

**Aging Outside the Walls: Care for Older Adult Exonerated Survivors of Death Row  
Report – 2022 Grant**

**1. What problem were you addressing? What solution did you propose to address it?**

Witness to Innocence (WTI) set out to provide targeted services for between 22 and 25 death row exonerees who are over the age of 60. This program supplements the DREAMS program's work to help address the lasting economic, physical, emotional, and social effects of incarceration on death row survivors through a focused effort on older adults. Through social work and peer support services, the DREAMS program mitigates the suffering of death row survivors by helping them navigate resources, such as to maintain employment, stable housing, proper healthcare and more.

At the time of our application, we planned to add a Family Peer Specialist to our social work team, to be funded by the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT). The Family Peer Specialist was to assist exoneree family members, including those of the older adult exonerees who represent about half of those we serve. We also set out to continue to employ a full-time Older Adult Peer Specialist, Randal Padgett, as this model of care with a focus on older adults. This model of care has been working well, both for the focused attention on older adults, and the increased time available for general Peer Specialists and the Director of Social Work to attend to other needs. We also sought to increase our skills in supporting death row exonerees experiencing dementia, death row exonerees caring for family members with dementia, and family members caring for exonerees.

**2. What actions did you take? What worked and didn't work toward your objectives? Please share any unanticipated benefits or barriers encountered.**

We continued to maintain Randal Padgett as the full time Older Adult Peer Specialist, under the supervision of the Director of Social Work, Cara Kovalovich, a licensed Social Worker. As we learned in the previous year, this is vital for our program as it allows us to maximize interaction and support for the older adult members and for Cara to devote significantly more time to complex cases and to cultivate resources.

At the time we applied for the 2022 grant, we knew there would be a delay in funding from our largest sustaining funder, the European Commission. We expected that to be a matter of several months. However, in the fall of 2022, we learned that the process would be delayed by about a year as the European Commission asked all their death penalty abolition grantees to form funding partnerships. The goal is part strategic – to have groups worldwide strategize together, support and learn from one another, working together to abolish the practice of capital punishment globally. The intent is also practical – to streamline the work of financial management of the grants and hopefully free up time for organizations to focus more on programs with less administrative burden. Rather than competing with one another for the European Commission funding, all the death penalty groups decided to get together as one consortium. We are the only group in the consortium that is led by, supports, and focuses on death row survivor voices in the effort for abolition.

We are excited to bring our model of peer support and exoneree leadership to the consortium and look forward to this future development for our work. However, for the time being, we are left with a serious shortage of funding at least through 2023. We have had to rearrange some of our planning to survive on a much smaller budget. Instead of hiring a new Family Peer Specialist as planned, we shifted resources to be able to maintain our existing Peer Specialists at their current hours, with the Older Adult Peer Specialist at full time. We did not travel for training and will not be attending the Innocence Network Conference this spring, nor will we have our Annual Gathering. While these are very valuable events, we are prioritizing the ongoing work of Peer Specialists with the exonerees.

**3. How did you measure success--both quantitative and qualitative? Please include numbers and demographics of people touched by the work.**

Success is largely measured by exonerees' self-reporting one-on-one with the Older Adult Peer Specialist, Director of Social Work and sometimes other staff. Peer Specialists keep data notes and check in with the Director of Social Work weekly or more. Participation in Witness to Innocence programs is another measure of success. Because we are unable to host a Gathering this year, we rely on monthly Town Hall calls with our Executive Director and Peer Organizer to gain the insight into success and efficacy we would usually glean from in-person group time. The Town Hall calls are a space for our members to spend time with each other and be candid about what they need and what is going well – since the addition of our new Executive Director, we have collected much more candid feedback than we have received in past years. We hope that this cultivation of a safe and open space will continue, and the ideas and criticisms from the space will allow the program to grow with the needs of our members.

10% Hispanic/Latinx, 53% Black, 51% White, 1% Indigenous

<b>Sub - totals by age and sex</b>							
Sex	Age group						
	0-15	16-25	26-35	36-45	45-60	+60	Sub-totals by sex
<b>Male</b>	0	0	1	1	17	23	42
<b>Female</b>	0	0	1	0	2	2	5
<b>Sub-totals by age</b>	0	0	2	1	19	25	<b>47</b>
<b>Total Number of Victims by Age and Sex:</b>							47

**4. How did partnerships/collaborations enhance or challenge the project?**

We have not had significant changes to our partnerships in the last year. Many of our partners in care remain within the local communities, and many referrals made in the year prior have become long-term resources. The challenges of working within the movement and the new landscape post-COVID remain the same, but an unexpected outcome of the pandemic has been renewed continuity of care. Many organizations and resources our members have accessed remain strong supports and clear paths to additional access in ways that they have not in the past, allowing our program and our clients to form relationships in spaces we have not historically been able to cultivate.

**5. Include a budget and actual for the project during the reporting period. Budget is attached.**

**6. What conversations have you had on how to sustain the project after the grant, and do you have plans to share your results with other organizations?**

We have had conversations about priorities with our full staff and board about how we will sustain our programs through the current period of longer than expected financial hardship. Currently, non-exoneree staff are working at 60-75% of full time while we seek to broaden our funding base. Exoneree needs are our top priority and exoneree staff have not had their hours reduced. As reported last year, we know that WTI exonerees bring an important human rights perspective to the movement for abolition and criminal justice reform and we are excited for the opportunity to share and learn with other organizations globally. We hope that through this partnership, there will be some funding to help with our DREAMS program, as most abolition organizations do not have the model of care that we do for impacted people and we have the skills and expertise to share that.

**7. Feedback on your interaction with FFA would be helpful. How have we helped? Made it harder? What else can we do to facilitate your work?**

In consulting with Susan Hoskins during the pandemic, we made the decision to develop and rely more heavily on our Peer Support model, rather than hire another Social Worker. This lesson has proven very valuable as we now navigate serious financial challenges. Instead of adding staff at a time when we are taking on additional responsibilities in limited hours, we are leaning more on our Peer Specialists, who also continue to gain experience. We are grateful for Susan and Friends Foundation for helping us see that the solution was to lift up and enrich what we have that is working, rather than add-on. It gives us a much-needed sense of relief to be able to have open communication about our current situation and developments, and a knowledgeable resource in Susan, who understands the types of challenges faced in serving people. We would also grateful for any opportunity that might arise again to share with other grantees.

## 8. Additional comments:

We are very grateful for the financial help from FFA, that allows for meaningful engagement and support with death row exonerees. We thank you for your ongoing faith in our work and in our dedicated DREAMS program team.

Budget : Care for Older Adult Exonerated Survivors of Death Row- 2022 Grant Application FFA						
	Grant Request - Friends Foundation for the Aging	Other Revenue Sources Projected	Project Total Projected	Project Total Actual by End of Grant Period	Total for FFA Grant	Notes
Full Time Older Adult Peer Specialist Salary and Benefits	\$32,000.00	\$19,000.00	\$51,000.00	\$54,700.00	\$37,000.00	High COLA for FY 23- WT1 prioritized exoneree staff and determined increases on sliding scale. Decisions were made before we knew the extent of the budget gap. Therefore we curtailed travel to maintain Peer Staff
Peer Specialist Hours (prorated Peer Organizer for this Project)	\$2,000.00	\$15,450.00	\$17,450.00	\$23,700.00	\$3,000.00	As above, high COLA and prioritized exoneree staff - extra responsibilities given reduction in hours for non exoneree staff. We are asking to shift the attribution for travel and in person training to sustain Older Adult Peer Specialist and pro-rate part of peer organizer for 6 months not covered under EC grant (work relevant to this project- older adults.
Family Peer Specialist January 1-June 30 2022, 25% time to older adult families		\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	Family needs remain under care of Director of Social Work and Peer Specialists for now.
Director of Social Work - Training/Supervision Social Work Staff		\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	Pro rated amount of salary and benefits to this project, covered by UNVFVT through 2022, application pending for 2023.
Travel- Older Adult Exonerees to Care	\$600.00		\$600.00	\$164.00	\$0.00	Trip to Shujaa and Phyllis
Office Space/Administrative Overhead Cost		\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	250/month Covered under EC grant.
Social Work Team Travel	\$3,000.00		\$3,000.00	\$643.00	\$600.00	Director of Social Work travel- older adult related.
Exoneree Direct Emergency Expenses		\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$21,785.00	\$0.00	To date dispersed for older adults
Equipment/WiFi/Etc & Training		\$700.00	\$700.00	\$1,075.00	\$0.00	equipment, wifi for older adults
Training for Dementia, PTSD for approximately 6 staff	\$3,000.00		\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	In-house ongoing training at no cost. We opted not to do the in person training due to budget constraints and travel challenges for at least one Peer Specialist due to family needs.
	<b>Total Request Friends Foundation</b>	<b>Total Other Sources</b>	<b>Project Total Projected</b>	<b>Project Total Actual</b>	<b>Friends Foundation Total Actual</b>	
	\$40,600.00	\$88,150.00	\$128,750.00	\$124,917.00	\$40,600.00	

**Notes on other sources of income:** The UNVFVT committed funding that covers the Director of Social Work salary, Family Peer Specialist and some social work travel until the end of 2023 and we have applied for 2024. As reported, the gap in European Commission (EC) funding is significantly longer than expected, as we learned in the fall. We are working to increase income to overcome the gap. We did not receive an SC Ministry grant last year, but have been invited to apply this year.