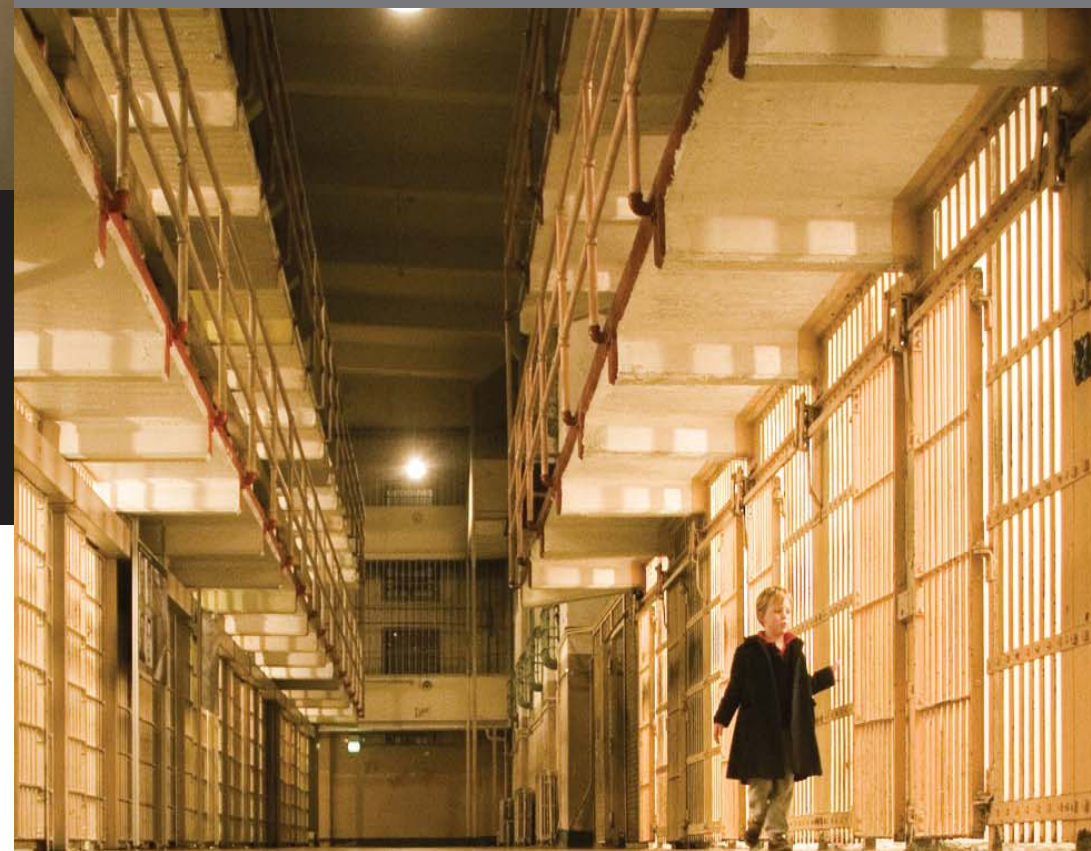




**“From 1980 to 2012, Oklahoma’s population grew by 22 percent while the incarceration rate grew by 590 percent. Today, Oklahoma’s prisons are at 99.25 percent capacity.”**

**- Director Justin Jones, Oklahoma Department of Corrections**

O K L A H O M A



## My Maternal Inspiration

It was during my fifth year of elementary school when I realized my resentment towards my mother. I began to hold a grudge, and truly started to lose my relationship with her. Part of the reason why I disliked her so much wasn't only because of the way she treated me, but because of the way she belittled my hero as well. Nothing was good enough for her, and my father and I paid the price.

Along with maturing, I began to realize what my mom was really all about. Soon I had discovered her involvement with drugs and alcohol. It was shocking, but by associating herself with the negative crowd as she did, her future was inevitable. Drugs had led to her demise.

Shortly after my discovering her true identity, she was around less and less. My mother's first criminal offense of grand larceny took place when I was only about eleven. She won her case and barely avoided jail. Even after her near encounter with incarceration, she didn't slow down. Instead, it was the exact opposite. When I was around the age of twelve, she faced her greatest offense of possession with intent to distribute. With luck, she was given a chance to serve her time on an ankle monitor that came along with certain specifications, such as her participation in AA meet-

ings and weekly drug tests. Even with the rare opportunity she received, she failed miserably. My mother was arrested with a DUI. Her actions caused her to go to prison for two years of both her and my life.

Upon her returning, conversation was minimal. Speaking to my mother was awkward, and mostly resulted in arguments. At this point in my life, I hated her not just because I felt betrayed, but because right when my father and I began to live a happy and less stressful life, here came my mom, once again, bringing misery into our lives.

After living with only my mother these past few years, I began to understand her more and more. Though we still bump heads on a regular basis, we try to make it work. My maternal maker isn't exactly a dazzling role model. She is though an example of a person who's had her fair share of problems, and unfortunately took her life in the wrong direction. At this point in our lives, we're maturing together. If it weren't for this woman, I too may have one day subsisted in the same manner as she; but thanks to her example I am working hard to achieve my utmost potential. Together we have perspired, I have aspired, and with the help of my mother I too will one day inspire. -Jarimar

## Legislative Brief

This report reflects information obtained by the Children of Incarcerated Parents (CIP) Advisory Committee. The Children of Incarcerated Parents Advisory Committee was established by Senate Bill 1991 to recommend measures that promote the safety and well-being of children whose parents are incarcerated, and also to promote the idea that *parental incarceration is not the child's fault*. This committee is working collaboratively with agencies and service providers to better meet the needs and improve the quality of life for children with incarcerated parents.

In SFY2012, House Bill 2300 required the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) and the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) to establish a contract with a nonprofit organization to create a program that provides one-to-one services for children of incarcerated parents.

Specific legislative language affected the determination made by OCCY and OJA to award the contract to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oklahoma (BBBSOK), who had already provided one-to-one mentorship for 612 children of incarcerated parents in 2012 alone. The targeted population will be OJA custody youth and siblings in Oklahoma, Tulsa, Cleveland, and Pottawatomie counties who have been identified as having been affected by an incarcerated family member. BBBSOK is in the process of contacting the families and will begin the matching process to provide one-to-one mentoring for 60 children and youth by June 30, 2013. The findings from this year's mentoring program will be reported in 2014.

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**Every day in Oklahoma there are in excess of 25,000 men and women incarcerated in the Oklahoma prison system; 1,700 men and women are awaiting reception to prison. An additional 24,000 are under probation or parole supervision by the Department of Corrections. Recognizing not everyone has minor children and many have more than one child under age 18, if each of these people represent only one child under 18 that amounts to over 50,000 children at significant increased risk for future incarceration. This estimate does not include those with parents in county jails (capacity exceeds 11,000 across the state) and those not in county jails who are supervised by agencies/organizations other than the Department of Corrections.**



## Protocol Matrix

There are certain standards that must be upheld by law enforcement officers, and this is especially true during an arrest. Most county sheriff's departments have an arrest protocol when children are present at the time of parental arrest. There is no known protocol concerning children who are not present at the time of parental arrest. There are many things that must be considered when an arrest is made whether a child is present or not. Protocols should include input and approval from Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS), law enforcement, and all appropriate social servicing agencies.

**RECOMMENDATION:** A standard arrest protocol response review should be conducted annually or semi-annually by the local law enforcement agency.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Adopt the Elk City Protocol Development Matrix and institute a statewide training strategy which serves to provide technical assistance to local law enforcement and all appropriate social service agencies on how to use the matrix.



## Partnerships & Collaborations

Along with the other collaborations and partnerships with Second Chance Access Pilot (S-CAP), the Western Oklahoma Family Care Center (WOFCC), Oklahoma Drug Endangered Children (ODEC), and OK.GOV, the CIP Advisory Committee has also partnered with Angel Tree Ministries. Project Angel Tree is a prison fellowship program that connects parents in prison with

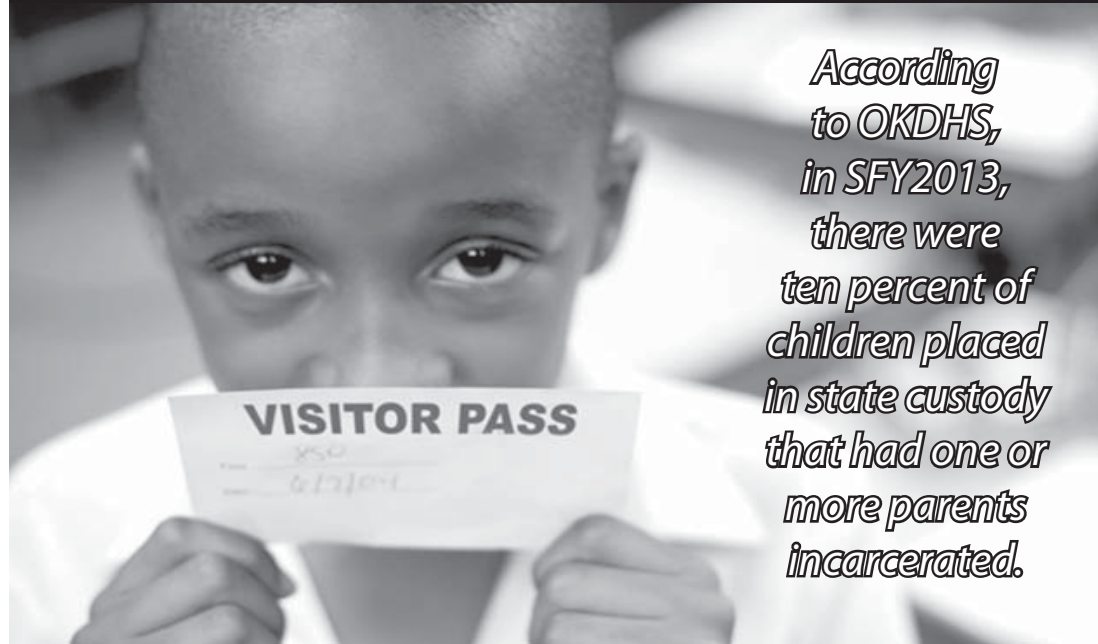
their children. They also collect very thorough and detailed data about the children.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Continue to strengthen and broaden current partnerships with faith-based organizations, community resources, state agencies, and statewide initiatives, such as S-CAP, ODEC, Angel Tree Ministries, OK.GOV, and the WOFCC.

## Findings and Recommendations

*"The adults incarcerated today were the at-risk children and youth of yesterday. Their pathways to incarceration began in childhood. If nothing changes, today's children of incarcerated parents are in danger of becoming the incarcerated adults of tomorrow."*

*- Dr. Laura Pitman,  
Oklahoma Department of Corrections*



*According to OKDHS, in SFY2013, there were ten percent of children placed in state custody that had one or more parents incarcerated.*

## United Resource One (UR-1)

In SFY2013, the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth partnered with OK.GOV to develop a resource center application to improve services to children and their families. United Resource 1 (UR-1) is a web-based application that can manage and display services and clients for the local communities to improve the lives of children and youth. This enterprise level resource and client management solution can help the CIP Advisory Committee explore and address the challenges facing caregivers by col-

lecting the necessary data related to resources needed to help support the children of incarcerated parents. The UR-1 test model will be piloted in a four county area. Beckham, Roger Mills, Custer and Washita counties will be able to test the uses of the UR-1 concerning a broader approach to all potential clients in the community. The project has expanded to the Second Chance Access Pilot(S-CAP) program in Cleveland County, which will be able to test the usefulness of the system in a specific client group in a more

urban environment.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Continue to support the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth as the state agency responsible for developing and administering the UR-1 enterprise level resource and client management solution that assists families in navigating services.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Expand partnerships between local communities for the purpose of encouraging their resources to be part of UR-1.

**There are approximately 20 percent of the children and youth in OJA custody that have one or more parents currently incarcerated.**

**"There are numerous schools in various portions across the state of Oklahoma that have at least 75 percent of their student population that are affected by parental incarceration."**

*- Dr. Susan Sharp, The University of Oklahoma*



## Workforce Development

Children of incarcerated parents are at risk of experiencing trauma, living in poverty, experiencing household instability, moving from one place to another or in foster care, disconnecting with family members, shame, etc. It has been shown that parental incarceration can be as painful as other forms of parental loss. Parents are sometimes handcuffed, with weapons drawn, in front of their children. Sometimes even the children themselves experience a physical struggle with the arresting officer.

Rarely do the county sheriff's offices, jail personnel, or probation officers inquire about the children of incarcerated parents. There are no State requirements, services, or programs that directly support all children of incarcerated parents.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Workforce Development is critical in improving the way law enforcement and social services identify and interact with children of incarcerated parents. Provide technical assistance related to trauma informed care and resource identification in the community.

## Second Chance Access Pilot (S-CAP)

Second Chance Access Pilot (S-CAP) is a navigational service for nonviolent women offenders both pre-release and post release from the Cleveland County jail. There are only three known programs across the country that provide services for female offenders in this manner and S-CAP is the only navigation program of its kind in Oklahoma. In Cleveland County, recidivism rates have dropped from 70% to less than 10% since the implementation of S-CAP. Over 85% of women in the S-CAP program are mothers, and the welfare of their children

is their number one concern. Unfortunately, the majority of S-CAP's clients no longer have custody of their children.

S-CAP is integral in assisting their clients to rebuild their lives by helping to find and obtain basic needs, transportation, and appropriate housing; by building valuable employment skills, and finding and maintaining quality employment. This is done on a one-on-one, case-by-case basis that navigates the client through an increasingly com-

plex justice, and social service system. The ultimate goal is to reestablish the client in a stable and productive lifestyle, as well as reconnecting them with their children and families. S-CAP is dramatically transforming the lives of female offenders and reducing the recidivism rate in Cleveland County.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Implement a "navigator program" using Cleveland County's S-CAP program as a model for all counties across the state of Oklahoma.



**According to Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma, on an average there are over 500 children and youth transported monthly to a female correctional center to visit their incarcerated mothers. Over 300 of these children and youth were referred and received community-based services.**

## Toolkit & Mentorship

It was identified that a guide/toolkit be published and made available for use by law enforcement, social service entities, educators, the juvenile justice system, and the caregivers for children of incarcerated parents.

One-to-one mentorship was also identified as an integral component in the safety and well-being of these children. Working in conjunction with OJA, it was determined that

BBBSOK met the criteria of HB 2300. BBBSOK will administer the one-to-one mentorship program for children of incarcerated parents.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Continue development of a Children of Incarcerated Parents Resource Toolkit.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Continue with the Oklahoma Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Parents Program.