

**Illinois Sentencing Policy Advisory Council  
Commission Meeting, Thursday, August 25, 2016**

**Safer Foundation Overview**

Safer Foundation, founded in Illinois in 1972, is one of the nation's largest and most experienced organizations providing a comprehensive set of services, exclusively to people with arrest & conviction records, pre & post release from jail, prison or probation and justice involved youth.

Safer utilizes a model that begins with determining the private sector employment opportunities available for our clients. With employer demand in mind, we assess a client's risks for recidivism and employment success, their aptitudes, interests and readiness. Based upon the client's readiness we place them on a pathway towards training and employment. The level of supportive services and programming they receive is tailored to the requirement to ensure their success. We are focused on helping our clients achieve industry recognized credentials that lead to living wage jobs with career advancement potential. This model is the Safer Demand Collaborative.

**Pre Release Services**

Since 1984 Safer Foundation has operated Adult Transition Centers on behalf of the Illinois Department of Corrections in Chicago. Currently we operate two of the states' four ATC's. Our Chicago based ATC's have the capacity to house 580 residents. The Crossroads and North Lawndale Adult Transition Centers receive inmates with 24 months or less remaining on their sentence.

Residents in the ATC's are required to participate in a rigorous and comprehensive programming designed to prepare them for private sector employment and ease the transition back into family and community life. Programming includes Academic Bridge Education, GED programs, Financial Literacy Training, DASA licensed Substance Abuse Treatment, Mentoring, Cognitive Behavioral Therapies, Mental Health Services, Vocational Training Leading to Industry Recognized Credentials, Job Readiness Training, Job Placement & Retention Services.

ATC residents earned over \$5M in wages & paid approximately \$1M in taxes in FY15. Through wages earned in private sector employment our residents were able to pay child support, court fees, restitution, offset a portion of the cost of their incarceration and save 20% of their income which is provided to them upon their release.

Safer Foundation has operated the PACE Institute in Cook County Jail for more than 30 years. The PACE Institute provides Academic Bridge Education and GED programs.

**Post Release Community Services**

Safer Foundation provides the same robust set of services described above for adults and youth in 8 locations in various communities in Chicago, South Holland and in the Quad Cities; Illinois and Iowa. In addition to private sector job placement, Safer provides transitional jobs for those with limited work experience through our Pivotal Staffing Company which provides services under contract to government and corporations.

Safer also has a partnership with 4 participating agencies in the Safer Midwest Reentry Employment Network (MREN) providing education, training, mentoring, sealing/expungement, service learning, job readiness & job placement services to justice involved youth in Chicago, Milwaukee Wisconsin and St. Louis Missouri. Safer provides Technical Assistance, Training and oversight to the MREN partner agencies.

Since 2013 Safer Foundation provided direct service to an average of 7847 clients. This does not include the clients served as part of the Midwest Reentry Employment Network.

Our annual budget for FY2017 is \$23.5M. Our funding comes from the Federal government, The State of Illinois, state and local government in Iowa Cook County, City of Chicago, Foundations, Corporations and individual donors. The state of Illinois provides over 55% of our annual funding.

Safer Foundation has a staff of 285. Our major functional areas are Workforce Development, Community Corrections, Finance & Technology, Policy & Advocacy, HR & Organizational Development, Fund Development, Legal and Safer Social Enterprises. We are actively pursuing funding to address our need to expand and upgrade our infrastructure including facilities for new and expanded client programs and services, new technology platforms to ensure we maintain our leading edge of workforce development model.

**Reentry Services Capacity:**

According to the “Illinois Results First Report: A Cost-Benefit Tool for Illinois Criminal Justice Policymakers” (Summer 2016) produced by the Illinois Sentencing Policy Advisory Council (SPAC), Employment Training in the Community or Job Assistance in the Community has a net benefit of \$4,238 (ranked 8<sup>th</sup> out of 10 adult programs), with a benefit to cost ratio of \$20.26 (ranked 1 out of 10 adult programs). So for every \$1 spent, the people of Illinois reap a benefit of \$20.26, the highest return on investment of the programs analyzed.

According to the same report, Adult Transition Centers have a net benefit of \$13,881 (ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 10 adult programs) and a benefit to cost ratio of \$1.73 (ranked 6<sup>th</sup> out of 10 adult programs).

<http://www.icjia.state.il.us/spac/pdf/Illinois Results First Consumer Reports 072016.pdf>

**Item 1: Safer Capacity**

Year	Total Clients Served
2013	9,522
2014	8,536
2015	7,268
2016	6,062
Average	7,847

Projections	Based on Average	Based on NEED, FY2013
2019 (15%)	9,024	10,950

2023 (30%) 10,201 19,044

#### Projections based on the Average vs. NEED

The 2019 projection (of 15%) would increase our total clients served at Safer to 9,024 and 10,201 for 2023 (a 30% increase) based on the Average number of clients served from FY 2013 to FY 2016.

- The 2019 projection of 9,024 based on the three year average is similar to our total number of clients served in 2013 (9,522); In 2013, Safer had increased staff and funding to meet the need for services, but due to funding cuts, we reduced staff and increased caseloads. As a result, despite the demonstrated need for Safer services, our intake was affected by significant budget cuts.
- Given the NEED for services based on our 2013 number of total clients served (9,522), we project that Safer could prepare to serve 10,950 clients by 2019.
- We have a replicable model, with proper funding, that would enable us to serve 19,044 total clients in 2023.
- Safer previously provided services throughout the state including pre-release programming at the SWICC and Sheridan facilities. We operated offices in a variety of cities; like Rockford in the past.
- Given the 2023 projection based on the three year Average, the total clients served would be approximately 40% higher than our current population and resource capacity (6,062 clients for FY2016).
- Given the 2023 projection of total clients served based on the NEED for services (FY2013), the total clients served would be approximately 70% higher than our current population and resource capacity.

#### Item 2: Generic Statement of Operational Needs

- Providers would need to anticipate that increasing numbers of those released may be moderate to high risk, (those having multiple prior arrests and convictions, lengthy incarcerations, limited education and employment history, and unmet housing and supportive service needs).
- There would be a need to increase the capacity to provide anger management, cognitive behavioral therapy, substance abuse prevention, financial opportunity and follow-up services which have been restricted due to budgetary concerns, especially to meet the ongoing needs of moderate to high risk clients.
- Due to social services budget cuts, many agencies are functioning with extremely high caseloads or reducing client intakes. Safer is currently functioning at capacity with our Retention Specialists carrying a caseload of 1:80 clients (or 1:65 active clients). Ideally, the staff to client ratio would be 1:50 clients in general, and 1:25 for those designated as high risk.
- While there is potential to grow our satellite offices in targeted communities, expansion would be required to accommodate the additional staff required to meet the need for services. The opportunity for service providers to collocate in state, county and city facilities to greatly increase facility capacity and minimize costs.
- Providers would need to expand the ability to interface with clients while they are incarcerated in prison and local jails and provide transitional services, including housing, training, and employment modeled in additional ATCs in Cook County and around the state.

- Transportation remains a significant issue. Even in areas where there may be access to jobs, the employers are often in suburban areas with no direct access via public transportation systems. Safer Foundation has a growing fleet of vehicles we use to fill the gap in the public transit system. Utilizing vans and buses to transport clients to employers economically should be part of a capacity building plan. That could be done with our public transit providers or through funding to service providers.
- Stable housing is a prerequisite for reentry success. Some individuals who are eligible for release from prison cannot be released due to housing related needs. Often those who are released have housing issues after return to the community. Increasing the availability of housing options post release is critical.

### **Item 3: Granting Practices**

- The state should consider several changes in granting practices.
  1. Ensuring grants provide for transportation support.
  2. Considering providing performance based income supports while clients participate in training.
  3. Providing an ample start-up period with funding for staff recruiting & training, establishing and equipping program facilities and operating funding while programs ramp up.
  4. Overall, ensuring funding and contract provisions do not run counter to the capacity building goals. As an example, currently one of two ATC contracts includes annual reductions in beds over time, yet this type of grant may need to be restructured to respond to projected need.
- IDOC assessment matched with responsive services for high (moderate and low) risk
- Linking the funding interests of justice, labor, education, and human service departments at the Federal, State, and local levels to meet the comprehensive needs of returning citizens.
- Targeting investment in high receiving (high economic hardship and high crime) communities.

### **Item 4: Funding, Regulations & Policies**

#### **Omnibus Occupational Licensing**

- Focusing on mandatory and discretionary barriers in 115 occupational and business statutes a majority of which are under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR)
- Provides removing the lifetime barriers and incorporating time frames of 3 and 5 years. Requires IDFPR that when reviewing a conviction, finding of guilt, jury verdict, or entry of judgment or by sentencing of an initial applicant for a license under the Acts, the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation may only deny a license based upon consideration of specified mitigating factors for specified felonies directly related to the practice of the profession. Provides that the Department shall issue an annual report by January 31, 2017 and each year thereafter indicating specific information on applicants within the preceding calendar year.

#### **Higher Education Ban the Box**

- Prevent schools from asking about arrest records and convictions on the common application, which many schools use instead of their own

#### **Sealing Expansion**

- Expanding eligibility to all Class 4, 3, 2 or 1 non-violent convictions. This is the opposite approach of the current law, which handpicks 8 felony convictions but is very limited. Instead of just

adding more to the running list, the idea is to include all, and remove ones that offend sensibilities.

### **Training & Employment Expansion**

- For communities with high volumes of returnees the state should provide increased training specific to real employment opportunities with people with records (manufacturing, health care, CNC, welding etc.) – plan to identify areas of highest reentry to get any and all funding sources focused on providing these services in targeted communities. This effort would be good for economic development in that community, a violence prevention strategy, getting people to get real time training and placement in industries that have demonstrate they are friendly to hiring people with backgrounds. RANA tools would be used as guidance for intake and programming.
- There would need to be proper oversight to ensure programmatic and fiscal outcomes are met. The federal training and employment programs provide \$8,000/person. This would be adequate funding and the state could quickly determine the total level of funding needed to address the growing number of returning citizens.
- The state should identify all funding in state and pass through federal funding that could be focused on providing these services.