



Prison Reentry Program

PREP

PREP is an acronym for Prison Re-Entry Program.

PREP is delivered in two tracks. The first track is for the participant and is essentially a deliberate two-year prison reentry program that has been vetted by participating employers and stakeholders as a pre-employment solution for ex-offenders. The second track is for the participating employers and supporting stakeholders and purpose is to create the conditions for success after the ex-offenders parole and release.

To achieve these ends, we believe the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) offers a prescriptive stakeholder model and process that works and can be effectively leveraged for prison reentry programs. WIOA migrates the focus of workforce development solutions from the provider and participant to the customer, which is the employer. WIOA states that effective solutions require employers to lead and own the process.

Let's discuss "Why", so that we all understand the reason why West Alabama employers are behind this program.

Recidivism: for decades, stakeholders in the prison sentencing and parole process have sought valid and reliable solutions to reduce recidivism. According to the Pew Center, the average recidivism rate in the US is 43% and 35% in Alabama. However, since 2007, states with evidence-based re-entry policies and programs have shown a significant decrease (e.g. 35% reduction in Georgia).

The question for all of us is this, "What solutions make sense for Alabama?"

Labor Force: West Alabama has a projection of over 7,500 open positions across all industries within the next two years. Talent pipelines must be developed in order to prepare those entering the workforce with the tools and skills necessary to be successful in today's modern workplace. We have created multiple workforce development programs in high schools, and Community Colleges, but until recently, ex-offenders have been underserved and essentially hidden in our available workforce population.

PREP

PREP MODEL

**PARTICIPANT
TRACK**

PARTICIPANT TRACK: 24 months is a long time, but PREP is worth it...

- Vocational skills based and faith-based programs have been proven to reduce recidivism to ~15%, so we have created synergy by blending both programs.
- Participants begin with CORE, an 18-month, faith-based character transformational program housed in Bibb County Correctional Facility and operated by LifeLink, a non-profit service provider to the Alabama Department Of Corrections. In addition to character development, CORE teaches life and behavior skills to excel in society. This program hosts 100 inmates that are hand-selected by the LifeLink team. LifeLink recruits from four prisons.
- After completing the 18-month CORE program, participants begin an expanded six-month Ready-To-Work program. Participants learn workplace skills that are applicable to all industry types in West Alabama; from truck driving, modern manufacturing, automotive and logistics, healthcare, construction, hospitality, and many others. PREP graduates earn the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and certified Alabama Worker credential.

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PREP MODEL

The Lifelink process

18 months
CORE

6 months
RTW

Parole with
life and
vocational
skills

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PREP MODEL

**EMPLOYER &
SUPPORTIVE SERVICES
TRACK**

EMPLOYER & SUPPORTING SERVICES STAKEHOLDER TRACK: Our motto “Whatever it takes...”

- We accept risk
- We provide cover
- We provide resources
- We identify and reduce or eliminate barriers
- We need and thank our supporting services stakeholders
- We do not care who gets the credit
- We are after outcome and results
- We do it whatever it takes...

PREP

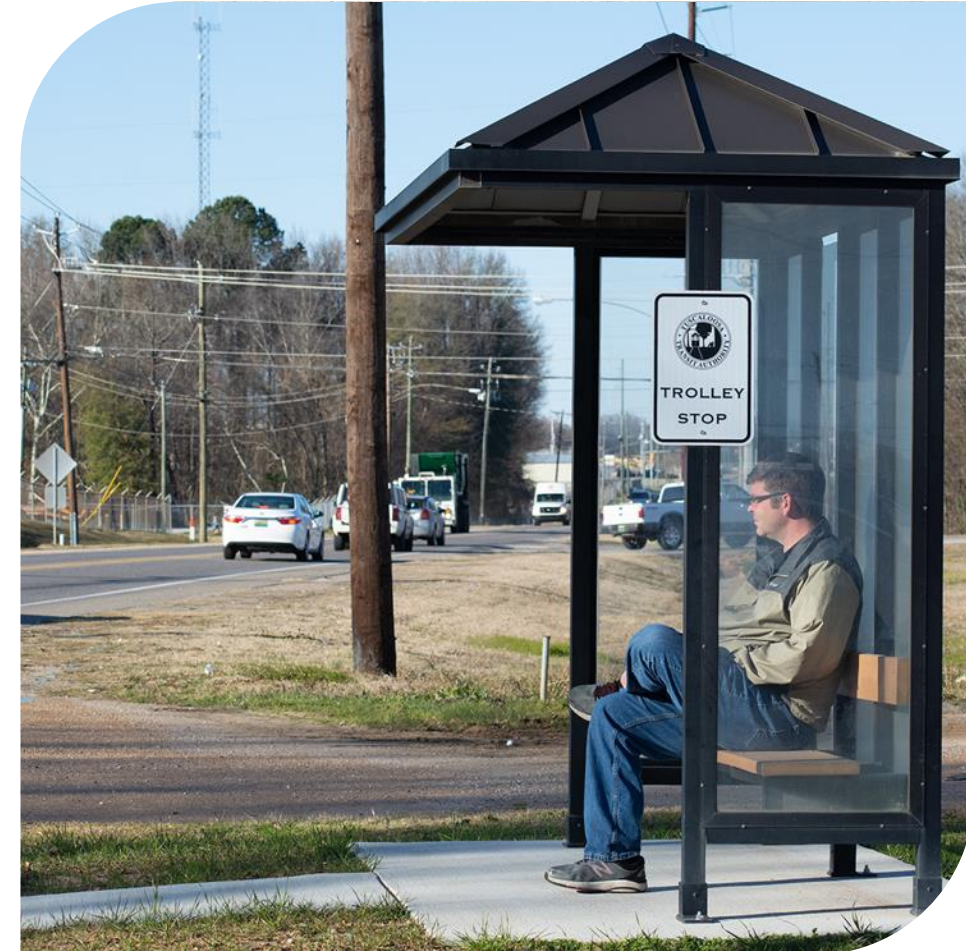
IDENTIFYING BARRIERS

You've made it! You have paid your debt to society by serving your time. Here is \$10, a new suit of clothes and a one-way bus ticket. "Good luck!"

No, this is not just in the movies. Paroled offenders are not prepared for entering society, nor do they have the skills, support groups or plan to enter the workplace, as such very few are successful (hence the high rate of recidivism).

A short list of things taken for granted that an ex-offender needs when released:

- Housing
- Transportation (work, parole office, grocery store, etc.)
- Government issued photo ID
- Health insurance
- Banking accounts
- Telephone
- Access to food



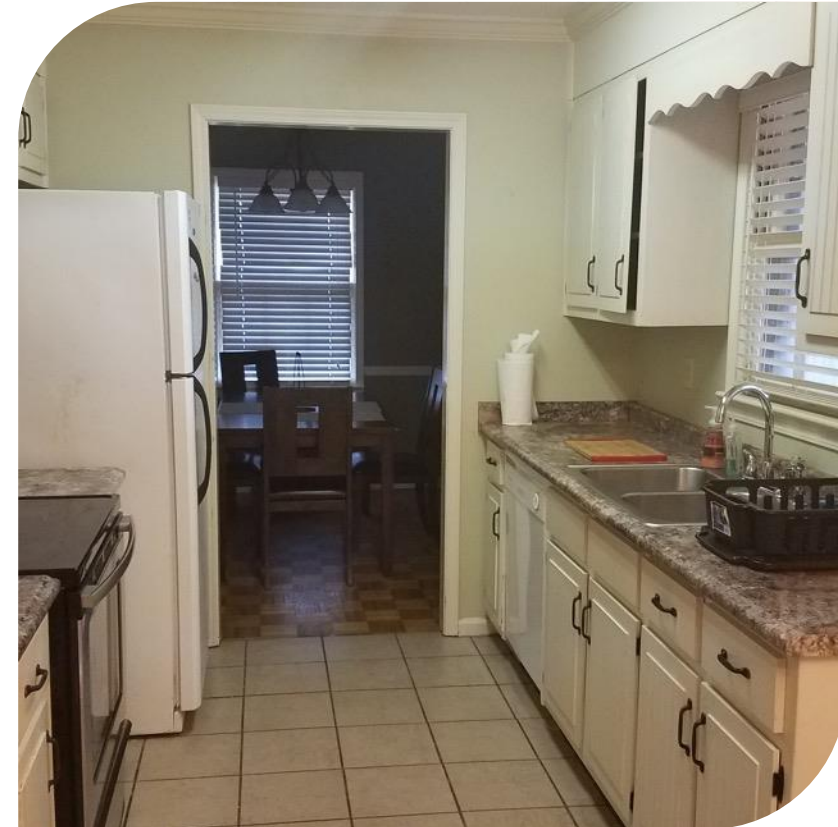
The first barrier in the previous slide was housing. This has proven to be a difficult challenge; however, difficult challenges require unique solutions.

The transitional and tiered housing solution:

- Before release, the wrap-around service providers will visit the inmates that are to soon be released to identify what all services are needed (e.g. health insurance, clothing sizes, nutritional restrictions, any limitations that will require accommodation or training by vocational rehab, etc.)

Phase 1

- Ex-offenders are paroled from Bibb County Correctional Facility into a fully-furnished house and begin “0 week”. In this first week, the ex-offender will be aligned with wrap-around services, that were identified, based on their unique circumstances, to cover the basics before their employment date.
- This house is where the ex-offenders will live for the first six months after release. Rent is free, and utilities are covered while the ex-offenders transition to gainful employment and life outside of prison.
- The second point on the previous slide was transportation. The ex-offender has a place to live, but how do they get anywhere? We have worked with local city government to get a public transportation installed near the house. In addition, the house is within walking distance of the employer and we have also purchased bicycles while the ex-offender builds savings for their own transportation.



Phase 2

- After the first six months, the ex-offender will then move into our second phase house. The house is a little further away to stress the value of transportation but is still accessible to the public mass transit system. This housing will be a split rent between occupants, along with utilities. This is another step to prepare them for being independent in society and to reinforce the importance of budgeting.

Phase 3

- After nine to twelve months in our transitional living spaces, we have an apartment complex willing to lease rental units to our PREP employees. The PREP employees will be responsible for full rent and utilities, but with multiple units for the ex-offenders, they still have a support group with familiar faces as they prepare to move into their own place.
- These three phases allow for a long enough time to have a record of employability, satisfy a significant portion of garnishments and ultimately for them to sign their own lease and be truly independent while maintain meaningful employment with life wages and contribute to society.



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Lessons Learned

Planned timeline for “0 week”

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
7:00	Leave Breakway Point	Report to Job Coach	Report to Job Coach	Report to Job Coach	Report to supervisor and shadow
8:00		Safety Training	Bus Route tour around town	Forklift training (2hrs)	
9:00	Arrive at employer for onboarding			Orientation	
10:00	Healthcare registration at service provider				
11:00					
12:00	Lunch (Downtown)	Lunch (brings lunch)	Lunch (brings lunch)	Lunch	Lunch with Job Coach and team
13:00	State ID (courthouse annex)	Meet supervisor, show work area	Clothing trip		Return to Job Shadow
14:00	TES- clothing/ food	Set up bank account		Church Visit (if requested)	
15:00	Go to House		Teledoc/ ESP services	Return home- Final Check in	Return Home- Final Check in
16:00	Show route to employer, Show bus stop	Return to employer/ visit wellness facilities	HR services		
17:00	Final Check in	Return home- Final Check in	Return home- final check in		

- Every hour of the first week was planned
- WRAP services incorporated on what we thought was needed
- Full structured days with time frames to visit each WRAP agency

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Lessons Learned

Actual timeline of “0 week”

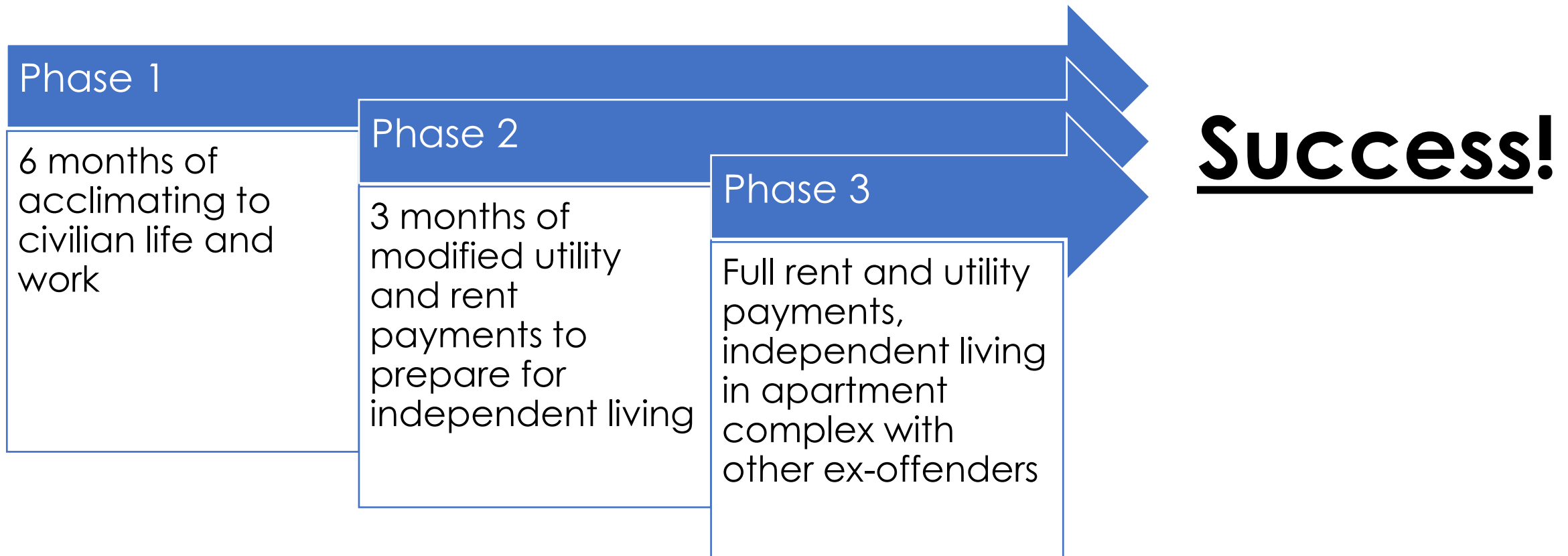
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
7:00	Leave Breakway Point	Report to Job Coach	Report to Job Coach	Report to supervisor and shadow	Report to supervisor and shadow
8:00		Safety Training	Health care coverage at Maude Whatley		
9:00	Arrive at Employer for onboarding				
10:00					
11:00					
12:00	Lunch	Lunch (brings lunch)	Lunch (brings lunch)		
13:00	safety training	forklift training	TES for clothing		
14:00					
15:00	Take to house	Return home	return home	Return home- Final Check in	Return home

- Ex-offenders are knowledgeable of some WRAP services and receive support upon paroling (e.g. TANF)
- Local agencies are not familiar with these workforce development programs, taking much longer than expected to receive services needed
- Ex-offenders want to get engaged in their job more quickly than expected to prevent idle hands and downtime. They want to stay busy and occupied

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Timeline of Success

Post-parole PREP process



- “0 week” was planned to have every hour accounted for, however, aligning support agencies was more time consuming than originally expected.
- Ex-offenders have a unique vernacular that forces supervisors and coaches to slow down in the communication process to fully understand the intent of what is being communicated.
- First-time experiences can be overwhelming for ex-offenders, and at the same time rewarding as they gain knowledge and ownership of the process (e.g. going to the grocery store, making coffee, etc.) these are viewed by the ex-offender as life skills and instills a further sense of dependability.

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The unknowns and particulars

You don't know what you don't know

- Court dates: ex-offenders will have court dates for violations from before their sentence began (e.g. a speeding ticket from 21 years ago, instead of being dismissed, was told he owes \$452)
- Lack of institutional support after release: to quote the contact at Bibb County to the ex-offender when inquiring about his social security card "You are out now, I'm not giving you anything"
- Lack of realistic expectations and common knowledge: First time to a grocery store, the ex-offender did not know if \$67 was enough to buy milk, bread, a box of cereal, and bath soap. In addition, when asked for his pant size, all that was known was the width, as they do not have length in prison, he had to be explained there are two numbers and told to look at the tag.

Expectations and goals moving forward

- Additional graduates of CORE and RTW are expected to enter into our re-entry program in the near future. Growing the number entering the program is essential to success.
- Increased capacity at Bibb County Correctional Facility is required. Additional dorm space will allow us to graduate more participants and allow graduates that are waiting on parole to serve as mentors and program assistants.
- Employer engagement is growing as they understand the program, allowing for more positions and career possibilities for graduates. Construction, hospitality, and healthcare will be viable options.
- We are embarking on a larger scale housing solution. Under consideration are housing complexes using Opportunity Zone funding, creating tiny home complexes, all within the public transportation network, etc. Stay tuned...

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QUESTIONS?