



ARIZONA WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT, INC.

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AWEE RECEIVES TWO-YEAR \$300,000 GRANT FOR PROGRAM TO TRAIN MENTORS TO SUPPORT, COUNSEL WOMEN BEING RELEASED FROM JAIL IN MARICOPA COUNTY

PHOENIX, Ariz. (Nov. 9, 2010): A two-year \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice will enable Arizona Women's Education and Employment (AWEE) to recruit and train 50 new mentors to provide counsel and support for up to 150 women preparing to be released from incarceration in Maricopa County.

Through the grant from the Justice Department's Second Chance Act funding and under AWEE's Moving Forward Mentoring Program, mentoring will begin before women are released from jail and prison. Support will increase after their release and during their first year of reentry into the community.

"The intent of the grant is to improve the well-being of these women and their families, ensure public safety and prevent recidivism," said AWEE President and CEO Marie Sullivan. "Currently, Arizona leads the nation in incarceration rates for women. Without this level of comprehensive targeted support, their chances of staying out of prison are relatively low."

Mentors will be recruited and trained for one-on-one and group counseling by AWEE staff as well as by partnering organizations Valley del Sol, the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Catholic Charities to address issues including history of abuse and trauma; medical, mental and behavioral health; basic needs; family reunification and parenting; education; and employment barriers.

Program coordination and tracking of offenders will be completed through AWEE's partnerships with the Arizona Department of Corrections and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office in an effort to keep the average recidivism rate under 20 percent. Currently in Arizona, the recidivism rate for men and women ranges between 33 and 51 percent.

"Women coming out of the prison system are already at a disadvantage on many levels, particularly those who have been released and ended up back in the system,"

Sullivan said. “This program will help us change, or at the very least, mitigate the challenges these women face in trying to reenter the community.”

For more information about AWEE services and programs, visit www.awee.org.

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About Arizona Women's Education and Employment (AWEE)

AWEE has been transforming the lives of Arizonans into “faces of success” for nearly 30 years. Since our inception, we have helped create successful beginnings and renewed hope for more than 100,000 women, men and young adults. Gone are the days of simply moving people off welfare. Today, the nonprofit AWEE is Arizona’s preeminent workforce development organization, offering a diverse range of evidence-based training and support services throughout Maricopa and Yavapai counties. For more information, visit www.awee.org or call (602) 223-4333 in Phoenix or (928) 778-3010 in Northern Arizona.

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