



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Wilson Foundation Announces \$1 Million in Prison Reentry Initiative Grants**

BATON ROUGE –The Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation today announced the awarding of \$1 million in Prison Reentry Initiative investments for 2018.

“We are eager and excited to see these programs grow these enhanced services for clients in our community,” said Dan Bevan, president of the Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation. “Louisiana has made progress in providing second chances for returning citizens, and these programs are part of the solutions to long-lasting community change.”

The Prison Reentry Initiative is designed to create a dramatic reduction in the percentage of formerly incarcerated individuals who return to prison and an increase in the cost-savings to the community associated with successful reintegration. Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the world, and approximately 95 percent of incarcerated individuals will return to their communities. This is the third year the Foundation has made investments of \$1 million in prison reentry programs.

“Since January 2016, our partners have served 5,000 individuals returning home from incarceration,” Bevan said. “More than 1,000 have gained vital skills and are maintaining stable life conditions. Employment is vitally important to personal stability, and more than 120 employers who have committed to hiring returning citizens. In addition, 75 community members have volunteered to be mentors providing social and emotion supports for what can often be a difficult transition.”

Programs receiving funds for 2018 are:

- **Awana Lifeline Prison Ministries**, \$40,000 for *Program Operations*: Awana operates programs in six Louisiana Department of Corrections prisons and East Baton Rouge Parish Prison focused on strengthening the bonds between incarcerated parents and their free children to stop the generational prison pipeline. This year Awana will be expanding to provide community engagement and awareness.
- **Capital Area Human Services District**, \$50,000 for *Behavioral Health Reentry Program*: CAHSD has partnered with East Baton Rouge Parish Prison to ensure those identified with mental illness/substance abuse are assessed upon admission by a behavioral health professional and assisted by a peer support specialist to develop a behavioral healthcare plan that is followed while incarcerated and for at least six months post-release.
- **Capitol Area Reentry Program**, \$30,000 for *Connecting to Success*: This program engages clients prior to release to develop case plans and assistance with necessary documents and linkage to health services, addiction treatment, housing, and job placement. Navigators assist clients in accessing these services and systems and achieving case plan goals.

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- **Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge**, \$62,000 for *Joseph Homes*: Joseph Homes provides transitional housing to 50 homeless unaccompanied men recently released from prison. The program will expand to include employment services, transportation and advocacy to increase the number of employment opportunities available to returning citizens.
- **Center for Justice Innovation**, \$150,000 for *Reentry Services*: The Center for Justice Innovation will engage clients within six months of release to develop a reentry accountability plan and provide coaching and life skills programming for one year post-release. CJI will serve multiple populations: inmates housed at Pointe Coupee Detention Center, individuals sentenced to life without parole who are newly eligible for parole due to changes in law, and offenders releasing after serving sentences of twenty years or more.
- **Center for Justice Innovation**, \$40,000 for *Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative*: The state's Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative (LA-PRI) is an evidence-based framework for sustainable system change through state-local partnerships with the goal of affecting every prisoner returning home. Reentry stakeholders will work together to reduce the statewide recidivism rate by 25 percent by 2022 and by 50 percent for higher risk returning citizens by 2028.
- **Center for Justice Innovation**, \$20,000 for *LA-PRI East Baton Rouge Community Coordinator*: The implementation of the LA-PRI in the East Baton Rouge region will rely on a community coordinator to facilitate stakeholder conversations, develop working relationships across sectors, and engage the broader community. The coordinator will also develop regional and statewide relationships in the statewide LA-PRI context.
- **Church United for Community Development**, \$40,000 for *Case Manager, Kingdom Men*: Church United serves high-risk incarcerated and formerly incarcerated men from Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. James and West Baton Rouge parishes through housing, job placement, accountability and assistance with social services.
- **Connections for Life**, \$30,000 for *Connect2Empower*: Connections for Life provides female returning citizens with a peer mentor and intensive case management, focusing heavily on job readiness, employment identification and placement. This program also advocates for new employment opportunities for returning citizens and public awareness of the barriers returning citizens face when coming home.
- **Family Service of Greater Baton Rouge**, \$40,000 for *Thinking for a Change*: Thinking for a Change is an evidence-based cognitive-behavioral curriculum that concentrates on changing criminogenic thinking. Family Service will implement the program for individuals newly released from incarceration.
- **Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Louisiana**, \$50,000 for *Goodwill Re-Integration Program (GRIP)*: The GRIP program focuses on individuals exiting local correctional facilities by providing a holistic approach addressing the needs of its participants, including intensive case management, supportive wrap-around services, mentoring, technical skills training and job readiness training.

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- **Louisiana Interchurch Conference**, \$20,000 for *Criminal Justice Church-Based Advocacy*: Directly connecting congregations from across the political spectrum with formerly incarcerated speakers, this program will introduce participants to the myriad facets of Louisiana's criminal justice system, including personal experiences, social scientific research, and government policies. In addition, the LIC's curriculum will encourage participants to consider how a variety of scriptures and Christian principles should shape their approach to criminal justice reform at the state level.
- **Louisiana Public Health Institute**, \$25,000 for *LA-PRI State Level Data Development: A* complement to the Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative, this project will provide parishes with risk and need data to map the needs of reentry populations onto the availability of support services, and begin individual case planning for returning citizens.
- **LSU Foundation**, \$40,000 for *LSU Law Parole and Reentry Clinic*: The Clinic provides students with the opportunity, under professorial supervision, to prepare offenders for their appearance before the Louisiana Board of Pardons and Parole and develop successful reentry plans to reduce recidivism. The Clinic also serves as a legal referral source for community-based reentry service providers in the Baton Rouge area.
- **MetroMorphosis**, \$40,000 for *Baton Rouge Reentry Collaborative*: MetroMorphosis will facilitate a collaborative process for improving practice, collaboration and capacity of reentry stakeholders in the Baton Rouge area.
- **O'Brien House**, \$68,000 for *Relapse Prevention for Successful Reentry*: O'Brien House will expand and intensify its services for returning citizens by formalizing pre-release assessments to expedite referrals, providing a specialized counselor on the treatment team, and formalizing a post-discharge after-care program. Clients work the steps of recovery, partner with a sponsor, join a home group, get a job, and develop a savings plan and a housing plan.
- **One Touch Ministry**, \$70,000 for *Reentry Housing*: One Touch Ministry provides housing opportunities for returning citizens at high-risk for recidivism. Program services include financial literacy, budgeting, linkage to care, transportation, housing-related educational programs and other supportive services.
- **Re-Entry Court Services**, \$40,000 for *19<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Re-Entry Court*: Re-Entry Court Services provides support services to the 19th Judicial District Court's Re-Entry Court. Eligible offenders have the opportunity to receive two years of intense education and training while imprisoned at Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola or Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women. Offenders participate in intensive case management and supervised probation while transitioning back to the community upon release.
- **Right on Crime**, \$40,000 for *Louisiana Reentry and Justice Policy*: Modeled after successful criminal justice reform in other states, Right on Crime Louisiana will provide the necessary support and information structure to secure policy-level changes to make practical, positive impacts on the lives of returning citizens, their families, their communities, and the state's economy, through a collaborative model sharing best practices in criminal justice and reentry reform across the state at all levels of system involvement with reentry and reintegration.

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- **SocialWorx Institute**, \$25,000 for *LA-PRI Steering Team Association*: This project's purpose is to support Steering Teams and Regional Collaborations in building seamless Continuums of Care in their communities and promote inter-agency collaboration, peer learning and information sharing to saturate the state with high-quality solutions which reduce incarceration, increase public safety, and ensure sustained access to vital services by returning citizens.
- **Urban League**, \$40,000 for *Career Pathways Program for Returning Citizens*: Urban League will provide returning citizens with comprehensive case management, referrals to technical skills training, career & workforce fundamentals training (job readiness), and other wrap-around services to facilitate their successful transition into the workforce in high-demand industries.
- **YWCA of Baton Rouge**, \$40,000 for *Freedom Project*: This project works toward successful reintegration by shortening the time-frame of pre-trial incarceration for nonviolent offenses, allowing individuals to better advocate for themselves when charged with a nonviolent offense, and to more fully maintain the community connections (family, religious, career-based) that help stem future criminality. One element of this project is the creation of a community bail fund to support the release of individuals charged with nonviolent offenses who are unable to afford bail.

Information regarding the Prison Reentry Initiative is available at [www.hawilsonfoundation.org/prisonreentry](http://www.hawilsonfoundation.org/prisonreentry).

#### **About the Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation**

Huey and Angelina Wilson established the Foundation with a focus on enriching the lives of the people of the Baton Rouge area. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson believed that communities are strengthened when people begin to see themselves as resources and find successful ways of marshaling their talents and the talents of local people and organizations to solve problems.

The Foundation believes that for people to be self-sufficient and productive members of society they must have basic needs of healthcare and education met. Therefore the Foundation invests in organizations and programs focused on four priority areas: human services, healthcare, education and prison reentry. In addition, the Foundation believes that the most disadvantaged – including the sick and disabled, the indigent, and the formerly incarcerated – need particular resources so they are better able to be competent and productive citizens. The Foundation's staff and trustees seek to invest in organizations and programs that are a solid fit to successfully address these needs and prioritize requests that address the root causes of problems rather than treating the underlying symptoms.

Learn more on the Foundation's website at [www.hawilsonfoundation.org](http://www.hawilsonfoundation.org).