

Missouri Department of Corrections Community Reentry Funding 2009 Summary Report

Overview

The Missouri Department of Corrections (DOC) launched the Community Reentry Funding Initiative in 2009 to support local reentry efforts in communities throughout Missouri. The Department of Corrections, Division of Probation and Parole, collects a supervision fee from offenders on probation and parole. In turn, the funds collected are to be spent on interventions that enhance the success of offenders under probation or parole supervision. The Community Reentry Funding is intended to support local efforts that directly impact the success of offenders under the probation or parole supervision, reduce crime and enhance public safety. These funds were to be used to assist offenders in the community with a variety of needs including housing, transportation, treatment, employment, education, and life skills.

In April 2009, 28 agencies that included non-profit agencies with 501c3 status, faith-based groups and units of local government were selected for funding in the six DOC, Probation and Parole regions. TABLE A shows the number of awardees and amount of money distributed by region. Funding was allocated based on the offender population in those regions. Due to staffing issues, one agency returned its awarded funds to the Department of Corrections within the first reporting period of the project and subsequently the Department funded only 27 agencies. Those 27 agencies provided services to 3,463 clients in a variety of capacities.

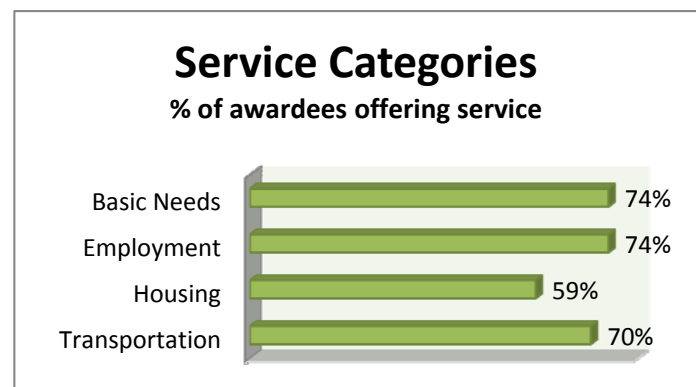
TABLE A: REGIONAL AWARDS

	# of Awardees	Total \$ Awarded
Region I	5	\$125,000
Region II	5	\$124,768
Region III	2	\$40,000
Region IV	6	\$135,604
Region V	5	\$120,555
Region VI	4	\$98,727

Organizations were allowed to request up to \$25,000 for their programs. A total of \$644,654 was distributed to agencies throughout the state.

Activities funded by the Community Reentry Funding Initiative can be classified into four service categories: basic needs, employment, housing, and transportation. The basic needs category includes providing food, clothing, hygiene supplies, and identification service. FIGURE A has a breakdown of the categories of services provided by the DOC awardees.

FIGURE A: CATEGORIES OF SERVICES PROVIDED



Impact

The Community Reentry Funding Initiative made an impact throughout the state by providing quality services to individuals under the supervision of the Missouri Department of Corrections. Agencies reported:

- Increased employment rates
- Increased job readiness skills
- Improved fulfillment of basic needs
- Improved access to vital documents
- Improved access to safe and affordable housing
- Improved transportation to employment and medical related services.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Reporting

- Based on the reports received, it is clear that there is significant room for improvement in the awardees' ability to report on their programs. Reporting skills were particularly weak for some, but could be developed across the board. More specifically, awardees should speak directly about their stated outputs and outcomes.
 - o The funding managers will provide technical assistance to awardees to strengthen their reporting capabilities including: improving the stated outputs and outcomes, providing more detailed instruction on reporting requirements, supplying financial reporting forms, and designing clear extension guidelines.

Application Process and Review

- Every effort should be made to develop a system to standardize the application review and selection process across all regions. This process could include a review of past performance and evaluations of previously funded applicants.
- A strict process and funding timeline needs to be developed to better direct the distribution of awards.

Enhanced Technical Assistance

- The funding managers will also provide technical assistance in the following areas:
 - o Programming and evaluation technical assistance provided on request.
 - o Funding manager site visits in conjunction with District Administrator site visits.
 - o Follow-up site visits with agencies that have been identified as struggling or facing major challenges.
 - o Output and outcome review and modification when necessary.
 - o Technical assistance with evaluation tools, participant tracking, and data collection.

Department of Corrections Outreach

- In general awardees reported that they struggled to recruit offenders to participate in their programming. A more systematic referral system could be designed to ensure clients are being connected with the services they need. In addition, more publicity or advertisement of the services and agencies in the community could increase participation and knowledge among the target population. District and Regional Administrators should be well informed about the services and opportunities in their communities.
- In order to pinpoint the needs and assets in the community a comprehensive needs and assets assessment could be conducted on a county by county basis. These assessments would provide the District and Regional Administrators with a clear understanding of the needs and resources available in their areas.

Conclusion

The Community Reentry Funding Initiative achieved its initial goal of distributing funds to provide services and support for individuals under the supervision of the Missouri Department of Corrections who are reentering the community. Agencies throughout the state provided intervention services in the areas of housing, transportation, employment, and basic needs. The lessons learned from the first round of funding will surely shape and enhance the funding process and the impact in the community. Agencies, communities, individuals and the Missouri Department of Corrections are all excited about the opportunities that are provided by the Community Reentry Funding Initiative and foresee continued success in the future.



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Map of Awardees

