

Recent local news articles on the “CRAFT” program reflect a renewed interest in this Forensics Community Reentry project. To help the community better understand the project and what it means to them, the Cameron/Elk MH/MR Program (CE MH/MR Program) has compiled a list of questions and answers.

Updates to the program will be on the agenda of the Cameron/Elk MH/MR Governing Board meeting, scheduled for Thursday, July 14, 2011 at the Cabin Kitchen in Emporium at noon.

- What does “CRAFT” stand for?  
CRAFT is the “Comprehensive Regional Adult Forensic Treatment Program.” Cameron and Elk MH/MR and the project partners developed a comprehensive, holistic treatment model to address the needs of the non-violent, mental health/substance abuse offender population.
- How is it funded?  
The CE MH/MR Program and Dickinson Center, Inc. have been providing forensic services for over ten years, funded through state/county Mental Health dollars as well as demonstration grant funding through the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). As the money decreased, we looked for additional funding opportunities. The latest grants which led to this project were a federal Department of Justice “Second Chance Act Adult Reentry Demonstration Grant” and a state PCCD Criminal Justice Advisory Board Initiatives funding. Both were awarded late last fall.
- How is the program designed?  
The CRAFT project has been carefully and scientifically designed to use best practice co-occurring treatment principles within the framework of a team approach with three distinct phases specifically, so that all six fundamental principles of evidence-based correctional practices are thoroughly addressed. In the CRAFT model, all six of these principles are sewn throughout the three stage program.
- Who gets into this program? And how many people are we talking about?  
To be eligible, a person must be an Elk, Cameron, or Potter County resident, a non-violent offender, in either Elk or Potter County Prison. They must have a mental health and substance abuse issue and they must commit to participating fully in the program and to their community reentry plan. Persons can not be court ordered to participate. This includes all populations over the age of 18 who are involved in the Criminal Justice System, such as, Transition Age, Older Adult, Veterans and those with Developmental and Physical Disabilities, to name a few. CE MH/MR proposes to serve 100 people per year. The residential part will serve a small portion of the total group, approximately 15 to 18 people per year.
- What is considered non violent?  
Persons served through CRAFT are serving time for offenses such as DUI, non-payment of Child Support, non-payment of fines, retail theft, harassment, paraphernalia, misdemeanor offenses, etc.
- What is included in the program?  
When a person enters the jail, an initial assessment determines if they are eligible and willing to be involved. Additional assessments include: mental health, drug

and alcohol and vocational. In addition employment, education/training, health and housing needs are determined

An individualized community reentry plan is developed and the person works with the CRAFT team while the person is in jail.

As the person nears release after serving their sentence, the case manager helps with linkages to other community based services, including assistance with finding safe and affordable housing. All participants have served their full Sentence. This project does not give the option of early release.

- What about this housing?

Two of the main barriers to a successful return to the community are access to affordable housing and employment. For some individuals in the program, changing their lives means changing where they live and the program includes a transitional housing opportunity.

National statistics show that the most critical time for success of re-entry is the first two months after release.

The project proposes eight transitional apartments where additional intense training and support would happen, based on the person's treatment plan, for up to nine months. After successful transition, the person would move to a more permanent housing situation.

The original plan was for an apartment complex to allow for group sessions, as well as, more cost effective and efficient delivery of services from community agencies, such as, case management, housing supports, medication monitoring, Certified Peer Specialist, Employment Supports, etc. Meeting the individual's needs and providing intense supports after release will assist in reducing the likelihood of returning to jail. A live in residence manager was included in this proposal. This onsite resident manager would have provided 24 hour access to support, as well as, enhance public safety.

- Since the housing component will not be a single site what are the housing plans now?

The alternative is to use eight or nine designated apartments scattered around the three partner counties of Elk, Cameron and Potter. Although Community supports will continue to be provided, this will make it more difficult and less efficient. The on site residence manager will not be conducive in scattered sites. Currently people coming from prison may have help from a case manager in finding an apartment, so this approach builds on an already longstanding practice.

- Are participants in transitional housing through CRAFT entitled the benefits of the Fair Housing Act and Americans with Disabilities Act?

Yes, CRAFT participants are entitled to all the benefits under both Acts. Under these Acts, individuals are protected from discrimination based on their disability status

- What are the goals of the project?

The overall goal of CRAFT is to reduce recidivism by 50% over five years.

Outcomes to be achieved are:

- Decreases in crime
- Increases in employment and enrollment in educational programs
- Reduction in violations of supervised release

- Increases in payment of child support
- Increases in housing opportunities
- Reductions in drug and alcohol abuse
- Increases in participation in substance abuse and mental health services.

This project allows Elk, Cameron, or Potter County individuals the opportunity to become contributing members of their community.

- What are the costs for this?

The total money from all sources (federal and state) coming to our counties is \$392,761 per year. Of this, \$176,705 is going to pay for all the services in the Elk County jail, and in the community. The remainder is budgeted for rental subsidies for transitional housing, Co-Occurring training certification for the treatment team, travel reimbursement for the treatment team that provides services in the community, as well as Administrative oversight and reporting requirements at CE MH/MR.

Without the grant awards, the Elk County tax payers would be responsible for approximately \$67,000 to provide mandated Mental Health services in the jail. The additional CRAFT services in the jail and the community would be discontinued.

- What happens when these grant ends?

CE MH/MR Program will continue to look for other funding streams and will apply for renewal grants as they become available. We will continue to build on and rely on the strong collaborative work of all the partners in the project, who have historically worked together to better the communities. We will explore using the dollars saved by reducing recidivism. The cost to continue the program should become less as the project reaches its goal to reduce recidivism.

Detailed information on re-entry policies and model programs can be found at:  
A Best Practice Approach to Community Reentry from Jails for Inmates with Co-occurring Disorders: The APIC Model

<http://www.gainscenter.samhsa.gov/pdfs/reentry/apic.pdf>

Moving Toward Evidence-Based Housing Programs for Persons with Mental Illness in Contact with the Justice System

<http://www.gainscenter.samhsa.gov/pdfs/ebp/MovingTowardEvidence-BasedHousing.pdf>

Integrating Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for Justice-Involved Persons with Co-Occurring Disorders

<http://www.gainscenter.samhsa.gov/pdfs/ebp/IntegratingMentalHealth.pdf>

Reentry program examples:

[http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/program\\_examples](http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/program_examples)

Reentry housing program examples:

<http://www.reentrypolicy.org/reentry-program-examples?issue=Housing>