



2022 – 2023 Biennial Budget Hearing

Every year more than 3500 citizens return to Cuyahoga County from incarceration. These are individuals who are released into the community with complex needs and there is no single solution to resolve these needs. Furthermore, there is no one single solution to eliminate recidivism.

The Office of Reentry exists as Cuyahoga County's commitment to serve these returning citizens by removing the stigma and social burdens that challenge their successful reintegration. The Office seeks to remove the stigma and social burdens by sustaining a reentry movement that provides the full range of comprehensive services, support, and monitoring opportunities needed for a successfully reentry.

The OOR provides direct funding to community agencies and organizations assisting returning citizens. We help to lead a county-wide reentry strategy that addresses barriers, challenges, and policies impeding individuals' successful reentry into the community.

That said, the biennial budget for 2022 & 2023 remains flat. There are no significant reductions or elimination of existing programs, initiatives, or services in this recommended budget.

The office has 6 FTEs and two vacancies at this time. I am currently working with HR to fill those vacancies by the end of the year.

In terms of new initiatives, the 2022-2023 budget is limited and does consist of new initiatives or expenditures. However, it is important for our office to identify additional funding resources. The office will explore federal funding with the Bureau of Justice Assistance/Second Chance Act to continue to provide vital reentry services to the community. We are also exploring additional opportunities in collaboration with the Office of Homeless Services and the Department of Development for the possible use of ARPA funds for an integrated approach.

Currently, we support the local justice system with the basic adult education/GED program in the jail. Our funding also pays for a probation officer in the Veterans Court to provide intensive case management services.

The Office of Reentry understands how important it is to have a safe and stable home for reentrants. Without a stable place to live, it is nearly impossible to maintain employment. The OOR funds the development of a housing plan for various models of housing, both long and short term.

As we move forward, the office will continue to promote the education, training, and employing of individuals leaving incarceration. This has proven to be a successful strategy in not only a successful reentry but in reducing recidivism and increasing safety within our communities.

Success story from Towards Employment:

Harvey was recently released from prison and living at the City Mission in Cleveland when he was referred to Achieve Staffing. Even though he has seven felonies on his background, we found an opportunity for employment with Diamond Metals. We helped him strengthen his manufacturing-related math skills, such as reading a tape measure and converting fractions to decimals. As a result, Harvey passed the pre-employment measurement test and was hired at \$14 an hour. In addition, we assisted Harvey with steel-toed boots, work pants, work shirts, and transportation assistance. He has continued to receive great reviews from the employer and has fully embraced the opportunity.