Promoting Reentry Success through Continuity of Educational Opportunities

Pre-Application Webinar
December 10, 2012

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Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE)

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Agenda

- Overview of the grant opportunity
  John Linton, OVAE
- Grant application essentials
  Zina Watkins, OVAE
- Overview of the reentry education model
  Michelle Tolbert, MPR
- Frequently asked questions
  John Linton and Zina Watkins, OVAE

Reentry—Current Priority…



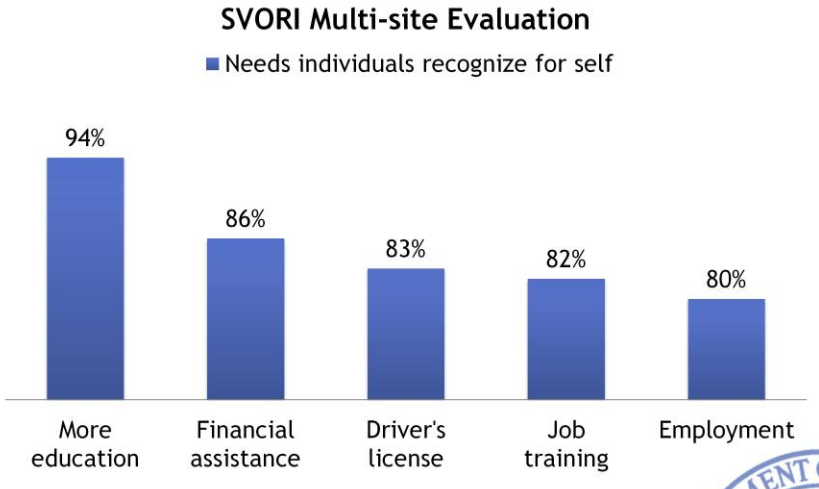
"Reentry presents a major opportunity to improve public safety, public health, workforce, education, family, and community outcomes."

A.G. Holder in a letter to Secretary Duncan inviting his participation in the federal reentry council.



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Prisoners Recognize Their Educational Needs



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Education Behind Bars or Post Release

- OVAE supports education in facilities and post release
- OVAE sees diminished opportunities in facilities
- Post-release employment statistics demonstrate that reentering citizens are not moving directly to employment
- School inside to school outside—a transition that rarely occurs

A Department of Education Investment

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds supported the development of a reentry education model that

- Addresses the chronic issue of underemployment for ex-offenders
- Provides a more constructive use of time for those under community supervision

A Department of Justice Investment

Second Chance Act funds are supporting a demonstration of the model

- Transferred funds to ED for this grant program
- Will be combined with AEFLA funds to provide technical assistance (TA) and fund a national evaluation
- Programs will receive TA from MPR, who developed model, and will be evaluated by Strix Research

Our Intent

- Support implementation of a specific model
- Establish the utility of that model
- Support work to connect education "behind the walls" with post-release education
- Support work to provide high-quality education in both settings
- Support work that leads to the achievement of educational goals and life success for reentrants

Still Interested?

- Then let's talk about what you need to do to work with us…

Overview of Application

Application narrative:

- The “heart” of the application
- Maximum score is 90 points
- Consider including the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) statement here

Two Absolute Priorities

1. Must be based on the reentry education model
   - Propose a project plan that implements the model and serves individuals in prison and under community supervision
   - Implement a project plan that identifies partners, describes individual education plan process, and identifies transition tools
2. Must use AEFLA-funded programs
   - Applicant must either be an AEFLA-funded eligible agency, an AEFLA-funded eligible provider, or a provider of adult education and literacy services with funds provided by an AEFLA-funded eligible agency or provider



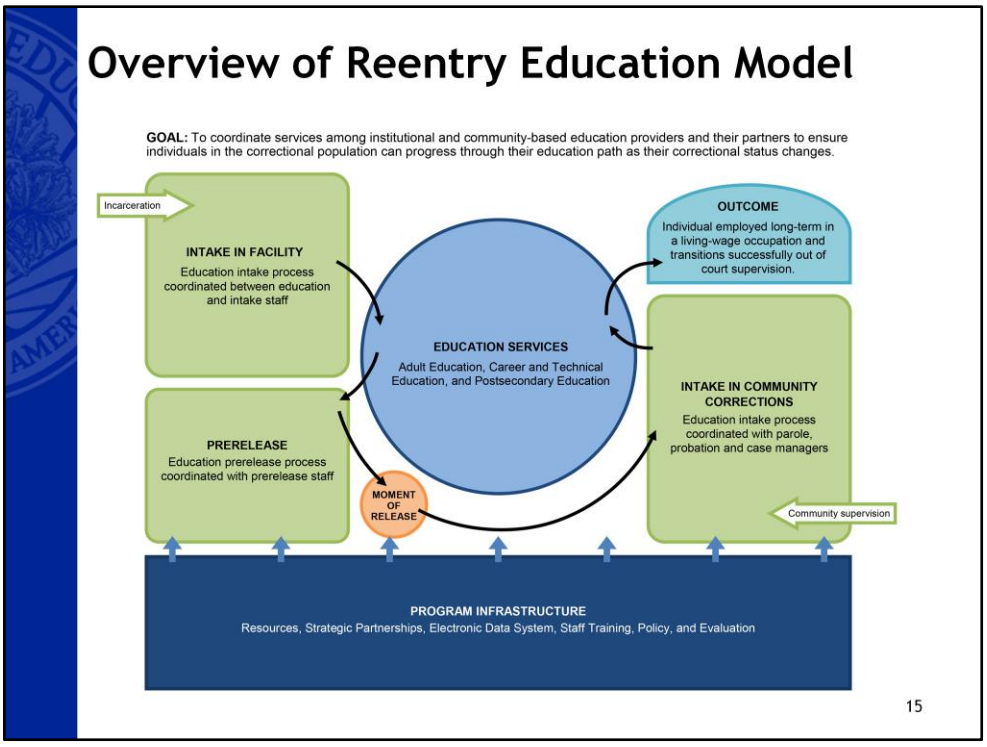
Two Competitive Preference Priorities

Demonstrated existence of the following program infrastructure elements contained in the model:

1. Strategic partnerships (max. of 5 pts.)
2. Electronic data systems (max. of 5 pts.)

Application Final Steps

- The checklist
  - Budget narrative
  - Forms with original signatures
- Application submission
  - Grants.gov



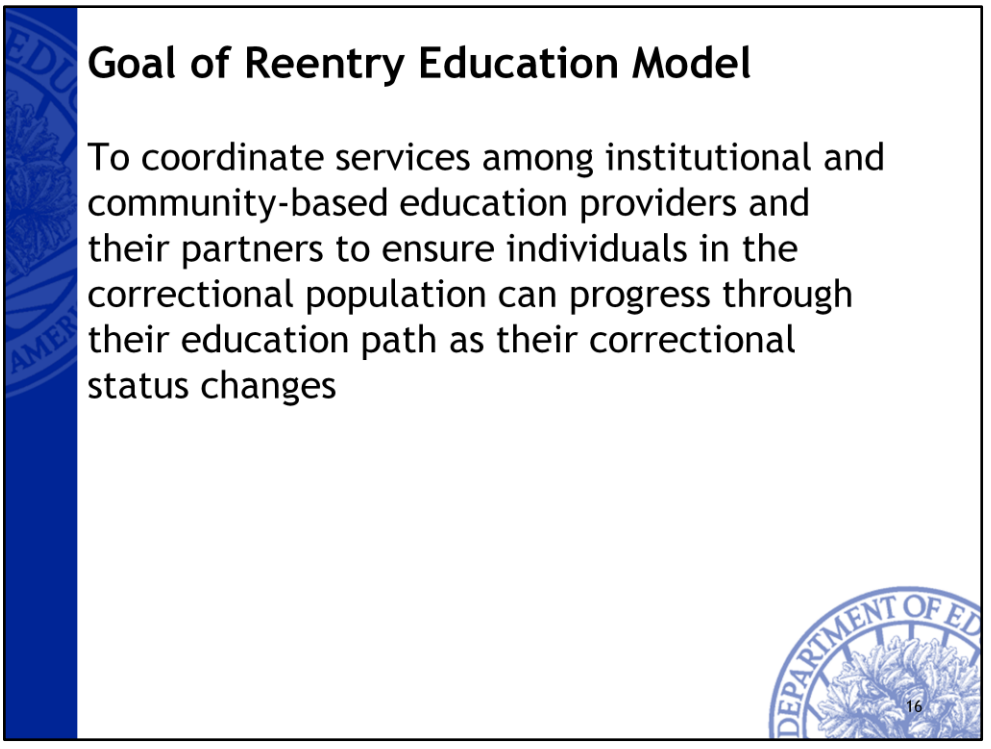
Thanks, Zina and John.

I'm now going to spend a bit of time walking you all through the reentry education model.

The model is described in more detail in the report *A Reentry Education Model: Supporting Education and Career Advancement for Low-Skill Individuals in Corrections.*

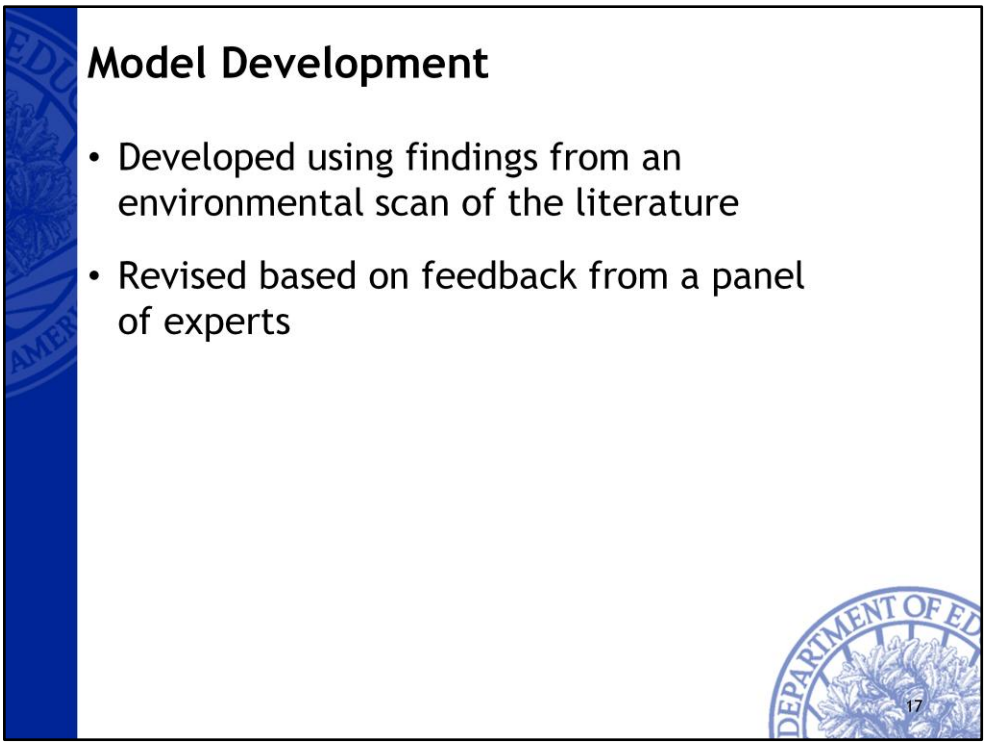
You should have received a link to the report with the webinar instructions. A link to the report and some descriptive information about the model also was included in the application packet.

In case you haven't seen the report, though, I have included the URL at the end of my presentation.



The goal of the reentry education model is to coordinate services among institutional and community-based education providers and their partners to ensure individuals in the correctional population can progress through their education path as their correctional status changes.

As we all know, individuals in the correctional population move around a lot. If incarcerated, they can be transferred from one facility to another than released and then sent back to prison for a parole violation or for committing a new crime. Therefore, we wanted to develop a model that recognized these challenges and created a system that would allow them to pick up their education path wherever they left off.



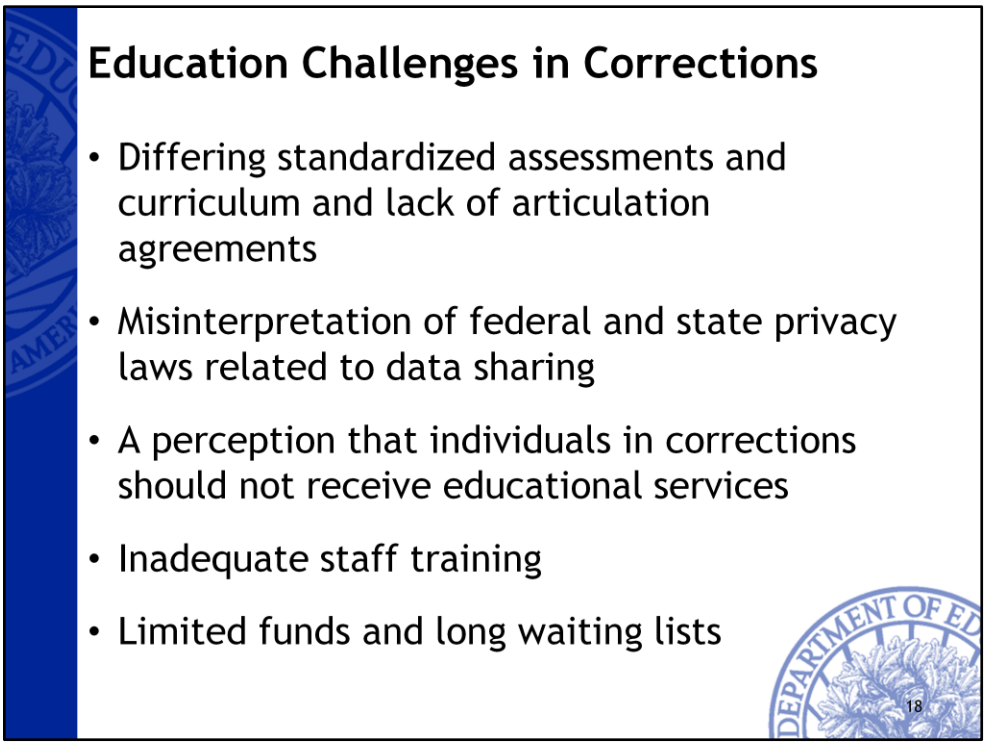
We developed an initial draft of the model based on findings from an environmental scan of the literature.

The scan included research on:

- Correctional education interventions, including adult education and postsecondary education
- Employment reentry programs
- Other reentry interventions, and
- Adult learning theory

We then shared the draft model with a panel of experts who provided feedback.

The panel of experts included practitioners, administrators, and researchers in the fields of corrections and correctional education.



A number of education challenges in corrections have been documented by the research and were noted by panel of experts. These include:

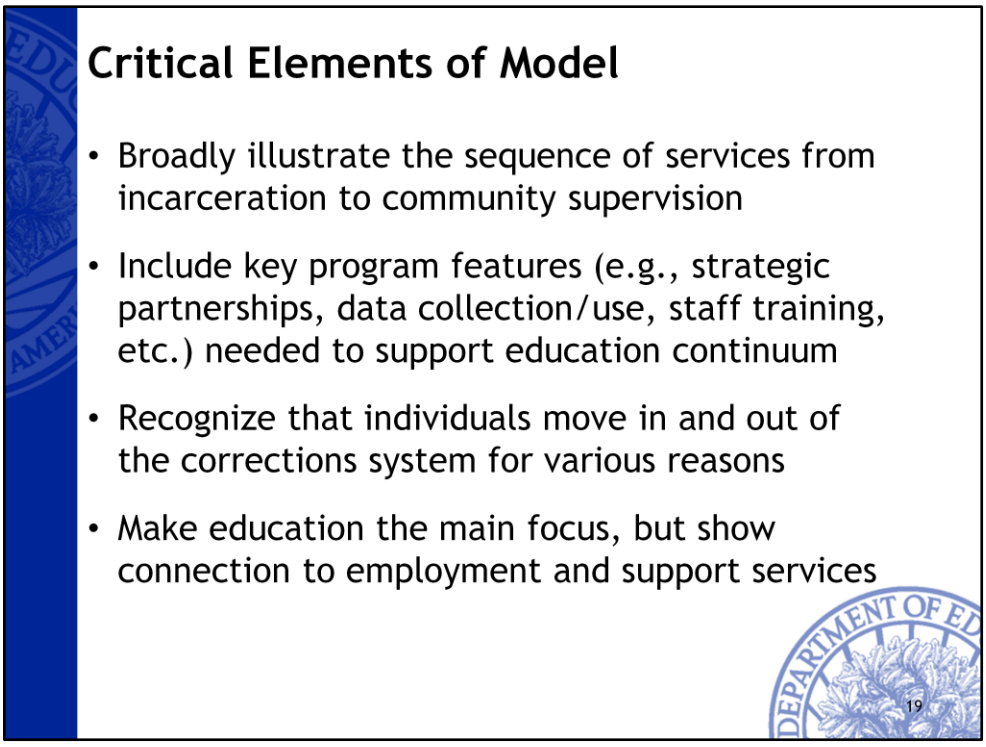
Differing standardized assessments and curriculum and lack of articulation agreements. So, for example, a prison-based program may use one type of standardized assessment while the program in the community may use another, which can make it difficult for a student transferring from one program to another.

Another challenge - Misinterpretation of federal and state privacy laws making it difficult for agencies to share data and have data follow the students as the move from one program to another.

The research and panel of experts also noted that there is a perception that individuals in corrections should not receive educational services, which can make it difficult to implement supportive reentry policies and administrative practices.

Another education challenge in corrections is inadequate staff training to prepare instructors for working with students in corrections.

Finally, as you probably all know, there is limited funds for correctional education, which means there's often long waiting lists for services.



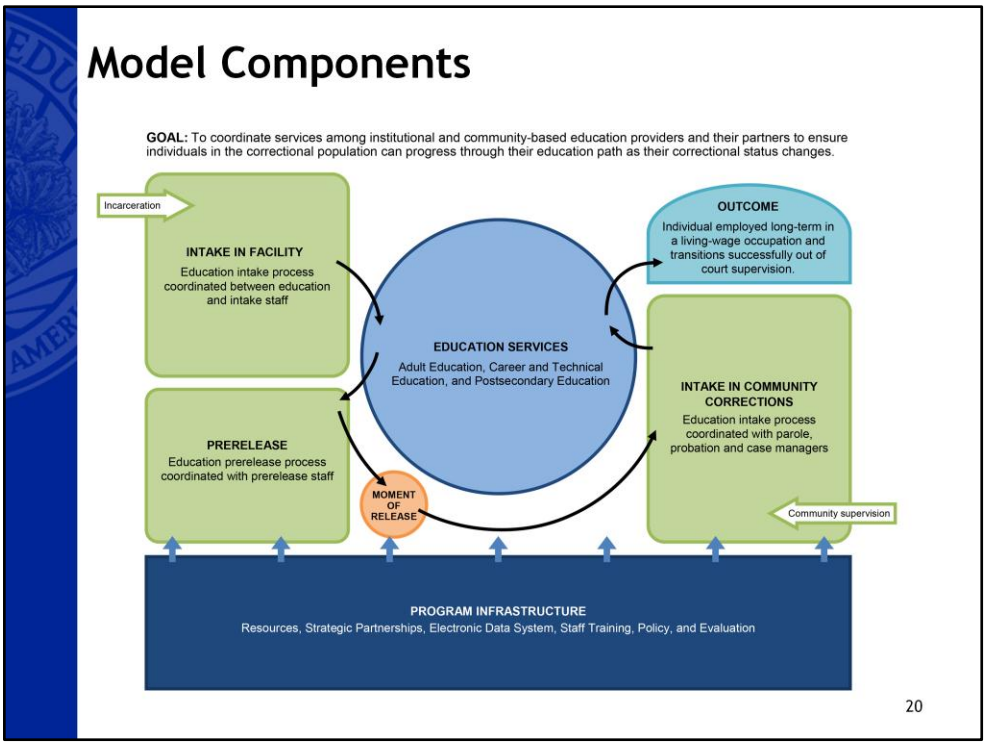
Recognizing these challenges, the panel of experts, in particular, thought it was important that we develop a reentry education model that:

Broadly illustrates the sequence of services from incarceration to community supervision

Includes key program features needed to support an education continuum – these include strategic partnerships, data collection and use, and staff training

The model also should recognize that individuals move in and out of the correction system for various reasons

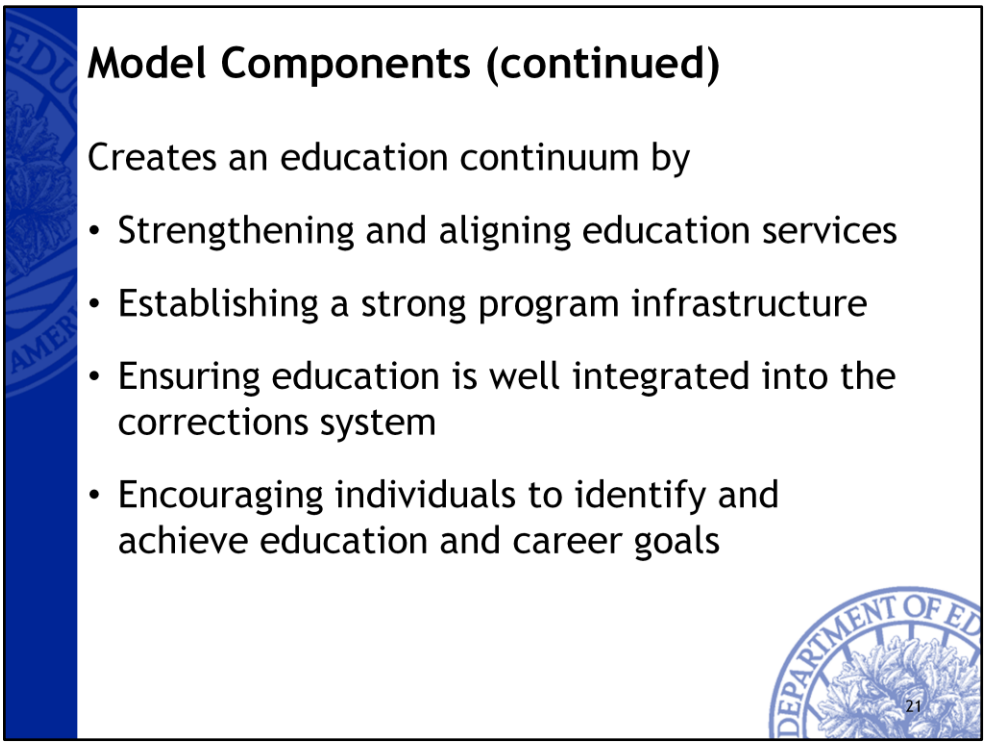
And finally, they thought that while education should be the main focus of the model, we needed to show how education connects to employment and other support services



So, that's what we did. We tried to create a model that recognizes the education challenges in corrections and that includes the critical elements raised by the panel of experts and the research.

•I'm now going to walk you through the different components of the model. But, in general, the model:

- •Illustrates program activities that occur at each step of the education continuum
- •Describes critical program features needed to support the education continuum
- •Shows different entry points for individuals
- •Highlights the model outcome, which is to get these individuals into long-term, living wage occupations and transition successfully out of court supervision.



The model is designed to create an education continuum by doing the following things:

•Strengthening and aligning education services

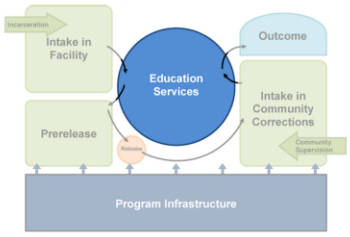
•Establishing a strong program infrastructure

•Ensuring education is well integrated into the corrections system, including intake and prerelease

•Encouraging individuals to identify and achieve education and career goals

Education Services

- Align programs with those in the community or institution—establish articulation agreements
- Align programs with labor market and jobs without criminal history restrictions
- Offer cognitive-based skills instruction



- Use technology to enhance and increase program access
- Provide flexibility in program schedules to accommodate jobs, apprenticeships, or other work opportunities
- Ensure needed support and employment services are provided through the program or strategic partnerships
- Develop a student recruitment and retention strategy

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So, now let's look at the different components of the model.

The heart of the model are the education services offered to individuals while they are incarcerated and under community supervision. These services can include adult education, career and technical education, and postsecondary education.

I'm not going to talk about each of these in detail, since the report provides that type of information.

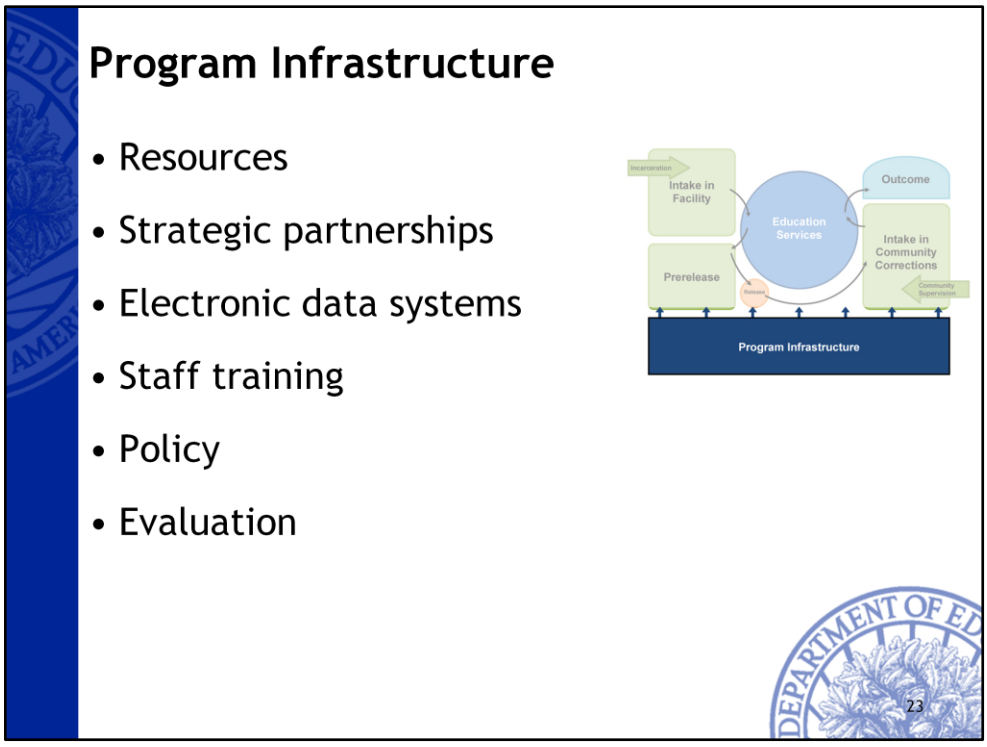
But, in general, we think it is important to make sure the education programs offered in the institution and in the community are aligned with each other and prepare students for jobs that area available in the labor market and don't have criminal history restrictions.

The research also shows that cognitive-based skills instruction is important.

An increasing number of programs in the corrections system are also considering way to incorporate technology, and the Department of Education wants to encourage more of that.

And, we think it's important for programs to provide flexible scheduling, support and employment services, and to develop a student recruitment and retention plan. The student recruitment and retention plan is particularly important for programs in the community where persistence is a big issue, and, as you all know, institutional programs typically have a captive

audience, so recruitment and retention isn't as big of an issue for them.



The foundation of the education program is its program infrastructure. This includes:

- **A diverse funding base**, which can include federal and state funds, student tuition and fees, and private or other innovative funding source. Also, community support is considered a resource and this can include peers and alumni, families, volunteers, and community organizations. Another resource is program capacity, such as a program's reputation and staff expertise.

-**Strategic partnerships**. These partnerships can include MOU and other types of formal or informal agreements with departments of Corrections, Community Corrections, Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services;

Partnerships also can be established with postsecondary institutions; community and faith-based organizations; and employers and industry associations. Please note that you can receive up to 5 extra points in your application if you can document that you already have strategic partnerships in place.

-**A strong and centralized electronic data system**. Having such a data system allows you to keep accurate, complete, and timely data on program participation and short-and long-term outcomes. Also, typically your own data system does not have all the data you need to understand the history of your students and their outcomes. So, it's also important to establish data-sharing agreements with partners. As Zina noted earlier, if you are able to document that you have a strong, centralized electronic data system, you can earn up to 5 extra points on your application.

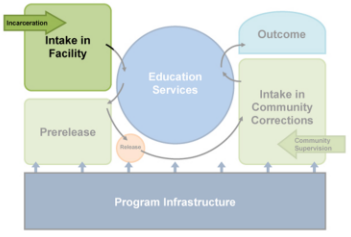
Other important features of a program infrastructure include:

- **Training all staff** using approaches such as motivational interviewing, risk-needs responsivity, and cross-training. And also periodically evaluating staff performance.

- **Strong correctional education and reentry policies** are also important as is **regularly evaluating the performance of your program.** Too often programs collect data for their reporting requirements, but don't use their data to understand what's working well and what needs to be improved.

Intake in Facility

- Assess knowledge, skills, and occupational interests
- Engage individual in creating an education and career plan
- Use information to determine eligibility and timing for education services
- Record information in a centralized electronic data system



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So, now we're going to look at the components of the model that show how individuals move throughout the corrections system.

When a person is sentenced to incarceration, they go through some sort of formal intake process generally at the facility. It's important to make sure that education is a part of this process. This can be done by:

-Assessing the knowledge, skills, and occupational interests of students. It's been noted, though, that this may not always be the best time to assess an individual since they've just been incarcerated. But, at some point soon after their incarceration, they should be assessed so you know who can benefit from correctional education.

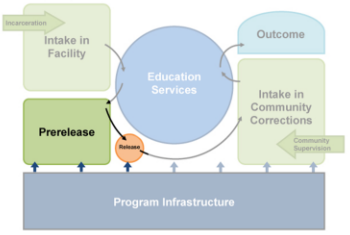
-It's also important to begin engaging an individual in creating their education and career plan, which should be revisited and updated throughout their incarceration and time under court supervision.

-This plan along with the assessment scores can help you determine who is eligible for services.

-It's also really important to record all this information in your electronic data system.

Prerelease

- Provide transcripts and test scores
- Ensure timely transfer of data to community supervision and new provider
- Assist individual with revising education and career plan and applying for financial aid, if applicable
- Connect students to community-based education programs through in-reach services and program referrals



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After intake, an individual with education needs or ambitions hopefully will be assigned to a correctional education program. Then, near the end of their sentence, they begin to prepare for release. We have found that it is very important to make sure education is also part of the prerelease process.

You should be providing your students with transcripts and test scores.

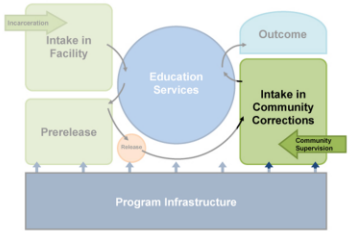
Making sure their data follows them to the community.

You also should help your students revise their education and career plan, and, if they are ready for college, help them apply for financial aid.

Finally, its really important to help connect students to education programs in the community. This can be done through in-reach services and program referrals. As we all know, these individuals are going to be facing a lot of other responsibilities when they are released, so you want to make it as easy for them as possible to get back into an education program.

Intake in Community

For individuals transitioning from incarceration:



- Connect with individual via in-reach services
- Ensure timely data transfer and update data via valid and aligned standardized tests
- Help with revisions of the education and career plan and applications for financial aid, if applicable
- Use assessment data and education plan to determine most effective use of individual's time under community supervision
- Communicate regularly with all partners working with individual; establish point person for tracking individual's progress

For individuals moving directly into community supervision, follow steps outlined under "Intake in Facility"

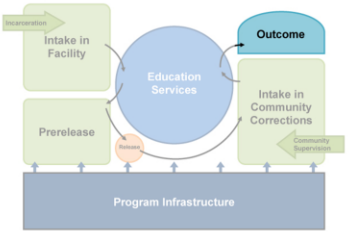
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The next component of the model is intake in the community. This isn't always as formal and structured of a process as intake into a facility. But, we think there are number of activities that should occur to either help those transitioning from incarceration or to help those who have been sentenced to probation and weren't incarcerated.

For individuals transitioning from incarceration, it's important to pick up where the institution left off. And, for those coming into the system for the first time, its important to assess their knowledge and skills and help them develop and implement an education and career plan.

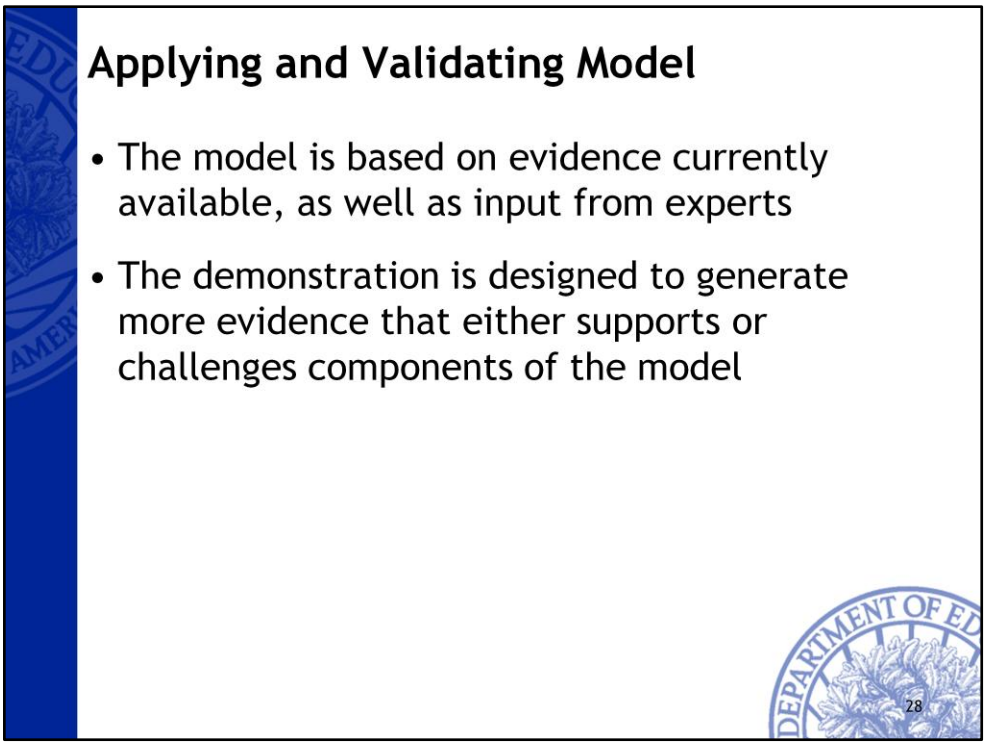
Model Outcome

Individual employed long-term in a living-wage occupation and transitions successfully out of court supervision

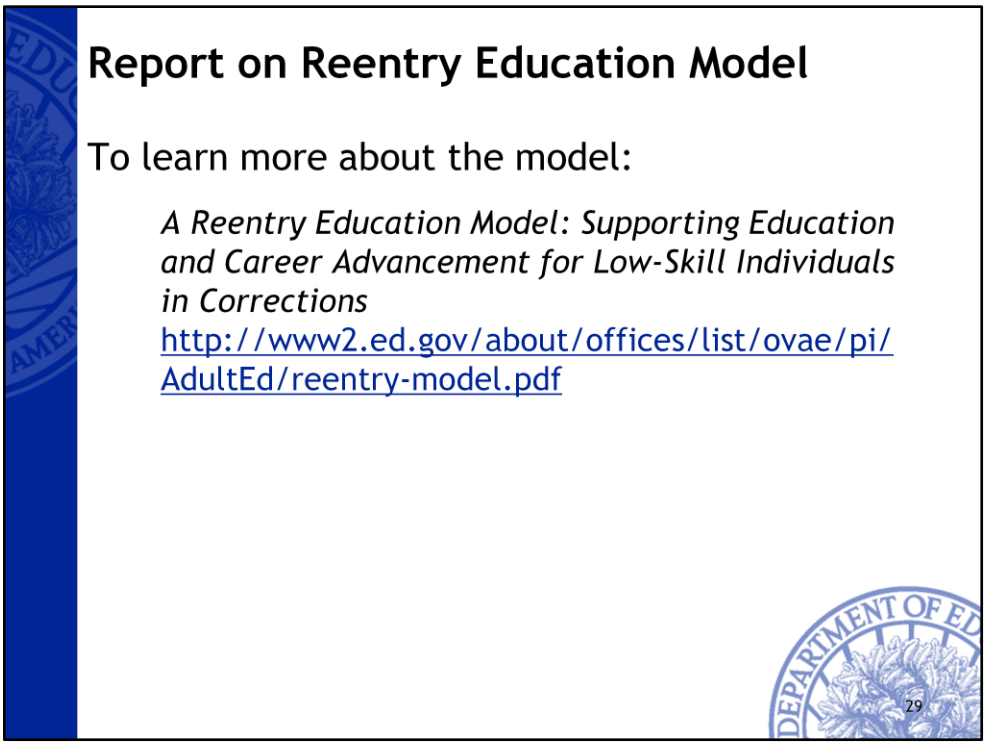


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The hope is that if all these different model components are in place, more individuals will be able to find long-term, living wage employment and transition successfully out of court supervision.



The fact is, though, that this model is based on evidence currently available. More research is definitely needed. So, it is our hope that this demonstration will generate more evidence that either supports or challenges the various components of the model.

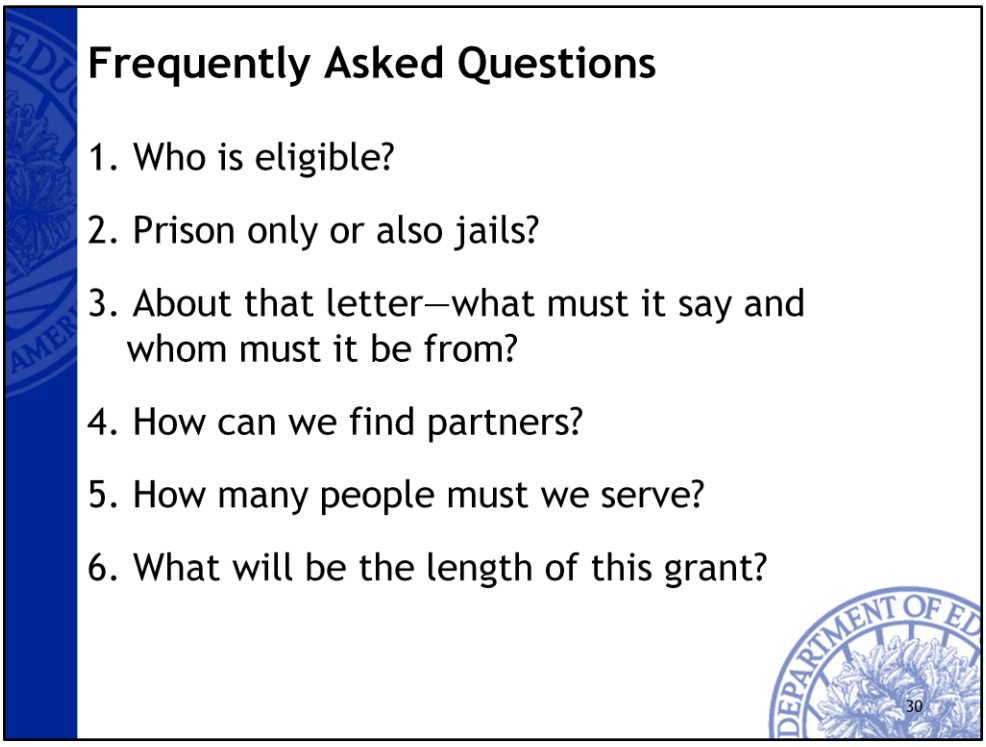


I hope I have provided you a good overview of the model.

To learn more about the model, please review the Reentry Education Model report. You can download it by using this URL.

I'm now going to turn it over to John and Zina to address your questions. If you have any questions about the model, please post them in the chat room.

Thanks.



Who is eligible?

By far most common question.

Two sections pertain to this – under the heading "III. Eligibility Information" and under the absolut priority #2

"AEFLA funded eligible agencies" (the State administering agencies)

"providers" -- AEFLA funded (entities providing direct services with AEFLA funds)

So who is AEFLA eligible? That is a moot question. We are only considering AEFLA funded providers. If AEFLA funded then AEFLA eligible. If not now AEFLA funded -- it doesn't matter if eligible for AEFLA funding because current AEFLA funding is required. So we are not addressing questions of AEFLA eligibility criteria.

The other section where this pertains -- Absolute priority number 2. This is a requirement to submit proof related to the eligibility.

[Note question three on the slide – concerning the letter required. This letter is to verify your status with AELFA. The letter is from the State agency administering AEFLA -- in other words -- from the agency that gives you your AEFLA funds.

We've had questions -- how do we find out who or what this agency is or how do we contact it? If you are asking this question – not a current AEFLA provider. If you are an AEFLA funded provider, this is the agency that gives you money, that you submit reports

to, and that monitors your AEFLA activities. If you are not AEFLA funded – then they will not be able to give you this letter and it doesn't matter -- so we will not spend time on this question.

With reference to what the letter must say, please reference the specific ific language in the Announcement of this grant opportunity. Please be guided by that.

A related word of caution -- given the grant application deadline – you may wish to ask for the letter now, as the deadline will fall on a date when many people are on holiday. You need to obtain this letter and submit it with your application materials.

Also please note -- not all partners in a project need to be AEFLA providers. But -- the applicant entity, the entity responsible for implementing the grant must be an AEFLA entity. If it is a consortium, all members must be AEFLA agencies or AEFLA providers. A consortium has a technical meaning and some special requirements apply. The citation for information about consortia in including in the grant notice, Please reference that resource and then let us know if you still have questions.

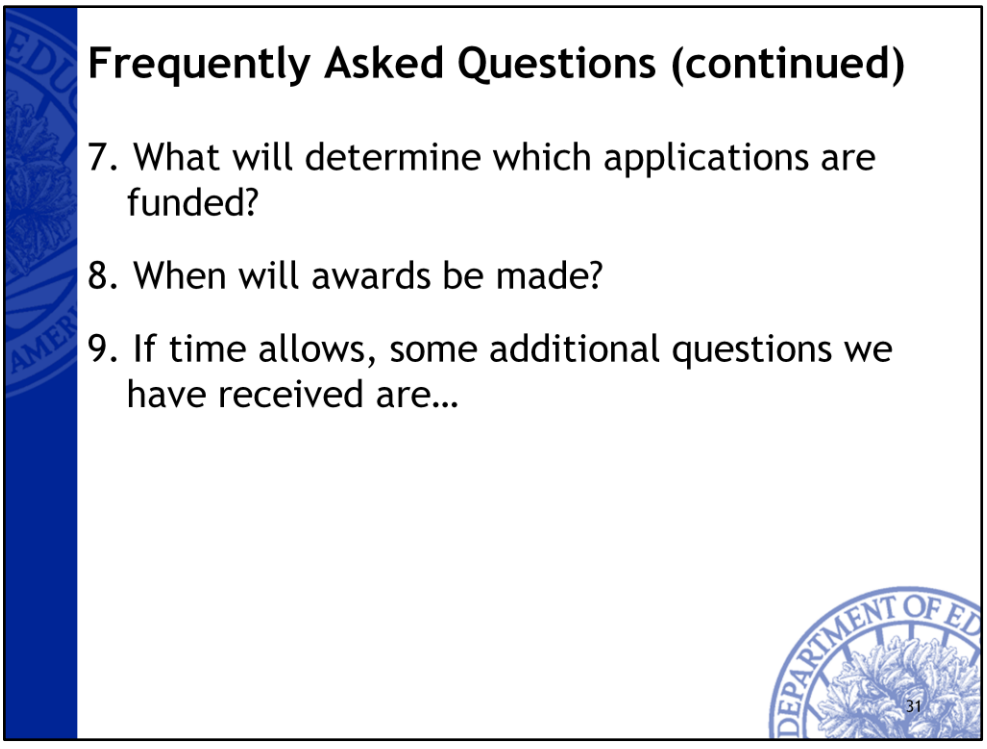
So we have covered question 1 and 3 on this list.

Question 2 -- Prison only or also jails? This project is inclusive of "correctional institutions" -- so yes, jails and detention centers are certainly appropriate settings. There is no requirement that there be a prison site.

Question 4. "How can we find partners?" This is an important question and I'm not sure we can give you a lot of help with it. These are entities in your State or community. If you are looking for AEFLA funded providers, you might want to go to the State AEFLA administering agency and see if they have a list. You can find the State adult education director and office at the ED web site -- search State contacts. Go to your state and you'll see the heading for adult education. As you know from our publication, we think these partnership relationships are important and want to encourage their development.

"How many people must we serve?" No minimum number is specified. It is challenging to serve persons in the community after they leave prison -- and numbers should be realistic. Numbers to be served should be proportional to the size of the project including especially the budget. Numbers anticipated may be considered by readers, but scorers may also see high numerical targets as unrealistic and score accordingly.

Length of the grant. Please be clear that this is only expected to be a one time award. The performance period may not exceed 30 months from the date of the award. We cannot say exactly when awards will be made -- but we suggest you work from a March 1, 2013 award date. Most likely, it will be sometime between February first and March 1st. The award period could include a planning and development phase, a service phase, and a follow up and evaluation support phase. Applicants could, for example, plan to initiate services on September first, provide them through one academic year or one calendar year, and then budget for a follow up period lasting as long as twelve additional months for data collection and evaluation. 6 mos of program planning, 12 months of program services and 12 months of data collection would constitute a 30 month project performance period.



Choosing applications for funding. Only complete applications submitted on time from eligible applicants and meeting the absolute priorities will be scored. Those applications scored will be given points by readers and chosen based on their scores. The scoring criteria are stated specifically in the Notice inviting applications. In addition to the points awarded based on those criteria, up to an additional 10 points can be awarded based on the competitive preference priorities. These extra points are intended to reward entities that have a head start on implementing the infrastructure elements in the model. The readers scoring the applications will also determine how many, if any, of the possible ten points to award for this.

When will awards be made? ASAP. We do not have an exact date. Based on our projections, sometime during February.

Additional Questions

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