

## **Prisoner Re-Entry and Family Unification Summary Report of Best/Promising Practices 2-25-05**

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The following requisite areas were identified as foundation to Renewal Candidate\* (RC) success. The infrastructure within the best/promising models is designed such that one area of an RC's success is linked and sometimes directly contingent upon an other area. For instance, transportation needs can affect employment standing that directly relates to housing issues and healthy family relationships. Not all models addressed a complete spectrum of RC needs.

1. Housing
2. Employment
3. Mentoring
4. Healthy relationships (family, friends, community)
5. Corrective thinking
6. A welcoming church
7. Addiction recovery
8. Repairing harm done to the offender's victims.
9. Access to medical and mental health services
10. Restored citizenship rights

Within the above primary areas of an RC's needs are many subset factors and considerations. For instance, under the employment task would be educational need: GED, vocational training, and college; under the housing consideration is would be costs, size, availability. As with all programs, funding becomes the main issue regardless of how virtuous and practical, even beneficial the idea might be.

Those who have committed sexual offenses or drug related offenses fall to a specialized needs category. Often their probation and parole requirements have specific limitations with regard to the proximity of age and gender groups that the individual may live or work around. Referring again to the above basic needs area, another consideration is demographics. Wyoming stands unique in that as a state it is the least populated in the nation. Additionally, the communities are small, generally of poor economic standing, and consequently these factors in combination do not provide a strong collaborative of benefits unless the Renewal Candidate lives reasonably close to or in one of Wyoming's larger communities.

\*Renewal Candidate is a new term defining the newly released inmate.

The following models/programs (in no particular order) were examined from the standpoint of interviewing the officials within the organization itself where specific questions were posed to them in order to establish some idea of their effectiveness and approaches:

1. Longevity of the organization in regard to experience.
2. Specific targeting of RC groups: men, women, juveniles, drug offenders, etc.
3. How they were funded.
4. Types of services offered.
5. Systematic approaches, if any.
6. Outcome measurements, if any.
7. Training of staff: paid/volunteer.
8. Assessment and screening.
9. Relationship to state and federal correction facilities.
10. Prerelease intervention approaches.

In consideration of the above questions, the following programs were examined: Helping Up Mission 1885(MD) Karios Horizon Communities in Prison 1976 (FL OH OK TX); Men of Valor 2001 (CA); New Horizons 1992 (CO); Episcopal Social Services Network Program 1831 (NY); Detroit Transition of Prisoners 1993 (MI); Wheeler Mission Ministries 1893 (IN); Project Blanket 1997 (PA); Keystone Ministries 2001 (MS); Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency 1997 (DC); Prodigal Ministries 1994 (KY); Amachi 2000 (PA); Conquest Offender Reintegration Ministries 1995 (DC); Teen Challenge 1958 (National); St. Leonard's Ministries 1954 (IL); Prison Fellowship Ministries 1976 (National). In addition to the above models, inquiry was made into several research projects such as The Urban Development Project, Wyoming DOC, The Ohio Reentry Program, and federal and state programs.

Over thirty programs were examined, most of which did not have any outcome measurements, no specific infrastructure, and very little systematic approach. Many programs specialized in only one area such as faith-based counseling, housing, or employment assistance. Of those programs that were considered, the following were chosen as the most comprehensive in meeting the RC basic needs, and were well-documented models to substantiate their outcomes. However, despite the models that are listed below, demographic considerations must be factored in. In almost all cases, RCs living in remote areas of a state do not have the services as compared to those living in the larger cities. Consequently, almost without exception, all models lose certain effectiveness outside of the cities where RCs live in urban settings.

The best practices used the following methods:

1. Detailed and ongoing assessment of the RC from the point of incarceration to the date of release.

- a. assessment as to education
  - b. risk/need level
  - c. health
  - d. type of offense
  - e. community of return
2. Prerelease intervention to prepare the RC to meet the challenges of employment from 18-24 months before release.
    - a. Finishing basic educational need such as G.E.D.
    - b. Vocational training.
    - c. Corrective thinking/cognitive behavior.
    - d. Interpersonal relationship intervention.
  3. Immediate transition into the community with a personalized plan.
    - a. RC has been briefed on his approach plan and understands what is happening.
    - b. Housing is prearranged.
    - c. Transportation issues are prearranged.
    - d. Family members are prepared to receive the member back into their lives.
  4. Assignment to a mentor that works on a daily basis with the RC, and where such mentor is closely involved in all aspects of the RC's life.
    - a. Mentor is a trained individual (paid or voluntary).
    - b. Walks with the RC through all phases of the reentry.
    - c. Is knowledgeable of the legal requirements related to the RC.
    - d. Maintains accurate and consistent records.
    - e. Is personally acquainted with the RC's individual challenges.
  5. Well trained faith-based proactive community of relationships.

Innerchange Freedom Initiative: begins 12-18 months "before" release.

- Phase One: focuses on the prisoner's internal transformational process and seeks to build spiritual and moral filters. A heavy emphasis on education, work and support helps create a new foundation for productive growth.
- Phase Two: tests the inmate's value system in real-life settings and prepares him for life after prison. Inmates may spend much of the day in off-site prison work programs or involved in the Re-Entry portion of the IFI curriculum.
- Phase Three: the IFI members are transferred to a Work Release or Halfway House facility to continue their transition process.
- Phase Four: allows the inmate to practice a transformed life-style upon release from custody in aftercare. Designed to assist the ex-offender in

assimilating into his family, community and workplace by his continued associated with a Christian mentor, IFI staff, and church family.

- Transformational vs Therapeutic approach.

How Does TOP® (Transition of Prisoners) Work? Assessment emphasis begins "after" not before.

- Trains individuals, selected by their Pastor, to effectively mentor those released from prison.
- Assesses individuals who apply for entrance into the program to determine their level of risk for returning to prison.
- Helps ex-prisoners develop a transition plan to focus on what is needed for them to complete a successful return to the community.
- Maintains a working relationship with Department Of Corrections to coordinate the ex-prisoner's ability to participate in church activities or services.
- Maintains a "Good Samaritan Fund" to reimburse churches for approved expenses associated with mentoring a TOP program participant.
- Also assists by collaborating with a variety of agencies and ministries to provide referrals for clothing, food, employment, relapse prevention, etc. when the ex-prisoner's need exceeds the ability of the local church.

Federal Bureau of Prisons Prerelease Assessment Evaluation The FBP developed, perhaps, one of the most comprehensive assessment plans called the Inmate Skills Development assessment that targets each of the nine listed areas below.

- Daily Living Skills
- Mental Health Skills
- Wellness Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Academic Skills
- Cognitive Skill
- Vocational/Career Skills
- Character Skills
- Leisure Skills

The ISD seems to be a leading assessment that is a primary key to design a reentry plan for Renewal Candidate.

The Nebraska Model (Prerelease assessment placement/risk factor rating) Uses a prerelease assessment that culminates in the personalized placement and design program.

The Nebraska model includes the following areas:

- Employment
- Education
- Health

- Housing
- Faith Community
- Family
- Community Resources
- Individual Motivation

The best practices. Those that were most comprehensive, used the following methods:

1. Detailed and ongoing assessment of the RC from the point of incarceration to the date of release.
  - a. Assessment as to education.
  - b. Risk/need level candidacy evaluation for placement.
  - c. Health issues: physical/mental.
  - d. Type of offense.
  - e. Community of return.
  
2. Prerelease intervention to prepare the RC to meet the challenges of employment from 18-24 months before release.
  - a. Finishing basic educational need such as G.E.D.
  - b. Vocational training.
  - c. Corrective thinking/cognitive behavior.
  - d. Interpersonal relationship intervention.
  
3. Immediate transition into the community with a personalized plan.
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4. Assignment to a mentor that works on a daily basis with the RC, and where such mentor is closely involved in all aspects of the RC's life.
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  - c. Is knowledgeable of the legal requirements related to the RC.
  - d. Maintains accurate and consistent records.
  - e. Is personally acquainted with the RC's individual challenges.
  
5. Well trained faith-based proactive community of relationships.
  - a. Community relationship.
  - b. Family relationship.
  - c. On-going care/help in both spiritual/material areas.
  - d. Guidance/mentoring.