

An Evaluation of the Latino Coalition's Reclamando Nuestro Futuro (Reclaiming our Future) Program

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Part One Background

Introduction

In June 2007, the Department of Labor contracted with the Paul Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan to conduct an evaluation of the Reclamando Nuestro Futuro (Reclaiming our Future or RNF) program run by the Latino Coalition for Faith and Community Initiatives of Bakersfield, California (hereafter called simply the Latino Coalition).¹ In June 2004, the Latino Coalition had been awarded a three-year, \$10 million grant by the Department of Labor to fund its RNF program, which was designed to assist at-risk and adjudicated Latino youths to obtain needed education or training, to find employment, and to avoid involvement with the juvenile justice system. The Henry Institute's study was to examine the Latino Coalition's "performance measurements, strategy, and findings."² This is the final report of this study.

Part One describes the key challenges faced by Latino youth,³ provides additional detail on the Latino Coalition and the RNF program, and explains the study in which we engaged. Part Two describes and evaluates how the Latino Coalition organized and implemented the RNF program. Part Three considers the outcomes experienced by the youths who participated in the RNF program, and Part Four relates our final conclusions and observations.

Latino Youths and the Challenges They Face

All youths face challenges as they move through what are often far-from-perfect schools, experience the conflicting feelings of adolescence, and adjust to an adult world that often seems to place clashing demands upon them. Minority youths often experience these problems in a more intense fashion. Compared to their white peers, their schools are often not as strong; positive adult role models—at home, at school, and in their neighborhoods—are often not as numerous; and the temptations of drugs, alcohol, and gangs are often more plentiful.

The challenges faced by Latino youths can be seen in three types of statistics. First, there are data documenting the poverty of many Latino families. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, 28.9 percent of Latino youths under 18 years of age live in poverty, compared to only 11.3 percent of white youths.⁴ Nearly half of Hispanics (48.4 percent) earn less than \$20,000 a year—a greater proportion than is the case for either white Americans or African-Americans—and only 12 percent earn over \$50,000 a year, a lower percentage than is the case for either white Americans or African-Americans.⁵

Second, these low income levels are associated with other characteristics that usually accompany poverty. Research has shown that, in comparison to other ethnic and racial groups, Hispanic youth have relatively low levels of health insurance coverage,⁶ exhibit lower levels of educational attainment,⁷ and are less likely to live in households headed by married couples,⁸

while they exhibit relatively high levels of high school dropout rates⁹ as well as relatively high birth rates among unmarried women.¹⁰

Third, Latino youths experience significant problems with the juvenile justice system (although fewer than do African-American youths). It is important to note that all studies of Latino youth involvement with the juvenile justice system point out the uncertain accuracy of their figures, since no uniform way of categorizing youths by race or ethnicity exists. Some jurisdictions classify Latino youths as either “black” or “white” and not as Latino, thereby underestimating the number of Latino youths in the juvenile justice system. But even with that limitation, the numbers are discouraging. For example, Human Rights Watch found that, compared to white youths, Latino youths are twice as likely to be incarcerated.¹¹ A U. S. Department of Justice report found that as of 1999, for every 100,000 youths, 485 Latino youths were in custody, compared to 212 for whites and 1,004 for blacks.¹² In 1998 Los Angeles County statistics showed that, when compared to white youths, Latino youths were 1.9 times more likely to be arrested for violent offenses, 1.6 times more likely to be arrested for property offenses, 2 times more likely to be arrested for drug offenses, and 1.8 times more likely to be arrested for felony offenses in general.¹³

In summary, Latino youths, when compared to white youths, are more likely to face poverty and the dislocations associated with poverty, and are more likely to be involved with the juvenile justice system. The target group of the RNF program was a group clearly in need of the services the program was designed to provide.

The Latino Coalition and the RNF Program

The Latino Coalition was founded in 2003 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, with Richard Ramos, an ordained pastor in Santa Barbara, California, as president.¹⁴ Its basic goal was “to enhance and strengthen the capacity of FBCOs [Faith-Based and Community Organizations] to transform Latino youth, families, and communities.”¹⁵ From the beginning the Latino Coalition saw itself largely as an intermediary organization, rather than as a direct provider of services. Ramos—himself a pastor and director of a teen center—was deeply concerned that most of the faith-based and community programs seeking to serve the Latino community were very small and lacking in experience, with inadequate record keeping and limited knowledge of how to approach private and government sources for funding. As a result many of the needy Latino youths he believed could be helped were not being reached.

Ramos and other leaders of the Latino Coalition sought to partner with the Department of Labor in targeting at-risk and adjudicated youth with job training and other services. They felt traditional social service agencies were, for a variety of reasons, not reaching these youths. Yet these youths were the very persons the Latino Coalition felt it could reach and assist by way of its grass roots network of churches and community organizations. Its application, which was ultimately funded by the Department of Labor, stated:

While a broad range of programs and initiatives are in place to improve the work prospects of at-risk youth and young adults, many in the Latino community remain underserved.

Indeed, when data on WIB/One-Stop program recipients are disaggregated, they reveal that Latinos are not represented among its beneficiaries in numbers that are comparable with their representation among the unemployed, the underemployed, and among labor force non-participants.¹⁶

The Latino Coalition was awarded a three-year, \$10 million grant in June 2004 “to develop and deliver educational and workforce development-related services for 1,200 Latino adjudicated and at-risk youth.”¹⁷ The Latino Coalition was to serve as an intermediary organization, charged with recruiting, training, and funding subgrantee organizations working with Latino youth in Los Angeles, San Diego, Phoenix, Denver, Dallas, and Houston. The grant required that 70 percent of the funds were to go to the subgrantees.

In RNF’s first year the Latino Coalition funded 16 programs in four cities (Los Angeles, Denver, Phoenix, and Dallas); during the second year it funded 13 of the original 16 programs and added 15 more, for a total of 28 programs. Of these 28 programs 5 were in Phoenix, 10 in Los Angeles, 2 in San Diego, 8 in Denver, and 3 in Houston. Twenty-two of these programs were faith-based and 6 community-based. In the third year of the program the Latino Coalition continued funding for 19 programs: 5 in Los Angeles, 2 in San Diego, 5 in Phoenix, 5 in Denver, and 2 in Houston. Of these 19 programs, 16 were faith-based and 3 were community-based. By the end of the first quarter of 2008, the Department of Labor funding had ended, although some funds remaining from 2007 were still available in the first quarter of 2008. The Latino Coalition obtained additional funding from the Department of Justice to continue to work with 9 subgrantees and their youth in Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Denver, with a focus on reducing gang influence and participation. This resulted as of early 2008 in a mixed picture, with some RNF programs ending, others continuing with reduced funding from the Latino Coalition, and still others continuing with funding obtained from other public or private sources. For a brief description of each of the 19 subgrantee programs that received funding in the third year of the RNF program see Appendix B.

The RNF program requirements stipulated that, for all the subgrantees, at least 80 percent of the youths served had to be Latino and that all had to be either at-risk or adjudicated youths between the ages of 14 and 21. Within that population, at least 60 percent had to be adjudicated. Although the requirements varied slightly from one program year to the next, the subgrantees were required to provide some soft skills training, as well as case management and follow-up services (the latter was added in the final year of the program), but otherwise they could choose what services to provide from among 10 different options: skill training, community service, subsidized and unsubsidized work experience, internships, job preparation, occupational training, GED preparation, basic and remedial education, substance abuse services, and mentoring. The four services the subgrantees most frequently provided were case management, community service, job preparation (often including anger management), and substance abuse services.

The Study

The aim of this study was to document the content of the RNF program, how it was organized, the services provided youths by its subgrantees, the outcomes experienced by the program

participants, and the effects of the RNF program on the subgrantee organizations. In doing so we aimed to provide insights that will be helpful to funding organizations, public and private alike, and to organizations seeking to serve troubled youths. We made use of five distinguishable sources of data: the Latino Coalition's management information system, interviews with the Latino Coalition's central office staff and consultants, subgrantee site visits in November and December 2007, focus groups with program participants in March 2008, and interviews with community partners of the subgrantees. This section describes each of these data sources and the use we made of them.

The ETO Data

As noted in the Introduction to Part One, the contract the Henry Institute signed with the Department of Labor stipulated that it would evaluate the Latino Coalition's "performance measurements, strategy, and findings." Special use was to be made of the Efforts-to-Outcome (ETO) data—the computer-based management information system developed by Social Solutions of Baltimore, Maryland. This system enabled the subgrantees to compile monthly and quarterly reports of their programs, including the number and characteristics of the participants and their various outcomes. Also, the ETO system enabled the city project directors (persons appointed in each city to serve as liaisons between the Latino Coalition and the local subgrantees) and the Latino Coalition's central office to monitor the various subgrantees in order to evaluate specific areas where they were meeting or failing to meet program goals. The data gathered by the ETO system were not merely aggregate data, reporting participant data and outcomes by program or city, but they provided a record of each individual's participation in one of the RNF programs. Thus one can use the ETO data to relate background characteristics, program participation, and outcomes on the individual level, thereby providing a wealth of information that is rarely available to researchers.

However, if the data are inaccurate or incomplete, one's findings will be equally inaccurate and incomplete. Thus, one of the purposes of our visits to each of the 19 subgrantee sites that still had an active RNF program was to determine whether or not the ground-level workers and supervisors were taking seriously the gathering and reporting of the ETO data. One could imagine situations where case managers and supervisors—who are often overworked and facing daily crises—would see the gathering and entering of data into the ETO system as just one more burden that was taking time away from more important duties of actually working with troubled youths about whom they cared deeply. Accordingly, they might view maintaining the ETO records as a matter of keeping the Latino Coalition and the city project directors off their backs by doing just enough on the ETO system to keep them satisfied. Thus, in our site visits we looked for three types of information: how the data were gathered, the attitudes of the program line workers and supervisors towards the ETO system and the data-gathering tasks it entailed, and the quality control systems that were in place. We consider each of these in turn.

Gathering the ETO data. There were three steps in the gathering of the ETO data. When a youth entered the RNF program a participant file was created for him or her in the ETO system. First, a case number was assigned to the participant and the start date in the program was entered, as well as the youth's gender, age, ethnicity, school status (in school, out of school/dropout, or out of school/graduated or GED), and housing situation (living with at least

one parent, in foster care, living independently, or in a temporary situation). Second, data were then gathered in the form of case notes made by the case managers following contacts with the youths. The contact and the amount of time involved were noted, as well as the particular program activities in which the youth had engaged (such as classes attended, community service time put in, and one-on-one counseling sessions) and any outcomes or changes in the youth's status (such as GED earned, employment obtained, and arrest or re-incarceration). Third, each month and each quarter a supervisor compiled overall data that summarized the activities of the previous month or quarter. These summary data were then reported to the Latino Coalition.

Attitudes of case workers and program supervisors. At each of the subgrantee programs we visited, we interviewed both case managers and supervisors concerning their attitudes toward the ETO system. We considered this important information because these attitudes were likely to be closely aligned with the completeness and accuracy of the data. Almost without exception everyone with whom we talked about the ETO system—from case managers to program directors—reported they took it seriously and were confident of its accuracy and completeness. The key was that those using it found it helpful in their day-to-day work. Case managers found keeping their case notes on the ETO system allowed them to better track the youths with whom they were working. Supervisors found it made preparing monthly and quarterly reports easier and that it was useful in documenting their activities and achievements, which, in turn, helped them in applying for additional grants. Many mentioned that there was a learning curve in working with the ETO system, but that, once they had mastered it, they found it very useful.

For example, when asked whether she found the ETO system useful or bureaucratic busy work, a program director in Phoenix responded in typical fashion:

I honestly . . . , you know, busy work is busy work. We all have to do it. But it benefits the program. It really does, because it's a template and a guideline of where you started . . . It's amazing, we are able to at a click of the mouse see how many people, our demographics, how many youths are enrolled, the ages that we serve. We really love it! For funding it's really worked for us in writing grants. Because all the information is there.

Quality control checks. There were three steps to the quality control checks in place for the ETO system. First, the supervisors checked for completeness and the proper recording of the data entered by the case managers. In some of the smaller programs, where clear divisions between supervisors and case managers did not exist, the case managers checked each other's entries. Second, the program director—or someone he or she had designated—compiled the data on a monthly and quarterly basis to send on to the Latino Coalition's central office. In doing so this person would check the data for completeness. The city project directors offered the third quality control check. They regularly checked the ETO entries and compared them to the written case files on a random basis. Especially in the early stages of a subgrantee's use of the ETO system, the city project directors spent extensive time checking the case managers' entries for completeness and accuracy.

Based on the quality control checks that were in place, and, most importantly, on the attitudes of case managers and supervisory personnel alike, we are confident that the ETO data are, with

very few exceptions, complete and accurate. We are convinced they are a reliable guide to the nature of the subgrantees' programs, the characteristics of the youths who participated in them, and the outcomes they experienced.

Interviews with the Latino Coalition Central Office Staff and Consultants

A second source of data and insights we used in this study consisted of interviews with Richard Ramos, president of the Latino Coalition, and other staff and key consultants of the Latino Coalition in its Bakersfield, California headquarters. The consultants we interviewed were Richard Paul Morales of Pinnacle Resources LLC, Eve Berry of SigniCor, and Bronwyn Mauldin, an independent consultant. The staff member we interviewed in addition to Richard Ramos was Estella Padilla, who was primarily responsible for working with the ETO data and generating various quarterly and annual reports based on them. We also interviewed four of the city project directors, who were meeting at the Coalition's central office at the time of our visit. These headquarter interviews gave us a good overview of the RNF program, including its origins, how it was organized, and the role the Latino Coalition, as an intermediary organization, played in its implementation. It was helpful to gain insight into the vision and goals of Richard Ramos, the founder and president of the Latino Coalition, especially his vision of the need for and purpose of an intermediary organization in the context of the many, often small, Latino community and faith-based organizations inexperienced in applying for and managing government grants and contracts.

Program Site Visits

A third source of data and insights derived from visits to 19 subgrantee program sites by one or the other of the lead researchers during November and December 2007. Included in these visits were all program sites that were receiving funding in the fall of 2007. We spent at least a half day at each of the sites, interviewing the project director and, if different from the project director, the agency director, additional administrators as appropriate, and case managers and other staff who worked directly with RNF youth (such as teachers). When possible we also observed one or more RNF classes or other activities.

Focus Groups

Our fourth source of input on the RNF program came from focus groups with program participants. We conducted 19 focus groups at 11 different program sites. These program sites were the ones that were still receiving some funding from the Latino Coalition in early 2008. The focus groups were conducted in March and April 2008; 15 were led by one of the two lead researchers and 4 at two different sites by Dr. Frieda Gehlen, an experienced researcher. The focus group participants were contacted and recruited by the various subgrantees. At each program site we sought to conduct two focus groups: one with active program participants or participants who had successfully completed one or more program activities and one with program participants who had begun the program but who for one reason or another had not completed the program component that they had started. By definition, potential members for this latter type of focus group were very hard to reach in order to solicit their participation. The subgrantees had lost track of many in this category once they had stopped attending the program

and its activities. Yet we were able to conduct some focus groups—often very small ones—with this category of program participants. Some of these were mixed groups of persons, including youths who had begun the program and then stopped coming, had completed only a portion of the program, or had just started the program.

These focus groups provided insight into the challenges participants in the RNF program faced and thereby the challenges confronted by the subgrantees in responding to the youths whom they were seeking to serve. It is important to keep in mind that a majority of the focus group participants were youths who had successfully completed one or more aspects of the RNF program. They ought not to be viewed as a representative sample of all of the participants in the subgrantees' RNF programs. Consequently we make use of the focus group responses to give additional insight into the youths who took part in the RNF programs, the challenges they faced, and the outcomes they experienced, but we do not cite percentages of focus group youths marked by certain attitudes or outcomes.

Community Partner Interviews

We conducted interviews with community partners of 12 of the subgrantees. Ten of these were conducted face-to-face by one or the other of the lead researchers and two were conducted by telephone. The community partners whom we interviewed were selected by the subgrantees. The information gained by these interviews was helpful for two reasons. First, one of the goals of the Department of Labor grant to the Latino Coalition was to increase the ability of small community and faith-based agencies to become a part of the social service safety net in their areas, operating as partners with other, usually longer-standing, more sophisticated entities. This is usually referred to as capacity building. By interviewing community partners we gained insight into the extent to which this goal of the RNF program was met.

The second reason to interview community partners was to obtain an additional perspective on the abilities, weaknesses, and prospects of the subgrantees' RNF programs. The community partners were generally long-standing entities with much experience at working to meet the needs of the communities in which they were located. Thus, their perspectives on the RNF subgrantees and their strengths and weaknesses offered useful insights. However, one should bear in mind that the community partners we interviewed were selected by the subgrantees, who likely selected partners with whom they had a successful relationship. We took this into account in interpreting the results of these interviews.

These five distinct sources of information and data have enabled us to combine quantitative, empirical data—the ETO data—with qualitative data and insights. In this way we were able to supplement the quantitative data with qualitative insight and observations. Also, we were able to interpret the quantitative data so as to begin to answer the question of why we found the patterns in the empirical data that we did. This study thereby may give future direction to the Department of Labor as well as other public and private funding agencies as they seek to maximize the positive impact of their funds. It may also provide direction to nonprofit agencies—whether large or small, faith-based or not—as they work in a very difficult arena, seeking to reach at-risk and adjudicated youths and to encourage them in more positive paths than they otherwise are likely to take.

Part Two

RNF Program Organization and Implementation

In 2004, when the Latino Coalition received a \$10 million grant to serve as an intermediary organization in providing needed services to at-risk and adjudicated Hispanic youths, it faced substantial organizational and implementation challenges. It had been in existence only about a year, and most of the subgrantees with whom it would be working were small organizations with limited experience and unaccustomed to careful record keeping or working with government funding organizations. As Richard Ramos, the Latino Coalition president, has expressed it: “One way to capture the operating culture of the [Latino] Coalition is the phrase ‘from vision to benchmarks,’ which really means we want to encourage innovation, but we also need to be rigorous in measuring and demonstrating the results.”¹⁸

In this section we first consider how the Latino Coalition organized its role as an intermediary organization so as to enable its subgrantees to turn “vision into benchmarks.” We next consider the nature and background characteristics of the youths who participated in the RNF program, followed by a consideration of the means utilized by the subgrantee programs to reach out to these youths. We next consider the relationship of the subgrantee programs with other community agencies and programs serving at-risk and adjudicated youths. We conclude Part Two by describing the program activities of the subgrantees.

The Latino Coalition as an Intermediary

As we will note later in this report, the Latino Coalition has been highly effective in working with its subgrantees, establishing control systems that have been very well received and increasing the sophistication of the subgrantees to the point where most were in a position to sustain their programs, even after RNF funding ended. The director of one Phoenix program reported to us that the RNF grant enabled her program to move from being no more than “a ping pong table”—an open recreation program that they used to make contact with troubled youths—to a sophisticated program, with a service plan and records for each youth in the program. When asked how the RNF program and working with the Latino Coalition had changed her organization, the director of a Los Angeles program replied: “I think it’s night and day with what we were before. Just the level of professionalism and certainly the capacity. . . . It has really changed how we do business.”

The question we explore here is how the Latino Coalition was able to transform programs from being not much more than “a ping pong table” to being professionally-run programs with service plans for each youth, the ability to track outcomes, and contacts with other community agencies. Three factors largely explain the ability of the Latino Coalition to manage effectively a \$10 million grant and have a major impact on raising the level of professionalism of small, grass-roots organizations. The first of these factors is the fact that the Latino Coalition contracted with Social Solutions of Baltimore, Maryland to develop the ETO case management system we discussed earlier. We consider the other two factors in this section of our report.

Outside Consultants

Richard Ramos and the Latino Coalition contracted with several outside consultants to develop the RNF program with the goal of developing a well-organized, professional program that integrated into the structure of the program accountability standards and controls. These consultants also played a key role—along with the city project directors to be discussed next—in training the subgrantees and their staffs in program standards and requirements, in the procedures of accountability, and in organizational capacity building. Without the consultants, the establishment of well-organized programs, marked by clearly-defined processes and standards of accountability, along with the training and acquisition of the necessary knowledge, would not have occurred. The outside consultants thereby played a key role in transforming the subgrantees' programs into professionally-run programs with service plans for each youth and the ability to track outcomes.

The key consultant was Richard Paul Morales of Pinnacle Resources LLC, who took on the title of Director of Operations and played an indispensable role in program development, including establishing accountability standards between the central office and the subgrantees. Morales has a background in case management and has explained the importance of accountability in these words: “The primary reason we invested so heavily in the case management process was because we wanted to establish a culture of accountability, both within the [Latino] Coalition and among the sub-grantees we would be working with.”¹⁹ Ramos and Morales developed a good working relationship: Ramos used his extensive network of contacts in the various urban Latino communities to recruit program subgrantees and to communicate program goals and visions to them; Morales developed processes and action steps that enabled the subgrantees to develop well-organized, accountable programs.

Also, playing key roles were Shannon Morales of Pinnacle Resources, an associate of Richard Paul Morales, Eve Berry, president of SigniCor, who worked as an advisor to Ramos, especially on board development issues and subgrantee training, and Bronwyn Mauldin, an independent consultant, who was largely involved in training subgrantees in developing organizational capacity and sustainability.

City Project Directors

No matter how clear a vision was held by the central office, how well organized the consultants, or well-thought out the technology, there remained the challenge of communicating the vision and action plans to the subgrantees in a compelling manner, thereby assuring they would be implemented in the field. In addition, the case managers and supervisors needed to be taught to make effective use of the technological innovations. These tasks largely fell to the city project directors (CPDs), persons who played a crucial part in the Latino Coalition being able to fulfill its role as an intermediary. There were five CPDs, one for each of the cities in which the RNF program had subgrantees. They were the true intermediaries between the central offices of the Latino Coalition and the subgrantees and their programs. In this section we describe the role played by the CPDs, the means they used to fulfill those roles, and our evaluation of the effectiveness with which they fulfilled their roles.

Roles. The various activities of the CPDs can be grouped into four categories or key roles that they played. First, they acted as *channels of communication*. The CPDs facilitated communication both among the subgrantees and between the Latino Coalition headquarters staff and consultants, on the one hand, and the RNF subgrantees, on the other. In this capacity they communicated the requirements and expectations of the program, changes or modifications in requirements as they occurred, and any other pertinent information from the central headquarters to the RNF subgrantees. But this was not only a one-way street. The CPDs also fed the reactions and suggestions of the subgrantees back to the central headquarters staff and consultants. Also, the CPDs encouraged communication among the subgrantees in an area, enabling them to learn from each other's successes and disappointments.

The second key role of the CPDs was that of *coach and trainer*, aimed at the continual improvement of the subgrantees' programs. In this role the CPDs offered training classes to the subgrantees and their staffs, suggested solutions to problems or challenges as they arose, and encouraged and supported the subgrantees when they become discouraged. In this capacity the CPDs often shared successful ideas from one site with other sites. They were even able to do this from one city to another, since the CPDs met together regularly and shared experiences and ideas. The training was especially important in helping the subgrantees and their staffs to understand the importance and use of the ETO system, which was new to the subgrantees. This involved classes, one-on-one instruction, practice runs as necessary, and review of ETO entries (see the quality control role discussed next). The coach and trainer role of the CPDs additionally helped the subgrantees effectively address specific problems or needs as they arose.

The third role of the CPDs was that of *quality control*. This role centered on assuring that the case files and ETO entries were up-to-date, complete, and accurate. Early in the program, the CPDs made ETO checks frequently, even weekly. Sometimes these checks were done on-site so the CPDs could sample case files and compare them to the ETO entries; other times the reviews were completed away from the subgrantee sites via computer access. Early in the program the CPDs conducted frequent reviews, but as subgrantee staffs became better acquainted with and proficient at using the ETO system, the CPDs reduced the number of reviews. This function was critical in assuring that both Latino Coalition and government standards were being met.

The fourth role of the CPDs was to work with the subgrantees to *develop sustainability*, that is, enabling them to maintain themselves and their programs into the future, even when Latino Coalition and Department of Labor funding would end. This role largely entailed working with the program managers to ensure continual program improvement, developing and training a strong board of directors, assisting in the development of complete program data, and enabling subgrantees to use program data and other means to submit strong funding applications to community funding sources and government entities.

The implementation of these roles. The CPDs used four different means to fulfill the above four roles. First, the CPDs made regular *site visits* to the subgrantees under their jurisdiction. These were as frequent as weekly when needed and no less than monthly when they judged a program

was sufficiently established and running well that more frequent visits were unnecessary. These visits primarily involved:

- Meeting with program managers and obtaining feedback on how the program was progressing, including any needs or problems that had emerged.
- Meeting one-on-one with front line staff, again to obtain feedback and to do problem solving or trouble-shooting.
- Observing classes or other program activities.
- Sampling case files to assure that they were up-to-date, complete, accurate, and matched the data entries in the ETO system.
- Holding formal training sessions for the subgrantees' staff members.

The formal training sessions were either one-on-one or group training sessions. They were especially important in the start-up phase of the ETO data gathering and tracking system, but became less necessary over time. During their site visits the CPDs also occasionally met with agency boards to provide training in the nature and functions of nonprofit boards. All these site visit activities involved giving encouragement, suggestions, and support, as needed.

Second, the CPDs were constantly available via *phone calls and email* to deal with questions and needs as they arose. Both management and front-line staff felt free to contact the CPDs and they frequently did so.

Once a month all the subgrantees in an area met together for *city-wide meetings*. This was the third means the CPDs used to fulfill their roles. The city-wide meetings were an important avenue of communication, as CPDs updated the subgrantees on new RNF information and regulations from the Latino Coalition. Sometimes these meetings also consisted of formal training sessions for the subgrantees; other times there were guest speakers from the community who shared relevant information or perspectives. Perhaps most importantly, these meetings enabled the various subgrantees to network together, encouraging each other and sharing ideas and suggestions among themselves.

Fourth, the CPDs *periodically met together* in sessions called by the Latino Coalition. These meetings assured that the CPDs felt a part of a team and not "lone rangers" out there on their own, allowed CPDs to share among themselves and with central staff and consultants any challenges they were facing, and communicated changes or modifications in the program and its requirements.

Evaluation of the CPDs and their work. During our 19 site visits, the subgrantees and their staffs were nearly unanimous in their positive comments on the CPDs and their work. They especially stressed two qualities they found to be extremely helpful. One was their constant accessibility. Again and again subgrantees and their staffs mentioned that their CPD was available and ready

to help whenever needed. As one program director said to us, “If I call _____ [the CPD] and leave a message, she gets back to me right away—always the same day.”

A second quality the subgrantees saw as highly positive was the knowledge and skills of the CPDs. They were clearly seen as a resource upon which they could draw, not as enforcers of rules and regulations. Their role as coach and trainer helped lead to this perception. One program head, for example, related that early in their program they were having trouble recruiting as many participants to their program as they were capable of handling. Their CPD made several suggestions on how to recruit more youths to their program. They implemented those suggestions and achieved the desired number of participants. As noted earlier, most of the subgrantees felt they gained enormously by their participation in the RNF program in terms of sustainability and the sophistication of their operations. Almost without exception they attributed most of the credit for this transformation to the CPDs and their work.

The Program Participants

In understanding the RNF program it is important to understand the youths with whom the various subgrantees were working. In this section we present a summary description of the key characteristics of the youths served by the 28 RNF program subgrantees. Table 1 gives a statistical picture of the youths, providing the distribution of the program participants in terms of their legal status, ethnicity, age, gender, school status, and home situation. As shown in Table 1, the ETO data reveal that about 40 percent of the RNF program participants were at-risk and 60 percent were adjudicated youths. The at-risk versus adjudicated distinction is a technical one, with adjudicated youths referring to persons who had had previous involvement with the courts. This category included youths who had served time in a juvenile detention facility or had been placed on probation by the juvenile justice system. At-risk individuals included youths marked by one or more of the following six characteristics: deficient in basic reading and writing skills, a high school dropout, a sibling of an adjudicated youth, gang involvement, a foster child, or pregnant or a single parent.²⁰ One of the primary goals of the RNF program was to have 60 percent of the program participants be comprised of adjudicated youths. Table 1 demonstrates that the Latino Coalition and its subgrantees were successful in meeting this goal.

Table 1 also reveals the ethnicity of the RNF program participants. The grant the Latino Coalition received from the Department of Labor required that 80 percent of the participants in the RNF program were to be Latino youths. This goal was exceeded. Almost 82 percent were Latino and close to another 8 percent were African-American. Barely more than 5 percent were white. Thus the Latino Coalition and its subgrantees were highly successful in enrolling minority youths. The 95 percent level of Hispanic and other minority participation in the RNF program was one of its key goals and it was achieved.

The lower portion of Table 1 completes the picture of the RNF participants. The RNF participants were generally young (76 percent fell into the 14 to 17 age group), male (65.7 percent), still in school (70.3 percent), and living with at least one parent (85.3 percent). The latter two characteristics, however, must be put into context. In our focus groups, we found that, among those listed as being in school, were a significant number who had been expelled or

Table 1
Characteristics of RNF Participants
(N=2748)

Characteristics	%
Legal Status	
At-risk	40.5%
Adjudicated	<u>59.5</u>
Total	100.0%
Ethnicity	
Latino	81.7%
Black	7.6
White	5.1
Multiracial	3.2
Native American	1.1
Other	<u>1.4</u>
Total	100.1%
Age	
14-17 years	76.0%
18-21 years	<u>24.0</u>
Total	100.0%
Gender	
Male	65.7%
Female	<u>34.3</u>
Total	100.0%
School Status	
In school	70.3%
Out of school, dropout	9.4
Out of school, HS grad or GED	<u>20.2</u>
Total	99.9%
Home Situation	
Living with at least one parent	85.3%
In foster care	1.2
Independent	3.7
Temporary situation	<u>9.8</u>
Total	100.0%

otherwise left a standard high school and were now attending some type of alternative school. Moreover, many reported that they were attending poorly performing schools, with high dropout rates, endemic gang activity, the threat of violence, and reportedly uncaring teachers. Likewise, the participants who were designated as living in a stable home environment included many living in home situations marked by one or both parents with marginal parenting skills or parents who themselves were struggling with drug or alcohol addictions. The neighborhoods in which the program participants lived typically were marked by violence and by gangs whose members served as role models for the program participants while they were growing up. In our focus groups with program participants and one-on-one interviews, these points were repeatedly made. It is hard to convey fully the challenging environments out of which many RNF program youths came and the challenges that this posed for the subgrantee programs.

The following quotations from program participants may give some insight into these challenges. They are, unfortunately, all too typical of what we encountered. From a San Diego youth: “I’ve never had my mom. I’ve never lived with my real family; I’ve always lived with my dad and his wife’s family. . . . And because she was my stepmom, I didn’t think she’d have the right [to tell me what to do]. And then she caught me with booze and stuff, and it caused them to divorce. So they divorced, and my mom, she’s also been in rehab.” In a Denver focus group there was this exchange: “There’s a lot of stuff that goes down in my neighborhood like shoot-outs, fights, people breaking into people’s cars, people whistlin’ at people. I don’t know, if you lived there for a day, you’d probably see it cuz I see it every day.” Another youth replied, “Yeah, you gotta look behind your back every time you walk down the street. I’ve got bullet holes in my windows.” The first youth responded: “Yeah, my car and house have been broken into within two months of each other.” A third youth added, “Just yesterday morning I woke up to a gunshot and my neighbor’s back window was shot out, ten feet away.” A Los Angeles youth, in referring to gang activity in his neighborhood, said, “Yeah, and I was . . . that’s all I knew growing up. I was . . . those were my role models, you could say, as growing up. I wanted to be like them.”

To summarize, the youths with whom the Latino Coalition and its subgrantees were working consisted of a very needy, difficult-to-work-with group. They typically were minority youths who reportedly came out of gang-infested, violence-prone neighborhoods and schools, as well as home environments that did not equip them to deal with their tough environments and temptations. Most had already experienced intervention by the juvenile justice authorities.

Reaching Youths from At-Risk Environments

One of the key qualities the RNF subgrantee programs needed in order to be effective was an ability to reach out to and connect with youths from challenging environments. We have seen that the programs were largely successful in doing so. Yet this leaves the question of the means by which the RNF programs were able to reach out to and connect with Latino and other minority at-risk and adjudicated youths. In this section we seek to answer this question. We break this success down into two components: first, recruiting youths to participate in the programs, and second, retaining and connecting with the youths once they had been recruited into the program. The observations in this section are largely drawn from our visits to the 19 program sites and the focus groups conducted at 11 of them.

Recruitment of Youths to the Subgrantees' Programs

With regard to recruitment of youths to the programs, almost all of the efforts can be placed into one of three categories.

Community publicity. Every program we visited reported that it sought to become known in its community by way of flyers, announcements in community newsletters, having a booth at community events, and similar means of disseminating information about a community or neighborhood opportunity. Some subgrantees themselves sponsored a neighborhood fair or festival in order to publicize their programs. Crucial to the success of this approach is the fact that most of the RNF subgrantee programs were themselves located in low income, heavily Latino neighborhoods. Most were located in the very communities where the youths they were seeking to reach lived.

Referrals from other community agencies. The second recruitment tool—and one that almost all of the programs relied upon—was referrals from other community agencies. Most important were referrals from juvenile justice authorities, and especially probation officers. Local schools also often provided referrals. This recruitment strategy involved making the program known to probation officers or school administrators and counselors, as well as overcoming any potential hesitancy by convincing the authorities at these agencies that the RNF program was a competently-run, effective program. This usually involved personal contacts between the community agencies and the subgrantee RNF program director or other staff. For most programs, referrals from probation officials played an especially important role in recruitment. Many youths, as a condition of their probation, are required to take certain classes, such as in anger management or drug abuse. They are often given a list of community agencies where they can obtain these classes, but many of these charge for these classes, while the RNF classes were free of charge. This, of course, created a large incentive for youths to enter RNF programs over those that charged for their services.

Preexisting community contacts and involvements. The third type of recruitment strategy upon which many of the programs relied was to utilize the subgrantees' previously existing community contacts. This most often took the form of contacts and involvements with a neighborhood-based church with which a subgrantee was associated. In many cases program directors cited a church as a prime source of youths for their program. Also, the focus group participants often related that they or some friends had first heard about the program at church. Recruitment was also sometimes helped by the subgrantee having had a long-time presence in the neighborhood. Focus group participants often cited word-of-mouth as the factor that led them to the program. Program staff also frequently mentioned word-of-mouth as a means that led their participants to their program. Maybe a cousin, a sibling, or a neighbor had been involved in some other program of the subgrantee, had kept up contact with the agency, heard about the RNF program, and urged the youth to check it out. Similarly, youths who were already in the RNF program sometimes recruited their friends to participate as well.

Retaining Youths in the Program

Reaching at-risk youths involves more than simply persuading them to attend an initial class or other activity. Several program managers told us that was the easy part. The difficult part, they reported, was keeping the youths coming and getting them to move beyond simply showing up to being actively engaged in program activities. In fact, we found that almost one-fourth of the program participants spent less than 6 hours in the program. These were youths who signed up for the program, but for one reason or another soon stopped coming. Therefore, it is also important to explore what means proved effective in holding and fully engaging youths in a program once they had first come. The programs we visited varied in this regard, with some reporting difficulties in holding the youths' interest and keeping them from dropping out of the program, while others reported few problems in this regard. Four factors appeared to be especially important in explaining the success of most, but not all, of the programs in this regard.

Neighborhood location. Most of the programs we visited were located directly in the neighborhoods they were serving. Additionally, they tended to have a feel that matched their neighborhoods. In other words, they were not overly professional-looking nor surrounded by green lawns or carefully trimmed shrubbery. Indeed, most appeared a bit untidy, crowded, and similar to the other buildings in the neighborhood. In fact, we observed that some of the subgrantees that indicated they had experienced difficulty in attracting and retaining youths in their programs were located in more professional-looking buildings, such as one in Phoenix that we had trouble locating because it was in a larger professional office park. In the more humble, neighborhood-like sites we often found youths just hanging out and visiting; in the more professional-looking sites the staff would be there, but the youths seemed to come for classes and then quickly leave at their conclusion.

Staff who had come from similar backgrounds as the program participants. In most programs the staff—and especially the case managers and teachers—came from similar backgrounds as the youths in the programs. Almost all were of Hispanic heritage. Many had experienced gangs, drugs, and arrests as juveniles, just as the youths in the programs were experiencing now. The youths in our focus groups frequently expressed the extent to which they were impressed by this fact, respected the staff for now having made it, and found in these staff members role models many of them were now trying to emulate. There was a nearly universal feeling that this sort of street experience was more important than education and degrees. Often the youths would contrast the RNF staff members with teachers or probation officers, whom they saw as not really caring about them as persons or understanding them or their situation. They saw teachers and probation officers as doing a job, getting paid, and then leaving for their homes. On the other hand, the common feeling was that the RNF staff members truly cared about them as persons—that they were not just doing a job. In addition, since the RNF staff members came from a similar background and had often gone through similar experiences and failures at their age, the program participants felt the staff understood how they felt and the challenges they were facing. The youths felt they had thereby earned the right to put themselves forward as role models and to be tough on RNF participants when they would give excuses for not doing what they should. Time and again the RNF youth made this point to us in various ways. A few examples will help provide greater insight into what we are seeking to convey here.

In a San Diego focus group a female program participant said: “I think that the teachers at school and stuff, their day’s over at a certain time so after that, if they see you walking, they’ll just keep driving. But these people [at the RNF program] they’ll pull over and be like, ‘Hey, do you need a ride?’ They’re really cool; really friendly and stuff.” A little later when asked why the group felt the RNF staff members understood them, a youth replied, “Maybe cuz they been there too. They know what we’re going through. They know how it is to be where we’re at.” Another jumped in with: “Cuz they probably say they made the same mistakes we did.” Another said, “It’s easier to help people when you know what they’ve been through. You’ve been through the same thing they have, than someone trying to tell you something and they don’t even know what you feel.” One of the youths added: “Cuz they’ve been through it and they got through it and so that to us is showin’ that we can get through it because they did; they’re here right now.” Then he went on to relate: “Yeah, they give us their personal numbers, I mean, if we’re ever in trouble or something or we don’t know what to do, we can call them and they’ll be there and they’ll help us. . . . I know if I called any of the counselors here and tell them, ‘I don’t know, I just got jumped or something, I’m stranded, I don’t know where I’m at,’ they’ll come and try to find us.” Frequently, the youths related that the RNF staff members had given them their cell or home phone numbers and told them to call them at any time if they needed help. The youths were understandably impressed and touched by this.

Another typical comment came from a participant in a Denver RNF program: “They—we relate to them very easily. They come from the block. They’re not just some rich guy with a thumb ring. They lived our lives, but they made something of themselves. So we respect them a lot more, that they know what I go through in my daily life.” From a Los Angeles program a focus group member said of the RNF staff: “They don’t act like a teacher. They act like your friend.” Another chimed in: “Yeah, like they’ve known you forever. A third added: “I remember the first time when I spoke to _____, she told me whenever you need help call me. You can go to her house and talk to her or to the office. And for me things like . . . she was a teacher but also a friend.”

Appealing skills training. A third factor that we found often kept the participants engaged and coming to a program was holding training programs in certain job skills that appeal to youths. Leading examples include training programs in computer graphic design, video recording and editing, sound recording, and, for ex-taggers, art courses that turned their tagging activities into legitimate artistic endeavors. These are all examples of skills training programs that some might feel are less marketable than more traditional skills programs such as those in word processing or auto mechanics. However, such programs may not have the same cachet with the youths as do the previously cited ones. The RNF programs that were able to offer the more appealing skills training courses generally found them over-subscribed and a means to keep the youths coming to and interested in the program.

A variety of programs and activities beyond the RNF program. We found that the subgrantees differed in the degree to which they worked to involve the RNF participants in programs and activities beyond the RNF program. Some offered RNF classes and case management services to the youths without trying to involve them in other programs and activities, while other subgrantees had a wide range of activities and programs and worked to involve the RNF youths in as many of them as possible. These latter subgrantees did not see the RNF program as

engaging the youths in a certain class or activity with a specified beginning and end, expecting them to move on once that class or activity was completed. We will return to this distinction between programs later when examining program outcomes, but now we wish to emphasize that the programs with the more integrative, on-going approach seemed to be more successful in holding and engaging the RNF youths than those that offered certain specific services with a beginning and an end. For example, the director of a Phoenix program explained to us that their youths do not leave just because they have completed a class. Instead, they seek to become like a family to the youth. To achieve this, they have arrangements with a nearby gym where they go with the youths for exercise activities. She also reported they have other activities going on all the time: game nights, lock-ins, and concerts and sporting events they attend. The program is faith-based and connected with a 1,000 member church, and the youths are also invited to take part in the church's youth activities. Programs that offered a variety of options for involvement that went beyond the RNF program itself, thereby integrating the RNF youth into a variety of activities and classes, appeared to be more successful in holding the RNF participants—even in RNF program activities—than those whose RNF classes and activities were of a stand-alone nature.

Working with other Community Agencies

An important question in understanding the RNF subgrantees and their programs concerns whether they operated their programs largely in isolation from other community agencies and resources or whether they operated them as part of a larger network of social service programs and organizations. Ideally, communities have multiple agencies providing help to those in need, with these agencies—formally or informally—having working relationships with each other. This results in a network of services, or a social safety net as it is often called, and not merely a random assortment of individual programs operating in ignorance and isolation from each other. Such networks are marked by one program referring persons to another program when it can better meet the needs of that person, a sharing of insights and experiences among agencies, and sometimes organizations providing services jointly.

As part of our evaluation, therefore, we considered the methods used and the extent to which the RNF subgrantees' programs were part of on-going networks of services to youths in need. In our site visits we asked the program directors about their relationship with other community agencies, probing for the nature and extent of those relationships. We also interviewed a community partner (another agency with whom the RNF programs had a working relationship) of 12 of the 19 program sites we visited. We asked these community partners about the nature and extent of their relationship with the RNF program and their evaluation of that relationship.

Our most basic finding was that every one of the 19 program sites we visited had, in fact, relationships with other community agencies or organizations. None operated in isolation from other community resources, even though they differed in the extent and nature of those relationships. In this section we first describe the types of community resources and agencies with whom the RNF programs had working relationships, and then we explore the extent and nature of those relationships.

The Types of Community Partners

Almost all of the other community organizations with whom the RNF subgrantees worked fell into one of six categories.

Probation departments and officers. The outside organization or official that the RNF programs most frequently cited as one with whom they worked was, not surprisingly, probation departments and officers. These contacts usually involved probation officers either directly referring youths to the RNF program or simply listing the RNF program as one of several that provided certain services the youths were required to receive as part of their probation requirements.

Schools. A second major category of community partners consisted of local schools or school systems. These contacts often involved referrals to the RNF program of youths who were experiencing problems at school or who had been expelled from a traditional high school. In other cases they involved the RNF program providing after-school or other services to youths who were in school, either a traditional high school or an alternative school.

Churches. Since many of the RNF programs were faith-based, it is not surprising that many had close working relationships with one or more churches in their neighborhoods. Some of the community-based programs reported the same. These relationships varied from single churches that were the sponsoring entity of an RNF program to programs that had more informal, working relationships with a number of churches. These interactions involved the churches serving as a source of referrals to the RNF program, the RNF programs referring youths to the churches for certain youth-oriented activities they conducted, and the churches serving as a source of volunteers, in-kind contributions (such as meeting space, meals, or clothing), or financial contributions.

Community social service agencies. A fourth type of community partner consisted of other social services agencies and programs in the community, ranging from mental health clinics to, in one case, a youth detention camp. The RNF programs sometimes referred their program participants to other programs for services they could not provide or services they judged the community partner could provide more effectively. For example, some reported referring youths with severe mental health or substance abuse problems to other agencies or programs better equipped to deal with them. More frequently, we found the relationship involved the RNF program providing certain services or activities they were better situated to provide than was the community partner, such as certain life skills classes. For example, a community partner of a Phoenix RNF program reported that the RNF program provided community service opportunities and job preparedness training for youths in its program.

Employers. Some RNF programs mentioned cultivating relationships with potential employers of youths in their programs. One Phoenix program, for example, had worked hard on this and showed us a long list of employers who had agreed to hire youths they recommend, even if they had previously been incarcerated.

The Workforce Investment System. Program staff rarely, if ever, mentioned working with more formal employment resources, such as state employment offices, local Workforce Investment Boards, or One-Stop Career Centers.

The Formal versus Informal Nature of the RNF-Community Partner Relationships

In considering the nature of these community partner interactions, we first note that most of the relationships were based on informal understandings and long-term working relationships not a formal, written agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU). Whether the relationship was formal or informal seemed largely to depend on the nature of the community partner. Formal, written agreements were most often present when the community partner was itself a more formal institution or organization, such as a school or juvenile justice institution. In only one case was there a written agreement when the partner was a nonprofit community service agency. The frequent contacts with probation departments were almost always based on informal, working relationships that had developed with certain probation officers. Even when there were formal MOUs or other formal, written agreements, the heart of the relationship seemed to rest upon more informal, on-going working relationships, with the written agreements merely putting into writing the informally-worked out relationships.

Concluding Observations

We conclude this section on community partners with three summary observations. First, most of the community partner relationships were of a long-term, on-going nature, not of a sporadic nature. They most often represented continuing working relationships with roots that in some cases preceded the RNF program.

Second, the community partners we interviewed consistently evaluated the RNF programs and their relationship with them in highly positive terms. This might be expected, since the RNF programs selected the community partners whom we interviewed and thus would, of course, select partners with whom they had positive relationships. Nevertheless, the specific positive qualities of the RNF programs they mentioned are revealing. Most frequently, they mentioned the caring attitudes of the RNF staff, thereby reinforcing what many of the youths in our focus groups had said. For example, a deputy probation officer said this of a Los Angeles RNF program with which she had worked extensively: “They also do one-on-one and the feedback from the kids is that is the most valuable part of the program. They feel validated; they feel like someone cares about them, which in my experience with [name of the subgrantee], they truly care about these kids.”

A third observation is that the subgrantees’ RNF programs did not operate in isolation; instead, almost all were connected to other community agencies and resources. We believe this to be evidence of their competence and sustainability. Well-established community agencies, such as schools and probation departments, would be unlikely to partner with agencies and programs they view as unstable, amateurish, and ineffective. Nevertheless, while most RNF programs had developed good working relationships with other community agencies, not all had. One reported having been asked to leave a school in which it had previously provided supplementary classes. And when we interviewed a probation officer, he indicated he was not even aware that a

subgrantee's RNF program was now located only a few miles from his office. (The program location had moved the previous year from a more distant location.) Yet these were the exceptions; most of the programs we visited had good working relationships with other youth service programs and agencies in their communities.

Program Activities

In this section we consider the basic activities provided by the subgrantees' programs. We first consider their assessment activities, next their program services, and then their follow-up activities.

Program Participant Assessment

Due to the ETO system and the requirements of the Latino Coalition that were embedded in it, all of the RNF programs were required to do an initial assessment of youths entering their programs and to develop an individual service plan (ISP) for each youth. The in-take assessments consisted of determining basic background information for each individual, such as age, gender, ethnicity, educational status, and family or living situation. The youths' specific situation and their at-risk or adjudicated status were determined. In addition, it was determined whether or not there were any court-ordered classes or other services required. Also, almost every program allotted time at in-take for a session with each youth in order to get to know him or her as an individual, to establish a direct, personal relationship, and to obtain a more intuitive sense of the person's needs. These sessions usually took the place of a formal assessment instrument that would cover such issues as mental health or substance abuse problems.

An individual service plan was then developed for each youth based on the in-take assessment, a requirement of the RNF program as it was set up by the Latino Coalition. As a part of this process, the Latino Coalition required a formal ISP questionnaire to be filled out. From our site visits we concluded that the crafting of an ISP was taken seriously by the various subgrantees. The programs typically placed a strong emphasis on encouraging the program participants to articulate certain goals and then to develop a plan to reach those goals.²¹

Following in-take, the ETO system required a quarterly assessment of each program participant that tracked the progress of each youth. Also, staff members were required to contact each youth in their program at least monthly. These contacts could be in the form of a face-to-face meeting, a telephone conversation, or a contact via email.

However, two caveats are in order. First, the programs tended to find it difficult, and even unadvisable, to follow fully the ISPs established at in-take. Youths would enter and drop out of the programs, their goals would change, and new issues would arise in their lives. More than one case manager referred to the plans of the youths and how the program interacted with them being in a constant state of flux. Thus the initial assessment and ISP should be seen as a starting point, not as a blueprint that was rigidly followed.

A second caveat is that often programs found it difficult to follow the prescribed regular series of contacts with program participants. They were dealing with a transient population and one that often would not keep appointments or return phone calls. Case managers reported having to make repeated calls in attempts to stay in touch with some program participants and some were lost completely due to their living situation presumably having changed. Several programs reported that, when other means of contact failed, getting in touch with a participant sometimes worked using Facebook.

Activities and Services Offered

In this section we consider the program activities and services that the 28 different subgrantees' RNF programs offered. We consider here only those activities and services that were provided by the subgrantee programs themselves as a part of the RNF program. In addition to the services considered in this section there were—as discussed earlier—services provided by community partners to which the RNF youths were referred, and, more frequently, there were services offered by the subgrantees themselves that were not a part of the RNF program. These included such activities as trips out to cultural sites or sporting events, church youth groups, and recreational activities.

Our site visits demonstrated that the RNF programs funded by the Latino Coalition were not carbon copies of each other. However, there were three types of activities or classes in which the RNF program participants most frequently engaged: job skills training, job readiness or job preparation training, and mentoring. Job skills training involved classes or other activities aimed at training the youths in certain employable skills. Examples of such skills in which the RNF programs provided training were computer use and literacy, graphic design, and video filming and editing. Job readiness or job preparation training involved training in attitudes and behavior patterns essential for securing and succeeding in employment or educational situations. Topics addressed here included proper dress, resume writing, interviewing skills, and anger management. Broader life skills were often also included, such as classes involving parenting, self-esteem, and attitudes and behavior towards persons of the opposite sex. Mentoring activities included a mentoring relationship with either adult volunteers or program case managers. The ETO system did not distinguish between these two types of mentoring and thus we present them together.

Table 2—based on ETO data—compares the amount of time the program participants spent in these three types of services. In interpreting these numbers it is important to remember that about 15 percent of the youths included in these data are those who went through the in-take process but never showed up to take part in the actual program. Also, many of the program participants were still enrolled full-time in school, and thus some activities would not be as relevant to them as to those who were not in school. These considerations in-part explain why the percentages in the “none” or “1 to 6 hours” categories are as high as they are.

Taking mentoring first, overall 42.2 percent of the youths in the various RNF programs received no mentoring services, while 20.2 percent received over 20 hours of personal mentoring services. Almost 20 percent fell in the “1 to 6 hours” category and another 20 percent into the “7 to 20 hours” category. The pattern, however, varied greatly from one program to another. None of the

Table 2
Hours Program Participants Spent
In Three Key Activities

Number of Hours Spent in Activities	Mentoring Activities	Job Skills Training	Job Preparation Training
None	42.2%	68.7%	60.9%
1-6 Hours	18.6	13.0	12.0
7-20 Hours	19.0	9.7	10.5
20+ Hours	<u>20.2</u>	<u>8.7</u>	<u>16.6</u>
Total	100.0%	100.1%	100.0%
(N)	(2748)	(2748)	(2748)

youths in one program were involved in mentoring services, while in three other programs 93 to 99 percent received mentoring services. There were five programs where 40 percent or more of the program participants received more than 20 hours of mentoring services. Four of the 5 programs for which the Latino Coalition had discontinued funding due to low performance exhibited 50 percent or more of their youths in the “None” category in regard to mentoring activities.

Table 2 also shows that overall slightly more than two-thirds of the youths in the RNF programs received no job skill training, while almost 9 percent received more than 20 hours of such training. Again, the programs of the various subgrantees varied greatly in how much emphasis they put on job skills training. There were nine programs in which 90 percent or more of their participants had spent no time in job skills training, and there was one in which almost all of its youths (98 percent) had engaged in more than 20 hours of such training.

Table 2 also reveals that overall almost 61 percent of the youths in the subgrantees’ programs received no job preparedness training, while almost 17 percent received more than 20 hours of such training. Again, the pattern varied greatly by program. In nine programs no participants or less than 1 percent of the participants spent time in job preparedness training. In contrast, three programs had over half of their participants who spent more than 20 hours in job preparedness activities. All five of the programs for which the Latino Coalition had discontinued funding due to low performance had no program participants involved in job preparedness training.

Overall, the programs emphasized mentoring the most, job preparedness training next, and then job skill training. Program participants took part in other activities at much lower levels than the

three activities discussed here. Fifteen percent had program participants taking part in community service, 10 percent had participants in GED preparation, and 7 percent had participants in internships or other subsidized employment.

Post-Program Follow-Up with Participants

Other studies have shown that community social service programs are often weak in systematic follow-up on their program participants once they have left or completed a program.²² The RNF programs were no exception. When asked about follow-up on participants in their programs who had either completed one or more portions of the program or who had left before completing any portion, program directors and staff cited informal means of staying in contact with the youths. They told stories of youths who would drop by to report on how they were doing and of others they would hear about from youths still in the program or from staff members living in the same neighborhood or attending the same church. Initially, the ETO data system did not require periodic reporting on the status of youths once they had left a program, but a follow-up requirement was added to the ETO system for youths who had successfully exited the subgrantees' programs. It required case managers to report quarterly on the status of these youths. However, both case managers and supervisors testified to the great difficulty in keeping track of youths once they were no longer in a program. The program participants are a mobile population, and one not quick to reply to letters or return phone calls or to respond to other formal avenues for staying in touch. Most case managers reported challenges in keeping in touch with and connecting with youths currently in the program, not to mention doing the same with those who had left the program 6 months or a year earlier. As a result, the individual programs almost totally relied on informal channels to keep track of program participants once they had left the program. This, of course, yielded inconsistent results.

Part Three Program Outcomes

In this section we consider the outcomes of the services provided by the RNF subgrantees. The services provided at-risk and adjudicated youths may or may not result in changed patterns of behavior or achieve the bottom-line goals of the RNF program. In this section we use the ETO data to consider four basic outcomes of the RNF program, the extent to which the RNF subgrantees were able to achieve them, the characteristics of the youths most likely to have positive outcomes, and the characteristics of the subgrantees and programs most likely to have positive outcomes. Since three of the outcomes measured by the ETO data are not fully relevant for in-school 14 to 17 year old youths, we also consider the ability of programs to hold youths in their programs for a significant amount of time.

The Outcome Measures

The first of the four basic outcomes of RNF program participation we considered was success in the employment field. One goal of the program was to enable youths to obtain gainful

employment. We sought to measure the extent to which the subgrantees had achieved this goal by combining those who had obtained unsubsidized employment for the first time, those who had obtained a new or additional job, and those who had been accepted into the military. If a program participant achieved one of these outcomes, we considered him or her to have achieved a positive employment outcome. A second goal of the program was to prepare youths for gainful employment. We considered a youth to have had a positive employment training outcome if he or she either entered an occupational training course of study or entered full-time post-secondary education. Our third positive outcome was achieving certain educational milestones. We considered four: completing long-term occupational training, obtaining a high school diploma, obtaining a GED, or obtaining some other educational certification. If a participant achieved one of these, we considered the person to have had a positive educational outcome. Our fourth positive outcome was avoiding recidivism. It had two components: not being convicted of a crime (with or without incarceration) and not having one's parole or probation revoked. To be considered as having had a positive outcome, a youth needed to achieve both of these measures. It should be recalled, however, that the RNF program subgrantees were less than successful in tracking the program participants once they left the program. Thus the long-term figures on recidivism rates are less than reliable for participants who had left the program.

The first three of these outcome measures are not fully relevant for 14 to 17 year olds who were still in school, which was the case for a majority of the youths in the subgrantees' programs (62.6 percent). In terms of employment such youths would not qualify for a full-time job or the military. Some could find unsubsidized part-time or summer employment and thus some show up as having achieved a positive employment outcome, but understandably many would not. Similarly, in terms of the employment training outcome, most would not be potential participants in an occupational training course of study or a full-time post-secondary course of study. In the case of achieving educational milestones, one must recall that most of the program participants had been involved with the program for 2 years or less.²³ Thus one would not expect 14 to 17 year olds who were still in school to experience such educational milestones as graduating from high school, even when making normal progress towards doing so.

Because three of the four outcome measures were not fully applicable to a majority of program participants (that is, the in-school, 14 to 17 year old youths), we also considered the numbers of youths who completed at least 25 hours in a RNF program. Although we did not consider this an outcome, we nevertheless believe that successfully encouraging program participants—and especially in-school, 14 to 17 year olds—to stay actively involved in a program such as the RNF program is an important achievement. Many of the qualities that are needed to succeed in school or the workplace—an ability to set goals and stick with them, to overcome discouragement and counter pressures, to get along with others, to accept guidance from authority figures—are needed simply to persevere with a program such as RNF. Thus we consider program participants who stayed in the program for 25 or more hours as having realized by that very act a positive achievement. Likewise, we consider subgrantees that possess high percentages of in-school, 14 to 17 year olds completing 25 hours or more in their programs as being more successful than those with lower percentages. We used 25 hours or more in the program as the cutoff point for two reasons: (1) this was the median number of hours participants spent in the RNF program, and (2) a program participant that spent at least 25 hours in the program would have completed

at least one class or other program segment (the shortest RNF classes usually met for about three hours, once a week for six weeks).

Outcomes: Overall Patterns

Table 3 presents the percentages of the 2,748 youths in the 28 RNF programs that experienced positive outcomes by each of these four outcome measures. Most positively, a very high 91 percent of the program participants avoided recidivism. In itself this is an impressive number, considering that 60 percent of the individuals in the program were adjudicated youths who already had experienced some sort of trouble with the juvenile justice system. Even among these adjudicated participants 87 percent experienced no further troubles with the justice system. Adding to the impressiveness of these numbers are national figures showing 82.1 percent of 14

Table 3
Participant Outcomes

Participant Outcomes	%	N
Positive Employment Outcomes ¹	20.0 %	2748
Began Employment Training ²	2.7%	2748
Completed Education Milestone ³	10.8%	2748
Avoided Recidivism ⁴	91.0%	2677

¹ The percentages of program participants who achieved one or more of the following employment outcomes: first time unsubsidized employment, found an additional job, or entered the military.

² The percentages of program participants who either entered long-term occupational training or entered full-time post-secondary education.

³ The percentages of program participants who achieved one or more of the following education attainments: completed long-term occupational training, obtained a high school degree, obtained a GED, or obtained an educational certificate.

⁴ The percentage of program participants who were not convicted of a crime (with or without incarceration) and did not have their parole or probation revoked. The N for this outcome is slightly lower than that for the other four outcomes because the recidivism data were not available for one program due to its having made an error in recording the recidivism outcome in the ETO system.

to 17 year olds who had been incarcerated being rearrested within three years of their release, with 55.7 percent being reconvicted, 38.6 percent returned to prison with new sentences, and 56.6 percent returned to prison without a new sentence.²⁴ The numbers from the national study and the RNF program are not directly comparable, however, since the national study only dealt with youths who had been incarcerated and covered three years after the youths' release. In contrast, most of the RNF youths had not been incarcerated, and the time period covered by this

study varied, though in almost all cases was less than three years. Nevertheless, the recidivism percentages for the RNF program youths—including those who were adjudicated—were lower by large enough margins that importance can be attached to them. In addition to the recidivism outcome, 20 percent of the RNF youths experienced a positive employment outcome, nearly 11 percent completed an educational milestone, and a few (2.7 percent) began full-time employment training. If one combines the three outcomes other than recidivism, one finds that 27.9 percent of the RNF participants experienced at least one of these three positive outcomes.

As noted earlier, due to the nature of these three outcomes, one would expect the in-school, 14 to 17 year old program participants to have lower rates of positive outcomes than the older and the out-of-school participants. We found this in fact to be the case. Table 4 compares the three outcomes other than recidivism of those program participants who were 14 to 17 years of age and in school with those who were either 18 to 21 years of age or 14 to 17 years of age and not in school. In each case those who were older or not in school had higher positive outcomes than those who were younger and in school. This was especially true of the employment outcome. A total of 39 percent of those who were out of school or were 18 to 21 years old experienced at least one of the three positive outcomes.

A more appropriate measure of success for in-school 14 to 17 year olds may be completing at least 25 hours in their RNF programs. Some 45.3 percent of these youths did so.

Table 4
Outcomes by Age and School Status of Participants

Outcomes	14-17 Years In-School Participants		18-21 Years or Out-of-School Participants¹	
	%	N	%	N
Positive Employment Outcomes ²	14.6%	1721	29.0%	1027
Began Employment Training ³	1.9%	1721	4.1%	1027
Completed Education Milestone ⁴	8.8%	1721	14.2%	1027

¹Program participants who were either 18 to 21 years of age OR who were 14 to 17 years of age and out-of-school.

²The percentages of program participants who achieved one or more of the following employment outcomes: first time unsubsidized employment, found an additional job, or entered the military.

³The percentages of program participants who either entered long-term occupational training or entered full-time post-secondary education.

⁴The percentages of program participants who achieved one or more of the following education attainments: completed long-term occupational training, obtained a high school degree, obtained a GED, or obtained an educational certificate.

In summary, overall about 28 percent of the program participants had a positive employment, educational, or training outcome, a number that increases to almost 40 percent when one eliminates the 14 to 17 year old, in-school youths, among whom one would not expect to have high positive outcomes on these three measures. In addition, about 45 percent of the latter group persevered in the RNF program for over 25 hours.

One can debate whether these are encouraging or discouraging percentages. We were unable to find any outcome research for similar programs that we could use as a benchmark against which to compare these numbers. Overall, almost three-fourths of the program participants did not experience even one of the three positive outcomes other than avoiding recidivism. On the other hand, about 40 percent of those most in need of and in a position to achieve one or more of these three outcomes did so, and of those who by age and school status were not prime candidates for achieving these positive outcomes, about 45 percent persevered in the RNF program for 25 hours or more, enough to complete at least one class or other segment.

In evaluating the level of achievement these figures represent, one must keep in mind two fundamental facts. First, most of the youths with whom the subgrantees were working—although not without talents and a desire to make something useful out of their lives—were facing huge challenges. As the youths and program staff relayed, their neighborhoods, and even their schools, were typically gang infested and violent, many of their families were dysfunctional, peer pressures loomed large and more often than not were highly negative in nature.

A second fact that should be taken into account when evaluating the positive outcome levels of the RNF program is that many of the youths in the program had been with the program only a short time and were still “works in progress.” It is naïve to think that a young person’s life can be turned around quickly or easily. Months, and sometimes years, are needed. Even persons who eventually succeed will often experience failures in which they slip back into gang activity or drugs before they succeed. One case manager after another made this point to us. While some of the subgrantee programs had been in existence for all three years of the Department of Labor grant, most had been in existence for two years and a few for only one year. And not all the youths had, of course, been in their programs for the entire time the RNF program had been in existence. In fact, included in these percentages are the 15 percent of youths who signed up for the program, but never participated in it. Later we will see that outcome success was closely related to the length of time the youths had spent in the program.

Given these circumstances, even a 28 percent rate of positive outcomes (or a 40 percent rate for older and out-of-school youths)—especially when combined with a very low 9 percent recidivism rate—can properly be interpreted as a success level to be applauded.

Outcomes: Characteristics of the Program Participants

Next, we consider whether or not and to what extent the program outcomes varied by the nature or characteristics of the program participants. It is reasonable, for example, to assume that at-risk youths would do better than adjudicated youths, and that older and out-of-school youths

would do better at employment outcomes than younger participants who were still in school. These are the types of issues we consider in this section.

Table 5 shows the four program outcomes divided by four key characteristics of the program participants: age, school status, gender, and at-risk versus adjudicated status. As might be expected, the at-risk youths did better on all four outcomes than did the adjudicated youths. Females did better in all four outcomes, but the differences tended to be small. Youths 18 years of age or more did better than the 14 to 17 year olds in all four outcomes, and the differences were large except in the case of recidivism. As discussed earlier, these differences in outcomes by age category can mainly be attributed to the fact that the outcomes measures (except for avoiding recidivism) are not fully appropriate to measure the progress of in-school youth.

Table 5
Outcomes by Program Participants' Characteristics

Characteristics Of Program Participants	N	Percent Positive Employment Outcomes %	Percent Began Employment Training %	Percent Completed Education Milestone %	Percent Avoided Recidivism¹ %
14-17 year olds	2089	16.8%	1.9%	8.9%	91.0% (2025)
18 years old +	659	30.2%	5.3%	17.0%	91.7% (652)
In school	1933	16.1%	2.2%	10.6%	92.6% (1874)
Out of school	815	29.2%	3.9%	11.3%	87.2% (803)
Male	1806	19.4%	2.4%	8.7%	89.2% (1756)
Female	942	21.2%	3.3%	14.9%	94.2% (921)
At-risk	1112	21.5%	4.2%	15.2%	96.8% (1089)
Adjudicated	1636	19.0%	1.7%	7.8%	87.0% (1588)
Total	2748	20.0%	2.7%	10.8%	91.0% (2677)

¹The one program that, as noted in Table 3, made an error in recording recidivism is not included in these percentages. The Ns for this column are given in the parentheses following the percentages.

Outcomes: Subgrantee Program Differences

This leaves the question of the extent to which and the ways in which the outcomes experienced by the program participants varied by the specific program they were in. Table 6—which shows the programs' range of positive outcomes for each of the four outcome measures—reveals that outcomes indeed varied from one program to another.

Table 6
The Range of Positive Program Outcomes Among the Subgrantees

Range of Positive Outcomes	Percent Positive Employment Outcomes		Percent Began Employment Training		Percent Completed Education Milestone		Percent Avoided Recidivism ¹	
	%	N ²	%	N ²	%	N ²	%	N ²
Highest rate of positive outcomes	46.7%	75	14.0%	50	31.1%	119	99.1%	219
Lowest rate of positive outcomes	0.0%	50	0.0%	177	0.0%	111	73.8%	61
Subgrantee mean of positive outcomes	21.3%		2.8%		11.4%		91.1%	
Subgrantee median of positive outcomes	24.3%		1.5%		10.5%		93.5%	

¹The one program that, as noted in Table 3, made an error in recording recidivism is not included in these percentages.

²The Ns in this table refer to the number of program participants in the subgrantee programs that ranked the highest or lowest in positive outcomes.

First, as seen earlier, 91 percent of the RNF program participants avoided recidivism. In spite of this very high level of attainment, there was some variation among the subgrantee programs. One program had a 99.1 percent success level and there were nine programs with a success rate of over 95 percent. On the other hand, five programs scored under 85 percent and one had only 73.8 percent of its participants avoiding recidivism. This program was generally a low performing program, scoring at a low level in all four of our outcome measures. It was funded for only one year, after which it was dropped by the Latino Coalition for poor performance and accountability issues.

When examining positive employment outcomes, the success rate among the 28 programs varied from a high of 46.7 percent for one program to a low of zero percent for two programs. A total of 11 programs had success rates under 10 percent, while 13 had success rates between 25.0 and 46.7 percent. There was a tendency for programs ranking low by this measure to have a higher percentage of 14 to 17 year old, in-school participants (66.0 percent) than the 13 programs ranking high (56.6 percent). Thus success seemed to be somewhat tied to having a higher percentage of participants who would clearly be job-eligible. More significantly, of the 11 programs with success rates of 10 percent or less, 5 were generally low in performance and their grants had been discontinued by the Latino Coalition by the time of our study. The low performance of some of the other 11 low-performing programs may be explained by the nature of their programs. One, for example, was largely a program working in a youth detention center and thus these youths would, of course, have had no ability to obtain employment. Another

program for the most part provided classes required by the probation department. To a large degree it operated as an extension of the probation system. Most of its participants felt they were there under duress and left as soon as they completed the required class or classes.

A third outcome measure involved reaching certain educational milestones. Here the rate of positive outcomes ranged from a high of 31.1 percent for one program, and a low of 0 percent for 2 programs. Nine programs achieved a 15 percent or higher success rate among their participants, with one being just over 30 percent and two others in the 25 percent range.

A fourth outcome measure is the percentage of program participants who began an employment training program. Overall, slightly less than 3 percent of the participants had begun one of these training programs, and therefore the individual program percentages tended to be low. Three programs had 12 percent or more experiencing this outcome; while seven had no program participants experiencing this outcome.

In an attempt to understand and evaluate these outcome patterns, we grouped the various subgrantees and their programs by three criteria.²⁵ First, we compared the 18 subgrantee programs whose funding had been renewed by the Latino Coalition with the 10 subgrantee programs whose funding had not been renewed. Most of the programs that were not renewed were dropped due to poor performance or a failure to comply with program guidelines. Thus one would expect that the programs whose funding had been renewed would have more positive outcomes than those whose funding was not renewed. With regard to positive employment outcomes this expected pattern is clearly present. (See Table 7.) Twenty-four percent of the

Table 7
Participant Outcomes by Type of Subgrantee

Program Type	N	Percent Positive Employment Outcomes	Percent Began Employment Training	Percent Completed Education Milestone	Percent Avoided Recidivism ¹
		%	%	%	%
Funding renewed	2037	24.0%	2.1%	11.2%	91.3%
Funding not renewed	711	8.6%	4.5%	9.7%	90.0%
All CBOs	497	18.1%	4.2%	10.5%	88.3%
All FBOs	2251	20.4%	2.4%	10.9%	91.5%
Integrative ²	777	35.9%	3.5%	18.7%	91.8%
Non-integrative ²	1260	16.7%	1.2%	6.7%	91.0%
Total	2748	20.0%	2.7%	10.8%	91.0%

¹The one program that, as noted in Table 3, made an error in recording recidivism is not included in these percentages.

²Only the 19 programs we personally visited are included in the integrative-non-integrative distinction.

program participants of subgrantee programs whose funding had been renewed by the Latino Coalition experienced one or more positive employment outcomes, while less than 9 percent of participants in programs whose funding had not been continued achieved this level. However, in the case of the other three outcome measures there were only very small differences.

Of the 28 programs, 6 were run by community-based subgrantees (that is, they were community-oriented organizations that were secular or non-religious in nature) and 22 were run by faith-based subgrantees (that is, the organizations had a religious background or nature). Given the discussion in public policy circles over the relative merit of delivering services through secular versus faith-based organizations it is worthwhile to ask whether the youths attending programs run by community-based organizations (CBOs) or by faith-based organizations (FBOs) tended to experience better outcomes. Table 7 offers some preliminary answers to this question. On recidivism and gaining jobs, the participants in FBOs did slightly better; on beginning employment training programs, the participants in CBOs did slightly better; and FBOs and CBOs were virtually tied in completing educational milestones. Yet in every instance the differences were too small to attach much importance to them. One can conclude that for all intents and purposes, the FBOs and CBOs did equally well.

A final comparison may be the most revealing one. As we noted earlier, while engaging in site visits to 19 subgrantee programs and conducting focus groups at 11 of them we noted a basic division in the character of the programs. Some of the subgrantees offered many activities and services in addition to the Latino Coalition-funded RNF program and worked to integrate their participants into those other activities and services. Their goal was the establishment of an ongoing relationship with the youths, one that would last for years. They offered a variety of classes, and as soon as a youth completed one, they would urge him or her to become involved in another. They offered trips to sporting events or concerts; they had recreational activities, such as ping-pong, video games, and basketball available; some would invite the youths to youth groups at an affiliated church; and they would urge the youths just to stop by and hang out. When we visited these program sites there always seemed to be youths present—visiting with each other and staff members, playing games, or just hanging out. The youths taking part in these programs often described their relationship to the program and its staff members in family terms. For example, in one Phoenix faith-based program we asked the participants in a focus group if the program acted as a sort of second family for them. There were general assents, and then one youth replied, “I consider it my first. I feel more comfortable here than with my real, regular family.” Another said, “That’s true.” A third said, “[Name of a staff member] is my mama.” A fourth said, “Yeah.” On the other hand, the non-integrative subgrantee programs seemed to focus on offering certain classes or counseling and mentoring sessions. Youths would usually come for the class or counseling session and then leave.

Because of this distinction, we divided the 19 programs we visited into those that took a more integrative approach and those that took a non-integrative approach. More specifically, the subgrantees we classified as integrative in nature were marked by two overlapping characteristics: (1) they worked hard to integrate the RNF youths into a variety of activities other than those that were a part of the RNF program, and (2) they sought to keep the youth engaged in those activities on a continuing, on-going basis. Admittedly this involved some subjective judgments on our part, but based on site visits and focus groups with participants, we are

confident that this division reflects a real distinction among the subgrantees' programs. We categorized 8 programs as integrative in nature and 11 as non-integrative. Of these 8 programs 7 were faith-based and 1 was community-based, although even the 1 community-based program had working relationships with a couple neighborhood churches.

The last pair of comparisons in Table 7 shows what we found when we compared the outcomes for the 8 integrative programs with the 11 non-integrative programs. By all 4 outcome measures the participants in the 8 integrative FBO programs had higher levels of positive outcomes than the non-integrative programs. In the case of positive employment outcomes and completed educational milestones, the differences were large—19 percentage points in one case and 12 in the other. For the remaining two outcome measures—beginning employment training and avoiding justice system involvement—the integrative programs had higher success rates, but only to a small degree. The integrative programs also did much better at encouraging 14 to 17 year old in-school youths to stay in the program for over 25 hours—69 percent of their 14 to 17 year old in-school participants did so, compared to only 38 percent for the non-integrative programs.

We believe this finding to be one of the more significant revealed by our data. A key to reaching at-risk and adjudicated minority youths seems to be that a program not simply offer a certain class or even counseling for a set amount of days or weeks. Instead, the key appears to be to offer a combination of services and opportunities that keep the youths involved in an on-going series of activities, thereby creating an alternative “family” or community with different cultural norms and values than what they too often would otherwise encounter.

Outcomes: Differences by Time Spent in an RNF Program

In assessing the effect of the RNF program on its participants, it is helpful to consider the differing outcomes the youths experienced based on the amount of time they spent in the program. If the program was in fact having a positive effect, one would expect that those who spent more time in the program would have more positive outcomes than those who spent less time in the program. In this section we consider whether or not the outcomes experienced by the program participants varied with the amount of time they spent in program activities.

Table 8 shows that positive outcomes are clearly related to the amount of time youths spent in the subgrantees' programs. Especially in the case of employment outcomes and completing educational milestones, the more time youths spent in the program the more likely they were to experience a positive outcome. In terms of employment outcomes the percentage of program participants with a positive outcome increased from about 6 or 7 percent for those with less than 25 hours in the program to almost 47 percent for those who spent over 90 hours in the program. In terms of completing educational milestones the percentage of program participants with a positive outcome increased from 2.2 percent to 25.7 percent as the time spent in the programs went from less than 6 hours to over 90 hours. Surprisingly, recidivism rates were slightly higher for program participants who spent more time in the programs than for those who spent less time in the programs. But the differences were too small to attach importance to them.

Table 8
Participant Outcomes by Time Spent in RNF Programs

Time in RNF Program	N	Percent Positive Employment Outcomes	Percent Began Employment Training	Percent Completed Education Milestone	Percent Avoided Recidivism¹
		%	%	%	%
0 – 5.9 Hours	667	7.5%	0.7%	2.2%	93.7%
6 - 24.9 Hours	734	6.0%	1.8%	5.2%	90.8%
25 – 54.9 Hours	431	20.2%	3.0%	8.6%	89.3%
55 – 89.9 Hours	220	24.5%	2.7%	12.7%	94.7%
90 or more hours	696	46.6%	5.3%	25.7%	88.2%
All	2748	20.0%	2.7%	10.8%	91.0%

¹The one program that, as noted in Table 3, made an error in recording recidivism is not included in these percentages.

We also considered whether or not the positive outcomes program participants experienced varied by the type of training or services they received as a part of the RNF programs they were in. Table 9 examines the percentage of program participants who experienced no, one, or two or more positive outcomes based on the amount of time they spent in three activities: job preparation, job skill training, and mentoring. (The recidivism outcome is not included here.)

Table 9
Positive Participant Outcomes by Time Spent in Three Specific Activities

Number of Positive Outcomes¹	Job Preparation		Job Skill Training		Mentoring	
	0-6 Hours	7+ Hours	0-6 Hours	7+ Hours	0-6 Hours	7+ Hours
None	78.5%	54.4%	75.7%	56.2%	77.9%	63.1%
One	18.2	34.6	20.6	31.1	19.3	27.5
Two or more	<u>3.4</u>	<u>10.9</u>	<u>3.8</u>	<u>12.7</u>	<u>2.8</u>	<u>9.4</u>
Total	100.1%	99.9%	100.1%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	2020	728	2243	505	1671	1077

¹This table does not include the positive outcome of avoiding recidivism.

The most notable pattern revealed by this table is that the time spent in the program is much more important than the type of activity in which the participants engaged. The percentage of those with no positive outcomes is in the 70 percent range for all those who had engaged in an activity for 6 hours or less, a number that dropped to the 50s to low 60s percentage range for those who had engaged in an activity for 7 hours or more—and this was true irrespective of the activity. Additionally, irrespective of activity, the percentage achieving one or more positive outcomes was higher for those engaged in 7 or more hours of an activity than for those engaged for 6 hours or less. This suggests that being involved in a program—with such helpful forces as social contacts, discipline, and positive role models—was more important than the exact nature of the services or training the youths received.

Therefore, we sought to determine what types of programs were able to hold their participants in the program for 25 hours or more and what types were not. Table 10 gives the results. There were very small differences between the community-based and faith-based programs. But as was the case with outcomes, those programs whose funding was renewed by the Latino Coalition

Table 10
Program Participants Completing 25 Hours in the Program
by Type of Subgrantee

Program Type	Percent Completing at least 25 hours in Program	N
Continued Funding		
Programs with funding renewed	52.3%	2037
Programs with funding not renewed	39.5%	711
Type of Program		
Community-based	50.3%	497
Faith-based	48.7%	2251
Nature of Program		
Integrative	69.6%	777
Non-integrative	41.7%	1260
All program participants	49.0%	2748

were more successful than the programs whose funding was not renewed. Most significantly it is again the programs we had classified as integrative in nature that scored the best, with almost 70 percent of their youths persevering in their programs for 25 hours or more.

Outcomes: Multiple Classification Analysis

One question is remaining to be answered: What factors are the most important in shaping program outcomes when they all are considered together and one controls for the effect of other variables in the analysis? The four tables in Appendix C report what we found when we used Multiple Classification Analysis, taking into account the program participants' age, gender, at-risk versus adjudicated status, time spent in the RNF program, home situation, and school status, as well as the programs' funding status, faith-based versus community-based orientation, and integrative versus non-integrative nature.²⁶

Table C-1, which deals with employment outcomes, shows that being 18 years of age or more, spending more time in the RNF program, being in a program whose funding was continued, and being in an integrative program increased one's chances of finding employment, taking into account all the variables considered here. Table C-2 shows that being over 18 years of age, being an at-risk rather than adjudicated youth, spending more time in the RNF program, being in a program whose funding was not continued, and being in an integrative program were all significantly related to the beginning employment training outcome. Table C-3 reveals that being 18 years of age or more, being in school, spending more time in the program, and being in an integrative program, significantly increased one's chances of completing an educational milestone. Table C-4 shows that being 18 years of age or more, being at-risk rather than adjudicated, being in school, and spending less time in the program significantly increased one's chances of avoiding recidivism.

These findings re-enforce our earlier findings. The older participants, those who spent more time in the RNF program, and those who were in integrative programs were the ones who most consistently experienced positive outcomes, even when other key variables are held constant. At the other extreme, whether a program participant was in a faith-based program or a community-based program had little effect on the outcomes achieved; nor did the gender of the participants. Those who were in school experienced significantly more success in terms of completing educational milestones and avoiding recidivism, and at-risk youths had significantly more positive outcomes in terms of beginning employment training programs and avoiding recidivism. Finally, being in a program whose funding was continued significantly enhanced one's chances of experiencing a positive employment outcome.

Summary

What can one conclude from the extensive data and the host of findings on program outcomes described in this section of our report? Here we outline in summary fashion eight findings that we view as the more notable findings we have reported here.

1. The youths participating in the RNF program had very low recidivism rates.
2. About 28 percent of the RNF program participants experienced positive employment, job training, or educational achievement outcomes.
3. These outcomes varied depending on whether a program participant was in-school²⁷ or out-of-school.²⁸ Almost 40 percent of the out-of-school youths had a positive outcome by one or more of the three outcomes mentioned in finding number two.
4. About 45 percent of the in-school, 14 to 17 year old youths persevered in the RNF program for 25 or more hours.
5. The at-risk program participants experienced more positive outcomes than did the adjudicated participants.
6. Participants in programs of an integrative nature experienced more positive outcomes than did participants in non-integrative programs.
7. The level of positive outcomes did not vary greatly between youths participating in faith-based versus community-based programs.
8. Those youths who spent more time in the RNF program had more positive outcomes than did those youths who spent less time in program activities, but the level of positive outcomes did not vary greatly depending on the type of training the youths received.

Part Four

Conclusions and Observations

In this final section of our report we outline the conclusions and observations that we can draw based on this study. We have organized these conclusions and observations under three headings: the potential of small faith-based and community organizations to reach minority youth, the potential role of intermediary organizations in making use of small faith-based and community organizations, and the relative effectiveness of different types of faith-based and community organizations.

Reaching Minority Members of the Population

As noted in Part One of this report, one of the goals of the RNF program and the Department of Labor grant that funded it was to reach out to minority youth—and Latino youth in particular. This study demonstrates the ability of faith-based and community-based programs to achieve this goal. Not only did the RNF program exceed its goal of having 80 percent of its participants being of Latino background, all but 5 percent of the remaining participants were African-

American, multiracial, Native American, or of other non-white backgrounds. This is no small achievement.

The key factor in making this achievement possible seemed to be the street-level nature of most of the subgrantees and their programs. With few exceptions they were located in the neighborhoods they were serving and their buildings were unpretentious and matched their neighborhoods. Even more importantly, their staff members were of the same ethnic and racial make-up as the youths they were reaching, most had lived the experiences the targeted youths were going through, and they were willing to make themselves available to program participants 24/7. The RNF program subgrantees grew out of, and were an integral part of, the communities they were working to serve. They were not entities imposed on those communities from the outside, as the schools and justice system institutions were often viewed. Together, these types of characteristics form what have been labeled “cultural competence” in the provision of public services,²⁹ that is, providing services in a manner that respects the histories, values, and traditions of those being served.

Based on the findings of this study, faith-based and community organizations have the potential to effectively address the diverse needs of minority communities.

The Importance of a Strong Intermediary Organization

This study testifies to the importance of a strong, effective intermediary organization in funding small faith-based and community organizations. The directors and other staff of the 19 subgrantees we visited frequently made the point that prior to the RNF grants from the Latino Coalition and the standards, systems, and training that came with the grants, they were not well positioned either to provide effective, well-rounded services or to pursue funding from public or private funding sources. The RNF program had greatly increased their level of professionalism, and with it, their ability to serve needy youths and to sustain their programs from a variety of funding sources.

Clearly, the Latino Coalition as an intermediary organization was indispensable in this transformation. Its success as an intermediary can be traced back to three steps it took early in its receipt of the Department of Labor grant. First, through its founder and president, Richard Ramos, it had a strong network of contacts in various urban Latino communities. Second, it hired consultants to set up a strong organizational structure, with guidelines, reporting systems, and control mechanisms all in place. Third, it hired a city project director in each city where subgrantees were located. These persons were immediately on-hand to communicate and explain program standards and processes and to provide oversight, encouragement, and training.

The fact that the participants of those subgrantee programs whose funding had been discontinued by the Latino Coalition tended to have worse outcomes than the participants in programs whose funding had been continued, indicates that the intermediary organization was effective in channeling funds to the more effective programs and eliminating the less effective programs. This suggests an additional positive role an intermediary organization can play.

The conclusion to be drawn is clear: if public policy is to make greater use of faith-based and community organizations with roots deep in minority communities, it is important to make use of strong intermediary organizations.

Differences in the Subgrantees and their Programs

It is important to note certain differences in the subgrantees and the programs that they implemented. One key difference among programs is that some sought to integrate the program participants into a variety of continuing classes and activities beyond those of the RNF program itself while others saw their role as providing classes or activities with a distinct beginning and end. By most measures the former were much more successful in terms of positive program outcomes than the latter.

We believe this to be the case because the integrative programs, as we termed them, created a culture, or haven, for youths from the troubled environments in which they lived. Most of the RNF youths came out of an environment of drugs, violence, gangs, discrimination, and, for some, dysfunctional families. This was not true of all the youths with whom we spoke, but it was true for most of them. Thus, offering a class, say, in anger management that meets for two or three hours a week for six weeks, only to send the youths back into the same environments that had not served them well in the first place, will likely not succeed. Those subgrantees that worked hard to create for their program participants a new environment or a new culture with new values and standards—or a new family as the youths themselves often put it—were the most successful programs in terms of outcomes. And when it is put in these terms, it is clear why this would be the case. This conclusion suggests that funding those organizations that take an approach that works to integrate youths into an on-going, continuing set of social contacts and activities is more likely to be successful in working with at-risk and adjudicated minority youths than programs that take other approaches.

This study also demonstrates the importance of youths staying in the RNF program for more than a minimal number of hours. We found that the longer a youth stayed in the program, the more likely he or she was to experience positive outcomes, and that doing so was more important than what type of training or services the program participants received. This finding suggests that programs that are successful in encouraging youths to stay with their programs instead of drifting off are likely to have more successful outcomes than programs that have not figured out how to engage and hold the interest and involvement of youths—admittedly a challenging task.

* * * *

We have conducted this study and written this report not as some sterile research project, but as an attempt to provide guidance to a variety of funding agencies and the thousands of nonprofit staff persons working hard to offer help to deeply troubled minority youths in our cities. If we have succeeded in this, the winners then will be not only the minority youths who are served, but also the communities out of which they come and indeed the nation as a whole, as the youths are enabled to live productive, law-abiding lives.

¹ For more information on the Henry Institute and the lead researchers, Stephen V. Monsma and Corwin E. Smidt, see Appendix A.

² From contract number DOLJ071A20526 awarded to the Henry Institute of Calvin College (July 28, 2007), p. C-2.

³ In this report we use “Latino” and “Hispanic” interchangeably to refer to persons whose heritage can be traced directly to Mexico or one or more of the countries of Central America, South America, or the Caribbean.

⁴ *Pew Hispanic Center Tabulations of 2006 American Community Survey*, Table 34. Available at <http://pewhispanic.org/factsheets/factsheet.php?FactsheetID=35>

⁵ *Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of 2006 American Community Survey*, Table 28. Available at <http://pewhispanic.org/factsheets/factsheet.php?FactsheetID=35>.

⁶ For example, a 2002 Urban Institute study found that 20 percent of Hispanic children were without health insurance, compared to 9 percent for black children and 7 percent for white children. See, Urban Institute, “Two-Thirds of Uninsured Children in Fair or Poor Health Are Hispanic.” Available at <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=900702>.

⁷ For example, in terms of education, 23.8 percent of Hispanics have completed less than a 9th grade education and only 12.3 percent are college graduates. Both percentages indicate lower education levels than those for whites, African-Americans, or Asians. If one separates out the foreign born Hispanics, the percentage with less than a 9th grade education drops significantly (from 23.8 to 9.8 percent), but even among American-born Hispanics there is a higher percentage of persons with less than a 9th grade education than among whites, African-Americans, or Asians. *Pew Hispanic Center Tabulations of 2006 American Community Survey*, Table 21.

⁸ About 40 percent of Latino households are not headed by a married couple, a higher percentage than among whites or Asians, but a lower percentage than among African-Americans. *Pew Hispanic Center Tabulations of 2006 American Community Survey*, Table 16.

⁹ Data collected by the Pew Hispanic Center found that as of the year 2000, 21 percent of all Latino 16 to 19 year olds had dropped out of school and 14 percent of US-born Latino youths had dropped out (these figures are the percentages of Latino 16 to 19 year olds who were not in school and who had not completed high school). This is a higher percentage than this same study found for whites (8.2 percent) or blacks (11.7 percent) in this age group. Other statistics showed that in 2006 22.1 percent of Hispanic 16 to 24 year olds had dropped out of high school, compared to 10.7 percent for blacks and 5.8 percent for white youths. See Richard Fry, “Hispanic Youth Dropping Out of U.S. Schools: Measuring the Challenge,” (Pew Hispanic Center, June 12, 2003), p. 3, and see the report by the National Center for Education Statistics at <http://nces.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=16>.

¹⁰ www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/births_deaths_marriages_divorces/births.html, Table 85.

¹¹ See Table 7 at <http://hrw.org/backgrounder/isa/race>. In this table youths are defined as persons under the age of 18.

¹² Melissa Sickmund, “Juveniles in Corrections,” U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (June, 2004), p. 11.

¹³ Francisco A. Villarruel and Nancy E. Walker, “¿Dónde Está la Justicia? A Call to Action on Behalf of Latino and Latina Youth in the U.S. Justice System,” Michigan State University, Institute for Children, Youth, and Families, Finding 1. Available at www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/latino_rpt/full_eng.html#6.%20Finding%201.

¹⁴ For an excellent account of the origins of the Latino Coalition see “The Latino Coalition for Faith and Community Initiatives Case Study,” Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion, Baylor University (March, 2008). Available at www.baylor.edu/isr. This section of our report is based on this study and an interview with Richard Ramos and Richard Paul Morales (September 20, 2007).

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 5.

¹⁶ “Expanding and Enhancing Services to Adjudicated and At-Risk Latino Youth through Latino Faith-Based and Community-Based Organizations,” as submitted to The Honorable Emily Stover DeRocco, Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor (May 10, 2004), p. 2.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁸ Quoted in “The Latino Coalition for Faith and Community Initiatives: Case Study,” p. 21.

¹⁹ Quoted in “The Latino Coalition for Faith and Community Initiatives Case Study,” p. 6.

²⁰ Other factors on an individual basis could also lead a youth to be classified as at-risk.

²¹ However, following this in-take process did not exactly fit every situation. A major part of one subgrantee’s RNF program, for example, was offering anger management classes at a youth detention facility. Doing an assessment beyond what was already in the youths’ records and developing an ISP did not fit this situation.

²² One of the lead researchers in this study, Stephen Monsma, has referenced in another work of his a number of researchers who have come to this conclusion. See Stephen V. Monsma and J. Christopher Soper, *Faith, Hope and Jobs: Welfare-to-Work in Los Angeles* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2006), pp. 3-4.

²³ A few of the subgrantee programs we studied had been in existence for all three years of the program, most had been in existence for 2 years, and some for less than one year.

²⁴ Patrick A. Langan and David J. Levin, “Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994” (U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, June, 2002) p. 7.

²⁵ We also note that it appears that effectiveness in one program area is frequently associated with effectiveness in other program areas. For example, of the 13 programs that did especially well in employment outcomes, more than half (7 in total) also did well in the outcome of their participants reaching educational milestones. And, all but 2 of the 9 programs that reached the 15 percent or higher success rate of enabling their participants to achieve educational milestones, achieved positive employment outcomes. Moreover, participants in these particular 7 programs also tended not to experience recidivism, as all but one of the program had 90 percent or more of their participants avoid any recidivism.

²⁶ We employed multiple classification analysis (MCA) because it enables one to use categorical variables in multivariate analysis. It first provides the mean score on the dependent variable for each category of the independent variable, the so-called grand mean which simply reflects the percentage of the respondents who have achieved the particular program outcome under examination. MCA then provides a mean score on the dependent variable for each category of the independent variables after controls for each of the other independent variables have been entered in the analysis, with the statistic *beta* revealing the relative strength of the relationship once the effects of the other variables in the analysis have been taken into account. Thus, a distinct advantage of using MCA is that it provides one single summary beta value for a categorical variable as a whole, rather than a series of coefficients for each of the categories of such a nominal-level variable in relationship to some suppressed value (typically the approach used in linear regression techniques). Further, it should be noted that in making the

integrative versus non-integrative distinction we included all 28 RNF subgrantees, and not only the 19 we had visited, as we did earlier in this report. We assumed that all of the 9 programs we did not visit were non-integrative in nature. From conversations with Latino Coalition staff we have reason to believe this is the case, but we cannot be sure. We needed to include all 28 programs in the integrative-non-integrative distinction, since to remove the 9 programs we did not visit from here we would have had to remove them from all of the analyses of the tables in Appendix C.

²⁷ Most, though not all, of these in-school youth were also 14 to 17 years of age.

²⁸ Most, but not all, of these out-of-school youth were also 18 to 21 years of age

²⁹ See Mitchell F. Rice, "Promoting Cultural Competency in Public Administration and Public Service Delivery: Utilizing Self-assessment Tools and Performance Measures," *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, 13 (Winter, 2007), pp. 42-50.

Appendix A

The Henry Institute and the Lead Researchers

The Paul B. Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics was created in 1997 at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Among its informational and research objectives is the promotion of research and study on topics related to religion and current public policy issues. It has sponsored research resulting in the publication of books by such well-known university presses as Georgetown University Press and Baylor University Press. It holds a nationally-recognized biennial symposium on religion and politics and has held news conferences in Washington, DC, to announce results of national surveys it has conducted.

Stephen V. Monsma, one of the lead researchers in this study, is a research fellow at the Henry Institute and has his masters degree from Georgetown University and his PhD from Michigan State University. He is also a non-resident fellow at the Institute for Studies of Religion, Baylor University. He is the author or editor of 15 books and numerous research reports, articles, and professional papers. His works have been published by the University of Michigan Press, Georgetown University Press, Rowman & Littlefield, and the University of Pennsylvania. Many of his published books and reports deal with faith-based organizations and their effectiveness and relationship with government agencies.

Corwin E. Smidt, the other lead researcher in this study, is the director of the Henry Institute. He has his masters and PhD degrees from the University of Iowa and has been engaged in research on religion and politics over the past quarter century. He is one of the nation's leading scholars on the influence of religion on American politics, and has been quoted in the *New York Times* and interviewed on NPR. He is the author or editor of 10 books and numerous research reports, articles, and professional papers.

Appendix B

The 19 Subgrantee Programs Included in Site Visits

A total of 28 program sites received RNF funding from the Latino Coalition. At the time of our visits to the program sites (November and December 2007), 9 were no longer receiving funding, leaving 19 that were receiving funding. Thus we visited the 19 subgrantees that at that time were receiving funding and actively running programs. In this appendix we briefly describe these 19 program sites.

Neighborhood Ministries. Neighborhood Ministries is located in the heart of urban Phoenix in a low income area. The school dropout rate is high and drugs and gang activities prevalent. Neighborhood Ministries is a large agency with a \$2 million budget and some 20 different programs: a health clinic, recreational programs, after school classes, a food and clothing bank, summer camps, and more. It is a faith-based agency and closely associated with a church, although it has its own 501(c)(3) status. It did not view the RNF program as a class or several classes the youths would take and then move on. Instead it sought to have the RNF program to be only one of several programs or activities the youths took part in. Its goal was to integrate Neighborhood Ministries and its wide variety of programs and activities into the lives of the youths so that they would stay involved indefinitely. It is one of the eight programs we classified as being integrative in nature.

KEYS Community Center. KEYS stands for Knowledge, Education, Youth, and Society and is located in a high poverty area of south Phoenix. It is sponsored by Southwestern Leadership Foundation, which describes its mission as “a faith-based organization, which serves people in need by strengthening their long-term spiritual, emotional, physical and economic well-being.”¹ KEYS considers itself to be faith-based in nature, although it is not related to a specific church. It has its own 501(c)(3) status. Its RNF program provided job preparation services, mentoring, individual case management, and classes in GED preparation and life skills.

Victory Outreach, Phoenix. Victory Outreach is faith-based and closely associated with the Phoenix Victory Outreach church, which has a number of community service programs in addition to its RNF program. The RNF program met in the same building as the church, which is in an office building that is part of an office park. It provided individual case management and counseling, job readiness and life skills classes, mentoring, some basic skill classes, and a video production and editing program (which is highly popular, but youths had to apply and be selected for it and there was room for only a few youths to take part in it).

New Beginnings Community Development Corporation. New Beginnings is located in a working class area of Phoenix. Its RNF program was one of the programs run by the community development corporation that is located on the campus of Catalyst Church, a large church of 1000 members. It is a faith-based program, but the community development corporation is a

¹ See www.southwestleadership.org

separate 501(c)(3) organization. It provided individual case management and counseling services, job readiness classes, job search classes, community service opportunities, physical fitness classes, mentoring, and an art class for former taggers. It sought to integrate the RNF youths into a variety of programs and activities and to keep them involved, not simply to offer them one or more classes. It is one of the eight programs we classified as being integrative in nature.

Help4Teenz. Help4Teenz is located in the very large facilities of the Church of the Nations in a commercial area of Phoenix. The program was officially not faith-based, although it had ties to the church in which it is located and to AlmaVision, a Christian Spanish-language TV station. It provided case management services, training in TV studio work and video production and editing, work experience with a professional events management company, and a life skills class at a local public high school (although this had recently been discontinued).

Victory Outreach, La Puente. Victory Outreach, La Puente was meeting at the Victory Outreach church in El Monte, since it had sold its La Puente building and was constructing a new facility in Corona. Its RNF services included classes in anger management, drug and alcohol abuse, parenting (for youths and their parents), tutoring for those in need of remedial education, and mentoring (they had about 10 mentors drawn from the church). The program largely consisted of offering classes for youths who were required to take these classes as a condition of their probation.

Cloud and Fire Ministries. Cloud and Fire is located in the northeast area of the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles, in the community of North Hills. This is an area with much violence and is known as “gang corridor.” It is a faith-based organization. It rents space from a church, but is otherwise independent from the church with its own 501(c)(3) status. It offered classes in anger management in the Mendenhall Detention Camp in a remote area of northern Los Angeles County. It also offered after school tutoring and counseling.

AltaMed Health Services Corporation. AltaMed is a secular, well-established, multi-million dollar agency in the east Los Angeles area specializing in providing health care services to a diverse, low income population. Its RNF services were offered at the East LA Occupational Center, a skills training high school, and consisted of after school tutoring, case management, and periodic workshops in such areas as career planning, life skills, and college readiness.

Calvary Recovery Center. Calvary Recovery Center is a large, well-established faith-based agency operating in the City of Industry and Covina areas of eastern Los Angeles County. Its primary focus is on drug and alcohol addiction. It is faith-based in nature, with its faith elements more a background or motivation factor than explicitly present. Its RNF program ran in three public high schools and consisted of on-campus case management and counseling services, as well as life skills, job readiness, and anger management classes.

Victory Outreach, Carson. Victory Outreach, Carson, is a program run by a small, 100-member Victory Outreach church in Carson, near Long Beach in southern Los Angeles County. It is faith-based in nature and faith elements were explicitly present. Its RNF program provided anger management, substance abuse, and life skills classes, individual tutoring and mentoring,

community service, and a computer graphic design class. It self-consciously worked to integrate the RNF youth into a number of its activities and build on-going relationships. It is one of the eight programs we classified as being integrative in nature.

Victory Outreach, San Diego. Victory Outreach, San Diego, is located in a high-poverty, largely Latino area of south San Diego. The program is located on the second floor of the Victory Outreach Church. The services it provided were life skills, self-esteem and job readiness classes, high school completion program, community service, case management and mentoring by staff counselors, drug and alcohol abuse classes and counseling, and a computer graphics class. It sought to integrate the youth into a number of activities and programs and is one of the eight programs we classified as being integrative in nature.

Turning the Hearts Center. Turning the Hearts Center is located in Chula Vista, a low income suburb south of San Diego. It is not faith-based, but it does have a cooperative relationship with two area churches. It sought to involve youth in a range of programs and activities on an ongoing basis. Ideally, once a youth came to one class or activity he or she would continue to come to additional activities and classes. The services it provided were individualized case management and counseling, career counseling and work readiness classes, anger management classes, gang awareness and education, substance abuse classes and counseling, pregnancy prevention classes, and physical fitness activities and break dancing. It is one of the eight programs we classified as being integrative in nature.

Life Development Institute. Life Development Institute is located in southwest Denver in an area of mixed Latino and Asian ethnicity and has a large high school dropout rate. It originated in a church and is still faith-based, but it now is independent from the church with its own 501(c)(3) status. Its emphasis was on integrating the RNF youths into the community with the message that the community needs them and that they have something positive to offer the community. The services it offered had a strong emphasis on mentoring, both one-on-one and group mentoring. Other services included job preparation and life skills training. It is one of the eight programs we classified as being integrative in nature.

Sun Valley Youth Center. Sun Valley Youth Center of Denver is located in a neighborhood that ranks highest in poverty in the state of Colorado. It is also a very high crime area. It is a faith-based organization and Sun Valley Youth Center began as a church outreach program, but now has separate 501(c)(3) status. In 2003 Urban Impact merged with Sun Valley Youth Center. Its vision is to provide constructive activities that help youths to learn new skills, achieve educational success, find jobs, and live within the law. The RNF services it offered were life skills and job readiness classes, GED preparation, summer jobs, after school tutoring and mentoring, and a job skills program in concert lighting and sound systems.

Center of Hope. Center of Hope is located in Lakewood, Colorado, on the edge of a high risk, high poverty area. It received funding from the Latino Coalition for its RNF program only from March 2007 to the end of 2007. It considers itself to be a faith-based organization. Its RNF program offered individual counseling, classes in drug and alcohol abuse, GED preparation, life skills, and job skills training, with the most popular being a class in camera and video training. It

worked to integrate program participants into a number of continuing classes and activities. It is one of the eight programs we classified as being integrative in nature.

Denver Area Youth for Christ. The Denver Area Youth for Christ is a multi-program, faith-based agency located near West City High in an area that is more affluent than most of the other programs we visited. Also, its staff is well educated and largely Anglo in ethnicity. Its staff struggled with balancing the demands of a government grant with their concern for the spiritual lives of the youths with whom they were working. Its emphasis in its RNF program was on individualized case management and building relationships with the youth in its program. It provided individual counseling, GED preparation, and after school tutoring and mentoring.

Victory Outreach, Lakewood. Victory Outreach, Lakewood—a faith-based organization—is closely associated with Victory Outreach Church, which meets at the same complex as the RNF program. The complex includes a worshiping center and an adjourning structure that contains numerous class rooms. The RNF program emphasized building personal relationships in order to encourage accountability and emotional support. Its services were life skills and job readiness classes, job skills training in the use of multi-media technology, adult mentoring, and supportive services. It is one of the eight programs we classified as being integrative in nature.

Mision Milby Community Development Corporation. The Mission Milby Community Development Corporation of Houston is associated with a small, but very active congregation. It is a faith-based organization, located in a very low income area of Houston, and offers several programs in addition to the Latino Coalition-funded RNF program. Its chief goals are to instill hope in the youths with whom they work and to develop their skills, both educational and job readiness skills. Its key RNF services were GED preparation, an ESL program, life skill classes, and an open computer lab (for training in computers and for their individual use).

Destiny's Door. Destiny's Door is a small, community-based organization that serves single teenagers who are pregnant or young parents. Almost all are single mothers. Its RNF program provided a number of classes: pregnancy and early child development, soft skills, and child development. It also sought to provide services that would enable the young mothers to complete their education, as well as material services (diapers, formula, and so forth).

Appendix C

Multiple Classification Analysis Tables

Table C-1
Positive Employment Outcomes by Participant and Program Characteristics:
A Multiple Classification Analysis

Characteristics	Adjusted Mean	Beta ¹	N
Grand Mean=.20			
<u>Participant Characteristics</u>			
<i>Age</i>			
14-17 years of age	.18		2089
18 years of age+	.27	.10**	659
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	.20		1806
Female	.19	.01	942
<i>Legal Status</i>			
At-risk	.19		1112
Adjudicated	.21	.02	1636
<i>School Status</i>			
In school	.19		1933
Out of school	.23	.05	815
<i>Time Spent in Program</i>			
Less than 6 hours	.09		667
6 – 24.9 hours	.07		734
25 to 89.9 hours	.21		651
90 hours or more	.43	.36**	696
<u>Program Characteristics</u>			
<i>Funding Status</i>			
Funding continued	.22		2037
Funding not continued	.14	.09**	711
<i>Type of Program</i>			
Faith-based	.20		2251
Community-based	.20	.00	497
<i>Nature of Program</i>			
Integrative	.28		777
Non-integrative	.17	.12**	1971
R² = .22			

¹The beta value assesses the relative importance of the variable after taking into account the influence of the other seven variables in the table, plus the participants' housing/home situation. The scores marked by a double asterisk are statistically significant at the .001 level and those marked by a single asterisk are significant at the .01 level.

Table C-2
Began Employment Training by Participant and Program Characteristics:
A Multiple Classification Analysis

Characteristics	Adjusted Mean	Beta ¹	N
Grand Mean=.03			
<u>Participant Characteristics</u>			
<i>Age</i>			
14-17 years of age	.02		2089
18 years of age+	.05	.07*	659
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	.03		1806
Female	.03	.00	942
<i>Legal Status</i>			
At-risk	.04		1112
Adjudicated	.02	.06*	1636
<i>School Status</i>			
In school	.03		1933
Out of school	.03	.00	815
<i>Time Spent in Program</i>			
Less than 6 hours	.01		667
6 – 24.9 hours	.02		734
25 to 89.9 hours	.03		651
90 hours or more	.05	.10**	696
<u>Program Characteristics</u>			
<i>Funding Status</i>			
Funding continued	.02		2037
Funding not continued	.05	.08**	711
<i>Type of Program</i>			
Faith-based	.03		2251
Community-based	.04	.04	497
<i>Nature of Program</i>			
Integrative	.04		777
Non-integrative	.02	.06*	1971
R² = .03			

¹The beta value assesses the relative importance of the variable after taking into account the influence of the other seven variables in the table, plus the participants' housing/home situation. The scores marked by a double asterisk are statistically significant at the .001 level and those marked by a single asterisk are significant at the .01 level.

Table C-3
Completed Education Milestone by Participant and Program Characteristics:
A Multiple Classification Analysis

Characteristics	Adjusted Mean	Beta¹	N
Grand Mean=.11			
<u>Participant Characteristics</u>			
<i>Age</i>			
14-17 years of age	.09		2089
18 years of age+	.18	.13**	659
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	.10		1806
Female	.13	.05	942
<i>Legal Status</i>			
At-risk	.13		1112
Adjudicated	.10	.05	1636
<i>School Status</i>			
In school	.13		1933
Out of school	.06	.10**	815
<i>Time Spent in Program</i>			
Less than 6 hours	.03		667
6 – 24.9 hours	.06		734
25 to 89.9 hours	.09		651
90 hours or more	.25	.27**	696
<u>Program Characteristics</u>			
<i>Funding Status</i>			
Funding continued	.10		2037
Funding not continued	.13	.05	711
<i>Type of Program</i>			
Faith-based	.11		2251
Community-based	.09	.02	497
<i>Nature of Program</i>			
Integrative	.16		777
Non-integrative	.09	.11**	1971
R² = .12			

¹The beta value assesses the relative importance of the variable after taking into account the influence of the other seven variables in the table, plus the participants' housing/home situation. The scores marked by a double asterisk are statistically significant at the .001 level and those marked by a single asterisk are significant at the .01 level.

Table C-4
Avoided Recidivism by Participant and Program Characteristics:
A Multiple Classification Analysis

Characteristics	Adjusted Mean	Beta ¹	N ²
Grand Mean=.91			
<u>Participant Characteristics</u>			
<i>Age</i>			
14-17 years of age	.90		2025
18 years of age+	.94	.07*	652
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	.90		1756
Female	.92	.04	921
<i>Legal Status</i>			
At-risk	.96		1089
Adjudicated	.87	.16**	1588
<i>School Status</i>			
In school	.92		1874
Out of school	.88	.07*	803
<i>Time Spent in Program</i>			
Less than 6 hours	.94		664
6 – 24.9 hours	.92		709
25 to 89.9 hours	.91		633
90 hours or more	.87	.09**	671
<u>Program Characteristics</u>			
<i>Funding Status</i>			
Funding continued	.91		1966
Funding not continued	.90	.02	711
<i>Type of Program</i>			
Faith-based	.92		2251
Community-based	.88	.05	426
<i>Nature of Program</i>			
Integrative	.91		706
Non-integrative	.91	.01	1971
R ² = .05			

¹The beta value assesses the relative importance of the variable after taking into account the influence of the other seven variables in the table, plus the participants' housing/home situation. The scores marked by a double asterisk are statistically significant at the .001 level and those marked by a single asterisk are significant at the .01 level.

²As with our other calculations of recidivism rates, the participants in the one program that had made an error in recoding recidivism were not included in this table.