

Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance Leadership Council Reentry Presentation

Center for Self-Sufficiency
December 8, 2009



Milwaukee Reentry and Workforce Pipeline Coordination

The Center for Self-Sufficiency (CFSS) has been contracted by the State of Wisconsin Dept. of Corrections (DOC) and funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to provide Milwaukee Reentry and Workforce Pipeline Coordination services.

CFSS Responsibilities

1. Facilitate complex, inter-agency reentry **mapping**
2. Coordinate and facilitate planning meetings for a DOC/WIB/DWD Workforce **Summit**
3. Assist with facilitating implementation of Milwaukee **regionalized strategies**
4. **Engage the employer community** in practical discussions on reentry

Purpose of Presentation

- General overview of the project
- Status update on component #1
- Mapping and focus groups
- Identify opportunity to work with the Funding Alliance on reentry policy for Milwaukee

Purpose of Mapping

We are gathering input and accurate information from reentry service providers with the goal of establishing a clear picture of current services. Specifically, we will:

- Identify system strengths and best practices
- Identify service gaps
- Better understand where and how the offender population receives reentry services (reentry providers and through general population programs)

Mapping Status

- More than 50 individual interviews and meetings with internal DOC staff (institutions, community corrections and juvenile corrections), community and faith-based organizations, government/funding intermediaries (Milwaukee County, MAWIB, United Way) will be conducted by CFSS prior to December 15, 2009.
- Focus groups are also being held with key stakeholders to clarify and probe to ensure an accurate report is presented.

Mapping Results will be Used to

- Identify policy or practice within DOC that can be modified to improve reentry for offenders
- Identify interdependencies and duplication of efforts and funding mechanisms
- Analyze data and identify DOC and community best practices and barriers/gaps in available reentry services
- Provide insight to DOC, DWD and WIBs as they plan for a February 2010 Workforce Pipeline Summit
- Help to engage the employer community in practical discussions on reentry

Focus Groups

Focus groups will augment individual interviews and will be conducted with the following groups:

- Workforce Investment Boards (policy barriers)
- Funders/Foundations (hopefully via Funding Alliance)
- W2 –Lessons Learned in Reentry of Welfare Recipients
- Faith-Based Groups (best practice and challenges)
- Reentry Nonprofit Providers (best practice and challenges)
- Recently Released Offenders

Early Observations

- There is a strong network of workforce development and supportive services in Milwaukee. However, there lacks a seamless system to create and manage a reentry plan that addresses all needs that leads to the end goal of employment, self-sufficiency and community safety (reduce recidivism).
- Probation and Parole agents and institution social workers are key linkages for offenders to access community resources. It is a laborious process for these staff to continually learn what exists and what is effective. Training and resource coordination is needed.

Early Observations

- Reentry is often thought about in terms of those leaving an institution to reenter the community. Of the roughly 15,000 individuals currently on community supervision, roughly 5,000 have been in an institution.
- In our interviews with workforce development and supportive service organizations that do not receive targeted reentry funding, typically 35 percent to as high as 80 percent of their general service groups document offender status.
- Evidenced-based practices and outcomes driven programs are lacking in Milwaukee. Treatment and ancillary services are rarely connected to the end goal of employment and self-sufficiency.

Early Observations

- Work experience models that pair education and supportive services are lacking. Promising practices do, however, exist within Milwaukee (Youth Build, Ameri Corps, Fresh Start).
- Many of these promising practices could still benefit from the use of better structure in program design. For example, if an estimated 6 percent of offenders have a valid driver's license, why refer on an as needed basis when this service should be built into the agency's program offerings.
- Most offenders are young. Models are needed for addressing issues of working with 18-25 year old offenders, particularly males.

For More Information

To share your perspective on reentry issues or for more information on the project, please contact:

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