

2008 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 08-M-18MN

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: **Minnesota**

Assign Program Category (applicant): **Corrections** (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name: **Learning Enrichment Activities Program (LEAP)**
2. Administering Agency: **Minnesota Correctional Facility-Red Wing (MCF-RW)**
3. Contact Person (Name and Title): **Avis Lind, LEAP Project Manager**
4. Address: **MCF-RW, 1079 Highway 292, Red Wing, MN 55066**
5. Telephone Number: **651-267-3730**
6. FAX Number: **651-267-3761**
7. E-mail Address: **alind@rw.state.doc.mn.us**
8. Web site Address: **NA**
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program:

LEAP is an after school program designed to assist incarcerated serious and chronic male juvenile offenders increase their reading and math skills, prepare for the GED test, and receive academic tutoring. Other program components include participation in fine arts activities, community service projects and driver's education classes.

10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 1, 2008 to be considered.

The grant was award in September, 2004 and the program began operating in December, 2004.

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

Reading and Math Classes:

Most of the students at MCF-RW have not experienced success in school. This failure to succeed in the educational setting is a well documented delinquent risk factor. The average student at MCF-RW is three grade levels behind in reading and more than three grade levels behind in math. Approximately 56% of the students are enrolled in special education classes. Many of the students have not passed the Basic Skills Tests necessary for graduation and most are ill-prepared to successfully pass the GED.

LEAP was created to help residents improve their reading and math skills by providing them with one-to-one or small group help. Each resident is given the opportunity to progress at their own level and receive help as needed. As a result, residents are able to see progress and experience success in an academic setting. The residents are continually challenged to do better and are recognized for their accomplishments. The residents often say that participation in LEAP is the first time they have ever experienced success in school or received recognition for their academic achievements. As one resident said “The only award I ever received in school was for perfect attendance in kindergarten.”

In addition to reading and math classes, residents can also attend tutoring classes where they receive help with any academic subject matter and get assistance in preparing for their GED or Basic Skills tests.

The goal of the facility is to provide services to serious and chronic juvenile offenders by reducing the risk of re-offending and increasing the likelihood of them becoming successful and contributing members of the community. The reading, math and tutoring components of LEAP are designed to contribute to the achievement of this goal.

Community Service:

Self-centeredness and the lack of empathy for others are common characteristics of serious and chronic delinquents. Their failure to take into consideration the rights and needs of others serves as a catalysis for much of their delinquent behavior. Opportunities to be of assistance to others, particularly to those who are less fortunate, serve as a means of challenging this self-centeredness and exposing the offender to the values and rewards of giving to others. To that end, the community service component of LEAP was designed to give residents an opportunity to put their own wants and needs aside and help those who are less fortunate than themselves. The residents in LEAP visit the Vasa Children’s Home once a week to participate in activities with children who have physical, emotional, or mental disabilities. The children are away from home, often lonely, and in search of people who can help them feel accepted and even special. The LEAP residents voluntarily participate during their leisure time and receive no monetary reward for their participation. While there are no tangible rewards for the residents, they speak positively of the pleasure they receive from helping others. They also better understand the importance of giving back to the community and the sense of satisfaction they can experience from doing so.

During the weekly visits, the LEAP residents and the children who reside at the home play board games, engage in art and craft activities, participate in athletic competitions, and most importantly, provide companionship, support and encouragement during these activities. The individuals provide each other with a sense of belonging and the feeling that someone cares about them. They also give each other a sense of purpose, worth, and acceptance that has often been lacking in their lives.

Residents Tutoring Other Residents:

Some residents also give back to the MCF-RW community by tutoring students in some of the LEAP classes. Several Spanish speaking students have tutored students in the Spanish class; a resident who hoped to become a math teacher tutored math students; and several residents who passed their driver's education permit test tutored students who were having problems learning the information. Tutoring has provided residents with an opportunity to help others while also experiencing the satisfaction of being of service. One student, who wanted to be a math teacher, had the opportunity to experience some of the tasks and challenges he would encounter should he pursue his educational goal.

Theatre

Many of the residents at the correctional facility lack social skills and confidence. Theatre classes are held weekly and participating residents present skits at various facility activities. The classes and presentations have proven to be a source of fun for the residents while also giving them an opportunity to try something new, go outside their comfort zones, and realize they can be successful at new and different things. Participation gives them confidence in themselves and their abilities and as a result, they are often more willing to try something new including new behaviors and a new lifestyle. In addition, the local community theatre often donates tickets so the residents have the opportunity to see live performances. This experience offers residents another idea on how they can constructively use their leisure time when they are in the community.

Driver's Education

Nearly all residents will become employed upon release to the community. The absence of employment represents a high risk situation that often leads to recidivism. One of the main obstacles to finding and maintaining employment is the absence of a driver's license. The Driver's Education component of the LEAP Program was designed to overcome this obstacle. Approximately 85% of the residents who have enrolled in the class have successfully completed the classes prior to their release. 100% of the residents who have successfully completed the classes have passed their permit test.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

- **When a resident completes the orientation and assessment phase of the facility's program and has demonstrated the willingness to engage in the treatment and education programs, he is eligible to enroll in LEAP. The resident completes a LEAP application form and submits it to the LEAP Project Manager.**
- **The Project Manager reviews the resident's application form and reviews his progress at the facility.**
- **The resident meets with the Project Manager who explains the qualifications and expectations for LEAP.**
- **If the Project Manager determines the resident is ready to take on the additional responsibilities of LEAP and the resident agrees to the expectations, his name is added to the LEAP schedule. All residents must sign up for reading or math; all other classes are optional.**
- **If the resident is eligible and wants to enroll in the community service component, his name is forwarded to the recreational staff members who manage and supervise the activity.**
- **The resident is given a schedule of his classes.**
- **Reading and Math classes are held four days a week after school, in the evening and on Saturday.**
- **Driver's Education class is held Monday and Wednesday evenings.**
- **Behind-the-Wheel classes are scheduled as needed. Residents must have achieved pre-release status to be eligible for behind-the-wheel classes.**
- **Tutoring is offered after school on Wednesday and/or Thursday depending on the need.**
- **Theatre class is held Saturday morning.**
- **Community service activities are held Thursday afternoon with the Vasa children.**
- **Classes are usually 1 – 1 ½ hours in length except behind-the-wheel classes which are two hours in length.**
- **Residents who are placed in the security unit for disciplinary reasons or residents who fail to attend class as scheduled are required to meet with the Project Manager to determine whether they will be allowed to continue in the program.**
- **At the end of each session, residents are invited to a recognition lunch. At that time, residents receive certificates and awards for their accomplishments in LEAP and they also participate in a leisure or recreational activity organized by the LEAP Advisory Committee.**

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

- **LEAP is the only 21st Century Community Learning Center in the nation that is located inside a correctional facility.**
- **LEAP is designed to support and reinforce the facility's treatment, educational and transitional programs.**
- **LEAP includes pro-social activities that participating residents can continue to pursue as they transition from the facility to the community.**
- **LEAP is designed to help reduce criminogenic risk factors common to serious and chronic juvenile offenders.**
- **LEAP is designed to reinforce pro-social attitudes and behavior.**

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.)

The first year budget included the following:

Salaries: Project Manager	\$32,451.64
Instructors:	\$33,721.00
Evaluator (grant requirement)	\$ 4,263.00
Stipends: College students (volunteers)	\$ 500.00
Other volunteers	\$ 3, 750.00
Driver’s Education permits	\$ 1,400.00
Equipment and Supplies	\$11,157.00

Purchases for the program included Renaissance Reading and Math Programs, computers for the classrooms, a TV for videos/DVDs, furniture for the classrooms and offices, art supplies, awards for recognition lunches, books and manuals for reading, math, theatre and driver’s education, a Spanish computer program, cameras and supplies for a photography workshop, a copier and ink cartridges and incidental supplies.

The Minnesota Correctional Facility-Red Wing provided office and classroom space, administrative support and supervision, staff to escort residents to the community service activity, staff to accompany the driver’s education instructor during behind-the-wheel classes, staff to assist with the coordination of volunteers, vehicle and fuel for behind-the-wheel classes and community service activities, utilities, phones, postage, and miscellaneous office supplies such as pencils and paper.

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

The budget for 2007-2008 includes the following:

Instructor:	\$25,719
Contracted Services:	
Project Manager and 2 Driver’s Education Instructors:	\$43,120
Driver’s Education Permits:	205
Stipends for Volunteers:	523
Indirect Costs:	2,852
Total 2007-08 Budget	\$72,419

There were some funds left from the previous year’s budget and those are being used for miscellaneous expenses such as new reading quizzes for the reading program and the replacement of consumable items such as ink for the copier, certificates and awards. Miscellaneous office supplies, the driver’s education vehicle, fuel, and MCF-RW staff support are provided by the facility as part of the matching funds for the grant.

16. How is the program funded?

Grant funds given to the Minnesota Department of Education by the Federal Government as part of the “No Child Left Behind” program are used to fund the program along with matching funds from MCF-RW.

LEAP is a 21st Century Community Learning Center.

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

CFDA Number: 84.287

Program Type: Formula Grants

“This program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.”

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

The reading and math programs use the Renaissance Learning Programs which require the use of software, computers and printers. The driver’s education program uses a multi-media projector and computer. A TV is available for videos.

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.

Funding for after school programs through the “No Child Left Behind Program” operate throughout the nation, but the programs are usually held in public schools or in the community by a service organization. LEAP is the only “21st Century Community Learning Center” after school program in the nation that is located at a correctional facility.

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

LEAP is the only 21st Century Community Learning Center located at a juvenile correctional facility for serious and chronic male juvenile offenders.

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

The program is fully implemented, but remains flexible in order to meet the needs of the residents. All the residents must participate in either the math or reading class so those classes are available every session. The driver’s education classes, the tutoring class and the community service component are also offered each session but the other classes such as Spanish, grammar and theatre are only offered when there is an interest on the part of the students. In addition, special interest workshops are sometimes provided if there is an expressed interest on the part of the participants. A workshop on photography is an example.

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.
1. **There has been a significant increase in the reading and math scores of the residents every session. Residents in LEAP are pre-tested when they enter LEAP and post-tested at the end of each session. The pre-test average grade equivalency for the math students since LEAP started has been 6.2. The post-test average grade equivalency for the math students has been 11.5. The pre-test average grade equivalency for the reading students since they started LEAP has been 7.8. The post-test average grade equivalency for the reading students has been 8.9.**
 2. **Attendance is higher than expected particularly given the fact that LEAP participation is voluntary.**
 3. **A large percentage of residents who are on the honor roll each session are students who are in LEAP. These are often students who have never been on the honor roll prior to their participation in LEAP.**
 4. **Approximately 85 % of the residents who have enrolled in the driver's education course have successfully completed the classes prior to their release and 100% of the residents who have successfully completed the classes have passed their driver's permit test.**
 5. **Program effectiveness is also reflected in the number of residents who have participated. This is significant because these residents are students who typically experienced failure in school and were often chronic truants. In addition, because they are currently in a correctional facility, they have a very structured day with little free time for themselves. To volunteer their free time to participate in an academic activity to get help with their reading or math indicates the value the program has for the residents.**
 6. **Program effectiveness is also evident in satisfaction surveys completed by participating residents and their assigned caseworkers. A sampling of the resident and caseworker comments are list below. It should be noted that in response to a question as to whether or not the residents would recommend LEAP participation to other residents, the universal response has been that they would recommend participation. They have also universally expressed their appreciation to the staff and volunteers who have assisted them during their participation in LEAP.**

Sample of Resident Responses to Satisfaction Surveys

- I enjoyed being able to work at my own level.*
- It helps me to focus and keep my mind on a particular thing.*
- Theatre helps me step out of my comfort zone; theatre gave me the opportunity to explore new challenges; it was awesome.*
- I learned a lot about doing math without using a calculator.*
- LEAP helps you get caught up with your work and strive for excellence.*
- I learned how to drive; the teacher taught driver's ed. well.*
- It helped me get used to being more responsible.*
- I liked community service and helping kids that are mentally challenged.*
- This program helped me to get an education which I never thought was possible.*
- It helped me to learn about responsibility and commitment, having to be on time and getting there... period.*
- The instructor does a great job helping residents understand what they are trying to learn.*
- LEAP helped me learn math and gave me good social skills.*
- I would recommend LEAP to others because "the name explains it all".*

- It helped me work with others and become more responsible.*
- Theatre enlightened me on where theatre came from and how to put on a good show.*
- It increased my math skills and opened up my reading horizon.*
- It keeps my behavior in check.*
- LEAP helped build confidence in my abilities.*
- I learned patience while trying to tutor others.*
- Theatre was really fun and I did a lot of acting.*
- I enjoyed math because it was a challenge.*
- I made great improvements on my reading and really started to like reading.*
- I enjoyed community service because I got a chance to give back to my community*
- Math class helped me because I didn't know a lot of math but now I know some and it's helping me prepare for the GED test. I would continue this class.*
- Reading helped me work on my goals for striving for excellence.*
- Math helped me with my GED.*
- LEAP showed me I could study more than I already do.*
- I'm a better person.*
- It helped me get my skills up to pass the GED math test which is really hard.*
- It helped me with some social skills.*
- I gained confidence with theatre – before I didn't like standing in front of people.*
- It helped me with my math and that helped me pass my GED.*
- It helped me prepare for the GED test; it helped me understand what I didn't understand and get better skills.*

Sample of Caseworker Responses to the LEAP Caseworker Questionnaires

*Improved his attitude toward school
 Helped him reach his treatment goals
 Helped him address behavioral concern
 Helped him develop confidence and self-efficacy
 Helped him improve his academic skills
 Tutoring helped him with his school work
 LEAP is a tremendous benefit to the residents
 Great program
 Very nice work with this resident
 The quarterly awards program is great
 Thank you*

LEAP Awards and Recognitions

- **The community service component of LEAP received the “President’s Daily Points of Light Award”**
- **LEAP has been recognized by Learning Point Associates with a “High-Quality Complementary Learning Activities for After-school Programs” award.**
- **The reading and math programs have received the Renaissance Learning “Model and Master” classroom status. LEAP is the only high school class in the nation using the Renaissance Learning Program that has reached that status.**

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

Originally the program was designed to include reading, math, art, driver's education and community service. A number of changes in programming have occurred and these have included...

- **an increase in the number of math classes because this is the area of greatest interest to the residents.**
- **the elimination of the art class because of the lack of interest.**
- **the addition of a spelling component with weekly tests (there is a definite need for the residents to improve their spelling skills).**
- **the addition of a theatre class in response to resident interest.**
- **periodic classes in Spanish and/or grammar as requested by the students.**
- **periodic workshops for special activities such as photography.**

In addition, recruitment has become unnecessary because of the increased interest in being in LEAP. Residents who are in LEAP encourage their group members to join the program...they do the recruiting because of the good experiences they have had in the program. There is often a waiting list even though every effort is made to include as many residents as possible.

The standards and expectations for performance in LEAP continue to be raised. As a result, the scores and achievements of the residents continue to increase.

Initially residents were only allowed to be in the program for two sessions, but because of the educational needs of the residents, they are now allowed to stay as long as they meet the behavioral expectations of the program. As a result, many students have spent between 100 and 400 hours in the program. They have given up recreational activities and other leisure activities so they can improve their math and reading skills; not something anyone would expect from juvenile offenders.

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

Funding for the program might be the biggest obstacle but there are resources available including grants such as the one funding LEAP. The largest expense would be the staff salaries and some initial supplies. Another obstacle might be finding quality instructors who would be willing to work evenings and week-ends and who are able to motivate and challenge residents to work hard and excel.