

Turnabout, Inc.

An overview of services for former offenders



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Brief Overview

▶ Purpose

- Reduce the number of people returning to prison by increasing career and educational opportunities that promote self-sufficiency, and end the cycle of poverty and crime in our Denver communities.

▶ Services

- Mentoring, case management, employment search, life skills and marketable work skills training, and support for transportation to job sites and training, work boots, tools, clothing, etc.

▶ Successes in 2010

- Life skills, Intro to Construction training and worship for 798 inmates at County Jail,
- Intensive 3-day 14-hour employment skills training for 313 recently released former offenders,
- Access to vocational training, transportation, work boots, tools, etc.
- 9753 drop-in client traffic
- Achieved over 90% successful employment rate with the Denver Metro Prisoner Re-entry Initiative, Stop The Revolving Door, and the Motherhood Program – reconnecting offenders with work and family.
- Average recidivism rate of 10%, compared to up to 40+% nationally



Current Workforce Programs / Partnerships

In 2010, Turnabout served 5327 individuals.
This year, we expect to serve over 6000 individuals.

Programs include:

- ▶ “Walk-in” client services (9753 traffic in 2010)
 - Twice weekly orientation: assessment for services, job search, school and housing information; limited bicycles and bus tokens, support, and answers to jobseeker questions
 - Computer lab and updated daily job leads
- ▶ Monthly intensive Employment Search Program (ESP) (313 ex-offenders in 2010) enrolled in various federal, state, city grants
 - Stop the Revolving Door, Community Corrections, Veterans Services for 4th Quarter Partners; Denver Dept. of Human Services Homeless Housing
 - Those who complete can access hard skills training, transportation, work boots, tools, long term case management, job matching/retention services and mentoring/support groups



Current Workforce Programs / Partnerships

- ▶ [Hard skills training](#) including Forklift, OSHA, Lead Paint and Highway Flagging (600 in total in 2010);
- ▶ [Weekly “Introduction to Construction” classes](#) for misdemeanor offenders at the Denver County Jail (558 inmates in 2010);
- ▶ [Provide homeless housing assistance](#) including assistance for 20 parolees with deposit and first month’s rent and provide 60 dual diagnosed high-risk parolees and 28 homeless veterans with intensive support services;
- ▶ [Outreach with major events](#) into the community including participation in Project Homeless Connect, the Freedom Conference, correctional facilities and jails, and Community Corrections;



Trends in Clients We Serve

Since onset of the economic downturn:

- ▶ More disadvantaged people seeking services
- ▶ Decreases in public/private funding result in greater difficulty getting ex-offenders connected to services
- ▶ Fewer jobs, Lower pay, Cut hours
- ▶ Temporary agencies no longer a significant resource
- ▶ *Unexpected positive:* enrollment in schools/training to achieve certifications and degrees is up

Our client outcomes:

- ▶ Recidivism rate has not gone up in spite of tough times
- ▶ Placement and retention rates have also remained at high levels thanks to strong community ties and relationships with those we serve



Lessons Learned: Barriers

▶ Legal Action Center Ranks Colorado 41st in Nation for Barriers to Re-entry

- Housing, benefits, voting, access to criminal records, parenting, driver's licenses
- Employment: discrimination incl. arrests that never led to conviction, occupational licenses: (moral character)

▶ Addressing Internal Barriers

- Anti-social attitudes, values, and beliefs
- Pro-criminal associations and isolation
- Weak problem-solving and social skills
- Low levels of vocational and educational skills
- Substance use, low self-esteem
- Negative family factors



Lessons Learned: Opportunities

Client Assets:

- ▶ Uncanny resilience of character
- ▶ Appreciative, willingness to give back
- ▶ Those most challenged often are the most successful
- ▶ The more in-house services you can provide, the better relationships, and better outcomes you build

Resources:

- ▶ **Guide to Getting On and Getting Out**
- ▶ Turnabout, Inc.
- ▶ DenverWorks!
- ▶ Empowerment Program
- ▶ Community Reentry Project (Misdemeanants)
- ▶ Community Reentry (CDOC Parolees)
- ▶ This list is incomplete – refer to Go Guide!



Housing Assistance

- ▶ Provide access to employment services for 60 dual diagnosed subsidy recipients
 - Selected by Colorado Dept. of Corrections (CDOC)
- ▶ Provide first month's rent and deposit assistance for 20 additional former offenders
 - Must be CDOC or Community Corrections
- ▶ Veteran's housing supportive services (4th Quarter)
- ▶ Provide DOC-approved transitional, weekly housing referrals

Resources and Tips

We developed over 50 landlords using this method.

- ▶ Develop direct housing connections, including transitional housing
 - Drive around and identify “for rent” signs
 - Consider access to transportation lines
 - Find a manager
 - ✓ Introduce self as advocate for ex-offenders, etc.
 - ✓ Address landlord restrictions head on
 - ✓ Ask for basic lease information (rent/deposits/length of lease)
 - ✓ Visit apartment – chat!
 - ✓ Ask quality of life questions; get them to impress
 - ✓ Get a YES! to future contact, add to referral list
 - ✓ Build goodwill – Send only prescreened program clients



Additional Tips

- ▶ Create a housing database
- ▶ Listen to your clients for more leads
- ▶ Get housing leads from outreach events
- ▶ Don't distribute your resource list
- ▶ Use an Employment Program
- ▶ Forge direct relationships with Workforce Centers
- ▶ Employ strengths-based approach to assessment and services

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