



2019 SECOND CHANCE ACT: INNOVATIONS IN REENTRY INITIATIVE GRANTEE

Lancaster County, Nebraska Community Corrections

Success Story

In 2017, Lancaster County Community Corrections received a Second Chance Act grant to work with local agencies to create the Young Adult male Sentence Conversion Reentry Program.

After the start of the program, Lancaster County Community Corrections received multiple inquiries from the courts, attorneys, and individuals in custody asking if it would provide the same program for women. Lancaster County Community Corrections applied for and was awarded a grant in 2019 to expand the program to women.

The Women's Reentry Program uses a gender-specific risk and needs tool and a trauma-informed, gender-specific treatment provider for substance use services and transitional housing. This project has benefited from a previously established relationship with a local not-for-profit organization that provides gender-specific substance use treatment services. Through this partnership, the program expanded services to include a recovery-focused transitional housing program specifically for the women's reentry population.

Other local support services—such as employment and educational assistance, Intensive Outpatient Matrix Treatment, behavioral health and medication management, and financial literacy—expanded to include the female population.

Since October 2020,

33 women entered the program

of the

6 who have graduated,

all remain in the community with no new arrests or bookings into jail.



PARTICIPANTS IN LANCASTER COUNTY'S
WOMEN'S REENTRY PROGRAM



Lessons Learned

Program staff cites “the power of local partnerships” as a big part of the program’s success. Active and ongoing communication facilitates consistency and provides the multidimensional structure and support

the women need to address complex issues. Additionally, the use of a gender-specific risk and needs tool provides valuable information about the specific needs of the women Lancaster County Community Corrections serves.

What worked?

Lancaster learned from the Young Adult Male Sentence Conversion project that bringing in partners early and regularly was important. To that end, Lancaster County Community Corrections holds a weekly staffing meeting that includes the housing partner, the department of probation (for individuals who also have post-release supervision), case management, mental health and substance use provider(s), and program managers. In these meetings, staff review individuals’ progress and address areas of concern.

What did not work?

Program staff noticed that the women sentenced directly to the program from the court who do not originate from the jail are more likely to abscond. For the women in custody, Lancaster County Community Corrections contacts them prior to sentencing. Once staff learns a woman has been identified as eligible for the program, they start paperwork and provide as much information as possible to engage her and initiate the therapeutic relationship.

What’s next?

For the last few years, Lancaster County Community Corrections has used match funding from the County Commissioners to help support the Women’s Reentry Program.

Program staff keep the County Commissioners and the Justice Council updated on the outcome data that show the successes of the program. These data show, for example, that in addition to improving the future for the women who

participate in this program, there are cost savings for the local jail, as well as the contributions to the local tax base from women who are gainfully employed.

Lancaster County Community Corrections is confident that sharing these findings about the lives improved by supporting this population in the community and the dollars saved will validate continued funding when the grant funding ends.

For more information, contact:

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