

6-30-2016

Nebraska Department of Correctional Service Vocational & Life Skills Program Quarterly Report and Final Report

UNO Nebraska Center for Justice Research

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/ncjrreports>

 Part of the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

UNO Nebraska Center for Justice Research, "Nebraska Department of Correctional Service Vocational & Life Skills Program Quarterly Report and Final Report" (2016). *Reports*. 30.

<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/ncjrreports/30>

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Nebraska Center for Justice Research at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Reports by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.

**Nebraska Department of Correctional Services
 Vocational & Life Skills Program
 Quarterly Report and Final Report
 QTR - April 1, 2016 to June 30, 2016
 Grant Cycle February 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016**

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Statute 83-904, the following provides a report on aid distributed under the Vocational & Life Skills Program.

The following community organizations have received funding under the vocational and life skills grant program:

Goodwill Industries – RESTART; Western Alternative Corrections, Inc.; Center For People In Need; Metropolitan Community College; Released and Restored, Inc.; Mental Health Association of Nebraska; Prairie Gold Homes; ResCare Workforce Services

Funding was awarded in January and programs could begin program design and hiring, effective February 1, 2015. All programs are fully staffed and providing services to the target population.

Number of Individuals Receiving Programming this quarter (April – June 2016)	363
Types of Programming	Vocational; life skills
Cost per Individual (Average cost for full grant cycle)	\$2,117.00
Number of Individuals Successfully Completed Programming this quarter	341*

*Goodwill did not receive continued funding and main services ended June 2016. Participants who were in follow-up stages were closed out by staff which is shown in the high numbers indicated in successfully completing by month and to date for the quarter.

Grantee	# receiving program for the QTR.	# successfully completed for the QTR.	Total # receiving programing to date	Total # successfully completing programing to date	Cost per individual to date
Mental Health Assoc.	29	26	137	66	\$4,815.00
Metro Community College	167	37	1206	159**	\$610.27
Released & Restored	32	40	154	115	\$666.53
Prairie Gold Homes	15	6	76	55	\$11,512.42
Goodwill Restart	9	151*	192	158*	\$2,432.20
Center for People In Need	16	33	213	123	\$4,717.85
Bristol Station	30	24	142	52	\$7,657.77
ResCare	65	24	329	159	\$763.95

* Goodwill did not receive continued funding and main services ended June 2016. Participants who were in follow-up stages were closed out by staff which is shown in the high numbers indicated in successfully completing by month and to date.

** Numbers were provided for participants successfully completing, but there was no way to match them up to participants in the data file. 159 participants were marked as completing one or more stage, but this data is incomplete.

Funds not expended:

The grant cycle includes five months of FY 2014-2015 and all of FY 2015-2016. Available funds for this grant cycle \$5,791,316 were awarded to eight organizations. The total amount of funds used was \$5,183,869.24 and the total amount not expended was \$607,446.76. Per statute, these funds will be carried into the next fiscal year and incorporated into the next funding cycle.

See attached for full report from the UNO Evaluators.

- cc: Scott R. Frakes, Director
- Senator Bob Krist, Chair, Executive Board of the Legislature
- Rosalyn Cotton, Chair, Board of Parole
- Mike Rothwell, Deputy Director
- Kevin Hand Vocational & Life Skills Coordinator
- Grantees
- File

Kh/DRS



VOCATIONAL & LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM DATA OVERVIEW

Quarter 6 and Total Grant Cycle 1

Johanna Peterson, MA
Research Coordinator
Nebraska Center for Justice Research
jpeterson@unomaha.edu

Jordan Clark
Data Coordinator
Nebraska Center for Justice Research
jordanclark@unomaha.edu

GRANT CYCLE 1 DATA

OVERVIEW OF VOCATIONAL AND LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

This report provides an overview of data points for the first vocational and life skills grant. The following pages provide more information on the data collection and evaluation process as well as program specific participant information for the last quarter and overall grant cycle. In the first Vocational and Life Skills grant cycle, there were **2,449** individual participations across all reentry programs. All of these individuals are unique to the program, though some individuals were served in multiple programs. This means that the numbers provided represent participations in programs and not necessarily unique individuals across programs. **186** individuals participated in two programs, **12** participated in three programs, and **1** participated in four different programs during the first grant cycle.

The programs served individuals who were in a correctional facility, under supervision or who had discharged within 18 months. **1,161** participants were classified as an inmate in a facility or a work release center. Additionally, programs served **534** parolees, **343** probationers, and **415** participants within 18 months of release. The average participant was **35 years old** with an average of **95 days** between program start date and end date. Services were offered to participants on site in Lincoln, Omaha, Hastings, McCook with teleservices offered to participants in Kearney, Norfolk and Gering. Programs also served participants in many of the correctional facilities including (Omaha Correctional Center, Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility, Community Correctional Center Omaha and Nebraska Correctional Center for Women.)

Programs offered many different services that are broken down into separate program areas. These program areas are listed out by program at the end of this report. Some programs focused on both vocational and life skills while others provided more specific services to either vocational or life skills. Vocational skills were classified as providing some type of formalized training, education, or certification that would prepare a participant to gain meaningful employment. Life skills were classified as other services that prepare an individual

for reentry like residential services, staff or peer mentorship, and employment prep.

Across programs, there were **1,495** participations in life skills programming and **874** participations where participants received some form of education. There were **1,659** vocational program area participations across all programs¹. Specific program area participation can be found for each funded program in the following pages. Program areas are denoted with VS for vocational skills and LS for life skills for the category that is the best fit. Many programs were able to track employment data for participants during and after program participation. Programs that were able to track employment information reported **667** participants who were employed while in the program or who gained employment after the program.

To provide more detail into the lives of the participants, qualitative data was also collected through interviews and surveys at each program. Participant interviews were conducted with people at each program site with participants who had completed the program or who were nearing the end of their program participation. In total, 27 interviews were conducted in the Spring of 2016. Interview questions mirrored survey questions, however, they allowed participants to further discuss the program and their reentry experience in the context of their life story. Analysis of these interviews is ongoing and will be available in future reports.

Programs began administering surveys beginning in January 2016 to participants that were nearing the end of their program participation. The surveys collected information on program satisfaction, job readiness, barriers to reentry and life satisfaction. Participants were also asked to provide any additional feedback about their experiences in the program. A total of **216** participants started the survey and **199** completed it. It is important to note that surveys were not taken at the same rate across programs. Many of the surveys came from two programs. Also, surveys were not added to the evaluation until the last six months of the grant cycle, so early participants did not take it.

¹ Since there wasn't a variable specifically for vocational programming, this is a combination of all program areas where Vocational Skills were offered and represents program area participations and not individuals. An individual could be counted in a number of those vocational skill program areas.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **89%** of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that the skills they gained in the program improved their chances of getting a job and/or continuing their education.
- **59%** of individuals agreed or strongly agreed that the program they were in helped them to reenter the community.
- On average, most participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were prepared to look for and get a job (based on five measures including explaining convictions to employers, creating a resume, having the skills to look for a job).
- Many individuals had barriers present they noted would impact their reentry.
 - **32%** reported a lack of computer skills
 - **30%** indicated a lack of safe and affordable housing
 - **38%** did not have reliable transportation
- **81%** of surveyed participants agreed or strongly agreed that a vocational and life skills program helped them to change negative habits or behaviors
- Participants were asked 15 questions about their past, current, and future life satisfaction. On average, participants were more satisfied with their current lives than their past lives and agree or strongly agree that their future lives will be more satisfying than their current lives.

IMPORTANT NOTES ON DATA

- Data below also includes participants who were currently active at the end of the grant cycle who had not yet completed their program. Many of these participants will carry over to the next grant cycle where their completion status will be captured.
- A few programs had participants go through the program more than once. These are counted as separate participations in the data, but only one participation counted towards the unique number. Duplicates were not controlled for across programs in this report.
- Average length of programming is calculated by program start and end dates and does not necessarily reflect the number of days participants received programming.
- Employment data is self-reported by participants. Verifiable data is not available for any participant that leaves program or changes/gains employment after program participation. Also, many participants are still in a facility and will not have employment information. Employment information was calculated from a Y/N variable indicating if the participant was employed or not. Some programs also provided documentation for unique employments including employer name, job title etc., but these did not always match the employment variable so that data is not included in employment numbers on this report.
- Due to different data collection processes throughout the first grant cycle, some items are not recorded the same way across programs and any items left blank or listed as “other” were left out (i.e. status).
- Information on participants in the following pages is not filtered by ending status (i.e. successful completion, terminated by program etc.) or by participants who are still active in program.

GRANT CYCLE 1 EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

The Nebraska Center for Justice Research began evaluation activities for Vocational and Life Skills programs beginning in May 2015. It was important to spend time at the beginning to develop an evaluation plan and cultivate data collection processes and procedures with the grantees that would not only provide us with rich information about the program participants, but that would also not hinder their delivery of program services. Below are brief descriptions of some of these activities. More details on the following items can be found in quarterly evaluation activity reports (quarters 2-6 in grant cycle 1) provided to NDCS.

Data Collection

- Program data began to be collected by NCJR in September 2015. Data collection methods were changed in November 2015 after improvements were made. Data codebooks and procedures were standardized across programs.
- Other data sources were pursued to provide a complete picture of a VLS program participant.
 - Surveys were developed for participants and staff and were implemented in early 2016.
 - Participants surveys are ongoing as they move through the program and staff are surveyed annually about their experiences as a grantee and successes and challenges in the program.
 - Interviews were conducted on site with 2-4 participants in each program; 27 total interviews were conducted during this grant cycle.

Other Evaluation Activities

- Training was provided to all grantees on using performance measures and logic models to help with data tracking for participants.
- Evaluators conducted initial site visits to programs in the summer of 2015 to view program activities and develop data collection methods. Additional site visits took place as requested.
- Technical assistance was provided during monthly and quarterly data calls and meetings. Training was also provided on variable definitions and the data codebook.
- Data management systems were tested and developed to improve on data collection methods.

DEVELOPMENTS IN GRANT CYCLE 2

Great strides were made to address many of the data limitations previously noted. The focus has been on continued improvement and ongoing collaboration between grantee programs, NDCS reentry team and evaluators at the Nebraska Center for Justice Research to address the main goals of increasing meaningful employment and decreasing recidivism for program participants. Activities and discussions during the first grant cycle led to major changes in how data is collected, stored and used in the second grant cycle that began July 1, 2016.

HIGHLIGHTED DEVELOPMENTS

- A revised and improved data collection processes is in place to address many of the data concerns from the first grant cycle. The goal was to create a data tracking process that is easy to use, includes important required data, and does not impede on service delivery. This led to individualized data tracking for each program based on the services they offered. Additional areas will be tracked including specific program areas, locations of programming, employment and demographic information for each participant. Qualitative data collection procedures will also be improved based on feedback from grantee programs.
- A data coordinator joined the team at the Nebraska Center for Justice Research to provide technical assistance and training to Vocational and Life Skills grantee programs on data collection processes and procedures for the evaluation.
- Data processes were improved with the creation and implementation of an online data management system. This system provides a platform for grantees, evaluators and the NDCS reentry team to collaborate working with data in real time. The online system is also equipped with additional security measures to protect participant data. All programs are required to enter in participant data on this system in grant cycle 2. Data will be exported monthly by evaluators for quality assurance and analysis.
- A data sharing agreement is in place with Nebraska State Probation for participants on probation. An additional data sharing agreement with Nebraska Department of Labor is in progress. With this agreement, additional participant employment information would be available beyond the self-reported measures currently available.
- There are additional opportunities for collaboration and networking through regular roundtable meetings and quarterly grantee meetings. At these meetings, grantees have a forum to discuss successes and challenges they face in their program. Evaluators are also available to provide support and technical assistance.

VOCATIONAL AND LIFE SKILLS

GRANT CYCLE 1

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM DATA

BRISTOL STATION

QUARTER 6 (APRIL 2016-JUNE 2016) DATA

Month	Total Participants Receiving Services	# of New Participants Receiving Programming	Participants Successfully Completing	Total Receiving Programming to Date (Cumulative)	Total # Successful Participants to Date (Cumulative)
April	54	14	10	126	38
May	56	11	9	137	47
June	55	5	5	142	52

GRANT CYCLE 1 DATA

Program Area Note: LS= Life Skills VS=Vocational Skills

<p><u>Participant Information</u></p> <p>Unique Participants Served: 142</p> <p>Total Successful Participants: 52</p> <p>Average Age: 33</p> <p>Average Length of Programming* (days): 104</p>	<p><u>Vocational and Life Skills</u></p> <p># of Participants Receiving Life Skills: 109</p> <p># of Participants Receiving Education: 16</p> <p># of Participants Employed: 119</p>
<p><u>Participant Entry Status</u></p> <p>Inmate: 3</p> <p>Work Release: 0</p> <p>Parolee: 111</p> <p>Probationer: 0</p> <p>Within 18 Months of Release: 28</p>	<p><u>Participants by Program Areas</u></p> <p>Residential Reentry (LS): 105</p> <p>Vocational Skills Only (VS): 33</p> <p>Life Skills Only (LS): 1</p> <p>Vocational and Life Skills (VS)(LS): 109</p> <p>MRT (LS): 18</p>

*Average length of programming does not include participants who were currently active at the end of the grant cycle.

CENTER FOR PEOPLE IN NEED (TRADE)

QUARTER 6 (APRIL 2016-JUNE 2016) DATA

Month	Total Participants Receiving Services	# of New Participants Receiving Programming	Participants Successfully Completing	Total Receiving Programming to Date (Cumulative)	Total # Successful Participants to Date (Cumulative)
April	35	5	17	202	107
May	23	5	4	207	111
June	22	6	12	213	123

GRANT CYCLE 1 DATA

Program Area Note: LS= Life Skills VS=Vocational Skills

<p><u>Participant Information</u></p> <p>Unique Participants Served: 213</p> <p>Total Successful Participants: 123</p> <p>Average Age: 36</p> <p>Average Length of Programming* (days): 92</p>	<p><u>Vocational and Life Skills</u></p> <p># of Participants Receiving Life Skills: 178</p> <p># of Participants Receiving Education: 0</p> <p># of Participants Employed: 90</p>
<p><u>Participant Entry Status</u></p> <p>Inmate: 124</p> <p>Work Release: included in inmate numbers</p> <p>Parolee: 53</p> <p>Probationer: 10</p> <p>Within 18 Months of Release: 24</p>	<p><u>Participants by Program Areas</u></p> <p>Core Classes (LS): 156</p> <p>Forklift/Warehouse Module (VS): 104</p> <p>Food Service/Event Planning (VS): 40</p> <p>Janitorial/Building Maintenance (VS): 13</p> <p>Residential Construction (VS): 19</p>

*Average length of programming does not include participants who were currently active at the end of the grant cycle.

GOODWILL (RESTART)

QUARTER 6 (APRIL 2016-JUNE 2016) DATA

Month	Total Participants Receiving Services	# of New Participants Receiving Programming	Participants Successfully Completing	Total Receiving Programming to Date (Cumulative)	Total # Successful Participants to Date (Cumulative)
April	117	7	8	190	15
May	107	2	3	192	18
June	85	0	140*	192	158*

*Goodwill did not receive continued funding and main services ended June 2016. Participants who were in follow-up stages were closed out by staff which is shown in the high numbers indicated in successfully completing by month and to date.

GRANT CYCLE 1 DATA

Program Area Note: LS= Life Skills VS=Vocational Skills

<p><u>Participant Information</u></p> <p>Unique Participants Served: 192</p> <p>Total Successful Participants: 158</p> <p>Average Age: 35</p> <p>Average Length of Programming*(days): 197</p>	<p><u>Vocational and Life Skills</u></p> <p># of Participants Receiving Life Skills: 192</p> <p># of Participants Receiving Education: 0</p> <p># of Participants Employed: 107</p>
<p><u>Participant Entry Status</u></p> <p>Inmate: 0</p> <p>Work Release: 81</p> <p>Parolee: 43</p> <p>Probationer: 14</p> <p>Within 18 Months of Release: 54</p>	<p><u>Participants by Program Areas</u></p> <p>Financial Literacy (LS): 191</p> <p>Resume (LS): 172</p> <p>Mock Interview (LS): 178</p> <p>Peer Mentoring (LS): 172</p> <p>Transitional Job (VS): 88</p>

*Average length of programming does not include participants who were currently active at the end of the grant cycle.

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

QUARTER 6 (APRIL 2016-JUNE 2016) DATA

Month	Total Participants Receiving Services	# of New Participants Receiving Programming	Participants Successfully Completing	Total Receiving Programming to Date (Cumulative)	Total # Successful Participants to Date (Cumulative)
April	58	8	13	116	53
May	50	12	5	128	58
June	53	9	8	137	66

GRANT CYCLE 1 DATA

Program Area Note: LS= Life Skills VS=Vocational Skills

<p><u>Participant Information</u></p> <p>Unique Participants Served: 137</p> <p>Total Successful Participants: 66</p> <p>Average Age: 40</p> <p>Average Length of Programming*(days): 133</p>	<p><u>Vocational and Life Skills</u></p> <p># of Participants Receiving Life Skills: 131</p> <p># of Participants Receiving Education: 3</p> <p># of Participants Employed: 72</p>
<p><u>Participant Entry Status</u></p> <p>Inmate: 25</p> <p>Work Release: 12</p> <p>Parolee: 59</p> <p>Probationer: 3</p> <p>Within 18 Months of Release: 38</p>	<p><u>Participants by Program Areas</u></p> <p>Hope Program (LS): 110</p> <p>Honu Home (LS): 30</p> <p>REAL Program (LS): 97</p> <p>Benefits (LS): 36</p>

*Average length of programming does not include participants who were currently active at the end of the grant cycle.

METRO COMMUNITY COLLEGE (RE-ENTRY)

QUARTER 6 (APRIL 2016-JUNE 2016) DATA

Month	Total Participants Receiving Services	# of New Participants Receiving Programming	Participants Successfully Completing	Total Receiving Programming to Date (Cumulative)	Total # Successful Participants to Date (Cumulative)
April	N/A	41	N/A	1080	N/A
May	N/A	79	N/A	1159	N/A
June	N/A	47	N/A	1206	159*

*Numbers were provided for participants successfully completing, but there was no way to match them up to participants in the data file. 159 participants were marked as completing 1 or more stage, but this data is incomplete.

GRANT CYCLE 1 DATA

Program Area Note: LS= Life Skills VS=Vocational Skills

<p><u>Participant Information</u></p> <p>Unique Participants Served: 1206</p> <p>Total Successful Participants: 159*</p> <p>Average Age: 34</p> <p>Average Length of Programming*(days): N/A</p>	<p><u>Vocational and Life Skills</u></p> <p># of Participants Receiving Life Skills: 359</p> <p># of Participants Receiving Education: 489</p> <p># of Participants Employed: 94</p>
<p><u>Participant Entry Status</u></p> <p>Inmate: 553</p> <p>Work Release: 162</p> <p>Parolee: 216</p> <p>Probationer: 29</p> <p>Within 18 Months of Release: 246</p>	<p><u>Participants by Program Areas</u></p> <p>Credit/GED (VS): 460</p> <p>Forklift Certification (VS): 134</p> <p>Workshops (LS): 264</p> <p>Certificate Received (VS): 137</p>

*Average length of programming does not include participants who were currently active at the end of the grant cycle. 159 participants were marked as completing 1 or more stage, but this data is incomplete.

PRAIRIE GOLD HOMES

QUARTER 6 (APRIL 2016-JUNE 2016) DATA

Month	Total Participants Receiving Services	# of New Participants Receiving Programming	Participants Successfully Completing	Total Receiving Programming to Date (Cumulative)	Total # Successful Participants to Date (Cumulative)
April	17	10	0	71	49
May	22	0	0	71	49
June	25	5	6	76	55

GRANT CYCLE 1 DATA

Program Area Note: LS= Life Skills VS=Vocational Skills

<p><u>Participant Information</u></p> <p>Unique Participants Served: 76</p> <p>Total Successful Participants: 55</p> <p>Average Age: 35</p> <p>Average Length of Programming*(days): 70</p>	<p><u>Vocational and Life Skills</u></p> <p># of Participants Receiving Life Skills: 55</p> <p># of Participants Receiving Education: 54</p> <p># of Participants Employed: 30</p>
<p><u>Participant Entry Status</u></p> <p>Inmate: 76</p> <p>Work Release: included in inmate numbers</p> <p>Parolee: 0</p> <p>Probationer: 0</p> <p>Within 18 Months of Release: 0</p>	<p><u>Participants by Program Areas</u></p> <p>HBI PACT (VS): 55</p> <p>Construction Practical (VS): 55</p> <p>Carpentry Certificate (VS): 75</p> <p>Painting Certificate (VS): 7</p>

*Average length of programming does not include participants who were currently active at the end of the grant cycle.

RELEASED AND RESTORED

QUARTER 6 (APRIL 2016-JUNE 2016) DATA

Month	Total Participants Receiving Services	# of New Participants Receiving Programming	Participants Successfully Completing	Total Receiving Programming to Date (Cumulative)	Total # Successful Participants to Date (Cumulative)
April	21	12	8	134	83
May	25	8	8	142	91
June	16	12	24	154	115

*Duplicate program participants were only counted as new the month of their first participation and only once in the total receiving programming to date. They could still have two successful completions.

GRANT CYCLE 1 DATA

Program Area Note: LS= Life Skills VS=Vocational Skills

<p><u>Participant Information</u></p> <p>Unique Participants Served: 154</p> <p>Total Successful Participants: 115</p> <p>Average Age*: 38</p> <p>Average Length of Programming*(days): 26</p>	<p><u>Vocational and Life Skills</u></p> <p># of Participants Receiving Life Skills: 159</p> <p># of Participants Receiving Education: 0</p> <p># of Participants Employed: 5</p>
<p><u>Participant Entry Status</u></p> <p>Inmate: 21</p> <p>Work Release: 104</p> <p>Parolee: 32</p> <p>Probationer: 0</p> <p>Within 18 Months of Release: 2</p>	<p><u>Participants by Program Areas</u></p> <p>Interview Skills (LS): 142</p> <p>Resume (LS): 154</p> <p>Anger Management (LS): 126</p> <p>Money Management (LS): 125</p>

*Average length of programming does not include participants who were currently active at the end of the grant cycle. Released and Restored length includes four participants who took program twice. They were not included twice for age calculations. Duplicate participants are counted separate for participations for everything else.

RESCARE

QUARTER 6 (APRIL 2016-JUNE 2016) DATA

Month	Total Participants Receiving Services	# of New Participants Receiving Programming	Participants Successfully Completing	Total Receiving Programming to Date (Cumulative)	Total # Successful Participants to Date (Cumulative)
April	51	20	7	284	142
May	47	20	9	304	151
June	45	25	8	329	159

*Successful participants include those who gain employment while in the program.

GRANT CYCLE 1 DATA

Program Area Note: LS= Life Skills VS=Vocational Skills

<p><u>Participant Information</u></p> <p>Unique Participants Served: 329</p> <p>Total Successful Participants: 159</p> <p>Average Age: 32</p> <p>Average Length of Programming*(days): 40</p>	<p><u>Vocational and Life Skills</u></p> <p># of Participants Receiving Life Skills: 312</p> <p># of Participants Receiving Education**: 312</p> <p># of Participants Employed: 150</p>
<p><u>Participant Entry Status</u></p> <p>Inmate: 0</p> <p>Work Release: 0</p> <p>Parolee: 20</p> <p>Probationer: 287</p> <p>Within 18 Months of Release: 23</p>	<p><u>Participants by Program Areas</u></p> <p>Get the Right Future in Omaha (VS)(LS): 108</p> <p>Get the Right Future In Kearney(VS)(LS): 75</p> <p>Get the Right Future in Norfolk(VS)(LS): 93</p> <p>Get the Right Future in Gering(VS)(LS): 54</p>

*Average length of programming does not include participants who were currently active at the end of the grant cycle.

** Education received was through the employment preparation programming.