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The Bexar County ReEntry Council hosts the Statewide ReEntry Council Coalition

Top criminal justice administrators and policy-makers from across Texas met today to discuss strategies and approaches to the successful re-entry of offenders back into the community aimed at saving both lives and money. Bexar County as one of only three county re-entry councils in Texas and has taken a leadership role in reforming our criminal justice system locally and statewide. Commissioner Tommy Adkisson stated, "Since our formation in 2008, the State has formed a statewide council modeled after the three re-entry councils in Tarrant (Ft. Worth), Travis (Austin) and Bexar County."

Topics discussed were substance abuse and mental health, employment and education along with housing and social services, some of the most critical issues that cause individuals to return to jail or prison. Bexar County Commissioner Tommy Adkisson gave the luncheon keynote speech and focused on improving public safety while reducing cost. It was noted that every 400 inmates costs Bexar County \$8 million annually and we regularly have around 4,200 inmates at our Jail. What's worse is that according to veteran criminal justice professionals, 81% of the inmates in the Bexar County Jail have already been there before.

As part of the wrap-up of the event, participants were encouraged to find ways to responsibly save money at the State and County levels relative to jails and prisons. Commissioner Adkisson also encouraged participants to develop a legislative agenda that could conceivably reduce the State's \$19 billion projected shortfall by as much as \$3 billion! This and other ideas will be presented to the Legislators that will go to Austin in January.