

GREEN CORRECTIONS

challenge

On November 21, 2014, the Green Corrections Symposium convened professionals from the corrections community, as well as partners including reentry professionals, energy specialists, and education and workforce development experts.

During the Symposium, winners of the Green Corrections Challenge, a video and presentation contest to demonstrate innovative green practices in the corrections community, were announced and viewed. Experts also spoke about best practices within the green corrections framework of correctional facilities, education and training, and reentry programs. Participants then answered a series of questions about lessons learned and application of these lessons. The following document summarizes the notes from these conversations.

Presentation and Discussion: Embedding Green Policies and Practices in Correctional Facilities

The first discussion focused on the greening of correctional facilities, defined as the “development of self-sufficient facilities that consider energy use and efficiency, water and waste management, recycling programs and other facilities management that reduce the negative environmental impact of correctional facilities (and potentially reduce costs).”¹

Jason Powers, U.S. Department of Energy, presented about effective practices to reduce energy and water consumption, including funding structures.

Two winning Challenge entries were shown:

- **FCC Victorville Federal Bureau of Prisons (California), “Putting our Trash on Lockdown”** In this presentation, FCC Victorville described how they implemented a program to reduce solid waste by 75 percent over a five year period. This included the development of an in-house waste sorting facility for recycling and a composting program. These programs generate revenue which sustain the programs.
- **Franklin County Sheriff’s Office (Ohio), “Green Taskforce.”** In this presentation the Sheriff’s Office described how a taskforce worked closely to identify areas to reduce water consumption, energy use, and solid waste entering the landfill. The taskforce has been particularly successful by leveraging partnerships with local nonprofits such as Goodwill and an animal shelter.

Participants then worked in groups to answer specific questions. The following section summarizes notes from these conversations.

¹ All definitions come from the Greening of Corrections: Creating a Sustainable System released by the National Institute of Corrections in 2011. This document can be accessed at www.nicic.gov/greencorrections

1. What are the two to three most important lessons learned from expert comments and the winning presentation?

- Don't have to implement new programs on your own; partner with other agencies/ organizations such as Goodwill and animal shelters / Seek partnerships such as Franklin did with Goodwill/animal shelter
- Be creative
- Consider toilet and water use
- Inmates used for work and facilities / Engage inmates in programs – i.e. recycling
- “You can't manage what you don't measure” Jason Powers / facilities need access to information in order to set goals and measure progress (ex. bills to implement) / Identify your assets—many institutions don't have a handle on their facilities' energy and water usage
- Learning and workforce opportunities for inmates, but prison vs jail = different time frame
- Consider state-federal partnership and local-county partnerships
- How to bridge from corrections to community recycling items and how to replicate
- Culture change
- Small bite-size goals
- Utilize community service projects to reduce energy use and waste
- Training and job skills
- Take a holistic
- There is a lot of waste within corrections
- There are areas that are controlled operate within an institution than within the public – can have a greater impact and greater potential for savings
- Clothing and uniforms and be recycled or repurposed.
- Ways of composting food water and learning of amounts possible
- Realization of not just striving for “low hanging fruit” (Jason Power's presentation related to payback period and budgeting)
- Consider ways of saving water and amounts of conservation possible

2. How can you apply what you learned?

- Get the data and share; consider posting information in the lobby; consider developing a competition between facilities to reduce energy use
- Establish a committee of individuals tasks with reducing usage
- Consider establishing training opportunities in solar power with concepts of business establishment (location specific)
- Need wider use and training on databases
- Reinvest saving into programing and improvements
- Building a database of all facilities' energy usage
- Alignment between transitional programing
- Work with recycling providers
- Reach out to community partners
- Make it part of culture
- Look for different fixtures, better parts for maintenance of current fixtures
- Research for possible grants or funding from outside sources

- Try to find partnership with outside sources to accept materials

3. What resources or information do you need to apply this?

- Need capital/money
- Difficult to overcome institutional inertia
- Would be easier to implement these things with more top-down directives
- Formalized training – goals modules
- Partnering with outside agency
- Concrete steps for replicating
- Funding streams
- More community programs
- Utilize contacts

Presentation and Discussion: Embedding Green Policies and Practices in Education and Training

The second discussion focused on the greening of education and training programs, defined as the “developing or adapting education and training programs that provide offenders with the relevant skills, competencies, and credentials to support a continuum of learning opportunities during a transition to a greener economy.”

John Linton, U.S. Department of Education presented. Linton highlighted three commonalities in effective green education and training programs: 1) green programs are often STEM in nature and allow for hands-on application of math problem solving; 2) green programs offer some great developmental opportunities around a particular priority shared across federal agencies and strongly embedded in current legislation under the title “Career Pathways,” and 3) green programs are generally motivated less by individual self-interest than for social benefit, which may combat anti-social behaviors that contribute to recidivism.

The winning Challenge presentation from Delaware Department of Corrections, Sussex Community Corrections Center for the Striving to Make a Difference in Sunny Sussex County was then presented. In this presentation, Sussex SCCC described how offenders learned hands-on skills while contributing to a variety of center activities. These activities include raising bees and producing honey, practicing aquaculture or the raising of fish, and growing native grasses for beach restoration, among other activities.

Participants then worked in groups to answer specific questions. The following section summarizes notes from these conversations.

1. What are the 2-3 most important lessons learned from expert comments and the winning presentation?

- Training should be connected to ideas of social responsibility
- Lots of hurdles but also opportunities
- Need creativity for short-term inmates
- Coordination with community-based organizations and workforce investment board, etc on referral services

- Skills assessment at intake for adequate referrals
- Application and resources: better coordination of correctional resources and hierarchy (judges, city, politicians, waste, water, natural resources departments)
- Sussex took advantage of resources in its environment. Examples include fisheries, parks, transportation, agriculture, natural resources and other state departments
- Green programs can address STEM related to learning of participants, who are often weak in math and science (hands on learning and application of math and science principles is important)
- Taking skills with them to career pathways—job growth
- Partnering with other agency
- Evaluate your location for what projects may be a good fit.
- Career pathways—careers are not for a lifetime anymore. The application is important for inmate education. Connect it to what is applied, needed, and useful
- Involving the individual in the process. Certificates essential for offenders
- Working more with other state agencies to partnership
- Offering female offenders are training in non-traditional areas

2. How can you apply what you learned?

- Engage the prison's security chief in assessing viability of a "green" project and engaging him in the development of the project
- Develop a green and environmentally safe component within training programs
- Know what the industries are for education targets
- Utilize training to possibly receive certificate programs
- Use profits to be reintroduced into programs
- Develop defined lessons plans to implement education/training
- Use current outside certificate programs to assist in planning

3. What resources or information do you need to apply this?

- How do you obtain funding and support for green programs?
- Is Sussex a minimum security institution? Is that a prerequisite for some activities?
- How did the institution address safety and security issues related to use of tools?
- How did they overcome institutional resistance to activities? (because of safety and security issues)

Presentation and Discussion: Embedding Green Policies and Practices in Reentry Programs and Integrating Green Corrections Programming

The final portion of the Green Corrections Symposium sought to integrate the separate pieces of green corrections programming, with a particular focus on reentry.

Mary Ellen Sprenkel of The Corps Network presented. In her presentation she highlighted best practices in green reentry programming including applying a restorative justice framework, training tailored to community needs and in-demand jobs, alignment with employer and

workforce system, and partnering with correctional facilities while offenders are still incarcerated.

Two Challenge winners were presented:

- **Reentry Programs: Wisconsin Department of Corrections for The Grow Academy.** In this presentation, the Wisconsin DOC described how the The Grow Academy provide youth with basic work skills in farming and food production. The Grow Academy hosts a bakery in with young adult use materials from the farm and learn skills to work in the food industry.
- **New Green Corrections Concepts: Indiana Department of Corrections, Branchville for the Green and Giving Back.** In this presentation, Branchville described how their green programs are integrated, supporting facility operations, offender education and training, and help the community. Offenders can earn a state-recognized work-readiness certificate, while working in the energy-efficient laundry facility, building cabins for the state parks, and donating to local nonprofits. These activities strengthen offender's commitment to their communities and reduce anti-social behaviors that contribute to recidivism.

In the final conversation, participants discussed the particulars of the reentry presentations, as well as strategies to integrate facility operations, education and training, and reentry. The following summarizes these conversations.

1. What are the 2-3 most important lessons learned from expert comments and the winning presentation?

- Using in-mate population in WI through every plan and the projects
- Emphasis on experiential elements is key
- Certification and skills are import for transition and reentry. The most powerful the certification, the better for re-entry (and persistence in employment)
- Communication between education-counselors-supervisor-employer connections-public – what is happening public information officer to do?
- Service component- giving back to community
- Having identifiable businesses and skills to partner with
- Making connections with employer
- Think outside the box

2. How can you apply what you learned?

- Increasing attention to hands-on learning
- Expanding university partnerships and partnerships with nonprofits (and holding them accountable—which is difficult, since they are a “partner” and not a vendor)
- Applying educational information in a practical way
- Breaching the wall between correction and higher education employers
- Liaison to create opportunities
- Training on basic skills for offenders to build a foundation for learning and employment
- Partner with outside contractors and employers to assist with re-entry opportunities

- Reach out to outside employers to assist in their recycling programs

3. What resources or information do you need to apply this?

- What are the data systems and practices that track former inmates' persistence in green jobs after their transition?
- Available funding
- Requirements for certification
- Space utilization

4. What are the 2-3 most important lessons learned today about integrating the pillars?

- Know your environment/community/labor market
 - Know what opportunities are available both in green practices and how they lead to re-entry opportunities
- Measurable outcomes- costs, recidivism, etc
- Restorative justice and understanding how you fit into the community/affect the community
- Timing and preparation, research
- Good PR → community support, buy-in
- Staff mindset, buy-in -> how it affects their bottom-line, work-load
- Systems buy-in and local partnerships
- Utilizing resources
- Mapping system to understand levers of power, funding
- Identify strengths and opportunities and focusing on resources or on returns
- Looking at skills and education levels upon reentry and working with a time frame of stays- tailor programming
- Contingency planning for turnover and leadership/political
- Framing "green" as win-win-win → reduced energy costs; maintenance; education