

Oklahoma County Women's Early Release Reentry Program

According to the latest data from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics, Oklahoma is ranked #1 in female incarceration per capita in the United States at a rate of 118.5% above the national average. Oklahoma is also ranked #2 in male incarceration and #2 overall. These statistics won't go away without addressing the root causes of this issue since incarceration is multi-generational. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Violence Prevention, children of incarcerated parents score higher in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which tremendously impacts future behaviors, such as smoking, alcoholism, drug use, and violence victimization and perpetration.

TEEM enables an underserved and stigmatized population to become productive, contributing members of the community, which benefits Oklahoma and Oklahoma's families. Employment has been identified as a top remedy for recidivism. The purpose of the Oklahoma County Women's Early Release Reentry Program is to promote self-sufficiency for women impacted by incarceration by removing barriers to securing and maintaining employment.

Program Overview

This initiative will serve women impacted by incarceration pre- and post-release. The service location is Oklahoma County. Eligibility criteria may be found below in the "Participants" section.

TEEM utilizes evidence-based curriculum and best practices as defined by various federal and state entities, including the US Department of Justice, US Department of Labor, US Department of Health and Human Services, Oklahoma Department of Corrections, and Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Successful reentry hinges on participants who have dedicated themselves to a lifestyle change.

Participants will receive TEEM's self-sufficiency program model, which includes cognitive behavior classes, life skills classes, and work readiness training. TEEM also offers tangible certifications, including OSHA-10, Forklift, and ServSafe®. In an effort to remove barriers to employment, TEEM provides direct supportive services in the form of transportation and housing assistance, case management, and legal assistance (e.g., obtaining state IDs or driver's licenses, expungement, and family law matters) as well as one-on-one mentoring from community volunteers who assist in confidence building and development of prosocial behavior.

Participants will receive services for 12 months, including pre- and post-release services. Outcomes will be tracked for a five-year period to determine participant success and program impact.

Participants

The Oklahoma County Women's Early Release Reentry Program will serve 65 female participants per year. Participants must be 18 years or older and must return to Oklahoma County upon release. While the focus will be on potential participants with non-violent offenses, candidates with violent offenses will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Participants must be work-release eligible and should be employed before release. Participants must actively be training for and/or maintaining employment throughout for the duration of the 12-month service model in order to remain in the Women's Early Release Reentry Program. **[AT WHAT POINT IN THE PROGRAM IS EMPLOYMENT EXPECTED BY THE P&P BOARD?]**

TEEM program staff will work with Oklahoma Department of Corrections staff to perform file reviews of potential program participants in order to identify quality candidates for the program. After completion of pre-release services, TEEM will submit participant names to Oklahoma Department of Corrections and the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board for consideration of early release and enrollment into post-release services.

Combined pre- and post-release program services will be provided for a total of 12 months, although data collection for outcome measurements will continue for 60 months.

Pre-Release Services

Potential participants will attend a three-day orientation while being assessed by TEEM staff for pro-social and employable behaviors. Those passing the orientation assessment will be invited back to receive TEEM's two-week core curriculum, which includes cognitive behavior classes (*Winning the Workplace Challenge*, *Thinking for a Change*, and *SAMSHA Anger Management*) as well as job and life skills classes (*Ready for Work*, financial literacy, keyboarding/navigation, and high school equivalency (HiSET®) preparation and testing). During this phase, participants are further assessed for criminogenic risk, employability, and reentry success.

TEEM case managers will conduct individual participant assessments, recording participant needs and existing barriers to meeting those needs. TEEM's Job Placement Coordinator will work with each participant to form an Individualized Career Plan, which tracks career history, career goals, and desired income.

Post-Release Services

In the post-release phase, TEEM offers tangible certifications, including OSHA-10, Forklift, and ServSafe®. Other certifications or industry-related degree courses may be taken through community partners, such as the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education.

In an effort to further remove barriers to employment during this phase, TEEM also provides direct services in the form of transportation and housing assistance, case management, and legal assistance (e.g., obtaining state IDs or driver's licenses and family law matters) as well as one-on-one mentoring from community volunteers who assist in confidence building and development of prosocial behavior. If participants have children, parenting classes may also be added as part of the post-release services.

Program Cost

The cost of the program is \$2,000 per participant. Of this cost, \$800 will be used for implementation of the curriculum, including instructional and material costs; case management; job placement assistance; mentoring; and legal assistance. The remaining \$1,200 will be used for training and supportive services. This could include certified/degreed training; housing match; transportation match; work-related needs, such as work clothes and equipment; and incentives. These services will vary per participant based on assessed needs.

Outcome Measurements

TEEM staff track participant demographics, course enrollments, program progress, certifications, outcomes, and follow-up. TEEM will collect data from participants throughout the 12-month program and follow up at the 18-month, 24-month, 36-month, 48-month, and 60-month marks to measure program impact. TEEM evaluates the effectiveness of its courses and assesses the number of participants who have secured/maintained employment. Courses or service techniques are revised if they aren't shown to adequately prepare participants for employment. TEEM maintains monthly contact with each participant and employer for 12 months. This allows all parties to determine if a participant received adequate preparation. During the follow-up process, feedback gathered on program effectiveness, pay rate, and job satisfaction is beneficial in defining future programming.

Nine key performance indicators will measure participant success:

- 1) Participation Rate: **100%** each reporting quarter (required to meet conditions or parole)
 - a. Defined as all active participants who receive a service every month of the quarter
- 2) Entered Employment Rate: **100%**
 - a. Defined as participants who are employed each quarter
- 3) Employment Retention Rate: **100%**
 - a. Defined as 9 months of continuous employment (can be different employers)
- 4) Average Earnings: **At least \$9.00 per hour**
 - a. Defined as the average earnings of the most current quarters of employment
- 5) Recidivism Rate: **15%** or below
 - a. Defined as the percentage of participants rearrested or re-incarcerated within one year of release from prison
- 6) Mentor Match Rate: **100%**
 - a. Defined as the percentage of participants who receive mentoring services for at least six months
- 7) Industry-Recognized Certificate/Degree Enrollment Rate: **100%** of paroled participants
 - a. Defined as enrolling in a degree or certificate awards program
- 8) Certificate/Degree Completion Rate: **90%** of those enrolled in a certificate/degree program
 - a. Defined as completing a degree or certificate awards program
- 9) Curriculum Completion Rate: **100%**
 - a. Defined as participants who complete the reentry curriculum

In addition to the regular tracking and measurement, TEEM's case management will follow up with each program participant after employment to ensure the following: 1) the participant is still gainfully employed; 2) the participant has access to proper training and equipment needed to perform the job and meet job requirements; 3) the participant is able to pay for his basic needs, as well as outstanding fines, fees, or other payments; and 4) the participant's overall situation has improved. Follow-up phone calls and visits are also made with employers to ensure 1) the employee is arriving to work regularly and on time; 2) the employer is satisfied with the employee's performance; and 3) a healthy working relationship is maintained. Additionally, participants are required to bring pay stubs to his or her case manager to verify employment and incentives given for 3, 6, and 12 months on the job in addition to incentives for advancement.

Impact

TEEM's program objectives for participants are self-sufficiency, economic stability, long-term employment, family reunification, and recidivism reduction. Outcomes include increased state revenue as former tax consumers transition into tax producers, decreased costs to the state as recidivism is reduced, and reduced generational cycles of incarceration and poverty as the quality of life increases for program participants and their families. Long-term impact for the self-sufficiency service model is a better economy, stronger families, and increased public safety.