

Governor Perdue and officials visit StepUP to kick off statewide StreetSafe program



Governor Perdue greets StepUP participant Tameika Wilson and Angela Coleman, Employment Counselor.

StepUP Ministry headquarters was the venue of a recent visit by North Carolina Governor Beverly Perdue and Attorney General Roy Cooper and other officials, as part of an announcement of the new StreetSafe Task Force. Aimed at reintegrating ex-offenders safely into the community and reducing recidivism, StreetSafe brings together faith-based organizations, non-profits, local and state government agencies, business leaders and community members to develop its plan.

Gov. Perdue announced 34 members of the Task Force, which will try to find ways to keep people from going back to prison. “We help people stay out of prison by giving them a life and a job and a capacity to succeed in the community,” she told a press conference at White Memorial Presbyterian Church, across from StepUP headquarters. “I believe this works,” she said. “I am so eager to see the results of the task force. I think it’s of huge, huge importance to North Carolina, and we can become a model for the country.”

Every year, 28,000 people are released from North Carolina prisons into a world where their pasts make it difficult to find a decent job and a place to live. Moreover, it costs the state an average of more than \$27,000 a year to keep someone locked up.

Attorney General Cooper cited StepUP’s record of being able to train an ex-offender, teach him or her life skills and help with a successful job hunt for \$1,200 per person. “This is the safe thing to do, it’s the smart thing to do, and it’s the right thing to do,” he said.

StepUP leaders at the event included Steve Swayne, executive director; Robert Battle, director of programs, and Molly Nichols, development director, as well as several board members. The Governor and taskforce members toured StepUP before the press conference, where they met with staff and participants.