

OVERCOMING HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES FOR RETURNING CITIZENS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM UI'S REENTRY PORTFOLIO



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Prepared for:
Housing and Employment Reentry Symposium
Sponsored by the Urban Institute and
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
Washington, DC | December 2010

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URBAN INSTITUTE
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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- **Introduction**
 - Reentry research in the Justice Policy Center
 - Summary of reentry challenges for formerly incarcerated persons
 - Reasons for optimism
- **Findings from the Returning Home Study**
 - Employment and Reentry
 - Housing and Reentry
- **Select Findings from UI's Employment and Reentry Portfolio**
- **Select Findings from UI's Housing and Reentry Portfolio**
- **Challenges in Designing Reentry Programs**
- **Lessons Learned**

REENTRY RESEARCH AT THE URBAN INSTITUTE

- Primary research
- Program evaluation
- Policy reports
- Reentry roundtables
- Strategic partnerships

WHAT WE KNOW: INDIVIDUALS' REENTRY CHALLENGES

- Finding and maintaining gainful employment
- Finding and maintaining stable housing
- Maintaining sobriety
- Overcoming educational and skills deficits
- Receiving services for physical and mental health issues
- Elemental needs, such as:
 - Transportation
 - Identification
 - Clothing
 - Food

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DESPITE THE CHALLENGES...

REASONS FOR OPTIMISM

- Prisoners are optimistic about their future
- Though they have limited means, families are supportive
- Though communities are weakened by criminal activity, the removal, and reentry of offenders, they are also generally supportive
- Growing interest and attention to reentry as an issue worthy of scrutiny by researchers, practitioners, as well as policymakers
- Growing knowledge base about “what works”

WHAT WE KNOW: REENTRY PROGRAMS SHOULD (PETERSILIA 2004)...

- Take place mostly in the community versus the prison
- Be intensive; that is, more than six months
- Be focused on high-risk individuals
- Use cognitive-behavioral treatment techniques
- Be matched to the learning styles of the individual
- Provide vocational training and job enhancing opportunities

SPOTLIGHT...

MULTI-SITE RETURNING HOME PROJECT

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RETURNING HOME STUDY: DESIGN

- Longitudinal study of men and women released from state prisons to: Baltimore, Maryland (pilot); Chicago, Illinois; Cleveland, Ohio; Houston, Texas
- Three interviews: 30 days pre-release, 4 months post-release, 12 months post-release
- Gathered information on reentry expectations, reentry needs, and post-release experiences
- Interviews conducted with family members, community residents, and reentry stakeholders

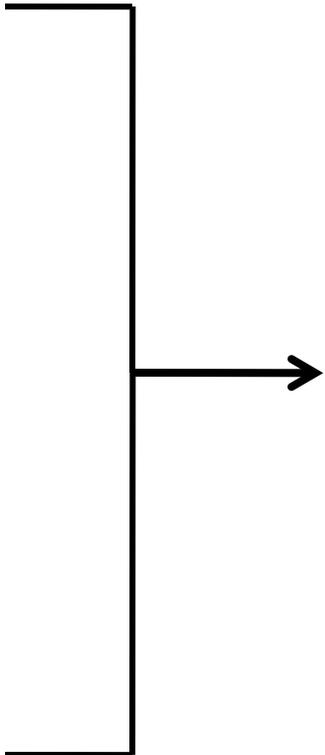
WHAT *RETURNING HOME* TELLS US ABOUT EMPLOYMENT AND REENTRY

- Before release:
 - 60-70 percent worked during the six months before incarceration
 - 30-45 percent thought it would be hard to find a job
- After release:
 - Less than half were employed at the time of their post-release interview
 - Of those employed at any time after release, only half worked full time
 - Most found jobs through family and friends
 - Many employed in “casual” work or employed “under the table” since release

WHAT *RETURNING HOME* TELLS US ABOUT HOUSING AND REENTRY

- Before release:
 - More than 80 percent had a place to live lined up
 - More than 75 percent expected to live with family
- Moment of release:
 - 50-60 percent slept at a relative's house the first night of their release
 - 5-8 percent slept at a transitional placement facility
- After release:
 - More than 80 percent were living with family; only 20-40 percent were paying rent
 - Roughly 20 percent living with someone who served time
 - Roughly 10 percent living with someone who used illegal drugs
 - Between 18-25 percent moved at least once since release

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- Finding gainful employment
 - Finding stable housing

WHAT WE KNOW...

While some folks coming home may need a specific program or assistance with a specific issue area or need, there are others who need more comprehensive assistance to address a myriad of issues

SPOTLIGHT...

**MULTI-SITE OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED PROJECT
CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
PROGRAM
SAFER RETURN DEMONSTRATION**

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CHALLENGES WITH EMPLOYMENT FOR RETURNING INDIVIDUALS

- Few prisoners receive employment readiness training while incarcerated
- Few prisoners receive job training while incarcerated
- Many formerly incarcerated persons have limited job skills
- Fragmented work histories
- Transportation is a significant barrier to employment

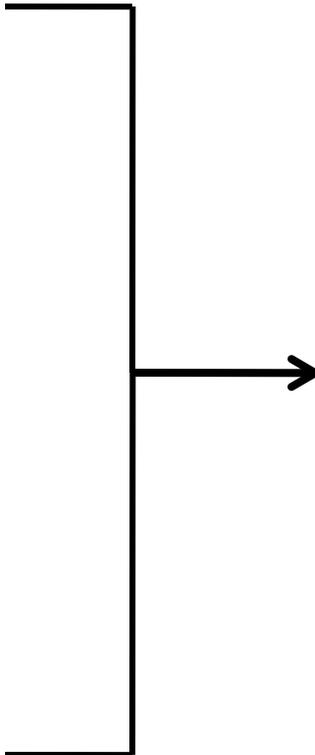
EMPLOYMENT AND REENTRY: SELECT FINDINGS

- Case managed reentry services increase the likelihood of finding and maintaining full-time employment after release (*Opportunity to Succeed (OPTS) Program: Rossman et al. 1999*)
- Full-time employment is associated with reductions in self-reported crime (*OPTS Program: Rossman et al. 1999; Rossman & Roman 2003*)
- Transitional job placement is associated with reductions in recidivism (conviction and incarceration), at one and two years post-release (*Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Program: Redcross et al. 2009*)
- Transitional job placement is associated with greater benefits among high-risk offenders (*CEO Program; Zweig et al. 2010*)

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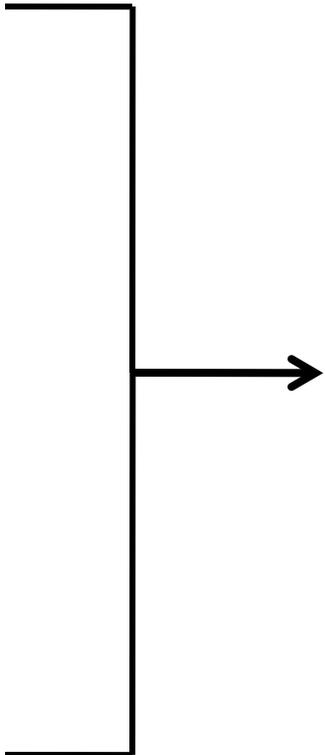
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WHAT WE HOPE TO KNOW SOON...

- Safer Return Demonstration Project—comprehensive, community-based prisoner reentry project in Chicago
 - Includes transitional job opportunities, job readiness training, and long-term employment placement within the same program
 - Reentry coaches or case managers and other staff trained to address other reentry needs comprehensively
- Program Questions
 - Efficacy of the employment/training targeting?
 - Assessment tools adequate for effective targeting?
- Research Questions
 - Does targeting increase employment retention, wages, and ultimately reduce recidivism?

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IMPORTANCE OF REENTRY HOUSING

- Though most DOCs require valid addresses before release, many individuals face challenges acquiring housing
 - Inadequate income
 - Severed family ties
 - Desire to move away from the criminal environment from which they came
 - Inability to qualify for public housing
- Historically, housing has been viewed outside the purview of correctional agencies, particularly long-term housing
- Whether focusing on those in need of specialized services or those who do not, strong need for short-, mid-, and long-term housing options

CHALLENGE OF REENTRY HOUSING

- Housing formerly incarcerated persons is difficult for several reasons:
 - Expensive, especially long-term housing
 - NIMBY-ism among local residents
 - Availability of housing across rural, suburban, and urban areas are difficult
 - Private landlords may be unwilling to rent to those with criminal histories and formerly incarcerated persons may lack the funds for pay for these houses
- Given the challenges, DOC's should coordinate reentry housing in collaboration with housing agencies in the community

SPOTLIGHT...

MULTI-SITE RETURNING HOME INITIATIVE

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CORPORATION FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING'S RETURNING HOME INITIATIVE

- Research has shown that permanent supportive housing (PSH) is effective in increasing residential stability of persons with homeless and mental health histories (*Burt and Anderson 2005, Culhane et al. 2002, Culhane et al. 2007*)
- Individuals with histories of homelessness, incarceration, mental illness or other disabilities often cycle through the criminal justice, homelessness, and other public crises system, i.e., they are high risk (*Burt and Anderson 2005, Hall et al. 2009, Metraux and Culhane 2004*)
- In response, the Corporation for Supportive Housing began to promote PSH for individuals returning to the community from incarceration in 2001 (*Fontaine et al. 2010*)

RETURNING HOME INITIATIVE AND SYSTEM CHANGE

- Establish PSH as essential component of reentry for released persons with histories of disabilities and housing instability
- Initiate and implement public policy changes that strengthen the integration and coordination of the corrections, housing, mental health, and human service systems
- Promising initiative that is focused on: designing innovative programs, providing training and technical assistance, documenting successes and challenges, and engaging stakeholders toward systems change

WHAT WE HOPE TO KNOW SOON...

- Corporation for Supportive Housing has launched reentry supportive housing models across the country
 - Most include in-reach into prisons and jails
 - Focused on “hard to house” or “hard to serve” population (e.g., multiple disabilities, histories of homelessness and incarceration)
 - Combination of single-site and scattered-site housing models
- Program Questions
 - What are the successful components to reentry housing?
 - Differences in success across urban, suburban, and rural places?
- Research Questions
 - Does PSH for reentry population increase housing stability and reduce recidivism?
 - What types of housing models work for whom?

CHALLENGES DESIGNING REENTRY PROGRAMS

- Coordinating supportive services immediately upon release
- Connecting with potential participants pre-release, especially in a jail context
- Using available information to identify the target population to conduct in-reach
- Securing set-asides, especially in the current economic climate
- Bringing programs “to scale”

LESSONS LEARNED FROM RHI... TRANSFERABLE TO OTHER CONTEXTS

- Look for and capitalize on opportunity
- Collaboration begets collaboration
- Cultivate champions within corrections
- Use data to inform the program/policy
- Gather data to document impact
- Expect implementation hurdles

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For more information on prisoner reentry, please visit the Urban Institute website at: <http://www.urban.org>

For more information on the DC Crime Policy Institute, please visit the DCPI website at: <http://www.dccrimepolicy.org>