

2007 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 07-S-38LAMODSECURECARE

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: Louisiana

Assign Program Category (applicant): Corrections

1. Program Name – LA MOD – the Louisiana Model for Secure Care
2. Administering Agency – DPS&C Youth Services, Office of Youth Development
3. Contact Person – Jerel M. Giarrusso, Communications Director
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9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

The Louisiana Model for Secure Care takes a therapeutic approach to reforming secure care in the Louisiana juvenile justice system. We have developed a new approach to secure care, based on a therapeutic, treatment and child-centered model, moving away from the traditional correctional, custodial methods, addressing such areas as crisis management, human dignity, professional boundaries, family systems and group dynamics.

10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on April 2, 2007, to be considered.

LA MOD has been operational since July, 2005.

11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?

Because Louisiana's secure care system fell under federal supervision due to identified deficiencies and inadequacies, drastic and swift reforms were required. Serious reforms began in the late 1990s but were escalated when the current governor took office. The LA MOD program was developed to create a system that would focus on adolescent development rather than an adult punitive model. It is designed to provide treatment that addresses individual problem areas. The goal of LA MOD is to provide delinquent youth the opportunity to become productive citizens. The traditional method saw high recidivism rates, with a large number of youth ending up in the adult system. Under the old system, violence was a major problem, with assaults by youth on youth, and youth on staff, and staff on youth. With emphasis building trust and relationships, LA MOD fosters a safe environment where altercations are few.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order. OYD began working with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Missouri Division of Youth Services in 2004 to develop a new approach to juvenile justice, based on a therapeutic, treatment and child-centered model, moving away from the traditional correctional, custodial methods. The new system is entitled LA MOD (Louisiana Model for Secure Care).

OYD introduced the reform pilot at Bridge City Center for Youth (BCCY) in July 2005.

OYD's Staff Development area developed LA MOD training for new and veteran secure care staff. Participants receive intensive training during a three-week course, including instruction in the differences between the traditional correctional approach to juvenile justice, and the new therapeutic approach.

OYD's Staff Development team now offers opportunities for local providers to participate in LA MOD training.

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

Louisiana recognizes that the differences between adult and children are key to reforming the juvenile justice system. LA MOD focuses on a therapeutic, child-centered environment versus a traditional adult correctional/custodial model. The key to LA MOD's success is to treat youth with dignity and respect. Emphasis is on relationship-building that affords youth the opportunity to belong and contribute to a group, make meaningful choices, develop transferable skills and mentor their peers.

Physical characteristics of LA MOD feature a more homelike environment in secure care facilities, with dorm sizes reduced from an average of 37 to 10-12 youth in each one. Group processes led by staff (Youth Care Workers, a newly established job title created to work with LA MOD) take place in the dorms and include treatment and counseling. Weekly team meetings provide an opportunity for all staff who work with youth to discuss progress and ways to support the youth.

LA MOD is seen as a national model for juvenile justice reform, and groups around the nation have taken notice of the program. OYD's Staff Development Director co-presented "Therapeutic Team Building Activities" at the National Juvenile Services Training Institute in Indianapolis in June 2006.

14. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

Staff traveled to Missouri to observe the program in place there, and extensive training then took place.

To launch LA MOD, major changes had to take place in the secure care facilities. Facilities were remodeled, new furniture was purchased for dorms, staff development materials were developed and duplicated, staff were trained in new methods. However, costs were not charged against the LA MOD program per se. The costs were rolled into normal operating

costs – maintenance, repair, personnel, etc. Financial records do not show the cost to implement LA MOD.

15. What are the program's annual operational costs?

Apparently the cost of this program is not a separate line item.

16. How is the program funded? –

Operations are paid through state general funds that comprise the agency budget.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation funded the travel to Missouri and some staff development costs (these were one-time expenditures).

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number. –

The Louisiana Legislature passed Act 1225 of the 2003 Regular Session as an initial bold plan to systematically restructure the juvenile justice system in Louisiana. One of the Governor's first actions when she took office in 2004 was to separate the Office of Youth Development from adult corrections by executive order, allowing Youth Services to begin making the changes necessary for serious reform.

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?

No equipment is used in the dorms for programming and treatment. For training, ordinary audio-visual equipment is used, including laptops, LED projectors, screens, etc. PowerPoint is used for presentations.

19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.

LA MOD is based on the system in use by the state of Missouri, however, it is not identical. LA MOD was developed after thorough research by a committee of OYD staff, led by Staff Development Director Denise Clause, P. O. Box 6458, Audubon Station, Baton Rouge, LA 70896, tel. 225.287.7984. email DClause@oyd.louisiana.gov.

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?

The program in the state of Missouri is similar in structure and approach. LA MOD, however, is tailored to meet the unique needs of Louisiana's youth.

21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?

The program has been fully implemented at one of three sites, Bridge City Center for Youth. Partial implementation at the other two facilities has taken place. Limitations include staff shortages and renovation of dormitories. LA MOD will continue to expand as these two issues are addressed. The goal is full implementation at all facilities.

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.
LAMOD has been in operation for less than two years. Recidivism rates have not yet been determined. Data on youth who have been through LA MOD programming is flagged so that effectiveness of the program can be monitored over time. However, altercation rates are much improved, as the "frequent fighter" reports clearly show. LA MOD dorms are clearly safer than traditional ones. Even in areas where LA MOD has not been fully implemented, radical changes have been seen and those dorms are safer as a result of the reforms.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?
The training cycle was originally five weeks. The training program has been refined and compressed into three weeks.

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?
Obstacles to overcome include staff resistance to radical change; problems with an operating system in flux; staff and youth buy-in; increased training time; need to hire additional staff; resistance from the legal community, legislators, parents and other skeptics. Limitations would include funding for construction, remodeling, purchase of equipment and travel to other states to see similar programs in action.

2007 Innovations Awards Program Program Categories and Subcategories

Use these as guidelines to determine the appropriate Program Category for your state's submission and list that program category on page one of this application. Choose only one.

Infrastructure and Economic Development

- Business/Commerce
- Economic Development
- Transportation

Government Operations

- Administration
- Elections
- Public Information
- Revenue

Health & Human Services

- Aging
- Children & Families
- Health Services
- Housing
- Human Services

Human Resources/Education

- Education
- Labor
- Management
- Personnel
- Training and Development
- Workforce Development

Natural Resources

- Agriculture
- Energy
- Environment
- Environmental Protection
- Natural Resources
- Parks & Recreation
- Water Resources

Public Safety/Corrections

- Corrections
- Courts
- Criminal Justice
- Drugs
- Emergency Management
- Public Safety

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This application is also available at www.csg.org, in the Programs section.

Deadline: April 2, 2007