



Request for Proposals for Post-Release Reentry Services for Individuals Returning from Federal Incarceration

Summary

The Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program of Open Society Institute-Baltimore (“OSI-Baltimore”) seeks proposals from organizations able to provide high quality post-release reentry and reintegration services to individuals who have been granted clemency by the President of the United States for federal drug-related sentences and will be returning to Maryland, beginning November 2015. These services will include case management, life and job skills training, employment placement, and referrals to substance use disorder treatment and public benefits agencies. Through this initiative, OSI-Baltimore seeks to support the successful reentry and reintegration of this population into Maryland communities, including Baltimore, to reduce recidivism and demonstrate the effectiveness and value of investing in reentry services.

Background

In 2014, after years of advocacy by the Open Society Policy Center and other allies, the U.S. Sentencing Commission amended federal sentencing guidelines for drug offenses and voted to apply the amended guidelines retroactively. As a result, thousands of people currently incarcerated for a federal non-violent drug offense are eligible for a sentence reduction and early release from federal prison. Officials anticipate that as many as 367 people from Maryland may be eligible for early release, beginning November 1, 2015. With this upcoming influx of returning citizens, there is a need to provide comprehensive, ongoing reentry and reintegration services that meet the specific needs of this population in Maryland, including in Baltimore City.

Federal residential reentry programs (“halfway houses”) serve as a first step toward social reintegration after leaving federal prison. While at the halfway house, individuals live closer to the community for a typical period of three to six months and may receive case management, job training and placement, and referrals to treatment for substance use. There is, however, a dearth of programs that provide services to these returning citizens once they are released from halfway houses that help them continue their transition back into the community. OSI-Baltimore has identified this post-release period as critical to improving the success of this target population and seeks to fill that need in the immediate term.

Description of Programs to be Funded

Model approaches under this Request for Proposals (RFP) will address the various services that federal returning citizens need in order to improve their stability and well-being post-release and become empowered to achieve long-term success. Programs will find creative solutions to overcome barriers to employment and housing caused by drug-related criminal records and thereby reduce recidivism and protect public safety. Potential service areas include, but are not limited to:

- Housing
- Employment
- Transportation
- Behavioral health care, including both mental health and a specific focus on substance use disorder treatment
- Physical health care
- Legal support
- Family reunification
- Health insurance coverage
- Identification documents
- Higher education and/or vocational training, including technology training
- Coaching, mentoring and peer support
- Connection to social networks

Strong proposals will address as many of the above areas as possible, articulating a continuum of services that are tailored to the needs of individual clients.

To ensure continuity of services, the applicant should describe how it will make contact with potential clients **prior** to their release from prison (e.g., when released directly to home detention) or a halfway house in order to provide transition services. These transition services could include assessment, orientation, and assistance with obtaining identification or health insurance, among others. The proposed program design must also provide post-release services over an extended period of time to ensure clients' stability and integration. At a minimum, post-release services must last for six months—and, ideally, for at least one year—after each client's final contact with a prison or halfway house.

Funding Availability and Grant Period

The total amount available under this RFP is \$250,000. OSI-Baltimore may award the full amount to one organization or divide the available funding among multiple recipients, depending on the strength and range of proposals received (see selection criteria below). In the event that OSI-Baltimore awards more than one grant, OSI-Baltimore may periodically bring recipients together to reflect on program design and delivery and to discuss the effectiveness of transition services with other public and private agencies.

The grant term is a minimum of one year, but OSI-Baltimore will also accept proposals that span two years. Whether the proposed grant term is one year or two years, the amount requested may not exceed a total of \$250,000 over two years. Because this is a one-time grant, OSI-Baltimore expects grantees, by the end of the grant term, to have developed a realistic long-term sustainability plan if the organization intends to continue providing services to the target population beyond the grant period. Matching funds are not required.

Required Qualifications

To be eligible to apply for a grant, organizations must demonstrate:

1. Non-profit 501(c)(3) status or a fiscal sponsorship agreement with a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.
2. A history of programming to support the successful re-entry/re-integration of returning citizens and others with criminal records.
3. Existing relationships and collaborations with other relevant public agencies, employers, social service providers, and local community and/or faith-based organizations.
4. The ability to collect, analyze and report relevant data to evaluate program design, delivery and outcomes.

Selection Criteria

Applicants may propose a new program or an expansion of an existing program to include the target population. Applicants that plan to collaborate with other organizations or agencies should name those organizations and agencies and delineate the division of labor for the duration of the grant period. Memorandums of understanding are strongly encouraged but do not have to be included in the grant application.

OSI-Baltimore will assess proposals on the following criteria:

- A demonstrated track record of delivering effective re-entry and re-integration services.
- The scale and comprehensiveness of the program design and delivery.
- Well-defined partnerships with key providers, public agencies and employers.
- The demonstrated capacity to manage the grant and the operations funded by the grant.
- The demonstrated ability to raise additional funding as needed.

In addition to the above, OSI-Baltimore will have a strong preference for:

- Programs whose target population includes citizens returning to Baltimore
- Organizations and programs that meaningfully involve returning citizens in the design and implementation of the program.

Persons of color, community-based organizations, and organizations led or staffed by returning citizens are strongly encouraged to apply.

Timeline:

RFP release	September 8, 2015
Proposal deadline	September 28, 2015 by 5:00 p.m.
Site visits (as needed)	October 2015
Finalist(s) notified	No later than December 2015
Grant period begins	December 1, 2015 or January 1, 2016

Applicant Information Sessions

OSI-Baltimore will host two phone calls to field questions from potential applicants. The calls will be held on Wednesday, September 10 at 12 Noon EST and Thursday, September 17 at 4:00 p.m. EST and will last no more than one hour. To register for an information session and receive the call-in information please email reentryrfp@opensocietyfoundations.org.

Individuals unable to participate in the information sessions may contact OSI-Baltimore at reentryrfp@opensocietyfoundations.org to receive a copy of the compiled list of questions and answers.

REQUIRED PROPOSAL COMPONENTS:

A. Cover letter (1 page)

A letter on letterhead and signed by the executive director of the lead applicant stating:

- A one or two sentence description of the proposed initiative, including the number of federal returning citizens to be served.
- The target geographic location.
- The amount requested from OSI-Baltimore.
- The amount of the total organizational budget.
- The name of the fiscal sponsor, if applicable.
- A contact name, address, e-mail and telephone number.

B. Descriptions of the Applicant Organization (1-2 paragraphs)

This section should briefly describe the applicant organization (or underlying organization if using a fiscal agent) that will be primarily responsible for the program design and delivery, including the organization's mission, history and track record. Note: collaborating organizations must choose one lead applicant.

C. Program Design and Delivery (up to 2 pages)

This section should describe in detail the services the applicant plans to provide and the manner in which the applicant will deliver those services. It should also describe how returning citizens will be engaged in the program's planning and implementation. Collaborating organizations should use this section to describe which organization or agency will be responsible for which piece(s) of the program design and delivery.

D. Goals, Intended Outcomes and Performance Measures (up to 1 page)

This section should describe the ultimate goals of the program, the expected outcomes, and benchmarks by which the applicant will evaluate success. Additionally, this section should describe the expected scale of the model (i.e., number of people to be served, range of services provided, and intensity and duration of services) and the capacity of the applicant to carry out the proposed activities well. The section should also address likely challenges in carrying out activities or achieving the desired results, how those challenges may affect the program in the short and long term, and the ways in which the applicant will address the challenges. Finally, this section should describe how clients served will inform the evaluation of the project.

E. Sustainability (1-2 paragraphs)

This section should provide an explanation of what, if any, additional funds the applicant plans to raise to support the program during the grant period. This section should also describe potential funding streams, both existing and untapped, that can support components of the program (e.g., the opportunity to offset medical costs by enrolling uninsured participants in Medicaid). Finally, the proposal should indicate if funding from OSI-Baltimore will leverage any existing support from other sources.

F. Work Plan with Timeline (1 page)

This section should provide a work plan (chart form is acceptable) for the proposed program period of one or two years. If the applicant plans to contract with or sub-grant to another organization, the plan should identify the entity responsible for conducting particular activities as well as the actors likely to be involved.

G. Budget and Budget Narrative (up to 2 pages)

This section should include a one or two year project budget, and a separate section that briefly describes each line item. The maximum award from OSI-Baltimore, whether for one or two years, will be \$250,000. The budget should set forth costs associated with staff, services, supplies, meetings, transportation, and other activities required to achieve programmatic goals. It should also include other financial resources already committed or under consideration (noting both the likelihood and timeline for pending sources of support). While matching funds are not required to receive this grant, budgets should include any additional funds the applicant plans to

raise from other sources. In-kind contributions should be noted in the budget narrative but calculated as part of the proposed project budget.

H. Other Supporting Documents (no more than 5 pages)

Applicants may choose to include letters of support, relevant press clippings and client testimonials

I. Required Appendices

- 501(c)(3) determination letter from the IRS for the lead organization or fiscal agent
- Current organizational budget
- Most recent audited financial statement
- Bios of key staff and consultants (no longer than a paragraph each)
- List of board members, with names and titles

Application Procedures and Timetable

Applications must be received by the OSI-Baltimore office no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, September 28, 2015.

All applications *must* be complete upon initial submission and *must* be received via first-class mail, email (reentryrfp@opensocietyfoundations.org) or hand-delivery to the address printed below. Mailed applications must be post-marked no later than September 28, 2015. No faxed or late applications will be accepted. Foundation staff will endeavor to make final decisions according to the timeline stated above.

Proposals should be addressed to:

Tara Huffman, JD
Director, Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program
Open Society Institute-Baltimore
201 N. Charles Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be directed to reentryrfp@opensocietyfoundations.org