The Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies (IRES) Pilot Project

Findings and Recommendations

Milwaukee County, WI

May 2016

Council of State Governments Justice Center

- National nonprofit, nonpartisan membership association of state government officials from three branches of government

- Provides practical, nonpartisan advice informed by the best available evidence on criminal justice topics

JUSTICE ★ CENTER
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS
Collaborative Approaches to Public Safety

the NATIONAL REENTRY
RESOURCE CENTER
A project of the CSG Justice Center

Corrections	Courts	Justice Reinvestment	Law Enforcement
Mental Health	Reentry	Substance Abuse	Youth

Overview

Goals and scope of pilot project

Findings

Recommendations

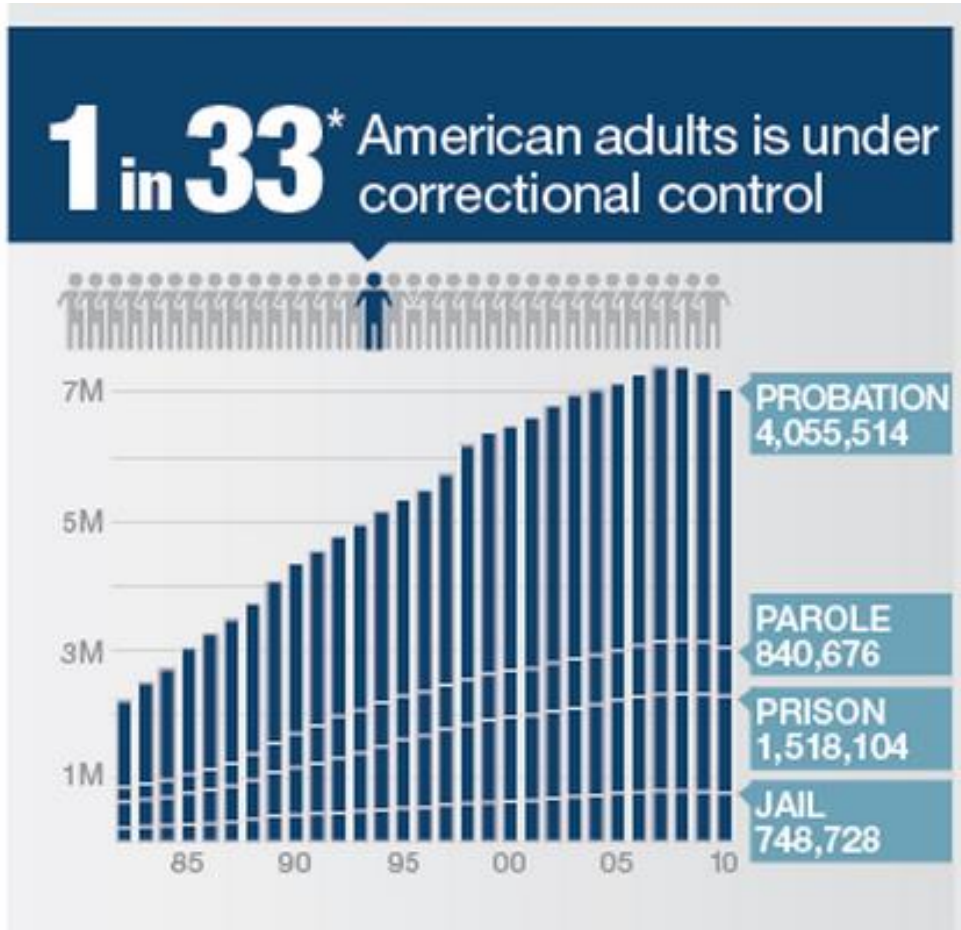# Overview

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Reentry is a major challenge for communities across the country

1 in 33* American adults is under correctional control

- 7M — PROBATION 4,055,514
- 5M
- 3M — PAROLE 840,676
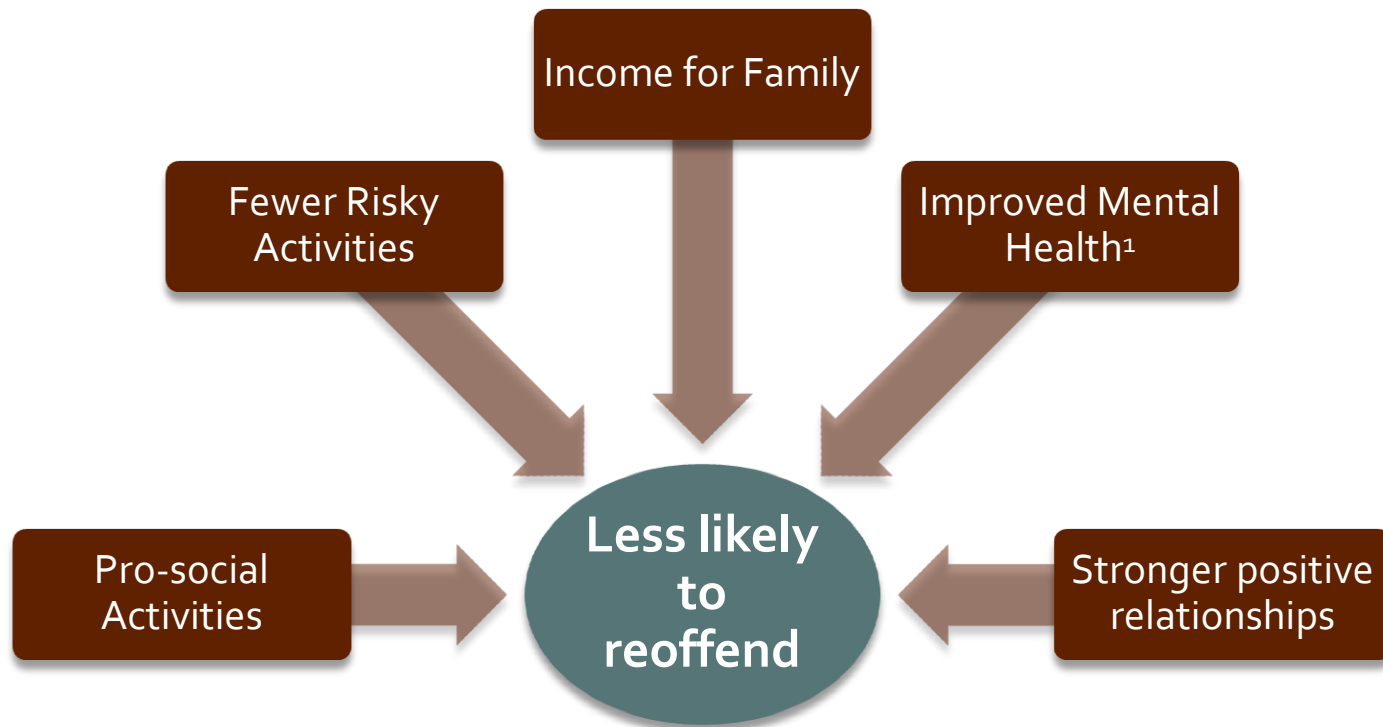- PRISON 1,518,104
- 1M — JAIL 748,728

85 90 95 00 05 10

68% of people released from state prisons are rearrested within 3 years

50% of people released from state prisons are reincarcerated within 3 years

SOURCE: Pew Center on the States (2012); Bureau of Justice Statistics (2014)

Employment is an important part of reentry

Income for Family

Fewer Risky Activities

Improved Mental Health[1]

Pro-social Activities

Less likely to reoffend

Stronger positive relationships

- Especially when earnings are above minimum wage[2]
- Especially with stable jobs[3]

However, limited research exists on the impact of employment programs on reducing recidivism

▶ Not everyone with a criminal record need the same services.
  ▶ Need to assess differences in job readiness and likelihood of recidivism

▶ Just connecting someone to a job has not been shown to reduce recidivism.
  ▶ Need to address people's underlying needs related to recidivism

▶ Higher-risk people require cognitive-behavioral interventions, while those services can make lower-risk clients worse off.
  ▶ Need to match people to services based on assessments

Some employment programs have been able to reduce recidivism

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) 3-Year Impact on Recidivism

Full Sample

Control Group: 48.8%
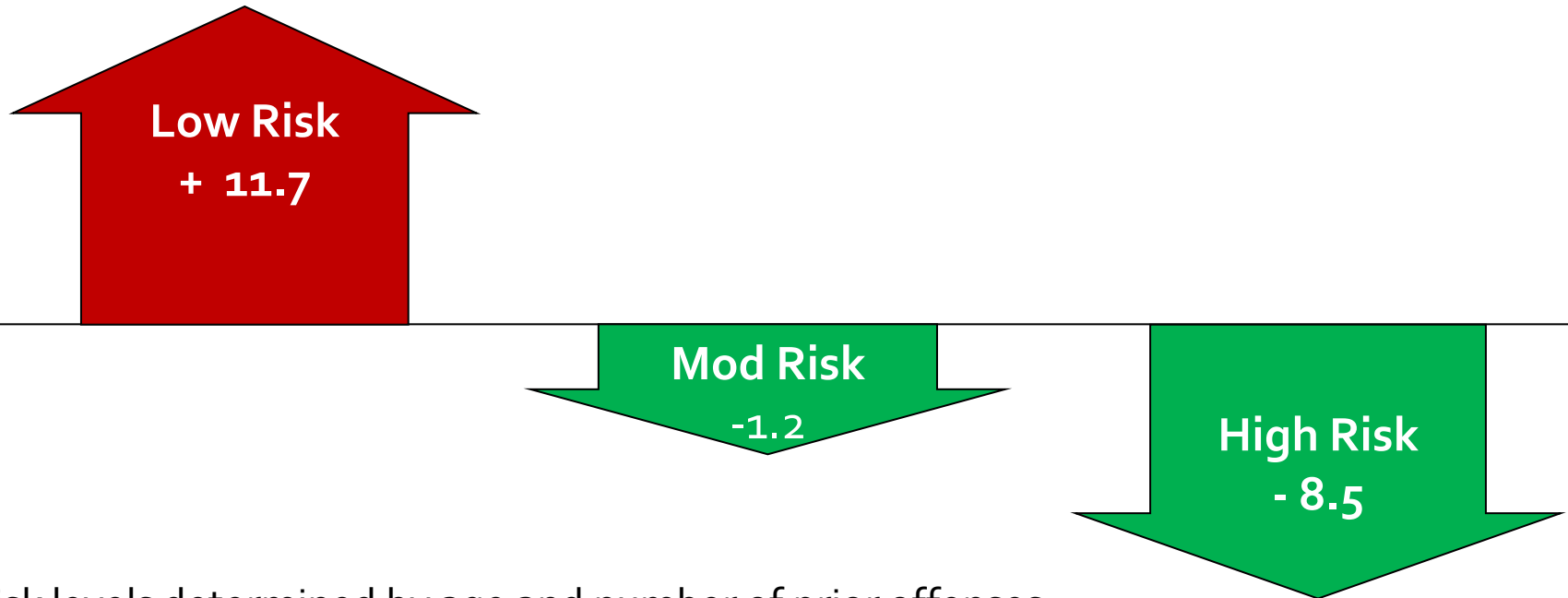Participants: 43.1%

Y-axis: Recidivism Rate (30% – 50%)
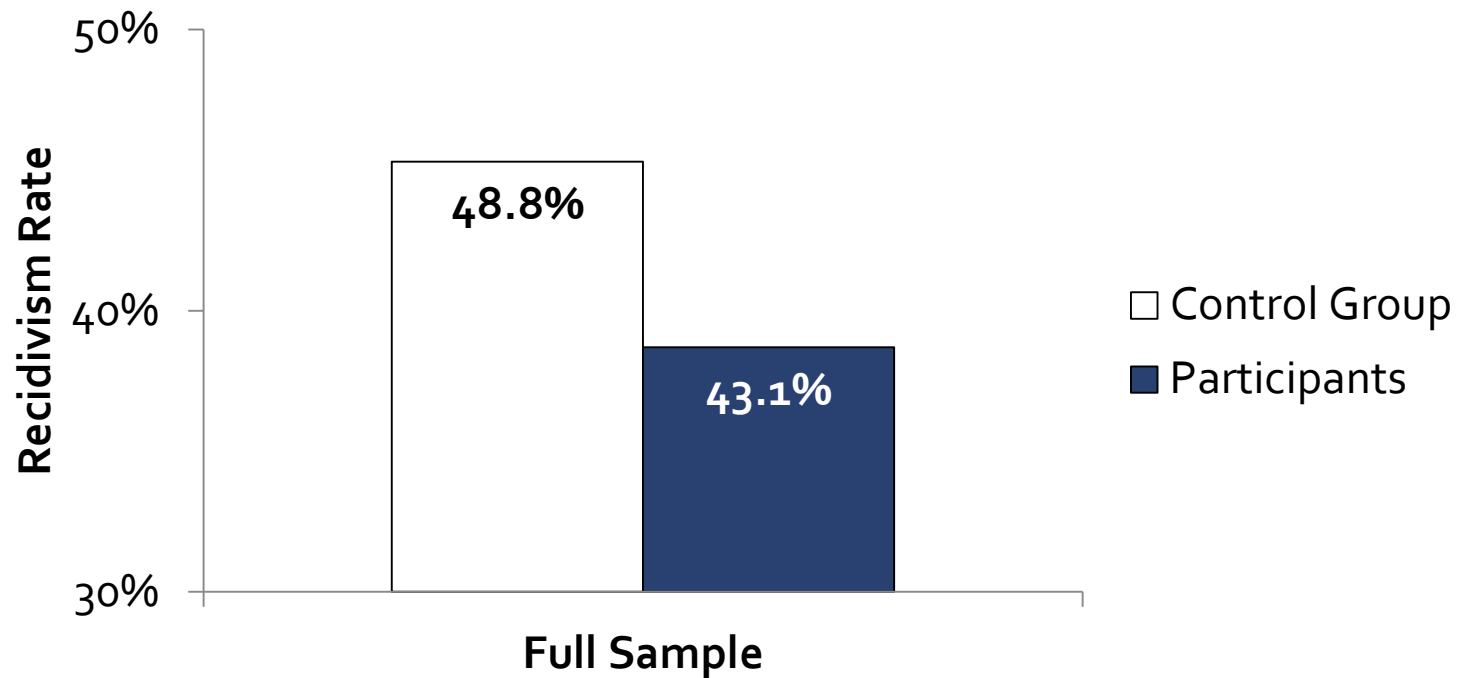
**Significance level = p<.05

SOURCE: Redcross et al, "*More Than a Job: Final Results from the Evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Transitional Jobs Program*" (2012)

Employment programs must consider risk levels when delivering services*

Differences in reconviction rates between CEO program participants and control group (years 1 and 2)†

**Low Risk
+ 11.7**

**Mod Risk
-1.2**

**High Risk
- 8.5**

* Risk levels determined by age and number of prior offenses
† Recidivism impacts for the high risk group were only statistically significant in year 2

Despite shared goals, workforce development and reentry fields are often not integrated

Workforce Development

Job readiness assessment

Address skill deficits that impact employment

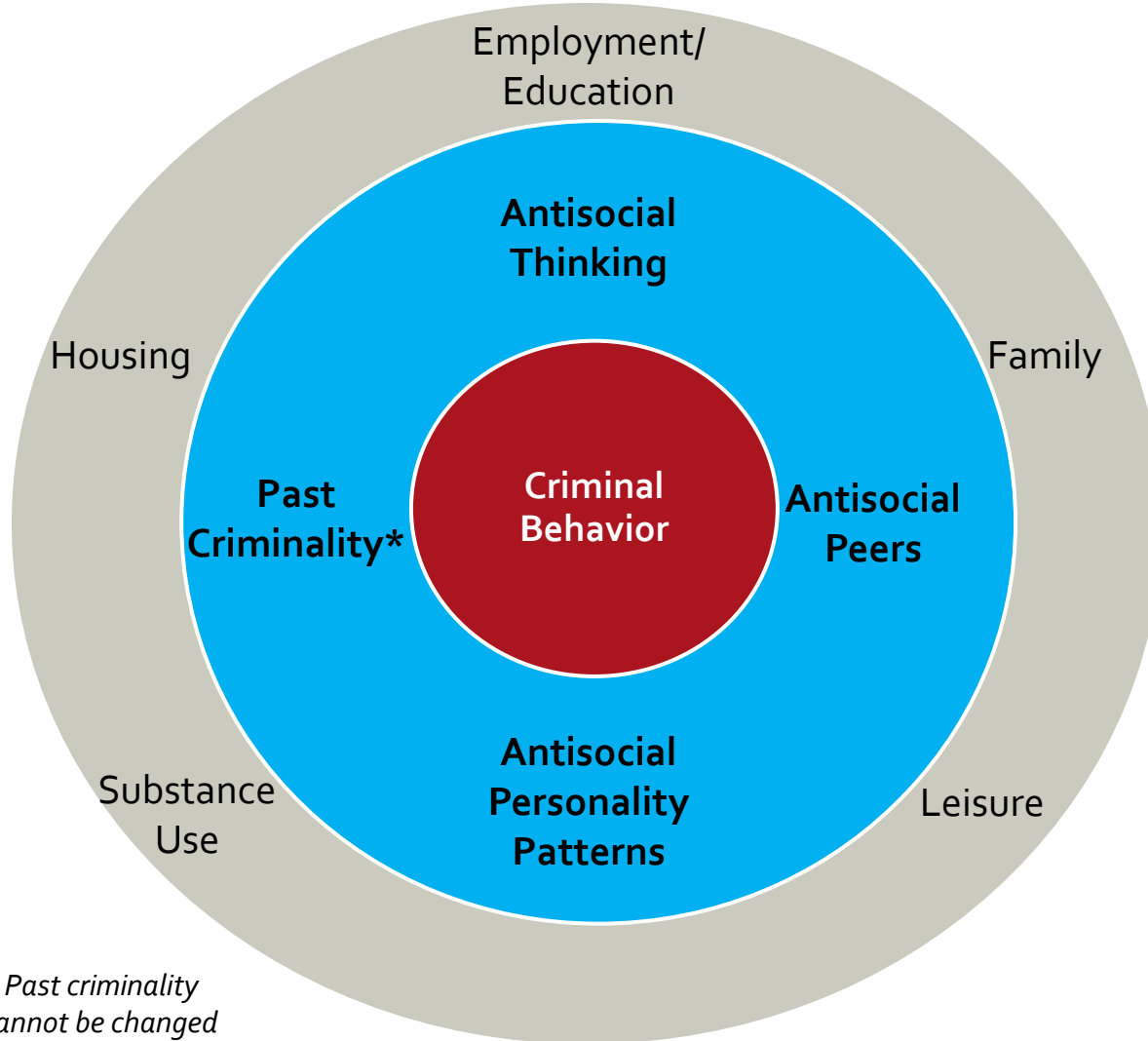Case management and wraparound support

Corrections & Reentry

Risk/needs assessment

Address needs that lead to reoffending

Case management and wraparound support

What are the predictors of recidivism, and how are they measured?

Employment/ Education

Antisocial Thinking

Housing

Family

Past Criminality*

Criminal Behavior

Antisocial Peers

Antisocial Personality Patterns

Substance Use

Leisure

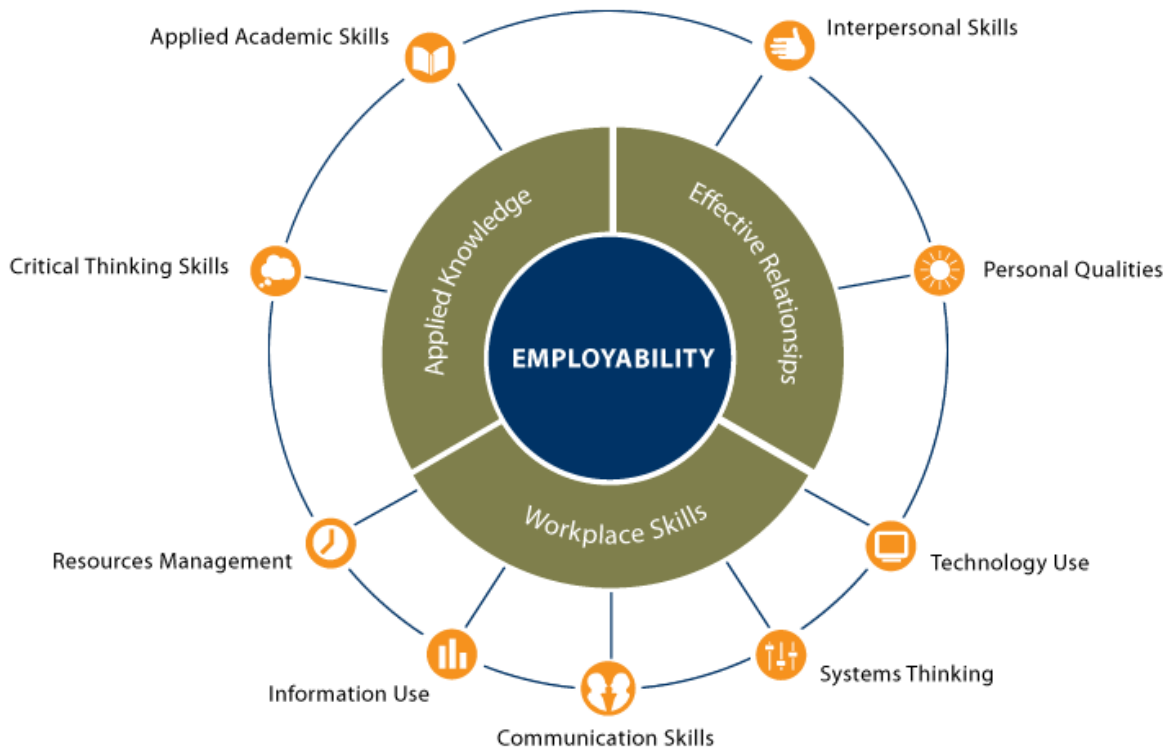** Past criminality cannot be changed*

Risk/Needs Assessments

- Administered by corrections agencies

- Measure criminogenic risk factors and specific needs that, if addressed through cognitive-behavioral interventions, will reduce the likelihood of future criminal activity

- Help practitioners maximize limited resources

What are the predictors of job readiness, and how are they measured?

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FRAMEWORK

Applied Academic Skills

Interpersonal Skills

Critical Thinking Skills

Personal Qualities

Applied Knowledge

Effective Relationsips

EMPLOYABILITY

Workplace Skills

Resources Management

Technology Use

Information Use

Systems Thinking

Communication Skills

No national consensus on defining or assessing job readiness
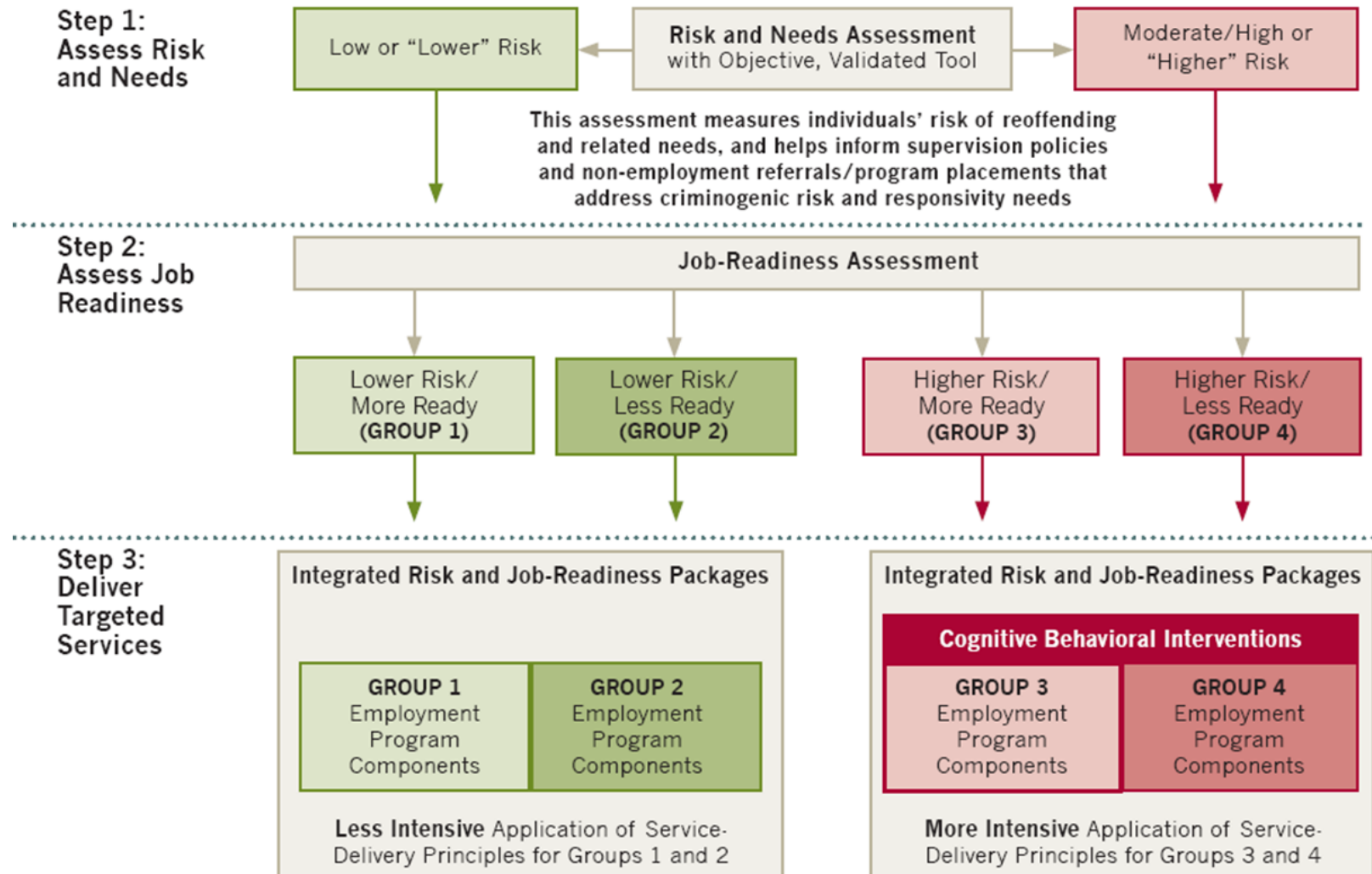
Employability skills are general skills necessary for success in the labor market at all employment levels, across all sectors

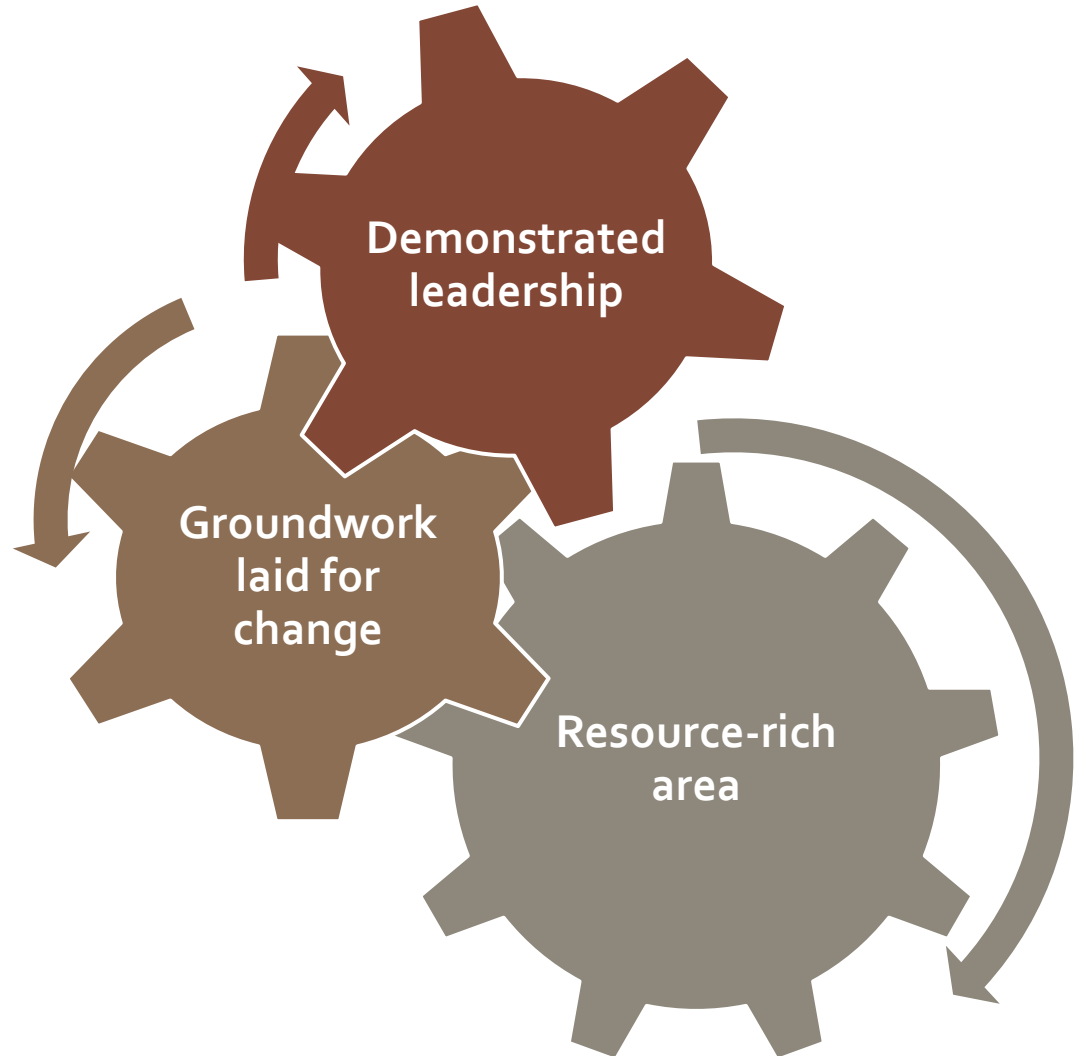# *Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies (IRES)* white paper released in 2013
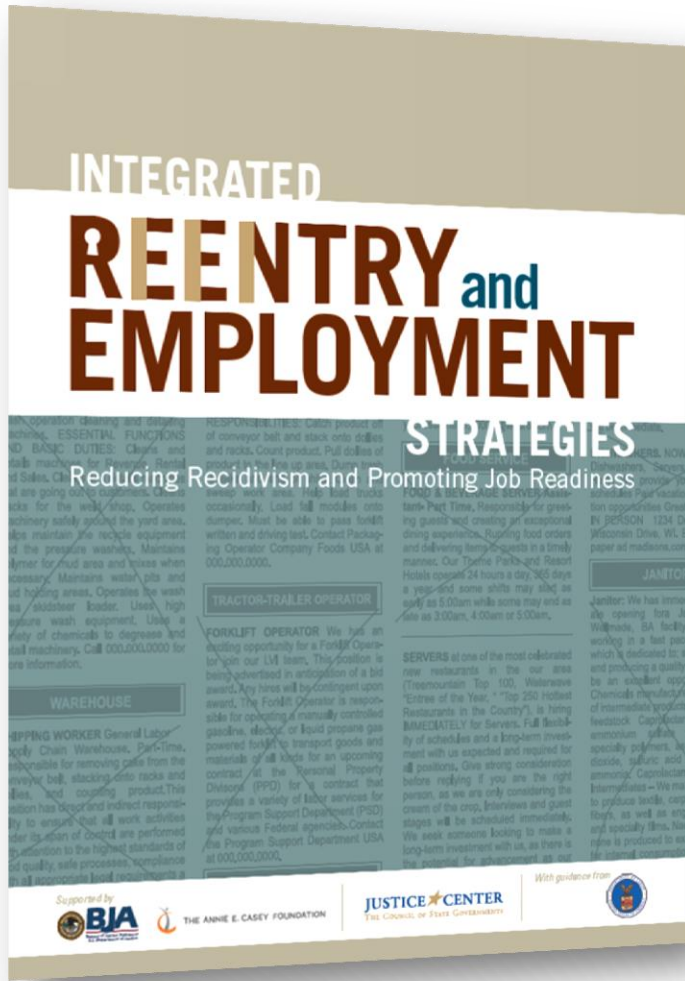
Secretary Thomas E. Perez,
U.S. Department of Labor

By sorting people based on risk and job readiness, we can connect them to appropriate employment services

Two pilot sites selected to test framework at a systems-level

Milwaukee Co., WI

Palm Beach Co., FL

Demonstrated leadership

Groundwork laid for change

Resource-rich area

Goals of the IRES pilot project

Bridge workforce development and corrections / reentry fields

Match people to employment services using assessment results

Technical assistance approach

‣ **Lead applicant:** Wisconsin Department of Corrections (WI DOC) and Employ Milwaukee, *formerly Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB)*

‣ **Lead consultant**: Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center

‣ Support from expert partners

‣ Three-year project

‣ $300,000 in in-kind technical assistance and training

Technical assistance activities

Year One (completed)
Information Gathering and Planning

Year Two
Implementation

Year Three
Evaluation

WI DOC operates 37 adult correctional facilities and centers across the state

22,215 people
incarcerated,
and **8,725** people
released each year*

Milwaukee Co. receives greatest proportion of releases (23%)

* as of December 2014

Over 30% of all adult releases to Milwaukee Co. come from four facilities

Fox Lake Correctional Institution	5%
Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility (MSDF)	15%
Oakhill Correctional Institution	3%
Racine Correctional Institution	8%

1,028 people releasing to Milwaukee Co. between April and September 2016 from all WI DOC facilities

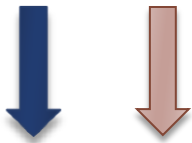# Scope of pilot project in Milwaukee Co. and research questions

Target Population

~**600 adults** will return to Milwaukee Co. from four facilities of focus each year

➤ *What are their risk levels and service needs?*

Referral Mechanism

Pre-release staff coordinate **with supervision officer** for reentry planning

➤ *What are the assessment and referral processes?*

Programs

~**25 agencies** in Milwaukee Co. offering employment services to adult reentry population

➤ *Who are providers best equipped to serve?*

Overview

Goals and scope of pilot project

Findings

Recommendations

Connecting people to programming in the four facilities of focus

▶ **What programs are available?**

  ▶ Recidivism reduction and educational/vocational programming

  ▶ Program capacity

▶ **How do people get enrolled in programs?**

  ▶ Type of assessments and timing

  ▶ Assessment-informed referrals and enrollment criteria

Cognitive programming is available, but capacity varies in each facility

Thinking for a Change (T4C) is an evidence-based **cognitive-behavioral intervention** that focuses on cognitive self-change, social skills, and problem solving skills.

	Staff trained	Staff facilitating	FY15 participants
Fox Lake	25	25	80 enrolled, 54 completed
MSDF	23	14	15 enrolled, 10 completed
Oakhill	5	2	34 enrolled, 29 completed
Racine	25	10	31 enrolled, *completion pending*

Educational/vocational programming is available, but type and capacity varies by facility

Pre-apprenticeship programs

Vocational Education/Training

Adult Basic Education
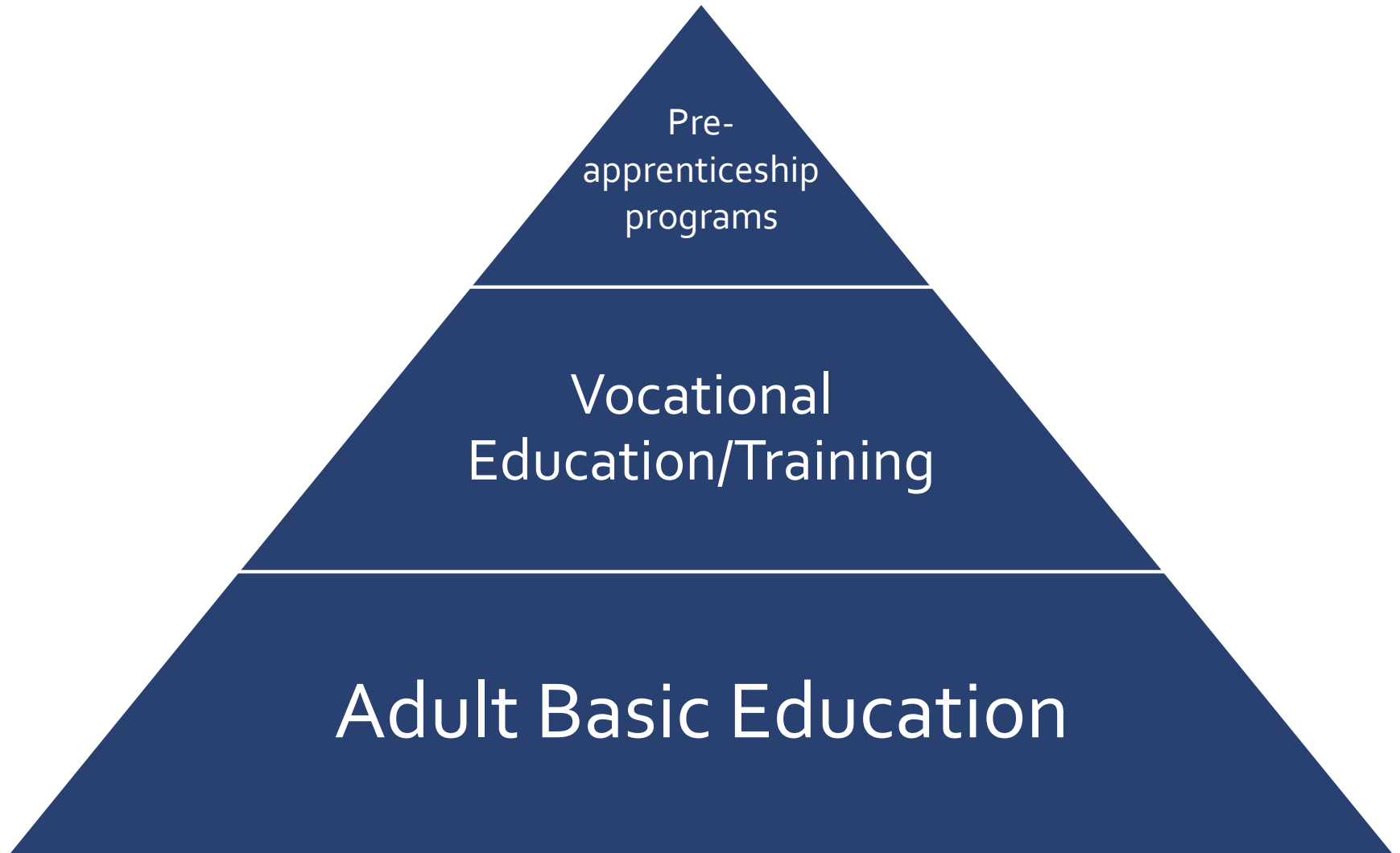
Windows to Work (W2W) integrates cognitive interventions with employment services

W2W offered in partnership with local workforce boards and community workforce agencies

Pre-release:

▸ Individual and group services to address criminogenic risk factors begin 6 months pre-release

▸ Classroom training: employability, career path planning, personal development, values clarification, financial literacy, housing, child support, community resources

Post-release:

▸ Partnership with supervision officer to support job search

▸ Case management continues 12 months post-release

System for connecting people to programming in the facility

| Assessment	Referral Decision	Program Enrollment
COMPAS Core completed within 6 weeks of admission	Referral to T4C driven by COMPAS criminogenic need scales Referral to educational and vocational programs driven by professional judgment based on reported skills and academic attainment	Enrollment in T4C driven by COMPAS risk score (medium to high only) and program availability Enrollment in education / vocation programs driven by individual's interest and program availability ** Enrollment in Adult Basic Education required if GED/HSD is not completed*

86% of people are assessed at medium to high risk of re-offense
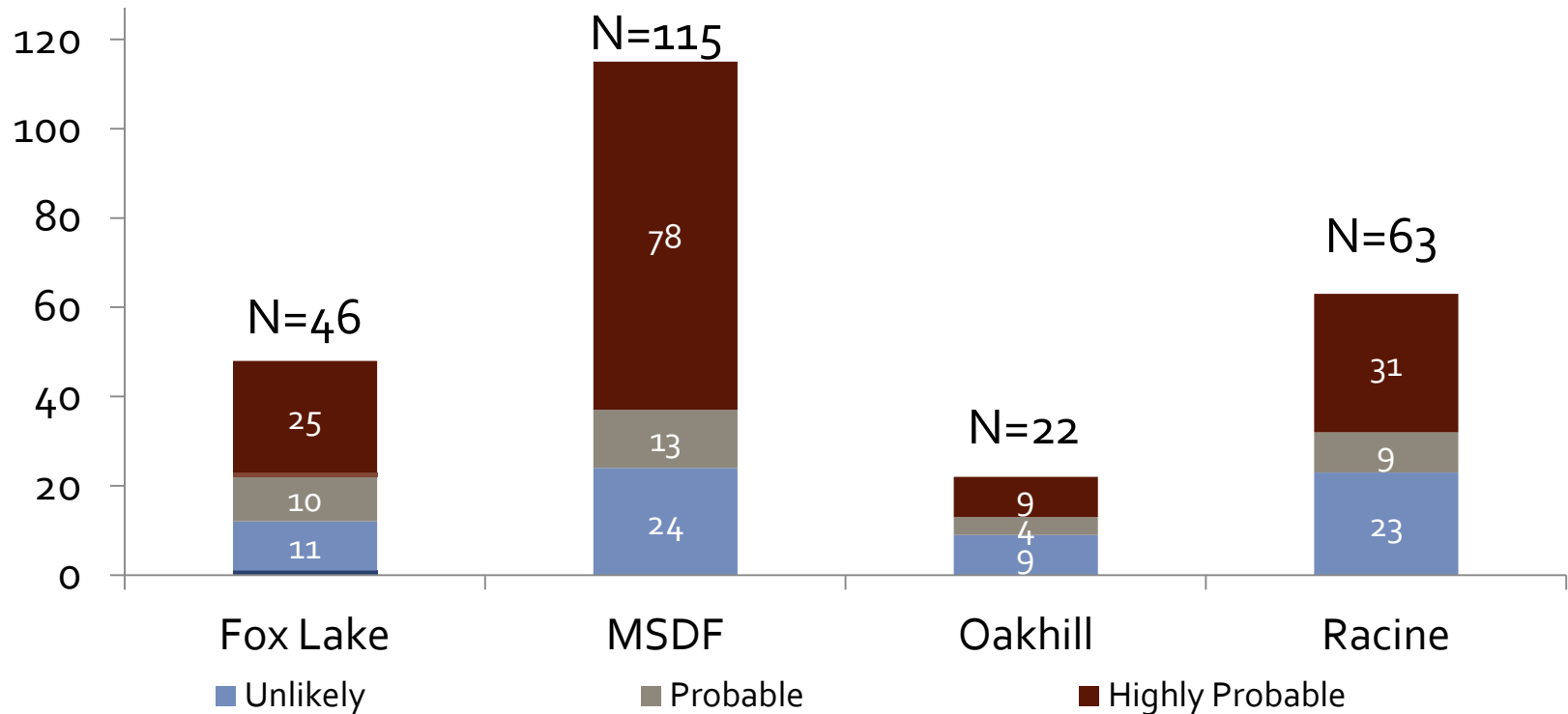
~600 people returning to Milwaukee Co. per year from four facilities
(Data includes 320 people being released between April and Sept 2016)
(by COMPAS Core Recommended Risk Level)
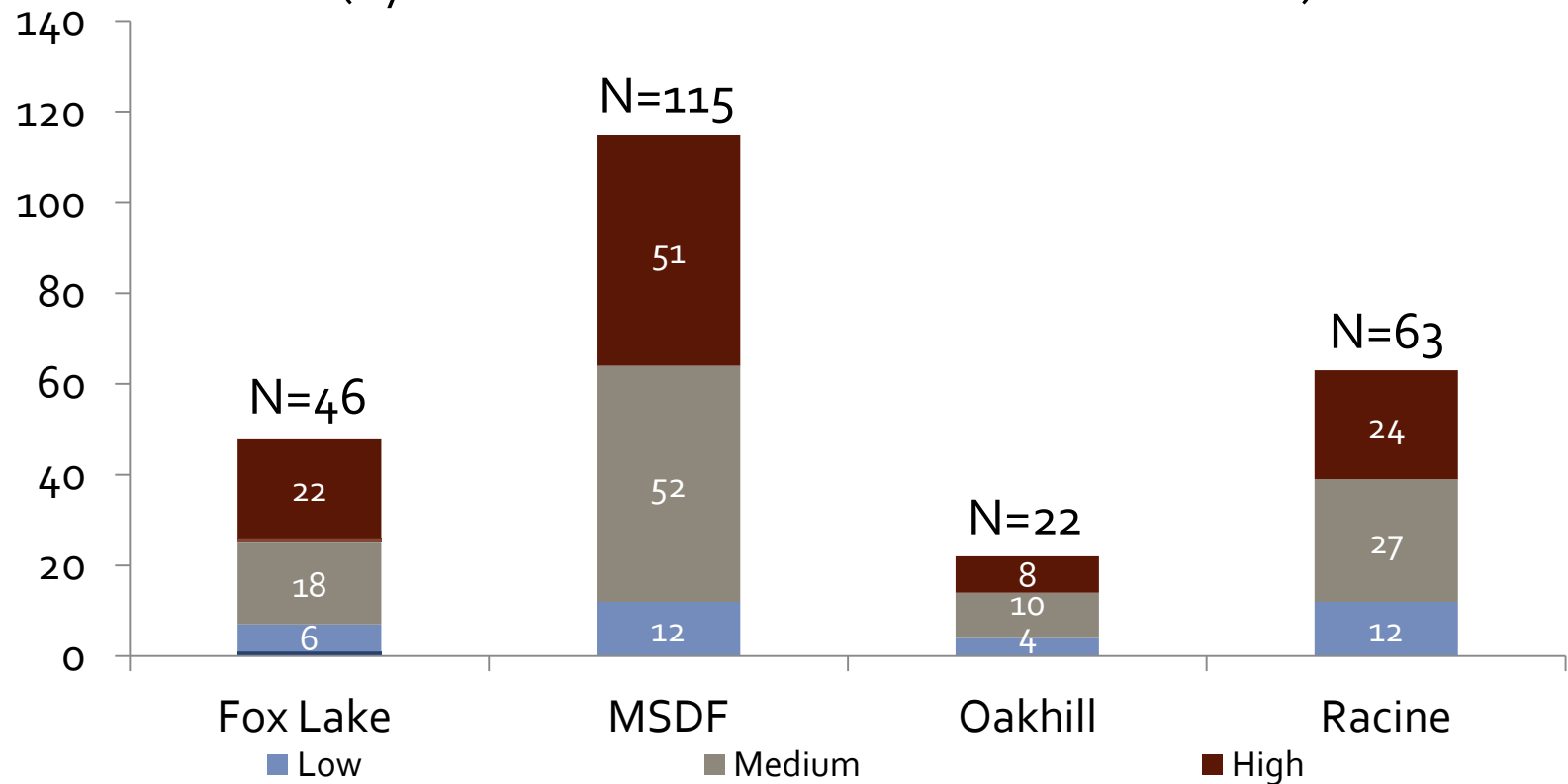
COMPAS Core assessment missing for 74 people

73% of people are assessed at having high job-readiness needs

~600 people Returning to Milwaukee Co. per year from four facilities
(Data includes 320 people being released between April and Sept 2016)
(by COMPAS Core Education/Vocation Need)

Chart data by facility:

Facility	Unlikely	Probable	Highly Probable	Total
Fox Lake	11	10	25	N=46
MSDF	24	13	78	N=115
Oakhill	9	4	9	N=22
Racine	23	9	31	N=63

Legend: Unlikely, Probable, Highly Probable

COMPAS Core assessment missing for 74 people

69% of people are higher risk and less job ready

Lower Risk/ More Ready (GROUP 1)	Lower Risk/ Less Ready (GROUP 2)	Higher Risk/ More Ready (GROUP 3)	Higher Risk/ Less Ready (GROUP 4)
10% (~48 people per year)	**4%** (~20 people per year)	**17%** (~86 people per year)	**69%** (~338 people per year)
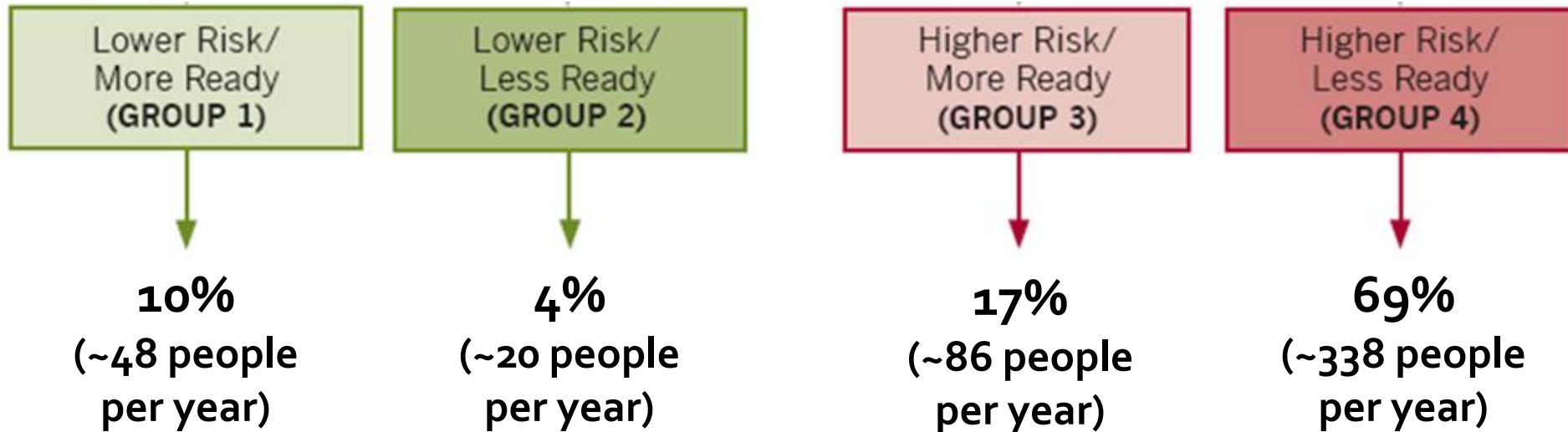
Data Definitions
Higher Risk: Medium, Medium with Override Consideration, or High Recommended Supervision Level from COMPAS Core
Lower Risk: Low Recommended Supervision Level from COMPAS Core
More Ready: Unlikely Education/Vocation Need Scale from COMPAS Core
Less Ready: Probable or Highly Probable Need Scale from COMPAS Core

Data was analyzed for people being released from four institutions of focus to Milwaukee Co. between April and September 2016. All numbers were doubled to estimate projected total releases for a one year period.

COMPAS Core assessment missing for 74 people

Key takeaways and opportunities

▸ WI DOC staff administer risk assessments and refer to evidence-based cognitive programs based on results.

  ▸ Capacity to accommodate people that require this programming varies by facility.

▸ Education and vocation needs are captured in assessment tools, but workforce programs offered in the facilities are not targeted accordingly.

▸ 69% of people returning to Milwaukee Co. from the four facilities of focus have a high risk of reoffending and high job-readiness needs.

Connecting people to workforce/reentry agencies in the community

▸ **What programs are available?**

 ▸ Recidivism reduction and educational/vocational programming

 ▸ Program capacity

▸ **How do people get enrolled in programs?**

 ▸ Type of assessments and timing

 ▸ Assessment-informed referrals and enrollment criteria

Robust landscape community-based agencies, including faith-based, offering critical services

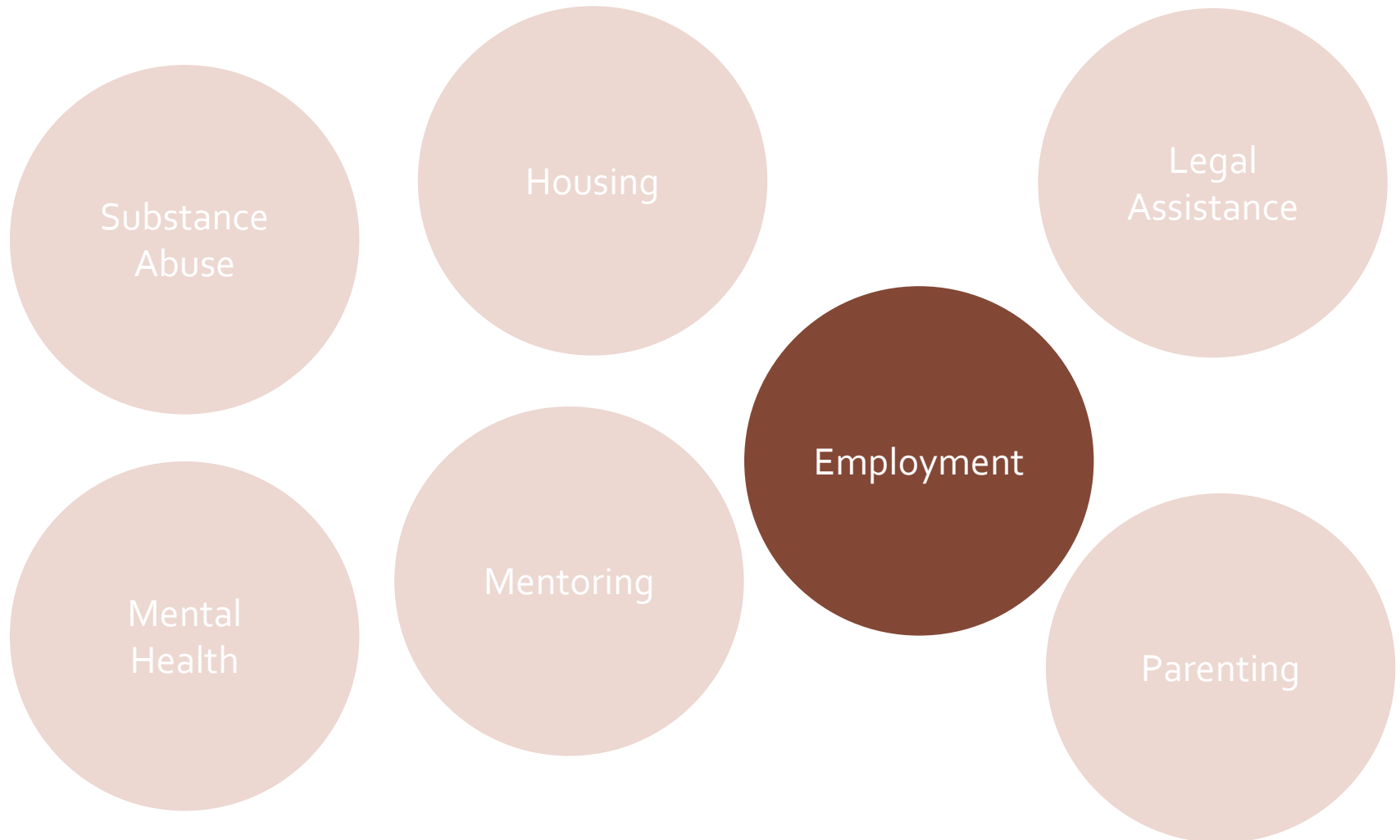Substance Abuse

Housing

Legal Assistance
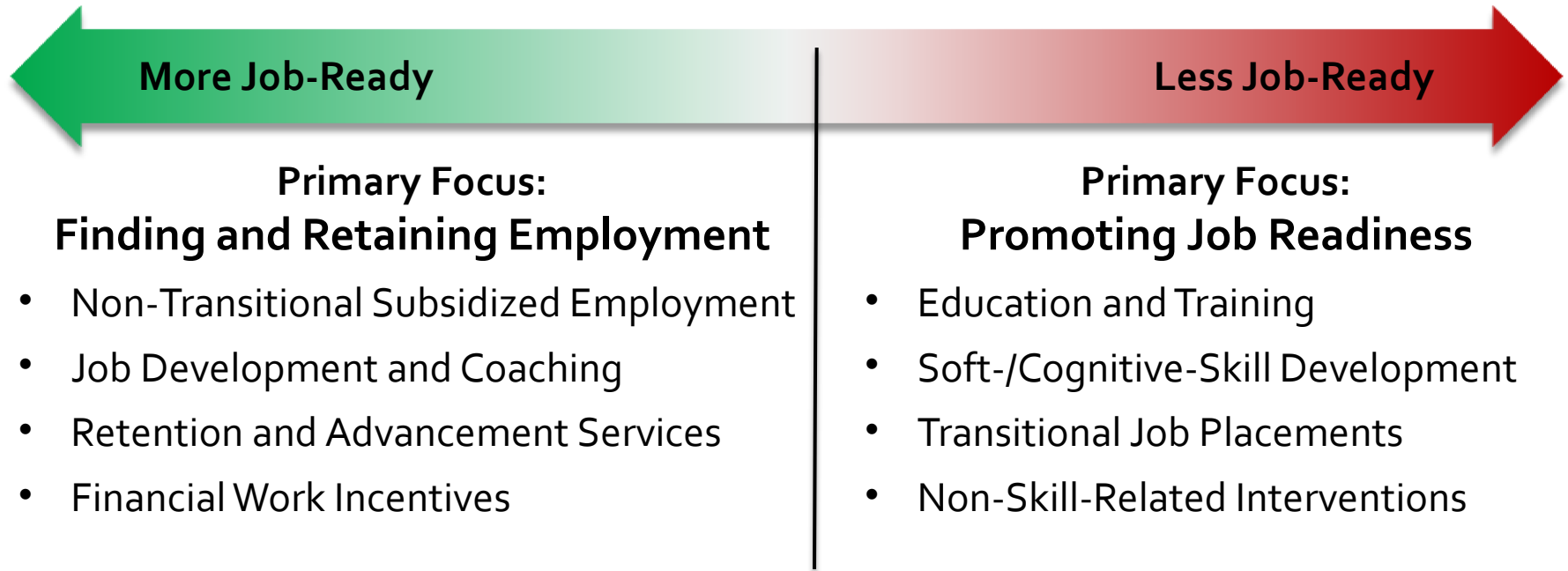
Employment

Mental Health

Mentoring

Parenting

Robust landscape community-based agencies, including faith-based, offering critical services

Substance Abuse

Housing

Legal Assistance

Mental Health

Mentoring

Employment

Parenting

How services are delivered should be based primarily on risk of recidivism

	Lower Risk ←	→ Higher Risk
Service Delivery Principles	**Less Intensive Application for Lower-Risk Individuals**	**More Intensive Application for Higher-Risk Individuals**
Engagement	Avoid intensive engagement and case management	Intensive case management and use of cognitive-behavioral approaches
Timing	Timing is still important, but less of a priority for lower-risk individuals	Connect with individuals shortly after release from jail/prison
Incentives	Incentives are less of a priority and need for lower-risk individuals	Enhance motivation through communication and incentives
Coordination	Community supervision should not be intensive, and supervision officers do not have to play as active a role	Work closely with community supervision officers, who can assist with intensive engagement
Structured Time	Avoid disrupting existing pro-social ties	Structure time in a pro-social environment

What services are delivered should be based primarily on job readiness

More Job-Ready	Less Job-Ready
Primary Focus: **Finding and Retaining Employment**	**Primary Focus:** **Promoting Job Readiness**
• Non-Transitional Subsidized Employment	• Education and Training
• Job Development and Coaching	• Soft-/Cognitive-Skill Development
• Retention and Advancement Services	• Transitional Job Placements
• Financial Work Incentives	• Non-Skill-Related Interventions

Considerations with program-matching

▸ Review of workforce agencies is based on a point in time analysis and services may change based on contract funding

▸ Agencies could partner with other programs to provide more comprehensive service packages to other risk/need groupings

▸ With added capacity or slight changes, some agencies will be equipped to serve other risk/need groupings

▸ Job readiness should change over time, so a person could move from one set of agencies to another over the course of programming

Workforce agencies specialize in offering differentiated services based on needs

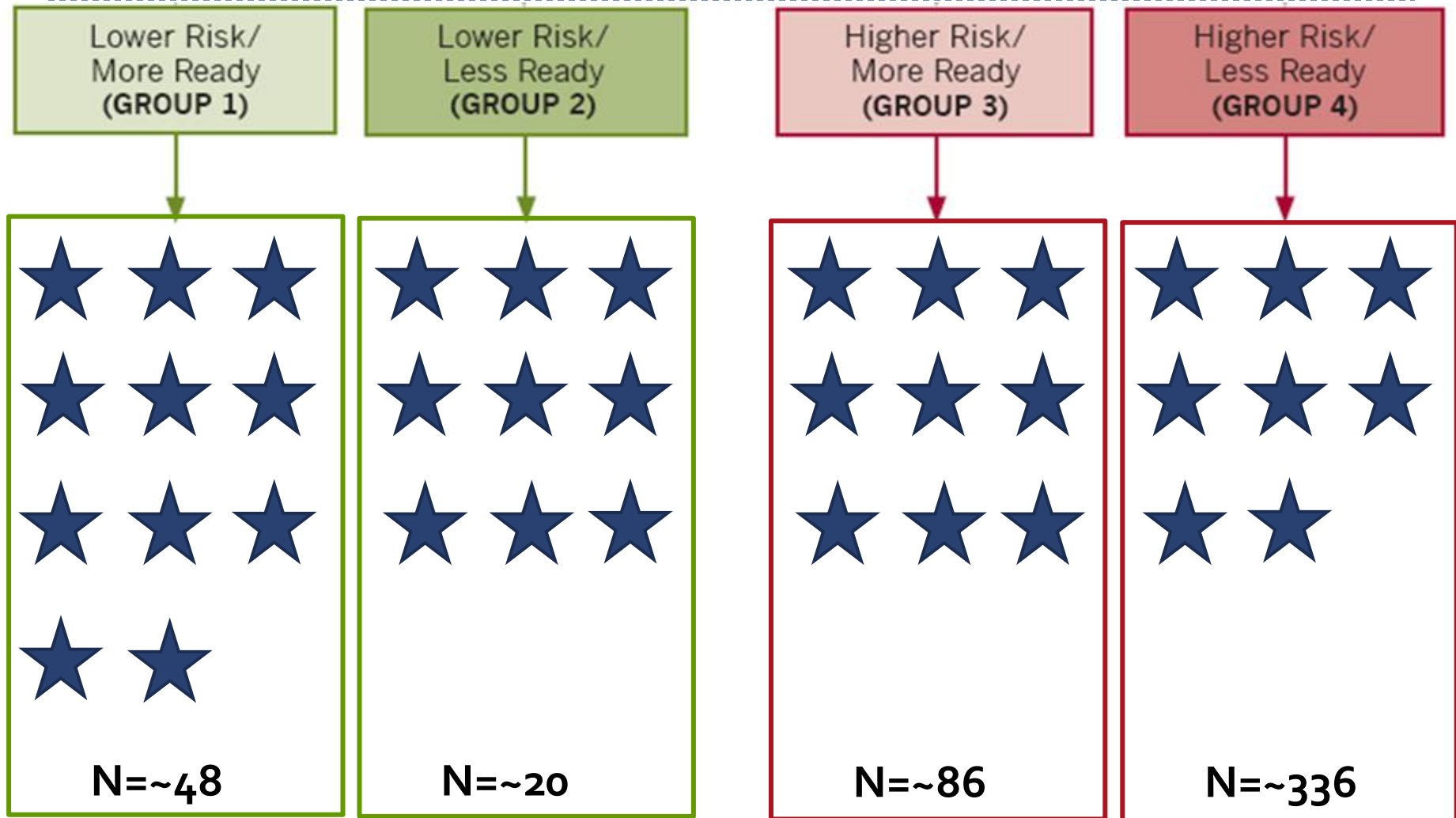| Lower Risk/ More Ready (GROUP 1)	Lower Risk/ Less Ready (GROUP 2)	Higher Risk/ More Ready (GROUP 3)	Higher Risk/ Less Ready (GROUP 4)
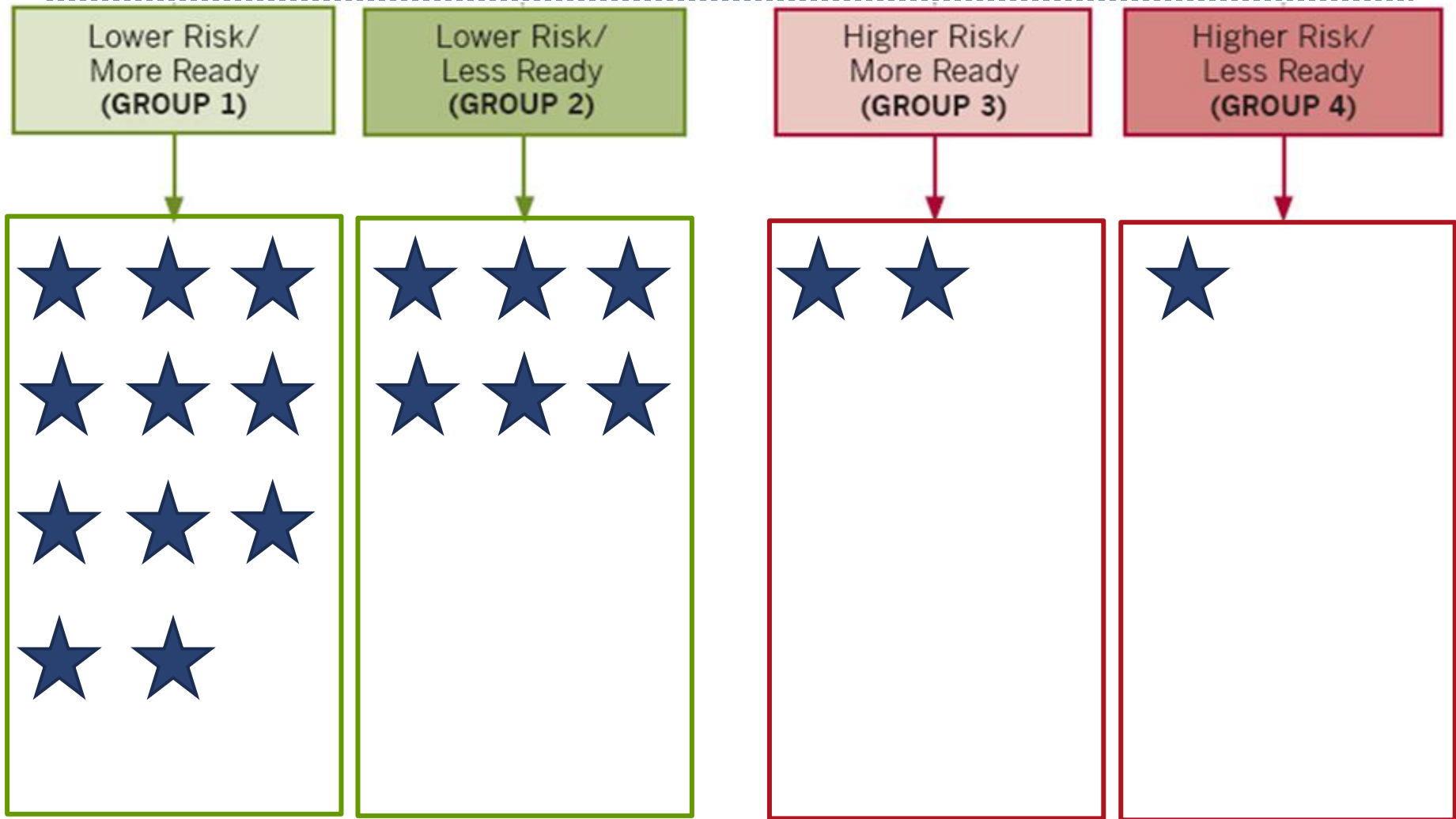
Star depicts workforce agency equipped to serve people with specific risk/job readiness needs.

However, workforce agencies may not have capacity to serve population returning to community

Lower Risk/ More Ready (GROUP 1)	Lower Risk/ Less Ready (GROUP 2)	Higher Risk/ More Ready (GROUP 3)	Higher Risk/ Less Ready (GROUP 4)
N=~48	N=~20	N=~86	N=~336
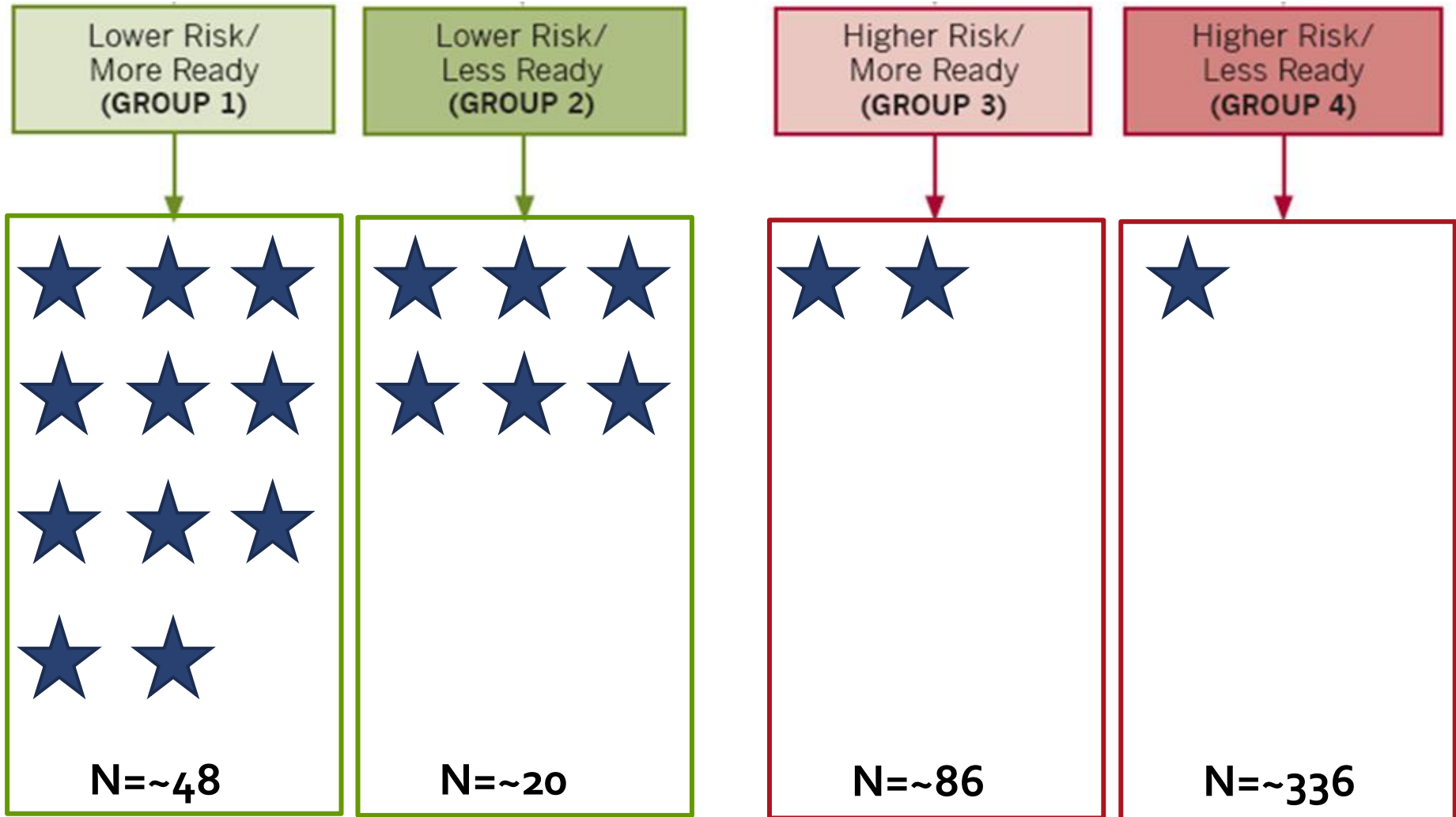
Workforce agencies may move from one grouping to another with relatively minor changes*

Lower Risk/ More Ready (GROUP 1)	Lower Risk/ Less Ready (GROUP 2)	Higher Risk/ More Ready (GROUP 3)	Higher Risk/ Less Ready (GROUP 4)
N=~48	N=~20	N=~86	N=~336

* Changes may include the addition of cognitive programming, creation of clear services tracks, or the allocation of contract funds

System for connecting people to workforce/reentry agencies in the community

Assessment → **Referral Decision** → **Program Enrollment**

Assessment	Referral Decision	Program Enrollment
COMPAS Reentry completed within 9 months of release (often completed closer to release date due to limited capacity) Informal needs assessments at intake to community supervision (varies by officer)	Referral to supervision officer within 6 months of release (often completed closer to release date due to limited capacity) Supervision officer makes referral to community-based workforce/reentry agency using professional judgement	Enrollment in community-based workforce/reentry programs is not regularly made pre-release (excluding Windows to Work

Key takeaways and opportunities

▶ Supervision officers often make referrals to community-based workforce agencies upon release, but referrals are not consistently driven by assessment information.

▶ Milwaukee Co. is resource-rich with regards to workforce/reentry agencies.

   ▶ The use of assessment information often does not drive service delivery.

   ▶ While most workforce agencies specialize in offering differentiated services based on risk and job readiness, the services are not targeted or in accordance with evidence-based practices.

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Goals and scope of IRES pilot project
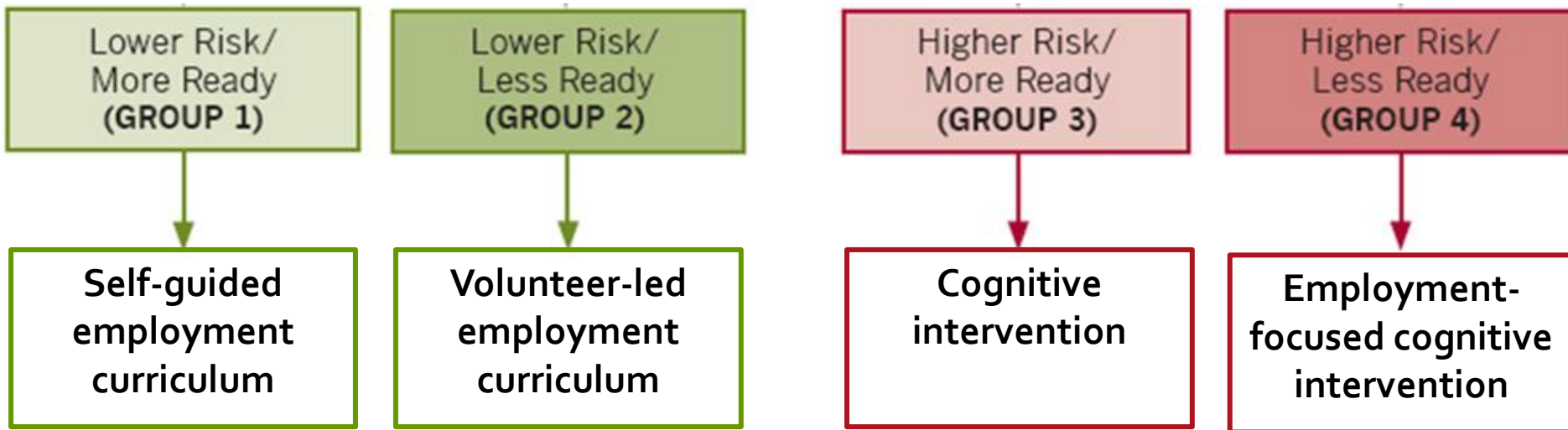
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1. Determine facility's capacity to provide cognitive programming and increase capacity, when needed

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2. Make assessment-informed referrals to institution-based programming

a) Use job readiness assessments for vocational programming decisions

b) Formalize and develop programming for people with different risk and job-readiness levels

Lower Risk/ More Ready (GROUP 1)	Lower Risk/ Less Ready (GROUP 2)	Higher Risk/ More Ready (GROUP 3)	Higher Risk/ Less Ready (GROUP 4)
↓	↓	↓	↓
Self-guided employment curriculum	Volunteer-led employment curriculum	Cognitive intervention	Employment-focused cognitive intervention

3. Make assessment-informed referrals to community-based workforce agencies

a) Contract with centralized agency to complete assessments and coordinate referrals to most appropriate workforce agency

Higher-risk clients

Within 6-9 months of release, DOC staff makes referral to centralized agency to reassess job readiness and coordinate with supervision officer to make referral to workforce agency

Workforce agency for less job-ready people

Workforce agency for more job-ready people

Lower-risk clients

Upon release, supervision officer makes referral to Employ Milwaukee to reassess job readiness and make referral to workforce agency

Workforce agency for less job-ready people

Workforce agency for more job-ready people

4. Ensure capacity of workforce agencies to serve population

a) Assess service gaps and, where appropriate, provide trainings for workforce agencies on evidence-based practices that help reduce recidivism

b) Redesign contracts to encourage integration of recidivism reduction interventions into employment programs and to promote specialization among workforce agencies

a) Regularly review landscape of workforce agencies to note changes in service delivery

Summary of recommendations

▸ Determine facility's capacity to provide cognitive programming and increase capacity, when needed

▸ Make assessment-informed referrals to institution-based programming

▸ Make assessment-informed referrals to community-based workforce agencies

▸ Ensure capacity of workforce agencies to serve population

Questions?

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