

OAR of Fairfax County, Inc. (OAR)
Second Chance Act Mentoring Grants to Nonprofit Organizations CFDA #16.812
FY 2009 Competitive Grant Application

Program Narrative (Attachment 1)

1. Statement of the Problem

Describe the problems with returning offenders to the community: Chronic poverty, substance abuse and mental health issues are frequently cited as contributing to criminal activity. There are additional problems that also confront offenders in our community, which OAR is exceptionally qualified to address. These problems are: 1) *Employment*: A collateral consequence of a criminal conviction is the impact on employability. Entering the labor market after incarceration or following a criminal conviction can present seemingly insurmountable challenges. According to the Urban Institute, barriers include “supply-side” or the characteristics of the population itself (such as limited education, limited work experience and substance abuse), and “demand-side” or the characteristics of the labor market including a hesitation to hire ex-offenders. An array of laws and regulations has eliminated an estimated 300 job categories for employment by this population. Many employers believe they may be held liable for criminal acts by their employees under the theory of negligent hiring; and research has found employers more willing to hire almost any other category of potential employees than the ex-offender. In FY 2008, 168 OAR clients found employment, but only 23% remained employed more than 90 days. Clearly, more needs to be done to assist clients to not only find but retain employment. We believe that by linking mentors to participants in OAR’s Work Empowerment Program through this grant OAR will be able to improve the rate of job retention. 2) *Housing*: In addition to the bleak employment outlook, individuals in this target population face many barriers in obtaining affordable housing. In FY 2008, OAR assisted 233 individuals experiencing a housing crisis.

OAR's Beacon reentry program was created in part to provide a residential resource because of the chronic impediments associated with housing this population. 3) *Family Stress and Reunification Issues*: Studies show numerous negative consequences of incarceration on the families and children left behind. Family ties during incarceration are often strained. Parents returning from incarceration and attempting to reunite with children or spouses may feel intrusive and may be marginalized by his or her primary support network. There is also a challenging period of having to find a job, become self-sufficient and "prove oneself" to create a new life after incarceration. To help families, OAR offers direct aid for emergencies, sponsors a bi-monthly family support group, and posts volunteers in the jail lobby to help families in crisis.

Jurisdiction/community to be served: Fairfax County, VA

Collaborative relationship with a correctional agency/facility/institution: OAR has worked cooperatively with the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office, which is responsible for operation of the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center (ADC), for more than three decades to offer an array of jail-based services to inmates. OAR has a written memorandum of agreement with the Sheriff's Office. The local Probation and Parole Office currently contracts with OAR for case management services under the Virginia Serious and Violent Offenders Reentry Program and for case management services at its Day Reporting Program satellite office.

Number of offenders returning to the community: Approximately 3,000 offenders. There are 1,200 inmates returning annually from the Fairfax County ADC. Another estimated 1,800 inmates who are under supervision of State Probation and Parole return to the County each year from state correctional facilities. (OAR served a total of 4,283 clients in FY 2008; about 80% of these or 3,400 had been incarcerated at some time).

Number and type of offenders (Fairfax County ADC): According to data from the Sheriff's Office more than 25,000 persons are jailed each year in Fairfax County. In 2007 (most recent Sheriff's Office data) the jail's monthly average population exceeded 1,300; 84% male, 16% female. The racial/ethnic characteristics were: 43% white, 26% black, 26% Hispanic, and 5% all others. The average education level completed was 11.62 grades. Over 36% of the inmates are formally charged with alcohol or controlled substance-related crimes.

Summarize the basic components of the state, local, reentry initiative as currently being implemented:

State: a) Department of Criminal Justice Services [DCJS funds Offender Reentry and Transitional Services (ORTS)]. OAR is one of nine ORTS service providers under contract with DCJS in Virginia. b) Department of Corrections/Probation and Parole: Community supervision of inmates returning from state/federal correctional facilities; contracts with OAR for case management services in the Virginia Serious and Violent Offenders Reentry Program.

Local: a) Fairfax County Government Human Services Administration: Consolidated Community Funding Pool provides funding under contract for a variety of OAR pre- and post-incarceration programs and transitional and family services, the volunteer program and general administration. b) OAR, Inc. offers a continuum of pre-release and post-incarceration services such as skills classes, emergency aid, job assistance, mentoring, and family support.

Describe the existing continuum/menu of pre- and post-release services available to offenders:

- Individual's risk/need assessment: Needs assessments are conducted by OAR for previously incarcerated clients as part of the case management services; in-depth assessments are provided for participants in the Beacon reentry program.

- Job development: Offered through OAR's Work Empowerment Program and with the cooperation of the local One-Stop Skillsource Centers for workforce development.
- Cognitive behavioral therapy: OAR does not provide CBT; however OAR's jail-based programs use cognitive restructuring techniques.
- Life skills (including financial training): Offered by OAR in the ADC; in addition to financial planning includes keyboarding and computer skills, responsible fatherhood, impact of crime class, anger management, and release planning among others.
- Education: GED opportunities are offered to inmates in the jail and through a cooperative relationship with the Public School Adult Education office. Clients are advised of continuing education and workforce development programs at Northern Virginia Community College.
- Mental health and substance abuse treatment: provided by the Community Services Board in the jail or on referral basis, following release.
- Family counseling: A Family Support Group sponsored by OAR meets twice monthly.
- Transitional and permanent housing links: OAR's Beacon reentry program offers the first of its kind transitional residential program for formerly incarcerated persons in Fairfax County. In addition to housing, the Beacon program offers wrap-around transitional services modeled after the Delancey Street program in San Francisco. Other housing resources are provided on a referral basis by Fairfax County's Department of Family Services.
- Ongoing offender behavior assessments: Offered through case management at OAR and through use of various measurement tools used in classes provided at the jail.

- Data collection and analysis for future efforts: OAR uses an Access-based data collection system to provided outcome and output data required from state and local funding sources.

This system is very flexible and can be modified to provide data necessary for this grant.

Describe how the mentoring program proposed in this project application will interface with the existing reentry process:

OAR's proposed mentoring program will be an enhanced version of the existing jail-based mentoring program that is currently part of the existing reentry process. The proposed program will fill a gap in the existing system by providing after-release mentoring, education, and job-training to allow clients to develop the skills needed to become self-sufficient, re-enter society and rebuild their lives, and housing through the Beacon reentry program.

2. Program Design and Implementation

The target population (TP) for the initiative: men and women 18-years of age or older housed in the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center (ADC) who have attended OAR's "Release Planning" class, and who have agreed to participate in the Work Empowerment Program, and are returning to Fairfax County, Virginia upon release, or inmates in the AIB accepted into OAR's Beacon reentry program. Members of the target population will be assigned a mentor and provided transitional services in this program. Rationale: The target population offers the greatest potential for numbers of clients to be served and therefore is cost effective and contributes to community safety, because most inmates were Fairfax County residents when incarcerated and will return to the County upon release. This approach focuses mentoring resources on those inmates most likely to be returning to the immediate community. This target group also is the most likely to benefit from the transitional services offered. Additionally, this population can more easily be tracked for reporting purposes since they are directly engaged, and have a relationship, with our agency's volunteers and staff. OAR currently has the capacity to

track data for the identified target population consistent with the performance measures as outlined in the Grant Announcement, either directly through its own data base or with the assistance of its partner agencies such as the Sheriff's Office and/or the local office of State Probation and Parole.

Overview of Program Design and Implementation: The Pre- and Post-Release Mentoring will be based on OAR's successful jail-based mentoring program which provided mentors for 68 inmates in the ADC in FY 2008. Transitional Services will be based on OAR's Work Empowerment Program and the Beacon reentry program, which provides wrap-around services including housing.

Mentoring—*Current and Proposed Mentoring Services Structure:* Currently mentoring consists of weekly visits from a trained volunteer mentor to the inmate while incarcerated, but not after release. The mentor offers supportive listening, guidance on setting goals and decision making. Assignment of mentors under the current structure was based on the interest of the inmates in having a mentor; mentor resources were not targeted to those inmates specifically known to be returning to the Fairfax County community. Research indicates that goal setting and delayed gratification skills are essential to ultimate self-sufficiency and the proposed Mentoring Services Program will offer a continuum of mentoring and transitional services, beginning during incarceration and following release for those inmates who are part of the target population as defined. Mentors in the program will agree to provide mentoring help on a pre- and post-release basis. Current mentor training will be enhanced to include victim issues. Additionally, because mentoring activities will be taking place on both a pre-release and post-release basis, the training will be revised to include such issues as boundaries, safe meeting places, and ending the mentoring relationship. The same volunteer mentor who assisted the inmate during incarceration

will “follow along” after the inmate is released. Evaluation is achieved through use of a “Mentoring Matrix” designed to assess and score decision making and planning skills of inmates. The matrix is administered at the beginning of the mentor relationship and then administered again shortly prior to the inmate’s release and the matrix will be administered again prior to completing the program. The two scores are compared to evaluate improvement. Data from the Matrix scores will be augmented with data collected to report on relevant performance measures as required under the grant.

There will be two entry points for the TP: 1) Adult Detention Center (ADC) through Enrollment in the “Release Planning” Class and the “Work Empowerment Program” (description below). Mentors will be provided within one week of starting the class and mentoring will continue for 12 months following release, and 2) Alternative Incarceration Branch of ADC through acceptance into the Beacon reentry program (description below). Mentors will be provided within one week of acceptance into the Beacon and mentoring will continue for up to 24 months after beginning the Beacon program.

Transitional Services will include: a) The Work Empowerment Program (WEP): provides long-term case management services to assist clients in finding employment. (Inmates in the “Release Planning” class who do not enroll in the Work Empowerment Program will be offered other OAR classes at the ADC, including a basic job skills class.) WEP goals are to:

- Provide employment preparation services. Clients work with case managers to prepare resumes, cover letters, and employment applications. Education and training opportunities are also explored. OAR helps clients obtain proper identification needed for employment.

- Assist clients in their employment search. Case managers provide referrals to employers identified as willing to hire ex-offenders. Service plans are developed with clients to ensure continued progress in their preparation and search for employment.
- Ensure clients have resources necessary to obtain employment. Clients are provided with transportation assistance to and from the job site prior to receiving their first paycheck. Clients are also provided assistance with equipment/clothing required for employment.
- Support retention of long-term employment by providing ongoing case management to address work-related challenges and offer incentives to encourage continued employment.

b) The Beacon Reentry Program: an 18-24 month reentry program for formerly incarcerated persons offering comprehensive transitional services that include residential, employment and career training, and educational opportunities and resources. The program is designed to assist men who voluntarily wish to rebuild their lives and return to positive, productive roles in the workplace, in their families, and in the community. The Beacon incorporates three phases: Pre-Release, Community Living, and Graduation/transition. Upon completion, participants will be equipped with the tools needed for successful community reentry including the means to: prevent recidivism, avoid relapse, maintain employment, remain self-sufficient, improve familial relationships, and continue the process of productive community reintegration. Beacon services include: participant stipends; needs assessment; mentoring, coaching and case management; addiction recovery and relapse prevention; work readiness and career training (e.g., building trades and vehicle emissions inspection programs); literacy, education opportunities; family reunification, and spiritual and ethical development.

Plan to implement activities that have been demonstrated effective in facilitating the successful reentry of offenders:

Such services are now implemented and provided as described above. A post-incarceration component will be added to the current mentoring program.

Plan/strategy for recruiting, training and supervising/monitoring volunteer mentors:

Recruitment: The senior Volunteer Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator currently recruit through mass mailings to area churches, volunteer fairs at George Mason University and other venues, from OAR's listing with Volunteer Fairfax (the local volunteer "clearinghouse"), from current volunteers, and through leads developed through networking with local government contacts, civic, business, and charitable groups, and public service announcements. Training: OAR's volunteer training program currently provides for 2 hours of training from OAR staff which includes an overview of the various components of the local judicial and public safety system and the relationship between the agency and the criminal justice system. As part of the training, mentors receive instruction about OAR's services and relevant community resources. Volunteer trainees also engage in role playing activities. Finally, Sheriff's Office personnel conduct a mandatory day-long training/orientation that includes the ADC policies and procedures and tour of the facility for those who have received OAR training and pass a criminal background check. In-service training is provided once every two months for 2 hours. Finally, to meet grant requirements, a training module will be added utilizing victim impact content from OAR's certified batterer intervention program; the Police Department's Victim Services unit has agreed to assist with speakers. Monitoring Volunteers: in addition to in-service training group support, the new mentoring program will ensure quality monitoring using a "mentee" contact report, a six-month review of the mentoring relationship, and supervision sessions with the project management case manager.

Discuss the role of local governmental agencies, other nonprofit organizations, and community stakeholders that will collaborate on project implementation:

The Sheriff's Office (access to inmates, classification assessments, office, classroom space), and the Police Department (training assistance from Victim Services) will be key stakeholders collaborating with OAR to carry out the program.

Provide a description of the evidence-based methodology to be utilized in the delivery of mentoring and other proposed transitional services:

The continuum of pre- and post-release mentoring services including mentor monitoring will be based on the "Foundations" Mentoring Program developed for OAR in 2008 by George Mason University doctoral candidate Caron P. Heigel, MA. Ms. Heigel carried out an extensive literature review about the efficacy of mentoring inmates in order to create the program. The program also will continue to use its outcome driven Mentoring Matrix which rates the participant's decision making and planning skills. Lastly, the Beacon program is based on the best practices replication of the Delancey St. program funded under OAR's previous BJA grant.

Provide a description of how the project could be replicated if demonstrated to be effective:

OAR's volunteer training program is thoroughly documented in writing, and thus can be shared with other organizations as necessary. Additionally, if funded, a case manager will be added to the staff to specifically implement and monitor the new mentoring program using OAR's data base. The data base has the capability to produce standard statistical reports as well reports generated from specific queries with defined parameters, and information could be easily shared.

Role of state or local corrections departments, community corrections agencies, and/or local jail systems in ensuring successful reentry of offenders into their communities and how mentoring/transitional/training services provided under this project will be integrated into the overall reentry strategy:

OAR is currently part of the state and local justice systems. Its reentry and transitional services are financially supported by them, and the project will offer enhancements to the services and

programs OAR is currently offering on a pre- and post-incarceration basis. Thus, the program can be integrated seamlessly into the existing system.

3. Capabilities/Competencies

Describe the organizational structure, capabilities, and competencies of the applicant nonprofit organization/agency. This should include a historical perspective on how the organization is positioned to provide mentoring and transitional services throughout the entire reentry process from pre-release to post-release community support.

OAR of Fairfax County, Inc. is a 501(c) 3 organization established in 1971. Its mission is to rebuild lives and break the cycle of crime with opportunities, alternatives, and resources for offenders and their families to create a safer community. OAR of Fairfax County seeks to be a national model for prisoner reentry. OAR has evolved over its 38-year history to become an exceptionally comprehensive, highly regarded member of both the criminal justice system and the human services system. OAR serves as the primary “bridge” between these systems for offenders needing reentry and transitional services. OAR’s Board of Directors is drawn from a cross-section of the community including public safety, business, education, and faith communities. Other achievements reflecting OAR’s capabilities and competencies include:

- 1) OAR’s successful administration of a BJA grant awarded in 2005 (Grant #2005-DD-BX-1231) to plan the Beacon re-entry program modeled after the Delancey Street project; BJA approved close-out of the grant in April 2009;
- 2) The Catalogue for Philanthropy--Greater Washington has ranked OAR as among “some of the best small charities in Greater Washington” for its “distinction, merit, cost-effectiveness and accomplishment;” and
- 3) in 2007, OAR’s volunteer program was recognized for its achievements by Volunteer Fairfax, the County’s agency responsible for volunteer coordination.

OAR offers a continuum of services and programs with multiple points of entry to enable criminal offenders and their families to:

- 1) Acquire the skills and support needed for self-

sufficiency including basic needs, 2) Maintain healthy, stable, and independent lives, and 3) Become productive contributing members of the community and prevent recidivism. Experience and research have shown that the punitive aspects of the criminal justice system are unable, by themselves, to bring about a change in behavior. Sustainable change rarely occurs along a straight line but often is a series of false starts, unexpected outcomes, and sustained effort; thus interventions take place at various stages. OAR’s approach involves helping clients think and feel differently—sometimes referred to as “cognitive restructuring,” as well as developing the work and relationship skills noted above with a special emphasis on taking personal responsibility. OAR has 16 full and part-time professional staff members and maintains an active roster of 100 volunteers who provide direct services in the ADC.

Identify the agency responsible for the project and the grant coordinator: OAR is the responsible agency; grant coordinator: Brandon Cosby, Community Programs Director.

Describe the management structure and staffing of the project:

- Management support team (existing staff): Executive Director, Director of Operations, Director of Development
- Grant coordinator (existing staff): Community Programs Director
- Mentor recruitment and training (existing positions): Senior Volunteer Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator
- Supervision (existing staff): Senior Case Manager, Transitional and Family Services Unit
- Project administration, mentor supervision, and data management (new grant position): Case Manager, Transitional and Family Services Unit
- Residential Counseling (new grant position): Residential counselor, Beacon program

5. Impact/Outcomes, Evaluation, Sustainment, and Description of the Applicant’s Plan for the Collection of the Data Required for Performance Measures (10 percent out of 100)

Describe the process for assessing the project's effectiveness (see Performance Measures):

Identify goals and objectives for program development, implementation, and outcomes:

Program Development Goal: All elements of program design are planned and documented; all

collaborating agencies and partners advised of proposed application and program. Objective:

Role and responsibilities assigned; staffing needs identified, mentor and participant sequencing

scheduled, and relevant letters of support obtained. *Program Implementation Goal:* Phase in

program mentors and participants over two year time-frame to serve 50 participants. Objective:

End of Year 1: train and assign 20 mentors to 20 participants. End of Year 2: train and assign 30

mentors to 30 participants. *Program Outcomes Goal:* Collect and track relevant data to

document outcomes. Objective: Ensure entry of participant data, obtain quarterly criminal record

checks, ensure mentor matrixes are completed and scores are recorded on schedule.

Describe how performance will be documented, monitored, and evaluated, and identify the impact of each strategy once implemented:

Performance documentation: By means of reports from the data system and from criminal record

checks generated quarterly. Performance monitoring: Project manager (case manager) will be

responsible for monitoring performance under supervision of the Senior Case manager.

Performance evaluation: The grant manager, project manager, and senior case manager will meet

quarterly to determine if the project is on schedule and to evaluate performance in the following

areas: number of program enrollees, active mentors assigned inmates, employment status,

program drop-out rate, and arrest/re-incarceration data. Performance impact: Project will stay

substantially on schedule; mentors will follow 50 inmates from incarceration through release and

50% or fewer of former inmates in program will recidivate.

Outline what data and information will be collected and describe how evaluation and collaborative partnerships will be leveraged to build long-term support and resources for the program:

OAR routinely collects basic information for OAR clients such as name, address, contact information, social security number, family size, income level, incarceration details (charges, etc.), any health-related needs/conditions, employment status, services the client received and case notes. An Access-based data system is used to store and retrieve information. In addition to this information, subsequent arrest and conviction data would be collected (local records and NCIS) to document participant recidivism rates. Through OAR's existing collaborative relationship with the Sheriff's Office, this data would be made available about specific program participants. Evaluation currently is achieved through a "Mentoring Matrix" that assesses and scores decision making and planning skills of inmates with mentors. The matrix is administered at the start of the mentor relationship and shortly prior to the inmate's release and the matrix will be administered again prior to completing the program. The two scores are compared to gauge improvement. This evaluation tool will be used in the proposed program.

Discuss how this project will be integrated into the state and local justice system plans or commitments, how the program will be financially sustained after federal funding ends, and the expected long-term results for the program:

Integration: OAR of Fairfax County currently is part of the state and local justice systems' planning process and its reentry and transitional services are funded by them. At the state level, OAR is a member of Offender Reentry and Transitional Services, Inc., a coalition of nine reentry agencies that is directly involved in state-level re-entry planning with the Department of Criminal Justice Services. At the local level OAR is a member of the Community Criminal Justice Board and the Criminal Justice Advisory Board. Members are appointed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to make recommendations about the quality and availability of criminal justice services including community corrections and reentry programs. The members represent law enforcement, criminal corrections, judicial system, community and political leadership. Thus, the program can be integrated seamlessly into the existing system.

Sustainability: The substantive, long-term state and local funding already provided for OAR's programs and services indicate there is financial sustainability. We anticipate we will have new and powerful data to show specific outcomes with respect to a reduction in recidivism and the cost savings to state and local governments associated with such a reduction. Accordingly, after the two-year period of the grant, our plan is to request proportional funding support from the State Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Fairfax County Consolidated Community Funding Pool to continue the new program. Both these funding sources have previously awarded one-time funding for the Beacon (housing and staffing) and we believe that armed with positive outcomes from this project, more support would be forthcoming to sustain the program.

Expected Long-Term results: 1) improved mentoring services and improved allocation of volunteer resources due to specific targeting of inmates returning to the community and the linkage with the Work Empowerment Program, 2) improved long-term employment retention rates, 3) an overall reduction in recidivism after two years, 4) a self-sustaining housing component in the Beacon and 5) a stronger client data tracking system.

Describe the strategy/methodology for tracking offenders assigned to the project for as long as they are actively involved:

The approach is to rely on the relationship between mentor and inmate developed during and after incarceration and to offer an incentive system tied to the Work Empowerment Program to increase the likelihood of participants reporting changes of address, contact information, and employment status so the data base can be kept current. The incentive system periodically will offer gift cards to participants who maintain contact with OAR project staff during the course of the grant. For Beacon program, locating and staying in contact with participants will not be issue since the Beacon will be their home and the Residential Counselor will be the point of contact and will have on-going involvement with them.