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Prepared by:

Jillianne Leufgen
Charles Lea
Brandon Nicholson
Anna Rubin
Kate Dunham

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2008, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) of the U.S. Department of Labor awarded the City of Newark, New Jersey a \$2 million grant to replicate -- on a broader scale -- a specific model for helping returning ex-offenders find work and avoid recidivating. The model called for an array of services, including intensive case management, workforce preparation and employment services, mentoring, and supportive services, all to be delivered through faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) rather than public agencies. The model was the same as that used in the earlier Prisoner Re-entry Initiative (PRI) (later renamed the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders or RExO), which entailed multiple rounds of grants in localities across the U.S. The Newark Prisoner Re-entry Initiative Replication (NPRIR), however, was designed to test the use of the model with multiple organizations in a single city (rather than just one organization in a single site) and thus to bring the PRI approach to a much larger scale.

The City of Newark was fertile ground for such an experiment, since ex-offenders made up a significant portion of the population. A quarter of the city's 280,000 residents were estimated, at the time of NPRIR implementation in 2008, to have been involved with the correctional system (Greenwald and Husock, 2009) and about 1,700 formerly incarcerated individuals were estimated to be returning to the city from state prison each year (with a smaller number returning from stints in Federal prison). Like formerly incarcerated individuals in other parts of the country, many ex-offenders returning to Newark faced numerous personal challenges, such as low education levels, unstable work histories, substance abuse problems, and mental health conditions. In Newark, the barriers to successful re-entry were exacerbated by a shortage of affordable and stable housing, limited employment opportunities, and a dearth of community support services. The recent economic downturn presented additional challenges during the operation of NPRIR.

With the ETA grant and a \$2 million match from the Nicholson Foundation, the City of Newark utilized local service providers and collaborated with multiple state, and local partners to provide PRI services to over 1,400 ex-offenders. The City contracted with four local organizations that had experience in serving ex-offenders: La Casa de Don Pedro (La Casa), Offender Aid and Restoration (OAR), the Renaissance Community Development Corporation Center (RCDCC) and the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (NJISJ), which collectively were to serve a total of 670 non-violent offenders. Nicholson Foundation match funds were used with two additional

organizations that also had experience in serving ex-offenders: Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and Northern New Jersey, Inc. (Goodwill) and America Works, Inc. (America Works). These organizations agreed to follow the PRI model and serve 670 violent and non-violent ex-offenders.

Using funds from the ETA grant, the city also contracted with an experienced technical assistance provider, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), to help with the early phases of implementation and to provide training to the FBCOs.

In 2008, ETA commissioned Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to conduct an evaluation of NPRIR, to document its implementation and assess how participants fared in terms of employment and recidivism. This report summarizes the key findings from that study as they relate to program leadership, partnerships, recruitment and pre-enrollment activities, service delivery, and participant outcomes. Qualitative data were collected for the evaluation through three rounds of intensive four-day site visits and phone reconnaissance, while quantitative data were collected from the PRI management information system (MIS) and from state agencies (including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system and the New Jersey Department of Corrections, among others) on participant outcomes. The analysis of the quantitative data involved exploring patterns among participants and services in the NPRIR and comparing outcomes to those obtained in other PRI demonstration projects.

Leadership and Management of NPRIR

Mayor Cory A. Booker was critical to NPRIR's advancement. After his election in 2006, Mayor Booker made prisoner re-entry an important focus of his administration and he was instrumental in supporting the city's quest for funding from multiple sources, including ETA, for re-entry services and in defining a strategic vision that called for an integrated, citywide system of supports for ex-offenders. Thus, he spurred creation of the Office of Re-entry, which was to be the means to create a unified re-entry system as well as the entity responsible for implementation of the NPRIR project.

On a day-to-day basis, the Office of Re-entry, which was housed in the Department of Housing and Economic Development under a deputy mayor, managed NPRIR. A Re-Entry Director provided operational leadership of the office initially, and then by the Chair of Re-entry Initiatives (CRI), who was funded through an outside grant. The CRI took on these responsibilities after the Director left and a hiring freeze prevented the position from being filled. Almost all staff in the Office of Re-entry was supported through outside grants due to layoffs and hiring freezes in the City government, and the inability to use the ETA grant for administrative costs.

The office itself performed a number of strategic, coordinating, and supervisory functions. It led the planning and project design efforts, managed fiscal affairs, engaged partners and stakeholders, and provided administrative guidance and oversight to service providers. Management of the sites in NPRIR was shared, however, with the Nicholson Foundation, which assisted in providing guidance and oversight for the two organizations it funded.

The city had to ensure that NPRIR service providers received sufficient support to implement the program effectively. To provide this support, the city relied heavily on its contracted technical assistance provider, P/PV in the earlier phases of the project. The Office of Re-entry, however, played an important supplementary hands-on role in providing assistance during this phase and eventually built its own capacity to provide effective technical assistance as well as policy guidance to the subgrantees.

In the latter phases of the NPRIR project, the Office of Re-entry turned its attention to sustainability, including securing future funding to continue its re-entry services, and to refining a common data management system that could be used by re-entry providers across the city.

Partnerships

NPRIR presented the City of Newark a unique opportunity to collaborate with state and local agencies to implement the project and to work toward creating a seamless service delivery system for ex-offenders. Such services would require coordination and partnership with multiple state and local criminal justice and workforce development agencies.

The Office of Re-entry engaged partners from the inception of NPRIR in 2008, when it convened with key stakeholders, such as the New Jersey State Parole Board (NJ SPB), New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJ DOC), New Jersey Department of Labor (NJ DOL), NewarkWORKS (the city's workforce development arm), and the state Office of the Attorney General. These partners participated in developing the initial design and implementation plan for the NPRIR.

In implementing NPRIR, several partner organizations proved critical in providing participant referrals and in helping train project staff (such as job developers). In fact, the NJ SPB and NJ DOC halfway houses and community resource centers (CRCs) were responsible for a large proportion of referrals and it is unknown whether an acceptable flow of potential participants could have been sustained without their involvement. While each partner had its own referral procedures, the Office of Re-entry developed several tools and procedures to facilitate the referral process across partners.

However, partnerships yielded varying degrees of benefits. The Office of Re-entry engaged NewarkWORKS and NJ DOL to supplement the providers' workforce development services

through the Newark One-Stop Career Center. However, few referrals were made to the Newark One-Stop Career Center, as NPRIR providers typically wanted to offer their own—and what they believed were better—workforce services.

The existence of the Office of Re-entry itself also facilitated partnership in that it gave other agencies a designated portal through which they could work on issues of re-entry with the city. The planning process for NPRIR, as well as the ongoing referral and service coordination associated with project implementation, also created an opportunity for the Office of Re-entry and criminal justice agencies to develop relationships where few or none had existed before.

Recruitment and Enrollment

Despite a slow start for some providers, enrollment goals were met in the NPRIR project overall. This was due in part to referrals received from established partners, but service providers also pursued strategies to identify new referral partners and recruit their clients. Most commonly, NPRIR service providers made presentations to community corrections agencies and their participants, including halfway houses/CRCs, and contacted officers of NJ SPB, Probation, and New Jersey Intensive Supervision Program (ISP). Only two NPRIR providers also conducted pre-release recruitment in correctional facilities (in contrast to earlier generations of PRI grantees, who conducted a great deal of pre-release outreach).

All NPRIR service providers conducted eligibility determination prior to enrolling individuals in the program. The NPRIR eligibility requirements were the same as for other ETA PRI programs¹ with two exceptions: 1) individuals whose most recent offenses were considered violent could be provided services by one of the two Nicholson-funded providers, and (2) all participants had to be Newark residents when they were enrolled.

In addition to conducting eligibility determinations, all NPRIR service providers (except for one) also assessed individuals on their suitability for the program. Providers defined suitability as having the motivation and commitment to fulfill program requirements and tested it by requiring participants to attend several orientation sessions. The suitability assessment also included a determination of participants' job-readiness, which generally referred to their willingness to work and possession of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Overall, the average participant was a single, African-American, male in his mid-30s who was a non-violent offender. At enrollment, most participants lived either in halfway houses, residential

¹ Participants had to be 18 or older, have been convicted of a crime as an adult and incarcerated for that crime, and could not have committed a sexual offense; in addition, all but 10 percent must have been released from incarceration in the past 180 days.

treatment facilities, or other transitional housing or with family or friends in a stable setting. The average participant was unemployed at enrollment and in the three months prior to incarceration, demonstrating limited formal labor market experience prior to incarceration. Most were repeat offenders who had spent years incarcerated, averaging three convictions and four years incarcerated during their lifetimes. In addition, the majority of NPRIR participants were on some kind of community supervision at enrollment.

Services to Participants

Consistent with the PRI model, the primary services NPRIR participants received were case management, workforce preparation, and mentoring.

In general, NPRIR providers appeared to have successfully replicated the intensive case management called for in the PRI model. Case managers had frequent contact with participants, established rapport with them, outlined what was expected of them throughout their participation, socialized them to the programs' rhythm and activities, provided them with counseling and employment services, referred them to external organizations for additional supportive services if needed, and maintained documentation.

According to at least some participants, intensive case management was particularly beneficial. They remarked on how comfortable these staff members made them feel and how encouraged they felt that someone would look past their criminal records and help them reach their goals.

Similarly, all NPRIR providers offered workforce preparation services, as required by the PRI model. These services were designed to address many ex-offenders' lack of the skills associated with searching for, securing, and retaining employment and included instruction on how to: complete online and hard-copy job applications, develop resumes and cover letters, interview for jobs and talk about their criminal convictions, identify career interests and opportunities, understand labor market information, communicate effectively with job supervisors, develop and manage a personal budget, and conduct job searches. Providers used work readiness training and on-site computer labs to help remedy the lack of technological competency of participants, as these skills are necessary in the increasingly digitized job search process.

Some providers also offered a transitional jobs component for ex-offenders with little or no work experience: temporary subsidized employment opportunities, which were intended to be bridges to permanent employment. The Greater Newark Conservancy's (GNC) Clean & Green initiative provided transitional jobs in which participants worked three days a week for a maximum of eight weeks.

With few participants able to find jobs on their own in the challenging labor market, job placement assistance was in high demand among NPRIR participants. Service providers offered

job placement assistance to participants they considered “job-ready.” Most placements stemmed from job development efforts on the part of provider staff members that entailed introducing employers to the NPRIR program, addressing any reservations around hiring ex-offenders, and informing them about pertinent employer benefits, such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. The strained job market—combined with the fact that six service providers were working to identify opportunities with ex-offender-friendly employers in the same city at the same time—presented considerable challenges to job developers. The developers responded to these challenges by extending their geographic reach, pursuing opportunities in far-flung suburban areas outside of Newark and even in adjacent counties.

With one exception, all providers also offered mentoring, as required by the PRI model, in order to provide interpersonal, emotional, and practical support to participants. While service providers initially had plans to provide both one-on-one and group mentoring, providers found that setting up one-on-one mentoring required a great deal of administrative effort—particularly to recruit, train, and retain volunteer mentors—while group mentoring could be provided with fewer volunteer mentors and administrative resources. As a result, most providers shifted to the volunteer-provided, group-mentoring format. Group mentoring had some added benefits, as it allowed participants to share experiences and learn from one another in a casual group setting, while still connecting them with positive individuals from their communities. Provider staff generally believed that the both group and individual mentoring were beneficial, a view that appeared to have been supported by many participants themselves. However, a number of participants did not utilize mentoring and one provider did not offer this service at all.

In addition to the case management, workforce preparation services, and mentoring, education and training activities (e.g., math and reading remediation, GED preparation, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, and unpaid work experience) were offered to a small number of participants.

Participant Outcomes

Overall, the analysis of participant outcomes indicates that NPRIR was relatively successful in meeting project goals, and that project participants were able to achieve similar or better outcomes than Generation 1 Newark grantees’ participant, despite a worsened labor market.

Overall, 62 percent of participants were placed in unsubsidized employment during their participation in NPRIR. Despite the somewhat dire economic circumstances that prevailed during NPRIR implementation, these placement figures are similar to those reported for the first generation of PRI grantees in 2008. On average, NPRIR participants earned \$9.13 per hour in their first employment placements, which was \$1.88 over the minimum wage of \$7.25 (as of March 2011). The jobs that most of the participants obtained were in production, food service

and production, sales, and construction and extraction occupations. These were industries where employers had been willing to hire ex-offenders in the past. In addition, many participants had work experience in these occupations and preferred them because they involved working with their hands.

Approximately, 73 percent of participants were employed in their first quarter after program exit. This rate exceeds the program's performance benchmark of placing 60 percent of participants in employment. The retention rate for the program overall—69 percent retention—just missed meeting this performance benchmark of 70 percent established for the program. However, when compared to participants from first generation PRI grantees, NPRIR had a slightly better retention rate. Participants who retained employment for two quarters after their exit quarter had average earnings of \$8,909. Overall, NPRIR missed meeting the performance benchmark for average earnings of \$9,360.²

Approximately 29 percent of NPRIR participant's recidivated, exceeding the 22 percent recidivism rate the city set as its performance benchmark. Most of the participants who recidivated were re-arrested for a new crime (25 percent) rather than reincarcerated for a violation of community supervision (9 percent). On average, recidivating participants were re-arrested for a new crime or reincarcerated for a violation of parole/probation at the seven-month mark following their release from incarceration and five months following the beginning of NPRIR participation.³

Compared to Generation 1 Newark grantees' participants, NPRIR participants performed better in terms of placement in employment. Even though the NPRIR participants were not as successful as participants from Generation 3 grantees in employment placement, some location-specific conditions may have been the cause. Although NPRIR did not meet its performance benchmark for recidivism, it performed as well as other PRI grantees when the comparison is based solely on data captured in the PRI MIS. Given the challenges providers faced in collecting recidivism data, as noted by Holl et al. (2009), had data been collected from local criminal justice agencies for each of the comparison programs, it seems likely that these grantees would have had higher recidivism rates as well.

² Measures of employed in the quarter after exit, retention, and average earnings were calculated using data from both the PRI MIS and data obtained from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage record system.

³ Measures of recidivism were calculated using data from the PRI MIS and from three criminal justice agency databases— New Jersey State Department of Corrections, New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts, and the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety.

Conclusion

Overall, implementation of a citywide prisoner re-entry project following the PRI model was a challenging endeavor that required significant resources, strong leadership, and persistence, but led to positive outcomes for ex-offenders. The City of Newark and its Office of Re-entry faced a number of challenges but nonetheless were able to implement NPRIR and develop the groundwork for a citywide integrated system of services for returning ex-offenders.

Key implementation challenges encountered among providers included a delayed start (due to late approval of their contracts), difficulties in correctly inputting data into the data management system (especially regarding entering services and tracking outcomes), and challenges in establishing mentoring programs. In addition, collaborating with partners took a significant investment of resources, so fostering, developing, and maintaining these partnerships was challenging and time-consuming. Though NPRIR planners hoped to utilize partners to provide service to supplement those of providers, these other services were generally under-utilized.

Regarding key program-level accomplishments, despite a slow start and some challenges with one of the providers, enrollment goals were exceeded for the NPRIR project as a whole. Of the services provided through the PRI model, respondents noted that the intensive case management component was strong and, despite a challenging labor market, job development efforts were relatively successful.

Additionally, the Office of Re-entry successfully secured additional funding to support NPRIR implementation, strengthened its monitoring of and technical assistance to providers, developed key referral partnerships, and became an important referral source in its own right.

While the Office of Re-entry was initially focused on program-level tasks—that is, implementing and managing the NPRIR project itself—the mayor’s overall vision for the grant also included using NPRIR as a launching pad to help Newark build the infrastructure of a unified, citywide system of re-entry support services. Some of the challenges faced in the development of such a system, included partnerships that still require some refinement and some data-sharing challenges that persist regarding the Office of Re-entry’s desire to develop a unified data system to be used across partners throughout Newark.

However, by the conclusion of the NPRIR grant, the City of Newark, largely through the efforts of the Office of Re-entry, appeared to have made significant steps toward developing an integrated re-entry system in Newark. These included developing key partnerships that seemed likely to remain in place and to be fruitful in the future, building the capacity of its own staff members to provide technical assistance, and developing a functioning system of fundraising to support re-entry efforts in Newark.

Several factors and approaches seemed to be particularly helpful in Newark during the process of planning for, implementing, and managing NPRIR, as well as in attempting to implement coordinated citywide re-entry systems.

In terms of leading city-wide initiatives, the City of Newark found that creating an office dedicated to re-entry efforts, and maintaining consistent leadership in that office, was important both to effective NPRIR implementation and to coordinating re-entry efforts city-wide. In addition, integrating the office into a city's governmental structure was advantageous to supporting re-entry efforts citywide.

Regarding lessons learned in developing partnerships, the Office of Re-entry concluded that it was important to prioritize the development of relationships with key partners and to involve them in re-entry initiatives from the beginning, as these relationships can be challenging to cultivate. The office also found that engaging partners on multiple levels helped facilitate the coordination of referrals and services in the NPRIR project.

In implementing the PRI model citywide with multiple providers, FBCOs in NPRIR benefited from extra assistance in providing some services, especially in the area of job development. In addition, because the economic conditions were so challenging, in order to identify a sufficient number of job prospects for their participants in a citywide re-entry program, NPRIR job developers had to devote significant time to employer outreach. The City of Newark also developed companion programs that engaged participants in temporary employment as one strategy to combat the challenges ex-offenders faced in obtaining experience in the workforce.

Finally, while it remains to be seen whether Newark's efforts to maintain and expand re-entry programs are successful, the city's experience in implementing NPRIR point to some possible lessons that may be of use to other cities trying to implement city-wide, multiple-provider re-entry projects and coordinated systems of re-entry services.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) of the U.S. Department of Labor awarded \$2 million to the City of Newark to fund a replication of the Prisoner Re-entry Initiative (PRI) model called the Newark Prisoner Re-entry Initiative Replication (NPRIR). This replication was designed to test the PRI model on a citywide scale by funding multiple organizations in one city rather than only one. Specifically, the City of Newark was charged with subcontracting with local service providers and collaborating with Federal, state, and local partners to provide case management, employment services, and mentoring to 670 non-violent ex-offenders returning to the city. Approximately \$2 million in matching funds from the Nicholson Foundation would support similar re-entry services for an equal number of violent ex-offenders.

Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) was, in turn, commissioned by ETA to conduct an evaluation of NPRIR, to document how the grant was administered, noting implementation challenges, and assessing outcomes. This final report describes and analyzes the grant's implementation and participant outcomes.

Background of PRI

Absorbing formerly incarcerated individuals into the fabric of our communities and preventing them from recidivating has long been a challenge in the U.S. However, over the last several decades, the magnitude of that challenge has increased: Incarceration rates have risen continuously since the early 1970s and there are more recent ex-offenders than ever before. In fact, the number of men and women being released from prison annually over the last 25 years has grown more than four-fold. (Harrison and Karberg, 2004).

In general, our communities are not well prepared for handling the increased influx of ex-offenders. The communities to which prisoners disproportionately return tend to be fragile at best, demonstrating high poverty, high unemployment rates, and high rates of single parenting (La Vigne and Kachnowski, 2003). As such, these communities are often ill equipped to provide the necessary supports that returning offenders desperately need, and are themselves further stressed and endangered by needing to absorb this population into their mainstream.

Ex-prisoners face daunting obstacles to successful re-entry into society: difficulties finding jobs, housing, and services for substance abuse or mental health problems; significant child-support arrearages; challenges reintegrating with their families; and many others. Moreover, they are concentrated in a relatively small number of urban neighborhoods that also experience high rates of poverty and other social problems. Not surprisingly given these challenges, rates of recidivism are very high. The most recent national statistics show that two-thirds of ex-prisoners are rearrested and half are re-incarcerated within three years of release (Langan and Levin, 2002), typically for violations of parole conditions, rather than for new crime convictions (Petersilia, 2003).

In an attempt to reduce recidivism and its many negative impacts, the federal government implemented several large-scale initiatives to aid ex-offenders' reintegration into society. One of these, a \$300 million federal program—initially known as the Prisoner Re-entry Initiative (PRI) and later renamed the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Initiative (RExO)—was designed to reduce recidivism rates and strengthen urban communities heavily affected by the challenges associated with high numbers of returning ex-offenders. In service of these goals, the initiative included several groups of grants, of which Newark's Prisoner Re-entry Initiative Replication project (NPRIR) was a part.

ETA was responsible for administering the PRI grants to FBCOs to provide post-release services to ex-offenders. Only certain FBCOs were eligible for PRI grants: those serving “urban communities that are heavily impacted by large numbers of prisoners returning to their community each year, particularly those affected by high rates of recidivism” (US DOL, 2005). FBCOs were specifically invited to apply for PRI grants because they “are among the strongest and most trusted institutions in urban neighborhoods where the majority of released inmates will return” and many “have a proven ability to work collaboratively with other service providers and justice agencies” (US DOL, 2005).

There were three cohorts, or “generations,” of FBCOs that received PRI grants. These FBCOs were expected to coordinate with other agencies and organizations including probation and parole, Workforce Investment Boards, housing providers, other service providers (alcohol and drug treatment, mental health services), and local employers in providing predominantly post-release services to program participants. The second generation of PRI grantees was expected to coordinate services with corresponding state agencies that received the parallel US DOJ grants.

Service Approach

Under PRI, the selected FBCOs were charged with providing a variety of services to ex-offenders in their communities. In order to be eligible to participate in PRI, these ex-offenders

had to be 18 years or older, had to have been imprisoned pursuant to an Act of Congress or a state law, and could not have been convicted of a violent or sex-related offense.⁴

Workforce Preparation and Employment Services

Given that PRI was designed to reduce recidivism rates by helping ex-offenders find and keep jobs, it is not surprising that workforce preparation and employment services were a key aspect of the FBCOs' work. Grantees were required to provide a variety of workforce preparation and employment services, either by themselves or through partner organizations. These services included vocational/occupational skills training, job placement or referral for job placement, work-readiness training, soft skills training, follow-up services to increase job retention, on-the-job training, and/or subsidized employment and internships. Additionally, within this service category, educational services, such as basic and remedial education and GED preparation, were also allowable.

Case Management

Case management was a central component of the PRI program, and it was expected that it would help ensure that participants gained access to the services they needed to make successful transitions into the community. More specifically, case managers were to provide PRI participants with emotional support, advice, encouragement, and guidance on making the right decisions. They also were to help connect participants to workforce preparation services and coordinate various supportive services such as housing, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment, among others. Finally, case managers were to work with participants to develop and implement individual service plans (Leshnick, Geckeler, Wiegand, Nicholson, and Foley, 2012).

Mentoring

The final service component for PRI was mentoring. While mentoring for ex-offenders was still a relatively new strategy, it was included as a key component of PRI because of promising findings from early studies of mentoring for ex-offenders, particularly the Ready4Work study.⁵ For the purposes of the PRI initiative, mentoring was defined as “a relationship over a prolonged period of time between two or more people where caring volunteer mentors assist ex-prisoners in successfully and permanently re-entering their communities by providing consistent support as

⁴ Early in the program, waivers were available to allow grantees to serve a small number of violent offenders, and by year 5 of the program, grantees were allowed to serve ex-offenders convicted of a violent offense in the past as long as the ex-offender's most recent offense was not violent.

⁵ With funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and DOL, Public/Private Ventures launched the Ready4Work Initiative in 17 sites in 2003. Through this national demonstration project, each site provided re-entry services, including employment-readiness training, job placement, mentoring, and intensive case management (Farley and McClanahan, 2007).

needed, guidance, and encouragement that impacts [PRI] participants in developing positive social relationships and achieving program outcomes such as job retention, family reunification, reduced recidivism, etc.” (US DOL, 2008).

The Context for the PRI Replication in Newark

To understand the context in which NPRIR operated, it is important to be aware of the challenges faced by reentering ex-offenders in Newark, as well as the scope of the other services and interventions that were available to them.

Challenges Faced by Ex-Offenders

In New Jersey in general and in Newark specifically, ex-offenders make up a significant portion of the population. As many as a quarter of the City’s 280,000 residents may have been involved with the correctional system at one time or another (Greenwald and Husock, 2009).

Approximately 14,000 men and women were typically released from correctional facilities throughout New Jersey annually (Travis et al., 2001). During the operation of NPRIR, Newark alone received 1,700 formerly incarcerated individuals returning from state prison each year, 1,400 individuals returning from Essex County Jail each month, and a smaller number annually returning from stints in Federal prison (Greenwald and Husock, 2009).

Like formerly incarcerated individuals around the country, the many ex-offenders returning to Newark faced numerous challenges to their successful re-entry. One important obstacle was their lack of formal education. For example, the Urban Institute reported that in 2002, New Jersey state prisoners held, on average, a 6.0 grade level in reading, and a 5.4 grade level in math (Travis et al., 2001). In addition, ex-offenders faced tremendous barriers to employment because many had unstable job histories and, due to their years spent incarcerated, had not had the opportunity to hone their job skills. Many employers were often uneasy about hiring them due to their criminal histories. Substance abuse and mental health issues were also major barriers for many ex-offenders; in 2010, over 60 percent of New Jersey inmates were identified as being addicted to drugs and/or alcohol and about one third of the population had been diagnosed with at least one significant physical or mental health condition.⁶ These conditions made it difficult for ex-offenders to re-assume positive family and other supportive relationships.

In addition to the individual-level factors that impeded ex-offenders’ successful re-entry in Newark, several community-level problems may have created further challenges. These included the limited availability of employment opportunities, housing, education and training,

⁶ New Jersey Department of Corrections Website, “Frequently Asked Questions,” accessed June 2010. http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/OTS/faq_ots.html

support services for ex-offenders, and pre-release services for inmates, as described in greater detail below:

- **Employment.** Mirroring the economic downturn experienced nationally, the unemployment rate of Essex County, New Jersey, rose from 5.5 percent in 2008 to 11.1 percent in 2011.⁷ With increased competition for jobs caused by the poor economy, ex-offenders were at a great disadvantage in securing employment, particularly jobs with higher wages or benefits. Access to employment was a key contextual factor in the success of NPRIR participants, as suggested by prior studies documenting the links between employment and recidivism and between illegal forms of employment and incarceration (D'Alessio and Stolzenberg, 1995; Chiricos and Bales, 2006).
- **Housing.** In Newark, re-entry service providers reported that a lack of available and affordable housing was one of the most significant and immediate barriers ex-offenders faced. This shortage was at least partially due to Newark Housing Authority policies that denied Section 8 housing to applicants with a history of criminal activity or who had other household members with such backgrounds (Fishman, 2003).

Just as subsidized public housing was out of reach for ex-offenders, so was most market-rate housing. The New Jersey Institute of Social Justice (NJISJ) reported that in order for an individual working a minimum-wage job in Newark to afford a one-bedroom apartment in New Jersey, he or she had to work 127 hours per week (NJISJ, 2003). Moreover, New Jersey law allowed private landlords to evict tenants who knowingly permitted individuals who had been convicted of a drug-related offense to reside with them. This law thus prevented ex-offenders from relying on otherwise supportive family members for temporary housing. Consequently, NPRIR service providers reported relying on Newark homeless shelters (that sometimes had lengthy waitlists) and, even, when necessary, temporary spaces in sympathetic Newark churches to address the immediate housing needs of their clients.

- **Education.** Ex-offenders returning to Newark could access educational services at Essex County Community College. However, many ex-offenders, especially those on parole, had employment requirements that made anything other than very short-term and part-time education difficult to pursue.

Other Services Available to Ex-Offenders

The NPRIR project was just one of a number of sources of services available to returning ex-offenders.⁸ Other organizations and projects that provided pre- and post-release assistance of various kinds to ex-offenders in Newark included the following:

⁷ BLS website, accessed May 2011. <http://www.bls.gov/lau/laucntycur14.txt>

⁸ Efforts of the City of Newark to coordinate with other service providers is discussed briefly below and in more detail in Chapter IV.

- **Pre-release services.** Both New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJ DOC) and Essex County Jail provided some pre-release educational and vocational training services, but in period prior to NPRIR, few inmates had participated.^{9,10}
- **Pre- and post-release services.** NJ DOC, Goodwill, and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJ DOL) were also heavily involved in a re-entry pilot project operated by the state of New Jersey called Another Chance. This program provided pre- and post-release services such as job placement and job coaching to 1,300 state prison inmates returning to Newark, Camden, and Trenton.
- **Post-release services.** Other county, state, and Federal agencies that provided post-release assistance to ex-offenders in Newark during the operation of NPRIR¹¹ included the following:
 - Nine New Jersey State Parole Board (NJ SPB)-contracted residential and community resource centers (CRCs)¹² and ten residential halfway house facilities under contract to NJ DOC offered drug treatment programs, life skills training, case management, and job placement assistance, among other services.
 - Opportunity Reconnect, an ex-offender center located at Essex County College in Newark, offered access to numerous co-located providers.¹³ Through Opportunity Reconnect, ex-offenders could access a wide

⁹ In 2001, Travis et al. reported that only six percent of inmates participated in any of NJ DOC’s vocational programs.

¹⁰ However, the “Education and Rehabilitation Act” signed by New Jersey’s outgoing governor in January 2010 may significantly increase the number of NJ DOC and Essex County jail inmates receiving pre-release educational and vocational services. This law makes mandatory the provision of workforce skills training programs in all state correctional facilities for all inmates within 18 months of release. In addition, it requires inmates without a high school diploma or equivalent to participate in an education program to achieve 12th grade educational proficiency levels.

Another law, the “Fair Release and Re-entry Act,” requires that within 10 days of a prisoner’s release, the state Commissioner of Corrections must provide that prisoner with documentation of his or her criminal history and rights, participation in pre-release education and employment programs, medical records, fines, assessments, surcharges, and child support obligations; in addition, the released prisoner must be given personal identification, one-day’s transportation costs, and a two-week supply of any prescribed medication.

¹¹ Although NPRIR did not serve juvenile offenders, the list includes two programs that targeted juveniles because these offenders included young adults who could also be eligible for NPRIR.

¹² CRCs are non-residential, community-based programs that provide offenders with various support services and supervision to aid in their community reintegration.

¹³ Partners with staff members co-located at Opportunity Reconnect include Essex County College; NewarkWORKS; NJ SPB; Female Offender Re-entry Group Effort; Essex Vicinage Probation Division (Essex Probation); Goodwill of Greater New York and Northern New Jersey; Legal Services of New Jersey; Essex County Department of Citizen Services, Division of Welfare; America Works of New Jersey, Inc.; Newark Comprehensive Center for Fathers; Newark Homeless Health Care; Single Stop USA; and Dress for Success.

range of services provided by these partners, such as work readiness training, job search and placement assistance, educational services, housing services, legal assistance, food assistance, health care, substance abuse treatment, and other supportive services.

- Newark Comprehensive Center for Fathers, run by NewarkNow, provided mentoring for fathers seeking to repair relationships with their children. However, the organization reported serving only about 100 men per year, a number of whom are not ex-offenders.¹⁴
- Participants in the New Jersey Intensive Supervision Program (ISP) received mentoring services through that program.¹⁵
- In 2009, YouthBuild Newark established four juvenile re-entry programs in New Jersey. In conjunction with the court system and the state juvenile justice commission, YouthBuild Newark provided re-entry services to teens and young adults while they were in detention.
- Rutgers Transitional Education and Employment Management (T.E.E.M.) established the Juvenile Mentoring and Support Services Initiative to help juvenile ex-offenders rejoin society and rebuild their lives through various activities, including job training, mentoring, counseling, anger management, life skills and family development training, GED preparation and literacy classes, video production, and boxing.

Overview of NPRIR

With a large number of ex-offenders returning to its community, the City of Newark and its Office of Re-entry received \$2 million in funding from ETA to develop NPRIR (with additional support from the Nicholson Foundation in the form of approximately \$2 million in matching funds). NPRIR was designed to incorporate the key elements of two promising nation-wide prisoner re-entry initiatives, Ready4Work and PRI, to reduce rates of recidivism among ex-offenders and reconnect them with the labor market. The key difference between these other initiatives and NPRIR was that the latter aimed at bringing these models to scale in order to create positive outcomes not just for individual program participants, but also for the City of Newark as a whole.

¹⁴ Newark Now website, accessed June 2010. <http://www.newarknow.org/fatherhood.html>

¹⁵ New Jersey's Intensive Supervision Program (ISP) is a program operated by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts to reduce prison overcrowding by allowing carefully selected offenders to serve the remainder of their sentences in the community under strict supervision from ISP officers.

Consequently, the city’s NPRIR Implementation Plan called for the project to be a PRI “community-saturation model” which would “reduce criminal recidivism and achieve other positive outcomes on a community-wide basis.” The plan proposed to use this model to serve 1,340 ex-offenders over a 24-month period and to meet specific employment and recidivism goals. The plan stated that the project would “prepare Newark’s returning former prisoners for success in the labor market and increase their employment opportunities” by the following means:

- “Increase participants’ economic viability through strategic employment, retention and advancement plans, training and work supports.
- “Strengthen social networks and supports by providing participants with life coaches (a group and one-to-one “mentoring” approach that utilizes volunteers from faith- and community-based organizations).
- “Provide a range of case-managed wraparound direct and referral services to address the critical needs of ex-offenders, including substance abuse and addiction, HIV/AIDs, child support and custody issues, government identification, and mental and physical health needs.
- “Promote healthy parental, familial, and intimate relationships.
- “Offer services through effective partnerships between local FBCOs, correctional facilities, city agencies, businesses, schools, health-care providers and social service organizations.
- “Add to the general knowledge and understanding of effective re-entry programs through good data collection and a performance management system.

Key Partners

In an effort to fulfill the goal of “saturating” the community with re-entry services, the Office of Re-entry identified key partners that needed to be included in the NPRIR project. These partners included a number of local, state, and Federal agencies and organizations. Criminal justice agencies predominated, and their primary role was to make referrals to NPRIR. These criminal justice agencies are briefly reviewed below:

- **New Jersey State Parole Board (NJ SPB).** As the state’s lead re-entry agency, NJ SPB worked to ensure that ex-offenders transition back to society as law-abiding citizens. In 2010, the agency’s Division of Parole was responsible for the supervision of more than 15,000 offenders statewide. Within that division, the Community Programs Services Unit managed the provision of treatment and services to individuals on parole—largely through community-based programs such as CRCs and halfway houses. The Community Programs Services Unit had specific responsibility for referring parolees to NPRIR.

- **New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJ DOC).** NJ DOC managed and operated the state’s prison facilities, which in 2010 included 14 major institutions housing approximately 25,000 inmates. For NPRIR, the Office of Re-entry worked primarily with NJ DOC’s Division of Programs and Community Services, which supervised contracted halfway houses.
- **Halfway Houses and CRCs.** Both NJ SPB and NJ DOC contracted with private, non-profit agencies for the provision of various residential and non-residential services to eligible offenders who were subject to community supervision. These programs—more commonly referred to as halfway houses and CRCs—were designed to provide a wide array of intensive workforce, educational, support, treatment, and case management services that prepare offenders for re-entry into society and help prevent recidivism.¹⁶
- **Essex County Jail.** In 2010, the Essex County Jail was the largest county jail in New Jersey, housing 2,280 inmates.
- **Essex Probation.** Essex Probation was a unit under the New Jersey judiciary. In 2010, Essex Probation supervised approximately 4,000 adults in Essex County.
- **Federal Probation.** U.S. probation officers serve as officers of the Federal court system and as agents of the U.S. Parole Commission. In NPRIR, they were responsible for the supervision of individuals conditionally released to the community by Federal courts, the Parole Commission, and military authorities.
- **New Jersey Intensive Supervision Program (ISP).** The Administrative Office of the Courts administered ISP. Designed to address overcrowding in prison, this program offered an alternative, community-based correctional supervision for eligible offenders sentenced to state prison. This supervision was more rigorous than that under probation and participants had to meet a number of program conditions—including maintaining full-time employment—or face returning to prison.
- **New Jersey Office of the Attorney General (NJ OAG).** NJ OAG housed the Statewide Director of Re-entry Programs—a position that was created as part of former Governor Corzine’s anti-crime strategy. While NJ OAG did not make referrals to NPRIR, this office served as the state’s liaison to the City of Newark on re-entry issues and led the state’s Re-entry Coordinating Council, whose members include NJ SPB, NJ DOC, and NJ DOL.

In addition to criminal justice agencies, the Office of Re-entry also partnered with the following workforce development agencies, whose primary role in NPRIR was to provide workforce development services.

¹⁶ Although the private agencies that operate these community corrections programs were subcontractors to NJ SPB and NJ DOC, they became critical NPRIR partners in their own right, and are thus discussed separately from NJ SPB and NJ DOC. For the purposes of this report, NJ SPB and NJ DOC’s halfway houses and CRCs are discussed collectively, as respondents tended not to distinguish between them.

- **NewarkWORKS.** NewarkWORKS was part of the City of Newark’s Department of Economic and Housing Development and is the city’s workforce development arm. It operated Newark’s One-Stop Career Center, where it provides Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult and Dislocated Worker Services.
- **New Jersey Department of Labor (NJ DOL).** NJDOL had staff members co-located at the One-Stop Career Center. At the One-Stop Career Center, it provided Wagner-Peyser-funded Employment Services, Unemployment Insurance services, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. State-level administrators from NJ DOL also played a role in NPRIR, most notably through a separate technical assistance grant from US DOL and by providing in-kind support for the project.

Early Implementation of NPRIR

The City of Newark decided to assign the lead role of implementing and administering the NPRIR grant to its Office of Re-entry.¹⁷ Upon receipt of the NPRIR grant from ETA in June 2008, the city’s Office of Re-entry began immediately working with its partners to design and implement the NPRIR program.

One of the first major activities was to develop a contract with a technical assistance provider, as required by the grant agreement for NPRIR, which called for use of about one quarter of the funds for a “coordinating agency that will oversee and provide technical assistance to the faith-based and community organizations providing services.” The city contracted with Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), which had designed and implemented Ready4Work, to serve as this coordinating agency. The city charged PP/V with providing consultation on effective prisoner re-entry programs; leading the selection process of sub-grantees; and providing sub-grantees with day-to-day technical assistance and training on NPRIR implementation, particularly on data inputting and reporting.

The City used the remaining ETA funds to contract with four FBCOs to serve 670 non-violent ex-offenders by providing: 1) intensive case management; 2) work readiness, job placement and retention assistance; 3) mentoring; and 4) support services. Working with P/PV in the fall of 2008 and early 2009, the city selected four FBCOs with experience in serving ex-offenders.¹⁸ These organizations, and their experience in serving the target population, are described below.

- **La Casa de Don Pedro (La Casa)** was a community organization that since 1972 had served mostly Latino individuals and families at six sites in Newark’s North Ward. Historically, La Casa provided childcare, youth literacy and counseling,

¹⁷ More detailed information on the role, structure, and activities of the Office of Re-entry is provided in Chapter III.

¹⁸ Contracts with these providers were not signed until summer 2009. More information on challenges related to finalizing these contracts is provided in Chapter III.

housing assistance, immigration services, and job preparation and development to a broad constituency, including ex-offenders. Prior to its participation in NPRIR, La Casa received funding from the New Jersey Department of Human Services to participate in the Responsible Parenting Program, under which La Casa staff members gained access to Northern State Prison and recruited soon-to-be-released inmates into the program. During the NPRIR project, La Casa also operated 25 other programs and had more than 50 staff members.

- **New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (NJISJ)** was a non-profit organization in Newark that focused on criminal and juvenile justice advocacy. NJISJ was founded in 1999 and, in 2003, it co-sponsored the New Jersey Re-entry Roundtable to bring together Federal, state, county, and other local agencies and organizations to address prisoner re-entry issues in the state of New Jersey.¹⁹ For three years prior to NPRIR, NJISJ used other sources of funding to implement its New Careers program for ex-offenders (which operated as part of NPRIR) without mentoring services. During the NPRIR project, NJISJ operated at least three other service delivery programs and a number of advocacy initiatives. The organization had 15 permanent staff members and many interns.
- **Offender Aid and Restoration (OAR)** was founded in 1984 to assist Essex County residents with returning to the community from incarceration and the Newark office was one of 11 OAR chapters around the country. Since its inception, this nonprofit organization had provided re-entry services to adult ex-offenders; it also operated a program called Parents and their Children Together, which assisted parents incarcerated in the Essex County Jail and their children. During NPRIR, OAR had five staff members and a number of interns and volunteers.
- **Renaissance Community Development Corporation Center (RCDCC)** was founded in 1995 and was a faith-based organization affiliated with the Renaissance Church of Newark. The Center offered a number of services in addition to those for ex-offender services, including a food pantry; substance abuse counseling; GED, ESL, and computer training; and various youth services. Prior to the NPRIR project, the organization's founder and executive director (an ex-offender himself) served as a mentor for ex-offenders who were part of ISP. RCDCC had a staff of six and a number of volunteers during the NPRIR project.

In addition to the NPRIR service providers funded by the city through the ETA grant, two additional organizations—Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and Northern New Jersey, Inc. (Goodwill) and America Works, Inc. (America Works)—participated in NPRIR. These organizations had the goal of serving 670 violent and non-violent ex-offenders and used

¹⁹ See “Coming Home for Good: Meeting the Challenge of Prisoner Re-entry in New Jersey,” Final Report of the New Jersey Re-entry Roundtable (December 2003), for more detailed information on Roundtable participants and conclusions. www.njisj.org

matching grant funds from the Nicholson Foundation to support their work.²⁰ Agreements between these providers and the Nicholson Foundation required them to offer the same NPRIR services as the city-funded organizations, with one exception: America Works was required to refer NPRIR participants to (but not provide them with) mentoring services.²¹ In addition, the contract with America Works, which was a for-profit organization, represented a departure from the PRI model of using FBCOs to provide services. The Nicholson Foundation finalized its contract with Goodwill on July 1, 2008, selected America Works as the final NPRIR provider in early 2009, developing an agreement with that organization in mid-June. Below are brief descriptions of these two organizations and their history and experience in serving Newark ex-offenders at the time of the second-round site visit:

- **Goodwill.** Goodwill, a non-profit organization founded in 1913, provided education, training, and career services for welfare recipients, the homeless, ex-offenders, individuals without formal education or work experience, and individuals with physical, mental, and/or emotional disabilities. This organization brought to NPRIR its prior experience serving Newark ex-offenders as a first-round grantee of ETA's PRI program. The agency served more than 164,000 people in 2009 throughout the greater New York metro area, operating roughly 84 programs with several hundred staff members.
- **America Works.** This for-profit organization was founded in the mid-1980s and had offices in five cities including Newark. With pay-per-placement contracts, America Works used a "work first" model to place "hard-to-serve" clients, mainly TANF recipients and ex-offenders, in employment. In 2008, at the behest of the Nicholson Foundation and the city, America Works began providing services to individuals being supervised by the Vicinage of Essex Probation Division (Essex Probation). America Works ran at least 14 programs in five cities and had more than 50 permanent staff members.²²

Following the selection of these service providers, P/PV began providing training to them on NPRIR, particularly how to enter data in the PRI Management Information System (PRI MIS). For La Casa, NJISJ, OAR, and RCDCC, P/PV also facilitated the development of NPRIR workplans, which the Office of Re-entry reviewed and approved. Among the providers,

²⁰ Originally, these match-funded providers were only allowed to serve violent offenders. However, in early 2010, the Office of Re-entry and the Nicholson Foundation, in consultation with ETA, decided to allow these two organizations to use NPRIR match funding to serve non-violent offenders as well.

²¹ More information about the agreements between these organizations and the Nicholson Foundation is provided in Chapter III.

²² America Works locations in individual cities were actually subsidiaries of the main corporation, headquartered in New York. Programs offered in each of these cities, were, consequently, operated by different subsidiaries, rather than by the corporate parent. The programs in Newark, for example, were operated by America Works of New Jersey, Inc.

Goodwill was the first to begin implementation, enrolling its first NPRIR participants in July 2008, with America Works following suit seven months later. In January 2009, NJISJ became the first city-funded provider to enroll participants. By April 2009, the rest of the city-funded providers—RCDCC, La Casa, and OAR—had enrolled their first participants.

Organization of the Report

The subsequent chapters of this final report present and discuss findings from the evaluation. Chapter II discusses the methodology of the evaluation, including the key issues in the research design. Chapter III follows with a description of the City of Newark’s overall leadership and management of NPRIR. Chapter IV describes the partnerships developed between the city’s Office of Re-entry and corrections and workforce agencies. Chapter V describes the FBCO’s recruitment processes and the services they provided through NPRIR, with a particular emphasis on case management, workforce preparation services, and mentoring. Chapter VI discusses enrollment in NPRIR and the outcomes achieved by program participants, and it compares these outcomes to those of other similar PRI projects. Finally, Chapter VII presents a summary of implementation, along with a discussion of the lessons learned during the course of the project.

II. METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation of NPRIR was designed to document and assess the City of Newark's implementation of the PRI model on a citywide scale. To accomplish this goal, the evaluation collected data on the management of the project, its service delivery and partnership development, and the recidivism and employment-related outcomes of NPRIR participants. This chapter describes these various aspects of the evaluation's methodology, beginning with a discussion of the conceptual framework and research questions and followed by a description of the analytical approach used in the implementation and outcome studies.

Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

The NPRIR evaluation design was based on a conceptual framework that took into account contextual factors, partnerships, leadership and management, service delivery, and outcomes. The various contextual factors influenced the implementation of NPRIR; these included community characteristics, individual attributes, and partner structures. The administration and leadership of the grant, itself affected by the contextual factors, determined how programmatic decisions were made, resources allocated, and information disseminated. Each of these factors, in turn, affected how services were delivered and what program-level, participant-level, and system-level outcomes were achieved.

From this conceptual framework arose the following broad research questions:

- How did the administrative, management, and leadership structures of NPRIR function? How was the strategic vision conveyed and reinforced? How were the service functions coordinated? How was the performance of partners monitored? How were interagency agreements negotiated?
- What partnerships and linkages were developed with the workforce investment system, the criminal justice system, and faith-based and other community-based organizations? How did these linkages evolve over time, and what are the prospects for sustaining them into the future?
- What services (in the areas of case management, job training and placement assistance, mentoring, and support) were provided and how adequate were they in meeting the varied and complex needs of ex-offenders?

- What issues arose in program design and implementation? What challenges were encountered in implementing the PRI model on a citywide basis?
- What program-level and system-level outcomes were achieved?
- What participant outcomes did the initiative achieve? What percentage of program participants secured employment? What were the recidivism rates for program participants? How did NPRIR participant outcomes compare to similar PRI participants' outcomes?
- What lessons were learned from the NPRIR project? What are the implications for replicability?

Analytical Approach

To collect the data required to answer these research questions, the evaluation drew on a mixed-methods model employing qualitative and quantitative data collection activities and analysis. The activities involved in evaluating the implementation of the initiative were different from those involved in evaluating its outcomes, and so the data collection and analysis for these two parts of the evaluation are discussed separately below.

Implementation Study

The implementation study provided detailed qualitative information on (1) the management of the project from initial planning to execution, (2) the development of partnerships, (3) the strategies and approaches used to assist ex-offenders recently released to Newark, and (4) the lessons learned from the implementation of the project. Chapters III, IV, and VI discuss these findings. In addition, qualitative data from these analyses were used to help inform findings from the outcomes study, discussed below.

Data Sources

To collect the bulk of the qualitative data, SPR conducted three rounds of intensive four-day site visits to Newark (in June 2009, March 2010, and December 2010). These site visits were designed to capture what occurred as the city and its sub-contracted service providers planned and implemented the activities of NPRIR. During the visits, evaluators interviewed staff members from the Office of Re-entry, P/PV, contracted NPRIR service providers, and other city- and state-level workforce and criminal justice partners. During the second- and third-round site visits, evaluators conducted in-depth focus groups with mentors, interviewed participants and reviewed their case files, and observed work-readiness training sessions to gain a more detailed and concrete understanding of key interventions.

Because a number of months passed between site visits, evaluators also conducted quarterly phone check-ins with key project staff members from the Office of Re-entry and P/PV to remain updated on project issues such as recruitment, staffing, and service delivery.

Analysis

The implementation study drew on data from the three Newark site visits and the quarterly reconnaissance calls described above. After completion of each visit, evaluation team members prepared a detailed site visit write-up, which represented a consolidated set of notes, observations, and assessments collected while on site. Each site visit write-up also addressed the research questions presented above. Similarly, after reconnaissance calls, a much briefer but detailed write-up was prepared. The research team assessed the entirety of grant activities across the sub-grantee and partner sites, guided by key research questions around recruitment and enrollment, case management, employment services, mentoring, and partnerships. The descriptive and explanatory analyses presented throughout this report derive from these site visit and phone write-ups.

Outcomes Study

In addition to the implementation study, an analysis of the outcomes obtained by NPRIR participants was conducted. The outcomes study had two major goals: (1) explore the outcomes obtained by participants in the project, and (2) compare these outcomes against those obtained by other groups of ex-offenders who participated in PRI. The findings of this study are presented in Chapter VI.

Data Sources

The outcomes study drew upon a number of data sources, including the PRI MIS used by NPRIR providers, data from workforce and criminal justice agencies in New Jersey, and data from other PRI programs provided by ETA. Below is a discussion of these sources, including some of the challenges associated with using these data.

PRI MIS

The evaluation's primary quantitative data collection activity consisted of collecting data from ETA's PRI MIS. This MIS, which was originally developed for PRI grantees and slightly modified for NPRIR, captured detailed information on each project participant, including identifiers, demographics, employment and educational status at enrollment, incarceration history, details of program participation, services received, and outcomes. The NPRIR evaluation received four extracts of key data from this system, the last of which was used in the preparation of this report.

Many NPRIR service providers faced some challenges in understanding how to properly enter data into the system (discussed in detail in Chapter III). The most significant of these challenges related to the recording of services provided to participants. Thus, throughout the report, conclusions about participants' receipt of services should be interpreted with caution. In addition, some providers also faced challenges in tracking participant outcomes in the PRI MIS.

Data from Other State Agencies

Due to the potential challenges NPRIR providers faced in collecting outcome data from participants, data were gathered from other agencies in the State of New Jersey to augment those contained in the PRI MIS. NJ DOL provided Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage data on employment and earnings outcomes for NPRIR participants to fill in possible gaps due to incomplete reporting by participants or a program's inability to obtain the data.²³ Three criminal justice agencies—NJ DOC, the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, and the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts—also provided data used to supplement information collected by providers regarding participants' involvement with the criminal justice system after their enrollment in NPRIR. The data from these agencies, along with those from the MIS, were combined to provide a more complete and accurate picture of the recidivism rates of program participants.²⁴

Additional Data from ETA

In addition to the data collected on NPRIR participants, SPR obtained administrative data from ETA for selected PRI programs that operated prior to and concurrently with NPRIR. Like data from the NPRIR MIS, these data included information on PRI participant demographics, offender history, pre-enrollment employment and educational status, programs and services accessed, and outcomes. These data were used to compare NPRIR outcomes with those of other PRI programs, as discussed below.

Analysis

The outcomes study analyzed participant outcomes associated with the project, including placement in employment, wages earned, and recidivism. First, the analysis provided a descriptive analysis of these outcomes as well as participants' ability to obtain stable housing and refrain from alcohol abuse/drug use. Subgroup analyses were also conducted to explore how outcomes varied across different participant characteristics.²⁵

²³ UI data were limited in that they did not include earnings from the informal economy, and NPRIR participants who were self-employed or worked in a family-run business were not covered in the UI wage records. Additionally, participants who were employed in states other than New Jersey were not captured in the state UI wage records.

²⁴ The thoroughness of data from the criminal justice agencies may have been limited because of a possible time lag between when events occurred and when they were entered into the databases. Thus, any involvement of NPRIR participants with the criminal justice system that occurred just prior to the transmission of these data may have been omitted.

²⁵ Subgroup analyses of the relationship of program services and outcomes were not conducted because the evaluation was not designed to assess the effectiveness of NPRIR program services. In addition, the decision to participate in particular services was left up to participants, in coordination with their case managers, and thus

Secondly, multivariate analyses were conducted to compare the outcomes of NPRIR participants with those obtained by individuals in two other PRI program groups—past participants of PRI in Newark (Generation 1) and participants served by other PRI grantees that operated in the same period as NPRIR (Generation 3).²⁶ This analysis was intended to assess NPRIR participants’ outcomes relative to other PRI programs. If NPRIR participants were found to have attained similar or improved outcomes, it would suggest that the NPRIR project was able to replicate the PRI model and bring the project successfully to scale.

Given that one of the original Generation 1 PRI grantees operated in Newark, the outcomes of its participants could serve as an effective comparison of the outcomes achieved by NPRIR participants. The main advantage of using Newark PRI participants as a comparison group was that it served to control for factors that were specific to Newark. Both groups of participants were seeking employment in the same local economy in the sense that the available industries and prevailing wages were the same. Participants were also living in the same law enforcement atmosphere, with comparable sets of rules about arrests, prosecutions, corrections, and parole. Characteristics specific to a location, many of which were likely to affect participants’ outcomes, are difficult to measure precisely, if at all, and are thus difficult to control for in statistical analyses. Therefore, using a comparison group of participants from the same city helped control for this bias.

However, because the two projects were active over different periods, their respective participants sought employment in different economic conditions, and thus labor market outcomes may have varied solely due to this difference. While this is the case when any comparisons are made between groups whose outcomes are measured at different times, the potential for bias was particularly worrisome given the economic downturn that occurred during NPRIR implementation. These harsher economic conditions may have also affected the rate of recidivism because participants’ inability to gain employment through legitimate means may have led to an increase in criminal behavior. Additionally, because PRI Generation 1 grantees were not allowed to serve violent offenders, it was not possible to include the numerous violent offenders enrolled in NPRIR when comparing the two groups.

participants who chose to participate in a given service may be fundamentally different from those who do not receive the same service.

²⁶ Due to confidentiality concerns regarding participants served by Generation 1 and Generation 3 PRI grantees, it was not possible to obtain either recidivism data from criminal justice agencies or data on employment from UI wages records. Thus, to be equitable, comparisons of NPRIR and other PRI grantees rely solely on the employment and recidivism data captured in the PRI MIS, and data obtained for NPRIR participants from outside agencies were excluded.

It was for these reasons that the second comparison was conducted using selected Generation 3 PRI programs, which were implemented around the same time as NPRIR. This comparison could more precisely control for differences in economic contexts, and because Generation 3 grantees were allowed to serve violent offenders who enrolled via pre-release arrangements, it was possible to compare outcomes for violent as well as non-violent offenders. To compile this comparison group, a subset of six Generation 3 PRI grantees located in cities or localities similar to Newark were selected—Baltimore, MD, Bridgeport, CT, Phoenix, AZ, St. Louis, MO, Trenton, NJ, and Tulsa, OK. Mahalanobis procedures, in which correlations on key demographic and economic variables (e.g., unemployment rate, earnings data, industry mix, and population composition regarding race/ethnicity, age, and education levels) were used to determine the comparison sites most similar to Newark. Mahalanobis procedures rely on a distance metric, $d(i,j)$ which can be defined as:

$$d(i,j) = (u - v)^T C^{-1}(u - v) \quad (1)$$

where u and v are vectors of values of the matching variables for Newark and sites in the comparison group, and C is the sample covariance matrix of matching variables from the full set comparison group sites. Generation 3 sites with the minimum distance $d(i,j)$ are selected as matches for Newark. The main drawback of this procedure is that it is not based on a one-dimensional score, like many propensity scoring methods, thus as more covariates are added to the model it may become difficult to find close matches.²⁷

²⁷ Guo, S. and Fraser, M. Propensity Score Analysis: Statistical Methods and Applications, Sage Publications, California, p. 145.

III. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF NPRIR

In a program such as NPRIR, with multiple service providers ranging from small FBCOs to Federal partners, leadership and management are critical and complex functions. The leaders of the initiative were tasked with designing and establishing a framework for providing re-entry services, managing implementation, collaborating with partners and stakeholders, securing financial resources, and providing support for service providers.

This discussion of the leadership and management structure of the NPRIR program begins by describing how the leadership function was divided between the Mayor of Newark and the city's Office of Re-entry. The chapter then covers the role of the Office of Re-entry in designing the project, managing fiscal matters, convening key stakeholders, providing policy guidance, and overseeing service providers. This management section is followed by discussions about securing additional funding and efforts to sustain NPRIR after the end of the ETA grant period. The chapter concludes with a discussion of lessons learned in the area of leadership and management.

Leadership and Organizational Responsibilities

Using the mayor's strategic vision for re-entry programming as a guide, the implementation was led by the city's Office of Re-entry, which received supervision and guidance from the deputy mayor in charge of economic and housing development and his director of operations.

Role of the Mayor

Previous research on city-led re-entry efforts concluded that the leadership of the city's mayor is critical to the success of such initiatives (Cobbs Fletcher et al, 2008). In the case of NPRIR, the mayor's broad leadership was indeed important: Mayor Cory A. Booker made prisoner re-entry an important focus of his administration and defined a strategic vision of developing an integrated, citywide system of supports for ex-offenders returning to Newark. The mayor took several concrete steps, including: making the City an official partner in Opportunity Reconnect (a one-stop resource multi-agency center for ex-offenders in Essex County College), creating the Office of Re-entry to coordinate re-entry efforts throughout the city, and supporting the city's quest for funding from multiple sources, including ETA for the development of NPRIR and the

broader re-entry system.²⁸ The mayor also focused on advocating for several re-entry-related bills being considered by the state legislature,²⁹ which were eventually passed and signed into law.

The Office of Re-entry

Responsibility for management of NPRIR and the broader re-entry initiative was delegated to a newly created Office of Re-entry, in the Department of Economic and Housing Development (DEHD). The Office was responsible carrying out the mayor's vision of creating a seamless service delivery network for prisoner re-entry by designing and planning re-entry initiatives, overseeing the city's re-entry programs (including NPRIR), securing funding for additional efforts, and engaging key partners in an effort to promote system-wide coordination. The deputy mayor, who headed DEHD, was tasked with providing strategic leadership, and his director of operations and management supervised the Office of Re-entry.^{30,31}

Day-to-day management and development were assigned to the Director of the Office of Re-entry. However, the intended director of the Office, who was involved in the design and planning process for NPRIR, left the position early in the project. Due to a hiring freeze in Newark, a new Director could not be hired and the job of supervising the Office was transferred to the Chair of Re-entry Initiatives (CRI, formerly the chair of the city's Re-entry Advisory Board), who was funded by an external non-profit organization.

A team of individuals assisted the CRI in operating the Office of Re-entry, providing support for both the broader mission of the office and for managing the NPRIR. The staff had several key responsibilities, including drafting grant proposals and service-provider contracts, creating and formalizing processes used to refer NPRIR participants to service providers, and monitoring NPRIR providers by reviewing PRI MIS data and analyzing performance outcomes. Additionally, these staff members assisted NPRIR providers directly by providing individualized technical assistance and support.

Because she was funded through outside sources, the CRI was able to retain leadership of the Office of Re-entry despite citywide layoffs and hiring freezes that occurred in Newark during the

²⁸ Detailed information is provided below on the multiple sources of funding the city has used to support re-entry efforts since the beginning of NPRIR.

²⁹ As an example of his advocacy efforts, the mayor wrote an opinion piece supporting these bills that was published by the *New Jersey Star-Ledger* on January 3, 2010.

³⁰ NPRIR Quarterly Narrative Report for the quarter ending March 31, 2010.

³¹ The Director of Operations and Management of the Department of Economic and Housing Development is also responsible for supervising the city's One Stop Career Center system.

course of NPRIR. She was therefore able to maintain consistent leadership for NPRIR and build expertise in re-entry issues through hands-on experience managing implementation of the initiative. This experience also helped the CRI build strategic relationships with partners, and she became the main point of contact for all re-entry partners, the NPRIR service providers, and the community at large. Of the Office of Re-entry, and her role specifically, the CRI stated:

I think it is critical [to have a dedicated re-entry office within city government] because there needs to be a point person for the community to address these issues ... I think that there needs to be some expertise [in the city regarding re-entry issues].

Through the CRI's work in forming relationships with partners, she helped expand the capacity of the Office of Re-entry to make significant contributions to other re-entry-related efforts. During the implementation of NPRIR, according to the CRI, the Office of Re-entry evolved to encompass "a broader mission that include[d] supporting new legislation, networking with re-entry providers, providing leadership on re-entry policy, [and] making sure that provider and One-Stop services [were] aligned with the needs of re-entry clients." As one significant example of its advocacy efforts, the Office of Re-entry, through its Re-entry Advisory Board, helped shape the state re-entry legislation that was signed into law in January 2010.

As part of this expanded capacity, the Office of Re-entry had, by the end of NPRIR, also begun to play an important role in encouraging the city to prioritize re-entry efforts. Through her participation in the leadership team meetings of the Department of Economic and Housing Development, the CRI served as a point of contact for other city departments and was able to bring re-entry issues to the fore of department-wide discussions. Through these discussions, she began collaborating with numerous other city offices and departments to advocate for building re-entry components into many newly implemented programs. One example of this collaboration was Pest at Rest Newark, a city-run integrated pest management venture that provided Newark residents—including re-entering ex-offenders—with structured apprenticeships and placement into career-track jobs.

The CRI was also able to leverage her position on the leadership team to encourage the inclusion of re-entry components into other economic development activities. For instance, when companies were interested in coming to the City of Newark, the CRI was able to meet with and inform them about the advantages of hiring ex-offenders in Newark re-entry programs (e.g., pre-screening by the service providers, federal bonding, tax credits, etc.). She could also discuss integrating re-entry priorities into contractual agreements with developers, in which developers would receive incentives for hiring ex-offenders.

The Office of Re-entry's activities also included planning and implementing other re-entry programs. For example, the office was instrumental in helping the city secure additional funding

to develop other programs, such as the Gateway ID program, which assisted ex-offenders with obtaining replacement IDs, and the Steps to Employment Program 1 (STEP 1), which assisted ex-offenders who are ineligible for NPRIR.

Management Activities

As part of its role in managing NPRIR, the Office of Re-entry had a number of strategizing, coordinating, and supervisory functions. The office led design efforts, managed fiscal affairs, engaged re-entry stakeholders, and provided administrative guidance and oversight of all the providers including those supported with foundation funds. However, due to its role as the largest provider of match funds, the Nicholson Foundation also assisted in the management of providers it funded.³² Below each of these critical management functions is described.

Leading Design Efforts

Initially, the Office of Re-entry focused on leading NPRIR design efforts. Upon receipt of the NPRIR grant from ETA in June 2008, the Re-entry Director for the city served as the lead for the design and planning of NPRIR. She, along with a small team of colleagues, convened representatives of partner agencies to develop a design for the initiative.³³ Respondents reported that the Re-entry Director was able to secure the buy-in and cooperation of key criminal justice partners at the state level due, in part, to her former role as high-ranking official within one of the state's criminal justice agencies.

Collectively, the Re-entry Director (then the CRI) and the management team helped develop two organizational plans—the NPRIR Implementation Plan and a program administration plan. The implementation plan included a description of program goals and a process-flow design that outlined key steps regarding recruitment, enrollment, and service provision. The program administration plan documented the responsibilities for program coordination and oversight, outlined the communication and collaboration protocols, and detailed the performance measures.

Fiscal Management

Following the design phase of NPRIR and the selection of service providers, the Office of Re-entry negotiated contracts and agreements with the four city-funded service providers, and the Nicholson Foundation did the same with the two service providers it was funding. The City's and the Nicholson Foundation's contracts or grant agreements varied for each service provider in

³² The Nicholson Foundation has a geographic focus on the City of Newark and other urban neighborhoods in Essex County and, since 2002, has funded a number of prisoner re-entry-related activities in this area.

³³ The role of partners in the design of NPRIR is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

terms of available funding, period of performance, and finalization date (please see Exhibit III-1 below).

**Exhibit III-1:
Selected Contract/Grant Agreement Provisions between NPRIR Service Providers and Program Funders†**

	City-funded Providers				Nicholson-funded Providers	
	La Casa	OAR	RCDCC	NJISJ	America Works	Goodwill
Available funding	\$358,000	\$307,000	\$307,000	\$469,000‡	\$100,000	\$1,800,000
Contract period of performance start date	1/1/09	1/1/09	1/1/09	1/1/09	2/1/09	7/1/08
Date contract finalized	7/1/09	7/1/09	6/18/09	8/21/09	6/15/09	7/1/08
Contract period of performance end date	6/30/11	6/30/11	6/30/11	12/31/10	12/31/10	6/30/11

† Following the termination of NJISJ's contract, the City of Newark reallocated the remaining funding earmarked for NJISJ to La Casa because it took over serving NJISJ's outstanding participants and the running of the transitional jobs program. The city also reallocated unused funds from P/PV's contract to OAR and RCDCC so that they could serve additional participants. The figures in Exhibit III-1 reflect these changes.

‡ This amount excluded the \$621,569–\$652,849 that NJISJ was to subcontract to the Greater Newark Conservancy.

The amount of funding specified in these agreements ranged from a high of \$1.8 million for Goodwill (if all employment benchmarks for 600 participants were met³⁴), to a low of \$100,000 for America Works.³⁵ While these contracts and agreements were all set to expire December 31, 2010³⁶, they specified different start dates and were finalized at different points in time. For instance, Goodwill's contract began and was finalized nearly a year and a half before the America Works agreement. Although the city-funded organizations' period of performance

³⁴ No maximum dollar amount was provided in Goodwill's contract; however the maximum reimbursement was \$3,000 per participant and the contract specified that a minimum of 600 participants were to be served.

³⁵ Initially, America Works' grant began at \$100,000, with the option of being renewed for another \$100,000; however, America Works was not granted this renewal.

³⁶ The City of Newark received a no-cost extension from ETA to extend the NPRIR period of performance to June 30, 2011. In turn, the city extended the contracts of four of the service providers—La Casa, OAR, RCDCC, and Goodwill—through that period. The city allowed NJISJ's contract to terminate as of December 31, 2010. America Works' contract also expired at the end of 2010 because the organization had spent its allocated \$100,000.

began on January 1, 2009, their agreements with the city were not finalized until about six months later.

An important feature in the contracts and agreements was the use of performance benchmarks that had to be met before payment could be made. However, there were differences between City and Nicholson Foundation in these provisions. Nicholson-funded providers had contracts or agreements that were entirely performance-based—meaning that funding was to be provided only upon completion of certain benchmarks. By contrast, city NPRIR contracts had only 14 to 20 percent of their funding predicated on achieving benchmarks, with the rest provided either up front or on a reimbursement basis.

Funding and Fiscal Management Challenges

Throughout the implementation of NPRIR, both the city and service providers faced some challenges related to funding and fiscal management. Early in the program's implementation, the execution of city contracts was delayed by several months due to objections raised by the City's legal department regarding automatic no-cost extensions if the providers did not meet their performance benchmarks and the expiration of certificates of insurance (that providers had initially supplied) while the other issue was being resolved.

During the six-month delay in contract approval, the city could not pay providers the upfront portion of their contracts or reimburse them for expenses already incurred. As a result, two of the four city providers implemented the initiative more slowly than originally planned because they could not hire the necessary staff members or pay for the provision of participant services until they received their first payments from the city.

Some providers claimed that the NPRIR funding they received was insufficient to cover the real cost of program staffing or service provision. This forced these providers to cover the cost of staffing through other grants, rely on volunteers or interns, or even operate without key staff members, such as job developers. Other providers noted that more funding would have allowed for better services in some cases. For example, one provider said that although the organization had been providing bus tickets for NPRIR participants for the first two weeks of each participant's enrollment, funding limitations forced an end to this practice.

One city-funded provider manager noted that the problem of limited funding was exacerbated by tying 20 percent of the organization's available NPRIR funding to the achievement of performance benchmarks. Although the manager thought contract benchmarks were reasonable, the small size of her organization's budget made it difficult to wait the required time before requesting payment for achieving these benchmarks, especially when several could not be measured until nearly a year after participants were enrolled in the program. In addition, the

complexity of how achievement on the benchmarks was measured made it difficult for some of the city providers to understand when they could request payment.

Engaging Key Stakeholders

Another important role of the Office of Re-entry was to engage and convene key stakeholders on behalf of NPRIR. The importance of this role is supported by other research studies, in which it is recommended that local and state-level officials responsible for planning a re-entry initiative “engage key stakeholders in a joint venture regarding re-entry” (Re-entry Policy Council, 2005; Cobbs Fletcher et al., 2008). The Office of Re-entry began formally engaging stakeholders in May of 2009, after some partners had already been active in the planning of NPRIR. The office formed the Newark Re-entry Advisory Board, made up of high-level leaders from multiple re-entry stakeholders, such as criminal justice agencies, workforce development agencies, academic experts, policy and research institutes, and FBCOs specializing in re-entry. According to written documentation from the city, this advisory board was “charged with the responsibility of establishing a strategic vision for Newark’s re-entry initiatives.” Throughout the project period, this group was supposed to meet monthly to assist with identifying re-entry priorities for Newark and the NPRIR program, as well as identify potential funding sources.

However, according to the CRI, the board had difficulty accomplishing its goals given the range of interests of the re-entry stakeholders. As a result, the entire advisory board met only two times during project implementation and the office instead relied primarily on sub-committees to move its agenda forward. The sub-committees proved more efficacious because they were smaller and able to focus on specific tasks and issues in which their participants had expertise. This reliance on sub-committees is consistent with research indicating that convening a broad spectrum of stakeholders with disparate interests can paralyze rather than galvanize action. While meetings of all stakeholders can be useful in agenda setting, smaller, more focused groups, such as sub-committees or task forces, are more effective in getting work done and accomplishing the stated goals (Re-entry Policy Council, 2005).

The sub-committees’ areas of focus included Performance Measurement and Management, State and Legislative Issues, and Formerly Incarcerated Individuals. According to the CRI, each of these subcommittees made significant contributions to the advancement of the re-entry agenda in Newark. For example, the Performance Measurement and Management sub-committee was instrumental in identifying and developing effective strategies for tracking re-entry outcomes. The State and Legislative Issues sub-committee assisted the Office of Re-entry with its re-entry advocacy efforts by providing state legislators with critical feedback on re-entry bills that they proposed, and which were subsequently signed into law in early 2010. The Formerly Incarcerated Individuals sub-committee, which included ex-offender members, gave ex-

offenders a forum for sharing their personal experiences, thereby assisting the Office of Re-entry in its efforts to better align program services with the needs of re-entry clients.

Providing Administrative Guidance and Oversight

Another critical role of the Office of Re-entry was to manage and oversee the functioning of the NPRIR project. In this role, the office provided policy guidance to providers and partners, helped to recruit and refer potential NPRIR participants, and monitored provider performance and compliance with city and grant regulations.

Policy Guidance

As part of its management role, the Office of Re-entry developed policies and guidelines for the NPRIR program. For example, early on in the implementation process, the Office of Re-entry worked with its contracted technical assistance provider, P/PV, to develop a list of key definitions to guide program operations. The Office of Re-entry also developed the *Newark Re-entry Referral Network: A Guide to Successful Referrals and Interagency Collaboration* (“Referral and Collaboration Guide”), which described the required steps for making referrals to the NPRIR program, as well as the process for registering participants with the city’s One-Stop Career Center system.³⁷ Additionally, Office of Re-entry staff members put together an NPRIR Operations Manual for providers, which compiled all of the relevant policies and guidance the office developed.

Recruitment and Referral of Potential Participants

Another key role of the Office of Re-entry was to help recruit and refer potential participants to NPRIR. While individual service providers did most of the recruiting for NPRIR, Office of Re-entry staff members contributed to the effort by distributing NPRIR brochures to NJ DOC correctional facilities and submitting information about the NPRIR program to NJ DOC to include in the informational packets provided to offenders upon release from its facilities.

To handle the large number of ex-offenders who regularly visited its office looking for help, the Office of Re-entry implemented a process for referring these individuals to NPRIR service providers or other services. During the course of the project, these referrals grew from a small number at the beginning to more than 100 per month, making the Office of Re-entry one of the largest referrers to NPRIR providers.

The Office of Re-entry also took on the role of managing the NPRIR referral process at Opportunity Reconnect. This role grew out of an effort to ensure that NPRIR providers received appropriate referrals from Opportunity Reconnect and that participants who visited Opportunity

³⁷ The Referral and Collaboration Guide is discussed in greater detail in Chapter IV.

Reconnect seeking services were referred to a provider that had the capacity to meet their individual needs. In the fall of 2009, the city placed the Office of Re-entry's program manager at Opportunity Reconnect to serve as a liaison to Opportunity Reconnect and to supervise the ex-offender intake process. Additionally, in February 2010, the city worked with the Nicholson Foundation to provide a special grant to NewarkNow³⁸ to hire and place three staff members as intake specialists at Opportunity Reconnect.

To aid providers in the referral process, the Office of Re-entry fostered systematic partnerships with key criminal justice referral agencies. On the formal level, the Office of Re-entry signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with NJ SPB to guide the referral process with NPRIR service providers. Informally, Office of Re-entry staff members met with local halfway house/CRC staff members in an effort to streamline referrals from them to NPRIR providers. Partnerships between the Office of Re-entry and other agencies and organizations are discussed in detail in Chapter IV.

Monitoring Providers

As per the requirements of their grant agreement with ETA, the Office of Re-entry monitored the city *and* match-funded NPRIR service providers to ensure their practices complied with city and ETA guidelines, and to track their achievement of performance benchmarks. To conduct this monitoring, the city used feedback supplied by P/PV, direct communication with providers, and regular analysis of the PRI MIS data. The Nicholson Foundation also monitored match-funded providers independently due to their funding being contingent on the achievement of certain benchmarks.

P/PV communicated regularly with Office of Re-entry staff members to keep the office abreast of city and Nicholson Foundation-funded providers' activities and progress towards achieving NPRIR benchmarks. This communication typically consisted of weekly email updates sent to the city. Based on this information and his own analysis of the PRI MIS, the Office of Re-entry's data analyst scheduled monthly meetings with each NPRIR provider, in which they discussed the provider's progress towards meeting performance benchmarks. When providers were not meeting the specified benchmarks, the data analyst worked with them to devise a plan to remedy the issue. According to the CRI, the city wanted to ensure that providers achieved positive outcomes, so the Office of Re-entry made sure that providers were informed of their performance status on a regular basis.

³⁸ NewarkNow is an intermediary organization that collaborates with municipal government, residents, grassroots organizations, and the philanthropic community to catalyze the achievement of significant positive outcomes throughout the city. The organization channels the efforts and energy of the grassroots community to improve safety, economic independence, and civic participation.

The Office of Re-entry also monitored service providers to make sure they complied with operations guidelines. After detecting irregularities in the provision of mentoring services, city staff members met with certain NPRIR service providers in May 2010 to inform them that they needed to change the way they were providing mentoring services in order to comply with city and ETA guidelines.

As the Nicholson Foundation paid its two NPRIR providers based on whether their participants met certain employment benchmarks, it also played a key role in monitoring the performance of these providers. On a quarterly basis, the providers sent reports of their achievement of these milestones, along with supporting evidence, to the foundation to request reimbursement of \$3,000 per participant. The foundation also hired a staff person to oversee the activities of these providers, and he met regularly with their NPRIR program managers to discuss program implementation and performance. City and Nicholson Foundation staff also met to discuss issues related to providers' progress in implementing NPRIR.

Providing Technical Assistance

The city had to ensure that NPRIR service providers, particularly the four contracted with the city, received sufficient support to implement the program effectively. To provide this support, the city relied heavily on its contracted technical assistance provider, P/PV. However, the Office of Re-entry also played a supplementary hands-on role in providing assistance. In addition, NJ DOL also provided limited technical assistance to NPRIR providers, funded through the ETA technical assistance grant for Newark and Essex County. An overview of the technical assistance provided to address various challenges encountered during the implementation of NPRIR is provided below.

Start-up Assistance

Once the providers were selected, P/PV facilitated an orientation for all providers to explain the program requirements and provide details on the technical assistance they would receive throughout the duration of NPRIR. P/PV staff members then conducted site assessment visits to the four city-funded providers in an effort to understand their organizational capacities for implementing NPRIR and to develop work plans for each provider that included strategies and timelines for meeting NPRIR benchmarks. Following the service provider and partner orientation and site assessment visits, P/PV conducted initial site visits to providers to assist in developing and refining strategies for each program component, including recruitment, case management, mentoring, job development, and job placement and retention.

Ongoing Assistance

As part of the ongoing assistance provided, P/PV staff members regularly contacted and visited providers to assist them in troubleshooting service-related challenges, review progress on identified benchmarks, and assist with any PRI MIS issues. In addition, P/PV staff members had regular communication with providers, via e-mail and phone, to address minor day-to-day issues. P/PV and the Office of Re-entry also convened providers monthly as the NPRIR Advisory Committee. Initially, these meetings consisted of professional development trainings on topics such as mentoring, transportation, case management, job development and placement, and using the PRI MIS; they also included discussions of program policies, challenges, and promising practices. In general, NPRIR provider staff members felt that these meetings provided a helpful forum for discussing common issues related to providing NPRIR services, building cross-agency relationships, and providing peer support.

Although important technical assistance was provided at these meetings, the Office of Re-entry found that NPRIR providers needed more intensive support in several critical areas. The support provided in each of these areas is detailed below.

PRI MIS

Because many NPRIR service providers had never before used a data management system as complex as the PRI MIS, they faced some challenges in understanding how to properly enter data into the system. The most significant of these challenges related to the recording of services provided to participants. In particular, some providers misunderstood which service categories to use when recording participant activities. In addition, providers recorded the provision of similar services in different ways. For example, one provider may have recorded a weeklong activity as a single service, whereas another provider recorded *each day* of a similar activity as a single service. In some cases, providers recorded as services activities in which a service was not actually delivered. One notable example of this was that some providers recorded the referral of participants to their mentoring programs as a mentoring service, though it is unclear if a mentoring service was actually provided.

Some NPRIR service providers also faced technical challenges with transferring data on already-enrolled participants into the PRI MIS because some of these participants were “exited” as soon as they were entered in the system, and before staff members could enter any services data. While technical assistance to providers helped ameliorate some of these issues, data on the services delivered were not captured uniformly across providers throughout the course of the project. Thus, throughout the report, conclusions about participants’ receipt of services should be interpreted with caution.

Some providers also faced challenges in tracking participant outcomes in the PRI MIS. During the follow-up period, NPRIR service providers were required to check in with former

participants quarterly to document employment outcomes. However, some case managers struggled to maintain follow-up contact with participants after they exited from the program, making it difficult for them to obtain accurate employment information. In addition, although ETA guidelines indicated that recidivism outcomes should be validated for all participants using some form of documentation (e.g., notifications from parole or probation officers or by searching local criminal justice agencies' databases), it was unclear whether providers used these sources for validation or simply relied on participants' self-reports.

Because the providers found it challenging to use the PRI MIS, they required extensive technical assistance from P/PV and the Office of Re-entry. To improve NPRIR providers' knowledge of and expertise with the PRI MIS, P/PV arranged for an ETA consultant who specializes in the PRI MIS to provide training to NPRIR service providers early in project implementation. This initial training was widely praised by service providers, but most felt that it came too early in the program's implementation. They stated that they would have benefited from it more if the training had come after they had had more experience using the system. Despite receiving ongoing assistance from P/PV and the Office of Re-entry (described below), some PRI MIS-related issues persisted and the city had this consultant conduct another training after providers had time to familiarize themselves with the system, though this occurred late in the grant period.

As a way to assess providers' ongoing needs for additional technical assistance, P/PV wrote monthly data reconciliation memoranda that identified missing or erroneously entered data in the PRI MIS. These memoranda were given to providers with instructions to correct these problems. The Office of Re-entry also received copies of these memoranda so that they were made aware of the challenges and could supply additional assistance to providers as necessary. In such cases, the Office of Re-entry's data analyst supplied this support by discussing data entry issues directly with providers and working with them to implement strategies to address these challenges. Close to the end of the grant period, P/PV also provided each provider with a memorandum detailing how to follow up with "exited" participants to ensure participant outcomes were appropriately recorded in the PRI MIS.

Generally, NPRIR service providers commented that the monthly data reconciliation memoranda and related assistance provided by the Office of Re-entry's data analyst were particularly useful, and reported that this assistance had helped them to remedy numerous MIS problems. By the last site visit, the Office of Re-entry's data analyst said that the length of each provider's data reconciliation memoranda had decreased, which suggested that providers had improved their data entry practices.

Job Placement and Development

Because the economic climate at the time of the implementation of NPRIR made it difficult for service providers to identify and secure employment opportunities for NPRIR participants, the

monthly meetings evolved to focus mainly on job development and placement issues. During these meetings, providers shared job leads, discussed how to manage employer relationships, and exchanged promising practices for working with participants and employers. NPRIR provider staff members noted that these meetings were valuable in assisting them with achieving their job placement benchmarks.

In addition, NJ DOL, in collaboration with NJ SPB, provided trainings to NPRIR service providers on how to conduct workforce services for ex-offenders. These trainings included an introduction to becoming an Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) and an OWDS certification training program. While staff members felt that the NJ DOL training was valuable, they indicated it would have been more useful had they not already been so experienced in working with ex-offenders.

Mentoring

Because mentoring was a challenge for nearly all NPRIR service providers, P/PV gave providers additional support in designing and implementing their mentoring programs. This support included distributing sample mentoring guides and templates, developing a mentoring manual for each provider that provided systematic instructions on how to implement and manage its mentoring program, and furnishing providers with continued individual assistance. Overall, NPRIR service providers indicated the technical assistance received improved their knowledge and capacity to implement their mentoring programs. However, while providers' mentoring programs improved because of the technical assistance received, providers rarely, if at all, used their mentoring manuals as guides to implementing and managing their programs.

Overall Effect of Ongoing Technical Assistance

During the course of NPRIR, Office of Re-entry staff members built their capacity to provide technical assistance on their own, earning praise from the FBCOs providing re-entry services. One NPRIR manager said “[the Office of Re-entry has been] on top of every single detail, especially performance. They are not critical but really just want to help.” Another NPRIR manager, with many years of experience working in Newark, noted that this was not what he had come to expect from city staff members: “The city surprised me...about the amount of support they have provided. They didn't even have a Re-entry Department before, and now every one of their workers is really accessible and responsive. They have been really helpful.”

Office of Re-entry staff members noted that the ongoing technical assistance given to providers was extremely useful in increasing providers' capacity to serve ex-offenders. Summarizing the impact of the technical assistance, the CRI stated the following:

The technical assistance provided through NPRIR has completely changed the ability of the agencies that have been here and have done this work for a long time to [make an] impact and prove what they're doing is making a

difference...These agencies are light-years ahead of where they were. They understand good case management, they understand good process flow, they understand what it means to have a job developer, and they understand how to assess program effectiveness. I think it was just ad hoc before.

Securing Additional Funding

To supplement ETA funding and to provide additional support for the NPRIR services and other re-entry efforts, the city sought funding from a variety of other sources. It was very successful in obtaining this additional funding, securing pledges from foundations for more than \$2.3 million in match funding for NPRIR (please see Exhibit III-2). The Nicholson Foundation provided the bulk of this match funding: \$1.9 million for service providers and an additional \$5,000 to fund marketing materials for the project.

In addition to these cash matches, NJ DOL and NJ SPB both committed to providing significant in-kind support for the NPRIR grant, primarily for staff time. The value of this support from NJ DOL amounted to \$397,240; from NJ SPB it amounted to more than \$4 million.³⁹

For fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010, the city also obtained DOJ earmark grants of \$424,000, \$500,000, and \$100,000 respectively. These grants, which were administered by the Office of Re-entry, were used to support additional services for participants and the salaries of several Office of Re-entry staff members. In addition, the Manhattan Institute provided \$372,000 for the 2009 fiscal year to support a number of re-entry-related costs, including the salary of the CRI, a portion of the salary of the data analyst, and the time spent by a senior fellow at the institute who was assisting the city. Funding for re-entry efforts also came from a member of the Newark City Council, who donated \$75,000 to support staff salaries. Lastly, NJ DOL received a \$480,000 technical assistance grant from ETA that was to be used to assist Newark and Essex County with their re-entry efforts.⁴⁰

³⁹ NJ SPB's estimate of its in-kind contribution was based on an assumption that 80 percent of NPRIR participants would be on parole or be served by NJ SPB-contracted halfway houses.

⁴⁰ At the time of the last site visit, the city had only used \$3,000 of NJ DOL's technical assistance grant due to delays in obtaining approval for budget modifications of the grant and bureaucratic barriers that prevented the city from hiring staff members as outlined in the grant. At the time of the last site visit, the most recent modification had not been approved by NJ DOL, but the CRI was hopeful the approval would occur soon and the city could begin spending the rest of the money.

**Exhibit III-2:
Match Funding Pledged for NPRIR Grant**

Source	Amount	Direct Beneficiary	Purpose
Nicholson Foundation	\$1,900,000	Goodwill (NPRIR), America Works (NPRIR), Newark Now/Newark Comprehensive Center for Fathers, NJ DOC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPRIR • NJ DOC and NJ SPB personnel to promote referrals to NPRIR • NewarkNow/Center for Fathers programs
Victoria Foundation	\$120,000	City of Newark; Newark Now; NJISJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive-on-loan to provide leadership for the NPRIR • NJISJ's transitional jobs program (NPRIR) • Mentoring and counseling at Newark Comprehensive Center for Fathers • Professional development for City of Newark staff members
Bodman Foundation	\$100,000	P/PV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance for the NPRIR
Edison Innovation Foundation	\$100,000	City of Newark, Urban Renewal Development Corp.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the eCycling@Newark (eCAN)† program for NPRIR participants
Council of New Jersey Grantmakers	\$90,000	City of Newark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the work of a philanthropic liaison to conduct fundraising for the NPRIR program and other city re-entry efforts
Total	\$2,310,000		

† The eCAN program provided occupational skills training and internships to 22 NPRIR participants. The Urban Renewal Corporation, in cooperation with the Office of Re-entry, managed this program.

Utilizing multiple funding sources to support re-entry efforts was critical for ensuring the successful implementation of the city's re-entry efforts, including NPRIR, amidst a period of economic hardship. Outside grants were necessary to fund most staff in the Office of Re-entry since the ETA grant could not be used for such a purpose and the Newark city government, having endured budget cuts, which resulted in hiring freezes and citywide layoffs during the grant period, was unable to fund the office's re-entry positions. Additionally, because funding from ETA would not allow the city to serve violent offenders, private philanthropic funds assisted the city in expanding the target group to include violent offenders and also supported services such as the Gateway ID program.

Sustaining Re-entry Efforts

Once the NPRIR program was implemented fully, the Office of Re-entry turned its attention to how it could sustain and improve its re-entry activities. The Office focused on three areas: securing future sources of funding, refining a common data management system for re-entry programs, and developing an in-house capacity to provide technical assistance to service providers, all of which are discussed below.

Sustainability of Funding

Due to city budget limitations, there was little possibility that city general funds would be available to support NPRIR beyond the period of the grant. Therefore, the Office of Re-entry sought other ways to sustain NPRIR financially after the conclusion of the ETA grant.

One method was to seek out continued funding from the Nicholson Foundation. Pleased with the Office of Re-entry's management of NPRIR, the foundation provided the Office of Re-entry with a \$1.5 million block grant in January 2011 to serve 730 ex-offenders returning to Newark. A portion of these funds was also slated to support the salary of the senior policy analyst in the Office of Re-entry and provide funding for the city to take over all of the management duties of Opportunity Reconnect. This expanded role would allow the office to have direct supervision over the Opportunity Reconnect intake specialists and RAS, which would help the office gain the level of understanding of Opportunity Reconnect's client flow necessary for creating a systematic referral process that would encourage more referrals to organizations outside of Opportunity Reconnect, as well as to those co-located in Opportunity Reconnect.

The city also aggressively pursued other sources of funding to support both its re-entry programming and programming that complemented re-entry efforts. For example, the city applied for and received a \$750,000 DOJ Second Chance Act grant to serve approximately 150 18- to 24-year-olds with violent criminal histories. As discussed above, the city also sought and received a \$100,000 DOJ earmark grant to support re-entry services and the salaries of several Office of Re-entry staff members for fiscal year 2010. To complement its re-entry work, the office obtained funding from the Corporation for Supportive Housing to run a program called Frequent Users of Systems, which aimed to assess how the city plans for people who cycle in and out of jail, homeless shelters, and emergency rooms. Through this initiative, the CRI hoped to identify best practices for providing housing services to ex-offenders. At the time of the final site visit, city staff members were continuing to meet with funders to secure additional funds to support their re-entry work.

In addition to seeking new sources of funding for re-entry projects, the Office of Re-entry also coordinated with other city offices and departments to see how existing city funding sources could be re-aligned to support re-entry services. For example, the city changed the way it

awarded Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and WIA funding so that these funding streams could be applied to re-entry activities. At the time of the last site visit, the Office of Re-entry was also working closely with the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) in Newark to get WIA dollars directed towards training for ex-offenders. Office of Re-entry staff members were also hopeful that they would receive funding for re-entry activities from the city's Economic Development and Trust Fund, which derives its funds from land sales.

The Office of Re-entry also urged providers to seek funding on their own to sustain NPRIR services and indicated the city would support these efforts as much as possible. The Office of Re-entry followed through on this by supporting a proposal submitted by one of the providers to the Victoria Fund seeking an additional \$75,000 to provide transitional jobs to NPRIR participants. Perhaps as a result of this urging, program managers at two other NPRIR service providers reported that they had actively looked for other sources of funding to sustain NPRIR and had applied for some state and federal grants. The city also had P/PV send providers information on funding resources, including a list of funders who have supported P/PV's re-entry and social service work in New Jersey.

Future of Data Management

Because of the widespread use of data for NPRIR program management, by both the city and providers, the Office of Re-entry realized that having a sustainable re-entry data management system would be important for their future re-entry efforts. The CRI indicated that prior to NPRIR, data collection was not a priority in the Newark re-entry community and little or no data were collected on re-entry services. As a result, she said, "no one in the city had any idea what services were available or how effective those services were." However, by the end of NPRIR, the Office of Re-entry was using two data systems—the PRI MIS and the Nicholson Foundation-funded Reconnect Administrative System (RAS)—to capture information on re-entry services and monitor provider progress.

In part because the PRI MIS would not be available following the end of the ETA grant, but also due to the desire to develop a more comprehensive, citywide data management system, the Office of Re-entry recognized that it needed to establish a new data management system for use in future re-entry programming. As part a proposed budget modification of the NJ DOL technical assistance grant, the office requested funds to assess existing data systems being used in Newark and identify potential areas for improving data sharing across agencies working in re-entry. The city hoped this research would allow it to develop a unified data system with the capability to track and share data and outcomes across multiple agencies, including criminal justice and workforce partners.

At the time of the last site visit, RAS appeared to be the best existing platform from which to build this more comprehensive system. RAS was designed to collect participant-level data on services received and outcomes achieved by ex-offenders in Newark. However, because this system was housed at Opportunity Reconnect during NPRIR, its use was limited primarily to tracking the referrals of ex-offenders between agencies co-located at Opportunity Reconnect.⁴¹ However, the CRI indicated that \$23,000 of the Nicholson Foundation's block grant was allocated for the refinement of the RAS, which the city hoped to use as the primary tracking system for collecting all re-entry-related data on referrals and outcomes in Newark.

Future Technical Assistance

As the Office of Re-entry built its own capacity, its staff members became able to provide technical assistance on their own. As the project progressed, they began actively monitoring the progress of providers and assisting them with challenges, especially as related to entering data and meeting performance benchmarks. As a result of this experience, the CRI indicated that she will likely add a staff member to the Office of Re-entry who will assume technical assistance responsibilities on an ongoing basis and consult with subject-matter experts on an as-needed basis. Centralizing this function in the Office of Re-entry was thought to be beneficial by program managers, for a number of reasons: 1) the office can continue to build its capacity and expertise in providing technical assistance, 2) having to provide technical assistance will ensure that city staff members understand how programs operate and the challenges they face, and 3) an outside technical assistance provider will no longer need to be funded. That NPRIR providers expressed satisfaction with the technical assistance provided by the Office of Re-entry during implementation suggests the city may be well equipped to provide this assistance in the future.

Summary

In summary, the Office of Re-entry faced some challenges in managing and leading NPRIR, but was also able to undertake key tasks regarding implementation of the project. In addition, this section details some lessons that were learned from the City of Newark's experience in managing a city-wide, multi-provider re-entry initiative. Each of these is discussed below.

Challenges

In addition to the successes described above, there were several challenges that affected implementation of NPRIR, including:

⁴¹ These organizations included the City of Newark, the two Nicholson Foundation-funded NPRIR service providers, the Departments of Welfare and Probation, FORGE, Goodwill, NewarkNow, and NJ SPB.

- **Contractual complications.** The Office of Re-entry experienced complications with finalizing contractual arrangements because of city-wide policies, and thus NPRIR implementation by some providers was delayed.
- **Delayed payments to providers.** Although using performance-based contracts is a potentially promising way to prod providers into higher performance, it is also proved challenging for smaller providers. Because these providers often have few alternative sources of income, they therefore need a certain level of on-going funding to remain solvent. Tying program reimbursements to achievement of benchmarks created some stresses for these providers, since some payments were withheld until achievement of some benchmarks was verified.
- **Provider problems with data inputting.** Despite receiving intensive assistance from P/PV and the Office of Re-entry, NPRIR service providers, particularly the four city-funded FBCOs, continued to struggle with some aspects of implementation. In particular, these providers had great difficulty using the PRI MIS correctly.
- **Due to the complex nature of using a data system to manage and record participant-level information and outcomes, NPRIR service providers felt that they would have benefited from additional hands-on training with the PRI MIS.** Early on in project implementation, P/PV, in conjunction with an ETA consultant who specializes in the PRI MIS, provided training to NPRIR service providers. While providers thought this training was helpful, some commented that it was delivered before they had enough time to understand the system. While additional training was arranged and was helpful in improving NPRIR service providers knowledge and skill level, it occurred late in project implementation and some providers indicated that they were still in need of more support at the time of the third-round site visit.

Accomplishments

The NPRIR program has exhibited a number of successes related to project administration:

- **The Office of Re-entry has developed a successful referral process of its own that is effectively channeling large numbers of potential participants to NPRIR providers.** Although it only began making referrals at the beginning of 2009, the Office of Re-entry has become a major source of NPRIR referrals for a number of providers.
- **The Office of Re-entry created a system of fundraising for its re-entry efforts.** The Office of Re-entry staff was able to stay intact, despite layoffs of City of Newark employees, because most of the office's employees were funded by outside sources. In addition, because there was little possibility that city general funds would be available to support NPRIR beyond the period of the ETA grant, the Office of Re-entry sought other ways to sustain NPRIR financially. This included aggressively seeking out additional sources of grant funding and coordinating with other city offices to take existing city funding sources and re-align them to support re-entry activities. The Office of Re-entry also supported the efforts of individual service providers to seek funding on their own to sustain NPRIR services.

- **The Office of Re-entry realized the benefits of data-driven management.** Prior to NPRIR, data collection on re-entry services and referrals was not a priority in Newark. However, due to the widespread use of data for NPRIR program management, the Office of Re-entry realized that having such a system for future re-entry efforts was critical for tracking the availability and effectiveness of services. The Office of Re-entry aims to make this new data management system even more comprehensive than the PRI MIS. Although the city had not yet developed a comprehensive re-entry data system, the Office of Re-entry had begun to use data from the PRI MIS to better understand the city's current re-entry system.
- **The City of Newark was able to use NPRIR as a launching pad toward building a unified, sustainable system of re-entry programming in Newark.** Through the implementation of NPRIR, the Office of Re-entry strengthened its capacity to guide and support re-entry efforts in the city. Numerous respondents noted that this office had developed the capacity to bring re-entry stakeholders together and manage re-entry programs and policies in ways that no one in the city was doing previously. This improved capacity made it more likely that the city would be successful in developing and maintaining a truly integrated re-entry system.

Lessons Learned

During the process of planning for, implementing, and managing NPRIR, the City of Newark learned some valuable lessons that may prove useful to other cities trying to institute similar projects.

- **Continuity of leadership was crucial for following through on the strategic vision of Newark's citywide prisoner re-entry initiative and for supporting the ongoing building of staff members' capacity to run the initiative successfully.** The mayor of Newark defined a strategic vision for the city that prioritized the development of an integrated, citywide system of supports for ex-offenders reentering Newark from incarceration. Following some early turnover in leadership of the Office of Re-entry, the CRI held her post throughout the majority of operation of NPRIR and was able to provide stable leadership of the Office of Re-entry.

Due in part to the consistency of the CRI's leadership, the Office of Re-entry strengthened its capacity to guide and support re-entry efforts in the city. The CRI accumulated a vast amount of institutional knowledge of Newark-specific re-entry matters, and expanded her expertise on re-entry issues generally. She also fostered strong partnerships with other re-entry partners, whose staff members grew to trust her. Numerous respondents noted that the office was able to bring re-entry stakeholders together and manage re-entry programs and policies in ways that no one in the city was doing previously. This improved capacity increased the likelihood that the city would be successful in developing and maintaining a truly integrated re-entry system.

- **There were many advantages to locating the Office of Re-entry within the city's economic development department.** Because the Office of Re-entry was integrated into the city's Department of Economic and Housing Development, the CRI attended the Department's leadership meetings and was able to collaborate with other city

offices to ensure a citywide focus on re-entry issues, and identify ways that re-entry priorities could be integrated into other aspects of the department's and city's agendas. Through these meetings, the CRI was able to create partnerships between the Office of Re-entry and other city offices that have led to additional services and programs being made available for ex-offenders.

The CRI was also able to leverage her position on the leadership team to encourage the inclusion of re-entry components into other economic development activities. The CRI was able to meet with employers and inform them about the advantages of hiring ex-offenders in Newark re-entry programs. She could also discuss integrating re-entry priorities into contractual agreements with developers.

This organizational structure also allowed the Office of Re-entry to access sources of funding that the department oversaw, such as the Economic Development and Trust Fund, CDBG, and WIA dollars, to help support its re-entry efforts. For example, some CDBG funding helped jump-start Pest at Rest Newark, a city-sponsored social venture initiative that will provide on-the-job training to ex-offenders.

- **Understanding FBCOs' capacity to provide prisoner re-entry services would have been helpful in providing them with intensive technical assistance from the beginning of implementation.** The Office of Re-entry came to recognize that if it had better understood the capacity levels of sub-contracted providers early on in project implementation it could have forestalled some of the difficulties by providing more targeted assistance to each provider.
- **Although an outside organization effectively fulfilled the technical assistance needs at the beginning of the NPRIR, the Office of Re-entry found it important to increase their in-house capacity to become the major providers of technical assistance and guidance.** Due to the scale of NPRIR implementation, using a contractor to provide technical assistance up front was an effective way of filling a crucial need without overburdening Office of Re-entry staff members. However, as the initiative progressed and the Office of Re-entry built its own re-entry capacity as noted above, it became increasingly apparent that city staff members could provide effective technical assistance in their own right. By the end of the grant period, the notable success of city-provided technical assistance indicated the wisdom of switching to a model in which all TA is provided by the city itself.

IV. PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to the contracted service providers, at the heart of Newark’s effort to take the PRI model to scale and provide a seamless service delivery system to ex-offenders was a rich array of partners consisting of criminal justice agencies and workforce development agencies. The emphasis on partnership was made explicit in the NPRIR Implementation Plan, which emphasized the importance of effective partnerships for referrals and service delivery.

This chapter examines these partnerships more closely, with the aim of not only documenting how the partners were involved in NPRIR, but also how the City of Newark’s experience in partnering to provide re-entry services can be used to inform similar efforts in other cities. It provides an overview of key partners; discusses partners’ involvement in planning and designing the project, referring participants, and providing services; and details efforts to improve partnerships and establish the basis for their sustainability. The chapter concludes by highlighting the lessons that can be drawn from the City of Newark’s partnering experiences.

Role of Partners in Planning and Project Design

The Office of Re-entry engaged partners from the beginning of NPRIR. When the City of Newark received the ETA grant in 2008, it convened several of its partners—including NJ SPB, NJ DOC, NJ DOL, NewarkWORKS, and NJ OAG—to assist in developing a design for NPRIR. Upon receipt of the grant, these partners assisted the city in developing the NPRIR implementation plan. Additionally, throughout the life of the grant, partners provided input—through both direct communication with the city and via membership on the various boards and coordinating committees—on continuous program improvement.

The degree of each partner’s involvement in the initial stages of NPRIR varied, but NJ SPB was particularly well positioned to work with the Office of Re-entry on NPRIR and thus played a strong role from the start. Not only was re-entry part of the agency’s core mission, but it also had a substantive history of promoting and engaging in collaborative efforts to address re-entry in Newark. More specifically, in partnership with Essex Community College and the Nicholson Foundation, NJ SPB played a key role in the development of Opportunity Reconnect in 2006 and in Opportunity Reconnect’s precursor at a local housing authority housing complex. In both instances, NJ SPB agreed to co-locate its staff members at these sites from the beginning and

was instrumental in pushing other partners such as NJ DOL to do likewise. Additionally, given that NJ SPB had access to a large pool of ex-offenders, the Office of Re-entry recognized the key role it could play in making referrals and thus prioritized developing this relationship. As discussed throughout this chapter, these factors contributed to the formation of a strong relationship between the Office of Re-entry and NJ SPB.

Role of Partners in Referrals

In the NPRIR Implementation Plan, partnerships with specific criminal justice agencies were anticipated to be “necessary to foster a steady flow of referrals of former prisoners.” It is unknown whether an acceptable flow of referrals could have been sustained without the involvement of the criminal justice agencies, but a large proportion of all referrals did indeed end up coming from these partners, according to the PRI MIS.⁴² Of these, halfway houses/CRCs alone accounted for almost half of *all* referrals. NJ SPB parole officers, ISP officers, probation officers (both state and Federal), and correctional facilities accounted for the remainder of referrals from criminal justice agencies. Referrals also came from several other partners outside the realm of criminal justice, including the Newark One-Stop Career Center and local FBCOs. The Office of Re-entry and Opportunity Reconnect also served as intermediaries for some of the partner referrals. More specifically, in many cases, partners would refer ex-offenders to one of these two offices, which would then in turn refer the ex-offenders to one of the NPRIR providers. (See Chapter III for further details).

Referrals from Key Criminal Justice Partners

NJ SPB and NJ DOC halfway houses/CRCs were a critical source of referrals for NPRIR. These referrals came via three pathways. In some cases, the staff members of halfway houses/CRCs referred clients directly to NPRIR providers. In other cases, they referred clients to Opportunity Reconnect or the Office of Re-entry, which in turn made referrals to the NPRIR providers. Some halfway houses/CRCs even physically brought participants to Opportunity Reconnect to facilitate this process. (NJ SPB leadership preferred that staff members refer clients to Opportunity Reconnect rather than to service providers directly because this made it easier for NJ SPB to track referred clients and ensured that these clients would not be waitlisted for the program. Additionally, because Goodwill and America Works were co-located at Opportunity Reconnect, “losing” ex-offenders between the referring agency and the NPRIR provider was not a problem at Opportunity Reconnect.)

⁴² Two important caveats must be made about the referral sources recorded in the PRI MIS. For one, referral sources were missing for a significant portion of participants. Additionally, recorded referral sources were based on the self-reports of NPRIR participants.

Accounting for the third referral pathway, several NPRIR providers developed agreements with halfway houses/CRCs that allowed them to hold regular events at the halfway houses/CRCs to conduct recruitment and initial intake procedures (see textbox for examples). However, while most NPRIR providers had a high number of referrals from halfway houses/CRCs, at least one NPRIR provider reported not targeting halfway house residents because the restrictions placed on their residents impeded its ability to effectively provide services.

The overall high level of referrals from halfway houses/CRCs was the result of a number of factors, including the high level of coordination between halfway houses/CRCs, the Office of Re-entry, and the NPRIR providers. In addition to direct coordination between some of the halfway houses/CRCs and NPRIR providers discussed above, the Office of Re-entry created several opportunities for halfway houses/CRCs and NPRIR providers to come together as a group. The development of these opportunities was sparked by a need to address initial challenges in the relationship between halfway houses/CRCs and NPRIR, including tracking halfway house/CRC residents referred to NPRIR providers and coordinating services between halfway houses/CRCs, NPRIR providers, and NewarkWORKS. The Office of Re-entry held two initial meetings with NJ DOC halfway houses in the summer of 2009 and created the Newark Re-entry Coordinating Committee later that year to formalize a space for communication. Membership in this committee was open to all re-entry stakeholders, including NPRIR service providers, halfway houses/CRCs, and state and local governmental agencies (including NJ DOC, NJ SPB, and NJ OAG). Unlike members of the City of Newark Re-entry Advisory Board discussed in Chapter III, because this committee was open to all, participants tended to be

Examples of Relationships between NPRIR Providers and Halfway Houses/CRCs

Some NPRIR providers worked closely with halfway houses/CRCs, as shown in the following examples.

- Goodwill held a quarterly meet and greet with current and potential referring partners. At these meetings, Goodwill shared information on its goals and policies, the services participants receive at Goodwill, changes to the program, and ways in which Goodwill could support the work of referring agencies. Respondents reported that these meetings had several benefits including (1) allowing Goodwill introduce or reacquaint other organizations with its work; (2) helping to build trust and rapport between the different attendees; and (3) facilitating networking and information sharing between agencies.
- OAR had a formal MOU with one halfway house to guide the referral and service provision process.
- At the start of the grant, case managers from La Casa visited halfway houses on a weekly basis to make presentations on the re-entry services available at La Casa. Following these presentations, La Casa fielded calls from halfway house case managers or residents and scheduled the potential participants for an orientation session at La Casa.

program staff members as opposed to higher-level leaders. This made the committee more of a forum for discussion of day-to-day coordination challenges and best practices.

Although the Newark Re-entry Coordinating Committee had only met twice as of the time of the last site visit, NPRIR provider managers noted that these meetings had been critical in fostering knowledge of and connections with halfway houses/CRCs. They also noted that the information exchange occurring at the meetings helped providers better understand the perspective of community corrections agencies, including the NJ DOC supervision requirements that sometimes affected NPRIR services. Additionally, as a result of the Newark Re-entry Coordinating Committee meetings, the Office of Re-entry, NPRIR providers, and halfway houses were able to agree on a number of procedures for improving coordination and communication between NPRIR providers and halfway houses—e.g., use of an attendance sheet that providers were supposed to complete and e-mail weekly to halfway houses.

Further contributing to the high levels of referrals specifically from NJ SPB's contracted halfway houses/CRCs was the strong relationship between NJ SPB and the Office of Re-entry. The Office of Re-entry prioritized developing this partnership and thus secured high-level leadership buy-in within NJ SPB. This buy-in was critical for building the organizational will necessary for this type of collaboration, creating procedures that delineated the referral process and communicating these expectations to mid-level managers, program staff, and the contracted halfway houses/CRCs. This buy-in also resulted in referrals being made by NJ SPB officers, although to a more limited degree.

Given the strong relationship between NJ SPB and the Office of Re-entry, it is not surprising that communication and coordination between the two was multi-faceted and occurred at both formal and informal levels. At the formal, organizational level, the two entities signed an MOA in April 2010 to guide the referral process. (See textbox for more details.) In order to further facilitate coordination, in September 2010, NJ SPB used funding from the Nicholson Foundation to hire a Prisoner Re-entry Initiative Coordinator. This individual was responsible for serving as the liaison between the City of Newark and NJ SPB and acting as a mediator between the two as necessary. As part of these responsibilities, he contacted the Office of Re-entry weekly to discuss if NJ SPB was making sufficient referrals to NPRIR.

MOA with NJ SPB

Recognizing early on that a strong partnership with NJ SPB was critical to the success of NPRIR, the city prioritized developing an MOA with this agency. A draft of this MOA was completed in September 2009. It took several months for the MOA to be finalized, and it was signed in April 2010. Key points included the following.

- NJ SPB representatives were to make referrals to Opportunity Reconnect, the Newark Office of Re-entry, or to individual NPRIR providers based on the individual needs identified in parolees' Case Plan Agreements.
- NJ SPB agreed to share "all public information concerning parolees that are located in Newark" and any other information "agreed upon under any release-of-information document entered into by the parolee." The Office of Re-entry agreed to share quarterly narrative and data reports with NJ SPB.

Although the MOA officially expired in June 2010, city respondents reported that the relationship between the two entities was so strong that the procedures in the MOA continued to be followed.

Referrals from Other Criminal Justice Partners

In addition to the above-mentioned partnerships, the Office of Re-entry and NPRIR providers developed relationships with other criminal justice partners that resulted in referrals, although to a more limited degree. Research suggests that forming partnerships with criminal justice agencies is inherently difficult, and studies of the first generation PRI grantees likewise indicate struggles to develop partnerships with criminal justice agencies (Holl et al., 2009; Leshnick, Geckeler, Wiegand, Nicholson, and Foley, forthcoming). According to both NPRIR respondents and research on the subject, several barriers exist in working with criminal justice agencies. For one, capacity issues limit criminal justice agencies' abilities to work collaboratively on issues of re-entry. This challenge is not unique to New Jersey—the Re-entry Policy Council (2005) found that criminal justice agencies are increasingly being called upon to serve more individuals without accompanying increases in resources, thus minimizing their ability to address issues of re-entry. Additionally, Yoon and Nickel (2008) found that differences between the values, goals, and institutional cultures of criminal justice agencies and other community organizations are also significant barriers to these groups working together. Therefore, it is not surprising that these relationships were less well developed and/or resulted in fewer referrals than the Office of Re-entry's relationship with NJ SPB and halfway houses/CRCs. In some cases, these relationships were institutionalized at the level of the Office of Re-entry, while in other cases individual NPRIR providers leveraged their own pre-existing relationships for referrals. The referral relationships developed with Federal Probation, NJ DOC correctional facilities, Essex County Probation, The New Jersey Intensive Supervision Program, and Essex County Jail are summarized below.

- **Federal Probation accounted for a small number of referrals overall, although respondents reported that these referrals were relatively well coordinated.** Referral coordination was facilitated by the fact that Federal Probation had one officer assigned to each NPRIR provider to serve as a “point person” for contact.
- **NJ DOC correctional facilities accounted for many fewer referrals overall than did NJ DOC’s halfway houses/CRCs.** The Office of Re-entry explored working with NJ DOC to conduct proactive pre-release recruitment in these facilities, but NJ DOC did not have the staff capacity to support this activity. Instead, pre-release recruitment was limited to NPRIR brochures being available at the correctional facilities and NPRIR staff members attending Community Awareness Days at NJ DOC correctional facilities. In contrast, Goodwill enjoyed a well-developed partnership with NJ DOC’s Northern State Prison because of the relationship it had with a Nicholson Foundation-funded social worker located there.
- **The Office of Re-entry’s relationship with Essex Probation was limited because most of the clients it served were not eligible for NPRIR.** Essex Probation did make a relatively small number of referrals to Opportunity Reconnect and America Works, and used RAS to track these referrals.
- **RCDCC enjoyed a uniquely strong relationship with The New Jersey Intensive Supervision Program (ISP), which resulted in a number of referrals.** This strong relationship was due at least in part to the fact that RCDCC’s program director is working as an ISP mentor.
- **OAR had a uniquely strong relationship with Essex County Jail—and particularly the jail’s social worker—that resulted in referrals.** This relationship was a result of OAR’s work providing pre-release services and conducting pre-release recruitment for other projects.

Referral Tools and Systems

While each partner had its own referral procedures, several tools and structures existed to facilitate the referral process across partners. These tools and structures were intended to ensure that (1) a somewhat consistent process was used across referring agencies and NPRIR providers; (2) the needs of both the referring agency and the NPRIR provider were being met; and (3) the process was not overly burdensome for any parties involved. However, as discussed further below, the extent to which these tools and systems were utilized varied.

Referral and Collaboration Guide

As discussed in Chapter III, the main guiding document for the referral process was the Referral and Collaboration Guide. The Office of Re-entry developed this guide in the fall of 2009 and updated it in January 2010 to address initial challenges related to referrals and partner coordination. Its target audience was both NPRIR providers and NPRIR partner agencies, and it included several components:

- Procedures and forms for making referrals to NPRIR providers, including specific procedures and communication protocols for referrals from halfway houses/CRCs;
- Background information on NPRIR, including participation qualifications, contact information for each NPRIR provider, and procedures for using the PRI MIS system to make referrals from Opportunity Reconnect to NPRIR providers; and
- Information on additional services available to ex-offenders outside of NPRIR.

However, not all of the procedures outlined in the Referral and Collaboration Guide were followed by NPRIR providers and referring agencies. In many cases, NPRIR providers and referring agencies saw the procedures outlined in the Referral and Collaboration Guide as overly burdensome or unnecessary and developed more informal procedures that met their needs.

Shared Data Systems

Two shared data systems—RAS and the PRI MIS—were used to make and track referrals, although to a somewhat limited degree due to several challenges. Many partners already had their own internal data tracking procedures and systems; these organizations often perceived the imposition of additional systems as burdensome. For example, according to the Referral and Collaboration Guide, when Opportunity Reconnect staff members were making a referral, they were to enter a limited amount of participant information into the PRI MIS system and then contact P/PV to electronically transfer the participant’s information to the appropriate NPRIR provider. Subsequently, when the participant presented at the provider, provider staff members were to enter the remaining participant information in the database. However, these procedures were never fully implemented both because of the complexities in following each step and the burden that it put on Opportunity Reconnect staff, who also had to enter participant data into RAS. Additionally, because of the various functionalities that partners desired from a shared data system, creating a “one-size-fits-all system” was difficult. For example, RAS, which was used primarily by Probation and the agencies housed within Opportunity Reconnect, could be used only to make referrals, not track them. Respondents from Probation reported that, for them, this was a major gap in the system. These challenges are not unique to NPRIR. According to the Re-entry Policy Council (2005), information sharing laws and regulations, the level of resources required to create an integrated data system, and the varying data needs of different types of agencies are all challenges that may thwart data-sharing efforts. As discussed in Chapter III, the city is working on revamping RAS to address many of these challenges.

Despite the efforts that went into creating shared data systems, the Office of Re-entry found that using a hard-copy referral form had several benefits over using only an electronic referral system. Respondents from the Office of Re-entry reported that using a hard-copy form eased the referral process for all parties involved because (1) it allowed staff members to more easily track who had been referred where; (2) ex-offenders felt that they were expected somewhere if they left with a form in hand; and (3) the providers knew to expect to see the ex-offenders.

Ongoing Communication with Referral Agencies

Communication with referring agencies often extended beyond the initial referral process. In some cases, this communication helped to address the challenges that emerged as a result of having multiple agencies working with the same ex-offender. Supervisory agencies or officers often imposed restrictions on the clients they served that conflicted directly or indirectly with NPRIR services. One respondent reported that halfway house residents needed pre-approved passes from staff members to attend job readiness classes, a requirement that sometimes caused residents to miss classes. Additionally, respondents voiced concern that employees might be annoyed by having representatives from multiple agencies contacting them regarding the same individual. Halfway houses also had certain requirements for worksites where their residents were placed, which impeded NPRIR providers' ability to place their clients. Regular communication between NPRIR providers and referring agencies created channels whereby staff members could (1) check-in about the status and progress of participants; (2) communicate about participants' specific restrictions and schedules; and (3) co-identify supportive services needed. Ongoing communication also facilitated participation in NPRIR services, as staff members from referring agencies—especially in the case of parole, probation, and ISP officers—were also able to strongly encourage or require their clients' participation in NPRIR activities.

Role of Partners in Providing Services

The Office of Re-entry recognized that in addition to bolstering recruitment efforts, partners could also augment NPRIR providers' services. Given that ex-offenders face many challenges in obtaining and maintaining employment—including generally low education and skill levels, a dearth of jobs in the communities they return to, and the stigma of having a criminal record—the Office of Re-entry engaged NewarkWORKS (the city's workforce development arm) and NJ DOL to supplement the providers' workforce development services. These services were provided mainly through Newark's One-Stop Career Center, which is operated by NewarkWORKS in partnership with NJ DOL.

Over the past several years, NewarkWORKS and NJ DOL have worked to integrate the services they provide at the One-Stop Career Center—for example by having staff from both agencies work together in cross-functional teams—in order to operate under the principal of functional alignment. Despite the fact that both agencies provided services via the One-Stop Career Center under the principal of functional alignment, the Office of Re-entry developed a relationship with each individual agency. From the outset of NPRIR, the Office of Re-entry had a relatively strong connection with NewarkWORKS because both entities were located in the city's Department of Economic and Housing Development. Both were also supervised by that department's director of operations, although NewarkWORKS staff members were located at the

comprehensive One-Stop Career Center, while the Office of Re-entry was located at Newark City Hall, a couple of blocks away. Although the Office of Re-entry's relationship with NJ DOL was initially less well developed, in March of 2010, state-level NJ DOL administrators and the city instituted bi-weekly conference calls to talk about coordination of services and keep each other apprised of next steps. Respondents reported that these regular meetings resulted in an improved relationship between the two entities. Additionally, at the time of the last site visit, the Office of Re-entry was actively working to strengthen its relationship with the NJ DOL employment services staff at the One-Stop Career Center. As discussed in Chapter III, NJ DOL also worked with the Office of Re-entry via the technical assistance grant it received from the US DOL.

One-Stop Career Center Services

As outlined in the Referral Guide, all NPRIR participants were required to be registered at the One-Stop Career Center. In some cases, ex-offenders had registered at the Newark One-Stop Career Center prior to seeking services from NPRIR providers. For those respondents who were not already registered, NPRIR providers had two options: they could either (1) start the orientation and registration process themselves using a PowerPoint presentation provided by NewarkWORKS and then send the participant to the One-Stop Career Center to complete the process, or (2) send the participant to the One-Stop Career Center for the entire orientation and registration process.

In practice, however, there were a number of challenges associated with the orientation and registration process. First, not all NPRIR providers seemed to be aware that they could initiate the One-Stop Career Center orientation in-house. Even those providers that did provide the orientations in-house eventually ceased doing this because their clients were often required to receive the same orientation again when they visited the One-Stop Career Center. Not surprisingly, participants found attending the second orientation to be a poor use of their time. A related source of frustration for these pre-registered participants was that they were usually lumped in with the general population at the One-Stop Career Center and/or were not able to immediately connect with NJ DOL's re-entry employment specialist, who focused specifically on serving ex-offenders. For these reasons, many participants were soured by their initial experiences at the One-Stop Career Center.

At the One-Stop Career Center, a variety of workforce development services were available to NPRIR participants, including work readiness training, placement assistance, vocational training grants, and access to computers and the Internet. Additionally, NJ DOL's re-entry employment specialist provided specific services for ex-offenders, primarily via a "Re-entry Job Finding Club" held on certain days each week. Despite this variety of available services, however, NPRIR providers tended to make referrals for only a small subset of One Stop Career Center

services, such as TABE testing, short certification programs (specifically forklift safety and asbestos safety), transportation subsidies, and on-the-job-training services. While only a relatively small number of participants took part in OJT, OJT was an important service to have available for ex-offenders, as many needed to find employment immediately, rather than spend time in unpaid training.

Overall, NPRIR participants did not intensively use One-Stop Career Centers. Respondents cited several reasons why this was the case. For one, few NPRIR participants were interested in some of the key services offered by the One-Stop Career Center because they needed to find employment right away (either due to personal circumstances or the conditions of their parole or probation) and thus could not participate in training or education services. Additionally, the NPRIR providers tended to offer some services similar to those provided at the One-Stop Career Center, and they did not believe that the One-Stop services most likely to be used by participants (other than training) added significant value to the services they provided in-house. More specifically, several provider respondents reported that the One-Stop Career Center services did not have the quality, depth, or degree of personalization required to effectively help their participants find jobs. Additionally, they reported that the atmosphere at the One-Stop Career Center was off-putting for NPRIR participants. Holl and Kolovich (2007) similarly found that Generation 1 PRI grantees tended to provide the bulk of workforce development services in-house rather than making use of the local One-Stop Career Center, at least partially due to the fact that One-Stop Career Center services were not tailored to meet the specific needs of ex-offenders.

Job Development

The Office of Re-entry also collaborated with NewarkWORKS to supplement the job development conducted by each NPRIR provider's job developers and NJ DOL's re-entry employment specialist. Working with NewarkWORKS was a strategic way to leverage local expertise regarding job development and connect NPRIR job developers with larger, citywide efforts. A key aspect of NewarkWORKS's NPRIR job development strategy was to encourage large employers in Newark to hire ex-offenders. In service of this strategy, the NewarkWORKS job developer publicized and marketed the idea of hiring ex-offenders to employers and let it be known that employers could receive incentives from the city for hiring ex-offenders. The public support for this work offered by the city and the mayor was a key facilitator of these efforts. NewarkWORKS also worked directly with the NPRIR providers—whose staff members were less experienced in job development—to bolster their job development efforts in several key ways. NewarkWORKS provided some technical assistance to NPRIR providers on how to engage in their own successful job development. Additionally, job developers from the NPRIR providers were invited to attend the weekly NewarkWORKS job developer meetings, and

NewarkWORKS shared the job orders generated by its staff members with the job developers at the various NPRIR providers via the Office of Re-entry.

However, the level of job development support that NewarkWORKS could provide was hampered by layoffs and by competing demands on staff members' time. Part of the NewarkWORKS's lead job developer's responsibilities included focusing on issues of re-entry and working closely with NPRIR, but when she was promoted to acting director of NewarkWORKS, she had less time to focus on this work. Another staff member who stepped in to take over some of her responsibilities and serve as a re-entry point person at the One-Stop Career Center was subsequently laid off several months later. Accordingly, the amount of NewarkWORKS staff time spent on NPRIR job development was less than planned. This was likely a major reason why several NPRIR provider respondents reported that the level of support provided by NewarkWORKS was less than they would have liked.

Partnership Improvement and Sustainability

NPRIR presented the City of Newark a unique opportunity to collaborate with state and local agencies to address issues of re-entry. The existence of the Office of Re-entry and position of CRI facilitated partnership development in that it gave partners a designated portal through which they could work on issues of re-entry with the city. In particular, through this project, the Office of Re-entry and the CRI and criminal justice agencies developed relationships where little or no relationships existed before.

While each partner brought something unique to the table, the Office of Re-entry prioritized developing a relationship with NJ SPB because it had access to and could make referrals from a large pool of ex-offenders. Therefore, it is not surprising that while the Office of Re-entry's relationships with the majority of its partners showed improvement over the course of the project, the development of its relationship with NJ SPB was arguably NPRIR's biggest partnership success story. From the start of NPRIR, NJ SPB was "ready" to partner and shared NPRIR's core focus on re-entry. Building on this strong foundation, these two agencies were able to develop strong interpersonal relationships among their respective staffs and a shared vision for coordinating services. Each agency came to a much better understanding of how the other operates. Respondents reported that this strong relationship will facilitate the implementation of future re-entry efforts, such as the city's recently received Second Chance grant. According to one NJ SPB respondent,

It's almost like everyone was doing everything in a silo, but now we have bridges. We've created bridges between [the city and NJ SPB]. The general public and the offender population will both benefit from this.

The strong relationship developed between NJ SPB and the Office of Re-entry is one reason why many of the NPRIR providers enjoyed improved relationships with halfway houses/CRCs and parole officers. The fact that high-level leadership at NJ SPB strongly encouraged coordination between these entities made the formation of these relationships much more likely.

Relationships were also improved because the NPRIR providers and halfway houses/CRCs had an overlapping client base and therefore had to coordinate services to a certain extent. As described by one NPRIR provider,

It's a lot of hard work, but we've developed a great relationship with the halfway houses. . . We try to keep them involved so that they feel part of [what's happening] or that they've had a decision in what's happening. Once you do that, it works better because you don't have to argue. We don't have to complain about what's not working because we've involved their staff.

Overall, efforts to form partnerships to further the work of the Office of Re-entry and the NPRIR providers were met with varying degrees of success. While the Office of Re-entry and NPRIR providers have been able to develop strong, mutually beneficial relationships with NJ SPB and halfway houses/CRCs, relationships with other partners were less well developed and/or are still in the process of being developed. For example, the Office of Re-entry has improved its relationship with state-level administrators at NJ DOL but is still working on the relationship with NJ DOL staff members at the local One-Stop Career Center. However, where strong partnerships have been developed, it is likely that these relationships will not end with NPRIR funding. Rather, agencies and organizations will continue to work together and coordinate services—whether it be the Office of Re-entry and NJ SPB working together in service of the Second Chance grant or NPRIR providers and halfway houses/CRCs continuing to coordinate their efforts in serving overlapping populations.

Summary

Below the challenges and accomplishments that have emerged from the Office of Re-entry's partnership efforts are discussed, and some lessons learned from their experiences are identified.

Challenges

In developing partnerships, a number of challenges emerged.

- **Collaboration took a significant investment of resources—both financial and human— and thus finding ample resources to dedicate to fostering, developing, and maintaining partnerships was a challenge.** This challenge manifested itself in several ways in NPRIR. For one, a lack of staff capacity and lay-offs diminished NewarkWORKS's ability to fully engage in NPRIR at the level originally intended. Additionally, unlike the first generation PRI/RExO grants, in the case of NPRIR,

there was no accompanying grant to the state department of corrections (NJ DOC). Accordingly, this lack of financial resources tied to NPRIR affected NJ DOC's ability to work collaboratively with the Office of Re-entry on NPRIR. For example, in order for NJ DOC to provide referrals and pre-release discharge plans, the City would have had to use NPRIR funds to pay for an additional social worker at each referring correctional facility, an expense the Office of Re-entry decided was not an efficient use of NPRIR money. Consequently, pre-release recruitment in NJ DOC facilities ended up being minimal.

- **Having multiple agencies working with the same ex-offender created the potential for the restrictions imposed by one agency to impede service delivery by another and for possible redundancy in the provision of services.** Supervisory agencies or officers often imposed restrictions on the clients they served that conflicted directly or indirectly with NPRIR services. Respondents reported that halfway house residents needed a pre-approved pass from halfway house staff members to leave, causing residents to miss some classes or interviews. Additionally, halfway houses had certain requirements for worksites where their residents were placed, but these restrictions were not always clearly communicated to NPRIR providers.

Additionally, this overlap also created the potential for redundancy in services and inefficient use of funds. For example, halfway houses/CRCs, NPRIR service providers, and the One-Stop Career Center all provided workforce development services, so the added value of having individuals be served by all three was unclear. Additionally, respondents voiced concerns about having multiple people from different agencies contact or visit employers regarding the same individual, as this was a disincentive for organizations to employ ex-offenders.

- **Creating systems and policies to share data proved to be difficult due to issues surrounding what kind of data to share and how to share this data.** Confidentiality laws and concerns around participant privacy restricted the kind of data that partners were willing to share. For example, NJ DOC was unwilling to provide information about all recently released prisoners to the Office of Re-entry. Even for data that partners were willing to share, creating systems to do so was challenging. Many of the organizations involved in NPRIR already had their own databases and saw having to use an additional database as overly burdensome.
- **Leadership turnover set back or slowed down the process of partnership development.** Several of the Office of Re-entry's partners—including NJ DOC, NJ SPB, and NewarkWORKS—experienced high-level leadership turnover during the implementation of NPRIR, affecting partnership development in various ways. For example, in the case of NJ SPB, leadership turnover delayed the signing of the MOA. Additionally, NewarkWORKS also experienced leadership turnover during the life of the project, which resulted in other staffing changes that affected the agency's involvement in NPRIR.
- **Due to a number of challenges, NPRIR providers were unlikely to rely heavily on the Newark One-Stop Career Center for employment-related services.** Respondents cited several reasons why the One-Stop Career Center services were not

heavily utilized. For one, few NPRIR participants were interested in many of the services offered by the One-Stop Career Center because—either due to personal circumstances or the conditions of their parole or probation—they needed to find employment right away, rather than training or education. Additionally, the FBCOs tended to provide similar services as the One-Stop Career Center and services available at the One-Stop Career Center were not of the depth or degree of personalization required to effectively help participants find jobs, and therefore they did not actively refer participants to the One-Stop Career Center

Accomplishments

The NPRIR program has demonstrated a number of successes in the area of partnership development.

- **The Office of Re-entry enjoyed a strong relationship with NJ SPB regarding NPRIR.** The Office of Re-entry and NJ SPB signed an MOA, thus ensuring a strong level of ongoing conversation and collaboration about how NJ SPB officers would refer parolees to NPRIR. The MOA also incorporated NJ SPB’s concerns about avoiding duplicative services and accessing ongoing updates on referred clients.
- **Community corrections providers had assumed a more prominent role in NPRIR than was originally anticipated.** Although the private agencies that operated these community corrections programs were subcontractors to NJ DOC and NJ SPB, the programs were critical partners in their own right, in part because of the significant number of client referrals they provided (e.g., through Opportunity Reconnect or through arrangements with NPRIR providers). Their heightened partner role was reflected by such developments as meetings between the Office of Re-entry and NJ DOC halfway houses to increase the latter’s participation in NPRIR. The meetings of the Newark Re-entry Coordinating Committee also helped foster NPRIR providers’ knowledge of and connections with community corrections providers.
- **Having strong relationships and regular communication with referring agencies enhanced NPRIR providers’ work in several key ways.** For one, NPRIR providers could count on specific partner agencies that they had developed a relationship with to make direct referrals. Additionally, staff members from referring agencies were able to strongly encourage or require their clients’ participation in NPRIR activities staff—especially in the case of parole, probation, and ISP officers. Finally, these relationships helped NPRIR providers and partner agencies more efficiently coordinate services by creating channels to (1) check-in about the status and progress of participants; (2) communicate about participants’ specific restrictions and schedules; and (3) co-identify supportive services needed. While in some cases, NPRIR providers leveraged pre-existing relationships with criminal justice partners, including halfway house, parole and probation, and corrections facilities, many of these relationships were newly developed via NPRIR.
- **The existence of Opportunity Reconnect, a centralized referral “portal,” also eased the referral process, both for the partners and the providers.** For one, NJ SPB leadership felt more comfortable with staff members referring clients to OR.

Not only did it make it easier for NJ SPB to track referred clients, but it also ensured that these clients would not be put on a waitlist to get into the program. While some individual parole officers did make referrals directly to the providers, this highlights the added value of having a centralized referral center such as OR.

- **Working with NewarkWORKS was a strategic way to leverage local expertise regarding job development.** Despite the challenges presented above, there were still many benefits to engaging NewarkWORKS around job development, most critical of which was creating a pathway between the NPRIR specific job development and larger, city-wide efforts.
- **Additionally, by working with the WIA providers, the Office of Reentry was able to make on-the-job training (OJT) available to participants.** While only a relatively small number of participants took part in OJT, OJT is an important service to have available for ex-offenders, as many need to find employment immediately, rather than spend time in unpaid training.

Lessons Learned

The following section looks more closely at the lessons that can be drawn from the Office of Re-entry's partnership efforts.

- **Because developing partnerships was time- and resource-intensive, it was important for the Office of Re-entry to focus on developing relationships with key partners.** As discussed earlier, the Office of Re-entry focused its efforts on developing a strong partnership with NJ SPB because of this agency's access to a large number of potential NPRIR participants. It did not dedicate resources to partnership building with agencies—such as NJ DOC's correctional facilities—that it saw as providing less return on the investment of NPRIR money. In accordance with this strategic focusing, Holl et al. (2009) found that first generation PRI grantees focused their efforts on building connections with agencies that had the most potential to add value to their work, either by making referrals or by providing community supervision.
- **Partner agencies and organizations brought in during the planning stages of a re-entry initiative were more likely to feel they have a significant stake in the work.** NJ SPB's involvement from the beginning of NPRIR was one reason cited for the strength of its partner relationship with the Office of Re-entry, for example.
- **Coordination and communication between partners at all levels of both organizations—from high-level leaders to on-the-ground program staff members—was useful in developing and maintaining effective partnerships.** The Office of Re-entry's partnership with NJ SPB exemplifies why having multiple levels of coordination is critical. High-level leaders at the Office of Re-entry and NJ SPB were in regular contact, and thus a willingness to work with NPRIR was imbedded within NJ SPB's organizational culture. However, because the actual referrals were made by NJ SPB staff members working directly with ex-offenders, their relationships with NPRIR program staff members were critical in the day-to-day operation of the partnership. This finding is supported by other research on the topic.

For example, in examining the Department of Justice's Re-entry Partnership Initiative, Byrne et al. (2002) found that "true" re-entry partnerships include partnership members at three levels: "policy development, operational practice, and staff decision-making."

- **Clear points of contact were critical for effective partner coordination.** At the citywide level, respondents reported that the Office of Re-entry and the CRI served as critical portals for partners seeking to interface with the city's re-entry work. A similar principle held true at the on-the-ground level as well. For example, NPRIR providers appreciated that Federal Probation assigned one probation officer to each NPRIR provider, giving them "someone who can take responsibility for the relationship, [with] clear lines of communication." NJ SPB staff members also appreciated that they could funnel their referred clients through Opportunity Reconnect, thus reducing the need to coordinate with many NPRIR providers. In contrast, due to layoffs, there was no dedicated re-entry job developer at NewarkWORKS to work with the providers, and this was identified as a challenge by respondents.

V. PRE-ENROLLMENT ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES PROVIDED TO PARTICIPANTS

This chapter describes the recruiting of participants by service providers, the processes involved in enrolling them into the program, achievement of enrollment targets, the characteristics of participants, and the means by which they were provided with services. The three primary re-entry services for NPRIR participants—case management, workforce preparation, and mentoring—are discussed in detail, but the less commonly provided services are described as well. The chapter concludes with a discussion of what was learned about how PRI services can be best provided on a citywide scale.

Recruitment

The Office of Re-entry's efforts to recruit ex-offenders and facilitate referrals—discussed in chapters III and IV—were important in garnering participants for NPRIR. The separate recruitment and outreach efforts of NPRIR service providers, however, were also critical in ensuring that enrollment goals were reached. Most commonly, these efforts consisted of NPRIR service providers making presentations to partner agencies and potential participants. Providers often made presentations about their programs to officers of NJ SPB, Probation, ISP, and the Newark Police Department, and also to drug court managers and halfway house providers. These presentations helped the staff members of the partner agencies understand the providers' individual programs so that they felt comfortable referring their participants to NPRIR. With the approval of these partners, providers also made direct presentations to partner clients, such as those individuals assigned to halfway houses/CRCs and residential drug treatment facilities.

Another somewhat common referral activity was for NPRIR service providers to recruit participants at community job fairs or re-entry events, such as the Fugitive Safe Surrender Event held at a Newark church.

Both of these referral activities were also common among the first generation of PRI grantees. However, while nearly all Generation 1 PRI grantees also reported recruiting inside state correctional facilities, only one NPRIR provider—Goodwill—reported doing so (Holl et al., 2009). Goodwill's recruitment of participants for NPRIR from NJ DOC's Northern State Prison

was facilitated by a Nicholson Foundation-funded social worker located at the prison who identified and referred eligible offenders to Goodwill.

About half of all Generation 1 PRI grantees reported recruiting participants from city or county correctional facilities (Holl et al., 2009). However, among NPRIR providers, only OAR engaged in pre-release recruitment activities at Essex County Jail, offering inmates with fewer than 90 days left until their release applications to the NPRIR program.

Some NPRIR participants came to the program independently of any efforts on the part of providers or the Office of Re-entry. Some of these individuals were referred to NPRIR by family or friends. Others were recruited for the program in the process of seeking other re-entry services. Staff members at OAR, for example, said that many of their NPRIR participants were initially referred not to NPRIR but to their Gateway ID program. During the course of intake for that program, OAR staff would often identify good candidates for NPRIR and would refer these individuals to an NPRIR case manager.

Intake

Prior to enrolling an individual in the program, all NPRIR service providers conducted an eligibility determination. In addition, all but one provider conducted a suitability assessment. These intake activities are described below.

Eligibility Determination

For all NPRIR service providers, the first step in the pre-enrollment intake process was to assess whether potential participants met the program's eligibility requirements. These requirements were the same as for other ETA PRI programs,⁴³ with two exceptions:

- Individuals whose most recent offense was considered violent were not eligible to participate, unless they were to be provided services by the two Nicholson-funded providers.
- All participants had to be Newark residents when they were enrolled; if they were residents in a Newark halfway house, they had to have been Newark residents prior to incarceration.

Case managers usually conducted an eligibility determination during the first in-person meeting with an individual. The individual needed to bring proof of Newark residency to this meeting, along with documentation of his or her release date and offense history. For a halfway house

⁴³ Participants must have been 18 or older, have been convicted of a crime as an adult and incarcerated for that crime, and could not have committed a sexual offense; in addition, all but 10 percent must have been released from incarceration in the past 180 days.

resident or CRC client, proof of release date and criminal history documentation often came in the form of a letter from the halfway house/CRC. For a person without hard-copy documentation, the case manager was usually able to look up the individual's offense history and release date on the Internet via inmate search tools provided by NJ DOC, Essex County Corrections, or the U.S. Bureau of Prisons.

Suitability Screening

All but one NPRIR service provider also assessed individuals for program suitability. Typically, providers defined suitability as having the motivation and commitment to fulfill program requirements. In addition, most providers included perceived job-readiness as an element of suitability. For example, they usually deemed individuals with major substance abuse issues, mental health conditions, major literacy challenges, or limited English language skills⁴⁴ as not job-ready and, therefore, unsuitable for NPRIR because these applicants would need long-term, specialized assistance before they would be able to find or maintain employment.

To test the extent of potential participants' motivation and commitment to the program, providers required them to attend a series of program meetings or workshops over a one- to two-week period. These requirements ranged in intensity from attending a single group mentoring session to participating in a series of eight work readiness workshops. Those who did not attend all of the required meetings were generally not enrolled, at least not until they demonstrated greater commitment to the program by regularly attending and participating in meetings. Once a case manager determined an individual to be both eligible and suitable for participation in NPRIR, that individual was officially enrolled in the program and began receiving services.

This kind of suitability screening was common among the first group of PRI grantees, though not universal—about half of the program sites reported screening applicants for suitability (Holl et al., 2009). The higher prevalence of suitability screening among NPRIR providers might be explained by differences in how providers were paid. While ETA typically paid its PRI grantees on a purely reimbursement basis, the city and the Nicholson Foundation both conditioned payment, at least in part, on achievement of performance benchmarks. NPRIR providers may have in turn used their suitability screenings to recruit individuals whom they believed would be more likely to contribute to the achievement of their program's performance benchmarks.

⁴⁴ Although, one provider, La Casa, had the capability to serve Spanish-language only speakers, they tended to refer these individuals to English as a Second Language (ESL) programs run by their organization.

Enrollment

According to the NPRIR grant agreement, the enrollment goal for the project was 1,340 participants. To achieve this goal, the City of Newark and the Nicholson Foundation made agreements with each of the six NPRI providers to enroll a certain number of eligible ex-offenders. These individual provider goals are displayed in Exhibit V-I. As of February 2011, the NPRIR program had achieved a total enrollment of 1,410, thus exceeding the program’s overall enrollment goal.⁴⁵ Individually, the providers all met their original enrollment goals as well.⁴⁶

**Exhibit V-1:
Enrollment Goals and Actual Enrollment for NPRIR**

Grantee	Total Enrollment	Enrollment Target	% of Target Met
America Works	69	50 to 100†	100%
Goodwill	619	600	103%
La Casa	207	194	107%
NJISJ	205	200	103%
OAR	153	138	111%
RCDCC	157	138	114%
Total	1,410	1,340‡	105%

† The provider stated that its goal was to enroll from 50 to 100 participants.

‡ Due to America Works providing a target range, this is the enrollment goal provided in the grant agreement (1,340), not the sum of the individual provider goals.

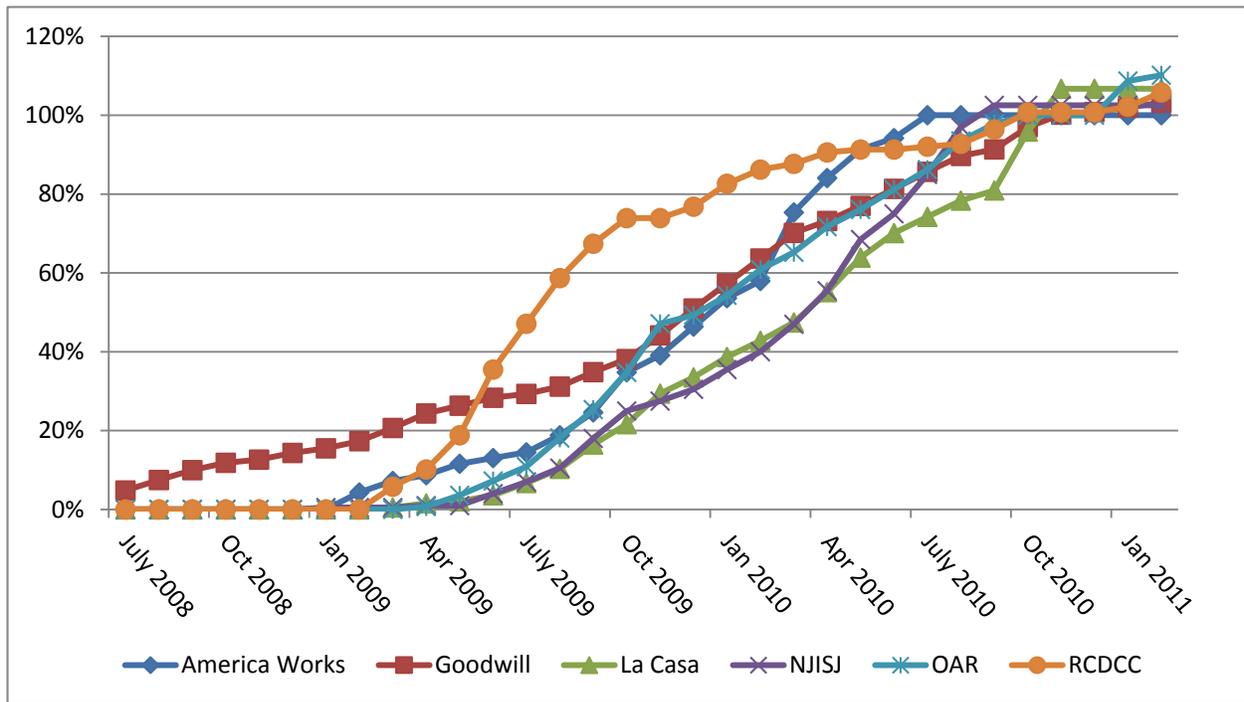
As shown in Exhibit V-2, Goodwill was the first provider to enroll participants, doing so in July 2008. NJISJ enrolled its first participants in January 2009, America Works in February 2009, and all others in March or April 2009.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ The original grant period ran through December 31, 2010; however, the City of Newark obtained a no-cost extension from ETA to continue running NPRIR through June 30, 2011. The city extended the contracts of three of the city-funded providers—La Casa, OAR, and RCDCC—and one Nicholson-funded provider—Goodwill. However, the PRI MIS data were acquired at the end of February 2011, so enrollment data presented are only current through that month.

⁴⁶ The city identified that NJISJ was having some difficulty enrolling participants early on and worked with the organization to correct these issues. However, as low enrollment continued, it eventually decided to amend its contract with NJISJ to lower its enrollment target from 256 to 200 participants and transfer the remaining 56 slots to La Casa. Exhibit VI-1 presents these revised enrollment targets.

⁴⁷ Although America Works’ period of performance according to its proposal with the Nicholson Foundation did not begin until June 15, 2009, the provider began serving NPRI participants in February 2009 according to the PRI MIS.

**Exhibit V-2:
Percent of Enrollment Target by NPRI Provider, July 2008 – February 2011**



Despite beginning enrollment in the spring of 2009, three of the city-funded providers had enrolled only a third or fewer of their current participants by September 2009 due to delays in the execution of their contracts; however, following that point, providers steadily enrolled participants.

Characteristics of Participants

NPRIR providers had substantial freedom to enroll and serve individuals with a wide variety of demographic backgrounds and offense and incarceration histories, as long as those individuals met the enrollment criteria. Using data recorded in the PRI MIS, this section describes the demographic, employment-related, and offense-related characteristics of NPRIR participants—both overall and by provider.⁴⁸

As shown in Exhibit V-3, NPRIR participants were primarily African-American males, whose average age at enrollment was 36. The next largest racial/ethnic groups were Latinos (11 percent) and whites (8 percent). Among specific providers, La Casa stands out as having served

⁴⁸ Please note that because many of the characteristics presented here are based on self-reports, the data may not be entirely accurate, individuals may not have remembered correctly or may not have been completely forthcoming with the provider staff member who captured these data. In addition, many of these data items are not required by the PRI MIS, so data are missing for many participants.

relatively high numbers of both Latino and white participants. RCDCC served participants who were, on average, slightly younger than those served by the other providers.

**Exhibit V-3:
Demographic Characteristics of NPRIR Participants**

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDCC	Goodwill	America Works	
Number of Participants	207	205	153	157	619	69	1,410
Gender							
Male	95.2%	88.3%	88.9%	91.1%	96.6%	89.9%	93.4%
Female	4.8%	11.7%	11.1%	8.9%	3.4%	10.1%	6.6%
Race/ethnicity†							
African-American	76.3%	95.6%	88.2%	89.9%	84.8%	81.2%	85.9%
Latino	19.8%	2.9%	14.4%	7.0%	11.6%	7.2%	11.1%
White	23.7%	2.4%	9.8%	3.2%	4.4%	14.5%	7.9%
Average age at enrollment (yrs.)	37.7	37.1	36.7	32.3	35.1	38.8	35.8
Individual with a disability	4.8%	0	2.0%	0	0.6%	0	1.2%
Eligible veteran status	2.9%	0.5%	7.8%	1.9%	2.4%	5.8%	2.9%
Attained H.S. diploma or GED or higher	15.0%	51.7%	63.4%	33.8%	55.3%	64.2%	47.7%

† Note that participants who are Latino can be of any race and participants can ascribe to more than one racial category, so race/ethnicity percentages do not add up to 100 percent.

Overall, 48 percent of participants reported having a GED or high school diploma at enrollment, although this varied substantially by provider. For example, 64 percent of America Works participants reported having a high school diploma or GED at enrollment, while only 15 percent of La Casa’s participants reported having achieved those credentials.

Compared to those enrolled in the first generation of PRI, NPRIR participants were of similar ages and had similar levels of education. However, NPRIR served greater percentages of men and African-Americans than did Generation 1 grantees.⁴⁹

In terms of housing status at enrollment, nearly half of all participants reported living in halfway houses, residential treatment facilities, or other transitional housing.

Just slightly fewer reported living in a stable housing situation, either owning or renting a room or apartment or staying with someone else in a stable situation. Among the providers, La Casa and America Works reported higher-than-average percentages of halfway house and transitional

⁴⁹ This and all subsequent comparisons with the outcomes for the first generation grantees are based on data from Holl et al., 2009.

housing residents (71 and 67 percent, respectively). Interestingly, few participants reported being homeless at enrollment, despite the fact that several NPRIR providers reported that finding housing for participants was a major challenge. Overall, NPRIR was serving a greater proportion of participants living in halfway/transitional houses than the first generation of PRI grantees.

**Exhibit V-4:
Housing and Health Issues of NPRIR Participants**

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDCC	Goodwill	America Works	
Number of Participants	207	205	153	157	619	69	1,410
Housing status at enrollment							
Own/rent apartment, room, or house	6.3%	3.9%	4.6%	10.9%	0.3%	7.2%	3.7%
Staying with someone (stable)	17.9%	62.4%	38.6%	68.6%	38.1%	21.7%	41.3%
Halfway/ transitional housing	71.0%	20.5%	40.5%	15.4%	50.2%	66.7%	44.8%
Residential treatment	1.0%	0	2.6%	0	0.8%	0	0.8%
Staying with someone (unstable)	1.4%	3.4%	9.2%	2.6%	9.2%	1.4%	6.1%
Homeless	2.4%	9.8%	4.6%	2.6%	1.3%	2.9%	3.3%
Substance abuse in 3 months prior to enrollment	0	20.9%	3.3%	2.5%	2.4%	15.9%	5.5%
Significant health issues	3.5%	11.9%	9.2%	4.5%	0.2%	0	3.8%

The vast majority of participants (95 percent) denied abusing drugs or alcohol in the three-month period prior to enrollment.⁵⁰ Given that several providers said they screened individuals for substance abuse problems, it is likely that individuals with major substance abuse issues were deemed unsuitable for NPRIR or that they denied incidents of substance abuse to avoid becoming ineligible for program services.

Typically, NPRIR participants were single, non-custodial parents. While 69 percent of participants reported having at least one child, only 16 percent of participants reported having children living with them at the time of enrollment. Although only about 10 percent of participants overall reported having child support obligations, OAR reported that nearly one-third of its participants had such responsibilities. Given the percentage of the participants who indicated they have children who do not live with them, these obligations are likely under-reported.

⁵⁰ Because these data are self-reported and of a sensitive nature they should be treated with caution.

**Exhibit V-5:
Family Background of NPRIR Participants**

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDCC	Goodwill	America Works	
Number of Participants	207	205	153	157	619	69	1,410
Marital status							
Single	89.8%	93.1%	84.1%	80.8%	95.6%	81.4%	90.8%
Married	7.3%	5.0%	7.9%	12.8%	3.6%	10.2%	6.1%
Divorced/sep. or widowed	3.0%	2.0%	7.9%	6.4%	0.8%	8.5%	3.1%
Children							
Have child(ren)	68.6%	67.0%	74.3%	75.8%	65.3%	57.1%	68.9%
Have child(ren) living with them	5.4%	22.2%	15.9%	24.7%	22.4%	0	15.6%
Have child support obligation	4.9%	9.2%	32.0%	14.5%	2.6%	3.1%	11.4%

The data on NPRIR participants' previous employment and earnings demonstrate that they typically had limited formal labor market experience prior to incarceration. Regarding work experience, only one percent of participants reported that they were employed at enrollment and only 13 percent of participants reported being employed prior to incarceration. This rate of employment at incarceration is lower than that reported by past PRI participants. The average length of participants' longest job was about two and a half years.

The typical NPRIR participant worked longest in the field of production, food preparation, transportation and material moving, or construction and extraction. Although workers in some of these fields can earn high wages, NPRIR participants reported earning hourly wages that averaged only \$10.44. While participants enrolled with first generation grantees also reported working in these fields most often, they reported earning higher average hourly wages (\$11.13, in 2009 dollars) than did NPRIR participants.

**Exhibit V-6:
Employment Characteristics of NPRIR Participants**

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDCC	Goodwill	America Works	
Number of Participants	207	205	153	157	619	69	1,410
Employed at enrollment	1.0%	0	1.3%	4.5%	0.8%	0	1.1%
Employed at incarceration	2.0%	6.0%	29.9%	21.9%	9.3%	2.0%	12.8%
Months worked in longest held job (mean)	14.2	20.7	42.2	27.9	22.2	--	29.2
Occupation of longest job held†							
Production	14.3%	41.7%	6.9%	2.8%	45.9%	--	27.2%
Food preparation and serving	0	13.5%	17.2%	11.1%	14.1%	--	14.6%

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDCC	Goodwill	America Works	
related							
Transportation and material moving	14.3%	5.2%	22.1%	5.6%	3.0%	--	10.5%
Construction and extraction	28.6%	12.5%	8.3%	19.4%	6.7%	--	10.0%
Building, grounds cleaning, and maintenance	0	5.2%	13.1%	2.8%	3.7%	--	7.2%
Installation, maintenance, and repair	14.3%	4.2%	6.9%	5.6%	8.9%	--	6.9%
Sales and related	0	4.2%	7.6%	13.9%	5.2%	--	6.4%
Hourly wage at longest-held job (mean)	\$12.21	\$9.95	\$10.83	\$13.28	\$9.52	--	\$10.44
Primary income over the 6 months prior to incarceration							
Formal employment	93.8%	47.1%	21.6%	61.3%	8.5%	7.7%	24.4%
Informal employment	0	5.1%	12.4%	5.4%	0.5%	0	3.4%
Public benefits	0	0	6.5%	7.2%	1.0%	0	2.3%
Illegal activities	0	44.6%	54.2%	19.8%	88.2%	76.9%	66.7%
Friends and family	3.1%	3.2%	5.2%	0	0.9%	0	1.8%
Other	3.1%	0	0	6.3%	0.9%	15.4%	1.4%

† Not all occupations are included, so percentages may not total 100%.

When participants were asked what their primary source of income was in the six months prior to incarceration, only about one-quarter indicated it was from formal employment. The majority of NPRIR participants reported their primary income was from illegal activities. In comparison, the first generation of PRI programs enrolled greater proportions of participants whose previous income sources were primarily formal employment.

The offense- and incarceration-related characteristics of participants are summarized in Exhibit V-7. On average, NPRIR participants were released from incarceration approximately 11 weeks prior to enrollment. Because halfway house residents were considered still incarcerated until the point of NPRIR enrollment, the two providers that served the highest percentages of halfway house residents—La Casa and America Works—had participants with the lowest average time out of incarceration before enrollment. In addition, most NPRIR participants were on some kind of community supervision at enrollment, with only La Casa reporting that the majority of its participants were not supervised.⁵¹ Of providers, only America Works reported that a sizeable

⁵¹ La Casa staff members likely interpreted “supervision” as being on parole or probation only. Because 71 percent of its participants were halfway house or transitional housing residents, and thus on supervision, the number of participants on community supervision is underreported.

number of participants were mandated to participate in the program as a condition of parole, probation, or other supervision.⁵²

As shown in Exhibit V-7, over three-quarters of NPRIR participants reported that they were most recently incarcerated in a state prison. Among providers, OAR reported the highest percentage (39 percent) of participants who were most recently incarcerated in a county jail, likely reflecting that provider's strong connections with Essex County Jail. The provider with the highest percentage of federal prisoners was La Casa, which reported that more than a quarter of its participants were most recently incarcerated in federal prison.

The exhibit also shows whether participants had pre-release contact with NPRIR providers. Overall, few participants had pre-release contact with NPRIR providers, which is consistent with the fact that the NPRIR service model did not include this kind of outreach. America Works reported a high percentage of pre-release contact with participants, but this statistic should be interpreted with caution because America Works enrolled a high percentage of halfway house residents and staff members likely interpreted this as pre-release contact when entering data because participants were technically still in DOC custody. This aspect of NPRIR's service model is different from that of the first generation grantees, most of which conducted some recruitment inside correctional institutions.

Because the two Nicholson-funded providers focused on serving violent offenders (approximately 80 percent of Goodwill's participants were violent offenders, for example), the proportion of NPRIR participants overall who had committed violent offenses was relatively high at 37 percent. This makes NPRIR quite different from previous PRI service models, in which providers were not allowed to serve violent offenders.⁵³

⁵² It seems likely that America Works over-reported this number due to confusion with PRI MIS definitions. While it is possible that a number of its participants were mandated to participate in some type of post-release program, it would be unlikely that they would have been mandated to participate in NPRIR specifically.

⁵³ PRI Generation 3 grantees could enroll violent offenders if they had been assessed and referred by the providers' state department of correction.

Exhibit V-7: Criminal Justice Background of NPRIR Participants

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDCC	Goodwill	America Works	
Number of Participants	207	205	153	157	619	69	1,410
Weeks from release to NPRIR enrollment (mean)	6.6	20.4	11.9	15.0	9.7	4.3	11.4
Most recent incarceration							
State prison	71.1%	63.9%	48.0%	76.6%	92.7%	57.9%	77.6%
County jail	3.1%	26.2%	38.8%	21.4%	1.8%	31.6%	12.7%
Federal prison	25.8%	9.9%	13.2%	1.9%	5.5%	10.5%	9.7%
Post-release status at enrollment							
Parole	26.6%	38.0%	32.0%	50.0%	90.0%	65.2%	61.1%
Probation	16.4%	21.0%	45.8%	14.1%	0.8%	33.3%	14.0%
Other supervision	1.0%	6.8%	0.7%	16.0%	2.3%	0	4.0%
Not supervised	56.0%	34.1%	21.6%	19.9%	7.0%	1.4%	20.9%
Had pre-release contact with NPRIR staff	0.5%	0	0	0	0.3%	45.6%	2.1%
Mandated to participate	1.5%	0.5%	0	0	0.5%	55.2%	2.9%
Violent offender	1.4%	0.5%	0	0.6%	81.3%	18.8%	37.0%
Presenting offense†							
Property	20.3%	18.5%	17.0%	16.6%	16.6%	18.8%	17.6%
Drug	61.8%	62.0%	71.9%	72.0%	30.9%	56.5%	50.2%
Public order	1.9%	1.5%	2.0%	0.6%	0	0	0.8%
Other	18.8%	21.5%	23.5%	13.4%	73.8%	33.3%	44.0%
Number of arrests (mean)	2.9	5.2	15.4	9.8	1.9	--	6.6
Number of felony arrests (mean)	1.1	4.2	4.9	3.2	1.6	--	3.0
Number of convictions (mean)	1.6	4.4	4.3	3.5	1.6	--	3.0
Lifetime years incarcerated (mean)	3.3	2.2	2.0	9.2	4.4	2.6	4.1

† An ex-offender's presenting offense is the one for which he or she was most recently incarcerated. Because participants can have multiple presenting offenses, these percentages do not sum to 100 percent. In some cases, "other offense" includes violent offenses.

Regarding participants' presenting offenses, half of participants were incarcerated most recently for a drug crime. A sizeable portion were incarcerated for "other offense," though this is likely due to the fact that violent offenses are captured in this category, as demonstrated by the fact that approximately three-fourths of Goodwill's participants' presenting offenses fall in this category.

Most NPRIR participants were repeat offenders who had spent years incarcerated. In terms of their history with the criminal justice system, participants averaged about seven arrests, three felony arrests, and three convictions, and were incarcerated about four years during their

lifetimes. Among providers, RCDCC and Goodwill enrolled participants with the highest average time incarcerated.

Because convictions for violent crimes tend to be associated with longer sentences, it is not surprising that Goodwill's participants tended to have spent more time incarcerated. In the case of RCDCC, its participants appeared to have had numerous convictions with sizable sentences. Compared with participants of first-generation PRI grantees, NPRIR participants had similar numbers of arrests and convictions, but spent more time incarcerated than the earlier participants, which is not surprising given that 37 percent were violent offenders.

Intensive Case Management

Case management was a required PRI component and one of the primary services offered through NPRIR. The Office of Re-entry provided specific guidance that participants had to receive case management throughout their involvement in the program.⁵⁴ NPRIR case managers reported engaging in a number of common case management tasks, including carrying out assessments, connecting participants with services, tracking progress, and communicating with appropriate criminal supervision staff members.

Case manager staffing varied among providers. Half of the providers had two or three case managers on staff. Other organizations had just a single case manager, but also employed highly active job developers who were available for one-on-one services. One program did not employ anyone with the actual title of "Case Manager," and instead the entire staff collaborated to provide participants with intensive support.

A key aspect of case management in the PRI model is its intensity. This means that case managers were expected to spend a significant amount of time working with participants, particularly during the days and weeks immediately following enrollment and to have frequent contact with participants.

In general, particularly early on in program implementation, NPRIR providers appeared to have successfully replicated this intensive case management approach, as required in the PRI model. Both case managers and participants reported frequent contact, usually between one and three times a week, especially during a participant's first two weeks in the program. This frequency of contact helped case managers establish rapport with participants, outline what was expected of them throughout their participation, and socialize them to the programs' rhythm and activities. Once clients demonstrated their commitment to and comfort with regular participation in

⁵⁴ City of Newark, "NPRIR Key Definitions."

program activities, these meeting requirements generally decreased, especially after participants secured employment.

The fact that NPRIR case managers' duties generally extended beyond case management made staying in close contact with participants easier. Case managers were often the primary staff members who provided workforce preparation services, such as assisting participants with mastering interviewing techniques, developing resumes and cover letters, and conducting job searches. At five of the six NPRI providers, case managers also entered data on their clients into the PRI MIS.

Frequent contact between case managers and participants was also facilitated by the fact that case managers regularly made themselves available for extended hours (e.g., by giving out their personal cell phone numbers).

After the first year of NPRIR implementation, increasingly large caseloads made it more difficult for case managers to stay in frequent contact with participants. Two significant factors clearly contributed to this increase in caseloads: (1) providers enrolled considerably more individuals between early and late 2010; and (2) those providers did not hire additional case managers during this period. In addition, some case managers were hesitant to enter some participants into exit status after those individuals had located work, and thus retained them as active cases.

Although NPRIR providers were relatively successful in maintaining frequent contact with participants during the several weeks following their enrollment, they struggled with sustaining contact with participants after they obtained employment. This was especially true as case manager caseloads increased over time and the availability of in-person meeting time slots became scarcer. Consequently, most providers developed specific policies to help facilitate communication during the post-employment follow-up period. For instance, one program required each participant to sign an agreement in which he or she committed to contacting his or her case manager every two weeks while enrolled in the program. One provider had staff members check in with participants when they came in to receive monetary incentives for securing and retaining employment. Another strategy to maintain follow-up communication was to encourage participants to attend at least one group mentoring session each month, at which point they could also speak with their case managers or schedule check-ins for later dates.

Despite the challenges related to increasing caseloads and maintaining communication during follow-up, participants provided glowing reviews of their case managers. They often remarked at how comfortable these staff members made them feel, and how encouraged they felt that someone would look past their criminal records and help them reach their goals.

Participants' Accounts of Case Management

Joshua⁵⁵ most recently completed a short-term sentence for possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell. Now over 50 years of age, he explained that he had been in and out of the criminal justice system since he was a teenager. Prior to this most recent incarceration, he had managed to maintain employment for multiple years without incident, until he suffered a drug relapse. Upon his release to a local halfway house, he found himself engaging in a job search on his own, with no guidance. With a fresh offense on his record and limited skills for a man over 50, he initially felt very discouraged about his prospects for re-entering the workforce. He eventually received a referral to an NPRIR provider. His case manager helped him develop a renewed sense of hope for his employment prospects.

[The case manager] has given me skills and given me what I need: Walk into an interview, shake hands, sit down, and be very observant as to what is going on...He's not giving you anything new, he's enhancing what you have. Because we all have the ability to articulate [past offenses], we all know what we've done, we all know what we're capable of, it's [a matter of] how to present it.

Joshua was able to utilize his improved interview skills to secure a part-time job. He planned to return to school to develop his computer skills and increase his chances of finding full-time employment.

Colleen served a couple of years in a state correctional facility for criminal neglect. At the time of her sentencing, she was over 40 years old, had never before been convicted of a crime, and possessed significant work experience. Colleen had experienced past success in obtaining work, but never with a criminal record attached to her name. This new barrier to securing employment led her to a deep depression after her release, and she had little hope that she would be able to find work. However, she explained that her experience at her NPRIR service provider was extremely beneficial, and that the case manager's work had been at the core of that.

She's magnificent. She's been a mentor, a positive role model; I can't say anything but great things about her...You can go some places and they'll [say], 'We'll help you find work or whatever,' but she actually did...I guess for me, I walked in the door and I saw the comfort. Right there. She sat down, she talked, I was able to cry a little bit, get some things out, and then the trust was built from that point on. There's nothing that I don't think I can discuss with her. I would discuss things with her before I would go to anyone [else].

Colleen was able to secure full-time employment. At the time of her interview, she planned to continue to refine her resume and search for a better job.

⁵⁵ As is true throughout this report, all participant names are pseudonyms.

Assessments and Individual Development Plans

To determine participants' need for services and guide the development of their individual case plans (called individual development plans or IDPs), all NPRIR service providers conducted some type of assessment. Most commonly, these assessments involved case managers meeting one-on-one with ex-offenders and asking them a series of questions about their living situations, family ties, educational backgrounds, current and previous work experiences, and offense histories.⁵⁶ While this inquiry helped case managers populate the PRI MIS with baseline information, several case managers reported utilizing these initial probes to get participants to think about their employment or educational goals. This exercise was significant in that it often caused many participants to conceptualize themselves as legitimate employees for the first time in their lives. In addition to the one-on-one interview, some providers administered additional assessments such as a "Work-Readiness Checklist" or basic skills tests such as the TABE, which also determined participants' readiness to pursue General Educational Development (GEDs) certificates.

Once the initial assessment process was completed, case managers used the information from that process to work with each participant to create a customized IDP. These plans outlined the specific action steps required for participants to achieve goals in the areas of employment, skill-building, and family and personal life. Usually, these action steps identified specific NPRIR services that would help participants achieve their goals, including supportive services that clients would need, such as housing assistance and medical care. These IDPs differed from the first generation of PRI grantees' IDPs in two key ways: (1) NPRIR providers' IDPs placed greater emphasis on the provision of additional supports (beyond employment services) than did Generation 1 grantees; and (2) most NPRIR providers formalized the IDPs in writing and kept them in participants' case files for future reference, whereas Generation 1 grantees often tracked participants' plans more informally (Holl et al., 2009).

Although case managers were the primary staff members who assisted participants with IDPs, job developers sometimes participated in IDP composition sessions, particularly regarding participants' employment goals. One case manager stated that job developers could be particularly helpful in providing guidance and insight to participants regarding the specific training or skills needed to enter certain career fields.

⁵⁶ This was also the most common type of assessment reported in ETA's evaluation of the first generation of PRI grantees (Holl et al., 2009).

Connecting Participants to Supportive Services

Consistent with the expectations set forth by the NPRIR Implementation Plan, the NPRIR providers operated on the assumption that newly-released ex-offenders needed comprehensive supports such as transportation, housing, health care, childcare, and substance abuse treatment⁵⁷ in order to re-enter society successfully. Hence, case managers and other staff members made efforts to provide such services to participants or to refer them out to other agencies that could do so.

The most common supportive service offered by NPRIR providers was transportation assistance, primarily in the form of providing bus tickets. Transportation assistance was also the most common type of supportive service provided by Generation 1 PRI grantees (Holl et al., 2009). This transportation assistance was provided both while participants were actively enrolled—so they could get to program activities and job interviews—and during follow-up because it helped participants get to their jobs. However, the costs associated with providing bus tickets to participants proved to be substantial, and providers had to find additional sources of funding or discontinue the service. The city attempted to assist providers by providing them with tickets funded with WIA dollars; however, this funding also quickly ran out.

In addition to providing bus tickets, most programs also provided transportation assistance in the form of van transportation for participants headed to job interviews or their first days of work. This was more affordable for providers because they already owned the vans that were used for this purpose. This van service grew in importance as the faltering local job market compelled individuals to pursue employment opportunities farther from Newark and/or farther from accessible public transit lines.

Due to both a lack of resources and restrictions of the ETA grant, NPRIR providers were limited in what other types of supportive services they could provide. Thus, case managers frequently issued referrals to external organizations for these services. Case managers noted they commonly made referrals for legal assistance, clothing, health care, vocational rehabilitation, housing, food stamps, public assistance, emergency food, and substance abuse treatment services. Generation 1 PRI staff members also reported commonly making referrals for these types of services (Holl et al., 2009).

For other much-needed services, case managers often had difficulty finding agencies to which to refer participants, especially given that many local agencies were operating with limited

⁵⁷ While some providers screened out participants that had major substance abuse problems, one provider did not conduct suitability screenings and thus, its participants may have received substance abuse treatment assistance. In addition, some substance abuse issues may have become apparent only after enrollment, in which case, these participants would have been referred to treatment.

available resources and high demand for the services they provided. This challenge was cited frequently in the areas of housing assistance and medical services. In the case of the latter, however, some programs were able to provide referrals to local clinics.

Workforce Preparation

Because many ex-offenders who enroll in PRI programs have never held jobs in the legitimate economy for an extended period, they often lack skills and knowledge needed in searching for, securing, and retaining employment (Holl et al., 2009). Consequently, all NPRIR providers offered some form of workforce preparation services to their clientele, as detailed below.

Work Readiness Training

In accordance with the guidelines set by the NPRIR Implementation Plan, NPRIR programs provided work readiness training onsite on such skills and behaviors as:

- how to handle questions about one's criminal background in job interviews, in applications, and on the job;
- punctuality and other issues related to the work ethic;
- appropriate work attire;
- business culture, work attitudes, and work behaviors; and
- anger management, communication, and other life skills such as money management, financial literacy, etc.⁵⁸

All NPRIR service providers engaged participants in some type of work readiness training within the first two weeks of enrollment (though the small number of participants deemed job-ready at enrollment were allowed to bypass work readiness training).

The models for delivery of work readiness training varied across sites. A few providers offered formal training sessions intermittently, if at all. Instead, they directed case managers and job developers to counsel clients on various aspects of work readiness. Among the providers that did provide formal preparation, the timing and frequency of trainings varied considerably. Goodwill offered the shortest trainings: participants attended a minimum of two one-hour workshops on different days of the week. America Works presented the longest work readiness training, requiring its participants to attend six hours of sessions each day until they were deemed job-ready (which typically occurred after two weeks).

⁵⁸ NPRIR Implementation Plan, p. 18 (direct quotes).

Despite this variation in the structure of work readiness activities, the content covered by providers was essentially uniform. Across providers, work readiness training sessions typically included training in the following:

- completing online and hard-copy job applications;
- developing a resume and cover letter;
- interviewing for jobs, including how to talk about criminal convictions;
- identifying career interests and opportunities;
- understanding labor market information;
- communicating effectively with job supervisors;
- developing and managing a personal budget; and
- conducting job searches.

In addition, nearly all providers took advantage of on-site computer labs to teach participants about the basic functions of computers, help participants establish e-mail accounts, and teach them how to send and receive e-mail with attachments. This basic computer training proved significant, as much of the job search process is digitized and many ex-offenders have little experience with computers. Participants noted that the assistance offered by NPRIR providers played a large part in addressing their lack of technological competency.

Work Readiness Training at America Works

At America Works, work readiness classes consisted of two sessions daily. Morning sessions lasted from 9 am to 12 pm and featured 20 modules in the curriculum, with a different one covered in each session. They touched on a range of topics related to securing a job, and placed a great deal of emphasis on preparing for a job interview. Participants were taught how to explain convictions in a positive manner and to use the interview to sell themselves, and they practiced and critiqued mock interviews.

In the afternoon sessions, which ran from 1 pm to 4 pm, the instructor assisted participants one-on-one in the computer lab. In these sessions, participants received assistance in writing resumes and cover letters. The instructor also helped participants with computer issues, such as setting up email accounts, searching employment-listing websites, and emailing resumes and cover letters to employers.

The instructor ran these sessions in a very interactive way, using humor liberally. He explained that humor helped keep participants at ease and engaged. Taking advantage of the fact that participants joined the sessions at different points in time, he created opportunities for long-time attendees to mentor new participants.

The NPRIR Implementation Plan included an expectation that the Newark One-Stop system would also assist NPRIR participants in mastering many work readiness skills. However,

because of concerns about the quality of services provided by the Newark comprehensive One-Stop Career Center, and the inconvenience of sending participants there when most NPRIR service providers offered the same services on-site, few participants received workforce readiness training from the Newark One-Stop system.⁵⁹

Transitional Jobs

The NPRIR design also included a transitional jobs component involving subsidized work opportunities for “ex-offenders seeking immediate employment, but who are not prepared for the workforce.” Such short-term, subsidized jobs were expected to benefit these ex-offenders by providing work experience that would be “a bridge to permanent employment.”⁶⁰

NJISJ and La Casa—who each oversaw the NPRIR transitional jobs component for a portion of the program—did not offer subsidized employment directly, but rather contracted with the Greater Newark Conservancy (GNC) to provide work opportunities through its Clean and Green Initiative.⁶¹ Participants first completed their NJISJ/La Casa orientation and work readiness training and then worked three days per week (24 hours a week) for a maximum of eight weeks, earning \$7.82 per hour. They worked on conservation or landscaping projects overseen by GNC, many of which involved park and playground restoration and/or various forms of beautification through plant and mural installation.

On the two days per week that transitional job participants did not work, they were required to attend supplemental work readiness activities and mentoring sessions at their provider sites. After completion of their transitional jobs, participants received regular NPRIR job placement services. Those individuals who managed to secure full-time employment before their GNC placement was complete qualified to receive a \$500 incentive payment. Hence, there was motivation for participants to engage in job search on their own. Accordingly, some of the most ambitious transitional job participants came into the provider office and conducted job searches on the off-days during the workweek.

Interviews with NPRIR staff members and participants suggest that the transitional employment component provided by GNC functioned well. Staff members at La Casa and NJISJ reported that GNC ran the program well, and said that their case managers did a good job of maintaining consistent communication with NPRIR providers about the status and progress of clients.

⁵⁹ The relationship between NPRIR and the Newark One-Stop Career Center is described in further detail in Chapter IV.

⁶⁰ NPRIR Implementation Plan, p. 20.

⁶¹ The Greater Newark Conservancy is an organization based in Newark that provides environmental education, community gardening, beautification of neighborhoods, and job training opportunities.

Participants said that they had positive experiences with the program, especially since it provided opportunities for them to do tangible work while interacting with other people. While participants generally indicated that the nature of the work was such that it did not afford them many skills transferrable to future employment, they felt it did help them acclimate to a work routine.

Job Placement and Retention Assistance

Due to a challenging labor market in which few participants were able to find jobs on their own, job placement assistance was in high demand among NPRIR participants. In order to be considered for job placement assistance, participants had to meet several criteria, including completing work readiness training (and/or transitional employment) and being assessed by case managers as “job ready.” Typically, a job-ready participant was one who had a photo ID, a Social Security card, an updated resume, clear employment goals, and was available to work (i.e., was not in full-time substance abuse treatment).

Job placement assistance occurred in several stages. The first step in the process was usually a one-on-one meeting between the participant and a job developer (or the case manager, in the absence of a job developer). During these meetings, job developers assessed participants’ skills, career interests, and work experience.⁶² Based on this assessment, job developers provided participants with career guidance and job leads that matched their skills, interests, and experience. After this initial meeting, job developers continued to work with participants, typically during weekly or bi-weekly meetings in-person, until they secured employment,. During these meetings, job developers checked in with participants regarding the status of previous job leads and provided them with new ones, sometimes through email. The services NPRIR job developers provided closely mirrored the job development services provided in previous generations of PRI programs (Holl et al., 2009).

Providers and their staff varied in their approach and philosophies about how self-directed participants should be during the job search process. Two providers required participants in the job placement phase to be at their offices much of the day (unless they were on a job interview). While on-site, these participants met with job developers and case managers and continued refining their resumes, honing their interviewing skills, and looking for jobs on their own on the Internet. Some providers’ staff members indicated this kind of format was particularly important for ex-offenders because they tend to work better with highly structured schedules. In contrast, another provider’s manager attributed at least part of his organization’s success with job placement to the organization’s philosophy of demonstrating job-hunting skills (e.g., searching

⁶² As discussed earlier in the chapter, this assessment process was often tied to the earlier work done by the case managers, as well as formalized tools such as TABE.

Internet job listings, following up on job listings provided by staff member, networking to find out about available jobs, etc.) and encouraging participants to look for jobs themselves. He said the program's motto for job placement is "We help you [participants] to help yourself."

In the event that a participant received an offer to come in for an interview, the job developer often coordinated the preparation process. This could include logistical support, such as calling the appropriate halfway house to request authorization for release, coordinating the participant's transportation to and from the interview, or engaging the participant in practice interviews.

NPRIR job developers reported placing most participants in warehouse, food service, and construction jobs; similarly, these were the top three sectors for placement reported by job developers among the first generation of PRI grantees, according to Holl et al. (2009). Job developers explained several reasons for their focus on these industries. First, employers in these industries had been willing to hire ex-offenders in the past. Second, many participants had work experience in these types of occupations. Third, many participants expressed interest in jobs that involved working with their hands, and these were occupations that involved at least some manual labor.

Some NPRIR job developers also placed participants with little or no work experience in jobs with temporary agencies, often in the same occupations as specified above. Although these jobs were temporary, job developers asserted that they were beneficial because they allowed participants to gain work experience. One service provider that used this option was Goodwill, which placed a number of participants in its own GoodTemps program.⁶³ RCDCC's job developer also placed a number of participants in temporary agencies, at least partly because so few other jobs were available due to the recession. A third provider, OAR, placed some participants in jobs with temporary agencies, although OAR's program manager said that most of these were "temp to perm" jobs that would eventually lead to permanent employment.

Once participants were placed in employment, job developers and case managers continued to provide services and incentives to foster both job retention and advancement. These follow-up services usually involved NPRIR case managers or job developers checking in with participants and employers in person or by phone to discuss participants' needs, behavior, performance, and work ethic. Additionally, a number of NPRIR service providers provided participants with incentives, such as bus tickets, for staying employed. One provider, America Works, paid its participants \$50 for retaining employment for 30 days and an additional \$50 for staying employed for 90 days.

⁶³ GoodTemps is a temporary staffing division of Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and Northern New Jersey that offers long- and short-term temporary assignments in the public and private sectors for people with disabilities and other barriers to employment.

Job Development

Most NPRIR placements stemmed from job development conducted by provider staff who largely followed the same approach described by Holl et al. (2009). This model of job development entailed a conventional set of tasks, such as accessing ex-offender-friendly job databases and online search sites, as well as making cold calls to local businesses.

However, NPRIR job developers faced a number of challenges. One of the most serious of these challenges was that there were few available jobs in Newark due to the deep recession. This lack of jobs was made even worse by the intense competition for them among the six NPRIR service providers, which were all trying to place ex-offenders at the same time.⁶⁴

A further challenge was that many of the employers with vacancies were unwilling to hire ex-offenders. In particular, a number of large retail employers had instituted policies that did not allow anyone with a criminal record to be hired. The first generation of PRI grantees noted this latter challenge as the greatest barrier that PRI participants faced in obtaining employment (Holl et al., 2009).

NPRIR service providers who worked with halfway house residents noted that restrictions on those participants posed another challenge in job placement. Halfway house participants were only granted release from their houses with a pass, which could sometimes take 24 to 48 hours to obtain. However, job developers sometimes could not schedule job interviews more than 48 hours in advance, and consequently a number of halfway house participants missed job interviews. In addition, halfway house residents were not allowed to hold certain types of jobs, such as jobs in establishments where alcohol was served. Further, employers of halfway house residents had to supply information about their businesses to halfway house staff members and their worksites often needed to be inspected—requirements that some employers found onerous. For all of these reasons, NPRIR service providers asserted that placing halfway house residents in jobs was much more challenging than placing other participants.

The Office of Re-entry attempted to address these job development challenges in a number of ways. The Office of Re-entry enlisted P/PV to provide additional assistance in this area, as discussed in Chapter III. Additionally, the Office of Re-entry worked with other city staff members to support social ventures involving the hiring of ex-offenders. For example, the city worked with the Doe Fund to develop a pest control company called “Pest at Rest” (discussed in detail below). As discussed in Chapter IV, the Office of Re-entry also sought to involve

⁶⁴ Historically, PRI grants have been distributed to a single grantee within a city. However, in the case of NPRIR, there were six contracted providers in one city that were competing to identify job opportunities for their ex-offender clients at the same time. Consequently, competition among providers under NPRIR may have made it even more difficult for providers to find placements for their participants.

NewarkWORKS in assisting NPRIR providers with job development, though these efforts were hampered by city layoffs.

Another strategy that some providers adopted was to become more aggressive in their job development efforts and use new strategies for finding placements for participants. For example, many began marketing the program to employers located in far-flung suburbs around Newark (please see accompanying textbox). In addition, job developers faithfully participated in monthly job development meetings hosted by the city, using these meetings to share job leads. Finally, NPRIR job developers also commonly networked with community partners to share information on employment opportunities.

Aggressive Job Development Strategies in a Challenging Job Market

The Newark job market was particularly challenging for ex-offenders. Because of this, job developers adopted a number of aggressive strategies for connecting participants with employment.

One strategy was to expand the geographic area in which they sought out job placement opportunities. Instead of focusing on core areas of Newark, they traveled to outlying areas within the city and into adjacent counties. On the wall of one provider's office, one could find a map of Essex and surrounding counties, with various markers indicating the locations of major employers known to hire several ex-offenders at a time. This provider's job developers visited each of these employers to introduce them to the NPRIR program.

However, commuting to these jobs required long and expensive bus rides for participants, and this proved prohibitive for some. While NPRIR job developers were somewhat unique in so aggressively pursuing opportunities outside of the city, the problem of prohibitive transportation costs was common across generations of PRI programs.

The job developer from another provider intensified his efforts by establishing relationships with several Newark-area businesses, to increase their comfort level with hiring ex-offenders. Accordingly, he received regular leads from them, and—every Tuesday—he would take participants to fill out applications at whichever businesses notified him that they were hiring in a given week.

Mentoring

The PRI model also included the provision of mentoring that would provide interpersonal, emotional, and practical support services beyond case management and workforce preparation in order to help participants successfully re-enter society (Holl et al., 2009), NPRIR providers offered mentoring services to provide interpersonal, emotional, and practical support to participants. The following section highlights how these mentoring services were provided.

Volunteer Mentors

The NPRIR grant required that providers utilize volunteers to serve as mentors. Although some sites initially had difficulty fulfilling this requirement and used staff members instead, those organizations later reexamined their mentoring structures and with guidance from the Office of Re-entry worked to bring in volunteers.

Providers used various methods to recruit volunteer mentors. On the more formal end of the recruitment spectrum, programs sought to establish partnerships with local community organizations to develop mentor pipelines. Faith and community-based organizations were key partners, as several were able to provide mentors for both group and one-on-one mentoring activities. More informally, NPRIR providers reached out to potential mentors and community organizations through e-mails and online social media. Additionally, they set out to recruit individuals from local businesses, colleges, and universities.

Providers noted it was very challenging to recruit and retain volunteer mentors. Each of the providers faced great difficulty finding appropriate individuals who were able to commit to the time requirements of being a mentor. Numerous staff members explained that the unique needs of the ex-offenders they worked with were not necessarily a good fit for just any kind of mentor. While some organizations were successful in recruiting community members generally, they often found that the best mentors were ex-offenders themselves—such individuals could understand the experiences of program participants, and participants could, in turn, more easily appreciate what such mentors had to offer. The difficulty of recruiting mentors was compounded by the fact that the providers were essentially competing with one another to locate volunteer organizations that would participate in the program. Carrying out the recruitment process was also reported to be extremely time-consuming for staff members. In addition, mentor coordinators reported that it was hard to retain volunteer mentors for longer than a few months. Recruiting and retaining mentors was also a major challenge for the first generation of PRI grantees (Holl et al., 2009).

Examples of Mentor Recruitment Strategies

As the program with the longest history of providing mentoring, it is not surprising that **Goodwill** had the most well-established and successful process for recruiting volunteer mentors. This process involved partnerships between Goodwill and five other Newark-area FBCOs that sponsored community members to serve as Goodwill mentors. These partner organizations were required to provide support and guidance to referred mentors, and they were reimbursed \$250 for every mentor that was successfully matched with a mentee. These organizations also received an additional \$250 when a mentor relationship lasted for three months.

Although **OAR** had attempted to recruit mentors from churches and other community groups, these sources were not fruitful. Instead, staff members recruited most of the OAR mentors using their personal networks. Staff members selected these individuals because they had been involved with the criminal justice system in the past, and believed their backgrounds would help them relate to NPRIR participants.

In accordance with **La Casa's** commitment to promoting a family-type atmosphere and relating with participants on a peer-to-peer level, the service provider staff determined that former participants would be the strongest candidates to facilitate mentoring. They identified two participants who had gone through the program, found work, and stabilized their living situations. These individuals were brought in to lead the hour-and-a-half-long Friday morning group mentoring sessions during alternating weeks. They did not receive formal training, but they worked closely with staff members to get guidance about how to structure the meetings.

Once they identified potential volunteer mentors, three of the organizations employed various methods to screen them to ensure they would be appropriate to work with NPRIR participants. Accordingly, these providers required potential mentors to complete an application, meet for an in-person or phone interview, and provide references. One program also conducted a criminal background check. After completing the screening process, two of the three providers that screened their mentors offered them formal training sessions, during which they informed mentors about their programs' rules and discussed effective mentoring strategies. One of these organization also provided mentors with a mentoring training manual that detailed the program guidelines.

Modes of Mentoring

According to the guidelines developed by the Office of Re-entry, NPRIR service providers were able to use three approaches in providing mentoring services:

- *group mentoring*, which consisted of four to five participants meeting with one mentor, or eight to ten participants meeting with two mentors;
- *one-on-one mentoring*, which consisted of same-gender matches of one mentor with one participant; and

- *team mentoring*, which consisted of two to five mentors matched with one participant.

The structure of the mentoring services varied by provider and over the life of the grant. Initially, only the NPRIR provider with prior mentoring experience offered the one-on-one mentoring format exclusively. The remaining providers offering mentoring opted to provide both group and one-on-one mentoring.⁶⁵ However, by the time of the second site visit, only two providers were still providing one-on-one mentoring. Staff members at the other provider organizations realized that setting up one-on-one mentoring programs required a great deal of administrative effort—mostly for recruiting, training, and retaining volunteer mentors—while group mentoring could be provided with fewer volunteer mentors and administrative resources. As a result, they shifted to providing only group mentoring. Similarly, many of the first generation of PRI grantees without previous experience in implementing mentoring programs faced challenges in developing one-on-one mentoring and added or switched to group mentoring services over the first two years of grant implementation (Holl et al., 2009). Below is a description of group and one-on-one mentoring activities in further detail.⁶⁶

Group Mentoring

Group mentoring activities were led by volunteer mentors. Generally, these mentors facilitated workshop- or seminar-style sessions, which featured group discussions, guest speakers, and video showings. The frequency of these meetings varied by provider, but typically occurred weekly or monthly, with each session lasting from two to three hours. Most sessions covered work readiness, job retention, or life skills topics such as interviewing skills, appropriate supervisor interactions, and anger management. Multiple programs incorporated simulated job interviews and other public speaking exercises into their curricula.

An Example of Group Mentoring: La Casa

The content of La Casa’s group mentoring sessions addressed both participants’ daily life experiences and how to obtain employment. However, given that there were qualified staff members on site dedicated to providing employment services, mentors often felt it more appropriate to focus less on finding employment. For instance, one mentor—himself an ex-offender—expressed a belief that the most significant barrier for ex-offenders in successful re-entry into society and the job market was a lack of social skills, particularly in overcoming shyness, battling low self-esteem, and coping with adversity. As a result, he focused on how to deal with those issues in the group mentoring sessions he facilitated.

⁶⁵ One Nicholson-funded provider, America Works, did not offer mentoring services. Instead, it was supposed to refer its NPRIR participants to Goodwill for mentoring. However, it does not appear that these participants received mentoring services.

⁶⁶ There is no discussion of team mentoring, as no organization included it in their program design.

One-on-One Mentoring

As discussed above, one-on-one mentoring proved especially challenging for NPRIR programs to develop, as it was human resource-intensive and required significant oversight. Consequently, it is no surprise that the two providers that actually implemented one-on-one mentoring programs were the two with the most prior experience. Of these two providers, one (Goodwill) had significant experience in one-on-one mentoring for adult ex-offenders, while the other (OAR) built its NPRIR mentoring component based on its already existing one-on-one youth mentoring program.

One-on-one mentors provided various types of support to individuals seeking employment, as well as to those who had already been placed. The content of the assistance transcended issues pertaining to employment and focused more on supporting participants in making smooth transitions back into society. For example, mentors commonly provided their mentees with financial advice, support in positive decision-making, and parenting counseling.

Both Goodwill and OAR required the same amount of contact—at least four hours per month—between one-on-one mentors and mentees, regardless of whether or not a participant was employed. This contact could occur through e-mail, phone calls, and face-to-face meetings.

A Blended Mentoring Model: OAR

OAR's mentoring model blended group and one-on-one mentoring activities. Originally, its mentoring coordinator planned for these mentoring activities to be separate components. However, because mentees and mentors all attended the group mentoring meetings, these sessions became the main times that mentors and mentees interacted face-to-face. Outside of these group sessions, mentors and mentees typically communicated weekly via phone or email.

Group mentoring sessions were preceded by one-hour meetings in which mentors and mentees met in their own respective peer groups. In these sessions, OAR staff members introduced the mentoring program to newcomers and provided them with mentoring materials, discussed some communication skills, and went over the day's agenda. The mentor coordinator said that these activities also functioned as "focus groups" in which mentors and mentees could discuss challenges or issues encountered in their mentoring relationships with a group of their peers. Afterward, the mentors and mentees met together for the group session, where they typically engaged in group discussions or activities. Following the group sessions, mentors and mentees would break out into pairs.

While these NPRIR providers had to overcome challenges in identifying and assigning sufficient numbers of volunteer mentors, they were ultimately able to make their systems work. They

addressed these challenges by giving certain participants priority for receiving mentors and by assigning one mentor to multiple program participants.

Follow-up Mentoring

Most NPRI service providers attempted to continue engaging participants in mentoring activities even after program exit. These follow-up mentoring services were the same as those provided to enrolled participants. Case managers reported that mentoring, particularly in its group form, was a key follow-up service because it kept participants engaged in the program. They explained that when participants in follow-up attended a group mentoring activity, case managers (who usually helped facilitate group mentoring meetings) would typically take a moment to check in with each participant individually to assess his or her need for additional assistance.

Benefits of Mentoring

Despite some early challenges in setting their mentoring services in motion, providers generally believed they had established systems that were beneficial to their clients. Both the group and one-on-one formats offered distinct advantages to participants and NPRIR providers alike. Without question, individual mentoring allowed mentees to receive

Participant Reluctance to Enroll in Mentoring

Both the first generation of PRI grantees and most NPRIR providers noted that it was difficult to persuade participants to engage in mentoring services. While some participants did not take part simply because they did not see the need for mentoring, others did not have time to participate. Participants were even less likely to participate once they became employed, as they were often scheduled to work during the times that mentoring sessions were held. Consequently, even though most providers strongly encouraged participants to engage in mentoring, many participants did not participate or participated for only a short time.

guidance in a range of specific areas of their lives, including those not directly related to the employment search. A number of participants noted that simply having someone to listen to them was invaluable. For instance, one participant said of his mentor:

He keeps me grounded. He's been through things that I've been through. He's older than me so he's teaching and talking from experience... Sometimes you need an understanding ear; some people will listen to you but they don't really understand what you're saying... it's good to have someone [understand] where you're coming from.

Nevertheless, not all participants felt comfortable with the one-on-one mentoring format. In that respect, group mentoring offered an avenue for participants to share experiences and learn from one another in a casual group setting, while still connecting them with positive individuals from their communities. One participant explained the benefits of group mentoring:

The group setting has allowed me to interact with other people. To learn from them and give some input to them...I wasn't so well rounded before incarceration in a group setting. Now I can talk in a group setting. I would kind of sit back feel like they were staring at me; I was just feeling uncomfortable. But now it's like I can talk in front of the groups and I like to participate.

Education and Job Training Services

In addition to case management, work readiness training, and mentoring, a few NPRIR participants received education or job training services during their time in the program. These services included basic skills education (GED preparation and math and reading remediation), occupational skills training, on-the-job training (OJT), and unpaid work experience.

As was the case with the first generation of PRI grants (Holl et al., 2009), only a small number of participants ultimately received these services. Service providers were primarily concerned with placing participants in employment as soon as possible, and given the state of the job market in the area, they felt they needed to focus more on developing employment opportunities. Another reason for limited focus on training and educational services was lack of interest in these services on the part of NPRIR participants. Providers reported that many participants needed to find work as soon as possible to support themselves and pay fines and restitution fees. Some participants, such as those in ISP, were also required to obtain employment within a short time after being released or be subject to re-incarceration.⁶⁷

Of all the education and training services, the most common type received by NPRIR participants was basic skills instruction, including GED preparation and math or reading remediation. Two providers, RCDCC and La Casa, provided GED preparation services on site, and the rest referred their participants either to other providers or to Newark WORKS, the One-Stop Career Center system for the City of Newark and surrounding areas.

Additionally, a few NPRIR participants received occupational skills training through RCDCC's on-site computer training program. The program consisted of introductory courses on Windows, keyboarding, and software programs such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Outlook, and Publisher, as well as certificate programs in basic computer keyboarding, Call Center Specialist, and QuickBooks Specialist.

RCDCC also provided some participants with unpaid work experience through its Renaissance Construction Company. During this work experience, participants learned about green construction and weatherization design processes, site preparation and clearance, Occupational

⁶⁷ Individuals in ISP are required to find a full-time job within 30 days of release from prison.

Safety and Health Administration standards, construction terminology, blueprint design and specifications, and dry wall preparation, framing, installation, and finishing. Additionally, the Office of Re-entry worked with other organizations to support occupational training opportunities for a few NPRIR participants (please see text box below).

Occupational Training Programs

While they were neither common nor exhaustive, the Office of Re-entry helped coordinate a few different occupational training opportunities for NPRIR participants.

Twenty-two individuals from a variety of NPRIR providers participated in eCycling@Newark (eCAN), an electronics waste recycling program provided by the Urban Renewal Corporation (URC) in cooperation with the Office of Re-entry. The program provided occupational skills training and education about the environmentally safe disposal of e-waste. eCAN participants attended classes at URC's computer recycling center eight hours a day, four days a week. They earned a \$150 food and transportation stipend for regular weekly attendance, as well as an additional stipend on Fridays if they engaged in activities to market the benefits of e-waste recycling throughout Newark. Following completion of the program, participants could be placed in paid internships with URC partners.

The PREP program, run by Project U.S.E. (Urban Suburban Environments) provided 16 individuals ages 19–21 with the opportunity to gain intensive work experience with the City of Newark's Neighborhood Services. Through this program, the individuals fulfilled maintenance and landscaping duties typical of those common to municipal public works departments, and received stipends subsidized by Newark WORKS.

Finally, at the time of the final site visit, the city was launching Pest at Rest Newark, a social venture initiative for the City of Newark and Brick City Development Corporation. An integrated pest management venture, Pest at Rest would provide Newark residents, including re-entering ex-offenders, with structured apprenticeships and placement into career-track jobs. Trainees would receive on-the-job training (OJT), safety training, and classroom training, culminating in their state certification as licensed pesticide applicators. Licensed graduates would then be placed in jobs with pest control companies throughout New Jersey, or start their own companies. As the program progressed, NPRIR participants would receive referrals to the program.

While provider staff members said that the Newark WORKS staff was helpful in supporting NPRIR participants with applications for on-the-job training placements, only a handful of participants were able to enroll. Newark WORKS required participants to be receiving welfare benefits at the time of their OJT application, and most NPRIR participants did not easily qualify for welfare benefits (due to their drug convictions, or failure to meet one of the other criteria). Moreover, the NewarkWORKS OJT program was very popular throughout the city, and had already exhausted its funds by the middle of the NPRIR grant period.

Overview of Participation and Services

The following section provides a brief overview of the characteristics of individual’s participation in NPRIR, including the duration of participation and their use of services.

On average, NPRIR program participants were actively enrolled for nearly 13 weeks (Exhibit V-8), a length of program participation similar to that of the first generation of PRI participants.⁶⁸ Participants served by OAR, RCDCC, and America Works averaged over 14 weeks of active enrollment, while La Casa participants averaged only 8.2 weeks of program participation.

**Exhibit V-8:
Length of Participation†**

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers	
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDCC	America Works	Total
Number of participants	173	205	132	136	69	715
Weeks from enrollment to exit						
One week or less	24.3%	6.8%	5.3%	23.5%	10.1%	14.3%
Two to three weeks	20.8%	7.3%	12.1%	9.6%	7.2%	11.9%
Four to eight weeks	22.0%	28.8%	23.5%	16.9%	27.5%	23.8%
Nine to twelve weeks	9.8%	20.0%	11.4%	8.8%	11.6%	13.0%
Thirteen to sixteen weeks	12.7%	20.5%	24.2%	12.5%	14.5%	17.2%
More than sixteen weeks	10.4%	16.6%	23.5%	28.7%	29.0%	19.9%
Average (weeks)	8.2	12.9	14.7	14.8	14.0	12.7

† Goodwill participants were excluded from this table because the PRI MIS erroneously exited a number of them out of the program prematurely, and thus Goodwill’s results on length of participation in the program could not be calculated accurately.

Exhibit V-9 displays the types of services that NPRIR participants received, by provider. Due to some of the challenges NPRIR providers encountered in correctly recording services (as described in Chapter II), the exhibit shows the percentage of participants that received at least one instance of each of these services.

Unsurprisingly, workforce preparation—one of the key program components—was the most commonly provided service across providers. Because two providers—La Casa and NJISJ—worked with GNC to provide transitional employment to their participants, they also had significant percentages of participants engaged in subsidized employment. Specifically, over 90 percent of NJISJ’s participants were enrolled in subsidized employment.

⁶⁸ Participants’ length of participation only includes the time for which participants were actively enrolled and does not include the time in which they may have received follow-up services.

Mentoring was the second most common type of service provided, with approximately 55 percent of participants receiving mentoring.⁶⁹ In addition, over a quarter of participants received mentoring services while they were in the follow-up stage of the program, though the rate of follow-up mentoring varied widely by provider.

Nearly half of all participants received some type of supportive service. As described in Chapter V, the most commonly provided supportive service was transportation assistance. All America Works participants were recorded as receiving supportive services; interviews with provider staff members indicate that these services were likely in the form of bus tickets, because the provider distributed bus passes to participants daily so that they could travel to and from its offices.

**Exhibit V-9:
Receipt of Services**

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDCC	Goodwill	America Works	
Number of participants	207	205	153	157	619	69	1,410
Community involvement	7.7%	0.5%	2.0%	27.4%	1.0%	2.9%	5.0%
Education or job training	32.9%	12.2%	12.4%	19.1%	0.8%	8.7%	10.9%
Workforce preparation	77.3%	97.1%	98.0%	85.4%	85.0%	97.1%	87.7%
Subsidized employment	23.2%	90.7%	0.7%	0	0	0	16.7%
Mentoring	65.7%	66.3%	57.5%	44.6%	56.5%	0	55.3%
Follow-up mentoring	14.0%	1.5%	24.8%	38.2%	42.8%	0	28.0%
Health services	1.9%	7.3%	9.8%	26.8%	0.5%	2.9%	5.7%
Supportive Services	31.9%	36.1%	81.0%	31.8%	47.8%	100.0%	48.2%

Relatively few participants utilized other program services. As explained in Chapter V, because participants were focused on securing immediate employment, few participated in education or job training services. While few participants overall received health services, a number of RCDCC participants received such services, which usually consisted of financial support for participants to complete drug tests required by prospective employers. Similarly, although a small number of participants in NPRIR overall received community involvement services, more than a quarter of RCDCC’s participants did because the organization encouraged participants to help with its community service projects.

⁶⁹ America Works did not offer mentoring services. Instead, it was supposed to refer its NPRIR participants to Goodwill for mentoring. However, it does not appear that any of its participants received mentoring services.

Summary

The following section looks more closely at both the challenges and accomplishments that have emerged from the providers' implementation of the PRI model, as well as identifies some lessons learned from their experiences.

Challenges

In implementing the PRI model, providers encountered some challenges in supplying services to participants, the most significant of which are discussed below.

- **Staff members at the NPRIR providers believed they could have benefited from the availability of additional case managers.** Case management was the key component of the PRI model, and interviewees from the service providers and Office of Re-entry alike indicated that the program could have benefited from additional case managers. During the initial site visits, case managers described their caseloads as very manageable. However, as enrollments increased dramatically leading up to the third round of visits, it was apparent that case managers typically had too many clients to offer the same level of intensive support to each client that they had earlier. This was especially significant since they also described that it was more difficult to keep in touch with participants after their first few weeks in the program. Service providers could have utilized additional case managers to devote more time to serving employed participants and/or those in follow-up.
- **Case managers sometimes found it challenging to maintain contact with participants so they could provide follow-up services and obtain information on participant outcomes.** Case managers said that once participants secured employment, it was difficult to get them to engage in the program's follow-up services, such as mentoring. In addition, case managers' struggled with maintaining contact with participants in follow-up or after exit in order to verify employment and recidivism outcomes.
- **NPRIR service providers—in particular those without prior experience with offering mentoring to ex-offenders—struggled to roll out their mentoring services.** Mentor coordinators and other NPRIR provider staff members reported that recruiting and retaining volunteer mentors was a key challenge in implementing their mentoring programs. As a result, although nearly all NPRIR service providers initially planned to implement both one-on-one and group mentoring formats, only two had retained one-on-one mentoring by the time of the last site visit. This was largely because—consistent with the experiences of the first generation of PRI grantees and subsequent grantees thereafter (Holl et al., 2009; Leshnick et al., 2011)—volunteer mentors were difficult to recruit. Therefore, most providers determined that the group format was easier to implement than the individual approach, since it required them to recruit fewer volunteer mentors. Moreover, a few programs utilized staff members to facilitate group sessions, which fell out of step with the parameters of the Implementation Plan. These organizations eventually identified non-staff members to lead the sessions, but in many cases they were rather large, and not as conducive to participants receiving intimate support.

- **In order to identify more job prospects for their participants in a citywide re-entry program, NPRIR job developers had to devote significant time to employer outreach and to developing new approaches.** The challenging employment environment required that NPRIR job developers invest considerable effort in tracking down job leads. They took to the field to develop relationships with employers and ended up spending a great deal of their time visiting and meeting with employers. Some of them ventured as far out as neighboring counties to identify businesses hiring en masse. Such aggressive advocacy on the part of job developers was important for ex-offender participants, as they usually had minimal prior experience searching for legitimate work.
- **NPRIR service providers struggled to connect many participants with employment-based training.** The fact that NPRIR participants were determined to find full-time employment as soon as possible meant that they were often more reluctant to commit additional time to training without earning a wage at the same time. At the same time, most service providers did not have the infrastructure in place to offer intensive workforce preparation and training services prior to NPRIR; hence, they were limited in what they could provide. Their relationships with NJ DOL, NewarkWORKS, and the One-Stop Career Center system were meant to mitigate these limitations, but sustaining those partnerships also proved to be a challenge.

Accomplishments

The NPRIR program has demonstrated a number of notable accomplishments with regard to service delivery.

- **Despite a slow start, the NPRIR program was able to achieve its enrollment goals.** Despite a slow start and some challenges with one of the providers in achieving their specific target, enrollment goals were exceeded for the NPRIR project as a whole. Regarding the characteristics of enrolled individuals, the average participant was a single, African-American, male in his mid-30s who was a non-violent offender. At enrollment, most participants lived either in halfway houses, residential treatment facilities, or other transitional or with family or friends in a stable setting. The average participant was unemployed at enrollment and also in the three months prior to incarceration, demonstrating limited formal labor market experience prior to incarceration. Most were repeat offenders who had spent years incarcerated, averaging three convictions and four years incarcerated during their lifetimes. In addition, the majority of NPRIR participants were on some kind of community supervision at enrollment.
- **NPRIR was able to implement services in accordance with the PRI model, and added a transitional jobs component.** Overall, NPRIR providers were able to implement all the main components of the PRI model—intensive case management, workforce preparation services, and mentoring. In addition, NPRIR included a transitional jobs component that provided subsidized employment to some participants that helped them get acclimated to a work routine and prepare them for future work.

- **Case management proved to be vital in engaging and supporting participants on a daily basis.** Case management was probably the most successful aspect of NPRIR service delivery. Throughout the course of this study, interviewees overwhelmingly identified the NPRIR case managers as tremendous assets to the program. Staff members at the Office of Re-entry, service providers, program participants and external partners agreed that the case managers were highly committed and capable advocates. They possessed a great deal of experience working with ex-offenders and other underrepresented populations, which helped them engender trust with their participants. Additionally, they were very accessible; they allowed participants to drop in unexpectedly throughout the day and often gave out their personal cell phone numbers so clients could reach them after business hours. Finally, case managers commonly assisted in providing other core NPRIR services, as they had the most intimate knowledge of participants' circumstances.
- **Providers used work readiness training and on-site computer labs to help participants bridge technological gaps.** Work readiness training included information on how to complete online job applications, use computers to develop resumes and cover letters, and conduct online job searches. In addition, providers took advantage of on-site computer access to teach participants about the basic functions of computers, help them establish e-mail accounts, and teach them how to send and receive e-mail with attachments. This incorporation of computer-based training proved significant in addressing the lack of technological competency of participants, as these skills are necessary in the increasingly digitized job search process.
- **Regardless of some struggles in implementing mentoring programs, these programs were successful in providing support to participants.** Although some participants were hesitant to enroll in mentoring programs, provider staff members and participants noted the usefulness of these programs in providing emotional support and strengthening life and interpersonal skills. Mentoring allowed mentees to receive guidance in a range of specific areas of their lives, including those not directly related to the employment search. It also offered an avenue for participants to share experiences and learn from one another and connect with positive individuals from their communities. A number of participants noted that simply having someone to listen to them was invaluable.

Lessons Learned

Addressing the various challenges associated with this work produced several lessons related to the provision of ex-offender re-entry services in Newark.

- **It would have been helpful if NPRIR service providers could have anticipated that caseloads would increase and plan accordingly, in order to have adequate staff resources to maintain the desired caseload level over time.** In light of the case managers' many strengths, interviewees from the service providers and Office of Re-entry suggested that additional case managers would have been the most beneficial addition to the program. Although case managers described their caseloads as very manageable during the initial site visits, enrollment increases expanded

caseloads dramatically afterwards; by the time of the third round of visits, it was apparent that case managers typically had too many clients to offer the same level of intensive support to each client that they had earlier on. Service providers would have been best served by setting caseload limits in advance—based on their anticipated enrollments—and monitoring caseloads in real time so as to ensure that case managers are not overwhelmed and can maintain optimal levels of contact with participants.

- **NPRIR service providers with little experience offering mentoring services required technical assistance early in the design phase.** Because providers, especially those without previous experience, struggled with implementing their mentoring programs, they could have benefitted from greater support and technical assistance early on in the process. This may have allowed them to take inventory of their resources more accurately and accordingly determine the most appropriate design for mentoring services. With a better understanding of the various resources and effort needed to implement the different mentoring formats, they might not have had to change from one-on-one to group mentoring formats midstream. Further, regardless of the format, they would have also likely benefited from more assistance with developing volunteer recruitment strategies during the design phase.
- **Advance planning and up-front effort by service providers would have been helpful for securing the resources and partnerships needed to provide NPRIR participants with a greater number and deeper array of supportive services.** Case managers discussed the need to offer more extensive supportive services in order to assist participants in preparing for employment and successful re-entry into the community. They found that difficulties in accessing transportation and finding housing presented participants with tremendous barriers to securing employment. Additionally, some ex-offenders lacked access to vital medical care and/or prescriptions that they had received free of charge while incarcerated. While staff members certainly believed that access to additional funds would have been helpful in providing more comprehensive assistance, they also decried a dearth of available services in the larger community. A number of service providers did have relationships with community organizations that assisted NPRIR participants, but many of those organizations were low on resources as well. Multiple program directors indicated that if they had spent more time thinking strategically about how to cull such resources and develop strong partnerships, they might have been able to offer more help in the way of supportive services.

VI. PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

NPRIR aimed to replicate the PRI model on a citywide scale, which meant helping reentering Newark ex-offenders secure stable employment and avoid recidivating. The outcomes obtained by participants are key indicators of the success of this endeavor. This chapter presents and discusses those outcomes. PRI MIS data on participant outcomes were used in combination with data collected from workforce and criminal justice agencies in New Jersey to analyze the extent to which NPRIR participants secured employment and avoided recidivating. The results of these analyses are presented in this section. Additionally, the section discusses the degree to which participants attained stable housing and refrained from substance abuse. These outcomes are discussed for the NPRIR project as a whole and by provider. Where applicable, the outcomes of participants are compared to the performance standards outlined by the Office of Re-entry in the NPRIR Implementation Plan. Finally, the outcomes of NPRIR participants are compared with those obtained by individuals served by two other groups of PRI program participants, using data provided by ETA.⁷⁰

Employment

Data from the PRI MIS captured information on ex-offenders' placement in unsubsidized employment during their participation in NPRIR.⁷¹ As shown in Exhibit VI-1, 62 percent of participants were placed in employment. Despite the somewhat dire economic circumstances that prevailed during NPRIR implementation, these placement figures are similar to those reported for the first generation of PRI grantees in 2008.

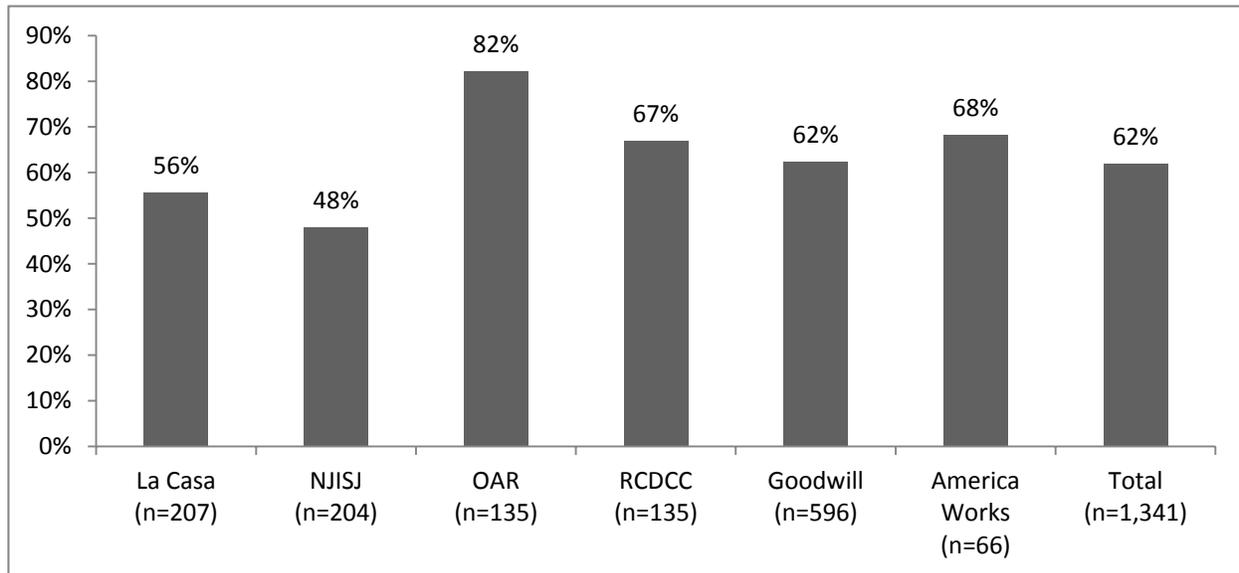
Of the providers, OAR had the highest rate of placement, with 82 percent of its participants obtaining employment during participation in the program according to PRI MIS data. This may be due in part to OAR having the most intensive suitability screening process, which required

⁷⁰ A more detailed discussion of data sources and analytical methods is presented in Chapter II.

⁷¹ Throughout this section, the analysis of employment outcomes excludes participants who were enrolled in the three months prior to the PRI MIS data acquisition because not enough time had elapsed for their employment outcomes to be collected.

participants to complete a two-week work readiness workshop before they could officially enroll in the program. NJISJ had the lowest placement rate (48 percent), which may be influenced by the fact that nearly all participants were enrolled in NJISJ’s subsidized transitional jobs program.

**Exhibit VI-1:
Placed in Employment during Participation**



Source: PRI MIS

As shown in Exhibit VI-2, according to the PRI MIS, most participants were placed in one job during their participation in NPRIR. However, a significant percentage of participants from OAR and RCDCC had more than one placement. This may be because these providers regularly utilized temporary agencies to place participants so that they could gain work experience. However, it may also be an indication that many of the ex-offenders served by these providers landed initial jobs that were stepping-stones to other, perhaps better, jobs.

On average, participants were placed in employment about 10 weeks following enrollment in NPRIR. The Nicholson-funded providers were able to secure employment for their participants more quickly on average than the other providers, possibly due to their aggressive job development. It is not surprising that NJISJ’s participants took the longest time to secure unsubsidized employment, given that the vast majority were initially enrolled in a transitional job for 10 weeks immediately following enrollment. More than 40 percent of RCDCC’s participants were placed in employment in the first few weeks after enrollment, likely due to RCDCC using its Renaissance Construction Company as a source of employment for its participants. In comparison to PRI Generation 1 grantees, NPRIR providers averaged more time between participants’ enrollment and placement in employment. This may be due, in part, to worsened economic circumstances nationally and, according to provider staff members, particularly dire conditions in Newark.

**Exhibit VI-2:
Number and Timing of Job Placements**

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDCC	Goodwill	America Works	
Number of participants	115	98	111	89	372	45	830
Number of placements during NPRIR participation							
One	92.2%	92.9%	48.6%	65.2%	82.8%	86.7%	79.0%
Two	7.0%	6.1%	30.6%	25.8%	15.1%	8.9%	15.8%
Three or more	0.9%	1.0%	20.7%	8.9%	2.1%	4.4%	5.2%
Average	1.1	1.1	1.8	1.5	1.2	1.2	1.3
Weeks from enrollment to placement							
Less than 2 weeks	24.3%	7.1%	23.4%	40.4%	26.6%	13.3%	24.3%
2 to 3 weeks	13.9%	9.2%	18.0%	5.6%	21.0%	13.3%	16.1%
4 to 6 weeks	10.4%	6.1%	16.2%	11.2%	15.6%	33.3%	14.3%
7 to 11 weeks	13.9%	29.6%	16.2%	11.2%	16.1%	15.6%	16.9%
12 or more weeks	37.4%	48.0%	26.1%	31.5%	20.7%	24.4%	28.3%
Average	10.7	15.9	9.0	13.0	8.7	8.4	10.3

Source: PRI MIS

Exhibit VI-3 displays some characteristics of NPRIR participants' employment, specifically the number of hours worked and the types of occupations in which participants were employed. According to PRI MIS data, participants worked an average of 32 hours during their first full week of employment. The jobs that most of the participants obtained were in production, food service and production, sales, and construction and extraction occupations; as discussed earlier, these are the occupations in which most participants were employed prior to incarceration. As discussed in Chapter V, NPRIR job developers reported that these occupations were popular among NPRIR participants because they are associated with industries in which managers and owners are more willing to hire ex-offenders, and because many participants had work experience in these occupations.

**Exhibit VI-3:
Hours Worked and Occupations for those Placed in Jobs**

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDC	Goodwill	America Works	
Number of participants	115	98	111	89	372	45	830
Hours worked during the first full week at initial placement (mean)	34.0	34.6	31.8	27.5	31.7	33.8	32.0
Occupation of initial placement							
Production	73.9%	25.5%	9.0%	1.1%	59.1%	0	41.1%
Food preparation and serving related	12.2%	19.4%	17.1%	16.9%	10.2%	22.2%	13.9%
Sales and related	3.5%	5.1%	10.8%	16.9%	10.5%	26.7%	10.5%
Construction and extraction	1.7%	9.2%	20.7%	33.7%	3.2%	0	9.2%
Transportation and material moving	1.7%	14.3%	16.2%	3.4%	31.1%	5.4%	8.6%
Building, grounds cleaning, and maintenance	3.5%	9.2%	17.1%	16.9%	3.8%	11.1%	7.1%
Installation, maintenance, and repair	0	5.1%	4.5%	0	1.6%	4.4%	2.2%

Source: PRI MIS

* Not all occupations are included, so percentages may not total 100%.

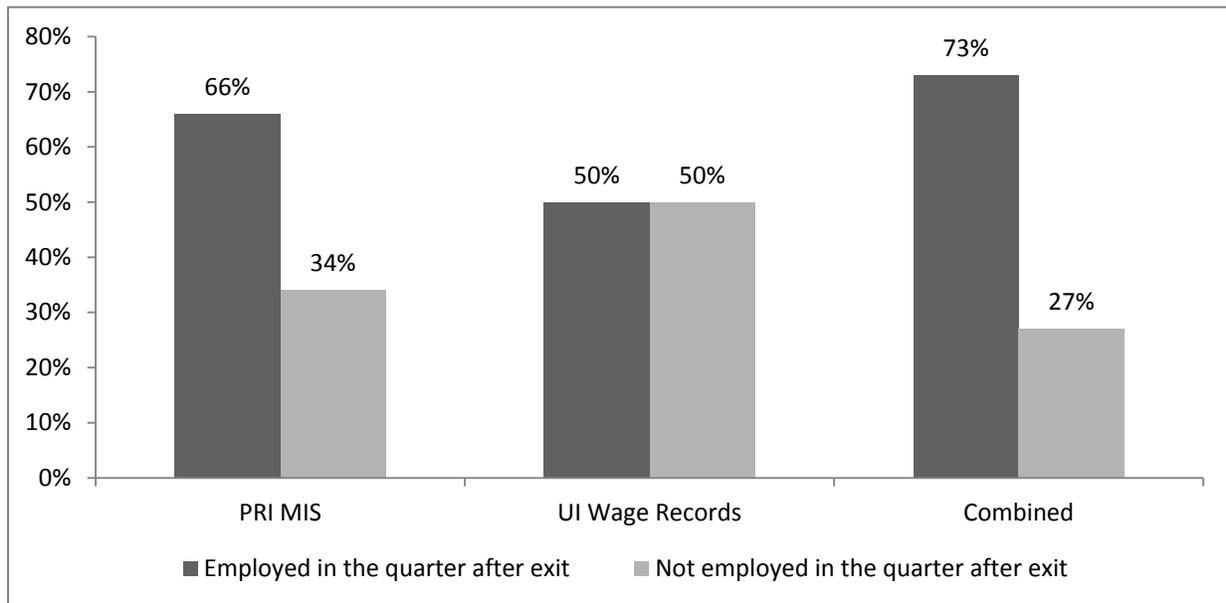
As discussed in Chapter II, the evaluation collected data on participants' employment outcomes from the PRI MIS and then supplemented these with UI wage data collected from NJ DOL. Exhibit VI-4 displays data on participants' employment outcomes in the quarter after they exited the program according to each of these data sources, and with these sources combined.⁷²

According to the PRI MIS, 66 percent of NPRIR participants obtained employment.⁷³ However, UI wage records indicated that only 50 percent of participants obtained employment in occupations covered by the UI system. This discrepancy may be due to the fact that the PRI MIS likely recorded participants as employed who were not captured in New Jersey's UI wage records because they were employed in nearby state or working in the informal economy.

⁷² Employment in the quarter after exit is calculated only for participants who had exited the program early enough for a sufficient amount of time to elapse in order to overcome time lags in the availability of UI wage records. As such, these data were not available for 11 percent of participants. In addition, employed in the quarter after exit is calculated only for those participants who were unemployed at program enrollment.

⁷³ Participants were categorized as not employed in the quarter after exit if the provider was unsuccessful in contacting the participant to verify employment.

**Exhibit VI-4:
Employment in the Quarter after Exit, by Data Source†**



† For all data sources and the combined variable n=950.

In an attempt to get the most accurate employment rate in the quarter following exit, these data sources were combined.⁷⁴ According to the combined data, 73 percent of participants were employed. This rate exceeds the program’s performance benchmark of placing 60 percent of participants in employment.

Considered individually, all providers but NJISJ exceeded the performance benchmark of 60 percent when using the combined data to determine the employment rate, as shown in Exhibit VI-5. Goodwill boasted the highest employment rate (91 percent). As mentioned above, NJISJ struggled with placing its participants in unsubsidized employment, thus it is not surprising that it has the lowest rate of employment.

⁷⁴ The combined employment in the quarter after exit variable counts an individual as employed if data from either PRI MIS or UI Wage Records indicate that was the case.

**Exhibit VI-5:
Employment in the Quarter after Exit, by Provider**

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDCC	Goodwill†	America Works	
Number of participants	147	149	115	118	359	62	950
PRI MIS Data	50.3%	34.2%	64.3%	59.3%	89.7%	59.7%	66.1%
UI Wage Records	47.6%	47.0%	56.5%	33.1%	55.7%	43.5%	49.6%
Combined	61.9%	51.7%	68.7%	62.7%	91.4%	67.7%	72.7%

† The employment rate in the quarter after exit in UI wage records is likely to be artificially low because of the issues this provider had with the PRI MIS erroneously exiting participants before they were finished receiving services.

On average, NPRIR participants earned \$9.13 per hour in their first employment placements, which was \$1.88 over the minimum wage of \$7.25 (as of March 2011). NJISJ’s participants averaged the highest hourly wage. While NJISJ had the lowest placement rate according to the PRI MIS (as shown above), the participants whom they did place earned more on average than did participants from other providers. Participants who retained employment for two quarters after their exit quarter had average earnings of \$8,909. Overall, NPRIR missed meeting the performance benchmark for average earnings of \$9,360.⁷⁵

**Exhibit VI-6:
Earnings**

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDCC	Goodwill	America Works	
PRI MIS Data							
Number of participants	115	98	111	89	372	45	830
Hourly wage at initial placement (mean)	\$8.65	\$9.68	\$8.99	\$8.66	\$9.31	\$8.89	\$9.13
UI Wage Records							
Number of participants	19	14	20	11	72	7	143
Average Earnings	\$8,488	\$11,802	\$8,451	\$6,004	\$8,982	\$9,389	\$8,909

According to the NPRIR performance benchmark, 70 percent of the participants employed during the quarter after exit should retain employment for the following two quarters. When the PRI MIS and UI wage records are combined, the retention rate for the program overall—69 percent retention—just missed meeting this performance benchmark (Exhibit VI-7).⁷⁶ However,

⁷⁵ Individual providers’ average earnings should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of participants who contributed to this measure for each provider.

⁷⁶ The combined retention variable counts an individual as retained if data from either PRI MIS or UI wage records indicate that was the case.

when compared to participants from first generation PRI grantees, NPRIR had a slightly better retention rate. Goodwill had the highest retention rate (80 percent) among the providers.⁷⁷

Provider staff members noted that NPRIR participants struggled with retaining employment. Part of these challenges associated with retention, may be due to the fact that many of the available jobs were in suburban areas outside of Newark and obtaining transportation to these areas was often challenging for participants. While many providers gave participants transportation assistance to get to work during the initial few weeks of employment, after they had received a couple of paychecks these participants were expected to pay for transportation costs on their own.

Exhibit VI-7: Employment Retention

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDC	Goodwill	America Works	
Number of participants	59	44	44	53	281	33	514
Retained in employment in the two quarters after exit	67.8%	31.8%	63.6%	52.8%	80.4%	51.5%	68.7%

Source: Combination of PRI MIS Data and UI wage records.

Recidivism

As with the employment data, PRI MIS data on participants’ recidivism were supplemented with data collected from several criminal justice agencies in New Jersey. Using these data, recidivism outcomes were analyzed for participants in the year following their release from incarceration.⁷⁸ For the purposes of this report, participants were considered to have recidivated if they had been re-arrested for a new crime or reincarcerated for a violation of the conditions of community supervision (e.g., parole or probation).

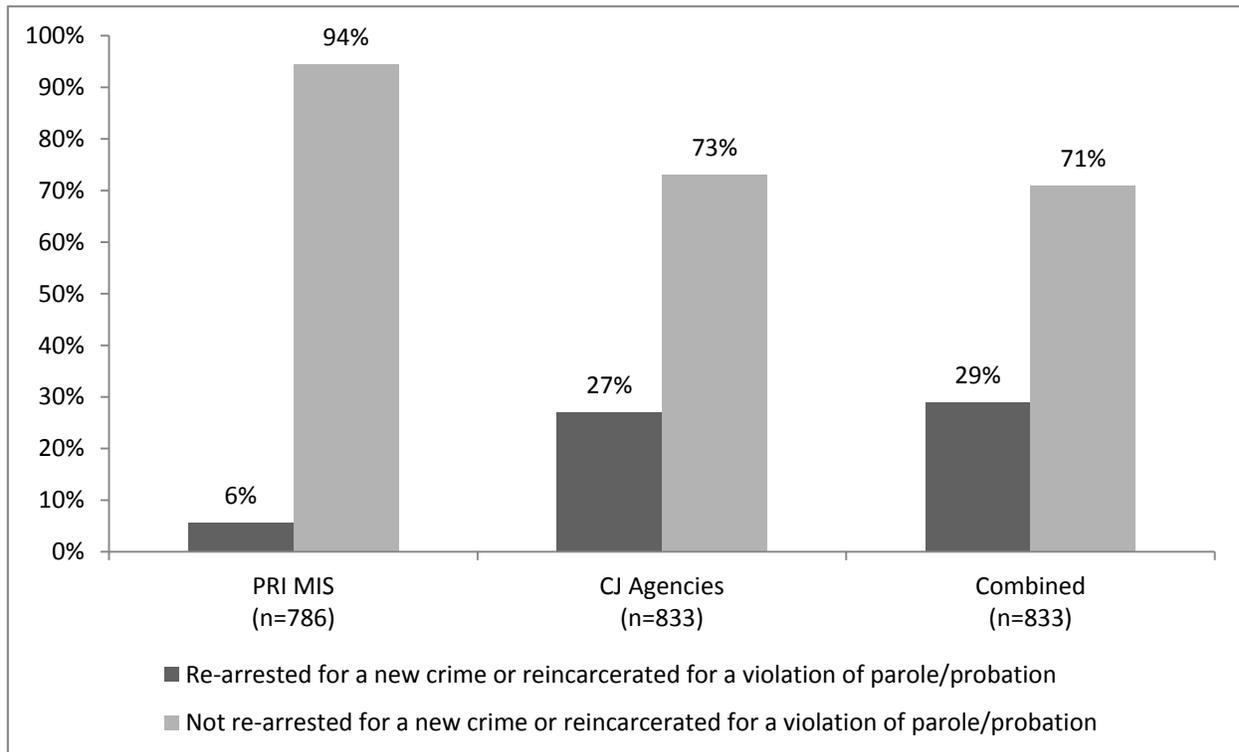
Exhibit VI-8 displays information on participants’ recidivism outcomes following enrollment in NPRIR according to each of these data sources and in combination. According to data in the PRI MIS, only six percent of NPRIR participants were re-arrested or reincarcerated. However, data from state criminal justice agencies indicate that the program’s recidivism rate was much higher

⁷⁷ Other than Goodwill, providers had small numbers of participants for which data on retention were available. Therefore, their retention rates should be treated with caution.

⁷⁸ Recidivism rates only pertain to participants who reached the 12-month mark after release from incarceration. Additionally, participants who have passed the 12-month mark prior to NPRIR enrollment were excluded from the recidivism calculation.

(27 percent).⁷⁹ When these data sources are combined, the recidivism rate increases to 29 percent overall, exceeding the 22 percent recidivism rate cap the city set as its performance benchmark.⁸⁰

**Exhibit VI-8:
Recidivism Rates at One Year after Release**



The difference in the recidivism rates from these two data sources suggest that NPRIR provider staff members faced challenges in accurately verifying and recording the recidivism status of their participants and thus may have severely underreported recidivism in the PRI MIS. Around the time providers began recording recidivism rates in the PRI MIS, the Office of Re-entry discovered that many of them were unsure about how to do this. In response, the office provided some technical assistance to help providers improve the collection of these outcomes; however, the discrepancies between data sources suggest that providers could have used more support. As

⁷⁹ Participants who were arrested for a new crime and had the charges dismissed are not considered to have recidivated. Due to the nature and timing of the data obtained from criminal justice agencies, these dismissals may be undercounted. In addition, due to the nature of the data collected, the recidivism rate may have included a few people that were reincarcerated for brief periods in Residential Assessment Centers and whom the City of Newark did not consider recidivists under their program definitions.

⁸⁰ The combined recidivism variable counts an individual as recidivated if data from PRI MIS *or* any of the criminal justice agencies indicate that an individual was re-arrested for a new crime or reincarcerated for a violation of parole/probation.

noted in Holl, et al (2009), many of the first generation of PRI grantees also struggled with verifying and documenting the recidivism of their participants.

As shown in Exhibit VI-9, recidivism rates using the combination of data sources range from 20 percent for La Casa’s participants to 37 percent for participants of RCDCC. According to this measure, only La Casa met the performance benchmark set for recidivism. Part of the reason for La Casa’s relatively low recidivism rate may be that the vast majority of La Casa’s participants were strictly supervised halfway house residents unlikely to have opportunities to commit crimes. Of the providers, OAR and La Casa had the smallest percentage differences between the recidivism rates calculated from PRI MIS and the combined measures, suggesting that their staff members were diligent about capturing recidivism outcomes data accurately. Although OAR had the highest recidivism rate according to data in the PRI MIS, when these data were combined with data from criminal justice agencies, the rate was not dissimilar to that of other providers.

**Exhibit VI-9:
Recidivism Rates At One Year after Release, by Provider**

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDCC	Goodwill	America Works	
PRI MIS Data							
Number of participants	74	84	92	120	392	24	790
Percent recidivated	4.1%	6.0%	15.2%	5.0%	3.6%	8.3%	5.6%
Criminal Justice Agencies							
Number of participants	81	102	92	121	394	43	833
Percent recidivated	19.8%	22.5%	21.7%	37.2%	28.4%	23.3%	27.1%
Combined							
Number of participants	81	102	92	121	394	43	833
Percent recidivated	19.8%	23.5%	30.4%	37.2%	29.7%	25.6%	28.9%

Using data from both the PRI MIS and criminal justice agencies, Exhibit VI-10 presents the ways in which NPRIR participants were involved with the criminal justice system in the year following their release from incarceration. Most of the participants who recidivated were re-arrested for a new crime (25 percent) rather than reincarcerated for a violation of community supervision (9 percent). Although it does not count toward recidivism, the data indicate that 85 percent of participants committed some kind of lesser violation of parole/probation that did not lead to incarceration. By contrast, Holl et al. (2009) reported that very few first generation participants committed other violations. This high rate of other violations among NPRIR participants may indicate that ex-offenders in Newark had difficulty staying out of trouble.

However, these findings may also indicate that the culture of supervision in Newark is such that parole/probation officers are more likely to cite participants for minor violations.

**Exhibit VI-10:
Criminal Justice Activity during the Year Following Release**

Characteristic	City-Funded Providers				Nicholson-Funded Providers		Total
	La Casa	NJISJ	OAR	RCDCC	Goodwill	America Works	
Number of participants	81	102	92	121	394	43	833
Arrested for a new crime	19.8%	20.6%	22.8%	33.9%	25.1%	25.6%	25.1%
Reincarcerated for a violation of parole/probation	1.2%	3.9%	10.9%	10.7%	10.9%	2.3%	8.6%
Other violations of parole/probation but not incarcerated	87.7%	73.5%	75.0%	92.6%	90.9%	53.5%	85.0%

Data on the timing of participants’ re-arrests or reincarcerations are presented in Exhibit VI-11. On average, recidivating participants were re-arrested for a new crime or reincarcerated for a violation of parole/probation at the seven-month mark following their release from incarceration and five months following the beginning of NPRIR participation. Participants may be especially motivated to stay out of trouble just following release from incarceration, as suggested by the lower recidivism rates in the early months following release. Thus, this period may be an opportune time for providers to focus on enrolling ex-offenders in their programs.

These findings also suggest that NPRIR providers had a significant amount of time to provide participants with interventions aimed at preventing recidivism. However, because the average program length was just over three months, it is likely that most recidivism occurred after participants’ most active participation in the program. Thus, the lower percentage of participants recidivating within the months immediately following NPRIR enrollment might indicate that the intensive services provided at the beginning of programs did indeed help participants avoid recidivating.

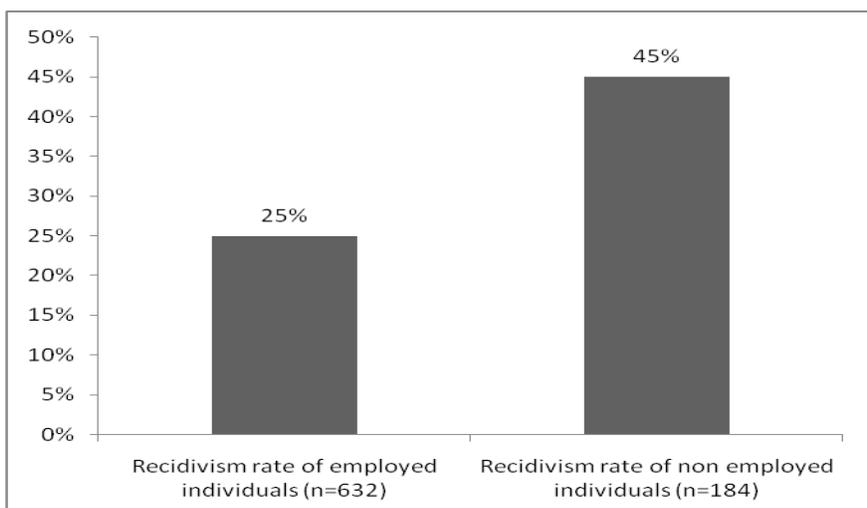
Exhibit VI-11: Timing of Recidivism

Characteristic	Total
Number of recidivists	241
Months between release and re-arrest or reincarceration	
Less than 3 months	12.0%
3 to 5 months	29.0%
6 to 8 months	29.0%
9 to 12 months	29.9%
Average number of months	6.8
Months between NPRIR enrollment and re-arrest or reincarceration	
Less than 2 months	17.4%
2 to 3 months	27.8%
4 to 5 months	15.8%
6 to 8 months	22.4%
9 months or more	16.6%
Average number of months	5.1

Employment and Recidivism

To explore the relationship of employment to recidivism, the recidivism rates of employed and not employed NPRIR participants were compared. As shown in Exhibit VI-12, the recidivism rate of those participants who obtained employment was 25 percent as compared to 45 percent for those who did not obtain employment.

**Exhibit VI-12:
Recidivism by Employment Status in the Year Following Release†**



† Outcomes in this exhibit were calculated using combined measures from all data sources—PRI MIS and workforce and criminal justice agencies.

Previous research suggests that employment may be most important for preventing recidivism for individuals 27 years or older (Uggen, 2000). Because NPRIR served older participants (average age of nearly 36), these findings suggest that for the average NPRIR participant obtaining employment may be correlated with lower recidivism.

Subgroup analyses were conducted to explore the relationship of selected participant characteristics with employment and recidivism outcomes.⁸¹ These analyses, presented in the following exhibit (VI-13), indicate that women were as likely to be employed as men, but earned slightly lower wages. African-American participants had a lower rate of employment than non-African-Americans. As expected, participants with high school diplomas or GEDs had a somewhat higher employment rate than participants without such credentials. Participants who were at least 27 years old had higher rates of placement in employment and earned more, on average, at their initial placements than younger participants.

Participants who had a violent presenting offense and had spent a year or more incarcerated in their lifetimes had a higher rate of placement than their counterparts. Provider staff members indicated that participants who were violent offenders or had been incarcerated for a significant period of time were especially motivated to turn their lives around and succeed in the labor market despite numerous challenges, such as lacking the necessary skills to conduct successful job searches and employers often being less willing to hire individuals convicted of violent offenses.

Halfway house residents also secured employment at a higher rate than other participants did. While many providers discussed the challenges associated with placing halfway house residents in jobs, this finding suggests that the providers were able to work around such restrictions. In spite of the restrictions, these participants had a number of other supports provided to them in the halfway houses that may have made them more employable than other participants, such as stable housing, substance abuse counseling, and other services. However, these participants earned lower average hourly wages than participants not residing in halfway houses.

⁸¹ “Employed in the quarter of exit” and “Re-arrested for a new crime or reincarcerated for a violation of parole/probation” include data from the PRI MIS and supplemental data from workforce and criminal justice agencies. “Hourly wage at initial placement” was used instead of average earnings because of the small number of participants for which average earnings were available. Tests of significance are not appropriate given that these analyses include the universe of NPRIR participants.

**Exhibit VI-13:
Outcomes by Selected Participant Characteristics**

	Employed in the quarter after exit		Hourly wage at initial placement		Re-arrested for a new crime or reincarcerated for a violation of parole/probation	
	Percent	Number	Average Wage	Number	Percent	Number
Gender						
Male	72.7%	895	\$9.17	768	29.7%	789
Female	72.7%	55	\$8.61	62	15.9%	44
Difference	0		\$0.56		13.8%	
Age						
Less than 27 years	64.2%	162	\$8.90	392	38.3%	406
27 years or more	74.5%	787	\$9.17	437	26.8%	426
Difference	-10.3%		-\$0.27		11.5%	
Race						
African-American	71.5%	799	\$9.15	703	30.2%	698
Non-African-American	79.5%	151	\$9.01	127	22.2%	138
Difference	-8.0%		\$0.14		8.0%	
Violent offender						
Yes	89.6%	318	\$9.21	313	30.4%	372
No	64.2%	632	\$9.07	517	27.8%	461
Difference	25.4%		\$0.14		2.6%	
Had H.S. Diploma/GED at enrollment						
Yes	77.7%	421	\$9.19	391	27.9%	348
No	68.3%	499	\$9.11	410	29.8%	459
Difference	9.4%		\$0.08		-1.9%	
In halfway house at enrollment						
Yes	82.4%	443	\$9.00	403	24.2%	314
No	53.4%	507	\$9.24	427	32.0%	516
Difference	29.0%		-\$0.24		-7.8%	
On community supervision at enrollment						
Yes	78.6%	725	\$9.16	673	28.8%	649
No	53.8%	225	\$8.90	157	29.8%	181
Difference	24.8%		\$0.26		-1.0%	
Total time incarcerated in lifetime						
Less than one year	64.4%	174	\$9.05	139	35.5%	110
One year or more	74.6%	776	\$9.14	691	28.1%	720
Difference	-10.2%		-\$0.09		7.4%	

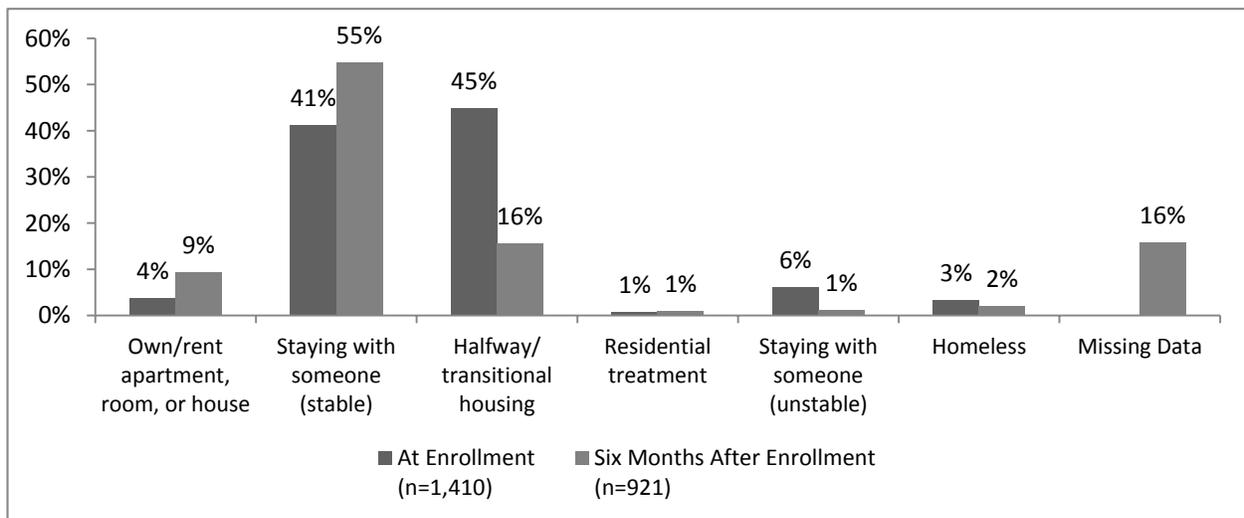
Participants on community supervision also had a much higher rate of employment than those not on such supervision. This may be a reflection of participants having to secure employment to fulfill requirements of their supervision. These individuals also earned higher wages at placement than participants not on community supervision.

Regarding recidivism outcomes, halfway house residents had lower recidivism rates than non-halfway house residents; this is likely due in part to the restrictive nature of their supervision. Participants who had spent at least one year incarcerated in their lifetime also had lower rates of recidivism than those who had spent less time incarcerated. Men, participants under the age of 27, and black participants had higher instances of recidivism than their counterparts.

Housing and Substance Abuse

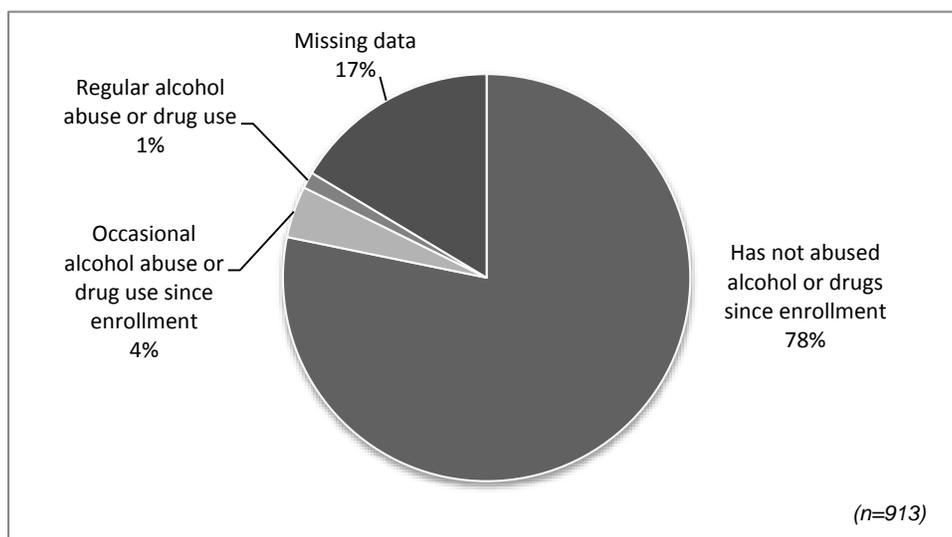
NPRIR participants were assessed at six months after enrollment to determine if they had been able to obtain stable housing and abstain from abusing drugs and/or alcohol. Providers captured housing status data for 84 percent of all participants who had reached their six-month points by the time data were collected for this analysis. These data show an increase in the number of participants in stable housing during the six-month period after enrollment. Fewer participants were living in halfway houses or transitional housing at the six-month point, likely because they had been released from their restrictive housing situations during the first six months of their enrollment in NPRIR. These findings indicate that despite providers complaining about the lack of appropriate housing, enough housing opportunities were available to allow an improvement in participants' situations.

**Exhibit VI-14:
Housing Status at Six Months after Enrollment**



At intake, only six percent of participants admitted to using drugs or abusing alcohol in the three months prior to enrollment. Similarly, at the six-month assessment point, only five percent of participants reported at least occasional alcohol abuse or drug use. Outwardly, this indicates that NPRIR had no effect on the percentage of participants using drugs or abusing alcohol. It is important to note, however, that there is quite a bit of missing data. In addition, as mentioned earlier, the self-reported nature of these data allow for under-reporting of drug use and alcohol abuse, and some participants may have been more inclined to make honest reports after participation in the program than they were at intake.

**Exhibit VI-15:
Substance Abuse at Six Months after Enrollment**



Comparisons to Other PRI Populations

A key point of the evaluation was to determine if NPRIR was able to replicate the PRI model and yield outcomes similar to those of other PRI grantees. Therefore, as a last step in the analysis, the outcomes of NPRIR participants were compared to those of participants enrolled in similar PRI programs. These multivariate analyses compare the outcomes of NPRIR participants that were captured in the PRI MIS—placement in employment, initial wage rate at placement, and recidivism—with the analogous outcomes of past participants of PRI in Newark (Generation 1) and participants served by other PRI grantees that operated in the same period as NPRIR (Generation 3) while controlling for a variety of participant characteristics and community-level factors that may have influenced outcomes.⁸²

⁸² For a more detailed discussion of these analyses, as well as the regression tables, please refer to Appendix A.

NPRIR participants were more likely to obtain employment than the Newark Generation 1 participants, but were less likely to be employed than Generation 3 participants.⁸³ This suggests that there may be location-specific factors at work in Newark that could not be controlled for in the analysis. In addition, because NPRIR was using a community saturation model, there were six times the number of program participants competing for jobs in Newark than there were in any of the other grantee communities, including Generation 1 Newark. Given this increased competition for jobs, the placement rate for NPRIR as compared to that for Generation 1 Newark grantees is all that more impressive.

On the other outcomes measures—wage rate at initial placement and recidivism—there were no significant differences between NPRIR participants and the participants of the other two groups. This indicates that when NPRIR participants were placed in employment, the jobs they obtained were paid comparable to those obtained by other PRI grantees' participants. The findings also indicate that NPRIR was able to provide its participants with the supports necessary to keep recidivism rates equivalent to those achieved by other PRI grantees.

On the whole, these findings suggest that, despite worsened economic conditions, the Office of Re-entry was successful in achieving outcomes as least as positive as those of the previous PRI grantees.

Summary

Overall, the findings from this chapter indicate that NPRIR was relatively successful in meeting project goals, and that project participants were able to achieve similar or better outcomes than Generation 1 Newark grantees' participants despite a worsened labor market.

Data from the PRI MIS and UI wage records were analyzed to determine the outcomes of NPRIR participants on a number of employment measures. Data from the PRI MIS indicated that 62 percent of participants were placed in unsubsidized employment during their participation in NPRIR. Despite the somewhat dire economic circumstances that prevailed during NPRIR implementation, these placement figures are similar to those reported for the first generation of PRI grantees in 2008. On average, NPRIR participants earned \$9.13 per hour in their first employment placements, which was \$1.88 over the minimum wage of \$7.25 (as of March 2011). The jobs that most of the participants obtained were in production, food service and production, sales, and construction and extraction occupations. This is likely because employers in these industries had been willing to hire ex-offenders in the past. In addition, many participants had

⁸³ The regression tables, as well as additional discussion of the multivariate analyses, are presented in Appendix A.

work experience in these occupations and preferred them because they expressed interest in jobs that involved working with their hands.

Combined data from the PRI MIS and UI wage records show that 73 percent of participants were employed in their first quarter after program exit. This rate exceeds the program's performance benchmark of placing 60 percent of participants in employment. The retention rate for the program overall—69 percent retention—just missed meeting this performance benchmark of 70 percent established for the program. However, when compared to participants from first generation PRI grantees, NPRIR had a slightly better retention rate. Participants who retained employment for two quarters after their exit quarter had average earnings of \$8,909. Overall, NPRIR missed meeting the performance benchmark for average earnings of \$9,360.

Data from the PRI MIS combined with data from several criminal justice agencies indicate that approximately 29 percent of NPRIR participants recidivated, exceeding the 22 percent recidivism rate the city set as its performance benchmark. Most of the participants who recidivated were re-arrested for a new crime (25 percent) rather than reincarcerated for a violation of community supervision (9 percent). On average, recidivating participants were re-arrested for a new crime or reincarcerated for a violation of parole/probation at the seven-month mark following their release from incarceration and five months following the beginning of NPRIR participation.

Compared to Generation 1 Newark grantees' participants, NPRIR participants performed better in terms of placement in employment. Even though the NPRIR participants were not as successful as participants from Generation 3 grantees in employment placement, some location-specific conditions may have been the cause. Although with the inclusion of data from criminal justice agencies NPRIR did not meet its performance benchmark for recidivism, it performed as well as other PRI grantees when the comparison is based solely on data captured in the PRI MIS. Given the challenges providers faced in collecting recidivism data, as noted by Holl et al. (2009), had data been collected from local criminal justice agencies for each of the comparison programs, it seems likely that these grantees would have had higher recidivism rates as well.

VII. CONCLUSION

With a large number of ex-offenders returning to Newark and the serious re-entry challenges faced by those individuals, the City of Newark and its Office of Re-entry implemented NPRIR and attempted to use NPRIR to realize a PRI “community-saturation model.” This chapter provides an overview of the outcomes achieved by NPRIR and summarizes the lessons that have emerged from the city’s experiences.

Participant-Level Outcomes

Individual-level outcomes were analyzed to determine how well NPRIR participants performed in obtaining employment and avoiding recidivism.

Regarding employment following program participation, 73 percent of participants were employed in their first quarter after program exit, exceeding the program’s performance benchmark of placing 60 percent. NPRIR’s retention rate of 69 percent retention just missed meeting the 70 percent performance benchmark. The average earnings of project participants (\$8,909) was lower than the performance benchmark set for the project (\$9,360).

Data from the PRI MIS combined with data from several criminal justice agencies indicate that the recidivism rate of NPRIR participants was 29 percent, exceeding the 22 percent recidivism rate cap the city set as its performance benchmark.

While not meeting all of the performance benchmarks set out for the program, NPRIR participants had comparable or better outcomes on employment and recidivism than past PRI participants in the City of Newark, despite challenging local economic and community-level conditions.

Program-Level Outcomes

The following section highlights the most notable challenges faced and accomplishments achieved from the City of Newark’s implementation of the PRI model on a city-wide scale.

Challenges

- **Implementation was impacted by challenges related to fiscal management.** The finalization of city-funded providers' contracts was delayed by several months. The city experienced major delays with finalizing sub-contracts with NPRIR service providers. As a result of this, NPRIR implementation was slowed, and, in some cases, service providers were serving participants without a contract. For smaller providers, performance based contracts put a strain on their budgets because reimbursements were withheld until the achievement of the benchmarks can be ascertained, which in some cases took a considerable amount of time. In addition, the use of performance-based contracts may have contributed to the prevalence of suitability screening among NPRIR providers, which may have used these screenings to recruit individuals whom they believed would be more likely to contribute to the achievement of their program's performance benchmarks.
- **NPRIR service providers struggled with entering data correctly into the PRI MIS and could have used additional technical assistance.** Because many NPRIR service providers had never before used a data management system as complex as the PRI MIS, they faced some challenges in understanding how to properly enter data into the system. The most significant of these challenges related to the recording of services provided to participants. P/PV, in conjunction with an ETA consultant, provided MIS training to NPRIR service providers in the beginning of implementation as well as closer to the end of the grant. While providers thought this training was helpful, some commented that trainings were delivered too early (before they had enough time to understand the system) and too late to remedy a number of issues that had already occurred.
- **Maintaining contact with participants following employment or exit was challenging and affected the program's ability to collect comprehensive outcomes data.** Some case managers struggled to maintain follow-up contact with participants after they exited from the program, making it difficult for them to obtain accurate employment information. As a way of motivating participants to check-in with staff to update employment outcomes, one provider paid its participants incentives for retaining employment following program exit. In addition, although ETA guidelines indicated that recidivism outcomes should be validated for all participants using some form of documentation, it was unclear whether providers used these sources for validation or simply relied on participants' self-reports.
- **Mentoring was provided, but usually in a group-based format.** Although all providers intended to implement one-on-one mentoring programs, only the two providers with previous mentoring experience were able to do so. Because they found volunteer mentors difficult to recruit, the other providers eventually determined that the group mentoring format was easier to implement than the individual approach. By the end of the grant period, however, all of the providers that decided to incorporate mentoring of some type into their service models had functioning programs. Although some participants were hesitant to enroll in mentoring programs, provider staff members and participants noted the usefulness of these programs in providing emotional support and strengthening life and interpersonal skills.

- **Collaboration with partners took a significant investment of resources and thus finding ample resources to dedicate to fostering, developing, and maintaining these partnerships was challenging.** A lack of staff capacity and lay-offs diminished NewarkWORKS's ability to fully engage in NPRIR at the level originally intended. In addition, leadership turnover set back or slowed down the process of partnership development with several of the Office of Re-entry's partners, including NJ DOC, NJ SPB, and NewarkWORKS, which experienced high-level leadership turnover during the implementation of NPRIR. Additionally, unlike the first generation PRI/RExO grants, in the case of NPRIR, there was no accompanying grant to the state department of corrections (NJ DOC). Accordingly, this lack of financial resources tied to NPRIR affected NJ DOC's ability to work collaboratively with the Office of Re-entry on NPRIR.
- **Efforts to have partners supplement providers' services were less fruitful than hoped.** Recognizing that partners could augment NPRIR providers' services, the Office of Re-entry engaged NewarkWORKS and NJ DOL to supplement the providers' workforce development services through the One-Stop Career Center. Despite the Office of Re-entry's relatively strong connection with NewarkWORKS, NPRIR participants did not heavily utilize One-Stop Career Center services. This was largely because the NPRIR providers tended to offer some similar services in-house, and providers did not believe that the One-Stop services added significant value to the services they provided. In a few cases, however, participants utilized NewarkWORKS services to obtain OJT. The Office of Re-entry also partnered with NewarkWORKS to supplement the job development conducted by each NPRIR provider's job developers, but the level of job development support that NewarkWORKS could provide was hampered by layoffs and by competing demands on staff members' time.

Accomplishments

- **Despite a slow start, the NPRIR program was able to achieve its enrollment goals.** Despite a slow start and some challenges with one of the providers in achieving their specific target, enrollment goals were exceeded for the NPRIR project as a whole.
- **Intensive case management was strong.** Overall, staff members and participants indicated that intensive case management was the cornerstone of the NPRIR programs. Since case managers were participants' main points of contact with their respective providers, their work was important to the retention and success of NPRIR participants. Case managers also served in a variety of roles—service-broker, career counselor, informal mentor, and (at some providers) job developer or workforce services trainer. Case managers were dedicated advocates who provided participants with programmatic *and* emotional support and helped them build interpersonal as well as workforce skills.
- **Job development was successful by the end of the grant despite the context of a challenging labor market.** Because NPRIR was functioning in a particularly difficult economic climate, job developers faced significant challenges in finding appropriate employment opportunities for participants. However, with the help of

technical assistance from the city (e.g., city-organized job developer meetings during which provider staff members could share job leads) and P/PV, the job development efforts of providers improved. To adjust for the limited number of openings in Newark, job developers expanded their search area beyond Newark and into the outlying areas of Essex and other adjacent counties. Together, increased technical assistance and aggressive job development tactics likely contributed to the providers' achievement of a placement rate that exceeded 60 percent.

- **The Office of Re-entry successfully secured additional funding to support NPRIR.** The Office of Re-entry was very successful in obtaining additional funding to supplement the ETA grant, securing pledges from foundations in match funding for NPRIR, mostly from the Nicholson Foundation, and in-kind support for the NPRIR grant from NJ DOL and NJSPB. The city also obtained grants from US DOJ and the Manhattan Institute to support Office of Re-entry staffing. Utilizing multiple funding sources to support re-entry efforts was critical for ensuring the continuity of Office of Re-entry staffing amidst a period of economic hardship for the City of Newark. Additionally, because the city could not serve violent offenders with ETA grant funds, the private philanthropic funds allowed the city to expand the target group to include violent offenders.
- **The Office of Re-entry was able to strengthen its ability to monitor providers and provide them with technical assistance.** Early in the project, the Office of Re-entry developed policies and guidelines to direct the implementation of the NPRIR as part of its management role. Throughout the project, the Office of Re-entry also monitored the city- and match-funded NPRIR service providers to ensure their practices complied with city and ETA guidelines and to track their achievement of performance benchmarks. While information supplied by P/PV was initially used to conduct this monitoring task, the Office of Re-entry later took over much of the direct communication with providers about their compliance and technical assistance needs. Similarly, the Office of Re-entry initially relied heavily on P/PV to provide technical assistance to providers. However, during the course of NPRIR, Office of Re-entry staff members built their capacity to provide technical assistance on their own, garnering praise from the FBCOs for the assistance provided.
- **The Office of Re-entry developed key referral partnerships and became an important referral source in its own right.** The Office of Re-entry focused its efforts on developing a strong partnership with NJ SPB because of the agency's access to a large number of potential NPRIR participants, and signed an MOA with the agency to guide the referral process with NPRIR service providers. Additionally, the Office of Re-entry helped NPRIR providers develop agreements with halfway houses/CRCs that allowed them to receive referrals from these sources. In addition to directly coordinating the relationships between some of the halfway houses/CRCs and NPRIR providers, the Office of Re-entry created several opportunities for halfway houses/CRCs and NPRIR providers to come together as a group. The development of these opportunities was sparked by a need to address initial challenges in the relationship between halfway houses/CRCs and NPRIR. The Office of Re-entry also took on the role of managing the NPRIR referral process at Opportunity Reconnect. In addition, the Office of Re-entry implemented a process for referring individual

who dropped into their offices to NPRIR service providers or other services. During the course of the project, these referrals grew from a small number at the beginning to more 100 per month, making the Office of Re-entry one of the largest referrers to NPRIR providers.

System-level Outcomes

While the Office of Re-entry was initially focused on program-level tasks—that is, implementing and managing the NPRIR project itself—the mayor’s overall vision for the grant also included using NPRIR as a launching pad to help Newark build the infrastructure of a unified, citywide system of re-entry support services. By the conclusion of the NPRIR grant, the City of Newark, largely through the efforts of the Office of Re-entry, appeared have made some significant steps toward developing such as system. The following section highlights some of the challenges faced in the development of such as system, as well as the progress made in achieving these broader goals.

Challenges

- **While the bases for successful future partnerships were aided by the NPRIR grants, some still require considerable work.** While during NPRIR the Office of Re-entry had a good partnership with NewarkWORKS, the breadth of services that this agency was able to provide (i.e., through the One Stop Career Center and via the work of its job developers) was under-utilized. In addition, due to a lack of financial resources, NJ DOC’s ability to work collaboratively with the Office of Re-entry was hindered. Although the Office of Re-entry fostered working referral relationships with halfway houses/CRCs, there were still some challenges in coordinating services with these organizations and there was also the potential for redundancy in the provision of services. For example during NPRIR., halfway houses/CRCs, NPRIR service providers, and the One-Stop Career Center all provided workforce development services, so the added value of having individuals be served by all three was unclear.
- **Efforts to create a shared data system face some challenges.** Creating systems and policies to share data proved to be difficult during the grant due to issues surrounding what kind of data to share and how to share this data. Confidentiality laws and concerns around participant privacy restricted the kind of data that partners were willing to share. For example, NJ DOC was unwilling to provide information about all recently released prisoners to the Office of Re-entry. Even for data that partners were willing to share, creating systems to do so was challenging. Many of the organizations involved in NPRIR already had their own databases and saw having to use an additional database as overly burdensome. The Office of Re-entry will need to navigate these issues in attempting to construct the unified, re-entry data system it wishes to create.

Accomplishments

- **Key partnerships developed for NPRIR seem likely to remain in place and to be fruitful in the future.** NPRIR presented the City of Newark with the opportunity to develop partnerships with state and local agencies around issues of re-entry; these agencies included criminal justice agencies with whom strong relationships did not exist previously. The solid partnerships that developed are not likely to end with NPRIR funding. Rather, respondents indicated that the ties organizations have fostered through NPRIR will facilitate continued collaboration and coordination of services. For example, the Office of Re-entry and NJ SPB will continue to collaborate on the Second Chance grant received by the city.
- **The Office of Re-entry will take on an expanded role in the management of Opportunity Reconnect.** During NPRIR implementation, the Office of Re-entry placed its program manager at Opportunity Reconnect to supervise the ex-offender intake process and ensure that NPRIR providers received appropriate referrals from Opportunity Reconnect. As part of the block grant received from the Nicholson Foundation in January 2011, funding was provided for the city to take over all of the management duties of Opportunity Reconnect. Through this expanded role, the city will have direct supervision over the Opportunity Reconnect intake specialists and RAS, which will help the office coordinate with service providers and create a systematic referral process for individuals seeking re-entry services in Newark.
- **As the Office of Re-entry built its own re-entry capacity, its staff members became better situated to provide technical assistance on their own.** As discussed above, city staff members increased their capacity to monitor provider progress and provide in-house technical assistance. As a result, the city will likely invest in adding a staff member to the Office of Re-entry who will assume the technical assistance responsibilities for supporting re-entry service providers and use subject-matter consultants only as needed. This centralization of technical assistance functions in the Office of Re-entry will allow the office to continue to build its capacity and expertise in providing technical assistance and will ensure that its staff members understand fully service providers' operations and challenges.
- **The Office of Re-entry plans to create a sustainable data management system to be used in future re-entry efforts.** Prior to NPRIR, data collection on re-entry services and referrals was not a priority in Newark. However, due to the widespread use of data for NPRIR program management, the Office of Re-entry realized that having such a data management system for future re-entry efforts was critical for tracking the availability and effectiveness of services. The Office of Re-entry aims to make this new data management system even more comprehensive than the PRI MIS. To further this goal, the office proposed to use funds from the NJ DOL technical assistance grant to assess the existing data systems being used by agencies working in re-entry across Newark and use this knowledge to inform its development of a unified data system. The office wants the new data system to have the capability to track and share data and outcomes across multiple agencies, including criminal justice and workforce partners. At the time of the last site visit, RAS (the data system used at Opportunity Reconnect during the NPRIR grant) appeared to be the best existing platform from which to build this more comprehensive system.

- **The city developed a functioning system of fundraising to support re-entry efforts in Newark.** Because there was little possibility that city general funds would be available to support NPRIR beyond the period of the ETA grant, the Office of Re-entry sought other ways to sustain NPRIR financially. The Nicholson Foundation provided the Office of Re-entry with a \$1.5 million block grant in January 2011 to continue serving ex-offenders in Newark. The city also aggressively pursued other sources of funding to support its re-entry programming, such as the DOJ Second Chance Act grant. In addition, the Office of Re-entry coordinated with other city offices to take existing city funding sources and re-align them to support re-entry activities; this included, for example, changing the way the city awarded Community Development Block Grants and WIA funding so that these funding streams could be applied to re-entry activities. The Office of Re-entry also supported the efforts of individual service providers to seek funding on their own to sustain NPRIR services.

Lessons Learned

Several factors and approaches seemed to be particularly helpful in Newark during the process of planning for, implementing, and managing NPRIR and in attempting to implement coordinated citywide re-entry systems, as discussed below.

Leading Citywide Re-entry Initiatives

- **Creating an office dedicated to citywide re-entry efforts was important to effective NPRIR implementation and to coordinating re-entry efforts city-wide.** In Newark, the Office of Re-entry was the office dedicated to guiding the implementation of service components and fostering strategic partnerships. The Office of Re-entry was able to provide overarching guidance to providers to ensure that they were operating their programs in accordance with the PRI model. When providers struggled with implementing aspects of the model, the Office of Re-entry saw that they received technical assistance. The office's CRI also served as a key point of contact for partners and thus was effective in fostering strong partnerships with key criminal justice and workforce partners and bringing these partners, along with a variety of other stakeholders, together to work on developing and maintaining a truly integrated re-entry system.
- **Integrating the re-entry office into a city's governmental structure was advantageous to supporting re-entry efforts citywide.** Because the Office of Re-entry was integrated into Newark's Department of Economic and Housing Development, the CRI was able to collaborate with other city offices to ensure that re-entry priorities were integrated into other aspects of the city's agenda. For example, the CRI leveraged her position in the department to bring a re-entry focus into economic development activities within the city by pushing for the inclusion of re-entry priorities into other city projects. In addition, because the Office of Re-entry was housed under the same city department as the One-Stop Career Center operator (NewarkWORKS), the office was able to engage the workforce development system in NPRIR, especially in assisting providers with job development, providing OJT opportunities for participants, and using WIA funding for re-entry services. The

Office of Re-entry also leveraged its position in city government to encourage the city's development of occupational job training opportunities aimed at enrolling ex-offenders.

- **Because the city could not provide adequate funding, securing additional sources of funding to support the Office of Re-entry and its efforts was critical.** The City of Newark utilized funding from DOJ and foundations to support Office of Re-entry staffing during NPRIR, thereby ensuring it could retain staffing sufficient for overseeing the project despite citywide budget cuts and layoffs during the grant period. In addition, due to these city budget limitations, there was little possibility that city general funds would be available to support NPRIR beyond the period of the grant. Therefore, the Office of Re-entry also leveraged additional funding from the Nicholson Foundation to sustain NPRIR financially.
- **Continuity of strong leadership was crucial to the City of Newark to sustain its citywide re-entry efforts.** In Newark, because of the consistent leadership provided by the mayor and the CRI throughout the implementation of NPRIR, the city was able to work towards realizing the mayor's strategic vision of building a citywide re-entry system and strengthening its capacity to guide and support future re-entry efforts. In addition, the CRI fostered trusting relationships with re-entry partners and was able to bring re-entry stakeholders together in ways that had not occurred previously. Respondents felt that this improved capacity and strong partnerships increased the likelihood that the city would be successful in developing and maintaining a truly integrated re-entry system.
- **Although P/PV effectively fulfilled the technical assistance function at the beginning of NPRIR, the Office of Re-entry focused its resources on increasing the capacity of its staff members to become the sole providers of technical assistance.** At the beginning of NPRIR implementation, the Office of Re-entry was quite new itself and lacked the capacity to provide the assistance required by FBCOs. Consequently, it made sense that the city initially contracted with P/PV to provide this assistance. However, as NPRIR progressed and the Office of Re-entry built its own re-entry capacity, it became clear that city staff members had gained the ability to provide effective technical assistance. Additionally, because city staff members had strong relationships with providers and extensive knowledge of their programs, providers preferred to contact the Office of Re-entry with technical assistance needs.

Developing Partnerships

- **Because it can be difficult to develop partnerships, especially with criminal justice agencies, it is important for the Office of Re-entry to prioritize the development of relationships with key partners and involve them in re-entry initiatives from the beginning.** In Newark, because of limited capacity, it quickly became clear that the city needed to focus its criminal justice system partnership efforts on the partners that were most "ready" for a partnership and that could provide a large number of referrals for NPRIR. Consequently, the Office of Re-entry prioritized the development of a partnership with NJ SPB from the outset of the project during the design phase, and thus secured early buy-in from high-level leadership within NJ SPB. This buy-in was critical for building the organizational

will necessary for creating a streamlined referral process. City staff members specifically cited their decision to involve NJ SPB from the beginning of NPRIR as one reason for the strength of this partnership.

- **Engaging partners on multiple levels helped facilitate the coordination of referrals and services between organizations during NPRIR.** While the Office of Re-entry engaged the high-level leaders of partner agencies and organizations in order to develop a willingness to collaborate, actual referrals were made by partner staff members and staff members for agencies contracted with those partners who were working directly with ex-offenders. Thus, fostering relationships between these staff members and NPRIR provider staff members was as critical in facilitating the referral process as developing strong relationships with provider leadership.

Providing Services to Participants

- **Because FBCOs in NPRIR were competing for resources from their peers, they benefited from extra assistance in providing some services.** Because NPRIR involved multiple service providers, these providers were essentially competing with one another for resources; and this is especially true in the areas of mentor recruitment and job development. While it can be challenging for a single provider to recruit mentors or secure employment opportunities for participants, having multiple agencies in the community drawing from the same pool of resources makes these tasks even more difficult. The Office of Re-entry identified that job development was difficult for many providers and provided some additional technical assistance to help in this area. The Office of Re-entry convened monthly meetings of job developers during which providers shared job leads and exchanged promising practices for working with participants and employers. Provider staff indicated that these meetings fostered a spirit of collaboration and helped them in meeting their employment benchmarks. While the city and P/PV provided some technical assistance to providers in developing mentoring programs, most providers continued to struggle with mentor recruitment throughout implementation and could have used more targeted technical assistance in this area.
- **In order to identify a sufficient number of job prospects for their participants in a citywide re-entry program, NPRIR job developers devoted significant time to employer outreach.** Because Newark was such a difficult employment environment and numerous providers were competing for job leads, NPRIR job developers spent considerable time in the field tracking down job leads and developing personal relationships with employers. Job developers noted that this aggressive advocacy was important for securing employment placements for ex-offender participants.
- **Developing companion programs that engaged participants in employment was one strategy that the City of Newark used to combat the challenges ex-offenders face in obtaining experience in the workforce.** In Newark, the city worked to develop a transitional jobs and occupational training program aimed at serving ex-offenders. This program, run by GNC, provided immediate short-term employment to NPRIR participants. In addition, the city worked with the Office of Re-entry to coordinate a few different social venture occupational training opportunities for

NPRIR participants (i.e., eCAN, the PREP program, and Pest at Rest Newark) that provided ex-offenders with occupational training while serving the community.

Overall, implementation in a single city of a multiple prisoner re-entry programs following the PRI model was a challenging endeavor that required significant resources, strong leadership, and persistence. It resulted in positive outcomes for participating ex-offenders in a very challenging economic environment. While Newark's success in coordinating and expanding re-entry services is as yet unknown, its experience with NPRIR provides many useful lessons for other localities trying to create integrated services for large numbers of returning ex-offenders.

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APPENDIX A: REGRESSION TABLES

As discussed in Chapter VI, data captured in the PRI MIS were used in multivariate analyses to compare the outcomes of NPRIR participants with past participants of PRI in Newark (Generation 1) and participants served by other PRI grantees that operated in the same period as NPRIR (Generation 3) on placement in employment, initial wage rate at placement, and recidivism. This appendix describes these analyses in more detail and presents the resulting regression tables. For a discussion of the implications of these analyses, please refer to Chapter VII.

The regression models used in these analyses control for a number of factors that may have influenced participants' outcomes, including a variety of participant characteristics and community-level factors. For the models comparing NPRIR and Generation 1 Newark, only the unemployment rate was controlled for, given that other community-level characteristics would be similar within the few years' time that separated the projects' implementations. For comparisons with the selected Generation 3 grantees, the unemployment rate, the rate of individuals in the community living below the poverty level, and the rate of violent and property crime per 1,000 residents were used as community-level controls. Other factors were not included in the models, but were used to select the subset of Generation 3 sites whose participants were used for comparison.¹

Due to confidentiality concerns regarding participants served by Generation 1 and Generation 3 PRI grantees, it was not possible to obtain either recidivism data from criminal justice agencies or data on supplemental employment from UI wages records. Thus, to be equitable, comparisons of NPRIR and other PRI grantees rely solely on the employment and recidivism data captured in the PRI MIS, and data obtained for NPRIR participants from outside agencies were excluded. It was anticipated that these grantees would have faced similar challenges with capturing

¹ Unemployment rates were acquired from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Local Area Unemployment Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov/lau/>). Poverty Rates were acquired from the U.S. Census Bureau's American FactFinder (http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en). Crime rates were acquired from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Unified Crime Reporting Program (<http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr>).

participant outcomes in the PRI MIS. For more detail on methodological issues, please refer to Chapter II.

Since the employment placement and recidivism outcomes are binary (meaning the variable must take one of only two values), logistic regression was used, as this type of analysis provides a more robust estimate when examining binary variables. The model for wage at placement utilizes ordinary least squares (OLS) regression because the dependent variable is a continuous variable. Because the regression models do not use randomly sampled data, it is not appropriate to conduct tests of significance.

**Exhibit A-1:
Conditional Correlations on Key Outcomes—NPRIR and Generation 1 Newark Grantees**

	Placed in Employment	Wage at Initial Placement	Re-arrested for a new crime or re- incarcerated for a violation of parole/probation
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Intercept	1.188	7.424	(2.854)
NPRIR	1.3218	0.710	0.591
Unemployment Rate	(0.3288)	0.020	(0.153)
Male	(0.400)	0.395	1.710
Hispanic	0.529	(0.261)	0.831
African-American	0.536	(0.311)	0.941
Veteran	0.205	(0.385)	1.031
Disabled	(0.592)	0.370	(13.351)
Age at enrollment	(0.003)	0.016	(0.027)
Obtained H.S. Diploma/GED	0.174	0.134	(0.031)
Employed at enrollment	0.931	0.247	(12.591)
Housing at enrollment—Stable	(0.013)	0.706	(0.623)
Housing at enrollment—Halfway house	0.681	0.051	(0.059)
Substance abuse prior to enrollment	(0.321)	(0.281)	(0.078)
Had significant health issues at enrollment	(0.139)	(0.257)	0.684
Length of recent incarceration (months)	0.001	0.006	0.003
Time incarcerated over lifetime (months)	0.004	(0.004)	(0.004)
Weeks released before enrollment	0.002	0.002	(0.004)
Most recent crime—drug crime	0.343	(0.267)	(0.649)
Most recent crime—public order	(0.366)	0.074	0.087
Most recent crime—other crime	0.005	0.124	0.264
Received DOJ pre-release services	(0.331)	0.473	0.364
On community supervision at enrollment	0.387	(0.037)	0.601
Mandated to participate	(0.369)	0.370	(0.302)
R-square	0.056	0.030	0.099
F-statistic	91.010	2.080	43.636
Sample Size	1,249	808	757

**Exhibit A-2:
Regression on Key Outcomes—NPRIR and Selected Generation 3 Grantees**

	Placed in Employment	Wage at Initial Placement	Re-arrested for a new crime or re- incarcerated for a violation of parole/probation
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Intercept	(4.818)	10.035	(2.550)
NPRIR	(2.292)	0.466	(0.892)
Unemployment Rate	(0.133)	0.017	0.057
Poverty Rate	0.315	(0.085)	0.044
Violent Crime Rate	(0.023)	(0.002)	(0.029)
Property Crime Rate	0.014	(0.022)	(0.016)
Violent	0.010	0.389	(1.202)
Male	(0.121)	0.754	1.279
Hispanic	(0.015)	(0.181)	0.220
African-American	(0.209)	(0.316)	0.081
Veteran	(0.002)	0.608	0.637
Disabled	(0.339)	(0.775)	(0.875)
Age at enrollment	(0.002)	0.025	(0.037)
Obtained H.S. Diploma/GED	0.275	0.035	0.338
Employed at enrollment	1.478	0.954	(13.926)
Housing at enrollment—Stable	(0.142)	0.624	(0.191)
Housing at enrollment—Halfway house	0.379	0.185	0.105
Substance abuse prior to enrollment	(0.146)	0.317	(0.129)
Had significant health issues at enrollment	(0.375)	0.091	0.851
Length of recent incarceration (months)	(0.001)	(0.000)	0.002
Time incarcerated over lifetime (months)	0.003	(0.002)	(0.004)
Weeks released before enrollment	(0.002)	0.001	(0.023)
Most recent crime—drug crime	0.209	(0.314)	(0.505)
Most recent crime—public order	(0.070)	(0.028)	0.275
Most recent crime—other crime	0.132	(0.016)	0.122
Received DOJ pre-release services	(0.272)	(0.456)	(0.005)
On community supervision at enrollment	0.333	(0.005)	0.693
Mandated to participate	(0.631)	0.396	0.465
R-square	0.036	0.009	0.097
F-statistic	76.163	1.330	49.539
Sample Size	1,599	1,020	936