

**STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLAN  
FOCUS GROUP MEETING  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 2007  
KANSAS CITY, MO**

(In conjunction with the ACA's 137<sup>th</sup> Congress of Correction)

A strategic workforce plan focus group meeting was held in Kansas City, Missouri. The group meeting was facilitated by Debbie Boyer (OK), Joyce Fogg (VA) and Chuck Kehoe (VA). [Reference files for agenda.] Debbie Boyer to tabulate meeting evaluation forms.

The following represents feedback from the attending participants in areas covered by the agenda:

**Trends**

- What are you seeing in your state?
  - Retirement of large numbers of baby boomer staff
  - Workforce speaks different languages – multilinguistic
  - Applicants now want to be interactive to mesh with current multigenerational gap – wants computer (on line) training v. standard face to face training
  - Applicants use corrections as a job v. a career – young people change career a lot
  - Mentoring (topdown)
  - Applicants with differing cultural perspectives that results in different ideas about punishment and how to deal with offenders
  - Lack of concern for job security
  - Corrections is marketed as a paramilitary organization that is tied to reentry
  - More officers crossing the line on contraband because staff knows inmates. Because many offenders' family members comprise staff it makes it difficult to screen and results in more issues with staff and having to move inmates
  - Today's policies relating to dress codes and ethics are different and officers are being compromised
  - How to deal with more officers crossing the line and enforcement of policies and ethics – there needs to be consistency on how to deal with staff issues
  - There is an increase in offenders encouraging their family members to become correctional officers which means that inmates are really recruiting for the dept. of corrections
  - We need to be more flexible about hiring ex-offenders
  - Retreading of baby boomers – rehiring former staff to replace retiring personnel, which results in not getting fresh ideas
  - Because today's environment is not paramilitary in style there is a loss of respect for officers – the field needs to go back to feeling like professionals and there are a lot of training officers who treat personnel like they would treat inmates, so there is a loss of respect on the part of staff
  - Because of dual career families, staff today expects more flex time and family time – are policies and procedures flexible enough for today's families? Hearing about the good ole days doesn't help
  - More females in workforce

### Workforce Center

- What should it “look” like?
- What are your expectations?
- Where do you want/need help/support?
- How will we know it is working?
- What will keep your attention?
  - Don’t want it to look like others – it’s not just for HR staff – there is a need for employees to do HR, too
  - 1<sup>st</sup> opportunity to see corrections – it should reflect professionalism and make a good impression – site should be well done
  - Should reflect diversity of working in corrections– how can we guide them to through careers
  - Focus on clearinghouse of good ideas
  - Take opportunity to upgrade corrections’ image, parallel corrections to other professions
  - Needs to be user friendly for current field – but also for others who may be entering field
  - Needs to be friendly to academic community to recruit C.J. majors, historical issues, challenges, etc., so that grad students can focus on a career in corrections while still in school
  - Clearinghouse for students (market analysis, compensation, benefits like tuition assistance)
  - Provide information that will also be helpful to politicians and their staffers
  - Initiate some type of positive workforce environment to combat negative image for commercialism
  - Try an initiative to attract students and give them a chance to pursue a career in corrections – rethink their mentality

### Vision of Information and Support

- What will be helpful?
- What information should be collected and made available?
- Instant messaging
- Web site
- Real-time information
- Good ideas
- Webinars
- Survey
  - Real time info important for legislatures
  - Aftermath reports to share lessons learned
  - Staffing info – do a common survey instead of individual surveys to provide info such as uniform v. non uniform; compensation; retention stats
  - Present us as an inclusive system – not a discreet organization that stands alone – even if less info that bridges entire system
  - Provide link to other agencies, such as BJS and BJA
  - Continuum of correctional services approach – so can see as a career field
  - Need to see that corrections staff are a progressive group – have website show how to develop corrections career through other links on website (NIC, FEMA, etc.) for career enhancement
  - Have OCA courses linked to website
  - Webinars – consensus was that webinars are good. Possible topics
    - ▲ Coaching & how to train employees
    - ▲ Retention and recognition initiatives
    - ▲ Respect in workplace, sexual harassment, financial management
  - Instant messaging – consensus of group was that it was not used a lot

### *Attracting and Retaining*

- Innovative developments
- Good ideas
  - Number of downloads/hits on websites
  - Track number of agencies who use it to get applicants
  - Use as a job bank – track how many people get jobs thru using this service
  - Link website to 1,000 job centers – noted that 70% of all jobs were obtained via internet
  - Send a basic e-mail of trends and initiatives – it was noted that there needed to be follow up to see how we did on the suggestions provided at this meeting
  - How many people know about the workforce center – one of the benchmarks
  - Issue a progress report
  - Highlight good ideas
  - Attract staff with honesty – instead of weeding out beforehand – focus on all types of folks

### *Branding and Marketing the Workforce Center to Corrections Professionals and the Public*

- Use word of mouth to promote workforce center
- Show the partnership between staff and volunteers
- Handling stakeholders with community
- Who is our business really for? Honesty about who we really want instead of weeding out who we don't want.
  - Who do we want
  - Who will stay

### *Next Steps*

- Download lists to see if Workforce Center Working – provide correct and relevant information
- Link all state agencies to one site – structure it so that it's easy to find an agency within a state
- Include faith-based initiatives – volunteer chaplains v. paid chaplains