DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COURT SERVICES AND OFFENDER SUPERVISION AGENCY &
PRETRIAL SERVICES AGENCY
RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATION STATEMENT

DATE: November 19, 2007

I.   RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Principal Researcher: Wendy S. McClanahan; Vice President for Research, Public/Private Ventures (PPV); Philadelphia, PA 19103

Title: Ready4Work (R4W): An Ex-Prisoner, Community and Faith Initiative

Institution: Public/Private Ventures

Description:

The Ready4Work initiative was an 11 site project funded by the US Department of Labor (DOL) to provide workforce development grants to community-based organizations, to include faith-based institutions. These grants were intended to provide employment training to returning offenders age 18 to 34 (excluding those convicted of non-violent/non-sexual charges) and to place them in viable jobs/employment opportunities. To determine whether this initiative contributed to a reduction in re-arrest and re-incarceration among participating offenders, PPV is seeking criminal history data for the 462 offenders who participated at the Washington, D.C. site.

This study applies to CSOSA only.

Type of Data and Analysis: PPV is seeking criminal history data for the 462 offender who participated in the Ready4Work initiative at the Washington, D.C. site. It is assumed that PPV is seeking arrest and court disposition data for the period of 2003 through 2007.

This project will employ quantitative analysis techniques (e.g., cluster analysis, event history analysis, and limited dependent variable analysis). Researchers will explore the relationship between participant demographics, program participation, participation site, and post-program employment patterns to post-program criminal activity.

Subjects: PPV has collected information for the 462 offenders who participated at the Washington, D.C. site. They have the following personal identifiers: full name, date of birth, and social security number.

PPV collected signed informed consent forms for each of the 462 offender for whom they are collecting and requesting data. However, the informed consent form does not fully specify the information that is being sought by PPV. As such, at the time of signing the informed consent, offenders were not provided the full scope of information being sought.

II. RECOMMENDATION

The RRC recommendation for this study:

☐ **Support**   ■ Support with Conditions   ☐ Do Not Support

The RRC finds that the proposed project is considered non-agency research as defined in Research and Evaluation Policy Statement 1201. The RRC recommends support of this request within the scope of one of the follow conditions.

- PPV modifies the informed consent form to include greater specificity regarding the exact information to be collected and over a specified period of time; and obtains signatures for the new consent form from the 462 program participants; or

- PPV provides CSOSA the analysis dataset with personal identifiers. CSOSA will merge this analysis dataset to its offender records. Thereafter, CSOSA will extract criminal history data and append it to the merged records. The final data set will be submitted to PPV with a newly created record identifier. (Note: CSOSA and PPV will need to establish parameters for the criminal history data extraction process – data elements, period of follow-up, extraction and matching method, etc.)

Further, the RRC notes that approval under either of these conditions will require a commitment of Agency resources.

III. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Regulatory:

The proposed study has received approval from PPV's Institutional Review Board. However, it is the RRC's finding that the consent forms used do not sufficiently specify

the data to be requested and the nature of the use of the data. Therefore, it is not consistent with the standards of Agency policy pertaining to research and evaluation
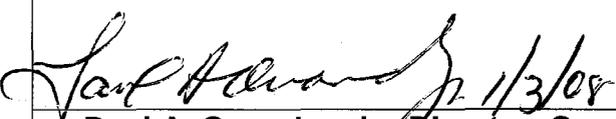
Benefit to the Agency:

Given our partnership with community-based service providers (to include faith institutions), CSOSA's support of these types of efforts will further support our mission. That is, CSOSA's support is likely to result in favorable consideration for future proposals submitted to DOL. The funding agency will see this as a worthwhile investment – investment in projects that can collect the requisite performance and evaluation data. In the end, CSOSA offenders are exposed to services that previously were unavailable.

Other Considerations:

If approved, this project would be assigned to CSOSA's Office of Research and Evaluation's (ORE) temporary staff. This staff person provides support for CSOSA's ongoing recidivism tracking efforts. It is estimated that roughly 160 hours will be required to complete the data extraction and quality control tasks. Thereafter, an ORE statistician will require an estimated 24 hours for file merging, de-identification, coding, and final file construction.

Finally, this project raises the issue of whether CSOSA's VOTEE unit should also be responsible for collecting similar information in response to questions posed by PPV. Currently, VOTEE's focus is on 30-60-90-day follow-up periods. However, there should be some consideration given to regular follow-up of all VOTEE participants of at least 180 days.

I **ACCEPT** the RRC recommendation	I **DO NOT ACCEPT** the RRC recommendation
[signature] 1/3/08	
Paul A. Quander, Jr. Director, Court Services And Offender Supervision Agency	
Comments:	

Memorandum

TO: Claire Johnson, Director for the Office of Justice and Community Programs

           Spurgeon Kennedy, Director for the Office of Strategic Planning, Policy & Program Development

           Brian Rybicki, Policy and Program Development Manager

FROM: Calvin Johnson, Director for the Office of Research & Evaluation

DATE: September 11, 2007

SUBJECT: Public/Private Venture's Request to Conduct Non-Agency Research

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A request was recently submitted to the Office of Research and Evaluation from Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) for non-agency research. P/PV is conducting research as part of the National Ready4Work Initiative. They will require criminal history data for 462 individuals who participated in the Ready4Work program in Washington, DC. At the beginning of the program, the participants at the Washington, DC site signed an informed consent form. P/PV is only requesting criminal history data for those individuals who submitted the consent forms.

Please take a moment to review the attached packet to determine whether this is a project with which we can provide the requested data. I will be sending a meeting invitation later this week to discuss this request. Thank you in advance.

P/PV

August 31, 2007

Mr. Calvin Johnson
Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia
633 Indiana Ave NW
Washington, DC, 20004

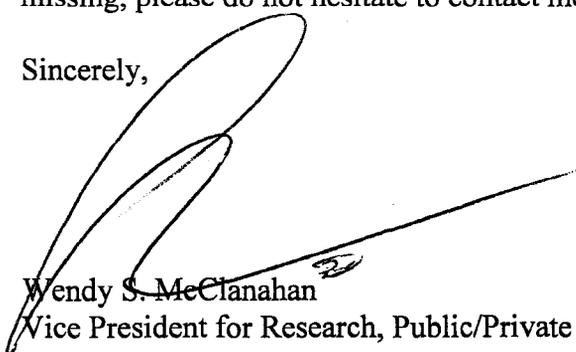**RE: Request for Non-Agency Research Project Approval**

Dear Mr. Johnson

Enclosed please find a Request for Non-Agency Research Project Approval on behalf of Public/Private Ventures and the Ready4Work Initiative.

The submission consists of:
1) Request for Non-Agency Research Project Approval
2) Curriculum Vitas for the Project team
3) P/PV Institutional Review Board Letter of Approval
4) P/PV Institutional Review Board Submission
5) Blank Copy of a Ready4Work Participant consent form
6) Researcher Agreements
7) Five copies of the complete submission

If, upon review of the attached documents, there is any information is inadequate or missing, please do not hesitate to contact me at 215-557-4465 or iholas@ppv.org

Sincerely,

Wendy S. McClanahan
Vice President for Research, Public/Private Ventures

1) SUMMARY STATEMENT

The project team at Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) working with the requested data will include: Wendy McClanahan, Vice President of Research; Tina Kauh, Ph.D., Research Associate & Director of MIS; Joshua Freely, Ph.D., Research Associate; Igor Holas, Research Assistant; and Carol Kersbergen, Project Data Specialist. The project is entitled "Ready4Work (R4W): An Ex-Prisoner, Community and Faith Initiative." Launched in 2003 and completed in 2006, the Ready4Work Initiative was a national demonstration project funded by US Department of Labor focused on reducing crime and recidivism rates among previously incarcerated persons returning to their communities from incarceration. The Initiative was comprised of 11 sites across the country serving 4,482 ex-offenders between the ages of 18 and 34 years, whose most recent conviction was for a non-violent, non-sexual felony. Our goal for this ongoing research project is to identify effective strategies for delivering comprehensive services, including job placement to formerly incarcerated individuals. We have systematically collected information on participants via MIS data completed on a monthly basis by program staff as well as through in-person interviews with participants. Data collected so far contains information on participants' demographic characteristics, employment history, and program-related outcomes such as services received, new employment, and educational outcomes. We currently collect site-reported data on recidivism, but have found it unsuitable for more complex analyses. Therefore, we have been actively pursuing full criminal histories on all participants. As such, we are gathering criminal record histories for participants from all of the sites participating in the Initiative. This request for criminal history information from the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia is directly related to this current analysis.

All research will be conducted at Public/Private Ventures, located at 2000 Market Street, Suite 600, Philadelphia, PA 19103. The initial work will conclude by early 2008, but as research questions arise, the data may be used for further analyses. Criminal history data will be coded and entered into an electronic database and used to investigate several research questions including the extent to which participation in R4W is associated with a decreased likelihood of recidivating. (Additional research questions are detailed below in Section 2B.) P/PV's research sample is comprised of all R4W program participants from the 11 program sites, including 462 individuals in Washington, DC. Per out commitments to DOL, data entry must be completed by October 31, 2007. P/PV requests full criminal histories for Washington, DC R4W participants either in electronic or paper format as well as contact information for an individual in your agency whom P/PV researchers can contact should any questions arise about the data. There is some risk to participants due to the sensitive nature of the data. If confidentiality is not maintained, participants may experience discrimination or personal embarrassment. However, as described below in Sections 2G and 2H, P/PV will take several steps to minimize these potential risks. We anticipate that the results of our analyses will show that participation in R4W is associated with a decline in risk for recidivism, but that this positive impact may be moderated by certain demographic characteristics, such as education level and

race. Our analyses will also provide insight into the patterns of criminal activities in which recidivating individuals become involved. P/PV plans to disseminate our findings through published reports, conference presentations, and policy briefs.

2) DETAILED STATEMENT

A) Review of the Literature
Almost 700,000 inmates were released from state or federal prisons in 2005 and returned to their communities and families. Unfortunately, within three years, seven out of ten of these returning inmates will be charged with new crimes, and a quarter of the returning inmates will return to prison[1]. In most cases, this high recidivism rate is a direct result of a dismal lack of efforts to successfully re-integrate released inmates back into their home communities. Rather, the current system ignores both this population's woefully insufficient employment and educational skills needed for successful re-entry into society as well as the barriers that prevent these individuals' access to key societal supports. Adult prisoners demonstrate weak or non-existent ties to the workforce, not only after release from incarceration, but even before arrest. Data show that 20 to 40 percent of adult prisoners were unemployed just before their arrest, which is significantly higher than the unemployment rate in the general population (7%). Further, five percent of state prisoners and three percent of federal prisoners had never been employed[2,3]. Post-incarceration, employment rates only worsen—unemployment among ex-prisoners has been estimated at between 25 and 40 percent[4]. Likewise, it is not surprising that prisoners also achieved poor levels of education. Nineteen percent of adult state prisoners are completely illiterate and 40 percent are functionally illiterate[5]; over half of state parole entrants did not earn high school degrees and as many as 11 percent had only an eighth grade education or less[6,7].

Beyond their lacking employment skills and education, previously incarcerated persons are also faced with a myriad of other challenges. For instance, possessing a criminal record prevents access to such public services as public housing, federal educational financial aid, and TANF[8]. These barriers along with the prospect of obtaining only low-wage employment render the re-integration of previously incarcerated persons into mainstream society unattractive, if not impossible, which drives returning inmates to the

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[1] Douse, and Mumola, 2004. *Profile of Nonviolent Offenders Exiting State Prisons,* Bureau of Justice Statistics Fact Sheet, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, NCJ-207081.
[2] Salomon et al., 2004, *From Prison to Work: A Report on Reentry Roundtable*, Urban Institute, Washington, DC.
[3] Petersilia, 2002. *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry*, Oxford University Press, USA
[4] Petersilia, 2002
[5] Rubinstien, 2001 as quoted in Petersilia, 2002
[6] Petersilia, 2002
[7] Salomon, et al., 2004
[8] *Every Door Closed: Barriers Facing Parents With Criminal Records*, Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington, DC, 2003

underground economy and criminal activity following release. However, increasing both the rate and quality of employment following release among retuning inmates has been shown to be correlated with reduced recidivism, creating promising guidelines for effective re-entry intervention[9].

B) Research Method

We have already collected participant criminal histories from eight of the 11 program sites. With these data, we have created an electronic database to capture the information provided, including the charge, disposition, sentence, and incarceration information for each offense. In addition, we classify each charge using a modified version of the FBI Unified Crime Report offense classification. These data in conjunction with demographic and program-level data collected earlier from participants and program staff will allow P/PV to study several research questions. Below, we provide a sampling of these research questions and the statistical models we plan to use.

- Was participation in Ready4Work related to lower likelihood of post-program criminal involvement? Did the reception of certain services (e.g. mentoring) moderate this relationship? (*Logistic regression or Event history analysis*)

- Among those participants who recidivated after enrollment in Ready4Work, is there a common pattern of criminal activity? Do these patterns indicate areas of additional service needs? (*Cluster analysis → Logistic regression or Ordinal regression*)

- Was enrollment in Ready4Work differentially related to reduced criminal activity for different sub-populations based on characteristics such as gender, race, educational level, and nature of past criminal activity? (*Logistic regression or Event history analysis*)

- Was stable employment related to a reduced likelihood of one's future criminal involvement? Does this relationship vary by the nature of that employment (e.g. part time versus full time)? (*Logistic regression or Event history analysis*)

C) Significance and Contribution

The intention of the Ready4Work evaluation is to provide insight into how to best promote employment among previously incarcerated persons. The national Ready4Work Initiative tested one model of employment and service provision utilizing community organizations. The reports we are producing will critically examine the efficacy of this model of attaching previously incarcerated persons to the workforce.

D) Benefits to CSOSA/PSA

With total sample of over 4,000 the Ready4Work initiative evaluation stands to serve the general re-entry field and CSOSA by providing invaluable insight into the processes of re-entry. The focused research will not only further enlighten the challenges faced by returning inmates, but also point to promising practices in aiding their reintegration into

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[9] Salomon, et al., 2004

communities. This new knowledge will aid CSOSA's own internal research into these issues.

E) Specific Agency Resources Required
In order to accomplish our goals, P/PV is requesting full criminal histories for our 462 Washington, DC participants either in electronic or paper format. In addition, we request contact information for an individual in your agency whom P/PV researchers can contact should any questions regarding clarification about the records be needed.

F) Risks/Benefits
Criminal histories are highly sensitive data. Participants may experience discrimination or embarrassment if their criminal records are made public. Risks will be minimal in this study; however, due to the precautions that P/PV will take to ensure confidentiality of all data.

G) Steps to Minimize Risks
Because the only risks involved in this project are related to breach of data confidentiality, the steps to minimize risks are outlined as the procedures to maintain confidentiality of data (Section 2H below).

H) Description of Procedures
P/PV will make every reasonable effort to ensure that data will be kept confidential. For instance, only individuals directly working on the project will have access to hard copies of data, and when not in use, these copies will be stored in a locked office to which only project staff will have access. In addition, once entered into our password protected electronic database, participants' names will be replaced with unique identifiers. Further, any publications or presentations resulting from P/PV's analysis of these data will only be at the aggregate level, and individual's names will never be used. Per P/PV's policies no unnecessary copies will be made of the data, any security breach will be thoroughly investigated and immediately reported to CSOSA, and all data will be destroyed three years after the publication of the final reports.

I) Anticipated Effects on Agency
The approval of this project would pose only a one-time request on the agency as the criminal histories for the 462 participants are prepared. Beyond this step we anticipate minimal, if any, demands on the agency staff and resources. If necessary, P/PV would be willing pay CSOSA a small fee in order to compensate staff for their resources and time.

3) INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD REVIEW

The Ready4Work Initiative was approved by P/PV's Institutional Review Board. The IRB Approval letter, as well as the full IRB submission is included in the submission.

4) INFORMED CONSENT

All persons included in this request signed an informed consent permitting collection of in-program data and the review of their criminal histories. Every person had the option to refuse consent in which case they were excluded from any data collection; however, a refusal of consent did not preclude one from receiving services A blank copy of the Consent Form is included in this submission.

5) REQUEST FOR INDIVIDUALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION

We are requesting the inclusion of identifiers in the criminal histories provided by CSOSA to facilitate matching with program data collected throughout the course of the Initiative, with the goal of understanding the individual's in-program experiences in Ready4Work, and the potential role this experience played in the transition from prison to the community. The identifiers that we are requesting are:
- First name
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Social Security Number

We plan to use this data solely for the purpose of matching each record to a unique ID used to track participants in our database. Once the ID match is made, all other identifying information will be discarded. Although we anticipate the individual's name and date of birth will be sufficient for complete matching to occur, the availability of the Social Security Number would enable an additional level of precision in matching as needed.