



FACT SHEET

FAITH & CHARACTER BASED PROGRAM

2020

TIMOTHY C. WARD COMMISSIONER

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The Faith & Character Based Program is a holistic program, secular in nature, designed to equip its participants to explore and choose alternatives to criminal thinking and behavior through emphasis on spiritual, moral, and character development, and life skills training. The goal is to meet the needs of the offender population, their families and communities, enhance existing programs, and involve the community in the re-entry efforts.



MISSION

To reduce recidivism through utilization of Faith based and community partnerships that will support the offender's successful transition from custody to community.

VISION

To establish a network of government agencies, community and faith based organizations, businesses and citizens committed to successful offender transition from custody into the community. To create a sustainable transition and reentry process that ensures coordinated services and supervision for offenders released from prison.

Historical Milestones

- Began in 2004 with the support of the administration of President Bush who proposed a four-year \$300 million initiative to reduce recidivism by harnessing resources and experience of Faith based community organizations.
- On June 1, 2004, GDC implemented the Faith and Character based dormitory program at six facilities
- In 2011, GDC commissioned Walker SP as Georgia's first Faith and Character based prison.
- In 2019 there are a total of 18 faith and character based sites.

National Recognized Model

- A National Institute of Corrections study in 2005 found that more than a third of state prison systems (41%) were operating or planning faith based housing units.
- GDC has been one of the leading agencies in advising, promoting and supporting other states in their Faith and Character based programming.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- Consists of eight major components
 - Faith enrichment
 - Character building
 - Career planning and Workforce development
 - Academic education
 - Leisure skills
 - Substance abuse
 - Cognitive Behavioral programming
 - Community Service and Family relationships
- Components are divided in to four phases:

Phase I - Foundational

- Offenders will be assessed to determine criminogenic risk and need in the eight component areas.

Phase II - Discovery

- Offenders will explore their strengths and weaknesses.
- Programming, identified by the Next Generation Assessment, will begin.

Phase III - Transformational

- Offender should begin to exhibit signs of change in many aspects of their lives.
- Participation in all programs from the Discovery phase will continue.

Phase IV - Transition

- Offenders learn to apply lessons learned from program to their community either on the outside or inside the facility.

GRADUATION

- All offenders participate in a formal graduation ceremony.
- Graduates returned to general population within facility and continue community development and discussion of future goals and projects.
- Some offenders from each graduating class volunteer as mentors to assist in a variety of tasks in the following areas:
 - Faith and Character based dorms
 - Chaplaincy
 - Education
 - Character development



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FAITH AND CHARACTER BASED DORMITORY

A specially designated living unit within a facility that provides a pro-social, programmatic environment for change, to those offenders who voluntarily request to participate in the program. Housing unit will foster moral and character development and cultivate pluralistic spiritual enrichment.

Program

- A one-year program.
- Guided by program coordinator (counselor), chaplain, prison staff and volunteers from community.

Results

- In house data has shown a 4% three-year recidivism rate compared to 26% for general population

WALKER STATE PRISON FAITH AND CHARACTER BASED FACILITY

MISSION

- Specifically designed prison that provides a pro-social, programmatic environment for change to those offenders who voluntarily request to participate.
- Fosters moral and character development and cultivates spiritual enrichment.

VISION

- To be a model Faith and Character based prison that demonstrates a holistic program, secular in nature, designed to equip its participants to explore and choose alternatives to criminal thinking and behavior through emphasis on spiritual, moral and character development.

Participants

- A two-year curriculum
- All core programming includes basic Counselor and Group Facilitation of the following components:
 - Motivation for Change
 - Moral Reconciliation Therapy
 - Thinking for a Change
 - Behavior stabilization
 - Effective communication
 - Faith and Character based concept

Application Process

- Applications are made available in areas designated by the facility to include dorm bulletin boards, counseling,

chaplaincy and officer workstations.

- Interested offenders must complete an application with a Counselor and/or Chaplain.
- Applications will be submitted for review of eligibility to the Facility Classification Committee.
- The Classification Committee who will process a request reassignment to Walker Faith and Character Based Prison of approved applicants with Offender Administration via SCRIBE.
- Applicants receive final approval at Walker SP.

Results

- In house data has shown a .4% three-year recidivism rate compared to 26% for general population