

FISCAL YEAR 2009 APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS

GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE -- REP. Michael Burgess (TX-26)

Must be completed and submitted NO LATER than COB March 7, 2008

Please submit completed questionnaire to josh.martin@mail.house.gov

PLEASE NOTE: ALL REQUESTS MUST INCLUDE A FORMAL LETTER OF REQUEST ON OFFICIAL LETTERHEAD EXPLAINING THE PROJECT. THIS QUESTIONNAIRE SHOULD ACCOMPANY, NOT REPLACE, A FORMAL LETTER OF REQUEST AND ANY OTHER QUESTIONNAIRE

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

1. Please provide a formal name for this project: Mentoring Children of Prisoners

2. Please describe the project and its purpose:

Project: A 2000 Senate Report stated that 70% of the children of prisoners will go to prison themselves without intervention. Amachi Texas is the first statewide intervention initiative, having established and supported one-to-one mentors into the lives of more than 2000 children of prisoners since its inception in 2006. This successful demonstration of preventive intervention has been possible through the collaborative efforts of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas Education Agency and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Texas. Now in its 3rd year, the collaborative efforts of Amachi Texas have already proven up the dramatic impact that focused intervention makes in the lives of children of prisoners. In fact of the 1000 children in the 2nd phase (September 1, 2006 – August 31, 2007), **NONE** of the children were referred to the criminal justice system. Such results are worthy of note and worthy of expansion dollars. In Texas there are upwards of 400,000 children with a parent under criminal justice supervision. **Capacity-building dollars are the only barrier to increasing the numbers of children who are mentored by a safe, caring adult in a one-on-one relationship in Texas and the only barrier to expanding the replicable model to other states, as well.** Access to the children via the prisoners themselves (TDCJ), mentoring expertise via Big Brothers Big Sisters, funding and oversight via TEA have proven to be components of a highly successful model that with appropriated dollars can be expanded in Texas and duplicated across the United States.

Purpose: Amachi Texas seeks to further break the cycle of incarceration in Texas by building greater capacity for placing even more one-to-one mentors into the lives of children of prisoners and to expand the highly successful Texas model to other states, ultimately saving thousands of children from following their parents' footsteps into prison.

3. Please outline the project plan, including the finance plan: See attached budget and timeline

II. BENEFIT TO THE 26th DISTRICT AND/OR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1. Please explain how this project will improve life, the economy or the general welfare of the 26th District and/or the country at-large. Please be specific (i.e. outline number of jobs created, savings to economy or taxpayers, improve national security):

How Amachi Texas benefits local communities and the state

1. Community Need

- 400,000 children in Texas have an incarcerated parent [Texas Department of Corrections]
- 7 out of 10 (70%) of them will go to prison themselves without one-on-one intervention. (U.S. Senate Report, 2000)
- The average level of educational attainment of Texas prisoners is 8th grade.
- Only 31 percent of Texas inmates have a high school diploma.
- 33 percent of inmates are functionally illiterate (educational attainment below sixth grade).
- Without basic literacy and education and without a future and a hope, children of prisoners presume that entering a life of crime is their only choice.
- From a monetary standpoint, the cost to house a prisoner in a Texas state prison is \$55,000 per year. On the other hand, the cost to prevent a child from going to prison is \$1500 per year. Communities can ill afford not to fund a program that offers proven outcomes a drastic disparity in long term costs.

These figures and many more like them point to the absolute necessity of intervening in the lives of children of prisoners before it is too late for them and for society at large. Also, these figures point to the absolute necessity of the implementation of a demonstrative model, not only in Texas, but across the United States.

Amachi Texas is a statewide program that is changing the lives of children of prisoners in Houston, Austin, San Antonio, El Paso, Dallas/Fort Worth, Abilene, San Angelo, Lubbock, Midland, Amarillo, Hereford, Galveston and surrounding counties

2. Amachi Texas Mentoring Works: Effective Outcomes

All mentor-child matches are evaluated using an annual Program Outcomes Evaluation (POE) survey. Completed by the mentor and parent or guardian after one year of mentoring, this survey gauges a child's progress in three key areas of youth development: caring, confidence and competence. Each area in turn is composed of ten questions which measure change over time in specific areas such as avoiding substance abuse, improved grades and relationships with others, especially teachers and parents. POE is used by all Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies nationally and is recognized by numerous other organizations such as schools of social work and governmental agencies as being an effective indicator of ability to affect positive change in a child's life through one-to-one mentoring.

Based on consistent POE results, children mentored through Amachi Texas will achieve the following outcomes:

- 90 percent will show increases in self-confidence;
- 92 percent will improve academic performance;
- 95 percent will not use drugs, tobacco or alcohol; and,
- 95 percent will avoid violence and juvenile delinquency.
- 96 percent improve relationships with peers, teachers and adults
- 98 percent make better use of community resources

Eighty-seven percent of all children who are mentored by Big Brothers Big Sisters complete high school.

Of the 1000 children mentored in the Phase II of Amachi Texas (September 1, 2006 – August 31, 2007, NONE were referred to the criminal justice system.

These outcomes have resulted in Big Brothers Big Sisters being classified as a model program by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency, which rates its programs as "exemplary" in preventing juvenile delinquency and dropping out of school.

These results state clearly that Amachi Texas intervention in the life of the child of a prisoner is equivalent to a literal rescue of that child from a life of crime and imprisonment. Extrapolating the numbers, Amachi Texas is the model that can rescue a community of children, a state of children, a nation of children from the ravages of criminality and imprisonment. By so doing, a community rescues itself from the pangs of the havoc that those potential criminals wreak on the community.

The case for building the capacity of Amachi Texas and then Amachi nationwide is strong indeed.

2. Please explain why this project should be considered a priority:

This country can ill afford for the intergenerational cycle of crime and incarceration to continue. Texas has established a first-of-its-kind model that is breaking the cycle. Additional dollars are the only barrier preventing the expansion of this program. Federal dollars are the logical next source as this model has the potential of being duplicated with success nationwide.

III. REQUEST

1. Amount of money you are requesting: \$2M
 2. Agency from which you are requesting funds: Health and Human Services
 3. Account from which you are requesting funds: Administration for Children and Families
Program: Social Services Research and Demonstration
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IV. FUNDING HISTORY

1. What is the total project cost and can you provide a federal-state/local-other funding breakdown? \$5M

Texas Education Agency - \$2.5M annually; OJJDP (via ICF aka Caliber for research and evaluation funding) - \$500,000; Citi - \$100,000; Borders - \$25,000 in kind; Sears Foundation - \$2,000; Entergy - \$2,500; Altria - \$5,000; John Pitts - \$2,500; Rob Roby - \$5,000; Verizon - \$23,000; Southwest Airlines - \$3,000 in kind; Capital for Kids - \$100,000; Rees-Jones Foundation - \$150,000; United Way Venture Grant - \$6,500; United Way Priority Needs Grant - \$45,958; Dollar General - \$50,000

2. Has the project ever received federal funds before? If so, please elaborate. Not directly. The OJJDP funds for research and evaluation funding are administered through ICF aka Caliber.

3. Has the project received state, local or private funds before? If so, please elaborate.

Yes. See above and see attached budget

4. Can you demonstrate a commitment for future funds from state, local, or private sectors? If so, please elaborate to the extent possible.

Yes. \$2.5 annually from Texas Education Agency. Research funding from OJJDP via ICF at \$500,000 annually for 3 years. The commitments listed above are renewable.

5. How do you intend to spend federal funds for this project (operating, construction, studies, equipment purchase, salaries, other)? See attached budget

6. Does the project request stem from a currently-funded federal program (i.e., an already existing congressional authorization)? If so, please explain and be as specific as possible.

NO

V. PROJECT HISTORY

1. Please briefly explain the level of support for the project in the local and any other community (if letters of support exist, please attach to this form).

The support of this project includes the Governor Rick Perry, local school districts, the Honorable Senator John Cornyn (who is Honorary State Chair), the Honorable Greg Abbott, Attorney General of Texas, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas State Association of Firefighters, the Potter's House,

Texas Workforce Commission, OneStar Foundation, virtually every member of the House and Senate in Texas, etc., etc.

(I apologize that due to my misunderstanding about the deadline I do not have time to produce the wide array of support letters. If you would like them later this week, I am happy to send them to you.)

2. Has the project encountered any objections within the local or other interested communities? If so, please describe (if letters or official records exist noting objections to the project, please attach to this form). NO

3. Please briefly explain the current stage and expected timeline of the project in as great a detail as possible.

Amachi Texas is in its third phase, having begun in January, 2006, at the bequest of Governor Rick Perry. To date, over 2000 children of prisoners have received one-to-one mentors, and by August 31, 2008, 2650 of these invisible children will have received a mentor. The cycle will repeat itself in Phase IV and another 1352 children will receive mentors; however with the infusion of federal funds, an additional 1250 children of prisoners can receive a mentor in FY09, bringing the total for 2009 to 2602 children of prisoners and the grand total since inception to 5252 in only 3 ½ years time. These figures are extraordinary and speak to the necessity of infusing funds into Amachi with an eye toward replicating this model nationwide.

VI. CONTACTS

1. Who is the primary point of contact for the request? Olivia Eudaly

2. Contact information (telephone and e-mail):

817-919-9475

oeudaly@bbbsnt.org

3. Mailing address of entity that would receive the funding?

Amachi Texas
450 E. John Carpenter Freeway
Irving, Texas 75060

VII. TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

1. How much of this request can be spent in fiscal year 2009?

2. If this is a highway, transit, rail, or aviation request, did you check eligibility with the state DOT, FTA, FRA, or FAA?

2a. If yes, did the agency indicate the project is eligible under the account requested?

3. If this is an FHWA request, is the project considered by the state and/or regional transportation officials as critical to their needs?

4. If a highway request, is the project on the state's transportation improvement plan?

PRIORITY PROJECT REQUEST CRITERIA

CERTIFICATION:

I, Olivia Eudaly, ATTEST THAT THIS PROJECT REQUEST MADE ON BEHALF OF

Amachi Texas (Big Brothers Big Sisters) MEETS THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

1. All appropriations requests must be a priority for the 26th District and/or the country-at large as defined as enhancing life, liberty, or the general welfare.
2. All requests must be a proper and wise use of federal taxpayer dollars and must be justified as such. Projects that include a commitment to match federal funds will receive priority consideration.
3. All requests will be immediately posted on the website and supporting documentation made available to press outlets and interested individuals.
4. None of the funding requested will be used for a building, program, or project that has been named for Congressman Michael C. Burgess, M.D. No request will be made that Congressman Burgess or his spouse has any financial interest.
5. All requests shall be made in accordance with House of Representatives rules, and within Appropriations Committee deadlines. No funding request will be submitted after the deadline established by the Committee

Name of person certifying: Olivia Eudaly

Title of person certifying: State Executive Director

Project name as it will appear in the bill: Mentoring Children of Prisoners

Legal name of entity making request Big Brothers Big Sisters

Address: 450 E. John Carpenter Freeway, Irving, Texas 75060



Signature

March 6, 2008
Date