

Early Implementation Experiences of OJJDP's Tribal Green Reentry Programs

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Background

In 2009, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) awarded Tribal Juvenile Detention and Reentry Green Demonstration (henceforth, Green Reentry) grants to three American Indian tribes: the Hualapai Indian Tribe (AZ), the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MS), and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe (SD).

The grants provided up to \$700,000 for 4 years, including an initial planning year and 3 years of service delivery. The Green Reentry funding was intended to achieve the following goals:

- to provide services to help detained and reentering youth successfully reintegrate into the community, using risk and needs assessments, educational and vocational programming, mental health services, substance abuse programs, family strengthening, and extended reentry aftercare;
- to support the development of partnerships to help tribes implement green technologies and environmentally sustainable activities and to create long-term environmental and economic benefits to tribes; and
- to support each tribe's ability to implement, monitor, and maintain tribal juvenile detention standards.

Grantees were required to establish partnerships between the tribal agency applicant and a higher learning institution with expertise in green technology. In addition, grantees are receiving technical assistance throughout their grant periods from the Tribal Juvenile Detention and Reentry Resource and Technical Assistance Center, managed by the Education Development Center.

The Green Reentry grantees are also required to participate in an evaluation. Under contract from the Library of Congress (via an Interagency Agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice) RTI and American Indian Development Associates (AIDA) are conducting the Cross-Site Evaluation of OJJDP's Green Reentry Program. The purpose of the evaluation is to document the implementation of the Green Reentry programs and determine the impact of the programming on the tribal youth and communities served. The evaluation includes a process evaluation, which will describe the implementation experiences of the demonstration grantees, and an outcome evaluation, which will determine the effectiveness of the programs.



The incorporation of green activities into traditional reentry programming is a novel approach to working with justice-involved youth and may have several benefits for participating youth.

First, the act of working in the garden and caring for living things is felt to be therapeutic, as reflected in the traditional name of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Green Reentry Program (Osapausi Amasalichi, or "Little Garden of Healing").

In addition, learning concrete skills such as horticultural techniques, solar panel installation, or greenhouse construction can make youth more employable or more self-sufficient.

Finally, for tribal youth in particular, Green Reentry programming offers a natural opportunity for youth to reconnect with their traditional tribal culture, as discussed later in this report.



This brief describes the early implementation experiences of the Green Reentry grantees, representing their first 2½ years of program design and implementation. This report presents a brief profile of the Green Reentry program in each site, followed by a discussion of cross-site implementation experiences. The findings in this report are based on information obtained during the first round of evaluation site visits (May–June 2012).

Green Reentry Site Profiles

Rosebud Sioux Tribe

The Rosebud Sioux Tribe's (RST) Green Reentry Program is administered by the tribal juvenile detention center, which has the Lakota name Wanbli Wiconi Tipi (WWT) Wellness and Renewal Center, meaning "Eagle Life Center." The Green Reentry program, called Ina Maka Nikiyapi Okolakiciye ("Helping Mother Earth Live Society"), is delivered primarily in the context of a day reporting educational program at the WWT, in which youth report to the facility daily (Monday through Friday) and participate in schoolwork and other programming from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Green Reentry activities take place in classrooms and on the grounds of the WWT, with field trips for cultural activities and service learning projects taking place in the community.



Data sources for the current report include the following:

- Individual, semi-structured interviews conducted with
- Program Directors, other Green Reentry staff, and representatives from key partnering agencies
- Youth who have participated in the Green Reentry programs
- Parents of youth participants
- Observation of Green Reentry activities, documented using a structured observation form
- Review of grantee progress reports, strategic plans, and original grant proposals

Before beginning data collection, RTI and AIDA worked with each grantee to obtain tribal council approval for all evaluation activities. The evaluation team was greatly assisted in this process and other evaluation activities by Daniel Mittan and Robert Ben from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; Candida Hunter from the Hualapai Indian Tribe; and Miskoo Petite, Claude Two Elk, and Kelley Lafferty from the Rosebud Sioux Tribe.

A green reentry program participant works on the geodesic growing dome at Wiconi Wanbli Tipi (Rosebud Sioux Tribe)



The green components of the RST Green Reentry Program include gardening, beekeeping, raising chickens, recycling, taking part in environmental education, and participating in community service learning projects with a focus on beautification. The program also has an extensive emphasis on cultural activities, including the use of traditional healing, culturally based counseling, culturally relevant offsite excursions, infusion of culture in daily activities, and Lakota history education. Other activities considered to be part of Green Reentry include the educational component of the day reporting program, counseling, job training and placement, and assessment and medical services.

The youth who participate in Green Reentry program activities are those sentenced to the day reporting program, which includes

- youth who have had persistent truancy issues and are processed (as status offenders) through truancy court,
- youth who are sentenced (through youth court) to probation, and
- youth who are released from the detention center after serving a sentence.

For all three groups, participation in the Green Reentry program is ordered as a condition of supervision. Currently, youth housed in the 36 bed WWT detention center are not eligible to participate in most Green Reentry activities because of security constraints. These youth participate in some projects while detained and, given that most youth are released from detention to the day reporting program, they are eligible to participate in the full set of activities after their release.

Hualapai Indian Tribe

The Hualapai Indian Tribe's Green Reentry Program is administered by the Hualapai Juvenile Detention and Rehabilitation Center (HJDRC). The program serves all youth who are adjudicated to the 30-bed HJDRC, which includes Hualapai youth as well as those from nearby tribes. Youth participate in the Green Reentry program while they are housed at the HJDRC as well as after their release back to the community, with most post-release activities taking place at partnering agencies' facilities. For some youth, post-release participation in Green Reentry is court ordered, whereas for others, continued participation is voluntary.

The green components of the Hualapai Green Reentry Program include horticultural instruction and hands-on practice at garden plots in the recreation yard of the HJDRC (for detained youth) and continued gardening and greenhouse construction and maintenance at the local Boys & Girls Club (after youth are released). In addition, detained youth who achieve Positive Warrior Work Service (PWWS) status (based on attaining the requisite security level and submitting an application) participate in other horticulture-related activities, such as greenhouse construction and maintenance and hydroponic gardening, at the HJDRC. PWWS youth also have the opportunity to participate in occasional green projects such as solar panel installation with the Hualapai Planning Department. The Hualapai Green Reentry Program includes cultural components available to youth before and after their release. This includes instruction on Hualapai culture and language; talking circles; and participation in cultural events and activities, such as sweat lodges and traditional arts and crafts. Other services considered to be part of the



Green Reentry program include individual behavioral health services, child and family team meetings, online high school and general equivalency diploma (GED) preparation, substance abuse treatment groups, underage drinking prevention groups, anger management classes, life skills classes, Youth Council activities, church services, culinary work, community service and vocational training through PWWS, and assistance with job placement and outside vocational training.



Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) Green Reentry Program is administered by the Division of Court Services within the tribal government. The program is delivered primarily on the grounds of the MBCI Justice Complex, which includes the Smith John Justice Center and the Adult and Juvenile Detention Centers. Field trips for cultural activities and workshops take place in the community, and some services are delivered at partnering agencies' facilities.

The MBCI Green Reentry Program is referred to by the Choctaw name Osapausi Amasalichi, which roughly translates to "Little Garden of Healing." The green components of the program include gardening in a large plot on the grounds of the Justice Complex, as well as environmental education, which includes instruction in the garden as well as workshops by partnering agencies and technical assistance

Youth help to construct a straw bale greenhouse at the Boys and Girls Club of Peach Springs (Hualapai Indian Tribe).



contractors on topics such as native permaculture and forestry. The Green Reentry program incorporates traditional Choctaw culture by providing youth with opportunities to participate in culturally relevant events in the community and by working with cultural experts to provide youth with cultural or traditional education about Choctaw cooking methods, history, language, and arts and crafts. Other components of the MBCI Green Reentry Program include individual and family counseling, Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) groups, school support, job training and placement, experiential team building activities, and individual reentry planning.

The following groups of youth participate in the MBCI Green Reentry Program:



Elders receive vegetables from the first green reentry program harvest, presented in traditional Choctaw baskets (Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians).

- Youth who participate in the program voluntarily as an informal diversion strategy
- Youth who are sentenced to probation and participate in Green Reentry as a community service sanction
- Youth who are released from the detention center and are on probation, with participation in Green Reentry established as a community service sanction

Currently, youth who are housed in the 17-bed Juvenile Detention Center are not eligible to participate in most Green Reentry activities, because of security constraints. However, detained youth do have contact with Green Reentry staff and receive enhanced coordination between facility- and community-based behavioral health counselors. In addition, once the facility's Transitional Living Unit reopens, youth who are housed there will have the opportunity to participate in Green Reentry activities.

Summary of Green Components

Additional details about each grantee's green activities are included in the exhibit below. Gardening is the core component of the Green Reentry programs, with all sites involving youth in the development of the plots and the ongoing planting,



maintaining, and harvesting. Harvested foods have been shared with elders, used to prepare meals in the detention centers, and taken home by youth to share with their families. In the context of gardening and other green activities, youth at all three sites receive education on native planting techniques and other related topics.

Some grantees have implemented other green components (e.g., beekeeping, hydroponics), with several additional activities being considered for the third year of program operations (listed in the exhibit below). The grantees that do not currently have a greenhouse are planning to build one to expand their growing seasons. Other potential expansions include recycling, composting, aquaponics, training in solar panel installation, and other activities.

Cross-Site Implementation Experiences

As evident from the site descriptions above, the Green Reentry programs integrate green activities with holistic reentry programming designed to meet youth needs in a variety of areas. The programs are intended to successfully reintegrate youth who are returning to their communities after detention, prevent future criminal behavior among at-risk youth, or both. In achieving these goals, the programs combine “traditional” youth reentry activities, such as individual assessments, reentry planning, education, and individual counseling, with green activities such as gardening and skill development in green technologies. The incorporation of green activities into broad-based reentry programming represents an innovative approach for working with youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Because of the novelty of this approach, the implementation experiences of the demonstration grantees are important to understand.

In the remainder of this report, we highlight cross-site implementation challenges and considerations, including developing interagency partnerships, working within tribal juvenile detention center security constraints, implementing green components, engaging youth, involving parents, and involving elders and other community members.

Developing Partnerships

The Green Reentry grantees reached out to several partnering agencies to gain the expertise and assistance needed to effectively implement these complex programs. As noted previously, the grantees were required to collaborate with an institute of higher education. All three grantees developed formal agreements with their state university’s agricultural extension office (South Dakota State University, University of Arizona, and Mississippi State University) for assistance with gardening activities and other components. The RST also developed an agreement with the Oglala Lakota College to provide training on organic gardening.

The grantees have also developed partnerships with various tribal departments who offer expertise in green areas, including forestry and natural resources. These departments provide guidance on specific technical issues and in-kind donations of materials, such as soil, rocks, and lumber, that support participant activities. The Hualapai Indian Tribe’s Green Reentry Program has close partnerships with the tribal Planning Department, which has extensive experience with green



The Green Reentry programs offer a natural framework for reconnecting youth with their traditional tribal culture, which is believed to benefit youth in many ways. Through gardening and other green activities, tribal horticultural knowledge can be passed on to youth, as well as values regarding protecting the environment and conserving natural resources. In addition, activities such as gardening offer a natural opportunity for elders to be involved in working with the youth, sharing their horticultural knowledge while developing or reinforcing intergenerational ties.

All the grantees have used the opportunity to reconnect youth with their traditional tribal culture through green programmatic activities, such as using traditional planting methods (e.g., Three Sisters, native fruit tree windbreak) and greenhouse construction (e.g., straw bale) techniques. In addition, grantees infuse their programs with cultural activities to directly involve youth with their culture through traditional crafts, history and language, excursions to culturally significant sites, ceremonies, and spiritual activities.



Rosebud Sioux Tribe	Hualapai Indian Tribe	Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
<p>Current Green Components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardening and Planting: The program established a garden on the WWT grounds with youth involved in developing the plot; building the fence; and doing ongoing planting, maintaining, and harvesting tasks. • Beekeeping: The program set up several beehives on the WWT grounds with youth participating in training provided by an expert beekeeper. Youth are involved taking care of the bees and harvesting honey. • Raising Chickens: The youth are involved in constructing and maintaining chicken coops and raising chicks. • Recycling: The program recently began collecting shredded paper and cans that can be recycled locally. • Environmental Education: Youth receive education on planting, soils, irrigation, water conservation, organic planting, recycling, and other related topics. <p>Potential Green Expansions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructing a greenhouse that enables detained youth to participate, extends the growing season, and allows youth to participate in a local farmers market. • Planting a windbreak of native fruit trees to be pollinated by the bees. 	<p>Current Green Components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardening and Planting: The program established several small garden plots at the HJDRC and at the local Boys & Girls Club. The University of Arizona agricultural extension officer gives detained youth weekly instruction and hands-on practice at the HJDRC. Post-release youth can continue gardening at the Boys & Girls Club and Cultural Department plots. • Greenhouse Construction and Maintenance: Youth participated in the construction of greenhouses at the HJDRC (for youth who achieve PWWs status) and at the Boys & Girls Club, with the latter constructed using native straw-bale building techniques. • Hydroponic Gardening: Detained youth who achieve PWWs status are able to assist with growing plants in hydroponic tubes in the HJDRC greenhouse. • Green Building: Youth can participate with the Hualapai Planning Department in other activities related to green technology, including solar panel installation. <p>Potential Green Expansions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composting • Beekeeping 	<p>Current Green Components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardening and Planting: The program established a large garden on the Justice Complex grounds, with youth involved in developing the plots, planting, maintenance, and harvesting. • Environmental Education: Education is woven into the gardening activities. Mississippi State University and the Choctaw Natural Resources Department provide training for different gardening or culturally based crafts, such as harvesting cane for Choctaw basketry. The program also includes education on Native American planting methods using the Three Sisters strategy—planting corn, beans, and squash together—among other information sessions. <p>Potential Green Expansions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling • Increased recruitment of elders to assist youth with gardening activities. • Training in solar panel installation • High tunnel (hoop) greenhouses that would extend the growing season • Aquaponics



construction and provides opportunities for youth to be involved in projects involving green technology. They also involve the tribal Housing Department, which provides job training and employment for youth. Another unique partnership is the RST's collaboration with the tribal Department of Environmental Health on its recycling program.

In addition to green partners, all three programs established partnerships with traditional stakeholders in juvenile justice issues, such as youth court, probation, child and family services, behavioral health, local school districts, and community-based organizations serving youth (e.g., Big Brothers & Big Sisters). Finally, given the emphasis on incorporating traditional tribal culture into the programs, two of the grantees partnered with their tribal cultural center or institute for the provision of cultural classes or activities to youth.

Working Within Tribal Juvenile Detention Center Security Constraints

A major implementation challenge that affected all three grantees was the extent to which the security constraints of the tribal juvenile detention centers limited planned program activities. The Green Reentry programs had many outdoor components, which are inherently problematic in a correctional setting. The physical location of the gardens—which was in the recreational yard within the secured portion of the detention center in one site and outside of the secured area in the other two sites—proved to be very influential in program implementation.

All three grantees originally planned to primarily serve youth residing in the detention center. However, the two grantees with gardens located beyond the secured grounds of the detention center (because of the building layout) could not get permission from detention center administrators for detained youth to work in the gardens. Detention center staff cited federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)¹ policies and security concerns as the rationale behind this decision. Both grantees responded to this barrier by opening up their Green Reentry program to other youth who were involved in the justice system but who were not currently residing in the detention center.

However, even the site in which detained youth had access to the garden encountered challenging security logistics. The time window that security staff allotted for the youth to work in the garden was not the appropriate time for garden work, and every piece of equipment brought in by the agricultural extension representative had to be fully inventoried upon entry and exit. In addition, policies that forbid girls and boys from communicating with one another were perceived to prevent them from becoming fully involved in the gardening work. Furthermore, this site faced a unique difficulty associated with working with youth once they were released from the detention center. Because the garden was located within the secured area of the detention center, youth could not return to work in the garden upon release. This site responded to the challenge by establishing a garden at the tribal Cultural Department and a garden and greenhouse at the local Boys and Girls Club, which all community youth could access.



Although the Green Reentry grantees were very successful in developing the partnerships necessary to design and implement their programs, stakeholders in all three sites reported some difficulties with managing partnerships. The unique nature of the Green Reentry programs, particularly the emphasis on rehabilitation and community reentry for youth, challenged partnership building.

For some sites, it was difficult to get such a diverse set of partners to understand what the Green Reentry program was all about. This difficulty was compounded when representatives from various tribal departments did not attend advisory board meetings consistently, or the department did not send consistent representatives to the meetings.

¹ The BIA is a federal agency that funds different detention components including salaries, operations and management, construction, and provides oversight using BIA standard operating policies and procedures.



Implementing the Green Activities

Overall, the grantees experienced few barriers associated specifically with the implementation of the green components. Some logistical challenges affected the gardening component, including weather-related challenges (unexpected frosts), destruction of plants by wildlife, and poor-quality soil received as a donation. These issues led grantees to explore ways to extend the growing season by using hydroponics or high tunnel houses (unheated greenhouses). In addition, the grantees experimented with several types of fencing techniques and learned to test soil before planting.

School schedules of the participating youth also created difficulty in keeping the gardens maintained (e.g., irrigated and weeded) during the day. An additional set of factors created difficulty in weekend maintenance, including the work schedules of the Green Reentry staff, competing demands of community-based youth, and lower weekend staffing levels at the juvenile detention centers.

Not surprisingly, given the complexity of some of the green technologies considered, several grantees struggled with finding expertise in areas in which the programs wished to expand (e.g., beekeeping). One grantee noted that the experts are out there and that persistence in locating them is critical. It was necessary for grantees to continuously seek new tribal agency partnerships as well as locate outside expertise to assist with particular areas of expansion.

Engaging Youth

Staff and partner agency representatives from all three sites felt that youth were generally engaged in the Green Reentry programs, with the following types of activities most conducive to youth engagement:

- Activities that get youth out into the community and allow them the opportunity to give back and feel that they belong. Specific examples include the PWWS component developed in Hualapai, the RST community service learning projects, and the act of giving produce from the garden to elders in the MBCI site.
- Hands-on activities in which the youth can work at their own pace to produce something, such as cultural items.
- Activities in which the youth can learn a transferable skill, such as reading a blueprint, learning to cook, building a greenhouse, assembling something, or participating in a horticultural workshop.
- Activities that give the youth a sense of accomplishment and pride in the results of their labor, such as gardening, beekeeping, and raising chickens.
- Cultural and spiritual activities (e.g., sweat lodges, cultural crafts, talking circles, community-based cultural activities, gaining cultural skills and knowledge).

Despite the generally high levels of youth engagement reported by program stakeholders, a few staff felt that some youth just “go through the motions.” Several noted that although attendance may be required, youth cannot be forced to fully participate and take advantage of all the program has to offer. Staff at all sites noted that once youth are no longer required to participate in Green Reentry programming, keeping them engaged in community-based components is almost impossible.



Strategies for facilitating youth engagement reported by the Green Reentry grantees include being persistent, understanding where the youth are coming from, and employing Native American staff who can relate to the youth and use the youths' interests as a tool for engagement. In addition, the RST program offered incentives (purchasing school clothes) to encourage youth to attend programming regularly, noting that once they get youth involved in the program, the youth create a bond with the staff and continue to come. All three tribes also ended up making extensive transportation arrangements to get community-based youth to their program activities, given that many families lack transportation.

Perspectives of the youth themselves appear to be consistent with the staff reports of their level of engagement in the Green Reentry programming. Overall, most youth interviewed expressed favorable views about their participation in the Green Reentry program, noting that they learned new things and had fun. In two sites, youth specifically said that the program gave them experience and enabled them to learn new things, such as gardening and greenhouse construction. Not all youth enjoyed working in the garden, with some youth expressing dissatisfaction with getting dirty and working in the heat.

When asked about the parts of the Green Reentry program they liked the most (including the green activities as well as cultural components and holistic reentry services), youth across the three sites reported that they enjoyed

- doing green activities, such as planting and gardening (all three sites), beekeeping (at the RST site), and raising chickens (at the RST site);
- being able to talk to someone about problems (the MBCI counseling component);
- having elders talk to the youth;
- helping out through service learning, such as community beautification activities, and donating harvested vegetables to elders;
- learning new things, such as organic gardening, construction skills, and horticulture; and
- being outdoors with structured things to do.

When asked about the program component from which they learned the most, youth at all three sites most commonly reported gardening. Other program components identified by the youth as activities from which they learned the most included outdoor cooking (MBCI), Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MBCI), greenhouse construction (Hualapai), and talking circles (RST).

Involving Parents

All three sites planned to involve parents of participating youth in their Green Reentry programs. However, stakeholders consistently named parent engagement as a central challenge to delivering their programs successfully. According to stakeholders across the three sites, various barriers prevented parents from engaging successfully with Green Reentry programming. Cross-site barriers that were perceived as preventing parent involvement included

- parents' opposition to detention,
- parents' wariness of law enforcement and courts,



Although gardening was typically mentioned as an activity in which youth were very engaged, a few staff noted that some youth did not like it because of the hard work and hot weather. One staff member noted that many youth end up enjoying it, despite their initial resistance. A staff member in another site noted that now that the greenhouse is in place, the gardening aspect of the program is more enjoyable for the youth.



- competing needs of parents' other children, and
- alcohol and drug addiction issues.

Each of the three programs developed a variety of strategies to better engage parents.

Program staff at all sites introduced themselves to parents and offered an explanation of the Green Reentry program through initial telephone or mail contact or both. The extent to which staff at each site persisted in reaching out to parents over the duration of their children's participation in programming seemed to differ both by site and by individual family. Although stakeholders expressed a strong desire to engage parents in supporting their children's reentry, they felt that outreach efforts had been mostly unsuccessful. Therefore, stakeholders at all three sites focused some discussion on the idea of courts' ordering parental participation in youth reentry programming. This approach was occasionally used by the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Court in working with families of Green Reentry youth, and staff found it to be helpful. Several interviewees at the other two sites expressed the desire for parents to be ordered by the court to cooperate with their programs.

Among parents interviewed during the first evaluation site visits, some reported having been involved in the decision for their child to participate, and others said they had not been. Feelings about this were mixed: some said they would have liked to have been consulted, whereas others felt it was appropriate for this decision to be made by their children or the courts.

Most parents interviewed reported that they had not participated in Green Reentry program activities. Many stated that they would have liked to participate but did not know they could be involved in the Green Reentry program and had not been invited. When asked what would facilitate parents' involvement, interviewees suggested

- helping parents to better understand that opportunities exist for them to participate in the program,
- advising parents well in advance about specific events or activities to allow them to make advance arrangements to attend, and
- inviting the enrolled youth's siblings (along with his or her parents) to activities to remove barriers related to parents' other child care responsibilities.

However, a few parents stated that they were unlikely to participate in the Green Reentry program for various reasons, including the following:

- They believed it was best for their children to participate independently because they might be more engaged or cooperative without their parents present or have more pride of ownership over the program if they completed it independently.
- Participating in additional activities was too difficult given their competing commitments (e.g., work schedules, care for other children).



Despite the lack of parental involvement, parents at all three sites expressed a great deal of support for the Green Reentry program, and particular enthusiasm for the green aspect of programming.

Parents named green activities such as gardening, beekeeping, and green construction as among those they felt were most positive or effective. They also expressed support for activities that gave their children new skills (such as construction) or involved service to the community (such as community clean-up). Most interviewees believed that positive changes in their children's lives had occurred as a result of program participation.



Involving Elders and Other Community Members

All three grantees also envisioned a large role for tribal elders and other community members, including having these individuals share stories with the youth, passing on traditional horticultural knowledge, and working with the youth in the garden. Although sites were encouraged by some elder involvement during the initial planning stages, all three tribes reported that getting elders and other community members to participate was a challenge. In one site, an elder who had played a key role during the very early implementation stage passed away, which posed a major setback to the program. Staff cited that some elders were apprehensive about giving time to a program about which they knew little, suggesting that the program needed time to prove itself to earn their trust. Negative community perceptions about the juvenile detention center (and the tribal justice system in general) were thought to have an influence on community involvement in at least one site.

The grantees have employed several outreach strategies to better engage elders and other community members. One site had the Green Reentry youth give the first produce from the garden to the elders in a traditional tribal basket, as a step in fostering goodwill toward the program. A stakeholder from another site suggested that inviting tribal council and other community members to come and see the garden and greenhouse would be a good way to reach out to the community and encourage them to take a bigger role in activities at the detention center.

Conclusions and Next Steps

The Green Reentry initiative represents an innovative approach to community reintegration and recidivism prevention for youth by integrating green activities with traditional reentry programming. With gardening as the core green activity, the grantees are providing holistic reentry programming while incorporating horticultural and environmental education and traditional tribal culture. The three programs are fully operational, having demonstrated creativity and resourcefulness in overcoming several implementation barriers. Their implementation experiences to date point to several early lessons for incorporating green activities into reentry programming.

First, because of the technical complexity of green activities and the rehabilitative focus of youth reentry programming, careful selection of partnering agencies is necessary. The initiative resulted in the creation of new partnerships across the sites, including those with institutions of higher education and tribal departments not typically involved in juvenile justice-related activities. The Green Reentry grantees brought together traditional juvenile justice partners and tribal agencies that brought critical technical expertise and resources necessary to assist with the implementation of the green components. Clearly, the logistical problems encountered by the demonstration grantees, such as soil preparation, weather, and destruction of plants by wildlife, highlight the importance of early consultation with experts in these areas. In addition to identifying partners with the requisite green expertise, however, it is necessary to ensure that all partners agree on the goals of the program. This process may be more challenging with such a diverse set of partners, and it is important to ensure that partners fully understand and support the intended purpose of the programs.



Second, the outdoor nature of green activities and the security-focused nature of juvenile justice facilities must be reconciled to enable programs to reach all the target populations, particularly those that are incarcerated. This requires a careful understanding of the specific activities that will be feasible to implement with the participating youth. Decisions about the population to be served (e.g., detained youth at a certain security level) and the programmatic components to be offered (e.g., gardening) must be made in conjunction rather than in isolation and must be based on an understanding of the security constraints facing the target population. If the target population includes incarcerated youth, detention center administrators should be consulted on program design to ensure that planned activities are feasible within the facility's physical layout and security regulations. An important reentry consideration is the extent to which youth will be able to continue their participation in green activities after their release. Programmatic activities that take place within the secure area of the detention center may not be accessible to youth after they leave. However, reentering youth can be served after release through collaboration with community-based partners to offer program activities at their facilities—a strategy implemented by one of the Green Reentry grantees.

Third, several strategies appear to be associated with youth engagement in Green Reentry programming, including the inclusion of activities that allow youth to give back to their communities and activities in which youth learn a transferable skill. Interviews with youth and parents showed that the Green Reentry programs were perceived very favorably and have resulted in new experiences for participating youth.

The evaluation will identify other implementation lessons as the demonstration grantees enter their final year of federal funding. Some of the implementation challenges encountered to date have not yet been overcome. Strategies for involving parents in Green Reentry programming are still being explored. Similarly, elder and community member involvement is a priority for all three grantees, and they continue to pursue ways to effectively engage these groups. Finally, although the grantees have been resourceful in modifying their programs to accommodate tribal juvenile detention center security regulations, this remains an ongoing implementation issue in two sites. Documentation of key lessons in resolving these and other issues will be a continued focus of the evaluation.



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