

## 2018 LGFCU Excellence in Innovation Award Project Evaluation

<b>Project ID</b>	HS-3
<b>Title of Program</b>	Community1
<b>Program Category</b>	
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<b>Implementation Date</b>	1-Mar-17
<b>FLSA Designation</b>	Non-exempt
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### Description of Productivity Improvement

In March 2017, New Hanover County Sheriff Ed McMahon directed his staff to develop a process that would efficiently combat recidivism in New Hanover County. Over the next few months, several individuals collaborated on what would become "Community1" in May of 2017. The end result was a comprehensive network of assistance for released former offenders that included housing assistance, employment assistance, drug rehabilitation, connection to social services and community reintegration. By creating a hub for these resources, Community1 has already been able to assist 78 former offenders with only four counts of recidivism. These 74 individuals represent a savings of approximately \$519,000 (an aggregate of days spent incarcerated over the last three years, barring any medical, dental, dietary or other incidental costs). Community1 started with only four organizations to assist them at the program's inception. In less than a year, there are now over 50 partners from the community, and the goal for 2018 is 150 justice-involved individuals assisted.

### Description of why this project was initiated

Recidivism is an issue many county agencies face across the country, with a cycle of arrest and release that is common for many individuals. With nothing changing besides the date of arrest, things stayed the same. Numerous factors contribute to recidivism: homelessness; lack of access to public assistance, transportation or medical care; the growing opioid epidemic; inability to gain employment

with an arrest record; and mental health issues and access to care. These issues are very challenging to tackle for any one agency, so the NHC Sheriff's Office created Community1 - a hub for all the resources available to incarcerated individuals. In addition, Community1 adds direct assistance from the Sheriff's Office so that former offenders are released from jail with a plan, instead of questions, hope instead of worry. They are given a chance, where they didn't have it before this program.

**Quantifiable results (sustainability, cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of service).**

**Indication of what resources were used and what was done with any accrued time savings**

As of December 2017, Community1 had a total of 78 successes with only four instances of recidivism. These 74 individuals represent a savings of approximately \$519,000 (an aggregate of days spent incarcerated over the last three years, barring any medical, dental, dietary or other incidental costs).

A success is measured by an individual having all of their needs that were requested met. For example, if someone says they needed a place to live and the program is able to assist with that need and find a home for the person when they leave jail, then that is considered a success. For an individual facing addiction who wants a residential treatment program, the success comes when they are accepted into the treatment facility.

Initially begun with one substance abuse outpatient facility, two halfway houses, and an inpatient substance abuse treatment facility in Asheville, the program's network has grown to over 50 partner organizations, including the Department of Social Services, disability resources, and employers - from manual labor assistance to office placement.

Typically, most inmates have to wait until after they are released from jail to begin seeking the assistance they need. This was an issue, because if a person's issues like drug addiction or homelessness are known, then it doesn't help to wait until they are back in that same situation that contributed to their criminal behavior / incarceration to begin assisting them.

While incarcerated, they are sober, fed, clean, medicated and have an actual address for contact. Giving organizations that access has helped them to bolster their numbers, a need that most non-profits have due to their grants often being tied to the amount of individuals they assist. It has helped us break the cycle of re-arrest and release, because they are being released with a plan, instead of issues. This symbiotic relationship is at the core of what the Community1 program does. Everyone benefits, especially the formerly incarcerated individuals.

Because the program leverages existing community resources, it is also very cost effective. Community1 is staffed by one full-time detention officer equipped with a laptop and cell phone using a nominal amount of basic office supplies.

**Other descriptive information**

One of the program's greatest successes came in the form of an elderly man who was habitually homeless for years, and a frequent inmate. Mr. P (name shortened for privacy) was almost 70, and

never charged with a violent or major offense. His charges would range from drunk and disorderly to second-degree trespassing - all charges indicative of a homeless individual. Community1 provided Mr. P with a sober housing with treatment and connected him with social services. Six months later, one of the program's proudest moments occurred when the Sheriff's Office was asked to write a letter of recommendation to his employer, because he had his first job in many years. By assisting him alone, the Sheriff's Office was able to save \$14,672 a year, just on the cost of his average stays at the jail, not including medical or any other additional services.

To our knowledge, Community1 is unlike any other program in the country. Most re-entry programs are focused on prison and not jail, and there is nothing as comprehensive as what is being done through this program. The program combines elements of a social worker, recruiter, drug counselor, mental health provider and liaison all under one roof.

Community1 was created by the New Hanover County Sheriff's Office, is staffed by Sheriff's personnel, and was designed from research and a knowledge of our community - it is one of a kind. It offers many new services to county residents, creating more partnerships than ever before, and fills a large gap that previously existed for inmates as they left the county's jail.

The cost savings that this program provides for each inmate that doesn't return is considerable for the county, and it decreases the burden on the already-crowded jail. New Hanover County's administration and leadership have been welcoming of this program, and clearly see its value and purpose. The county has initiated mental illness training for employees that helps them to better assist inmates and has hosted forums for the public that have helped the community understand what the program does.

Through Community1, New Hanover County Sheriff's Office has created a network of community partners and local governmental agencies that continues to grow, and has helped change the lives of former inmates by getting them back on their feet and helping them achieve success.