Evaluation of the Los Angeles Re-Entry Employment Options Project

FINAL REPORT

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The population of ex-offenders continues to rise. The majority need support, assistance, and guidance in order to have a successful reentry into the general population. Thus, many states are funding prisoner reentry programs to promote the effective reintegration of offenders into communities upon release from prison and jail. Reentry programs often involve a comprehensive case management approach. These programs are intended to assist ex-offenders in acquiring the life skills needed to succeed in the community and become law-abiding citizens. A variety of programs are used to assist offenders in the reentry process, including prerelease programs, drug rehabilitation and vocational training, and work programs (DOJ, 2009). While many states and cities across the US are implementing some type of reentry programs, evidence on the effect of these programs on recidivism is not clear.

In order to break the cycle of recidivism, the California State Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), Division of Community Partnership awarded the City of Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board a 29 month grant to fund the Re-Entry Employment Options Project (REEOP). The REEOP provides support and services related to job creation, training, and job placement efforts for men and women who leave prison with no direct access to specialized programs in the City and County of Los Angeles. Objectives of the project are to assess skills and employment history and match participants with a job as soon as possible if there are no significant employment barriers. Participants in REEOP also have access to number of additional support services (e.g., intensive case management, housing assistance, mental health care, substance use disorders support groups or treatment, and referrals to organizations providing no or low cost furnishing, clothing, and legal assistance). The support services are provided to bolster recovery efforts and help individuals remain engaged in employment services and employment-focused efforts as they acclimate to life in their local communities.

The City of Los Angeles Community Development Department (CDD) has requested Westat, an independent research company, to evaluate the project's implementation and outcomes. This report documents findings from Westat's evaluation of REEOP. First, we present an executive summary of the study design and key findings. In Chapter 1, we discuss previous studies examining other re-entry programs and we provide information on the Los Angeles Re-Entry Employment Options Project. Chapter 2 describes the methodology implemented during the process and outcome evaluation. We present results from process and outcome evaluations in Chapter 3 and 4, respectively. Chapter 5 includes a discussion on findings and recommendations from lessons

learned. Appendix A contains Re-Entry Employment Options Project Talking Points about the study for REEOP Staff and a Participant Consent Form. Appendix B includes all interview protocols developed for the evaluation and Appendix C provides descriptive statistics of participants who were not included in the analytical sample.

In California, Los Angeles County is home to one-third of the state's prison population as well as one-third of the state's parolee population (30.82 percent in 2006). Most of the parolees face many obstacles to successful reintegration in the community. As a consequence, many of them experience recidivism. For example, in 2005, for all paroled felons released from prisons in California, one-, two-, and 3-year follow-up recidivism rates have been 40%, 54%, and 59%, respectively. To break this cycle, the California State Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), Division of Community Partnership awarded the City of Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board a 29-month grant to fund REEOP. The REEOP provides support and services related to job creation, training, and job placement efforts for men and women who leave prison with no direct access to specialized programs in the City and County of Los Angeles. Objectives of the project are to assess skills and employment history and match participants with a job as soon as possible if there are no significant employment barriers. For those individuals needing additional skills or job training, linkages to the appropriate resources and services are made through cross-referral within the project. Additional services, such as continuing education or completion of GEDs, substance dependence treatment, mental health, or other related support services are offered to participants as needed.

Independent Evaluation

Westat conducted a site visit to Los Angeles that was primarily designed to collect information from key informants and clients, and acquire additional information about the context within which the REEOP was being implemented. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Program Director at CDD; the Program Coordinator at Special Services for Groups; three Case Managers; four Job Developers (interchangeably referred to as employment specialists); the supervisor of REEOP staff at the WorkSource Centers; and the Instructor of the Job Readiness class, which provided entry for clients to comprehensive employment services. Personnel interviews were recorded and transcribed for content analysis. Three REEOP clients were also interviewed (two in person, one by phone) and asked to characterize their experiences with the project.

Quantitative data for outcomes analysis were provided by the REEOP program. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation maintains a database that each Intergovernmental Partnership (IGP) and Community-Based Reentry Initiative (CBRI) Grant Program may use to

report program and participant-related data. Data on recidivism and employment during program participation are the main outcome variables of interest for this study.

Key Findings

The REEOP made excellent progress toward the goal of preventing recidivism. Among the analytical sample of 108 ex-offenders, 10.9 percent (n=11) have experienced recidivism during their participation in the program. This 10.9 percent recidivism rate is significantly lower than the 40 percent one-year recidivism rate among all paroled felons released from prisons in California in 2005. The REEOP clients also experienced a lower rate of recidivism (10.9 percent) than the 16.1 percent recidivism rate observed among the Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (PRI) demonstration programs involving 30 similar re-entry programs across the country.

Table 1   Functional outcomes

Characteristics	Analytical sample (N=108)	
	N	% of total
Recidivism	11	10.9%
Ever worked	38	35.2%
Average hourly wage (Std. dev.) [1]	$9.63 ($1.76)	Min: $8
		Max: $16

The REEOP made some progress toward the goal of helping participants obtain employment. Among the analytical sample of 108 ex-offenders, 35.2 percent report ever working during their participation in the program[2]. However, this rate is lower than the 68.1 percent employment rate observed among the PRI demonstration programs. The REEOP participants had an average hourly wage of $9.63 similar to PRI participants who averaged an hourly wage rate of $9.29.

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[1] REEOP dataset includes wage information on total of 45 jobs. Table 1 presents average hourly wage for a job.

[2] The number of clients ever employed based on all clients that were enrolled in the program is 50.

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Length of stay in the program and level of engagement with program services are significantly associated with better employment and recidivism outcomes. Almost half of program participants (47.8 percent) who stayed with the program for 6 months or more obtained employment. Only 1 in 4 (25.8 percent) of participants who stayed with the program less than 6 months obtained employment. In addition, while two-thirds of participants (66.7 percent) in the "received more than 5 services" group found employment, only 38.9 percent of participants in the "received 2 to 5 services" group reports finding employment. The percentage of participants who found employment in the "received one or no services" group was only 18.0.

Level of engagement with program services is marginally significant in reducing recidivism. Among the 15 participants who received more than 5 services, no recidivism was reported. However, participants who 'received between 2 and 5 services' and 'received one or no services' reported 16.7 and 5.1 percent recidivism rates, respectively.

The process evaluation suggests three main sources for the positive outcomes of the REEOP:

1. The skill with which CDD kept partners focused on the need to change the re-entry services system and improve coordination of services across (and beyond) REEOP partners to benefit individuals but especially to break the cycle of recidivism;

2. CDD efforts to regularize communications among project partners and also between partner staff and clients; and

3. The individual level of skill and competence with which staff in the partner agencies delivered timely and effective services to participants.

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Background 1

1.1 Introduction

Over 600,000 prisoners are released from prisons and jails each year in the US (Harrison and Karberg, 2004). Of these ex-prisoners, approximately two-thirds are re-incarcerated within three years of their release. National data show that 44 percent of released prisoners are arrested within one year of release (Freeman, 2003). In light of these gloomy statistics, reducing the known risks affecting successful integration of the people released from prison has become an important policy goal.

1.2 Ex-offenders and the Challenges They Face

Employment can effectively serve as a protective factor which lessens the risk of re-arrest or re-incarceration for ex-offenders that return to local communities after periods of incarceration. Previous research found a negative relationship between having a job and the likelihood of committing a crime (Freeman, 2003). Ex-offenders with jobs are less likely to commit crimes. However, finding and retaining a job is a major challenge for most ex-offenders. Ex-offenders face numerous obstacles when searching for jobs. Some of these obstacles are due to the actions and attitudes of business owners (demand side obstacles) and some are related to the human capital and the skill set that the ex-offenders offers to the job market (supply side obstacles). Demand side obstacles most often involve business practices, job requirements, and attitudes of the employers. For example, employers may request a certain level of education and skill sets along with previous work experience even for unskilled jobs. In addition, some employers may hesitate to offer jobs to individuals with criminal backgrounds. In some states (e.g., Georgia), employers may be held liable for the criminal actions of their employees under the theory of negligent hiring (see e.g., http://www.georgiainsurancedefenselawyer.com/2008/12/a_primer_on_employer_liability.html). In order to avoid the risk of litigation, employers may prefer not to hire applicants with a history of criminal activities. Demand side obstacles pertain to human capital related features that the ex-offender brings to the competitive labor market. For example, most ex-offenders have a lower level of education and minimal prior work experience (UCLA, 2003). Long periods of unemployment may also prevent them obtaining employment since employers may think that ex-offenders may lose

some of the required job skills and positive work habits while they were in prison. Most ex-offenders also suffer from health issues (including both physical and mental health), and substance abuse issues. In addition, the jobs that ex-offenders find may be of low quality and low salary jobs. Ex-offenders may choose to forego these low-paying employment options in favor of illegal opportunities with greater returns (Holzer, Raphael, Stoll, 2003).

1.3 Re-entry Programs

The population of ex-offenders continues to rise. The majority of them need support, assistance, and guidance in order to experience successful reentry into the general population. Thus, many states are implementing prisoner reentry programs in order to promote effective reintegration of offenders back into communities upon release from prison and jail. Reentry programs often involve a comprehensive case management approach. These programs are intended to assist ex-offenders in acquiring the life skills needed to succeed in the community and become law-abiding citizens. A variety of programs are used to assist offenders in the reentry process, including prerelease programs, drug rehabilitation and vocational training, and work programs (DOJ, 2009). While many states and cities across the US are implementing some type of reentry programs, evidence on the effect of these programs on recidivism is not clear.

Table 3-1 presents summary information from 7 studies evaluating re-entry programs. Recidivism rate in these programs varies from 14 percent to 40 percent within a year and the differences between treatment and control groups are not statistically significant. There is some evidence that treatment group participants are more likely to be employed and/or employed longer. Work programs seem to increase the odds of obtaining and maintaining employment for at least some subgroups within the ex-offender community (e.g., age greater than 27).

Table 3-1.   Summary of selected references on evaluation of programs providing services to ex-offenders

Reference	Population	Sample Size	Intervention	Outcomes
Mallar, C.D., Thornton C.V.D (1978). Transitional aid for released prisoners: Evidence for the LIFE Experience, *JHR*, 13(2): 208-236	Ex-prisoners who are at high-risk for returning to prison because of their previous criminal history	432 participants in one of the four treatment groups	(1) $60 a week and job placement service for 1 year after release, (2) Only $60 a week, (3) Only job placement services, (4) No additional support services.	No impact on arrests in the first year. Those who were at least 26 years old were much less likely to be arrested than younger participants.
Rossman, S, Sridharan, S. et al. (1999). Impact of the Opportunity to Succeed (OPTS) Aftercare Program for substance-abusing felons: Comprehensive Final Report. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute	Ex-prisoners with alcohol and drug offense histories	Random assignment of 398 participants to treatment and control	Comprehensive post-release services, including job readiness classes, job training, and job placement	No differences in the two groups on number of arrests at the end of the first year.
Barbaree, H. E., Seto, M. T., & Maric, A. (1996). Effective sex-offender treatment: The Warkworth Sexual Behavior Clinic. *Forum on Corrections Research 8* (3), 13-15.	Sex offenders	250 in treatment, 65 in control	The program uses a group therapy format, and is designed to fit into institutional work and job-site organization. Participants report to work five days per week throughout the five-month program.	18.5% in both groups committed a new offence after release. While 77.8% of the treatment sample survived the first year of follow-up, just 61.1% of those who refused treatment did the same.
Bloom, D., Redcross, C., Zweig, J., & Azurdia, G. (2007). *Transitional jobs for ex-prisoners: Early impacts from a random assignment evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Prisoner Reentry Program*. New York, NY: MDRC.	Ex-prisoners who were referred by their parole officer	568 in treatment, 409 in control	Individuals were eligible to receive all of program services, including the four-day Life Skills class, placement in a transitional job, job coaching, additional services (such as the fatherhood program), job development services, and all post-placement services.	80.1% in the program and 56.1% in control group were ever employed in 4 quarters. 21.7% in the program and 10.9% in control group were employed in all 4 quarters The program group was about twice as likely as the control group to work in all four quarters of the year. There are no statistically significant impacts on arrests, parole measures, or overall incarceration. 22.7% in the program and 24.2% in control group were arrested.

Table 3-1. Summary of selected references on evaluation of programs providing services to ex-offenders (continued)

Reference	Population	Sample Size	Intervention	Outcomes
Farole, D. J. (2003). *The Harlem parole reentry court evaluation: Implementation and preliminary impacts.* New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.	Felony drug offenders (those convicted on either drug possession and/or drug sales offenses) who have no history of violent felony convictions	45 in treatment, 90 in control	The Reentry Court put in place a collaborative, team-based model that improves communications between parole and treatment agencies. As a result, parolees appear to receive greater access to needed services (substance abuse treatment, job training, transitional housing, etc.) and more coordinated service delivery using a case management approach.	There are no statistically significant impacts on arrests and new convictions. Within one year of release from prison, 22% in the program and 14% in control group were rearrested, with 22% in the program and 30% in the control group had a new conviction.
McGarrell, E. F., Hipple, N., & Banks, D. (2004). *Applying problem-solving approaches to issues of inmate reentry: The Indianapolis pilot project. Final report.* Indianapolis, IN: Hudson Institute.	Former inmates in Marion County (Indianapolis)	93 in treatment, 107 in control	The project consisted of having recently released inmates attend a neighborhood-based group meeting convened by criminal justice officials and including community representatives and service providers. The meetings were based on the notion of combining deterrence and social support (linkage to services).	Approximately 40 percent of both treatment and control groups were re-arrested during the follow-up period that ranged from 10 to 24 months. The treatment group survived longer (average = 172 days) than did the comparison group (120 days) before being re-arrested, yet this difference did not prove statistically significant in the survival analysis.
Roman, J., Brooks, L., Lagerson, E., Chalfin, A., & Tereshchenko, B. (2007). *Impact and cost-benefit analysis of the Maryland Reentry Partnership Initiative.* Washington, DC: Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center.	Offered to inmates preparing for release from the Metropolitan Transition Center (MTC) located in East Baltimore	229 in treatment, 370 in control	Coalition of service providers that coordinate efforts to provide prisoners returning to select Baltimore neighborhoods with comprehensive reentry services including housing assistance, substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, education, vocational training and other services.	REP was successful in reducing criminal offending. Fewer REP clients (72% compared to 77.6%) committed at least one new crime in the study period, which averaged 38 months. Overall REP participants committed 68 fewer crimes during the study period than ex-prisoners in the comparison group. There were no significant differences in time to re-arrest, likelihood of a new conviction, number of new convictions, or time to a new conviction.

1.4   Los Angeles Re-Entry Employment Options Project (REEOP)

In California, Los Angeles County is home to one-third of the state's prison population as well as one-third of the state's parolee population. Most of these parolees returning to communities within Los Angeles County are struggling and facing many obstacles in successful reintegration in the community. One consequence is that many of them return to jail. For all paroled felons released from prisons in 2005, one, two, and 3 year follow-up recidivism rates have been 40%, 54%, and 59%, respectively. In order to break this cycle, California State Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), Division of Community Partnership awarded the City of Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board a 29 month grant to fund REEOP. The REEOP is set up to provide support and services related to job creation, training, and job placement efforts for men and women who leave prison with no direct access to specialized programs in the City and County of Los Angeles. Objectives of the project are to assess skills and employment history and match participants with a job as soon as possible if there are no significant employment barriers. For those individuals needing additional skills or job training, linkages to the appropriate resources and services are made through cross-referral within the project. Additional services, such as substance dependence treatment, mental health services, or other related services are offered to participants as needed.

Over 12,000 parolees in California institutions are returning to communities within the County and City of Los Angeles annually. Whether it's a few weeks later or after many years, parolees find their neighborhoods unprepared to address their critical employment, health, and housing issues. With no formal mechanism linking job creation, training, and job placement efforts to the neediest job seekers enrolled in City and County funded human service programs, women and men who leave prison with no direct access to specialized programs tend to subsist on the *margins* of their communities. The South Los Angeles area alone has 5, 262 parolees, with these neighborhoods primarily housing low-income residents. With a state recidivism rate of 64%, the intense cycle of arrest, removal, incarceration, and re-entry— at levels four times higher than 20 years ago—has had severe consequences on neighborhoods.

The City of Los Angeles Community Development Department (CDD), responsible for employment services, is the fiscal agent on the project. The REEOP collaborates with other public and private agencies, each playing a unique role within the grant.
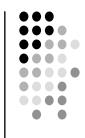
The primary partner, and the partner most responsible for working with other organizations to bring community experts into the joint venture and for bringing the opportunity to serve as the fiscal agent for CDCR funding to the attention of the CDD, was the Special Service for Groups (SSG) organization. Before approaching CDD, SSG worked with the Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches/Ex- Offender Action Network (LAM/EAN) to brainstorm about the possibility and feasibility of coordinating a re-entry project. SSG's early action steps and their historical work with LAM/EAN brought a wealth of community-based expertise with ex-offenders into the partner matrix. The CDD had recently established working relationships with agencies (e.g., Department of Mental Health, Housing Authorities) serving populations with multiple employment barriers (e.g., mental illness, substance use disorders, limited education) through the workforce centers on previous federal projects (e.g., DOL-ODEP grants for customized employment services and to serve individuals with histories of chronic homelessness), but had not yet had the opportunity to work with ex-offenders. SSG's offer to coordinate project activities and bring in knowledgeable organizations to work with and provide critical support services to participants made the REEOP possible. SSG's work in the locale spanned decades, and focuses on offering community-based solutions to the social and economic issues facing those in greatest need. SSG was thus able to develop contracts with other community providers for REEOP participants, in addition to the LAM/EAN. The other organizations were Friends Outside—Watts (FOS-Watts), which provided pragmatic and emotional support for participants as well as instructors for the required job readiness course, "From Parole to Payroll," upon participants' enrollment in the project. Another partner working under subcontract to SSG for the REEOP was Mum's the Word, which provided needed legal assistance to participants on a no-cost or low-cost basis.

Employment services are provided to participants by the City of Los Angeles Workforce Development System (WDS). The City of Los Angeles works with employers to identify and create job openings; create career ladders in job placement; utilize a demand-driven approach to job development; and leverage funding and services available through existing programs, funding streams, and partners. The employment services partners to the project included the South Los Angeles Crenshaw WorkSource Center, which held a subcontract to provide REEOP services with the UAW, and the Southeast Los Angeles—Crenshaw WorkSource Center. The Adams/Baldwin Hills and the L.A. Watts WorkSource Centers joined the project about halfway through the REEOP contract period to utilize expanded employment resources available there.

The relationships of the partners to each other are shown in Figure 1, the REEOP Organizational Chart, below.

REEOP Organization Chart

South Los Angeles
WorkSource Center
Placement/ Retention Services

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The central goal of the project is to assess skills and employment history and match participants with a job within the first 30 days of contact with project staff if there are no significant employment barriers. For those individuals needing additional skills attainment or job training, linkages to the appropriate resources and services are made through cross-referral within the project including referrals to Community College partners. Additional services, such as substance dependence treatment, mental health or other related services are offered to participants as needed. The respective roles played by each of the partners are reflected in the flow chart for the project, shown in Figure 2. below.

City of Los Angeles Community Development Department
Re-Entry Employment Options Demonstration Project (REEODP)

1.0
Point of Entry
Pre-Release
Engagement

2.0
Client Eligibility Form
LAM/EAN

2.1
Is the Client
Eligible?

YES →

NO
2.2b Referral to other CBO programs

2.2a
Intake/Collection Form
(Pre-release)
LAM/EAN

2.3
Enrollment/
Survival Kit
(Pre-release)

3.0
Post-Release Intake
(after release)
LAM/EAN CM

4.0
Individualized
Service Plan
EAN CM/Client

5.0
Case Plan
Implementation/ IEP
Client/EAN/WSC

6.0
Partnership for Re-Entry
Programming & Life Skills/Job– Readiness

• Orientation to Community Reintegration
• Orientation to Community Partners
  (CDD Intensive CM specialist to parolees 18-25)
• REEOP Survival Kit Follow up
• Assess educational; attainment & develop soft skills
• Legal Education
• Financial Literacy Education

REEODP Partners

7.0
Interdisciplinary Team
Case Conferencing

REEODP Partners
- Program Coordinator
- LAM/EAN Case Managers
- Friends Outside staff
- SSG Case Managers
- WorkSource Center Case Managers

Information Sharing

7.1
Client **is not**
job-ready.

7.2
Job Placement
(City job creation linkages)

8.0
Work with client so that s/he will:
• Obtain a GED or a high school diploma is s/he does not have one
• Continue to work on personal issues
• Volunteer to acquire work habits and experience

YES ↓

8.1
Comprehensive Employment/Support Services
Employment
- Vocational assessment, entrepreneurial training & placement.
- Supportive vocational services; GED; Skills Center; Work Exp
Case Management
On-going Comprehensive case management services
Housing
- Emergency, short-term, and/or transitional housing placement
- Supportive Service
Mentorship
On-going mentorship services through faith-based organizations

9.0
Retention
Ongoing Case
Management
REEODP Interdisc Team

9.1
Case Plan Services
Completed?

YES →

NO ↓

9.1a
Continue Services
Remove Barriers
as needed

10.0
Evaluation of
Client Outcomes

11.0
Discharge from
Program

12.0
Follow-up
-REEODP–
- Work Source Center– 1 year

EXIT

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Prepared by Special Service for Groups

Once a person obtains a job, assisting the participant with job retention is the responsibility of all project partners. This collaborative approach assists in increasing retention rates, reducing recidivism and promoting successful community reintegration for the participant. Collaborative efforts are reflected in the outcomes for participants of the REEOP. The process findings for participants are documented in Chapter 3, and the outcomes for participants at the end of the project are detailed in Chapter 4. We turn next to a discussion of the methodology that informed the independent evaluation conducted by Westat.

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Methodology 2

The process and outcome evaluation and analysis for the REEOP are described in this section. We present the overarching purposes of the evaluation components. In this context, the focal research questions for the process evaluation component are reviewed. This section concludes by providing additional details about the methodologies that guided the collection of data and the data analysis approaches used for this study.

2.1   Process Evaluation

The purpose of the process evaluation was to gather information about the REEOP formative activities and to acquire data needed to address these central questions:

- How closely did the REEOP implementation match the proposed project plan?

- What types of deviation from the plan occurred? What led to the deviations? What effect did the deviations have on the planned interventions?

- Who provided (program staff) what services (type, intensity), to whom (individual characteristics), in what context (system, community)?

- What was the level and quality of partnership among different institutions involved in the project?

- What roles were assumed by the collaborating organizations in order to respond to the needs of the target population in each of the following areas?

    - Primary health care, mental health and substance abuse treatment services;

    - Housing support;

    - Criminal justice related guidance and counseling; and

    - Employment services and support.

- During the implementation phase, were the performance indicators used appropriate for the project (e.g., matching participants to a job within 30days)? Can other indicators be identified for assessing whether the REEOP project achieved the intended goals, objectives and outcomes?

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The site visit was designed to collect information from key informants and clients, and acquire additional information about the context within which the REEOP was being implemented. Expanding knowledge about whether the REEOP approach could be sustained or possibly expanded for use in other parts of the city were additional goals for the site visit data collection.

Westat prepared and submitted a site visit plan with the initial contract for the evaluation of the REEOP, and additional details for the agenda were negotiated prior to the trip. During a May, 2009 visit to Los Angeles, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Program Director at CDD; the Program Coordinator at Special Services for Groups; three Case Managers; four Job Developers (interchangeably referred to as employment specialists); the supervisor of REEOP staff at the WorkSource Centers; and the Instructor of the Job Readiness class, which provided entry for clients to comprehensive employment services.

Three REEOP clients were also interviewed (two in person, one by phone) and asked to characterize their experiences with the project during a taped interview session. After a review of risks and benefits of participating in the interview had been reviewed with prospective interviewees, each client provided a signed, consent form indicating their willingness to participate and their agreement to having the session recorded. Clients received $50 compensation for their time and travel expenses.

Qualitative data were gathered for the process evaluation component during semi-structured interviews with 15 individuals in May, 2009. (See Appendix B for all interview protocols developed for the evaluation.) With the permission of interviewees, all interviews were recorded. Recordings were transcribed to facilitate non-statistical content analyses.

In our analyses of the qualitative process evaluation data, Westat sought comprehensive responses to questions about implementation of the project and the short- and long-term outcomes for the project, given data available nearing end of the evaluation period (i.e., as of May 31, 2009). Westat analyzed how the REEOP model operated during the start-up and early phases of the project, and whether its viability as a replicable model changed or improved as the project progressed.

Relying on standard approaches to non-statistical, content analyses (e.g., Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Straus, 1987; Miles & Huberman, 1994), Westat undertook following steps during analysis:

■ Foreshadowing and identifying likely key categories or themes prior to data analysis (e.g., grantee's partner engagement strategies, direct care staffs' strategies for client engagement),

■ Coding text materials to identify key and emergent categories, properties of categories, and dominant themes or patterns in the data,

■ Organizing data according to key themes relevant to process or other evaluation questions (e.g., general implementation trends, problematic issues for clients or providers, achieved outcomes), and

■ Synthesizing, focusing, and integrating key and emergent themes in a final evaluation report.

These approaches incorporate established conventions of cultural anthropology, grounded theory, and situational analyses. They enable analysis of similarities and differences in perspectives, of implementation efforts and of the processes involved in achieving certain outputs and outcomes. They also enable analysis of any unintended consequences or unanticipated outcomes that are illuminated by key informants or clients during the in-depth interview sessions.

2.2   Outcomes Analysis

Quantitative data for outcomes analysis were provided by the REEOP program. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has developed a database that each IGP and CBRI grant program can use to report program and participant related data. The dataset included participant level information on participant characteristics such as:

■ Program enrollment date;

■ Age, gender, education, education status, marital status;

■ Whether caring for children under 18 for whom the participant is providing;

■ Age at first arrest;

■ Primary drug of choice;

■ List of program services listed in participant's Service Plan;

■   Number of different services in which participants were engaged; and

■   Program exit date and exit reason.

Recidivism and employment during program participation are the main outcome variables of interest for this study. The information on recidivism and employment were put together by program staff and provided to Westat along with the REEOP database. Analyses in this report include descriptive characteristics of program customers, services, and functional outcomes (recidivism and employment). The findings answer the following questions.

1.   What are the characteristics of program customers at enrollment (e.g., age, gender, education level, marital status, disability status, caring for children, age at first arrest, every employed for a full six months, primary drug of choice)?

2.   What services did program customers receive according to their service plans (e.g., housing, employment, mental health and substance abuse treatment, physical health services)?

3.   What are the participant outcomes in terms of recidivism and employment?

Using bivariate and multivariate analysis, the dataset helped to answer the following research questions:

1.   What are the characteristics of individuals who were engaged in program services?

2.   What are the individual and/or program factors that are associated with recidivism and employment outcomes?

Overview of Process Evaluation Findings **3**

Westat presents findings from the process evaluation analyses in this chapter. In this discussion, the collected data about implementation efforts provide information that addresses research questions about the organizational matrix of the REEOP as realized, and about the processes involved in intra-agency planning, collaboration, and in the coordination of services for delivery to REEOP clients.

Westat approached the analysis of process evaluation data by: reviewing the strategies that were developed at the site to meet the challenges of starting a collaborative re-entry venture in South Los Angeles; by observing the quality of collaboration reported by key informants and project partners; and by identifying significant barriers to carrying out the REEOP and achieving its main objectives. A discussion of barriers affecting the attainment of employment and successful community reintegration for REEOP clients includes highlights of the project managers and providers' perspectives on how or whether the identified obstacles to successful reintegration and avoidance of recidivism for REEOP clients were resolved or continue.

Changes made to the original plans for REEOP were needed to enable implementation of the project. These changes comprise a significant focal area of the REEOP process evaluation. To facilitate a presentation of findings that indicate how changes were made to the original plans, we begin with a synopsis of the REEOP as extracted from its proposal for funding to the CDCR (CDD, 2006).

3.1   Original Project Design and Implementation Plans

The overarching objective for the REEOP was to connect the existing Los Angeles's job creation system, the Workforce Development system, the Los Angeles county health system and peer- and community-based organizations' support systems. To do this, REEOP would coordinate counseling, employment, health care, mentoring and housing services to help ex-offenders rejoin their local communities to undertake meaningful and productive activities (i.e., attain employment, participate in vocational training, skill building, or educational endeavors). REEOP was designed to significantly impact the high-risk communities in South Los Angeles by promoting systems change

through the integration of employment, substance abuse, mental health and housing services. As noted in the proposal for REEOP, "This [grant] will help the City of Los Angeles reach its goal of "improving public safety through evidence-based recidivism reduction strategies" (CDD, 2006).

The CDD, as grant recipient, fiduciary, and contract administrator, provided a Project Director and direction for the collaborative venture. During development of the proposal for funding, the CDD worked closely with Special Services for Groups (SSG) to identify partners and also design a plan that would yield the desired client outcomes (i.e., paid and satisfying employment); benefit the workforce development system and meet local employers' staffing needs; and improve coordination of services to people reintegrating into the rhythms of community life and work following incarceration. Each partner asked to join the REEOP pledged to work toward the attainment of these goals.

The design for REEOP relied on seven primary activities to implement the plan and address the central objectives of the plan. The proposed core (and related) activities included:

- Outreach (both within corrections systems and community-based) and recruitment that includes:

  a.   Determination of eligibility within 24 hours of first contact;

  b.   Mentor recruitment and training; and

  c.   A plan to match participants with mentors.

- Approval of enrollment and referrals for REEOP services, including assignment of case manager and employment specialists.

- Conducting client assessments (of personal strengths, barriers to employment, need for vocational training and education; need for support services, including medical, mental health, substance use, dental and eye care) and developing individual service and employment plans with the client and his or her REEOP team members.

- Determination of next steps through joint case management by case managers and employment specialists.

- Job placement using the state's WorkSource Centers and other local city job creation systems.

- Provision of work experiences and pre-employment training.

- Client follow-up to increase job retention skills and support reintegration efforts during the 2-year project period during which clients were to be served for 24 months. The

partners were required to continually serve 100 clients throughout the 24-month period. They were further required to follow each client for 12 months once placed in employment. (Many of the clients received retention services from REEOP well after the program ended.)

Once eligibility was confirmed, enrolled REEOP clients would be assigned to case managers and employment specialists, and individual service and employment plans were to be developed for each client. The plans would be tailored to each person's specific profile and situation. When the created plans were mutually agreed to by the client and their REEOP team members, project staff members would then assist clients with accessing services, acquiring needed resources, and navigating the local system. Case managers were expected to help eligible participants access or maintain mainstream benefits such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), General Relief (GR) or food stamps.

The partners proposed for the project would provide or take responsibility for ensuring that action steps were taken and services and resources were provided (CDD, 2006). The table below lists the partners, a brief description of the entity and the central activities each partner was to pursue for the grant.

Proposed REEOP Project Partners and Core Activity List (CDD, 2006)

REEOP Partners	Description of Partner and Activity for REEOP
Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches/Ex-Offender Action Network (LAM/EAN)	*Faith-based organization.* Will provide employment mentors; spiritual mentoring; life skills/coping mentors; assessment; referrals; GED or diploma linkage; literacy linkages; obtain identification; parenting (fathers) training; assist with court orders, warrants, child-custody. Will assist in employment retention and participant stability.
Special Service for Groups (SSG)	*Community-based organization.* Will provide teachers for job readiness training and for *Learn and Earn* work-experience training. Facilitate employment opportunities available through members of the community or churches and direct information to the WorkSource system for participant placement. This may include work experience/volunteer opportunities. Will assist in employment retention and participant stability.
Friends Outside-Los Angeles (FO)	*Community-based and advocacy organization.* Will provide initial needs Assessment; referrals; facilitate family engagement and reunification, as appropriate; provide job retention peer support and counseling; identify resource referrals for tattoo removal, eye glasses, dental work,

REEOP Partners	Description of Partner and Activity for REEOP
	family services, and legal services (e.g., expungement assistance or certificate of rehabilitation or pardons); and provide referrals to paraprofessional counseling and crisis intervention resources. Will assist in employment retention and participant stability.
City of Los Angeles Economic Development Division (Work Source Centers, City Industrial and Commercial Dev. Div. Job Creation & EZ Programs)	*Governmental agencies*. Will provide job readiness, training, placement and support services, retention services, post-employment skills upgrade, and advancement job placement. Will assist will connection to entrepreneurial training and small business loans. Will provide assistance to employers for job creation or development, and impart knowledge about employer incentives for wage and tax credits. CDD will coordinate all employment services for this project and other collaborators to the project (e.g., community residents, LAUSD, LAPD, Probation, the Mayor's Office, City Councilpersons, community-based organizations, businesses, and advocates).

Another community-based organization was mentioned as a collaborator in the proposal. The organization was asked to become involved in minor, but important ways. This partner, "Mum's the Word," was recruited to provide assistance to clients seeking to comply with legal issues (e.g., paying child support; making restitution payments for crimes or for other public monies owed to the city, county, or state).

Project strategic plans and action steps evolved as the project unfolded. An appraisal of changes in the array of partners and the roles they each played in the project is the subject of the next discussion section. However, given the important role played by partner organizations, and in consideration of the context within which the REEOP activities and outcomes were realized, we first provide some historical and contemporary information about each of the REEOP partners.

3.1 .1 The Organizational Matrix: REEOP Partners & Collaborators

Grant recipient, City of Los Angeles Community Development Department (CDD)

The Community Development Department operates within the Los Angeles Workforce Development Division in cooperation with the Workforce Investment Board of Los Angeles. The

CDD provides assistance to individuals, nonprofit agencies and businesses. It administers $750 million in grant and city funding. CDD offers employment services in 18 WorkSource Centers (i.e., One Stop Career Centers) and 13 OneSource Centers (i.e., One Stop Career Centers for young job seekers). As a past recipient of federal demonstration program awards (e.g., Ending Chronic Homelessness through Housing and Employment from the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy), the CDD has expertise in partnership building and eliciting cross-agency collaboration with multiple stakeholders. The current Project Director of REEOP, Susan Quigley, served CDD in this capacity for the DOL-ODEP funded projects, too. Key objectives of CDD work include establishing and expanding effective employment services for people with multiple employment barriers, and developing or changing city or agency policies and procedures that are obstacles to the attainment of employment for this cohort. (For a graphical representation of the role of CDD with respect to REEOP partners, please refer to Figure 2., on page 1-7, above.)

As noted in the earlier discussion (pages 1-5 through 1-7, above) CDD was receptive to the initiative taken by the Special Services Groups' organization to author the grant application and pursue REEOP funding. The SSG partner identified organizations (e.g., Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches, Ex-Offender Action Network, Friends Outside, and Mum's the Word) that had experience with the population of ex-offenders and brought organizations to the REEOP project that helped CDD facilitate the project.

During REEOP implementation, as grant administrator, the CDD Project Director drew together a project steering committee comprised of executives and decision-makers in partner organizations. CDD hosted a monthly meeting of these individuals and established the twice per month conference case call among direct service staff, in addition to monitoring project operations on a daily basis. CDD was particularly influential in overcoming the initial in-reach barriers that complicated enrollment efforts for two months following the award of funding. Working closely with the Project Coordinator at SSG, CDD and SSG tapped into existing networks of providers and parole officers working with the target cohort, and developed new and effective strategies for disseminating information about the REEOP to prospective clients.

As the grant period drew to a close, CDD redoubled efforts to ensure sustainability of key project activities. CDD also ensured continuing attention to achieving systems change with respect to the coordination of services that would advance the reintegration of ex-offenders in local communities. CDD, leveraging its position with the workforce development arena, sought to widen the network of collaborating agencies and improve the coordination among organizations providing services to ex-offenders reentering local communities. The *City of Los Angeles New Start Employment Options Plan*

(Quigley, 2009) stands as testament to these collaborative, systems change-focused efforts involving individuals from over 30 organizations and county and city agencies. The stated mission of the New Start Program is to develop and implement an approach that involves all stakeholders and reduces recidivism throughout Los Angeles County by using evidence-based practices in prevention and intervention to ensure public safety and meet the needs of reentering individuals and their families (CDD, 2009).

Lead Partner, Special Services for Groups (SSG)

The REEOP partner Special Services for Groups (SSG) has an historical presence in South L.A. SSG is a non-profit organization founded in 1952. Its stated mission is to offer community-based solutions to the social and economic issues facing those in greatest need. In the mid-1990s, SSG accelerated its efforts to collaborate and build strategic partnerships with other community based organizations and groups. Their staff members develop and manage programs that serve many communities by encouraging local residents' involvement and self-sufficiency. SSG believes that the needs of groups and individuals cross traditional ethnic, racial, and other cultural boundaries. By identifying ways to pool available community resources, SSG seeks to serve as a bridge between people with common needs and resources that will meet those needs for the greatest good of all (http://www.ssgmain.org). Over time, SSG became an organization that provides an array of supportive services to diverse groups.

SSG assumed a defining role for the REEOP. The organization identified the funding opportunity, it worked with community-based (e.g., Friends Outside, Mum's the Word, Ex-Offender Action Network [EAN]) and faith-based organizations (e.g., Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches [LAM]) in South L.A. to develop plans for re-entry support services, and it initiated contact with CDD to secure employment services for participants available through extant state Workforce Investment Area resources, the WorkSource Centers.

Veronica Lewis, REEOP Project Coordinator from SSG and Sue Quigley, Project Director from CDD, were primary authors of the winning grant proposal to CDCR for REEOP funding. During the REEOP implementation, one division within SSG, the Re-Entry Maintenance Organization, provided or arranged for assessments and referrals to needed services for clients through its Community Assessment Service Center (CASA). The CASA also served as the REEOP headquarters. In daily practice, the SSG-RMO integrated the provision of employment, substance dependence, mental health, legal education, financial literacy and housing services to California State inmates paroled to South Los Angeles. In addition spearheading the daily coordination of activities,

SSG also identified and arranged subcontracts with experienced and credentialed providers of case management and other supportive services for REEOP participants.

An additional, critical role played by SSG before the REEOP project was implemented was its role in contacting the City to apply for the CDCR grant after it secured the pledge of cooperation in the project from the Los Angeles Metropolitan (LAM) Churches. SSG also assumed a coordinating role for the production and submission of the CDCR grant application.

Partner, Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches and Ex-Offenders Action Network (LAM/EAN)

The Ex-Offenders Action Network and its affiliated organization, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches (LAM), are essential partners to REEOP. Described on its website as a network of 47 small to mid-size African American congregations that span Los Angeles County, the LAM was founded in 1994 with a mission to build the capacity of clergy and community leaders to revitalize the communities in which they live, work, and worship. For the past 8 years, LAM has been engaged in a number of policy initiatives that address prisoner re-entry and crime intervention (http://www.exoffenderactionnetwork.org/history.htm).

As the REEOP project was implemented, a co-founder of the Ex-Offender Action Network (EAN) assumed the duties of Case Manager for the REEOP. Throughout the project, case managers to the REEOP provided assessments, referrals, links to GED completion classes, literacy linkages to Adult Basic Education sources and help with driver's license or state ID. Case managers also helped with parenting (fathers) training, court orders, warrants, and child custody issues (and/or referrals to specific sources for legal aid, such as Mum's the Word) to participants. The EAN/LAM project staffs also provided participants with weekly "Rap Sessions" in the REEOP headquarters. The rap sessions were intended to provide mentorship to clients newly released from correctional settings.

During implementation, the case manager from EAN/LAM worked closely with the other two SSG case managers and with the WorkSource job developers[3] to provide support for clients' efforts to maintain emotional stability during their reintegration periods. The primary objective of these supportive practices was to help empower the clients so that they would be better able to retain the employment positions they obtained and to help clients remain motivated to keep up their search for paid employment.

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[3] The terms job developers and employment specialists are used interchangeably in this discussion. Both job titles refer to staff providing employment-related services to REEOP clients.

Friends Outside (FO)

Friends Outside in Watts (FO) is a chapter of the larger organization, Friends Outside in Los Angeles County (http://ww.friendsoutsidela.org). Founded in 1972, the organization's mission is to provide services to families and children and their incarcerated and formerly incarcerated family members. Friends Outside is a non-profit advocacy group. Local chapters typically partner with community and faith-based organizations, government agencies, schools, service groups, local businesses, and the community to help break the cycle of crime and incarceration while maintaining public safety. Friends Outside chapters are funded through government contracts, foundation grants, fee-for-services and individual contributions. The organization hires ex-offenders to staff some of their programs, including the "Parole to Payroll" course.

As the REEOP project was implemented, the FO became a key partner and provided the curriculum and instructor for the 5 day/3hour per day job readiness "Parole to Payroll" course. The course is required of all REEOP clients, and enrolled clients begin the course the first Monday after their release to the community.

WorkSource [One Stop Career] Center Sites

The WorkSource Center partners to the REEOP provide employment services to participants. With the encouragement or assistance of project job developers, REEOP clients enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) system and gained access to intensive services, including job search assistance, resume preparation help, transitional employment, internships, and on the job training that allows partial reimbursement to employers during the training periods. Two WorkSource Centers also provided classroom space for the job readiness course, "From Parole to Payroll."

As the REEOP was implemented, four WorkSource Center sites representing the South Los Angeles region became partners to the REEOP: South Los Angeles-Crenshaw WorkSource Center (aka CCI); Southeast Los Angeles-Crenshaw WorkSource Center (aka UAW- LETC); Southeast-Watts WorkSource Center; and West Adams/Baldwin Hills WorkSource Center. Only two sites (i.e., CCI and UAW-LETC) were originally named as active participants in REEOP, but the number of Centers involved increased by two during implementation.

Implementation activities undertaken by WorkSource Center staffs included working closely with project case managers to identify available resources and job leads appropriate for the REEOP clients. Job developers from the WorkSource Centers, including the coordinator of WorkSource Center staff serving as the liaison to the steering committee for the project, regularly participated in case conference calls involving representatives from the CDD and SGG partners. The instructor of the job readiness course also participated in the bi-monthly calls about REEOP clients and could provided job developers with insight into specific client situations prior to the first meeting between job developers and clients.

Additional Collaborators and Facilitators of Project Activities

Additional collaborators to the project included representatives from the following agencies and organizations. Their primary contributions during the implementation phase of the project are noted in the descriptions below.

California State Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation (CDCR), Division of Community Partnerships provided the funding for the REEOP. However, it was not otherwise involved in the daily operations of the project or in developing and providing services, including referrals for particular support services (e.g., medical health care). Moreover, CDCR representatives did not regularly attend project management steering committees during the contact.

 Original plans for the REEOP design and implementation stated that CDCR would provide a way for REEOP staff to in-reach and contact prospective clients approximately three months before their release date. This activity could not be negotiated with the correctional institutions due to bureaucratic entanglements and acute and sudden economic declines in the state. However, one department within the CDCR facilitated critical outreach to prospective clients through parole offices. Thus, the active partner to the project from the CDCR was the **Region 3, Department of Adult Parole Operations (DAPO)**.

During implementation, DAPO oversaw community supervision of released ex-offenders and assisted REEOP case managers with entrée to the parole offices that were in the zip codes of areas receiving clients eligible for the project. This provided the means for REEOP case managers to reach out to prospective clients through community-based parole offices in Inglewood, Alameda/South Central, and Huntington Park. REEOP case managers provided parole officers in each of these locations with information and written materials about the program and provided

appointment sign-up sheets for interested clients. Case managers arranged to meet prospective enrollees at the parole office at a set time and date and complete an eligibility and enrollment discussion at that time.

Another contextual dilemma affecting REEOP implementation changed an early, and promising, practice involving REEOP's work with inmates at "restitution centers." During the first contract year, the DAPO had provided project staff with entrée to restitution centers. The centers were group homes that permitted non-violent offenders to engage in paid employment, contribute to their detention costs, and provide monetary compensation to victims of their offenses prior to their parole in the community. The State received one-third of their earnings to apply to the cost of their detention, one-third of their earnings went to the restitution costs, and a little less than one-third of their earnings were put aside and given to them upon release. A small percentage of their earnings (e.g., 3% or less) was available to them as disposable income. California abruptly closed these centers when the funding for them was cut due to budget short falls. As a consequence, the inmates at the restitution centers were picked up by CDCR staff during night hours and returned to prison or jail (http://articles.latimes.com/2009/jan/13/local/me-prison13). The REEOP experience with the restitution centers suggests that the confluence of a depleted state budget with the effects of a multi-layered correctional system bureaucracy could neither be sufficiently anticipated in the original REEOP grant application nor overcome with the time and funding available to the project.

Mum's the Word is a small non-profit organization that provides legal services and assistance to low income individuals in Los Angeles. Mum's the Word negotiated a small subcontract to provide these services to REEOP clients. The organization did not play a major role during implementation of the project, but it did provide critical help to some individuals who sought counsel for legal issues. For example, a single father interviewed during the REEOP evaluation received invaluable help as he sought and was awarded full custody of his children with their help. The organization was paid a fee for these services under the grant.

We turn next to a discussion of how these partners worked to adapt their original plans to the realities in place during the contract period.

3.2   Findings: Partners and the Organizational Matrix as Implemented

The Community Development Division (CDD) staff directing the REEOP drew the partners together in a timely way and effectively concentrated a joint focus on collaboration and strategic coordination. Thus, critical roles for the REEOP were assumed by partners first proposed for the project in the workforce development system (i.e., the WorkSource Centers); by the Special Services for Groups (SSG), Re-Entry Maintenance Organization division; by the Ex-Offenders Action Network affiliated with the Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches network (EAN/LAM); and by the Friends Outside (FO) chapter serving this area of Los Angeles. This finding was confirmed by informants in partner agencies and by providers working closely with REEOP clients, revealed that

In addition to undertaking daily Project Coordination, SSG served as the case management lead and contributed two of the three case managers providing empathetic, knowledgeable, and intensive case management services. The Ex-Offender Action Network, working with the Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches (EAN/LAM), provided the additional case manager for the REEOP. Case managers were the first point of contact for REEOP clients, and worked with each person to develop a meaningful, client-centered Individual Support/Service Plan that detailed employment and other end-goals, such as additional education, continued sobriety, etc.

Most of the changes to the original planning for project implementation involved shifting specified duties from one partner to another. For example, EAN/LAM was proposed as a source for mentor recruitment, mentor training, and mentor-client matching. SSG was proposed to provide legal assistance to clients. In practice, the Mum's the Word provided legal assistance to REEOP clients when needed. The mentorship recruitment, training, and matching activities outlined as the major responsibility of the EAN/LAM partner did not materialize as planned. Most of the mentor duties were subsumed by the individual case managers from both EAN/LAM and SSG. Additional shifts in planned activities included changes in the partners proposed for conducting client assessments, from Friends Outside (FO) staff to SSG case managers and WorkSource Centers' employment specialists.

Similarly, the FO was originally proposed as a source for volunteer mentors to REEOP clients, but FO assumed a more central role during project implementation. Responsibility for providing a job readiness course was proposed as a joint SSG-ENA/LAM responsibility, but as the project

unfolded, this duty was assumed by FO staff. The course design was described in these terms in the REEOP proposal for CDCR funding:

> The job readiness training content is based on industry approved publications and evidence-based practices. … Day 1 will cover orientation to the program, including the evaluation of clients' housing status. Day 2 will focus on scenario based "case teaching" to explore real-world examples of employment barriers to highlight critical points. Examples of topics: setting goals, managing conflict, managing change, communication, working collaboratively and recognizing high pay-off information. On Days 3 & 4, participants will receive a REEOP survival kit and other project-related incentives to promote job readiness and increase individual motivation. Staff will have an opportunity to observe participants and further evaluate readiness for employment. At the conclusion of the training, each individual will receive a "Passport to Success". This coupon book includes redeemable certificates based on job search progress. Coupons include bus tokens, phone cards, gas vouchers, clothing vouchers, customized resume and master application assistance. It is used as an engagement tool to keep participants fully involved in the program (CDD, 2006).

The job readiness course content and emphases closely matched this description. The only major shift with respect to the course was a switch in the partner taking responsibility for teaching the course. In addition, client incentives and other engagement strategies utilized during the course were enhanced in practice. These included a graduation ceremony and the presentation of a completion certificate for individuals who finished the five-day course; bestowal of zippered portfolio binders for protecting the compiled paperwork needed to satisfy potential employers' requirements (e.g., certificates of rehabilitation; training school certificates; ID-related paperwork, etc.); and the opportunity to meet the job developer to whom REEOP enrollees were assigned. Case managers also attended the graduation ceremonies.

Overall, the core implementation activities originally proposed did not change substantially, with the exception of a shift from pre-release recruitment plans to community-based first contacts and self-referred enrollees. This altered the DAPO-REEOP partnership after the project began. The REEOP changed the proposed in-reach recruitment plan to recruit clients at pre-arranged meetings at set dates and times in three parole office locations. The change served the clients and the project well. Some parole office sites communicated with parolees for the REEOP more extensively and more completely than others, but most of the early miscommunications between prospective clients and REEOP case managers were resolved over time. In fact, key informants reported that by the time the economic downturn had resulted in layoffs within the parole office service system, word of mouth among inmates and community parolees regarding REEOP resulted in a fairly steady stream of self-referred, prospective applicants to the project.

The role of other collaborators mentioned in the proposal, such as employers who were to be recruited for an advisory committee, representatives from the Mayor's Office, and those working with the CDD on preventing recidivism but not on this particular project (e.g., the L.A. Police Department) were smaller and less visible than envisioned in the original REEOP plan. The cultivation and nurturing of those relationships, however, are promising for sustaining attention and marshalling resources to prevent recidivism for returning community ex-offenders in a subsequent project, "The 21st Century Project: Recidivism Prevention & Reduction in Los Angeles County" (CDD, 2009). Planning for the forthcoming project involves both the primary REEOP partners and the more peripheral resources just mentioned.

3.2.1   Findings: Client Pathways to Engagement & REEOP Services

There were some variations in client referrals made to the project from those first anticipated in the proposal for funding. As noted, most prospective referrals were expected to come from the corrections system institutions themselves after pre-release in-reach procedures were established. However, given challenges to obtaining approvals to conduct in-reach recruitment, REEOP project staff devised other means to inform community-based organizations and agencies, including participating community-based parole offices, about the project. Staff developed presentations for parole officers and left contact information with REEOP brochures at parole offices, at WorkSource Centers, and at other organizations and centers that routinely provided services to returning ex-offenders. Referrals to the project were less frequently received from corrections officials working with individuals not yet released. More often, referrals were the result of contacts initiated by prospective clients who saw brochures or received information about the program through other programs with which they were affiliated (e.g., a residential treatment setting for former addicts, Skidrow shelters or portals).

Another implementation activity was strongly associated with positive client outcomes by key informants during site visit interviews in May, 2009. The CDD Project Director and the SGG Project Coordinator, in discussion with other partners, mandated that individuals enrolled in REEOP attend a five-day job readiness course being conducted by the Friends Outside partner each week at two different WorkSource Centers. In effect, this requirement served as a kind of 'motivation' screener for REEOP enrollees. It appears that the completers of the job readiness course may have been more likely to remain engaged and work with the REEOP program than

other ex-offenders who did not commit to completing the five-day course. The Project Coordinator provided an example of this insight during her interview with Westat:

> *We had one gentleman [that] … we enrolled him in the REEOP and he never showed up. Never did anything. About two months ago, he contacted us and asked to be reinstated. The case managers [told us] he had [been] … kind of a problem. He hadn't done anything. He hadn't worked – hadn't participated in any of the activities and so … I said "Well, he has to do the job readiness [course] again. If he's committed to doing it again, then we'll enroll him." And sure enough, he did so we reinstalled him. But people who have never done any type of participation? They'll have to go through the initial steps –and take the job readiness course-- and if they don't do it, we won't enroll them.*

Bolstering this idea was anecdotal information mentioned by the course instructor who estimated that 47-50% of the people who complete the 5-day course become employed --or return to school as a first step to possible employment with career advancement potential. Completion of the course tended to generate concentrated attention to job searching and job-getting processes. During interviews for the process evaluation, clients reported that they experienced this phase in the project as a mutual activity, and keenly felt support for the employment-focused efforts.

The REEOP practice of co-case-management-job-development, including the bi-monthly case conferencing calls that included input from the job readiness instructor, augmented the use of the job readiness course as a motivational strategy. Co-case management/job development relies on critical timing and the input of key staff who are working to engage clients and nudge them toward attainment of the goals they set for themselves. As a result, communication between clients and staff and across staff in the partner agencies is comprehensive, client-centered, and up to date with respect to the employment prospects and progress of specific REEOP clients.

We turn next to a discussion of how the REEOP partners worked to adapt their original plans to the realities in place during the contract period.

3.3 Findings: Strategic Plans, Core Activities, and Promising Practices

Early in the project, CDD identified the lack of coordination among organizations addressing re-entry issues in L.A. as a critical concern.

> *I think the biggest thing that we saw coming into this is it seemed like there was a multitude of re-entry workgroups…and no coordination. … The hierarchy that's involved in all of these different groups that*

are serving ex-felons and trying to move policy and procedures is very fractured" (Project Director interview, 2009).

Another partner also observed that "…prior to the establishment of the REEOP… there was no consistent interaction of service providers regarding collaborative information sharing or progressive client evaluation among the interdisciplinary programs of service providers. REEOP developed protocol models to effectively address the problems throughout the program and developed a genuine 'continuity of care' model" (Paul, 2009).

The positive outcomes for the REEOP (e.g., a reported recidivism rate of 10.9% and a 35.2% employment rate for clients in the analytical sample) are associated with: 1) the skill with which CDD kept partners focused on the need to change the re-entry services system and improve coordination of services across (and beyond) REEOP partners to benefit individuals but especially to break the recidivism cycles; 2) CDD efforts to regularize communications among project partners and also between partner staff and clients; and 3) the individual level of skill and competence with which staff in the partner agencies delivered timely and effective services to participants.

Below, we provide additional details about the findings by arraying the promising practices that were mentioned to Westat evaluators during site trip interviews in May, 2009. In the discussion that follows, we highlight the activities and plans that were central to the implementation of the project. Each brief section highlights the role and importance of a particular 'promising practice' undertaken by the CDD, as project administrator, or by the REEOP partners in concert. These practices were described by the interviewees as having significant impacts on operations and outcomes for the REEOP.

It is important to note a critical and unique feature of the REEOP was that the project coordinated mainstream employment services funded by the Department of Labor Workforce Investment Act to better serve ex-felons returning to society. Compared to other re-entry projects reviewed in Chapter 1, the REEOP project's close coordination of efforts with resources available through a state's workforce development system stands in stark contrast to projects in which these relationships were thinly addressed, if at all. The New Start Program for California which was announced in July, 2009 and implemented beginning in November, 2009 was substantially built upon the example and the foundation laid by the REEOP project model.

Promising Practices

Partner identification and recruitment. Earlier engagement with other federal projects helped the Community Development Division Previous projects had helped CDD prepare the way for the delivery of services to REEOP clients. A number of factors that helped the REEOP operate were also implicated in some of the successes of its clients. The CDD identified an important organization, SSG, offering a number of key services (e..g, physical health, dental care, mental health and substance abuse treatment, housing) and working with a number of important players in the community (e.g., Ex-Offender Action Network, LA Metropolitan Churches) to work with them on authorship and design of the grant. CDD assembled partners that knew what barriers to employment that people in the re-entry cohort were likely to face, and called on organizations to provide critical outreach and case management services that knew what resources were available in these communities. The CDD drew partners together that had experience serving the re-entering ex-offender and also had organizational knowledge about how to locate key resources for such a clientele among the faith-based organizations (e.g., the Dress for Success groups provided interview clothing or the thrift shop or church that supplied low-cost or no-cost furniture for an apartment).

Attention to ongoing project management needs. The necessity of having a steering committee of executives that would jointly manage the project was understood, as was the need for ongoing, regularized communication channels among staff providing direct services (primarily case management and employment services). CDD once thought that either the steering committee meetings or the bi-monthly co-case management conference calls for staff providing services could become less frequent as the project progress, but the need for each of the group meetings did not diminish over time, and continued from the point they began until the project ended.

Utilization of skilled individuals with expertise in partner agencies. The wisdom of the individual staff called upon to work on the project served the REEOP well, from the Project Director at the CDD, to the Project Coordinator from SSG, to the Lead Case Manager from the Ex-Offender Action Network, to the Job Developers from the WorkSource Centers, and to the job readiness instructor from Friends Outside who provided the job readiness training at two of the WorkSource Centers. The breadth of their collective, organizational reach was equally important to the project, bringing workforce system development contacts in touch with mental health and substance abuse disorders experts from SSG, or legal aid from Mum's the Word.

Employees of the L.A. workforce system and staff in the WorkSource Centers serving re-entering clients in South Los Angeles had access to online training designed to improve services to people

with multiple employment barriers and disabilities. The employment specialists/job developers from WorkSource Centers applied "best practices" associated with serving people with multiple employment barriers (e.g., employment plans were client-centered) that facilitated the creation of meaningful, goal-directed relationships with REEOP clients. The job development efforts from staff at these WorkSource Centers focused closely on securing job opportunities that were specifically tailored to individual ex-offenders, but that also addressed employer needs whenever possible (e.g., tax incentives for hiring, liability protection via bonding of the client/new hire). The job developers did mention that sometimes a relationship can be built with an employer who "*maybe can identify with someone who has a background challenge because maybe they had one and … they feel like they were in that person's shoes once. … But, it is rare*" (Job developers group interview). More often, job developers targeted employers who have a history of hiring people who have felonies or misdemeanors (e.g., construction firms, unions, oil refineries, warehouses).

Project experts included ex-offenders and advocates. Past CDD lessons learned from hiring peer-staff with similar recovery experiences for federal projects were applied. For example, CDD hired a formerly homeless individual to manage the WorkSource center "portal" co-located within a large homeless shelter during a previous Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy project. For the REEOP, CDD again sought partners and individuals who could provide "experiential expertise" and help clients engage in project activities. Project staff with prior prison and drug addiction experiences exemplified "living in recovery". One REEOP case manager with these experiences also acquired important credentials for his work (e.g., he was a Certified Addictions Drug Counselor) and developed relationships with clients that were holistic.

Another example of the receptivity of the clients to staff with similar experiences to their own was provided by the job readiness course instructor. The FO instructor, self-described as an ex-offender and recovering addict who had lived and worked in South Los Angeles for more than a decade, provided the curriculum-based, 5 day "From Parole to Payroll" course (discussed previously) to participants. The course was tailored to the needs of individual ex-offenders and the realities of the urban situations to which they returned. The timing and the content of this course, per the clients' and case managers' reports about its perceived impact, provided a critical direction for clients as they initially returned to the community[4].

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[4] To ensure continuing relevance and quality of the course curriculum, Friends Outside conducted focus groups for WorkSource Centers' staff and job developers on the REEOP, where feedback about the content and presentation of materials for the course were sought. FO plans to revamp the training for the New Start program (discussed above). The refined curriculum will include attention to topics that job developers wanted added to the course so that they could more effectively help ex-felons that were seeking employment and/or trying to maintain the jobs they had obtained after their releases to the community.

Informant interviews with peer-staff and clients characterized the development of relationships between case managers and job developers and other project staff (e.g., the FO course instructor) in terms similar to those used to describe ***therapeutic alliances*** (Campbell, n.d.). Such alliances are characterized by positive bonds between clients and counselors, agreement about the tasks of treatment, and agreement about the roles of treatment (ibid, p5). Bordin has examined the shared agreement between the client and the counselor about the resources and supports that are needed and how the client's belief in the counselor's commitment to his or her recovery process helps facilitate a strong level of working alliance (Bordin, 1979). Further, the working alliance relationship, consisting of mutual trust, respect, and involvement in the counseling process signifies the existence of a collaborative counseling process that engages the client and facilitates successful outcomes (Bordin, 1994), such as employment placement and recidivism avoidance.

Frequent, cross-agency co-case-management meetings. Work with community-based, advocacy-focused, and faith-based organizations allowed project staff to find resources that helped clients attain key objectives (e.g., paid employment, funds for trade school, appropriate apparel for job interviews) and use staff time effectively. Sharing information about home agencies and resources provided more knowledge about what might be available to project participants. In addition, the need to establish cross-agency working routines and maintain open lines of communication among organizational decision makers and direct service staff was addressed by establishing regular meeting schedules for an advisory committee comprised of executives or senior managers from the organizations. Direct service staff, providing case management or employment services, and the job readiness instructor, when REEOP clients were attending his course, met on bi-monthly case conference calls throughout the project. Knowledge of community-based organizations, including faith-based organization groups, was an integral factor in attaining the positive outcomes among REEOP clients.

3.3.1   Framing Project Flow with Promising Practices

These key practices and approaches reviewed above informed the flow of project activities for individual clients. The strategic planning and operations were monitored across and among the partners, were tweaked and refined by partner and client needs throughout the project, and resulted in this general flow of major project activities.

■ REEOP case managers contact parole officers who are assigned to serve returning ex-offenders that may be eligible for enrollment (i.e., offices in certain zip codes).

– Early in the project, REEOP case managers made informational presentations to parole officers, answered their questions, and sought their cooperation in letting prospective clients know about the REEOP. Print materials were made available (flyers, posters) and posted on bulletin boards in parole offices. Sign-up sheets were collected for the case managers by the parole officers. Parole agents were asked to let interested clients know how to contact REEOP, and/or were asked to tell the interested people when case managers would be returning to the office to meet prospective clients.

– Two of the three community parole office locations accommodated prospective client and case manager meetings onsite, and provided an area where private conversations could be held.

– Many of the initial meetings with case managers occurred onsite at the parole agency office or through the contacts made with prospective clients with the parole officer's help.

■ Case managers complete the intake and enrollment form for eligible participants. They meet with the individual and conduct a client-centered needs assessment. Together, the client and case manager produce an Individualized Service Plan. The ISP stipulates the client's employment and education goals and other service needs related to achieving employment goals (e.g., transportation assistance) and to achieving reintegration and wellness goals (e.g., referrals for mental health, substance abuse, medical, or legal aid providers).

– Exception: Clients that receive mental health treatment or services during their time in a correctional institution must continue to receive those services on an outpatient basis through the Parole Outpatient Clinic. State stipulations prohibit the use of other state-funded mental health services (e.g., at a Community Mental Health Clinic or program site) until parole (or the probation period) has been completed.

– If the client has not yet received mental health or substance abuse disorder treatment and needs it, REEOP also refers the parolee to substance abuse intervention (treatment) activities based upon individual substance abuse assessment (Criminal Justice Addiction Severity Index- CJ ASI). The SSG partner provides many of these services for clients.

– Case managers inform clients about the requirements of the program, including mandated attendance at the five-day "Parole to Payroll" job readiness course. Clients who complete the job readiness course meet their job developers on the last day. Case managers also usually attend the ceremony. Completers are given a certificate, and a leatherette binder. In addition to being a tangible reward for completion, the binder portfolio offers safe storage for clients' paperwork that case managers and other partners help the clients to complete (e.g., paperwork

needed for state ID, social security, job history listing, child support information, updated resume, education history, parole office information, tattoo removal proof, conditions of parole, restitution receipts, community service records, etc.).

- After the job readiness course has been completed, working together with regular and frequent communication, REEOP case managers and employment specialists/job developers implement the case plan.

    - Working with other REEOP partners, case managers and job developers provide or refer the client to counseling services, appropriate educational or vocational resources (e.g., adult basic education classes) and other facilities or services to meet the needs in evidence.

    - REEOP refers parolees to intervention activities based upon individual needs such as marriage and family counseling, domestic violence counseling, gender specific parenting (fatherhood classes), developing work ethic (life skills), gang intervention and anger management.

    - Clients are invited to attend weekly "Rap Sessions" that address transition issues (e.g., staying sober, maintaining relationships, managing anger). The sessions provide a way for clients to examine and share the coping strategies they have or are developing in order make their transition to life in the community a success with their peers. The sessions were led by REEOP case managers who faced similar transition and recovery issues years ago and became licensed professionals (i.e., Certified Drug and Alcohol Counselors).

- REEOP assures that transition services needs such as housing and potential entitlement services needs such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) or General Relief are assessed and offered to the parolee

- REEOP links parolees with appropriate social and support services such as mentors, peer-support networks, faith leaders, child care, transportation, clothing resources, food and services for individuals with disabilities (including individuals with developmental disabilities).

- The plan to provide individual mentors for individual clients through the LAM/EAN, originally proposed, did not materialize. Mentorship was provided one-to-one by case managers from LAM/EAN and SGG, and in a group Rap Session conducted by a SSG case manager once each week.

- Case managers and job developers are in contact with clients no less than once per week, and, depending on situations and work schedules, more frequent contact occurs.

- The three clients interviewed for the process evaluation all indicated that they had more frequent contact with case managers than with job developers. This finding could be an artifact of only interviewing clients who were currently employed. It may also be related to the bond formed during clients' participation in the weekly Rap Sessions with case managers.

Given changes in in-reach and self-referral practices noted above, not every client followed this pathway through the project. However, this categorization of major steps highlights the areas that received routine attention and assessment. Because plans and relationships built between project staff and participants were client-centered, areas of particular need (e.g., with child custody issues, financial aid for school) were addressed as needed or as they arose.

3.4 Findings: Resolving Implementation Barriers and Barriers to Work and Reintegration

In this section, we discuss our findings on how REEOP staff confronted implementation barriers, how barriers to work and reintegration were identified and resolved.

3.4.1 Resolving Implementation Barriers

At the city services and organizational levels, the earliest change in the proposed REEOP plans involved the operations governing the recruitment of clients. Out-reach procedures to parolees already in the community replaced planned in-reach to prospective clients before their return to the community. The once impenetrable silo of corrections systems and corrections procedures became mutable and cross-agency meetings resolved communication and operations barriers to a large extent. The REEOP case managers and the REEOP Project Coordinator made in-roads into the system of re-entry players when they made presentations in parole offices and began to make regularly scheduled appearance there to speak with prospective clients. It became clear that the presentations imparted more than practical knowledge about project services that could help individual parolees if they enrolled in the REEOP. It also became apparent that the kind of help and support being offered to parolees would benefit parole agents as well, who struggled to serve ever-increasing caseloads in the community.

The REEOP brought new resources to bear on re-entry issues, and importantly, brought new entities into communication with each other. For example, the Friends Outside job readiness instructor developed a range of soft skills that were emphasized in vocational training at the WorkSource Centers working with the project, with the Special Services for Groups and with the CDD. The coordination of re-entry resources and services improved. The involvement of community-based parole offices, faith-based organizations, the city workforce agency and the

WorkSource Centers, and the county and city social service advocacy organizations provided enrolled clients with access to housing, mental health, medical health, substance abuse treatment, and other essential services that helped smooth the transition to community life after prison.

The approach to the project brought a convergence of missions to the work as well. Co-founder of an ex-offender action network that operates through a consortium of churches in the LA metro region was hired as a REEOP case manager. She was drawn to the position because some of the participants in REEOP were the (formerly at-risk-youth) relatives of currently or previously incarcerated individuals to whom the LAM/EAN program provided services. Another case manager was also an ex-offender who had previously worked with a population of dually diagnosed individuals (i.e., mental illness and substance abuse disorder) as a SSG employee. Due to his experience and credentials as a certified drug and alcohol counselor (CADC), he was asked to shift duties to work with REEOP clients. These small ripples of activity within the project provided evidence of other changes that came in their wake.

The mutual benefit to agencies and clients in utilizing this process to guide communication exchanges for the REEOP was asserted by nearly all key informants at some point during their interviews with Westat.

3.4.2   Blazing New Pathways

The internal and joint management routines that evolved during the REEOP between representatives of corrections and the workforce agencies and the advocacy groups and the WorkSource Centers began to change the breadth and depth of communications around re-entry issues. The lead job developer for REEOP encapsulated these experiences in his comments during an interview:

> *What happens, there's been disputes that have gone on in this process here, but the thing is we learn how to use those as advantages and not disadvantages. We don't harbor things and allow them to fester into evasive kind of dealings with one another. We work through it. The demonstration model that has been produced out of that is amazing and we could sit here today and you know, job developers don't share job leads with each other. You may hear it and they have it written down in their manual, but it doesn't happen because it's gold, but I'm seeing that it is a whole different psyche of approach that people use in this system and it's so amazing. … It started with Sue Quigley [CDD Project Director]. She is one of the biggest advocates of the collaboration. That is her mantra. …She's said it and she pounds it in. "Are you guys sharing? Are you speaking about this?" And it took a while to begin to adapt that*

mentality. At first, you say, whatever, OK, but then you really see that it is a much better benefit [to] use that model than not.

Another job developer captured the pragmatic benefits of the cross-agency, co-case management approaches for clients and the project in his comments:

If I send you [a client] out to an employer and I haven't prescreened the variables that can hinder or give you some kind of advantage when you get there and he says I can't really, I can't help you. I built them up and got them all encouraged and I could have avoided that, then I am doing more damage than good and that's what we really try to work on. With the co-case management process, the collaborative process that we use through REEOP, it allows us a real solid foundation to work with.

While it is difficult to prove any causal relationship, it is certainly plausible that this dynamic change in cross-agency communications may have paved the way for a figurative, and literal, "New Start." The joint program, a piece of the "21st Century Project: Recidivism Prevention & Reduction in Los Angeles Country," ushered in a formalized Memorandum of Understanding between the California Workforce Investment Board (via the Workforce Development Division and the Community Development Division), the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and 17 of the WorkSource Centers in the City of Los Angeles's workforce development system. The 21st Century Project was a planning grant funded by CDCR to coordinate re-entry services within the City of Los Angeles. The California Assembly Bill 900 dictated the changes that needed to occur within the California prison system, and provided the impetus for the New Start Program.

The increased knowledge of community resources and the increase in communication among the entities that worked with state corrections and employment services and supportive services facilitated attention to a new mission. The new mission relies on the use of evidence-based practices, provides a continuum of proven and successful services, attends to administrative changes that coordinate administrative policy changes that support efficient and effective practices, and concentrates attention on promoting high quality media coverage and public education.

3.4.3   Moving Beyond Client-Encountered Barriers to Re-entry: Engagement and Problem-Solving

At the client level, the primary implementation barriers to attaining paid employment and avoiding recidivism for each participant in the project were engaging the person in a relationship and maintaining that relationship over time. The partners and their individual staff were knowledgeable and experienced, so these issues were anticipated and staff developed strategies to address them.

Project staff, case managers, and job developers were aware that ensuring that the client had access to secure housing and essential resources (food, income, clothing and toiletries, transportation) made a successful transition from jail to life in the community possible. The critical elements in the tangible array of services and support for REEOP clients included—but certainly were not limited to-- these features:

- Job readiness course provided practical and emotional tips for coping with the adversities and negative reactions likely to be encountered as clients tried to return to the workforce;

- A "Passport to Success" was awarded to clients for their continued engagement with program services and that provided coupons and assistance for acquiring clothing or transportation passes;

- The "Positive Paper Trail" gave clients an overview of the paperwork they would need to acquire in order to pursue jobs, deal with landlords, speak to employers, handle family law issues, document payment of restitution charges, and also gave clients a way to collect and mark their progress with project staff and their parole agent toward acquiring what was needed; and

- The "Rap Session" was offered once per week by case managers who had been ex-offenders and had worked hard to recover from drug addictions, to manage emotional or psychiatric difficulties, etc. The topics and intensity of the groups varied with individual participants but allowed a venue for re-entering community members to voice what they were up against and listen to each other to get tips about coping and moving forward.

From the descriptions offered by clients and project staff, it appeared that the earliest attention was paid to the acquisition of essential and tangible resources (e.g., certificate for completion of the job readiness course; the leather binder-portfolio that provided a place to store the positive paperwork people were acquiring; the Passport coupons for clothing needed for job interviews). Securing needed resources and having a forum to problem-solve and explore issues were also quite important and occurred in tandem, aided by the Rap Sessions.

3.4.4   Creating Client-Staff Working Alliances

However, as these tangible resources were acquired and used, other structures of relationship and communication were being built between clients and staff that could—and did—enable clients to acquire meaningful and well-paid jobs that they wanted to keep. This other "construction work"

encompassed activity beyond the essential rapport building, and is well conveyed by the idea of "working alliance". Evidence that working alliances developed between case managers, job developers, and the REEOP clients is found in the reports of clients and staff and seen in the analysis of the outcomes for these joint endeavors during the demonstration project (reviewed in Section X). Such claims are consistent with a growing body of literature as well.

Studies document that staff efforts to engage an individual in activities that focus on the employment-attainment process is important to increasing successful employment outcomes (Chan, Shaw, McMahon, Kock, & Strauser, 1997; Lustig, Strauser, and Rice, 2009). Other studies indicate that building a working alliance between a client receiving employment services and a staff person delivering those services is significantly associated with the attainment of positive employment outcomes and ongoing labor force participation. Creating "healthy, collaborative, mutually trusting clinician-patient relationships" (Young, et al., 2008) increase the chances that participants will "undertake new endeavors, take new risks and experience growth in the recovery process" (ibid.), including the attainment of competitive employment. Recent evaluation reports from Federal employment demonstration programs, including the ODEP program in which the CDD recently participated (e.g., Frey, Stewart, Karakus, McCoy, Elinson, Palan, and Gollapudi, 2009), underscore this finding and support the idea that the formation of working alliances between participants and staff workers support job attainment efforts and also buttress individual participants' long term involvement with competitive employment, through one or several jobs (ibid.).

3.4.5 Expanding the Concept of Positive Client Outcomes

One of the original goals for the REEOP was the placement of individual clients in employment within 30 days of their return to south Los Angeles. In the context of the general and specific obstacles to clients' re-integration and job-seeking endeavors, most key informants reflected on whether the time frame set for achieving the goal was appropriate. More than that, however, key informants speculated on whether the goal itself was realistic for people who had so many barriers and obstacles to overcome. Many informants thought it was important to acknowledge the many kinds of client successes that they had witnessed that weren't being "counted" as positive outcomes for the clients. Several staff noted positive employment outcomes might depend on the clients' abilities to reach benchmarks (e.g., completion of GED, completion of residential addiction treatment) that would eventually result in the client's attainment of satisfying employment.

Administrators and direct service staff alike offered many opinions about why employment should not be seen as the only positive outcome that "counts." Often such statements were followed by observations about the positive role that acquiring greater education plays in the eventual success of clients in their reintegration efforts. Literature shows that the evaluation of other re-entry programs (e.g., Monsma and Smidt, 2009) also asserted the importance of including attainment of educational certificates or degrees as positive outcomes for clients re-entering community settings following incarceration. Observations from the REEOP job developers and case managers underscore these ideas, as heard in the following excerpts from the evaluation interviews.

> *A job is not going to solve everybody's issue, but an education will empower them. … Every outcome that's positive is not going to be employment.*

> *[One of my REEOP clients at the WorkSource Center] disagreed with me about the need for school.] …For lack of understanding the process, she thought "Hey I need a job," but she didn't know [what I knew]- 'No, you're not going to get a job. It's not going to happen. So, let's be realistic and let's give you a fighting chance.' It's almost as if everybody turned against the idea just for the sake of the emotionalism of the moment that we've got to get her a job, but if you trust me to do my part and listen to what I'm saying and understand the reality. I'm not trying to brush her off or get her off my table. I'm saying that there is nothing that can be done realistically to put her in a beneficial situation outside of at least finishing her high school education. Get a GED. Finish her education so we can use custodial work or whatever that may be and then come back and let me fight for you that way. … Ultimately [that] became an amicable idea and the young lady did start the school process. … [And] we all came to a place where we saw how realistic we have to approach the things that we are dealing with.*

The project director from CDD and the project coordinator from SSG also reflected on the role of education in clients' reintegration efforts. Their comments indicate that more attention to these issues emerged in the course of the project.

> *Project coordinator: Some people, even with a strong push from us, they do – do not – they're not interested in completing – getting their high school diploma or GED. And what we found is – we had this conversation about three months ago in our meeting-- is that we really need to push them and make them realize that – not that we haven't been doing it – but make them recognize that this is directly correlated to living wage employment. So what we found is that usually they find it out on their own. So they are adamant [at first, so we tell them] "We're not going to dis-enroll you if you say, "I… completed sixth grade, but I don't want to finish school. I just want to get a job." We're not going to dis-enroll them, but when they experience with job developers and see how difficult it is – that most employers require at least THAT [GED] at a minimum, they usually come back. You know? But we don't require it. It's not mandatory…*

> *Project Director: … As of March [20090], we have about 14[clients] – participating in education…[at] ALL levels…high school, community college, …universities, vocational training…*

[But] that's something that really… it doesn't seem that [CDCR, the funding sponsor] is that interested in [as a positive outcome].

Project management and provider staff see the essential role that education plays in an individual's progress toward more productive lives, expanded employment potential, and an increased quality of life. Collectively, they communicated that performance measures that ignore education and are strictly tied to job placements and rate of employment for clients don't quite match the realities of many client's situations or the realities of employer expectations. This becomes especially an important issue when seeking jobs that will help clients advance beyond secondary labor market.

Other staff members observed that even less tangible steps forward should be acknowledged as positive outcomes in some way. The job readiness instructor emphasized that clients who change their attitude toward work and accept and become engaged in law-abiding pursuits have achieved a certain degree of success.

> *I'm more concerned with getting their attitude right because that is what's been standing in their way. They're not willing to take suggestions, not willing to put in a day's work looking for work. Uh, they think that one or two applications a day is a job search. I try to instill in them —six is an entry level job search – eight, ten a day? Now you're job searching. You know, get them up and running in the right direction, you know? … I really to try instill in them, "You've gotta be clean and sober or people are going to know. It's going to show up one way or another. In your attitude. In your work ethic. Or in a drug test, you know? Heaven forbid you just smoked something the other day and your drug test is tomorrow. It's going to show."*

The course instructor said that the importance of helping clients develop more positive attitudes even overshadows the value of some of the credentials clients bring to the employment-search processes.

> *Because a lot of times, even though they have the educational background and skills and training, uh, they come out with the mentality that, "Now I'm an ex-offender. I can't get a job." It just isn't good. It's harder, you know. People, you know, there's all kinds of pre-conceived notions that go with that. You see it on the news every night and that's what they think you are. …So I work on that attitude – that defeatist attitude extensively and every day all through the week, you know?*

Attitudinal change as a precursor to re-entry success was also emphasized by the job developers.

> *Even though [one of my REEOP clients] was incarcerated again, I would say that that's a success [because] … even though he was incarcerated again, he realized and now he is thinking "You know what? I'm going to make that change now. I spoke with [my job developer and he] was giving me some really true information. I see that now. I am going to do my best not to become incarcerated anymore." He recognizes a lot of advice that was offered was real advice. It wasn't just an excuse just to get him away from your desk and he really valued now and he is looking forward to coming home. That was the*

first letter. Last Friday, I received another letter from him and he was telling me he was closer to coming home. He said "I get out in August. I am looking forward to touching base with you." Even though the success wasn't employment, it was more a change of thought and of lifestyle … and hopefully good things will come out of that. So, we'd like to see successes with employment and that's great. We want to try to do that, but it's not always going to work like that. It might be just the change of thought of "You know what? I'm done with this lifestyle."

The case managers built on these ideas during their interviews as well, and connected work on attitude change to the quality and depth of the personal—and instrumental—bonds that project staff members built with project participants.

We give them the power not to give up. They already know that there is a stereotype and there is a stigma about them, so they carry that psychologically so what we're doing is we're creating a community that they can feel safe in. It's almost like a city of refuge. When you build them up internally and give them tools so when they go out there, they …know that even if they fail and they didn't get the job, they have someone they can come talk to who'll say hey you can do this and they go back out again. … I tell them … what you do is you show [employers] that you're more than this label that has been placed on you or this condition. That doesn't make you who you are and you're a better person. You can do a darn good job and be an asset so you show them that and you will move up the ladder and you will get to where you want to be and what you call comfortable, but at the same time, realize it may not happen tomorrow. It may not happen next week, but it's going to happen. That encouragement has been able to keep folks afloat … and cause them to not relapse or be aggressive about the situation. … And when they do get that job and I'm excited and I'm like, remember the conversation we had 2 weeks ago? [They say] "I sure do and thank you" because now it's reality to them.

The idea that all clients could obtain and maintain employment was widely shared by project management and direct service staff, and all accepted it as the overarching goal and the most direct route to an improved quality of life for the REEOP clients. However, their work with the clients - to engage them; to construct working alliances; and to help them acquire soft skills, education, and vocational credentials needed for more satisfying and higher paid jobs - led all key informants to articulate an appreciation of the smaller milestones and successes that would make positive employment outcomes possible.

Perspectives on positive steps forward that are measured in terms other than attainment of desired employment positions are echoed in many of the opinions and manifest in many of the activities pursued by REEOP clients who were available for interviews during the evaluation period. We conclude the discussion of process evaluation findings by exploring clients' input in the following section.

3.5   Findings: Perspectives of REEOP Clients

In this discussion section, as we review data from the interviews with REEOP clients, it becomes apparent that the weight—and import—of the steps clients take as they navigate the REEOP demonstration period vary considerably for each person. What is equally striking in the narrative synopses is how much each person also brings to their experiences. For the individuals who encounter the project when they are motivated and ready to seek authentic transition to a law-abiding, employment-defined life in South Los Angeles, the REEOP can be the crest of the wave that carries them to a new shore.

3.5.1   Experiences of REEOP Participants

During the evaluation, Westat had the opportunity to interview three participants in the REEOP. In this section we describe how the individuals learned about the project, the kinds of services each received, the outcomes they have realized thus far from their participation, and their overall impressions of the project.

Kevin was the first gentleman we spoke to, and he had been living in the community for four months at the time of the interview. In his terms, he "did a long period of time" in Lancaster State Prison. He learned about the project when he saw a notice about it on the bulletin board in the prison. During the interview, he did not disclose what he had been incarcerated for, but from the notice he read, he understood that he had committed the kind of crime for which eligibility would have to be individually considered5. He wrote to Sue Quigley, the project director at the Community Development Division, and asked to be considered for the project. Ms. Quigley was able to work with project staff and enroll Kevin in the project.

Kevin was one of the few individuals that had been contacted during his incarceration (as noted above, the in-reach procedures had not worked out as planned). He mentioned that he met with a REEOP case manager twice, about 60 days apart, prior to his release. When he left prison, he was able to share an apartment with his mother. The apartment is close to some of his other relatives (a sister, an uncle, and an aunt) as well. When asked, he said that "*the hardest thing [about getting out and*

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5 Individuals with serious felonies, spousal abuse, high notoriety/public interest and street gang members were to be considered on a case by case basis prior to REEOP enrollment. A number of other offenses rendered individuals ineligible for the project: felony holds, pending criminal charges, serious violent conviction, sex offense conviction, arson offense conviction, US immigration naturalization service hold, firearm possession or use and simulated possession or use of a firearm, and interstate parolees.

starting again] is … the hardest thing is family, because you see these faces when they're little and they're grown now. … Trying to interact –be a part of what's been going on in their life already [is] the hardest transition." He'd like to stay in mother's apartment for at a year before gets own place, so that he can put some money aside and also try to make up for "lost time" with family members.

He learned from other inmates that he was eligible for General Relief after his release, and he applied for and received that benefit after his incarceration ended.

He is engaged with project activities on a regular basis. He took the 5-day job readiness course, "From Parole to Payroll," and completed it. He is a high school graduate, wants to be self-employed as a barber, and is pursuing certification as a barber-stylist. To this end, he has enrolled in a 6 month barbering-stylist trade school course outside of LA in Torrance, California and gets there with his own car. Eventually he would like to go into personal financial consulting, and may return to school for that in the future.

The travel time and transportation costs associated with attending the barbering course means less face-to-face time with his job developer, but he does get regular e-mails from him (e.g., containing information about job fairs or free clothing) and is in touch at least a few times a week. He and the job developer are working on self-promotion of his barbering business. He has business cards and a flyer for his barber work now. He rents a barber chair in a community business three days each week. He also has portable tools, so can take his tools to private homes as well. He has designed and purchased business cards and made flyers for his business, too. After rent and expenses, he told us he was making about $150 (profit) each week. Acquiring this skill set has improved the quality of his life. As Kevin puts it, "*Barbering is where my heart's at. That's where I can just wake up every day and say, 'Okay. I can make it.'*"

When asked about the services he received from the REEOP, he mentioned several of the essential resources that project staff had helped him procure, i.e., clothing, underwear, toiletries, and a Walmart gift card. The project also paid for his barbering tools, which he needed to purchase before he could enroll in the 6-month certificate course. The REEOP also helped him fill out his car registration and gave him a gas card to use to get to classes.

The relationship he developed with his REEOP case manager has been meaningful to him. He sees his case manager in person and continues to participate in the weekly "rap sessions" that the REEOP case managers offer at their location to people in the program. He said the rap sessions are meaningful—you "*get morale, so to speak. ..Talk to guys going through the same thing and [facing] the same*

frustration …So you get to express it and see how he did and what it did for you. You can see what has and hasn't worked for some of the other people going through the same transitions."

His suggestions for improving the program include:

- Working with people still in high school, to help them stay on the streets and out of prison;

- Asking city councilmen to work with REEOP clients;

- Teaching participants how to form a non-profit 501 (c3) program; and

- Using ex-offenders to teach trade skills (e.g., welding, masonry) to people being released to the community on parole.

Kevin noted that he would, and already has, recommended the program to people he met in [prison and others he has met in the community, after release.

Ronald found out about the REEOP after he had been released from jail and saw a notice on a bulletin board at one of the project's participating WorkSource Centers. He was at the Center because he had been laid off and was seeking employment and the flyer he noticed was about the job readiness course that was tailored for people who were ex-offenders. When he asked to learn more about it, he met the job readiness course instructor from Friends Outside. In the discussion, his eligibility for the course and the program were verified, and he enrolled in REEOP.

Although most clients meet their case manager first and then are introduced to the job readiness course and the job developer that will work with them, the process was switched for Ronald because he referred himself after he found the REEOP announcement on the WorkSource Center message board. After Ronald signed up for and started attending the 5 day job readiness course, he was accepted by the project and enrolled. He met his case manager on the fifth day, during the completion/graduation ceremony. He was also assigned to work with a job developer at that time. He is in fairly frequent contact with his job developer, and they talk at least 1-2 times each week. Sometimes, Ronald and his job developer are prayer partners. Ronald also remains in contact with his REEOP case manager, and speaks with him about once per week, in addition to his attendance at weekly Rap Sessions.

At the time of his interview, Ronald had been engaged in the REEOP for about a year. In that time, he had obtained a series of paid and volunteer jobs, and actively pursued a strategy in the

competitive marketplace. For instance, he worked some unpaid jobs just for the experience and the portfolio building. "*You gotta crawl before you can walk.*" By his own report, that strategy paid off and led to other paying jobs. Another pragmatic approach he employs is to keep on good terms with past employers. He mentioned that past employers have been glad to provide a positive reference for him to prospective employers, and he believes this has helped him get hired for some of the temp work he has done recently.

About one week after his original release to the community, he worked cleaning graffiti for the city. His next job was in property management, where he made about $10/hour. His property management position ended when the housing market bubble collapsed and the management company laid off a number of individuals. He applied to and was hired by a temp agency, where he found 5-6 short-term jobs. His REEOP job developer had provided him with the lead to his current job, full-time, at National Car Rental, driving a shuttle van from the terminal to the parking lot for National customers at the Los Angeles airport. The job site is within walking distance of his home. The job also has career advancement potential, and he plans to stay, and advance, in the job.

During the interview, we asked if he had needed or received any other services, in addition to employment services, from the REEOP in the past year. He said that he had needed help with housing, but solved it himself, "*man-to-man*". He found a small apartment and discovered that he preferred less space. He acknowledged that "*I'll never be bothered with a lot of things.*" His apartment is not subsidized, and he pays rent and utilities out of his earnings from his job at National.

He did receive help from his job developer and the WorkSource Center during his time in REEOP with completing his GED. He hopes in the future to return to a trade school to learn how to install solar panels, a multi-week course.

Ronald does not acknowledge needing referrals for mental health or substance use disorders, but did tell us he'd "*been through some of that.*" He has attended several of the Rap Sessions hosted by the REEOP case managers, and finds them "*really enlightening.*" He said he can relate to his case manager. *"[He's] been here, did that. You know, if you ain't been there, [having] done that [and landed in prison] I wouldn't probably try to hear what you're talking about. … It's a real positive feeling, knowing you're not the only one that goes through their ups and downs."* He says he can talk to case manager about pretty much anything, and yet, still expresses some reluctance to do that. "*He's a man over there, like I'm a man over here and I don't like to burden nobody with my problems.*"

He sees parallels to attending the Rap Sessions, and attending church. *"You come and listen to experiences and how other people experience God and how another person has been delivered by God while going through the same situation as mine."* He describes the REEOP as *"a blessed thing. … I tried at first to do it my own way, but I finally saw that it does help to listen to people"* who have been through similar circumstances, and to get feedback from them.

He has recommended the program to other people he knew in prison, and gives the REEOP an "A+" for helping him with so many things. Project funds helped him obtain his Commercial Driver's License by paying for his school course hours and by paying for the drug test that was required before he could be hired by National. He paid the fee for the CDL himself, by putting aside some money each week from his job until he had what he needed. Originally, the Parole Office had also been willing to contribute to the cost of the course and the license fee, but when the state hit the economic skid in 2008-2009, that possibility ended.

Ernie also volunteered to be interviewed for the Westat evaluation of the REEOP. He first learned about the REEOP during his last month in a time-limited residential program for drug treatment. He had served 3 prison terms prior to his acceptance into the residential, community-based addiction treatment program. Because he was finishing the program, he was about to lose his housing. When he met his REEOP case manager, he was facing homelessness, joblessness and was desperate to find legal help in order to win back full custody of his minor daughter (she was currently in foster care). A staff member in the residential treatment program told him about the REEOP, and he initiated the first contact with REEOP. He wanted to learn more about the program and find out if he was eligible for services.

Ernie was eligible for the program and enrolled. He describes meeting the REEOP case manager—and being listened to—as one of the first times he had been able to breathe in a long while. He described, in great detail, how relieved he was to find someone who would listen to him and steer him toward resources and program staff that could assist him in his search for housing and employment.

The REEOP case manager encouraged him and helped him return to school. A school counselor offered him formal and informal advice, including a recommendation that he participate in Toastmaster International where he earned his "Comprehension One" level. Ernie acquired credentials from schools and the community college, completing course in Community Safety and U.S. Conflict Analyst training. School and the other opportunities *"changed the arenas I was in"* and *"opened his mind to actually do different things."*

The support and advice from the case manager gave Ernie a non-judgmental sounding board and provided him with a lot of relief from anxiety. Ernie saw a stark difference between his experiences in REEOP and other programs: "*They didn't say, "This is what could happen. They said 'This is what we're going to* **do.***"*

By his account, "*My biggest first step was learning "emotional literacy.*" He noted that his earlier father or brother role models were gang and prison affiliated and that he had never learned emotional literacy before he encountered the REEOP staff and their support. "*Because if I didn't get a hold of that, I don't think I would have got a hold of anything else. And it's the truth because your emotions are what you think, what you feel, everything. How you interact with people. If you don't know how to control them or identify them, how can you do anything else? It's like … once I figured that out-- or partially 'cause I'm still working on it – … it made everything else a lot easier. It made me talk a little softer. It made me be a little more attentive towards people. I wasn't as rude or [impatient or] whatever.*" He has been in the program two years and regularly attends the weekly Rap Sessions. *"They made it so comfortable for me for the transition [from institutions to life in the community]."*

He took the job readiness course and at its conclusion, he met his job developer. At the WorkSource Center with his job developer, Ernie learned how to job search and find job leads. One of his first employment positions in the REEOP was as a laborer, and his duties included helping to restore fire burn-out areas for the Conservation Corps. It was quite fulfilling to him: "*It was inspirational to work while standing on a mountaintop and look over the mountains and the ocean.*" Like other clients, Ernie developed a strategy and decided to build his work portfolio by working at a variety of tasks, and staying close to sources of information in the WorkSource Center. He took a job with the Obama campaign and learned about grass-roots organizing. In February, 2009, he was offered and accepted a full-time as Job Developer/employment specialist for Skidrow Housing Development. He was working there when he was interviewed for this evaluation report.

Another REEOP partner, Mum's the Word, offered legal advice and guidance in restoring full custody of his children. Another REEOP partner helped him find appropriate and affordable housing for his family in the area. Ernie has housing, custody of his children, his sobriety, his employment, and a positive outlook. When not working, he often serves as a motivational speaker to at-risk youth and young adults as well.

As the interview drew to a close, Ernie reflected on his REEOP experiences in these ways. He says he has "*… been blessed. Without REEOP my life would be without hope.*" The program exceeded his hopes and expectations and he could not offer ideas about recommendations for its improvement.

3.5.2   Summary Highlights of REEOP Client Narratives

In summary, the experiences of each of the clients in the re-entry initiative reveal strong, self-directed efforts to engage in the reintegration activities available through the REEOP. They tenaciously pursued routes of self referral (i.e., by letter writing while imprisoned; by calling to follow-up on a lead; by taking a "job readiness" course that someone with an employment history 'surely didn't need') and took risks to enter into relationships with outsiders when much of their recent past had cautioned against such risks. In the latter regard, the lead case manager observed that *"I find that the first day [when we meet a prospective client] is a little touch and go because these are individuals that have trust issues so they don't trust anyone. These are individuals that have probably already experienced different programs and got a negative outcome. So they are afraid to jump in there and trust anyone or another program" (Case managers' interview, May, 2009).*

In consideration of such dynamics, the REEOP clients that volunteered to participate in the evaluation interviews may well represent a departure from more typical—and less engaged--responses to outreach efforts made by community-based organization staff that provide re-entry services. Two of the three clients also mentioned that they had experienced some successes with drug rehabilitation efforts, and one of the three noted that his emotional maturity level had increased during his time in the REEOP. Since these individual traits-- the capacity to trust others, to pursue and succeed at drug and alcohol sobriety efforts, and to articulate a need and desire to increase emotional strength—are rarely cited as attributes common to individuals returning to community bases after periods of incarceration, it is likely that individuals who self-selected to participate in the REEOP are substantially different than other individuals participating in different reentry programs (e..g., such as the programs reviewed in Chapter 1). While this does not diminish the positive outcomes reported for REEOP clients, it does limit potential claims about the <u>generalizability</u> of such findings. Additional data about program services, to be collected from a wider and broader sample of individuals, would be needed to increase the strength of this claim.

It is important to understand that this methodological observation concerning the lack of generalizability about these process findings (largely due to budget and other pragmatic constraints affecting the breadth of the project) does not diminish the strength of the positive findings for the clients discussed in this chapter. As Sue Quigley, Project Director at the CDD observed, for many individual participants, their "traits" or inner strengths were enhanced and developed as a result of their participation in the REEOP in general and especially through processes and strategies used by

project staff—i.e., through their continual engagement efforts, through their offerings of emotional and resource supports that staff identified and secured for clients, and through the provision of and guidance for the rap session groups that allowed clients to discuss difficult issues and help develop more positive sense of self-worth and confidence in decision-making (Quigley, 2009b).

These latter assertions are borne out by the clients interviewed for this process evaluation component. Each REEOP client that we spoke to about their experiences persevered when it was difficult to keep connected to the program. The support they received from REEOP staff bolstered their own efforts to develop more productive and satisfying ways of living in the community and avoid a return to prison or jail. One client expressed a new understanding about how to cope with problematic relationship issues that he faced when he returned to the community:

> *Q: Has it been difficult to reunite with family or friends after your release?*
> *R: (LOUDLY) Whooo! That's a story in itself. … (PAUSE) I'm going to tell you like it is. A lot of [friends and family] are still doing the same things before I went to prison. A lot of them have advanced no way. And I just look at it like this. We can become our own worst enemies or whatever and there's a lot of "toxicate" [sic] people that could be in our lives you gotta eliminate.*

Two of the three people interviewed mentioned a similar dynamic upon their return to the local community; they were approached by past acquaintances and friends with whom they had pursued illegal activities prior to serving their time and had to turn down the offers or break the relationships to avoid "*slipping" back into the ways I did it before*". The client informants signaled that these were difficult steps to take. One of the interviewees said that former friends had ridiculed his focus on recovery and employment issues, and implied that he was being disloyal by opting to pursue the program versus rekindling former community ties.

Thus, the clients' efforts to maintain their connection to REEOP project staff and to the goals of the program were rarely conflict-free and always deliberate. Despite transportation costs (only some of which could be reimbursed by REEOP funding) and time constraints, these clients attended weekly Rap Sessions with the case managers and remained in regular contact with them and with their job developers. None of these relationship streets ran one-way; the experienced and street-wise case managers and job developers (i.e., some of whom were ex-offenders, living in recovery from addiction or managing mental illness) set forth expectations that the clients struggled to meet.

The clients' narratives were particularly striking with respect to the reports of deep rapport that clients reported they had forged with their REEOP project team members (both case managers and job developers). The bonds between the staff and the clients, and the shoulder-to-shoulder work

pursing employment and other recovery (e.g., starting or maintaining treatment) or reintegration goals (e.g., reuniting with family) signaled that authentic, valuable, and purposeful working alliances were being created. This claim is strengthened by other evidence gathered during the interviews, as well. Each client asserted that they would remain in contact with project staff after their 2 year REEOP period ended, and staff members interviewed for the evaluation noted that current and former REEOP clients, even those who had exited the program, routinely called or dropped by with news about their personal current events.

Another summary finding from the interviews with REEOP clients available for the process evaluation revealed that clients' efforts to persevere in the face of adversity included a willingness to do volunteer work in order to acquire work experience and build an employment portfolio. Each of the people interviewed indicated that at some point in their post-release, community experiences, they performed unpaid and volunteer work for these reasons. Given this shared attribute among the small number of clients available for interviews at the time of the evaluation, and in light of the fact that the job readiness course instructor reported that he spent considerable time emphasizing this point, it may be that that clients who participate in the 5-day course acquire practical information that does effectively help them to move from "Parole to Payroll."

Additional support for this dynamic is also found in outcome data which reveal associations between number of services utilized and positive employment outcomes (reported in the following chapter). However, this positive association cannot be generalized to other REEOP clients or to other clients in other re-entry programs, due to the small volume of data collected from just 3 clients. The reportedly positive impact of the job readiness course, and the connections between the clients' acceptance of taking unpaid work as a job finding strategy promulgated by the course and subsequent job outcomes, warrant additional examination, with a larger sample. To date, the results of these practices are promising.

In the next chapter, we present and review the analyses of outcome data for the REEOP evaluation.

Outcomes Analysis **4**

The Los Angeles REEOP Database includes customer level information on demographic characteristics, receipt of program services, and functional outcomes (employment, recidivism). Findings are described below. Analysis was performed on an "analytical sample" (i.e., participants with Service Plan including "Job readiness program" and stayed with the program for more than 60 days) (see Appendix B).

4.1 Enrollment

The analysis of the REEOP database indicates that there were 157 program customers who enrolled in the program from its inception in July, 2007 until June, 2009. The database included all individuals enrolled in the program, regardless of the nature and extent of their engagement in the program and receipt of program services. Westat created an analytical sample that consisted of program customers with a completed service plan (individual treatment and rehabilitation plan) that includes at least a minimal amount of employment related services (1 week of job readiness program). The following criteria defined the analytical sample: (1) Stayed in the program for more than 60 days, and (2) Service plan includes job readiness program. This yielded an analytical sample of 108 program customers. Analyses on enrollment trend, participant characteristics, and services received and functional outcomes (employment and recidivism) use the analytical sample. Appendix C presents information on the excluded sample of 49 participants who either stayed with the program less than 61 days and/or did not have job readiness program listed in their service plan.

Table 6-1 shows that the majority of customers (88 out of 108) were enrolled in 2008. As of June, 2009, 73 people had left the program, and 35 were still enrolled.

Table 4-1 Annual enrollment and program exit figures

Year	New enrollees	Program exits	Participants remaining in the programs
2007	8	0	8
2008	88	41	55
2009	12	32	45
Totals as of June 1, 2009	108	73	35

4.2   Characteristics of Program Customers

The majority of program participants were male (69.3 percent) (Table 6-2). The average and median age at enrollment in the analytical sample was 38 and 40 years old, respectively. The greatest percent of participants fall within the 31-44 year old age group (43.5 percent). More than one-fourth of participants were in the 30 years old or less (27.8 percent) or 45 year old or greater groups (28.7 percent).

About one in three participants in the sample had less than a high school education (34.3 percent). However, substantial numbers had a high school diploma or GED (48.1 percent) and had attended more than high school (17.6 percent). The majority of this population was never married (56.5 percent), and about 14.8 percent in were married or living together.

Table 4-2   Demographic characteristics of program participants

Characteristics	Analytical sample (N=108)	
	N	%
Gender		
Male	58	53.7
Female	50	46.3
Age at enrollment		
30 years old or less	30	27.8
31-44 years old	47	43.5
45 and more	31	28.7
Education		
Less than high school	37	34.3
High school graduate	52	48.1
More than high school	19	17.6
Marital Status		
Never married	61	56.5
Married/Living together	16	14.8
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	31	28.7

* Analytical sample includes those participants who received 1 week of job readiness course and stayed with the program for more than 60 days.

The information collected at enrollment also consisted of data on disability status, whether caring for children, age at first arrest, ever employed for a full six months, and primary drug of choice (Table 6-3). About 1 in 6 program customers (15.7 percent), reported at least one disability. About forty one percent were caring for at least 1 child under the age of eighteen (41.7 percent). Majority of participants had their first arrest at 18 years old or younger (28 percent less than 16 years old and

27.1 percent between 16 and 18 years old). In terms of substance abuse, 34.6 percent reported cocaine/crack to be their primary drug of choice. The program customers who stated Marijuana and Other drugs (including alcohol) as their primary drug of choice are 20.6 percent and 23.4 percent, respectively. Percent of customers for whom the substance abuse problem was not applicable was 21.5 percent.

Table 4-3   Other characteristics of program participants

Characteristics	Analytical sample (N=108)	
	N	%
Disability status		
Reports at least 1 disability	17	15.7
Caring for children		
Caring for at least 1 child under the age of 18	45	41.7
Age at first arrest *		
Less than 16 years old	30	28.0
Between 16 and 18 years old	29	27.1
19 years old or more	48	44.9
Substance abuse *		
Cocaine/Crack	37	34.6
Marijuana	22	20.6
Other drugs	25	23.4
Not applicable	23	21.5
Other Information		
Average length of stay (Std. dev.) in program as of June 1, 2009	197 (124) days	Min: 61 and Max: 585
Length of stay greater than 6 months	46	42.6
Average age (Std. dev.)	38 (9.6)	Min: 20 and Max: 59

* We use self-reported primary drug of choice as a substance abuse indicator. It excludes 1 subject with missing information.

Average length of participation among participants in the analytical sample was 197 days (~6 ½ months) with a minimum of 61 days (~2 months) and a maximum of 585 days (~19.5 months). Less than half of the participants (42.6%) stayed with the program greater than 6 months. Average age at enrollment was 38 years with a minimum age of 20 and maximum age of 59 years old.

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4.3   Program Services

In this section, we discuss the program services planned and discussed with the clients and the information on the receipt of these services by participants. All clients in the analytical sample had a service plan including Job readiness program (100 percent) since this was a condition when defining the analytical sample. In addition, 97 individuals (89.8 percent) had an employment/vocational training program. Almost half of the participants had literacy training program (52.8 percent) or academic/education classes (50.9 percent). Less than half of the clients had life skills training (43.5 percent) and only 3 clients (2.8 percent) had mentoring in their service plan. Individuals with treatment services in their plan were included 20 clients (18.5 percent) with substance abuse program, 28 clients (25.9 percent) with physical health treatment, and 10 clients (9.3 percent) with mental health services.

Table 4-4   Services listed in participant's Service Plan

Characteristics	Analytical sample (N=108)	
	N	% of total
Life skills training	47	43.5
Mentoring	3	2.8
Substance abuse program	20	18.5
Physical health treatment	28	25.9
Mental health services	10	9.3
Anger management	7	6.5
Domestic violence	5	4.6
Family reunification	13	12.0
Parenting skills training	11	10.2
Housing assistance	47	43.5
Literacy training program	57	52.8
Academic/Education class	55	50.9
Employment/Vocational training program	97	89.8
Job readiness	108	100.0

Other services in the plans include anger management (6.5 percent), domestic violence services (4.6 percent), family reunification services (12.0 percent) and parenting skills training (10.2 percent).

4.4 Functional Outcomes

The main objective of the REEP program is successful reintegration of ex-offender into the general society and labor market. Thus, we focus on two main indicators of functional outcomes that measure the extent of successful reintegration achieved by the program participants. First, we look at the recidivism data and then examine data on employment.

In this evaluation, we lack a comparison sample to draw conclusions on the performance of the REEOP program. Instead, we use employment and recidivism data from other studies and reports to shed some light on the relative performance of the REEOP. One such study is the Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (PRI) evaluation. The PRI evaluation involves 30 programs across the country that seeks to strengthen urban communities affected by large volumes of returning prisoners through employment-centered projects that incorporate job training, housing referrals, mentoring, and other comprehensive transitional services. The PRI is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA), the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and other Federal partners in 2005. On average, participants spent 12 weeks in the PRI program from enrollment to program exit. We believe that the objectives and provisions of the programs along with the type of agencies involved makes PRI demonstration programs reasonable comparison group for the Los Angeles REEOP. We provide PRI outcomes, outcomes from other studies, and general prisoner recidivism statistics of the State of California just for information purposes. We strongly caution readers that the differences across programs in terms of context, location, population and timing do not permit comparisons of the outcomes in the statistical sense.

Table 4-5   Functional outcomes

Characteristics	Analytical sample (N=108)	
	N	% of total
Recidivism	11	10.9%
Ever worked[6]	38	35.2%
Average hourly wage (Std. dev.)[7]	9.63 (1.76) $/hr	Min: 8 $/hr Max: 16 $/hr

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[6] The number of clients ever employed based on all clients that were enrolled in the program is 50.

[7] Average hourly wage and standard deviation pertain to 45 jobs reported for 38 participants. It does not include 8 jobs with missing wage information.

Recidivism

Participants in the REEOP analytical sample had on average 6.5 months (197 days) of participation in the study with a 10.9 percent recidivism rate. In other words, 11 participants out of 108 experience recidivism. Among the participants in the PRI demonstration programs, the proportion re-arrested in the year after release was at the minimum 16.1 percent (due to lack of data exact recidivism rate is not known). Grantees also reported an average of six months between participants' release from incarceration and their first re-arrest or technical violation of probation or parole. In the REEOP dataset, we lack information about the timing of the re-incarceration and type of offense.

The 10.9 percent recidivism rate experienced by the REEOP participants is also significantly lower than the 40 percent one-year recidivism rate among all paroled felons released from prisons in California in 2005.

Employment

We found that 38 participants (35.2 percent) in the analytical sample obtained employment at some point during their participation. In the PRI demonstration programs, among participants who were in the program for at least 3 months, 68.1 percent obtained employment. In terms of wages, REEOP participants had an average hourly wage of $9.63 and PRI participants had a similar average hourly wage rate of $9.29.

The 35.2 percent employment rate observed among the REEOP participants is also significantly lower than the 65 percent ever employed rate (eight months after prison) reported in a recent study that explores reality of finding employment after prison from the perspective of 740 former male prisoners in Illinois, Ohio, and Texas (Visher, Debus, and Yahner, 2008).

4.5   Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate analysis is the simultaneous analysis of two variables, usually undertaken to see if one variable is related to another variable. We conducted bivariate analysis to examine the relationship between functional outcomes and other factors. Each factor is examined one at a time. We also report a chi-square (χ^2) statistic for each comparison (Table 4-6 for employment and Table 4-7 for recidivism).

Individual characteristics in employment analysis, in general, do not have associations with desired statistical significance (p<0.05). The only statistically significant variable is the location of participant recruitment. Individuals who are recruited from prison, jail or parole housing are significantly less likely to obtain employment compared to all other type of recruitments (χ^2=7.63, p=0.006). Similar percents of males and females obtained employment during their program participation (34.5 percent for males, 36.0 percent for females). The employment rate among participants who were 27 years old or younger was 23.5 percent and 37.4 percent among those who were age 27 or more. Education level was not related to obtaining employment (χ^2=1.50, p=0.472). The employment rate among program customers with less than high school education, with high school education, and with more than high school education were 32.4 percent, 32.7 percent, and 47.4 percent, respectively. Among individuals who report at least one disability, the employment rate was 29.4 percent, which is less than the 36.3 percent observed among the

Table 4-6.   Relationship between obtaining employment and factors in the employment model (N=108)

Factors	Found employment (%)	Did not find employment (%)	X² value	p-value
Gender				
Male	34.5	65.5	0.03	0.869
Female	36.0	64.0		
Age				
Age less than 27	23.5	76.5	1.20	0.273
Age 27 and more	37.4	62.6		
Marital status				
Married/Living together	37.5	62.5	0.04	0.834
All others	34.8	65.2		
Education				
Less than high school	32.4	67.6	1.50	0.472
High school	32.7	67.3		
More than high school	47.4	52.6		
Disability status				
Report at least one	29.4	70.6	0.29	0.587
No disability reported	36.3	63.7		
Recruitment				
Prison/Jail or parole housing	15.6	84.4	7.63	0.006
All others	43.4	56.6		
Children				
Caring for at least 1 child under 18	34.9	65.1	0.00	0.957
Not caring for a child under 18	35.4	64.6		
Timing of first arrest				
15 years old or younger	40.0	60.0	0.53	0.768
16 to 18 years old	31.0	69.0		
Greater than 18 years old	34.7	65.3		
Substance abuse				
Reports at least one drug	34.1	65.9	0.20	0.655
No drug reported	39.1	60.9		

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Table 4-7. Relationship between recidivism and factors in the recidivism model (N=108)

Factors	Recidivism (%)	No recidivism (%)	X² value	p-value
Gender				
Male	15.5	84.5	3.89	0.048
Female	4.0	96.0		
Age				
Age less than 27	11.8	88.2	0.06	0.815
Age 27 and more	9.9	90.1		
Marital status				
Married/Living together	12.5	87.5	0.11	0.740
All others	9.8	90.2		
Education				
Less than high school	8.1	91.9	1.29	0.525
High school	13.5	86.5		
More than high school	5.3	94.7		
Disability status				
Report at least one disability	11.8	88.2	0.06	0.815
No disability reported	9.9	90.1		
Recruitment				
Prison/Jail or parole housing	3.1	96.9	2.48	0.115
All others	13.2	86.8		
Children				
Caring for at least 1 child under 18	9.3	90.7	0.06	0.805
Not caring for a child under 18	10.8	89.2		
Timing of first arrest				
15 years old or younger	6.7	93.3	2.20	0.332
16 to 18 years old	17.2	82.8		
Greater than 18 years old	8.2	91.8		
Substance abuse				
Reports at least one drug	4.4	95.6	1.09	0.297
No drug reported	11.8	88.2		

participants who reported no disability. Caring for children under 18 was also not associated with obtaining employment, both groups (those caring for at least one child under 18 and those caring for no child under 18) experienced 35 percent employment rate. Timing of first arrest was also not associated with obtaining employment (χ^2=0.53, p=0.768). The employment rates among program customers with timing of first arrest before age 15, between ages 16 to 18, and greater than age 18 were 40.0 percent, 31.0 percent, and 34.7 percent, respectively. While 39.1 percent of participants who did not report any drug use at enrollment obtained employment, this figure was 31.1 percent among others who report at least one drug.

Individual characteristics in recidivism analysis, in general, do not have associations with desired statistical significance (p<0.05). The only statistically significant variable is the gender indicator. Males are significantly more likely to experience recidivism compared to females (χ^2=3.89, p=0.048).

Similar percents of people age less than 27 and age 27 and more report recidivism (11.8 percent for age less than 27, 9.9 percent for age 27 and more). While 12.5 percent of married/living together participants report recidivism, this figure was not very different among all others (9.8 percent). Education level was not associated with the probability of recidivism (χ^2=1.29, p=0.525). The recidivism rate among program customers with less than high school education, with high school education, and with more than high school education were 8.1 percent, 13.5 percent, and 5.3 percent, respectively. Among individuals who report at least one disability, the recidivism rate was 11.8 percent, which is more than the 9.9 percent observed among the participants who reported no disability. Caring for children under 18 was also not associated with recidivism. Participants caring for at least one child under 18 report 9.3 percent and those caring for no child under 18 report 10.8 percent recidivism rate. Timing of first arrest was also not associated with recidivism (χ^2=2.20, p=0.332). The recidivsm rates among program customers with timing of first arrest before age 15, between ages 16 to 18, and greater than age 18 were 6.7 percent, 17.2 percent, and 8.2 percent, respectively. While 4.4 percent of participants who did not report any drug use at enrollment experienced recidivism, this figure was 11.8 percent among others who report at least one drug.

Relationship Between Services and Functional Outcomes

While the data quality in terms of provisions listed in the service plan is high, we can not make the same statement for the information regarding the actual services received. The data on actual services utilization is not complete. However, we can use the information on the actual services received (regardless of the completion type) as a good indicator for those clients who are more engaged (using program services) compared to those clients who are less engaged (never or minimally using program services) with the program. We define three groups in terms of engagement in the program:

1. "Received one or no services" as those with 1 or no services listed in the dataset (n=39),

2. "Received 2 to 5 services" as those with 2 to 5 services listed in the dataset (n=54), and

3. " Received more than 5 services" as those with more than 5 services listed in the dataset (n=15).

We combined people who received zero or only 1 service in the same group because most clients received initial ISP but some dropped out at that point because they didn't want to do the program as discussed. We employ bivariate analysis to examine association between level of engagement and functional outcomes. Results, Table 4-8, indicate that higher level of services received from the

program (receipt of more than 5 services) is significantly associated with positive employment outcomes.

Table 4-8.   Receipt of program services and functional outcomes, N=108, n (%)

Year	One or No services	2 to 5 different services	More than 5 services
Found employment			
YES	7 (18.0)	21 (38.9)	10 (66.7)
NO	32 (82.0)	33 (61.1)	5 (33.3)
Pearson Chi-squared: 11.92 with Probability=0.003			
Recidivism			
YES	2 (5.1)	9 (16.7)	0 (0.0)
NO	37 (94.9)	45 (83.3)	15 (100.0)
Pearson Chi-squared: 5.27 with Probability=0.072			

While two-third of participants (66.7 percent) in 'received more than 5 services' group found employment, only 38.9 percent of participants in the 'received 2 to 5 services' group found employment. Percent of participants who found employment in the 'received one or no services' group was only 18. This positive association was statistically significant at 0.003 level.

Level of services received is only marginally significant in reducing recidivism (χ^2=5.27, p=0.072). There was no participant in 'received more than 5 services' group who experienced recidivism. However, 16.7 percent in the 'received 2 to 5 services' group and 5.1 percent in the 'received one or no services' group report recidivism.

Relationship Between Length of Participation and Functional Outcomes

We also employ bivariate analysis to examine association between length of participation and functional outcomes. We use 6 months as a base to divide the sample into two groups; (1) those who stayed with the program less than 6 months (but more than 60 days) (n=62), and (2) those who stayed with the program for 6 months or longer (n=46). Results, Table 4-9, indicate that length of stay with the program is has a positive and statistically significant association with obtaining employment (χ^2=5.61, p=0.018). Almost half of program participants (47.8 percent) in the 6 months or more group obtained employment. Only 1 in 4 (25.8 percent) of participants who stayed with the program less than 6 months obtained employment.

Table 4-9.   Length of participation and functional outcomes, N=108, n (%)

Year	Less than 6 months	6 months or more
Found employment		
YES	16 (25.8)	22 (47.8)
NO	46 (74.2)	24 (52.2)
Pearson Chi-squared:5.61 with Probability=0.018		
Recidivism		
YES	6 (9.7)	5 (10.9)
NO	56 (90.3)	41 (89.1)
Pearson Chi-squared:0.04 with Probability=0.839		

Length of stay with the program was not significantly associated with recidivism (χ^2=0.04, p=0.839). Among those who stayed in the program for 6 months or longer, 10.9 percent experienced recidivism. A very similar percentage (9.7 percent) had recidivism among those who stayed in the program for less than 6 months.

4.6   Multivariate Analysis

The analyses conducted in Section 4.5 examined the relationship between functional outcomes (employment and recidivism) and other factors, one factor at a time. However several factors often operate at once in the pathway to obtaining employment or preventing recidivism. Thus, a multivariate analysis is required to better understand the factors that are associated with these functional outcomes.

A multivariate analysis is the simultaneous analysis of three or more variables. It is frequently done to refine a bivariate analysis, taking into account the possible influence of additional variables on the original bivariate relationship. It is also used to test the joint effects of two or more variables upon a dependent variable (in this case, obtaining employment or recidivism). In this multivariate analysis, we calculated adjusted odds ratios and 95 percent confidence intervals as indicators of the relationship between employment and other factors (Table 4-10) and recidivism and other factors

Table 4-10.   Multivariate analysis of employment (N=108)

Factors	Odds ratio*	95% confidence Intervals	p-value
Gender (Male=1)	0.298	0.097, 0.916	0.035
Age less than 27	0.411	0.076, 2.214	0.301
Married living together	0.987	0.219, 4.451	0.986
Less than high school	0.225	0.043, 1.186	0.079
High school	0.259	0.053, 1.263	0.095
More than high school	1.000		0.218
Reported disability	0.374	0.078, 1.787	0.218
Recruitment in prison/jail/parole housing	0.102	0.019, 0.543	0.007
Caring for child under 18	0.917	0.292, 2.885	0.883
Age at first arrest			
15 years old or less	3.314	0.907, 12.103	0.070
16 to 18 years old	0.956	0.262, 3.493	0.946
Greater than 18 years old	1.000		
Did not report any drugs	1.372	0.390, 4.823	0.622
Length of stay in program greater than 6m	4.577	1.505, 13.918	0.007
Did not receive any services	0.104	0.018, 0.586	0.010
Pseudo R-squared**	0.2851		

*The odds ratio (Hosmer and Lemeshow, 1989) shows how much more (or less) likely it is for an outcome to be present (in this case, obtaining employment) among those with and without a particular characteristic. An odds ratio of approximately 1.0 implies that the outcome is equally likely whether or not the characteristic is present. An odds ratio greater than 1.0 implies that the outcome is more likely if the characteristic is present. An odds ratio of less than 1.0 implies that the outcome is less likely if the characteristic is present.

**In multivariate analysis, the r-squared statistic is typically used to determine the goodness-of-fit of the model. Because logistic regression does not have an equivalent goodness-of-fit statistic a pseudo R-squared is used. A pseudo r-squared of about 0.28 implies that the variables contained in both the full and reduced model reasonably explain the relationship between employment and the combination of these variables. However, it also implies that other factors, not contained in the database, may provide further explanation.

(Table 4-11). The odds ratio (Hosmer and Lemeshow, 1989) shows how much more (or less) likely it is for an outcome to be present (in this case, obtaining employment or re-incarceration) among those with and without a particular characteristic (e.g., staying in the program for less than 6 months or more than 6 months). An odds ratio of approximately 1.0 implies that the outcome is equally likely whether or not the characteristic is present. An odds ratio greater than 1.0 implies that the outcome is more likely if the characteristic is present. An odds ratio of less than 1.0 implies that the outcome is less likely if the characteristic is present.

The calculation of confidence intervals (CIs) around an odds ratio is an alternative way of drawing inferences about a population based on observations in a sample (Colton, 1974). The 95 percent confidence intervals for the odds ratios are interpreted to mean that, if one were to draw a sample again and again, 95 percent of the time the odds ratio would fall within those confidence intervals.

■   After adjusting for all other factors in the model, the odds of obtaining employment for a male program customer was 70 percent of the odds of obtaining employment for females (OR=0.298, 95% CI = 0.097, 0.916).

- After adjusting for all other factors in the model, the odds of obtaining employment for a program customer who was recruited from prison/jail or parole housing was 90 percent of the odds of obtaining employment for all other recruitments (OR=0.102, 95% CI = 0.019, 0.543).

- After adjusting for all other factors in the model, the odds of obtaining employment for a program customer who stayed with the program for 6 months or longer was 4.58 times greater than the odds of obtaining a competitive employment for those who stayed with the program less than 6 months (OR=4.577; 95% CI = 1.505, 13.918).

- After adjusting for all other factors in the model, the odds of obtaining employment for a program customer who did not receive any services was 90 percent of the odds of obtaining a employment for those who were engaged with program (OR=0.104; 95% CI = 0.018, 0.586).

Multivariate analysis for the recidivism outcome does not produce any factors that are significantly associated with recidivism. Only 11 percent of the sample experienced recidivism which produces very small variation to study in an analytical sample of 108. Although not statistically significant, some covariates had theoretically expected signs. After adjusting for all other factors in the model:

- Males are more likely to experience recidivism compared to females.

- Participants who are married/living together are less likely to experience recidivism compared to all others.

- Participants with high school or less than high school education are more likely to experience recidivism compared to participants with more than high school education.

- Participants who reported a disability are more likely to experience recidivism compared to those who did not report any disability.

- Participants who are recruited in prison/jail/parole housing are less likely to experience recidivism compared to all others.

- Participants who did not report any drugs are less likely to experience recidivism compared to those who report a primary choice of drug.

Table 4-11. Multivariate analysis of recidivism (N=108)

Factors	Odds ratio*	95% confidence Intervals	p-value
Gender (Male=1)	3.511	0.619, 19.903	0.156
Age less than 27	0.828	0.113, 6.100	0.853
Married living together	0.532	0.078, 3.648	0.521
Less than high school	1.211	0.082, 17.819	0.889
High school	2.852	0.228, 35.641	0.416
More than high school	1.000		
Reported disability	1.557	0.242, 9.993	0.641
Recruitment in prison/jail/parole housing	0.462	0.036, 5.892	0.552
Caring for a child under 18	1.119	0.221, 5.663	0.892
Age at first arrest			
15 years old or less	0.674	0.098, 4.642	0.688
16 to 18 years old	2.033	0.407, 10.151	0.387
Greater than 18 years old	1.000		
Did not report any drugs	0.362	0.037, 3.514	0.381
Length of stay in program greater than 6M	1.178	0.299, 4.643	0.815
Did not receive any services	0.400	0.036, 4.419	0.455
Pseudo R-squared**		0.1482	

*The odds ratio (Hosmer and Lemeshow, 1989) shows how much more (or less) likely it is for an outcome to be present (in this case, recidivism) among those with and without a particular characteristic. An odds ratio of approximately 1.0 implies that the outcome is equally likely whether or not the characteristic is present. An odds ratio greater than 1.0 implies that the outcome is more likely if the characteristic is present. An odds ratio of less than 1.0 implies that the outcome is less likely if the characteristic is present.

**In multivariate analysis, the r-squared statistic is typically used to determine the goodness-of-fit of the model. Because logistic regression does not have an equivalent goodness-of-fit statistic a pseudo R-squared is used. A pseudo r-squared of about 0.14 implies that the variables contained in both the full and reduced model reasonably explain the relationship between recidivism and the combination of these variables. However, it also implies that other factors, not contained in the database, may provide further explanation.

Conclusions and Recommendations   5

The expressed purpose of the Los Angeles Re-Entry Employment Options Project was to bring together local expertise in the workforce development and case management support systems to prevent recidivism and improve employment outcomes among the ex-offender population in local communities and to document both the process and success of the re-entry program. Ex-offenders come out of prison with a complex set of needs related to employment, housing, transportation, mental health and substance abuse, trauma, physical and sexual abuse, childcare and custody issues, and family reunification.

In this report, we focused on two main outcome variables: recidivism and employment. The findings presented in the previous sections document the success of the program in reducing recidivism. The program was also successful in improving the rate of employment among participants. For the REEOP program, we found a positive and significant relationship between the level of engagement with program services and obtaining a job. In other words, people who received more services from the program were more likely to obtain employment. In addition, we found a positive and significant relationship between length of stay with the program and finding employment. There was a negative and significant relationship between the level of engagement with the program and recidivism and a marginally significant negative relationship between length of participation with the program and recidivism. Thus, participants who received more services and stayed with the program longer were less likely to report recidivism.

5.1   Conclusions

The conclusions below represent the core lessons learned from Westat's evaluation of the REEOP.

5.1.1 Support Systems[8] Must Adapt to Effectively Serve People Who Are Ex-Offenders and Have Multiple Employment Barriers

Employment is a focus and priority for ex-offenders. It promotes self-confidence and improves one's chances of self-sufficiency after prison. It is very important to understand the objectives of the ex-offenders and help them prepare for the job market in a realistic way given the supply and demand side obstacles. Unfortunately, State of California Department of Corrections had very minimal contribution and participation in the REEOP program. The department did not have a designated staff person to deal with the program (No agent of record). Treating the REEOP program as an outside agency created many operational problems particularly for in-reach recruitment activities. In reach activities are extremely important since they let the ex-offender know that there is a support system waiting outside and that the coordination of services will address most, if not all, of his/her needs.

Parole and probation officers in Los Angeles are overwhelmed with their caseloads particularly after the recent layoffs from jails and prisons. These officers were not very helpful in sharing information and providing leads on participants who might be interested in the program. The communication between REEOP staff and parole officers was not at the desired level. Still, many program participants heard about the program from parole officers. In addition, what complicates service delivery for some parolees is that parolees with mental health problems cannot be served by the State Department of Mental Health. Parolees with mental health issues are required to seek treatment from the Parole Outpatient Clinic (POC), and this agency does not provide any information to the REEOP program. Thus, it is very hard for the program to assess and address any obstacles related to mental health problems. Ex-offenders with housing needs are using GR benefits to enter transitional housing but most permanent housing options are attached to having a substance abuse problem

5.1.2 Programs Should Focus on a Broad Array of Outcomes in Assisting Clients

While the primary objective of the REEOP was to assist clients in their attainment of employment and their successful transition to meaningful life in the community, the experience of both clients

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[8] These support systems include, but not limited to, the workforce development system, corrections systems, housing systems, educational systems, and social services systems.

and project staff argue for a broader array of outcomes that are important and meaningful. For example, individuals who had not yet completed their GED during incarceration would benefit from having that as a step-wise goal toward employment. Given the particulars of other individual situations, other trade-school, or even more global liberal arts (e.g., a B.A.) courses of study could be equally meaningful and important to the eventual employment success of individuals. Serial employment is a feature of many individual employment histories. A series of jobs, and/or less time unemployed between jobs, could be understood as steps that might be needed for people to eventually acquire jobs that satisfy their career needs and interests. Client's experiences with volunteer positions could be particularly important and valuable for the ex-offender.

5.1.3. Increasing Access to Services Requires Increasing the Capacity of Staff in a Variety of Social Service Organizations

Increasing access to services for people who have multiple barriers to employment is related to increasing the capacity of social service organization staff to reach, engage, and maintain, cultivate meaningful relationships with the individuals. At REEOP, employing people with previous inmate experiences or with previous non-profit advocacy organization experiences increased staff capacity to effectively work with this population cohort. Professional development is one aspect of increasing staff capacity, as is regularizing contact between decision makers in partner organizations, increasing the communication flow between decision makers and their direct service staff, and ensuring a flow of information about participants among the direct service staff in several different agencies that are providing services to clients. Experiential experts served as case manager staff members for the REEOP. Staff knowledge of "inside" correctional institutions (i.e., jail and prison) and their knowledge of the community barriers that ex-offenders encounter as they return to seek competitive employment enhance their collective capacity to establish relationships with people deemed the "hardest-to-serve".

Project management steering committee meetings convened by the grantee increased knowledge about specific partners' activities and resources that could be available to program participants. Early corrections made to an impeded flow of communication that became apparent when grant activities were first underway resulted in instituting a bi-monthly, case conference call among staffs providing direct services to the REEOP clients. The involvement of decision makers in steering committee meetings and the involvement of direct service staff in case conference calls were facilitated by the bridging/liaison role assumed by the CDD Project Director.

5.1.4 Bending Systems is Both Possible and Necessary to Accomplish the Goals of the Project

People who are ex-offenders and have barriers to employment are employable when supports are appropriate and accessible. Partners and stakeholders that made the greatest investment of time and energy in project activities accepted this key assumption of the project. The REEOP grant did not allow the grantee the power to influence the way the systems operate and how particular components intersect. However, the primary partners to the project (e.g., EAN/LAM, SGG) are collaboratively engaged in the 21st Century Project being promulgated by the CDD to prevent recidivism and resolve barriers to successful reintegration for returning ex-offenders in the Los Angeles area.

The CDCR grant did not create leverage to influence the operations of the systems so that the specific partners within the systems could take risks and embrace new practices. However, systems level change, and focused attention to the needs of re-entering ex-offenders in the Los Angeles area, were elevated by the application of new practices in the project (e.g., clients' mandated attendance at a five-day Parole to Payroll work readiness course, work with Unions to institute training and trade-associated apprenticeships) that were credited with effecting some attitude change among the central players in the workforce development, corrections, and social services systems.

5.2 Recommendations

Evaluation of REEOP project in Los Angeles, demonstrates that ex-offenders with multiple needs can obtain employment and that using individualized case management strategies and other supports can help prevent recidivism. We form our recommendations based on what worked best for the ex-offenders in Los Angeles to achieve positive outcomes, what continues to cause this population's biggest problems, and what we learned from the previous re-entry literature.

Recommendation 1

The success of the program depends on:

1. forming successful partnerships to pool local resources,

2. working together toward common goals of reintegrating ex-offenders into society with the assurance that these common goals are understood and agreed to by all partners, and

3. developing effective flow of communication across partners and synchronizing services to provide on-time support to the participants.

Recommendation 2

Re-entry programs should engage with ex-offenders before they are released into the community in order to have a better preparation to address their social, economic, psychological, and other needs and provide a support system that is in place after release. Engagement of parole/probation officers in the project and improved in-reach activities are essential for successful re-integration.

Recommendation 3

REEOP program would benefit greatly by including a partner providing effective legal aid. Many ex-offenders go through difficult legal procedures following release from prison. We did not observe an effective legal aid that is a core part of the program provisions. It would definitely improve a participant's chances of keeping up with all the legal requirements and provide support in times of need for legal help.

Recommendation 4

Program was not able to focus on participant's complex psychosocial problems due to the absence of a partner expert in criminal psychology. Most often, ex-offenders experience psychological problems in re-adjustment to the society. It is important to invite a partner that would provide effective psychosocial help targeted to the issues of ex-offenders.

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Recommendation 5

Combination of services for ex-offenders has to recognize gender based differences. We were not able to interview a female participant at REEOP. However, the literature suggests that female and male ex-offenders go through a different set of adjustment processes after they leave prison (Ritchie, 2001; NIJ, 2005). Such gender-based differences have effects on the need for services related to trauma, physical and sexual abuse, childcare and custody issues, family reunification, mental health and substance abuse, and homelessness.

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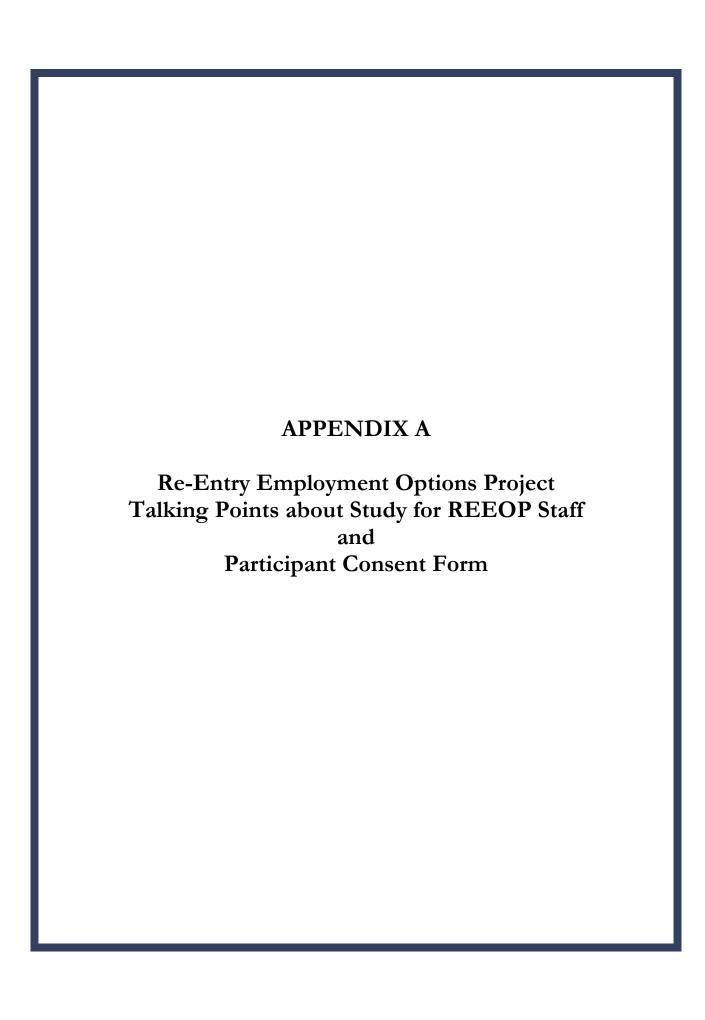
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APPENDIX A

**Re-Entry Employment Options Project
Talking Points about Study for REEOP Staff
and
Participant Consent Form**

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Re-Entry Employment Options Project: Information for Potential Interviewees

Westat has prepared these t**alking points for contact with program participants** that may prove useful to you or other staff members as you approach individuals who have received REEOP services and are interested in being interviewed for the REEOP evaluation study.

■ **Purpose of the interview:** To obtain information from former participants about their experiences in the Re-entry Employment Options Project.

■ **Interview question topics:**

– Employment-related services received (e.g., how an employment plan was developed, how job search occurred, and help received with resume or job interviews);

– Other supportive services received (e.g., money management, benefit planning, mental or medical health care, alcohol or drug treatment);

– How long employment or support services were received from the program (estimates are fine);

– Employment results (e.g., job(s) obtained, wages received, whether job(s) had fringe benefits, how long jobs were held, and how the individual felt about the job(s));

– Perspectives on the help she/he received from staff in the program;

– Opinions about whether what they did or learned from the program may help them in future efforts to find or keep other jobs; and

– His/her overall satisfaction with the program and its offerings.

■ **Consent form:** Participants will be asked to read (or listen to someone read) a consent form and sign it before the interview begins after any questions he or she has are answered. (They will be given a copy of the consent form to keep.)

■ **Compensation:** $50 (cash) to cover time and travel expenses for the interview session.

■ **Interview will be in-person or by phone.** In-person interviewees will receive cash when the interview is over. If he/she is interviewed by telephone, a $50 check will be mailed to them.

■ **Interviews will be scheduled for** [2 DAYS and DATES THAT WESTAT WILL BE ON SITE] _____ and _____.

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- **Individuals with a Representative Payee** will agree to allow Westat to contact his/her payee and follow the recommendation of their payee for handling the $50 payment. (Westat will ask the payee if he/she can be paid in cash, or if he/she should be paid by check to be given to or mailed to them, or if Westat should mail a check to the payee who will distribute it to the participant.)

- **Interview location** will be arranged with staff from the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department (e.g., at the CDD, at a WorkSource Center, or at an agency the participant is familiar with) at a place that is private and quiet.

- **Right to refuse**: Only people who want to be interviewed will be interviewed. If he/she doesn't want to participate, he/she will not lose any services or benefits now or in the future.

- **Can bring someone to the interview**: He/she may bring a friend or relative or personal assistant to the interview if they'd like to do that.

- He/she **can refuse to answer specific questions**.

- He/she **can take a break at any time** during the interview.

- He/she **can stop or end the interview at any time**.

- **Interview duration** is expected to be about 60 minutes.

- **Recording the interview:** He or she will be asked if it is okay for the interview to be recorded. (No one but Westat interviewers will hear the recordings. We will erase recordings when the study ends.)

- **Private and confidential**: Everything he or she says will remain private. Nothing he or she says will be repeated to anyone else.

  - Reports written about this study will not include any personal information about the individual or about what he or she says in the interview.

- **No risk:** He or she will not be harmed or put at risk by answering the interview questions.

- **No future risk:** Nothing said in the interview will affect any services or benefits he or she may apply for or receive in the future.

- **Benefit:** His or her answers to interview questions could help improve job-related programs and services for people with disabilities.

- **Toll-free number for contacting Westat** with questions about the study will be on the consent form that participants sign, and they will receive a copy of it to keep.

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AGREEMENT TO BE INTERVIEWED FOR A RESEARCH STUDY

PROJECT NAME: Re-Entry Employment Options Project

I, _____, agree to be interviewed about my current or past experiences with the RE-ENTRY EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS PROJECT which is funded by a cooperative agreement from the California State Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation. The City of Los Angeles Community Development Department is managing and overseeing the project.

The purpose of this interview is to learn about my experiences with the Re-Entry Employment Options Project, how participating in the project affected me, and whether I am (or was) satisfied with the services I am receiving or did receive. By agreeing to be interviewed, I understand that:

- My participation in the interview is entirely my choice;

- I have the right to refuse to be interviewed, and my decision to refuse will not result in any loss of benefits or services to me;

- If I agree to be interviewed, I will be asked questions about my experiences with the Re-Entry Employment Options Project and what happened as a result. Specifically, I will be asked about the jobs I obtained and, the services I received to help me obtain and retain those jobs.

- I will be interviewed by myself in a private meeting room in an agency or another setting that I am familiar with. The interview room will be private, and where what I say to the interviewers will not be heard by anyone else (unless I bring someone to the interview with me).

- If I do not want to be interviewed in person, I can be interviewed over the telephone.

- I do not have to answer any question that I do not want to answer.

- I can take a break whenever I want to.

- If I want to stop the interview, I just need to say so and the interview will end.

- There will be approximately 4-7 other people taking part in similar interviews for this program.

- The interview will last approximately 60 minutes.

- I will be asked for my permission to have the interview audio recorded. No one but Westat will hear the recordings. The recording will be destroyed after the study is over.

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- Everything I say will remain confidential and will not be repeated to anyone else.

- My name or other identifying information will not be used in any reports.

- Nothing I say will affect any services I or my family might receive in the future.

- My participation in the interview will not put me at any risk. It could benefit me by improving employment-related programs and services for people who are returning to the community after spending time in a correctional setting.

- I will be offered $50 for taking part in this interview, and I will be paid in cash after the interview is over. If the interview is done over the telephone, a check for $50 will be mailed to me.

- If I have a Representative Payee that helps me manage my money, the Westat interviewer will contact my payee and follow his or her recommendation about handling the $50 payment on my behalf (i.e., he or she may suggest that I can receive the cash directly, or that a check be written in my name or in the name of the Representative Payee in that amount). I agree to accept the recommendation for handling the $50 payment that my Representative Payee makes to Westat.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Dr. Mustafa Karakus at Westat (MustafaKarakus@westat.com) or Dr. Marion (Taffy) McCoy at Westat (MarionMcCoy@westat.com, or 1-800-937-8281, ext. 2891 (toll free).

CONSENT SIGNATURE:

_____   _____   _____
Participant Name (please print)   Participant's Signature   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Person Conducting Informed Consent Discussion   Date

If this consent form is read to the participant because the participant is unable to read the form, an impartial witness not affiliated with the project or project staff must be present for the consent and sign the following statement:

I confirm that the information in the consent form and any other written information was accurately explained to and apparently understood by the participant. The participant freely consented to take part in the interview.

_____   _____
Signature of Impartial Witness   Date

APPENDIX B

Re-Entry Employment Options Project
Interview Protocols

Project Director Interview
Project Staff Partners and Collaborators Interview
Project Partners and Collaborators Interview
Project Participants Interview

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INTERVIEW WITH PROJECT DIRECTOR

[INTERVIEWER: PARAPHRASE AS NEEDED]: My name is [INSERT NAME] and this is [INSERT NAME]. We both work for Westat, a private research company in Rockville, Maryland. On your behalf (i.e., for the City of Los Angeles Community Development Division), Westat is collecting information on the project funded through the Re-Entry Employment Options Project (REEOP), which is funded by the California State Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation.

As grant recipient, administrator, and coordinator of REEOP, you are an important source of information. We have some specific questions we would like to ask you about the activities you were involved in, and we also would like to hear your perspective on the impact this program has had on people who are ex-offenders and on the workforce development system.

Before we begin, I'd like to ask for your permission to record our conversation so that we do not miss any of your comments. Do we have your permission?

A.   Overview of Re-Entry Employment Options Project

1.   Please describe the current operations of the REEOP and highlight any changes you've made in operations since the project began. Please talk about:

- Partners

- Planning

- Inreach, outreach, recruitment, and enrollment

- Characteristics of program participants

- Employment services

- Provision of mentoring, education and training

- Housing issues

- Other services (e.g., mental health services, medical care, substance use disorder treatment)

2.   Did your approaches change from what you originally planned? If so, how and why?

3. What are the primary objectives of your project?

4. What do you consider to be "success" for your project?

5. What do you consider to be "success" for someone enrolled in your project (e.g., maintaining engagement, maintaining housing, attending school, obtaining employment, getting treatment)?

6. Have you developed specific activities designed to "improve public safety" (a goal indicated in the RFP), or are those activities part of the other goal-focused activities? Please explain.

B. Collaboration and Partnerships

1. What organizations/agencies have been primary partners over the course of the project?

Partners*	Role in Project
City of Los Angeles Community Development Division* (Sue Quigley, Jaimie Pacheco])	Grantee; fiscal agent Project coordination Data management
Special Services for Groups* (SSG) (Veronica Lewis) Community-Based Organization	Case management Mental health, substance use treatment Instructors of Prep4LIFE Accepts REEOP referrals to outpatient MH – SA unit
Friends Outside Los Angeles County* (Mary Weaver) Community-Based Organization	5-Day Job Readiness classes Various support services for families of participants Employment referrals
Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches (LAM)- Ex-Offender Action Network (EAN)* (Monnie Anderson) Faith-based Organization	Mentor recruitment Participant-mentor matching (e.g., employment mentors, life skills/coping mentors) Assessments, referrals, GED or diploma linkages, literacy linkages, help with IDs, parenting (fathers) training, help with court orders, warrants, child custody Assists with employment retention & participant stability
Mum's the Word*	Expungement workshops and assistance Research on child support issues Low cost legal assistance as needed

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Partners*	Role in Project
South Los Angeles-Crenshaw WorkSource Center* (lead) South Los Angeles WorkSource Center* Adams Baldwin-Hills WorkSource Center* South Los Angeles Watts WorkSource Center* Community-based organizations	Lead WorkSource Center On-the-job training Paid work experience Job placement Employment support services Job retention services
California State Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation, Division of Community Partnerships California State Prison-Los Angeles County, Lancaster California Institute for Women , Corona	In-reach referrals, discharge planning assistance
Parole Units: Exposition, Inglewood, South Central, and Huntington Park	Referrals, need assessments, eligibility determinations

*Denotes partners with representatives on Strategy Committee

2. Have there been any additions or deletions of partners to your project since the project began? If yes, who was added or left, and why?

3. Please describe the current role of each of your partners and their contribution to the project. As applicable, please describe activities in these areas:

- Inreach, outreach, recruitment, maintaining contact with participants

- Mentor training and mentor matching

- Member of project steering committee or advisory group

- Provision of services (employment, education, job readiness, job training, job development, mental health or substance use treatment, medical care)

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- Provision of in-kind services (e.g., use of facilities)

- Paid staff positions

4. Has there been a change in the type or intensity of involvement for any of these partners since the project began? If so, please describe.

Partnership Issues

5. Has there been staff turnover among your partner agencies? If so, what was the impact?

6. How do you address confidentiality issues when sharing clients' information among partners?

7. Have there been any other issues related to partnering with different agencies (e.g., differences in eligibility requirements, philosophy)? Please provide details, as possible, in these areas:

- Areas of concern or problems

- Methods of resolution

- Results

8. Have partnerships had an impact on the REEOP? If so, in what ways?

9. Has partnering with other organizations and agencies increased the capacity of the WorkSource Centers or the workforce development system to provide employment services to people who are ex-offenders (e.g., providing expertise, additional services, or funding)? Please explain.

10. How has staffing across partnering agencies (e.g., DC&R, housing, WorkSource Centers, mental health agencies) helped to leverage resources and expertise? Give examples.

Future Partnership Plans

11. In retrospect, are there any partners that have not been included that you would like to have included? Why weren't they included (or, if they declined to participate, why do you think that happened)?

12. Which of your partnerships, if any, do you think will continue after the REEOP ends? Do you think that any of these partners will remain involved in the WorkSource Centers or the workforce development system in this area?

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C.   Project Activities

Now we'd like to talk more about the activities that took place as part of the REEOP. We'll focus on the primary activities and how services were coordinated across the partners to the project.

Inreach, Outreach, Recruitment and Enrollment

1.   How does your project identify, reach out to, and recruit people who are likely to be eligible for the REEOP?

2.   To whom, and by what means, is information about services being disseminated to people who are in the corrections system and may be eligible for the REEOP (i.e., are scheduled for parole or probation to a community setting)? Do other organizations get this information, too (e.g., shelters, day programs, treatment programs, etc.)? Please describe what is distributed and where and how it is distributed.

3.   Does your program identify people that are ex-offenders and served in the military that may be eligible for veterans' services? How is this done, and who initiates the process?

4.   You've mentioned 3 phases for project participants. In light of this, at what point is someone considered "enrolled" in your project? How are enrollees assigned to case managers for the project? Please describe.

5.   Which comes first in your project: mentor matching, housing, employment services, mental health care, substance use disorder treatments or something else?

6.   Where do housing services fit into the equation?

7.   Is enrollment for the project still open? Do you have a wait list? How does that work? Have you set a date on which enrollment will end?

8.   What are some of the approaches used in your project to help engage participants in the REEOP (e.g., peer counselors or peer advocates; use of former ex-offenders or formerly homeless staff)?

   ■   Did you develop any incentives to help participants keep in contact with you or staff from the REEOP (e.g., phone cards, voice mail system accounts, Passport system credits, food, or distributing cell phones)?

   ■   Did any of these approaches appear to have an impact on program results (e.g., employment outcomes)? Please explain.

9.   How would you characterize the primary challenges associated with mentoring participants? Did one partner take a lead in this area for the REEOP?

10. What is involved in the follow-up process for participants? Who initiates contact and what information is collected? Do you know the last follow-up date for the REEOP?

Information and Training

Now we'd like to discuss the information and training you provide in your project and some of the impacts it may have had.

11. How did your project identify information and training needs? Please describe.

   ■ Methods of assessment

   ■ Types of needs identified

12. Please describe the information and training your project provided to your partners, collaborators, and members of the workforce development system.

   ■ Target audiences

   ■ Topics covered

   ■ Frequency of training sessions

   ■ Methods (e.g., in person, online)

   ■ Source of information and training (e.g., a project partner, DMH)

13. Is the project educating employers about the benefits of employing people with corrections' system involvement? Please describe.

14. Is this project involved in education activities that may facilitate the use of employment services and personalized supports for ex-offenders in local communities? At the state level?

14. Is this project educating the media and the general public about successful strategies for and the benefits of securing employment for people with corrections' system involvement?

16. Did you encounter any problems while providing information and training? Please describe.

17. How do you maintain staff development activity when staff members leave and turnover occurs in positions connected to the project's participants?

18. How satisfied were recipients with the training provided? Did you meet their information needs?

19. What are your goals and plans for providing information and training in the future?

20. Is monitoring or updating online training content occurring now? If so, please describe that process. What organization will handle it once the project ends?

Now we'd like to talk about the impacts of information and training.

21. Have staff attitudes about people who are ex-offenders changed as a result of the information and training you provided to them? Please give examples. What methods have been used to determine this?

22. How has the information and training affected service delivery to participants? Please describe. Were any changes made as a result of the information and training (e.g., changes in job development approaches or activities)?

23. How would you describe the impact that the information and training has had on the workforce development system in your area?

   ■ Do you think it has made a difference in what the project has or has not yet accomplished?

   ■ Do you think that information and training have helped the WorkSource Centers and the local workforce development system improve or broaden services for people who are ex-offenders?

24. Has training increased staff's ability to serve people who are ex-offenders (e.g., did it increase knowledge and understanding about best practices for working with ex-offenders, or about work incentives, benefits planning, "tickets" and other provisions under Ticket-to-Work, or other employment strategies)? Please give examples.

25. Were some training topics more helpful than others? Please give examples.

Housing Issues and Services

26. What housing services are provided by your project? Please address: eligibility determinations, type of housing provided (if any), and housing-related services provided (examples are below).

   ■ Rental payments

   ■ HUD voucher or certificate applications

   ■ Dealing with landlord

   ■ Help searching for an apartment

   ■ Provision of furniture and other household items

   ■ Move-in or move out help

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■ Followup visits

27. What have been the most critical housing issues over the course of this project?

28. In your opinion, what are the barriers, if any, to providing people who are ex-offenders with housing? How are they being resolved in your project?

29. What are some of the barriers encountered in helping people keep their housing? Please give examples.

Employment Services

30. How would you describe the employment services typically provided to participants? (A few examples are shown below.)

■ Assistance with job search

■ Assessment of goals and strengths

■ Development of an ISP or IEP

■ Integration into recovery plan

■ Assistance in obtaining other supports and services

■ Job negotiation with employers

■ Ongoing followup

31. How are such services coordinated? Are certain partners responsible for specific employment services (e.g., job development, job coaching, follow-up contacts)? Is co-case management an approach that the REEOP uses?

32. Do any of your participants routinely receive services at the WorkSource Centers? Are any REEOP participants enrolled in WIA, to your knowledge? How is it determined if participants will be enrolled in WIA services? Please describe the core, intensive, and training services your project provides to participants.

33. Were any changes made that affected how people who are ex-offenders-- and who may have multiple barriers to employment-- are accommodated by the WorkSource Centers? If so, please describe.

34. Do more people with corrections' system involvement utilize the WorkCenters than before the project's inception? How do you get information about this?

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35.   How does your project identify the employment goals, needs, and strengths of program participants? Please describe how it is done, whether assessment tools are used, who provides assessment or discovery sessions and when does this take place for the participant.

36.   For participants that were self-referred, or living in the community when they enrolled in the REEOP, did anyone present or use a Ticket-to-Work they received because they were on disability benefits? If yes, how many?

      ■   Are any of the WorkSource Centers involved in the project an EN (or could they be)?

Job Development

37.   What is the job development process for the REEOP? How are potential employers identified? Please describe.

38.   Do project staff members identify and negotiate tasks to be included in an individualized job description? Please describe.

39.   Does the employment process used by staff in REEOP result in an individualized relationship between a job applicant and the employer? Please describe.

40.   What problems, if any, did you encounter with employers or job negotiation with employers? How did you attempt to resolve those problems? Please give examples.

41.   Has the project management staff developed any particularly noteworthy relationships with certain employers? If yes, please describe. If no, please tell us why this aspect wasn't developed or wasn't needed.

42.   Have any changes occurred in the range of job opportunities available to REEOP participants? If yes, please give examples. What contributed to these changes?

43.   Are there specific employment services (or other support services) that are especially useful in helping participants keep their jobs? Which one(s)?

44.   Are there any management strategies or unexpected opportunities (e.g., cross-agency meetings, state conferences) that contributed to helping the REEOP build relationships with local employers? If yes, did these strategies or opportunities help participants maintain their employment or open up job opportunities with a certain employer?

45.   How satisfied are participants with the employment services they receive? What methods are being used to assess their satisfaction? [Please furnish satisfaction surveys, if available.]

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Mental Health Care, Substance Use Disorder Treatment, Medical Care, and Other Services

46. Besides housing and employment, what other services are being provided to program participants (e.g., mental health services, veterans services, substance use disorder treatment, other)? Please describe.

47. What process is used to obtain mental health care or substance use disorder treatment services for a program customer who needs it? Please walk us through the process (e.g., method of referral, typical wait time to start of service) and highlight any problematic aspects of it (e.g., fee for service required, transportation issues, etc.).

Best Practices

We're interested in whether you and/or the Strategy Committee specifically sought partner organizations to work with that routinely used "best practices" with people presenting multiple barriers to employment.

48. We will ask staff, too, but do you know if any of the organizations working with project participants provide trauma-informed services (e.g., services tailored to people who have experienced trauma due to previous physical, sexual, or severe psychological abuse)?

49. Does your project offer on-site support meetings for people with substance use disorder and/or for people with both mental health and substance use disorders? And/or, any there support groups specifically for working participants that also address the issues of mental illness and substance use disorders? Please describe.

Probe:

- ■ Type of support

- ■ Nature of support (e.g., STEMMS , "Double Trouble," other)

- ■ Whether support groups are curriculum-based

- ■ Source of support (e.g., organizations/agencies, professional staff, peers, combinations)

50. Does your project use motivational interviewing or stages of recovery as primary approaches to interacting with program participants in your project? Please describe.

51. Do any of the providers or partners in your project provide representative payee services for program participants who are living in housing affiliated with your project?

52. What other services are provided to program participants by your project? Please describe.

53. How do employment services, housing services, mental health services and substance use treatment services fit together for the REEOP? Is there an attempt to integrate these different types of services? Please describe.

Probe:

- Structures put in place (e.g., partnerships, staff, meetings, operations) to facilitate integration

- Processes

- Who does what?

54. Of these three types of services, is one or another given higher priority (e.g., jobs "first," housing "first," stabilization or health care "first," etc.)? Please explain.

D. Distribution of REEOP lessons learned information

Here the focus is on how information about employment and other strategies from your project is being disseminated.

1. How do you determine what information should be distributed and who should receive the information?

2. Have you encountered any problems? How are you attempting to resolve those problems? What would you do differently?

3. Do you have any evidence that the information your project disseminates is being used by the organizations/agencies that receive it? Please describe.

4. Has the information you've distributed affected the ability of providers and stakeholders in the workforce development system to provide employment services to people who are ex-offenders? Please give examples.

E. Program Impacts

5. What do you consider to be the most notable achievements of this project? Please give examples.

6. Have you encountered any local, state, or Federal systems barriers in your work with participants when they try to use the WorkSource Centers?

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- Have you identified any systems barriers that deter people who are ex-offenders from obtaining jobs?

- What strategies have you used to overcome these barriers?

- Have these strategies been successful? Why or why not?

- Which strategies will be maintained beyond the life of the project? How have you implemented these strategies so they will be sustained? Please explain.

7. Have you worked with other systems change efforts in your state to improve employment outcomes for people who are ex-offenders (e.g., Full Community Partnership agencies)? If yes, which ones? How? Please describe.

8. As a result of this program, did the WorkSource Centers make any formal policy changes that influenced services for people who are ex-offenders? Please give examples.

9. Have there been other local or state policy changes within the workforce development system that have influenced services to people who are ex-offenders? What role did the project have in these policy changes?

Sustaining Program Elements

10. Describe the elements of your project that you think should be sustained in the future.

11. Describe how these elements will be sustained once DCR funding has ended.

- Are new partnerships (both formal and informal) being developed which will serve to sustain these new elements after the project funds expire? If so, describe these plans.

- What funding sources (new versus existing funding streams) will be available to support project efforts (pre-grant, during-grant, post-grant)?

- How are Federal, state, and local public sector commitments contributing to the sustainability of project activities (e.g., have there been changes in policies, procedures, or relevant legislation)? Please explain.

12. What are the next steps planned for sustaining employment services and other program elements once DCR funding ends?

- Are there other funds that have been identified that will be used to sustain elements of the project (either activities or staff positions)? If yes, what funding sources and what will be sustained?

- Have elements of your project been replicated in other locations in your state?

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Changes in local employment services offerings

13.   Have any changes occurred at the WorkSource Centers as a result of the REEOP?

 ■   Has the project changed the intake process?

 ■   Have new intake or release of information materials been developed?

 ■   Are intensive services accessible for people who are ex-offenders?

  —   If the menu of services has changed, please indicate what has been added to the menu of services for customers since the project began.

 ■   Does the State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation have any role in the REEOP? For instance, has the project involved VR in (or leveraged any VR funds for) micro-enterprises or self-employment efforts among project participants?

 ■   Have there been changes in the WorkSource Centers' business services as a result of this project (e.g., different ways of serving and interacting with employers; providing employers with information on disability and accommodation)? If yes, describe.

 ■   Are the changes temporary or permanent? Are they in place locally? Have they been or will they be extended statewide?

 ■   To what extent are services for people who are ex-offenders now integrated into services for other customers (e.g., job training sessions involve people with and without disabilities)?

Employment Outcomes

14.   What have been the positive employment outcomes from this project? Please give examples.

15.   Have the individualized employment processes resulted in jobs that pay competitive wages? Give examples.

16.   Do you expect that the job outcomes data will improve over time for participants, or stay about the same? That is, is there a re-entry period that is predictable and expected for most people, before they acquire and settle into paid employment? (If yes, would a longer project period make a difference to the eventual job outcomes you would expect to see?)

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F.   Policy

Now we'd like your perspectives on policy changes that might address barriers you have identified in serving this population.

1.   Please describe any policy-focused activities you have undertaken during the project with respect to the situations you've encountered in order to secure housing for project participants who have been ex-offenders.

Probe:

- Barriers to employment or housing identified and addressed in policy or practice (specify)

- Activities with project partners or providers

- Policy activities with state councils or administrators

- Policy or practice activities with city or community stakeholders

2.   Are there concrete policy practice recommendations in the area of employment services or housing that you could recommend for federal, state, or local levels? Please describe.

3.   Please describe any policy-focused activities you have undertaken during the project with respect to helping people who are ex-offenders obtain and retain employment in community non-sheltered or competitive settings.

Probe:

- Barriers to employment identified that can be addressed in policy or practice (specify)

- Activities with project partners or providers

- Policy activities with state councils or administrators

- Policy or practice activities with city or community stakeholders

4.   Please describe any policy-focused activities you have undertaken during the project with respect to helping to expand the professional development of staff members who assist people who are ex-offenders attain housing, employment, and needed social services.

Probe:

- Deficits or weaknesses in staff members' preparation for working with individuals who are ex-offenders obtain employment, housing, and supportive services (specify)

- Activities to develop a professional staff development agenda with project partners or providers

- Policy activities to establish professional staff development with state councils or administrators

- Policy or practice activities with city or community stakeholders for professional staff development

5. Are there concrete policy practice recommendations in the area of professional staff development that you could recommend for federal, state, or local levels? Please describe.

6. Please describe any policy-focused activities you have undertaken during the project with respect to helping to increase access to supportive services (e.g., mental health care, addiction treatment) for people who are ex-offenders and are trying to return to competitive employment.

Probe:

- Barriers to access to supportive services identified and addressed during the project (specify)

- Activities to develop policies to improve access to supportive services with project partners or providers

- Policy activities to improve access to supportive services with state councils or administrators

- Policy or practice efforts to improve access to supportive services with city or community stakeholders

H.   Wrap-up

1. From a project management/coordination perspective, please describe what you consider to be the biggest challenges you have faced while carrying out the project. Are these challenges ongoing? What are some of the ways you have sought to overcome these challenges?

2. What have you wanted to accomplish with this project but been unable to achieve? Give examples. What would have made a difference?

3. Do you think that the project has changed how the intersecting local systems –e.g., the workforce system or the mental health system or the housing system-- operate with respect to serving people who are ex-offenders and are returning to the community and have multiple barriers to employment? Please explain.

- If yes, what factors do you think are primarily responsible for the changes you've mentioned?

- If no, what do you think prevented change from occurring?

4. Do you think anything in this particular locale has helped or hindered your efforts to achieve the objectives of this project?

Probe:

- The presence (or absence) of advocacy organizations dedicated to helping ex-offenders

- The presence/absence of groups dedicated to assisting individuals who have been chronically homeless, such as the National Homeless Coalition, Healthcare for the Homeless, homeless veterans' groups

- Current (or recent) collaboration among businesses interests to employ ex-offenders address as a means to reducing homelessness in the area

- Particular legislation or community ordinances

5. What final steps do you have planned, if any, toward developing effective service delivery or expanding current services for people who are ex-offenders?

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[INTERVIEWER: PARAPHRASE AS NEEDED]: My name is [INSERT NAME] and this is [INSERT NAME]. We both work for Westat, a private research company in Rockville, Maryland. On behalf of the City of Los Angeles Community Development Division, Westat is collecting information on the projects funded through the California State Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation. We would like to talk to you about the Re-Entry Employment Options Project (REEOP).

Because of your involvement with the Re-Entry Employment Options Project, you are an important source of information. We have some specific questions we would like to ask you about the activities you were involved in, and we also would like to hear your perspective on the impact this program has had on people who are ex-offenders and on the workforce development system.

Before we begin, I'd like to ask for your permission to record our conversation so that we do not miss any of your comments. Do we have your permission?

A.   Introduction

Let's start out by having you describe your organization and what it does.

- What is your organization's relationship to the workforce development system?

- What is its relationship to this project?

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[9] Partners include individuals or organizations that have a formal contractual arrangement or memorandum of understanding with the project; housing agencies/organizations, mental health agencies/organizations, and veterans' supports and services are included. Collaborators are individuals or agencies/organizations that do not have a formal or contractual relationship with the project and may include people or organizations that the project targets for information dissemination (e.g., area employers, WIA partners, advocacy groups, and other key organizations) or that recruit, train, or serve project customers.

[10] Note: This protocol will be used for all partners and collaborators.

B.   Collaboration

One of the things awardees have been asked to do by Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation is to collaborate with other organizations and involve them in planning and implementation activities.

- Describe the collaboration between your organization and the Re-Entry Employment Options Project.

- How did your organization become involved with this project?

- Was a new partnership established? Please describe (formal vs. informal).

    - If there was an existing partnership, did collaboration increase? Please describe.

- What helped you to develop or increase collaboration?

- Have you encountered problems in developing and/or increasing collaboration?

- If yes, how are they being overcome?

- Please describe some of the ways in which your organization worked to coordinate service delivery to customers of this project, especially with respect to employment services, mentoring, housing, mental health care and substance use treatment.

- What outcomes or changes have you seen as a result of your involvement/collaboration with Re-Entry Employment Options Project? What do you expect to see?

- Did this collaboration result in any changes in attitude toward people who are ex-offenders and may have multiple barriers to employment (e.g., substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, and/or chronic physical illness)?

- Did this collaboration result in changes in your own program or agency's policies or procedures? Give examples.

- How has your relationship with the project affected the capacity of the WorkSource Center, the local workforce development system, and the social service system to provide employment services to people who are ex-offenders and have multiple employment barriers? Give examples.

- Have you seen any changes at the state or local level with respect to new or revised policies, procedures, or personnel that would facilitate coordination of services? Are these temporary or permanent changes? Please describe.

C.　Project Advice, Oversight and Monitoring

We have a few questions for people who served on the REEOP Strategy Committee. Did you serve on this committee or one involved in the management and coordination of the project? If not, we'll proceed to the next section. If so, please describe the kinds of activities that you pursued in this role.

- When did you begin serving on the committee?

- How often did you meet? Who else came to the meetings?

- Are there any especially problematic issues that you confronted in this role or that were problematic for your organization? For example:

  - Strained resources, including staff time or expenses related to having staff from your organization involved

  - The introduction of risk to your organization imposed by time obligations committed to the project or other kinds of risk;

  - Issues around which there were differences of opinion that caused conflict, such as the direction committee members believed the project should take, or how funding could be sustained for valued project activities after DC&R funding ends.

- If problematic issues did arise, please describe how they were handled or resolved.

- If project management and oversight went smoothly and overt conflicts were not in evidence, what factors most contributed to this dynamic?

D.　Information and Training

- Did you or someone from your agency/organization provide information and training? For example, did you train WorkSource Center staff or staff from local housing organizations/agencies? Did you provide information on employment services or mental health or addictions or housing? Did you provide information or training to area employers about the benefits of employing people with disabilities? Did you provide information to employers about how to provide Employer Network services to people with disabilities using Ticket to Work?

  - ☐　YES
  - ☐　NO ⇒ SKIP TO ITEM 4

- How has your organization been involved in providing information and training? Please describe.

- Thinking about whom you trained or provided information to, in your opinion, have their efforts toward supporting and/or assisting people who are ex-offenders expanded as a result of the information and training you provided? Please describe.

- Do you think this information and training has affected the capacity of the WorkSource Centers or the local workforce development system to provide employment services to people who are ex-offenders and who have one or several barriers to obtaining employment (e.g., active substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness)?

- Have you or your organization received any training or information from the project on employing or serving people who are ex-offenders?

  ☐ YES
  ☐ NO ⇒ SKIP TO ITEM 27

- Describe the information or training you received. Who initiated the training? Who conducted the training?

- Has your knowledge about or attitudes toward people with disabilities (and particularly people who are ex-offenders who may have substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, and/or chronic physical illness) changed as a result of the training you received?

- How has the information and training received by you or your organization affected its ability to serve people with disabilities?

- Describe any other information you have received about the services that the REEOP provides.

- How has the information this project has provided thus far had an impact on the capacity of your organization to provide services to people who are ex-offenders? Please describe.

Probe:

- Did receiving training result in the designation of staff within your organization that has expertise in serving the target population?

- Was a new or re-structured staff position created in your organization to assist people who are ex-offenders that may also have a substance use disorder, serious mental illness or chronic physical illness? If so, are there plans to retain that staff job in your organization after the project ends?

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E.   Program Services

This project was purposely designed to integrate housing, employment and other supportive services for people returning to their communities from jail or prison.

- ■   What do you think have been the most helpful services thus far that this project provides to people who are ex-offenders? Please explain.

- ■   How well do you think the project has managed to integrate the three types of services (i.e., employment, housing, and mental health/substance use disorder treatment)? Please explain.

- ■   What do you think have been barriers to integration of these services? Please describe.

- ■   What have you or your organization done to try to resolve these barriers?

- ■   What has and has not worked?

- ■   To the extent that the project has been successful in integrating housing, employment services, and mental health care and substance use treatment or services, what do you think has been the impact? Please describe impacts on program customers and on the workforce development system

- ■   Thinking about this project's successes thus far, what do you think have been the essential ingredients? Do you think one element (housing, employment, mental health care, and substance use treatment or services) is more important than others? Please explain.

- ■   How has the provision of housing, mental health services, employment services, and veterans services (as appropriate) played a role in improving --or reducing-- the likelihood of obtaining employment for this population (people who are ex-offenders)?

  - o   Do you think there are other services that weren't provided, that should have been available to participants in the project that would have helped people find and retain employment? Please explain.

E-2.   Daily Operations and Services (Staff questions)

In addition to the issues we've covered above, we'd like to find out more about how some of the following issues are handled in the daily operations of the project.

- ■   Please describe how the issue of disclosure is handled with prospective employers, particularly for people who have been incarcerated and have a mental illness and/or substance use disorder.

- Do you routinely offer advice on this issue? If yes, what kind of advice do you offer?

■ From your work thus far, do you have a perspective on whether disclosure should or should not be encouraged? Can you provide examples of situations you've encountered during the project to illustrate your perspective on this?

■ What kind of "best practices" do you rely on to engage people, keep them engaged, and help them get and keep paid employment? Please describe.

- Do you offer any incentives to keep people in contact with the REEOP?

- Does the REEOP have procedures for handling contact with participants after normal business hours?

■ How is job development conducted? Please provide a recent example of the process.

■ Did you receive any special information or training about these practices through this project? If yes, was the training useful? If not, what would have made it better or more useful for you?

■ Do you go on-site to job coach any of the participants?

■ Do you have contact with participant's employers? For what reason(s)?

■ Which project services are delivered by ex-offenders, formerly homeless individuals, or peers who are in recovery for mental illness and drug or alcohol addictions (e.g., support groups, employment services or other paid staff positions)?

- Have you noticed any differences in the participants' responses to such services?

- Is there any informal or survey information about participants' perspective on such services?

■ How are educational or literacy needs assessed, and when is this done? Do you provide or refer participants for educational services? Please describe that process.

■ Are you in regular contact with other service providers for the customers you serve? Please describe.

- Organizations/agencies (e.g., housing, mental health, clinics, eye or dental care)

- Nature of contact (e.g., regular staff meetings, written reports, other)

- Frequency of contact (e.g., weekly, bi-weekly, monthly)

- Level or intensity of involvement (e.g., high during crises, minimal at other times)

- Do you visit participants in their homes? Do you contact them in their work places?

- What happens when someone leaves their job? How do you find out if someone resigns or quits their job? Does this affect their housing? Please give examples.

- Has transportation to work or the WorkSource Centers presented problems for the participants you work with? If yes, how are these issues resolved?

- Overall, what would you say are the unexpected issues you encountered in your work on this project, serving this target population? How have you addressed the issue(s)?

- Have you been surprised by any of the outcomes you've observed thus far?

- Can you describe some of the employment outcomes for the project (e.g., competitive positions, development of self-employment options, subsidized positions in partner organizations, etc.)?

- Do you know if any of the project partners have hired participants for paid, non-subsidized employment positions? Is this planned?

F.   Policy Section

Now we'd like to ask you about your perspectives on the policy work you've been doing. We are especially interested in hearing about your suggestions for policy changes that might address barriers you have identified in serving this population.

- Please describe any policy-focused efforts you have made during the project with respect to the situations you've encountered in order to secure housing for project participants who have been ex-offenders.

Probe:

- Barriers to housing identified and addressed in policy or practice (specify)

- Position paper work with other Prisoner Reentry grantees

- Efforts with project partners or providers

- Policy efforts with state councils or administrators

- Policy or practice efforts with city or community stakeholders

- Are there concrete policy practice recommendations in the area of housing that you could recommend for federal, state, or local levels? Please describe.

- Please describe any policy-focused efforts you have undertaken during the project with respect to helping people who are ex-offenders obtain and retain employment in community non-sheltered or competitive settings.

Probe:

- Barriers to employment identified that can be addressed in policy or practice (specify)

- Position paper work with other Prisoner Reentry grantees

- Efforts with project partners or providers

- Policy efforts with state councils or administrators

- Policy or practice efforts with city or community stakeholders

- Are there concrete policy practice recommendations in the area of employment that you could recommend for federal, state, or local levels? Please describe.

- Please describe any policy-focused efforts you have undertaken during the project with respect to helping expanding the professional development of staff members who assist people who are ex-offenders attain housing, employment, and needed social services.

Probe:

- Deficits or weaknesses in staff members' preparation for working with individuals who are ex-offenders obtain housing, employment, and supportive services (specify)

- Efforts to develop a professional staff development agenda with other grantees

- Efforts to develop a professional staff development agenda with project partners or providers

- Policy efforts to establish professional staff development with state councils or administrators

- Policy or practice efforts with city or community stakeholders for professional staff development

- Are there concrete policy practice recommendations in the area of professional staff development that you could recommend for federal, state, or local levels? Please describe.

- Please describe any policy-focused efforts you have undertaken during the project with respect to helping increasing access to supportive services (e.g., mental health care, addiction treatment) for people who are ex-offenders attain housing, employment, and needed social services.

Probe:

- Barriers to access to supportive services identified and addressed during the project (specify)

- Efforts to develop policies to improve access to supportive services with other grantees

- Efforts to develop policies to improve access to supportive services with project partners or providers

- Policy efforts to improve access to supportive services with state councils or administrators

- Policy or practice efforts to improve access to supportive services with city or community stakeholders

H. Wrap-Up

- Now that the project has been up and running for several years, what do you see as the project's biggest accomplishments? What do you think contributed to the success?

- What have you wanted this project to accomplish but have been unable to achieve? Give examples. What would have made a difference?

- Do you think there are elements in this particular locale that facilitated or hindered the attainment of the project's objectives? Please explain if the following items or activities, or others you may have observed, have influenced the project.

  - Presence or absence of advocacy groups for the homeless (e.g., National Coalition for the Homeless, Homeless Veterans' groups, Healthcare for the Homeless, others)

  - Too few or too many providers of services working with the project

  - State of the local economy

  - Penalties or sanctions against ex-offenders who have been homeless (e.g., tickets, fines, or jail time for sleeping in a park).

THAT'S ALL THE QUESTIONS WE HAVE FOR YOU. WE'D LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR MEETING WITH US TODAY AND HELPING US TO UNDERSTAND THIS PROGRAM AND YOUR ROLE.

INTERVIEW WITH PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Good (MORNING/AFTERNOON/EVENING) and thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is [INTERVIEWER NAME] and this is [INSERT NAME]. We both work for Westat, a private research company in Rockville, Maryland. We are here to learn about the Re-Entry Employment Options project and what has worked and what can be improved. As a participant, you are an important source of information, so we would like to talk to you about your experiences and what the program has done for you.

I want to make sure you understand that the opinions and experiences we talk about here today will not negatively affect the services and benefits you receive from the WorkSource Centers, any government agency, or any service agency. Your honest input will help us better understand the services available for people like yourself, and your individual responses will be anonymous.

Before we start, I want to ask if it is all right with you if we record this session. The recording is only to help us so we don't lose any of the information you give us. OK?

In general, we will be asking you to tell us about your experiences with this program, including why you wanted to participate, what happened, and what you liked or didn't like about the experience.

A.   EXPERIENCES

1.   First, tell us how you came to know about this program and the services it offers.

Probe:

- Why did you come here?

- How did you find out about it?

- Who told you about it?

- Why did you think this program might be able to help you?

2.   Please walk us through your experiences with this program. Tell us how you heard about it, what happened when you came to the program. If you can, try to tell us what happened in the order of when it happened.

Probe:

- How long have you been enrolled in the program?

- What was the enrollment process like (papers filled out, waiting time)?

- Did you complete an application or fill out papers? Please describe.

- How did you find a place to live?

- What is your housing situation like? Please describe.

  – Type of housing

  – Number of rooms and roommates

  – Rules of the house

- Did you meet with a counselor? What did he/she do to help you find a job? Please describe.

- What services did you receive through this program?

  – Employment

  – Housing

  – Mental health/substance abuse

  – Other

- Did the staff help you to talk to and relate to employers? Please describe.

- Did you take any kind of assessments or tests to help you find decide what types of jobs to look for?

- Did you attend any training to help you find a job?

- Did you receive any help in applying for financial benefits, mental health or veterans' services, or finding housing?

- Were you referred to any other services inside or outside the program (e.g., VR, veterans groups, mental health agencies/organizations, substance abuse programs)? Please describe what happened (e.g., reason for referral, the process).

- Are you still enrolled in the program?

B.   PERSON-CENTERED APPROACH

3. Did you feel that your employment goals and interests were the main focus of the help you received? Did the staff help you to decide what kind of job or career you might like to have? How did you and the staff decide what jobs to work toward? Were you asked for your opinions and given choices in the direction you might want to take?

Probe:

- Why did you enter the program? What was your goal?

- What are your employment goals? Did the program support those goals?

- Did the staff listen to your employment goals and use them as the main focus to develop your employment plan?

- Did you feel that the staff listened to your concerns? Please give examples.

- Did you feel that you could tell the staff your honest opinions about the help they gave you? Please explain.

C.   SATISFACTION

4. In general, were you satisfied with the help you received from the program?

Probe:

- What things were helpful to you? Please give examples.

- How easy/difficult was it to get services? Please explain.

- What did you like the most about the program? Please describe.

- What did you not like about the program? Please explain.

- If you had a friend who was looking for a job, would you recommend that your friend come to this program for help? Why or why not?

D. RESULTS

5. What has been the result of your experience with this program?

Probe:

- Did you get a job through this program? (If no, did you find a job on your own during the time you've been involved with this program?)

- Are you working now? Please describe the job (type of job, responsibilities, part-time/full-time, duration in job).

- If so, how satisfied are you with your job? Does it match your interests, capabilities, and needs?

- How many jobs did you receive through this program? Please describe.

- Were there any skills that you were taught that you think might be useful in helping you to get a job in the future (e.g., networking, computer skills, resume writing)?

- Do you think you are in a better position to get a job?

- Were you able to get housing? How did that help you to look for/obtain/keep a job? Please explain.

- Did you receive any other services from this program (e.g., referrals for mental health care or substance use treatments)? If yes, have those services been helpful to you? Please explain.

- How did the other services you received (e.g., mental health or substance use treatment) help you in obtaining and/or retaining a job? Please explain.

- How has your ability to find permanent housing and other services affected your ability to look for/find a job? Please explain.

- How did having permanent housing and a job affect other parts of your life (e.g., your mental outlook, issues related to alcohol and substance use). Please explain.

- How have things changed for you since you received help from this program?

6. If you received a Ticket to Work in the mail, did you ask the staff from this program what it was?

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Probe:

- Did you get the information you needed about using the Ticket?

- Are you using your Ticket?

- Have there been any problems in using it?

7. What would you tell your friend about any problems you had getting help from this program?

Probe:

- How easy or difficult was it to get help?

- How accessible were the services you received? Please explain.

- How accessible was the space at the place where you received services? Please explain.

- How easy was it for you to communicate the kind of help you wanted ? Please explain.

8. What would you tell your friend about the staff at the program?

Probe:

- How were you treated by the staff?

- How knowledgeable is the staff about your needs?

- How helpful was the staff in helping you find a job or preparing you for a job?

- Did you feel the staff was comfortable with the fact that you had been in jail?

9. When you think about the help you have received from this program, how would you rate the help you received on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 is the most amount of help)? Why?

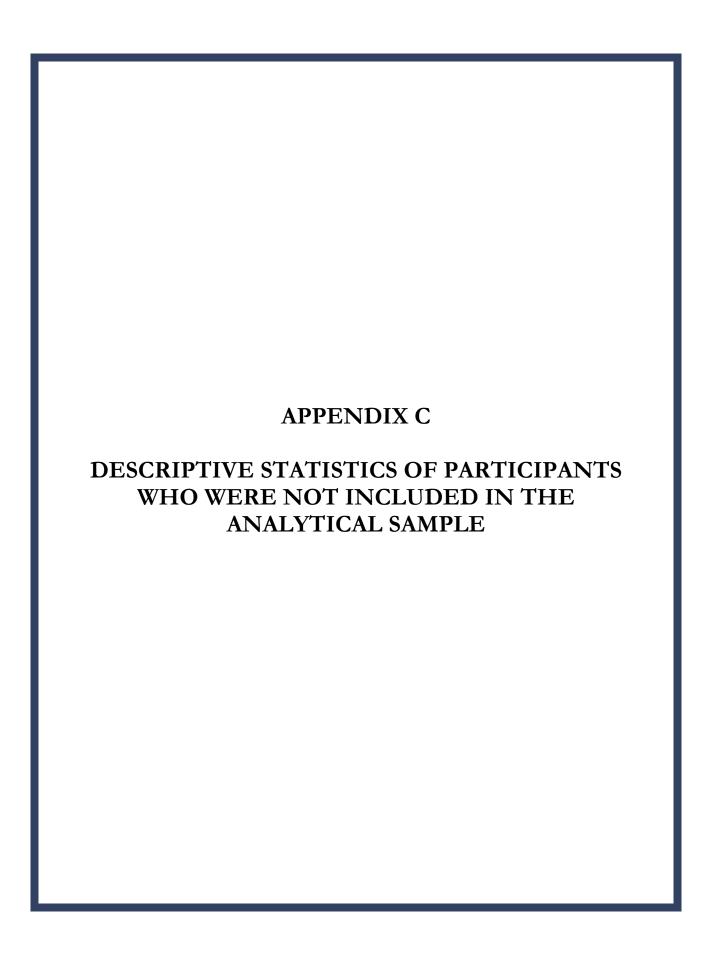10. Do you have any suggestions to make your experiences better?

APPENDIX C

**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS
WHO WERE NOT INCLUDED IN THE
ANALYTICAL SAMPLE**

Table C-1   Demographic characteristics of program participants who were not included in the
analytical sample

Characteristics	Sample that was excluded in analysis (N=49)	
	N	%
Gender		
Male	25	49.0
Female	24	51.0
Age at enrollment		
30 years old or less	14	28.6
31-44 years old	21	42.8
45 and more	14	28.6
Education		
Less than high school	18	36.7
High school graduate	22	44.9
More than high school	9	18.4
Marital Status		
Never married	31	63.3
Married/Living together	8	16.3
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	9	18.4

* Analytical sample includes those participants who received 1 week of job readiness course and stayed with the program for more than 60 days.

Table C-2   Other characteristics of program participants who were not included in the
analytical sample

Characteristics	Analytical sample (N=49)	
	N	%
Disability status		
Reports at least 1 disability	8	16.3
Caring for children		
Caring for at least 1 child under the age of 18	18	36.8
Age at first arrest **		
Less than 16 years old	11	22.5
Between 16 and 18 years old	12	24.5
19 years old or more	24	49.0
Substance abuse *		
Cocaine/Crack	19	38.8
Marijuana	10	20.4
Other drugs	9	18.4
Not applicable	9	18.4

* We use self-reported primary drug of choice as a substance abuse indicator. Information is missing for 2 subjects. * Information is missing for 2 subjects.

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