2008 Innovations Awards Program
APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 08-E-16NJ

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: New Jersey

Assign Program Category (applicant): Corrections (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name
   
   Recovery Oriented Integrated System (ROIS) Feasibility Pilot Project

2. Administering Agency
   
   Collaborative Partnership: New Jersey Department of Corrections (Office of Drug Programs, Office of Community Programs and Northern State Prison), New Jersey State Parole Board, the Gateway Foundation, Inc. (in-prison Therapeutic Community treatment provider), Community Education Centers, Inc. (Talbot Hall Assessment and Treatment Center), Integrity, Inc. (Port Halfway House), the National Development Research Institutes and the Nicholson Foundation.

3. Contact Person (Name and Title)
   
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9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

The ROIS Pilot Project was created to test the system feasibility of establishing a treatment framework for addicted offenders under correctional jurisdiction that focuses on recovery, specifically, the progression through the research identified stages of recovery. The ROIS project also seeks to orient the continuum of care in a meaningful, non-duplicative transition through the enhanced integration and communication of handoff agencies that represent the offender step-down to release (in-prison Therapeutic Community, Assessment and Treatment Center, Halfway House, Parole).

10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 1, 2008 to be considered.

Although the ROIS concept was initially discussed as part of the agenda at the November 21, 2005 workshop entitled ‘Enhancing the Continuum of Care for the Addicted Offender’ hosted by the Rutgers University School of Criminal Justice – Newark and co-sponsored by the New Jersey Departments of Corrections and Human Services, the State Parole Board, the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice and Integrity, Inc., the first meeting of the ROIS Feasibility Pilot Project Steering Committee occurred in June 2006.

11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?

The NJDOC has long embraced the research-supported continuum of care approach to address offender addiction issues. Assessed and referred offenders spend nine to twelve months in an in-prison Therapeutic Community program followed by two to three months in an Assessment and Treatment Center with an additional up to twelve to fifteen months in a licensed residential treatment facility (community based) and/or a substance abuse support or work release focused halfway house. The science and related research is showing that the continuum can be further enhanced. In other words, evolution of the continuum is natural and it is appropriate for the NJDOC to respond accordingly to build upon successful outcomes to promote its public safety and rehabilitation mission.

The primary issue is indeed the handoff between continuum agencies. Although all programs within the system provide solid treatment approaches, it was often the case that the language of treatment progress and the underlying programmatic focus was not uniform. This had the potential of providing duplicative services. In addition, some offenders were having to back track their treatment activities, not because good work
had not previously taken place, but as a result of differing understandings of modalities and measures of progress. The primary goal of ROIS is to address these very continuum issues, common goals, language and progress measures all within an integrated continuum system.

The believed outcome of the ROIS approach is enhanced offender post-release success as well as greater system cost efficiency.

10. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

- Integrity, Inc. approached the NJDOC with the concept of having the continuum partner agencies interact and gain rapport with the offenders participating in the in-prison program at Northern State Prison.
- Office of Drug Programs’ staff met with national expertise with the National Development Research Institutes to discuss the idea as well as other continuum enhancements. ROIS was introduced as a research based concept of similar approach.
- The ROIS Pilot Project was first represented in a meeting of continuum agencies (as listed in Question 2 above). The ROIS training was delivered by Dr. DeLeon, National Development Research Institutes. This group became the ROIS Steering Committee.
- It was mutually determined that a feasibility study was called for prior to recommending systemwide change to upper management. The ROIS Feasibility Pilot Project was born.
- The goal of the project is to identify and track Therapeutic Community offenders as a moving cadre through the continuum. The cadre, would transfer to Talbot Hall Assessment and Treatment Center and then if community appropriate, to PORT halfway house as closely in timing in possible to maintain cadre adhesion and mutual support as they pass through the reentry phases of post Therapeutic Community treatment.
- It became clear that a case manager was needed to follow the group and provide linkages through the continuum. Through a grant from the Nicholson Foundation to Integrity, INC., a ROIS case manager was hired for this specific purpose.
- As expected, the system accommodation of time cohesion in a system that runs on time was of great challenge. In addition, in the early stages of offender engagement, there were misperceptions of what ROIS participation meant.
- The first identified cadre passed through in diminished numbers, however, a small but sound group made it to the halfway house stage. Interviews with these early ROIS ‘pioneers’ held promise that the system enhancement has positive effects on the participants and their overall continuum and treatment progress.
- Again, as expected, traffic bottlenecks continued to arise, however, the true benefit of the ROIS integration is that the right players are at the table to address these issues (Northern State Prison Administration). A second cadre
is currently moving through the system. The Steering Committee continues to meet to address and resolve ROIS issues.
- Case conferencing will now commence.

11. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

Integration (from the article: Integrated System of Care for Substance-Abusing Offenders, Prendergast & Burden, 2002):

“The term integrated system of care connotes the ability to unite the multiple components of a system into a fully functioning and unified whole. With respect to treating substance-abusing offenders, an integrated system of care must be able to mediate between the conflicting goals and operating procedures of stakeholders and to take fragmented strategies and philosophies regarding substance abuse and treatment and combine them into a system that provides effective and comprehensive treatment in a ‘seamless continuum of care’ for substance abusing offenders.” (Note: citations omitted)

The ROIS Feasibility Pilot Project’s greatest achievement is the very bringing together of the continuum partners (Steering Committee) to act in unison in the identification and system resolution of continuum barriers and to address the specific progress and treatment needs of the offenders passing through.

12. What were the program’s start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

The only current cost (grant funded) is the case manager. The Continuum of care agencies are pre-existing.

12. What are the program’s annual operational costs?

The grant funded case manager (~$60,000)

13. How is the program funded?

The Nicholson Foundation (case manager) and existing state resources.

14. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.

No.

15. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?

At present, standard spreadsheet and correctional inmate tracking software.
16. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator’s name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.

   We understand that New Jersey, through the guidance of the National Development Research Institutes, is in the forefront of the ROIS concept. In his paper *Therapeutic Community Treatment in Correctional Settings*, (2007, Offender Substance Abuse Report, Vol. 7, No. 6, pp: 81-88), Dr. Deleon calls to attention that the ROIS approach is under review in New Jersey.

17. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?

   We understand that ROIS replication is under consideration in Delaware but do not know the status.

18. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?

   By design, the ROIS Pilot is an ongoing systems change/enhancement project. Each iteration brings new information and solutions to continuum issues. After the anticipated conclusion of ROIS system change feasibility, broader application will occur. The ROIS Steering body is recognized as critical for permanent existence.

19. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program’s effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.

   The very communication between and among continuum partners under similar vernacular and case handling, is a high achievement of continuum enhancement. Its replication is feasible for other jurisdictions.

   As stated, problems arise related to offender programming, however, the ROIS partners are in place to swiftly and fully resolve these issues.

19. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

   Again, system change is incremental and iterative. The ROIS Feasibility Project is about building on lessons learned, about system improvement and enhancement.

20. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

   ROIS is a system commitment. The greatest challenge may be the bringing together of varying programmatic beliefs and processes if a continuum partner is not willing to accept the validity or value of other agencies. In New Jersey, this was not an issue; the ROIS Steering Committee is united by mission belief, commitment and passion.