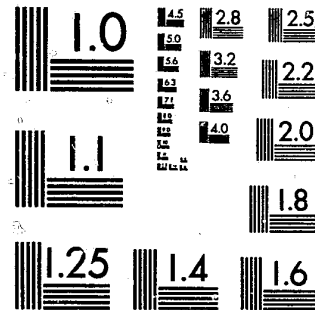


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HOW TO MANUAL

"The Hiring of Ex-Offenders in  
Domestic Violence Programs"

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ACQUISITIONS

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### SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

CONTACT, INC. an international non-profit organization, ties together people, resources and information to implement new ideas and programs.

"The Hiring of Ex-Offenders in Domestic Violence Programs" was a special project of CONTACT, INC. which followed our basic philosophy of linking community resources. The project was funded under grant No. CE-1 from the National Institute of Corrections, an agency of the United States Department of Justice. NIC provides funding and services to those involved in the field of corrections.

During the one-year research project, CONTACT sought to locate and survey all domestic violence programs, coalitions, clearinghouses, court and probation programs or any other organizations involved in the issues of:

1. Spouse Abuse
2. Child Abuse
3. Persons Who Batter

AND who utilized ex-offenders (not limited to those convicted of crimes of domestic violence) either as volunteers or employees in their efforts. The project also sought literature on that subject.

Questionnaires were sent to 2,256 programs which had been identified in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

U.S. Department of Justice  
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From the completed questionnaires (21.4%) that were returned:

- \* 22.9% were from Southern States
- \* 31.6% were from Eastern States
- \* 22.2% were from Mid-Western States
- \* 21.2% were from Western States
  
- \* 30.02% were from largely populated cities (100,000 or more) and the remainder were from medium and small-sized cities
  
- \* An adequate distribution of types of programs with varied funding bases were gathered.

The number of programs which use or have used ex-offenders as either employees or volunteers was 15.5% of the programs returning questionnaires, or 3.3% of the total sample surveyed.

Although some of the agencies utilizing ex-offenders had bad experiences with them, the vast majority of those responding who used ex-offenders had had good experiences and planned to continue to use ex-offenders.

Among the responding agencies who do not now, or have not ever, utilized ex-offenders to provide services in their agencies, most were interested and willing to consider utilizing ex-offenders as employees or volunteers in the future.

## INTRODUCTION

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This simple, concise "How To" Manual designed to enhance the utilization of ex-offenders in domestic violence programs is based on the year-long survey "The Hiring of Ex-Offenders in Domestic Violence Programs" which is outlined in the preceding Summary. The information and recommendations included here were all derived from the policies, procedures, and information gathered from all the responding agencies, some of which already use the services of ex-offenders to provide their services. The purpose of the Manual is not to be a comprehensive training manual, but rather based on the experiences of some agencies, give additional instruction on how ex-offenders are and may be utilized, what special considerations are necessary, and how they may be recruited for program usage.

The concept for this project came <sup>after a</sup> ~~about~~ feasibility study to find out if it would be possible to link wasted human resources to a field (domestic violence) where the help of many dedicated people is crucially needed in the austere times ahead. The complete outline of the project and its ~~x~~ results are found in the companion Summary Document to this "How To" Manual. *awk*

At the time CONTACT began this project, we did not know whether this idea would be workable or, outside of isolated incidents, what was actually being done about this in the field. We only knew that the area of domestic violence services was increasing dramatically as this hidden social steps from behind the closed doors and curtains of our society. *problem* *awk*

And, through CONTACT's years of experience in the area of human service referrals for offenders and ex-offenders to the services that they needed in order to parole, it has been possible for us to ascertain what ex-offenders special needs and problems with jobs, and community integration following their incarceration.

Some of the information we received not only allowed us to generalize about myths and prejudices concerning the issues of domestic violence and ex-offenders, but also provided many good common sense ideas for dealing with the special talents or drawbacks when utilizing ex-offenders in domestic violence agencies.

Although we surveyed coalitions, clerainghouses and other groups in addition to direct service agncies, direct service agencies made up the largest part of the sample and were the chief area of exploration. Therefore, this Manual speaks most specifically to that type of agency.

We have taken what the various agencies who work on a daily basis with the victims and perpetrators involved in domestic violence incidents told us about their agencies, services, policies and experiences in using ex-offenders either as volunteers or employees and have attempted to lay it out for you here in a brief, easy to read, yet useful fashion. We know as a social service provider that you have a tough job to do and that your time for reading documents is severely limited. Yet, we want to provide you with a tool with which you may consider and implement the utilization of appropriate ex-offenders, to support your agencies, augment your staff, provide needed services to your clients, and ease your load.

## STUMBLING BLOCKS

### MYTHS, PREJUDICES & ASSUMPTIONS

Listed below are some recurring themes which appeared over and over again among the agencies who were surveyed:

\* **ALL VICTIMS OF CRIMES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ARE WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

Most respondents simply read victims as women and children. Although far too many women and children are the victims of abuse, abuse of men, the elderly, and between siblings is not uncommon.<sup>13</sup>

\* **ALL EX-OFFENDERS ARE MEN**

Many respondents read the word ex-offender (even though men and women were specified) as "men". This disregards the fact that while men do make up the greatest proportion of the offender population, each year women offenders comprise 4 to 5 percent of that total offender population.<sup>14</sup>

\* **ALL EX-OFFENDERS WERE INCARCERATED FOR CRIMES OF VIOLENCE**

According to a 1978 Survey of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities 47% of the state male offender population and 40% of the state female offender population were convicted of crimes which could be classified as violent. That leaves a remaining 53% of state male offenders and 60% of state female offenders who were convicted of crimes against property and the public order or who committed other crimes. <sup>15</sup>

\* **NOBODY EVER CHANGES AND THERE IS NO HOPE**

Although the recidivism rate (the rate at which people are reconvicted) rides somewhere between 23% and 33% (solid statistics on recidivism are non-available on a national basis as no consensus has been reached about how to measure it), people tend to look at those failures and forget to remember the 73 to 63%

who do succeed in becoming valuable members of their communities. Although our responding agencies, did discuss that ex-offenders have embezzled or dealt drugs over the phone, a much greater percentage and even those with some bad experiences, still saw the possible positive effects rather than the negative.

AGENCIES UTILIZING EX-OFFENDERS HAD A FAR GREATER TENDENCY TO SEE BOTH THEIR STAFF AND THEIR CLIENTS AS INDIVIDUALS, RATHER THAN STEREOTYPES FROM A CERTAIN GROUP.

#### WHAT SEEMS TO BE HAPPENING

Below are some interesting observations on the issues of ex-offenders and domestic violence and some of the impacting factors provided to us by these agencies:

- \* LACK OF VOCATIONAL SKILLS, EDUCATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS ARE A FAR GREATER HANDICAP TO EX-OFFENDERS THAN THE CIRCUMSTANCE OF THEIR INCARCERATION

Many agencies using ex-offenders responded that some of the greatest difficulties for ex-offenders on the job were the result of insufficient skills in literacy, interaction and coping, and that these were the greatest impairment to their employment or usefulness as a staff member.

- \* MANY VIOLENT OFFENDERS WERE THEMSELVES EITHER VICTIMS OF CHILD ABUSE, OR GREW UP IN ABUSIVE HOMES.

Evidence indicates that in the history of violent offenders is found either domestic violence between their parents or that the offenders were themselves abused. 16

- \* THE INABILITY TO DEAL APPROPRIATELY WITH STRESS, AND A POOR SELF-IMAGE ARE COMMON BOTH TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS/PERPETRATORS AND OTHER CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

Literature from the domestic violence agencies surveyed, indicate that the inability to find appropriate means

for the alleviation of stress and a poor self-image are the keys for tipping off abusive behavior (of either spouse or children). These have also been found to be common factors in the psychological make up of the legal offender, as reflected by the many in-prison rehabilitative psychological counseling/therapy programs geared toward enhancing an individual's self-esteem and proper channelling of stress into constructive behaviors.

- \* MOST OFTEN THE REASON EX-OFFENDERS WERE NOT A TARGET GROUP TO BE UTILIZED AS A HUMAN RESOURCE IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCIES IS THAT EX-OFFENDERS ARE LARGELY A MINORITY WITHOUT AN ADVOCATE AND AGENCIES SIMPLY HAD NOT THOUGHT ABOUT IT.

Ex-offenders have a very poor public relations image and a fairly "out of sight, out of mind" position in American society. Many of the agencies where ex-offenders were not being used as either employees or volunteers gave the answer "we hadn't thought about it, but it sounds interesting." Few minority groups have the lack of favorable or compassionate exposure to the public eye that ex-offenders have. Heinous crimes get a lot of "bad press", but rarely are the remainder group of criminals viewed as human beings and remembered as such "after they have been put away". Most ex-offenders continue to pay their debt to society on a daily basis for the rest of their lives by the exclusion they are often forced to suffer. Once the abused child, who may become an abusing adult, (either physically or by other criminal activity perpetrated against society) is convicted, they are written off.

- \* EX-BATTERERS AND OTHER EX-OFFENDERS ARE MAKING VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS IN SOME ROLES WITHIN THE AREA OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES.

The greatest groundswell is to use ex-batterers (not necessarily always convicted legal offenders) to provide peer counselor services to current batterers. These agencies, especially, feel that behaviors and learned responses can be changed to more appropriate ones, and that "rehabilitation" can and does occur.



## POLICY FORMATION

By hiring an ex-offender, or using an ex-offender as a volunteer, an agency is probably:

- \* Employing a human being who wants to try.
- \* Providing him/her with an alternative to crime, a job or constructive use of leisure time.
- \* Giving him/her a chance to convince themselves that they can produce and be successful.
- \* Helping to keep individual and corporate taxes down by reducing public costs of reintegrating the ex-offender into the community.
- \* Adding another human resource to the staff pool, thereby enhancing the ability to provide services to clients.

The first step towards utilizing ex-offenders within a domestic violence agency should rightfully be the FORMATION OF A POLICY which speaks to the issue. Not only will a policy clarify to the agency and to the public the stance that is being taken, it will also protect the agency from those who are in disagreement with the practice of hiring or using ex-offenders to provide domestic violence services.

### Board of Directors

Policy formation should be done by the Board of Directors of an agency. Even many of the small grass-roots organizations responding to this survey indicated that they had a Board of Directors to whom they referred for policy and approval. A Board of Directors is a vital part of an organization because it can:

- \* Influence Public Policy
- \* Testify on Behalf of Client Groups
- \* Set Agency Goals

- \* Interpret an Agency's Programs to the Community;
- \* Give Credibility to an Agencies Advocacy Activities in the Community Because of the Stature and Prominence of its Members;
- \* Write the Policies which Govern An Agency Involving Public Issues or Controversial Positions.

### Homework

Before a Board of Directors can (or should) make or issue a policy regarding the hiring of ex-offenders in a domestic violence agency or utilize them as volunteers, some crucial homework needs to be done.

First, the following questions must be answered in order to write a policy which will work for a domestic violence agency.

1. What is an agency allowed to do, or bound to do, under Federal Law? How is the agency affected by that law?
2. What is the agency allowed to do, or bound to do, under the statutes of the state where the agency is in residence?
3. What are the needs of the target client group/s? How would utilizing ex-offenders affect those needs?
4. What kinds of services provided by the agency could be enhanced by using ex-offenders?
5. What past crimes should be totally restricted from possible employment/volunteerism? Where could ex-offenders be placed most successfully within the agency, i.e. in what kinds of positions? Where, or in what kinds of positions, shouldn't they be placed?
6. What will the community attitude be about such usage of ex-offenders? How will it affect the program? What could be gained? What could be lost? What preventive measures can be taken to help keep problems from occurring?

## FEDERAL LAW

In order to be in conformance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and Presidential Executive Order No. 11246, agencies are required to foster and actively promote equal opportunity in employment on the basis of merit and ability to perform work, and to eliminate discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, and national origin. The question of incarceration is not directly protected under Equal Opportunity Law, however:

"An employer who adopts an employment policy automatically rejecting applicants who have an arrest or conviction record may be violating Title VII, the fair employment practice section of the 1964 Civil Rights Act enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Because Blacks as a class are arrested and convicted substantially more frequently than Whites, the foreseeable impact of an employer's inquiry regarding arrests and convictions, according to the EEOC, is that a substantially disproportionate percentage of the persons rejected because of the inquiry will be Black. In such circumstances, an inquiry policy is unlawful absent a showing of a business necessity.

...In order for an employer to justify a refusal to hire a former offender, he must show a business necessity. 'In our view,' the EEOC has said, 'Title VII makes it unlawful to discharge or refuse to employ a minority group person because of a conviction record unless the particular circumstances of each case (e.g., the time, nature and number of the convictions and the employee's past employment record) indicate that employment of that particular person for a particular job is manifestly inconsistent with the safe and efficient operation of that job.' 17

Currently, you may NOT ask applicants you are screening about ARRESTS; you MAY ask applicants about CONVICTIONS, but you must have a legitimate reason for doing so.

Therefore, it is imperative that each individual agency and their Board of Directors specify what conditions, such as incarceration or multiple incarceration for certain crimes, would constitute a legitimate reason or "business necessity" for them to be barred from employment in various positions within the agency. This can be handled in a comprehensive policy statement or a general policy statement and a specific statement on job descriptions.

## STATE STATUTES

Even with manpower programs providing remedial education, counseling, vocational training and job placement services, the employment problem of ex-offenders remains staggering. Many cannot find suitable or full-time employment because of poor work experience, little education, and little or no skill training. But, in addition to these difficulties there are also other obstacles--legal barriers within the state bodies of laws which prevent ex-offenders from holding certain jobs which require licenses and, in the case of domestic violence agencies, affect some of the positions serving clients. In many states, child abuse agencies found difficulty in utilizing ex-offenders from working in child abuse capacities because Child Care Workers are required to have a license which is not granted to felons.

Each state is unique in its statutory law that may affect jobs which are available to those who have been incarcerated. However, three basic kinds of statutes exist:

- \* Statutes that refer to a criminal offense as grounds for denying a license.
- \* Statutory provisions that condition the granting of a license on an applicant possessing good moral character.
- \* Statutory provisions that condition the granting of a license on the applicant possessing a good moral character and not having a criminal record. 18

For small agencies who may not have their own attorneys, an attorney may be found who would be willing to donate their time to research any restrictions which would affect the agency. This not only protects clients, but also the agency and the ex-offenders who might be hired or used in a volunteer capacity.

#### AGENCY RESTRICTIONS

Most of the agencies using ex-offenders who responded to the survey were not aware of state statutes that would bar them from using ex-offenders. However, in some cases agencies had set up some agency restrictions for placement of persons in certain positions which they felt were a necessity. In order to avoid any potential lawsuits, such restrictions should go into the policy developed by domestic violence agencies or be part of the qualifications or restrictions section of a job description. The most important action indicated by those agencies who were surveyed is to DECIDE IN ADVANCE WHAT KINDS OF POSITIONS MAY BE FILLED BY EX-OFFENDERS CONVICTED OF WHAT KINDS OF CRIMES.

The following agency restrictions are a sample of responses from both agencies who have or have not used ex-offenders.

"While we are permitted under the regulations of the Office of Personnel Management to hire ex-offenders if they are qualified for the positions to be filled and are suitable for Federal employment, we do not have any ex-offenders on our staff."  
(VA Outpatient Clinic, El Paso, TX)

"In the case of professional, fiscal and managerial personnel, recent conviction is a serious crime and shall be considered strong evidence of lack of fitness for the job. Before SMTCCAC employs in any such capacity a person who has been convicted of a serious crime, the Board of Directors, or Personnel Committee shall conduct an investigation in accordance with fair standards and procedures and, if it finds that the prior conviction does not disqualify the person for the proposed position, shall promptly provide a written statement of its reasons to the OEO/CSA Mid-Atlantic Regional Office. In the case of other positions, including clerical and non-professional jobs, criminal records by themselves shall not constitute a basis for disqualification for employment, but SMTCCAC shall require full disclosure of any such record by an applicant and shall exercise prudent judgement in relation to positions."  
(Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Hughesville, MD)



"These issues would be considered for utilizing ex-offenders:

1. For which positions
2. Nature of offender's history
3. Nature of rehabilitation and offender's understanding of himself."

(Des Plains Valley Community Center, Chicago, IL)

"Our child care license does put restrictions on those staff working directly with the children. The license does require that all employees be fingerprinted upon being hired. (Otherwise) we are an equal opportunity employer with hiring based on qualifications." (Rainbow Retreat, Phoenix, AZ)

"We use ex-offenders in our Sexual Abuse Programs to make contact with newly charged offenders only and not with children. Anyone convicted of crimes against children must prove rehabilitation before working with children in any program." (Child Protective Service, Ukiah, CA)

"Those convicted of DWI Charges are required to attend AA. Also, we might not consider those who have committed crimes against children because of a safety factor involved." (Family Shelter, San Angelo, TX)

"There are no written policies but I do not think we would hire a male who has committed any crimes against women, such as rape, wife abuse, or others using physical force or a weapon." (Wife Abuse Service of the YWCA, Memphis, TN)

"Applicants are disqualified if they fail to indicate criminal record on application." (Bradley-Angle House, Portland, OR)

"Since we had an embezzlement with an ex-offender hired as an accountant, we would not use one in a money-managing capacity." (Women Helping Women, Cincinnati, OH)

"(There are) certain restrictions on sex offenders and violent felons, because of the service we provide." (Sea Haven, Emergency Shelter Program, Seattle, WA)

"We will not employ anyone that has had felony charges. We have had men that were at one time batterers, that have volunteered their services...but at the time they volunteer (they) have been out of the battering relationship and have received personal counseling." (Alliance on Family Violence, Bakersfield, CA)

## SAMPLE POLICIES

From the information that was gathered from the respondents to the survey, some sample policy statements were selected and are included here as examples and possible models:

### EXAMPLE I

"In all hiring, employment, planning and implementation of programs, contracts, and activities of this group, there shall be no discrimination against any citizen because of race, sex, creed, color, national origin, physical disability, criminal record, or age." (West CAP, Domestic Abuse Project, Glenwood City, WI)

### EXAMPLE II

"Applications may be rejected by the Personnel Division and/or applicants refused further consideration, examination or appointment for any of the following reasons, provided such reasons can be documented:

Applicant has been convicted of a crime or has a record of convictions, the nature of which would affect the individual's suitability for employment in the class;" (Natrona County Dept. of Public Assistance and Social Services, Casper, WY)

### EXAMPLE III

From Minnesota where a massive domestic violence service effort is maintained under the Department of Corrections:

"In accordance with Minnesota Statutes 1978, Chapter 364, the Minnesota Department of Corrections encourages the rehabilitation of criminal offenders by providing that they be eligible for employment with the Department. The following policy established the conditions under which persons with criminal convictions may be eligible for employment in the Department. Persons with criminal convictions are defined as persons who have been convicted of felonies, gross misdemeanors and misdemeanors for which probation, a jail sentence, or a prison sentence is imposed.

**Policy:** Although the Department of Corrections encourages the hiring of criminal offenders for rehabilitative purposes, the Department's responsibility for public safety and security requires that consideration also be given to:

1. the nature and seriousness of the offense for which the person was convicted;
2. the relationship of the offense to the ability, capacity, and fitness of the person to discharge the duties and responsibilities of the position; and
3. evidenced demonstration that these persons have been able to lead law-abiding lives for specific periods of time.

(4) For employment in positions that require the employee to be regularly engaged in treatment, custody, or supervision of inmates, parolees, or probationers, the applicant must present documentary evidence of discharge from parole, probation, or from a correctional institution (after serving to completion of sentence) two (2) years prior to making application for employment. The appointing authority must verify through law enforcement agency records that the applicant had no criminal conviction for two (2) years prior to the application for employment.

For employment in positions that do not require the employee to have direct contact with inmates, parolees, or probationers as specified in item 4 above, the applicant must present documentary evidence of discharge from parole, probation, or from a correctional institution (after serving to completion of sentence) one (1) year prior to making application for employment. The appointing authority must verify through law enforcement agency records that the applicant has had no criminal conviction for one (1) year prior to the application for employment.

**Procedures:**

1. Appointing authority must determine that the applicant meets eligibility requirements in accordance with the Minnesota Department of Personnel rules and regulations.

2. Applicant must present documentary evidence to the appointing authority regarding the conviction and discharge record as specified in Minnesota Statutes 1978, Section 364.03, Subd. a and c. Documentary evidence includes a copy of the local, state, or federal release order and a copy of the order of discharge from probation, parole, or other field supervision.
3. Appointing authority must determine that prior convictions would not adversely affect the applicant's ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position as specified in Minnesota Statutes 1978, Section 356.08, Subd. 2.
4. For employment which requires the carrying of firearms, the applicant must present documentary evidence that relief from Federal statutes prohibiting persons with criminal convictions from carrying firearms has been granted by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms." (Battered Women's Programs, Minnesota DOC, St. Paul, MN)

**EXAMPLE IV**

And, from the office of OAR (Offender Aid and Restoration) which both serves offenders and ex-offenders, and also hires them, comes an excellent model for a policy statement and the necessary backup hiring procedures which embrace a total affirmative action stance including ex-offenders.

"OAR/USA shall make every attempt to employ and retain the best qualified personnel through adequate salary schedules and just personnel practices. No discrimination shall be made because of sex, age, race, color, national origin, ancestry, union membership, political affiliation or handicap in:

recruitment  
screening  
hiring  
promotion or demotion  
rates of pay or other forms of compensation  
benefits

transfers  
layoffs or return from layoffs  
continued education opportunities  
termination

OAR/USA will take affirmative action to demonstrate the commitment to equal opportunity. OAR/USA, when recruiting, hiring and promoting employees, will make every reasonable attempt to place qualified people into all phases of its work force in a distribution representative of that of the population. Special attention will be given to include the employment of ex-prisoners. The recruiting and screening methods used will attempt to insure that all groups mentioned above in this section are included in the applicant pool.

Employment of all staff of OAR/USA shall occur according to the following procedures:

- a. Notice of job openings shall be provided to the agencies and universities which serve those groups mentioned above; to local, state, and/or national allied organizations; and, to selected newspapers.
- b. In the event that professional recruiting groups or organizations are used, care will be taken when choosing such firms that they reach all segments of the community with particular access to the above minority characteristics.
- c. All notices of job openings shall indicate that OAR/USA is an "Equal Opportunity Employer".
- d. Employment forms and applications shall make clear that references to the above minority characteristics are for affirmative action purposes only.
- e. Pre-employment forms and applications will not have reference to arrest records. For those positions which require background investigations by the nature of the duties involved, applicants will be required to grant a release of criminal and medical records.
- f. All job descriptions and basic criteria for employment will be as clear as possible and will be accessible to all present employees and applicants." (OAR/USA, Charlottesville, VA)

## CODE OF ETHICS

A Code of Ethics is an essential ingredient to a set of agency policies and is especially useful if you are involved in what could be construed by the community to be a controversial practice, i.e. utilizing ex-offenders within the agency. A Code of Ethics is also an essential tool towards staff understanding about their roles and what is expected of them. Below is a sample Code of Ethics, provided here to serve as a beginning model for those domestic violence agencies planning to implement a Code of Ethics.

### Code of Ethics

(Name of Agency) expects of its employees unfailing honesty, respect for the dignity and individuality of human beings, and a commitment to professional and compassionate service. To this end we subscribe to the following principles.

#### Relationships With Clients/Colleagues/Other Professions/The Public

- \* Employees will respect and protect the civil and legal rights of all clients;
- \* Employees will serve each case with appropriate concern for the client's welfare and with no purpose of personal gain;
- \* Relationships with colleagues will be of such character to promote mutual respect within the professions in improvement of its quality of service;
- \* Statements critical of colleagues or their agencies will be made only as these are verifiable and constructive in purpose;

- \* Subject to the client's rights of privacy, employees will respect the public's right to know, and will share information with the public with openness and candor.
- \* Employees will respect and protect the right of the public to be safeguarded from criminal activity.

#### Professional Conduct/Practices:

- \* No employee will use his/her official position to secure privileges or advantages for personal benefit;
- \* No employee will act in his/her official capacity in any matter in which he/she has personal interest which could in the least degree impair his/her objectivity;
- \* No employee will use his/her official position to promote any partisan political purpose;
- \* No employee will accept any gift or favor of a nature to imply an obligation which is inconsistent with the free and objective exercise of his/her professional responsibilities;
- \* In any public statement, employees will clearly distinguish between those which are personal views and those which are statements and positions on behalf of (Name of Agency) or agencies or individuals we serve;
- \* Each employee will be diligent in his/her responsibility to record and make available for review any and all case information which could contribute to sound decisions affecting a client or the public safety;
- \* Each employee will report without reservation any corrupt or unethical behavior which could affect either a client or the integrity of the organization;
- \* Employees will not discriminate against any client, employee or prospective employee on the basis of race, sex, creed, age, arrest or conviction record, or national origin;

- \* Each employee will maintain the integrity of private information, he/she will neither seek personal data beyond that needed to perform his/her responsibilities, nor reveal case information to anyone not having proper professional use for such;

- \* Any employee who is responsible for agency personnel action will make all appointments, promotions or dismissals only on the basis of merit and not in furtherance of partisan political interests.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality was one area of concern which direct service domestic violence service providers stressed, especially when asked about their utilization of ex-offenders or their potential utilization of ex-offenders. It is usually best, in addition to a Code of Ethics, to provide certain policies in regard to confidentiality, both in working with clients and in regard to the location of "safe houses" and shelters. The following policy was provided by one of the agencies responding to the survey:

"To try to guarantee confidentiality and safety as much as humanly possible for the staff, victims, volunteers, and shelter hosts, each person involved will be asked to sign a written agreement not to divulge any information about the victims, the shelter, hotels, or any other place that may be used. Any victim who gives out the names of safe house hosts or their addresses will BE DENIED FURTHER ASSISTANCE. Likewise, victims will be assured that all information about themselves will be kept in a locked place. Addresses of safe houses or the shelter will never be published or posted. Safety and confidentiality will be stressed continually in training. Crisis line workers or shelter/safe home hosts will be encouraged to call the escort back-up person if they are frightened or unsure about their own or a victim's safety." (Baton Rouge Area YWCA, Baton Rouge, LA)

## GENERAL PROCEDURES AND SCREENING

Three key issues--policy, screening and supervision--are essential to the proper usage of any employee or volunteer. But, when dealing with a special population of employee or volunteer in a domestic violence agency, such as ex-offenders, these three areas become even more crucial. These three areas must be handled properly not only to assure that the agency is having its staffing needs met properly, but that those ex-offenders who are used as employees or volunteers will have the greatest chance of success by being managed well.

Every agency will have to tailor its needs and resources into a management system which will work in balance with the services it provides. Individual practices, forms and procedures can only be decided upon by each domestic violence agency, but some good rules of thumb to follow are given here to enhance matching some of these administrative processes to the needs of ex-offenders who may be hired or used as volunteers.

### Policy Procedures

- \* Each domestic violence agency hoping to utilize ex-offenders should have a Volunteer Coordinator/Employment Officer for the agency who is responsible for recruiting, recordkeeping and scheduling. Agency needs should be analyzed BEFORE trying to utilize or look for volunteer/employees among the ex-offender population.

- \* Prepared job descriptions should be used. Each agency should decide through the use of the agency policy and Code of Ethics which positions are eligible to be filled by ex-offenders in general, or in particular according to classification of criminal act. This should be based on the kinds of agency requirements which are reasonable and necessary for the job to be done.
- \* Definite criteria should be established and also an employment/volunteerism APPEALS PROCEDURE. If the agency must deny employment/volunteerism to an applicant or terminate the usage of an employee/volunteer a pre-established procedure will protect the agency and eliminate many bad feelings.

### Screening

- \* Definite screening procedures (applications, interviews, etc.) should be established. The types of information which the domestic violence agencies surveyed by the project looked at were:
  1. The type of offense which the ex-offender had committed. (It is permissible to ask persons if they have been convicted of a crime, but not if they have been arrested.) This information must then be weighed against;
  2. The current situation of the ex-offender:
    - a. Skills and qualifications
    - b. Rehabilitation
      - \* Self-esteem
      - \* Length of time since incarceration without a repeat offense



- \* Freedom from alcohol and drug abuse
- \* Ability to deal appropriately with stress
- \* Ability to communicate
- \* Ability to follow the rules and regulations of the agency and accept authority

### 3. The job to be filled.

- \* When an individual is screened they should be apprised of the job description, agency policy, procedures, Code of Ethics and Confidentiality Agreement, if applicable. In this way the expectations of the ex-offender and the agency will be the same. Applicants should also be told of evaluation procedures or criteria for remaining in the positions, such as successful completion of training or a probationary period.
- \* In the case of volunteers, many agencies ask that the volunteers sign an agreement or "contract" with the domestic violence agency, stipulating the number of hours per week and the specific time period over which they pledge their volunteer staff support. (Most agencies have a minimum requirement of 3 to 4 hours per week for at least 6 months.) This procedure "connects" the volunteer to the job and gives them additional measurable ways of evaluating their performance.

#### Supervision

Comprehensive training programs are a must when dealing with any volunteer or employee in a business or service agency. Training and supervision are especially crucial issues in situations utilizing ex-offenders. Proper training and supervision can maximize the ex-offender employee/volunteer's chance to succeed. Many poorly managed businesses or public service agencies "cheat" their employee/volunteers out of the

chance to succeed simply by being unclear about agency expectations, procedures, processes, and by not providing sufficient input on a regular basis so that the employee/volunteer is given an optimal chance to grow and improve in the position. Since successes are difficult to come by in an ex-offenders world it is especially important that when presented with an opportunity to "prove" themselves, they not be handicapped by too nebulous a situation or instruction.

Supervision for all employees and volunteers should be good, not only for the agencies sake but also for the employee/volunteer's sake. Most of the agencies surveyed felt that with the exception of careful placement and screening of ex-offenders into appropriate positions, ex-offenders should otherwise receive identical supervision to that given other employees. Many agencies surveyed state that screened ex-offender employees did not commit more agency infractions or pose any greater potential risk to clients or the agency than other employees or volunteers. Awareness, but not "watchdogging" was the tone of the input from agencies on this question; some agencies expressed that it would be offensive to all concerned and create potential problems if too strict an eye were kept on ex-offenders or if they were treated differently from other employees or volunteers. Use of periodic evaluations and open communication between staff and management were thought sufficient by most agencies.

#### Staff Reinforcement

A fourth area, staff reinforcement and benefits should also be mentioned. Benefits both to the clients and community but also to

the agency staff (training, job skills, job experience, personal satisfaction, etc.) should be pointed out to volunteers and employees. Also, reinforcement in terms of certificates of recognition (see the "Attaperson" among the following pages) and other forms of personal recognition are important for all employees or volunteers in public service agencies who carry heavy client loads. Recognition is especially important for ex-offenders whose sense of self-esteem and feeling of community solidarity are so crucial to their continued successful interaction in society.

#### Summary

Careful policy making, selective screening and mindful attention to procedures and supervision can all be effective towards enhancing the employment or volunteerism activities of ex-offenders in domestic violence agencies. A probationary period, stipulation for the successful completion of training, an evaluation process and other management procedures of this nature can give positions in domestic violence agencies the important structure, fairness and performance feedback which is essential for creating good employees and maintaining good faith and productive attitudes.

#### GUIDELINE EXAMPLES

As part of the study, the Questionnaire that was circulated asked specifically for agencies to provide any sort of hiring guidelines that they used when evaluating job applicants. Agencies did not have extensive guidelines, but instead supplied remarks of which the following are some examples.

"All employees hired on 'as needed' basis. (In the case of ex-offenders) former employers are consulted for reference and/or contact is maintained with Adult Probation." (Family Shelter, San Angelo, TX)

"Employees: No mention of offender status in application or consideration of in hiring.

Volunteers: Screened during training, must not have battered for 1 year period--other offenses considered individually." (Domestic Abuse Intervention Program, Duluth, MN)

"(Batterers) must have completed treatment 6 months ago and remained non-violent; (otherwise) fulfill same qualifications as other volunteers." (Emerge: A Men's Counseling Service on Domestic Violence, Boston, MA)

"Guidelines are to ask if an applicant has every been convicted of a crime which would affect performance in the job they are applying for." (The Women's Center, Inc., Waukesha, WI)

"Guidelines are interest and skills in the issue. The project is set up to do crisis intervention for women who are abused by their husbands. Our counselors and volunteers are therefore predominately women. We have had some women ex-offenders volunteer with the project or join the staff if they had a special interest and skills in the issue." (Park Slope Safe Homes Project, Brooklyn, NY)

"Only that they (ex-offenders) be pleasant and ble to work with persons from all walks of life--we train for our needs." (Richland County Task Force on Domestic Violence, Mansfield, OH)

"For all staff and volunteers a police check is run regarding any offenses that would make individuals inappropriate to work with youth and families." (Youth Help, Hoquiam, WA)

TYPES OF SERVICES  
CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

- \* Individual/Family/Group Counseling (Battering)
- \* Individual/Family/Group Counseling (Incest)
- \* Emergency Shelter
- \* Parent Aide Programs (Parent Aides serve as models for parents and "parent the parent"; lay therapy)
- \* Hotlines (Listening, Referral or Reporting)
- \* Parents Self-Help Groups (Parents Anonymous, Parents United; betterment and support for abusing parents operating along the lines of Alcoholics Anonymous)
- \* Parenting Workshops
- \* Speakers Bureau & Community Outreach
- \* Foster Care Services & Home Finding
- \* Advocacy
- \* Legislative Outreach

TYPES OF SERVICES  
SPOUSE ABUSE

- \* 24 Hour Crisis Hotline (Listening, Suicide Intervention, Referrals, Emergency Housing)
- \* Emergency Housing
  - \*\* Shelters
  - \*\* Hotel Rooms
  - \*\* Safe Houses
- \* Professional Counseling or Referrals
- \* Peer Counseling and Bi-Lingual Peer Counseling
- \* Advocacy
  - \*\* Legal
  - \*\* Medical
  - \*\* Employment
  - \*\* Housing
  - \*\* Financial
  - \*\* Liaison to Partner
- \* Adjunct Services to Shelter Programs
  - \*\* Child Care Programs
  - \*\* Educational Programs
- \* On-Going Support Groups
- \* Speakers Bureau & Community Outreach
- \* Legislative Outreach

## TYPES OF SERVICES

### PERSONS WHO BATTER

(Generally programs for persons who batter exist in the main for men who batter their female partners; however, programs for abusive women who batter their partners are also in existence. Programs for men and women who abuse children are handled by child abuse agencies.)

- \* Stop Battering Workshops and Counseling
- \* Peer Counseling
- \* Advocacy
  - \*\* Legal
  - \*\* Employment
  - \*\* Liaison with Partner
- \* Drug and Alcohol Education
- \* Speakers Bureau & Community Education

## TYPES OF POSITIONS

### \* Management:

Program Director  
Assistant Director  
Volunteer Coordinator

### \* Counselors:

Professional Counselors  
Social Workers  
Child Care Case Workers

### \* Technical Support Staff:

Investigators (3rd Party Reporters)  
Peer Counselors/Group Leaders  
Partner Liaison Personnel  
Escort Personnel  
Safe House Hosts  
Hot-line Operators  
Teachers in Shelter Education Programs  
Trainers

Advocates:    Employment  
                 Housing  
                 Medical  
                 Legal  
                 Financial

### \* Clerical Staff:

Accountants/Bookkeepers  
Secretaries

### \* Public Relations Staff:

Community Education Personnel  
Public Information/Relations Personnel  
Speakers Bureau Personnel  
Lobbyists

### \* Other:

Fundraisers

### POSITION RECOMMENDATIONS

As is obvious, the types of positions listed previously exist in many but not all of the three types of domestic violence agencies being studied. Since their function in those different agencies is relatively the same, they are being discussed together.

#### Management

Management positions include Program Director, Assistant Director and in many cases Volunteer Coordinators. Generally, within the agencies surveyed there were no ex-offenders in management positions. This was, however, attributed to a lack of qualifications on the part of ex-offenders in terms of education and experience, not necessarily a lack of confidence or trust. Given proper management background, training and a public relations stance which would neither hide nor push to the fore the criminal history of the ex-offender, there were apparently no other obstacles to including ex-offenders in management positions. Positions such as Volunteer Coordinator can be considered to be an important management position within domestic violence agencies since the reliance on volunteer assistance is quite great. Usually Volunteer Coordinator positions require less formal training and education and a greater emphasis on "acquired" skills in organizing, recruiting and staff training. Volunteer ex-offender Volunteer Coordinators might be a special boon to under-funded, under-staffed domestic violence agencies.

#### Counselors

The class of counselors includes professional counselors, social workers, and child care workers. These positions were also infrequently

held by ex-offenders, and again because of lack of formally acquired educational requirements. Most professional counselors either employed by, or working on a voluntary basis in domestic violence agencies had education on a Master's level. And, as a general rule, ex-offenders as a group rarely have attained this level of education and therefore are unemployable or non-useable in these types of positions.

In the case of Child Care Workers, state statutes and licensing strictures in many states bar felons from obtaining the necessary licenses, thus restricting them in direct service capacities in child abuse agencies. This is also true in some cases for Marriage and Family Counseling professionals.

#### Technical Support Staff

Technical support staff covers a wide range of supportive agency positions which include: investigators; peer counselors/group leaders; partner liaison personnel; escort personnel; safe house hosts; hotline operators (all types of direct service agencies); teachers in shelter educational programs for women and in some cases their children; trainers; and a host of advocate positions.

Ex-offenders were found to be especially effective in several of these technical support staff positions, most notably as peer counselors/group leaders, investigators, partner liaison personnel and advocates. Legal advocates in agencies dealing in spouse abuse and programs for persons who batter were also seen as extremely viable positions for ex-offenders. As ex-offenders had been through the criminal justice system, they are seen as 'experts' and this special knowledge was



perceived as an asset and useable skill in assisting either partners seeking legal action against other partners, or a divorce, separation or support action or in aiding partners being charged with crimes related to domestic violence. Hot-lines that operate mainly as a peer counseling/referral service were another targeted technical support staff positions which was felt to be a good placement for ex-offenders; but although agencies thought that ex-offenders could provide special insights and empathy, the ability to deal with the stress created by the jobs was cited as a consideration for placing ex-offenders in these crucial positions. Roles as peer counselors in programs for batterers were being especially effectively filled by ex-offenders and usually those who had manifested past violent behavior (and achieved true rehabilitation) or who had been ex-batterers (who may or may not have been actually convicted).

#### Clerical Staff

In terms of clerical staff, programs were utilizing ex-offenders in part-time, and nominal cost capacities in this area. More often, the skill levels of ex-offenders were more in line with clerical positions and any interpersonal deficiencies became less apparent in these jobs than was true in client related positions.

Screening ex-offenders into accounting/bookkeeping positions became an important issue, however. Several agencies utilizing ex-offenders in these money sensitive areas reported thefts and embezzlements, and stated quite clearly that they would be careful in the future to keep ex-offenders convicted of economic crimes out of any such jobs, although they would still consider using this classification of ex-offender in other capacities within the agency.

#### Public Relations Staff

Community education personnel, public information/relations personnel and speakers bureau personnel are very similar kinds of positions within agencies with different degrees of scope, primary purpose, range and degree of sophistication. These functions are often either handled by those in management positions or others whose primary duties lie in another job function. A small number of programs surveyed had had favorable experience with ex-offenders used as community educators and speakers bureau personnel. One program, the Crisis Center of Arkansas, Inc., used work-release inmates to make presentations about their domestic violence agency in local schools and reported that it was extremely successful. It is important to note that also in some of these instances ex-offenders were especially effective public speakers when they were rehabilitated after conviction for crimes of domestic violence.

#### Other

Under the survey category of other, Fundraiser was the only "other" classification of employee/volunteer to surface. Usually only extremely large and sophisticated agencies had a job classification of Fundraiser and these were not positions filled by ex-offenders. Therefore, it is only possible to conjecture that fundraising positions might be jeopardized by possible public exposure of a past criminal record.

#### Summary

Several major points of emphasis and consideration come out of the survey research in hiring ex-offenders into various positions

with the three targeted types of domestic violence agencies.

A. Agencies were extremely reluctant to hire ex-offenders who had been convicted of crimes of violence and domestic violence to work as service providers in direct service agencies (with the exception of programs for batterers). This was especially true of child abuse agencies. The safety, assurance and well-being of clients were major considerations and many agencies felt that clients would feel a loss of confidence in the agency should any past violent offenders be included on the program staff.

B. Child abuse agencies were the least apt to use any ex-offenders in client contact positions--partially this was true because most child protective agencies are more highly structured and sophisticated, and have licensing requirements for those working directly with the clients of these programs. Irregardless of licensing restrictions, child abuse agencies understandably exercise a higher degree of caution than other agencies. Special child abuse oriented groups such as Parent's Anonymous, however, make use of ex-abusers and ex-offenders to reach potentially abusing parents.

C. There is little cross-sex usage of ex-offenders in domestic violence agencies which severely limits the number of ex-offenders being used in the field of domestic violence endeavor. A majority of programs surveyed and which exist are in business to provide direct services which of course implies client contact either in person or by telephone. And, the bulk of programs in existence deal in the areas of child abuse and spouse abuse. Spouse abuse programs in the main are for women; programs for those who batter partners are in the main for men.

Since the proportional number of offenders is converse (roughly 95% of the offender population are men and 5% women) this creates extremely delimiting factors towards using ex-offenders in domestic violence programs. Although child abuse agencies use ex-offenders more often than spouse abuse agencies, they are generally reluctant to use ex-offenders in any kind of direct service capacity. Spouse abuse programs, which are also chiefly direct service agencies, deal mainly with women and in many cases their children (shelter services). These agencies prefer to use "women" to provide services in client contact capacities. Again, this is a limiting factor when considering usage of the total ex-offender population. Continued possibility or even the "feeling" of a threat caused, not by ex-offender status, but by physical size and sex stereotyping becomes the issue for many spouse abuse agencies.

In regards to services for those who batter (usually programs for men), men generally are the service providers--but even though the numbers of these programs are increasing, they are still greatly outnumbered by the programs and shelters for women and children.

This total isolation of the sexes may become less rigid in the future with greater cooperation, awareness and increased emphasis and numbers of programs for both men and women. It is interesting to note that in St. Louis, Missouri, two programs, RAVEN: Rape and Violence End Now (a counseling resource and support service group for men) works cooperatively with the St. Louis Abused Women's Support Project to mutually solicit financial resources for the End Violence Fund.

D. Other interesting phenomena to note in staffing for domestic violence agencies is the propensity for those agencies to later hire victims to whom they provided services. This cross-over also is true of former abusers or clients of other programs who "stay with" the agency once they become rehabilitated. This system of employment or volunteerism by "personal contacts" is typical in the business world and its seepage into public sector agencies is also common practice. Some groups, however, specifically recruit former clients (see Example Programs, Domestic Abuse Intervention Program, Duluth, MN). One very important item to point out which was raised by many agencies is the difficulty that former offenders have "crossing-over" into the field of becoming service providers. Often, agencies said that ex-offenders had difficulty separating their personal issues from the client's issues or that they had difficulty "re-living" painful experiences by dealing with the problems of clients.

#### UNDER-WRITTEN, NOMINAL OR NO COST POSITIONS

If a domestic violence agency is severely restricted financially, as most are, there are several other ways to have more staff without paying full salaries out of the agency budget. These methods are valid whether or not agencies are utilizing the talents of ex-offenders but the project survey found that the following underwritten positions were being filled in some domestic violence agencies by ex-offenders.

#### CETA

Although CETA positions may be in jeopardy in the near future, they are still being utilized a great deal especially in the area of providing basic skills to employees. Often, ex-offenders will have other accompanying employment problems which make them eligible for CETA, such as chronic unemployment and lack of job skills and education. Ex-offenders may be eligible for employment within a domestic violence agency either on an Adult Work Experience (AWE) or an On-The-Job (OJT) contract. As the ex-offender is provided training and experience, the agency has an extra service provider at no cost (AWE) or minimal cost (OJT).

#### Internships and Practicums

Internships and practicums differ in the level of experience and usually the duration of the time spent in the work experience, but both are educational programs from institutions where college credit for work experience may be applied towards a degree program. For a domestic violence agency to hook up with this type of assistance, an agency must contact the educational institutions to see what their experiential

training site needs are. The domestic violence agency may be asked to provide concrete training and more extensive supervision, but based on the experience of those agencies responding to the project survey, domestic violence agencies found these sorts of programs provided terrific staff resource opportunities. Again, these programs would be open to any student and therefore, ex-offenders who had returned to school would be eligible if they met the educational institutions academic and other requirements for an internship or practicum. Usually the cost to the domestic violence agency work experience site is nominal or nil.

#### College Work Study

This program is especially good for ex-offenders who may be going through a community college, vocational training school or regular four-year educational institution. Eligibility is based on financial need rather than academic expertise (usually the criteria for internships or practicums). College Work Study students may work on a part-time basis at approved agency sites. Contracts between the domestic violence agency and the educational institution stipulate what portion of the wages the work site agency will be responsible for and what portion will be paid out of work study funds.

#### VISTA

VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is an adjunct program the larger federal governmental agency, ACTION. As of April, 1981 there were 19 VISTA projects with 77 VISTA Volunteers focusing on the problems of domestic violence.<sup>19</sup> Several of the agencies responding to the

project survey indicated that they had VISTA volunteers working in community action and advocacy capacities. For information about obtaining a VISTA volunteer and slot within your agency (VISTA's are usually paid a low yearly salary by the VISTA program), contact: VISTA, 806 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20525.

#### Diversion Programs/Community Service Orders

Diversion programs differ from Community Service Orders in that when a person is processed through a diversion program they are not taken to court and convicted of a crime, and therefore are not in a technical sense an offender or ex-offender. Usually the person makes a "contract" with the diversion program to do specific things to improve their life stance or make restitution for the offense, such as going to school, drug and alcohol counseling, and in many instances "volunteer" service to site agencies within the community.

Community Service Orders, like Probation, stipulate a sentence. After the offender has been taken to court and found guilty they are charged to perform certain conditions to avoid incarceration. Community Service Orders are exactly that--the offender will be ordered to perform "volunteer" service within the community. Often these Orders are carried out at approved site agencies. Probation may also stipulate that service be performed within the community.

Although diversion/community service orders/probation are inexpensive ways in which domestic violence agencies may gain valuable human resources, some agencies reported that these "volunteers" were more trouble than they were worth in terms of tardiness, absence and lack of skills.

Although this was not true, in all cases, generally offenders/ex-offenders hired as paid staff or who genuinely volunteered their time and services to the domestic violence agency were much more successful on the job than those under enforced "volunteerism".

#### Targeted Job Tax Credits (TJCT) & WIN/Welfare Tax Credit

The Federal Government offers two kinds of income tax credits to private employers who hire hard-to-employ workers--in this case, ex-offenders (felons) who are economically disadvantaged and hired no more than 5 years after release from prison or date of conviction, whichever is more recent.

The TJTC is an elective credit applied to wages paid between Jan. 1, 1979, and Dec. 31, 1981 (it is unknown if this program will be extended) for those certain targeted groups of employees. Generally, the workers must have been hired after Sept. 26, 1978. The credit is 50 percent of first year wages up to \$6,000 per employee and 25 percent of second year wages up to \$6,000. This means a maximum allowable credit of \$3,000 per employee the first year, and \$1,500 the second. The credit applies only to employees hired into a business or trade. Maids, chauffeurs, and other household employees do not qualify.

WIN works the same way as TJTC, but also allows employers to claim credit for hiring nonbusiness (household) workers for one year. For information about TJCT or WIN contact should be made with the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration in Washington, DC (20213).

#### RESULTS

In a short summary fashion, some of the major facts uncovered during the course of the survey project that impact on funding, structure and staffing of domestic violence agencies are:

- \* 31.5% of the agencies responding to the survey were involved in all areas of domestic violence, i.e., child abuse, spouse abuse and persons who batter.
- \* Agencies which utilize ex-offenders were somewhat more likely to charge fees than agencies which do not utilize ex-offenders -- 42% and 36% respectively.
- \* The Federal Government was the largest funding source of domestic violence agencies.
- \* The most marked difference in funding sources between agencies which utilize ex-offenders and those who do not is in state funding and special grants. Twenty-two percent fewer agencies utilizing ex-offenders received state funding, but 10% more received special grants from foundations.
- \* 95% of all responding agencies had paid employees, 68% of the agencies also use volunteers and 55% use others, such as interns, college work study students, or CETA employees.
- \* The ratio of paid employees to volunteers to "other" is similar for both agencies which report they do not use ex-offenders (7.6/18.5/2.4) and agencies which do use ex-offenders (6.3/15.6/2.3).
- \* Overall, agencies reported counselor and technical support staff as being the greatest number of staff; these positions also included the largest numbers of volunteers.
- \* Salaries varied widely: Counselors (both peer and professional) were \$8,000 to \$18,000 yearly; Management were \$12,000 to \$18,000; Clerical workers were \$8,000 to \$9,000; Technical Support Staff and Public Relations were around \$10,000 yearly.
- \* In governmental agencies, management salaries were consistently somewhat higher than in the private, non-profit agencies, although counselor and clerical salaries were very similar.



- \* Ex-offenders were volunteers more often than paid employees.
- \* Most agencies reported that they utilized either men and women both, or just women ex-offenders. Past or present use of only male ex-offenders was infrequent, and was chiefly in agencies with viable men's support groups.
- \* There was no significant difference between salaries for ex-offender and other staff for comparable positions, but ex-offenders most often held lesser positions within domestic violence agencies.
- \* Ex-offenders were much more likely to be employees or volunteers in private, non-profit agencies rather than governmental agencies.

# JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Position: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Job Classification: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Department: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Function: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Scope of Position: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Person assigned to position: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Authority: \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. Organizational Relationships:

Direction Received: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Direction Given: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Coordinates with: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cooperates with: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Communicates with: \_\_\_\_\_

## 9. Responsibilities:

## 10. Qualifications:

## 11. Restrictions:

Date of Job Description: \_\_\_\_\_ Month of Review: \_\_\_\_\_

(Supervisor) \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT, Inc.  
CERTIFICATE

For Your Outstanding Performance  
You are Awarded  
"ONE ATTAPERSON"

One Thousand "Attapersons" Qualifies you to be  
a Leader of People,  
Work Overtime with a Smile,  
Explain Assorted Problems to Management  
And be Looked Upon as a Local Hero  
Without a Raise in Pay.

DATE

PRESIDENT

NOTE: One "Awshit" wipes the board clean and  
you have to start all over again.

## EMPLOYEE EVALUATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

### CLIENT AND PUBLIC CONCERNS:

Concern for public image and appearance? \_\_\_\_\_

Cooperation and attitude? \_\_\_\_\_

Resourcefulness and knowledge of job? \_\_\_\_\_

Stability and performance in crisis? \_\_\_\_\_

### ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS:

Attendance and dependability? \_\_\_\_\_

Performance of tasks/initiative, quantity and quality of work? \_\_\_\_\_

Cooperation and attitude? \_\_\_\_\_

Work habits? \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended actions for improvement of performance: \_\_\_\_\_

## TRAINING FOR EX-OFFENDERS

We found among our survey respondents that training in most agencies was a combination of formal and informal or on-the-job training. Most formal training was either conducted by a staff person responsible for that function or by community professionals who donated their time to the agency for training purposes. As would be expected, larger agencies had more sophisticated training mechanisms; small agencies conducted "training" on a more one-to-one basis.

What the "Hiring of Ex-Offenders in Domestic Violence Programs" survey was most concerned with was how training differed for ex-offenders used either in paid positions or as volunteers. from training given to "regular" employees/volunteers.

The results of the study of respondents shows that TRAINING FOR EX-OFFENDERS USED EITHER AS EMPLOYEES OR VOLUNTEERS IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCIES IS THE SAME AS FOR OTHER PERSONNEL. This practice was found to be true with a few exceptions. The most notable exception is found in the area where use of ex-offenders is enjoying the most well received utilization, that of peer counseling in battering counseling groups.

The ex-client/ex-batterer/ex-offender is generally required to have had special "rehabilitative" training in addition to the regular counseling training required of "other" employees or volunteers. An example of this is: "Volunteers with a history of violence must undergo 30 hours of intensive training like all volunteers in addition to the RAVEN counseling group." (Raven: Rape and Violence End Now, St. Louis, MO)

Another important point to draw attention to is the fact that generally ex-offenders are less educated than other personnel who might

be hired or used as a volunteer by the domestic violence agency. In this sense, their lack of "formal training" prevents them from being utilized in what would generally be considered the "higher positions" within the agencies.

General training practices vary widely from agency to agency, dependent on the size, location, service provided and above all budget (or lack thereof). On the following pages are some direct excerpts from domestic violence agencies in response to the query about training, and a general beginning outline to familiarize trainees with basic domestic violence issues. Each agency must decide, of course, what would be appropriate for its own organizational realities and tasks.

#### Agency Examples--Both General and in Regard to Ex-Offenders

"A Certified Family Therapist provides training in a group setting for handling children. One-to-one training by management or senior staff for special needs. A professional Volunteer Coordinator trains volunteers in crisis intervention, etc." (Family Shelter, San Angelo, TX)

"Training required is specific to the client population to be served and the potential of the worker. Criteria is not rigid." (Crisis and Counseling Center, Augusta, ME)

"60 hours of training (is given) all volunteers."  
(Domestic Abuse Intervention Program, Duluth, MN)

"Training is conducted on a one-to-one basis. We begin with a study series on the issue of wife abuse. 4 hours are direct listening to calls on a training telephone. The amount of time needed for training depends on the individual."  
(Wife Abuse Service of the YWCA, Memphis, TN)

"40 hours training--20 hours in-service with supervision. Training in hotline counseling, counseling techniques, information on domestic violence, child abuse, legal options, community resources, staff professionalism, etc."  
(Temporary Assistance for Women, Las Vegas, NV)

"(Ex-offenders receive the) same training as other employees who work for us. Initial training and on-going we provide and (also) OJT. Initial 16 hours orientation; 16 information form and policies; other training available."  
(Underground Railroad, Saginaw, MI)

"Child abuse field, counseling techniques, bi-lingual/bi-cultural methodology, court advocacy, provision of supportive social services, case documentation requirements, writing and verbal communications."  
(Plaza Community Center, Los Angeles, CA)

"For offenders, (there is a ) session with President of Agency, judge and adult probation or parole agency; session with juvenile judge and child juvenile probation office; session with director of family and youth department; session with warden from state facility and public defender visit to county jail."  
(Lycoming County, Dept. of Children and Youth, Williamsport, PA)

"All staff have the same training; they are taught basic phone skills along with daily routine, filling out of forms, learning what their capabilities are and knowing to what extent they should become involved. Basic routine, training comes from medical, legal, psychological, and various other areas in communication. Also training in referral sources and what services are provided by other agencies." (Richland County Task Force on Domestic Violence, Mansfield, OH)

SPOUSE/CHILD ABUSE  
EXAMPLE TRAINING CURRICULUM

**I. CLIENT RELATED**

**A. Introduction to Domestic Violence**

**1. Spouse Abuse**

- a. What is battering?
- b. What are the statistics?
- c. Films/Examples
- d. What are the alternatives

**2. Child Abuse**

- a. Definitions: neglect, battering, incest
- b. Interpersonal dynamics: power in the family
- c. Treatment options
- c. Mandatory report versus client confidentiality

**B. Related Areas**

**1. Drugs (including alcohol)**

- a. Types
- b. Use and Abuse
- c. Addiction and withdrawal
- d. Overdose

**2. Sexuality**

**a. Heterosexual Issues**

1. Expectations/Social Pressures
2. Romance, marriage, infidelity, separation, divorce, etc.
3. Rape

**c. Other Issues**

1. Transvestism
2. Transsexuality

**C. Counseling:**

**1. Hotline/Crisis Intervention**

- a. Definition of "crisis"
- b. Intervention
  1. Methods
  2. Consequences
- c. Role-playing
  1. Helping and being helped
  2. Self awareness
- d. Communication
  1. Facts/feelings
  2. Listening/feedback

**2. Counseling Fundamentals**

- a. Confidentiality
- b. Client-centered therapy
  1. Empathy
  2. Acceptance
  3. Validation
- c. Decision-making and making choices
- d. Assertiveness
  1. Definitions: assertiveness, aggression, and non-assertive behavior (including passive and passive-aggressive)
  2. Setting limits in the counseling situation.

### 3. Special Counseling Problems

#### a. Guilt

#### b. Depression/Suicide

##### 1. Symptoms of depression

##### 2. Evaluation of suicidal risk: talk versus action

#### D. Advocacy

##### 1. Advocacy as support through a service system

##### 2. Advocacy as participation in planning programs, laws, etc.

##### 3. Abuse Prevention Laws

#### E. Reference Volumes

## II. AGENCY RELATED

#### A. Services Provided by Agency

#### B. Personnel Policies

##### 1. Overall hiring policy

##### 2. Code of Ethics

##### 3. Personnel Policies and Procedures

#### C. How Services Are to be Provided by the Agency

#### D. Stress and Burn-Out

### RECRUITING EX-OFFENDERS

### AS EMPLOYEES OR VOLUNTEERS

Very few of the agencies utilizing ex-offenders either as paid staff members or volunteers, who responded to the survey, indicated that the agency specifically recruited ex-offenders for positions. Since an additional query was asked about what other agencies referred ex-offenders to the agencies being surveyed, for employment or volunteerism, supplemental perspectives were gathered on which to base recruitment strategies.

#### Homework

Before a campaign is begun, to recruit employees or volunteers for a domestic violence agency should:

#### A. Have a volunteer coordinator or personnel coordinator.

#### B. Know exactly how the agency wants and is able to utilize ex-offenders.

##### 1. Have the policy written up by the Board of Directors.

##### 2. Have job descriptions ready with any special restrictions for those convicted of specific crimes.

##### 3. Know in advance what the agency and the community can live with.

#### C. Especially when recruiting ex-offenders as employees, be sure definite personnel policies are laid out, including a code of ethics, an evaluation and appeals procedure, should employment denial be challenged or an employee discharged.



- D. If recruiting volunteers, (in addition to all those items listed in C.) decide if the agency will require a "Contract" that commits the volunteer to a specific number of hours over a set period of time.
- E. Have a confidentiality agreement prepared, if it is necessary to the services the agency is providing, that everyone (volunteers, employees and clients) will sign.

UPON RECRUITMENT BE SURE THAT ALL ARE AWARE OF AGENCY POLICY:

#### The Campaign

Domestic Violence agencies should then decide:

1. What Recruiting Methods Will Be Used
2. Where Ex-Offenders May be Recruited

#### Methods of Recruitment

Any of the following methods of recruitment may be used, dependent on the fiscal restraints of the agency:

- \* Word of Mouth/Phone Calls
- \* Leaflets and Brochures
- \* Posters
- \* Radio Public Service Announcements
- \* Local Newspapers
- \* Television
- \* Newsletters or Bulletins
- \* Personal Presentations (Speaker's Bureau)

#### WHERE TO RECRUIT EX-OFFENDERS

- \* Diversion Programs
- \* Community Service Order Programs
- \* Restitution Programs
- \* Probation Departments
- \* Parole Boards
- \* Work-Release Programs
- \* Pre-Release Programs
- \* Jails
- \* Law Enforcement Agencies
- \* State Job Service
- \* CETA
- \* Rehabilitation/Human Service Agencies
- \* Civic Organizations
- \* Churches
- \* Ex-Offender Organizations and Programs
- \* Educational Institutions

#### Special Organizations to Consider:

- \* Salvation Army
- \* Alcoholic's Anonymous
- \* Parent's Anonymous
- \* OAR Office

### Referral Agencies

A vast variety of public service agencies referred ex-offenders to domestic violence agencies either as enforced "volunteers" (diversion or community service orders), regular volunteers or paid employees to domestic violence agencies to assist in some capacity in the agency operation.

Criminal justice agencies such as probation, parole, work-release programs and jails or law enforcement agencies were chief among agencies making contacts for the utilization of ex-offenders in domestic violence agencies. Other groups were CETA, Job Service, and other human service agencies such as drug and alcohol abuse programs.

### Client to Service Provider

As mentioned in other places in this manuscript, it is not uncommon for a client of a domestic violence agency to later become a volunteer or even paid employee of that agency. In the cases where the client has been a perpetrator of a crime of domestic violence, they are also considered to be an ex-offender (whether convicted or not).

In many cases the ex-offender has been a "client" of another human service agency or a criminal justice agency, and has previously been a recipient of services rather than a service provider. Throughout this document, it has been noted by the commentary of the project's responding agencies that this transition from "client" to professional service provider is a rough

one for many ex-offenders. The very "connectedness" to the issues at hand which may allow ex-offenders special insights and empathy and the ability to relate to clients also very often makes it difficult for the ex-offender to separate their personal issues from the issues of the client. This inability to maintain objectivity about their role as a service provider often puts them at a professional disadvantage and may inhibit their ability to rise to more advanced positions within these types of agencies.

### Volunteer to Employee

From the domestic violence agencies surveyed, it was difficult to ascertain the incidence with which ex-offenders used in a volunteer capacity were then hired into paid slots within the domestic violence agency. Most agencies did not provide answers to this question. This is probably accounted for by several factors: the relative youth of many domestic violence agencies (years in operation); the agency budget; and the kind of personnel information which is kept or which is easy to access. Several agencies commented that all paid positions were full, and there were no further funds to hire new paid employees. Among the few agencies who did provide an answer to this question, numbers of ex-offenders utilized as volunteers who were later hired as paid employees ranged anywhere from 10 to 100 percent.

### Employee To Employee in Other Agencies

Agencies surveyed were also asked to ascertain if the skills learned on the job in the domestic violence agency increased the "hireability" of employed ex-offenders when changing jobs. Again, most agencies were unable to supply the needed information, probably due to the small numbers of ex-offenders employed, and lack of follow-up procedures on employees leaving the agency. Also, agencies who did supply the requested information had very wide and disparate ranges of percentages in response to this query. Percentages ranged from 3 - 5%; some agencies reported 50% and several others said 100% of ex-offenders originally employed in the domestic violence agency later got jobs based on their experience with the agency.

### BENEFITS

#### TO OFFENDERS:

- \* Increase Self-Esteem
- \* Build Job Skills
- \* Provide Economic Support
- \* Achieve Community Integration

#### TO PROGRAMS:

- \* Provide Additional Valuable Staff Resources, Especially in the Category of Volunteers
- \* Dedication and Interest
- \* Specialized Knowledge in Some Areas (i.e. legal processes; "streetwise")
- \* Understanding and Empathy

### PROBLEMS

- \* Unfavorable Community Attitudes
- \* Unacceptable Behavior Which Could Harm Clients or The Program
- \* Actual Return to Crime
- \* Alcohol and/or Drug Abuse
- \* Lack of Education
- \* Lack of Vocational Skills
- \* Poor Work Habits
- \* Poor Interpersonal and Social Skills
- \* Conflicts When Changing Roles From Ex-Offender To Professional (Separation of Self from Issues)

### Summary of Programs Never Having Used Ex-Offenders

During the course of this project, "Hiring Ex-Offenders in Domestic Violence Programs" an equal effort was made to obtain input and information from domestic violence programs who had never utilized the services of ex-offenders as either paid employees or volunteers. The wealth of commentary from these agencies made it possible to gain a perspective on why the usage rate (15.5% of the agencies responding, or 3.3% of the total sample) of ex-offenders in domestic violence agencies was so low.

The following major points can be drawn from the information received from these non-ex-offender utilizing agencies:

A. The vast majority of these agencies have never considered utilizing ex-offenders; primarily because the issue or opportunity has never presented itself. Ex-offenders are still a minority group without an advocate; a true public relations effort is necessary in order to make the American public aware of the plight of the offender after incarceration. The lock-them-up-and-forget-about-them attitude still prevails.

B. Overall, agencies were unaware of state restrictions which might exist to bar ex-offenders from their agencies; however, (again) this minority group's needs had not been addressed in most agencies, and the hiring policies of the agencies took a stance neither for nor against utilizing ex-offenders. For those who provided conjectures about future utilization of ex-offenders, the majority stated that the nature of the offense would have to be known and considered. It was often emphasized that the "individual" person and their circumstances would be the key factor in a decision to hire.

C. The majority of responding agencies who had never used ex-offenders indicated that they would consider utilizing them. A smaller number of programs were very interested in and supportive of the idea. Very few agencies were totally against the idea.

One other point which must be noted is that while the Questionnaire clearly and repeatedly stated that the project was interested in all categories of ex-offenders, both men and women irregardless of the crime committed, a great deal of the answers and comments suggested that the agencies thought (mainly) of only ex-batterers and/or abusers. Again, as reiteration of statements already made in this manuscript, the public mind tends to think of offenders as violent offenders and a menace to the physical well-being of society.

#### Conclusion

Very briefly, in conclusion, several points need to be re-emphasized. When discussing the potential utilization of ex-offenders in domestic violence agencies, the main and not surprising obstacles are public opinion, prejudice and stereotyping. However, it is important to note that in relationship to domestic violence agencies who serve chiefly women and children this stereotyping goes beyond perceiving offenders as violent offenders but to perceiving all offenders as men and for that reason unfit to provide services to the clients of these agencies. Sex-stereotyping in our culture is seen no more powerfully in our society than in the same sex client/service provider relationship in domestic violence agencies.

For those agencies having broken the prejudicial barriers and also who had the opportunity to use ex-offenders in their provision

of services, the crucial issue was not the crime or subsequent incarceration, but rather the lack of skills, both interpersonal and vocational, which handicapped the ex-offender. Although in many agencies understanding, empathy and being "streetwise" was a great asset, lack of job experience and the subsequent acquired talents were still a problem.

Another devastating problem for many domestic violence agencies were budgets. These budgetary restrictions put strains on the possible utilization of ex-offenders in many agencies who needed the utmost they could get in terms of experienced and educated staff for their sparse dollars. As budgets decrease as they are expected to do, agencies are willing to take fewer chances or to use personnel who require more initial time, training and supervision. As national unemployment rises and the laws of "natural selection" continue to operate in fuller force it will grow increasingly more difficult for the ex-offender who is handicapped often not only by past incarceration, but present lack of employable skills.

Although the picture is fairly grim for employing ex-offenders in domestic violence agencies, (mainly based on pragmatic budgetary conditions) there is a vast gap of services which are and can be filled by ex-offenders working as volunteers. Volunteerism will continue to increase in importance as a practice to be relied upon by domestic violence agencies with their growing case loads and shrinking budgets. Even though forced "volunteerism" is reported to be less than successful in helping to augment domestic violence agency staff, true volunteerism

by ex-offenders in positions as advocates and peer counselors is the area which is gaining a toe-hold of acceptance and which can be expected to grow greatly in the next few years. In the domestic violence field, first services for children were developed, then, in the past few years, services for women have gained momentum. Now, there seems to be an increase in "preventative" programs for those who batter or abuse. Volunteer men's support and anti-battering therapy groups in some cases actively recruit their clients once they have been rehabilitated. These groups feel that the ex-offender/ex-batterer is a very powerful service provider and role model for clients.

Even with failing budgets, volunteerism will undoubtedly be the key to keeping service provision going in the area of domestic violence. With proper screening, training and supervision, ex-offenders, both men and women, may be of assistance to this area of endeavor and while improving their job skills and establishing themselves in the community, help to enhance the lives of millions of victims of domestic violence.

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