Evaluation of the Jail-Based Job Center (JBJC) Pilot Program at Pitchess Detention Center-South Facility

Los Angeles County Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services

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Introduction

Jail-based employment programs are designed to support incarcerated people as they near release from custody. They provide pre-release services such as résumé preparation, job search support, skills identification, and life skills workshops, as well as ongoing employment support and case management as individuals transition back into their communities. Research has shown that obtaining quality employment post-release is directly related to lower risk of recidivism,[1,2] yet many people leaving jail do not have the resources or skills to locate and secure employment. Even as the State of California has seen the inmate population drop over the last decade, recidivism—the rate at which formerly incarcerated individuals re-offend within three years—has averaged over 50 percent, according to a 2019 report by the California State Auditor.[3]

To that end, the Los Angeles County Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), in partnership with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), Los Angeles County Probation Department, Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources, Los Angeles County America's Job Centers of California (AJCC), and Los Angeles Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Council, established the Jail-Based Job Center (JBJC) pilot program at Pitchess Detention Center, South Facility (Pitchess). WDACS awarded a contract to Five Keys Schools and Programs (Five Keys) to deliver services for the pilot. The JBJC pilot sought to connect inmates to jobs upon release via pre- and post-release workforce development services.[4] The program offered a combination of prosocial habit development and employment readiness training and pre-release support, including weekly career training and employment planning. The program also offered post-release transition

support by connecting enrolled participants with case managers to continue employment navigation services.

According to JBJC's January 2018 Annual Status Report, the goal of AJCC was to assist JBJC participants in securing unsubsidized employment along a career path, leading to a sustainable wage.[5] Once participants secured employment, AJCC provided up to 12 months of employment retention services to help mitigate obstacles encountered on the job that could threaten job retention and progression. The JBJC Pitchess program intended to provide participants with services and trainings geared toward workforce development and transitioning post-release.

The JBJC pilot program operated at Pitchess from November 2017 through August 2019. It was developed to target individuals who graduated from the Sheriff's Department's Education Based Incarceration (EBI) programs and were going to remain in the facility for at least 90 days, as the program included 30 hours' worth of activities.

Exhibit 1 shows the services and support offered to participants through each component of the program, including pre-release services, case management, and post-release services.

While in practice participants navigated activities in a non-linear fashion, according to WDACS staff, the intention was for participants to join each set of activities from the beginning (i.e., prosocial habit activities, employment readiness workshops, and case management services). Because the program enrolled participants on a rolling basis, some participants might enroll when the prosocial habits modules had already started; in that case, they would participate in employment readiness workshops while waiting for a new round of prosocial habits modules to start.

[1] Eric Lichtenberger and Scott Weygandt, "Offender Workforce Development Services Makes an Impact," *Corrections Today*, vol. 73, 2011, http://ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=59533379&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

[2] Jennifer Henderson-Frakes, "Providing Services in a Jail-Based American Job Center" (Princeton, NJ, 2018), https://www.mathematica.org/our-publications-and-findings/publications/providing-services-in-a-jail-based-american-job-center.
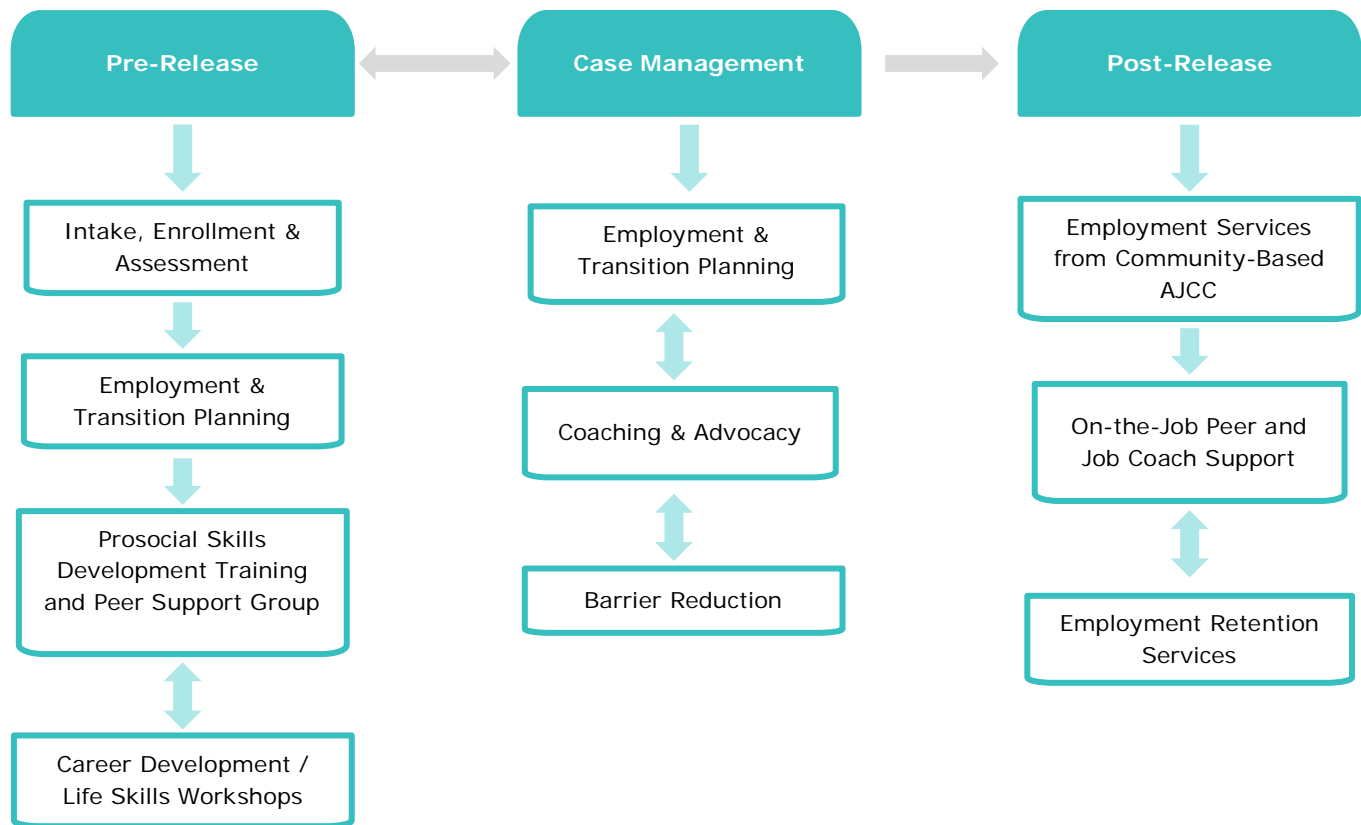
[3] California State Auditor, "Several Poor Administrative Practices Have Hindered Reductions in Recidivism and Denied Inmates Access to

In-Prison Rehabilitation Programs" (Sacramento, CA, 2018), www.auditor.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2018-113.

[4] County of Los Angeles Quality and Productivity Commission, "Productivity Investment Fund Annual Status Report: Los Angeles County Jail-Based Job Center" (Los Angeles, CA, 2018).

[5] According to their website (https://edd.ca.gov/Jobs_and_Training/TCLobby.htm), America's Job Center of California provides workforce services and a comprehensive range of no-cost employment and training services for employers and job seekers. AJCC is a collaboration of local, state, private, and public entities that provide comprehensive and innovative employment services and resources to meet the needs of the California workforce.

Exhibit 1. Jail-Based Job Center Program Services and Support

Pre-Release	Case Management	Post-Release
Intake, Enrollment & Assessment	Employment & Transition Planning	Employment Services from Community-Based AJCC
Employment & Transition Planning	Coaching & Advocacy	On-the-Job Peer and Job Coach Support
Prosocial Skills Development Training and Peer Support Group	Barrier Reduction	Employment Retention Services
Career Development / Life Skills Workshops		

JBJC Evaluation Overview and Methods

In July 2020, WDACS contracted with Harder+Company Community Research to conduct an external evaluation of the JBJC pilot to inform future jail-based job program development. The evaluation sought to answer the following questions:

- How successful was the collaboration between WDACS, Five Keys, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in implementing the JBJC pilot program at Pitchess (e.g., agency partnerships sustained throughout the pilot)?

- Was the pilot successful in recruiting and retaining participants (e.g., target recruitment goals, completion of the program)?

- How effective was the pilot in preparing participants for employment and connecting them to jobs post-release (e.g., employment and wages)?

Harder+Company used a mixed-methods approach incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data in the evaluation design. Specific methods included the following:

- In-depth telephone interviews with two Five Keys staff who were a part of the JBJC pilot

- An in-depth telephone interview with two members of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department who oversee the Education Based Incarceration Programs

- An in-depth telephone interview with three members of the original WDACS team that designed the pilot and oversaw early implementation

- Participant-level data from the CalJOBS data system, including participant demographics, pilot program activities completed under the Title I application, an authorization from WIOA to provide job training and related services to unemployed or underemployed individuals, and post-release employment placement and wages

We intended to include the perspective of more Five Keys and Sheriff's Department staff, as well as of JBJC pilot participants. However, as the evaluation began more than a year after the pilot was complete, few staff who had been directly involved in the pilot were still employed by Five Keys and many of the Sheriff's Department staff who were most familiar with the pilot had been reassigned or retired. The time lapse also meant that many participants' email addresses were invalid by the time of this evaluation, and none of the participants responded to interview requests.

Further, the evaluation team was not able to reach any of the AJCC staff who worked with JBJC pilot participants. The AJCC case manager who was identified by program staff did not respond to multiple contacts from the evaluation team.

Despite these limitations, the evaluation team was able to address all the evaluation questions to some extent. Based on these findings, we developed five overarching recommendations aimed at future efforts to address the needs for jail-based employment training and career development.

Summary of JBJC Pitchess Pilot Evaluation Findings

This report summarizes Harder+Company's evaluation of the JBJC Pitchess Pilot Program and offers recommendations for future jail-based programs in Los Angeles County that seek to support employment readiness and career pathways post-release. **While the JBJC program at Pitchess was successful in enrolling participants, it is unclear whether it met participant employment readiness needs, and coordination gaps between partners led to minimal post-release support and follow-up.**

A total of 264 participants were enrolled in the JBJC Pitchess Pilot during the two-year period, which exceeded the goal of 200 participants. Participants had an average age of 35 years old. Most were Hispanic/Latino (58 percent) and had at least a high school or recognized equivalent education (57 percent); 18 percent reported being homeless. These demographics of the JBJC Pitchess Pilot participants were fairly similar to those of the 2019 Los Angeles County (LAC) jail population. For example, in both the pilot program and jail population, many inmates were under 35 years old (52 percent in the pilot versus 56 percent in the LAC jail population). Though the JBJC pilot had a similar percentage of Hispanics/Latinos compared to LAC's jail population (58 percent versus 53 percent, respectively), the pilot program served fewer Black/African Americans relative to the overall LAC jail population (12 percent versus 29 percent, respectively).[6] Considering that Black/African Americans are overrepresented in the LAC jail population (comprising only 9 percent of the population in LA County, but nearly 30 percent of the jail population),[7] any jail programming should have an explicit plan for reaching African American inmates. Further details about participant demographics

can be found in Exhibits 2, 3, and 4, below, and Appendix A.

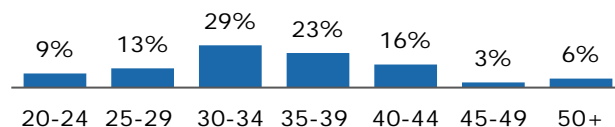**Exhibit 2. Age of Pitchess Pilot Program Participants (n=264)**

| 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50+ |
| 9% | 13% | 29% | 23% | 16% | 3% | 6% |

Exhibit 3. Race/Ethnicity of Pitchess Pilot Program Participants and LAC Jail Population,[8,9] 2019

Hispanic or Latino — 58% / 53%
Other* — 16% / 4%
Black or African American — 12% / 29%
White — 10% / 14%
Asian — 3% / 0.1%
American Indian — 0.4% / 0%

■ JBJC Pitchess Pilot (n=252)
■ LA County Jail (n=14,858)
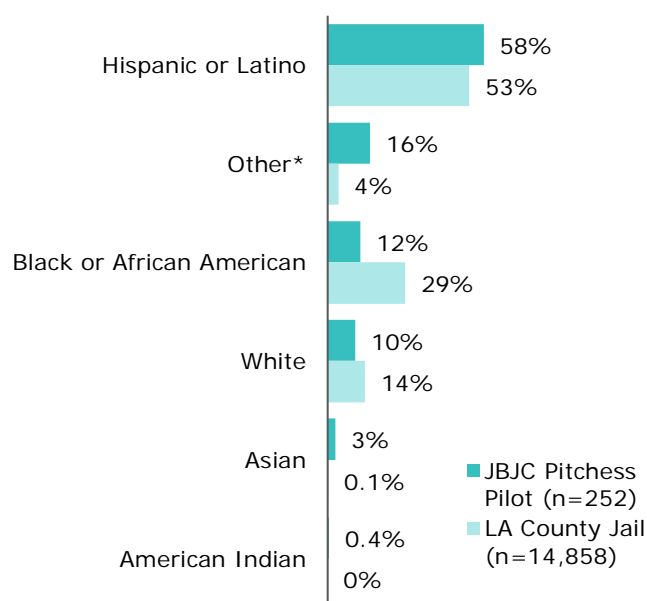
Exhibit 4. Percent Homeless, Pitchess Pilot Program Participants and LAC Jail Population,[10] 2019

JBJC Pitchess Pilot (n=252) — 18%
LA County Jail (n=14,858) — 27%
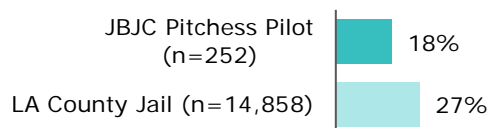
According to the CalJOBS data, pilot participants were offered 35 unique activities. Of these, participants attended an average of six, with some attending only one

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[6] Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, "Custody Division Population Quarterly Report" (Los Angeles, CA, 2019), http://www.la-sheriff.org/s2/static_content/info/documents/Custody Division Population 2019 Second Quarter Report.pdf.

[7] U.S. Census Bureau, "QuickFacts: Los Angeles County, California," 2019, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/losangelescountycalifornia.

[8] Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, "Custody Division Population Quarterly Report."

[9] In the Pitchess Program, 'Other' Is Categorized as Multi-Racial. The LAC Jail Data Did Not Report If the Person Is Multi-Racial.

[10] Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, "Custody Division Population Quarterly Report."

activity and others attending as many as twenty-two. These activities were intended to help participants be successful in post-release employment through coaching and job readiness skills. Almost all participants (89 percent) attended at least one target activity, most frequently Pre-Release Case Management (62 percent) and Pre-Release Soft Skills Workshop (63 percent). Exhibit 7 highlights higher engagement pre-release, and a clear disconnect post-release. Given that the intended outcomes of the program include access to AJCC services, and the importance of peer support in reducing recidivism, it would be worth further exploring some of the missed opportunities in these activities. Similarly, it is important to consider strengthening these components in future programs. Additional details about program activities can be found in Exhibits 5, 6, and 7 and Appendix B.

Exhibit 5. JBJC Pilot Program Job Readiness Activities

Pre-Release Case Management
• Career Guidance/Planning • Objective Assessment • IEP
Pre-Release Prosocial Habits Development Training (7 Habits)
• Job training
Pre-Release Soft Skills Workshops (Employability)
• Workshops
Pre-Release Prosocial Habit Development Peer Support Group
• Group counseling
Navigation to Community-Based WIOA/AJCC Services
• Referred to WIOA services

Exhibit 6. Jail-Based Job Center Program Services and Support

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11+
6%	15%	8%	7%	6%	9%	15%	8%	11%	5%	11%
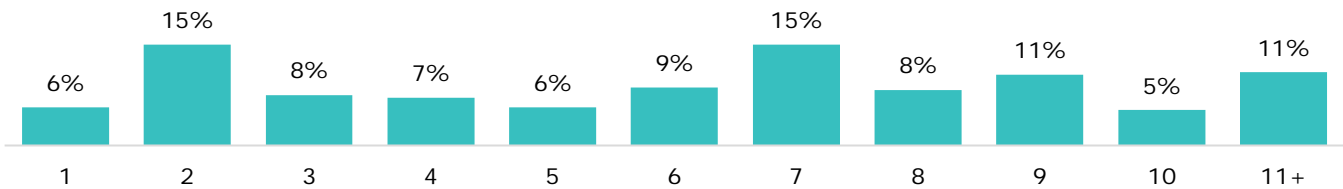
Exhibit 7. Jail-Based Job Center Program Services and Support

|	
Pre-Release Case Management	62%
Pre-Release Prosocial Habits Development Training	60%
Pre-Release Soft Skills Workshops	63%
Pre-Release Prosocial Habit Development Peer Support Group	9%
Navigation to Community-Based WIOA/AJCC Services	13%

The pilot also included a plan for AJCC case managers to follow up with participants at five time points during the first year after release to assess employment status and wages. Only 88 of the 264 pilot participants (33 percent) received any follow-ups. Of those, most received one (40 percent) or two (31 percent); 6 percent received all five follow-ups (see Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8. Number of follow-ups received for post release (n=88)
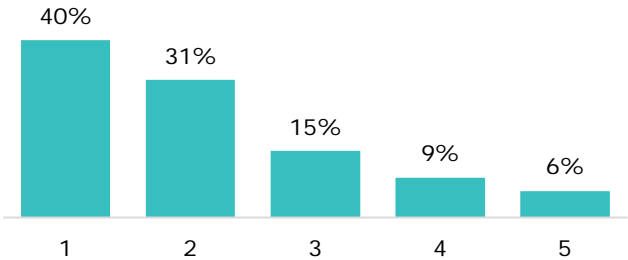
Post-release follow-up data was available for 33 percent of the participants (88 of 264, Exhibit 9). Given the complexity of the data and missing key data points (i.e., type of employment, hours worked), we have little detail on the employment obtained by these 88 participants. Wage data collected during a follow-up were not collected in a standardized way, making interpretation difficult. For example, some wages appeared to be hourly, whereas others appeared to be year-to-date wages, or annual salaries (for more information see the *Examples from Pitchess* section, below).

Exhibit 9. Participants With Employment Information (n=264)

Yes, 33%
No, 67%

■ Yes ■ No
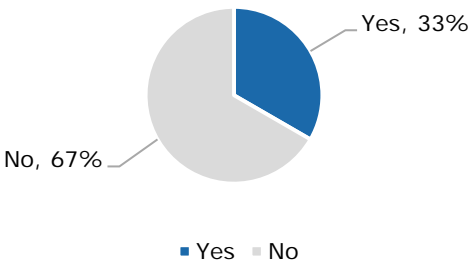
Based on the available CalJOBS data on former pilot participants and feedback from interviews with pilot partners, we identified opportunities to further develop or strengthen five components of a jail-based job center:

- Evidence-based program models and participant-centered approaches
- Collaboration and co-investment between key partners
- Clear eligibility criteria
- Specific programmatic milestones and outcome monitoring plans
- Real-time and ongoing assessment of program success

Each of these opportunities is detailed in the following sections of this report, along with supporting evidence from the evaluation.

Evidence-Based Program Models and Participant-Centered Approaches

The use of evidence-based models that promote participant-centered practices can increase the success of future programs.

Evidence-based models promote the use of well-researched interventions to inform the delivery of services. Successful elements of jail-based job programs include providing career assistance, using targeted assessments to understand participants' needs and abilities, developing pathways to securing industry-recognized certifications, and supporting a career-focused work ethic.[11]

Justice-involved individuals face multiple barriers when they leave jail; securing stable, well-paid employment may be just one. Other challenges include finding affordable and stable housing, lack of family/community support, substance abuse challenges, and the risk of returning to conditions or environments that contributed to their incarceration. A successful jail-based job center program must anticipate these needs and have a method to address them. This does not mean that jail-based job programs must address all these needs directly; however, appropriate referral pathways must be in place and job-related services must be offered with a holistic understanding of participants' needs.

Examples from Pitchess JBJC

Literature shows that workforce development programs for justice-involved individuals can reduce recidivism.[12] The success of any jail-based job program relies on a program model that suits the target population and has experienced, well-trained staff who can implement the model. The JBJC pilot program used the *7 Habits on the Inside* curriculum,[13] which aims to reduce recidivism through behavioral change. The curriculum was co-developed by Franklin Covey and the Colorado Department of Corrections, adapted from Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. It is a 10- to 12-week training course designed for incarcerated people that aims to achieve the following outcomes: inmates learn how to take initiative, inmates understand they have choices in every situation, inmates complete the course with a plan for how to operate in society, inmates become positive role models for their family and friends, and inmates discover how to collaborate for successful outcomes. WDACS staff shared that the self-reflective elements of the 7 Habits curriculum, along with the ease of implementation (i.e., you could buy it packaged and train staff and managers on it) led them to select this curriculum.

Five Keys staff who were involved in JBJC implementation shared that many pilot participants had difficulty relating to the 7 Habits curriculum. Participants were more engaged in the practical workshops that taught skills such as job interview preparation, mock interviews, and email and phone etiquette. Participants who did connect with the curriculum, according to WDACS staff, were those seeking to develop goals and be self-reflective. Five Keys staff also observed needs emerging that neither the 7 Habits curriculum nor any other part of the pilot was prepared to address. For example, they identified early on that many pilot participants experienced mental health challenges issues, but they had no mechanism to address this.

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[11] National Institute of Corrections, "The Employer-Driven Model and Toolkit Strategies for Developing Employment Opportunities for Justice-Involved Individuals," 2014, https://info.nicic.gov/nicrp/system/files/028098.pdf.

[12] Lichtenberger and Weygandt, "Offender Workforce Development Services Makes an Impact."

[13] Dean Collinwood, *The 7 Habits on the Inside* (Salt Lake City, UT: FranklinCovey, 2010), https://www.franklincovey.com/Solutions/government/7-habits-on-the-inside/.

Overall, the 7 Habits curriculum, while designed for use with incarcerated populations, is not specifically employment-focused and does not have an evidence base. Its 10- to 12-week design may also not be a good match for a facility like Pitchess that houses low-level offenders serving shorter sentences.

Recommendations

- JBJC stakeholders should carefully select a program model and curricula that suit the facility and target population of inmates. Lengthy or time-intensive curricula will not be a good fit for jail environments, where inmate movement/transfer is frequent and sentences are shorter. In the case of the Pitchess pilot, the 7 Habits on the Inside curriculum was lengthy (designed to take 10-12 weeks), did not appear to be a good fit for participants based on Five Keys feedback, and is not evidence-based as noted above. One alternative to consider for future JBJCs is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). CBT is an evidence-based intervention to improve mental health and change patterns of thinking or behavior and is frequently used with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. CBT is also complimentary to employment services and job coaching as it supports prosocial behaviors that are relevant for getting and maintaining a job.

- Program staff should do a comprehensive needs assessment with participants who have enrolled and tailor services accordingly. When participants have fundamental needs (such as mental health, substance use, and housing services) that cannot be met through the JBJC, program staff should have suitable referral pathways available, both inside the jail and in the community. Any of these needs has the potential to destabilize current or prospective employment, and should be addressed alongside preparing someone for successful employment.

- People of color are disproportionately impacted by incarceration and by post-release challenges, including returning to underserved communities.[14] JBJCs should be designed bearing in mind these disparities and embed racial equity and culturally responsive services for inmates at all stages. JBJC program providers should be experienced working with incarcerated people and have staff with lived experience and/or who are from the same racial/ethnic backgrounds as the program participants. Further, people with lived experience (e.g., formerly incarcerated people, family of incarcerated people) should be engaged in the development or adaptation of a JBJC to ensure that it meets the specific needs of the target population.

- Ahead of release, inmates should have a transition plan in place that helps them take the first step towards a successful transition into the community. Support for job center participants post-release should include a "whole person" perspective and consider stability in various aspects of life, including housing, rebuilding and nurturing family/friend support systems, food security, transportation, employment, behavioral health, and education.

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[14] Emily Greene, "An Overview of Evidence-Based Practices and Programs in Prison Reentry" (Chicago, IL, 2019), https://icjia.illinois.gov/researchhub/articles/an-overview-of-evidence-based-practices-and-programs-in-prison-reentry.

Collaboration and Co-Investment between Key Partners

All partners in a jail-based job center program must be co-invested in the program's success and dedicate resources accordingly so that the program is implemented with fidelity and participants receive the intended benefits.

Because of the complexity of the jail system and myriad agencies that regularly interact with incarcerated people, the success of any jail-based job program relies on the coordination of multiple partners, which in Los Angeles County includes WDACS, the Sheriff's Department (including their Community Transition Unit staff), Probation, AJCCs, and the contracted JBJC service provider.

The implementation of a jail-based job program layers responsibilities onto these already busy agencies. Therefore, early and ongoing trust-building, input, adjustments, and buy-in is essential. All partners should be committed to the program and accountable to the other stakeholders for their role in achieving success. Ideally, a team should be formed to lead the work, made up of two or three people from each involved agency. Each member should have direct experience related to their agency's involvement as well as decision-making and enforcement power within their agency to ensure that decisions lead to action. Support for the project team needs to come from the highest levels of each agency. Details for the team to agree on include:

- Program design and goals, including a logic model

- Vendor qualifications and selection, as allowed by procurement processes

- Target population

- Program logistics (where, when, how long)

- Participant logistics (recruitment into the program, scheduling with other activities)

- Post-release responsibilities

- Establishment of an evaluation, including evaluation questions

Examples from Pitchess JBJC

Based on our review of program documents and feedback gathered from pilot partners, the Pitchess Pilot had coordination between partners in the early stages of development and then significant challenges between the partners once the project was launched and throughout the pilot period.

The Los Angeles County Statement of Work proscribes multiple collaboration partners for the sub-recipient[15] (in this case, Five Keys) including AJCC staff, AJCC Re-Entry Navigators, AJCC Business Services Representatives, LASD staff, LASD Back on Track staff, LASD Education-Based Incarceration (EBI) staff, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) staff. It also details specific coordination-related tasks, such as weekly project meetings, weekly program coordination meetings with the County Program Manager, monthly JBJC Partnership Workgroup Meetings, LASD Back on Track meetings (including Community Alliance Partnership, Reentry Collaborative, Multi-Disciplinary Team, and Back on Track Alumni), and coordination with the County to facilitate program and room schedules. Review of the Pitchess JBJC Scope of Work, however, shows no coordination-specific outcomes specified in the Performance Requirements Summary nor any details about support provided to the sub-recipient to facilitate collaboration. Consequently, it is unclear whether these intentions of collaboration were ever met.

Interviews with WDACS, LASD, and Five Keys reveal that lack of clarity in partner roles contributed to many challenges during the JBJC pilot. At various points during

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[15] County of Los Angeles, "Exhibit A: Statement of Work (SOW), Jail-Based Job Center (JBJC) Project" (Los Angeles, CA).

the pilot, each partner was frustrated with what they perceived to be unfulfilled roles by one or more other partners. Five Keys perceived that the Sheriff's Department was concerned primarily with jail safety issues and did not play a strong enough role in supporting access to necessary technology, room re-assignments, and program scheduling conflicts.[16] They also pointed out that the Los Angeles County Human Resources department came into the facility to give monthly presentations on available jobs in the county, but did not have a clear description of participants' employment experiences, so most positions they described were not applicable to the audience. It is not clear who should have provided this information to Human Resources, although it seems that Five Keys would have had the best information, given their one-on-one work with pilot participants.

The Sheriff's Department was initially supportive of the pilot program. According to WDACS staff, however, a two-year lag between program award and implementation resulted in eroded enthusiasm and buy-in. During that period, the Sheriff's Department welcomed a new Captain, which meant restarting the relationship-building process with this key partner. Program details set prior to the Sheriff's involvement also eroded cooperation. For example, Five Keys staff reported that the 7 Habits curriculum has a central faith-based grounding and the Sheriff's Department was moving away from this type of programming in the jail. The curriculum was adjusted, but likely contributed to damaged buy-in.

Sheriff's EBI program staff reported that the only role they were aware they were supposed to play in the pilot was to identify interested inmates and reserve rooms for program activities. It is not clear from our interviews with program partners whether this was a breakdown in communication at the partner level (e.g., between agencies) or within the ranks at LASD.

Recommendations

To build and sustain an effective JBJC partnership, we suggest the following:

- When selecting a jail facility with which to partner for the development and implementation of a JBJC, it is important to identify a facility where there is buy-in at the highest level of administration. According to the Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) evaluation,[17] successful JBJC programs have a correctional partner who is not just willing to

implement a JBJC but is a champion of the program. Buy-in from jail administrators lends credibility to the initiative so that program partners can spend their time efficiently running the program.

- Form a JBJC project committee composed of representatives from all key stakeholders. Ideally, each stakeholder should be represented on the project committee by more than one person, so that staff turnover does not derail the process and institutional knowledge management is maintained. In addition to high-level decision makers, committee members should also include representatives from departments or branches who will be most directly connected to the program on a day-to-day basis. In the Sheriff's Department, for example, this could include Education Based Incarceration (EBI), Population Management Bureau (PMB), and Facilities. Plan for regular project committee meetings and establish channels for between-meeting, quick response communication channels when needed for problem-solving and to address urgent issues. When the partner relationships are new, potentially complex or contentious, consider hiring an outside facilitator to help organize the committee and run the meetings. Building cross-partner relationships early will ensure that each partner's concerns, suggestions, and desired outcomes are considered. This committee should continue to meet regularly throughout the life of the program to address emerging needs and the inevitably changing circumstances of implementation.

- Before launching a new JBJC, map out the day-to-day workflow. Start with participant recruitment procedures, inclusion criteria, meeting times and locations, and each step through release and follow-up. Identify the people and resources needed to successfully complete each step, bottlenecks or barriers to completion, and suggestions for improved workflow and participant outcomes based on partners' knowledge of jail operations and target participants. Include opportunities that strong coordination would enable, such as flagging program participants so that Release Center staff schedule their releases only during times when post-release partners are available to meet participants and connect them right away with transportation and post-release services.

The insights and trust that result from this type of in-depth collaboration are crucial to developing and implementing a successful program.

[16] County of Los Angeles Quality and Productivity Commission, "Productivity Investment Fund Annual Status Report: Los Angeles County Jail-Based Job Center" (Los Angeles, CA, 2020).

[17] Jeanne Bellotti et al., "Developing American Job Centers in Jails: Implementation of the Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) Grants" (Princeton, NJ, 2018), https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/legacy/files/LEAP-Final-Report.pdf.

Clear Eligibility Criteria

Establishing clear eligibility criteria based on the program model and developing a process for recruiting and screening potential participants will ensure that a jail-based job program is using its resources effectively.

Los Angeles County jails offer inmates a variety of programs to prepare them for post-release success. [18] Each is likely to benefit people with different needs and life experiences. Individual level factors such as length of incarceration, type of offense, previous education and employment experience, post-release goals, and substance use or mental health needs should be considered in determining alignment with program goals and curricula. Aligning potential participants with programs designed for their specific needs will increase participant engagement and satisfaction as well as improve the likelihood that program outcomes are achieved.

Examples from Pitchess JBJC

Based on feedback from pilot partners, the Pitchess Pilot did not have clear inclusion criteria. The Los Angeles County Statement of Work directed program staff to enroll participants "who meet JBJC eligibility requirements, provided by the County"[19] and that staff "shall conduct assessments of all Participants to identify employment-related transitional needs, job readiness, employment background, interests and aptitudes."[20] WDACS documents further describe that participants should be graduates of the EBI program and scheduled to remain at Pitchess for at least 90 days. Sheriff's Department EBI program staff, however, were only aware of criteria based on "a year or less sentencing" and perceived that enrollment was primarily based on inmate interest.

In practice, Five Keys staff initially understood that potential participants would be selected and/or screened for the program by the Sheriff's Department using the Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS) assessment. If the COMPAS was administered, the results were never shared with Five Keys. The next plan was for potential participants to complete an assessment, again administered by the Sheriff's Department, to assess if they were "employment interested." This screening was also never initiated. Ultimately, any inmate could sign up for the program and anyone who expressed an interest was accepted. The lack of agreed-upon inclusion criteria meant that not all participants were ideally suited to the 7 Habits curriculum or interested in its outcomes.

Furthermore, confusion over various screening methods demonstrated that partners were not on the same page about the target population for the JBJC.

While the scope of work prescribed specific program outreach and promotion activities, including weekly education and orientation sessions, few participants (3 percent) completed all five target modules of the program (see Exhibit 10), suggesting that participants may not have had a clear sense of what the program was about and whether it was something that they were interested in before enrolling.

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[18] Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, "Education Based Incarceration Programs," accessed November 24, 2020, http://shq.lasdnews.net/pages/morelinksPage.aspx?type=Education Based Incarceration Programs&page=1&id=EBU&source=2.

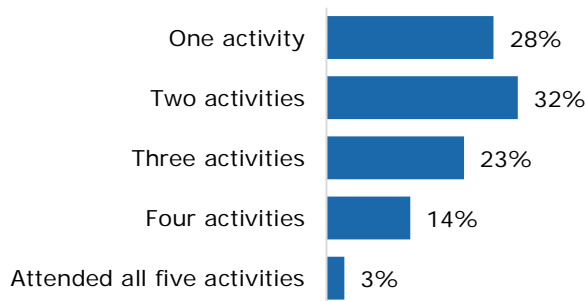[19] Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, section 10.10.

[20] Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Section 10.11.

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Due to scheduling, the JBJC is not assisting the most work-ready inmates: those in jail-based work crew employment.

Source: County of Los Angeles Quality and Productivity Commission, Productivity Investment Fund, Annual Status Report, January 2018.

Exhibit 10. Attendance at targeted activities (n=236)

Activity	Percent
One activity	28%
Two activities	32%
Three activities	23%
Four activities	14%
Attended all five activities	3%

Recommendations

We suggest the following steps to ensure that a JBJC is serving participants who are best suited to the program model:

- Engage stakeholders in identifying the target population most likely to benefit from the JBJC and establish agreed-upon inclusion criteria. Criteria may include factors such as criminogenic risk, work readiness, employment aspirations, motivation and interest, conviction history, and proximity to the location of the community-based services upon release.[21] Remaining sentence time is another important consideration. For example, participants should be close enough to release that employment training is relevant, while far enough away from release to be able to benefit from the core elements of the program and establish a transition plan upon release. Individuals who are 180 days from release are often seen as suitable candidates for jail-based services.

- Once clear inclusion criteria have been established, screening procedures including the specific tools or assessments that will be used and who will administer them should be developed. This will require coordination between jail and program staff, as some screening procedures may need to be conducted by each party. Jail staff, for example, may generate a preliminary list of eligible participants based on conviction history, remaining sentence time, and criminogenic risk. They could then refer interested individuals from this list to the program provider for additional screening for motivation and interest, employment history, and workforce readiness.

- Finally, program outreach activities should ensure participants understand the requirements of the program, the value of engagement with the curriculum, specific information about who is most likely to benefit, and outcome goals.

Clear and agreed-upon inclusion criteria, well-thought-out screening procedures, and effective and transparent outreach will ensure a JBJC is serving the individuals who are most likely to benefit from services and, therefore, using its resources most effectively.

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[21] Bellotti et al., "Developing American Job Centers in Jails: Implementation of the Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) Grants."

Specific Programmatic Milestones and Outcome Monitoring Plans

To maximize the impact for participants in a jail-based job center, there should be clear programmatic milestones and outcome monitoring plans that are embedded into all program phases.

Employment-related services and linkage to employment can help incarcerated people successfully transition back to their communities.[22] As discussed previously, successful elements of jail-based employment readiness programs include targeted assessments of job skills and experience, career assistance (e.g., résumé building, job searching), industry-recognized certifications, and career-focused work ethic trainings.[23]

Examples from Pitchess JBJC

The JBJC pilot program offered elements that aligned with best practices for jail-based employment programs (e.g., soft skills workshops, prosocial habits development, and case management). However, the lack of documentation around program milestones and whether participants met these leaves a lot of unanswered questions about the success of the Pitchess JBJC implementation. Further, the post hoc nature of this evaluation made understanding implementation challenging, as the evaluation team could rely only on data points that were recorded in CalJOBS and the recollection of interviewees.

Based on our review of CalJOBS data, the degree to which participants engaged in JBJC program activities varied. Although most participants (89 percent) attended at least one of the targeted activities, about a third (31 percent) attended *only* one activity. The variability in attendance was due to factors such as remaining length of sentence, unanticipated early release, and scheduling conflicts with other programming in the jail.

Pitchess Detention Center houses inmates with varying lengths of stay: some come in and out in a day, some serve sentences of a few weeks or months, and some are awaiting trial, sentencing, or United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) processing for longer periods of time.[24] Scheduling conflicts with other jail-based programs at Pitchess and participants being moved to other facilities or released without Five Keys' knowledge posed challenges for participants progressing through the program in a consistent way. On average, JBJC pilot participants were in the pilot for five months. However, 18 percent were enrolled for less than one month and 9 percent were enrolled for a year or more. According to WDACS staff, participants should have had between three and nine months of sentence time left at Pitchess when they entered the pilot. It was not clear from the CalJOBS data for how many participants this was the case, although both WDACS and Five Keys staff reported that there were numerous times that participants were released unexpectedly and without communication to Five Keys.

Further, given the range and ordering of activities that participants attended (participants attended a range of one to twenty-two activities), there did not appear to be a clear path to "successful" program completion. For example, there was no consistency in the first or the last activity that participants attended. According to WDACS staff, participants were supposed to start with orientation and then continue with either employment readiness activities or prosocial habit activities. The intended sequence of activities for each participant was supposed to be based on their schedule. However, CalJOBS data showed that only 9 percent attended orientation first and

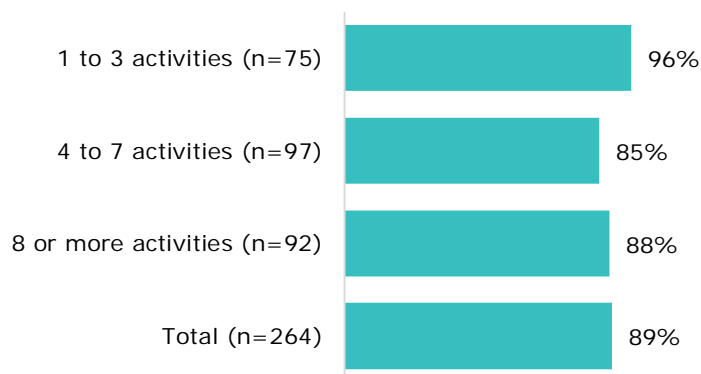22 Henderson-Frakes, "Providing Services in a Jail-Based American Job Center."

23 National Institute of Corrections, "The Employer-Driven Model and Toolkit Strategies for Developing Employment Opportunities for Justice-Involved Individuals."

24 Kerry V. Dunn and Shelley Cohen Konrad, "Stronger When Combined: Lessons from an Interprofessional, Jail-Based Service-Learning Project," *Partnerships: A Journal of Service-Learning and Civic Engagement* 10, no. 1 (2019): 117–28, http://libjournal.uncg.edu/prt/article/view/1211.

over half (56 percent) attended a Pre-Release Soft Skills Workshops first. Though all participants (100 percent) attended orientation at some point during their time in the program, the sequence of activities was not consistent. This suggests that participants joined the activity being offered when they enrolled, without a clear skill-building progression. CalJOBS data also indicate that some participants attended the same activity multiple times, although, according to Five Keys staff, the program intended that participants complete each activity only once.

CalJOBS data indicated that activity completion overall was high, with participants completing an average of 89 percent of the activities they started (see Exhibit 11). Those who attended one to three activities had the highest rate of completion (96 percent) compared to those who attended four to seven (85 percent) or eight or more activities (88 percent; $p<.001$).[25] What the data does not include is whether participants met the intended activity outcomes or milestones upon completion.

Exhibit 11. Activity completion by number of activities attended (n=264)*

Category	Completion
1 to 3 activities (n=75)	96%
4 to 7 activities (n=97)	85%
8 or more activities (n=92)	88%
Total (n=264)	89%

* p<.001.

Recommendations

- Identify clear but flexible pathways for how participants navigate through program activities. This can include setting milestones that participants need to complete before advancing. For example, participants should complete "introductory" activities before moving to more focused or specialized activities.

- Establish clear metrics for program retention and dosage (e.g., participants served in the program, successful activities completed, participants with developed transition plans, length of stay in program) to more accurately assess how these impact program goals and participant outcomes.

- Establish clear definitions of what constitutes long- and short-term program success and share definitions with participants. This can be either during case management sessions or at the start of each activity. This will help ensure participants understand how program components build on one another and what they should expect to accomplish by the time they have completed a specific program activity.

- Recognize participant achievements, both small and large, to benefit participants and program. When achievements are recognized (e.g., providing a certificate or graduation ceremony), participants can see their achievements and staff is able to celebrate with participants and build visibility of the program.[26]

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[25] The statistical test (ANOVA) was run to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the number of activities attended with the percent of successful completions. The number of activities that participants attended were grouped as 1 to 3 activities, 4 to 7 activities, and 8 or more activities.

[26] Henderson-Frakes, "Providing Services in a Jail-Based American Job Center."

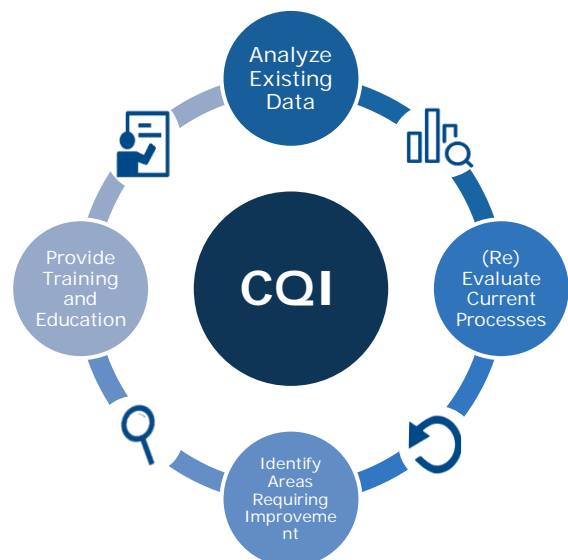# Real-time and Ongoing Assessment of Program Success

Develop an evaluation plan early on and use data to assess program implementation and impact throughout.

Evaluation is most effective when implemented during a program's design phase and is particularly important for pilot programs to assess success and inform potential replication. [27] Data can be used throughout a program's life cycle to improve decision-making, monitor participants' experiences, and provide insights on anticipated and unanticipated program outcomes. [28]

A Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process (see Exhibit 12) is especially useful for evaluating pilot programs, as it incorporates feedback loops and identifies ways to improve the design, implementation, and impact of the program's core elements in real-time. In this process, data is collected continuously and used to help all program partners (including both staff and participants) reflect on the progress and seek improvement. This data can also be used to assess program short and long term impacts.

Exhibit 12. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Framework

- Analyze Existing Data
- (Re) Evaluate Current Processes
- Identify Areas Requiring Improvement
- Provide Training and Education

CQI

Examples from Pitchess JBJC

In our interviews, program partners shared that data collection was a pain point for the JBJC pilot. This was evident when reviewing available data from the CalJOBS data system. Though the program managed the data well —such as using unique identifiers to track participants, consistently coding the variables, and securing the data— the data entry and collection was problematic. According to WDACS staff, CalJOBS was not an ideal data system to track and manage job readiness data due to its rigid structure and difficult learning curve for staff. For example, CalJOBS automatically closed a participant's record if there was no activity after 90 days. Because the

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[27] Victor R Basili, "Data Collection, Analysis and Validation," in *Software Metrics* (MIT Press, 1981), 143–60, https://www.cs.umd.edu/~basili/publications/chapters/C12.pdf.

[28] J.J. Moss, "The Evaluation of Occupational Education Programs," in *Evaluation of Short-Term Training in Rehabilitation*, ed. Philip L. Browning, Monograph (Eugene, OR: University of Oregon, 1970), 17–34, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED057208.pdf#page=24.

system did not differentiate between a participant's program ending and an automatic closing of their record, the average program length could not be accurately assessed.

Another key contributor was lack of internet access for program staff while on site, meaning they were unable to update their cases files in real time, which may have impacted the timeliness, accuracy, and completeness of data. This also meant that program activity data were not reviewed throughout program implementation, resulting in a missed opportunity to make real-time adjustments.

Many key evaluation questions—such as how many participants secured employment as a result of their participation in Pitchess JBJC or did participants recidivate or return to custody—were not answered because these data were not systematically collected. An early evaluation plan at the outset could have set up this structure and specific measurement metrics.

Data challenges continued after participants were released. According to JBJC staff, one of the biggest challenges was getting accurate post-release contact information for participants. Those who are released from jail are typically hard to reach due to limited connections with typical mainstream social institutions such as stable housing, social programs, or steady employment, as well as difficulties paying their phone bill or frequently changing their phone numbers.[29,30] Five Keys staff shared that some participants provided false social security and incorrect phone numbers, making it difficult to track their progress in CalJOBS.

This also likely led to minimal follow-up data. For example, post-release employment data were only available for one-third of participants, most of whom (71 percent) only received one or two of the five intended follow-ups. Participants with employment data did not differ from those without it in demographics, activity dosage, or activity completion, suggesting follow-up was with a convenience sample rather than conducted systematically.

Even for participants who had employment data, the information about their wages was essentially unusable. Wage data came from two sources: base wage data and supplemental data. Base wage data is employer-reported wages received by the Employment Development Department (EDD) and reported as participants' earned

quarterly wages. Case workers also entered participants' data, recorded as hourly wages, along with the number of hours worked per week (the evaluation team did not receive the number of hours worked). These wages were calculated using a Department of Labor (DOL) formula to reflect *quarterly* wages, to be consist with EDD base wage data. In addition, base wage did not include information about the type of employment (e.g., full-time, part-time, temporary) or the hours worked, which would have aided interpretation.

For the evaluation, wage data was averaged across the follow-ups, with a median of $3,995 and range from $57 to $30,985. The wide range suggests that there may be issues with data entry in supplemental data and how the data was reported (i.e., hourly versus annual wages), making summary measures or comparisons across participants difficult. Since post-release employment is an important predictor of recidivism and success of a formerly incarcerated person's reentry into the community, it is imperative for pilot programs to collect reliable and accurate post-release employment data.[31]

Recommendations

To more accurately measure participant outcomes and program success, we suggest that future programming use the following data collection processes:

- In parallel with partner-driven program selection, develop an evaluation plan that specifies short- and long-term program goals and the data collection steps that will be used to assess success. Base this on a logic model that is developed with all program stakeholders.

- Use the CQI framework to monitor and improve the program to allow for early identification of areas that need improvement. In alignment with the CQI framework, interview a range of key program partners, such as program participants, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and Five Keys staff throughout the program.

- Collect pre- and post-survey data to capture key metrics about participants at baseline and after conclusion of the activities to assess how knowledge or behaviors changed. Key metrics to measure could include overall confidence in self, attitudes on job and career readiness, attitudes about success in post-

[29] Bruce Western et al., "Study Retention as Bias Reduction in a Hard-to-Reach Population," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 113, no. 20 (May 17, 2016): 5477–85, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1604138113.

[30] Bruce Western, Anthony Braga, and Rhiana Kohl, "A Longitudinal Survey of Newly-Released Prisoners: Methods and Design of the Boston Reentry Study," *Federal Probation* 81, no. 1 (2017): 32–40,

https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/usct10024-fedprobation-june2017-508compliant_0.pdf.

[31] Nancy La Vigne et al., "Release Planning for Successful Reentry - A Guide for Corrections, Service Providers, and Community Groups," *Urban Institute: Justice Policy Center* (Washington, DC, 2008), https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/32056/411767-Release-Planning-for-Successful-Reentry.PDF.

release (i.e., employment, recidivism), attitudes about self-agency and social control, and connections to services, such as affordable and stable housing, substance abuse, and mental health services. The post surveys can also measure satisfaction and impact of the activity, ask about participants' predicted use of key concepts covered in the activity, and suggestions for program improvement. According to best practices, surveys should mainly consist of close-ended questions (i.e., questions that have respondents choose from a list of answer choices) rather than open-ended questions.[32] To ensure a high response rate, we recommend that surveys are short, ideally taking five minutes or less to complete.

- Build connections and rapport with participants so they are more willing to participate in follow-up data collection efforts. Consider providing a monetary incentive and/or referrals to wrap around services, such as housing, substance abuse treatment, and transportation.[33,34]

- Standardize the post-release employment wage data to enable comparison across participants.

- Collect data on a comparison group of individuals who are similar to participants but did not receive the program (or received an alternative program). Clearly articulated inclusion criteria could be used to define the characteristics of a comparison population. This will allow for comparison of outcomes for those who did and did not participate, providing stronger evidence that any improvements are attributable to the program and not to the uniqueness of program participants (i.e., selection bias).

- Consider partnering with programs like the County Justice Metrics Project that may have curated a broad range of identifiable data that can be linked to program participants and used to assess potential outcome influencers like connection to post-release services and outcomes like recidivism, in addition to data for a comparison group.

- Consider partnering with an external evaluator to bring an objective viewpoint, which mitigate any biases and ensure credibility and integrity in the evaluation process. An external evaluator brings a wealth of experience and expertise in evaluating similar programs and initiatives.

[32] Pew Research Center, "Questionnaire Design - Pew Research Center Methods," Pew Research Center, 2020, https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/u-s-survey-research/questionnaire-design/.

[33] Western et al., "Study Retention as Bias Reduction in a Hard-to-Reach Population."

[34] Bellotti et al., "Developing American Job Centers in Jails: Implementation of the Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) Grants."

Conclusion

The Jail-Based Job Center pilot program at Pitchess Detention Center, South Facility operated between November 2017 and August 2019 and aimed to assist participants in securing post-release employment, setting them along a career path leading to a sustainable wage. To assess whether the pilot met these goals and identify opportunities for future programs, Harder+Company conducted this evaluation in 2020, a year after the pilot ended. The evaluation sought to examine pilot partner collaboration, participant recruitment and retention, and participant post-release employment.

The evaluation relied on data of pilot participants that had been entered into the CalJOBS data system, and interviews with program delivery staff (Five Keys), the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and WDACS staff that were conducted by members of the evaluation team. We found that the JBJC pilot exceeded its goal in the number of participants it enrolled. However, coordination gaps between partners led to implementation challenges for the program inside Pitchess and minimal post-release support and follow-up once participants were released. Therefore, it is unclear whether the pilot met participants' employment readiness needs.

Given our review of available data and feedback from the interviews with key stakeholders, we identified opportunities for five components of the pilot to be further developed or strengthened:
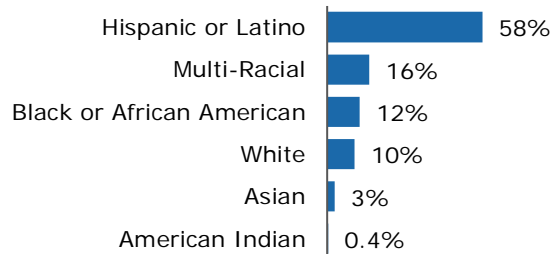
- The use of evidence-based models that promote participant-centered practices can increase the success and impact of future programs;

- All partners in a jail-based job center program must be co-invested in the program's success and dedicate resources accordingly so that the program is implemented with fidelity and participants receive the intended benefits;

- Establishing clear eligibility criteria based on the program model and developing a process for recruiting and screening potential participants will ensure that a jail-based job program is using its resources effectively;

- To maximize the impact for participants in a jail-based job center, there should be clear programmatic milestones and outcome monitoring plans that are embedded into all program phases; and

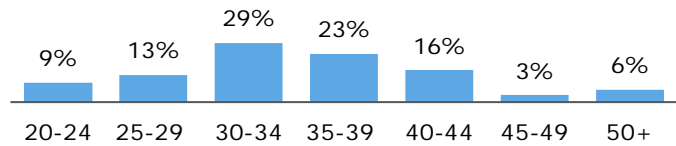- Develop an evaluation plan early on and use data

Appendix A: Pitchess Pilot Participant Demographics (n=264)
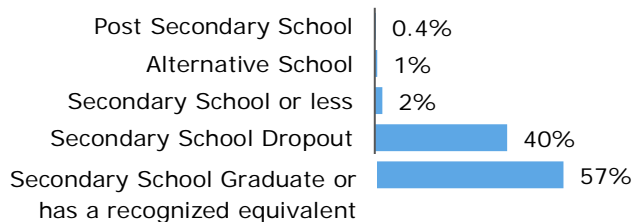
Source: CalJOBS data system

Race

Hispanic or Latino	58%
Multi-Racial	16%
Black or African American	12%
White	10%
Asian	3%
American Indian	0.4%

Age

20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50+
9%	13%	29%	23%	16%	3%	6%

18% of participants were homeless

1% of participants were veterans

Education

3% of participants were in school

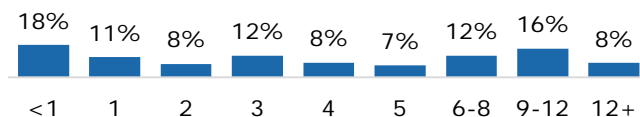|	
Post Secondary School	0.4%
Alternative School	1%
Secondary School or less	2%
Secondary School Dropout	40%
Secondary School Graduate or has a recognized equivalent	57%

Enrollment

264 participants were enrolled

**Months Enrolled.** On average, enrolled in 5 months with a range of less than a month to 20

<1	1	2	3	4	5	6-8	9-12	12+
18%	11%	8%	12%	8%	7%	12%	16%	8%

Activities

On average, participants attended 6 activities with a range of 1 to 22.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11+
6%	15%	8%	7%	6%	9%	15%	8%	11%	5%	11%
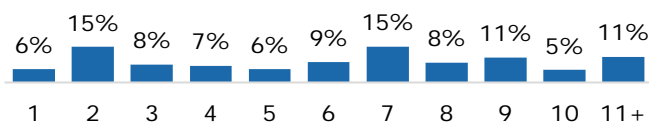
Most Attended Activities

% who attended at least one session	
Orientation	100%
Initial Assessment	64%
Workshop	63%
Job Readiness Training	60%
Objective Assessment	58%
Career Guidance/Planning	55%
Development of IEP/ISS/EDP	55%
Resume Writing Workshop	37%

Targeted activities. 89% of participants attended at least once targeted activity. On average, participants attended four targeted activities with a range of 1 to 13.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+
21%	11%	6%	18%	19%	9%	9%	8%
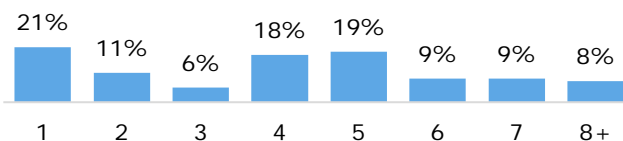
% who attended at least one session	
Pre-Release Case Management	62%
Pre-Release Pro Social Habits Development Training	60%
Pre-Release Soft Skills Workshops	63%
Pre-Release Pro Social Habit Development Peer Support Group	9%
Navigation to Community-Based WIOA/AJCC Services	13%

Appendix B: Pitchess Pilot Participant Program Activities

Source: CalJOBS data system

Exhibit 1. Total number of activities participated in (n=264)

Total	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum
35	6.38	6.50	1	22

Exhibit 2.   Overall success by number of activities attended (n=264)

1 to 3 activities (n=75)	96%
4 to 7 activities (n=97)	85%
8 or more activities (n=92)	88%
Total (n=264)	89%
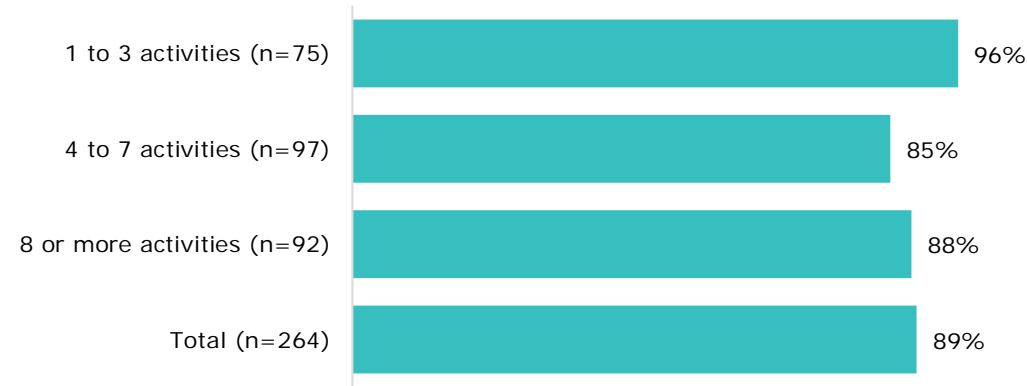
Exhibit 3.   Overall attendance of targeted activities (n=236)

One activity	28%
Two activities	32%
Three activities	23%
Four activities	14%
Attended all five activities	3%
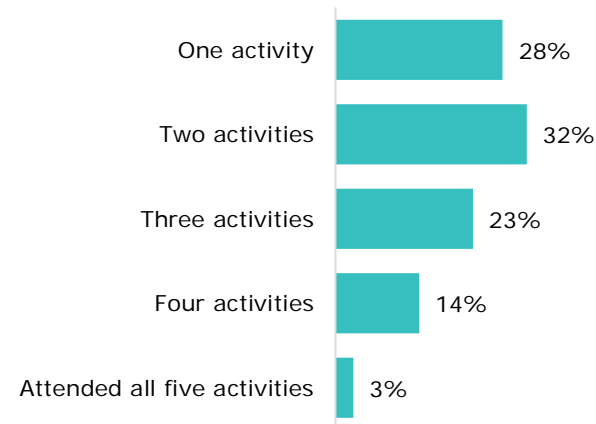
Exhibit 4. Targeted activity attendance by activity

Activity	Valid N	Mean	Max.	Min.	Std. dev.
Pre-Release Case Management	163	2.90	7	1	0.88
Pre-Release Prosocial Habits Development Training	158	1.01	2	1	0.08
Pre-Release Soft Skills Workshops	167	1.81	7	1	1.63
Pre-Release Prosocial Habit Development Peer Support Group	23	1.00	1	1	0.00
Navigation to Community-Based WIOA/AJCC Services	35	1.00	1	1	0.00
Overall targeted activities	236	4.20	13	1	2.56

Exhibit 5. Percent of successful completion of targeted activities

Activity	Success Rate			
	Valid N	Mean	Median	Std. dev.
Pre-Release Case Management	163	75%	67%	21%
Pre-Release Prosocial Habits Development Training	158	92%	100%	28%
Pre-Release Soft Skills Workshops	167	81%	100%	39%
Pre-Release Prosocial Habit Development Peer Support Group	23	100%	100%	0%
Navigation to Community-Based WIOA/AJCC Services	35	100%	100%	0%
Overall targeted activities	236	83%	86%	23%

Appendix C: Pitchess Pilot Participant Employment Data

Source: CalJOBS data system

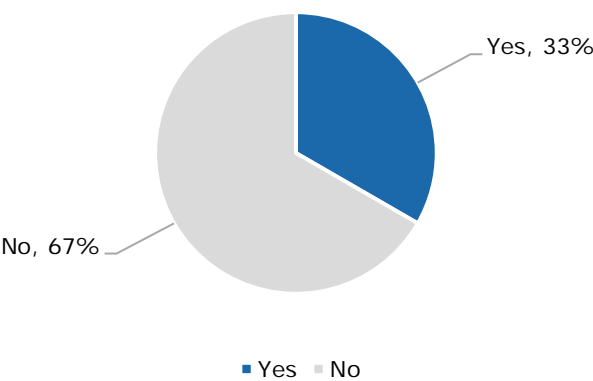**Exhibit 6.   Participants With Employment Information (n=264)**

Exhibit 7.   Number of follow-ups received (n=88)

Number of follow-ups	Percent
1	40%
2	31%
3	15%
4	9%
5	6%

Exhibit 8.   Summary of placement wages (n=88)

Average of placement wages	
Mean	$4804.84
Median	$3994.18
Std. Deviation	$4544.86
Range	$30927.63
Minimum	$57.00
Maximum	$30984.63

Exhibit 9.   Occupation group (n=11)*

Occupation group	Percentage
Transportation and Material Moving	27%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	18%
Production	18%
Business and Financial Operations	9%
Construction and Extraction	9%
Office and Administrative Support	9%
Personal Care and Service	9%
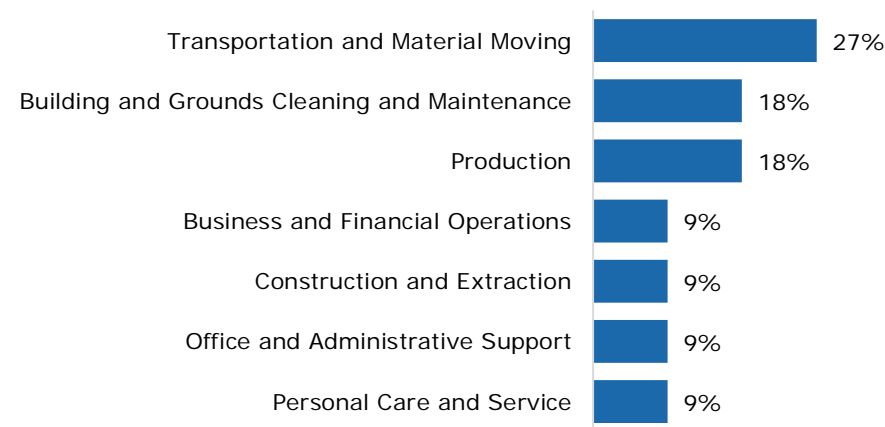
Exhibit 10.   Employer name (n=11)*

Employer name	Percentage
Five Keys Schools and Programs	18%
CorTech	9%
Crespo Corporation	9%
Five Keys Charter School	9%
Forwardline Financial	9%
Four Star Chemical	9%
Ruuhwa Dann and Associates Inc.	9%
Staffing Network, LLC.	9%
Surety Industries	9%
Versatile Systems, Inc.	9%
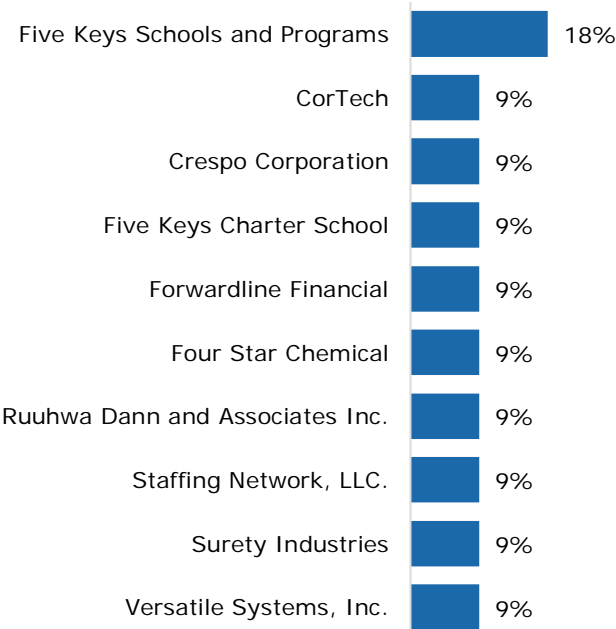
Data was available only through the closures or follow-ups, not through base wage.