

The Center for  
Community Transitions



building people, not prisons

February 1, 2017

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' FY16 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.

Sincerely,

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 Solomon  
Mountain Region Director David Mitchell  
John A. Tate, III, President, CCT Board of Directors  
Reports@NCleg.net  
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**Report to the Legislature**  
**The Center for Community Transitions**  
**The Center for Women**  
**FY16**

**Summary of the Report**

In FY16, the Center for Women served 51 different inmates from 30 North Carolina counties, at a cost of \$54.31 per day saving NC \$287,420 for the year. The 51 inmates earned \$374,790 and paid \$29,921 in restitution. Seventy-three percent (73%) were mothers of 116 children with 39 children under the age of 18. In FY16, 19 women were released from this program to return to their home communities. In 2014, of the 11 inmates released from this facility, **none or 100%** have been rearrested in the two year period following release. In this report you will find demographic, criminal convictions, employment and earnings details for the women served. There are also charts showing cost savings and recidivism information.

**Agency overview**

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 42 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" to reduce recidivism, and interrupt the next generation from entering prison.

**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, whether it matches what they value and believe and if not what would. In FY16, 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 and family dynamics. 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 FY16, 85% of the children who participated in the EKWIP program showed an increase in pro-social behaviors and attitudes as measured using a pre and post Devereaux Student Strengths Assessment or DESSA. 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, an open mic night for kids and parents. One measurement used for families is reduction in stress and increase in resilience. Of the families served by this program 90% reported reduction in stress and showed an increase in resilience using the Resilience Scale for Adults. 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.

## **THE CENTER FOR WOMEN**

### **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
- complete an application
- have at least one year left on their sentence



## PROGRAM SERVICES

Programs offered at the Center for Women address *criminogenic factors* to reduce risk of further 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 identifying and managing high risk behaviors; improving self-control and social and emotional skills; identifying thinking errors and matching values and attitudes with behaviors; and increase connections with prosocial people, events and activities. Some of the ways the program helps inmates make these changes are through education, parenting skills, work experience, personal associations, family relationships, leisure activities, thinking, problem solving and communicating, counseling, self-management, and involvement in substance use treatment.

**Work Release-** Work release, the primary program at this facility, allows 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 toward successful reentry.

**Study Release-** Equal to work success is educational success. Many of the 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 support from The Sunshine Lady Foundation.

**Family Services and Home Leaves-** 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. Inmates participate in home leaves as provided by NCDPS.

**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, artistic activities 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 inmates 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.

**Financial Literacy-** Partnership with a local financial literacy program has assisted inmates in repairing their credit. Commonwealth Charlotte provides classes for inmates to learn about the effects of their credit report, learning to save and budgeting. Individual sessions allow for each resident to review her credit report and make a financial plan to address negative credit issues. The majority of the residents have been able to pay old debts, and create a payment plan to repair negative credit. This is one barrier than many are able to eliminate prior to release.

**Case Management-** Case managers work with inmates to prepare for release. Often this means looking at issues that may come up 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 of this report to help clients practice problem solving and self-evaluation techniques.

**Counseling Services-** The program has three counseling options for the inmates, supervised graduate students who complete their practicums with CCT and provide talk therapy. Domestic Violence counseling is available in Mecklenburg County Prevention and Intervention Services and Safe Alliance provides counseling to support survivors of sexual trauma. Staff transport residents to all off site counseling sessions. This counseling is provided at no cost or have a small fee residents pay themselves.

**Transition Services-** Inmates are provided transition services throughout the time they are assigned at CCT, however in the last 6 months this becomes more intense. Assistance is provided in finding housing, accessing health care upon release, and other activities that will prepare them for a successful transition. A CCT board member also provides complete furnishings for the inmate's new home.

## **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, Mountain Region Director (Mr. Pinion retired and the new Region Director is David Mitchell). 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.

## **FY16 DATA**

In 2015-2016, there were 51 different inmates assigned to **The Center for Women**. Nineteen (19) women were released, three (3) were transferred due to disciplinary infractions, and one (1) was transferred for administrative reasons. The average length of stay for the 19 women released from CCT was 21 months.

## **Demographics**

The Center for Women served inmates from 32 different counties:

|             |           |            |             |
|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Alamance    | Buncombe  | Cabarrus   | Catawba     |
| Cherokee    | Cleveland | Cumberland | Davidson    |
| Durham      | Edgecombe | Forsyth    | Gaston      |
| Granville   | Greene    | Guilford   | Harnett     |
| Henderson   | Hertford  | Jackson    | Lincoln     |
| Mecklenburg | Mitchell  | Moore      | New Hanover |
| Onslow      | Randolph  | Rowan      | Scotland    |
| Surry       | Wake      | Wayne      | Wilkes      |

Of the 51 inmates, 37 were mothers of 116 children, 39 of these children were younger than age 18.

Of the 51 inmates, 20 were African American, 30 Caucasian, 1 American Indian.

The age range was 28 to 59, with an average age of 42.

## **Criminal Charges**

These numbers represent multiple convictions for the inmates served during this year.

| Category   | FY14 | FY15 | FY16 |
|--|------|------|------|
| Number of inmates each year  | 47   | 48   | 51   |
| Homicide (1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree murder, manslaughter, death by vehicle and conspiracy to commit murder) | 8    | 11   | 14   |
| Assault/Threat   | 21   | 3    | 3    |
| Robbery, Larceny, Breaking and Entering  | 13   | 11   | 8    |
| Obtaining Property by False Pretense, embezzlement   | 30   | 11   | 10   |
| Weapons  | 17   | 5    | 3    |
| Drug Offenses  | 30   | 20   | 23   |
| Driving Offenses (not death by vehicle)  | 3    | 1    | 3    |
| Habitual Felon   | 8    | 9    | 15   |

In FY16 inmates served during the year had sentences ranging from 5 to 20 years.

## **Employment**

All inmates participate in the LifeWorks! Employment Readiness program prior to employment placement. Inmates worked for 30 different employers during the year, with several women working for the same employer in different locations. At the beginning of a resident's work history at CCT food service is more likely their first employment. However, they often find higher paying positions in other businesses after the initial employment. This list adds up to more than 51 women, since some of them changed positions during the year.

| Number of inmates | Position                                |
|-------------------|---|
| 2                 | Call center representative              |
| 2                 | Nursery/Landscaping- assistant          |
| 2                 | Hair Stylist                            |
| 2                 | Doggie Day Care                         |
| 5                 | Office Manager/administrative assistant |
| 1                 | Dental Tech                             |
| 4                 | Supervisor/Manager                      |
| 4                 | Housekeeper                             |
| 34                | Food service positions                  |

## **Inmate Earnings**

The 51 inmates who were employed during the year earned a total of \$374,790.22. The hourly pay earned was between \$7.25 and \$14.00 per hour

Inmates paid \$115,620 in program fees. The chart below includes amount earned and amount paid in restitution and child support.

|   | FY14         | FY15         | FY16         |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Number of inmates                                   | 47           | 48           | 51           |
| Total Net Earned                                    | \$378,770.61 | \$379,802.68 | \$374,790.22 |
| Number paying restitution                           | 18           | 13           | 13           |
| Total Restitution paid                              | \$44,512.54  | \$20,114.90  | \$29,921.08  |
| Number paying Child Support                         | 4            | 12           | 9            |
| Total Child Support Paid, Voluntary and Involuntary | \$6,071.59   | \$22,278.08  | \$6,532.70   |

## OUTCOMES

### Cost

The daily cost per inmate at CCT in FY15 was \$55.11 and in FY16 it was \$54.31. The NCDPS reported cost per inmate in minimum custody for FY15 was \$72.64 and that same number will be used to calculate FY16 cost savings. FY16 costs for minimum custody are not yet available. The reimbursement rate from NCDPS to CCT was \$46.23 per night per inmate.

|  | FY13      | FY14      | FY15       | FY16        |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| NCDPS Daily Cost Per Inmate in minimum custody   | \$69.93   | \$70.18   | \$72.64*   | 72.64**     |
| CCT Daily cost Per inmate  | \$55.70   | \$54.41   | \$55.11    | \$54.31     |
| Per Diem paid by NCDPS to CCT  | \$46.23   | \$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)              | \$23.70   | \$23.95*  | \$26.41    | \$26.41     |
| Number of inmate days billed per year  | 10,818    | 10,883    | 10,755     | 10,883      |
| Total Cost Savings per year for North Carolina (NCDPS per day cost minus NCDPS payment to CCT) x # inmate days billed) | \$256,387 | \$260,648 | \$284,039* | \$287,420** |

\*original report showed previous year NCDPS cost per inmate in minimum custody, this amount is corrected from the research bulletin for 2015.

\*\* using last known cost per minimum custody inmate from research bulletin 2015, this will be updated when 2016 Research Bulletin is released.

### 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 11 inmates released in FY14 none were found to have been rearrested during the two year period since release, resulting in 100% successful transition from prison to the community. Over the 29 years the program has existed, the average success rate for women exiting the program remains around 87% or better.

| Recidivism                                      | FY13 | FY14 | FY15                     | FY16                     |
|---|------|------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Number released                                 | 12   | 11   | 13                       | 19                       |
| Number rearrested                               | 0    | 0    | To Be Determined In FY17 | To Be Determined In FY18 |
| % of successful transitions measured at 2 years | 100% | 100% | To Be Determined In FY17 | To Be Determined In FY18 |



### **Additional information**

One of the residents who was released in 2014 after serving a 16 year sentence has invited Center for Women staff to attend her graduation for her Associates Degree in Mortuary Sciences from Fayetteville State University. She began her preparation for this degree when she was at the Center by completing all courses except the internships she needed to graduate. Once she was released she got married and has a new baby boy, but she did not give up on this goal. She has completed all course work and is eligible to graduate in May 2017 from Fayetteville State. She has secured a job at a local funeral home where she is now able to use what she has learned.