

## **2007 Innovation Awards Program**

### **ID (assigned by CSG): 07-MW-17OHRICINAACP**

1. Richland Correctional Institution N.A.A.C.P. Prison Project (RICI-NAACP), Ohio  
Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC)
2. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.)
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8. National Web site: [www.NAACP.ORG](http://www.NAACP.ORG)
9. The RICI-NAACP believes that successful re-entry begins the moment an offender enters prison. The program vision is to demonstrate leadership, foster hope and provide an opportunity for resiliency and positive human relationships. This process is facilitated by providing various programming for individuals as a vehicle to get involved in their own destiny such as life skills training, parenting classes, health awareness, basic education, literacy etc.
10. The program began in April/2002.
11. The RICI-NAACP Prison Project was created to promote education and awareness by providing motivational speakers, programs, workshops, and presentations that inform felons about re-entry resources, restoration (voters' registration), and job opportunities. In addition, this program is designed to promote alliances, legislation, and initiatives that positively impact inmate recidivism, ex-felon re-enfranchisement, and racial disparities within the criminal justice system; as well as provide the incarcerated with a vehicle of empowerment through the formation of prison branches.
12. Since 2002, this program initiated several workshops, seminars, and ongoing projects to help facilitate community re-entry. They include the following:





- 2004 Juneteenth (June)**  
A celebration commemorating African American Legacy and Achievement.
- 2002 Native American History Month (July)**  
A seminar to commemorate Native American History and Culture
- 2003 Youth Day (August)**  
A special sporting event provided for members 25 and under.
- 2003 Hispanic Heritage Month (September)**  
A celebration in honor of Hispanic Contributions to the U.S.
- 2004 Hip Hop Discussion (May)**  
An annual discussion involving young members 25 and under.

## **Other Activities**

### **Implementation**

- 2002 Community Services**  
This program donates funds to sponsor children for summer youth camp (Cuyahoga County, Ohio) and to provide supplies for Hedges Elementary in Mansfield, Ohio.
- 2002 RIC-NAACP Library**  
This has been developed to complement our workshops and seminars.
13. This program allows inmates to develop and implement activities that cultivate leadership, re-enfranchisement, organizational sustainability, and collaborative efforts involving community partnerships.
14. The RIC-NAACP start up cost (April 2002) was \$3,960.00 for 220 members at \$18.00 per person. Furthermore, all computers were donated from the Trumbull Correctional Institution's Computer Refurbishing Program division of the Ohio Penal Industries (OPI). This Project purchases its own supplies for all organizational activities. In addition, this program continues to donate funds to various organizations, charities, and provides the NAACP National Office with 25%

of all fundraisers. **Note:** All staff advisors are employees of Richland Correctional Institution and provide services on a voluntary basis.

15. Annual total : \$23, 840.24
16. The program is funded through membership fees, donations and various fundraisers such as food sales and photo sales.
17. On June 21<sup>st</sup> 2001, Mr. Terry Collins, Former Deputy Director (Current Director) of Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (O.D.R.C.) authorized formation of inmate Prison Branches in the State of Ohio per Administrative Rule: 5170-939 Inmate Groups.
18. Computers (Microsoft Windows 95 and XP)
19. No.
20. Yes.

This program is the first to be reactivated in over 10 years and the first to be chartered in over 30 years; thus, making us the Pilot Project in the nation. Nationally, other Correction Departments have followed suit activating branches in other states such as; Nevada; Washington; New Jersey; Pennsylvania; Florida; Kentucky; Michigan; Colorado; Iowa; Delaware; and Missouri. This program differs because it focuses on Re-entry initiatives through registering offenders to vote 90-days before they are released.

21. Yes.
- 22.

**Pros:**

The RIC-NAACP is a nationally recognized inmate focused program that has been successful in fostering hope, encouragement and leadership enhancing resiliency. It develops positive human relationship skills. These initiatives continue to be successful because of the local and national chapter of the NAACP, ODRC administration, and staff of RIC and the support of the inmate population. This program's success and activities have been documented. (See attachments)

**Con:**

The RIC-NAACP Prison Project continues to strive to gain 100% of the support of the administration, community and the inmates. However, strategic buy-in from those mentioned will strengthen the progress of the program. We believe that the support of the other entities and increase in membership will improve

effective results in equipping felons with the tools necessary to become productive citizens.

23. We continue to develop and implement seminars, workshops, and other activities. Also, we have increased our membership, administrative support, and community assistance. We began the program with 220 members in 2002, currently there are 345 members. Since 2002, approximately 2200 inmates have been involved in the program (membership). We provide technical assistance to other state correctional institutions to assist in increasing their membership. RIC-NAACP will continue to strive to build community partnerships with local agencies.
24. With the exception of various States, the NAACP Prison Project has been embraced nationally; and one of the major obstacles is getting other States to permit this program within their prison facilities. Another obstacle is community involvement. Many community organizations are not aware of this type of program and the more they become involved the more incentive ex-felons will have in rebuilding their communities.