

Legislative Proposal 2008 Executive Summary

The Ridge House is requesting \$581,512 from the Interim Finance Committee in order to stabilize and enhance services at its seven properties in Reno, Nevada. The Ridge House and northern Nevada would benefit from this additional funding in the following ways:

- ◇ Ensure continuity of services to the State of Nevada
- ◇ Enhance clinical services, allowing a smaller caseload per counselor and allow co-facilitation model for all clinical services. Co-facilitation allows all counselors to work more effectively, reduces counselor burnout and enhances the clients' experience.
- ◇ Reduce unfunded overhead costs in order to offer more direct assistance to clients in the form of medical, dental and mental health needs. Clients will also benefit through the use of assessment and placement tools at evaluation, and workbooks and journals throughout the program.
- ◇ Allow clients with limited financial resources to participate in the program since the agency relies so heavily on client service fees.
- ◇ Allow for the hiring of a clinical coordinator to ensure quality services are being provided at all off-site locations. The clinical coordinator position is currently vacant due to budget constraints and the Executive Director is performing the duties despite the significant work load. Filling this position will allow the Executive Director to seek additional local, state and federal funding sources in order to ensure sustainability when this funding ends.
- ◇ Allow important agency budget items to return, including maintenance of the properties and vehicles. Deferred maintenance issues on 7 properties and 5 vehicles are accumulating daily.
- ◇ Allow for enhanced salary and benefits packages to all employees to keep staff turnover to a minimum, reduce training costs and enhance the clients' program experiences. This item also includes costs of required bi-yearly training classes that the counselors are currently required to pay for themselves.
- ◇ Allow for the creation of a former client/former offender aftercare support group, increasing the odds for this population to remain out of prison.

The State of Nevada benefits from funding this proposal in the following ways:

- ◇ Allows the Nevada Department of Corrections to utilize a strong aftercare re-entry program.
- ◇ Keep recidivism rates for those enrolled in the 10% rather than 25% range, saving the State millions of dollars per year.
- ◇ Create tax-paying, productive citizens that were previously tax-burdens to society.
- ◇ Award 400 clients/former offenders the chance to create a new life, rebuild families and assist other returning inmates in the same recovery process. For every successful former inmate, there are often 3 former inmates that benefit from the strength, hope and spirit of that former client.

The Ridge House is a successful program that has assisted thousands of individuals in the past 25 years. With help from the State of Nevada, The Ridge House will continue to expand and help thousands more individuals stay out of our overcrowded prison system.



The Ridge House Program Request for Funds

Overview:

In response to the “bubble” of inmates that may be released from the Nevada Department Corrections as a result of A.B. 510 from the 2007 Legislature, The Ridge House is presenting this proposal for re-entry services in Northern Nevada. Dr. James Austin reported to three legislative subcommittees on 02/22/2007 that additional post-release treatment services are absolutely necessary in the State of Nevada. In an article in the Reno Gazette-Journal on February 15, 2007, retired state Supreme Court Justice Bob Rose and Justice James Hardesty stated “It is ill-advised to remove people from society without inculcating new survival tools.” “Those inmates will be dumped back on the street, but without the skills to live responsibly and productively, unless rehabilitation and corrections replace old values and behaviors and retard recidivism.”

In October 2001, Governor Kenny Guinn appointed the Study Committee on Corrections. Two of the areas identified in this study are directly linked to services currently performed by the Ridge House Inc. in Reno Nevada. These two areas are:

1. Nevada lacks appropriate institutional programming, treatment, education and employment opportunities to prepare offenders to succeed upon release to the community and;
2. The risk to public safety is greater – and high recidivism results – when offenders are released from prison without re-entry planning, transitional services and/or community support.

Background:

- At the Interim Finance Committee (IFC) meeting on November 14, 2007, Nevada Department of Corrections Director Howard Skolnick reported there would be “about 800” inmates who qualified for parole, but couldn’t get out of prison for various reasons.
- Nevada released over 4,192 offenders from prison in 2007. In an average year, more than 1,600 inmates, or 39% of Nevada’s released offenders, expire their sentences and leave prison with no community supervision. More than 20% of Nevada’s offenders left prison last year having earned or saved no money and had to be given “gate money” to get home. Estimates from recent reports are that treatment can reduce recidivism (a tendency to return to criminal habits) 20 to 64 %.
- Surveys that show 60 to 90% of Nevada’s inmates have drug or alcohol problems. One consistent research finding is that involvement in substance abuse treatment

- reduces recidivism for offenders who use drugs. Studies have found that, on average, the best programs tend to reduce recidivism rates by 30 percent.¹
- **The Ridge House Inc. graduates have a 9% recidivism rate, as opposed to State and National Published recidivism rates of 26 to 66%.**
 - Treatment provides a cost benefit to taxpayers. According to the California Drug and Alcohol Treatment Assessment Study, the cost benefit averages \$7 return for every dollar invested. Criminal activity significantly declines after treatment. In 1992, the cost of treating approximately 150,000 individuals was \$200 million. The benefits received during treatment and in the first year afterwards totaled \$1.5 billion in savings. The largest savings were due to reductions in crime. Also, significant improvements in health and corresponding reductions in hospitalizations were found during and after treatment. Emergency room admissions, for instance, were reduced by one third following treatment.²
 - **Research indicates that treatment gains may be lost if treatment is not continued after the offender is released from prison or jail.** In part, this is because release presents offenders with a difficult transition from the structured environment of the prison or jail. After release many prisoners have no place to live, no job, and no family or social supports. They often lack the knowledge and skills to access available resources for adjustment to life on the outside. These are all factors that significantly increase the risk of relapse and recidivism.³
 - Nevada has very few community-based programming opportunities for offenders. Four thousand five hundred men and women are projected to be released from prison this year and almost 78% will have substance abuse issues. This translates to a need for 3,500 treatment beds. Today, there are 161 designated substance abuse residential treatment beds for the criminal justice system statewide. Programs for parolees are extremely limited, as is housing for transition and reentry. The State of Nevada provides transitional re-entry housing for 500 men in the state of Nevada, 400 at Casa Grande in Las Vegas and 100 at the Restitution Center in Reno⁴. These clients are required to secure employment and some treatment services are offered in the South, but not the North.

Current Costs:

- The State of Nevada currently holds 12,770 inmates in its 10 facilities managed by the Nevada Department of Corrections⁵. Costs for the prison system include substantial amounts for new construction to keep up with the growth in prison populations. In addition, significant resources are required to serve the current population of inmates, parolees and individuals recently released from incarceration.⁶
- The average budgeted cost per inmate is \$52.92 per day (2006). The cost to house those inmates is just over \$675,788 per day (\$246,662,620 per year). In Washoe and Clark County alone, there are more than 2,555 people on parole. The state budget for the parole and probation department is over 45 million dollars.

¹ <http://www.doc.nv.gov/gsc/docs/Report%20to%20Governor.pdf>

² <http://www.adp.cahwnet.gov/pdf/caldata.pdf>

³ <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/media/Prevline/pdfs/bkd526.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.doc.nv.gov/programs/re-entry.php>

⁵ http://www.doc.nv.gov/stats/2006/07/2006-07_MONTHLY_SUMMARY.pdf

⁶ <http://www.doc.nv.gov/gsc/docs/Report%20to%20Governor.pdf>

Proposal:

- Forty beds for residential service will be provided. Services include 90 days of housing (including meals), substance abuse treatment, individual and group counseling, life skills training, and job placement. Ridge House services are holistic and emphasize a continuum of care that is individualized.
- It is anticipated that 250 clients will benefit from outpatient services each year. Aftercare services would be offered after the initial 90 day treatment period for each client. Each client will participate in weekly counseling for the remaining 9 months following release from incarceration. In addition, approximately 75 clients will participate in monthly individual sessions, family and ongoing outpatient mental health treatment. There will also be a group of individuals that will reside at halfway houses or private homes in the community and participate in intensive outpatient or outpatient services without The Ridge House residential services.
- The cost of the residential program is projected to be \$50 per day per client. The cost of each ancillary service is also projected to be \$50 per unit of service delivered. This compares to the current cost in the prison system of \$52.92 per day, which covers only physical maintenance of the client and does not contribute to their recovery and reintegration. These costs also do not consider the reduced expense of clients who do not recidivate.
- The Ridge House currently receives income/grants from the following sources:
 - State of Nevada Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse \$428,225
 - Bureau of Justice Assistance \$ 57,462
 - Revenue from client co-pays \$150,000
 - Private Foundations and Grants (restricted use) \$183,450
 - Total Current Revenue \$829,137

Cost Savings to Nevada

- In a report generated by the Urban Institute, the Illinois Returning Home program findings show that one-fifth (22 percent) of released prisoners were reconvicted for a new crime within 11 months of release, and nearly one-third (31 percent) were returned to prison on a new sentence or parole revocation within 13 months of release⁷.
- It can be deduced, then, that if the 4,709 people released in 2004 had access to a program such as the Ridge House, only 423 (9% recidivism) would have returned to prison, rather than 1,459 (31% recidivism). The cost to incarcerate the 1,036 people who could have succeeded is as follows: 1,036 people at a daily cost of \$52.92 computes at \$54,825.12 daily, or \$20,011,168.80 per year. The average length of stay in prison is 3.3 years; therefore, the cost to incarcerate the difference in recidivism rates is \$66,036,857.
- According to the CALDATA study showing that every dollar spent on substance abuse treatment would save \$7 in future costs, this project could potentially save

⁷ http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411289_reentry_portfolio.pdf

the State of Nevada \$4,996,250 by reducing the rates of recidivism, post-release supervision and reductions in future criminal activity.

Summary:

The Ridge House Inc. has a history of documented success in treating the recently released offender and assisting them in establishing appropriate spiritual, recovery, educational/occupational, family and social connections that will reduce their chances of going back to prison. This program will not only reduce the economic impact of parole supervisees on the criminal justice system, but also on society as a whole.

This Proposal is for \$581,512 from the Nevada Interim Finance Committee. The Ridge House Inc. is requesting this money in order to assist these offenders in developing a healthy, productive lifestyle so that they may contribute to our economy, rather than tax it.