

Documentary Narrative for Model Replication

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This Documentary Narrative – alongside the Hope House Case Study, Landscape Mapping Project, and Findings from ANWOL’s National Survey – is a continuation of the second phase of the Replication Model Study. These efforts were made possible through the continued support of many dedicated staff at A New Way of Life (ANWOL). First, we would like to express appreciation for Susan Burton, Founder of ANWOL because this opportunity for expansion is only possible thanks to her vision, commitment, and leadership.

We also extend our appreciation to Co-Directors Tiffany Johnson and Michael Towler, Claire Arcé, and the many staff who all shared their time, reflections, and ideas. We appreciate the leadership and staff’s continued commitment to transforming the reentry process for women, families, and communities. Perhaps most importantly, we remain indebted to the women at ANWOL and commend their strength and courage as they experience reentry and transformation.

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Introduction: The Path Toward Replication

The United States has the highest rates of incarceration of any country in the world, and women are the most rapidly increasing segment of those affected. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice, more than 112,000 women were in state or federal prison during 2014, compared to only 13,000 in 1980.¹ The Prison Policy Initiative reports that the United States is one of the “top incarcerators” at the international level.² When grouping together state and federal prisons, local jails, and youth and immigration detention centers, approximately 219,000 women and girls were incarcerated in 2018 alone.³ But as these numbers have increased, the services available to formerly incarcerated women remain non-existent, with both short- and long-term consequences for their emotional and physical well-being. The incarceration of women creates trauma. Their incarceration takes both a short- and long-term toll on their emotional and physical health, their families, and their communities, particularly low-income, marginalized communities of color.⁴

And these problems do not end after incarceration. Instead, women released back to their families and communities after prison face ongoing challenges surrounding basic survival, mental and physical health, and overall well-being.⁵ Most significantly, research reveals that women face unresolved physical and emotional difficulties that increase the risk of substance abuse, re-arrest and re-incarceration, all contributing to the criminalization of trauma.⁶ Women who have been incarcerated are also more likely to have been involved with government entities such as Children’s Protective Services, which can make them feel they have no control or choice when it comes to their own lives and can create ongoing challenges in reuniting with and rebuilding relationships with their children. Unsuccessful reentry

¹ Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2015). *Prisoners in 2014* (No. NCJ-248955). U.S. Department of Justice.

² Prison Policy Initiative. (2018). *Women’s Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2018*.
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2018women.html>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Leverentz, A. M. (2014). *The ex-prisoner’s dilemma: How women negotiate competing narratives of reentry and desistance*. Rutgers University Press.

⁵ Van Wormer, K. (2010). *Working with female offenders: A gender-sensitive approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

⁶ Saxena, P., Grella, C. E., & Messina, N. P. (2016). Continuing care and trauma in women offenders’ substance use, psychiatric status, and self-efficacy outcomes. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 26(2), 99-121.

and the subsequent reincarceration of women have far reaching effects that include higher costs to community health and family stability.⁷

A New Way of Life (ANWOL) is an innovative, holistic reentry program that in the words of its founder Susan Burton, is “*dedicated to helping women, families and our communities break the cycle and heal from the formidable experiences of incarceration.*” Committed to both individual and systems change, ANWOL's programming includes multiple transitional and independent living homes and offices with staff who provide substance use and mental health services, job development, and independent living skills, as well as a legal clinic and leadership program.

In 2016, ANWOL and the California Endowment funded Leap & Associates to complete a case study evaluation to understand the supports their unique program offers and how they can help pave the way for successful reentry. Extensive data, including on-site observations and in-depth interviews, were collected and analyzed, all in a systematic manner. The themes and lessons learned from the case study were meaningful for women facing reentry in both urban and rural settings. It is worth including these five programmatic themes identified from the case study, as they pop up again and again throughout this report (Table 1 on the following page).

⁷ Braman, D. (2004). *Doing time on the outside: Incarceration and family life in Urban America.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.

Reaching Out	Women spoke movingly of the simple, yet powerful act of writing a letter to ANWOL’s founder Susan Burton, seeking acceptance into the program, and receiving notification of their acceptance. This acceptance was frequently seen as “life-changing.”
Autonomy, Flexibility, and Freedom	While ANWOL programming is structured, the autonomy afforded residents was frequently and repeatedly praised.
Housing	All residents expressed gratitude when discussing the impact of entering a transitional home upon release from prison. Many had no family to turn to, and others made a conscious choice to keep their distance from family in order to maintain their recovery. Every single woman acknowledged the environment at ANWOL as “home”.
Inspirational Leadership and Mentorship	Many women described Susan Burton as a mentor and as family. The feelings, attachment, and admiration expressed were central to women’s sense of hope and their motivation for recovery.
Community-Based Treatment and Events	The majority of women spoke at length about the activities and opportunities available to them at ANWOL and how this shaped their reentry and recovery. The overnight journeys, day-trips, and local events – many of them relating to policy advocacy – served as a powerful, intentional space for reentry, education, and healing for many women.

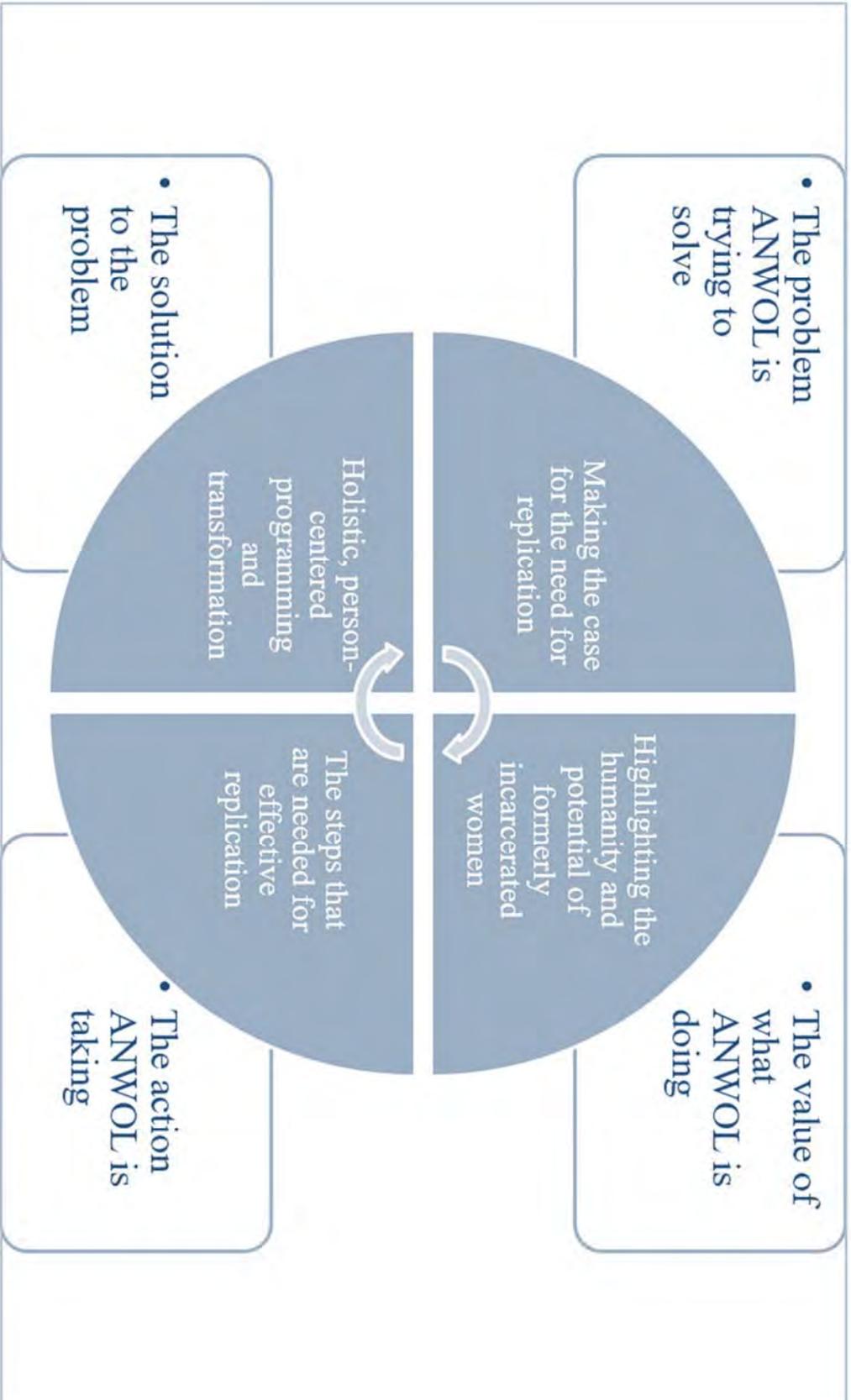
The following year, in 2017, *Becoming Ms. Burton* was released – a critically acclaimed memoir that singlehandedly advanced the national conversation about women and mass incarceration. As the demand for Susan Burton’s expertise and inspiration grew, the conversations she had in prisons and communities nationwide further cemented the need for more and better services for women facing reentry. It rapidly became apparent that ANWOL was a model program that could potentially be replicated nationally to serve formerly incarcerated women across the country. In 2017, ANWOL leadership set out on a bold path to further this goal. In partnership with the UCLA Social Justice Research Partnership led by Jorja Leap, a preliminary replication model study was developed in an effort to provide a “*blueprint*” for visionaries and replicators

to bring the ANWOL model to other communities. This model study aimed to describe ANWOL’s statement of philosophy and define the key guiding concepts – many of which are established best-practices or promising practices – that inform ANWOL’s programming. In addition, the initial model study laid out the “building blocks” of the program that make ANWOL both unique and effective.

In December 2018, ANWOL publicly unveiled its latest strategy in its fight against mass incarceration and its impact on women: The SAFE (Sisterhood Alliance for Freedom and Equality) Housing Network. SAFE aims to support the replication of ANWOL's model in promising communities impacted by the criminal justice system. As part of this effort, ANWOL contracted with Leap & Associates, which is affiliated with UCLA, to develop a national replication strategy. This report is part of that effort; it takes the initial replication model study one step further towards its mission of a national network of SAFE Housing and reentry programs. Researchers conducted nine in-depth interviews with ANWOL leadership and staff, in addition to observing how the organization is run, participating in meetings, and conducting site visits in an effort to document the fundamentals necessary to replicate the ANWOL model in other environments. Integrating the interviewees' input with the research data, this report expands upon the initial replication model study. This document will also serve as the foundation of a “*how to*” guidebook for replicators throughout the US.

Focused on the fundamentals of successful replication, this document adheres to the following order (Figure 1 on the next page). First, it provides a brief history of the development of ANWOL. Second, it details the over-arching problem ANWOL is trying to solve while also making the case for the value of its programming. Third, it reviews what ANWOL is doing and accomplishing, and how its programming offers solutions to the problems it is trying to solve. Finally, it concludes by highlighting the action ANWOL is taking that should be replicated.

Figure 1. Overview of the Documentary Narrative Report



History of ANWOL: From Humble Beginnings to Holistic Treatment

If one has not experienced incarceration firsthand, it is impossible to fully appreciate and understand the pain women endure in their reentry process. Many women are released without support or resources from family, their community, or programming, and are left to cope with the difficult reentry process in complete isolation. While one might assume that reentry marks a time of freedom, in fact, it is full of as much uncertainty, instability and fear as incarceration itself. Developing an effective and supportive reentry program requires a genuine understanding of this experience in order to create an environment that promotes success rather than added trauma. Susan Burton has experienced incarceration and recovery firsthand, and her own experiences have guided the development of an organization whose mission statement is implicit in its name: A New Way of Life. Her personal struggle with recovery – stemming from the grief she experienced after the death of her five-year-old son who was struck by a car driven by an off-duty police officer – led to her nearly two-decade-long cycle in and out of the “*criminal injustice*” system. Unable to find employment or obtain resources because of her record, after her recovery, she found both solace and work through helping other women experiencing the same harrowing reentry process. Because it was conceived by a leader with a deep, personal knowledge of reentry, ANWOL provides a truly comprehensive range of supportive services to women experiencing reentry.

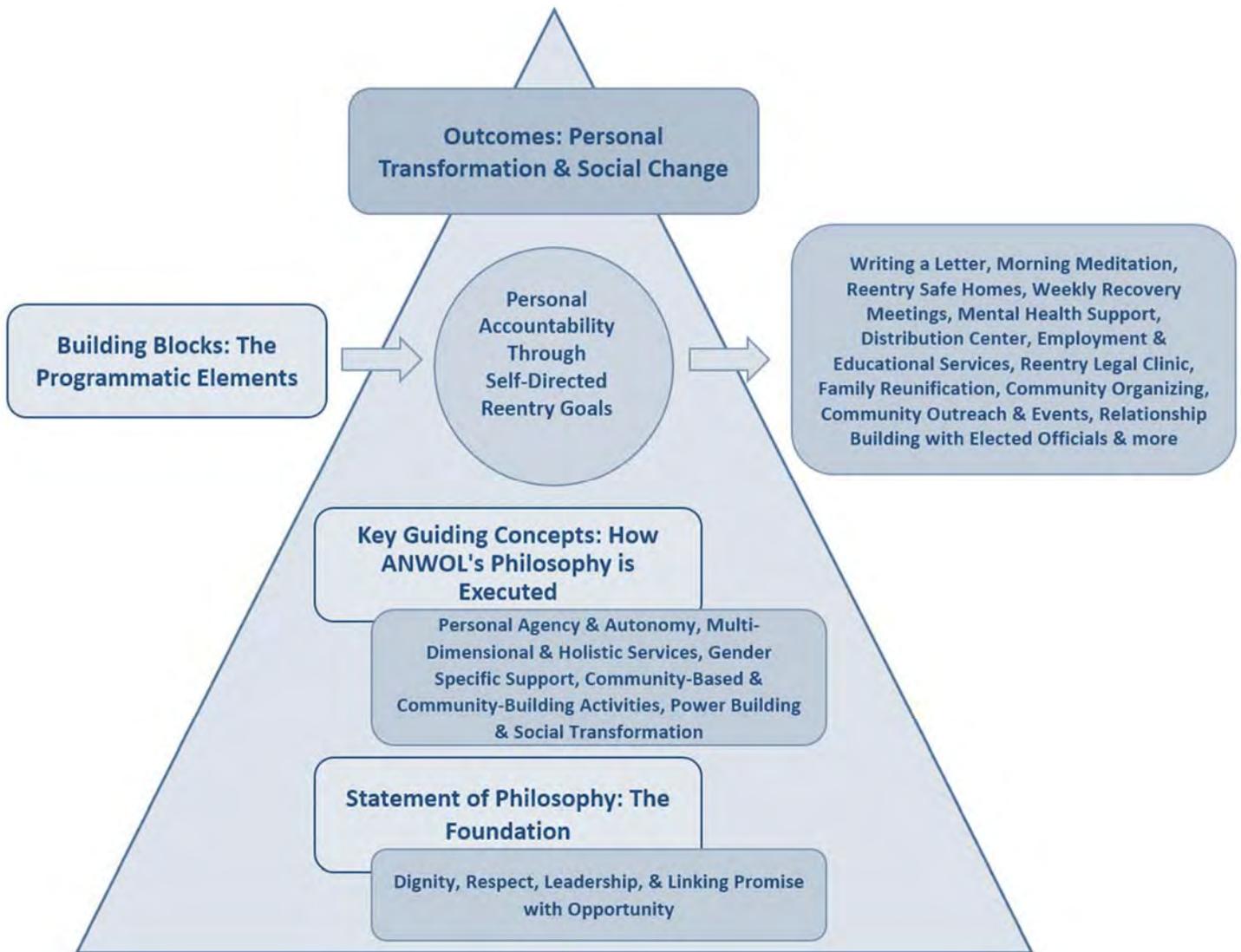
ANWOL has expanded from its origins nearly 20 years ago as a single room in Susan Burton’s house to a far-reaching program. The services it makes freely available include multiple transitional and independent living homes, substance use programming, mental health treatment, job development, and independent living skills and services, a legal reentry clinic, and leadership development labs with specialized curriculum. The expansion of ANWOL was both organic and intentional according to its founder, who notes that the programming was developed “*starting with my own reentry process and understanding what I needed, and then building on what I needed and connecting people to the things that made it possible for me.*” One staff member described the first days of ANWOL and how it developed out of “*community need.*” At first,

women simply needed a safe place to live. But Ms. Burton’s own experience of having to travel to Santa Monica from South Los Angeles for therapy highlighted another immediate obstacle that formerly incarcerated women faced. Other pervasive structural barriers inherent in reentry soon became apparent, with women unable to receive food stamps or other social safety nets to support their reentry. It became clear that in addition to the systems-level change that would be required to assist formerly incarcerated women, there were simply no comprehensive reentry programs that were able to meet their complex needs.

Today, ANWOL has grown dramatically from its roots, having developed programming that meets the diverse needs of women facing reentry. There is a partnership between the UCLA School of Law and ANWOL that led to the creation of a reentry legal clinic that assists with expungement and reclassification of records, as well as early termination of probation, and also provides training workshops to help people understand their legal rights after incarceration. Perhaps the most significant departure from traditional reentry programs is the thoughtful development of their leadership project in 2008, Women Organizing for Justice (WOJO), which trains formerly incarcerated women in advocacy and organizing.

ANWOL provides support to nurture and develop every aspect of the reentry process, while building both family and community. In the words of its founder: “*Strong families make strong communities.*” By understanding the development and evolution of its programming, there are many lessons-learned to guide future program replicators. Figure 2 on the following page details the roadmap that has guided ANWOL’s programming and lists the key components that are in practice today. This figure serves as an important guide to the remainder of the report.

Figure 2. ANWOL's Programming



The Problem that ANWOL is Solving

“What I want everyone to understand is that from where I started, to where the country is now, is light years away. There has been a real evolvement – even the term ‘mass incarceration.’ People weren’t open to helping people. But there’s been a whole shift of resources that just weren’t available in my day. . . Again, we’ve moved light years, and what we want to do is continue to lift up women into the space of mass incarceration.”

– Susan Burton

Formerly incarcerated women can no longer be ignored. The United States has higher rates of incarceration than any country in the world, and women are the most rapidly increasing segment of those currently affected. The incarceration of women creates trauma and disruption at for families and individuals, as well as for the broader community. A recent report from The Prison Policy Initiative estimates that 80% of incarcerated women are mothers with children.⁸ This translates into a staggering two million children who are separated from their mothers as a result of incarceration.⁹ These problems do not end after incarceration. In 2018 alone, approximately 115,000 women across the country were released from federal or state prisons¹⁰, the majority of whom faced reentry in isolation, without the supports necessary to ease their transitions.

A review of the literature documenting women’s experiences of incarceration and reentry into mainstream life reveals that there are certain considerations that must be part of best practices in supportive programming and services. One of the most critical findings focuses on the gendered nature of individual experiences of incarceration and reentry. *In short, women are different.* While both men and women coming out of prison share many characteristics and challenges, they typically have different causes leading to their incarceration, different

⁸ Prison Policy Initiative. (2018). Women’s Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2018. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2018women.html>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

propensities to violence and criminality, and different needs. It is critical that these needs be reflected in reentry programming.

ANWOL is determined to make this a reality. In its pursuit of individual and systemic change, ANWOL confronts three interrelated issues. *First*, there are simply not enough programs or supportive services available to women experiencing reentry. With funding from ANWOL, Leap & Associates recently undertook a landscape analysis which mapped gender responsive reentry programming nationwide. Preliminary findings from this effort indicated that there are fewer than 175 programs exclusively for women, with a capacity to serve only a small fraction of formerly incarcerated women. In Texas, for example, available gender responsive programming serves fewer than 3% of the total number of women released from federal or state prisons in 2016. *Second*, considerably more programming is available to women and men collectively, but this is not specifically responsive to women's needs. While numerous programs have been developed nationwide that aim to address the complex needs of all formerly incarcerated individuals, they have not taken women's specific needs into account. Therefore, women have long been overlooked in these programs or are often forced to utilize programs designed to serve men. *Third*, ANWOL directly confronts the prevailing narrative around incarceration that is all too often characterized by victim blaming. There needs to be a shift in the national conversation around women's incarceration by highlighting injustice and the perpetuation of trauma within the criminal justice system. ANWOL fights to reshape these societal narratives and policies through organizing and advocacy.

While ANWOL is a noteworthy example of a successful reentry program – envisioned and designed *for* women experiencing reentry *by* women who have experienced reentry – it is but one program in a landscape of overwhelming need. Because of this, supporting replication efforts nationally will pave the way for replicators to support thousands of women in their reentry process.

The Value of What ANWOL is Doing

“It’s looking at it from the lens of the humanity of each individual that we serve, the potential of the women that we work with, with the consideration of where they’ve been, what’s been done to them, and what can help them. These are the things that we consider first, and the organization was developed from that lens – the humanity, their potential, and what their experiences have been.”

— Susan Burton

ANWOL is unique for many reasons: its leadership, the holistic, diverse programming, as well as its growth and longevity as an organization. Yet, one of the things that has been most central to its success is the way in which ANWOL regards and respects the women that they serve. Core to the organization is the belief that formerly incarcerated individuals can contribute in meaningful ways. Through the reentry experience and healing process, women at ANWOL become agents of change and engaged citizens who play a central role in reforming the “criminal injustice system” and helping end mass incarceration.

ANWOL’s statement of philosophy is grounded in the values and core beliefs of the agency. The statement of philosophy, which serves as the foundation upon which to build and grow women’s reentry efforts, encompasses the following fundamentals: *leadership, dignity, respect* and *linking promise with opportunity* (Table 2). Among all those interviewed, there was complete consensus – between both leadership and staff – that these four fundamental ideas are central and essential to replication, regardless of geography, location, or community. These values were described as “*universal*” or “*basic human rights*” or “*non-negotiable.*” Every organization that seeks to replicate the ANWOL model *must* embrace and implement these fundamentals.

Table 2. Values Present in ANWOL’s Statement of Philosophy that Guide Replication

Statement of Philosophy: Fundamental Values That Must Be Present in Any Replication	
Leadership	<p>With the inspirational leadership at ANWOL as a guide, the following attributes must be embraced in replication efforts. It is essential that leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are authentic and reflects the women they serve demographically, culturally and, most critically, in terms of their lived experiences as formerly incarcerated women. • Serve as mentors and family to program participants. • Model behaviors and provide daily reinforcement to program participants that personal transformation is achievable.
Dignity	<p>All programs seeking to replicate ANWOL’s model must wholeheartedly embrace the belief that every woman who walks through their door has promise and potential. Replicators must put in place a culture that recognizes, understands, and embraces the reality of the lives of the formerly incarcerated, providing a solace not afforded by a mainstream culture that responds by stigmatizing, marginalizing, and further punishing them.</p>
Respect	<p>While dignity is based on the idea that everyone is valuable and has potential, respect is the outward provision of opportunity to achieve and recognition of women’s ability to transcend past trauma. Without exception, all replicators must ground their programming in the belief that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are respected for their accomplishments, past and present. • There is a new way of living that raises self-respect and conquers low self-esteem. • Mutual respect among participants, staff, and leadership is uncompromising and unconditional.
Linking Promise with Opportunity	<p>In addition to treating the formerly incarcerated with dignity and respect, perhaps most important to the success of ANWOL is their belief that every person is capable of transformation. This is the intentional work of linking promise with opportunity. It is the belief in and the commitment to the ability to transform individually and transform society that is the foundation of ANWOL’s philosophy and their practice. This must be present in any replication effort.</p>

These four key concepts that guide ANWOL’s statement of philosophy are essential and must be present as the foundation for any SAFE Housing replication effort. However, the location and culture of future replication sites will inform other aspects of how their work is implemented. For example, safe houses in more rural settings may emphasize the need for investment in increased program-sponsored transportation if public transit is not established or accessible. Other examples will be discussed throughout the remainder of the report, such as how data collection benchmarks should vary depending on established state reentry norms, and how geography and culture inform the authenticity of a program. While it is impossible to anticipate all of the diverse needs of communities across the country, technical assistance in the form of ANWOL trainings, the ANWOL guidebook and site visits will help guide this process.

ANWOL's Solution to the Problem

Women who are incarcerated and struggle to reclaim their lives after jail or prison have long been overlooked and underserved. And the societal narratives that allow mass incarceration to persist – placing blame on the individual or assuming that it is the woman who must change, rather than the underlying structural inequality that perpetuates injustice. Marrying the lived experiences of women with best practices (as documented in the established academic literature), ANWOL offers a compelling solution to these problems. In addition to being grounded in its statement of philosophy, ANWOL's programmatic content is further guided by six key concepts:

- 1) personal agency and autonomy,
- 2) multi-dimensional and holistic services,
- 3) gender specific support,¹¹
- 4) community-based and community-building activities,
- 5) power building, and
- 6) social transformation.

In-depth interviews with ANWOL leadership and staff revealed which of these key guiding concepts are most important for replicators to start with, and provided insight about how ANWOL embraces these concepts in their programming. In the minds of leadership and staff, these guiding concepts are fundamental and should form the basis of programming for replicators. Moreover, these concepts are easiest to implement for newly established organizations, with the other concepts added organically as the program expands to serve the specific needs of women within their communities. The examples and descriptions in the following sections are based on important lessons learned and will help pave the way for replication.¹²

¹¹ It should be noted that in conversations with ANWOL leadership and staff, the inclusion of gender-responsive programming was understood as fundamental and completely implicit in all discussions of program implementation and replication. Therefore, examples of gender-responsive elements are interwoven throughout and within the remaining concepts.

¹² An additional report – a case study of Hope House, a Bronx-based reentry SAFE House – will supplement this current narrative and offer further insight into lessons-learned related to ANWOL model replication.

Personal Agency and Autonomy

All women who were interviewed talked at length about the importance of their individual agency and autonomy as they moved through their reentry journeys. Over and over again, women emphasized that any replication effort must embrace this autonomy and reinforce it within their programming. Women must direct their own paths to reentry and recovery, but support staff are ready to assist when needed. ANWOL is not the traditional “acted upon” reentry service provider model. Antiquated reentry programs that are oppressive and don't allow women to make everyday decisions and plan toward long-term goals can quickly become another form of incarceration. The inability to use a phone or restrictions on family visitation may seem trivial, but they can undermine a woman’s personal autonomy while weakening the social connections that are vital to successful reentry for so many women. ANWOL is not provider driven but rather is “survivor focused” and emphasizes “person-centered planning.” ANWOL programming is truly self-directed, actively rebels against a “one-size-fits-all” model of reentry, and is “not clinically driven.” This is perhaps best exemplified in ANWOL’s case management, as described by one staff member:

“What I think is most effective and what I think ANWOL does really well is what I call person-centered planning. It starts with, okay, where are you at? And where do you want to go? And then the resources are brought to bear based on what I called self-identified needs. That’s interesting, because I’ve seen women come in who think that they need to do this and this and this. But I’ve also seen Susan push them a little bit and say, ‘Hey, wait a minute.’ For example, a woman came into her [Susan’s] office - I used to share an office with Susan many years ago. A woman came in, and she [Susan] says ‘Welcome, what you want to do?’ And the woman said, ‘I’m going to get my ID. I’m going to get hooked into my benefits. I’m going to get my food stamps.’ And Susan said, ‘Hold on, stop. You are free. You get to dream. What do you want for your life?’ The woman stopped and it was like, she couldn’t even understand... it stopped her. It was beyond the mold of what she thought she needed to be doing. So, it’s beyond traditional case management and what can help them.”

– Claire Arcé

A key part of personal agency and autonomy is the ability for women to maintain individual responsibility for themselves. Practices such as contributing a certain percentage of income – obtained through either General Relief or employment – to housing and food costs or engaging in dedicated chores within the reentry homes are intended to promote both responsibility and community. This is one of the unique aspects of the ANWOL program; taking economic responsibility reinforces the individual sense of agency. The benefit of such activities is clearly articulated in the following account:

“It’s about building on what is being responsible, without being oppressive. Giving people the ability to — making the space for mistakes, because we all make them. But being thoughtful about how those mistakes are addressed. So, if you miss your chore, what does that mean? And how do you show up to correct it, how does the agency show up to correct it, to say, ‘Wow, you forgot to do your chores. The house depends on you to do your chore because you are part of this. And when a link is missing it throws everybody off.’ And then that means you matter, more so than I’m going to browbeat you.”

– Susan Burton

Multi-dimensional and Holistic Services

Literature documenting women’s experiences of incarceration and reentry has revealed that certain factors must be considered as part of best practices in programming and services. During the reentry process, women often have to cope with many stressors at the same time. For example, a woman may be searching for housing and employment, while struggling to remain sober in the face of addiction and repairing and maintaining family relationships. And all this is done while enduring the social stigma of being formerly incarcerated and having a criminal record. Many are also forced to do this while navigating the challenges of family reunification, burdensome requests from the child welfare system, and the often-punitive terms of correctional supervision by public agencies. This is an overwhelming balancing act that lands many women back in prison due to unrealistic pressure and their impulsive response to it.¹³ When faced with

pressure, many women feel helpless and act out, use drugs, and become involved in criminal activities. That is why programs need to adopt models of wraparound supportive services, which allow consideration for clients' individual needs – legal services, mental health treatment in the form of one-on-one therapy or support groups, parenting and life skills, substance misuse, employment assistance, and everything in between.¹⁴

Interviews with staff and leadership echoed these established best practices and emphasized the importance of having a range of services available to meet the needs of women who are at different points on their reentry journey. ANWOL offers an unprecedented array of programmatic components. Reentry safe houses are within walking distance of the ANWOL administrative and program offices, which means that staff who can help with reunification, legal or employment services are close by. Transportation is offered to women traveling to and from appointments, recovery meetings or events. Case managers, mental health staff, and even ANWOL leadership are all regularly available at the safe houses to give women the support they need while in crisis. ANWOL goes far beyond meeting basic needs by encouraging participants to dream and live out their self-directed goals and by providing the toolbox and opportunities to accomplish what is seemingly impossible. One staff member articulated the importance and uniqueness of the truly holistic range of programming offered to women at ANWOL:

¹³ Falkin, G. P., & Strauss, S. M. (2003). Social supporters and drug use enablers: A dilemma for women in recovery. *Addictive behaviors*, 28(1), 141-155.

¹⁴ Saxena, P., Grella, C. E., & Messina, N. P. (2016). Continuing care and trauma in women offenders' substance use, psychiatric status, and self-efficacy outcomes. *Women & criminal justice*, 26(2), 99-121.

I think what's unique about ANWOL is that we do acknowledge that people have needs, whether it's case management needs, housing needs, transportation needs, family reunification needs. And people are all involved in the process of individual change, taking the steps to provide individual relief. But they are also a part of the process of being able to make that happen for the community at large. For example, the ban the box initiative is creating employment opportunities. It's about working with people in a way that addresses their needs but then having them involved in the process of making change and getting people who are directly impacted by problems and giving them a voice in helping shape solutions to the problems. So, I think that's the coolest thing about ANWOL, is that it captures all of the things that different organizations are trying to do, either one or the other. Most of the time either they're an organizing organization, or they are organization that provides technical assistance, or they are direct service providers."

– Marcus McKinney

Social Transformation

One feature that makes ANWOL unique, as described in the quote above, is its emphasis on transformation through both individual and systems-level change. Susan Burton poignantly articulated the importance of social transformation stating: “*People made me feel I needed fixing, but it's the system that need fixing.*” One need only look at the Bureau of Justice Statistics numbers cited earlier to confirm this: there is still alarming disproportionality in prison populations, sentencing, entry into foster care, and poverty, among both women and men of color. Discriminatory policies and practices that directly contribute to this disproportionatlity are still deeply embedded at the local, state, and federal levels. ANWOL’s model is committed to dismantling these structural barriers. The personal agency and autonomy described earlier in this section are key to social transformation.

While social transformation must be foundational to the underlying programmatic content of replicators, it was also evident through interviews that implementing the tools with which to

accomplish this goal will take time. The legal reentry clinic, All of Us or None (the advocacy apparatus), and Women Organizing for Justice and Opportunity (the political apparatus) were all added to the ANWOL model organically as the organization grew. Developing these components required long-term partnerships and considerable financial investment, which many replicators will not have access to during initial stages of replication.¹⁵

Instead, it was suggested that the emphasis on social transformation begins with personal development. For example, one interviewee noted that programming that “*builds on their self-esteem and self-worth and self-leadership is a component that needs to be done.*” This is achieved by attending community events, such as town hall meetings, where women can build self-confidence and self-esteem through exposure to community engagement processes. The same interviewee went on to explain that the “*organizing and the advocacy could blend into this leadership role,*” rather than “*overwhelming*” replicators with fully-fledged advocacy, legal clinics or curriculum. A former ANWOL resident who now works in full-time advocacy described how her perception of her strength and worth changed when she testified in front of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. It is important to note that the structured leadership curriculum and programming that comprise Women Organizing for Justice and Opportunity should not be the initial focus of the women’s personal development. Instead, programming within reentry safe houses should emphasize activities that cultivate self-leadership and encourage both curiosity and engagement in advocacy for systems change. Once this is established, the safe houses can then move to providing more well-developed legal and advocacy services.

Community-Based and Community-Building

Successful reentry programs, especially for women, are centered on community-based interventions.¹⁶ The idea behind community-based approaches is that support services and

¹⁵ Table 3 in the following section details ANWOL’s programmatic building blocks that should be prioritized for early replication according to leadership and staff.

¹⁶ Covington, S. (2001). From Prison to Home: The Effect of Incarceration and Reentry on Children, Families, and Communities.

programs work more effectively when they are close to home, in the client’s own community. This strategy also involves stakeholders and staff who share characteristics with the population being served. This enables women to form meaningful connections with staff and improve the quality of service. For instance, staff members reflect the client population in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, incarceration experience, and recovery status. These similarities can foster mutual understanding, connection and trust that allow service providers to support their clients effectively.¹⁷ When women can identify with the experiences of the leadership, case managers, service providers and advocates, relationships develop. This interconnectedness helps to ensure that mentorship and role model relationships have staying power and inspirational zest that outsider-imposed policies and programs lack. While this is an ideal to strive for, the reality that exists for many communities – particularly rural areas – cannot be ignored: namely, programs cannot afford to provide all services in house and have to partner with other organizations with professional resources that can meet the critical needs of women. Each safe house must adapt and shape their community-based and community-building efforts to the strengths and challenges of their setting.

Many interviewees described the importance of culturally authentic safe houses and acknowledged that what works in South Los Angeles might not also hold true in other regions. Because of this, replication involves a balance between core values and regional culture. This was articulated succinctly by one ANWOL staff member who explained:

¹⁷ Covington, S. (2003). “A Woman’s Journey Home.” *Prisoners once removed: The impact of incarceration and reentry on children, families, and communities*, 67.

“ANWOL was built very grassroots and based on what the community of women were facing and needed. For South LA, it’s culturally authentic. Would it be culturally authentic for New York? No. ... It needs to be built out based on the needs of the community. But for us to go into the community and say we have this, this, this, and this and you get to have it, no. Otherwise were not doing that community a service.”

– Claire Arcé

The Action ANWOL is Taking

ANWOL is a model program that should be replicated nationally, with core values and methods that will ensure that change happens not just in South Los Angeles but around the country. In response to the need that has been demonstrated in both observation and survey data¹⁸, ANWOL is taking action by providing the opportunity and support for replication. In fact, ANWOL has already received requests nationwide, and even internationally, for guidance on how to replicate their successful model. This replication narrative is an important guiding step toward bringing the ANWOL model to other communities. Integrating the previous areas of the report focusing on the statement of philosophy and key guiding concepts, this section gives specific recommendations from leadership and staff regarding the building blocks of ANWOL programming that are essential to early stage replication. These recommendations have been further backed up by evidentiary research, as well as ethnographic observations and interviews conducted by the Leap & Associates research team.

While it has taken ANWOL nearly 20 years of practice in the field of reentry to arrive at this point, the organization continues to evolve. It is therefore unreasonable to expect that organizations replicating the model will be able to immediately integrate all components of the ANWOL comprehensive model into their program operations. Throughout this replication study, there has been consensus among leadership and staff that, while adhering to the core concepts of the ANWOL model, replicators should grow into the model and develop services that are “*authentic*” for their setting. One interviewee provided a clear vision for how replicators might

¹⁸ An additional, complimentary report completed by Leap and Associates will provide findings on a national survey about the reentry needs and experiences of formerly incarcerated women.

start in terms of the programming and services offered:

“It’s like Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. You need to have the basic foundation, with the basic needs are met, and that’s across the board. Women need shelter, they need to be valued, they need to have dignity. They need to focus more on where they’re going, not where they’ve been. They need time to heal. These very basic things. Because if you’re out running around trying to find shelter or running around trying to find food, if you have to get a job within so much time, if your contract only pays your rent for 90 days, then you have no time for introspection, no time to rest, no time to heal. The basics need to be taken care of first, and it needs to be built out based on the needs of the community.”

– Claire Arcé

Another interviewee echoed this sentiment and offered a similar assessment of the critical initial components that must be present in early replication:

“I’ve been doing this for a few years now working directly with the women who are coming home, and the services that we offer are wonderful. However, if you’re just getting started you must, you must, you must, you must, think about having not only that safe environment and clean environment. Having the 12 steps incorporated in your program, whether it’s two to three times a week or four times a week. Whatever that structure looks like. You also have to identify and have a space for the trauma. You have to have therapists there, MSWs, social workers there that can talk to that need. That deep trauma that we all have and the majority of us never ever worked on. You also need a grief component in there because a lot of people lost folks while they were incarcerated, or when they got out they lost folks and they don’t know how to grieve. These are components that I think are a must. And employment. How do we help navigate folks in employment – that’s another must. One of the first things that a person is going to think about is, I need a job. Yeah, I’m going to need to do all these other things, but that most of them aren’t thinking about looking at their trauma or their grief or going to a therapist. Their first thing is, how do I get a job? To have someone there that can help navigate that will be extremely important. How do you help someone to not only safely and healthfully transition from coming to prison into a reentry home, first and foremost is the key. Having all of those things intertwined in such a way that it doesn’t feel overwhelming. But yet it helps the person to begin to have their independence and their life, which will be very rewarding.”

– Tiffany Johnson

Based on interviews with leadership and staff, as well as established best practices, Table 3 provides the essential elements of ANWOL programming that should be implemented by replicators early in the process. These particular components embody the essence of ANWOL but are also least burdensome – in terms of finances, expertise, or dedicated staff – to achieve in the early stages of replication. Moreover – and perhaps worthy of emphasis once again – many of these components are supported by established best practices. First, reentry safe houses must create an environment that counters the victimization and trauma women experienced while incarcerated. This environment must be “based on safety, respect, and dignity,” and staff must make sure the programming is “nurturing, compassionate, and consistent.”¹⁹ Second, gender-responsive programming emphasizes the need for women experiencing reentry to build pro-social, healthy relationships. This is because, in many instances, women’s experiences are defined through their relationships more often than for men.²⁰ Third, the need for services to be “comprehensive, multifaceted, and individualized” is well documented in the literature.²¹ A review of multiple program evaluations identified three components that were most commonly associated with reducing recidivism: substance-use treatment in conjunction with mental health treatment, services to support education, and **coordination related to employment**.²² Fourth and finally, established research emphasizes the importance of empowerment and independence. In particular, programs should work to increase women’s self-reliance and self-efficacy, as well as a “woman’s sense that she has the power to affect the course of her life.”²³ One study focused on supportive housing and demonstrated the importance of residents having the option to choose

¹⁹ Boehm, P. V. V., Harvey, A., Malloy, D., Mestad, R., Bush, E., Richman, R., & Ney, B. (2005). Women offender transition and reentry: Gender responsive approaches to transitioning women offenders from prison to the community.

²⁰ Spjeldnes, S., & Goodkind, S. (2009). Gender differences and offender reentry: A review of the literature. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 48(4), 314-335.

²¹ Ibid.

²² McKean, L., & Ransford, C. (2004). *Current strategies for reducing recidivism*. Chicago, IL: Center for Impact Research.

²³ Boehm, P. V. V., Harvey, A., Malloy, D., Mestad, R., Bush, E., Richman, R., & Ney, B. (2005). Women offender transition and reentry: Gender responsive approaches to transitioning women offenders from prison to the community.

and decline program services and activities, while reinforcing the support for client-involved goal setting.²⁴

While interviewees provided feedback on the essential elements that should be replicated, they were also in agreement that it is possible – and in some instances essential – that many of these elements be tailored to their unique geographic and cultural setting. In an effort to provide both specificity and context to the recommendations made by ANWOL leadership staff that are presented in Table 4, ANWOL’s theory of change – which lists key concepts and programmatic components – is presented first, on the following page in Figure 3.

²⁴ Cossyleon, J. E., & Reichert, J. (2015). Women and reentry: Evaluation of the St. Leonard’s Ministries’ Grace House program.

Figure 3. ANWOL's Theory of Change

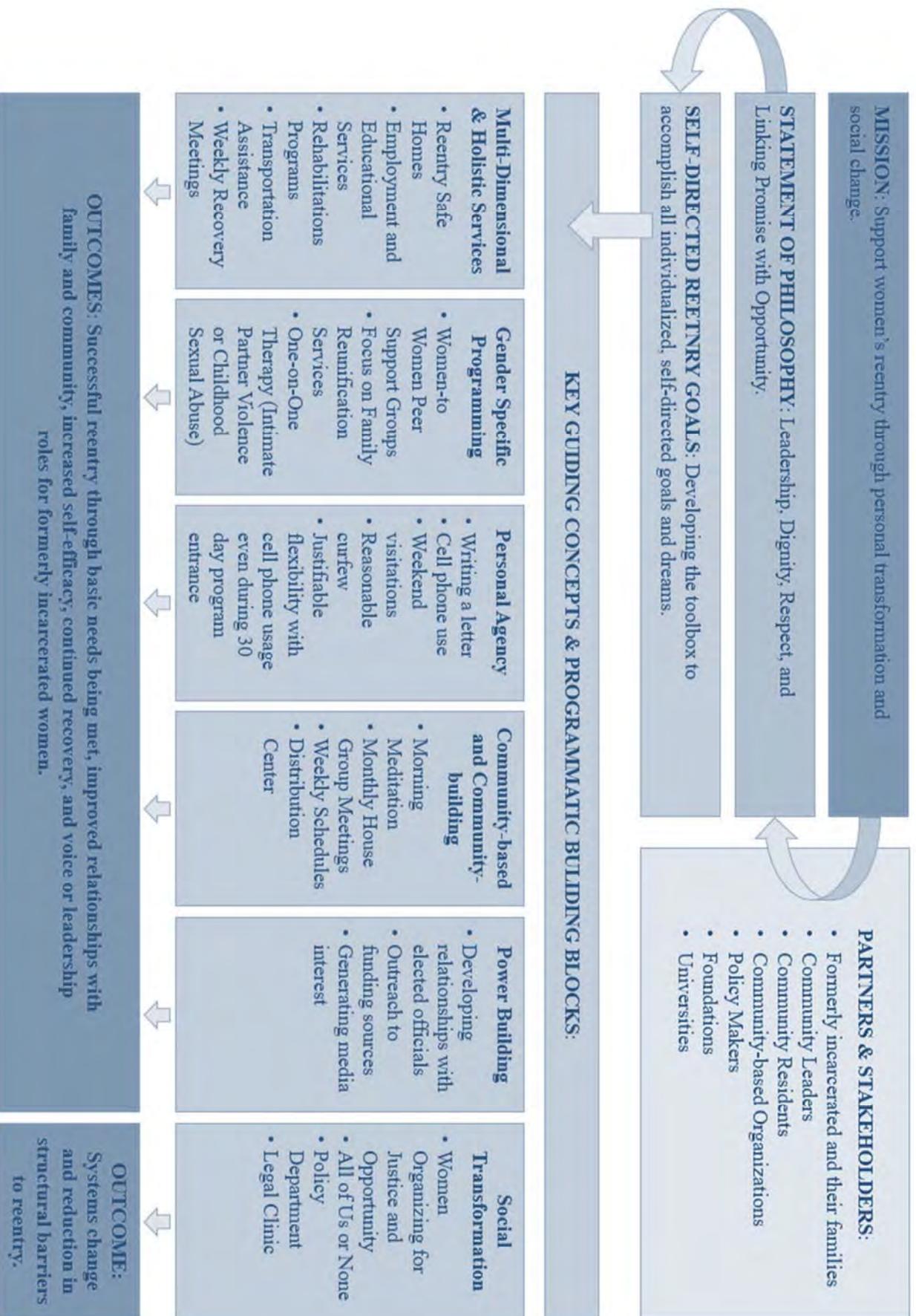


Table 4. ANWOL Programmatic Building Blocks Prioritized for Early Stages of Replication

Best Practices and Programmatic Components That Can be Immediately Adopted by Replicators	
<p>1. The reentry safe houses: It is essential to establish a supportive culture within the homes. In the words of ANWOL’s founder, these safe houses “<i>have to set up an environment for the women to be able to come in and land. They have to be a home.</i>” The houses should provide personal agency and autonomy. The following components can help create and reinforce the appropriate culture:</p>	
	Housing coordinators with first-hand experience. These staff are a fixed presence during daytime and early evening hours. But in the spirit of developing agency and personal autonomy, they leave for the night.
	Establish a practice similar to <i>writing a letter</i> ²⁵ that develops both a connection to or relationship between the organization and participant and also shows a willingness to participate in programming.
	30-day restriction and rest at the beginning of women’s residency – designed to help them “settle in” and recover from the experience of incarceration.
	Morning meditation or daily centering
	Weekly recovery meetings and integrated 12-step programming
	Participants should contribute a percentage of their income for rent and food for the house.
	Ability to freely visit family and have children or family at the residence after the first 30 days
	House group meetings with residents and housing coordinators
	Community events and trips that residents participate in as a group. These can range from policy advocacy trips to recreational and sporting events

²⁵ While still in prison, women are required to write a letter to ANWOL requesting acceptance into the program. The process offers a mechanism to bring about powerful introspection on the part of the women. Writing the letter also provides a safe, intentional space for women to feel comfortable asking for help and places an emphasis on personal agency. It also helps establish an initial connection and relationship between the potential participant and the organization.

2. Case Management: Person-centered and self-directed case management for all women residing within the SAFE Houses. It is not expected that replicators will be immediately equipped to provide in-house staff to meet all these needs. However, replicators must be prepared to partner with community-based programs offering the expertise needed; it is critical to outsource these services if safe houses cannot provide them.

An intake process that establishes an “*admission agreement contract*,” as well as self-identified goals that will be continually revisited

A space for trauma: responsive, gender-specific counseling (to focus on sexual abuse, domestic violence, family trauma), support groups, and on-call therapists ready to address immediate needs

Employment coordinator or staff dedicated to providing job readiness and placement opportunities as required by residents.

Education coordinator or staff knowledgeable in vocational and academic programming to assist residents in navigating systems related to financial aid, grants, enrollment, and other areas necessary to provide a successful foundation for reentry.

A method for establishing medical history and providing access to health insurance (Medicaid) and physical exams

No specified end date for service provision and case management: “*It’s not a straight line – reentry is a continuum.*”

After reviewing the best established practices for early stage replication (Table 4, above), it is important to also consider how programs can better prepare for replication – or, at a minimum, highlight the steps programs can begin to take to lay a foundation. ANWOL leadership and staff noted the resources that need to be in place. Furthermore, they also articulated how developing a strong foundation will set the stage for replicators and newly established safe houses to organically grow while they develop additional programming. The table on the following page (Table 5) provides examples of what leadership and staff within emerging programs can do in order to effectively prepare for model integration and program launch.

Table 5. The Groundwork for Model Replication

How Replicators Can Prepare to Adopt the ANWOL Model	
Administrative	<p>Replicators should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already be established as a 501(c)3. If not, paperwork for this should be in the filing stages so that it is retroactive from date of receipt. • Begin to develop consistent on-boarding and training for staff entering the organization that aligns them with the culture and history of the organization. • Be prepared to maintain monthly staff meetings.
Leadership	<p>Leadership within replicating programs must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Empower and support staff.” • Have lived, first-hand experience as formerly incarcerated women and fully understand the intersectionality of the experiences of women in the program. • Provide mentorship to all staff, residents, and program participants. • Be open to a clear plan for succession planning that involves a path for emerging leadership. Key to succession planning is effective mentoring. For example, ANWOL now functions as a three-pronged organization, with two co-directors who have been intentionally nurtured into their roles.
Power Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replicators “<i>must know their environment and know their landscape.</i>” This means leadership and staff must know “<i>how women are getting released, where the women are, who are the agencies that you work with, and how to contact women on the inside.</i>” This is achieved through developing strong relationships with local systems (social service systems, political voices, community leaders). • Knowing their environment also means becoming well versed in policies that affect the population they serve, as well as becoming knowledgeable about policy development and advocacy. • Networking is critical: “<i>attend resource fairs,</i>” “<i>go to town hall meetings,</i>” “<i>plug into resource fairs</i>” and “<i>meet other people.</i>”

Replicating Administrative Functioning

Effective management (of both staff and resources) is critical to successful programming. There are many important aspects of administration, but most critical to replication are 1) data collection and 2) financial sustainability and fiscal best practices.

Data Collection

While data collection can also refer to bookkeeping, staffing, or human resource and management, the focus here refers specifically to outcome data related to programming and direct service provision, which are gathered mainly through client assessments. While most assessments are intended to support and strengthen outcomes for clients, they often end up pathologizing and incriminating more than helping. It is therefore critical that data collection efforts are strengths-based. While basic needs inventories, along with additional health and addiction assessments, are commonly used to gauge clients' needs, it is also critical that data collection include other ways to understand the personal transformation process. Focusing on personally identified goals – short, intermediate, and long-term – will be critical. At the same time case managers must collect, on an ongoing basis, detailed notes and descriptions of residents' goals and their progress toward achieving them. This is admittedly an onerous process; one staff member at ANWOL noted the tension of managing the intensive documentation that is needed with case management but also keeping staff “*nourished and nimble*” enough to support the women with the limited time available.

Other benchmarks should be collected, as well. Indicators of successful reentry must be established, collected regularly, and continually monitored. ANWOL uses the following 12 benchmarks for successful reentry (Table 6), and these should form the basis of any data collection system.

Table 6. ANWOL’s 12 Benchmarks of Successful Reentry

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Housing stability ✓ Acquiring personal ID ✓ Maintenance of sobriety ✓ Development of self-identified goals ✓ Progress toward achieving self-identified goals ✓ Compliance with conditions of probation or parole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No re-incarceration ✓ Ability to access benefits or assistance ✓ Regular attendance at recovery meetings ✓ Enrollment in school ✓ Access resources to employment ✓ Sought employment
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Data collection for tracking residents’ progress and assessing successful reentry will likely be influenced by the region where replication occurs. For example, one interviewee provided a detailed example of how one of ANWOL’s benchmarks, namely acquiring personal identification, is tailored to its geography and how other sites will have differing focal points:

“For example, in California there is supposed to be a system where people are not released without their IDs because that was California recognizing that it’s a real problem – people are released and don’t have an identification. So, there were efforts to reform that. But guess what, we still have women coming home that still do not have their ID. So, that’s actually a very simple benchmark. Say you’re in another city, maybe in Oklahoma, or someplace where they routinely get their IDs. That wouldn’t be an appropriate benchmark.”

– Claire Arcé

Table 7 below provides additional best practices that could potentially serve as culturally relevant benchmarks that would be appropriate for collection.

Table 7. Additional Considerations for Data Collection: Other Benchmarks for Successful Reentry

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase in social connections, social bonding, or quality attachments ✓ Qualitative engagement with programming ✓ The extent to which participants are future oriented (from reactive to proactive thinking) ✓ Community engagement ✓ Removal of gang affiliation (tattoo removal, ties with those who are still affiliated) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mental health compliance (regular attendance in therapy and medication utilization) ✓ Reintegration into family ✓ Physical health and reduced health risks (check-ups, reproductive health checks, etc.) ✓ Identity building – new identity derived from newfound education, reunification with children or family, employment, sobriety, etc.)
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Furthermore, ANWOL’s data collection is grounded in understanding and patience, coupled with accountability. Residents and participants are not labeled with clear-cut “*pass or fail*” scores in regard to meeting program requirements. Instead, leadership and staff understand and respect women who are “*not yet ready*” to embrace resources offered. Progress is a continuum: some residents have left but subsequently returned, while others stay only a few months and others have been in residence up to six years. A unique aspect of ANWOL programming is its complete lack of time limits for program engagement or residency.

Data collection that occurs as part of case management, as noted above, leads into an aggregation of the data in a way that supports oversight and sustainability. ANWOL has a staff member dedicated to this systematized collection and aggregation of data. Their responsibilities include compiling data from case managers, housing coordinators, therapists, legal staff, and

employment/education coordinators. It is critical that data are collected and managed in a way that will be most conducive to both internal monitoring in the short term and outside program evaluation in the long term. In terms of internal monitoring, both leadership and program staff should be able to regularly review monthly data in an effort to ensure that residents are meeting goals or taking meaningful steps toward doing so.²⁶ Developing this preliminary data collection infrastructure will position an organization to be able to engage in outside program evaluation in the long term. External program evaluation is not something to be considered until the safe house program is clearly developed.

Fiscal Best Practices and Financial Sustainability

Outside of client-centered data collection, perhaps the most important administrative function of a successful organization is financial sustainability and the fiscal practices that support it. Financial sustainability is crucial to the long-term viability of any program. All of the individuals interviewed agreed that sustainability takes shape in the form of: 1) fundraising and diversity of available resources, 2) establishing solid relationships with community partners to provide in-kind services and valuable linkages to other community-based providers, and 3) strong fiscal management. Each of these three aspects is described in detail below.

First, organizations must be able to sustain themselves financially, which is no small task. Their financial security and capitalization can be found in the form of public funding from government agencies, private funding from foundations, and the contributions of individual donors. Each of these potential funding streams has unique benefits and challenges. For example, individual donations often come with considerable flexibility in terms of how and where the funds can be used. Public contracts, on the other hand, will often have significant requirements, in terms of additional activities (such as compliance checks) and extensive monthly, quarterly, and annual reporting commitments. ANWOL has been successful in its ability to systematically reach out to private foundations, individual donors, and publicly available grants, and can serve as a model to other communities implementing similar programs.

²⁶ Individual intake forms as well as tracking forms for monthly data collection are currently in development and will be included in the ANWOL Replication Guidebook.

It is also important to note that ANWOL has not hesitated to reject any type of contract or donation that includes unreasonable demands or requires compliance that is counter to the mission and values of ANWOL SAFE Houses.

Second, establishing community relationships is critical to success in the fundraising opportunities, in-kind services and linkages just described. Many interviewees commented on the ability of ANWOL’s leadership to effectively “*network and build relationships*” with donors and other local organizations working in the area of women’s reentry. But unfortunately, there are no shortcuts in relationship building – they are developed and earned through time, effort, and respect. However, it is worth noting that their association with ANWOL and its established reputation will give replicators “*an edge*” in terms of fundraising. While there is no recipe or formula for effective relationship-building, ANWOL leadership and staff offered the following insights:

- ✓ All funders need to be appreciated and acknowledged whether they donate \$5 or \$50,000.
- ✓ Invest in a donor management system.
- ✓ Be proactive, responsive, and receptive with funders even when your organization is not awarded a contract. Ask the funder how your application can be improved. Make changes and reapply.
- ✓ Grant writing is “*not rocket science*” but is one of the most critical facets of an organization in terms of achieving growth and sustainability. Successful grant writing involves “*following instructions and writing well,*” “*building relationships,*” “*being accountable to funders,*” and “*demonstrating that you are a good investment.*”
- ✓ Organizations will not be able to pursue significant sources of funding until they are properly established and can demonstrate success. Programs should be open to program evaluation – starting with a firm grounding in data collection – as a means of facilitating this process.
- ✓ Replicators should balance in-kind support and individual or foundation donations along with contract grants in order to maximize the utility of funding.

- ✓ Stay true to your mission and, however enticing, do not accept funding that compromises core values (for example, placing compliance above the quality treatment of participants).

In addition to financial sustainability, organizations must implement and work towards achieving strong fiscal management. ANWOL has been evolving in this respect for two decades. The organization started with a basic Excel spreadsheet to document payroll, expenses, and revenue. As the program has developed, its “financial management literacy” has kept pace with program growth. Today ANWOL has become well-versed in a range of software and programs available to nonprofits and can offer guidance to replicators so they won't have to reinvent the wheel. For example, the co-director of ANWOL offered the following lesson-learned:

“We use QuickBooks. We use a desktop version of QuickBooks, not an online because online it can be \$25 or \$30 a month... forever! When you’re a 501(c)3, you can register with an organization called Tech Soup. Tech Soup gets donations from Microsoft, Intuit, Dell, IBM, Cisco, and all of these companies donate products to Tech Soup that are then distributed to the nonprofit community who are registered through them through an admin fee. So, for an admin fee of \$15 you can get QuickBooks. And that desktop version will be good for three years. And really, it’s good for longer than that; they convince you to upgrade every three years, but you don’t have to. You can still produce all of the financial statements that you want. We ran with a really old version for a long time until we registered for tech Soup.”

– Michael Towler

The co-director of ANWOL went on to provide additional best practices and lessons-learned. These are key aspects of financial expertise that are all too often overlooked. But that is no excuse. Individuals who are engaged in replicating the ANWOL SAFE House model must be knowledgeable about developing the following sound fiscal practices²⁷:

²⁷ Central to both financial sustainability and fiscal best practices is an organization’s status as a 501(c)3. The ANWOL Replication Guidebook will include forms for organizations that can be filed with the IRS to achieve exemption status as a nonprofit.

- ✓ Finances must be transparent, accessible, and current.
- ✓ Establish sound payroll systems.
- ✓ In California, 501(c)3 organizations can register with Public Counsel and obtain access to pro bono attorneys who can assist with auditing of financial statements.
- ✓ There are multiple forms of insurance to consider, including insuring the reentry safe home along with directors and officers' insurance for board members.
- ✓ Develop, utilize, and maintain a comprehensive chart of accounts
- ✓ Have a clear understanding of functional (program and administrative costs) and fundraising expenses. Keep an organization's administrative fundraising percentage figure under 15%.

In addition to lessons-learned that have been noted by ANWOL leadership, there is established best-practices literature on the fiscal management of nonprofits, particularly in the areas of budgeting and fundraising.²⁸

Nonprofits are presented with unique challenges, when compared with corporate or for-profit enterprises. Financially, they often have to do more with less, and they are directly accountable to their mission and the clients they serve. It is important for replication efforts to be well prepared for these challenges. Additional considerations for financial sustainability and fiscal best-practices include:

²⁸ A collection of useful handouts and tip-sheets will be made available in the ANWOL Guidebook within "The Challenge of Bookkeeping" section.

- ✓ Maintaining a cashflow, which can be achieved by developing an annual budget or budget planning process, consistent tracking of budget compared with actual spending, and having a reserve fund.
- ✓ Developing policies related to employee reimbursements and timesheet completion.
- ✓ Ensuring that the organization understands actual program costs and reflects these costs accurately in program grant budgets.
- ✓ There should be an explicit gift acceptance policy that details the types of gifts an organization can and will accept and a clause detailing when legal counsel is needed when accepting a gift.
- ✓ Organizations should “integrate fundraising into the organizational culture so that all staff are able to serve as ambassadors of programs.”²⁹

While often seen as secondary to the success of an organization, it is clear that administrative functioning is as significant as service delivery. It is critical to note that the two most important pieces of the administrative puzzle – data collection and financial sustainability – often work in concert with one another. Because data collection can help an organization demonstrate accountability and measure the effectiveness of programs, it is the foundation of an organization’s success and financial sustainability. After administrative functioning, there is one final aspect to consider that can contribute to an organization’s success and sustainability: the appointment of an advisory board or board of directors.

Establishing a Board of Directors or Advisory Board

The board of directors is generally understood to be the ultimate managing and oversight body for the organization. Its members usually serve on a volunteer basis, and are different from the chief executive officer (CEO) or executive director (ED) of the nonprofit organization, who is

²⁹ Community Partners. “Top 7 Best Practice Areas for Nonprofit Financial Health.” Retrieved on December 1, 2018 from: <https://communitypartners.org/community-partners-resources/top-7-best-practice-areas-nonprofit-financial-health>

typically responsible for the day-to-day organizational operations. According to the National Council of Nonprofits, the legally required roles of a board of directors are:³⁰

- ✓ **Duty of Care:** Ensure prudent and sustainable use of all assets including facility, people, and good will. Provide oversight for all activities that advance the nonprofits' effectiveness and sustainability.
- ✓ **Duty of Loyalty:** Make decisions in the best interest of the nonprofit organization, rather than in a member's self-interest. Disclosure of conflicts of interest.
- ✓ **Duty of Obedience:** Ensure that the organization obeys all applicable local, state, and federal laws; is in accordance with ethical practices; adheres to its stated purposes; and participates in activities that advance its mission.

It is often a requirement of nonprofit corporations to have a board of directors. Distinct from a board of directors is an advisory board, which serves an important role for both established and emerging nonprofit organizations. Members of an advisory board are hand-selected to provide expertise and counsel on a range of issues that directly impact the mission, direction, and operations of an organization. An advisory board does not hold the same legal obligations or fiscal responsibilities as the board of directors, so organizations have greater latitude in choosing advisory board members.

ANWOL has both an advisory board and board of directors. ANWOL's board of directors is remarkable and truly a best practice to work toward for any replication effort. It includes a diverse group of politically connected and policy-savvy professionals, including the director of communications for the District 3 Los Angeles County Supervisor and established public relations professionals. It also consists of academics and individuals who have long been involved with philanthropy and family foundations. ANWOL's advisory board includes writers and columnists, activists, filmmakers, and formerly incarcerated advocates. Having an advisory board in addition to a board of directors lets ANWOL access individuals with varied skills or knowledge, many of whom also provide increased publicity and outreach.

³⁰ "Board Roles and Responsibilities." Retrieved on December 1, 2018 from: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/board-roles-and-responsibilities>

Additionally, individuals frequently would like to support the organization, but simply do not have the time to devote to a position as a board member, which carries stricter legal requirements and more onerous obligations. Advisory board membership addresses this interest.

Interviewees were asked what an ideal advisory board or board of directors would look like and how it would function. The following comments were highlighted multiple times by numerous staff:

- ✓ It is critical to have systems-involved members on any board. This is not negotiable.
- ✓ More specifically, it is important to have systems-involved members who are *recently* released and can give voice to current issues or those that are newly emerging.
- ✓ Boards should never remain stagnant and should be ever evolving.
- ✓ The board should be “*structured enough but also nimble enough to be able to shift with issues that are important and current.*”
- ✓ Members need to have expertise with multiple systems connected to the community, and from a range of sectors – from religious affiliations to corporate settings.
- ✓ It is essential to have a range of members with political and advocacy expertise.
- ✓ People who have directly benefited from the organization’s programming should also be active members.
- ✓ Boards should have a “*range of opinions*” with “*some people that can be radical in their thinking, who are visionaries. And people who can rule with some practical thoughts and not stagnate the visionaries, but at least let them know what it would take to execute some of the ideas that they have.*”

Leadership Development and Sustainability

ANWOL is unique in many ways. One example is its current operating structure, which has taken shape as a reflection of its statement of philosophy and leadership development practices. Using what many interviewees referred to as a “*three-pronged*” approach, the organization is led by its founder and director, as well as two co-directors. This structure allows for a unique blend of expertise and governance. Co-director Michael Towler has years of experience in fiscal organizational and nonprofit management. This expertise is also complemented by a lived

experience: he has personally struggled with addiction. His knowledge in this area is critical in ensuring that recovery is a cornerstone of ANWOL programming. Co-director Tiffany Johnson is an expert community organizer, advocate, and, most importantly, has benefited from ANWOL's programming herself. When asked about her progression to the position of co-director, she provides the following explanation:

“That’s tricky. I came in as an organizer by way of coming through the homes. My willingness to be helpful in any area of the organization I think has put me on the radar of Susan – she says I’m dedicated to the organization, doing all that I can. So, she just advanced me. I really don’t know how that came about! It just morphed into it. One minute I was an organizer, and then another minute I was associate director!”

– Tiffany Johnson

There is a great deal of humility and modesty in this statement, but it also speaks to the importance of the ANWOL practice of succession planning. Key to ANWOL's success is simply identifying “*the right*” people – including individuals such as Tiffany Johnson or Ingrid Archie, the civic engagement coordinator and Proposition 47 specialist. Both have been directly affected by the criminal injustice system and possess insight and understanding that is difficult to train into those who have not lived through incarceration. Both have also demonstrated unrelenting willingness to learn, take on increasingly more responsibilities, and “*fill in and take part however I can.*”

Tiffany and Ingrid were both “*thrown in,*” but not without considerable mentoring and training. This speaks directly to two aspects of ANWOL's succession planning and leadership development. First, it highlights the respect and confidence ANWOL's leadership has in its staff and the clients they serve. The leadership wholeheartedly believes in all the people they work with and provide them opportunities to prove themselves. But in addition to simply identifying promising staff, the leadership provides intensive mentoring and coordinated training to support people in newfound and important positions. While Ingrid first light-heartedly jests about how

“you can either sink or swim” within the organization, she then follows with a description of an onboarding process that is equal parts deliberate and organic:

“I was trained to canvas. We were canvassing and going door-to-door and talking to people about Prop 47, and then Miss Burton said, ‘I have something else coming about in a supervisory position.’ She said, ‘I’m going to need the support of somebody that can run this program.’ So, I’m thinking it’s just something that is temporary, but no. I had to go to the trainings, and I got trained through Cali Cause, people who fund our civic engagement program. I didn’t know anything about civic engagement until I started training. I’ve been running it for about three years now. That’s where I got my training from.”

– Ingrid Archie

Other staff commented on the mentoring that happens. One described it as “*very subtle*,” and so much so that “*a lot of people don’t even realize they are being mentored*.” She went on to say that this mentoring is the “*core part of what happens here*” at ANWOL and noted how it happens with both staff and program participants. This culture of mentoring and support defines ANWOL’s leadership development, while its belief in people is the cornerstone for how the organization and its staff have been sustained.

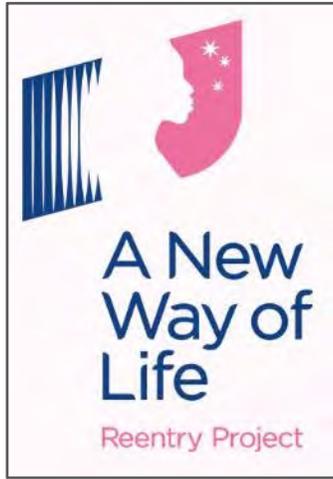
Conclusion and the Road Ahead

In reviewing this extraordinary program – its underlying philosophy, goals and values, programming, and leadership development for staff and participants alike – it is clear that the fundamental reason for ANWOL’s success is the sense of hope they give to everyone they touch. The leadership and staff’s belief in and unwavering acceptance of the women they serve translates into personal transformation. And through personal transformation, communities become empowered. This is why ANWOL must be replicated nationally – to dismantle the dysfunctional criminal injustice system and replace it with alternatives that are humane, evidence-based, and recognize the inherent value in every person.

This documentary narrative report was designed as part of a set of resources that will assist in the replication of the ANWOL model nationally. Drawing upon best practices, as well as the expertise and evidence-based knowledge of leadership and staff, this report offers a comprehensive view of the fundamentals necessary to replicate the ANWOL program service model in other places. The documentary narrative first provided a brief history of ANWOL to highlight its evolution and serve as an exemplar for replicators. Then, the document addressed the over-arching problem ANWOL is trying to solve, along with the values that guide its programming. It then concluded with a description of the action ANWOL is taking to solve these problems, highlighting the components that should be replicated, and paving the way for their replication.

An additional research effort will build upon the foundation of this report: the ANWOL Guidebook. Expanding upon the initial replication model study and the documentary narrative, this report will serve as the foundation for a how-to document that will transform the implicit into the explicit by providing a guidebook for replicator settings throughout the US. This step-by-step guide will direct replicators in the establishment and implementation of an ANWOL SAFE House and its programming. It will also serve as the required background for technical assistance related to needs of women experiencing reentry, recruiting and managing staff, and selecting and working with residents.

In the words of ANWOL founder Susan Burton, it is those with the lived experience – those who are formerly incarcerated who truly are “*experts in understanding and identifying both the visible and hidden barriers that continue to oppress us.*” For 20 years the leadership and staff at ANWOL have supported and mentored the women who have called their safe houses home. ANWOL’s leadership will provide replicators with the same dedicated mentorship and expertise necessary to forge a new path. And they will work together to repair the effects of mass incarceration on women and help transform individual lives, families, and communities.



**Documentary Narrative for
Model Replication**