

COACHING PACKET

Building Offenders' Community Assets through Mentoring

One in a series of Coaching Packets designed
to assist jurisdictions in the implementation
of effective practices that will support
successful offender outcomes

Author: Rachelle Giguere, Center for Effective Public Policy
Editor: Madeline M. Carter, Center for Effective Public Policy

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Coaching Packet Series 1: Creating a Blueprint for an Effective Offender Reentry System

- A Framework for Offender Reentry
- Establishing a Rational Planning Process
- Engaging in Collaborative Partnerships to Support Reentry

Coaching Packet Series 2: Delivering Evidence-Based Services

- Implementing Evidence-Based Practices
- Effective Case Management
- Shaping Offender Behavior
- Engaging Offenders' Families in Reentry
- Building Offenders' Community Assets through Mentoring
- Reentry Considerations for Women Offenders

Coaching Packet Series 3: Ensuring Meaningful Outcomes

- Measuring the Impact of Reentry Efforts
- Continuous Quality Improvement



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Introduction to the Coaching Packet Series

The Center for Effective Public Policy (the Center) and its partners, The Urban Institute and The Carey Group, were selected by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance to serve as the training and technical assistance providers to the Fiscal Year 2007 Prisoner Reentry Initiative grantees (hereafter “PRI grantees”). The project team served in this capacity from April 2008 to June 2010.

The Center is a nonprofit criminal justice consulting organization based in Silver Spring, Maryland. Since the early 1980s, the Center has provided training and technical assistance to the criminal justice field on a wide array of topics, including transition and reentry, and has administered a number of national projects of this kind. The Urban Institute was established as a private, nonprofit corporation in Washington, D.C. in 1968 and is a leader in prisoner reentry research, focusing on making best practice information accessible to practitioners and policymakers. The Carey Group is a justice consulting firm with extensive practitioner experience in evidence-based practices, strategic planning, community and restorative justice and corrections.

As a part of its technical assistance delivery to the PRI grantees, the Center developed a series of tools to assist grantees in specific areas of their reentry work. The final products of this work include eleven Coaching Packets in three series. These Coaching Packets offer practical value beyond the jurisdictions involved in this initiative and are available to criminal justice professionals and their partners interested in enhancing their strategies for reducing recidivism and improving offender outcomes.

Each Coaching Packet provides an overview of a specific topic as it relates to successful offender reentry, and offers tools and resources for those interested in exploring the topic in greater depth.

- *Series 1* provides a blueprint for an effective offender reentry system. This series provides a conceptual framework for addressing prisoner reentry at the policy level; outlines a strategic planning process to support implementation efforts; and explores the establishment of successful collaborative partnerships at the policy and case management levels.
- *Series 2* addresses key issues related to the delivery of evidence-based services to offenders. This series summarizes the key literature with regard to implementing evidence-based practices; explores advances in approaches to case management; addresses the important role of staff in changing offender behavior; and summarizes research and practice as it relates to working with women offenders, engaging families, and mentoring.
- *Series 3* provides guidance and tools to ensure that reentry efforts achieve their intended outcomes. This series describes methods to assess the effectiveness of reentry efforts and offers strategies for achieving continuous quality improvement.

FY 2007 Prisoner Reentry Initiative (PRI) Grantees

The Prisoner Reentry Initiative (PRI) – intended to support the development and implementation of institutional and community corrections-based reentry programs to help returning offenders find employment and provide other critical services – is a collaborative effort of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Grants were awarded to state and local corrections agencies by DOJ to provide pre-release and transition services to offenders and were “matched” by DOL grants to faith- and community-based organizations (FBCOs) to provide post-release services, focusing on employment assistance and mentoring.

Thirty-five states received grants in three cycles of the Initiative during Fiscal Years 2006, 2007, and 2008.¹ Of these, 23 FY 2007 PRI grantees received assistance under this project. FY 2007 grants were awarded in the fall of 2007 and implemented from 2008 to 2010; however, some grantees will not complete their activities until 2011. The FY 2007 grantees provided technical assistance under this project included:

- ✓ ALASKA, Native Justice Center
- ✓ ARIZONA, Criminal Justice Commission/ Yuma County Sheriff’s Office
- ✓ CALIFORNIA, Department of Community Services and Development
- ✓ COLORADO, Division of Criminal Justice Services/City of Denver
- ✓ DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, Government
- ✓ FLORIDA, Department of Corrections
- ✓ HAWAII, Department of Public Safety
- ✓ INDIANA, Department of Corrections
- ✓ IOWA, Department of Corrections
- ✓ KANSAS, Department of Corrections
- ✓ MAINE, Department of Corrections
- ✓ MICHIGAN, Department of Corrections
- ✓ MINNESOTA, Department of Corrections
- ✓ NEVADA, Department of Corrections
- ✓ NEW JERSEY, Department of Corrections
- ✓ NORTH CAROLINA, Department of Corrections
- ✓ OHIO, Department of Rehabilitation and Correction
- ✓ PENNSYLVANIA, Department of Corrections
- ✓ RHODE ISLAND, Department of Corrections
- ✓ TENNESSEE, Department of Corrections
- ✓ VIRGINIA, Department of Criminal Justice Services
- ✓ WISCONSIN, Department of Corrections
- ✓ WYOMING, Department of Corrections

¹ The PRI program will end when the FY 2008 grantees complete their activities.

Acknowledgments

Becki Ney, Principal, Center for Effective Public Policy, served as the PRI Training and Technical Assistance Program Project Director. Ms. Ney conceptualized and oversaw the development of the Coaching Packet series.

Madeline M. Carter, Principal, and Rachelle Giguere, Program Associate, Center for Effective Public Policy, served as the key editors for the Coaching Packet series. Ms. Giguere also provided extensive research support to the development of the series.

Introduction to the Building Offenders' Assets Through Mentoring Coaching Packet

The Contents of this Packet

This Coaching Packet provides:

- An overview of the use of mentoring programs with adult offenders to assist in their transition from prison to the community;
- A discussion of best practices in implementing mentoring programs with offenders;
- Some strategies to address common challenges facing jurisdictions on implementing mentoring programs and services;
- A discussion of the importance of collaborative partnerships;
- A tool to determine your jurisdiction's strengths and gaps in implementing effective mentoring services;
- An aid to developing plans to address identified gap areas; and
- References to additional resources on this topic.

The Intended Audience for this Packet

This Coaching Packet was originally developed to assist grant teams that were established to manage local PRI initiatives. The teams were composed of representatives from institutional and community corrections and faith-based or community organizations involved in the delivery of pre- and post-release services to offenders transitioning from prison to the community. The content of these Coaching Packets has much broader application, however; the information and tools contained within this Coaching Packet can also be used by teams of criminal justice professionals and their partners to assess the status of their efforts in implementing evidence-based practices and effective reentry services to offenders.

This Coaching Packet may also serve as a resource for professionals at all levels who are interested in learning more about this topic.

How to Use this Packet

SECTION I: READ THE OVERVIEW ON BUILDING OFFENDERS' COMMUNITY ASSETS THROUGH MENTORING.

This section of the Coaching Packet provides an overview of the use of mentoring programs with offenders. Review its content and, if the information it contains is applicable to your work and addresses an area in which you feel you need to focus your efforts, use the tool in Section II to assess your jurisdiction's strengths and gaps with regard to implementing an effective mentoring program.

SECTION II: COMPLETE THE BUILDING OFFENDERS' COMMUNITY ASSETS THROUGH MENTORING COACHING PACKET CHECKLIST.

As a team, complete the Building Offenders' Community Assets Through Mentoring Coaching Packet Checklist. (Based upon the information you read in Section I, consider who may need to be involved so that you are able to answer the questions thoroughly.) Complete the checklist as a group and discuss your responses along the way.

- Rate each item listed in the checklist (yes, no, not clear).
- For items where your response is "not clear," make note of the additional information the team needs to collect in order to be able to rate this item.
- Add additional items that may relate to your jurisdiction's implementation of an offender mentoring program that are not already included on the checklist.
- Develop a consensus-based response for each item on the checklist.
- Once the checklist is completed, consider your jurisdictions' strengths in implementing an offender mentoring program. Make note of these.
- Next, consider your most significant gaps. Make note of these as well.

SECTION III: DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN.

If, after completing the checklist in Section II, your team determines that further work on this topic is necessary or would be helpful, follow the steps below to identify your goals, objectives, and action items, and identify any additional assistance or expertise needed.

Working as a team, review your findings from the Building Offenders' Community Assets Through Mentoring Coaching Packet Checklist. Specifically:

1. Determine whether, based upon what you have read and discussed, you desire to advance your jurisdiction's work with regard to mentoring offenders.
2. If you determine you have a desire to improve in this area, write a goal statement that reflects where you want to be with regard to improving your current efforts. Your goal might be to "Establish a new offender mentoring program for offenders ages 18-30 being released from prison," "Refine our current mentoring program for offenders to ensure that we are following best practices," "Develop new strategies for recruiting qualified mentors who better match the offender population," or another goal. Using the Action Planning Worksheet in Section III, note your goal in the area of building offenders' community assets through mentoring.
3. Identify your three most significant strengths in this area and discuss how you might build on those to overcome some of your gaps.
4. Identify your three most significant gaps. For each gap, write an objective. Your objectives might be, "To develop eligibility requirements for mentors and mentees," or "To establish a mentor coordinator position to oversee daily operations of the program," or something else. Note your three objectives on the Action Planning Worksheet.
5. Add the following on the Action Planning Worksheet for each objective:
 - a. The specific sequential steps that must be taken to meet the objective.
 - b. The individual who will assume lead responsibility for this action item.
 - c. The completion date for this action item.

6. Discuss whether additional assistance or outside expertise is needed to successfully achieve any of your action items. For instance, explore whether additional literature, guidance from another practitioner over the telephone, examples of work products from other jurisdictions, or on-site technical assistance would be helpful options.
 - a. For each action item, identify those for which assistance/expertise is needed.
 - b. Identify the type of assistance/expertise needed.
 - c. Prioritize each of these need areas. If assistance/expertise will be limited, for which action items is assistance most needed?
 - d. Begin exploring ways to secure the needed assistance/expertise.

How to Seek Additional Information

To download copies of the Coaching Packets, please visit the Center's website at <http://www.cepp.com/coaching.htm>. To obtain further information on the use or content of this or any of the Coaching Packets, or on the 2007 PRI Training and Technical Assistance Program, please contact:

Becki Ney
Principal
Center for Effective Public Policy
32 East Montgomery Avenue
Hatboro, PA 19040
Phone: (215) 956-2335
Fax: (215) 956-2337
Email: bney@cepp.com

Section I: Building Offenders' Community Assets Through Mentoring

Mentoring is a primary program element of the Prisoner Reentry Initiative (PRI)² and one strategy being implemented in many jurisdictions throughout the country to support offenders who are lacking in the supports and services necessary for successful reentry. Mentoring is a pro-social support option for offenders who need additional assistance in finding employment and housing, reconnecting with their families, and navigating other challenges they may confront as they adjust to life outside of prison.

Mentoring as Part of a Multifaceted Approach to Successful Transition

More than 700,000 offenders return to the community each year from prison,³ many of whom struggle with one or more challenges – including the need to find steady employment, a lack of appropriate housing options, health and mental health issues (including drug or alcohol addictions), and broken or strained bonds with family and friends.⁴ Given that 67% of released prisoners are rearrested within three years,⁵ there is a clear need for a multi-faceted strategy to address the many contributors to failure. Mentoring can serve as one among an array of interventions to assist offenders in transitioning successfully back to the community.

As current PRI grantees, readers are encouraged to consider the research and strategies presented in this Coaching Packet, and implement mentoring programs for offenders that build upon the work of previous PRI and Ready4Work grantees.

Research on Mentoring Outcomes and Implications for the Establishment of Successful Programs for Adult Offenders

Mentoring is a relatively new strategy for assisting adult offenders to transition successfully from prison to the community. It has been more commonly used with school-aged youth and children of incarcerated parents. Given the positive outcomes of improved relationships and reduced delinquency with youth, interest in mentoring as an intervention for adult offenders is growing.

MENTORING FOR CHILDREN AND AT-RISK YOUTH

Mentoring programs were first introduced into the criminal justice arena for children of incarcerated parents⁶ and at-risk youth (i.e., those at risk of delinquency, gang affiliation, school drop out, etc.), given the preliminary research on the positive outcomes achieved through

² A primary goal of the PRI Initiative is to “strengthen urban communities through employment-centered programs that incorporate *mentoring*, [emphasis added] job training, and other comprehensive transitional services.” See <http://www.doleta.gov/PRI/>.

³ Sabol & Couture, 2008.

⁴ Bauldry et al., 2009.

⁵ Hughes & Wilson, 2005.

⁶ For example, see the AMACHI program in Philadelphia (Jucovy, 2003).

Exhibit 1:
Department of Labor (DOL) PRI Grant Program Mentoring Definition and Expectations

Definition:

“Mentoring is defined as a relationship over a prolonged period of time between two or more people where caring volunteer mentors assist ex-prisoners in successfully and permanently reentering their communities by providing consistent support as needed, guidance, and encouragement that impacts PRI participants in developing positive social relationships and achieving program outcomes such as job retention, family reunification, reduced recidivism, etc.”

Other Expectations and Requirements:

- Programs should attempt to maintain mentor/mentee relationships (in both the one-to-one and group models) for a minimum of six months.
- Matches must meet, or group mentoring sessions must be held, at a minimum of once every two weeks.
- Mentoring should be performed by “volunteer mentors” rather than by paid program staff.
- Typically, job training classes or other life skills classes offered by PRI site staff are not considered mentoring. However, they may be counted as mentoring if one-to-one mentors or group mentors are consistently present and they are able to have discussions and develop relationships with the same mentees over a prolonged period of time.

Adapted from: Coffey Consulting, 2009.

mentoring youth. For example, at-risk youth participating in Big Brother/Big Sisters mentoring efforts across the country were 46% less likely to use drugs, 27% less likely to use alcohol, 30% less likely to physically strike someone, and did better in school than youth who did not participate in the mentoring program.⁷ An evaluation of OJJDP’s Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) sites reported that the mentoring relationship assisted mentees in staying away from drugs and alcohol, not starting fights, and keeping away from gangs.⁸ Research on the Indiana through Mentoring (AIM) project – an aftercare program providing incarcerated youth with life skills and mentoring services – shows that, after four years of follow-up, youth receiving both services (life skills and mentoring services) were less likely to recidivate (43%) than those who received only life skills services (50%) and those who did not receive any services (62%).⁹

MENTORING FOR ADULTS INVOLVED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Generally, mentoring programs for adult offenders include the use of community volunteers or previously incarcerated individuals to provide guidance and support to offenders leaving prison either in a group setting or through one-on-one activities. While many current efforts pair mentoring with assistance in obtaining and sustaining employment, the goal of mentoring is broadly focused on addressing offenders’ needs for pro-social relationships and engaging them in the community.

⁷ Grossman & Garry, 1997; Herrera et al., 2007; Tierney & Grossman, 1995.

⁸ Novotney et al., 2000.

⁹ AIM, 2004; Jarjoura, 2003.

Preliminary research indicates there are positive outcomes associated with adult offender mentoring programs:

- ✓ Misdemeanor courts utilizing volunteer mentors found that only 15% of probationers recidivated within 5 years (as opposed to 50% of the probationers supervised by other courts).¹⁰
- ✓ Offenders who received mentoring services in the Ready4Work Initiative¹¹ were more likely to find a job and stay employed, and recidivated at a lesser rate than expected (see Exhibit 2).¹²
- ✓ Interviews with Generation 1 Prisoner Reentry Initiative (PRI) sites¹³ indicate that mentors positively impact offenders in readjusting to society and dealing with the many challenges associated with the transition.¹⁴
- ✓ In Canada, programs such as Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) employ groups of community volunteers to provide daily support to high-risk sex offenders transitioning from prison. These efforts to increase offenders' pro-social ties to the community have shown positive results – as much as a 70% reduction in sexual recidivism.¹⁵

Despite these promising data, a clear link between mentoring and recidivism reduction has yet to be established. The current research is limited in two ways. First, it does not separate the effects of the mentoring intervention on recidivism from other interventions concurrently provided to the offender. Since most offenders receive multiple kinds of transition services (case management, employment services, etc.) at the same time, it is unclear which intervention(s) impacted their recidivism. Secondly, where programs are voluntary (i.e., offenders are not randomly selected to participate), the current research does not distinguish the degree to which offender motivation plays a role in the positive outcomes exhibited by mentoring participants. That is, if the offenders who receive mentoring services are naturally more motivated to be successful than offenders who do not receive services, the mentoring program alone can not be credited for the outcomes. In the meantime, the experiences of multiple jurisdictions from across the country serve to inform others on the implications of effective offender mentoring programs and demonstrate their promise.

Since the goal of mentoring is to help offenders build positive relationships, mentors and mentees should be encouraged to engage in informal, social interactions... even if mentoring sessions still include structured activities.

¹⁰ Leenhouts, 2003.

¹¹ The Ready4Work Initiative was a three-year demonstration effort conducted by Public/Private Ventures, Philadelphia, PA designed to address the needs of ex-offenders and test the capacity of faith and community – based organizations to meet those needs. Mentoring was a primary component of the Ready4Work program.

¹² Bauldry et al., 2009; Farley & Hackman, 2006; McClanahan, 2007.

¹³ Throughout this document, PRI sites are referenced by their grantee name provided in Appendix A on page 228 of Coffey Consulting, 2009.

¹⁴ Results are based on interviews with case managers and participants about their experiences with the mentoring program. See Coffey Consulting, 2009.

¹⁵ See CSOM, 2008.

Exhibit 2: The Ready4Work Initiative

The Ready4Work Initiative was launched in 2003 in 11 sites. Led mostly by local faith-based and community based organizations, its purpose was to provide services to ex-offenders in order to decrease recidivism by addressing the barriers they faced while transitioning to the community. While the Ready4Work initiative focused on increasing rates of employment by providing wrap-around services and case management to ex-offenders, a critical piece was the mentoring component, which was intended to strengthen the social networks and supports for offenders reentering communities from prison.

The goals of the program were **“to provide ex-prisoners with support and to offer positive role models [in order to] help participants reestablish their lives and deal with the challenges of returning to their communities.”**

About half of the Ready4Work Initiative participants (2,203 individuals) chose to participate in the mentoring component. Some key ***program and participant characteristics*** include:

- Most mentees were African American males, aged 22-34 with long criminal histories.
- Females, older offenders, those without children, and spiritually-involved offenders were more likely to participate in the mentoring component of the initiative.
- On average, participants worked with mentors for 3.5 hours a month for 3 months.
- Most program sites required that mentors be 18 or older, have no violent offenses, and be out of prison and violation free for 3 years or more.

Most sites found it difficult to engage offenders in the mentoring component. Some ***barriers to participation*** were that ex-offenders:

- Believed that mentoring is geared toward youth rather than adults.
- Saw the mentoring activity as “one more requirement.”
- Wanted to instead prioritize activities related to finding employment.
- Thought they did not have enough time to participate given work, family, and other responsibilities.
- Did not want to discuss their personal issues with strangers.
- Questioned the motivation of the faith-based organizations providing the mentoring services.

Outcomes from this initiative include:

- The mentoring component increased retention in the initiative as a whole.
- Ex-offenders who participated in one-on-one mentoring were more than twice as likely to find a job than those who did not have a mentor.
- Participants who were mentored were more likely to stay employed than those who did not meet with a mentor.
- An additional month of mentoring increased an ex-offender’s chances of finding a job by 7%, and for others who had a job, an additional month made them 24% more likely to stay employed.
- Recidivism was reduced: 6.9% of the participants in the mentoring program recidivated within one year, which was lower than the national average of 10.4%.

Sources: Bauldry et al., 2009 (http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/265_publication.pdf); Farley & Hackman, 2006; Farley & McClanahan, 2007; McClanahan, 2007.

What Does Mentoring Look Like?

Mentoring activities might include one-on-one mentoring or group mentoring, and can take place pre-release, once the offender is living in the community, or both. Oftentimes, mentoring programs offer both one-on-one and group mentoring options. At the present time, there is no evidence to suggest that one type achieves better outcomes than the other. Similarly, it remains unclear whether pre-release or post-release mentoring services are more effective. While most Generation 1 PRI sites provided mentoring services to offenders in the community following their release from prison, the majority of Ready4Work sites provided services pre-release.

A Mentor is a...

Guide
Listener
Source of support

A Mentor is not a:

Savior
Probation or parole officer
Counselor or social worker

Source: Secretariat for Evangelization, 2009.

ONE-ON-ONE MENTORING

One-on-one mentoring matches one offender with one volunteer in order for them to develop a supportive relationship through regular interaction. Common activities in one-on-one mentoring include meeting in public locations to talk (e.g., restaurants) or attending church and church events, sport events, or other recreational events.

GROUP MENTORING

While group mentoring might not offer the same benefits as a one-on-one relationship, it offers a viable solution to mentor recruitment challenges and can be less expensive to administer. Furthermore, it capitalizes on the “peer dynamic”¹⁶ and offers offenders who are uncomfortable with one-on-one mentoring with an alternative. Experience suggests that groups stay consistent throughout the program, with at least two mentors working with about 4-6 mentees. Intensity also matters: programs recommend that sessions last for about 2 hours and occur at least every two weeks.

While some programs may follow a curriculum for each meeting, others conduct unstructured meetings. For structured meetings, elements might include:

- A presentation on new information/topics each week (oftentimes identified by mentees) followed by a discussion period,
- Sharing exercises for mentees to talk about what has been happening in their life since the last session, and/or
- Refreshments and/or other incentives (e.g., other program services, gift cards) to keep participants interested in continued attendance.

¹⁶ Public/Private Ventures, 2007b, page 41.

In San Diego, the PRI grantee – Metro United Methodist Urban Ministry – prefers to conduct less structured group mentoring meetings.¹⁷ The first 20 minutes of each meeting is spent socializing over refreshments and then the group is assembled for a round table discussion. Mentors are encouraged to “keep the spotlight on participants and their current struggles or aspirations” and to let discussions start spontaneously based on what the mentees want to talk about.¹⁸

Exhibit 3: Supporting the Mentoring Relationship

Aside from training and monitoring mentors, programs must be able to allow the mentoring relationship to take root, while providing support where needed. At a minimum, programs should support the mentoring relationship by:

- Offering meeting location(s)
- Providing necessary resources/materials
- Offering ideas for appropriate activities
- Providing assistance in determining the mentee’s goals
- Being accessible for questions or concerns
- Stepping in when a relationship is not working
- Sponsoring events
- Providing recognition to both mentors and mentees for their contributions

Sources: Bauldry et al. 2009 (http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/265_publication.pdf); MENTOR, 2005; Public/Private Ventures, 2007b.

Best Practices for the Establishment of Effective Mentoring Programs

The literature on the Ready4Work Initiative, lessons from Generation 1 PRI sites, and other youth mentoring programs identifies a number of lessons learned and “best practices” that can inform the efforts of agencies as they plan and implement mentoring programs for ex-offenders. For example, the conduct of a careful and comprehensive planning process was found to be a critical step in assuring the successful implementation of mentoring programs (whether this included one-on-one mentoring, group mentoring, or a combination). Two other lessons learned were the importance of clarifying the target population for mentoring (e.g., prisoners who are nearing the end of their incarceration or ex-offenders already living in the community), and the necessity of establishing effective partnerships with faith and community-based organizations (FBCO’s) to provide mentoring services.

¹⁷ Public/Private Ventures consultants conducted site visits and phone interviews with PRI sites in 2007. The experiences of PRI sites shared in this document are the result of their research and can be found in Public/Private Ventures, 2007b.

¹⁸ Public/Private Ventures 2007b, page 47.

Following are some of the emerging practices gleaned from these efforts and an outline of the key steps in designing and implementing successful offender mentoring programs.¹⁹

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND PROGRAM DESIGN

Before the implementation of any successful program, substantial planning is critical. There are a number of key questions that should be answered before getting started:

- How does mentoring fit within the larger vision, mission and goals of reentry?
- What are the goals (and outcomes) desired for a mentoring program?
- What kind of mentoring will occur (one-on-one, group, etc.)?
- What is the target offender population?
- Who will manage the mentors and provide program oversight?
- How will mentors be identified, recruited, and trained?
- What process will be used to match offenders and mentors?
- What stakeholders need to be included at the planning and design phases of the program?
- What monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be in place?

Experience suggests that mentoring programs be designed so that mentors and offenders can meet regularly for at least a year in order to ensure that enough time is provided to form bonds and produce benefits.

Sample Mission

Our mentoring program provides stable and caring mentors who will guide and support mentees to develop the skills and abilities to help them to become successful community members.

Sample Goals

- Decrease the likelihood that participants will be rearrested or returned to prison.
- Provide a social network of caring relationships and increase the support system of offenders reentering the community.

Sample Objectives

- Provide mentoring services to 150 mentees over 12 months.
- Recruit and train 100 mentors by June 30, 2010.

Adapted from: Public/Private Ventures, 2007a.

For more examples, see Public/Private Ventures, 2009 (http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/316_publication.pdf).

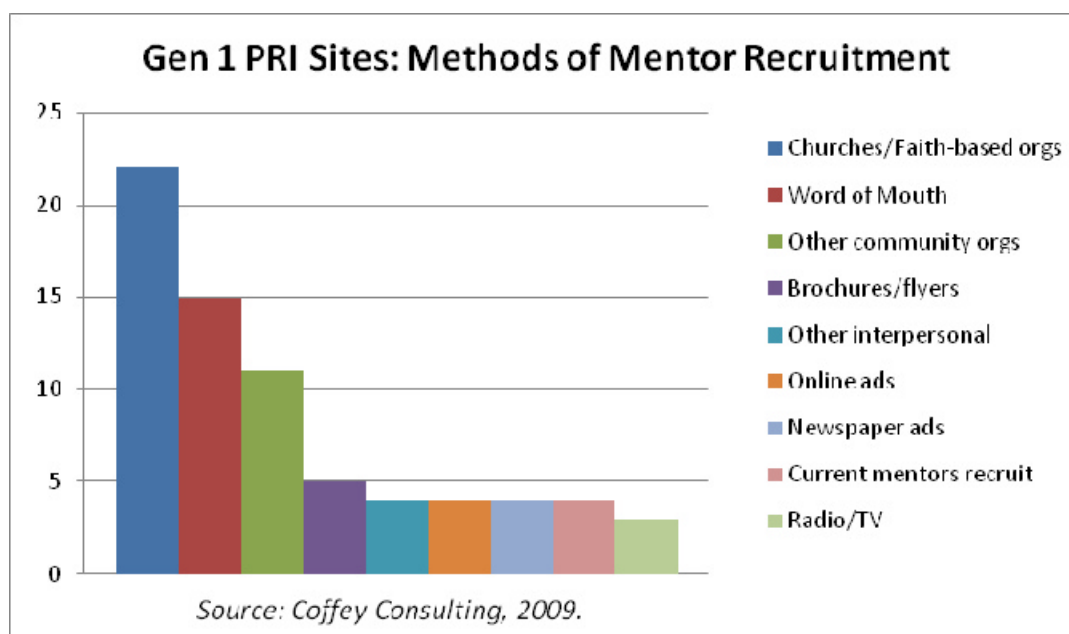
¹⁹ This section contains best practices as identified for youth mentoring programs in MENTOR, 2005, and a number of publications on mentoring adult offenders from Public/Private Ventures: Bauldry et al., 2009; Cobbs Fletcher, 2007; Public/Private Ventures, 2009; Public/Private Ventures, 2007b.

MENTOR AND MENTEE RECRUITMENT

Once the planning process has been completed and goals for recruiting both mentors and mentees have been established, the creation of a marketing plan and marketing tools will be needed to assist in promoting the program.

Mentors

There are several approaches that have been used to recruit mentors. One method is to reach out to numerous stakeholders – advisory committee members, staff, and community members – as they can assist in marketing the program and the recruiting process. In San Diego, the PRI grantee Metro United Methodist Urban Ministry used “mentoring buddies” to work with mentors.²⁰ Mentoring buddies are volunteers who may be interested in mentoring but do not have the time to commit to becoming a full-fledged mentor. Instead, they provide support to mentors in the program for only as much time as they are able. This approach allows the program to engage the interest of the volunteer, increasing the likelihood that he or she becomes a formal mentor at a later time.



Consideration should be given as to whether the program will use ex-offenders as mentors, commonly called “peer mentors.” Some believe that ex-offenders make excellent mentors because they understand the issues facing participants, have more credibility in that they have “walked in the offender’s shoes,” and often put more effort and passion into the mentoring role. Many departments of corrections, however, have policies that may restrict or prohibit ex-offenders from entering secure facilities or policies prohibiting anyone with a past criminal record from having active involvement in offender programs. Despite these challenges, many of the Generation 1 PRI sites report using ex-offenders as part of their mentoring programs.²¹

Lastly, another issue to consider is whether mentors will be paid for their time and/or reimbursed for costs associated with mentoring (e.g., travel expenses, mentoring activities).

²⁰ Public/Private Ventures 2007b.

²¹ 20 out of 27 sites used ex-offenders as mentors in their programs. See Coffey Consulting, 2009.

Most mentoring programs are clearly volunteer programs (only a few pay a nominal fee of some kind); and there is no evidence to suggest that either method – paid or volunteer – is more effective than the other in terms of recruiting mentors or providing mentoring services.

Mentees

Participation in mentoring programs is often not mandatory, therefore some strategies for engaging offenders in a mentoring program include:

- Engaging offenders while they are still in prison by providing informational sessions on the benefits of becoming a mentee (i.e., that participants are more likely to find a job and are less likely to go back to prison),
- Allowing interested offenders to attend group mentoring sessions to see if the program services resonate with them before formally committing themselves to participation,
- Offering incentives and other services at group mentoring sessions to encourage offender attendance (e.g., stipends, job training classes, gift cards for grocery stores).

MENTOR AND MENTEE ORIENTATION

Both potential mentors and mentees are typically provided an orientation to the program as part of the recruitment process. This orientation would provide detailed information about the program, the time commitment required, and the benefits and challenges of mentoring – *before* mentors and mentees officially enroll. Orientations might include the use of vignettes, videos, question and answer sessions, or guest speakers in order to provide information about what mentors and mentees should expect. For example, during the recruitment process in Chicago’s PRI site, The Safer Foundation staff were clear with volunteers, before they agreed to sign up as mentors for the program, that a one-year time commitment was critical.²² The Safer Foundation found that volunteers were more likely to follow-through with their time commitment to the program when they realized that leaving early could be damaging to their mentees’ success.

While more in-depth training comes later, some key material to provide during an orientation for potential mentors and mentees might include:

- Program overview and mission
- Level/length of time commitment and training requirements
- Expectations of mentees and mentors
- Description of eligibility requirements and the screening process
- Potential benefits for mentees and mentors
- Barriers facing ex-offenders
- Program rules around religion/faith (if applicable)

MENTEE ENGAGEMENT

While efforts to engage mentees in the program should occur throughout the life of the program, it is particularly critical during the early stages. Typically, offenders do not immediately see the benefits of having a mentor. Agencies should consider ways in which they can demonstrate to ex-offenders that joining the mentoring program may assist them in

²² Public/Private Ventures 2007b.

making their transition to the community a success. Talbert House (Cincinnati's PRI grantee) does not mandate that offenders participate in the mentoring program, but they do require that participants meet with mentoring program staff at the same time they meet with job training and placement staff.²³ The Safer Foundation program staff stress with participants that joining the mentoring component will assist them in all areas of transition and reentry.²⁴ The better offenders understand how to use the program to their advantage, the more engaged they are likely to be.

MENTOR AND MENTEE SCREENING

Once commitment from mentors and mentees is secured, the use of a screening process determines who is eligible for the program and ensures that safety issues are addressed. Some common screening activities include requiring written applications, conducting reference/background checks of potential mentors, and having in-person interviews with mentors and mentees. Completion of the orientation and training sessions might also be considered requirements of the screening process.

Possible Eligibility Criteria

<i>For Mentors:</i>	<i>For Mentees:</i>
Age	Age
Language	Timing of release
Career interests	Severity of offenses committed
Skills	Drug and/or alcohol problems
Motivation for volunteering	Mental illness
Time available to commit to program	Motivation for participating

Adapted from: Public/Private Ventures, 2007b

For more information, see Public/Private Ventures, 2009 (http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/316_publication.pdf).

MENTOR TRAINING

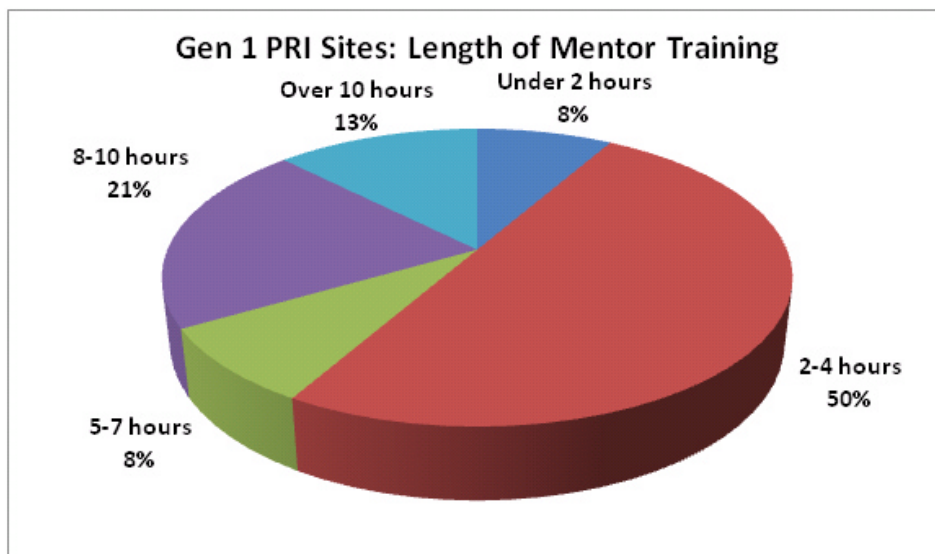
Once mentors and mentees are recruited, screened, and enrolled in the program, training mentors is the next critical step. While mentors receive an introduction to the program during the recruitment process (i.e., an orientation session), a comprehensive training session provides them with more detailed information about the program's rules and guidelines (including, for example, policies regarding confidentiality and safety issues), emphasize the commitments necessary to be a mentor, enhance their understanding of the barriers facing ex-offenders as they transition from prison to the community, and provide them with the skills necessary for

²³ Public/Private Ventures 2007b.

²⁴ Public/Private Ventures 2007b.

effective mentoring (i.e., communication skills, how to build relationships, Motivational Interviewing, problem solving skills, etc.).²⁵

At the conclusion of the initial training (or at the latest, prior to being matched with a mentee), mentors should be asked to sign a participation contract that expresses their commitment to the program.²⁶ Ongoing “booster” training and support for mentors allows for peer-to-peer interaction and problem solving opportunities. As highlighted in the chart below, about half of the Generation 1 PRI sites provided at least 5 hours of formal training to mentors, while almost all provided at least 2 hours of training.²⁷



MATCHING

In order to ensure that mentee-mentor relationships are successful (in both one-on-one and group mentoring settings), mentoring programs need a strategy to match compatible individuals. Matching considerations include things like hobbies, interests, available schedule, geography, religiosity, and/or gender. For one-on-one mentoring, program staff might arrange for a more controlled first introduction – by phone or in the program office. For group mentoring, staff might allow pairs of mentors and mentees to form on their own naturally. Career Opportunity Development, Inc., a PRI grantee in New Jersey, holds an open house immediately before group mentoring sessions twice a month allowing all past and current clients to mix with mentors.²⁸ New mentees can then get to know mentors in a less structured setting, which facilitates a more natural matching process.

PROGRAM MONITORING

Monitoring, which is another critical component of a mentoring program, promotes accountability and increases the likelihood of success. By supervising matches, a program can

²⁵ Public/Private Ventures provides PRI sites with template language suggestions regarding confidentiality issues, communication skills, and problem solving skills in their *Ex-Prisoner Mentoring Program: Mentor Training Manual Template*. See Public/Private Ventures, 2007a.

²⁶ For examples of both mentee and mentor agreements, see Public/Private Ventures, 2007a, pages 13-15.

²⁷ Coffey Consulting, 2009.

²⁸ Public/Private Ventures 2007b.

monitor that rules are being followed, that matches are meeting regularly, and that both mentors and mentees are satisfied with the program. This also facilitates the evaluation process, as the information collected during monitoring activities informs the evaluation of outcomes (e.g., attendance in the program, job outcomes, mentors/mentees satisfaction with the program).

Monitoring Mentoring Sessions:

While mentor coordinators or program staff can monitor group mentoring sessions by sitting in on them, many PRI sites ask mentors to fill out “logs” following each group and one-on-one mentoring session. These logs typically contain:

- Name(s) of the mentor(s) and mentee(s) present and absent
- Activities engaged in and whether the mentor thought they were successful
- Positive and/or negative changes observed in mentee
- Any problems or disruptions in the session
- Suggestions for future activities or improvements in the program
- Whether the coordinator should contact the mentor

Adapted from: Public/Private Ventures, 2007b.

MENTOR AND MENTEE RETENTION

One lesson learned from the Ready4Work Initiative was the importance of focusing on the retention of mentors and mentees. When mentees drop out of a program, they not only increase their own risk of failure, but also impact the mentors’ commitment to the program. Mentors whose mentees quit might feel disappointed and frustrated by the failure. By being clear with mentees and mentors about the work involved and the possibilities for failure (and what happens when a mentee drops out of the program), all parties can have realistic expectations for the program. In addition to clear expectations, mentoring programs should also utilize supervision, recognition, and incentives to keep mentees and mentors motivated to stay in the program. Career Opportunity Development, Inc. holds an open house every two weeks before group mentoring sessions.²⁹ These open houses include meals, engaging activities, and interesting presentations. To retain mentees, The Safer Foundation staff follow the motto “we will not give up on you” – whether this means meeting mentees at home or changing the meeting times to accommodate busy schedules.³⁰

MATCH CLOSURE

Attention must also be paid to the termination process – when mentees and mentors come to the successful end of the program. Since the end of the program might be a difficult time for both parties emotionally (e.g., both feel they have created a bond, mentees might experience feelings of abandonment), program staff should regularly remind both the mentor and the mentee of the time left in the program, and should be clear about the program’s policy on

²⁹ Public/Private Ventures 2007b.

³⁰ Public/Private Ventures 2007b.

continuing the relationship after termination. At this time, mentors and mentees might be asked to sign a termination contract, which indicates that they understand how their relationship will change post-program. Exit interviews might also be conducted to collect feedback on how the program could be improved.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

To determine the effectiveness of the program, an evaluation process should be established that seeks to determine whether the mission, goals, and objectives of the program were met. Information on the mentoring process, mentee outcomes, and level of program satisfaction should be collected and analyzed. Determining how to identify, collect, and measure intermediate and program outcomes are all important considerations.³¹

While the experiences of mentoring programs offer the best practices discussed in this document, further research on implementing mentoring programs and their benefits for offenders is needed. The evaluation of current and future mentoring programs is critical to determine the essential elements of effective mentoring programs; for example, the length of the program, program components, attributes of effective mentors, and the types of offenders who may benefit most from mentoring.

Evaluation Considerations

With respect to establishing an evaluation process, consider the following:

- What specific outcomes do you seek through this mentoring program (e.g., job attainment, decreased recidivism)?
- How might these outcomes be measured?
- How will you collect the data that speak to these outcomes (e.g., interviews with mentees, official DOC records, follow-up surveys)?
- What other data might you collect that serve as indicators of the program's achievement (e.g., training hours, meeting frequency, length of relationship)?
- Where would this data come from (e.g., mentor logs, interviews, questionnaires, surveys)?
- Are tracking systems currently in place? What other systems might be set up to assist in data collection and tracking?
- What will be required in order to make data collection routine?
- Who will analyze the collected data?
- How will findings be disseminated to appropriate stakeholders?
- How will refinements to the program be made based upon findings?

³¹ For more information on evaluating program outcomes, see the Coaching Packet on Measuring the Impact of Reentry Efforts.

Additional Recommendations for Addressing Common Implementation Barriers

The experiences of a number of sites revealed some common barriers to implementing effective mentoring programs.³² This section offers a number of recommendations for addressing these obstacles.

BE CREATIVE IN MENTOR RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

- Provide group mentoring opportunities to decrease the number of mentors who need to be recruited.
- Expand the pool from which mentors are drawn – mentors do not need to have previous mentoring experience, mentors can be formerly incarcerated individuals (with some parameters).
- Play to potential mentor motivations – ex-offenders express the desire to help and serve as role models because they’ve had the same experiences; non-offenders express interest in mentoring ex-offenders because their relatives or friends have been incarcerated.
- Reach out to pastors of minority congregations to recruit mentors for minority populations.
- Recruit mentoring buddies – individuals who are willing to help out occasionally without becoming a full-time mentor; such individuals may become more invested in the program to become an official mentor.

BE DELIBERATE AND CLEAR WITH MENTORS ABOUT EXPECTATIONS

- Inform and reiterate with mentors the importance of their committing to the program for an extended period of time (i.e., one year or more), and that this will result in better outcomes for their mentees.
- Provide clear policy on what is and is not permitted (e.g., mentors are only allowed to discuss religious issues in response to a question from the mentee and attending church as an activity is only permitted when the desire is expressed by the mentee).
- Provide guidance to mentors on confidentiality procedures, including when it is and when it is not acceptable to share information they learn about their mentee.

CONSIDER WHAT APPEALS TO OFFENDERS TRANSITIONING TO THE COMMUNITY

- Consider other descriptive terms for mentors like “life coach,” “career coach,” or “transition coach” to appeal to an adult offender population.
- Emphasize that the benefits of becoming a mentee address offenders’ top concerns around reentry – that participants are more likely to find a job, stay employed, and not recidivate.

³² This list is compiled from a number of Public/Private Ventures publications: Bauldry et al., 2009; Cobbs Fletcher, 2007; Public/Private Ventures, 2007b.

- Share success stories of previous participants whose mentoring relationships assisted in their transition to the community.

MAKE IT EASY AND ENJOYABLE FOR MENTEES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MENTORING PROGRAM

- Offer mentoring sessions at various times of the day to accommodate mentees' work schedules and various other appointments.
- Provide reminders to mentees of upcoming meetings and activities.
- Offer refreshments at group mentoring sessions.
- Offer additional services (e.g., resume-building workshops) to mentees who attend group sessions.
- Allow offenders to participate in group mentoring sessions in lieu of one-on-one mentoring if that is their preference.

KEEP MENTEES ENGAGED IN MENTORING ACTIVITIES

- Ensure that everyone is a participant in group mentoring activities, including mentors.
- Discuss topics that mentees suggest or ask mentees to create the topics/agenda for group meetings.
- Provide opportunities for outside activities (e.g., eating at restaurants, going to sporting events).
- Bring in guest speakers.
- Encourage mentors to socially interact with mentees one-on-one before and after meetings, and over the phone in between meetings.

Building Collaborative Partnerships Between Corrections and Faith-Based Community Organizations

Faith-based community organizations are uniquely positioned to successfully recruit volunteers to serve as mentors, while corrections entities supervise an offender population in need of mentoring services. Therefore, implementing successful mentoring programs requires an effective working relationship between corrections and faith-based community organizations. Both benefit from the establishment of mentoring programs that facilitate successful offender reentry and increased community safety. Once these joint goals are recognized, an effective working relationship can be established.

The following lists some steps that FBCOs and departments of corrections can take to help facilitate a partnership to provide mentoring services to offenders.

STEPS FOR FBCO'S

Some steps for FBCO's interested in forming a collaborative partnership with departments of corrections to provide mentoring services include:

- Reach out to prison chaplains or other faith-based leaders with previous experience working with corrections entities in similar settings.

- Enlist corrections staff to jointly plan the mentoring program to ensure that both partners are equally invested in the program’s success.
- Sign memoranda of agreement with departments of corrections to formalize the agreements made and to ensure that roles and responsibilities of each partner organization is clear.
- Determine what kind of information the FBCO staff will need to collect on offenders participating in the program from the department of corrections.
- Solicit information on prison regulations and/or supervision conditions and requirements so that mentors better understand the unique challenges facing offenders leaving prison.
- Ask whether mentors might participate in the training available for department staff that is applicable to their work as mentors (e.g., communications skills, Motivational Interviewing) to assist with training efforts.

PRI Initiative Faith-Based Grantees

If a mentoring program provided by a faith-based organization is publically funded, FBO’s must take care to ensure that participation is voluntary, the religiosity of all participants is respected, and that mentors understand that they are not to force their religious views on mentees.

For guidelines on faith-based organizations providing mentoring services under the PRI initiative, see the Addendum on page 62 of Public/Private Ventures, 2007b.

STEPS FOR CORRECTIONS STAFF

Some steps for corrections staff interested in working with FBCO’s to provide mentoring services include:³³

- Gather contact information from interested FBCO’s; create an open system of communication to foster new relationships.
- Demonstrate how partnering to offer a mentoring program is consistent with their mission.
- Partner with FBCO staff to assist in the creation of programs, instead of just asking them to join later as volunteers.
- Provide training and information to ensure that FBCO staff have the skills to work effectively with offenders.
- Discuss with faith-based organization partners how they will balance religious and secular demands in providing mentoring services.

Both FBCO and corrections entities interested in establishing a mentoring program might facilitate such a partnership by enlisting a “champion” – a leader with credibility in both the secular and faith-based communities who can engage all in the effort. For example, the program director and “champion” Reverend Dr. Goode, previously the mayor of Philadelphia,

³³ Jucovy, 2003; Public/Private Ventures, 2009; Public/Private Ventures, 2007b.

successfully mobilized partnerships between faith-based and secular organizations and developed the Amachi program, a mentoring program for the children of prisoners.³⁴

One key lesson from the Gen 1 PRI Initiative was that joint planning is critical to a successful partnership. Without equal buy-in from both parties, partnerships suffered. Furthermore, establishing clear and open lines of communication are also critical. Reports on program progress, questions or concerns about policy or procedures, and changes in staff should be shared regularly between the partner organizations. While collaborating to create successful mentoring programs continues to be challenging,³⁵ these lessons provide guidance to departments of corrections and FBCOs interested in working together to provide a critical support to offenders entering the community.

³⁴ See Jucovy, 2003. While this program did not mentor ex-offenders, strategies for reaching out to congregations are relevant.

³⁵ Coffey Consulting, 2009.

Section II: Building Offenders' Community Assets Through Mentoring Coaching Packet Checklist³⁶

MENTORING PROGRAMS: BEST PRACTICES	YES	NO	NOT CLEAR	NOTES
1. Have specific mission, goals, and objectives for the program been identified?				
2. Have recruitment goals been established (i.e., how many mentors are needed, how many mentees will be served)?				
3. Has a description of the program and other tools been created for marketing purposes (e.g., flyers, brochures)?				
4. Do mentors and mentees receive an orientation as part of the recruitment process?				
5. Are mentors and mentees provided accurate information about the program (e.g., time commitment, expectations, and challenges)?				
6. Are mentors and mentees fully screened to ensure that they meet established criteria?				
7. Has a training plan and curricula been developed for mentors?				
8. Are mentors trained on the skills necessary to work with offenders?				
9. Do mentors and mentees receive ongoing training sessions to discuss with their peers challenges and successes, and receive peer support?				
10. Has a matching plan been constructed to assist in successfully pairing mentors and mentees based on established criteria?				
11. Are group sessions led by at least two mentors and limited in size (i.e., 4-6 mentees)?				
12. Are mentoring activities occurring on a frequent basis (i.e., a minimum of 1-2 hours every two weeks)?				
13. Does the monitoring process include regular communication between staff and mentors, and staff and mentees?				
14. Are key aspects of the mentoring program monitored such as attendance, adherence to rules, and level of satisfaction?				
15. Do staff continue to try to engage/meet with mentees who have poor attendance or those who have dropped out?				
16. Do mentees and mentors know how to voice their concerns/problems to program staff?				
17. Are mentors and mentees provided with incentives to stay in the program?				
18. Are exit interviews conducted between mentors and staff; and between mentees and staff?				
19. Are mentors and mentees informed about the policy on continuing their relationship after program termination?				
20. Is an evaluation plan in place?				
21. Is the evaluation process based on the mission, goals, and objectives of the program?				
22. Are refinements made to the program based on these findings?				

³⁶ Adapted from Public/Private Ventures, 2009; Public/Private Ventures, 2007b. A more comprehensive version of this checklist is available for interested jurisdictions upon request.

Section III: Action Planning Worksheet

GOAL:			
Objective 1:			
Tasks	Lead Person	Completion Date	Assistance/Expertise Needed
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
Objective 2:			
Tasks	Lead Person	Completion Date	Assistance/Expertise Needed
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
Objective 3:			
Tasks	Lead Person	Completion Date	Assistance/Expertise Needed
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Section IV: References and Additional Resources

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