



## A.TLG Case Study 2013 Cover Sheet

### Charlottesville, Virginia:

### “A City of Second Chances”- The Prisoner Reentry Initiative

**Topic:** Partnerships

**Jurisdiction:** Charlottesville, Virginia

**City Manager:** Maurice Jones

*This application should be considered for an Innovation Award and for the Rapid Fire Session.*

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## B. TLG Case Study 2013 Synopsis

**The City of Charlottesville strives to be a great place to live for all of our citizens.**

| <i>This is expressed in the vision of our City Council to be the following:</i>  | <i>We accomplish this vision by focusing on nine key areas:</i>  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A leader in innovation, environmental sustainability, social and economic justice and healthy race relations</li> <li>• Flexible and progressive in anticipating and responding to the needs of our citizens</li> <li>• Cultural and creative capital of Central Virginia</li> <li>• United community that treasures diversity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Sustainability</li> <li>• A Center for Lifelong Learning</li> <li>• Quality Housing Opportunities for All</li> <li>• C’Ville Arts &amp; Culture</li> <li>• A Green City</li> <li>• America’s Healthiest City</li> <li>• A Connected Community</li> <li>• Community of Mutual Respect</li> <li>• Smart, Citizen Focused Government</li> </ul> |



The City of Charlottesville seeks to address the needs of our low wealth community through a number of strategies. In 2008 the City began a renewed focus on race relations through the creation of the Dialogue on Race, and a number of Action Teams that have resulted. This community wide endeavor engages our residents in an on-going discussion to better understand each other, our backgrounds, our history, our perceptions and how past actions continue to affect life in Charlottesville today. Also in 2008 City Council held a work session to address poverty. The work session focused on local statistics, economic development strategies and best practices in other communities. This work session called for action in five key areas: transportation, workforce development funds, prisoner reentry initiatives, affordable housing, and the development of a Section 3 plan. These focus areas continue to be emphasized today with many cross-departmental programs that could be discussed at the 2013 Transforming Local Government Conference. Examples include:

- Section 3 is a provision of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 that promotes local economic development, neighborhood economic improvement, and individual self-sufficiency. The recently created Section 3 program requires that recipients of certain HUD financial assistance, to the greatest extent feasible, provide job training, employment, and contracting opportunities for low- or very-low income residents in connection with projects and activities in their neighborhoods. In 2011, a Section 3 Coordinator was hired and a steering committee was established that had representatives from many various departments and local businesses.
- The Office of Economic Development partners to implement numerous workforce initiative programs. New education programs have impacted hundreds of local students with exposure to workplace readiness, an emphasis on the fields of medicine and technology, and transportation assistance. Training and support for small businesses is being provided in workshops and one-on-one. Job readiness is being promoted with training for public housing residents. Job placement is encouraged with job fairs, apprenticeships, and employment training. Businesses are recruited to create a significant impact on the local economy.
- Neighborhood Development Services partners to create affordable housing strategies. Local dollars are being used with Community Development Block Grant and HOME Funds to create new rental and homeownership units. Direct client services, rental assistance, and home rehabilitation, and energy improvement assistance are all being provided to our citizens. Our homeless population is being supported with day programming,

winter shelter assistance, and a new Single Resident Occupancy facility has been recently completed. Public housing redevelopment is in the planning stages.

- The City of Charlottesville is fostering other emerging initiatives. **City of Promise** is an effort to replicate the Harlem Children’s Zone. The initiative has received a federal planning grant and is in the process of applying for an implementation grant. **Bank ON Charlottesville** is planning to launch in late 2012. This program will be modeled after many nationwide to promote financial literacy, move the unbanked and under-banked into the financial mainstream and provide micro-loans at low rates. The **Community Investment Collaborative** supports local entrepreneurs with a four month training course and access to small business loans. The Orange Dot Project is a recent study that demonstrates a plan to improve self-sufficiency in the community by matching low wealth individuals and existing small businesses with the anchor institution dollars that are already being spent.

**This presentation focuses on our ongoing collaborative efforts to improve adult prisoner reentry.** On December 6, 2010, City Council declared Charlottesville to be “A City of Second Chances” for ex-offenders, and that all departments of City Government must continue to give fair and appropriate review to all ex-offenders’ applications for employment and make hiring decisions in such cases based on the applicants’ knowledge, skills, abilities and potential for success. Council urged all area employers, public and private, large and small, to join in the effort to promote the successful re-entry of ex-offenders into our community by considering each ex-offender’s application for employment, without prejudice arising from the fact that the applicant has been incarcerated.

In collaboration with the Charlottesville Department of Social Services and Offender Aid & Restoration (OAR/JACC), a local nonprofit that provides a host of criminal justice services to address the needs of our community, our local Prisoner Reentry Council was established in 2007 to develop local plans that identify available resources and methods for interagency coordination and increased service effectiveness. At the request of the local Reentry Steering Committee, in support of the December 6<sup>th</sup> proclamation, City Council appropriated \$7,500 on December 20, 2010 for a Reentry Summit to promote awareness, provide education and training, and facilitate improved coordination of reentry services to prisoners in our community. On March 9, 2011 the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors appropriated \$3,000 to facilitate additional community participation at the event. The event was planned by members of the Reentry Steering Committee, the Dialogue on Race Reentry Workgroup, and a number of community volunteers. Over 200 participants including ex-offenders, family members, human service agency and public safety staff, employers, and interested citizens attended the event.

One participant was a 37 year old man who has spent all but 11 months since he was 16, incarcerated. He has only worked 2 days at a fast food restaurant and never worked in prison because of high security level. Literally, this man possessed no work experience and was able to maintain employment and gain valuable skills throughout the pilot.

As a result of the Reentry Summit a number of exciting changes have occurred. Development of Peer Support Networks have been supported and a number of groups are up and running. One of these groups, the Believers and Achievers, worked with the City to organize training for reentry support networks in August 2011. The Believers and Achievers continue to meet weekly to focus on peer support and reentry issues. In November 2011, The Reentry Steering Committee endorsed a new structure that invited applications for a significant number of ex-offenders and family members to become a part of the group for the first time. Applications are currently being reviewed. As part of this reorganization the steering committee will develop an action plan for 2012 that will create action teams rather than the standing committee structure previously in place. In December 2011, Council accepted a Homecoming Resource Guide developed by the Dialogue on Race Reentry Action Team in collaboration with community partners.

In September 2011 with workforce development funds earmarked by Council, the Coming Home to Work Program piloted a partnership between the City and the Reentry Program at OAR/JACC. This work training program helped ex-felons gain real work experience through the City’s Parks and Recreation Department. The

pilot provided an opportunity for ex-offenders to gain real employment experience and demonstrate a commitment to meeting workplace expectations. OAR/JACC provided intensive case management within existing staff resources, and provided job readiness, retention skill building, and support to the offenders selected. OAR/JACC worked with other community partners to identify local businesses who would employ participants who successfully completed the program. Outreach to employers has focused on areas where the State of Virginia does not have barrier crimes. Employers who are passionate about providing a second chance to formerly incarcerated individuals have been identified and been worked with to establish levels of support to encourage participation, including tax credits, bonding, case management supports, internships, and wage supplement incentives.

The City is invested in providing a living wage and participants in the program were paid a rate of \$10.74 plus FICA for their work hours. The pilot created a work crew of ex-offenders who received employment training for 25.5 hours per week by OAR/JACC for a period of 23 weeks. The City of Charlottesville provided training on safety and leadership, generated assignments for the work crew to accomplish weekly, and provided \$30,060 of for the program in FY 11-FY 12. The City's Parks & Recreation Department provided the training and planning components as in-kind. The funding supported wages for the offenders and payroll costs to OAR/JACC for administration of the program.

Another participant has rebuilt many relationships with family that had been damaged due to his past behavior. He has remained positive while in this program and his family members have told them that they never disliked him but they disliked what he was doing with himself and his life.

The pilot was successful in many ways and was a very valuable experience for all participants. In total six individuals were served during the pilot: four worked successfully to the end, one was injured off site and was unable to continue, and one was removed due to incurring criminal charges during the pilot. Some outcomes from the pilot included:

- Five participants opened new bank accounts
- All participants began budgeting their money
- Two participants had their driver's license reinstated
- All participants started paying court fines/fee or completed payments
- Average hours per week worked by the group increased from missing at least a half day each week the first several weeks of the program to near perfect attendance after the first six weeks of the program.

- Two participants started doing regular part time work in addition to work program (used work program as reference)
- Never had to address work ethic with participants
- Four participants are on supervision, with no issues during the pilot with probation officers
- Four participants who completed the program are currently working or are under consideration for an employment opportunity. Two may be hired as City employees

The program has now moved out of the pilot phase, was budgeted \$85,000 for FY 13, and will continue to work with the Parks and Recreation Department as well the Department of Rehabilitation Services, OAR/JACC, and numerous other local businesses. This program is a key example of the City's effectiveness with having various departments and businesses collaborate to address a city-wide focus and part of the broader strategy to address the needs of our low wealth community.

## **C. TLG Case Study 2013 Presentation Style**

The team will present this case study using the following tools:

- A power point presentation
- Video clips of testimonials from clients and stakeholders. This would include those who have benefited directly from the re-entry program and businesses that have placed clients in various jobs.
- Videos/pictures of job sites that resulted in placements for clients.