Attachment A

REENTRY PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVE

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Corrections Program Office (CPO), in partnership with the Executive Office of Weed and Seed (EOWS) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), U.S. Department of Justice, are developing a new strategy to assist jurisdictions in facing the challenges presented by the transition of offenders from prison to community to enhance public safety and restore confidence in the criminal justice system.

DESCRIPTION

The Reentry Partnerships Initiative (RPI) is a corrections, law enforcement, and community-based alliance. It seeks to improve risk management of released offenders by enhancing surveillance and monitoring, strengthening individual and community support systems, and repairing the harm done to victims. This partnership is part of an ambitious effort by the sponsoring Federal agencies to help address the continuing problem of offenders entering the community after incarceration with little or no surveillance, accountability or resource investment.

This view of a reentry partnership would require three partners--state corrections agencies, local law enforcement, local community-based organizations--to develop reentry plans for offenders scheduled for release into the community and then oversee the implementation of those plans. These reentry plans would be based on a network of community resources, e.g., employment, treatment, family, faith-based organizations, and peer support that would encourage positive reinforcement and reintegration. This community network would be supported by a network of criminal justice agencies, i.e., institutional corrections, probation, parole, and police, that would be created as part of the initiative.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 1999, more than 500,000 individuals will be released from prison, a number nearly equal to the population of Washington, D.C. and greater than that of Wyoming. Many will return to urban areas--and disproportionately to certain neighborhoods. Too often, released offenders return to communities ill-equipped to offer them support to help them change their behavior. Local law enforcement agencies often cannot track offenders in the community adequately enough to ensure proper risk management and protection for victims. Corrections officials also may not have sufficient resources or procedures in place to determine individual support needs, gauge the resources available in the "reentry community" or match available resources to the identified needs. The Reentry Partnerships Initiative seeks to create a more positive and constructive transition from prison to community by devising and advocating strategies that balance surveillance and sanctions with efforts to reduce recidivism. Such an effort would provide support services that seek to improve long term individual viability, thereby enhancing public safety.

PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

This initiative seeks to test various approaches aimed at improving offender risk management through more efficient surveillance and enhancing offenders' viability as productive member of society. There are three goals: public safety, cost conscious accountability, and offender productivity.

The Reentry Partnerships Initiative should help to:

- enhance public safety by reducing recidivism among the released offender population
- build stronger police, corrections, and community partnerships and collaborations
- maximize offenders' accountability and positive contributions to the community
- strengthen support services for victims whose offenders are in the community
- increase ability to identify offender needs and to match those needs with appropriate community resources
- encourage use of graduated sanctions to minimize prison returns due to technical violations of supervised release

PROJECT ELEMENTS

Critical elements for a reentry partnership model are suggested below. Within each element, various components are also listed for consideration.

1. STRONG COLLABORATION

Components include:

- Central authority as project head.
- Structured board as primary oversight agent and reentry monitor/case manager
- Identification of all essential reintegration partners in the criminal justice system and the community, e.g., corrections, law enforcement and community agencies.

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2. IDENTIFICATION OF APPROPRIATE REENTRY OFFENDER POPULATION

Components include:

- Specific definition of target population. For example, "The target population is comprised of offenders who (1) will return to residences in high-crime neighborhoods and (2) are at risk to reoffend without appropriate intervention."

- Procedures for special needs populations, such as youthful offenders, women and the mentally ill.
- Mechanism to determine an offender's residence upon release and the communities where he or she will spend significant time.

3. STRUCTURED POST-RELEASE REINTEGRATION

Components include:

- A clearly defined reentry plan individualized to the offender with stated requirements for monitoring, reparation, possible sanctions and incentives, and support service plan. This plan is developed while the offender is still incarcerated.
- Active offender involvement in plan development and accountability for success or failure.
- Structured board or other entity as primary oversight agent and reentry monitor/case manager.
- A central, community-based authority responsible for assisting offenders with short- and long-term service needs.
- Linking of services to offender via some type of case management model, beyond simple referrals and making appointment.
- Intermediate responses to technical violations of supervision and minor offenses to help reduce the use of detention as a sanction (graduated sanctions and incentives).

4. SURVEILLANCE AND MONITORING

Components include:

- Judicial or administrative ability to impose safety-specific conditions of release, such as curfews, restraining (from person/area) orders, "live at" orders, civil protection orders and drug testing. These should be part of the reentry plan.
- Enhanced supervision partnerships, in which police and probation or parole officers perform joint supervision or other joint functions related to offenders in the community.
- Fugitive apprehension units, in which police and corrections agencies collaborate to locate and apprehend persons who have absconded from probation or parole supervision.
- Liaison between law enforcement and the community to report illegal behavior.

5. COORDINATION BETWEEN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND THE SOCIAL SERVICES AND/OR TREATMENT SYSTEMS

- Social services and treatment programs are usually administered through health or human services agencies. Traditionally, these agencies have traditions, values and goals that differ from the criminal justice system. Bringing together the various

agencies and creating a common mission is challenging at best. An understanding of available community-based resources and how these resources can and should be applied to the returning offender population is critical.

6. NEEDS SUPPORT ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAMMING

Components include:

- Needs support assessment conducted well before an offender's release date to allow adequate time for appropriate community linkage preparations.
- Risk assessment conducted to categorize an offender's likelihood to recidivate and to identify the most appropriate level of community surveillance.
- Active offender role in determining services needed.
- Service delivery or reentry orientation begins in institution setting to help offset the problem of physical distance between prison and community.
- Identification of available community support resources within the institution.
- Continuity of service and continuity of health care begun in institution carried into the community.

7. COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT RESOURCES

Components include:

- A wide range of services geared to offender, community and victim needs.
- Service providers experiences in monitoring and providing services to offenders.
- Support focus on behavior modification rather than on compliance. This requires a long-range view of "success" and a link with graduated sanctions and incentives.

8. VICTIM INVOLVEMENT

Components include:

- Sensitivity to the needs of victims.
- Support services for victims whose offenders are released back into the community.
- Victim and community notification.

9. RIGOROUS EVALUATION

Components include:

- Clear performance measures.
- Clear outcome measures.
- Links with local universities for assistance on evaluation issues, or retention of in-

house evaluator.

10. INTEGRATED INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Components include:

- An automated MIS linking all participating agencies that records institutional plans and support services, tracks offenders after reentry plan development, records services recommended, tracks progress and appropriate sanctions and incentives.

RESOURCES FROM SPONSORING FEDERAL AGENCIES

The sponsoring agencies (NIJ, CPO, EOWS, COPS) will provide the following:

- Process evaluations of each participating jurisdiction will be conducted under NIJ's Analytic Support Program contract, co-funded by sponsoring agencies. Sites will be expected to cooperate with an evaluator, who will collect data and who can assist sites with measurement issues.

- Cluster conferences will be convened periodically with participating sites to share information and experiences. These meetings may be held in participating site locations, with NIJ's Professional Conference Series contract handling logistics through funding provided by sponsoring agencies.

- Participating sites may request technical assistance (TA) as needed for the purpose of designing and implementing various program elements. TA will be coordinated by CPO, and may be provided by NIJ, COPS, EOWS and other Office of Justice Programs bureaus, as appropriate.

- Periodic conference calls will be set up between the project staff team and the participating sites for the purpose of sharing information, gauging progress and assisting with programmatic issues.

Depending on the need, the project staff team may conduct site visits to participating jurisdictions. This project team is comprised of designated staff from each sponsoring agency.

Depending on site interest, a newsletter or list serv may be established to maintain links between sites and to share information between site and the federal agencies.

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