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Final Report For The Evaluation Of Nebraska's Serious And Violent Offender Reentry Program

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FINAL REPORT FOR THE EVALUATION OF NEBRASKA'S SERIOUS AND VIOLENT OFFENDER REENTRY PROGRAM

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the evaluation of the NDCS Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Program was to assess the success of the program in three areas. First, an evaluation of the process was conducted to determine if a reentry program had indeed been created by the NDCS. Second, a cost benefit analysis was conducted to determine the economic savings that a reentry program could promote for the state of Nebraska. Finally, an outcome evaluation was conducted to determine if the reentry program was successful in its goal of reducing recidivism among serious and violent offenders in the state. Below are the key findings of each of these three evaluation components.

Process Findings:

- Although the selection of program participants has evolved since the inception of the program, NDCS has targeted serious and violent offenders with a high risk of re-offending for pilot program participation.

- There was community and agency support for the reentry program from its inception through its implementation.

- NDCS had implemented the program components intended for Phase I of the reentry program, including the creation of personalized reentry plans for inmates and the creation of programs to address the mental health, substance abuse, and general living skills needed among the inmates.

- The programs offered in Phase I of the reentry program are being delivered to inmates in Phase II thereby providing a seamless delivery of services as originally intended in the program's inception.

- Overall, there is much consistency between what inmates perceive they need to live a crime-free life upon leaving prison and the services that are being delivered by NDCS.

- Participants generally believed that the services they are receiving from NDCS are beneficial in helping them successfully return to society.

- Overall, participants reported a positive attitude toward the services provided in Phase I and II of the reentry program and found the support provided to them by their transition mangers as most effective in bringing about their success in the program.

- NDCS has not appeared to establish a graduated sanction or reward system to induce compliance with program requirements, manage problem behaviors, or minimize termination from the program.

Cost Benefit Analysis Findings:

- Those assigned to the re-entry program account for -96 fewer misdemeanor and -28 fewer felony arrests (per 200 participants) during a 12-month follow-up period.

- Based on average process costs incurred by misdemeanor arrests ($6,014) and felony arrests ($21,156), the fewer misdemeanor arrests result in annual outcome cost savings of $577,344 (-96 X $6,014), while fewer felony arrests save $592,375 (-28 X $21,156), or a total annual recidivism-outcome cost savings of $1,169,719 (per 200 participants).

- The average annual recidivism-outcome cost savings per reentry program participant is $5,849.

- Victimization costs include tangible costs (lost wages, medical and mental health care costs) and intangible costs (pain suffering and lost quality of life). The average estimated cost per violent victimization in the U.S. is $42,098, while the average cost of property victimizations is $1,313.

- The annual victimization cost savings due to the lower rates of recidivism of 200 re-entry participants are $884,058 for violent crimes (-21 X $42,098) and $73,528 (-56 X $1,313) for property crimes, or a total societal-victimization cost savings of $957,586.

- This equates to an average annual societal-victimization cost savings per reentry program participant of $4,788.

- When recidivism-outcome and societal-victimization costs are combined, the total annual savings due to the NDCS Re-Entry Program are $10,637 per reentry participant.

Outcome Evaluation

- In order to assess outcomes, the 19 reentry participants were compared to a control group of 53 offenders who received "traditional" correctional treatment.

- Each offender in both groups was interviewed in the month prior to their release to determine the degree of similarity between the two groups.

- Based on this interview data, the two groups were remarkably similar on measures of race, age, prior criminal history, prior drug use and family relationships.

- Recidivism was assessed using two measures: whether the offender was arrested during the 6 months following release, and the mean number of arrests during the six-month follow-up period.

- 26% of the control group, but only 21% of the reentry participants were rearrested during the 6 month follow-up period.

- The mean number of new arrests for reentry participants was .26 compared to .58 for control participants.

Introduction

In 2003, the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) received a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to design, implement, and evaluate a Serious and Violent Offender Reentry program. The Department intended to create a program to help those offenders most at risk for re-offending successfully transition from prison back into society. The program was designed to facilitate a seamless transition encompassing three phases. Phase I of the reentry program proposed to offer educational, mental health, and substance abuse treatment, accompanied by mentoring and life skills training, to inmates while still in correctional institutions. Also during this phase, reentry transition teams for the inmates were to be created, which included members of the offender's family, a transition manager provided by NDCS, a member of the clergy if requested, and the offender's correctional case manager, and personalized prisoner reentry plans for offenders were to be created.

During Phase II of the reentry program, inmates would be transitioned to the community, via community corrections centers and parole, while still receiving some programming services from NDCS and some from private treatment providers. Offenders would also maintain contact with their transition teams during Phase II; however the composition of the team would somewhat change. Case managers would be replaced by a law enforcement agent and community contacts, such as employers, mentors, additional family members, etc. Also, inmates would be placed on electronic monitoring while under community release until such time as their good behavior earned them the right to have the monitor removed. Once inmates successfully completed their assigned period of community release and parole, offenders were to enter Phase III of the program.

Phase III of the program was to occur as offenders emerge from correctional control. Their assigned sentences have been completed, and they are free to fully participate in society. Because they remain in contact with their reentry transition teams while in Phase II, offenders are expected to have established a support network in the community to help facilitate law-abiding behavior. By Phase III, offenders should also have contacts in place with private treatment providers within the community, so they may continue receiving the mental health or substance abuse help they need. To this end, Phase III is where community agencies, and other state treatment providers, come into play in offenders' reentry. NDCS intended to create partnerships between the Department and other state, local, and private agencies to address offenders' needs in the community. NDCS intended to reduce recidivism and enhance public safety with the movement of offenders through these three phases of the reentry program, as offenders would emerge from prison with social networks and community-based support systems to help aid in law-abiding lifestyle. In an effort to help the Department assess the degree to which their goals for the reentry program had been achieved, they enlisted the evaluation services of the University of Nebraska at Omaha's School of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

University of Nebraska at Omaha's Involvement in Prisoner Reentry

In July 2003, the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) assembled an interdisciplinary team of researchers to help the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) implement and evaluate Nebraska's Serious and Violent Offender Reentry program. Specifically, the University agreed to help facilitate the implementation of the reentry program and to conduct a process and outcome evaluation.

In terms of facilitating the implementation of the reentry program, the UNO research team offered to help familiarize criminal justice practitioners and community members with the broader topic of prisoner reentry and the specific components, goals, and objectives of Nebraska's reentry program. UNO proposed to compile a listing of community and state resources currently committed to offender reintegration and to identify the services still needed. Last, the research team planned to hold meetings to help foster communication across government and community agencies so that coordination of services could be achieved.

The work plan submitted by the UNO research team outlined a two-pronged approach to evaluating the prison reentry program. First, the UNO team planned to conduct a process evaluation to determine the degree to which NDCS developed and implemented the three phases of the reentry program. Areas of interest for the process evaluation include the accuracy with which the reentry program identified and selected the targeted population, the extent to which the program built effective partnerships between criminal justice, behavioral health, and social services, and the degree to which program components were implemented as intended. A common finding in program evaluation research is that often no program exists to evaluate (Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman, 2004). The overall purpose of the process evaluation, therefore, is to first determine if a prisoner reentry program was developed, and second, to ascertain if program components were implemented in such a way as to achieve the program's goals.

The UNO research team also proposed an outcome evaluation. The purpose of the outcome evaluation is to determine whether participation in Nebraska's pilot reentry program improves offender reintegration, thereby ultimately reducing recidivism. In this sense, the evaluation would be able to assess the program's impact on public safety. Furthermore, as part of the evaluation, UNO would provide NDCS with a cost/benefit analysis to help determine

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whether the reentry program is cost effective relative to the traditional release procedures of parole or mandatory release.

The remainder of this report discusses the outcome of UNO's process and outcome evaluations. Given that it was essential to first determine if the prisoner reentry program had been established before assessing its impact on recidivism, we first review the findings of the process evaluation followed by the results of the outcome evaluation. In order to put prisoner reentry into a broader context, however, we begin by offering a brief discussion of the background of prisoner reentry and some findings from other states' experiences.

Background of Prisoner Reentry

The issue of prisoner reentry has taken on a renewed importance over the last several years. The record numbers of inmates returning home after having spent longer periods behind bars has become an issue of great importance not only for corrections professionals, but for society at large (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001). Inmates returning to society bring with them the need for employment, housing, and typically some form of treatment for a variety of ailments. If these needs are not met, offenders will likely resort to crime , which compromises public safety. With this in mind, a focus has been placed on restructuring how prisoners are prepared for release from prison and the services they receive upon returning to the community.

Newly envisioned reentry programs typically define reentry as "a structured process that spans incarceration and community release" (Taxman, Young, Holsinger, & Anspach, 2002: 6). It is beyond the extent of this review to look specifically at how all states have designed their reentry efforts; therefore, we will look at commonalities among programs, while at the same time incorporating information from the many academic articles that have emerged on this topic.

Target Populations

Ideally, all offenders could potentially benefit from some form of reentry services (Taxman, Young, & Bryne, 2002a). The financial realities of government agencies, however, make it necessary to target those offenders who would most benefit from such integrated programming. With this in mind, choosing the population is a critical issue in designing a reentry program (Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002). Rehabilitation research has shown that high-risk offenders are most likely to benefit from intensive services (Bonta, 1996). Although high-risk offenders are most likely to benefit from intensive services, this population is rarely targeted for correctional programs (Taxman, Young, & Bryne, 2002b). The "cardinal rule of correctional practice" recognizes that gaining political and public support for new programs is best attained by selecting compliant and "low stakes" offenders "who are less likely to create public outcry" (Taxman, et al., 2002b:14). Focusing on low stakes or low-risk offenders may initially prove beneficial to program development; however, doing so, may ultimately hamper the program's longevity and stifle its potential by focusing on inmates who would likely have been successful without the intensive intervention. As Austin (2001: 332) recognized, "a significant portion of released inmates are low risk" and "will not be rearrested or re-incarcerated." Conversely, there exists a small but highly visible number of inmates who pose a great public safety risk, yet would most likely benefit from the intensive services offered by a comprehensive reentry program. In the end, program developers will be put in a position of having "to balance offender risk with the public's tolerance for any crime" (Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002:19).

To target a specific population for reentry programs, assessment tools and procedures for identifying those offenders who will be recruited into the program must be in place (Taxman,

Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002). Ideally, offenders should be targeted for reentry as early in their incarceration as possible in order to begin the process of preparing them for their eventual release (Travis, 2000; Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002). However, the reality appears to be that selection time varies widely among programs and many inmates are not selected for participation until a few months prior to their release (Austin, 2001 Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002).

An added issue to consider when targeting a population is whether program participation will be voluntary or mandatory. As Taxman et al. (2002:8) suggest, "getting inmates to volunteer for reentry programs is a perennial challenge, because offenders perceive programs as limiting their options as well as reducing their anonymity (to supervision agents, service providers, family and neighbors) upon return to the community." Convincing inmates to volunteer for the added supervision and scrutiny involved in this type of special supervision has proven to be a difficult challenge. Realistically, inmates will likely either need to be required to participate or see some immediate benefit (such as earlier release) for subjecting themselves to the added level of supervision. A review of the potential benefits for long-term success will not likely be sufficient to recruit high numbers of participants (Lindquist, Hardison, & Lattimore, 2003; Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002).

Affected Communities
A common element among many reentry programs is that they focus on inmates returning to a specific geographic location. Typically, these locations are metropolitan areas, which are home to a disproportionate number of offenders (Lynch & Sabol, 2001). In addition, it appears that these offenders are not evenly distributed throughout counties, but are concentrated in select neighborhoods (Lynch & Sabol, 2001). While there remain gaps in the

research, it appears that many of these neighborhoods, which are home to the disproportionate number of returning inmates, are considered disadvantaged with higher rates of unemployment, drug use and crime (Kadela & Seiter, 2003; Travis, et al., 2001). The challenges of reintegrating offenders into society is a difficult proposition in itself; however, when you combine this with the fact that most parolees are returning to environments where substance abuse, crime and unemployment levels are elevated, it makes the task seem even more daunting.

Given the influence of the community in prisoner reentry, successful transition is not a task that can be accomplished by correctional agencies alone. Community involvement and ownership in this problem are necessary components in developing a successful reentry program (Young, Taxman & Byrne, 2002). This reliance on community involvement is based on two assumptions. First, it is grounded in the premise that communities want to accept and reintegrate ex-offenders. While this may be a correct assumption, it might also be true that many communities will reject efforts to reintegrate ex-offenders, and can actually act as barriers to reintegration (Lynch & Sabol, 2001). The second assumption is that all communities actually have the capacity to be effective partners in the reintegration of offenders. In reality, this may not be the case. It has already been established that many returning inmates are concentrated in select communities that are often considered disadvantaged. It must be considered that these communities do not have the ability to assist in the reentry process. As Travis, et al. (2001:42) note, "these communities may have little capacity to address the needs of their residents, offenders and non-offenders alike, such as substance abuse treatment, employment opportunities, health care, housing, and counseling." From a practical sense, program developers must be aware of both the strengths and weaknesses of the particular community targeted for a reentry program. This will require an ongoing dialog between agency professionals and community

members. In some instances, program developers will need to act as advocates to garner public support for programs (Buntin, 2003).

Seamless Approach

A commonly used phrase in much of the literature focusing on prisoner reintegration is the term "seamless reentry" or "seamless transition." A seamless approach to offender reentry refers to a process that spans traditional organizational boundaries. Traditional approaches to offender reintegration have failed to provide a continuity of services that span from the institution to community supervision (Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002). As Basile (2002:56) recognized, "a truly effective reentry program will require all the components' disciplines to come together to coalesce into a complete and effective system." The achievement of this continuity of services will likely be a very difficult task. Program administrators will have to identify not only the organizational barriers that inhibit cooperation among agencies and departments, but the cultural barriers as well. This will require a high level of commitment and leadership (Byrne, Taxman & Young, 2002).

Reentry Teams

A key to achieving the continuity of services that span organizational boundaries is the formation of reentry teams to manage the release of offenders. Traditionally, the management of offender reentry has been very compartmentalized. Case managers or pre-release staff within the institution assumed responsibility for managing offenders until the point of release. From this point, community supervision officers, assuming the offender was subject to post-release supervision, took over this role. Typically, there occurred very little collaboration between the institutional staff and community corrections personnel, despite the fact that sharing information between these two groups could prove to be an invaluable resource from both a reintegration and

community safety perspective (Basile, 2002). To combat the lack of cohesiveness and promote a more seamless approach to offender reintegration the concept of reentry teams has emerged.

Reentry teams have the potential to span organizational boundaries by bringing together a wide array of individuals who could play a pivotal role in the reintegration of offenders. A key issue in designing any reentry program is to identify who will be included on the reentry team (Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002). A review of the literature reveals that programs vary on exactly who is included. There are, however, certain core members who are consistently represented among the programs, such as representatives from the institution (usually case managers and treatment staff who have first hand knowledge of the offender), community supervision personnel (typically this consists of the officer who will assume supervision of the case upon the offender's release), community treatment representatives, and representatives from partnering community agencies. In addition to these core individuals, teams could include family members, representatives from other government agencies (i.e. job placement agencies, housing programs, or other social service agencies), clergy, and even victims or representatives from victim groups (Byrne, et al., 2002). In reality the exact composition of the reentry team should depend on the needs of the particular offender. While the core members will likely anchor all reentry teams, the needs of the individual prisoners should be the key element in determining the remaining representatives.

The role of the reentry team is essentially to "facilitate the offender's transition from institutional to community services" (Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002:27). One of the key components in facilitating this transition is the development of a reentry plan to serve as a guide through the reintegration process. Research has shown that an offender's experience during his/her first few days following release can affect his/her chances for leading a

law abiding life (Callery & Larivee, 2001). One of the primary concerns for inmates as they prepare to leave the institution is how they will meet basic survival needs, which include the simplest provisions such as shelter, food, and employment (Taxman, et al., 2002a; Travis, et al., 2001). Therefore, it is critical that the reentry plan address these most basic needs. In addition, the reentry plan should address other practical issues which might act as barriers to successful reentry, such as reuniting with family and establishing a positive support system. Finally, the plan should incorporate elements for long-term success. This would include plans for continued substance abuse treatment, mental health services, job training, or other identified needs.

The role of the reentry team does not end once the offender is released from the institution. The reentry team continues working with the offender once he/she has been released into the community. As Taxman, et al. note, "once the short-term needs of the offender are addressed, the case management team typically turns to orienting the offender to the community" (Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002:28). It is recommended that the reentry team meet with the offender as soon as possible upon his/her release from prison (Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002). The role of the reentry team is not only to provide support for the offender, but also to hold him/her accountable for following through on the reentry plan. In addition, it will likely become necessary to update and modify the reentry plan as the offender adjusts to life outside of prison. In reality, even the most carefully thought out plan will require modification as the offender faces the challenges of life in society. It appears that most reentry teams meet with the offender at least one time per month. However, the number of meetings can vary depending on the progress of the offender.

A further issue to consider regarding the formation of reentry teams is whether new staff will be utilized or whether existing staff will be called upon to fill these new responsibilities

(Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002). Some programs have elected to hire new staff to take on the role of reentry manager. Typically, these reentry managers are responsible for overseeing the reentry process beginning in the institution and continuing as offenders enter the community. The reentry manager is vital in making sure that all of the offenders' needs are being addressed and is instrumental in fostering relationships with existing community organizations and other government organizations. Reentry managers may also take on other tasks such as data collection for future evaluative studies. Programs that do not hire additional staff rely on existing personnel to take on these added duties. There does not appear to be any guidance from the literature as to which approach is more effective; however, it is apparent that providing these comprehensive reentry services will be time consuming and will likely require the addition of new staff (Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002).

Building Partnerships

Traditional efforts at offender reentry have been criticized as being too compartmentalized. There is also a strong consensus in the literature that the problems and barriers to prisoner reentry cannot and should not be the sole responsibility of corrections professionals (Byrne, et al., 2002; Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002; Travis, et al., 2001). In the end, ex-inmates return to families and communities. Therefore, at the most fundamental level, prison reentry is a family and community issue (Travis, et al., 2001; Young, et al., 2002). Toward this end, corrections professionals, community organizations, and the various other agencies that support the reentry effort have begun to embrace the need for collaborative response to offender reintegration.

The identification of organizations willing to contribute to the goals of the reentry program may not prove to be a difficult undertaking; however, the creation of successful

partnerships will require extensive planning and effort (Byrne, et al., 2002). It will likely involve more than a commitment of resources, and will require partners to truly accept the notion that offender reentry problems are central to the mission of their organization. In addition, partnering agencies should be involved in the development process of the program and should be given more than a symbolic voice in its design. Successful collaborations ultimately require involvement from partner members at all levels, including policy development, operational practice, and staff decision-making (Byrne, et al., 2002). As Byrne et al. (2002:3) note "when program developers describe reentry partnership initiatives they often spend an inordinate amount of time identifying who is included in the partnership, but little is offered on how often these partners meet, what they discuss, how decisions are made, what operational practices are put in place and who is responsible for delivering what part of the process."

Reentry: A Three-Phase Approach

Reentry programs typically involve three phases of operation. Although these phases are presented as distinct stages of operation, in reality they are very much intertwined and less distinguishable. While the names of these stages differ among programs, in a practical sense they are very similar. In describing these phases, we will rely on the terminology utilized by the Bureau of Governmental Research located at the University of Maryland, which termed the three phases of reentry as the institutional phase, structured reentry, and community reintegration (Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002).

The institutional phase commences once the offender is committed to the Deaprtment of Corrections. The offender is assessed and classified in terms of the level of security needed. Ideally, at this point offenders will begin treatment designed to address their criminogenic tendencies (Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002). At some point during this

institutional stage, the offender is selected to participate in the reentry program. Programs vary greatly in regard to when the offender is selected for participation. It is considered best practice for offenders to be targeted for reentry as early in their sentence as possible. Ideally, during the institutional phase, program participants are moved to facilities that are in close proximity to where they will be released. This allows offenders to begin the reintegration process from the institution and gives them the opportunity to begin rebuilding ties to their families and communities.

The structured reentry or transition phase typically begins a month or two prior to the offender's release and continues through his/her first month in the community. It is during this time that specific plans are made regarding the offender's release, the offender's reentry plan is finalized, and basic survival needs are addressed. The structured reentry phase is typically considered the most critical time for the offender, as it is during this time when he/she leaves the confines of the institution and returns to the community (Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002).

The community reintegration phase is the final stage of reentry. This phase is best described as the on-going reintegration of the offender into the community, in which the focus evolves from meeting basic survival needs to stabilization and maintenance (Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002). It is very difficult to identify the exact point at which an offender crosses the line from structured reentry to community reintegration, as each offender will advance to this final stage in his/her own time. During this time, it is imperative that offenders focus on the issues that are crucial to his/her long-term success. The reintegration phase will likely span beyond the offender's time on supervision and will only be complete once

the offender has defined a new role for himself/herself as a productive member of the community (Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, Anspach, 2002).

Graduated Sanctions

One of the biggest challenges to an effective reentry program will be finding ways to respond to the high number of technical violations that will likely be associated with a program of intensive supervision of a high risk population. Currently, parole violators account for one third of all prison admissions nationwide. This represents a nearly two-fold increase since 1980, when parole violators accounted for only 18 percent of new admissions (Travis, et al., 2001). Of those returned for parole violations, two-thirds are recommitted for technical violations as opposed to the remaining one third who have perpetrated new offenses (Travis, et al., 2001). One lesson learned from the implementation of intensive supervision programs is that the increased surveillance of offenders will result in an increase in the detection of technical violations (Cullen, Wright & Applegate, 1996). Therefore, it is imperative that program designers anticipate this challenge and incorporate ways of addressing technical violations in the design of the program.

The use of graduated sanctions does show promise as a means of increasing compliance with supervision conditions (Taxman & Soule, 1999). Graduated sanctions refer to "structured, incremental responses to non-compliant behavior" (Taxman & Soule, 1999:1). They can include a range of sanctions such as the imposition of community service hours, the imposition of a curfew, electronic monitoring, or a short stay in the county jail. However, inasmuch as graduated sanctions hold promise for holding offenders accountable, they also can have detrimental effects when used inconsistently or in an unstructured manner (Taxman & Soule: 4). Taxman and Soule argue that in order for graduated sanctions to be used effectively they must be

grounded in a procedural justice framework (1999:4). In a practical sense, this translates into a need for the sanctioning model to be perceived as being fair. This does not necessarily mean fair in terms of the outcome, but rather in terms of the process.

In order to achieve this perceived level of equality, Taxman and Soule contend that the sanctions process should be grounded on three premises:

- The offender should be made aware at the onset of his supervision of the behaviors that constitute a violation and the potential consequences for that action. Specifically, it is recommended that offenders sign a behavioral contract at the beginning of his supervision period in which they acknowledge the rules and consequences for non-compliance. Further, it is recommended that a structured sanctioning menu be used in order to reduce the level of discretion in making sanctioning decisions, thus increasing the perception of fairness in the process.

- It is important to ensure that all involved in the supervision of offenders adhere to the sanctioning model.

- It is important that the sanctioning model be designed to ensure that offenders' dignity is upheld throughout the sanctioning process. To this end, it is imperative that the sanctions fit the offense and that sanctions are not imposed with the intent to shame the offender.

In addition, to the three principals listed above, Taxman and Soule (1999) identify seven theoretical concepts which should guide the development of the sanctioning model. These include certainty, celerity, consistency, parsimony, proportionality, progressiveness, and neutrality. Table 1 "summarizes the concepts and operational features of a theoretically sound graduated sanctions process" (Taxman and Soule, 1999: 4).

While there is evidence to suggest that the use of graduated sanctions, if implemented correctly, can increase compliance with release conditions, scholars also suggest that sanctioning should not stand as the only response to undesired behavior (Cullen, et al., 1996). Research suggests that punishments that stand alone are a weak tool for changing behavior. However, punishments that are coupled with appropriate treatments show more promise for reducing

destructive conduct (Cullen, et al., 1996). For example, the imposition of a sanction for a

positive urinalysis screen should be accompanied by a referral to treatment or an increase in the

level of treatment provided.

Table 1. Operational Features of a Graduated Sanctions Process

Concept	Relevant Research Findings	Sanction Features
Certainty	Increased perceived certainty of punishment deters future deviance.	1)Defined Infractions 2)Behavioral Contract & Written Notification 3)Structured Sanction Menu
Celerity	Reduction in violations by reducing the interval between violation and sanction. Delaying response increases perception that response is unfair or questionable.	Swift Process to Respond to Violations
Consistency	Similar decisions made for similar situations increases compliance due to positive experience.	1) Behavioral Contract 2) Structured Sanction Menu
Parsimony	No punishment should be imposed that is more intrusive or restrictive than necessary.	Structured Sanction Menu
Proportionality	Level of punishment should be commensurate with severity of the criminal behavior.	Structured Sanction Menu
Progressiveness	Continued violations result in increasing stringent responses.	Structured Sanction Menu
Neutrality	Responses must be viewed as impartial and consistent with rules, ethics, and logic.	1) Defined Infractions 2) Behavioral Contract

Reentry Program Evaluations

Comprehensive reentry programs, such as those that are being implemented as part of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative, are a relatively new phenomenon. As a result, there is little published research to date that has evaluated either the process of implementing reentry programs or the outcomes of program participants. What is known about reentry programs' effectiveness at reducing re-offending is discussed below.

In regard to reentry programs' effect on recidivism, Visher et al. (2004) reported on their four state, longitudinal pilot project research. The authors provided 324 prison inmates with self-administered surveys before and after their release to the community. Visher and colleagues (2004) reported that the inmates who found jobs after release were more likely to have participated in work release while incarcerated. Also, younger inmates that returned to families with parents or relatives with substance abuse problems were more likely to use drugs after release. The authors also found that one-third of respondents were re-arrested within six months of release for either parole violations or for new crimes (Visher et al 2004). The program participants reported that an extra focus in prisoner re-entry programs needs to be placed on parenting skills, education, more intensive policing,? and greater involvement of the corrections department in public agencies. Visher and her colleagues (2004) conclude that the Prisoner Re-entry Programs studied are in need of intensification and adjustment.

Successful release to the community has been found to differ based on the type of crime for which inmates were incarcerated. Solomon et al. (2005) found that community supervision did not seem to effect re-offending for violent offenders but was more effective for lower-level offenders. Low-level offenders were identified by the authors as black men with few prior arrests and who were serving time for parole or probation revocations. Also, these researchers

found that prior arrest record had a significant impact on re-arrest; the fewer prior arrests, the lower the risk of or re-arrest when released with supervision to the community.

In addition to outcome evaluations, scholars also often conduct process evaluations. (Babbie 2001) Process evaluations look to the implementation of the goals and objectives of a program to determine if the program has been applied and implemented as intended. To date, there are no published process evaluations of prisoner reentry programs. There are, however, a number of process evaluations of reentry courts that may offer some guidance for reentry program developers.

Reentry courts are similar to reentry programs, except that they utilize judicial representatives to act as the reentry managers. Despite this difference, reentry courts incorporate many of the same principles as reentry programs, such as building partnerships with community agencies, providing a range of services, and spanning organizational boundaries. The results of the evaluations of reentry courts highlight some common problems that will likely affect similar programs. These problems include convincing offenders to volunteer for intensive programs, overcoming organizational boundaries between partnering organizations, and maintaining the level of motivation needed among stakeholders (Lindquist, et al., 2003). In addition, it is noted that reentry court offenders face two common problems upon their release to society: finding employment and securing suitable housing (Lindquist, et al., 2003).

In terms of evaluating the overall effectiveness of prisoner reentry programs, there is ongoing debating regarding how to define program effectiveness. According to the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) Multi-site Evaluation Project Coordinator, Mark Pope, the typical SVORI evaluation will consider the following factors:

- Housing (housing stability and housing quality)

- Employment (job stability, income)

- Education (educational attainment)

- Family relationships/functioning (child support, family instrumental support, family emotional support, family violence, contact with children)

- Peer relationships (instrumental support, emotional support, association with peers who engage in criminal activity)

- Attitudes (self-efficacy, spirituality, locus of control, civic action, legal cynicism)

- Mental and physical health (overall status, specific symptoms, mental health related limitations)

- Substance abuse (frequency of self-reported use, oral fluid test results)

- Crime (self-reported criminal behavior, self-reported re-arrests, supervision condition violations, gang membership, self-reported re-incarceration, official arrest rates, official re-incarceration data)

These factors allow a multi-faceted approach for determining the effectiveness of prisoner reentry programs. They not only address the degree to which the programs affect public safety and re-offending, but they also assess changes in offenders' and their families' overall well-being.

Summary of the Literature

To date, research suggests that prisoner reentry programs have much to overcome, but if planned and implemented carefully, they hold promise for improving the lives of offenders and enhancing the safety of community residents. The way in which inmates are targeted for participation in reentry programs, the degree to which correctional agencies build collaborative partnerships across government and community agencies, and the way in which returning inmates' transgressions are addressed are all important aspects of the design and evaluation of reentry programs. With these factors in mind, the University of Nebraska at Omaha conducted

both a process and outcome evaluation of Nebraska's Serious and Violent Offender Reentry program. The results of our evaluations are discussed in the following sections of this report.

An Evaluation of the Process of Implementing the Prisoner Reentry Program

In order to determine the degree to which the prisoner reentry program was implemented as designed and intended, we employed several methodologies. We conducted semi-structured interviews with program stakeholders both before and after the reentry program was implemented to determine government agency and community support for such a program. In an effort to inform citizens of the pilot reentry program in Omaha and elicit community partners for the program, Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) personnel held community meetings, which UNO representatives attended. Unobtrusive ethnographic data collection techniques were used to assess community members' reactions to the program and the information they were given. The transition managers responsible for facilitating program participants' reentry back into society were interviewed to determine the specific treatment components of each phase of the reentry program and to determine inmates' compliance. Last, semi-structured interviews were conducted with program participants to determine if they were receiving the services they were promised, the degree to which they found these services helpful, and what, if any, aspects of the program could be improved. The sum of these various methodological techniques resulted in an accurate picture of the degree to which Nebraska's prisoner reentry program was implemented as intended.

The discussion of our process evaluation results begins with an overview of the selection of reentry participants. We then discuss support for the reentry program, followed by a review of the services being delivered to inmates in each phase of the program. Program participants'

thoughts regarding the effectiveness of reentry services and the use of graduated sanctions for program compliance is also discussed. We conclude this section with the results of the cost/benefit analysis of the reentry program and a summary of the process evaluation results, which provide a transition to our discussion of the outcome evaluation findings.

The Selection of Program Participants

NDCS provided UNO with list of eligibility criteria for reentry participants at the outset of the grant. The criteria were as follows:

➢ the younger adult offender age 18 to 35

➢ serious and violent offender who is considered to be a high risk for recidivism

➢ returning to designated areas within the City of Omaha within the zip codes areas comprising 68104, 68110, and 68111

➢ has a tentative release date equal to or less than 3 years from entrance in the program

In addition, the crime types listed below were identified by NDCS at the onset of the grant as those eligible for participation. For the purposes of the grant, the list identifies the offenses that were to be considered 'violent' as generally defined by the Nebraska Board of Parole. The final eligibility component for participation in the reentry program was an assessment of risk. Inmates assessed as "high risk" for re-offending were subject to participation.

While these were the originally determined eligibility requirements for the program, there were some modifications during the course of the research. For instance, the program grew to include two other zip codes in the Omaha metro area and other crime types, such as drug offenses that included weapon violations, were added to the eligible crime types list. Also, the age of offenders may have been extended beyond 35 years of age, but at this time, we are unclear as to what age this extension was granted. In sum, the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the

reentry program have evolved over time, and we are currently unclear of the exact criteria to be met by participants. One factor on which we are clear is the creation of a risk assessment tool to choose eligible participants for the program.

Table 2. Original Crime Types for Eligibility in the Prisoner Reentry Program

1st Degree Murder	Stalking	Child Abuse
2nd Degree Murder	2nd Degree Sexual Assault	Vulnerable Adult Abuse
Manslaughter	Sexual Assault of a Child	Assault of Officer using Motor Vehicle
1st Degree Sexual Assault	False Imprisonment –1st Degree	Assault of Police Officer or DCS Employee – 1st Degree
1st Degree Assault	False Imprisonment – 2nd Degree	Assault of Police Officer or DCS Employee – 2nd Degree
Robbery	Arson – 1st Degree	Assault of Police Officer or DCS Employee – 3rd Degree
Motor Vehicle Homicide	Arson – 2nd Degree	Assault by a Confined Person
Shoot with Intent to Kill	Arson – 3rd Degree	Use of Explosives to Kill or Injure
2nd Degree Assault	Incest	

One of the criteria for reentry program participation was an assessment of risk. As part of the reentry process, NDCS adopted a new, and validated, risk assessment instrument to

identify program participants.[1]   In June of 2005, UNO personnel began administering this instrument to inmates to determine those suitable for inclusion in the control group of the reentry program's outcome evaluation.

We found that approximately 90% of those assessed for the control group were deemed to be at "high-risk" for re-offending. Interestingly, however, NDCS had previously informed UNO that roughly only 20% to 30% of inmates returned to NDCS for a new offense. The disconnect between the proportion of offenders assessed as high risk and NDCS reported recidivism rates has been verbally noted to the NDCS program coordinator.

In the fall of 2005, transition managers began assessing risk among potential program participants, using the newly created instrument, and approaching potential subjects about entry into the program. Participation in the program is voluntary, and UNO has not been informed of the refusal rate for the program. Informally, however, transition managers have noted that offenders are often reluctant to volunteer to participate in the program due to the intensive supervision and service requirements. These managers have led the UNO research team to believe that a higher number of eligible offenders have refused to participate in the program than have agreed. We were not given the names of inmates that declined the opportunity to participate, so UNO could not investigate the exact reasons why inmates did not want to participate. Future research should be conducted to determine the reasons why inmates are reluctant to participate in reentry and how this may be addressed in the future.

Despite the reluctance of inmates to participate, by the beginning of 2006, NDCS had identified participants and provided UNO with a list of reentry subjects based on the eligibility

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[1] The company contracted to create the risk assessment instrument should be consulted for specific details regarding the creation of, and elements included, on this tool.

criteria at that time.   Lines of communication were established between NDCS and UNO to provide up-to-date information on subject accrual.

The above information suggests that the selection of reentry participants has occurred as intended, albeit not as the original work plan indicated.   As eligibility criteria have evolved, however, it appears that the original intent of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative has been preserved.   The inmates entering the program appear to be serious and/or violent offenders at high risk for re-offending.

Support for the Reentry Program

The success of a program is not only dependent on the degree to which the program is implemented as intended but also on the support stakeholders and agency personnel have for the program itself.   For this reason, we interviewed several individuals affiliated with the reentry initiative.   A complete list of people interviewed can be seen in table in the Appendix.

Persons interviewed were asked several questions regarding their support for the reentry program both before the program was implemented in the summer of 2004 and approximately one year after the program was operational during the summer of 2006.   Questions included such things as: if and why stakeholders believed the program was needed, what they expected the program to achieve, and any comments they had to help improve program implementation and overall effectiveness.   The questions were open-ended, so stakeholders could respond in any way they felt relevant, and the interviews took approximately one half hour, on average, to complete.

The results from the first and second rounds of interviews are now presented in terms of the general conceptual themes found.

First Round Interview Results

Four general themes emerged when analyzing the results of the first round interview data collected in the summer of 2004 as the reentry program was being planned and implemented.

Goals for the Re-entry Initiative

Stakeholders interviewed for the project generally agreed on the need for a re-entry program in Nebraska. They suggested that the re-entry initiative could be successful in reducing recidivism in the state and in helping offenders reintegrate into society. Below are some comments on which this conclusion is based:

- Success to me is taking one participant and successfully reintegrating that person into society as a law-abiding citizen. Success would be keeping them crime free and making the transition easier than in the past. (Stakeholder, NDCS)
- Desired impact is that public will be safer; that serious high risk offenders will not recidivate. If this proves to be true, the public will be safer. It will result in an increase in public safety. Hopefully we will have a viable model that we can replicate in other places. (Stakeholder, NDCS)
- I would like to see each offender come away from the program a whole person, mentally and spiritually. I'd also like to see them more connected to the community. (Stakeholder, faith-based agency)
- Once clients successfully complete the program, I expect nothing but positive feedback. All of our clients want to succeed, but sometimes they default to excuses and crime because it's easier. (Stakeholder, NDCS)

Potential Obstacles for the Re-entry Initiative

Stakeholders anticipated a variety of obstacles that the re-entry initiative may encounter. They expressed concerns about whether the program would be able to meet the material and social needs of participants and about the impact of new re-entry-related policies on current staff. Stakeholders in all fields were also concerned about the potential impact of a violent crime by a re-entry participant on the public's perception of the program. Some of their comments are noted below:

- Offenders must have a job and a place to live. There is a critical window of about one

year where if you can keep the individual employed, then their chances for success are much better. …The program needs more money and needs to share that money with participants. It needs to look at meeting the needs of clients who can't get TANF or food stamps, and should provide childcare so participants can go to work. (Stakeholder, community agency)

- We need a "whole lot more" resources in the area of mental health care, medical care, and housing. (Stakeholder, NDCS)
- Internally, we lack the funds to dedicate full-time staff to the project. Current staff who are working on the initiative are not assigned to it full-time, which is a serious disservice to the project. We really need to be able to dedicate staff to it full-time. (Stakeholder, NDCS)
- If someone commits a serious crime, the public will ask why this person was out on parole. DCS will be criticized as well as the whole re-entry initiative. The increased risk of violent offenders; it's a given that someone will reoffend, and the public response to that, and how we handle it, will be the biggest problem; how far we get with the program will depend on that. (Stakeholder, NDCS)

The Role of the Public in the Initiative and the Impact of the Initiative on the Public

Although stakeholders reported mixed feelings about the initiative's impact on the public, they were optimistic that the public would have a significant opportunity to participate in the initiative.

- There will be a large impact in the target neighborhoods, because there will be a lot of clients in a small area. I expect to see neighbors very fearful. The DCS should provide community education to help with this. (Stakeholder, NDCS)
- The public has to be responsible and involved. They need to be on community boards and involved in discussions about re-entry. Ultimately, the public has "the" role. (Stakeholder, NDCS)
- If done right, this program could serve to build bonds between the community and ex-offenders. It will humanize ex-offenders and tap into the public desire to reduce recidivism. This program should be presented to the public as compassionate if we are going to win their support. (Stakeholder, faith-based agency)

The Long-Term Goals of the Re-entry Initiative

Stakeholders expressed cautious optimism regarding the future of the re-entry initiative. All expressed a desire to see the program succeed and make a positive contribution to the community. Several stated that they hoped the program would serve as a model for the rest of the state and for other states. Others indicated a desire to see the program become so

successful that it could be expanded to include other inmate populations.

- I would like to see it attain self-sustaining status and eventually grow into a separate division within the DCS. For that to happen, it needs to become instilled in our organizational culture. If this happens, it will have a trickle-down impact on the number of inmates who successfully stay out on parole and eventually have the effect of lowering the institutional population. Along with all of this, I would also like to see greater openness to the needs of re-entry clients among the stakeholders in the system. (Stakeholder, NDCS)
- We need to analyze the pilot program in Omaha, take the lessons learned, and apply it throughout the state so that every offender has the chance to take advantage of re-entry programming. (Stakeholder, NDCS)
- We would like to see new clients be better prepared for success on parole, so that we in turn can better serve these clients. (Stakeholder, NDCS)
- We're glad to see female offenders included, but we wish they were a bigger part of the program's prospective clientele. (Stakeholder, faith-based agency)
- I'd like to see the program address the high-risk offender, a chronic re-offender, rather than just the serious violent offender. These "revolving door" inmates don't get enough attention. (Stakeholder, NDCS)

As can be seen from these results, the reentry program enjoyed much support among stakeholders in NDCS and within the community. The interviewees seemed to be realistic about the possible obstacles to the reentry initiative, yet continued to be optimistic regarding its success. After the program had been in operation for a full year, we spoke with many of these same individuals again to determine if support for the program continued to exist, if their expectations had been met, and what obstacles existed for the program's success. The results of the second round of interviews can be seen below.

Second Round Interview Results

In summer of 2006, we conducted interviews with many of the same stakeholders we had previously interviewed. Given the possible influence of staff, however, in the recruitment of program participants, we added interviews with selected staff members at OCC and NCCW to the interview schedule. Our intention was to determine the level of support that existed for the

program after its implementation. Analysis of these interview data revealed three general conceptual themes, which are presented below.

Self-Sufficiency and Department-wide Implementation

The overarching sentiment amongst shareholders in the reentry initiative was a desire for self sufficiency brought about through reciprocal relations with social service and employment agencies throughout Nebraska. Although the initial parameters of the grant required certain conviction types, certain prison sentence lengths, and determined parole dates, stakeholders evidenced a desire for not only a department wide implementation of reentry programming but a paradigm shift in terms of a Corrections ideology. Evidence of this can be seen in the comments below:

- No, not because of some dewy-eyed, fuzzy liberal hug-a-thug kind of idea; this is about making the staff more effective. It involves thinking and listening and asking people what is important to them. (Staff, NDCS)
- Before Corrections did their 'thing' in the institution and parole did their 'thing,' separately, without consulting each other, once the offender was outside the institution. Now there is a growing awareness that ongoing communication should occur between both parties both for our benefit and for the inmates. (Stakeholder in the community)

In sum, in order for self sufficiency to exist beyond the grant timeline, interdepartmental differences pertaining to programming ideology and information sharing must be comprehensively addressed both in formal supervisory settings and within informal social networks.

Restorative Justice and Community Corrections

The awareness that responsibility no longer ends at "the Wall" was a recurring theme from stakeholder interviews. There was repeated emphasis on a "cultural shift" that the reentry initiative has brought about within the department; that the "cuff 'em and stuff 'em" mentality has been replaced with a "hug-a-thug" one in which comprehensive case planning proceeds

beyond the marker of time served. Crucial to this framework, as stated by an official with the Department of Correctional Services is the idea of staff as "agents of change." This involves an awareness of and proactive attention toward the social and economic factors that influence the criminality. A comment by one stakeholder reaffirms this conclusion:

- The days where our job ended at the wall were so much easier, but there is an overall consensus that fiscally and ethically the direction in which we are headed is one in which our responsibilities are more expansive but well worth the results (NDCS, Stakeholder).

This was consistently reiterated via a thematic emphasis—from Department Heads to Line Staff—toward attention for the factors that influence, or contribute to, offenders' criminal decisions. There was not a touch of frustration or disagreement with the ramifications of this "cultural shift;" but rather, a patient optimism that "the kinks will work out with time and experience (NDCS, stakeholder)." The role of community agencies and networks are a significant factor in the ironing out of these kinks, as illustrated below.

Community Support ("Cuff 'em and Stuff 'em vs. Hug-a-Thug")

There was unanimity among the shareholders, whether department heads or line staff, that one of the key ingredients to long term success of reentry is "buy-in" from the community agencies that work with Corrections staff and the inmates as they seek housing, education, employment, health care, and supportive services for themselves and their families. Related to the overall paradigm shift is an understanding of the community as a resource by virtue of the fact that there are no distinguishable barriers in the community between the criminal and the non-criminal, as seen in the comments below:

- It is more than what they can do for us and for the inmates; it is also about how we can reciprocate and about maintaining good rapport and communication. (NDCS, Stakeholder)

- We live amongst each other in the community so we have a vested interest in helping the men and women who are trying to re-enter it to become stronger and more competent parents, employees, and citizens. (Stakeholder in the community)

Interviews revealed evidence of understanding that coalition building does not occur overnight, and that it is a reciprocal process. As one stakeholder described it "We are an isolated island no longer, and old habits die hard…"

The major issues that emerge from discussion with stakeholders—from Agency and Department Heads to Case Managers and Community Activists— include: (1) the necessity of collaboration on the route to self sufficiency beyond federal oversight; (2) awareness of a growing paradigm shift within Corrections that reducing offender recidivism requires alternative approaches than simply "what has always been done"; (3) Community agencies and activists who provide services to ex-offenders are vitally important to the success of any programmatic attempts at offender reentry.

Summary of Interview Results

As can be seen in the discussions above, there was considerable support for the reentry program that continued from its inception through its first year of implementation. Once the program began operation, community stakeholders, as well as NDCS department heads and line staff, all seemed to note the paradigm shift that was occurring under the auspices of prisoner reentry—a shift from a strong focus on incapacitation to a more rehabilitative and restorative emphasis on treatment and services.   Although some correctional officers seemed less enthusiastic about this shift than department heads at NDCS, all with whom we spoke seemed to generally embrace this new correctional philosophy. This shift in correctional ideology appeared

to be particularly welcomed by community activists and stakeholders, which was evidenced in their comments regarding the need and support for the reentry initiative.

Given the support that the reentry program enjoys from NDCS personnel and community stakeholders, the implementation of specific reentry program components should have occurred with ease. We now turn to a review of program components and the degree to which the specific phases of the reentry program were implemented as intended.

Program Components and Services

Nebraska's prisoner reentry program includes three phases of service delivery. It is prudent to review the services that were planned and/or delivered during each phase of the program. We begin by reviewing the programming components being delivered in the institutional phase, Phase I, and conclude with a discussion of the activities that have surrounded the services to be delivered in Phase III.

Phase I Programming and Services

In order to establish a background for the programming offered in the re-entry program, both transition managers for the program were interviewed in the spring of 2007, approximately one year after the implementation of the program. Transition managers were asked to explain the programming offered to participants through their personalized plans, and other classes and programming for which participants are eligible. Table 3 provides an overview of the programming available, the components of the programs, the purpose of the programs, and the extent of the contact the participants have with each particular component. Although the reentry project is split into distinct Phases of I, II, and III, the programming is intended to be seamless in

nature, particularly in Phases I and II. The table below provides an overview of services that are

offered by NDCS to offenders in both Phase I and II of the reentry program.

Table 3. Overview of Phase I & II Programming

Program Title	Program Components	Purpose	Contact Hours
Mental Health GOLF Program	Behavior recognition, Cognitive Change, Change Maintenance, and Goal Setting Maintenance. Self Monitoring Skills and intervention strategies.	Behavioral and Cognitive Change	Levels I-III, 12 – 2 hour Sessions Level IIII- Individualized Sessions
SAU	Residential Treatment, Monitoring and Education	Drug Treatment and Drug Change	10 Months
NRTS	Non-Residential, Prevention and Awareness	Education	2 Times a Week, for 9 Weeks
Men and Women in Progress	Motivational Speakers, Former Inmate Speakers, and Open Discussions	Motivation and Role Model Development	Twice Monthly
NA/AA	Weekly meetings	Relapse Prevention and Support Development	Weekly
Education	GED's and College Courses	Academic Development	1 to 3 Days, for 1 to 1 ½ hours Weekly
Victims Awareness		Empathy Development	9 Weeks
Wrap Sessions	Discussion of Progress in Programming With Transition Managers		Once at the end of the month

Mental Health services were the first that transition managers described when asked

about the programming that was available to the re-entry participants. One of the managers

stated, "As for mental health, there is the GOLF program. I'm not really sure what the letters

stand for, but it includes behavioral recognition in the first stage, cognitive work in the second,

they work on change in the third stage and work on maintaining the change, and the maintenance

of the change and goal setting are worked on in the fourth stage." The second transition manager

explained "most of the participants complete the first two stages of GOLF, if not all of them. But if they haven't completed them, they are at least on the list when they enter into the program."

Substance Abuse Treatment programs are a second required area for the re-entry participants on their personalized plans. According to the transition managers there are two different substance abuse treatment programs to which the re-entry participants are assigned. The first is the Substance Abuse Unit (SAU), which is a residential treatment program, in which there is no contact with the general prison population. Participants complete SAU in an average of 10 months. SAU monitors the participants and educates them on alcohol and drug use, and stress relapse prevention. The second program is the non-residential treatment service (NRTS) that works with participants on prevention and awareness of the issues of drugs and alcohol. NRTS is a one day per week, nine week course.

A third program discussed by the managers was Men/Women In Progress. Men/Women in Progress is a group-session-oriented program that meets twice a month. All of the male and female participants in the three phases come together is sex-specific groups to discuss issues that affect their chances of remaining crime free. The program brings in motivational speakers to discuss how to maintain change. Former inmates also come to speak to participants about their situations, including what has been helpful and harmful to their own process, so the current inmates can learn from them. One transition manager stated,

> They seem to really like it when we have these meetings and bring in the ex-felons to talk
> with them. We try to keep it fresh with different people coming in. We work on having
> some religious classes, but we have to be open to some of them not wanting to
> participate. We also supply mentors for these guys also. These mentors come in at least
> once a month to help establish connections with the outside and gain support.

Along with the programming that is part of the personalized plan, the transition managers stated that the participants at the Community Corrections Center were offered the opportunity to participate in an after-care program, anger management courses, job placement and job services, Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous, and GED course work. The transition managers appeared quite enthusiastic about the programming and services being offered to participants. Of equal importance were transition managers' perceptions regarding the degree to which offenders were involved in these programs.

Managers' Assessments of Involvement

To address perceptions of the involvement of the Re-entry participants in the programs, three areas were investigated; the contact with participants, the performance evaluations conducted on participants, and the support given to the participants. One of the transition managers stated "We have contact with each of the participants at an end of the month meeting, where we talk to them about what has been going on in the last month, their progress in the programming and we give them a chance to bring up new ideas for the program." The other transition manager expanded further with these statements:

> We have an open office policy and the guys know that they can come to us about anything we make sure that they can reach us at anytime and we'll do what we can. We are also there for them at custody changes and any hearings that they may have to go to. We also get to drive them to job interviews and other visitations that they need to go to.

When addressing the participants that were in Phase I of the program, being housed at the Omaha Correctional Center, the transition managers continued to explain, " we want to keep our office open to the participants so they can come to us to address the issues that may be bothering them, or if they are having trouble on the yard. We definitely are there to be supportive." The

transition managers appear to have much contact with participants in Phase I of the reentry program.

To explore the means by which the progress of the participants was measured, the managers were asked to elaborate on their participant evaluations, "Performance evaluations are done at the end of each month. We look for the number of programs completed for each participant. However, completion of programming is not tracked before they have been in for 6 months. This gives them time to get acclimated to the people, programs, and getting into the swing of things." The managers also stated that support was the key piece to the re-entry puzzle. They continued to express, "The re-entry program provides the supportive tool for these people to complete the programs and we are there to help them get on the right track through our open communication, opening new windows of opportunity to kick habits and reshape thoughts, by providing mentors, and bringing in people that have been in their position and have made it. We are definitely their supportive back bone in this process." These comments by transition managers suggest that evaluation of participants' successful completion of programming is solely dependent on transition managers' subjective assessments, and that they are intricately involved with keeping participants on a path to success.

The final area of interest was the managers perceptions of the participants' involvement in the programming, one manager stated, "There's a pretty high compliance rate. Most of the members participate because they know they are in a good program. There are very few who don't participate, but we will work with them to straighten things out before they are kicked out of the program. We will make sure that we are doing our job and help them get back in the game." UNO researchers were given no quantitative data concerning the degree to which

participants regularly attend and complete programming, but these comments suggest that compliance with personalized programming is perceived to be high.

Summary of Findings for the evaluation of Phase I Programming and Services

Our interviews with transition managers revealed several factors about Phase I programming and perceptions of participation. First, our interview results suggested that personalized plans had indeed been constructed for every inmate in the program, which was one planned requirement for Phase I. It also appears that NDCS has created and implemented programs to allow inmates to successfully complete their personalized plans. Last, transition managers report a high degree of compliance with this programming on the part of participants. To this end, NDCS has implemented Phase I of the reentry program as intended. There is, however, one exception worth noting.

The prisoner reentry plan was intended to match the limited resources of NDCS to offenders with specific needs. In other terms, the personalized plans that are created for inmates in Phase I are intended to individualize treatment in such a way that every offender is not encouraged to participate in every program available. Specific offender needs were to be assessed, and those needs were to be matched to specific programs. Some offenders may receive substance abuse services, while others may not, depending on the nature of offenders' specific criminogenic tendencies. In our research, we compared the list of the programs available in the re-entry program and the programs in which participants were enrolled, as stated on their personalized plans. All participants were enrolled in the same three areas of re-entry programming; mental health, substance abuse treatment, and education, leaving little to demonstrate that the personalized reentry plans for inmates were truly personalized.

Participants in phase I of the program may be involved in parenting classes or anger management courses, but often these services were not listed on offenders' personalized plan, whereas virtually all personalized plans listed the same services for every inmate participating in the program. The personalized plans that are developed for the participants when they enter into the program appear to include the areas in which all members of the re-entry program are required to take part,, which does not seem to address the intention of matching individual offender needs with limited program availability in NDCS. It is possible that offenders' assessments revealed that all program participants had a need for the same level of substance abuse and mental health programming. UNO researchers were not given the needs assessments of program participants, so the degree to which this is the case remains unknown. NDCS, however, should conduct further investigation into the assessment of needs for program participants and the way in which personalized reentry plans are constructed to ensure that the limited programming resources of the NCDS are not being exhausted by inmates who have not demonstrated a specific need for these services.

Phase II Programming and Services

As stated previously, the services offered in Phase II are virtually the same as those offered in Phase I in order to provide a continuity of care to reentering inmates. We, therefore, focused our examination on transition managers' contact with participants, the performance evaluations conducted, and the support given to the participants. We found that the contact transition managers had with the participants in Phase II was somewhat different compared to the contact they had with Phase I participants.

The managers described their interaction with the work release participants as follows "for those on work release, we have contact with their case workers to address any issues that

may have risen. We also have our once a month meetings, or sometimes on an as needed basis, but we try to meet at least once a month. We also are there if they have supervised visits and we conduct reports from the records of their case managers."

They also added,

> We also see them twice a month at Men In Progress, so we are able to get a hold of them then for the monthly visits. We also help them by driving them to job hunt, to obtain certificates including driver's license and birth certificates. But we normally see them at Men in progress.

When the participants reach the community stage of Phase II the contact with the transition managers again changes. One manager explained:

> The participants have most of their contact with their parole officers. If there is an issue then we most likely hear from the parole officer. We are available for after hours if they need someone to talk to, I always have my cell phone on in case someone needs some help at any time of night. We've also helped them get settled in the contract housing, and in job searches. By this time, they are pretty self sufficient, but we are there to help out if they need it."

Despite this less frequent contact with Phase II participants, transition managers continued to evaluate participants' performance in their programming and reported a high level of compliance with programming requirements.

Summary of Findings for the evaluation of Phase II Programming and Services

From transition managers' comments, we can conclude that transition managers have less contact with program participants as they precede from phase I to phase II. There is much direct contact on a regular basis with the phase I members, a lighter regiment for the participants on work release at CCCO, and an independent focus on the contact with the members of phase II that are on parole in the community. The managers also explain that they are evaluating the

participants on a regular basis regardless of Phase and report a high compliance rate with the participation of the members.

Phase III Programming and Services

Recall that Phase III of the reentry program begins as offenders emerge from parole and are no longer under the control of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS). At this time, with the help of transition managers and teams, offenders are expected to have fulfilled their basic survival needs of employment and shelter and found services in the community to address their substance abuse, physical health, or mental health needs. In order to assist offenders in finding community support, NDCS intended to build partnerships with other state agencies and local community service providers.

To date, no offenders in the reentry program have reached Phase III, so it is not possible to assess the degree to which effective partnerships were formed or if inmates are receiving services from these partners. Nor is it possible to determine the degree to which Phase III of the reentry program has been implemented as intended. UNO researchers did, however, gather data on the preparation of this phase and NDCS's efforts to initially create these partnerships, which are discussed below.

Planning and Preparing for Phase III

NDCS recognized that they could not facilitate inmates' reentry back into society alone. They would need the help of both other government agencies and private service providers. In terms of obtaining support from other governmental entities, NDCS noted that Nebraska was challenged in terms of inter-agency cooperation, as are many states. With this in mind, NDCS established a meeting strategy for creating partnerships across agencies and within the community. First, they established a state-wide steering committee and began holding quarterly

meetings to discuss the goals and progress of the reentry program. The list of government agencies invited to participate on this steering committee includes:

- Health and Human Services
- Probation
- Parole Board
- Community Corrections Council
- Department of Labor
- State Patrol
- University of Nebraska at Omaha
- Omaha Police Department
- Douglas County Department of Health
- Douglas County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

At the same time, the department also began holding a series of town hall meetings, inviting about 16 to 25 organizations to participate. In addition, to these town hall meetings, the assistant Director of corrections also made personal appearances at faith-based organizational meetings. All of these efforts were intended to help gain support for the reentry program and create partnerships to better facilitate offenders' return to society.

In order to begin to facilitate inter-agency collaboration, the Director of Correctional Services sent out letters of intent to the heads of the aforementioned government agencies, which requested representatives for the reentry program's steering committee. A steering committee was assembled, and the first committee meeting was held almost 3 years before the first reentry program participant would make parole.

The initial steering committee meetings suggested much promise in creating collaborative relationships across agencies, as most invited agencies sent representatives and attendance was high. The conversation among meeting participants suggested a high degree of enthusiasm about the reentry program. After these initial meetings, however, participation began to wane. By the 3rd steering committee meeting, it became clear which agencies were willing to

participate in the program with the corrections department. For example, law enforcement agencies at both the state and local level consistently attended meetings and contributed to planning discussions, as did members of the parole board and the community corrections council. There were also several members of the department of corrections that regularly attended steering committee meetings, such as administrators from various correctional institutions and parole.

By the 2nd year of steering committee meetings, representatives from health and human services, department of labor, and state patrol no longer attended meetings regularly. Parole board representatives also began coming to the meetings infrequently. At the last steering committee meeting in June of 2006, there were no more than 4 people in attendance, which included representatives from the department of corrections and the community corrections council. To date, state-wide steering committee meetings have been suspended.

In sum, the series of steering committee meetings fostered few relationships across state agencies, but had better luck creating partnerships with local governmental organizations. NDCS developed successful partnerships with the Omaha Police department, the parole board, and the community corrections council. These agencies are still actively working to facilitate prisoner reentry by providing inmates with the opportunity for parole, providing electronic monitoring of released inmates, and helping corrections identify other services in the Omaha area.

NDCS had better luck in forming partnerships with private and faith-based organizations than they had building collaborative relationships with other government agencies,. The department sponsored a series of four town hall meetings in the spring and summer of 2004, approximately 2 years before the 1st reentry participant would make parole. These meetings

were organized around either specific groups or specific needs of returning inmates, for example one general meeting was held for faith-based groups, one was dedicated to discussing housing, one explored employment, and one invited substance abuse treatment providers. Attendance was quite high for the first 2 meetings, with virtually every invited organization represented. Department representatives delivered a short power point presentation on the need for the program, and its vision and goals after which the floor was open to questions. Participation in the discussion of the program was quite high, with several questions about the program and timeline. Three themes quickly emerged from these town hall meetings: questions about funding, a distrust of NDCS among community members, and an animosity toward UNO for receiving the funds to evaluate the process and outcomes of the reentry program.

Representatives from community service providers often asked corrections personnel how much funding was available for providing services to returning inmates. When it was explained that no money from the reentry grant could be used for direct service delivery (only for evaluation), the questions and comments from participants became more curt and hostile. Some invited guests quit participating in the meeting, and clearly wanted no part of prisoner reentry unless money was involved for their organization. It is possible that some invited participants viewed the reentry program as simply another way for them to fund their organization. When this was not the case, they simply withdrew their participation. It is also possible that some organizations simply did not want to take on a larger workload without receiving some compensation. Regardless of the reason, once the potential for funding was dispelled, some community organizations no longer participated in town hall meetings.

As for the issue of distrust of NDCS, several questions were posed about how this program would be different than any other conducted in the past, how quickly would the

program fade away, and why corrections had never solicited nor wanted input into program delivery from outside the department in the past. Corrections personnel handled this animosity by explaining the philosophical shift NDCS was undertaking, and acknowledging the error of their past ways. This seemed to appease community members' resentment of NDCS's exclusion of their organizations in previous program initiatives.

Finally, dissatisfaction with UNO's being selected to evaluate the re-entry program was an issue. Some organizations felt more qualified and deserving of the funding and suggested that there was some bias against them by the corrections department. On a few occasions, community members wrote letters to the Director of NDCS asking for justification for why their organization was not considered when contracting for reentry evaluation services. Corrections personnel explained that the university was the best equipped to conducted an evaluation of this magnitude. They also explained that the university was available to help organizations identify possible funding sources and help them write proposals so they too could participate in the reentry initiative, but to date, no organization has taken advantage of this opportunity.

Despite the animosity toward NDCS and UNO, NDCS did find willing partners from these meetings with which to facilitate community services for returning offenders. These partnerships were furthered by the personal appearances of the assistant director of NDCS at faith-based organizational meetings. These appearances had a much different purpose than town hall meetings. Rather than soliciting help and possible partnerships with the community, the personal appearances were intended as public relations, meant to gain local community support for the prisoner reentry program. These appearances were generally well attended and the assistant director was well-received. Based on their comments, it seemed that local community members accepted the reentry program and appreciated being given information.

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In all, the results of the town hall meetings and personal appearances fostered at least 4 collaborative working relationships that, to date, have offered housing to returning inmates, helped them find employment, and provided them with education and vocational training despite the lack of funding available for these services. The partnerships that have been created thus far between agencies and organizations and NDCS, however, have all had a funding component.

Although the initial reentry grant from DOJ did not allow funding to be used for service delivery, NDCS helped agencies apply for funding for reentry elsewhere. The corrections department itself applied for separate funding for substance abuse counseling, which will pay for the services provided by health and human services. The department helped 2 faith-based groups secure funding to house offenders, (New Creations to house male offenders and Compassion in Action to house females). The department currently contracts with Metropolitan Community College in Omaha for offenders' educational services in the institutions, so this service is being extended to returning offenders.

If NDCS wishes to continue creating and maintaining partnerships with community program providers, the challenge will be to find a way to maintain these partnerships after their current funding expires. Another challenge for NDCS will be to maintain some level of enthusiasm for the reentry program from both state and community organizations and correctional staff. After three years of planning Phase III of this program, participation in reentry meetings is starting to wane and some have started to question whether the reentry program will ever be fully realized as promised. It is possible that corrections set about creating partnerships and finding services for inmates too far out from when offenders would actually need the services that private agencies had to offer. To date, there is no empirical research from which to draw to help guide the process of building and maintaining collaborative relationships.

To this end, NDCS had no information from which to draw to determine how long it would take to build community partnerships or what it would take to maintain them. The lesson for the future appears to be to find the optimum length of time needed between involving community partners in the reentry program and offenders actually accessing the services.

The last observation to be made from the planning activities surrounding Phase III is that there are still services that offenders will need when returning to the community that are not currently provided. For example, once offenders leave the community corrections center and begin parole, their transportation to work, home, and scheduled treatment appointments is still in question. Family reunification counseling and services have not yet been addressed, and NDCS has yet to determine if offenders will be able to obtain their medications after they leave the institution. There is still much to do in the planning of Phase III, but it appears that NDCS has made significant progress in creating the partnerships needed to enable a seamless transition of services for offenders as they leave NDCS control and begin their lives as law-abiding citizens.

Program Participants' Perceptions of the Reentry Program

Although there are currently no participants that have entered Phase III of the reentry program, there are offenders currently participating in Phase I and II. Since UNO researchers have found that services are being delivered to these inmates, it was important to determine their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the services being offered. We, therefore, interviewed the offenders in the reentry program in the spring of 2007. The details of the sample of offenders interviewed can be seen in Table 4.

The final sample of respondents included six males from the Omaha Correctional Center, nine males from Phase II at the Omaha Community Corrections Center, one female from the

Women's Correctional Center in York and three females in Phase II. As this is a program that is constantly adding participants, the final sample number was determined on the day of the first interview with the transition managers. However, during the interview time frame, four participants in the parole stage of phase II left the program and two phase I participants were terminated from the program. Because four of the nine phase II participants quit during this research, in-depth information from this group of participants is lacking.

Table 4. Reentry Participants Interviewed*

	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Sex			
Males	6 (86%)	9 (75%)	
Females	1 (14%)	3 (25%)	
Total	7	12	
Race/Ethnicity			
White	3 (43%)	4 (33.3%)	
Black	3 (43%)	7 (58.3%)	
Hispanic			
Other	1 (14%)	1 (8.3%)	
Total	7	12	
Mean Age			
Males	23.5	26.3	
Females	23	25.3	
Crime Type			
Robbery w/ weapon	2 (28.5%)	3 (25%)	
Assault 1st degree		1 (8.3%)	
2nd Degree	2 (28.5%)	1 (8.3%)	
Burglary	2 (28.5%)	1 (8.3%)	
Possession of Narcotics w/ intent to sell	1 (14.5%)	4 (33.5%)	
Murder		1 (8.3%)	
Manslaughter		1 (8.3%)	
Total	7	12	

*As of June 2007

This aspect of our research primarily addresses the participants and the programming in Phase I of the Nebraska re-entry program. As the Nebraska program had only transitioned a small number of its Phase I participants to the second, community-based, phase, the conclusions of this research primarily address institutional-based programming and inmate perceptions. However, the participants in Phase II were included in the final sample and themes and conclusions are identified for the Phase II participants as well.

We interviewed program participants, using open-ended questions, with two primary research questions in mind: what do inmates perceive they will need to live a crime-free life when they emerge from prison, and how do the services they are currently receiving comply with these perceived needs? The planning of services for Phase I and II of the reentry program largely occurred without consultation with inmates. It is possible that the services that inmates feel they need is very different from the services that NDCS has chosen to provide. Our interviews with participants were intended to identify any disconnect between the perceived needs of inmates and services being offered as well as to explore the effectiveness of programs delivered.

The interview questions posed to program participants can be found in the Appendix. Generally, inmates were asked, "What do you think you need to live a crime free life outside of prison?" "Have these needs been addressed in your time in the re-entry program? Which ones, and how so?" "What needs have not been addressed in the program, and why?" These questions addressed the actual programming and services that have or have not been provided to the participants based on what they perceived as their needs.

To explore if the participants are actually benefiting from the re-entry programming they are receiving, several questions were posed such as: "Have you found these programs to be helpful? Why or why not?", "Do you have any suggestions for programs to add or eliminate?", and "What ways can the existing programming you have participated in be improved?".

In order to derive the conclusions from the open-ended questions of the inmate interviews, conceptual ordering was used. Conceptual ordering is the organization of data into categories based on the properties and description of the information (Strauss & Corbin 1998), which ultimately was used to develop key themes. These themes became our final conclusions as to the extent that the programming the Department of Correctional Services meets the expectations and needs of the program participants themselves.

Results of the Interviews with Program Participants

The following results pertain to respondents' views about their participation and overall opinions of the re-entry program. The data are grouped into perceptions of need, perceptions of programming, attitudes towards change, and overall opinions.

Perceptions of Need

When asked to address the programming, services, skills, or material items that the program participants believed they need to live a crime-free life when they emerge from prison, a variety of responses were provided. However, there were several key themes that were identified, which include education, a job, time management skills, maintaining cognitive change, or positive influences and support groups.

Education was expressed by the respondents as being integral to their success of remaining crime free on their return to their community. One respondent stated that "I think that

getting an education is really important. Without getting some schooling, there is a less chance of me being successful in the change that I'm trying to do." Another respondent addressed the issue by saying, "education is really important, even if it is just giving you skills for a certain trade or making you more book smart. With it there are a lot more possibilities."

Having stated that getting a better education will lead to better skills, several respondents noted that obtaining more education will lead to obtaining a better job. One respondent stated, "There aint no way that I'm gunna get a good job without gettin more education skills. All I'm gunna be endin up doin is flippin damn burgers at McDonalds or Burger King without it. So my GED is good and all, but I need to get on top of some college courses to get the kind of job I can get by on." Several other respondents mirrored this sentiment;

> Without a good education, I'll be right back where I was, with no real job that is going to take me anywhere. If I get some more training on how to be educated and act educated then I can convince myself that I actually can get a real good job. Then maybe I won't even be tempted to commit a new crime.

> I want to continue my education, maybe get set up with Metro Tech and get an associates degree. I know that being an ex-con isn't going to help me get a great job, but if I have some more school courses under my belt, then I can maybe get a good one.

The acquisition and maintenance of full time employment was a second emphasis area for the needs of the respondents. The majority (65%) of the respondents stated that maintaining a full time job was a key need to remaining crime free. As one respondent summarized, "Without a full time job I won't have the monetary assets to pay my bills and get back on my feet when I get out. If I get one and keep one, then I'll be much more likely to keep clean and keep my nose in good things."

Along with maintaining a full time position to retain earnings, some respondents also saw employment as a time management tool. "If I have a full time job that I go to every day,

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Monday through Friday, maybe even a little on the weekends, then I am keeping busy and keeping myself out of trouble. I know that the more free time that I have on my hands, the more likely that I could do something stupid. But if I keep busy, then that is less likely to happen. That's why I need a full time job," stated one participant. Two other participants felt similarly about maintaining employment as a time management tool;

> I definitely need a schedule to keep my self busy and on the right track. If I have a good job that I enjoy going to everyday, then can use that to take up the free time that I used to have; the time that got me in trouble.

> I used to sit around bored all day when I was out, so to get some entertainment I'd take a little adventure. If I have something to take up my time, like a real job, then it will keep me off the streets and I won't have to go on adventures anymore, at least not criminal ones.

Along similar lines, and as mentioned in the previous responses, change must occur for successful transition into the community. Cognitive change was highly regarded as a need for living crime free. Correcting and re-aligning criminal thought processes is a main concern of the mental health courses. One participant stated, "I have to keep working on the cognitive changes that I have made here. I realize now that I can change, but it's going to take a little bit more than what I was giving before, and I am needing and wanting more when I get out." One other respondent expressed;

> I think that mental preparation is over 90% of the battle to stay straight on the outside. We have been working here to change our thoughts, and if I keep my mind in the right place, I'm gunna be alright.

Part of maintaining mental preparation and changes in cognitive processes is allowing oneself to be surrounded with positive people, positive environments, and supportive groups. "I need to be around positive people and positive things to rub off on me and to teach me how to be a good and positive person and member of the community." Statements like this show the

perception that by simply surrounding themselves with positive people, they too will do positive

things. When respondents talked about this need, there seemed to be a real desire to fulfill it.

> If I want to be a better person and a better father, then I have to be a better person. I really want to be a better person and do good things with my life. I know that if I keep my connections with people that are doing positive things for themselves and others around them, then I can know that I can do that too.

> My support group has given me a lot of positive feedback and is keeping me on the right track now. Without them I don't think that I'd have made it as far as I have. I definitely need to maintain their support in the future.

Other needs were also expressed by individual participants, including obtaining a driver's

license, obtaining transportation, and assistance with paying past due child support. After

addressing their primary needs, respondents were also asked to explain how their needs were

being addressed in the re-entry program. Most of the respondents (85%) reported that their

needs had been addressed in the program. As one participant stated, "They have addressed

everything in every meeting, as to the what, the how, and the why we need or should do

something. They motivate you to be successful in living crime and drug free, and helping you to

take the steps to be where you want to be."

Respondents were then asked to explain if any of their needs had not been addressed

during their time in the program. An overwhelming majority (80%) of the participants

responded that there was nothing that was not being addressed and were quite confident that they

were getting what they needed from the program; however, a few respondents did not feel the

same.

> I haven't had much visitation with my children; I wish that would be addressed. I have also noticed that the program is only focused on the individual, but I think that they should try and focus more on the others that in the lives of the participants. We aren't alone in our struggles, we are trying to get better for them, so I think that should be included. That's something that I need when I get out and it's not being addressed.

My medical issues have not been addressed. I need to think about what I am going to do when I leave here and there hasn't been anything done to help me find a counselor or even how to find a good doctor where we're going to live. I wish that they'd help more with these kind of issues.

After examining the program participants' perceptions of their needs for living a crime free life upon return to their community, we can see that there are needs for education, maintaining full time employment, time management tools, maintaining cognitive change, and positive surroundings and support groups. It was also suggested that these needs have been met; however, there were other, less main-stream needs that were not addressed for a few of the respondents. Through this look at the perceptions of need and the fulfillment of these needs by the program, we can now look more extensively at the programming in which the inmates are eligible to participate.

Perceptions of Programming

Program participation is, in large part, the core of the re-entry program. To address participants' perceptions of this issue, participants were asked if they felt they were receiving the programming and services they were promised at the time they entered the program. Every respondent stated that "yes" they perceived that they had or would be receiving the services that they were promised. One respondent asked, "I think so, unless I have been lied to. Do you know if I've been lied to? Just kidding, I know that I have completed everything off my personalized plan, and I'm still receiving more programs on top of that. So I know that is a yes to your question."

The participants' personalized plans were obtained through consent from the individual participant. The personalized plans were then compared to the interview responses for the

question of the programming and services in which they had participated. This was done to reaffirm participants' perceptions of their contracted programming and assess the full implementation of reentry services. The direct comparisons uncovered that an overwhelming majority (95%) of participants' responses matched the obtained personalized plans.

More importantly, it is necessary to assess if the program participants perceive the programs to be helpful in their transition to the community. In the process of discussing this question, several programs were identified as being most helpful; mental health programs, the drug treatment programs, Narcotics Anonymous, and Work Attitudes and Behaviors.

One of the main purposes of the mental health courses is to work on changing the thought processes of the individuals from criminal to lawful. Several participants perceived this program as being quite helpful. One participant stated, "Yep, mental health helped me work on my trust issues, thought patterns, and to change my process of thinking. I am able to ask question to get the in-depth answers that I need to get them answered. This will all help me be able to use what I learn to keep straight back on the streets."

The mental health program, GOLF, includes behavior consequences lessons to identify the need to step back and think before acting. This was also perceived by participants as an important and helpful part of the mental health programming. One participant stated, "GOLF led me to think about my thought process and work on taking it from negative to positive. It's changed because I think before I act now. I don't have to get mad right away, I let myself think about what I should be instead of just getting mad and hittin' someone." Other respondents mirrored this statement;

> GOLF helped me most. It taught me to think before you act. It showed things in everyday life and how I can change to live a better day to day life. It also create a foundation of work patterns that help for future long term change. It also taught me to

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improve my communication skills with others and being respectful to them and myself. It taught me that everyone is not an enemy. I can now approach a situation having thought through the consequences before I act. That's what really helped.

The mental health and cognitive thought process training helped me a lot. I can think about the consequences of my actions now, when before I didn't, I just did what I knew best which meant violence. I am not the same person because of the program and I am really appreciative for all the help that it gave me.

Along with the helpfulness of the mental health services, drug treatment services were also viewed as helpful in creating positive change of the participants. In regards to the residential treatment program, SAU, several participants felt that the program had changed their life forever. One participant stated, "SAU was the best thing that's ever happened to me. It has helped me change the way that I think about things. It includes cognitive exercises, how to maintain this thought process once we get out, and we talk a lot about relapse prevention. I am pretty scared that once I get out I might relapse, but I know that if I work on what SAU has taught me then I'll be ok." Other participants used similar notions in describing SAU's helpfulness;

SAU forced me to look at my life at other's views. I could see what to change to not go back to where I was when I came into the corrections system.

SAU gave me a new way of thinking about my drug problem. You are there in the residential program for so long that there isn't any chance that I couldn't have changed. We were forced to see that we do have a problem and that it is affecting more than just our state of mind for a high. It breaks you down and builds you back up in a different way of thinking. I know that it has really helped me, for the long haul.

The non-residential drug treatment program was also seen as beneficial to one participant, "NRTS changed my ways of using drugs and alcohol. I am more aware of the dangers and the aftermath of taking drugs. It's a real helpful program, and it gives you lots of information to help you make good choices." Although some found this program helpful, there were two participants that did not agree and stated, "NRTS in the first level gives you

educational information on drug types and the effects and reasons to not take drugs and how it can lead to no good, but I already knew all of that. I didn't find those classes to be helpful at all" and "NRTS was no helpfulness and I didn't see any use for the course, if I have to be positive it was alright, but really it wasn't. It's only helpful if you want to change or want it to be helpful. I don't take drugs but I had to be in it, I didn't have any need for it, it was pretty much boring."

After the drug treatment courses are completed, the participants are required to attend weekly Narcotics Anonymous meetings. A vast majority (70%) of the participants felt the program was helpful, and two participants had much to say about the program. One expressed, "NA was helpful because it includes my circle of friends so we can keep each other accountable to remain drug free while we are in and also when we get out. It helps me build stronger relationships with my friends and the other inmates that are going through the same things as me." Another participant states, "Narcotics Anonymous allows me to share and relate to the other people that are coming to the meetings. It also lets me feel a strong fellowship with other people that are going through what I have been going through. I was asked to lead the meetings which made me step up, take on responsibility, and help in coping with my addiction. It's maybe the most worthwhile thing that I have done while I've been in the program."

With some of the participants perceiving that fellowships and friendships are helpful in their transitional process, there is one program that brings all of the participants together to communicate and relate to each other and other ex-inmates. Men In Progress was highly regarded by many of the respondents (83%), resulting in responses such as, "Men In Progress allows me to relate to those that are coming in to talk to us. I can speak my mind and others can do the same. We talk about a lot of different topics that will affect us while we are still in and when we get out. It is good that we can talk to others that have been through it, they can guide

us on what not to do and give us pointers on things that are hard to avoid when we get out, so that we can prepare before we get there. They give us a better chance of making it" and "The guys that come in to talk to us are real helpful in answering our questions about what it's like getting out and stayin' straight. The motivational speakers are pretty good too, they help us keep a positive mindset and keep us believing that it's mind over matter and that we can succeed. I really like the time that I spend in Men In Progress."

Women In Progress is a similar set of bi-monthly meetings that are set up for the female re-entry participants. The female version also includes ex-inmates and other motivational speakers, but it brings in speakers to explore issues that expressly address female health and safety. One respondent stated, "Women In Progress has allowed me to hear women come in from Planned Parenthood and talk about awareness of my health, giving us good information of STD's, and talk about men's and women's issues through them using surveys and slides. The domestic violence classes were hard to follow, but none-the-less helpful. I think that the time that they take to come out here is worthwhile for us and for them." Other female participants stated;

> Women In Progress has been helpful because these women that come talk have been in my shoes and they understand where I've come from. They are supportive in the change that I want to make for my future. By just knowing I can talk to these women about anything, knowing where I've been, and definitely not acting like a counselor but more like a comfort and encouragement for having to do things that I don't want to do. I am very comfortable talking to these women and it is fun to go to these meetings, cause I learn a lot because they make it so comfortable.

> Women In Progress has shown me that there is hope for me. I know that I have been working to change my life while I have been in the re-entry program, but I think that in knowing that these women have made it, are happy and are doing good things with their life, I know that it is possible for me too.

One of the needs that the participants expressed as crucial to their successful transition to a crime free life was maintaining full time employment. The program that is designed to assist in this process is Work Attitudes and behaviors. Participants perceived the services that this program offers to be helpful. Participants stated;

> Work attitudes is a good tool for finding a job before we leave prison. It gives you all the necessary help with the steps to get a good job, so we can try to stay out of trouble when we get out.

> Work attitudes and behaviors helps with the start of pre-release, it also teaches you about resumes, how to write a cover letter, helps us with interviewing skills by bringing in a lady to do mock interviews with us and to help us to improve on making a good impression on the people we want to work for, helping us know what is appropriate dress for the interview, helping us keep our communicating skills good. It also showed me that I need to continue with my college credits.

Along with helping in the processes of writing resumes, writing cover letters, and interviewing skills, the program also brings in the opportunity for the participants to study and prepare for taking the CDL test in order to be a delivery driver.

> There's a man that comes in and he helps us get ready to take our CDL test so we can work for his company and be delivery drivers. He gives us the training packets and he helps us study so we can pass the test. It really helps me to know that I actually can get a job outside.

> When I need to get a job, the work program has helped through listing places to work and bringing in the CDL training class and giving us study stuff and prep for the test when we are released.

In addition to their perceptions of what programming is helpful, the respondents also expressed areas of programming that could be improved to make the program more relevant. The primary area of interest in this section of the interview was the size of the group of participants. The participants stated that the program was very small and that the program could be improved by increasing the number of participants in the program, "We need to get more people into the program. I look forward to going to Men In Progress, but there are just not that

many people in the program and it would only help us to have more guys to support each other. The more people you have rooting for you and keeping you accountable would only benefit the success of the program and us participants." Other participants concurred with the need for more participants and offered suggestions;

> I think that there should be a wider age range of people in the program. I know that there is an age limit, but I think that there are older people that ask me about the program and want to know how they can get in and better themselves like I have gotten to. I don't see how it could hurt they aren't any different than me, except they were born years before me.

> The program should be offered to a wider range of inmates. I think that it should not only just include first time offenders, but it should look to include those that are older or those that have several hits. I think that there is a better chance for change if these guys were allowed in, they are older, wiser and have more capacity to truly want to change after being in for so long. I think that would better the program.

Along with more participants, improvements were suggested for more accountability in terms of participation compliance. One participant stated, "They need to keep everyone in the program involved in the activities of the program. I don't think that there are enough people willing to do everything that the program offers, and that brings down the morale of the group, cause they don't want to participant when we ask them. It's really frustrating when I want to take every opportunity to better myself through the program and they're just sitting back doing the minimum to get by. Frustrating." Another respondent stated;

> We need to include more get-to-know-you activities at our meetings. It's hard when there is someone new in the program and they just sit in the back and get lost in the crowd for a while until finally they make the effort to jump in. If we are supposed to be the brotherhood that we talk about, then we need to get the interaction with the new guys as soon as they enter the program to make them feel welcome and start their process on a good note.

> I don't know why we can't have more time and more conversations with the participants that are in SAU. They have to be separated on the yard, and we can't even get to know them while they are in treatment, even though they are in the re-entry program. I think

that we should get more interaction with all the participants, regardless of that treatment program they are in.

There was also a perceived need for more programs. "There just needs to be more classes, programs, meetings available to us. I have completed all of my personalized plan, and I'm still going to be in the program for a while longer, there just needs to be more to do," stated one participant. Another expressed that the programming was too past focused, "Put the focus on the future. I know that I have done some bad things in my past, but I have come to terms with them and I think that the program keeps bringing them back up and it's not helping me with working towards changing my future. If they keep rehashing our bad pasts, we aren't going to be able to get past them and move on to change for the better. That definitely needs to be improved."

Men in Progress was one program for which a few respondents had suggestions. "Cut down on the time that we sit in Men In Progress or else just make it worth while for us to be there. I have to take time off my work assignment for these meetings and all we do is sit around and talk about bull shit. None of these guys can know my situation, yeah they can try, but all they talk about is bull shit nothing. I haven't gone the last few times because I'm sick of it, nothing about it is worth while for me." Three other participants felt that one particular guest speaker should be eliminated;

> They know that none of us like the police, they are the reason that we were caught. I just don't see why we have to sit in a room with them and have to talk with them.

> I just don't get why the police have to come talk to us. I don't like them and they don't like me. They come in telling us that we are going to be supportive of you when you get out, but I know that they don't mean it. They have been against me from the time I was little, and them coming in here isn't going to change my attitude. I just think that that should be left out.

I think that the interrogation by the police needs to be eliminated. I don't see why they should have contact with us to the extent that they do. They are our support on the outside, right, but they have the chance to interrogate us and are trying to find out too much about is and try to get into our lives. They are trying to know where we hang out, where we like to eat, and what we are doing during our days. They don't need to know all that. I think that should be taken out.

Other participants felt that residing at the community correction center limited them on the programming that they received;

Just get more interaction and meetings for us over here at CCCO. We go to Men In Progress two times a month and then that's all we do. We just waste our time sitting around the rest of the month. We just aren't getting anything out of the program over here.

I don't get why there is so much available for them over in custody, and we get dropped over here with nothing. At least have the transition managers come over here once in a while and meet with us, I don't think that I see them but the two times we go over to custody a month. I think that they forget about us. It's pretty boring to be in the program, if it weren't for the year of housing rent free, I wouldn't be in the program anymore.

Housing was another area for which a couple inmates felt needed improvement. "There needs to be a meeting of the guys that are going to be living in the house. Sure we were in the program together, but we didn't have to actually live that close together. I think we need to get together and discuss arrangements, so there aren't issues later" expressed by one respondent. Another stated, "They need to change the neighborhood that the halfway house is located in. It is a really bad neighborhood; the guys down there just got robbed last week. They say that they want to help us change, but they are sending us back to the same fucking shitty neighborhood. How's that supposed to better our living situation? I lived in a better place before I got here, I'm down grading."

As much as programming is essential to the re-entry program, there are aspects of the programming that make the program different from the opportunities for the general inmate population, such as faster enrollment in programming, motivational meetings, and support groups. The participants were asked to identify these differences and one key theme arose from all of the responses, the supportive nature of the programs and the staff. One participant said, "We are getting a double dose with the supports that we are receiving from the managers and the mentors and the speakers. They also give more opportunities for us to change." Other participants echoed these sentiments;

> They have lost more classes in a lot more areas in the re-entry program. They have job training, CDL training, other meetings and activities to keep us to stay out of trouble and most of all they are behind us 100% and they got our back on any problem that we may have and they help us in the parole process.

> The classes and programs are smaller and there is more supportive one on one time with the transition managers. Because of the help that we have the program will definitely work if you use the resources that are available to us.

> There are lots of way that you can get the support that you need to make a change in your life. There are lots of programs, support groups, and interaction with people that are going through it too.

> We are getting to know other guys that are going through the same changes that we are and that helps in knowing that we can count on each other and since we know what the other is doing we can help out to make all of our changes stick.

After examining the participants' perceptions about the programming in which they are enrolled, we can see they are receiving the programming and services that they were promised when they entered the program, and that the mental health, substance and drug abuse courses, narcotics anonymous, and work attitudes and behaviors programs were all perceived as helpful. The participants also believed that there need to be improvements; increasing the number of participants, improving the interaction of participants, getting more programming at CCCO, and

improving the housing situation topped their list of suggestions. The participants also perceived that the re-entry program offers more support in their programming than the programming that is offered to the general prison population. Along with the supportive nature of the re-entry program, the attitudes of the participants must also be willing to change. The following section examines the responses of the participants on the nature of their attitudes toward change.

Attitudes Toward Change

In order to understand the thought processes and mind set of the participants at the beginning of their time in the program, each was asked why they chose to join the re-entry program. An overwhelming number of respondents provided variations of the same underlying concept, a chance to change. The responses came in several forms including, "For support in the change that I wanted to make in my life, through kicking my drug habit and cracking my criminal thoughts, this program was my chance to complete that change." Other respondents used different terms,

> I wanted to have a change in my life and my actions, which were taking me nowhere good. I was tired of getting into trouble and being in prison, and I wanted to make a change to help me stay out, so I thought that I'd try it.

> It was a good opportunity to start over, to give myself a second chance, it was a good avenue for change and it opened new windows for opportunity to change my life.

> It was an opportunity to change and be a better person. Before I entered the program I had lots of problems and lots of write ups. But since I got into the program I have had to hold myself accountable and I have gotten better.

Other respondents stated that the incentive of living rent free for a year played a large part,

> I thought it would change my life through a residential program, we also have a half-way house that we can live in rent-free for a year, and that is was a transitional program.

> I joined to put myself on the right track to succeeding in being crime free, with a lot of support behind me, even allowing us to have a place to live once we are released, rent

free for a year. That will be a big help in saving some money before we have to make it completely on our own.

The attitudes towards change can also be addressed through the responses to the question, how have you seen yourself change since you entered the program? One participant explained that there have been several changes that have taken place in his time in the program, particularly in his criminal thought processes,

> Before I entered the program there would have been some things that I would have done, but since I have gone through the thought process change training I don't do them now. Before I would have had an idea to get money, I would have thought to sell some weed, but now I don't, I think about working harder at a job.

Several of the respondents felt that their behavior toward others was an area that they had changed, including anger management and trust,

> I have worked on my temper through mental health, and now I think that I don't have to get upset first and act, not I think first and if I need to get mad it will be for a reason.

> I see that I have changed in the way that I react to people. I don't jump down their throats at the smallest comments anymore. I also carry myself differently and I can open up and trust people more than I ever have done in the past, before if my trust was violated there would be no way that it could be gotten back, but now I can work on restoring the trust.

> Job placement was another area which respondents felt that they had made strides to change,

> The job placement has helped me so much. I have to work for my family and my son, so he doesn't follow in my footsteps. By being the oldest member in the program, I have seen all the younger guys making the same mistakes that I have, and I don't want to be there again.

> In July I will have a full year of work history, I haven't been able to hold a job for as long as I can remember, which shows that I have the motivation and determination to succeed. I have improved my actions and my anger. I'm a changed man.

To address the extent to which the change that these participants claim they have undergone is a long term commitment, the respondents were asked how they were going to maintain this change once they reentered society. Several responses can be read below:

> I'm going to stick with positive people and watch how they live their lives and how they are good people. I am going to maintain a full time job, something that I have not done for longer than a couple of months, and with the money I make I am going to start a savings account so I don't have to revert to crime for a little cash. I am going to stick with NA and attend weekly, and I am going to thank God everyday for the opportunity that he gave me through this program to change my life. For that I am forever grateful.

> I've got a great support group and my family is ready to help me succeed and will keep me accountable for my actions. I am no longer that worthless man that entered prison, I am a changed man. I am going to continue to take part in whatever the re-entry program will allow me to be part of, they can't keep me away.

> I'm going to start talking to troubled kids in schools. I think that there is a lot to learn from my story, cause I don't want no more kids doing what I did. I'm going to try to change a few kids, then I'll feel better about the process that I have gone through, making it worth something to someone other than me.

One of the most impressive responses to this area of interest did not come from a scheduled interview, but from a voicemail greeting. The greeting stated:

> You know who you got. I am committed to changing my life, and that means getting away from people that are leading a life of no good, if you are one of those people that I am trying to get rid of, hang up right now and don't call back. But if you are someone who believes that everyone deserves a second chance and that anything is possible, please remain on the line.

These comments regarding attitudes toward change, suggest that many of the participants joined the program for an opportunity to change. They also felt that they have changed in thought processes, anger management and trust issues, and attitudes towards employment. Several participants also felt that this change was a change that would last for a very long time by suggesting that they have plans to continue with aspects of what they have learned in the re-

entry program. After delving into the attitudes toward change, we now take a look into the overall opinions of the participants about the program as a whole.

Participants' Overall Opinions

When asked to share their overall opinions of the program, several areas were identified, including participants' opinions of transition managers, program peers, and overall programming. Respondents' opinions of the transition managers suggest an overwhelming agreement that the mangers were quite helpful. "The managers provide us with so much support. They are behind us all the way in all of our decisions, as long as we've thought about them and think the decision is best for us. I am really grateful for them," expressed one participant, while another said, "I couldn't have picked better myself, they are good people and are incredibly supportive. They want to see us change for the better, and will do what it takes to help us get there."

When it came to conflict resolution, the managers were again highly applauded. One respondent stated "We call them our re-entry moms. They help you when you need them to do something for you. They help us if we have problems on our units, they will call meetings to talk to guards or other inmates that are causing us problems, to talk and get the conflict resolved. And one of the nicest this is that they treat us like we matter. That's made the biggest difference for me."

Other respondents have echoed the same sentiments regarding resolution of problems;

> The managers are good hearted people and they genuinely care about how we end up. I like that they have an open door office policy so I can go in and chat them up or go in for some guidance. They always help with what you need and will do what they can.

> They keep us on our toes, that's for sure. They keep us on the right track whether in the classroom, in our programs or even on the yard. When there is an issue that comes up,

they don't judge, they bring us in and get our side of the story and they will go out of their way to resolve it, even getting other staff involve to take care of it.

Among the tasks of the transition managers, the act of transporting participants to and from places was also addressed by the respondents. "They are cool people, they help out if there is anything that you need all of the time. They give a ride to look for jobs or to go to a job interview. They are really nice about it" stated one respondent. Other respondents mirrored the last statement;

> They help out a lot with a lot of different things. I think the biggest one for me is that they help get visitation leave so that I can go visit my grandma, and they get the transportation aligned so they can drive me there and then pick me back up with my visitation time is over. I'll also be needing them to start taking me to some job interviews here in a couple months when I get put on work release, but I hear they're real good about that too.

> They have been real good about getting me to the places that I need to be. I have been trying to get my birth certificate and identification card, and they have been real good about taking me to different places to get the right stuff to get those things. I appreciate them a lot for what they've done for me.

> Jessie provides me with good information of setting up transportation to get me to and from work. If my ride isn't able to come get me, then all I have to do is call them up and they'll try their best to personally get me there. They're real nice.

After expressing their perceptions of the transition managers, the participants were asked to describe their perceptions of their peers in the program. Among the positive responses about the program participants as perceived by the participants themselves, accountability and a fellowship were the two top responses. Several respondents stated;

> We hold each other accountable for keeping on the straight and narrow. It's a fellowship of brother. General population isn't holding anyone accountable for their actions, but we watch out for each other. If we don't watch out for the others in the program, then it is likely that the actions will get thrown back on us for not helping out. So we try to keep an eye on other members on the yard.

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They are good people, and we are actually like a little family, where we have to hold each other accountable for out actions. I hope that my family back on the outside holds me as accountable for my actions when I get back as my re-entry family does in here.

They are cool. We are all trying to work on the same things so we can help each other cause we know what we are going through. Because of that we keep each other going and even though I'm not trying to make friends, I still respect them and what their trying to do.

There were also less positive perceptions, however, regarding the motivation and reasons for wanting to be in the program. One participant stated, "They are alright, they probably aren't in it for the right reasons, just trying to milk anything they can get out of the system including the free housing. I guess what I don't understand is how they say they want to change or have changed, but they still keep coming up with fucking dirty UA's. And what really gets me is that there is nothing done about it, doesn't seem right to me. Bull shit is what it is." Other respondents stated;

They just fake it to make it. They just tell the managers that they are changing, but behind their back bag on the program and how it isn't helping them. Doesn't seem like a change to me.

Some of them want to be involved in the program, but flat out say that they don't want to change. Or they say they want to change, but don't get involved in all the programming. We try to get them there, but it's useless if they don't want to be there. It's pretty sad.

To gain an overall perception of the program, the respondents were first asked if the program was what they had originally expected it to be. Almost all of the respondents stated that the program was what they had expected. One participant stated, "I signed up expecting to prepare me for leaving the prison system, job hunting, providing housing after release, and allowing us to have someone to call when we want to get into trouble or if we are having issues, and that is exactly what I got. So yes, I got exactly what I expected."

As for the opinions of the re-entry program overall, all of the respondents expressed they held the program in high regard, all using the term "good", "great", or "awesome". Several respondents said things such as, "The program is great. It is very helpful; they give you the right tools to make it as a productive member of society. The people there are there truly care about us and our goals", "It's a golden opportunity for change. All the right doors are opened for you and it is up to you to take them", and It's a great program. It gets me to do the things that I need to do, even though I may not always want to do them, and it's very motivating." Another respondent stated "It is a good program, it is a good set up with lot of support around you. It's life changing, it's what I call serious business."

From the responses on the overall opinions of the transition managers, the participants generally held the transition managers in high regard. The respondents had mixed feelings about their peers in the program. Some felt like there was a fellowship between the men and that they held each other accountable; however, there were other respondents that felt like their counterparts were faking it to make it. All of the respondents expressed positive thoughts about the programming addressing the supportive nature and providing the opportunity to change.

We should note that the responses to the interview questions seemed to be truthful and quite sincere by both the transition managers and the program participants. The confidentiality promised to participants, the private environment in which interviews occurred, and the duration of the interviews created a comfortable atmosphere in which respondents felt they could be open and honest. We, therefore, have faith that the findings of this research are reliable and accurately reflect people's opinions.

In sum, the program participants expressed several needs that they believed would help them live crime free, including but not limited to, education, employment, and support systems.

They also reported that the re-entry program had provided the services to meet these needs. Through the helpfulness of the programming, the participants felt that they had made changes in their lives, which were often reported as permanent. One component of the reentry program that participants found most helpful was not even seen by inmates as part of their programming—the services provided by the transition managers. All inmates perceived the interaction and intervention they received from their transition managers as invaluable support for the life changes they are determined to make. To this end, the presence of transition managers should be seen as an integral component of the reentry program.

Further Interpretation of Results

Because the participants in the program can be 18 to 35 year olds, of different races, and of both sexes, we investigated the degree to which perceptions varied by these variables. For instance, although responses were generally consistent across the sexes, some subtle differences could be discerned. The programming available for males and females were identical when it came to the personalized plans; however, there were differing services when it can to the Men in Progress and Women in Progress programs. The women appeared to be far more likely to express enthusiasm and gratefulness for being in the program than men. For example, when discussing Men/Women in Progress meetings, there were differing opinions in regard to the helpfulness of this program. The men's program brought in motivational speakers and had ex-inmates come in to talk with the male participants. The women's program also brought in motivational speakers and ex-inmates, but the women were also given presentations by Planned Parenthood, a domestic violence educator, and community outreach workers from Compassion In Action. The fact that the women are receiving services regarding women's general health and

sexual health, while the men are not, suggests that the programs are similar, but the programming is more specialized to the needs of women.

The age of the target population may account for some observations and conclusions about the program participants and the effect that the program has had on them. The program allows for a seventeen year difference in the ages of its participants, and there are differences in their perceptions and outlooks on the program. The most significant distinction between the older participants from the younger is the commitment to change. The younger participants, ages twenty to thirty, see their time in the program as helpful, but do not have the enthusiasm and fire behind their confessions of change.

The older participants, those over thirty, were much more adamant that their lives have been changed, through their cognitive skills, behavior recognition, and willingness to "keep it straight". The older participants also commented on the fact that the younger participants have not walked in their shoes and have not seen what they have seen, and that they are trying to help the younger men get to the place of change. It can be seen that the inclusion of a seventeen year age range has helped the older participants in realizing their change process, working on bettering themselves through helping the younger participants continue in their change, and helping the younger participants realize the work that needs to be put in to achieve change.

Another demographic interest area is the race of the participants. In analyzing the responses of the participants, typically there were no differences by race This appears to reflect that regardless of race, the programming and services that the re-entry program is making available to these participants is being uniformly administered and the participants are addressing change with similar attitudes. This finding should be noted particularly in light of the findings that often suggest racial bias or discrimination in the criminal processing of offenders.

Overall, few differences in participants' opinions regarding the reentry program could be discerned along sex or racial lines. Although some programs may be more gender-specific than others, it appears that programs are being uniformly delivered across races and sexes. This may explain the relatively few differences noted in the opinion of participants, regardless of their sex or race.

Sanctions for Non-Compliance and Misbehavior by the Participants

As noted above, four participants in the parole stage of phase II left the program and two phase I participants were terminated from the program during our research. We were not able to contact the participants that voluntarily left the program, so their reasons for their withdrawal are unknown.

In regard to the two participants that were terminated from the program, verbal communication with the transition managers indicated that their termination was drug-related. Either these participants continually refused to participate in drug-testing or failed drug tests routinely. UNO was not advised as to the number of refused or failed tests, so the threshold for program termination is not known. Nor was UNO advised of the types of sanctions that were applied to these participants prior to their termination. Verbal communication with transition managers, however, suggests that several attempts were made to keep these participants in the program.

NDCS personnel explained to UNO researchers that terminated participants were given verbal warnings regarding their compliance with program requirements. Transition managers gave these participants "a talking to" on several occasions. Verbal warnings then appear as a sanction used by NDCS to punish non-compliance in the program. Beyond these warnings,

however, UNO researchers are unaware of any other sanctions that may have been used to induce compliance.

As stated in the Background section of this report, non-compliance and problem behaviors should be expected from reentry participants, particularly given the serious and violent nature of their offenses and their assessment of high risk for re-offending. Both graduated sanctions and a rewards system should be used to manage this population. While planning the three phases of the reentry program, NDCS did plan a reward system for offenders in Phase II of the program. As offenders reached parole, they would be placed on electronic monitoring. Compliant behavior with their personalized plans would result in the removal of the electronic monitor. To date, no offender has reached the parole phase of the program, so the degree to which this reward system has been used or deemed successful in creating compliance remains unknown.

As UNO attended planning meetings for the three phases of the program, we noted that no discussion occurred regarding a graduated sanction system for participants. Also, beyond the removal of the electronic monitor, no other reward system for participants in Phase I and II were discussed either. In the future, NDCS may want to focus attention on developing a graduated sanction and reward system for participants to help them achieve their goals. Under these types of systems, terminations from the program may be reduced in the future, and personnel may find it easier to manage participants' behavior.

Summary of the Findings from the Process Evaluation

UNO researchers investigated several aspects of the creation and implementation of Nebraska's Serious and Violent offender reentry program. Several findings can be noted:

- Although the selection of program participants has evolved since the inception of the program, NDCS has targeted serious and violent offenders with a high risk of re-offending for pilot program participation.

- There was community and agency support for the reentry program from its inception through its implementation.

- NDCS had implemented the program components intended for Phase I of the reentry program, including the creation of personalized reentry plans for inmates and the creation of programs to address the mental health, substance abuse, and general living skills needs of the inmates.

- The programs offered in Phase I of the reentry program are being delivered to inmates in Phase II, thereby providing a seamless delivery of services as originally intended in the program's inception.

- The contact participants have with transition managers in Phase II of the reentry program is less frequent than in Phase I, but contact still continues.

- Although no inmates have reached Phase III of the reentry program, NDCS has established some partnerships with community service agents to provide housing, counseling, and education for returning inmates.

- There are still services needed for offenders in Phase III that have yet to be addressed, such as transportation for inmates and medical attention for physical needs.

- Overall, there is much consistency between what inmates perceive they need to live a crime-free life upon leaving prison and the services that are being delivered by NDCS.

- Participants generally believed that the services they are receiving from NDCS are beneficial in helping them successfully return to society.

- All participants reported experiencing some degree of change in their attitudes about their return to society and their ability to live as law-abiding citizens.

- Overall, participants reported a positive attitude toward the services provided in Phase I and II of the reentry program and found the support provided to them by their transition mangers as most effective in brining about their success in the program.

- The positive attitudes toward the reentry program did not vary across racial/ethnic, gender, or age lines.

- NDCS has not appeared to establish a graduated sanction or reward system to induce compliance with program requirements, manage problem behaviors, or minimize termination from the program.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the process evaluation, particularly the findings from participant interviews, we can offer some suggestions for improving the program as a whole. These suggestions include working on increasing the number of participants that are allowed in the program, increasing transition manager "face time" with the participants at CCCO, addressing the need for increased programming at the Community Corrections Center, and assisting in forming better relationships between the program participants.

The largest number of complaints regarding the reentry program came from the phase II participants on work release and work detail. Community corrections participants' responses suggest that they think "the transition managers are good people, but they don't have much contact with them" or they don't bring up needs they would like addressed because they just don't talk to them enough." It is felt that further development of the transition managers' roles is needed within Phase II at the community corrections center.

Regarding the concern of face-time with the managers, perhaps placing one of the transition managers' offices in the community corrections center would address this issue. This would encourage an open-door office environment between the participants and the manager. A second option could include having one or more of the transition managers having "office hours" at CCCO at least twice a week. This would allow the managers to keep one-on-one contact with the participants to track their attitudes and progress and would also give the participants more time to discuss issues with the managers.

Participants had concerns about wasting their time when there were no programs to attend. In the future, NDCS should explore the development of additional programs for offenders on community release. Because there is a limited number of activities and services

available at CCCO, some participants perceive that living in the contract housing rent-free for a year is the only benefit from the program. Further trainings and services would provide participants in the community with greater involvement in the program. Unfortunately not all of the participants could offer suggestions for additional programming, but a couple expressed wanting to have the opportunity to partake in more workforce related trainings like the CDL training in which the institutional Phase I participants participate. If nothing else, this suggestion highlights the need to explore expanding Phase I programming to Phase II participants. Another participant wanted to get more volunteer projects to fulfill a personal need for change. A third participant stated that just having a get together a couple times a week with the other phase II members to have fun and maybe learn something, would be a good addition to the opportunities they have now.

A second area that should be addressed for improvement is the relationship and interaction between the participants within a particular phase and between phases. The interaction between the participants during their time in the program has been a positive asset to some, but has left others wanting more. To address the participants' need for more peer interaction, two areas come to light through interview responses. The first is the restricted communication between program participants in the SAU program and the other re-entry members. The second is the slow-paced process of getting acquainted that happens when new inmates are brought into the program. Several participants felt that there was not enough effort put into getting all of the 'old' guys involved in the 'new' guys' acclimation to the program. It is felt that doing more 'get to know you' ice breakers would get the new participants involved, get everyone interacting, and also improve the relationships between those who have been in the

program for awhile. These interactions should be with all of the program participants, from both OCC and CCCO.

In sum, throughout this report of the process evaluation results, both UNO researchers and program participants offered some suggestions for changing the future of the reentry program. Some of these suggestions involve nothing more than further investigation, while others actually suggest adding additional programs or slightly modifying current practices. It is our hope that NDCS takes these suggestions within the spirit they are offered, as a way of achieving the most that the prisoner reentry program has to offer in regard to enhancing public safety and improving the life-chances of returning offenders.

An Evaluation of the Outcomes of Participants in the Prisoner Reentry Program

The outcome evaluation for the NDCS Prisoner Reentry Program compares participants in the program to a group of matched controls. The control group consists of offenders who met all of the conditions for participation in the reentry program, but who were released from prison prior to the start of the program. The members of the control group were released from June of 2005 through January of 2006; they were either unconditionally discharged or were paroled during this time period.

The original intent of the outcome evaluation was to compare equal numbers of reentry participants and controls. However, delay in implementation of the reentry program (as explained above, the first reentry participant was not released from prison until July of 2006), coupled with the fact that the outcome evaluation was to be completed by December of 2007, meant that we were able to collect data on only 19 reentry participants. We compare these 19

participants to the 53 members of the control group on a variety of indicators. Because of the small number of reentry participants, the data we present must be interpreted with caution.

All of the offenders were interviewed within a month of their release from prison. The interviews were conducted by members of the reentry project research team, using a questionnaire that was a modified version of the questionnaire developed by the Urban Institute for their reentry evaluation. We also collected recidivism data on each offender. These data were provided by the Nebraska Crime Commission. We recorded the date of each arrest that occurred subsequent to the offender's release from prison. We also recorded the type of arrest (traffic, misdemeanor, or felony) and whether the arrest resulted in a conviction or not.

We begin by presenting data on offenders' background characteristics, alcohol and drug use history, and family relationships. We then present data on their attitudes and opinions, as well as their assessments of the types and amount of stress they experienced while incarcerated. The next section focuses on the offenders' expectations for the future and plans for life after being released from prison. The final section presents the recidivism data.

Offender Background Characteristics and Drug/Alcohol Use

The background characteristics of offenders in the two groups are presented in Table 5. The typical offender in each group was a 25-year-old white male who did not have a high school degree or GED upon entering prison. At the time of the interview, however, most offenders had at least a GED and many had some college credits. In terms of employment status, the control group members were more likely than the reentry participants to have been employed at least part time prior to entering prison. More than half of the offenders in each group reported that they received at least some support from illegal income in the six months before entering prison;

47.4 percent of the participants and 41.5 percent of the controls reported that they received "most" or "all" of their income from illegal sources.

Most of the offenders in each group had never been married, but a majority of them had at least one child who was less than 18 years old when they entered prison. Most offenders were living in their own home or apartment or in someone else's home or apartment; nearly all of them were living in Nebraska and over half of each group was living in Omaha during the six months prior to entering prison.

Table 5. Re-Entry Program Evaluation—Pre-Release Interview: Offender Characteristics

	Control Group		Re-Entry Participants	
	N	%	N	%
Background Characteristics				
Sex				
Female	4	7.5	4	21.1
Male	49	92.5	15	78.9
Race/Ethnicity				
White	27	50.9	9	47.4
African American	21	39.6	10	52.6
Other	5	9.5	0	0.0
Age (mean)	25.2		25.3	
Education When Entered Prison				
No high school degree/GED	25	47.2	12	63.2
High school graduate	10	18.9	3	15.8
GED	13	24.5	2	10.5
Some college/college degree	5	9.4	2	10.5
Education At Time of Interview				
No high school degree/GED	14	26.4	2	10.5
High school graduate	7	13.2	3	15.8
GED	22	41.5	9	47.4
Some college/college graduate	10	18.9	5	26.3
Employed 6 Months Before Entering Prison (% yes)	36	67.9	8	42.1
Support From Illegal Income 6 Months Before Prison (% yes)	29	54.7	12	63.2
How Much Money From Illegal Income				
None	19	35.8	5	26.3
Some	6	11.3	4	21.1
About half	6	11.3	1	5.3
Most	14	26.4	1	5.3
All	8	15.1	8	42.1
Marital Status When Entered Prison				
Single, never married	40	75.5	17	89.5
Living with someone as married	2	3.8	0	0.0
Married	7	13.2	0	0.0
Separated/Divorced	4	7.6	2	10.5

Table 1, continued				
Number of Children Under 18 When Entered Prison				
0	24	45.3	7	36.8
1	12	22.6	6	31.6
2	8	15.1	3	15.8
3	4	7.5	1	5.3
4 or more	5	9.5	2	10.6

Table 1, continued	N	%	N	%
Type of Residence Where Lived Before Prison				
Own house or apartment	25	47.2	8	42.1
Someone else's house or apartment	22	41.5	8	42.1
No set place/Other Residence	6	11.3	3	15.8
Lived in Nebraska Right Before Prison (% yes)	45	84.9	18	94.7
Lived in Omaha Right Before Prison (% yes)	32	60.4	11	57.9
Criminal History				
Age When First Arrested				
Younger than 13	15	28.3	7	36.8
13—16	25	47.2	5	26.3
17---19	10	18.9	3	15.8
Older than 19	3	5.6	4	21.1
Spent Time in a Juvenile Facility (% yes)	35	66.0	13	68.4
Number of Times Convicted of Crime				
1	7	13.2	4	21.1
2	5	9.4	0	0.0
3	6	11.3	3	15.8
4	2	3.8	2	10.5
5	8	15.1	0	0.0
6 or more	25	47.2	10	52.7
Number of Prior Prison Terms				
0	1	1.9	1	5.3
1	40	75.5	13	68.4
2	11	20.8	4	21.1
3	1	1.9	1	5.3
Member of a Gang 6 Months Before Prison (% yes)	10	18.9	7	36.8
Offense Characteristics (Current Offense)				
Primary Conviction Charge				
Murder	2	3.8	1	5.3
Robbery	8	15.1	7	36.9
Assault	6	11.3	1	5.3
Burglary	8	15.1	0	0.0
Theft	2	3.8	0	0.0
Drug trafficking	8	15.1	1	5.3
Drug possession	9	17.0	6	31.6
Other offense	10	18.9	1	5.3
Security Classification				
Minimum	33	62.3	7	38.9
Medium	15	28.3	6	33.3
Maximum	5	9.4	5	27.8
Protective Custody This Prison Term (% yes)	3	5.7	1	5.3
Disciplinary Segregation This Prison Term (% yes)	19	35.8	12	63.2

Both the controls and the program participants had extensive criminal histories. A large portion of each group was first arrested before the age of 17, two thirds had spent time in a juvenile facility, and nearly all of them had been imprisoned at least once prior to their current incarceration. Nearly half of the controls (47.2 %) and over half of the participants (52.7%) had six or more prior convictions. Reentry participants, on the other hand, were more likely than the controls to have been a member of a gang in the six months prior to entering prison for the current offense.

Consistent with the eligibility criteria for the reentry program, participants in the program were incarcerated for murder (1 offender), robbery (7 offenders), assault (1 offender), and drug or other offenses (8 offenses); presumably, the offenders incarcerated for drug offenses were those whose offenses involved use of a weapon. The members of the control group also were incarcerated for violent offenses (16 offenders) or drug offenses/other offenses (27 offenders); 10 members of the control group were incarcerated for either burglary or theft. Offenders in the reentry group were more likely than those in the control group to have a maximum security classification.

Information on offenders' alcohol and drug use is presented in Table 6. Although very few offenders in either group reported that they never drank alcohol, about a third stated that they had never been drunk. On the other hand, about a third of the offenders in each group indicated that they were drunk "daily" or "a few times a week" in the six months prior to entering prison. The overwhelming majority of offenders in each group reported using marijuana (75.5% for the controls and 84.2% for the participants) and a substantial proportion reported using methamphetamine (47.2% for the controls and 36.8% for the participants). Only one offender reported using heroin and cocaine use was more common among the controls (17

offenders) than the participants (2 offenders). A majority of each group also reported using more than one illegal substance on the same day and stated that they spent a lot of time using drugs and alcohol. Nearly half of the offenders in each group reported that they wanted to stop or had tried to stop using drugs or alcohol prior to their current imprisonment. As these data indicate, then, both alcohol and drug use were common among the offenders in the two groups.

Table 6. Re-Entry Program Evaluation—Pre-Release Interview: Offender's Alcohol/Drug Use History

	Controls		Re-Entry Participants	
	N	%	N	%
Alcohol Use 6 Months Before Prison				
How Often Drink Alcohol				
Never	7	13.2	4	21.1
Daily	12	22.6	6	31.6
A few times a week	18	34.0	4	21.1
Once a week	3	5.7	1	5.3
Every two weeks	4	7.5	2	10.5
Once a month	9	17.0	2	10.5
How Often Drunk				
Never	16	30.2	6	31.6
Daily	5	9.4	3	15.8
A few times a week	14	26.4	4	21.0
Once a week	7	13.2	2	10.5
Every two weeks	2	3.8	0	0.0
Once a month	9	17.0	4	21.1
Drug Use 6 Months Before Prison				
Use Marijuana (% yes)	40	75.5	16	84.2
Use Heroin (% yes)	0	0.0	1	5.3
Use Methamphetamine (% yes)	25	47.2	7	36.8
Use Cocaine (% yes)	17	30.2	2	10.5
Use Amphetamines (% yes)	14	26.4	8	42.1
Table 2, continued				
How Often Use More Than One Illegal Substance-Same Day				
Never	10	19.2	7	36.8
Daily	18	34.6	6	31.6
A few times a week	11	21.2	2	10.5
Once a week	3	5.8	3	15.8
Every two weeks	4	7.7	0	0.0
Once a month	6	11.5	1	5.3
Spent A Lot of Time Using Drugs and Alcohol (% yes)	29	56.9	12	63.2
Wanted To Stop/Tried to Stop Using Drugs/Alcohol (% yes)	21	40.4	9	47.4
Drinking Led to Problems 6 Months Before Prison				
No, didn't drink	8	15.1	5	26.3
No, didn't lead to any problems	8	13.2	4	21.1
Yes, led to missing work or school	11	20.8	5	26.3

Yes, led to losing a job	4	7.5	3	15.8
Yes, led to neglect of child care	4	7.5	2	10.5
Yes, led to unpaid child support	3	5.7	2	10.5
Yes, led to arguments at home	18	34.0	7	36.8
Yes, led to arguments about drinking	13	24.5	6	31.6
Yes, led to relationship problems	20	37.7	7	36.8
Yes, led to reckless driving	14	26.4	6	31.6
Yes, led to DUI charge	10	18.9	2	10.5
Yes, led to suspended license	11	20.8	3	15.8
Yes, led to fights or property damage	19	35.8	9	47.4
Yes, led to serious injury	4	7.5	3	15.8
Yes, led to arrest	18	34.0	7	36.8
Yes, led to other legal problems	9	17.0	1	5.3
Yes, led to blackouts	12	22.6	5	26.3
Yes, led to health problems	2	3.8	3	15.8
Illegal Drug Use Led to Problems 6 Months Before Prison				
No, didn't use drugs	7	13.2	2	10.5
No, didn't lead to any problems	6	11.3	4	21.1
Yes, led to missing work or school	16	30.2	6	31.6
Yes, led to losing a job	13	24.5	2	10.5
Yes, led to neglect of child care	9	17.0	3	15.8
Yes, led to unpaid child support	3	5.7	2	10.5
Yes, led to arguments at home	24	45.3	8	42.1
Yes, led to arguments about drug use	25	47.2	9	47.4
Yes, led to relationship problems	28	52.8	9	47.4
Yes, led to reckless driving	12	22.6	5	26.3
Yes, led to DUI charge	3	5.7	1	5.3
Yes, led to suspended license	6	11.3	4	21.1
Yes, led to fights or property damage	20	37.7	8	42.1
Yes, led to serious injury	5	9.4	3	15.8
Yes, led to arrest	23	43.4	7	36.8
Yes, led to other legal problems	9	17.0	6	31.6
Yes, led to blackouts	6	11.3	3	15.8
Yes, led to health problems	9	17.0	5	26.3

Table 6 contains additional evidence of problems caused by alcohol and drug use. When asked whether drinking or drug use led to any problems in their lives in the six months prior to incarceration, substantial numbers of offenders in each group said that they had caused problems. For example, at least a fourth of the offenders in each group reported that drinking led to arguments at home, arguments about drinking, relationship problems, reckless driving, and fights or property damage; in addition, 34 percent of the controls and 36.8 percent of the participants said that drinking resulted in an arrest. Respondents cited similar problems that resulted from

drug use. In fact, over 40 percent of the offenders in each group stated that drug use led to arguments at home, arguments about drug use, and relationship problems. Consistent with the results for drinking, 43.4 percent of the controls and 36.8 percent of the participants reported that drug use led to their arrest.

Offenders' Family Relationships

We asked offenders a series of questions about their family relationships before they entered prison and while they were in prison. We also asked them about their expectations about the level of support they would receive from family members following their release from prison. Their responses to these questions are summarized in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7. Re-Entry Program Evaluation—Pre-Release Interview: Offender's Family Relationships

	Control Group		Re-Entry Participants	
	N	%	N	%
Family Relationships Before Offender Entered Prison This Time				
Number of close family relationships				
0	5	9.4	2	10.5
1	7	13.2	1	5.3
2	9	17.0	2	10.5
3	5	9.4	5	26.3
4 or more	27	50.9	9	47.4
Closest family member				
Mother/stepmother	16	30.2	7	36.8
Sister/brother	9	16.9	7	36.8
Father/stepfather	7	13.2	0	0.0
Husband/wife or Boyfriend/girlfriend	7	13.2	0	0.0
Grandparent	6	11.3	1	5.3
Other relative	4	7.5	1	5.3
No one	4	7.5	3	15.8
I felt close to my family[a]	1.74		1.83	
I wanted my family to be involved in my life	1.81		1.78	
I considered myself a source of support for my family	2.11		1.89	
My family was a source of support for me	2.08		1.89	
Someone in family I could count on to listen to me	1.68		1.78	
Someone in family to have a good time with	1.75		1.72	
Someone in family to talk to about myself or my problems	1.81		1.88	
Someone in family whose advice I really wanted	1.91		1.89	
Someone in family to share my private worries and fears with	2.11		2.06	
Someone in family to turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a personal problem	1.81		2.00	

Someone in my family who understood my problems		1.92		2.06
Someone in family to love me and make me feel wanted		1.64		1.83
Someone in family to get together with to relax		1.81		1.78
Someone in family to do something enjoyable with		1.77		1.89
Someone in family to help me get my mind off things		1.81		1.83
Family Relationships While in Prison				
Number of close family relationships now				
0	6	11.3	1	5.3
1	6	11.3	2	10.5
2	7	13.2	2	10.5
3	0	0.0	2	10.5
4 or more	34	64.2	12	63.2
Closest family member while in prison				
Mother/stepmother	18	34.0	8	42.1
Husband/wife or boyfriend/girlfriend	10	18.8	0	0.0
Sister/brother	7	13.2	7	36.9
Grandparent	6	11.3	1	5.3
Other relative	9	17.0	1	5.3
No one	3	5.7	2	10.5
Table 3, continued				
During time in prison, it was difficult to keep in touch with family because (% yes)				
Prison located too far away for regular visits	11	20.8	3	15.8
Visitation rules are hard to work with	4	7.5	2	10.5
Prison is not a pleasant place to visit	7	13.2	1	5.3
Lack of transportation	6	11.3	2	10.5
Cost of visiting is too high	2	3.8	0	0.0
Cost of calling or receiving calls is too high	17	32.1	2	10.5
Family members did not want to maintain close contact	4	7.5	3	15.8
Embarrassed for family to see me or receive mail from me	1	1.9	0	0.0
It was not difficult to keep in touch with family	20	37.7	11	57.9
Attitudes Toward Current Family Relationships				
I feel close to my family[a]		1.58		1.83
I want my family to be involved in my life		1.40		1.50
I consider myself a source of support for my family		2.08		1.89
My family is a source of support for me		1.66		1.78
I fight a lot with my family members		3.32		3.22
I often feel like I disappoint my family members		2.51		2.32
I am criticized a lot by my family		2.87		2.88
Anyone in family ever been convicted of a crime? (% yes)				
Husband/wife or boyfriend/girlfriend	3	5.7	3	15.8
Mother/stepmother	8	15.1	6	31.6
Father/stepfather	9	17.0	5	26.3
Sister/stepsister	6	11.3	2	10.5
Brother/stepbrother	26	49.1	10	52.6
Aunt	7	13.2	1	5.3
Uncle	16	30.2	6	31.6
Cousin	16	30.2	5	26.3
Grandparent	3	5.7	2	10.5
No one in family convicted of a crime	12	22.6	2	10.5

Anyone in family currently in prison? (% yes)				
Husband/wife or boyfriend/girlfriend	1	1.9	0	0.0
Mother/stepmother	0	0.0	0	0.0
Father/stepfather	3	5.7	0	0.0
Sister/stepsister	2	3.8	0	0.0
Brother/stepbrother	9	17.0	2	10.5
Aunt	0	0.0	0	0.0
Uncle	9	17.0	1	5.3
Cousin	8	15.1	3	15.8
Grandparent	0	0.0	0	0.0
No one in family currently in prison	28	52.8	12	63.2

aResponses were strongly agree (1.0), agree (2.0), disagree (3.0), and strongly disagree (4.0).

Most of the offenders interviewed for this project indicated that they had at least three close family relationships prior to entering prison; the person to whom they felt the closest was either their mother/stepmother or a sister or brother. When we asked them whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about their family relationships in the six months prior to their incarceration, most offenders indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that they had positive family relationships. Somewhat surprisingly, a larger proportion of the offenders in each group stated that they four or more close family relationships *while* they were in prison. For example, 64.2 percent of the controls stated that they had four or more close family relationships while in prison, compared to 50.9 percent who stated that they had four or more close relationships in the six months prior to prison. The figures were similar for the participants; 63.2 percent (while in prison) versus 47.4 percent (prior to prison). When asked who their closest family member was while they were in prison, 10 of the controls, but none of the participants, said that it was their spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend.

Most of the participants (57.9 percent) and a substantial proportion of the controls (37.7 percent) indicated that it was not difficult to keep in touch with family members while they were in prison. Of those who cited problems, the most common problems were (1) cost of calling or

receiving calls is too high, (2) prison located too far away for regular visits, and (3) lack of transportation.   Regarding their current family relationships, offenders tended to agree that they were close to their families, wanted their families involved in their lives, and saw their families as a source of support. They tended to disagree that they fought a lot with family members, were criticized frequently by family members, and were a disappointment to family members.

We also asked the respondents whether anyone in their families had been convicted of a crime and whether any family members were currently in prison. About half of the respondents in each group stated that a brother or stepbrother had been convicted of a crime; other family members likely to have prior convictions were uncles and cousins. Twelve of the controls and two of the participants stated that no member of their family had been convicted of a crime. Most of the respondents from each group reported that they had no family members who were currently incarcerated.

Table 8. Re-Entry Program Evaluation—Pre-Release Interview: Expectations about Family Support

	Control Group	Re-Entry Participants
Expectations About Support from Family After Release From Prison		
Expect my family to be supportive[a]	1.58	1.67
Expect my friends to be supportive	2.08	1.79
Will be able to count on someone in family to listen to me	1.72	1.53
Will have someone in family to talk to about myself/problems	1.72	1.58
Will have someone in family whose advice I really want	1.79	1.53
Will have someone in family to share private worries/fears with	1.87	1.68
Will have someone in family to turn to for suggestions about how to deal with personal problem	1.70	1.58
Will have someone in family who understands my problems	1.75	1.74
Will have someone in family to love me/make me feel wanted	1.58	1.53
Will have someone in family to have a good time with	1.68	1.68
Will have someone in family to get together with to relax	1.72	1.68
Will have someone in family to do something enjoyable with`	1.68	1.63
Will have someone in family to spend time with/help me get mind off things	1.74	1.74

[a]Responses were strongly agree (1.0), agree (2.0), disagree (3.0), and strongly disagree (4.0).

As shown in Table 16, most of the inmates interviewed for this project either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that they expected their family to be a source of support for them following their release from prison. They were somewhat less certain that their friends would be a source of support.

Offenders' Attitudes and Opinions

During the pre-release interview, inmates were asked a number of questions designed to tap their attitudes toward the police and their opinions on law and ethical issues. As shown in Table 9, both the controls and the participants have generally favorable attitudes toward the police. Respondents in each group agreed or strongly agreed that the police did a good job responding to victims of crime and that they were effective in preventing crime and dealing with problems. Reentry participants, on the other hand, expressed more negative attitudes toward the police on several dimensions. For example, 42.1 percent of the participants, but only 20,8 percent of the controls, stated that the police brutalized people in the neighborhood; similarly 31.6 percent of the program participants, but only 15.4 percent of the controls, stated that they believed the police in the community were racist.

Respondents' answers to questions about law and ethics suggest that they reject the view that morals and values are relative. For example, most of the interviewees disagreed with statements that "laws are made to be broken," "it is okay to do what you want so long as you don't hurt anyone, and "there are no right and wrong ways to make money, only easy and hard ways." Their responses also indicate that these inmates are not fatalistic: respondents in both groups disagreed that they have little control over what happens to them or that there is little they can do to change their lives; nearly all of them agreed that "what happens to me in the future

mostly depends on me." Although about a third of the respondents in each group agreed that

their lives have gone out of control, nearly all of them disagreed that there was no way to solve

their problems and that their lives were without meaning.

It is interesting to note that nearly all of the respondents indicated that they were tired of

the problems caused by their criminal behavior and that they wanted to get their lives

straightened out. It also is interesting that respondents were nearly unanimous in agreeing that

"I can do just about anything I really set my mind to" and that "I have much to be proud of."

These responses suggest not only that the respondents wanted to improve their lives but were

optimistic about their prospects for doing so.

Table 9. Re-Entry Program Evaluation—Pre-Release Interview: Offender's Attitudes and Opinions

	Control Group		Re-Entry Participants	
	N	%	N	%
Attitudes Toward Police in Community Where Offender Lived 6 Months Before Entering Prison (% who strongly agreed or agreed with statement)				
Police doing a good job dealing with problems	30	56.6	8	42.1
Police in my community were racist	8	15.4	6	31.6
Police were not doing a good job preventing crime	22	41.5	9	47.4
Police were not able to maintain order on streets	19	35.8	8	42.1
Police did a good job responding to victims of crime	33	64.7	10	52.6
Police brutalized people in my neighborhood	11	20.8	8	42.1
Opinions on the Law, Ethics, Degree of Control Over Life (% who strongly agreed or agreed with statement)				
Laws are made to be broken	7	13.2	2	10.5
It's okay to do what you want as long as you don't hurt anyone	3	5.7	4	21.1
To make money, there are no right and wrong ways, only easy and hard ways	11	20.8	2	11.1
Fighting with friends or family is nobody else's business	22	41.5	8	42.1
These days a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself	31	58.5	7	36.8
I have little control over the things that happen to me	3	5.7	3	15.8
What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me	50	94.3	18	94.7
There is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life	8	15.1	0	0.0
My life has gone out of control	16	30.2	6	31.6
There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have	3	5.7	2	10.5
I can do just about anything I really set my mind to	52	98.1	19	100.0
Sometimes I feel like I'm being pushed around in life	9	17.0	3	15.8

I often feel helpless dealing with problems in my life	12	22.6	6	31.6
My life seems without meaning	4	7.5	0	0.0
I am tired of the problems caused by the crimes I committed	48	90.6	17	89.5
I want to get my life straightened out	53	100.0	18	94.7
I have much to be proud of	49	92.5	18	94.7
I feel like a failure	11	20.8	2	10.5
I wish I had more respect for myself	17	32.1	5	26.3
I feel I am basically no good	3	5.7	0	0.0
In general, I am satisfied with myself	40	75.5	14	73.7
I feel I am unimportant to others	3	5.7	0	0.0

Stress in Prison

During the pre-release interview, respondents were asked about their experiences while in prison. More specifically, they were asked to indicate how often they experienced various types of stressful situations,. Their responses to these questions, which are shown in Table 10, suggest that respondents from both groups frequently felt nervous or stressed and worried about going home; substantial proportions of each group also stated that they felt overwhelmed by the though of returning to society. On the other hand, most respondents said that they felt prepared about being released from prison; this was particularly true of the members of the control group. Members of both groups also stated that they were confident in their ability to handle their personal problems and felt that they were "on top of things." Most respondents did not believe that they were unable to control "the important things" in their lives or to cope with all that they had to do. Consistent with this, members of both the control group and the reentry group stated that the amount of stress they experienced when thinking about being released from prison was in the middle of a scale that ranged from "no stress" to "unbearable stress."

Table 10. Re-Entry Program Evaluation—Pre-Release Interview: Stress in Prison

	Control Group		Re-Entry Participants	
	N	%	N	%
In the last month, how often have you . . . (% who said very often or fairly often)				
Been upset because of something that happened				

unexpectedly	10	18.9	4	21.1
Felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life	10	18.9	5	26.4
Felt nervous and stressed	25	47.1	13	68.4
Worried about going home	33	63.3	13	78.4
Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems	42	78.2	12	63.2
Felt prepared about being released from prison	45	85.9	10	52.6
Felt that things were going your way	29	54.7	8	42.2
Found that you could not cope with all the things you had to do	7	13.2	2	10.6
Been able to control irritations in your life	32	60.3	11	57.9
Felt that you were on top of things	34	64.1	7	36.8
Been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control	17	32.0	6	31.6
Felt overwhelmed by the thought of returned to society	23	43.4	10	52.6
Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them	4	7.6	2	10.6
Amount of stress experienced when thinking about being released from prison (mean; 0 = no stress and 10 = unbearable stress)	4.45		4.74	

Offenders' Expectations About Life After Prison

An important component of the pre-release interview was offenders' expectations about their lives after prison. We asked them several questions designed to elicit their perceptions of the factors that would help or impede their transition from prison to the community. We also asked them how they intended to support themselves, with whom they intended to live, and how easy or hard they thought it would be to stay out of prison. The responses to these questions are displayed in Table 11.

Table 11. Re-Entry Program Evaluation—Pre-Release Interview: Expectations and Plans for Life After Prison

	Control Group		Re-Entry Participants	
	N	%	N	%
Expect To Be Gang Member After Release (% yes)	2	3.8	1	5.6
How Many Close Friends Likely to Commit Crimes after Release (% who				

	N	%	N	%
said "all" or "most")	5	9.4	4	21.1
How Many Close Friends Likely to Use Drugs after Release (% who said "all" or "most")	14	26.4	6	31.6
It is very important to find a job after release from prison (% who strongly agreed or agreed)	52	98.1	14	73.7
Sources of Financial Support During 1st Month Following Release (% yes)				
My own job	41	77.4	18	94.7
My own savings	23	43.4	9	47.4
Family	32	60.4	11	57.9
Friends	10	18.9	6	31.6
Public assistance	9	17.0	4	21.1
Illegal sources	2	3.8	0	0.0
No financial support expected	4	7.5	0	0.0
Where Offender Will Live After Release (respondent could select > one)				
Husband/wife	2	3.8	0	0.0
Boyfriend/girlfriend	13	24.5	1	5.3
Mother/stepmother	14	26.4	0	0.0
Father/stepfather	3	5.7	0	0.0
Sister/brother	7	13.2	0	0.0
Grandparent	4	7.5	0	0.0
Child/stepchild	5	9.4	0	0.0
Other relative	3	5.7	2	10.6
Friend	2	3.8	1	5.3
Other non-relative	4	7.5	8	42.1
Nobody	4	7.5	5	26.3
Don't know where I will live	1	1.9	0	0.0
Already Have a Place To Live Lined Up (% yes)	42	79.2	15	78.9
How Often See Children After Release (% of those with children)				
Daily	15	50.0	5	26.3
Weekly	8	26.7	4	21.1
Monthly	3	10.0	0	0.0
A few times a year	3	10.0	1	5.3
Never	1	3.3	0	0.0

Table 7, continued	Control Group		Re-Entry Participants	
	N	%	N	%
How easy or hard do you think it will be to . . . (% who said very easy)				
Renew relationships with your family	19	35.8	4	21.1
Renew relationships with your children (those with children)	12	40.0	3	15.8
Re-establish contact with old friends (those who plan to contact)	24	63.2	5	37.5
Be socially accepted after being in prison	26	50.0	6	31.6
Provide yourself with food	29	54.7	7	36.8
Avoid a parole violation (those who will be on parole)	25	64.1	9	50.0
Stay in good health	36	67.9	7	36.8
Make enough money to support yourself	18	34.0	6	31.6
Find a job (% of those who don't have a job lined up already)	4	14.8	1	5.3
Keep a job	27	51.9	7	36.8

Pay off debts (those who have debts)	7	23.3	7	36.8
How likely is it, if you thought you wouldn't get caught, that you would . . (% who said very likely or likely)				
Use drugs in the six months after release	7	13.2	2	10.5
Commit a crime in the six months after release	3	5.7	1	5.3
How easy or hard do you think it will be to stay out of prison?				
Very easy	34	64.2	9	47.4
Pretty easy	13	24.5	8	42.1
Pretty hard	6	11.3	1	5.3
Very hard	0	0.0	1	5.3
Will _____ be important in order for you to stay out of prison (% yes)				
Having a place to live	51	96.2	19	100.0
Having a job	51	96.2	19	100.0
Having access to health care	38	71.7	19	100.0
Having enough money to support myself	52	98.1	19	100.0
Not using drugs	49	92.5	19	100.0
Not drinking alcohol	47	88.7	18	94.7
Getting support from my family	44	83.0	16	84.2
Getting support from my friends	30	56.6	15	78.9
Avoiding certain people/situations	50	94.3	18	94.7

Most of the offenders interviewed for this project stated that they did not intend to be a gang member following their release from prison. Similarly, few offenders stated that "all" or "most" of their close friends in prison would be likely to commit crimes or use drugs following their release from prison.

It is clear that offenders believe in the importance of steady employment; all but one of the controls and 14 of the 19 reentry participants strongly agreed or agreed that "it is very important to find a job after release from prison." Offenders in both groups indicated that their financial support would come from a variety of sources: their own jobs, their families, and their savings. Very few offenders believed that they would obtain financial support from public assistance or from illegal sources. Regarding their post-prison living arrangements, over three-quarters of the offenders stated that they already had a place to live. About half of the controls indicated that they would be living with a boyfriend/girlfriend or with their mother/stepmother.

In contrast, more than two-thirds of the reentry participants stated that they would be living alone or with a non-relative.

Respondents in both groups had generally optimistic attitudes toward their lives after prison. For example, a third or more of them indicated that it would be "very easy" to re-establish contact with old friends, to avoid a parole violation, to stay in good health, to make enough money to support themselves, to keep a job, and to pay off their debts. Respondents had more pessimistic attitudes about renewing relationships with their children and, among those who didn't already have a job lined up, finding a job. Respondents also had generally optimistic attitudes about their abilities to stay out of trouble following release from prison. When asked how likely it was that they would use drugs or commit a crime, even if they thought that they wouldn't get caught, only two of the reentry participants and seven of the controls said that it was very likely or likely that they would use drugs and only one reentry participant and three controls said that they would commit a crime. Consistent with this, all but six of the controls and all but two of the reentry participants said that it would be "very easy" or "pretty easy" to stay out of prison. All of the re-entry participants, and most of the controls, indicated that the following would be important factors in helping them avoid a return to prison: having a place to live, having a job, having access to health care, having enough money to support themselves, and not using drugs.

Analysis of Recidivism Data

Preventing recidivism is an important goal of the NDCS Serious and Violent Reentry Program. By preparing offenders for reentry into society and by providing those who are released with the tools to successfully reintegrate into community, the program is designed to

delay or preclude offender recidivism. If the program is operating as expected, then, the arrest rates of the reentry participants will be less than those of the controls.

Our analysis of the recidivism data is hampered by the fact that the follow-up period for the reentry participants is substantially shorter than the follow-up period for the controls. As indicated above, the controls were released from prison from June of 2005 through January of 2006. In contrast, the first reentry participant did not leave prison until July of 2006 and many of them were released during the spring and early summer of 2007. We collected recidivism data through September of 2007; as result, the follow-up period for many of the reentry participants was six months or less. The recidivism data that we present is therefore preliminary and our results should be interpreted with caution.

We use two measures of recidivism: whether the offender was arrested or not during the six months following release from prison and the mean number of arrests (felonies or misdemeanors) during the six-month follow-up period. As shown in Figure 1, the odds of a new arrest during the six-month follow-up period were somewhat smaller for the reentry participants than for the controls: 26 percent of the controls, but only 21 percent of the reentry participants had a new arrest during the follow-up period. As shown in Figure 2, the mean number of new arrests also was smaller for the reentry participants (mean = .26) than for the controls (mean = .58).

Figure 1: Percent Arrested Within Six Months of Release From Prison
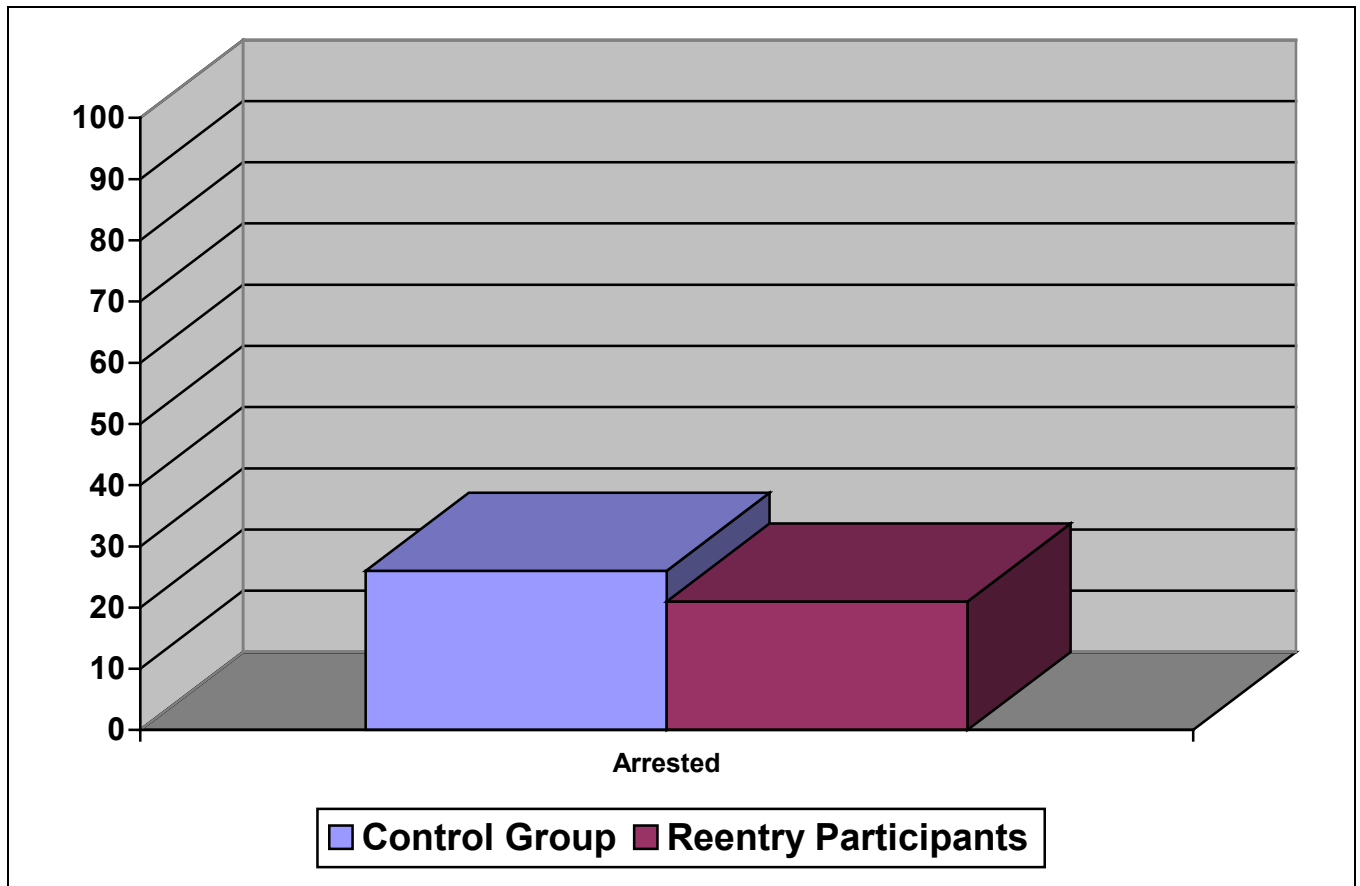
Figure 2: Mean Number of Arrests Within Six Months of Release From Prison
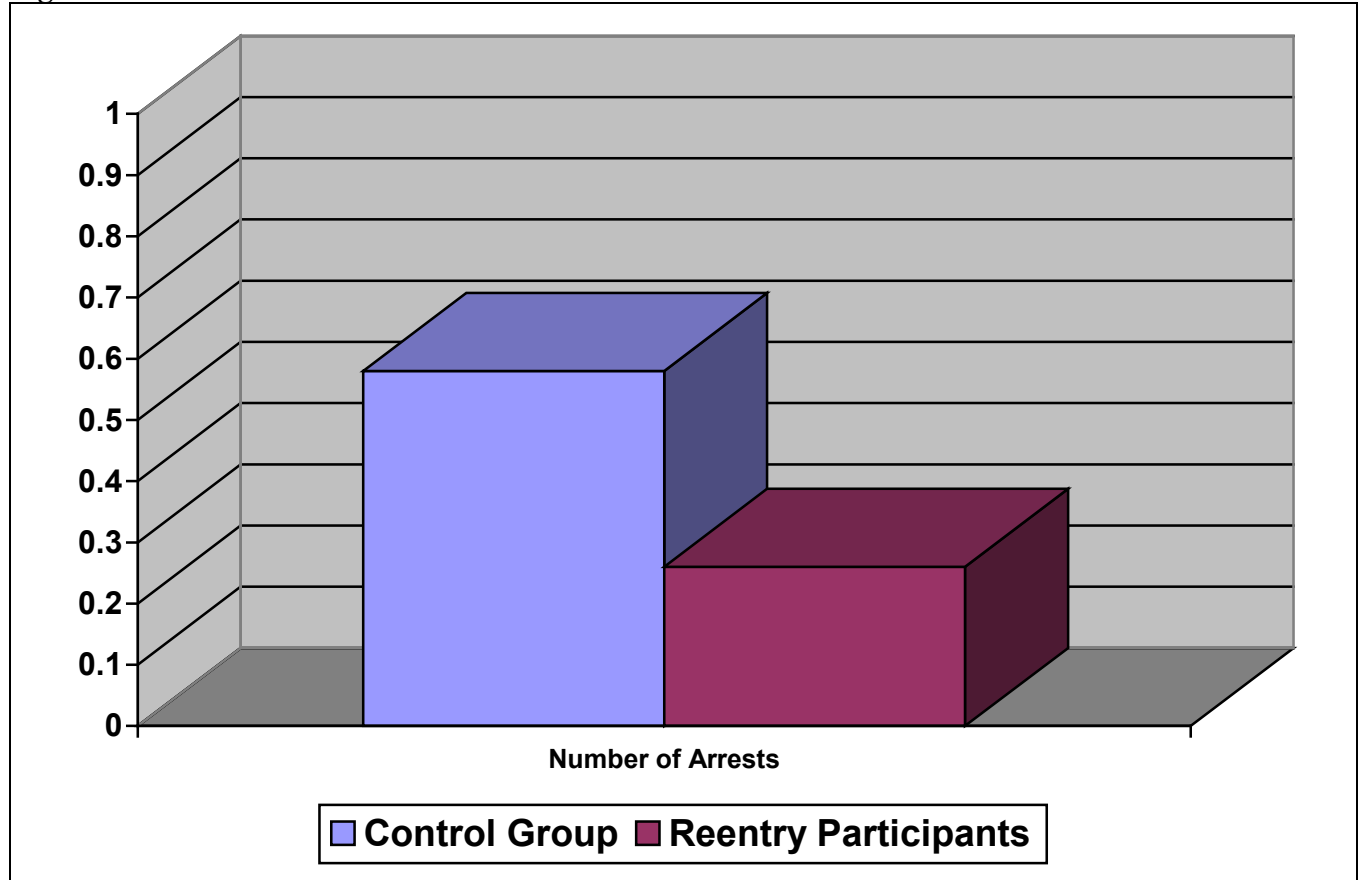
In sum, at first blush, fewer reentry participants were rearrested within the 1st six months of release when compared to control subjects, and participants had fewer numbers of arrests than controls. Again, these statistics should be interpreted with caution given the small number of participants in the program. Despite the limitations of the sample size, however, the reentry programs shows some promise at reducing re-offending among convicted and incarcerated offenders.

Summary of the Outcome Evaluation Results

The primary purpose of this outcome evaluation for the Serious and Violent Offender reentry program is to determine if the goal of reducing recidivism is being achieved through the

program. This determination was to be made by comparing a control group of 53 similar offenders to the participants of the reentry program. There are currently only 19 offenders involved in the reentry program, therefore any conclusions regarding recidivism outcomes must be taken with caution. In spite of this methodological weakness, some meaningful conclusions can be drawn from the outcome evaluation.

- The members of the control group were released between June 2005 and January 2006, via unconditional release or traditional parole.

- In contrast, the first reentry participant was not released until July of 2006, thus creating a lag between the control and reentry groups.

- Each offender in both groups was interviewed in the month prior to their release to determine the degree of similarity between the two groups.

- Based on this interview data, the two groups were remarkably similar on measures of race, age, prior criminal history, prior drug use and family relationships.

- Recidivism was assessed using two measures: whether the offender was arrested during the 6 months following release, and the mean number of arrests during the six-month follow-up period.

- 26% of the control group, but only 21% of the reentry participants were rearrested during the 6 month follow-up period.

- The mean number of new arrests for reentry participants was .26 compared to .58 for control participants.

- These recidivism findings indicate a clear difference between the two groups with reentry participants re-offending at a lower rate.

Cost/Benefit Analysis of the Serious and Violent Reentry Program

The primary purpose of the cost-effectiveness analysis of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services Re-entry Program is to provide corrections officials, administrators and local, state and national policy-makers with cost and cost-savings information that will be critical for future policy and funding decisions. The study is intended to expand and refine the use of previous cost-effectiveness measurement methods and efforts that have been employed elsewhere in re-entry and other criminal justice programs in the U.S.

One study in particular, *"A Detailed Cost Analysis in a Mature Drug Court Setting: A Cost-Benefit Evaluation of the Multnomah County [Portland, Oregon] Drug Court," prepared for the National Institute of Justice, by Dr. Michael Finigan and Dr. Shannon Carey (July, 2003),* stands out in this regard by comprehensively categorizing program costs and savings in terms of 1) program-participant outcomes, 2) societal victimization impacts and 3) public investments. Our study adopts a similar comprehensive approach that will, hopefully, lay the groundwork for continuing refinements in cost-effectiveness measurement and the evaluation of re-entry programs.

In order to provide the most useful information to policy-makers, a "cost-to-taxpayer" approach is used that defines the type of cost data collected. This data includes any criminal justice related costs (or avoided costs) generated by re-entry or non-re-entry comparison group participants, that directly impacts citizens either through tax-related expenditures or personal victimization costs/losses due to crimes committed by serious and violent offenders.

Program Participant Outcome Costs

The outcome costs in this study are based on a Transaction Cost model that examines complex, multiple-criminal-justice-agency transactions or events in the State of Nebraska for

program participants and control group members.[2] Transaction costs are defined as the costs which are incurred by study participants during their involvement with the criminal justice system as of a result of the original (presenting) arrest/case which qualified them for inclusion in this study.

Transactions/events are the major steps or stages through which all participants must pass as part of the re-entry program and/or traditional "business as usual" criminal justice system processing. A complete description of each major re-entry program/criminal justice system stage, individual transactions/events, activities within those events, actors involved with each, cost factors and cost totals are included in Section III. Public Investment Costs.

Program Outcome Cost Savings Due to Reduced Recidivism

As demonstrated earlier in this report, recidivism rates and outcomes for NDCS re-entry program participants are significantly better than those for control group offenders. Re-entry participants averaged an annual rate of .52 new misdemeanor and felony arrests, compared to 1.14 for non-re-entry/control group offenders, or a difference of -.62 fewer new arrests.[3]

Applying these arrest rates to 200 annual participants,[4] those assigned to re-entry program would account for a total of 104 new arrests per year (64 misdemeanor and 40 felony),

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[2] The most comprehensive analysis conducted in Nebraska to date is the *"Cost/Benefit Analysis of the Douglas County Felony Drug Court,"* prepared for the Douglas County District Court of Nebraska, Fourth Judicial Distict, by R.K. Piper and Cassia Spohn, University of Nebraska at Omaha (April, 2004).

[3] A 6-month follow-up period was used for both re-entry and non-re-entry study participants as a majority of re-entry participants had not been released from direct supervision for 12 months or longer. The annual rates used in the cost-effectiveness analysis are therefore double (2X) the rates shown in the 6-month recidivism study. See the program outcome section in this report for a complete description of the recidivism methodology and findings.

[4] We use 200 participants in our cost study to standardize the reporting of results and better demonstrate potential cost-savings in future years. The Nebraska re-entry study sample contains 19 program participants and a control group of 53 traditionally-incarcerated offenders.

while non-participant controls are arrested 228 times (160 misdemeanor and 68 felony), or a difference of -124 (-96 misdemeanor and -28 felony) fewer arrests.[5]

The estimated average outcome costs for misdemeanor and felony re-arrests and the subsequent criminal justice processing for re-entry program participants are shown in Table 12. These estimates are based on the total transaction costs for misdemeanor and felony outcome arrests for Douglas County (Omaha, Nebraska) Felony Drug Court participants.[6]

The felony and misdemeanor transaction costs are based on public investment cost factors for arrest, county and district court processing, probation, jail confinement, prison incarceration and parole. Total felony outcome costs for re-entry study participants are estimated to be $21,156.24 per re-arrest (including cases that did not result in conviction), while misdemeanor transaction costs are $6,014.00.

Table 12. Average Outcome Transaction Costs for Re-entry and Non-Re-entry Participants (2007 Dollars)*

Outcome Cost	Misdemeanor	Felony
Total Criminal Justice Cost	$6,014.00	$21,156.24
General Cost Categories		
Arrest	468.22	468.22
County Court	1,434.82	956.54
District Court		1,904.22
Probation	516.40	476.56
Jail Confinement	3,594.56	8,292.34
Prison		9,025.12
Parole		33.24

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[5] Totals do not include arrests for failure to appear.

[6] See *"Cost/Benefit Analysis of the Douglas County Felony Drug Court,"* by R.K. Piper and Cassia Spohn, University of Nebraska at Omaha (April, 2004). Re-entry program transaction costs are conservatively estimated to be double ($2x$) the costs for traditionally-adjudicated offenders in the felony drug court due to the higher "risk level" of re-entry participants. For example, offenders in the drug court program study could have no more than one prior non-violent and non-gun-related felony conviction (in addition to the presenting felony-drug offense that made them eligible for participation in the drug court or for inclusion in the control group).

Table 13. Annual Outcome Cost-Savings Based on Annualized Recidivism Rates

ARRESTS	Re-entry Program	Non-Re-entry Control Group	Recidivism Difference	Total Outcome Savings*
Misdemeanor Arrests (rate) number	(.32) 64	(.80) 160	**(-.48) -96**	**$577,344**
Felony Arrests (rate) number	(.20) 40	(.34) 68	**(-.14) -28**	**$592,375**
Total Misdemeanor and Felony Arrests (rate) number	**(.52) 104**	**(1.14) 228**	**(-.62) -124**	**$1,169,719**

* Per 200 re-entry participants

When outcome transaction costs are applied to the differing recidivism outcomes as shown in Table 13, total annual outcome cost savings for 200 re-entry participants are $1,169,719 (-96 fewer misdemeanor arrests X $6,014.00 = $577,344) + (-28 fewer felony arrests X $21,156.24 = $592,375). The average annual outcome savings per re-entry program participant is $5,849.

Societal Victimization Costs

The recent compilation of national crime victimization and related cost data provides evaluators and policy-makers with a new window through which to view the broader social impacts of public-sector initiatives such as re-entry programs. To the extent that such programs contribute to a reduction in crime, they are also responsible for lowering additional crime-victim, societal and taxpayer costs.

Clearly, the impacts of crime on society are most closely and intensely felt by the victims of criminal acts, in terms of the pain, suffering, lost quality of life and the personal "out-of-pocket" monetary and property losses that result. Crime also exacts broader societal costs such as the enormous public expenses for victim services, disability and income-support transfer payments, as well as medical and mental health treatment. Finally, other important societal impacts are reflected in higher property, automobile, personal-injury, liability and medical insurance premiums which are all passed on to consumers.

Each year in the U.S., over 49 million personal crime victimizations cost victims an estimated $644 billion ($598 billion for violent crime [including drunk driving] and $46 billion for property crime).[7] Costs for individual victimizations vary greatly depending on the type and severity of the crime, ranging from an average of $530 for each larceny or attempted theft to $4,540,000 for fatal DWI victimizations.

Table 14 provides a summary of the estimated number of annual victimizations, average tangible costs (productivity/lost wages, medical care, mental-health care, police and fire services, social/victim services and property losses), average intangible costs (pain, suffering and lost quality of life) and total aggregate costs for each violent and property crime category. Comprehensive breakdowns of the categories of victimizations, losses per criminal victimization and annual losses in the U.S. are provided in the tables in the Appendix.

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[7] From "Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look" by Ted Miller et al, a research report prepared for the National Institute of Justice (1998). The costs used in this report have been adjusted for inflation to 2007 dollars based on the Consumer Price Index published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 14. Annual Victimization Costs in U.S.* (2007 dollars)**

	Total Number of Victimizations ***	Tangible Costs per Victimization	Intangible Costs per Victimization (Quality of Life)	Total Costs per Victimization	Total Aggregate Victim Costs (Billions)
Violent Crime					
Assault/ Attempt	9,906,000	$2,300	$11,100	$13,400	$133.0
Rape/Sexual Assault	1,467,000	7,300	116,200	124,000	181.0
Robbery /Attempt	1,351,000	3,300	8,100	11,000	16.0
Child Abuse	926,000	11,000	74,000	85,000	80.0
DWI (non-fatal injury)	509,000	31,800	69,100	101,000	51.0
Fatal Crimes	31,000	1,427,700	2,855,400	4,283,000	133.0
Arson (non-fatal injury)	15,000	70,000	218,000	288,000	4.0
Sub-total	**14,205,000**				**$598.0 B**
Property Crime					
Larceny/ Attempt	25,012,000	530	0	530	13.0
Burglary /Attempt	6,321,000	1,600	400	2,000	13.0
Vehicle Theft /Attempt	1,813,000	5,000	400	5,400	10.0
DWI (no injury)	1,774,000	1,900	2,000	3,900	7.0
Arson (no injury)	122,000	23,000	700	24,000	3.0
Sub-total	**35,042,000**				**$46.0 B**
Total	**49,247,000**				**$644.0 B**

*   Cost factor amounts are based on 1993 dollars used in Ted Miller's "Victim Costs and Consequences."

** The totals in the table may not add due to rounding.

*** Estimates of crime victimizations from the National Institute of Justice are based on FBI Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) data.

Dividing the total annual victimization costs for violent crimes ($598 billion) by the total

number of violent-crime victimizations (14,205,000) reveals that the average estimated cost per

violent victimization in the U.S. is $42,098. By comparison, the average property victimization cost is about $1,313 ($46 billion divided by 35,042,000 property victimizations).[8]

Victimization Cost Savings Due to Reduced Recidivism

Applying the average violent and property crime victimization costs to the annualized recidivism findings for re-entry and traditionally-imprisoned study participants allows us to estimate the annual victimization cost savings resulting from reduced criminal activity due to program participation.[9] While measurement of recidivism does not guarantee that an actual victimization occurred for every re-arrest, findings from other studies about serious, habitual, drug-related and violent criminal activities offset this concern.

Recent estimates, based on interviews with offenders and other data, reveal that active offenders commit as many as 100 property and violent crimes per year, the vast majority of which do not result in arrest.[10] While offenders in our study likely did not commit this number of crimes per year, we assume, on average, that at least one property or violent victimization occurred for every property or violent crime re-arrest of re-entry and non-re-entry participants.

Out of the total of 332 misdemeanor and felony re-arrests (per 200 re-entry and 200 control-group study participants), re-entry participants are re-arrested a total of -124 fewer times. As shown in Table 15, re-entry participants have -21 fewer arrests for violent crimes, -56 fewer

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[8] The annual $644 billion violent and property crime victimization cost figure used in this report is perhaps a conservative estimate of the actual costs in the U.S. More recent studies by David A. Anderson (1999) and Mark A. Cohen (2005), cited in testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee (9/16/2006) by Professor Jens Ludwig, Georgetown University, estimated the total victimization costs to be $694 billion per year.

[9] This estimate assumes the average local victimization costs in Nebraska are about the same as the national average.

[10] For example, the study "Behind Bars: Substance Abuse and America's Prison Population" by Steven Belenko et al, National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (1999), found that active offenders annually commit between 89 and 191 property and violent crimes.

property crimes arrests and -47 fewer arrests for drug offenses or other "victimless" crimes (such as prostitution).[11]

Table 15. Re-arrest and Victimization Differences for Violent and Property Crimes*
(200 Participants Per Group)

	Re-entry Re-Arrests Number (Percent)	Non-Re-entry Re-Arrests Number (Percent)	Victimization Difference
Violent Crimes	18 (17.0%)	39 (17.0%)	**-21**
Property Crimes	47 (45.0%)	103 (45.0%)	**-56**
Drug and Other "Victimless" Crimes	39 (38.0%)	86 (38.0%)	**-47**
Total	**104 (100.0%)**	**228 (100.0%)**	**-124 (Re-Arrests)**
Total (not including drug/other victimless)	**65 (62.0%)**	**142 (62.0%)**	**-77 (Re-Arrests)**

* Totals or percentages may not add due to rounding.

Omitting the arrests for drug and other "victimless" crimes, the lower re-arrest rates for re-entry program participants equate to victimization cost savings of $884,058 for violent crimes (-21 X $42,098) and $73,528 for property crimes (-56 X $1,313), or a total savings of $957,586.[12] The average victimization cost savings per re-entry program participant is $3,916.

As shown in Table 16, when total annual program-outcome cost savings of $1,169,719 are combined with societal victimization savings, total annual outcome and victimization savings for the re-entry program are $2,127,305, or $10,637 per participant (not including any cost

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[11] Estimates of the types of crimes committed by category for re-entry and control group study participants are based on the approximate proportions of violent (17%), property (45%) and other/victimless (38%) crimes committed by both felony drug court and traditionally-adjudicated offenders in Nebraska (Spohn and Piper, 2004). While re-arrests were not categorized by type of crime in the re-entry recidivism outcome study, reasonable and conservative estimates of violent and property crimes can be inferred from the results of the drug court study.

The results from the drug court study revealed a remarkable similarity in types of re-arrest crimes between felony drug court study participants and traditionally-adjudicated offenders in the control group (approximately 300 in each sample): violent (17.2% average; range 16.6% dc – 17.7% non-dc); property (44.8% average; range 46.9% dc – 43.4%% non-dc); and other/victimless (37.9% average; range 36.5% dc – 38.8% non-dc).

[12] These total savings are after a deduction of $10,900 (84 X 107) for initial police response and investigation costs already included in public investment and outcome costs.

savings which might result from lower incarceration and other costs due to early release in the re-entry program[13]). While these estimated annual cost savings are substantial, we next discuss and examine the remaining costs/savings component in our model, public investments.

Table 16. Total Annual Re-entry Program Outcome and Victimization Cost Savings

COST SAVINGS	Savings Per Re-Entry Program Participant	Total Annual Savings (Per 200 Participants)
Recidivism-Outcome	$5,849	$1,169,719
Societal Victimization	4,788	957,586
Total Outcome and Victimization Cost Savings	$10,637	$2,127,305

Public Investment Costs

Investment costs are defined as the transaction costs which are incurred by program participants as part of the selection process for acceptance into and during all three phases (i.e., Pre-Release [Phase 1], Transitional [Phase 2] and Post-Release [Phase 3) of the re-entry program. These transactions or events are the major steps through which all participants must pass as part of the re-entry program and/or traditional "business as usual" correctional system processing and incarceration.

Most of the transaction-cost studies conducted in the criminal justice field to date begin with an examination of *the differences* between the "up front" public investment costs of intervention programs (such and pre- and post-adjudication diversion and drug- or other specialized-courts) and traditional offender processing. Re-entry programs are somewhat different, however, due to the later point-of-introduction of intervention for offenders.

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[13] These would be the differences in the incarceration and other costs for re-entry program and control group participants, which result from the original (presenting) offense(s), which made them eligible for the re-entry program and/or inclusion in the evaluation/study.

For example, typical transaction-cost analyses begin with the comparative costs of arrest, pre-trial detention, county and district court processing (e.g, hearings, pleas, trials, judgments and sentencing), and finally the application of the interventions (either rehabilitative diversion or court-monitored programs or the traditional interventions of probation, fine and/or incarceration). Table 17 shows a typical transaction-cost accounting for one traditionally-processed offender. In this instance of felony-case adjudication and processing, all possible criminal justice events and their costs (including the non-traditional drug-court intervention which was not applied), the number of occurrences, the total costs of each event and a total offender cost of $34,517.10 are presented.[14]

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[14] See "Phase II [6/2/99] and Phase III [5/18/01] Douglas County Drug Court Evaluation: Final Report[s]," by Thomas J. Martin, Cassia C. Spohn, R.K. Piper, Erika Frenzel-Davis and Jill Robinson. Methodologies and results for both recidivism and cost-effectiveness were published in the Journal of Drug Court Issues, Bruce Bullington, Editor; Volume 31, Number 1, Winter 2001, Florida State University.

Table 17. Calculating the Cost of Criminal Justice System Involvement of a Traditional Adjudication-Group Offender (2002 Dollars)*

Criminal Justice Event	Cost Factor	Number of occurrences / months / days	Cost of Event
Arrest	204.15	1	204.15
County Court Processing	417.07	1	417.07
District Court Processing			
Arraignment	63.13	2	126.26
Drug Court Petition	36.56		
Pre-trial Processing			
ordinary motions	34.00	2	68.00
motion to suppress	870.90		
plea in abatement	231.23		
pre-trial hearing	89.00	1	89.00
pre-trial plea proceeding	119.69		
Trial			
Jury	5,469.40		
bench	1,032.52		
Judgment and Sentencing	308.13	1	308.13
Other District Court Events			
appearance bond	19.93	2	39.86
affidavits	10.53	2	21.06
transcripts	3.45	1	3.45
court orders/rulings on motions	10.20	3	30.60
miscellaneous events	3.45	3	10.36

* Cost factor amounts are based on 1998 dollars adjusted for inflation based on the Consumer Price Index published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Notes: Blank entries indicate that the event did not occur for this offender.

As is readily apparent in this example, jail confinement and prison incarceration costs are, by far, the largest criminal justice system costs. A typical cost-effectiveness study would then compare the total average costs for offenders in representative sample groups of those receiving the non-traditional intervention and those processed as "business as usual."

In the analysis of a re-entry program, the accounting of criminal justice events and associated costs typically would not begin with arrest, but with the screening and selection events for offenders who are already incarcerated (which point-in-time would also trigger the comparative accounting of traditional-imprisonment costs for the control group members). The counting of events and costs would continue through the end of the re-entry offenders' participation in the intervention program and for a corresponding length of time for controls.

Table 17 (continued)

**Calculating the Cost of Criminal Justice System Involvement
Of a Traditional Adjudication-Group Offender
(2002 Dollars)***

Criminal Justice Event	Cost Factor	Number of occurrences / months / days	Cost of Event
Drug Court (one month)			
Judicial monitoring and case management	112.24 per month		
Treatment	90.87 per month		
Total	203.11 per month		
Probation			
Regular	1.84 per day		
Intensive (ISP)	12.73 per day		
Jail Confinement	53.64 per day	251 days	13,463.36
Prison Incarceration			
NPCC	67.36 per day	293 days	19,735.79
SDCS	65.28 per day		
Omaha facility	45.74 per day		

Lincoln facility	66.51 per day		
Women's facility	79.49 per day		
Parole	6.72 per day		
Total Cost			**34,517.10**

* Cost factor amounts are based on 1998 dollars adjusted for inflation based on the Consumer Price Index published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Notes: Blank entries indicate that the event did not occur for this offender.
The Drug Court treatment cost total includes BSA Region 6 treatment administration costs.

Public Investment Data Collected

Researchers initially began collecting public investment data for re-entry program and traditional correctional-system transactions/events (e.g., personnel, time and cost factors) through interviews with NDCS staff in mid-February, 2005. We identified 11 major Pre-Release (Phase 1) events/activities, including: identification of potential participants, application of risk/need assessments, parole board approval, inmate interviews, review and approval, participant orientation, development of personalized re-entry plan, participation in programming and development of the transitional team and monthly meetings.

Table 18 shows the events/activities identified for Phases 1-3, as well as data collected to date on personnel involved, additional costs and the average duration of the events and activities. The interview protocol used to collect this data, which is designed to be used in all three phases of the re-entry program, is provided in the Appendix.

Table 18. **Nebraska Department of Corrections Re-entry Program Cost Benefit Study Phase I (Pre-Release [Av. 3-6 months up to 9 months])**

Event/Activity	Personnel Involved/Other Costs	Average Duration	Cost Factors
1. Identify Potential Participants (and control group) Generate Roster [set parameters for run: tentative release date, parole data, etc]	Janee Pannkuk (Program Coordinator) Becky Hickman (Central Office) (Review, sort results, compile list after crime check for needs assessment)	1 hr to set parameters; 1 hr to conduct run/distribute results [initial run 144 names conducted 4/2006; every other month run new arrivals]	

2. Apply Risk/Need Assessment
  a. Double check SAVORI criteria met
  b. Misconduct reports (anti-social behavior, drug/alcohol intoxicants, job, age)
  c. Contact and visit each institution checkking other factors on assessment: e.g., computer gang/enemies, public info sheet
  d. Score and fit criteria……compile list for Janee
	Transition Managers administered 121 initial assessments (in 5-7/2005)	Total per inmate: 208.25 hrs.
		
		a. + b.= 30 min per inmate [1hr total] (30x121=60.5 hrs)
		
		c.=3.0 hrs. per trip (3x9 trips = 27 hrs) 45 minutes per inmate (45x121=90.75 hrs) (+transportation costs per trip)
		d.=30 minutes per list of inmates	

3. Roster to Parole Board for Approval (monthly) a. 78 names submitted to parole board [9/2005]; 48 approved	Janee	a. 1 hr to compile spreadsheet	

by parole board b. Special session to review: Parole board circled "approve/denied" and signed spreadsheet; forwarded to Julie and Jessie; maintain sheet on inmates approved/not and notes	Janee	4 hrs. (including travel)	
4. Interview (Notification, Education/Orientation) Interviewed all 48 inmates approved by parole board [10/2005]	Transition Mangers	a. Review spreadsheet and notes for interview = 30 min per inmate (30 x 24 = 12 hrs) b. Contact unit adm, setting up time and place for interview (15 min); conduct interview (45 min) = 1 hr per inmate (1 x 48 = 48 hrs). 3.0 hrs per trip x 8 trips = 24 hrs + travel expenses	
5. Participant Review and Approval (Final Acceptance or Rejection) a. Submitted list of 24 inmates meeting requirements for and requesting final acceptance into program to the Re-Entry Board	a. Janee and Transition Manager	a. 30 min per inmate to review results of each interview and prepare final list (30 x 48 = 24 hrs)	

b. Re-Entry Board approved final acceptance of 17	b. Re-Entry Board [members & staff]	b. Average 30 minutes per inmate (30 x 24 = 12 hrs)	
6. Memo of acceptance (Notifying participants in Lincoln, Tecumseh or York) a. Transfer order to OCC, assign specific housing to those already at OCC	Transition Managers [other staff at each administrative unit]	30 minutes (30 x 17 = 8.5 hrs) a. 30 minutes (30 x 17 = 8.5 hrs)	
7. Orientation (Group 2-4 hours, Rules/Regulations, Steps) a. Sign program agreement (copies to different departments) b. Prep for orientation; prepare passes c. Orientations (1 OCC, 1 York)	Transition Managers	a. 30 minutes (30 x 17 = 8.5 hrs) b. 30 minutes (30 x 17 = 8.5 hrs) c. 2 hrs (x2 mgrs x 2orientations = 8 hrs) + travel 4.0 hrs to York (x2 mgrs = 8 hrs) = travel expenses	
8. Re-entry Personalized Plan (Part of classification; each unit required to do new personalized plan within 30 days of arrival) a. Review existing Departmental Plan b. Develop personalized re-entry components c. Review with unit manager/other staff	a. Transition Managers b. Transition Managers, Unit Manager and other staff	a. a. 30 minutes (30 x 17 = 8.5 hrs) b. 1 hr x 17 = 17 hrs c. 1 hr x 17 = 17 hrs (+ 4 hrs travel	

(submit requests for participation in program components)		time to York x 2 mgrs = 8 hrs)	
9. Participate in Programming (at OCC or NCCW) Mental Health Education (plans/occupation) Substance Abuse a. *Motivation to Change (Staff) Work Attitudes/Behavior b. *Men in Progress (Ex-offenders/staff) c. *Self-Exploration (Community Volunteer) Victim Impact) *Offered only as part of re-entry program (i.e., additional costs above those already included in NDCS average control group offender costs; program participants may get higher placements in waiting lists) d. Trouble-shooting/ Touch-stoning	Transition Manager (Other staff/costs involved in setting up, scheduling, providing these components)	a. 12 hrs x 2 times per year = 24 hrs b. 6 hrs x 2 times per year = 12 hrs c. 9 hrs x 3 times per year = 27 hrs d. 4 hrs per month (x2 mgrs = 8 hrs per month)	
10. Develop and Meet with Transitional Team (monthly) a. Re-assessment b. Program Evaluation by Inmates	Transitional Teams still under development; members yet to be identified as of 1/06		
11. Other events/ (Programming costs above and beyond			

Event/Activity	Personnel Involved/Other Costs	Average Duration	Cost Factors
control group incarceration costs)			

Table 18 (continued)
Nebraska Department of Corrections Re-entry Program Cost Benefit Study
Phase 2 (Transitional [Av. 3-6 months])

Event/Activity	Personnel Involved/Other Costs	Average Duration	Cost Factors
1. Continue to Participate in Programming (see Phase 1, item 9.) (Participants still living in work-release center, still under supervision during: a. work details [on-site at CCO or road crews, etc] or, b. work release [shopping passes, cannot own vehicles]	Transition Managers		
2. Transition Team Meetings (monthly)			
3. Transitional Assessment (Program evaluation by inmates)			
4. New Criminal Activity/Contacts w/CJ System (Some inmates may be doing work release in 2nd half of Phase 2, so			

Event/Activity			

may re-offend at this
time)

Table 18 (continued)
Nebraska Department of Corrections Re-entry Program Cost Benefit Study
Phase 3 (Post-Release [Av. 3 months to one-year+])

Event/Activity	Personnel Involved/Other Costs	Average Duration	Cost Factors
1. Transition Team (Modified for post-release) Meetings (monthly)		Active contact first three months, up to one year beyond that	
2. Two Post-Release Assessments			
3. Program Adjustments (As needed)			
4. Successful Completion or Termination of Participation			
5. Conduct Follow-up Recidivism and/or Participant/Behavior			

Change Studies at 24-, 36-, 48-months or longer			

As of November, 2005, ten (10) program participants had begun Phase 2 transition events/activities and by mid-January, 2006, a total of sixteen (16) inmates had been accepted into the program. The transitional teams were still under development, however, and all members were not identified and in-place until July, 2006.

At this time it became apparent to investigators that the implementation of the program was taking longer than originally planned and the number of program participants in the sample group for the cost-effectiveness study was also smaller than expected. As a result, a decision was made to shift resources to other aspects of the evaluation and to concentrate on the development of the other two components of the cost-effectiveness analysis (recidivism outcomes and societal victimization).

Moreover, the researchers felt that the public investment component could be more-fully and accurately examined once at least some participants had completed the program (as of December, 2007 none had). By that time, the events/activities and associated costs in all three phases of the program are more likely to have become "more-regularized" than in the early development and initial implementation stages, when existing obstacles are first being identified and initial efforts are made to overcome them.

Summary of the Cost Effectiveness Evaluation

The primary purpose of this cost-effectiveness analysis of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) Re-entry Program is to provide administrators and policy-makers with critical information for future policy and funding decisions. This study is intended to

expand and refine the use of cost-effectiveness measurement methods that have previously been

employed in re-entry and other criminal justice programs in the U.S.

This study employs a Transaction Cost model that examines complex, multi-agency

events and costs for participants in re-entry and non-re-entry comparison groups. A "cost-to-

taxpayer" approach is used that includes any criminal justice related costs (or avoided costs)

generated by re-entry program or comparison group participants, that directly impact citizens,

either through tax-related expenditures or personal victimization costs/losses due to crimes

committed by serious and violent offenders after their release from prison.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION FINDINGS

2. **Recidivism-Outcome Costs** are defined as event costs (or avoided costs) due to recidivism (re-arrest) during a 12-month, post-release follow-up period. Recidivism outcomes are substantially lower for re-entry participants than for matching offenders who were traditionally sanctioned and processed.

   - Re-entry participants averaged an annual rate of .52 new misdemeanor and felony arrests compared to 1.14 for non-re-entry control group offenders. Those assigned to the re-entry program account for -96 fewer misdemeanor and -28 fewer felony arrests (per 200 participants) during a 12-month follow-up period.

   - The fewer misdemeanor arrests result in annual outcome cost savings of $577,344 (-96 X $6,014), while fewer felony arrests save $592,375 (-28 X $21,156), or a total annual recidivism-outcome cost savings of $1,169,719 (per 200 participants).

   - The average annual recidivism-outcome cost savings per re-entry program participant is $5,849.

3. **Societal Victimization Costs** are defined as the costs of serious and violent offender crime on victims, taxpayers and the larger society. To the extent that the re-entry program contributes to a reduction in crime (as measured in lower recidivism rates), it is also responsible for lower associated crime-victim, taxpayer and societal costs.

   - Victimization costs include tangible costs (*productivity/lost wages, medical and mental-health care, social/victim services, property and monetary "out-of-pocket losses*) and intangible costs (*pain, suffering and lost quality of life*). Victimization costs vary greatly, ranging from $530 for each larceny or attempt to $4,283,000 for fatal victimizations.

- Each year in the U.S., over 49 million personal crime victimizations cost victims an estimated $644 billion ($598 billion for violent crime [including drunk driving] and $46 billion in property crime).[15] The average estimated cost per violent victimization in the U.S. is $42,098, while the average cost of property victimizations is $1,313.

- Those assigned to the re-entry program account for an estimated -21 fewer violent crimes, -56 fewer property crimes and -47 fewer drug or other "*victimless*" crimes during a 12-month follow-up period (per 200 participants). The annual victimization cost savings due to the lower rates of recidivism of 200 re-entry participants are $884,058 for violent crimes (-21 X $42,098) and $73,528 (-56 X $1,313) for property crimes, or a total societal-victimization cost savings of $957,586.

4. **Total annual cost savings.** When recidivism-outcome and societal-victimization costs are combined, the total annual savings due to the NDCS Re-Entry Program (per 200 participants) are $2,127,305 or $10,637 *for each* re-entry participant. The following table summarizes annual re-entry savings and average savings per participant at each stage of the cost-effectiveness analysis.

Table 19. Total Annual Re-Entry Program Recidivism-Outcome, Societal Victimization, Public Investment and Other Cost Savings

COST SAVINGS	Savings Per Re-Entry Participant	Total Annual Savings (Per 200 Participants)
Recidivism-Outcome	$5,849	$1,169,719
Societal Victimization	4,788	957,586
Public Investment	N/A	N/A
Participant/Behavioral Change	N/A	N/A
Total Cost Savings	$10,637	$2,127,305

5. **Recommendations for Further Evaluation**

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[15] From "Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look" by Ted Miller et al, a research report prepared for the National Institute of Justice (1996).

The totals in Table 12 above do not include other potentially substantial taxpayer and societal cost-savings due to public investment transactions or changes in re-entry program participants and/or their behavior.

The remainder of this executive summary documents our major recommendations for continuing re-entry program evaluation in these areas, as well as for improvements in later recidivism-outcome and societal victimization cost-effectiveness analyses.

Public Investment Cost/Savings.   While the public investment section of the cost analysis was not completed as described in the report, *far greater cost savings are likely in this area than were found in either the recidivism-outcome or societal victimization analyses.*

- These savings would potentially result from reduced imprisonment costs for re-entry participants due to early release, despite higher program costs which also must be documented and included in the analysis.

- Once re-entry program procedures and staffing have become "more regularized" and a significant proportion of participants have completed the program, the initial collection of public-investment data in this study should be reviewed, verified and completed.

Participant/Behavioral Change Costs/Savings.   While changes in re-entry program participants themselves and their non-criminal, social behaviors were not included in this analysis, these types of cost-effectiveness measures have been used in numerous other cost-effectiveness studies in the criminal justice field.

- The inclusion of participant and social change variables in future studies, we believe, would provide a more-comprehensive and accurate depiction of both the cost-effectiveness and larger societal benefits of the re-entry program.

- Much of this information is already captured in the re-entry program case management and information system (MIS) or could be added in the future without great difficulty.

- The variables which have measurable cost-impacts on taxpayers and the larger society include: changes in education, employment, income, formation of stable personal/family relationships (including child custody) and treatment of medical and mental health conditions.

Recidivism-Outcome Cost/Savings. Later recidivism studies conducted at the 12-, 18-, 24- and 36-month (or longer) follow-up periods may likely demonstrate greater cost-savings than those found in the 6-month follow-up period.

If the program is working as envisioned and designed, *with the passage of time, offenders who have not participated in the re-entry program would be more- likely to generate far greater costs for significantly more arrests and convictions for increasingly-serious crimes.*

- New transaction-cost data, beginning with first re-arrests for re-entry and control-group participants and continuing throughout the criminal justice process, should be collected in future recidivism studies.

- While our cost study uses adjusted misdemeanor and felony adjudication/processing cost estimates for Nebraska offenders,[16] more-accurate cost information for actual re-entry and control offenders should be obtained via direct observation and examination of individual criminal-history records.

Societal Victimization Costs/Savings. When new recidivism-outcome data is collected on misdemeanor and felony adjudication/processing costs for re-entry and control group members, as described above, information on the types of crimes for first and subsequent arrests should also be gathered.

- At a minimum, data on re-arrests should be categorized as violent, property, "victimless" to allow for basic cost analysis.

- More-specific re-arrest categorizations, will allow more-precise societal-victimization cost estimates.

  These include: *assault/attempt, rape/sexual assault, robbery/attempt, child abuse, DWI (non-fatal injury), fatal crimes, and arson (non-fatal injury)* for violent crimes; *larceny/attempt, burglary/attempt, vehicle theft/attempt, DWI (no-injury) and arson (no-injury)* for property crimes; *and drug offenses, prostitution and other* for "victimless" crimes.

Conclusions

Nebraska's Serious and Violent Offender Reentry program was intended to reduce re-offending among released offenders and thereby enhance public safety. A team of researchers

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[16] Misdemeanor and felony adjudication and cost data were for offenders who were likely "lower-risk" than offenders in the re-entry and control samples. For additional details and information, see Section II. of the cost analysis.

from the University of Nebraska at Omaha evaluated this program to determine the degree to which it either achieved, or had the potential to achieve, these goals. Process, outcome, and cost/benefit evaluations were conducted on the reentry program, and overall, it has been determined that this program holds promise at reducing re-offending.

The reentry program was, for the most part, implemented as intended. Although the target population for the program has evolved over time due to the small number of serious and violent offenders in Nebraska, those offenders that exhibit violent tendencies and are predicted to be at high risk for re-offending have been targeted for the program. Program components that were promised to participants in Phase I have been delivered, and program subjects expressed enthusiasm for these components and believe they will help them make a successful transition back into society.

Programming components for Phase II of the reentry program have also, for the most part, been delivered as promised. Although participants report slight dissatisfaction with some aspects of reentry programming in Phase II, most of this sentiment focused around the small number of people in the program or the perceived lack of services as they get closer to leaving the Community Corrections Center. By dedicating a transition manager to CCC-O at least a half a day a few times a week, NDCS could possible alter these perceptions. Also, by continuing to maintain, or build additional partnerships with community service providers, NDCS should be able to addresses any concerns of participants in Phase II.

Researchers were not able to fully evaluate the implementation of program components in Phase III of the reentry program because no participants had entered this phase at the end of the evaluation period. Some community partnerships to deliver services in Phase III have been established, however. Although the quality or offender satisfaction with these programs remains

unknown, NDCS has vetted the agencies with which they have created relationships, which should ensure some quality control. Despite the collaborative partnerships that have been established, a continued expansion of community partnerships would undoubtedly benefit participants when they reach Phase III and possibly avoid some of the concerns expressed by inmates in Phase II of the program.

The outcome evaluation of the reentry program indicates that the program shows promise in reducing re-offending among returning offenders. Researchers originally intended to examine an equal number of reentry participants and control subjects who were matched on several variables. Although the optimum number of control subjects was achieved, the program yielded many fewer participants than expected. The outcome evaluation was, therefore, hampered by the limited number of participants in the program. Nevertheless, the evaluation reveals that the odds of being re-arrested were smaller for reentry participants than for control subjects, and reentry subjects had a lower mean number of arrests than controls. Although researchers were only able to follow reentry participants for six months upon their release into the community, literature commonly suggests that most offenders fail, or are rearrested, within the first six months of release from prison (Petersilia, 2001). This evaluation should have then covered the time period in which most returning offenders are likely to fail. Overall, despite the short follow-up period and small sample size, our evaluation suggests that the reentry program demonstrates positive results in terms of reducing re-offending.

The small numbers of inmates participating in the reentry program also somewhat limits the conclusions that can be drawn from the cost/benefit analysis. The early results, however, suggest that a cost savings can be achieved through the reentry program. It is estimated that considerable cost savings to NDCS can be achieved by using the reentry program through its

potential to reduce recidivism. More importantly, early estimates indicate that the reentry program lowers victimization costs to society. Overall, it is estimated that an annual two million dollar savings can be passed on to tax payers in Nebraska through the reentry program's potential to reduce incarceration and victimization costs. To this end, although the reentry program needs further evaluation, and some aspects of programming may need modification, on its face the reentry program is a prudent financial investment for not only NDCS but also for Nebraska taxpayers overall.

Given the results presented in this report, it would seem that it is not only prudent for NDCS to continue the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry program, but it may be in the department's best interests to expand this program to more offenders. For this pilot program, only offenders returning to the Omaha Metropolitan area were eligible. The results of the outcome and cost effectiveness evaluations suggest that greater reductions in costs and recidivism could be achieved by implementing the program state-wide. The process evaluation indicates that most program components have been implemented as intended, so a simple replication of the efforts made at OCC, CCC-O, and in Omaha could facilitate the expansion of the program state-wide. At the very least, results indicate that the program should be expanded to the Lincoln Metropolitan area, the second most populated area of the state.

Beyond an expansion of the reentry program, it would be wise for NDCS to re-evaluate the Omaha pilot program within the next five years. Within the next five years, many Omaha reentry participants will have reached Phase III of the program, which to date has not been evaluated in terms of process or outcomes. More importantly, UNO researchers continue to hold the information on the control subjects for this study. A five-year comparison of re-arrests

among both reentry and control subjects would yield further evidence of the effectiveness of the reentry program.

One last overall recommendation for the reentry program pertains to the reasons behind the effectiveness of the program. The reentry program is quite large, encompassing three phases and several services and programming components. Although these results suggest that the reentry program overall has the potential to reduce re-offending and enhance public safety, at this time, we do not know why. Some findings from the process evaluation suggest that the transition managers for reentry may be an important aspect of the program's success, but which programming components are the most helpful to inmates remains unknown. In the future, it would be wise for NDCS to evaluate the programming components used in the reentry program, such as GOLF or Men/Women in Progress, to determine which are most or least beneficial to offenders' return to society and which may need further modification.

The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services has successfully created a Serious and Violent Reentry program that seems to be producing positive results in terms of cost-savings and re-offending. The Department should be commended for its efforts. Given the results presented here, NDCS should consider future evaluation of the program to further demonstrate its potential to enhance public safety.

Appendix

List of Stakeholder Interviewees

Bob Houston Current Director, NDCS	*Brian Finn* PRA NDCS	*Ken Vampola* Director, Nebraska Board of Parole	*Tom English* Omaha Correctional Center	*Teela Mickles* Founder and CEO, Compassion in Action
Harold Clarke Former Director, NDCS	*Stephen Weis* Administrative Assistant II NDCS	*Ed Birkel* Probation Administrator NDCS	*Linda Leonard* Omaha Correctional Center	*Carolyn Stuczynski* Manager, Omaha Career Center Dept. of Labor,
Janee Pannkuk Program Coordinator NDCS	*Jeff Uttecht* Lincoln Correctional Center	*Julie Rogers* Executive Policy Analyst The Nebraska Community Corrections Council	*Mark Weilage* Supervisor of Mental Health Omaha Correctional Center	*Carol Terrell* Executive Director Nebraska Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
Larry Wayne Assistant Director Programs and Community Service NDCS	*Jim McKenzie* Adult Parole Administrator NDCS	*Lois Bernasek* Warden, Nebraska Correctional Center for Women	*Ed Fabian* Community Correctional Center-Omaha	*Line Staff* (to remain anonymous) at OCC, York, CCC-O
Ron Limbech Coordinator, Classification and Programs NDCS	*Sara Nelson* Victim Services Coordinator NDCS	*Cathy Waller-Borovac* Acting Warden, NCYF NDCS	*Cynthia Stewart* Omaha District Parole Supervisor	
Steve King PRA	*Dr. Mario Scalora*	*Karen Shortridge* Warden, Omaha	*Gail Braun* Grant	

NDCS	Diagnostic and Evaluation Center, NDCS	Correctional Center	Coordinator City of Omaha Mayor's Office	

Participant Interview Instrument

How long have you been a participant in the re-entry program?

What do you think you need to live a crime-free life outside of prison in terms of types of skills, programs, etc? Why?

Have these needs been addressed in the time you have been in the program? Which ones? How so?

Which of those needs have not been addressed? Why?

In what programs have you been a participant in your time in the re-entry program?

Have you found these programs helpful? Which ones, why or why not?

Have you received the programming and services that you were promised when you entered the program?

If not, what were you promised that you have not received?

Why did you join the re-entry program?

Was the program what you expected it to be when you entered?

Do you have any suggestions for programs to add or eliminate from the program?

Do you have any suggestions for improving the existing programs?

What is your overall opinion of the re-entry program?

What is your overall opinion of the transition managers?

What is your overall opinion of your peers in the program?

What are the difference, if any, that you see between the programming available to you in the re-entry program compared to the programs available to the general prison population?

How have you seen yourself change in your time in the re-entry program? Is it because of the program?

Protocol for Cost/Benefit Analysis

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 3, 2005

TO: Cassie Spohn, Lisa Sample

FROM: R.K. Piper

RE: Protocol for Gathering NDCS Re-entry Program Cost-Benefit Information from CJ and Related Agencies

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Below is a protocol for gathering cost-benefit information from criminal justice and related agencies in the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NSCS) Re-entry Program. The protocol is organized by agency (i.e., corrections, law enforcement, prosecutor, court, supervisory agency, and treatment/service providers) and lists some basic questions that should be asked of agency staff as well as documentation which we will need.

Our general objective will be to gather basic information on agency activities relating to the re-entry program from pre-release, post-release and follow-up phases, as well as to collect variable cost data pertaining to those activities. Our strategy will be threefold. First, establish the most important agency activities relating to the re-entry process/program (e.g., major activities which relate to: screening, selection, release, supervision, treatment and services, and any subsequent re-arrest, adjudication and confinement). Second, link each major agency activity to a typical usage of agency resources (e.g., a program-participation screening and evaluation = X hours of NE Corrections staff time, a typical arrest = Y hours of a police officer time). Third, link the use of agency resources to underlying cost factors (e.g., each hour of a staff time is worth Z dollars in terms of compensation (i.e., salary and fringe benefits).

NE Department of Corrections Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Program: Cost-Benefit Analysis Information Protocol

Agency: Nebraska Department of Correctional Services

Questions.

Questions 1-5 should be asked of a senior corrections administrator(s) who has general knowledge of the major program activities relating to each phase (I.-III.) of the re-entry program. This person does not have to be knowledgeable about underlying resource costs or agency budgets.

1. *What are the major pre-release, post-release and follow-up activities or events relating to re-entry?*

Probe on screening and evaluation, participant selection, program components, supervision, and any subsequent post-release activities, investigations, arrests, adjudications and confinements. Include assistance provided to other criminal justice agencies such as law enforcement, the courts, probation, and parole. After formulating an initial list of activities, review the list with the interviewee and ask, "Does this look complete? Are we missing anything important?"

2. *What do these activities typically consist of?*

   Probe on actual tasks such as communications with corrections staff, filling out administrative reports, travel time to and from a given destination (e.g., to program participant, treatment/service provider and community meetings), the development of a case plan, supervision, referrals for treatment or services, etc.

3. Who is typically involved in these activities?

   Probe on type of staff and number of staff involved. For example, probe on the involvement of supervisory staff and clerical staff, in addition to the involvement of line officers.

4. How much time is typically spent on each of these activities by each of the types of staff discussed?

   Probe on each activity, then sum up the amount of time and ask, "Does this look right or are we over or under on some of these?" Agency time sheets may be helpful in tracking the amount of time spent on specific tasks

5. What equipment, materials or other resources are used in connection with each of the activities that we have discussed?

   Probe on travel mileage, use of forms, equipment and supplies, telephone and computer usage.

Documentation.

1. Summary of the annual agency budget. (variable and fixed costs) (Who has this?)

2. Personnel compensation rates by rank/type of personnel (major variable cost)

3. Depreciation schedules for facility and major equipment items or other (fixed costs)

4. Communication costs (telephone calls, computer database access) (other variable cost)

5. Supply/material costs or other (e.g., forms, supplies, equipment) (other variable cost)

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