

Jane Addams College of Social Work

## Making “The Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents” a Reality

# Evaluation Report

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[April 24, 2008](#)



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Open Society Institute of the Soros Foundation funded a Senior Fellow to provide technical assistance to groups across the country that were interested in pursuing changes in policy and practice to make *The Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents* a reality. These groups – or partnerships as they refer to themselves – did not receive any funding, only technical assistance. Nonetheless, in the course of 14-months members of the partnerships formed organizations, educated themselves about issues affecting children with incarcerated parents, mobilized support, and launched a multitude of projects to change how systems and programs interact with children whose parents are in jail or prison. These partnerships show the potentiality of becoming a potentially potent incubator for policy and practice reforms.

## STRATEGIES FOR BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE

The partnerships took two fundamentally different approaches to affecting change. Some chose one or two very specific changes upon which to focus. This was the case, for example, in Montana, where the local partnership focused on creating an information package explaining how to talk with young children about parental arrest and incarceration and criminal justice processes. This information will be distributed to parents in correctional facilities and to the people caring for children of incarcerated parents. The Pittsburgh partnership began working with local law enforcement agencies to develop a protocol that will guide how officers respond when children are present when their parents are arrested. In Illinois, training on children of incarcerated parents for key school personnel was instituted in the Chicago Public School system.

Other partnerships took a “top-down” approach. These partnerships established statewide networks and governmental or quasi-governmental entities charged with gathering information and making recommendations for how to improve the way systems and programs respond to children of incarcerated parents. In time, these entities could potentially bring about more far-reaching changes than the locally-targeted change efforts described above, but the results of these initiatives remain to be seen.

## CHALLENGES

### A. RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

The biggest challenge facing the partnerships is a lack of resources. Only a very few partnerships have personnel dedicated to *Bill of Rights* projects. This limits the pace of the partnerships’ work. The lack of resources also affects the changes partnerships elect to pursue. For example, it costs relatively little to train school personnel – some PowerPoint slides and a few hours of time donated by volunteers or borrowed from other work organizations are doing. In comparison, revamping the visitation area in a jail or prison requires money and materials for renovations upfront and the possible addition of a staff person in the long run. Resource limitations push partnerships in the direction of selecting change strategies for their economic feasibility, rather than because of their potential impact on children of incarcerated parents. For the partnerships to move forward, they will need to develop strategies for supporting their planning and development work and for financing changes.

### B. AMBIGUOUS THEORIES OF CHANGE

When attempting to affect change, it is important for partnerships to have clear goals and to select methods that are most likely to achieve those goals. In other words, they need clearly articulated theories of change. In some

instances, partnerships have selected methods (e.g., disseminating information about how to talk to children about incarceration, training school personnel), but it's unclear to what end. For example, is training school personnel suppose to change trainees (1) knowledge, (2) attitudes, or (3) behaviors and, in what specific ways? More importantly, if the training succeeds in producing the desired change in trainees, does it result in subsequent changes in how children of incarcerated parents are treated? Becoming clearer about their theories of change would help partnerships to work more purposeful and, possibly, efficacious.

### C. MAINTAINING THE CENTRALITY OF *THE BILL OF RIGHTS*

When asked what outcomes their work would bring about, some partnerships talked about reducing intergenerational incarceration, parental recidivism, and improving parents' treatment outcomes. While the promise of these outcomes could help the partnerships attract support from key players in corrections, it is important for the partnerships to keep *children* of incarcerated parents and the goals of *The Bill of Rights* foremost in their thinking. For instance, children have the right to a life-long relationship with their parents – period. Not because it might reduce their parents' likelihood of recidivating, but simply because children need to have a relationship with their parents. The partnerships should exercise caution in trying to win support from key players that they do not lose sight of the primacy of the child's perspective on parental incarceration.

### D. EXTENDING CHANGE EFFORTS TO INCLUDE ALL CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

Although *The Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents* pertains to all children of incarcerated parents, many of the projects the partnerships undertook target very specific subgroups of children, most typically young children and children of incarcerated mothers. These subpopulations reflect only a fraction of children affected by parental incarceration and, so, there is room to extend the work of the partnerships to include older children and children whose fathers are in jail or prison.

## NEXT STEP

The partnerships found it extremely useful to know about the work being done in other locales. This information was communicated to partnerships by the Senior Fellow who saw her role, in part, as being a cross pollinator. The partnerships, however, also wanted opportunities to learn more details about what was being done by other partnerships. In order to preserve and capitalize on the work that has been done throughout the country as a result of *The Bill of Rights* technical assistance project, the Soros Foundation should consider investing in building the partnerships' capacity to operate learning collaboratives (see Conclusions). Using a learning collaborative model would help the partnerships become clearer about their theories of change and, thus, more purposeful in their work. It would also provide opportunities for each partnership to learn from the collective experiences of all the other partnerships. This model could be used to facilitate the partnership-to-partnership transfer of policy and practice innovation and, also, by individual partnerships to replicate best practices throughout their home states.

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# Part I. Evaluation Report





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# MAKING “THE BILL OF RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS” A REALITY

When we send someone to prison, we tend to think of it as the endpoint in a process: someone has violated the law, been caught, tried, and sentenced to confinement away from others. However, for millions of children whose parents are sent to jail or prison, the process does not stop there. While their parents are in prison, children worry about who will care for them, wonder if they are somehow to blame for their parents getting into trouble, and struggle to keep their parents’ whereabouts hidden from others to avoid being teased or rejected.

Being separated from a parent – even a parent who has broken the law – leaves a hole in a child’s life. When children are separated from their parents for other reasons such as divorce, death, or military service, we offer them comfort and support, and help them come to terms with what has happened. In contrast, when we send parents to prison, we are often oblivious to the pain, fears, and anxieties their children experience.

After years of working with, talking to, and studying children whose parents had been to prison, the San Francisco Partnership for Incarcerated Parents developed *The Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents*<sup>1</sup> (see sidebar). These are not rights in the legal sense; they are not mandated by law. Instead, they are a set of goals which, if achieved, would help to assure that children’s fundamental needs for safety, security, and belonging are met. This is no more than we offer any other children who face crises because something out of the ordinary has happened to their parents.

Before children can benefit from *The Bill of Rights*, however, the rights have to be translated into changes in the way individuals and systems treat children whose parents are incarcerated. For example, the goal of children being able to see, touch, and talk with their parents while their parents are incarcerated might be achieved by allowing children to visit with their incarcerated

The Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents includes the rights for children:

to be safe at the time of their parent’s arrest;

to be heard when decisions are made about them;

to be considered when decisions are made about their parent(s);

to be well cared for in their parent’s absence;

to speak with, see, and touch their parent;

to support as they struggle with their parent’s incarceration;

not to be judged, labeled or blamed because of their parent’s incarceration; and

to have a lifelong relationship with their parent.

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<sup>1</sup> San Francisco Partnership for Incarcerated Parents. (2003). *Children of incarcerated parents: A bill of rights*. San Francisco, CA: Author. Available from [http://www.ushrnetwork.org/files/ushrn/images/linkfiles/CERD/10b\\_Children%20of%20Incarcerated%20parents.pdf](http://www.ushrnetwork.org/files/ushrn/images/linkfiles/CERD/10b_Children%20of%20Incarcerated%20parents.pdf)

parents in special settings within correctional facilities where parents and children can talk and interact freely. Making this a reality might require getting approval from corrections administrators, obtaining the cooperation of security staff, and securing resources to revamp a space in the facility.

There are a number of groups around the country that are working to translate the broadly defined goals outlined in *The Bill of Rights* into specific changes in the way systems and individuals treat children of incarcerated parents. To further these efforts, The Open Society Institute of the Soros Foundation funded a Senior Fellow to provide technical assistance for 14 months. Her objectives were to: (1) share knowledge based on her own experience providing services and advocating for children of incarcerated parents and her training in developmental psychology; (2) facilitate contact with the authors of *The Bill of Rights* and trainers and practitioners from The Family and Corrections Network; and (3) serve as a “cross pollinator”, carrying ideas and strategies between groups.

Groups were selected to take part in the technical assistance project via a Request for Proposals. To be considered as a possible recipient of technical assistance, applicants had to demonstrate the ability to form a partnership of three or more entities; one had to be a state agency involved with prisoners, their children, or people who care for prisoners’ children. At least one of the partners also had to have a minimum of 18 months experience serving or advocating for one of these populations. The partner that submitted the application is referred to as the lead agency. In many cases, partnerships’ lead agencies were not-for-profit organizations that were already working with children of incarcerated parents or their families.

Partnerships were asked to commit to undertaking a minimum of two change efforts during the 14-month technical assistance project and to contribute to a manual explaining strategies and tools for translating *The Bill of Rights* into changes in systems and programs. Participants did not receive any funding.

The RFP process resulted in the selection of 17 partnerships in the 14 states listed below.

Arizona  
Connecticut  
Illinois  
Indiana  
Massachusetts  
Michigan  
Minnesota  
Montana  
North Carolina  
Pennsylvania  
South Carolina  
Tennessee  
Texas  
Washington

# EVALUATION GOALS AND METHODS

## Research Question

A faculty member of the Jane Addams College of Social Work was asked by the Soros Senior Fellow to assist in evaluating the work the partnerships were doing. The aim of the evaluation was to answer very fundamental questions about what the partnerships did, why, and what others might learn from their experiences. This involved assessing:

- what changes the partnerships decided to pursue and why,
- their approach to organizing their work,
- their choice of strategies and tactics for bringing about change,
- the organizational, community, and systemic factors that influenced their choices,
- what, if anything, changed as a result of their efforts, and
- what the impact of those changes were on children of incarcerated parents.

## Evaluation Design

Qualitative methods (i.e., structured interviews and document content analyses) were used because of their superiority in illuminating processes and contextual factors.<sup>2</sup> The evaluation employed a multi-case study design and focused on understanding similarities and differences in decisions partnerships made, the reasons they made them, how they were implemented, their results, and the contexts in which they varied.

## Sensitizing Concepts

The development of data collection instruments and data analyses were guided by three sets of sensitizing concepts. The first set of concepts were borrowed from a model of factors that influence macro-level change efforts.<sup>3</sup> This model describes four categories of factors that affect decisions about the specific changes in programs and policies that groups decide to pursue (see figure 1).

The second set of concepts comes from force field analyses,<sup>4</sup> a method for assessing factors that support or create barriers to change. These concepts were applied to arrive at an understanding of the political and policy context in which partnerships operated.



<sup>2</sup> Berg, B. L. (2004). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Person.

<sup>3</sup> Netting, F. E., Kettner, P. M., & McMurty, S. L. (2004). *Social work macro practice* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson

Program logic modeling provided the third source of concepts<sup>5</sup>. Program logic models are used to delineate the resources that go into an intervention or program, the intervention/program processes, and intended client outcomes and impacts. Program logic modeling was used as a framework for eliciting details of the service-based changes partnerships pursued.

## Data Collection

Structured telephone interviews were conducted with representatives of partnerships' lead agencies (i.e., the organization that submitted the application for technical assistance). These were done by trained research assistants who were students in the Ph.D. program at Jane Addams College of Social Work. Other sources of information were partnerships' initial applications, minutes, planning documents, and reports.

Although 17 partnerships were selected to receive technical assistance, interviews were conducted with the lead agencies of only 11. The North Carolina partnership realized early on that it did not have resources to expend on the project and never became involved in the project. In Indiana, personnel changes made it impossible for the lead agency to continue working on *The Bill of Rights* project. In Michigan, three lead agencies were initially selected with the understanding that they would collaborate to become a single partnership. This collaboration never came about and only one of the agencies went on to participate in the technical assistance project. Two lead agencies were selected initially in Pennsylvania; one in Philadelphia and one in Pittsburgh. Research assistants made repeated attempts to schedule an interview with the lead agency in Philadelphia, but were not successful.

## Limitations

Only one person from each partnership's lead agency was interviewed. Of the 11 lead agencies that took part in the evaluation, five were not-for-profit agencies that serve children of incarcerated parents or their parents, four were existing task forces or commissions, one was a University, and one was a corrections program. The perspective of the individuals who were interviewed may not be the same as that of other members of the partnerships.

## Analysis

The evaluation used a multiple-case study design<sup>6</sup> in which both individual cases and multiple-cases are of interest. Analyses of individual cases (i.e., partnerships) were guided by the sensitizing concepts described above, but also employed open coding to capture emerging themes and concepts. Data from each case was analyzed to understand how it demonstrated (or failed to demonstrate) sensitizing and other concepts. Cross-case analysis focused on the extent to which concepts and phenomenon were replicated across cases and the conditions under which they were similar or different. This pattern-matching approach was used with respect to both dependent variables (i.e., the change being attempted) and independent variables (i.e., factors affecting the choice of change and strategies for enacting change).

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<sup>4</sup> Lewin K. (1943). Defining the "field at a given time." *Psychological Review*. 50;292-310. Republished in *Resolving Social Conflicts & Field Theory in Social Science*, Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> W. K. Kellogg Foundation (2001). *W. K. Kellogg Foundation logic model development guide*. Available from <http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

## PARTNERSHIP SIZE, COMPOSITION, AND STRUCTURE

In applying for technical assistance, applicants had to demonstrate the potential to form a partnership of three or more entities. One of the partners had to be a state agency involved with prisoners, their children, or people who care for prisoners' children. One of the partners also had to have a minimum of 18 months experience serving or advocating for one of these populations. The partnerships that took part in the technical assistance project differed considerably with respect to size, composition, and structure. They ranged from relatively small groups made up primarily of not-for-profit organizations to large, complex entities with substantial participation by public agencies.

Table 1. Partnership Size and Composition

	N=	Public Agencies		Not-for-Profit Agencies		Other	
		% Criminal Justice System	% Other Public Agencies	% Faith-based	% Other Not-for-Profits	% Universities/ Colleges	% Foundations
AZ	6	33	50	17	0	0	0
CT	13	15	23	0	54	0	7
IL	6	33	0	33	33	0	0
MA	6	17	17	0	33	17	17
MN	10	10	0	0	90	0	0
MT	9	11	11	0	78	0	0
PA	7	0	0	0	88	0	14
SC	12	17	0	17	50	8	8
TN	8	13	0	38	50	0	0
TX	21	29	29	5	38	0	0
WA	12	33	25	0	25	8	8

### PARTNERSHIP SIZE

Initially, partnerships ranged in size from six (AZ, IL, and MA) to 21 member organizations (TX) (Table 1). Some of the organizations listed in partnerships' applications did not take an active role in the work of partnerships. For example, although the Minnesota Department of Corrections was listed as a partner in Minnesota's application, their involvement amounted to a representative from the lead agency having telephone and email contact with people within the Department. Similarly, the Tennessee application listed a number of criminal justice system entities as partners. According to the Director of Tennessee's lead agency, these organizations decided against taking an active role in the partnership, although the Department of Corrections made its teleconferencing technology available to the partnership.

The opposite was also true: in some instances, as the initial partners began working together, their numbers grew. The Arizona and South Carolina partnerships, for example, both took a "top-down" approach in which the initial planning group began by compiling information about children of incarcerated parents. They then involved local groups in targeted areas of their states in translating that information into local change strategies. In Arizona, this resulted in a network of over 60 organizations working to plan changes in four counties. The South Carolina partnership is pursuing a similar strategy, but had not established regional groups at the time of this report.

The partnerships in Connecticut and Pittsburgh also grew with time. The Connecticut partnership made a strategic decision to keep its partnership small initially and only open membership to others after they made fundamental decisions about the direction of the partnership's work. Similarly, in Pittsburgh, partners were added only on a project-by-project basis as needed to further specific projects.

## COMPOSITION

The combination of organizations included in partnerships is important because member organizations influence the substantive knowledge, political and social capital, and ties to other organizational networks to which partnerships have access. Partnerships varied widely in composition. In some partnerships, public agencies dominated and in others, not-for-profits were prolific.

### PUBLIC AGENCIES

In a number of partnerships, public agencies nearly equaled or outnumbered other types of agencies. In Arizona, 88% of the initial partners represented public agencies, as did 58% of the partners in Texas and Washington, and 48% in Connecticut.

State departments of corrections were the single most widely represented state agency. Some partnerships also included other state and local agencies associated with the criminal justice system (e.g., court administration agencies; offices of attorney generals, public defenders, and prosecuting attorneys; and local police departments and jails). In addition to criminal justice organizations, many partnerships included agencies that administer social service, child protective service, or economic security programs. Quasi-governmental and volunteer commissions were members or lead agencies of some partnerships as well (i.e., Parents Commission on Drug Education and Prevention, Commission on Children, and so forth).

### NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Not-for-profit organizations figured prominently in most partnerships. In fact, three partnerships were composed predominantly of not-for-profits. These were the partnerships in Minnesota (90% of partners), Pennsylvania (88%), Tennessee (88%), and Illinois (66%).

A number of not-for-profit organizations with a national presence were members of several of the partnerships. These included Head Start, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Girl Scouts of America, and United Way. About half of the partnerships also included one or more faith-based groups (typically, prison ministries) and, in fact, the partnership in Tennessee was headed by a faith-based agency.

### OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Almost half of the partnerships included representatives of a foundation. Two included a university or college. This includes the South Carolina partnership, which is headed by Clemson University's Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life.

## PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURES

### COMPLEX STRUCTURES

Three of the 11 partnerships (AZ, TX, and WA) have relatively complex structures and formalized decision-making processes. Arizona, for example, has a statewide steering committee, a statewide task force dedicated to developing arrest protocols, and four location-specific workgroups. The Texas partnership is lead by a subcommittee of a much larger organization – The Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable. They recruited additional outside organizations to work with the subcommittee on developing projects associated with *The Bill of Rights*. In Washington, an entity created by legislation (The Oversight Committee on Children of Incarcerated Parents) is the lead agency.

## PROJECT-DRIVEN STRUCTURES

Three of the partnerships (MT, PA, and MA) had much simpler structures and relied on informal, consensus-based decision-making. These partnerships focused on very specific projects. When needed, they involved other groups to work out details and implement changes. The Montana partners, for instance, worked together on developing written information to help incarcerated parents communicate with children about their parents' incarceration. Pennsylvania's work focused on improving visitation at the Allegheny jail and developing a protocol for law enforcement officers to follow when they arrest parents. Massachusetts concentrated on developing a mother-child literacy program and weighing in on legislation to prevent the shackling of pregnant inmates during childbirth. In these instances, organizations external to the partnerships were only involved on an "as-needed" basis.

## AMBIGUOUS STRUCTURES

It was difficult to categorize the structure of four of the partnerships (IL, MN, SC, and TN). The Illinois partnership grew out of a Task Force that formed several years ago. Many groups were initially attracted to the Task Force in hopes it would put them in a better position to compete for federal grants to mentor children of incarcerated parents. After the grants were awarded, many groups stopped participating in the Task Force although they stay informed about its work. The Task Force has formalized rules; however, these have been revisited recently because of growing dissatisfaction with the functioning of the Task Force. The structure of the Task Force notwithstanding, projects related to *The Bill of Rights* are being carried out by individual organizations within the Task Force, sometimes in cooperation with one another. These groups work independent of the Task Force and simply keep the Task Force advised of their work.

The Minnesota Council on Crime and Justice brought together a number of agencies that met monthly at first to talk about the work they were currently doing with children of incarcerated parents and what they would do if they had money to put an agenda in place. Because the Council on Crime and Justice convened the group, there was an assumption that the Council would figure out how to find funding to move forward. In contrast, the informant we spoke with from the Council felt that the participating organizations needed to figure out how to pursue resources together and that the lead agency should be selected on a project-by-project basis.

In South Carolina, the partners did not meet together regularly. The common link among these groups was Robin Kimbrough-Melton, J. D. of The Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life at Clemson University. She disseminates information across different subgroups of partners.

The lead agency in Tennessee is an organization that has been advocating for and serving families who have relatives in prison for nearly 20 years. Because Reconciliation Ministries has been such an active advocacy organization, it was difficult to differentiate which of this organization's activities were the work of a partnership formed as part of *The Bill of Rights* and which were more simply part of the ongoing ebb and flow of the organization's work.

## WHAT THE PARTNERSHIPS ACCOMPLISHED

Each partnership was expected to undertake two projects to translate *The Bill of Rights* into changes in the way systems and individuals interact with children of incarcerated parents. As the lead agency in Tennessee noted, 14 months is a relatively brief period in which to plan strategies and execute tactics to bring about changes in major systems; particularly, given that some partnerships first had to build working relationships among the partners they brought to the table.

Also, very few partnerships had staff dedicated to *The Bill of Rights* project. The Arizona partnership had a full-time person for one year who conducted research, coordinated workgroups, and prepared a report for the partnership. The Pennsylvania partnership had the benefit of an employee funded by the Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation who facilitated communication among the partners and coordinated their activities. An intern from the Wheelock College Family and Child Studies Division worked part-time with the Massachusetts partnership and, among other things, provided administrative support. Otherwise, partners' had to juggle work related to *The Bill of Rights* project with other responsibilities and commitments.

Resources were also an important consideration in partnerships' decision about the projects they pursued. For instance, one of the activities the Massachusetts partnership undertook was mobilizing support for legislation that would preclude the shackling of inmates during childbirth. The decision to pursue legislative advocacy on this issues was due, in part, to the fact that doing so did not require funding. Similarly, Arizona concluded that the changes the partnership pursued either had to be changes that did not require funding or the partnership had to make a compelling argument that investing in change now would produce savings later. In Minnesota, the work of the partnership stalled because of a lack of resources for change efforts.

Given the short timeframe of the technical assistance project, staffing limitations, and the need to develop resources in order to implement certain changes, it is not surprising that only a limited number of changes were actually implemented during the technical assistance project. Nonetheless, the partnerships made considerable headway in identifying changes that *could* be made in their locales and rallying the interest and support of important players in key systems.

## FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES IN STRATEGIES

Partnerships followed one of two fundamentally very different approaches in pursuing change. Some identified and implemented very specific, local changes directly linked to some element of *The Bill of Rights*. Others took a "top-down" approach. These were typically groups with a statewide focus. Some gathered information and formulated recommendations with the expectation that those recommendations would be translated into changes by local groups. Others focused on establishing a public or quasi-public organization charged with identifying and/or addressing the needs of children of incarcerated parents.

At the time of this report, some of the partnerships that pursued targeted, local changes were implementing those change, but none of the "top-down" efforts had yet produced change. It is conceivable, however, that these latter types of efforts might take more investment on the front end, but in time lead to more widespread change. Therefore, readers should keep in mind that this report only describes partnerships' short-term accomplishments.



## TARGETED CHANGE EFFORTS

Table 2 lists each of the rights set out in *The Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents* and related interventions/programs that partnerships were implementing or want to implement in the near future. Partnerships' efforts focused on three primary types of interventions: (1) arrest protocols, (2) parent-child visitation, and (3) training for personnel in schools and social service organizations. In order to understand the program logic models that informed partnerships' work, representatives of partnerships' lead agencies were asked for details about: (1) the resources that were required for the interventions (e.g., client population, staffing, funding, materials, and so forth), (2) specifics of the intervention process (e.g., details of arrest protocols, specifics of visitation programs, content and length of training programs), and (3) the impact the intervention was expected to have on children of incarcerated parents.

**THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE WHEN THEIR PARENT IS ARRESTED.** The partnerships in Arizona and Pennsylvania both began conversations with law enforcement agencies about developing protocols for officers to follow when they arrest parents and children are present. Both partnerships plan to develop training resources that will become a routine part of officers' training. Additionally, in the event no one is immediately available to take responsibility for a child when his or her parent is taken into custody, the Pennsylvania partnership intends to develop resources for transporting children to a child-friendly facility where they can wait for someone to pick them up. At the time of this report, neither location had finalized or implemented these protocols.

**THE RIGHT TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN DECISIONS ARE MADE ABOUT THEIR PARENT.** Only one partnership – Tennessee -- reported working on a project related to the right for children to be considered when decisions are made about their parent. The lead agency in Tennessee worked with several organizations to produce and distribute a newsletter. This newsletter was distributed to, among others, individuals and organizations within the criminal justice system. According to the lead agency representative, this was a way of getting people within the criminal justice system to take children into consideration when they make decisions about parents. The newsletter included stories and articles contributed by children of inmates and other family members and profiled organizations that took part in the production of the newsletter. A broad range of topics were covered including intergenerational incarceration, poverty, and children's involvement in gangs. The newsletter was only published for about one year. No information was collected on if, or how, the newsletter affected the consideration criminal justice system practitioners gave to children when they made decisions about their parents.

**THE RIGHT TO SPEAK WITH, SEE, AND TOUCH THEIR PARENT.** Three of the partnerships (IL, MA, and PA) implemented or are planning to implement visitation programs for children and their incarcerated parents as a way of making the right for children to speak with, see, and touch their parent a reality. In Illinois, contact visits were implemented for children whose mothers are taking part in a treatment program in the Cook County Jail. There are plans to evaluate the impact of the jail-based treatment program has on parents, but at present no data are being collected on the impact that visitation has on child outcomes.

Massachusetts uses the Motherhead literacy program as an anchor for visitation. Several evaluations of Motherhead in other settings have found that it improves participants' literacy skills. Researchers have also examined the effect of Motherhead on mothers' emotional health, their parenting attitudes, and their children's self-esteem. Evidence of a favorable effect on these outcomes is tentative.

Pennsylvania's efforts have a slightly different focus. The Pennsylvania partnership focused on overcoming barriers to visitation for children with child protective services cases who have been ordered by the family court to have visits with their parents. The hope is that increasing the number of parents who receive court-ordered visits will

reduce the number of parents whose parental rights are terminated. For this reason, the Pennsylvania visitation project also indirectly addresses children's right to a lifelong relationship with their parents. As changes have not yet been implemented, it is too early to know if the changes Pennsylvania is pursuing will reduce the termination of parental rights and what, if any, impact the program will have on the outcomes of children of incarcerated parents.

**THE RIGHT TO SUPPORT AS THEY STRUGGLE WITH THEIR PARENT'S INCARCERATION AND THE RIGHT NOT TO BE JUDGED, LABELED OR BLAMED FOR THEIR PARENT'S INCARCERATION.** Three of the partnerships are educating school personnel, believing this will lead to institutionalized changes in how school personnel interact with children of incarcerated parents.

A member of the Illinois partnership used student interns to develop a PowerPoint presentation that serves as the basis for a one-hour training for key school personnel (e.g., school nurses, counselors, psychologists, school administrators, and so forth). The training provides basic statistics on incarceration, possible consequences of parental incarceration for children, information about the "rights" of children of incarcerated parents, and recommendations for working with children of incarcerated parents. To date, key personnel in three schools have been trained. As a result of receiving this one-hour training, school personnel are expected to be able to recognize when children's academic performance and behavior are being affected by their parents' incarceration and respond in a manner that lets children know someone cares.

Members of the Minnesota partnership are also educating school personnel. They want school personnel to be able to work "holistically" with children of incarcerated parents. Approximately 100 people had been trained at the time of this report. Training includes an overview of the issue of parental incarceration and describes work partners are currently doing that they regard as "best practices". The partnership would like to develop a directory of community resources for school personnel and to establish a protocol for dealing with children of incarcerated parents. They feel the protocol is important because there is fear in the African American and Native American communities that calling attention to children of incarcerated parents could result in greater state involvement in these families. These trainings are not viewed as an end in themselves by the representative with whom we spoke, but as part of an ongoing process of learning from school personnel about the type of supports they need to be able to work most effectively with children of incarcerated parents.

In Texas, 325 counselors in the Austin Independent School District who work with preschool and elementary age children received three hours of training from Ann Adelstein-Estrin of the Family and Corrections Network. The partnership feels this training will enable counselors to do a better job identifying, connecting with, and supporting children of incarcerated parents.

To the best of our knowledge, no data have been collected on the effect these education efforts have had on attendees' (1) knowledge, (2) attitudes, or (3) behavior. Nor are we aware of any data being collected on the impact that these brief educational interventions with school personnel are having on children's outcomes.

The Montana partnership took a slightly different approach to securing children's right to support as they struggle with their parent's incarceration. They developed a document they refer to as a "toolkit" that contains information intended to help parents and people who care for children in their parent's absence communicate with children about their parent's incarceration and criminal justice processes. There are no plans that we are aware of to evaluate the extent to which receiving this information changes children's knowledge about their parents' involvement in the criminal justice system or affects their outcomes.

## TOP-DOWN APPROACHES

Rather than focusing on specific, local changes, some partnerships took a more expansive approach. Generally, these partnerships either compiled information on children of incarcerated parents with the intent that the information would be used by subsequent workgroups or organizations to implement changes at the local level or, they are working to establish public or quasi-public entities (e.g., legislative committee, commission) charged with gathering information and recommending changes.

The Arizona partnership, for example, spent five months conducting interviews, holding focus groups, convening local workgroups, and reviewing potential model programs in order to develop a set of recommendations. There is now a statewide group working on developing protocols for law enforcement officers to follow when they arrest children and four area-specific workgroups. One of the recommendations to come from this effort is identifying a system to take responsibility for children of incarcerated parents.

South Carolina is pursuing a strategy similar to that of Arizona. They are compiling a set of white papers and will share the information in those papers at a statewide conference. The conference is to be followed by regional forums that are intended to instill in communities a sense of responsibility for supporting children of incarcerated parents and result in local networks through which children will receive social support and concrete resources. The South Carolina partnership would also like the Governor to appoint a re-entry commission to look at more broad-based issues.

Connecticut is also attempting to establish responsibility for children of incarcerated parents within a governmental agency – in this case, the Department of Corrections. The goal is to create a senior level position within the Department of Corrections that would be responsible for examining DOC policies and practice to make the system more responsive to children of incarcerated parents. The initial bill was drafted during the 2006-2007 legislative session and was accompanied by a budget of \$1 million. The partnership was not able to garner the needed support for the bill, but plans to reintroduce it during the 2007-2008 legislative session.

The partnership in Washington is lead by the Oversight Committee on Children of Incarcerated Parents, a entity that was legislatively empowered for one year. The Oversight Committee developed recommendations that were presented to state legislators and resulted in four government departments being charged with reviewing their current programs and policies to assess the adequacy and availability of services for children of incarcerated parents. The secretaries of these departments are expected to translate the findings from this review into policy changes.

Tennessee passed legislation calling for a survey of inmates and the formation of a committee to identify ways to improve outcomes for children of incarcerated parents. The survey results will be present to the Oversight Committee on Corrections. The resolution calls for the Oversight Committee to work with a group of approximately 40 public and private agencies to develop a strategic plan to improve outcomes for children of incarcerated parents.

Table 2. Projects Undertaken by Partnerships to Advance *The Bill of Rights*

Partnership	Right for children. . .							
	to be safe at the time of their parent's arrest;	to be heard when decisions are made about them	to be considered when decisions are made about their parent(s)	to be well cared for in their parent's absence	to speak with, see, and touch their parent	to support as they struggle with their parent's incarceration	not to be judged, labeled or blamed because of their parent's incarceration	to have a lifelong relationship with their parent
AZ	Plan to create a DVD and online information to be used by AZ POST (Peace Officers Standards Training)							
CT						Community-based counseling for children and their families		
IL					Contact visits for children whose mothers are in a pre-trial detention treatment program in Cook Co. Jail	Educating personnel in Chicago Public Schools		
MA					Operating Motherhead literacy program in the Women's Prison in Salisbury.			
MN						Educate school personnel Educate social service organizations		
MT						Toolkit to guide parents' and caregivers' communication with children about parent's incarceration		
PA	In process of developing arrest protocol for law enforcement officers in Allegheny County to follow*				Implementing changes to overcome barriers to children receiving court-ordered visits with parents in Allegheny Jail*			See jail visitation
SC								
TN			Newsletter					
TX					Laying the groundwork for implementing family visitation at the Travis State Jail*	3 hours of training for Austin Independent School District to enable them to identify, connect with, and support children of incarcerated parents.		
WA								

# DIFFERENCES IN THE SUBPOPULATIONS PARTNERSHIPS TARGETED AND THE PROBLEMS PARTNERSHIPS ADDRESSED

## SUBPOPULATIONS

Although *The Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents* applies to all children whose parents are in prison, the work of some partnerships focuses on select subgroups within this population. In these instances, older children and children of incarcerated fathers receive less attention than younger children and children of incarcerated mothers. For example, Montana developed written information geared toward helping parents and caregivers communicate with *young* children about parental incarceration. Visitation programs, by their very nature, are limited to children with *currently* incarcerated parents, and -- in the case of the work the partnerships did under the technical assistance project -- focus exclusively on children of incarcerated *mothers*. In contrast, school-based interventions have the potential to benefit children with both currently or formerly incarcerated mothers *or* fathers. In some instances, however, these projects are limited to children in certain age groups (e.g., children in pre-school or elementary school). Finally, in at least one instance, a partnership's efforts were related to the subpopulation of children who had open child protective services cases in a particular county.

## PROBLEMS

When interviewed, partnership representatives were asked about how the changes they were pursuing would affect the outcomes of children of incarcerated parents. The answer to this question provides additional insight into partnerships' understanding of the problems purportedly confronting this population (or the subgroup of interest to a particular partnership). The anticipated outcomes (listed below) span a broad gamut from preventing health problems to improving children's school, social, and family functioning, and the reduction of emotional and behavioral problems. One partnership, Connecticut, believes that not all children of incarcerated parents required the same services. This partnership's intent is to establish a "menu" of services that can be customized to meet the unique needs of individual children and families.

Table 3. Outcomes Partnerships Believe will be Affected by Their Work

- Health
  - Preventing children from developing physical ailments
- Emotional and behavioral outcomes
  - Reducing fears related to being separated from their parent
  - Reducing anger, aggression, and hostility toward caregivers or other adult authority figures
  - Preventing developmental regression
  - Reducing the development of delinquent behaviors
- Social functioning
  - Reducing isolation from peers
  - Reducing withdrawal from activities
  - Greater sense of being connected to their community
- School functioning
  - Preventing decline in academic achievement
  - Better school performance
  - Fewer school problems
- Family functioning

- Children will feel their mothers are interested in them
- Children will have positive childhood memories

In some instances, partnerships were unable to identify how children would benefit from their efforts, but instead described changes in parents or benefits to other systems. These included:

- Benefits for mothers:
  - Mothers will have a stronger bond with their children
  - Mothers will be more likely to successfully complete treatment
- Benefits for the criminal justice system:
  - Preventing intergenerational incarceration
  - Reducing criminal recidivism among parents
- Benefits for the child welfare system:
  - Reducing the need for the child welfare system to become involved in finding placements for children when parents are arrested
  - Reducing termination of parental rights

## FACTORS WORKING IN FAVOR OF PARTNERSHIPS' SUCCESS

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

#### SPARKING THINGS OFF

Many partnership representatives spoke of their involvement in a national technical assistance project as a catalyzing event. Among other things, the Senior Fellow's initial visits to partnerships were often described in terms of "sparking everything off". Additionally, Pennsylvania believed that being part of a project funded by the Soros Foundation gave their work prestige. Illinois spoke of how the connections they gained to outside experts through the project created a sense of being connected to something bigger and how this helped to keep energy high, provide a sense of what was possible, and aided in gaining the cooperation of policy makers.

#### MODELS FOR CHANGE

Participating in the technical assistance project also gave partnerships ideas about the types of changes they might pursue. Illinois credited the technical assistance project with "creating a sense of the changes that were possible". This sentiment was echoed by representatives from multiple other partnerships who spoke of the inspiration they received from learning about changes other states were pursuing. While this information helped partnerships grasp what was possible, partnerships also wanted opportunities to talk directly with members of other partnerships to better understand specific details about the work occurring in other states.

### OUTSIDERS LEND LEGITIMACY TO THE WORK OF PARTNERSHIPS

Many partnerships spoke of the role that outsiders played in helping to draw attention to children of incarcerated parents. Interest from outsiders was credited with giving visibility to children of incarcerated parents and legitimizing partnerships' work.

At the national level, Connecticut found that President Bush mentioning children of incarcerated parents in a State of the Union Address helped to establish these children as a population deserving of attention. Illinois noted that children of incarcerated parents were registering on more "radar scopes" because of federal funding for mentoring programs for this population. Similarly, groups in Texas, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Minnesota found that interest in these children was intertwined with interest in federally sponsored prisoner re-entry initiatives. Moreover, the work of the Texas partners also gained legitimacy because Texas was included in research that the Urban Institute did on issues affecting families experiencing parental incarceration.

### SUPPORT FROM PUBLIC OFFICIALS

When asked what factors were working in favor of their success, a number of partnerships mentioned Governors, legislators, leaders within government agencies, or some combination of the above who were supportive of their work. The reasons for this support differed, however. A few partnerships enjoyed the support of legislators who are champions of children's issues. In other cases, leaders were attracted to the work of the partnerships because of concerns about the economic impact high levels of incarceration were having on their states' budgets and the belief that supporting efforts to enact *The Bill of Rights* could reduce costs by (1) reducing parents' criminal recidivism, (2) preventing intergenerational incarceration, or both. Some partnerships "piggybacked" on these issues by casting efforts to make changes to benefit children of incarcerated parents as a way to prevent recidivism and future incarceration.

“Piggybacking” also took place at the local level. The work of the Illinois partnership is focused in Chicago. A representative of the partnership noted that the political environment surrounding children of incarcerated parents has been “ripening” because of the Mayor’s interest in addressing prisoner re-entry. Although this created spillover *interest* in children of incarcerated parents, it has not produced any resources for working with children of incarcerated parents. In fact, there is resentment among some organizations in Chicago because newcomers have been able to obtain resources to support prisoner re-entry initiatives, while organizations that have been working with incarcerated parents and their children for decades are struggling for funding.

In other states, partners saw their legislatures as generally supportive of efforts to help children of incarcerated parents and credit this to the work organizations have been doing for years to educate legislators in order to “soften” them on issues confronting this population. For example, Tennessee, believes they were able to get the state legislature to mandate a survey to gather information on inmates’ children because of decades of work the lead agency and others have done calling legislators’ attention to this population. Similarly, although Texas generally takes a “tough on crime” stance, the Texas partnership found bipartisan support within the state legislature for bills that affect children of incarcerated parents. They believe this is because of work they have been doing to educate legislators about the impact that high rates of incarceration are having on children.



## FACTORS WORKING AGAINST PARTNERSHIPS' SUCCESS

### FISCAL CONSTRAINTS

#### PARTICIPATION IN PARTNERSHIPS

The single most common theme to emerge from partnership interviews was that their work was limited by a lack of resources. In some instances, this meant that organizations that partnerships would like to have involved in their work, particularly not-for-profit organizations, could not participate, or could only participate intermittently. As a representative of the Illinois partnership described it, the ability of organizations to participate on a consistent basis was restricted by the fact that many member organizations are small, underfunded not-for-profit organizations that lack the resources to commit time to the partnership. However, it is not only not-for-profit agencies whose partnership involvement was affected by funding. During the course of the technical assistance project, the existence of the lead agency in Illinois, The Department of Women's Justice Programs, was threatened because of County budget cuts.

#### ABILITY TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE PARTNERSHIP

In addition to influencing who was able to participate in partnerships, resource constraints also limited the support partnerships' had for their planning and development work. For instance, the Connecticut partnership felt it was well-positioned to affect change, but because the lead agency is a small agency with commitments to a wide range of programs, it was hard-pressed to support the partnership's work. Similarly, the Montana partnership also found that it was hamstrung by a lack of funding to staff the project.

#### CHOICE OF CHANGE TARGETS

In addition to affecting organization's participation in partnerships and the ability of agencies to move the work of the partnerships forward, resources also came into play in the choices partnerships made about the changes they would pursue. Resources sometimes indirectly influenced partnerships' choices. According to one informant, "because resources are hard to come by, many agencies get caught up in an ugly scramble for cash, and may not be as intentional about what they do and how they do it." In other cases, fiscal realities directly limited partnerships' options. For example, two partnerships (AZ and SC) specifically mentioned that, because of the current fiscal environment in their states, they had to limit their change efforts to ones that did not require government expenditures. However, the Arizona partnership believes it may be possible to persuade key decision makers that investing in change now will produce savings later.

#### IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

A number of partnerships overcame resource limitations in the planning stages, only to encounter them at the implementation stage. For example, after developing written materials for parents and caregivers, Montana now faces the challenge of having the materials mass-produced. Similarly, Pennsylvania was able to win support for a number of changes to improve visitation for children with open protective services cases whose parents are in the Allegheny Jail. They would like to have a full-time person within the child welfare system coordinating these visits, but this is not possible because of cuts that have taken place in child welfare funding. In Illinois, after obtaining approval for children to have contact visits with parents in the Cook County Jail, the partnership had to find private donors to contribute materials and labor to renovate the visiting space because of a county budget crisis.

## PUBLIC ATTITUDES

Many partnerships believed their work was hindered either by public sentiments that support harsh criminal punishments or by public ignorance about the consequences that parental incarceration might have for children. Accordingly, partnerships often spoke of the need for public education and awareness campaigns. Two partnerships also believed that circumstances could be improved if there was a way to track children of incarcerated parents.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a relatively brief period, what started as a technical assistance project has become a budding national network of groups with the demonstrated ability to rally support for making *The Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents* a reality. One way to think of this network is as an incubator for policy and practice innovations. Members of this network are grappling with tough questions about exactly what policies and practices should and can be changed in order for children of incarcerated parents to be treated in a manner consistent with *The Bill of Rights*. When one member of the network finds an answer to these questions, it opens up possibilities for the other members as well. The challenge ahead is creating an infrastructure to sustain the momentum of this network so that it can achieve its potential.

As the technical assistance project was initially designed, the Soros Senior Fellow played the role of “cross pollinator”. The partnerships found this useful. Informants repeatedly spoke of how knowing what other partnerships were doing gave them ideas about policy and practice innovations they could pursue in their own locales; but, the partnerships also needed and wanted to know more about the specific details of others’ work.

This is predictable. Taking a policy or practice change that works in one setting and implementing it in another requires some degree of adaption, and adapting an innovation requires an understanding of its nuances. It is unrealistic to expect the Senior Fellow, or any other single individual, to know enough about the subtleties of all the projects taking place within the network and the contexts of those projects to supply the needed level of detail. Members of the network need opportunities to learn from one another.

In moving forward, several critical processes need to be established if this neophyte network to realize its potential. These include:

### 1. ESTABLISHING A SYSTEM FOR COMMUNICATING BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT POLICY AND PRACTICE INNOVATIONS

Partnerships need to be aware of one another’s policy and practice innovation efforts. That information could potentially be shared via a newsletter, listserve, website, teleconferencing, or some combination of the above. It is worth noting that a listserve was set up, but has not been used by the partnerships. This may be because the partnerships were not expected to communicate directly with one another initially. Inter-partnership communication was, instead, the job of the Senior Fellow. Some preliminary work will need to be done to determine what means of communication is most desirable and to establish a structure (e.g., report format) for partnerships to communicate information about their activities. Once the expectation for partnership-to-partnership communication is established and a method of communication is selected, partnerships will be able to regularly update each other about their work.

### 2. INSTITUTING A PROCESS OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Whenever one partnership succeeds in bringing about a policy or practice change, it creates a model for other partnerships to follow. Currently, there are at least three changes (each with variations) that might be replicated within the network and beyond: arrest protocols, visitation programs, and educating school personnel. In addition, several partnerships have passed model legislation establishing a public or quasi-public entity that is responsible for examining the needs of children of incarcerated parents. These legislative models could also be the focus of replication efforts.

In order for this network of partnerships to live up to its potential as an incubator of policy and practice innovations, a process needs to be implemented that allows partnerships to learn directly from each other. Learning involves more than partnerships simply updating one another about *what* they are doing; it requires opportunities for partnerships to acquire specific information about *how* innovations are being done in different contexts. Implementing a learning approach (as opposed to providing technical assistance) would accelerate the rate of acquisition and application of knowledge by the partnerships because each partnership would not only benefit from the knowledge and experience they are acquiring through their own work, but also from the collective knowledge and experiences of other partnerships.

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) has a model of collaborative learning<sup>7</sup> that has been used successfully in national efforts to develop and disseminate best practices in healthcare, pediatrics, and child mental health.<sup>8</sup> This collaborative learning model brings together teams of participants from different locales who have a shared interest in solving a particular problem or adopting a particular practice. Over a 9- to 12-month period, the teams meet together for three, two-day face-to-face sessions and maintain communication through other means between meetings. Between face-to-face sessions, the teams also undertake cycles of planning, doing, studying, and acting. In this respect, learning collaboratives incorporate basic elements of action research.

Core steps in conducting learning collaboratives are as follow:

- a. **Selecting a change target.** The first step is to select a policy or program change that would bring about a desired change in the way systems or individuals respond to children of incarcerated parents. This might be changing how police respond to children when they arrest their parents or changing the way schools respond to children who have emotional problems following their parent's arrest.
- b. **Convening experts to identify content and learning objectives.** After the change target has been selected, the next step is to convene experts to identify and develop the content and specific learning objectives for the learning collaborative. This step is particularly critical in the case of changes related to *The Bill of Rights*. There is very little research on the benefits that system-change efforts or direct interventions have for children of incarcerated parents. Accordingly, there is no way of readily identifying "best practices" at the present time; therefore, careful consideration must be given to the learning objectives. For example, because school is such a big part of the lives of children, there is interest in intervening with school personnel. However, the goal of these types of trainings need to be clarified. Is the goal to change teachers' knowledge or, instead, their behavior? What's the best method for bringing about the desired change (e.g., one-shot trainings; a series of trainings; trainings with ongoing consultation)? What changes will the trainings create for children of incarcerated parents (e.g., increase the frequency of children receiving support from school personnel; decrease the frequency of children being negatively judged by peers because their parents are in prison)?

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<sup>7</sup> Institute for Healthcare Improvement. (2003). *The breakthrough series: IHI's collaborative model for achieving breakthrough improvement*. IHI Innovation Series white paper. Boston: Institute for Healthcare Improvement. Available from [www.IHI.org](http://www.IHI.org).

<sup>8</sup> See for example The National Center for Child Traumatic Stress. (2007). *Learning collaborative information packet*. Durham, NC: Author. Available from [http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn\\_assets/pdfs/lc\\_info\\_packet\\_3-22-07.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/lc_info_packet_3-22-07.pdf).

- c. **Developing a package describing the change.** Once experts have specified the change, a change package is developed that describes the goal of the change, its primary components, and steps in its implementation. The change package is used to inform potential “learners” about the goal of the learning collaborative so they can make an informed decision about participating in the collaborative. It also guides the selection of content for the collaborative.
- d. **Identifying teaching faculty.** Next, two to three individuals are identified to serve as teaching faculty for the learning collaborative. They are responsible for designing and conducting learning sessions and providing consultation in between.
- e. **Team applications.** Teams apply to participate in the learning collaborative. As was the case with the RFA process used in the technical assistance project, the application process is an opportunity to determine that potential participants can bring the necessary players to the table and that there is a willingness to undertake the targeted change.
- f. **Pre-work phase.** Teams that are selected to take part in the learning collaborative undergo a pre-work phase during which they complete an organizational readiness assessment, review readings and/or videos, and participate in conference calls.
- g. **Learning sessions.** Teams come together for three, two-day learning sessions over the course of 9 to 12 months or, in some cases, they may have the first learning session on-site and meet for the final two sessions with other teams.
- h. **Action periods.** Periods between learning sessions are referred to as action periods. Between the face-to-face sessions, teams implement planned changes and assess the impact of the changes. In other words, the action periods are part of a cycle of planning, doing, studying, and acting. These cycles allow team members to test ideas, document successes and challenges, and share what they are learning with other teams. This sharing may occur via teleconferences, video-conferences, listserves, and ongoing group consultation with expert faculty.

### 3. COLLECTING INFORMATION ON THE EFFECT POLICY AND PRACTICE INNOVATIONS ARE HAVING ON CHILDREN.

Although partnerships have succeeded in a number of instances in changing policy and practice, to the best of our knowledge no data are being systematically collected on how many children are affected by these changes or on the impact the changes are having on children. In fact, when partnerships were asked to describe how children would benefit from their efforts, some could only describe changes they expected to occur in parents (e.g., reduced recidivism) and others listed far-fetched and unrealistic outcomes. The ability of partnerships to articulate what their policy and practice innovations might realistically be expected to accomplish could be improved by providing technical assistance on basic intervention development and evaluation methods. A further step would be to select a set of agreed upon measures and to pool information in order to begin developing a body of knowledge that could ultimately be used to establish the efficacy of policy and practice changes. Note, data collection is inherent in the IHI learning collaborative model. Thus, establishing learning collaboratives would have the added benefit of building a relevant knowledge base.

### 4. ESTABLISHING AN ADVISORY BOARD

An advisory board should be formed that is made up of individuals who have been affected by parental incarceration, individuals with a deep commitment to the principles of *The Bill of Rights*, and individuals who are well-versed in research on children of incarcerated parents and, more generally, services effectiveness research. As partnerships succeed in engineering policy and practice innovations, questions will arise about the “right” thing to do. Some of these issues are *already* surfacing. For instance, in at least one partnership, questions were raised about whether calling attention to children of incarcerated parents in schools might inadvertently lead to greater State involvement in families that are already overrepresented in systems such as child welfare. Another question that will need to be tackled is whether identifying and tracking children of incarcerated parents will increase the stigma these children experience. Individuals who have been affected by parental incarceration should have a voice in these and other substantive issues.

Second, it is important for partnerships to have ongoing access to individuals who are deeply committed to the principles of *The Bill of Rights*. One of the reasons *The Bill of Rights* was written was to assure the primacy of the *child’s perspective* of parental arrest and incarceration. As partnerships struggle to gain support for policy and practice innovations, they may find themselves attracting interest from groups with other primary interests such as reducing foster care case loads or criminal recidivism. It is one thing to “piggyback” on these issues in order to advance changes that will make *The Bill of Rights* a reality, but partnerships must guard against children’s rights being co-opted or contingencies being placed upon them. For example, the prisoner re-entry movement stresses the fact that inmates with strong family ties are less likely to recidivate. On the one hand, advocates for *The Bill of Rights* might capitalize on this interest in inmate families in promoting changes that would lead to children having a life-long relationship with their parents. On the other hand, according to *The Bill of Rights*, children have the right to a life-long relationship with their parents—PERIOD – not because it may influence parents’ criminal recidivism (a fact that we do not yet know to be true). Similarly, the rights of children of incarcerated parents exist independent of any effect they may or may not have on children’s emotional or behavioral well-being or involvement in the criminal justice system. Children have these rights – PERIOD – not because enacting these rights might reduce psychological problems or delinquency.

Third, it is important for partnerships to have access to accurate and current findings from research on children of incarcerated parents as well as findings from research on the efficacy and effectiveness of various interventions and services. In some respects, partnerships that took part in *The Bill of Rights* technical assistance project are plowing new ground. For example, there is currently very little published information on how parental arrest and incarceration affects children’s academic performance, school attendance, school discipline, or relationship with other students. Partnerships are largely reliant on antidotal information and practice experience in understanding these phenomenon and in determining what specific changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior they should be attempting to bring about through school-based training. On the other hand, there is a very substantial body of research on the effectiveness of different methods of affecting changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior that could inform the development of school-based change strategies.

Similarly, there are only a small number of studies on the experiences of children who are present when their parents are arrested. Here again, partnerships are working largely from antidotal information and practice knowledge in determining a how law enforcement and other systems should respond when children witness their parent’s arrest. But again, there are models of methods for successfully bringing about changes in law enforcement practices. The domestic violence, child welfare, and mental health fields each have experience in this area.

Finally, although a number of correctional facilities have implemented child-friendly visitation programs, the evaluation of these programs has either focused on the challenges to implementing changes in correctional

settings or in changes that visitations programs bring about in incarcerated parent. We currently have very little systematic knowledge of how visitation programs affect the children who participate in them, but there are a number of individuals who have experience implementing these programs.





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## Part II. Individual Partnership Report



## ARIZONA

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<b>Original Partners:</b>	Arizona Department of Economic Security Arizona Governor's Office of Children, Youth and Families Arizona Parents Commission on Drug Education & Prevention Juvenile Services Coordinating Council Prison Fellowship Ministries

## HOW THE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPED

The original five members of Arizona's partnership (listed above) began working together over six years ago. Now, there are more than 60 partners (see Appendix). This is because the original partners decided it was important to build local capacity for change. To that end, they brought together groups within targeted counties and engaged them in conducting a needs assessment, and developing recommendations and strategies for change.

## PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING

Arizona's partnership has a Statewide Steering Committee that meets bi-monthly (or monthly if needed). Among other things, partners share ideas and information about how they can assist in implementing *The Bill of Rights*. There is also a Statewide Work Group on Arrest Protocols that meets monthly to review research on model programs and to make recommendations about strategies for keeping children safe when their parents are arrested. In addition to these two statewide groups, there are regional working groups in Maricopa, Pima, Coconino, and Yavapai Counties.

## PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The partnership's strategy for enacting *The Bill of Rights* was to conduct a statewide needs assessment that informed a subsequent planning process to identify localized targets for change and strategies for bringing about those changes. Findings from the needs assessment are being disseminated through two publications: a *Final Report* and a *Manual of Strategies*, both of which "are designed to guide a data-driven approach to developing or enhancing local and state protocols and policymaking to improve outcomes for children of incarcerated parents" (Pima Prevention Partnership, 2007). Generally, the partnership's work is guided by an understanding that improving the outcomes of children of incarcerated parents requires: (1) reducing traumas associated with parental arrest, (2) addressing barriers and deficits in behavioral health services, (3) providing support to caregivers, and (4) promoting awareness of the needs of this population of children.

## PROJECT # 1: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Arizona partnership conducted a statewide needs assessment to evaluate the degree to which current policies and practices were supportive of or obstructive with respect to three rights: (1) the right for children to be kept safe when their parents are arrested, (2) the right for them to be well cared for in their parents absence, and (3) the right to be supported as they struggle with their parents incarceration. Within a five month period, project staff conducted nearly 100 interviews, convened and coordinated two statewide and four county-specific professional work groups, conducted interviews with several children of incarcerated parents, held nine focus groups with citizens, reviewed model programs and approaches, and developed recommendations for changes in state and local policies and practices.

The recommendations that came out of the needs assessment are as follows:

- Conduct training on behalf of children of incarcerated parents.
- Conduct a public awareness and education campaign.
- Publish a local resource directory in every jurisdiction in Spanish and English of available resources.
- Ensure that adequate, accessible resources are available to foster security and stability for children whose parents are incarcerated.
- Support community based organizations and services that can provide comprehensive resources to the caregivers of children of incarcerated parents.
- Advocate for funding and access to best-practice mentoring services.
- Establish arrest guidelines for law enforcement to follow when arresting parents.
- Train all law enforcement officers in the state of Arizona on the needs of children of incarcerated parents.
- Designate and financially support an advocate system for children of incarcerated parents to serve as an immediate and ongoing resource to the child and the family.
- Foster communication between inmates and their children.

The partnership also identified key steps that are necessary for these recommendations to become realities. They are:

- Taking necessary action to implement recommendations within each work group's area of focus. For example, the Arrest Protocol Working Group will implement a campaign to educate law enforcement officers that will include DVD and online information to be used by AZ POST (Peace Officers Standards Training).
- Undertaking an educational campaign within targeted communities, as well as an educational campaign targeting state legislators. This campaign will include educating communities and legislators about the costs and benefits of different policy and program options.
- Involving institutional agencies such as law enforcement, schools, behavioral health providers, etc. in implementing the recommendations. To succeed, the partnership will have to secure funding through the reallocation of existing funds or the acquisition of new funding.

- Identifying a system to take responsibility for children of incarcerated parents.

## PROJECT #2: MANUAL OF STRATEGIES

One of the outcomes of the partnership's work was a *Manual of Strategies*. This document was designed to serve as a reference. It lists a large number of policies, practices, and programs that are being implemented in Arizona and elsewhere for children of incarcerated parents, their caregivers, and parents in jails and prisons. The manual, however, is not indexed the *The Bill of Rights*.

## FACTORS WORKING FOR SUCCESS

**Technical assistance.** Because of the technical assistance Arizona received from the Soros Senior Fellow, the partnership was able to learn about the various approaches being used by partnerships in other states. This helped them understand the scope of activities that might be possible and effective in working for the rights of children of incarcerated parents.

**Dedicated staff person.** The Arizona partnership also credits their success during the technical assistance project, in part, to having a one-FTE staff person to do research, coordinate workgroups, and produce reports.

**Supportive Governor and legislature.** The Arizona partnership also sees the Governor's office and the Arizona Legislature as supportive of their efforts.

## FACTORS WORKING AGAINST SUCCESS

**State budget crisis.** Arizona is having a budget crisis and there has been a lack of funding from private sources. Consequently, Arizona believes they are either limited to pursuing changes that do not require money or that they will have to persuade stakeholders that investing in change now will pay off in savings later.

**Lack of systematic tracking of children with incarcerated parents.** The Arizona partnership believes its potential for success is stymied by the fact that the state does not have a way to track the number

**Public attitudes.** A final factor the Arizona partnership believes is impeding their success is the public's attitude towards people in prison. In this respect, Arizona has been helped by the media, which the partnership sees as playing an important role in getting the public to understand the vulnerability of children of incarcerated parents.

# APPENDIX

## New Partners

### STATEWIDE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ambitious Ladies of Today  
Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts  
Arizona Attorney General  
Arizona Children's Association  
Arizona Department of Corrections  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Arizona Department of Education  
Arizona State University  
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Central Arizona  
Catholic Diocese of Tucson  
Children's Action Alliance  
Child Crisis Center  
Governor's Office for Children, Youth & Families  
Governor's Office, Policy Advisor for Tribal Affairs  
Juvenile Services Coordinating Council  
Maricopa County Adult Probation  
Maricopa County Sheriff's Office  
Maricopa County Superior Court  
Phoenix Indian Center  
Phoenix Police Department  
Prison Fellowship Ministries of Arizona  
Tucson Police Department

### STATEWIDE ARREST PROTOCOL WORK GROUP

Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Avondale Police Department  
Florence Police Department  
Hayden Police Department  
Maricopa County Attorney's Office  
Maricopa County Sheriff's Office  
Oro Valley Police Department  
Tucson Police Department

### MARICOPA WORK GROUP

Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts  
Arizona's Children Association  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections  
Arizona's Fathers & Families Coalition  
ASU Child Welfare Training  
ASU African & African American Studies  
ASU School of Criminology & Criminal Justice  
ASU/Youth in Transition  
Big Brothers/ Big Sisters of Central Arizona  
Calvary Kids Mentoring Program  
Child & Family Resources  
Community Volunteer  
Cross Roads Youth  
Child Crisis Center  
Fresh Start Community Service  
Girls Scouts of Arizona

Jewish Family & Children Services  
Maricopa County Adult Probation  
Middle Ground Prison Reform  
Prison Fellowship Ministries  
Prison Living Magazine  
Save the Family

### PIMA WORK GROUP

Arizona's Children Association  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Tucson  
Casa De Los Ninos  
Easter Seals/ Blake Foundation  
Grandparent Raising Grandchildren  
In-TOW  
Jewish Family & Children's Services  
Juvenile Services Coordinating Council  
Our Family Services  
Pima Community College  
Pima County Attorney's Office  
Pima County Attorney's Office Victim Witness Program  
Pima County School Superintendent's Office  
Southern Arizona Children's Advocacy Center  
Woman's Re-entry Network (WREN)

### COCONINO WORK GROUP

Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Flagstaff  
Flagstaff Police Department  
Coconino County Adult Probation  
Coconino County Juvenile Court Services  
Coconino County Sheriff's Department Detention  
Coconino County Superior Court  
Family Resource Center  
Flagstaff Unified School District  
Genesis-X  
University of Arizona-Coconino Extension Service

### YAVAPAI WORK GROUP

Arizona's Children Association  
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Flagstaff  
Big Brothers/ Big Sisters of Yavapai  
Open Inn Turning Point  
The Salvation Army  
Yavapai County Sheriff's Office  
Yavapai County Superior Court  
Yavapai Family Advocacy Center  
Youth Count

## CONNECTICUT

<b>Lead Agency:</b>	Families in Crisis, Inc.
<b>Contact:</b>	Susan Quinlan, Executive Director Phone: (860) 236-3593 ext. 101 Email: <a href="mailto:quinlan@familiesincrisis.org">quinlan@familiesincrisis.org</a>
<b>Partners:</b>	Connecticut Association of Non-Profits Connecticut Child Advocates Office Connecticut Commission on Children Connecticut Department of Children and Families Connecticut Department of Correction Connecticut Department of Social Services Connecticut Office of the Chief Public Defender Connecticut Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division Connecticut Voices for Children Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters The Tow Foundation United Way of Greater Bridgeport United Way of Greater Hartford United Way of Greater New Haven United Way of Greater Waterbury

## HOW THE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPED

Leaders within Connecticut's partnership view Connecticut as a small state made up of numerous towns and cities that all do things differently. They decided that in order to have the most impact on children of incarcerated parents, it would be necessary to organize a statewide effort, rather than multiple local efforts. The partnership made a strategic decision to keep the partnership small initially and to open membership to others only after establishing the foundation of the partnership's work. The leaders first focused on engaging select public agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and funders. All of the original invitees agreed to participate in the partnership, with the exception of a few United Way offices that were too understaffed. As the project gained momentum, other agencies came forward and expressed interest in joining the partnership.

## PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

In general, the partnership views itself as working collaboratively. The Commission on Children takes the lead in moving the collaborative forward and its staff were instrumental in bringing state legislators to the table.

## PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The goal of the Connecticut Collaboration for the Children of Prisoners Bill of Rights Project is to get legislation passed that mandates services for children of incarcerated parents and provides government appropriations to support those services. If they succeed in getting this legislation passed, they believe it will result in new services that address the varied needs of children and families experiencing parental incarceration. In recognition that each

family is different, this legislation would establish an array of complementary services that could be tailored to the strengths and needs of individual families.

## Project # 1: Establish Senior Level Department of Corrections (DOC) Position to Address Issues of Children of Parents in Prison

The partners met four times to further their understanding of the issues affecting children of incarcerated parents, dialogue about their disparate viewpoints, and develop consensus about their goals. They arrived at the conclusion that, as long as multiple institutions already encounter children with incarcerated parents, the most reasonable thing to do would be to promote the creation of a coordinated response to meeting these children's need. Accordingly, the partnership decided to pursue legislation creating a senior-level position within the Department of Corrections that would be charged with (1) bringing forward issues of children of incarcerated parents, and (2) examining Department of Corrections' policies and practices to make the system more responsive to children of incarcerated parents. In addition, funding would be provided for community-based programs to provide counseling services to children and their families.

The bill was drafted initially during the 2006-2007 legislative session with an accompanying budget of \$1 million. Potential sources of funding included revenues from Connecticut's surplus budget and funding reallocated from agencies already serving these children. The partnership was unable to garner adequate support during the 2006-2007 legislative session to get the bill passed. They plan to reintroduce the bill in the 2007-2008 session and hope to increase support among members of the public through a mass media public education campaign (e.g., local news articles, editorials, national coverage). They have also identified a different legislator to sponsor the bill.

The partnership is optimistic that the time is right for this type of legislation for two reasons. First, there is a renewed interest in Connecticut in prison re-entry and prevention due to overcrowding. Second, leaders at the Connecticut Department of Correction are increasingly interested in studies that show the benefits of family involvement in reducing recidivism.

Some of the goals they hope these services will address include: (1) preventing children from developing physical ailments; (2) reducing children's fears associated with being separated from their caregivers; (3) reducing isolation from peers and withdrawal from activities; (4) preventing developmental regression; (5) reducing anger, aggression, and hostility toward caregivers or other adult authority figures; (6) preventing decline in academic achievement; and (7) reducing the development of delinquent behaviors (stealing, physical violence toward other children, etc).

## FACTORS WORKING FOR SUCCESS

**President's State of the Union Address.** President Bush mentioned children of incarcerated parents in his State of the Union address. Mention of these children by such a high-profile figure helped to establish them as a population needing attention.

**Intergenerational Incarceration.** The second factor that is helping Connecticut gain support for efforts to address the needs of children of incarcerated parents is the belief that these children have an above average probability of becoming the next generation of offenders.

**Prison Overcrowding.** According to the Connecticut partnership, legislators are increasingly paying attention when it comes to the children of inmates. This increased attention stems partly from the volume of people in prison.



**Involvement of Major Players.** Connecticut created conditions that are favorable to the success of their *Bill of Rights* efforts by creating a partnership made up of the state organizations that are major players in the proposed legislation.

## FACTORS WORKING AGAINST SUCCESS

**High Profile Violent Crime.** The partnership does not see children of incarcerated parents as a top priority for the Governor in Connecticut. In fact, sentiments have been running toward more punitive treatment of inmates in the wake of a high profile incident in which two people newly released from prison invaded a home in a high-income neighborhood and sexually assaulted the mother and girls, killed them, and burned the house down. This incident stopped the release of prisoners and has decision makers considering three-strikes legislation.

**Lack of Resources.** Although the Connecticut partnership is well poised to affect change, the lead agency is a small agency with a commitment to a wide range of programs. Their capacity to carry out the work of the partnership is limited by not being able to hire extra staff to support this project, and specifically, to support the public education components of their work.

## ILLINOIS

**Lead Agency:** The Illinois Task Force for Children of Prisoners, Children of Promise

**Contact Person:** Terrie McDermott, Department of Women's Justice Services  
Phone: (773) 869-7731  
E-mail: [tmcderm@cookcountygov.com](mailto:tmcderm@cookcountygov.com)

**Partners:** Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers (CLAIM)  
Community Renewal Society  
Illinois Department of Corrections  
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois  
The Link and Option Center  
Women's Treatment Center

## HOW THE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPED

The Illinois Task Force for Children of Prisoners, Children of Promise pre-dates the Bill of Rights Technical Assistance Project. As many as 50 to 60 groups were involved in the Task Force initially because they believed being part of the Task Force would put them in a better position to compete for federal grants for mentoring children of incarcerated parents. Many groups disengaged after the grants were awarded, but remain in touch with and informed about the work of the Task Force. The partners who are currently involved with the *Bill of Rights* were not at the table to position themselves for federal funding, but have working relationships that pre-date the project.

## PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING

The Department of Women's Justice Services (DWJS) is the lead agency for the Technical Assistance Project. DWJS provides treatment services to women in pretrial detention in the Cook County Jail. It operates under the auspices of the Cook County Sheriff. Another key partner is Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers (CLAIM). CLAIM is a well-established not-for-profit agency that provides legal services to and advocates on behalf of incarcerated mothers and their children. Other active organizations include Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, and Community Renewal Society. Additional organizations participate in the Task Force, but on a more intermittent basis.

The Task Force has a formal set of operating procedures, but does not always strictly follow them. In fact, the group revisited these recently with an eye toward finding ways of improving the structure of the Task Force and communication among members.

The Task Force has a committee structure. Generally, the Task Force meets monthly as a whole with task groups meeting separately as needed. For the most part, member organizations work on *Bill of Rights* projects independently and report their progress to the larger group.

## PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Task Force decided that if the group could put their efforts behind only one initiative, it should be advocacy for legislative changes to increase community-based sentencing. In the meantime, however, member organizations

are pursuing service-related projects. One is an initiative headed by DWJS to implement contact visits for children whose mothers are in treatment during pre-trial detention at the Cook County jail. Another is a project spearheaded by Lutheran Social Services to train school personnel throughout Chicago. There are other things happening within Illinois that could benefit children of incarcerated parents and, although they are not Task Force projects per se, the Task Force is in a position to influence them. For example, the Illinois prison system recently designated a prison that is relatively near to Chicago as a visitation center. This reduces the amount of travel involved in children visiting their parents. Through their ties to other organizations, Task Force members helped influence the decision to make this change.

## **PROJECT # 1: VISITATION FOR MOTHERS IN PRE-TRIAL DETENTION AT COOK COUNTY JAIL**

The Department of Women's Justice Services (DWJS) was able to secure the permission of officials at Cook County Jail for children to have contact visits with mothers in Division 17 of the jail. Women in Division 17 come from the general population and have agreed to take part in an integrated treatment program. The program includes substance abuse and mental health treatment along with auxiliary services such as parenting and education. The program has the capacity to serve 120 women.

Women in Division 17 take part in four weeks of parenting classes in preparation for their visits with their children. The parenting classes are staffed by a community-based organization, Haymarket. A mental health team made up of interning PhD candidates and a staff psychologist also provide services in support of visitation.

According to the Director of DWJS, community partners like Haymarket are critical to the visitation project. Due to the fiscal climate in Cook County, DWJS relied on community-based groups to create the physical visitation area. For example, Bright Horizons, a foundation that disburses funding from corporate sponsors, procured toys and furniture, painted the walls, and built family "pods". Another community-based group, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, arranges for people to talk with mothers about child-related issues and provides volunteers to staff groups for caregivers who bring children to visit their mothers.

Security was another critical consideration. Corrections officers were concerned about contraband being brought into the facility and about maintaining order. Accordingly, part of the process of planning the contact visitation program was regular meetings between security personnel, representatives of the treatment staff, and members of community organizations to work out security details. Because the Sheriff supports the project, corrections officers were motivated to find ways to ensure security while allowing the contact visits to take place.

According to the Director of DWJS, the underlying premise of this program is that face-to-face visitation contributes to mothers' positive bonding with their children and, in turn, will help mothers successfully complete treatment. Additionally, there is the hope that the connections mothers make with community groups will translate into support for them once they leave jail. In terms of the children involved, the expectation is that they will not feel abandoned by their mothers.

## **PROJECT # 2: TRAINING FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

One of the Task Force members, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, has been making presentations to school personnel in order to increase sensitivity to issues affecting children of incarcerated parents. Lutheran Social Services took the lead on this project because of the work they had done taking children to visit their incarcerated mothers. This work made them realize the need for more comprehensive family services and they believed schools could be a focal point for touching the lives of children. The progress Lutheran Social Services is making on this

project is due, in part, to the fact that the agency's Director of Programs previously worked for Chicago Public Schools (CPS).

According to the Program Director, there is an expectation that the training that school personnel will be better able to recognize when children's academic performance and emotional and behavioral well-being are affected by their parents' involvement in the criminal justice system and respond in a confidential, nurturing manner that lets children know someone cares. The expectation is that school personnel will then be able to address issues with sensitivity before they develop into a problem.

Currently, the Director of Programs is the only paid staff person working on this project. She has taken advantage of interns from Masters and PhD programs in Social Work and Psychology to research issues of concern to children of incarcerated parents, create a PowerPoint presentation, and make presentations to schools and parents. The PowerPoint is used as the backbone of a one-hour presentation that covers: (1) statistics on incarceration and the demographic characteristics of children and their parents; (2) information about the social and economic effects parental incarceration has on children; (3) things school personnel should be aware of when dealing with children of incarcerated parents; (4) the "rights" of children; (5) recommendations for working with children of incarcerated parents; and (6) where to get more information.

To date, presentations have been made to key personnel at Chicago Public Schools (CPS), a CPS conference for parents attended by 5,000 people, and three schools where the Director of Programs knew the principals well. System-wide trainings are to begin in November 2007. The first set of presentations will be made to school nurses, psychologists, social workers, and counselors with the hope of eventually also being able to train teachers.

CPS initially rejected Lutheran Social Services' proposal to train school personnel. The Task Force subsequently invited key CPS personnel (e.g., department heads, nurses, social workers, psychologists, counselors, and school administrators) to a meeting the Task Force sponsored in June 2007. This daylong conference featured outside experts on family counseling, families with prisoners, and mentoring programs.

At the same time, Community Renewal Society, another member of the Task Force, published an article about children of incarcerated parents in their publication *The Catalyst*, a paper that focuses on school reform. This helped to establish the issue of children of incarcerated parents as something that CPS needed to address.

As the training project grows, Lutheran Social Services would like to hire a person who is dedicated to working with schools. As a start, they applied for and received a small grant to hire a Family Service Coordinator who has joined in helping with this project.

## FACTORS WORKING FOR SUCCESS

**National attention.** Members of the Task Force attribute their recent success, in part, to the fact that children of incarcerated parents are receiving attention at the national level. The possibility of funding for mentoring programs for children of incarcerated parents, for instance, helped attract attention to this population. Connections with *The Bill of Rights* technical assistance project and connections to outside experts helped to create a sense of being connected to something bigger. This helps to keep energy high, provides a sense of what is possible, and helps in gaining the cooperation of policy makers. For example, it helped in gaining support from Chicago Public Schools for training school personnel.

**Spillover effect of support for re-entry.** Locally, members of the Task Force see the political climate in Chicago "ripening." They attribute this to leadership from the Mayor and Sheriff. The Mayor is supporting efforts to

address prisoner re-entry in Chicago neighborhoods. Although issues affecting returning inmates have become more visible in Chicago, children have not been central to these discussions. Moreover, there is some degree of resentment that city funding is going to groups to work with returning inmates when the city has not funded organizations that work with and for children of incarcerated parents although these organizations have struggled for years to serve this population.

## FACTORS WORKING AGAINST SUCCESS

**Lack of an organization dedicated to addressing the needs of children of incarcerated parents.** Among factors limiting efforts to address the needs of children of incarcerated parents is the fact that there is no organization in Chicago dedicated to working on issues affecting this population. Consequently, there is no persistent advocacy and “the work can only go so far.”

**Lack of resources.** The Task Force has the potential to link people from a number of organizations together to focus on children of incarcerated parents, but member organizations are often underfunded and overextended; their priority is organizational survival. This affects their ability to participate consistently in the Task Force and to lend their time and energy to sustained efforts to address large-scale policy issues.

**Budget crises.** One of the challenges the Task Force faced is the Cook County and Illinois governments’ pre-occupation with budget problems. During the Technical Assistance Project, there was a period when the lead agency, DWJS, was at risk of being dissolved because of short falls in the county budget. In addition, one of the partner’s, Chicago Renewal Society, obtained a commitment from a State legislator to hold a hearing on children of incarcerated parents, but it was pre-empted by budget debates. In fact, because of the priority given to the budget, a number of issues affecting children of incarcerated parents and, more generally, poor families were put on hold.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**Lead Agency:** Community Action, Inc.

**Contact Person:** Deborah Linett  
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**Partners:** Essex County Correctional Facility Women in Transition (WIT)  
Haverhill Police Department  
Haverhill Probation Department  
Massachusetts Department of Social Services (DSS) Region 3 Office  
Office of Senator Baddour of Massachusetts

## HOW THE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPED

The Massachusetts Bill of Rights partnership builds on previously established working relationships among organizations committed to addressing issues confronting children of incarcerated parents.

## PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING

The partners meet every two months via teleconferencing calls. These are scheduled to coincide with the Family Corrections Network broadcasts. All of the partners take part in decision-making. Each partner contributes to the partnership in a unique way: The Haverhill Probation Department provides experience working with Corrections; Head Start contributed staff time; and The Peter and Elizabeth Tower Foundation provide funding for books and training. In addition, the partnership benefited from a Wheelock College Family and Child Studies Division intern who worked on the project and provided administration support.

## PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### PROJECT # 1: MOTHEREAD IN WOMEN'S PRISON

The partnership implemented the Motherhead literacy program in the Women's Prison in Salisbury. Motherhead is a voluntary, ten-week program that uses children's books to train parents to read, about the importance of reading, and how to use literature to make sense of their own lives. Participants read a minimum of ten books. The books are kept in the prison offices and brought out at the beginning of the activities.

Every book has a related activity with specific questions for parents to ask their children. In addition, parents engage in discussions about their past and their future with their children. There are also activities for children. They can talk about the book, draw, act out the scenes, or discuss present day problems with their parents.

The logic behind this program is that it gives children an opportunity to spend quality time with their mothers during visitation. The activities are meant to be fun for children and help them build good childhood memories. More specifically, there is the belief that children will feel more connected to their parents, have a greater sense of belonging, and know their parents "are there for them".

According to a partnership representative, this program also strengthens the bonds between children and their mothers. The activities give mothers a way to show affection for their children and children feel their mothers are interested in them. The program also gives mothers an opportunity to teach their children to read and demonstrate interest in their children's education. In turn, the partners expect children to do better in school, get into less trouble, and have a lower likelihood of becoming involved in delinquency.

## FACTORS WORKING FOR SUCCESS

**Private funding and volunteers.** Motherhead has relied on private funding and benefits from substantial volunteer support.

**Support of Sheriff.** The Essex County Sheriff is proud of the Motherhead program, involved, and supportive.

**Public attitudes.** The general public is supportive of the aims of Motherhead; i.e., promoting literacy, improving parenting, and prevention of adverse child outcomes.

## FACTORS WORKING AGAINST SUCCESS

**Funding cuts.** Funds for Motherhead have been decreasing every year. It needs more volunteers and administrative support.

## MINNESOTA

**Lead Agency:** Council on Crime and Justice

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**Original Partners:**

African American Family Services  
MN Department of Corrections  
Twin Cities Big Brothers, Big Sisters  
Women Planting Seeds

**New Partners:**

Bridge Builders  
Girl Scouts Beyond Bars  
Mentoring Partnership of MN  
Montana Adoption Resource Network  
Salvation Army

## HOW THE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPED

The Soros Senior Fellow, Dee Ann Newell, visited Minnesota at the beginning of the Bill of Rights Technical Assistance Project. According to the lead agency, her visit “sparked everything off.” People were excited about being part of a “national demonstration project.”

The Soros Fellow provided regular updates on what was happening in other partnerships as well as copies of newsletters and other materials including the arrest protocols that are being developed in San Francisco and Connecticut. As time passed and the partners began to settle on an agenda, there was a drop in participation. There were initially 32 partners, but this decreased to the ten core partners listed above. Although participation has declined, the partnership still receives input from some of the previous participants.

The partnering agencies have been working together for different amounts of time. The Council on Crime and Justice has a longstanding relationship with the Department of Correction that involves exchanging emails and keeping in touch by phone with key personnel. The Council has been working with Big Brothers Big Sisters for several years and provides Big Brothers Big Sisters with regular training for mentors working with children of incarcerated parents. The Council has been working with African American Family Services since 2006. Women Planting Seeds is a relatively new non-profit, but according to the lead agency’s representative, the director of that organization is an excellent parent educator and children’s circle facilitator and has been working with the Council’s statewide family strengthening project for several years.

## PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

The Minnesota partners meet monthly and review what each partner is doing with children of incarcerated parents and what they would do if they had money to put an agenda in place. Everyone takes part in the decisions, but because the Council on Crime and Justice convenes the group, there is an assumption that the Council will find resources and funding to move forward. In contrast, the informant from the Council feels that the partnership



needs to figure out how to pursue resources together and make decisions about which partner is the best suited to take the lead on a project-by-project basis.

The partnership has a high level of commitment to children of incarcerated parents, but continuously struggles with a lack of resources. They are being forced to scale back until resources can be secured. Consequently, the partnership will not meet during November and December 2007 and may meet every other month after that.

## PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### PROJECT 1: EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Initially, representatives from the school system attended partnership meetings. They indicated that social workers and psychologists in schools feel left on their own in working with children of incarcerated parents because they do not know where to go for information or what programs provide good support for children.

At the invitation of the schools, the partnership began providing education in schools so that those working with children of incarcerated parents could work with them “holistically”. They intend to provide a directory of community resources and to specify a protocol for working with children of incarcerated parents. The protocol is important because there is fear in the African American and Native American communities that calling attention to children of incarcerated parents may exacerbate officials becoming involved in families.

Currently, the partnership has conducted workshops on children of incarcerated parent with 100 school-based social workers and psychologists. The workshop presents what the partnership refers to as a holistic overview of the issue of parental incarceration, the national *Bill of Rights* agenda, and introduces the work of some of the organizations in the partnership. There are also two PhD students who are compiling information about potential best practices.

The partnership relies on interns to conduct the workshops and plans to continue conducting workshops on a regular basis over the next two- to three-years until the information is engrained in the institutions. They expect these workshops to lead to a continual dialogue between the partnership and school personnel that will help the partnership learn about additional problems children of incarcerated parents face and develop a more comprehensive plan for addressing those needs.

The partnership has also participated in dialogues with about 25 agencies that provide crisis and advocacy services related to the out-of-home placement of African American children.

### PROJECT 2: ARREST PROTOCOLS FOR MINNEAPOLIS AND ST. PAUL POLICE DEPARTMENTS (PLANNED)

The partnership hopes to develop a relationship with the Minneapolis and St. Paul Police Departments that will lead to the development of arrest protocols. They would like the police to regard the partnerships as partners in a joint prevention strategy. Currently, a community crime prevention officer is attending partnership meetings on a regular basis.

### PROJECT 3: DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS VISITATION AND COMMUNICATION POLICIES (PLANNED)

The partnership also hopes to bring about changes in the quality of the visitation environment in Department of Correction facilities and to look at other forms of communication (e.g., e-communication) that will let parents and their children stay connected. The partnership has talked with DOC, but has not pushed formally because the program needs money to work. Consequently, partners are being encouraged to think strategically about how to change communication without additional resources.

## PROJECT 4 – PUBLIC AWARENESS (PLANNED)

The partnership intends to use their network of members to conduct a broadband awareness campaign. They are currently working with core counties of a metro area, local newspapers, state newspapers, and radio shows. The main aim of the awareness campaign is to build momentum for a push to have the Minnesota Legislature pass a children's Bill of Rights by 2009.

Partners have agreed to begin hosting events that educate people about the way partners are working with children of incarcerated parents and draw broader implications from their work. Each partner agency will organize events within their own networks. For instance, a group of children in foster care that are known to the Minnesota Adoption Resource Network are currently planning to educate people about the way the children in foster care are treated (Our Voice Counts). They are setting up a mock legislative committee in order to practice testifying at a legislative hearing.

The partnership has begun talking with the local affiliate of the Children's Defense Fund, and an organization (Peace Foundation) that works in neighborhoods with the highest violent crime rates. These two groups—the local Children's Defense Fund and the Peace Foundation—conducted an event in November in which they brought in a national organizer on issues affecting children of incarcerated parents.

## FACTORS WORKING FOR SUCCESS

**The power of networks.** There is a growing sense that the problems experienced by children of incarcerated parents are real. An abundance of assets exist that can be tapped into if people are organized to act. Tapping into existing networks creates the potential for a large movement with “rapid fire” capabilities.

## FACTORS WORKING AGAINST SUCCESS

**Expectations.** In this particular partnership, there was an assumption that the Council of Crime and Justice would lead the agenda; however, their intention was to be the convener, not the leader. There were many reasons The Council was seen as the leader including the fact that the agency has existed for 50 years and has relevant expertise. The invitation to others to form a partnership and take leadership roles did not take root. Because of the perception that the Council was supposed to lead the partnership, some feel that the Council failed and let others down.

**Narrow understanding of the issue.** The second thing working against the success of the partnership, according to a representative of the lead agency, is that people have a tendency to look at this issue through a behavioral change approach; they mobilize resources to change “those people” (e.g., caregivers, children) to make them conform to middle class norms when resources to join the middle class are absent.

**The “theory of change” is ambiguous.** The biggest constraint is general ignorance about the reality confronting children of incarcerated parents. *The Bill of Rights* is a new agenda item and the partnership did not do enough

mass awareness building. Because of this, funders are raising many questions. This problem is compounded because “the theory of change seems ambiguous”.

**Apartheid.** Another factor a lead agency representative identified as hindering the work of the partnership is “apartheid”, meaning that the people who are most affected are not at the table. Instead, the people who are at the table are professionals and experts who are talking about the affected population, not *with* them.

**Lack of resources.** Many not-for-profits are inundated by problems, including a lack of time and space. Because resources are hard to come by, “many agencies get caught up in an ugly scramble for cash, and may not be as intentional about what they do and how they do it”.

# MONTANA

<b>Lead Agency:</b>	Montana Head Start/State Collaboration Office
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Mary Jane Standaert Phone: (406) 444-0589 Email: <a href="mailto:mjstandaert@mt.gov">mjstandaert@mt.gov</a>
<b>Partners:</b>	Community Representative Court Appointed Special Advocates of Montana Family Tree and the Parenting Place Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Montana Dads Incarcerated Montana Department of Corrections Montana Department of Health and Human Services (Child & Family Services) Montana Children's Trust Fund Rural Dynamics, Inc. Montana Head Start Association Montana Head Start/State Collaboration Office Rocky Mountain Development Council Head Start

## HOW THE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPED

The Montana Bill of Rights partnership was started through the efforts of the Head Start State Collaboration Office and the Rocky Mountain Development Council Head Start (RMDC). It includes not-for-profit organizations that provide parent education in both the Montana Women's and Men's Prison (Family Tree and the Parenting Place), a bedtime storybook program for fathers in prison (Montana Dads Incarcerated), support for relatives who care for children while parents are in prison (Grandparents Raising Grandchildren), and advocacy on behalf of children involved in the child welfare system (CASA). Representatives of the Montana Department of Corrections and Department of Public Health and Human Services are also active partners. The community representative has affiliations with Head Start and the Department of Corrections, as well as personal experience with family incarceration.

The Montana Partnership was formed after Mary Jane Standaert of the Montana Head Start/State Collaborative received an email from a colleague at RMDC announcing a request for proposals for technical assistance for groups interested in implementing a Children's Bill of Rights Project. Ms. Standaert was personally intrigued by this opportunity to work for improvements in the lives of these children. She replied to the email announcement indicating her interest in the project; others soon responded, expressing their own interest in creating a Bill of Rights project for children of incarcerated parents in Montana. Ms. Standaert then initiated a meeting with Department of Corrections (DOC) and Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) representatives to discuss the feasibility of applying for technical assistance. This initial group worked on the application process together, and spent time during the application phase identifying other potential partners. Although a number of other organizations initially expressed interest in participating in this project, the organizations that ended up taking an active role in the partnership are those that had the capacity to be fully and actively involved.

## PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING

The Montana Partnership employs a collaborative working model. The partners share in decision-making and have joint responsibility for the partnership's work. They meet monthly to discuss their goals and progress. The representative from the lead agency is responsible for facilitating the work of the partnership; she facilitates communication between the various partners, provides administrative support, and checks in with people about the progress they are making on specific project tasks. She is regarded more as a coordinator than a project leader.

## PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Montana partnership spent their initial months of collaboration recruiting additional partners, developing ideas about how best to proceed, and establishing sound working relationships. During this time, the partners realized a need to become better acquainted with each other and learn about each other's work. For example, staff from the DOC provided the other partners with concrete information about how DOC operates. In return, the Montana Head Start program provided the group with information on child development. This exchange of information helped the partnership to clarify its goals. After approximately six months of technical assistance and meetings, the partnership came to consensus on their first project, a "toolkit" containing information parents and caregivers need to know when communicating with children about parental incarceration and criminal justice system processes. In the future, they would like to create a version of this toolkit for professionals.

### PROJECT # 1: INFORMATIONAL TOOLKIT FOR INCARCERATED PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN'S CAREGIVERS

Montana is developing a written document that will be distributed through the Department of Corrections to parents in all prisons throughout the state. It will also be disseminated to caregivers of children with incarcerated parents through a variety of institutions such as local Head Start offices, county health care systems, and county public assistance offices. The document is intended to help incarcerated parents and other caregivers communicate with children about the processes and experiences of the criminal justice system (e.g., arrest, sentencing, and so forth). Although it will be distributed to parents and caregivers of children of all ages, it emphasizes the issues of young children. The partnership plans to pool resources from their various organizations to print the initial quantity of these toolkits.

### PROJECT #2: INFORMATIONAL TOOLKIT FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS (PLANNED)

The Montana partnership would like to produce a version of the toolkit for professionals such as school staff, social service workers, and medical personnel. In order to do so, however, they must first raise funding for the production and distribution of these materials.

## FACTORS WORKING FOR SUCCESS

**Support of Governor.** From the onset, key stakeholders expressed a strong interest in supporting incarcerated parents and their children and caregivers. In particular, Montana's Governor Schweitzer has been supportive of *The Bill of Rights* initiative, as has his advisor, Anna Whiting-Sorrell. Governor Schweitzer is a popular state official and is expected to be re-elected.

**Stability.** The original partners have been consistently involved in the Montana *Bill of Rights* partnership, and the group has been fortunate not to have experienced staff transitions among the major partners.

## FACTORS WORKING AGAINST SUCCESS

**Lack of funding.** The partnership's work is hindered by a lack of funding, which limits staffing for the project. The group applied for a Vista volunteer through the Montana Legal Services Poverty Law Project, and their application is currently pending approval. If approved, the Vista volunteer would be work on partnership projects for one year and would be responsible for coordination and administrative support. The Department of Corrections is another possible source of support. Funding for Montana's state prison system was increased in the 2007 state legislative session. Although there was not a specific set aside for The Bill of Rights project, the increased funding could free up other funding that could then be used to support the work of the Montana partnership.

## PENNSYLVANIA (PITTSBURGH)

**Lead Agency 1:** Lydia's Place

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**Lead Agency 2:** Families Outside

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**Partners:** Allegheny Jail Collaborative (group of 25 agencies)  
Amachi, Pittsburgh  
Every Child, Inc.  
Goodwill Industries  
Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation  
Second Chance, Inc.

## HOW THE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPED

The Pittsburgh partnership developed out of a shared experience working with families with incarcerated parents and began meeting together in the fall of 2006.

## PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING

The Pittsburgh partnership is a loosely structured group of organizations with experience helping families with incarcerated parents. Monthly meetings are held to discuss the partnership's two main projects (i.e. court-ordered jail visitation, and training for law enforcement officers), but otherwise meetings are only scheduled as needed. The partnership has the benefit of an employee that was hired by the Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation to facilitate communication among the partners and coordinate activities.

## PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### PROJECT #1: COURT-ORDERED VISITS WITH PARENTS IN JAIL

The aim of the jail visitation project is to implement policy changes so that incarcerated parents in Alleghany County receive visits from their children when visits have been ordered by the family court. In addition to the partners listed above, the head of the local child welfare system, the head of the family court, the warden of the jail, and attorneys representing children were involved in this initiative. This project is important because of its potential to prevent parents' parental rights from being terminated.

To begin, the Pittsburgh partners worked closely with judges in Alleghany County and jail officials to identify problems that prevented parents from receiving visits that the courts had ordered parents to receive. These

included problems scheduling transportation for children to get to the jail, excessively long waits before children could see their parents once they arrived at the jail, and the fact that child welfare case workers did not always go to the jail to observe visits. The latter is important because when caseworkers do not observe the interaction between children and their parents, they are unable to make informed recommendations to the courts in child welfare hearings.

After studying the matter, the partnership prepared a written report describing the situation and recommending changes. The final report was submitted to the head judge of the family court who is issuing a set of directives on how child welfare workers should handle court-ordered visitation when parents are incarcerated. The warden also agreed to make it policy for correctional officers to give priority during normal visitation periods to children who have court-ordered visits, and, if needed, to expand visitation times to ensure that the court's orders are carried out. Ideally, the partnership would like to have someone from the child welfare department assigned as a liaison to coordinate with the jail, but this may not be possible because of constraints on the resources of the child welfare department.

## **PROJECT #2: LAW ENFORCEMENT ARREST PROTOCOL**

The Pittsburgh partnership is spearheading a project to develop a protocol for law enforcement officers in Allegheny County to follow when they arrest parents. The intent of the protocol is to provide instruction to police officers on what to do and what not to do when children are present when parents are arrested so that arrest will be less traumatic for children. The protocol will also encourage officers to allow parents to identify and contact someone to take responsibility for their children. This is expected to reduce the number of children that become involved with the child welfare system simply because their parent has been taken into custody. Eventually, two to three agencies will be identified and contracted with to provide a safe place for children to wait to be picked up by family members. Either a professional transportation service or the police will transport children to these agencies. The partnership is beginning to circulate names of agencies and locate funding for the respite agencies and transportation services.

To date, the partnership has met with a number of police departments in Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh police-training academy. The training academy formed a committee to look at the issue and create a model protocol. The partnership consults with the police who are hoping to disseminate the protocol throughout the 73 police departments in Pittsburgh once it is approved via a county Executive Directive.

## **PROJECT #3: FAMILY AND CORRECTIONS SATELLITE BROADCASTS**

Lydia's Place, one of the partnership's lead agencies, purchases real-time satellite broadcasts from the Family and Corrections Network at the cost of \$100.00 per broadcast. The broadcasts address various issues pertaining to children of the incarcerated. Prior to the broadcast, Lydia's Place sends emails to approximately 200 people inviting them to attend at no cost to them. There is discussion following the broadcast based on handouts and discussion points provided by Family and Corrections Network. The goal of this project is to raise awareness of issues related to children of incarcerated parents, which the partnerships hopes will lead to this population of children receiving better services.



## FACTORS WORKING FOR SUCCESS

**Support from within key systems.** One of the factors that the Pittsburgh partnership identified as contributing to their success is relationships with supportive individuals in key systems such as the family courts, the child welfare system, and police departments.

**Experience with policy advocacy.** Members of the partnership have considerable past experience with policy advocacy.

**Being associated with a project funded by the Soros Foundation.** The partnership believes it benefits from being associated with a project that is being supported by the Soros Foundation because of the prestige of this foundation.

## FACTORS WORKING AGAINST SUCCESS

**Funding cuts.** One of the factors working against the success of the partnership is cuts in federal funding for child welfare services. For example, because of limited resources, it may not be feasible to designate someone within the child welfare system to coordinate court-ordered visits for incarcerated parents.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

<b>Lead Agency:</b>	The Institute on Family & Neighborhood Life (IFNL), Clemson University
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Robin Kimbrough-Melton, JD Phone: (864) 656-6285 Email: rkimbrow@clemson.edu
<b>Partners:</b>	A Better Way Children's Trust Fund Every Child Matters League of Women Voters Prison Fellowship of SC SHARE/Head Start Soteria World Outreach Ministries SC Correctional Association Task Force on Female Adult and Juvenile Offenders South Carolina Department of Corrections South Carolina to Prevent Child Abuse Voices of South Carolina's Children We Stand for Kids

## HOW THE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPED

The members of this partnership are involved in this project because of their mutual interest in children of incarcerated parents and a shared sense of direction. Many of the partners worked together prior to the technical assistance project.

## PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING

The South Carolina partnership does not hold regularly scheduled meetings of all partners; however, subsets of partners meet together on a recurring basis. The common link among these groups is Ms. Kimbrough-Melton of The Institute on Family & Neighborhood Life at Clemson University. She disseminates information across different subgroups of partners.

## PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The South Carolina partnership established three aims that build upon each other. The first is compiling white papers on issues relevant to children of incarcerated parents; the second is presenting those papers at a state conference; and the third is taking what they learn at the state conference and presenting it at regional forums throughout the state. The white papers, state conference, and regional forums are intended to instill in communities a sense of responsibility for supporting children of incarcerated parents and result in networks through which children will receive social support and the concrete resources that they need.

The partnership expects these projects to create awareness of how high the rate of incarceration is in South Carolina and how local communities are being affected. Their perception is that it is too easy for people to write off offenders and ignore the collateral consequences that criminal justice policies and practices have on families.

As a result of their efforts, the South Carolina partnership envisions children having access to psychological assistance and concrete services from the time their parents' first encounter the criminal justice system. In terms of expected outcomes, the partnership hopes to prevent children of incarcerated parents from "moving down the path of academic failure and juvenile delinquency". They believe people will be more sensitive in their treatment of these children and react differently to them. As a result, they expect children to feel more connected to their communities and less stigmatized and ashamed.

The South Carolina partnership would also like the Governor to appoint a commission to look at more broad-based issues. Accordingly, the partnership is pushing behind the scenes to get the Governor to appoint a re-entry commission.

The partnership also believes it is important to develop a system for tracking the children of people coming into the system in order to identify affected children. They foresee this helping them to reach out to help children, caregivers, and parents when parents re-enter communities after prison.

## FACTORS WORKING FOR SUCCESS

**University leadership.** The lead agency for this partnership is a university. This helps in bringing groups together because of the perception that the university is a neutral entity with no specific agenda.

**Tapping pre-existing networks.** Some of the partners (e.g., The League of Women Voters, the Department of Corrections, South Carolina to Prevent Child Abuse, and Voices of South Carolina's Children) are part of broad, pre-existing networks. The partnership is able to tap various sources of political and social capital through these networks.

**State budget crisis.** The state budget crisis is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it creates an incentive for the Department of Corrections and other agencies to consider new options. On the other hand, the budget crisis places fiscal limits on options for change.

## FACTORS WORKING AGAINST SUCCESS

**Lack of public awareness and leadership.** There is a general lack of awareness about the extent to which children are affected by the incarceration of parents and a lack of leadership on the issue.

**Competing issues.** The Department of Correction is supportive of the partnerships goals, but has to deal with competing problems such as how best to manage overcrowded prisons.

## TENNESSEE

**Lead Agency:** Reconciliation Ministries, Inc.

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**Partners:** Big Brothers Big Sisters of Middle Tennessee (Amachi initiative)  
Families Free  
New Wings Ministry  
Parents in Prison  
Prison Fellowship  
Shelby County Division of Corrections  
Tennessee's Community Service Agencies (CSA)

## HOW THE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPED

The partnership, The Alliance for Tennessee's Children of Prisoners, has been working together for about one year; many members did not know each other prior to the technical assistance project. Tennessee's application listed a large number of criminal justice system organizations as partners; however, many of these organizations chose not to participate as full members. The active partners are a mix of government (Tennessee's Community Service Agencies and Shelby County Division of Corrections) and not-for-profit agencies (Big Brother Big Sisters, Parents in Prison, New Wings Ministry, Prison Fellowship, and Families Free).

## PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING

Alliance members meet together monthly, using teleconferencing to connect partners from different regions of the state. The Department of Corrections provides support by making its videoconferencing technology available to the partnership. The partners work collaboratively. Each partner brings their own perspective and information from their individual agencies and contributes to joint decision making about the work of the partnership.

## PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Alliance created and distributed a newsletter about children of incarcerated parents. They also worked with the legislature to pass a joint resolution calling for a survey of inmates and the formation of a committee to identify ways to improve outcomes for children of incarcerated parents.

### PROJECT #1: NEWSLETTER

Early on, Reconciliation Ministries and the Shelby County Division of Corrections decided that criminal justice practitioners needed to understand how their decisions affected the lives of prisoners' families (including their children) and about existing resources for these populations. To that end, The Alliance's first project was producing and distributing a newsletter.

The Alliance organized Committees to carry out the work of producing the newsletter. This included a Distribution Committee, Contents Committee, Design and Layout Committee, and Proof and Editing Committee. Representatives from Alliance agencies wrote articles, collaborated, and discussed the newsletter content in monthly meetings. Topics covered in the newsletter included inter-generational incarceration, poverty, and children's involvement in gangs. The newsletter also included stories and articles contributed by the family members and children of inmates and profiles of member organizations.

For a year, the Alliance distributed the newsletter on a bi-monthly basis. As people became aware of the newsletter, individuals contacted The Alliance and asked to be added to the distribution list. The newsletter had a readership of approximately 3,000 people. It was distributed primarily by email; however, hard copies were mailed to inmate's family members on the distribution list who did not have access to email. A prison-based print shop produced the hard copies for The Alliance.

In distributing the newsletter, The Alliance was attempting to secure for children the rights to be considered when decisions are made about them or their parents. One success they had in this regard came about because of an article in the newsletter about a father from a rural area of the State who was awaiting trial. The father's defense attorney contacted The Alliance and asked them to provide a letter informing the judge who was presiding over the case about the possible adverse consequences the father's incarceration might have for his three young children. In this particular situation, there was the possibility of the children being split up or placed in foster homes because there were no relatives with the resources to care for all three children. Alliance members, with the help of the Soros Fellow, prepared a statement for the court containing statistics about the consequences of parental incarceration for children, in general, and the particular repercussions of parental incarceration for the children in this specific case.

## PROJECT #2: INMATE SURVEY AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Alliance worked to get the Tennessee Legislature to pass a joint resolution calling for a survey of inmates and the formation of a committee to identify ways to improve outcomes for children of incarcerated parents. This is not the first such resolution passed in Tennessee. The Legislature passed a similar resolution and conducted a similar survey in 1994.

The goals of the new resolution were determined through discussion between members of the Alliance and the Department of Corrections. The Director of Reconciliation Ministries won support for the new resolution from Claire Deroder, the Director of the Oversight Committee on Corrections. Ms. Deroder is a well-respected champion for children. With Ms. Deroder's help, The Alliance was able to persuade a State Senator and State Representative to sponsor the new resolution. The resolution was treated as a non-controversial bill in the Senate and, on the House side, it passed with only minimal discussion. The Governor of Tennessee subsequently signed the resolution.

The Department of Correction's Research and Planning Division is currently designing the survey. The survey will provide updated information on (1) the demographic characteristics of inmates, (2) their experiences with domestic violence and mental illness, and (3) the living arrangements of inmate's children.

The survey results will be presented to the Oversight Committee on Corrections. The resolution calls for the Oversight Committee to work with a group of approximately 40 public and private agencies to develop a strategic plan to improve outcomes for children of incarcerated parents. The Alliance will make recommendations for the strategic plan. One of their hopes is that the strategic planning process will lead to better coordination of existing services and to new services (particularly services that help children deal with the emotional impact of parental incarceration).

## FACTORS WORKING FOR SUCCESS

**Involving the right people.** The Executive Director of the lead agency attributes The Alliance's success with the newsletter to the fact that The Alliance brought together the right group of people. The people who took part in producing the newsletter were people who had stories they wanted to tell about inmates' children and families and who were interested in criminal justice practitioners learning about the issues affecting these populations.

**Interest in children of incarcerated parents.** Another factor working in The Alliance's favor is community interest in children of incarcerated parents. According to the lead agency's Executive Director, "Tennessee is a state that really understands and knows something about children and families of prisoners". Interest in this population is due partly to the work Reconciliation Ministries has done over the past 20 years to call attention to the issues affecting these children. The agency expects that when the new inmate survey is complete, it will generate even more interest in this population.

## FACTORS WORKING AGAINST SUCCESS

**Time.** The major factor working against The Alliance is time. Because of the time-limited nature of the technical assistance project, The Alliance was not able to tackle reforms to address all of the rights listed in *The Bill of Rights*. The Executive Director of Reconciliation Ministries is hopeful, however, that the strategic planning process that is gearing up in Tennessee will sustain the work Tennessee is doing to secure improvements for children of incarcerated parents.

## TEXAS

**Lead agency:** Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable

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Phone:

**Initial**

**Partners:** City of Austin  
Family Connections  
Texas Department of Corrections  
Texas Inmate Families Association  
Travis County Sheriff's Office  
Travis County Criminal Justice Planning Department

**New Partners:**

02 Weed & Seed Program 78702 (Re-entry subcommittee Weed & Seed)  
Attorney General Office, State of Texas  
Austin Police Department  
Austin Public Library  
Austin/Travis County Mental Health Mental Retardation  
Big Brothers Big Sisters  
CMA Consulting Services - Regional Manager, Texas Office  
Travis County Commissioner  
Jail Mail Art  
Project Matthew (Dallas)  
Seedling Foundation  
Success by Six, United Way  
Texans Care for Children  
Texas Department of Criminal Justice  
Texas Jail Project  
Texas Worksource Commission  
The Austin Project  
The Wright House  
Travis Co. District Attorney's Office  
Travis Co. Human Health Services  
Wholly Committed Ministries  
Working2Change  
YWCA/Girls Scouts beyond Bars

## HOW THE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPED

In Texas, the application for technical assistance was submitted by the Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable. Their initial efforts to recruit partners to pursue work related to the rights of children of incarcerated parents focused on agencies that the original partners had worked with in the past. Other organizations joined when

community providers who were involved in *The Bill of Rights* work suggested to them that they could contribute and benefit from involvement in this effort.

In January 2007, the Soros Senior Fellow, Dee Ann Newell, made a presentation introducing *The Bill of Rights*. There was a second training in August during which Nell Bernstein, one of the people involved in authoring *The Bill of Rights*, presented information on issues confronting children of incarcerated parents. As part of the training, there was also a panel discussion of issues related to working with children of incarcerated parents, and Ann Adalist-Estrin of the Family and Corrections Network provided a three-hour session for counselors on strategies for working with children of incarcerated parents. Attendees received the *Travis County Resource Guide* with an addendum listing service providers working with ex-offenders and their families.

## PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING

The work to assist children and families affected by parental incarceration is carried out primarily by the Support Services Committee of the larger Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable. The committee's charge is to identify, support, and develop systems for successful offender reentry into families and communities in a manner that supports victims and promotes public safety. Their work is complemented by that of the other Roundtable Committees, including the Policy Reform Committee, Employment Committee, and Evidence-based Practice Committee. The Chair of each committee is part of the larger planning council of the Roundtable. It is within this larger structure that the Support Services Committee carries forth its work.

The Committee is an all-volunteer group that meets on a monthly basis. The Committee Co-chairs, Thomas Cruz and David Goldstein, are responsible for project management and administrative support for the group. They brought priority issues to the table for discussion and consensus building. Planning for *Bill of Rights* initiatives is developed and pushed forward through the active participation of members in committee meetings. The group always looks for consensus in decision-making, but officially operates by majority rule.

Some committee members play a more active role in the work than other members, however this is usually due to how closely specific projects correspond with their line of work. The committee also engages power brokers, such as the Austin Police Department, in selected meetings as a means of securing the involvement and commitment of others.

## PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The work undertaken by the Roundtable to secure the rights of children of incarcerated parents is outlined below. In addition to these specific projects, the Roundtable also regularly monitors legislation. For example, they are aware of two legislative issues that have the potential to affect communication and contact between incarcerated parents and their children. One is the Prisoner Phone Access Law and the other is the Infant and Pregnant Mother's Law. They will be examining these pieces of legislation for gaps and barriers in implementation.

### PROJECT #1: TRAINING COUNSELORS TO WORK WITH CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

One of the projects the Texas partnership undertook was to work within the Austin Independent School District to identify, connect with, and support children of incarcerated parents. To this end, approximately 325 school counselors who work with preschool and elementary school children received three hours training from Ann Adalist-Estrin of the Family and Corrections Network in August 2007.



This component of the Texas initiative is intended to improve the overall well-being of children dealing with both current and former parental incarceration. Because of increased school support, the Texas partnership believes that children will perform better academically, experience fewer emotional problems, and have an improved sense of support and security. This additional school support is expected to provide a safety net that encourages resiliency in children. The long-term goal of this component is for fewer children to end up in the prison system, helping to break the cycle of intergenerational imprisonment.

## PROJECT #2: FAMILY VISITATION AT THE TRAVIS STATE JAIL

Another goal of the partnership is to plan, develop, and implement family visitation at the Travis State Jail. This project is in the planning and development stage. To date, the partnership has co-sponsored a meeting at the Travis State Jail to introduce the concept of Family Visitation and discuss staffing needs, program components, and funding requirements.

Going forward, the Committee will continue to develop concrete plans for Family Visitation. They are considering applying for an Americorp and/or Vista volunteer (programs funded through the National Service Corporation) to secure volunteers to staff Family Visitation. The volunteer would be responsible for administration of the project and oversight of the Family Visitation volunteers. The committee will hold meetings with key players (i.e., the warden of the Travis State Jail, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, and relevant county service providers) to outline the implementation plan. The involvement of the Warden is critical to the approval and implementation of this project.

The goal of this project is to reduce damage in the parent-child bond that results from parental incarceration. Because of improved bonding, children are expected to feel more secure and supported, and to be in a better position to reunite with their incarcerated parent after his/her release (when applicable). According to the informant, an underlying premise of the visitation program is the belief that visitation will reduce the negative impact of incarceration on the child by reducing the likelihood of their parent's re-incarceration and improving their parent's re-entry into the community and family. Moreover, they expect family visiting to reduce acting out behaviors among adolescents stemming from their negative feelings toward the criminal justice system.

## PROJECTS UNDER DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the projects described above that are underway, the Roundtable has also selected additional projects as priorities for 2008: (1) implementing arrest protocols, (2) implementing family impact statements, and (3) a statewide public education campaign.

The Roundtable would like to see the Austin Police Department and the Travis County Sheriff's Department adopt protocols for officers to follow when arresting parents. Currently, the Roundtable is working to engage the Police Department and Sheriff's Department in assessing their current practices in order to identify areas for improvement. They are also reviewing arrest protocols that are being used in other states that could serve as models for change.

The Roundtable is also considering plans to implement family impact statements. These are reports of the potential impact that a parent's incarceration might have on his or her children for the courts to consider when parents are sentenced. They are currently gathering information on the use of family impact statements in other states and have begun to have conversations with non-profit providers about this idea.

Additionally, the Roundtable is considering plans to develop and implement a statewide public education campaign to raise awareness of the issues addressed in *The Bill of Rights* and foster support for services to meet the needs of children of incarcerated parents. In furtherance of this goal, they have begun to identify partners in Dallas, San Antonio, and Houston

## FUTURE GOALS

In addition to their current projects and plans for 2008, the Roundtable has identified other possible projects for the future. For example, they would like to develop a method for providing information to the family members of parents who are leaving the supervision of the criminal justice system so they will understand the process. In addition, they would like to design and implement a ceremony marking the incarcerated parent's transition from incarceration to freedom and reunion with the family and to make family service coordinators available at the county and state jails to help prepare inmates for a successful transition.

## FACTORS WORKING FOR SUCCESS

**Support for addressing the needs of children of incarcerated parents.** Currently, there is local and statewide support for addressing the needs of children of incarcerated parents and for supportive re-entry services, as evidenced by the work of the Texas Restorative Justice Network, Re-entry Roundtable and Justice Council. The Re-entry Roundtable is focused on promoting evidence-based practices, which lends strength to the partnerships efforts to increase, enhance, and expand services.

**Full-time administrative director.** The Reentry Roundtable has recently hired a full time Administrative Director to support the efforts of the Planning Council and Committee Chairs.

**Bi-partisan legislative support.** Although the general atmosphere in the state is conservative, there is bi-partisan support within the state legislature for new bills to address the needs of children of incarcerated parents. Recently, Texas passed two bills that affect incarcerated parents and their children. These bills were successful in moving through the legislature because of educational and advocacy efforts that have highlighted the impact of over-incarceration and raised awareness of children's needs.

**Existing programs.** The Storybook Project meshed well with faith-based restorative justice initiatives and helped to break stereotypes about incarcerated parents. The children of incarcerated parents mentoring grants awarded throughout Texas brought more attention to the issues that these children face.

**Research.** A recent Urban Institute research initiative focused on issues affecting families experiencing parental incarceration (their research looked at the situation in major urban areas, including Austin and Houston). These research findings lend legitimacy to efforts to rebuild relationships while the parent is in jail and to offer supportive re-entry services.

## FACTORS WORKING AGAINST SUCCESS

**Conservative atmosphere.** Texas is a politically conservative state that takes a hard line on incarceration, and until recently, has not focused on the needs of inmates' children. In fact, in recent years, the Governor has blocked legislation that might have benefited this population.

**Volume of inmates.** Since Texas has the highest rate of incarceration in the country, the volume of children affected by parental incarceration makes it difficult to reach all of them.

## WASHINGTON

**Lead Agency:** Washington State Oversight Committee on Children of Incarcerated Parents

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**Partners:** Big Brothers/Big Sisters  
Casey Family Programs  
Children's Home Society of Western Washington  
The Department of Corrections Advisory Board  
The Department of Social and Health Services  
ELCA Public Policy Office of Washington  
Pacific Lutheran University  
Law Enforcement and Jails  
Office of the Administrator of the Court  
Office of the Public Defender  
Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Volunteers of America West Washington  
Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys

## HOW THE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPED

The partnership formed about one year before the beginning of the technical assistance project. The Oversight Committee on Children of Incarcerated Parents was legislatively empowered for one year and selected 25 partners to engage around the issues affecting children of incarcerated parents. When the partnership first formed, they began with two days of training. Currently the group that leads the partnership's work is referred to as the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board only recently began meeting.

## PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING

The Oversight Committee had regularly scheduled meetings every one to two months. The Committee also established four to five subcommittees who added new members and worked independently. In the year between the Oversight Committee's application and the formation of the new Advisory Board, Pacific Lutheran University and Casey Family Program provided meeting space, facilitated meetings, maintained contact with the legislature, and mobilized people to testify at hearings.

## PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Oversight Committee developed recommendations that were presented to state legislators. The Legislature advised bringing more people to the table to review existing policies and gather data. Accordingly, four departments under the Community Trade and Economic Development Committee have been tasked with reviewing current programs and policies targeting children of inmates to assess the adequacy and availability of services. The secretaries of these departments are expected to translate the findings from this review into policy changes.

## PROJECT # 1: RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE

The partnership's Oversight Committee compiled a report of recommendations that was presented to the legislature and subsequently written into legislation and passed (E2-SHB1422). The legislation calls for the assessment of the adequacy and availability of services for children of incarcerated parents and inmates. Data collection will occur in jails and prisons and will consider the experiences of incarcerated individuals throughout the state of Washington from arrest through release.

The purpose of this project was to make service for families more visible, increase awareness of the needs of children and caregivers among agency providers, and collaborate on what services to develop and new groups to serve. An overarching goal is to increase the awareness of children of incarcerated parents and prevent recidivism. If implemented, these recommendations could improve the stability of family relationships, better school achievement, and lower stress among children.

In order for change to happen, individual agencies will have to look at their own policies that may affect children of incarcerated parents and perhaps change those policies. Agencies will have to monitor what they have the capacity to do and they will have to collaborate. In addition, secretaries of state agencies will need to be on board if changes at the direct service level are needed, this could require culture shifts within agencies.

## FACTORS WORKING FOR SUCCESS

**Educating elected officials.** Educating the legislature and assistance from Representative Mary Helen Roberts helped this partnership get legislation passed and bring the Department of Corrections on board. During the Technical Assistance Project, there was a new governor and new appointments, which required additional education on the issue. Relationships with local and state government leaders, as well as grassroots programs that have relationships with local prisons, also helped to move the agenda along.

**No funding was required.** The partnership attributes their success to the fact that the legislative mandate that was passed did not have any funding attached.

**Public-private partnership.** The public-private links established through the partnership allowed community and government agencies to combine resources.

**University support.** The involvement of a university was also cited as contributing to the partnerships work getting legislation passed.

**Focusing on children and families.** The partnership believes they succeeded in getting legislation passed because they adopted the strategy of tailoring their presentation of issues so that it focused on children and families rather than focusing on the offender. This strategy was valuable because the popular image of crime and criminals poses a barrier to taking a proactive approach to crime.

## FACTORS WORKING AGAINST SUCCESS

**Size of the affected population.** The sheer number of children affected by an incarcerated parent poses a barrier to reaching the population.

**Variation among jails.** The partnership noted that different jails have different policies. This creates a barrier to implementing change because implementation strategies have to accommodate the between-jail differences.