

THE INTEGRATED REENTRY AND EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES PILOT PROJECT:

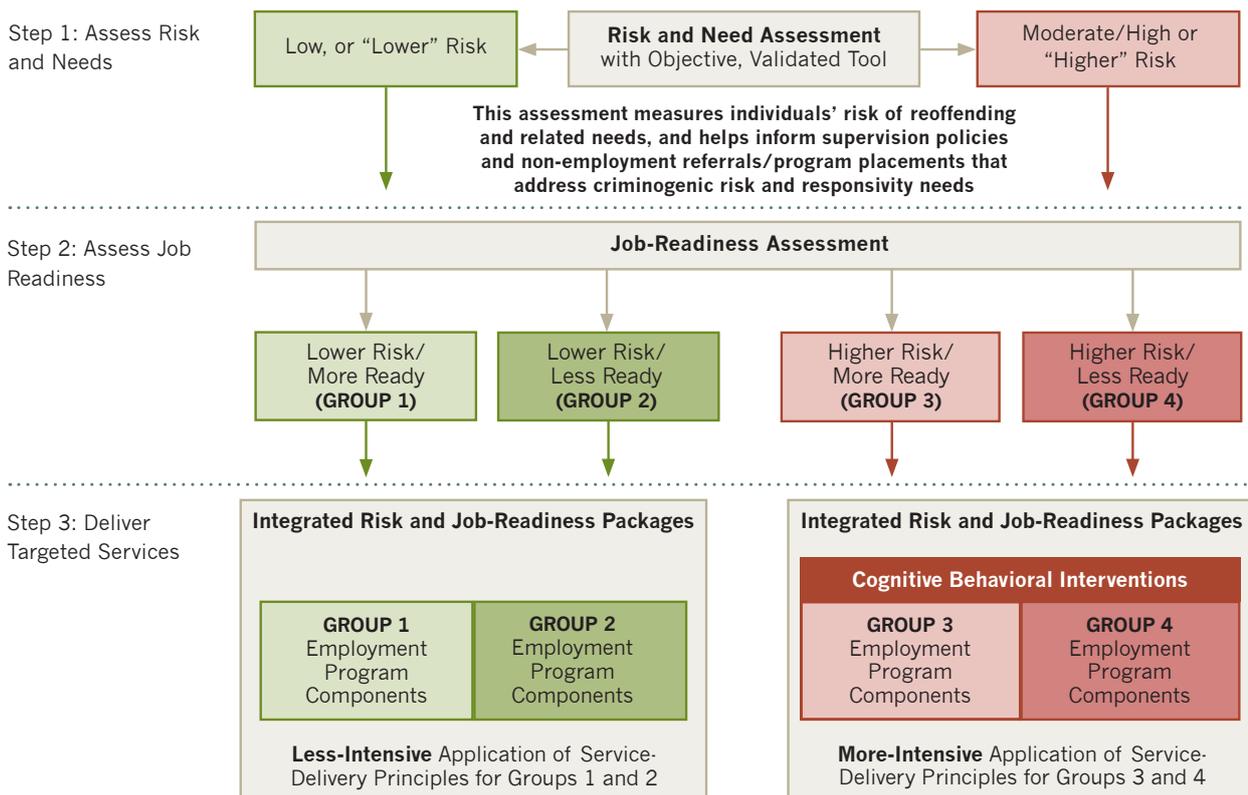
Using a Systems-Level Approach to Improve Reentry and Employment Outcomes for People Returning to Their Communities after Incarceration

The Model

The Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies (IRES) framework, published in 2013, was developed to help policymakers, system administrators, and practitioners collaboratively determine whether resources are being efficiently used to connect the right people to the right interventions at the right time.

People returning to the community after incarceration have a variety of needs; this population is diverse, and as such, require tailored services. The Resource-Allocation and Service-Matching tool (below) focuses on the use of assessments to determine the likelihood that a person will reoffend and his or her level of job readiness. As a result of these two assessments, four groups are created, each requiring distinct employment services delivered in distinct ways.

THE RESOURCE-ALLOCATION AND SERVICE-MATCHING TOOL



Testing the Model in Two Sites

The IRES pilot project is designed to test innovative strategies to reduce recidivism and increase job readiness for individuals with criminal records. The pilot project focuses on operationalizing a level of cross-systems coordination among corrections, workforce development agencies, and community-based service providers on a scale rarely seen in the field. The theory being tested is that by applying resources based on an assessment-driven referral process, recidivism and employment outcomes will improve. Thus, the IRES pilot project has the potential to influence both correctional and workforce programming across the country by providing a replicable framework for organizing systems in a cost-effective way. The project is being supported through a public-private partnership between the U.S. Department of Justice and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, with guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor.

The three-year IRES pilot project is underway in two sites:

Milwaukee County, Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Department of Corrections and the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board are leading the pilot project, which will provide a framework and a set of tools to help supervision agents match people being released into Milwaukee County to the appropriate workforce development services in the community.

Palm Beach County, Florida: The Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission is leading the project to ensure that people returning to the county from both state and county correctional facilities are referred to appropriate workforce services and ensuring the services have the capacity to meet the needs of the population.

Technical Assistance Approach

The National Reentry Resource Center, a project of The Council of State Governments Justice Center, is working with a team of expert partners to provide technical assistance to both pilot sites for up to three years. The first year includes information gathering and planning activities, followed by an implementation year. Finally, a process and impact evaluation will be conducted to ensure that the larger field benefits from the lessons learned from the pilot sites.

The NRRC technical assistance team brings together individuals with extensive experience in policy analysis, program development and implementation, and research. The project also includes assistance from expert consultants, including the Heartland Alliance National Transitional Jobs Network and the National Institute of Corrections.

The Heartland Alliance National Transitional Jobs Network is providing support assessing the capacity of service providers in Milwaukee and Palm Beach Counties, and determining the most appropriate factors to be considered in evaluating job readiness. The National Institute of Corrections will provide capacity-building training to service providers during year two.

The research questions being answered in both sites include:

- What are the risk and job-readiness profiles of adults returning to the counties from correctional facilities?
- How do assessments inform the services a person receives, and what are the mechanisms for making connections to those services?
- What services are available in the community, and how well do they meet the risk and job-readiness needs of this population?

To ensure that community-based services align with the needs of the population, technical assistance providers will:

- Analyze the prevalence of risk, job-readiness, and responsivity factors within the target population;
- Review the services provided in the community to determine the extent to which they can effectively treat people with different risk and job readiness levels; and
- Compare those two sources of data to determine where people should be referred based on their assessed needs, the structure of the referral process, and where there are gaps in community based services. As people move through the criminal justice system, they encounter multiple state, city, and local agencies and receive a variety of assessments, one of which inform decision making and referrals. To learn about the systems in Milwaukee and Palm Beach Counties, technical assistance providers will conduct a systems mapping exercise, identifying how an individual moves from intake to a facility, through incarceration and completion of reentry or pre-release planning, on to community supervision, and eventually to a community-based service provider.

These technical assistance services will help both sites establish policy frameworks to ensure that existing resources are leveraged in an impactful and sustainable way to deliver employment programs for this population.

Interim touchpoints will be held with both sites to review findings to date and explore initial recommendations. Final reports, including recommendations for implementation, will be presented to local and executive leaders in Wisconsin and Florida in March 2016.

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Established by the Second Chance Act, the National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC) provides education, training, and technical assistance to states, tribes, territories, local governments, community-based service providers, nonprofit organizations, and corrections institutions involved with prisoner reentry. The NRRC is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance and is a project of The Council of State Governments Justice Center, in cooperation with the Urban Institute, the National Association of Counties, the Association of State Correctional Administrators, the American Probation and Parole Association, and other key partner organizations. Learn more at csgjusticecenter.org/nrcc.