


# Building From The Ground Up: Safer Foundation



**Diane Williams  
President and CEO,  
Safer Foundation  
CSOSA Conference  
December, 2010**

[www.saferfoundation.org](http://www.saferfoundation.org)



# Today's Presentation

- ✓ Who we are
- ✓ How we operate
- ✓ Key elements of success
- ✓ Challenges and answers
- ✓ Words of wisdom

# About Safer Foundation

[www.saferfoundation.org](http://www.saferfoundation.org)



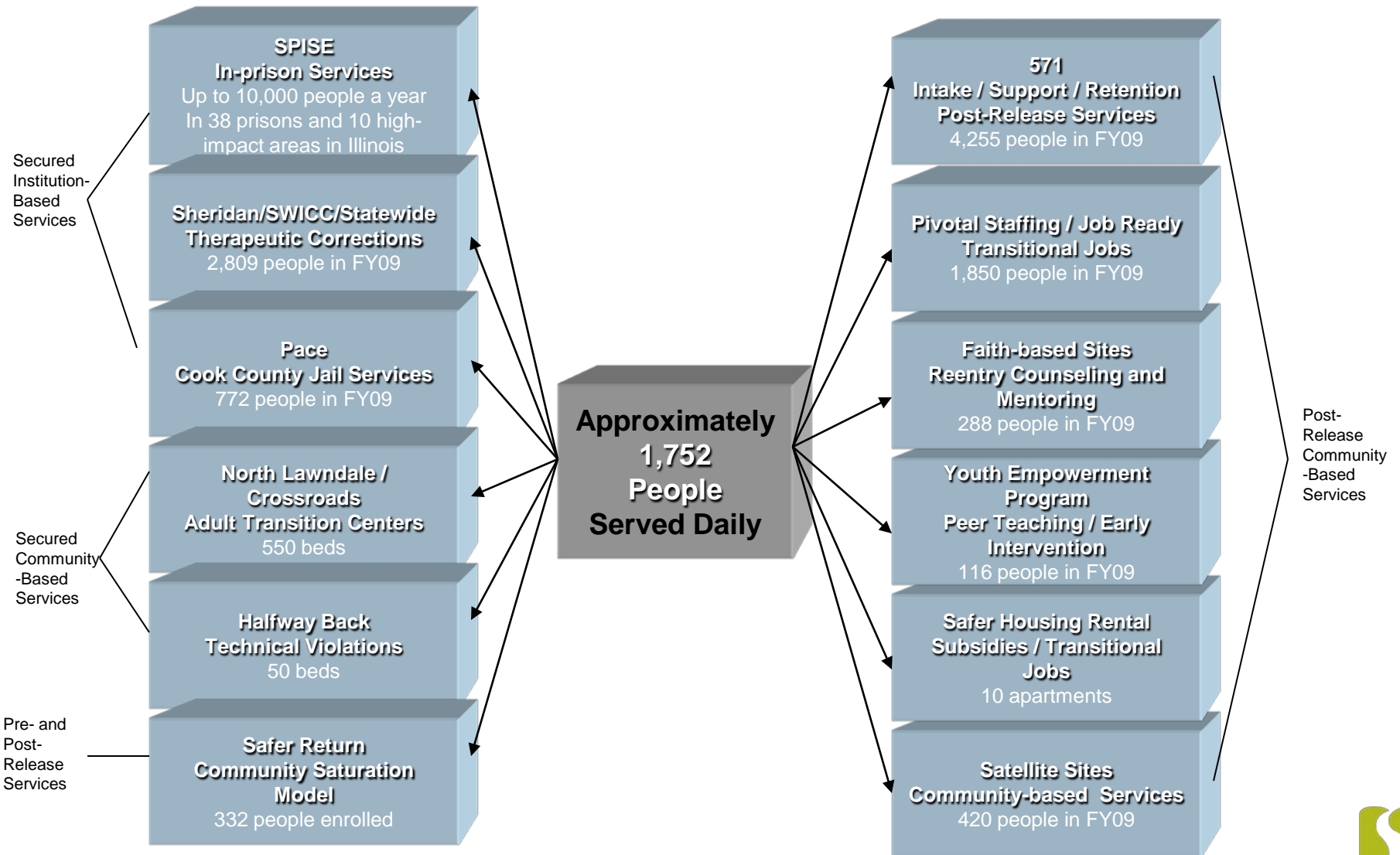
# About Safer

Safer Foundation is a 38-year-old, not-for-profit organization, headquartered in Chicago.

Our mission is to reduce recidivism by supporting, through a full spectrum of services, the efforts of people with criminal records to become employed, law-abiding members of the community.

# Safer has Seen a Dramatic Increase in Clients Seeking our Services

# Safer Programs



# Safer Clients and Customers

Safer Foundation is a client and customer-centered organization. Our job is to anticipate the ever-evolving needs of our clients and customers and then respond accordingly in our service delivery. We aim for long-term relationships, not transient interactions. This is accomplished in three ways:

## 1. Knowing Our Client & Customer Bases -

**People with Criminal Records (Clients)** must be treated with dignity and respect

**Employers, Businesses and Funders (Customers)** must have continued trust and confidence

**Legislators and the General Public (Customers)** must see the greater good of Safer's mission

## 2. Aligning Organizational Capabilities -

As a whole organization we have to be able to expand and adapt to changing times, circumstances and withstand adversity (e.g. budget crisis, organization leadership changes), it is crucial that we constantly monitor labor market trends, the political climate on local, state and federal levels, and all other factors that could impact Safer's ability to deliver services effectively.

## 3. Encouraging and Empowering Our Staff -

"A better you makes a better us" – we aim to encourage staff growth and development and to ensure that we position not only our customers, but our staff for optimal success. We promote ownership and accountability on all levels.

# Safer Foundation: An Integrated Strategy

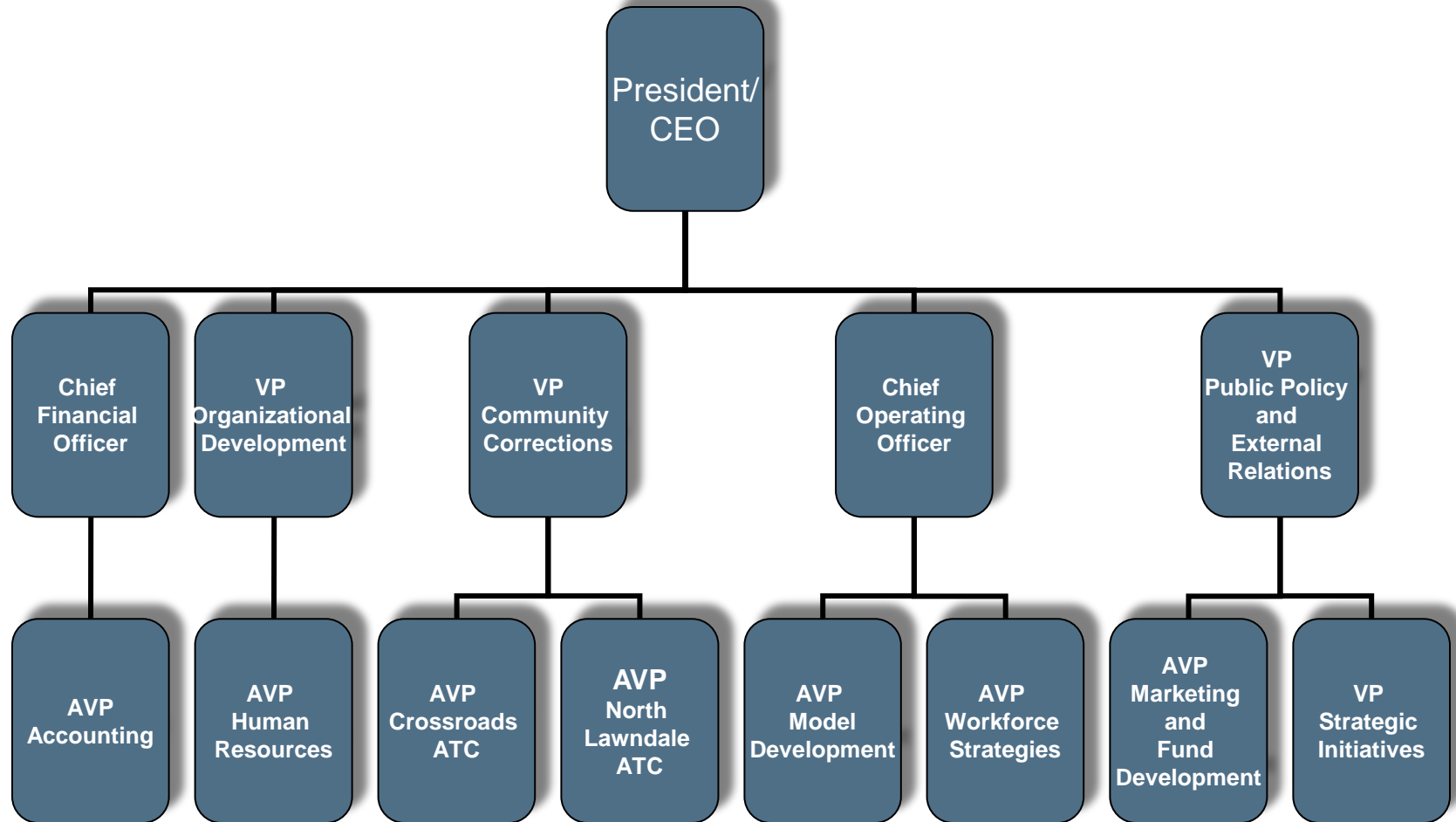


Safer is at the cross-section of four different arenas

Our ability to bring all the stakeholders to the table is a crucial component to being able to address and counteract some of the major reentry and reintegration challenges



# Organization Chart – Leadership Team



Our leadership team has a blended knowledge and experience base, with diverse educational backgrounds in fields such as: business administration; finance; marketing; human resources; sociology; anthropology; education; legal and criminal justice.

We come from corporate America, corrections, probation, other branches of government and other not-for-profits.

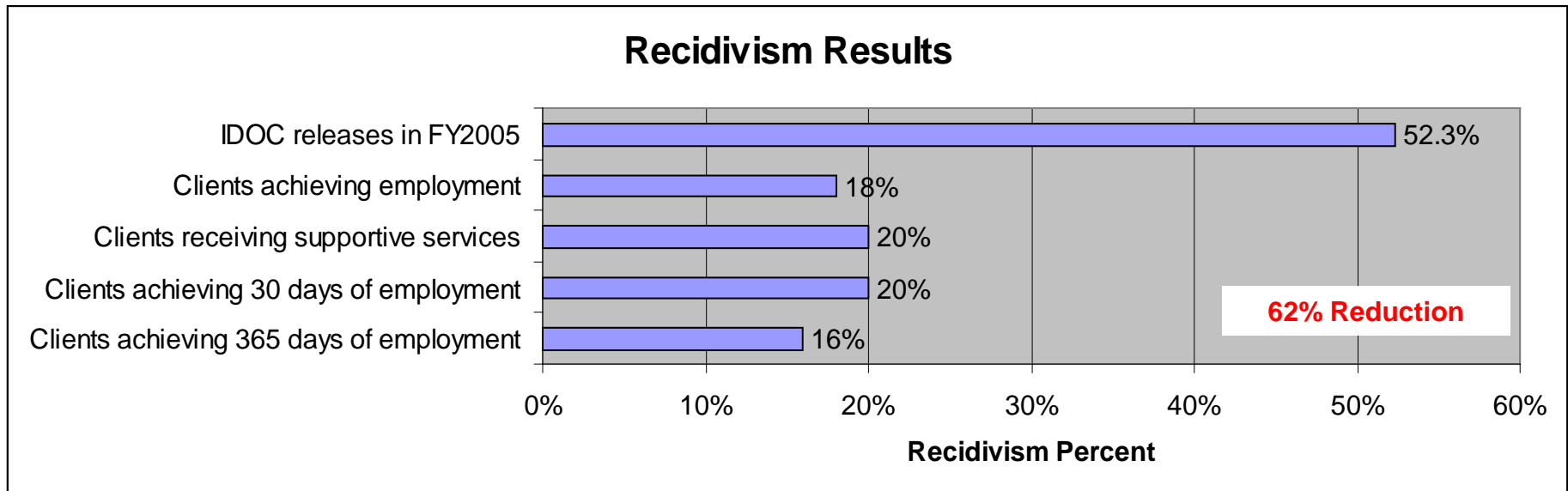
# Safer Balanced Scorecard – How We Measure Organization Success

| <b>Mission</b><br>Benchmark      Target      Actual   | <b>Internal Capacity</b><br>Benchmark      Target      Actual   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of clients served (beyond intake)</li> <li>• # of clients served with new program models</li> <li>• Clients retained employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% at 90 days from placement</li> <li># at 90 days from placement</li> <li>% at 180 days from placement</li> <li># at 180 days from placement</li> <li>% at 360 days from placement</li> <li># at 360 days from placement</li> </ul> </li> <li>• % of eligible clients who obtain GED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of GED's</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % overall employee satisfaction</li> <li>• % overall employee turnover</li> <li>• % of employees achieving five Safer Education Units</li> <li>• \$ investment per client</li> </ul> |
| <b>External Market Factors</b><br>Benchmark      Target      Actual   | <b>Financial</b><br>Benchmark      Target      Actual   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of parolees served through Safer supported sites</li> <li>• # of new employers</li> <li>• % of employers who hire 2 or more clients</li> <li>• # of employers who hire 2 or more clients</li> <li>• Overall Client Satisfaction (%Agree or Strongly Agree)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall revenue level<br/>FY10</li> <li>• Unrestricted revenue \$\$<br/>FY10</li> <li>• \$ available for reinvestment</li> <li>• Operate within Budget</li> </ul>                    |

# 3-Year Recidivism Results

## Services Overall

Recidivism rate for those who were re-incarcerated after services were provided  
Safer services were provided for 8,157 individuals in 2005

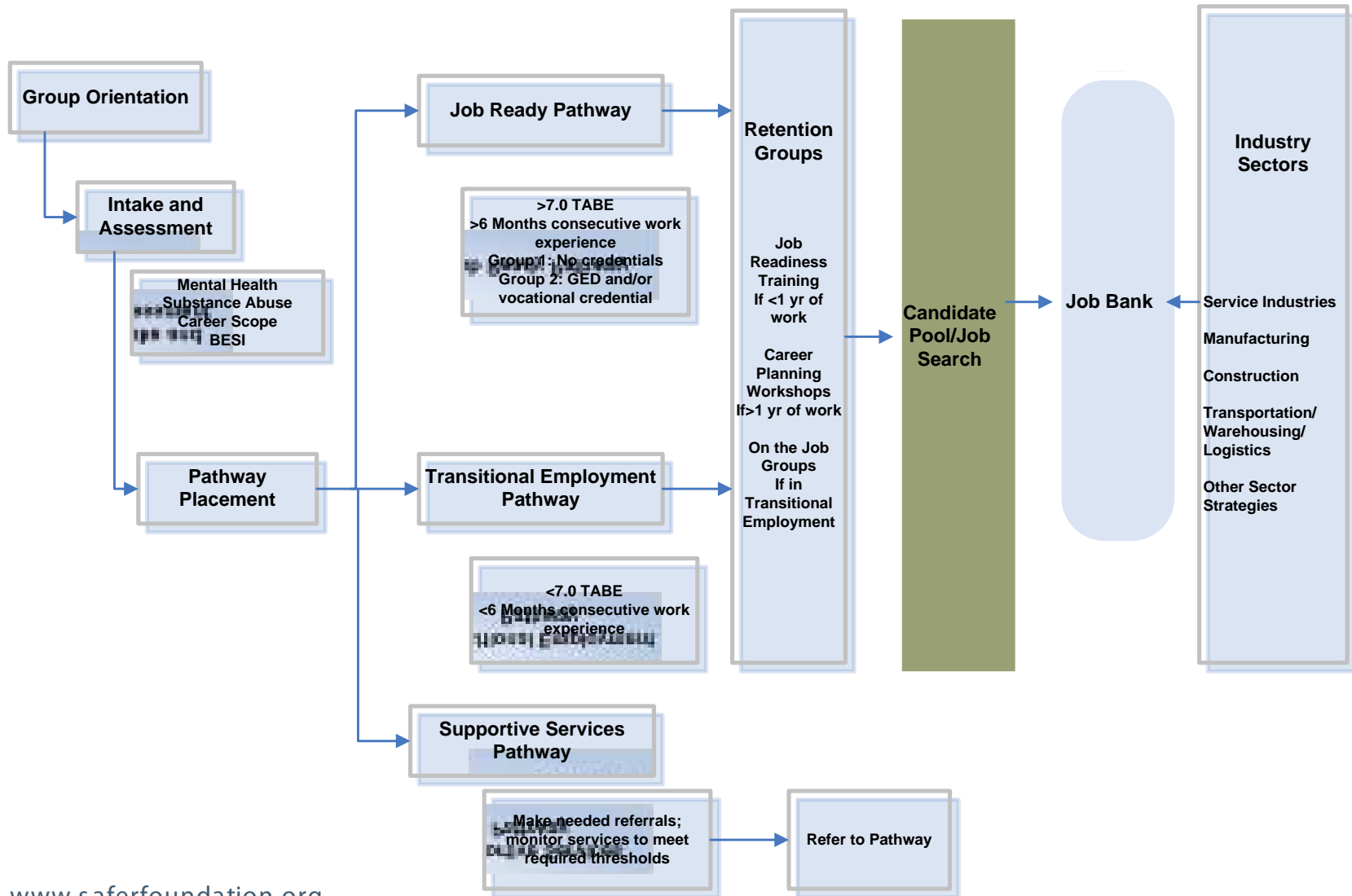


# How Safer Foundation Operates

[www.saferfoundation.org](http://www.saferfoundation.org)



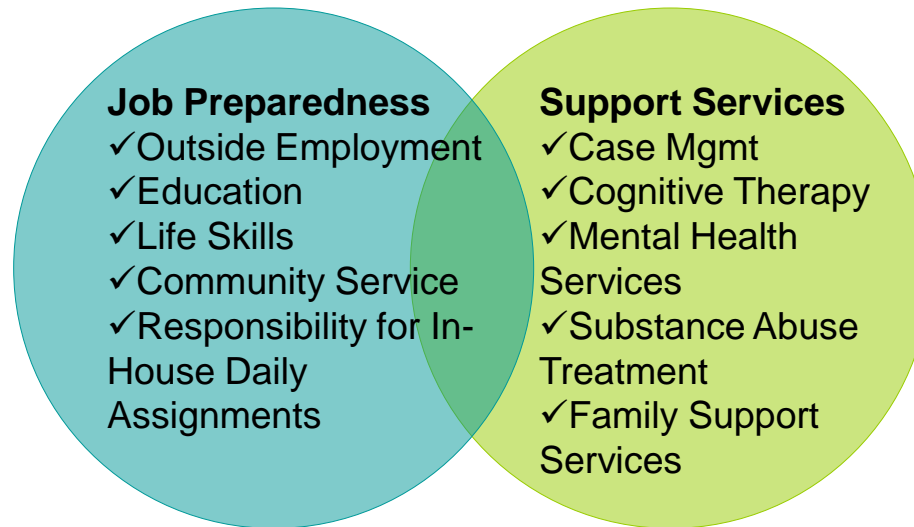
# Safer's Employment/Retention Services Model: Client Process Diagram



# Secured Community-Based Adult Transition Centers (ATCs)

ATCs offer selected Illinois individuals with a criminal record the opportunity to gradually transition back to the community prior to their release from custody.

Crossroads (350 beds)  
North Lawndale (200 beds)  
Halfway Back (50 beds) – Technical Violations



# Safer's Secured Institutional Programs



## **Sheridan/Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center (SWICC)**

- ✓ 2,809 people served in FY 2009
- ✓ Treatment, community integration, job readiness, and job placement
- ✓ Medium-security adult male facility and post-release community support



## **Statewide Partnership to Increase Safety Through Employment (SPISE)**

- ✓ Resourced to serve up to 10,000 people per year
- ✓ Expansion of the Safer Sheridan Model
- ✓ Classroom and computer lab training
- ✓ In 38 of 39 Illinois facilities, and in 10 high-impact regions throughout the State



## **Programmed Activities for Correctional Education (PACE)**

- ✓ 772 people served in FY 2009 in Cook County Jail
- ✓ Focus on improving literacy and academic skills
- ✓ G.E.D obtainment
- ✓ Post-release support
- ✓ Combination of trained teachers and volunteers lead the program

# Safer's Green Job Initiative

**Safer's Green Jobs Mission** - A portion of Safer's job training is focused on emerging green job markets in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste reduction, urban agriculture, and horticulture industries.



## Deconstruction Work Services and Training Program

- Contract with the Dept. of Community Development
- Partners: The Delta Institute and Rebuilding Exchange; The ReUse People of America (TRP)
- Provides 70 clients with training related to the controlled deconstruction of buildings and salvaging of materials



## Neighborhood Cleanup Program

- Contract with the Dept. of Family and Support Services
- Partner: The Dept. of Streets and Sanitation
- 33 clients join work crews and participate in community beautification projects like snow removal and alley upkeep



## Green Jobs Work Experience and Job Training Program

- Contract with the Dept. of Environment
- Partners: Garfield Park Conservatory; Christy Webber Landscaping
- 50 people will be provided with green job training in sustainable landscaping and urban agricultural projects
- Safer has partnered with WRD/Greencorps Chicago to do additional training



# Safer's Public Policy Initiative:

## Council of Advisors to Reduce Recidivism through Employment

**CARRE consists of over 100 state, local, and national members including:**

- Elected officials
  - Cook County Public Defenders Office
  - Cook County Clerk of the Circuit Court
    - Legal Aid Clinics
  - Illinois Department of Corrections
    - National HIRE Network
- Employment and Social Service Organizations
  - Advocacy Groups
  - Universities
- Faith-based Organizations

**Annual Public Policy Conferences:**

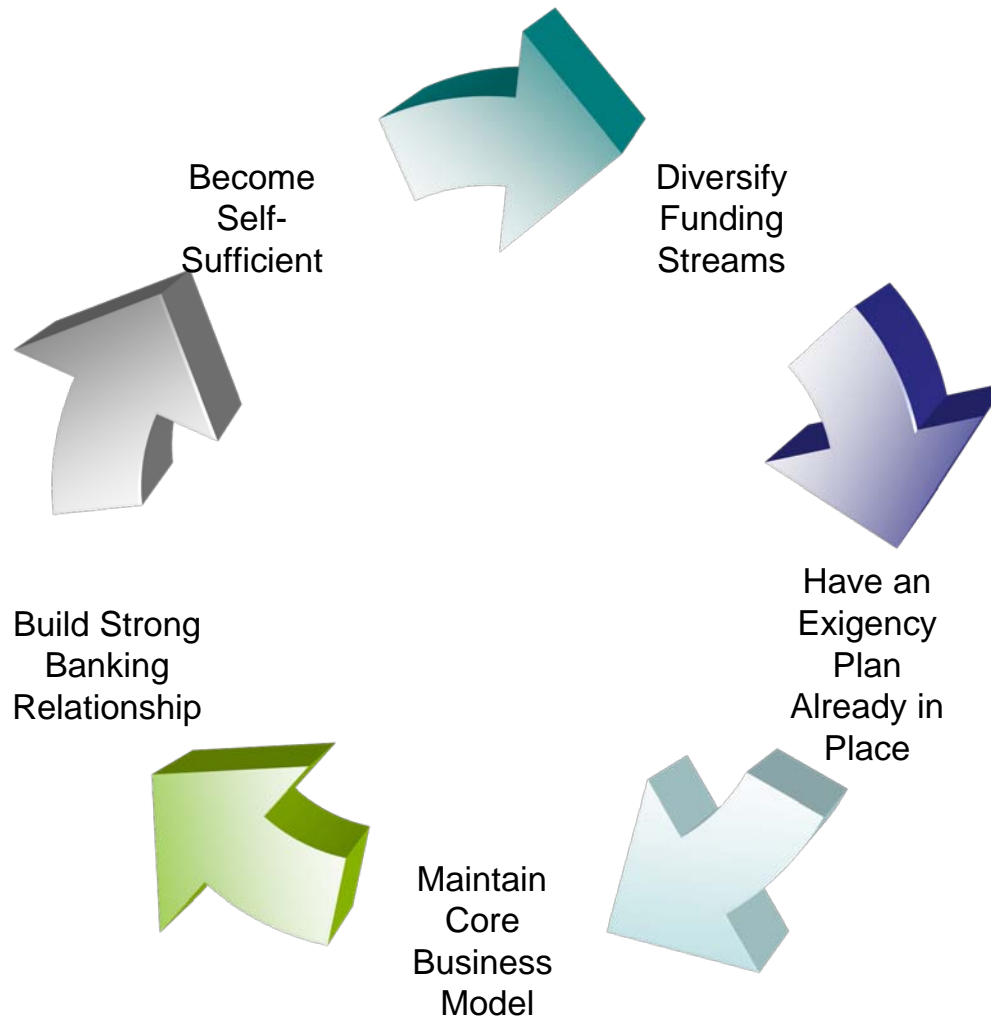
- Vet best practices
- Strategize with public officials
- Make sound recommendations for new public policy initiatives

# Key Elements of Safer's Success

[www.saferfoundation.org](http://www.saferfoundation.org)

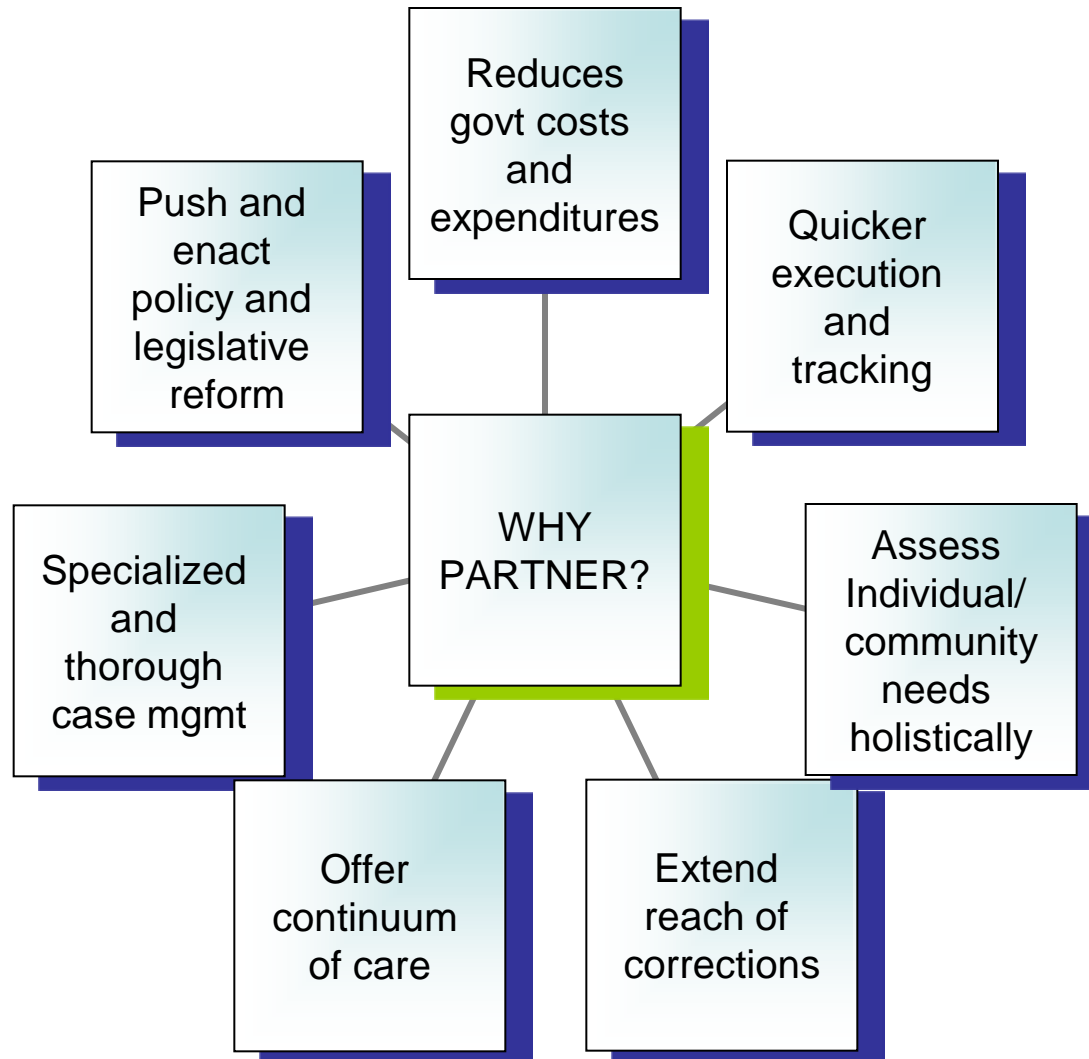


# Financial Flexibility



# Partnerships

A crucial component of Safer's success, partnerships help bridge gaps in organization capacity and expand resources in order to ensure maximum service delivery to our clients and customers.

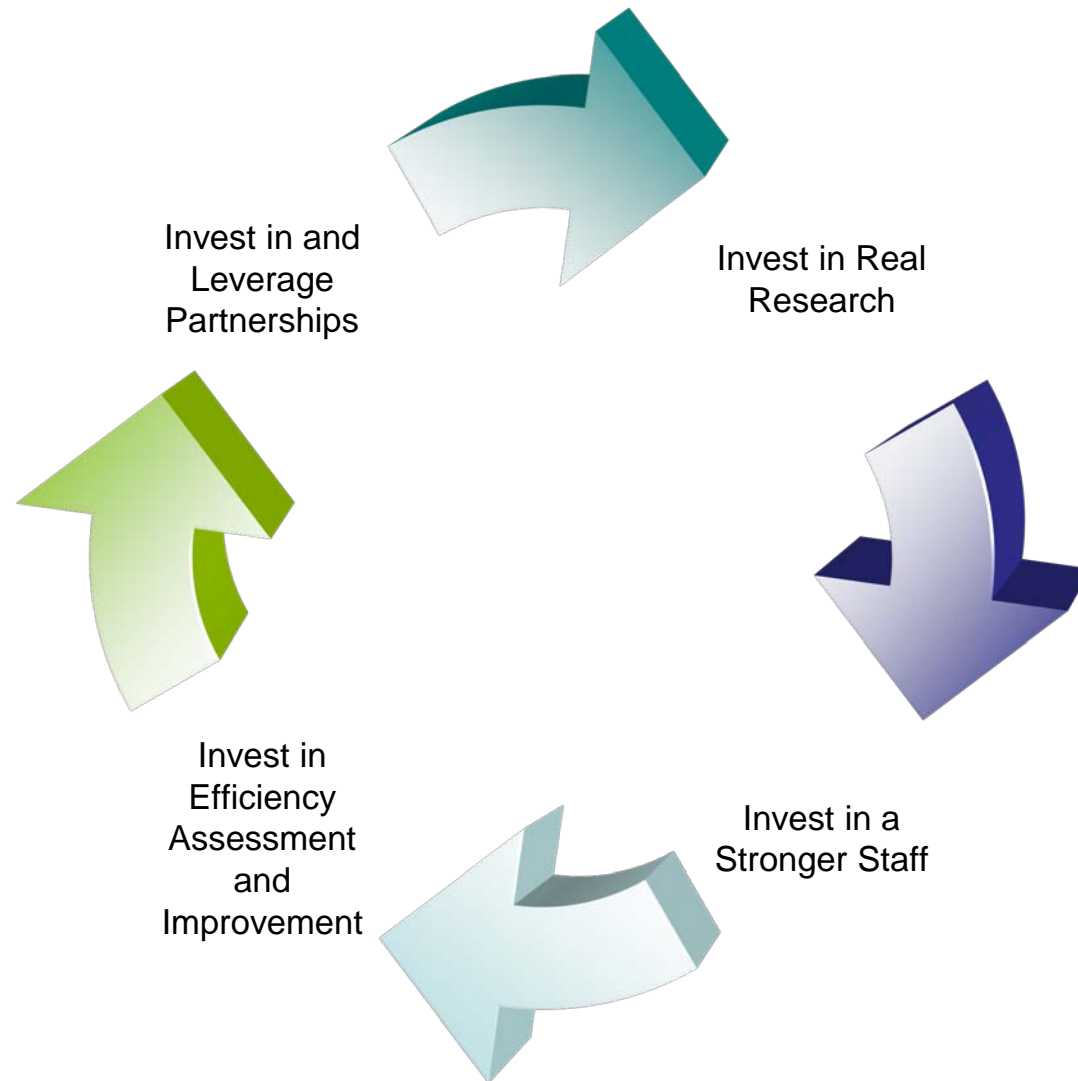


# Relationship Building and Sustainability – Sample Grid

---

When cultivating and maintaining relationships, it is essential to know which department person is going to take the lead, but allow for flexibility – even if it is natural that one department should lead, if a person from another department has a preexisting relationship or inside information, they might be better positioned to navigate that relationship.

# Strategic Investment in Organizational Development



# Data, Data, Data

## **Data tells and sells your story!**

Keeping up to date and thorough numbers will help your organization not only to track strengths and weaknesses and make changes accordingly; it also shows businesses, other organizations, legislators, researchers and funders why what we do is so important.

# Challenges and Answers

[www.saferfoundation.org](http://www.saferfoundation.org)





# Challenge: Budget Crisis

**The best way to deal with budget crisis is to already have a plan in place and have financial flexibility. However, reality dictates that an organization must prepare to make hard but necessary and look to other ways to stay afloat.**

✓ **Know your success factors – if you’ve created your story you can begin to build the case**

- Keep up to date numbers and track the successes of individual clients
- Leverage and strengthen your relationships with your “customers”

✓ **Use cost-reduction strategies**

- Employee reduction, if necessary should be based on performance, not blanket cuts
- Use cost-effective ways to continue to train and develop employees so they continue to grow and can take on multiple hats/roles
- Manage programs with planned vacancy rates
- Look to restructure programs as opposed to shutting them down altogether

✓ **Look to create multi-year contracts**

- Multi-year commitments can help get you through crisis and develop your budget accurately years into the future

✓ **Partnerships!**

- Coalitions develop a strong political presence during local/state/federal fiscal crisis
- They can help you combine resources and find other ways to continue service offerings

# Challenge: Program Threats

- ✓ **Recognize that not all threats are financial**, sometimes programs are threatened because they are undervalued, or because of other agendas (e.g. political)
- ✓ **Look to create jobs and opportunities in-house** (e.g. pivotal staffing agency)
- ✓ **Always keep abreast of market trends and forecasts** so you can recognize signs of trouble and exploit burgeoning opportunities
- ✓ **Data!** Track every program and ensure that they are yielding optimal results and furthering your mission
- ✓ **Partnerships!** Leverage, strengthen/maintain the relationships with your customers, when a program is under attack, galvanize your stakeholders to make the case

# Challenge: Political Upheaval or Change in Rhetoric

- ✓ **Align yourself with non-traditional partners** who may not have the same goals but have either congruent goals or work with an overlapping demographic (e.g. veteran, homeless or ethnic minority interest groups)
- ✓ **Cultivate positive relationships with policy-makers and legislators** to help ensure you are at the table when policy is being drafted- recognize the politicians that are consistent allies and ones that are amenable to certain types of policy
- ✓ **Cultivate positive relationships with the media**, they can quickly disseminate information and help dispel misconceptions
- ✓ **Partnerships!** Building your base and having allies will help to ensure your voice/cause is heard

# Challenge: Recruitment and Development

Safer's recruitment and organization development strategy is taken from Jim Collins' book "Good to Great" –

- ✓ **Level 5 Leadership:** Leaders who are humble, but driven to do what's best for the company.
- ✓ **First Who, Then What:** Get the right people on the bus, then figure out where to go. Finding the right people and trying them out in different positions.
- ✓ **Confront the Brutal Facts:** The Stockdale paradox - Confront the brutal truth of the situation, yet at the same time, never give up hope.
- ✓ **Hedgehog Concept:** Three overlapping circles: What makes you money? At what could you be best in the world? and What lights your fire?
- ✓ **Culture of Discipline:** Rinsing the cottage cheese, trim the fat and leave no room for variance
- ✓ **Technology Accelerators:** Using technology to accelerate growth, within the three circles of the hedgehog concept.
- ✓ **The Flywheel:** The additive effect of many small initiatives; they act on each other like compound interest.

# Parting Words of Wisdom

Remember, today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday

Opportunity only dances with those who are already on the dance floor

Don't develop a wishbone where your backbone should be

Life isn't about how fast you run, or how high you climb, but how well you bounce

Many hands make the work light, as long as there aren't too many cooks in the kitchen

The difference between a mountain and a molehill is your perspective

Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity

Questions ? ? ? ?

[www.saferfoundation.org](http://www.saferfoundation.org)



[www.saferfoundation.org](http://www.saferfoundation.org)

