

CARE Program Overview

Almost all offenders return back to the communities in which they previously lived. The safe and successful reintegration of adult offenders has continued to be a critical and demanding concern for our community members, as well as every division of government. Offenders who return to the community without addressing the issues that caused them to offend will likely prompt them to re-offend. By identifying and addressing the issues that contribute to criminal behavior, jail re-entry programs, such as the CARE Program, have proven to be an effective way to reduce recidivism.

CARE is an acronym for Community Assessment and Reintegration. CARE is an evidenced-based, jail re-entry program that uses case management and coordinated delivery of services in order to reduce recidivism and increase public safety.

SERVICES:

There are a number of factors that lead to recidivism. Many offenders have complicated issues such as chemical dependency, lack of family support, substance abuse, mental or physical disabilities, illnesses, or a deficiency in education and income, which affects their employability and stability. The greatest risk for reoffending is the general lack of resources.

The Winona County CARE program can be symbolized as an umbrella—a tool made available for hands willing to receive its shelter from the inevitable circumstances that adult offenders face once released.

CARE is about enabling its clients to arrive at a place where they have the tools and resources to help themselves. Underneath the umbrella of CARE, our clients will find a number of opportunities. These opportunities, many of which are drawn from existing resources in the community, will help provide some of the basic and essential needs of our clients. An example of opportunity provided includes the Mentoring Program. Clients will have the chance to take an active part in continuing their education as well as finding work that will allow them to have the stability needed to stay away from unlawful behaviors. The CARE program will provide the opportunity for our clients to receive the mental and physical wellness that they need to successfully reintegrate.

Along with understanding what the CARE Program is—it is important to understand what the CARE Program is NOT. The CARE program has not been established to be a plea bargaining tool. As we will soon discuss, in order to be eligible for the program, clients must have been convicted before entering the CARE Program. Nor is it intended to be used to lighten a sentence or reduce criminal sanctions. The CARE program is a voluntary service; and it is crucial to the integrity of the program that it remains a voluntary program. We are equipped to aid those who desire to change their lives. Finally, CARE is not a substitute for probation. CARE is for those who are ready to make a conscious decision to take an active part in rehabilitating their lives, and changing the behaviors that caused them to become an offender

PARTNERS:

The CARE Program was developed by the Winona County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). (www.winonacountyjcc.org) Financial Assistance for the CARE Program is provided by the federal

government through a Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Award administered by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety-Office of Justice Programs (www.ojp.state.mn.us.)

CARE STAFF:

Kalene Engel is the Program Director and Grant Manager, responsible for overall management of the CARE Program and its grant;

Cindy Czarnomski is the CARE Coordinator and provides case management services to its clientele;

Victor Souders is the Career Coach Coordinator, responsible for coordinating mentoring and employment programming.

Latrisha Denise Green is the Office and Communications Specialist, providing office support and media/public relations services

Thomas Weber is the Criminal Justice Consultant, responsible for assisting in policy development, data collection and outcome evaluations.

INTENDED CLIENTELE:

The intended clientele, or target population for the CARE Program, includes individuals who meet the following criteria

- *Winona County resident*
- *Convicted as an adult in criminal court*
- *Is expected to be in Winona County jail or Minnesota State prison for a minimum of 15 days*
- *Who expects to reside in Winona County for at least 90 days post release*
- *Who voluntarily participates in the CARE Program*
- *Who has a risk of re-offending*
- *Who has not been in the CARE Program within the last 90 days*
- *If a state prisoner, is within 30 days of release*

On rare occasions, an individual who does not precisely meet the foregoing criteria may gain admission into the program through a professional override approval.

PROCESSES:

CARE has three phases of operation—The Institutional Phase (Phase 1); The Going Home Phase (Phase II) and The Staying Home Phase (Phase III). The suggested minimum length for participation in the CARE Program is six months from the date of release from jail.

In the first phase, (**The Institutional Phase –Phase I**) the offender enters jail with a conviction. Information about the CARE Program is made available to the offender by jail staff and he or she is asked to complete a pre-screening form. If the offender meets initial eligibility requirements for residency and willingness to participate, the CARE Coordinator and Career Coach Coordinator conduct an in-depth interview with the offender. Following the interview, CARE Staff compile collateral

information about the offender, including medical and criminal history and the client's LSI-R Information.

An **LSI-R** is a validated assessment tool which is used to measure the individual's needs as well as his or her risk of re-offense. The scores provided by LSI-R assessment have been proven to help predict success in correctional programs and are used by the Minnesota Department of Corrections in making corrections decisions. One measure of success for the CARE Program will be the reduction in the client's LSI-R score.

After additional information about the applicant has been compiled, the CARE Coordinator and Career Coach Coordinator determine whether the applicant meets the Target Population Criteria. Applicants who meet the criteria are accepted into the program as clients and receive an acceptance letter from CARE Staff.

The CARE program is comprised of three groups; CARE Staff, a **CARE team** and a **CORE team**. On a twice monthly basis the CARE Team will meet to discuss the client's risks and needs and to give professional input on a CARE Plan for the client. The CARE Team is comprised of the CARE Coordinator, Career Coach Coordinator, Jail Programming Director and representatives from Public Health, Department of Human Services, and the Department of Corrections. Additional members may be invited to these meetings based upon the client's identified needs. A subset of the CARE team is the Core team, which is comprised of the CARE Coordinator, Career Coach Coordinator, Jail Programming Director, and the a representative from the Department of Corrections if they are supervising the CARE client. This Core Team will decide issues of admission to the program for those individuals who do not precisely meet the target population as well as decide termination from the program, for those individuals who are non-compliant with the CARE Program. If no override is needed, then the Career Coach Coordinator and the CARE Coordinator determine the eligibility of the client.

The CARE Coordinator, using input from all information received, will meet with the client to develop a CARE Plan specific to that clients needs. The CARE Plan represents the clients identified areas of needs and sets forth goals for the client in those areas.

(The Going Home Phase –Phase II) As our client approaches a release date, additional assessments are performed. At this juncture, a CARE Conference is scheduled to update the client's CARE plan to incorporate a continuum of care for inmate release preparation.

(The Staying Home Phase –Phase III) Post-release supervision and services are provided by CARE staff, mentors and the Department of Corrections as the sentence requires. The CARE team refers to the client's CARE plan to monitor progress with the ultimate goal being the successful completion of the program and, consequently, a successful reintegration into the community.