REENTRY
A BRIDGE TO SUCCESS!

Council on Offender Reentry Meeting
3/15/17 10am-12pm
3099 E. Washington Avenue
Madison, WI 53707

Call to Order:
Silvia Jackson called to order the quarterly meeting of the Council on Offender Reentry at 10:00 am on March 15, 2017.

Member attendees:
Attendees included Chuck Brendel, Karen Cumblad, Patrick Hughes, Dianne Jenkins, Silvia Jackson, Constance Kostelac, Daniel J. Gabler, Angela Mancuso, Jon Nejedlo, Michael Oberbrunner, Sue Opper, Paul Rifelj, Antwayne Robertson, Deborah Fischer (on behalf of Mitchell Warren), Honorable Stephanie Rothstein, and Carolyn Stanford-Taylor.

Members not in attendance:
Members not in attendance included Jerome Dillard, Beth Dodsworth, Michael Knetzger, and Bruce Palzkill.

Guests:
Guests included Jared Hoy (Reentry Project Manager, Department of Corrections), Daylan Beamon (Expert Consultant, ICF), Chytania Brown (Vice President, Employ Milwaukee), Kristine Palmer (Reentry Coordinator, Department of Corrections), Janell Lathrop (Reentry Unit, Department of Corrections), and Chantell Jewell (Employ Milwaukee).

Introduction of new members:
Silvia Jackson introduced the group to the three newest Council members: Antwayne Robertson (Director, Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services), Angela Mancuso (Executive Director, The Women's Center), and Karen Cumblad (Professional Counselor, Family Service of Waukesha).

Approval of Minutes:
The minutes for the December 2016 meeting were approved without discussion at 10:07am. Binders were disbursed to new Council members.

Jared Hoy, Reentry Project Manager, Department of Corrections
Specialty Courts Module
Mr. Hoy and Dr. Kostelac have been working closely with counties implementing specialty courts. Dr. Kostelac stated there are 46 counties and two tribes that have specialty courts and/or diversion

programs funded through the Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) Program. It would be helpful for there to be a good case management process available for those courts, which would serve as a central location for referral information, program progress, etc. To date, there has not been a consistent method for this throughout Wisconsin. There is a specific component of COMPAS for specialty courts case management that is currently not leveraged in Wisconsin. Before moving forward with pursuing this option for treatment/specialty courts case management, it is important to determine the level of need in Wisconsin for this type of tool.

A charter has been developed to outline the goals of a group working on this issue. The first goal identified in the charter is to assess need, and the second is that if it is determined this is something supported, then the decision regarding which case management tool should be pursued will be explored. This may be the specialty courts module within COMPAS or it may be a different tool.

This work is being discussed with the Council because of the different agencies represented in this group and members' connections with local stakeholders. Feedback is requested from the group regarding whether there is interest in participation in the workgroup looking at these areas. Specialty courts and diversion courts are part of the continuum involved in successful transition to the community.

Antwayne Robertson of Waukesha County stated they would be interested, and they are volunteering on behalf of Judge Jennifer Dorow.

Jared Hoy, Reentry Project Manager, Department of Corrections
Evidence-Based Practice and COMPAS
Jared Hoy discussed risk/need assessment (RNA) in general and the COMPAS risk/need assessment specifically. He talked about RNA, what it is, what it is not, decision points in Wisconsin when RNA is used, and norming and validation of COMPAS.

National Institute of Corrections identifies eight principles of effective intervention. Aligning with these principles helps to have a greater effect on the criminal justice system. These eight principles are often displayed in a ribbon; the bottom level of this ribbon is "risk/need: assess actuarial risk." Wisconsin DOC procured the COMPAS risk need assessment and case management system about five years ago for this purpose.

Mr. Hoy discussed the Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) principles. The risk and need principles involve providing level and dosage of services based on the individuals level of risk, knowing the individual's needs and how they related to recidivism (discussion about the top and lesser four criminogenic needs). Focus on the individual's needs means we do not have to have the same rules for everyone. Focusing on the individual's responsivity means we want programming and supervision that will be tailored to the individual's characteristics.

The research says we are 51-52% right at predicting someone's likelihood of reoffending. By using the actuarial tool by itself we are accurate around 70-71% of the time. It is important to not neglect professional judgment, however, and this is a message we emphasize in training. Pairing experience and knowledge with the actuarial tool brings us closer to about 80% accuracy in predicting someone's risk.

There have been four generations of these risk tools. The first generation relies solely on professional judgment with support from collateral information. The second generation was actuarial and based solely on static factors; predictions for future behavior are based on what someone has done in the past. The third generation tools included dynamic factors like substance abuse treatment, jobs, school, etc. Tools of this generation were based on theories of criminology. This generation included the advent of LSI-R and the Wisconsin risk/needs tool. The fourth generation tools connect risk and need information to case planning and a case management module. They are continually updated and revalidated and are subject to peer review. The fourth-generation RNA allows for professional judgment. Professionals should not rely solely on this tool for supervision levels; there is the opportunity for overrides to account for deviating from the tool's recommendation.

What is COMPAS?

When WIDOC was researching fourth-generation risk need assessment tools, many tools were considered and several bids were received; ultimately the bid was granted to Northpointe (recently rebranded to Equivant). COMPAS has been fully implemented in WIDOC since 2012.

COMPAS, which is web-based, gives a general risk score, a violent risk score, and a pre-trial risk score. It also identifies the individual's criminogenic needs. WIDOC staff members write pre-sentence investigations in COMPAS, enter rules of supervision, and use COMPAS for evidence-based response to violation (determining how to respond to violation for a person on probation or parole).

COMPAS is not a crime-specific predictor. It is not perfect, it's correct about 70-73% of the time (the percentage varies slightly depending which validation study is referenced). It is not meant to determine whether someone should be incarcerated. COMPAS uses multi-modal assessment, including an official records section, an interview section, and a self-report section in which the offender completes a series of multiple chose questions on paper. Calculating this assessment gives us the risk and needs scores.

Mr. Hoy went over the Department of Corrections flow chart for using COMPAS. As someone moves through the system from arrest to discharge, COMPAS is used at multiple decision points, as illustrated in the flow chart. In WIDOC, the assessment is done at intake to community supervision or incarceration, prior to release from prison, for supervision level classification, in response to violations, and when there have been significant changes in an offender's legal and/or life circumstances.

It is important for Wisconsin to norm and validate the tool, outside of the studies done by others. Initially COMPAS was normed on a national population of offenders. WIDOC has since normed the tool on our Wisconsin population. The department will continue to norm to make sure we are picking up on any changes. There have been studies done to validate this tool as well, which verifies that the tool is successful in doing what is intended to do.

Dianne Jenkins stated almost a third of the population has a history in foster care. She expressed hesitation in moving forward with COMPAS when there has been some discussion about machine bias, particularly related to race. She asked how WIDOC is responding to the criticism of machine bias. Jared noted the importance of "healthy skepticism" as some of the studies that have come out have helped to

push the field further. Articles have come out since the referenced machine bias article have rebutted and largely debunked that analysis due to inappropriate analysis techniques (i.e., Dr. Christopher Lowenkamp). This is a sensitive topic; we know the disproportionate racial representation in our system. In DOC we want to make sure the tool we use is not perpetuating that even further. This is a part of our validation study. The purpose of our validation study: is it predicting accurately across our entire population? The department's research team is pursuing arrest data to help them get a better picture. Mr. Hoy discussed the department's focus on education and training. He noted information has been added on the pre-sentence investigations to message to the judges. The message to staff is that the tool should be augmented as necessary; staff members should use professional discretion, staff cases with supervisors, etc. Dr. Silvia Jackson reinforced that it is all about balancing the use of actuarial risk assessments along with staff professional judgment and suggested that perhaps a future meeting could involve more discussion about the tool's design, results from validation, and norming studies in Wisconsin.

Daylan Beamon (ICF International, Inc.)
Chytania Brown, Employ Milwaukee
Online Work Readiness Assessment (OWRA)
Chytania Brown discussed how Employ Milwaukee was using many tools, but none of them were designed for determining job readiness. For example, the CareerLocker assessment tells someone what they are interested in but not whether they are ready to be employed. In 2015 the workforce development board received a grant through the SAFER Foundation Midwest Reentry Employment Network. The need was there to understand the population with whom they were working. Employ Milwaukee wanted to improve coordination and service delivery by making referrals that were evidence-based. In the past, records were maintained on paper in a file and the data was not being aggregated to learn more about the population.

ICF International, Inc. provided training to the Employ Milwaukee team. Case managers are now required to spend a little more time with the clients, including a one-hour assessment. The team has gone through motivational interviewing training. Taking the tool and the person together helps to create a plan that is appropriate for the individual. Now Employ Milwaukee is putting out contracts that truly address the needs of their client population. Although they help more than just the correctional population, one area of improvement was the development of a job center in the House of Corrections to bring these job search/work readiness resources to offenders prior to their release.

The goal is so standardize the data. The OWRA is not an actuarial tool; it is an objective work readiness assessment that comes from the perspective of the employer with regard to what an employer would believe is necessary for successful employment.

This tool is being deployed statewide in California, and many other states have adopted it. Ms. Brown talked about how this tool is customizable; Employ Milwaukee has tweaked it to fit their needs. The tool is web-based, so it accessible from anywhere one has internet-access. The Efforts to Outcome (ETO) system is what Employ Milwaukee uses to track all the participants. The OWRA interfaces with ETO to include the demographic information from ETO into OWRA. The tool has five different modules. Intake

module includes general information, household, and finances. The tool makes recommendations based on the barriers that are identified through the assessment. (Certain items are flagged as identifying barriers for the client.) This is only a recommendation and does not override the career coach's discretion.

Mr. Beamon walked through the assessment questions in the different modules. Throughout each section, the questions ask about different areas in different ways. For example, there are questions about substance use throughout different modules, asking more directly and whether a drug test was the reason for not getting or maintaining a job. Experience and interest is extremely important. It is important to know what interests the client. Other areas assessed include: education history, housing, transportation, general health, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence- safety (victim and perpetrator indicator questions), pregnancy, childcare and parenting, and relationships. There is also a final thoughts section in which the career coach or participant can add additional details of interest. Results of the assessment at included in the OWRA Self-Sufficiency Plan, which indicates strengths and barriers.

The group discussed staff discomfort in asking certain sensitive questions (i.e., questions related to mental health or substance abuse). Antwayne Robertson noted that there were similar issues with the eWiSACWIS system. To address this issue, the person entering the information is required to submit a reason for why a section is not completed. Regardless of what the person is stating, the career coach can write notes if there appears to be a discrepancy with their judgment and what the client is stating in response to the questions.

The next phase is for the interviewer and the client to go over the recommendations and build a plan. This is meant to be a strength-based process, for which the client needs to be involved. Employ Milwaukee needs to continue to update the resources available in that region, so this information can be worked into the referrals made in the planning phase to address specific barriers. The plan can be between 7 and 14 pages and plans will all be different based on the individual. This plan is dynamic; once a referral is made, Employ Milwaukee is now able to track the referral. This is something they were not able to do in the past.

Based on interests and previous work history, the tool gives regional Labor Market Information (LMI) employment projections for Wisconsin to match areas the individual is willing to consider for employment. Specifically, LMI provides current vacancies by field, wage information, required education, and projections for future employment in that area.

OWRA provides report capability. Security level determines what you are able to see. There is a dashboard that provides summary information about assessments completed and information about the types of clients being assessed. This information can be narrowed down to specific populations, including participants in Windows to Work, people in community corrections, etc.

If this assessment is done too soon prior to release, information can be different than the information obtained post-release. This tool can be used to react to what is happening right now in real time based on the aggregate information gathered.

In Employ Milwaukee's contract with ICF, they are working toward doing more webinars instead of in-person trainings or meetings.

Mr. Robertson noted the human aspect of this tool and the helpfulness of having the plan to help guide individuals seeking employment.

Next meeting: ~~The date for the next meeting was confirmed: June 15th, 1pm – 3pm.~~ Note: This meeting was rescheduled to June 21, 2017 from 1:30pm until 3:30pm.