Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

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

Program Name: Puppies for Parole
Administering Agency: Missouri Department of Corrections
Contact (Name and Title): Chris Cline, Director of Communications
Address: 2729 Plaza Drive, P.O. Box 236, Jefferson City MO 65102
Telephone Number: 573-522-1118
E-mail Address: chris.cline@doc.mo.gov
Web Address: doc.mo.gov

1. How long has this program operated (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old as of April 5, 2012 to be eligible for this year’s award. Puppies for Parole began in February 2010.

2. Describe the program:
   - Why was it created? Puppies for Parole was created to help interdict the euthanization of homeless dogs, give offenders an opportunity to repay their debts to society and teach offenders valuable skills. The presence of the dogs at correctional institutions boosts both staff and offender morale. Our program partners with local shelters across the state and takes their dogs who are about to be euthanized because they are undesirable for various reasons and cannot find homes. (For the most part these dogs are abused, neglected or abandoned.) Volunteer trainers teach offenders skills needed to socialize and train these dogs, thereby making the dogs more appealing for adoption. The program has shown to enhance the relationship between staff and offenders and improves the atmosphere at the institutions as a whole. The program provides an incentive for offenders to modify their behavior.

   - Why is it a new and creative approach or method? Puppies for Parole is a “thinking outside the box” approach at achieving offender rehabilitation. Through Puppies for Parole, offenders learn responsibility and compassion by providing the daily care for dogs in the program. Puppies for Parole is a “game changer” for many offenders because it sets the stage for additional positive programming in the rehabilitation process.
What are the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order?

**Prisons partner with dog shelters and rescue organizations.** Dogs arrive at prisons at staggered times and are placed with two offender handlers who are tasked with training and rehabilitating the dogs. During the training process, the dogs live with the offender handlers inside their cells. The training takes approximately 8-12 weeks to complete for each dog, depending on their individuals needs. At the conclusion of the training, each dog must pass the AKC Canine Good Citizenship Test. Several institutions hold Puppies for Parole graduations for each class of dogs as a culmination of the program. At the graduation, new adoptive owners are given the opportunity to take possession of their new pets and meet the offender handlers who conducted the training. Offender handlers typically prepare individualized training manuals which are given to adoptive owners at this time.

Is it effective? **Provide tangible results and examples.** As a result of Puppies for Parole, homeless shelter dogs in Missouri have a new “leash” on life. The program has successfully graduated and adopted out over 750 dogs since it began.

3. Did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator’s name, present address, telephone number, and e-mail address. **Yes, Missouri Department of Corrections Director, George A. Lombardi, 2729 Plaza Drive, P.O. Box 236, Jefferson City, MO 65102, george.lombardi@doc.mo.gov**

4. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ? **Yes.** While there are correctional dog training programs in other states, we believe our program is the largest. Currently, Puppies for Parole exists at 16 of our 20 prisons. Two additional prisons will be coming online within the next couple of months. Since its inception in 2010, over 750 dogs have been successfully trained and adopted as a result of the program. In addition to basic obedience, several of the dogs trained by offenders have also received specialized training to assist individuals with handicaps and illnesses. Some of the dogs have also had handicaps of their own, which made them unsuitable for adoption prior to the program. After completing the program, though, the dogs have learned to overcome their handicaps and have found permanent homes. This specialized training niche separates Missouri’s program from most others, and has received national and international media attention. For example, a regional press release about Zeus, a deaf Dachshund, turned into a phenomenon that reached MSNBC, the Associated Press, Reuters, CBC Toronto, People Magazine and the London Times. Several dogs who have completed the program have been placed in veterans homes across the state, mental health facilities, and the Missouri School for the Deaf.

5. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter when attempting to adopt this program? **Puppies for Parole requires an acknowledgement that the premise of the program is not about coddling offenders.** It requires innovative thinking, courage and support from leadership because it is a “thinking outside the box” approach to offender rehabilitation. The purpose is to interdict the euthanization of homeless dog and further and enhance the rehabilitation process of offenders.

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