

## CIC | DC Corrections Information Council

September 7, 2016

**To: Stefanie Skroch, Contracting Officer  
Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP)**

**From: DC Corrections Information Council**

**RE: RFP-200-1270-ES for Residential Reentry Center and Home Confinement Services**

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The CIC is an independent monitoring body mandated to inspect, monitor, and report on the conditions of confinement at facilities where DC residents are incarcerated. In November 2012, after hearing many concerns about Hope Village from District leaders, community members, and returning residents, the CIC conducted an inspection of the facility, and in May 2013 it published a report of its findings. The CIC continues to monitor Hope Village's current practices and their impact on returning men through interviews with current and former residents and service providers who interact with the facility staff and residents. This summer, legal and undergraduate interns, under the supervision of Program Analyst Lashonia Thompson-El, conducted research, interviews, and site visits pertaining to FBOP's recent request for proposals for a male residential reentry center (RRC) in the DC area. It is our hope that the information provided in this memorandum will assist BOP as it considers pending FBOP RRC proposals.

### Proposed Locations

At present, Hope Village is the BOP-contracted male Residential Reentry Center (RRC-also known as a halfway house) in Washington, DC, with two contracts that expire in 2016 and 2017.<sup>1</sup> The FBOP issued a request for proposals from January 11, 2016 until April 26, 2016 for a male RRC provider with at least 300 beds and 150 spaces for home confinement.<sup>2</sup> Potential providers must agree to follow the 2015 Statement of Work (SOW) and meet the minimum guidelines set forth by the FBOP and take into account local concerns of constituents. Through community interaction the CIC learned about four

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<sup>1</sup> See "Final CIC Hope Village Report May 24, 2013." DC Corrections Information Council, 24 May 2013. Web. 18 July 2016

<<http://cic.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cic/publication/attachments/FINALCICHopeVillageReport052413.pdf>>

<sup>2</sup> See "Residential Reentry Center Services and Home Confinement Services within the counties of Prince Georges County and/or Montgomery County, Maryland; and/or Arlington County and/or Fairfax County, Virginia; and/or the District of Columbia (DC)." *Department of Justice, Bureau of Prisons, Solicitation: RFP-200-1270-ES*. Fed Biz Opps. 22 Oct. 2015. Web. 18 July 2016.

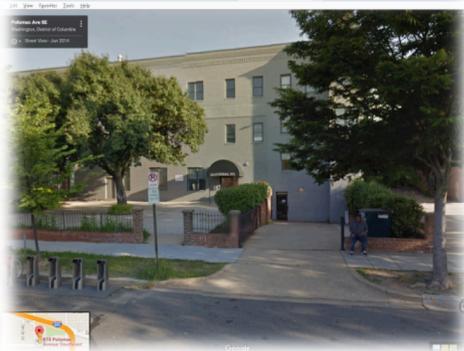
<[https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=630b96440b11bf2ca506503422a1c736&tab=core&\\_cview=1](https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=630b96440b11bf2ca506503422a1c736&tab=core&_cview=1)>

proposals from various corporations including Hope Village, who are seeking to obtain the contract with the FBOP to provide RRC placement for the District's returning men.



#### 475 School Street SW

GEO Reentry, Inc. has proposed a location at 475 School Street SW.<sup>3</sup> The location currently features a five-floor office building. The location is 226 feet from the Washington Global Public Charter School and 0.3 miles from the Federal Center SW metro station.



#### 810 Potomac Avenue SE

Core DC has proposed a location at 810 Potomac Avenue SE.<sup>4</sup> CIC staff spoke with a security guard on duty that confirmed the proposal. The location is 476 feet from the Eagle Academy Public Charter School and close to the 92 and 96 bus routes.

\* Google Maps



#### 810 14<sup>th</sup> Street NE

A third proposed location is located at 810 14<sup>th</sup> Street NE. Previously, this location served as a RRC Extended House. This location is on the X1, X2, and X9 bus routes.

\* Google Maps

<sup>3</sup> See "The Federal Bureau of Prisons has initiated a proposal to put in a 300 Bed Male Prison Halfway house 200ft. away from the Washington Global Middle School." *Prince of Petworth*. Popville. 23 May 2016. Web. 18 July, 2016. <<http://www.popville.com/2016/05/federal-bureau-of-prisons-sw-dc/>>

<sup>4</sup> See "Criticisms Abound for Plans for Halfway House in Lower Barracks Row." *Michelle Goldchain*. DC Curbed. 23 May, 2016. Web. 18 July 2016. <<http://dc.curbed.com/2016/5/23/11745848/halfway-house-barracks-row>>



### **2844 Langston Place S.E.**

The current RRC provider, Hope Village is a proposed location for the new male residential reentry center contract. Hope Village is located in Ward 8 in close proximity to Congress Heights Metro Station. Hope Village is also near The Mayor’s Office on Returning Citizen Affairs and Unity Health Center, both of which provide substantial support services to returning men

and women. Hope Village is also in a high crime area.

CIC staff members continue to be in contact with Hope Village staff, residents, community advocates, and service providers. The CIC has learned of the construction of a Rocketship Elementary School campus 36 feet from Hope Village, which is set to open its doors in Fall 2016.

### **DC Municipal Zoning Regulations**

Under 11 DCMR §199, residential halfway houses, convalescent homes, social service centers, and other “residential facilities for persons with a common need for treatment, rehabilitation, assistance, or supervision in their daily living,” are considered community-based residential facilities.

The three potential sites are commercial districts in Ward 6 and are zoned C-3-C or C-3-A.<sup>5</sup> Under 11 DCMR §741.5 (c), community-based residential facilities shall be permitted in a C-3 district as a matter of right. Overlay zones in the area are H Street Overlay District (HS-A) and Eighth Street Southeast Neighborhood Commercial Overlay Districts (ES).<sup>6</sup> Neither overlay zone explicitly forbids community-based residential facilities.<sup>7</sup>

While placement near an educational institution is not forbidden under DC Municipal Regulations, the Mayor must give at least 60 days written notice to the DC Board of Education or the governing body of a private school of the proposed establishment of a correctional facility or halfway house to be located within 400 feet of a school in DC.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the Mayor is required to give great weight to written comments of the DC Board of Education with regards to the establishment or current operation of a correctional facility or halfway house within 400 feet of a DC public school.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See “D.C. Office of Zoning, Interactive D.C. Zoning Map” *DC Office of Zoning*. Web. 18 July 2016. <<http://maps.dcoz.dc.gov/>>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> 11 DCMR § 1309, 1320-26

<sup>8</sup> DC Code §38-3201

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

## Local Concerns

Community opposition includes a letter written on April 29, 2016 from Councilman Charles Allen (Ward 6) to Stephanie Skroch, the Contracting Officer for the Federal Bureau of Prisons, regarding his disapproval of GEO Reentry, Inc.'s proposal submission for the property at 475 School Street.<sup>10</sup>

Councilman Allen stated, "This proposal is incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood, and its immediate proximity to Washington Global Public Charter School . . . would be particularly inconsistent with the needs of that location." He continued to say that, "[I]t remains unclear whether this use is allowed under current DC Zoning Regulations." Councilman Allen is joined in opposition with the ANC 6 (Advisory Neighborhood Commission) and Metropolitan Police Department Commander for the area. Similar concerns have also been raised against a proposal at 810 Potomac Avenue SE regarding its proximity to Richard Wright Public Charter School, allowance under zoning regulations, and lack of support resources.<sup>11</sup>

## Statement of Work (SOW)

The FBOP requires the proposed halfway house sites to comply with the current Statement of Work (SOW)<sup>12</sup>. The current Statement of Work which outlines policies and procedure for RRC providers could address some of the concerns mentioned in the 2013 CIC Report on Hope Village and by more recent residents of Hope Village<sup>13</sup>. Currently, Hope Village is not governed by this SOW; however, if Hope Village is awarded the pending RRC contract, it will be. Below, the CIC reports on information obtained from residents and service providers about important issues of concern to current RRC residents.

### Community Relations

The Statement of Work places an emphasis on Community Relations stating, "it is extremely important and vital to develop and maintain positive community relations".<sup>14</sup> The facility is required to provide written policy and procedures that offer ongoing, positive communication between the facility, local community, elected officials, law enforcement, and citizens. The facility is required to describe the approach to educating the community about the goals and mission of the RRC. They are also responsible for maintaining the support of the community. The RRC provider the FBOP chooses should make it a priority to inform and engage the community regarding its activities.

<sup>10</sup> See "Opposition Letter CM Allen" *Popville*. Web. 18 July 2016. <[http://www.popville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/475School\\_Oppo\\_Ltr\\_CM\\_Allen\\_Final.pdf](http://www.popville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/475School_Oppo_Ltr_CM_Allen_Final.pdf)>

<sup>11</sup> See "Rehab Center Proposes 300 Bed Facility for Lower Barracks Neighborhood." *Larry Janezich*. Capitol Hill Corner. 22 May 2016. Web. 18 July 2016. <<https://capitolhillcorner.org/page/2/>>

<sup>12</sup> United States. Federal Bureau of Prisons. Residential Reentry Management Branch. *Residential Reentry Center Statement of Work*. Washington: Federal Bureau of Prisons, May 2015 (Corrected).

<sup>13</sup> See "Final CIC Hope Village Report May 24, 2013." DC Corrections Information Council, 24 May 2013. Web. 18 July 2016

<<http://cic.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cic/publication/attachments/FINALCICHopeVillageReport052413.pdf>>

<sup>14</sup> *Residential Reentry Center Statement of Work*, page 9.

### *Staff and Programming*

The Statement of Work also highlights the importance of the role of staff and programming. The SOW states, “The contractor will clearly identify in the Individualized Program Plan (IPP) how they will prioritize and assist the offender in addressing elements of the IPP, and include specific program activities and a time table for achievement of these goals.”<sup>15</sup> Current and former Hope Village residents mentioned that the programming was not helpful. A current Hope Village resident stated that he was required to complete a 12-hour life skills course but that the course was neither helpful nor informative. The only benefit of the course was that, after completing the course, the resident could begin searching for employment. In the 2013 report the CIC recommended that Hope Village use expert consultants to facilitate job readiness, and transitional planning courses in an effort to supplement the lack of effective programming.<sup>16</sup> The current Hope Village resident also commented that while Hope Village does have a GED class twice a week, only GED students may use the computers onsite. The GED students may only use the computers for GED preparation. Computer and Internet access are not available at Hope Village for residents to conduct job searches or use the email. Residents are instead referred to the Skyland Workforce Center for computer access. Being forced to use the computer outside of Hope Village adds to the digital divide for Returning Citizens and poses as a barrier to connecting returning residents to community resources.

The current resident expressed that he did not learn about community resources or reentry support services from staff at Hope Village. Rather, he learned from another resident about Project Empowerment<sup>17</sup> and services provided through the Mayor’s Office on Returning Citizen Affairs. The resident interviewed also stated that there was only one staff member at Hope Village with good connections to help residents find jobs.

The CIC spoke with a local service provider who works closely with in the Hope Village about communication barriers between service providers and Hope Village staff. The telephone is the only line of communication because Hope Village staff members do not provide email addresses. Phone calls made by service providers to Hope Village staff usually go to voicemail. The provider shared an on-going issue of Hope Village staff calling service providers to confirm appointments, not leaving a message, saying they could not reach the provider, and then denying residents’ passes based on this gap in communication. The service provider stated that case managers and vocational counselors need email addresses so that information and communications can become more efficient. This will also enable correspondences to be documented.

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<sup>15</sup> *Residential Reentry Center Statement of Work*, page 49.

<sup>16</sup> “CIC Hope Village Report May 24, 2013.”

<sup>17</sup> “Project Empowerment is a transitional employment program that provides job readiness training, work experience, and job search assistance to District residents who face multiple barriers to employment”. (<http://does.dc.gov/service/project-empowerment-program>)

### *Transportation*

The Statement of Work states, “The contractor must provide transportation or public transportation vouchers to assist offenders seeking employment.”<sup>18</sup> It also states “the contractor is required to ensure all offenders have transportation to all required Community Treatment Service (CTS) appointments.”<sup>19</sup> CTS appointments include: drug offender, mental health and sex offender treatment. In 2013 the CIC found that it was difficult for Hope Village residents who were indigent to obtain transportation assistance. In June of 2016 the CIC interviewed a current Hope Village resident and determined that obtaining transportation assistance remains a concern. According to Hope Village, tokens are provided to indigent residents. However, current residents report that they do not have access to tokens even when they repeatedly request tokens. They further state that “indigent” status is determined on a case-by-case basis and is usually denied if a resident has received funds from family or friends. Community service providers also state that Hope Village clients have difficulty with commuting to and from Hope Village when searching for jobs, obtaining identification, and traveling to health care visits.

### *Disciplinary Procedure*

According to the SOW, “The contractor will designate and train two or more staff members to hold formal hearings...if circumstances do not allow for the in-person hearing (e.g., permission cannot be obtained by the holding official or the offender is on escape status), the CDC will conduct the hearing in absentia and notify the Residential Reentry Management Branch (RRM).”<sup>20</sup> A current resident stated that Hope Village residents are not receiving hearings for 300 level disciplinary infractions<sup>21</sup>. If hearings are being conducted, they are done so without the resident present. A service provider also told CIC staff that she has never heard of anyone getting a hearing about anything at Hope Village. This service provider also informed CIC staff that when an individual is being sent from Hope Village to Piedmont Regional Jail in Virginia, located over 50 miles away, for a rule violation, a US Marshal will show up, put the resident in shackles, and transfer the resident without a hearing. Current Hope Village residents believe that the hearing process currently in place does not allow sufficient opportunity for them to defend against allegations of wrongdoing.

### *Subsistence*

Subsistence is a fee that residents must pay to cover their cost of confinement. This fee is 25 percent of their gross income, not to exceed the per diem rate for the RRC contract. The CIC pleased to report that the FBOP policy changes (Program Statement 7320.01, Home Confinement and Program Statement 7300.09, Community Corrections Manual) set forth on August 1, 2016, discontinue the subsistence requirement for individuals on home confinement.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Residential Reentry Center Statement of Work*, page 54.

<sup>19</sup> *Residential Reentry Center Statement of Work*, page 62.

<sup>20</sup> *Residential Reentry Center Statement of Work*, page 80.

<sup>21</sup> 300 level infractions are considered moderate infractions such as being out of bounds, disobeying an order, or having contraband. (<http://etikallc.com/disciplinary-matters-in-federal-prison-part-1/>)

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.bop.gov/resources/news/20160803\\_policy\\_change.jsp](https://www.bop.gov/resources/news/20160803_policy_change.jsp)

For residents still housed at the RRC, subsistence payments are still required, but “[subsistence] waivers will be considered on a case-by-case basis after considering the offender’s debts, assets, employment status, and spending.”<sup>23</sup> A Hope Village resident interviewed by the CIC requested to have his subsistence waived because he was homeless. Prior to obtaining the waiver, the resident received a stipend from an employment program on a debit card, for which no pay stubs were issued. Upon his return from the program to Hope Village, the resident was denied his social pass for failure to pay subsistence or present pay stubs for the employment program stipend pay.

A second resident informed CIC staff that he was a homeless father who applied for a subsistence waiver. His case manager said he would have no problem getting his subsistence payment waived. Other Hope Village staff members, however, told him that he would have to pay his subsistence, or he would lose his weekend pass and not be able to visit with his children. It appears that the process of obtaining a subsistence waiver is flawed and the drawback for those who apply for a subsistence waiver is reduced family engagement, a hallmark of successful reentry.

### *Safety*

Current and former residents, in addition to community service providers, have informed the CIC that individuals do not feel safe traveling to and from Hope Village. Movement and meals have been restricted frequently due to criminal activity in the area. Men have turned down the opportunity to be released from prison early to go to Hope Village because of the safety concerns.

### *Travel Passes*

A travel pass is written permission for a resident to leave the facility for external appointments and social visits. A resident told CIC staff that Hope Village randomly denies passes and/or limits time despite residents being in compliance and having initial approval from case managers or vocational specialists. A service provider also told CIC that Hope Village front desk staff will tell residents that they are not allowed a pass even though front desk staff is not authorized to do so. The same provider also stated that there is an ongoing issue of paper passes being misplaced. Residents fill out passes and place them in a case manager’s mailbox. The case manager signs the passes and gives them to the front desk staff to hand out to residents. However, Front desk staff frequently tell residents that they never received passes from case managers.

### **Promising Practices**

In an effort to remain solution-focused, the CIC has looked at a few promising practices that could address some of the current RRC concerns and create a more efficient environment within the RRC that the FBOP chooses for the new contract.

*Rutgers University, Center for Behavioral Health Services & Criminal Justice Research*

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<sup>23</sup> *Residential Reentry Center Statement of Work*, page 59.

The Center for Behavioral Health Services & Criminal Justice Research at Rutgers University facilitated three roundtable discussions between August of 2012 and November of 2012. The purpose was for researchers, policy-makers, advocates, and practitioners to discuss issues regarding halfway house models and operations. As a result of these discussions a report was generated entitled, *Halfway from Prison to the Community: From Current Practice to Best Practice*. When discussing ideal locations for RRCs, the report emphasizes that RRCs should be located in communities close to where their residents will eventually live, to public transportation, and to options for employment. RRCs should be located far away from illegal activities and distractions, making it easier for formerly incarcerated people to draw on local support and create successful integration connections with the community.<sup>24</sup> The report also notes that low-risk offenders should not be housed in RRCs because there are more cost effective alternatives, such as GPS monitoring or transitional houses with community supervision. Separating individuals by risk level and focusing the capacity of RRCs on medium and high-risk individuals increase performance within RRCs.

#### *Volunteers of America, Chesapeake*

Volunteers of America, Chesapeake is a non-profit, faith-based organization based in Baltimore, Maryland that has, for more than 30 years, helped ex-offenders completing the last three to six months of their sentences in transitioning back into the community. Volunteers of America utilize the *Program for Returning Offenders with Mental Illness Safely and Effectively* (PROMISE) to serve parolees with mental illness who are transitioning out of prison.<sup>25</sup> The program offers housing, medical and mental health care, case management services, family engagement initiatives, access to public benefits and other helpful reentry services. The program has served 303 clients to date with 138 having a positive discharge and 105 living in supportive housing. Also, as of 2015, Volunteers of America are partnered with over 50 community organizations.

#### *Pre-Release and Reentry Services, Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation (Rockville Center)*<sup>26</sup>

The Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, Pre-Release and Reentry Services oversee the 171-bed Montgomery County Pre-Release Center (PRC). The Division serves pre-trial adults and incarcerated adults to be released within 12 months from the county's two detention centers as well as state and federal prisons who are returning to Montgomery County or the larger Washington metropolitan area. The CIC observed a number of promising practices:

- PRC sells tokens to indigent residents at a discounted rate. If a resident does not have sufficient funds to purchase tokens, tokens are provided on a loan, and the monetary amount is withdrawn at a later time.

<sup>24</sup> See "Halfway From Prison to the Community: From Current Practice to Best Practice." *Rutgers*.

<sup>25</sup> Rutgers, "Halfway From Prison to the Community: From Current Practice to Best Practice"

<sup>26</sup> Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, Pre-Release and Reentry Services, <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cor/prrs/index.html>

- Passes are submitted in written format on carbon copy documents. Residents submit the top white sheet to staff members and keep the underlying yellow sheet as verification of submission.
- Pre-GED and GED classes are offered for program participants four nights per week and are taught through collaboration with Montgomery College.
- The Job Readiness and Retention Program is a one-week workshop. Residents are provided discussion tips and are given the opportunity to discuss their criminal backgrounds with potential employers.
- The Welcome Home Program is a faith-based mentorship program that pairs a community volunteer with a resident.
- The Thinking for a Change (T4C) program provides participants with the opportunity to consider the thinking and decision-making patterns that contributed to their contact with the criminal justice system. All new residents receive a five-hour introductory module.
- Family and Friends Support Program allows families to partner in the participants' reentry process, from reentry planning, to community services referrals to home confinement services.

## **Conclusion**

Residents and service providers continue to present a negative picture of current RRC services. It is the CIC's hope that when the FBOP makes its decision about the pending RRC contract, not only will the chosen provider meet the 2015 SOW requirements, but the provider will also seek to implement some of the promising practices above. These practices will enable the provider to be more efficient and provide a more productive transitional experience for men returning from incarceration back to the District of Columbia. Improving RRC operations will increase public safety and increase the likelihood of reentry success for DC men returning home from incarceration.