

Attachment A

APPLICATION

Ex-Offender Re-entry Partnership Initiative

September 8, 2008



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development
Suzanne M. Bump, Secretary

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I. Background Information ¹

The ***Ex-Offender Re-entry Partnership Initiative*** is an effort of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. This pilot initiative is part of the Secretary's comprehensive response to Governor Deval Patrick's CORI reform effort.

This application reflects the work of the Governor's Interagency Task Force on Pre- and Post-Release Programming, convened by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development in March, 2008. The goal of the task force, and of this pilot initiative, is to increase public safety by supporting the successful reintegration of ex-offenders into society through education, training, employment and necessary support services, including but not limited to housing, transportation, mental health/substance abuse treatment and counseling, and recovery.

Estimates of the number of individuals released from correctional facilities in Massachusetts range from 20,000 to 25,000 annually. Nearly 8 in 10 of these individuals are released from a county house of correction after having served 9 months or less. Success in re-entry for many of these individuals, in the final analysis, will depend on their ability to find stable housing, support services and sustainable employment.

Criminal justice professionals, community activists, and researchers generally agree that the costs of incarceration have risen dramatically over time. At the same time, research demonstrates that the lack of opportunities to treat health, mental health, and substance abuse issues as well as access to education and employment opportunities are strong factors in increasing the likelihood of ex-offenders returning to prison.

As of March 2008, over 25,000 individuals within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts were incarcerated in state and county correctional facilities. These individuals were split between the 16 Department of Correction facilities and the 13 Sheriffs who have statutory responsibility to operate County Houses of Correction. This prisoner population breaks down as follows:

- 14,000 county (Approx count, Feb, 2008)
- 11,000 state (Approx. count, March 2008)
 - Includes 10,016 criminally sentenced inmates (those not being held pre-trial).
 - 7,792 of these (78%) have a release date within five years.

¹ Information cited in the background information section taken from the report of the Governor's Interagency Task Force on Pre- and Post-Release Programming, March 2008. See Attachment 6.

Ex-offenders who successfully return to their communities will be less likely to return to criminal behavior, improving the public fiscal health and increasing public safety. Regional partnerships applying for funding must consider strategies to reduce recidivism and decrease financial and social costs of return to criminal behavior to communities and government agencies.

II. Purpose of Pilot Initiative

This application is for the purpose of funding regional partnerships to provide re-entry support to ex-offenders in regional pilot sites to further the goals of the Ex-Offender Re-entry Partnership Initiative. The particular requirements for these services are more fully stated below.

III. Available Funding

The Ex-Offender Re-entry Partnership Initiative will provide funding in two categories: Implementation Awards and Planning Awards. This application process is for Implementation Grants only, which will be provided in amounts of not less than \$250,000 and not more than \$600,000 (see note below).

Planning Awards will be provided in amounts of not less than \$20,000 and not more than \$30,000, under a separate application to be issued by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development at a later date.

It is anticipated that up to 4 implementation grants for up to \$600,000 over two years will be available to fund services and partnerships designed by regional teams.

*Note: In areas where more than one Workforce Investment Board is included in a region (see below), an additional \$100,000 can be requested to serve an expanded number of individuals. The Commonwealth invites applications from the following regions with the highest returning release populations and prior experience and expertise in designing Re-entry Programming:

INVITED GRANTEE	REGIONAL COVERAGE	# OF RETURNING OFFENDERS ²	
		STATE	COUNTY
BOSTON REGION	Target Cities: Boston County: Suffolk County LWIB: Boston Private Industry Council DOC Region(and Facilities, if applicable): Boston Pre	Boston – 687	Boston – 2599

² Data for state offender re-entry by city was provided by Massachusetts Department of Correction for calendar year 2007. Data for county offender re-entry by city only includes sentenced inmates, and is provided by indicated County Sheriff's offices for calendar year 2007. Data collection from County Sheriff's release patterns is ongoing and will be provided directly to regional leads as data is made available.

INVITED GRANTEE	REGIONAL COVERAGE	# OF RETURNING OFFENDERS ²	
		STATE	COUNTY
	Release Center		
CENTRAL REGION	Target Cities: Worcester, Framingham County: Worcester County, Middlesex County LWIB: Central Mass. Regional Employment Board, Metro SouthWest Regional Employment Board DOC Region(and Facilities, if applicable): MCI Concord, MCI Framingham, MCI Shirley, South Middlesex Correctional Center, Pondville Correctional Center	Worcester – 217 Framingham – 88 Total - 305	Worcester – N/A Framingham – N/A Total
HAMPDEN REGION	Target Cities: Springfield, Holyoke County: Hampden County LWIB: Hampden County Regional Employment Board DOC Region(and Facilities, if applicable):	Springfield - 174 Holyoke – 41 Total - 215	Springfield – 1,560 Holyoke – 390 Total – 1,950
SOUTHEAST REGION	Target Cities: New Bedford, Fall River County: Bristol County LWIB: Greater New Bedford Regional Employment Board, Bristol County Workforce Investment Board DOC Region(and Facilities, if applicable):	New Bedford – 89 Fall River – 35 Total - 124	New Bedford – N/A Fall River – N/A Total – N/A Totals for NB & FR

It is expected that the implementation grants will serve a minimum of 150 participants over a two-year grant cycle, including activities that support the development and maintenance of regional partnerships. A minimum of 175 participants will be expected in the Regions where more than one WIB is involved. For guidance in determining typical costs per participant for program planning and budgeting, please refer to guidelines provided in the budget instructions.

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development expect that **no more than 5%** will support program administration (see Attachment I for definition of administration, Workforce Investment Act, 20 CFR Part 652).

All Implementation Awards will require in-kind funding, demonstrating leveraged resources including cash, education and training slots, staff time, etc. Scoring points will be awarded to applicants based on the level of these leveraged resources provided in their application. Applicants shall demonstrate these leveraged resources in the budget narrative and explain the methodology used in accounting

for costs. The Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development expects that a minimum of 30% of the total project cost will be provided by partner agencies through direct cash support or in-kind services. Additional points will be provided to grant applicants who demonstrate commitment of in-kind and or leveraged contributions beyond the minimum required (30%).

Applications must contain both a detailed and narrative budget for the duration of the pilot period. Budgeting must be fully compliant with the limitations described in the budgeting attachment D, and show both grant and leveraged/in-kind financial support for both the program staffing and service delivery needed to meet the application goals.

IV. Timeline

- September 5, 2008 Ex-Offender Re-entry Partnership Initiative information announced
- Implementing Regional Partnerships identified: Hampden, Boston, Central/Metro SouthWest, Bristol/New Bedford
- September 19, 2008 Information session for implementing regional partnerships
Place: Central Massachusetts REB, 44 Front Street, Suite 300, Worcester
Time: 10 to 12
- October 29, 2008 Applications must be submitted no later than 5:00pm
- November 2008 Applications will be reviewed/Decisions made/Awards announced
- December 2008 Contract negotiations with implementing regions
- January 2009 Pilots commence

V. Inquiries

Inquiries concerning this invitation for applications should be emailed to:

Dawn McElaney, Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development -
Division of Career Services dmcelaney@detma.org

VI. Conditions of Application

All costs incurred in the preparation of an application in response to this invitation, including initial partnership development activities in support of submission will be the responsibility of the applicant and will not be reimbursed by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development or its agencies.

VII. Submission Instructions to Applicants

Regions should limit their applications to no more than fifteen (15) pages, single spaced, font size 12 pt, not including any attachments.

Please submit ten (10) copies of the application, and a CD ROM in a sealed envelope marked:

Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development - Division of Career Services
ATTENTION: Dawn McElaney
Ex-Offender Re-entry Partnership Initiative Application Review Team
19 Staniford St. First Floor
Boston, MA 02114

Applications are due on Wednesday, October 29, 2008 by 5:00 pm. There is an application checklist (Attachment H) to assist with your submission.

VIII. Right to Reject

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development reserves the right to reject any and all applications received in response to this invitation. A contract for an accepted application will be based upon the factors described in this invitation.

IX. Notification of Award

Upon conclusion of final negotiations with the successful bidder(s) all applicants submitting applications in response to this invitation will be informed, in writing, of the decision.

X. Eligibility to Apply

Lead applicants for each regional partnership must have a demonstrated ability to work with ex-offenders reentering the community, including placement of ex-offenders in support services, education, training, and employment services. Partnerships submitting for implementation awards must provide evidence demonstrating this capacity.

The appropriate Workforce Investment Board(s) representing the regional partnership will act as the convener and coordinator for the grant. The fiscal agent for the grant must be one of the designated Workforce Investment Act fiscal agents for a workforce area as selected by the regional partnership. Only one fiscal agent should be selected in the regions which are submitting a collaborative application (Central Mass/Metro SouthWest, and Bristol/New Bedford).

The Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development will execute a contract with the designated fiscal agent for the region. All services will be provided in keeping with the goals and objectives of the report of the Governor's Inter-Agency Task Force on Pre- and Post-Release Education Programming and Workforce

Investment Act allowable statewide activities. All services must reflect the Successful Re-entry Framework contained in this application.

XI. Hold Harmless

The lead applicant or any sub grantees will hold The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, its employees, agents, partners, officers and directors harmless for any loss or liability.

XII. Program Framework & Design

The goal of the Ex-Offender Re-entry Partnership Initiative is to assist regions in filling gaps in service for ex-offenders, with a special focus on employment and training. Over time, the Re-entry Pilots will assist regional networks to build a continuum of services for ex-offenders in a region and leverage the role of existing service providers and organizations.

The Commonwealth expects that regions submitting applications will engage a broad range of criminal justice and community partners. All applicants will be asked, as a part of the application questions, to assess existing services in the region for ex-offenders. The map of existing services within a region shall be compared to the “continuum” of services needed to support successful re-entry. This continuum is identified and explained in more detail in the report of the Governor’s Interagency Task Force on Pre/Post Release Programming (Attachment G).

The Commonwealth encourages regions to consider the needs of specific segments of the ex-offender population, (i.e., including but not limited to female ex-offenders, youthful offenders, veterans), in determining who to serve within the pilot project. To ensure that grant awards are being used to develop regional partnerships and using and capturing best practices, each regional award will:

- Be guided by a Re-entry Steering Committee made up of regional partners specified in the next section.
- Consider the use of existing common tools and best practices (i.e. ex-offender portfolio models, use of Massachusetts JobQuest (the state’s online employment database), etc.
- Include comprehensive case management and coordination along with the service plan for each participant.

XII. A. - Regional Partners

A key goal of this initiative is to build regional capacity to better address the needs of the re-entry population. In developing an application package, regional teams must engage the below partners in all aspects of the program, where appropriate. When a required partner is not part of a regional submission, the applicant must present both evidence of outreach and explain the rationale for exclusion of required partners. Key areas where multiple partners shall be involved include, but are not limited to, project planning, service design and delivery, and outcome reporting.

Mandatory Partners:

- **Chief Elected Official**
- **Local Workforce Board**
- **Local One Stop Career Center (including Disability Program Navigator)**
- **Employers**
- **Local Sheriff's Office**
- **Parole - Local Regional Re-entry Centers**
- **Local Department of Correction Facility Leadership**
- **Support Service Providers (according to program design, also see examples below)**

Other Potential Partners:

- Workforce Training Providers
- Adult Basic Education/English as a Second Language education providers
- Local Police
- Local offices representing State Health and Human Service Agencies (e.g. Dept. of Transitional Assistance, Dept. of Children and Families, Department of Youth Services, Mass. Rehabilitation Commission, Department of Mental Health, Department of Public Health)
- Massachusetts Department of Revenue/Child Support Enforcement
- Department of Veterans Services
- Local Mental Health agencies or providers
- Local Substance Abuse agencies or providers
- Local Housing Authority
- Local Community Corrections Center
- Office of Probation
- US Probation

Evidence of partnership (MOU's, shared costs, etc.) should be included in the application package and used as evidence of partnership to support the narrative. As indicated above, applicants will need to demonstrate that all partners have been considered, even if a regional team does not include all above.

XII. B. – Potential Uses of Grant Funding

Allowable uses of the grant funds will be to provide services to ex-offenders and fill gaps identified through the regional application planning process. The resources provided in these grants should support a wide range of needs for individuals in the service population. Allowable uses of funding from these resources may include:

- Capacity & Partnership Activities
- Building and sustaining regional partnership
- Staffing
 - Must demonstrate regional sustainability planning & identify resources
- ABE/ESOL

- Job Readiness
- Skill Training
- On the Job Training
- Educational Materials
- Portfolio development & implementation
- Curriculum development and use
- Supportive Services
- Employer Outreach
- Job Development
- Employer training
- Community Corrections Center
- Data Tracking & Outcome reporting (required)

XII. C. Framework for Program Design & Service Delivery

A region's program design must reflect the below framework for successful re-entry, as adopted by the Task Force. Regional partnerships must address the provision of services indicated below, either through grant dollars or through existing resources. The narrative questions will ask a region to identify its existing "continuum" of services and describe existing capacity and gaps along this continuum.

Applicants shall demonstrate in their responses, strategies that extend resources to address unmet needs, by serving additional ex-offenders and filling significant gaps in the service continuum. Ex-offenders must be 18 years old, eligible to work in the US, selective service compliant, incarcerated, participating in pre-release services, or previously released - date of release not more than 12 months prior to program enrollment date. Areas may propose additional target service populations that reflect specific needs of community. It is expected that each region selected for an implementation award will serve a minimum of 150 new individuals during the grant timeframe, (175 for regions which submit collaborative applications for two Workforce areas).

For regions developing applications please refer to Attachment E – Visual of Continuum of Service for Ex-Offender, a visual representation of the required Successful Re-Entry Framework to assist in planning and implementing your proposed project.

Successful Re-entry Framework Pre- and Post-Release Services

Pre Release Services

Assessment - Correctional facilities administer health, mental health, education and skill assessments.

Mental Health, Substance Abuse Treatment - Upon incarceration, offenders need access to services. (As allowed by sentencing/facility classification)

Service Plan or Portfolio - Offenders create a service plan based on assessments that outlines service needs during incarceration and extends beyond release. Plan should include steps /strategies to attain basic employment documentation prior to release, including: birth certificate, Social Security card, Mass ID and MassHealth card. All applicants will be required to provide each participant with a portfolio and plan for post-release services. Applicants may use either a plan of their own design, or may access existing best practices provided as attachments. See attachment F for examples of portfolios.

Education and Skill Development - Offenders enroll in adult education (GED), ESOL, vocational training, college preparation and coursework and job readiness workshops.

Transition Planning - Transitional planning begins prior to release to identify:

- Connections to housing
- Enrollment in MassHealth (access via Virtual Gateway)
- Organizations and referrals for mental health, substance abuse, and health care.
- Regional Re-entry Center, Community Correction Center or One Stop Career Center services needed for post-release.

Linkages for Ex-Offenders Built with Service Providers Prior to Release - Offenders are connected to service providers prior to release or “behind the wall” based on transition plan – direct referral, provider orientations, etc.

Work Release Models - Provide individuals with work experience and the potential for employment post-release and develop agreements with employers to “credit” offender with employment history for company earned through work release program.

Post Release & Community Based Services

Transportation - Need transit options upon release to appropriate community resources.

Housing, Mental Health Substance Abuse Support Services - Ex-Offenders need resources to provide these services simultaneously. Research has shown that this needs to be in place upon leaving a correctional facility. (72 hour window of success)

Coordination of Services and Case Management - Upon release, a contact individual should be identified to connect the ex-offender to community resources. Often, Regional Re-entry Centers & Community Correction Centers provide case management for ex-offenders, referrals to employment, substance abuse, mental health, and other services. “Wrapped” individuals (completed sentence) need incentives to engage. All applicants will be required to include in their proposals a provision for multi-agency participant case conferences, to ensure coordination of services across agency lines.

Employment Planning and Placement - Regional Re-entry Center & Community Correction Center make referrals to One Stop Career Center. Offender brings “portfolio” to work on employment planning and getting a job while Career Center acts as employer contact. See attachment F for examples of portfolios.

Education and Skill Development - Resources for ex-offenders to access education (ABE/ESOL, post-secondary) and occupational training to enhance job prospects and income.

Liability Protections for Employers - Education about federal bonding program and the work opportunity tax credit (WOTC).

Employer Outreach Strategies - Models should include employer outreach strategies for pre- and post-release placements, including employer breakfasts (to market population), or assignment of a job developer to support the individual. All applicants must include in their proposals a plan for informing participating employers about resources and information available to employers to mitigate risks of hiring ex-offenders, including third party risks.

XII. D. - Program Goals & Anticipated Outcomes

Regional applications must present a detailed plan of services for ex-offenders and must consider individuals in need of additional support for successful re-entry and address the key elements of successful re-entry. The elements of successful re-entry programming include but are not limited to housing, supportive services and access to education, training, and employment opportunities.

Applicants must demonstrate a thorough understanding of the recommendations of the Governor’s Inter-Agency Task Force on Pre- and Post-Release Programming. Implementation applicants must demonstrate, with evidence and a detailed proposed service plan for individuals, a thorough understanding of the goals outlined by the Commonwealth for this pilot initiative.

The goals for the initiative include:

- **Increasing Ex-offender Success/Reducing Recidivism:** Increase levels of public safety and reduce recidivism and build stronger communities and families by increasing participation in the workforce for the re-entry population.
- **Increasing Service Connections/Leveraging Resources:** Increase the number of individuals in the state accessing support services, education/training and employment necessary for successful re-entry.
- **Building Partnerships/Best Practices:** Build regional capacity to serve customers by taking lessons learned from this project to help all customers.

XII – E. Desired Outcomes

Program design and service delivery should reflect an understanding of the desired outcomes for the pilot initiative. The outcomes for this pilot include:

- **Education/Training measures:**
 - Number of individuals completing training program (Skill Training, ABE/ESOL, etc.)
 - Number of individuals demonstrating a learning gain (Number of participants earning a credential; skill level gain as indicated by pre/post testing.)
- **Job Placement measure:** Number of individuals entering employment
- **Job Retention measure:** Number of individuals retaining employment
- **“Successful Transition” measure:** Measure to be developed with grantees. Measure will reflect increased labor market participation and increased family capacity from earned income by participants. (Could include number of referrals to support services, housing stabilization, creation of transition plans and career plans, recorded wages, etc.)
- **Employer Engagement measure:** Number of employers participating in hiring individuals served by program, including employer type.
- **Leveraged Services measure:** Report of number of services, amount of dollars, and types of services provided by grant dollars and cash or in-kind contributions.
- **Recidivism Impact measure:** For enrolled participants, length of non – incarcerated time (in weeks) over the life of the grant. The Commonwealth will track program participants 1 year post program exit.

XIII. Application Questions & Budget Instructions

Application Questions: Please see Attachment B for Narrative Questions to follow in developing a proposal narrative, as well as scoring points for responses to each question.

Budget: Please see Attachment D for Budget Instructions and Template.

XIV. Proposal Evaluation

XIV.A. - Scoring Framework

Program Framework and Design Application (0 to 45 points)

Based on responses to Narrative Questions 1, 2, 5, 7, & 8 (Attachment B)

- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of grant program goals and desired outcomes
- Proposed goals and outcomes in project are achievable and consistent with program goals as outlined
- Contains a timeline for project implementation that is both reasonable and compliant with grant program timelines
- Proposed strategies are well developed, reasonable and support program intent

Demonstration of Support & Service Coordination (0 to 45 points)

Based on responses to Narrative Questions 3, 4, 6, & 9 (Attachment B)

- Appropriate documentation of support is provided from each partner in the application
- Contains tangible evidence of necessary partnerships, referral and collaborative agreements necessary to achieve program goals
- Demonstrates the applicant's success in involving mandated and potential partners in planning for and providing services

Demonstration of Capacity and Budget (0 to 10 points)

Based on responses to Narrative Question 10 (Attachment B)

- Proposed budget is supportive of program intent, and costs are reasonable
- Budget Detail and Narrative are included as instructed, are internally consistent, achievable with demonstrated resources and compliant with all relevant program cost restrictions

Maximum Points 100

Applications which result in an overall score of less than 75% will not be funded.

XIV. B. - Additional Points for Percentages of Resources Leveraged

This program intends to build long term regional capacity to serve ex-offenders through collaborative, creative and efficient use of resources across agency lines to provide service to participants within the ex-offender population. To advance that goal, additional points will be provided to grant applicants demonstration commitment of in kind contributions beyond the minimum required (30%) on the scale indicated below.

35% match - +2

40% match - +3

45% match - +4

50% match - +5

XV. Technical Assistance

The Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development – Division of Career Services is compiling training for the successful applicants. Mandatory training will be offered initially and participation will be required in the topics listed below. The following topics are mandatory. Other training, both mandatory and optional, will be offered as the pilot evolves.

Initial Mandatory Training grant awardees will include, but may not be limited to the following:

1. Thinking of Victims when Dealing with Re-entry
2. Outreach to Companies that Hire Ex-Offenders
3. National Institute of Corrections Training
4. Corrections System 101
5. Dealing with the Sex Offender Population 101

6. Federal Bonding Training

XVI. Reporting

Fiscal and participant data reports will be submitted from each of the successful applicants on a monthly basis, with cumulative totals for the duration of the grant. The reports will be due to the project manager, Dawn McElaney on the 20th of each month for the preceding month's activity.

Reports will be in Excel format, based on designated Massachusetts One Stop Employment System data elements, with narrative sections for progress information. A report template will be issued separately for the implementing regions to utilize.

Implementing regions are encouraged to report on successful participant testimonials as anecdotal information during this pilot phase.

XVII. Contract Closeout

The grant closeout must be completed and submitted to Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development – Division of Career Services no later than 45 days after the end of the grant, or as soon as the grant is fully expended, whichever is earlier. Please follow the existing closeout policy at the time of the grant.