

The Center for  
Community Transitions



building people, not prisons

February 1, 2015

Senator Phil Berger  
President Pro Tempore  
North Carolina Senate  
16 West Jones Street  
Room 2008  
Raleigh, NC 27601-2808

Representative Tim Moore  
Speaker of the House  
North Carolina House of Representatives  
16 West Jones Street  
Room 2304  
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096

Dear Sirs:

Attached you will find The Center for Community Transitions' annual report to the Legislature for the Center for Women. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to know more.

Warmest Regards,

*Myra M. Clark*

Myra M. Clark  
Executive Director  
The Center for Community Transitions

Enclosures

CC: Joint Appropriations Committee for Justice and Public Safety  
Mecklenburg County Legislative Delegation  
Commissioner David Guice  
Director George Soloman  
Western Region Director Todd Pinion  
John A. Tate, III, President, CCT Board of Directors  
Reports@NCleg.net  
Approps@NCleg.net





**Report to the Legislature**  
**The Center for Community Transitions**  
**The Center for Women**  
**FY14**

The Center for Community Transitions is a non-profit organization that began in 1974 as ECO, Inc. and was formed as a result of a Vista grant initiated by the NC Department of Correction. The original goal was to help men leaving prison find employment and housing. This is still one of the organization's primary goals. Over the last 40 years programs have been added to serve women who are being released from prisons/jails and the families and children of people who are incarcerated. **The Center for Community Transitions (CCT)** now has three primary programs, **LifeWorks!**, **Families Doing Time** and **The Center for Women**. CCT's focus is "building people not prisons" reduce recidivism, and interrupt the next generation from entering prison.

**THE CENTER FOR WOMEN**

**The Center for Women** opened in 1987 as a contract work release program for state female offenders. This was a result of the closing of the Residential Facilities for Women operated by NCDOC in the early 1980's. Those facilities allowed a woman to complete her prison sentence near her home and her children to promote a positive transition. A bill introduced by Representative Jo Graham Foster in 1986 made the work of the Center for Women possible. The goal of this program is to help women make a successful transition from prison to their family and community while upholding the goals of the NC Department of Public Safety.

When the Center for Women opened in 1987, it served 20 women. In October of 2010, the program moved into a newly built 30-bed facility. The new facility is located on 2.8 acres of land and is a half block from the planned light rail line from uptown Charlotte to UNC-Charlotte. The **Families Doing Time** program is located on this site and provides parenting and family problem solving guidance for the inmates.

The three programs of the Center for Community Transitions are interwoven and clients often participate in more than one program. The inmates at the Center for Women participate in all three programs as they are appropriate for their transition needs. A description of each program follows.

The **LifeWorks!** program is the longest running program of the organization. Today this program provides employment readiness training, soft skills training, and weekly job search groups, opportunities for participants to volunteer in the community, case management and career planning. This program is also offered to Work First enrollees of the Department of Social Services who have criminal records. CCT subscribes to a cognitive behavioral approach to clients in all settings where clients are served such as classroom, groups and individual meetings. The cognitive behavioral approach matches client behavior with client beliefs and



values. A simplified explanation of the cognitive behavioral approach is that every interaction with clients introduces clients to thinking skills, and poses questions about other possible options, consequences of each option, does it match what they value and believe and if not what would. In FY14, 94% of those who completed the program and found employment did not recidivate.

The **Families Doing Time**(FDT) program serves families of people who are incarcerated. Research (Berg and Heubner, 2011) shows that maintaining family contact reduces recidivism and can improve post release employment opportunities. When someone is released families are often able to provide the basic needs of housing, food, and transportation allowing the ex-inmate to focus on finding employment and improving education and work skills. EKWIP (Empowering Kids with Incarcerated Parents) is a school and community based support group for children with incarcerated parents. In FY14, 77% of the children who participated in the EKWIP program showed an increase in pro-social behaviors and attitudes as reported by teachers and caregivers. Other family services offered are short term family counseling, a monthly dinner meeting for participating families with programs addressing issues such as bullying, internet safety, parent teacher conferences, and open mic night for kids and parents. Family reunification and reintegration are concerns for many of the families we serve. Staff assists with problem solving, managing expectations and feelings which are critical to successful reentry in the family and the community.

## **CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION**

The selection of participants for the Center for Women is made by the NC Department of Public Safety within the following guidelines:

- must be within three years of release
- have achieved minimum custody level 3
- capable of going to work in the community
- not had a serious infraction within the last year or a minor infraction in the last six months
- medically cleared to be at a facility with limited on site medical staff
- make a request for transfer to their case manager

## **PROGRAM SERVICES**

Programs offered at the Center for Women address *criminogenic factors* which contribute to increased risk of criminal involvement. There are static and dynamic criminogenic factors. Static factors are those things that cannot be changed such as age at first arrest or a person's current age. Dynamic factors are those things that can be changed such as education, parenting skills, work experience, personal associations, family relationships, leisure activities, thinking, problem solving and communicating, self-management, and involvement in substance abuse. Helping clients change from risky, antisocial behaviors, harmful associates, and negative, antisocial thinking to productive and successful citizens is an outcome the Center for Women works to achieve.

**Work Release-** Work release is the primary program at this facility, allow inmates to work in the community and gain work experience, receive constructive feedback, achieve higher levels of performance and earn rewards for hard work. Bridging the gap in work due to incarceration time creates a positive step to successful reentry.

**Study Release-** Equal to work success is educational success. Many of those incarcerated failed in school. Research (Davis, 2013) continues to show increased educational achievement



reduces recidivism. CCT pays for inmates to attend school through community donations to a small educational fund and donations from The Sunshine Lady Foundation.

**Family Services-** Rebuilding broken family relationships is key to restoring and strengthening families. The staff of both the Center for Women and the Families Doing Time programs works with each inmate to find ways to improve family relationships, especially the relationship between the inmate and her children. Some of the efforts to build these relationships include preparing for visits, practicing difficult conversations, activities during visitation to build positive experiences, and improving communication with caregivers, teachers and others in the child's life. Each year CCT hosts a Family Day event with food and activities to build positive experiences to facilitate a more successful transition.

**Community Volunteer Program-** Community volunteers play an important role for inmates in the development of positive relationships, access to positive leisure activities and addressing substance abuse and chemical dependency. Volunteer activities with inmates often include volunteering, attending church and Bible study, shopping for toiletry and personal items (CCT does not have a canteen), hobbies, games, budgeting, exercise and health workshops, and gardening to name a few.

**Life Skills Development-** Some of the activities listed under the volunteer program are life skill development activities such as budgeting and hobbies. Examples of life skills that are taught are part of the day-to-day program providing inmate's opportunities for practicing conflict management; leadership; balancing work, school and home responsibilities; parenting, team work; and communication. Practicing "right" living while incarcerated leads to "right" living when released.

**Case Management-** Case managers work with inmates to prepare for release. Often this means looking at issues that may arrive once released that can deter a successful transition. Inmates review their credit reports and driving records and are able to work with creditors and the DMV to pay outstanding bills or charges. Inmates have paid past due tax bills, utility bills, and traffic/driving fines and fees. Case managers assist with finding resources to address substance abuse issues and attendance at AA, NA and Alanon meetings. Since the facility is small, contact with case managers occurs frequently and may include problem solving, career planning, resolving family issues, correcting behaviors, and brief counseling. The case managers use the cognitive behavioral approach described in the LifeWorks! section to help clients practice problem solving and self-evaluation techniques.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

CCT receives NCDPS audits and inspections of the facility, inmate trust fund, safety/security of the facility and program audits. Facility Services Division of Department of Health and Human Services conducts annual health inspections. Annually, CCT is audited by an independent auditor and completes financial certification for United Way of Central Carolinas and the Better Business Bureau.

CCT follows NC DPS guidelines and procedures for accountability of inmates and conducts monthly drug screens as well as on site work release, study release, and home leave community checks. Employers and school instructors are aware of the inmate's status. CCT has access to OPUS (the Offender Population Unified System) and enters case notes, bimonthly reports, semi-annual case reviews, daily activity information, drug screens, visitor applications and visits, release plans, etc. CCT provides monthly reports to the facility monitor, Mr. Todd Pinion, Western Region Director. Staff, inmates, volunteers, employers, school instructors and all on-site visitors are provided sexual harassment and PREA (Prison Rape



Elimination Act) training as required. Volunteers are provided training in accordance with the approved volunteer guidelines for this site.

## **FY14 DATA**

In 2013-2014, there were 47 different inmates assigned to **The Center for Women**. Eleven (11) women were released, two (2) were transferred due to disciplinary infractions, one (1) was transferred for medical reasons and 3 were transferred for administrative reasons. The average length of stay for the 11 women released from CCT was 20 months.

## **Demographics**

The Center for Women served inmates from 24 different counties:

Alamance	Ashe	Brunswick	Buncombe
Burke	Cleveland	Cumberland	Davidson
Durham	Forsyth	Gaston	Guilford
Hertford	Iredell	Jackson	Mecklenburg
McDowell	Moore	Robeson	Rockingham
Rowan	Stokes	Wake	Wilkes

Of the 47 inmates, 41 were mothers of 86 children, 39 of these children were younger than age 18.

Of the 47 inmates, 18 were African American, 28 Caucasian, and one (1) Native American.

The age range was 28 to 67, with an average age of 43 and a median age of 40.

## **Criminal Charges**

These numbers represent multiple convictions for the inmates served each year.

Category	FY12	FY13	FY14
Number of inmates each year	51	50	47
Homicide	10	8	8
Assault/Threat	9	21	21
Robbery, Larceny, Breaking and Entering	15	13	13
Obtaining Property by False Pretense, embezzlement	35	27	30
Weapons	14	17	17
Drug Offenses	43	27	30
Driving Offenses	Not tracked	3	3
Habitual Felon	Not tracked	7	8

In FY14 Sentences ranged from 3 years and 3 months to life.

## **Employment**

All inmates participate in the LifeWorks! program prior to employment placement. Inmates worked for 20 different employers during the year, with several women working for the same employer in different locations. Due to the current economic situation, it was much more difficult for inmates to find full-time employment and the selection of places to work was limited. At the beginning of the year more women were working in food service, but during the year a few found better positions in other businesses. This list adds up to more than 47 women, since some of them changed positions during the year.

Number of inmates	Position
3	Call center representative
3	Nursery/Landscaping- assistant
1	Hair Stylist
2	Costume maker/seamstress
1	Office Manager
4	Customer Service Representative
2	Cashier
1	Baker
39	Food service positions

### **Inmate Earnings**

The 47 inmates who were employed during the year earned a total of \$378,770.61. The hourly income rates were between \$7.25 and \$13.75 per hour. Inmates paid \$111,273.88 in program fees. The chart below includes amount earned and amount paid in restitution and child support.

	FY 12	FY13	FY14
Number of inmates	51	50	47
Total Earned	\$303,984.61	\$299,470.61	\$378,770.61
Number paying restitution	23	27	18
Total Restitution paid	\$54,565.61	\$73,574.86	\$44,512.54
Number paying Child Support	10	9	4
Total Child Support Paid, Voluntary and Involuntary	\$16,724.57	\$6,479.01	\$6,071.59

Of the forty-seven (47) inmates assigned to CCT, eighteen (18) had restitution to pay. Those 18 inmates paid \$44,512.54 in restitution. Four (4) of the 47 inmates paid \$6,071.59 in voluntary child support.

Of the inmates working, 25% started at minimum wage, and 14% were earning minimum wage at the end of the fiscal year. During the fiscal year 38% of the inmates received raises from their employer.

Due to inmate releases and new inmates arriving, rarely are all 30 working at the same time. During the year there were 3 times all 30 were working at the same time.



## OUTCOMES

### Cost

The daily cost per inmate at CCT in FY13 was \$55.70 and in FY14 it was \$54.41. The NCDPS reported cost per inmate in minimum custody for FY13 was \$69.93 and that same number will be used to calculate FY14 cost savings. FY14 costs for minimum custody are not yet available. The reimbursement rate from NCDPS to CCT was \$46.23 per night per inmate.

	FY12	FY13	FY14
NCDPS Daily Cost Per Inmate in minimum custody	\$65.87*	\$69.93*	\$69.93**
CCT Daily cost Per inmate	\$54.84	\$55.70	\$54.41
Per Diem paid by NCDPS to CCT	\$46.23	\$46.23	\$46.23
Cost savings per day per inmate (difference between NCDPS cost per day and per diem paid by NCDPS to CCT)	\$19.64	\$23.70	\$23.70
Total Cost Savings per year for North Carolina (per day savings x # inmate days billed)	\$212,564	\$256,387	\$257,927

\*original report showed previous year NCDPS cost per inmate in minimum custody, these amounts are corrected amounts from the research bulletins for 2012 and 2013.

\*\* using last known cost per minimum custody inmate from research bulletin 2013

### Recidivism

The Center for Women has shown continuous success in the transition of women from prison to home. Since 1987, CCT has measured the recidivism rate as defined by rearrests during the immediate two years after release. Of the 14 inmates released in FY12 three were found to have been rearrested during the two year period since release, resulting in 79% successful transition from prison to the community. Over the 28 years the program has existed, the average success rate for women exiting the program remains at 87%.

Recidivism	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14
Number released	14	9	14	12	11
Number rearrested	1	0	3	To Be Determined In FY15	To Be Determined In FY16
% of successful transitions	93%	100%	79%	To Be Determined In FY15	To Be Determined In FY16