

from fathers/crim justice meeting 9/10/99

CC: CK
Leanne S

from Andrew

f: fathers-crimjus

Las Vegas Weed and Seed Re-entry Project

Background

The Attorney General and the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs have recently highlighted the expanding problem posed by the return of inmates from state and federal prisons to their respective communities. Recidivism rates for ex-offenders who have experienced incarceration have historically been high, however, the recent diminution in correctional programming designed to prepare inmates for a successful re-entry, coupled with the acceleration in the number of releases may pose a growing public safety threat and could impact some of the gains made in reducing the incidence of crime over the last seven years. Further exacerbating this problem is the growing percentage of releases nationally who have completed full terms and are not subject to any post release supervision requirements. For instance, In Nevada about 40 percent of the release population falls into this category.

Nationally, the federal and state prison population is now over 1.8 million people. It is estimated that nearly 500,000 inmates will be released from these prisons this year and about 3.2 million over the next five years. Nevada has a prison population of approximately 9,200 inmates with an incarceration rate of 529 per 100,000 residents, the fifth highest in the nation. In the past 12 months 4,000 inmates were released from prison. About 60 percent of this population were convicted for a non-violent crime.

The Las Vegas, Nevada Weed and Seed site is located within Clark County in West Las Vegas and the Meadows Village area. The site was founded in 1992 and received federal funding beginning in 1994. The site's population is about 20,000 people, mostly poor, and mostly African-American and Latino-American. There is a substantial population of undocumented workers and about 15 percent speak a language other than English. The unemployment remains in double digits despite the area's employment boom. It is estimated that about 90 inmates will be released from state prison to the Weed and Seed area in the coming year. Those released are expected to be predominantly male with an average age of 35 years at release. About half have been in some type of treatment program but only 5 percent have participated in the prison industries program.

The Re-entry Intervention Concept

The Weed and Seed re-entry intervention concept flows from the Weed and Seed strategy of collaborative modeling that takes advantage of an array of community assets to address problems in a comprehensive manner. The intervention begins within the institution. Those inmates within six months of release date are positioned in programs that provide them with work experience, life skills training, basic math and English skills, parenting classes, anger management, etc. They are also placed in facilities closer to their home community. Assessments are done and a release plan is formulated.

FATHERS-
PRISONERS

Research has shown that lack of essential services in either the institution or the community is equally detrimental. Therefore, it is critical that a comprehensive aftercare component be in place for this population, and that these aftercare services be programmatically linked to the services provided the inmates during their incarceration. This re-entry model relies on community-based services provided by both local government and community-based non-profits. The core of this model is a case management system with each released inmate assigned to a case worker that brokers required services and works hand in hand with parole authorities and/or police officials concerning monitoring and supervision issues. This linkage should improve the monitoring and supervision of this population.

Critical services for this population include life skills training, job readiness training, job placement and follow-up, career counseling, family counseling, health care, mental health treatment, housing assistance, literacy training, and parenting (fatherhood issues). Case managers are expected to be aware of all available community and local government resources that can be accessed to address these needs. The cost for these services should already be accounted for through existing expenditures (existing funded services). The Weed and Seed approach focuses on improved coordination and utilization of these existing resources and programs. During this demonstration process, need areas that remain problematic after improved coordination can be identified and strategies can evolve to develop resources to address these needs.

Goal of the Re-Entry Demonstration

The goal of this Weed and Seed intervention model is to put in place a continuum of services beginning in the institution that follow the inmate into their home communities. The purpose of this re-entry intervention is **first and foremost to enhance public safety by reducing criminal victimization initiated by this high risk group**. Effective and strategic crime prevention and control strategies bring together community elements including law enforcement, other elements of local government and target high risk groups such as school drop outs, habitual drug offenders, and persons recently released from prisons. The re-entry program will hopefully demonstrate that carefully designed interventions taking full advantage of all available resources that are focused on this group can reduce recidivism, and add to the quality of life of their home communities.

Methodology

Inmates currently serving time in the Nevada state prison system who are from the zip code areas corresponding to the Las Vegas Clark County Weed and Seed sites will be identified. Among this category of inmates, those scheduled to be release between April 1, 2000 and March 31, 2001 will be located and identified. It is this population of inmates that will comprise the experimental group in this demonstration project.

These inmates will be asked to participate in the program. Those agreeing to participate will be assigned a case manager while they are institutionalized. Data about their past and their current needs will be collected and organized. These inmates will participate in recommended programs while incarcerated including a prison industries program, a street readiness program, and others as they are identified. Inmates may also be moved from northern facilities to southern facilities closer to Las Vegas to facilitate family re-integration efforts. Inmate release and parole plans will be developed in collaboration with the assigned case manager. The expanded release plan will encompass housing needs, employment readiness training and placement, life skills training including parenting and fatherhood issues, medical and mental health needs, family counseling, career development, and a monitoring component.

Once released, the inmate will be referred to a virtual "one stop shop" service center where all needs can be addressed. Services available are identified, and delivery of services is coordinated by the assigned case manager. The case manager works closely with the parole officer for those with parole requirements. Case managers will be encouraged to connect clients with mentors from the faith-based and ex-offender communities, and to utilize community-based organizations as well as local government and county based services. Case managers will be required to work closely with local law enforcement officials concerning monitoring and supervision functions.

The case manager will routinely meet with service providers including law enforcement officials and the released inmate's family members or significant others to assess progress and to surface other problems and issues. The thrust of this approach is to improve coordination and communication among those living and working with the released offender and to take full advantage of the available community-based resources.

Data concerning police contacts, arrests, parole violations, etc. will be systematically collected and analyzed. Comparable data will be gathered for other inmates released to demographically similar zip codes for comparative analysis to gain a better understanding of the overall impact of these interventions on community safety.

Andrea Kane

08/19/99 09:38:22 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Cynthia A. Rice/OPD/EOP@EOP, J. Eric Gould/OPD/EOP@EOP, Eugenia Chough/OPD/EOP@EOP
cc:
Subject: Delaware

----- Forwarded by Andrea Kane/OPD/EOP on 08/19/99 09:38 AM -----

Andrea Kane

08/19/99 09:37:42 AM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message
cc:
Subject: Delaware

Here's a summary of Delaware's Fatherhood Initiative, including information about their parenting education for prisoners. A couple of interesting points that came out of our conference call w/ Lynn Howard of Governor Carper's staff:

1) she thinks the largest route for people to get into the classes is by inmate request and requests exceed available capacity. 2) they are aware that TANF funds could be used to fund such an activity but DE is one of the states that has committed all its TANF funds. 3) the program is now in all 6 state correctional facilities and is serving about 860 inmates (men and women). It operates on a small budget: total state funds of about \$37,000, supplemented by private funds from CBOs/non-profits, some state funds that go directly to the non-profits, and funds from the DE children's trust fund--a tax check off program. 4) no outcomes or evaluation yet, but they're in process of developing outcome measures. 5) examples of organizations contracted to provide the parenting classes include: Child Inc, a major statewide family services provider, Salvation Army does a young parents program for 18-21 year old violent offenders in adult prisons, Girl Scouts Behind Bars operates a program for women inmates and their children. 6) the core elements of the parenting classes for incarcerated parents are same as those offered in other parenting education classes throughout the state (family communication, expressing emotion, conflict resolution, child growth and development etc), but they are adapted for parents who are not living with their children. 7) length and intensity vary in each facility, 8) parenting education in prison has been underway for about 2 years.



DEfathers.doc

The state is also in the process of implementing a Prison to Work program, a collaborative effort between the state Dept of Labor and Dept of Corrections for individuals leaving prison. I'll forward material about that as soon as it's available. It doesn't sound like they've yet incorporated a connection with child support into this initiative but I suggested their IV-D folks contact OCSE to discuss this further (I mentioned the OCSE-funded demo in Denver).

State of Delaware Fatherhood Initiative Activities

In 1993 Governor Thomas R. Carper established the Governor's Family Services Cabinet Council. The FSCC was established as a forum for the exchange of ideas and collaborative policy development and planning between the seven cabinet agencies focused on services for children and families in Delaware. The members of the Council are the Secretaries of the Departments of Health and Social Services, Labor, Education, Public Safety, Services for Children, Youth and their Families, Corrections, the Delaware State Housing Authority and the State Budget Office. Governor Carper chairs the Council.

The Delaware Fatherhood Initiative developed out of the discussions of the FSCC and evolved out of other initiatives. Following are some of the activities that have been implemented as Delaware strives to be a father and family friendly state.

Delaware's welfare reform program has worked to assure that two-parent families are not experiencing a "marriage penalty". Barriers to assistance for two-parent families have been removed by a federal waiver of restrictive requirements on previous work experience, allowing one and two parent families equal access to supports and services.

All participants in Delaware's welfare reform program must participate in a parenting program as a requirement of receipt of benefit.

Delaware's Strengthening Young Parent Families program targets job readiness, parenting skills training, and job entry services for both of the young biological parents. Parenting education and supports such as subsidized child care and family Medicaid will continue to be available.

Delaware has developed a Parents Seek Work Program (PSW) to increase an unemployed or under-employed non-custodial parent's (usually a father's) ability to meet his child support obligation by requiring work and removing barriers to employment. PSW mandates participation in work readiness workshops, supervised job search activities, and employment support services as well as training in parenting skills.

Three years ago Delaware established PEP, the Parent Education Partnership. The PEP Committee is the coordinating body that oversees parenting services in the state, reviews best practice in the field of parenting education and support services, and each year publishes a PEP Inventory of parent education services in the state.

Delaware, through the Department of Health and Social Services has established Family Visitation Centers across the state. These centers support non-custodial parents (usually fathers') visitation of their children, while protecting the child's safety and decreasing family conflict.

In June 1999 on the Friday before Fathers Day, Governor Carper hosted the Governor's Summit on Fatherhood and brought together over 125 of Delaware's civic, business, religious and policy leaders to discuss and develop new strategies to confront the impact of father absence on our schools, our businesses, our children and their families.

As parenting education programs developed across the state, Governor Carper and the Family Services Cabinet Council recognized the need to take these services into the state's correctional facilities. At present, all of the correctional facilities in Delaware have parenting programs of varying types.

Inmates are selected to participate in parenting programs through the following processes: 1. Court order; 2. Inmate request and 3. Short-time release date. Certain inmate classifications are not eligible, such as lifers and inmates in maximum security.

Selection is also dependent upon an inmate's particular characteristics and impact on security. Security is a prime consideration. As inmates are classified into certain housing, that can dictate whether or not they can participate.

The parenting programs within Delaware's correctional facilities are provided by a variety of community based non-profit family and social service organizations and educational institutions.

Funding for the programs is provided for through contractual dollars in the general fund budget of the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families. The Department of Corrections presents a proposal to the DSCYF each year for funding for these programs, and contracts are then developed with the non-profits.

Some of the non-profit agencies also use other sources of funding to provide these services, i.e. state grant-in-aid dollars; private fundraising; funds from the Delaware Trust Fund (a tax check-off program).

The programs in each facility are developed by that facility's staff and approved by the Warden. They range from a weekly one or two hour small group session, to a program focused on young parents ages 18-21. The groups average 10-12 persons at a time and the curriculum covers such areas as family communication, resolving conflicts, confrontation skills, stress, expressing emotion, redirecting children's misbehavior, effective discipline and growth and development of children.

For more information contact: Lynne Howard, Office of the Governor, 302.577.3210
lhoward@state.de.us

Richard Seifert, DE Dept. of Corrections, 302.739.5601
rseifert@state.de.us