

States Engaging Human Need with Community Partners: Oklahoma and Prisoner Reentry

In cooperation with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections (DOC), the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI), also known as FaithLinks, helped to create a statewide collaboration of reentry service providers in May of 2005. This collaboration became known as the “Oklahoma Partnership for Successful Reentry, Inc.” (The Partnership) and acquired its status as a 501(c) (3) organization. It is comprised of approximately 60 representatives from faith-based and community organizations, state agencies, and Native American tribes. The Partnership meets monthly to keep reentry service providers informed, coordinate efforts and be a unified voice on issues affecting reentry.

With DOC and the OFBCI, the Partnership co-hosted a statewide conference to address reentry issues and is currently conducting quarterly educational and networking forums for reentry service providers in Oklahoma. Events are being held in the two major metropolitan areas and are focused on both pre and post-release issues such as substance abuse, education and employment, mentoring, family reunification, etc. The most significant benefit of these workshops has been the networking which is creating a number of synergistic opportunities between organizations.

In addition, recent Oklahoma legislation established a revolving fund for the award of mini grants to volunteer organizations providing reentry services. The fund will be administered by the OFBCI. A Reentry Policy Council and Transformational Justice Task Force were also created to ascertain gaps in reentry services and to assess the extent to which faith-based and community organizations are providing these services. The OFBCI will consider the findings of the Council and Task Force in the creation and award of mini-grants. The legislation was designed to encourage participation of volunteer organizations in programs and services to inmates and ex-offenders.



For more information, visit <http://www.faithlinksok.org>