



# **Offender Workforce Development Designing A Path to Success**

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# LEAP Project

The purpose of the LEAP project is to develop men and women to be ready for full time employment upon release from jail. Using evidence-based curriculum, wrap around case management and coordination of services. LEAP prepares inmates for the workforce.

# LEAP Project

- History Overview
  - Federal Grant to County Contract
- Set ambitious goals
  - 108 enrolled per year
  - 90% complete pre-release program
  - 80% show work readiness using the “JIST” assessment
  - 80% enrollment rate at the community based CareerLink within 30 days of release, for those who have not obtained employment or enrolled in education within 30 days.
  - 60% placement rate in education or employment within 30 days of release plus those who enroll at the CareerLink and obtain employment/education within 90 days of release.
  - 70% of participants who are employed within the 30-90 days of release and remain employed 9 months post-release

# Recidivism

- Goals:

1. Recidivism with any new charges: 10%

2. Recidivism with Probation/Parole violation only: 25%

- Civil charges (domestic relations) not a contractual goal, but reported.

# LEAP Project – Program Process

- Participant Recruitment
  - Identify, Interview, Recruit
  - Know your population - successful program starts with successful recruitment. Set guidelines for recruitment such as must be sentenced, must have a HS diploma/GED, returning to a certain area, etc.

# LEAP Pre-Release Classes

- JOBTEC Curriculum
  - Evidence-based curriculum
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Mentors
  - Resume writing and interviewing skills
- Re-Entry Services – Transition to CareerLink Services
  - Exit interview
  - Refresher Classes

# Case Management

- Three cross trained staff provide case management pre and post-release. As the program grew so did the number of participants in the post-release phase. Due to the increase, one staff member was not enough to serve the group.
- Importance of seeing that all aspects of their life - barriers/challenges are being addressed and supported. LEAP's focus is employment, but refers to other providers for additional needs.

# Case Management (cont'd)

- Enrolling at the CareerLink within 30 days, employment within 30 days.
- Having these targets motivates staff to maintain contact and engage people and stay in constant contact with them.



# Community Partners

The importance of establishing community partnerships

- SHRM
- Community Support
  - Change on 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - Crime Victims Council
  - Returning Citizens Round Table
- Community Resources
  - Clothing
  - Bus Passes

# The Benefits

## Employment, Education & CareerLink Enrollment

- The program has created tax paying employees. Only about 19% of the LEAP participants had been employed prior to incarceration. Upon release 69% have jobs within 30 days.
- Participants have obtained employment or enrolled in education within 90 days post release at a rate of 61%.
- For those who have not obtained employment or enrolled in education within 30 days 72% have enrolled for comprehensive services at CareerLink.

## Recidivism

- LEAP participants show a rate of return to jail of 29.33%, compared to the general population of 48.1% (difference of 18.77%).
- Reduction in new charges - 27% of the jail's recidivators return for new charges. Only 8% of LEAP recidivators return for new charges.
- LEAP graduates are less likely to commit new crimes.

# The Benefits (cont'd)

Cost benefit to the Jail: \$509,565

Recidivism reduction can be calculated to a cost savings of \$509,565, or 4431 bed days saved. (Calculation: 225 inmates released to date, 18.77% of that total is 42.2. Reasoning that LEAP prevented 42.2 people from recidivating we can calculate a cost savings as follows; 40.2 people times 105 days (the average length of stay for sentenced inmates) times \$115 (cost per day, per inmate).

# Lessons Learned

## Recruitment:

- Start recruitment at intake
- Reengage recidivators

## Staff:

- Hiring staff with the energy for and understanding of the environment.
- LEAP is voluntary and staff need to recruit and engage participants.
- “The instructors provided me with hope and encouraged me that I can obtain employment, there are opportunities for me upon release.” Past LEAP participant

# Lessons Learned (cont'd)

- Barriers:
  - Training programs that require tuition or day-time attendance with no pay are not likely to be used by this population. People releasing from jail need to earn money as soon as possible.
- Never stop networking with coalition/providers
  - Building partnerships creates new opportunities for participants and can help diversify funding streams.

# LEAP Participant Testimonials

## Program Evaluation

- I loved the fact that the program not only taught me skills on how to get a job but also skills on how to be a better person. I was taught how to evaluate and elevate both my values and behaviors. -- Past LEAP participant
- The LEAP Program helped me a lot with not only interviewing skills and applying for future work possibilities but also how to deal with other problems in my life outside of work. And with confidence that I can still do great things with my life even though I'm in here and have problems in my past. It's really turned my way of thinking around to be a lot more positive. -- Brian

# LEAP Participant Testimonials

## Post-Release Testimonials

- Just to let you know those resumes are pretty much gold. I have 4 interviews set up over the next two days. Just need to go in and wow them now and find the one that works best for me. I have had two other companies call me too that I have to call back today so who knows I might wind up with 6 by the time I'm done. :) You guys are awesome. -- Rachel

# Contact Information

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