

Open Society Institute-Baltimore
Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program
Request for Proposals
Deadline: September 17, 2008

Community Re-Entry Programs for Baltimore Empowerment Zones
Residents with Criminal Records

Summary

The Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program of the Open Society Institute-Baltimore (OSI-Baltimore) is seeking proposals from organizations that will provide re-entry and re-integration services to former prisoners and other people with criminal records (e.g., individuals on probation) who return to or live in neighborhoods within the Empowerment Zones (EZ) of Baltimore City. Through these services, which will include case management, life and job skills training, employment placement, and referrals to addiction treatment and public benefits agencies, OSI-Baltimore seeks to break the cycle of recidivism by supporting the successful reintegration of Empowerment Zone residents back into their communities. The Project will serve approximately 210 EZ residents over a three-year period (approximately 70 per year). EZ neighborhoods include East Harbor, Historic East Baltimore, Harlem Park / Lafayette Square, Poppleton, Sandtown-Winchester, and Washington Village Pigtown. A list of Empowerment Zone street addresses is attached.

Background

For the last several decades, the vicious cycle of poverty, limited access to opportunities, crime, incarceration and recidivism has reduced the quality of life for residents living in some of Baltimore's communities. Of the 25,000 African-American men ages 20 to 30 living in Baltimore, nearly one in five is incarcerated on any given day. A full 52 percent of these men are either incarcerated (3,226 in prison; 1,269 in jail) or on parole or probation (8,680).¹

According to a recent report by the Urban Institute, 59 percent of prisoners released from Maryland state prisons return to the City of Baltimore.² Similarly, a 2003 report found that 30 percent of prisoners returning to Baltimore City settled in just six of the city's 55 neighborhoods,³ including those within the EZ (e.g., Sandtown-Winchester and Harlem Park).

Baltimore's city center hosts a deep concentration of poverty (22 percent), and, in 2007, the city's unemployment rate (8 percent) topped the national average. For residents of the city's Empowerment Zones, in which over 18 percent of its residents live in poverty and about 16.5 percent are unemployed,⁴ the issues of incarceration and recidivism are of magnified urgency.

National data shed light on the disturbingly predictable cycle of recidivism. Nearly two-thirds of those released from prisons are rearrested again within three years; almost half who are rearrested are reconvicted; and a quarter is re-sentenced to prison for a new charge.⁵ In Maryland, nearly 50 percent of people who are released from prisons are

1 Lotke, E. and J. Ziedenberg. (2005). Tipping Point: Maryland's Overuse of Incarceration and the Impact on Public Safety. Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute.

2 Roman, J., L. Brooks, E. Lagerson, A. Chalfin and B. Tereshchenko. (2007). "Impact and Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Maryland Reentry Partnership Initiative." Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center.

3 La Vigne, N., V. Kachnowski, J. Travis, R. Naser and C. Visher. (2003). "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland." Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

4 Empower Baltimore Management Corporation (EBMC) website, <http://www.ebmc.org/home/empowermentzones.html>

5 Bureau of Justice Statistics. 1994. Retrieved 6/27/07 at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/crimoff.htm#recidivism>.

re-incarcerated within three years as a result of the commission of new offenses or technical parole violations, such as failure to report to a parole agent.⁶ In high-poverty communities such as those in the City of Baltimore, the effects of incarceration and recidivism have emerged as an overlapping and circular set of social problems.

This circle includes: deeply entrenched economic challenges tied to poverty, low educational attainment, unemployment and crime; growing public health needs such as drug and alcohol addictions, mental illnesses and HIV/AIDS; and, a worrisome breakdown of the family that too often results in engagement with child welfare agencies. This circle ultimately creates destabilized communities and a low-skilled workforce. Such challenges are omnipresent for those who cycle in and out of jails and prisons and for the communities to which they return.

OSI-Baltimore seeks to reduce Maryland's over-reliance on incarceration, a practice that is costly, disproportionately targets poor communities of color, and does little to rehabilitate offenders and improve public safety. For the past 10 years, it committed its grantmaking, technical assistance, educational activities, and advocacy activities to policy reform efforts at every stage of the criminal justice system. It also helped to build the capacity of non-profit organizations to provide services to people returning to Baltimore from prisons. Ultimately, OSI-Baltimore sought to improve returning prisoners' chances of building stable lives and becoming self sufficient, thereby reducing recidivism.

Through this Request for Proposals, OSI-Baltimore seeks to build on its past work. By focusing on the needs of EZ residents, it intends to continue to help develop the capacity of re-entry and re-integration organizations to serve former prisoners or others with criminal records.

Purpose of the Baltimore Empowerment Zone Re-Entry Project

In July 2008, OSI-Baltimore was awarded a Legacy Grant from the Empower Baltimore Management Corporation (EBMC) to support services for EZ residents who were released from prisons and jails or have criminal records. EBMC is the non-profit organization that oversees the Baltimore Empowerment Zone Program, which uses federal funding to create safe, healthy neighborhoods and economically self-sufficient residents through workforce development and other activities.

A factor that often determines whether individuals who are involved with the criminal justice system remain in the community and out of prisons is their ability to secure and retain employment and other social services. This OSI project aims to interrupt the cycle of recidivism of EZ residents by providing services that will help former prisoners or people with criminal records to become reliable and productive employees and community members.

To successfully re-integrate these individuals into the fabric of a healthy community, this initiative will support non-profit community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide the following reentry services to EZ residents: case management, life and job skills training, employment placement, and referrals to addiction treatment centers and public benefits agencies.

By selecting and supporting CBOs that have demonstrated commitment and success with former prisoners and other people with criminal records, the Empowerment Zone Re-entry Project will leverage a network of partners that will then have the necessary resources and infrastructure to reduce recidivism.

Objectives for the EZ Re-entry Project are as follows:

1. Provide re-entry and re-integration services that meet or exceed specific outcome benchmarks (noted in Section 4 below) to approximately 210 EZ residents who are returning from prison or have criminal records (e.g., people on probation) (approximately 70 individuals per year for three years).
2. Assist these EZ residents with restoring strong family relationships and becoming productive employees by providing case management services to streamline their access to community services and public benefits, flexible funding to cover fees and transportation, social service supports (e.g., mentoring) and training in life skills.
3. Place participating EZ residents in job training programs leading to job placement with family-supporting wages, retention and advancement opportunities.

⁶ Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). (2005). *Repeat incarceration supervision cycle (RISC) report*.

4. Strengthen the capacity of re-entry/re-integration programs to collect and analyze data about their program outcomes and adopt best practices in order to make program refinements and better meet their clients' needs.
5. Strengthen networks and collaborative efforts among CBOs that provide re-entry/re-integration services.
6. Reduce recidivism of participating EZ residents.

Application Guidelines and Selection Criteria

OSI-Baltimore may approve up to three grants, with each CBO serving between 23 to 35 EZ residents per year. Each grant award will range from \$70,000 to \$175,000 per CBO per year for three years. OSI-Baltimore will pay the grant in semi-annual installments contingent on the grantee's satisfactory program performance. OSI funding must be used to provide new or expanded re-entry/re-integration services to EZ residents. It can not be used to supplant organizational funds for existing programs.

Empowerment Zone Focus

In an effort to sustain economic and other opportunities for EZ residents, a grantee organization:

- Must document that it has used grant funds to expand re-entry/re-integration services for people residing in EZ neighborhoods; and
- Is encouraged to hire EZ residents as employees if and when the opportunity presents itself.

Required Qualifications

All eligible applicant organizations must demonstrate:

1. Non-profit 501(c)(3) status;
2. A track record of prisoner re-entry/re-integration services for a minimum of four consecutive years;
3. A history of innovative and effective programming to ensure the successful re-entry/re-integration of former prisoners and others with criminal records;
4. An annual budget level of \$500,000 or more during the least three years;
5. Relationships and collaborations with: the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and other relevant public agencies; employers; social service providers; and other local community and faith-based organizations. (Technical assistance will be available to help grantee organizations further identify and cultivate these relationships);
6. An existing, high-quality data collection software system that is capturing program service delivery, outcomes and performance in relation to established benchmarks. (Technical assistance will be available to help grantee organizations to improve data collection and performance evaluation programs);
7. Agreement to comply with data collection software system revisions and reporting requirements for this project.

Required Proposal Content

1. Cover letter

A one-page letter on letterhead and signed by the executive director should state:

- A one or two-sentence description of the proposed initiative, including the number of EZ residents to be served;
- The amount requested from OSI-Baltimore;
- The amount of the total organizational budget;
- The name of the organization that would serve as the fiscal sponsor for the grant if awarded; and
- A contact name, address, e-mail and telephone number.

2. Executive Summary (two pages)

Within two pages, briefly state the:

- Applicant organization's name;
- Empowerment Zone region(s) within which the proposed project is targeted;
- The number of EZ residents the applicant currently serves, if applicable, and the number of EZ residents it proposes to serve;
- Demographics of the proposed population of EZ residents who are former prisoners or other people with criminal records by age, race, gender and/or specific re-entry barriers; and
- Summary of budget request for the total grant period (three years), as well as documentation of other committed funding sources for this project, if any.

3. **Proposal Narrative (eight single-sided pages maximum, double-spaced with 12 point type and one-inch margins)**

▪ *Organizational History/Capacity (two page maximum)*

Describe the applicant's organizational history, particularly as it relates to experience operating a re-entry/re-integration program for former prisoners and other people with criminal records. When describing the organization's current capacity, emphasize:

- Experience of the current leadership (staff and board).
- Key staff, including any new staff, for this project (please provide a biographical sketch of each).
- Experience operating a re-entry/re-integration program.
- Current relationships with other key partners relevant to serving former prisoners and other people with criminal records.
- Current management of outcomes tracking, including what data management tools are currently in place in the organization.
- Any prior experience serving EZ residents.

▪ *Overall Project Design and Service Strategy (six page maximum)*

Describe the applicant's current re-entry/re-integration program and how the proposed EZ Re-Entry Project will be integrated into current service delivery. When describing the organization's current programming, describe specifically:

- How the organization will work with the criminal justice system to ensure released prisoners from EZ neighborhoods are referred to the program and program services will be coordinated with community supervision through the Department of Parole and Probation.
- How the organization will recruit participants prior to their release from prison (technical assistance will be provided to assist grantees with refining any guidelines around eligibility).
- How the organization will advertise its services to other EZ residents who have criminal records (e.g., those who are on probation).
- How the organization will maintain a protocol for confirming and documenting the EZ residency status of former prisoners and other people with criminal records.
- The organization's current case management structure and systems, including case load ratios, case file management, definitions for active case management, processes and referral networks.
- The organization's current program retention strategies and how they will be applied to the proposed EZ project.
- The organization's current program strategies to secure medical and other public benefits for returning prisoners or other people with criminal records.
- The organization's current program strategies to secure basic identification documents, housing, realistic child support and court fine arrearage payment plans, addiction treatment, physical and mental health treatment, family reunification support, etc. for returning prisoners or other people with criminal records.
- The organization's current program strategies (if any) to provide other supports, such as mentoring, for returning prisoners or other people with criminal records.
- The organization's current program strategies to deliver life and job skills training programs (if the organization partners with another organization or agency to deliver these services, please describe the nature of the partnership and the details of the services provided). Please describe the curriculum or approach utilized in detail.
- The details of the organization's current job placement, retention and advancement programs (if the organization partners with another organization or agency to deliver these services, please describe the nature of the partnership and the details of the services provided). Please describe the approaches utilized in detail, including the organization's use of job developers and counselors, any industry-specific targeting the organization might use, and how relationships with employers are cultivated.
- Whether the organization currently employs residents of any of the Empowerment Zone neighborhoods.

4. **Baltimore Empowerment Zone Re-Entry Project**

Current Organizational Re-Entry Outcomes Template (two pages)

An applicant organization must complete this table of re-entry/re-integration program outcomes by using any relevant data collected by the organization during the most recent fiscal year or calendar year.

Organization	Outcomes from Most Recent Fiscal or Calendar Year	Anticipated Outcomes for Next Fiscal or Calendar Year for Existing Program Only	Anticipated Outcomes for Each Year of EZ Re-entry Project
Number of former prisoners served			23-35
Number of other individuals with criminal records served			23-35
Percentage of clients actively case managed and receiving services monthly			90% (or higher)
Percentage of clients enrolled in public medical benefits (of those actively case managed)			75% (or higher)
Percentage of clients screened for other public benefits (of those actively case managed)			90% (or higher)
Percentage of clients enrolled in other public benefits (of those actively case managed and those screened and deemed eligible)			50% (or higher)
Percentage of clients retained in program (actively) after six months (of those actively case managed)			TBD
Percentage of clients retained in program (actively) after twelve months (of those actively case managed)			TBD
Percentage of clients completing structured life skills program (of those actively case managed)			65% (or higher)

Organization	Outcomes from Most Recent Fiscal or Calendar Year	Anticipated Outcomes for Next Fiscal or Calendar Year for Existing Program Only	Anticipated Outcomes for Each Year of EZ Re-entry Project
Percentage of clients completing structured job skills training program (of those actively case managed)			65% (or higher)
Percentage of clients who became/become employed (of those actively case managed)			60% (or higher)
Percentage of clients who remained employed for six consecutive months (of those actively case managed)			TBD
Percentage of clients who remained employed for twelve consecutive months (of those actively case managed)			TBD
Number of people placed in either temporary or temp-to-perm jobs (of those actively case managed)			TBD
Number of temporary or temp-to-perm placements that convert to permanent jobs (of those actively case managed)			TBD
Total number of temporary or temp-to-perm placements made (of those actively case managed)			TBD
Average hourly wage paid to workers in temporary or temp-to-perm jobs (of those actively case managed)			TBD
Average hourly wage paid to workers in permanent jobs (of those actively case managed)			TBD
Percentage of clients incarcerated or re-incarcerated for a new offense (of those actively case managed)			TBD

5. **Program Budget (one page)**

List the line items requested from OSI, the costs covered by other sources, and the total cost of each line item for each of the three years funded (December 2008 to November 2011). Please note that funding disbursements for years two and three will be contingent upon proof of satisfactory program performance and compliance with all of the project's data collection and reporting requirements.

The budget should be in the following format:

Organization Name: _____	OSI Request	Other Committed Sources for Project (if any)
Project Name: Baltimore Empowerment Zone Re-Entry Project		
Salaries and fringes	\$	
Consultants and fees		
Fees and transportation costs for program participants		
Incentives		
Stipends		
Travel		
Telephone and fax		
Printing		
Postage and delivery		
Office supplies		
Other direct costs		
Indirect costs		
Total costs	\$ _____	

6. Appendices

The appendices should include:

- A summary of the applicant's institutional budget based on applicant's fiscal year, if applicant is not a major educational institution or unit of government.
- Proof of the 501(c)(3) tax status by the Internal Revenue Service.
- Applicant's most recent audited financial statement, or the expense and revenue portion of the applicant's most recent 990 tax return.
- Résumés or biographies of the organization's executive director and key program staff who will be responsible for implementing the proposed initiative.
- A list of the organization's board members and affiliations.
- A list of current and proposed funders of the organization.
- Letters of agreement with any partner service providers.

Application Procedures and Timetable

Applications must be received by the Foundation office no later than 5:00 p.m. on September 17, 2008.

All applications *must* be complete upon initial submission and *must* be received via mail or hand delivery. No late or faxed applications will be accepted. Foundation staff will endeavor to make final decisions on grants by November 2008. Implementation is targeted for December 2008.

Proposals should be addressed to:

Monique L. Dixon, JD
Director, Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program
Open Society Institute-Baltimore
201 N. Charles Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-234-1091

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be directed to Monique Dixon, mdixon@sorosny.org and Justin Schaberg, jschaberg@sorosny.org.

The Open Society Institute is an international private foundation that was founded by philanthropist George Soros in 1993. It works to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. To achieve its mission, OSI seeks to shape public policies that assure greater fairness in political, legal, and economic systems and safeguard fundamental rights. The heart of OSI's mission is to improve the lives of marginalized people and communities.

With support from a range of investors, the OSI-Baltimore office works within four program areas: Criminal and Juvenile Justice; Tackling Addiction Treatment Initiative; Education and Youth Development; and Community Fellowships and Initiatives.