



SAFER COMMUNITIES STRONGER FAMILIES

Annual Report

October 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021

In Partnership with

Michigan Department of Corrections

I. Executive Summary

Ensuring the success of all participants referred to Flip the Script (FTS) Safer Communities, Stronger Families (SCSF) program continues to be our pivotal objective to reducing recidivism and providing personalized support supports and encouragements to “justice involved” probationers, with “Moderate to High” level predispositions. Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit’s (GIGD) – Flip the Scrip Empowerment Program continues to redirect program participants to a more positive path toward personal success.

GIGD and the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) as partners work to maintain regular communications, and to ensure all program elements are managed for participants’ long-term success. Wayne County 3rd Circuit Court has continued to refer individuals to the FTS – SCSF program as an alternative to jail or prison. Approximately 85% of persons referred, who have fully participated in the program, have not returned before a judge, nor have they been incarcerated and/or detained. Overall, the continued success of the FTS program endures, and works to reduce the number of offenders who commit new crimes, and who are ultimately incarcerated in state prisons, while reducing the corrections expenses shouldered by taxpayers across the state.

As shared in our mid-year report-out, fiscal year 2021 has not been without challenge and/or complexity. The COVID-19 national pandemic continued to challenge the FTS team in various ways. Traditional classroom services, workshops, and activities were offered in both the face-to-face and virtual systems. New virtual tools and methods allowed the FTS team to continue with excellent participant service supports. The enrollments and educational recovery outcomes are still exceeding expectations, and other metrics were above the 75-80% success ratings.

Participant financial literacy and debt management outcomes continued achievement at optimum levels. Job Placement outcomes for male participants were above the quantitative goals for FY 2021. The FTS team has diligently worked to conclude the year favorably. Results for the Women Empowerment participants, however, continued below the FY 2021 metric/goals. The program received few referrals of women participants for services.

Lastly, the MDOC and Goodwill Detroit worked collectively to negotiate the quantitative FY 2021 goals for SCSF programming, and we are exploring program improvements for the FY 2022 activities.

II. SCSF Participants and Their Challenges/Barriers

Participants in are referred directly by the MDOC’s Probation Department, and the Wayne County Third Circuit Court Judicial Branch.

Many SCSF participants, along with the City of Detroit residents, and those throughout Wayne County, continue to have a myriad of barriers to obtaining competitive employment, and most importantly life success. The list of barriers are often numerous, but familiar when supporting offenders from across the region and/or State. However, the intensity of the challenges for SCSF participants is likely much more acute (mirroring other aspects of Wayne County population data as compared to state population data).

Overall, many SCSF participants are not prepared to achieve any substantial life goals toward life successes. Housing insecurity, childcare, low literacy, food uncertainty, are the immediate challenges that most face. Many probationers are disconnected from the educational, financial, health, and employment systems that could offer a positive path forward. Most do not have vital documents such as a State ID or Driver’s License, and many have no personal/reliable transportation, and have limited, to no traditional work experience.

Many SCSF participants suffer from low educational levels in Reading and Math, and a significant number of individuals struggle with identified and unidentified learning disabilities. Some can identify words that are familiar, but have very low reading levels, and have difficulty expressing themselves orally or in writing. Employment is another challenge given that the participant’s low educational levels prohibit them from completing online web-search and/or job applications in computer-based systems.

The need for childcare assistance is also a significant barrier for many SCSF participants, especially the women/female participants. When combined with unreliable transportation, food, and housing challenges mentioned above, the resulting barriers becomes nearly insurmountable.

A significant number of the women serviced are traumatized due to prior emotional and sexual abuse, and many have experienced sexual assault and/or domestic violence at the hands of a controlling male partner(s). Other female probationers referred are also in negotiations with the Wayne County Family Court, and are facing the potential removal of children from their care, while equally being underemployed and/or unemployed.

Compounding these challenges, most SCSF participants were reared and/or shaped in environments where criminal behavior was acceptable. Their social networks are of little help in transcending these barriers and in most cases, the networks are an obstacle. In particular, many of the men are members of formal or informal street gangs that are engaged in regular criminal activity. Those that are not members of such groups were generally “raised and/or socialized by the streets” and, as a result, were either mixed/mingled in a similar manner, or learned to avoid all social support systems as a survival tactic.

Lastly, there are aspects of the criminal courts system that create barriers to employment and life success for SCSF participants. Many probationers often communicated that they are required to visit their probation officer, and/or Judge during the day—a requirement that is inconsistent with the expectation that they gain and maintain employment, especially in cases where they are expected to work a full 8 or 10-hour shifts. Similarly, contracts such as SCSF expect services can be delivered, and results achieved on a timeline consistent with the State’s fiscal year calendar. Impactful and meaningful results frequently take from 18 to 24 months. This means that results/outcomes frequently are not available, and are likely to carry over into a new fiscal year.

Participants:

- During the current COVID-19 living and work environment, many of the MDOC probation officers had been understandably more lenient with the probationers, and the referrals of whom we serve. As an unintended consequence, some of the participants have an attitude and/or disposition where there is a “lack of urgency” when it comes to completing class work/assignments in a timely manner.
- This current pandemic environment has also exposed the severity of areas such as digital literacy and/or the digital divide, with disparities in access to quality internet and Wi-Fi, as well as, laptop or desktop computers for which a cellphone/tablet is no substitute.
- Though this was a barrier pre- COVID quarantine, participant childcare needs were exacerbated due to the limited available childcare centers, along with the lack of affordable childcare options in this climate. For participants who continued in classroom or virtual sessions, the distractions were evident. A number of probation agents pulled participants from the program.

- The COVID-19 environment did shift the employment dynamic. A number of our working participants were regularly asked by their employers to work extensive schedules/overtime to make up for the losses due to staff shortage situations. As a result, many probationers often found it difficult to complete classroom assignments in a timely fashion.
- Over 90% of SCSF participants enrolled during this period are on probation, and 25% are repeat offenders, and therefore are in need of a diversionary strategy in order to avoid long-term incarceration.
- Over 85% of our male participants and over 70% of female participants lacked a high school diploma or GED. The majority of the male and female participants, consistent with past years, initially scored below the 4th grade level in math, and at or below the 5th grade level in reading.
- Less than 55% of male participants have never held a traditional job assignment, or have been previously employed.
- Over 70% of participants report being challenged with both transportation and housing, which in many cases means that there is “no permanent residence” in place after program completion.

III. Services, Strategies, Activities and Progress Toward Goals

Goodwill Detroit’s Flip the Script program, which operates the SCSF, has successfully responded to the regional re-entry challenges for just under two decades. The SCSF program has its roots in service to parolees, but over the last 10 years has increasingly focused its attention on ‘alternative sentencing efforts’ and reducing the likelihood of recidivism among probationers participating in them.

Flip the Script’s holistic and tailored approach is designed to deter probationers from costly state confinement, while continuing to produce measurable and/or favorable outcomes. SCSF participants are expected to focus on educational attainment, personal growth, and positive life skill acquisitions. Many probationers have to face and confront the same pressures that sent them to the justice system (i.e. Criminal court) in the first place. In addition to building this lifestyle resolve, participants must learn accountability for life’s demands, such as critical childcare needs, employment demands, and educational recovery. The investment each probationer is required to make in his or her own success is paramount.

Support for SCSF probationers, and ensuring their success is a total community effort. The continued support and/or validation from our community partners, including the Detroit Police Department (DPD), the Office of Detroit Mayor Michael Duggan, and the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan and the United States Attorney’s Office ensures that our reach in supporting SCSF participants extends beyond Goodwill Industry’s Community Center. Veteran and rookie officers from the DPD have joined into scheduled immersion sessions with SCSF cohort groups and classes, building bridges that will assist in fostering healthy relationships between police and community residents.

National thought leaders in the arena of reentry services have recognized the Flip the Script - SCSF program. FTS is recognized as one of many leading programs internationally, so much so that it periodically hosts visits from international audiences seeking to learn best practices in re-entry and community reintegration work. Indeed, Flip the Script’s effective program model has received multiple commendations from CARF, a national accrediting body for its comprehensive employment and training services for the justice involved populations.

Our current and former SCSF participants have consistently reported high “client satisfaction” results when surveyed on their experience. In the most recent fiscal year, 97% of participants rated SCSF had a positive and direct impact on their lives.

SCSF programming includes a variety of services designed to meet the needs of participants:

- An intense “Rites of Passage” Cognitive Behavioral training (CBT) program that teaches social skill building and personal accountability; along with
- Employment and Work readiness counseling and coaching.
- Wraparound services and supports to meet basic needs;
- Intense one-on-one counseling, coaching, and mentorship;
- Assistance with obtaining legal identification, including state ID, birth certificates, and also driver’s licenses;
- Financial literacy and related services, including debt avoidance, basic budgeting, credit counseling and repair, assistance with recovery from identity theft, smart money management, assistance opening a savings or checking account, and exposure to other financial tools;
- Remedial education services, Basic Reading/Literacy, Mathematics, and Digital Awareness and Literacy;
- An individualized combination of those services has been proven to consistently produce excellent outcomes for SCSF participants.

A. Community-Based Male Alternative Sentencing Program

SCSF programming delivered strong outcomes for male participants.

	FY 2021 Goals 10/1/20 – 9/30/21	FY 2021 Actual 10/1/20 – 9/30/21
Target Number of Enrollees	155	124 (80% Goal Achieved)
Number of program completers (80% of total enrollees)	125	73 (58% Goal Achieved)
Number of Job Placements (70% - Percentage of participants placed in competitive employment with 90 calendar days of completion.)	109	91 (83% Goal Achieved)
Number achieving 30 day retention (80% - Percentage of employed participants achieving 30-day employment retention)	76	52 (68% Goal Achieved)
Number achieving 90 day retention (80% - Percentage of employed participants achieving 90-day employment retention)	104	37 (36% Goal Achieved)

At MDOC’s request, we are also reporting this data in a new way. Many program participants often require two or more job placements before achieving employment sustainability. They frequently fail to maintain their first placement due to unfamiliar workplace soft skills and communication methods, along with the accumulation of years of poor interpersonal and social skills, household distractions, and negative peer pressure.

Out of 73 male offenders who completed the Alternative Sentencing program for FY 21, 47 are still on probation, 14 completed probation successfully, and 3 were unsuccessful while on probation. Therefore, a total of 17 offenders were discharged from probation, and the successful completion rate is 14/17 (82%).

When participants do not retain their initial job placement, they are immediately counseled, coached, and receive additional supportive services and job placement assistance. MDOC and GIGD agreed the initial and subsequent placements would be counted toward the “job placements” outcome. Per the MDOC’s 2019-20FY request, the table below shows only one job placement per participant (unduplicated). Total number of job placements (duplicated) is not reflected.

	FY 2021 Program Goals 10/1/20 – 9/30/21	FY 2021 Actual 10/1/20 – 9/30/21
Number of job placements (70% - Percentage of participants placed in competitive employment with 90 calendar days of completion)	109	83%

Finally, thirty-seven (37) participants entered the SCSF program employed from July 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020. For those who enrolled in program 04/01/21 – 9/30/21, their 90-day employment retention measure will occur post September 30, 2021. (Therefore, 13 participants reached the 90-day retention benchmark.) The Flip the Script team continues its emphasis on supporting participants to retain employment beyond their initial 30 days, while also offering new opportunities that have higher wages.

B. Education Recovery for All Adult Populations

One hundred twenty-four (124) probationers enrolled in remedial educational programming (i.e. GED). Participant services included classroom activities in reading and math, as well as one-on-one tutorial sessions. We have also initiated full implementation of the Online GED Academy activity and remote testing, along with the high school completion alternative, HiSET high school equivalency. Thirty-five (35) carryovers from FY 2020-21 currently are pursuing GED completion.

	Program Goals 10/6/20 – 9/30/21	FY 2020 Actual 10/6/20 – 9/30/21
Number of Enrollees	145 (124)	85%
Number of participants achieving grade level increase (80% of total enrollees)	116 (112 Grade Improvements)	96%

(03) HiSET is an alternative to the GED for someone pursuing high school completion.

Twenty (20) carryover participants were actively engaged in remedial education services as of September 30, 2021. These individuals will carry-on through the FY22 to ensure continuation of their educational goals. More than half of these individuals are pursuing their last/final test to completing a GED.

The following table reflects the reading and math grade levels improvement for all enrolled Educational Recovery participants.

	Entry (TABE) Reading Level	Reading (1 Level Grade Increase)	Reading (2 Level Grade Increase)
Grade (9th -12th)	19	17	12
Grade (7th – 8th)	41	38	19
Grade (5th – 6th)	37	35	14
Grade (4th – 1st)	27	26	8

	Entry (TABE) Math Level	Math (1 Level Grade Increase)	Math (2 Level Grade Increase)
Grade (9th -12th)	19	17	5
Grade (7th – 8th)	41	38	6
Grade (5th – 6th)	37	35	10
Grade (4th – 1st)	27	26	7

Seventeen (17) participants achieved their GED during the fiscal year 10/6/20 – 9/20/21.

Additionally, fiscal year 2020 probationers continued their educational goals beyond September 30, 2021. The table below reflects FY 2020 probationer’s carry-over educational progress in FY 2021.

FY19 SCSF Carryover	Entry (TABE) Reading Level	Reading (1 Level Grade Increase)	Reading (2 Level Grade Increase)
Grade (9th -12th)	8	8	7
Grade (7th – 8th)	6	6	6
Grade (5th – 6th)	3	2	2
Grade (4th – 1st)	3	1	1

FY20 SCSF Carryover	Entry (TABE) Math Level	Math (1 Level Grade Increase)	Math (2 Level Grade Increase)
Grade (9th -12th)	8	8	7
Grade (7th – 8th)	6	6	5
Grade (5th – 6th)	3	3	2
Grade (4th – 1st)	3	3	2

C. Beyond Jobs Women’s Empowerment Services

Women’s Empowerment is another service component which was created to offer gender and cultural specific ‘career planning and development services’, along with continuing education for women 16 -39 years of age. Women’s Empowerment provided ongoing supportive services that focused on Workplace and Employment readiness for eligible women facing critical issues including poverty, financial strain, homelessness, and domestic abuse.

During this year’s efforts and plans, the women’s programming continued to experience low referral submissions and challenges from the MDOC and Wayne County Circuit Courts due to life, childcare, and educational challenges. As indicated by the data in the tablet below, the challenges are continually exacerbated by the on-going personal challenges and program requirements, resulting in fewer referrals for services versus the previous moments. However, with the newly negotiated program metrics for women, FTS – SCSF sought to recruit women, and gain new referrals from the MDOC Probation Offices, and the Wayne County 3rd Circuit Court. Unfortunately, after months of

outreach and strategic communications, the women referrals did not increase. However, with COVID-19 and childcare challenges (being the largest), the Women’s Empowerment Program had a significant drop in outcomes in serving and supporting female participants.

	FY 2021 Goals 10/01/20 – 9/30/21	FY 2021 Actual 10/01/20 – 9/30/21
Number of Enrollees	62	6 (9%)
Number of Completers (80% of total enrollees)	37	2 (2% Goal Achieved)
Number of Job Placements (70% of Total Enrollees)	53	2 (1% Goal Achieved)

Although there were COVID-19 and referral challenges, a few women successes were achieved. Two (2) women achieved their GED and six (6) successfully completed three of the four parts of their GED exams. We assisted four (4) women (carryover) in jobs with average wage earning of \$10-\$12 per hour.

D. Other Program Services—Financial Literacy and Coaching

All SCSF probationers were provided the opportunity to access Goodwill’s Center for Working Families (CWF) services for support with “Income Support Services, Financial Literacy, and Financial/Credit Building. These services support low-to-moderate income individuals and families in achieving greater financial stability and/or economic prosperity and the means to pursue their life goals.

During this fiscal year (FY21), eighty-five (85) SCSF participants have benefitted from these services. Seventy (70) probationers accessed their credit report for credit counseling and developed a personal budget. Fifty-four (54) individuals began building savings, with an increased net worth. Twenty-eight (28) probationers reduced their non-asset related debt.

IV. Future Plans

After delivering the SCSF program for the past six years, and delivering re-entry programming for nearly 20 years, the Flip the Script team at Goodwill Detroit continues to make great strides:

We have learned a participant's basic needs are adequately addressed, attendance improves moderately, participation drastically improves, and transformation begins. Toward that end, some probationers were provided with a variety of personal hygiene products, including toothbrushes and toothpaste, mouthwash, soap, deodorant and underclothing. Work clothing and other attire were also provided.

- As in prior years, a close relationship between Flip the Script staff and MDOC probation officers is a substantial determinant of a probationer's long-term success. When SCSF participants realize that the two entities are working together to resolve their challenges, participants become more accountable to the court's referral orders. As a result, Flip the Script staff have encouraged all agents who have participants enrolled to take advantage of our site/space to engage probationers, and to designate times after 3:00 p.m. at Flip the Script to conduct their interviews, which improves probationer compliance and attendance.
- The odds of SCSF participants completing the program improve significantly if they remain engaged throughout the program. The first 4 to 5 weeks are most critical for both GED Preparations and Rites of Passage (RoP). More importantly, the odds of a dramatic transformation in the life of the trainee also improves after that same period. It takes approximately 4 - 8 weeks for SCSF participants to develop a real trusting relationship with the staff at Flip the Script and to begin to accept how deep-seated childhood trauma has affected their lives.

The Flip the Script team has continued to implement new service delivery strategies and practices to enhance the SCSF programming for the 2021 fiscal year. Those improvements include:

- New GED and academic testing tools and resources (e.g., GED Online Academy) inclusive of Singapore Math Strategies, and Trauma Informed Teaching;
- Remote Testing was also made available for participants to be able to take their GED Test online at Goodwill's Detroit Career Center Lab. This act has increased the participant's access to GED testing tremendously as the city of Detroit has very few Test Centers open due to covid-19.
- Improved strategic alliances with local businesses and staffing agencies (especially those job sites located on 24-hour bus lines) and other human service agencies in order to ensure competitive placements and job retention;

- Improved outreach to Wayne County 3rd Circuit Court and to Probation Officers has persisted. We have also sought to be added to quarterly meeting with the Judges in order to provide regular updates and program insights;
- Partnerships with Detroit Police and other local mental health professionals, along with childcare providers;
- Usage of a career development scorecard earlier in the Rites of Passage curriculum;
- A new partnership with the ‘Empowerment Plan’ to deliver Financial Literacy training to interested participants;
- Advocacy for the use of probationer’s restricted driver’s licenses to allow employed participants to drive during work hours; and
- Pairing all SCSF participants with a workforce and/or financial coach prior to employment (as opposed to after employment).

Lastly, the SCSF program has been able to leverage other programs and supports that are underway at Goodwill Detroit. In the past, some SCSF participants have been able to enter the Goodwill Detroit’s Welding school upon completion of SCSF. Those participants, upon graduation, have gone on to careers as apprentices, welders, and/or entry-level sheet metal workers that have paid them \$16-\$20 per hour. Goodwill Detroit has relocated and expanding the welding school in order to increase the number of students that will graduate every year. The expansion of the welding school at Goodwill Detroit will allow more SCSF participants to enter the welding school in the future. Goodwill’s GreenWorks, and Donated Goods and Retail divisions have also allowed probationers from the SCSF program to take part in Transitional Work Experience (TWE) opportunities, where they learn about proper time-management, workplace communications, client services, product inventory management, and logistics.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, Flip the Script’s SCSF program is a critical service provider within the alternative sentencing structure and/or region of Wayne County, and is a reliable option in reducing petty criminality for those young participants with felony convictions seeking an oasis of hope and transformation.

Many participants have expressed SCSF is a viable alternative to gang life and criminality. The SCSF project also commands a high level of respect, and engagement with local law enforcement agencies and service providers. Goodwill Detroit's Flip the Script - SCSF project has achieved sustained success, and provides a proven, cost-effective community-based resource for reintegration of offenders and the reduction of recidivism.