Call for Applicants to Participate in the Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies Pilot Project

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Labor, the Council of State Governments Justice Center (CSG Justice Center) is seeking applicants to participate as pilot sites in the Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies Pilot Project. This project is designed to test innovative strategies for enhancing job readiness and reducing recidivism for adults under correctional supervision.

Deadline
All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. EST on August 15, 2014. (See “Deadlines,” page 3).

Contact Information
For technical assistance with submitting an application, please contact Phoebe Potter, Senior Policy Analyst, CSG Justice Center, at 240-482-8587 or ppotter@csg.org.

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I. **Overview of Pilot Project**

The Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies Pilot Project (Pilot Project) is designed to test innovative strategies for enhancing job readiness and reducing recidivism for adults under correctional supervision, based upon the recently released *Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness* white paper (*Integrated Strategies*).\(^1\) The jurisdictions selected for participation in the pilot project will have opportunities to become national leaders in implementing cutting edge strategies at the intersection of reentry and workforce development.

Selected jurisdictions will be given intensive technical assistance to support the design and implementation of an integrated reentry strategy that brings together workforce development and corrections partners. The components of the strategy include assessing the employment and reentry needs of individuals on community supervision and developing policies and procedures to match individuals to appropriate services based upon their specific needs. The technical assistance package will help these jurisdictions establish a policy framework to ensure that existing resources are leveraged in an impactful and sustainable way.

The strategies that will be applied in the pilot sites are based upon the *Integrated Strategies* white paper, published by the Council of State Governments Justice Center (CSG Justice Center) in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice and with guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor. Technical assistance will be provided by CSG Justice Center staff and will be funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance through the National Reentry Resource Center and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. For more information on the specific technical assistance activities supported by this project, please see Section VIII.

II. **Program Length and Support**

The pilot project may last up to three years and will include one year of data analysis, planning, and capacity building; one year of implementation and conducting a process evaluation; and one year of follow-up and evaluation. Moving on to each new phase will be dependent upon meeting certain milestones, documented in Section VIII below.

Direct funding is not available to the pilot sites for provision of services. The purpose of this pilot project is to assist selected jurisdictions in developing policies and procedures that will ensure that existing resources are leveraged in a more impactful and sustainable way, rather than setting up new services that are dependent upon continued grant funding. Intensive technical assistance and research support from the CSG Justice Center is provided at no cost to the site. This in-kind support includes:

• Helping the jurisdictions develop a policy framework for targeting available service and supervision resources to individuals in a way that will maximize outcomes by analyzing the specific needs of the population and helping the jurisdiction implement an assessment-driven, client- and service-matching system.

• Bringing in national experts to help train corrections staff and service providers on how to ensure that they are targeting available resources effectively and how to provide effective employment-focused reentry services for higher-risk individuals.

• Supporting a third-party evaluation to assess the impact of policy and practice changes on recidivism and employment outcomes for the target population. Lessons from this evaluation will inform a national conversation on the importance of employment in an effective reentry process.

More specific activities that will be supported with the technical assistance package are listed in Section VIII below.

III. Target Population
The target population for the pilot project is individuals under correctional supervision who are returning from prison or jail to a particular jurisdiction (state, city, or county), and are required to, or interested in, seeking employment upon return to the community. Individuals must also have been assessed to determine their level of criminogenic risk (see Section VII.A.). The specific number of individuals provided with programming under this pilot project will be driven by the needs of the individuals and the programming capacity within the targeted jurisdiction.

IV. Deadlines
All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. EST on August 15, 2014. Applications must be submitted by email to ppotter@csg.org. See the following sections for more information on how to apply.

V. Eligibility
This project is open to state, county, and municipal governmental agencies, and community-based organizations working in corrections and workforce development; however, a governmental agency must be the lead applicant. It is also expected that the governmental agency will be partnering with community-based agencies and service providers. The strongest applications will be those submitted with letters of support on behalf of each of the following:

• The office of the Chief Executive of the governmental jurisdiction (e.g., Governor, Mayor)
• The office of the Chief Executive of the corrections, releasing, and/or supervision authority (e.g., Director of Corrections, Sheriff, Head of Probation, etc.)

• Executive Director and/or Workforce Board Chair at Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)

• Any additional community-based organizations providing reentry and workforce development services

Priority consideration is given in the circumstance where any of the above is also a recipient of a Bureau of Justice Assistance Second Chance Act (SCA) grant and/or Department of Labor Reintegration of Ex-Offender (RExO) grant.

In the circumstance where the above combinations of commitment are not possible, a successful application must, at a minimum, include demonstrated commitment from both of the following:

• Criminal justice agency(ies) with releasing and supervision authority over the target population (e.g., Director of Corrections, Sheriff, Head of Probation, etc.); and

• A community-based workforce partner that provides services for the reentry population (government agency or NGO).

Candidates who wish to apply should carefully review the activities and criteria outlined in Section VII and VIII, as well as the Integrated Strategies white paper, and assess their ability to meet these expectations.

VI. Application Process
Please review the following application process and email your completed application to Phoebe Potter at ppotter@csg.org by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on August 15, 2014.

A. Submit letter of interest and attachments
A letter of interest must be submitted by the required agencies listed in the table below to Phoebe Potter at ppotter@csg.org. The letter of interest should be double-spaced, using a standard 12-point font (Times New Roman is preferred) with not less than 1-inch margins, and should not exceed 10 pages. Applicants must also submit four attachments with their letter of interest, which are listed in Section VII.

Priority consideration will be given to sites that submit letters of support from all of the organizations/individuals listed on the following page:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead applicants (required)</th>
<th>✓ Criminal justice agency(ies) with releasing and supervision authority over the target population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ A community-based workforce partner that provides services for the reentry population (government agency or NGO)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The letter of interest should demonstrate how the site meets the selection criteria outlined in Section VII below, and a commitment to participating in the activities outlined in Section VIII. The letter must also include a series of attachments to demonstrate the site’s ability to meet the selection criteria, as described in Section VII below. See Appendix A for a template for the letter of interest and attachments.

B. On-site observation
After all applications received by August 15, 2014 are reviewed, a subset of sites will be selected as finalists based upon the quality of the applications submitted and how well the sites demonstrate that they meet the selection criteria in Section VII. The CSG Justice Center will then schedule follow-up calls and/or an on-site visit with these final sites to determine if the applicant has the necessary resources to complete the activities outlined in Section VIII.

C. Final selection
The CSG Justice Center will use the criteria/expectations outlined in Sections VII and VIII to help identify sites that best fit the selection criteria and have the greatest capacity to implement recommendations from the Integrated Strategies white paper. Based on the information collected, a limited number of pilot sites will be identified for the pilot project. All application materials and findings, as well as recommendations, will be presented to the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance, the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation for final review and confirmation.

VII. Selection Criteria
Applicants must demonstrate how they meet the following criteria in the letter of interest to qualify for the pilot project:

A. Ability to implement white paper recommendations:

- **Demonstrated leadership:** Site has demonstrated community and/or policymaker support for improving employment and reentry outcomes for adults under correctional supervision.

- **Demonstrated partnerships:** Site has established strong partnerships with corrections agencies (including community corrections and community
supervision), workforce development agencies, and other local employment and reentry providers. Please attach brief (no more than one page each) letters of support from each partner that will be involved in the pilot project.

- **Data collection and sharing capacity:** Site is able and willing to collect and share accurate and complete data on all services provided to program participants including services provided directly by the applicant organizations and its contractor, as well as services provided through referrals to other community service providers.

- **Risk assessment capacity:** Site has demonstrated interest in, and has the ability to assess individuals’ criminogenic risk and need using a valid, reliable, and predictive assessment tool. Please attach a copy of the tool and any validation studies completed.

- **Job readiness assessment capacity:** Site has the potential or ability to assess individuals’ level of job readiness/employment-related needs. If a job readiness tool is already used in the jurisdiction, please attach a copy. Otherwise, part of the technical assistance package will involve developing a job-readiness-assessment tool.

- **Commitment to assessment-driven service matching:** Site is able and willing to apply the results of individuals’ risk/need assessments and job-readiness assessments to develop individualized service packages for the target population.

- **Service capacity:** Site has a continuum of community-based employment services including job preparation/readiness, job placement services, transitional/subsidized employment, and post-employment retention services, and is willing to realign existing resources to ensure services are tailored to the needs of the target population. Please attach a list and brief description of the employment/workforce development and/or reentry programs and services offered within the jurisdiction and an estimate of the number of participants served by those different programs or service areas annually.
B. Evaluation support:

- Site is willing and able to work with research staff from the CSG Justice Center (or other third-party evaluator selected by the CSG Justice Center and its project partners) to identify a valid comparison or control group.
- Site has client-level, electronic records that capture individuals’ risk and job readiness scores.
- Site is willing and able to maintain electronic records that show the types of services received and duration of those services, as well as program completion and drop-out/termination information for the target population.
- Site will provide or facilitate access to individual level data on recidivism outcomes, including dates of rearrest, court dispositions for new convictions, and admissions to prison for all participants of the integrated strategies project.
- Site is willing and able to share all necessary data with the technical assistance provider to implement the Integrated Strategies white paper recommendations effectively and evaluate the project.
- Site is willing to assist the technical assistance provider and evaluation team with arranging interviews with corrections agency staff, workforce agency staff, community service providers, and other key partners.
- Site will assist the technical assistance provider with conducting exit interviews and/or surveys of clients as well as surveys of employers about their experiences with the program.

VIII. Required Activities

To qualify for the pilot project, applicants must commit to supporting the implementation of a resource-allocation and service-matching strategy through the technical assistance activities outlined in the table below (see Attachment B for a description of the resource-allocation and service-matching tool that will guide this work). It is important to note that continued technical assistance is contingent on the site completing certain project milestones, as noted.

[see chart on following page]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Assistance Activities and Milestones</th>
<th>Suggested Time to Complete Activities</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Establish a steering committee to work alongside the technical assistance provider to support implementation of the pilot project.</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Conduct a system-mapping exercise that details the current assessment and referral process, and analyze data on the risk and job readiness characteristics of the target population. Use assessment data to disaggregate target population by risk/needs and job readiness levels and develop four distinct risk/readiness groupings in line with the sorting tool in the Integrated Strategies white paper.</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conduct a field review that inventories employment and reentry services available or commonly provided to the target population, with a focus on their capacity for meeting the needs of higher-risk/less-job-ready individuals.</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Use data to develop a strategic plan for implementing a client assessment and matching process and building service capacity to meet needs of clients.</td>
<td>4 months</td>
</tr>
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**Milestone 1:**
Before moving on to TA activities 5-7, the site must demonstrate its ability to implement an efficient risk/job-readiness assessment and referral process in partnership with corrections to match clients to existing reentry/employment services. If the existing services do not meet the needs of a higher-risk/less-job ready population, the site will also be expected to reallocate resources to develop intensive services.

| 5. Implement an efficient risk/job readiness assessment and referral process in partnership with corrections to match the four client group profiles to the appropriate reentry/employment services. | 4 months |
| 6. Develop tailored service packages (either through a network of providers or within larger agencies) to ensure that service providers are meeting needs of the four client groups. | 4 months |
| 7. Conduct a process evaluation to ensure steps 5 and 6 are being implemented with fidelity. | 4 months |

**Milestone 2:**
Before moving on to TA activities 8-10, the site must demonstrate its ability to implement policy/programmatic changes with fidelity, including making any programmatic adjustments that are recommended as a result of the process evaluation. The site must also demonstrate that it is able to participate in an evaluation by tracking necessary client-level data and establishing procedures for sharing, matching and using data for evaluation purposes. The CSG Justice Center will help identify funding for a third-party evaluation of outcomes.

| 8. Identify a valid matched comparison group that has comparable data. | 2 months |
| 9. Collect client-level data for the target and comparison groups as needed for the evaluation. | 6 months |
| 10. Evaluate impact of policy/practice changes on recidivism (rearrest/reincarceration) and employment outcomes for participants and comparison group. | 4 months |

**Total Time:** 36 months
APPENDIX A:
OUTLINE FOR LETTER OF INTEREST

[contact information for applicant point of contact]
[date of submission]

To XXXX, Council of State Governments Justice Center:

The submission of this letter indicates interest and support for [name of jurisdiction] becoming a pilot site for the Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies Pilot Project by [name(s) of lead applicants]. This letter is supported by [name(s) of partner agencies and co-applicants] as indicated by the letter of support included in Attachment 1.

[Up to 1 page: Overview of why jurisdiction is interested in becoming a pilot site]
[Up to 5 pages: Overview of how jurisdiction meets selection criteria]
[Up to 4 pages: Overview of jurisdictions’ capacity and willingness to support technical assistance activities outlined in Section VIII]

By submitting this letter, we invite the Council of State Governments Justice Center to follow-up and request the scheduling of a site visit to further explore our capacity to become a pilot site. The point of contact for this application is [name and contact information].

Signed,

[lead applicants]

Attachment 1: Letters of support for pilot project by partner agencies
Attachment 2: Copy of all criminogenic risk/need assessments used within the jurisdiction and the most recent validation study completed, if available
Attachment 3: Copy of all job readiness assessments used within the jurisdiction
Attachment 4: List and brief description of the employment/workforce development and/or reentry programs and services offered within the jurisdiction and an estimate of the number of participants served by those different programs annually
APPENDIX B: OVERVIEW OF THE RESOURCE-ALLOCATION AND SERVICE-MATCHING TOOL

The resource-allocation and service-matching tool was developed to help jurisdictions develop an assessment and resource-management process and to guide the development of integrated service responses across the corrections, employment, and reentry fields. It is based on two key dimensions: the risk of reincarceration and job readiness, which are used for grouping individuals being released from prison or jail or under community supervision. There are four groupings that result from these two assessments, and each can be tied to a combination of corrections and supervision policies, employment program components, and service delivery strategies.

**THE RESOURCE-ALLOCATION AND SERVICE-MATCHING TOOL**

**Step 1: Assess Risk and Needs**
- Low, or “Lower” Risk
- Moderate/High or “Higher” Risk

This assessment measures individuals’ risk of reoffending and related needs, and helps inform supervision policies and non-employment referrals/program placements that address criminogenic risk and responsivity needs.

**Step 2: Assess Job Readiness**
- Lower Risk/More Ready (GROUP 1)
- Lower Risk/Less Ready (GROUP 2)
- Higher Risk/More Ready (GROUP 3)
- Higher Risk/Less Ready (GROUP 4)

**Step 3: Deliver Targeted Services**
- Integrated Risk and Job-Readiness Packages
- Cognitive Behavioral Interventions

Using the Resource-Allocation and Service-Matching Tool to make systems-level decisions

Every jurisdiction has a distinct web of community-based service providers that can be used to reduce the likelihood a person will commit a crime in the future. Risk/needs and job readiness assessments can help reveal the numbers of individuals with criminal histories that require a range of employment-readiness and placement services. This information then can be used to help identify gaps in community-based service provider expertise or inadequate capacity.
Screening and assessment information can help policymakers and administrators better understand the size of the population of individuals who may avoid a costly reincarceration if given proper services and supports. In particular, the assessment results can help administrators determine what types of coordinated reentry/employment services should be made available for individuals returning from incarceration or who are under supervision. After assessments have been conducted, it should be clear what proportion of the targeted population falls into each of the four risk/readiness groupings, and how to shift resources to account for this distribution of needs.

The tool is also meant to help practitioners and program administrators meet demands for accountability by providing data-driven criteria to guide decision making. For example, if there are only 100 slots for a particular employment program, and the risk/needs assessment ranks 150 potential program participants as at high criminogenic risk with high need for services, it may be necessary to examine that group more closely to further distinguish those whose receipt of interventions would make the biggest impact on recidivism and employment outcomes. Additionally, if a lower-risk group is taking up some of the slots for services that affect employability, then it is worth considering whether some of those spaces could be freed up to serve individuals that will benefit more from the service. While these decisions can be difficult, the sorting tool can help guide these choices on how to make the most efficient use of public resources so that neighborhoods and families reap the greatest benefits.

Using the Resource-Allocation and Service-Matching Tool for individual case management decisions

By applying the principles associated with risk reduction to employment program components, service packages can be tailored to address individuals’ distinct criminogenic and job-readiness needs.

- **Groups 3 and 4: The Higher-Risk Groups:** Groups 3 and 4 both consist of individuals that are at higher risk of future criminal activity, but have notably different levels of job readiness. Therefore, Group 4 (less job ready) will require more employment services than Group 3 to increase their employability; however, both groups will require intensive risk-reduction services to reduce their likelihood of reoffending. The more intense application of service-delivery principles (including corrections supervision coordination) will look very similar for both of these groups because of their higher-risk levels. In contrast, employment program components will be individually tailored to address different job-readiness levels.

- **Groups 1 and 2: The Lower-Risk Groups:** Groups 1 and 2 are composed of individuals who are at a lower risk of recidivating, but have different levels of job readiness. Given their lower risk level, Groups 1 and 2 have less of a need for, and are less likely to benefit from, placements in programs that are specifically designed to reduce risk factors related to criminal activity. Groups 3 and 4 should receive priority placements into these
interventions instead. Because Groups 1 and 2 are both low risk, the service delivery principles associated with recidivism reduction will look very similar, but the program components that address job readiness will differ. Generally, Group 2 individuals should receive priority placements into job-readiness services. Group 1 is more likely to be successful with less-intensive programs and will benefit most from placements into job-retention services or self-directed programs.

For examples of how this might apply to specific individual case plans, please see pages 46-55 of the white paper.

Key Takeaways from “Section III: The Resource-Allocation and Service-Matching Tool” of Integrated Strategies White Paper

1. The resource-allocation and service-matching tool can help employment, reentry, and corrections professionals improve outcomes for their shared population. Policymakers and administrators can use the tool to better determine whether their resources are being used to their best effect and practitioners can help ensure that the right people get the right interventions at the right time, and in ways that reduce their chances for reincarceration.

2. There are four groupings that result from criminogenic risk/needs and job-readiness assessments of unemployed individuals released from prison or jail or starting probation or parole. These groupings can be tied to a combination of corrections and supervision policies, employment program components, and service-delivery strategies aimed at reducing recidivism. Line-level staff can then individualize plans to meet the diverse needs of individuals within each grouping.

3. Using assessment data and cut-off scores to define the size of the four groupings and then determining the available service/supervision slots, system administrators can better decide whether resources should be developed or reallocated (such as when analyses reveal that lower-risk/more job-ready individuals are taking up spaces in programs that they do not need to succeed).

4. Although workforce development agencies already invest in employment interventions for people with criminal records that come through their doors, they are often not oriented to identify higher-risk individuals and provide them with the type of intensive, specialized programming required to keep them out of prison and jail and connected to the workforce. The tool is meant to help jurisdictions narrow the population to be targeted for intensive services and leverage their collective resources through multisystem collaboration, cross-training, and planning to reduce individuals’ criminogenic risk factors that affect employability.