

Commission on Re-Entry and Returning Citizen Affairs

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



Responses to Fiscal Year 2020 Performance Oversight Questions

Corwin Knight

Chairman, Commission on Re-Entry and Returning Citizen Affairs

Submission to

Committee on Facilities and Procurement

Chairperson Robert White

At-Large Councilmember

February 19, 2021

Committee on Facilities and Procurement

John A. Wilson Building

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20004

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. *Please provide the agency's mission statement.*

ANSWER: To serve as an advisory board to the Mayor, the D.C. City Council, and the Director of MORCA on the process, issues, and consequences of the reintegration of returning citizens into the general population.

2. *Please list reporting requirements in the District of Columbia Code or Municipal Regulations that the agency is required to complete in FY 20 and FY 21, to date. For each requirement, please list the date the report was required and the date it was produced. If the agency did not produce the report on the mandated timeline, please explain why.*

ANSWER: At this point, the Commission on Re-Entry and Returning Citizen Affairs (The Commission) does not have any statutory mandates that it lacks sufficient resources to fully implement. Please see D.C. Code 24-1303, Establishment of the Commission on Re-entry and Returning Citizen Affairs.

3. *What are the agency's top five priorities? Please explain how the agency expects to address these priorities in FY 2021.*

- Voting rights for incarcerated persons has been a topic of high interest and activism in the returning citizen community.
- Working to strengthen and promote effective enforcement of "Ban the Box" legislation has been a consistent priority goal for our group.
- Promoting career development opportunities and workforce incentive programs for returning citizens continues to be a major goal.
- Expanding the number of support and other programs available for the children of incarcerated parents, we deem essential.

Advocating for the return and strengthening of adult education and vocational programming in our local public schools, we regard as a must.

4. *Please describe any initiatives or programs that the agency implemented in FY 20 and FY 21 to date, to improve the internal operations of the agency or the interaction of the agency with outside parties. Please describe the funding required and the results or expected results of each initiative.*

- **ANSWER:** Calendar year 2020 was a very productive year for our advocacy. That is, in calendar year 2020 three bills that we strongly supported were the beneficiaries of favorable Council action. Specifically, the "Restore the Vote Amendment Act of 2019" was passed by the Council of the District of Columbia; the "Helping Children Impacted by Parental Incarceration Amendment Act of 2020" was introduced before this body; and the "Access to Jobs Amendment Act of 2020" was also introduced during this Council period. Perhaps needless to say, Chairman White, we are grateful to you, your Committee members, and your other colleagues on the Council for the enthusiastic support that these initiatives received. Further, we look forward to collaborating with

you on other items of shared interest in the future. Finally, we continued to work closely and cooperatively in support of MORCA initiatives during calendar year 2020 and, of course, we strongly encourage the city agencies who have ex-officio representation in our group to develop and implement reentry projects and programs in their respective organizations.

5. *Please list all settlements entered into by the agency or by the District on behalf of the agency in FY 20 or FY 21, to date, and provide the parties' names, the amount of the settlement, and if related to the litigation, the case name and a brief description of the case. If unrelated to litigation, please describe the underlying issue or reason for the settlement (e.g., administrative complaint, etc.).*

ANSWER: The Commission has not entered into any settlements.

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6. *Please list all settlements entered into by the agency or by the District on behalf of the agency in FY 20 or FY 21, to date, and provide the parties' names, the amount of the settlement, and if related to the litigation, the case name and a brief description of the case. If unrelated to litigation, please describe the underlying issue or reason for the settlement (e.g., administrative complaint, etc.).*

ANSWER: The Commission has not entered into any settlements.

7. *Please list all pending lawsuits that name the agency as a party. Identify which cases on the list are lawsuits that potentially expose the District to financial liability or will result in a change in agency practices and describe the current status of the litigation. Please provide the extent of each claim, regardless of its likelihood of success.*

ANSWER: The Commission has no pending lawsuits.

8. *Please list and describe any ongoing investigations, audits, or reports on the agency or any employee of the agency that were completed during FY 20 and FY 21, to date.*

ANSWER: The Commission has no ongoing investigations, audits, etc.

9. *Please provide a list of all studies, research papers, reports, and analyses that the agency prepared or funded during FY 20 and FY 21, to date. Please submit a hard copy to the Committee of any study, research paper, report, or analysis that is complete.*

ANSWER: The Commission did not have any reports, studies, or research papers prepared in FY 20 and FY 21.

10. *Please provide a current list of all voting members of the Commission, including their date of confirmation, the date their term expires, the Ward in which they reside, and the number of meetings attended by each since they were appointed:*

Last Name	First Name	Appointment Status	Term End Date	Ward	Seat Designation
Berry	James	Active	4/3/23	4	Public Member
Elder	Olivia	Active	1/2/2023		Public Member
Fields	Leon	Active	8/4/2020	4	Public Member
Henry	Dominic	Active	1/2/2023	8	Public Member
Johnson	Clarence	Active	1/2/23	8	Public Member
Knight	Corwin	Active	5/4/23	8	Public Member
Jarvis	Richard	Active	1/2/2023	5	Public Member
Matthews	John "Peterbug"	Active	8/4/2021	6	Public Member
Moon	Larry	Active	8/4/2023	7	Public Member
Washington	Decarlo	Active	1/2/2023	7	Public Member

11. . Please describe how the Commission is working with the Office on Returning Citizen Affairs and the Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments to fill the current vacancies on the Commission.

ANSWER: At the time of this writing, the Commission is seeking the assistance of the MORCA and the Office of Talent and Appointments to fill our current vacancies

12. For each voting member of the Commission, please list whether the member is (a) a returning citizen; (b) a representative from an established District-based public, private, nonprofit, or volunteer community organization involved with the provision of services for returning citizens, the incarcerated, and their families; or (c) a member of a group, organization, or service provider that focuses on the needs of female returning citizens.

ANSWER: Of the 10 active commissioners, six (6) are returning citizens and all ten (10) are in some way affiliated with an established district-based public, private, nonprofit, or volunteer community organization involved with the provision of services for returning citizens.

13. Please provide, for each ex-officio, non-voting member of the Commission, the number of meetings the ex-officio, or their designee, has attended in FY 20 and FY 21, to date.

ANSWER: The following are the agency heads who are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Commission. In fairness to them, we did not have a targeted outreach plan to get them involved in our meetings during the past fiscal year. However, we have devised a strategy to get them

involved in our meetings and our work for FY 2021, -- a plan that includes our active collaboration with MORCA as well as the Executive Office of the Mayor.

Ex-officio, non-voting members from the following D.C. Government agencies (24-1303 (b)(1):

- (A) Attorney General: **Karl Racine, Esq.**
- (B) Director of the Department of Human Services: **Laura Zeilinger**
- (C) Director of the Department of Health: **LaQuandra S. Nesbitt MD, MPH**
- (D) Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development: **Polly Donaldson, Director**
- (E) Director of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs: **Ernest Chrappah**
- (F) Superintendent of Education of the District of Columbia: **Shana Young**
- (G) President of the University of the District of Columbia: **Ronald Mason, Jr., J.D.**
- (H) Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department: **Robert Contee (Acting)**
- (I) Director of the Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services: **Clinton Lacey**
- (J) Director of the Department of Employment Services: **Dr. Unique N. Morris-Hughes**
- (K) Director of the Office of Human Rights: **Mónica Palacio**
- (L) Director of the Department of Behavioral Health: **Barbara J. Bazron, PhD**; and,

Director of the Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration, or the administrative head of the agency or the successor agency within the Department of Health responsible for administering substance abuse prevention and treatment services: **Barbara J. Bazron,PHD**

14. *Please describe how the Commission worked with the District government to increase participation from ex-officio members in FY 20. Which ex-officio members are most critical to the Commission meeting its goals?*

ANSWER: See answer 15 for the first question. All ex-officio members are essential to the success of the Commission, in as much as the mission of their respective organizations squarely impacts the community that we exist to serve and support in a very significant way *for each voting member of the Commission, please list whether the member is (a) a returning citizen; (b) a representative from an established District-based public, private, nonprofit, or volunteer community organization involved with the provision of services for returning citizens, the incarcerated, and their families; or, (c) a member of a group, organization, or service provider that focuses on the needs of female returning citizens.*

ANSWER: Of the 10 active commissioners, six (6) are returning citizens and all ten (10) are in some way affiliated with an established district-based public, private, nonprofit, or volunteer community organization involved with the provision of services for returning citizens.

15. *For every meeting of the Commission in FY 20 and FY 21, to date, please provide the agenda, the minutes, a listing of all voting and ex-officio members in attendance, and whether a quorum was present.*

ANSWER: See attached. **(Need Agendas and Summaries of Meetings)**

16. *Please provide any rules of procedure that have been adopted by the Commission.*

ANSWER: See Rules of Procedure Attached.

17. *Please list any public hearings or community meetings on returning citizen issues attended by voting Commissioners in FY 20, or FY 21, to date.*

ANSWER: The following is but a sample of the variety of hearings, community meetings and other activities that voting Commissioners attended, co-sponsored or were otherwise actively involved in FY 2020:

1/9/2020	Think Like an Entrepreneur Event at Department of Corrections
2/5/2020	Performance Oversight Hearing
3/25/2020	Day of Empathy
12/6/2020	5 th Annual Socks and Underwear Drive

18. *Please provide the Commission's 2020 annual report, pursuant to D.C. Code 24-1303. If the report is not available, when does the Commission expect to submit its report to the Council?*

ANSWER: It is anticipated that our annual report will be ready for submission to the Council by the end of the month. For additional details, see Answer 3.

19. *Please provide any policy recommendations made by the Commission on legislation, regulations, policies, and programs affecting returning citizens in FY 20, or FY 21, to date.*

ANSWER: Commission Recommendation(s)

To sponsor a Citywide Reentry Summit that will focus attention on the stabilization needs of returning citizens as well as encourage the active involvement of public and private sector towards the goal of developing programs and other opportunities to meet these needs.

To expand the number of quality programs for returning citizens in the following critical areas of need: Employment, Education and Training, Housing, Family Reunification, and Mental Health.

To promote dialogue and unity within the returning citizen community regarding public policy and legislative issues that impact re-entry success.

To develop and fund an initiative that promotes and supports the existence of peer support and advocacy groups for reentrants in D.C.

To develop and fund an initiative intended to respond to the emotional and other needs of children who have a parent/parents who is/are incarcerated.

To strengthen the efforts of the D.C. Office of Human Rights to hold landlords accountable at times when returning citizens are discriminated against in the housing market.

To coordinate an arrangement between the D.C. Department of Corrections and the U.S. Bureau of Prisons that allows returning citizens to receive transitional job-readiness and placement assistance as they exit the federal prison system.

To establish a "Task Force" of business persons/entrepreneurs who are charged with the responsibility of developing a strategy and plan of action to educate/train returning citizens for the abundant number of "Coding" positions that are currently available to those who possess the relevant Information Technology (IT) expertise in the DMV.

20. *In the FY 21 budget, the Council provided \$10,000 to the Commission to support its goals and activities. Please explain how the Commission plans to use those funds for FY 21.*

ANSWER: At this point, the Commission expects to use the funds to meet certain basic organizational and operational needs that will facilitate its work and outreach to the D.C. community. A brief summary of those needs are currently contemplated as follows:

Commission on Reentry and Returning Citizens' Affairs

Office Space

Office Supplies: Paper, Pens, etc.

Computer

Printer

Fax

Stationery

Telephone

(1) Hold Commission Retreat: To further develop and refine strategic plan and goals for FY 2021.

- a) Trainer/Facilitator
- b) Location
- c) Supplies: Pens, markers, flip charts, paper, and the like
- d) Very modest refreshments: Water, pastries, etc.

Technical Assistance and Support: Provided by the D.C. Government

(2) Host Community Forums

- a) Public Hearing on the amount and quality of Reentry Services available to returning citizens in DC
- b) Voting Rights for BOP Residents
- c) Strengthening DC's "Ban the Box" Legislation
- d) Workforce Development Opportunities for Returning Citizens
- e) Expanded Adult Education and Vocational Training Programs in DC
- f) Services for the Children of Incarcerated Parents
- g) Restorative Justice – A productive approach to conflict resolution and building peace in DC neighborhoods

(3) Lend modest support to promising or evidence-based peer support and possibly youth initiatives that impact the lives of returning citizens.

21. *Please describe the Commission's achievements in FY 20 and FY 21, to date.*

Answer: The Commission continued to lend considerable support to the Office of Returning Citizens Affairs during FY 2020; it made a concerted effort to extend its outreach to the returning citizen community in DC; it absorbed the loss of an appreciable number of members whose terms expired or who resigned due to competing obligations in their lives; and, it remained a viable and effective partner with the MORCA as it underwent a transition in its executive leadership.

22. *How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the Commission's efforts in FY 20 and FY 21 to date? What additional support is needed to meet its goals?*

ANSWER: The Commission could use more funding for the development of the Commission and community affairs.

23. *Please describe any challenges that the Commission has that is impacting its ability to meet its goals.*

ANSWER: Like many Boards and Commissions, maintaining an active, engaged cadre of members can sometimes be a bit of a challenge. However, we are optimistic about FY 2021 and expect to maintain the high interest in our work by the current roster of members.



The Commission on Re-entry and Returning Citizens Affairs

Date: January 16, 2020 Public Meeting

Location: Martha's Table
2375 Elvan's Road

Time: 6:30pm -8:00pm

Agenda:

Roll Call:

Commissioner in attendance

- Cory Knight
- Clarence Johnson
- Larry Moon
- Leon Fields
- James Berry
- Richard Jarvis

Chairman Knight

Led a discussion around creating access to employment for returning citizens in specific industries with low barriers for returning citizens.

General Updates: MORCA Leadership provided general updates

Meeting was Adjourn 7:30pm.

The Commission on Re-entry and Returning Citizens Affairs

Date: February 6, 2020 Public Meeting

Location: Martha's Table

2375 Elvan's Road

Time: 6:30pm -8:00pm

Roll Call:

Commissioner in attendance

- Cory Knight
- Clarence Johnson
- Larry Moon
- Leon Fields

Chairman Knight

Led a discussion around the upcoming Restore the Vote Bill, and strengthening family reunification and mental health services for returning citizens.

General Updates: MORCA Leadership provided general updates

Meeting was Adjourn 7:30pm.



The Commission on Re-entry and Returning Citizens Affairs

Date: June 11, 2020 Public Meeting

Location: : Webex: Virtual Meeting

<https://dcnet.webex.com/dcnet/j.php?MTID=m9598a11d4cccef4e741921cc67646d6e>

Time: 6:30pm -8:00pm

Roll Call:

Commissioner in attendance

- Chairman Knight
- James Barry
- Clarence Johnson
- Richard Jarvis
- Dominique Henry
- Larry Moon
- DeCarlo Johnson
- Olivia Elder

Chairman Knight

Led a discussion around the development of a strategic plan for the commission on re-entry and returning citizens affairs. Commissioner contribute ideas for the strategic plan such as advocating for more housing for returning citizens, employment opportunities, vocational training, and mentoring programs for returning citizens and strengthening family reunification services for returning citizens.

General Updates: MORCA Leadership provided general updates

Meeting was Adjourn 8:00pm



The Commission on Re-entry and Returning Citizens Affairs

Date: July 9, 2020 Public Meeting

Location: : Webex: Virtual Meeting

<https://dcnet.webex.com/dcnet/j.php?MTID=m9598a11d4cccef4e741921cc67646d6e>

Time: 6:30pm -8:00pm

Roll Call:

Commissioner in attendance

- Chairman Knight
- James Barry
- Clarence Johnson
- Richard Jarvis
- Dominique Henry
- Larry Moon
- DeCarlo Johnson
- Olivia Elder

Chairman Knight

Led a discussion around the development of a strategic plan for the commission on re-entry and returning citizens affairs. Commissioner contribute ideas for the strategic plan such as advocating for more housing for returning citizens, employment opportunities, vocational training, and mentoring programs for returning citizens and strengthening family reunification services for returning citizens.

General Updates: MORCA Leadership provided general updates.

Meeting was Adjourn 8:00pm



The Commission on Re-entry and Returning Citizens Affairs

Date: August 13, 2020 Public Meeting

Location: : Webex: Virtual Meeting

<https://dcnet.webex.com/dcnet/j.php?MTID=m9598a11d4cccef4e741921cc67646d6e>

Time: 6:30pm -8:00pm

Roll Call:

Commissioner in attendance

- Chairman Knight
- James Barry
- Clarence Johnson
- Richard Jarvis
- Dominique Henry
- Larry Moon
- DeCarlo Johnson
- Olivia Elder

Chairman Knight

Led a discussion around the development of a strategic plan for the commission on re-entry and returning citizens affairs. To returning back normal meeting status every 2nd Thursday of the month

General Updates: MORCA Leadership provided general updates.

Meeting was Adjourn 8:00pm

The Commission on Re-entry and Returning Citizens Affairs
September 3, 2020 Public Meeting

Location: Webex: Virtual Meeting
Time: 6:30pm -8:00pm

- Commission Roll Call- 6:30pm
 - Chairman Knight
 - Clarence Johnson
 - Richard Jarvis
 - James Berry
 - Olivia Elder
 - Dominic Henry
 - Larry Moon
 - Decarlo Johnson

Quorum Established:

Discussion

- Introduction of Staff from the Committee on Procurement and Facilities Mr. Dexter Williams. Mr. Williams provided updates to the commission regarding the Restore the Vote legislation and the efforts that the Board of Elections are taking to educate all incarcerated DC residents housed in Federal Bureau Of Prison.
- Mayor Office on Returning Citizens Affairs Director Carey provided an update on MORCA services.
- Discussion on how to develop outreach strategies on how to register more returning citizens to vote and complete the 2020 census.
- Adjournment 8:00 pm

The Commission on Re-entry and Returning Citizens Affairs

Date: October 8, 2020 Public Meeting

Location: Webex: Virtual Meeting

<https://dcnet.webex.com/dcnet/j.php?MTID=m9598a11d4cccef4e741921cc67646d6e>

Time: 6:30pm -8:00pm

Commissioners:

- Corwin Knight: Chairman
- Clarence Johnson
- Richard Jarvis
- James Berry
- Olivia Elder
- Larry Moon
- Dominic Henry

Quorum Established:

- Welcome Commissioners
- Old business- No old business to discuss
- Discussion regarding the propose Legislation on Children of incarcerated parents, which will require MORCA to contract with Community Based Organization to conduct an assessment and to develop a strategic plan on the District of Columbia government would provide support to this population.
- Chairman Knight provided an update on the activities surrounding the push for FBOP to provide DC residents with Voting Ballots.
- Chairman Knight expressed his desire for the Commission to create sub-committees on children of incarcerated parents
 - Subcommittee 1: Resources for families
 - Subcommittee 2: Resources for children

Meeting Adjournment 8:00 pm

The Commission on Re-entry and Returning Citizens Affairs

Date: November 5, 2020 Public Meeting

Location: Webex: Virtual Meeting

<https://dcnet.webex.com/dcnet/j.php?MTID=m9598a11d4cccef4e741921cc67646d6e>

Time: 6:30pm -8:00pm

Commissioners:

- Corwin Knight: Chairman
- Clarence Johnson
- Richard Jarvis
- James Berry
- Olivia Elder
- Larry Moon
- Dominic Henry

Agenda

- Welcome Commissioners
- Old business- Commissioners voted to add to two subcommittees for the Children of Incarceration Bill. Commissioner Dominic Henry agreed to Chair the subcommittee for the Children. Chairman Knight agreed to chair the subcommittee for parents.
- Chairman Knight provided an update on the Restore the Vote Update, informing Commissioners that DC Board of Elections mailed ballots to DC residents in the FBOP and that several DC residents have reach-out informing family members they have received their ballots.
- Chairman Knight discussed conducting a Commission Retreat/Strategic Plan in the beginning of new year.

Next steps

Adjournment 8:00 pm

The Commission on Re-entry and Returning Citizens Affairs

Date: December 11, 2020 Public Meeting

Location: Webex: Virtual Meeting

<https://dcnet.webex.com/dcnet/j.php?MTID=m9598a11d4cccef4e741921cc67646d6e>

Time: 6:30pm -8:00pm

Agenda:

Roll Call:

- Chairman Knight- Present
- James Barry- Present
- Clarence Johnson- Present
- Richard Jarvis- Present
- Dominique Henry- Present
- Larry Moon- Present
- Decarlo Johnson- Present

Quorum Established

- Commissioner's discussed the success of the Restore the Vote campaign
- Discussion around the recent proposed legislation of Children of Incarcerated Parents testimony debrief.
- MORCA Executive Director Lamont Carey provided updates regarding the administration position Mr. Tony Lewis provided background on the Commission's development of the recommendation to Council Member Robert White's office.
- Discussed a Commission Retreat (Strategic plan and development)
- Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm