



**THE PHILADELPHIA
REENTRY COALITION**

**STRATEGIC PLAN
JANUARY 2021-
DECEMBER 2022**



BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2020, the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition (PRC) began the process of strategic planning, with support from Strategy Arts that was sponsored by the City's Office of Reentry Partnerships (ORP). PRC was sunsetting its previous five-year countywide plan "Home for Good" and considering updates to its structure, governance, and membership framework, including development of formal bylaws. This planning process was informed by the challenges and obstacles experienced by PRC throughout the implementation of Home for Good, as well as a set of minimum operating standards for county reentry coalitions that Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) developed in early 2020.

PLANNING TEAM

The PRC Leadership empowered a strategic planning committee (volunteers from the larger group) to work with Strategy Arts on the strategic planning process. The members of PRC's strategic planning committee were: Jeffrey Abramowitz (JEVS), Laurie Corbin (PHMC), Judge Djerassi (FJD), Maurice Jones (PAR Recycle Works)*, Abd'Allah Lateef (Campaign for the Faith Sentencing of Youth)*, Robert Rosa (New Leash on Life)*, Laura Schwartz (Regional Housing Legal Services), Reverend Michelle Simmons (Why Not Prosper)*, Pam Superville (ORP), Aviva Tevah (ORP), Bianca van Heydoorn (ORP), TJ von Oehsen (ORP). Planning team members with an asterisk joined the planning team between Phases I and II, upon invitation, as local reentry leaders with lived experience. The invitation was extended because the planning committee felt there were not enough people involved in strategic planning who identified as having lived experience of incarceration.

RESEARCH, STAKEHOLDER INPUT & ESTABLISHING STRUCTURE AND BYLAWS

After doing background research on the history and current efforts of the PRC and a scan of four other coalitions that shared characteristics with PRC, including in Philadelphia and across the country, Strategy Arts conducted a robust stakeholder research process. Stakeholder research included 10 interviews with fourteen individuals identified by the planning committee as critical voices to the planning process, and a stakeholder survey that received 75 total responses from PRC's distribution list. All of this input informed two Coalition-wide stakeholder meetings, as well as multiple working sessions and strategic planning meetings that Strategy Arts facilitated through which the planning committee developed the new bylaws and strategic plan.

THEMES FROM STRATEGIC PLANNING RESEARCH

PRC conducted in depth interviews with a variety of Coalition members. The chart below summarizes what members identified as the most important things for PRC to consider in their work.

CATEGORY	THEME
STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRC is a convener that brings together cross-sector organizations where individuals can network, build relationships, and serve as a hub for reentry work • PRC shares information (via reports, meetings, etc.) in a uniquely beneficial way that is useful to members • PRC is uniquely positioned to set the strategic direction for reentry in Philadelphia
WEAKNESSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRC lacks the power to hold organizations accountable and enforce its vision • Grassroots/community organizations led by people with lived experience are underrepresented in PRC • Members are uncertain about PRC's identity, role, areas of focus, mission, internal operations
NEAR TERM CHANGES FOR PRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship building: Focus even more on building relationships and facilitating partnerships between organizations and individuals doing reentry work across silos and between spheres of power • Access to resources: Facilitate or provide access to resources (funding and capacity) for PRC members • Share effective strategies: Share the breath of strategies, programs and organizations that demonstrate they can do reentry work in an innovative, culturally competent, and effective way • Information sharing: Increase sharing of non-bias, data-informed information about re-entry, news, techniques, and opportunities occurring across the City to membership at a regular interval

THEMES FROM STRATEGIC PLANNING RESEARCH

CATEGORY	THEME
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of opportunities: There is an increased need to create opportunities for people coming home including supporting investment in entrepreneurs, closing gaps in technical skills, and finding pathways to meaningful employment • Barriers to resources: Money/resources do not reach the people and programs that need it • Institutional resistance: Resistance from traditional institutions pushes against the criminal justice strategies buoyed by today's social movement (police reform, deconstruction of racism, decarceration) • Commitment to racial justice: A commitment to racial justice work is emphasized in all parts of PRC and PRC's member organizations including its leadership, values, employees, programmatic priorities, and measured via process metrics • Data sharing: Data transparency and information sharing between organizations has increased value and impact
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">CHANGES IN REENTRY IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced understanding of reentry: Shifting from reentry as a construct of criminal justice and correction to a social systems issue with a goal of creating pathways to prosperity • Stronger community empowerment: Communities are better equipped to repair the harm of incarceration and can support individuals transitioning back into their families and communities • Widening technology gaps: Returning individuals have an increased gap in relationship to rapidly evolving technologies • Increasing focus on pre-entry: Pre-entry, especially at the hyper local level, is increasingly important to those doing reentry work • Increased value and normalization of people coming home: People transitioning are increasingly thought of as valuable members of their community and society (i.e. fair chance hiring, removing barriers to civic participation, etc)

STRATEGIES AND VISION

The following summary presents the overarching strategies, organizational vision, and two-year strategic initiatives for the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition (PRC). It is intended to present a snapshot of the strategic direction of the coalition.

OVERARCHING STRATEGIES

Lead with the values of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion and meaningfully center lived experience in all of PRC's work.

Lead the effort to transform the mentality that frames people coming home in terms of criminality. Instead treat people who have been involved or are at risk of being involved with the legal system as valuable individuals deserving dignity, self-determination, and pathways to prosperity.

Constantly support collaborative efforts between PRC members that are aimed at removing barriers and supporting full, self-determined lives for people involved or at risk of being involved with the legal system.

ORGANIZATIONAL VISION

Leadership & Capacity:
PRC's diverse and representative leadership body and structure encourages member engagement and provides a clear and hopeful vision for significant improvements in the reentry field in Philadelphia.

Advocacy, Best Practices & Opportunities:
PRC establishes a position on racial justice and a set of shared values that inform practices in the reentry field and an advocacy platform that address barriers to prosperity faced by people involved or at risk of being involved with the legal system.

Supporting Members:
PRC members use the coalition as a resource to build their own capacity to work in greater alignment with a set of shared values and more effectively serve people involved or at risk of being involved with the legal system.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Leadership, Accountability, & Transparency:
Improve leadership accountability, clarify expectations, and create a pipeline of leaders with lived experience in decision-making roles. Prioritize transparency and clarity in communicating with members about the Coalition's decision-making and organizational structure, including its relationship to Philadelphia City government and criminal justice agencies.

Advocacy Platform:
Create the structure for PRC to take evolving positions on language, beneficial practices, and policy (including legislation) that will impact people involved or at risk of being involved with the legal system.

Member Support Hub:
Construct a clearly defined "hub" of member services that facilitates member collaboration/referrals, capacity building, and ability to effectively serve people involved or at risk of being involved with the legal system.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES

INITIATIVE 1: LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND TRANSPARENCY

Goal: Improve leadership accountability, clarify expectations, and create a pipeline of leaders with lived experience in decision-making roles. Prioritize transparency of the Coalition's decision-making and organizational structure (including its relationship to Philadelphia City government and criminal justice agencies).

ACTIVITIES

- Activity 1.1: Establish revised bylaws that reflect the structure of PRC, including a governance system that encourages collaboration between the Coalition, Philadelphia City government, and criminal justice agencies.
- Activity 1.2: Communicate PRC's revised decision making and organizational structure and new 2-year strategic plan intentionally to members, and openly to all others.
- Activity 1.3: Elect a new Steering Committee.
- Activity 1.4: Establish clear and effective mechanisms for PRC leadership and/or staff to disseminate and receive information to/from members, including feedback.
- Activity 1.5: PRC commits to actively responding to and advancing the interests of PRC members with lived experience.

INITIATIVE 2: ADVOCACY PLATFORM (POLICY AND PRACTICES)

Goal: PRC takes evolving positions on language, beneficial practices, and policy (including legislation) that will impact people involved or at risk of being involved with the legal system.

ACTIVITIES

- Activity 2.1: Align members around shared PRC values.
- Activity 2.2: Steering Committee develops recurring process for Coalition to identify and address policies and practices that impact people coming home.
- Activity 2.3. Endorse a set of best practices in reentry that emphasize dignity and pathways to prosperity.
- Activity 2.4. Develop a member education and awareness strategy focused on legislation and other policy related to reentry

INITIATIVE 3: MEMBER SUPPORT HUB

Goal: Construct a clearly defined "hub" of member services that facilitates member collaboration/referrals, capacity building, and ability to effectively serve people involved or at risk of being involved with the legal system.

ACTIVITIES

- Activity 3.1. Support expansion of an existing database that provides access to member services, facilitates collaboration, and promotes sharing information between members
- Activity 3.2. PRC creates an organization-wide training and education curriculum supported by members that leverages member strengths, data and lived expertise
- Activity 3.3. Identify and support opportunities for ongoing collaboration between PRC members, including making referrals and coordinating services more effectively.



CONCLUSION

As of June 16th, 2021, the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition's membership has elected the initial members of a new Steering Committee, four of seven of whom identify as having lived experience with the justice system. The Chair, Vice-Chair, and five at large members have also appointed five subcommittee chairs and a representative of the Office of Reentry Partnerships to make up the remainder of the Steering Committee for the next 2 years.

The success of any strategic plan is in its implementation. PRC's Steering Committee and Coordinator will be responsible for advancing the strategic initiatives and activities outlined in this plan and ensuring that the Coalition's overarching strategies are integrated into each step. Though there is still much work ahead, this process has created a solid, member led foundation from which PRC will be building. The work accomplished to this point provides a clear and hopeful vision for significant improvements in the reentry field in Philadelphia.



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