

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Entrants must complete all sections for the entry to be considered by the Committee. A copy of this official entry is available at www.pacounties.org

County	Erie County
County Class	3 rd class county
Address	1618 Ash Street
City, State, Zip Code	Erie, Pa. 16508
Primary Contact, Title	Ron Bryant, Deputy Warden
Contact Phone	814 451 7515

PROJECT INFORMATION

Title Total Change Program

Project Start Date August 2015

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

Enter program narrative that addresses each of the following subject areas, and does so in the order presented below. Entries must be submitting using this form. All sections must be complete. Entries submitted without the required information may be disqualified.

Problem Discussion - Enter comments on the identified need and the background including what programs were in place before the current project, if any, and how it led to this effort. This section is worth 10 points.

The Total Change Program, a component of Climate Changers, Inc., offers a unique endeavor to combat the increased number of ex-offenders who return to prison. Although a vast amount of money has been dedicated to reduce the rate of recidivism in Erie County, positive long-term results are lacking. It is obvious that we need to stop those who have been released from jail from being rearrested and incarcerated (at an average cost of \$38,000 per inmate per year). It is even more obvious that we need to change the way in which we are addressing the problem. There have been attempts to utilize various groups i.e. anger management, parenting, job readiness etc to try and assist offenders in being more successful while on parole. These attempts in and of themselves has not been successful.

Background – Enter history of the project, including any evidenced-based approaches to divert individuals from further penetration into the juvenile or adult justice system, community involvement strategies, formation of stakeholder groups, county- wide planning strategies, etc. This section is worth 20 points.

As ex-offenders attempt to re-enter society the most pressing re-entry challenges are:

A place to live/housing; securing employment; and adjusting to social living beyond Incarceration. A deficiency in any one of these three is a serious risk factor to relapse.

Recidivism is at an all-time high in the United States. Many prisoners are released from prison without the tools they require to become productive citizens choosing to fall back into a life of crime. According to a 2013 Pennsylvania DOC Recidivism Report:

- One in 200 Adult Pennsylvanians are currently incarcerated in a Pennsylvania State Correction Institution.
- Ninety Percent of the inmates currently in a Pennsylvania State Prison will eventually be released.
- Approximately 6 in 10 released inmates **Recidivate** within three years of their release from prison.
- Released inmates are more likely to be re-incarcerated (mostly for technical parole violations) during the 18 months after release from prison.

While there are several approaches available to reduce recidivism, methods are scattered and usually only address a minimal amount of issues facing ex-offenders. For example; there are programs for anti-social attitudes, values, beliefs, peer associations, personality, education/employment, family, substance abuse, and leisure/recreation – however, rarely is there a program which addresses all these areas and more to bring about a *Total Change*. Cognitive-behavioral therapy strategies, life-style changes and a safe-haven to practice these new learned behaviors are just some of the reasons The Total Change Program is receiving so much positive response.

2015 in Erie, PA a group of business owners and investors approached Pastor Curtis Jones. Sr. (retired Chaplain for the Albion State Prison) with a request for help. New businesses were looking to build in Erie to provide hotels and other attractions for tourists and help build jobs in the market. There was however, a huge downside to investing in Erie... homelessness, vagrancy and high crime rates. It was determined, through interviews with the groups of people on the street, the local police and the department of justice – that the largest population of loiterers consisted of ex-offenders. Groups of these individuals could be seen around the city of Erie causing concern for new business.

Soundness of approach – Enter a description of the ways the project conforms to either program themes or goals as established in the criteria. This section is worth 20 points

The program has utilized a different approach to dealing with offenders. The developers of the program have been on both sides of the fence, having worked in correctional facilities as well as having been a resident of correctional facilities, and approach things in a way that speaks to the offender in a way they can understand. There is a lot of credibility given to those who have walked a mile in my shoes. When the offenders feel as if they can relate to individuals, the message is better received and they are offered assistance in the community as well as held accountable for their behavior and actions outside the facility.

Program Elements – Enter a description of the elements of the project, utility, adaptability, strategies used, community and stakeholder involvement, evidence-based approached. This section is worth 20 points.

Phase 1 – Pre-Release Program at the institution of incarceration; equipping each participant with the necessary tools enabling them to successfully adjust and function as productive, law abiding citizens within society. Based on the Integrated Case Management Approach, T4C-Thinking for a Change and the NIC Transition from Prison to the Community Model Education includes: how society and their family will view them because of their various past indiscretions; the reality of gainful employment and what opportunities may or may not exist to them; equipping them to be able to effectively deal with rejections they will face; discovering what basic identification is required - Driver's Licenses, Birth Certificates, SS Cards, etc.; and basic interpersonal skills – responsibility, decision making, denial, communication and more. (*program details provided by request only – Mutual Non-Disclosure Agreement required to access this copyrighted material – email totalchangeprogram@gmail.com*).

Phase 2 – A 6 to 12 month Intense Residential / Non-Residential community based component further equips participants with the necessary essentials to prepare them as they transcend back into society. Within this phase women are reconnected with their children, which is imperative in the process of bringing families back together. This community based phase includes a place to live, basic necessities, access to agencies (Social Security, Driver's License, Health Care, Parole Office, Assistance, etc.), education, job training, computer, resume building, health care, support, personal responsibilities – a safe haven to transition and prepare to re-enter society.

Phase 3 – Aftercare, The Total Change Program and its tools remain accessible to all participants as needed to assist them along their journey to living as law abiding, productive citizens. In order for the program to be successful continual support will be provided whenever a participant wants help.

The pre-release classes have proven to be successful with continued weekly meetings on the outside; and where ex-offenders from the program are encouraged to volunteer and help serve in the community. These meetings are not just for ex-offenders – they are community meetings where members of the community come together to work with each other to improve the neighborhood. The expected outcome is greater when the transitional housing component is added.

Expectations and Measurable Goals – Enter a description of the costs of the project, how it was funded, projected impact, number of inmates diverted or assisted, utilization of risk assessment, impact on recidivism. This section is worth 20 points.

*An **outcome** is a change in behavior after release from prison.*

Programs considered most effective have been found to reduce recidivism by about 10 to 15 percent; and on rare occasion, up to 20 percent. The Total Change Program is experiencing a higher success rate due to post release pieces; including consistent weekly meetings, transitional housing, support and continuing education components. We believe we can reduce recidivism of our participants by at least 50 percent. The first housing facility will accommodate 14 men at a time. The expected time they will stay is from 6 months to a year. As one participant leaves another will fill the spot.

This facility will take care of an average of 30 men per year. As the program grows and success is established, other locations will be added to house more men, women and juveniles. There is an initiative in place to take over closed school properties for this purpose. Forward thinking will allow expansion of this program quickly as results further prove the model.

Evaluation/Sustainability – Enter details describing the process for evaluating success including assessment methodologies, data reports, continuation, and determination of success. This section is worth 10 points.

Group sessions that occur within the facility are evaluated by the attendees on a regular basis to illicit from those individuals what works or is most helpful to them. Groups facilitated within the facility have been expanded to include our female population as well as the juvenile population housed in our facility. As proof of the success of this initiative, the courts are now releasing individuals into our custody as a court mandated program.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Please include any supporting documentation to demonstrate the impact of the project in cost or population outcomes, or other data to demonstrate the considerations utilized in determining the scope or design of the project. Scoring will be based on factors including the entrant’s description of the problem, the soundness of the approach, and success in meeting goals and objectives. Award submissions will receive consideration for outcomes or best practices supported by data. **SUPPORTING INFORMATION SHOULD BE COPIED AND PASTED DIRECTLY INTO THE FORM USING THE BOX BELOW.**

The Total Change Reentry Program uses a combination of the following evidence based techniques, methodologies and curriculums:

- The Integrated Case Management Approach (ICM)
- T4C-Thinking for a Change
- The NIC Transition from Prison to the Community Model (TPC)
- Positive Youth Development (PYD)
- Triple P-Positive Parenting Program - Level 5 Enhanced Triple P and Pathways Triple P
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)

All forms must contain at least one signature. Signatures can be entered electronically, or submitted via fax using a separate form. To sign, right-click on the signature line, select “Signature Setup” from the drop down, and follow the prompts. If submitting signatures on a separate form, enter “FAXING” on the signature line.

X Gary N. Lee
County Chief Executive Officer

X _____
Chair of Board of Commissioners

SUBMITTING YOUR ENTRY – To submit the entry, save a copy of this completed form after all information, including signatures and supporting materials have been added. When saving the form, please assure that the document name includes the county name, the type of project and the year – (i.e. FranklinJailAward2018). Address an email to bpenyak@pacounties.org and attach the award submission.