

An MDRC Working Paper

**Transitional Jobs for Ex-Prisoners
Early Impacts
from a Random Assignment Evaluation
of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)
Prisoner Reentry Program**

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Overview

This paper presents early results from an evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) in New York City, a highly regarded employment program for former prisoners. The evaluation is part of the Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration and Evaluation project, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor. The project is led by MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan education and social policy research firm, along with the Urban Institute and other partners.

More than 650,000 people are released from prison each year. These ex-prisoners, many of them parents of children receiving welfare, face serious obstacles to successful reentry, and rates of recidivism are high. Most experts agree that finding steady work is one of the central challenges they face. CEO uses a distinctive transitional employment model. After a four-day job readiness class, participants are placed in temporary, minimum-wage jobs with crews that work under contract to city and state agencies. Within weeks, they receive help finding permanent jobs and, later, services to promote employment retention.

The evaluation targets a key subset of CEO's population — ex-prisoners who showed up at the program after being referred by a parole officer. It uses a random assignment design: in 2004 and 2005, nearly 1,000 people were assigned, at random, to the regular CEO program or to receive basic job search assistance (this is called the control group). The research team is following both groups for several years, using surveys and administrative data to measure the program's impact on employment, recidivism, and other outcomes. At this point, data on employment covered by unemployment insurance (UI) and several measures of recidivism are available for one year.

For the full research sample, CEO generated a large, but short-lived increase in UI-covered employment. By the end of the first year of follow-up, the program and control groups were equally likely to be employed. There were also small but statistically significant decreases in two key measures of recidivism — felony convictions and incarceration for new crimes — during Year 1, but no effects on other measures.

Most CEO participants enroll just after release from incarceration. However, a large fraction of the study sample came to CEO many months after release. Because the program was designed to serve recently released ex-prisoners, results were examined separately for those who came to CEO within three months after release (about 40 percent of the sample) and those who came later. These results are less certain because the sample sizes are relatively small, but they show a potentially important pattern: Among those who came to CEO within three months after release, program group members were significantly less likely to have their parole revoked, to be convicted of a felony, and to be reincarcerated. Effects on these measures are rarely seen in rigorous evaluations. In contrast, there were no significant impacts on any recidivism measures for those who came to CEO more than three months after release.

The CEO evaluation is still at an early stage. The study will eventually include three years of follow-up and will incorporate several additional data sources, including records of New York City jail stays and a survey of more than 500 sample members. A full report is planned for 2008.

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Introduction

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) is one of four sites in the Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration and Evaluation Project, sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), with additional funding from the U.S. Department of Labor. The overall project is evaluating diverse strategies designed to improve employment and other outcomes for several hard-to-employ populations. MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan social and education policy research organization, is leading the evaluation, in collaboration with the Urban Institute and other partners.

Based in New York City, CEO was included in the Hard-to-Employ study because it is a comprehensive employment program for former prisoners — a population confronting many obstacles to finding and maintaining work — and because it has a special focus on parenting and child support issues for participants who have children. The other three sites in the Hard-to-Employ Project are targeting Medicaid recipients with serious depression, Early Head Start parents and children, and long-term welfare recipients.

The Prisoner Reentry Crisis

There has been a tremendous increase in incarceration over the past three decades. Consequently, unprecedented numbers of prisoners are being released each year: four times as many prisoners were released in 2004 as in 1980. Ex-prisoners face a range of challenges to successful reentry into the community, and rates of recidivism are high. Within three years of release, two-thirds are arrested and more than half return to prison or jail.¹ Many individuals are in and out of prison or jail multiple times for the same original offense, meaning they were reincarcerated for a violation of parole. Over one-third of prison admissions each year are for parole violations.² The large number of former prisoners who fail to reintegrate and who end up back in prison costs taxpayers billions of dollars each year. Expenditures on corrections by state governments were estimated to be more than \$40 billion in 2005.³

Prisoner reentry also has direct effects on families and children. More than half of reentering adults have children under 18 years old, and more than ten million children in the U.S. have a parent who was in prison at some point in their children's lives.⁴ Not surprisingly, long periods of incarceration can be detrimental to family ties and can alienate the recently released parent from his or her children. Aside from the prolonged effects on children's well-being, di-

¹Langan and Levin (2002).

²Petersilia (2003).

³National Association of State Budget Officers (2006).

⁴Hirsch et al. (2002).

minished bonds with family can seriously hinder the likelihood of successful reentry.⁵ There are also increased financial burdens on families, many of whom were relying on public assistance prior to a parent being incarcerated. Research has shown that as many as 44 percent of the caregivers of children with an incarcerated parent report receiving public assistance.⁶ Furthermore, upon release nearly one-third of former prisoners expect their families to depend on public assistance.⁷

Work seems to be a key ingredient in determining the success or failure of former prisoners' transition back to society. Studies have shown a correlation between higher employment and lower recidivism, particularly for older former prisoners.⁸ Positive employment outcomes can help pave the way to better housing conditions and improved relations within the family and community. Moreover, employment may help ex-prisoners feel more connected to mainstream society and help move them away from criminal activity.

Unfortunately, finding a steady job upon release is a major challenge for this population. Many employers are reluctant to hire someone with a prison record.⁹ In a survey of 3,000 employers, two-thirds reported that they would not knowingly hire a former prisoner.¹⁰ Most recently released people also have other attributes, such as low educational attainment and limited work history, that make them less appealing to potential employers, and they may have competing demands from drug treatment programs and curfews or other restrictions on mobility that can further exacerbate the problem of finding and keeping full-time employment.

Well-rounded employment services for former prisoners may be critical to ensuring better post-release outcomes. While there are many community programs that aim to provide these needed supports, few operate on a large scale and little is known about how effective they are. CEO in New York City is one of the nation's largest and most highly regarded employment programs for formerly incarcerated people.

The Center for Employment Opportunities

Developed by the Vera Institute of Justice in the 1970s, CEO has operated as an independent nonprofit corporation since 1996. Each year, CEO serves an average of 2,000 parolees who are returning to the community from prison.

⁵Visher et al. (2004).

⁶Travis and Waul (2004).

⁷Reentry Policy Council (2005).

⁸Harer (1994); Uggen (2000).

⁹Pager (2003).

¹⁰Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll (2004).

Participants start the program with a four-day Life Skills class focusing on job readiness issues, such as workplace behavior, job search skills, and decision-making. CEO makes sure that each participant has all of the official identification and documents necessary for employment. Participants are then placed in transitional jobs at one of 30 to 40 worksites around the city through CEO's Neighborhood Work Project (NWP). The worksites are public agencies that have secured CEO's services through the New York State Division of Parole to perform work for their agencies. Participants work four days per week at the state minimum wage, and they are paid at the end of each day. CEO uses the transitional period to identify issues that are likely to hinder the participants' performance in an unsubsidized, permanent job; staff work with participants to address these issues.

Participants spend the fifth day of each week in the main CEO office meeting with job coaches to discuss work performance and to prepare for interviewing, as well as meeting with job developers to discuss permanent employment opportunities:

- **Job coaching.** The role of the CEO job coach is to assess and promote "job readiness" for each NWP participant. Job coaches teach the Life Skills classes, track participants' attendance and performance at NWP worksites, communicate with parole officers, and, where appropriate, issue warnings and suspensions to participants. An important aspect of a job coach's responsibilities is to identify and address any issues needed to make an individual ready for permanent employment. Job coaches do this through weekly meetings with participants and through communications with worksite supervisors. Ultimately, it is the job coach who decides when a participant is deemed "job ready" and prepared to work with a job developer to seek a permanent job. For most of the study period, job coaches were also responsible for following up with participants after they had been placed in permanent jobs to try to promote employment retention.
- **Job development.** Once a program participant is deemed "job ready," job developers conduct an initial assessment of the participant and begin the process of matching the participant with a permanent job. Job developers build relationships with employers in order to identify openings and match participants with those jobs. Job developers typically prepare participants for a specific interview and, in some cases, will accompany the participant to an interview. Job development is a particularly valuable service because CEO has identified dozens of employers who are willing to hire individuals with criminal records.

Participants can also spend this fifth day participating in other activities, such as an extensive fatherhood program that works on child support issues (such as helping to reduce their current child support orders) and improving family relationships (at least half the study participants are parents and their children may be receiving welfare benefits).

CEO made several enhancements to its program during the study period, such as creating special worksites for new enrollees, developing a system of non-cash incentives to reward retention in unsubsidized employment, and deploying specialized job retention workers. These enhancements are still operating today. The study results reported here may not fully reflect any effects generated by these programmatic changes, however, because they were not in place when the study began.

Research Design and Data Sources

The evaluation rigorously tests whether the core components of CEO's program produce impacts on employment, recidivism, and other outcomes.

Research Design for the Evaluation

The impacts of CEO's program are being assessed using a random assignment research design. Between January 2004 and October 2005, 977 ex-prisoners who were referred by their parole officer, reported to CEO, and met the study eligibility criteria,¹¹ were randomly assigned to one of two groups:¹²

- **Neighborhood Work Project Group (the Program Group; N=568).** Individuals who were assigned to this group were eligible to receive all of CEO's program services, including the four-day Life Skills class, placement in a transitional job, job coaching, additional services (such as the fatherhood program), job development services, and all post-placement services.
- **Resource Room Group (the Control Group; N=409).** The Resource Room program was designed to provide a basic level of service to individuals assigned to the control group and to provide a benchmark against which to

¹¹For both ethical and methodological reasons, individuals who had participated in the Neighborhood Work Project (NWP) program in the past year ("recycles") were excluded from the study and assigned to the NWP program. Also, only individuals who signed an Informed Consent form were included in the study sample.

¹²The MDRC team worked with CEO and the New York State Division of Parole to design a random assignment process that ensured that the study did not decrease the number of people who received NWP services and that ensured that CEO had enough participants to fill its contractual obligations to NWP worksite sponsors. Random assignment was only conducted during weeks when the number of new enrollees exceeded the number of available NWP worksite slots.

compare CEO's core program. Individuals assigned to this group participated in a revised version of the Life Skills class that lasted 1.5 days, rather than 4 days. Participants were then given access to a resource room that includes computers (with job search software), phones, voice mail, a printer, a fax machine, and other job search tools, including publications. When clients came into the Resource Room a staff person was available, if needed, to assist them with many aspects of job search, including use of the equipment, help developing a resume, and assistance with setting up a voice mail account so that potential employers could leave messages for participants.¹³

The research team is tracking both groups using a variety of data sources (see below). Any statistically significant differences that emerge between the groups over time — for example, differences in employment or incarceration rates — can be attributed to CEO's core program with some confidence.¹⁴ These differences are referred to as “impacts” or “effects.”

It is important to note that the individuals who were targeted for the study — parolees who were referred to CEO by their parole officer — represent a subset of the parolees that CEO serves. For example, everyone who graduates from New York State's Shock Incarceration (boot camp) program and returns to New York City is required to participate in CEO's program. For contractual reasons, boot camp graduates and participants in some other special programs were not included in the study. CEO provides very similar services to all of these groups of parolees.

Data Sources Used in This Analysis

Data from several sources are used in the analysis presented in this paper:

- **Baseline data.** Participants completed a short baseline information sheet when they entered the study. Some additional baseline data were also obtained from CEO's internal database.

¹³If a control group member worked diligently in the Resource Room for three months but was unable to find employment on his own, he was offered CEO's job development services (but not a transitional job), but this very rarely happened. Of course, control group members may have sought assistance from other employment programs. A 15-month follow-up survey will gather information about program participation for both groups.

¹⁴Since the proportion of people randomly assigned to the program group varied from week to week, weights were used so that the impact results were not dominated by a disproportionate assignment to one group or the other in any given week. In particular, each program group member received a smaller weight in the impact calculation if they entered the study in a week when a higher proportion of individuals were assigned to the program group, and vice versa. The same was true for control group members. In addition, following standard practice in studies such as this, the estimates were regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for pre-random assignment characteristics of sample members.

- **Criminal justice administrative data.** These data were provided by the New York State (NYS) Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), which compiles data from many city and state agencies. These data provide information on a range of outcomes, including arrests, parole violations, convictions, and incarceration in state prison, for each member of the study sample, both before and after study entry.¹⁵
- **Employment data.** Data from the NYS Department of Labor show employment in jobs covered by the state unemployment insurance (UI) program (including CEO transitional jobs). These data cover the period from three years prior to study entry to one year after study entry for all sample members.
- **Program MIS data.** These data, from CEO's management information system (MIS), provide information on each individual's participation in the CEO components for which he was eligible, including data on NWP work and on job coach and job developer appointments.

At this point, data from all of these sources are available for at least one year after study entry for all sample members. The study will eventually follow sample members for three years and, as discussed further below, will incorporate data from a number of other sources.

Characteristics of the Study Participants

Table 1 presents baseline characteristics for the program group, the control group, and both groups combined. As expected in a random assignment design, there are very few significant differences in background characteristics between the two research groups. In addition, the characteristics of the CEO study sample are similar to the national population of former prisoners.

¹⁵DCJS provided MDRC with three SPSS portable files matched to a sample request file using New York State Identification (NYSID) Numbers: an arrest, a parole, and a corrections file. Each file includes information about unsealed events only. The arrest file includes data from the DCJS rap sheet system, including arrests, convictions, and sentencing. The corrections file contains information furnished to DCJS from the New York State (NYS) Department of Corrections, including state prison admissions and releases (with a small number of records on jail stays). The parole file contains information furnished to DCJS from the NYS Division of Parole, including parole term start and end dates, abscond dates, and parole revocation information. The arrest and corrections files contain data reported to DCJS from January 1970 to present, and the parole file contains data reported to DCJS from January 1960 to present. DCJS takes no responsibility for the methods of statistical analysis or for the conclusions derived from the analysis.

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Table 1

Baseline Characteristics by Research Group

Center for Employment Opportunities

Characteristic	Program Group	Control Group	Total
Age (%)			
18 to 24 years	19.0	20.3	19.6
25 to 30 years	23.8	23.7	23.8
31 to 40 years	31.4	30.3	30.9
41 years or older	25.7	25.7	25.7
Average age	33.7	33.7	33.7
U.S. citizen (%)	74.6	73.6	74.2
Race/Ethnicity (%)			
White, non-Hispanic	1.4	2.2	1.8
Black, non-Hispanic	64.3	64.5	64.4
Hispanic	31.2	29.8	30.6
Other	3.0	3.4	3.2
Male (%)	91.4	95.3	93.0 **
Has any children (%)	58.1	56.2	57.3
Lives with any children under age 18 (%)	16.3	15.2	15.8
Has a child support order (%)	18.9	19.9	19.3
Education (%)			
High school diploma	9.5	11.4	10.3
GED	42.6	43.9	43.1
Beyond high school diploma	4.8	3.5	4.3
None of the above	43.1	41.2	42.3
Housing status (%)			
Rents or owns home	16.6	19.9	18.0
Lives with friends or relatives	59.1	55.1	57.4
Transitional housing	12.4	11.2	11.9
Emergency housing/homeless	3.7	5.4	4.4
Other	8.1	8.4	8.3
Marital status (%)			
Married, living with spouse	8.1	9.3	8.6
Married, living away from spouse	7.4	7.7	7.5
Unmarried, living with partner	21.8	20.1	21.1
Single	62.6	63.0	62.8

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Characteristic	Program Group	Control Group	Total
Ever employed (%)	81.1	81.2	81.2
Employed 6 consecutive months for one employer (%)	59.9	62.7	61.1
UI covered employment in the quarter prior to random assignment (%)	14.9	11.7	13.6
UI covered employment in year prior to random assignment (%)	24.1	24.0	24.0
Sample size	568	409	977

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using CEO Baseline Information Form data and Unemployment Insurance wage records from New York State.

NOTES: Includes sample members randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005. Data in this table are unweighted, but the results for the statistical significance test are weighted by week of random assignment.

In order to assess differences in characteristics across research groups, chi-square tests were used for categorical variables and t-test was used for continuous variables. Significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. The significance level indicates the probability that one would be making an error in concluding that there is a difference between research groups for the variable in question.

The vast majority of sample members are male (93 percent).¹⁶ Almost all are black or Latino (in national samples nearly one-third are white, likely reflecting the difference between prison populations in New York City and those for the nation as a whole). Fifty-seven percent of the sample members are over 30 years old. This is similar to national-level information — the average age of prisoners being released in recent years has increased to 34 years.

Sixteen percent of the sample is married, with 9 percent living with their spouse. Another 21 percent are unmarried but live with a partner. Over half of the study sample (57 percent) has at least one child, although only 16 percent live with any of their children. Only 19 percent report having a formal child support order in place.

The process of obtaining affordable housing upon release is complicated for returning prisoners because most do not have income from employment and are not eligible for many other forms of public assistance. In addition, current federally subsidized housing programs give public housing authorities power to deny housing or to terminate the leases of individuals with a

¹⁶There is a small but statistically significant difference between groups in the percentage of sample members who are male. The impact calculations presented later are adjusted to account for this difference. Also, all results were examined for males separately, and the results are very similar to those presented.

history of drug use or criminal behavior. Thus, many sample members live with friends or relatives (57 percent) or in some type of transitional housing (12 percent). Four percent report living in emergency housing or are homeless.

Just over half the sample has completed a high school diploma or a GED, and a very small proportion has a postsecondary degree (4 percent). Most have at least some employment history. More than 80 percent report that they have worked, and about 61 percent report that they have worked for a single employer for six consecutive months.

It is notable that 24 percent of the sample was employed in a UI-covered job in the year *before* study entry. This means that at least some study participants did not come to CEO immediately after release from prison, an issue that will be discussed further below.

Table 2 shows the criminal histories of study participants for both the program and control groups before random assignment and including the offense for which they were recently released from prison.¹⁷ Again, there are very few differences between the groups. As expected, all of the study participants have a history of arrest, conviction, and incarceration. The average lifetime total time spent in state prison for study participants is nearly five years.

Before random assignment, study participants had been arrested an average of eight times, similar to that of the 1994 national release cohort,¹⁸ with about five being felony arrests and three being misdemeanor arrests. Before random assignment, study participants had been convicted an average of seven times with about three being felony convictions. Nearly 70 percent of the sample members have had prior arrests for violent offenses with 51 percent being convicted of violent offenses. Nearly three-quarters of the sample had prior drug offense convictions.

Table 2 also shows the time between the last prison release and the date of random assignment. These data confirm that only 41 percent of the study sample came to CEO within three months after release. This is not typical of the full CEO population, about three-fourths of whom come to the program either immediately upon release or shortly thereafter.

As noted earlier, boot camp graduates and participants in some other special programs were excluded from the study for contractual reasons. Individuals in these special programs almost always come to CEO just after release. Those in the study sample came to CEO after referral by a parole officer not involved in special programs. These parole officers base their referral decisions on a wide variety of concerns and circumstances. Further analysis is needed to understand why many of the individuals referred by these parole officers came to CEO long after release (for

¹⁷As noted earlier, these data include incarceration in state prison but not local jails.

¹⁸Langan and Levin (2002).

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Table 2

**Criminal History Characteristics by Research Group
Center for Employment Opportunities**

Characteristic	Program Group	Control Group	Total
<u>Arrest history</u>			
Any prior arrests (%)	100	100	100
Average number of arrests ^a	7.4	7.7	7.5
Number of prior felony arrests	4.5	4.6	4.6
Number of prior misdemeanor arrests	2.8	3.1	2.9
Ever arrested for a violent crime (%) ^b	67.4	67.5	67.4
Number of prior arrests for a violent crime	1.4	1.4	1.4
<u>Conviction history</u>			
Any prior conviction (%) ^c	100	100	100
Average number of prior convictions ^d	6.6	6.9	6.7
Number of prior felony convictions	2.7	2.5	2.6 ***
Number of prior misdemeanor convictions	3.6	4.1	3.8
Convicted of a violent crime (%)	51.6	50.6	51.2
Convicted of a drug-related crime (%)	73.1	74.2	73.6
<u>State prison history</u>			
Lifetime number of months in state prison ^e	59.2	57.5	58.5
Months between latest state prison release and random assignment (%) ^f			
1–3 months	41.4	39.5	40.6
4–6 months	14.7	13.5	14.2
7–9 months	10.8	11.7	11.2
More than 9 months	33.0	35.2	33.9
Sample size	568	409	977

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from the New York State (NYS) Division of Criminal Justice Services.

NOTES: Includes sample members randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005. Data in this table are unweighted, but the results for the statistical significance test are weighted by week of random assignment. Significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

Due to missing data, seven sample members are missing prior criminal history data.

Prior criminal history includes the arrest, conviction, and incarceration related to the offense they were on parole for at the time of random assignment (the current offense).

^aEach arrest date is only counted as a single event. If there are multiple crimes or charges on the same date, only one event per date is recorded in the analysis. A total of 19 sample members are missing arrest charges information.

^bViolent crime indicator as defined by Penal Law 70.02; also includes underlying offenses.

^cConviction outcome excludes convictions where a final disposition was not found. A total of 24 sample members are missing a final disposition.

^dEach conviction date is only counted as a single event. If there are multiple convictions on the same date, only one event per date is recorded in the analysis.

^e"Lifetime" includes historical data as early as 1970.

fully one-third of the sample, more than nine months after release). For example, some parole officers may have referred parolees to CEO after they had worked for a time and then lost a job. Alternatively, data from the New York City jail system (which will be analyzed later) may show that some sample members spent time in jail between their release from prison and their date of random assignment. Others may have spent time in residential drug treatment programs.

Because the CEO model was designed to serve ex-prisoners just after release, and because most of CEO's broader population fits this profile, the results presented later in this paper are examined separately for people who came to CEO soon after release and those who came later.

Participation in CEO Activities

Table 3 shows participation in CEO's core program activities for the program group during the first year of the follow-up period. These data are drawn from CEO's management information system. (In later reports, data from a follow-up survey of program and control group members will be used to present a fuller picture of service receipt for both groups, including services not provided by CEO.)

- **Life Skills class.** The first step in the CEO program is completing the four-day Life Skills class. More than three-fourths of the program group (79 percent) completed the Life Skills class. About 38 percent of the control group completed the shorter version of this class that was specifically designed for

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Table 3

**Participation in CEO Activities for the Program Group
Center for Employment Opportunities**

Outcome	Program Group
Completed Life Skills class (%)	78.9
Worked in Neighborhood Work Project (NWP) (%)	71.7
Weeks worked in NWP (%) ^a	
Never worked in NWP	28.4
Less than 1 week	5.5
1-4 weeks	20.8
5-12 weeks	28.5
13-24 weeks	14.1
More than 24 weeks	2.8
Days between random assignment date and (NWP) (%)	
Never worked in NWP	28.4
0-7	48.4
8-14	14.8
More than 14	8.5
Met with a job coach (%)	59.5
Met with a job developer (%)	57.4
Placed in a non-NWP job (%) ^b	30.2
<u>Among those who worked in NWP (N=407)</u>	
Met with a job coach (%)	81.6
Met with a job developer (%)	78.6
Average weeks worked in NWP	8.3
Median days between random assignment and NWP	6.0
Placed in a non-NWP job (%) ^b	40.8
Sample size	568

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from CEO's Network for Information Gathering Evaluation and Learning (NIGEL) database.

NOTES: This table reflects program participation and NWP employment between January 2004 and October 2006. The sample in this table includes program group clients randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005. There were 9 control group members (2%) who worked in NWP during the follow-up period. NWP outcomes for these control group members are not shown in the table.

^aIt is important to note that weeks worked may not be consecutive but includes a total of weeks worked after an individual's random assignment date. This variable is created by taking total days worked in NWP and dividing by 4 because participants work 4 days per week in NWP and attend job coaching or other CEO services on the 5th day.

^bIncludes non-NWP employment placements by CEO staff and self-placement employment that CEO was made aware of.

them (not shown). It may be that, without the promise of transitional employment, many control group members were not highly motivated to complete their class.

- **Worksite assignment.** Upon completing the Life Skills class, the program group members were placed in transitional employment at a Neighborhood Work Project (NWP) worksite — the core of CEO's program. About 72 percent of the program group worked in NWP during the follow-up period.¹⁹ Most of the participants who worked in NWP moved to this employment quickly, within seven days after random assignment (the median is six days).
- **Length of transitional employment.** Overall, just under half of the program group worked in NWP for at least one month. Among those who worked in NWP, the average length of employment was about eight weeks (bottom panel of Table 3). Working longer in NWP is not always better; an individual may be deemed "job ready" and placed in a permanent job after a relatively short period in NWP. CEO program staff members try to address issues and move people to permanent employment as efficiently as possible.
- **Job coaching.** About 60 percent of the program group met with a job coach at least once, but a large majority of the participants who worked at an NWP worksite — 82 percent — had such a meeting. Among those who worked in

¹⁹According to CEO's management information system, nine members of the control group — 2 percent — worked at an NWP worksite at some point during the one-year follow-up period.

NWP for at least two weeks (8 days), almost 90 percent met with a job coach (not shown).

- **Job development.** About 57 percent of program group participants met with a CEO job developer during the one-year follow-up period; the figure is 79 percent for those who worked at an NWP worksite, and 87 percent for those who worked in NWP for at least two weeks (the latter figure is not shown).
- **Job placement.** CEO keeps records of job placements that are made by its job developers (called direct placements), as well as “self placements” — instances in which participants find jobs on their own and report this to CEO. Just over 30 percent of the full program group had one of these types of job placement recorded in CEO’s database (most of these were direct placements). The placement rate is 41 percent among those who worked in NWP, and 45 percent among those who worked in NWP for at least two weeks, the point at which participants typically begin working with a job developer. Of course, these placement statistics are not a comprehensive measure of employment because some participants may have found jobs and not reported this to CEO. The UI records (and, eventually, the survey) will provide a more complete picture of employment.

Impacts on Employment and Recidivism for the Full Sample

This section discusses CEO’s impacts on selected measures of employment and recidivism. As discussed earlier, the impacts are assessed by comparing outcomes for the program and control groups during a one-year period after sample members entered the study (referred to as Year 1).

Employment

Table 4 shows CEO’s impact on employment during Year 1. Employment rates are shown for the full year and by quarter, with Quarter 1 defined as the quarter in which each sample member was randomly assigned.²⁰

The top panel of the table, based on data from CEO’s management information system, only includes employment in CEO’s Neighborhood Work Project (NWP) transitional jobs. Consistent with the study design, almost no one in the control group worked in NWP. The previous section noted that about 70 percent of the program group worked in an NWP transitional

²⁰For example, for a sample member randomly assigned in February 2004, Quarter 1 is the first calendar quarter of 2004. For someone randomly assigned in May 2005, Quarter 1 is the second calendar quarter of 2005.

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Table 4

**Year 1 Impacts on Employment
Center for Employment Opportunities**

Outcome (%)	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	Standard Error
<u>Neighborhood Work Project (NWP) employment</u>				
Ever employed in NWP Q1-Q4 ^a	69.5	2.6	66.9 ***	2.383
NWP employment Qtr 1 (quarter of random assignment)	63.0	1.3	61.7 ***	2.461
NWP employment Qtr 2	43.3	2.0	41.3 ***	2.499
NWP employment Qtr 3	14.0	0.1	13.9 ***	1.702
NWP employment Qtr 4	5.3	0.5	4.8 ***	1.122
<u>All UI-covered employment</u>				
Ever employed in Q1-Q4	80.1	56.1	24.0 ***	2.900
Employed Qtr 1 (quarter of random assignment)	65.8	25.9	39.9 ***	3.000
Employed Qtr 2	59.2	34.7	24.5 ***	3.200
Employed Qtr 3	41.6	35.4	6.1 *	3.200
Employed Qtr 4	33.3	33.8	-0.6	3.100
Employed all 4 quarters Q1-Q4	21.7	10.9	10.8 ***	2.400
Sample size (total = 977)	568	409		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from CEO's Network for Information Gathering Evaluation and Learning (NIGEL) database and unemployment insurance wage records from New York State.

NOTES: Includes sample members randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005.

A total of three people were excluded from the UI-covered employment because of invalid social security numbers.

Results in this table are weighted by week of random assignment and adjusted for pre-random assignment characteristics.

Significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. The significance level indicates the probability that one would be making an error in concluding that there is a difference between research groups for the variable in question.

The standard error is an estimate of the sampling variation of the impact and is used to assess its level of statistical significance, as shown by the p-value.

^aNine control group members were employed in NWP during the follow-up period.

job, with most people starting shortly after random assignment and remaining in NWP positions for less than three months. Thus, it is not surprising that 63 percent of the program group worked in NWP in Quarter 1 and 43 percent worked in NWP in Quarter 2.

The bottom panel of Table 4, drawn from New York State unemployment insurance records, shows all UI-covered employment, including both NWP transitional jobs and non-NWP

jobs. The table shows the percentage of sample members who had any UI-covered employment in the year or the specified quarter. New York State did not provide individual-level data on earnings, so no earnings results are shown. MDRC has recently obtained data from the National Directory of New Hires, which include individual-level earnings; analyses based on those data will be presented in later reports.

Table 4 shows that a little more than half of the control group worked in a UI-covered job at some point in the year following random assignment, but the quarterly employment rates were much lower —only 26 to 35 percent — indicating that many control group members did not work steadily, at least not in UI-covered jobs.

The table shows that CEO generated a very large increase in UI-covered employment in the early part of the follow-up period. In Quarter 1, 66 percent of the program group worked in a UI-covered job, compared with 26 percent of the control group. The difference, about 40 percentage points, is statistically significant at the 1 percent level, meaning that such a difference is quite unlikely to have occurred by chance. Taken together, the results in the two panels of the table suggest that NWP transitional jobs accounted for a large share of the program group's employment in the first two quarters of the follow-up period. However, it is not possible to determine from these data how many program group members worked in non-NWP jobs.²¹

The results for these early quarters demonstrate the value of CEO's transitional work model. The low employment rate for the control group during this period shows that relatively few CEO participants would be able to find a UI-covered job without NWP. However, the impact on UI-covered employment was relatively short-lived: it declined from 25 percentage points in Quarter 2 to 6 percentage points in Quarter 3, and then disappeared altogether by Quarter 4. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the program group was about twice as likely as the control group to work in all four quarters of the year.

The main reason for the declining impact is the declining employment rate for the NWP group. (The control group's employment rate rose somewhat between Quarter 1 and Quarter 2, but then remained relatively stable for the rest of the year.) The data cited earlier from CEO's management information system show that less than half of those who worked in NWP were placed in a permanent job, so one would expect a significant fall-off in the overall employment rate for the program group. However, because of the limitations of the UI data described above, it is not possible to determine the extent to which program group members failed to transition

²¹Without individual-level earnings data or employer ID numbers, it is not possible to identify sample members who worked in both an NWP job and a non-NWP job in the same quarter; this is particularly likely to have occurred in Quarters 1 and 2. Thus, there is no way to determine how many program group members worked in non-NWP jobs (that is, it is not possible to subtract NWP employment from total employment to obtain non-NWP employment). However, data from the New Hires database will be used to examine this question in detail in subsequent reports.

from NWP into regular jobs, transitioned and then quickly lost their jobs, or transitioned to jobs not covered by unemployment insurance. Data from the New Hires database and the follow-up survey should allow a more complete analysis of this issue in later reports.

Recidivism

Table 5 shows CEO's impacts on several measures of recidivism. The data provide a relatively complete picture of arrests, convictions, and prison stays in New York State, but they do not include information on admissions to New York City jails; these data will be incorporated into later analyses.

The first panel of the table shows data on arrests and convictions during Year 1, while the second panel shows one parole status measure — the percent of each group whose parole status was ever classified as “absconded” or “revoked.” The third panel shows data on admissions to state prisons during the year, and the bottom panel shows the status of sample members at the end of Year 1 with respect to parole and state prison.

Given national statistics on recidivism for released prisoners, it may seem surprising that only 24 percent of the control group was arrested in Year 1 of the follow-up period.²² However, it is important to recall that many sample members had already been out of prison for a substantial amount of time before coming to CEO, so Year 1 of the study period often does not correspond to the first year out of prison. Thus, these data are not directly comparable to studies of cohorts of recently released prisoners. Moreover, the sample only includes people who showed up at CEO's offices after a referral from a parole officer, perhaps a relatively motivated group. Finally, it is worth noting that 37 percent of the control group was *either* arrested *or* absconded from parole *or* had their parole revoked during Year 1 (not shown in the tables).

Table 5 shows that, overall, CEO generated few statistically significant impacts on recidivism measures. However, there are small but statistically significant decreases in the percent convicted of a felony during Year 1 and in the percent incarcerated in state prison for a new crime during that period — the two measures that have the most direct implications for public safety. There are no statistically significant impacts on arrests, parole measures, or overall incarceration.²³ It is notable that there is no statistically significant impact on arrests during the first three months after random assignment, a period when the program group was much more

²²National data show that 44 percent of released prisoners are arrested within one year of release.

²³A small number of the convictions in Year 1 were associated with arrests that occurred prior to random assignment. This should not affect the program impacts, but the outcome levels would be slightly lower for both groups if the measure counted only convictions associated with arrests after random assignment.

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Table 5

**Year 1 Impacts on Recidivism
Center for Employment Opportunities**

	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	Standard Error
<u>Arrests and convictions</u>				
Arrested (%)	22.7	24.2	-1.5	2.800
Average number of arrests ^a	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.046
Number of months between random assignment and first arrest (%)				
3 months or less	5.3	5.0	0.3	1.500
4-6 months	4.8	6.0	-1.2	1.500
7-9 months	8.4	6.6	1.8	1.800
10-12 months	4.2	6.6	-2.4	1.500
Convicted of a crime (%) ^b	16.7	17.8	-1.1	2.500
Convicted of a felony (%)	1.8	3.7	-2.0 *	1.100
Convicted of a misdemeanor (%)	12.1	11.4	0.7	2.100
Other convictions (%)	3.2	3.2	0.0	1.200
<u>Parole outcome</u>				
Absconded/revoked from parole (%) ^c	20.2	20.5	-0.3	2.600
<u>Incarceration in state prison</u>				
Incarcerated in state prison (%) ^d	11.1	13.9	-2.7	2.200
Incarcerated for a new crime (%) ^e	0.7	3.1	-2.4 ***	0.900
Incarcerated for a parole technical violation (%) ^f	8.2	9.4	-1.2	1.800
Incarcerated for all other/unknown reasons (%) ^g	2.2	1.4	0.8	0.900
Average number of months incarcerated in prison	0.5	0.5	-0.1	0.098
<u>Status at the end of Year 1</u>				
Incarcerated in state prison (%) ^h	7.1	9.8	-2.7	1.800
Not incarcerated and on parole (%) ⁱ	82.0	80.8	1.2	2.600
Not incarcerated and not on parole (%) ^j	10.9	9.4	1.5	2.000
Sample size (total = 974)	565	409		

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from the New York State (NYS) Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

NOTES: Includes sample members randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005.

A total of three people were excluded from the sample because they did not match to the DCJS data.

Results in this table are weighted by week of random assignment and adjusted for pre-random assignment characteristics.

Significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. The significance level indicates the probability that one would incorrectly conclude that a difference exists between research groups for the corresponding variable.

The standard error is an estimate of the sampling variation of the impact and is used to assess its level of statistical significance, as shown by the p-value.

^aEach arrest date is only counted as a single event. If there are multiple crimes or charges on the same date, only one event per date is recorded in the analysis.

^bA total of 21 convictions (less than 1%) were found to be associated with an arrest that occurred prior to random assignment.

^cMeasure includes those that absconded and those with a discharge type of "Revoked," according to data from the NYS Division of Parole.

^dAll prison incarcerations (regardless of parole status) according to data from the NYS Department of Corrections. Due to multiple incarcerations, subcategories are not mutually exclusive and may sum to a total greater than the "Incarcerated" measure.

^eIncarcerations for those committing new crimes, regardless of their parole status.

^fIncarcerations for those committing technical violations while on parole.

^gAll other incarcerations, including those for technical violations while not on parole and for other unknown/unspecified reasons.

^hIncarceration status based on month 12 after random assignment.

ⁱ"Not incarcerated/on parole" includes those not incarcerated and without any parole discharge data in the 12 months after random assignment.

^j"Not incarcerated/not on parole" includes those not incarcerated in Month 12 who also have a parole discharge in the 12 months after random assignment.

likely to be working in a UI-covered job (although not shown in the table, there was also no impact on parole outcomes during this period).²⁴ This suggests that the link between employment and rearrest is not straightforward. The bottom panel of Table 5 shows that more than 80 percent of sample members in both groups were still under parole supervision at the end of Year 1, indicating that the story of CEO's impact on recidivism is still unfolding.

Table 6 combines the data on UI-covered employment with the data on incarceration in state prison. In general, these results mirror the employment impacts discussed earlier, with

²⁴There was a hypothesis that CEO might lead to an increase in parole revocations because program group members working in NWP were, in effect, being monitored more closely than control group members. The results in Table show that this did not occur.

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Table 6

Year 1 Impacts on Recidivism and Employment

Center for Employment Opportunities

Outcome	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	Standard Error
Employed and not incarcerated (%)				
Quarter 1 (quarter of random assignment)	57.6	23.9	33.8 ***	3.000
Quarter 2	59.0	34.6	24.3 ***	3.200
Quarter 3	41.5	35.1	6.4 **	3.200
Quarter 4	33.2	33.6	-0.4	3.100
Employed and incarcerated (%)				
Quarter 1 (quarter of random assignment)	7.9	2.0	5.9 ***	1.400
Quarter 2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000
Quarter 3	0.1	0.3	-0.2	0.300
Quarter 4	0.1	0.3	-0.2	0.300
Not employed and not incarcerated (%)				
Quarter 1 (quarter of random assignment)	26.8	61.2	-34.4 ***	2.900
Quarter 2	38.6	62.2	-23.6 ***	3.200
Quarter 3	51.6	58.6	-7.0 **	3.300
Quarter 4	57.4	54.9	2.4	3.200
Not employed and incarcerated (%)				
Quarter 1 (quarter of random assignment)	7.6	12.9	-5.2 ***	1.800
Quarter 2	2.4	3.1	-0.8	1.100
Quarter 3	6.7	5.9	0.8	1.600
Quarter 4	9.4	11.2	-1.8	2.000
Sample size (total = 971)	562	409		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from New York State (NYS) unemployment insurance wage records and NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

NOTES: Includes sample members randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005.

A total of six people were excluded from the sample; three were missing a social security number and three did not match to the DCJS data.

Results in this table are weighted by week of random assignment and adjusted for pre-random assignment characteristics.

Significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. The significance level indicates the probability that one would incorrectly conclude that a difference exists between research groups for the corresponding variable.

The standard error is an estimate of the sampling variation of the impact and is used to assess its level of statistical significance, as shown by the p-value.

large initial positive effects that diminished over time.¹ It is striking that, in the last quarter of Year 1, well over half of the sample in both the program and control groups was neither employed in a UI-covered job nor in state prison. The follow-up survey and data from the New York City jail system may help to describe the circumstances of these individuals.

Results for Groups Defined by Time Since Release

CEO's program model is designed to provide immediate employment and income to ex-prisoners in the critical weeks following release. A large majority of CEO's overall client population comes to the program either immediately upon release or shortly thereafter.

As discussed earlier, however, a large proportion of the study sample members had been out of prison for a long time before coming to CEO. Once this became clear to the research team, there was great interest in looking at results separately for the 377 sample members who came to CEO within three months after release from state prison.² This "recently released" group is closer to the population for whom the program was designed, and results for this group may provide better evidence about CEO's impacts for its overall service population. More broadly, the "recently released" group better fits the usual definition of a "reentry" population, and the results for that group may help to test the widely held assumption that reentry programs are more effective if they begin working with ex-prisoners immediately after release.³

Tables 7, 8, and 9 show results for the same measures that were described above for the full sample, but focusing only on sample members who came to CEO within three months after release — that is, the "recently released" group.⁴ There is more uncertainty about these results because of the relatively small sample size, but the general pattern of results appears to be more positive than for the full sample, particularly with respect to recidivism outcomes. Results for the rest of the sample — those who came to CEO more than three months after release — are shown in Appendix Tables A.3-A.5, and they are less favorable.

¹The status "employed and incarcerated" may seem counterintuitive. However, most of the people in this status in Quarter 1 were released from prison and began working in an NWP job during the same calendar quarter.

²The "recently released" sample of 377 is 39 percent of the full sample of 977. However, 49 sample members are missing the latest prison release date. Thus, as shown in Table 2, the "recently released group" accounts for 41 percent of those for whom the latest release is known.

³Appendix Table A.1 shows that the baseline characteristics of the recently released group are generally similar to those for sample members who came to CEO longer after release. However, there are some expected differences. For example, the proportion with UI-covered employment in the year prior to random assignment is 34 percent for those who came to CEO more than three months after release and only 12 percent for the recently released group. In addition, the recently released group is more likely to be living with friends or relatives and less likely to be in transitional housing. Appendix Table A.2 shows that the pattern of program participation is very similar for the two groups.

⁴About 43 percent of the sample members in the recently released group came to CEO within one month after release from state prison (not shown in tables).

Table 7 shows that the general pattern of employment impacts for the recently released group is similar to the results for the full sample — impacts are very large in the early quarters and not statistically significant by the end of the year — but the impact appears to decline more slowly for the recently released group.

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Table 7

**Year 1 Impacts on Employment
Sample Members Randomly Assigned Less Than 3 Months After Release
Center for Employment Opportunities**

Outcome (%)	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	Standard Error
<u>Neighborhood Work Project (NWP) employment</u>				
Ever employed in NWP Q1-Q4 ^a	73.0	0.5	72.4 ***	3.832
NWP employment Qtr 1 (quarter of random assignment)	66.3	0.5	65.7 ***	4.116
NWP employment Qtr 2	47.2	0.5	46.7 ***	4.165
NWP employment Qtr 3	15.1	0.0	15.1 ***	3.010
NWP employment Qtr 4	5.1	0.0	5.1 ***	1.687
<u>All UI-covered employment</u>				
Ever employed in Q1-Q4	85.4	53.3	32.1 ***	4.700
Employed Qtr 1 (quarter of random assignment)	69.9	26.0	43.9 ***	4.900
Employed Qtr 2	65.5	30.9	34.6 ***	5.200
Employed Qtr 3	47.8	35.0	12.8 **	5.200
Employed Qtr 4	38.9	33.7	5.2	5.000
Employed all 4 quarters Q1-Q4	25.2	10.3	14.9 ***	3.900
Sample size (total = 377)	222	155		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from CEO's Network for Information Gathering Evaluation and Learning (NIGEL) database and unemployment insurance wage records from New York State.

NOTES: Includes sample members randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005.

A total of two people were excluded from the UI-covered employment outcomes because of missing social security numbers.

Results in this table are weighted by week of random assignment and adjusted for pre-random assignment characteristics.

Significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. The significance level indicates the probability that one would be making an error in concluding that there is a difference between research groups for the variable in question.

The standard error is an estimate of the sampling variation of the impact and is used to assess its level of statistical significance, as shown by the p-value.

^aOne control group member was employed in NWP during the follow-up period.

Table 8 presents recidivism measures for the recently released group. It shows that the decrease in felony convictions for the full sample, discussed earlier, is concentrated in the recently released group, where there is a statistically significant impact of 4.5 percentage points (though few people in either group had felony convictions). In addition, there is a statistically significant 8 percentage-point decrease in the percent of sample members whose parole status was ever classified as revoked or absconded. These two effects translate into a sizable, 10 percentage-point decrease in overall reincarceration, as well as a 5 percentage-point decrease in the percent incarcerated for a new crime (both effects are statistically significant). There is also a decrease in the total number of months incarcerated in state prison during Year 1. Thus, at the end of Year 1, program group members in the recently released group were substantially more likely than their control group counterparts to remain under parole supervision and substantially less likely to be incarcerated.

Table 9, which combines employment and incarceration measures by quarter, shows, as expected, that CEO decreased the number of recently released people who were “not employed and incarcerated” at the end of Year 1. This table also makes clear that the impact on reincarceration emerged in the latter half of Year 1.

As a work program, CEO can only affect recidivism indirectly through its effects on employment. However, it is notable that a *similar* pattern of employment impacts for the recently released subgroup and for those who came to CEO later may be leading to much *different* patterns of impacts on recidivism. This pattern may reflect the fact that the recently released group is at higher risk of reincarceration. For example, 20 percent of control group members in the recently released group were incarcerated in state prison within one year after random assignment, compared to 12 percent of control group members who came to CEO more than 3 months after release (see Tables 8 and A.4). Similarly, the percent incarcerated for a new crime was 5 percent for control group members in the recently released group and only 2 percent for control group members who enrolled more than three months after release. This pattern is not surprising. People who are not in the recently released group had already stayed out of prison for a lengthy period before random assignment, so one would not necessarily expect them to have a high rate of incarceration in the subsequent year. It is possible that, while both groups of participants needed assistance finding jobs, CEO’s employment help was more crucial in avoiding reincarceration for the group at higher risk of returning to prison. Additional analysis of this pattern of results will be included in later reports.

The results for the recently released group are intriguing — few programs have generated substantial impacts on recidivism outcomes in rigorous studies — but not yet definitive. It will be important to see whether the impacts on felony convictions and incarceration hold up

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Table 8

**Year 1 Impacts on Recidivism
Sample Members Randomly Assigned Less Than 3 Months After Release**

Center for Employment Opportunities

	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	Standard Error
<u>Arrests and convictions</u>				
Arrested (%)	21.8	27.0	-5.2	4.600
Average number of arrests ^a	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.073
Number of months between random assignment and first arrest (%)				
3 months or less	7.8	6.2	1.6	2.900
4-6 months	3.3	8.3	-5.0 **	2.400
7-9 months	5.9	6.2	-0.3	2.600
10-12 months	4.8	6.2	-1.4	2.500
Convicted of a crime (%) ^b				
Convicted of a felony (%)	1.7	6.2	-4.5 **	2.000
Convicted of a misdemeanor (%)	9.6	11.6	-2.0	3.300
Other convictions (%)	2.7	2.9	-0.3	1.900
<u>Parole outcome</u>				
Absconded/revoked from parole (%) ^c	18.8	27.0	-8.2 *	4.400
<u>Incarceration in state prison</u>				
Incarcerated in state prison (%) ^d				
Incarcerated for a new crime (%) ^e	0.5	5.1	-4.7 ***	1.600
Incarcerated for a parole technical violation (%) ^f	7.4	12.0	-4.7	3.200
Incarcerated for all other/unknown reasons (%) ^g	1.8	2.5	-0.7	1.500
Average number of months incarcerated in prison	0.4	0.8	-0.4 **	0.183
Status at the end of Year 1				
Incarcerated in state prison (%) ^h	6.4	15.4	-8.9 ***	3.300
Not incarcerated and on parole (%) ⁱ	86.7	78.4	8.3 **	4.000
Not incarcerated and not on parole (%) ^j	6.8	6.2	0.6	2.600
Sample size (total = 377)	222	155		

(continued)

Table 8 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from the New York State (NYS) Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

NOTES: Includes sample members randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005.

Results in this table are weighted by week of random assignment and adjusted for pre-random assignment characteristics.

Significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. The significance level indicates the probability that one would incorrectly conclude that a difference exists between research groups for the corresponding variable.

The standard error is an estimate of the sampling variation of the impact and is used to assess its level of statistical significance, as shown by the p-value.

^aEach arrest date is only counted as a single event. If there are multiple crimes or charges on the same date, only one event per date is recorded in the analysis.

^bA total of 21 convictions (less than 1%) were found to be associated with an arrest that occurred prior to random assignment.

^cMeasure includes those that absconded and those with a discharge type of "Revoked," according to data from the NYS Division of Parole.

^dAll prison incarcerations (regardless of parole status) according to data from the NYS Department of Corrections. Due to multiple incarcerations, subcategories are not mutually exclusive and may sum to a total greater than the "Incarcerated" measure.

^eIncarcerations for those committing new crimes, regardless of their parole status.

^fIncarcerations for those committing technical violations while on parole.

^gAll other incarcerations, including those for technical violations while not on parole and for other unknown/unspecified reasons.

^hIncarceration status based on month 12 after random assignment.

ⁱ"Not incarcerated/on parole" includes those not incarcerated and without any parole discharge data in the 12 months after random assignment.

^j"Not incarcerated/not on parole" includes those not incarcerated in Month 12 who also have a parole discharge in the 12 months after random assignment.

The Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration

Table 9

**Year 1 Impacts on Recidivism and Employment
Sample Members Randomly Assigned Less Than 3 Months After Release**

Center for Employment Opportunities

Outcome	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	Standard Error
Employed and not incarcerated (%)				
Quarter 1 (quarter of random assignment)	48.3	22.2	26.2 ***	5.100
Quarter 2	65.5	30.9	34.6 ***	5.200
Quarter 3	47.7	34.3	13.5 **	5.200
Quarter 4	38.5	33.0	5.5	5.000
Employed and incarcerated (%)				
Quarter 1 (quarter of random assignment)	21.6	3.8	17.8 ***	3.700
Quarter 2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000
Quarter 3	0.0	0.7	-0.7	0.600
Quarter 4	0.4	0.7	-0.3	0.700
Not employed and not incarcerated (%)				
Quarter 1 (quarter of random assignment)	12.6	40.1	-27.5 ***	4.500
Quarter 2	32.0	64.0	-32.0 ***	5.200
Quarter 3	46.3	54.0	-7.7	5.400
Quarter 4	52.8	49.0	3.8	5.400
Not employed and incarcerated (%)				
Quarter 1 (quarter of random assignment)	17.5	33.9	-16.4 ***	4.600
Quarter 2	2.5	5.1	-2.6	2.100
Quarter 3	5.9	11.0	-5.1 *	3.000
Quarter 4	8.3	17.3	-9.0 **	3.500
Sample size (total = 375)	220	155		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from New York State (NYS) unemployment insurance wage records and NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

NOTES: Includes sample members randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005.

Two people were excluded from the sample due to missing social security numbers.

Results in this table are weighted by week of random assignment and adjusted for pre-random assignment characteristics.

Significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. The significance level indicates the probability that one would incorrectly conclude that a difference exists between research groups for the corresponding variable.

The standard error is an estimate of the sampling variation of the impact and is used to assess its level of statistical significance, as shown by the p-value.

over a longer follow-up period (although one could argue that even a short-term delay in reincarceration is a positive result). In addition, data on incarceration in New York City jails will provide a more complete picture of incarceration.

Next Steps

The CEO evaluation is still at an early stage. The study will eventually follow the sample for three years, will analyze results for other subgroups, and will incorporate a number of additional data sources, including:

- **Survey.** A survey is being administered to more than 500 sample members in the program and control groups, approximately 15-18 months after random assignment. The survey will provide data on services that sample members received from organizations other than CEO, on job characteristics and jobs not covered by unemployment insurance, on contact between sample members and their children, and on other issues.
- **Individual-level UI earnings data.** Data from the New Hires Database will have several advantages over the UI data used in this report: (1) the New Hires data will include employment outside New York State and in some positions not covered by the state UI program (for example, federal government jobs); (2) they will allow the analysis to distinguish CEO from non-CEO jobs; and (3) they will include individual-level earnings data for all sample members.
- **Child support payment data.** The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, which runs the state Child Support Enforcement program, will provide data on child support payments made by sample members who are noncustodial parents.
- **New York City jail data.** The New York City Department of Correction has provided data on incarceration in city jails, including the Rikers Island complex. These data will offer a more complete picture of incarceration patterns.
- **Cost data.** The research team is collecting data on the cost of CEO's program and other services sample members receive in order to estimate the net cost of the program.

A full-scale report on the evaluation results, including data from all of these sources, is planned for 2008.

Appendix

Supplementary Tables

The Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration

Table A.1

**Baseline Characteristics by Number of Months Between
Prison Release and Random Assignment**

Center for Employment Opportunities

Characteristic	Length between prison release and random assignment		Total
	Less than 3 months	More than 3 months	
Age (%)			
18 to 24 years	21.8	16.2	18.4
25 to 30 years	21.8	24.0	23.1
31 to 40 years	31.6	31.8	31.7
41 years or older	24.7	28.1	26.8
Race/ethnicity (%)			
White, non-Hispanic	1.9	1.5	1.6
Black, non-Hispanic	64.2	65.4	64.9
Hispanic	31.2	30.2	30.6
Other	2.7	2.9	2.8
Male (%)	94.4	92.0	93.0
Lives with any children under age 18 (%)	14.8	17.2	16.2
Has a child support order (%)	14.9	22.7	19.6 *
Education (%)			
High school diploma	11.1	10.1	10.5 *
GED	44.3	42.9	43.5
Beyond high school diploma	6.0	3.0	4.3
None of the above	38.6	44.0	41.7
Housing status (%)			
Rents or owns home	16.8	19.6	18.4 ***
Lives with friends or relatives	63.4	51.4	56.3
Transitional housing	8.5	15.2	12.4
Emergency housing/homeless	5.0	3.8	4.3
Other	6.3	10.0	8.5
Marital status (%)			
Married, living with spouse	10.1	7.9	8.8 **
Married, living away from spouse	6.3	8.5	7.6
Unmarried, living with partner	17.8	24.0	21.5
Single	65.8	59.5	62.1

(continued)

Table A.1 (continued)

Characteristic	Length between prison release and random assignment		Total
	Less than 3 months	More than 3 months	
Ever employed (%)	78.9	84.6	82.3
Ever employed 6 consecutive months for one employer (%)	58.0	64.8	62.0
UI-covered employment in the quarter prior to random assignment (%)	7.2	18.5	13.9 ***
UI-covered employment in year prior to random assignment (%)	11.5	33.6	24.6 ***
<u>Arrest history</u>			
Average number of arrests	7.9	7.7	7.8
Number of prior felony arrests	4.7	4.6	4.7
Number of prior misdemeanor arrests	3.0	3.0	3.0
Ever arrested for a violent crime (%) ^a	69.5	68.1	68.7
<u>Conviction history</u>			
Average number of prior convictions	7.0	6.7	6.8
Number of prior felony convictions	2.7	2.6	2.6
Number of prior misdemeanor convictions	4.0	3.8	3.9
Convicted for a violent crime (%)	51.7	52.0	51.9
Convicted for a drug-related crime (%)	71.6	75.3	73.8
<u>State prison history</u>			
Lifetime number of months in state prison ^b	61.5	56.4	58.5 ***
Sample size	377	551	928

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from CEO Baseline Information Form, New York State (NYS) unemployment insurance, and New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

NOTES: Includes sample members randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005. Results in this table are unweighted, but the results for the statistical significance test are weighted by week of random assignment.

A total of 49 sample members were excluded from this table due to missing prison release date.

In order to assess differences in characteristics across research groups, chi-square tests were used for categorical variables and t-test was used for continuous variables. Significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. The significance level indicates the probability that one would be making an error in concluding that there is a difference between research groups for the variable in question.

Prior criminal history includes the arrest, conviction, and incarceration related to the offense they were on parole for at the time of random assignment (the current offense).

^aIncludes underlying offenses

^bDue to missing admission or release dates, a total of 8 sample members are missing this measure.

The Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration

Table A.2

Participation in CEO Activities for the Program Group by
Number of Months Between Prison Release and Random Assignment

Center for Employment Opportunities

Outcome	Length between prison release and random assignment		Total
	Less than 3 months	More than 3 months	
Completed Life Skills class (%)	77.5	79.3	78.5
Worked in Neighborhood Work Project (NWP) (%)	70.7	72.3	71.6
Weeks worked in NWP (%) ^a			
Never worked in NWP	29.3	27.7	28.4
Less than 1 week	6.3	4.8	5.4
1-4 weeks	20.3	20.4	20.3
5-12 weeks	25.7	30.6	28.5
13-24 weeks	15.8	13.4	14.4
More than 24 weeks	2.7	3.2	3.0
Days between random assignment and NWP (%)			
Never worked in NWP	29.3	27.7	28.4
0-7	50.0	48.4	49.1
8-14	14.4	14.3	14.4
More than 14	6.3	9.6	8.2
Met with a job coach (%)	54.5	64.0	60.1
Met with a job developer (%)	55.4	58.9	57.5
Placed in a non-NWP job (%) ^b	31.8	29.1	30.2
<u>Among those who worked in NWP (N=384)</u>			
Met with a job coach (%)	76.4	86.3	82.3
Met with a job developer (%)	77.1	79.7	78.6
Average weeks worked in NWP	8.4	8.5	8.4
Median days between random assignment and NWP	6.0	6.0	6.0
Placed in a non-NWP job (%) ^b	44.1	38.4	40.8
Sample size	222	314	536

(continued)

Table Appendix A.2 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from CEO's Network for Information Gathering Evaluation and Learning (NIGEL) database.

NOTES: This table reflects program participation and NWP employment between January 2004 and October 2006. The sample in this table includes program group clients randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005. A total of 32 sample members in the program group were excluded from this table due to a missing prison release date. Results in this table are unweighted, but the results for the statistical significance test are weighted by week of random assignment.

In order to assess differences in characteristics across research groups, chi-square tests were used for categorical variables and t-test was used for continuous variables. Significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. The significance level indicates the probability that one would be making an error in concluding that there is a difference between research groups for the variable in question.

^aIt is important to note that weeks worked may not be consecutive but includes a total of weeks worked after an individual's random assignment date. This variable is created by taking total days worked in NWP and dividing by 4 because participants work 4 days per week in NWP and attend job coaching or other CEO services on the 5th day.

^bIncludes non-NWP employment placements by CEO staff and self-placement employment that CEO was made aware of.

The Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration

Table A.3

**Year 1 Impacts on Employment
Sample Members Randomly Assigned More Than 3 Months After Release
Center for Employment Opportunities**

Outcome (%)	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	Standard Error
<u>Neighborhood Work Project (NWP) employment</u>				
Ever employed in NWP Q1-Q4 ^a	67.9	3.6	64.3 ***	3.194
NWP employment Qtr 1 (quarter of random assignment)	62.1	2.3	59.8 ***	3.223
NWP employment Qtr 2	41.6	2.3	39.3 ***	3.254
NWP employment Qtr 3	13.2	0.1	13.1 ***	2.168
NWP employment Qtr 4	5.9	0.9	5.0 ***	1.600
<u>All UI-covered employment</u>				
Ever employed in Q1-Q4	77.7	56.2	21.5 ***	3.900
Employed Qtr 1 (quarter of random assignment)	65.4	24.7	40.7 ***	3.800
Employed Qtr 2	56.9	35.5	21.4 ***	4.200
Employed Qtr 3	39.2	35.1	4.1	4.200
Employed Qtr 4	31.3	33.8	-2.5	4.100
Employed all 4 quarters Q1-Q4	22.2	10.5	11.7 ***	3.300
Sample size (total = 551)	314	237		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from CEO's Network for Information Gathering Evaluation and Learning (NIGEL) database and unemployment insurance wage records from New York State.

NOTES: Includes sample members randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005.

Results in this table are weighted by week of random assignment and adjusted for pre-random assignment characteristics.

Significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. The significance level indicates the probability that one would be making an error in concluding that there is a difference between research groups for the variable in question.

The standard error is an estimate of the sampling variation of the impact and is used to assess its level of statistical significance, as shown by the p-value.

^aNine control group members were employed in NWP during the follow-up period.

The Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration

Table A.4

**Year 1 Impacts on Recidivism
Sample Members Randomly Assigned More Than 3 Months After Release
Center for Employment Opportunities**

	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	Standard Error
<u>Arrests and convictions</u>				
Arrested (%)	24.7	23.4	1.3	3.800
Average number of arrests ^a	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.064
Number of months between random assignment and first arrest (%)				
3 months or less	3.5	4.3	-0.7	1.700
4-6 months	6.0	4.8	1.2	2.000
7-9 months	10.2	7.4	2.8	2.500
10-12 months	4.9	6.9	-2.0	2.000
Convicted of a crime (%) ^b				
Convicted of a felony (%)	18.8	17.5	1.3	3.400
Convicted of a misdemeanor (%)	1.9	2.4	-0.5	1.200
Other convictions (%)	14.3	11.9	2.4	3.000
	3.3	3.8	-0.6	1.700
<u>Parole outcome</u>				
Absconded/revoked from parole (%) ^c	23.0	18.5	4.6	3.600
<u>Incarceration in state prison</u>				
Incarcerated in state prison (%) ^d	12.7	11.7	1.0	2.900
Incarcerated for a new crime (%) ^e	1.0	2.1	-1.1	1.100
Incarcerated for a parole technical violation (%) ^f	9.1	8.7	0.4	2.500
Incarcerated for all other/unknown reasons (%) ^g	2.6	0.9	1.7	1.200
Average number of months incarcerated in prison	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.122
<u>Status at the end of Year 1</u>				
Incarcerated in state prison (%) ^h	8.1	7.2	0.9	2.300
Not incarcerated and on parole (%) ⁱ	78.7	82.4	-3.7	3.500
Not incarcerated and not on parole (%) ^j	13.2	10.4	2.8	2.900
Sample size (total = 551)	314	237		

(continued)

Table A.4 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from the New York State (NYS) Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

NOTES: Includes sample members randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005.

A total of three people were excluded from the sample because they did not match to the DCJS data.

Results in this table are weighted by week of random assignment and adjusted for pre-random assignment characteristics.

Significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. The significance level indicates the probability that one would incorrectly conclude that a difference exists between research groups for the corresponding variable.

The standard error is an estimate of the sampling variation of the impact and is used to assess its level of statistical significance, as shown by the p-value.

^aEach arrest date is only counted as a single event. If there are multiple crimes or charges on the same date, only one event per date is recorded in the analysis.

^bA total of 21 convictions (less than 1%) were found to be associated with an arrest that occurred prior to random assignment.

^cMeasure includes those that absconded and those with a discharge type of "Revoked," according to data from the NYS Division of Parole.

^dAll prison incarcerations (regardless of parole status) according to data from the NYS Department of Corrections. Due to multiple incarcerations, subcategories are not mutually exclusive and may sum to a total greater than the "Incarcerated" measure.

^eIncarcerations for those committing new crimes, regardless of their parole status.

^fIncarcerations for those committing technical violations while on parole.

^gAll other incarcerations, including those for technical violations while not on parole and for other unknown/unspecified reasons.

^hIncarceration status based on month 12 after random assignment.

ⁱ"Not incarcerated/on parole" includes those not incarcerated and without any parole discharge data in the 12 months after random assignment.

^j"Not incarcerated/not on parole" includes those not incarcerated in Month 12 who also have a recent parole discharge in the 12 months after random assignment.

The Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration

Table A.5

**Year 1 Impacts on Recidivism and Employment
Sample Members Randomly Assigned More Than 3 Months After Release
Center for Employment Opportunities**

Outcome	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	Standard Error
Employed and not incarcerated (%)				
Quarter 1 (quarter of random assignment)	65.4	24.7	40.7 ***	3.800
Quarter 2	56.9	35.5	21.4 ***	4.200
Quarter 3	38.9	35.0	3.9	4.200
Quarter 4	31.3	33.8	-2.5	4.100
Employed and incarcerated (%)				
Quarter 1 (quarter of random assignment)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000
Quarter 2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000
Quarter 3	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.400
Quarter 4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000
Not employed and not incarcerated (%)				
Quarter 1 (quarter of random assignment)	34.6	74.1	-39.6 ***	3.900
Quarter 2	40.6	62.5	-21.9 ***	4.200
Quarter 3	53.3	61.8	-8.5 **	4.300
Quarter 4	58.2	57.7	0.5	4.300
Not employed and incarcerated (%)				
Quarter 1 (quarter of random assignment)	0.0	1.1	-1.1 *	0.600
Quarter 2	2.5	2.0	0.5	1.300
Quarter 3	7.5	3.1	4.4 **	2.000
Quarter 4	10.5	8.5	2.0	2.600
Sample size (total = 551)	314	237		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from New York State (NYS) unemployment insurance wage records and New York State (NYS) Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

NOTES: Includes sample members randomly assigned between January 2004 and October 2005.

Results in this table are weighted by week of random assignment and adjusted for pre-random assignment characteristics.

Significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. The significance level indicates the probability that one would incorrectly conclude that a difference exists between research groups for the corresponding variable.

The standard error is an estimate of the sampling variation of the impact and is used to assess its level of statistical significance, as shown by the p-value.

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About MDRC

MDRC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social policy research organization dedicated to learning what works to improve the well-being of low-income people. Through its research and the active communication of its findings, MDRC seeks to enhance the effectiveness of social and education policies and programs.

Founded in 1974 and located in New York City and Oakland, California, MDRC is best known for mounting rigorous, large-scale, real-world tests of new and existing policies and programs. Its projects are a mix of demonstrations (field tests of promising new program approaches) and evaluations of ongoing government and community initiatives. MDRC's staff bring an unusual combination of research and organizational experience to their work, providing expertise on the latest in qualitative and quantitative methods and on program design, development, implementation, and management. MDRC seeks to learn not just whether a program is effective but also how and why the program's effects occur. In addition, it tries to place each project's findings in the broader context of related research — in order to build knowledge about what works across the social and education policy fields. MDRC's findings, lessons, and best practices are proactively shared with a broad audience in the policy and practitioner community as well as with the general public and the media.

Over the years, MDRC has brought its unique approach to an ever-growing range of policy areas and target populations. Once known primarily for evaluations of state welfare-to-work programs, today MDRC is also studying public school reforms, employment programs for ex-offenders and people with disabilities, and programs to help low-income students succeed in college. MDRC's projects are organized into five areas:

- Promoting Family Well-Being and Child Development
- Improving Public Education
- Promoting Successful Transitions to Adulthood
- Supporting Low-Wage Workers and Communities
- Overcoming Barriers to Employment

Working in almost every state, all of the nation's largest cities, and Canada and the United Kingdom, MDRC conducts its projects in partnership with national, state, and local governments, public school systems, community organizations, and numerous private philanthropies.