



AUSTIN·TRAVIS COUNTY

REENTRY ROUNDTABLE

ANNUAL REPORT

20 24

ABOUT

The [Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable](#), founded in 2004, is an ongoing forum for system-impacted individuals, community leaders, policymakers, advocates, service providers and academics working to address the challenges to effective reentry and reintegration of persons directly impacted by the criminal legal system.

Our **vision** is a connected community that values and supports equity, well-being and upward mobility for persons impacted by the criminal justice system.

Our **mission** is to be a robust network that champions safe and healthy communities through effective reentry and reintegration of persons with justice system involvement by bringing reentry partners together to increase collaboration, reduce duplication, align efforts and strengthen the capacity of persons with justice system involvement and the reentry programs that serve them.

The **long-term outcome** we are working toward is that all persons with justice system involvement have what they need to survive and thrive including access to housing, a stable income, a support network to connect them to needed resources, and access to pathways to upward mobility.

OUR NETWORK

IN NUMBERS



50

MEMBERS

33

GATHERINGS

136

CONNECTED
ON MOBILIZE



Reentry Roundtable held its November Member Meeting in person at Austin Community College's Highland Campus. The Roundtable has an open membership model and accepts new members throughout the year.

To join as a member, visit: <https://www.reentryroundtable.org/join-membership/>

OUR 2024 INITIATIVES

GENERAL
MEMBERSHIP

REENTRY
ADVOCACY
FELLOWSHIP

COORDINATING
COMMITTEE

REENTRY
ADVOCACY
MENTORSHIP

REENTRY
ADVOCACY
PROJECT

HOUSING
RESEARCH
WORKGROUP

REENTRY
SERVICES
COMMUNITY
OF PRACTICE

FISCAL
SPONSORSHIP
WORKGROUP



Reentry Roundtable members presented to Commissioners Court in commemoration of the Roundtable's 20th anniversary. From left to right: Theo Hernandez-Walsh (Reentry Services Community of Practice member), Helen Gaebler (Housing Research Workgroup member), Darwin Hamilton (Reentry Advocacy Mentor), Barbara Ornelas (Reentry Advocacy Fellow), Misty Campbell (Coordinating Committee Vice Chair), Melissa Shearer (Coordinating Committee Chair), and Reyda Taylor (Coordinating Committee member).

2024 COORDINATING COMMITTEE

In 2024, the Roundtable elected its first Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee is a leadership body elected by Roundtable membership that provides general oversight of the group and assures that the work of the Roundtable is consistent with its mission and vision.

To ground the Coordinating Committee in the experience of persons impacted by the criminal-legal system, the Coordinating Committee is comprised of at least 50% of persons, regardless of professional affiliation, who identify as being directly impacted by the criminal legal system.







DEVELOP
CAPA
ADVOCACY GOVERNANCE
PEER NETWORKING LEADERS

REENTRY SERVICES COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Reentry Roundtable's Reentry Services Community of Practice engages and builds relationships between service providers working in the jail and prison reentry space. Representatives from seven local reentry service provider organizations participated in the inaugural year: Austin Community College, Black Men's Health Clinic, Building Promise USA, Capital Area Private Defender Service, On Point Reentry Consortium, RARE Academy, and Travis County Sheriff's Office.

2024 IMPACT

-  Building Promise USA has formed a collaborative relationship with Travis County Correctional Complex
-  Building Promise USA and On Point Reentry Consortium have developed a stronger collaborative relationship, resulting in "warm handoff" referrals from On Point Reentry Consortium to Building Promise USA
-  Austin Community College has connected Building Promise USA with Texas Department of Criminal Justice's new "Innovation Prison" initiative
-  Austin Community College and RARE Academy co-hosted a Reentry Simulation at Texas Workforce Commission's Growth through Reentry to Advance Careers & Employment (GRACE) Conference

Affordable Housing Funder Eligibility Scan & Recommendations

In 2024, the Roundtable conducted an analysis of criteria and processes for criminal legal system-impacted persons to access affordable housing, including both Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) and units within subsidized affordable housing developments. Then, developed policy recommendations for funders to decrease barriers for criminal legal system impacted individuals to access affordable housing. [Click here to read the report.](#)

This research was led by Khadijah Diaz (UT Austin CONNECT Fellow) and a workgroup of Roundtable members: Rosie Turnipseed (Choice and Chance Center for Change), Jennifer Sowinski (Downtown Austin Community Court), Melissa Shearer (Travis County Public Defender Mental Health Division), Richard Gamboa (Goodwill Excel Center for Adults), Barbara Ornelas (RARE Academy), and Helen Gaebler (UT Austin School of Law).

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Lead advocacy efforts at the local and state level to lower barriers and increase access to affordable housing for persons who are criminal legal system-impacted

Develop education and training modules for housing providers, housing-seekers, and service providers; Develop clear and transparent data protocol that the public can utilize in housing navigation

Implement required enforcement and monitoring procedures for all grantees of affordable housing funding

ADVOCACY FELLOW SPOTLIGHT

BARBARA ORNELAS

This year as a Fellow with the Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable has been a transformative journey of advocacy, collaboration, and innovation. It offered me the chance to work alongside passionate individuals committed to breaking down barriers for justice-impacted individuals and creating pathways to meaningful opportunities.

As the facilitator of monthly Reentry Advocacy Project (RAP) meetings, I facilitate a brave space for justice-impacted individuals to share their experiences and influence policy development. Themes like "Resource Roundup" and substance use recovery support provided participants with practical tools and a sense of community, underscoring the value of lived experiences in shaping effective reentry solutions.

One of the most impactful projects I undertook was creating the Reentry Simulation, a dynamic tool designed to immerse participants in the real-life challenges faced by individuals reentering society. This simulation encompasses several models, including housing barriers, mental health awareness, family responsibilities, vital records access, and immigration challenges. Participants experience scenarios such as navigating rental applications, managing mental health distractions, balancing childcare, and overcoming delays in obtaining essential identification documents. This initiative fosters empathy and systemic understanding while sparking conversations about sustainable solutions.

Professional growth opportunities, such as attending conferences and leadership development programs, further enriched my fellowship experience. Highlights included the Leadership Austin Professional Development program, which enhanced my ability to lead reentry-focused initiatives with greater impact. Additionally, my participation in the Women Transcending Collective Leadership Institute (CLI) has been instrumental in building my leadership capacity. This program has equipped me with tools for legislative advocacy, community organizing, and communication while offering workshops on the history of women's movements, healing practices, and Participatory Action Research. These experiences have deepened my understanding of systemic challenges and strengthened my ability to advocate for transformative change.

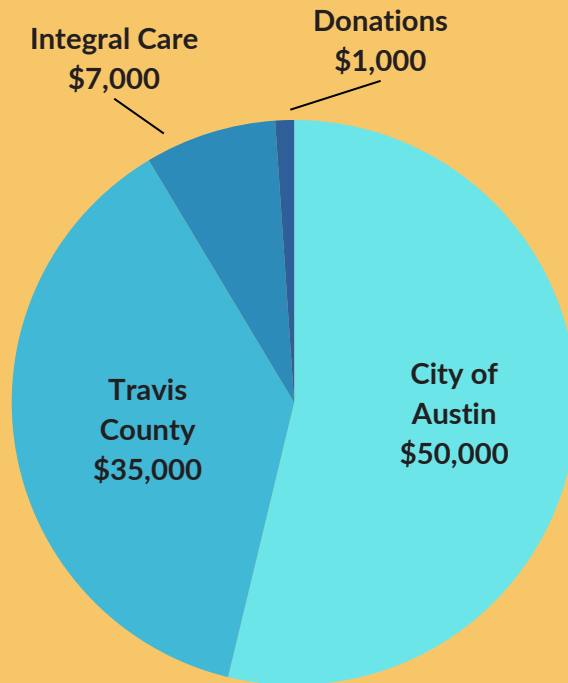
Reflecting on this past year, I am profoundly grateful for the mentorship and collaboration I have received. Together, we have bridged gaps in resources and empowered our community. This fellowship has reaffirmed my belief in the power of collective action, and I am excited to continue this vital work in the years to come.



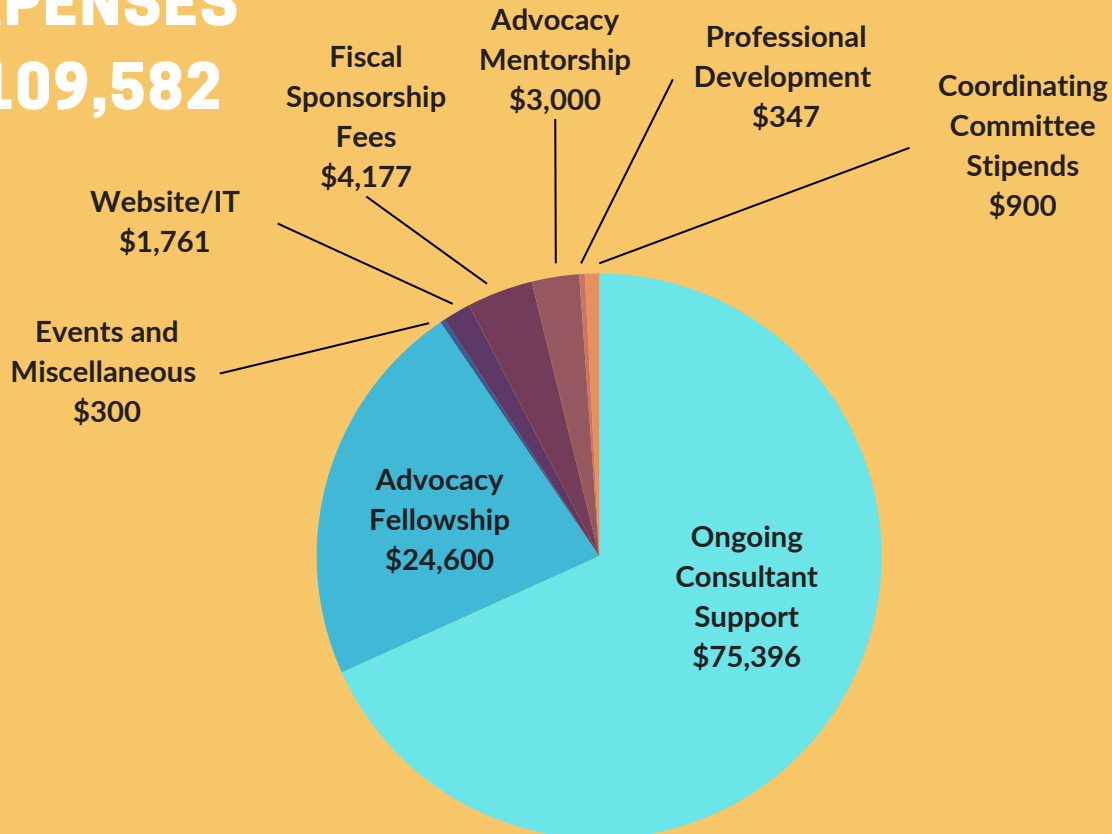
Barbara Ornelas (Reentry Advocacy Fellow) and Misty Campbell (Vice Chair) designed and facilitated a Reentry Simulation at Texas Workforce Commission's Growth through Reentry to Advance Careers and Employment (G.R.A.C.E.) Conference.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

INCOME \$93,000



EXPENSES \$ 109,582



MEMBERSHIP

Partnerships allow the Roundtable to maximize its impact within the community and we greatly appreciate the support and commitment from our coalition of individuals directly impacted by the criminal legal system, academics, service providers, practitioners, community leaders, policymakers, and advocates working to address the challenges to effective reentry and reintegration.

In FY2023-24, the Roundtable collaborated with the following entities through organizational membership:

- A New Entry, Inc.
- American YouthWorks
- Austin Community College
- Bastrop County Cares
- Black Men’s Health Clinic
- Building Promise USA
- Capital Area Private Defender Service
- Choice and Chance Center For Change
- Cities4Peace
- Community Coalition for Health
- Dove Springs Proud
- Downtown Austin Community Court
- Ending Community Homelessness Coalition
- Goodwill Central Texas
- Grassroots Leadership
- Integral Care
- Jail to Jobs
- Lioness Justice Impacted Women’s Alliance
- On-Point Re-Entry Consortium
- RARE Academy
- Recovery ATX
- Santa Maria Hostel, Inc.
- Travis County Community Justice Services
- Texas Diva of Real Estate
- Texas Inmate Families Association
- The Excel Center
- The Other Ones Foundation
- Travis County Innovative Justice and Program Analysis
- Travis County Juvenile Probation Department
- Travis County Public Defender
- Travis County Public Defender--Mental Health Division
- Travis County Sheriff's Office

