

City Council – Action Request Form

Date: October 15, 2018

To: The City Manager

From: Evan Raleigh, Assistant City Manager
Ben Rowe, Assistant City Manager

Council Action Requested:

Resolution Approving Guidelines for Successful Outcomes After Release (SOAR) Programs

Strategic Focus Area: Safe and Secure Community
Strategic Objective: Reduce Crime and Fear of Crime
Strategic Plan Action Item: No
Key Work Item: Yes



Summary of Information:

One of the strategies approved by the Mayor and City Council in the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan is to strengthen re-entry and diversion initiatives (Strategy 2.1 under Safe and Secure Community Strategic Focus Area). In January 2018, City staff presented a report on the Successful Outcomes After Release (SOAR) initiative that provided an update on the initiative’s two programs—the work experience program and the grantee agency funding program. In addition to program information and results, the report included staff recommendations to increase the impact of the initiative.

As a follow-up to that report, City staff have consolidated the guidelines for both programs into one program manual that provides the framework for consistent administration of the programs. City staff have incorporated the following recommendations identified in last year’s report into the guidelines, particularly for the work experience program.

- 1) **Use the City’s temporary agency for all SOAR hiring to provide flexibility in selecting and managing program participants.** This item has been completed. Working with Winston Personnel Group provides an expedited onboarding process, mainly because the drug testing is done on site instead of going through a third-party vendor.

Committee Action:

Committee	Public Safety 10/8/18	Action	Approval
For	Unanimous	Against	
Remarks:			

- 2) **Add the Sanitation Department and City-County Utilities Division as placement departments and expand existing partner departments such as the Community Development Department.** The Utilities staff has agreed to conduct a labor employability skills session and equipment training class with current SOAR participants in November 2018. Additionally, the Utilities Department has agreed to have a SOAR participant assigned to their department in January 2019. The Director of Operations has agreed to assign a SOAR participant to the Sanitation Department in 2019.
- 3) **Strengthen internal commitment to the work experience program through supervisory training.** Staff has implemented monthly site visits at each of the employment locations throughout the City. During this time, staff observes the participant and site supervisor. Staff provided all site supervisors with video training at the start of the cohort including a list of Frequently Asked Questions to address expectations of site supervisors and their assigned SOAR participants.
- 4) **Implement the coaching program to provide on-going support to program participants.** While coaching and mentoring have happened organically throughout the current cohort, staff also have developed an application and starter packet for a coaching/mentoring program to provide on-going support to program participants. This coaching program will be advertised to staff on the City's internal site and will include contact information for staff. The anticipated date for implementation is January 2019.
- 5) **Develop marketing materials to increase the visibility of the work experience and the grantee agency funding programs of the SOAR initiative in the community.** City staff have posters, hand-bills, flyers, and business cards that are also available in English and Spanish. The SOAR website is updated as needed and includes an interest form link. At any time, those interested in the program can complete this interest form so that they will be notified via email when the application is available. Staff recommends that the SOAR Grantee information that is included on the Budget and Evaluation Office's webpage is also viewable on the program's main page: www.cityofws.org/soar
- 6) **Continue to work with SOAR grantee agencies on the development of performance measures, in particular outcome-based measures.** Staff hosted an information session with all SOAR Grantee Agencies in May 2018. The purpose of this session was to inform SOAR agencies on the application process and provide information on what constitutes an applicant to be "job-ready." Staff also attended a Neighborhood USA Conference with the SOAR Grantee Agency representative to learn about other re-entry initiatives and examine best-practices with other re-entry programs throughout the country. The workforce development staff continues to work with staff in the Offices of Performance and Accountability and Budget and Evaluation to examine and expand outcome-based measures.

Attachment A provides an update on the outcomes achieved by the work experience program. Information about SOAR grantee agencies will be provided as part of the FY 17-18 performance report prepared by the Budget and Evaluation Office in January 2019.

The attached resolution approves the guidelines for the work experience and grantee agency funding programs. The draft program manual is included with this agenda item.

ATTACHMENT A

Update on SOAR Work Experience Program

Since the program's inception in April 2015, the City has hired 47 former offenders under the SOAR initiative. Of the 47 participants, 28 have completed the program, and nine were involuntarily separated from the program for various reasons.

Eleven individuals were hired from a pool of approximately 98 candidates to participate in the most recent cohort that began on June 4, 2018. Seven of the initial ten participants remain enrolled in the program. One participant was hired full-time as a Light Equipment Operator for City/County Utilities in August 2018 and recently received a promotion in September 2018. Two participants voluntarily separated from the program to take advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities including a healthy dog walking service.

Each participant works 32 hours per week for a period of six months and is paid at a flat rate of \$11.25 per hour. Participants have been assigned to labor positions in the following departments:

- Properties and Facilities Management (Vegetation Management –Cemeteries)
- Properties and Facilities Management (Fleet Services Division)
- Properties and Facilities Management (Custodial Division)
- Recreation and Parks (Recreation Maintenance Division)

The current SOAR class has been exposed to several personal and professional enrichment activities such as financial literacy through the Center for Smart Financial Choices, Creating a Professional Brand Course (customized for SOAR participants), New Employee Orientation, Positive Identity Session taught by Nurse Betty Speaks, Mental and Sexual Health taught by staff at Winston-Salem State University, presentations from a Communication Specialist, the Forsyth County Emergency Preparedness Team, the FTCC scholarship program, and a motivational speech from an "Inmates to Entrepreneurs" speaker.

City staff have developed a coaching component to the program. As a part of the coaching experience, participants will have an opportunity to meet and learn from City employees and coaches from other organizations who have a genuine interest in sharing advice with program participants.

To date, 21 participants who successfully completed the program have either enrolled in college or secured employment in Winston-Salem. Unfortunately, 1 of those 21 participants entered the cycle of recidivism in April 2018, while 95.2% of participants who successfully complete the SOAR program remain employed and out of the penal system. The following table provides details about the status of these individuals.

Participant	Full-Time or Part-Time	Employer
Participant 1	Part-Time	Eve's Home Care
Participant 2	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (Community Dev.)
Participant 3	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (Recreation & Parks)
Participant 4	Full-Time	Commercial Truck Driver
Participant 5	Full-Time	B.E. Aerospace
Participant 6	Full-Time	K&W Cafeterias
Participant 7	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (Community Dev.)
Participant 8	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (City/County Planning)
Participant 9	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (PFM- Fleet Services)
Participant 10	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (DOT)
Participant 11	Full-Time	Town of Kernersville
Participant 12		Incarcerated (Formerly employed with City of Winston-Salem Recreation & Parks)
Participant 13	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (Recreation & Parks)
Participant 14	Part-Time	Laborer
Participant 15	Full-Time	City/County Utilities
Participant 16	Part-Time	Sonic Restaurant
Participant 17	Full-Time Student	Enrolled in Undergraduate Studies at Winston-Salem State University
Participant 18	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (PFM- Fleet Services)
Participant 19	Full-Time	Aon (Health Insurance and Risk Management)
Participant 20	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (Sanitation)
Participant 21	Full-Time (Temp-to-Hire)	City of Winston-Salem (Recreation & Parks)

Program staff continue to attend job and resource fairs with staff from the Human Resources Department to promote the program and recruit for future cohorts. SOAR also has an online interest form on the City's website for anyone who is interested in applying to the program. Other recruitment efforts include: emails and phone calls to citizens who complete interest forms, networking with local re-entry organizations, hosting Forsyth County Re-Entry Council's Inaugural Community Expo, neighborhood association and community day events, hosting information sessions and placing bi-lingual handbills and flyers at the local recreation centers, hosting an information session with SOAR grantee agencies, and providing bottled water and business cards to potential applicants at various basketball courts, beauty shops, and barber shops. The current cohort will end on December 7, 2018. Our next cohort is scheduled to begin in January 2019.