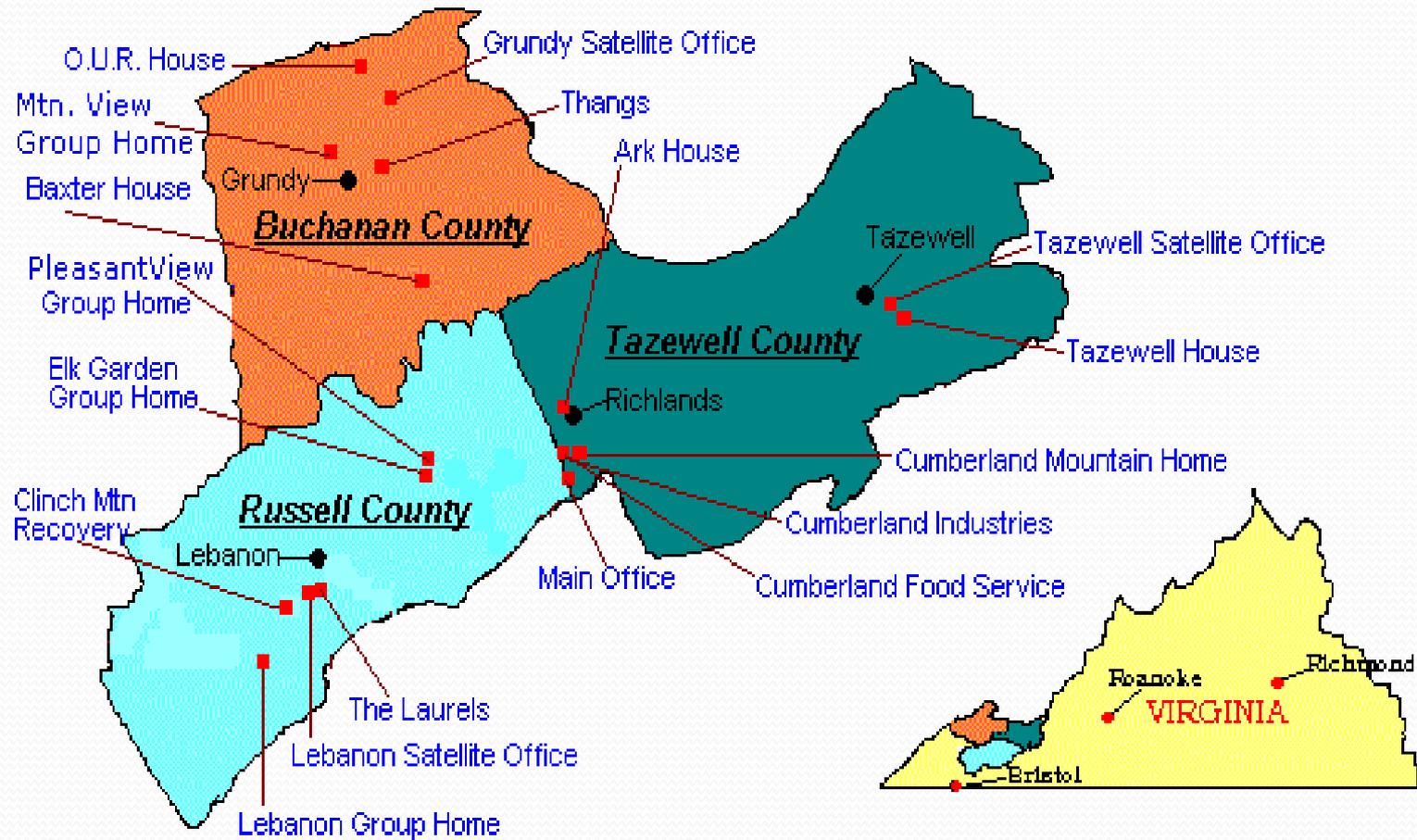


Family Reintegration & Reentry Pilot Program for Female Offenders

A Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) 2nd Chance Grant
2010-H7132-VA-RN awarded to the Virginia
Department of Corrections on October 1, 2010

Family Reintegration & Reentry Pilot Program



Family Reintegration & Reentry Pilot Program

- *"There is a much higher prescription drug abuse rate in central Appalachia than other parts of the country," local physician Dr. Aft Van Zee reported in recent VA legislative hearings. "Each year in Virginia, oxycodone causes 10.7 percent of accidental drug deaths, while methadone causes 44.6 percent."*

- *"Drug abuse is destroying the fabric of many families in Southwest Virginia," said VA Delegate Bud Phillips. "I'm just seeing more and more of it. It's an epidemic."*

Family Reintegration & Reentry Pilot Program

- Southwest Virginia was chosen as target site due to high levels of illicit prescription drug abuse. This area of Virginia has the highest unemployment rate and lowest per capita income compared to other regions.
- In particular, services for incarcerated women and their children were desperately needed. The BJA grant is designed to help incarcerated S/A women successfully return to their home communities and also provide needed services to their minor children.

Family Reintegration & Reentry Pilot Program

- Grant Period: October 1, 2010 – March 31, 2013
- Target Population: Substance abusing female offenders with minor children living in SW Virginia counties of Russell, Tazewell, and Buchanan.
- Grant Amount: \$300,000
- Services are coordinated at Probation District #43
- Women and Family reentry resources are provided by Cumberland Mt. Community Service Board
- Parenting training & assistance with videoconferencing provided by University of Virginia (Dr. Ann Loper)
- Evaluation provided by Virginia Tech (Dr. Joyce Arditti)

Family Reintegration & Reentry Pilot Program

Target VADOC Sites:

- Virginia Correctional Center for Women (VCCW)
- Brunswick Women's Intensive Reentry Program
- Chesterfield Women's Detention and Diversion Ctr.

A total of 30 women and their families will be served under the grant.

VADOC convened a Grant Oversight Committee to monitor progress of the Pilot Program

- Oversight Committee consists of representatives from the Governor's Office, VADOC, the CSB, Virginia Tech and University of Virginia and meets approximately bi-monthly.

Key Elements of Grant

- Use of Client Advocates to Support Transition
- Therapeutic Video Conferencing
- Brilliant Parenting Curriculum
- Close Coordination with Probation/Parole District
- Collaboration with two nationally-recognized experts at the University of Virginia & Virginia Tech who designed the parenting/video conferencing technology and the post-release evaluation process.

Challenges Prior to Reentry

- Numbers Game - Opening New Site
- Video Conferencing Hook-up Difficulties
- Developing Cooperation with Family Members

Challenges upon Reentry

- Mountainous terrain and distances
- Lack of transportation network
- Cultural challenges
- Poor economy and job opportunities
- Limited support resources

Lessons Learned

- Needed to strengthen relationship with families to overcome cultural barriers
- Needed to make 2 grant modifications mid-stream when it became apparent that numbers needed to be increased, and when families were choosing not to access the array of services available to them and their children.
- Needed to modify the evaluation protocol from a primarily outcome driven evaluation to a process evaluation focusing on the study of family reintegration issues.