

5-3-17 PUBLIC TESTIMONY

BUDGET WORK SESSION # B @ MULTCO

WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED  
(NOT ORAL)

|                   |                                 |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| RHEANNIN BECKE    | WONDER LEARNING CTR.            |
| JAYMES YOUNG      | " " "                           |
| TONY VEZINA       | " " "                           |
| KEVIN BRADLEY     | " " "                           |
| AMY HALLIBURTON   | " " "                           |
| WILLIAM CHU       | " " "                           |
| RICARDO VERDEGUEZ | " " "                           |
| RHONDA MCLEOD     | " " "                           |
| KATHY SEVOS       | VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA<br>OREGON |

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PUBLIC TESTIMONY SIGN-UP**

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Please complete this form and return to the Board Clerk  
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MEETING DATE: 5/3/17

SUBJECT: Multnomah County Fiscal Year 2018 Budget

SPECIFIC BUDGET TOPIC (DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM): Londer Learning Center

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NAME (**PRINT** & INCLUDE **PRONUNCIATION**): Rheannin Becke

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE:      DAYS: \_\_\_\_\_

EVES: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

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I work full time at a local community college but I have had the amazing experience of working as a substitute teacher at Londer Learning Center. When I hear that there was discussion of this place closing my heart broke.

Community Colleges do great work, but when people are just returning from being incarcerated, it is too much of a shock to paroles and they are likely to stop attending. What Londer Learning Center does is unique. They help people who were incarcerated to get back on their feet. There is no GED program in Multnomah County Jails, Londer is the first access many people have get back into school and get better paying jobs. This can't be taken away-it is a place that gives hope and enables people to change their lives.

The thought of Londer not being funded is frustrating to me. I am in a biracial relationship and this has opened me to the idea that Portland is not welcoming to people of color. Londer serves many racial minorities and helps them improve their lives. I would love to see the County make a move to truly show support for people from diverse backgrounds who are being held back by systems that are acting against them. In my opinion it is places like Londer that are going to break down inequities that exist in this community.

Thanks,  
Rheannin Becke  
1,1312 NE Fremont Ct  
Portland, OR 97220

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NAME (PRINT & INCLUDE PRONUNCIATION): Jaymes Young

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ DAYS: \_\_\_\_\_

EVES: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dear County Commissioners,

I would ask that you not close Londer Learning Center. The Londer Learning Center is the only way that some people that are in the criminal justice system have access to the GED, computer skills and work force training. Londer also helps with apprenticeship programs and transitioning to college.

I personally attended Londer and know from first hand experience how helpful it was in improving my life. Londer helped me get my GED and after receiving my GED I was able to attend Portland Community College and receive an associates of applied science in Web Design and Development. Now that I have my two year degree, I am considering going to a four year university to continue my education. I am considering a degree in Computer Science or in Linguistics, specializing in Germanic languages, I may even double major. I am currently studying German at PCC and Dutch on Duolingo.com. I wouldn't be doing any of this if it weren't for the Londer Learning Center.

The Londer Learning Center provides access to education and education provides access to so much more.

1. Education has been proven to reduce recidivism.
2. With an education a person can earn more money. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2013 the median annual salary for someone with less than a high school diploma was about \$24,000. That increased to \$34,000 a year when the person had a diploma. With an associates degree that number went up to \$40,000 a year, and with a bachelor's degree that increased to \$58,000 a year.
3. An educated person makes better decision. When a person is more informed about things they make better decision. Things like who to vote for, what foods are healthy, and what purchases are the best value.
4. Educated people become role models for friends and family. People see how well a person is doing and in turn may be inspired to do better themselves.
5. Education also boost a persons self-confidence.

There are many reasons to keep the Londer Learning Center open and I can't pick just one. I believe that a well educated population is beneficial to the world as a whole. Reduced recidivism, earning more money, being a role model to friends & family, making better decisions, and having a healthy self-esteem are just some of the positive side effects of education.

The Londer Learning Center provides access to the GED, work force training, apprenticeship programs and help transitioning to college. This is why I am asking that you not close the Londer Learning Center.

Sincerely,

Jaymes Young

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SPECIFIC BUDGET TOPIC (DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM): Londer Learning Center

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NAME (PRINT & INCLUDE PRONUNCIATION): Tony Vezina

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ DAYS: \_\_\_\_\_ EVES: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dear Representative,

My name is Tony Vezina and I am a person in long-term recovery, for me that means I haven't used drugs or alcohol since July 20, 2012.

My road to recovery started at Volunteers of America Men's Residential Treatment Center which I was sent to from Inverness jail. I was 27 years old with nothing; addiction had taken everything from me and I was hopeless. While in treatment I started to believe that recovery was possible for me, that I may have a chance at a real life if I started making good choices.

VOA required me to go to the Londer Learning Center to get my GED. Again, I was 27 and had nothing. I found real acceptance at the Londer Learning Center, I found people who believed in me despite my past. People who told me I was smart and nurtured the positive qualities of myself I thought I lost. The Londer team helped me get my GED and I remember crying on the max on my way back to the VOA treatment center. The tears of happiness rolled down my face, because for the time in my life, I had accomplished something.

By completing my GED through Londer, I was given 12 credits to Portland Community College. The Londer team took me there to show me the campus and explain to me how it works, they even hooked me up a program at the women's resource center that supported college students in recovery. It was through this PCC recovery support program that I was exposed to student government.

Soon after enrolling at PCC, using the 12 credits from Londer, I started a Recovery Club. The club set out to 1) support students in recovery during college 2) destigmatize addiction through civic engagement. I ran the club for two years and it is now a paid position at PCC Cascade. My peers at the college suggested I try to be Student Body President and I tried; I didn't get it the first time, but was offered the job as President of the Honors society.

The next year, I became the Student Body President of PCC Cascade Campus and the District Student Council Chair (DSC Chair). The DSC Chair represents all four PCC Campuses Student Governments and reports to the PCC Board of Directors. While the DSC Chair, I successfully led an initiative to place a Student on the PCC Board of Directors as a non-voting member. I also advocated for the rights of marginalized communities -- I was even honored with a diversity, equity and inclusion award for advocacy.

In addition, while at PCC I helped start a non-profit, the 4th Dimension Recovery Center (4D). I am now the Executive Director. 4D is an addiction recovery community center that provides addiction peer mentoring. We cater to the 35 and under range and see about 600 people under 35 come through our doors every month.

I am also a Board of Director member for the Recovery High School Initiative, a coalition of recovery members that will bring a Recovery High School to our area. I am also a Board of Director member for MAAPP's, a trade association representing over 300 addiction peers from the Oregon tri-county area.

I sit on several committees as well: The Oregon Peer Delivered Service Coalition and I am interviewing for the OHA Traditional Health Worker Commission.

I would like to share my accomplishments with you because I think that it is important to recognize that my academic success started at Londer. You are well informed individuals that know investing in education is more moral, ethical and economical than prison or jails -- and I am not insinuating that is what you are doing here. I am saying that the Londer Learning Center is a reentry program that helps people, including me.

Please reconsider cutting funding to Londer.

I am here to answer any further questions.

--

*Tony Vezina    Pronouns: he/his/him*

**4th Dimension Recovery Center**

**Executive Director**

[tony.vezina@4drecovery.org](mailto:tony.vezina@4drecovery.org) | [503.734.0474](tel:503.734.0474)

[www.4drecovery.org](http://www.4drecovery.org) | [971.703.4623](tel:971.703.4623)

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SPECIFIC BUDGET TOPIC (DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM): Londer Learning Center

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NAME (PRINT & INCLUDE PRONUNCIATION): Kevin Bradley

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ DAYS: \_\_\_\_\_ EVES: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Dear Ms. Kafoury,*

*I am contacting you on behalf of the Londer Learning Center. My understanding is that the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice is considering de-funding this valuable education program later this summer. I hope that is not the case because the service provided to the county through Londer is invaluable.*

*My connection with Londer goes back at least a decade to when I was the Learning Center Manager at the Portland Rescue Mission. Londer welcomed our clients for GED instruction and testing, and we saw several men and women in recent recovery from addictions take the huge step of achieving their GED with Londer's help. During that time I witnessed the impact of Londer when I attended the annual graduation several years. It was inspiring to see so many (usually around 80 or so) individuals from the community who had turned their life around and were now GED graduates through Londer and either gainfully employed or continuing on to college at Portland Community College.*

*Now that I am in corrections education, the GED continues to be a huge factor in reducing the cycle of recidivism (along with housing). For those who are not able to complete their GED while at Coffee Creek Correctional or Columbia River Correctional, Londer stands in the gap to provide Multnomah county parolees the instruction and support they need to finish up that critical last test or two needed to obtain the GED. Without Londer, the likelihood that those folks will enroll at PCC and finish is little to none.*

*I know budgets are very tight this year, and you have a bigger picture in view. But, I wonder if cutting Londer Learning Center will cost the community more in the end than it would cost to fully fund this program with a proven track record. I hope you and your fellow commissioners are able to sort through challenging questions like this one, and I hope you will strongly consider funding Londer for many years to come.*

*Thank you,*

*Kevin Bradley*

**Kevin M. Bradley**

Corrections Education Director  
Workforce Development and Community Education  
Portland Community College

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NAME (PRINT & INCLUDE PRONUNCIATION): Amy Halliburton

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: DAYS: \_\_\_\_\_

EVES: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dear Ms. Kafory,

A few days ago I heard the horrible news that you are planning to close the Londer Learning Center. This was shocking and upsetting to me! I have been a volunteer math tutor there since 2014. The students I've worked with are hard-working and extremely motivated. Students of all abilities are welcome. As a former elementary school teacher, it was sad to see how many students needed help with basic math. However it is encouraging to see the effort and success that occurs there. Sometimes students share parts of their story with me and it's clear that they are trying to get their lives on the right track. I am fortunate to be able to help.

It would be a huge mistake to close Londer. What options would be available to the students working towards their GED if they couldn't continue at Londer? Many have young children and they want to set a good example about the importance of education. These people matter and closing Londer would have a ripple effect on the whole community.

I have been fortunate to attend two graduation ceremonies. Seeing the students in their caps and gowns with their families around them was very moving. My favorite part was listening to the graduates express their appreciation to the people that believed in them and helped them make it to graduation. They thanked their teachers and families for all their support. For some it was the first time they felt proud of something they had accomplished.

Again, I urge you to keep Londer Learning Center open. It provides so much to so many.

Sincerely,  
Amy Halliburton

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NAME (PRINT & INCLUDE PRONUNCIATION): William Chu

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: DAYS: \_\_\_\_\_

EVES: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dear Deborah Kafoury,

I am one of your constituents from Multnomah County. I served as a volunteer at the Learning Center as a math tutor from the fall of 2013 until the summer of 2016. Recently I was informed that the future of the Londer Learning Center is in jeopardy. I am here to make a statement in defense of the program and why its funding should remain.

When I first moved to Oregon about 3 and a half years ago, I was searching for a volunteer position that would provide me with opportunities to interact with people from differing socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. It was important to me to find ways to build compassion/empathy for others as I began seeing my own socioeconomic position rise at a rapid pace. Fearing that my newfound privilege would breed apathy for the plight of others less fortunate, I selected the Londer Learning Center. Specifically because their program focused on helping the most vulnerable members of our population.

I understand that like any organization, the Londer Learning Center requires funding to remain operational and that financial resources available to you are limited. However, it is not a simple cost/benefit analysis when trying to quantify the value that this social program brings to our city.

It's true, graduation rates at the learning center plummeted when the GED test was revised in 2016. I'm not sure how heavily this is used as a benchmark for success of the program, but it should not be the only thing considered when deciding on its future. Londer often accepts students that do not meet the requirements imposed by other traditional GED programs and serves as a safety net that catches these individuals that would have otherwise fallen through the cracks. As a result, the learning center is often working to educate students that pose the greatest challenge. I know this because I worked directly with these individuals while acting as a tutor.

At my most optimistic, I believe that the Londer Learning Center is changing lives by developing self-worth and putting students on track to becoming functioning members of society. However, I am also a pragmatist. Even when adopting the most pessimistic mindset, the benefits of the learning center far outweigh the costs.

A number of the students utilizing the program may never obtain their GED. However, it is without a doubt less expensive to provide these individuals with a safe place of study than to provide nothing. Without the learning center, we cannot know how many of these students would have returned to crime and/or addiction posing further risk to themselves and other residents of the county. These undesirable outcomes bear large societal and fiscal costs requiring even more government funding for more law enforcement, court fees, parole officers, etc. Furthermore, without tangible prospects for a better future, these individuals have little choice but to become permanent collectors of government assistance.

Unless you are implementing a new program that can help to address these problems, please reconsider eliminating the Londer Learning Center. If you would like to discuss further, please let me know. I can be reached via this email address or my cell phone 503.421.4398.

Thank you, William Chu

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NAME (**PRINT** & INCLUDE **PRONUNCIATION**): Ricardo Verdeguez

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: DAYS: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dear Chair Kafoury and County Commissioners:

I am writing this letter on behalf of a program that changed my life and gave me the opportunity to become a productive member of society. I heard that it might close due to county budget cuts. As a refugee coming to a new country, I developed an addiction to alcohol and drugs and started to run into legal problems. I can honestly say that I was costly to taxpayers, the county, and this beautiful state. After I had been given the opportunity to go to treatment, my PO referred me to Londer Learning Center to work on my English and my GED. Thank God for that opportunity; my life changed. In the Londer Learning Center, they showed me compassion and they didn't judge me. They helped me with my English, GED and work skills. I strongly recognize that getting my GED opened the door for me in the workforce to get back into society. Today I am actively involved in the community. I pay my taxes and that would not be possible without the Londer Learning Center.

I always think about how many more people the Londer Learning Center can be the rock for to change their life like it did with me.

Thank you for taking this moment to reflect and for your help.

Ricardo A Verdeguez, CADCI, CRM

Launder Learning Center Alumni.

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MEETING DATE: 5/3/17

SUBJECT: Multnomah County Fiscal Year 2018 Budget

SPECIFIC BUDGET TOPIC (DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM): Londer Learning Center

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NAME (PRINT & INCLUDE PRONUNCIATION): Rhonda McLeod

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: DAYS: \_\_\_\_\_

EVES: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

**IF YOU WISH TO ADDRESS THE BOARD IN PERSON:**

1. Please complete this form and submit to the Board Clerk.
2. Commenters are called to testify in the order forms are received. The Presiding Officer may re-arrange the order that testimony is given or ask Invited Guests or Elected Officials to speak first.
3. When your name is called, come forward and be seated at the presenter's table; state your name for the record and speak clearly into the microphone.
4. Public comment is limited to **3 minutes or less** per person unless otherwise directed by the Chair, who is the Presiding Officer.
5. A buzzer will signify the end of your allotted time.
6. If submitting handouts to be given to the Board, seven (7) copies are required. If only one (1) copy is provided, it will be received for the file and electronically shared with the Board and County Attorney after the meeting.
7. All meetings are audio and video recorded and can be viewed at: [multco.us](http://multco.us).
8. The Chair has authority to keep order and may impose reasonable restrictions necessary for the efficient and orderly conduct of a meeting. Any person who fails to comply with the Rules of Conduct, or who creates a disturbance, may be asked or required to leave and upon failure to do so, becomes a trespasser and will be treated accordingly. Copies of the Rules of Conduct are available next to the sign up sheets.

**IF YOU WISH TO SUBMIT WRITTEN INSTEAD OF ORAL COMMENTS TO THE BOARD:**

1. Please complete this form along with your written testimony and return to the Board Clerk at the meeting, or submit by e-mail at: [lynda.grow@multco.us](mailto:lynda.grow@multco.us)
2. Written testimony will be entered into the official record.

Good afternoon Deborah Kafory, my name is Rhonda McLeod. I am writing you this email today because I am a graduate of the Londer Learning Center (LLC). I graduated in 2012. I am 49 years old and I dropped out of school in the fifth grade. I was in my addiction for 30 years. I never went back to school until I decided one day to get my GED. I was at LLC from 2009-2012. Yes, it took me three years to get my GED. All the staff at LLC are amazing. I really struggled with my math, but the wonderful staff and instructors helped, guided, and mentored me through every struggle I encountered. Not one time did any staff or instructor lose their patience with me. I honestly believe that if it wasn't for the LLC I wouldn't have gotten my GED. Thanks to the life changing program and staff at LLC, I received my GED in 2012. With that completion, LLC granted me 12 free credits to go to Portland Community College (PCC). In 2013, I enrolled at PCC and I am graduating this June with my Associates Degree in Criminal Justice. I am also getting my Associates Degree in General Studies, at the same time. I am graduating with full honors. I am a straight "A" student. I have 7 years and 8 months clean and sober. The Londer Learning Center was the foundation for my success. I truly believe that I would not be as successful as I am today, if it wasn't for the Londer Learning Center and the unconditional love and support from all staff members.

Best regards,  
Rhonda McLeod  
503-995-0354

Thank you Chair and thank you commissioners for allowing my testimony today. My name is Kathy Sevos, and I'm the Director of Reentry and Transition Services at ***Volunteers of American Oregon***.

**VOA** has been an active partner with ***Multnomah County*** in the development and implementation of a continuum of care for some of our most vulnerable families and individuals, and the services I oversee also target and serve populations in our community considered the most dangerous threat to public safety and those offenders at the highest risk to reoffend in Multnomah County.

VOA has been a key partner in the implementation of the ***Multnomah County Justice Reinvestment Program or MCJRP*** saving the county and State millions of dollars.

- Graduates of VOA's **Men's Residential Center, Women's Residential Center** and **Moving Forward** outpatient treatment program for those with a MCJRP sentence thank **each of YOU** every month for giving them a second chance at freedom
- And they continuously thank VOA programs and staff for saving their lives.
- Most recently, VOA began the operation of a Treatment Readiness Dorm in the ***Multnomah County Inverness Jail***, which several of your toured last month.
- VOA programming such ***Reentry Enhancement Coordination (REC)*** program has successful outcomes. A Preliminary Evaluation of REC by the Criminal Justice Commission demonstrated (2011):
  - ***Recidivism***: REC participants had a 43% reduction in recidivism compared to control group
  - ***Employment***: 74% of REC participants achieved employment within 90 days of release from prison
  - ***Housing***: 84% had independent housing 90 days after release from prison

CPR staff - some of which are former CPR and DCJ clients who turned their lives around – partner with PO’s from DCJ’s African American Program and the Gang Unit to engage young gang impacted youth with the transformative HEAT curriculum designed specifically for young African Americans and only delivered in 8 communities nationwide.

We are successfully engaging some of our most dangerous gang members who typically present with little motivation for treatment and denial around their level of dependency.

These are things we cannot afford to dismantle. This is precious infrastructure developed over 10 years. We have helped grow our young men of color – who struggled with drug addiction or are former gang members - into mentors and role models who can speak a common language with these young men struggling to do the right thing in our communities.

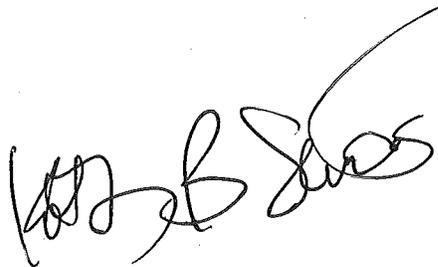
I urge you to keep CPR and these culturally specific services whole. VOA has brought tremendous federal resources to our county, but we no longer have grant funding for our African American mentors on staff, and we can no longer rely on the federal grants to pay for these core services essential for the public safety of Multnomah County.

As a community, we must own these services so our young men can thrive, raise their own families and break the intergenerational cycle of gang association and incarceration.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kathy B Sevos, MPA, MNPM  
Director of Transition and Reentry Services  
VOA Oregon

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy B Sevos', is written over the typed name and title.



Volunteers of America  
OREGON

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS REINVESTMENT PROGRAM

*CPR helps young men get back on track after incarceration and helps families break the cycle of gang association*



## Menu of Services

- ↪ Jail, Prison & Community
- ↪ Pre & Post-Release
- ↪ Gang Intervention & Alternatives Support
- ↪ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- ↪ Substance Abuse Education & Treatment
- ↪ Mental Health & Medication Management
- ↪ Healthy Lifestyle, Transitional Planning & Pro-Social Connections
- ↪ Culturally-Competent Mentoring
- ↪ Intergenerational Family Support
- ↪ Tailored Curricula
- ↪ Evidence-Based

## Who We Are

### Who We Serve

CPR is a model reentry program designed to help high risk young men, ages 18-25, transition back to the community and out of a criminal lifestyle. They typically:

- Pose the greatest threat to public safety
- Demonstrate the highest recidivism rate and risk
- Are the least successful in traditional programs

### What We Offer

State Prison Transition Services for 6 months pre-release  
 Local Jail Transition Services for 3-6 months pre-release  
 Community-Based Services for 1 year post prison or jail  
 Gang Intervention Services for identified gang members and their families

### How We Partner

Volunteers of America Oregon  
 Multnomah County Department of Community Justice  
 Oregon Department of Corrections  
 Multnomah County Sheriff's Office  
 City of Portland Office of Youth Violence Prevention  
 Gang Involved Family Team | Portland Police Bureau  
 Metropolitan Family Service | Reentry Transition Center