

PROGRESS REPORT:

U.S. Department of Education's
Private Sector Jail Industries Demonstration Programs

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Preface.

ACQUISITIONS

In 1991 the U.S. Department of Education announced a unique new demonstration program, focusing on new approaches to incarcerated offenders at the local and state levels. Proposals for "demonstration sites" were solicited, and after careful review a joint-venture between three counties was selected to implement the Department's jail demonstration effort.

The following pages describe the overall approach of the Department, and the current status of "enhancement" efforts in each of the three demonstration sites. This report was prepared by CRS, Inc. which serves as the principal experts assisting the sites, and CGA, Inc. (Carter Goble Associates)--the program manager/contractor for this project.

I. The Department's Jail Demonstration Effort.

Problem. The high cost of incarceration is the overall problem addressed through the demonstration project. According to the National Association of Counties, local jails comprise the single largest expenditure for counties. Costs to incarcerate an inmate in a county jail range from \$15,000 to \$25,000 per year. Jail populations are rising steadily at an average rate of more than 7%, and the rate of recidivism--when measured--suggests that more than 60% of all jail inmates will be confined again.

Opportunities. The U.S. Department of Education believes that a comprehensive, integrated approach will help inmates to become more competent workers by mobilizing and coordinating vocational education programs, literacy and basic skills training, academic content and using "real work" experiences inside jails. The experience of existing private sector jail industry programs suggests that their inmate-workers are more likely to secure--and keep--employment upon release.

Cost Savings. The Department's demonstration project offers an opportunity to prove that a range of real savings can result from the operation of jail industry programs in conjunction with transitional services. Savings can be expected to result from:

- * inmate payments to the county for room/board, deducted from wages earned while confined;
- * inmate payments for taxes deducted from their wages;
- * reduced maintenance repair costs within the jail as a result of reduced inmate idleness; and
- * reduced rate of recidivism after release.

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The Need to Integrate the Full Range of Services. Components of a comprehensive jail-to-work transition system can be found in several jails; however, no single facility has brought all of these components together at one time *with* integrated transition services with vocational education and training programs. The demonstration sites for this project were anxious to bring all of these elements together.

Carl Perkins Act. Through this demonstration project, the purpose of the Act will be achieved for a group of underemployed persons. The Act was created to "*...make the U.S. more competitive in the world economy by developing more fully the academic and occupational skills of all segments of the population...through concentrating resources on improving educational programs leading to academic and occupational skill competencies needed to work in a technologically advanced society.*"

II. The Three Demonstration Sites.

A. Hennepin County, Minnesota

The Hennepin County Adult Corrections Facility (ACF) is the most secure alternative within the county's continuum of correctional services. There are three custody operations on-site at the county's corrections complex in Plymouth: men's, women's, and work release. All facilities house only sentenced offenders. The rated capacity of the facility is 565 beds, and the average length of stay is between 10 and 56 days; executed sentences cannot exceed one year.

A wide range of educational, social service and chemical health services are provided. The education services at the ACF are part of a consortium which includes twelve school districts and two correctional facilities, and is viewed as more of a community education program than an adult education program. The type of education programs offered to residents are dictated by the resident's length of stay, and are limited to those residents with over ten days to serve. The ACF has approximately 25 education staff, divided between the Basic, Remedial, Special, GED, Advanced/College, and Vocational education divisions.

Substance Abuse treatment consists of screened individuals participating in Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous programs and individual and group counseling. Since early 1992 the County has also operated a certified outpatient substance program on the site, allowing inmates to participate in therapy three nights each week.

There are also Release Preparation and Planning Programs, such as conditional releases for job search, work release housing, coordination with probation, and opportunities for arrangement of continuing treatment after release.

A private-sector industries program has also been in operation at the facility since 1981. The industries program at the ACF is one of the most comprehensive in the country, and is very extensive for a county-level facility. There are screening and testing procedures, job preparation classes, job counseling, and job search assistance, job site visit programs, and programs for placement in jobs associated with the industries program.

What is unique about this program is that it pays residents the prevailing wage, which is minimum wage or better. The program is co-ed and has been successful for 10 years contracting jobs primarily in the private sector. Back in 1981 when the program started, 13,948 resident hours were clocked. During that developmental period, the numbers stayed consistent through 1987. Since then, there has been steady growth in the number of jobs contracted and the number of labor hours sold. By the end of 1990, over 50,000 resident hours were sold to in-state manufacturers.

At this time, services available to ACF customers include shrink wrapping, contract packaging, poly bagging, heat sealing, hand assembly, inspecting/rework, hand collating and labeling, light production, and other subcontract services. Inmate labor is delivered to a variety of private sector customers, and inmates are paid on a piecework basis with minimum wage as the base.

POWER PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

A committee of county officials, educators, private industry, legislators, and all levels of jail personnel (line, supervisory, administrative) called the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was formed to provide ongoing guidance and policy assistance to the jail industry program. A Corrections Advisory Board already existed in Hennepin County, and the TAG was established as an ad hoc committee of the Board. The TAG consists of a citizen representative to the Corrections Advisory Board, a representative from local industry, the ACF Education Director, an education consultant, the ACF Industry Coordinator, and a Bureau of Community Corrections financial advisor.

Existing industry and educational programs were carefully audited and evaluated in order to determine what changes would need to "enhance" programs, consistent with the demonstration project objectives.

Twenty-three ACF staff members, representing industry, security, social services, chemical health, food service, staff training, education and volunteer services were selected by management to develop and implement the project. This group participated in a two day "retreat," formulating a mission statement, goals, and objectives for the project.

The large group was subdivided into 5 committees to flesh out the specifics of the project components: Recruitment, Programming, Training, Transition, and Evaluation. A program document was drafted, based on the work of the subcommittees, and approved as the working plan for the project. A name was chosen-- the POWER Program (Providing Opportunities for Work, Education, and Readiness).

POWER PROGRAM OVERVIEW

INTAKE. Upon intake into the facility, inmates are informed about and given a chance to apply for the POWER program. The application is reviewed, and if accepted, the applicant is assessed as to skills and needs, and a POWER program contract is developed with each resident. The resident is then referred to the supervisors of either Kitchen, Industry or Laundry to be placed in the employment category that is best suited to his/her needs and skills.

PROGRAMMING. Each participant develops a program and employment portfolio to document their individual progress. Life skills training is scheduled each week for four weeks. Each resident works a regular shift at their particular job, working with the Coordinator to develop their action plan to schedule educational, chemical health, or other programming around their daily work schedule.

TRANSITION TO THE COMMUNITY. Two weeks prior to their discharge from the program, the participants meet with the Community Network Facilitator (CNF) to review action plans, accomplishments, career assessment, strengths and weaknesses. Participants are also matched with volunteer mentors from the community to assist in their transition to the community upon release. The CNF acts as a counselor with the participants, helping with their fears and concerns regarding their release. The CNF also establishes contacts with agencies or services in the community to provide ongoing placement and program support.

ACF STAFF TRAINING. Comprehensive training has been developed for program staff to ensure that the program runs as smoothly as possible, and to allow staff to incorporate improvements.

PROGRAM STAFF AND OVERSIGHT. POWER committee members meet regularly to review issues and to trouble shoot problems brought forth by the CNF or POWER Program Coordinators. These sessions allow adjustments to be made to the program as it develops.

PROGRAM EVALUATION. The evaluation of the project is ongoing throughout the life of the project, culminating in a final evaluation. A third-party evaluation is being undertaken through a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Institute of Justice and the U. S. Department of Education.

BUDGET. Funding for this program provides for program support materials and two full-time staff; one Coordinator and one Community Network Facilitator. Additional staff support and involvement is provided by the Department's existing staff as in-kind contributions.

CURRENT POWER PROGRAM STATUS (April 1993)

Staff. The Power Program coordinator position has been filled with an existing Department employee who was previously assigned to the education unit. This person has been assigned to the project since May 1992. The Community Network position was filled in July 1992. The person filling that position was not a Department employee, however did have previous experience in community networking with this type of population.

Staff Training. All Hennepin County Adult Correctional Facility staff have received Power Program orientation training. Staff directly involved with the program have received program-specific training. This training included program participant expectations, reporting requirements, documentation and rules.

Power Program Curriculum. A participant orientation package has been established and put into place. A new Life Skills Program geared toward the goals of the program has been designed. This four-week program is a requirement for all participants.

Program Forms. All forms required for program implementation have been developed. These forms include application, intake, progress, performance, program plan. Other forms have been developed to provide administrative documentation and overall program evaluation data.

Program Participants. The POWER program started operation in April 1992, and the first "graduate" was released from confinement in August 1992. Currently, 67 residents (54 men, 13 women) are participating in the program--most of whom are now released into the community. An average of more than 20 released residents are employed in the community at this time.

B. Strafford County, New Hampshire

Strafford County, New Hampshire, began planning jail improvements in 1981. Citizens who comprised the jail planning committee decided that inmates should be offered meaningful opportunities to work during their confinement in the new facility. In March, 1986, the Strafford County Jail Industries Program opened in the new 68-bed facility. Since then, the overall capacity of the facility has expanded to over 130, including the creation of a pre-release center in an adjacent building; industries and inmate work activities have expanded to keep pace.

Initial Goals/Objectives.

The industries program was originally intended to achieve several objectives:

1. Reduce inmate idleness and tap a major resource;
2. Create, develop and reinforce work habits for inmates, build self-esteem, motivate prisoners to prepare for reintegration as productive members of the community, and wherever possible, to develop skills;
3. Produce products and deliver services that are needed in the public or private sector;
4. Generate enough revenue through work projects to, at a minimum, offset all operating costs associated with the projects and to offset some of the County's costs for confining prisoners; and
5. Compensate prisoners, if possible, consistent with their production, with the disposition of any such compensation to be closely controlled by the County, to be used for the following purposes (in order of priority)--
 - to contribute to the costs of confinement
 - to pay court-ordered fines, costs and restitution
 - to contribute to the support of the family
 - to contribute to a mandatory savings program to build funds which would be available on release.

On the fourth anniversary of the initiation of the industries programs, Strafford County officials were delighted to find that all of these objectives have been achieved--and many have been exceeded. Now in its seventh year of operation, new funding from the U.S. Department of Education has provided opportunities to expand program goals and scope.

Scope of Program.

From its modest beginnings in a small workshop in the new jail, the industries program has expanded several times, and now occupies its own inmate-renovated building within the perimeter of the facility. While initially designed to serve pretrial inmates, the program now also serves sentenced offenders. Perhaps most significant, however, is the expansion of the **scope of services** provided by--and through--the industries program. These now include:

- pre-placement testing
- counseling
- strong linkage with educational and substance abuse programs based at the jail
- job readiness classes
- real work in the jail
- pre-release counseling
- family counseling
- job placement and follow-up

Many of these services are sponsored through a contract with the New Hampshire Job Training Council. Now in its fifth year, NHJTC contract funds provide over \$30,000 for industries operations and programs. This aspect of the industries program has proven particularly effective and innovative.

The "Fresh Start" Program.

The industries program has evolved carefully over the past six years. With labor funds, the program expanded to take a "holistic" view of each inmate. In 1990, this enhanced approach was named "fresh start," and the 30-hour classroom experience provides a strong initiation for incoming participants. Through ten three-hour classes, participants are provided with a full range of information and insights that will help them to obtain--and keep--a job upon release.

The 30-Hour Fresh Start Class

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| How to Get a Job | Class 1: Job Application and Resume Writing |
| | Class 2: Listening Skills/Communication |
| | Class 3: Job Interviewing |
| Self Awareness | Class 4: Self Awareness and Decision-Making |
| How to Keep a Job | Class 5: Keeping a Job |
| | Class 6: Productivity and Quality, Interpersonal Relationships, Safety |
| "Survival" Skills | Class 7: Finances and Survival |
| | Class 8: AIDS Education, Good Nutrition Practices |
| | Class 9: Parenting, Battering |
| | Class 10: Alcoholism and Drugs |

New Partnerships through U.S. Department of Education Enhancements.

As a first step, the County expanded its industries advisory committee by adding more private sector representatives and officials from area education and vocational programs. This expanded advisory group (TAG--Technical Advisory Group) identified several goals and objectives for the use of new education funds:

Reinforce Private Sector Program

- improve administration/organization
- improve staffing/supervision
- reconsider allocation of tasks
- bolster development/expansion efforts

"TIE" Industries to Education/Programs

- closer coordination between all elements
- shift some program elements between industries and programs
- avoid duplication of effort

Work History for Inmates--

- begins with first job in facility and continues throughout period of confinement
- create inmate job descriptions and evaluate all work
- identify issues/problems for each inmate and address them while confined
- formalize work history documentation

Expand Program Resources

- educational, vocational, pre-vocational, personal
- secure new self-paced programs and technologies
- develop a "resource center" for broad use by inmates, especially during "off" hours

Expand Pre-/Post-Release Services

- work closely with families prior to release
- provide mobile intervention after release
- improve probation/parole connections

Pursue/Solidify External Funding Sources

The advisory group went on to articulate several key principles that must be satisfied with any program enhancements:

Principles.

* All changes and new programs should "connect" with--

- classification
- programs
- work
- industries

* All changes and new programs should address both services while inmates are confined, and post-release follow-up

As a result of this planning effort, Strafford County implemented program enhancements in the April 1992, including:

Enhancement Elements.

1. *Family Weekend Program.* A bi-monthly pre-release preparation program for families and inmates, with a bi-monthly follow-up meeting for released inmates.
2. *Mobile Intervention Services.* Provides mobility for crisis intervention after release.
3. *Evaluate all Inmate Work Performance,* providing an increased focus on non-industry work efforts, implementing a bi-weekly work evaluation and the development of a comprehensive work history folder for each inmate--even in the more mundane "traditional" work assignments such as kitchen and maintenance.
4. *Funding for additional supervision* of the industry shop, to allow other personnel to work on developing new programs and expansion (resulting in the expansion of the inmate work force, and the introduction of new customers).
5. *Funding for part-time program development services,* to explore additional funding sources, develop new programs, and ensure strong continuing foundation for the industry program (already producing additional customers).
6. *Establishing laundry* as a jail industry, to provide additional revenue and stabilize inmate participation levels, and treating even this in-house function as a "real work" situation.
7. *Establishing a computer "resource center"* to serve all program components, but located primarily in the industry area (allowing inmates additional opportunities to learn during their work and "off hours," providing the basis for new certified vocational training, and offering new services to customers).

C. Belknap County, New Hampshire.

Belknap County, New Hampshire, began planning jail improvements in 1985. Citizens who comprised the jail planning committee, having heard of the efforts in neighboring Strafford County, decided that inmates should be offered meaningful opportunities to work during their confinement in the new facility. In 1989 Belknap Correctional Industries (BCI) opened in the expanded and renovated 50-bed facility.

Initial Goals/Objectives.

The industries program was originally intended to achieve several objectives:

1. Reduce inmate idleness;
2. Create, develop and reinforce work habits for inmates, build self-esteem, motivate prisoners to prepare for reintegration as productive members of the community, and wherever possible, to develop skills; and

3. Generate enough revenue through work projects to, at a minimum, offset all operating costs associated with the projects and to offset some of the County's costs for confining prisoners.

Belknap County developed a small private sector industry, using sentenced minimum security inmates. Initial projects included jobs for an adjacent ball-bearing company. A creative committee member found a local crutch manufacturer that has become the primary employer of inmates in the program. Up to four inmates assemble crutches for a piecework rate. Belknap County became the second county in the United States to secure federal certification for private sector corrections industries.

Scope of Program.

The program in Belknap County *had* a more narrow scope than its counterparts in Strafford and Hennepin Counties. The industry program continues to be operated under the direct supervision of the jail's program director, who also supervises the county's education and substance abuse programming. Until the Department of Education funds were made available, Belknap County did not systematically provide employment-related services.

Initial Policies for Enhancing Industries.

The County's citizen advisory committee was expanded to provide guidance for the demonstration program. The advisory group articulated the following policies to guide Department of Education-sponsored enhancements:

- a. View the County's programming as a continuum of services-- moving inmates from their current situation, connecting them with resources, and addressing deficiencies.
- b. Develop work for medium security inmates.
- c. Maintain private sector work, and if possible, should expand.
- d. Make better use must be made of the Shop/Garage space.
- e. Evaluate inmate work performance formally and continuously during their confinement using objective criteria (checklists) to develop a foundation for assigning inmates within the facility and as a starting point for a work history after release.
- f. Tie job assignment more closely to evaluated performance, and to participation in programs (with an emphasis on education)--but not at the expense of getting needed work accomplished for the County.
- g. Provide inmates with more incentives for participation in programs and self-improvement, balanced with a concern that participation must be sincere.

- h. Expand the scope of Belknap County Department of Corrections programming to include services relating to the employment of inmates after release.
- i. Expand the Department of Corrections area of concern to include employment services for inmates after release.
- j. Accomplish the preceding using a minimum amount of County funding, with a focus on tapping other community-based resources, and with a likelihood of securing external funding as needed.

Principles and Strategies for Improving Programs.

The advisory group established a series of principles and strategies to guide the development of expanded and enhanced programming--along with some cautions:

Principles

- * Focus on feasibility of continuation (life after DOED)
- * Use inmate's time at DOC to improve chances for success after release
- * Reflect the "real world" inside (e.g., GED, computers, drugs)
- * Use community-based resources (current, accessible, cost-efficient)
- * "TIE" together work-industry-education-substance abuse and other programs
- * Use inmate work performance as the basis for more decisions/incentives
- * Use DOC stay to identify inmate employment deficiencies, build a work history
- * Make the inmate "experience" a continuum of coordinated/integrated opportunities/services

Strategies

- * Develop flexible, self-paced, low-staff programming/resources for inmates
- * Use facility assets (garage/shop, classrooms, facility design)
- * Create a real (practical) model for small jails
- * Pick a lot of pockets - diversify funding sources
- * Don't build a "house of cards" that is too easily brought down
- * Use seed money to experiment, equip, and build the foundation for continuation

Cautions

- Don't put all eggs in one basket
- Acknowledge BDOC staff concerns-- limits, workload, resistance to change
- Don't detract from inmate work output already realized
- Be sure inmates are not participating just to get the "bennies"
- Keep it simple, and as possible, independent so entire effort does not fall if one element falters.

Enhanced Programming.

In April 1992 Belknap County began to implement a series of changes in daily operations--including the addition of several part-time personnel. Program components included:

1. Enhancing substance abuse programming using college students;
2. Developing a comprehensive "resource center" centrally located to make its use during inmate "off" hours more convenient;
3. Developing and implementing a 30-hour "life skills" course;
4. Providing comprehensive employment services--beginning at the time of admission and continuing *after release*;
5. Developing a "self-funding" industry program using the idle wood shop, through which inmates learn "real work" habits; and
6. Developing specific task statements, job descriptions, and competencies for all inmate jobs, evaluating workers and providing a much better inmate work experience while developing a work history.

To implement the preceding improvements, the County is hiring several part-time personnel, including:

- * Employment Specialist (30 hours/week)
- * Resource Center Coordinator (8 hours/week)
- * Wood Shop Supervisor (16 hours/week)

III. For More Information....

Persons interested in any of the three demonstration sites may contact them directly:

Hennepin County: Rosemary Madison, Manager, (612) 475-4244

Strafford County: Marilyn Allen, Industry Director (603) 749-3289

Belknap County: Walt Newcomb, Superintendent (603) 524-4185

The U.S. Department of Education may be contacted by calling Gail Schwartz at (202) 205-8892.

The principal investigators/consultants may be contacted through Rod Miller, CRS, Inc.
(207) 685-9090.

The enhancement program contractor may be contacted by calling Bob Goble, CGA, (803) 765-2833.