



Understanding the Second Chance Act

Adult Mentoring Grants (Section 211)

Background

On April 9, 2008, President George W. Bush signed the Second Chance Act ([P.L. 110-199](#)) into law. The bill received bipartisan support from both chambers of Congress and a broad spectrum of leaders representing state and local government, law enforcement, corrections, and courts. This first-of-its-kind legislation authorizes various grants to government agencies and nonprofit organizations to provide employment assistance, substance abuse treatment, housing, family programming, mentoring, victims support, and other services that can help reduce recidivism.

This fact sheet is intended to help nonprofit organizations and Indian tribes prepare to apply for mentoring grants to provide services to individuals age 18 or older.¹ The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), U.S. Department of Justice, released the [fiscal year \(FY\) 2010 mentoring grant solicitation for adult populations](#) on January 19, 2010, and applications are due on March 18, 2010.²

Section 211

Section 211 of the Second Chance Act (42 U.S.C. § 17531) authorizes the U.S. Department of Justice to make grants to nonprofit organizations and Indian tribes for the purpose of providing mentoring and other transitional services essential to reintegrating individuals released from prisons or jails into the community. In fiscal year 2010, \$15 million was appropriated for the Section 211 grant program.

Who Can Apply?

Nonprofit organizations and Indian tribes may apply for grants under the BJA solicitation.

Allowable Uses

Funding under this solicitation is available to help nonprofit organizations and federally recognized Indian tribes implement mentoring projects to promote the safe and successful reintegration into the community of individuals who have been incarcerated. Funding is only available for projects serving individuals aged 18 and older convicted as an adult and imprisoned in a state, local, or tribal prison or jail.

¹ For information about other grant programs authorized by the Second Chance Act, see www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/about/second-chance-act.

² The solicitation, as well as other information about the Second Chance Act, is available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/SecondChance.html. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice, will release a solicitation for mentoring grants for juvenile populations.

Application Requirements

Program components of a project proposal must include

- mentoring individuals during incarceration, through transition back to the community, and post-release;
- providing transitional services to assist in the reintegration of individuals into the community;
- training regarding “offender and victims issues.”

A project proposed under this solicitation must have a training component, which must be offered to potential and active mentors. The content should be designed to

- enhance their knowledge of the criminal justice system;
- acquaint them with appropriate governing policies and procedures of the correctional agencies or facilities referring clients;
- develop or improve their skills such as interpersonal communication to enhance their effectiveness as mentors;
- increase their awareness of and sensitivity to victim-related issues;
- provide them with information on available transitional services and referral procedures to other agencies or organizations;
- develop or enhance their level of professionalism and adherence to accepted ethical standards of practice.

Applicants must also provide a plan to collect data and report annually on the progress of their project at achieving

- reductions in recidivism rates;
- decreases in crime;
- increases in employment and enrollment in educational programs;
- reductions in violations of conditions 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.

Priority Considerations

The Second Chance Act directs the U.S. Department of Justice to give priority consideration to applications that

- include a plan to implement activities that have been demonstrated effective in facilitating successful reentry;
- include a plan or strategy for recruiting, training and supervising or monitoring volunteer mentors;
- discuss the role of local governmental agencies, other nonprofit organizations, and community stakeholders that will collaborate on project implementation;
- provide a description of the evidence-based methodology to be used in the delivery of mentoring and other proposed transitional services;
- provide a description of how the project could be broadly replicated if demonstrated to be effective;

- include a discussion of the role of state or local corrections departments, community corrections agencies, and/or local jail systems in ensuring successful reentry and how mentoring, transitional, and training services provided under this project will be integrated into the overall reentry strategy;
- include a plan to promote the sustainability of the project once federal funding ceases.

Budget

- Contingent upon the availability of funds and the number of offenders projected to be served, awards of up to \$300,000 will be made.
- Awards will be for a period of up to twenty-four months, with the ability for no-cost extensions.
- A grantee may be eligible for continued funding contingent upon the availability of funds and demonstration of adequate progress toward meeting established goals of the program.
- A match is not required, but applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a 25 percent in-kind match in the form of contributions of goods or services that are directly related to the purpose for which the grant was awarded. The applicant must identify the source of the 25 percent non-federal portion of the budget and how the in-kind match will be used.

For More Information

The [National Reentry Resource Center](#) (NRRC), established by the Second Chance Act and administered by the [Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice](#), provides education, training, and technical assistance to states, tribes, territories, local governments, service providers, nonprofit organizations, and corrections institutions working on prisoner reentry. To receive updates when new resources become available, please subscribe to the NRRC newsletter at www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/account/subscriptions.

The NRRC is a project of the [Council of State Governments Justice Center](#), in partnership with the Urban Institute, Association of State Correctional Administrators, and the American Probation and Parole Association. The NRRC is also guided by an [advisory board](#), which helps coordinate support and services for Second Chance Act grantees and the reentry field. For more information about the National Reentry Resource Center or the Second Chance Act, please visit www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org.