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**SHELBY COUNTY
OFFICE OF
REENTRY**

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From the Director's Desk

Shelby County Office of Reentry Receives its First Federal Grant—1.2 Million Dollars



The Shelby County Office of Reentry has received our first federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice under the Second Chance Act (Innovative Reentry Initiatives: Building System Capacity & Testing Strategies to Reduce Recidivism). Partnering with the University of Memphis' Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP) and Shelby County Division of Corrections, Project INK

(Inspiring New Koncepts) will pursue ways to improve the local justice system and reduce recidivism by expanding the Office of Reentry's post-release job preparation program "FOCUSED" to be pre-release at the SCDC, with predicted outcomes of increased ability to find and sustain employment and a significant decrease in recidivism among participants compared to released offenders with standard reentry planning. The grant award of 1.2 million will extend 4 years. CREP's role, as the third-party evaluator, will include routinely reviewing process and outcome data to provide formative feedback to inform implementation, and completing the final outcome evaluation in Year 4. CREP will accomplish its tasks through a mixed-methods randomized controlled trial (RCT) including both quantitative and qualitative data.

"We are honored to have received this \$1.2 million Grant to continue the work of transforming lives of those that have been incarcerated. These funds will allow us to provide our FOCUSED programming inside the Division of Corrections, which moves from a traditional soft skills training, to hands-on technical and vocational programs in an effort to assist our clients to gain self-sufficient employment, or become entrepreneurs"., Director Collins' says.

Ongoing Partnerships

The Shelby County Office of Reentry is proud of the relationships and partnerships that we have developed with other community agencies. Through partnerships with other agencies, we are able to continue to provide a holistic approach to our clients.

The Greater Memphis Financial Empowerment Center is an agency that our office partners with to provide our clients with information pertaining to financial literacy and free, one-on-one financial counseling. The Shelby County Office of Reentry serves as a co-location for the Greater Memphis FEC for the convenience of our clients.

Maximus Child Support Services is another agency that has an ongoing partnership with our Office. Maximus makes monthly scheduled visits to our office to assist our clients with child support related issues and to help remove the negative stigma associated with child support enforcement.

FOCUSED

We have seen success with our FOCUSED program, which is a 14-16 week program that combines job readiness training with the following components: entrepreneurship, mental health, family reconnection, healthy living, and expungement & voter's rights. Upon completion, clients will have

an opportunity to enroll in various vocational training programs through our Office's partnerships with other agencies such as Southwest Tennessee Community College, Torry Low Voltage Communications, Tennessee College of Applied Technology, and others. In the very first cohort of FOCUSED, we had a total of 27 completions with 52% perfect attendance. In the second session, there were a total of 31 completions with a minimum of 80% attendance. The next session of FOCUSED will begin in January 2020. If you know someone who could benefit from the services and resources that our Office provides, please send them our way!

Client Success Spotlight



Carla Burns graduated from MSCOR University in October 2014. Prior to graduation from MSCOR University, Ms. Burns was employed by the Shelby County Health Department. Ms. Burns worked with the Shelby County Health Department from 2014 to 2017. Carla returned to the Office of Reentry as a client in May 2019. Carla received a clerical training certificate through Shelby County Government and decided that the clerical field would be a better fit. Having no clerical experience, Ms. Burns began volunteering at the Shelby County Office Of Reentry to gain more work experience. In September, Carla was offered temporary, part time employment at the Office of Reentry as a program assistant.

Reentry Dormitory at the Shelby County Division of Corrections

We are pleased to announce the opening of two reentry dormitories at the Shelby County Division of Corrections. The goal is to offer the FOCUSED program prerelease. There are approximately 50 inmate/clients housed in the dorms. Our housing capacity is 80. Programming is set begin the week of October 21, 2019.

Employment Data

Employment is the largest barrier for individuals attempting to reenter society after incarceration. Our office focuses on all of our clients being employment ready, thus being able to earn livable wages. Of the 2 FOCUSED cohorts completed to date, we are proud to say that 61% of our FOCUSED program participants are employed and earning \$10-\$29 per hour, and less than 10% of our clients are employed by a staffing agency.

Staff Spotlight



Madelyn Altman came to the Shelby County Office of Reentry in July of 2019 as a staff support volunteer, through the Memphis Interfaith Coalition for Action and Hope (MICAH). "The learning curve was steep, but the Office of Reentry team was generous with information, insights, and encouragement to help me effectively be of service. I was delighted when Ms. Patricia Melton invited me to join the staff."

Madelyn says.

"The Shelby County Office of Reentry is vital to the collective health and prosperity of Memphis, and continues to expand its services and vision for the future. Daily, I am inspired by the leadership and staff's determined dedication to assist each person who walks thru the door, despite the client's unique needs and challenges. I am honored and blessed to be part of this team!"