

# *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*



**Hank Rosen, *CSG Justice Center***

**Nancy La Vigne, PhD, *Urban Institute***

**Hannah Dodd, *Urban Institute***

# Goals of today's presentation

- Purpose of the *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*
- Overview of the methodology of the *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*
- Tour of the *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*
- Next Steps

# Purpose of the *What Works* project

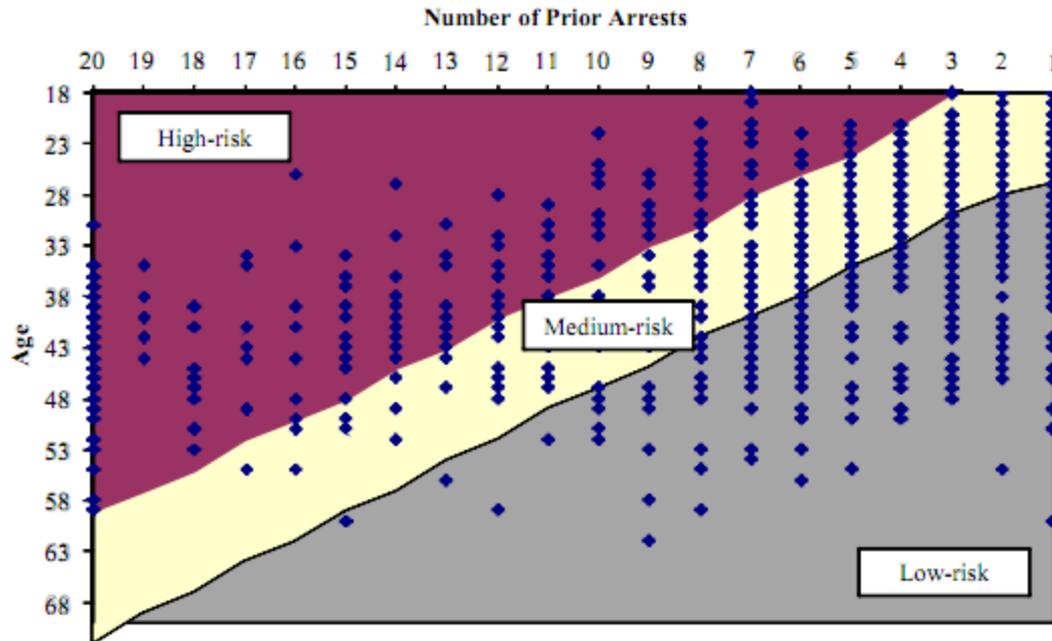
## Practitioners – Policymakers – Funders – Researchers

- *How do I find and **decipher** research?*
- *What are the **key takeaways** that I need to know?*
- *How do I know if the research is **reliable**?*
- *How do I determine the **relevance** of the research?*

The Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration

Figure 2

Definition of Risk Subgroups, by Age and Number of Prior Arrests



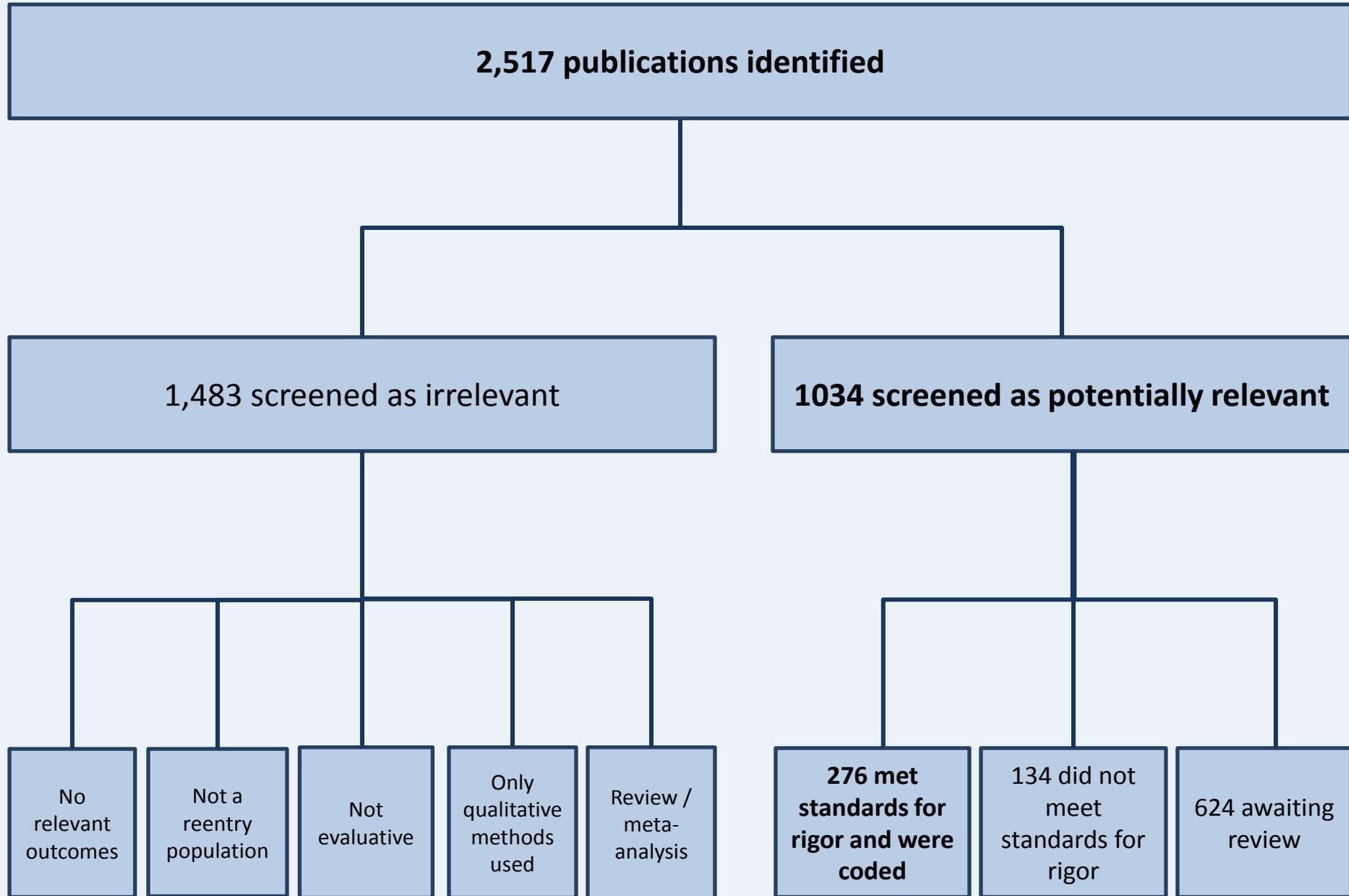
NOTES: This figure shows former prisoners in the sample and their categorization as being at high, medium, or low risk of recidivism, as determined by regression-based calculations of recidivism risk for different combinations of age and prior arrests while holding constant at the sample means gender, race/ethnicity, and time since release. As shown in the figure, for the average-aged participant (who was 33 years old), those with nine or more prior arrests are placed in the subgroup with high risk of recidivism; those with five to eight prior arrests are categorized as medium risk; and those with one to four prior arrests are categorized as low risk. Similarly, for participants who had the sample average of seven prior arrests, those who were age 28 or younger are categorized as high risk; those who were 29 to 40 are categorized as medium risk; and those who were 41 or older are categorized as low risk.

**Does CEO's Impact on Recidivism Vary by Low, Medium, or High Risk of Reoffending?**

# Development and Methodology

- **Identified** reentry studies through systematic review of the literature
- **Screened out** studies that did not meet content & methodological standards
- **Coded** eligible studies
- **Rated** eligible studies' methodology and findings
- **Wrote** summaries of eligible studies
- **Synthesized** across all eligible studies of each intervention

# Snapshot of Progress



## Content-related criteria

- Quantitative
- Population returning from incarceration
- Measure one or more reentry-relevant outcomes (recidivism, employment, substance use, housing, or mental health)
- Published in 1980 or later

## Methodological criteria

- Study design:
  - Randomized experiment
  - Quasi-experiment with matched groups or statistical controls for differences
- Sample size of at least 30 in each group
- Independent evaluation

**List of ineligible studies provided on website**

## Rigor/Methods Ratings

- Basic Rigor
  - RCT or rigorous QED
  - $N \geq 30$  in each group
  - Independent evaluator
- High Rigor
  - RCT or rigorous QED
  - $N \geq 100$  in each group
  - One-year follow-up
  - Minor attrition
  - Independent evaluator

## Outcomes Ratings

- Strong evidence of a beneficial effect
- Modest evidence of a beneficial effect
- No evidence of an effect
- Modest evidence of a harmful effect
- Strong evidence of a harmful effect

## The key to interpreting *What Works*

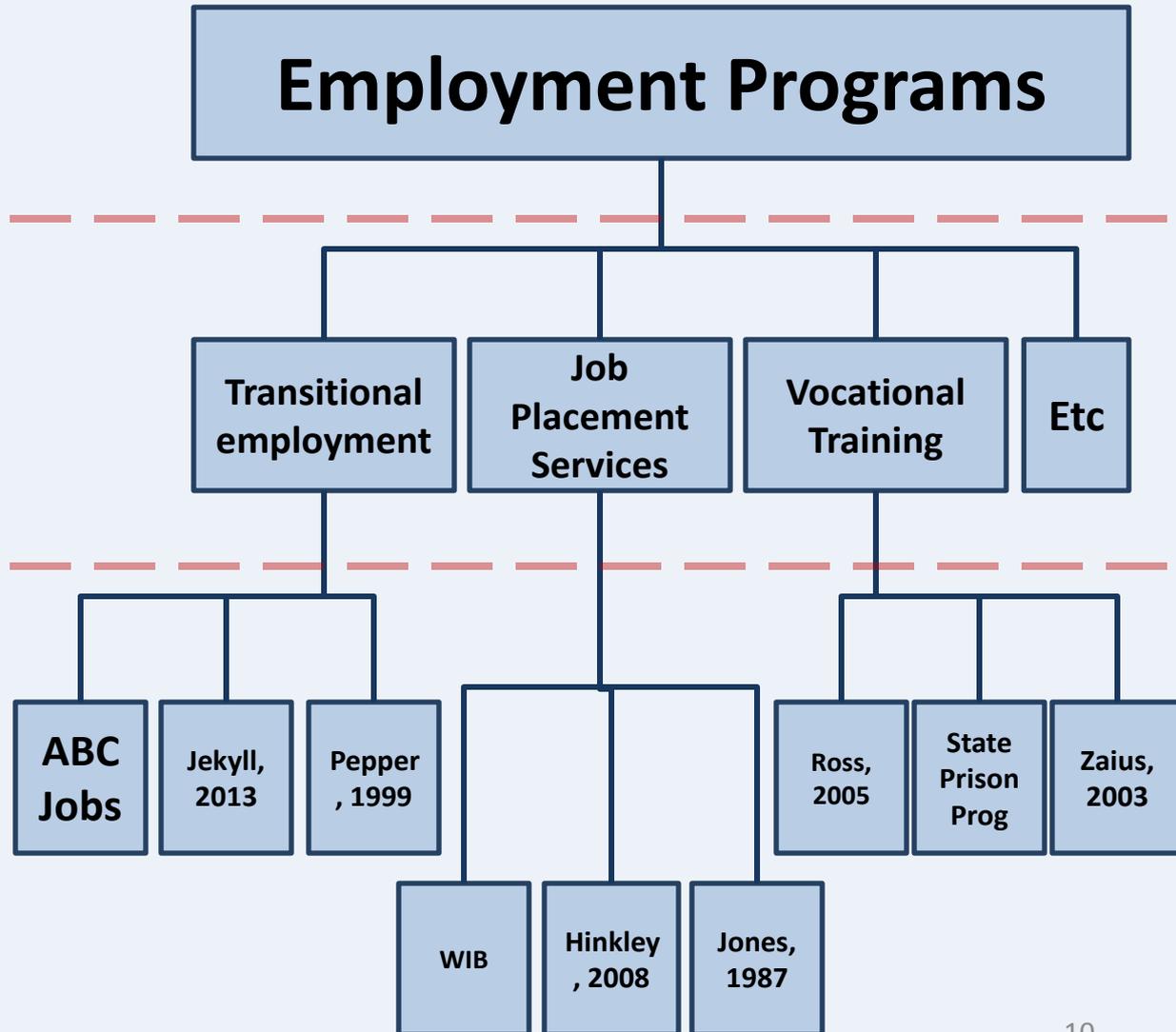
High Rigor	Basic Rigor	
		Strong evidence of a beneficial effect
		Modest evidence of a beneficial effect
		No statistically significant findings
		Modest evidence of a harmful effect
		Strong evidence of a harmful effect

- Outcome ratings: What the study actually found
- Rigor ratings: How much we can trust the findings

- A study can be high rigor but show no evidence of an effect, or basic rigor but show strong evidence of an effect
- The rigor rating determines how much confidence we place in the findings

# Overview of Website Content

- **Topic area summaries** synthesize across all interventions in each topic area
- **Intervention summaries** synthesize across all evaluations of an intervention
- **Evaluation summaries** describe a single evaluation



## Topic areas to be included in website launch:

- Employment
- Housing
- Mental Health
- Brand Name

## Topic areas to be added throughout 2012:

- Cognitive-Behavioral
- Education
- Substance Abuse
- Supervision & Sanctions
- Juvenile
- Sex Offender Treatment
- Family
- Comprehensive

# Tour of the website: Homepage

Subscribe to our newsletter!

Name:

Email:

Subscribe

## What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse [User View](#) | [Admin View](#)

The *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse* offers easy access to important research on the effectiveness of a wide variety of reentry programs and practices. It provides a user-friendly, one-stop shop for practitioners and service providers seeking guidance on evidence-based reentry interventions, as well as a useful resource for researchers and others interested in reentry. To get started, click the button below for additional information about this project or how to use this site; or, click on a focus area topic on the left to begin exploring. You can also conduct a customized search by clicking the advanced search link on the right.

Click here for more information about the *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse* and information on how to use this site

### Audiences

[States/Local](#)

[Community and Faith-based Organizations](#)

[People Returning Home](#)

### Tools & Resources

[Calendar](#)

[Funding](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[National Criminal Justice Initiatives Map](#)

[Reentry Service Directories](#)

[Program Examples](#)

[Second Chance Act](#)

[Federal Interagency Reentry Council](#)

[Announcements](#)

### Browse Focus Areas

- [Brand Name Programs](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Mental Health](#)

### Coming Soon

- [Substance Abuse](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Juvenile-Specific Interventions](#)
- [Supervision and Sanctions](#)
- [Cognitive-Behavioral Programs](#)
- [Sex Offender Treatment](#)

### Search What Works

Search What Works... Search

[Advanced Search](#)

### Ratings Key

High Rigor	Basic Rigor	
		Strong evidence of a beneficial effect
		Modest evidence of a beneficial effect
		No statistically significant findings
		Modest evidence of a harmful effect
		Strong evidence of a harmful effect

Tips and Help

Advanced search

Browse the site

# Tour of the website: Diving into the information

Subscribe to our newsletter!

Name:   
Email:

## What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse [User View](#) | [Admin View](#)

The *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse* offers easy access to important research on the effectiveness of a wide variety of reentry programs and practices. It provides a user-friendly, one-stop shop for practitioners and service providers seeking guidance on evidence-based reentry interventions, as well as a useful resource for researchers and others interested in reentry. To get started, click the button below for additional information about this project or how to use this site; or, click on a focus area topic on the left to begin exploring. You can also conduct a customized search by clicking the advanced search link on the right.

Click here for more information about the *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse* and information on how to use this site

- Audiences**
- States/Locals
- Community and Faith-based Organizations
- People Returning Home
- Tools & Resources**
- Calendar
- Funding
- Frequently Asked Questions
- National Criminal Justice Initiatives Map
- Reentry Service Directories
- Program Examples
- Second Chance Act
- Federal Interagency Reentry Council
- Announcements

- Browse Focus Areas**
- [Brand Name Programs](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Mental Health](#)
- Coming Soon**
- [Substance Abuse](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Juvenile-Specific Interventions](#)
- [Supervision and Sanctions](#)
- [Cognitive-Behavioral Programs](#)
- [Sex Offender Treatment](#)
- [Family-Based Programs](#)

**Search What Works**

[Advanced Search](#)

Ratings Key	
High Rigor	Basic Rigor
	Strong evidence of a beneficial effect
	Modest evidence of a beneficial effect
	No statistically significant findings
	Modest evidence of a harmful effect
	Strong evidence of a harmful effect

“Having a job improves outcomes”



# Tour of the website: Focus Area Page, Employment

- Tips/Help
- Related content
- Advanced Search
- Key
- 
- Overview of Focus Area
- General Summary of Findings
- Interventions

Home About ▾ Library Topics ▾ Training & TA ▾ Reentry Facts What Works

Subscribe to our newsletter!  
Name:   
Email:

**Employment** User View | [Admin View](#)

[What Works](#) >> Employment

Conventional wisdom states that finding a job is one of the most important elements for a person to successfully transition from incarceration back into the community. In fact, individuals returning home from prison often identify employment as the most important factor that helped them stay crime free. While studies have shown that employment can help decrease the likelihood that an individual will re-offend and recidivate, in general research on the relationship between participation in employment programs and recidivism has yielded mixed results.

This section provides an overview and examination of key evaluative research investigating the relationship between reentry employment programs and recidivism reduction. Below, we highlight the results and conclusions of research that met our criteria for methodological rigor and provide a basis for comparing and discussing effective employment programs emerging in the reentry field.

Click "more" to read a summary of our findings in this Focus Area ... [\(more\)](#)

**8 Interventions**

Click the header to expand/collapse to show or hide additional information.  [Send Us Your Feedback](#)

**Affordable Homes Program (Construction Training and Experience)**

Evaluations: 1 High Rigor

The Affordable Homes Program (AHP), as implemented by the Minnesota Department of Corrections with the assistance of non-profit agencies, is an intervention designed to provide practical, construction-related experience to minimum-security inmates, while simultaneously providing homes for low-income residents throughout the community.

[View Intervention Details](#)

**Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)**

Evaluations: 1 High Rigor

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) opened in New York City in the 1970s and has since

**Audiences**

[States/Locals](#)  
[Community and Faith-based Organizations](#)  
[People Returning Home](#)

**Tools & Resources**

[Calendar](#)  
[Funding](#)  
[Frequently Asked Questions](#)  
[National Criminal Justice Initiatives Map](#)  
[Reentry Service Directories](#)  
[Program Examples](#)  
[Second Chance Act](#)  
[Federal Interagency Reentry Council](#)  
[Announcements](#)

**About the What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse**

**Other Employment Resources**

**Search What Works**

[Advanced Search](#)

Ratings Key	
High Rigor	Basic Rigor

# Tour of the website: Focus Area Page, Employment

- Short description of the Intervention
- Quick overview of evaluations

**Kintock Group, Inc., Employment Resource Center**

Evaluations: 1 Basic Rigor 

This intervention is designed to assist formerly incarcerated persons with securing and maintaining employment, thus reducing the chances of recidivism; in addition to providing clients with job retention support, employment readiness training, and job placement services, the Employment Resource Center offers case management, substance abuse treatment, and educational referrals.

[View Intervention Details](#)

**National Supported Work Demonstration Project**

Evaluations: 1 High Rigor 

The intervention evaluated was the National Supported Work Demonstration Project; those randomly assigned to the treatment group were offered minimum-wage jobs in crews of 8 to 10 workers led by counselor/supervisors.

[View Intervention Details](#)

High rigor: Strong evidence of effectiveness

**Prison Industries**

Evaluations: 4 High Rigor   
3 Basic Rigor 

Depending upon the available programs and the type of correctional facility (eg, state versus federal), persons participating in prison industries are employed in jobs ranging from farming and agriculture (Johnson 1984) to metal industries and furniture shops (Flanagan et al 1988).

[View Intervention Details](#)

**Specialized Training and Employment Project (STEP)**

Evaluations: 1 Basic Rigor 

The Specialized Training and Employment Project (STEP) was a unique intervention implemented in a Milwaukee prison that was designed to improve the post-release employment prospects of returning prisoners; STEP provided participants with a wide array of support occurring in three phases: institutional, transitional, and post-release.

[View Intervention Details](#)

**Work Release**

Evaluations: 3 High Rigor   
3 Basic Rigor 

Work release programs provide incarcerated persons the opportunity to work within the community while residing in a correctional facility at all other times; this approach is believed to facilitate the prisoner's reintegration success by enhancing employment prospects and providing a means for prisoners to accrue savings while offsetting the costs of the work release program.

[View Intervention Details](#)

# Tour of the website: Intervention Area, Prison Industries

Subscribe to our newsletter!

Name:

Email:

## Audiences

[States/Locals](#)

[Community and Faith-based Organizations](#)

[People Returning Home](#)

## Tools & Resources

[Calendar](#)

[Funding](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[National Criminal Justice Initiatives Map](#)

[Reentry Service Directories](#)

[Program Examples](#)

[Second Chance Act](#)

[Federal Interagency Reentry Council](#)

[Announcements](#)

## Intervention: Work Release

User View | [Admin View](#)

[What Works](#) >> [Employment](#) >> Work Release

Outcome Evaluated Findings

Recidivism	
Employment	

### Description of Intervention

Work release programs provide incarcerated persons the opportunity to work within the community while residing in a correctional facility at all other times; this approach is believed to facilitate the prisoner's reintegration success by enhancing employment prospects and providing a means for prisoners to accrue savings while offsetting the costs of the work release program. ... [\(more\)](#)

### Summary of Findings

Six evaluations of work release programs meeting eligibility criteria and methodological standards were identified; three were rated at the high level of study rigor, while three were rated at the basic level. All six studies evaluated the impact of work release on recidivism, and two also measured employment outcomes. ... [\(more\)](#)

### Recommendations for Practice

- Turner and Petersilia (1996) evaluated the predictors of work release success in a sample of Washington State inmates, finding that those most likely to succeed while on work release tended to be older, White individuals who were committed for a crime against a person and had no prior criminal history. ... [\(more\)](#)

### Suggestions for Future Research

- Due to the logistical and resource challenges that face evaluators in nearly every area of reentry research, none of the studies reviewed were able to conduct a true randomized experiment, instead relying upon quasi-experimental designs with matched groups or statistical controls for differences between groups. ... [\(more\)](#)

### 6 Evaluations

Click the header to expand/collapse to show or hide additional information.  [Send Us Your Feedback](#)

Ratings Key		
High Rigor	Basic Rigor	
		Strong evidence of a beneficial effect
		Modest evidence of a beneficial effect
		No statistically significant findings
		Modest evidence of a harmful effect
		Strong evidence of a harmful effect

### Search What Works

Search What Works...

[Advanced Search](#)

- Table of findings
- Introduction to intervention
- Summary of Findings/Research Quality
- Recommendations for practice
- Suggestions for future research

# Tour of the website: Intervention Area, Prison Industries

Program Name

Rigor Rating and Outcomes

Summary of program

Target population demographics

Description of setting

---

Evaluation Design

Findings

Limitations

Other information

## 6 Evaluations

Click the header to expand/collapse to show or hide additional information. [Send Us Your Feedback](#)

### Berk 2007

Rigor: *High*

**Program Name:** Florida Work Release

**Age** Adult

**Outcome Ratings:**

**Gender** Men

**Recidivism:** Strong evidence of effectiveness 

**State/Country** Florida

**Employment:** Strong evidence of effectiveness 

**Focus Area** Employment

**Program Summary:** In the Florida work release program

**Intervention** Work Release

evaluated here, eligible prison inmates can request transfer to a work release center, and they are transferred when space becomes available ...

[View Evaluation Details](#)

### Drake 2007

Rigor: *High*

**Program Name:** Washington State Work Release

**Age** Adult

**Outcome Ratings:**

**Gender** Mixed

**Recidivism:** Modest evidence of effectiveness 

**State/Country** Washington

**Program Summary:** The Washington State Work Release

**Focus Area** Employment

program utilizes 15 work facilities and employs about 700 inmate workers. Eligibility criteria vary by facility, with some facilities specific to males or females and some with a therapeutic community component, but all facilities exclude those convicted of first-degree murder or first-degree rape. At each facility, contracted staff provide security, food, maintenance, and clerical support, while Washington State Department of Corrections staff provide case management and perform administrative functions. Participants must find a full-time job within ten days of arrival at the facility, and they receive assistance in the job search process if needed. Wages earned may be deducted for room and board, dependent support payments, legal/court costs, or other fees, as applicable.

**Intervention** Work Release

**Design:** This study utilized a quasi-experimental design with logistic regression to control for group differences. The comparison group included individuals who were released during the same period as the treatment group and would have been eligible for work release but did not participate in the program.

**Findings:** A significant reduction in the rate of re-conviction was observed for the treatment group over the 3-year period. However, no significant differences were observed with respect to the rate of violent felony convictions.

**Limitations:** Findings may not be generalizable to a broad prison population; participants were found to be systematically different from non-participants; the study is based on observational data and relies upon limited statistical controls.

**Sample Size:** Total N: 15,326 (Treatment group: 11,413; Comparison group: 3,913)

**Follow-Up Period:** 36 months

[View Evaluation Details](#)

### Leonard 2001

Rigor: *High*

**Program Name:** Beaver County Work Release Program

**Age** Adult

**Outcome Ratings:**

**Gender** Men

**Recidivism:** No evidence of an effect 

**State/Country** Pennsylvania

**Program Summary:** The Beaver County Work Release

**Focus Area** Employment

program is designed for inmates in the Washington State Department of Corrections who have four to six months remaining in their sentences ...

**Intervention** Work Release

[View Evaluation Details](#)

# Tour of the website: Evaluation Page, WA Correctional Industries (Class I)

- Outcome Ratings
- Program Summary
- Target Population
- Methodology and limitations
- Overview of findings
- Publications Reviewed

## Methodology

This study utilized a quasi-experimental design. The treatment group (N=11, 413) consisted of prisoners who had participated in the Washington State work release program and were released between January 1, 1998, and July 31, 2003. The comparison group (N=3,913) was drawn from prisoners released during the same time period who would have been eligible for work release during confinement but who had not participated in the program. In order to evaluate pre-existing group differences, the researcher conducted significance tests on relevant variables. These tests revealed several differences, including a greater proportion of African Americans, a higher average age, and a greater number of prior felony adult adjudications among the treatment group.

The researcher operationalized recidivism in three ways: 1) any re-conviction, 2) any felony re-conviction, and 3) any felony re-conviction involving violence. For the treatment group, outcomes were tracked during the work release program and over an additional 36 months after release from prison. Outcomes for the comparison group were tracked for 36 months following release. Statistical analyses involved the use of logistic regression models, and all models included the following control variables: felony risk score, non-drug risk score, violent risk score, age at release, prior adult felony adjudications, gender, race, actual prison days, Sentencing Reform Act (SRA) severity level, SRA offender score, minimum sentence years, maximum sentence years, and mandatory sentence days.

## Methodological Limitations

As noted by the researcher, both participants and nonparticipants had volunteered to be involved in work release, which limited potential selection bias. However, the findings may not be generalizable to the entire prison population for this reason. Furthermore, eligibility requirements for both groups excluded violent offenders, so interpretation of these findings should not extend beyond non-violent offenders. Program participants were also found to differ from non-participants on various demographic and criminal history variables, although these were controlled in the regression analyses. Finally, the study is based on observational data and relies upon limited statistical controls.

## Quality of Implementation

The quality of intervention implementation was not discussed.

## Findings

This study found weak evidence of a beneficial treatment effect on recidivism.

- When recidivism was defined as any new conviction (felony or misdemeanor), 58% of the treatment group and 61% of the comparison group recidivated during the follow-up period. Logistic regression analysis indicated that this difference was significant ( $p < .01$ ), with the treatment group showing lower odds of recidivating than the comparison group.
- When recidivism was defined as any new felony conviction, 45% of the treatment group recidivated over the 3-year period, compared to 47% of the comparison group. This difference was found to be marginally significant ( $p = .12$ ) in the logistic regression model; however, it does not meet the level of significance required to be considered a significant finding ( $p < .05$ ).
- When recidivism was defined as a violent felony conviction, 10% of both the treatment and comparison groups recidivated. The logistic regression model found no significant difference on this outcome.

## Publications Reviewed

Drake, E. (2007). *Does participation in Washington's work release facilities reduce recidivism?* Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

# Tour of the website: Advanced Search

- Intervention / Evaluations
- Keyword + filters
- Customizability increases as amount of content increases
- Sort according to various criteria

Subscribe to our newsletter!

Name:

Email:

### Audiences

States/Locals

Community and Faith-based Organizations

People Returning Home

### Tools & Resources

Calendar

Funding

Frequently Asked Questions

National Criminal Justice Initiatives Map

Reentry Service Directories

Program Examples

Second Chance Act

Federal Interagency Reentry Council

Announcements

## What Works: Search

User View | Admin View

[What Works](#) >> Search

Search for:  Interventions  Evaluations

Keyword:

#### Focus Areas

- Brand Name Programs
- Employment
- Housing
- Mental Health

#### Rigor

- High
- Basic

#### Age

- Juvenile
- Adult
- Mixed
- Unspecified

#### Gender

- Men
- Women
- Mixed
- Unspecified

#### State/Country:

- All
- Unspecified
- Alabama
- Alaska

Ratings Key		
High Rigor	Basic Rigor	Strong evidence of a beneficial effect
		Modest evidence of a beneficial effect
		No statistically significant findings
		Modest evidence of a harmful effect
		Strong evidence of a harmful effect

43 Evaluations match [Show All](#)

Sort By

Click the header to expand/collapse to show or hide additional information.

Ostermann 2009		Rigor: High
<b>Program Name:</b> New Jersey State Parole Board Halfway Back Program	<b>Age:</b> Adult	<b>Gender:</b> Mixed
<b>Outcome Ratings:</b>	<b>State/Country:</b> New Jersey	<b>Focus Area:</b> Brand Name Programs
<b>Recidivism:</b> Strong evidence of effectiveness	<b>Intervention:</b> New Jersey State Parole Board Halfway Back Program (HWB)	
<b>Program Summary:</b> The New Jersey State Parole Board Halfway Back Program (HWB) began in 2006, when the New Jersey State Parole Board moved to adopt an evidence-based approach to parole supervision; HWB was created as a structured approach to increasing returning ...		
<a href="#">View Evaluation Details</a>		

Miller & Miller 2010		Rigor: Basic
<b>Program Name:</b> Auglaize County Transition Program	<b>Age:</b> Adult	<b>Gender:</b> Men
<b>Outcome Ratings:</b>	<b>State/Country:</b> Ohio	<b>Focus Area:</b> Brand Name Programs
<b>Recidivism:</b> Strong evidence of effectiveness		
<b>Program Summary:</b> The Auglaize County Transition (ACT)		

- **Comprehensive aftercare programs usually effective, including:**
  - 4 of 5 comprehensive aftercare programs for mentally ill individuals
  - 6 of 7 comprehensive “brand name” programs
  - 5 of 6 community-based aftercare for substance abusers

- **Employment programs show mixed results**
  - Work release, prison industries: Only about half of studies show effectiveness
  - Unique employment programs: Several show no effects
- **Effects often depend upon individual characteristics**
  - Risk to recidivate
  - Timing of service delivery
  - Many studies did not examine such factors

- **Few eligible studies in some topic areas**
  - **No eligible studies in Physical Health**
  - **Only 3 studies in Housing topic area – all of halfway houses**
  - **Why?**
    - **Problems with methodological approach**
    - **Focus on non-reentry populations (e.g., probationers with no jail time)**
    - **No relevant outcomes**
      - **Physical health studies often do not examine recidivism**
      - **Many studies examine institutional outcomes only**

## Roll Out Timeline

Summer 2012

Fall 2012

Winter 2012/3

**Roll-out of  
additional  
focus areas:**

- Substance Abuse
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Education

**Roll-out of  
additional focus  
areas:**

- Supervision and Sanctions
- Sex Offender Treatment
- Juveniles

**Roll-out of  
additional focus  
areas:**

- Holistic
- Family

# How to get there?

[www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/what\\_works](http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/what_works)

# Who to contact?

**Nancy La Vigne, PhD:** [nlavigne@urban.org](mailto:nlavigne@urban.org)

**Hannah Dodd:** [hdodd@urban.org](mailto:hdodd@urban.org)

**Hank Rosen:** [hrosen@csg.org](mailto:hrosen@csg.org)