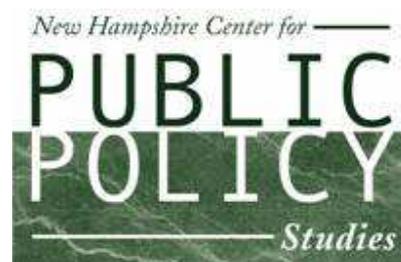


*“...to raise new ideas  
and improve policy  
debates through quality  
information and analysis  
on issues shaping New  
Hampshire’s future.”*

**One Eagle Square  
Suite 510  
Concord, NH 03301-  
4903**

**(603) 226-2500  
Fax: (603) 226-3676**



**Board of Directors**

Todd I. Selig, Chair  
Michael L. Buckley  
John D. Crosier, Sr.  
William H. Dunlap  
Sheila T. Francoeur  
Stephen J. Reno  
Stuart V. Smith, Jr.  
Brian F. Walsh  
Kimon S. Zachos  
Donna Sytek,  
*Immediate Past Chair*  
Martin L. Gross,  
*Chair Emeritus*

**Executive Director**

Stephen A. Norton  
[snorton@nhpolicy.org](mailto:snorton@nhpolicy.org)

**Economist**

Dennis C. Delay  
[ddelay@nhpolicy.org](mailto:ddelay@nhpolicy.org)

**Office Manager**

Cathleen K. Arredondo  
[carredondo@nhpolicy.org](mailto:carredondo@nhpolicy.org)

**Evaluating Corrections  
Reentry Programs  
The Experience of the  
Hillsborough County Reentry  
Program**

**March 2010**

## **Authors**

Dennis Delay  
Consultant

Steve Norton  
Executive Director

## **About this paper**

This paper is one of a series published by the NH Center for Public Policy Studies on the broad topic of New Hampshire corrections. This paper was made possible by a grant from the New Hampshire Department of Justice, State Justice Statistics Program. This paper, as with all of the Center's published work, is in the public domain and may be reproduced without permission. Indeed, the Center welcomes individuals' and groups' efforts to expand the paper's circulation.

Copies are also available at no charge on the Center's web site: [www.nhpolicy.org](http://www.nhpolicy.org)  
Contact the Center at [info@nhpolicy.org](mailto:info@nhpolicy.org); or call 603-226-2500.  
Write to: NHCPPS, 1 Eagle Square, Suite 510, Concord NH 03301

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Corrections in New Hampshire.....	1
Major Findings.....	2
Overview of the Hillsborough County Reentry Program .....	3
The Center’s Evaluation of the Reentry Program.....	4
Research Findings about Reentry Program Data Critical to the Measurement of Program Outcomes. ....	4
Creation of a Data Collection Instrument for the Hillsborough County Reentry Program .....	5
Input and Analysis of the Data Collected from the Hillsborough County Reentry Program .....	6
Descriptive Results from the Reentry Program .....	7
Recommendations for Further Data Collection Efforts .....	11
Outcome Evaluation.....	11

## Executive Summary

The New Hampshire Attorney General's office enlisted the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies (the Center) to evaluate the Hillsborough County Reentry Program (Reentry Program). Over the course of its active life 247 individuals were referred to the Reentry Program. This Manchester based corrections reentry program was active from the fall of 2007 through March 2010,

In March 2010 the Center partnered with the Council of State Governments Justice Center to assist in evaluating the Reentry Program. The partners conducted a review of the literature regarding the evaluation of re-entry programs to identify critical information to support a successful analysis of the success or failure of these types of programs. In addition, the partners developed a data instrument to collect data from the Reentry Program. Finally, the partners reviewed the data and provided a method for analyzing future re-entry work. These data have been provided to the New Hampshire Attorney General's office for their distribution under their guidance.

The partners' analysis should be considered a pilot approach to evaluating corrections re-entry programs. The timeline available for this project was very short – 1 month – and so the goal of this analysis was to provide the state with a template for how one might approach future analyses of corrections efforts, especially given the increased focus on community corrections in New Hampshire. Nevertheless, there are important lessons to be taken from the Reentry Program regarding the management and evaluation of similar programs.

### ***Corrections in New Hampshire***

The New Hampshire state prison population has been increasing. New Hampshire's prison population climbed 31 percent over the last 10 years. According to a study report developed by the Justice Center<sup>1</sup>, the New Hampshire prison population has increased, even though crime has remained low and stable, because parole revocations jumped 50 percent since 2000. Today, revocations from probation and parole account for 57 percent of admissions to state prison. In other words, admissions to prisons are being driven primarily by offenders already known to the system – parole violators – and not by new criminals, continuing a trend established over past decades in New Hampshire

In 2009 New Hampshire requested intensive technical assistance from the Justice Center to help develop a statewide policy framework that reduces spending on corrections and reinvests in strategies that increase public safety and reduce recidivism. The Justice Center proposed ways to reduce, by at least 20 percent, rates at which people released from prison are re-incarcerated, including expanding the availability of effective community-based mental health and drug treatment services. One recommended goal is to ensure everyone leaving prison receives at least nine months of post-release, community-based supervision. The Reentry program evaluated here was established and active before the state requested assistance from the Justice Center.

---

<sup>1</sup> "The Justice Reinvestment Project in New Hampshire", Council of State Governments Justice Center, January 25, 2010, <http://doj.nh.gov/publications/nreleases2010/documents/20100125.pdf>

## Major Findings

Analysis and evaluation of the Reentry Program was significantly hampered by the fact that a standard data collection process was not utilized. Any future re-entry work should mandate the collection of consistent data across programs and across participants.

As part of this evaluation the Center, in consultation with the Council of State Governments Justice Center, developed a database and data collection instrument for the Reentry Program. The partners believe that this data collection instrument can not only assist in the evaluation of the Reentry Program, but also serve as a resource applicable to evaluate other community corrections and reentry programs. As such, this database approach developed by the Center and the Justice Center should serve as a model for future reentry programs administered by the Department of Corrections and other criminal justice agencies in New Hampshire.

While our analysis allows us to understand some of the characteristics of participants and begin to formulate questions about the factors which contribute to success or failures, a more comprehensive analysis is necessary to understand the true value of the program, and the value of services provided within those programs.

Approximately 1/3 of the reentry Program participants successfully completed the program within one year. Not surprisingly, successful completion of the program in Hillsborough County was highly correlated with both educational attainment and the ability of the individual seeking to exit prison to get a job. As shown in Figure 1, prospects for having gainful employment were more likely to ensure a successful exit from the reentry program, and job quality is positively correlated with program success.

Figure 1



As part of any future evaluation, the Center recommends that the primary funder of the program mandate the collection of data on the type of service or treatment provided, the intensity of the treatment, and the level of care provided. This data was available only in a limited way for the existing Reentry Program. Neither the type of information collected nor its consistency across participants supported any meaningful analysis of the role of different types of services or levels of treatment on whether or not an individual participated.

Finally, the Center recommends that the status of the clients in the Hillsborough County Reentry Program (and any other future program in the state) be tracked over three years. Milestone reports should include an analysis at 12 months from the close of the program, and at 24 months, with a final report in 2014 on the status of the program participants. The Reentry Program participants should be compared to a control group of parolees with similar characteristics that did not participate in the reentry program. The control group should be monitored alongside the reentry clients, and the results for both groups should be part of the status reports.

## **Overview of the Hillsborough County Reentry Program**

The Hillsborough County Reentry Program was available to offenders serving a New Hampshire State Prison sentence and who were released on parole into Manchester, and was active from the fall of 2007 through March 2010. The program was offered to male or female adult offenders between the ages of 17 and 35, and who were deemed eligible for consideration following an assessment process. Offenders eligible for the Reentry Program were required to have a documented connection to Manchester as their place of residence upon entering prison. Offenders were not excluded based solely upon their prior criminal record.

The New Hampshire Department of Corrections was expected to refer approximately one hundred male and female adult offenders per year who were returning to Manchester on parole. It was anticipated that no less than eighty-five percent of the offenders would have substance abuse issues and a significant percentage of these would be dually diagnosed with mental health and substance abuse issues.

The Reentry Program goals were to effect successful reentry into the Manchester community for select adult felons, to prevent recidivism and ensure public safety. The Reentry Program instituted a model of community justice that balanced the strength based habilitation of each participant, restoration to victims and protection of public safety through a collaborative approach. The Reentry Program was overseen by the Hillsborough County Attorney in collaboration with the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office (AG), the New Hampshire Department of Corrections (NHDOC) and New Hampshire Adult Parole Board.

As of February 17, 2010 there were 247 people referred to the Reentry Program. The program status at that time was:

- 32 participants were active and still in program
- 4 participants were reopened, or returned
- 6 clients were not participating in the program, but were receiving service
- 25 completed the program
- 66 denied entry to the program, for reasons including age and wrong address.
- 45 clients were denied entry to the program because the program was closing

- 39 terminated from the program
- 30 withdrawn from the program

## **The Center's Evaluation of the Reentry Program**

The Center partnered with the Council of State Government's Justice Center (Justice Center) to analyze and assess the data collected during the program, develop a database that would support quantitative analysis of the program by any of the AG's partner organizations, and provide an outline of a research approach to evaluating the reentry program. A critical result of this work is a series of recommendations about data collection methods for any future efforts at reentry programming.

This scope of work to evaluate the Reentry Program included four tasks:

1. Development of a set of best practice indicators used to measure Reentry Program effectiveness. Based on a review of available research, this summary of field knowledge will support efforts at identification of data collection factors critical to measuring the stated goals of various programs (i.e. lower rates of re-arrest and re-incarceration).
2. Review and assessment of existing case files on Hillsborough reentry participants and existing data collection efforts at the Department of Corrections designed to create a data collection instrument supporting measures in Deliverable 1 above. The Center and Justice Center developed a database and data collection instrument for use in evaluating the reentry program delivery. The database was designed after a review of available case files for reentry efforts in Hillsborough County. These reviews assessed the data currently collected versus what data should be collected. The database was designed using Microsoft Access, and is part of this final report.
3. Input and analysis of data identified in Deliverable 2 above. The initial analyses ensured that the database accurately captures necessary data and can be used for larger research purposes. A short summary of the database is contained in this report, and the database is also available for future research.
4. Based on the work conducted in Deliverables 1, 2, and 3, develop a research protocol for an evaluation of the Hillsborough County program and recommendations for further data collection efforts in any reentry programs implemented in the state. The research design utilized the database provided in Deliverable 2 and any additional observations gleaned from the process related to Deliverable 3. The research design will include the identification of a comparison sample for non-participants.

### ***Research Findings about Reentry Program Data Critical to the Measurement of Program Outcomes.***

The ability to demonstrate effectiveness of a reentry program is an absolute necessity for obtaining funding for operating the program. While there is no "one size fits all" to data capture and evaluation, there are some basic, and critical, data elements that must be captured to demonstrate program effectiveness. The data should include the demographic profile of each

program participant, and should document each type of service and treatment that is provided to a participant.

Reentry programs typically involve several agencies, all delivering services to program participants, and each agency tracking participant progress through the program. Information sharing among agencies becomes problematic, because each agency has its own operational culture, each keeping records in a different format. These records are most often paper based. While paper based recordkeeping may appear to be effective to the subject agency, paper records are extremely difficult to review and analyze *post facto*.

A computerized case management system should be implemented at the outset of an offender reentry program. Such systems allow a standardized approach to record keeping and save considerable manpower resources when conducting meaningful program evaluations. The design of a computerized case management system should involve all of the agencies providing services to the reentry program.

The necessary data elements captured should assist in evaluation of the overall reentry goals. A common element for all programs is to reduce recidivism, but it is also important to measure **how** the program will reduce recidivism rates. Some programs may focus on housing assistance and employment services, while others address behavioral health issues. At a minimum the data captured for evaluation of a reentry program should include the following:

1. Unique identification of the program participants, including name, date of birth, gender and race, social security number and any relevant institutional information.
2. Evaluation of the program impacts; including type of service or treatment, intensity of the treatment, the level of care, and the manner of program termination.
3. Developing comparison groups; in order to fully evaluate the success of a reentry program the program outcomes should be compared to those of a group that did not receive similar services. Obviously the type of data collected for individuals in the control group should match the data collected on the reentry participants.

In summary, the best practice for evaluating a reentry program should include a well established process for collecting the information including an electronic method of data entry and storage. There must also be a commitment to collecting the right information in order to adhere to basic principles of research. Indeed these activities require commitment of resources, but the ability to make an empirical case for continuing a program is incumbent upon these processes.

More detail on Deliverable 1 can be found in Appendix One from the Justice Center, "Research findings about Reentry Program Data Critical to the Measurement of Program Outcomes." All research is cited.

### ***Creation of a Data Collection Instrument for the Hillsborough County Reentry Program***

Information on each of the Reentry Program participants was maintained in a paper-based folder, but the capacity for using information in an analytical manner had not been established. The

Center reviewed the data and identified protocols to evaluate the reentry initiative and developed a data file for future evaluation efforts.

The Justice Center and the Center worked together to create a database program which would capture the most critical data elements, which could then be used to evaluate the Hillsborough County Reentry Program.

The AG office provided the Center with a redacted copy of one of the paper files for one client in the reentry program, to assist in the development of the data collection instrument. Review of case files by Justice Center determined data elements found consistently across files that are important to analysis and evaluation of re-entry programming efforts. A relational database (Microsoft Access) was developed using unique identifiers deemed to be reliable for collection after review of case files. The review and data input tools included an analysis of both data that are currently collected and those that should be collected.

The data screens for that program are shown in Appendix Two. This data collection instrument is being provided to the AG's office to use as needed.

### ***Input and Analysis of the Data Collected from the Hillsborough County Reentry Program***

The transfer of Reentry Program information from the paper files to the relational database was performed by students from St. Anselm College over several days in late March 2010. Eight students worked three to four hours per day, in separate shifts, in the last two weeks of March 2010 entering data from the paper records into the relational database created by the Center and the Justice Center. At any one time there were about four students entering data.

Paper records for each participant in the Reentry Program were contained in one folder, and each client folder organized by section. There were more than 200 individual participant case files, each file folder containing hundreds of pages of correspondence, client questionnaires, case summaries, parole board information, offender records, court documents, criminal records and driving records.

As noted by the Justice Center, reentry programs typically involve several agencies, all delivering services to program participants, each agency tracking participant progress through the program, with each keeping records in a different format. While paper based recordkeeping may appear to be effective to the subject agency, paper records from different agencies, and in different formats, are extremely difficult to review and analyze *post facto*.

The students initially had great difficulty finding the appropriate data in the paper files. Many of the records in the files were incomplete, or were not well organized. The students sifted through these paper records, and sometimes had to look in several separate records to find the most important information. On average each student spent over an hour on their first client file, scanning documents, finding pertinent information, and then entering it into the computer database. Once the students became familiar with the information required in the database program, and where it might be located in the client paper records, subsequent files took less

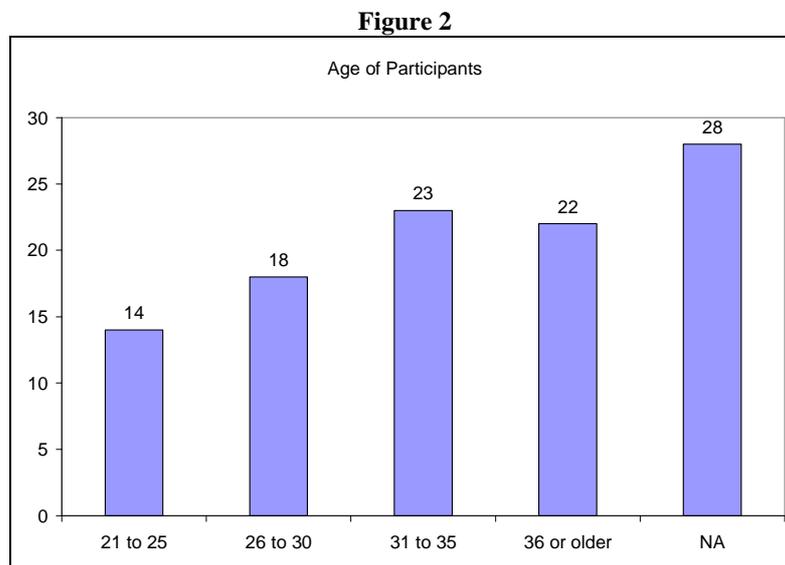
time. A student experienced in working with the files most often completed data entry in less than half an hour per client folder.

There were 179 cases entered into the database but, after eliminating cases with no information and duplicate cases, there were 166 cases for analysis. Of the 166 cases for analysis, 105 were accepted into the reentry program, 17 were deemed ineligible, and 41 were denied for unspecified reasons. Three cases had no data entered for the result of the application.

## Descriptive Results from the Reentry Program

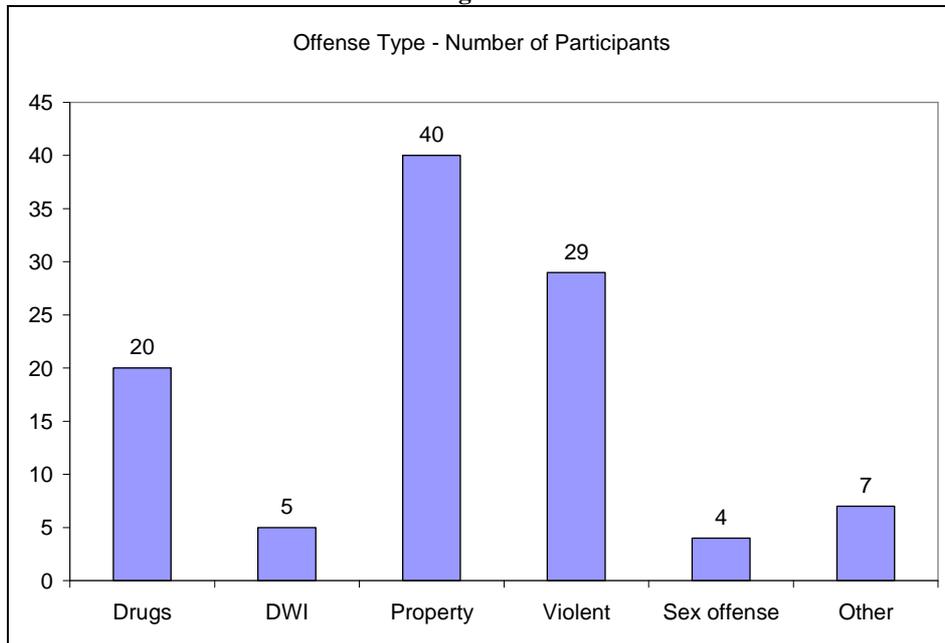
The following charts reveal summary data for the participants in the Hillsboro County Reentry Program.

As shown in Figure 2 the majority of the participants in the Hillsboro County Reentry Program were over the age of 30.



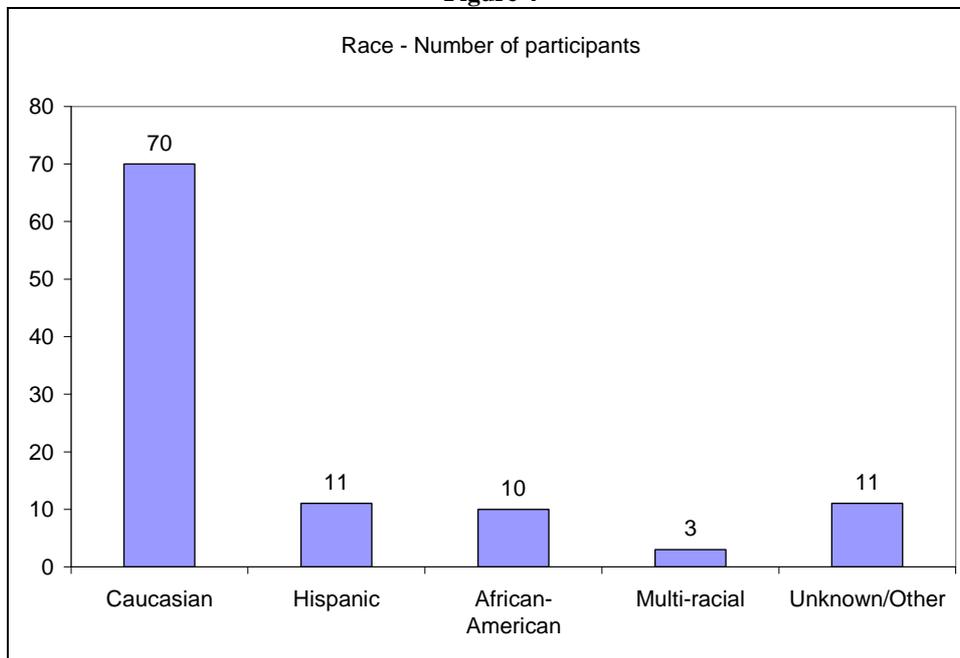
The major offense for most of the reentry participants involved some type of property crime, as shown in Figure 3 below. The second major offense of participants involved violent crime, the third involved substance abuse.

**Figure 3**



As shown in Figure 4, participants in the reentry program were most likely to be Caucasian.

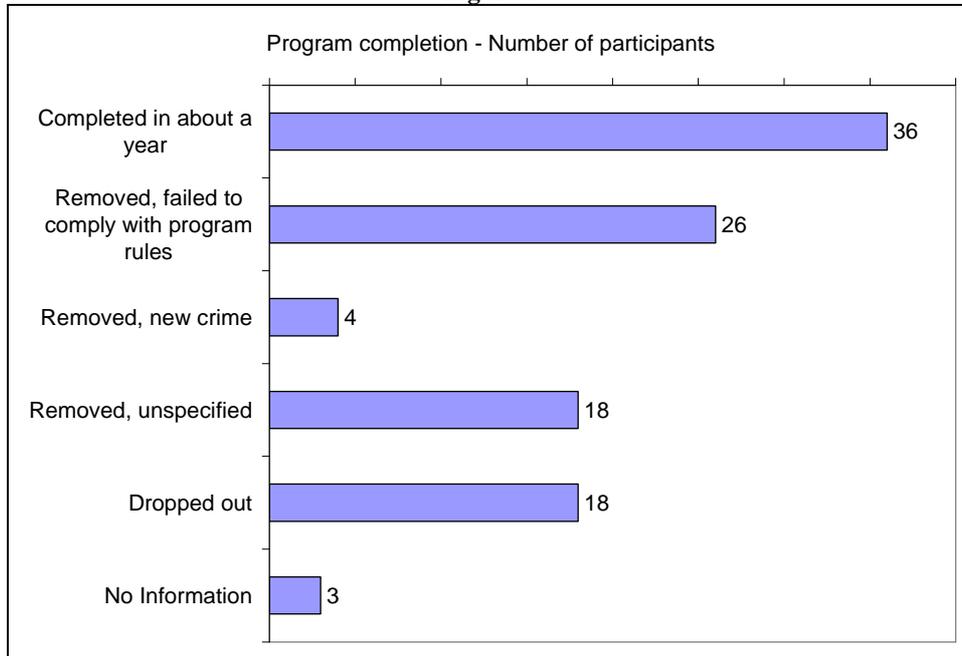
**Figure 4**



About one third of the participants in the reentry program (Figure 5) completed it successfully in about one year. One quarter were removed for failing to comply with the requirements of the

program. Another quarter of the participants were removed for a new crime or for unspecified reasons. Less than twenty participants dropped out of the program.

**Figure 5**

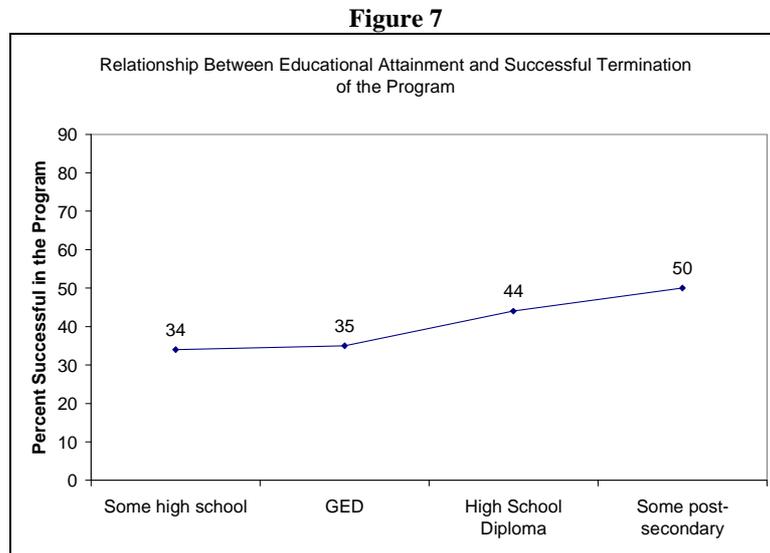


There appears to be a correlation between employment and successful completion of the reentry program, as shown in Figure 6. Prospects for having gainful employment were more likely to ensure a successful exit from the reentry program, and job quality is positively correlated with program success.

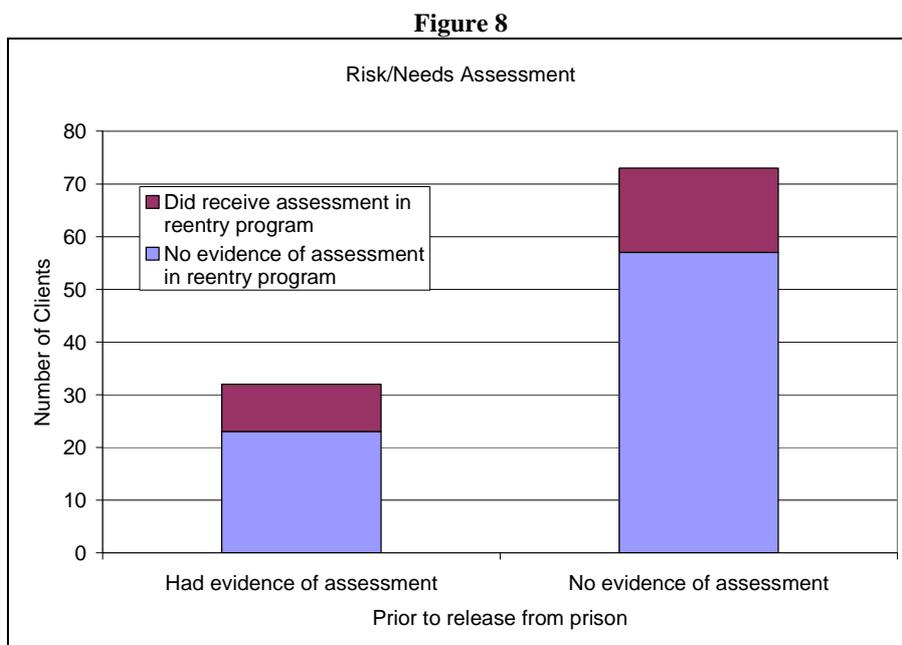
**Figure 6**



There also appears to be a correlation between educational attainment and successful exit from the reentry program (Figure 7). Participants with higher levels of education attainment were more likely to exit the reentry program successfully.



Risk/needs assessments are an important tool in reentry programs. However, as shown in Figure 8, 57 of the 105 parolees accepted into the reentry program had no evidence of a risk/needs assessment, either prior to release from prison or in the reentry program. Of those that had no evidence of an assessment prior to release from prison, 16 did receive a risk/needs assessment in the reentry program, while 9 clients that had a risk/needs assessment prior to release from prison also had an assessment in the reentry program.



### ***Recommendations for Further Data Collection Efforts***

In order to evaluate reentry programs aimed at reducing recidivism, some basic program evaluation tools are vital. These tools include a basic database infrastructure, as well as well-defined protocols for the capture and storage of information critical to measuring how the program operates.

There are multiple points where the opportunity exists for capturing information on a client's movement through a reentry program. It would be worthwhile to track all the movement of all offenders through the safety, court, and criminal justice systems, to conduct effective process and outcome evaluations. Cooperation between the Department of Corrections and other entities will be necessary in order to gather a full compliment of information.

Once the points of data are identified, the data will have to be captured in a database. Although paper recordkeeping can be acceptable, there should also be a process for ultimately entering information for electronic recordkeeping. The database in this report should be a model for data capture of a client progressing through a reentry program. Members of each team (administration, service delivery, evaluation and management) need to be clear on individual responsibilities for data collection and capture for each client.

Evaluation of the Hillsborough County Reentry Program could have been enhanced by a process evaluation of the program – a series of interviews with the various reentry team members. The process evaluation should measure the following:

- Referrals – is the Department of Corrections making referrals to the program, do the referrals meet the eligibility requirements, is the volume of referrals consistent with the program capacity, etc.?
- Assessments – are assessments given, and by who, and what aspects are assessed?
- Case management – what is the pre-release monitoring, who facilitates interventions, are violations reported to parole officers, etc.?

### ***Outcome Evaluation***

A reentry program must be measured against its stated objectives of reducing recidivism and ensuring public safety. Proper evaluation should include six basic elements – a research group, a control group, measurement of primary outcomes, measurement of secondary outcomes, methods of analysis and analytical notes.

- The research group consists of all the clients in the reentry program. Each client should be tracked and further classified according to whether they completed the program successfully or not.
- The control group should be similar to the research group with one critical difference; they were not participants in the reentry program. A well designed control group is necessary to suggest that any outcome differences are attributable to the effects of the reentry program.
- Primary outcomes should be tracked for both groups, including percent of parolees re-arrested after release, and reason for re-incarceration.

- 
- Secondary outcomes, including percent of parolees securing housing or employment and substance abuse tests, should also be tracked.
  - Method of analysis should include use of statistical analysis program, and the subdivision of clients into groups or cohorts. Recidivism should be measured for clients at 12 months and 24 months from the release from the program, with full evaluation expected to be complete in three years.
  - Analytical notes should include multiple comparisons between the research and control groups along a number of dimensions (age, offense type, risk/need levels, etc.) and that the process and outcome analysis be conducted by qualified professionals.

The data elements required for evaluation are included in Appendix Four to this report.



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Stephen Norton, New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies

**From:** Andrew Barbee, Council of State Governments Justice Center

**Re:** **Research Findings about Reentry Program Data Critical to the Measurement of Program Outcomes**

**Date:** March 15, 2010

---

### **I. Background**

This memo is the first of a four- piece series of items that will be provided to the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies by the Council of State Governments Justice Center.<sup>1</sup> This first document will provide part of a larger research framework being developed for conducting a thorough evaluation of the Hillsborough County, NH Reentry Program.

Related to any evaluation of a reentry program is the need for reliable data related to the various aspects of that program. Such data are necessary for quantitative analysis and research oriented at evaluation and measurement of impacts associated with reentry programs. This memo offers a research based summary of program elements and offender characteristics that are deemed critical pieces of information required for making proper evaluations of the outcomes of reentry efforts.

### **II. Available Research on Effectiveness of Reentry Programs**

The field of reentry has experienced a veritable explosion of research over the past decade. As states have increasingly faced strained budgets, correctional practitioners and policymakers have turned towards reentry initiatives in an effort to reduce the rate at which former inmates are returned to prison or jail. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, almost 750,000 inmates were released from state and federal prisons during 2008 (Sabol, 2009). The large number of prisoners being released will continue to grow into the future, and states are likely to continue investing in reentry initiatives as a result (Katel, 2009).

---

<sup>1</sup> Contract for research services between New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies and Council of State Governments Justice Center. March 10, 2010.

Ideally, locales implementing or continuing reentry efforts will base their approach on models proven to be effective in reducing recidivism. A number of quality studies have been conducted that demonstrate what works and what does not in regard to reducing rates of reincarceration (Drake, 2009; McDonald, 2008). By and large, the ability to demonstrate effectiveness of a reentry program is an absolute necessity for obtaining funding for operating the program. As previously stated, the purpose of this document is to outline the elements related to an offender's participation in a reentry program that are critical to the process of measuring a program's effectiveness.

For a program wishing to conduct an evaluation of their program, there is no "one size fits all" approach in terms of data capture and evaluation. However, it is possible to obtain guidance based on a review of research findings indicative of successful reentry programs and the specific attributes that made those programs successful. Examples of reentry services and treatments demonstrated to be effective include (Blakely, 2007; Drake, 2009; Lattimore, 2007; Petersilia, 2004):

- ✓ Cognitive Behavioral Treatment
- ✓ Community-Based Intervention
- ✓ Drug Courts
- ✓ Employment and Job Training
- ✓ In-Prison Therapeutic Communities
- ✓ Intensive 3-12 Month Programs
- ✓ Substance Abuse Treatment
- ✓ Targeting High Risk Offenders
- ✓ Treatment-Oriented, Intensive Community Supervision
- ✓ Vocational Education

At a minimum, a reentry program should be able to document each type of service and treatment that is provided to an offender. The information captured should be specific enough to allow for description of the services along the lines of those referenced in the preceding list of successful reentry approaches. This does not mean that these are the only viable reentry programming options, but they illustrate the level of detail that will be necessary to make the case that a program is effective.

### **III. Process of Data Capture**

Reentry programs invariably involve a network of many different groups such as departments of correction, behavioral health professionals, education and vocational service providers, and housing assistance groups among others. These different networks present basic challenges to the task of information sharing. Each participant in a reentry network operates from their own unique perspective and operational culture making cohesion a challenge. To facilitate the aims of reentry programs, it is imperative that processes be identified and clearly delineated for collecting information generated by each of the network participants used in the identification of needs and acquisition of services aimed at transitioning offenders back into society (Council of State Governments, 2004).

All too often, much of the information generated by the reentry network is in the form of paper-based records. Usually, the case managers tasked with coordinating the various aspects of an offender's reentry program are also responsible for maintaining case files that attempt to consolidate the various streams of information generated throughout the reentry process. This can be quite a daunting task given the tremendous amount of assessment and referral for treatment services involving the different reentry network participants. Gathering the information and ensuring that it is collected in a manner that allows for review is very time consuming if driven by a paper-based method.

To help facilitate the demands of collecting all the information relevant to an offender's reentry process, it is necessary to utilize computerized case management systems. Such systems allow for a standardized approach to record-keeping and save considerable manpower resources when conducting meaningful program evaluations (Pattavina, 2004). If the only goal of information sharing was to simply have a centralized method of storing information generated by the network participants, paper files might be acceptable. But when there is a need for program evaluation, paper-based data storage is inadequate as it does not allow for efficient analysis by virtue of having to manually sort through the files looking for specific pieces of data. Moreover, the efforts at analysis become more susceptible to human error when relying on manual review of paper-based records.

Designing a computerized case management system should involve most, if not all, of the primary reentry network participants (Council of State Governments, 2004). Given the different roles of the various participants, it is important to understand the nature of information they generate and their capabilities of sharing that information. The sophistication of a case management system can range from the highly integrated where all network participants are able to directly access and utilize the computerized system, to a less integrated approach where paper files are utilized by the participants but ultimately distilled into one repository by a case manager with access to the computerized system. Clearly, the more integrated systems allow for greater efficiency when considering duplication of information and review of an offender's progression through reentry programming. But even the less integrated case management approaches save time and improve evaluation capability by virtue of having one computerized storage unit that can be efficiently accessed for purposes of program evaluation.

#### **IV. Necessary Data Elements**

Arriving at a sense of what program elements must be tracked to conduct outcome evaluations combines basic principles of research as well as an understanding of the goals of a specific program. One common element of virtually all reentry programs is the goal of reducing the rate of involvement in criminal activity after return to society, usually measured as recidivism through some combination of rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration rates. But it is important to consider how the programs aim to affect recidivism rates. For example, a reentry program focusing primarily on housing assistance and employment services will have different data tracking needs compared to a program with a focus on treatment of behavioral health issues. Of course, it's overly simplistic to portray a reentry program as having purposes that are so

isolated from one another. Many aspects of an offender’s transition into the community include a combination of housing, employment and behavioral health needs. Nonetheless, areas of particular emphasis must be accounted for when designing a case management system that tracks data elements associated with an offender’s progression through the reentry program (Winterfield, 2006).

As previously stated, delineation of data elements that need to be tracked about an offender’s participation in a reentry program should consider principles from basic research methodology as well as specific measurement needs relative to the goals of that program. With that in mind, the following section of this document is broken into three parts aimed at categorizing the purposes of tracking specific data elements. The three purpose areas are: unique identification of program participants, evaluation of program impacts, and development of comparison groups necessary for evaluation.

### Unique Identification of Program Participants

When conducting evaluations of any reentry program, it is imperative that researchers have the ability to accurately and efficiently distinguish between unique program participants (Maxfield, 2001). Doing so requires that various pieces of information about the participants be collected and maintained in an electronic format. The information includes demographic as well as institutional, or prison-related information.

Quite often, evaluations of reentry programs will require matching of case records between different databases. For example, records of program participants will usually be matched with arrest, conviction, or incarceration databases in an effort to develop rates of rearrest, reconviction, or reincarceration. Matching the case records will depend on the ability to use a variety of data elements used in combination to create a unique key or index. The more data elements that can be used to create the matching key, the more accurate the match is likely to be. For example, matching ‘John Doe’ from a reentry program with a ‘John Doe’ in an arrest database might yield a false positive match. It’s very possible that more than one ‘John Doe’ exists. However, if a date of birth and social security number can also be matched along with the name the match is much less likely to be a false positive.

Even if there is not going to be matching of records between databases, there remains a need for evaluation of distinct program participants (Maxfield, 2001). It is still possible that there are multiple participants with the same name. Such possibilities create the need for additional information so that unique distinction can be made between multiple participants in a program who happen to have the same name.

The following list highlights the basic information needed for accurate identification of the subjects of an evaluation.

- **Name of Participant** – the first and last name of an offender must be tracked. Special care needs to be paid to spelling and capitalization (e.g. McDonald). It is advisable to also allow for tracking of middle initials and any suffixes such as Jr., III, etc. Each of these name elements should be maintained separate from one

another in the database (i.e. separate the first name from the last name into distinct data fields).

- **Date of Birth**
- **Gender**
- **Race / Ethnicity**
- **Social Security Number**
- **Any Relevant Institutional Information** – many reentry program participants are referred directly by prisons or jails. If possible, acquisition of the prison/jail inmate identification numbers will benefit efforts to match reentry program records back to prison/jail incarceration records. Furthermore, state record keepers of arrest information usually have a process for assigning state identification numbers used in their arrest databases. Obtaining these identification numbers is not always easy, but the information can greatly facilitate the eventual matching of program participant case records to arrest databases.

At a minimum, the name, date of birth, gender and race/ethnicity of the participant will be necessary to confidently establish unique identification of participants. Although it is still theoretically possible that more than one participant could have the same name, date of birth, gender and race/ethnicity, it is unlikely and serves as a defensible minimum standard. Of course, the ideal combination would also include a social security number and possibly a prison or state identification number.

#### *Evaluation of Program Impacts: The Research Group*

The ultimate goal of a reentry program outcome evaluation is to ascertain what impacts on recidivism, if any, are attributable to the various services and attributes of the program. It is necessary to demonstrate whether or not the program is achieving its goal of reducing rates of rearrest and reincarceration. To make such measurements, it is necessary to have specific data on precisely which services and treatments an offender participates in (Taxman, 2004). This is especially true when a program offers a variety of services for similar groups of offenders. To the extent similar offenders might participate in different programs it becomes increasingly important to distinguish the potentially different impacts on recidivism of the various services.

Offenders participating in one or more of the various services or treatments offered through a reentry program constitute the research group. The research group consists of individuals who have received specific aspects of a program that are the focus of the study. For example, an evaluation might investigate whether participants receiving job skills training had lower rates of rearrest than those who did not receive job skills training. The participants who received the training comprise the research group.

The following list highlights the basic information needed for development of research groups in a reentry program outcome evaluation.

- **Type of Service or Treatment** – reentry programs often provide a variety of different services ranging from substance abuse and mental health treatment to

vocation skills training. It is important to track each of the types of services an offender receives and clearly indicate the nature of the service provided.

- **Level of Care** – types of treatment can be offered in a variety of fashions. Examples of different levels of care include assessment by outside clinicians, detoxification (substance abuse), stabilization (mental health), residential, outpatient (individual or group), intensive outpatient (individual or group), and peer support (e.g. 12-steps).
- **Intensity of Service or Treatment** – even when offenders participate in similar types of programs or levels of care, the intensity may differ. Intensity is generally identified by the frequency of the service or treatment and the duration of each session. For example, two offenders with mostly similar characteristics may each be participating in outpatient group counseling. However, one offender may be required to attend 30-minute sessions once per week for 6 months while the other offender may be required to attend 1-hour sessions once per week for 1 year. It is important to have the ability to make such distinctions when evaluating program effectiveness.
- **Manner of Program Termination** – simply participating in similar programs of similar intensity is not enough to group offenders together. It is also necessary to understand whether or not an offender participated in accordance with the design of the program. Those who attend all required meetings and adhere to the program objectives should be viewed as having received different services than those offenders who were not participating in accordance with the program requirements. Successful completion, unsuccessful completion and program dropouts are fundamentally different in terms of measuring program impacts on recidivism.

Capturing the characteristics of an offender's participation in the services and treatments offered through a reentry program enables the researcher to build distinct groups of participants for purposes of measuring how the program impacted recidivism. Successful completers and dropouts of the same program can be contrasted with one another to help determine whether there were any differences in subsequent rearrest and reincarceration rates.

#### *Development of Comparison Groups*

Another requirement of program outcome evaluation is developing a control, or comparison group (Cullen, 2000; Maxfield, 2001). The previous section identified participants receiving job skills training as the research group. In order to address the question of whether they had lower rates of rearrest, it is necessary to compare them to a group of similar participants that did not receive job skills training. To make such a comparison a control group is needed. The essence of a control group is that they are matched to the research group along multiple factors with the single exception being they did not receive job skills training.

Ideally, the axiom of 'all else being equal' would apply. In this example, both the research and control groups would be made up of similar types of participants with one exception – whether or not they received job skills training. They would be similar in terms of their criminal histories, risk of reoffending, needs in the community, and so forth.

The following list highlights the basic information needed for development of control groups in a reentry program outcome evaluation.

- **Offense Characteristics** – collect information about most current and prior criminal offenses. This information needs to include types of offenses in terms of violent, sex assault, property, drug, DUI, etc.
- **Length of Incarceration Term Preceding Reentry Program**
- **Risk / Needs Assessment Results** – these need to be standardized according to the assessment instrument used.
- **Substance Abuse Assessment Results** – these need to be standardized according to the assessment instrument used.
- **Mental Health Assessment Results** – these need to be standardized according to the assessment instrument used.
- **Educational Information** – highest grade completed or diplomas/degrees earned.
- **Employment Information** – pre-incarceration history and employment while in the reentry program are valuable. Information should capture whether participant worked full or part-time and the duration of employment. Job skills information can also be helpful.
- **Housing Information** – as with employment, both history prior to incarceration and housing while in the reentry program are valuable.
- **Supports in the community** – family or other individuals in the community that can help the offender transition back into society can play a crucial role in the ultimate success of the offender’s transition.

Each of the aforementioned elements is crucial to the purpose of creating control groups. Many attempts at research and evaluation of program impacts have been undermined due to the absence of valid control groups. In order to make claims about the abilities of any program, the effects experienced by those receiving specific services or treatments must be balanced against the outcomes of a matched group of individuals who did not receive the specific services or treatments in question.

## **V. Concluding Remarks**

This document provides a general outline of the basic data elements that need to be captured as part of any effort to evaluate the effectiveness of a reentry program. Depending on the aims of a given program, additional data may be necessary in order to capture more specific information about the variety of services and treatments available to participants. It is important to have a well established process for collecting the information including an electronic method of data entry and storage. This is a must for efficient and accurate analysis of program impacts on the offenders participating in the program. There must also be a commitment to collecting the right information in order to adhere to basic principles of research. Indeed these activities require commitment of resources, but the ability to make an empirical case for continuing a program is incumbent upon these processes.

## **References**

- Blakley, Baron, Robert Gossweiller, and Sherri Johnson (2007). Interim Evaluation Report on the Virginia Prisoner Reentry Evaluation Programs. Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, Division of Policy, Planning and Research.
- Council of State Governments (2004). *Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community*.
- Cullen, Francis T., and Paul Gendreau (2000). Assessing Correctional Rehabilitation: Policy, Practice, and Prospects. *Criminal Justice 2000*. Washington, DC, National Institute of Justice.
- Drake, Elizabeth K., Steve Aos, and Marna G. Miller (2009). “Evidence-Based Public Policy Options to Reduce Crime and Criminal Justice Costs: Implications in Washington State.” *Victims and Offenders* 4:170-196.
- Katel, Peter (2009). “Prisoner Reentry: Can Aid to Ex-Inmates Significantly Reduce Recidivism?” *CQ Researcher* 19 (42): 1005-1028.
- Lattimore, Pamela K. (2007). “The Challenges of Reentry.” *Corrections Today*.
- Maxfield, Michael G. (2001). *Guide to Frugal Evaluation for Criminal Justice*. Newark, NJ: Rutgers University.
- McDonald, Douglas, Christina Dyou, and Kenneth Carlson (2008). *The Effectiveness of Prisoner Reentry Services as Crime Control: The Fortune Society*. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates, Inc.
- Pattavina, April (2004). “The Emerging Role of Information Technology in Prison Reentry Initiatives.” *Federal Probation* 68 (2): 40-45.
- Petersilia, Joan (2004). “What Works in Prisoner Reentry? Reviewing and Questioning the Evidence.” *Federal Probation* 68 (2): 4-8.
- Sabol, William J., Heather C. West, and Matthew Cooper (2009). “Prisoners in 2008.” Washington, DC, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Taxman, Faye S., Eric S. Shepardson, and James M. Byrne (2004). *Tools of the Trade: A Guide to Incorporating Science into Practice*. National Institute of Corrections.
- Winterfield, Laura and Christine Lindquist (2006). *The Multi-site Evaluation of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative: Evaluation Design Overview. Reentry Research in Action: Findings from the Field*.



## New Hampshire Center For Public Policy Studies Reentry Study Database

### Demographics

Client ID:	<input type="text"/>	DOC ID:	<input type="text" value="234354"/>				
Last Name:	<input type="text" value="Doe"/>	First Name:	<input type="text" value="John"/>	Middle Initial:	<input type="text"/>	Suffix:	<input type="text"/>
Date of Birth:	<input type="text"/>	SSN:	<input type="text"/>	Gender:	<input type="text" value="Male"/>	Race:	<input type="text" value="White/Caucasian"/>

### Cases

Program Application Date:	<input type="text" value="12/20/2009"/>	Application Result:	<input type="text" value="Accepted"/>	Applicant Agree to Participate?:	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>
Reentry Program Begin Date:	<input type="text"/>				
Reentry Program Termination Date:	<input type="text"/>	Reentry Program Termination Type:	<input type="text"/>		

### Offense

Number of Felony Convictions Prior to Incarceration:	<input type="text"/>	Does Conviction Have Multiple Offenses?:	<input type="text"/>			
Current Offense: Primary Offense - General:	<input type="text" value="Property"/>	Current Offense: Primary Offense -Specific:	<input type="text"/>			
Current Offense: Primary Offense - Minimum SL Years:	<input type="text"/>	Current Offense: Primary Offense - Maximum SL Years:	<input type="text"/>			
Prison Admission Date:	<input type="text" value="2/5/2009"/>	Prison Release Date:	<input type="text" value="2/4/2009"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Registered Sex Offender?	Gang Affiliations:	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Recent Incarceration Was Due to a Revocation of Parole	Reason for Parole Revocation:	<input type="text"/>				
Restitution - Original Amount Ordered:	<input type="text"/>	Restitution - Up To Date on Payments?:	<input type="text"/>			



## New Hampshire Center For Public Policy Studies Reentry Study Database

### Risk/Needs

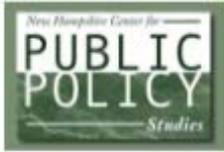
Pre-Release Risk/Needs Assessment Date:	<input type="text"/>	Pre-Release Risk/Needs Assessment Type:	<input type="text"/>
Pre-Release Risk Score:	<input type="text"/>	Pre-Release Needs Score:	<input type="text"/>
Most Recent Risk/Needs Assessment Date:	<input type="text"/>	Most Recent Risk/Needs Assessment Type:	<input type="text"/>
Most Recent Risk Score:	<input type="text"/>	Most Recent Needs Score:	<input type="text"/>

### Substance Abuse/Mental Health

Substance Abuse	
Pre-Release SA Assess Date:	<input type="text"/>
Pre-Release SA Assess Type:	<input type="text"/>
Pre-Release SA Assess Results - Numeric:	<input type="text"/>
Pre-Release SA Assess Results - Alpha:	<input type="text"/>
-----	
Most Recent SA Assess Date:	<input type="text"/>
Most Recent SA Assess Type:	<input type="text"/>
Most Recent SA Assess Results - Numeric:	<input type="text"/>
Most Recent SA Assess Results - Alpha:	<input type="text"/>

Tested Positive For: (check all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/> Heroin
	<input type="checkbox"/> Marijuana	<input type="checkbox"/> Amphetamine
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cocaine	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Drugs
Pre-Release SA Assess - Recommended Services:	<input type="text"/>	

Tested Positive For: (check all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/> Heroin
	<input type="checkbox"/> Marijuana	<input type="checkbox"/> Amphetamine
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cocaine	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Drugs
Most Recent SA Assess - Recommended Services:	<input type="text"/>	



## New Hampshire Center For Public Policy Studies Reentry Study Database

### Mental Health

Pre-Release MH Assess Date:

Pre-Release MH Assess Type:

Pre-Release MH Assess Results - Numeric:

Pre-Release MH Assess Results - Alpha:

Pre-Release MH Assess Diagnosis:

Pre-Release MH Assess - Recommended Services:

Most Recent MH Assess Date:

Most Recent MH Assess Type:

Most Recent MH Assess Results - Numeric:

Most Recent MH Assess Results - Alpha:

Most Recent MH Assess Diagnosis:

Most Recent MH Assess - Recommended Services:

### Supervision

Name of Parole Officer:

Supervision Level at Program Begin:

Supervision Level at Program End:

Number of 'Participation' Violation Episodes:

Number of 'Quasi Criminal' Violation Episodes:

Number of 'New Criminal Offense' Violation Episodes:

Number of Drug Test Events:

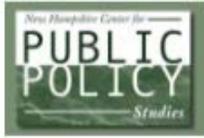
Number of Drug Test Events With a Positive Result:



## New Hampshire Center For Public Policy Studies Reentry Study Database

### Demographics - Expanded

Marital Status:	<input type="text"/>	Number of Children:	<input type="text"/>	Children Living in Manchester?:	<input type="text"/>
Monthly Child Support Obligations:	<input type="text"/>	Was Offender Adopted?:	<input type="text"/>	Mother Living in Manchester?:	<input type="text"/>
Father Living in Manchester?:	<input type="text"/>	Any Siblings Living in Manchester?:	<input type="text"/>		
Any Other Family Living in Manchester?:	<input type="text"/>	Possess Identification at Time of Release?:	<input type="text"/>	Valid driver's license?:	<input type="text"/>
Transportation at Time of Release from Prison:	<input type="text"/>	Current Transportation at Time of Reentry Program Termination:	<input type="text"/>		
Education:	<input type="text"/>	Job Skills:	<input type="text"/>	Employment Prior to Incarceration:	<input type="text"/>
Consecutive Months Employed Prior to Incarceration:	<input type="text"/>	Employment Secured After Release from Prison:	<input type="text"/>		
Employment at Time of Reentry Program Termination:	<input type="text"/>	Consecutive Months Employed at Time of Program Termination:	<input type="text"/>		
Was Offender Homeless at Any Point Prior to Incarceration?:	<input type="text"/>	Housing Prior to Incarceration:	<input type="text"/>		
Housing After Release from Prison:	<input type="text"/>	Housing at Time of Reentry Program Termination:	<input type="text"/>		
Member of a Church?:	<input type="text"/>	Any Non-Court Ordered Volunteering in Community?:	<input type="text"/>		
Benefits Received?:	<input type="text"/>	Currently Have Health Insurance?:	<input type="text"/>	Any Known Disabilities?:	<input type="text"/>



## New Hampshire Center For Public Policy Studies Reentry Study Database

---

### Treatment and Services Input Screen

#### Treatment/Service 01

Treatment/Service Name:	<input type="text"/>	Type:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="v"/>		
Level of Care:	<input type="text"/>	Begin Date:	<input type="text"/>	Frequency:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="v"/>
Session Duration:	<input type="text"/>	Scheduled Overall Treatment/Services Duration:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="v"/>		
Treatment/Services End Date:	<input type="text"/>					

Add/New/Enter

Save

Undo

Delete

Print

Quit



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Stephen Norton, New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies

**From:** Andrew Barbee, Council of State Governments Justice Center

**Re:** **General Descriptive Analyses of Data Entered into Hillsborough County Reentry Program Database**

**Date:** March 31, 2010

---

### **VI. Background**

This memo represents the third deliverable of a four- piece series provided to the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) by the Council of State Governments Justice Center (Justice Center).<sup>2</sup> This document presents initial descriptive analyses of data entered into the database designed by the Justice Center for the Hillsborough County Reentry Program in New Hampshire.

### **VII. Cases Available for Analysis**

The information available for analysis was limited. The total number of cases entered into the database was 179. Four of the cases were determined to be test cases created by the staff doing the actual data entry. These test cases were excluded from the analyses. Eight cases had virtually no information at all entered in the records and were dropped from the analyses. Two additional cases were duplicates of one another, so one of the duplicates was excluded from the analyses. This left *166 cases for analysis*.

---

<sup>2</sup> Contract for research services between New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies and Council of State Governments Justice Center. March 10, 2010.

### **VIII. Summary of Findings**

Of the 166 cases available for analysis, 105 were accepted into the reentry program, 17 were deemed ineligible, and 41 were denied for unspecified reasons. Three cases had no data entered for the result of the application.

#### **Descriptive Analyses of the 105 Parolees Accepted into Reentry Program**

##### Age:

- ✓ 14 of the 105 parolees were age 21 to 25.
- ✓ 18 of the 105 parolees were age 26 to 30.
- ✓ 23 of the 105 parolees were age 31 to 35.
- ✓ 22 of the 105 parolees were age 36 or older.
- ✓ 28 of the 105 parolees had no date of birth or age recorded.

##### Offense Type:

- ✓ 20 of the 105 parolees were drug offenders.
- ✓ 5 of the 105 parolees were DWI offenders.
- ✓ 40 of the 105 parolees were property offenders.
- ✓ 29 of the 105 parolees were violent offenders.
- ✓ 4 of the 105 parolees were sex offenders.
- ✓ 7 of the 105 parolees were other offenders.

##### Sex:

- ✓ 84 of the 105 parolees were males.
- ✓ 18 of the 105 parolees were females.
- ✓ 3 of the 105 parolees had no sex indicated.

##### Race:

- ✓ 70 of the 105 parolees were Caucasian.
- ✓ 11 of the 105 parolees were Hispanic.
- ✓ 10 of the 105 parolees were African-American.
- ✓ 3 of the 105 parolees were Multi-racial.
- ✓ 11 of the 105 parolees were of Other/Unknown race.

##### Marital Status / Children / Indication of Family Ties:

- ✓ Only 15 of the 105 parolees were married or cohabitating.
- ✓ 62 of the 105 parolees were parents.
- ✓ 55 of the 105 parolees had no indication of family living in Manchester.

##### Risk/Needs Assessment:

- ✓ 57 of the 105 parolees accepted into the reentry program had no evidence of any risk/needs assessment.

## Appendix Three: General Descriptive Analyses of Data Entered into Hillsborough County Reentry Program Database

- ✓ 32 had evidence of a risk/needs assessment prior to release from prison.
- ✓ 73 lacked any indication of a risk/needs assessment prior to release from prison.
  
- ✓ 16 of the 73 without a risk/needs assessment in prison did receive an assessment while in the reentry program.
- ✓ 9 of the 32 with a risk/needs assessment in prison received a subsequent assessment while in the reentry program.

### Substance Abuse Assessment:

- ✓ Only 16 of the 105 parolees entering the reentry program had any evidence of having been screened for substance abuse issues.

### Mental Health Assessment:

- ✓ Only 10 of the 105 parolees entering the reentry program had any evidence of having been screened for mental health issues.

### Services – Treatment:

- ✓ 69 of the 105 parolees entering the reentry program received some type of service.
- ✓ Of those receiving treatment, 44 received substance abuse treatment and 18 received mental health treatment. Another 3 participants received integrated behavioral health treatment.
- ✓ The most frequently used provider was Farnum Center serving 33 of the 69 parolees receiving services.
- ✓ The most prevalent levels of care involved included outpatient-individual care with 29 participants and basic assessments with 12 participants. These two levels of care combined accounted for almost 40% of services provided.

### Program Completion:

- ✓ 36 of the 105 parolees entering the reentry program terminated successfully with average program duration of 11.6 months.
- ✓ 26 of the 105 parolees entering the reentry program were removed for failure to comply with program requirements with average program duration of 7.3 months.
- ✓ 4 of the 105 parolees entering the reentry program were removed due to commission of new crimes with average program duration of 7.9 months.
- ✓ 18 of the 105 parolees entering the reentry program were removed for unspecified reasons with average program duration of 5.7 months.
- ✓ 18 of the 105 parolees entering the reentry program dropped out after 1.3 an average of months in the program.
- ✓ 3 of the 105 parolees entering the reentry program had no termination information recorded in the database.

### Examination of Characteristics Found with Successful Reentry Program Terminations

Family Presence in Manchester (defined as being married or cohabitating; or having children, mother, father, siblings, or any family presence in Manchester):

### Appendix Three: General Descriptive Analyses of Data Entered into Hillsborough County Reentry Program Database

- ✓ 29% of parolees without family in Manchester successfully terminated the reentry program.
- ✓ 40% of parolees with family in Manchester successfully terminated the reentry program.

#### Highest Level of Education Achieved:

- ✓ 24% of parolees with some High School or less successfully terminated the reentry program.
- ✓ 35% of parolees with a GED successfully terminated the reentry program.
- ✓ 44% of parolees with a High School Diploma successfully terminated the reentry program.
- ✓ 50% of parolees with some post-secondary schooling successfully terminated the reentry program.

#### Employment at Time of Program Termination:

- ✓ 23% of parolees with no known employment at the time of program termination successfully terminated the reentry program.
- ✓ 53% of parolees with part-time employment at the time of program termination successfully terminated the reentry program.
- ✓ 77% of parolees with full-time employment at the time of program termination successfully terminated the reentry program.



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Stephen Norton, New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies  
**From:** Andrew Barbee, Council of State Governments Justice Center  
**Re:** **Research Design for Evaluation of Hillsborough County Reentry Program**  
**Date:** March 31, 2010

---

### **IX. Background**

This memo represents the final deliverable of a four- piece series provided to the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) by the Council of State Governments Justice Center (Justice Center).<sup>3</sup> This document presents a research design for evaluating the Hillsborough County Reentry Program in New Hampshire.

Presented in this memorandum are specific steps for conducting a process and an outcome evaluation of the reentry program. The procedures identified build upon information identified in a previously provided literature review regarding the types of data necessary for conducting such evaluations. Furthermore, the process and outcome evaluations will utilize the database that was created pursuant to the contractual agreement between CPPS and the Justice Center.

Prior to detailing the aspects of the process and outcome evaluations, this memo will discuss various program logistics that should be in place in order to have the ability to conduct the evaluations. These logistics include identification of data entry opportunities within the reentry program and establishment of data capture responsibilities.

### **X. Logistical Requirements Related to Documentation of Program Participation**

---

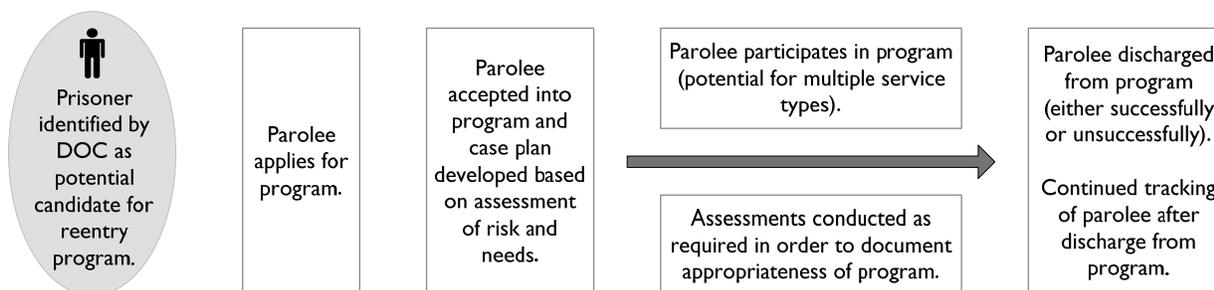
<sup>3</sup> Contract for research services between New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies and Council of State Governments Justice Center. March 10, 2010.

## Appendix Four: Research Design for Evaluation of Hillsborough County Reentry Program

The process and outcome evaluations put forth in this document can be viewed as products created in an effort to describe the implementation and ability of the reentry program to achieve goals related to reducing the rate of recidivism of offenders released to parole from prison in New Hampshire. However, in order to move forward with the evaluation products it is necessary to have the tools required for such an undertaking. These tools consist of basic database infrastructure and well-defined protocols for the capture and storage of information critical to measuring how the program operates.

### Information Gathering

There are multiple points where the opportunity exists for capturing information related to an offender's movement through the reentry program. It is advisable that the full movement potential of an offender through the reentry program be mapped in order to accurately identify the various points of information creation and consequent opportunities for gathering that information. This flow of movement through the program begins with the initial identification of potential program participants by the New Hampshire Department of Corrections (DOC) and continues along the many points of decision-making by reentry team members leading to program completion. Ideally, there will be continued tracking of parolees discharged from the reentry program. An illustration is provided below as an aid to visualizing potential points of information gathering. Section V of this memo serves as a useful guide to the types of information necessary for ultimately conducting the process and outcome evaluations prescribed in this document.



It should be noted that cooperation with other New Hampshire government entities will be necessary in order to gather the full complement of available information. DOC will have information related to prison admission and release activity, parole supervision, underlying offense history, institutional assessment of risk/needs and behavioral health issues as well as basic identifying information such as DOC identification number. The New Hampshire Department of Safety (DOS) maintains the arrest data that will be used for determining arrest incidents of those on parole.

### Data Capture

Once the various points of information collection are identified, it is important to establish a clear process for how the information will actually be gathered and ultimately stored in a database. Indeed, there are more desirable and less desirable ways of accomplishing the data

capture. For example, a process that is less reliant on paper files and hand-written notes would be preferable. However, there is no requirement of one specific approach. The resources available to the program administrators must be taken into consideration, and a paper-driven system is acceptable as long as there is a process identified for ensuring the information maintained in the files is ultimately entered into an electronic database in a timely and accurate manner. The database created as part of this contract with CPPS should suffice as the database for entering and storing information related to a parolees progression through the reentry program.

One final logistical consideration to be addressed is the responsibility for data entry. There are multiple members of the reentry team, and most will have repeated interactions with the parolee throughout their participation in the program. The various team members need to be clear about who is responsible for gathering necessary information and ensuring it is available for entry into the database. One team member should be designated as the party responsible for actually managing the data collection protocols and entering the information into the database. This person will make sure that members of the team are routinely collecting necessary data and will conduct quality review to make sure that data being collected is accurate. This person should also be in-charge of maintaining the electronic database and should be familiar with the reports that can be generated from this database.

Addressing these logistical concerns will enable not only the process and outcome evaluations, but it will also ensure that a process is in place that leads to maintenance of information in a way that facilitates access to information by all members of the reentry team.

## **XI. Process Evaluation**

It is important to have an understanding of the manner in which the reentry program is being implemented and operated. Oftentimes a program is unable to achieve its desired impacts due to improper implementation of the program according to its original design. The concept of how well a program is implemented and operated as designed is known as fidelity.

The following process evaluation items are offered as a method for assessing the fidelity of the Hillsborough Reentry Program. All of the items need to be addressed through a survey of each of the various reentry team members. Some items can also be measured directly through analysis of data; these items will be identified accordingly.

### **Item #1 – Referrals**

- ✓ Is DOC making referrals to the Hillsborough Reentry Program?
- ✓ What is the process whereby DOC notifies the program about potential parolee candidates?
- ✓ Do the referrals meet the program's eligibility requirements and target population of offenders with substance abuser issues? (*data analysis possible*)

## Appendix Four: Research Design for Evaluation of Hillsborough County Reentry Program

- ✓ How many referrals are made by DOC (per week/month/quarter)? Is the volume consistent with projections or do the number of referrals indicate problems with process? Is the number of referrals consistent with program capacity?

### Item #2 – Assessments

- ✓ Are risk/needs and behavioral health assessments of the offender completed prior to the inmates' parole eligibility date? (*data analysis possible*)
- ✓ Who conducts the assessments? Are they properly qualified?
- ✓ What aspects of the offender are assessed (e.g. risk/needs, substance abuse, and mental health)?
- ✓ What assessment instruments are used for the various types of assessment?
- ✓ Are assessment results clearly documented and shared accordingly with reentry team members? What is the profile of offenders assessed and is it consistent with program design? (*data analysis possible*)

### Item #3 – Case Management

- ✓ What is the nature of pre-release monitoring by the reentry program? What pre-release services, if any, are being delivered?
- ✓ Are the reentry teams constituted as envisioned by the program (case manager, parole officer, LADC, mental health clinician, reentry program director and assistant director, and administrative assistant)?
- ✓ Are partnering agencies in the local community identified and utilized as necessary?
- ✓ Do parolee interventions match with needs identified through initial assessments?
- ✓ Who facilitates interventions?
- ✓ Are subsequent assessments conducted? (*data analysis possible*)
- ✓ Are reentry program violations reported to the parole officer?
- ✓ Do all members of the reentry team have access to the same information?
- ✓ Are incentives/sanctions in place for program compliance/non-compliance?
- ✓ What is the definition for successful completion of the program?

## **XII. Outcome Evaluation**

This section presents a process for measuring the degree to which the reentry program is able to meet its stated objectives of reducing recidivism and ensuring public safety. The first step is to develop the research and control (or comparison) groups. After designing the research and control groups, the basic research areas to be addressed in the outcome evaluation should be identified. For this research design, the outcome evaluation areas are divided into primary and secondary subsets. Finally, a few observations about analytical techniques and resources are offered.

### Research Group

## Appendix Four: Research Design for Evaluation of Hillsborough County Reentry Program

The research group consists of all parolees who enter the reentry program. This group will subsequently be divided into those who successfully complete the reentry program and those who do not successfully complete as described below.

Usually, successful completion is defined as having met all requirements of the reentry program and being discharged out of the program favorably. As with all programs, there will be some participants who enter but do not successfully complete the program. The reasons for unsuccessful termination may be due to dropping out of the program or being terminated by program managers due to continued non-compliance with the requirements of the program. It is imperative that program managers clearly define successful versus unsuccessful program completion and track offenders accordingly based on program termination types used in the database.

For purposes of measuring recidivism, participants not completing the reentry program successfully should be tracked separately from those who complete the program successfully. This will yield research sub-groups and potentially allow for further demonstration of program impacts on those parolees who successfully complete the reentry program.

### Control Group

This group should be similar to the research group with one critical difference – they were not participants in the reentry program. Efforts must be taken to ensure that members of the control group are similar to the research group in terms of age, offense, risk/needs, behavioral health characteristics and manner of release from prison (parole). A well-designed control group is necessary to suggest that any outcome differences are attributable to the effects of the reentry program.

A typical control group can be people who qualified for the program but did not actually enter the program because they were not ultimately released to parole or were on a waiting list but never entered the program due to capacity limitations. Another method is to select people released from prison that look statistically similar to program participants along the dimensions mentioned above.

The control group will have to be created based on data provided by DOC. Basically, a request for case data for all offenders released from prison during a specified time frame will be necessary. Refer to Section V of this memo for a list of the desired data elements to be incorporated into the data provided by DOC.

### Primary Outcomes

The following measures relate directly to the stated goals of the reentry program. Compiling the data necessary to answer the primary outcomes will require utilization of the database developed for CPPS and provided as Deliverable 2 of this project. Data will also have to be obtained from the DOC as well as the state entity responsible for maintaining arrest records. The primary measures will be analyzed for the research group and the control group. The primary measures are as follows:

## Appendix Four: Research Design for Evaluation of Hillsborough County Reentry Program

- ✓ Percent of parolees re-arrested during 12 months after prison release.
- ✓ Percent of parolees re-arrested during 24 months after prison release.
- ✓ Percent of parolees re-incarcerated during 12 months after prison release.
- ✓ Reasons for re-incarceration of parolees re-incarcerated during 12 months after prison release (new offense conviction, new offense arrest, or non-criminal violations).
- ✓ Percent of parolees re-incarcerated during 24 months after prison release.
- ✓ Reasons for re-incarceration of parolees re-incarcerated during 24 months after prison release (new offense conviction, new offense arrest, or non-criminal violations).

### Secondary Outcomes

The following measures also relate to the goals of the reentry program. However, the measures will be less readily available for the control group given they are not being tracked as directly as the research group. Therefore, these secondary measures will likely only be possible for the research group. Compiling the data necessary to answer the secondary outcomes will require utilization of the database developed for CPPS and provided as Deliverable 2 of this project. The secondary measures are as follows:

- ✓ Percent of parolees securing housing during 12 months after prison release.
- ✓ Percent of parolees securing employment during 12 months after prison release.
- ✓ Urinalysis test results as available.

### Methods of Analysis

As previously stated, the process evaluation will rely primarily on the issuance of surveys to reentry team members. The surveys should be constructed as narrative questionnaires addressing each of the items previously identified in the process evaluation section of this document. Where possible, data will be analyzed to address process questions such as whether or not initial assessments were conducted prior to the parole eligibility date.

For the outcome evaluation, it is recommended that a statistical analysis software package such as SPSS be used. The basic approaches for developing rearrest and reincarceration rates will be to extract monthly prison release cohorts that will be assigned to either the research or control groups. For each of the cohorts in the respective groups, a data matching routine will be designed wherein arrest data from DOS and prison admission data from DOC are merged with records from the original prison release cohorts. For those prison releases with a subsequent match with arrest and/or prison admission records, the difference in months will be calculated between original release from prison and subsequent arrest and/or admission to prison.

Generally, the two timeframes addressed will be recidivism within 12 months after original release from prison and 24 months after original release from prison. However, it is possible additional time frames will be developed depending on results of the data matching routine. Those original release cohort records without a matching arrest or admission to prison within 24 months subsequent to the prison release date will be considered as non-recidivists for purposes of this evaluation.

As envisioned, the time required to conduct the full outcome evaluation is about three years from the date of prospective parole releases from prison entering the reentry program. For example, assume the evaluation is undertaken for parolees entering the program between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011 (dates of release from prison). Two years would need to be allowed for those released from prison in June 2011 to have an opportunity for re-arrest or re-incarceration. This means the follow-up period would last until June 2013. It should be clear that it takes time from actual arrest or admission to prison for these data to become available. Generally, six months is adequate lag time for entry of such information into the respective databases. It would take at least another six months to obtain the data and conduct the analyses related to measurement of recidivism. This amounts to about three full years after the last prison release to allow for all necessary follow-up, data retrieval and analysis. Under this scenario, June 2014 would be the point at which a report detailing the recidivism outcomes would be available.

Waiting until June 2014 is an admittedly long time. It is possible in the interim to conduct the process evaluation. Furthermore, it is possible that some partial measures like 6-month recidivism rates could be generated for the parolees entering the program during the first 6 months of fiscal year 2011. This would allow for some preliminary outcome measures to be available by June 2012.

#### Analytical Notes

When conducting the various outcome analyses, it is desirable to make multiple comparisons between the research and control groups along a number of dimensions. Examples of areas for further delineation and comparison include age, offense types, risk/need levels, known behavioral health issues and employment. The additional layers of comparison enrich the ability to demonstrate potential effectiveness of the reentry program to reduce rates of recidivism.

Finally, it is important that the process and outcome analyses be carried out by qualified people experienced in evaluations of criminal justice programs generally and reentry programs specifically. Depending on the number of offenders evaluated, there may be considerable amounts of data to analyze. Conducting analyses of large datasets in an efficient manner requires fairly sophisticated software. The various software packages available for these types of research take time to learn and use proficiently. Additionally, unexpected challenges often arise requiring an ability to make decisions about alternative analytical approaches. Such decisions usually have to be made without the benefit of additional time or resources. All of these challenges are magnified when relying on personnel without adequate research training and experience.

### **XIII. Data Elements Required for Evaluation**

The following tables depict the various data elements necessary for conducting the thorough evaluations presented in the preceding sections. Some data elements are required for creation of unique parolee records while other elements are desired for further categorizing the

## Appendix Four: Research Design for Evaluation of Hillsborough County Reentry Program

parolees along additional characteristics such as age, offense type, risk/needs, behavioral health screening results, treatment types received, and employment.

### Elements Necessary to Generate Unique Parolee Records

DOC ID
Last Name
First Name
Date of Birth
SSN
Gender
Race
Prison Release Date
Prison Release Type
Prison Release Offense of Record
Prison Release Offense Degree

### Elements Necessary to Generate Reentry Program Participant Identifiers

Reentry Program Begin Date
Reentry Program Termination Type

### Elements Necessary to Identify Recidivism Measures

Date of First Arrest Subsequent to Original Prison Release
Offense Degree for Subsequent Arrest
Date of Prison Admission Subsequent to Original Prison Release
Reason for Prison Admission Subsequent to Original Prison Release

### Elements Necessary to Identify Risk/Needs and Behavioral Health Characteristics

Appendix Four: Research Design for Evaluation of Hillsborough County Reentry Program

Pre-Release Risk/Needs Assessment Date
Pre-Release Risk/Needs Assessment Type
Pre-Release Risk Score
Pre-Release Needs Score
Most Recent Risk/Needs Assessment Date
Most Recent Risk/Needs Assessment Type
Most Recent Risk Score
Most Recent Needs Score
SA Assessment Date
SA Assessment Type
SA Assessment Results
Alcohol (yes/no)
Marijuana (yes/no)
Cocaine (yes/no)
Heroin (yes/no)
Amphetamine (yes/no)
Other Drugs (yes/no)
Recommended Services
MH Assessment Date
MH Assessment Type
MH Assessment Results
MH Assessment Diagnosis
MH Assessment Recommended Services

Elements Necessary to Identify Criminal Offense Characteristics

Number of Felony Convictions Prior to Incarceration
Conviction Have Multiple Offenses?
Current Primary Offense - General
Current Primary Offense - Specific
Current Primary Offense - Minimum SL Years
Current Primary Offense - Maximum SL Years
Prison Admission Date
Registered Sex Offender?
Gang Affiliations
Recent Incarceration Due to Parole Revocation?
Reason For Parole Revocation
Restitution - Original Amount Ordered
Restitution - Up to Date on Payments?

Elements Necessary to Identify Parole Supervision Characteristics

Name of Parole Officer
Supervision Level at Program Begin
Supervision Level at Program End
Number of 'Participation' Violation Episodes
Number of 'Quasi Criminal' Violation Episodes
Number of 'New Criminal Offense' Violation Episodes
Number of Drug Testing Events
Number of Drug Testing Events with Positive Results

Elements Necessary to Identify Reentry Program Intervention/Treatment Characteristics

Appendix Four: Research Design for Evaluation of Hillsborough County Reentry Program

Treatment/Services Name
Treatment Type
Treatment Level of Care
Treatment Begin Date
Treatment Frequency
Treatment Session Duration
Scheduled Overall T/S Duration
Treatment End Date

Elements Necessary to Identify Education/Employment/Housing Characteristics

Education (highest grade completed)
Manual Labor (yes/no)
Construction/Carpentry (yes/no)
Machinist (yes/no)
Welding (yes/no)
Computer Programming (yes/no)
Landscaping (yes/no)
Plumbing (yes/no)
Electrical (yes/no)
Employment Prior to Incarceration
Consecutive Months Employed Prior to Incarceration
Employment Secured After Release from Prison
Employment at Time of Reentry Program Termination
Consecutive Months Employed at Program Termination
Was Offender Homeless at Any Point Prior to Incarceration
Housing Prior to Incarceration
Housing After Release from Prison
Housing at Time of Reentry Program Termination

Elements Necessary to Identify Family/Social Support Characteristics

## Appendix Four: Research Design for Evaluation of Hillsborough County Reentry Program

Marital Status
Number of Children
Children Living in Manchester
Monthly Child Support Obligations
Was Offender Adopted
Mother Live in Manchester
Father Live in Manchester
Siblings Living in Manchester
Any Other Family Living in Manchester
Possess Identification at Time of Release
Valid Driver's License
Transportation at Time of Release from Prison
Transportation at Time of Reentry Program Termination
Member of a Church
Any Non Court-Ordered Volunteering in Community?
Medicaid (yes/no)
Medicare (yes/no)
Pension (yes/no)
Social Security (yes/no)
Unemployment (yes/no)
VA (yes/no)
Disability Benefits (yes/no)
Welfare/TANF/Food Stamps (yes/no)
Worker's Compensation (yes/no)
Currently Have Health Insurance?
Any Known Disabilities?