

## **Example 25. New York State Support and Expectations of Local Reentry Task Forces**

### ***State of New York – Division of Criminal Justice Services***

#### ***PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT***

##### ***Request for Applications to Develop Local reentry task Forces/Strategies***

###### ***Program Overview/Understanding the Problem***

Each year approximately 26,000 offenders are released from New York State prisons and return to local communities. Consistent with Governor Pataki's goal of making New York the safest state in the nation, - it is now the sixth safest state - the New York State Offender Reentry Task Force, through the Division of Criminal Justice Services, is offering funding for local communities to establish local prisoner reentry task forces as a tool to reduce recidivism and increase public safety.

Upon release from prison, many offenders have difficulties obtaining housing, securing employment, accessing treatment services, and reunifying with their families. As research has shown, to the extent an offender is employed, sober, in a stable living environment, and moving toward self sufficiency, the greater chance he or she has of not committing further crimes – benefiting the community by reducing crime and improving the stability of the community.

Reentry is more than just a criminal justice issue. Emphasis on reentry serves the broader community's interest in public safety as well. Public, community and neighborhood organizations, and criminal justice and human service agencies are all stakeholders in this process. Collaboration in an effort such as this is critical. Coordinating the delivery of support services and securing interdisciplinary collaboration between the criminal justice, social services, educational, health and mental health systems during the reentry process are key factors in assuring successful reentry.

Not only in New York, but across the United States, significant attention has been paid to the record numbers of offenders returning to the community and to the promise of innovative interventions designed to smooth their transition. The focus on offender reentry at the federal level has been demonstrated by: (1) the appropriation of considerable funding to assist communities in improving their reentry process; and (2) groundbreaking collaboration among the Social Security Administration and the Departments of Justice, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Veterans Affairs, and Education in the development of strategies to address the challenges of offender reentry.

Consistent with the national focus on offender reentry, in 2003, New York State convened a prisoner Reentry Task Force to examine current statewide reentry policies and develop a comprehensive continuum of reentry services, programs and supervision that is consistent with national best practices. The Reentry Task Force is comprised of a Policy Team of commissioners and directors from fourteen criminal justice and human service agencies directly involved in offender reentry and a Steering Committee of representatives from each of these agencies. The Reentry Task Force has adopted the Transition from Prison to Community (TPC) model of reentry developed by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), which espouses shared interest among criminal justice and human service agencies for achieving the successful transition of persons from prison to the community.

The vision of the Reentry Task Force is to build a safer New York resulting from the successful transition of offenders from prison to living law-abiding and productive lives in their communities. In order to achieve this vision, the Reentry Task Force is working to establish a coordinated statewide system to accurately assess and respond to offender risks and needs, support offender accountability and reparation to victims and communities, promote offender self-sufficiency, and encourage family and community involvement.

The Reentry Task Force recognizes that local communities play a critical role in the successful transition of persons from prison to the community. Accordingly, the Reentry Task Force has developed this grant program to support the establishment or enhancement of local reentry task forces to coordinate and strengthen the community response to high-risk offenders transitioning from prison back to the community with the ultimate goal of reducing the number who return to prison after committing new crimes.

The role of county-level reentry task forces would be threefold. First, county task forces would provide coordinated services to high-risk offenders around housing, employment, education, family support and reunification, substance abuse, mental and physical health, and other transitional needs. County task forces would collaborate with state criminal justice, particularly with the State Division of Parole, and human service providers to develop well-crafted transition plans for high-risk offenders transitioning from prison back into the community. Second, county task forces would assess the current system of offender transition in the county and implement strategies to enhance successful transition. Lastly, local task forces would develop the community's capacity to assist in offender reentry through means such as public education, development of mentoring programs, and inclusion of ex-offenders in volunteer services as a means of reparation.

2) *Funding, Match and Program Period*

Grant awards of up to \$100,000 will be made available to each of the New York State IMPACT counties. The IMPACT counties include the 17 largest counties that account for 80% of the crime outside of New York City and are participating in our statewide crime reduction program administered by the District Attorneys offices. Award priority will be given to those jurisdictions with the highest volume of returning offenders. Grant funds

must be expended within the contract period, in accordance with the program budget. Grant recipients are required to designate \$5,000 of grant funds for travel to attend two mandatory workshops. This requirement is addressed further in Section 4 (d) of this announcement.

This program will be funded by the Federal Fiscal Year 2005 Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Program Grant. Therefore, grant recipients must provide a hard cash match equal to 10% of the total project cost (or 11.11% of the final award.) Operation IMPACT II program funds may be used as eligible match for this program if IMPACT II funds support components of the Reentry Project.

Contracts will be for the 18 month period beginning January 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007. Contingent upon availability of funds, these contracts may be renewed for one year.

3) Targeted Offender Population

The targeted returning offender population for this grant consists of those returning from prison who are deemed by the local reentry task force to pose a significant risk to public safety or who present to the community with reintegration needs that are particularly difficult to address. The State Reentry Task Force will work jointly with the local partnerships to identify high-risk offender populations specific to each grant recipient county.

Offenders returning from prison may be under parole supervision or may have been released due to the maximum expiration of their sentence. Grantees may also choose to develop specific protocols to target such sub-populations as sex offenders or those with a history of violence.

4) Program Requirements/Activities

*a. Development and composition of local reentry task forces*

The primary requirement of this grant program is the establishment of a comprehensive reentry task force. The County Executive's Office will be the fiscal agent responsible for administering the grant and will identify the implementing agency to oversee the Reentry Project. The designated agency will serve as the chair of the local reentry task force. An alternate management structure for the task force may be considered upon request by the county. At a minimum, the reentry task force must include the following agencies/organizations:

1. Regional or Area Parole Office
2. Sheriff's Office
3. Police Department (of largest jurisdiction)
4. County Department of Mental Health
5. County Department of Probation
6. County Department of Social Services

7. Local VESID (Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities) Office
8. Local One-Stop Center (Department of Labor)
9. OASAS Field Office (Addiction Specialist)
10. Faith-based/community organization(s)
11. Victim advocacy organization(s)

Because the criminogenic needs of returning offenders and available system resources will differ across counties, grantees should consider engaging other reentry stakeholders as appropriate. Additional optional partners may include: community treatment providers, New York State Police Community Outreach Representative, district attorney's office, county legislators, local research partners, local educators and representatives from courts, the local housing authority, and the business community.

Grantees are encouraged to build on existing structures; therefore, if a group is already in place with an appropriate composition and similar purpose, it may serve as the foundation for the complete reentry task force.

Representatives from DCJS, the Division of Parole, the Department of Correctional Services and other State agencies, as appropriate, will partner with the local reentry task forces by providing supportive services and technical assistance via the Statewide Reentry Task Force. To ensure the coordination between the State and local jurisdictions, and to further enhance the contribution of State agency representatives, grantees will be required to interact with the Statewide Reentry Task Force. Minimally, the local reentry task force chairperson and the reentry coordinator will be required to attend periodic meetings of all grant recipients coordinated by DCJS and the Division of Parole (co-chairs of the Statewide Reentry Task Force).

*b. Designation of Reentry Coordinator*

In addition to the development of local reentry task forces, a second program requirement is the **designation of a full-time county reentry coordinator**. The role of the reentry coordinator would be twofold. First, the reentry coordinator would be responsible for developing a case conferencing process to assist in the coordination of services for high-risk offenders. An extension of this function will be to communicate service gaps, redundancies or inconsistencies experienced at the individual case-level to the full reentry task force for their attention in the context of strategic planning and system-wide assessment and coordination.

For those offenders under supervision, case management coordination would be provided following referral by the supervising agency. For offenders who are not under criminal justice supervision, the reentry coordinator would develop an "in-reach" process to establish contact with eligible offenders pre-release. One mechanism by which this could occur is through exit orientations conducted by teams including law enforcement, service providers and the reentry coordinator to deliver a collective message that the offender will be held accountable for his/her actions post-release, but that there are specific

services available in the community, including case management by the reentry coordinator, to assist in the reentry process.

The second role of the reentry coordinator is to oversee a comprehensive assessment of the local reentry system that the task force must undertake as part of the grant requirements. The reentry coordinator would act as a facilitator, working across agency lines to enhance partnerships among criminal justice and human service agencies. This could include developing coordinated working agreements that address duplication of services and establishing new relationships with agencies that could assist in the county reentry process.

*c. Roles and activities of local reentry task forces*

Once established, local reentry task forces will oversee the following activities:

- *Assist in the coordination of services in targeted, high-risk cases:* Assist in coordinating services in high-risk re-entry cases to enable the offender to meet needs that will reduce the probability of recidivism and increase self-sufficiency in areas such as housing, employment, education, family support and reunification, substance abuse, and mental health.
- *Strategic planning and system-wide coordination:* Assess the quality and comprehensiveness of the current system of offender transition within the county through use of the Transition from Prison to Community (TPC) model; implement strategies that enhance the accountability and management of all offenders reentering the community and improve the coordination of services across agencies;
- *Public education and outreach:* Engage the community in building a reentry system through public education and activities that: (1) explain the reentry process to the public; and (2) provide for community participation in reentry planning and programming such as offender mentoring.

*d. Training*

County reentry teams must reserve \$5,000 for two training workshops to be arranged by the Statewide Reentry Task Force and conducted by technical assistance providers designated by the Statewide Reentry Task Force. The training workshops will address the components of the Transition from Prison to the Community (TPC) approach to offender reentry and the fundamentals of effective collaboration. The workshops will: (1) assist teams in the development of collaborative, sustainable partnerships that integrate basic policies; (2) enhance the provision of services; and (3) maximize resources in order to improve the transition process for returning offenders and increase the likelihood of successful reintegration.

Local reentry task force leadership along with the reentry coordinator and the regional Parole representative will be required to attend the first training to be held in Albany. Additionally, once the entire reentry task force has been established, complete teams will be required to attend a collaboration training.

*e. Grant timeline*

Within the first 90 days following the grant award, local reentry task forces must conduct their first meeting and designated members must attend the mandatory workshop trainings. Task forces must meet at least quarterly for the remainder of the grant period.

Also within the first 90 days, grantees must designate a reentry coordinator. The reentry coordinator should immediately establish a relationship with the regional Parole office and begin to develop the case conferencing process described above for both supervised and unsupervised offenders. Throughout the remainder of the grant period, the reentry coordinator will continue to manage the case conferencing process while concurrently overseeing the system assessment to be conducted by the complete task force.

Systematic assessment of the county reentry process relative to currently understood best practices in offender reentry should be conducted and completed by June 30, 2006. The steps necessary to complete this task will be outlined in detail during the first mandatory training workshop. The assessment should include an analysis of the returning offender population as well as a compilation of the existing resources, policies and practices with regard to the reintegration of these offenders.

Following the system assessment, grant recipients will be required to submit a county reentry strategy that identifies three measurable goals that the local reentry task force will achieve over the remaining twelve months of the grant. Once achieved, these goals should begin to bridge the identified gaps between current and best practices. Additionally, grantees must submit an implementation plan to achieve these goals, a method to gather data and measure progress toward goal fulfillment, and an updated budget, as appropriate.

*f. Funding uses*

Grant funds, first and foremost, **must be used to support a reentry coordinator position** to help coordinate services to targeted cases and assist in system assessment as described above. A variety of methods may be used to meet this requirement: 1) If the county already has a full-time reentry coordinator or equivalent position supported by another source, the funds supporting this position may be applied toward the required cash match for this program. Grant funds may then be used to support other allowable program activities and costs described below; 2) County may choose to hire a consultant to support the coordinator position; and 3) A new position may be established and hired for the reentry coordinator.

All grantees must allocate \$5,000 of their grant funds for travel to attend two mandatory workshops.

Any grant funds remaining after the support of a reentry coordinator position and travel for mandatory workshops may be used for the following:

1. Purchasing treatment or other specialized services needed to improve the reentry of high-risk offenders.
2. Providing victims and other persons whose safety may be placed in jeopardy by offender reentry with services to enhance their safety.
3. Systems coordination planning and developmental activities that bring key stakeholder agencies/organizations together.
4. Purchasing supplies and services required by the workgroup to carry out its plans (e.g., preparation and printing of educational materials).
5. Providing services and advice to families of reentering offenders who will be housing those offenders and helping them to reintegrate into the community.
6. Training community members and volunteers to assist reentering offenders through mentoring and other programs designed to increase offender employment and otherwise improve their adjustment to the community.

5) Performance Measures

As indicated in the grant timeline Section 4(e) above, each local reentry task force will be required to establish **three measurable goals** that can be monitored and evaluated throughout the duration of the grant period. DCJS will assist local reentry task forces in the measurement and calculation of these goals and will provide information to each grant recipient county regarding their specific returning offender population.

6) Application Requirements

Applications must be submitted by the County Executive's Office. Only one application will be accepted from each county.

*a. Memorandum of Understanding*

Applicants must submit an MOU signed and dated by the chief executive officers of each of the required criminal justice and human service agencies on the reentry task force indicating their planned participation. The MOU should describe an understanding of the grant deliverables and indicate the agreement of the signatories to participate in a coordinated multi-disciplinary approach to offender reentry. A sample MOU is provided with this announcement. The original signed MOU may be mailed and be received by the due date to: DCJS Funding, 4 Tower Place, Albany, New York 12203, Attn: Anne Marie Strano, or you may scan the signed MOU and attach it to your GMS application.

**Individual agency MOUs are not acceptable. In addition, letters of support may not be substituted in place of one originally signed MOU.**

*b. Budget*

Applicants are required to submit a budget that includes a concise narrative outlining how funds would be spent. As each county task force is required to complete a comprehensive system assessment, the budget should only outline how initial funds will be spent in order to complete this assessment and early case conferencing activities. For example, this may include the cost of the full-time reentry coordinator and estimated

travel expenses for the training in Albany to be conducted in the Winter of 2006. Applicants' budgets should then identify how remaining grant funds will be used to develop, execute and evaluate their county reentry strategy during the implementation phase of the grant.

*c. Narrative*

The narrative portion of the application should be at least four, but no more than eight, double-spaced, single-sided pages with 12-point text font and one-inch margins and can be typed in a word processing format first and then copied and pasted into the program specific question area in GMS. Narratives should consist of responses to each of the following questions.

1. County-level reentry issues

Describe up to four specific reintegration issues experienced by the submitting county. Include references to present key policies and practices affecting transition that are currently in place. You may incorporate data from your county reentry profile which is attached to this program announcement.

2. Need for grant support

How would this grant opportunity assist the county in its efforts to increase the success rate of offenders transitioning from prison to the community?

How would this grant opportunity improve the county's capacity to conduct coordinated case management and evidence-based planning around offender reentry?

How would the local reentry task force build appropriate community participation in the reentry process?

3. Current state of collaboration

If a team is already in place with an appropriate composition and congruous purpose that could be expanded to function as the reentry task force, please describe the team, its mission, and its members.

If a suitable team does not currently exist, please describe any recent, formal collaboration between criminal justice and human service agencies established in your county to solve common problems or achieve mutual objectives.

4. Reentry coordinator

Describe the proposed plan for implementing the reentry coordinator function.

If this role is currently being accomplished in the county, please describe the position and the agency or agencies supporting it. Alternatively, please describe the position to be

created, as envisioned, including where it would be located and the supervising agency or agencies.

7) Application Preparation, Forms and Requirements

Grant applications should be submitted to the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) automated DCJS Grants Management System (GMS). The system allows an agency to complete an application electronically and submit it over the Internet. If upon reading this program announcement you are interested in completing a grant application, and you have not previously been registered to use the DCJS GMS system, your agency will need to register and be assigned a password. The Registration Request Form and instructions for use of the GMS system can be found at the following Internet address: <http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us/ofpa/gms.htm>

When your request has been processed, you will receive a username, password, instructions and a link to a user manual. Please allow 3-5 business days for your Registration Request to be processed. **Applicants are encouraged to register their agency immediately.**

Should you have difficulty in accessing or using the GMS system, please email GMS Technical Assistance at [funding@dcjs.state.ny.us](mailto:funding@dcjs.state.ny.us) for assistance.

All applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. December 5, 2005.

8) Timeline

DCJS will receive applications starting November 4, 2005 and continue receiving applications through the close of business (5:00 p.m.) on December 5, 2005. All applications will be reviewed and awards made to those applications selected for funding by January 1, 2006.

9) Approval and Notification of Award

The Director of Criminal Justice will provide oversight of the grant review process. The Director will announce the final grant award decisions based on the review and rating of applications and recommendations by the staff. Nothing herein requires DCJS to approve grant funding for any applicant.

DCJS will notify all applicants in writing as to whether or not they will receive a grant award.

10) Administration of Grant Contracts

Contract Approval – All contracts are subject to the approval of the Attorney General and the Comptroller of the State of New York, and until said approval has received and indicated thereon, the Contract shall be of no force and effect.

Contract Period – Contracts will be executed for an 18-month period beginning January 1, 2006 and may be renewed for one year, subject to the continued availability of grant funding.

Contract Activities – All activities must have prior approval from DCJS and meet guidelines established by the State of New York and the Federal government.

Contract Changes – Contracts with grantees may be executed, terminated, renewed, increased, reduced, extended, amended, or renegotiated at the discretion of the Director of Criminal Justice in light of a grantee's performance, changes in project conditions, or otherwise.

Records – Grantees must keep books, ledgers, receipts, work records, consultant agreements and inventory records pertinent to the project; and in a manner consistent with DCJS contractual provisions and mandated guidelines.

Liability – Nothing in the contract between DCJS and the grantee shall impose liability on the State of New York, for injury incurred during the performance of approved activities or caused by use of equipment purchased with grant funds.

Payments – Payments to reimburse project expenses will be made pursuant to schedule specified in a contract entered into between the State of New York and the grant award recipient.

Reports – The grantee shall submit to DCJS reports in a format and time schedule specified in the grant contract, which shall include a description of the program efforts undertaken during the report period and the current status of the project. Reports must address program goals and objectives to be monitored and evaluated throughout the duration of the grant period.

Review – The grantee's performance in all areas mentioned above, in addition to the services contracted for, will be monitored by DCJS. Monitoring activities may take the form of site visits, record inspections, written and telephone communication, or other methods deemed necessary by DCJS.

Revocation of Funds – Funds awarded to an applicant who does not implement an approved project within 120 days of the execution date may be revoked and reallocated to another applicant at the discretion of the Director of DCJS.

Standard Contract Provisions – Grant contracts executed as a result of this Program Announcement will be subject to the terms and conditions of Appendix A and Appendix a-1, which are available for review on the Internet site <http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us/ofpa/forms.htm>.