

People of Faith United for Justice

March 14, 2013

Madison WI

Fully Fund Treatment Alternatives and Diversions (TAD)

The evidence is in and it is conclusive. Alternatives to incarceration work. Throughout the state, programs like Drug Treatment Courts, Veterans' Courts, Day Reporting Centers have been functioning for years. They have proven themselves to be far less costly than prisons. They are more effective than incarceration at getting to the root of the problem and preventing future crime. They are much more successful at helping low-risk offenders to become successful, healthy, employed, productive members of the Wisconsin community.

Treatment Alternatives and Diversions (TAD) work, but they only reach a small fraction of the people who can and should be enrolled in them. If the state invests \$75 million in this budget in TAD, we can reach everyone who qualifies. A recent study predicts that, within two years, that could mean *3,000 fewer prison admissions per year, and more than 27,000 fewer jail admissions, and financial savings that would be far greater than the investment*. This relatively modest investment in TAD would allow for greater savings in the next budget, which could be used for tax cuts or service restoration.

There is nothing left to wait for, and there is no reason to make only a small improvement. The state needs to commit itself, in the coming budget, to fully funding TAD. The Corrections budget is already far too large a burden on taxpayers, and it would be irresponsible to refuse to take the step that is a proven means to reduce it in the future. **A significant investment in TAD in this budget will pay nearly double in savings for the next budget.**

Governor Walker failed to increase TAD funding in his budget proposal. Despite all the evidence, he left funding at the same level it has been for the past six years. The legislature must now take the responsible step of ensuring full funding for TAD.

Maintain Transitional Jobs at the Current Level

Another success story in Wisconsin has been the Transitional Jobs (TJ) program. Transitional Jobs (TJs) are short term subsidized jobs that help people disconnected from the workplace get back to work. Many participants have significant barriers to employment such as being ex-offenders or long term unemployed. The business community is a strong supporter of TJs because their companies have the opportunity to try out new employees before formally employing them. The state's TJ program has, over the past 2-1/2 years, helped 3,280 people to gain the dignity of work, and more than 1,830 TJ workers have subsequently gone on to successfully secure unsubsidized jobs.

We are grateful for continued funding for transitional jobs in the Governor's budget proposal. But the needs for employment are much greater than the proposed \$11 million allocation over the next biennium. And it is a step backwards to confine the program to Milwaukee alone. We ask for \$33 million to be allocated to transitional jobs over the next biennium for a statewide project. "

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