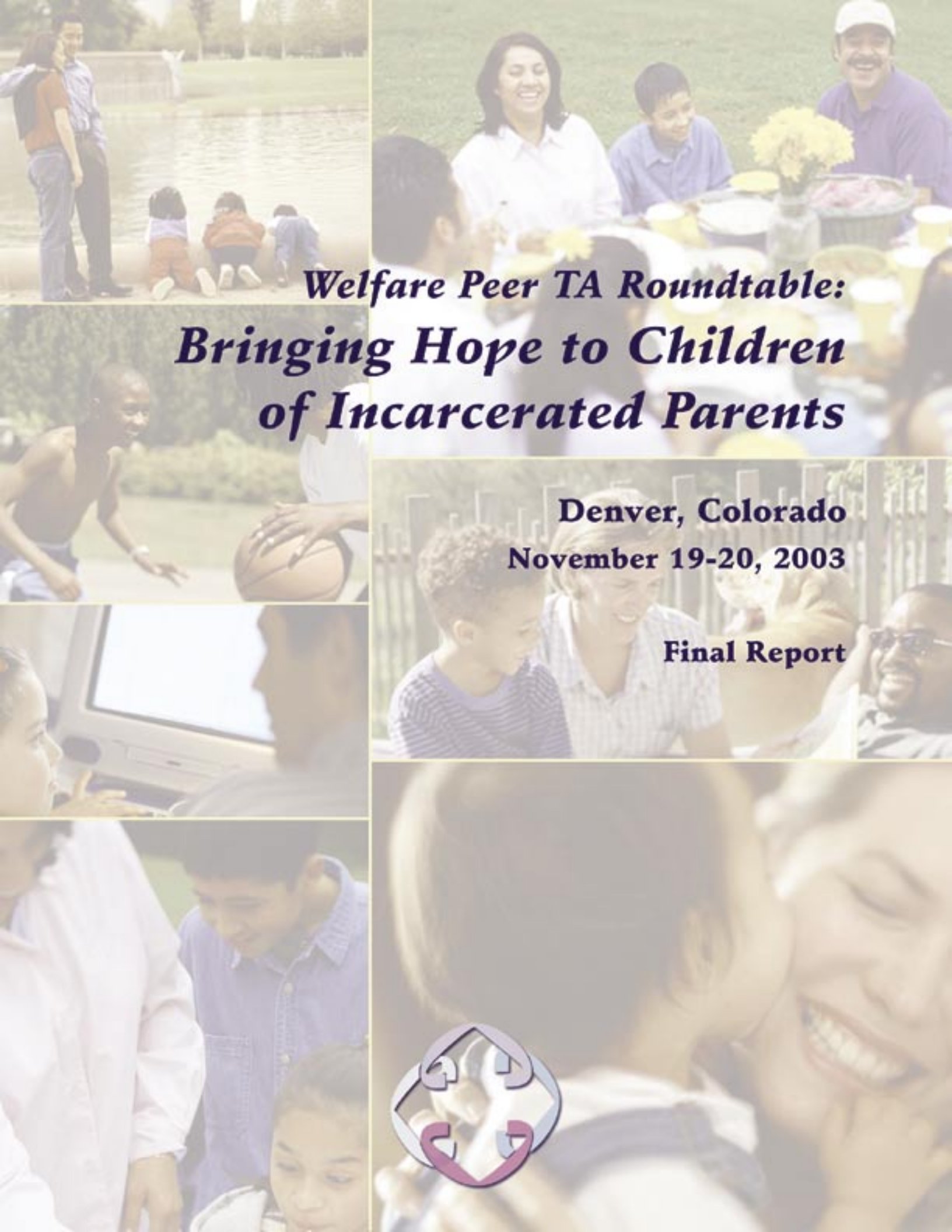

Welfare Peer TA Roundtable:
Bringing Hope to Children of Incarcerated Parents

Denver, Colorado

November 19-20, 2003

Final Report

CALIBER

WELFARE PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NETWORK

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE

Welfare Peer TA Roundtable: Bringing Hope to Children of Incarcerated Parents

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Submitted in accordance with
Contract number 105-99-8401
December 2003

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BRINGING HOPE TO CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

1. BACKGROUND

The number of parents in United States prisons is growing with the increasing use of incarceration as a criminal penalty. The Bureau of Justice Statistics noted that 1.5 million children had a parent in prison in 1999; and this number is up by more than 500,000 since 1991. While incarcerated, many parents do not have regular interaction with their children. Thus, when it is time for release, incarcerated parents do not know how to build or rebuild meaningful relationships with their children. Instead, incarceration can be a time for parents to learn skills and to develop bonds with their children. Many in-prison programs specifically address these issues, including programs with parenting skills, relaxed visitation policies for children, and therapeutic interventions. Research has shown that positive involvement of parents in the lives of their children helps to stabilize and strengthen families, which, in turn, may help to reduce recidivism, and promote self-sufficiency.

The Welfare Peer TA network received expressed desires from several States to explore successful in-prison programs that work to unite incarcerated parents and their families. States were interested in a program to address such issues as parenting, anger management, conflict resolution, job readiness, and relationship building, understanding that such services would benefit the children served by providing them the opportunity to rebuild and strengthen connections with their incarcerated parents, thus fostering a positive relationship that will continue following release from prison.

In response to these requests, the Welfare Peer TA network designed the *Bringing Hope to Children of Incarcerated Parents* Roundtable. The roundtable showcased promising practices from around the country, and provided plenty of time for participants to think strategically about how to design and implement these programs, as well as opportunities to learn about and discuss "what works" in serving this population. Participants included representatives from the States of Colorado, Virginia, and Wyoming. Roundtable speakers included State and local government agencies, service providers, practitioners, Federal personnel, and leaders of national organizations.

2. NATIONAL TRENDS

Setting the stage for the 2-day roundtable discussion, this presentation familiarized participants with trends and characteristics of parents and children separated by incarceration. Roundtable participants shared perspectives from their work and communities.

2.1 Corrections in Crisis

American prisons at the beginning of the 21st century are in crisis. Perhaps the most pervasive problem challenging modern corrections is the ominous nexus of overburdened prison systems and record numbers of prisoners returning to communities each year. Today, exponential increases in incarceration have resulted in more than two million prisoners and well over half a million ex-prisoners reentering communities each year. Other challenges include escalating confinement costs in an economic climate of increasing demand for services, and declining resources.

2.2 Prisoners in 2002

The United States had incarcerated 2.1 million persons at year end 2002. This total represents a 2.6 percent annual increase in the number of persons held in Federal and State prisons (1,361,258), territorial prisons (16,206), local jails (665,475), Immigration and Naturalization Service facilities (8,748), military facilities (2,377), jails in Indian country (1,912), and juvenile facilities (110,284). During the same period, the rate of incarceration in prison was 701 inmates per 100,000 U.S. residents, or 1 in every 143 U.S. residents in prison or jail. At year end 2002, State prisons were operating at as much as 17 percent above capacity; and Federal prisons were operating at 33 percent above capacity. Table 1 presents data on the number of prisoners held in Federal or State prisons or in local jails over the past several years.[1]

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF PRISONERS HELD IN STATE OR FEDERAL PRISONS OR IN LOCAL JAILS: 1995 – 2002

Year	Total Inmates in Custody	Federal	State	Inmates in Jail on June 30	Incarceration Rate
1995	1,585,586	89,538	989,004	507,044	601
1996	1,646,020	95,088	1,032,440	518,492	618
1997	1,743,643	101,755	1,074,809	567,079	648
1998	1,816,931	110,793	1,113,676	592,462	669
1999	1,893,115	125,682	1,161,490	605,943	691
2000	1,937,482	133,921	1,176,269	621,149	684
2001	1,961,247	143,337	1,180,155	631,240	685
2002	2,166,260*	151,618	1,209,640	665,475	701
Percent change 2001 – 2002	3.7%	5.8%	2.5%	5.4%	
Average Annual Increase 1995 – 2002	3.6%	7.8%	2.9%	4.0%	

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Bulletin, *Prisoners in 2002,* July 2003.
Note: * represents the overall total.

[1] U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Prisoners in 2002. Washington, DC.

2.3 Probation and Parole in 2002

The correctional population also includes more than 4.7 million adult men and women on probation or parole at year end 2002. This total represents a record high in the number of U.S. residents being supervised in the community. As the new millennium advances, the total Federal, State, and local adult correctional population, including those incarcerated and those being supervised in the community, has reached a new high of 6.7 million. At the end of 2002, about 3.1 percent of the U.S. adult population, or 1 in every 32 adults, were incarcerated or on probation or parole. Table 2 presents data on the number of persons under adult correctional supervision.[2]

TABLE 2
PERSONS UNDER ADULT CORRECTIONAL SUPERVISION

Year	Total Estimated Correctional Population	Community Supervision		Incarceration	
		Probation	Parole	Jail	Prison
1995	5,342,900	3,077,861	679,421	597,044	1,078,542
1996	5,490,700	3,164,996	679,733	518,492	1,127,528
1997	5,734,900	3,296,513	694,787	567,079	1,176,564
1998	6,134,200	3,670,441	696,385	592,462	1,224,496
1999	6,340,800	3,779,922	714,457	605,943	1,287,172
2000	6,445,100	3,826,209	723,898	621,149	1,316,333
2001	6,581,700	3,931,731	732,333	631,240	1,330,007
2002	6,732,400	3,995,165	753,141	665,475	1,367,856
Percent change 2001 – 2002	2.3%	1.6%	2.8%	5.4%	2.8%
Average Annual Increase 1995 – 2002	2.8%	3.1%	1.5%	4.0%	3.5%

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Bulletin. *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2002.* August 2003.

2.4 Prisoner Reentry

Over the past two decades, exponential increases in incarceration have resulted in more than two million prisoners and 600,000 ex-prisoners reentering communities each year. Research findings reveal a trend toward record numbers of prisoners returning home having spent longer terms behind bars. Other findings suggest that returning prisoners are less prepared for life on the outside and that assistance in their reintegration is inadequate.[3] Still other findings

[2] U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2002*. Washington, DC.

[3] Urban Institute. *From Prison to Home: The Dimensions and Consequences of Prisoner Reentr*y, 2001.

indicate that most prisoners returning home have difficulties reconnecting with families, housing, and jobs—and many remain plagued by substance abuse and health problems.[4]

2.5 Breaking the Cycle

Today, repeat criminal behavior is one of the most troublesome issues facing corrections planners and policy makers. Research results show that 62 percent of State prisoners are rearrested within three years of release. Other results show that 41 percent of released prisoners are returned to incarceration. Still other results indicate that 42 percent of parolees are returned to incarceration following discharge from parole supervision.[5] Further, the cycle of imprisonment among large numbers of individuals, mostly minority men, is increasingly concentrated in urban communities that already encounter enormous social and economic disadvantages.[6] Table 3 presents the most recent data on the number of persons leaving prison and returning to communities across the country.

TABLE 3
NUMBER OF STATE AND FEDERAL INMATES RELEASED

Year	Number of Inmates Released*
1990	423,800
1995	474,300
1996	488,700
1997	514,300
1998	546,600
1999 (projected)	565,700
2000 (projected)	600,000

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *State and Federal Prisoners Returning to the Community.* April 2000.
Note: * Inmates with sentences of > than one year only.

2.6 Collateral Consequences

The increasing volume of returning prisoners has severe consequences for public safety, State budgets, and society. Nearly two-thirds of released prisoners are rearrested for a felony or serious misdemeanor within three years of their release. Rising recidivism rates among returning prisoners translate into thousands of new victimizations each year. Second, there are fiscal implications, as significant portions of State budgets are now invested in the criminal justice system. Expenditures on corrections alone increased from $9 billion in 1982 to $53 billion in

[4] U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice. *When Prisoners Return to the Community: Political, Economic, and Social Consequences*, 2002.
[5] U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners in 1983*, 1989.
[6] U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice. *But They Come Back: Rethinking Prisoner Reentry,* 2002.

1999. These figures do not include the cost of arrest and sentencing processes, nor do they take into account the cost to victims. Third, there are far-reaching social costs since prisoner reentry carries the potential for profound collateral consequences, including public health risks, disenfranchisement, homelessness, and weakened ties among families and communities.[7]

2.7 Children of Prisoners

Today, more than two million children in the United States have a parent in prison, and many more minors have a parent in jail. When a parent is incarcerated, the lives of their children are disrupted by separation from fathers and mothers, severance from siblings, and displacement to different caregivers. Children with parents behind bars are more likely to experience poverty, parental substance abuse and mental illness, and other associated risk factors. These children also disproportionately suffer from aggression, anxiety, and depression. In addition, the children of prisoners are at greater risk for alcohol and drug abuse, poor academic performance, and juvenile delinquency.[8]

2.8 Incarcerated Parents

The U.S. Department of Justice reported that State and Federal prisons held an estimated 721,500 parents of 1.5 million children in 1999. Results show that, prior to admission, less than half of the parents in State prison reported living with their children—44 percent of fathers, 64 percent of mothers. Nearly two out of three State prisoners, however, reported at least monthly contact with their children by phone, mail, or personal visits. Other results show that incarcerated fathers typically cite the child's mother as the current caregiver. In contrast, incarcerated mothers cite the child's grandparents or other relatives as the current caregiver. Still other results show that more than 75 percent of parents in State prison reported a prior conviction, and 56 percent report having been previously incarcerated. A majority of parents in prison were violent offenders or drug traffickers expecting to serve 6.5 years in State prison and 8.5 years in Federal prison.[9]

The discussion of the findings revealed consensus among roundtable participants that the most pervasive problem challenging modern corrections is record numbers of children with a parent in prison, a number consistently underestimated in many State and local jurisdictions. Roundtable participants also agreed that while the multiple challenges presented by national trends among prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their children are formidable, these challenges provide

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[7] U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Direct Expenditure on Criminal Justice by Level of Government, 1982-97,* 2001. Washington, DC.
[8] Child Welfare League of America. Federal Resource Center for Children of Prisoners. See http://www.cwla.org/.
[9] U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Special Report. *Incarcerated Parents and their Children, 2000*. Washington, DC.

an opportunity to think more broadly about prospective partners in serving at-risk children, youth, and families. In addition, roundtable participants concurred that, to the extent faith-based correctional interventions foster family relationships and create caring communities, they may help to bring hope to children separated by incarceration.

3. FEDERAL PERSPECTIVE

Joining the roundtable via teleconference, Debra Pontisso, program manager at the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) presented initiatives involving incarcerated and paroled parents, including those funded via Special Improvement Projects and Section 1115 grants. Ms. Pontisso observed that "dads are more than a paycheck" and that children that grow-up without active, positive father involvement consistently rank lower on markers of child well-being than their peers.

Ms. Pontisso expressed concern over the very real challenge of arrearage accumulation and support order enforcement during incarceration, and the overwhelming nature of huge arrearages that can face the newly released ex-offender. Because there is a Federal provision under which a noncustodial parent can request a review and adjustment of child support orders, outreach to incarcerated parents and support in making application for such a review is essential. While the ultimate decision remains with the judicial system in these cases, some States (e.g., North Carolina, Oregon) have instituted automatic downward adjustment orders for support providers at the point of incarceration. It is important to note that these adjustments are not an elimination of financial responsibility, but rather a temporary adjustment recognizing the limited earning capacity of the incarcerated parent.

Ms. Pontisso also highlighted several financial opportunities available to help States and localities support the children of incarcerated parents:

- **Special Improvement Projects.** The Special Improvement Projects (SIP) grants are small ($2 million) discretionary grants available to agencies doing work related to child support—not exclusively IV-D agencies. Based on a Request for Proposal (RFP) structure, grants will be made available at the end of December 2003, and awards made in summer 2004. Potential applicants should be aware of bonus points awarded for collaboration with IV-D agencies.

- **Section 1115 grants.** Authorized by Section 1115 of the Social Security Act, these grants fund research and demonstration programs in areas of priority to State child support enforcement agencies. Successful applications must include operational and evaluative criteria. "A Section 1115 waiver of any of the State Plan requirements under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act may be granted in connection with any experimental pilot or demonstration project that will assist in promoting the

objectives of the Child Support Enforcement Program and meets certain conditions."[10]

- **Access and Visitation grants.** Access and Visitation grants are $10 million in formula funding distributed to States. The goal of these grants is to reconnect noncustodial parents with their children in a positive and appropriate way. States are using these funds in a variety of creative ways targeted to this goal, including providing dispute resolution, parenting skill development, neutral drop-off and supervised visitation programs. Recognizing that decreased recidivism is linked with post-release connections to family and community, some States are directly targeting the incarcerated noncustodial parents.

4. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

In order to guide the discussions and presentations planned for the remainder of the roundtable, participants were asked to enumerate some of the primary challenges they faced when attempting to plan, fund, and provide services to support the children of incarcerated parents.

- **Unstable family relationships.** Many reentry programs build on the notion of reintegrating families post-incarceration. In reality, pre-incarceration adult relationships are often varied and/or highly unstable. Additionally, the custodial parents often face many of the same barriers as the incarcerated, noncustodial parents.

- **Inadequate parenting skills.** Like the relationships between adults, the relationships between parents and their children are often strained even before the additional burden of one parent's incarceration.

- **Threat of child support enforcement.** The negative association many parents have with child support enforcement exacerbates rather than relieves family challenges.

- **Challenges to visitation.** The dynamics of these families, including multiple cases/fathers, new relationships, and a lack of desire to reconnect with the ex-offender parent, coupled with the transitory nature of the caseload, combine to make child support enforcement a real challenge.

- **Financial reality of incarceration.** A significant disagreement exists regarding what amounts to "real" financial support while a noncustodial parent is incarcerated. While all sides agree it is necessary to avoid an entitlement mindset, defining an appropriate measure for support is difficult.

[10] General Services Administration, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA). http://www.cfda.gov/public/printfriendlyprog.asp?progid=1271.

- **Systemic biases and challenges.** While the general mission and philosophy of child support enforcement has changed over the years from a punitive to a supportive system, remnants of the old mindset remain. A culture change at the child support agency for both staff and policy is necessary.

5. THE ROLE OF THE FAITH COMMUNITY

Mickey Griffin, D.Min., Director of Programming for Kairos Horizon Communities in Prison, addressed the question "what role does the faith community play in bringing hope to children of incarcerated parents?" Kairos Horizon Communities in Prison builds on 25 years of work by Kairos to work toward three goals:

- Personal Responsibility
- Family Responsibility
- Employability/Institutional Asset.

"Horizon first tries to make every participant in the program know that they are loved. This message is delivered by free-world volunteers and is reinforced through faith-specific teaching, encouraging growth in faith."

Historically, about 70 percent of Kairos Horizon participants are fathers. While there are many entry points to serving these men, Kairos Horizon believes the faith community is the most promising leverage agent of personal transformation. While very few church-goers have ever stepped inside a prison, Horizon provides a well-organized vehicle to increase the community's presence in prisons. Further, the Horizon communities have repeatedly demonstrated that healing the parent heals the child.

Kairos Horizon brings several strengths to the mission of bringing hope to children with incarcerated parents. Horizon effectively partners with the State departments of corrections and shares goals with the State and Federal human services agencies. It emphasizes family relationships, has a respected reputation, and has proved to be replicable in many varied locations. Fifteen Horizon classes have now graduated from 10- or 12-month programs.

Kairos Horizon believes that the four elements required for human maturity are love, discipline, guidance, and nurture. The State can provide discipline and some guidance, but only the community can provide love and nurture. This is the role of the faith community. The faith community provides financial leverage to corrections with contributions from individuals, companies and foundations. Horizon Communities have provided corrections with grants now totaling almost $500,000.

5.1 Lessons Learned

In addition to tangible human and financial resources, Horizon has also learned some important lessons in its four years of operation:

- Almost all correctional systems are steeped in retributive justice vs. restorative justice. There is real trauma in incarceration. Prisons are almost universally negative and violent environments.
- Prisons remove almost all opportunities for personal and family responsibility.
- Relationships heal. Crime is a break in the fabric of community, and it takes the presence of the community to heal that break. This is the ancient Jewish practice of Tikkun Olam.
- Faith-based programs reduce recidivism and help long-term inmates become institutional assets.
- Fathers are for life and can have profoundly important effects on children even while incarcerated.
- Men tend to isolate and not build relationships. Prison exacerbates this tendency.
- It takes time. Horizon program elements often revisit issues like anger and communication skills in several different programs and with varying approaches. It takes time to internalize what one learns and to practice it on a daily basis. This is what changes family relations.
- Horizon men help hold one another accountable. This is part of their service to the community.
- Between 60 and 65 percent of Horizon participants report family restorations. These are the outcomes most celebrated and honored by the men themselves.
- Horizon, a natural partner for many existing programs, collaborates readily with other ministries and service providers.

5.2 Outcomes

As mentioned in lesson learned #9, 61 percent of Horizon participants in Texas and Oklahoma surveys report restored family relationships. Further, prison administrators describe the Horizon dorms as having an "almost unheard of positive sub-culture." More than two-thirds of participants show improvement in their workplace settings, while more than half demonstrate a positive effect on others in the workplace. The Kairos Horizon program in Tomoka Correctional Institution in Daytona Beach, FL, is the subject of a current evaluation by Caliber

Associates funded as part of the Compassion Capital Fund (CCF). The report on this evaluation is expected in Spring 2004.

6. INNOVATIVE LOCAL INITIATIVES

The following summarizes a roundtable session highlighting the efforts of two innovative local initiatives: The John Inmann Work & Family Center (WFC); and Colorado Child Support Enforcement (CSE). Roundtable participants learned that WFC is a multi-agency offender services program that provides comprehensive reintegration services to offenders returning to the Denver metro area. The mission of WFC is to promote successful offender reentry through employment, family-based interventions, and other programs focused on reducing recidivism and increasing public safety. Participants also learned that CSE has historically used a variety of services to bring hope to children with incarcerated parents. Among them is providing information on CSE procedures for determining order amounts, paying from prison, and getting out of prison and debt. Focusing on the need for collaboration between departments of correction and child support enforcement agencies, the roundtable discussion placed emphasis on promising practices involving employment and the need for new approaches to gain child support order compliance.

6.1 John Inmann Work & Family Center

The WFC is a cooperative effort between the Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC), Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), Colorado Department of Public Safety/Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ), Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Denver Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD), Denver Department of Human Services (DDHS), and several community- and faith-based organization. This unique, multi-agency offender services program provides comprehensive reintegration services to offenders returning to the Denver metro area. The mission of the Work & Family Center is to assist newly released offenders in their transition from incarceration back into society and by doing so, reduce the continuing high costs of recidivism.

DOC projections are that more than 3,000 offenders will return to the Denver metro area during FY 2002-2003. These individuals face a wide range of barriers to their successful return to society, including getting and maintaining employment, housing, family and child support issues, substance and mental health problems, and the bias they face from other members of the community. The return to prison rate of released offenders in Colorado is currently approaching 50 percent within a 3-year release period. The social and economic costs of recidivism to communities and the State are staggering and continue to grow each year.

The WFC was founded specifically to address the issue of recidivism of offenders. The current projections are that the Center will serve between 1,000 and 1,500 clients annually. The Center utilizes a holistic strategy to address the myriad of barriers and issues faced by offenders. Services provided include case management, job development and placement, child support and family reunification counseling, support services, and legal assistance pertaining to parental rights and responsibilities. Based on current research reviews, the John Inmann Work and Family Center's return to prison rate is almost half of the general DOC population released from prison. All road signs indicate the Center is making a difference.

Funding for the WFC currently comes from partner agencies, grant funds received through the Drug Control and System Improvement Program, and the Welfare to Work Program. The Center operates on a budget of more than $750,000 this fiscal year and employs 14 staff members. Discussions are in progress with several other potential partners to include the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Veteran Affairs Office.

Offender clients come to the Center from a variety of sources, including parole officers and community corrections agents, referrals from other service providers, and self-referrals. The only criterion for participation in Center programs is that the individual be released from a DOC facility to the Denver metro area. Every client coming to the WFC receives assistance, many meet with a primary case manager and, depending on their needs, are also referred to other services throughout the community. The WFC has developed a "Guide to Independent Living" and the "Community Reintegration Resource Guide," which assist clients with other stabilization services. Services provided at the Center include:

- Assessment of reintegration needs
- Case management
- Information on and linkages to community resources and other program services
- Emergency support services (housing, clothing, tools, transportation, etc.)
- Job development, placement, and retention assistance (career development)
- Child support and family-related services
- Access to bonding and Work Opportunity Tax Credit programs
- Enrollment in programs such as Workforce Investment Act and Welfare to Work
- Unlimited access to computer-resource room for job seeking, resume development, and much more

- Daily Group Job Search, Employment Skills Development & Personal Development/Self Management workshops.

The Work & Family Center has had a number of significant achievements since its inception in August 1999. Among these are:

- Provided services to more than 1,800 individuals
- Increased employment and earned income by an average of 25 percent for individuals served at the WFC
- Reduced returned to prison rates by at least 12.5 percent more than the rate for other inmates released from DOC
- Increased coordination between agencies through the development of a coordinated, community response to the needs of released offenders
- Provided offenders with access to an Employment Resource Center with a computer lab, employment information and Internet access
- Provided approximately 300 clients (including relevant family members) with attorney consultation services, mental health services, women's, men's, and parenting support groups.

The intent of the Work & Family Center is to reduce recidivism by providing effective, comprehensive reintegration services to released offenders. The Center is the focus of the DOC Community Reintegration Program in Denver and is an integral part of a continuum of services model which begins in DOC correctional facilities and continues into the community. While it is part of an overall reintegration effort, the Work & Family Center is also a unique, widely watched program both statewide and nationwide. It is currently a "one of a kind" program where a variety of agencies and organizations pool resources and work together to address what is one of the great social issues facing our society: the reintegration of released offenders.

6.2 Colorado Child Support Enforcement

Starting a Case

Anyone who has a child support or medical support order, wants to establish one, or wants to establish paternity can apply for child support enforcement services by completing and returning an application form to their local county child support office. This is referred to as the county Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Unit. It is important to answer all of the questions found on the application because the more information given, the easier it will be for the local

county CSE Unit to work with the case successfully. Families who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are automatically referred to child support enforcement services. All other applications require a one-time $20 fee.

Establishing Paternity

Paternity means fatherhood. When the parents are not married, it is important that paternity be legally established; otherwise, the child has no legal father. To establish paternity, a judge or other official may enter a court order, or the local county Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Unit may establish paternity without going to court. Also, an Acknowledgment of Paternity may be signed by both parents at the hospital when the child is born or anytime thereafter. Some important reasons to establish paternity:

- **Identity.** Children have the right to know their mother and father.
- **Financial.** The father may be required to pay child support if paternity has been legally established.
- **Medical.** It may be possible to obtain health insurance coverage for the child through the father's employer.
- **Survivor's Benefits.** If the father is disabled or dies, his child could qualify for a number of benefits: Social Security, inheritance, veteran's benefits and life insurance.

Either parent may initiate a paternity action anytime before the child reaches the age of 18 and, in some circumstances, up to age 21. Paternity can be established even if the father lives in another State.

Establishing Support

Once paternity is established and the noncustodial parent is located, the local county Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Unit works with both parents to establish a child support order, if none exists. If the child is in foster care, a fee may be charged to the mother, the father, or either parent. Establishing a child support order is a legal process that results in an order that sets a monthly amount of money to be paid by the noncustodial parent for the support of the child or by both parents if the child is in foster care. A parent must be given proper legal notice before child support and paternity can be determined. If a parent does not respond within the required time period, an order for support may be entered. This is called a "default order." It is legally valid and enforceable. The child support or parental fee order is based on Colorado child

support guidelines that consider factors such as the needs of the children and the finances of both parents. These guidelines are available through the Colorado Judicial Department Web site.

Establishing Health Insurance Coverage

Children of divorced, never-married, or separated families are at greater risk than other children of not having health insurance coverage. Because of this, the Colorado courts and Colorado Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Program also require that health insurance coverage be provided for children when establishing the child support order. The local county CSE Unit will always list the mother, the father, or either parent in the support order as the person who is to provide health coverage. Medicaid is considered public assistance and is secondary to private health coverage plans. If the children are on Medicaid, the parent ordered to supply health coverage is still held responsible to provide other coverage.

Calculating Child Support Payments

The Colorado Legislature adopted the Colorado Child Support Guidelines for use when a child's parents are divorced, separated or unmarried. The guidelines ensure that a fair share of each parent's income and resources are directed to supporting the child. A basic support obligation is determined using the monthly gross incomes of both parents and information about what intact families spend on their children. The parents share the basic support obligation based upon their gross incomes. The noncustodial parent's share of the obligation establishes the amount of the child support order. The amount of child support a parent pays can also be affected by the amount of parenting time (visitation) with the child. The parents also share the costs for child care, medical insurance, and uninsured medical expenses. The child support amount calculated using the guidelines is accepted as appropriate unless either parent shows a reason for a deviation. If the noncustodial parent's monthly gross income is between $850 and $1,850, s/he may be eligible for a low-income adjustment to the amount of child support paid.

Family Support Registry

The Family Support Registry (FSR) is Colorado's centralized collection and disbursement unit for processing child support and maintenance payments. Federal law requires each State to operate a centralized State disbursement unit. The FSR processes payments for cases being enforced by the various county Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Unit and "Registry Only" orders that are not being enforced by the county CSE Unit. The FSR is responsible for activities associated with payment processing, such as address changes, payment inquiries, and payment records.

Making and Receiving Payments

When a county Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Unit becomes involved with the enforcement of court-ordered support, the noncustodial parent will be required to make payments to the Family Support Registry. A unique FSR account number will be assigned to process payments. The county CSE Unit will give the affected parent his or her FSR number. Payments can be made by check or money order, mail or overnight express, or electronic payment options (e.g., recurring automatic withdrawal and pay-by-phone). Electronic options for receiving payments include direct deposit and deposits made directly to an FSR Card. The FSR Card can be used to pay for goods and services anywhere VISA is accepted, just like any debit card.

Enforcement Remedies

Income Assignment Against Employment Wages. Colorado Child Support Enforcement (CSE) has the authority to issue an income assignment for current and past due support. An income assignment is issued to the employer of the parent required to pay child support to deduct the required amount from wages or other income. CSE may learn of employment by monitoring Department of Labor wage data or from "New Hire Reports" the employer is required to submit to the State.

New Hire Reporting. Federal and State laws require all employers to report new hires to their respective State Directory of New Hires. "Employer" means the person or entity doing business in the State and engaging an employee for pay and for whom the employer withholds Federal or State tax from the employee's pay. For example, an employer who is required to provide a W-2 Form for an employee must also report that he has recently hired that employee. CSE agencies have access to new hire information to check against their caseloads in order to locate a person who has child support obligations.

Unemployment Compensation Benefits. People who owe child support and receive Unemployment Compensation Benefits (UCB) through Colorado's Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) are subject to having their child support obligations deducted from their weekly benefit amount. Colorado law mandates CDLE to withhold child support payments to fulfill child support obligations.

Workers Compensation. CSE Unit has the authority to attach Workers' Compensation benefits from those obligated to pay child support. Weekly benefits or lump sum payouts may be attached to satisfy a child support obligation.

Suspensions and Denial

Driver's License Suspension. If full payment is not received, Colorado Child Support Enforcement (CSE) has the authority to suspend a driver's license. Once a license is suspended, an individual must get a Notice of Compliance from CSE and meet Department of Motor Vehicle requirements to reinstate the privilege to drive.

Professional and Occupational License Suspension. CSE is authorized to suspend professional and occupational licenses of individuals who are past due in their child support obligations. If suspended, they must obtain a Notice of Compliance from CSE and meet the requirements of their particular licensing board at the Department of Regulatory Agencies to regain a professional/occupational license.

Recreational License Suspension. CSE is authorized to suspend or deny hunting and fishing licenses of individuals who are past due in their child support payments. Individuals who are seeking to hunt or fish must meet the requirements of CSE and Division of Wildlife to regain the privilege.

Passport Denial. CSE has the authority to deny a passport for a person with past due child support obligations.

Intercepts

Federal Tax Offset. Federal law gives Colorado Child Support Enforcement (CSE) the authority to intercept Federal tax refunds when a past due child support balance exists, whether or not child support payments are being made.

Colorado State Tax Refund Offset. Federal law gives CSE the authority to intercept State income tax refunds when obligations are past due and owing, whether or not child support payments are being made.

State Vendor Offset. CSE intercepts payments to vendors doing business with the State to pay child support debt or arrearages. A State vendor is an individual who has entered into a contract with the State of Colorado to provide goods or services to the State for a fee. Vendor Offset can also collect money for other debts owed; however, child support debt or arrearage takes priority over other State agency collections.

Federal Administrative Payment Offset. Federal Law gives CSE authority to intercept payments made to Federal retirees, vendors or contractors of the Federal government, and travel

advances or reimbursement made to Federal employees, for the payment of past due child support.

Lottery Winnings Offset. CSE intercepts cash prizes, non-cash prize merchandise or a combination of merchandise and cash lottery winnings from parties who owe past due child support.

Financial Institution Data Match. CSE issues Notices of Lien and Levy to freeze and seize the contents of financial accounts owned by a parent who has a past due child support debt.

Credit Bureau Reporting

Child Support Enforcement (CSE) monitors child support accounts on a monthly basis for payment due and payment received. Monitoring for credit reporting begins the first month a court order for a child support case shows a payment due. When the payment received is less than the payment due, CSE refers the account to major credit reporting agencies and the account then appears on individual credit reports. Balances on accounts unpaid for 180 days appear on credit reports as collection accounts. Credit reporting continues as long as payments are due on an open child support case. CSE follows both the Federal legislation for credit reporting and the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

Judicial Actions

Judgments. Child Support Enforcement (CSE) has the authority to issue a judgment for any amount of child support that becomes past due. Judgments are for specific time periods and dollar amounts.

Liens (Real and Personal Property). CSE has the authority to execute a lien on personal property, real property, or the motor vehicle of the person obligated to pay support. Payment in full is required to release the lien on the property.

Contempt. CSE has the authority to file with the Court to find the person obligated to pay support in contempt of court for willfully failing or refusing to do so as ordered by the Court. This person may be fined and/or jailed for a period of time, which is at the discretion of the Court.

Rule 69. CSE has the authority to attach assets using Rule 69 when the obligated party does not have a verifiable source of income or real property against which to place a lien and has past due child support. This person is served with a subpoena that requires them to appear at a court hearing.

Garnishment (2 Types). CSE has the authority to seize the income of a person ordered to pay child support to satisfy past due obligations by requesting the Court to issue a continuing Writ of Garnishment. Up to 65 percent of this person's disposable earnings may be taken, depending upon the family situation and age of past due support. CSE also has the authority to use a one-time garnishment by requesting the Court to issue a Writ of Garnishment with Notice of Exemption and Pending Levy. This is executed on non-income, personal property such as bank accounts for the payment of past due child support.

Federal Prosecution. Federal law authorizes prosecution at the Federal level for non-payment of child support. If the party has left the State where the child resides and fails to pay child support, they can be charged with either a misdemeanor or felony, depending on the amount past due and the time since a payment was made. The U.S. Attorney General's Office is responsible for these prosecutions at the request of the Colorado CSE Office.

Finding a Parent

The local county Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Unit may need to locate a parent at any time in a child support case. Local, State and Federal information is used to find out where the noncustodial parent lives or works. Finding missing parents requires that as much information as possible be given to the county CSE Unit.

Parents in Different States

When parents live in two different States or countries, cases are often more complex and the timeframes associated with case processing are often longer than when both parents live in the same State. In some cases, the law gives Colorado the ability to handle the case the same as an in-state case. In other cases, the local county Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Unit must request help from the other State to establish paternity and/or support or to enforce a child support order.

The primary legal tool for interstate cases is the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA). UIFSA gives States the power to reach beyond their borders for the establishment and enforcement of support orders. It also allows States to enforce a support order issued in another State. If legal action is needed to establish or enforce an order in another State, UIFSA makes the process easier, as State child support agencies are required to work together. However, the county CSE Unit must rely on the other State's laws, regulations, procedures and personnel to take action on the case. The other State may assess fees or withhold fees from the support collected.

If the county CSE Unit asks for help from another State to establish or enforce a support order, the local agency maintains control of the case. According to Federal regulation, the county CSE Unit is responsible for communicating with both the other State and the party who opened the case. Please contact your local caseworker for case status information rather than the other State.

Foster Care

Each parent has the legal duty to pay child support or foster care fees while his or her child is in foster care if the child is in a voluntary or court-ordered placement. The amount paid applies to the total cost of foster care, which will be paid up-front by the State of Colorado. It is important to provide accurate income information since the monthly amount paid is based partially on this information. Payment may be made by income withholding or, with permission, by automatic withdrawal from a bank account.

Changing an Order

Either party may ask for a review of their child support order. The request must be made in writing to the local county Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Unit. It should give a reason for the change and include supporting information. The reason for a review must relate to an ongoing change in circumstances. The order may not be changed unless:

- The dollar amount of the order changes by 10 percent or more, or
- Medical insurance coverage is ordered or changed.

Reasons to request a review are:

- One of the children has emancipated.
- One or the other parent has had a significant change in income.
- There has been a sizable change in the cost of raising a child (i.e., health care costs or day care costs).
- The number of overnight visits the children have with the other parent has changed significantly.

If there is no open case with a local office, either parent may apply for services and request a review of the court order. A review may result in the ordered amount going up, going down, or staying the same. The review uses the current income of both parties and expenses for the children. The Colorado Child Support Guidelines are used. Reviewing and changing an order

can take up to six months, depending on how quickly the needed information is provided by both parties.

Closing a Case

Child Support Enforcement (CSE) will close a case:

- After an obligation ends and the noncustodial parent has paid all support and arrears
- After making all possible reasonable attempts to establish or enforce an order with no success
- After trying but not being able to find the noncustodial parent or the custodial party
- If closure is requested by the person who applied for services.

The county CSE Unit may send a letter 60 days before closing the case. Even if a case is closed, it does not always mean that the noncustodial parent's legal duty to pay support will permanently end. If new information about a case is received, the case may be reopened.

This session emphasized the multiple challenges of prisoner reentry (e.g., employment, housing, and substance abuse treatment). Roundtable participants commended the collaborative efforts of the Department of Corrections and WFC to provide comprehensive reintegration services to returning offenders. While participants believed that CSE acts "in the best interest of children," the discussion revealed the need to modify policies and procedures to foster family reunification and promote successful prisoner reentry. Roundtable participants also identified the need for a "paradigm shift" to expedite CSE procedures to modify child support orders and the accumulation of arrearages during periods of incarceration.

7. FATHERS FOR LIFE

This session highlighted Fathers for Life, a State-and Federally-funded collaboration to strengthen connections between incarcerated fathers and their children. Roundtable participants learned about the promising demonstration program designed to help inmates in two Missouri prisons and their families gain parenting information and skills. Participants also discussed the need for similar program partnerships to promote parenting practices that both minimize harm and maximize benefits to children. In addition to increasing parenting education and support for incarcerated fathers, goals of the program include enhancing visiting experiences between incarcerated fathers and their children, improving preparation of fathers for employment upon release, and restoring relationships between incarcerated fathers and the mothers of their children.

7.1 Overview

Nearly 12,000 fathers are incarcerated in Missouri State prisons. While 25 percent of fathers receive visits from their children, only 11 percent of those with child support orders make payments. The majority of these fathers have insufficient education and poor work histories, limiting their capacity to provide parenting, emotional, or financial support for their children upon their release. In response to the crisis, The Incarcerated Fathers Collaboration Project, Fathers for Life, was created. Fathers for Life is a Section 1115 Demonstration Grant Project funded by the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

In October 2001, the Missouri Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) was awarded funding for the Federal demonstration project. The primary goal of Fathers For Life is to provide opportunities, resources, and supports to promote responsible fatherhood in order that fathers would assume emotional and financial responsibility of their children, both during and upon release from incarceration. Fathers currently incarcerated at the Western Reception Diagnostic and Correctional Center in St. Joseph and Central Missouri Correctional Facility in Jefferson City were offered voluntary participation opportunities. Missouri was awarded funding for the demonstration project under priority area III, Broad Collaborative Efforts and Outreach by Child Support Agencies, for programs working with incarcerated fathers. The grant amount was $192,607, which, when added to the Federal and State match, provided total project funding of $664,164.

The Incarcerated Fathers Collaboration Project was funded as a 17-month demonstration project. A no-cost extension to September 2003 was granted. An independent evaluation, provided by the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Institute for Human Development, tracked the development and implementation of all intervention components and assessed their short-term impact.

7.2 Collaborators

Agencies and organizations that collaborated with the Division of Child Support Enforcement in Fathers for Life included the Missouri Departments of Corrections and Elementary and Secondary Education, the Division of Workforce Development, the University of Missouri-Columbia's ParentLink, The University of Missouri-KC's School of Education, Parents as Teachers National Training Center, M.A.R.C.H., Inc., and the Missouri Area United Methodist Church.

7.3 Project Objectives and Components

Fathers for Life has four principal objectives: improve access to parenting information and referral for incarcerated fathers; increase parenting education and support for incarcerated fathers; improve short-term and long-term visitation experiences of incarcerated fathers and their children; and increase the capacity of incarcerated fathers to provide financial support for their children.

Fathers for Life consists of the following components in each of the two facilities:

Installation of Parenting Corners in Visiting Areas and Lobbies. Parenting Corners are tower/kiosk displays that provide parent education information, as well as links to problem-solving supports and resources. ParentLink, affiliated with the University of Missouri-Columbia, developed models appropriate for the target population, reviewed and selected literature, resources and information, and installed and provided upkeep for models. As a part of this component, the libraries located in each of the two facilities were enhanced with books, videotapes and audiotapes related to parenting and parental relationships.

Enhanced Child Visiting Area. A graduate student from the University of Missouri-KC's School of Education provided consultation services to design and implement state-of-the-art, safe, developmentally-appropriate environments for enhanced child visitation.

Group Parent Education Classes. An introductory class, entitled Proud Parents, informed participants of the components of Fathers For Life and provided information about three topics: a father's rights and responsibilities; communicating with his child's mother; and bonding with his child. Long Distance Dads, a 12-week group parent education curriculum developed by the National Fatherhood Initiative, was also offered. Long Distance Dads deals with topics such as communication, relationships with the other parent, anger management and role modeling. The original curriculum was revised for this project to include the topics of marriage, communication/mediation and bonding/attachment.

Group and Individual Sessions with a Parent Educator. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education worked through the Parents as Teachers National Center to hire and train staff using adapted Parents as Teachers curriculum to offer group and individual sessions to participants. When appropriate, Parents as Teachers services were also offered to the other parent and child/children through their local school district elsewhere in the State.

Mediation. Prior to release, mediation between the incarcerated father and the other parent was offered, when appropriate. Mediation focused on the development of parenting plans to address issues that include a father's parenting time with his children.

Parents Fair Share. Parents Fair Share, a Division of Workforce Development's noncustodial parent employment program, worked with current work readiness activities offered by Department of Corrections to enhance and expand opportunities for fathers to progress toward financial self-sufficiency upon release. Group Parent's Fair Share informational sessions were held regularly and eligible offenders were offered enrollment in the program prior to release. It was expected that this component would lead to improved financial support for their children.

Relationship Enrichment Skills Training. Parents planning to share the same household in the future were offered an opportunity to learn and practice new ways of talking with each other. The skills they learn will allow them to be better understood and better able to solve problems. Both parents met privately with a trained marriage enrichment leader couple.

Transportation. The Missouri Area United Methodist Church provided transportation to the other parent/caregiver and the children for family visits. In addition, they offered transportation for the spouse or other parent to participate in other program components, such as mediation and the relationship skills sessions.

Site Coordination. A site coordinator was selected for each demonstration site. The site coordinator, contracted by ParentLink, organized the available services and publicized them to interested participants.

In general, the discussion of Fathers for Life involved the need for collaborative fatherhood initiatives that improve outcomes for the children of prisoners. Specifically, roundtable participants discussed whether and under what circumstances the provision of comprehensive parenting support during incarceration significantly improves the parenting provided by incarcerated fathers to their children. Participants concurred with results of the program evaluation, reporting that the addition of individualized, multifaceted services appear to improve the short-term capacity of incarcerated fathers to more effectively parent their children, and potentially improve long-term outcomes for both incarcerated parents and their children.

8. WHEN MOM GOES TO PRISON

For 13 Saturdays between Memorial Day and Labor Day, Dwight Correctional Center, a maximum-security prison in Dwight, IL, offers a 5-hour day camp to offenders and their minor children. The goal of the program is to provide an opportunity for incarcerated mothers to either begin or continue the process of reconnecting with their children in a non-intimidating atmosphere. Mr. Dan Gibbons, Director of the Day Camp program, observes:

"It is not about the mother, it is about the kids. I am a firm believer that the kids do time as well, and I think harder time. You know by law, we have to feed these women three times a

day—give them clothing, give them shelter. And good medical care. That's by law, and these kids don't enjoy those same amenities on the outside. So for me, the program is about the kids."

There are five steps to success for the Day Camp model:

- **Qualification.** Set criteria, take applications, read Master File to approve or deny
- **Permission**. If accepted, caregiver must agree to allow child/children to participate
- **Transportation.** Determine whether family member can transport, or if volunteer organization should be involved (faith-based)
- **Transition.** One phase if family transport, two phases if volunteer transport
- **Separation.** Use subtle distractions to ease the "good-bye."

Each of these steps is described below.

8.1 Qualification

A bulletin is posted at all housing units with information on how to apply, and staff make sure applications are available (via counselors, chaplain, Family Services Department). Upon receiving the application, program staff must read the Master File to determine if an applicant qualifies. Several criteria must be met, including:

- Offender must be natural birth mother of child
- Offender's crime cannot have been committed against a child
- Offender's crime cannot have been committed in the presence of a child
- Offender cannot have a child neglect or abuse crime in her past
- Offender cannot have an open child case
- Offender must be eligible for a "contact" visit (not in segregation).

8.2 Permission

Once eligibility is determined, the Day Camp Director will phone the family member or caregiver, explain the purpose and workings of the program. It is important to gain the trust and respect of the caregiver, and to eliminate reluctance for them to allow the child to be "inside the walls."

8.3 Transportation

Determine if the family member or caregiver can transport. If yes, select a Saturday. Notify them what the child can and cannot bring with them. Find out if there are any special medication needs (i.e., asthma inhaler, insulin). Stress drop-off and pick-up times. If child/children need outside transportation, offender will fill out a separate application (see section on faith-based, below).

8.4 Transition

Mr. Gibbons stressed the critical nature of the program director developing a relationship with the children and the family member immediately. There are several reasons for this, including:

- Program director and the family have never met. The only contact has been by phone.
- Program director is the first person families and children meet not wearing a uniform.
- Perimeter patrol met families and children in the parking lot.
- Correctional officers in the gatehouse sign families and children in and pat them down.
- Electronically controlled doors, high fences, and rolling razor wire surround families and children.
- The caregiver is handing their child/children over to program director to enter a maximum-security facility.

The guiding principal is that this is a very intimidating environment and everything that can reasonably be done to make it easier for families and children should be done. According to Mr. Gibbons, "gain their trust and you will remove the intimidation factor."

8.5 Separation

The end of the day can be emotional for both child and mother. Use distractions to ease the separation. One tactic that has been successful is to draw children into a game of trying to figure out what the end of the day surprise treat is. These distractions should, first and foremost, prevent the child from seeing the electronic door close in front of the mother.

8.6 Faith-based Organizations

Faith-based organizations can play an important role in supporting programs like a Day Camp. At Dwight Correctional Center, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) is the main resource for providing drivers for families that lack transportation to the prison. Church Women United (CWU) assists in purchasing equipment, games, books, toys and other supplies that improve the quality of the program.

In addition to these types of resources, faith-based organizations can operate programs that augment current curricula. For instance, *Aunt Mary's Storybook* (a component of Companions, Inc.) provides an opportunity for the incarcerated mom to read a book to their child on audiocassette. The child can take the new book and tape home with them at the end of the day, and listen to mom's voice and message at any given time.

9. ACTION PLANNING SESSION

At the conclusion of the roundtable, participants were asked to brainstorm short-term, realistic action steps they could take to bring hope to the children of incarcerated parents. Among the items cited by the group are:

Bring together appropriate partners. Participants expressed the need to have appropriate partners (human services, corrections, child welfare, advocates, legal community) at the table as they plan initiatives and services targeted to children with incarcerated parents. They hoped to invite these partners to their meetings.

Attend meetings/events of potential partners. As above, participants are exploring new ways to partner to serve this vulnerable population. By inviting potential partners to join current initiatives, they hope to build bridges across agencies and departments and into the community. Recognizing the value of "meeting people on their own ground," however, participants also highlighted the importance of attending the meetings of those with whom you would like to partner, and not merely expecting them to come to you.

Host a Policy Academy on reentry. Participants are excited about the idea of working with their partners to design and host a Policy Academy on issues concerning reentry (family connections, employment, emergency services).

Conduct outreach/education campaigns. Lack of awareness and understanding of available services seemed to be at the core of many of the challenges described by roundtable participants. As such, participants will explore different venues for outreach/education,

including with the judicial community, internal agency staff, and inmates and ex-offenders and those that serve them.

Develop a resource manual. Resource manuals have been created in the past, but are challenged by rapidly shifting information. Participants explored the possibility of developing an on-line manual or exploring other types of technology that might facilitate information, referral, and service integration.

Learn from CCF competitive grants. Recognizing that significant change without additional resources is often challenging, participants discussed strategies for accessing additional funding. One strategy was to develop a clear understanding of the priorities of the available funding streams, such as the Compassion Capital Fund (CCF) grants.

Access Federal resources. Excited by Ms. Pontisso's presentation, participants highlighted the value of accessing both Federal funding streams and Federal resource people who have unique insight and may provide additional guidance and/or inroads into programming for Federal prisons.

Think strategically at all points. Participants noted the importance of asking strategic questions, such as: "what are the expected outcomes?" and "where can we leverage the most change for the fewest resources?"

10. CONCLUSION

This roundtable brought together many stakeholders interested in improving services and bringing hope to children with incarcerated parents. The insights offered by the presenters and the enthusiasm and dedication from the participants combined to create an interactive session with significant positive outcomes. The Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network (http://peerta.acf.hhs.gov) received very strong evaluations of the event (see Appendix C), and positive anecdotal feedback as well.

Children facing the incarceration of a parent bear tremendous burdens and face significant risks for negative childhood and adult behavioral and economic outcomes. Despite these challenges, however, hope is not lost. Programs and services targeted to this population are in operation and various stages of development around the country. New information is gained everyday about what works and how services can be improved. This type of event is one strategy for sharing information and working together to bring hope to the children of incarcerated parents.

APPENDIX A:
AGENDA

AGENDA

DAY 1 - Wednesday, November 19, 2003

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. **Registration**

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. **Welcome, Introductions, and Overview**
Thomas Sullivan, *Regional Administrator, ACF Region VIII*
Jacqui Cunningham, *Program Manager, Colorado Works Program*
Courtney Kakuska, *Senior Associate, Caliber Associates*

This session welcomes and introduces roundtable participants. An overview of the two-day agenda is provided, along with a brief discussion of what participants hope to learn. Emphasis is placed on the need to bring together child welfare practitioners, corrections policymakers, and community advocates to develop innovative solutions to problems involving serving children with incarcerated parents.

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **National Trends: Incarcerated Parents and Their Children**
Richard Lewis, *Senior Associate, Caliber Associates*

This informative session presents statistics on incarcerated parents and their children. The presentation familiarizes roundtable participants with national trends and characteristics of parents, children, and families separated by incarceration. Participants are encouraged to share perspectives from their own work and communities.

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. **Break**

10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. **Federal Perspective: Supporting Children With Parents in Prison**
Debra Pontisso, *Program Manager, OCSE, ACF, HHS*
*Ms. Pontisso will be joinging the meeting via teleconference.

This teleconference highlights federal efforts to support children with parents in prison. In this session, OCSE initiatives involving incarcerated and paroled parents are discussed, including those funded via Special Improvement Projects and Section 1115 Grants. Ample opportunity for questions regarding future funding priorities is provided.

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Roundtable Discussion**
Issues and Challenges: Overcoming Barriers to Fostering Family Relationships and Serving Children Separated by Incarceration

This session identifies issues and challenges involved in supporting children with incarcerated parents. The discussion places emphasis on problem identification, including barriers to building family relationships and serving children separated by incarceration. Participants are encouraged to examine their efforts, share experiences, and exchange information on possible solutions to overcoming obstacles to improving outcomes for children.

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. **Working Lunch**
The Role of the Faith Community: Kairos Horizon Communities
Mickey Bright Griffin, *Kairos Prison Ministry, Daytona Beach, FL*

This session highlights Kairos Horizon Communities in Prison, a non-profit organization founded to establish faith-based residential programs in prisons. The first project was established in 1999 at Tomoka Correctional Institution in Daytona Beach, Florida, in collaboration with the Florida Department of Corrections and the Florida Commission on Responsible Fatherhood. Other Horizon multifaith programs are active elsewhere in Florida, Ohio, Texas, and Oklahoma. Horizon is an outgrowth of Kairos Prison Ministry, an ecumenical ministry established in 1976 and now active in over 260 prisons in 30 States and 5 foreign countries.

2:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. **Break**

2:15p.m. – 3:30 p.m. **Innovative Local Initiatives**
Mario Salinas, *John C. Inmann Work and Family Center, Denver, CO*

The session highlights the collaborative efforts of The John C. Inmann Work and Family Center, a multiagency offender services program that provides comprehensive reintegration services to offenders returning to the Denver metro area. The mission of the Work and Family Center is to promote successful offender re-entry through employment, family-based interventions and other programs focused on reducing recidivism and increasing public safety. The discussion places emphasis on promising practices involving employment among prisoners and ex-prisoners.

Robert Conklin, *Child Support Enforcement, Denver,* CO

This session highlights the efforts of the state to support children with parents in prison. In this session, a variety of child support services to assist prisoners and ex-prisoners are presented in historical context. Participants are provided information to share with inmates on CSE procedures for determining order amounts, paying from prison, and getting out of prison and debt. The discussion places emphasis on promising practices involving child support order compliance among prisoners and ex-prisoners.

3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. **Break**

3:45 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. **Focusing on Fatherhood: Fathers for Life**
Kathy LeFebvre, *Fathers for Life, Cape Girardeau, MO*

This session highlights Fathers for Life, a State and Federally funded collaboration to strengthen connections between incarcerated fathers and their children. The demonstration program is designed to help inmates and their families in two Missouri prisons gain parenting information and skill, thereby promoting parenting practices that will both minimize harm and maximize benefits to children. In addition to increasing parenting education and support for incarcerated fathers, goals of the program include enhancing visiting experiences between incarcerated fathers and their children, improving preparation of fathers for employment upon release, and restoring relationships between incarcerated fathers and the mothers of their children.

4:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Wrap-Up and Next Steps**

This session provides a brief summary of Day 1 events and reviews the agenda for Day 2.

DAY 2 - Thursday, November 20, 2003

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Recap and Review of Agenda
Courtney Kakuska, *Senior Associate, Caliber Associates*

This session welcomes roundtable participants and provides an overview of the Day 1 agenda.

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Focusing on Women: When Mom Goes to Prison
Daniel Gibbons, *Day Camp Program, Dwight, IL*

This session highlights the Day Camp Program. For 13 Saturdays between Memorial Day and Labor Day, Dwight Correctional Center, a maximum security prison in Dwight, Illinois, offers a 5-hour day camp (9am to 2 pm) to offenders meeting the criteria established by the administration, and their minor children. The goal of this program is to create an opportunity for incarcerated mothers to either begin or continue the process of reconnecting with their children, in a non-intimidating atmosphere.

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Break

10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Roundtable Discussion
Developing Solutions: Building Promising Partnerships Between Child Welfare, Corrections and, Communities

Spotlighting the issues and challenges identified by participants, this session focuses on developing long-term solutions to problems involving supporting children with incarcerated parents. The discussion places emphasis on building collaborative partnerships between child welfare service providers, corrections practitioners, and community advocates. Participants are encouraged to create problem-solving partnerships in a climate of increasing demand for services and declining resources.

12:00 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Working Lunch
Improving Outcomes for Children: What Works and What Doesn't

This session explores the programs presented during the roundtable in further detail. In this session, a panel of presenters will respond to participant inquiries regarding what works and what doesn't work to improve outcomes for children. The discussion places emphasis on the need to tailor program services to meet the special needs of children and families impacted by incarceration. Participants are encouraged to share perspectives from their own work and communities.

12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Roundtable Discussion
Developing a Framework for Action: Next Steps in Program Development and Implementation

This session discusses the essential elements for developing a framework for action. In this session, participants from the same service areas break into small groups to discuss next steps in program development. Participants are encouraged to engage other stakeholders upon returning to their work and communities, and to develop and implement an action plan.

1:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Workshop Wrap-Up and Evaluation

This session provides a brief summary of the 2-day roundtable to bring hope to children separated by incarceration.

APPENDIX B:
ATTENDEES LIST

ATTENDEES LIST

Speakers

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APPENDIX C:
EVALUATION SUMMARY

APPENDIX C:
WELFARE PEER TA NETWORK
BRINGING HOPE TO CHILDREN WITH INCARCERATED PARENTS
EVALUATION SUMMARY

At the conclusion of the roundtable, participants were asked to evaluate how well the event met their expectations and needs. The evaluation asked participants first to rate the extent to which they agreed (from 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) with a series of five statements about the Roundtable. Each statement and its associated average score is presented below.

Statement	Average Score
Conference planners adequately prepared me for the meeting by providing clear written and verbal communication regarding the meeting's purpose and expected outcomes.	4.3
Conference planners handled the preparation, arrangements, and scheduling of the event in a timely, courteous, and competent manner.	4.7
The speakers were thorough in the subject areas presented.	4.8
The speakers engaged the audience and facilitated interactive discussions.	4.8
The information will be useful to me/my staff in developing new approaches to serving children with incarcerated parents	4.7

Additionally, participants were asked three open-ended questions about the roundtable and future technical assistance needs. The questions and the responses received are presented below:

What did you find most useful about attending this roundtable (i.e. any immediate or long-term benefits to you/your staff that you anticipate as a result of attending this roundtable)?

- Motivated me to become a spokesperson on this important issue
- Bringing CBO/FBO and government departments together to discuss needs and collaborating services to meet those needs
- New ideas
- Real world examples of programs that work and programs that don't
- Understanding the programs that are out there
- Discussion of "what works"
- Hearing about different programs—picked up new ideas which I hope to pursue and implement

- Learning more about child support
- The collaboration amongst the agencies. Its wonderful to know what resources are presently available, but also good to know where we could improve
- I really liked that we focused on the children
- Hearing many sides to a particular issue
- Transition programs.

What issues would you like to have had more discussion about at the roundtable?

- More promising programs
- Making first contacts between State and faith- or community-based groups
- Putting together persuasive packages of information to help groups understand how their potential partners operate.
- Problem solving at the implementation stage
- Well-rounded, but a lot of content for 1½ days
- Child welfare agency collaboration
- A detailed action plan of what we're actually going to do
- The identification of inmates that can effectively be helped.

In which areas of serving children with incarcerated parents would you like to receive additional technical assistance?

- Strategies for outreach/education to legislators
- All of it! Building the bridges from the offenders to their communities
- Evaluation research for current and new programs
- This event, multiplied several times over
- Continuum of programming if inmate is transferred
- How to best meet the emotional needs of children in the face of parental incarceration
- Same event in different locations
- Re-entry programs
- Research-based best practices.