



**Report on Successful Outcomes After Release
(SOAR) Initiative**

January 2018



Winston-Salem

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In June 2014, as part of the FY 2014-2015 budget, the Mayor and City Council appropriated \$100,000 to fund a former offender re-entry initiative called Successful Outcomes After Release (SOAR). The funds initially were appropriated to provide grants to support community agencies that provided educational, vocational, therapeutic, and employment training programs to the local former offender community.

In October 2014, after reviewing the objectives of the re-entry initiative and assessing the City's current labor force needs, the Mayor and City Council approved the allocation of \$50,000 of the funding previously designated for grants to fund a work experience program. This program would provide employment opportunities for former offenders who met the program's guidelines while supplementing the City's existing workforce to address areas of critical need. At that time, the program was funded to employ up to eight temporary positions for a period of 16 weeks at the City's minimum hourly rate. The participants were assigned to the Property and Facilities Management Department's Vegetation Management Division or the Code Enforcement Division of the Community Development Department. The inaugural class of participants began in April 2015. The program has conducted recruitment for future classes of SOAR participants twice per year, during the fall and spring.

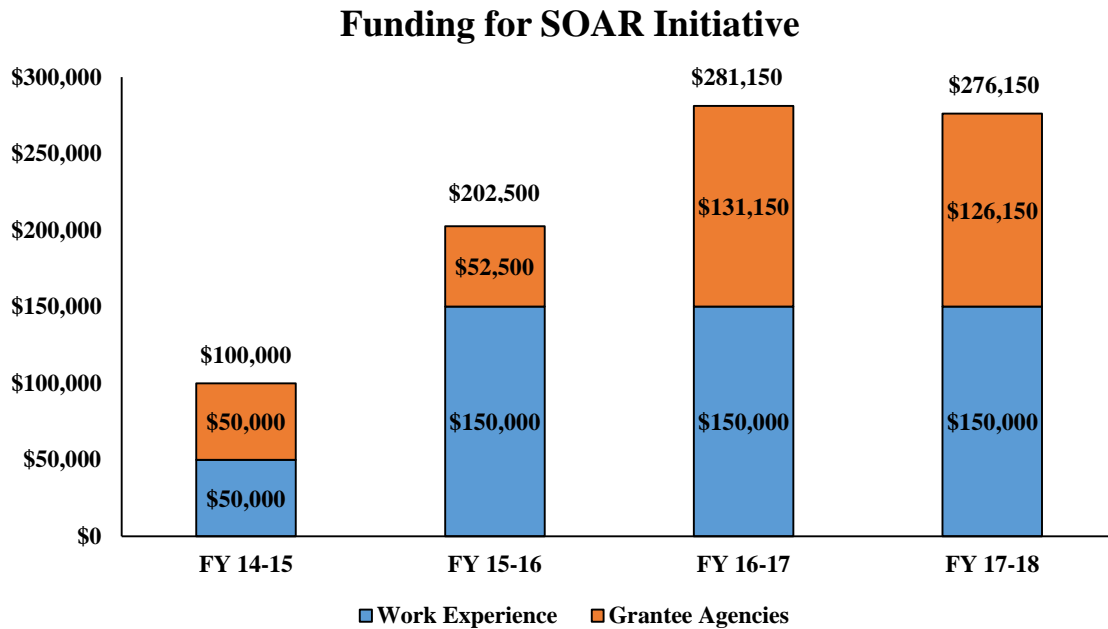
The remaining \$50,000 funded grants to the following agencies: Self-Empowerment Last Forever (SELF) (\$10,000), Project MOORE (\$10,000), Beating Up Bad Habits (\$10,000), Eureka Ministry (\$10,000), The Salvation Army (\$5,000), and the Piedmont Triad Regional Council's Re-entry Program (\$5,000).

In June 2015, as part of the FY 2015-2016 budget, the Mayor and City Council increased funding for the SOAR initiative from \$100,000 to \$202,500 with \$150,000 budgeted for the work experience program. With the increased funding, City staff expanded the work experience program, adding a second phase that included an additional six-month term of employment as well as life skills training.

As part of the FY 2016-2017 budget, the Mayor and City Council appropriated \$50,000 in contingency funds for the initiative. After an internal staff review of the agency applications, the Mayor and City Council approved the allocation of \$40,000 in contingency funding to seven agencies. These agencies and their programs provided assistance to at-risk populations, including former offenders and at-risk youth. Based on the quality of information submitted by first-time applicants, City staff recommended that a portion of the contingency be provided as "seed" funding to those agencies. The remaining \$10,000 from the contingency was used to fund the training for the agencies receiving this funding.

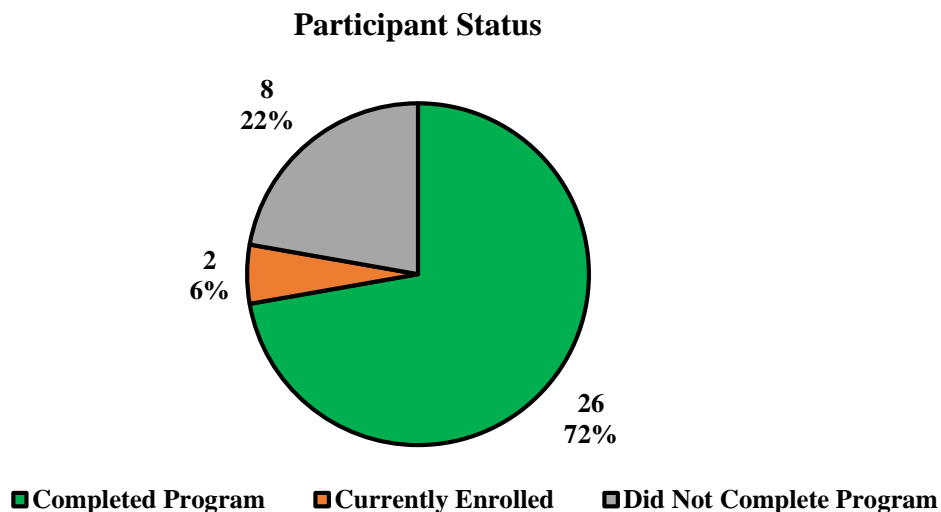
Funding

The SOAR initiative primarily is funded from general fund revenues. Part of the grant to the Piedmont Triad Regional Council’s Re-entry Program is funded from the City’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The following chart shows funding for the work experience and grantee funding programs since the start of the initiative.



Results

Under the work experience program, the City has hired 36 former offenders under the SOAR initiative since its inception. The following chart provides a breakdown in the status of these participants.



Of the 26 participants who completed the program, City staff have confirmed that 17 have secured part-time or full-time employment either with the City or private employers.

Under the grantee agency funding program, the City has awarded \$359,800 in grants to 13 community organizations. City staff continue to work with these agencies on the development of outcome measures in order to quantify the impacts of their programs and the City's financial assistance. The report includes the section from the Community Agency Performance Report, which is prepared by the Budget and Evaluation Office and includes reported outcomes for FY 2016-2017 (Attachment A).

This report provides information about the work experience and grantee agency funding programs of the SOAR initiative. In addition, the report presents staff recommendations for improving the program based on lessons learned from the three plus years of administration of the program.

WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Since the program's inception in April 2015, the City has hired 36 former offenders under the SOAR initiative. Of the 36 participants, 26 have completed the program, two currently are enrolled, and eight were involuntarily separated from the program for various reasons.

Five individuals were hired from a pool of approximately 60 candidates to participate in the most recent cohort that began on August 14, 2017. Two of the initial five participants remain enrolled in the program.

Each participant works 25 hours per week for a period of six months and is paid at a flat rate of \$11.00 per hour. Participants have been assigned to labor and administrative support positions in the following departments:

- Properties and Facilities Management (Vegetation Management Division)
- Properties and Facilities Management (Fleet Services Division)
- Community Development (Code Enforcement Division)
- Recreation and Parks (Recreation Maintenance Division)

The current SOAR class has been exposed to several personal and professional enrichment activities such as Service Excellence training, human resource development through Forsyth Technical Community College, financial literacy through the Center for Smart Financial Choices, cognitive behavioral strategies through Insight Human Services, and a basic cooking skills class with Triad Community Kitchen.

City staff currently are developing 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, 17 participants (65%) who successfully completed the program have secured employment with the City of Winston-Salem, B.E. Aerospace, Aon, home-health services, and local restaurants. The following table provides details about the status of these individuals.

Participant	Full-Time or Part-Time	Employer
Bintakebba Banner	Part-Time	City of Winston-Salem (PFM)
Robert Brinkley	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (Recreation & Parks)
Christopher Brown	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (Community Dev.) <i>*Resigned to drive Commercial Trucks *</i>
Jeremy Cody	Full-Time and Part-Time	B.E. Aerospace (Currently employed) <u>and</u> City of Winston-Salem – ended 2017 (PT w/ Community Dev.)
Steven Crump	Part-Time and Part-Time - Temp	K&W Cafeterias (Currently employed) <u>and</u> City of Winston-Salem – ended 2016 (Veg. Management - Cemeteries Division)
Bryan Foy	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (Community Dev.)
Joel Goodson	Part-Time	City of Winston-Salem (PFM)
Charles Hall	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (PFM- Fleet Services)
Frank Hill	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (DOT)
Justin Hairston	Part-Time - Temp	City of Winston-Salem (Recreation & Parks)
Audriana Lewis	Part-Time	City of Winston-Salem (Recreation & Parks)
Alisha Shell-Nelson	Part-Time	Sonic Restaurant
Barbara Reaves	Part-Time - Temp	City of Winston-Salem (Community Dev.) <u>and</u>

Participant	Full-Time or Part-Time	Employer
	Part-Time	Kentucky Fried Chicken and Home Health Care <u>and</u> JUST COMPLETED FRESHMAN YEAR at Winston-Salem State University
Kiyunta Wilson	Full-Time	Aon (Health Insurance and Risk Management)
Leroy Wise	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (Sanitation)
Fredrick Moore	Part-Time	Laborer
Gregory Bitting	Full-Time	City of Winston-Salem (Community Dev.)

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. The current cohort will end on February 16, 2018.

GRANTEE AGENCY FUNDING PROGRAM

Starting with the FY 2014-2015 budget, the Mayor and City Council has provided annual contributions to community organizations that provide educational, vocational, therapeutic, and employment training programs to the local former offender community.

The following table notes the annual contributions to these organizations since FY 2014-2015.

Agency	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	Total
Self-Empowerment Last Forever	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$40,000
Southside Rides	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	30,000
Beating Up Bad Habits	10,000	0	5,000	0	15,000
Eureka Ministry	10,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	70,000
The Salvation Army	5,000	5,000	0	0	10,000
Piedmont Triad Regional Council*	5,000	17,500	41,150	41,150	104,800
YWCA – Hawley House	0	0	13,500	13,500	27,000
Josh Howard Foundation	0	0	6,500	6,500	13,000
Hoops4L.Y.F.E.#	0	0	5,000	5,000	10,000
My Brothers Second Chance#	0	0	5,000	5,000	10,000
Silver Lining Youth Services#	0	0	5,000	0	5,000
Boys2Men Mentorship Program#	0	0	0	5,000	5,000
Honorable Youth#	0	0	0	5,000	5,000
Contingency	0	0	10,000	5,000	15,000
Total	\$50,000	\$52,500	\$131,150	\$126,150	\$359,800

Received “seed” funding

* Partially funded from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

With the appropriation of \$50,000 in SOAR contingency funds as part of the FY 2016-2017 budget, the Mayor and City Council expanded the grantee agency funding program to support organizations that provided services to at-risk youth as well as former offenders. In addition, the program started to provide “seed” funding to those agencies that did not meet all of the eligibility requirements for the City’s established community agency funding program.

The purpose of “seed” funding is to assist start-up agencies in strengthening their management and capacity to serve clients. With this funding, the agencies would receive maximum annual assistance of \$5,000. As a condition for receiving this “seed” funding, the City would provide half of the contribution up front and the remaining half after officials with these agencies completed City-sponsored capacity building training. The internal City team’s recommendations focused on funding direct program expenses, not agency salaries. Through this initial financial and technical assistance, “seed” funding should enable those agencies to compete for funding through the established community agency funding process within a couple of years.

The agencies receiving “seed” funding attended a series of four customized workshops. The workshops are listed below with brief descriptions. All of the “seed” agencies attended the required workshops.

Governance-A look at nonprofit governance, including best practices. Topics include the role of the board, building an effective board, the relationship and roles of the board and staff, and how to monitor and evaluate the Executive Director.

Fund development-An overview of the development function, featuring the most current information and techniques, and the skills, strategies, and program components for individuals with zero to four years of fundraising experience.

Program evaluation-An introduction to simple concepts and tools that can improve an organization's programs and services. Build skills through guided practice as these tools are applied to specific examples from your organization.

Budget/finance-An overview of nonprofit budgeting and finance, including financial terminology, the components of nonprofit financial statements in order to develop a working understanding of an income statement and balance sheet. The course will also address how to build a budget.

Staff from the Police Department's Community Relations Division hold regular meetings with all of the agencies that receive funding through SOAR to facilitate dialogue about the populations they serve and to minimize duplication of services.

The following table provides information about the number of clients served by these agencies.

Agency	Participant Information (FY 2016-2017)
Hawley House	295 women/children
Hoops4 L.Y.F.E.	276 youth
Honorable Youth	12 students summer camp/25 EOG tutoring
Josh Howard Foundation	38 youth/15 adults
Boys2Men	18 youth
My Brothers Second Chance	41 youth
Southside Rides	30 male participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 owners of used car lots - 4 owners of body shops - 12 employed at local dealerships, (e.g., Flow, etc.) - 8 students at FTCC - 4 jobs at local restaurants (e.g., Burger King)
SELF	52 participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 35 employed at local companies, Budd Services, Food Lion, Enterprise Rent a Car etc.
Eureka House	36 offenders placed in permanent housing
Project Re-entry	Served 332 new participants in FY2016-17

Attachment A provides the section on SOAR grantee agencies from the Community Agency Performance Report, which is prepared by the Budget and Evaluation Office and includes additional information on outcomes reported for FY 2016-2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on lessons learned from the three plus years that the City has administered the SOAR initiative, the staff proposes the following recommendations to improve program outcomes.

- 1) Use the City's temporary agency for all SOAR hiring to provide flexibility in selecting and managing program participants.
- 2) Add the Sanitation Department and City-County Utilities Division as placement departments and expand existing partner departments such as the Community Development Department.
- 3) Strengthen internal commitment to the work experience program through supervisory training.
- 4) Implement the coaching program to provide on-going support to program participants.
- 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.
- 6) Continue to work with SOAR grantee agencies on the development of performance measures, in particular outcome-based measures.

ATTACHMENT A

Eureka Ministry

FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000

Activities:	FY 2016-17 Annual Outcomes:
Transitional Housing for Ex-Offenders Released from Prison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided housing and 75% of food for 10 ex-offenders. - Provided employment assistance to 10 ex-offenders; 10 were placed in jobs. - Provided life skills coaching in the areas of finances, relationships, problem solving, and conflict resolution. - Recidivism rate of 25%.
Housing Case Management Services for Ex-Offenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assisted in placing 36 homeless ex-offenders into permanent housing from the streets and homeless shelters in Winston-Salem. - Traveled total of 329 miles to service client needs, sign leases, purchase household goods, and complete initial intake. - Spent 240 hours servicing clients' needs and working with them in the housing search process.
Men's Bridge Club (Support Group) for Inmates at Forsyth Correctional Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sponsored inmates from prison to a local church to participate in facilitated meetings and setting goals about Dealing with Addiction, Financial Management, Anger Management, Building Relationships, Educational Opportunities, and Locating Resources. - Worked with eight local churches, utilizing 14 volunteers.
<p>2016-2017 Program Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The FY 2016-17 grant served 36 participants with each getting a one-time assistance of \$300.00 each. The funds were used to help pay rent deposit, utility deposit and or household items they needed as they experienced the new challenges they now faced having their own apartment. - EHP provided case management services to assist these individuals in acquiring and retaining permanent housing. EHP helps participants learn how to develop a realistic budget and utilize resources to meet their multiple needs. Case management services include needs assessment, resource identification, referring and linking, and life/success skills education and coaching. 	

Hoops4L.Y.F.E.

FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000

Activities:	FY 2016-17 Annual Outcomes:
After school program offering mentoring, tutoring, and basketball training for youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided services for 48 children. - Before and after school program served 10 children. - Provided two AAU Leagues for 5th-12th grades.
<p>2016-2017 Program Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hoops4L.Y.F.E. received a \$750 grassroot grant from Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods. - Hosted a summer enrichment program for 25 children. - Partnered with Cancer Services for the Breast Cancer Awareness Basketball Tournament. 	

How is Your Heart Project - Beating Up Bad Habits

FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000

Activities:	FY 2016-17 Annual Outcomes:
Mentoring and referrals to behavioral health as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 60% of youth ages 8-17 were serviced and assisted in all needs. - 100% of youth were referred as needed to services for substance abuse, anger management, and gang prevention services. - 100% of youth participated in school programs and staff followed up with grades.
<p>2016-2017 Program Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided referrals to behavioral health as needed, assisted families, and continued involvement with schools and other referral agencies. 	

Josh Howard Foundation Mentoring Program

FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,500

Activities:	FY 2016-17 Annual Outcomes:
Community Progressive Development Program - After school program at Sprague Street Recreation Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100% of students enrolled in the afterschool program improved their grades by one letter grade - 100% of students enrolled in the afterschool program had no discipline reports or school suspensions
<p>2016-2017 Program Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Winston-Salem State University, Wake Forest University, and UNC School of the Arts students volunteered to tutor the students in the afterschool program. - Local Businessman spoke to the students regarding interview skills, resumes, setting goals, and financial literacy. 	

My Brother's Second Chance

FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000

Activities:	FY 2016-17 Annual Outcomes:
Mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided after school snacks, school supplies, field trips, as well as two college visits and activities throughout the summer months. - Worked with 10 students and provided 1000 hours of mentoring services to empower, encourage, and equip boys towards accountability, compassion and self-respect that will guide them in their transition towards manhood. - Referred seven juveniles to other agencies for clothing, employment, and mental health services. - 100% of students enrolled in My Brother's Second Chance remained in school for the entire year. - Annual cost to organization of \$1,000 per participant.
<p>2016-2017 Program Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Program adopted 12 men from Carver High School who all passed (2 finished on A/B honor roll). - Five students received tablets from the organization. - Volunteers took students on college tours to Winston-Salem State University, Wake Forest University, and Forsyth Technical Community College. - Volunteers assisted three students with securing part-time jobs. 	

Piedmont Triad Regional Council – Project Re-Entry

FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
\$ 5,000	\$ 17,500	\$ 41,150

Activities:	FY 2016-17 Annual Outcomes:
Provision of pre-release curriculum cycles, pre/post-release case planning/ services and post-release only services for participants.	- Decreased former offender prison recidivism by providing customized reintegration services. Latest study followed 2013/14 pre/post participants for a 2.5-3 year period ending December 2016. The recidivism rate for these participants was 8.9%.
Specialized case management, skills building trainings, vocational education	- Employment rate for participants was 77%. This included 73 of pre/post and post only participants.
Provide programming that is efficient and cost effective	- Served 332 new participants in FY 2016-17. With a total budget of \$205, 883 for the program, the cost per participant was \$620. - 80% received basic needs services. - Average monthly caseload in FY 16-17: 17 pre-release, 45 pre/post and 32 post release (including carryovers from previous year).
<p>2016-2017 Program Highlights:</p> <p>- Project Reentry is now featured in a documentary series on the OWN network called “Released.” In this series, three Project Reentry participants were followed for the initial 90 days after release to highlight the unique challenges returning citizens face. The series debuted in late September 2017 and may be extended. Additionally, Project Reentry was featured in a Wake Forest University exhibit called “Open Spaces.” This exhibit collected photography and quotes from Project Reentry participants to speak to the special perspective of reentry / transition.</p>	

Self-Empowerment Lasts Forever—Taking a Giant Step (T.A.G.S.) Reentry Program

FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000

Activities:	FY 2016-17 Annual Outcomes:
Education and Skills Training	- Referred participants to resources to obtain GED. Of the 21 participants enrolled, 18 participants (85.7% came into the program with a GED or diploma.
Provided job readiness seminars, budget counseling, and goal setting	- Enrolled 21 participants in the program, and 16 were placed in jobs. Two participants became independent contract workers. - 85% of enrollees had detailed goals and maintained employment.
Develop relationships with shelters, realtors, and half-way houses to help participants find/maintain housing	- Reviewed standard leases with participants, located private landlords, matched needs with budgets to house. 18 of 21 enrolled had family housing, 2 stayed in shelters.
<p>2016-2017 Program Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project T.A.G.S. is a program designed to address a multitude of barriers individuals who were previously incarcerated face as they attempt to re-enter society and become productive citizens within their community. It will provide them with a composite of experiences that will enrich their lives and assist them in leading a healthier more productive life. - The program concentrates on skills training that will eventually prepare them to become entrepreneurs, thereby becoming independent business owners and productive citizens. - Specifically, the program will address three major categories of numerous risk factors they face: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Personal risk factors where they have demonstrated poor educational performance, exhibited low self-confidence, exhibited poor decision making and problem solving skills, and lack the knowledge to establish good sound life goals and channel negative behaviors into positive behaviors. (2) Social risk factors which include association with peers who may possibly pose bad influences, the inability to make good choices of not using alcohol, controlled substances and/or tobacco, and the tendency of these individuals to want to <i>'belong, be a part of the in-crowd, and not rock the boat.'</i> (3) Family risk factors are those where they have exhibited inappropriate behaviors inclusive of alcohol/drug use and abuse, child abuse, spousal abuse, domestic violence and multiple socio-economic problems in the home environment. They feel financially obligated for the support of their family, which often leads to criminal behaviors. 	

Silver Lining Youth Services

FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000

Activities:	FY 2016-17 Annual Outcomes:
STARS Teen Development Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During the 2016-17 academic year, the program served students at Carver High School. - Silver Linings implemented its evidence-based curriculum, Lions Quest “Skills for Growing,” our social and emotional program to support each student’s social development. - 100% of students assigned to in-school suspension received a healthy breakfast once a week.
<p>2016-2017 Program Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Silver Linings Program Coordinator assisted students that were assigned to the alternative learning center. 80% percent of the students did not return to the alternative learning center upon returning to the regular classroom. 	

Southside Rides

FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000

Activities:	FY 2016-17 Annual Outcomes:
Mentor at-risk youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 95% of participants were paired with mentors in the community - All participants received a stipend for training at Southside Rides to reduce the rate of recidivism by providing a legal and legitimate source of income. - Five of the participants enrolled at Forsyth Tech in the auto body Associates Degree Program.
<p>2016-2017 Program Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Southside Rides had no participants recidivate back into the system. - Three of the participants pooled their resources to open a body shop. - Southside Rides' parents/guardians implemented a support group to discuss issues regarding the participants. 	

YWCA – Hawley House

FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
\$ -	\$ -	\$ 13,500

Activities:	FY 2016-17 Annual Outcomes:
Hawley House, Project New Start program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instrumental in helping 12 women become employed, including four with the Pepsi Co. and three with K&W. - Provided supportive services and referrals to 225 women and their children – more than twice the anticipated goal of 110 women and their children (specifics described in quarterly reports). - Assisted 42 clients by sponsoring an expungement clinic at the Hawley House with the help of WFU Law Students, a local Attorney Travis Simpson and The Honorable Judge Denise Hartsfield. All Project New Start and Hawley House clients were invited, and the event was also open to the public. - Provided toys for multiple families at Christmas time.
<p>2016-2017 Program Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assisted clients in obtaining basic needs to become employed or file for disability (i.e. an I.D., Social Security Card, medical records, resume, and clothing). - Assisted clients by providing a schedule of transportation to various agencies to receive health care, medicine, ID's, counseling, and/or food stamps. - Assisted clients with gaining access to emergency assistance. 	