Integrating Best Practices from Corrections and Workforce Systems to Match Jobseekers to Services:
The IRES Pilot Project

May 31, 2017

Brought to you by the National Reentry Resource Center and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice
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The National Reentry Resource Center

- Deliver training and technical assistance
- Advance knowledge base of reentry field
- Promote what works in reentry
- Facilitate peer networks and information exchange
- Provide information for people returning to communities and their families

www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org
Overview

01 Understanding the intersection of reentry and employment
02 Engaging key stakeholders
03 Assessing risk and needs
04 Inventorying available services
05 Making service referrals and tracking outcomes
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The scope of reentry is too big to ignore

10 million adults in the U.S. are returning from incarceration each year*

70 million adults nationwide have an arrest or conviction record


* 600,000 people released from state and federal prisons, plus 9 million people released from jails
Quiz: How many working age adults in the U.S. have a felony record?

(A) ~1 million
(B) ~6 million
(C) ~15 million

Quiz: How many people are out of work in the U.S. because of their felony record?

(A) ~825,000 fewer workers
(B) ~1.8 million fewer workers
(C) ~5.0 million fewer workers

A felony record results in:

• Skill deterioration
• Lack of access to pro-social networks
• Employer bias
• Legal barriers to employment

Employment is an important part of reentry

- Especially when earnings are above minimum wage
- Especially with stable jobs

How do we break the cycle?

Incarceration → Failed reentry → Lowered employment prospects
Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies (IRES) white paper released in 2013

- Supported by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, with guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor
- Purpose: Bridge and integrate best practices from the reentry, corrections, and workforce development fields
Connect people to appropriate services based on assessed risk and needs

**Step 1: Assess Risk and Needs**
- Low or “Lower” Risk
- Risk and Needs Assessment with Objective, Validated Tool
- Moderate/High or “Higher” Risk

  This assessment measures individuals’ risk of reoffending and related needs, and helps inform supervision policies and non-employment referrals/program placements that address criminogenic risk and responsivity needs.

**Step 2: Assess Job Readiness**
- Job-Readiness Assessment
- Lower Risk/More Ready (GROUP 1)
- Lower Risk/Less Ready (GROUP 2)
- Higher Risk/More Ready (GROUP 3)
- Higher Risk/Less Ready (GROUP 4)

**Step 3: Deliver Targeted Services**
- Integrated Risk and Job-Readiness Packages
  - GROUP 1 Employment Program Components
  - GROUP 2 Employment Program Components
  - Less Intensive Application of Service-Delivery Principles for Groups 1 and 2

- Integrated Risk and Job-Readiness Packages
  - GROUP 3 Employment Program Components
  - GROUP 4 Employment Program Components
  - More Intensive Application of Service-Delivery Principles for Groups 3 and 4
Two pilot sites selected to test the framework at a systems level

1. Is our leadership committed to a collaborative approach?
2. Do we conduct timely risk-needs assessments and job-readiness screenings?
3. Have we conducted a comprehensive process analysis and inventory of employment services?
4. Do we have a coordinated process for making service referrals and tracking data?

Milwaukee County, WI

Palm Beach County, FL
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Policymakers and Practitioners across the political spectrum are prioritizing employment as a key issue

“Employment is an instrumental part of success after incarceration, and it’s also a monumental hurdle for many reentering society.”
– Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch (R), WI

“We need to not just get them a job, but teach them the value of employment, of providing for themselves and providing for their families.”
– John Wetzel, Sec. Pennsylvania DOC

“We must do more to stop the revolving door of recidivism once and for all.”
– Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D), NY

“Employment is one of the greatest predictors of reentry success...”
– Harold Clarke, Director Virginia DOC
Is our leadership committed to a collaborative approach?

- Executive leadership involvement
- Representative planning team
- Designated project coordinator
- Commitment to vision, mission, and guiding principles
Example: Planning teams in Wisconsin

- Core Planning Team
- Full Steering Committee
- Executive Steering Committee
- Other coordinating councils and task forces
Challenges to prioritizing employment services for the reentry population
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Conducting timely risk-needs assessments and job readiness screenings

- Validated risk-needs assessments
- System-wide definition of job readiness
- Job readiness screenings
- Mechanisms for information sharing
- Baseline data
Quiz: What are the top 4 predictors of recidivism?

Please select only 4 from below

(A) Antisocial Thinking
(B) Lack of Education/Employment
(C) Family & Marital Stressors
(D) Antisocial Peers
(E) Past Criminal History
(F) Antisocial Personality
(G) Substance Use
(H) Mental Disorders
(I) Lack of Pro-social Leisure Time
What are the predictors of recidivism, and how are they measured?

**Risk/Needs Assessments**

Measure criminogenic risk factors and specific needs that, if addressed, will reduce likelihood of future criminal activity

Help prioritize programming to make the best use of limited resources

* Past criminal history cannot be changed

**Antisocial Thinking**
- Lack of employment or education
- Family & marital stressors

**Past Criminal History**
- Substance use

**Antisocial Personality**
- Antisocial Peers
- Lack of pro-social leisure time

**Criminal Behavior**
- Past Criminal History*

* Past criminal history cannot be changed
Example: Assessment process and information sharing in Palm Beach County, FL

- Contracted community-based reentry agencies conduct risk-need assessment 9 months pre-release

- Case conferencing with correctional staff and community-based reentry providers to develop reentry plan pre-release

- Information shared in database accessible to Criminal Justice Commission (CJC), contracted community-based reentry service providers, and local workforce board
What are the predictors of job readiness, and how are they measured?

No national consensus on defining or assessing job readiness

Employability skills are general skills necessary for success in the labor market at all employment levels, across all sectors.
Example: 50% of people returning to Milwaukee Co. are at a higher risk of reoffending and less job ready

Data Definitions
Higher Risk: Medium, Medium with Override Consideration, or High Recommended Supervision Level
Lower Risk: Low Recommended Supervision Level
More Ready: Unlikely Education/Vocational Need Scale or Unlikely Employment Expectations Scale
Less Ready: Probable or Highly Probable Education/Vocational Need Scale or Probable or Highly Probable Employment Expectations Scale

Data was analyzed for everyone released from four institutions of focus to Milwaukee Co. in 2015.

* WI DOC data analyzed by The Council of State Governments Justice Center
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Have we conducted a comprehensive process analysis and inventory of employment services?

• Detailed process analysis

• Service capacity

• Evidence-based services

• Identifying existing services

• Alignment of funding requirements
What services are delivered should be based on a person’s level of job readiness.

**Primary Focus: Finding and Retaining Employment**
- Permanent unsubsidized employment
- Job development and coaching
- Retention and advancement services (*including continuing education and training*)
- Financial work incentives

**Primary Focus: Promoting Job Readiness**
- Education and training
- Soft-skill development
- Transitional job placements
- Non-skill-related interventions
How services are delivered should be based on a person’s risk of reoffending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Avoid intensive case management</td>
<td>Intensive case management and cognitive-behavioral interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Important to connect to services upon release</td>
<td>Connect to services pre-release or immediately upon release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives</td>
<td>Less of a need for motivation</td>
<td>Enhance motivation through communication and incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Community supervision should not be intensive</td>
<td>Work closely with community supervision officers, who can assist with intensive engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Time</td>
<td>Avoid disrupting existing pro-social ties</td>
<td>Structure time in a pro-social environment</td>
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An example

Joseph
• 28
• Felony conviction
• GED

Michael
• 27
• Felony conviction
• High school graduate
An example

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Other Risk Factors:

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<td>• No prior convictions</td>
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<td>• Maintained family ties</td>
<td>• Criminal thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• History of substance use</td>
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### Other Risk Factors:

- No prior convictions
- Maintained family ties
- 3 prior convictions
- Criminal thinking
- History of substance use

### Other Job Readiness Factors:

- Employed at time of arrest
- Worked in correctional industries while incarcerated
- Unemployed at time of arrest
- Gaps in employment history
- Limited skills
## An example

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### Other Risk Factors:
- No prior convictions
- Maintained family ties

### Other Job Readiness Factors:
- Employed at time of arrest
- Worked in correctional industries while incarcerated

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Joseph?
- (A) Group 1- Lower Risk/More Ready
- (B) Group 2- Lower Risk/Less Ready
- (C) Group 3-Higher Risk/More Ready
- (D) Group 4-Higher Risk/Less Ready

Michael?
- (A) Group 1- Lower Risk/More Ready
- (B) Group 2- Lower Risk/Less Ready
- (C) Group 3-Higher Risk/More Ready
- (D) Group 4-Higher Risk/Less Ready
## An example

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Group 4</th>
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### Other Risk Factors:
- Joseph: No prior convictions, Maintained family ties
- Michael: 3 prior convictions, Criminal thinking, History of substance use

### Other Job Readiness Factors:
- Joseph: Employed at time of arrest, Worked in correctional industries while incarcerated
- Michael: Unemployed at time of arrest, Gaps in employment history, Limited skills

### Appropriate Services:
- Joseph: Connect with services that focus on job attainment and retention, Low intensity service delivery and supervision
- Michael: Intensive engagement and structured programming, Focus on soft skill development and building job readiness
Example: Employment agencies may not be able to meet service needs of target population

Each star represents an employment agency in Milwaukee County that serves the reentry population.
Building capacity and ensuring service contracts promote evidence-based practices

• Develop differentiated service tracks based on a participant’s level of job readiness

• Increase knowledge of evidence-based practices and promote coordination and collaboration

• Align reentry service contracts with evidence-based practices

• Refer people to the agencies that are best equipped to meet their needs

• Incorporate cross-agency referrals to provide targeted services
Example: Employment agencies may move from one grouping to another with minor changes*

* Changes may include the addition of cognitive programming, creation of clear services tracks, or the allocation of contract funds.
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Do we have a coordinated system for making service referrals and tracking data?

• Establishing a lead coordinating agency

• Ongoing evaluation of community-based reentry services

• Coordinating transition planning

• Tracking referrals and services

• Promoting coordination, collaboration, and sustainability
Example: Connecting people to reentry services in Palm Beach County, FL

CJC Functions:
1. Contract with providers for service delivery
2. Coordinate assessment and referral processes
3. Engage and enroll people in programming pre-release
4. Maintain database to track individual outcomes

CJC connects people to community-based reentry and employment services

Community-Based Reentry and Employment Service Providers
CareerSource
Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
The Lord’s Place
Riviera Beach Justice Services Center
Thank You!

For more information, contact Erica Nelson at enelson@csg.org

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