short-term residential stays for persons experiencing mental health or substance abuse issues, staffed by person who have had lived experienced with these conditions.
 - Peer-Run Warmline – 24-hour telephone service staffed by peer specialists to help callers cope with non-emergency mental health or substance abuse issues.
 - Peer Recovery Center Grants – A peer recovery center is a place where adults who have experienced mental health or substance use issues may meet with others who have had similar experiences to help sustain their recovery. Unlike a peer respite center, a peer recovery center does not offer overnight residential services.
- Expand Forensic Patient Treatment Capacity at Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center

Michele Carter presented on Governor's Biennial Budget recommendations for the Department of Workforce Development that could assist justice involved individuals in Wisconsin. More information on the requests can be found [here](#).

- Employer Hotline for Hiring Individuals with a Conviction Record – funds to staff new hotline created by Wisconsin Act 228 to answer employers' questions that are interested in hiring a justice involved individual
- Correctional Institution Job Lab Staffing – provide staffing at 13 DOC correctional facilities to provide consistent job lab staffing.

IV. Department and/or Agency Representative Report Outs

Jeanne Geraci announced the Benedict Center ([About the Benedict Center](#)) was awarded continuation to support women while incarcerated Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center (CRC) and their transition back into the community. The Benedict Center has worked with the Milwaukee County CRC since 2016 to support incarcerated women as they successfully return to the community.

Jeanne inquired about recidivism data points to analyze impacts on reducing recidivism involved in programming and the DOC indicated discussing with DOC's Director of Research & Policy to provide data points.

Sharlene Lopez thanked the Council and appreciated the information and resources provided by the Council that she was able to research and implement into St. Croix County Human Services.

V. Next Council Meeting – July 16, 2025

Meeting adjourned at 2:43 PM.