

**Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)  
FY 2011 Second Chance Act Adult Mentoring Grants  
to Nonprofit Organizations  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**General**

**1. What is the goal and objectives for this program?**

The goal of this program is to promote more effective and successful reentry for offenders through the establishment and maintenance of pre- and post-release mentoring relationships. The objectives of this program are to establish or improve the administration of mentoring programs, including the expansion of mentoring strategies and program design; enhance and improve the organizational capacity, system efficiency, and cost effectiveness of mentoring programs through training and technical assistance and other strategies, and; improve outcomes for offenders in mentoring programs by establishing and strengthening collaborative community approaches.

**2. What is the definition of “Mentoring” under this program?**

Under this program “Mentoring” refers to a developmental relationship in which a more experienced person helps a less experienced person develop an enhanced sense of self-worth and specific knowledge and skills to increase the chance of successful reentry. Mentoring is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional and personal development with the primary goal of preparing an offender (pre-release) for reentry and supporting him/her during the reentry process to enhance success. Mentoring involves communication and is relationship-based. Mentoring can take many forms and may consist of a one-to-one relationship, or can sometimes occur in a smaller group setting. Under this solicitation mentoring must be delivered/provided in both a pre-release and post-release environment for all participants.

**3. What are the eligibility requirements under this program?**

Applicants are limited to nonprofit organizations and federally recognized Indian tribes (as determined by the Secretary of the Interior). Applicants must adhere to all of the eligibility and funding requirements of the Second Chance Act and any additional requirements that may be established through appropriations measures.

**4. Are there specific requirements that must be adhered to for the program?**

Under this solicitation there are two categories that applications may be submitted - Category 1: Adult Offender Mentoring and Category 2: Mentoring of Adult Offenders: Promoting Successful Reentry Through Responsible Fatherhood/Motherhood. Under both categories applications must meet the requirements of the Second Chance Act and provide the following program components: include both pre- and post-release services; transitional services to assist in the reintegration of offenders into the community, and; training for mentors. However, Category 2 requires the applicant to focus on a “special emphasis” in terms of target population. This includes a specific subset of the population of individuals aged 18 and older convicted as an adult and imprisoned in a state, local, or tribal prison or jail and who are also parents of minor children. Applicants are encouraged to examine the solicitation for specific details on the program requirements, target populations, mentor type, and other information pertinent for submissions under Categories 1 or 2.

**5. Are there any Priority Considerations given for applications submitted under this solicitation?**

Priority considerations under both categories will be given to applications that include the following:

- A plan to implement activities that have been demonstrated effective in facilitating the successful reentry of offenders.
- A plan/strategy for recruiting, training, and supervising/monitoring volunteer mentors.

- Discuss the role of local governmental agencies, other nonprofit organizations, and community stakeholders that will collaborate on project implementation.
  - Provide a description of the research- or evidence-based methodology to be utilized in the delivery of mentoring and other proposed transitional services.
  - Provide a description of how the project could be broadly replicated if demonstrated to be effective.
  - Include a discussion of the role of state or local corrections departments, community corrections agencies, and/or local jail systems in ensuring successful reentry of offenders into their communities and how mentoring/transitional/training services provided under this project will be integrated into the overall reentry strategy of the state, local, or tribal prison or jail housing the target population.
  - Include a plan to promote the sustainability of the project once federal funding ceases.
  - Provides for an independent evaluation of the project that includes, to the maximum extent feasible, random assignment of offenders to program delivery and control groups (as per the Second Chance Act, Section 211).
- 6. Where can applicants find additional information on designing reentry interventions?**  
 "Appendix 1: Resources" contains a list of additional resources that applicants may find helpful in designing specific reentry interventions as part of a comprehensive program proposal.
- 7. Can applicants apply for both Categories 1 and 2, or are they restricted to selecting only one category to apply under?**  
 Under this solicitation applicants must apply in one of two categories, depending upon the scope of their proposed project.
- 8. What is the deadline for submitting an application?**  
 All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on April 21, 2011.
- 9. What is the potential project length for an award?**  
 Awards under this program will be made for a period of 24 months with the possibility of no-cost extensions. Contingent upon the availability of funds and the number of offenders projected to be served, awards of up to \$300,000 will be made.
- 10. May applicants request funds for fewer than 24 months?**  
 Awards will be made for a period of 24 months. However, if a project is requested for less than 24 months the application should provide costs and adequate services in relation to the requested award amount.
- 11. What are the award amounts for projects?**  
 Contingent upon the availability of funds and the number of offenders projected to be served, awards of up to \$300,000 will be made. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.
- 12. Is there a minimum amount that an organization must request?**  
 No. But applicants should provide costs and adequate services in relation to the requested award amount.
- 13. When will applicants be notified if they are successful?**  
 Awards should be announced before the end of the federal fiscal year on September 30, 2011.
- 14. How quickly after receiving notice will a grant recipient be expected to launch their program?**

Actual funding access to award recipients is dependent on final budget clearance and adherence to Special Condition requirements. However, award recipients should anticipate begin providing services no later than 90 days after receiving notice.

**15. Can agencies that received previous awards under the Second Chance Act Section 211, also apply for funding again under the FY 2011 solicitation?**

There is no regulation that prohibits previous award recipients from applying again for funding. However, applicants that received FY 2010 awards may not be able to demonstrate the same degree of need as new unfunded applicants.

**16. Where can I download the solicitation?**

The solicitation is available at the following web site: [www.ojp.gov/BJA/grant/SecondChance.html](http://www.ojp.gov/BJA/grant/SecondChance.html).

**17. Must a nonprofit organization be a registered 501(c)3 organization to be eligible to apply?**

No. Applications will be accepted from nonprofit organizations that are not registered 501(c)3 organizations if they qualify as a nonprofit organization under a state or local statute in their jurisdiction. Applicants that are not registered 501(c)3 organizations should reference the applicable state or local statute in their application.

**18. Who should applicants contact for technical assistance questions?**

For technical assistance with submitting the application, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726 or via e-mail to [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). The [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) Support Hotline hours of operation are 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except federal holidays.

**19. Who should applicants contact for specific solicitation questions?**

For assistance with any other requirement of this solicitation, contact the BJA Justice Information Center at 1-877-927-5657. The BJA Justice Information Center hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. eastern time, and 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday, on the solicitation close date.

**Mentors**

**20. Must mentors be volunteers, or can they be paid staff?**

Mentors may be paid staff as long as they undergo a training process that meets the requirements outlined in the solicitation.

**21. Are volunteer mentors expected to serve as “formal” case managers (i.e. make referrals, etc.)?**

While a well-trained skilled mentor may be able to make referrals, mentors are not expected to serve as formal case managers.

**22. May formerly incarcerated individuals serve as mentors?**

Yes.

**23. May mentoring be provided in a group environment? If so, is there a recommended ratio of mentors to mentees?**

There is no recommended ratio of mentors to mentees under this solicitation. A single mentor may mentor a group of individuals who have been incarcerated, or a group of mentors may mentor a single individual.

**Mentees/Participants/Target Population**

**24. Will the number of individuals an applicant proposes to serve have any bearing on who will be awarded? For example, can the number of program participants be as little as 25 individuals served?**

Applications will not be automatically disqualified on the basis of the size of their proposed target population. However, while the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) will not prioritize applications on the

basis of the number of participants who will be served, peer reviewers will be examining applications that provide adequate services for the award amount requested, in addition to other application information and solicitation requirements.

**25. May the grant be used to provide services only to individuals who have already been released from a prison or jail?**

No. Under this solicitation the reentry process includes the delivery of a variety of research- and evidence-based program services in both a pre- and post-release settings, designed to ensure that the transition from prison or jail to the community is safe and successful. Applicants are required to provide both pre- and post-release services that include mentoring offenders in a pre-release setting during incarceration, through transition back to the community, and post-release. Applications that do not include both pre- and post-release components (i.e., post-release services only) will not be selected for funding.

**26. May the grant be used to provide services to individuals who are serving a portion of their sentence in a community corrections facility?**

Yes. However, services should include both a pre- and post-release component and begin while participants are imprisoned or incarcerated in a prison or jail, and prior to release to the community corrections facility. Services should not be provided to individuals only during transition back to the community or post-release periods.

**27. May the grant be used to provide services to individuals incarcerated in the federal system?**

Second Chance Act grant funds may not be used to provide services to individuals with federal convictions or federal offenders.

**28. May the grant be used to provide services to individuals convicted of violent offenses or sex offenses?**

Yes. The Second Chance Act does not impose any restrictions on the basis of the criminal histories or offenses of the individuals to be served.

**29. May the grant be used to provide services to individuals incarcerated in a county jail?**

Yes, as long as service recipients have been convicted under state, local, or tribal law.

**30. May the grant be used to serve individuals incarcerated in more than one facility?**

Yes.

**31. Under this solicitation can award funds be used for juvenile related programs, or serve individuals under the age of 18?**

No. Funds from this particular solicitation may not be used to serve individuals under the age of 18, or individuals of any age who were sentenced as juveniles. This solicitation provides funding opportunities for “adult” reentry mentoring programs. If organizations are interested in applying for federally funded “juvenile” programs they should examine reentry opportunities provided by the Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). OJJDP funding opportunities are available at the following website. [www.ojjdp.gov/](http://www.ojjdp.gov/)

**32. Some jurisdictions have non-fraternization policies that prevent mentors from interacting with offenders during both pre- and post-release. Are organizations in these jurisdictions unable to apply for these grants?**

Applicants must demonstrate and document an established collaborative relationship with a correctional agency/facility/institution (a letter of commitment or memorandum of understanding must be included with the application). The strength of this collaboration or relationship, as documented through this letter or MOU among other things, is a key factor in assessing the strength of the application and its potential for success. Nonprofit organizations located in jurisdictions with restrictive policies should work collaboratively with the correctional agency/facility/institution on any policy changes that may be needed for successful program implementation and completion.

**33. Some jurisdictions will not allow individuals with criminal records to visit individuals who are incarcerated. May applicants in these jurisdictions combine pre-release mentoring by a case manager with post-release placement with a peer mentor?**

Yes.

**34. May incentives – such as meal vouchers, books, gifts, etc. – be used or given to mentees to encourage their participation?**

Yes.

**35. May funded programs target specific people who are overrepresented in the criminal justice system?**

As a condition for receiving funding, recipients must comply with applicable federal civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Federal law prohibits a recipient of funding from discriminating in the delivery of services or benefits on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability. While applicants may design their program to maximize participation by any population overrepresented in the criminal justice system, they may not accept or reject otherwise eligible participants on the basis of their race.

### **Transitional Services**

**36. In addition to mentoring, can applicants request funds for other transitional supports for offenders?**

Yes. In addition to mentoring, each applicant should provide at least one type of transitional service for their target population, such as housing, education, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, job training and readiness, services to enhance family reunification, and post-release case management. However, applicants need to ensure these services are provided to eligible program participants as defined in the solicitation.

**37. Will the grant pay for other services (e.g., substance abuse treatment) - even if the process does not include mentoring?**

No. Mentoring is a required component of every initiative that receives funding under this program. Applicants that propose only to provide transitional services will not be eligible for funding under this solicitation.

**38. May the grant be used to provide services to families of individuals who have been incarcerated?**

Yes, if services to families are provided in conjunction with services to the individuals who have been incarcerated.

### **Budget/Allowable Uses**

**39. What is an acceptable cost per inmate ratio for a program qualifying for a grant?**

Since every program will provide different services to a different population, there is no average ratio.

**40. Does the entire award amount need to be used for the period up to 24 months?**

No. No-cost extensions will be available to grantees subject to the approval of BJA.

**41. Is there a match requirement for this program?**

No. This solicitation does not require a match.

**42. If an organization is applying for a 24-month grant, should the budget be representative of two years?**

Awards under this program will be made for a period of 24 months with the possibility of no-cost extensions. The budget submitted should cover the entire period for which funding is requested. For example, if applicants request funding for the entire 24 months, they should provide a budget for 24 months as well.

**43. May recipients use grant funds to subsidize wages for persons reentering the community from incarceration?**

Yes.

**44. Some federal grants require applicants to set aside funds for travel to mandatory grantee meetings. Should mentoring grant applicants budget for any particular training or technical assistance?**

Applicants must budget funding to travel to DOJ-sponsored grant meetings. Applicants should estimate the costs of travel and accommodations for three staff to attend two meetings in Washington, D.C.

**Performance Measurement**

**45. Are applicants required to set aside funds for an outside or independent evaluation?**

There is no mandatory solicitation requirement that applicants provide set-aside funding for an outside or independent evaluation. However, priority consideration will be given to applications that provide for an independent evaluation of the project that includes, to the maximum extent feasible, random assignment of offenders to program delivery and control groups.

**46. Are applicants required to track all of the performance measures on pages 12-15 of the solicitation?**

Yes. Any award recipient under this solicitation will be required, post award, to provide the data requested in the "Data Grantee Provides" column so that OJP can calculate values for the "Performance Measures" column.

**47. How should applicants define and measure recidivism?**

The Second Chance Act requires that recidivism be a measure of success in funded programs. For purposes of this solicitation, recidivism is defined as "a return to prison and/or jail with either a new conviction or as the result of a violation of the terms of supervision within 12 months of initial release."

**48. How long will grantees need to track clients for data listed on pages 12-15 of the solicitation? Beyond the funding period?**

Recipients may be required to track clients beyond the end of the period for which they receive federal funding, but DOJ will provide further guidance and assistance to recipients on data collection activities.

**Collaboration**

**49. How should an applicant demonstrate that it has a relationship with the reentry task force or steering committee operating in its jurisdiction, and the correctional institution(s) in which it intends to operate?**

Applicants must demonstrate and document an established collaborative relationship with a correctional agency/facility/institution. As required under this solicitation, a letter of commitment or MOU with partner organizations, task force members, or administrators of facilities must be included with the application materials.

**Issues Pertaining to Faith-Based Organizations**

**50. May an applicant use a faith-based mentoring program, such as the mentoring program developed by the Prison Fellowship?**

Yes.

**51. What programmatic limitations are there for faith-based organizations?**

Federal funds may not be used to fund any inherently religious activity, such as prayer or worship. Inherently religious activity is permissible, but it cannot occur during an activity funded with federal

funds; rather, such religious activity must be separate in time or place from the federally-funded program. Further, participation in inherently religious activity by individuals receiving services must be voluntary. Federally funded programs are not permitted to discriminate in the provision of services on the basis of a beneficiary's religion. Faith-based organizations that plan to apply for Second Chance Act funding should carefully read the section of the OJP Additional Requirements ([www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other\\_requirements.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/other_requirements.htm)) web page entitled, "Funding to Faith-Based Organizations."

**52. Are bibles and/or other faith-based literature allowable expenses for faith-based nonprofits?**  
No.

### **Technical Application Questions**

**53. What is the start date for the award?**  
The start date should be October 1, 2011.

**54. Do letters of support or MOUs count towards the 15 page limit?**  
No. The 15-page limit pertains to the Program Narrative that should be double-spaced, using a standard 12-point font (Times New Roman is preferred) with no less than 1-inch margins, and should not exceed 15 pages. Letters of support or MOUs can be included as additional attachments that are separate from the Program Narrative materials.

**55. Must applications be submitted electronically, or can hard copies be mailed?**  
No. Applications must be submitted online through the Grant Management System (<https://grants.ojp.usdoj.gov/>).

### **Other**

**56. Will grantees be required to perform risk assessment screening at intake? If so, is there a preference for one assessment tool or another?**  
Grantees will not be required to perform a risk assessment at intake, but the use of validated assessment tools is emphasized by the Second Chance Act and recommended in the solicitation for this grant program. It is anticipated that the correctional agency with whom the non-profit is partnering will perform the risk/needs assessment on potential clients and share the information. For more information about assessments, please visit: [www.reentrypolicy.org/issue\\_areas/assessment\\_processes](http://www.reentrypolicy.org/issue_areas/assessment_processes).

**57. The solicitation mentions that training is required regarding "offender and victims issues." Who is this in reference to: mentors, or someone else?**  
Ideally, a grantee should provide training to staff, mentors, and mentees. A project proposed under this solicitation **must** have a training component which is offered to potential and active mentors. The content should be designed to minimally address the following:

- Enhance their knowledge of the criminal justice system as a whole, the corrections and reentry process and of offender issues generally.
- Acquaint them with appropriate governing policy and procedures of the correctional agencies/facilities referring clients.
- Develop or improve skills such as interpersonal communication to enhance their effectiveness as mentors.
- Increase awareness and sensitivity of victim-related issues. Applicants are encouraged to seek constructive methods of incorporating victims' perspectives into the mentoring process, in close coordination with the corrections agency(ies) and community victim services agencies.
- Provide information on available transitional services and referral procedures to other agencies/organizations.

- Develop or enhance the level of professionalism and adherence to accepted ethical standards of practice.
- Ensure the safety of mentors.

**58. May a national non-profit apply for the grant to provide services in more than one state?**

Yes, but an applicant proposing to provide services in several sites nationally should be particularly clear about how each site will focus on the particular needs of each jurisdiction, and how federal funds will be allocated across program sites.

**59. When awarding grants, will you put a limit on the number of awards granted to a particular region of the country?**

There is no numerical limit on the number of grants (or amount of grant funds) available to any particular city, state, or region. However, geographic diversity, as well as diversity in the types of programs funded, is a goal of the program.

**60. May services funded by this grant be provided via internet or other distance learning methods?**

Yes.

**61. Will there be future opportunities to apply for funding under this program?**

Assuming that Congress appropriates funds for the program in future years beyond Fiscal Year 2011, there could be another solicitation released for this program in 2012. However, this is not definitive.

**62. May an organization apply for both the BJA adult mentoring grants and OJJDP juvenile mentoring grant programs?**

Yes. BJA and OJJDP will be administering separate FY 2011 mentoring program solicitations so an organization could apply for both the BJA adult mentoring grants and OJJDP juvenile mentoring grant programs.