



THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND VIABLE JOB SKILLS IN RAISING THE  
SUCCESS RATE OF COMMUNITY REENTRY FOR FEMALE PRISONERS

By

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	i
COMMUNITY CONTEXT .....	1
Community Profile .....	1
Community Needs Assessment .....	2
Project Target Community .....	5
PROBLEM ANALYSIS .....	6
Problem Statement.....	6
Stakeholders .....	7
Project Goals in CED Terms .....	9
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	11
PROJECT DESIGN .....	14
METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN .....	17
Project Beneficiaries.....	17
Host Organization/Group .....	17
Project Roles and Staffing Plan.....	19
MONITORING .....	23
Indicators .....	23
Monitoring, Tools and Forms.....	23
Team/Tasks.....	25
Schedule .....	26
EVALUATION .....	28
Evaluation Indicators.....	28
Data Gathering Methods, Tools, Forms .....	31
Data Analysis.....	31
Evaluation Team/Tasks .....	32
Evaluation Schedule .....	32
SUSTAINABILITY .....	34

RESULTS.....	37
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	41
Prospects of Attaining Intermediate and Long Term Outcomes .....	41
Personal Thoughts .....	42
REFERENCES.....	45

## **ABSTRACT**

Incarcerated women in New Hampshire face a plethora of issues and challenges prior to, during and after incarceration. The New Hampshire Project for Raising the Success Rate of Community Reentry for Female Prisoners, here to referred to as NHP, proposes to increase a female offender's chance at successfully reentering into her community after prison. New Hampshire's female offenders continue to recidivate due to a lack of education, poor employability, substance abuse and untreated mental illness. This project aims to increase access to education, increase positive life skills and expand the employability of female offenders. Eventually I and other project designers decided to focus on a preliminary advocacy phase of the project which aimed to identify service agencies, funding sources and community education opportunities which create a foundation for the active rehabilitation of the project. Once this phase is successfully complete, the rehabilitation component will commence. The ultimate goal is to help these women build healthy, self-sufficient life.

## **COMMUNITY CONTEXT**

### **Community Profile**

On any given day, there are 2,850 women under correctional supervision in New Hampshire (New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute, 2008). While women only make up 25% of those incarcerated in New Hampshire, their rate of confinement is increasing at an alarming rate. Arrests for women in New Hampshire are on the rise. Between 2002 and 2006, the rate of female arrests rose 25%, compared to the 9% increase of male arrests during the same time frame (New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute, 2008).

The issues faced by detained women are enhanced by the fact that the majority are mothers. Sixty-six percent of incarcerated women in New Hampshire have children, of this group, 45% are single mothers (New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women, 2004). It is estimated that 1,300 children are affected each year in New Hampshire by said incarcerations (New Hampshire Commission on Women, 2004). Despite staggering statistics on how many of its inmates are mothers, New Hampshire State Prison for Women (NHSP/W) is the only correctional facility in New Hampshire that does not offer a state funded parenting program. The New Hampshire State Prison for Men (NHSP/M) offers both programs to their inmate population (New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute, 2008). Single motherhood combined with unemployment and low education creates a cycle of poverty that is challenging to break (New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute, 2008). Being a parent is only one of many complicated issues for this population.

Fifty-four percent of female inmates in New Hampshire were unemployed at the time of their arrest (New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute, 2008). In 2007, 67% of

women arrested and incarcerated were unemployed compared to 36% of males arrested and incarcerated in the same year (New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute, 2008). The lack of quality, sustainable work plagues this female population. Compounding this challenge is the fact that one in four women in NHSP/W does not have a high school degree or GED (New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute, 2008). These challenges of poverty and economic insecurity contribute to female inmate's dependence on unhealthy and violent relationships which play a role in their social instability, recurrent criminal activity and recidivism.

## **Inmate Community Needs Assessment**

### ***Jobs***

Not only does the State of New Hampshire fail to educate women while in prison, it also falls short in properly implementing vocational and job skills training during a woman's incarceration. There is one single state-funded vocational program, unduly limiting an inmate's income potential and limiting her to a small range of employment options upon release (The New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women, 2004). The few programs that are available are not gender-responsive therefore ineffective. There has been an ongoing debate within New Hampshire about gender parity in regards to vocational training in both the men's and women's state prisons. Men are trained in fields such as construction, wood working, metal working, electrician work, etc. These are not only some of the industries least likely to employ women, but also well known for unfairly paying the few women they do employ. On average in NH, female construction workers make 67 cents to a male dollar (Hayes & Miller, 2010). These

issues point to the importance of gender-appropriate training. This lack of rehabilitation helps to increase a woman's likelihood to recidivate.

### ***Mental Health***

The issues faced by this population of women are fueled by an overwhelming presence of mental illness and substance abuse, often spanning several generations. Sixty-six percent of women incarcerated at NHSP/W say they have had a previous diagnosis of mental illness while 14-20% are diagnosed for the first time during incarceration (New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute, 2008). Three in four female inmates in New Hampshire have admitted to struggling with depression at some point in their lives while a staggering 30%, report attempting taking their own life at least once (New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women, 2004). Despite an overwhelming prevalence of mental illness within our incarcerated female population, only 38% of these women were referred for counseling while incarcerated (New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute, 2008).

### ***Substance Abuse***

Using illicit drugs to treat the symptoms of mental illness creates even more desperation for the vulnerable women. At times substance abuse is seen as the primary diagnosis and mental illness the result of the substance abuse (Bonta, Pang & Capretta, 1995). In actuality, these are co-occurring disorders, equally detrimental to a person's stability and success and imperative to address for sustainable rehabilitation (Hayes & Miller, 2010). According to the NHSP/W Entry Self-Assessment, 66% of women admitted in to the prison acknowledge a history of substance abuse and prior mental health diagnosis (New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute, 2008). Fifty-seven percent



say they suffered from substance abuse and were under mental health care at the time of their arrest, while 58% of female inmates at the NHSP/W are on one or more psychotropic medications (New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute, 2008). Eighty-five to ninety two percent of female inmates incarcerated in 2007 had a known or suspected substance abuse problem (New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute, 2008). According to the inmate self-report assessment, 58% of women in prison used drugs regularly prior to their incarceration while 43% regularly used and abused alcohol. These numbers are on the low end because it is a self-assessment and many worry their answers will harm their chances for parole.

### ***Abuse & Trauma***

“Women who have experienced family violence are at a significantly higher risk for substance abuse, addiction and mental health problems and they often engage in delinquent or criminal behavior” (New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women, 2004). Nationally it is estimated 90% of female inmates have experienced abuse and trauma. New Hampshire statistics vary somewhat from this. Sixty-seven percent of prisoners at NHSP/W report being physically harmed by an intimate partner at least once during their life. The likelihood that this is a onetime occurrence and not a tragic pattern is very low. Eighty-seven percent reports being emotionally harmed by an intimate partner while 45% were sexually abused (New Hampshire Women's Policy Institute, 2008). In short, any successful project that proposes meaningful rehabilitation must address each of these areas of human need.

## **Project Target Community**

This Project focused on female offenders who had served their sentence at The New Hampshire State Prison for Women in Goffstown. NHSP/W is a medium/minimum security facility although it houses all levels of New Hampshire federally sentenced women, including maximum security prisoners; the population of the prison as of July 1, 2011 was 127 (NH Department of Corrections, 2011). NHSP/W was a facility established in 1989, built with the intent to hold a maximum capacity of 105 inmates (NH Department of Corrections, 2011).

Out of this prison population, the project focused on women who had served time in NHSP/W and who were currently housed at Shea Farm, the states female half-way house. During their time at Shea Farm, these women are allowed to leave the premises for work and rehabilitative purposes while still being supported in housing, food and medical needs by the state's correctional system. This is an ideal time period for these women to work on building necessary social and employment skills which could be used for successful community reentry upon their release.

## PROBLEM ANALYSIS

### Problem Statement

Incarcerated women in New Hampshire face a plethora of issues and challenges prior to, during and after incarceration. NHP addresses the high incidence of women released from NHSP/W having difficulty finding viable and sustainable employment upon release. Twenty-five percent of incarcerated women in New Hampshire do not have a high school degree, lessening their chance of employment and increasing their risk of recidivism (New Hampshire Commission on Women, 2004). The effect of this lack of employment is that a high percentage of women released from The New Hampshire State Prison for Women live below the poverty line, increasing their risk for re-offending and returning to prison.

Currently, New Hampshire does not have a GED granting program within the Women's State Prison. This means that women can take classes towards a degree but they will not be able to leave prison with any type of improved academic status. With an inability to advance academically while incarcerated, reentering females upon release have a challenging time finding reliable, stable and consistent work. This lack of opportunity too easily allows women to slip back into bad habits and become more susceptible to committing crimes as a way of providing for themselves and their families.

***Table 1: Problem Analysis***

Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased community crime rate</li><li>• Higher dependence on state and federal assistance</li><li>• Lack of livable wage jobs</li><li>• Continuous underdevelopment of the community</li><li>• Strain on accessible and affordable healthcare</li><li>• Increase in domestic violence</li><li>• Increased amount of women and children living</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in poverty</li> <li>Increased drug use and drug related crime</li> </ul>
Problem Statement	25% of incarcerated women in New Hampshire do not have a high school degree, lessening their chance of employment and increasing their risk of recidivism
Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cyclical poverty</li> <li>History of abuse</li> <li>Limited access to high quality education and vocational opportunities</li> <li>High rate of drug use</li> <li>High rate of teenage pregnancy</li> <li>A familial dependence on state assistance</li> <li>High rates of undiagnosed and untreated mental illness</li> <li>Lack of access to quality healthcare</li> <li>Institutional discrimination</li> </ul>

## Stakeholders

The State of New Hampshire in general and The New Hampshire State Prison for Women (NHSP/W) has a vested interest in the success of granting GED's during incarceration as well as expanding possible employment opportunities for their inmates upon release. Decreasing recidivism and improving the success of inmate rehabilitation have enormous benefits for everyone. NHSP/W and its administrators will be the primary overseers of both the GED granting program as well as any improvements that are able to be made in the vocational program. The prison faces a challenging road in successfully implementing these key programs. Some of the barrier opposing successful inmate rehabilitation include limited staffing, drastic budget cuts, limited resources and distrust from the inmates themselves. Many of those working within the system have long since given up on their ability to positively affect and change these women's lives. Getting the buy-in from correctional administrators these administrators may likely prove to be more challenging than winning the support of the inmates.

Among stakeholders in the greater community, the Women's Fund of New Hampshire is a nonprofit organization which caters to the most vulnerable females in our state. The closest organization to an "umbrella" for this project, The Women's Fund assists women in taking steps forward to remove themselves permanently from poverty, substance abuse and violent relationships. Included in this program is healthcare, health education including reproductive health and self-sufficiency programs, all important factors in a woman's successful and sustained reentry. One of the largest issues for this organization, like many others, is funding concerns. The Women's Fund is partially supported through federal and state grants; however the majority of their funding is through private donations. This of course can cause limited resources during a time of economic recession. There is an expanding call for services such as those provided by The Women's Fund, raising the concern that drastically adding to their working population would not be welcomed. Also, being an ex-offender comes with many stereotypes and assumptions that can limit a person's willingness to work with them. The Women's Fund could be a key liaison for reentering women, helping put released inmates in touch with housing organizations, employers, daycare, health care needs and so forth. The resources and experience of The Women's Fund of NH are important to this project's success.

Incarcerated women are reentering in to our communities on a daily basis. They share the same needs and desires as those who are already established, participating members of society. The success of these communities means the success of all of its members, including recently released women.

Many of these women entered prison impoverished, without a job, without a high school education and no employment experience or training. While one does not change these sorts of conditions overnight, the goal is to improve both education and vocational training while women are in prison. Upon release, these women will have improved knowledge and skills which will hopefully open new doors of opportunity for them. It can be very challenging for a female felon to find quality work upon release. The goal is that, in coordination with The Women's Fund and this project, women will find a place in the community to earn a decent and livable wage. The majority of those who recidivate will do so in the first three years after their initial release. The hope for these women and all stakeholders is that the rate of recidivism can be decreased through interventions proposed in this project.

### **Project Goals in Community Economic Development Terms**

This group of women is a marginalized community by nature. The vast majority of female offenders are raised in poverty, have limited educational backgrounds and subsequently hold few viable job skills with limited employment history. These women come from backgrounds of substantial mental, physical and sexual abuse as well as heavy substance use leading to histories of trauma, undiagnosed mental illness and heavy substance abuse. With a high dependence on state and federal assistance, elevated crime rate and decreased economic output, these women are a financial burden on our community as a whole. Through the improvement of these women's educational attainment, vocational skill sets and healthy lifestyle behaviors, they will be less likely to

be financially dependent and more likely to be higher functioning and contributing members of the community.

Long term, this project aims to help women become strong, positive, contributing members of their community. This is done in a variety of ways; through keeping a steady job with a livable wage, increasing ones education, staying substance free, removing themselves and their children from harmful and dangerous living situations and striving to improve their overall socio-economic situation. Not only do these steps improve the lives of former inmates, they also improve the chances that their children will stay out of prison, finish school and stay free from substances. These are just some of the many ways these women can positively affect their communities.

The project's goal is to provide integrated pre-release and post release services to women incarcerated within the New Hampshire State Prison system. The intent is to improve the economic conditions of these women through focusing on sustainable employment attainment, educational achievement, financial literacy and the acquisition of healthy life skills and behaviors. The hope is that, through the attainment of the above mentioned skills, these women will be able to successfully reenter in to their communities following incarceration and maintain a successful and self-sufficient lifestyle. This project also provides advocacy for formerly incarcerated women to assist them in finding meaningful work, safe housing, quality healthcare and the necessary resources to stay substance free.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The personal and social cost of female incarceration in the United States continues to rise. According to Brien (2002) the number of female prisoners has increased by 114% since 1990. By 2001, the Department of Justice estimated that 154,000 women were imprisoned annually (Honderich, 2003). The vast majority of these women are poor, inadequately educated and the primary custodial parent for their children (Honderich, 2003). Over 50% of women were unemployed at the time of their initial arrest (Honderich, 2003). These issues compound further a woman's ability to reenter her community successfully and avoid recidivating.

One of the largest obstacles a woman faces both during and after incarceration is the care and protection of her children. According to the Bureau of Justice, 75-80% of incarcerated women are mothers (Hernandez, 2008). These children undergo tremendous trauma and upheaval due to their mother's incarceration. This cost is born by both the child and community. According to Hernandez (2008) children who have an incarcerated parent are shown to be four to five times more likely to be incarcerated themselves at some point during their lifetime. "In the United States, 2 of every 100 American children has one or both parents in prison in any given year, a number which has tripled in a decade," (Hernandez, 2008). Hernandez (2008) discusses how the vast majority of children with incarcerated parents were more likely to be living with their mother than their father at the time of arrest. The incarceration of a mother has been shown to negatively affect a child's physical, emotional, social and cognitive development (Hernandez, 2008). Not only does the child suffer from issues of abandonment, anger and



resentment but according to Hernandez (2008) one in five children witness their mother's arrest, 50% of these children are under the age of 7.

These children face detrimental issues in regards to learning and development as well. According to Poehlman (2003) one third of children who had a mother incarcerated scored below average on standardized intelligence tests. While trauma has a detrimental effect on cognition and retention, over 60% of these children were exposed to some sort of chemical substance before birth, increasing their odds at needing increased services (Poehlman, 2003). Poehlman discusses how the majority of these children face serious issues of detachment and abandonment which resonates in to an unhealthy understanding of personal needs and relationships upon adulthood (Poehlman, 2003).

Levy-Pounds (2006) discusses the long term personal and social effects of a mother's incarceration on her children. Children of these mothers are more likely to use drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanisms and far more likely to develop habits to illegal substances (Levy-Pounds, 2006). In addition to their heightened chance of abusing drugs and alcohol, these children are likely to suffer from low self-esteem, insecurity issues, rage and shame (Levy-Pounds, 2006).

Brien (2002) highlights a growing trend in female recidivism. Within the first three years after release, 58% of women were rearrested at least once, 40% were reconvicted and 39% were returned to prison on new crime sentences. A large amount of incarcerated women face the challenge of low education attainment and severely limited work experience (Brien, 2002). Highlighting the obvious flaws in our female federal prison system's education and vocational programs, Brien examines the uphill battle these women face in finding work which provides livable and sustainable wages

following release. Due to the limited education opportunities during incarceration, few women will leave prison with the necessary tools and qualifications to find adequate work upon release. For those who do seek to further their educational opportunities, there are a number of issues that these women face which are found to be impassable including being ineligible for federal Pell Grants. Coupled with this difficulty is the fact that prisons have outdated and ineffective vocational programs. More often than not, there is a substantial gap within these programs between prison jobs and training opportunities and the feasible and available jobs awaiting these women upon release (Brien, 2002). Women will continue to recidivate in droves if not given the proper tools to positively change their level of opportunity from the time they are initially incarcerated until release.

## PROJECT DESIGN

NHP proposes to identify eight participants who will be selected to take part in the project through a variety of assessments and interviews conducted during their incarceration at the state prison. The first criterion for possible participation in this project is consistent attendance of offered academic classes during incarceration. In order to be eligible, a woman needs to show interest in improving her future through involvement in educational opportunities. Three months prior to release, the participant will take The University of Cincinnati's Risk and Needs Assessment, which highlights areas of vulnerability upon release. The Assessment evaluates both strengths and needs of the offender as well as highlights the offender's history of abuse, mental illness, education and employment and substance use. Upon completion of the assessment, the participant will be rated on her ability to successfully utilize and retain the project's goals and parameters. Individual interviews will be conducted with each inmate and her case manager to determine how to assist the inmate to best apply the tools of the project. During the assessment and interview process, motivation as well as current skill sets will be evaluated.

***Table 2: Logic Model***

Long Term Outcome	Over time, female offenders will increase their employability and skill set, improving their chances at sustained employment and self-sufficiency. Through stable employment and housing as well as a reintegration of children and family, these women will decrease their likelihood to recidivate, reducing crime, drug use and incarceration costs for our communities.
Intermediate Outcome	Female offenders reentering the community will have increased marketable job skills and educational attainment, with a higher probability of successfully transitioning in to a functioning member of her community.
Short Term Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase access to GED completion programs</li><li>• Increase positive behavioral and social skills</li><li>• Increase marketable vocational skills and employability</li><li>• Increase understanding within the local business community of the employability of female offenders</li></ul>
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6 women complete their GED within six months of being released from</li></ul>

	Shea Farm (half-way house) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20% decrease in categorized “risk” from the initial Risk and Needs Assessment when initially evaluated for program during last three months of incarceration at NHSP/W</li> <li>• 5 women have fulltime work six months after release from Shea Farm (half-way house)</li> </ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with NH Department of Education</li> <li>• Partner with NH Task Force on Women and Recovery</li> <li>• Connect offenders with local businesses who have job openings or ability to take on interns/apprentices</li> <li>• Weekly journal to track employment progress</li> <li>• Monthly strength/opportunity meetings with offender employers</li> <li>• Weekly GED exam review</li> <li>• Monthly meetings at Shea Farm with Voices Against Violence facilitator</li> <li>• Bimonthly resume writing and mock interview classes</li> <li>• Provide weekly opportunity to attend social skill building and mental health classes at The Pillar House (Riverbend)</li> </ul>
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GED Review Curricula</li> <li>• Transportation to and from meeting points and employment sites</li> <li>• Partner with Dress for Success in Concord</li> <li>• Room at Shea Farm for group meetings, at least 60mins/month</li> <li>• Voices Against Violence Facilitator</li> <li>• Partner with local businesses who are hiring/willing to take on reduced pay or unpaid interns</li> <li>• Access to the Concord Public Library</li> <li>• Pillar House Facilitator</li> <li>• Transportation to and from GED testing locations</li> </ul>

This project begins while the women are incarcerated. Currently, the state of New Hampshire Department of Corrections insists it does not have the resources to provide women incarcerated in the state prison with a GED completion program. Rather, the prison provides various classes towards a degree but no way in which to actually attain said degree. Under this project and with the help of local resources, these women will have the opportunity to apply the classes they take while incarcerated towards the attainment of the actual degree while residing at Shea Farm, the state’s half-way house for women.

One of the factors that keep these women from attaining livable-wage employment is a lack of marketable vocational skills. While at Shea Farm, the women

will have the opportunity to participate in skill-building internships and apprenticeships with local businesses. This will help to both build valuable skill sets as well as to increase local businesses understanding of offender employability.

Since the current state budget does not allow for any type of increased business credit for hiring offenders, advocacy on behalf of these women throughout the business community will be crucial. Internships will either be unpaid or at a reduced wage. Implementing this part of the project while the women are still under state supervision will allow for the ability to earn a lower wage while increasing their skills and likelihood at finding sustainable employment upon release.

## **METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

### **Project Beneficiaries**

This project is intended to benefit women incarcerated at The New Hampshire State Prison. Eight women will participate in the project. They will be chosen after careful review of all assessments, interviews, discussions with case managers and review of “release plan.” Women who participate will not have a high school degree or GED upon entering the NHSP/W.

### **Host Organization/Group**

There are several organizations participating in the program including but not limited to: The NH Department of Corrections, Riverbend Community Mental Health Center, Voices Against Violence, The NH Department of Education, Goodwill Industries, The NH Taskforce on Women and Recovery, The NH Department of Labor, NH Department of Health and Human Services and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. The NH Departments of Labor, Education and Health and Human Services serve as a liaison between the women and their goals. Each department services the women in a different capacity on the road to self-sufficiency and successful, sustainable reentry. Through partnering with these agencies, the women learn the ability to independently navigate the various resources available to them as well as how to best to utilize different agencies and programs.

Riverbend Community Mental Health is a key partner agency in assisting these women with successful reentry skills. One of the common factors within this community is undiagnosed and untreated mental illness. Through Riverbend, and specifically their

Pillar House Program, women participate in skill building classes as well as seeking treatment for various mental illnesses.

Voices Against Violence is a local community organization focused on helping women to end the unhealthy cycle of violent relationships. Many of these women grew up in violent environments and have continued the cycle through their adult relationships. One of the largest determining factors in a female offender's successful reentry is the ability to successfully support herself without the need to retreat back to a former partner, usually an environment of violence and substance use. Voices Against Violence helps women learn necessary skills in leaving violent partners, learning to spot warning signs in potentially harmful relationships and secure safe and affordable housing without the need of returning to a partner for financial stability. These will all be key skills in helping these women build self-sufficiency.

Goodwill Industries provides a reentering offender mentor program. This is a peer to peer mentorship program that pairs a successfully reentered female offender with one just beginning the process. While this mentorship is not a key component in an offender's successful reentry, it provides her with the opportunity for friendship and guidance as well as tips and advice on navigating what is many times an overwhelming process.

The Unitarian Universalist Church in Concord has graciously offered their support for this project through spiritual guidance for the women as well as allowing participation in their many anti-poverty initiatives. Finding a voice and hope during this challenging time will prove to be exceptionally important for these women. In addition to the above mentioned services, the women will have an opportunity to participate in support groups and counseling offered, free of charge, by the church and its staff. While

it will not be mandatory for the women to participate in any of the programs offered by the church, the opportunity to increase spiritual connection has proven to be beneficial for participants in similar projects and thus it was felt to be important to offer comparable services within this project.

My role in the project is to serve as an organizer and advocate. One of my most important roles is advocating for the women, both within the business community as well as various social service organizations which will be key to their long-term success upon reentry. As the developer and key implementer for the initial phase of this project, I oversee the cohesion of organizations and services as well as helping to navigate through any issues that may arise for the women individually or the project as a whole. It will also be my responsibility to monitor and report on successes, issues, development concerns which may arise or adversity encountered along the way.

### **Project Roles and Staffing Plan**

The projects primary staff include: Director of NH Women Offenders Program, Niki Miller; various staff and case workers from The NH Department of Health and Human Services; Voices Against Violence facilitators; Riverbend staff and caseworkers; Clergy, staff and parishioners at Concord Unitarian Universalist Church; Administrators at the NH Department of Education; Case workers and representatives from the NH Department of Labor and staff and mentors from Goodwill Industries.

***Table 3: Responsibilities by Organization***

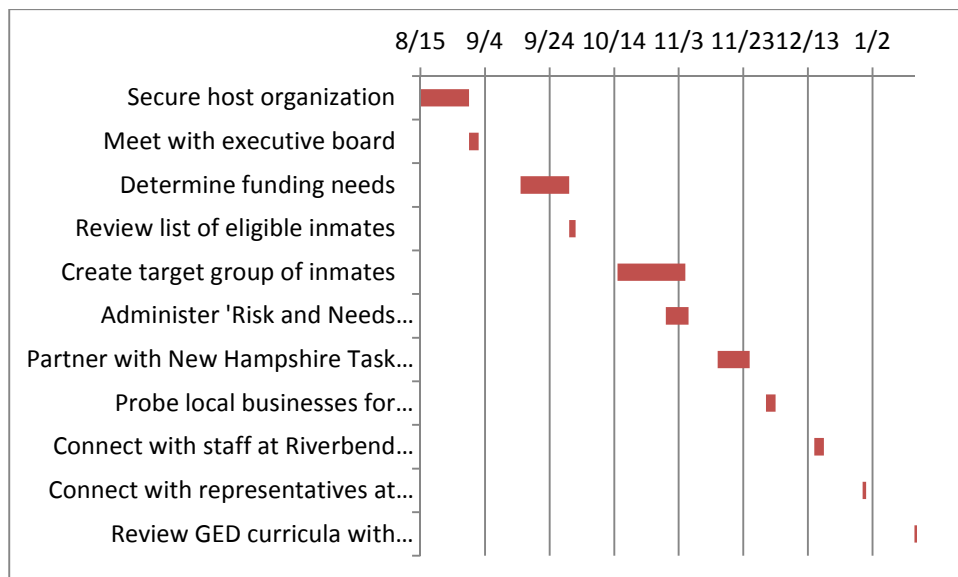
Niki Miller, Director of NH Women Offenders Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and advise Project Director, Anna Hayes</li> <li>• Assistance in grant writing and advocacy</li> <li>• Assistance in navigating NH's correctional system</li> </ul>
NH Health and Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist in finding eligible assistance for women on a case by case basis before and during initial reentry</li> </ul>



Department	
Voices Against Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate skill building classes</li> <li>• Assist in helping women find safe and affordable housing</li> </ul>
Riverbend Community Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate mental health counseling</li> <li>• Assist women in navigating local mental health system and resources</li> <li>• Provide Pillar House programs to help teach successful life skills</li> </ul>
Concord Unitarian Universalist Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spiritual counseling</li> <li>• Anti-poverty programs</li> <li>• Opportunity for spiritual growth and guidance</li> </ul>
NH Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GED curricula review and testing</li> </ul>
NH Department of Labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide employment resources, job counseling and assistance with interview skills and resume building</li> </ul>
Goodwill Industries of New England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist in partnering reentering women with other offenders for positive peer to peer mentoring relationships</li> </ul>

The Gantt chart featured in table 4 refers to the initial outline of the projects development. The timeline is built upon feasible dates of accomplishment for various steps of implementation prior to the projects start date of January 15, 2012.

**Table 4: Gantt Chart**



**Table 5: Project Budget**

<b>Reentry Project Budget</b>			
	<b>Monthly Cost</b>		<b>Anticipated Total Project Cost</b>
<b>Salary Cost</b>			
Director and Staff of Host Organization	\$400		\$2,400
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$0		\$0
<b>Equipment Costs</b>			
Rented Shuttle Van	\$100		\$600
Concord Library Access	\$0		\$0
Printing Cost	\$40		\$240
Office Supplies	\$50		\$300
GED Curricula	\$25		\$200
GED Tests	n/a		\$560
Bus Passes	\$80		\$480
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$295		\$2,380
<b>Start Up Costs</b>			
Materials for Local Businesses	n/a		\$100
Risk and Needs Assessments	n/a		\$800
Support Services Literature	n/a		\$100
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$0		\$1,000
<b>Operating Expenses</b>			
Cost of Used Space	\$100		\$600
Computer Use	\$20		\$120
Internet Access	\$50		\$300
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$170		\$1,020
<b>Professional Service Needs</b>			
Voices Against Violence Facilitator **	\$150		\$900
Riverbend Mental Health Facilitator **	\$150		\$900
Drug and Alcohol Counseling **	\$300		\$1,800
Dress for Success **	\$50		\$300
Monthly One-on-Ones with Employers **	\$160		\$1,280
** - Denotes Donated Staff Time			
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$810		\$4,860
<b>Personal Expenses</b>			
Traveling	\$100		\$600
Donated Time	\$200		\$1,200
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$300		\$1,800
<b>Miscellaneous</b>			
	\$75		\$450

<b>Subtotal</b>	\$75		\$450
<b>Total Cost of Project:</b>	\$3481.67		\$20,890
Total Cost of Donated Time:	\$1,410		\$8,460
Donated Supplies:	\$108.33		\$2,450
Donated Equipment and Space:	\$170		\$1,020
<b>Sources of Income:</b>			
Donated Time and Expenses:	\$1,688.33		\$11,930
Second Chance Grant:	\$833		\$5,000
<< Established Organization Donations	\$700		\$4,200
<< : Denotes Faith Based Organizations, NHDOC, NH Dept of Labor, Antipoverty Organizations and Initiatives, Planned Parenthood.			

## **MONITORING**

### **Indicators**

The success of this project will heavily depend on the successful implementation and monitoring of the activities listed within the logic model. The activities outlined lead to the projects bench marks, or indicators, listed below.

- Output 1: Six women complete their GED within 6 months of being released from the Shea Farm half-way house.
- Output 2: 20% decrease in categorized “risk” from the initial Risk and Needs Assessment implementation when initially admitted to project.
- Output 3: Five women have fulltime, livable wage work 6 months after release from Shea Farm.

### **Monitoring, Tools and Forms**

The monitoring of these outputs will be conducted through surveys, interviews, journals and monthly assessments. The project staff hopes that through careful monitoring of activities and outputs we will not only ensure success but also be able to navigate any problems as soon as they arise and be as proactive as possible to navigating through them.

Progress reports will be filled out monthly by the inmates’ employer and assessed by the projects staff and offender together. This will allow the opportunity to react to any issues prior to them becoming an all-encompassing problem and to also positively build off of new skills. These progress reports will also be shared with each woman’s Department of Corrections Case Manager and remain in their file.

As a compliment to the employer progress reports, the women will fill out biweekly surveys which will focus on accomplishments, areas of concerns, road blocks and project feedback. This will give all project facilitators the opportunity to address the tools that have been proven most successful and allow the opportunity to reorganize areas that are not proving effective. The projects staff and all facilitators will meet monthly to discuss all aspects of the project, including activities, each woman's successes and areas of opportunity and react to any aspect of the project that may not be entirely successful. Risk and Need Assessments will be filled out every three months or more often if deemed necessary by project staff or case workers on an individual basis.

The evaluation tools used by project staff and administrators will have a heavy emphasis on qualitative data, although there will be some measurement in the form of quantitative data; specifically, the long term evaluation in regards to the success of the women. Has the program made a significant difference in reducing recidivism, increasing income and raising the factors which indicate an overall successful and sustainable long-term reentry?

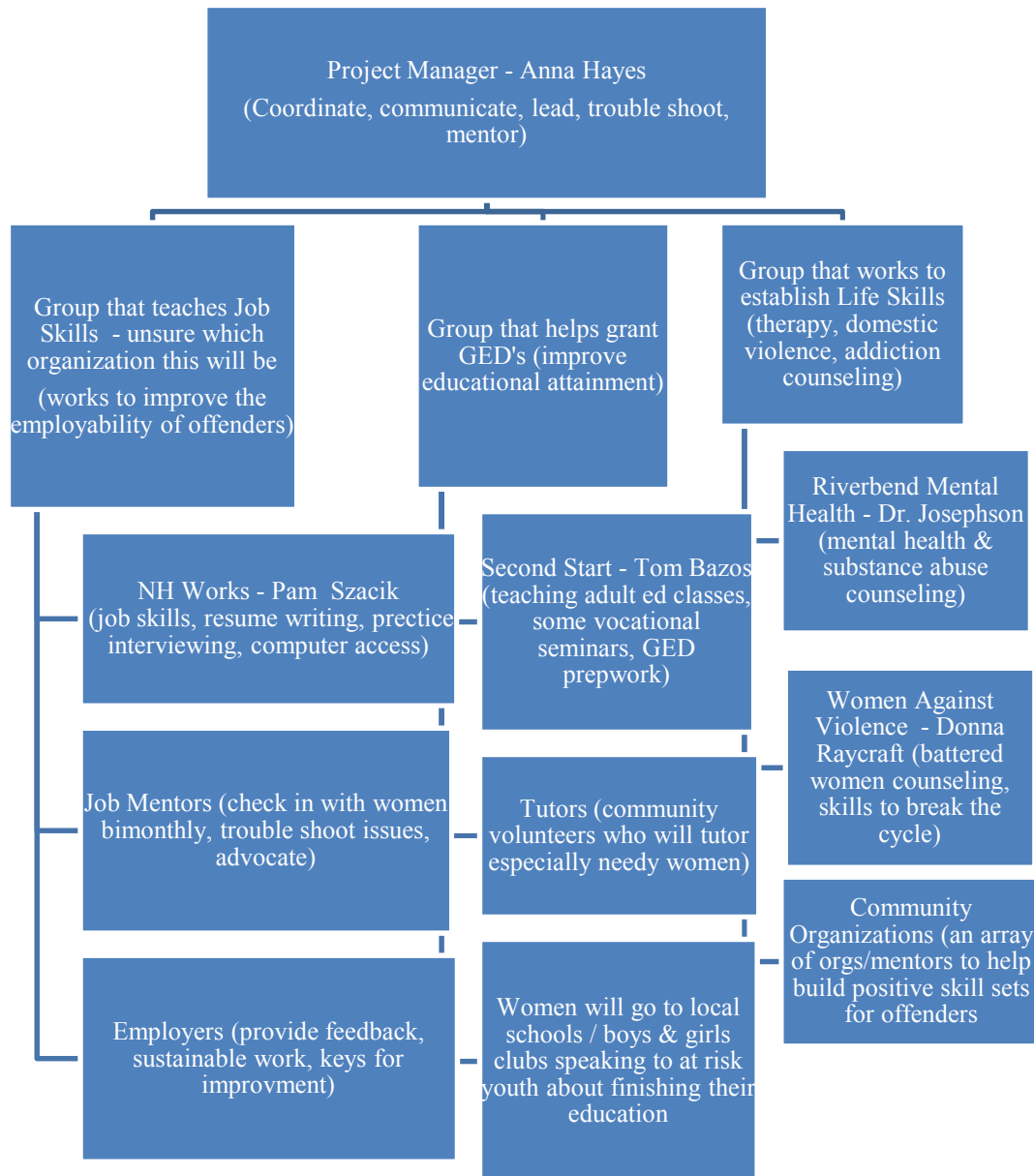
One way NHP will seek to monitor inmate success throughout the project is through email assessments (see appendix A). These will be a generic template which all of those involved in the project; employers, advocates, mentors, tutors and counselors, will fill out and pass in to the project director based on a pre-determined schedule. These emails allow for the quick collection of key information in an effort to assess the standing and progress of each inmate as well as to address any opportunities before they become an issue. Significant items focused on in the email include attendance, attitude,

wins/opportunities and if there were any problems. These brief assessments will be reviewed by project staff at each meeting and if need be, issues will addressed.

In addition to the above mentioned monitoring tools, there will be an emergency hotline which all employers, advocates and project managers will be able to access 24 hours a day. This phone line will allow for direct and instant contact if an emergency issue with the inmate arises and requires immediate attention.

### **Team/Tasks**

As stated above, the project staff will be responsible for organizing and collecting all monitoring tools and evaluations. The results will be broken down for the entire team to see any areas of opportunity and to build upon the projects successes. It is important that all individuals and organizations working within the project report results, feedback and issues to the appropriate parties.



## Schedule

There will be several different schedules followed in terms of collecting monitoring data. Each area of rehabilitation will have an evaluation schedule based upon how often they see the inmates. For example, a therapist will submit the weekly email

template after every week's session while a Goodwill career counselor may only submit an email evaluation once every three weeks as this is how often the inmate will utilize this resource.

The monthly staff meetings will be a key opportunity in effectively monitoring the project as it moves forward. These meetings will allow all facilitators and NHP staff the opportunity to come together and brain-storm, problem solve and discuss the progress of each individual inmate. All facilitators and project staff will be required to be at each meeting.



## **EVALUATION**

Evaluation is a key and necessary part of growing a strong and sustainable reentry program. It is through consistent assessment that NHP will be able to successfully take shape and offer the correct and necessary services to female offenders.

The community reentry services project felt the empowerment evaluation model best represented the initiative and its goals. The stakeholders participating in the project, at all levels, care deeply about the success of the initiative and the reentering women. One of the most important overall themes throughout the reentry project is empowerment, of the individual and of the project. An evaluation method based on these same principles makes good sense.

### **Evaluation Indicators**

This project will evaluate the following indicators as they relate to short term, intermediate and long term outcomes throughout the project. There are a number of different surveys currently being utilized to evaluate outcomes within the project. Within the NHP survey for participants there are three key questions that take precedence when reviewing how successful the current initiative is: 1) Has your level of drug use decreased since your incarceration, and if so by how much of a decrease; 2) Are you consistently attending some form of therapy for substance abuse and/or counseling for emotional spiritual needs, if so, how often, if not why not; 3) What is your greatest challenge currently and what is your most recent success? It is important to remember that while all women in the program participate in random drug screenings; all assessments that ask the women to comment on drugs or drug activity are kept confidential.

The vast majority of women who will participate in the NH Successful Reentry Services Project will have been at one time or other substance abusers. Heavy drug and alcohol use is closely connected with a life of abuse and a history of untreated or undiagnosed mental illness. Addiction is a large reason why many of these women are unable to hold down steady employment, live self-sufficiently, keep custody of their children and ultimately stay free of crime and out of prison. Due to the overwhelming link between drug use and reentry failure, the project feels it necessary to keep an incredibly close watch on these women's substance use patterns, even after parole obligations expire. The goal of the project is to help these women build a foundation for which they can stand on their own two feet. Drugs and alcohol abuse have no place in that future. If this portion of the rehabilitative process is failing, these evaluations are one of the only ways for us to uncover the issue and correct the problem.

A lack of accessibility to therapy, mental health counselors, drug abuse counselors and psychiatrists has led many of these women to years of undiagnosed/undertreated mental illness and self-medication through illegal narcotics and alcohol. One of the projects goals is to open access to various sustainable mental health resources. This is an important step towards successful sustainable community reentry. If the women are not attending some form of therapy on a regular basis it is important that the evaluations help identify reasons for this lack of counseling support. Due to traumatic histories and heavy substance use, many of these women will not be able to successfully complete other important areas of the project such as finding and keeping steady employment and earning ones GED without consistently attending some type of emotional therapy and support.

Consistent evaluation is important during all steps of the project, as well as after. The initiative hopes to keep in touch with these women well after their participation in the program in an effort to evaluate the long term success of the project. Short term outcomes will be the first measureable data as to the successes and opportunities within the project. The first is to increase the marketable vocational skills and employability of ex-offenders. The key indicator as to whether or not this is a success will be gauged by whether at least five women are able to successfully gain full-time (32+ hours) employment six months after release from NHSP/W. The second key short term outcome is a 20% decrease in measured risk from the initial Risk and Needs Assessment six months after release. The success indicator will be consistent participation in project programs and services as well as continued partnership with staff and resources.

Intermediate outcomes play a key role in measuring the sustainability of the project. The first intermediate outcome focuses on increasing the number of women released from NHSP/W with a completed GED. This will be measured by the number of women who finish the GED Completion Program and who successfully pass the exam within one year of being released. The second important intermediate benchmark revolves around increasing positive behavioral and social skills. The attainment of this part of the project relies on the number of women successfully able to complete all of the life-skills training program components.

The initial long term outcome the project seeks to accomplish is improving the employment status of ex-offenders. The largest indicator of this will be the number of women who have gainful (at least 30 hours a week) employment for a minimum of three years post-release. A second important long term outcome indicator is reduced recidivism

among women release from NHSP/W who participated in the project. The largest assessment of whether this has been a success will be told through the number of women who re-offend and are re-incarcerated within three years of release.

### **Data Gathering Methods, Tools, Forms**

In an effort to effectively monitor the above mentioned outcomes, the following monitoring tools and methods will be used. Measurement of the short term outcomes will be gauged through skill surveys and employability data. The University of Cincinnati's 'Risk and Need Assessment' will be routinely utilized throughout the project to measure progress as well as at the beginning to quantify a starting point for each individual woman. For the intermediate outcomes, GED data will be utilized as will housing surveys, relationship surveys, drug screenings and mental health questionnaires. For both long term outcomes, employment surveys as well as staff and data from the NH Dept. of Health and Human Services will be utilized. The NH Dept. of Corrections data and records will be consistently used to measure and monitor outcomes.

### **Data Analysis**

All data recovered through these various monitoring methods will be broken down individually and as a group. Staff will monitor short term, intermediate and long term data in an effort to gauge the effectiveness of the project. If and when data points to opportunities within the project, NHP staff and facilitators will work together to put in place feasible action plans and partner with necessary organizations and resources.

## **Evaluation Team/Tasks**

Staff for each section of the rehabilitation phase of the project will be responsible for implementing and collecting their part of the projects evaluation as well as developing action plans to correct problems when necessary. It will be the core staffs (Niki Miller and Anna Hayes) responsibility to break down the said evaluations and compile workable data to evaluate the success of the project. Each facilitator will be responsible for presenting the data to the group in an effort for all to understand the strengths and areas of opportunity for the project and the participating ex-offenders. While each area of need is important to the female inmate's community reentry, it is equally important that all capacities of the project are working together as a team to ensure that each goal is achieved during and after reentry.

## **Evaluation Schedule**

Although each female participant will have various check-ins whether it be with their substance abuse counselor, GED tutor, career advisor, employer or case manager, it is important that they have bi-weekly check-ins with project management staff. This will include a sit down with their case worker and the appropriate NHP staff. During the meeting, evaluations submitted from facilitators from the previous two weeks, feedback and any issues that need to be addressed will be discussed. Prior to each sit down, an NHP staff member will have a phone check-in conversation with the female inmate's parole officer. This allows for a continued connection between the correction system and the project as well maintaining an open line of communication between the two establishments. If there are issues with a particular inmate that render more frequent

meetings, the NHP staff will accommodate this need until an action plan is in place and the problem is solved.

As the women get farther in to the project, NHP staff will continue to have check-in with the inmate's on a less frequent basis. After nine months of clean living, qualified as drug free, consistent attendance of required meetings and therapy work as well as steady employment, and free of any criminal activity, the participant will begin monthly check-ins with project staff. If these healthy behaviors continue and progress remains, after another nine months the participant will attend sit-downs with NHP staff every three months. If at any point in time an issue arises or there is a setback in her progress towards self-sufficiency, NHP staff reserves the right to request more frequent meetings with the participant until action is taken to correct the setback.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

NHP looks to be a long-term project which can cater to many generations of reentering offenders. In order to successfully achieve such longevity, the initiative must find a way to become sustainable. There are a number of different factors which determine whether or not the project will be able to successful over time. Financial influences, political circumstances and social considerations will all help to both propel the project forward and continue its growth or if not properly planned for, stifle its development and cause it to end.

The project has many financial opportunities. It has been challenging to secure funding or monetary donations to the scale which the organization needs in order to fully begin delivering services. The Second Chance Act Grant will play a pivotal role in funding the initiative if the project is approved although this will not be known until the fall of 2012. The hope is that as the community becomes more receptive to the idea of rehabilitation for these women the more funding will be available. Also, much of the necessary funds will be delivered to the organization in the form of donated professional time such as volunteer substance abuse counselors and mental health workers. This cost cannot be completely compiled until that portion of the project is ready to begin.

The overall state of the economy poses a huge challenge to the success and longevity of the project. In the last eighteen months, New Hampshire has been hit with Draconian sized budget cuts, mainly focused on the poor and those who seek publicly funded social and health services. With an already depleted social services sector in NH, the reentry project aims not to be a burden on an already overly taxed system but rather to blend in to existing organizations and groups. The idea is to find a way to utilize the excellent

services available while minimizing the cost for both the organization and the system at large. It is through this practice that the initiative hopes to aid in its own sustainability. New Hampshire has faced huge political turmoil since the last election. The majority in our State House neither favor social services nor do they support aiding and assisting the under privileged and marginalized communities within our state through government programs. This has become a huge issue for anyone attempting to promote any type of advancement for New Hampshire's disenfranchised citizens, including reentering female offenders.

Federally there has become more of an understanding in regards to the need to focus on the growing recidivism rates within our population, particularly with women. The Second Chance Act Grant, which funds most reentry services on some level, has been a huge success as have other smaller scale operations, such as drug courts and work rehabilitation programs. Unfortunately, with the national economy in recession, public and private funding is scarce.

Socially, the largest issue for women offenders in New Hampshire is fighting stigma. As an ex-offender, she is only seen as a criminal record, not as a person. Large percentages of these women are mothers, and too often those in the community view them as not only bad people but as bad parents. Businesses tend not to hire offenders simply because of their criminal background. The project aims to help break down the barriers between these women and the community. The NH Reentry Services Project seeks to educate the community on the necessity of rehabilitation, second chances and the value that each person can bring to the whole when given the right tools and opportunities.



The goal of the community reentry project is to be a fully sustainable initiative which can cater to one group of reentering women after another. Some of the most important steps the project has taken to ensure its longevity are the building of relationships with local rehabilitative organizations and support services. These partnerships are established within the community and will allow the reentry initiative to merge into an already well known and reputable social service network. In addition, these organizations already look to serve this population; however, there has been an inability to successfully connect with this particular community. The bridge that this project provides between established services and the reentering women will be a vital part of the projects sustainability.

One of the most important tasks the project has taken on thus far in ensuring its longevity is educating the community and business leaders as to the value and merit of these women. Before the local community can fully embrace the project and the women it serves, they must understand why the project is important and how it serves the greater good. Educating the community on the cost of incarcerating these women, the common reasons so many find themselves behind bars and why it is such a challenge to reenter as self-sufficient citizens, helps the overall community recognize the impact that assisting these women makes on the health of our state and individual communities as well as the price we pay when we do nothing. Funding will be critical in order to ensure long-term sustainability; however, the initiative is confident that once given the opportunity to prove the difference that can be made in these women's lives, continued financial support will be more readily available.

## **RESULTS**

While the progression of the project has been slow, there have been many important lessons learned during the advocacy phase of the initiative. It became clear early on that this project could not begin with rehabilitation. While at times the experience was quite upsetting and frustrating for staff, there were also many moments of encouragement and feelings of victory. Over the course of the first eighteen months of NHP, roadblocks have been encountered, challenges overcome and successes celebrated, although there is much work to be done ensuring the four short-term outcomes become a reality.

### **Short Term Outcome One: Increase access to GED completion programs**

Initially the project had planned to offer the vast majority of required classes during incarceration. Unfortunately the state did not see this as a viable option and declined to allow the project to participate. This of course means that the women are unable to utilize their time behind bars to move their educational goals forward. While this does not mean that the women cannot gain a GED upon release, it does mean that the time period in which it will take is greatly lengthened.

There have been outstanding networks formed within the community, from Head Start to various local college groups, willing to help tutor and mentor the women through the process of attaining their GED. Many of these women have severe issues with reading and the prospect for one-on-one tutoring allows them the opportunity to grow in a way they would not have otherwise.

## **Short Term Outcome Two: Increase positive, behavioral and social skills**

This may be one of the most challenging STO's to achieve. So much of what lead to these women being incarcerated came from witnessing and being victim to violence and sexual abuse as children, growing up in cyclical poverty, being surrounded by substance abusers and having no positive role-models or people who believed in them. This transcended in to an adulthood filled with violent relationships, substance abuse and poverty. These personal behaviors and lessons are hard to "unteach."

The initiative will work hard to build a coalition of strong, long-standing, community based organizations to work with the women on these vital issues. Riverbend, for example, one of New Hampshire's premier mental health care providers has agreed to work with these women in whatever capacity is best fit for the project and for Riverbend. The initiative has also gained a great partner in the Concord Unitarian Church whose mission has a direct focus on social justice issues. An openly accepting congregation, Concord Unitarian Church will also provide an opportunity for these women to seek spiritual counseling during reentry. The pastoral counseling at the prison is incredibly well liked and regularly attended by many of the offenders and because of this, the initiative felt it important to ensure a similar opportunity was offered during community reentry. Another huge win for the organization is the developing partnership with the Family Resource Center in Concord. This relationship will allow the women enrolled in the project to participate in parenting classes.

Some of the resources the initiative counted on to back the project seem uninterested or unhelpful for successful reentry for these women. Several substance abuse clinics and providers the project had initially contacted refused to help with the

project. The project continues to work on finding a stable substance abuse counseling resource.

### **Short Term Outcome Three: Increase marketable vocational skills and employability**

The NH Successful Reentry Project is challenged with finding a way to quickly build marketable vocational skills for these women when there are no viable vocational rehabilitation programs during their incarceration. One thought has been to partner with the local vocational high school in an effort to help these women build some functional skill sets. Another idea has been to help set these women up with various organizations within the community and volunteer for a certain number of hours a week. This would allow the inmate to improve their work on social skills and give back to the community.

Once these women do receive their GED, one of the biggest challenges for many of them will be going any farther in their educational goals. Many have voiced a desire to go to cosmetology school, pursue nursing or try their hand at a trade school. The vast majority of these women do not qualify for any type of financial aid because they have a drug felony on their record. This greatly hampers their ability to increase vocational training and continue with their academic pursuits.

Socially, there is little support for this initiative. With so many people struggling to make ends meet who “did it the right way” as the project has been told time and time again, it seems as though there is little support for helping out the disadvantaged inmates in this respect. As one of the projects local partners put it, “if they can pin your challenges as self-inflicted, whether true or not, they will see you as an outcast.” This

attitude underscores much of the controversy of this project: why should we (the community) help these women, they should have helped themselves.

**Short Term Outcome Four: Increase understanding within the local business community of the employability of female offenders**

At a time where so many American's are out of work, it is challenging to face an employer and plead the case as to why these incarcerated women in particular deserve an opportunity. At this initial phase in the project, our goal is not so much to get these women hired as it is to lay the ground work for these women are worthwhile candidates. All too often an employer sees the felony box checked on an application and dismisses any merit the candidate may possess. The hope is that, through heavy lobby on behalf of the initiative, local businesses and organizations will learn that there is nothing wrong in giving someone a second chance and in fact, many times it can enrich everyone involved.

Many businesses have turned the project away or have not responded to letters that have been sent. Business leaders have told the initiative they cannot in good conscious hire an ex-offender when there are so many candidates currently out of work. It has been frustrating to even have a full sit down conversation or phone call once a business realizes what our intentions are.

Just when there seemed to be no hope, the project spoke with a large local retail store chain's regional management. This opportunity laid out the case for considering hiring some of the female offenders within our program once it was up and running and as the project moves further along the retail management team and initiative will get back in touch on how to proceed forward.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Despite the challenges faced by the project, it is clear that the rehabilitation services it would provide are much needed. For this reason, the project manager and staff identified key benchmarks for success and evaluation throughout the process that would enable the initiative to gauge the level of productivity and achievement throughout the project.

### **Prospects of Attaining Intermediate and Long Term Outcomes**

During development of the project, four key outcomes were identified as being necessary in helping these women build a self-sufficient and healthy life; increase access to GED completion programs, increase positive behavioral and social skills, increase marketable vocational skills and employability and increase understanding within the business community of the employability of female offenders. Since initially being identified, the project took on a more advocacy-based approach within the community after identifying weaknesses from lack of funding and political resistance. Although these continue to stand as being the benchmark short-term outcomes for a female offender reentry project, this initiative shifted gears towards educating the community on the benefits of rehabilitation, the cost effectiveness of appropriate and improved reintegration programs such as this proposed project and the social justice issues that surround incarceration.

Despite the need for a temporary change in course, it is clear that the adjustment was necessary if the initiative is to live up its fullest potential. With the current political climate in New Hampshire, the nationwide economic crisis and the continuing

fundamental shift from a society concerned with community to one only focused on the individual, it was clear there needed to be a process of public education before the project could successfully begin. If the program were started before such education could produce funding and community support than the initiative would not be sustainable and could potentially be a huge disservice to the women it hoped to help rehabilitate.

Understanding this, the project staff is focused on educating community members on why so many of these women find themselves in prison, breaking down stigma, forming partnerships with local organizations and agencies and continuing to build relationships within the business and education communities.

As understanding grows, the political climate pacifies, and the economy rebuilds, this project has an excellent opportunity to be build towards positively assisting female offenders to successfully transition in to a functioning member of her community. There is no reason as to why once these variables are in place that this project will not successfully accomplish its long-term goal. Over time, female offenders will increase their employability and skill set, improving their chances at sustained employment and self-sufficiency. Through stable employment and housing as well as a reintegration of children and family, these women will decrease their likelihood to recidivate, reducing crime, drug use and incarceration costs for our communities.

### **Personal Thoughts**

Initially, the project was designed to commence at the rehabilitation stage. It became clear to me and my colleagues as we began to apply for funding and seek partnerships that the necessary resources were not available, nor was the community in a

place to embrace such an initiative at an implementation phase. After much thought, mentorship and guidance, the decision was made to approach the project from an advocacy standpoint, building relationships, breaking down stigma and building a foundation for future donors. This enabled me to continue to learn, grow and develop the project in a way that was more conducive to the community's current needs, thus establishing stronger results.

Through the implementation of this project I have learned how to translate my passion in to effective action and make decisions based on the needs of many. It was challenging to hear so many more "no's" than "yes's" in response to the project. I learned to see those "no's" not as a final answer but as a "not at this time" response. While my heart is in this project, I had to learn to dampen my emotional to reaction, unfair stigma and angry opposition. I have learned how to keep the target community in the forefront of everything I am saying and doing.

The monitoring and evaluation portion of this project is ongoing as I continue to lobby community members, local organizations and funders. It has been challenging to find a way to measure the success of my advocacy efforts thus far. Progress is hard to gauge at this juncture, although I continue to utilize every opportunity I have to speak about the initiative, the women involved and the importance of action. I have faith that through continued effort results will be forthcoming.

New Hampshire has a growing female offender population which has become an incredible financial burden on a state struggling to find feasible financial balance. Even more concerning is the growing rate at which these women are recidivating, at almost twice the rate of their male counterparts (New Hampshire Commission on Women,



2004). With an overcrowded women's prison, Corrections officials struggle to develop and fund successful programs in an effort to reduce the state's growing female recidivism rate. This project focuses on improving the successful rate of reentry for eight women incarcerated at the New Hampshire State Prison. These women will be individually chosen based on their high risk for recidivism, low educational attainment, lack of viable job skills and extreme willingness to work towards bettering theirs and their families' future. Prior to release from NHSP/W, the offenders will be required to be 75% done with the state's GED preparatory program, as well as voluntarily participate in a variety of assessments, interviews and case worker evaluations. Through this process, the project staff will select eight women who are felt to best fit the ideals of the project as well as gain the most from the projected resources and learning opportunities. Each woman will work with the project staff to develop her own plan for successful reentry, including timelines, goals and focuses. With the help of various organizations, facilitators and project staff, each woman will be given the opportunity to develop healthy life-skills, seek counseling for undiagnosed or untreated mental illness, become aware of various resources available to her in the community, learn viable job skills and increase her overall employability. This project proposes to assist these women in healthy and successful community reentry while decreasing their risk of recidivating.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix A – Sample Weekly Facilitator/Counselor Evaluation

Participant's Name:

Facilitator/Counselor:

Did participant attend all required meetings this week? Y \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_

If no, is there a reason:

Did participant do everything that was asked of her? Y \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_

If no, please explain:

How was the participant's attitude this week? Please be as specific as possible.

Were there any issues you feel should be addressed by project staff?

What was the biggest win this week for the participant?

What was the biggest opportunity?

Overall how would you rate participant this week on a scale from 1 – 10  
(one being uncooperative and ten having a positive and focused outlook):

Any additional comments:

## Appendix B: MONITORING REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2011 – MARCH 2012

### Title of Project: The Role of Education and Viable Job-Skills in Raising the Success Rate of Community Reentry for Female Prisoners

ACTIVITIES	DATES	STATUS	TIMELI- NESS	EXPLANATION, IF DELAYED	ALTERNATIVE ACTION, IF DELAYED	ATTAIN- MENT OF OUTPUT
Meeting with local business leaders	Start: 05/11  End:  Ongoing process	I have met six employers as of yet as I continue to meet with leaders in the business community	My goal is to have eight internships or employment by Dec. 1, 2011	N/A	N/A	<b>OUTPUT 1:</b>  5 women have full time work 6 months after release from Shea Farm (half-way house)  Target:  To date: I am continuing to work on finding a feasible program for the women to work off of. We have come across roadblocks and have yet to cement a program in place.
Researching possible vocational opportunities at NHTI and local high schools	Start:  07/11  End:  Nov. 1, 2011	Have begun researching but have not found a concrete program that would work with this population	This portion of the project is not set in stone. Hoping to see whether it will be feasible but Nov. 1, 2011	N/A	N/A	
Partnering with Voices Against Violence to coordinate Life Skills classes	Start:  July 2011  End:  Nov 2011	Continuing to develop curricula	My goal is to meet with possible VAV facilitators by Oct 15, 2011	N/A	N/A	<b>OUTPUT 2</b>  20% decrease in categorized "risk" from the initial Risk and Needs Assessment implementation when initially admitted to prison  Target:  To date: Riverbend continues to be a huge support of this community and this program. We have met several times
Partner with Riverbend Mental Health Center	Start:  Sept 2011  End:  Nov 2011	Continuing to develop curricula	My goal is to meet with possible Riverbend facilitators by Oct 15, 2011	N/A	N/A	

						since the initial meeting goal.
Draft 2 <sup>nd</sup> Chance Act Grant	Start: Nov 2011  End: Feb 2012	Work in progress...	My goal is to submit grant proposal by Feb. 10, 2012	Because we do not have a concrete project for which to apply the grant towards, we have put the submission of said grant on hold as of this moment.	N/A	

ACTIVITIES	DATES	STATUS	TIMELINESS	EXPLANATION, IF DELAYED	ALTERNATIVE ACTION, IF DELAYED	ATTAINMENT OF OUTPUT
Monthly resume writing and mock interview skills classes	Start: Jan 2012  End:  On going	We have not begun yet – still waiting for a space to conduct classes and funding...	My goal is to get back on track with this by Feb. 15, 2012	Funding, red tape	We do not have a plan b as of yet	<b>OUTPUT 3</b>  5 women have fulltime work six months after release from Shea Farm (half-way house)  Target:  To date: The anti-violence meetings have occurred within prison but not within the project as we have not been able to solidify the group.
Monthly meetings with a woman's anti-violence facilitator	Start: Nov 2011  End:  On going	These have been happening outside of the project (with a facilitator who is not as strong as the one the project sponsors – in my opinion)	My goal is to get this running within 30 days of fully implementing program	Funding, organization, lack of resources	We do not have a plan b as of yet	
Meeting with Rockingham Community Action "Workplace Success Program"	Start: Feb 2012  End:  On going	This is a local org I have been working to partner with. They work to help put disadvantaged community groups to work.	I have been unsuccessful as of yet in setting up a meeting with the director (or major decision maker). They seem to be off-put by some of the less concrete parts of the project, although I have explained these steps are ongoing.	N/A	I sent them a letter outlining the project as well as a "fact sheet" with different facts about these women, incarceration, costs and WHY we should support them their rehabilitation.	
Partner with Sen. Sylvia Larsen	Start: March 2012  End:  Ongoing	Sen. Larsen sat on the NH Committee for Women when I worked for Niki and is a huge advocate for prison and education reform. She and Niki work closely together and I am hoping to speak with her about possible networking suggestions/ideas/support as I look to shift the focus of my project towards one of advocacy.	I have yet to reach out to Sen. Larsen, this is on my to do list in the coming week.	N/A	N/A	

Partner with the Unitarian Universalist Church Concord, NH	Start: March 2, 2012 End: Ongoing	The Unitarian Church has a Social Justice program. They dedicate time and energy to advocating and empowering marginalized groups throughout the state and the community at large. I think this church might be an excellent opportunity for this project, and the women. The Unitarian Church is an incredibly open and accepting congregation and I will continue to explore this option.	This opportunity just came to my attention late this past week – I will be spending some time this coming week organizing my information and setting up a time to present to the leadership.	N/A	N/A	
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