



# EVALUATION OF THE PRISONER RE-ENTRY INITIATIVE

## FINAL REPORT

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In late 2005, the U.S. Department of Labor selected 30 organizations to operate Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (PRI) programs, each one intended to help at least 200 formerly incarcerated individuals find jobs and re-enter their communities annually. This report is the product of several years of research into the operations of these projects; it is also built upon prior research in the criminal justice and workforce fields.

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Douglas Holl  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENT</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>EXHIBITS, FIGURES, AND TABLES</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>xii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENT</b> .....	<b>I</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>III</b>
<b>EXHIBITS, FIGURES, AND TABLES</b> .....	<b>VII</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>XII</b>
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>A. PRISONER RE-ENTRY: THE POLICY IMPETUS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>B. THE PRISONER RE-ENTRY INITIATIVE</b> .....	<b>5</b>
1. The Federal Partnership .....	5
2. The Three-Stage Prisoner Re-Entry Framework .....	5
4. Key Parameters of PRI .....	8
<b>C. THE PRI EVALUATION</b> .....	<b>13</b>
1. Key Research Questions .....	13
2. Interim Report Findings .....	14
3. Data Sources for the Final Report .....	16
<b>D. ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>II. PRI GRANTEES AND COMMUNITIES</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>A. GRANTEE CHARACTERISTICS</b> .....	<b>19</b>
1. The Grantee Organizations .....	19
2. Grantee Experience .....	20
2. Grantee Experience .....	21
<b>B. GRANTEE COMMUNITIES</b> .....	<b>23</b>
1. Economic Conditions .....	24
2. State Approaches to Incarceration and Community Supervision .....	26
<b>A. APPROACHES TO PROJECT ORGANIZATION</b> .....	<b>30</b>
1. Degree of Program Centralization .....	30
34	
2. Staffing Considerations .....	34
3. Supervising Participants .....	35
<b>B. PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT</b> .....	<b>36</b>
1. Overview .....	36
2. Criminal Justice Partners (Institutional) .....	37

3. Criminal Justice Partners (Community).....	40
4. Housing .....	43
5. Workforce Investment System.....	44
6. Health-Related Partners.....	47
7. Summary of Relationship Perceptions and Implications for Projects.....	49
<b>IV. PROJECT OPERATIONS.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>B. PERCEPTIONS OF CHALLENGES FACED BY EX-OFFENDERS.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>C. TRENDS IN PROGRAM DESIGN OVER TIME.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>D. PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT, INTAKE, AND ASSESSMENT.....</b>	<b>55</b>
1. Pre-release Connections .....	56
2. Recruitment and Referral Processes.....	59
3. Participant Intake Processes .....	61
4. Participant Assessment Processes .....	66
<b>E. CASE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES .....</b>	<b>69</b>
1. Case Manager Responsibilities .....	69
2. Developing an Individual Development Plan (IDP) .....	71
<b>F. MENTORING.....</b>	<b>72</b>
1. Mentor Recruitment .....	73
3. Recruiting Mentees .....	78
4. Mentoring Program Design and Content .....	80
5. Processes for Matching with Participants .....	85
6. Oversight/Supervision.....	85
7. Perceptions of the Value of Mentoring .....	86
8. Direction of Mentoring.....	88
<b>G. WORKFORCE PREPARATION ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>H. EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>90</b>
1. Basic and Remedial Education and GED Preparation .....	91
2. Occupational Skill Training .....	92
3. Post-Placement Training .....	93
<b>I. JOB DEVELOPMENT, PLACEMENT, AND RETENTION.....</b>	<b>93</b>
1. Strategies for Job Development and Initial Placement .....	93
2. Retention Strategies.....	100
<b>J. HOUSING ASSISTANCE.....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>K. SUBSTANCE ABUSE, MENTAL HEALTH, AND OTHER HEALTH SERVICES.....</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>L. SUPPORTIVE SERVICES .....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>M. Project Use of Incentives.....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>N. REMAINING GAPS IN SERVICES.....</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>V. PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS AND SERVICE USE.....</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>A. DATA SOURCES, ANALYSIS METHODS, AND DATA LIMITATIONS.....</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>B. PRI ENROLLMENT .....</b>	<b>116</b>
1. Participant Enrollment Patterns.....	116
2. Services Received During Incarceration and DOC Program Participation.....	117
3. Time from Release to Enrollment .....	122
<b>C. PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS .....</b>	<b>122</b>

1. Demographics and Family Characteristics.....	122
2. Criminal History and Recent Incarceration.....	125
3. Education.....	128
4. Employment History .....	130
5. Housing Status.....	133
6. Substance Abuse and Mental Health.....	134
<b>D. PATTERNS OF PARTICIPATION AND SERVICE RECEIPT .....</b>	<b>135</b>
1. Flow of Services and Length of PRI Participation.....	136
2. Types of Services Received .....	138
3. Subgroup Differences in Service Receipt .....	143
<b>VI. SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES .....</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>A. OUTCOMES MEASURES, DATA LIMITATIONS, AND ANALYSIS</b>	
<b>METHODS .....</b>	<b>147</b>
1. Types of Outcome Measures.....	147
2. Grantee Tracking and Verification of Participants’ Outcomes .....	148
3. Analysis Methods.....	151
<b>B. INITIAL PLACEMENT IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT .....</b>	<b>153</b>
1. Rates and Timing of Job Placement.....	153
2. Characteristics of Initial Job Placements .....	156
3. Subgroup Differences in Job Placement .....	158
4. Comparisons with Other Re-entry Initiatives.....	161
<b>C. POST-EXIT EMPLOYMENT.....</b>	<b>162</b>
1. Employment in the Three Quarters After Program Exit .....	162
2. Subgroup Differences in Post-Exit Employment.....	165
<b>D. RECIDIVISM AT ONE YEAR AFTER RELEASE .....</b>	<b>167</b>
1. Rates and Timing of Re-arrest .....	167
2. Rates of Conviction and Incarceration for New Crimes .....	171
3. Relationship Between Job Placement and Recidivism .....	172
4. Subgroup Differences in Recidivism .....	172
5. Comparisons with Other Ex-Offender Populations .....	174
<b>E. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT.....</b>	<b>176</b>
<b>F. SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND HOUSING STATUS.....</b>	<b>178</b>
1. Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the Six Months After Enrollment.....	179
2. Housing at Six Months After Enrollment .....	181
<b>G. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICES AND SHORT-TERM</b>	
<b>OUTCOMES.....</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>VII. COST ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>A. SOURCES OF COST DATA, ANALYSIS METHODS, AND LIMITATIONS .</b>	<b>187</b>
1. Cost Data Sources .....	187
2. Cost Analysis Methods and Limitations .....	190
<b>B. TOTAL COSTS OF PROVIDING PRI SERVICES .....</b>	<b>191</b>
1. Grant Expenditures Across All 30 Grantees .....	192
2. Detailed Grant Expenditures Across Nine Selected Grantees.....	193
3. Donated, Volunteer, and In-Kind Resources across Nine Selected Grantees .....	200
4. Breakdown of Costs by Program Component Across Nine Selected Grantees .....	204

<b>C. COST PER PRI PARTICIPANT .....</b>	<b>207</b>
1. Average Total Cost per Participant .....	208
2. Costs Relative to Participant Outcomes .....	210
<b>VIII. CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>A. JOB PLACEMENT AND RECIDIVISM .....</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>B. SERVICES FOR PARTICIPANTS.....</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>C. ENROLLMENT STRATEGIES AND RE-ENTRY CHALLENGES .....</b>	<b>214</b>
<b>D. COMMUNITY CONTEXT AND PROGRAM OPERATIONS.....</b>	<b>215</b>
<b>E. COSTS OF PRI.....</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>F. NEXT STEPS IN FEDERAL EFFORTS TO SERVE EX-OFFENDERS .....</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS .....</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>APPENDIX A. GRANTEE INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>APPENDIX B. INCARCERATION AND COMMUNITY SUPERVISION DATA.....</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>APPENDIX C. MISSING DATA FROM THE PRI MIS .....</b>	<b>232</b>
<b>A. BASELINE AND SERVICE RECEIPT DATA .....</b>	<b>232</b>
<b>B. OUTCOME DATA .....</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>APPENDIX D. SUBGROUP ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>237</b>
<b>APPENDIX E. ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE USE AND OUTCOMES .....</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>APPENDIX F. REGRESSIONS.....</b>	<b>257</b>

# EXHIBITS, FIGURES, AND TABLES

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## **Exhibits**

Exhibit ES.1	Prisoner Re-Entry Framework .....	xv
Exhibit I.1	Prisoner Re-Entry Framework .....	7
Exhibit I.2	DOJ Pre-release Grant Requirements .....	13
Exhibit I.3	Findings from the Interim Report .....	15
Exhibit II.1	Key Findings – PRI Grantees and Communities .....	18
Exhibit II.2	The "Reach-in" Oregon Department of Corrections .....	28
Exhibit III.1	Key Findings – Organization of Program Services .....	29
Exhibit III.2	Participants’ Thoughts on Parole, Probation, and Re-Entry .....	41
Exhibit III.3	Examples of PRI and One-Stop Partnerships .....	46
Exhibit IV.1	Key Findings – Project Operations .....	51
Exhibit IV.2	From Pre-release to Re-Entry: Ohio Department of Corrections and Talbert House .....	63
Exhibit IV.3	Mentor Recruiting Challenges .....	76
Exhibit IV.4	Mentor-Mentee Activities: Community Service, Rock Climbing, and Amusement Parks .....	84
Exhibit IV.5	Profile of a Work Readiness Training Program .....	89
Exhibit IV.6	The Atlantic City Rescue Mission .....	104
Exhibit V.1	Key Findings – Participant Characteristics .....	113
Exhibit V.2	Key Findings – Service Use .....	114
Exhibit VI.1	Key Findings – Short-term Outcomes .....	146
Exhibit VII.1	Key Findings – Costs .....	188

## **Figures**

Figure ES.1	Types of Mentoring Provided .....	xxii
Figure III.1	Subcontracting by PRI Projects .....	32
Figure IV.1	Types of Mentoring Provided .....	80
Figure IV.2	Case Manager Perceptions of Mentoring .....	86
Figure V.1	PRI Enrollment by Month .....	117
Figure V.2	Type of Institution Most Recent Incarceration .....	118



Figure V.3	Enrollment Patterns among Participants Who Received DOJ PRI Pre-release Services .....	120
Figure V.4	Educational Attainment at Enrollment.....	129
Figure VI.1	Rate of Job Placements Among All PRI Participants .....	154
Figure VI.2	Recidivism Rates at One Year After Release .....	169
Figure VI.3	Attainment of Educational Degrees or Certificates .....	177
Figure VI.4	Substance Abuse at Six Months After Enrollment .....	180
Figure VI.5	Housing Status at Six Months After Enrollment .....	182

## **Tables**

Table ES.1	Time from Release to Enrollment and Release Conditions .....	xvii
Table ES.2	Types of Services Received Before Exit.....	xviii
Table ES.3	Grantees' Success in Collecting Outcome Data at Key Benchmarks .....	xx
Table ES.4	Employment Outcomes After Exit.....	xxv
Table II.1	Overview of PRI Grantees .....	20
Table II.2	Prior Grantee Experience in Seven Principal PRI Service Areas .....	22
Table II.3	Key Economic Statistics for PRI Communities .....	25
Table III.1	Subcontracting Activity .....	31
Table III.2	Staffing Distribution Across Sites.....	34
Table IV.1	Top Re-Entry Issues for Ex-Offenders .....	53
Table IV.2	DOC Criteria for Selection of Pre-release Participants .....	57
Table IV.3	Methods for Recruitment and Referral of Participants .....	59
Table IV.4	Information Provided To DOL Grantees By The DOJ Partners .....	64
Table IV.5	Types of Assessments Performed by PRI Projects .....	68
Table IV.6	How Case Manager Assignments Were Made .....	70
Table IV.7	Approaches to Mentor Recruitment.....	74
Table IV.8	Length of Mentor Training .....	77
Table IV.9	Mentor-Mentee Social Interactions.....	83
Table IV.10	Types of Occupational Skills Training Offered by PRI Projects.....	93
Table IV.11	Most Significant Barrier To Employment .....	95
Table IV.12	How Participants Are "Marketed" To Employers.....	96
Table IV.13	Approaches To Job Development .....	98
Table IV.14	Leading Industries For Placement.....	99
Table IV.15	Reasons Why Participants Do Not Keep Jobs .....	100
Table IV.16	Harder-To-Follow Participants .....	102
Table IV.17	Why Is Finding Appropriate Housing So Difficult For Ex-Offenders?.....	105
Table IV.18	Supportive Services.....	109
Table IV.19	Project Manager Identification of Services They Would Like to Add or Expand .....	111

Table V.1	Prevalence of Missing Data Across Baseline Characteristics.....	119
Table V.2	Time from Release to Enrollment and Release Conditions .....	121
Table V.3	Demographic Characteristics .....	123
Table V.4	Comparison of PRI Characteristics with Released Prisoners Nationwide.....	124
Table V.5	Family Characteristics and Child Support Obligations at Enrollment.....	125
Table V.6	Criminal History .....	127
Table V.7	Characteristics of Most Recent Incarceration .....	128
Table V.8	Employment History .....	130
Table V.9	Characteristics of Prior Jobs .....	131
Table V.10	Housing, Substance Abuse, and Health Status at Enrollment.....	133
Table V.11	Timing of Service Receipt .....	137
Table V.12	Types of Services Received Before Exit.....	139
Table V.13	Types of Services Received After Exit .....	142
Table V.14	Subgroup Differences in Length of Participation .....	144
Table V.15	Subgroup Differences in the Types of Key Services Received .....	145
Table VI.1	Grantee’s Success in Collecting Outcome Data at Key Benchmarks.....	148
Table VI.2	Grantees Success in Collecting Outcome Data by Participant Characteristics...	150
Table VI.3	Number and Timing of Job Placements .....	154
Table VI.4	Tenure at Initial Job Placement and Job Replacement .....	156
Table VI.5	Characteristics of Job Placements.....	157
Table VI.6	Subgroup Differences in Job Placements.....	160
Table VI.7	Employment Outcomes After Exit.....	163
Table VI.8	Characteristics of Jobs Held in Second and Third Quarters After Exit .....	164
Table VI.9	Subgroup Differences in Post-exit Employment .....	166
Table VI.10	Recidivism Rates at One Year After Release With Various Missing Data Assumptions .....	168
Table VI.11	Criminal Justice Events During First Year After Release .....	169
Table VI.12	Characteristics of Re-arrests Within One Year After Release .....	170
Table VI.13	Summary Measure of Participants’ Short-term Success.....	172
Table VI.14	Subgroup Differences in Recidivism .....	173
Table VI.15	Number and Timing of Educational Credential Attainment.....	179
Table VI.16	Differences in Job Placement Based on Service Receipt.....	184
Table VI.17	Differences in Recidivism Based on Service Receipt.....	185
Table VII.1	Nine Grantees Selected for In-Depth Cost Analysis.....	189
Table VII.2	Total Grant Expenditures through September 2007 .....	192
Table VII.3	Total Expenditures for Nine Selected Grantees during the Cost Period of October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007 .....	194
Table VII.4	Breakdown of Expenditures at Nine Selected Grantees (in dollars).....	196
Table VII.5	Average Salary Rates and Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) for PRI Staff .....	197
Table VII.6	Grantee Administrator Reports of Unmet Needs among Participants .....	200
Table VII.7	Donated, Volunteer, and In-Kind Resources (in dollars) .....	201
Table VII.8	Types of In-Kind Resources Garnered by the Nine Selected Grantees .....	204

Table VII.9	Breakdown of PRI Costs by Service Categories across Nine Selected Grantees .....	205
Table VII.10	PRI Cost per Participant during Cost Period .....	209
Table VII.11	PRI Costs Relative to Participant Outcomes across All 30 Grantees (Percents) .....	211
Table A.1	PRI Grantees .....	228
Table B.1	Share of Adult Population Incarcerated or Under Supervision, by State.....	230
Table B.2	Released Sentenced Prisoners by State and Type of Release, 1998 .....	231
Table C.1	Prevalence of Missing Data Across Baseline Characteristics.....	234
Table C.2	Prevalence of Missing Data Across Outcome Data Elements .....	236
Table D.1	Subgroup Differences in Length of Participation .....	238
Table D.2	Subgroup Differences in Types of Services Received.....	240
Table D.3	Subgroup Differences in Job Placements.....	242
Table D.4	Subgroup Differences in Post-Exit Employment.....	244
Table D.5	Subgroup Differences in Recidivism .....	246
Table D.6	Subgroup Differences in Educational Attainment .....	248
Table E.1	Differences in Job Placements Based on Service Receipt .....	251
Table E.2	Differences in Post-Exit Employment Based on Service Receipt .....	253
Table E.3	Differences in Recidivism Based on Service Receipt.....	255
Table F.1	Regressions on Key Outcomes Controlling for Participant Characteristics and Grantees.....	259

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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## **BACKGROUND**

As part of a presidential initiative to reduce recidivism and the societal costs of reincarceration by helping inmates find work when they return to their communities, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) joined the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and other Federal partners in 2005 to create a demonstration program: the Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (PRI). The initiative seeks to strengthen urban communities affected by large volumes of returning prisoners through employment-centered projects that incorporate job training, housing referrals, mentoring, and other comprehensive transitional services. Although it is designed to offer ex-offenders an array of services to meet their diverse needs, this initiative is based on the core premise that helping ex-offenders find and maintain stable and legal employment will reduce recidivism.

The PRI draws upon the strengths and skills of faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) to provide re-entry assistance to returning ex-offenders. FBCOs are respected in their communities, have experience in providing social services to some of the hardest-to-serve populations, have access to sizable networks of volunteers, and provide enthusiastic support to many of their undertakings (Soukamneuth 2006).

In June 2005, DOL selected Coffey Consulting, LLC (Coffey) and its subcontractor Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) and consultants, Johns Hopkins University and Douglas W. Young, to evaluate the demonstration program. In November 2005, DOL announced grant awards averaging approximately \$660,000 in year one funding to 30 FBCOs to initiate PRI services. The 30 projects are located in urban areas in 20 states around the country.

The organizations chosen as grantees were expected to develop relationships with corrections agencies, the publicly-funded workforce investment system, other community organizations, and employers in order to help their projects meet the program goals.

In September 2006, DOJ announced grant awards to departments of corrections (DOCs) located in the 20 states with PRI projects to provide pre-release services for inmates who, upon release, would be referred to DOL PRI sites for post-release assistance. Although not a direct subject of this evaluation, the activities conducted under these grants support the objectives of the re-entry initiative and might benefit some of the individuals who enroll in PRI.

The objective of this evaluation is to assess the extent to which the community agencies receiving DOL PRI grant awards successfully developed employment-centered approaches for ex-offenders that focused on stable jobs and housing in their neighborhoods and communities. This report is the culmination of a three-year effort to evaluate the first two years of PRI project operations. Ultimately, DOL wanted to know whether employment-centered programs could be developed to help ex-offenders find work, keep their jobs, and avoid recidivism.

## **OVERVIEW OF PRI**

To be eligible for PRI project services, individuals must be 18 years of age or older, have been convicted as an adult and imprisoned pursuant to an Act of Congress or a state law, and have never been convicted of a violent or sex-related offense.<sup>a</sup> In each site, at least 90 percent of project participants were to be enrolled within six months of their release from incarceration. Grant funds could be used for counseling and case management, job placement assistance, basic skills training and remedial education, occupational skills training, mentoring, and supportive services. Funds could not be expended on substance abuse treatment services, housing services,

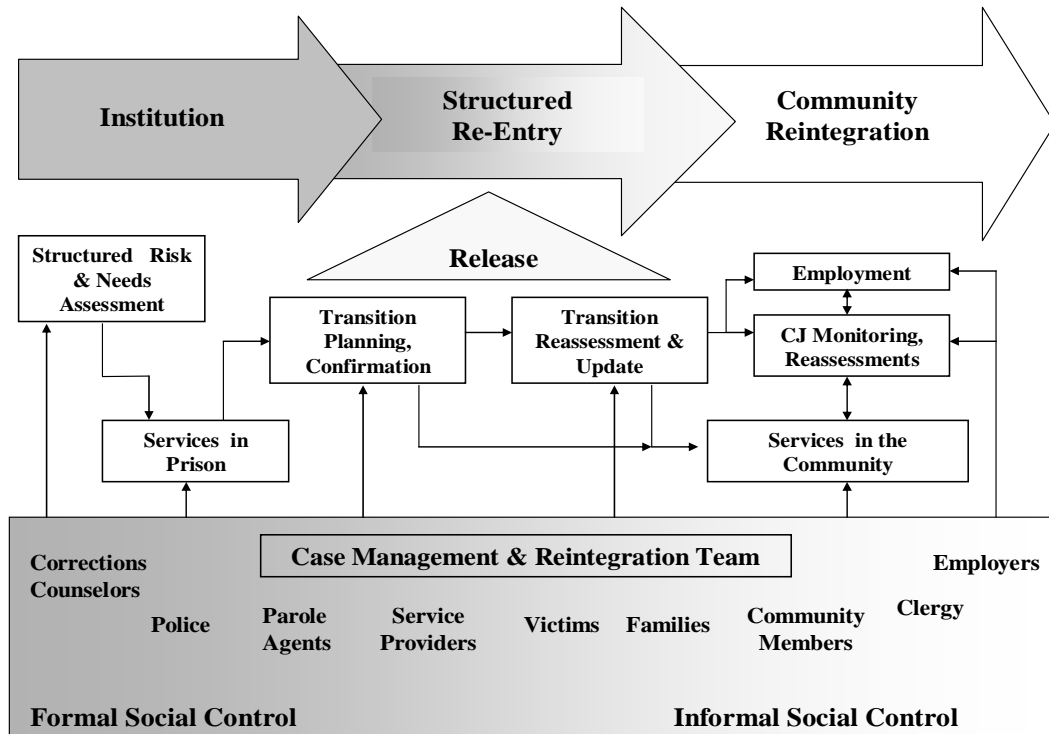
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<sup>a</sup> Over time, a waiver process was established to grant limited exceptions to the non-violent requirement.

or pre-release services, other than those necessary to establish connections with prisoners. In lieu of using grant funds for these services, grantees were expected to establish linkages with local criminal justice (CJ) institutions, substance abuse treatment providers, and housing providers.

The three-stage prisoner re-entry framework provides the conceptual framework for both the initiative and the qualitative analysis in this evaluation report. The framework (Exhibit ES.1) depicts re-entry as three distinct but intertwined phases: (I) institutional, (II) structured re-entry or transitional, and (III) community reintegration. In Phase I of the framework, the institutional phase, the offender begins to address his or her needs through services, which might include substance abuse treatment and cognitive-behavioral change classes. Phase II, the structured re-entry phase, begins once an individual is identified and selected to participate in a re-entry program. Under the three-stage framework, structured re-entry begins in prison and carries over into the ex-offender's first month or so in the community. It is characterized by more intensive preparations for release, which include formalizing a reintegration plan and establishing stable connections in the community. The final phase is community reintegration, including CJ system monitoring, which begins soon after release and continues until the termination of the supervision period. In this phase, the focus is on sustaining gains made in the initial release period, refining and maintaining the re-entry plan, and achieving independence from the formal case management process. DOJ grantees were to focus their attention on the institutional and structured re-entry phases, and DOL grantees were to begin their involvement in the participants' structured re-entry phase and move more actively into the community reintegration phase.

## EXHIBIT ES.1: PRISONER RE-ENTRY FRAMEWORK



Source: Taxman et al., 2004

## DATA SOURCES AND EVALUATION LIMITATIONS

The analysis uses data collected principally from five sources: (1) interviews of program staff and selected partner representatives, including corrections staff, during two rounds of site visits to each grantee conducted approximately 6 and 24 months after DOL's deadline for beginning participant services in March 2006, (2) a management information system (MIS) designed specifically for the demonstration with a final analysis extract dated May 6, 2008, (3) data on grantee expenditures through the third quarter of 2007, (4) project documents (such as grant agreements), and (5) secondary data sources (primarily for indicators of local economic conditions).



Although the evaluation was designed to provide a detailed picture of how the PRI demonstration unfolded during its first two years of operation, the study design and available data sources have several key limitations. First, the qualitative information that was collected through site visits was affected by time constraints, changes in project staff, and the potential for biased or faulty recollections among interviewees. Second, grantees relied largely on participants' self-reports when recording data in the MIS, including participant characteristics and outcomes; this raises concerns about the accuracy of the data, particularly of sensitive information such as substance abuse. Third, grantees had difficulty tracking participants over time, resulting in missing outcome data for some participants. Last, the study does not include a control or comparison group and, therefore, is not intended to assess the effectiveness of PRI at improving participant outcomes. Despite these limitations, the report provides rich information on the experiences of PRI grantees as they implemented the demonstration and on PRI participants' characteristics and outcomes as they worked to successfully reintegrate into society.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

The PRI program has matured substantially over time, laying the groundwork for continued re-entry efforts. The evaluation has documented a range of participant and program successes as well as lessons learned through the first two years of program operations. Below are key findings drawn from analysis of the evaluation's qualitative and quantitative data.

### **Job Placement and Recidivism**

*Grantees continued to make progress toward the goal of placing participants in employment, with two-thirds placed in unsubsidized employment and about half of these placed within three weeks of enrollment.* The 30 PRI grantees enrolled a total of 13,315 participants between November 1, 2005, and May 6, 2008. The evaluation's outcomes analysis

examined a range of these participants' short-term outcomes, such as job placement throughout participation, employment in the three quarters after exit from the program, and recidivism during the first year after release. As shown in Table ES.1, many grantees had difficulty tracking participants over time or did not enter outcome data for those participants who were unsuccessful. Nevertheless, MIS data showed that two-thirds of all participants were placed in unsubsidized employment as of May 2008, with average hourly wages at placement of \$9.29.

**Table ES.1**  
**Grantees' Success in Collecting Outcome Data at Key Benchmarks**

Benchmark	Measures Collected at Benchmark	Number of Participants Who Reached Benchmark	Percent Who Reached Benchmark with Outcome Record in the MIS
6 months after enrollment	Substance abuse Housing	10,449	72
12 months after incarceration	Recidivism	7,767	88
First calendar quarter after exit	Employment	9,671	60
Second calendar quarter after exit	Employment Wages Hours worked	8,135	53
Third calendar quarter after exit	Employment Wages Hours worked	6,319	49

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

<sup>a</sup> Grantees were asked to enter data on educational attainment and employment placement throughout participants' tenure in the program. The MIS did not allow grantees to identify if a record was missing or data could not be obtained for a particular participant. Therefore, it was assumed that participants without records in these components of the MIS did not attain a degree or credential or were not placed in employment.

A slightly lower proportion (about half) of those who had exited the program were reported as employed during the first full calendar quarter after exit, suggesting continued employment even after active PRI participation ends (Table ES.2). Looking further beyond program participation, 65 percent of those who were employed in the first quarter after exit remained employed in all three quarters after exit. Hourly wages among those employed in the third quarter after exit averaged \$10.44.

**Table ES.2**

**Employment Outcomes After Exit**

	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants
Employed in First Quarter After Exit Among All Those Who Completed the First Quarter After Exit <sup>a</sup>	49.6	9,671
Employed in First Quarter After Exit Among Those With a First Quarter Followup Record <sup>b</sup>	82.0	5,847
Employed in Second Quarter After Exit Among All Those Who Completed the Second Quarter After Exit <sup>a</sup>	41.8	8,135
Employed in Second Quarter After Exit Among Those With a Second Quarter Followup Record <sup>b</sup>	78.9	4,316
Employed in Third Quarter After Exit Among All Those Who Completed the Third Quarter After Exit <sup>a</sup>	38.5	6,319
Employed in Third Quarter After Exit Among Those With a Third Quarter Followup Record <sup>b</sup>	78.3	3,111
Employed in All Three Quarters After Exit Among Those Who Were Employed in the First Quarter After Exit <sup>b</sup>	65.0	3,139

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

Note: Data pertain only to those individuals who exited from PRI as a result of not having services for 90 days. Employment is defined as holding a job for at least one day during the specified quarter.

<sup>a</sup>Assumes that those without a follow-up record were not employed

<sup>b</sup>Includes only those who had a follow-up record for the appropriate benchmark

***Recidivism rates across all grantees appear low.*** Between 70 and 82 percent of participants were reported by grantees to have no CJ involvement during the first year after release. Using only data for those participants who had the relevant outcome data in the MIS, grantees reported that 8 percent of participants who reached one year after release were re-arrested for a new crime, and 9 percent were reincarcerated for a revocation of parole or probation. An additional 4 percent had other violations of community supervision requirements and 2 percent were re-arrested and released without further charges. These rates are substantially lower than national recidivism rates as well as those found in other studies of ex-offenders, however, differences in the populations served and data collection methods make it difficult to determine the reason for this variation.

***Some participant characteristics are associated with better outcomes.*** Women, older participants, non-Black participants, those with at least a high school diploma or GED at the time of their enrollment in PRI, those released from Federal institutions, and those who served longer terms in prison or jail had more success than their counterparts on a range of employment and recidivism outcomes. Many of these findings mirror trends shown in other employment and criminal justice literature. For example, research has consistently shown the value of increased education on employment and earnings (Ehrenberg and Smith, 2000). National trends in recidivism also show that men, younger ex-offenders and Blacks are more likely to recidivate than women, older, and non-Black ex-offenders (Langan and Levin, 2002). Findings from MIS analysis and site visits also suggest reasons for some differences. Federal prisoners tend to have less extensive criminal histories, have access to more extensive programming while incarcerated, and are often required to participate in supervised release, which likely position them for better

outcomes upon release. Local grantee staff also reported that, compared to those serving short sentences, those released after long spells of incarceration were ready to make a positive change in their lives and motivated to move more quickly into employment. While these relationships are not causal and cannot be attributed to program effectiveness, they may be useful for programs that are considering the best ways to target scarce program resources.

### **Workforce Preparation, Mentoring and Other Services**

*Nearly all participants received work readiness training, although receipt of occupational skill training was limited by participants' low educational levels, time constraints, need for immediate income, and community supervision employment requirements.* Workforce preparation activities, including career or life skills counseling and workforce readiness training, were the most widely used with over 90 percent of participants receiving at least one (Table ES.3).

**Table ES.3  
Types of Services Received Before Exit**

	Percent of All Participants
Participated in Any Workforce Preparation Activities	90.3
Participated in Any Mentoring Activities	52.7
Participated in Any Supportive Services <sup>a</sup>	54.6
Participated in Any Education or Job Training Activities	29.3
Participated in Any Health Services	25.4
Participated in Any Community Involvement Activities	11.0
<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>11,770</b>

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

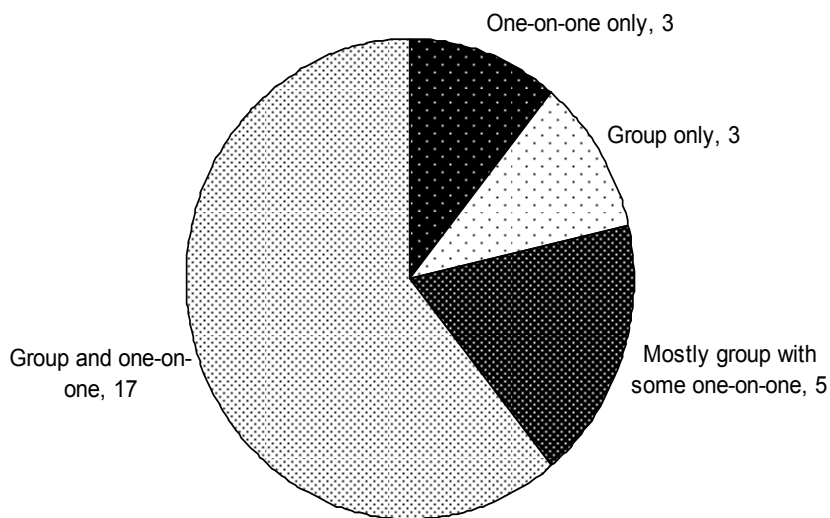
Note: Data pertain only to those individuals who were enrolled at least three months prior to the final extract to minimize potential bias in the statistics that are reported from right-censored data.

<sup>a</sup> Includes only supportive services prior to exit

Offered at almost all sites, work readiness training often consisted of four-to-ten half-day classes, although some were as short as a few hours. Sites also offered occupational skill training, usually through apprenticeship training, classroom training or on-the-job training, but take-up was low. In fact, less than 30 percent received educational or training services with only 9 percent receiving vocational or occupational skills training, using short-term certification programs. Perceiving a need for additional education services, at least six sites increased their short-term vocational training offerings during their first two years of operations, in part to help participants who were several months into their community reintegration phase prepare for higher-paying jobs.

*Sites adjusted their mentoring programs in response to initial problems with format, content and participation.* Participation in mentoring activities increased during the period of the evaluation, and as of May 2008, just over 50 percent of participants had attended at least one mentoring session (Table ES.3). Although establishing and maintaining ex-offender participation was a common challenge, over half the sites also indicated that they had difficulty finding and/or retaining qualified mentors. Sites reduced the need for mentors by increasing their use of group mentoring and reducing or eliminating one-on-one mentoring. Some participants were said to be more comfortable in group mentoring settings compared to one-on-one mentoring. Figure ES.1 shows how many sites used group or one-on-one mentoring programs at the time of the second site visit. While a few sites required mentoring participation, most projects “strongly encouraged” participants to engage with mentors.

**Figure ES.1**  
**Types of Mentoring Provided**  
 (number of sites)



Source: Site visit interviews with PRI project managers.

To increase participation, many projects experimented with offering incentives, such as gift cards for attendees, to get participants to attend mentoring. In addition, to create more perceived value for participants, mentoring content was adjusted to include workforce preparation activities and other types of services. Project staff believe that mentoring was most helpful in aiding participants with social readjustment to life outside prison.

*Despite the wide range of service offerings, the length of participation in PRI was relatively short.* On average, participants spent 12 weeks in the program from enrollment to program exit, with half participating for 8 or fewer weeks. Just over half of participants continued to receive at least some services after exit, with an average participation of 22 weeks from the date of enrollment to the date of last follow-up service. Certain groups of participants were more likely to participate for longer periods. In particular, participants over the age of 35 years, who anecdotally appeared more likely to embrace program services, attended for longer than their younger counterparts. Participants who were on community supervision and those

mandated to attend the program participated for longer periods than those without supervision requirements. Women and non-Blacks participants also attended for longer periods than men and Black participants, however, site visits did not suggest clear reasons for differences by gender and race.

*Sites continued to confront operational challenges related to participant tracking and retention in the program and after exit.* Retention efforts also improved since the first round of site visits, but many sites still noted difficulties in tracking their participants. Interviewees reported that substance abusers, the homeless, and younger participants were more difficult to contact than other participants. MIS data confirm differences in tracking based on housing stability and age.

*Over time, projects increased their use of incentives for participants to attend certain activities or complete certain tasks or benchmarks.* To motivate participants to remain connected to their programs, to encourage participation in specific activities, and to reward participants for their achievements, projects instituted various incentive programs. To promote retention and tracking, sites provided gift cards for participants who notified them of a new address or brought in a pay stub from a new job. To increase participation in mentoring programs or workforce preparation activities, sites offered gift cards for those who attended four or five sessions in a row. To reward participants for reaching certain milestones, sites provided store vouchers for individuals who remained active participants after three months of enrollment. The incentives took several forms, including monetary incentives such as gift cards for department stores and supportive services like bus passes, and non-monetary inducements like sharing job leads for attendees at mentoring sessions. Despite their increased use, however,



some project staff opposed the use of incentives, feeling that the personal motivation of participants should be their primary incentive.

## **Enrollment Strategies and Program Operations**

*Enrollment strategies increasingly focused on motivated or suitable candidates, with projects targeting ex-offenders who were likely to benefit from the services.* Intake and assessment processes instituted or enhanced over time helped to identify suitable applicants and appropriate services. After struggling with some participants' weak commitment to their programs, sites began to conduct some form of applicant screening as part of their intake efforts, often through an orientation process, and/or conducted a "suitability" assessment to gauge a participant's interest in and commitment to the PRI program. Twenty-four projects developed written agreements outlining project rules and/or expectations that participants signed as a condition of enrollment. After intake, most assessment activities were employment-centered, with many sites relying on other entities, such as community supervision partners, to conduct comprehensive assessments and to arrange services to meet participants' other needs.

*Grantees enrolled participants who faced multiple challenges to employment and reintegration, including low educational levels, poor work histories, substance abuse, and lack of housing.* Nearly half of the participants enrolled within a month of their release from jail or prison (Table ES.4).

**Table ES.4**  
**Time from Release to Enrollment and Release Conditions**

	Percent of All Participants
Had Contact with PRI Staff Prior to Release	15.0
Received Pre-release Services Through DOC Grants	11.0
Weeks from Release to PRI Enrollment	
Less than 4	46.9
4 to 12	27.1
More than 12	26.0
Average (weeks)	11.2
Post-release Status	
Parole	57.3
Probation	24.2
Other criminal justice or court supervision	4.1
None	14.4
Mandatory PRI Participation	8.8
<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>13,315</b>

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

The majority (86 percent) were on some form of community supervision; however, only 9 percent were mandated to enroll in PRI as a condition of their release. Education levels were low; upon enrollment, 44 percent did not have a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate. Less than 40 percent reported formal employment as their primary source of income prior to incarceration. In addition, over half struggled with drug and alcohol abuse prior to PRI enrollment, and about 45 percent either were homeless or lived in transitional housing, residential treatment facilities, or unstable housing at enrollment.

Enrollment of individuals who had received pre-release services funded by DOJ grants was below DOL's original expectations of 100 per project per year due to the slow start-up of many DOJ projects and the relatively undeveloped processes for identifying, training and connecting inmates with the PRI grantees after their release. In fact, only 11 percent of all

participants enrolled through May 2008 received pre-release services through a DOC grant. However, the number of referrals increased over time as the DOJ grantees came up to speed.

*Substance abuse poses a major barrier throughout the re-entry process.* Sixty-two percent of participants were released for drug crimes or driving while intoxicated before enrollment in PRI. However, many sites also reported that community resources were insufficient to handle the need for treatment. At six months after PRI enrollment, 43 percent of participants reported not using illegal drugs or abusing alcohol since enrollment, 8 percent reported occasional use, 2 percent reported regular use, and data were missing for the remaining 46 percent. Given the extent missing data and reliance on self-reports, these data likely underestimate the true extent of abuse. In fact, of the PRI participants that were reported as re-arrested for a new crime within one year of release, 29 percent were charged with drug possession, the most common type of offense. If not addressed, substance abuse can inhibit participants' ability to find and maintain employment and act as a catalyst for further criminal involvement.

### **Community Context and Program Operations**

*The context in which the PRI grantees operated varied considerably.* Eleven of the grantees had annual budgets of less than \$2 million, including their PRI funds. By contrast, six operated with budgets that exceeded \$25 million. Grantee organizations had some previous experience in serving ex-offenders, but often this was limited to specific activities such as housing assistance or employment, and only about a third had prior involvement in other PRI services such as mentoring or training. Although economic conditions in most PRI communities were fair to good, two had unemployment rates in excess of 7 percent during 2007. Wages and housing costs also varied across all 30 grantees, with median wages ranging from \$12.76 to

\$20.77 an hour, and median rent as low as \$535 and as high as \$1,154. In addition, supervision practices differed by state and locality, affecting the number and types of services that ex-offenders needed from PRI projects. Partly because of these contextual differences, DOL provided technical assistance to help build grantee capacity, especially among smaller grantees that had limited previous experience in constructing projects and providing services as required by PRI.

*By providing project services through multiple partners and/or locations, grantees aimed to better meet participants' needs for assistance.* Twenty grantees subcontracted out one or more services. Some sites contracted with multiple service providers to serve participants with particular needs. For example, in one location, ex-offenders who lacked work histories were routed through a program of structured work experience offered by one of the service providers. Over one-third of the projects offered case management, work readiness and related services at multiple locations, usually through subcontractors, to make it easier for participants to access services. By outstationing grantee staff at One-Stop Career Centers, two grantees provided participants access to a wider range of work readiness services than they would otherwise have had.

*Sites concentrated on building partnerships with criminal justice agencies, and often relied on existing relationships with partners in other fields to assist PRI participants.* Grantees successfully developed partnerships with key criminal justice entities needed to recruit project participants, but those relationships rarely included joint planning or exchange of progress reports between organizations. Staffing changes, communication, and procedural issues were the problems most commonly affecting cooperation between the two groups, particularly in connection with the pre-release programs funded by DOJ.

Many PRI services were also provided by external organizations through referral arrangements, often with organizations with which grantees had existing relationships. Some leveraged resources—such as housing services and drug treatment programs funded by other sources—from within their larger grantee organizations. However, grantees continued to face challenges identifying and accessing mental health and substance abuse services for participants. Many of these programs, both public and private, have insufficient resources to meet the need for services, making partnership-building a time-consuming task with potentially little return. Finding and maintaining stable housing for participants proved a sizeable challenge, although a few grantees were successful in securing outside funds to provide housing assistance. Staff reported that women were more likely to face housing difficulties than men due to the more limited options available to them. Few sites had other funding sources that enabled them to offer housing to PRI participants, even though project staff cited housing as the most significant obstacle to reintegration. Instead, most gave referrals to help participants with emergency or short-term housing needs. One-Stop Career Centers were partners in job placement efforts at 21 sites, offering assistance ranging from sharing job listings to providing specialized placement assistance for ex-offenders.

### **Costs of PRI**

*The PRI program cost less than expected per participant.* Given the substantial investment of resources in this demonstration, a cost analysis examined the use of both public and private resources to serve the PRI population. DOL awarded grantees with \$39.5 million to serve a total of 12,000 participants over the first two years of the demonstration, resulting in an expected cost of \$3,289 per participant. The actual costs per participant averaged \$2,495 per participant. This lower-than-expected cost appears due to the short average length of

participation in PRI. Given that participants were cycling in and out of the program quickly, grantees were therefore able to serve more participants than expected with their grant funds. When examining costs compared to outcomes, the PRI program costs \$3,786 per successful placement in unsubsidized employment. Among those with valid recidivism data, PRI services cost \$4,287 per participant who was placed in a job and remained free of crime for one year.

*Grantees garnered substantial donated, in-kind, and volunteer resources to supplement their grant funding.* DOL chose to award PRI grants to FBCOs not only to tap into their experience helping hard-to-serve populations but also to capitalize on their strong connections within local communities. To illustrate grantees' use of other resources, a detailed cost analysis was conducted with nine grantees, which were chosen to reflect a range of grantees, although they were not representative. The nine grantees garnered \$1.4 million in donated, volunteer, and in-kind resources from their local communities. This amounted to 25 percent in additional funding beyond their PRI grants. In particular, PRI staff donated nearly 23,000 hours of additional time beyond their normal work schedules, which amounted to an additional 1.2 full-time equivalent staff member per grantee. Community volunteers also spent over 15,000 hours, of which 65 percent supported mentoring activities. Finally, in-kind resources, including other grants as well as community donations, helped support workforce preparation activities but also allowed grantees to provide supportive services that were not covered by PRI grant funds. This success in tapping community resources highlights the unique strengths that FBCOs bring to the PRI.

## **Conclusion**

In general, sites were successful at implementing employment-centered programs for ex-offenders in their first two years of operations. Since most ex-offenders had little if any time for

skill training, sites focused on helping participants find work quickly, often by helping them identify appropriate job openings and prepare for interviews. Given the limited prior work experience of most participants, most were placed in jobs that did not require advanced skills.

Sites also developed effective working relationships with many important partner entities, including corrections agencies and local workforce investment programs. Correctional institutions were key sources of participant referrals. Community supervision agencies referred ex-offenders for PRI services and helped many participants access other resources in the community. This assistance, coupled with the oversight provided by probation and parole officers, facilitated the transition of many participants. One-Stop Career Centers offered job leads and other workforce services.

Sites experienced greater challenges in establishing new relationships to help address participants' substance abuse treatment and housing needs. Mentoring programs were particularly helpful in assisting participants with their social readjustment to re-entry. One factor that thwarted long-range service planning was the tendency of some participants to disappear within a short time of enrollment.

Grantees accepted a formidable challenge by becoming involved in the PRI demonstration program. Considering their limited progress at the time of the first round of site visits, by the end of their second year of serving participants, the 30 PRI sites had made significant strides toward establishing employment-centered re-entry projects for ex-offenders. By capturing the initial experiences of the first 30 PRI grantees, this report can inform community organizations who seek to provide employment-centered services to ex-offenders.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

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The challenges associated with prisoner re-entry have been a topic in the public policy arena for several decades, but the large number of ex-offenders returning to vulnerable communities in recent years has raised the visibility of this issue. In his 2004 State of the Union Address, President Bush announced the establishment of the Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (PRI).<sup>2</sup> The initiative seeks to strengthen urban communities affected by large numbers of returning prisoners by introducing employment-centered projects that incorporate job training, housing assistance, mentoring, and other comprehensive transitional services.

In November 2005, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded grants to 30 faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) across the country to implement such projects for one year, with an option of three additional years of funding. In preparation, in June 2005, DOL selected Coffey Consulting, LLC (Coffey)—and its subcontractor, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. and consultants, Johns Hopkins University and Douglas W. Young—to evaluate the demonstration program. The purpose of the evaluation is to describe the evolution of PRI implementation, assess the short-term outcomes of participants served by the program, and report on the costs of providing PRI services.

An interim report prepared by Coffey in 2007 looked at the early implementation experiences of the PRI grantees (Holl and Kolovich, 2007). The report described the principal program services, the degree and form of cooperation with key partners, and the primary challenges encountered by project sites. This final report covers the first two years of program operations and documents the work undertaken and results obtained thus far by the PRI projects.

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.dol.gov/cfbci/reentry.htm>.

This chapter provides an overview of the public policy environment in which the PRI was conceived. It describes the key features of the initiative itself, including the three-stage re-entry framework that presents the conceptual basis for PRI. The chapter then discusses the evaluation process and concludes with a description of the remainder of this report.

### **A. Prisoner Re-Entry: The Policy Impetus**

A set of stark realizations about prisoner re-entry emerged among policymakers and scholars in the late 1990s. Increasing numbers of released ex-offenders were reentering communities—more than 600,000 annually from state prisons—as a result of the quadrupling of prison and jail admissions that occurred over the prior 20 years (Harrison and Beck, 2003). Along with the increase in the ex-offender population, policymakers saw the converging effects of tougher laws affecting returning prisoners, the wide range of needs faced by this population, and the potentially negative implications for the families and communities to which former prisoners return. Many states had cut back or eliminated inmate programming and abolished incentives for early release, thus compounding the re-entry challenges of ex-offenders.

In the 1980s and 1990s, a shift towards stricter sentencing led to longer prison terms, extending the time that inmates are detached from jobs and families and the responsibilities these bring. The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reports that, by 1998, 27 states and the District of Columbia had enacted laws requiring prisoners to serve at least 85 percent of their sentence (Ditton, 1999). From 1990 to 1996, the mean time served in state prisons for property offenses increased from 18 to 22 months; for drug offenses, from 14 to 20 months; and for public order offenses, from 14 to 17 months. Parole practices followed similar trends. From 1977 through 1999, 14 states eliminated early parole release for all offenders. Stricter sentencing and reductions in parole often went hand-in-hand. In Florida for example, the state legislature

abolished good time credits and discretionary release by the parole board, requiring that all prisoners serve 85 percent of their sentence (Warren et al., 2008). Curtailing or abolishing parole increased the number of inmates released with no obligations (Rhine, 1997; Travis et al., 2001).

During the first decade of the 21st century, budgetary pressures and doubts about the effects of get tough policies have helped generate discussion about how best to deal with criminal behavior and improve re-entry processes. For example, to address substance abuse issues, Warren et al. note that at least 13 states have expanded or incorporated the use of drug courts, thus providing for the treatment needs of the offender while still holding individuals accountable for their criminal actions. While prison costs continue to rise and threaten state budgets, evidence-based strategies suggest that there may be better ways to determine which prisoners are most appropriate for community-based re-entry services (Warren et al., 2008).

Ex-felons face a number of barriers to employment, including state laws and licensing requirements that bar ex-felons from being hired for certain positions, difficulties in obtaining needed documentation, and increasingly easier access to criminal records by employers and the public at large (Clear and Cole, 2000). Employers are looking for educated and literate individuals with steady and successful work experiences, and ex-offenders often do not meet these criteria (Coley and Barton, 2006). Restricted access to public assistance programs for some ex-offenders and to subsidized public housing are further examples of institutionalized barriers to ex-offenders' successful reintegration into the community.

The prevalence and multiplicity of service needs of releasees—needs that constitute risk factors for recidivism—also conspire to reduce their prospects for success. About three-fourths of released prisoners have a history of substance abuse (Belenko et al., 1998); and more than half of all inmates were reported to have a mental health problem (James and Glaze, 2006). One in three inmates reports being unemployed before entering state prison, and one study found that

fewer than half of released prisoners had a job waiting upon their return to the community (Steurer et al., 2002). Ex-prisoners' records, their poor job histories, and their detachment from conventional society—factors that particularly affect those individuals embedded for years in criminal activity—reduce what chances ex-prisoners may have of achieving stable employment (Bushway and Reuter, 2002).

Ex-offenders also face great challenges due to lack of education. Petersilia (2003) summarizes data indicating that nearly 60 percent of state prison inmates are either completely or functionally illiterate. BJS statistics show that, in 2004, approximately 34 percent of state and Federal inmates had not completed high school or passed the General Educational Development (GED) test, compared to 19 percent of the U.S. population age 16 and over (Crayton and Neusteter, 2008). Participation among state and Federal inmates in high school or GED preparation declined from 27 to 23 percent between 1991 and 1997. During the same period, the participation of Federal inmates in postsecondary education dropped from 19 to 13 percent and the participation of state inmates fell from 14 to 10 percent (Coley and Barton, 2006).

Returning prisoners have a disproportionate impact on some communities. Many lose ties with their families and, as a result, return to the community alone (Nelson et al., 1999; Byrne and Young, 2002). Long stays in prison inhibit the ability of offenders to maintain ties with their children and to resume a provider role upon return to the community. Research has also pointed to the possible negative impacts of removing and returning offenders en masse from and to vulnerable inner cities: high per capita rates of incarceration and the repeated shuttling back and forth of offenders may reduce social cohesion and stability in these neighborhoods, loosen informal social controls, and ultimately contribute to crime (Rose et al., 1999).

Widely-cited statistics prompting calls for a new approach to re-entry include estimated re-arrest rates for state prisoners that approach 45 percent in the first year of release and 67

percent within three years—figures that had been remarkably stable since the 1960s (Langan and Levin, 2002). Although substantial progress was being made in some local areas, the provision of comprehensive services to this population was largely isolated and unstudied. With increasing numbers of releasees, continuing high rates of recidivism, increased concentrations of returning ex-offenders in certain urban areas, and reduced prospects for ex-offenders’ successful reintegration, in the late 1990s, Federal agencies began several large initiatives to respond to the issue of re-entry. A brief summary of such programs can be found in Holl and Kolovich, 2007.

The government hopes that the PRI demonstration program will build upon previous and ongoing Federal efforts by developing innovative employment-focused initiatives that target the diverse needs of the ex-offender population.

## **B. The Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative**

### 1. The Federal Partnership

In 2005, DOL<sup>3</sup> joined the Departments of Justice (DOJ), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Health and Human Services (HHS), and other Federal partners to support the PRI. The program seeks to strengthen urban communities with large numbers of returning prisoners through employment-centered projects that incorporate mentoring, job training, and other transitional services. Although participants are offered a wide array of services to meet their diverse needs, the initiative is based on the core premise that helping ex-offenders find and maintain stable and legal employment will reduce recidivism.

### 2. The Three-Stage Prisoner Re-Entry Framework

The government’s approach to the PRI is consistent with the perspective offered by the three-stage prisoner re-entry framework. The framework (Exhibit I.1—Taxman et al., 2004)

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<sup>3</sup> The two components of DOL involved in PRI are the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI).

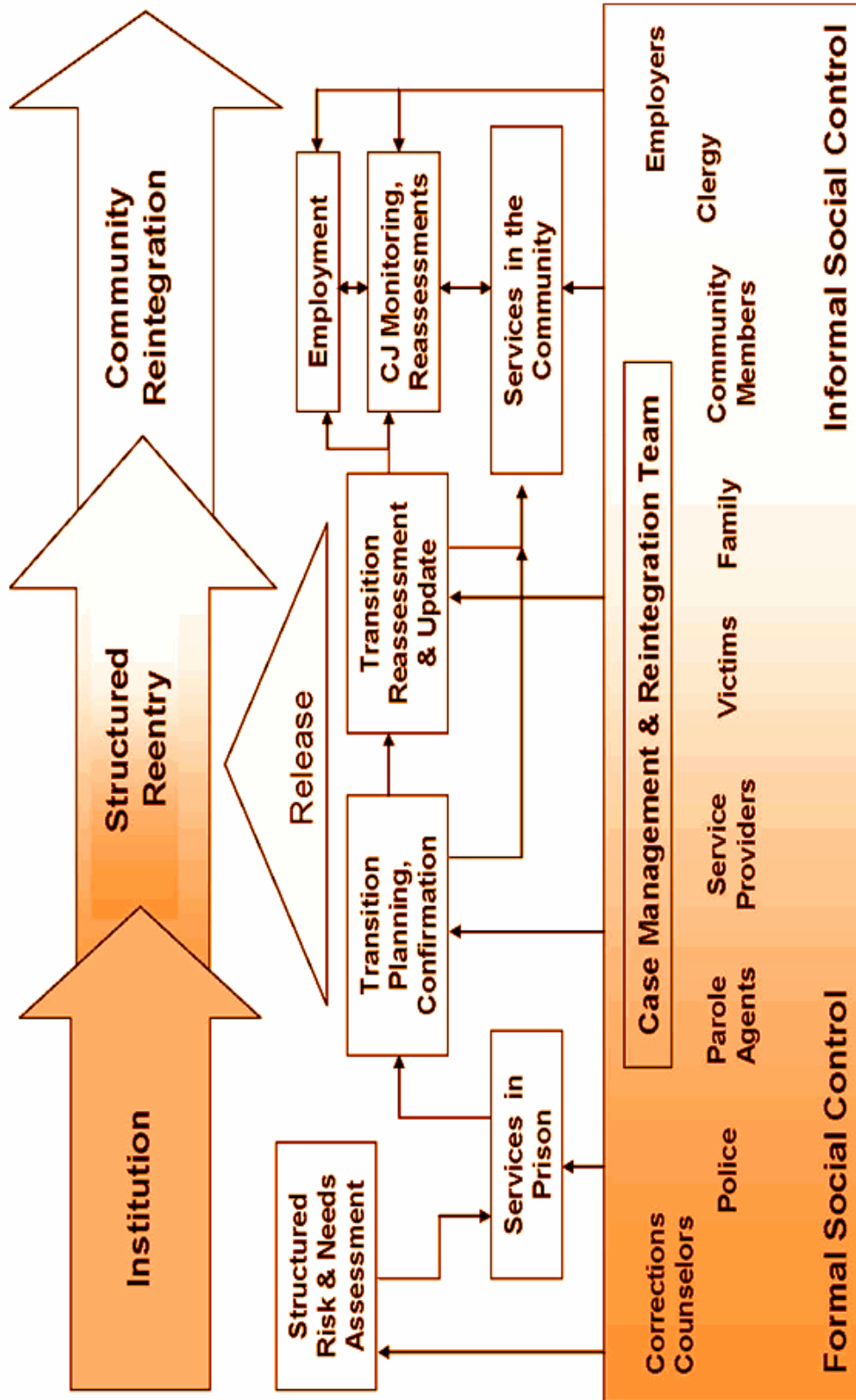
depicts re-entry as three distinct but intertwined phases: (I) institutional, (II) structured re-entry, and (III) community reintegration. These components can be described as follows:

- In Phase I, the traditional institutional phase, the offender is assessed, classified, and placed in an appropriately secure facility. Ideally, offenders begin to receive services that address identified needs at this stage.
- Phase II, the structured re-entry phase, begins once an offender is identified and selected to participate in a re-entry program. Transcending organizational and physical boundaries, structured re-entry begins in prison and carries over into the ex-offender's first month or so in the community. This period is characterized by activities that increase the intensity of preparation for release, formalize basic elements of the reintegration plan, and establish stable connections in the community.
- Phase III, the community reintegration phase, begins soon after release of the inmate and continues until the termination of the supervision period. Here, the focus shifts to sustaining gains made in the initial release period, refining and maintaining the re-entry plan, and achieving independence from the formal case-management process (Taxman et al., 2004; Altschuler et al., 1999).

This three-stage re-entry framework helps to identify the principal activities that represent most offenders' re-entry service needs. The framework suggests that new working relationships between and among many organizations are needed to effect successful transitions between phases. To a large extent, these new collaborations will require that entities rooted in environments characterized by contradictory attitudes and beliefs—punishment versus redemption and bureaucratic versus flexible grassroots—share information, coordinate assistance, and cooperate to ensure a continuity of services. The divergent cultural environments of the entities involved create opportunities as well as challenges: They may inspire efforts to bridge organizational gaps through planning and communication; or they may serve to create major bottlenecks in enrollment, service delivery, and ex-offender employment.

Exhibit I.1

# Prisoner Re-Entry Framework



Source: Taxman *et al.*, 2004

### 3. Faith-Based and Community Context

The PRI draws upon the unique strengths and skills of FBCOs to carry out the prisoner re-entry demonstration projects. In 2001, President Bush issued the first in a series of executive orders that established the White House Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI). Recognizing that FBCOs are well respected within their communities and have a long history of providing social services to some of the hardest-to-serve populations, the underlying premise of the FBCI is that a more open and competitive Federal grant-making process will increase the delivery of effective social services to those whose needs are greatest.

Under the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) for the PRI issued by DOL, only FBCOs within urban communities that were heavily impacted by large numbers of returning ex-offenders were eligible to apply for grants. This demonstration program thus relies upon entities that are among the most trusted institutions in the urban neighborhoods to which ex-offenders return. For some of the grant recipients, implementation of their PRI projects required them to go beyond their customary affiliations by developing relationships with public, private, and nonprofit service providers and with corrections agencies and policymakers plus accessing additional resources to facilitate the success of the projects and their participants.

### 4. Key Parameters of PRI

In November 2005, DOL awarded \$19.84 million in initial funding for the 30 selected grantees, with the goal of having each site serve 200 participants in the first year of program operations. Second and third year awards were made to the 30 grantees in early 2007 and 2008. DOL established parameters affecting the local project designs and operations in four areas: eligibility criteria, allowable uses of grant funds, limitations on the use of grant funds, and performance expectations for local projects. In addition to the government's guidance in these



areas, DOL's approaches to data collection and technical assistance (TA), and a companion DOJ program to provide pre-release services, are summarized here.

Eligibility. To be eligible for the program, individuals must be 18 years of age or older, have been convicted as an adult and imprisoned pursuant to an Act of Congress or a state law, and have never been convicted of a violent or sex-related offense. Ninety percent of participants in each site must be enrolled within 180 days of their release from prison, jail, or a halfway house. Waivers allowed grantees to serve a small number of individuals convicted of violent crimes, should there be an insufficient supply of ex-offenders who met the non-violent criterion.

Allowable Uses of Grant Funds. The SGA anticipated that projects would provide participants with counseling and case management, job placement assistance, basic skills training and remedial education, occupational skills training, and mentoring. Each is discussed below:

- *Counseling and case management* usually required the assignment of a "case manager" to guide or counsel the participant throughout participation in the project. Oftentimes, a service plan (called an Individual Development Plan (IDP) or Individual Employment Plan (IEP)) was the adjustable roadmap that would take the participant through the remainder of the re-entry process. Projects could use such a plan as a form of behavioral contract.
- *Job placement assistance* was designed to help participants find jobs. This could include the first job after release, a better job after training, or a new job after leaving an old one.
- *Basic skills and remedial education* typically included math and English language classes, GED preparation (for those not already possessing a high school diploma or GED), and workforce readiness classes, such as introductions to the world of work.
- *Occupational skills training* could include on-the-job training, classroom training, and work experience. These range from brief (two- to three-week) classes on basic computer skills to semester-length (or longer) training at a private or public post-secondary school.
- *Mentoring* was described in the SGA as a key part of the initiative. Mentors were to offer support, guidance, and assistance to help participants deal with their many challenges. Grantees were expected to offer mentors to every released prisoner who desired these services during their first year of enrollment. Participants could be matched with an individual mentor or participate in a group mentoring activity.

Sites were allowed to provide other re-entry services to help meet many of the remaining needs of PRI participants. Grantees could offer the traditional supportive services that are found in many Federally-funded, locally managed Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs, such as transportation and child care assistance. They could also use grant funds for the more specialized services that are commonly associated with ex-offenders, such as assistance in obtaining required forms of identification and help in renegotiating child support payments. Grantees were also authorized to provide follow-up services to support job retention and continued adjustment to life outside prison walls, services often required by ex-offenders.

Limitations on Use of Funds. ETA placed three major limitations on the use of DOL grant funds. First, PRI funds could not be “used for pre-release services other than recruitment, introductory meetings, orientations, and other activities necessary to establishing program connections with prisoners prior to their release” (70 *Federal Register* 16856).<sup>4</sup> Second, DOL grant funds could not be used to directly provide substance abuse treatment services. Third, funds could not be used to provide housing assistance.<sup>5</sup> Grantees were expected to develop linkages in the community to provide necessary substance abuse treatment and housing services to participants.

Performance Expectations. In January 2006, DOL announced project-specific goals on the following measures: (1) enrollment rate, (2) participation rate, (3) entered employment rate, (4) employment retention rate, (5) average earnings, (6) recidivism rate, (7) degree/certificate

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<sup>4</sup> The design of the PRI envisioned that the DOJ grants awarded to Departments of Corrections in states where PRI grantees were located would be used to provide support for pre-release services, as described later in this section.

<sup>5</sup> For the first year of PRI, the Administration requested \$25 million in housing monies through HUD. See <http://www.hud.gov/about/budget/fy06/fy06budget.pdf>. Additional funding was sought in subsequent years.

attainment rate, (8) substance abuse abstinence rate, and (9) stable housing rate.<sup>6</sup> Grantees were required to report quarterly on their progress toward achieving these goals.

Management Information System (MIS). DOL designed the PRI MIS as a Web-based system that allows grantees to submit participant data and quarterly aggregate reports on individuals who receive services through PRI program funds and partnerships with other entities. The reports include aggregate data on demographic characteristics, types of services received, job placements, outcomes, and follow-up status. The MIS also allows grantees to collect information on individuals' service needs and provides a means for staff to record case notes and other narrative information. Following its introduction, the PRI MIS has been adjusted and enhanced, including the creation of capabilities that allow grantees to produce management reports for use in tracking participant services and status.

Training and Technical Assistance. At the same time DOL procured an evaluator for the initiative, it secured a contractor to provide TA to PRI grantees. Through a separate bidding process, Coffey Consulting, LLC was selected to provide TA.<sup>7</sup> The TA team has used a range of strategies to support the PRI grantees, including facilitating five peer-to-peer meetings among grantees and assigning TA coaches to each site. The coaches have maintained regular contact

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<sup>6</sup> The four key measures are defined as follows:

**Entered Employment Rate:** Of those who are not employed at the date of participation (enrollment) and who exit the program: the percentage of participants who are employed in the first quarter after the exit quarter

**Employment Retention Rate:** Of those who exit the program and are employed in the first quarter after the exit quarter: the percentage of participants who are employed in both the second and third quarters after the exit quarter

**Average Earnings:** Of those who exit the program and who were employed in the first, second, and third quarters after exit: the average total earnings for the second and third quarters after exit

**Recidivism Rate:** The percentage of participants who were re-arrested for a new crime or reincarcerated for revocation of the parole or probation order within one year of their release from prison. If participants are re-arrested and subsequently released without being convicted of a new crime, they may be taken out of the recidivism rate.

<sup>7</sup> Coffey Consulting, LLC maintains separate project direction between its TA and evaluation activities. To ensure the independence of its work on both of these contracts, staff overlap between the two projects is kept to a minimum.

with grantees and, along with subject matter experts, provided general and specialized assistance on such topics as case management and MIS. Hands-on assistance is typically provided through both routine and targeted visits to the projects.

Pre-release services. In support of a service strategy consistent with the three-stage re-entry framework, a companion grant program was funded by the DOJ. According to DOJ, their initiative “envisions the development of model re-entry programs that begin in correctional institutions and continue throughout an offender's transition to and stabilization in the community.” (DOJ, 2005) The grants were to support institution-based and transitional programs designed to prepare offenders to reenter society by providing such services as education, monitoring, mentoring, life-skills training, assessment, job-skills development, and mental health and substance abuse treatment.

A total of \$9 million in Federal grant funds was awarded to Departments of Corrections (DOCs) in the 20 states with PRI projects to help correctional institutions provide a range of pre-release services (Exhibit I.2) and to coordinate with DOL’s PRI grantees in those states. DOL grantees were expected to coordinate services with, and accept referrals from, organizations receiving funding through the DOJ grants. Although the DOJ grantees represent a significant potential source of eligible participants for DOL projects, these DOJ projects were late in starting up, and relatively small numbers of PRI participants had received pre-release services through the DOJ grants during the period covered by this evaluation.

**Exhibit I.2**  
**DOJ Pre-release Grant Requirements**

Among the activities that DOJ grantees are required to perform are the following:

- Develop and implement offender screening and assessment processes using dynamic risk and needs assessment tools.
- Develop a written implementation plan for critical pre-release services to the target population and program participants.
- Develop and implement for each program participant a transition planning process that includes an individualized transition plan and a description of the type and level of pre-release services to be provided; that coordinates with faith-based/community-based organization(s) [FBCO(s)], local law enforcement, and/or a community supervision agency; and that includes other local service and community organizations.
- Ensure that at least 200 offenders successfully complete pre-release programming and participate in post-release community-based services and that over 200 individual transition plans are implemented in collaboration with the FBCO; and provide supervision or periodic contact with law enforcement.
- Manage a rigorous screening process for all potential candidates for effective participation, including use of eligibility criteria.
- Oversee pre-release programming and services, including the coordination of pre-release orientation meetings with FBCOs, such as employment service providers and mentors.

*Source: U.S. Department of Justice, 2005*

### **C. The PRI Evaluation**

In February 2006, the research design for the evaluation of the PRI demonstration program was completed and submitted to DOL. (See Bellotti et al., 2006) The design anticipated two key reports: the evaluation interim report, completed in 2007, and this report. This section describes the key research questions for the overall evaluation, the findings from the interim report, and the data sources for this final report.

#### **1. Key Research Questions**

This evaluation was designed to provide answers to the following questions:

*Who are the PRI grantees and their partners?*

*What are the principal approaches to organizing, implementing, operating, and administering PRI projects?*

*What patterns of cooperation and linkages evolve between PRI projects and partners, such as the workforce investment system, the criminal justice system, local employers, training providers, and other stakeholders?*

*Who participates in the PRI projects, and what services do they receive?*

*What are PRI participants' short-term outcomes related to employment, degree attainment, housing, substance abuse, and recidivism?*

*What are the resource costs to communities of operating PRI job training and employment preparation projects for ex-offenders?*

Ultimately, DOL wanted to learn whether employment-centered programs could be developed and operated and, if so, whether they would make a difference in helping ex-offenders find work, keep their jobs, and avoid recidivism.

## 2. Interim Report Findings

The PRI Evaluation Interim Report was based on the information gathered during an initial round of two-day site visits to all 30 sites conducted from June to October, 2006 (Holl and Kolovich, 2007). It described initial observations and findings several months after projects achieved full operation. The report answers several of the research questions, serving as an important tool for framing a second round of site visits and as a baseline for the final analysis.

The interim report found that grantees had made considerable progress in implementing complex program designs that required the building of new relationships and the creation of new internal processes. Exhibit I.3 displays the key findings from the interim report.

### **Exhibit I.3**

#### **Findings from the PRI Evaluation Interim Report**

1. Grant communities varied considerably, especially with respect to their economic situation and public infrastructure.
2. Grantees with more organizational resources at their disposal and those with prior experience in providing prisoner re-entry services typically experienced fewer problems during the start-up phase.
3. Grantees were challenged by the PRI eligibility requirements, specifically with regard to obtaining and interpreting criminal history records and locating eligible ex-offenders.
4. Most projects were designed to recruit and serve ex-offenders in general, although four identified specific target groups within the eligible population.
5. Grantees' approaches for enrolling participants varied considerably, with some sites taking significantly more deliberate approaches as to whom they enroll than others.
6. To carry out the holistic role envisioned by DOL, most projects had to enhance their practices related to participant assessment and case management.
7. Project approaches to employment involved relatively traditional, one-at-a-time job development techniques.
8. Most PRI training involved pre-employment skills, with little basic/remedial education and occupational skills training taking place.
9. Follow-up job placement services and follow-up for participant tracking and data collection purposes were relatively undeveloped at the time of the site visits.
10. Relationships with community agencies that provide substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and other health services were generally not well developed.
11. Considering their starting point, sites made considerable progress in constructing productive working relationships with criminal justice system entities.
12. Relationships with the workforce investment system were generally nominal, but this did not appear to have a significant adverse effect on project operations.
13. Partnerships with housing providers that would allow participants in need of housing to access such services were generally not well developed.
14. Most sites with developed mentoring programs relied on previous experience in the field and integrated their mentoring activities into overall project services.
15. Mentoring was most often provided by faith-based organizations, either as the grantee or as a partner to a grantee. Churches appeared to be relatively successful at recruiting mentors,

### 3. Data Sources for the Final Report

*Qualitative data.* With 30 grants, the PRI is far larger than most DOL demonstration programs, and with only broad Federal guidance on program design, grantees had wide latitude in setting up service strategies for participants. Combined with the range of needs that ex-offenders have and the barriers they face, this led to significant variation among sites in partners, services, and service strategies. Qualitative data on project evolution, partnership development, and program operations were collected through two rounds of visits to all 30 grantees.

The second round of site visits took place from November 2007 through May 2008, with two-thirds of the visits occurring in the first three months of 2008. During the visits, semi-structured interviews took place with program staff, usually individually or in small groups in which interviewees were clustered by function. In addition, interviews were held with representatives of key partner organizations, including representatives of institutional and community components of the criminal justice system, housing and health care providers, and the workforce investment system. Discussions were held with small groups of participants and one or more employers in most sites. Other sources for qualitative information included quarterly narrative reports submitted to DOL by the grantees, information provided at DOL-sponsored grantee meetings, and published reports.

*Quantitative data.* The principal source of quantitative data is the MIS developed by DOL for participant tracking purposes. Cost data were collected through visits to nine PRI sites, as well as from financial reports for all 30 grantees. This information was supplemented by state and national corrections systems statistics and by research studies on criminal justice topics.



## **D. Organization of the Report**

The report continues in Chapter II by describing the PRI grantees and their communities. Chapter III examines project administration, program organization, and partnerships formed with key entities in the important areas of criminal justice, workforce investment, housing, substance abuse, and mental health. Chapter IV presents observable differences in the various projects' approaches to staffing and descriptions and analysis of project activities and services. Chapter V describes PRI enrollment patterns, participant characteristics, and patterns of service receipt. Chapter VI provides information on the short-term outcomes of PRI participants. Chapter VII contains information on the total costs of providing PRI services through the grantees, including costs per participant and per service category. Chapter VIII summarizes key findings from the evaluation.

## **II. PRI GRANTEES AND COMMUNITIES**

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This chapter supplements the information in the interim report on the organizations that received PRI grant awards and on the environments within which the PRI projects provided services to ex-offenders. The interim report found that grantees with more organizational resources at their disposal and those with prior experience in providing prisoner re-entry services experienced fewer problems during the start-up phase. Organizations with established infrastructures for providing administrative support for such tasks as data collection and entry and financial management and reporting did not face as challenging a start-up period as other, usually smaller, grantees. The interim report also found that hiring or assigning appropriate staff to the project and dealing with staff turnover were relatively common challenges among grantees and that these challenges contributed to start-up problems (Holl and Kolovich, 2007).

DOL is interested in knowing about the PRI grantees, their partners, the participants they served in the past, the services they provided, the characteristics and qualifications of staff, and the communities in which the projects operate. Exhibit II.1 summarizes key findings.

**Exhibit II.1**  
**Key Finding – PRI Grantees and Communities**

- Many grantees were relatively small organizations and many had limited previous experience in serving ex-offenders.
- Although economic conditions in most PRI communities were fair to good, two had unemployment rates in excess of 7 percent during 2007.
- Supervision practices varied widely by state and locality, which affected the number and types of services that ex-offended needed from PRI projects.
- Through its technical assistance efforts, DOL helped to build grantee capacity, especially among smaller grantees that had limited previous experience.

## **A. Grantee Characteristics**

### **1. The Grantee Organizations**

DOL restricted applications for PRI demonstration grants to FBCOs. Over 500 grant applications were submitted, and DOL funded 10 faith-based organizations (FBOs) and 20 community-based organizations (CBOs). Table II.1 displays the 30 PRI grantees, their location (city and state), and the total amount of grant funds awarded during the first two years of funding (the period covered by the evaluation). The table also shows whether the grantee was a faith-based or a community-based organization, the year it was founded, and the organization's budget (including the PRI grant) for the most recent fiscal year, usually calendar year 2007. Many of the grantees were relatively small—11 had annual budgets of under \$2 million, including PRI grant funds.

**Table II.1  
Overview of PRI Grantees**

Grantee Name <sup>a</sup>	City	State	Two Year Grant Total	Faith/Comm.	Year Estab.	Annual Budget (millions)
AWEE	Phoenix	AZ	\$1,313,150	C	1980	\$2.7
The Primavera Foundation, Inc.	Tucson	AZ	\$1,313,150	C*	1983	\$3.5
FCDI	Fresno	CA	\$1,313,150	C*	1992	\$7.0
Allen Temple	Oakland	CA	\$1,313,150	F	1989	\$1.3
MAAP	Sacramento	CA	\$1,313,150	C	1975	\$6.2
Metro United <sup>b</sup>	San Diego	CA	\$1,324,961	F*	1966	\$3.2
The Empowerment Program	Denver	CO	\$1,313,150	C*	1986	\$2.5
Community Partners In Action	Hartford	CT	\$1,326,425	C*	1875	\$14.0
OIC of Broward County, Inc.	Ft. Lauderdale	FL	\$1,314,093	C	2000	\$1.4
The Directors Council <sup>bc</sup>	Des Moines	IA	\$1,313,150	C*	1999	\$0.8
The Safer Foundation	Chicago	IL	\$1,320,605	C*	1972	\$28.0
The Church United	Baton Rouge	LA	\$1,311,938	F	1997	\$1.3
Odyssey House Louisiana, Inc.	New Orleans	LA	\$1,361,408	C	1973	\$12.0
Span, Inc.	Boston	MA	\$1,313,150	C	1976	\$1.3
ECSM <sup>d</sup>	Baltimore	MD	\$1,309,041	F	1927	\$0.8
Oakland Livingston HSA	Pontiac	MI	\$1,313,150	C*	1964	\$33.0
Connections to Success <sup>b</sup>	Kansas City	MO	\$1,312,020	F*	1998	\$1.2
St. Patrick Center	St. Louis	MO	\$1,313,150	F	1985	\$11.0
Career Opportunity Development <sup>b</sup>	Egg Harbor City	NJ	\$1,313,150	C	1970	\$5.3
Goodwill Industries - Greater NY/NJ	Newark	NJ	\$1,313,150	C*	1920	\$100.0
Urban Youth Alliance	Bronx	NY	\$1,313,391	F	1970	\$1.2
The Doe Fund, Inc.	Brooklyn	NY	\$1,311,160	C	1990	\$48.0
Talbert House	Cincinnati	OH	\$1,313,150	F	2001	\$50.0
SE Works, Inc.	Portland	OR	\$1,313,150	C	1997	\$2.9
Connection Training Services <sup>b</sup>	Philadelphia	PA	\$1,313,150	C*	1990	\$1.8
Urban League of Greater Dallas	Dallas	TX	\$1,313,150	C	1967	\$7.1
WABC 5C's	Houston	TX	\$1,313,150	F	1976	n/a
Goodwill Industries of San Antonio	San Antonio	TX	\$1,319,210	C	1945	\$43.9
POCAAN	Seattle	WA	\$1,313,150	C	1987	\$1.7
Word of Hope Ministries, Inc. <sup>b</sup>	Milwaukee	WI	\$1,313,150	F*	1996	\$0.9

Source:

*Faith-based/community-based designation was obtained from OMB form 1890 (where provided, as indicated by \*), or from information in the grantee's application. Information was verified during site visits.*

*Two year grant total is the sum of DOL announced grant award amounts.*

*Year established is from the original grant application or the organization's website.*

*Annual Budget (millions) covers the most recent fiscal year for the grantee organization, usually calendar year 2007, and includes PRI grant funds for the year. Data from site visit interviews and organization websites.*

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> *In some instances, an acronym or shortened form of the grantee name is used. For the full name, see Appendix A.*

<sup>b</sup> *Reported annual budget is for 2005.*

<sup>c</sup> *The Directors Council indicated their budget was between \$500,000 and \$1 million.*

<sup>d</sup> *Episcopal Community Services of Maryland reported annual budget before PRI grant*

## 2. Grantee Experience

Grantees had varying levels of experience in the principal service areas that are part of the PRI. Grant applications were examined to identify prior experience in serving ex-offenders and in providing services in six principal service areas: basic skills education (literacy/GED), occupational skills, mentoring, substance abuse treatment, mental health/general health care, and housing. Based on their applications, none of the grantees had prior experience across all seven of these dimensions, and five grantees identified only one or two areas in which they had prior experience (Table II.2).

**Table II.2  
Prior Grantee Experience in Seven Principal PRI Service Areas**

Grantee	City	Total Number of Service Areas	Services to Ex-Offenders	Housing Assistance	Mental/General Health Assistance	Substance Abuse Assistance	Vocational Training	Education Assistance (Literacy/GED/College)	Mentoring
AWEE	Phoenix	2		■		■			
The Primavera Foundation, Inc.	Tucson	3	■	■			■		
FCDI	Fresno	2	■					■	
Allen Temple	Oakland	5	■	■	■		■		■
MAAP	Sacramento	6	■	■	■	■	■		■
Metro United	San Diego	3	■					■	■
The Empowerment Program	Denver	5		■	■	■	■	■	
Community Partners In Action	Hartford	5	■	■	■	■		■	
OIC of Broward County, Inc.	Ft. Lauderdale	2	■				■		
The Directors Council	Des Moines	6	■	■	■	■		■	■
The Safer Foundation	Chicago	5	■	■	■	■			■
The Church United	Baton Rouge	5	■	■		■		■	■
Odyssey House Louisiana, Inc.	New Orleans	4		■	■	■	■		
Span, Inc.	Boston	4	■	■	■	■			
ECSM	Baltimore	3	■		■	■			
Oakland Livingston HAS	Pontiac	3		■	■		■		
Connections to Success	Kansas City	2	■	■					
St. Patrick Center	St. Louis	4		■	■	■		■	
Career Opportunity Development	Egg Harbor City	2	■				■		
Goodwill Industries - Greater NY/NJ	Newark	5	■		■	■	■	■	
Urban Youth Alliance	Bronx	4	■				■	■	■
The Doe Fund, Inc.	Brooklyn	4	■	■	■	■			
Talbert House	Cincinnati	4	■	■	■	■			
SE Works, Inc.	Portland	3	■	■			■		
Connection Training Services	Philadelphia	6	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Urban League of Greater Dallas	Dallas	5	■	■	■		■	■	
WABC 5C's	Houston	5	■	■	■	■			■
Goodwill Industries of San Antonio	San Antonio	1					■		
POCAAN	Seattle	4		■	■	■			■
Word of Hope Ministries, Inc.	Milwaukee	6	■		■	■	■	■	■
Total Number of Grantees with Prior Experience			23	21	19	18	15	12	10

Source: Grantee applications for federal assistance

Note: Table includes only those activities included in grant applications.

The analysis of prior experience among PRI grantees showed that previous service to ex-offenders was their most common attribute, shared by 23 sites. Twenty-one grantees were experienced in providing some form of housing assistance to the individuals they served. The two least common principal service areas were assistance with basic education, in which 12 grantees had experience, and mentoring, with 10 sites having experience. Mentoring was an area that presented significant challenges to sites. Many of them changed mentoring providers, struggled with recruiting or retaining mentors and mentees, and/or adjusted the content of mentoring programs during the first two years of project operations.

Grantee organizations came into the PRI with varying degrees of experience in providing prisoner re-entry services. In their grant applications, many grantees described themselves as active in providing various social services including housing, employment, substance abuse treatment and other assistance—to low-income and other disadvantaged populations. Few grantees described their activities as similar to the core activities in PRI, particularly in the area of providing employment assistance and related services to ex-offenders. As a result of this lack of experience in helping ex-offenders to achieve employment-based outcome goals, most sites struggled early to construct programs offering the appropriate range of services and assistance to the population targeted by the PRI program.

After a relatively slow start-up, most sites managed to reach DOL recruitment goals by March 31, 2008, the end of their second year of operations.

## **B. Grantee Communities**

Although all of the grantee communities shared the common characteristic of being urban areas, significant differences existed in the environments in which the PRI projects operated. These differences may have influenced the level of effort required to provide project participants

with re-entry services that increased their likelihood of getting jobs, covering their expenses, avoiding illegal drugs, not abusing alcohol, and remaining out of prison.

#### 1. Economic Conditions

Most projects resided in communities where the local economy was reasonably good, with unemployment rates in the 3.5 to 4.5 percent range (Table II.3). However, some sites found themselves operating under less propitious circumstances. In two sites (Fresno and Pontiac), the annual unemployment rate in 2007 was over 7.5 percent. In general, when unemployment rates are high, wages tend to be depressed, and more individuals compete for jobs at the lower levels of the economic ladder. With many ex-offenders lacking work experience, basic skills, and education, sites in areas with higher unemployment faced more serious obstacles in achieving employment-related outcome goals than sites where competition for jobs was less intense.



**Table II.3  
Key Economic Statistics for PRI Communities**

Grantee Name	Location	Unemployment		
		Rate (2007 average) (percent)	Median Wage (May 2007) (hourly)	Median Rental (monthly)
AWEE	Phoenix	3.3	\$14.52	\$769
The Primavera Foundation, Inc.	Tucson	3.7	\$14.18	\$619
FCDI	Fresno	8.6	\$13.91	\$748
Allen Temple	Oakland	4.4	\$20.77	\$947
MAAP	Sacramento	5.4	\$17.66	\$891
Metro United	San Diego	4.6	\$16.67	\$1,154
The Empowerment Program	Denver	3.9	\$17.35	\$724
Community Partners In Action	Hartford	4.7	\$19.24	\$690
OIC of Broward County, Inc.	Ft. Lauderdale	3.8	\$14.35	\$896
The Directors Council	Des Moines	3.5	\$15.58	\$631
The Safer Foundation	Chicago	4.9	\$16.62	\$803
The Church United	Baton Rouge	3.8	\$14.00	\$667
Odyssey House Louisiana, Inc.	New Orleans	3.5	\$14.12	\$838
Span, Inc.	Boston	4.1	\$19.44	\$1,080
ECSM	Baltimore	3.7	\$17.49	\$750
Oakland Livingston HSA	Pontiac	7.7	\$17.93	\$751
Connections to Success	Kansas City	5.0	\$15.65	\$657
St. Patrick Center	St. Louis	5.3	\$15.46	\$592
Career Opportunity Development	Egg Harbor City	5.8	\$13.65	\$896
Goodwill Industries - Greater NY/NJ	Newark	4.4	\$18.81	\$787
Urban Youth Alliance	Bronx	4.4	\$19.37	\$845
The Doe Fund, Inc.	Brooklyn	4.4	\$19.37	\$945
Talbert House	Cincinnati	5.0	\$15.36	\$535
SE Works, Inc.	Portland	4.9	\$16.74	\$721
Connection Training Services	Philadelphia	4.3	\$16.95	\$746
Urban League of Greater Dallas	Dallas	4.3	\$15.07	\$724
WABC 5C's	Houston	4.3	\$14.84	\$729
Goodwill Industries of San Antonio	San Antonio	4.1	\$12.76	\$678
POCAAN	Seattle	4.0	\$18.85	\$833
Word of Hope Ministries, Inc.	Milwaukee	5.1	\$15.97	\$674
<b>National Average</b>		<b>4.6</b>	<b>\$15.10</b>	<b>\$763</b>

*Sources:*

*Unemployment Rate is from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Unemployment Rates for Metropolitan Areas, Year 2007, <http://www.bls.gov/lau/lamtrk07.htm>*

*Median Wage is from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2007 Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Area Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates*

*Median Rental is from U.S. Census Bureau 2006 American Community Survey GCT2514. Median Monthly Housing Costs for Renter-Occupied Housing Units (Dollars): 2006.*

*Notes:*

*Unemployment Rate and Median Wage are for relevant Metropolitan Statistical Area. (Newark, Bronx and Brooklyn are for the Metropolitan Division)*

*Median Rental refers to median gross rent of renter-occupied housing units in principal city of MSA (Egg Harbor data are for Atlantic County)*

Projects operating in relatively high wage areas had a better chance of meeting the wage goal for the initiative. Based on data for May 2007, median wages in some sites were 30 percent or more above the national average (e.g., Oakland, Boston), and wages in other sites (e.g., San Antonio) were significantly below the average.

The third variable that may be indicative of the relative disparity in conditions faced by ex-offenders is the median rental cost for renter-occupied housing. The figure in Table II.3 does not reflect the amount ex-offenders paid for monthly rent, but rather shows the variations in rent among the grantee communities. Again, this measure shows wide variation in rental costs, with some sites ranging up to 40 percent or more above the national average (San Diego and Boston), and other sites 20 percent or more below the national average. The cities where median rent is significantly below the average are typically found in the Midwest and the South, with Cincinnati, St. Louis, Tucson, and Des Moines appearing at the low end of rental costs.

Although all sites face considerable difficulties in successfully assisting ex-offenders by providing meaningful re-entry services, these data suggest that some projects operate in environments that are slightly more conducive to success, while others face greater challenges.

## 2. State Approaches to Incarceration and Community Supervision

As states struggle with the rising cost of corrections, many are facing difficult choices. Over a 21-year period, from 1987 to 2007, state expenditures on corrections rose 127 percent in 2007 dollars. During the same period, adjusted state spending on higher education rose 21 percent. The financial burden is forcing many states to consider alternatives that will address public safety issues while holding offenders accountable for their behavior (Warren et al., 2008).

One approach adopted by some states is to impose sanctions other than prison for individuals who violate parole and/or probation conditions. These and other changes in sanctioning parole and probation violators affect the likelihood that an ex-offender in any given

PRI community will be returned to prison for a technical violation of parole, which would count as “recidivism” under the DOL performance measures. The implications are significant. Langan and Levin 2002 cite BJS data showing that, nationwide, 26 percent of parolees are returned to prison solely for technical violations of parole. In California, however, almost 40 percent of parolees who recidivated within three years of release were reincarcerated for technical violations of parole (Warren et al., 2008).

The different approaches among states to incarceration and parole/probation affected site performance.<sup>8</sup> The number of individuals released with conditions (e.g., parole supervision) also influenced the population from which sites drew participants. Sites in communities with higher percentages of persons under supervision may be more likely to achieve success due to the presence of a person of authority who could facilitate access to additional services, share oversight responsibilities, and help to track participants’ progress toward reintegration. Several sites restricted enrollment to individuals under supervision for these reasons.

There was wide variation across the 20 states with PRI projects in the percentage of prisoners released conditionally in 1998. In Oregon, 99.8 percent of prisoners were released conditionally, but in Florida and Massachusetts, less than 50 percent of their prisoners were released with conditions (Appendix B). Fourteen of the 30 PRI projects operated in states where 90 percent or more of the prisoners released in 1998 were released with conditions. In sites with relatively low rates of community supervision, projects may find it more difficult to identify potential participants who will be under some form of community supervision, unless they had strong connections to supervision agencies and/or to individual agents.

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<sup>8</sup> The pools of ex-offenders eligible for services under PRI varied significantly in size and composition from one location to another. The number of eligible ex-offenders in each grantee’s urban area depended on the state’s system for classifying crimes as violent or non-violent, the state’s approach to incarcerating individuals convicted of specific crimes, and the state’s policies toward probation and parole, among other factors.

To increase the likelihood of a seamless re-entry, coordination between institutional and community components often takes place during the structured re-entry phase. For example, the Oregon DOC uses “reach-in” meetings with inmates prior to release to help them with transition and community integration (Exhibit II.2).

Additional factors which affect re-entry are the quality of supervision and the range and responsiveness of resources to which supervision agents were able to refer their charges. It is possible that factors related to the programming that is accessible through supervision agents may have had a more significant impact on PRI projects’ success than the opportunity to enroll ex-offenders who are under supervision.

**Exhibit II.2**  
**The "Reach-in"**  
**Oregon Department of Corrections**

In Oregon, before inmates are released from the institutions, they participate in a “reach-in” meeting to help prepare for the re-entry transition. Reach-ins can take place in person, over the phone, or via video-conferencing, and they typically occur 45 days before release. Inmates are asked if they would like to include family, friends, and other supportive allies at the reach-in meeting. Corrections counselors, case managers and parole officers also participate. During the meeting, the attendees focus on what the inmate has accomplished while in prison and explore potential challenges that need to be addressed upon release. The core idea of the reach-in is to familiarize all of the attendees with the inmate’s strengths and weaknesses and to discuss the re-entry expectations of the parole officers, inmate, and family/friends. Conditions of parole are covered during this meeting, as well.

Interviewees in Oregon discussed how reach-ins educate not only the inmate as to what to expect during the re-entry process but also the parole officer and the support network of family and friends. Reach-ins, according to the interviewees, have also helped to change the relationship between parole officer and parolee; that is, parolees have come to view parole officers as partners rather than adversaries in the re-entry process.

### III. ORGANIZATION OF PROGRAM SERVICES

DOL expected PRI grantees to establish working relationships with state and community organizations that would facilitate the provision of re-entry services to ex-offenders. DOL was particularly interested in analysis and discussion of grantee experiences related to the principal approaches to organizing, implementing, operating, and administering PRI projects, the patterns of cooperation and linkages evolved between PRI projects and partners, whether significant institutional issues influenced project design and implementation, the opportunities and challenges arising in new partnerships between grantees and actual or potential project partners, and how grantees capitalized on these opportunities and address these challenges.

Sites were at different stages of the “learning curve” when they began to implement their PRI projects. As described in Chapter II, many had experience in some portion of the core PRI functional areas, but none was familiar with the full range of PRI activities. Sites also began with different levels and types of relationships with their primary partners in this endeavor—criminal justice agencies on both the institutional and community sides, workforce investment system partners, and providers of housing, health-related services, and other assistance. Key

**Exhibit III.1**  
**Key Findings – Organization of Program Services**

- Twenty grantees subcontracted out one or more services. In some of the sites with multiple service providers, participants received a distinct set of service options, depending on which subcontractor served them. For example, in one location, ex-offenders who lacked work histories were routed through a program of structured work experience.
- Eleven projects offered case management, work readiness and related services at multiple locations, usually through subcontractors.
- Some of the sites with multiple service providers used these partners to serve participants with particular needs; others did so to make it easier for participants to access services.
- When grantee staff were at One-Stop Career Centers, participants had access to a wide range of services.

findings of how grantees organized to deliver program services are presented in Exhibit III.1.

## **A. Approaches to Project Organization**

Because of the grantee and site-specific differences described in Chapter II and the dynamism of the projects themselves, distinct, meaningful, program models have not yet emerged from the PRI sites' experiences. However, three noteworthy aspects of project organization involved the degree to which services were centralized at a single site, project staffing, and participant management. Each is discussed in the following subsections.

### **1. Degree of Program Centralization**

Data were collected during the second site visits to assist in differentiating those projects where *the menu of services available to a participant varied* from those where *all participants received the same basic set of services*. This analysis begins with a review of grantee approaches to subcontracting.

In developing and implementing re-entry projects, grantees had the option of partnering with other organizations to provide re-entry services, or providing a range of services directly, through their staff. The majority of grantees created formal financial agreements with partners or subcontractors to provide re-entry services to project participants. However, one-third of the grantees provided the basic range of PRI services—intake, assessment, case management, work readiness, training, placement assistance, supportive services, follow-up activities, and mentoring—exclusively by their staff in-house (Table III.1). Under the *single-entity approach*, subcontractors were not used for any of the allowable program services, and even mentoring was provided in-house and coordinated by an individual who was on the grantee's payroll.

**Table III.1**  
**Subcontracting PRI Services**

Project Approach	Number of Grantees
No subcontractors, in-house	10
With subcontractor partners	20

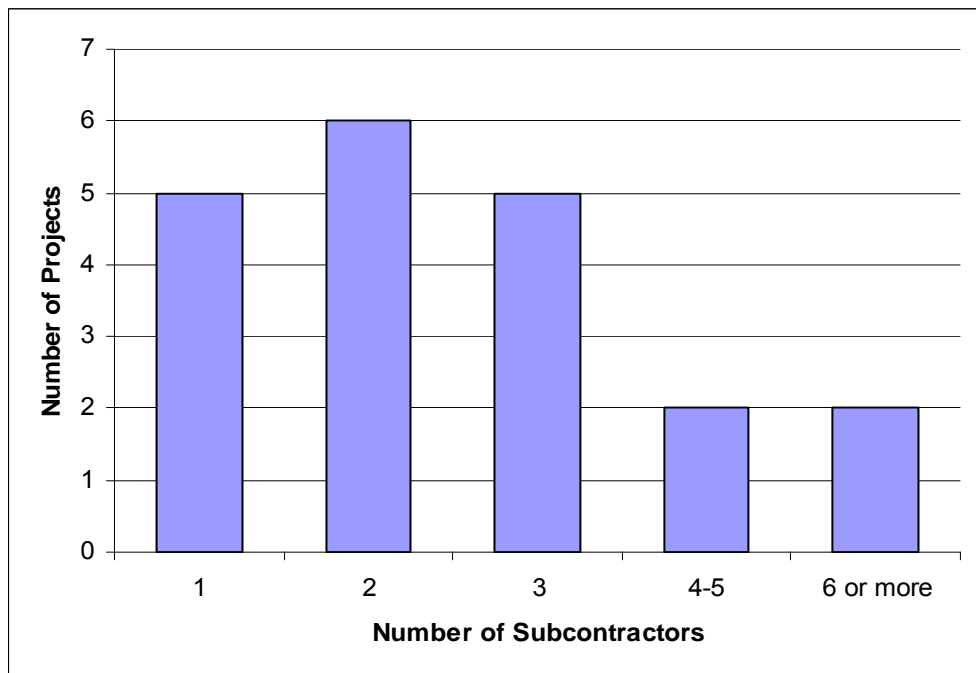
*Source: Site visit interviews with project managers; grantee applications for option year (2007–2008) funding*

A number of grantees that used an in-house service delivery approach had originally contracted with other entities for specific services, often mentoring, but for various reasons decided during the first two years of project operations to bring responsibility for these services in-house. Several of the sites that moved their mentoring services in-house did so in part for the purpose of gaining more control over the content of specific services offered to participants.

Grantees in the 20 remaining locations engaged partners to provide one or more of the basic program services (Figure III.1). This took place in one of two ways:

- Partners provided one or more specific types of services to all participants or all participants who received that service, with participants moving between locations and service providers for the complete range of services. Eleven sites used this approach.
- Partners provided a complete range of basic services to all of the participants who enrolled at a specific project location. Nine sites used this approach.

**Figure III.1  
Subcontracting by PRI Projects**



*Source: Site visit interviews with project managers*

Project managers and grantee executives said that their sites used partners to provide services to take advantage of expertise and resources available in other organizations and/or to provide more than one entry point for participants to receive services. Considering the difficulties that many ex-offenders face in the area of transportation, the establishment of multiple access points to project services was an important factor in making project services more accessible in many cities.

In some of the sites with multiple partners, participants received a distinct set of service options, which varied depending on which partner served them. These service options typically involved specialized assistance for specific subpopulations, including youthful ex-offenders, persons with disabilities, and participants whose readiness for unsubsidized employment differed



from that of the individuals served by the grantee. Subcontractors oversaw a service strategy that differed significantly from the approach followed by the grantee in seven sites.

Two projects gained the benefits of the multi-entity approach without using subcontractors. In those sites, grantee staff were out-stationed at One-Stop Career Centers. According to interviewees, participants who accessed PRI services through the off-site PRI staff were more likely to also receive One-Stop services such as TABE testing, computer assessment, and development of an interest profile than participants served at the projects' main locations.

Information from a number of projects using a *multi-entity approach* indicates that various factors and objectives motivated grantees to follow this path:

- Two projects provided basic services through neighborhood churches. This design was chosen to facilitate access to services at the neighborhood level, often in locations familiar to returning ex-offenders. Staff at one of these sites also stated that this approach built the capacity of local faith-based entities to address the needs of their communities.
- At the time of the site visit (March 2008), another project included five partners. Three offered specific services—mentoring, job development and placement, and retention services—with which the grantee had only limited expertise at the outset of PRI. A fourth partner provided a full range of services for younger participants. A local One-Stop operator provided intensive assessment services and training. Managers at the grantee said that the organization had not previously used subcontractors to the extent it did for PRI.
- In one host city, several organizations had experience in assisting ex-offenders. When the grant opportunity was announced in 2005, representatives from these organizations met and, after some discussion, determined their respective roles in the project, which were reflected in the grant application. The original partnership has largely survived. The project offers access to services at multiple locations and has partners with experience in providing housing services, services to individuals with disabilities, and substance abuse treatment, among other areas of expertise.

The above are but four examples of how sites that used a multi-entity approach arrived at that design. For grantees that used this approach, benefits included a higher level of expertise or competence in providing those specific services and/or expertise in serving specific subgroups of ex-offenders (e.g., those with disabilities or substance abusers).

**Table III.2**  
**Staff Distribution Across Sites**

Functional Area	Average	Lowest	Highest
Case Management / Retention / Job Readiness Training	4.1	2.0	7.0
Job Development	1.4	0.5	3.0
Mentor Program Coordination	1.1	0.2	3.0
Support Functions	1.1	0.2	2.0

*Source: Site visit interviews with project managers.*

*Note: Numbers represent managers' estimates of full-time equivalents in the functional areas listed. Data cover 29 sites.*

## 2. Staffing Considerations

During second round site visits, project managers were asked to estimate the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff that worked on case management, retention, job readiness training, job development, mentor program coordination, and other support functions. Because case managers often provided job readiness training and/or retention services, these functions were combined for this analysis. The data show that, on average, four FTE staff members worked on case management, retention, and/or job readiness training, while one FTE was dedicated to job development, mentor program coordination, and support functions (Table III.2).<sup>9</sup>

Potential services offered in the PRI programs at each site included conducting intake, assessing suitability, determining eligibility, assessing participants' general needs, conducting specific assessments, developing Individual Development Plans (IDPs), making referrals to other service providers, recruiting and assigning mentors, placing participants in employment, and tracking and following up with participants. Case managers had either the sole or the lead responsibility for most of these tasks. The three tasks for which case managers did not have

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<sup>9</sup> Chapter VII provides additional information on staffing patterns and costs at nine grantees. Please see Table VII.5 and the accompanying discussion.

primary responsibility were recruiting mentors, assigning mentors, and placing participants in employment. Mentor coordinators and job developers directed these efforts.

Many project managers and grantee executives were aware of the effects of staff-related issues on project operations. Among the topics mentioned during site visit discussions were staff turnover, compensation, and staff configuration for carrying out project operations. Site visitors found that every line staff position had turned over in at least four project locations within the 18-month period between site visits. One executive director reported conducting a salary survey for occupations similar to the grantee's and finding that PRI staff salaries were approximately 35 percent below the average for the area. As a result, staff compensation was raised at this site.

### 3. Supervising Participants

Sites have approached the “management” of participants differently depending on whether individuals were under the active supervision of a community supervision agency (including parole, probation and halfway houses). When participants were subject to external supervision, project staff were better able to focus on addressing participants’ work-related needs. Staff from these community supervision agencies kept track of participants’ residences, monitored behavior such as substance abuse, facilitated access to various services (e.g., mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment), and generally served as the source of oversight and, when necessary, discipline. One of the functions they performed was that of case management.

A number of projects developed close relationships with community supervision agencies. Participants in these projects were not only more likely to be under supervision, but also more likely to be receiving various forms of re-entry assistance consistent with the three-stage re-entry framework from or through the supervising agencies. With an external “policeperson” keeping track of participants and facilitating access to ancillary assistance, staff said they were less likely to be distracted from an employment-centered approach to serving

participants. At the other extreme, staff at sites where fewer participants were under community supervision were likely to spend more time on activities that were less central to their performance goals, such as attempting to track down participants who were “missing.” In the middle of this continuum were sites with large numbers of participants on parole or probation, but for whom supervising agencies had fewer resources at their disposal to assist in the re-entry process.

Staff at several sites stated that they did not enroll ex-offenders who were not under active supervision. In these sites, the community supervision agency played a strong role in providing comprehensive re-entry services and project staff were able to serve primarily as an employment-centered “gap filler” that supplemented the resources available in the community.

## **B. Partnership Development**

### **1. Overview**

The breadth and complexity of the assistance needed by returning ex-offenders required grantees to reach out to other entities to construct a menu of services that was responsive to the needs of project participants. Some of these other organizations were involved in the incarceration and community supervision sides of the criminal justice system. In many locations, the criminal justice partners were also providing services, sometimes independently of those established by the project. The creation of effective working relationships among multiple partners and the management of project services required more complex organizational structures and interagency agreements than many grantees had been accustomed to.

Re-entry programs involve shared decision-making among institutional corrections, community corrections, and public and private service providers concerning how best to assist inmates and ex-offenders as they make the transition from the institution to the community

(Byrne et al., 2002). In addition to the obvious need to work with criminal justice entities, PRI grantee representatives cited four other reasons for partnering: (1) to better respond to ex-offender service and support needs, (2) to provide and facilitate access to activities not allowed with grant funds, (3) to foster goodwill among community organizations that were already providing services to ex-offenders, and (4) to increase the efficiency of project services and/or to improve their effectiveness.

## 2. Criminal Justice Partners (Institutional)

Partners on the “institutional” side of the criminal justice system include state, Federal, and local corrections institutions that house offenders who are eligible for services under the PRI. In the context of PRI, they provide referrals to projects, are locations where potential participants may be recruited, and serve as providers of pre-release services to individuals who may become participants in PRI projects. The organizations that comprise the institutional side of the criminal justice system are principal stakeholders in, and overseers of, the institutional component of the three-stage re-entry process described in Chapter I.

Managers in sites that had some relationship with the DOC prior to the PRI grant funding were more likely to report having regular contacts regarding the DOJ grant. Organizations in 17 sites had a relationship with the DOC prior to the PRI grant funding, and 16 of the 17 said they had regular contact. The one organization that did not have regular contact was in a state where the DOC staff responsible for the DOJ grant had changed several times in the first 15 months of operations. Seven PRI project managers said they did not have regular contact with the DOC prior to the PRI grant but that they did have regular contact after the grant was let. A small number of PRI project managers reported difficulties in establishing good working relationships with pre-release service providers. The PRI project managers generally relied on the DOCs for

referrals of inmates being released back into the community and access to the institutions to recruit inmates and disseminate information about the program.

Frequent communication between PRI grantees and DOC pre-release service providers was needed to coordinate services and share information. However, interviewees cited several concerns as impediments to building partnerships between DOC and PRI grantees. Staff turnover and changes in assignments were common to both organizations. Communications and relationship building were hampered when key contacts changed. This happened more often on the PRI side.

Five of the state DOCs used some of their DOJ grant money to contract with PRI grantees to provide pre-release services, thus creating a relationship even where there was not one previously. Two sites worked closely with their DOC contacts to create and implement the pre-release curriculum within the correctional institutions. Group meetings among PRI project managers, DOC staff, and other interested parties occurred monthly or quarterly in at least five states. In addition, PRI project managers and DOC interviewees were in almost weekly if not daily contact by email and phone when the DOJ grants were first awarded. Interviewees discussed the coordination challenges they faced due to the differences in operating styles. To overcome these barriers, frequent communication was one essential tool.

DOC staff in 19 of the 20 states were interviewed about their relationships with PRI grantees. DOC staff in seven states rated the relationships as excellent, six as very good, and five as good. Within one relationship described as excellent, the DOC and PRI partners worked closely together to write the grant application for PRI. The DOC interviewee said that he viewed the PRI grantee staff as co-workers and pointed out that they had written grants together to leverage additional funds outside of DOL and DOJ. In four out of the six relationships rated as

excellent, the PRI grantee had already been working with the DOC prior to the DOJ grant; in some sites, the relationship had been established more than five years before PRI.

In only one interview did DOC staff describe their relationship with the PRI partner as poor, and the interviewees said that the primary reason for this was poor communication. According to these interviewees, staff from the PRI grantee did not provide feedback on the participants who had been referred from the DOC, and the PRI grantee lacked a point of contact to manage the relationship. Also, because different people from the PRI grantee attended the monthly DOC/PRI staff meetings, the DOC had been unable to establish a relationship with a single contact person at the PRI grantee who would be knowledgeable about the two programs and be in a position to follow through on tasks important to effective partnering.

PRI project managers identified the following significant challenges they encountered while working with the pre-release projects:

- Delays in implementation of DOC projects.
- Getting DOC participants to show up at the PRI site after their release from jail or prison. (DOC institutional staff may have only limited control over this problem.)
- The DOC project was serving inmates who did not meet the PRI eligibility criteria of no prior violent offenses. The two states in which this was mentioned did not have waivers that may have allowed the grantee to serve such individuals.
- The absence of a steady contact person at DOC due to turnover and a slow hiring process.
- Inadequate communications about release dates and a lack of shared assessment information.
- Inconsistent procedures, difficulties in obtaining security clearances to go into the institutions, and lack of flexibility by DOC and institution staff.

DOC staff also discussed the challenges they encountered while working with the PRI grantees. One recurring theme was that, although PRI grantees wanted to conduct orientations and provide other pre-release services inside the institutions, they often did not understand the

processes and procedures in place at these institutions. Some grantees did not schedule these sessions well in advance and arrived late for appointments. As one interviewee noted, the failure of PRI grantee staff to arrive on time or at all for orientations disrupted the prison staff and the institution's routine. To overcome this problem, some DOC staff met with the PRI grantees to discuss prison procedures and culture. Other DOCs provided clearances to project staff who would be regular visitors to their facilities if the staff attended formal training sessions of a day or more. DOC interviewees reported that new PRI case managers presenting the PRI program during inmate orientations often were not adept at marketing their programs to the inmates.

In states with two or more PRI grantees<sup>10</sup>, the multiple grantees within the state often coordinated jointly with the DOC partner. While information across all such grantees is not available on this topic, 10 project managers reported that they collaborated (to varying degrees) with the other grantee(s) in their states on the PRI project; four, however, said that they did not.

### 3. Criminal Justice Partners (Community)

State and local agencies handling ex-offender parole and probation were among the principal partners on the "community" side of the criminal justice system. The community side also included the Federal Probation Office (FPO), through which former inmates at Federal institutions are supervised. In locations where diversion programs offer alternatives to incarceration, the community justice partners may include components of the courts systems.

PRI grantees relied on parole and probation officers and staff at halfway houses for referrals, supervision, and oversight, and in some instances also relied on them as brokers of wrap-around services. Many of these partnerships had been reasonably well-established, as probation and parole officials were often the best positioned to provide referrals of individuals eligible for PRI and to process grantee requests for eligibility verification.

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<sup>10</sup> There are seven such states with a total of 17 PRI projects.



PRI participants held divergent views on the role played by probation and parole officers in facilitating and supporting their own re-entry (Exhibit III.2). Of the 28 project managers who rated their relationship with state parole and/or probation officials, only one said that the relationship was poor. Seven said that the relationship was good, while 20 said that it was very good or excellent. In some locations, attempts to establish relationships with all staff in a community supervision agency proved challenging; so managers and/or staff sought to build rapport with individual parole and probation officers.<sup>11</sup> Staff reported that some specific officers were more active supporters of PRI activities than others.

**Exhibit III.2**  
**Participants' Thoughts on Parole, Probation, and Re-entry**

During discussions with participants in 17 PRI locations, participants were asked whether or not parole/probation officers helped or hindered their re-entry. The following examples represent a few of the comments from participants who felt that being on supervision was a barrier:

- One participant's parole officer scheduled a urinalysis during the participant's work hours.
- Another participant's parole officer would not adjust curfew stipulations so that the participant could keep his job.
- Six out of the eight participants in one site where project staff are co-located at the parole office said that they would prefer to have the PRI office located somewhere else.

Other participants had more positive experiences with their parole officers. For instance:

- Participants in two different cities said that parole officers were more "relaxed" knowing that they were in the PRI program.
- One participant shared that his mentor spoke with his parole officer on a regular basis.
- Many participants said that they learned about the PRI program through their parole officers and that their parole officers encouraged them to enroll.
- One participant saw a benefit in having a parole officer located on-site at the PRI grantee; the parole officer was able to see the positive changes in the participants' lives. This participant said that he saw a change in his parole officer's attitude toward him, in that the parole officer was pleased with what the participant was doing and knew that he is always sober now.

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<sup>11</sup> In some agencies, individual parole or probation officers were able to exercise discretion in the approach they took to supervising parolees. Oftentimes, those most "sympathetic" to the PRI philosophy or concept were individuals assigned to work with the project.

The most commonly coordinated activity between the PRI grantee and parole officers was eligibility verification. In 24 sites, parole and probation officers helped confirm eligibility for at least some of participants. In three of those sites, parole or probation officers were co-located at the PRI office and were able to provide background checks. In other sites, case managers or participants would fax or take an eligibility verification form to the parole or probation officer to be signed.

To recruit new participants, PRI staff made presentations at parole offices or halfway houses to explain and promote PRI activities and services to community justice officers and occasionally directly to parolees. Interviewees noted that these presentations allowed them to maintain regular contact with parole officers and to coordinate referrals between the entities. In one site, the PRI grantee held weekly partner meetings and hosted job fairs at the local house.

A supervision officer in one city described information exchanges between PRI project staff and supervision staff. Although no regular reports were shared between the two entities, contact was made when issues arose that would affect the participant's successful re-entry. For example, if the PRI project was able to get a participant a better job that would require working with the parole officer to change a curfew, then the two entities would work together to effect a change in the time the participant must return to housing.

Twenty-four PRI project managers discussed their partnerships with the FPO. Five project managers said their relationship was excellent, four said it was very good, eleven said good, two said fair, and two said poor. One project manager said that Federal Probation Officers take more of a social service approach to supervision than other parole and probation offices, in that they attempt to ensure that the individuals whom they supervise receive needed services. They are not as quick to "violate" someone for failing to adhere to terms of supervision as are other probation and parole officers.

#### 4. Housing

Finding safe and affordable housing is a critical challenge for many ex-offenders. Since grant funds could not be used to provide housing assistance, project staff who attempted to assist participants with their housing needs had to develop relationships with community housing resources. This report discusses four distinct types of housing. Three categories of housing are distinguished primarily by the length of time that an individual typically stays in such housing: emergency housing, typically lasting up to 30 days; transitional housing, which may last up to six months or more; and permanent housing, typically a longer-term lease or ownership of a year or more. The fourth category consists of a transitional housing facility known as a halfway house or, in some communities, as a transition house, depending on the sponsoring agency.

Halfway houses are often managed by an organization under contract to a government agency; a few are private with no connection to government. At halfway houses, residents are given a structured or semi-structured living environment, often with programs and supports related to addiction counseling and reintegration into society. Among the most comprehensive halfway house programs is the one operated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP):

*The Bureau contracts with residential re-entry centers (RRCs), also known as halfway houses, to provide assistance to inmates who are nearing release. RRCs provide a safe, structured, supervised environment, as well as employment counseling, job placement, financial management assistance, and other programs and services. RRCs help inmates gradually rebuild their ties to the community and facilitate supervising offenders' activities during this readjustment phase. An important component of the RRC program is transitional drug abuse treatment for inmates who have completed residential substance abuse treatment program while confined in a Bureau institution.<sup>12</sup>*

As is evident in the BOP description above, some halfway houses provide programming that is very similar to the assistance available through PRI. Although a resident of a Federal

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.bop.gov/locations/cc/index.jsp> (August 3, 2008).

halfway house technically remains an inmate, she or he is eligible for PRI.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, when individuals from state prison systems stay in halfway houses, they typically have been released from prison and may be under community supervision (i.e., parole or probation), in addition to the supervision provided by the halfway house.

Overall, PRI project managers rated their relationships with transitional housing providers as marginally better than relations with halfway houses, which in turn were rated better than relationships with emergency housing providers. In some cities, access to emergency shelters is centrally managed, providing PRI sites with few options other than referring participants to the gatekeeping agency, where participants must follow the procedures in place in that community.

Grantees spend the majority of their energies developing connections related to transition housing. Quite often, ex-offenders have a place to stay when they are first released; if not, they can access the emergency shelter network in their city. However, when it comes time to move out of their halfway house, initial residence, or emergency shelter, individuals often need assistance. Because few projects were actively involved in assisting participants in the search for permanent housing, partnerships in this area were generally lacking. Many interviewees expressed the view that having enough money was the key issue to affording permanent housing.

## 5. Workforce Investment System

Job developers in 21 sites indicated that the publicly funded workforce investment system was an active partner in their placement efforts. In these locations, One-Stop Career Center activities included providing job leads and access to electronic databases; exchanging information regularly with job developers and/or case managers; providing core services

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<sup>13</sup> According to DOL guidance, an inmate is considered to have been released when s/he is moved to a halfway house. Please see ETA Q&A #4 March 2006.

(including access to computers, assistance with resumes and interviewing skills, and job fairs); and referring participants for training.

Partnerships with some or all of their One-Stop Career Centers seemed highly developed in three sites, which used WIA funds for training, provided intensive assessment services, and offered specialized services for ex-offenders (Exhibit III.3).

In two other locations, the PRI grantee was a One-Stop operator. PRI staff were out-stationed at One-Stop Career Centers in two cities. In several locations, One-Stop Career Centers offered programs and services specifically developed for ex-offenders, employed staff members who specialized in providing services to ex-offenders, and/or provided space for PRI staff and activities. These practices included the following:

- In one site, each of the One-Stop Career Centers held a job search workshop for ex-offenders. The workshop lasted approximately four hours a day for two weeks, making it the longest specialized workshop for ex-offenders discovered during site visits.
- In a second site, the PRI grantee used space at one of the city's One-Stop Career Centers for training workshops at no cost to the grant.
- At a third location, one of the One-Stop Career Centers provided a wide range of services to PRI participants, due to the co-location of staff from other agencies at the facility. Many participants qualified for housing assistance; single parents with children could apply for TANF; and participants could apply for food stamps. In addition, the office that provides Emergency Assistance (EA) is located in the same building as the One-Stop. Once individuals are approved for EA and prepared for employment, a case manager guides their search for work and housing. Those ex-offenders in the EA program were referred to a PRI "Life Coach" who was co-located at the One-Stop.

**Exhibit III.3**  
**Examples of PRI and One-Stop Career Center Partnerships**

**Tucson:** At the time of the site visit, about 20 PRI participants had been enrolled in WIA services. Co-enrollees had case managers from both the One-Stop and the PRI program. Referrals were made in both directions, and the case managers called one another to discuss the person being referred. PRI participants had to complete the 4.5-day employability skills workshop in order to get an appointment with a case manager. By the time an individual met with a case manager, he or she had completed at least two formal assessment instruments (e.g., TABE, PESCO-Sage aptitude and interest test, Strong Interest Inventory, Self-Directed Search, or Myers-Briggs).

Job leads were shared between the two entities, and One-Stop job postings were sent electronically to PRI staff. Some participants were enrolled in WIA-supported training programs. With WIA support, PRI participants had been trained in such fields as medical assistant and truck driving (CDL). Local partners worked together to address issues facing the ex-offender and his or her family. For example, some children of PRI participants received assistance through Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth programs.

**Hartford:** Services to ex-offenders were part of the local workforce plan. At the largest One-Stop Career Center in Hartford, an estimated 85 percent of the 1,200 individuals seeking assistance each month are ex-offenders. This center offers a three-week workshop specifically for ex-offenders. The One-Stop referred many eligible ex-offenders to PRI. More would be referred if the PRI program had capacity to serve more.

Many PRI participants received a reading and math assessment and a career interest inventory through the career assessment unit at the One-Stop, which provided feedback to the project and participant. Participants met with a master career counselor for three hours, who looks at the individual's career interests in terms of the area's four targeted industries (machine manufacturing, allied health, retail, and insurance; they also support truck driving). Participants took one or more Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) assessments, and all results were entered into the Connecticut Works database so that the information would be readily available if the participant sought training through an Individual Training Account (ITA).

Under an agreement with the PRI grantee, the Local Workforce Investment Board administered the PRI project's training accounts. After the assessment, the case manager at the PRI project reviewed training options, if appropriate, and worked through the One-Stop to set up an ITA. As of mid-March, 14 PRI participants had been assessed, and seven had been issued ITAs. In addition, some participants benefitted from the Hartford Jobs Funnel, created specifically to get Hartford residents into construction industry careers.

**Baltimore:** Services to ex-offenders were part of the local workforce plan. The Reentry Center (REC), started in 2005, came out of city's ex-offender initiative and the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED). REC is located within a career center office and is funded by the Able Foundation, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Maryland State Department of Education, and Maryland Parole and Probation. Since its opening in 2005, REC has served more than 8,500 ex-offenders.

A full range of assessment and placement services were available for ex-offenders, including legal services (workshops on expungement and child support arrearages), assistance with obtaining identification and birth certificates, adult basic education, GED, and pre-GED classes, and access to ITAs. Participants in Baltimore's PRI project went to the REC center during the first week or two after enrollment in PRI to access all of the above-listed services. Grantee staff accompanied participants to assist them with REC registration. Referrals were made in both directions. Staff at the two organizations shared assessment information on the participants, exchanged job leads and updated each other on participants' job search status.

Site visitors solicited opinions from One-Stop staff about why some One-Stop locations appear to be less open to serving ex-offenders. Responses varied, and the reasons cited were often specific to the circumstances extant in the city where the conversation was taking place. Two representative opinions are presented below.

- City A: Career centers were designed for customers to access self-directed services, with certain individualized services. Without extra funding, it is a real challenge to provide the kind of services that would be useful for this population. Funding is not available from the traditional career center pipelines. The local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) has been successful in getting funds to serve some special populations, and creating partnerships to access services for various groups of jobseekers. One career center has been involved in prisoner re-entry because ex-offenders were one of the populations coming in for services. The One-Stop operator is a private non-profit organization, which also seeks funding for special populations (and has a grant for a women's re-entry program.)
- City B: The city has decided to focus its workforce investment activities on a handful of key industries, including customer service, information technology, healthcare, business services, hospitality, and biosciences. Many ex-offenders will not qualify for jobs in some of these sectors due to education requirements and/or because of their felony convictions. As a result, it is difficult for ex-offenders to qualify to receive more than core services—those general forms of assistance available to all jobseekers without any eligibility requirements—through One-Stop Career Centers.

## 6. Health-Related Partners

Given the need for health services and restrictions on the use of grant funds for substance abuse treatment, sites sought out partners in health-related fields. Only one project manager gave a “Poor” rating to the project’s relationship with general health treatment providers.

Ex-offenders often have significant need for health-related services. In general, the PRI projects established cordial but arms-length relationships with public and private providers of health care services in their communities. The generally positive opinion that project managers had of their relationships with the array of health care providers likely reflects their interactions with a subset of the health care providers in the communities. Participants at most sites had significant health care needs that were not being addressed. Few sites were able to create

opportunities for participants to access services as a result of their participation in the PRI program, and in almost every location access to health services was dependent on individuals meeting specific eligibility criteria, usually related to income. PRI staff set up medical appointments for participants in some cases while other staff provided contact information directly to the participants for their use.

Few sites had independent connections with mental health or substance abuse treatment providers. Where relationships existed, they typically had been established before PRI. In many instances, receipt of substance abuse treatment and/or mental health treatment services had already been arranged before the ex-offender enrolled in PRI, through a diagnosis in prison and as a condition of release that was established by partners in the criminal justice system.

General health services for PRI participants were typically provided by state Medicaid programs and local free clinics. In almost every site, access to public programs required proof of eligibility. Sometimes ex-offenders in general or persons convicted of specific crimes were not eligible for publicly funded health services, forcing sites to seek to establish relationships with individual sources of health-related services.

Despite these challenges, sometimes sites were able to address basic health needs for some participants. The parent organization of the PRI grantee in Sacramento, for example, ran a sliding-scale fee health clinic that provided basic primary and preventative health care for underserved populations in the city. In Baton Rouge, a mobile medical clinic visited the PRI site each week; and in Milwaukee a doctor worked each Thursday at the PRI site. Nursing students in Denver would visit the PRI grantee twice a week to perform basic health assessments for PRI participants; while in Fresno, a local CBO offered to provide the same type of service twice a month. Brooklyn participants could also get basic health assessments performed weekly. In San Diego, the Lion's Club provided eyeglasses to PRI participants who needed them. These



examples suggest that some sites had success in addressing some of the health care needs of participants.

## 7. Summary of Relationship Perceptions and Implications for Projects

Relations with four types of criminal justice partners—state prisons/departments of corrections (excluding DOJ pre-release activities); state parole and/or probation organizations; state prisons/DOCs involved in the pre-release services; and providers of transitional housing—were generally better than those with other potential partners and were described as excellent or very good by over half of the project managers.

Based on these perceptions, sites appear to have focused their attention on building connections with those partners that could make the most significant contribution to project success—initially by providing access to and referrals of potential participants, and later by supervising participants in the community. Relationships with partners that provided transitional housing were also described in a generally positive light, signaling the importance that managers attached to assisting project participants with their medium-term housing needs.

In some communities, One-Stop Career Centers offered services to ex-offenders and/or facilitated project activities by assisting with job development, training, and other services for PRI participants. Some sites also took advantage of existing specialized offerings in local One-Stop Career Centers. In general, however, the PRI sites did not attempt to create interest in new services for ex-offenders among workforce partners.

Since community supervision agencies could provide assistance across a range of needs common to ex-offenders, projects operating in communities with active and well-resourced parole and probation agencies, as well as those projects with access to residents in halfway houses, often could focus on the employment-related component of re-entry, with the assurance that other entities carried the primary responsibility for addressing the participants' other needs.

## **IV. PROJECT OPERATIONS**

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This chapter describes the services that were provided to PRI participants both directly by project staff and indirectly by referrals to partner entities. It describes project services, challenges sites experienced in providing services, how services changed over time, grantees' experiences in tracking clients, and participants' barriers to entry into the project, to service receipt, and to successful reintegration into the community. Sections are organized according to the sequence of services that ex-offenders typically receive through PRI projects, beginning with outreach and recruitment activities and concluding with participant follow-up. The discussion of project operations is extremely wide-ranging, as befits a program aimed at assisting individuals with significant barriers not only to employment, but also to leading what many would consider to be a stable life. Exhibit IV.1 highlights key findings.

**Exhibit IV.1**  
**Key Findings—Project Operations**

- Sites usually conducted some form of applicant screening as part of their intake efforts.
- Twenty-four projects had developed a written agreement outlining project rules and/or expectations that most or all participants were to sign.
- Assessment activities continued to be employment-centered.
- Sites increased their use of group mentoring and many reduced or eliminated one-on-one mentoring.
- Establishing and maintaining ex-offender and mentor participation was a common challenge.
- Many projects experimented with offering incentives to get participants to attend mentoring.
- Workforce preparation activities were often combined with mentoring programs.
- Sites offered occupational skill training in some form to the participants, but take-up was low.
- At least six sites increased their training offerings during their first two years of operations.
- Grantees did not fully develop the partnerships with key criminal justice entities needed to operate an approach consistent with the three-stage re-entry framework of services.
- Staffing changes, communications problems, and procedural issues were the problems commonly affecting cooperation between the grantees and DOC partners.
- Many PRI services were provided by external organizations through referral arrangements, although problems in accessing mental health and substance abuse services are ongoing and problematic.
- Although project staff cited housing as the most significant obstacle to reintegration, few sites were in a position to offer housing to PRI participants. However, most sites had referral processes to help participants with emergency or short-term housing needs.
- One-Stop Career Centers were partners in job placement efforts at 21 sites.
- Incentives were used to promote participation in specific activities, to reward participants for reaching certain milestones, and to promote participant retention and tracking.

## **A. Data Sources for This Chapter**

Researchers visited each of the sites for three to four days between November 2007 and May 2008. During those visits, data were collected primarily through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with project staff and other stakeholders. These discussions provided detailed information on PRI grantees and their staff, project operations, and administration; on patterns of cooperation between grantees and their partners; on the evolving recruitment and service delivery processes; and on the associated challenges, barriers, successful strategies, and lessons learned in planning and developing the projects. They also provided an update on project implementation, allowing comparisons between project status at 6 and 24 months of operations.

In 17 locations, interviews were arranged with groups of participants. The objective was to provide an opportunity for the voice of the ex-offender to be heard, to obtain a perspective that is different from that of project staff, and possibly to validate information from other sources.

Given the large number of sites, the semi-structured nature of the interviews, and the vast amount of qualitative (and often disparate) data collected for the evaluation, it was not possible to collect consistent information across all 30 projects. When the site visit results differ significantly from the PRI MIS data, this situation is noted in the text or in a footnote.

## **B. Perceptions of Challenges Faced by Ex-Offenders**

Project managers, case managers, and community justice representatives were asked to identify the major challenges that ex-offenders faced based on their experience in PRI and elsewhere. Housing was cited most often by these three types of interviewees, and substance abuse was the second most frequently mentioned challenge (Table IV.1).

**Table IV.1**  
**Top Re-Entry Barriers for Ex-Offenders**  
**(as perceived by project managers, case managers, and community justice representatives)**

Issue	Percent Who Ranked Top Barrier		
	Project Managers	Case Managers	Community Justice Representatives
Housing issues	36.7%	40.5%	31.6%
Substance abuse	23.3%	19.0%	10.5%
Employer attitudes/getting employment	10.0%	9.5%	26.3%
Low educational attainment/low literacy or numeracy	3.3%	9.5%	5.3%
Lack of formal identification	3.3%	11.9%	0.0%
A culture of crime among friends, family or community	3.3%	0.0%	10.5%
Lack of job training and/or employment history	3.3%	4.8%	5.3%

*Source: Site visit interviews with 30 project managers, 42 case managers, and 19 community justice representatives.*

*Notes: Interviewees could identify up to three barriers to re-entry. Other barriers mentioned but not shown in the table are: transportation, lack of family and friend support systems, low self-image, thinking errors, dealing with family, supervision requirements, earning a living wage, fitting into the community, and poor health.*

Issues related to employment—employers’ attitudes toward ex-offenders and the ex-offenders’ lack of vocational training, education, and basic skills—were also cited as important challenges. Lack of formal identification was among the top three challenges noted by case managers (12 percent). However, only 3 percent of project managers and no community justice interviewees ranked this as a significant barrier. This may be because case managers work more closely with participants and are more aware of the “little” problems that can stand in the way of successful re-entry.

Assuming these views accurately reflect the range and relative severity of the challenges faced by ex-offenders, these challenges illustrate the difficulty faced by grantees in responding to their needs. Although grantees could use project resources to address many employment-related issues, the problems of housing, substance abuse, and other perceived barriers were largely beyond the control of the grantee. Sites were prohibited from spending grant funds on such challenges as housing and treatment for substance abuse. As a result, sites could respond to

these issues through partnerships with other service providers they could try to find participants whose needs were less severe. The range of needs and the limits on activities for which PRI funds could be expended meant that the projects were limited in meeting all their participants' needs. Partnerships with many of the organizations providing these ancillary services were slow-forming, and, again, often did not result in any priority of treatment for PRI participants.

### **C. Trends in Program Design over Time**

At the time of the first round of site visits, projects were still in the midst of organizing and forming—reaching out to prospective partners and organizing project services—and had begun to make modest and sometimes wholesale revisions to their service delivery strategies as they gained experience in serving ex-offenders. Eighteen months later, sites had expanded project offerings by adding activities in many areas. The most common additions were in behavioral/life skills (seven sites) and hard (occupational) skills training (six sites). Sites also added new services designed to better prepare participants to look for work and to “fit” into wage-earning employment, and they established or expanded their transportation assistance (five sites each). Many sites replaced their mentoring providers, and four sites made other changes affecting the substance of their mentoring services, such as using guest speakers or having group discussions. Other additions were in ancillary or supportive services (housing, substance abuse, and other health-related and legal issues), basic educational services, and assessment activities.

These program changes and additions reflect how the grantees responded to their experiences during the first 18 months of operations. During this period, grantees grappled with significant issues in the areas of organizational development, partnership formation, and program implementation. Often, they added new services as they became aware of gaps in the range and types of assistance available in their communities to respond to the needs of participants.

Many of the behavioral and life skills services were meant to help participants learn healthy ways to cope with the stresses of adjusting to life outside of prison and to function effectively in a “straight” environment. These additions included preparation classes in workforce readiness, or post-placement workshops. They covered such topics as financial literacy and financial advising, parenting, sexually transmitted diseases, life skills and behavior modification, and anger management. One site established a women’s support group. Another program created a support group that met on Saturdays, when participants were less likely to have work obligations.

Hard skills training activities increasingly were seen as a gateway to better-paying jobs. At the time of the initial site visits, few projects were offering vocational skills training since programs were focused on participants’ immediate employment. At least six sites created or expanded their vocational training options, suggesting a realization that such services might improve participants’ chances of success in the job market, while simultaneously helping projects achieve PRI performance goals. Three sites explicitly mentioned adding vocational skills training in order to help participants who were already employed to gain additional skills that would enable them to move into higher-paying jobs.

#### **D. Participant Recruitment, Intake, and Assessment**

Recruitment, intake, and assessment functions determined who enrolled in PRI, and these functions set the stage for the services that would be delivered during the enrollees’ participation. Initial observations revealed that most projects did not carry out comprehensive participant assessment and holistic case management, for various reasons. During their first six months of operations, many projects were responding to participants’ immediate employment needs, and limited assessment activity focused on education and employment needs. The absence of in-

depth assessments was paralleled by a general lack of any development of formal individualized plans that documented the goals of the participants, the services the project would provide, and any services that would have to be provided through referral. The projects made significant progress over time, and the second round of site visits showed that the projects as a whole had become significantly more sophisticated in all aspects of recruitment, intake, and assessment.

#### 1. Pre-release Connections

To collect information on the types of pre-release services provided to inmates and the way the pre-release services were coordinated with those provided by the PRI grantees, evaluation staff interviewed staff from 12 state DOCs. These discussions were also intended to provide background on the recruitment and selection processes used by DOC grantees to identify participants, a better understanding of the processes through which inmates could be “handed off” to PRI projects upon release, and information about the successes and challenges of the working relationships between the two types of organizations. This section illustrates the range of approaches that DOCs have taken in this process, including their approaches to inmate identification and recruitment, pre-release services, and coordination with DOL PRI sites.

Many state corrections systems were enhancing or expanding pre-release services. “Re-entry planning begins at reception [or at intake]” was a common theme. Efforts were underway in many states to improve the assistance available during incarceration and community supervision.

DOC staff described the selection criteria they use for the pre-release programs, which typically included elements related to the PRI eligibility requirements (Table IV.2).



**Table IV.2**  
**DOC Criteria for Selection of Pre-release Participants**

Criterion	Number of DOC Sites
Eligibility (e.g., prior convictions, background check)	8
Release date	6
Intended location of residence	6
Measures of risk	2
Parole candidate	1

*Source: Site visit interviews with DOC pre-release staff*

*Note: Data represent responses from DOC staff in ten states.*

DOCs in at least four states included PRI staff in the pre-release selection process.<sup>14</sup> For example, some PRI project staff reviewed information held by DOC partners who serve inmates as part of the pre-release grant. The following approaches were described for specific projects:

- A panel of three individuals—two DOC representatives and the PRI project manager—reviewed files for each inmate who expressed interest in the PRI project. This panel made final decisions about which inmates would participate in the pre-release program.
- The PRI case manager reviewed inmates’ files for eligibility criteria: age, crime, length of sentence, and time to release. Potential participants were then given two assessments (one by clinical psychology staff) to identify inmates most suitable for the PRI project.
- At one site, three individuals were involved in the process of considering individuals under the waiver provision that allows individuals convicted of violent offenses to be served with PRI pre-release and post-release funds. One individual was employed at a prison, one was the PRI project manager, and the third was the supervisor for parole.
- At another site, corrections officials would send a list of individuals eligible for the PRI project (based on their presenting offense) to the DOL grantee, which would then identify whom it wanted to serve. Those individuals would be checked for PRI eligibility by DOC and then sent to a separate USDOJ-funded PRI pre-release class.

Information from a number of state DOC pre-release projects indicated that recruitment, identification, and/or selection of inmates typically occurred about six months prior to scheduled

<sup>14</sup> At least three DOCs subcontracted with PRI grantees to provide some pre-release services under the DOJ grants during their first year of operations. In two of these states, DOC representatives indicated that they did not expect the agreements with the PRI grantees to be renewed.

release dates. One site indicated that this process took place nine months prior to release; another site indicated that it took place four months prior to release.

The content of DOC pre-release programming ranged from light interventions that focused on transition planning to more intensive, classroom-based curricula that were built around work readiness training. Under the three-stage re-entry framework, organizations involved in identifying and delivering re-entry services throughout the continuum of an individual's passage—through the institutional, transitional, and community phases—were expected to coordinate this assistance. In most locations, however, there was little, if any, actual coordination between the PRI and DOC grantees on the programming for participants.

According to DOC staff, processes for providing feedback on the status of inmates who received pre-release services were largely undeveloped. One DOC program tracked former inmates for six months post-release, through monthly calls with both the parole officer and the PRI grantee. Another DOC had hired an individual who was responsible for following up with the two grantees in the state. This person contacted parole officers if he or she could not obtain follow-up information from the PRI sites. Staff at a third DOC indicated that they would like to receive information on who showed up at the PRI site, what services they received, and whether they stayed with the program. The DOC and the PRI grantees were developing a Memorandum of Understanding to provide for this information sharing. This particular DOC also planned to track recidivism. In one case, DOC staff indicated that they had no interest in receiving feedback once inmates left their institutions.

Many DOC projects were still in their formative stages at the time of the second round of site visits, and in general, their pre-release connections with PRI projects were still at an early stage of development. The institutions' formal responsibility for an inmate typically ends when the inmate is released. As a result, institutional corrections agencies have not traditionally been

involved in post-release activities. Overall, however, DOC staff continued to build processes for tracking the post-release status of their participants and indicated an interest in receiving more information on releasees' status in the PRI projects.

## 2. Recruitment and Referral Processes

Sources for recruitment and referral of potential participants became even more numerous and diverse after the first site visits. At least twenty-five sites obtained participants from the following eight sources: word of mouth, recruitment in state correctional institutes, and referrals from state parole and/or probation officers, from the DOC pre-release program, halfway houses, other partners, the Federal probation system, and faith-based entities (Table IV.3).

**Table IV.3**  
**Methods for Recruitment of Participants**

Method	Number of Sites	
	Total Using Method	One of Top Three Sources
Referral from state probation or parole officers	30	19
Word of mouth	30	13
DOC pre-release program referrals	29	8
Project recruitment in state correctional institutions	28	3
Halfway houses	28	11
Referral from partner(s)	26	3
Referral from Federal Probation Officers	25	4
Referral from faith-based entities	25	2
Other state correctional institution referrals	22	7
Referral from local (city, county) institutions	20	3
Recruitment from local (city, county) institutions	15	2

*Source: Site visit interviews with project managers at 30 sites*

Case managers at six sites said that some participants were required to enroll in PRI by their probation or parole officers. The number of mandated participants ranged from “five or six” in one site to “about 90 percent” in another.

Staff at many sites expressed concern regarding the drop off between the number of individuals who receive pre-release services and are released and those who arrive at the PRI site. DOCs and their PRI partners tried several approaches to increase the proportions of pre-release “graduates” coming into PRI projects. One common approach was to increase the interaction with and visibility of PRI staff while inmates were still incarcerated, to provide inmates with a better understanding of available services and a personal connection with staff. One DOC began dropping off the releasees at the project door. It was too early to know, however, whether any of these approaches were successful in countering the attrition that occurred between pre- and post-release re-entry programs.

Interviews with program participants at 17 sites yielded fairly congruent information about how participants heard about the program. The top three sources for participants were, again, parole and/or probation officers, referrals from other organizations, and someone in prison or jail (one form of word-of-mouth). Some participants reported hearing about the program from family members or friends, and a few from other sources such as advertisements or job fairs.

Although project managers at nine sites said that they faced some challenges in the area of recruitment, projects made significant progress in developing strategies to recruit eligible participants compared to their situations roughly six months into project operations.

To learn more about why ex-offenders enrolled in PRI, participants were asked to describe the primary reason(s) for their interest. The majority stated initially that their primary reason was to get help with employment. Participants also described numerous challenges that ex-offenders face in seeking employment, including employer policies that discriminate against

ex-offenders, their own need to learn how to deal with the anxiety that comes with being asked about one's criminal past, and their need for job preparation, skills, and supplies. As the discussions continued, however, many participants communicated a desire to change as being their primary reason for coming into the program. This change encompassed such ideas as a desire to surround oneself with positive people and to change their feelings of hopelessness about securing a career, given their criminal past. Some participants sought various supportive services, occupational certificates, education or vocational training. Others were curious to see what services the program could provide. A few said they came to satisfy parole.

### 3. Participant Intake Processes

The intake process encompassed the set of activities that project operators undertook in order to determine an applicant's eligibility for project services and to begin gathering other data necessary for assessment and/or MIS data entry. In many cases, it also included an element of orientation for participants, either in a group or one-on-one setting.

In 27 sites<sup>15</sup>, PRI staff had some form of contact with prospective participants (both DOC and non-DOC inmates) prior to their release; this represents a dramatic increase from the observations during the first site visit, when only 10 sites reported having contact with participants prior to release. At 14 sites, staff met with prospective participants only once or twice before their release. Most often, for the first meeting, case managers or other staff went inside the prisons to conduct an orientation for prospective participants. If a second meeting was held, it often took place shortly before an inmate was released. During this second encounter, the PRI case manager might review the inmate's transition plan and discuss immediate and long-term needs and goals.

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<sup>15</sup> According to the PRI MIS, all 30 sites reported that they had met with at least one participant prior to his or her release from incarceration. See Chapter V.

Three project managers noted that the number of times that staff met with inmates varied, based on the needs and desires of the inmates. Two reported that staff had monthly meetings with inmates, and another two grantees met with inmates on a weekly to monthly basis.

During their period of incarceration, inmates were often subject to assessments, treatment, and various forms of classes and other programming. They worked, were punished for misdeeds while inside, and were rewarded for good behavior. Data on inmates' prison experiences were usually entered into one or more automated systems, creating the potential for significant information sharing so that PRI grantees could begin their relationships with a better understanding of the histories of participants, and the information collection process would be less burdensome on participants and program staff. An example of comprehensive information sharing and other connections between one DOC and the PRI grantee is shown in Exhibit IV.2.

## Exhibit IV.2

### From Pre-release to Re-entry: Ohio Department of Corrections and Talbert House

In Ohio, prospective participants were identified by Ohio Department of Corrections (ODOC) staff at the institution's reception center. Talbert House case managers conducted a group orientation with these prospective participants while they were still being held at the reception center. After the orientation, the case managers had the opportunity to meet with inmates to gauge their interest in the DOC and Talbert House PRI programs. The Talbert House case managers then informed ODOC staff as to which inmates were interested, so that ODOC could transfer the inmates to one of four institutions offering the DOJ-funded programming.

Once inmates were transferred, Talbert House case managers went back inside the prison to complete the intake application and conduct a Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) and other assessments.<sup>16</sup> The case managers returned to the prisons twice each month to help inmates develop an IDP and a resume. This allowed both the case managers and the inmates to become better aware of the needs and challenges the inmate would face upon release; topics such as obtaining employment, resolving legal barriers, and treating substance abuse and mental health needs were covered during these sessions. Once case managers at Talbert House were aware of the inmates' release date, they would set up appointments at the grantee location for the inmates. Inmates were typically released from the institution with a bus ticket to Cincinnati.

It is interesting to note that while Ohio had, in the opinion of the site visitors, a well-developed transition program, the interviewees at Talbert House informed us that few of the individuals that they met with while in prison ever arrived at the Talbert House site. As one interviewee said, "[We] have worked with 400 people on the DOC side, and only about 80 have come in. Once they leave the prison, they're gone." The explanation that three interviewees gave for this was that the ex-offenders were not on parole or probation. As one interviewee said: "If [the ex-offenders] were on paper, they would be here."

The extent of information that grantees received from their DOC partners varied greatly. Data covering 19 sites showed that DOC contacts in at least nine sites provided the PRI staff with a participant's criminal history to confirm PRI eligibility, or the DOC partner itself verified eligibility for the grantee (Table IV.4). One of these sites also received information on the programs the participant attended while in prison, as well as on the participant's mental health, substance abuse history, education, and work history. Generally, however, sites did not benefit significantly from receipt of information already available on participants.

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<sup>16</sup> The Ohio Department of Corrections subcontracted with Talbert House to provide pre-release services such as assessments and job readiness skills using USDOJ funds. Please see the discussion in Chapter III on DOC and PRI grantee partnerships.

**Table IV.4**  
**Information Provided To PRI Grantees By The DOC Partners**

Type of Information	Number of Sites
Criminal History/Rap Sheet	9
Release Date	6
Assessment Information	5
Programs Attended While in Prison	3
Transition Plan	2
Mental Health History	2
Substance Abuse History	2
Work History	2

*Source: Site visit interviews with 19 PRI project managers*

*Notes: Other responses not included above include resumes, IDPs, case notes, education, housing plan, contact information, birth certificate, and family history.*

Some DOC and project interviewees attributed this limited data sharing to the restrictions on providing information on health-related topics<sup>17</sup> and on institutional restrictions on sharing information on inmates and ex-offenders with individuals not directly employed by the corrections system.

All sites had processes in place to establish the eligibility of applicants for PRI services prior to formally enrolling them. Depending on the individual, how he or she came to the PRI site, and the site's relationship with local criminal justice agencies, the eligibility verification process took as little as an hour or two, or as long as several days to a week or more. Eligibility verification typically went more smoothly for individuals referred from DOC pre-release programs. However, as noted previously, in at least a few instances staff learned that releaseses who had received USDOJ-funded pre-release services had prior convictions for violent offenses. In an example of what appeared to be a smoothly functioning process, one grantee provided office space for a parole officer who could quickly verify the eligibility of prospective participants, in addition to performing her supervisory duties.

<sup>17</sup> In part due to HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996.



As described in the interim report, the intake process at a handful of projects generally served to reduce the number of less-motivated individuals who were enrolled in PRI projects. During the more recent round of site visits, interviewees at about half the sites described processes that involved some form of applicant screening. Subsection D.1 above describes how, in four sites, PRI staff were involved in selecting who is admitted into DOC pre-release programming. Many sites conducted an orientation that functioned in part as a means for the prospective participant to self-select out of the program and the project staff to determine whether the individual was a good “fit” for the project. The orientation was usually one day or less in length, but some sites spent up to a week or more before enrolling applicants. At least four sites required most applicants to attend a one-week orientation session prior to enrollment. Another eight sites required applicants to attend various meetings or group events for at least two or three days prior to enrolling them.

In other sites, the screening was less formal. Typically, when case managers or intake staff met with the applicants, they were enrolled immediately (depending on verification of eligibility) if they were perceived to be qualified and suitably interested. For applicants who were more reticent or uncertain, staff required them to first attend a project activity such as orientation. If they completed this activity, they were usually enrolled.

One other key component of the intake process for 24 projects involved most or all participants signing a written agreement either prior to enrolling in the project, during the intake session, or shortly thereafter.<sup>18</sup> Only six sites did not have the participants sign any rules or expectations form. In one site, participants signed an action plan with the parole officer so the supervisory agency had this information on file. This plan was developed through a collaborative process involving PRI staff and sometimes other service providers. In this site, parolees were required to participate in the PRI project via parole conditions. Participants also signed an Individual Development Plan (IDP) with project staff. This type of “behavioral contract” is often considered to be an important component of treatment and case management, as it engages the ex-offender in the ownership of his or her re-entry plan.

Sites also had participants sign confidentiality waivers so that PRI staff could share information with parole officers, substance abuse and mental health counselors, housing providers, and other agencies providing supportive services.

#### 4. Participant Assessment Processes

Project managers, case managers, job developers, and other staff expressed the view that in order to serve the participants well, grantee staff had to be aware of the participants’ needs, skills, and goals. To accomplish this task, staff at all 30 sites conducted informal assessments of the participants. The informal assessment process generally consisted of discussing his or her criminal history, education, work experience, substance abuse history, mental and/or physical

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<sup>18</sup> As the offender moves from the institution to structured re-entry to community integration, some re-entry partners use a “behavioral contract” as a tool to communicate “offender responsibility and expectations,” as Taxman et al. point out. A behavioral contract contains clear assignments, measurable goals, and consequences for failing to complete the terms of the contract. This tool is a means of holding the inmate/ex-offender accountable for his or her actions during all three phases of the re-entry process. Departments of Corrections and community justice agencies use behavioral contracts as part of their re-entry transition plan. One potential benefit of written plans or contracts in PRI is that such documents provide a means by which not only the ex-offender but also all stakeholders in the re-entry process have a clear understanding of the entirety of the re-entry plan and of each player’s role and responsibilities.

health needs, family situation, and parole/probation conditions with the participant. Staff at all 30 sites collected the “Assessment at Entry” information that is part of the MIS database, including participant contact information, gender, race and ethnicity, veteran status, employment history, alcohol and drug use history, mental health status, marital and family status, education, and criminal history.

Twenty-two sites also conducted some form of a “suitability” assessment to gauge the participants’ interest in and commitment to the PRI program. For example, at one site, participants were required to meet not only the PRI eligibility guidelines but also the suitability measures established by the grantee staff, which included such criteria such as living arrangements, sobriety plans, commitment to the PRI program, and employment goals. At another site, project personnel conducted a “staffing” activity after every orientation. At this activity, all team members provided their first impressions of those prospective participants who were in attendance. They reviewed how the candidates filled out the application form, whether they followed instructions, whether there was any indication of a learning disability, and what their attitude was. Staff voted “Yeah” or “Nay.” “Yeahs” were accepted, “Nays” were referred to another program. If staff were not in agreement, then the candidate usually had a one-on-one assessment interview, designed to gather more information on the candidate’s objectives and to possibly better understand the reason for prior behavior that may have split the staff vote. Sites going through a suitability assessment did so because it helped to ensure that there was a reasonable match between the needs of the applicant and the services available through the project and that the applicant was ready to begin to receive project services.

In 27 of the 30 sites, one or more formal assessments were administered to some or all of the participants, either at the lead PRI location or at a subgrantees’ location. As with informal assessments, case managers typically took the lead in formally assessing participants. However,

job developers and project managers were involved in the formal assessment in several locations. Participants in three sites were referred to various partner organizations for formal assessments.

Table IV.5 displays data on the types of assessments reported to be in use in early 2008. When formal assessment instruments were used, the most common was the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), as well as various vocational, mental health, and substance abuse assessments, all of which were administered in at least half of the sites. Sites increased their use of formal assessments between site visits; and although it is difficult to compare exact counts due to the semi-structured interview format, the range of test instruments in use also increased.

A number of interviewees indicated that their sites did not administer some of the more specialized assessment tools—for mental health, for example—due to the absence of anyone on staff with the expertise to administer these kinds of tests and interpret the results.

**Table IV.5**  
**Types of Assessments Performed by PRI Projects**

Type of Assessment	Number of Sites
MIS Database Assessments	30
Educational Attainment (TABE, CASAS)	20
Vocational	18
Substance Abuse	18
Mental Health	16
Aptitudes	10
Physical Health	6
Risk Assessments (Level of Service Inventory – Revised (LSI-R), Service Planning Instrument (SPI))	5
Barriers to Employment Success Inventory (BESI)	3

*Source: Site visit interviews with case managers*

*Notes: The count includes situations in which some participants received a formal assessment either through the grantee or sub-grantee, through referral to outside organizations, or through DOC prior to enrolling (and the grantee had access to this information). Asking the MIS substance abuse (SA) questions would not count as a formal SA assessment.*

*Forty-two interviews were conducted with case managers at lead grantees and sub-grantees, and if at least one case manager said that the assessment was performed, then the site as a whole was counted as conducting the assessment.*

## **E. Case Management Practices**

### **1. Case Manager Responsibilities**

PRI case managers have a wide range of responsibilities. At most sites, they were responsible for much of the human interface between the project and participant, such as assessing participants, making referrals, and conducting participant follow-up. They also served as the gatekeeper for many project and partner services, including training, access to supportive services, and referrals to external providers. Other common duties included developing IDPs, entering MIS data, conducting intake, recruiting mentors, and recruiting participants. In two sites, case managers also performed administrative, payroll, job development, and partner coordination work, in addition to accompanying participants to court.

According to project managers in 24 sites, job developers had the sole or primary responsibility for job placement. One trend that emerged from on-site discussions with the case managers, however, was that 78 percent of the case managers interviewed stated that they were involved in job placement. On the whole, however, the job placement services offered to participants through their case managers were much less extensive and more on a case-by-case basis than the help that participants received through the grantees' job developers.

Case managers reported that the frequency of their meetings with participants varied according to how far the participant had progressed along the continuum of services. Interviewees most commonly stated that meetings were weekly or every two weeks while participants were still looking for employment; however, at least seven case managers said that they required participants in the job search phase to come in two to four times a week. Once participants were placed in their first job, case managers noted that they met with them less frequently, typically once a month. Case managers also reported that they found it difficult to continue to engage some participants after those individuals had found employment.

**Table IV.6**  
**How Case Manager Assignments Were Made**

Method of Assigning Cases	Number of Sites
Alternating/Case load distribution	18
Participant needs	12
Geography	7
Personality	5
Gender	1
Randomly	1
Assigned various case managers depending on the phase of the program	1

*Source: Site visit interviews with project managers*

*Notes: Data represent responses from project managers in 30 sites. Entries do not sum to 30 because some sites used more than one approach.*

In all sites but one, participants were assigned a specific case manager. Sites took varying approaches to these assignments. In general, project managers took the lead in determining which participants would be matched with which case manager. However, at some sites, project managers, case managers, job developers, and other staff made these decisions as a team. Most project managers tried to ensure a relatively even caseload and alternated participant assignments among the case managers. Other project managers used the needs of participants or their personality as a deciding factor (Table IV.6).

At the 11 projects with multiple points of service delivery, geography was a consideration in assigning case managers. For example, in one site case managers worked at the six churches that were affiliated with the project and at a substance abuse center; and another site placed its nine case managers at various Goodwill stores and warehouse locations throughout the city. In another site, two of the case managers were stationed at the lead grantee's main office, while two other case managers had office space at two One-Stops. To limit a participant's transportation time and cost, participants were often sent to the access point closest to their homes.

Thirteen case managers reported that they were able to work with parole officers to co-case manage PRI participants, although the extent of cooperation and coordination varied across

the sites. In one site, the parole officers were said to be especially supportive, offering parolees bus tokens, supportive services, and help with job placement. To avoid duplication of efforts, the case manager and parole officer would consult with each other to determine which services a participant might need. Two parole officers were stationed at one PRI project site, and a formal staff meeting was held every Wednesday morning between the parole officers and PRI staff to discuss individual participants and the issues that needed to be addressed.

## 2. Developing an Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Case managers in all sites said that either they or other PRI staff worked with participants to create IDPs. Using a variety of resources, such as discussions with participants, results from informal or formal assessments, and/or information from DOCs or parole and/or probation offices, the grantee staff identified participants' education/training, career, and life goals. In most cases, the case manager was responsible for developing the IDP. However, at two sites a team approach was used to create the IDP; and at one site the job developer had the primary responsibility for the IDP. While the majority of the sites had been creating IDPs throughout the grant period, at least two sites added the IDP process to their array of services only in the last quarter of 2007.

The vast majority of case managers interviewed during the site visits reported that IDPs were written. Yet in many cases, the written IDPs were not given to participants. For those sites that did not provide written copies to the participants, the plans were often very general and basic; for example, such an IDP might cover only two to three of the participant's goals.

At other sites, IDPs were not developed for all of the participants. For instance, at one site, only participants who went through the DOC pre-release program would have an IDP; at another site, only those participants who had mental health referrals would go through the IDP

process. Case managers at other sites that did not create IDPs for each participant often emphasized that some participants did not need a written plan to “keep them on track.”

In the context of the three-stage model, the presence of a written transition plan helps to keep all participating service providers and other stakeholders aware of the primary components supporting the ex-offender’s re-entry. In general, PRI sites made noteworthy progress toward more comprehensive assessments, information sharing with DOCs, supervisory agencies, and other partners between the two rounds of site visits. However, the relative scarcity of written plans, the limited use of behavioral contracts, and the general absence of multi-stakeholder re-entry planning suggest that the PRI sites continued to be relatively employment-centered in their approaches to ex-offender services.

## **F. Mentoring**

The provision of mentoring to every released prisoner who desired this service was a key element of the PRI. DOL clarified the mentoring concept and its expectations in guidance issued in June 2007<sup>19</sup>, which included the following key points:

- *[M]entoring is defined as a relationship over a prolonged period of time between two or more people where caring volunteer mentors assist ex-prisoners in successfully and permanently reentering their communities by providing consistent support as needed, guidance, and encouragement that impacts PRI participants in developing positive social relationships and achieving program outcomes such as job retention, family reunification, reduced recidivism, etc.*
- *[P]rograms [should] attempt to maintain mentor/mentee relationships (in both the one-to-one and group models) for a minimum of six months. In addition, matches must meet, or group mentoring sessions must be held, at a minimum of once every two weeks.*
- *Mentoring should be performed by “volunteer mentors” rather than by paid program staff.*

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<sup>19</sup> “Mentoring Definition and Goal,” Memorandum from Gregg Wertz, Chief, Division of Youth Services, Employment and Training Administration, June 11, 2007.



- *Typically, job training classes or other life skills classes offered by PRI site staff are not considered mentoring. However, they may be counted as mentoring if one-to-one mentors or group mentors are consistently present and they are able to have discussions and develop relationships with the same mentees over a prolonged period of time.*

During the first round of site visits, few sites developed mentoring programs, and the sites that had been successful relied on previous experience in the field. Over time, this changed and those projects that implemented the mentoring activity as an integral component of project services were more successful at engaging project participants in mentoring. As the projects' second year of operations ended, PRI mentoring programs continued to evolve.<sup>20</sup>

### 1. Mentor Recruitment

Faith-based organizations represented the primary source through which mentoring recruitment took place, but sites also recruited mentors through other community organizations, by word of mouth and by referral from current mentors. Various media were also utilized for more generalized recruitment activities, including online advertisements, radio and television public service announcements, and brochures and flyers (Table IV.7).

Seventeen sites indicated challenges in finding and/or retaining qualified mentors. Several projects created group mentoring activities partly in response to the challenges associated with mentor recruitment and retention. However, recruitment and/or retention problems were common in projects with both group and one-on-one approaches to mentoring.

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<sup>20</sup> At the time of the site visits, two sites were unable to provide detailed knowledge of their mentoring programs. At one site, the mentoring coordinator position was vacant, and a mentor was unavailable for an interview. At the other site, the grantee had released the original mentoring subcontractor, and the site was in the midst of revising its mentoring activities.

**Table IV.7**  
**Approaches to Mentor Recruitment**

Method of Recruitment	Number of Sites
Churches/faith-based groups	22
Word of mouth	15
Other community organizations	11
Brochures and flyers	5
Other interpersonal (board members, receptions, networking)	4
Online ads (ex. Craigslist, website)	4
Newspaper ads	4
Current mentors recruit	4
Radio/TV (e.g., Public Service Announcements, talk shows)	3

*Source: Site visit interviews with mentor coordinators*

*Notes: Data are for 29 mentoring programs at 28 sites. The total number of responses exceeds the number of interviewees due to multiple responses for some sites.*

In 25 sites, mentor coordinators were paid either directly by the grantee or through the subcontractor that handled the mentoring function.<sup>21</sup> Although many of these were full-time positions, some represented as little as 25 percent of a position. In one site, case managers shared the responsibility for coordinating mentoring activities. In another, this function was fulfilled by volunteers from the faith-based entities that hosted the mentoring program.

The role of mentor was an entirely voluntary position in 24 sites. Three sites indicated that mentors were paid, but overall it was unclear how many sites paid mentors for their direct mentoring activities, in contrast to other functions they performed. In one of those sites where mentors were reported to be paid, the mentor coordinator facilitated group sessions. This was a paid position. In a second site, three individuals who were involved in administrative activities associated with the mentoring function were also described as paid mentors. In a third location, mentors who worked more than four hours a month were paid \$15 per hour. Some of these individuals also handled administrative functions connected with the mentoring program. One site provided mentors with gift cards to “encourage them to stay on board.”

<sup>21</sup> Two sites were not providing mentoring at the time of the second round site visits.

Peer mentors (ex-offenders) were reportedly part of the mentoring program in nearly three-quarters of the sites that provided information on this topic (20/27 responses). PRI program alumni were mentors in half the sites that provided this information (12/24 responses). Several sites relayed participants' desire to give back through peer-mentoring but described challenges to using ex-offenders as peer mentors. Five projects cited state requirements that ex-offenders had to be "off paper" (i.e., not on parole or probation) for a particular period of time before they could perform this function. One site had very strict requirements for alumni wishing to serve as mentors: they must be employed for six months, be drug-free, have successfully gone through mentoring for six months, be recommended by their case manager, and also have attended mentor training. A few sites described a sort of surrogate mentorship role for alumni who could not be mentors but still wanted to give back. At one location that used both alumni and peer mentors, an administrator remarked that he did not notice any difference between peer and non-peer mentoring. However, participants from three different sites suggested having peer mentors when asked how the program could be improved (Exhibit IV.3).

### **Exhibit IV.3 Mentor Recruiting Challenges**

One reason that it was hard to find and retain mentors was schedule conflicts. Staff promoting the mentoring program tried to assure potential mentors that the actual amount of time that they would need to commit to mentoring a PRI participant would only be a few hours each month. Nevertheless, some prospective mentors felt that even this was too big a commitment due to their own work and family schedules.

At one site, the original plan was to have mentoring sessions during the evening; however, due to participants not wanting to return to the grantee site in the evening, the grantee changed mentoring to daytime hours. Yet this change conflicted with the original mentors' schedules. As the project manager noted, the staff then attempted to recruit senior citizens as mentors because they were available during the day. Participant attendance still lagged, despite these efforts.

A different site found that recruiting peer mentors was the key to success, since, as their staff reported, their peer mentors seemed to be more passionate and more willing to find the time to mentor PRI participants than non-peer mentors.

Mentor coordinators and project managers talked about how they had hoped to recruit large numbers of mentors from churches and other faith-based or community organizations, but these efforts were sometimes disappointing. One interviewee said that he reached out to 800 churches and found that only 20 were receptive and willing to discuss the mentoring program.

Another challenge was breaking through the stereotypes and misconceptions about ex-offenders. During presentations to recruit mentors, staff at one site worked to address the myths that all ex-offenders were violent or sex offenders. Educating potential mentors about ex-offenders was an essential component of their mentor recruiting efforts.

## 2. Mentor Training

Twenty-seven of the 29 mentoring programs reviewed by site visitors provided formal training to mentors.<sup>22</sup> Of the two that did not provide training, one was structured as a seven-week behavioral workshop, with the intention that program completers could then become mentors to PRI participants. However, that latter step had not occurred at the time of the more recent site visit. In the other location where training was not provided, a new organization had recently taken over responsibility for the mentoring activity. Although mentors had committed to the activity, no training had taken place.

For the 25 mentoring programs that provided information on the length of their mentor training, the total hours of training was four or fewer in 14 of those sites (Table IV.8).

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<sup>22</sup> Data are reported for 28 sites, one of which had two distinct mentoring program providers. Information on mentoring was not available for two sites, as the activity was non-functional at the times of the site visits.

**Table IV.8**  
**Length of Mentor Training**

Length of Training	Number of Programs
Under 2 hours	2
2 to 4 hours	12
5 to 7 hours	2
8 to 10 hours	5
Over 10 hours	3
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>24</b>

*Source: Site visit interviews with mentor coordinators*

*Note: Data on length of mentor training were available for 24 mentoring programs.*

The training curricula used by sites consisted of materials purchased from outside vendors, public domain materials and other free content, internally developed content, and a combination of materials from these three sources. According to individuals involved in the mentoring program at each site, mentor training included such topics as general mentoring information (what a mentor is/is not, why the role is important, what is appropriate for a mentor, how to engage mentees, how to adjust to mentoring, how to be comfortable/make mentees comfortable), information about the PRI program (expectations, policies, forms, resources, and safety/emergency protocols), and boundaries (including maintaining a proper mentor-mentee relationship). Other topics covered included communication and listening skills, information on ex-offenders (e.g., the challenges they face and how to help them with re-entry and transition), relationships and trust, role modeling, information on substance abuse, motivational interviewing, confidentiality, manipulation, and encouragement/motivation.

Twenty-one sites indicated that mentors were brought together periodically for additional training or discussions after their initial training was completed. These sessions occurred at widely disparate intervals, including weekly (four sites), biweekly (one site), monthly (four

sites), bimonthly (two sites), and quarterly (three sites). Interviewees at the remaining sites said that either these sessions occurred “as needed,” or they could not provide specific information.

### 3. Recruiting Mentees

The interim report described the slow start-up of mentoring activities in many sites and attributed it to the participants feeling over-programmed, as well as to the logistical challenges the participants faced regarding the timing of and transportation to mentoring activities (Holl and Kolovich, 2007). The barriers that were observed during the earlier site visits remained in place in the second round. Between the two visits, however, sites had taken steps to make mentoring activities more attractive to PRI participants. These steps included providing incentives for attendance, making mentoring a mandatory activity, providing opportunities for a closer personal connection with individuals involved in mentoring early in an ex-offender’s relationship with the project, and adjusting the content of mentoring programs. This subsection explores the steps taken by projects to increase the participation of PRI enrollees in their mentoring programs.

Interviewees at 21 sites said that their mentoring program was voluntary; but many were quick to add that attendance was highly encouraged. Sites tried several approaches to getting more participants to attend mentoring sessions. Some sites distributed bus passes or other incentives as a way to further entice participants to attend the mentoring program regularly. Two sites offered gift cards for regular attendance at the mentoring sessions. Participants who attended five mentoring sessions received a \$25 gift card to either a grocery or retail store.

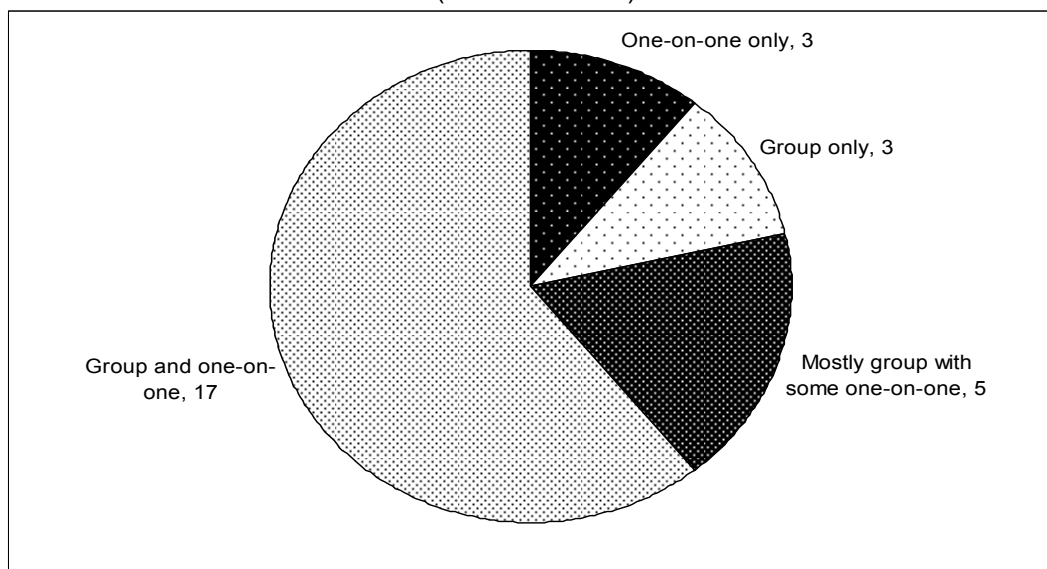
To increase attendance, sites also used group mentoring sessions as the venues at which other project services were made more readily available. These strategies included distributing bus passes and other forms of supportive services at mentoring sessions and, in at least one location, providing job leads to individuals who came to mentoring. Several locations, where one-on-one mentoring was available, provided stipends or other financial support to mentors,

who could then use those resources to access entertainment (movies or shows), purchase meals, and otherwise support both social activities and a comprehensive range of supportive services and other forms of assistance for mentees.

One strategy was to help actual and prospective PRI participants better understand the potential benefits of mentoring and to increase the personal connection they felt with the mentoring activity. To do this, sites began having a mentor or the mentor coordinator participate in the informational sessions they held in state prisons and local jails. In this setting, inmates would be able to “put a face” on the mentoring activity, hear about it from someone who was directly involved, and get answers to their questions. In at least one location, new participants met with the mentoring coordinator immediately following their first meeting with the case manager. Many sites had begun to encourage new participants to attend group sessions on a somewhat informal basis so that they could observe the types of interaction that took place prior to deciding whether to engage in mentoring on a longer-term basis.

In one site, mentoring was mandatory for all active participants in the PRI program. Participants were able to choose group mentoring, individual mentoring, or both. Additionally, because participants there were mandated to be in the PRI program by their parole/probation agents, participation in the mentoring program was incorporated into the parole plan. Another site required attendance in its mentoring program for the first two weeks after a participant’s enrollment in PRI. A third site required all of its PRI participants to attend mentoring, and the first class of the job readiness training program was a mentoring session.

**Figure IV.1**  
**Type Of Mentoring Provided**  
(number of sites)



Source: Site visit interviews with PRI project managers.

#### 4. Mentoring Program Design and Content

Over the first two years, many sites developed more group mentoring services, sometimes as a supplement to, but more often as a replacement for, one-on-one mentoring. Three mentoring programs offered one-on-one mentoring exclusively, and three others offered only group mentoring. Seventeen programs offered both group and one-on-one mentoring; and another five offered mostly group mentoring, with some one-on-one (Figure IV.1).

Four sites indicated that they expanded or added group sessions to their mentoring programs, and all three sites where one-on-one mentoring was the sole approach to the activity said that they were planning to add group mentoring to their mentoring programs. Sites and mentoring providers developed more group mentoring in response to their experiences during the initial period of mentoring activities. Several sites instituted group mentoring in an effort to increase participation. At least one site reported that group mentoring was instituted because mentees did not feel comfortable with one-on-one mentoring. Another site moved to group



mentoring because it was not able to attract enough volunteer mentors to meet DOL's goal that 60 percent of participants received mentoring. Among other reasons cited for moving more toward group mentoring were the costs of establishing and managing one-on-one mentoring, difficulties in mentor training, and problems with mentor retention.

Only three sites reported that they did not make any modifications to their mentoring program during the period between site visits. According to their applications for grant funding, only 10 out of the 30 grantees offered mentoring prior to PRI. So as PRI grantees, most of them were in the process of learning which mentoring components and approaches are more effective. Consistent with this, several sites described a trial-and-error process, where the mentoring program was constantly changing and evolving. For example, one grantee tried mentoring sessions with men and women combined and found that it did not work well. Another initially did not think that monthly group meetings would be the best approach, so they began with bi-weekly meetings.

Many sites reported technical or logistical changes (e.g., changing times, locations, and/or the format of sessions) to attract participants and to make mentoring more effective. Some of these changes were minor, while others were more significant. For example, one project moved towards a more structured mentoring format where attendees spent the first 10–15 minutes introducing themselves and talking about their week, a speaker spent the next 20–25 minutes talking about the theme for the night, and the entire group spent the remaining time in a question-and-answer session. Guest speakers included a psychologist, a former drug dealer, and peers who had been in the program for a year and who were willing to share their stories.

To attract more participation, the projects added incentives and group mentoring. One project was working to start the mentoring process in prison (on the pre-release side, with the intention that this would create relationships that would continue post-release). Another site

asked for participant feedback on their mentoring program with the intention of using that feedback to inform future program direction. The manager of a third project reported that its mentoring program had been redesigned to include more individuals from the community so participants would know what programs and services are available within the community. They also made changes to more effectively track the program's growth.

Many sites have structured group mentoring activities according to a generalized curriculum built around life skills and behavioral modification topics. One mentoring program coordinator described his organization's seven-week-long session as follows:

Our program can include up to 16 different topics. First, we find out what the participants need to know and then tailor the program to address their needs. Topics can include child support, child custody, parental rights, self-esteem, dealing with rejection, decision-making, goal-setting, personal development, anger management, stress management, time management, and financial planning. Our approach is to have the participants serve as resources for one another and keep each other honest. . . . Peer accountability is an important component. We think individuals show up because they are accountable to one another.

The nature and content of the activities that were recorded as mentoring were not consistent across sites. Site visitors were informed that brief telephone calls were recorded as mentoring services in some locations. At least one site counted attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings as mentoring services received. A review of the PRI MIS entries confirmed these statements.

**Table IV.9**  
**Mentor-Mentee Social Interactions**

Type of Interaction	Number of Sites
Meeting and talking (e.g., at a restaurant, bookstore, museum, on walks)	13
Church and church events	10
Sports-related events, movies, theater, concert, amusement park, state fair	10
Family activities	7
Group mentoring sessions/activities	5
Community events	4
Meetings (AA/NA)	4
Educational classes (e.g., African dance class, parenting, GED tutoring, lectures)	4
Shopping/manicures	3
Men-only events	2
Meeting at each other's homes (e.g., playing dominoes, doing yard work)	2
Other	5
No social interaction or "don't know"	8

*Source: Site visit interviews with mentor coordinators*

*Notes: In addition to those social interactions described above, three sites emphasized avoiding expensive activities or money-exchange, and two stated that for safety and boundary reasons, there is no ride sharing between mentors and mentees. Three sites indicated that mentors and mentees have phone conversations as part of their social interaction.*

*Data are for 29 mentoring programs at 28 sites. The total number of responses exceeds the number of interviewees due to multiple responses for some sites.*

Since one of the goals of the mentoring activity is to help participants develop positive social relationships, many mentoring programs actively encouraged mentors and mentees to engage in social interaction. This aspect of mentoring may have been especially important for those projects that utilize a group mentoring approach exclusively. Mentor coordinators and mentors were asked to describe the types of social interactions that occurred between mentors and mentees in their programs. The type of interaction most often mentioned involved meeting and talking in public settings (Table IV.9). Other common types of interactions include attending church and church events together, attending public entertainment and sporting events together, and participating in family-oriented activities. Despite the discussions of proper

boundaries between mentors and mentees, two respondents indicated that mentees and mentors met in their respective homes. Eight mentor coordinators could not provide any specific examples of social interaction because there was no social interaction between mentor and mentee outside of the group mentoring sessions.

Exhibit IV.4 provides a brief discussion of three mentor-mentee activities conducted by one of the PRI grantees.

#### **Exhibit IV.4**

##### **Mentor-Mentee Activities: Community Service, Rock Climbing, and Amusement Parks**

Outside of the routine group meetings between mentors and mentees, participants in the mentoring program at one location were able to join their mentors for a day of community service. The group spent a day cleaning the grounds of a local school, and as one mentor stated, this experience gave the men and women “an opportunity to show that they can give back” to their communities. At the time of the site visit, there were plans to repeat this activity at another school.

The mentoring group at this site also sponsored a “rock climbing” trip where participants and their mentors scaled a 62-foot simulated rock cliff. Participants said that the trip “brought out the kids in them” and that they were “surprised that they could do what they did” by climbing a 62-foot wall. One participant, who agreed to go along on the trip but had no intention of climbing the wall, found himself scaling the wall by the end of the day and impressed himself and others by his accomplishment. Family members were able to attend the trip if their presence was approved in advance by the mentoring staff.

One participant at this site also talked about a trip to a local amusement park. He had not visited this park since childhood, and returning to the park reminded him what his life was like before he got involved in crime. The experience “showed him how good life *should* be.”

## 5. Processes for Matching with Participants

Sites that assigned mentees to mentors typically used gender and personal interests as matching factors. One site reported that it did not use gender in matching mentor to mentee because some women never had a positive male role model in their lives and wanted a male mentor. Other common factors involved personality, geographic location, and age. Experiences, background, spiritual views/religion, and common goals were also mentioned.

Thirteen sites indicated that they used questionnaires or assessment instruments to profile either the mentee or both the mentor and the mentee to determine the best match. Another popular approach involved observing individual interactions during group sessions before determining an appropriate match. A less common approach used in four sites was matching individuals based on gut feelings. That is, PRI staff became acquainted with both the mentors and the mentees and would then match based on pairing that the staff felt would make good matches. These four sites did not use any formal matching guidelines or criteria.

When mentees were matched with individual mentors, one of the important features involved how many mentees were assigned to each mentor. Of the 25 sites that provided at least some one-on-one mentoring, 19 reported having only one or two mentees matched with each mentor. Two sites reported that they paired three to five mentees with one mentor, and one site paired six or more mentees per mentor. The three remaining sites said that the number of mentees per mentor varied, based on the mentor's experience and availability.

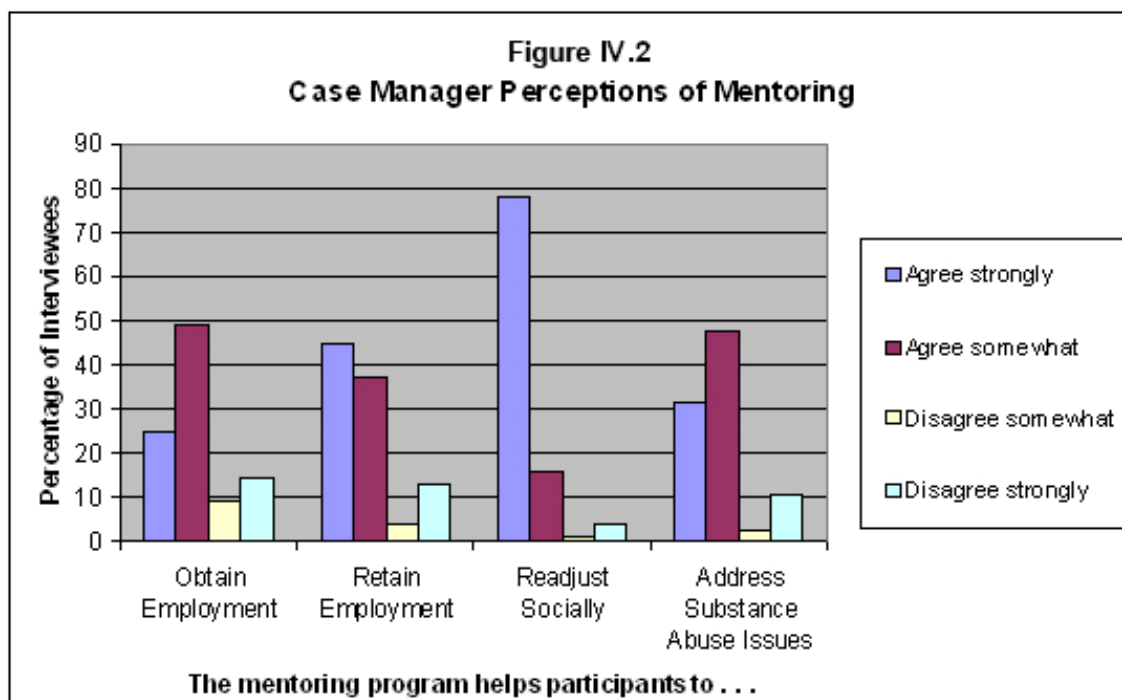
## 6. Oversight/Supervision

Oversight of the mentoring program involved general administrative functions, such as arranging group mentoring sessions, assigning mentors to mentees, and tracking and reporting mentoring activities. In general, most mentors were required to send monthly logs to either the mentor coordinator or the case managers so that the staff could properly record mentor/mentee

meetings in the MIS database, but the topics discussed during the individual mentoring sessions were not revealed. However, interviewees at other locations said that details regarding mentee issues, challenges, and successes were included on mentor reports. Sites that held group mentoring sessions typically had a sign-in sheet to track mentee attendance. At several sites that used group mentoring, project staff attended group sessions.

## 7. Perceptions of the Value of Mentoring

Case managers were asked how successful their project’s mentoring program had been in helping participants deal with four critical re-entry components: obtaining employment, retaining employment, readjusting socially, and addressing substance abuse issues. The most significant benefit of mentoring from the perspective of project staff was in the area of social readjustment. According to staff, mentoring also provided significant assistance in helping participants to retain employment and address substance abuse issues. Mentoring was perceived as somewhat less important in helping participants to obtain employment (Figure IV.2).



Source: Based on interviews with 76 case managers.  
Note: Not all interviewees offered opinions on all topics.

Participants who had taken part in mentoring had mostly positive remarks about their mentoring experiences, although discussions on this topic were not held at every project location. Participants from one site felt that mentoring was particularly helpful in that it encouraged and helped them solve family problems, helped them maintain their focus by giving them an opportunity to be around positive people, allowed them to vent, and gave them a forum for learning from other people's mistakes. Another participant found mentoring sessions to be helpful because they showed her how to have fun without illegal or harmful substances (e.g., by attending picnics and other fun events).

Participants in another location said that they enjoyed their group mentoring meetings because they were motivating and helped make participants feel that they were viewed as more than just a number. Several participants at various sites described an unofficial mentoring-type relationship with specific individuals on the program staff or with the staff in general. Some called the program staff role models.

- “It gives you a foundation to look forward to twice a week to come to a place where you can vent—actually vent. We’re ex-cons, but we’re not out of the game. We want some stability in our lives. We want somebody to give us that second chance, or that third, or even that fourth. But the ideal is just don’t give up, and that’s what the mentoring does.” —*PRI participant*
- “[The mentoring] doesn’t stop [when you get out of the program]. I can pick up the phone at any moment and call any one of them and they will help me.” —*PRI participant*

Participants had very few negative remarks about the mentors or about the mentoring program. One participant stated that she did not want a randomly-chosen person to be her mentor. She stressed that she wanted someone she knows and who has been through similar situations to be her mentor. Another participant said that his mentor was not available when he called, and that he left messages for the mentor but the mentor did not call back.

## 8. Direction of Mentoring

Mentors and mentoring coordinators had definite ideas on how the program could be improved. Over half of the responding mentoring programs indicated a need for more help in the form of support staff and/or additional mentors. The next most common responses related to funding—staff expressed a need for both more funding and more flexibility in how the funds could be used. Other ideas for improvement dealt with program content (organizing group events, expanding the role of mentoring, providing assistance with transportation, and increasing access to jobs), program rules (making mentoring mandatory), and the mentor position itself (including peer mentors and more mentor training).

Mentoring in the PRI sites appears to be in a continuing state of development. Sites continue to experiment with different approaches, testing new ideas and trying to find ways for the mentoring activity to more fully support the re-entry process for PRI participants.

## **G. Workforce Preparation Activities**

According to the PRI MIS, “workforce preparation activities” include services that range from providing life-skills counseling and labor market information to subsidizing employment and internships. Some sites classified certain types of workforce readiness training as “education and training” activities, according to PRI MIS text entries describing the nature of “other” education and training activities. (See section H below.) Most project staff refer to this activity as “job readiness training” (JRT), a term that will be used in this report.

Initially, about 80 percent of the projects provided soft skills training such as interpersonal and communications skills to help participants prepare for the job market. This type of training predominated because much of the population targeted by the PRI had limited education, work experience, and occupational skills; and participants usually needed to begin



**Exhibit IV.5**  
**Profile of a Work Readiness Training Program**

Classes are from 9 a.m. until 12 noon daily for two weeks, which equates to a 30-hour program. Students are taught how to conduct a job search. The barriers they face are explained, along with approaches for addressing them. Students prepare a master job application and discuss what to write in each box. Special attention is paid to how to answer the felony question and to the need for precision in providing one's work history. Students discuss different types of resumes, including which type is the best fit based on their work history. Students prepare resumes using a software program.

During the training program, students spend about three days working on interviews. This includes a "Mock Interview Day" when students "dress up" as if going for a real interview and a private sector human resources volunteer comes in to conduct the interviews. Staff used to tape the mock interviews but no longer do so because the camera is not available. The last day of the training is graduation day, when students get a portfolio with their completion certificate, a list of references, and a resume.

The largest class was 15 students, but the usual class size is ten or fewer. Students have to conduct their own job searches outside the class (usually in the afternoons) and record activities on an employer contact sheet. Not all students in the class are PRI participants, but they all are ex-offenders. At the end of the class, most completers are ready to get a job.

work shortly after release. At least five sites added workforce readiness preparation activities to their service offerings between the first and second round of site visits. Based on information gathered during the second round of site visits, projects in general allocated time to preparing participants for the job search process (and eventual employment) before sending them out to look for work. While the amount of time was limited in some instances, it was more than the projects allocated during their early start-up period.

At virtually all sites, workforce readiness training covered such topics as interviewing skills, work ethic, resume preparation, and job search skills. At least 26 sites indicated that they provided each of these components of JRT. Other topics such as proper dress and hygiene and anger management were occasionally covered but often not in as much depth.

Many sites included job-readiness topics in their group mentoring activities, covering them there for the first time or using mentoring sessions to reinforce lessons taught during work readiness classes. Case managers occasionally addressed these and other needs individually as they came across participants without these skills or knowledge.

From site to site, the length of workforce readiness training varied from one-half hour to two hours at one extreme to 30 hours or more at the other. At most of the sites where JRT classes lasted several days, the duration of classes was one or two weeks. One site, however, reported classes of two hours a day, five days a week, for six-to-eight weeks. It was not clear how participants sustained themselves financially if they did not work during that six-to-eight-week period. A common approach for the multi-day classes was to offer them for only part of the day, allowing the remaining time for job search or other activities.

At some sites, all (or nearly all) participants were expected to attend JRT before starting job search. At other sites, as many as half of the participants were allowed to bypass the classes and move directly into job search. A third approach was to begin JRT and job search simultaneously and allow the market (and each individual participant's motivation) to determine who remained in the class for the entire duration. The second approach, in which participants were directed into JRT or job search based on assessment results, is an example of the customized approach to participant services described in Chapter III. At one site, the JRT lasted four weeks. If project staff conducting the training determined that a participant was ready to begin looking for work before completing the workshop, then he or she could leave the training before completion.

## **H. Education and Training Activities**

In PRI, education and training services include several different types of activities, ranging from basic and remedial education to occupational skills training, both in the classroom and in an on-the-job setting. Some sites classified certain types of workforce readiness training

in this grouping as well. For this report, education and training activities consist of the following:<sup>23</sup>

- Basic and remedial (Math/English) education: Classroom instruction designed to improve the reading and/or math skills of participants who are determined to be deficient in basic skills. This includes reading comprehension, mathematical computation, writing, speaking, listening, problem solving, and reasoning.
- GED preparation: Activities to prepare participants to pass the GED examination.
- Vocational/occupational skills training: Specific classroom and work-based study in a specific occupation leading to a degree or certificate.
- On-the-job training (OJT): Training provided by an employer to a paid participant while he or she is engaged in productive work. This mode of training is intended to provide the worker with the knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job, providing reimbursement to the employer of up to 50 percent of the wage rate of the participant. OJT is limited in duration to a period appropriate to the occupation for which the participant is being trained.
- Other education or job training activities.

At the time of the initial round of site visits, little of the training taking place in PRI projects involved education and occupational skills training activities. Many participants were unfamiliar with traditional jobs and did not possess the types of work habits expected by most employers, which prompted the focus to shift to workforce readiness training. Because most ex-offenders on parole or probation are required to be employed, sites reported that very few were interested in and/or willing to engage in classroom-type training activities.

#### 1. Basic and Remedial Education and GED Preparation

As reported in the interim report, many sites did not offer or refer participants to basic or remedial education and related activities, even though most of the case managers interviewed said that basic education was very important to ex-offenders. At that time, project staff said that

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<sup>23</sup> Descriptions are adapted from USDOL/ETA, Prisoner Re-entry Initiative Participant Forms Manual and Record Documentation (January 2006).

participants did not have the time to take classes towards their GED or similar classes, especially while employed or intensely engaged in seeking employment.

By the second round of site visits, most sites were providing access to basic and remedial education. A small number of sites offered GED preparation classes and adult education classes either on site or at a partner's site. But the predominant approach was to refer participants to those classes offered through other providers, including local public education agencies.

English as a second language (ESL) classes were rarely offered directly by a grantee or partner, but rather required a referral. At most sites, however, staff indicated that ESL classes were not a service needed by their participants. This may suggest that those individuals' English language skills were sufficient to "get by" in many of the occupations common among PRI participants, particularly those involving construction, landscaping, and laborer positions. It could also mean that ex-offenders without English language skills simply did not enroll in PRI.

## 2. Occupational Skill Training

More sites offered work experience, internships, and/or "try-out" employment than other types of occupational skill training (Table IV.10). Apprenticeship training (including some pre-apprenticeship training) was available at 20 sites. Classroom training and on-the-job training were offered by almost half the projects.

At least six sites created or expanded their vocational training options from those available during the first six months of program operations. Fourteen sites indicated that they offered occupational skill training in a classroom setting. Training activities were often provided through partner entities, with the grantee referring participants to the partner for consideration for training assistance. Five of the sites said that WIA funds had been used to support training.

**Table IV.10**  
**Types of Occupational Skills Training Offered by PRI Projects**

Type of Occupational Skills Training	Number of Sites
Apprenticeship (includes some pre-apprenticeship)	20
Classroom training	16
On-the-job training	13
“Bridge” programs that incorporate skills training	21

*Source: Site visit interviews with case managers*

*Notes: “Bridge” programs include work experience, internships, and try-out employment.*

*Forty-two interviews were conducted with case managers at lead grantees and sub-grantees. If at least one case manager at each site said that the training was offered, then the site as a whole was counted as offering the training.*

Four sites indicated that they did not provide any occupational skills training. Eighteen sites provided two or three types of occupational skills training. Typically, participants spent 90 days in these transitional positions before undertaking their search for external employment.

### 3. Post-Placement Training

Because many participants were seeking employment as quickly as possible, training was often not a viable option immediately following enrollment. Over time, however, as participants began to establish stable work histories and adjust to life outside the correctional institution, some were viable candidates for some form of training. Although this program feature was not common among PRI sites, three sites stated that they had added vocational skills training with the specific purpose of helping employed participants gain additional skills that would enable them to move into higher-paying jobs.

## **I. Job Development, Placement, and Retention**

### 1. Strategies for Job Development and Initial Placement

As a group, ex-offenders lack many of the skills necessary to secure a good-paying job. Some projects took a very deliberate and lengthy approach to preparing participants for

unsubsidized employment and relatively independent living. Others provided specific services in more limited interventions.

During site visits, job developers were asked to identify the biggest barrier that participants faced to obtaining employment. Nearly one-third of job developers identified the participants' criminal record and/or employers' attitudes toward ex-offenders (Table IV.11). This explains why work readiness activities typically included efforts to help PRI participants understand how to better explain their prior criminal activity in their search for jobs. Case managers also said that criminal records and/or employer attitudes towards ex-offenders was the most significant barrier. Many employers now perform criminal background checks, and, it has become harder to hide one's criminal history from an employer. To overcome this, sites train participants on how to address one's criminal background in an interview. Staff worked with the participants so that they felt comfortable explaining their past actions in an interview.

**Table IV.11**  
**Most Significant Barrier To Employment**

Barrier	Number of Sites	
	Job Developer	Case Manager
Criminal record/employer attitude	10	15
Lack of skills	6	3
Transportation	2	7
Substance abuse	3	0
Lack of education/low literacy	2	1
Lack of self confidence	2	0
Limited work experience	2	0
Lack of preparedness for interview (e.g., communication skills, presentation, dress)	2	0
Other (including attitude, medical needs, housing)	2	4

*Source: Site visit interviews with job developers and case managers*

*Note: Data reflect interview responses from job development staff at 30 sites and 2 subgrantees and case managers at 29 sites.*

Lack of transportation was the second most common challenge, according to case managers, who noted that participants could not afford cars. In many sites, the lack of reliable and/or wide-spread public transportation added to the problem. As one case manager said, the jobs that pay well are located outside of the city; but to get to these jobs, a person must have a car, as public transportation does not serve those areas. To address this challenge, case managers offered bus passes and gas cards to their participants, and at least one site offered van service.

Project staff described how they market PRI participants to potential employers. The most common approach, cited by respondents from 12 projects, was to describe to potential employers the support system to help the participants deal with any problems that may arise (Table IV.12). Other common approaches included discussing the importance of offering a second chance to ex-offenders, describing the incentives for potential employers through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and Federal Bonding Program (FBP), discussing the merits of the participants, and matching the participants to what the employers needed.

**Table IV.12**  
**How Participants Are "Marketed" To Employers**

Description of Approach	Number of Sites
Discuss the purpose of the PRI program and the support system in place (e.g., staff in place to deal with any problem)	12
Need to offer a second chance to ex-offenders	6
Work Opportunity Tax Credit and/or Federal Bonding Program	6
Discuss the merits of the participants (hard working, loyal, dependable)	6
Match participants to employers' needs	5
State that they are not working with sex/violent ex-offenders	2
Employer contribution to increased public safety by offering work to ex-offenders	2
PRI grantee, not as a "staffing agency," but full-service provider	2
Other	4

*Source: Site visit interviews with job developers*

*Notes: Individual entries add to more than 30 because some sites mentioned multiple approaches.*

*Other approaches cited include describing the grantee as a staffing agency, stressing the non-profit status of the grantee, using project data to demonstrate success, and using subsidized employment.*

In addition to the six sites that reportedly used the FBP or the WOTC as primary sales tools for marketing PRI participants, other grantees made use of one or both of these tools in their dealings with some employers. The FBP was designed to reimburse employers for any loss due to employee theft of money or property. The sponsoring organization, in this case the PRI project, purchased one or more bonds, which hiring employers received free-of-charge as an incentive to hire an ex-offender or other hard-to-place job applicants.<sup>24</sup> Nearly all of the sites

<sup>24</sup> The face value of the bonds is \$5,000, and they are good for a six-month period. There is no deductible amount, so the employer bears no liability up to the total value of the coverage. The bonds serve as a job placement tool for at-risk job seekers by guaranteeing to the employer financial coverage if the applicant proves dishonest while on the job. See <http://www.bonds4jobs.com/program-background.html> (August 4, 2008).



reported at least occasional use of the FBP in their job development and placement activities. However, job developers in only two sites reported that more than five participants had been bonded, and those in 17 sites reported the number to be less than five. (Others were not sure or provided imprecise responses.) Many job developers reported that, through experience, they only occasionally used the program as a tool in marketing their participants to employers. Several expressed the feeling that employers were often more skeptical of project participants if job developers suggested that bonding might be necessary. In some instances, however, not using the program may have been more related to participants' relative lack of skills, which made it less likely for them to be in positions where a fidelity bond was considered necessary by employers.

In many ways, project experiences with the WOTC mirror those of the bonding program. The WOTC provides as much as \$2,400 for each employer who hires an adult who has been convicted of a felony within a year of the ex-offender's conviction or release from prison.<sup>25</sup> At most of the PRI sites (26 of 28 responding), staff who work with employers reported that they promoted the WOTC program when they attempted to place PRI participants. However, staff at only five of the sites reported that more than half of the employers were interested in the program. According to staff, many employers perceived that the paperwork burdens associated with the WOTC outweighed the benefits.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/> (July 26, 2008).

Table IV.13 presents information on the approaches that were used to identify potential job openings for participants. The most common approaches involved utilizing databases of employers (including specific listings of ex-offender-friendly employers), making cold calls to prospective employers, accessing on-site computers (to view job listings) and on-line classified help-wanted advertising, and participating in job fairs. Staff at half of the PRI sites indicated that they rarely if ever utilized job clubs, and 23 of 27 sites reported rarely or never using a contracted placement partner (i.e., an entity working on a fee-for-service basis).

**Table IV.13**  
**Approaches To Job Development**

Tool or Approach	Number of Sites Responding	Frequency of Use		
		Always or Usually	Occasionally	Rarely or Never
Employer database	28	25	1	2
Cold calls to prospective employers	28	24	3	1
On-Site Computers	28	21	4	3
Online classifieds (e.g., craigslist)	24	18	5	1
Job fairs	29	18	8	3
Assist participants with a visit to the employer	28	15	9	4
Networking	22	14	5	3
Newspaper classifieds	28	13	10	5
Job clubs	29	12	2	15
Staffing firms	29	11	12	6
Pre-apprenticeship classes	25	4	7	14
Contracted placement partner	27	2	2	23

*Source: Site visit interviews with job developers*

*Note: All sites identified multiple approaches to job development.*

When asked to identify the industries in which participants are typically placed, job developers often identified sectors that offer employment to individuals with little or no skills or prior work experience (Table IV.14). These included warehousing, food service, retail/sales, general labor, and landscaping. Sectors that generally require skilled labor were identified less frequently. The most common in this group include truck driving, automotive/mechanical, and hazardous materials operator. A few, such as construction and manufacturing/light industrial, include a mix of skilled and unskilled positions. Information from the PRI MIS on job placements is reported in Chapter VI.

**Table IV.14**  
**Leading Industries For Placement**

Industry or Sector	Number of Sites
Warehousing/Distribution	16
Food Service	14
Construction	11
Manufacturing/Light Industrial	8
Retail/Sales	6
General Labor	5
Hospitality	3
Transportation/Truck Driving	3
Automotive/Mechanical	3
Customer Service	3
Landscaping/Grounds Maintenance	2
Maintenance/Janitorial	2
Clerical/General Office	2
Hazardous Materials Operator	1
Shipyard	1
Health Care	1

*Source: Site visit interviews with job developers*

*Note: Data reflect interview responses from job development staff at 30 projects.  
Many sites identified more than one leading industry for placement.*

**Table IV.15**  
**Reasons Why Participants Do Not Keep Jobs**

Reason	Number of Sites
Poor Work Ethic/Habits (e.g., not punctual, poor attitude, conflicts with co-workers)	16
Absenteeism	11
Relapse/Substance Abuse	8
Inadequate Transportation	8
Personal issues (non-work-related)	5
Job Dissatisfaction (lack of skills, not making enough money, boredom)	5

*Source: Site visit interviews with a total of 25 project staff responsible for job development.*

*Notes: Interviewees also identified issues related to supervision, housing, race, depression, new crimes, lying about criminal history, and layoffs as reasons why participants did not keep jobs. Many interviewees provided up to three reasons.*

Twenty-five individuals responsible for job development provided reasons why participants might not remain in a placement. Fourteen said that poor work ethic and bad habits were one reason, while 11 said that absenteeism was another. Other common reasons included substance abuse, lack of transportation, and personal issues; these are shown in Table IV.15. However, many job developers noted that while these issues do occur, the percentage of participants who fell into any of these categories was small. For those who said that a higher percentage of their participants faced one or more of the challenges in Table IV.15, four out of seven said that inadequate transportation was the root cause for participants leaving their jobs.

## 2. Retention Strategies

At the time of the first visits, most projects had not developed strategies for gathering participant follow-up data or for supporting the long-term placement and retention of participants. Since then, DOL arranged technical assistance activities for the grantees that focus on retention strategies, and site staff has become more aware of the need for and value of using effective techniques in these areas.

One approach that some sites have adopted in part to improve recruitment and intake has benefitted participant tracking and retention as well: project staff are building stronger relationships with participants during the early stages of project orientation and service receipt.

As sites became less likely to enroll just any eligible individual who walked in the door for the purpose of “getting their numbers up,” and more selective about whom they enrolled, the extra care taken to ensure that there was a good match between what the project had to offer and what the prospective participant needed has meant that those participants were more likely to remain in contact with project staff. Projects became less likely to enroll individuals who arrived at their door solely because they wanted a specific benefit such as bus passes. Instead, individuals interested in PRI assistance were being more fully informed of project expectations, often through signed program agreements and other means. Although these steps did not guarantee that a participant would not become “missing in action,” project procedures have evolved significantly since their initial period of operations.

Table IV.16 displays responses from site staff identifying the types of participants who were harder to follow through the retention and follow-up periods. During site visits, project staff explained why some types of participants were more difficult to follow and described the strategies that they adopted to track and continue their support for active participants, as well as those in follow-up status. One staff member tried to keep the participants engaged in project services, encouraged them, and established a personal connection. He noted that while for some individuals the incentive was more important, for others the relationship was paramount. Another said that those under supervision were much easier to follow given that parole officers could require participants to call the project.

**Table IV.16**  
**Harder-To-Follow Participants**

Category of Participant	Number of Sites Identifying as More Difficult
Substance abusers	10
Homeless	9
Younger participants (usually male)	6
Those not on supervision	3
Those without stable employment	2
Females	2
Those with mental health issues	2

*Source: Site visit interviews with case managers*

*Notes: Interviewees also identified the following categories of individuals as more difficult to follow: people who come in for one specific service (e.g., bus pass or tools), those arrested for DWI, those with a lengthy criminal history, the more educated, males, those who are required by their parole officer to attend the program, and those who are transferred among case managers.*

*Case managers at 21 sites provided information for this question. Responses sum to more than 21 because some interviewees provided more than one response.*

## **J. Housing Assistance**

As noted by the majority of project managers and case managers interviewed during the site visits, housing was a significant problem for many ex-offenders. Case managers and project managers listed a number of factors that contributed to the difficulties participants had in finding stable housing: financial constraints, “wearing out one’s welcome” at a former residence, requirements for parole or probation approval of residence, a personal desire to avoid temptations and old neighborhoods, and a reluctance among landlords to rent to ex-offenders. In addition, PRI sites were not allowed to use PRI funds for housing assistance to the ex-offenders.

Nine out of the thirty project managers reported that emergency housing was especially difficult for single men. However, 14 out of the 30 said that it was especially difficult for single women. Project managers explained that there were often fewer shelters for women, and women typically did not want to stay in shelters, since they felt unsafe there. The results are similar for

transitional housing: Eight out of 30 said that it was especially difficult for single men, while 12 out of 30 said it was especially difficult for single women.

To connect the PRI participants to housing resources, many of the grantees established partnerships with various organizations that provide emergency and transitional housing. Emergency housing providers typically consist of shelters or missions where residents can remain in the facility for up to 30 days. In some cities, the emergency shelter system is run by the local government, and case managers or participants needed to call a “beds hotline” to enter the city’s shelter system. For example, in New York City, anyone wishing to stay in the shelter has to call 311 and then complete the city’s shelter intake process before being assigned a space in the shelter. In Milwaukee, PRI participants called 211 to access the centralized shelter system.

Transitional housing partners generally allowed residents to stay for six months to one year or more, often in a sober living facility or single-room occupancy building. For example, one site developed a relationship with a faith-based sober living facility founded by an ex-offender. This facility did not receive any funding from outside sources; rather, it was maintained through the revenues of a thrift store located on the bottom floor of the building. Residents were required to attend in-house classes on sobriety and re-entry, and many of the residents worked in the thrift store to gain work experience.

Of the 30 project managers interviewed during the site visits, 28 said that they had developed relationships with providers of emergency housing, and 29 had developed relationships with providers of transitional housing. However, of these 30 project managers, only three noted that their emergency housing partners guaranteed a bed for at least some PRI project participants. For transitional housing, only two project managers worked with an organization that guaranteed a space for any PRI participants. Relationships with transitional housing providers were generally viewed in more positive terms than those with emergency

providers. While not many grantees were able to partner with organizations that provided guaranteed bed space, 24 of the 30 project managers interviewed said that they were able to refer project participants to local organizations that would provide rent, utility, deposit, and/or furniture/appliance assistance. Faith-based and community providers were most often cited as the sources of this housing assistance.

When referring PRI participants to either emergency or transitional housing organizations, case managers generally called to arrange the participant's stay at the facility, offered a letter of referral for the participant, provided the participant with contact information for staff at the facility, and in some cases took the participant to the housing facility.

Exhibit IV.6 provides an example of how one grantee partnered with a local homeless shelter to serve a large number of PRI participants.

**Exhibit IV.6**  
**The Atlantic City Rescue Mission**

The Atlantic City Rescue Mission (ACRM) has space for approximately 300 individuals and works closely with the PRI grantee in Egg Harbor, NJ, to provide emergency/transitional shelter for PRI participants. Originally, ACRM had set aside 15 beds for PRI participants, but as many as 26 have been served at one time. In 2007, ACRM served approximately 80 PRI participants.

Residents at ACRM are required to save 70 percent of their income and contribute 10 percent to the facility. They may keep the remaining 20 percent for their own expenses. Money management classes designed to teach the residents about saving and budgeting are available at the mission, but PRI participants can also receive similar training through the PRI grantee. The combination of forced savings and financial management classes is intended to help residents reach the point where they can afford to move into unsubsidized housing.

ACRM has a Housing Locator on staff who works in conjunction with the PRI case manager to serve the PRI client. The two develop a participant's plan and oversee the participant's progress. To facilitate this collaboration, residents must sign a release of information so that the staff can share information on the participant.



At least four grantees received grant funding from state, local, and private sources, thereby allowing them to offer rent, utility, or security deposit assistance to PRI participants. Other grantees had transitional housing options available to the participants through grantee-run housing units. One site opened a 10-unit apartment building in June 2007. The units are reserved for formerly incarcerated individuals, who pay 30 percent of their income for rent and utilities; and if they are not working, they do not have to pay rent until they start working again. On average, residents stay there for nine to 12 months.

Both case managers and project managers cited housing as the biggest challenge to participant reintegration. Overwhelmingly, the case managers said that lack of funds (due to working at low-wage employment or not having a job at all) was the principal reason participants could not find suitable housing (Table IV.17). Housing that was affordable with a minimum wage job was often located in high crime areas, and participants looking for a fresh start were reluctant to live in those neighborhoods. In two of the sites, new laws recently went into effect that allow for landlord discrimination based on criminal history.

**Table IV.17**  
**Why Is Finding Appropriate Housing So Difficult For Ex-Offenders?**

Reason	Number of Sites
Lack of funds/employment	25
Criminal Background (e.g., landlords not willing to rent to ex-offenders)	6
Substance abuse	6
Section 8/Housing Authority rules	4
Lack of affordable housing	3
Lack of family support	3
Mental health issues	2
Other reasons	3

*Source: Site visit interviews with case managers at 30 sites*

*Notes: Responses sum to more than 30 because some interviewees provided more than one response.*

## **K. Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Other Health Services**

Substance abuse was the second most common barrier to re-entry cited by project managers and case managers (Table IV.1). Since PRI funds could not be used to pay for substance abuse or mental health treatment, sites usually sought to develop partnerships with organizations that provided those services. All 30 project managers said that they had partners to help participants with substance abuse treatment, while 27 and 26 project managers said that they had partners to help with mental health treatment and general health needs, respectively.

Thirteen of 15 case managers said one of the main reasons that PRI participants either leave or drop out of the program is substance abuse issues. Fourteen of the 30 grantees conducted substance abuse assessments, either through formal instruments, such as the Adult Substance Use Survey (ASUS), or through more informal methods, such as targeted questions during an interview with a case manager. Five of the grantees conducted urine tests on the participants to confirm sobriety.

Nine grantees assessed participants' mental health status; however, these assessments were generally informal in nature. Participants were then referred out to mental health treatment providers for more intensive assessments if case managers became aware of potential mental health issues. In a few sites, case managers received information from parole or probation officers or from the state department of correction regarding a participant's mental health treatment and use of prescription drugs. However, case managers noted that the information was not always complete, and they did not always receive it for each participant.

PRI participants were able to access a variety of substance abuse, mental health, and general health services either directly through the grantee or through referral to a partner. These services include individual, group, or family counseling; substance abuse counseling/treatment; AA or NA meetings; mental health counseling/treatment; and physical health services. In fact

only one grantee among those responding was not able to provide participants with access to individual, group, or family counseling. This grantee, along with one other, was also not able to refer participants or provide them with direct access to AA or NA meetings. Finally, this grantee, along with one other, did not provide referrals for physical or medical health services.

Because grant funds could not be used for substance abuse treatment and community resources were often insufficient to handle the need for this kind of support, some sites sought funding from other public or private sources. One grantee received a one-year grant from a private foundation to offer substance abuse counseling for PRI participants through an on-site counselor. After the funding period for the grant ended, the state DOC then provided one additional year of funding so the grantee could continue on-site substance abuse counseling. The counselor was certified to treat co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders but was not able to provide any medical treatment that a PRI participant might need. If medical detoxification or other medical treatment was required, the counselor made the appropriate referrals. On average, the counselor met with seven clients a week on site. Furthermore, for those clients whose schedules or other conflicts prevented them from coming into the office, the counselor conducted infrequent home visits or calls to the clients.

In another city, PRI participants in need of substance abuse treatment could be assigned to a subgrantee that offered medical detoxification, residential and outpatient treatment facilities, GED services, spiritual advisors, a six- to eight-week workforce readiness training program, and a Family Enrichment Program to address the effects of addiction on family. The residential facility was able to house approximately 400 individuals, and at the time of the site visit, the PRI case manager had worked with 56 PRI participants since the subcontract began.

For those requiring mental health treatment, some case managers were able to refer participants to various city- or county-run mental health centers, psychiatrists/psychologists, and

emergency rooms. One site partnered with a psychologist to work with PRI participants on a one-on-one basis for mental health and cognitive behavioral change therapy. The psychologist worked with four or five PRI participants in 2007.

## **L. Supportive Services**

Individuals who leave prison often have to rebuild their lives; that is, they have few if any material possessions and lack much of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that facilitate not only gaining employment but also functioning in society. The lack of material possessions means that most PRI participants need a wide range of supportive services. In response, PRI grantees offered many types of supportive service assistance, ranging from transportation assistance and clothing for interviews to help in applying for public benefits and dealing with child support issues. Table IV.18 displays the supportive services that case managers said were among the five most common in their projects, as well as those they deemed to be among the three most important.

Transportation assistance was commonly considered by case management staff to be one of the three most important supportive services. Clothing for job interviews and assistance in obtaining identification were cited as among the three most important by the next highest number of case managers. Assistance in obtaining identification is a supportive service that is relatively uncommon for workforce programs, but it is clearly important for ex-offenders.

**Table IV.18**  
**Supportive Services**

Type of Supportive Service	Subproject staff indicating this was among the . . .	
	Five Most Common	Three Most Important
Assistance with transportation	34	30
Interview clothes	27	14
Assistance in getting identification and/or drivers' licenses	21	13
Work tools or clothing	22	10
Emergency health services	6	9
Life-skills classes/anger management	16	8
Assistance with child support	6	6
Money management classes	5	2
Legal assistance	3	2
Dental services	2	2
Eyeglasses, eye care	2	1
Assistance with family reunification services	1	1
Substance abuse treatment	1	1
Assistance with child care	0	1
Access to food banks	12	0
Assistance with obtaining public benefits	7	0
Voice mail or phone cards	2	0
Others	3	0

*Source: Site visit interviews with case managers*

*Notes: Others include GED supplies, mental health referrals, and car insurance. Data represent responses from 42 interviews with case managers.*

To aid PRI participants in obtaining identification/drivers' licenses and navigating child support issues, one project had an attorney on site who was funded through an outside foundation. She provided legal information and advice to participants on drivers' licenses, child support arrearages, family law, and employment concerns. She offered workshops twice a month, as well as individual appointments for participants. Another project subcontracted with an organization that provided legal information on expungement and child support.

## M. Project Use of Incentives

Use of incentives by projects had increased significantly from the first round of site visits to the second. Sites tied their awarding of merchant gift cards, distribution of bus passes, access to job referrals, and other program benefits to participants attending various project activities and maintaining contact with program staff. Commonly, staff provided bus passes or other supportive services at the conclusion of project activities, such as group mentoring sessions. This was intended to encourage participants not only to stay in touch with project staff, but also to take part in specific project service activities.

During the second round of visits, interviewees described several types of incentives:

- Taking and passing the GED or other educational/training programs. In one site, passing the GED or receiving a high school diploma resulted in a \$250 incentive. Passing advanced training and vocational education programs was worth \$150.
- Participating in mentoring. Two sites offered bus passes or other transportation incentives at the end of each mentoring session. Two other sites provided gift cards for those participants who regularly attended mentoring meetings (e.g., a \$25 gift card for going to five mentoring sessions).
- Bringing in pay stubs. At several sites, incentives were offered in exchange for the participant bringing in a pay stub. One site provided a \$50 gift card if the participant stayed in touch over a six-month period and provided the requisite pay stubs. Another provided \$100 if the participant remained employed for 90 days with the same employer and brought in a pay stub.
- Completing a week-long orientation program. One site provided participants with a \$50 gift certificate for use on “employment needs” after they completed the program.

Some project staff indicated that there may be a downside to offering incentives, at least for some incentives in connection with some behaviors. One site manager said that he would like to have more referral sources for clothing and provide donated clothes rather than gift cards. Many participants arrived at the site asking, “When am I getting my transit pass?” or “When I am getting my [business name] card?” According to this manager, when participants raised

these questions, he would ask, “Do you really want to be in the program or do you just want the incentives?” Staff at another site said that former participants did not return if they were doing well, and those who came back did so only for the incentive. The project manager at a third site suggested that participants who relapse are ashamed, and under those circumstances a \$20 gift card was not going to get them to come back to the program. One project manager reported:

“We do not offer incentives for people coming in to our program. They do not get incentives for doing what they are supposed to do. The use of incentives feeds into the need for immediate gratification. The project has been trying to remove the immediate gratification need from the clients. We teach people to make sacrifices for a longer-term good.”

## N. Remaining Gaps in Services

Project managers also described gaps in services or services that they would like to offer participants. The need most commonly cited was in the area of housing (Table IV.19). Other service areas cited by project officials as being most needed include hard (occupational) skills training, services related to substance abuse, transportation services, and general health services.

**Table IV.19**  
**Project Manager Identification of Services They Would Like to Add or Expand**

Type of Service	Number of Sites
Housing	17
Hard skills training	6
Substance abuse-related	6
Transportation	5
Health-related (other than substance abuse or mental health)	5
Behavioral/life skills	4
Basic education	3
Mental health-related	3
Legal aspects	2
Identification	2
Others	5
<b>TOTAL for Sites</b>	<b>58</b>

*Source: Site visit interviews with project managers*

*Notes: Data represent responses from 30 interviews with project managers. Individual entries add to more than 30 because some interviewees mentioned multiple approaches.*

During discussions with participants, the overwhelming majority said that the PRI programs had already done so much for them that they did not see many areas for improvement. Nevertheless, some offered suggestions for additional services. The most commonly requested addition to the menu of services was transportation, mentioned by participants in seven out of 17 sites. Housing was second, noted in six sites. Participants also discussed the need for the PRI programs to expand their recruiting efforts by sending staff members or PRI alumni<sup>26</sup> into the prisons to conduct orientations more frequently. Another suggestion was to incorporate more educational or vocational training programs into PRI. In at least three sites, participants felt that their PRI programs needed more staff to work with all of the participants.

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<sup>26</sup> When the suggestion of bringing PRI alumni into the prisons was raised, the site visitors asked if this would be allowed under the state DOC's rules. Participants stated that they would be able to get a pass to go back inside the prisons.



## **V. PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS AND SERVICE USE**

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As the demonstration evolved, the 30 grantees recruited, enrolled, and served participants with a wide range of characteristics and experiences. DOL placed three limitations on who could be served in PRI: Participants must (1) be 18 years or older, (2) have been convicted as an adult and served time in prison or jail, and (3) have never been convicted of a violent or sex-related crime. Grantees were also expected to enroll at least 90 percent of their participants within six months of their release from incarceration. Within these guidelines, grantees were given substantial flexibility as to whom they served and what services they provided. The implementation study described in Chapters III and IV offered insights into grantees' intake processes and the types of services they offered to participants. However, it is important to understand who actually enrolled in PRI and how their backgrounds and re-entry barriers compare to ex-offenders nationwide and those served by other re-entry programs (Exhibit V.1). Since grantees offered a wide array of services, it is also important to explore the types of services that PRI participants chose to receive (Exhibit V.2).

**Exhibit V.1**  
**Key Findings – Participant Characteristics**

- The 30 PRI grantees enrolled 13,315 participants between November 2005 and May 2008.
- Nearly half of participants were enrolled in PRI within one month of their release.
- Eighty-six percent were on parole, probation, or some other form of community supervision.
- Forty-four percent have less than a high school degree or GED, and only 39 percent reported formal employment as their primary income source prior to their most recent incarceration.
- Over half of the participants struggled with drug and alcohol abuse. About 45 percent lived in transitional housing, residential treatment facilities, or unstable housing or were homeless.

**Exhibit V.2**  
**Key Findings – Service Use**

- Participants received PRI services for an average of 12 weeks, with half participating for eight or fewer weeks. Slightly more than half of participants continued to receive at least some services after exit.
- Workforce preparation was the most common service received, with 90 percent receiving at least one of these services.
- Just over half of participants received mentoring services.

**A. Data Sources, Analysis Methods, and Data Limitations**

Grantees were required to collect data on participants at the time of enrollment, throughout service provision, and during the follow-up period. These data were then entered into the MIS designed specifically for the PRI. In addition to supporting the evaluation and DOL's performance measurement system, the MIS was designed to be a useful case management tool for grantee staff. The system contains three categories of data: baseline data, service receipt and short-term outcomes.

DOL designed the system to include data elements that grantees were required to collect, as well as optional data elements that grantees could choose to collect if they were relevant and useful for program management. This strategy was intended to minimize the burden on grantees, while still providing a full range of data that would be useful for both DOL reporting and the evaluation. While reporting fairly complete data for the required elements, grantees varied in how consistently they reported the optional elements. Appendix C provides information on which MIS data elements are required and optional as well as the proportion of missing data for each element, based on the final MIS extract taken in May 2008.

The data analysis presented in this chapter consists primarily of descriptive tabulations. To understand how grantees succeeded in reaching their enrollment targets, trends in the number

of participants enrolling over time were examined. Tabulations of service data reveal which services participants actually received out of all the services offered by the programs. Finally, tabulations were produced for key grantee and participant subgroups to understand if certain types of participants received more or fewer services.<sup>27</sup>

The full universe of PRI participants served in the first two years of the demonstration is included in the MIS data. While this group of participants is not representative of ex-offenders nationwide, they are representative of participants (or potential participants) who could be served through PRI in these sites if the program were to continue. Given that the demonstration was ongoing at the time of the final extract for this report, significance testing provides a useful indication of the patterns that are likely to emerge as the program continues serving clients. The results of these tests are presented in Appendix D.

While the analysis methods are straightforward, both the evaluation design and the grantees' use of the MIS present issues that limit the conclusions that can be drawn. For the following four reasons, any conclusions on participant characteristics as well as the receipt of PRI services should be interpreted with caution.

- ***Many baseline data elements are self-reported.*** In some cases, data could only be obtained through self-report as the FBCOs did not have authority to request official documentation for a number of elements collected. Local staff report that participants sometimes had difficulty remembering information or were not honest about their backgrounds. This is especially true for substance abuse.
- ***Grantees are not required to record service intensity.*** The MIS includes the start and end date of each service but not the hours of service received.
- ***Service receipt is recorded differently across and within sites.*** In many instances, grantees and even staff members within grantees recorded the same service in

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<sup>27</sup> Grantee subgroups were defined by organization size and experience working with ex-offenders. Participant subgroups included gender, age, race, type of institution from which released, educational attainment, community supervision status at enrollment, whether mandated to participate in PRI, time between release and enrollment, length of most recent incarceration, and employment status at enrollment.

different ways. For example, a one-week work readiness class that consisted of five three-hour workshops, or a total of 15 hours of service could be entered as a single service or five separate services.

- *Experience and training in data collection varies across staff members.* Grantee staff are busy, and many do not have much experience collecting data for Federal grants. Some also use their own data systems, requiring double-data entry. This facilitated data verification in a few sites, but the competing demands caused staff to sometimes neglect data entry in the MIS. In addition, MIS training was not uniform across staff members.<sup>28</sup> Four of the nine grantees that were visited for the in-depth cost study reported that no one currently on staff received formal MIS training. Those not trained learned informally from coworkers and through trial and error.

## **B. PRI Enrollment**

Many new programs have difficulty sparking initial interest among their target populations, building outreach and referral networks, developing a reputation within their communities, and moving to a steady-state of enrollment. This section discusses the patterns of participant enrollment over time and participants' exposure to the PRI program prior to enrollment.

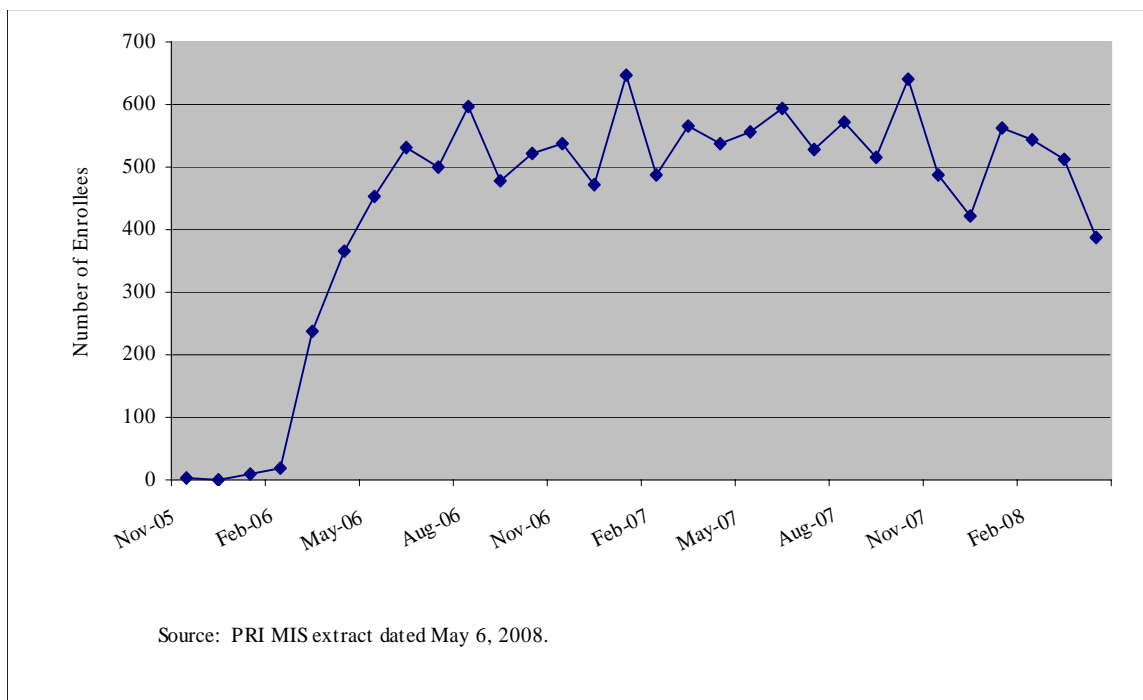
### **1. Participant Enrollment Patterns**

Most grantees met the PRI enrollment target of 200 participants per year. While some grantees began enrolling as early as November 2005, DOL established a deadline of March 1, 2006 for all grantees to begin enrollment. Total monthly enrollment stabilized between April 2006 and April 2008, with some seasonal effects (Figure V.1). Two-thirds of grantees met their

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<sup>28</sup> DOL held three two-day MIS training sessions, as well as an MIS webinar during early implementation. A consultant also provided targeted MIS training at individual grantees throughout the course of the demonstration.

**Figure V.1  
PRI Enrollment by Month**

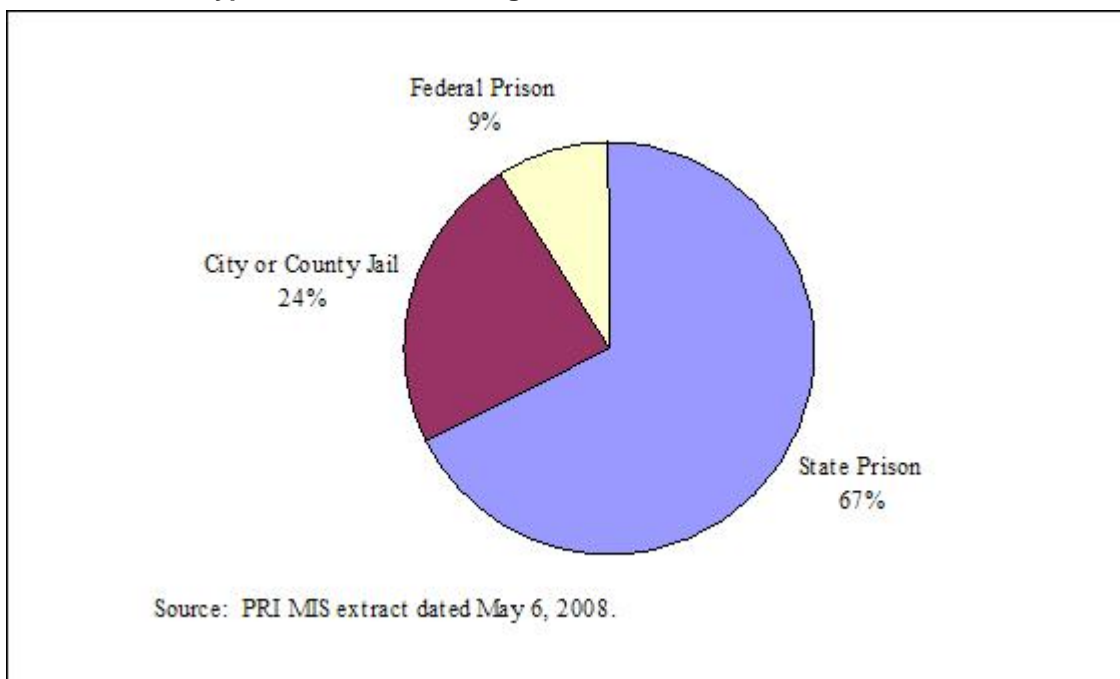


goal of enrolling 200 participants during the first year, and 28 of the 30 met the goal of enrolling a total of 400 participants within the first two years, by March 31, 2008. As grantees began to reach their targets in early 2008, the rate of enrollments slowed, and grantees began shifting their resources away from recruiting new participants and towards enhancing services to existing participants and tracking participants who had exited the program.

## 2. Services Received During Incarceration and DOC Program Participation

As shown in the re-entry framework presented in Chapter I, the first two phases of re-entry—institutional and structured re-entry—occur prior to release and extend through the early post-release period. Grantee staff, therefore, collected information from participants on the services they received while incarcerated. To provide a context for this discussion, 67 percent of PRI participants served their most recent incarceration in a state prison, 9 percent in Federal prisons, and 24 percent in city or county jails (Figure V.2).

**Figure V.2**  
**Type of Institution During Most Recent Incarceration**



Nearly half of participants received some re-entry services while incarcerated (Table V.1). For those participants who reported receiving services before their release, substance abuse treatment was the most common service, followed by work readiness training.<sup>29</sup> The prevalence of such service use varied substantially among those who were released from Federal, state, and local prisons. Nearly 60 percent of Federal prisoners, compared to 48 percent of state prisoners and 32 percent of local prisoners, received at least some services while incarcerated.

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<sup>29</sup> Substance abuse treatment could include self-help programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

**Table V.1  
Pre-release Services Received by PRI Participants**

	Percent of All Participants
Received at Least One Pre-release Service <sup>a</sup>	45.1
Types of Pre-release Services <sup>a</sup>	
Substance abuse treatment	24.3
Work readiness	15.2
Occupational skills training	8.9
Basic or remedial education	7.0
Mental health services	3.4
Other	7.3
Received GED While Incarcerated	14.7
Received Pre-release Services Through DOC Grants	11.0
<b>Sample Size: 13,315</b>	

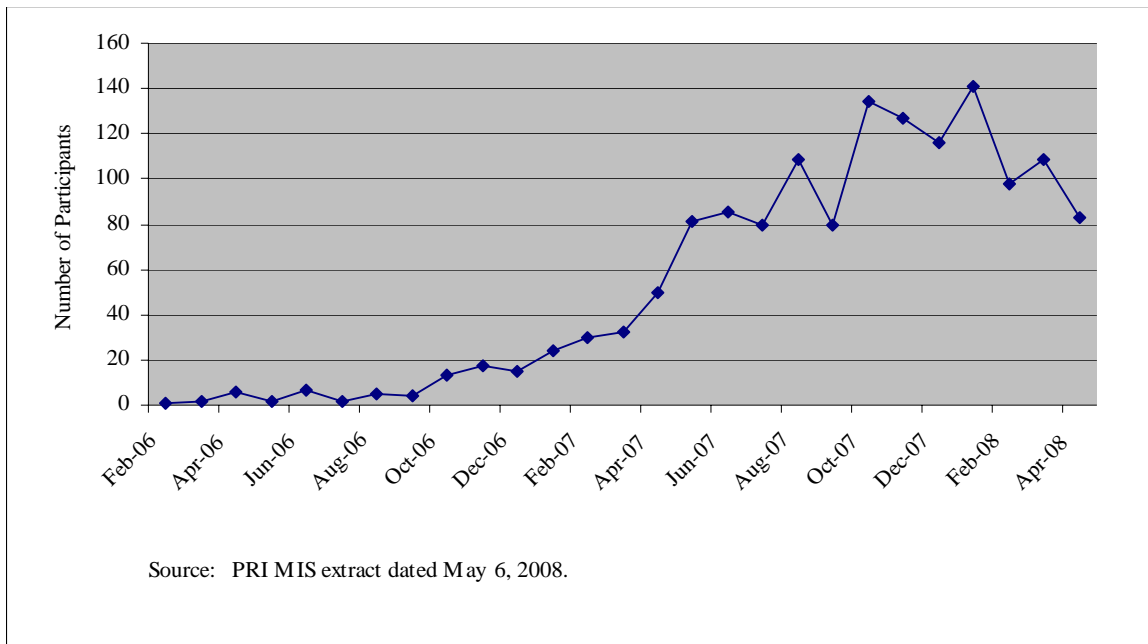
*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

<sup>a</sup> *Grantees were not asked to distinguish between pre-release services offered through DOC grants and other pre-release services offered within institutions. Therefore, these percentages reflect both types.*

Furthermore, as discussed in earlier chapters, DOJ awarded 20 grants to state DOC agencies to provide more extensive pre-release services to participants who, upon release, would continue to receive services from the PRI program. Eleven percent of PRI participants reported participating in the DOC pre-release program. This relatively low proportion of participants resulted from delays in the start-up of the DOC grants, which pushed back the start of referrals to the PRI program. Enrollments of DOC participants began increasing in the summer of 2007 and peaked in early 2008 (Figure V.3). Some grantees enrolled significantly more DOC participants than others. Forty-three percent of participants at one site were referred from DOC, while less

than four percent at seven other sites participated in the DOC programs.<sup>30</sup> Of those participants who received DOC pre-release services, 83 percent came from state prison. Among DOC participants, 80 percent were reported to have received at least some pre-release services with the most common including work readiness training (37 percent), substance abuse treatment (36 percent), occupational skills training (16 percent) and basic or remedial education (13 percent).

**Figure V.3**  
**Monthly Enrollment of Participants Who Received DOC Pre-release Services**



<sup>30</sup> In addition to these seven grantees, three of the four grantees in California had fewer than five percent of participants receive DOC pre-release services. The California DOC made a strategic decision to focus DOC grant resources on efforts in the San Diego area, resulting in low enrollments among the other three PRI grantees in the state. Their intent was to roll the program out to the other local areas with future funding.



**Table V.2**  
**Time from Release to Enrollment**

	Percent of All Participants Unless Noted
Had Contact with PRI Staff Prior to Release	15.0
Weeks from Release to PRI Enrollment	
Less than 2	27.9
2 to 4	19.0
4 to 12	27.1
More than 12	26.0
Average (weeks)	11.2
Mandatory PRI Participation	8.8
<b>Number of Participants: 13,315</b>	

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

Given the importance of preparing the incarcerated for their pending release, DOL allowed the PRI sites to begin recruiting and building relationships with potential participants prior to their release.<sup>31</sup> DOL guidance specified that PRI staff could recruit, hold introductory meetings and orientations, and conduct other activities necessary to establish program connections with prisoners. Some sites were not actively making connections with participants prior to release; however, about 15 percent of participants across all sites reported having had contact with PRI staff before their release (Table V.2). One site made contact with less than 2 percent of participants prior to release, while two sites were in contact with more than 42 percent of participants before they left prison or jail. Participants coming out of state prisons or city and county jails were more likely to have contact with PRI pre-release grantees (17 percent and 12 percent, respectively), compared to those coming out of Federal prisons (8 percent). This reflects the proximity of state and local institutions to the PRI grantee locations, the fact that DOC grants were given primarily to state institutions, and the fact that, generally, grantees more often reported building stronger relationships with these institutions than with Federal facilities.

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<sup>31</sup> Formal PRI services were not permitted to occur prior to an individual's release from incarceration.

### 3. Time from Release to Enrollment

Sites enrolled 91 percent of participants within six months of their release from incarceration. Nearly half of all participants (47 percent) were enrolled within one month, and nearly three-quarters (74 percent) were enrolled within three months (Table V.2). About 4 percent were enrolled on their day of release. Nine percent were also mandated to participate in the program as a condition of their release. On average, those participants who had contact with PRI grantees before their release enrolled more quickly into PRI after their release than those who did not have contact (4.3 versus 12.3 weeks). Similarly, those who were mandated to participate in the program also enrolled more quickly, on average (8.2 versus 11.4 weeks).

## **C. Participant Characteristics**

As of May 6, 2008, 13,315 participants had enrolled in PRI. Understanding the backgrounds of these participants not only makes it possible to assess how they may or may not have differed from other ex-offender populations, but also provides a context for the analysis of service use and outcomes.

### 1. Demographics and Family Characteristics

PRI served a diverse group of ex-offenders who differed in meaningful ways from the general population of released prisoners. Table V.3 provides demographic statistics of enrolled PRI participants. Compared to a report by the BJS on state prisoners released in 15 states in 1994 (Langan and Levin 2002), the PRI sample is older, has a higher percentage of women and Blacks/African Americans, and has a lower percentage of Hispanics (Table V.4). The differences in race and ethnicity may result, in part, from the composition of cities in which PRI grants are located.

**Table V.3  
Demographic Characteristics**

	Percent of All Participants
Gender	
Male	76.7
Female	23.3
Age at Enrollment	
18 through 24	15.0
25 through 34	31.5
35 through 44	32.2
More than 45	21.3
Average (in years)	36.3
Race	
White	33.3
Black	63.8
Asian	0.6
American Indian or Alaskan native	1.3
Hawaiian native or other Pacific Islander	0.3
Multiracial	0.7
Ethnicity	
Hispanic or Latino origin	15.3
Non-Hispanic	77.3
Not specified	7.4
Veteran	7.3
Individuals with a Disability	7.1
U.S. Citizen	99.0
<b>Number of Participants: 13,315</b>	

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

Interestingly, the PRI population was similar in many ways to ex-offenders served by One-Stop Career Centers under WIA. According to the WIASRD data book for program year 2006 (Social Policy Research Associates 2008), adult offenders<sup>32</sup> who exited WIA between April 2006 and March 2007 and received intensive or training services were similar to the PRI sample in terms of age and ethnicity. The PRI population, however, had a higher proportion of Black participants (64 versus 44 percent) and women (31 versus 23 percent).

<sup>32</sup> “Offenders” is the term used in the WIASRD data book.

**Table V.4**  
**Comparison of PRI Characteristics with Released Prisoners Nationwide**

Participant Characteristic	Percent of PRI Participants	Percent of Ex-offenders Released in 15 States in 1994	Percent of Offenders Who Exited from WIA in PY2006
30 years or older	69	56	65
Female <sup>a</sup>	23	9	31
Black	64	49	44
Hispanic	16	25	18

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008; Langan and Levin, 2002; and PY 2006 WIASRD Data Book, Social Policy Research Associates, March 2008*

<sup>a</sup> One PRI grantee specifically targeted women for enrollment.

Most PRI participants were noncustodial parents (Table V.5). Women were more likely than men to report having at least one child (80 versus 67 percent). Despite these high rates of parenthood, only 17 percent of participants reported living with their children when they enrolled, with slightly higher proportions for women than men (25 versus 15 percent). About one-quarter of participants reported having child support obligations. Given that over two-thirds of both male and female participants had children and only a fraction of those participants were living with their children, the MIS data likely underestimated the extent of their obligations. Some participants may have chosen to withhold information from PRI staff on child support obligations for fear that their wages would be garnished to pay arrearages.<sup>33</sup> Site visits revealed that a number of sites were aware of problems associated with child support obligations and were providing workshops or legal assistance to help participants deal with support issues.

<sup>33</sup> For 40 percent of those participants reporting obligations, data were missing on the number of children for whom these participants had support orders. In addition, data on the amount of their financial obligations were difficult to analyze because some local staff members appear to have entered weekly payment amounts, while others entered total arrearages. As a result, these elements are not reported in the analysis.

**Table V.5**  
**Family Characteristics and Child Support Obligations at Enrollment**

	Percent of All Participants Unless Noted
<hr/>	
Number of Children	
None	29.3
One	23.1
Two	19.7
Three or more	27.9
Average (number)	1.8
Number of Children Living with Participants	
None	82.8
One	8.3
Two	4.8
Three or more	4.1
Average (number)	0.3
Marital Status	
Currently Married	10.6
Single	71.2
Divorced or Widowed	12.8
Separated	5.5
Has Child Support Obligations	25.2
<hr/>	
<b>Number of Participants: 13, 315</b>	
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*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

## 2. Criminal History and Recent Incarceration

Ninety percent of all PRI participants had more than one arrest in their lifetime (Table V.6). On average, participants had a total of nine arrests (of which three were felony arrests) and four convictions. Nearly three-quarters had two or more convictions. Over 99 percent of participants had never been convicted of a violent offense.<sup>34</sup> On average, each participant had spent an average of 2.4 years incarcerated during his or her lifetime, but over 60 percent had

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<sup>34</sup> DOL and DOJ agreed to waive the requirement that a participant could never have been convicted of a violent offense if the state DOC pre-release program could not enroll enough non-violent offenders from the state institutions that met the eligibility criteria for PRI. Moreover, PRI grantees could only enroll someone with a prior violent conviction if s/he had gone through the DOC pre-release program and if the presenting conviction was not a violent offense.

been behind bars for less than two years. At the time of enrollment, 86 percent of participants were on some form of community supervision.

The MIS also collected information on participants' most recent conviction. Nearly half of participants served less than a year, but almost one-fifth served three years or more (Table V.7). Drug crimes, often possession of a controlled substance, were the most common conviction. The second most common category of offense involved property crimes, with burglary and motor vehicle theft ranking highest within that category. Nearly 28 percent were coded as having served time for other offenses, which often included parole violations, absconding, and gun possession, along with crimes such as driving under the influence (DUI) and theft that were misclassified by grantee staff.

**Table V.6  
Criminal History**

	Percent of All Participants Unless Noted
Non-violent Offender	99.6
Total Number of Arrests	
1	8.4
2 to 3	18.1
4 to 5	14.8
6 to 10	21.5
11 or more	19.5
Missing data	17.8
Average among those with data (number)	9.0
Total Number of Felony Arrests	
0	5.2
1	22.3
2 to 3	30.5
4 to 5	12.8
6 or more	12.4
Missing data	16.7
Average among those with data (number)	3.4
Total Number of Convictions	
1	21.3
2 to 3	31.9
4 to 5	14.4
6 or more	13.8
Missing data	16.7
Average among those with data (number)	3.8
Total Time Incarcerated During Lifetime	
Less than 6 months	20.1
6 months to 1 year	18.2
1 to 2 years	21.9
2 to 3 years	13.3
3 to 5 years	12.6
5 or more years	13.7
Missing data	0.2
Average among those with data (number)	2.4
Post-release Status At PRI Enrollment	
Parole	57.3
Probation	24.2
Other criminal justice or court supervision	4.1
No supervision	14.4

**Number of Participants: 13, 315**

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

**Table V.7**  
**Characteristics of Most Recent Incarceration**

	Percent of All Participants
<b>Length of Most Recent Incarceration</b>	
0 to 6 months	27.8
6 to 12 months	20.6
12 to 36 months	34.3
36 months or more	17.3
Average (years)	1.8
<b>Category of Offense</b>	
Drug crimes	57.5
Property crimes	28.5
Public order offenses	8.2
Other offenses	27.5
<b>Drug Crimes</b>	
Possession of a controlled substance	36.2
Trafficking a controlled substance	7.0
Criminal sale of a controlled substance	4.7
Possession of drug paraphernalia	2.7
Other drug crime	6.1
Missing	1.4
<b>Property Crimes</b>	
Burglary	10.3
Motor vehicle theft	3.7
Larceny	2.9
Receiving stolen property	2.5
Other property crime	8.8
Missing	0.4
<b>Public Order Offenses</b>	
Driving while intoxicated	4.6
Other public order offense	3.6
Missing	0.2
<b>Number of Participants: 13,315</b>	

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

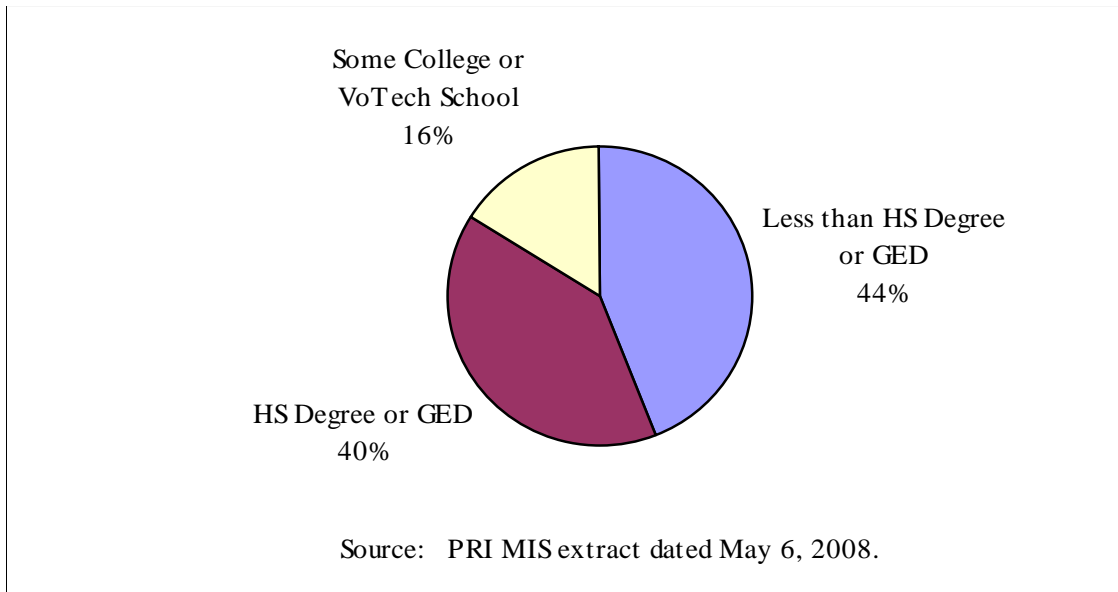
*Note: Percentages do not sum to 100, as participants could have been convicted of more than one crime.*

### 3. Education

The vast majority of PRI participants had low levels of educational attainment at the time of enrollment. Forty-four percent of participants had not earned a high school diploma (Figure V.4).



**Figure V.4**  
**Educational Attainment at Enrollment**



Only about 16 percent had completed at least some college or vocational or technical school. In addition, about 8 percent were reported to have limited English proficiency. The percentage of PRI participants without a high school diploma was higher than the national average but similar to percentages among other recently released ex-offenders. The 2007 U.S. Census shows that only 14 percent of all adults 25 and older reported not completing high school, compared to 41 percent among the same subgroup of PRI participants.<sup>35</sup> The rate of high school diploma or GED attainment among PRI participants was also half that of offenders served by WIA (Social Policy Research Associates, 2008). However, according to Harlow (2003), 40 percent of state inmates and 47 percent of jail inmates had not completed high school or its equivalent.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/educ-attn.html> accessed on August 19, 2008.

#### 4. Employment History

PRI participants appear to have limited work experience through formal employment. Within the six months prior to their most recent incarceration, less than half reported formal employment as their primary income source (Table V.8). About 28 percent of participants reported being employed either full- or part-time at the time of incarceration for their most recent offense. When asked about their most recent job prior to incarceration, participants reported earning an average of \$10.45 per hour, and about 30 percent of these had held that job for more than one year (Table V.9). Their most common occupation was food preparation and service, followed by construction and extraction.

**Table V.8**  
**Employment History**

	Percent of All Participants
Primary Income Over 6 Months Prior to Incarceration	
Formal employment	38.9
Illegal activities	23.7
Friends and family	6.8
Informal employment	6.4
Public benefits	3.0
Other	3.1
Missing	18.2
Employment Status at Incarceration	
Not employed	47.9
Employed full-time	22.5
Employed part-time	5.5
Missing	24.1
Employed at PRI Enrollment	90.0
<b>Number of Participants: 13,315</b>	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

**Table V.9  
Characteristics of Prior Jobs**

	Percent of Participants	
	Most Recent Job Prior to Incarceration	Longest-Held Full- Time Job
<b>Months Worked</b>		
Less than 3 months	16.9	4.6
3 to 6 months	12.2	6.1
6 to 12 months	9.6	8.2
More than 12 months	29.1	46.0
Missing	32.2	35.2
<b>Occupation</b>		
Food preparation and serving related	12.2	11.9
Construction and extraction	11.0	8.8
Production	9.0	8.1
Sales and related	7.4	6.6
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	7.2	6.1
Transportation and material moving	6.1	5.7
Installation, maintenance, and repair	5.8	5.3
Other	14.4	16.0
Missing	26.9	31.5
<b>Hourly Wage</b>		
Less than \$7.50	16.0	14.7
\$7.50 to \$8.49	11.6	9.4
\$8.50 to \$9.99	11.1	10.0
\$10.00 to \$14.99	20.9	19.5
\$15.00 or more	9.2	10.5
Missing	31.3	35.9
Average among those with data (in dollars)	\$10.46	\$11.13
<b>Number of Participants: 9,739 (most recent job) and 9118 (longest-held full-time job)</b>		

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

Participants also provided information about their longest-held full-time job prior to incarceration. Importantly, the MIS does not capture data on the percent of participants who were never employed in their lifetime or never had a full-time job. About 31 percent of participants had missing data for all characteristics of the longest-held full-time job. It is not possible to determine whether these participants were never employed in a full-time job or if they simply did

not report the data. As a result, 31 percent represents an upper bound for the percentage of participants who never held a full-time job. By contrast, 46 percent reported holding a job for more than one year. Average hourly wages at the longest held job were \$11.13.

An overwhelming majority of participants (90 percent) were unemployed at the time of their PRI enrollment (Table V.8). This is slightly higher than the WIA figure, where 85 percent of ex-offenders were unemployed at the time of enrollment (Social Policy Research Associates, 2008). It is particularly important to note the number of participants employed at enrollment for three reasons. First, employment at enrollment could affect the type of services that sites provide to these participants. Second, individuals who are employed at the time of enrollment are excluded from the performance measures for entered employment and employment retention. Third, the jobs that participants were able to obtain prior to enrollment provide a benchmark for comparison with the jobs they are able to obtain after participation in PRI. Many participants were required to obtain employment very quickly after release as a condition of parole or probation. Grantee staff reported that those who found jobs to satisfy their release conditions often got low-paying jobs that had little or no prospect for advancement. Sites reported enrolling these participants in the hope of helping them advance to better employment. At three sites, in particular, over one-third of participants were employed at enrollment.

Among the 10 percent who were employed at the time of PRI enrollment across all sites, food preparation and service was the most common occupation at enrollment. Most worked full-time at an average hourly wage of \$9.13. Women were slightly more likely to be employed than men (13 versus 9 percent). In addition, those participants who were released from prison for a month or longer before enrollment were more likely to be employed than those who were enrolled sooner after release (13 versus 6 percent).

## 5. Housing Status

Affordable, safe, and stable housing is a key component to an ex-offender’s successful transition back into society. Consequently, DOL highlighted housing as one of the three major services at the heart of the PRI intervention—along with employment and mentoring. Although PRI funds could not be used to pay for housing, PRI grantees were encouraged to build relationships with, or leverage resources from, housing partners to meet the needs of participants.

The majority of participants reported that, at enrollment, they owned or rented their housing or were living in a stable living situation with family or friends (Table V.10). About one-third reported living in transitional facilities, such as halfway or step-down houses or work-release centers.<sup>36</sup>

**Table V.10**  
**Housing, Substance Abuse, and Health Status at Enrollment**

	Percent of All Participants
<b>Housing Status at Enrollment</b>	
Own or rent apartment, room, or house	11.4
Stable living situation staying at someone’s apartment, room, or house	43.0
Halfway house or other transitional facility	31.3
Residential treatment	4.2
Unstable living situation staying at someone’s apartment, room, or house	5.2
Homeless	4.9
<b>Self-reported Alcohol Abuse or Drug Use</b>	
In three months prior to incarceration	44.8
In three months prior to enrollment	5.3
Both	6.7
None	43.2
<b>Significant Health Issues at Enrollment</b>	
Ever Received Mental Health Treatment Prior to Enrollment	9.2
	10.0
<b>Number of Participants: 13,315</b>	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

<sup>36</sup> The MIS manual developed by DOL defined transitional housing as “a residence designed to assist persons as they reenter society and learn to adapt to independent living after having been in prison.”

Grantee staff members reported that the quality of transitional living facilities, as well as that of rentals and family living situations, varied substantially. In particular, they reported that some transitional facilities operated safe and stable living environments, while others did not. Many facilities required that participants find employment immediately, which forced them to take any job they could find, often for low wages and with little prospect for career growth. In addition, some transitional facilities had strict hours or curfews that affected participants' ability to attend regular services at the PRI site or find employment during evening shifts. Approximately 10 percent of participants lived in unstable living situations or were homeless at the time of enrollment. The rate of homelessness ranged from no homeless participants at one site to 36 percent at another. Not only did those participants who lived in unstable housing often require more assistance than those in stable housing, but also they were often more difficult to track over time and had more difficulties obtaining work.

#### 6. Substance Abuse and Mental Health

As with housing, PRI grant funds could not be used to provide substance abuse or mental health treatment. Grantee staff members, however, often rated substance abuse as one of the biggest barriers facing participants. Given how prevalent these issues are among ex-offenders, grantees were encouraged to partner with local resources to address participants' needs.

According to the MIS, 57 percent of participants abused drugs or alcohol during the three months prior to their incarceration, during the three months prior to their enrollment, or during both periods (Table V.10). While PRI staff sometimes had access to parole or probation records on substance abuse history or recent urine screens required by community supervision or employers, they more often relied on self-reports, which likely underestimate the extent of abuse.

Grantees reported in the MIS data that about 10 percent of PRI participants had received mental health treatment, including formal treatment for anxiety, depression, impulse control, mood adjustment, personality issues, or other conditions related to mental health provided by a licensed or certified mental health provider. The proportion was significantly higher for women (19 percent) than for men (7 percent). These figures, however, may be underestimates for two reasons. First, this measure relies on self-reporting by participants, and they may have chosen not to disclose their mental health issues. Second, grantees did not actively record if a participant did not receive treatment; thus, no distinction can be made between the proportion of those who truly did not receive treatment and those for whom data are missing. Many local staff reported during site visit interviews that this particular data element was less reliable because staff either did not consistently ask participants about their mental health status or were less certain about the truthfulness of participants' responses. As a comparison, James and Glaze (2006) found that more than 50 percent of all individuals incarcerated in state, Federal, and county prisons in 2005 had a mental health problem. Of those who had a mental health problem, more than one-third of state prisoners, one-quarter of Federal prisoners, and approximately 17 percent of jail inmates had received mental health treatment.

#### **D. Patterns of Participation and Service Receipt**

As participants moved through the PRI program, grantees were required to enter MIS data on the timing, types, and number of services they provided to participants. This section provides a sense of the types of services that participants most often received during their participation. To avoid underestimating the extent of service receipt, the analysis only includes the 11,770 participants who were enrolled for at least three months before the date of the final MIS extract.

## 1. Flow of Services and Length of PRI Participation

Nearly all participants who enrolled in PRI received at least one service after enrollment, and 89 percent received their first service within one week of enrollment (Table V.11). As discussed earlier, participants often entered the program with pressing needs, and sites typically tried to begin addressing some of those needs immediately. The small fraction of participants who did not receive any services dropped out after the initial intake meeting.

On average, participants were actively enrolled in PRI for nearly 12 weeks between the dates of enrollment and exit; the median falls at eight weeks.<sup>37</sup> Just over 10 percent of participants attended for one day and did not return. Conversely, over 20 percent of participants were actively enrolled for more than 20 weeks. When including the follow-up and supportive services that were provided after exit, participants were involved with the program, on average, for a total of 22 weeks. While the period of time over which PRI participants received follow-up services appears almost comparable to their period of active enrollment, follow-up services tended to be less frequent and less intensive than services provided prior to exit.

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<sup>37</sup> DOL common measures state that once a participant has not received any services from the program (excluding supportive services) or a partner program for 90 consecutive calendar days, has no planned gap in service, and is not scheduled for future services, the date of exit is applied retroactively to the last day on which the individual received a service. In PRI, however, DOL designed the MIS to allow sites to proactively trigger exit when they believed that a participant was stable and no longer in need of services, allowing grantees to enter follow-up data before the official exit date was assigned.



**Table V.11  
Timing of Service Receipt**

	Percent of All Grantees
Received any PRI services after enrollment	99.4
Days between enrollment and first service	
0	71.4
1 to 7	17.5
More than 7	11.1
Average (days)	5.4
Weeks from enrollment to exit <sup>a</sup>	
0	10.5
0.1 to 4	24.5
4.1 to 12	28.0
12.1 to 20	16.6
20.1 or more	20.5
Average (weeks)	11.9
Weeks from enrollment to last service including follow-up services	
Less than 4	24.2
4 to 16	27.4
16.1 to 32	21.8
32.1 or more	26.6
Average (weeks)	22.4
Number of services received during active enrollment	
0 to 2	20.6
3 to 5	29.4
6 to 9	22.8
10 or more	27.2
Average (number)	8.3
Total number of follow-up services after exit <sup>a</sup>	
0	47.6
1	20.9
2 to 4	18.9
5 or more	12.6
Average (number)	2.1
<b>Number of Participants: 11,770</b>	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

Note: Data pertain only to those individuals who were enrolled at least three months prior to the final extract.

<sup>a</sup>Data available only for those 10,533 individuals who exited from PRI after 90 days without receipt of services.

## 2. Types of Services Received

PRI sites offered a wide range of services to participants and often tried to tailor service receipt to participants' individual needs. Overall, participants received an average of eight services prior to exit and an additional two services after exit (Table V.11).<sup>38</sup>

Workforce preparation was the most common service provided to PRI participants with 90 percent of participants receiving at least one (Table V.12). This was usually the first type of service initiated, with more than half of all participants beginning these activities on the day they enrolled. On average, participants received four workforce preparation services. More than half of the participants received career and life skills counseling. This was followed by workforce information services and work readiness training (48 percent and 47 percent, respectively). These statistics are consistent with findings from site visit interviews. Case managers reported that many contacts with participants involved some form of career or life-skills counseling. In addition, case management staff as well as job developers consistently shared job leads and labor market information with participants once they began actively searching for employment.

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<sup>38</sup> Due to variation in data entry practices, some local staff members reported on-going activities (such as a series of job readiness training workshops) as a single service while others recorded it as multiple services. Therefore, this measure of service intensity must be interpreted with caution.

**Table V.12  
Types of Services Received Before Exit**

	Percent of All Grantees
Participated in Any Workforce Preparation Activities	90.3
Participated in Any Mentoring Activities <sup>a</sup>	52.7
Received Supportive Services <sup>B</sup>	54.6
Participated in Any Education or Job Training Activities	29.3
Received Health Services	25.4
Participated in Any Community Involvement Activities	11.0
Type of Workforce Preparation Activities	
Career or life skills counseling	51.5
Workforce information services	48.3
Work readiness training	46.5
Subsidized employment	4.5
Internship	0.4
Other workforce preparation activities	44.1
Type of Supportive Services	
Transportation service	43.0
Needs-related payments	6.6
Child care services	0.3
Other supportive services	29.7
Type of Education or Job Training Activities	
Vocational or occupational skills training	9.0
On-the-job training	5.9
GED preparation	3.4
Math or reading remediation	0.9
Other educational or job training activities	14.9
Type of Health Services	
Substance abuse treatment	11.8
Non-emergency medical care	6.1
Mental health treatment	2.9
Emergency medical care	0.6
Other health services	10.5
Type of Community Involvement Activities	
Community service	4.2
Other community involvement activities	7.7

**Number of Participants: 11,770**

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

*Note: Data pertain only to those individuals who were enrolled at least three months prior to the final extract.*

<sup>a</sup> *The MIS does not include subcategories for the type of mentoring activities*

<sup>b</sup> *Includes only supportive services prior to exit*

Mentoring was another key service component, with just over 50 percent participation. This percentage appears to be growing steadily over time, with 66 percent of participants enrolled in the first quarter of 2008 involved in at least some mentoring services. DOL intended mentoring to involve activities in which a mentor met with the same mentee consistently over a prolonged period of time. Site visits showed that sites offered a variety of mentoring models, including both one-on-one and group mentoring activities. For those who received mentoring, however, services lasted for an average of four weeks and involved 1.9 services. Sites that made mentoring a central focus of their program design tended to have higher rates of participation than others. For example, one site subcontracted with two faith-based mentoring providers and referred all participants to one of these organizations during their first PRI enrollment meeting. This resulted in more than 90 percent of the participants at that site taking part in mentoring.

The rate of mentoring involvement among PRI participants was similar to the rate observed in the Ready4Work program, another DOL demonstration serving recently released non-violent, felony ex-offenders between the ages 18 to 34 years old (McClanahan, 2007). This holds true even when restricting the PRI sample to those under the age of 35 years. However, the average length of participation in mentoring services among this subgroup of PRI participants was substantially shorter (at less than one month) than in Ready4Work (at three months).

Sites also provided supportive services to participants both during their participation and after exit. About half of participants received supportive services before exit. Transportation services—including bus passes and tokens, gas cards, taxi service, and rides to job interviews, parole meetings, and court appearances—were most common. One site provided no transportation services, while two others assisted 74 percent of participants with transportation.

Nearly 30 percent of participants received education and training services. Just 9 percent received occupational skills training, another 6 percent received on-the-job training, and 3 percent participated in GED preparation courses. Anecdotal evidence from site visits suggests that few participants had the time or interest to attend educational classes, and many sought immediate employment, due either to release requirements or the need for immediate income.

Another quarter of participants received health services, often through referrals to other community resources. Substance abuse treatment was the most common, followed by non-emergency medical care. Grantee staff also reported that dental care and repair—often recorded as “other health services”—were important for improving participants’ employment prospects.

Of the 10,533 participants who had exited the program by early May 2008, approximately 52 percent received at least one follow-up service after exit (Table V.13). Exiters received an average of 2.1 follow-up services, with nearly 21 percent receiving only one service after exit. However, just over 10 percent received five or more services during the follow-up period.

**Table V.13**  
**Types of Services Received After Exit**

	Percent of All PRI Exiters
Participated in any services after exit	52.4
Type of service	
Transportation service	13.0
Needs-related payments	2.7
Child care services	0.1
Follow-up mentoring services	16.6
Other follow-up services	29.7
Other supportive services	23.4
<b>Number of Participants: 10,533</b>	

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

*Note: Data pertain only to those individuals who were enrolled at least three months prior to the final extract. Data are also restricted to participants who exited the PRI program by the date of the extract.*

*As a sensitivity check, when restricted the analysis to those who exited at least three months prior to the final extract. The proportion who participated in any services after exit increases only slightly to 53.2 percent, and the average number of post-exit services remains constant at 2.1 services.*

The two most common types of follow-up services fell into categories that were catchalls and labeled “other follow-up services” and “other supportive services” (30 percent and 23 percent, respectively). These categories were designed to record any service that occurred after exit that did not fit into the four existing supportive service categories, namely transportation services, need-related payments, childcare services, and follow-up mentoring. Site visit interviews showed that the most common services recorded in these fields included job search assistance and career and life-skills counseling. The fact that nearly one-third of exiters received other follow-up services indicates that many participants still had significant needs beyond supportive services, even after they exited the program. During the follow-up period, mentoring services appeared to drop off significantly, with only 16 percent of participants still receiving at least one mentoring service after exit.

### 3. Subgroup Differences in Service Receipt

Differences emerged in the number of weeks that individuals participated in PRI as distinguished by both participant and grantee subgroups (Table V.14).<sup>39</sup> Of particular interest, those that were mandated to participate in PRI by a criminal justice agent as a condition of community supervision participated, on average, for a month longer than those who participated voluntarily. The length of participation also varied substantially by site. The average length of participation at one site was just over one month, while it was as long as six months at another. In particular, smaller grantees with annual budgets less than \$1 million had shorter average lengths of participation among their enrollees.

Table V.15 also shows subgroup differences for the three of the most prevalent services, namely workforce preparation, mentoring, and supportive services. Differences emerged across a wide range of participant and grantee characteristics. Of particular interest, participants who were mandated to enroll in PRI were more likely to receive mentoring but less likely to receive supportive services. One site where nearly all participants were mandated to attend PRI also required everyone to attend mentoring, which may account for this finding. Those who were unemployed at enrollment were less likely to receive both workforce preparation and mentoring activities. The data gathered at site visits suggest that these subgroup differences may be partially due to the motivation and needs of participants, the accessibility of services among certain groups, or the decision among grantees to target services toward particular types of participants. When exploring grantee subgroups, not surprisingly, those grantees with prior experience

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<sup>39</sup>As noted earlier, Appendix B provides tables with results of t-tests examining statistical differences between subgroup analyses. Findings presented in the body of the report include only those that appear large enough to be policy relevant and are statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

serving ex-offenders also provided workforce preparation and mentoring activities to substantially more participants than those without experience.

**Table V.14**  
**Subgroup Differences in Length of Participation**

	Weeks of PRI Participation	
	Average Number of Weeks	Number of Participants
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 35 years	11.2	4,922
35 or more years	12.5	5,609
Difference	-1.3	
<b>Race</b>		
Black	10.9	6,009
Non-Black	13.2	3,426
Difference	-2.2	
<b>Type of Incarceration Facility</b>		
Federal	10.8	935
State and local	12.0	9,598
Difference	-1.2	
<b>On Community Supervision at Enrollment</b>		
Yes	12.2	9,001
No	10.2	1,527
Difference	2.0	
<b>Mandated to Participate</b>		
Yes	16.1	809
No	11.8	9,002
Difference	4.3	
<b>Size of Grantees' Annual Budget Prior to PRI</b>		
Less than \$1 million	11.2	2,086
\$1 million or more	12.1	8,447
Difference	-0.9	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008



**Table V.15**  
**Subgroup Differences in the Types of Key Services Received**

	Percent of Participants Who Received Any			Number of Participants
	Workforce Preparation Services	Mentoring Services	Supportive Services	
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	90.9	52.2	53.1	8,988
Female	88.4	54.2	59.2	2,782
Difference	2.5	-1.9	-6.1	
<b>Race</b>				
Black	90.1	55.3	53.6	6,704
Non-Black	90.1	49.8	57.9	3,831
Difference	-0.0	5.5	-4.3	
<b>Type of Incarceration Facility</b>				
Federal	94.4	38.7	42.0	1,027
State and local	89.9	54.1	55.8	10,743
Difference	4.5	-15.4	-13.7	
<b>Educational Attainment at Enrollment</b>				
High School Diploma or GED or higher	90.8	53.9	55.7	6,412
Less than High School Diploma or GED	89.9	51.6	52.9	5,035
Difference	0.8	2.3	2.8	
<b>On Community Supervision at Enrollment</b>				
Yes	90.1	51.7	55.4	10,067
No	91.6	58.8	54.0	1,698
Difference	-1.5	-7.1	6.0	
<b>Mandated to Participate</b>				
Yes	92.0	66.3	48.4	970
No	90.3	52.0	54.9	10,043
Difference	1.6	14.3	-6.5	
<b>Months from Release to PRI Enrollment</b>				
Less than one month	90.9	53.9	57.9	5,732
One month or more	89.7	51.6	51.4	6,038
Difference	1.1	2.2	6.5	
<b>Length of Most Recent Incarceration</b>				
Less than one year	90.9	54.6	52.8	5,313
One year or more	92.1	51.7	56.4	5,664
Difference	-1.2	3.0	-3.7	
<b>Employed at Enrollment</b>				
Yes	83.1	48.3	53.6	1,217
No	91.1	53.3	54.7	10,548
Difference	-8.0	-5.0	-1.1	
<b>Size of Grantees' Annual Budget Before PRI</b>				
Less than \$1 million	84.1	53.2	53.0	2,309
\$1 million or more	92.8	52.6	53.2	9,461
Difference	-7.7	0.6	-0.2	
<b>Grantees with Prior Experience Serving Ex-Offenders</b>				
Yes	91.4	57.2	54.6	8,736
No	87.0	40.0	54.5	3,034
Difference	4.4	17.1	0.1	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

## **VI. SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES**

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To achieve the long-term goal of successful reintegration into their communities, PRI participants need to overcome many obstacles and make progress through short-term milestones. The evaluation's outcomes analysis examined a range of intermediate outcomes that the PRI demonstration tried to effect through its services offerings. While this analysis cannot assess the effectiveness of the PRI program or describe participants' long-term success in avoiding criminal activity and being productive members of society, it does capture details of PRI participants' early experiences after release. This chapter describes the PRI participants' short-term outcomes, including employment, recidivism, degree attainment, housing, and substance abuse. Exhibit VI.1 highlights key findings.

**Exhibit VI. 1**  
**Key Findings – Short-term Outcomes**

- Two-thirds of all participants were placed in unsubsidized employment during their participation in PRI.
- About half of PRI participants who had exited the program were reported as employed during the first full calendar quarter after exit. This represents the most conservative estimate by assuming that all participants without a follow-up record (40 percent) were unemployed.
- Between 70 and 82 percent of participants were reported by grantees to have no criminal justice involvement during the first year after release.
- Only about 8 percent of participants received educational credentials, which were predominantly certificates for completing short-term vocational programs.
- Women, older participants, non-Black participants, those with at least a high school diploma or GED, those released from federal institutions, and those who served longer terms had more success than their counterparts on employment and recidivism outcomes.

## A. Outcomes Measures, Data Limitations, and Analysis Methods

The PRI evaluation examined data collected by the 30 PRI grantees on participants as they reached a number of short-term milestones. This included data collected during participation, as well as data collected during the three calendar quarters after participants exited the program. While the analysis provides an early glimpse at participants' success in reintegrating into society, the available data and analysis methods are subject to several key limitations.

### 1. Types of Outcome Measures

The 30 PRI grantees were required to collect data for participants' successes in five areas:

- ***Employment and Earnings.*** Both during participation and after PRI exit, grantees tracked which participants were placed in unsubsidized employment, their wages, the number, characteristics, and timing of placements, and employment retention.
- ***Recidivism.*** Grantees gathered data on the number and types of arrests that occurred during participants' first year after release from incarceration and subsequent to program enrollment. Data also show the number of convictions for new crimes and incarcerations that resulted from those convictions, as well as from technical violations of probation and parole.
- ***Educational Attainment.*** Grantees collected data on whether participants attained degrees or certifications, the types received, and how long it took to attain them.
- ***Substance Abuse and Illegal Drug Use.*** Grantees documented participants' self-reports of alcohol and drug abuse within the first six months after PRI enrollment.
- ***Housing.*** To supplement information gathered at enrollment, grantees reported on participants' housing status at six months after PRI enrollment.

Appendix C includes the specific data elements used to calculate outcome measures, whether the sites were required to collect each, and the proportion of participants with outcome records for whom specific data elements are missing.

These short-term measures served as a general proxy for participants' initial experiences after release. However, the re-entry process is fluid and continuous, and research has shown many examples of how participant outcomes can change over time. While it was possible to capture some of these phenomena with the data collected through the evaluation, the analysis does not provide a complete picture of participants' long-term successes in achieving and retaining legal employment and remaining free of the criminal justice system.

## 2. Grantee Tracking and Verification of Participants' Outcomes

Grantees used a variety of strategies for tracking participant outcomes. Some grantees made a single staff member responsible for tracking participants over time. Others had multiple staff members entering data on outcomes at different stages. To facilitate the tracking process, the MIS sent reminders to administrators and staff as each participant reached a key milestone.

**Table VI.1**  
**Grantee's Success Collecting Outcome Data at Key Benchmarks**

Benchmark	Measures Collected at Benchmark	Number of Participants Who Reached Benchmark	Percent Who Reached Benchmark with Outcome Record in the MIS
6 months after enrollment	Substance abuse Housing	10,449	72
12 months after release	Recidivism	7,767	88
First calendar quarter after exit	Employment	9,671	60
Second calendar quarter after exit	Employment Wages Hours worked	8,135	53
Third calendar quarter after exit	Employment Wages Hours worked	6,319	49

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

<sup>a</sup> *Grantees were asked to enter data on educational attainment and employment placement throughout participants' tenure in the program. The MIS did not allow grantees to identify if a record were missing or data could not be obtained for a particular participant. Therefore, it was assumed that participants without records in these components of the MIS did not attain a degree or credential or were not placed in employment.*

Many grantees, nonetheless, had difficulty tracking participants over time. In particular, grantees were only able to record outcome data on 60 percent of participants during the first quarter after their exit from a PRI program (Table VI.1). Seven of the 30 grantees had tracking rates of less than 50 percent. Tracking success across the 30 grantees dropped to 53 percent and 49 percent at the second and third quarters after exit, respectively. Site visit interviews suggest that this results primarily from problems following participants over time, however, at least some grantees also chose not to record outcomes when participants were unsuccessful, given that missing data were automatically treated as negative outcomes in DOL performance measures calculations. Grantees had more success recording outcome data on participants' substance abuse and housing status at six months after enrollment and whether they recidivated one year after release from incarceration, with outcome data entered for 72 and 88 percent, respectively, of participants who reached those benchmarks.

Despite grantees' good-faith efforts to document participant outcomes, site visit data suggest that grantees used inconsistent methods to verify key outcomes. DOL guidelines indicate that grantees must formally verify employment placement through participants' pay stubs, written employer verification, or searching unemployment insurance wage data. A formalized data validation process was not in place, however. Data quality was monitored through routine FPO audits of case files. DOL took steps to improve data quality, providing ongoing technical assistance both directly and through its contractors. Indeed, interviews with local staff revealed that most grantees and their staff were successfully documenting participant employment. For measures of recidivism, DOL also expected grantees to validate their outcomes using some form of documentation, such as written notifications from probation or parole officers. Some grantees reported being able to consistently obtain data on arrests and technical violations through

communications with probation and parole officers or by searching state or county databases of new arrests or incarcerations. Others, however, relied heavily on self-reports from participants and their families. Based on DOL guidance and technical assistance efforts, grantees were increasingly seeking out valid sources of recidivism outcomes, such as publicly available websites and contact with community partners. DOL expected that substance abuse and housing outcomes could only be collected through self-reports, given that FBCOs did not have the authority to request official documentation on these outcomes. Indeed, grantee staff reported that they relied primarily on self-reports, although some received data from probation and parole officers on urine testing or changes in housing status. While grantees entered outcome records on these measures in the MIS for 72 percent of participants who reached six months after enrollment, a large number of those records indicate that grantees were unable to obtain data.

There are many differences between those participants whom grantees were able to track and those they were not. At all three benchmarks presented in Table VI.2, grantees had more success tracking participants over the age of 35, non-Black participants, those employed, released from Federal institutions, mandated to participate, and in stable housing at enrollment. These differences suggest the need for caution when interpreting outcome measures, as the available data do not accurately represent all participants.

**Table VI.2**  
**Grantees' Success in Collecting Outcome Data by Participant Characteristics**  
**(Percent with Record in MIS)**

	Among Those Who Reached 6 Months After Enrollment	Among Those Who Reached 12 Months After Release	Among Those Who Completed the 1st Quarter After Exit
Male	70.4	87.5	60.2
Female	75.6	89.2	61.5
Difference	-5.2	-1.7	-1.3
Less than 35 years old	69.6	86.3	57.5
35 years or older	73.3	89.4	63.1
Difference	-3.7	-3.1	-5.6

Black	69.5	87.5	57.4
Non-Black	77.0	89.3	67.9
Difference	-7.5	-1.8	-10.6
High school diploma, GED or higher	72.0	88.0	64.7
Less than high school diploma or GED	72.4	88.2	56.4
Difference	0.4	-0.2	8.2
Employed at enrollment	76.9	90.3	72.4
Not employed at enrollment	71.0	87.6	59.1
Difference	5.9	2.6	13.3
DOJ pre-release participant	69.2	85.8	67.1
Not a DOJ pre-release participant	71.8	88.0	60.0
Difference	-2.6	-2.3	7.0
On community supervision	71.7	88.1	61.1
Not on community supervision	71.5	87.4	57.7
Difference	0.2	0.7	3.3
Mandated to participate in PRI	80.5	94.1	72.6
Not mandated to participate in PRI	71.2	87.7	59.5
Difference	9.3	6.3	13.1
Released from federal institution	79.7	89.0	78.2
Released from state or local institution	70.9	87.8	58.9
Difference	8.8	1.1	19.4
Only one arrest in lifetime	71.7	88.9	61.5
More than one arrest in lifetime	74.5	88.8	60.3
Difference	-3.1	0.1	1.2
Incarcerated for less than 1 year	70.9	88.6	57.4
Incarcerated for 1 year or more	72.5	88.1	64.7
Difference	-0.9	0.5	-7.3
On probation or parole at enrollment	71.7	88.1	61.1
Not on probation or parole at enrollment	71.5	87.4	57.7
Difference	0.2	0.7	3.3
Stable housing at enrollment	70.4	86.9	57.9
Unstable housing at enrollment	73.1	89.3	63.8
Difference	-2.7	-2.4	-5.9
Abusing drugs or alcohol at enrollment	72.3	86.2	57.3
Not abusing drugs or alcohol at enrollment	71.5	88.2	61.0
Difference	0.7	-2.0	-3.7
<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>10,449</b>	<b>7,767</b>	<b>9,671</b>

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

### 3. Analysis Methods

The outcomes analysis relies heavily on descriptive statistics. The analysis aggregates data across all 30 sites to determine the average outcomes among the entire PRI population.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Extreme outliers that appeared to be unreasonable values were set to missing. Distributions, and medians in some cases, were presented to reflect the effect of remaining outliers on averages.

Differences in average outcomes across participant and grantee subgroups are also presented.<sup>41</sup> Participant subgroups include gender, age, race, type of institution from which released, educational attainment at enrollment, community supervision status at enrollment, whether PRI participation was mandated by a criminal justice agent, time between release and enrollment, length of most recent incarceration, and employment status at enrollment. Grantee subgroups were defined by organization size and prior experience serving ex-offenders. Five grantees were also identified as having greater success in tracking participant outcomes over time.<sup>42</sup> Both qualitative and quantitative data sources were integrated when the results were interpreted.

To supplement this core analysis, a series of subgroup analyses were also conducted to assess differences in outcomes among those who participated in specific types of services compared to those who did not. These results must be interpreted cautiously, however, as the evaluation was not designed to assess the effectiveness of PRI services. Moreover, participants who chose to receive a particular service—either of their initiative or jointly with their caseworkers—or who participated for a longer period of time are likely to be systematically different from those enrollees who did not participate in the service. External factors such as economic conditions, court or police practices, and community supervision may also affect outcomes. Thus, without conducting a controlled experiment, it would not be possible to determine whether relationships between services and outcomes are due to receipt of the service,

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<sup>41</sup> While the evaluation design report (Bellotti et al. 2006) specified broad subgroups, specific subgroup variables were identified based on policy relevance and the proportion of missing data for available MIS data elements.

<sup>42</sup> The five grantees included The Directors Council, St. Patrick Center, OIC of Broward County, Talbert House, and Metro United Methodist Urban Ministries. Collectively, they recorded post-exit follow-up data for 85 percent of participants who completed the first quarter after exit and recidivism data for 97 percent of participants who reached one year after release, compared to 57 and 86 percent, respectively, among all other grantees.



per se, or the participants' characteristics or motivation that led them to participate in the service. In addition, there is substantial variation in whether and how staff recorded services in the MIS.

As discussed in Chapter V, significance testing of subgroup differences are presented in Appendices D and E to provide indications of the patterns that are likely to emerge if the program continues serving similar participants. Appendix F also presents a series of regressions to control for measurable differences among sites and participants to gain greater precision in measuring and explaining observed differences in outcomes across subgroups. Subgroup tables presented in this chapter include only those differences that appear large enough to be policy relevant and are statistically significant at the 1 percent level, using a two-tailed test.

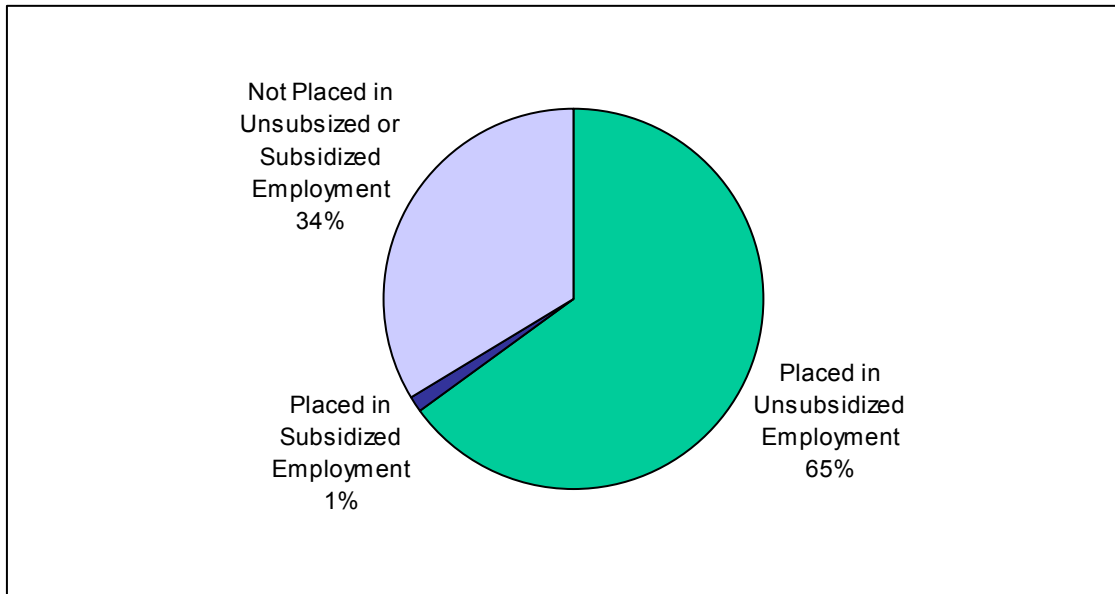
## **B. Initial Placement in Unsubsidized Employment**

DOL designed the PRI with the goal of reducing recidivism by helping ex-offenders prepare for, find, and maintain stable and legal employment. This section discusses participants' success in finding jobs and the types of jobs they obtained. It also explores subgroup differences in employment patterns and compares PRI outcomes with those observed in other programs.

### **1. Rates and Timing of Job Placement**

Two-thirds of all participants were placed in unsubsidized employment during their participation in PRI (Figure VI.1). This rate remains the same even when looking only at those unemployed at enrollment. Of those who were placed at least once, 23 percent received two placements, and 9 percent received three or more placements (Table VI.3). Grantee staff explained during site visit interviews that their initial goal was to help the participant find a job that was a good match based on skills and interest, could provide reasonable income and, if needed, could help the participant meet parole or probation requirements. All grantees also helped with additional placements if participants lost jobs or wanted to advance into better ones.

**Figure VI.1  
Rate of Job Placements Among All PRI Participants**



**Table VI.3  
Number and Timing of Job Placements**

	Percent of Participants Who Were Placed in Employment
<b>Number of Placements in Unsubsidized Employment</b>	
One	68.1
Two	22.8
Three or more	9.1
Average (number)	1.4
<b>Weeks from Enrollment to Initial Placement</b>	
Less than 2	32.0
2 to 3	19.0
4 to 5	11.8
6 to 11	17.8
12 or more	19.4
Average (weeks)	7.9
Left Initial Placement	45.7
<b>Number of Participants: 7,890</b>	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

Note: Data pertain only to those individuals who were enrolled at least three months prior to the final extract.

Over half of the participants were placed in unsubsidized employment within three weeks of PRI enrollment (Table VI.3). By contrast, about one-fifth of participants were not placed until 12 weeks or more after enrollment. These patterns likely reflect two phenomena. First, program designs varied in their emphasis on immediate unsubsidized employment. Second, the needs of the participants were both extensive and diverse, suggesting that a subset of participants may have required more assistance to prepare for the workforce before job placement. By comparison, the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that, among those receiving unemployment insurance benefits in 2006, the median number of weeks spent looking for work was 14.<sup>43</sup>

Among those PRI participants who were placed in employment, 46 percent left their initial placement by May 2008 (Table VI.3). These participants held their initial jobs for an average of 2.3 months (Table VI.4). In fact, many left their initial jobs shortly after obtaining them; over 40 percent worked for less than two weeks. In fact, over 5 percent left the job on the same day they were placed. Anecdotal evidence from site visits suggests that most participants who needed a subsequent placement lost their first job due to lack of motivation, truancy, or conflicts with employers. However, some sites also used seasonal or temporary employment as a job placement strategy. Among those who left their initial placement, grantees reported that 68 percent were placed in a second position.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2007/dec/wk4/art02.htm> accessed on August 19, 2008.

<sup>44</sup> While the majority of these re-placements appear to be sequential with the second job starting after the first job ended, a small proportion appear to be simultaneous with the participant working at both jobs at the same time.

**Table VI.4**  
**Tenure at Initial Job Placement and Job Replacement**

	Percent of Participants Who Left Initial Placement
Total Months at Initial Placement	
Less than 2	42.1
2 to 3	13.9
4 to 11	11.9
12 or more	1.1
Missing data	31.4
Average among those with non-missing data (months)	2.3
Placed in a Second Job	67.7
<b>Number of Participants: 3,578</b>	

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008.*

*Note: Data pertain only to those individuals who were enrolled at least three months prior to the final extract.*

## 2. Characteristics of Initial Job Placements

Participants who were placed in jobs typically worked full-time at 35 hours or more in their first week (Table VI.5). Starting wages ranged substantially, with nearly one-fifth of participants placed in jobs earning less than \$7.50 per hour and one-third placed in jobs earning \$10 or more per hour. The average hourly wage was \$9.29 per hour. At these wages and an average of 35.9 hours worked in the first week of employment, the average potential weekly earnings were estimated at \$334 per week (or \$17,343 per year). As a point of reference, the federal poverty line in 2006 was \$9,800 for a family of one in the continental US, \$13,200 for a family of two, and 16,600 for a family of three.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> <http://aspe.hhs.gov/POVERTY/06poverty.shtml>, accessed December 4, 2008.

**Table VI.5  
Characteristics of Job Placements**

	Percent of Participants Who Were Placed in Employment
<b>Hours Worked During First Full Week in Initial Placement</b>	
Less than 35	26.2
35 or more	73.9
Average	35.9
<b>Hourly Wage in Initial Placement</b>	
Less than \$7.50	19.3
\$7.50 to \$8.49	25.6
\$8.50 to \$9.99	22.2
\$10.00	13.7
\$10.01 to \$14.99	14.3
\$15.00 or over	4.9
Average (in dollars)	\$9.29
<b>Occupation of Initial Placement</b>	
Production	18.6
Food preparation and serving related	16.5
Construction and extraction	12.6
Sales and related	12.5
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	11.7
Installation, maintenance, and repair	7.5
Transportation and material moving	7.4
Office and administrative support	4.2
Personal care and service	3.1
Other	6.0

**Number of Participants: 7,890**

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

*Note: Data pertain only to those individuals who were enrolled at least three months prior to the final extract.*

Common occupations included production occupations, food preparation and services, construction, and sales. Among those with higher wages of over \$10 per hour, construction and extraction, production, installation, and building and grounds employment were common. Lower-paying jobs earning below \$7.50 per hour were more often in food preparation and service, production, and sales occupations.

Among the 10 percent of participants who were employed at enrollment, nearly 77 percent were placed in new jobs through the PRI program. These participants who were placed earned an average hourly wage of \$9.51 at their new jobs (compared to \$8.94 at enrollment) and worked an average of 37 hours per week (compared to only 35 hours at enrollment).

### 3. Subgroup Differences in Job Placement

A range of differences in job placements emerged from subgroup analyses (Table VI.6).

- ***Women earned lower wages than men.*** Similar to national trends, men and women were equally likely to be placed, but men earned higher wages at placement.
- ***Older participants had better employment outcomes than younger participants.*** Participants 35 years of age or older were more likely to be placed and earned more per hour than younger participants. They also worked slightly more hours per week (0.4 hours more) and worked longer before leaving their initial placements (1.1 weeks longer). As confirmed by the MIS, older participants have higher levels of education on average as well as stronger work histories prior to incarceration. The difference in outcomes between the two groups may also reflect the tendency of younger individuals to cycle in and out of jobs or participants' motivation to change. During site visit interviews, local staff across all sites described younger participants as being less motivated than older participants, who were often tired of cycling in and out of institutions and ready to make a serious change in life.
- ***Blacks had worse employment outcomes than participants of other races.*** Black participants were eight percentage points less likely to be placed in a job, earned less per hour, and worked fewer hours per week than participants of other races. They were also more likely to leave their initial placement (35 versus 27 percent). This finding is similar to national trends on the non-institutional population that show Blacks with lower employment rates than whites.<sup>46</sup>
- ***Participants released from Federal institutions had better employment outcomes.*** They were more likely to be placed, worked longer hours and were less likely to leave their jobs. According to MIS data, Federal prisoners had less extensive criminal histories and were less often released for convictions related to property offenses. Federal ex-offenders also had access to more extensive programming while incarcerated and were often required to participate in supervised release, which included living in a transitional facility. These factors likely positioned them for better labor market outcomes upon release. By

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<sup>46</sup> <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t02.htm> accessed on November 12, 2008.

contrast, grantee staff members reported, and the MIS data support the fact, that ex-offenders who enrolled in the program following stays in city or county jails tended to be younger, had more petty crime histories, received less programming while incarcerated, and were more prone to recidivate.

- ***Participants with a high school degree or GED had better employment outcomes.*** Compared to those without a degree, these participants were more likely to be placed, earned higher wages, worked more hours, and were less likely to leave their initial placement. Research has consistently shown the value of increased education on employment and earnings outcomes (Ehrenberg and Smith, 2000).
- ***Those on community supervision and those mandated to participate in PRI were more likely to be placed.*** This likely reflects community supervision requirements that parolees and probationers find employment quickly upon release.
- ***Those incarcerated for one or more years during their last incarceration were more likely to be placed in jobs.*** Local grantee staff reported that those released after long spells of incarceration were generally older and more ready to make a positive change in their lives. This may have motivated them to move more quickly into employment.
- ***Larger grantees placed higher percentages of participants in jobs.*** This could reflect the fact that larger organizations had more experience working with government contracts and, therefore, were more likely both to have job development and placement services in place prior to the demonstration and to enter data in the MIS.

**Table VI.6  
Subgroup Differences in Job Placements**

	Placed in Employment		Wages at Initial Placement	
	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Average Hourly Wage	Number of Participants
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	65.5	9,154	\$9.52	5,954
Female	67.1	2,821	\$8.55	1,884
Difference	-1.6		\$0.96	
<b>Age</b>				
Less than 35 years	63.5	5,587	\$9.07	3,521
35 or more years	68.0	6,385	\$9.46	4,314
Difference	-4.5		-\$0.39	
<b>Race</b>				
Black	63.4	6,826	\$9.07	4,309
Non-Black	71.4	3,895	\$9.62	2,767
Difference	-7.9		-\$0.55	
<b>Type of Incarceration Facility</b>				
Federal	81.8	1,034	\$9.25	840
State and local	64.4	10,941	\$9.29	6,998
Difference	17.4		-\$0.04	
<b>Had High School Diploma, GED or Higher at Enrollment</b>				
Yes	69.8	5,115	\$9.08	3,136
No	61.8	6,512	\$9.42	4,515
Difference	8.0		-\$0.34	
<b>On Community Supervision at Enrollment</b>				
Yes	66.7	10,227	\$9.29	6,782
No	61.5	1,729	\$9.24	1,054
Difference	5.3		\$0.05	
<b>Mandated to Participate</b>				
Yes	71.8	982	\$9.56	700
No	65.4	10,211	\$9.24	6,633
Difference	6.4		\$0.32	
<b>Length of Most Recent Incarceration</b>				
Less than one year	61.5	5,398	\$9.25	3,303
One year or more	70.9	5,750	\$9.27	4,049
Difference	-9.4		-\$0.03	
<b>Employed at Enrollment</b>				
Yes	76.7	1,242	\$9.51	942
No	64.7	10,717	\$9.26	6,896
Difference	12.0		\$0.26	
<b>Size of Grantees' Annual Budget Prior to PRI</b>				
Less than \$1 million	59.0	2,376	\$9.57	1,396
\$1 million or more	67.6	9,599	\$9.23	6,442
Difference	-8.6		\$0.35	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

Notes: Data pertain only to those individuals who were enrolled at least three months prior to the final extract.



#### 4. Comparisons with Other Re-entry Initiatives

To provide context for the employment rates observed among the PRI population, the findings were compared to those of other re-entry initiatives. The Ready4Work (R4W) initiative and the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) provide reasonable bases for comparison, although both projects served different groups of ex-offenders than PRI. R4W served non-violent felony ex-offenders between the ages of 18 to 34 years who were enrolled within 90 days of release. The services offered through R4W were similar to PRI, although the R4W interventions lasted an average of eight months compared to five months in PRI. While participating in R4W, about 56 percent of ex-offenders were reported to have held a job (Farley and McClanahan, 2007). Among those PRI participants who were less than 35 years of age at enrollment, the job placement rate was 63 percent, or 7 percentage points higher. While it is difficult to ascertain the reasons for this difference, R4W appears to involve more intensive pre-employment services that extend for a longer period of time, possibly delaying entry into jobs.

SVORI provided both pre- and post-release program components that focused on employment, community integration, substance use, and mental health treatment (Lattimore, 2007). Using a matched comparison group design, the evaluation found that 75 percent of SVORI participants were employed within three months after enrollment at an average hourly wage of \$9.57, compared to 73 percent of non-SVORI sample members with an average wage of \$9.33 (Lattimore and Steffey, 2006). Several factors may explain these higher employment rates. SVORI sample members were interviewed through a survey with formal tracking procedures, resulting in higher response rates than those obtained by the PRI grantees. Differences in the characteristics and the motivation of the participants in the two studies, including the type of

most recent offense, length of incarceration, type of incarceration facilities, and access to programming while incarcerated, may have influenced outcomes.

### **C. Post-Exit Employment**

While initial job placement is one indicator of participant success, DOL also required grantees to assess employment patterns after participants exited from the program. These post-exit measures begin to reveal how participants fare after they are no longer receiving services.

#### **1. Employment in the Three Quarters After Program Exit**

About half of PRI participants who had exited the program and completed the first calendar quarter after exit were employed for at least one day during that first post-exit quarter (Table VI.7). This represents the most conservative estimate—or lower bound—because it assumes that all participants without a follow-up record were unemployed. Among those who had a follow-up record, grantees reported that 82 percent were employed in this first quarter. This likely represents an upper bound, as it assumes that those with missing data have rates of employment that are comparable to those with non-missing data. This is unlikely, given differences in the characteristics of participants that grantees were and were not able to track over time. When restricting the analysis only to those participants who were unemployed at enrollment, and excluding those who exited the PRI demonstration for such reasons as illness or death, the proportion employed in the first quarter after exit drops to 48 percent.<sup>47</sup> Grantees did not collect information on wage rates, hours worked, or the types of jobs obtained during this first quarter.

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<sup>47</sup> This represents the “entered employment rate” used for grantee performance measurement.

**Table VI.7  
Employment Outcomes After Exit**

	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants
Employed in First Quarter After Exit Among All Those Who Completed the First Quarter After Exit <sup>a</sup>	49.6	9,671
Employed in First Quarter After Exit Among Those With a First Quarter Followup Record <sup>b</sup>	82.0	5,847
Employed in Second Quarter After Exit Among All Those Who Completed the Second Quarter After Exit <sup>a</sup>	41.8	8,135
Employed in Second Quarter After Exit Among Those With a Second Quarter Followup Record <sup>b</sup>	78.9	4,316
Employed in Third Quarter After Exit Among All Those Who Completed the Third Quarter After Exit <sup>a</sup>	38.5	6,319
Employed in Third Quarter After Exit Among Those With a Third Quarter Followup Record <sup>b</sup>	78.3	3,111
Employed in All Three Quarters After Exit Among Those Who Were Employed in the First Quarter After Exit <sup>b</sup>	65.0	3,139

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

*Notes: Data pertain only to those individuals who exited from PRI as a result of not having services for 90 days. Employment is defined as holding a job for at least one day during the specified quarter.*

<sup>a</sup>*Assumes that those without a follow-up record were not employed*

<sup>b</sup>*Includes only those who had a follow-up record for the appropriate benchmark*

The employment rate among exiters reaching the second and third quarter benchmarks dropped to 42 and 39 percent, respectively, assuming that participants with missing records were unemployed. This lower proportion could be largely due to grantees' difficulty tracking participants over time. However, the employment percentage among those with a record also dropped slightly to 79 and 78 percent in those respective quarters. When restricting the sample only to those participants who were employed in the first quarter after exit and who completed the second and third quarter benchmarks, 65 percent retained employment for at least one day in

all three quarters after exit. This percentage drops slightly to 63 percent when further restricting the sample to exclude those who were employed at enrollment or exited due to illness or death.<sup>48</sup>

Grantees were required to record information on the wages and hours that participants worked during the second and third quarters after exit. Most participants worked a full-time schedule of more than 35 hours per week (Table VI.8). Those with jobs in the second and third quarters after exit earned an average of \$10.15 and \$10.44 per hour, respectively.

**Table VI.8**  
**Characteristics of Jobs Held in Second and Third Quarters After Exit**

	Percent of Participants Who Were Employed in 2nd Quarter After Exit	Percent of Participants Who Were Employed in the 3rd Quarter After Exit
Hourly Wage		
Less than \$7.50	10.8	8.9
\$7.50 to \$8.49	18.3	15.8
\$8.50 to \$9.99	24.6	25.3
\$10.00	16.0	16.0
\$10.01 to \$14.99	22.4	24.9
\$15.00 or over	7.9	9.1
Average (dollars)	\$10.15	\$10.44
Number of Hours Worked During First Week		
Less than 35	12.6	11.7
35 or more	87.4	88.3
Average (hours)	38.4	38.5
<b>Number of Participants: 3,363 and 2,404, respectively</b>		

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

*Note: Data pertain only to those individuals who exited from PRI as a result of not having services for 90 days.*

<sup>48</sup> This represents the “employment retention rate” used for grantee performance measurement.

## 2. Subgroup Differences in Post-Exit Employment

Subgroup patterns in post-exit employment were very similar to those of initial job placements (Table VI.9). One interesting exception is that women were more likely than men to be employed in the second and third quarter after exit. While this may suggest that women have higher employment retention rates, analysis suggests that grantees success in tracking women over time drives the difference. While not shown in Table VI.9, participants with wages greater than \$8.50 at initial placement were also more likely to be employed after exit than those earning lower wages (74 versus 66 percent, respectively). In this case, however, the finding persists even when restricting the analysis to those with valid outcome records, suggesting higher retention rates among better paying jobs over time.

Table VI.9 also presents differences based on the five grantees who reported data for a larger proportion of their clients. As discussed earlier, these grantees were able to collect data on 85 percent of exiters during the first quarter after exit, compared to only 57 percent across the remaining 25 grantees. The five grantees performed better on employment rates in all three quarters. Because these grantees had fewer missing records, a lower proportion of their participants were imputed as zeros due to missing data. It may be that a proportion of those participants with missing data from the 25 remaining sites were indeed employed, resulting in underestimates due to these imputation methods. Alternatively, these five grantees could simply be placing larger proportions of clients in employment through their services or as a result of the local economic conditions.

**Table VI.9  
Subgroup Differences in Post-exit Employment**

	Employed in 1st Quarter After Exit		Employed in 2nd Quarter After Exit		Employed in 3rd Quarter After Exit	
	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	49.3	7,439	41.0	6,247	37.7	4,892
Female	50.5	2,232	44.8	1,888	41.5	1,427
Difference	-1.2		-3.8		-3.8	
<b>Age</b>						
Less than 35 years	46.3	4,527	38.3	3,835	34.1	2,957
35 or more years	52.5	5,142	45.0	4,298	42.4	3,361
Difference	-6.2		-6.7		-8.3	
<b>Race</b>						
Black	45.3	5,605	37.1	4,715	35.2	3,621
Non-Black	58.9	3,094	51.0	2,616	46.3	2,069
Difference	-13.5		-13.9		-11.0	
<b>Type of Incarceration Facility</b>						
Federal	72.3	835	66.5	716	62.4	590
State and local	47.5	8,836	39.5	7,419	36.1	5,729
Difference	24.9		27.0		26.3	
<b>Had High School Diploma, GED or Higher at Enrollment</b>						
Yes	54.2	5,169	46.2	4,353	43.1	3,364
No	44.7	4,220	36.9	3,556	33.3	2,783
Difference	9.5		9.3		9.8	
<b>On Community Supervision at Enrollment</b>						
Yes	50.2	8,223	42.5	6,940	39.1	5,448
No	46.5	1,433	38.3	1,185	35.5	864
Difference	3.8		4.2		3.5	
<b>Mandated to Participate</b>						
Yes	57.0	714	50.2	624	50.2	538
No	48.8	8,293	41.0	6,965	37.7	5,374
Difference	8.2		9.2		12.5	
<b>Length of Most Recent Incarceration</b>						
Less than one year	46.0	4,322	39.2	3,598	36.0	2,778
One year or more	54.2	4,662	45.7	3,937	42.4	3,021
Difference	-8.1		-6.5		-6.4	
<b>Employed at Enrollment</b>						
Yes	64.6	1,030	57.7	936	52.4	760
No	47.9	8,629	39.8	7,192	36.7	5,555
Difference	16.8		17.9		15.7	
<b>Size of Grantees' Annual Budget Prior to PRI</b>						
Less than \$1 million	38.9	1,916	33.6	1,620	29.2	1,337
\$1 million or more	52.3	7,755	43.9	6,515	41.1	4,982
Difference	-13.4		-10.3		-11.9	
<b>Grantees with Greater Success Tracking Participants</b>						
Yes	64.5	1,320	55.3	1,157	52.7	974
No	47.2	8,351	39.6	6,978	36.0	5,345
Difference	17.3		15.7		16.7	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

## **D. Recidivism at One Year After Release**

Reducing recidivism is one of the primary goals of the PRI demonstration. Grantees therefore tracked participants' interactions with the criminal justice system for the first year after their release from incarceration. This section discusses the rates and timing of re-arrests, the number and types of criminal incidents, and the conviction and reincarceration rates based on the data recorded in the MIS. While DOL required grantees to verify and document that participants were not re-arrested before entering data into the MIS, site visits revealed that some grantee staff used a "no news is good news" approach by recording that participants had not recidivated, even if they were not able to verify the outcome. Therefore, findings on recidivism should be interpreted with caution.

### **1. Rates and Timing of Re-arrest**

The proportion of PRI participants with no criminal justice involvement during one year after release ranged between 70 and 82 percent, depending how missing records are treated. About 12 percent of participants who reached the one year post-release benchmark were missing outcome data in the MIS. Those with missing re-arrest records are more likely, at enrollment, to be under 35 years of age, unemployed, and in unstable housing; however, the magnitude of these differences is much smaller than differences in post-exit employment measures. Table VI.10 presents ranges that assume that participants with missing data either did or did not recidivate.

**Table VI.10**  
**Recidivism Rates At One Year After Release With Various Missing Data Assumptions**

	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants
No Criminal Justice Involvement in the Year After Release		
Based on only those who had a recidivism record	79.2	6,830
Assuming those with missing records had recidivated	69.6	7,767
Assuming those with missing records had not recidivated	81.7	7,767
Re-arrested for New Crime in the Year After Release		
Based on only those who had a recidivism record	7.5	6,830
Assuming those with missing records had not recidivated	6.6	7,767
Assuming those with missing records had recidivated	18.7	7,767
Reincarcerated for Revocation of Probation or Parole in the Year After Release		
Based on only those who had a recidivism record	8.6	6,830
Assuming those with missing records had not recidivated	7.5	7,767
Assuming those with missing records had recidivated	19.6	7,767

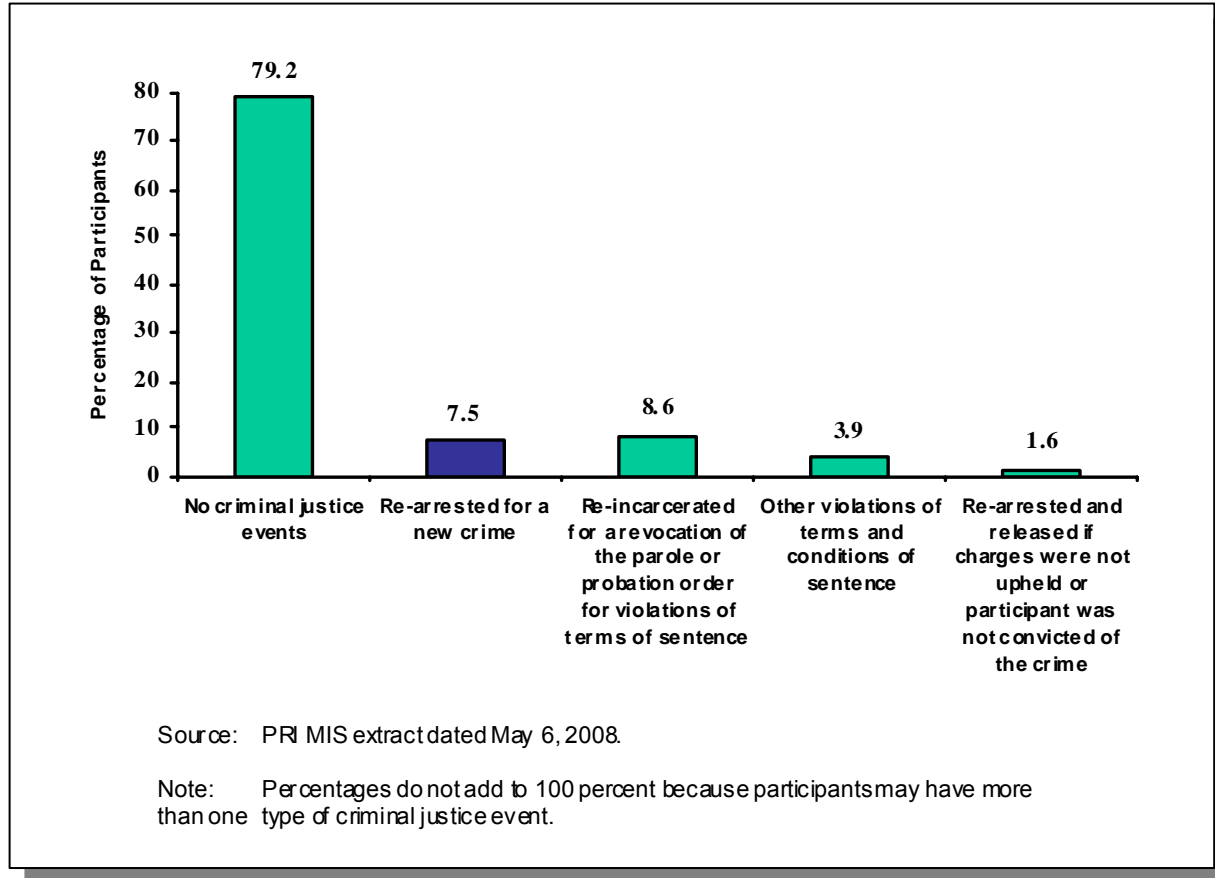
Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008.

Note: Data pertain only to those individuals who reached 12 months after their release from incarceration. Data were missing for 12 percent of these participants.

The proportion re-arrested for a new crime ranges between 7 and 19 percent, and the proportion reincarcerated for revocation of parole or probation ranges from 8 percent to 20 percent. Using only data for those participants who had a valid arrest outcome record in the MIS, in the most optimistic case, a majority of PRI participants (79 percent) stayed free of the criminal justice system during the first year after their release from incarceration. Grantees reported that 8 percent of participants who reached one year after release were re-arrested for a new crime, and 9 percent were reincarcerated for a revocation of parole or probation (Figure VI.2). An additional 4 percent had other violations of the terms and conditions of their release that did not result in incarceration, and 2 percent were re-arrested and released without further charges. Grantees reported that the vast majority of those who recidivated had only one re-arrest or violation during the 12 months after release (Table VI.11).



**Figure VI.2  
Recidivism Rates at One Year After Release**



**Table VI.11  
Criminal Justice Activity During The Year After Release**

	Percent of Participants Who Reached One Year After Release
Number of Re-arrests for New Crimes	
0	92.5
1	7.3
More than 1	0.3
Number of Re-incarcerations for Revocation of Parole or Probation	
0	91.5
1	8.3
More than 1	0.3
Number of Other Violations	
0	96.1
1	3.7
More than 1	0.2

**Number of Participants: 6,830**

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

**Table VI.12**  
**Characteristics of Re-arrests Within One Year After Release**

	Percent of Participants Who Were Re-arrested for New Crime or Reincarcerated for Technical Violation
<b>Months Between Release and First Re-arrest or Revocation of Parole or Probation</b>	
Less than 3	14.8
3 to 5	32.4
6 to 8	30.7
9 to 12	22.1
Average (months)	6.3
<b>Months Between PRI Enrollment and First Re-arrest or Revocation of Parole or Probation</b>	
Less than 2	22.1
2 to 3	26.2
4 to 5	20.4
6 to 8	22.7
9 or more	8.5
Average (months)	4.5
<b>Most Serious Charge For Those Re-arrested for New Crime</b>	
Drug possession	29.2
Theft	11.4
Assault or battery	7.4
Drug dealing	7.2
Burglary	6.9
Firearms or weapons possession	4.5
Robbery—person	3.7
Car theft	3.0
Public order offenses	3.0
Forgery or fraud	2.0
Robbery—business	1.2
Driving under the influence	1.0
Other offenses	19.6

**Number of Participants: 515**

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

Grantees reported an average of six months between participants' release from incarceration and their first re-arrest or technical violation of probation or parole (Table VI.12). Those who recidivated did so on average about 4.5 months after their enrollment in the PRI program. While a small fraction were re-arrested or had a technical violation during PRI participation (17 percent of all re-arrests and violations), most recidivism occurred after

participants had exited from the program. While it is possible that some of these re-arrests and violations were causing participants to drop out of PRI services, most participants (59 percent) were re-arrested or had a technical violation more than three months after exit, suggesting that they had already exited the program because they were no longer receiving services.

The most serious charge for participants who were re-arrested for a new crime involved drug possession, followed by theft, assault or battery, drug dealing, and burglary.<sup>49</sup> These patterns follow fairly closely those of the crimes for which participants were most recently released from prison, with a slight increase in the prevalence of theft.

## 2. Rates of Conviction and Incarceration for New Crimes

Data on convictions and incarcerations for new crimes are less complete than information on re-arrests. Grantees reported conviction data for 59 percent of the 515 participants who were reported to be arrested for a new crime. The disposition of some new crimes may not have been finalized, or some participants may have been re-incarcerated on a technical violation as a result of the new criminal charge, without an official court conviction. Of the 308 participants for whom conviction data were available, 68 percent were convicted of a new crime.

The MIS contained data on incarceration for new crimes for 93 percent of the same 515 participants. Among those participants, 31 percent were reported as incarcerated for a new crime. When reported as a percentage of all PRI participants who reached one year after release, 2.7 percent were convicted of and 1.9 percent were incarcerated for a new crime.

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<sup>49</sup> The MIS did not allow sites to record all charges, but rather asked only for the most serious charge.

**Table VI.13**  
**Summary Measure of Participants' Short-term Success**

	Percent of Participants
<b>Status Among Those Who Reached One Year After Release</b>	
Placed in employment during PRI participation and not recidivated <sup>a</sup>	51.1
Placed in employment during PRI participation and recidivated	11.3
Not placed in employment and not recidivated	18.4
Not placed in employment and recidivated	7.0
Missing data	12.2

**Number of Participants: 7,767**

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

<sup>a</sup> Recidivated is defined as having been re-arrested for a new crime or reincarcerated for a technical violation of parole or probation.

### 3. Relationship Between Job Placement and Recidivism

Table VI.13 explores the relationship between employment placement and recidivism. In particular, 51 percent of participants who reached one year after release both had been placed in unsubsidized employment and had not been re-arrested for a new crime or re-incarcerated for a revocation. This may suggest that participants who are highly motivated to succeed and seek jobs also work hard to remain free of the criminal justice system.

### 4. Subgroup Differences in Recidivism

Differences in recidivism rates appeared for a wide range of subgroups (Table VI.14).

- ***Subgroup findings based on participants' demographic characteristics mimic national patterns of recidivism.*** Similar to national trends in recidivism (Langan and Levin, 2002), PRI participants who were male, younger than 35 years of age, and Black were more likely to recidivate than female, older, and non-Black participants.
- ***Those released from Federal prison were less likely to be re-arrested for a new crime than those released from state and local prisons.*** As discussed earlier, the backgrounds of ex-offenders released from Federal institutions and the availability of services during incarceration may better position them for successful reintegration.

- *As expected, those on community supervision at enrollment were more likely to be re-incarcerated for a technical violation.* This likely results from errors in data entry by grantee staff. Participants' supervision status may have been recorded incorrectly; participants may have been re-arrested for new crimes, and grantees improperly coded the event; or participants could have been picked up on outstanding warrants.
- *Interestingly, those mandated to participate in PRI were more likely than those who participated voluntarily to be re-arrested for a new crime.* This could reflect the fact that those who participate voluntarily actively seek to change their lives and remain free of crime. Those who are mandated may be less committed to such change.
- *Participants at the five grantees that reported outcomes data for higher proportions of clients were more likely to recidivate.* This holds true for both re-arrests for new crimes and re-incarcerations due to technical violations. These grantees entered data on 97 percent of participants who reached one year after release, compared to 86 percent among the remaining 25 grantees. These differences suggest that the actual recidivism rate among all participants is higher than the rate derived from participants for whom data are available.

**Table VI.14**  
**Subgroup Differences in Recidivism**

	Re-arrested for a New Crime	Reincarcerated for a Technical Violation	Number of Participants
	Percent of Participants	Percent of Participants	
Gender			
Male	8.6	9.1	5,214
Female	4.2	6.9	1,616
Difference	4.5	2.2	
Age			
Less than 35 years	8.6	9.4	3,096
35 or more years	6.7	7.9	3,733
Difference	1.9	1.5	
Race			
Black	8.5	9.0	3,858
Non-Black	5.5	8.0	2,263
Difference	3.0	1.0	
Type of Incarceration Facility			
Federal	2.2	5.9	589
State	7.7	9.9	4,517
Local	8.6	6.0	1,557
Difference	-5.8	-2.9	
Had High School Diploma, GED or Higher at Enrollment			
Yes	6.9	9.7	3,031
No	8.2	7.7	3,641
Difference	1.3	2.0	
On Community Supervision at Enrollment			
Yes	7.3	9.2	5,899
No	8.9	4.3	929
Difference	-1.6	4.9	

**Table VI.14  
Subgroup Differences in Recidivism**

	Re-arrested for a New Crime <hr/> Percent of Participants	Reincarcerated for a Technical Violation <hr/> Percent of Participants	Number of Participants
Mandated to Participate			
Yes	10.1	8.3	616
No	7.1	8.5	5,826
Difference	3.0	-0.2	
Months from Release to PRI Enrollment			
Less than one month	8.8	10.3	2,909
One month or more	6.6	7.2	3,921
Difference	2.2	3.1	
Length of Most Recent Incarceration			
Less than one year	8.6	7.7	3,075
One year or more	6.8	9.2	3,280
Difference	1.8	-1.4	
Grantees with Greater Success Tracking Participants			
Yes	9.9	9.8	1,148
No	7.0	8.3	5,682
Difference	2.9	1.5	
Grantees with Prior Experience Serving Ex-Offenders			
Yes	8.1	8.0	5,101
No	5.8	10.2	1,729
Difference	2.3	-2.3	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

## 5. Comparisons with Other Ex-Offender Populations

PRI recidivism rates based on MIS data are substantially lower than national statistics reported by the BJS and rates found in other evaluations of prisoner re-entry programs. While comparable statistics are not available for all states where grantees were located, comparisons with some state-level statistics suggest more mixed results.

According to the BJS study of individuals released from state prisons in 15 states in 1994, 44 percent were re-arrested for a new crime within one year of release, 22 percent were reconvicted of a new crime, and 10 percent were returned to prison with a new sentence (Langan and Levin, 2002). Comparable statistics for the PRI population show that 8 percent were arrested for a new crime within one year of release, 3 percent convicted for a new crime, and 2 percent returned to prison with a new sentence. The population studied by BJS has a higher proportion of

men and also includes both violent and non-violent ex-offenders, which could influence differences in recidivism rates. The evaluation of R4W found that 6.9 percent of participants were sent to state prison for new offenses within one year of release, a rate nearly three times higher than the PRI rate of 2.3 percent when restricting the sample to those participants under the age of 35. Again, differences in the characteristics of participants served by the two programs may contribute to these findings.<sup>50</sup>

BJS statistics show that 42 percent of state parolees released in 2000 returned to prison or jail prior to successfully completing their parole (Glaze, 2003). By contrast, about 25 percent of Federal prisoners released under community supervision in 1996 unsuccessfully terminated their supervision due to technical violations, new offenses, drug use, and fugitive status (Adams, Roth, and Scalia, 1998). These patterns highlight the differences among state and Federal inmates that are reflected in the PRI subgroup findings. However, the national statistics are still substantially higher than rates observed during the one-year follow-up in PRI.

A search of recidivism data on state DOC websites provides mixed results when comparing PRI recidivism rates with state-wide statistics. For example, the state of California reports that between 38 and 43 percent of felons released on parole between the years of 1998 and 2005 were reincarcerated within one year of release.<sup>51</sup> The four PRI grantees in California collectively reported much lower rates, with 7 percent of their participants committing technical violations and another 2 percent being incarcerated for new crimes. By contrast, the PRI grantees

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<sup>50</sup> The R4W population was 81 percent male and 78 percent Black compared to the PRI population which was 77 percent male and 64 percent Black. Statistics show that males and Blacks are more likely to recidivate than females and non-Blacks. In addition, all R4W participants had to be enrolled within 90 days of release, but 26 percent of the PRI participants enrolled more than 90 days after release. As shown in the PRI data, those with less time between release from incarceration and PRI enrollment were more likely to recidivate.

<sup>51</sup> [http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports\\_Research/Offender\\_Information\\_Services\\_Branch](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/Offender_Information_Services_Branch) accessed on August 19, 2008.

in New York reported recidivism rates that were very close to state-wide statistics. Eighteen percent of prisoners released in New York State in 2002 were re-incarcerated for either new crimes or parole violations within one year of release.<sup>52</sup> The two PRI grantees reported that 16 percent of participants had technical violations, and 2 percent were incarcerated for new crimes.

## **E. Educational Attainment**

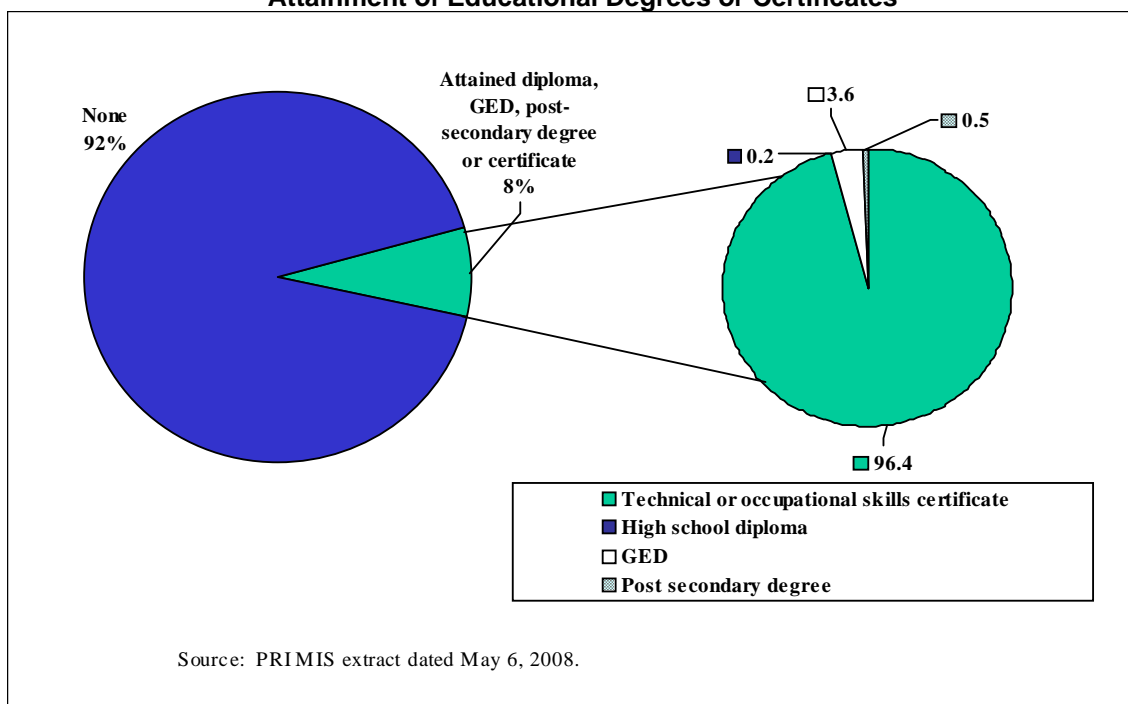
Given that PRI participants had low levels of education and few occupational skills, one of the goals of the initiative was to assess participants' needs and provide the educational services required to prepare them for the workforce. While over a quarter of PRI participants were recorded as having received some educational or training services, only 8 percent attained educational degrees or credentials (Figure VI.3). Of those participants, the vast majority (96 percent) received vocational certifications. Common certificates included Occupational Safety and Health Administration certification, Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard certification, and certificates for forklift operation, CPR and respirator use, basic computer and office skills, CDL, and security guards. Some sites also recorded when participants received certificates of recognition for completing job readiness training. Very small numbers of participants received a high school diploma, GED certificate, or post-secondary degree. Local staff reported that few participants had the time or interest in attending educational classes. Most were required through parole or probation to obtain employment very quickly after their release from jail or prison. Even those with no employment requirements often sought employment quickly to earn income to survive.

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<sup>52</sup> [http://www.docs.state.ny.us/Research/Reports/2007/2002\\_Releases\\_3YR\\_OUT.pdf](http://www.docs.state.ny.us/Research/Reports/2007/2002_Releases_3YR_OUT.pdf) accessed on August 19, 2008.



**Figure VI.3**  
**Attainment of Educational Degrees or Certificates**



Grantee staff explained that, once they were working, participants generally found it difficult to participate in classes in their free time. Class schedules often did not align with participants' work schedules, or participants felt overcommitted because of other responsibilities to their families and community supervision.

To help overcome some of these barriers, grantees began moving participants into educational services more quickly as the demonstration matured. Among those who entered educational programs, participants enrolled in PRI between November 2005 and October 2006 moved into educational services after about 13 weeks, compared to 7 weeks for those enrolled between November 2006 and October 2007 and only 3.5 weeks for those enrolled between November 2007 and May 2008. Across this entire period, participants entered their first

certification program an average of eight weeks after their PRI enrollment, and the first educational programs lasted an average of five weeks (Table VI.15).<sup>53</sup>

## **F. Substance Abuse and Housing Status**

A large proportion of returning ex-offenders have a history of substance abuse, and many return to their communities with no stable place to live. To provide additional proxies for participants' short-term successes in overcoming key barriers after release from incarceration, grantees were asked to contact participants at six months after enrollment to record any abuse of alcohol and drugs and capture their current housing status. While some PRI grantees had access to drug testing results, most relied on self-reports of alcohol and drug abuse. Research shows that individuals tend to underreport their drug use during in-person and telephone surveys, compared to results from biological testing through urinalysis, blood, or hair tests (Feuscht and Stephens, 1994; Knight et al., 1998; Fendrich et al., 1999; Dowling-Guyer et al., 1994; Schochet et al., 2001; Magura and Kang, 1997; Hser, 1999; and Lu, 2001). In some instances, PRI participants may have been unwilling to admit drug and alcohol abuse to grantee staff due to stigma or fear of jeopardizing their participation in the program. As a result, underreporting is suspected.

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<sup>53</sup> Subgroup differences in educational attainment are presented in Appendix B.

**Table VI.15  
Number and Timing of Educational Credential Attainment**

	Percent of Participants Who Attained an Educational Credential
<b>Number of Degrees or Certifications</b>	
One	92.0
Two	6.7
Three or more	1.3
<b>Weeks Between Enrollment and Start of First Degree or Certificate Program</b>	
Less than one	31.1
One to two	21.0
Three to five	11.8
Six or more	36.1
Average (weeks)	8.3
<b>Length of First Degree or Certificate Program in Weeks</b>	
Less than one	51.5
One to two	11.0
Three to five	10.2
Six or more	27.3
Average (weeks)	5.1
<b>Number of Participants: 953</b>	

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

*Note: Data pertain only to those individuals who were enrolled at least three months prior to the final extract.*

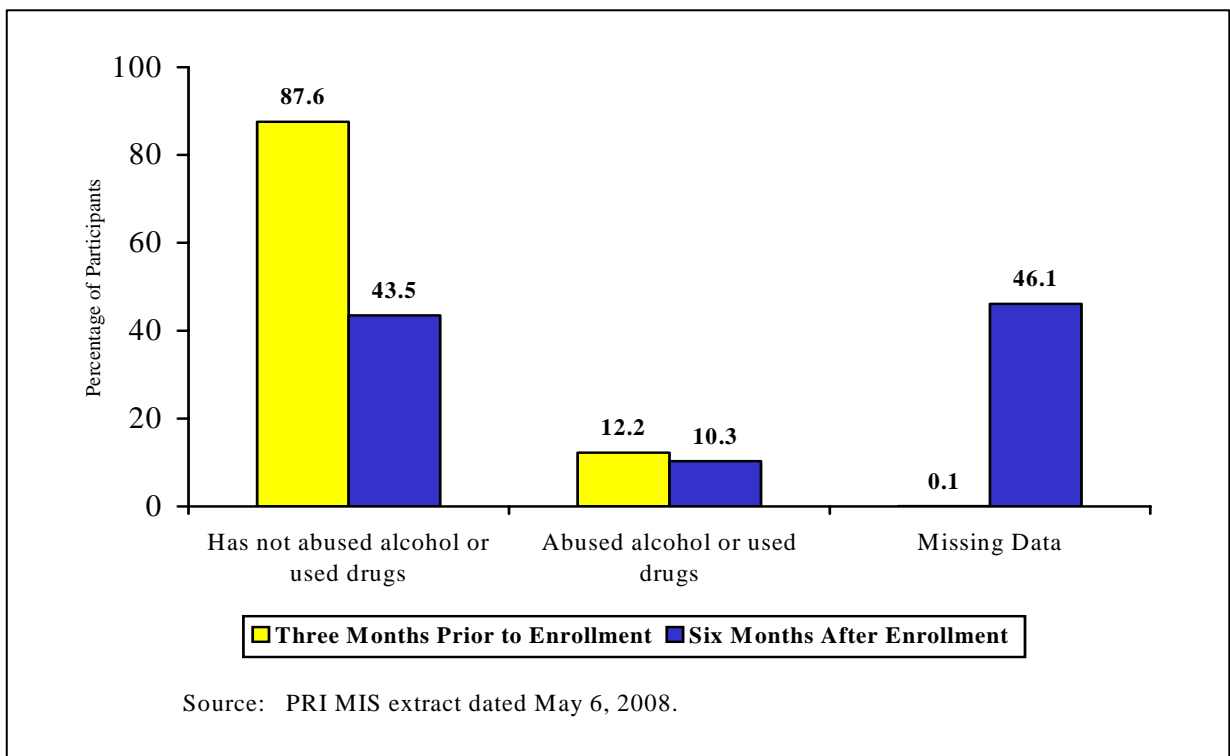
### 1. Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the Six Months After Enrollment

Among those enrolled in PRI for at least six months by May 2008, 44 percent reported not using illegal drugs or abusing alcohol since enrollment, 8 percent reported occasional use, and 2 percent reported regular use (Figure VI.4). Grantees were unable to obtain data for the remaining 46 percent of participants. The proportion of participants reported as using any substances dropped slightly from 12.2 percent at enrollment to 10.3 percent at six months after release from jail or prison. Those who reported using drugs prior to enrollment in the program were more likely to report continued use during the six months after enrollment, although 77 percent reported not using at all. Five percent of prior users reported regular use and 18 percent reporting occasional use after enrollment. Among those who reported at enrollment that they had

not used drugs in the three months prior to enrollment and incarceration, only 1 percent reported regular drug or alcohol abuse and 6 percent reported occasional use at the six-month follow-up.

There are large amounts of missing data at the six-month assessment compared to the data gathered at the time of enrollment, and even though the data do not appear biased toward those who were regular users prior to enrollment, it is still not possible to determine the outcomes of large proportions of participants. For those who reported using after release but before PRI enrollment, there is possibly an “Ashenfelter dip,” where someone hits rock bottom before he or she chooses to get help and self-select into PRI. In this case, the participant’s drug use would likely drop even in the absence of PRI participation.

**Figure VI.4**  
**SUBSTANCE ABUSE AT SIX MONTHS AFTER ENROLLMENT**

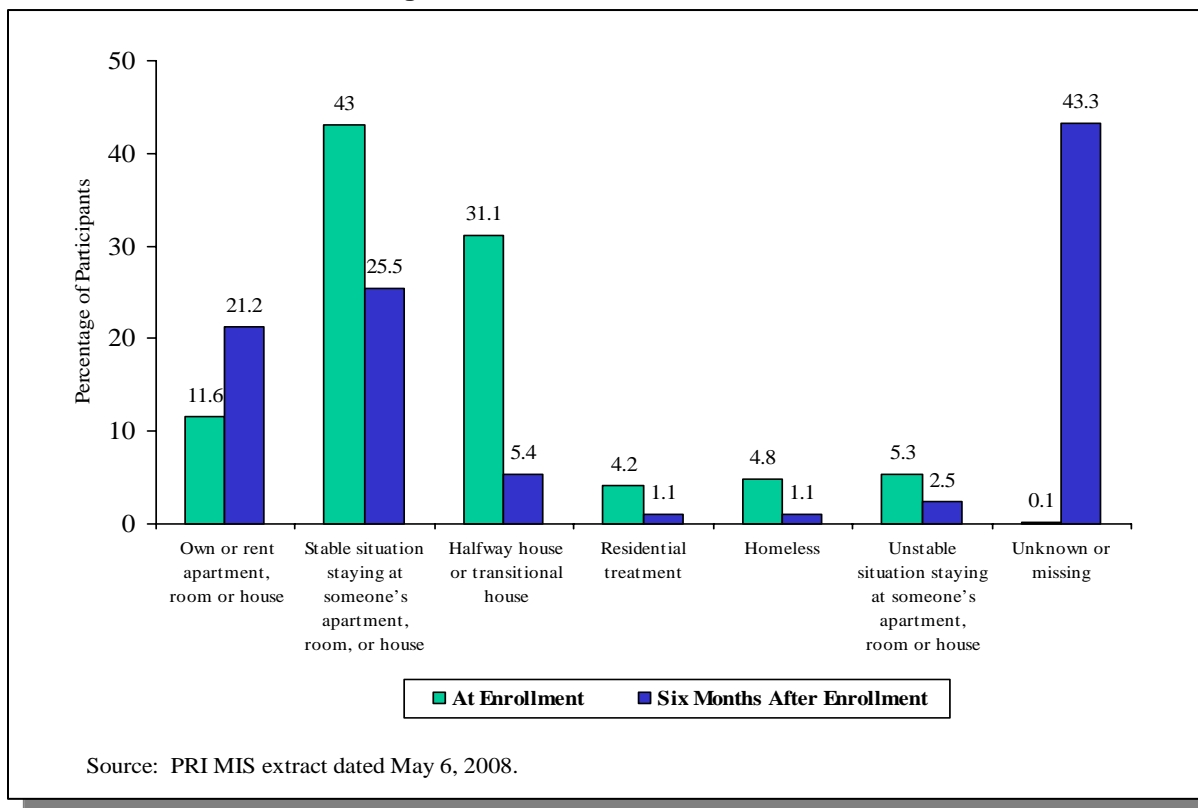


The evaluation of SVORI found somewhat higher rates of alcohol and drug use after enrollment. At three months after enrollment, 19 percent of SVORI participants reported using drugs within the past 30 days, compared to 23 percent among non-SVORI respondents (Lattimore, 2007). It is hard to assess whether these higher rates are due to the differences in the populations served or the data collection procedures.

## 2. Housing at Six Months After Enrollment

The MIS reveals a shift over time toward participant ownership or rental of their own apartment, room, or house. In particular, 21 percent of participants were reported to own or rent at six months after enrollment, compared to only 12 percent at enrollment (Figure VI.5). Another 26 percent were living in stable housing arrangements with family or friends at the six-month benchmark. Given the timing of when participants enrolled, it was not surprising that a substantial number were initially unable to own or rent housing due to lack of income or were in transitional housing, which by its nature is temporary. Among those who were in transitional housing, residential treatment, or unstable situations at enrollment, 40 percent were reported to own or rent their housing or be living in a stable situation with family or friends at six months after enrollment. By contrast, 27 percent of those who were living in a stable situation at enrollment ended up shifting into transitional housing, residential treatment, or unstable housing. These proportions are relatively comparable to those found in the evaluation of SVORI. Among the SVORI research sample, about a quarter reported living in their own place at three months after release, 1 percent were homeless, and most of the remainder reported living with relatives (Lattimore and Steffey, 2006).

**Figure VI.5  
Housing Status at Six Months After Enrollment**



Those who were placed in jobs through PRI appear more likely to have been in stable housing at the six-month benchmark. In particular, among those who were in unstable housing at enrollment, 47 percent who were placed in jobs were in stable housing six months later. By contrast, only 21 percent of those who were not placed in jobs moved into stable housing. Those who were in stable living arrangements at enrollment were also more likely to stay in stable housing if they were placed in a job (62 percent among those placed in employment versus 34 percent among those not placed). This may be partially because those who were placed in jobs also had fewer missing records, given their continued contact with the PRI staff.

## **G. Relationship Between Services and Short-Term Outcomes**

To assess the relationship between the receipt of PRI services and the participants' key outcomes, an additional set of subgroup analyses explored whether individuals who participated for longer periods of time, received more services, or participated in specific types of services had better or worse outcomes. Relationships identified through these analyses do not imply causal relationships. Individuals who chose to participate in various program services were likely to be systematically different from the participants who do not participate in the service. The facts that participants have complex needs and many factors influence their eventual success suggest that these simple measures have only minimal predictive power of participant outcomes. In addition, grantees had much greater success tracking and recording outcomes for those participants who continued to be involved in the program than those who dropped out.

With these caveats in mind, the subgroup analyses showed positive relationships between a range of different participation measures and both employment placement and recidivism (Tables VI.16 and VI.17).<sup>54</sup> Those who participated for longer periods of time (16 weeks or more) and received more services (5 or more services) were 20 and 17 percentage points more likely to be placed in a job than those that participated for shorter periods or received fewer services, respectively. Those that participated in all major categories of service, subcategories of workforce preparation services, and vocational or occupational skills training were also more likely to be placed. These general patterns also hold true for employment after exit. Results on hourly wage rates at initial job placement were less consistent.

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<sup>54</sup> Results of statistical tests on service subgroups are presented in Appendix C.

**Table VI.16  
Differences in Job Placements Based on Service Receipt**

	Placed in Employment		Wages at Initial Placement	
	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Average Hourly Wage	Number of Participants
Length of Participation in PRI (Including Follow-up)				
Less than sixteen weeks	77.2	5,699	\$9.30	4,367
Sixteen weeks or more	56.8	6,071	\$9.26	3,428
Difference	20.3		\$0.04	
Total Number of PRI Services				
Less than five services	75.2	5,888	\$9.22	4,407
Five services or more	58.1	5,882	\$9.37	3,388
Difference	17.1		-\$0.15	
Received Any Workforce Preparation Services				
Yes	68.1	10,625	\$9.25	7,198
No	53.0	1,145	\$9.70	597
Difference	15.1		-\$0.45	
Received Any Education Services				
Yes	68.6	3,448	\$9.28	2,346
No	65.9	8,322	\$9.28	5,449
Difference	2.7		\$0.00	
Received Any Mentoring Services				
Yes	69.9	6,207	\$9.24	4,312
No	63.1	5,563	\$9.34	3,483
Difference	6.8		-\$0.09	
Received Any Health Services				
Yes	69.7	2,989	\$9.19	2,075
No	65.6	8,781	\$9.32	5,720
Difference	4.0		-0.13	
Received Any Community Services				
Yes	77.2	1,291	\$9.40	987
No	65.4	10,479	\$9.27	6,808
Difference	11.9		\$0.13	
Received Any Supportive Services				
Yes	71.8	6,421	\$9.20	4,578
No	60.5	5,349	\$9.41	3,217
Difference	11.3		-\$0.21	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

Notes: Data pertain only to those individuals who were enrolled at least three months prior to the final extract to minimize potential bias in the statistics that are reported from right-censored data.



**Table VI.17  
Differences in Recidivism Based on Service Receipt**

	Re-arrested for a New Crime	Reincarcerated for a Technical Violation of Probation or Parole	Number of Participants
	Percent of Participants	Percent of Participants	
<b>Length of Participation in PRI (Including Follow-up)</b>			
Less than sixteen weeks	5.6	6.9	3,886
Sixteen weeks or more	10.4	10.7	2,839
Difference	-4.8	-3.8	
<b>Total Number of PRI Services</b>			
Less than five services	7.0	7.4	3,267
Five services or more	8.1	9.5	3,458
Difference	-1.1	-2.1	
<b>Received Any Workforce Preparation Services</b>			
Yes	7.5	8.2	6035
No	8.7	11.3	690
Difference	-1.2	-3.1	
<b>Received Any Education Services</b>			
Yes	4.7	7.4	2,030
No	8.8	9.0	4,695
Difference	-4.1	-1.6	
<b>Received Any Mentoring Services</b>			
Yes	8.6	7.5	3,153
No	6.7	9.4	3,572
Difference	1.8	-2.0	
<b>Received Any Health Services</b>			
Yes	5.7	8.8	1,624
No	8.2	8.4	5,101
Difference	-2.5	0.4	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

The length of enrollment does not appear related to hourly wages at initial placement; in fact, the receipt of workforce preparation and supportive services appears associated with lower wages. This could result if those who have more barriers to employment seek out and receive more services than those who can more easily move into jobs with higher wages. In terms of recidivism measures, those who participated for longer periods of sixteen weeks or more were nearly 5 percentage points less likely to commit a new crime and 4 percentage points less likely to be re-incarcerated for a technical violation of probation and parole. Participation in workforce

preparation, education, health, and community service activities also seemed to have a small relationship to reduced recidivism. Interestingly, the relationship between mentoring and recidivism is less clear. In fact, compared to those who did not participate in mentoring, those who attended mentoring services were more likely to commit a new crime but less likely to be re-incarcerated for a technical violation of release conditions.

Importantly, these relationships cannot suggest which measure preceded the other. It may be that those who chose to participate in PRI were less likely to recidivate, regardless of their participation, and their participation in PRI could have actually reduced recidivism; or it may be that those who had not recidivated might have simply been available to participate in PRI, given that they were not incarcerated. Only an experimental design can disentangle these relationships.

## VII. COST ANALYSIS

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Given the substantial investment of resources in this demonstration, a cost analysis that examines the use of both public and private resources to serve the PRI population is an essential component of this evaluation. The cost study analyzes how grantees have chosen to use the resources made available by the Federal government, as well as their ability to leverage additional resources from the community to help meet the needs of PRI participants.<sup>55</sup> Information gathered through this analysis aims to inform policymakers and project administrators about the cost to replicate the PRI model, which factors contribute the most to program costs, and how program expenditures relate to short-term outcomes achieved by participants.

### A. Sources of Cost Data, Analysis Methods, and Limitations

Data from the PRI grantees enabled a comprehensive analysis of costs. However, the analysis was still subject to several limitations. A description of the sources of data, analysis methods, and key limitations of the cost study follows.

#### 1. Cost Data Sources

Cost data were gathered from three key sources: (1) quarterly financial reports submitted by all grantees to DOL, (2) in-depth expenditure data from nine selected grantees, and (3) in-person interviews with administrators and staff members from the same nine selected grantees. An analysis of quarterly financial reports was conducted across all 30 grantees to develop a relatively straightforward estimate of the cost to the Federal government of the PRI program.

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<sup>55</sup> While the grantees did not have a formal matching requirement under this grant, DOL encouraged them to leverage as many resources as possible to supplement services provided with the PRI grant.

These data did not, however, provide detail on the distribution of resources across different types of services and activities and did not reflect the grantees' use of in-kind and volunteer resources.

To capture a more complete picture, data were collected from local administrators, staff, and accounting systems at nine selected grantees to independently estimate the annual cost of PRI. The nine grantees were not representative of the full 30 grantees but were selected to cover the broad spectrum of programs involved in the initiative (Table VII.1).

**Exhibit VII. 1**  
**Key Findings – Costs**

- The PRI program cost the federal government \$2,495 per participant.
- Including grant expenditures as well as donated, volunteer, and in-kind resources, the cost per participant in nine selected sites was \$3,438.
- Program management costs, combined with outreach and recruitment costs, were one-third of total grant expenditures in the nine selected grantees, while workforce preparation activities consumed another quarter of grant funds.
- Nine grantees selected for an in-depth cost study garnered \$1.4 million in donated, volunteer, and in-kind resources (or 25 percent in additional funding beyond their PRI grants).
- Volunteer hours were focused on mentoring, while in-kind resources were distributed largely among supportive services and workforce preparation.
- Examining costs compared to outcomes, the PRI program costs \$3,786 per successful placement in unsubsidized employment. Among those with valid recidivism data, PRI services cost \$4,287 per participant who was placed in a job and remained free of crime for one year.

**Table VII.1  
Nine Grantees Selected For In-Depth Cost Analysis**

Grantee Name	City	State	Faith or Community Based	Size of Annual Budget Prior to PRI	Selected for Special Focus
Arizona Women's Education and Employment, Inc.	Phoenix	AZ	Community	\$1–\$5 Million	Serving women
Metro United Methodist Urban Ministry	San Diego	CA	Faith	\$1–\$5 Million	
Fresno Career Development Institute, Inc.	Fresno	CA	Community	\$1–\$5 Million	
The Directors Council	Des Moines	IA	Community	< \$1 Million	
The Church United for Community Development	Baton Rouge	LA	Faith	< \$1 Million	
Episcopal Community Services of Maryland	Baltimore	MD	Faith	\$1–\$5 Million	Training
St. Patrick Center	St. Louis	MO	Faith	> \$5 Million	
Goodwill Industries of Greater NY & Northern NJ, Inc.	Astoria (serving Newark, NJ)	NY	Community	> \$5 Million	
Word of Hope Ministries, Inc.	Milwaukee	WI	Faith	< \$1 Million	Mentoring

*Source: Data were obtained from OMB Form 1890 and grantee applications and verified during round 1 site visits.*

A three-step process was followed to select the nine grantees. First, the 30 grantees were divided into six groups based on the size of the organization's annual operating budget prior to the PRI grant award and on whether they were faith-based or community organizations. One grantee was randomly selected from each of these groups, as well as an alternate program. Second, based on the key interests of DOL, other grantees were also randomly selected: one that focused heavily on participant training, one that focused on serving a specialized target population, and one that operated a strong mentoring component during early implementation. Third, evaluators consulted with DOL on these selections and replaced two grantees with their

alternates because the quality of the MIS data at these sites was poor and likely to limit the ability to conduct a detailed analysis.

During in-depth site visits to the nine selected grantees, which took place from December 2007 through March 2008, the evaluation team collected data on grant expenditures, as well as on other community resources devoted to supporting PRI—such as donated staff time, volunteer hours, and in-kind and donated resources—during the period of October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007.<sup>56</sup> This timeframe was selected to ensure that the costs that were examined represented a year when the program was fully implemented and caseloads relatively stable. If volunteers performed similar functions as PRI counselors, their time was valued at the cost-per-hour of hiring PRI staff to conduct those same duties. Donated goods were valued at the amount required to purchase the goods if they had not been donated. A wide range of local staff were also interviewed to estimate the proportion of time typically spent conducting activities within nine broadly defined program components: (1) program management, (2) outreach and recruitment, (3) education and training activities, (4) workforce preparation activities, (5) community involvement activities, (6) mentoring activities, (7) supportive service activities, (8) health services, and (9) general case management. Each of these components is discussed in greater detail in the analysis.

## 2. Cost Analysis Methods and Limitations

Analyzing the annual cost of operating PRI involved a multi-stage process. The overall, or aggregate, annual cost of the demonstration was first estimated using data on all 30 grantees and the nine selected grantees. Using participation data gathered in the MIS, the overall cost per

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<sup>56</sup> Given the scope of the study, it was not possible to collect cost data on services provided to PRI participants outside of the grant by other community organizations or agencies as a result of referrals from PRI staff members. For example, no estimates were made of the cost of substance abuse counseling that resulted from referrals to other community resources.

participant was estimated. Within the nine selected sites, data were also collected from local staff to estimate the breakdown of costs across the nine key program components listed above. Finally, an average cost was developed per participant who successfully entered employment and the cost per participant who did not recidivate.

While this analysis aims to provide useful information to both policymakers and practitioners on the true costs to serve the PRI population, it is important to note four limitations:

- *A detailed cost analysis was conducted for only nine grantees.* While these appear to be a reasonable cross section of grantees, they are not representative of all 30.
- *Some of the nine grantees did not diligently track in-kind and donated resources.* This issue surfaced during the cost study site visits. As a result, the calculations were based on the grantees' best estimates of the time and value of those resources.
- *Analysis does not account for start-up or close-out costs.* Calculations were based on a period of steady-state operations<sup>57</sup> that did not include activities to start or close out the program, and the resources needed for those activities can be quite substantial.
- *Cost per successful outcome is based on short-term outcome data of relatively weak quality.* As a result, analysis of longer-term outcomes could provide very different results. Also, this analysis only examines a small number of key outcomes related to employment and recidivism, even though the PRI aims to improve many facets of participants' lives.

## **B. Total Costs of Providing PRI Services**

Within their fixed grants, the PRI grantees needed to think strategically about how to spend their available funds and, when possible, tap other resources within their grantee organizations and their communities to supplement those funds. This section first analyzes the patterns of grant expenditures among all 30 grantees. It then provides a detailed analysis of grant

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<sup>57</sup> Even in a steady-state of operations, variation existed. For example, four grantees reported that annual expenditures were slightly higher than expected due to one-time costs. Two grantees reported that subcontractors did not bill regularly, causing expenditures either to appear in large lump sums during the cost period or not to appear at all. Another moved into a new office space, incurring nearly \$58,000 in unexpected moving costs. Finally, one grantee purchased laptop computers for its case management staff during the cost period.

expenditures among the nine selected grantees, followed by details on the amount and types of additional resources these grantees were able to leverage to support their PRI programs. The section ends with a breakdown of the total costs per program component among the nine selected grantees.

### 1. Grant Expenditures Across All 30 Grantees

The 30 grantees reported spending a total of \$27,753,717 in grant funds from the start of the demonstration in July 2005 through September 2007 (Table VII.2).<sup>58</sup> Grantees varied widely in the extent of their spending during this period. While average expenditures equaled \$925,124, they ranged from \$689,055 to nearly double that amount at \$1,234,190.<sup>59</sup>

**Table VII.2**  
**Total Grant Expenditures Through September 2007**

Cost Category	Total	Average Across Grantees	Lowest Among Grantees	Highest Among Grantees
Expenditures across all 30 grantees	\$27,753,717	\$925,124	\$689,055	\$1,234,190
Expenditures across 9 grantees selected for in-depth cost study	\$8,526,583	\$947,398	\$817,424	\$1,174,153

*Source: Data collected from grantees' quarterly financial reports submitted to DOL*

<sup>58</sup> The period of July 2005 through September 2007 covers the full range of grantee financial reports available for the evaluation.

<sup>59</sup> Expenditures included in the quarterly financial reports are “actual cash disbursements for direct charges for goods and services; the amount of indirect expenses charged to the award; MINUS any rebates, refunds, or other credits; PLUS the total costs of all goods and property received or services performed, whether or not an invoice has been received or a cash payment has occurred.”



Enrollments began in November 2005 and did not reach a steady pace until late spring 2006. In order to estimate the pace of grant expenditures, the pattern of grantee spending over time was examined. It took nearly two calendar years, on average, for grantees to spend the full amount of their first-year grant awards and to begin tapping their second-year awards. Specifically, grantees as a group exhausted their first-year funding of over \$19.8 million during the second quarter of 2007 although the first operational year was scheduled to end in March 2007. The first-year awards were to cover start-up expenses, as well as services for up to 200 participants per grantee, or 6,000 total participants. By the end of June 2007, the grantees had enrolled a total of 8,113 participants; and, by then, 6,319 had already exited the program. Based on discussions with local staff, the lower-than-expected costs appear attributable largely to the fact that participants were spending less time in the program than expected before either moving into stable employment or dropping out, resulting in program exit.

## 2. Detailed Grant Expenditures Across Nine Selected Grantees

While the above analysis across all 30 grantees gives a broad overview of grant expenditures, data obtained from the nine selected sites allows a much more detailed look at the types of costs incurred. Overall spending patterns from the start of operations through the third quarter of 2007 appear similar among the subset of nine grantees selected for the detailed cost analysis and the full set of 30 PRI grantees. Average expenditures in the group of nine grantees totaled \$947,398, or about 2.4 percent more than the average across all 30 grantees (Table VII.2). This suggests that the selection process used to identify the nine grantees appears to have resulted in a reasonable cross section of grantees based on spending patterns.

**Table VII.3**  
**Total Expenditures For Nine Selected Grantees**  
**During the Period of October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007**

Cost Category	Total Across Nine Selected Grantees	Average Across Nine Selected Grantees	Lowest Among Nine Grantees	Highest Among Nine Grantees
Total expenditures based on SF-269	\$5,689,310	\$632,146	\$525,414	\$729,789
Total expenditures based on grantee accounting data	\$5,510,206	\$612,245	\$519,794	\$886,930
Difference	\$179,104	\$19,900	\$5,620	(\$157,141)

*Source: Expenditure reports provided by the nine selected grantees during evaluation site visits for the cost period of October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007; and data collected from grantees' quarterly financial reports submitted to DOL.*

The detailed analysis covers a period that was considered indicative of steady-state operations, namely October 2006 through September 2007. Data collected for this period directly from the nine grantees closely match their financial reports to DOL (Table VII.3). The difference between the total reported expenditures resulted primarily from one grantee overdrawing on its PRI grant and reconciling the difference in subsequent quarterly financial reports submitted to DOL.<sup>60</sup> As a result, the evaluators believe that the expenditure data obtained during site visits are a slightly better estimate of actual expenditures during the cost period than are the quarterly financial reports.

<sup>60</sup> One grantee reported that it had received notice of a grant award from the state Department of Corrections (DOCs) to provide services through the Department of Justice PRI pre-release program and was delayed in receiving those grant funds. As a result, it drew down on the PRI grant funds to cover its DOC work. Grantee administrators reported that the quarterly financial report submitted to DOL for the fourth quarter of 2007 was reduced to compensate for the overdraw. Seven of the remaining grantees provided expenditure data that totaled within \$11,000 (plus or minus) of their quarterly financial reports, and the final grantee reported expenditures of about \$25,000 less than financial reports.

**Labor Costs.** Labor costs accounted for nearly two-thirds of total grant expenditures (Table VII.4).<sup>61</sup> These costs included fringe benefits, and approximately 97 percent of PRI staff received at least some benefits. All grantees offered vacation, sick days, holidays, and health benefits to PRI staff; two-thirds offered dental coverage; and seven reported providing retirement benefits. Additional benefits offered at some grantees included life insurance, workers compensation, and long- and short-term disability insurance.

Salaries for administrators and managers summed to nearly 16 percent of grant expenditures. On average, the PRI grants supported one half-time administrator at an annual salary of \$67,357 and one full-time project manager at an annual salary of \$50,470 (Table VII.5). These staff members were typically responsible for program oversight, supervision of staff, coordination with DOL, review of MIS data and reports, and coordination with subcontractors and community partners. According to site visit interviews, they rarely provided direct services to participants.

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<sup>61</sup> One grantee employed only three staff members (a project manager, one job developer, and an administrative assistant) and subcontracted with a partner to provide the remaining PRI services. Given the uniqueness of this arrangement, details on the partner's expenditures were combined with those of the grantee in the analysis rather than lumping all partner costs into the subcontractor line item.

**Table VII.4  
Breakdown of Expenditures at Nine Selected Grantees (in dollars)**

<b>Cost Category</b>	<b>Sum Across Nine Selected Grantees</b>	<b>Average Across Nine Selected Grantees</b>	<b>Percent of Total Expenditures</b>
<b>Labor Costs<sup>a</sup></b>			
Administrators	\$337,991	\$37,555	6.1
Project managers and assistant managers	\$529,656	\$58,851	9.6
Case managers and work readiness trainers	\$1,255,948	\$139,550	22.8
Job developers	\$420,380	\$46,709	7.6
Retention specialists and job coaches	\$128,597	\$14,289	2.3
Mentor coordinators and assistants	\$299,691	\$33,299	5.4
Support staff	\$353,989	\$39,332	6.4
Accounting staff	\$75,972	\$8,441	1.4
Other staff	\$24,950	\$2,772	0.5
<b>Subtotal Labor Costs</b>	<b>\$3,427,174</b>	<b>\$380,797</b>	<b>62.2</b>
<b>Other Direct Costs</b>			
Expenditures to train participants	\$323,379	\$35,931	5.9
Supportive services	\$253,083	\$28,120	4.6
Direct payments, subsidies, or incentives paid to participants	\$39,715	\$4,413	0.7
Copier, telephone, computer, fax	\$61,379	\$6,820	1.1
Supplies and equipment	\$142,733	\$15,859	2.6
Staff travel and subsistence	\$159,801	\$17,756	2.9
Rent, building maintenance, repairs, utilities, parking	\$204,668	\$22,741	3.7
Other <sup>b</sup>	\$114,290	\$12,699	2.1
<b>Subtotal Other Direct Costs</b>	<b>\$1,299,048</b>	<b>\$144,339</b>	<b>23.6</b>
<b>Subcontractors</b>	<b>\$448,722</b>	<b>\$49,858</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>Indirect Costs<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>\$335,262</b>	<b>\$37,251</b>	<b>6.1</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$5,510,206</b>	<b>\$612,245</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Expenditure reports provided by the nine selected grantees during evaluation site visits for the cost period of October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007*

<sup>a</sup> Labor costs include such fringe benefits as medical insurance, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, life insurance, disability insurance, pension, profit sharing, holidays, vacation, sick leave, and personal leave.

<sup>b</sup> Other costs include advertising, auditing services, liability insurance, consultant fees, etc.

<sup>c</sup> Indirect costs may include facilities or rent, utilities, insurance, fixtures and furniture, general equipment use, and general office supplies. Four grantees reported indirect costs as actual expenditures in the other direct costs category rather than as a separate line item.

**Table VII.5**  
**Average Salary Rates and Full-Time Equivalents (FTE) for PRI Staff**

Labor Category	Number of Selected Grantees Reporting This Type of Staff	Average FTE Across Grantees with This Type of Staff	Average FTE Across Nine Selected Grantees	Average Annual Salary
Administrators	9	0.5	0.5	\$67,357
Project managers and assistant managers	9	1.0	1.0	\$50,470
Case managers and work readiness trainers	9	3.5	3.5	\$32,781
Job developers	5	2.1	1.2	\$32,399
Retention specialists and job coaches	3	1.0	0.3	\$29,287
Mentor coordinators and assistants	7	1.0	0.8	\$34,149
Support staff	8	1.5	1.3	\$24,453
Accounting staff <sup>a</sup>	6	0.2	0.1	\$48,283
Other staff	4	0.5	0.2	\$20,762

Source: Expenditure reports provided by the nine selected grantees during evaluation site visits for the cost period of October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007

Note: Annual salaries do not take into account fringe benefits.

<sup>a</sup> The three grantees who did not report accounting staff within their PRI expenditures either used subcontractors to support accounting functions or included accounting salaries in their indirect expenditures.

Salaries for case managers and job readiness trainers were the largest single line item, at nearly 23 percent of total expenditures (Table VII.4). The nine grantees employed an average of 3.5 case managers and/or trainers at an average annual salary of \$32,781 (Table VII.5). Most had bachelor's (40 percent) or master's degrees (24 percent). On average, they had worked at the grantee for 2.5 years, although nearly 40 percent had worked there for less than one year.

Salaries for other line staff, including job developers, retention specialists, and mentor coordinators, accounted for another 15 percent of expenditures (Table VII.4). Five of the nine grantees employed job developers, seven used mentor coordinators, and three had dedicated retention specialists. Salaries for the positions averaged from \$29,000 to \$34,000 (Table VII.5).

**Other Direct Costs.** Other direct costs summed to nearly one-quarter of overall costs, although there was significant variation in both the amount and types across grantees (Table VII.4).<sup>62</sup> Expenditures to train participants—in such areas as occupational skills, financial literacy, and other specialized areas—comprised the largest subcategory at 6 percent of overall expenditures, although one grantee spent no funds on training while another spent over \$100,000 (or 18 percent of funds). Supportive services accounted for 5 percent of expenditures, with the most common types including transportation, work clothing, and boots. Other less common types of expenditures were for training supplies, help in obtaining personal identification, housing, utility assistance, food for participant meetings, urine testing, eyeglasses, dental repair, hair cut vouchers, and examination and licensing fees. Five of the nine grantees gave incentive payments, with site totals ranging from as little as \$600 to as much as \$16,264. These incentives most often included direct financial payments or gift cards given to participants for completing service milestones. Administrators with two of the California grantees reported that staff travel costs were also higher than expected due to collaborative meetings held across the four grantees in the state. Finally, other direct costs were high for two grantees that paid consulting fees to grant writers for help with their option-year funding requests.

**Subcontracts.** Five of the nine grantees used subcontractors, with three of these grantees paying over \$100,000 to subcontractors during the cost period. The largest subcontracts

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<sup>62</sup> One grantee incurred 42 percent of total expenditures in other direct costs, partially due to a one-time office move that resulted in \$58,000 in unexpected expenses.

supported vocational training, financial literacy, and mentoring services for participants. Two grantees also subcontracted for additional staff. In particular, one had a subcontract to pay one case manager and three recruitment specialists, and another had a subcontractor hire a PRI job developer. Smaller subcontracts supported consulting, accounting, and supportive services.

**Sufficiency of Funding.** Administrators in six of the nine selected grantees described grant funds as generally sufficient or more than sufficient to provide allowable services to PRI participants. Administrators at the three remaining grantees believed that the grant funds were not sufficient. Two of these were among those sites with the highest expenditures during the cost period. They reported that participant-to-staff ratios were still too high, resulting in unmet needs among active participants. The third reported that staff salaries were too low to retain highly qualified employees. Additional needs cited by these three grantees included needs for transportation funds, more specialized training for participants, legal services to get drivers' licenses reinstated, and incentives to encourage mentoring participation.

Despite significant efforts to tap other sources of funding and community resources, all nine grantees reported at least some unmet needs that could not be covered under allowable grant expenditures (Table VII.6). Four of the nine grantees expressed concerns about expected changes due to cuts in DOL grant funding for the third year of the demonstration. Two reported that they planned to eliminate some staff positions and consolidate responsibilities among remaining staff members. A third planned to cut back on training costs and will not give salary increases to staff in year three. The fourth expected to spend less on supportive services for participants.

**Table VII.6**  
**Grantee Administrator Reports of Unmet Needs Among Participants**

	Number of Grantees
At Least One Unmet Need Identified	9
Types of Unmet Needs	
Housing assistance	7
Medical and dental needs	5
Food assistance	5
Substance abuse treatment	4
Public transportation investments	3
Pre-release services	1
Legal services	1
<b>Sample Size: 9</b>	

*Source: Interviews with grantee administrators during site visits to the nine selected grantees*

### 3. Donated, Volunteer, and In-Kind Resources across Nine Selected Grantees

The nine selected PRI grantees garnered a total of \$1.4 million in donated, volunteer, and in-kind resources (Table VII.7). Grantees leveraged an average of \$155,666. Donated, volunteer, and in-kind resources averaged 25 percent of grant expenditures and ranged among grantees from 11 to 47 percent. Donated staff time accounted for the largest proportion (40 percent), followed by in-kind resources (35 percent) and volunteer time (25 percent).



**Table VII.7  
Donated, Volunteer, and In-Kind Resources (in Dollars)**

Cost Category	Total Across Nine Selected Grantees	Average Across Nine Selected Grantees	Lowest Among Nine Selected Grantees <sup>c</sup>	Highest Among Nine Selected Grantees <sup>c</sup>
<b>Donated Staff Time</b>				
Total donated hours	22,892	2,544	525	4,605
Full-time equivalent of donated hours	11.0	1.2	0.3	2.2
Total cost	\$564,233	\$62,693	\$9,887	\$104,114
<b>Volunteer Resources</b>				
Total volunteer hours	15,154	1,684	180	5,592
Full-time equivalent of volunteer hours	7.3	0.8	0.1	2.7
Average hourly salary equivalent <sup>a</sup>	\$23	\$23	\$12	\$33
Total volunteer costs	\$350,897	\$38,989	\$2,070	\$110,093
In-kind Resources <sup>b</sup>	\$485,866	\$53,985	\$8,232	\$194,077
<b>Total Donated, Volunteer, and In-Kind Costs</b>	<b>\$1,400,996</b>	<b>\$155,666</b>	<b>\$76,457</b>	<b>\$258,131</b>

Source: Interviews with grantee staff and expenditure reports provided by the nine selected grantees during evaluation site visits for the cost period of October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007

<sup>a</sup> The salary equivalent for volunteers was estimated in conjunction with local administrators based on the tasks conducted by volunteers, as well as the typical background and work experience of volunteer staff.

<sup>b</sup> In-kind resources include grants, donated space or rent assistance, food, clothing, transportation, furniture and household items, toy drives, computers, and funds for family events.

<sup>c</sup> Rows do not sum to total row because different grantees may have the lowest or highest cost within a category.

**Donated Staff Time.** PRI staff reported working nearly an additional 23,000 hours, or the equivalent of 1.2 full-time equivalents per grantee, beyond their total regular work schedules.<sup>63</sup> When valued at staff members' current salary rates with fringe benefits, the nine PRI programs garnered an additional \$564,233 in donated staff time. About half of interviewed

<sup>63</sup> The vast majority of staff interviewed during the cost study site visits reported being salaried for 40 hours per week, although a few staff members were hired to work fewer hours in a typical week. Administrators at most grantees reported that staff were hired with the expectation that their jobs might entail more hours than the typical 40-hour work week. These hours were included separately in this analysis, however, to better understand the substantial level of effort that staff are investing in the PRI program.

staff (48 percent) reported working an additional 25 percent, or 10 extra hours, in a typical work week. While many of these hours resulted from long days in the office, some staff members also reported participating regularly in evening and weekend activities, such as group mentoring sessions or community events; recruiting employers and visiting participants' workplaces; coordinating with mentors; and responding to calls from participants on their personal cell phones during non-work hours. The extent of donated staff time varied dramatically across grantees, ranging from 525 hours to 4,605 hours. Despite spending a substantial amount of extra hours, about half of local staff reported that they still did not have sufficient time to meet the extensive and diverse needs of their PRI participants.

**Volunteer Hours.** Local volunteers spent over 15,000 hours working with PRI grantees and participants during the cost period. When valued based on volunteer qualifications and the types of PRI tasks performed, the volunteer time across the nine grantees was estimated at \$350,897. Grantees' differing approaches to volunteerism and their differing rates of success in recruiting volunteers from the community contributed to wide variations in the number of volunteer hours per site. One grantee was able to garner 5,592 hours of volunteer time, while another reported only 180 hours. The number of volunteer hours does not appear related to whether grantees were faith-based or community organizations or to the size of the organization.

Three-quarters of volunteer hours supported mentoring (11,170 hours, or 74 percent of total hours). During the cost period, 1,092 participants from the nine selected grantees received at least one mentoring session. When the total hours of mentoring volunteer time are divided among these participants, the result suggests that volunteers spent an average of 11 hours per participant during that period. This could include training, travel time, time spent directly with participants, as well as time informing PRI staff about their mentoring interactions. Considering

that some volunteers may have been providing group mentoring to more than one participant, this may underestimate the actual volunteer hours per participant. Other volunteer activities included job development, case management, and workforce preparation (1,691 hours, or 11 percent of total hours); and classroom speakers, clerical and office support, food preparation, computer lab assistance, and community involvement (2,342 hours, or 15 percent of total hours).

**In-kind Resources.** In addition to donated staff and volunteer time, the nine grantees were able to garner a total of \$485,866 of in-kind resources during the cost period. Grants accounted for the largest proportion of in-kind resources. Two grantees used community development block grants to provide additional services to PRI participants, two used housing grants, and two used grants from other foundations and community agencies (Table VII.8). Other common sources of support involved clothing for participants, donated office space or rent assistance, food for PRI meetings and for participants and their families, transportation, and individual cash donations or church donations. Less common items included furniture and other household items, toys for participants' children, computers for PRI grantees, and funds for family events.

**Table VII.8**  
**Types of In-Kind Resources Garnered By the Nine Selected Grantees**

	Number of Grantees
<b>Grant Funds</b>	
Community block grants	2
Housing grants	2
Other grants from foundations and community agencies	2
<b>Donations</b>	
Clothing donations	7
Donated office space or rent assistance	5
Food donations	5
Transportation such as gas cards or use of a church van	3
Individual cash donations or church donations	3
Furniture and household items	2
Toy drives	1
Computers for grantee offices	1
Funds for family events	1

**Sample Size: 9**

*Source: Interviews with grantee administrators and staff during site visits to the nine grantees.*

#### 4. Breakdown of Costs by Program Component Across Nine Selected Grantees

While grantees were required to provide a core set of services to PRI participants, DOL gave local administrators flexibility in structuring their programs and placing emphasis on certain types of services. As a result, DOL requested a detailed analysis of how grantee expenditures were broken down across the nine different program components required of PRI grantees (Table VII.9). To accomplish this, the local staff was asked to identify the proportion of time they spent in a typical week on each of these nine types of activities. Thus, the 25 percent of time the job developer reported devoting to outreach in the state prison became part of the

**Table VII.9  
Breakdown of PRI Costs By Service Categories Across Nine Selected Grantees (Percents)**

	Total Costs	Program Management	Outreach and Recruitment	Workforce Preparation Activities	Mentoring Activities	Supportive Services	Education and Job Training Activities	Community Involvement Activities	Health Services	General Case Management
Labor Costs <sup>a</sup>	100.0	28.7	11.3	23.4	11.0	6.9	3.4	2.4	1.1	11.9
Other Direct Costs <sup>b</sup>	100.0	22.5	6.4	27.4	5.4	24.4	4.9	1.1	0.6	7.3
Subcontractors	100.0	5.7	6.0	42.9	23.5	7.7	0.3	2.1	0.6	11.2
Indirect Costs <sup>c</sup>	100.0	25.9	9.0	24.0	12.9	5.8	1.8	2.9	0.5	17.1
<b>Subtotal of Expenditures</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>11.1</b>
Donated Staff Time	100.0	26.1	12.2	23.7	15.5	7.0	2.5	4.0	1.2	7.9
Volunteer Hours	100.0	8.3	0.0	16.8	64.1	0.0	0.2	1.8	3.2	5.6
In-Kind Resources	100.0	10.3	6.2	24.8	9.0	42.5	1.5	2.3	0.0	3.3
<b>Subtotal of Donated, Volunteer, and In-Kind</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>5.7</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>

*Source: Interviews with grantee staff and expenditure reports provided by the nine selected grantees during evaluation site visits for the cost period of October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007*

<sup>a</sup> Labor costs include fringe benefits such as medical insurance, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, life insurance, disability insurance, pension, profit sharing, holidays, vacation, sick leave, and personal leave.

<sup>b</sup> Other direct costs may include direct incentives paid to participants, supportive services, expenditures to train participants, copier, telephone, fax, office supplies and equipment, computers, staff travel, rent and building maintenance (for some grantees), etc.

<sup>c</sup> Indirect costs may include facilities or rent (for some grantees), utilities, insurance, fixtures and furniture, general equipment use, and general office supplies.

“outreach and recruitment” column, and the 75 percent of time spent developing jobs and placing participants into employment was listed under “workforce preparation activities.” Administrators were also asked to identify how other direct costs and subcontracts were allocated across these same service groupings.

**Grant Expenditures.** Despite the employment focus of the PRI demonstration, substantial resources beyond those required for workforce preparation and job placement were needed to operate the PRI service model. Program management, combined with outreach and recruitment activities, absorbed nearly one-third of grant expenditures. Workforce preparation, which is at the heart of most grantee programs, consumed about one-quarter of grant resources.

Program management costs were driven largely by the salaries of administrators, project managers, and accounting staff, who spend large proportions of time conducting activities that do not include direct services to participants. However, a large number of direct service staff also reported spending a portion of their time helping to manage program performance: managing the MIS data entry process, overseeing other staff, or working on general office management. Staff interviews suggest that this was partially due to the extensive grant reporting requirements and the comprehensive data collection required for the MIS. Some grantee administrators also attributed it to the significant effort required to collaborate with community partners.

The 25 percent of costs devoted to workforce preparation activities were spent mainly on staff time and subcontracts. Line staff—including case managers, job developers, and retention specialists—reported spending the majority of their time helping to prepare participants for the workforce, placing them in employment, helping them retain employment, and recording their receipt of workforce preparation services in the MIS. Subcontractors were also largely focused on providing workforce preparation services, such as financial literacy and job development.

Costs for mentoring services were largely driven by the salaries for mentor coordinators, while supportive service costs were composed mainly of other direct costs, including the purchase of direct goods and services to support participants' needs. The smallest categories of cost were education and training, community involvement, and health services, as reflected by the small proportion of PRI participants who were involved in these activities.

**Donated, Volunteer, and In-kind Resources.** Grantees were able to garner resources to support a wide range of PRI activities, resulting in a somewhat different distribution across the service components than grant expenditures. The breakdown of donated staff time followed a pattern similar to that of labor expenditures. The main exception is that a slightly higher proportion of donated hours came from staff involved in mentoring services than case management. As discussed above, volunteer hours were concentrated in mentoring activities, with smaller proportions in program office assistance and workforce preparation. Over 40 percent of in-kind resources were in the form of supportive services, including housing assistance, food and clothing provisions, transportation, and other supports.

### **C. Cost Per PRI Participant**

Three main steps were followed to calculate the average cost per participant. First, MIS data were used to estimate the number of months that each participant was active in the project during the cost period; these data were then summed across all participants to determine the total number of "person-months" of participant involvement. Second, dividing the total annual project cost by the total person-months derived the average cost per "participant-month." Finally, a cost per participant was calculated by multiplying the cost per participant-month with the average duration of participant involvement in PRI, based on enrollment and exit dates. Whether or not the estimates were sensitive to the inclusion of services provided after exit was also examined.

## 1. Average Total Cost per Participant

Grantees spent substantially less than expected per participant. DOL awarded a total of \$39,473,633 in the first two years of the demonstration to serve 12,000 ex-offenders at an expected cost per participant of \$3,289.<sup>64</sup> To examine the actual cost per participant, calculations were developed for all 30 grantees, as well as across the nine selected sites, using data for the same cost period. During this period, the 30 grantees spent \$2,495 per participant from their PRI grants, while the nine selected grantees spent around \$2,741 (Table VII.10). Grantees are, therefore, spending between 17 and 24 percent less than anticipated on average per participant. While DOL did not specify the expected length of program participation, this lower cost per participant appears derived mainly by a relatively short average length of stay in the program.

Table VII.10 shows how the estimate of \$2,495 in average expenditures per participant across the 30 grantees was calculated. The grantees reported spending a total of \$18,612,264 during the cost period. Based on MIS service data, 10,533 participants were active during the cost period, for a total of 24,562 person-months. Dividing costs by person-months results in \$757 per person-month. The average length of participation among those who were enrolled during that period and had exited by the time of the final extract in May 2008 was 3.3 months.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Given that first-year grant funds were intended to cover start-up expenses, the anticipated cost per person may have been slightly lower than this simple division implies. However, second-year grant funds only dropped marginally and were intended to serve the same overall number of enrollees as first-year funds.

<sup>65</sup> If the analysis were adjusted to remove participants who did not return to the program after their initial enrollment date, the average length of participation rises to 3.7 months and the average expenditures per participant increases to \$2,783 per person.



**Table VII.10**  
**PRI Cost Per Participant During The Cost Period**

	All 30 Grantees	9 Selected Grantees
<b>Costs (in dollars) During the Cost Period <sup>a</sup></b>		
Total expenditures	\$18,612,264	\$5,510,206
Volunteer and in-kind resources	N.A.	\$1,400,996
Total costs	N.A.	\$6,911,203
<b>Total Number of Participants Served During Cost Period</b>	10,533	3,029
<b>Total Person-Months of Participation During Cost Period <sup>b</sup></b>	24,562	8,035
<b>Average Duration of Participation (in months) <sup>c</sup></b>	3.3	4.0
<b>Average Cost Per Participant-Month <sup>d</sup></b>		
Average expenditures per participant-month	\$757	\$686
Average volunteer and in-kind resources per participant-month	N.A.	\$174
Average total costs per participant-month	N.A.	\$860
<b>Average Cost Per Participant <sup>e</sup></b>		
Average expenditures per participant	\$2,495	\$2,741
Average volunteer and in-kind resources per participant	N.A.	\$697
Average total costs per participant	N.A.	\$3,438

*Source: Quarterly financial reports submitted by all 30 grantees to DOL, expenditure data provided to the evaluation team by the nine selected grantees during evaluation site visits, and MIS data collected by grantees through May 6, 2008*

*Note: MIS statistics pertain only to those individuals who were enrolled at least three months prior to the final extract to minimize potential bias in the statistics that are reported from right-censored data.*

*N.A. means not available.*

<sup>a</sup> *The cost period covers October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007.*

<sup>b</sup> *Equals the number of months that each person participated during the cost period summed across all participants.*

<sup>c</sup> *Equals the average months from enrollment to program exit for individuals served during the cost period. This average was calculated for individuals who had exited prior to May 6, 2008.*

<sup>d</sup> *Equals the total program costs divided by the total person-months of participation.*

<sup>e</sup> *Equals the total cost per participant-month multiplied by the average duration of participation in PRI.*

To test the sensitivity of these estimates, the cost per participant was also calculated, taking into account the services that participants received after program exit. As discussed in Chapters IV and V, many grantees continued to offer such assistance as supportive services, follow-up services, and continued mentoring after participants become stable. These calculations

resulted in a slightly higher cost per participant of \$2,595 for all 30 grantees and \$2,934 for the nine selected grantees. While the length of follow-up services can be substantial for some participants, they tend to receive fewer and less intensive services during this period.

To identify the amount of donated, volunteer, and in-kind resources spent per participant, similar calculations were developed for the nine selected grantees, using cost data gathered through the in-depth site visits. The nine selected grantees spent an average of \$3,438 per participant during the cost period; this includes both grant expenditures as well as donated, volunteer, and in-kind resources. Grant expenditures per participant were slightly higher among the nine selected grantees—\$2,741 compared to \$2,495 across all 30 grantees—due to a longer average participation of 4.0 months. Donated, volunteer, and in-kind resources amounted to \$697 per participant, adding an additional 25 percent of resources beyond grant expenditures.

## 2. Costs Relative to Participant Outcomes

Not all participants involved in the PRI demonstration were expected to successfully integrate into society. Therefore, DOL requested that the costs be estimated relative to participants' short-term outcomes. Three key outcomes were selected for this analysis: the rate of placement in unsubsidized employment, the rate of recidivism within one year of release, and a combination of these two. Using expenditure data across all 30 grantees, simple division provided estimates of the cost per participant for those who were successful at these milestones.

With the PRI program registering an initial employment placement rate of 66 percent, Table VII.11 shows that the PRI program costs \$3,786 per successful placement in unsubsidized employment. This estimate exceeds the budget of \$3,289 per participant expected by DOL by about \$500. Using those with valid recidivism data, for each PRI participant who remained free of the criminal justice system for one year after release, the PRI program costs \$3,150. Finally,

the combination of these two measures showed that PRI services cost \$4,287 per participant who was placed in a job and remained free of crime for one year.<sup>66</sup> Given that less than 60 percent of participants achieved both successes, this estimate exceeds the DOL budget by nearly \$1,000.

**Table VII.11**  
**PRI Costs Relative to Participant Outcomes Across All 30 Grantees**

Measure	Percent of Participants Who Achieved Outcome	Average Cost per Participant <sup>a</sup>	Average Cost per Participant Who Achieved Outcome
Placed in unsubsidized employment during PRI participation	65.9	\$2,495	\$3,786
No criminal justice activity within one year of release	79.2	\$2,495	\$3,150
Placed in unsubsidized employment <i>and</i> no criminal justice activity within one year of release	58.2	\$2,495	\$4,287

*Source:* Quarterly financial reports submitted by all 30 grantees to DOL and MIS data collected by grantees through June 30, 2008

*Note:* Recidivism measure includes only those who reached one year after release and had non-missing recidivism data. Employment measure includes those employed and unemployed at enrollment.

<sup>a</sup> Calculations resulting in the average cost per participant are detailed in Table VII.10.

<sup>66</sup> When the outcome statistics presented in Table VII.11 are restricted only to those participants who were enrolled at some point during the cost period, the percentage of those placed in unsubsidized employment increases to 68.6, resulting in a slightly lower average cost of \$3,642 per participant who was placed. For the same subgroup, the percentage with no criminal activity and the percentage placed in employment with no criminal justice activity shift only marginally to 79.1 and 58.7, respectively.

## VIII. CONCLUSIONS

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Under the PRI demonstration design, the 30 projects were expected to provide services that would assist ex-offenders in obtaining and retaining employment, and avoiding recidivism. The evaluation has documented a range of participant and program successes as well as lessons learned through first two years of program operations. This chapter summarizes the key observations and lessons learned from the first two years of PRI project operations. The summary is based on data collected for the evaluation, including two rounds of site visits ending in May 2008 and PRI MIS data through May 6, 2008. The chapter concludes with a brief review of next steps for Federal re-entry activities.

### A. Job Placement and Recidivism

*Many participants were able to obtain jobs and remained employed after exiting the program.* Grantees continued to make progress toward the goal of placing participants in employment, with two-thirds placed in unsubsidized employment, and about half of these were placed within three weeks of enrollment. Average hourly wages at placement were \$9.29. Employment appeared to continue even after active PRI participation ended, with about half of those who had exited the program reported as employed during the first full calendar quarter after exit. Sixty-five percent of the participants who were employed in the first quarter after exit remained employed in all three quarters after exit. Hourly wages among those employed in the third quarter after exit averaged \$10.44.

*Recidivism rates across all grantees appear low.* Between 70 and 82 percent of participants were reported by grantees to have no CJ involvement during the first year after release. Among those participants that grantees were able to track over the first post-release

year, grantees reported that 8 percent were re-arrested for a new crime, 9 percent were reincarcerated for technical violation, 4 percent had other violations of supervision, and 2 percent were re-arrested and released. These rates are substantially lower than national recidivism rates as well as those found in other studies of ex-offenders, however, differences in the populations served and data collection methods make it difficult to determine the reason for this variation.

*Some participant characteristics are associated with better outcomes.* Women, older participants, non-Black participants, those with at least a high school diploma or GED at the time of their enrollment in PRI, those released from Federal institutions, and those who served longer terms in prison or jail had more success than their counterparts on a range of employment and recidivism outcomes. Many of these findings mirror trends shown in other employment and criminal justice literature.

## **B. Services for Participants**

*Services focused on preparing participants to search for and obtain employment.* Workforce preparation activities, including career or life skills counseling and workforce readiness training, were the most widely used service, with over 90 percent of participants receiving at least one. Sites also offered occupational skill training, but take-up was low, with less than 30 percent of participants receiving any educational or training services and only 9 percent getting occupational skills training. In general, these low rates are ascribed to ex-offenders' low educational levels, time constraints, need for immediate income, and community supervision employment requirements.

*Mentoring programs were particularly helpful in assisting participants with their social readjustment to re-entry.* During the first two years of operations, most sites adjusted their mentoring programs in response to initial problems with format, content and participation.

Participation in mentoring activities increased over this period, and as of May 2008, just over 50 percent of participants had attended at least one mentoring session. Establishing and maintaining ex-offender participation was a common challenge, and finding and/or retaining qualified mentors was also difficult. Project staff believe that mentoring was most helpful in aiding participants with social readjustment to life outside prison.

*Despite the wide range of service offerings, the length of participation in PRI was relatively short.* On average, participants spent 12 weeks in the program from enrollment to program exit, with half participating for 8 or fewer weeks. Just over half of participants continued to receive at least some services after exit, with an average participation of 22 weeks from the date of enrollment to the date of last follow-up service. Participants over the age of 35 years, those who were on community supervision and those mandated to attend the program participated for longer periods than their counterparts.

*Sites instituted incentive programs and other strategies to address challenges related to retaining participants in the program and tracking them after exit.* Many sites noted difficulties in tracking their participants, particularly the homeless and younger participants. Over time, projects increased their use of incentives for participants to maintain contact with staff, attend certain activities or complete certain tasks or benchmarks. The effect of the incentives remains unclear.

### **C. Enrollment Strategies and Re-Entry Challenges**

*Enrollment strategies increasingly focused on motivated or suitable candidates, with projects targeting ex-offenders who were likely to benefit from the services.* Intake and assessment processes instituted or enhanced over time helped to identify suitable applicants and appropriate services. After struggling with some participants' weak commitment to their

programs, sites began to screen applicants at intake or conducted a suitability assessment to gauge a participant's interest in and commitment to the PRI program. Participants at most sites signed agreements outlining project rules and/or expectations as a condition of enrollment.

*Participants faced multiple challenges to employment and reintegration.* Eighty-six percent of participants were on some form of community supervision, but few were mandated to enroll in PRI as a condition of their release. Education levels were low, with 44 percent lacking a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate at enrollment. Less than 40 percent reported formal employment as their primary source of income prior to incarceration. Over half of the participants struggled with drug and alcohol abuse prior to PRI enrollment, and 62 percent served time for drug crimes or driving while intoxicated before enrollment in PRI. Nearly half were homeless or lived in transitional housing, residential treatment facilities, or unstable housing at enrollment.

Only 11 percent of all participants enrolled through May 2008 received pre-release services through one of the DOJ companion grants to state DOCs. This appears due to the slow start-up of many DOJ projects and the relatively undeveloped processes for identifying, training and connecting inmates with the DOL PRI grantees after their release. The number of referrals increased over time as the DOJ grantees came up to speed.

#### **D. Community Context and Program Operations**

*The context in which the PRI grantees operated varied considerably.* Eleven of the grantees were small organizations, with annual budgets of less than \$2 million including their PRI funds. Six operated with budgets that exceeded \$25 million. Grantee organizations had some previous experience in serving ex-offenders, but often this was limited to specific activities such as housing assistance or employment, and only about a third had prior involvement in other

PRI services such as mentoring or training. Although economic conditions in most PRI communities were fair to good, two had unemployment rates in excess of 7 percent during 2007. Supervision practices differed by state and locality, affecting the number and types of services that ex-offenders needed from PRI projects.

*By providing project services through multiple partners and/or locations, grantees aimed to better meet participants' needs for assistance.* Twenty grantees subcontracted out one or more services, sometimes to serve participants with particular needs. Over one-third of the projects offered case management, work readiness and related services at multiple locations, usually through subcontractors, to make it easier for participants to access services.

*Sites concentrated on building partnerships with criminal justice agencies, and often relied on existing relationships with partners in other fields to assist PRI participants.* Grantees successfully developed partnerships with key criminal justice entities needed to recruit project participants, but those relationships rarely included joint planning or exchange of progress reports between organizations. Staffing changes, communication, and procedural issues were the problems most commonly affecting cooperation between the two groups, particularly in connection with the pre-release programs funded by DOJ. Further progress integrated re-entry planning might improve the efficiency and effectiveness of re-entry services.

Many PRI services were also provided by external organizations through referral arrangements, often with organizations with which grantees had existing relationships. Grantees continued to face challenges identifying and accessing mental health and substance abuse services for participants, due to insufficient resources for such services and participants' reluctance to acknowledge the need for such assistance. Finding and maintaining stable housing for participants proved a sizeable challenge, although a few grantees were successful in securing



outside funds to provide housing assistance. One-Stop Career Centers were partners in job placement efforts at 21 sites, offering assistance ranging from sharing job listings to providing specialized placement assistance for ex-offenders.

## **E. Costs of PRI**

*The PRI program cost less than expected per participant.* The actual costs averaged \$2,495 in PRI grant funds per participant, compared to an expected cost of \$3,289 per participant.. This lower-than-expected cost appears due to the short average length of participation in PRI. Given that participants were cycling in and out of the program quickly, grantees were therefore able to serve more participants than expected with their grant funds. When comparing costs to outcomes, the PRI program cost \$3,786 per successful placement in unsubsidized employment. Among those with valid recidivism data, PRI services cost \$4,287 per participant who was placed in a job and remained free of crime for one year.

*Grantees garnered substantial donated, in-kind, and volunteer resources to supplement their grant funding.* DOL chose to award PRI grants to FBCOs not only to tap into their experience helping hard-to-serve populations but also to capitalize on their strong connections within local communities. The nine grantees garnered \$1.4 million in donated, volunteer, and in-kind resources from their local communities, equivalent to 25 percent in additional funding beyond their PRI grants. This success in tapping community resources highlights the unique strengths that FBCOs bring to the PRI.

## **F. Next Steps in Federal Efforts to Serve Ex-Offenders**

Prisoner re-entry is a field that has garnered increasing amounts of attention over the past several decades, as the prison population rose and evidence mounted that many former offenders were returning to jail or prison. With the rising cost of the current criminal justice system and

declining tax revenues, the topic of re-entry has taken on additional importance at all levels of government. There is now widespread acceptance that governmental and non-governmental entities can play productive roles in facilitating successful re-entry, and that re-entry planning needs to begin relatively early in a prisoner's incarceration. Among the areas that remain unclear are how actors from different arenas can best partner for common purposes and which interventions are most appropriate in specific circumstances to achieve the desired outcomes.

The findings from these PRI projects may help to inform public policy and develop successful re-entry program models. The PRI program matured substantially over time, laying the groundwork for continued re-entry efforts. During the first two years of operation, sites made significant progress in developing program designs and adjusting their service mix to be more responsive to customer needs. Projects adapted to meet unanticipated challenges and/or the needs of the participants. Sites built productive relationships with many community partners and businesses, and improved their data collection and data entry processes. Staff and organizational development through grantee-inspired initiatives as well as externally-directed and -supported capacity-building appear to be important components of efforts to facilitate greater involvement by FBCOs in re-entry service delivery.

Recent developments confirm that Federal interest in reentry efforts continues to grow. In April 2008, Congress passed and the President signed into law the Second Chance Act, which authorizes federal grants to government agencies and community and faith-based organizations to provide employment assistance, substance abuse treatment, housing, family programming, mentoring, victims support, and other services that can help reduce re-offending and violations

of probation and parole.<sup>67</sup> DOL and DOJ have funded additional series of PRI grants, known as Generation 2 and Generation 3, that incorporate some of the early “lessons” from the projects studied through this evaluation (Generation 1) on better ways of sequencing the parallel grants for pre- and post-release services. DOL has also announced its intent to support a random assignment evaluation of the PRI, assessing the program’s impacts on participants’ post-program labor market outcomes and criminal recidivism.<sup>68</sup>

With the prospect of increasing government interest in addressing both the fiscal and societal impacts of incarceration and prisoner re-entry, and the promising beginning to broadening the methods by which FBCOs are engaged in the re-entry process, it appears likely that new opportunities for research and learning will materialize. The collective experience of the PRI sites and their partners add to the body of knowledge on the subject, and strengthen the foundation for future efforts in this area.

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<sup>67</sup> Public Law 110-199, accessed at [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110\\_cong\\_public\\_laws&docid=f:publ199.110.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ199.110.pdf). To date, funds have not been appropriated to implement the Second Chance Act.

<sup>68</sup> See <https://www.fbo.gov/index?tab=core&s=opportunity&mode=form&id=5d18f79768fd81db98f1ee40059dee42>.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
ASUS	Adult Substance Use Survey
BOP	Federal Bureau of Prisons
CASAS	Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDL	Commercial Driver's License
CFBCI	Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
CJ	Criminal Justice
CRT	Classroom Training
DOC	Department of Corrections
DOJ	(U.S.) Department of Justice
DOL	(U.S.) Department of Labor
DWI	Driving While Intoxicated
EA	Emergency Assistance
ESL	English as a Second Language
ETA	Employment and Training Administration
FBCI	Faith-Based and Community Initiative
FBCO	Faith-Based and Community Organization
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
FBP	Federal Bonding Program
FPO	Federal Probation Officer
GED	General Educational Development
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
IDP	Individual Development Plan
IEP	Individual Employment Plan
ITA	Individual Training Account
JRT	Job Readiness Training
LSI	Level of Service Inventory
LSI-R	Level of Service Inventory – Revised
LWIB	Local Workforce Investment Board
MH	Mental Health
MIS	Management Information System
MOED	Mayor's Office of Employment Development
NA	Narcotics Anonymous
OJT	On-The-Job Training
PO	Parole or Probation Officer

PRI	Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative
PY	Program Year
REC	Reentry Center
RRC	Residential Re-Entry Center
RSP	Reintegration Support Program
SA	Substance Abuse
SGA	Solicitation for Grant Applications
TA	Technical Assistance
TABE	Test of Adult Basic Education
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TEP	Transitional Education Program
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DOL	U.S. Department of Labor
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WOTC	Work Opportunity Tax Credit
WRT	Work Readiness Training

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## APPENDIX A. GRANTEE INFORMATION

The report often uses shortened forms of the grantee names. The table below provides the full names of the organizations as well as their city and state.

**Table A.1**  
**PRI Grantees**

Grantee Name	City	State
Arizona Women's Education and Employment, Inc.	Phoenix	Arizona
The Primavera Foundation, Inc.	Tucson	Arizona
Fresno Career Development Institute, Inc.	Fresno	California
Allen Temple Housing and Economic Development Corporation	Oakland	California
Mexican American Alcoholism Program, Inc.	Sacramento	California
Metro United Methodist Urban Ministry	San Diego	California
The Empowerment Program	Denver	Colorado
Community Partners In Action, Inc.	Hartford	Connecticut
OIC of Broward County, Inc.	Ft. Lauderdale	Florida
The Directors Council	Des Moines	Iowa
The Safer Foundation	Chicago	Illinois
The Church United for Community Development	Baton Rouge	Louisiana
Odyssey House Louisiana, Inc.	New Orleans	Louisiana
Span, Inc.	Boston	Massachusetts
Episcopal Community Services of Maryland	Baltimore	Maryland
Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency	Pontiac	Michigan
Connections to Success	Kansas City	Missouri
St. Patrick Center	St. Louis	Missouri
Career Opportunity Development, Inc.	Egg Harbor City	New Jersey
Goodwill Industries of Greater NY & Northern NJ, Inc.	Newark	New Jersey
Urban Youth Alliance International, Inc. (UYAI)	Bronx	New York
The Doe Fund, Inc.	Brooklyn	New York
Talbert House	Cincinnati	Ohio
SE Works, Inc.	Portland	Oregon
Connection Training Services	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania
Urban League of Greater Dallas & North Central Texas	Dallas	Texas
WABC Central City Comprehensive Community Center	Houston	Texas
Goodwill Industries of San Antonio	San Antonio	Texas
People of Color Against AIDS Network	Seattle	Washington
Word of Hope Ministries, Inc.	Milwaukee	Wisconsin

## **APPENDIX B. INCARCERATION AND COMMUNITY SUPERVISION DATA**

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Among the factors cited indicating variation in community contexts for PRI projects are the incidence of imprisonment of adults, the incidence of community supervision of adults, and the proportion of all released prisoners who are released with conditions. Table B.1 presents the most recent data on the numbers of adults who are incarcerated or on supervision for the 20 states hosting PRI projects. Table B.2 shows the proportion of prisoners for the 20 states who were released with conditions. Some PRI sites focused on enrolling ex-offenders who were under supervision.

**Table B.1**  
**Share of Adult Population Incarcerated or Under Supervision, by State**

State	Adult Population Estimate (2005)	Institution Population (Federal and State) (2005)	Inmates per 1,000 Population	Total on Probation and Parole	Supervised per 1,000 Population
MA	4,940,707	10,701	2.2	168,944	34.2
TX	16,533,683	169,003	10.2	532,228	32.2
OH	8,704,930	45,854	5.3	258,548	29.7
MI	7,596,586	49,546	6.5	198,587	26.1
PA	9,612,877	42,380	4.4	243,293	25.3
WA	4,803,394	17,382	3.6	115,861	24.1
OR	2,791,112	13,411	4.8	66,352	23.8
NJ	6,556,124	27,359	4.2	152,965	23.3
CT	2,675,291	19,442	7.3	58,643	21.9
MD	4,197,427	22,737	5.4	89,864	21.4
FL	13,721,987	89,768	6.5	282,616	20.6
CA	26,430,285	170,676	6.5	500,003	18.9
IL	9,522,332	44,919	4.7	177,712	18.7
CO	3,484,652	21,456	6.2	64,819	18.6
LA	3,375,977	36,083	10.7	62,380	18.5
AZ	4,358,856	33,471	7.7	77,246	17.7
WI	4,240,206	22,720	5.4	70,680	16.7
MO	4,422,078	30,823	7.0	71,988	16.3
IA	2,295,533	8,737	3.8	26,964	11.7
NY	14,708,746	62,743	4.3	172,558	11.7
US	222,940,420	1,525,924	6.8	4,946,944	22.2

Source:

*Adult Population Estimate is from United States Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Bridged-Race Population Estimates, United States July 1st resident population by state, county, age, sex, bridged-race, and Hispanic origin, compiled from 1990-1999 bridged-race intercensal population estimates and 2000-2005 (Vintage 2005) bridged-race postcensal population estimates, on CDC WONDER On-line Database. April 2007. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/bridged-race-v2005.html> on June 12, 2008 12:45:03 PM*

*Institution Population is from the U.S. Census, Prisoners Under Jurisdiction of Federal or State Correctional Authorities—Summary by State: 1990 to 2005 at <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/08s0337.pdf>*

*Total on Probation and Parole is sum of Adults on Probation (12/31/2005) [from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ppus05.pdf>] and Adults on Parole (12/31/2005) [from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ppus05.pdf>]*

Notes:

*Inmates per 1,000 population calculated by (institution population/adult population estimate)\*1000*

*Supervised per 1,000 population is calculated by (total on probation and parole/adult population estimate)\*1000*

**Table B.2**  
**Released Sentenced Prisoners by State and Type of Release, 1998**

State	Conditional Release	Unconditional Release	Total Conditional and Unconditional Releases	Conditional Releases as a Share of Total Conditional and Unconditional Releases
OR	2,584	4	2,588	99.8%
CA	122,094	2,603	124,697	97.9%
WI	4,523	195	4,718	95.9%
LA	13,179	671	13,850	95.2%
IL	22,662	1,409	24,071	94.1%
NY	24,197	1,648	25,845	93.6%
MO	10,636	1,036	11,672	91.1%
MI	10,500	1,174	11,674	89.9%
MD	9,205	1,225	10,430	88.3%
AZ	6,917	1,268	8,185	84.5%
CT	1,104	238	1,342	82.3%
PA	7,285	1,608	8,893	81.9%
IA	3,366	748	4,114	81.8%
CO	4,387	1,103	5,490	79.9%
TX	40,550	12,922	53,472	75.8%
NJ	9,654	4,116	13,770	70.1%
WA	3,983	2,037	6,020	66.2%
OH	11,643	8,372	20,015	58.2%
FL	8,674	13,504	22,178	39.1%
MA	953	1,923	2,876	33.1%
US	406,050	126,086	532,136	76.3%

*Source:*

*Conditional and Unconditional Release data obtained from the Bureau of Justice Statistics Report on Correctional Populations in the United States, 1998 available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cpus9805.pdf>*

## **APPENDIX C. MISSING DATA FROM THE PRI MIS**

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Grantees were required to collect data on participants at the time of enrollment, throughout service provision, and during the follow-up period. These data were then entered into a Web-based management information system (MIS) designed specifically for the PRI. The system contains three categories of data: baseline data, service receipt and short-term outcomes.

DOL designed the system to include data elements that grantees were required to collect, as well as optional data elements that grantees could choose to collect if they were relevant and useful for program management. This strategy was intended to minimize the burden on grantees, while still providing the full range of data that would be useful for both DOL reporting and the evaluation. While reporting fairly complete data for most of the required elements, grantees varied in how often they reported the optional elements. This appendix provides information on which MIS data elements are required and optional as well as the proportion of missing data for each element, based on the final MIS extract in May 2008.

### **A. Baseline and Service Receipt Data**

The PRI MIS data offers a wealth of information on the characteristics of participants and the services they used. The baseline characteristics data were collected either at the time of enrollment or within two weeks of enrollment and contained information about the participants' demographic characteristics, housing status, substance abuse status and history, criminal and employment histories, and educational background. Most grantees collected these data through participants' self-reports.

Grantees also collected data on each service that participants received while enrolled in PRI. Services were divided into six main categories: (1) education and job training activities, (2)



workforce preparation activities, (3) mentoring activities, (4) community involvement activities, (5) health services, and (6) supportive services. Each of these main categories, with the exception of mentoring, contained a subset of two or more specific services. For example, workforce preparation activities included subcategories for career or life skills counseling, workforce information services, work readiness training, subsidized employment, internships, and other.

Data on services were collected and entered into the MIS by local grantee staff on an on-going basis. Many grantee staff who were interviewed during the second round of grantee visits reported that services were entered in a timely fashion, usually within 24 to 48 hours of service provision. However, some staff members were less diligent about data entry. The initial round of evaluation site visits also revealed that data entry during early implementation was not as systematic in general. At some sites, all of the service data were funneled to a particular staff member, usually a case manager, for data entry. At other grantees, multiple people entered data on the direct services they provided. For example, the mentor coordinator would enter data on mentoring services, and the job developer would enter data on work readiness services and employment placement.

Table C.1 includes the specific data elements collected at enrollment and throughout service receipt. The table indicates which elements sites were required by DOL to collect and which were optional. It also includes the proportion of participants for whom data are missing.

**Table C.1  
Prevalence of Missing Data Across Baseline Characteristics**

	Required or Optional	Proportion of Participants with Missing Data
<b>ENROLLMENT</b>		
Date of enrollment	Required	0
Date of exit	Required	0
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>		
Birth date	Required	0
Gender	Required	0
Race—any category marked	Required	10
Ethnicity Hispanic/Latino	Required	0
Highest school grade completed	Required	3
Limited English proficiency	Required	3
Marital status	Required	2
Number of children	Required	7
Number of children living with participant	Required	16
Veteran status	Required	0
Disability status	Required	0
Citizenship	Optional	3
Significant health issues at enrollment	Required	3
Ever admitted for mental health treatment or prescribed psychiatric medication	Optional	90
Child support obligations at enrollment: number of children	Optional	40
Child support obligations at enrollment: amount <sup>a</sup>	Optional	8
<b>WORK HISTORY</b>		
Employment status at incarceration	Required	24
Most recent job prior to incarceration—job code	Optional	27
Most recent job prior to incarceration—hours worked	Optional	29
Most recent job prior to incarceration—number of weeks worked	Optional	31
Most recent job prior to incarceration—hourly wage	Optional	17
Longest-held full-time job prior to incarceration—job code	Optional	32
Longest-held full-time job prior to incarceration—hourly wage	Optional	19
Longest-held full-time job prior to incarceration—number of weeks worked	Optional	15
Employment status at enrollment	Required	0
Job at enrollment—job code <sup>a</sup>	Required	6
Job at enrollment—number of hours worked per week <sup>a</sup>	Required	5
Job at enrollment—hourly wage <sup>a</sup>	Required	5
Job at enrollment—start date <sup>a</sup>	Required	6
Primary income source prior to incarceration <sup>b</sup>	Optional	18
<b>HOUSING STATUS</b>		
Housing status at enrollment	Required	0

**Table C.1**  
**Prevalence of Missing Data Across Baseline Characteristics**

<b>ALCOHOL ABUSE AND DRUG USE</b>		
Alcohol abuse and drug use at enrollment	Required	0
<b>CRIMINAL HISTORY AND RELATED ELEMENTS</b>		
Probation/parole status at enrollment	Required	0
Participation in PRI mandated by criminal justice agency	Required	7
Date of most recent incarceration	Required	7
Date of release from most recent incarceration	Required	0
Type of institution where incarcerated	Required	3
Type of crime for which most recently incarcerated	Required	1
Total time incarcerated in lifetime	Required	0
Number of arrests in lifetime—total and felony (optional)	Optional	16
Number of convictions in lifetime—total and felony (optional)	Optional	16
Services received while incarcerated—types	Optional	22
Services received while incarcerated—GED receipt	Optional	15

*Source: PRI MIS extract, dated May 6, 2008*

<sup>a</sup>*Includes only those for whom the data element is applicable according to skip logic.*

<sup>b</sup>*Includes both participants who are missing data as well as participants for whom this element is not applicable.*

## **B. Outcome Data**

Grantees were also asked to collect data on participants' employment and earnings, recidivism, educational attainment, substance abuse and illegal drug use, and housing. Table C.2 includes the specific data elements used to calculate outcome measures in the analysis. The table indicates which elements sites were required by DOL to collect and which were optional. It also includes the proportion of participants for whom data are missing. These proportions were calculated based on skip logic patterns. They also take into account two distinct reasons for missing data. First, data may be missing because a site did not enter a record for a participant when he or she reached a key benchmark. Second, data can also be missing because a grantee may have entered an MIS record for the participant but did not complete all of the associated fields. The percentages in the table combine these two types of missing data, when appropriate.

As the table reveals, several key outcome measures are missing for large proportions of clients, limiting the conclusions that can be drawn from the data.

**Table C.2**  
**Prevalence of Missing Data Across Outcome Data Elements**

	Required or Optional	Proportion of Participants with Missing Data
<b>EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES THROUGHOUT PRI PARTICIPATION</b>		
Date of initial placement	Required	Unknown
Hourly wage <sup>a</sup>	Required	1
Number of hours worked in 1st full week <sup>a</sup>	Required	1
Occupation code <sup>a</sup>	Optional	3
<b>EDUCATION OUTCOMES THROUGHOUT PRI PARTICIPATION</b>		
Attained diploma, GED, post-secondary degree or certificate	Required	Unknown
Date attained <sup>a</sup>	Required	0
Type of diploma, GED, post-secondary degree or certificate <sup>a</sup>	Required	0
<b>ASSESSMENT AT 6 MONTHS AFTER ENROLLMENT</b>		
Housing status at 6 months after enrollment <sup>b</sup>	Required	46
Alcohol abuse/drug use at 6 months after enrollment <sup>b</sup>	Required	43
<b>ARREST OUTCOMES IN FIRST YEAR AFTER RELEASE</b>		
Re-arrested/re-incarcerated <sup>b</sup>	Required	12
Date re-arrested/re-incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	Required	0
Most serious charge for new crime <sup>a</sup>	Optional	23
Convicted of new crime <sup>a</sup>	Optional	41
Incarcerated for a new crime <sup>a</sup>	Optional	7
<b>FOLLOW-UP FOR THREE QUARTERS AFTER PRI PROGRAM EXIT</b>		
Employed in 1st quarter after exit <sup>b</sup>	Required	40
Employed in 2nd quarter after exit <sup>b</sup>	Required	47
Hours worked during first week in 2nd quarter after exit <sup>a</sup>	Required	1
Hourly wages in 2nd quarter after exit <sup>a</sup>	Required	0
Employed in 3rd quarter after exit <sup>b</sup>	Required	51
Hours worked during first week in 3rd quarter after exit <sup>a</sup>	Required	1
Hourly wages in 2nd quarter after exit <sup>a</sup>	Required	1

Source: Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative Management Information System extract dated May 6, 2008

Note: Unknown refers to those variables for which grantees were asked to enter data for those participants who achieved an outcome. It is not possible to distinguish between those who did not achieve these outcomes and those for whom the grantee simply did not enter data.

<sup>a</sup>Includes only those for whom the data element is applicable according to skip logic.

<sup>b</sup>Includes the proportion of participants for whom a record is missing as well as the proportion for whom a record exists but a value for the data element is missing.

## **APPENDIX D. SUBGROUP ANALYSIS**

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To supplement the core analysis presented in the report, the evaluation team conducted statistical tests to examine differences in outcomes between key grantee and participant subgroups. The full universe of PRI participants served in the first two years of the demonstration is included in the MIS data. While this group of participants is not representative of ex-offenders nationwide, they are representative of participants (or potential participants) who could be served through PRI in these sites if DOL were to continue to fund the program. Given that the demonstration was on-going at the time the MIS data were extracted for this report, the significance testing provides a useful indication of the patterns that are likely to emerge if the program continues serving these types of ex-offenders. Grantee subgroups were defined by organization size and prior experience serving ex-offenders. Participant subgroups included gender, age, race, type of institution from which released, educational attainment at enrollment, community supervision status at enrollment, whether PRI participation was mandated by a criminal justice agent, time between release and enrollment, length of most recent incarceration, and employment status at enrollment. The following tables use a “\*” to indicate subgroup differences that are statistically different from zero at the 0.01 percent level, using a two-tailed test.

**Table D.1  
Subgroup Differences in Length of Participation**

	Weeks of PRI Participation	
	Average Number of Weeks	Number of Participants
<b>Participant Subgroups</b>		
Gender		
Male	11.5	8,053
Female	13.3	2,480
Difference	-1.8	
Age		
Less than 35 years	11.2	4,922
35 or more years	12.5	5,609
Difference	-1.3 *	
Race		
Black	10.9	6,009
Non-Black	13.2	3,426
Difference	-2.2 *	
Type of Incarceration Facility		
Federal	10.8	935
State and local	12.0	9,598
Difference	-1.2 *	
Had a High School Diploma, GED or Higher at Enrollment		
Yes	12.2	5,713
No	11.8	4,519
Difference	0.4	
On Community Supervision at Enrollment		
Yes	12.2	9,001
No	10.2	1,527
Difference	2.0 *	
Mandated to Participate		
Yes	16.1	809
No	11.8	9,002
Difference	4.3 *	
Months from Release to PRI Enrollment		
Less than one month	11.7	5,112
One month or more	12.1	5,421
Difference	-0.4	
Length of Most Recent Incarceration		
Less than one year	12.1	4,723
One year or more	12.2	5,089
Difference	-0.1	

**Table D.1**  
**Subgroup Differences in Length of Participation**

	Weeks of PRI Participation	
	Average Number of Weeks	Number of Participants
Employed at Enrollment		
Yes	11.9	1,143
No	11.9	9,385
Difference	0.0	
<b>Grantee Subgroups</b>		
Size of Grantees' Annual Budget Prior to PRI		
Less than \$1 million	11.2	2,086
\$1 million or more	12.1	8,447
Difference	-0.9 *	
Grantees with Prior Experience Serving Ex-Offenders		
Yes	12.0	7,750
No	11.7	2,783
Difference	0.3	

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

**Table D.2**  
**Subgroup Differences in the Types of Key Services Received**

	Received Any Workforce Preparation Services	Received Any Mentoring Services	Received Any Supportive Services	Number of Participants
	Percent of Participants	Percent of Participants	Percent of Participants	
<b>Participant Subgroups</b>				
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	90.9	52.2	53.1	8,988
Female	88.4	54.2	59.2	2,782
Difference	2.5 *	-1.9	-6.1 *	
<b>Age</b>				
Less than 35 years	90.5	52.7	49.7	5,485
35 or more years	90.1	52.8	58.8	6,282
Difference	0.3	-0.2	-9.1 *	
<b>Race</b>				
Black	90.1	55.3	53.6	6,704
Non-Black	90.1	49.8	57.9	3,831
Difference	-0.0	5.5 *	-4.3 *	
<b>Type of Incarceration Facility</b>				
Federal	94.4	38.7	42.0	1,027
State and local	89.9	54.1	55.8	10,743
Difference	4.5 *	-15.4 *	-13.7 *	
<b>Had a High School Diploma, GED or Higher at Enrollment</b>				
Yes	90.8	53.9	55.7	6,412
No	89.9	51.6	52.9	5,035
Difference	0.8	2.3	2.8 *	
<b>On Community Supervision at Enrollment</b>				
Yes	90.1	51.7	55.4	10,067
No	91.6	58.8	54.0	1,698
Difference	-1.5	-7.1 *	6.0 *	
<b>Mandated to Participate</b>				
Yes	92.0	66.3	48.4	970
No	90.3	52.0	54.9	10,043
Difference	1.6	14.3 *	-6.5 *	
<b>Months from Release to PRI Enrollment</b>				
Less than one month	90.9	53.9	57.9	5,732
One month or more	89.7	51.6	51.4	6,038
Difference	1.1	2.2	6.5 *	
<b>Length of Most Recent Incarceration</b>				
Less than one year	90.9	54.6	52.8	5,313
One year or more	92.1	51.7	56.4	5,664
Difference	-1.2	3.0 *	-3.7 *	



**Table D.2  
Subgroup Differences in the Types of Key Services Received**

	Received Any Workforce Preparation Services	Received Any Mentoring Services	Received Any Supportive Services	Number of Participants
	Percent of Participants	Percent of Participants	Percent of Participants	
<b>Employed at Enrollment</b>				
Yes	83.1	48.3	53.6	1,217
No	91.1	53.3	54.7	10,548
Difference	-8.0 *	-5.0 *	-1.1	
<b>Grantee Subgroups</b>				
<b>Size of Grantees' Annual Budget Prior to PRI</b>				
Less than \$1 million	84.1	53.2	53.0	2,309
\$1 million or more	92.8	52.6	53.2	9,461
Difference	-7.7 *	0.6	-0.2	
<b>Grantees with Prior Experience Serving Ex-Offenders</b>				
Yes	91.4	57.2	54.6	8,736
No	87.0	40.0	54.5	3,034
Difference	4.4 *	17.1 *	0.1	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

**Table D.3  
Subgroup Differences in Job Placements**

	Placed in Employment		Wages at Initial Placement	
	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Average Hourly Wage	Number of Participants
<b>Participant Subgroups</b>				
Gender				
Male	65.5	9,154	\$9.52	5,954
Female	67.1	2,821	\$8.55	1,884
Difference	-1.6		\$0.96	*
Age				
Less than 35 years	63.5	5,587	\$9.07	3,521
35 or more years	68.0	6,385	\$9.46	4,314
Difference	-4.5	*	-\$0.39	*
Race				
Black	63.4	6,826	\$9.07	4,309
Non-Black	71.4	3,895	\$9.62	2,767
Difference	-7.9	*	-\$0.55	*
Type of Incarceration Facility				
Federal	81.8	1,034	\$9.25	840
State and local	64.4	10,941	\$9.29	6,998
Difference	17.4	*	-\$0.04	
Had a High School Diploma, GED or Higher at Enrollment				
Yes	69.8	5,115	\$9.08	3,136
No	61.8	6,512	\$9.42	4,515
Difference	8.0	*	-\$0.34	*
On Community Supervision at Enrollment				
Yes	66.7	10,227	\$9.29	6,782
No	61.5	1,729	\$9.24	1,054
Difference	5.3	*	\$0.05	
Mandated to Participate				
Yes	71.8	982	\$9.56	700
No	65.4	10,211	\$9.24	6,633
Difference	6.4	*	\$0.32	*
Months from Release to PRI Enrollment				
Less than one month	65.9	5,813	\$9.29	3,807
One month or more	65.9	6,162	\$9.28	4,030
Difference	0.0		\$0.01	
Length of Most Recent Incarceration				
Less than one year	61.5	5,398	\$9.25	3,303
One year or more	70.9	5,750	\$9.27	4,049
Difference	-9.4	*	-\$0.03	

**Table D.3  
Subgroup Differences in Job Placements**

	Placed in Employment		Wages at Initial Placement	
	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Average Hourly Wage	Number of Participants
<b>Employed at Enrollment</b>				
Yes	76.7	1,242	\$9.51	942
No	64.7	10,717	\$9.26	6,896
Difference	12.0 *		\$0.26	
<b>Grantee Subgroups</b>				
<b>Size of Grantees' Annual Budget Prior to PRI</b>				
Less than \$1 million	59.0	2,376	\$9.57	1,396
\$1 million or more	67.6	9,599	\$9.23	6,442
Difference	-8.6 *		\$0.35 *	
<b>Grantees with Greater Success Tracking Participants</b>				
Yes	79.1	1,881	\$9.19	1,473
No	63.4	10,094	\$9.31	6,365
Difference	15.6 *		-\$0.11	
<b>Grantees with Prior Experience Serving Ex-Offenders</b>				
Yes	66.5	8,881	\$9.31	5,870
No	64.1	3,094	\$9.21	1,968
Difference	2.3		\$0.10	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

Notes: Data pertain only to those individuals who were enrolled at least three months prior to the final extract to minimize potential bias in the statistics that are reported from right-censored data.

**Table D.4  
Subgroup Differences in Post-Exit Employment**

	Employed in 1st Quarter After Exit		Employed in 2nd Quarter After Exit		Employed in 3rd Quarter After Exit	
	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants
<b>Participant Subgroups</b>						
Gender						
Male	49.3	7,439	41.0	6,247	37.7	4,892
Female	50.5	2,232	44.8	1,888	41.5	1,427
Difference	-1.2		-3.8 *		-3.8 *	
Age						
Less than 35 years	46.3	4,527	38.3	3,835	34.1	2,957
35 or more years	52.5	5,142	45.0	4,298	42.4	3,361
Difference	-6.2 *		-6.7 *		-8.3 *	
Race						
Black	45.3	5,605	37.1	4,715	35.2	3,621
Non-Black	58.9	3,094	51.0	2,616	46.3	2,069
Difference	-13.5 *		-13.9 *		-11.0 *	
Type of Incarceration Facility						
Federal	72.3	835	66.5	716	62.4	590
State and local	47.5	8,836	39.5	7,419	36.1	5,729
Difference	24.9 *		27.0 *		26.3 *	
Had a High School Diploma, GED or Higher at Enrollment						
Yes	54.2	5,169	46.2	4,353	43.1	3,364
No	44.7	4,220	36.9	3,556	33.3	2,783
Difference	9.5 *		9.3 *		9.8 *	
On Community Supervision at Enrollment						
Yes	50.2	8,223	42.5	6,940	39.1	5,448
No	46.5	1,433	38.3	1,185	35.5	864
Difference	3.8 *		4.2 *		3.5	
Mandated to Participate						
Yes	57.0	714	50.2	624	50.2	538
No	48.8	8,293	41.0	6,965	37.7	5,374
Difference	8.2 *		9.2 *		12.5 *	
Months from Release to PRI Enrollment						
Less than one month	50.2	4,652	41.8	3,806	39.1	2,832
One month or more	49.0	5,019	41.9	4,329	38.1	3,487
Difference	1.1		-0.2		1.0	

**Table D.4  
Subgroup Differences in Post-Exit Employment**

	Employed in 1st Quarter After Exit		Employed in 2nd Quarter After Exit		Employed in 3rd Quarter After Exit	
	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants
<b>Length of Most Recent Incarceration</b>						
Less than one year	46.0	4,322	39.2	3,598	36.0	2,778
One year or more	54.2	4,662	45.7	3,937	42.4	3,021
Difference	-8.1	*	-6.5	*	-6.4	*
<b>Employed at Enrollment</b>						
Yes	64.6	1,030	57.7	936	52.4	760
No	47.9	8,629	39.8	7,192	36.7	5,555
Difference	16.8	*	17.9	*	15.7	*
<b>Grantee Subgroups</b>						
<b>Size of Grantees' Annual Budget Prior to PRI</b>						
Less than \$1 million	38.9	1,916	33.6	1,620	29.2	1,337
\$1 million or more	52.3	7,755	43.9	6,515	41.1	4,982
Difference	-13.4	*	-10.3	*	-11.9	*
<b>Grantees with Greater Success Tracking Participants</b>						
Yes	64.5	1,320	55.3	1,157	52.7	974
No	47.2	8,351	39.6	6,978	36.0	5,345
Difference	17.3	*	15.7	*	16.7	*
<b>Grantees with Prior Experience Serving Ex-Offenders</b>						
Yes	50.0	7,070	42.2	5,926	38.6	4,735
No	48.6	2,601	40.8	2,209	38.5	1,584
Difference	1.3		1.4		0.1	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

**Table D.5  
Subgroup Differences in Recidivism**

	Re-arrested for a New Crime	Reincarcerated for a Technical Violation of Probation or Parole	Number of Participants
	Percent of Participants	Percent of Participants	
<b>Participant Subgroups</b>			
Gender			
Male	8.6	9.1	5,214
Female	4.2	6.9	1,616
Difference	4.5 *	2.2 *	
Age			
Less than 35 years	8.6	9.4	3,096
35 or more years	6.7	7.9	3,733
Difference	1.9 *	1.5	
Race			
Black	8.5	9.0	3,858
Non-Black	5.5	8.0	2,263
Difference	3.0 *	1.0	
Type of Incarceration Facility			
Federal	2.2	5.9	589
State and local	8.0	8.8	6,241
Difference	-5.8 *	-2.9	
Had a High School Diploma, GED or Higher at Enrollment			
Yes	6.9	9.7	3,031
No	8.2	7.7	3,641
Difference	1.3	2.0 *	
On Community Supervision at Enrollment			
Yes	7.3	9.2	5,899
No	8.9	4.3	929
Difference	-1.6	4.9 *	
Mandated to Participate			
Yes	10.1	8.3	616
No	7.1	8.5	5,826
Difference	3.0 *	-0.2	
Months from Release to PRI Enrollment			
Less than one month	8.8	10.3	2,909
One month or more	6.6	7.2	3,921
Difference	2.2 *	3.1 *	
Length of Most Recent Incarceration			
Less than one year	8.6	7.7	3,075
One year or more	6.8	9.2	3,280
Difference	1.8 *	-1.4	

**Table D.5  
Subgroup Differences in Recidivism**

	Re-arrested for a New Crime	Reincarcerated for a Technical Violation of Probation or Parole	Number of Participants
	Percent of Participants	Percent of Participants	
<b>Employed at Enrollment</b>			
Yes	5.9	8.3	817
No	7.8	8.6	6,012
Difference	-1.9	-0.3	
<b>Grantee Subgroups</b>			
<b>Size of Grantees' Annual Budget Prior to PRI</b>			
Less than \$1 million	7.0	7.6	1,290
\$1 million or more	7.7	8.8	5,540
Difference	-0.7	-1.1	
<b>Grantees with Greater Success Tracking Participants</b>			
Yes	9.9	9.8	1,148
No	7.0	8.3	5,682
Difference	2.9 *	1.5	
<b>Grantees with Prior Experience Serving Ex- Offenders</b>			
Yes	8.1	8.0	5,101
No	5.8	10.2	1,729
Difference	2.3 *	-2.3 *	

*Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008*

**Table D.6  
Subgroup Differences in Educational Attainment**

	Attained Any Educational Degree or Credential		Attained a Certification for Vocational or Occupational Skills Training		Received a GED	
	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants
<b>Participant Subgroups</b>						
Gender						
Male	7.7	9,154	97.4	703	2.4	703
Female	7.8	2,821	93.2	220	7.3	220
Difference	-0.1		4.3 *		-4.9 *	
Age						
Less than 35 years	7.7	5,587	94.9	428	4.9	428
35 or more years	7.8	6,385	97.8	495	2.4	495
Difference	-0.1		-2.9		2.5	
Race						
Black	7.9	7,607	96.5	600	3.7	600
Non-Black	6.0	4,320	95.7	257	3.9	257
Difference	1.9 *		0.8		-0.2	
Type of Incarceration Facility						
Federal	8.6	1,153	100.0	99	0.0	99
State and local	7.0	12,162	96.1	854	3.9	854
Difference	1.6		3.9		-3.9	
Had a High School Diploma, GED or Higher at Enrollment						
Yes	7.1	7,257	98.3	518	1.4	518
No	7.4	5,647	95.0	416	5.7	416
Difference	-0.2		3.3 *		-4.4 *	
On Community Supervision at Enrollment						
Yes	7.2	11,361	96.5	816	3.6	816
No	7.2	1,916	97.1	137	2.9	137
Difference	0.0		-0.6		0.6	
Mandated to Participate						
Yes	4.2	1,099	95.7	46	4.4	46
No	7.6	11,341	96.6	859	3.3	859
Difference	-3.4 *		-1.0		-1.0	



**Table D.6  
Subgroup Differences in Educational Attainment**

	Attained Any Educational Degree or Credential		Attained a Certification for Vocational or Occupational Skills Training		Received a GED	
	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants
<b>Months from Release to PRI Enrollment</b>						
Less than one month	6.2	6,484	96.5	404	3.7	404
One month or more	8.0	6,831	96.5	549	3.3	549
Difference	-1.8 *		0.0		0.4	
<b>Length of Most Recent Incarceration</b>						
Less than one year	7.3	5,988	95.2	437	4.8	437
One year or more	6.9	6,382	98.4	437	1.6	437
Difference	0.5		-3.2 *		3.2 *	
<b>Employed at Enrollment</b>						
Yes	6.5	1,242	96.3	81	2.5	81
No	7.9	10,717	96.4	842	3.7	842
Difference	-1.3		-0.1		-1.2	
<b>Grantee Subgroups</b>						
<b>Size of Grantees' Annual Budget Prior to PRI</b>						
Less than \$1 million	14.0	2,376	96.7	333	4.5	333
\$1 million or more	6.2	9,599	96.3	590	3.1	590
Difference	7.9 *		0.4		1.5	
<b>Grantees with Prior Experience Serving Ex-Offenders</b>						
Yes	8.4	9,919	96.6	833	3.5	833
No	3.5	3,396	95.8	120	3.3	120
Difference	4.9 *		0.8		0.2	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

## **APPENDIX E. ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE USE AND OUTCOMES**

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Additional subgroup analyses explored the relationship between the receipt of PRI services and the participants' key outcomes. Tables E.1, E.2, and E.3 present subgroup results for job placement, post-exit employment, and recidivism, respectively. Relationships identified through these analyses, however, do not imply causal relationships. Individuals who chose to participate in various program services were likely to be systematically different from the participants who do not participate in the service. It may be that those who chose to participate in PRI were less likely to recidivate, regardless of their participation, and their participation in PRI could have actually reduced recidivism; or it may be that those who had not recidivated might have simply been available to participate in PRI, given that they were not incarcerated. The fact that participants have complex needs and many factors influence their eventual success also suggests that these simple measures have only minimal predictive power of participant outcomes. In addition, grantees had much greater success tracking and recording outcomes for those participants who continued to be involved in the program than those who dropped out. Thus, imputation methods for dealing with missing data may influence the results. Only an experimental design can disentangle these relationships.

**Table E.1  
Differences in Job Placements Based on Service Receipt**

	Placed in Employment		Wages at Initial Placement	
	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Average Hourly Wage	Number of Participants
Length of Participation in PRI (Including Follow-up)				
Less than sixteen weeks	77.2	5,699	\$9.30	4,367
Sixteen weeks or more	56.8	6,071	\$9.26	3,428
Difference	20.3	*	\$0.04	
Total Number of PRI Services				
Less than five services	75.2	5,888	\$9.22	4,407
Five services or more	58.1	5,882	\$9.37	3,388
Difference	17.1	*	-\$0.15	
Received Any Workforce Preparation Services				
Yes	68.1	10,625	\$9.25	7,198
No	53.0	1,145	\$9.70	597
Difference	15.1	*	-\$0.45	*
Received Any Education Services				
Yes	68.6	3,448	\$9.28	2,346
No	65.9	8,322	\$9.28	5,449
Difference	2.7	*	\$0.00	
Received Any Mentoring Services				
Yes	69.9	6,207	\$9.24	4,312
No	63.1	5,563	\$9.34	3,483
Difference	6.8	*	-\$0.09	
Received Any Health Services				
Yes	69.7	2,989	\$9.19	2,075
No	65.6	8,781	\$9.32	5,720
Difference	4.0	*	-0.13	
Received Any Community Services				
Yes	77.2	1,291	\$9.40	987
No	65.4	10,479	\$9.27	6,808
Difference	11.9	*	\$0.13	
Received Any Supportive Services				
Yes	71.8	6,421	\$9.20	4,578
No	60.5	5,349	\$9.41	3,217
Difference	11.3	*	-\$0.21	*
Received Vocational/Occupational Skills Training				
Yes	71.1	1,062	\$9.37	752
No	66.2	10,708	\$9.28	7,043
Difference	5.0	*	\$0.10	
Received Workforce Readiness Training				
Yes	68.8	5,478	\$9.00	3,751
No	64.8	6,292	\$9.55	4,043
Difference	4.0	*	-\$0.55	*

**Table E.1**  
**Differences in Job Placements Based on Service Receipt**

	Placed in Employment		Wages at Initial Placement	
	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Average Hourly Wage	Number of Participants
<b>Received Career or Life Skills Counseling</b>				
Yes	70.4	6,060	\$9.28	4,240
No	62.7	5,710	\$9.30	3,553
Difference	7.7 *		-\$0.02	
<b>Received Workforce Information Services</b>				
Yes	71.1	5,682	\$9.12	4,016
No	62.6	6,088	\$9.46	3,779
Difference	8.5 *		-\$0.33 *	
<b>Received Subsidized Employment</b>				
Yes	63.7	532	\$9.41	338
No	66.8	11,238	\$9.28	7,457
Difference	-3.1		\$0.13	
<b>Received an Internship</b>				
Yes	79.1	43	\$9.69	33
No	66.6	11,727	\$9.28	7,762
Difference	12.5		\$0.41	
<b>Received Other Workforce Preparation Activities</b>				
Yes	73.0	5,195	\$9.21	3,767
No	61.7	6,575	\$9.35	4,028
Difference	11.3 *		-\$0.14	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

Notes: Data pertain only to those individuals who were enrolled at least three months prior to the final extract to minimize potential bias in the statistics that are reported from right-censored data.

**Table E.2**  
**Differences in Post-Exit Employment Based on Service Receipt**

	Employed in 1st Quarter After Exit		Employed in 2nd Quarter After Exit		Employed in 3rd Quarter After Exit	
	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants
<b>Length of Participation in PRI (Including Follow-up)</b>						
Less than sixteen weeks	59.7	4,631	52.4	4,038	49.0	3,188
Sixteen weeks or more	40.8	4,851	32.0	3,941	28.3	3,007
Difference	18.9 *		20.4 *		20.7 *	
<b>Total Number of PRI Services</b>						
Less than five services	56.3	4,332	46.5	3,539	44.5	2,500
Five services or more	44.8	5,150	38.9	4,440	35.2	3,695
Difference	11.4 *		7.5 *		9.2 *	
<b>Received Any Workforce Preparation Services</b>						
Yes	51.0	8,414	43.3	7,010	40.3	5,361
No	43.0	1,068	34.9	969	30.6	834
Difference	8.0 *		8.4 *		9.7 *	
<b>Received Any Education Services</b>						
Yes	54.6	2,720	47.4	2,269	44.7	1,776
No	48.2	6,762	40.3	5,710	36.7	4,419
Difference	6.4 *		7.1 *		8.0 *	
<b>Received Any Mentoring Services</b>						
Yes	52.5	4,590	42.7	3,677	40.5	2,569
No	47.8	4,892	41.9	4,302	37.9	3,626
Difference	4.7 *		0.8		2.6	
<b>Received Any Health Services</b>						
Yes	52.7	2,169	43.1	1,762	40.4	1,268
No	49.3	7,313	42.1	6,217	38.6	4,927
Difference	3.4 *		1.0		1.8	
<b>Received Any Community Services</b>						
Yes	61.2	908	50.7	708	47.7	547
No	49.0	8,574	41.5	7,271	38.1	5,648
Difference	12.4 *		0.9 *		9.6 *	
<b>Received Any Supportive Services</b>						
Yes	53.6	5,168	44.2	4,396	40.8	3,379

**Table E.2**  
**Differences in Post-Exit Employment Based on Service Receipt**

	Employed in 1st Quarter After Exit		Employed in 2nd Quarter After Exit		Employed in 3rd Quarter After Exit	
	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants
No	45.8	4,314	40.0	3,583	36.8	2,816
Difference	7.8 *		4.2 *		4.0 *	
Received Vocational/ Occupational Skills Training						
Yes	55.0	883	46.5	735	46.5	564
No	49.5	8,599	41.9	7,244	38.2	5,631
Difference	5.5 *		4.7		8.2 *	
Received Workforce Readiness Training						
Yes	51.5	4,342	43.5	3,589	39.5	2,780
No	49.0	5,140	41.3	4,390	38.6	3,415
Difference	2.6		2.3		0.9	
Received Career or Life Skills Counseling						
Yes	51.1	4,644	43.1	3,765	41.7	2,719
No	49.1	4,838	41.6	4,214	36.9	3,476
Difference	2.1		1.6		4.9 *	
Received Workforce Information Services						
Yes	50.5	4,305	41.7	3,525	38.4	2,526
No	49.7	5,177	42.7	4,454	39.4	3,669
Difference	0.8		-1.0		-0.9	
Received Subsidized Employment						
Yes	51.0	373	48.4	310	45.7	245
No	50.0	9,109	42.0	7,669	38.7	5,950
Difference	2.0		6.4		7.0	
Received an Internship						
Yes	66.7	21	57.1	14	55.6	9
No	50.0	9,461	42.3	7,965	39.0	6,186
Difference	16.6		14.9		16.6	
Received Other Workforce Preparation Activities						
Yes	54.6	3,977	47.4	3,203	45.4	2,379
No	46.8	5,505	38.9	4,776	35.0	3,816
Difference	7.8 *		8.5 *		10.3 *	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008

**Table E.3  
Differences in Recidivism Based on Service Receipt**

	Re-arrested for a New Crime	Reincarcerated for a Technical Violation of Probation or Parole	Number of Participants
	Percent of Participants	Percent of Participants	
Length of Participation in PRI (Including Follow-up)			
Less than sixteen weeks	5.6	6.9	3,886
Sixteen weeks or more	10.4	10.7	2,839
Difference	-4.8 *	-3.8 *	
Total Number of PRI Services			
Less than five services	7.0	7.4	3,267
Five services or more	8.1	9.5	3,458
Difference	-1.1	-2.1 *	
Received Any Workforce Preparation Services			
Yes	7.5	8.2	6035
No	8.7	11.3	690
Difference	-1.2	-3.1 *	
Received Any Education Services			
Yes	4.7	7.4	2,030
No	8.8	9.0	4,695
Difference	-4.1 *	-1.6	
Received Any Mentoring Services			
Yes	8.6	7.5	3,153
No	6.7	9.4	3,572
Difference	1.8 *	-2.0 *	
Received Any Health Services			
Yes	5.7	8.8	1,624
No	8.2	8.4	5,101
Difference	-2.5 *	0.4	
Received Any Community Services			
Yes	5.3	7.1	743
No	7.9	8.7	5,982
Difference	-2.6	-1.5	
Received Any Supportive Services			
Yes	8.1	8.5	3,813
No	7.8	8.5	2,912
Difference	0.3	0.0	
Received Vocational/Occupational Skills Training			
Yes	3.9	7.7	639
No	8.0	8.6	6,086
Difference	-4.1 *	-0.9	
Received Workforce Readiness Training			
Yes	7.6	8.8	3,045
No	7.6	8.3	3,680

**Table E.3  
Differences in Recidivism Based on Service Receipt**

	Re-arrested for a New Crime	Reincarcerated for a Technical Violation of Probation or Parole	
	Percent of Participants	Percent of Participants	Number of Participants
Difference	0.0	0.5	
Received Career or Life Skills Counseling			
Yes	7.8	8.1	3,411
No	7.4	8.9	3,314
Difference	0.4	-0.8	
Received Workforce Information Services			
Yes	6.6	8.4	3,106
No	8.5	8.6	3,619
Difference	-1.9 *	-0.2	
Received Subsidized Employment			
Yes	6.6	7.5	332
No	7.6	8.6	6,393
Difference	-1.0	-1.0	
Received an Internship			
Yes	0.0	5.3	19
No	7.6	8.5	6,706
Difference	-7.6	-3.2	
Received Other Workforce Preparation Activities			
Yes	7.4	8.1	2,910
No	7.7	8.8	3,815
Difference	-0.3	-0.7	

Source: PRI MIS extract dated May 6, 2008



## APPENDIX F. REGRESSIONS

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A series of regressions was conducted to supplement the core descriptive analysis of participant outcomes. The regression analysis aims to control for measurable differences among sites and participants in an effort to gain greater precision in measuring and explaining observed differences in outcomes. A series of models was developed to examine the relationship among participant, grantee, and community characteristics and four key outcomes, namely placement in unsubsidized employment, initial wage rate, employment in the first quarter after exit, and recidivism. For each outcome, three regression models were run. The first controlled for participant characteristics only; the second added grantee dummy variables; and the third replaced grantee dummy variables with city-level statistics, including population, unemployment rate, racial composition, housing units owned, and violent and property crime rates.<sup>69</sup>

Models controlling for observed participant characteristics and grantee-level dummy variables produced the best fit across all measures, suggesting that grantee-specific differences may play an important role in explaining participant outcomes. In particular, variation in the completeness and accuracy of grantee data collection are likely to influence the analysis results. Still, a multitude of factors influenced PRI participants' success, including many that were not observed, such as motivation and family support. As a result, the regressions have limited predictive power. Results are presented in Table F.1, with a “\*” noting differences are statistically different from zero at the 1 percent level using a two-tailed test.

The regression results show some of the same trends identified in descriptive subgroup analyses discussed earlier in the chapter. When controlling for other participant characteristics,

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<sup>69</sup> Given the linear relationship between the grantee dummy variables and the city-level statistics, it was not possible to run regressions containing both sets of controls.

as well as the grantee, participants who were younger than 35 years of age tended to have worse short-term employment rates and higher recidivism outcomes. Men also tended to have higher recidivism rates than women. Those released from federal institutions were employed at higher rates and recidivated less than their counterparts from state and local facilities. Blacks earned lower wages, were less likely to be employed after exit, and were more likely to be re-arrested for a new crime or commit a technical violation. Those with lower education levels also had worse employment outcomes.

**Table F.1**  
**Regressions on Key Outcomes Controlling for Participant Characteristics and Grantees**

	Placed in Employment	Wage at Initial Placement	Employed in First Quarter After Exit	Re-arrested for New Crime or Reincarcerated for Technical Violation
R-square	0.094	0.100	0.159	0.052
F-statistic	17.410 *	12.280 *	23.300 *	5.240 *
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Intercept	0.881 *	9.045 *	0.867	0.014
Male	(0.008)	1.120 *	0.004	0.037
Age 25 to 34	0.031	0.377 *	0.057 *	(0.037) *
Age 35 to 44	0.049 *	0.657 *	0.061 *	(0.029)
Age 45 or older	0.030	0.635 *	0.101 *	(0.058) *
Black	(0.011)	(0.644) *	(0.061) *	0.021
Hispanic	(0.005)	(0.419) *	(0.036)	0.039 *
Single	(0.021)	(0.239) *	(0.030)	0.008
Has disability	(0.057) *	0.080	(0.054)	0.005
Has high school degree, GED, or higher	(0.037) *	(0.270) *	(0.024)	0.001
Employed full-time at incarceration	0.055 *	0.302 *	0.058 *	(0.022)
Employed part-time at incarceration	0.028	(0.212)	(0.0020)	0.008
Employed at enrollment	0.030	0.060	(0.513) *	0.001
Own/rent or staying with family or friends	(0.043) *	0.386 *	(0.014)	(0.008)
Abused alcohol or drugs in 3 months prior to enrollment	(0.032)	(0.133)	(0.033)	0.012
Has significant health issues	(0.059) *	(0.363) *	(0.083) *	(0.007)
Total arrests—2 to 4	(0.009)	(0.078)	(0.024)	(0.001)
Total arrests—5 to 10	0.013	0.024	(0.014)	0.005
Total arrests—11 or more	(0.027)	(0.083)	(0.050) *	0.012
Total time incarcerated—6 months to 1 year	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.008)
Total time incarcerated—1 to 2 years	(0.019)	(0.082)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Total time incarcerated—2 to 3 years	(0.018)	0.107	(0.023)	(0.014)
Total time incarcerated—3 or more years	0.017	0.288	0.009	(0.008)
Released from state prison	(0.104) *	(0.221)	(0.140) *	0.032
Released from city or county jail	(0.115) *	(0.151)	(0.139) *	0.033
Most recent crime—drug crime	0.004	0.029	0.016	(0.013)
Most recent crime—public order crime	0.015	0.294	0.027	(0.014)
Most recent crime—other crime	(0.025)	0.014	(0.024)	0.005
Length of Most Recent Incarceration – less than 1 year	(0.076) *	0.079	(0.061) *	0.002

**Table F.1**  
**Regressions on Key Outcomes Controlling for Participant Characteristics and Grantees**

	Placed in Employment	Wage at Initial Placement	Employed in First Quarter After Exit	Re-arrested for New Crime or Reincarcerated for Technical Violation
Enrolled 2 or more weeks after release	(0.000)	0.078	(0.027)	(0.019) *
DOC pre-release participant	(0.031)	0.148	(0.025)	0.038
On Community Supervision at Enrollment	0.038 *	0.092	0.022	(0.001)
Mandated to Participate	(0.053)	0.088	(0.019)	0.016
Grantee 1	0.204 *	(0.769)	0.049	0.083 *
Grantee 2	(0.161) *	(0.931) *	(0.240) *	(0.006)
Grantee 3	(0.156) *	(0.455)	(0.274) *	0.088 *
Grantee 4	(0.200) *	(0.354)	(0.502) *	0.041
Grantee 5	(0.184) *	0.176	(0.339) *	(0.023)
Grantee 6	0.026	(1.000) *	(0.058)	0.175 *
Grantee 7	(0.090) *	(0.898) *	(0.233) *	0.063
Grantee 8	(0.049)	(0.873) *	(0.118) *	0.016
Grantee 9	(0.117) *	(1.303) *	(0.297) *	0.061
Grantee 10	0.087	(0.862) *	(0.038)	0.022
Grantee 11	(0.077)	0.259	(0.068)	0.009
Grantee 12	(0.197) *	(1.395) *	(0.189) *	(0.021)
Grantee 13	(0.017)	(0.565)	(0.032)	(0.035)
Grantee 14	0.070	(1.929) *	(0.161) *	0.037
Grantee 15	(0.038)	(1.432) *	(0.111)	(0.006)
Grantee 16	0.079	(1.062) *	(0.014)	0.143 *
Grantee 17	(0.266) *	(1.455) *	(0.508) *	0.076
Grantee 18	(0.126) *	(1.425) *	(0.401) *	0.037
Grantee 19	0.053	(0.556)	(0.045)	0.041
Grantee 20	0.031	(0.523)	(0.123) *	0.037
Grantee 21	(0.303) *	(0.199)	(0.320) *	0.014
Grantee 22	(0.179) *	(0.282)	(0.172) *	0.077 *
Grantee 23	0.002	(1.131) *	(0.158) *	0.016
Grantee 24	0.023	1.088 *	(0.171) *	(0.031)
Grantee 25	0.037	0.095	0.068	0.021
Grantee 26	(0.045)	0.575	(0.088)	0.025
Grantee 27	(0.037)	(0.989) *	(0.193) *	0.030
Grantee 28	(0.155) *	(0.349)	(0.113)	0.044
Grantee 29	(0.042)	0.018	(0.197) *	0.025
<b>Sample size</b>	<b>11,974</b>	<b>7,837</b>	<b>8,838</b>	<b>6,820</b>

Source: Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative Management Information System extract dated May 6, 2008

\*Significantly different from zero at the .10 level, two-tailed test

\*\*Significantly different from zero at the .05 level, two-tailed test

\*Significantly different from zero at the .01 level, two-tailed test