



## Project S.E.E.K.

(Services to Enable and Empower Kids)

### **Serving Children of Incarcerated Parents**

Jeweld Legacy Group is seeking organizations with the capacity to replicate Project S.E.E.K. - Services to Enable and Empower Kids. Project S.E.E.K. is the country's first and only comprehensive program and longitudinal study focused on children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers. Initiated as a pilot demonstration and longitudinal study in Genesee County, it was developed in the context of the Michigan Department of Community Health's Prevention Services Division, which pilots and evaluates promising prevention strategies.

Project S.E.E.K. targets children who have a parent in prison, a population known to be at increased risk for negative outcomes. It is designed to impact the risk and protective factors associated with delinquency and criminal behavior at both the individual and family levels. Services are flexible in scope and duration. As a comprehensive program with multiple components, Project S.E.E.K. draws on prior experience with prevention programming and incorporates aspects of infant mental health programming; problem solving, social skills training, substance abuse prevention, violence prevention and conflict resolution curricula, and Michigan Cooperative Extension Service's "Building Strong Families" curriculum, as well as empowerment and wraparound concepts.

Project S.E.E.K. has four major components: home visits, support groups for children, adolescent and caregivers, advocacy and referrals and facilitating communication with the incarcerated parent.

### Targeted Population

Project S.E.E.K. targets children of adults sentenced to prison with a minimum term of two years. Children are included if the incarcerated parent claim parenthood, whether or not the incarcerated parents normally resides with the family. Children must be under 11 years of age at intake.

Staffing Requirements and Qualifications for 60-100 families. (This will be modified based on funding available for replication and implementation)

Project S.E.E.K is staffed by 1 FTE coordinator, 2-4 FTE project specialists, .5 FTE clerical support and aide and contractual staff as needed to conduct, assist, and prepare for groups, in addition to staff who provide children care for caregiver support groups. Transportation can be contracted with area agencies.

The Program Coordinator should have a Master's in Social Work or other Human Services field with experience in therapeutic and group processes, program development and supervision. Project Specialist need a Bachelors Degree in human services with experience in outreach programs for high risk populations. Leaders of children's groups should have a four-year degree in human services or education and must be able to address emotional issues that may arise for group participants during sessions. Hiring staff with personal experience with the criminal justice system is strongly encouraged.

Staff should have knowledge of the impact of incarceration on children and families and of how to work with the corrections system. Expertise and training in early childhood development and working with substance abuse and mental health disorders is highly recommended.

## Evaluation

Participation in the evaluation of the replication of Project S.E.E.K. is required. Because S.E.E.K. is a family-centered program, data sources included observation, caregivers, children and adolescents and teacher.

The evaluation of Project S.E.E.K. is designed to measure the following intermediate indicators of effectiveness:

1. Risk and protective factors related to negative outcomes
2. Service providers' perceptions of children and family functioning
3. Participant satisfaction

## **Ultimate Outcomes Expected and Intermediate Objectives**

Project SEEK is designed to reduce the probability that the children of incarcerated parents will participate in delinquent or criminal activities and to break the intergenerational cycle of incarceration.

Intermediate objectives are:

1. To promote social competency, cognitive development (school success), emotional well-being, physical well-being and family stability of children.
2. To improve the child's caregiving environment by: a) promoting the psychological and physical well-being of caregivers, b) increasing their ability to meet basic needs, c) improving parenting practices, d) maintaining the parent-child relationship when appropriate while the incarcerated parent is incarcerated, and e) assisting with family issues of reintegration at the time of incarcerated parent's release.

Organizational Readiness:

The replication of Project S.E.E.K. requires that interested organizations must demonstrate capacity and readiness. Organization must be willing to participate in a 3- day training and on-going technical assistance, site visits and conference calls. This implies that organizations will commit to implement the program components with fidelity, allocate time to work with the consultant who will provide technical assistance to address implementation of program components; staff training and evaluation support.

