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## FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

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## Programs

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### The President's Prisoner Re-entry Initiative (PRI)

In January 2004, President Bush proposed a four-year, \$300 million initiative to reduce recidivism and help returning inmates contribute to their communities. PRI harnesses the resources and experience of faith-based and community organizations in providing newly released prisoners with job training and placement services, transitional housing, and voluntary mentoring support. Through the Initiative, the Federal government, including the Department of Justice, administers programs designed to give ex-offenders a second chance to become productive citizens.

- The **United States Department of Labor** is the lead federal agency on the President's Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative. Click [here](#) to learn more about program opportunities for faith-based and other community organizations. Grant funding opportunities through the Department of Labor are available [here](#).

### Federal Bureau of Prisons Residential Re-entry Centers

The Federal Bureau of Prisons contracts with Residential Re-entry Centers (RRCs), also known as halfway houses, to provide assistance to inmates who are nearing release. RRCs provide a structured, supervised environment and counseling, job placement, and other services. A prisoner re-entry program, RRC helps inmates to gradually rebuild their ties to the community and facilitate supervising offenders' activities during this readjustment phase. An important component of the RRC program is transitional drug abuse treatment for inmates who have completed residential substance abuse treatment while confined in a Bureau institution. Click [here](#) to learn more about the RRC program.

- The **Federal Bureau of Prisons** awards contracts to for-profit and non-profit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations, based upon whichever offeror provides the best overall value in meeting the terms and conditions of the solicitation. Interested offerors are encouraged to review RRC [statements of work](#) prepared by the Bureau of Prisons. Active solicitations are posted at [www.fedbizopps.gov](http://www.fedbizopps.gov), the Federal Business Opportunities Web site.

For a list of Frequently Asked Questions about RRCs, click [here](#).

## **Federal Bureau of Prisons Life Connections Pilot Program**

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (Bureau) Life Connections Pilot Program (LCP) is a residential multi-faith restorative justice program. The 18-month program is open to adult inmates who volunteer for the program in both male and female facilities. Five Bureau facilities across the country host the residential program. The mission of LCP is to reduce recidivism and bring reconciliation to victim, community, and inmate through the study of secular reentry-related subjects (e.g., ethical decision-making, anger management, victim restitution) from the inmate's religious or philosophical perspective. Participants are matched with volunteer mentors of their faith or philosophy who visit weekly and are linked with a church or like-minded group at their release destination in order to enhance community reintegration.

Participants from the same faith study and pray together in small groups. They are led through a secular life-skills curriculum by a contracted spiritual guide of their faith, who discusses what their sacred text (e.g., Bible, Torah, Quran) says about the subject (e.g., responsible parenting, budgeting, marriage enrichment, religious tolerance, respect). They join their respective worship service in the general prison population; those of no designated faith engage in individual study during chapel times.

All participating inmates must apply for the program voluntarily. Male inmates must be within 24 - 60 months of release; however, high security males may participate with a life sentence. Female inmates must be within 24 to 120 months of their projected release date. All must be recommended by the sending institution's chaplain and approved by its warden. A new cohort begins every six months with 32 - 36 participants.

Participants must complete 500 hours of community service, participate in Victim Impact Programs, complete 150 hours of addiction programming, provide financial and emotional support to their family through weekly correspondence, maintain a regular journal, and establish re-entry goals and action steps.

Participants have no extra incentives to participate - - other than a personal desire to change and grow. The LCP facilities are no different from any other cellblock in the facility. The move to an LCP facility of their security level will often take them much farther away from their family for 18 months. Moreover, the rigors of the program prevent participants from working as much as the general population, thus sometimes cutting in half their monthly earnings. The Bureau is currently evaluating the program's effects on institutional adjustment and recidivism.

The Bureau solicits volunteer mentors to work with inmates during incarceration and after their release. Individuals interested in becoming an LCP mentor-volunteer at any of the five sites should contact a chaplain or LCP personnel at the facilities listed below. Individuals interested in volunteering as an LCP mentor for inmates after their release may contact Volunteers of America at (225) 338-0794.

### **Life Connections Pilot Program Sites**

- Federal Correctional Institution, Milan, Michigan (734) 439-1511
- U.S. Penitentiary, Leavenworth, Kansas (913) 682-8700
- Federal Medical Center, Carswell, Texas (817) 782-4888
- Federal Correctional Institution, Petersburg, Virginia (804) 733-7881
- U. S. Penitentiary, Terre Haute, IN (812) 244-4400

### **Project Safe Neighborhoods**

The President's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Initiative is a nationwide commitment to reduce gun crime in America. The effectiveness of PSN is based on the ability of local, state, and federal agencies to cooperate in a unified offensive led by the U.S. Attorney in each of the 94 Federal judicial districts across the United States. Through collaboration with federal, state, and local law enforcement, each U.S. Attorney will implement the five core elements of PSN-partnerships, strategic planning, training, outreach, and accountability-in a manner that is contoured to fit the specific gun crime problems in that district. In many districts, re-entry programs are important to attaining the PSN goal of creating safer neighborhoods by reducing gun violence and sustaining that reduction. Click [here](#) to learn more about PSN.

- The **Bureau of Justice Assistance** awards PSN grants to governmental agencies. However, faith-based and other community organizations are eligible for sub-grants from their local agencies. Click [here](#) to learn about PSN Programs. Click [here](#) to obtain contact information on your local United States Attorney's office, which is responsible for overseeing a PSN Task Force in your district.

### **Federal Bureau of Prisons Chaplaincy Program**

The Federal Bureau of Prisons hires chaplains to administer, supervise, and perform work involved in a program of spiritual welfare and religious guidance for inmates in a correctional setting.

- Click [here](#) to learn more and to submit an application.

### **Protecting Inmates and Safeguarding Communities**

The Protecting Inmates and Safeguarding Communities Program, administered by the [Bureau of Justice Assistance](#), aims to eradicate prisoner rape in all of our nation's correctional facilities. State governments may apply for grants to support their efforts to prevent and eliminate prisoner rape between inmates in state and local prisons, jails, and police lockup facilities and to safeguard the communities to which inmates return. Click [here](#) to learn more about this program. **The Serious and Violent Offender Re-Entry Initiative**

- The Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative - developed by the **U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance**, in conjunction with other Federal agencies - was a comprehensive effort that addresses both juvenile and adult populations of serious, high-risk offenders. SVORI Initiative funds the development, implementation, enhancement, and evaluation of reentry strategies that promote the safety of the community and the reduction of serious, violent crime. Although the program concluded in FY05, a \$12 million outcome evaluation of SVORI is being conducted in 2006. Click [here](#) to learn more about SVORI. Click [here](#) to read about the outcome evaluation.

### **Weed and Seed**

Operation Weed and Seed is foremost a strategy-- and also a grant program-- which aims to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in targeted high-crime neighborhoods across the country. Weed and Seed sites range in size from several neighborhood blocks to 15 square miles. The strategy involves a two-pronged approach: (1) law enforcement agencies and prosecutors cooperate in "weeding out" criminals who participate in violent crime and drug abuse, attempting to prevent their return to the targeted area; and (2) "seeding" brings human services to the area,

encompassing prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood revitalization. A community-oriented policing component bridges weeding and seeding strategies. Officers obtain helpful information from area residents for weeding efforts while they aid residents in obtaining information about community revitalization and seeding resources. Click [here](#) to learn more about Weed Seed.

- Faith-based and other community organizations may serve as the fiscal agent for Weed and Seed sites. Faith-based and other community organizations may also participate in local Weed and Seed programming and funding at existing sites by contacting their neighborhood Weed and Seed Steering Committee. To learn about the responsibilities of a Weed & Seed Committee, read this [overview](#). To locate Weed & Seed sites near you, click [here](#).

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