

Tennessee Community Resource Board
Strategic Plan Summary

(Drafted March 25, 2006)

Among its seven statutory goals, the Tennessee Community Resource Board “coordinate[s] a network of local parole, probation, and institutional community resource boards on matters of statewide impact.” These local boards provide an effective mechanism for managing the more than 4,000 volunteer serving the Department of Corrections and the Board of Probation and Parole. Where these local boards exist, however, only a few benefit from the active participation of state board members. Most function independent of any oversight from the state board. None are aligned with a state-wide strategy because such a strategy does not exist.

Should the local boards become active and aligned with the strategic initiatives of the state board – and therefore with the strategic initiatives of TDOC and BOPP – all other goals set forth by the legislation authorizing the TCRB would be easier to accomplish.

As the local boards prosper so too does the organization.

Local boards will prosper by (1) establishing appropriate structures for managing them, (2) developing tangible resources to assist them and (3) properly aligning them with the strategies of the TCRB.

1. Management

To effectively manage its local boards, the state board will establish grand division steering committees. Steering committees will consist of the state board members and chairs of the local boards from the related grand divisions and will meet on a quarterly schedule between meetings of the TCRB. The purpose of these committees is to provide a forum to exchange ideas and information between all levels of the organization and to create an opportunity for local boards to compare experiences and discuss promising practices.

This structure will allow the state board to oversee the large number of local boards without taking a direct role in them and at the same time provide local boards with a means to give input to the decisions and direction of the TCRB.

For steering committees to be effective, local boards must be active. A local board development committee of the TCRB will exist, therefore, to help district offices and institutions organize, develop and cultivate active local board. This committee will be responsible for (1) creating guidelines for establishing a local board, (2) producing a manual for local board operations, (3) establishing channels of communication between the state board and its local boards and (4)

providing direct support to districts and institutions in creating new boards or intervening with ineffective ones.

2. Resource Development

Although there is a range of resources available to local boards through the volunteers they oversee, certain resources are appropriately developed by the state board to assist its local boards in their efforts. These resources include information, funding and training.

a. Information

Whether information is communicated to local board and, through these boards, to local volunteers is a function of the oral reports made by state board members to the local boards to which they are assigned. This structure does not lead to a consistent supply of meaningful information from board to volunteer and back.

Meaningful information will be collected by the state board through quarterly reports prepared by its local boards. These reports will be summarized and in a comprehensive quarterly report from the state board to its local boards. Included in this report will be relevant information about activities and achievements of the state board, TDOC and BOPP as well as upcoming events. This report will be distributed in the form of newsletter to volunteers and will be available through email to registered volunteers, in print at institution and district offices and on the organization's webpage.

Access to information must be improved. The current chair of the state board has very little information about the board and its functions. There does not appear to be a handbook or any operating procedures. Except for the membership list, there is no other list of district or institution contacts and no list of the chairs of the local boards.

Handbooks for the state and local boards must be created and these documents must be available online.

b. Funding

Because the TCRB is established as a charitable organization, it may develop funds independent of the state budget and apply them to activities that are consistent with its statutory goals. In order to accomplish this, the board must first develop the capacity to manage charitable gifts and grants. As a necessary first step in developing this capacity, the board will contract with a CPA to conduct an accounting of its financial records and to develop the policies for managing charitable funds.

When appropriate bookkeeping systems have been established and all the necessary conditions have been satisfied to legally solicit charitable donations, the board will begin conducting regular fundraising activities in the following order: (1) distribute the first of an annual solicitation letter to district and institution volunteers, (2) contract with a grant research and development firm to develop grant proposals, and (3) conduct the first of an annual prison to community conference.

The order of the fundraising activities is relevant. There is enough money in the board's account now to distribute solicitation letter to the more than 4,000 volunteers. With the money generated from this letter, the board will be able to conduct several projects of importance (e.g., create a website) and contract with a grant writer for special projects that will include provide seed funding for an annual prison to community conference.

c. Training

New volunteers are provided with adequate information about volunteering with individuals incarcerated in TDOC or on supervision with BOPP. Additional training for the purposes of volunteer development and remediation is not available. Volunteer orientations and training programs should conform to promising practices across the nation and annual training should be available in each grand division and at the annual prison to community conference in Nashville.

3. Strategic Alignment

The board must establish and maintain high level dialogue with TDOC and its institutions and with BOPP and its district offices. This dialogue should be around the strategic initiatives and the appropriate allocation of volunteer resources to help achieve them.

TN Community Resource Board
March 18, 2006

