



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

Lake County, Illinois

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January 6, 2011

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TO: Honorable Members of the Community Development Commission

RE: Jail Reentry Program Year FY- 2011 CDBG Funding Request

In 2004, the Lake County Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee, chaired by Lake County State Attorney Michael Waller, took the bold step of furthering the efforts of the Lake County Jail's strong rehabilitation program by focusing on re-entry and referrals for inmates being released back into society. The Committee recognized that if the ex-offenders who may have intentions of changing their lives, didn't have help outside of the jail, they would likely end up back in jail.

In 2005 the Re-entry Program was developed. We applied for and received CDBG funding in 2006 for a part time Re-entry Specialist for the jail. Within one year, the number of inmates requesting assistance and the number of referrals grew to the point that we knew the position should be full time. The Sheriff received funding for a full time Re-entry specialist but it was clear we needed an additional Specialist due to the increase in the number of requests we were receiving from inmates and if we truly wanted to have an impact on reducing recidivism here in Lake County. With CDBG funding, the Sheriff was able to bring on a part time Re-entry Specialist in 2007 and our requests for assistance is still growing.

Since inception, we have serviced over 2500 inmates with direct services such as GED testing, anger management, resume writing, cognitive behavior classes and other programs designed to assist inmates in returning as productive citizens in Lake County. We have made over 22,000 referrals to social service agencies in Lake County for housing, substance abuse treatment, NA/AA, medical treatment, support groups and many other services needed.

The Re-entry Specialists have partnered with the Coalition to Reduce Recidivism, the RePatriot Program, F.I.S.T., the CCJC, BMM, Waukegan Township, W.H.O.L.E., CLC and many more. The Mentor Program, which partners inmates with mentors who will meet the inmate at the door of the jail when they are released, is impacting the rate of recidivism daily because these ex-offenders have someone positive to turn to. To date, the Re-entry Specialists are directly responsible for 100 ex-offenders obtaining employment.

It costs approximately \$24,000 a year to house an inmate in the jail, not to mention the victims that may result from the crimes committed. We have shown that the Sheriff's Re-entry Specialists have helped ex-offenders with community referral, housing, community mentoring, job referral and that at least 100 ex-offenders have become employed through their efforts. And as we know, employment greatly reduces the chance of re-offending.

Because of the success of the Sheriff's Re-entry Program, the tax payers of Lake County can ill afford not to re-fund the part time Re-entry Specialist Staff position. We humbly ask that the Committee reconsider and that we receive \$30,000 to continue the Program in FY-2011.

Thank you.

Jennifer Witherspoon
Chief of Corrections

Lake County Jail– Re-Entry Services

Reentry Specialist: G. Mark McCorley

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Subject: Appeal to the CDBG Commission for FY-2011 Funding

Dear CDBD Commission Members,

Your recent decision to not recommend the Lake County Sheriff's Department Reentry Services for funding for FY 2011 is devastating and we ask that you reconsider.

The Lake County Jail Reentry Program since its inception we have served 2, 499 clients to dates issuing more than 22,200 referrals to its clients. In addition to assessments and referrals the Reentry program currently has 55 clients in our Mentoring Program and who are meeting weekly with us and being reaffirmed as they face the many challenges of post-incarceration. Further, the Reentry Program has assisted an average 100 clients per year in getting their GED, and another 150 into our Repatriation Demonstration Post Incarceration Career Development courses in partnership with the College of Lake County. In addition we have placed hundreds of clients in housing, substance abuse treatments centers, and therapeutic environments to assist in their recovery from drugs. We are also directly responsible for over 100 clients gaining employment.

If you decide not to fund the Reentry Program the devastating effects will go much further than our losing our part time Reentry Specialist, this will immediately affect the serving of at least 500 clients per year. That is 500 people that will be homeless, denied the opportunity for much needed drug treatment and therapy, 500 less completing their GED and furthering their education, and 500 more unemployed ex-offenders with no resources or any where to turn for assistance.

Rosalyn Franklin University is doing a study of the recidivism rate in Lake County, when this study is complete, it will add additional support to the value of this program.

I along with the Chief Witherspoon, Sherriff Curran, and the entire Sherriff's Department humbly ask that you reconsider your decision not to fund the Reentry Specialist program this year.

Thank you for reconsidering your decision in not funding the Lake County Jail Reentry Program.

G. Mark McCorley
Reentry Specialist

Cc: Rick Riddle, Programs Manager
Jennifer Witherspoon, Chief of Corrections
Mark Curran Jr., Sheriff