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"I JUST GOT OUT; I NEED A PLACE TO LIVE": A BUSINESS PLAN FOR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

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“I JUST GOT OUT; I NEED A PLACE TO LIVE”:
A BUSINESS PLAN FOR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR THE FOMERLY
INCARCERATED

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Communication Studies

by
Walker Beverly V
December 2018

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ABSTRACT

The United States has a serious epidemic of mass incarceration and high recidivism rates. The U. S. must act on these high recidivism rates by implementing social services programs that help the formerly incarcerated stop committing crimes. The formerly incarcerated are being oppressed by a historic process that has continued to incarcerate and control them, even after they had served their time for their crimes. This project attempts to assist in reducing the high recidivism rates by creating an education-based transitional housing facility with a plethora of supportive services that will be open to formerly incarcerated individuals. This project sheds light on some of the problems that continue to plague this demographic group of people, while providing a possible solution to help reduce recidivism. The outcome of this project is a business plan that explains a procedure to help create a non-profit transitional housing facility that will be located in Palm Springs, CA. The steps of building this non-profit business are detailed in an implementation plan following this manuscript.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

United States citizens, the criminal justice system, and the prison industry must understand that the first thing on the agenda of a newly released inmate is, “Where am I going to live?” not “what kind of treatment I need?” or even “I need a job”, because every citizen’s most basic need is a roof over their head. In a study by Lutze, Rosky, & Hamilton (2014), it was identified that an “estimated 700,000 inmates released from prison each year experience a combination of individual, social, and economic challenges that impede their ability to successfully reintegrate into the community” (p. 472). I have a family member who has been on the installment plan of incarceration (in and out of jail) for the past 30 years or more. He always has difficulty quitting his criminal activity because he goes right back to the same environment that helped get him into trouble in the first place, which ultimately turned into drug infested homelessness. He explains to me that rehabilitation centers do not help him because he has run his course by going more than 40 times over his lifetime, which has left him no other option but to be homeless. He states that he ends up this way because he has no home to go to after release and has to go back to the environment that welcomes him. He has tried to go to local transitional housing facilities but the waiting lists are extremely long and by the time his name comes up, he has already recidivated.

The criminal justice system in the United States has a revolving door, which has created mass incarceration and a high rate of recidivism. The expansion of the U.S. incarceration system over the past 40 years has created a large prison population, who will be released someday. According to Cochran and Mears (2017), "The U.S. releases 600,000-700,000 individuals from its jails and prisons each year" (p. 433); with these expected releases, there needs to be a plan for those released to succeed and this should be one of the first concerns of the prison system. However, the recidivism rate in the U.S. shows that there is not enough focus on getting to the root cause of the issue because "an estimated two-thirds or more of released prisoners are rearrested within the first three years" (Cochran & Mears, 2017, p. 433). There are several causes for recidivism such as a lack of housing, unemployment, weak social support, drug and mental health issues; however, there are limited options available to support the formerly incarcerated for post-incarceration. The U.S. justice system is continually punishing the formerly incarcerated, with continued consequences, even after they have served time for their crime. The formerly incarcerated are not afforded the opportunity to start over; they leave the physical prison to enter into a social prison. They are unable to obtain jobs, student loans, or even rent an apartment because of the lifetime identity of being formerly incarcerated, which perpetuates recidivism. Many men and women experience difficulties reintegrating because of the lack of support. According to Deveh (2014), "We know from long experiences

that if they can't find work, or find a home, or help they are much more likely to commit crimes" (p. 9).

Therefore, one way of aiding the formerly incarcerated is by providing practical solutions, such as housing, employment, life skills, and family reunification. These are examples of the supportive services that are needed, upon release, to ensure the formerly incarcerated are afforded the best chance to succeed. This proposed business plan is geared toward providing a level of support for the formerly incarcerated, by creating a transitional housing complex with a multitude of support systems. These services will include housing, education and trade training, employment referrals, mental health and drug treatment, family reunification, transportation, life skills, among other things as the needs arise. One of the main goals of this transitional housing facility is to motivate and promote education as a key in helping reduce recidivism, and improve the formerly incarcerated for upward mobility. A study shows that "offenders who had a higher education would likely have a lower recidivism rate and a higher employment rate than offenders who had a lower education" (Lockwood, Nally, Ho, & Knutson, 2012, p. 388). This business plan will act as a roadmap to the start of a much needed support system for the formerly incarcerated, which is transitional housing.

In this project, I will provide the necessary steps to create a transitional living facility for the formerly incarcerated. I will outline the problem, mass incarceration and high recidivism rates, which creates the need for this

transitional housing facility. I will then move into explaining the need for transitional housing for the formerly incarcerated, highlighting the collateral consequences that are ever present after release. Next, I will explain my perspective using critical theory as my driving force and passion for this project. Lastly, I will present the business plan for Advancing Steps transitional living highlighting the essential steps needed to begin this process. These steps will include the basics for licensing, permits, building needs, staffing, and non-profit set-up. Creating the non-profit status is the first major step in this process, which has already begun by applying for non-profit incorporation status.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PROBLEM

This work is being done during a time when the United States can use solutions to one of their major problems; mass incarceration. The mass incarceration epidemic in the U.S. is more prevalent than any other developed country in the world; “we account for five percent of the world’s population, while we account for twenty five percent of the world’s total inmate population” (Secretary, 2015, para. 2). The current prison population of the U.S. is “2,224,400 under correctional supervision – 1,561,500 under jurisdiction of state and federal prisons and 744,600 held in local jails” (Kaeble, 2016, para 1). While many individuals go through the correctional system; “an estimated 6,851,000 persons were under the supervision of the U.S. adult correctional system at year end 2014” (Kaeble, para. 1), the U.S. is failing the formerly incarcerated with regard to the criminal justice system and its correctional methodology.

Several reasons contribute to the high prison population rate in the U.S., but one of the major factors is the high recidivism rate. Recidivism can be defined in several ways. According to the Bureau of Justice (BOJ),

There is no single definition of recidivism. However, all definitions share three common traits. Each has a starting event, such as release from custody, program completion, or placed on probation. Next, each has a measure of failure following the starting event, such as a subsequent

arrest, a subsequent arrest for a violent crime, a conviction resulting from a subsequent arrest, or a new commitment resulting from a subsequent arrest. Finally, each has a recidivism window (e.g., 6 months, one year, two years, three years, etc,) beginning with the date of the starting event. (n.d., para. 1)

Recidivism is the likelihood that a formerly incarcerated person will return to the same patterns of behavior after being released from prison; in essence, they are not rehabilitated (Maltz, Recidivism, 2001). Ultimately, recidivism is the return to jail after being previously released from prison.

Recidivism rates in the U.S. keep the prison system full because new crimes are being committed by many of the formerly released prisoners. In a study conducted in 2014 by the Bureau of Justice, it is stated that

Within three years of release, about two-thirds (67.8 percent) of released prisoners were rearrested. Within five years of release, about three-quarters (76.6 percent) of released prisoners were rearrested. Of those prisoners who were rearrested, more than half (56.7 percent) were arrested by the end of the first year. (Durose, 2014, para. 2)

This study continues to establish staggeringly high results when concentrating on the 5-year post release timeframe,

Within 5 years of release, 82.1% of property offenders were arrested for a new crime, compared to 76.9% of drug offenders, 73.6% of public order offenders, and 71.3% of violent offenders. (Durose, 2014, para. 2)

This data indicates that recidivism is not correlated with any particular population; therefore, this is not the factor of high recidivism rates. These previous statistics demonstrate that it doesn't matter what crimes ex-prisoners are committing; they are still committing crimes after being released from prison. The criminal justice system, lawmakers, and the American public must understand that this is not a depiction of correction while being imprisoned. These statistics show that the correctional system of the U.S. is failing and the proof is in the high recidivism rate.

As this project is concerned with the high rate of return to prison once released, much of the blame for these conditions has to be placed on the correctional system. This system has evolved over the years and its roles of correction have changed. According to Kifer, Hemmens, and Stoher, "There are several goals of imprisonment: deterrence, incapacitation, retribution, and rehabilitation. The levels of public and professional support of each of these goals have changed over time" (2003, p. 48). The change in the corrections environment has altered the way the correctional staff enforces its policies, "Today, incapacitation is the accepted and prevailing response to crime, as demonstrated by the long sentences and three strikes legislation" (Kifer et al. p. 48). The focus is on denying freedoms instead of addressing the deeper concerns that will, in effect, work to change the mindset of the formerly incarcerated. This way of conducting a correctional system is one of the main reasons for the failing system in the United States.

With such high recidivism rates, the U.S. government must do a better job of helping and supporting the formerly incarcerated through their reintegration into society. One of the problems is that the justice system and the prison industries are punishing and not correcting, an oxymoron of the correctional system. According to Dr. Eggleston, Director of California State Reentry Initiative of California State University, San Bernardino (CSRI) and a lifetime prison educator, “The prison system is actually anti-educational, not pro-educational” (2008, p. vi). Prisons are designed to punish with little to no intention of correcting or even supporting the inmate’s ability to successfully transition back into society. A successful reintegration leads to becoming a productive citizen by finding sustainable work with a living wage and securing livable housing. Rade, Desmarie, and Burnette (2018) highlight the elements required for the transition from prison to community as, “reentry from prison and jail, including employment, housing, and healthcare, which are key to successful community reintegration” (p. 2149). The correctional system is not supporting a successful reentry but in ways it appears to be promoting reentry by not providing the tools for reintegration. The documentary, titled *13th*, by Duvernay, Barish, and Averick (2016) supports the claim that the criminal justice system is “putting people in prison and doing very little to rehabilitate them so they can reenter civil society and then America shuns them”. The American public and lawmakers need to establish programs that will support the formerly incarcerated to ensure that the transition process can be attained.

Some people think that the formerly incarcerated continue to commit crimes so they deserve to go back to prison; this mindset is a central problem faced by the formerly incarcerated upon release from prison. They face barriers that control and oppress them in a way that makes the reentry process complicated, at the least, if not downright impossible for some (Duvernay et al., 2016). They must reconcile many issues upon release to ensure that they are set up for successful reintegration; the first of which is, “where will I live”? While housing is a serious issue which will be discussed later in manuscript, the continued consequences that the formerly incarcerated encounter are virtually limitless and, in the minds of some, unbearable,

Resources available to families and communities to which many of the ex-offenders return-specific restrictions have been placed on a wide range of government services for the ex-offender. Bans on entry to public housing, higher education, and restrictions on receipt of public aid affects some if not all ex-offenders, further constraining the range of possible support.

(Pager, 2014, p. 24)

In an environment where the odds are already stacked against the formerly incarcerated, the system creates further hardships by denying them their basic necessities. According to the U.S. Congress, “One of the most important aspects of reintegrating in society is the ability to obtain and maintain employment. Limited employment opportunities are perhaps the most serious of the secondary legal consequences of a conviction since an inability to keep a job often leads to

recidivism” (U.S. Office of the Press Secretary, 2015, para. 5). As a result of Federal and State laws requiring background checks to obtain living-wage jobs, many formerly incarcerated are disqualified from the job pool for numerous employment opportunities. This includes skilled and unskilled jobs that are regulated by occupational licensing and employment laws. Considering these barriers facing the formerly incarcerated upon release, the only “support” they are provided is gate money and a bus ticket (Wilson, 2007, p. 3). The limited amount of support and the continued consequences upon release can be a result of the political economy of the prison industrial complex.

The Political Economy of the Prison Industrial Complex

The prison industry has become big business for some using the justification of fighting crime with taxpayers; “The prison-industry complex is an interweaving of private business and government interests. Its two-fold process is profit and control. Its public rationale is to fight crime” (Evans & Goldberg, 2009, p. 7). Control is a mechanism used to oppress a specific demographic, preventing them from maintaining lives of freedom. As a result the prison system cashes in on the labor that these individuals provide while incarcerated; thereby, creating profits for the prison industry. The private prison industry complex is a billion dollar business; “Private correctional facilities were a \$4.8 billion industry last year, with profits of \$629 million” (White, 2015, Para. 1). The U.S. taxpayer usually pays the price; the “average cost of incarceration for Federal inmates in the fiscal year 2014 was \$30,620.00 (\$483.39 per week)” (Prisons, 2015, para.

1). The profiteers from the prison complex are uninterested in finding solutions because of the great amount of money that would be lost if people were not going to prison. In fact, it is in their best interest to keep people going to prison and therefore, they are actively involved in lobbying for laws and regulations that work against the inmates.

The prison industrial complex is so vast that some U.S. politicians are involved because of the wide range of dollars being generated on the backs of the incarcerated. The U.S. Congress receives large payouts from corporate lobbyists who are interested in keeping prisons full. “Corporations spent over \$22 million dollars lobbying Congress, in the first decade of the twenty-first century” (Thompson, 2012, p. 41). The prison industrial complex is making the laws by giving politicians incentives to change the laws so that prisons stay full (2012, p. 41). Politicians even accept campaign monies; “They accepted millions on political campaigns, including at least \$3.3 million at the federal level and since 2001, more than nearly \$7.3 million to state candidates and political parties”(p. 41). The money continues to flow to incarcerate and not to reform or correct, which means that the U.S. will continue to have a higher than average incarceration rate while providing little support for the formerly incarcerated.

The fact is that prisons are a central part of employment for some communities and the economy of those communities is dependent on the prison itself. Lawmakers promote prisons to rural communities as community growth as stated here: “economic developers and policymakers espoused the virtues of this

industry” (Genter, Hooks, & Mosher, 2013, p. 597). In addition, “proponents claim a number of indirect benefits, including increased demand for local goods and services, increased tax revenues for local governments, upgrades of the local infrastructure, and population increase, also creating opportunities for increased funding from a variety of federal programs” (Genter et al., 2013, p. 598).

Communities have been created around prisons being built nearby, so the likelihood that those community members want to reduce crime and recidivism is highly unlikely. Prisons are the main source of income for most members of the community, and if the prison population was reduced, employment would be reduced. I have a friend who is a former director of a reentry center in Northern California and he once told me that many of the correctional officers joke about the prisoners being their retirement plan. Prisons are the main source of survival for many rural communities and they continue to back the prison industrial complex.

Another problem with a high recidivism rate is the cost of incarceration. Incarceration is costing the American taxpayer money that could be spent to provide better avenues of supportive services, to reduce the incarceration population. The cost to incarcerate is substantially higher to the taxpayer than the cost to provide the support services that were previously identified. In a *Miami Times* article, Judge Mathis states,

By reducing recidivism, the prison population would be reduced and prison spending could be drastically cut. It makes better economic sense to

invest the \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year it would take to educate an inmate than it does to spend the \$70,000 a year it takes to incarcerate them. The tax money that is saved could then be earmarked for other social programs. (2005, sec. 3c)

The *Los Angeles Times* adds that “next year in California, the annual cost of imprisoning each of California’s 130,000 inmates is expected to reach a record \$75,560 per inmate (Press, 2017, para. 1). The fact here is that the U.S. taxpayers are paying for an industry that is more concerned with incarceration than supportive services, such as housing, healthcare, mental health treatment, drug treatment, employment referrals, family building, and many others that can assist in transitioning the formerly incarcerated. Research continues to show that many politicians are in favor of the current laws, which are keeping the formerly incarcerated with the same barriers.

The prison industry complex avoids backlash from society by focusing on the marginalized groups in society such as Blacks and Latinos. These are factors preventing the formerly incarcerated from reintegration. The African-American representation among incarcerated people, for example, is much higher than any other group, which seems inequitable. According to research, “African-Americans--particularly in the poorest communities--are subject to tactics and practices that would result in public outrage and scandal if committed in a middle-class white community” (Alexander, 2012, p. 98). Alexander goes on to explain that “Blacks are admitted to prison at a rate of twenty to fifty-seven times greater

than their white counterpart”, while “Latino men [are] twenty-two times more likely to be imprisoned” (2012, p. 98). According to a 2018 Criminal Justice Fact Sheet, “though African Americans and Hispanics make up approximately 32 percent of the total population, they comprise 56 percent of all incarcerated people” (para. 1). This information exposes the fact that minorities are an important part of revenue for the criminal justice system and are expected to be imprisoned.

Barriers Facing Incarcerated People

Most people are in agreement that crime is wrong; however, if your options for survival are so limited and society has labeled you a criminal, your identity in society is that of a lifetime criminal. This cycle of releasing individuals from prison without support, coupled with a low educational level, and a prison record would prohibit the formerly incarcerated from obtaining living-wage jobs. During former President Obama’s visit to a federal prison, he stated,

Now, a lot of time, that record disqualifies you from being a full participant in our society, even if you’ve already paid your debt to society. It means millions of Americans have difficulty even getting their foot in the door to try to get a job much less actually hang on to that job.....like a lot of big employers, on many job applications there’s a box that asks if you have a criminal record. If you answer yes, then a lot of times you’re not getting a call back. We’re going to do our part in changing this. (Press Secretary, 2015, para. 1)

The box on housing and apartment applications, which asks if you have had criminal activity in the past five years, can be detrimental to many of the formerly incarcerated. As a result, they assume that they are not eligible because of the criminal record that they are attached to for the rest of their lives. The criminal justice system stacks the playing field against the formerly incarcerated so that they have no option but to return to criminal activity.

According to Von Berge and Bressler (2016),

Considerable social stigma results from persons being labeled a criminal in U.S. society. The disgrace associated with a criminal record is reported to have a number of adverse consequences for individuals, including difficulty in finding a spouse, attenuating the probability of being admitted and receiving funding to attend a university, hindering a person's ability to secure rental housing, impeding a person's ability to vote, and engendering negative health outcomes. (p. 385)

The reintegration process can be a continued roadblock to becoming a productive citizen, but U.S. citizens and the criminal justice system must adopt programs that offer more support for the formerly incarcerated.

As a result of low educational levels and difficulty finding employment, the formerly incarcerated are hindered from succeeding in society after release from prison. Many of the incarcerated have an educational level below high school. A Bureau of Justice special report stated that 68% of State prison inmates did not receive a high school diploma, in comparison, 18% of the general population age

18 or older had not finished the 12th grade (Harlow, 2003, para. 1). Education and earning decent living-wage employment are correlated; as the educational level increases, better employment opportunities are attainable. This challenging issue of being unable to procure employment is being perpetuated by a social label that is intended to “other” the formerly incarcerated. This process of labeling is a mechanism of “othering”: “the process of the more powerful group creating and naming another group as less worthy typically based on some single aspect of identity (Jandt, 2004, p. 203). “Othering” is a force that creates the injustices that many men and women experience every day without support to get them out of the cycle of the revolving door of the criminal justice system and keeping them from normal living necessities such as housing.

One of the problematic discourses in society that this study wishes to shed light on is the labels that oppress the formerly incarcerated from obtaining gainful employment. Work is explained as what “gives people identity, self-worth, and the sense that they can shape and influence the world around them. Perhaps the most fundamental satisfaction that work offers is the satisfaction of earning a living, the satisfaction of getting what we need to stay alive” (Ciulla, 2000, p. 21). Work for most people is a way to make a living and feed the household, but for the formerly incarcerated, work could be a means of creating a new identity; one in which they are productive and can satisfactorily meet their and their families’ needs. Work is an important aspect of self-respect for the formerly incarcerated individuals who have been locked in confinement from society. Work is part of

the transitioning process, which gets the formerly incarcerated a path to a living wage that creates a path to livable housing.

Housing

Another cause for recidivism is the inability to find and secure shelter. The majority of modern society considers safe and livable housing a natural process born out of necessity and a human right for all. Securing housing for the formerly incarcerated can be an obstacle, at the very least, if not unattainable for many as they try to adjust to modern society, a society that places a premium on the importance of housing. According to Garland, Wodahl, and Saxon (2017),

Fifty three percent of U.S. voters believe access to housing is 'very important' to successful post-release reintegration, although people felt that housing was less important than job training, drug treatment, mental health services, family support, and mentoring. Approximately two out of five U.S. voters stated that access to public housing was 'very important' for successful reintegration. A 2005 poll in Massachusetts found that 78% of residents felt that released prisoners reoffend because they need more help finding a place to live. (p. 22)

Housing must be a main priority of reentry because a basic necessity is a place to live in during treatment, mental health evaluations, job training, rebuilding familial relationships, mentoring, and actual day-to-day living from initial release. The U.S. government and its citizens have to understand that the first need that

must be addressed upon release is shelter; if the formerly incarcerated doesn't have shelter, the only other option is homelessness.

Housing in many of the urban cities is experiencing price hikes, whether renting and/or buying a home or an apartment, according to Dougherty, Rising rents are squeezing many families and leaving them with less to spend. Several factors have pushed rents up. Rental and apartment housing is in short supply but demand has grown after several years of foreclosures and population growth. (2012, para. 1).

Public housing's high cost and low supply produces an immediate problem for the formerly incarcerated because it reduces the chances for low cost housing upon release.

The Federal government, many states, and some counties provide low income individuals forms of housing. Hud.gov defines low-income housing as "housing established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities" (Public Housing Program, n.d., para 1). A majority of released prisoners are considered low to no income which would make low-income housing a valuable option but there are rules that keep them from securing this form of housing. The obstacles that the formerly incarcerated face for low-income housing are that "federal and state policies often prohibit felons, especially those convicted of drug or sex offenses, from accessing public housing" (Lutze et al., 2014, p. 472). This is another

example of the continued consequences that the formerly incarcerated experience upon release.

Another major barrier against the successful reintegration with regard to housing is the “check box” on the rental application which creates another road block. All of these barriers are major contributing factors to homelessness for the formerly incarcerated. The homeless population consists of approximately 50% of people who are formerly incarcerated, according to a director of transitional assistance: “We thought that probably about a third of the overall population would need some sort of transitional housing support...but it’s been roughly fifty percent that needed housing assistance” (Rodriguez & Brown, 2002, para. 1). In addition, Pager (2014) states that

The California Department of Corrections, for example, estimates that at any given moment ten percent of the states’ parolees are homeless; in Los Angeles and San Francisco, the proportion of parolees who are homeless is between thirty and fifty percent. (p. 25)

Reducing recidivism is reducing crimes as the formerly incarcerated are being released; “More than 600,000 inmates are released each year” (Press Secretary, 2015, para. 1-2). Inmates are being released daily into our communities. The more that the U.S. reduces recidivism, the more crimes it would reduce and the U.S. will become a safer place. Helping the formerly incarcerated to reintegrate will prove to be a win-win for society as well as the formerly incarcerated. Therefore, one method of helping at the non-

profit/governmental level would be to find solutions to housing availability for the formerly incarcerated.

CHAPTER THREE

A PROPOSED SOLUTION

This projects intent is to create a business plan for a transitional housing facility to serve the formerly incarcerated and/or homeless formerly incarcerated in the Coachella Valley of Riverside County, California, in an attempt to help reduce recidivism in this region (see appendix A). Transitional housing can be explained as a facility that “consists of relatively private accommodations provided on a temporary basis along with intensive services intended to facilitate the transition to permanent housing” (Foshburg & Dennis, 1999, pp. 10-3).

This proposed transitional housing facility, which will be named Advancing Steps, will be a residential reentry center, with educational and vocational training as the driving force to success. A major goal of this transitional house is to provide as many resources for the formerly incarcerated in an attempt to have a high success rate of reintegration in a safe living environment; “transitional housing aims to offer a secure place for offenders to regain their footing and rebuild credibility” (Garland, Wodahl, & Cota, 2016, p. 1410). The main mission of this transitional housing facility will be to help the formerly incarcerated regain their self-worth and self-respect as many of their psychological outlooks have been stripped inside the prison walls. The formerly incarcerated have been in a place that treats them as

substandard people and upon release from prison they are so broken by the experience that they continue to present themselves in this manner. The intent of this transitional housing facility will be to treat the formerly incarcerated as people with needs; because “people respond to the way they are treated. “People live up or down to your expectations” (Geraci, 2008, p.13). One thing that I preach to many is the Golden Rule: Treat people the way you want to be treated. If you believe that the formerly incarcerated are capable of change, they would often rise to the occasion and challenge themselves.

Many of these men and women have been stripped of their personal rights, their self-respect, and self-worth. Not only has the public shunned them so have their families, in most cases. This can cause “negative attitudes and stigma that lead to differential treatment and opportunities for ex-offenders due to their criminal histories” (Rade et al., 2018, p. 2143). The formerly incarcerated need to accept responsibility for their downfalls and find ways to regain their self-respect and self-worth. Another mission, if not the most important, is to assist and train the minds of the formerly incarcerated to believe that they are worth changing. This may be one of the most difficult goals that we will be attempting at the Advancing Steps facility. I believe the only way for one to succeed after incarceration is to change the mindset and the personal value of a person who has been isolated from modern society. These formerly incarcerated people need to understand this mission as we are trying to give them self-worth and self-value. Rade et al. (2018) state that “growth mindsets

lead to more positive attitudes toward ex-offenders, and subsequently, more support for reentry” (p. 2145). Our goal at Advancing Steps is to help the formerly incarcerated get back their self-worth and empower them to confront their future obstacles and goals in life.

There are many efficient support services that help the formerly incarcerated succeed in reintegration after their release from incarceration. The goal of the U.S. citizens and the criminal justice system must be to help correct the behaviors, attitudes, and opportunities that the incarcerated and the formerly incarcerated need to change their desire for criminal activity and behaviors. Many of the people who engage in criminal behaviors do so because of the limited opportunities available to them in their communities. The initial imprisonment experience will affect an individual’s life from that point onward, as they would be adversely impacted in many ways. According to Woodall, Dickey, and South, “released prisoners are more likely to return to heavily populated urban localities and re-enter communities that are poor, overburdened with substandard housing, and with high rates of unemployment” (2012, p. 189). While many may not want to find solutions to this problem, it is imperative that work be done to reduce recidivism as this will lead to crime reduction.

One of the purposes of this project is to push for education as a part of the vision of this transitional housing facility. A study shows that one of the best ways to improve wage rates, social status, and future outlook is to get an education or a trade certificate: “education is the vital force in the reformation of

fallen men and women” (Gehring, 2008, p. 78). In an interview, a lifetime prison educator and director of a reentry center stated “that those who are released from prison and obtain a Bachelor’s degree after their release have a 95% chance of graduating” (C. Eggleston, personal communication, 11/9/2017). As recently as 2015, California has started a new program for the formerly incarcerated to attend college at several state universities, one example is Project Rebound at California State University, San Bernardino; “What Project Rebound seeks to do is build a pathway from prison to college, to facilitate and assist folks in making that transition” (Kandil, 2016, para. 7). These new programs build on the work of Project Rebound at San Francisco State University, started in 1968, and their statistics reveal that only three percent of their students have recidivated compared to the national recidivism rate of 67% (Kandil, para. 18). I propose that education is the way to success, just as researchers have learned that “people who enroll and complete any type of education or vocational training have a better chance to have lower recidivism rates” (Austin, 2017, p. 563). This proposed transitional housing facility will connect with such outside supportive programs as referrals for its tenants.

Besides education, this project will include vocational training as a means to living-wage jobs for its tenants. Vocational training will be included as an educational means for a successful reintegration for this proposed project. Vocational training programs can be defined as programs that give an individual a skill that may result in a job after release from prison (Porter, 2011, p. 187).

Studies have found that “vocational training programs, in prison and after prison, showed a positive and significant effect on employment with nearly 90% of studies providing evidence as encouraging that vocational programs work to reduce crimes” (Porter, 2011, p. 190). The proposed transitional housing facility will assist the tenants in finding their area of education that meets their interests and skillset.

Another supportive resource that this transitional housing facility will offer is employment referrals, to assist the formerly incarcerated in finding gainful employment. A major factor impacting recidivism is the inability of the formerly incarcerated to gain living wage employment because minimum wage jobs are a trigger for the formerly incarcerated to revert back to crime to survive. Livable-wage employment will give the formerly incarcerated the ability to become self-sufficient and achieve successful reintegration because “gaining paid employment is highly significant in helping ex-offenders reintegrate into society” (Turner, 2013, p. 487). Failure to earn a respectable wage would increase the likelihood of re-engaging in criminal activity. As the formerly incarcerated procure employment, they are able to support themselves with respect and honor as stated here: “employment generates an ability to achieve both assimilation into mechanisms of capitalism and gain the respect of family members through the wages it provides” (Turner, 2013, p. 487).

This facility will collaborate with other supportive services in finding and supporting the formerly incarcerated. There are job seeking services, job leads,

and referrals that can direct the formerly incarcerated into finding the right niche that will support them during the reintegration process. Reentry centers, such as Project 180 out of Los Angeles, play a significant role in providing leads for job placement. For example, Project 180 has a pamphlet that explains services about their job program that “was based on a supportive employment model and aimed to increase each client’s success in job placement, retention and satisfaction” (Our Programs, 2017). Another emergency services program, 211 in San Bernardino County, provides employment services for the formerly incarcerated (Reentry Employment and Education, n.d.). There are some services in the Coachella Valley that are available to the formerly incarcerated to seek employment but there can always be more. This proposed transitional housing business plan will create an office for a counselor, which will help the tenants find an area that fits them best through education or trade.

Other collaborative and referral entities are day reporting centers (DRC), which are “facilities that offer offenders rehabilitative and daily supervision” (Boyle, Raguas-Salerno, Lanterman & Marcus, 2013, p. 120). These centers are facilities that require the formerly incarcerated to report on a daily basis with the intentions of providing supportive services for a possible reintegration. Boyle et al. goes on to explain the role of a DRC is to “aid in reentry and reintegration, treatment programs, designed for each participant specifically through the process of intake risk/needs assessment, can include educational or vocational training, job placement services, alcohol and drug

abuse education and treatment, and life-skills training” (p. 121). These DRCs have supportive services that can be used as a collaborative and referral resources for this proposed facility. By referrals, I mean some DRCs have funds for referring their clients to transitional living facilities.

Many, if not all, newly released prisoners will need some kind of guidance, counseling, and help with life skills. Garland et al. (2016) explain, “some scholars believe that offenders are having more difficulty adjusting to life after prison in recent years considering that they spend more time incarcerated, experience fewer institutional treatment opportunities, and receive less formal community supervision due to higher caseloads” (p. 1407). Counseling services can cover areas such as life skills, guidance, and mental stability which are all factors that the formerly incarcerated has to deal with after release from prison. Counseling services and the staff of this transitional housing facility will support and “fight alongside the people for the recovery of the people’s stolen humanity” (Behan, 2008, p. 12). Many are deprived of support services while incarcerated, but life after prison doesn’t have to follow prison patterns.

As I build this business plan, I will always keep the many needs of the formerly incarcerated in mind. These needs are described by studies on prisoner reentry as “various post-release obstacles related to housing, employment, drug addiction, health care, transportation, psycho-social adjustment, and reintegration into families and local community networks which place ex-prisoners in jeopardy immediately after release” (Garland et al., 2016, p.

1407). These barriers are meant to deter the formerly incarcerated from succeeding because of all the hoops they will have to jump through to create a new life for themselves. This facility is being created to overcome these barriers by supplying the proper support services and constant motivation from the staff at the transitional housing facility. My philosophy is that barriers are made to be overcome and that will be a motto for the residents and staff at this transitional house.

This proposal explains the many causes of recidivism and provides ways to reduce recidivism through a transitional housing facility that would support the formerly incarcerated throughout their transition. This project provided evidence that services, such as transitional housing and the supportive services that come along with it are needed to reduce recidivism which should be a concern to all U.S. citizens and their safety. The main motive for this project is my own experience witnessing many individuals fail after release from prison. I was raised in the community of South Central Los Angeles where I was afforded the opportunity to see success and failure of individuals when they had been released from prison. This is part of my passion because, as a scholar, I have researched the patterns of incarceration and there are historical patterns that continue to oppress the formerly incarcerated population. The culmination of this proposal will result in the creation of a business plan that will attend to the needs of the formerly incarcerated within the umbrella of the transitional housing facility. I am an advocate for the formerly incarcerated, and as such I will continue to find

ways to support successful reintegration for safer and more productive communities.

CHAPTER FOUR
GUIDING THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE IN COMMUNICATION:
CRITICAL THEORY

This project is based on researching, communicating, and writing a business proposal for a transitional housing for the formerly incarcerated, in hopes of implementing it in the future. It is heavily impacted by the work and research of Stanley Deetz and his critical perspective. Deetz explains that,

Critical work encourages the exploration of alternative communication practices that allow greater democracy and more creative and productive cooperation among stakeholders through reconsidering organizational governance and decision making. (as cited in May & Mumby, 2005, p. 85)

Deetz goes on to emphasize that “the critical researcher will continue to research as an ethical obligation, such as helping to emancipate or liberate those who find themselves in situations that are immoral, unfair, unethical, violent, or generally ‘not nice’” (Tracey, 2013, p. 42). My goal, taking into consideration the incompetent support of the formerly incarcerated, is to make an effort to emancipate the formerly incarcerated from the oppression that they face by incorporating supportive services into their plan to rehabilitate themselves upon release.

Deetz goes on to explain that “concepts from critical theory have been widely used to support studies of the structure, social relations, and practices of

social sciences” (May & Mumby, 2005, p. 85). As a critical scholar, I find that “critical research brings power relations to conscious awareness and, by doing so, provides space for questioning and transformation” (Tracey, 2013, p. 42). As I work on this project, I am aware of the power structure that the criminal justice system has created and I must find ways to work around and within this system, while simultaneously transforming the experiences of the formerly incarcerated, at least in my region, through the vision of this transitional housing facility. As a critical scholar, I want to “expose the forces that prevent individuals and groups from shaping the decisions that crucially affect their lives” (Zou & Trueba, 2002, p. 91). It seems that the formerly incarcerated are experiencing the concept of hegemony, as it refers to “situations in which people accept consent to, internalize, and are complicit in reproducing values and norms that are not in their own best interest” (Tracey, 2013, p. 43). This concept of “control and incarcerate” is a historical process that has conditioned the U.S. culture and people to believe that oppression and imprisonment are acceptable.

The power lies in the hands of the criminal justice system and its historical social process of control and confinement. The historical value of the power over the incarcerated and the formerly incarcerated makes incarceration the norm in certain cultures. The formerly incarcerated will continue to feel the power over them because of the lifetime identity of being a former criminal and the language used to keep them suppressed. The historical hegemonic powers the formerly incarcerated suffers from are important for the critical theorists to understand, as

they are “intensely concerned with the need to understand the various and complex ways that power operates to dominate and shape consciousness” (Zou & Trueba, 2002, p. 92). The perception of the correctional institution is that they are attempting to change the inmate’s mindset through incapacitation and punishment, but instead, they are suppressing the value of the incarcerated and the formerly incarcerated mindset to remain unchanged because of the lack of support, which can be a cause for recidivism. As a critical scholar it is my duty to make “sense of the world’s domination and oppression, as I work to bring more just, democratic, and equality to a society” (Zou & Trueba, 2002, p. 95). I understand the power differential and structure of the criminal justice system, and I want to do my part for a positive change as a critical scholar. As I promote the implementation of the business plan to different entities, the communication process will consist of a persuasive and informative tone to effectively move this project forward. I understand that I cannot solve the problems for all of the formerly incarcerated, but the few that I can reach should be a positive step for my community.

As an advocate for the formerly incarcerated, the tone of my prospective may be considered persuasive with frustration at the forefront because of all the barriers that the formerly incarcerated experience. Deetz states, “I work more to figure out how to include diverse interests rather than complain about the injustices of exclusion” (May & Mumby, 2005, p. 90). As I research, build, and implement this business proposal, I will try to act and communicate in the

capacity of an activist for the formerly incarcerated since the critical theorist has an activist dimension (May & Mumby, 2005, p. 93). I will attempt to give a voice and hope to the formerly incarcerated that I will be working with/for, knowing that their voices have been muted. There is an old saying: “actions speak louder than words,” and my action will be displayed as an active representative of the formerly incarcerated. Some argue that “empowering applied communication of social justice requires a ‘sensitivity’ that ‘foregrounds ethical concerns’ engages in ‘structural analyses’ of the social cause of ethical problems, ‘adapts an activist orientation’ and, as an expression of solidarity seeks ‘identification’ with others (Harnett, 1998, p. 234). The expectation is to “provide forums and voice so that different segments of society and different human interest can be a part of a better, more moral, historical dialogue, so that each may contribute equally to the choices in producing a future for all” (May & Mumby, 2005, p. 91). As a scholar, activist, communication major, and businessman, I understand that “it is not enough to understand the world; one must act in it” (May & Mumby, 2005, p. 91). My voice and my actions can prevail as an example and role model for the formerly incarcerated to emulate. This project has given the reader a problem, solution, and a theoretical roadmap in moving forward on this project, now where are the funds coming from to support this project.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROJECTED FUNDING OF THE PROJECT

At times, there are some federal and state funds that are available for the rehabilitation of the formerly incarcerated. The federal Second Chance Act is a piece of legislation signed into law by President George W. Bush on April 9, 2008. The Second Chance Act (SCA) “authorizes about \$340 million in reentry-related spending per year, most of which would be distributed in the form of grants to state, local, and tribal authorities” (O’Hear, 2007, p. 76). SCA has some requirements explained as,

Grant recipients (state, local, or tribal agencies) must develop a reentry strategic plan containing measurable performance outcomes, one of which must be a 50 percent reduction in recidivism rates. Other required performance measures include increased employment, education, and housing opportunities for offenders released back into the community” (O’Hear, 2007, p. 76).

These requirements are in line with the philosophy of this proposed transitional housing facility. Another requirement of this grant, which is similar to the overall goal of the proposed project, is that “grant recipients must collaborate with corrections, health, housing, child welfare, education, substance abuse, victims services, employment services, and law enforcement agencies and convene reentry task forces composed of diverse agencies and community organizations”

(O’Hear, 2007, p. 76). This will assist the formerly incarcerated in all areas of need. This federal grant can and will be used for this proposed facility, as its goals are aligned with the goals of this project.

The State of California also has several laws in place to help the formerly incarcerated. The first is the Amendment A.B. 109, a Public Safety Realignment law, which was designed to reduce the state prison population, while the bill also helps to fund rehabilitation and reentry services. A.B. 109 is a realignment tool to reduce prison populations and “this realignment is also intended to make available services and supports to facilitate rehabilitation and assimilation into the community thus, reducing recidivism” (AB 109 Implementation: The first year, 2013, p. 2). I am aware that some of these grants don’t allow for probationers’ and parolees to mix but that depends on the specifics of the grant. In 2014-2015, the State of California distributed “934 Million to counties across the state” (Briefing, 2014, para 1). These funds are allocated to different county Sheriff’s offices and are designed to be shared with supportive services, as “the California Mental Health Planning Council wanted to hear from the county Sheriffs, probation, and mental health departments on the implementation process to date, particularly in regard to the rehabilitative and supportive services aspects” (AB 109 Implementation: The first year, 2013, p. 2). It appears that the state council wants to make sure that the funds are being distributed fairly and this proves positive for the supportive services industry.

A new facility, as proposed here, will require funds to support the operations of this organization. This facility will have paid administrators, outside counseling services, paid staff to help run the everyday activities, transportation expenses, building and operating expenses that will require different forms of funding. The director would continue to find other avenues of federal and state grants that will help pay for expenses to run this facility. I also plan on seeking different organizations and individuals for donations. Where there is will, there is way and funding will have to stay at the top of this facility's priorities (for a full budget breakdown, see Appendix A)

APPENDIX A
BUSINESS PLAN FOR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR THE FORMERLY
INCARCERATED

Executive summary

This proposal for a new transitional housing facility is being created to serve as an education-based housing program for the formerly incarcerated because education is the key to their successful transition or integration back into society. The main role of this facility is to provide transitional housing to the formerly incarcerated as well as a safe place for them to reside while transitioning. In achieving this mission, the surrounding communities will also be kept safe by reducing crime. This facility will outsource services to several local support providers, such as drug treatment education services, job referrals, mental health services, and anger management therapy, with the intention of providing the residents with the needed services to aid them in their quest to become productive citizens.

This transitional/sober living housing program will be a brand new facility located in Palm Springs, in Riverside County of California.

The proposed facility is in a central location of downtown Palm Springs which is close to public transportation, medical services, several drug treatment facilities, and a plethora of businesses (potential employment opportunities) all within a two-mile radius. This organization will always keep the formerly incarcerated progress, the transition process, and the safety of the surrounding community at the forefront of its mission. The transformation from criminals to

productive citizens will prove to be positive and empowering for them and other American citizens.

The name of the non-profit will be Advancing Steps. The proposed building has also been secured and the location address is:

1331 N. Indian Canyon Dr.

Palm Springs, CA 92240

Needs Assessment

Transitional housing is a service that is needed to help people get back into a productive life after a traumatic event. Transitional housing can be explained as a facility that “consists of relatively private accommodations provided on a temporary basis along with intensive services intended to facilitate the transition to permanent housing” (Foshburg & Dennis, 1999, pp. 10-3). Transitional housing can serve different populations, but there is a great need for transitional housing in Palm Springs, CA and the surrounding areas because there is limited access to and shortage of such resources. There are factors that lead to this shortage, one of which is the concept of Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) mentality. NIMBY can be explained as, a person who objects to a particular person, people, or organization in his or her community because it may affect them in some negative fashion. At times, there are community members who question or challenge these kinds of facilities because of its population, so the director should be equipped to deal with these challenges.

In an interview with a former director of a veterans transitional housing facility and director of a formerly incarcerated transitional housing facility in Northern California, he stated that “transitional housing is down about 59% in California, and in Riverside County, that number rises to 65%” (E. Highbaugh, personal communication, August 15, 2016). He goes on to say, “the demand and need for transitional housing is high because the supply is low but there are plenty of available government funds for transitional housing” (2016). In conclusion, he communicated that “most counties are more concerned with drug treatment and homelessness and give the formerly incarcerated the last shot of transitioning” (2016). Mr. Highbaugh will serve as a mentor throughout the opening and sustaining stages of Advancing Steps.

Recently, I had the chance of visiting California State University, San Bernardino Reentry Initiative (CSRI) in Indio, CA, which is a day reporting center in the Coachella Valley. During my visit, I had the opportunity to sit down with the center’s manager, Jenna Johnson, who provided me with a lot of great information. This included demographics, funding, attitudes of the complex by neighbors, and the needs for her facility. She went on to explain the different cultures and/or races that were clients and the ability to serve each of them admirably. She then shared information on funding, which will be discussed in a separate section. She then stated, “you must be aware of your community members and the importance of being involved in community activities, visiting the city council, and to include the community” (J. Johnson, personal

communication, May 8, 2018). My next question was whether or not there was a need for transitional housing in the Coachella Valley and the instant answer, with passion, was “absolutely”. She went on to explain that “this facility referred out some clients and within two weeks, the transitional housing facilities in the area were full” (J. Johnson, personal communication, May 8, 2018). At present, there is no other available transitional housing facility available to them; therefore, the remaining clients are all on a waiting list. There is a need for transitional housing in the Palm Springs area and throughout California, and this business plan is an attempt to help ease the demand by supplying a transitional housing facility that can serve this population and community.

About Advancing Steps Transitional Housing and Its Vision

Advancing Steps transitional housing is a start-up non-profit business created by Walker Beverly, who will be receiving a Master’s degree in Communication in Fall of 2018. He is a licensed general contractor, and formerly incarcerated himself. Mr. Beverly who is the founder of Advancing Steps will also serve as its Director. He has been out of legal trouble since 2001 and has lived and studied the long-term consequences that affect the formerly incarcerated, even after they have served their time.

Mr. Beverly has recognized a serious problem while conducting his research, which is a historical social process that keeps a certain demographic group of people in a continued form of oppression by placing collateral

consequences on the formerly incarcerated after release from prison. A study explains,

The term 'collateral consequences' refers to a vast number of social and legal penalties that affect an individual once he or she has been convicted of or is suspected of engaging in criminal activity. Many collateral consequences are created by federal law while others are created by state law, and they tend to vary from state to state. Collateral consequences laws come in many different forms and affect various civil, political, social, and economic rights. (Finzen, 2005, p. 307)

The formerly incarcerated are the groups that have served their required time for the crime they have committed, yet continue to be punished after incarceration.

Long-term consequences are the barriers that oppress the formerly incarcerated, preventing them from a successful reintegration into society. These barriers include being identified as a former criminal or as a criminal with a record for life; check the box on housing and employment application; the inability to get government financial aid; and the list continues as the formerly incarcerated attempt their transition.

Advancing Steps has secured a building located in the Palm Springs, California area. The building consists of twelve studio-style units that each includes a private bathroom, a separate unit which will be used for office space, a kitchen, and a dining/meeting area. All of these areas will require renovation to meet the needs of an operating transitional housing facility and to ensure they

meet city code and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Each unit has approximately 400 square feet of living space and a bathroom with a shower, a toilet, and a sink. Each unit has a window in the front and back of the unit for fresh air and to view what life is outside of the prison walls. The building is located within one block of several bus lines, which makes for easy transportation for the tenants. There will be plans to upgrade the on-site pool and to create recreational space to reduce boredom. The dynamics of the entertainment will be discussed below.

Advancing Steps will have a philosophy of supporting educational expectations: each individual who walks through the doors must obtain some form of education or trade training. Mr. Beverly's research, which has been validated by several studies, proves that education is the primary means for a successful reintegration and becoming a productive citizen. As one study indicates, "offenders who did not participate in college programs had a re-arrest rate of 35.9% that is 3.8 times higher than the return rate (9.5%) of offenders who successfully completed college programs"(Kim & Clark, 2013, p. 203). Advancing Steps will require that each and every tenant begin the educational process within the first three months of residency. The education process can consist of community college, four-year university, or vocational training with the goal of completing the chosen program. The national recidivism rate is 67% so any education is considered a way to lower this recidivism rate. Advancing Steps will be a continued partner at every step in the educational process by providing

tutoring, counseling, and guidance to its clients. Advancing Steps will also provide a study area equipped with computers, desks, chairs, and supplies.

Another major need for a successful reintegration is finding employment that accepts the formerly incarcerated. Advancing Steps plans on having a close relationship with several employers in the area that are willing to accept those who have blemished records. The expectation is to have a referral system that can put those individuals who need help into a job as soon as possible. The majority of American citizens believe that employment is the number one step for reintegration; while that may be true, the difficulty of obtaining housing is still the number one need after release from prison as explained here, “one of the many reentry hurdles that returning prisoners face is securing stable housing. Housing restrictions for convicted felons, financial hardships, as well as compromised personal relationships all contribute to the housing difficulties faced by returning felons” (Clark, 2016, p. 1365). Employment requirements can be met by obtaining either a part-time or full-time job, but the tenant must be on an educational path, concurrently. Advancing Steps may also be able to provide some tenants with part-time employment at the facility. The tenant may work anytime in a 24-hour day, but must remain in good standing in their educational path and at Advancing Steps. If employed, the tenant must give a portion of their pay to the facility in an effort to give back and build a savings fund for the day that they graduate from the facility and begin life on their own.

The tenants that receive a regular pay check and those who get financial aid will have to contribute a portion of their income back to the facility. These funds may be detrimental and required by funders. Some funders require that the tenants pay a portion of their rent themselves, with any funds generated from employment. In a newspaper article about a transitional housing facility in Philadelphia, PA, it is important to note that “all ex-offenders pay a \$200 deposit then \$100 a week to stay at the facility” (Mayes, 2012, p. 2). Another requirement could be for the tenant to share the funds from their electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card, which is an avenue for payment through government assistance payments, as a form of payment for food and funds. EBT cards work as a form of food stamps and monetary payment that a low-income individual can receive as financial aid from the government. Advancing Steps will distribute the funds from EBT cards fairly, with transparency. Some funders may have regulations about collecting fund and Advancing Steps will adhere to any requirements.

Scholars agree that one of the challenges identified of transitional home living is the ability to provide an entertainment component to the daily life of residents. Therefore, advancing Steps plans to have recreational outlets to aid in the prevention of boredom. Tenants will have access to on-site activities which will include swimming, ping pong, video games, board games, cards, and whatever else that could be provided. The intention of Advancing Steps is to create a space to keep the mind full with education, work, and entertainment.

The vision includes providing a safe environment that houses the formerly incarcerated in the Palm Springs area with quality support until they are able to self-sustain in our communities. Besides having comfortable, low-cost to no-cost housing for the formerly incarcerated, Advancing Steps plans to provide a plethora of supportive services through outsourcing and collaborating with other organizations. Services will include, but are not limited to, life skills, counseling, employment support, educational referrals, family building services, drug counseling, three meals a day, health referrals, transportation assistance, entertainment, and any other service as the need arises. The vision is to empower the individual in a way that they can create a sense of pride in living a productive, crime-free life, their own legal visions, and have the courage and knowledge to move forward in a positive manner.

Many of the services that Advancing Steps transitional housing will provide are self-explanatory but there needs to be an explanation of the entertainment component. Mr. Beverly realizes that the formerly incarcerated probably were raised in poverty and had limited experiences of being in a middle-class environment. Such things as entertainment trips will broaden their views and knowledge, by educating them on different jobs, lifestyles, communities, cultures, and the like. Many of these men and women may have been incarcerated for the past one, five, 10 years or more and have had limited access to the world and its changes.

Finally, the vision comes from compassion, empathy, concern, and love for mankind and in particular the formerly incarcerated. Advancing Steps transitional housing will be a spiritual/holistic building community that accepts all cultures, faiths, and beliefs. Advancing Steps transitional housing's open and honest policy will take into account every person who walks through the doors at face value, while only concerning itself with giving the opportunity to succeed by any legal means.

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of Advancing Steps is to help reduce the revolving door of the criminal justice system by being a resource that helps the formerly incarcerated stop committing crimes. One of the main foci of this transitional housing facility will be to alter the formerly incarcerated way of living by providing them with the avenues that may not have been available to them previously. Advancing Steps' will empower the tenants by giving them the right to restore their privileges and the ability to use their voice. It must always be remembered that these individuals have been silenced for years and need to develop empowerment over their lives to have the confidence to move forward. Advancing Steps transitional living will be an accepting facility for the formerly incarcerated as housing can be a legitimate problem for some upon release from prison. Some may argue that drug treatment or a job is the first step after release from prison. However, Advancing Steps believes that housing is the number one priority because if one doesn't have a roof their head, one might have to find

alternative means, either legal or illegal, to achieve this goal. Every single person needs to have a roof over their head; the alternative is homelessness.

The Main Goals of Advancing Steps

1. Advancing Steps transitional housing's main goal is to provide a safe and positive housing facility which keeps the surrounding community safe. The focus is to reach out to the surrounding communities to provide volunteering opportunities, and to answer any questions that may arise. Advancing Steps also wants to make the tenants feel accepted as productive citizens and to prove that they have reformed their criminal behaviors by leading example.
2. Temporary housing for the formerly incarcerated: Advancing Steps transitional housing will support the formerly incarcerated with housing for six months to two years with the intention of helping them become self-sufficient with living-wage employment. There may be some special circumstances that could extend the time of stay. One of our major goals is to get the formerly incarcerated prepared to live in modern society by providing the right tools for their success. Once the tenants are ready to move out of this facility, they would have obtained the necessary tools that provide empowerment from committing crimes and give them the proper education to be productive citizens.
3. Supportive Services for the Formerly Incarcerated: Advancing Steps transitional housing will provide cooperative supporting services. We plan

on collaborating with local services such as drug treatment and education, mental health, health, employment, reentry, and any other services that will be helpful in the transitioning process. There are several services within a two-block radius from the facility such as treatment facilities, the hospital, and mental health services that Advancing Steps can collaborate with for support and referrals. The goal here is to use as many outside and in-house services to create a supporting environment as possible. The more opportunities available for the formerly incarcerated will facilitate a smoother path to success.

4. Advancing Steps transitional housing will provide a safe environment for the formerly incarcerated and the surrounding communities. This facility will have a check-in/check-out program so that Advancing Steps knows where their tenants are at all times. This will also be helpful for the facility and the assigned probation/parole officers.
5. Advancing Steps will provide an exit plan to assist the formerly incarcerated, by any means necessary, to become a self-sufficient productive citizen in our communities. To generate a positive and reachable program, Advancing Steps will create an entry and exit plan for the transitioning individual to see a beginning and an end to a crime free future, by seeing a light at the end of the tunnel.

The Admission Process

The acceptance process will be multi-step. The first step is that the prospective tenant must be newly released from prison under probation or parole, on their way to homelessness. The second step is that they must complete an application which will be reviewed by the facility's staff for key points as a part of the acceptance process to the facility. The third step is that the formerly incarcerated has to commit to engage in the educational path for success. The fourth step is that the prospective formerly incarcerated will be willing to work in the facility or an outsourced job. In summary, the prospective formerly incarcerated should be willing to take advantage of the many services that will be offered to him or her. Therefore, they must be willing to sign a contract that states all of the above. Another aspect of acceptance will be through referrals from day reporting centers (reentry centers) and/or the probation department. During the stay at Advancing Steps, the tenant must remain in good standing with the law, the center, and on their required educational path.

Best Practices

Operation Safe House is a nonprofit organization that provides transitional housing in Riverside, California. Operation Safe House, with community support, "provides emergency shelter, intervention and outreach services to run away, homeless and other youth in crisis. Safe House offers youth positive alternatives

to becoming victims of the streets” (Operation Safe House of Riverside, 2018).

This facility’s mission is,

A 24-hour emergency shelter whose mission is to serve runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth ages 11 – 17 in Riverside County. Services include three-weeks of emergency shelter, nutritious meals, counseling, attempts at family reunification, on-site education programs, after care and 24-hour toll-free crisis line. All of Safe House’s programs are designed to improve the health, wellness, and well-being of our clients. (Operation Safe House of Riverside, 2018, para. 3)

Safe House is one facility in Riverside, CA that provides some of the same services that Advancing Steps would like to model.

A large provider for the homeless in the Coachella Valley is Martha’s Village. Martha’s Village provides such services as food distribution, transitional housing, child services, career and education, and emergency services. Martha’s Village’s mission is stated as: Martha’s is a safe, welcoming environment for impoverished and homeless families, children, and individuals, providing a proven robust selection of housing, education, and support services so that they are empowered to transform their lives with dignity. Martha’s collaborates and partners with other organizations and agencies to leverage resources and fill gaps to ensure the effectiveness and long term sustainability of the organization and to break the cycle of poverty for the people we serve. (Media, 2018, para. 5). Martha’s Village can also be a collaborating partner for referrals and funding.

Another facility that manifests best practices is the Soroptimist House of Hope (SHOH), which provides recovery programs for women with substance abuse disorders. SHOH states that, these women were in need of housing and support to establish clean and sober lifestyles, re-establish their lives, and become productive members of society. We provide residential substance abuse recovery programs for women at our Desert Hot Springs, California Recovery Facility and our Banning, California Transitional Living Home. Since 1981, SHOH has helped thousands of women through a comprehensive and effective social model program offering housing, companionship and guidance, therapeutic activities, and a structured daily routine that enables them to establish and maintain sober and healthy lives. (Agency, 2018, para.1). Agencies such as these can be examples of successful supportive services and be a contact, if not a collaborating or funding organization.

Budget

Fundraising will be a major avenue for Advancing Steps to fund certain programs and necessities within the organization. Thornton states that “for nonprofits, fund-raising messages create awareness and attract charitable gifts to specific programs” (2006, p. 204). The goal is to raise more funding to provide for more services and to create an actual living environment where the tenants want to live and thrive. Fundraising can play an important role of funding as it can provide for more community support. Fundraising will “mix personal visits to donors, grant writing, telethons, websites, and direct mail to maximize donation

revenues at the lowest cost” (Thornton, 2006, p. 204). Advancing Steps must understand the role and cost of fundraising because the resources to raise funds must cost less than the funds being sought after. Funding for this organization will come from four different sources, which are grants, fundraising, revenue, and donors. Advancing Steps will mix sources for funding to provide for operational costs and support services that will be in place for a successful transition for the formerly incarcerated and a sustainable program. Here are few detailed ways of fundraising:

1. Grants

- a. Grants are funding sources defined as, “An amount of money given by a government or nonprofit organization, to fund certain projects. Grants are also a key part of many philanthropic foundations’ activities.” (Grants, 2011). Grants will be a key part of funding for Advancing Steps. Grants are funds that are given to different organizations for their startups, operational expenses, and sustainability. Grants tend to be a main source of funding for similar facilities. Grants are available through request for proposal (RFPs) from federal, state, and city agencies.
- b. Some of the agencies that Advancing Steps will submit proposals to are the federal government, state government, city government, CDCR, Riverside County Department of Probation, Medi-Cal, and any

others that can provide funds for this organization. Grants qualifications can include areas such as types of support, areas of interest, geographical focus, size of funding, funding cycle, and the duration of support. The director will work closely with the board to research, select, and apply for the most suited grants. Here are some grant search sites that this organization can utilize to receive notification of upcoming grants:

- (1) Grant station
- (2) Grants.gov
- (3) Grant gopher
- (4) Grant watch
- (5) Local state departments

c. Advancing Steps has become a member of the RAP foundation and the Academy for Grassroots foundation, which are organizations that assist non-profits for success. Walker Beverly has taken workshop classes to become certified for grant writing and sustainability. Also, these foundations provide continued assistance with the set-up of a non-profit, finding grants and funds, and offering a library to help the non-profit.

2. Donors:

A donor is person, organization, or government that donates money to charities by name or anonymously. These funds are used for nonprofit

purposes and are considered a gift to the receiving organization. My plans are to reach out to celebrities and their organizations. The building will need some remodeling and I will put plans in place to visit or reach out to different celebrities that can donate to the project and perhaps I can use their names on plaques around the facility. I would also like to reach out to the My Brother's Keeper Alliance, Obama's Foundation, for assistance with funds.

Revenues:

The second major source of budget is revenues. A non-profit generates revenue by its nonprofit tax-exemption status (see more details in the implementation plan). Many nonprofits create a mix of income, but revenue can play a significant role in achieving financial results. This means that Advancing Steps can create ways to gain revenue through money-generating options. One example is Angel View. Angel View is a nonprofit organization, in the Coachella Valley, that helps disabled children with housing, assisting, and rehabilitating them. Angel View obtains a large portion of its revenue from its resale/thrift stores. They take donations (clothes, furniture, etc.) from the public and resell those items back to the public. The profits are tax-exempt which will provide increased revenue.

Advancing Steps will explore many forms of revenue as a method for acquiring funds to support needed services. These may include creation of a car washing service, thrift store, landscaping service, or seek out areas that fit well

with the organization. A goal will be put in place to reach out to the community to learn how Advancing Steps can help them.

Budget Details:

Table 1

Advancing Steps Fiscal Budget			
Furniture and Materials	Number of Units	Cost per Unit	Total Cost
Beds and Dressers	12	\$600	\$7,200
Desks and Chairs	12	\$300	\$3,600
Outdoor Furniture			\$3,500
Dining Room Tables and Chairs			\$7,500
Total Furniture and Materials			\$21,800

Table 2

Operating Expenses	Number of Units	Cost per Unit	Annual expense
Lease (monthly)	12	\$18,000	\$216,000
Legal (auto accidents, injuries, neighbor conflicts)			\$5,000
Building Insurance			\$5,000
Utilities (monthly)	12	\$1,800	\$21,600
Worker's Comp. Insurance			\$9,000
Business Insurance			\$7,000
Food (monthly)	12	\$650.00	\$7,800
Total Operating Expenses			\$263,600

Table 3

Office Materials and Supplies	Number of Units	Cost per Unit	Total Cost
Professional Desks and Chairs	5	\$900	\$4,500
Computers	8	\$1,250	\$10,000

Software for Operations, Record Keeping, Sharing notes			\$3,500
All in One laser Printer			\$1,200
Supplies (monthly)	12	\$1,500	\$18,000
Total Office Supplies			\$45,000

Table 4

Salaries	# of Openings	Minimum	Maximum
Director (salaried)	1	\$75,000	\$95,000
Executive Administrator (salaried)	1	\$55,000	\$68,000
House Manager (hourly)	1	\$25,000	\$31,200
Residential Assistant (hourly)	6	\$137,300	\$174,700
Part-time counselor	1	Pro-bono	
Cooks	2	\$58,300	\$74,900
Volunteers		Donated Time	
Total Salaries		\$350,600	\$443,800

Description of Building:

Here are some pictures of the proposed building in Palm Springs, California. This building was built in 1955 and is a staple in the Palm Springs area. There have been conversations with the owner about the plans for this building and he is open to the idea of transforming this building into a transitional housing facility. The owner's family has owned this building since 1972 and the community has evolved into a tourist destination. This building is located less than a block away from the hospital, four drug rehabilitation facilities, bus stops, and approximately a mile from the downtown area. A grocery store, a barber shop, banks, and a dollar store are within walking distance.

This proposed building needs some renovations to fit the transitional housing concept. Here I have provided some estimated numbers for the cost of renovation from my experience as a construction contractor, followed by some pictures of the building:

Building Renovation Costs:

Table 5

Estimated Building Renovation Budget			
Exterior Workload	Number of Units	Cost per Unit	Total
Repair second floor deck			\$10,500
Build a community/dining room over entrance			\$19,500
Build a kitchen in Unit #7			\$7,500
Replace windows with energy efficient window	55	\$200	\$11,000
Pool Safety			\$6,000
Build new curbside fascia			\$8,500
Paint exterior of the building			\$8,800
Security lighting/ camera system			\$4,500
Build new entry gate and intercom			\$3,500
Landscaping			\$3,500
Total Exterior Renovation			\$83,300
Interior Workload	Number of Units	Cost per Unit	Total
Tile replacement	12	\$1,000	\$12,000
Shower repairs	12	\$2,500	\$30,000
New toilets and vanities	12	\$750	\$9,000
New entry doors and locks	12	\$250	\$3,000
New interior lighting	12	\$275	\$3,300
Paint interior	12	\$750	\$9,000

Cleaning	12	\$100	\$1,200
Total Interior Renovation			\$67,500
Total Renovation Budget			\$150,800







APPENDIX B
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Implementation plan

This section is an implementation plan that will serve as a step by step action plan for the creation of the Advancing Steps Transitional Housing program. The plan is informed by the list of references at the end of this Appendix. This plan is not set up in chronological order or by level of importance; however, many of the steps can be implemented during the start-up phase of the project. This implementation plan will serve as a guide for creating a systematic approach to the process of creating this transitional housing facility.

1) Non-profit Status: there are two options available for obtaining the non-profit status that is required for this proposed facility.

A) Advancing Steps can start its own non-profit status by applying for and completing the proper steps to acquire a 501(c)(3) status with the California Secretary of State. These steps include,

i) Choose a name

(1) Think of a name that relates to this proposed organization. Then check with the Secretary of State, to determine whether the name is available, by visiting their state non-profit link. In California, that link is (<http://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/name-availability/>). The name is already secured as Advancing Steps.

(2) Also check with the U.S. Department of Commerce to make sure the proposed name is not trademarked. The U.S. patent and trademark office website search engine is (<https://www.uspto.gov/trademarks-application-process/search-trademark-database>). This has been checked and cleared.

(3) Next, check the website of domain names for duplication, if duplication is found, then try adding a state or county code to the end of the name. Here are some websites to check for domain duplication:

(a) Site liner and their website is (<http://www.siteliner.com/>)

(b) SEO review tools website is

(<https://www.seoreviewtools.com/duplicate-content-checker/>)

(c) Copyscape website is (<https://www.copyscape.com/>)

ii) File articles of incorporation-

The articles of incorporation are documents that state a formal file of incorporation. These forms are a set of documents kept with a government body that legally documents the creation of incorporation. This form is filed with the Secretary of State in California. The forms for articles of incorporation can be found at the Secretary of States, California website (<http://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/filing-tips/filing-tips-corp/>). This form can be submitted at the local Secretary of State's office which is located at:

Los Angeles Regional Office
300 South Spring Street, Room 12513
Los Angeles, CA 90013
(213) 897-3062

The forms can be mailed in with a cover page to:
Secretary of State, Business Entities Filings Unit
P.O. Box 944260
Sacramento, CA 94244-2260

This process has been already completed by Mr. Walker.

iii) Apply for your IRS tax exemption,

This process is done through the IRS website, with a couple of forms to fill out and submit. The forms that are required to be filled out and submitted for social welfare organizations are (501(c)(4) organizations) (Applying for Tax Exemption, 2018). The website is:

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/applying-for-tax-exempt-status>. These are the required forms to submit:

- (1) Form 8976, Notice of Intent to Operate Under Section 501(c)(4)
- (2) Form 1024-A
- (3) Instructions for Form 1024-A

iv) Apply for a state tax exemption,

- (1) The website for these actions is
https://www.ftb.ca.gov/businesses/Exempt-organizations/Applying_for_tax-exemption.shtml
- (2) The following are required as part of the filling and submitting process:
 - (3) FTB 3500, Exemption Application.
 - (4) \$25 check or money order, payable to Franchise Tax Board.
 - (5) One copy of the entity's creation document.
 - (6) One copy of the bylaws or proposed bylaws.
 - (7) Complete Side 1 through Side 8 and complete the appropriate item listed for the specific R&TC section under which the organization claims exemption.
 - (8) All other required information and supporting data identified in FTB 3500.
 - (9) Determine your organizational type by deciding what section under R&TC 23701 best describes the purpose and activities of your organization. (Refer to Types of Exemptions.)
- (8) Important: To be recognized for California tax-exempt status, all organizations must receive a determination or acknowledgment letter from the Secretary of State's office.
 1. If your organization's tax-exempt status was revoked or denied, you must use FTB 3500,

Exemption Application to reapply for California
tax-exempt status.

- b. There can be a collaboration or working with/under another non-profit. This is called fiscal sponsorship, which is an alternative to actually obtaining non-profit status. Fiscal sponsorship can be a binding contract between the 501(c)(3) organization and the new organization that has not secured its own tax-exempt status, while being interested in obtaining grants and donations. The 501(c)(3) organization would take control of the money generated by the new organization and distribute funds as needed. Under this binding contract, both organizations become one and both are responsible for their actions.
 - i. The benefits of collaborating include sharing infrastructure results in
 1. cost savings
 2. a partnership that creates strength for both organizations
 3. organizational growth
 4. better efficiency
 5. improved leadership

(9) Draft bylaws

a. Bylaws can be explained as the structure that an organization follows to ensure legal compliance and productivity. A well planned and clear structure will take the guess work out of running your organization; especially when differing opinions exist between board members. Advancing Steps' director and board members will develop a set of bylaws that are conducive to running an operationally sound business while remaining in service to the tenants. The organization and the board will keep the tenants at the forefront of all decisions.

(10) Appoint a Board of Directors

a. Advancing Steps shall have a board of directors consisting of between 4 and 6 members. The board members roles are to create and enforce the bylaws. The board will introduce new support services and assist in creating a loving, spiritual, and accepting organization. The board members will be elected and serve on an annual basis on staggered terms; at completion of their term, their time can be extended pending a vote. The board members must be over the age of 18 and must be prominent members of the community. A member can be formerly incarcerated; however, they must have a college degree. The board will meet on a monthly

basis, although this is subject to change as needed. The meeting will consist of day-to-day operations, policy changes and/or advisory board, overseeing the director, tenant improvements, outsourcing issues, and any other decisions that need to be made.

(11) Hold a meeting of the board.

(a) The first meeting of the board will take place once the board is created. The board will be part of the opening and operating processes. The meeting will take place at a time to be determined.

5) Apply for conditional use permit

a) This process involves getting permission from the city to operate a transitional housing organization in the community. There is an application, in PDF form, on the city website (<http://www.palmspringsca.gov/home/showdocument?id=28759>). The city website containing the directions and fee structure for this process is (<http://www.palmspringsca.gov/government/departments/planning/applications-forms>).

b) There are several steps required to complete the submission process.

i) Submit the original application to:

Department of Planning Services
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way

Palm Springs, CA 92262

Tel 760-323-8245 – FAX 760-322-8360

- ii) Get a notary to verify and sign the application

L & L Accounting Services

34166 Date Palm Dr.

Cathedral City, Ca. 92234

760-202-7797

Contact: Mario Lopez

- iii) The city requires a justification letter, explaining that your application will be included in the materials reviewed by the Planning Commission.
- iv) There is a public hearing requirement for this application process.
- v) After the application is accepted, this organization and contractors need to post a site posting for the project. The purpose of the City of Palm Springs' on-site Posting requirement is to advise neighbors about pending development applications, so that they can become informed about the project and participate in the development process, if they so choose.
- vi) The final process for obtaining the conditional use permit is to reach out to the immediate neighbors. The City of Palm Springs strongly recommends that project applicants meet with surrounding property owners and neighborhood organizations located in or near the project to solicit input in the beginning stage of the design and development

process. There should be a meeting set up with the neighbors to explain the project and to get positive or negative feedback.

vii) The website address is:

(<http://www.palmspringsca.gov/government/departments/planning/applications-forms>)

6) Contract with the owner of building - lease agreement

a) This will serve as an agreement between Advancing Step and the property owner, Nolan Spunt and family. The lease term will be for five years with an amendment adding an extension of an additional five years, with a ten percent increase of the original lease agreement. Advancing Steps and the owner will determine all necessary requirements for the lease agreement.

7) Building renovation for operating

a) The proposed building is in need of major renovation. There needs to be a plan in place to address the needs of the building to become an operating transitional housing facility. The building has been dormant for about three years with only three units presently occupied. Each unit needs updating to include: paint, bathroom repair, window replacements, door locks, and flooring. Furniture will also need to be provided for each unit.

8) Licenses

9) Proof of Insurance

10) Research funding – four ways to get funding

a) Grants

i) Search for grants tailored to specific areas of interest. Search for RFPs at the following locations

(1) California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

(2) Medi-Cal

(3) Bureau of Prisons

(4) Contact Riverside County probation about funding-RFP

(5) The county of Riverside, CA, Probation department, offers bids for the RFPs. The RFPs are the way to secure funds through grants.

This organization must register online to get the bids for RFPs. The websites are

(a) <https://www.probation.co.riverside.ca.us>

(b) <https://www.publicpurchase.com>

(6) Contact the California Department of Correction and Rehabilitation (CDCR) for funding RFP

(7) The California Department of Correction and Rehabilitation has funds for rehabilitation purposes. The funds come from propositions the citizens of California voted for and approved.

(8) Assembly Bill 109 (AB109) also known as the Realignment bill.

(9) Proposition 57 is a bill for enhancing public safety, reducing recidivism by rehabilitating, and to stopping the courts from releasing inmates.

(10) Contact foundations for funding-RFP

ii) Fundraising

(1) Create opportunities to obtain funding and make connections within the community. Fundraising opportunities will go through the board of directors for approval.

iii) Engage potential donors

(1) Contact car dealerships for vehicle donation

(2) Advancing Steps is in the need of a transportation van to transport the tenants to programs, school, and other needed services.

Advancing Steps plans to solicit car dealerships for donation of a vehicle for operating purposes. The optimal vehicle would be a 15 passenger van.

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