

STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
**CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**PRISON REFORM--THE COMMUNITY JOINS FORCES WITH CORRECTIONS**

*Today 26-member Reentry Council meets for first time to begin work on prison reform*

SANTA FE – Ninety-five percent of people who come to prison eventually get out and return home to their communities. Prison reform is about equipping incarcerated prisoners with the necessary skills to manage their lives once they're on their own, outside the prison walls. "Rehabilitating and transforming an offender's life is much bigger than the Corrections Department. It will take the entire community and its resources to make this work," said Gail Oliver, deputy secretary of reentry and prison reform for the New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD).

The Reentry Council is comprised of community leaders and state government stakeholders. Creating the council was one of the top recommendations from Governor Bill Richardson's Task Force on Prison Reform--a diverse group that met in 2008 to look for ways to reduce incarceration and crime. The Reentry Council's work will be an investment in public safety and the social and economic health of families and communities throughout New Mexico.

The New Mexico Corrections Department has approximately 6,400 incarcerated offenders and approximately 19,500 offenders on probation and/or parole supervision in the community. During fiscal year 2008, NMCD records show that there were 3,752 admissions to prison. Thirty-four percent of those admissions were parole violators returning to prison.

The Reentry Council's efforts will enhance current prison reform initiatives that are already in the works at the Corrections Department. In January, the department implemented the COMPAS risk and needs assessment pilot project. The COMPAS is a tool to assist prison staff with placing inmates in appropriate prison programs and services based on the individual offender's needs. In July, the department will implement an offender management program, which will allow department staff to track inmate progress in various programs, work assignments and education. The new program will also closely align with the COMPAS assessment, and will guide case management decisions from the first day in prison until the last day on community supervision.

The Reentry Council will meet today, from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in Santa Fe, at the Corrections Department's Central Office, located at 4337 State Road 14.

(Continued on page 2)

**Reentry Council**

1. Gail Oliver – NMCD Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Prisoner Reentry and Prison Reform
2. John Bigelow – Chair, Prison Reform Task Force and Sentencing Commission
3. Bernie Lieving – NMCD Reentry Bureau Chief
4. John Wheeler – DPS Chief Counsel/Crime Policy Advisor to Gov. Richardson
5. Sandra Dietz – NM Adult Parole Board and former victim’s advocate
6. Paul Guerin – UNM Social Research
7. David Martinez- CYFD-Deputy Cabinet Secretary
8. Bruce Trigg, M.D. – Department of Health
9. Karen Meador-Behavior Health Senior Policy Advisor
10. Charlene Knipfing- NMCD Probation/Parole Director
11. Carl Koestner-Archdiocese of Santa Fe
12. Hazel Mella-Governor Richardson’s Faith Based Advisor
13. Chris Romero-Workforce Solutions-Apprenticeship Coordinator
14. Terri Cole-Statewide Workforce Board Chair
15. Cindy Padilla – NM Agency on Aging Cabinet Secretary
16. Angie Vachio-Advocate
17. Pam Hyde-Human Services Department Cabinet Secretary
18. Alvin Warren-Native American Affairs Cabinet Secretary
19. Peter Bochert-Drug Court/Administrative Office of the Court
20. Reena Szezepanski – Drug Policy Advisor
21. Christine Vallejos- NMCD Deputy Warden, Central New Mexico Correctional Facility
22. David Eisenberg-Chief of Public Defender’s Office
23. Harold Bailey-African American Affairs Executive Director
24. Fred Mondragon, Economic Development Secretary
25. Veronica Garcia, Public Education Department Secretary
26. Reed Dasenbrach-Higher Education Department Secretary

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