

**NEBRASKA SENTENCING REFORM TASK FORCE
MINUTES**

Virtual Meeting
Monday, October 7, 2024
10:00 a.m. CDT

Physical Location: Nebraska State Penitentiary – Public Visitation Room
4201 S 14th St, Lincoln, NE 68502

1. Call to Order, Introduction and Roll Call

Attorney General Mike Hilgers called the meeting of the Nebraska Sentencing Reform Task Force (Task Force) to order at 10:08 p.m. and requested a roll call. Members Present: Senator Carolyn Bosn, Douglas County Sheriff Aaron Hanson, Attorney General Mike Hilgers, Colfax County Attorney Bruce Prenda, Douglas County Public Defender Tom Riley, and Kearney Police Chief Bryan Waugh. Members Absent: Lt. Governor Joe Kelly, Douglas County Attorney Don Kleine, Lincoln County Public Defender Robert Lindemeier, Senator Terrell McKinney (late arrival), and Senator Justin Wayne.

2. Announcement of the Open Meetings Act

Attorney General Hilgers announced that the meeting was being conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

3. Notice of Meeting

On September 30, 2024, a notice of this meeting with the agenda was provided to the Task Force members and the public by posting to the Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar ([Nebraska.gov/calendar](https://nebraska.gov/calendar)). Notice of the meeting with the agenda was also available for public inspection at the Attorney General's Office, State Capitol Room 2115, and was kept continually current.

4. Adoption of Agenda

A motion to adopt the meeting agenda was made by Senator Bosn and seconded by Sheriff Hanson. Members voting in favor of the motion: Bosn, Hanson, Hilgers, Prenda, Riley, Waugh. Members voting in opposition to the motion: none. Members absent: Kelly, Kleine, Lindemeier, McKinney, and Wayne.

5. Approval of September 30, 2024 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from the September 30, 2024, meeting was made by Senator Bosn and seconded by Sheriff Hanson. Members voting in favor of the motion: Bosn, Hanson, Hilgers, Prenda, Riley, and Waugh. Members voting in opposition to the motion: none. Members absent: Kelly, Kleine, Lindemeier, McKinney, and Wayne.

6. Presentation from Dawn-Renee Smith, Deputy Director of Rehabilitative Services, and Invited Testimony.

The invited inmates gave their presentations first, followed by Ms. Dawn-Renee Smith. The first inmate, Mr. Wolfgang Rust, briefly explained his crime and sentence. He was then asked about the programming and jobs he was taking part in. Mr. Rust discussed his work with Braille and went into detail on many aspects of his certification and the certification process, including how he got certified and who oversees the certifications. He was then asked about his pay for this work, how many people work in the shop, and what the demographics look like there. Mr. Rust then discussed his past jobs and how he was approaching his time in prison. Senator McKinney arrived during this presentation.

The second inmate was Mr. Crescent Tucker, who briefly explained his crime and sentence. He was then asked about the programming and jobs he was a part of. Mr. Tucker emphasized the importance of programming and then discussed the programs he helps run and which have been the most influential during his time there. The Task Force went into extensive detail on the Intentional Peer Support program, Mr. Tucker's role as a mentor, and the barriers that keep people from participating in this and other programs. This led to a discussion on incentives available for programming participation, including monetary compensation. He was then asked about his future and how he was approaching his time in prison, which led to a brief discussion of parole eligibility.

The third inmate, Mr. Iman Muhammad, gave a brief history of his crime and sentence. He was then asked about the programming and jobs that he was a part of. Mr. Muhammad talked about his work in facilitating inter-faith dialogue and administration. Then, he went into detail on his former work as a Certified Nursing Assistant and the prison program he went through to get that certification. The Task Force then asked about the most helpful programs he has been involved in, which led to how programming affects the prison population. He then discussed the positive and negative effects of prison jobs on the population. The Task Force asked about incentives for people to participate in programs, including monetary compensation. He was then asked about his future and how he approached his time in prison.

Dawn-Renee Smith, Deputy Director of Rehabilitation Services, was the final presenter of the day. She provided the Task Force with the 2024 NDCS Program Register and printed copies of her PowerPoint presentation. She started by discussing the new 5-Key Model of Reentry and Well-Being Development that has recently been implemented department-wide. She then discussed the different treatments and programs that are currently in use, including clinical treatments, sex offender services, substance abuse programs, and peer-support programs. She then played a video on the PowerPoint of testimonials from inmates who have been part of these programs. Ms. Smith then discussed the use of tablets and how they have helped improve engagement with programs. The Task Force asked for details on the 5-Key Model, including its goal and how inmates have received it. This led to discussion on

the different data available, how it may be improved, and whether there are other areas that the department can look into. Following up on the former presentations, Ms. Smith was asked about jobs and incentives. This led to a discussion on the different jobs available and who funds them. The Task Force then asked what help was available to support inmates getting ready to be released. There was discussion on the re-entry process when it begins, and what the entire process entails. The Task Force also briefly discussed with Ms. Smith how the merger of Parole Services and NDCS was going and the differences between Parole and Post-Release Supervision.

7. Subcommittee Updates

The Data Collection Subcommittee did not have any updates, nor did the Criminal Justice System Resource Allocation and Recidivism Reduction Subcommittee, the Sentencing Reform Subcommittee, or the Public Safety Subcommittee.

8. Discussions of objectives for next meeting.

The objective of the next meeting, scheduled for October 24, at the state capitol. Staff will hopefully have a draft ready by October 24.

9. Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

10. Adjournment

The Task Force, having concluded its business as provided on the adopted agenda, adjourned on a motion by Sheriff Hanson, seconded by Senator Bosn. A roll call vote was requested. Members voting in favor of the motion: Bosn, Hanson, Hilgers, McKinney, Prenda, Riley, and Waugh. Members voting in opposition to the motion: none. Members absent: Kelly, Kleine, Lindemeier, and Wayne. The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.