THE OFFENDER EMPLOYMENT RETENTION FORUM: MEETING SUMMARY

Prepared for the
Division of Offender Workforce Development
National Institute of Corrections
U.S. Department of Justice

Shelli B. Rossman
S. Rebecca Neusteter

FINAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 9, 2010

URBAN INSTITUTE
Justice Policy Center

This report was prepared under Cooperative Agreement Number 07K98GJS6 from the Division of Offender Workforce Development, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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Introduction

Issues surrounding prisoner reentry have attained considerable visibility during the past decade, as both decision makers and practitioners increasingly recognize that the approximately 700,000 prisoners, who annually return from state and federal prisons each year, face a myriad of challenges (e.g., substance abuse, mental and physical health problems, unemployment, and housing instability) and high recidivism rates. While resources have been devoted to the community-based service needs of this population, including such factors as soft and hard skills to ensure employability and employment opportunities, little attention has been focused on the critical issue of job retention, including key factors such as what individual or market factors predict job retention or loss; what strategies are effective with individuals at high risk of unstable employment; what role(s) can employers, job specialists, and others play in supporting stable employment).

The Offender Workforce Development Division of the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) conceptualized the Offender Employment Retention initiative to address this gap in knowledge. The goal of this initiative is to develop a certified training program to improve employment retention for former offenders; specifically a curriculum for Employment Retention Specialists. As one objective, the Urban Institute (UI) was subcontracted to plan and convene a meeting of experts conversant with workforce development—particularly as it applies to offender populations—to identify the core job retention principles that should be considered in designing 1) a comprehensive training program that can be used with NIC's organizations, as well as a broader audience with similar needs; 2) a risk assessment tool that can identify individuals at risk for job loss; and 3) e-learning and on-site training modules. A specific charge for this meeting was to explore the feasibility of applying a relapse prevention model, inclusive of case management, to workforce retention.

The Forum was developed by the UI project director, Shelli Rossman, in collaboration with John E. Moore and Patricia Taylor, the NIC project managers for this effort. Working together, this team developed the meeting agenda and identified a prioritized listing of nationally known workforce, job development, and correctional experts to invite as Forum participants. Additionally, the team decided that invitations to observe the Forum should be extended to Federal partners and Foundations who share NIC's interest in improving employment outcomes for offenders.

UI staff contacted candidates for the meeting to ascertain their willingness and availability to attend the Forum. Virtually all invited individuals were interested in attending, but some were unable to clear their calendars. In those cases, they either suggested another person with similar qualifications in their organization who could serve in this capacity, or the team extended the invitation to another expert with a similar background. The intent was to bring together a

knowledgeable group with diverse expertise to stimulate a comprehensive, multi-faceted discussion on employment retention. **Appendix A** presents the list of Forum participants and observers. **Appendix B** presents the Forum Agenda.

In addition to subcontracting with UI, NIC commissioned two documents to frame the dialogue: a white paper, authored by George Parks, conceptualizing how relapse prevention can be used more broadly in criminal justice management (see **Appendix C**) and a literature review prepared by Connie Clem (see **Appendix D**). In addition, a DACUM[1] Profile for Employment Retention Specialist was developed prior to the Forum (see **Appendix E)**. The materials presented in Appendices A-E were vetted by NIC and disseminated by UI to participants and observers prior to the meeting, such that the ensuing discussions could build on this information in a highly interactive format.

The Offender Employment Retention Forum

The Offender Employment Retention Forum was convened at UI's Katherine Graham Center in Washington, DC, on February 3 and 4, 2010. The 1.5-day meeting brought together 37 workforce and job development, as well as correctional substantive experts, practitioners, researchers, and representatives of several federal agencies and foundations to identify core principles for inclusion in a certified training program to improve employment retention for former offenders. Demetra Nightingale, an expert in workforce development research, was subcontracted to facilitate the meeting. Briefing materials were again provided, and a resource table was set up so that attendees could access relevant NIC information and information provided by participants about their organizations' activities.

The Forum was quite interactive, involving both participants and observers, during various sessions. This report does not provide a transcript of the meeting, nor is it intended to. It does, however, capture the flavor and flow of the discussions, which were quite rich and often covered several topics in the span of a few minutes.

Topics Covered on February 3, 2010

The Vision

John Moore provided information about the vision for this project, and some of its historical background. He noted that the Offender Employment Retention effort has been under consideration since 1999, but NIC felt it needed to develop expertise in other areas before turning its attention to employment retention. NIC now has the Offender Employment Specialist (OES) and Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS)─entry level and more intensive training that lead to certification and professionalizing the field. The hope is to augment those curricula with Offender Employment Retention Specialist training not only to benefit offenders, but also to benefit the general population as well.

[1] DACUM refers to an organizational job task analysis undertaken prior to developing curriculum

Overview of the Process, Existing Curricula, and the DACUM Profile for Employment Retention Specialist

Patricia Taylor, John Moore, and Francina Carter provided an overview of the process in place to develop the Offender Employment Retention curriculum and how that training will connect to other training developed and implemented by NIC.

The objective of the Offender Employment Retention initiative is to develop a blended e-learning curriculum, borrowing from cognitive development principles. NIC uses the approach developed by Madeline Hunter on converting Instructional Theory Into Practice (ITIP); they ultimately want to have six to eight modules that identify specific learning objectives and constitute learning blocks that build upon each other and the curricula that have already been developed. In addition to curriculum development, another goal is to develop an assessment instrument because current tools do not give much attention to retention issues.

The intent is to be transparent and develop a national model that can be embraced by the field. NIC commissioned the Parks article and the Clem literature review, and also pursued several other avenues to gather pertinent information prior to curriculum development. The information gathering included looking at people working in correctional institutions and community-based organizations (CBOs) to capture diversity from both arenas so that the final curriculum is generalizable: in the process, they found that very few CBOs have Offender Workforce Development Specialists on their staff, although they do provide retention services.

NIC has made a deliberate effort to use a collaborative approach, reaching beyond corrections for curriculum development and training—this is an approach that was used in developing the OWDS curriculum and the training partnership with the National Career Development Association (NCDA). In addition to this interdisciplinary Forum, the agency also held several web forums and went through a DACUM process to get input from the field, looking closely at the duty bands and job tasks—this is how employment or retention specialists saw their tasks. Approximately eight people participated in the development of the DACUM for the Employment Retention Specialist position, and six different people participated in the validation process; one person participated in both phases to provide the institutional memory to link one to the other. Ordinarily, re-validation would be done, but NIC plans to use this Forum and participants' feedback as a mechanism for re-validation.

After the Forum, the next step is to develop a cooperative agreement with a curriculum developer selected as the result of a competitive process. The curriculum developer will be given the materials developed to date, as well as participate in a de-briefing covering the Forum discussions. Once the curriculum is developed, it will be pilot tested before it is rolled out. This has been a very deliberate process with an eye toward ultimately evaluating the curriculum to determine whether it works as intended.

Forum participants were given the opportunity to look at copies of some of the existing NIC curricula. OES training is suggested as a three-day introductory curriculum; although the schedule can be modified. NIC strongly encourages people to go through OES training prior to OWDS training, which is much more intensive[2] (as shown in the NIC Administrative Guide that gives detailed information on the training) and really lays the groundwork for collaboration and the system changes NIC hopes will be achieved. There is a module on job retention within the OWDS training, but because that curriculum contains so much information, it does not cover all the elements identified by the DACUM. Since job retention is not at the forefront of the OWDS training, it provides the impetus for the Employment Retention Specialist (ERS) curriculum.

During the discussion that immediately followed this presentation, several themes emerged regarding what NIC hoped the forthcoming ERS curriculum would accomplish and what participants viewed as important. Keys point included:

- Systematic training and emphasis on professionalism are regarded as important mechanisms for improving workforce development, contributing to systems change, and ultimately, yielding better employment and recidivism outcomes for offenders. When people receive training they often realize weaknesses that need to be shored up, and are motivated to use the information and newly acquired skills to change the way they do business. However, the training modules have to be relevant, clear, and consistent; and it also is essential to ensure that the training is delivered with fidelity.

- The dimensions identified in the Employment Retention Specialist DACUM should be part of any good employment program, but all too often are not. As a result, there is a need to specialize employment retention roles to lead to high-performing programs.

- Neither correctional staff, nor workforce or job development staff have focused sufficient attention on the importance of employment retention, what facilitates job retention, and what undermines it. As a result, connecting individuals to jobs is a repetitive process where individuals require multiple placements as they are unable to sustain employment. In order to achieve better outcomes, we need to do a better job of identifying and resolving the issues that are hindering individuals' employment success. Additionally, more emphasis should be focused on pathways and career opportunities, instead of just placement in a job slot.

- Collaboration is important in achieving better outcomes for offenders on a number of levels.

[2] OWDS trains selected multidisciplinary teams in a set of professional competencies that systematically address challenges faced by offenders in their search for employment. NIC provides OWDS Partnership Training through collaboration with the National Career Development Association (NCDA). Trainees receive intensive, competency-based instruction that includes approximately 180 hours of classroom training, e-learning modules, and practicum experience. The 108-hour classroom training is delivered in three weeks over a period of time.

- One participant noted that if it had not been for OWDS and the development of a multi-disciplinary team, corrections would have continued to be very self-contained. Now there is an expanding partnership in his state that permits them to link beyond corrections into the community.

- Several participants noted the importance of a seamless process not only for connecting offenders to services while they are incarcerated that continue post-release, but also for connecting programs to one another, since most programs cannot offer all services that might be needed by offenders and that might reflect on their employment success.

- Offenders should be connected to employment programs and services while they are still incarcerated. What would be beneficial is if people are connected to the same kinds of programs inside the facility and out. Services provided aren't as effective if not linked to services in the community. There should be a seamless process to continue working with people.

- The role of Employment Retention Specialist may vary by setting. One participant asked how the curriculum would address training for places where offenders only have short-term stays. She noted that her facility doesn't keep people very long, and can only track them for 60 days after they leave.

- Employment Retention Specialists need to have a "dual client" perspective, which is often lacking. Public and non-profit organizations—who place individuals in jobs—often do not define the needs of business the same way that employers do. Employment specialists and retention specialists need to understand employers' definition of "job ready" and their requirements with respect to job skills. Having this in the forefront is critical to both individuals' job retention and long-term good business relationships with employers. The training needs to increase specialists' confidence and capability in working with employers; if the specialists perform well in meeting employers' needs, ultimately they will also be meeting the needs of offenders.

- Several participants noted that it's often difficult, in practice, to determine who should get which services and when. Practitioners recognize that it's not practical, nor is it a good idea, to give everyone every service; but how does one make such determinations? One practitioner noted that everyone talks about assessments as if they were "silver bullets," but they aren't because they represent a point in time and there are all sorts of unpredictable events that practitioners confront and have to deal with in responding with real-time service delivery. A correctional expert amplified this issue, noting that they have people in corrections and in the field doing this work; but one complication is that they can't do it with everyone. They find it very hard to figure out who is high-risk and who will have the most needs when reach the community.

- Job retention seems to play out differently for different generations (age groups), genders, and cultural groups—and practitioners are struggling to understand these differences and how to respond to them to get better outcomes.

Who Does NIC Expect to Train With This Curriculum? Should There Be Separate Employment Retention Specialist Positions Within Organizations?

The participants asked whether NIC was developing this curriculum with the expectation that specific employment retention specialist positions would be funded, or whether the training would be for individuals to focus on employment retention as a collateral duty. NIC responded that ideally programs would have employment retention specialist positions in the future, but they recognize that most OWDS staff wear many hats and that it may not be possible to have specific retention specialist positions in the near term.

Using OWDS as the example, they noted that there are OWDS positions in some agencies, but generally it's very generic. People who have this training might be educators, case managers, volunteers, etc., and may not have the title of OWDS. However, as good results are being shown, some agencies are creating OWDS positions or changing the names of other positions to reflect this training/focus.

One of the participants suggested that it might be a good idea to do a crosswalk between the Employment Retention DACUM and other existing positions to see what this adds in terms of new or different skill sets. That if it could be shown that this requires additional skills sets, it might generate more buy-in for adding retention specialist positions and hiring people with this training.

A CEO participant noted that they have tried it both ways: with retention as a separate job from job developer or with the two combined. They agree retention specialist is a different job, in part because they have different customers: the employment specialist has an external focus to the labor market, while retention should focus more on internal support services. Right now, they have split this into separate positions, but note that there are costs and benefits to each approach. For example, the client now has to work with multiple staff members.

One participant noted that within the federal correctional system, there has been a push for officers to work as employment specialists. Officers reportedly get excited in the training; but when they bring it back, it's overwhelming, in part because there is now "systematic dumping" of higher-risk offenders onto these officers. Sometimes too much is expected of the officers who go through the training. As a result, he suggested that everyone should be cross-trained.

The Safer participant reported that, like CEO, they have both retention specialists and job developers. However, based on his past experience, he thought there is some merit to wearing both hats in that working with both clients and employers can increase one's understanding of the needs of each.

A STRIVE participant noted that it's important to treat employers as customer partners and to recognize we're not "selling formerly incarcerated people," we're providing human capital that can keep their company profitable. He suggested there had been a dynamic tension between job developers and counselors/case managers. They have found that it's important to have them work as a team, and they use incentives to create team cohesiveness. Other participants agreed that teaming is important, as are incentives, but suggested that teaming is very difficult to accomplish and that agencies have to provide incentives for the right things (e.g., not just for job placement, but for assists in preparing and getting the right person into the right job).

The facilitator observed that retention relates to both individual behavior and the labor market. She suggested it might be advisable to have teams who work together to focus on varying needs, rather than expecting a single person to have expertise in all areas. For example, in the absence of teams, a specialist would need to have a range of skills, including behavioral and mental health skill sets, and also be able to speak the language of the business sector. She reported that Colorado has implemented a number of models for teaming across agencies and institutional domains, and in some cases, they have managed to pool funding.

The Goodwill participant suggested that different approaches might work for different organizations or different types of clients. They have a single position because they have found in working with young minority men that these types of clients have poor relationships and significant trust issues. As a result, these clients seem to do better if they deal with a single person who encompasses the whole case. However, at Goodwill, they have other programs that work in teams, and if you can make that work, it's great.

Another participant suggested that regardless of the structure, coordination and information sharing are important. Also, it's critical to recognize when you have an employer relationship, the employer is depending on you to place a person who's right for them, not just someone who's in need of a job.

A participant who represents the business sector expanded on that theme by emphasizing that it's important that employers' needs are clearly and correctly understood. She noted that relationships are about communication, and communication is reliant on trust. She was adamant that anyone dealing with employers should have some basic business skills. In addition, from the agency perspective, there should be a commitment at the highest levels to pleasing the employer customer and developing long-term employer relationships as the way to meet the organization's objectives for its clients. Agency staff should be hired and trained with these principles in mind.

Following up on those comments, another participant reported that Kansas recognized that the corrections agency was probably not the best group to approach employers. Instead, they have a reentry taskforce with Workforce Investment Board members, who approach the employers on behalf of corrections.

Another participant observed that job development is not just a concern for corrections; other institutional systems such as health and welfare also are concerned with accessing jobs for their

clienteles. She reported that all the agencies in VA collaborate and share information as a workforce network comprised of job developers for the disabled, offenders, and those with mental health issues. They have one point of contact with the employers, and this has worked well so far. She noted that they probably should consider coordinating a network for retention.

The facilitator noted that there is a lot of competition for the "good jobs." She suggested that federal and state agencies could be really helpful in coordinating some of this and helping to minimize some of this competitiveness.

When Should Job Retention Become a Key Consideration?

A participant opened this line of discussion by stating that he had learned that job readiness is not a linear function: the type of stresses and challenges individuals experience when first placed are different from what they feel with the passage of time. So retention specialists may need to intervene at different times with different kinds of assistance, and this may require a longer-term retention presence in tracking and keeping in touch with the participant. He recommended that job readiness and retention should be regarded as a holistic and continuous process, and the current job model doesn't show that.

This led to a discussion about when a focus on retention should be introduced and how much preparation for job retention can or should be done prior to job placement. The facilitator reported that in the old welfare-to-work employment retention random assignment studies, one of the findings was that even with intensive services, there was no effect on job retention. She suggested that incorporating sensitivity to retention upfront seems like a promising approach, instead of adding it at the time of job placement or even later. She thought some consideration should be given to having another row on the DACUM chart that puts support services for retention earlier on.

The discussion quickly moved to consider how retention should be modeled. One person suggested that retention specialists should be placed in prisons to train the supervisors of the inmates who are working while in prison, so that prison work becomes a training ground for developing attitudes and behaviors consistent with job retention. Another participant noted that offenders often receive services from public sector organizations and they don't necessarily operate on a business model. Her view was that all interactions should be conducted on a business basis to model the results providers hope to achieve.

Another participant responded that this was exactly the approach introduced at the federal level, where they are trying to have people apply for prison industry jobs with resumes; they are changing their culture with the intent of supporting behavioral change. Someone then noted that both state and federal prisons contract with halfway houses, and asked whether halfway house employees are receiving OES or OWDS training. The response was that halfway house staff have been invited to participate in these trainings– and work is underway to restructure some contracts to embrace some of these concepts.

Are There Particular Challenges Given the State of the Economy?

The facilitator asked what the concept of meeting employers' needs means in a recession. The business sector representative suggested that approaching employers during a weakened economy isn't much different but there is less availability of jobs, and employers may be more risk adverse. She noted that in a bad economy, employers recognize that every hire has to be a smart hire. However, she felt that having an employment retention specialist could be a decided advantage because you could sell the retention specialist as the product. Her point was that a relationship could be developed with an employer on the grounds that the specialist would ensure the employer's needs were met and would be actively monitoring the situation so that if anything goes wrong, the specialist will intercede to correct the problem, even if it means replacing one client with another to get the job done properly.

CEO noted that they are still making a lot of placement, but it's tougher. Employers are still hiring entry-level people. The fact that their clients have had transitional jobs and on-the-job training makes them more competitive because employers know CEO clients have had some training and will show up. Retention should not be an afterthought on either the client's side or the employer's: relationships with employers better be good before a recession, if you want to be able to make placements during one.

A corrections participant noted that just as transitional employment and oversight by a retention specialist may be selling points, probation or other supervision can be turned into a benefit to employers. They stress that offenders under their supervision have received some training, will be drug-tested, and will be a good match for the job; also, that the employer can contact the P.O. if problems arise.

Does Emphasis on Employment Retention Have a Downside?

A concern that surfaced was whether an emphasis on retention would have unintended consequences in increasing recidivism. The example cited was that the more pressure placed on low-risk offenders, the more likely they are too mess up. One person commented that low-risk offenders generally have some job skills or experience and therefore would be unlikely to receive the level of services that would include the retention focus. The discussion that followed clarified that low-risk, in this case, was determined using the LSI-R and was referring to low risk for re-offending; individuals seen as low risk for recidivism receive some services, including some forms of employment services, but not with the intensity of others who are at higher risk.

CEO noted that a random assignment, longitudinal study in which they participated found that three years after enrollment, there were significant statistical decreases from all crimes. That said, on the employment side, clients had very significant changes in the first year, but these gains then faded out. The recidivism impact outlasted the employment impact. Since then, CEO has made huge investments in retention, and reportedly has more than doubled its retention outcomes (although this has not been subjected to rigorous evaluation).

The facilitator noted that successful retention is not just related to the characteristics of the employee or the actions of the service provider, it also may be a function of the nature of the job. Some employers or business sectors do not value staff retention. Under such circumstances, there may be little a program can do to help a client retain the job.

How Should Employment and Retention Be Defined and Tracked?

The conversation then shifted to discussing employment and retention terminology. The facilitator suggested that the retention definition extends from one's perception of what constitutes employment. Does employment mean a full-time job? Is one employed full time if one has more than one job? Does the definition include expectations about benefits or certain wage levels, or some other quality standards? She noted that years ago, the Department of Labor (DOL) didn't consider work as a job unless the activities were expected to last a certain number of days (initially 3 days, then later changed to a minimum of 30 days).

One participant asked whether retention means remaining in the same job or continuous employment attachment. And, if there are breaks between jobs, how long can the breaks be and still qualify as continuous employment? The facilitator responded that, years ago, DOL said if someone has been out of the labor market for 30 days, it's much harder to get them a job; so that might be one way to define the upper bound for breaks that don't qualify as continuous employment.

Another person raised the issue that maybe such standards were unreasonable given a recession. She noted that many people are currently unemployed and have been out of work for more than 30 days, and this doesn't necessarily mean that they are either bad employees or unemployable. To which the facilitator responded that nonetheless, being out of the job market more than 30 days makes it hard to become employed. She suggested that subsidized and transitional employment could be used as filler jobs and might be very effective in helping to achieve the objectives of avoiding chronic unemployment when the economy is slow or in other situations where it's difficult for people to get a job. However, several individuals noted that although there is a national transitional jobs network, there is not a lot of capacity. Few places have transitional or filler jobs, and even with stimulus funding, there is apparently not a lot of interest at the local level in setting up new programs of this nature.

Someone then suggested that NIC's definition for retention might start with the federal definition of employment at the 30-day mark, but not necessarily in the same job. He noted that Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and other contracts may use other markers, such as employment in 30, 60, or 90 days or employment in continuous quarters. Another participant felt that recidivism was being tracked at one year and therefore services, including employment services, should also be available and tracked for one year as well.

Those comments led to a discussion of accountability and measurement tasks. Someone suggested that when one thinks about a continuum of care, it would be ideal to have a tracking system, like an electronic passport, with shared data to track people and events, such as employment or job loss. Another participant reported ongoing work with his state's DOL to try

to get better data than offender self-report and reliance on community supervision staff for data entry, which means that sometimes employment data do not even get into their system. Also the state's labor department profiles who is likely to exhaust unemployment benefits; so they are working with DOL to see if there's a way to predict who in the offender population is going to be at most risk.

The facilitator noted that federal and state data are not easy for CBOs to obtain for tracking purposes. The University of Kansas maintains all data from all of the states, but there is limited access to it. The ongoing discussion underscored that states vary with respect to how accessible this type of information is, what will be shared, and with whom. In some states, they won't or can't share across state agencies; in others, it may take time or pressure from high-level decision makers to establish information sharing protocols. Some of the federal attendees think it's more likely for this kind of information sharing to happen at the state level than at the federal level. The general sense was that this is an area where NIC could be helpful in facilitating an impact on policy.

CEO noted it is concerned about accurate reporting versus underreporting of client employment and retention. They try to verify employment in three ways–asking the client to show them a paystub, asking parole to validate that they have seen a paystub, and talking to employers through an independent unit. CEO estimates that they spend $200,000 to $300,000 each year to find out information that the government already knows. They emphasized how helpful it would be to have assistance from the government in figuring out and measuring retention.

STRIVE agreed with CEO that they also had a concern about underreporting. They noted that the University of Maryland-Baltimore is a repository for state labor information. When the University did wage record analyses, they found out they were doing much better than they thought. STRIVE said they were amazed by how much retention was documented that they didn't know about, and what's more, they were able to see who did better by basic demographic breakouts. This helped them modify services to meet client needs.

One participant noted that information sharing is one of the challenges in tracking employment and retention, but another challenge is that offenders may use multiple names, have multiple social security numbers (SSNs), or do not know their SSNs.

The facilitator closed the meeting by observing that throughout the day individuals who had taken NIC training had, in essence, become champions, and that it, in itself, can have a transformative effect and contribute to systems change. NIC staff indicated that the discussion helped them see how the training is really applicable to a variety of clienteles.

Topics Covered on February 4, 2010

What Are the Circumstances That Favor Retention?

Participants identified a number of factors as important for improving retention outcomes, including the following:

- One of the most important elements is to begin offering services and developing attitudes and behaviors that support employment retention as soon as individuals touch the criminal justice system. This should begin pre-release, or possibly even earlier such as at charge time, but the strategies may need to be different at different points in the criminal justice process. One of the challenges in introducing an employment and retention focus early, particularly at pretrial, is in training officers to be job developers. For example, during the pretrial stage, employment is a focus, but not the major focus. A challenge for pretrial officers is getting individuals employed at that stage, and then having them leave a job to serve a jail/prison sentence. This is not only challenging for the officers, but also aggravates employers and they no longer want to work with the probation/parole officers (POs) because they keep taking away employees. One way to deal with this may be through transitional and temporary employment strategies. Also, getting jobs for people presentence allows individuals to structure their day more productively and develop community resources that they can return to when they come home.

- Another factor that may facilitate retention is becoming more creative in allowing individuals to keep connections with their jobs while incarcerated or helping employers retain employees. For example, maybe consider putting offenders out on furlough for enough time each month that employers can retain them on the payroll.

- Service providers and officers should mirror the workplace. When meeting with a client, they should treat it like it's a business meeting and mirror the workplace in attire, respect, and expectations that everyone will appear on time. Providers should receive training such as business basics and business etiquette, because there really is a culture difference between business and public or non-profit agencies, and this needs to be reflected in the message and marketing used with clients and employers.

- Other critical considerations are the individual's skills and the way people are matched to jobs. Everyone wants to do work they enjoy, but this population has limited options and they won't stay in a job they don't enjoy. So it's important to talk to them about how the job is a good match for them (the quality of the match is important for both the employee and the employer). In addition, these clients need to restructure their lives and they need to know what they have to do to deal with the world of work. This includes helping them to intentionally design a new structure for their lives so that they address personal issues and still manage to get to work on time. They also need to know how to talk about their past, about their criminal record–this is important when getting the job; but it's also

important while on the job. If the job is not working out, they need to know how to quit responsibly, and this includes understanding that steady employment is important and, therefore, they should have another job lined up before quitting. There are techniques to teach these things to staff, and ways to minimize the amount of curriculum for people who have lesser roles.

- Relationship building between staff and clients is important: staff needs to develop skills for being supportive, while holding clients accountable; they need to know when to be supportive and when to get tough.

- Specialists should be knowledgeable about employers needs. Do not send someone who is not ready to an employer with whom you want a long-term relationship.

- Offenders' beliefs and attitudes are critical to employment retention; so a cognitive behavioral approach (such as the relapse prevention model) is appropriate. It has the added advantage that POs and treatment/service providers are already familiar with the general approach.

Several participants suggested it is important to begin with the end (the objective) in mind and to get both organizational and individual staff buy-in; for example, if an intervention is going to include courts, judges will have to be on board. That means identifying strategies to increase the likelihood of buy-in, such as using research findings to identify benefits to the organization.

The Relapse Prevention Model

Shelli Rossman presented a brief overview of the Relapse Prevention Model since NIC's vision for the Retention Specialist curriculum is that job retention interventions will be built on the platform of relapse prevention.

Essentially, relapse prevention might be viewed as the other side of the behavioral change coin. It represents a pretty optimistic world view in that 1) mistakes people have made in the past need not define their future; and 2) behavior—even behavior that's fairly well entrenched—can be changed under the right circumstances. Change might be difficult, but it's not impossible.

For people to change a behavior that they or others see as undesirable or counterproductive, they need to:

- Be motivated to change their behavior.

- Understand the external situations and interactions that are associated with, or trigger the behavior they want to change.

- Learn to identify and recognize their internal thoughts, feelings, impulses, and behaviors that undermine their ability to successfully alter the "way their doing business; their old routines."

- Understand and develop new coping skills.

- Develop confidence in their ability to respond differently and in a way that is consistent with their goals and intentions.

The Relapse Prevention model (proposed by Marlatt and Gordon) suggests that both **immediate determinants**—such as high-risk situations, coping skills, outcome expectancies, and the abstinence violation effect (i.e., feelings of guilt or hopelessness after an error)—and **covert antecedents**—such as lifestyle factors; urges and cravings (e.g., the desire for instant gratification); negative emotional states such as anger, boredom, or frustration; interpersonal conflict; social pressure; and even positive emotional states such as feeling one's "on top of things now" and testing one's personal control–can undermine behavioral change. The model incorporates specific and global intervention strategies that allow practitioners and clients to address each step of the relapse process over time.

Two dimensions of relapse prevention are:

- The internal **self management dimension,** which is a self-control program designed to teach individuals who are trying to change their behavior how to anticipate and cope with the problem of relapse. This involves helping the individual develop a set of skills to lessen the likelihood of returning to unhealthy behaviors: the individual needs to be able to identify high-risk situations, analyze seemingly unimportant decisions that put them into high-risk situations, and develop strategies to avoid, or more effectively cope with, these situations.

- The **external, supervisory dimension** that has three functions: enhancing the efficacy of supervision by monitoring specific precursors to offenses, increasing the efficiency of supervision by creating a network of collateral contacts that assist in monitoring the individual's behavior, and creating collaborative relationships.

The first dimension involves a cognitive, behavioral approach to engage clients in a sequence of learning steps that build the skills needed to extinguish the undesirable behavior and replace it with more positive activities. However, one might also perceive the second dimension as a cognitive behavioral approach, but one that is focused on key people and environments surrounding the client (such as the practitioner, the family, and, in the case of work-related behavioral change, maybe the employer).

The relapse prevention model distinguishes between a **lapse** and a **relapse**: a **lapse** is the failure to adhere to new behaviors, while a **relapse** is defined as returning to a specific behavior after a period of abstinence (stopping) that behavior. Relapse doesn't occur suddenly and without

warning–it's a process over time. One of the purposes of relapse prevention approaches is to recognize that behavioral change may not proceed in a smooth forward course, so that one has to be prepared to prevent the occurrence of initial lapses, and intervene to prevent a lapse that does occur from escalating into a relapse. This involves accepting mistakes and setbacks, recognizing a higher likelihood of failure in the beginning, understanding that conflict and negative emotions are warning signs, factoring in the fluidity of motivation and understanding that both failure and success can undermine an individual's motivation, and helping to promote the client's self-efficacy (not only helping clients to become motivated, but also helping them to stay motivated).

Relapse prevention has been used with substance abusers, sex offenders, and overeaters, but the clinical model also has been adapted for educational purposes such as training managers to modify their attitudes and behavior in line with targeted systems changes. In the 1980s, Robert Marx identified a seven-step relapse prevention model as it applies to the workplace:

- Identify a skill to be transferred.
- Set a retention goal, and define slips and relapses.
- Discuss the pros and cons of new behavior; make a commitment to change.
- Learn the 14 relapse prevention strategies.
- Predict the circumstances of the first lapse.
- Practice coping skills to deal with likely obstacles.
- Monitor target behavior on the job.

The 14 relapse prevention strategies can be grouped into four major categories:

- Anticipate and monitor difficulties.
- Increase rational thinking.
- Diagnose and practice skills.
- Provide appropriate consequences for behavior.

The first category, anticipating and monitoring difficulties, entails understanding the relapse process, recognizing differences between training/preparation and the actual work setting, creating an effective support network on the job, expecting people to be skeptical of the new behaviors, identifying high-risk situations and helping clients to identify their own relapse triggers, avoiding implementing new skills in overwhelming situations, and recognizing the seemingly unimportant behaviors that can lead to errors.

Strategies to increase rational thinking include helping clients to reduce emotional reactions that interfere with behavioral learning/change (especially after a lapse), and helping them retain self confidence after lapses (e.g., errors/slip ups are natural during a learning curve).

Strategies to diagnose and practice skills include identifying specific support skills necessary to retain new behaviors, reviewing lifestyle patterns that might interfere with skill retention, and

helping the client schedule time to mix required and desirable activities (help balance "the should/want ratio" which states that life should have pleasurable activities and not just be all about work).

Strategies to provide appropriate consequences for behavior include both identifying organizational supports for skill retention and creating meaningful rewards/sanctions when they do not exist naturally. The latter will be self-administered (which is an interesting concept, because it moves the approach from external monitoring to internal self-directedness).

Later in the day, one participant returned to this topic and said that when relapse prevention is used in substance abuse, relapse is regarded as part of the recovery. He wondered whether that aspect would be accepted in the application of relapse prevention to employment retention; that is, if somebody commits a crime, what's the process—are they going back to prison and so will lose their job? One possibility is to use graduated sanctions: sanction the unacceptable behavior, but where possible, use a measured response that permits the person to continue making employment progress.

What Are Some of the Barriers to Retention?

One participant saw the issue of taking the training to scale as one of the key challenges to retention Almost every PO should have this information (about employment retention) because there's so much demand and need for it. On the one hand, you want to professionalize and credential retention specialists; but on the other hand, there's a real need to reach a wider audience. NIC responded to this point by acknowledging there is a great demand, and that is one of the reasons they want to develop this as a train-the-trainer curricula.

The facilitator indicated that some of the barriers to retention have little to do with the individual offender, but are a reflection of the low-wage labor market. An NIC participant suggested that other barriers may result from practitioners' attitudes and behaviors in relation to offenders as clients.

One participant noted that relapse prevention is not something that clients learn quickly; they'll likely need constant mentoring or a support network that represents a long-term relationship. Another participant added that this may be a problem for corrections since once an individual has been released, it's against ethical rules and standards to interact with the individual. That is, how do we change the thought process and culture of the criminal justice system to say it's okay to continue to help people once they've left; that they can call or come back for help.

Several participants suggested that there are not only individual barriers, but also organizational barriers that may need to be addressed. It may be necessary for some correctional systems to re-visit internal policies to bring in "bridge practitioners" or take other steps to ensure continuity of support for offenders from prison to the community.

One participant raised the issue of consistency and timing of the intervention, noting that they are still struggling to determine when to introduce cognitive behavioral training. Another barrier to long-term success is the lack of a consistent and holistic approach linking interventions inside facilities, post-release, and post-placement. Such inconsistencies can be overwhelming to clients.

That comment led to a discussion of when professional mental and physical health providers need to be involved. A Veterans Administration (VA) participant was asked to discuss the way they have integrated vocational rehabilitation into clinical care for their clientele who have some form of emotional or mental disability. He noted that VA rehabilitation is really centered around the most severe levels of disability (e.g., schizophrenia, paralysis, etc.), but 80% of the people who are disabled want to work. When the VA added vocational rehabilitation employment specialists to the clinical model, they found they were able to do a much better job of arranging for people to work successfully (e.g., the employment specialist might see a problem in the workplace and report it back to the clinical team, who recognize that the problem may be due, at least in part, to the client's medication, which they can adjust). This participant noted, however, that their approach is to "place and train"–that is, they put clients into transitional worksites owned by the organization or evidence-based supported work. The VA established a train-the-trainer model at 23 medical centers and trained a core group to provide services for individuals with mental health disorders. The training is not just for the employment specialists; it's for everyone who works with the client so that everyone on the team understands the same goals and objectives. The VA also implemented a fidelity process– they measure/rate how close the implementations come to the practices on which staff are trained; the research shows that the higher ratings are associated with better employment outcomes. However, this is a resource-intensive model: in supportive employment, their caseload is 25 for employment specialists, primarily for individuals with psychosis, dramatic brain injury, and spinal cord injuries (and they intend to expand to use this model with PTSD individuals in spring 2010). There has to be a policy and political posture to implement such an intensive approach; and the demand far exceeds supply. They had to decide which group of veterans would be served under this model. There were thousands of veterans under 50, none of whom were receiving any vocational services. So they had to make deliberate decisions about who to serve under this expensive intense intervention. In other parts of the system, they have caseloads of up to 400.

After that discussion, another participant said regardless of the caseload size, practitioners have to have tools for changing clients' value systems because that is what clients use in making everyday decisions that ultimately affect their long-term outcomes. Her organization tried Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT) as an approach, but chose to stop using it due to staff resistance although they are now trying to do some staff training. Nonetheless, she thinks an approach like MRT is important to include in training for employment retention. She later added that it's important to be working with people as they make early decisions and to challenge their illegal or counterproductive decisions. Offenders need to be challenged to address whether their values and behavior are helping or hurting them; they need to look at the pleasure versus the pain associated with their choices, and instant gratification versus making progress towards what is really important.

Building on that, another participant said that the client's family is a major barrier when talking about retention. If family doesn't value the job that has a major impact. The family may have unrealistic expectations about wages and career opportunities. They sometimes come up with excuses for why the client cannot to go work. Families can be a huge asset, if they can be engaged, but very few programs use a family-focused case management approach. Someone else added that they have been using MRT with offenders and getting good results, now they are considering adding for the family to help with retention factors.

Another participant indicated that it's just not possible to do everything needed with everyone who has some need, therefore, it's necessary to triage. A barrier is the lack of an assessment tool for who needs intensive retention services and how to identify triggers. Someone else added that having assessment tools is necessary, but not sufficient. She noted that often assessments do not capture what we want or need to know because the tools (particularly if they involve interviewing or other subjective determinations) are not used properly. Staff need training on how to conduct assessments; hopefully the NIC curriculum will help staff improve the selection and use of diagnostic tools.

Someone noted that collaboration across agencies can be a barrier. When collaborating with other agencies, we have to be cognizant that each may have a different goal in serving the same person. If the collaborators are not speaking the same language, it can make it very difficult. For in his agency, public safety is a major consideration that takes priority over the employment of offenders; but the importance of employment is different in you're running a DOL or VA program where public safety is not a goal.

In a similar vein, a CBO participant pointed out that halfway house goals are different from those of her agency. The halfway house expects individuals to get a job in two weeks, but that's not possible. Clients often don't have identification, they don't have transportation, and they may still be dealing with other issues that would adversely affect their ability to do an acceptable job—all of which her agency addresses in developing a sound foundation to enable clients to work and retain jobs, but this frequently takes considerably longer than two weeks.

One of the participants noted that the George Washington Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) recently issued a monograph—*Vocational Rehabilitation and Corrections*—that addresses many of the barriers the group has been discussing.

What Kind of Skills/Tools Do Employment Retention Specialists Need?

One participant indicated that having a universal skill-set is very important; it's very important to have common terminology and similar services so that geographic locations and other changes don't impede access to resources or knowledge. We should develop common classifications so that tasks are consistently referred to despite state and local boundaries.

CEO has been doing retention as a separate function from job development since 2005; the first few people that were hired were the trailblazers and set the mold for who would later be hired.

The people hired had experience in the business field; they were interested in working with the clients, but had not necessarily worked with them in the past; they understand the importance of data and tracking client outcomes; and were comfortable leaving their desks and meeting clients in the community. As the CEO participant noted: we also hired people with military and social service backgrounds and don't have just one mold, but these factors are important because you won't know what clients' issues are when they come in the door. Contact is very important on several levels: 1) staff members with different roles have to communicate with one another and do so at least in weekly staff meetings; 2) job developers need to maintain contact with employers; and 3) retention specialists need to stay in very close contact with clients. Contact is important in detecting issues and being able to step in when a problem emerges. At CEO, the rule is that job developers maintain the contact with the employers, and retention specialists maintain the contact with the clients. If over time, the client or employer opens the door for this and the job developer is okay with it, the retention specialist can connect with the employer as an intermediary to mediate between employers and clients. Employers tend to like intermediary relationships; some employers specifically request that a retention specialist be assigned, and some ask for the specialists' phone numbers so they can call for assistance.

Another participant indicated that a really basic skill that's important is to be able to speak the language of the employers, and understand how their businesses operate. She also felt that retention specialists need to learn how to triage; that often specialists spend too much time with harder-to-serve groups in crisis management, and not enough time with the middle group who could thrive with some additional support.

The Goodwill participant shared that one strategy they have used to optimize what their small staff can handle is peer support groups; they have found this really helps with client engagement. They create opportunities to bring the participants together more often without having to do individual case management; clients serve as resources for one another and often they have the answers. Staff need to understand that engagement is important and that they can be innovative in creating opportunities for engagement that exceed their own capacity/time. Another participant mentioned they have graduates of their job development programs coming back to do their own job development with current clients; they didn't plan this, it just developed on its own.

According to another participant, his state has partnerships with chambers of commerce and small businesses that brings these individuals together with OWDS trainees and offenders so they can learn to communicate with employers and clients. They also bring clients and employers together all the time and use role reversals (where the offenders act as business people, and vice versa), which helps to get everybody talking the same language. In addition, they developed a menu plan for the 17 OWDS modules, which they give to state agencies and let them pick the trainings they want.

The individual who represented the business sector noted that it's difficult for public and nonprofit sectors to know how to engage employers; they need to shift their focus and be able to identify and predict the demand of employers, rather than push the supply. So, specialists need to know what the economic entities in their communities are trying to do. The specialists have to be

prepared to deliver to the need by serving businesses, not asking something of them. This requires a shift in perspective. Specialists should be looking at companies and identifying whether they have certain corporate values or principles or whether they want a particular community footprint that the job developer or retention specialist can help them achieve. Also, the employment retention skills list should include specific training on business skills.

Other participants expanded the discussion by adding that job retention specialists need to know:

- What trade organizations and unions are in their local area.

- How to approach employers, and that they might acquire entrée to businesses by forming partnerships with community colleges and vocational trade schools that are already connected to employers. [M. McGuire-Kuletz noted that she authored a brief on the employer as the customer–how to work with them and how to partner with them–that can be downloaded from the George Washington University IRI site.]

One participant recommended that specialists should meet with the employer upfront to explain the depth and breadth of services that can be supplied, then should go through an employer's hiring process and their employee orientation to find out what the business needs, and finally should follow up at the back end to see how satisfied they were with the services provided.

Another suggestion was that employment and job retention should have a broader focus that addresses individuals returning from jails, as well as from prisons.

Someone made the comment that the group had discussed virtually everyone's needs, except the needs of the organizations in which the retention specialists are or will be located. Later in the discussion, another participant suggested that looking at the DACUM matrix of duties and tasks, one way to link organizational goals with the roles and responsibilities of the retention specialists is to have staff evaluated on these items. However, he noted that we keep asking staff to do more and more, but they have to have clarity about the priorities and that can be communicated by how their job performance is evaluated.

The CEO participant noted that job placement goals are clear, and retention goals also should be clear. It's also important to incentivize people to do their work. Retention specialists at CEO get bonuses so CEO can manage to those expectations. Job developers also get bonuses, but it was not until they put bonuses in place for job developers with respect to retention that developers began to pay attention to the quality and sustainability of job slots.

There also was a brief discussion about whether it's important to incentivize the clients, as well as the staff. Correctional participants pointed out that there are ways to incentivize offenders such as granting early discharge, travel permits, and a variety of other rewards (e.g., giving permission to reinstate their drivers license). CEO also provides client incentives; for example, when an individual gets a job, they try to work with the client's PO to grant more freedom (e.g., reducing the frequency of reporting or removing curfew restrictions). They also give monetary incentives ($500 over the course of a year) for staying in contact and showing paystubs. They did

a study looking at people who participated in the incentive program on a voluntary basis, and found higher retention for that group; and they are now participating in a random assignment retention incentives study. The facilitator noted that results from other studies involving employment bonuses are mixed; namely, that there is some evidence that retention drops off after the bonus is paid.

Re-Visiting the DACUM: Are There Gaps?

Several participants noted that it seems like there are so many different skills employment retention specialists need and so much they'll be expected to do. They felt that the challenge is beyond just building the skills—it's also making sure individuals have the time and organizational support to do all these functions. It just may be too much to expect from one person.

NIC responded by reminding the group that the DACUM was started by a panel of experts who identified the duty bands and teased out specific tasks as related to each duty band; because they realized it was a tall order, they went back to identify the top two priorities with respect to the duty bands and tasks. NIC realizes that it's likely impossible to achieve every task in the DACUM (see Appendix E)–not to mention the ideas that surfaced from this Forum, the literature review, and the white paper. All of this information will be passed on to experts for curriculum development who will then do additional research and identify the most critical duties and tasks that can be reasonably accomplished during the timeframe.

The goal is to develop a national model, and be effective and efficient in providing a training curriculum. NIC wants to develop a basic training curriculum that is appropriate and that will help the retention specialist or person providing those services to be efficient and effective (know what to do and when to do it) as an offender workforce person. The retention specialist may not be social work support person, but will still need to assess clients in order to refer them to relevant services.

Several participants agreed with this position. One noted that although there are a host of different skills that employment retention specialists need, it should be possible to identify a set of core fundamental skills. Individuals could then pick up other skills depending on their needs.

There also was a discussion about other concerns with the DACUM, including: 1) that it doesn't adequately reflect cognitive behavioral intervention for relapse prevention, how to pick up on the triggers, and what to do with that information (e.g., how to rehearse with the client to modify their behavior); 2) that the ranking of the top two tasks in the top three bands do not necessarily include clear activities for working with the individual participant, with the exception of working with employability, and 3) that it needs an evaluation or outcomes component to demonstrate effectiveness and also support position sustainability. One participant suggested the ultimate goal in job placement should be to have a satisfied employer, so measurement might include employer feedback.

Another topic that was addressed is whether the Employment Retention Specialist Curriculum is intended to be used in training offenders so they can achieve better outcomes. NIC indicated that this is not the intention of the curriculum but that it can be used that way, just as participants have used OWDS training at three levels: to train staff, to train partners, and to train offenders and strengthen their interaction with offenders.

How Can the Retention Needs of Special Populations Be Met?

The group was told that special populations intentionally were not defined because NIC was interested in hearing what issues they had to deal with regarding special populations and whether there any implications as far as staff training in serving these special groups?

One of the participants reported that participation in the OWDS training led to a focus on developing a program for sex offenders. He noted that sex offenders are harder to place because they can't violate parole and other legislative requirements (e.g., can't be close to schools, so can't take a job in a business near a school). But many are already employed, and often are able to keep their jobs; the employment rate tends to be higher for this group. Another participant reported that in talking to employers about their biases, some employers say they'd rather hire sex offenders than people with chemical dependency, theft, burglary, etc., because they perceive sex offenders as more stable. And another person agreed that in his state, sex offenders and offenders with other person crimes get hired at a higher rate than offenders with property crimes. However, in DC, sex offenders reportedly have more difficulty finding employment because there are so many parks and they can't work close to a park; the city has lots of security position openings, but they're ineligible; and delivery jobs might bring them into government buildings, which are also off limits.

Another participant indicated that she deals with individuals with disabilities (mental health issues, traumatic brain injuries, personality disorders, etc.) who are also currently or formerly involved in the criminal justice system. She suggested it's important for staff to become familiar with state and local vocational services, and the availability of services from the VA.

Several participants suggested that women involved in the criminal justice system constitute special population. An NIC participant agreed that gender does matter (Covington's research was mentioned) and indicated that these differences need to be acknowledged and addressed, just the same as cultural differences. The support and services women require are different. For example, staff should be sensitive to the fact the majority of women offenders have been abused; so if a woman announces she's quitting her job, they should be looking at whether the employer or others in the workplace behaved appropriately. The Goodwill participant noted that when they place women with employers, they first talk to women employees and really try to scrutinize the employer because they recognize the potential for exploitation.

The Goodwill participant noted that he regards young males of color born after 1980 as a special population. They have poor school attendance, if they attended at all; low academic achievement; little consistency in their lives; and a distorted view of money (i.e., the only job

they may have had is selling drugs which put lots of cash in their pockets); the latter becomes a retention factor because they're disinclined to work a legitimate job for less money. Another participant noted that parents with child support orders also have disincentive to labor market attachment, particularly when they see arrearages pulled from their paychecks. He indicated this mostly affects men, but increasingly women are dealing with this as well.

Gang members also merit special consideration. Several individuals indicated that it's hard to get people to separate from the gang, and gang members are often disinterested in working. Safer Foundation indicated they work with a lot of gang members, and a big issue is finding neutral territory; when they are considering employment for gang members, they have to think about the job's location and often have to choreograph a path of travel so the client can avoid crossing into another gang's territory. STRIVE also indicated the need to avoid bringing gang factions together. They noted their old location was in pretty neutral area, but they are now located closer to Bloods territory and experienced some friction between gang members coming to the facility. Their response was to close the facility down and hold a gang summit. It's been quiet since then, but they know they have to play it by ear. The Goodwill participant agreed that there's no fire proof way to deal with this, you just have to feel your way through the gang system. They have found older men who have gotten out of a gang are one of the best ways to navigate the gang system and bring summits together. Goodwill tries to keep gangs intact and change their focus to a legitimate enterprise, rather than split them up, because they have found entrepreneurship to be successful. However, the police force doesn't agree with this approach.

Other special populations that were mentioned included offenders returning to rural communities or Native American communities, where jobs are scarce and unemployment is often very high. Individuals who are homeless or have unstable housing also may have special needs with respect to employment. Substance abusers who are on methadone may be unable to work due to the effects of that treatment; similarly, individuals who have post-incarceration syndrome and return home with mental illness they did not have when they entered the system may be unable to work.

Concluding Statements

The facilitator summed up the proceedings by noting that:

- We clarified the functional model of the tasks, and the fluid and flexible arrangements of the tasks. It should be clear that the role of employment retention specialist will vary with the organization.

- Our conversations reinforced the importance of training and the three levels (staff, partners, offenders) where NIC curricula are useful, and how the training can be adapted and adopted.

- We discussed the therapeutic and theoretical underpinnings of the DACUM and the relapse prevention model

- We talked about cross-program interactions, and the importance of making sure that collaborative activities occur at different points.

- We also examined the potential of the DACUM model and discussed how this is just one layer of many that will lead to the ultimate outcome of professionalizing the position of retention specialist—both at the individual and macro level.

- And, we've ended by identifying special populations that might be specifically addressed in the training.

Appendix A: NIC Retention Forum Attendee List

NIC & UI Offender Employment Retention National Forum February 3-4, 2010		
Number	**Name**	**Affiliation**
	Participants	
1	Shelli B. Rossman	Urban Institute
2	Nancy La Vigne	Urban Institute
3	S. Rebecca Neusteter	Urban Institute
4	Amy L. Solomon	Urban Institute
5	John Moore	NIC
6	Patricia Taylor	NIC
7	Chris Innes	NIC
8	Felix Mata	U.S. Courts
9	Mark Pisano	President of the NYS Probation Officer's Association
10	Gwynne Cunningham	VA Department of Correctional Education
11	Jim Chastain	Hutchinson Parole Office
12	Angela Talley	Montgomery County DOC
13	Moses Hammett	STRIVE
14	Christine Hartwright	STRIVE
15	Mindy Tarlow	Center for Employment Opportunities
16	Keith Bennett	Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit
17	Carol Clymer	P/PV
18	Janet Ludden	Employer Solutions, Inc.
19	Dr. Pat Schwallie-Giddis	NCDA President/George Washington University
20	Denis Porter	NM DOC
21	Jack Hazan	Safer Foundation
22	Marta Nelson	Center for Employment Opportunities
23	Maureen McGuire-Kuletz	George Washington University IRI
24	Demetra Nightingale	Johns Hopkins University-Facilitator
	Observers	
1	Tom Beauclair	NIC
2	Bernie Iszler	NIC
3	Francina Carter	NIC
4	Gary Dennis	BJA
5	John Linton	DoE
6	DonaLee Breazzano	Fed Bureau of Prisons
7	Gina Honeycutt	Nat'l Correctional Industries Association (NCIA)
8	Michael Palumbo	USDOL/VETS
9	James (Jim) McGuire	VA- Healthcare for Vet Reentry
10	Anthony Campinell	VA- Healthcare for Vet Reentry
11	Vaune Shelbourn	National Veterans Training Institute
12	Bonita Cosgrove	MD Dept of Pub Safety
13	John E. Padilla	The Annie E. Casey Foundation
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Appendix B: Employment Retention Forum Agenda

Offender Employment Retention National Forum
February 3-4, 2010

National Institute of Corrections and The Urban Institute

The Katherine Graham Center at The Urban Institute
5th Floor, 2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

AGENDA

Wednesday, February 3

1:00 – 1:30

- Welcome — Shelli Rossman (UI)
- Greeting — NIC
- "Taking Care of Business" — Demetra Nightengale (JHU)

1:30 – 2:30

- Introductions — Participants and Observers

2:30 – 2:45 — BREAK

2:45 – 3:45 — Patricia Taylor (NIC)

- Overview of the Employment Retention Initiative
- Building on Existing NIC Training
- Description/Review of DACUM Process
- Review of DACUM Charts

3:45 – 5:00 — Participant Discussion

- Discussion of Key Terminology: 1
  - Employment/Unemployment
  - Retention
  - Other key terms?

Thursday, February 4

8:30 – 9:30 Continental Breakfast

9:30 – 10:30 Participant Discussion

- Factors Affecting Job Tenure: Retention Dynamics
  - What do we know about circumstances favoring retention
  - What do we know about retention barriers

10:30 – 10:45 BREAK

10:45 – 12:00 Shelli Rossman;
Group Discussion

- Dimensions of The Relapse Prevention Model
- Cognitive Behavioral Approaches to Replicate in Employment Retention

12:00 – 12:30 LUNCH SERVICE

12:30 – 3:00 Working Lunch
Group Discussion

- Staging Success for Retention Specialists
  - What do clients need to achieve high rates of retention, and what is the Retention Specialists' role in addressing such needs?
  - What tools and skills do Retention Specialists need for high-quality performance (assessments, MI, marketing)? What resources are recommended?
  - What has been used successfully; what should be avoided?
  - Who else can support or undermine Retention Specialists' achievement of successful retention for clients? (CM, employers)

3:00 – 3:15 BREAK

3:15 – 4:15 Group Discussion

- Meeting the Retention Needs of Special Populations
  - Which populations might require different strategies?
  - What strategies should be considered?

4:15 – 5:00 Participant Discussion

- Re-Visiting the DACUM Charts
  - What should be added or re-prioritized?
  - What job description of Retention Specialist would have broad usefulness?

Appendix C: New Approaches to Using Relapse Prevention Therapy in the Criminal Justice System White Paper

New Approaches to Using Relapse Prevention Therapy in the Criminal Justice System

By George A. Parks

Origins and Current Status of Relapse Prevention Therapy

G. Alan Marlatt's cognitive-behavioral model of relapse prevention (RP), as described in his 1985 book co-edited with Judith R. Gordon, was originally developed as a theory of alcohol relapse and a related set of intervention strategies designed to help clients who had completed treatment maintain abstinence by anticipating and coping with the problem of relapse. Soon after, the principles and practices of relapse prevention therapy (RPT) were applied to tobacco use, illicit drugs and addictive behaviors not related to substance abuse such as problem gambling, overeating and compulsive sexual behavior. A narrative review by Kathleen Carroll and a meta-analysis by Jennifer E. Irvin and her colleagues concluded that RPT is an empirically supported treatment that is effective in the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders. The National Institute of Drug Abuse also classifies RPT as an evidence-based practice.

The increasing implementation of correctional programs based on RPT suggests that corrections professionals would benefit from a greater understanding of relapse and how relapse and criminal recidivism are related. While it was Marlatt and Gordon's 1985 book that stimulated correctional program development in the past 20 years, a 2005 revision and update of RPT by Marlatt and Donovan provides a contemporary review.

RPT in Corrections

RPT for substance-abusing offenders. Most corrections professionals are aware of the growing research evidence that rehabilitation programs based on cognitive-behavior therapy (CBT) are among the most effective treatments to reduce recidivism. So, it is not surprising that the flood of drug-involved offenders into correctional systems in the 1980s and the influence of the "what works" movement emphasizing evidence-based correctional practice led to the implementation of correctional programs based on RPT.

During the 1990s, both the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) and the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) developed, implemented and tested prison-based programs based on the RP model — the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program in the U.S. and the Offender Substance Abuse Pre-Release Program in Canada. These programs utilized RPT as their treatment platform and as their source for specific cognitive-behavioral relapse prevention interventions. Evaluation research on the effectiveness of these offender substance abuse programs reviewed by Parks and Marlatt has demonstrated decreases in substance abuse relapse and criminal recidivism. The strongest treatment effects for RPT with substance abusing offenders occur when the in-prison substance abuse program is followed by continuing care in the community.

RPT with sex offenders. In the past 30 years, RPT has also become the dominant psychosocial treatment modality used in sex offender treatment programs, providing both the theoretical framework and specific strategies to reduce sex offense. In 1989, D. Richard Laws helped to launch the field of modern sex offender treatment with the publication of his book *Relapse Prevention with Sex Offenders*. In 2000, Laws and his colleagues provided a review of the applications of RPT to sex offenders and offered suggestions for remaking RPT to be more effective with this population. A recent review by Steve Aos and colleagues from the Washington State Institute for Public Policy concluded that sex offender treatment based on RPT has a moderate, but reliable, impact in reducing sex offender recidivism.

Meta-analysis of RPT in correctional programming. In 2003, Craig Dowden and his colleagues conducted a meta-analysis that provided an estimate of the overall impact of correctional programming based on RPT in reducing recidivism. They concluded that rehabilitation programs incorporating RPT consistently showed a moderate reduction in recidivism with larger recidivism reductions occurring when: there was a greater number of RPT core components; there was a more detailed description of the program; and the program targeted criminogenic needs. These three mediators of RPT program effectiveness demonstrate the importance of a cognitive-behavioral approach, focusing on program targets related to recidivism and a multimodal strategy using RPT core components in sufficient number and dosage to effect behavior change.

Dowden and his colleagues also identified several core components of RPT that reduced recidivism. The three most potent ingredients of RPT in offender programming are: 1) training significant others, including family and friends as well as spouses or girlfriends/boyfriends, in RP; 2) relapse rehearsal; and 3) conducting an offense chain analysis. Additional research is needed to identify more of RPT's significant components and the best way to combine these elements for greater impact in correctional programming.

Preventing Criminal Conduct

Traditional applications of RPT have been limited to rehabilitation programming for offenders who are already incarcerated or on probation and is primarily focused either on substance abuse or sex offending. In this section of the article, our attention will turn to contemporary approaches using RPT in corrections that apply the RP model in new and creative ways.

Table 1. RPT Core Components Used In Correctional Programs

♦ Train significant others in relapse prevention*
♦ Relapse rehearsal*
♦ Offense chain analysis*
♦ Identifying high-risk situations
♦ Coping skills training
♦ Booster sessions/aftercare
♦ Dealing with failure situations

***Designates strongest effect on criminal recidivism**

Relapse prevention planning for criminal law practice. Recently, David Wexler has suggested that RPT could provide a model to promote crime reduction within the therapeutic jurisprudence framework by familiarizing criminal defense lawyers, prosecutors and judges with the RP model for their use during the adjudication process. Wexler argues that RPT can assist these officers of the court to collaboratively create recidivism prevention plans designed to help a defendant avoid, or cope with, high-risk scenarios for crime when living in the community on probation or after a period of incarceration. Wexler recommends that recidivism prevention plans developed within the RP model include victim input as well as the input and cooperation of the defendant and his or her family, friends, neighbors and other community members to create conditions to prevent recidivism that would then be ordered by the court and supervised by probation officers. Finally, Wexler observes that by engaging the offender and others in a thorough process of examining both the distal and proximal precursors of criminal conduct, both self-change and effective monitoring by others can be accomplished under the supervision of and with the support of the court.

Relapse prevention in offender reentry. In his recent paper on offender reentry, Jeremy Travis observes that the criminal justice system currently lacks an effective means to manage the reintegration of released offenders into the community and that traditional approaches to parole based solely on surveillance and sanctions have not reduced recidivism. Travis suggests that an innovative solution to this dilemma can be found in the RP model because a greater understanding of alcohol and drug relapse has the potential to stimulate the development of new strategies for offender risk management similar to the use of RPT for addictive behavior problems.

Travis suggests that reentry planning based on the RP model provides an alternative to the typical emphasis on "zero tolerance" in the criminal justice system by recognizing re-offense as an ongoing threat that requires proactive management by the offender, the community and the criminal justice system. Rather than automatically punishing an offender for re-offense or remanding him or her to custody, the RP model suggests that the occasion of criminal recidivism is an opportunity to debrief the incident, understand its predictable and controllable causes, and help the offender work harder and smarter at re-offense prevention with the support of the community and the court.

James McGuire echoes the sentiments expressed previously by Wexler and goes on to say "that the process of learning to avoid relapse ... becomes a priority at the point of transition from institutions to the community ..." At this point, there is a focus on parole decisions and formulating a release plan. He argues that offenders reentering the community must "acknowledge the existence of various problems, develop some understanding of how these are inter-connected with each other and … acquire new coping skills that will enable them to avoid re-offense."

McGuire further emphasizes that offender motivation to be aware of and prepare to cope with recidivism risk factors will be enhanced if the court and correctional officers use positive reinforcement to reward successful offender self-management. McGuire states that one implication of therapeutic jurisprudence is that research on offender rehabilitation, the therapeutic alliance, motivational enhancement and relapse prevention should not "remain confined to the domain of social science when they have the capacity to illuminate offending behavior and inform legal responses to it." He states further, "By capitalizing on what we now know about offender treatment and personal change, such a development could maximize the therapeutic benefit of legal decisions."

RPT delivered by probation and parole officers. John A. Cunningham and his colleagues describe another innovative application of RPT based on a related cognitive-behavioral model of relapse called structured relapse prevention (SRP), developed by Helen Annis in her seminal studies of relapse conducted at the Addiction Research Foundation in Toronto. SRP is an outpatient program that combines motivational enhancement strategies and cognitive-behavioral interventions. A field test of SRP delivered by probation and parole officers was conducted in Ontario, Canada to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of this approach. Ten probation and parole officers were trained to deliver SRP and provided the SRP program to 55 offenders during a one-year period. The SRP protocol was modified for use in probation, and correctional officers were readily able to learn and apply the model in the supervision of their offenders.

Probation officers delivering the program commented on the common-sense appeal of the SRP model and found it easy to use. They also said it was sometimes a welcome alternative for offenders who were resistant to attending substance abuse treatment. While it was difficult for the probation officers to integrate delivering SRP into their other duties, overall they reported they would recommend the implementation of SRP. The authors note, "On the basis of the field test results, the Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services recommended dissemination of SRP to Probation and Parole Officers throughout the province."

An RP model for community supervision. For many years Canadian criminologist Edward Zamble has been asking, "How do we make community supervision more effective?" As a result of his research on the coping deficiencies of offenders and the recidivism process, Zamble came to the conclusion that the greatest limitation in current supervision practices is that "they lack a coherent theoretical justification or rationale." He also speculated that a theoretical account of the recidivism process based on the RP model could provide corrections professionals with guidelines for offender monitoring and more effective supervision strategies in order to "identify the proximal antecedents to criminal recidivism generally … [and to] tell a supervising officer what the signs are that a given offender is about to commit a new offense."

Zamble discovered the major difference between recidivists and nonrecidivists was not the amount of stress or problems they were exposed to or the severity of their past crimes but rather the way they interpreted and responded to external events and their internal states. He further suggested that recidivism was typically preceded by an observable pattern of precursors and seemed to vary predictably depending on offender characteristics and the type of crime committed. Zamble observed that much like alcohol and drug relapse, criminal recidivism is the result of a breakdown process, and the causes of recidivism are distinct from those that may have caused the original crimes to occur. Labeling this theory the coping-relapse model of criminal recidivism, Zamble and his colleagues describe recidivism as beginning with a learned propensity to commit crimes evoked by stressful life events whose impact is worsened by inadequate coping skills. This leads to compensatory responses such as substance abuse, anti-social thinking, seeking anti-social associates and, finally, committing crimes consistent with the person's past repertoire of criminal behaviors.

Noting the critical point for effective supervision, Zamble says, "These emotions and thoughts are identifiable, distinctive, and characteristic of offenders in similar circumstances. [Further that] the model hypothesizes that the psychological precursors of recidivism would be visible to an objective observer ... That outside observer could be the parole officer, acting in a redefined role … [to] monitor the verified antecedents of recidivism." Finally, Zamble says that if the antecedents or precursors of recidivism could be identified in a given case then perhaps the offender, the parole officer and the offender's significant others could create a checklist of warning signs leading to recidivism and intervene in appropriate ways to prevent the occurrence of a new offense when any of the warning signs begin to appear.

RPT as a case management tool. The author and his colleagues have been attempting to create an RPT case management tool to move from the more general statement of the coping-relapse model of recidivism proposed by Zamble to the specific application of RPT in community supervision. In order to use RPT as a case management tool for a given offender, the corrections professional must first complete a detailed assessment used to create a criminal behavior profile that contains three elements: crime cycles consisting of all known offense scenarios; offense scenarios describing all crimes or crime types committed in the past; and offense chain pathways that lead step-by-step to the offense scenarios. The criminal behavior profile forms the basis for a recidivism prevention plan created in collaboration with the offender to be used by the offender, his or her significant others, and the correctional officer to monitor recidivism risk and intervene accordingly.

Crime cycles consist of the repertoire of offenses that have occurred repeatedly in an offender's criminal history. Each of these crime cycles occurs under a specific and predictable set of conditions called offense scenarios. Offense scenarios include the "who, what, how, with whom, to whom, when, where and why" of each crime cycle. In order to create offense scenarios, specific information is required for each offense or a sufficient number of similar offenses. This specific information is gathered both through a file review of criminal records and an interview with the offender. Part of the offender interview is also used to identify the last component of the profile, the offense chain pathways that lead the offender step-by-step toward new acts of criminal behavior, which are likely to occur during exposure to an offense scenario where committing a crime is difficult to avoid.

The key to using RPT for recidivism prevention is to know an offender's crime cycles and their associated offense scenarios and offense chain pathways by conducting a thorough functional analysis of the distal and proximal precursors to offense. Intervening early in the process, before exposure to the offense scenario, can prevent a crime from occurring. However, it is not possible for an offender to avoid all offense scenarios, so offenders must also learn how to escape these offense scenarios or cope with them without committing a crime.

In an RPT-driven case management process, corrections professionals, the offender, and his or her significant others will use this functional analysis of criminal conduct consisting of crime cycles, offense scenarios and cognitive-behavioral offense chain pathways to prevent recidivism (i.e., as a checklist of warning signs). As a corrections professional gets a better picture of the circumstances that trigger recidivism by understanding the chain of events leading to offense scenarios, he or she can prevent crimes by using "coaching strategies" that improve an offender's coping skills such as teaching offenders how to better identify high-risk offense scenarios and to develop strategies to avoid them or escape them without committing a crime. A corrections professional can also use "catching strategies" that intervene to prevent crimes through surveillance and incapacitation such as increased monitoring, more frequent office contacts, and field visits at the offender's home or work.

Expanding the Use of RPT

While these new applications of the RP model offer corrections evidence-based interventions designed to reduce recidivism, much work remains to be done in refining and applying RPT beyond its traditional role in offender programming. Hopefully, correctional innovations based on RPT will continue to be developed, disseminated and tested to further the goals of crime reduction and successful integration of offenders into the community. The most important contributions of the RP model to the criminal justice system may be found in its implications for a philosophy of human nature that optimistically states that people can and do change and that crimes may be viewed as behaviors enacted by people, not traits forever defining them.

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George A. Parks, Ph.D., is associate director of the Addictive Behaviors Research Center, Department of Psychology, University of Washington.

Appendix D: Literature Review: Applying a Relapse Prevention Model in Employment Retention Assistance for Formerly Incarcerated Persons

Applying a Relapse Prevention Model in Employment Retention Assistance for Formerly Incarcerated Persons: A Review of the Literature

December 2008

Prepared for the
U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Corrections
Offender Workforce Development Division
Washington, D.C.

Connie Clem

Clem Information Strategies
Longmont, Colorado USA
303.242.6278

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The high rate of offender recidivism has enormous social, public safety and fiscal implications for communities throughout the United States. When released offenders re-offend, their criminal behavior harms not only their victims, but themselves, their families, and the fragile communities in which they reside. Their behavior also places an enormous financial burden upon the criminal justice system which, more often than not, must be shouldered by taxpayers over the course of many years. Given these implications and the fiscal constraints facing most government agencies today, policy makers are actively seeking to identify evidence-based practices that can reduce recidivism rates and promote successful reentry outcomes. Practices and interventions related to employment are of particular interest since virtually all offenders must secure employment if they are to become self-sufficient and cease to be a burden on the taxpayer. Without employment that provides adequate income for themselves and their families, persons with criminal histories are more likely to resort to illegal measures as means of supporting themselves than not. It is no small measure of employment's importance in the reentry process that the Second Chance Act passed by Congress includes increased employment opportunities for this population as a performance measure.

But connecting the formerly incarcerated to sustainable employment and keeping them employed has proven itself to be an enormous challenge to criminal justice professionals and their community partners. Many men and women leave prison lacking the basic reading, writing, mathematics, and communication skills valued by employers. Their prison work experience typically bears little resemblance to employment found in the community where creative thinking, decision-making and problem solving are highly valued. If they have had vocational training in prison, it is likely to have been in areas that are not in high demand. Their cognitive skills - often characterized by a lack of perseverance, self-esteem, sociability, self-management and integrity - act as a further impediment to successful employment. All these factors, combined with the prejudice that many employers have toward this population, cause many offenders to quickly cycle in and out of jobs which offer little opportunity for upward mobility and even less job satisfaction.

The lack of advancement opportunities and job dissatisfaction are not the only factors that affect offender employment. Individuals with criminal histories often lack strong family ties, stable living arrangements and a reliable way to get to work, circumstances that are strongly connected to long-term success on the job. The majority struggle with a history of substance abuse, a factor which, if left unaddressed, invariably leads to the loss of employment. Many have significant health and mental health problems and lack the insurance needed to get adequate care. And many leave prison without the financial resources needed to get a fresh start. If they secure work, they live from paycheck to paycheck, often lacking the financial literacy and daily living skills needed to survive in today's economy. Given all these factors, it is not surprising that most released prisoners do not secure employment that meets their basic personal and financial needs and most will be re-incarcerated.

Although these challenges are undeniably complex and difficult to address, the likelihood of an offender's success on the job can be increased if evidenced-based solutions are applied to each of these problems at the appropriate time and place and within the context of a model that recognizes and anticipates risks that are tied to job loss. This paper will examine the use of the relapse prevention model as the framework for this process. It is a framework that has its roots in the field of substance abuse services where relapse is defined as a return to a dysfunctional lifestyle that involves dependence on drugs. The return to drug dependence is typically preceded by observable warning signs and high risk situations that the relapse prevention model seeks to manage through the development of cognitive and behavioral skills needed for recovery.

The model views relapse as a learning opportunity, not as a sign of personal failure or a lack of will power. It is practical, strength-based, and action oriented strategy whose effectiveness has been supported by research.

To apply this model to the challenges associated with offender employment retention, employment loss would be viewed - much like a return to substance abuse - as an outcome that can be managed and avoided. Employment loss would not be considered to be an isolated event, but as a predictable event related to the challenges of coping with the transition from prison to the community. Behaviors and thinking patterns that are associated with employment would be targeted for change using behavioral and cognitive techniques. Offenders would be taught how to stop self-defeating behavior and irrational thinking. They would be encouraged to establish a social network that promotes positive employment outcomes and learn how to manage feelings and emotions in a responsible manner.

It would be a mistake to believe the post-release application of this model would be a sufficient response to the employment problems facing offenders. To maximize the effectiveness of a post-release relapse prevention program, opportunities for behavioral change must begin prior to release from a correctional facility. Each individual must receive a comprehensive assessment that determines the extent to which he or she possesses the core skills needed for successful reentry. This assessment should be used to design a customized plan that allows the inmate to master those reentry skills that have been identified as deficient. Ideally, the plan should provide for a continuum of services from prison to the community with information related to the inmate's assessment and progress shared between service providers.

In this model, professionals who work with individuals who have a history of criminal convictions would help them achieve the goals specified in the plan, providing support, expert guidance, and connections to necessary resources. They would help the offender learn new skills and establish a daily routine that minimizes the risk of job loss. They would also identify and explore issues related to job loss in the past. This knowledge would be used to teach offenders methods for identifying and addressing the warning signs of impending job loss and increase their ability to stay employed.

Sustained attachment to the workforce requires lifelong learning and an ongoing development of work skills. To achieve that end, it's important for offenders to view their involvement in the workforce in the context of a career that requires planning and management. This perspective will allow the offender to take advantage future of employment opportunities and successfully adapt to the rapidly changing needs of the workplace.

To support sustained employment, criminal justice systems and their community partners must coordinate their efforts and use practices that have demonstrated their effectiveness in improving offender employment outcomes. These practices must be tailored to meet the needs of each offender, applying interventions only where there is a need and doing so only at the appropriate time. This literature review examines a broad range of practices intended to improve offender employment retention outcomes within the context of a relapse prevention framework. It is organized into five sections:

- Section 1 reviews the relationship between employment and recidivism and examines the benefits associated with the application of interventions intended to improve employment outcomes.

- Section 2 reviews the theories and principles of relapse prevention treatment and presents the evidence related to the effectiveness of cognitive/behavioral programs.

- Section 3 provides a comprehensive review of the challenges facing formerly incarcerated persons who are seeking employment.

- Section 4 examines a variety of organization strategies that can be used by agencies to improve offender employment outcomes including collaborations and partnerships and the use of measurable objectives.

- Section 5 applies the relapse prevention model to the problem of offender employment retention, looking at a wide variety of practical techniques, strategies, and interventions that can be used to improve offender employment and retention outcomes.

1

[1] The introduction and conclusions sections of this report were written by John Rakis

SECTION 1. Why Focus on Offender Job Retention? The Relationship Between Employment and Success in the Community

In a 2005 NIC survey, corrections agency administrators said information on effective programming was one of their three most urgent needs (Clem and Eggers, 2005). Today's voices in local, state, and national leadership agree that society must stop the "revolving door" in the criminal justice system by providing better support for persons reentering from correctional facilities into our cities and neighborhoods. An essential key, the research shows, is productive and rewarding employment.

In order for people with employment challenges to obtain and keep jobs, a variety of factors related to skills and background, personality, and the overall community and working environment must come into balance. Successful employment is beneficial for everyone: both the people receiving assistance and the surrounding community. This also holds true for persons with a history of incarceration.

This section addresses:

1.1 The value of work: adjustment and community benefits
1.2 How underemployment is linked with crime
1.3 How employment is linked with rehabilitation

1.1 The value of work: adjustment and community benefits

By promoting employment, governments create tangible and intangible benefits for workers and for the communities in which they live. For employment-challenged individuals, a client's move from welfare dependence into gainful employment allows him or her to reclaim self-esteem and dignity (R. Fletcher, 2007). Work is one of the most important components of successful readjustment from military to civilian life, according to the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (2005).

Society also benefits through taxes paid by workers, goods and services they purchase, and reductions in entitlements and the overall cost of care (Cook and O'Day, 2006).

Work programs, including transitional job programs, turn former "tax users into taxpayers," according to the Joyce Foundation (2005). The authors continue, "You're taking people and teaching them to participate in the system fully so they're earning their own money, spending it, paying taxes, and not taking money from the system."

Advantages accrue when members of any work-challenged group gain independence and income. Among psychiatric populations, "research has shown that workers have significantly higher self-esteem and perceived quality-of-life than non-workers (Van Dongen, 1996). Huff, Rapp and Campbell (2008) cited 1997 findings by Mueser et al., that "employment is associated with better functioning in a range of different non-vocational domains (e.g. lower symptoms, higher self-esteem, and more satisfaction with finances), even after controlling for baseline levels of functioning."

These findings suggest that working at a job, particularly one that is a good match for an individual, can not only remediate the negative effects of mental illness, but can also contribute directly to the broader goals of recovery, that is, "to live, work and love in a community in which one makes a significant contribution" (Deegan, 1988, p. 12, cited by Huff, Rapp, and Campbell, 2008).

Communities benefit directly and indirectly from the successful employment of people who have been in contact with the criminal justice system. U.S. city mayors repeatedly expressed this view at the Mayors Summit on Reentry and Employment, February 28, 2008 (Johnson and Fletcher, 2008).

On the topic of "Why Cities Should Invest in This Issue," New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg commented at the Mayors Summit as follows:

> This is an issue that we all have a stake in. Because if someone leaving our jails and prisons decides that the only way he or she can survive is by breaking the law again, then everyone's safety is at risk.… It's in everybody's interest to make sure we do everything we can to get to these young men and women who go through our criminal justice system, get them the education they need, so that's not the only way that they can feed themselves…. We have to understand that people need our help and that we should do it for compassionate reasons, but there's also a great economic reason. If we want to leave our children a better city, a better country, a better life, we've got to stop this turnstile justice.

Providing support to ex-offender populations brings tangible benefits for the rest of the community. Commissioner Martin Horn of the New York City Department of Corrections stressed that reentry must be "in the context of community building…. Your ability to attract economic development, your ability to attract business, is a function of your ability to deal with crime. And this is part of breaking the cycle of criminality…. You have to find a language to talk about it in that context."

There is strong agreement on the operational level as well. When asked about their targets for intervention services to improve reentry success, the directors of all 89 Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) programs put employment among their top three priorities (Winterfield and Lindquist, 2005).

Visher, Debus, and Yahner (2008) observed, "Employment is an important component of the reentry process. Even more than a steady source of income, jobs can provide a sense of structure and responsibility to former prisoners as they struggle to reintegrate after release. Unfortunately, many will face a difficult path toward finding and keeping employment."

Regarding reentry, "Our assumption is that successful reentry strategies would translate into public safety gains, in the form of reduced recidivism, and the long-term reintegration of the formerly incarcerated individual. Successful reintegration outcomes would include increased participation in social institutions such as the labor force, families, communities, schools, and religious institutions. There are financial and social benefits associated with both public safety and reintegration improvements." (Solomon et al., 2008)

The financial burden of incarceration is significant. Camp and Camp (2000) found that the average daily cost of imprisonment in the United States was $61 per inmate. Travis (2000) found that parole violators were 34 percent of all admissions to state prisons. It is clear that when more former inmates are able to succeed in the community, the costs to society are reduced.

Overall, the U.S. spends more than $60 billion a year on prisons and jails (Public/Private Ventures, 2007). It costs more than $23,000 to incarcerate someone in a Federal Bureau of Prisons facility for one year and approximately $3,500 per year for probation. Incarceration in a state prison can run as high as $45,000 per year or more.

According to one estimate, there are more than 16 million felons and ex-felons in the United States, representing about 7.5 percent of the adult population (Uggen, Manza, and Thompson, 2006). Roman and Chalfin (2006) said that, to be cost-effective, reentry programs need to reduce recidivism by just 2 percent, as compared with the costs of re-processing an offender in the criminal justice system and the cost to the victims.

1.2 How underemployment is linked with crime

It has been established that under- or unemployed people are at a greater risk for justice system involvement. The New York City Bar Association (2008) wrote that "[u]nemployment may in fact be the most serious of all contributors to the high rate of recidivism." The authors urge readers to "[r]eflect on just one statistic: nine out of ten parole violators are unemployed," citing research by Mukamal (2000) and others.

The New York City Bar Association (2008) comments on 1994 U.S. national recidivism statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (2002) as follows:

> According to federally compiled statistics, 30% of all people released from prison are rearrested within the following six months; 44% within the first year; and 67.5% within three years (BJS, 2002). Many of those rearrests are for parole violations, but even with this qualification, the extent of recidivism is striking.
>
> How can this vicious cycle be stopped or at least slowed? Individuals released from prison or jail face a host of problems conducive to a renewal of criminal behavior, not the least of which is the difficulty that they face in securing employment.

Similarly, the New York State Bar Association (2006) states that "[r]esearch from both academics and practitioners suggests that the chief factor which influences the reduction of recidivism is an individual's ability to gain 'quality employment.'"

The Correctional Service Canada found that about 65 percent of men admitted to federal institutions were unemployed at the time of their arrest, and the proportion rose to 77 percent for men who were under age 25 at admission (Boe, 2005). Data from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics show that 29 percent of the 2002 jail population had been unemployed in the month before their arrest. However, among the 71 percent of inmates who were employed, just over half (57 percent) had full-time jobs, 11 percent had part-time jobs, and 18 percent had only occasional employment (James, 2004).

Bushway (2003) also remarks on offenders' low earnings prior to incarceration. Two theories here are that many offenders come from very isolated inner-city communities which are themselves detached from the world of legal work (Wilson, 1997), "or perhaps lack of work is why these individuals are imprisoned in the first place."

Houston (2006) stated, "Research shows that a lack of employment may contribute to an offender's continued criminal activity." Anderson et al. (1991) asserted that ex-offenders who are unemployed or working in temporary or lower-paying jobs are likely to return to crime.

Tarlow and Nelson (2007) refer to several studies that concur in their findings that unemployed people have a greater risk of recidivism than those who are employed (Bernstein and Houston, 2000; Bushway and Reuter, 2001; Dennis et al., 2000). Mukamal (2000) demonstrated that of people on probation and parole who return to prison in New York State, approximately 89 percent are unemployed at the time of their violation.

1.3 How employment is linked with offender rehabilitation

It is clear that moving former offenders into the fabric of the workplace and the local lawful economy, particularly via high quality jobs, helps them to stay out of the justice system. Ryan (2005) states that recidivism costs society through the "personal, social, and economic damages that result from criminal activities of unemployed ex-offenders. The investment made to ensure, or at least contribute to long-term retention of jobs by released offenders can be counted on to reap dividends at a level that more than justifies the cost of the investment" by reducing rearrest, retrial, and reincarceration.

This section addresses:

1.3.1 Employment and reintegration

Getting and keeping a job helps formerly incarcerated persons adjust socially, contribute to stability of their families, participate in the economy, and desist from crime. Each of these factors is mutually supportive of the others.

The Council of State Governments' Reentry Policy Council Report (2004) noted, "Connecting each prisoner to a job in the community in advance of his or her release date is a critical step to facilitating a successful return to the community." Research suggests that the likelihood of recidivism is decreased when legitimate employment is coupled with a livable wage.

Uggen and Wakefield (2008) note, "Beyond income, work connects adolescents to their peers (both delinquent and "straight"), offers informal social networks that may conflict with crime, and provides ex-offenders with pro-social roles."

Similarly, Cullen and Wright (2004) propose that crime-reducing effects of employment are due not simply to social bonds, but also to the establishment of pro-social relations with coworkers that may restructure friendship networks by diminishing contact with delinquent peers. Employment exposes individuals to pro-social peer networks, they state, and this is an important reason why "getting a job" has the potential to reduce offending and contribute to the process of desistance.

Cullen and Wright (2004) cite Sampson and Laub's 1993 work on informal social control, involving a re-analysis of earlier data from Glueck and Glueck. The 1993 analysis linked marital attachment and employment stability to desistance from crime. These factors create a stronger stake in conformity and increase the personal costs that would be associated with misbehavior. Cullen and Wright (2004) also cited Uggen's 2000 analysis of experimental data from the National Support Work Demonstration Project, which found that even marginal employment reduced recidivism for adults aged 26 and older.

Cullen and Wright (2004) also refer to the work of Anderson (1999) and Bennett and Lehman (1999), who posit that as youths enter the work force, the work environment becomes more important as a source of peers, who are "possibly older and more committed to conventional values" and therefore a stabilizing influence.

A review of research studies from the U.K. and the U.S. led Hurry (2006) to conclude that "there is fairly unequivocal evidence that interventions do make a difference to the employment rates of offenders."

However, there is less encouraging evidence on this point from the National Supported Work Demonstration. Though the program generated 30 to 50 percent increases in employment early on, when program participants were in subsidized jobs, the number of arrests did not decline (Piliavin and Gartner, 1981). The relationship between crime and employment is not straightforward (Bloom, 2006).

Smith et al. (2006) showed that assignment to correctional industry jobs, through the private-sector partnership Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program (PIECP), was associated with speedier and more sustained employment in the community, as compared with traditional prison industry work and other-than-work programming.

A multifaceted workforce initiative for federal probationers in the Eastern Judicial District of Missouri has resulted in a 2.5 percent unemployment rate for participants, compared with 5.3 percent for the area population overall (Weygandt, Anders, and Mata, 2008).

1.3.2 Employment and recidivism

The research literature supports the idea that improved employment of formerly incarcerated persons leads to greater public safety. The National Research Council (2007) reported that "extensive longitudinal research . . . highlights specific conditions that lead to less offending: good and stable marriages and strong ties to work appear to be particularly important."

Job retention has been defined as the positive attachment to employment over time. According to Houston (2006), "In order for employment to be a protective or resiliency factor against continued criminal activity, the employment itself must be maintained over time." She cites Eisenberg's 1990 study of Project RIO, in Texas, which reported that unemployed offenders were three times more likely to return to prison than were offenders who were employed.

MacKenzie (1998) reported that community employment programs, vocational education programs, and multi-component correctional industry programs reduced recidivism among ex-offenders in Washington State.

A meta-analysis by the Washington State Institute of Public Policy of 16 qualifying research studies (Aos et al., 2006b) found that employment and job training in the community was associated with a 4.3 percent drop in crime and an estimated net per-participant benefit to the public of $4,359.

Smith et al. (2006) found that PIECP industry program participants stayed crime-free longer than non-participants and that 90 percent remained free from reincarceration. Weygandt, Anders, and Mata (2008) report that employment-assisted federal probationers in the Eastern District of Missouri had a rearrest rate of 14.9 percent in July 2007, compared with rates of 67.5 percent nationally. Revocations were reduced to a rate of 6.8 percent, which compares favorably with other area districts and the national federal probation population.

A meta-analysis by Gendreau, Little, and Goggin (1996) suggested that unemployment is a moderate risk factor for recidivism among offenders.

Researchers in the federal probation system examined relationships between employment and recidivism for all offenders (N = 272,209) and for high-risk offenders on supervision from 2002 to 2006 (Cahill, 2006). The study found that having a job at the end of the supervision period was strongly associated with success (as measured by avoidance of revocation), and that being employed at both the beginning and the end of supervision was even better.

Probationers who were unemployed at the end of the supervision period were more likely to be revoked, and those who were unemployed at both the beginning and end of supervision had even less success.

For those employed at the end of supervision:

- 93 percent of probationers who were employed at both the start and end of the supervision period completed their sentences without being revoked;

- 87 percent of probationers who were employed at the end of supervision (but not at the beginning) completed their sentence without being revoked.

For those not employed at the end of supervision:

- 54 percent of offenders who were employed at the start of supervision (but not at the end) completed their sentence without being revoked;

- 47 percent of offenders who were unemployed at both the start and the end of the supervision period successfully completed their sentence without being revoked. This represents a difference of 46 percent from the group that were employed at both points.

The Cahill study found the pattern was even more pronounced for high-risk probationers:

- 77 percent of high-risk offenders who were employed at both the start and end of the supervision period completed their sentence without being revoked;

- 22 percent of high-risk offenders who were unemployed at both the start and end of the supervision period completed their sentence without being revoked.

In a 2000 meta-analysis, Wilson et al. concluded that work program participants are less likely to be arrested, be convicted, receive a technical violation, or be reincarcerated than those who do not participate in the programs.

Gillis and Nafekh (2005) reviewed data on 23,525 offenders released in Canada between 1998 and 2005. They found that employment increased the likelihood of successful sentence completion, increased the amount of time ex-offenders were in the community, and decreased the likelihood of being returned to custody.

A preliminary finding from one of the sites for the Department of Labor's Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative indicates that the recidivism rate for 450 adults returning to the community from incarceration following release for one year is 16 percent (Lambert, 2008). The Connections to Success program in Kansas City, Missouri, utilizes a holistic approach including strength-based case management. Additionally, the recidivism rate dropped to 6 percent for participants who were mentored during the first year, indicating a correlation between mentoring and recidivism.

A 2003 study by Welsh followed 2,089 Pennsylvania inmates for two years after release, finding that post-release employment significantly reduced the likelihood of drug relapse, re-arrest, and re-incarceration. Among the variables measured, employment status was the strongest predictor of recidivism.

These findings also are consistent in studies with specific offender populations. Johnson's research on sex offenders (2006) shows that job retention may help reduce recidivism. Hanson and Harris (1998) found that recidivism rates were highest among sex offenders who were not employed, compared with sex offenders who were employed.

On the other hand, there are more complex research findings surrounding work and recidivism. Tarlow and Nelson (2007) observed that, in a random assignment study, similar employment rates between participant and control groups by the fourth quarter did not appear to affect recidivism outcomes. In this evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities, they concluded that employment status at one year after release "does not matter; what matters is whether he or she was employed in those first six months" after release. An implication is that setting the pattern of employment and reintegration early is what counts.

Buck cited Bushway and Reuter's 1997 review of the literature, which concluded that "even after 30 years of trying . . . no program . . . has consistently shown itself capable (through a rigorous random assignment evaluation) of decreasing recidivism through labor market oriented programs."

Uggen and Staff (2001) observe that "work programs appear to be more effective for adult offenders than for adolescents and young adults." Though the effects of employment were somewhat modest and most effective with particular offender subgroups, they found "enough sound experimental evidence of program effectiveness to conclude that employment remains a viable avenue for reducing crime and recidivism."

Adams (1994) demonstrated that offenders who participated in work programs while incarcerated were more likely to be employed following release and to have higher earnings than those who did not participate in work programs while incarcerated.

Ready4Work was a three-year national demonstration project, funded by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Justice and the Annie E. Casey and Ford foundations, that provided reentry services to almost 5,000 returning prisoners in 17 sites around the country. It focused on the effectiveness of employment services, case management, and mentoring for adult offenders. Farley and Hackman (2006) described preliminary evidence showing that 60 percent of participants hold a job for at least one month while in the program. Participants in one-on-one mentoring were twice as likely to find a job. Only 1.9 percent of participants were returned to prison for a new offense within 6 months of release, and only 5 percent within one year. Among participants in the Ready4Work program who found a job and were active in the program for at least three months, 65 percent met the job retention benchmark of continued employment for three months (Fletcher, 2007).

An Urban Institute study reviewed the recidivism outcomes for 352 offenders who were released from Texas jails or prisons. The authors found that those who participate in job training and educational programs while incarcerated are less likely to return to prison after release. Persons with stable employment after release from prison and state jail were less likely to be reincarcerated within 12 months (La Vigne, Brooks, and Shollenberger, 2007).

Preliminary findings from an MDRC random-assignment evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) program show lower rates of incarceration for CEO participants. Bloom's 2007 evaluation of the prisoner reentry program found that participants who entered the program within three months of release had better outcomes. The ex-offenders in the study were randomly assigned into two groups: one group went to CEO for services, and a control group received basic employment assistance. Outcomes for the CEO sample were analyzed by enrollment timing: those who came to CEO within three months of release (40 percent of sample), and those who entered later.

After one year of tracking, CEO participants who came to the program within three months of release "were significantly less likely to have their parole revoked, to be convicted of a felony, and to be re-incarcerated." In 2007, 45 percent of parolees were employed at one year after release, up from 24 percent in 2004.

Researchers compared the reentry success of Going Home participants to a control group of similar parolees released in Cook County, Illinois, before inception of the program. Going Home, with its emphasis on case management, was found to reduce recidivism within three years of release on the first parole from about 60 percent to 42 percent. (George, LaLonde, and Haitsma, 2007).

In a study on prisoners released in Cleveland who were returned to prison, Visher and Courtney (2007) found that many identified difficulty supporting themselves financially (17 percent) and unemployment (11 percent) as primary reasons for failure on release. Men who worked more during the first six months after release were more likely to be working at the one-year point.

SECTION 2. What Makes the Relapse Prevention Model Effective?

Framing job retention as an exercise in relapse prevention is a workable strategy for intervention planning. The relapse model has been employed successfully in a variety of correctional programs.

Relapse, "a recurrence of symptoms of a disease after a period of improvement," is a construct used to describe a return to behavior that has been targeted by treatment or other interventions. Understanding why targeted behaviors recur, and how their recurrence is often a part of the recovery process, leads to stronger assistance interventions.

According to Ward and Hudson (2000), "[t]he major strength of the relapse prevention model has been its ability to focus our attention on the idea that behavior occurs in small steps over time rather than in an all-or-none fashion." This means that there is a continuum of internal thoughts and external behaviors that provide many points for intervention. In the context of employment, these include the client's self-awareness and internal preparation, his or her outwardly-focused task and interpersonal skills, and a range of worker assistance interventions.

Among correctional populations, the relapse approach to programming is familiar in the context of not only substance abusers but partner abusers, sex offenders, shoplifters, and some other offender groups. Correctional populations with mental health issues may be considered to relapse into a state of non-adherence with their medication schedules. Anger management programs minimize chances of relapse by teaching thinking skills, impulse control, and the understanding of one's emotional state. More recently, the relapse model has been used to frame work to control re-offense. The relapse model of job retention among persons with a criminal history also is a relatively recent development.

The relapse model of job retention is a lens that is suited for understanding the dynamics of a client keeping his or her current job. However, many of the skills and attitudes that improve retention of a specific job will also benefit the client's long-term employment performance and attainment of the client's vocational and career goals.

Because programs with a cognitive/behavioral approach have demonstrated effectiveness in helping treatment subjects to change targeted behaviors, they are discussed as a separate section in the following pages.

This section addresses:

2.1 Relapse theory and relapse prevention models

Relapse is the reoccurrence of targeted behaviors because of insufficient motivation or coping skills to meet the stress of a given situation. Relapse prevention attempts to provide the client with the skills to respond to a high-risk situation with an effective coping response, leading to greater self-efficacy and a strengthened probability of desisting from the targeted behavior. In the absence of effective coping responses, the client feels him- or herself to be weaker (low self-efficacy) and is more likely to succumb to thinking patterns that lead to the targeted behavior. If the targeted behavior recurs, the client's self-efficacy is weakened still further and the client experiences additional negative emotions, leading to a stronger likelihood of further relapse.

A cyclic view of relapse includes these elements:

- Steady state phase (normal functioning);
- Situation/stressor;
- Emotional response to stressor;
- Action (demonstrating intended behaviors, or reflecting failure/relapse);
- Response (further strengthening of self-efficacy, or remorse and loss of resolve); and
- Return to steady state/attempts to sustain targeted behavior.

The offense chain view of relapse identifies specific cognitive and behavioral events (decisions and actions) that can potentially culminate in an actual failure.

Various authors have provided theoretical outlines of the relapse model as applied in justice-related treatment settings. Marlatt and Gordon (1985) outlined a relapse prevention model in which both immediate determinants and covert antecedents contribute to relapse.

Immediate determinants of relapse behavior include:

- The high-risk situation the subject is exposed to;
- The coping skills available in the subject's repertoire;
- The subject's expectation of a positive result from engaging in the targeted behavior ("outcome expectancies"); and
- The feelings of guilt and failure that typically occur during and after a relapse (the "abstinence violation effect").

Marlatt and Gordon (1985) defined covert antecedents as background influences on behavior, including:

- Lifestyle factors, such as the overall stress level experienced by the subject as well as his or her tendency toward rationalization and denial; and
- Urges and cravings—the desire for immediate gratification (Larimer, Palmer, and Marlatt, 1999).

Building on these ideas, Larimer, Palmer, and Marlatt (1999) stated that "A central aspect of the model is the detailed classification (i.e., taxonomy) of factors or situations that can precipitate or contribute to relapse episodes." For example, they summarize Marlatt's 1996 view of the key situational factors that trigger alcohol relapse as follows:

- "Negative emotional states, such as anger, anxiety, depression, frustration, and boredom . . . are associated with the highest rate of relapse (Marlatt and Gordon, 1985). These emotional states may be caused by primarily intrapersonal perceptions of certain situations (e.g., feeling bored or lonely after coming home from work to an empty house) or by reactions to environmental events (e.g., feeling angry about an impending layoff at work).

- "Situations that involve another person or a group of people . . . , particularly interpersonal conflict (e.g., an argument with a family member), also result in negative emotions and can precipitate relapse. In fact, intrapersonal negative emotional states and interpersonal conflict situations served as triggers for more than one-half of all relapse episodes in Marlatt's (1996) analysis.

- "Social pressure, including both direct verbal or nonverbal persuasion and indirect pressure (e.g., being around other people who are drinking), contributed to more than 20 percent of relapse episodes in Marlatt's (1996) study.

- "Positive emotional states (e.g., celebrations), exposure to alcohol-related stimuli or cues (e.g., seeing an advertisement for an alcoholic beverage or passing by one's favorite bar), testing one's personal control (i.e., using "willpower" to limit consumption), and nonspecific cravings also were identified as high-risk situations that could precipitate relapse."

These factors have parallels in the realm of job retention. Interpersonal factors at work or dissatisfaction with the work itself can lead to negative emotional states, as can the cumulative stresses of reentry and its mosaic of individual challenges.

Marlatt (1985) distinguished between a lapse, in which there is a failure to adhere to new behavioral standards, and a full relapse, in which the person is demoralized by such a failure and abandons, at least temporarily, the effort to change. Thus, relapse is a breakdown or setback in a person's attempt to change or modify the target behavior. He further explained that the purpose of relapse prevention is to prevent the occurrence of initial lapses. If a lapse does occur, preventing further escalation to total relapse becomes the primary goal.

Larimer, Palmer, and Marlatt (1999) referred to the importance of "restructuring the client's perceptions of the relapse process." They recommended that clients be taught to view lapses "not as failures or indicators of a lack of willpower but as mistakes or errors in learning that signal the need for increased planning to cope more effectively in similar situations in the future."

Yates and Kingston (2006) discuss the "self-regulation model" to reduce reoffense in sex offenders. In this model, there are nine stages in the process of offending. The model addresses the individual's goals with respect to the offending behavior (approach versus avoidance) and the manner in which the individual attempts to achieve these goals (passive versus active), resulting in four hypothesized pathways that lead to sexual offending.

Regarding an incremental and cumulative, strength-based approach to progress, Larimer, Palmer, and Marlatt (1999) wrote, "[i]nstead of focusing on a distant end goal (e.g., maintaining lifelong abstinence), the client is encouraged to set smaller, more manageable goals, such as coping with an upcoming high-risk situation or making it through the day without a lapse. Because an increase in self-efficacy is

closely tied to achieving preset goals, successful mastery of these individual smaller tasks is the best strategy to enhance feelings of self-mastery."

Similarly, Gorski (2001) identified "mistaken beliefs" about relapse that need to be debunked to open a space for better understanding of addiction and recovery:

- That relapse is self-inflicted,
- That relapse is an indication of treatment failure, and
- That once relapse occurs, the patient will never recover.

In Gorski's view, each of these mistaken beliefs erodes the client's capacity for self-change, should the client lapse into the targeted thinking pattern or behavior.

According to Gorski (2001), people in addiction treatment "can learn to stay sober by recognizing [their] symptoms [of pain and distress] as relapse warning signs, identifying the self-defeating thoughts, feelings, and actions they use to cope with them, and learning more effective coping responses."

Hudson and Ward (1996) wrote that "[t]he application of a framework based on the problem behavior process has significant theoretical and clinical advantages and can overcome the major difficulties associated with Marlatt's and Pithers' RP models."

2.3 Importance of a cognitive/behavioral approach in relapse interventions

Cognitive-based counseling/coaching is well suited to supporting relapse prevention. It aims to help clients clearly perceive external situations without bias and distortion, and also to understand the emotional drivers behind the client's own responses, thoughts, and actions. Cognitive/behavioral therapies began to be developed in the 1960s as a merging of the cognitive and the behavioral schools of thought (Milkman and Wanberg, 2007).

Cognitive/behavioral programs help clients learn new coping skills that give them confidence in their ability to sustain changes in their behavior. This is accomplished through a sequence of learning steps that build the skills needed to desist from relapse behaviors.

This section addresses:

2.3.1 Principles of the cognitive/behavioral approach

Cognitive/behavioral training "is based on the scientifically supported assumption that most emotional and behavioral reactions are learned. Therefore, the goal of therapy is to help clients unlearn their unwanted reactions and to learn a new way of reacting." (National Association of Cognitive Behavioral Therapists, 2007).

Cognitive/behavioral retraining attempts to restructure thought patterns as the basis for progress in self-awareness, other-awareness, and self-change. As expressed by Morris Thigpen, NIC Director, in the foreword to a recent NIC publication (Milkman and Wanberg, 2007), "CBT attempts to change negative

behaviors by attacking, as it were, from both ends. Clients are not only taught more positive behaviors to replace their old ways of getting through life, they are also shown how to be more attuned to the thought processes that led them to choose negative actions in the past."

Lipsey, Landenberger, and Wilson (2007) wrote,

> Cognitive-behavior therapy is based on the assumption that cognitive deficits and distortions characteristic of offenders are learned rather than inherent. Programs for offenders, therefore, emphasize individual accountability and attempt to teach offenders to understand the thinking processes and choices that immediately preceded their criminal behavior. Learning to self monitor thinking is typically the first step, after which the therapeutic techniques seek to help offenders identify and correct biased, risky, or deficient thinking patterns. All cognitive behavioral interventions, therefore, employ a set of structured techniques aimed at building cognitive skills in areas where offenders show deficits and restructuring cognition in areas where offenders' thinking is biased or distorted.

2.3.2 Examples of cognitive/behavioral programs for offenders and ex-offenders

The cognitive/behavioral model has been introduced in correctional settings to address addictions and to combat criminal thinking.

- The Thinking for a Change program (T4C) was developed with NIC support in the 1990s. T4C "uses a combination of approaches to increase offenders' awareness of self and others. It integrates cognitive restructuring, social skills, and problem solving. The program begins by teaching offenders an introspective process for examining their ways of thinking and their feelings, beliefs, and attitudes. This process is reinforced throughout the program. Social-skills training is provided as an alternative to antisocial behaviors. The program culminates by integrating the skills offenders have learned into steps for problem solving. Problem solving becomes the central approach offenders learn that enables them to work through difficult situations without engaging in criminal behavior. . . . The curriculum is divided into 22 lessons, each lasting 1 to 2 hours. . . . Lessons are sequential, and program flow and integrity are important." (Milkman and Wanberg, 2007)

- The Windham School District, operating within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, provides the Turning Point Program, an instructional curriculum designed to help offenders overcome criminal thinking and behavior and to reduce the recidivism of offenders. Components include cognitive restructuring and cognitive skill development. The program documentation includes a chapter that uses a relapse prevention approach. (Cox, Burd, and Roberts, 1997)

- The Thinking Skills for the Workplace curriculum developed for Her Majesty's Prison System (Janet McLellan, 2001) is intended to improve offenders' problem-solving, critical reasoning, and perspective taking skills and to highlight the importance of these skills in the workplace. Participants learn, among other things, to recognize and challenge irrational thinking. McLellan states, "The field needs vocationally-focused cognitive skills intervention for offenders. Programs should be situationally relevant to the workplace." She also notes that, because "[r]esearch has demonstrated that some offenders have cognitive deficits . . . Cognitive Skills serve as a foundation set of skills for learning and applying the generic work skills (e.g., team-playing, co-operation)."

- Choices is a community-based reintegration program offered by the Correctional Service Canada that focuses on substance abuse relapse prevention and maintenance through a social-learning model (Murray, Gates, and Hansen, no date). An outcome evaluation by T3 Associates (1999) showed that the program helped offenders learn skills to abstain from or control future substance use. Choices includes a wraparound component that uses a team process for

intervention, which allows for more support in an integrated fashion by professional and non-professional staff.

A useful synopsis of the development and philosophical approach of other cognitive programs used in criminal justice settings is provided in Milkman and Wanberg (2007). Examples of these approaches include Aggression Replacement Training, Moral Reconation Therapy, and Reasoning and Rehabilitation. The authors also include a summary of evaluations of these programs.

2.3.3 Evidence of the effectiveness of cognitive/behavioral programs

Cognitive/behavioral programs are widely accepted as an evidence-based practice in corrections, with measurable effects.

- The National Research Council (2007) concluded that cognitive/behavioral therapy has measureable effects as a post-release intervention.

- Milkman and Wanberg (2007) wrote that "[a]n abundance of research shows positive effects of cognitive-behavioral approaches with offenders. At the same time that cognitive-behavioral treatments have become dominant in clinical psychology, many studies report that recidivism has been decreased by cognitive-behavioral interventions."

- An analysis by MacKenzie and Hickman (1998), conducted for the Washington State Department of Corrections, suggested that the cognitive programs Reasoning & Rehabilitation and/or Moral Reconation Therapy could be effectively used to reduce recidivism. They also quote a statement from Ross and Fabiano (1985), who "determined that successful programs shared one factor, the inclusion of an offender's cognitions, thoughts and attitudes as a target for change."

- Cognitive/behavioral therapy was found, on average, to provide a net value of $10,299 per participant by reducing returns to prison, in a meta-analysis of the findings from 25 studies (Aos, Miller, and Drake, 2006). Cognitive behavioral therapy also was found to be associated with an average 6.3 percent decrease in crime.

- Meta-analyses conducted by Lipsey independently (2005) and Landenberger and Lipsey (2006) confirm that cognitive behavioral programs are effective in reducing recidivism.

- Lipsey, Landenberger, and Wilson (2007) determined that the most effective configurations of cognitive-behavioral treatment would result in a 50 percent decrease in recidivism. Landenberger and Lipsey (2005) found that "the general cognitive behavioral approach, and not any specific version, produces an overall positive effect on recidivism. Within that framework, inclusion of distinct anger control and interpersonal problem-solving components enhance the effects, while victim impact and behavior modification components appear to diminish it. . . . The effects of CBT were greater for offenders with higher risk of recidivism than those with lower risks, contrary to any presumption that higher risk offenders might be less amenable to treatment. This is consistent with the principles of effective correctional treatment/evidence-based practice developed by Andrews, et al."

- The Lipsey, Landenberger, and Wilson meta-analysis (2007) examined 58 qualifying studies to identify what variables in cognitive-based programming make the most difference on recidivism. Mean recidivism rates were 10 percent lower (at 30 percent) for cognitive-based treatment

participants than control groups (40 percent). Through multiple regression analysis, the study found the strongest relationships between treatment and recidivism in programs that offered:

- One-on-one counseling (in addition to group program time),
- Anger control, and
- Cognitive restructuring ("activities and exercises aimed at recognizing and modifying the distortions and errors that characterize criminogenic thinking").

- The same meta-analysis found that two specific treatment elements – interpersonal problem solving and anger control – were most positively related to recidivism improvements. A high quality of program implementation was also important.

- Skill training with directed practice, using cognitive behavioral treatment methods, is an evidence-based practice, according to Bogue et al. (2004). Agencies should apply social learning techniques that are delivered by well trained staff. Skills are not just taught to the offender, but are practiced or role-played, and the resulting pro-social attitudes and behaviors are positively reinforced by staff. Research also supports an emphasis on positive reinforcements over negative discipline. A ratio of four positive reinforcements to one negative reinforcement is recommended to achieve sustained behavioral change (Bogue et al., 2004).

- In an interview published by the Pew Center on the States (2007), Joan Petersilia said, "[f]rom the literature we know that intensive community supervision combined with rehabilitation services can reduce recidivism between 10 and 20 percent." After the use of an objective risk and needs assessment, the next core principle, according to Petersilia, is to make certain that the rehabilitation programs are of sufficient quality to make a difference. There are now several scoring methods that rate the quality of rehabilitation programs along such dimensions as staff qualifications and training, use of a tested curriculum or program model, and use of cognitive behavioral or social learning methods. "These and other program characteristics," Petersilia stated, " have been shown to increase success."

- Taxman (2004) has also written on the use of behavioral management strategies as a best practice in the supervision of people returning from jail.

As stated by Bonta and Andrews (2007), "Whether the goal is to control smoking, rid one of depressive thoughts, develop good study habits, get along with one's employer or replace criminal behaviour and cognitions with prosocial behaviours and cognitions, cognitive social learning intervention is the preferred treatment method."

2.4 Evidence-based elements

Elements of the relapse model of employment retention assistance are supported by the literature on evidence-based practices.

Bogue et al. (2004) identified eight evidence-based principles for effective interventions with offender populations, as follows:

1. Assess actuarial risk/needs.
2. Enhance intrinsic motivation.
3. Target interventions.
   a. Risk principle: prioritize supervision and treatment resources for higher risk offenders.
   b. Need principle: target interventions to criminogenic needs.

c. Responsivity principle: be responsive to temperament, learning style, motivation, culture, and gender when assigning programs.
d. Dosage: structure 40-70% of high-risk offenders' time for 3-9 months.
e. Treatment: integrate treatment into the full sentence/sanction requirements.

4. Skill train with directed practice (use cognitive behavioral treatment methods).
5. Increase positive reinforcement.
6. Engage ongoing support in natural communities.
7. Measure relevant processes/practices.
8. Provide measurement feedback.

Bonta and Andrews (2007) expand on the three core principles of risk, need, and responsivity as follows:

- Risk principle: Match the level of service to the offender's risk to re-offend.
- Need principle: Assess criminogenic needs and target them in treatment.
- Responsivity principle: Maximize the offender's ability to learn from a rehabilitative intervention by providing cognitive behavioural treatment and tailoring the intervention to the learning style, motivation, abilities and strengths of the offender.

Bonta and Andrews (2007) articulate the concept of responsivity further by stating that "[g]eneral responsivity refers to the fact that cognitive social learning interventions are the most effective way to teach people new behaviours regardless of the type of behaviour." "Specific responsivity," they continue, "calls for treatment interventions to consider personal strengths and socio-biological-personality factors. Treatment should then be tailored to these factors, as they have the potential to facilitate or hinder treatment."

> The essence of this principle is that treatment can be enhanced if the treatment intervention pays attention to personal factors that can facilitate learning. Most have heard the pedagogical advice that one must vary teaching methods to suit visual learners and auditory learners. Offender treatment programs involve teaching offenders new behaviours and cognitions and to maximize this learning experience requires attention not only to whether the offender is a visual learner or an auditory learner but a whole range of personal-cognitive-social factors.

2.5 Relapse-based interventions with correctional populations

Interventions that focus on minimizing offenders' chances of treatment relapse have been common in the corrections field for many years. Nearly any area of focus in correctional treatment interventions can be viewed through a relapse prevention lens. This review does not attempt to cover all specific behavioral change interventions.

Parks et al., observed (2006) that Marlatt's model is the foundation for many substance abuse treatment programs in jails, in prisons, and in the community. Having been used for almost 15 years in treating sex offenders, the model began to be adapted as a case management tool for any type of offense behavior, including criminal recidivism itself.

As described by Parks and Marlatt (2000), relapse-oriented programs need to help clients to:

a) Understand relapse as a process,
b) Identify and cope effectively with high-risk situations,
c) Cope with urges and craving,
d) Implement damage control procedures during a lapse to minimize its negative consequences,

e) Stay engaged in treatment even after a relapse, and
f) Learn how to create a more balanced lifestyle.

Dowden et al. (2003) summarized the core components of relapse prevention models for offenders, as identified by Laws (1989), in this way:

> 1. Offense chain or cognitive-behavioral chain: The program teaches the offender to recognize his or her offense cycle or the precursory cues that warn an offender that she or he may be in danger of committing a criminal act.
>
> 2. Relapse rehearsal: The program involves the participants in identifying potential relapse situations and focuses on the development of skills to address these occurrences through corrective feedback in multiple opportunities for rehearsal of low-risk responses.
>
> 3. Advanced relapse rehearsal: The program involves the offender in dealing with hypothetical relapse situations but gradually increases the difficulty of the scenario.
>
> 4. Identify high-risk situations: The program teaches the offender to identify situations that are conducive to criminal activity and how to deal with these situations when he or she is placed in one.
>
> 5. Dealing with failure situations: The program teaches the offender to deal with failure or relapse constructively and not to lose hope or experience profound discouragement at a setback.
>
> 6. Self-efficacy: The program aims to instill feelings of self-confidence in the offender that his or her efforts will be successful in avoiding future criminal activity as a result of participating in the program.
>
> 7. Coping skills: One of the explicit targets of the program is to develop or enhance coping skills for the program participants.
>
> 8. External support systems: The program trains significant others such as family, friends, and school and work peers in the program model so the offender is properly reinforced for displaying pro-social behaviors learned in the program.
>
> 9. Booster sessions/aftercare: Booster sessions or aftercare focusing on supplementing the program material is made available to the offender within institutional or community settings.

Among these components, Dowden showed that training significant others in the program model (#8) was the single most effective factor in enhancing program effectiveness. Identifying the offense-chain elements (#1) and identifying and role-playing high-risk situations (#4) were also found to be highly effective for reducing future criminal behavior. Dowden also found that the more of these components are incorporated into an intervention, the better its effectiveness.

Wexler (1999) commented that “the basic approach to relapse prevention planning is to encourage the offender to analyze the chain of events and behaviors that lead to law violating behavior and to come up with a plan both to avoid high-risk situations and to deal if satisfactorily with such situations if they occur.” He suggested that a behavioral science perspective could be applied to the development of plausible probationary dispositions as part of a strategy to reduce over-reliance on incarceration.

Hudson and Ward (1996) suggested reasons for viewing the offense and relapse processes as functionally equivalent, stating that “[t]he core construct in both these traditionally different models is the problem behavior process.”

Zamble and Quinsey (2001) found that the main difference between recidivists and nonrecidivists was how they understood and responded to external events and their internal states. This is referred to as

the “coping-relapse model of criminal recidivism.” They found that clients’ coping ability was an equally accurate predictor of reoffense as the offender’s recidivism risk probability score, as determined by the Levels of Service Inventory assessment instrument. Travis (2000) suggested that a greater understanding of the relapse prevention model as applied to drug and alcohol relapse has the potential to stimulate the development of new strategies for offender risk management.

Parks et al. (2006) discussed how, as framed by the relapse theory of recidivism, the coping skills of recidivists have not been adequate to solve their life problems. Recidivists often have created problems in their own lives or made them more serious, and they are incapable of finding ways to fulfill their basic needs. This results in frustration and/or depression. These emotional states as well as social pressures lead to a stronger likelihood of inappropriate social behaviors, such as a new offense, and substance abuse, potentially leading to technical violation.

Andrews and Bonta (1998) explored how the cognitive/behavioral model of recidivism has a temporal dimension. In addition to static risks that predispose an offender toward criminal behavior, dynamic risks come into play over time. If an offender does not implement effective coping strategies, the situation can proceed toward acute dynamic risk through offense chains that lead to reoffense scenarios and into recidivism.

Parks et al. (2006) discussed how to work with dynamic risk factors in counseling to prevent relapse/recidivism. Clients have a predetermined level of static risk that reflects their baseline predisposition to committing an offense or lapsing/relapsing to an undesired behavior. As time proceeds, the client is also exposed to dynamic risk factors, such as job stress or the reappearance of a friend who is involved in drugs or crime, that can influence the client toward offense or relapse in the absence of adequate coping strategies. The point of correctional counseling in this view is to identify and confirm the client’s offense patterns and triggers, and then to help the client understand them. The authors emphasize the value of coaching strategies, which develop self-efficacy by teaching self-understanding and coping skills, rather than “catching” strategies, which focus on surveillance or incapacitation to intervene in offense or relapse situations.

Parks et al. (2006) describe several components of a relapse prevention therapy plan aimed at reducing recidivism. These components are congruent with the perspective of Zamble and Quinsey (1997) that the role of staff should include “a monitoring of the psychological thermometer of individuals after release.” Supervising staff would focus on:

- Increasing the understanding among all concerned—the staff, client, and client’s family and broader supporting social network—about recidivism and the warning signs of increased risk in the form of individualized reoffense scenarios and behavior triggers.

- Identifying each client’s static, dynamic, and acute risk factors by tapping into all available information.

- Assessing the client at every contact for changes in dynamic risk and adaptive use of coping responses in higher-risk situations that have been encountered.

- Continuing to foster self-awareness, self-monitoring, and coping ability in the client, and

- Exercising damage control if a lapse does occur.

Yazar observes that the relapse prevention model has become the most common model underlying treatment within the Correctional Service Canada. He refers to five main skill clusters that ex-offenders need to adopt, whatever the specific focus of treatment. These skills are problem-solving, emotional

regulation, challenging high-risk thinking, relationship skills, and relapse prevention or self-management. A sixth skill cluster involves working toward goals. (Yazar, n.d.)

Dowden, Antonowicz, and Andrews (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 40 studies on relapse-focused treatment. They found that moderate reductions in recidivism were achieved, with an average decrease of 15 percent. “Further analyses revealed that the clinically relevant and psychologically informed principles of risk, need, and general responsivity yielded the strongest reductions in recidivism” [from the abstract].

Parks (2007) referred to these findings when he wrote that three core components of relapse prevention therapy, as applied in correctional programs, have the strongest affect in reducing criminal recidivism:

- Training significant others in relapse prevention;
- Conducting relapse rehearsal counseling with the client; and
- Coaching the client through offense chain analysis.

Other program components that were less powerful as interventions included identifying high-risk situations, providing coping skills training, providing booster sessions/aftercare, and dealing with failure situations.

SECTION 3. Employment Challenges for Formerly Incarcerated Persons

Formerly incarcerated persons face perhaps the broadest range of challenges to employment of any group. They share many issues with other populations that face barriers to employment, and they may experience these problems at more critical levels. Formerly incarcerated persons are more likely than the general population to have mental health issues, substance abuse problems, and physical disabilities.

Other difficulties include the developmental and sociological issues that led the person into conflict with society and the justice system. These are compounded by the negative effects of incarceration and societal, legal, and employer bias against potential workers who have a criminal history. Clients may also be required to fit correctional supervision and reporting into their work week, complicating the normal logistics of a typical work day. They may also have the financial burden of supervision fees, reparation payments, and/or child support. Gender and race/ethnicity can also affect employment prospects. Family obligations are yet another factor that can complicate work and careers, especially for women who are parents and/or caregivers for other family members.

To bring formerly incarcerated persons back into sound footing for productive work takes skilled effort and resources. Programs should be evidence-based. Effective programs feature agency- and program-level strategies coupled with targeted, responsive work with individual clients based on an assessment of needs. Significant work is taking place in the field in connection with reentry initiatives. Lessons on job matching and employment retention assistance for many types of challenged workers are also relevant for persons and agencies that provide services to correctional populations.

This section addresses:

3.1 Barriers faced by many underemployed groups

Formerly incarcerated persons share certain barriers with other groups that experience low employability. Examples include their patterns of relatively low educational attainment, their higher than average occurrence of learning disabilities, substance abuse history, mental illnesses, medical issues, and impaired cognitive development, and their simple lack of actual work experience.

- Concerning education, Bushway (2003) cites BJS statistics that only 59 percent of U.S. state prison inmates had a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to 85 percent of the adult population as a whole. Harlow (2003) reported that 60 percent of jail inmates lack a high school diploma or equivalent (cited by Solomon et al., 2008). Smith (2008) reported that 84 percent of inmates in one county jail were high school dropouts.

- Freeman (2003), citing federal statistics, notes that 10 percent of inmates report having a learning disability, which is three times the incidence in the general population.

- The same federal data (cited by Freeman, 2003) show that 21 percent of state prisoners had some physical or mental condition that limited their ability to work, as compared to 11 percent of the U.S. national population.

- Graffam and Shinkfield (2006) stated that "[t]he most prominent condition of ill-health among prisoners is substance use." They cite U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics research (Mumola, 1999), which shows that about 80 percent of prisoners in the United States are known to have had some type of drug or alcohol problem. The same study reported that 74 percent of U.S. prisoners who were awaiting release within one year had a history of drug use and/or alcohol abuse.

- Mental illnesses have been self-reported to affect 10 percent to 16 percent of prison inmates. Other studies have put the number much higher. Anthony (2006) observed that there is a lack of vocational interventions for persons with mental illness who become involved with the criminal justice system. Two examples exist in New York City: the Howie the Harp program and the Center for Behavioral Health Services.

- According to Graffam and Shinkfield (2006), "Fazel and Danesh (2002) identified 31 surveys comprising 10,529 prisoners which reported on major depression. Overall, 10 percent of male prisoners and 12 percent of female prisoners were diagnosed with major depression."

- Persons who are seeking jobs after long prison terms are likely to have greater difficulty in the job market, for example because they are unfamiliar with technology advances that affect many areas of life and work. At the same time, studies suggest that employers are reluctant to consider older candidates for semiskilled or lower level positions (Haefner, 1977; Singer and Sewell, 1986; Triandis, 1963). (Cited by Ahrens, Frey, and Burke, 1999.)

- Freeman (2003) said, "On the order of one-half of ex-offenders arguably carry so many medical problems with them that it is unrealistic to expect them to re-enter society as normal productive citizens without much greater social assistance than the US has been willing to provide."

- Ryan (2005) stated that "Research indicates that personalities of criminals resembled personalities of the unemployed. Research showed that inadequate cognitive-skill development—typical of offenders—was manifested in deficiencies in generalization, abstraction, reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making. . . . Lack of rational and emotional control was shown in excessive aggression, anger, and stress, which, in turn, led to criminal behaviors."

- Lack of work experience is a pervasive and self-reinforcing pattern. "Incarceration reduces human capital because it diminishes work experience. . . . Punishment may also intensify the forces pushing offenders into unemployment and low quality work and make recidivism more likely" (Uggen and Wakefield, 2008). The Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that only two-thirds of U.S. inmates had been employed during the month before they were arrested for their current offense.

- Management of personal finances and budgets is an example of a life skill that, if lacking, can impede independent success. The Money Smart consumer education program provided by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) covers aspects such as banking, savings, and debt to bring participants into more stable and confident relationships with money. (FDIC, 2007)

3.2 Barriers faced by formerly incarcerated workers specifically

Past justice system involvement adds another challenge to the employability of formerly incarcerated persons, on levels ranging from personal bias to statutory restrictions. There may be direct or oblique bias in hiring and social stigma associated with their criminal history. Yet people recently released from prison not only need to find a job, they also need to remain employed in order to establish stability and, ideally, to lay the foundation for long-term advancement and wage growth. However, the jobs they find are often temporary or transitional. Ex-prisoners also have a high rate of either quitting these jobs or being fired. (Fletcher, 2007).

Samuels and Mukamal (2004) found that "people with criminal records seeking reentry face a daunting array of counterproductive, debilitating and unreasonable roadblocks in almost every important aspect of life." Some of these barriers are specific to employment qualifications, others contribute to a difficult environment for employment, and still others make ex-offenders ineligible to receive government aid that might otherwise help them to enter the workforce. The authors observe that, instead of helping formerly incarcerated persons to successfully reenter society, "many current state and federal laws have the opposite effect, interfering with the rights and obligations of full citizenship. . . These laws diminish public safety and undermine the nation's commitment to justice and fairness, creating roadblocks to basic necessities for hundreds of thousands of individuals who are trying to rebuild their lives, support their families, and become productive members of communities."

This section addresses:

3.2.1 The individual and the workplace

Solomon, Waul, et al. (2004) shared these remarks on an observation from Holzer, et al., on the changing workplace:

> The kinds of jobs for which employers have historically been more willing to hire individuals who were formerly incarcerated—blue collar and manufacturing jobs—are diminishing in the national economy. At the same time, jobs for which former offenders are barred or are less likely to be hired—childcare, elder care, customer contact, and service industry jobs—are expanding.

Weiman (2007) commented on the labor market for former prisoners from an economic supply and demand perspective. He wrote, "Like the labor market itself, I parse the 'barriers to entry' facing released prisoners into the supply and demand sides. The supply factors specify the more abstract notions of human and social capital: the array of personal characteristics and social attachments that influence an individual's job prospects." The demand side of the equation has to do with the labor market's attitudes toward the formerly incarcerated.

Arrest and incarceration also interrupt the employment trajectory of those who have been detained or convicted. Whatever professional connections and social contacts an individual has, which could potentially lead to legal employment upon release, are severed (Western, King, and Weiman, 2001, cited by Solomon et al., 2008).

In sum, as noted by Bloom (2006), many people enter the criminal justice system hard to employ and leave it even harder to employ. These factors add urgency to their need for employment-related assistance.

3.2.2 Employer bias

Samuels and Mukamal (2004) observed, "most states allow employers to deny jobs [or to fire] anyone with a criminal record, regardless of how long ago or the individual's work history and personal circumstances."

The recommendations of the 2009 Criminal Justice Transition Coalition (2008) include focusing on the expansion of employment opportunities for people with criminal records. "Although no one questions the legitimate concerns of employers who do not want to hire someone with a conviction record who clearly demonstrates a threat to public safety or who otherwise has a conviction history directly related to a specific job, policies that encourage employers to adopt broad sweeping exclusions (i.e. not hiring or considering anyone with any type of criminal history) simply lock out and eliminate many qualified, rehabilitated individuals from the job market."

In a survey of more than 600 employers in the Los Angeles area, Holtzer et al. (2003) found that formerly incarcerated persons are the least desirable employee applicant in the labor market pool. Positive answers on whether the employers would "definitely" or "probably" hire an individual from the following categories were as follows:

- Current or former welfare recipients – 93%
- Recipients of a GED diploma – 97%
- Individuals unemployed for a year or more – 80%
- Individuals with a spotty employment history – 66%
- *Ex-prisoners – 21%*

Respondents added that their willingness to hire formerly incarcerated persons would depend on the crime of conviction (36 percent). However, 43 percent said they definitely (18 percent) or probably (24 percent) would not hire an ex-prisoner, regardless of the specifics of his or her conviction history.

Bushway observes (2003) that employers aren't concerned about repeat crime or negligent hiring lawsuits so much as that ex-offenders will not be good employees. Therefore, the most important thing any ex-offender can do for long-term success is to get and keep a job for a least one year. In addition to establishing a track record of reliable performance, the ex-offender can use this work experience to acquire workplace skills and coping skills that help him or her to maintain a new identity in society. Success will lead to success. "In other words, better job opportunities await the ex-offender if and only if he can demonstrate – to himself and to others – the ability to work successfully for a period approaching one year."

Contact with formerly incarcerated people can help reduce bias. To offset the potential for employers to feel apprehensive about hiring ex-offenders, Giguere and Dundes (2002) suggest providing more opportunities for social contact between potential employers and workers. The Connections to Success program in St. Louis, Missouri, was highlighted for a mobile unit that travels in the community and to a nearby Federal Correctional Institution in Illinois. Employers are invited to help with sessions that "suit" women inmates for job interviews at a mock job fair the following week. Employers also participate in the job fair and conduct mock interviews. (Lambert, 2008)

3.2.3 Access to criminal history information

Employer access to criminal history records is associated with lower employment outcomes for persons with a criminal history. For example, Massachusetts parole officers acknowledge that employers' access to Criminal Offender Record Information data has proven to be an obstacle to employment (Brooks et al., 2008).

Finlay (2008) found that in states with open access to criminal history records, the wages of ex-offenders are 8.7 percent lower, and their earnings are 18.7 percent lower. The fact of incarceration itself, while detrimental in various ways, had less of an impact on ex-offenders' employment outcomes than did potential employers' access to criminal history records. Finlay concludes that "greater employer access to criminal histories is associated with worse labor market outcomes for ex-offenders."

Lindahl and Mukamal (2007) noted that "[t]he stigma of a conviction is long-lasting. Most states do not permit an individual to seal or expunge a conviction (though many do seal arrest and juvenile records). Therefore, employers who inquire about an applicant's criminal history will have access to the information even if it occurred many years ago and the individual has been crime-free and productive ever since.

Wallace and Wyckoff note (2008) that the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission "has issued guidelines to encourage employers to show 'business justification' for excluding job applicants with criminal records from employment." Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, employers must show they have considered three factors in making the employment decision: 1) the nature and gravity of the offense(s); 2) the time that has passed since the conviction and/or completion of the sentence; and 3) the nature of the job held or sought (Legal Action Center, 2000). State laws vary in their treatment of workplace discrimination for persons with felony and misdemeanor convictions (Legal Action Center, 2000; Samuels and Mukamal, 2004).

The 2009 Criminal Justice Transition Coalition recommends (2008) that EEOC regulations should specify that consideration of a criminal record should not be permitted beyond seven years.

3.2.4 Legal barriers

According to the New York City Bar Association (2008),

> Formerly incarcerated individuals are barred by statute from many occupations, particularly those involving vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, the disabled and children, and from obtaining occupational licenses, such as a tow truck license. In some instances, newly released individuals may find themselves barred from the very same jobs they held before being imprisoned, or for which they were trained while in prison. . . . Some of the restrictions are rationally related to the offense of which the job applicant has been convicted (for example, an individual convicted of certain vehicular offenses may not be employed as a bus driver), but other restrictions make little or no sense (an electrician convicted of a crime may have his license revoked or suspended, and a convicted embezzler may not be hired as an emergency medical technician).

The report suggests that the employment barriers faced by formerly incarcerated persons may be heightened by the failure of employers to understand the laws under which they operate.

Samuels and Mukamal (2004) reported that "29 states have no standards governing the relevance of conviction records of applicants for occupational licenses," meaning that "occupational licensing agencies can deny licenses based on any criminal conviction, regardless of history, circumstance or business necessity. 21 states do have standards that require a 'direct,' 'rational,' or 'reasonable'

relationship between the license sought and the applicant's criminal history to justify the agency's denial of license."

An interesting channel for redressing this situation is available in Illinois and other states. Ex-offenders can apply for relief from the disability of having been disqualified to practice their profession. To assist individuals with criminal records to qualify for licensure in occupational and professional categories that are otherwise inaccessible to them. The Illinois criminal code was modified in 2004 to create eligibility for relief for persons convicted of no more than one non-violent felony (The Safer Foundation, 2007). The other states found by Samuels and Mukamal (2004) to have similar provisions include Arizona, California, Nevada, New Jersey, and New York.

New York's Independent Committee on Reentry and Employment (2006) recommends specific changes in law on, for example, the sealing of criminal history information and added protections against employment discrimination for formerly incarcerated persons.

A Minnesota legislative panel recommended several changes to reduce unnecessary barriers to employment, plus the creation of a Create a Certificate of Good Conduct to facilitate employment of ex-offenders (Minnesota Legislature, Collateral Sanctions Committee, 2008). They recommended that the legislature:

- Carefully restrict the number of convictions that will trigger absolute bars from particular kinds of employment, or eliminate such bars entirely; and

- Establish sensible "look-back" periods after which convictions will not be reported. It is not readily apparent why some are longer than others and how we arrived at the periods we have. These time-frames must be carefully considered, because they affect many people in a major way.

Among the recommendations of the 2009 Criminal Justice Transition Coalition (2008) is a suggestion "to amend the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), authorized by the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-188). Currently, under the WOTC program, employers who hire low-income individuals with criminal records can reduce their federal income tax liability by up to $2,400 per qualified new worker. Congress should increase the WOTC tax credit for individuals with criminal records to match the tax credit available for individuals who qualify as Long-term Family Assistance recipients. There is a $6,600 difference between the two credits."

3.3 Special barriers: gender and race/ethnicity

Program interventions can be gender neutral or gender informed. Correctional programs that are gender informed take into account women's different pathways to crime, their frequent backgrounds of physical and/or emotional abuse with accompanying low self-esteem, their higher rates of addiction, their greater likelihood of being a parent and having custody of minor children, and the effects of their orientation toward relationships with others as a factor in development and decision-making. These elements create both needs to be addressed in programming and opportunities for program design.

Women who have been incarcerated face a different employment environment than their male counterparts. Their job opportunities differ in significant ways, and women on average continue to earn lower hourly wages than men. Women are also more likely to experience complications with work attendance because of child and family care responsibilities.

Differences in mentoring of women and men is one area addressed in the literature on employment assistance, as discussed in Section 5.5.3.

Specialized assessments also exist for women in correctional settings. For example, the reentry-focused inmate skills assessment developed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons (2007) includes questions in areas of concern for female offenders, "such as history of victimization, child care responsibilities, and codependent tendencies."

Several studies cited in this document discuss employment programs specifically designed to assist women who have been involved with the criminal justice system. Intervening successfully with women potentially leads to even greater societal benefit. As expressed by Sylvia Larsen of the New Hampshire State Senate, "[i]f we can treat the mothers successfully, we can also improve the outcomes for their children." Two-thirds of women inmates in New Hampshire have children, and 45 percent are single mothers. The number of women in custody in the state is growing because of alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, and unemployment (Timmins, 2008).

Regarding the effects of race/ethnicity, Pager (2003, 2004) demonstrated that race had a strong effect on the employment prospects of black men, and that the effect was equal to or greater than the effect of having a criminal record. Black men with a criminal record are therefore facing a double disadvantage. Pager's study tracked the success of articulate young black men in Milwaukee who posed as job-seekers. "Only 14 percent of black men without criminal records were called back for an interview," compared with 34% of whites with no criminal record. Among applicants with a criminal background, 17% of whites were called back and just 5% of blacks." (Pager, 2004)

Pager (2003) noted that, "While the ratio of callbacks for non-offenders relative to ex-offenders for whites is 2:1, this same ratio for blacks is nearly 3:1.37 The effect of a criminal record is thus 40% larger for blacks than for whites."

Pager also observed,

> The evidence from this audit suggests that the criminal justice system is not a peripheral institution in the lives of young disadvantaged men. It has become a dominant presence, playing a key role in sorting and stratifying labor market opportunities for such men.

The demographic numbers add urgency to this concern. Uggen, Manza, and Thompson (2006) described as "astounding" the fact that felons and ex-felons make up 33.4 percent of the U.S. adult black male population in the U.S. That figure compares with 7.5 percent in the general U.S. adult population and 22.3 percent among the adult black population.

Pager (2003) wrote about differential incarceration rates as follows:

> The expansion of the prison population has been particularly consequential for blacks. The incarceration rate for young black men in the year 2000 was nearly 10%, compared to just over 1% for white men in the same age group (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2001). Young black men today have a 28% likelihood of incarceration during their lifetime (Bureau of Justice Statistics 1997), a figure that rises above 50% among young black high school dropouts (Pettit and Western 2001). These vast numbers of inmates translate into a large and increasing population of black ex-offenders returning to communities and searching for work. The barriers these men face in reaching economic self-sufficiency are compounded by the stigma of minority status and criminal record.

The result is a form of social stratification, according to Pager (2003):

> Those sent to prison are institutionally branded as a particular class of individuals—as are college graduates or welfare recipients—with implications for their perceived place in the stratification order. The "negative credential" associated with a criminal record represents a unique mechanism of stratification, in that it is the state that certifies particular individuals in ways that qualify them for discrimination or social exclusion. It is this official status of the negative credential that differentiates it from other sources of social stigma, offering greater legitimacy to its use as the basis for differentiation.

Pager further notes, "In our frenzy of locking people up, our 'crime control' policies may in fact exacerbate the very conditions that lead to crime in the first place. . . . The fact that a criminal record severely limits employment opportunities—particularly among blacks—suggests that these individuals are left with few viable alternatives."

Weiman (2007) also examined the effects of a prison record and race/ethnicity on employment, reporting on a larger experiment in New York that confirms Pager's "basic finding: that a white former offender has approximately the same callback rate as Latino and African American men with a clean record." Weiman observes that going to prison impedes the employment trajectory of black offenders particularly, "[b]ecause of the striking racial disproportionality in prison rates exacerbated by the War on Drug policies." He found that "employers show clear signs of racial profiling, tarnishing all young black men with the stigma of a criminal record."

In sum, Weiman stated that "[a] prison record is not a 'pathway to the secondary labor market' . . . but rather a profound institutional barrier that prevents those on the socioeconomic margin from getting their foot in the doors that lead out of the secondary labor market."

Gooden and Bailey (2001) noted different findings, however, with regard to longer-term employment rates. Regarding race and gender, they wrote that "[a]t three months, the odds of blacks and Hispanics retaining their jobs are .70 less than the odds of whites. At six months, this relationship is no longer present.

Weiman also noted that, "Regardless of these racial and class differences, the employment rates of all prisoners [released in Washington State] declined sharply over time and returned to their preprison levels within 1.5 years."

3.4 Difficulty making ends meet: low wage jobs

Working long hours for low wages and minimal or no benefits can mean the rewards for work are too low to continue working, especially when balanced against commuting costs, child care, and other outlays that may be necessary.

Visher, Debus, and Yahner (2008) examined the relationship between wages and recidivism. Based on research involving 740 men who were formerly imprisoned in Illinois, Ohio, or Texas, they found that "the more wages earned two months after release, the lower a respondent's likelihood of reincarceration. Predicted probabilities of reincarceration were 8 percent for those earning more than $10 per hour; 12 percent for those earning $7 to $10 per hour; and 16 percent for those earning less than $7 per hour—compared with 23 percent for those who were unemployed." This means that people earning more than $10 an hour "were half as likely to return to prison as those making less than $7 an hour."

The authors posited that the recidivism effect "may be due to the difficulty in supporting oneself or one's family on an inadequate salary. About two in five respondents resorted to working over 40 hours a week to earn more money. Many respondents relied on family and friends and, to a lesser extent, on government programs for financial support after release. Although this reliance decreased over time, 48 percent of respondents were still reporting their family and friends as sources of income eight months after release. Furthermore, even after considering all sources of income, the median monthly income eight months after release was only $700 per month." The authors concluded that, "All things equal, former prisoners who are able to secure a job, ideally at higher than minimum wage, by two months out are more likely to successfully avoid recidivism the first 8 to 12 months after release."

The Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (2007) conducted a study to determine the wages a family needs to earn in order to meet its basic expenses, such as housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, utilities, and taxes. The resulting online calculator allows families to estimate their income needs according to the type of family (single parent, multiple wage earners, etc.), by geographic location, and by whether health insurance is provided through employers. The home page for the system is www.missourieconomy.org/familywage.

Other sources also associate better wages and benefits with improved job retention and reduced recidivism.

- In 1996, Gendreau, Little, and Goggin hypothesized that "quality employment which places ex-offenders on a career track will increase job retention and ultimately lead to more favorable outcomes."

- Holzer, Stoll, and Wissoker (2001) agreed that placing workers in better jobs, including those with promotion possibilities and/or health insurance benefits, can improve retention.

- Holzer and Martinson (2005) stated that the focus of pre-employment services, particularly job search or job readiness services, should be to improve the quality of the jobs to which low earners have access – in terms of starting wages and benefits, as well as growth potential — to jobs that are above and beyond what they obtain on their own.

- As noted by Uggen and Wakefield (2008), "[E]mployment quality may be more important for crime reduction than the simple presence or absence of a job, as many of those at high risk for crime are likely to also have substantial opportunities in the illegal labor market open to them."

On the other hand, low-skill and low-paying jobs are not always to be avoided. Wallace and Wyckoff observed (2008) that less-desirable jobs can actually be a useful resource for placements within the local employment situation. "Program staff contend that companies with poorer paying jobs, undesirable working conditions and high turnover can play a important role in helping some job seekers gain skills and experience that will lead to better employment." Workers can get and hold these jobs for a relatively short time then move on with a stronger resume.

Research also shows that better earnings in post-parole employment are associated with lower rates of long-term recidivism. "[P]ost-prison jobs in which reentrants earn less than a person working part-time at the minimum wage were not associated with lower recidivism over the long run." (George, LaLonde, and Haitsma, 2007). However, when post-prison earnings are above that threshold, long-term recidivism rates are significantly lower. This effect held true also for younger people, who typically have a stronger likelihood of losing jobs and returning to the corrections system. "Among the youngest reentrants, including reentrants in the [Going Home] target population, earning more than half-time minimum wage pay is associated with substantial reductions in long-term recidivism." A conclusion is that successful programs should focus on ensuring that participants will earn "some threshold level of earnings while employed."

Crutchfield and colleagues (1997, 2006) also discuss how a stable job with reasonably good pay, benefits, and potential for advancement (a “primary-sector job”) gives a worker more incentive to hang onto the job than does a job with low pay, few benefits, and no future (a “secondary-sector job”). Crutchfield refers to this as establishing a greater stake in conformity with the social norms associated with employment.

In a conference presentation summarized by the National Institute of Justice (1997), Crutchfield described an analysis of data from 121 census tracts in Seattle, Washington, which tested the relationship between labor market instability (as indicated by unemployment rates and the percentage of the workforce in service-sector jobs) and crime. The results showed that the neighborhoods with higher levels of labor market instability also had significantly higher rates of violent crime, poverty, and income inequality. Unemployment and marginal employment rates appeared to have direct effects on violent and property crime. In addition, a combination of personal factors and the employment rates in the county of residence could be used to predict criminal activity. (Similar content is presented in Crutchfield and Pitchford, 1997.) In subsequent work, Crutchfield et al. (2006) demonstrated that local labor markets were more important than neighborhood characteristics in determining employment outcomes.

Putting the availability of quality jobs in a broader social context, Elizabeth Lower-Basch (2007) says that the government should not allow companies to provide substandard jobs and leave it to workers, families, and communities to pay the price. “Improving job quality is a critical part of the agenda for reducing poverty, supporting families, rewarding effort, and expanding opportunity for all.” This idea leads to the question of what employer incentives might be created through public policy. As noted by Lower-Basch, “[l]ow-wage workers are both the least likely to get paid sick days and the least able to get by without a day’s pay.”

SECTION 4. Organizational Strategies for Addressing Job Retention for Formerly Incarcerated Persons

Job placement and retention with ex-offender populations is an important theme in the reentry literature and elsewhere. Many organizations are developing and testing new approaches, though evaluative research that focuses on job retention outcomes is limited compared to studies that measure recidivism.

While job placement is a necessary first step, employment retention is a more important goal. As stated by Solomon, Johnson, et al. (2004),

> Job retention benefits multiple parties—the employee (who will build a more impressive resume with long-term positions), the employer (who avoids the costs associated with employee turnover), and the intermediary agency (which can maximize its resources to help a greater volume of former prisoners, rather than helping the same former prisoner find multiple jobs). Partnerships are a key to success in this area. Intermediary agencies can provide critical supports that are beyond the expertise and capacity of most employers. Functioning as mediators, they are also available to assist the employer and employee in working through problems rather than terminating the relationship.

Work assistance programs and their partner organizations need to define employment retention as a strategic priority. Several elements position an agency or partnership for constructing an effective approach that can operate from a relapse framework.

It is helpful when partner agencies understand each other's shared and individual needs and goals. Intended aims for clients should be articulated. Tracking the services that are delivered and measuring their impacts helps to demonstrate effectiveness, justify program expenditures, improve service delivery, encourage a sense of achievement among program staff, and share knowledge for the advancement of the field.

This section addresses:

4.1 Agency, partnership, and employer relationships
4.2 Aims for clients and outcomes
4.3 Program goals and outcome measurement

4.1 Agency, partnership, and employer relationships

Agency or partnership efforts are most effective when they are designed to meet the complementary needs and goals of all the stakeholders involved. In the area of job retention for formerly incarcerated persons, the stakeholders include, at a minimum, the client, the community of area employers, the justice agencies that release and/or supervise the program clients, and the workforce entity itself.

This section addresses:

4.1.1 Environment and culture
4.1.2 Employer relations and services

4.1.1 Environment and culture

Agency readiness, philosophy, culture, and partnerships combine to create an environment that believes in and supports interventions that improve employment and job retention for formerly incarcerated persons.

Bushway (2003) mentioned the importance of prison management buy-in to the goal of successful reentry. Solomon et al. (2008) observed that "[j]ail reentry strategies will only work if the culture of the institution supports the end goals and reentry programming, treatment, and operations are thoroughly integrated into everyday activities. . . . In the paramilitary correctional structure, the sheriff or commissioner, along with wardens and other top jail officials, needs to clearly, consistently, and frequently remind staff why reentry is a priority and link this mission to promotions and performance evaluations." One resource on correctional culture and ways to influence it is NIC's publication, *Building Culture Strategically: A Team Approach for Corrections* (Carol Flaherty Associates, 2007).

On the same theme, Solomon et al. (2008) wrote, "There is increasing recognition that to be successful in the reentry arena, organizations need to communicate, coordinate, plan, and prioritize shared goals and outcomes (Council of State Governments and Re-Entry Policy Council, 2005; Osher, 2006). Still, many organizations continue to operate as they have over time, with independent goals and missions. Jail transition efforts may require collective goals—and maybe even altered missions—to identify shared aims and rewards for individual agency accomplishments. Jurisdictions should also identify outcomes of interest, or performance measures, that will help hold themselves accountable to their goals. As the adage says, 'What gets measured gets done.'"

Massachusetts parole officers emphasized the importance of partner agencies in the community to assist in successful reentry (Brooks et al., 2008). "To improve their role as service brokers, parole officers indicated they would benefit from a specialized staff person whose primary purpose is facilitating contacts to service providers and employment opportunities. For example, they thought parole outcomes would improve dramatically if a job developer were on staff at every regional parole office to help parolees find jobs. The local career centers that parolees use as a referral source have not been very successful in placing parolees in jobs, and parole officers reported having little time to assist with such needed skills as résumé writing and interviewing."

An example of attention to consolidated services and development of partnerships is in Montgomery County, Maryland. The county "has established a direct link between the jail and the county's workforce system through a partnership between the Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation and the Workforce Investment Board. The result is the creation of a full-service One-Stop Career Center located within the jail, enabling inmates to start the job search while incarcerated. The One-Stop Career Center offers a variety of resources in a single location, including reading rooms, mock interview rooms, workspace, and a computer lab where inmates have access to online career and labor market information and can complete résumés, cover letters, and job applications." (Solomon et al., 2008)

Weygandt, Anders, and Mata (2008) described a variety of state and local partnerships created to improve the employability of federal probationers in the Eastern District of Missouri. For example, construction trades training is provided through an agreement with the St. Louis city government and the Carpenters Joint Apprenticeship Program.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (2007) developed its Inmate Skills Development initiative and web-based assessment system in collaboration with other agencies involved in inmates' transition to the community, including the courts and probation.

Ryan (2005) emphasized the importance of linkage and coordination between the agencies that have responsibility for offenders before and after their release and between these agencies and any other

direct service providers. Ryan further extended the concept of readiness to the community. She advocated for liaison between employment programs and the community via meetings and outreach through the local media. Devoting time and energy to a public relations effort can help create a climate of readiness and acceptance of ex-offenders who are returning to work.

An important potential partner is the local One-Stop career center, a service of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. One-Stop centers provide training referrals, career counseling, and job placement services.

Community and faith-based organizations can be effective partners in employment assistance programs. An evaluation of twelve collaborations between workforce investment systems and faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) (Paulsell et al., 2007) showed that the FBCOs "expanded access to workforce investment services among job seekers from underserved populations. Nearly a third of those served were ex-offenders, almost a fourth had limited English proficiency, and more than a fifth were receiving public assistance at enrollment." FBCOs provided "more intensive services, more individualized services, or services that had not been offered before (such as specialized job readiness training or mentoring)," particularly for people considered typically underserved by local One-Stop centers. FBCOs were also effective in leveraging other community resources. However, attention may be needed to bridge cultural differences between the partnering organizations.

The Connections to Success program in Kansas City, Missouri, has created a variety of partnerships, both faith-based and non-sectarian, to improve job retention. Lambert (2008) notes that agreements cover a variety of services, some paid and others made available in-kind. Partners include workforce development agencies, U.S. Probation, Missouri Probation and Parole, the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association (KCMBA), faith-based organizations, and others. For example, KCMBA has provided pro bono legal services for matters such as child support for out-of-state children of participants.

Lambert (2008) observed that faith-based organizations "are well positioned to provide vital support to individuals transitioning back to the community from incarceration. Congregations have strengths that are not easily duplicated by any other force in society." She cites remarks by Gary Gunderson, Director for the Interfaith Health Program of the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, that "[c]ongregations are by nature relational and have the capacity to connect people to each other."

According to Steve McFarland, Director of Faith Based Initiatives in the U.S. Department of Justice, "The faith-based community is prime venue for recruiting mentors who see these returning offenders as their fellow human being. The faith based community has an answer. That's why they are indispensable partners." (Coppola, 2008)

4.1.2 Agency/partnership relations with employers

Job assistance programs can improve their effectiveness through their knowledge of, relationships with, and direct support of area employers. Being available as a resource to employers can help build trust that results in consistent placements. Developing connections among employers also helps the assistance agency expand the spectrum and value of its job placements and ultimately keep more clients better employed for longer periods.

Better relationships with employers create a stronger social network to support formerly incarcerated persons in sustaining their employment. The workforce organization can provide better advocacy in both directions, representing the needs of both clients and employers.

By engaging more deeply with area employers, workforce programs can demonstrate their expertise, commitment, value, and flexibility in ways that ultimately benefit their clients through better placements and improved retention.

Fischer's study of Jobs Initiative sites (2005) recognized a trend away from a mission-driven approach to job training and employment services in favor of a "dual customer" approach that focuses on both businesses and new workers. The key was for the assistance provider to get buy-in and build credibility, and to stay connected with employers and fine-tune programs in response to employer feedback.

The Independent Committee on Reentry and Employment (2006), examining circumstances for former inmates in New York, found that very few employers were aware of the existence of intermediary organizations that could be a resource for hiring. The committee also noted research that shows a need for education and training among business owners and hiring personnel on aspects of hiring formerly incarcerated persons, such as permissible screening practices and financial incentives for employers (e.g., wage subsidies and tax credits). The suggestion is that employment service providers can step forward to help employers navigate these issues.

Workforce intermediaries are "quasi-governmental entities" (Fischer, 2005b) that strengthen the competitiveness of the local workforce by linking worker development initiatives and business. Poppe et al. (2003) summarized the role of workforce intermediaries in helping solve the job advancement problem for low-wage workers. Programs can "offer a comprehensive set of services to individuals (such as education and training, career and family counseling, and supportive services) and to employers (such customized job training, job coaching, and supervisor training).

Holzer and Martinson (2005) emphasized that the workforce intermediary agency can best deliver on its placement duties when it understands the human resources needs and problems facing area employers. "Critical to these efforts, of course, is the credibility that the intermediary maintains with the employer – i.e., they must be perceived as being balanced brokers who try to meet the needs of both sides in the employment relationship, and not only advocates for the workers."

To engage with employers, employment assistance programs can provide client training that is focused on growth sectors in the local labor market, tackles skills gaps identified by employers, and is customized for specific job vacancies (Stewart, 2008).

According to Wallace and Wyckoff (2008), "More and more workforce organizations are offering retention services to all their business customers, and this approach seems especially valuable when employers express trepidation about hiring former prisoners. Fathers at Work staff 'sold' the program's services and support rather than the job applicant. Services included the promise to respond immediately if problems occurred on the job." The authors provide a checklist on providing retention services and a worksheet on assistance types that programs can provide. They noted that "[s]uccessful workforce professionals know who will hire whom and convince hesitant employers that their organization will be there immediately should problems arise." To succeed, workforce professionals must market their own organizations as well as furthering the needs of their job-seeking clients.

Employment assistance agencies can also benefit their employer and employee clients by providing feedback to employers on the importance of good supervisor relationships. Conflict with the supervisor is a major element that can push ex-offenders and others to leave their jobs, especially when the jobs are low-paying or perceived as offering little future advancement. Stork et al. (2005) wrote, "No one is in a better position to empower and engage, or conversely, to discourage and demotivate—than the immediate supervisor." In the study by Stork et al. (2005) of worker satisfaction and on-the-job relationships, 94 percent of respondents said it is definitely important to be trusted by your supervisor, and 88 percent said it was important to respect the supervisor.

According to Crandall (2004), placement agencies can provide services that assist the employer (such as incumbent worker training, worker mentoring, and training for supervisors) that indirectly improve job retention. Integrated services from a one-stop provider makes it easier for the employer to work with the workforce development system. Buy-in for retention services should exist at all levels of the hiring organization – top management, human resources, and front-line supervisors.

Evans, Souma, and Maier (1989) observed that staff interventions with employers are especially important for formerly incarcerated persons. In addition to their role helping ex-offenders market themselves as employees, program staff are important in locating job situations that can accommodate the particular needs of some clients. This can include jobs with low stress, low-stimulus work stations (to reduce problems related to social skills or anger management issues), and potentially flexible working hours to accommodate treatment or management of medication.

Gillis and Andrews (2005) found that strong social support benefits were gained when correctional industry work sites created a database of community employers and businesses that were willing to hire offenders. This saved time for released offenders, relieved their uncertainty about whether to report their criminal record to potential employers, and helped them get to the interview stage.

By developing relationships with area employers, workforce organizations can create opportunities for workers who face barriers to enter higher quality jobs with more interesting work, better pay and benefits, and improved paths for advancement. People in reentry are living “on the edge” in many ways, and even modest improvements in work rewards can make a major difference in their success in keeping a job.

The career pathways model provides an example of tightly aligning area work assistance efforts with local employer needs. Poppe et al. (2003) discussed key elements of advancement for low-wage workers, using a “career pathways” model for “developing training and job placement efforts that bring together the long-term needs and goals of workers and employers.”

On the level of client-focused assistance programs, Wallace and Wyckoff (2008) say that “effective job developers continuously develop their own employer lists or, more accurately, employer portfolios. Well-developed portfolios include both employers offering less desirable jobs that allow people to gain experience and develop skills as well as those with better jobs but more stringent requirements.”

4.2 Client aims and outcomes

An additional element is the organization’s conceptualization of its goals and targets for clients. Workforce initiatives can create a stronger sense of purpose by exploring what they want to accomplish for individual clients. The different emphases of job retention and employment retention can lead to different program and client interventions. Attainment of training, education, and other life goals may be most feasible when the client obtains a part-time rather than a full-time job. Self-employment may be a viable option for some clients. By being fully open to the unique circumstances of individuals, workforce initiatives may be able to provide both more focused and more flexibly adaptive services for clients.

Client goals should be based on a realistic understanding of the factors that impede employment and research on the effectiveness of interventions. For example, high transition rates out of employment may not indicate failure so much as an ongoing movement toward a job that provides a better fit for the client and employer. Based on this recognition, “one component of a successful reentry program likely should be services to help reentrants retain their jobs and to move them from job to job quickly when they become unemployed” (George, LaLonde, and Haitsma, 2007).

This concept can be framed from a relapse perspective. For example, Tarlow (2001) refers to the value of a strategy that accepts early failure as part of the process of recovery to successful life on the outside. The essential aim is to focus on retention itself rather than job placement. Ideally, the client will benefit from program interventions in ways that lead to greater work satisfaction over the long haul and a productive career path.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons, in its Inmate Skills Development initiative, now holds its wardens accountable for program outcomes related to employment (Rakis, 2008). This exemplifies the movement in corrections over the last decade toward focusing on early interventions to improve success at reentry. "It is generally accepted that offenders should receive a continuum of reentry services," Rakis noted, "which begin the first day they enter prison. Retention services should be viewed as an integral part of the reentry process, and not simply a stand-alone effort that begins upon release or when a person obtains a job."

4.3 Program goals and outcome measurement

Outlining the program's aims for clients can inform the development of program-level goals and outcomes. Evidence-based practices require that measurable targets should be defined in order for program outcomes to be evaluated. This principle applies to the efforts of corrections and its partner social service agencies to make a difference in offender employment retention. Program planning should include strategic thinking about measurable and evaluable elements that can help illuminate what works in placement and retention on a large scale, and what can be learned from job loss patterns at the client level. Support for data collection and analysis is essential.

How placement and funding agencies measure placement activity and outcomes can define and steer the development and improvement of programming. A greater understanding of job matching or of reasons for job loss can lead to better targeting in assistance and interventions for clients or to changes in agencies' partnerships with employers. The state of knowledge on why releasees fail in the community and why, specifically, job placements fail is mainly anecdotal rather than illuminated by quantified, case-level data. This may be limiting the ability of programs to adjust their services in ways that would result in meaningful improvements.

The literature includes commentary on the need for a consistent definition of job retention. Ryan (2005) observed,

> At the very basis of the problem is the fact that job retention is a nebulous concept. Without a standard definition of job retention, it is impossible to establish a meaningful program goal. It is impossible either to compare results across programs or to assess the relative effectiveness of interventions in achieving job retention.

Rakis (2005) connected employment and reentry success, noting,

> Given the importance of work in the reentry process, the rate of employment is a valuable indicator for measuring the effectiveness of post-release services and supervision. Only 21.8 percent of responding agencies reported that they tracked the employment rates of persons under their supervision. Where they were tracked, employment rates for 2003 ranged from a high of 97.5 percent to a low of 45 percent. The absence of a universally accepted definition for offender employment rate and the differences between local economies makes it impossible to compare parole agencies at this time.

Rakis also observed,

> To ensure consistency between reporting agencies, the term "employment rate" needs to be defined and common methods for measuring the employment status of parolees need to be adopted. It is recommended that parole agencies use the definitions and systems developed by the U.S. Department of Labor to measure the efficacy of welfare-to-work programs. These definitions and systems have been developed and refined over the course of many years and provide a nationally accepted benchmark for parole agencies to use.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, has noted (2007) that "[v]aried federal performance measures and definitions of employments success often prevent state agencies from developing a seamless service system. As such, uniform benchmarks for tracking data and measuring success, including definitions and retention standards, are essential to improving service integration."

Some examples of criteria that could be used for measuring retention success include the specific number of days employed in a calendar year or a quarter, the number of days per year or quarter that a client was unemployed or between jobs, or the number and percentage of program participants who were employed at specific intervals. Collecting data on why people leave or are terminated from jobs could measure the relative importance, in the local employment marketplace, of specific skill sets, workplace attitudes, difficulties and challenges experienced, or employer characteristics.

This review found that current impact measures for job assistance tend to be process-oriented, measuring program completions and training attendance, or they track job placements, days worked, and/or wages earned as the meaningful outcome. When retention status is tracked, it is often for short periods such as 90 days, or at specific calendar points such as six months or one year.

There is growing interest in development of longer-term, retention-specific outcome measures. Fischer (2005) says, "Both government and private funders such as the Casey Foundation have indicated their growing appreciation for the importance of retention over the last few years, placing job-training providers on notice that the days of meeting their contract obligations by merely bringing participants in for training, or even making initial job placements, are gone forever."

In 2005, the U.S. Department of Labor was engaged in developing a performance goal for job retention for veterans in an assistance program. Data for 2003 suggested that 35 percent of employed veterans who were served through the program retained their jobs for 180 days. (Bascetta, 2005).

A study in the UK (Stewart, 2008) describes the situation well by saying, "[t]here is a surprisingly small evidence base for the effectiveness of offender employment projects, . . ." though information exists and is being shared. However, much of the information is anecdotal, it is not collected in a systematic manner, and it is often lost when projects are closed at the end of a funding period. "There is as yet nothing approaching a common framework for evaluating offender employment projects. Although good quality evaluations do exist, they are largely single project based. This is better than nothing and helps individual projects make their case, but they are of limited strategic value overall."

Some employment measures have been in place for some time, and many are still evolving.

- The employment referral field uses "closure" as a term to indicate successful placement, meaning the client has been vocationally rehabilitated.

- Self-sufficiency is defined within the Workforce Investment Act of 2000 as employment that pays at least 100 percent of the lower living standard income level (LLSIL).

- The federal Employment and Training Administration measures employment in days worked (U.S. Department of Labor, 2007).

- Miles (2006) described six workforce programs around the country that operate in an outcomes-driven manner. Examples include the Chrysalis program in Los Angeles, which works with economically disadvantaged and homeless people; the Strive program in Chicago; the Hope program in Brooklyn; Jewish Vocational Service in San Francisco; and Towards Employment in Cleveland. Miles discussed how these programs adjusted their approaches to better measure their impact and results.

- The Robin Hood Foundation is a funder of the CEO program. The foundation targets poverty and funds some 45 programs, some of which provide services to some post-correctional participants, but fewer than 10 of which target formerly incarcerated persons exclusively. The foundation requests its grantees to track program completions and 90-day and 1-year job retention data, but there is no tracking of reasons for job loss (Epstein, 2008).

- An MDRC random-assignment evaluation of the CEO program looks at employment outcomes by quarter in the first year after release (Bloom et al., 2007). Arrests, convictions, and parole and reincarceration status are also tracked.

- A detailed set of 10 suggested metrics is provided by Andrew Moore (2004) on behalf of the National Transitional Jobs Network project of the National League of Cities. For retention, the recommendation is to track the number of participants working at 6 months after placement, with gaps in employment permissible if not exceeding 14 days, and for intermediate status checks to be made at 30, 60, 90, and 120 days. Moore also recommends gathering data on retention at 12, 18, and 24 months after placement and identifies other measurable elements that focus on impact and benefits of services.

- "The first 30 days are the most critical, so much so that the Safer Foundation does not even count a placement until the participant has been working for 30 days." (Buck, 2000)

- Ready4Work looks at three months of continuing employment, although not necessarily in the same job, as a key job retention benchmark (Fletcher, 2007). A peer review of data collection for Ready4Work (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2007) suggested that Ready4Work should "adopt a post-program earnings measure" similar to that used by other employment and training programs to improve understanding of employment outcomes.

- The Second Chance Act requires nonprofit organizations that receive grant funds should report on rates of recidivism, entry into employment, retention in employment, and average earnings.

- Section 136 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), focusing on performance accountability, requires programs for general adult workers and dislocated workers to measure these elements:

    - Entry into unsubsidized jobs,
    - Retention for 6 months,
    - Earnings, and
    - Attainment of credentials in education or occupational skills.

  The WIA has specific accountability requirements for Job Corps programs, one of which is the number and retention rate of program graduates in jobs at 6 and 12 months. Job Corps programs are also to measure the number of graduates; the job placement rate; the average wage at placement; the average wage at 6 and 12 months; a breakdown of job entries at the 32+ hour per week level, the 20 to 32 hour per week level, and the less than 20 hours per week

level; the number of participants referred to education or advanced training, and the number who attain job readiness and employment skills.

The U.S. Department of Labor lacks structured data on job placement failures within WIA programs (Callahan, 2008). Some unstructured data is being collected in a non-mandatory database field, and it could be instructive to review these data against factors such as hours worked per week, hourly wages, type of job (listed in 16 occupational groupings), and acquisition of a subsequent job. The depth of the available data may vary by grantee location.

- The U.S. Government Accountability Office (2004) reviewed states' assessments of their employment placement and training programs. Among these 18 states that provided sample assessments, four (4) assessed their programs exclusively using process-oriented indicators, such as the number of businesses served and the number of program participants. GAO noted that process-oriented indicators help assess a number of factors, including who uses the program, how funds are spent, and how well a program is being implemented. Fourteen (14) states included outcome-oriented indicators, the most common of which was worker wages (11 states). Other outcome-oriented indicators included:

    - Retention rates (1 state)
    - Job placements (1 state)
    - Return on investment (2 states)
    - Employment stability (1 state)
    - Advancement rates (2 states)
    - Use of unemployment insurance benefits (2 states).

- Information collected from Ready4Work sites includes participation in specific services (such as mentoring, job-training case management, counseling, education, health, and life skills training), program participation (e.g., active participant, graduate, terminated), job placements, job retention, and recidivism status (U.S. Department of Labor, Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, 2008). The authors suggest these questions to be considered by teams starting new programs:

    - Does your organization adequately monitor the success of your programs?
    - What quantifiable data points can you develop that would define "success" in your program?
    - Does the data produced and distributed by your organization provide an accurate portrayal of your activities and rates of success?
    - Are there other data elements that you are not collecting that would more accurately portray your program's activities and successes?

- Scott Weygandt of the National Institute of Corrections is helping to pilot software that tracks employment and recidivism outcomes for formerly incarcerated persons who are being assisted by trained Offender Workforce Development Specialists (Weygandt, 2008). A two- to three-year follow up period is anticipated. Some of the outcome variables being measured include re-arrest, recidivism, number of days the offender held employment, number of days elapsed before the offender found employment, and number of work days missed. Outcomes also are being tracked against the use of specific skills covered in OWDS training, such as assessment of the clients' barriers and strengths, development of an individualized job retention strategy, and use of mock job interviews.

- Federal Probation collects data via the PACTS system, and inclusion of employment outcomes data has been planned (Weygandt, 2008).

- The Federal Bureau of Prisons is piloting a system to measure employment outcomes for halfway house residents and community supervisees (Breazzano, 2008). In addition to collecting basic data (e.g., dates of employment, full- or part-time status, and wages/wage increases), the system as currently conceived will also track employer satisfaction. Also of interest is the relationship between the type of vocational skills training the client has received and the type of job an individual obtains or remains in over time.

In their discussion of reentry assistance in Going Home sites in Chicago, George, LaLonde, and Haitsma (2007) say that officials can use available state-level data to set "realistic benchmarks and goals for recidivism and employment outcomes." This includes communicating with other policy makers about why recidivism rates should be expected to stay "relatively high" and employment rates to stay "relatively low" for reentrants even if the program is successful and cost-effective. "We find that setting a post-prison benchmark employment rate of 50 percent or more for Cook County reentrants would constitute a very ambitious standard for a prisoner reentry program. Instead, planners of reentry services should anticipate that quarterly employment rates of reentrants are likely to be in the 30 to 35 percent range during the first few quarters after parole. Further we expect these rates to subsequently decline modestly with time."

Regarding piloting changes in the practices followed by staff, Bloom (2006) writes, "Clearly some reforms are systemic efforts that are not easily testable, but others might lend themselves to evaluation. For example, what if a study systematically varied performance goals for parole officers, with officers in the 'experimental group' subject to targets that emphasized employment and successful completion of parole?"

Similarly, there seems to be little quantified data on the individual dynamics of job loss. Measuring the prevalence of specific factors in clients' loss of or voluntary separation from jobs could lead to improvements in program design, job referrals development, placement practices, and employee supports. By learning more about job fit, goal setting, training and workplace preparation, interpersonal issues, and atmosphere at specific workplaces, program may be able to further improve employment retention.

SECTION 5. Applying the Relapse Model to Ex-Offender Job Retention

The relapse prevention concept of job retention confronts the dynamics of losing a job through poor performance, poor attitude, inability to balance life pressures, and/or reasonable dissatisfaction with a job. As noted previously, in this paper the term "job retention" refers to the client's ability to hold a specific job. "Employment retention" refers to the client's ability to maintain a place in the workforce, possibly by moving as necessary to jobs that provide a better fit in terms of compensation or long-term goals.

Relapse prevention theory emphasizes the importance of empowering clients for sustained success with their behavioral objectives. This means building on strengths, motivation, and coping strategies both before and during employment. Understanding the client's individual needs and challenges is essential to this work. While the client is in the job, staff provide reinforcement and assist with specific challenges that may arise to threaten sustained employment. Providers and their agencies should also be prepared to offer a range of supports and incentives and to extend the network of assistance available to the client. If the client loses one job, staff help the client learn from the experience and prepare for the next job.

Job retention is the outcome of the interplay between motivation and personal strengths, self-awareness, job preparedness, job fit, and stressors and social pressures and the client's inner and outer resources for dealing with them. Attention focuses on the employment experience, particularly in the reentry period, when establishing the pattern of stable employment and a record of reliability can be important. Assistance can also focus on the client's internal motivation to succeed and on specific incentives and practical aids and supports that help make it possible for challenged workers to keep their jobs despite the many obstacles they face.

This section addresses:

5.1 Job loss framed as a treatment relapse
5.2 Understanding the client's needs and assets
5.3 Building on strengths
5.4 Supporting motivation to work
5.5 Maximizing client support
5.6 Intervening with threats to job retention
5.7 Responding constructively to job loss

5.1 Job loss framed as a treatment relapse

Section 2 of this paper reviewed the theory of relapse intervention and how it has been used in other types of correctional programming. In terms of theory, for example, Parks and Marlatt (2000) said that relapse-oriented programs need to help clients to:

a) Understand relapse as a process,
b) Identify and cope effectively with high-risk situations,

c) Cope with urges and craving,
d) Implement damage control procedures during a lapse to minimize its negative consequences,
e) Stay engaged in treatment even after a relapse, and
f) Learn how to create a more balanced lifestyle.

Houston (2006) outlined the direct parallels between addiction relapse and ex-offender employment and job retention as follows:

- People who are addicted often return to treatment before maintaining sobriety, just as offenders often need re-placement before maintaining extended employment.

- Substance abuse relapse potential is highest in the first 30 days, just as offender employment is most often lost in the first 30 days.

- High-risk and emotional situations such as personal conflict, frustration, and anger can trigger relapse, just as they can trigger behavior likely to result in job loss.

- Motivation and commitment are key to maintain sobriety, just as they are critical to maintaining employment, and

- Motivation alone is not enough to avoid relapse. Perceived self-efficacy often plays a crucial role in long-term sobriety, just as with offender employment.

Houston's suggestions echo a discussion by Tarlow (2001) of specific relapse-related attitudes that correctional assistance workers need to adopt in order to be effective helping formerly incarcerated persons to succeed in making life changes:

- Accepting mistakes and setbacks – As relapse is an accepted element of the drug treatment continuum, "in the same way, anticipating and managing mistakes should be an integral feature of effective program models for job retention." It often takes more than one job placement before the right match is made. For this reason, employment programs for hard-to-employ ex-offenders should expect that the first job placement may not "stick."

- Recognizing a higher likelihood of failure in the beginning – Relapse potential is highest in the early stages of post-treatment recovery, particularly the very first month. Clients are typically more stable after about 90 days. Within the CEO program, 30 percent of clients fail within the first month on the job, but of those who have kept their jobs for 90 days, 70 percent will still be working after six months.

- Understanding conflict and negative emotional states as warning signs – Job loss often involves a poor attitude, a lack of perspective about the employer's needs and the worker-employer relationship, frustration, anger, and anxiety. Learning coping skills can be key.

- Understanding the fluidity of motivation – Success experienced by clients can sometimes undermine or subvert their commitment to change. For example, when an ex-smoker quits smoking long enough, her congestion and coughing fits can improve to the point where they lose their immediate power as a deterrent to further smoking. Similarly, job assistance clients can gain a false sense of confidence that they have dealt with their issues, leaving them potentially vulnerable to actual threats. For example, ex-offenders at CEO sometimes weaken in their resolve to stay out of prison as their bad memories fade. They may feel they can handle some occasional substance use or spend time with drug-involved friends, but then relapse badly to substance abuse and end up losing their jobs and returning to prison.

- Promoting self-efficacy – Beyond motivation, perceived self-efficacy is crucial for long-term recovery, as clients develop coping responses for dealing with high-risk situations. To develop abilities and confidence, clients may need the most support during the early stages of change. Peer pressure has strong potential to undermine these new ways of thinking.

Table 1 presents a phase-by-phase overview of the job retention cycle in terms of client and staff roles.

Table 1. Focus of Client and Staff in a Relapse Cycle View of Job Retention

	Focus of client	Focus of program staff
Pre-employment	Self-knowledge, motivation, identification of work and career goals, job skills and attitudes preparation, anticipating possible challenges to future sustained employment, rehearsing responses to possible challenges.	Understanding the needs and issues of the client; supporting and assisting with client strengths, learning, and growth; helping determine job and career goals; helping develop strategies for response to possible future job retention challenges.
Ongoing employment	Performing on the job; gaining work skills and experience; developing interpersonal skills specific to the workplace, balancing work and other life demands.	Monitoring client status, providing reinforcement.
Stressor pattern or incident	Understanding the causes of the stressor or incident.	Reinforcing client understanding of the situation.
Emotional response to stressor/incident	Strength and coping response, or doubt and loss of resolve.	Providing support and encouragement.
Action	Use of coping strategies and interpersonal skills to remain on the job, or failure to meet the demands of the situation.	Reinforcing use of coping strategies and interpersonal skills, intervening with employers, encouraging support from client's support network, and/or providing other support interventions.
Post-employment	Learning from the job loss experience, identifying areas that need further attention or factors that will improve future job fit.	Helping identify focus areas for further work, providing encouragement toward additional learning and growth.

5.2 Understanding the client's needs and assets

Assessment is a good first step toward planning assistance for workforce clients. Assessment for employment purposes can include an evaluation of offender skills (provided by 44 percent of programs answering an NIC 2000 survey), an evaluation of employment-related needs (provided by 39 percent of programs), and an evaluation of career interests (provided by 37 percent of programs) (Houston, 2001). About half of the survey respondents obtained these types of information via interviews, and about one-third did so by using formal assessment instruments.

Mellow et al. (2008) wrote that assessments in the context of jail reentry are useful for four reasons that are also relevant to workforce assistance programs:

1. Assessment allows you to see the big picture of your population's needs and trends.

2. Assessment allows you to be as efficient and cost-effective as possible when matching your reentry strategies to individual inmate needs.

3. Assessment helps identify inmates' prevalent needs.

4. Assessment identifies the level of support, responsibility, and training your staff and contract vendors need to work with inmates before and after release.

Mellow et al. (2008) described two assessment instruments being used to identify employment assistance needs, which are provided as appendices in their report.

- The PS Plus assessment "surveys for vocational interests, skills, and history; educational levels and qualifications; and barriers to employment, such as driver's license suspension." It was developed through a project of the European Social Fund and the U.K.'s National Offender Management Service. The assessment instrument is included as an appendix in the Mellow et al. document.

- A second screen has 49 questions about challenges in the areas of career planning, education/training, personal/health, attitude, job search, offense, and support. It was originally developed by the New Mexico Corrections Department and modified by the Maryland Correctional Education Program. The client reflects on these questions to identify and prioritize issues to be addressed.

Approaches to assessment and rehabilitation in jails focus on identifying problems or underlying causes for negative behavior (Solomon et al., 2008). This information can uncover areas where an ex-offender may still have vulnerabilities that could affect sustained employment. For example, the categories of the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) explore negative behaviors and failures in an individual's life, such as criminal attitudes, emotional problems, lack of stable family structure, or lack of a high school diploma, in an attempt to inform areas to focus intervention. Solomon et al. also described an increasing focus on identifying and encouraging individual strengths and healthy behaviors in justice-involved persons, as discussed by Clark in 1997 and 1998. Proponents of strength-based practice argue that it provides more strategies to exploit and build on positive qualities, enhance intrinsic motivation, and help people remain out of the justice system.

The Reentry Policy Council provides an online index (not dated) to assessment instruments that focus on employment and education.

The Connections to Success program in Kansas City, Missouri, adopted the assessment tools identified in NIC Offender Workforce Development training. As a result, job retention rose to 69 percent, according to Lambert (2008). She notes, "Mentoring is key to retention and recidivism; however, it is our experience utilizing the assessment tools and training from NIC OWDS training that has contributed to our model. Examples include an informal assessment at participant intake, barrier identification, and career assessments. We implemented the OWDS training in every aspect of our model, including the mentor training for faith partners."

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (2007) relies on dynamic assessments in its competency-based Inmate Skills Development (ISD) initiative. The purpose of the initiative is "to enhance reentry success and reduce recidivism, particularly for the high-risk offender population." Its starting point is an online Inmate Skills Assessment (ISA) instrument targeting nine areas of skill achievement. The ISA is a "dynamic instrument, automated through a web-based application, utilizing information from a variety of sources including court documents, a structured interview with the inmate, behavioral observations of the inmate, and supplemental assessment instruments."

The Bureau of Prisons ISA tracks reentry preparedness skills in nine categories:

- Daily living skills
- Mental health skills
- Wellness skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Academic skills
- Cognitive skills
- Vocational/career skills
- Leisure time skills
- Character skills

The Cognitive Skills category includes drill-down content on general behavior, criminal history, domestic violence/abuse, and criminal behavior. The competency statement of ideal behaviors for this category states, "Engages in accurate self-appraisal by acknowledging and correcting irrational thinking patterns. Is cognizant of the importance of goal setting. Solves problems effectively, maintains self-control and displays pro-social values. Acknowledges and appropriately corrects criminal thinking patterns and behaviors."

Similarly, the Vocational/Career Skills category covers employment history, career development, institution work history, and post-incarceration employment. The competency statement reads, "Acquires and maintains employment in order to become self-sufficient and fulfill financial obligations. Engages in purposeful activity, develops abilities useful in the acquisition and maintenance of post-release employment and pursuit of career goals."

5.3 Building on strengths

Staff who are working in a relapse framework need to consistently express a belief in and expectation of client success. Staff provide a context for support as the client moves through change and prepares for the challenges ahead. Much of the focus is on the client's internal experience and readiness. Assistance is geared to reinforce the strengths and assets that will help keep clients in their jobs.

"The atmosphere of a retention-focused organization is also important," Clymer and Wyckoff write (2003). "Hope permeates the lobby, offices, and classrooms of organizations focused on helping people

provide for themselves and their families. Hope is a great motivation for organizations, their staff, and participants."

This section addresses:

5.3.1 Cognitive/behavioral groundwork
5.3.2 Intrinsic motivation
5.3.3 Motivational interviewing
5.3.4 Self-efficacy and locus of control
5.3.5 Planning ahead

5.3.1 Cognitive/behavioral groundwork

Any progress toward self-change and achievement relies upon an understanding of both the self and the outside factors, situations, and people with which the client will interact (Bush, Glick, and Taymans, 2001). It is the role of the employment assistance worker, in a cognitive/behavioral relapse framework, to help clients understand the objective realities and the interpersonal dynamics of the situations they find themselves in. This is a foundational element in fostering the development of coping strategies.

Section 2.3 of this paper provides more background on cognitive/behavioral program principles, plus examples as applied in corrections.

Cognitive/behavioral interventions help clients, first, to understand their own interior experiences in the form of thoughts and emotions. Secondly, clients learn to observe external events with less bias and to better understand the actions of other people. In many cases, adult offenders have had a fairly limited understanding of their own emotional range, but they can learn to recognize a greater depth of experience. This enables the client to choose to respond to external situations in different ways than in the past.

For example, a work-related interaction that might have triggered simple anger in the past can be understood as causing fear (of loss of respect and/or potential loss of income) and frustration (over a lack of job-specific skills). Instead of quitting the job in response to an immediate angry impulse, the client can identify factors that are within her control, such as the need for more training, and choose an action that is better aligned with her beliefs and goals.

Thinking Skills for the Workplace is an example of a program that applies cognitive/behavioral principles directly to the question of employment preparation for inmates (McLellan, 2001). Participants learn, among other things, to recognize and challenge irrational thinking. McLellan noted, "[c]ognitive skills serve as a foundation set of skills for learning and applying the generic work skills (e.g., team-playing, co-operation)."

In sum, people who have the motivation to their change behavior patterns need to learn how to interrupt the relapse cycle. In order to accomplish that goal, as viewed from a cognitive/behavioral perspective, they must:

- Be motivated to change the targeted behavior;
- Understand the external situations and interactions that are associated with or trigger the lapse behavior;
- Learn to identify and recognize their internal feelings, impulses, thoughts, and behaviors that are a precursor to lapse behavior;

- Understand and develop new coping skills—thinking patterns and behaviors that can avert a lapse; and

- Develop confidence in their ability to respond differently to the situations that trigger lapse thoughts and behavior, in a way that is consistent with their goals and intentions.

5.3.2 Intrinsic motivation

Effective programs help to develop the inner motivation of program participants to make changes in their own lives. Self-motivation is necessary for clients to maintain the resolve needed to stick with a job through difficult times and ultimately achieve their work and career goals. Clients can be helped to recognize and make the most of their existing strengths and resources as well as to understand when and where they need additional support.

Many insights into motivation for self-change come from the literature on reentry and addiction treatment. Bonta and Andrews (2007) called for staff to practice relationship skills – based on respect, collaboration, and motivational interviewing, and structuring skills – based on prosocial modeling and the appropriate use of reinforcement and disapproval, cognitive restructuring, and motivational interviewing.

The self-change cycle includes these phases:

- Precontemplation, the stage before awareness that a change may be warranted;
- Contemplation, the stage in which the costs and benefits of change are considered;
- Decision, the point of commitment to change;
- Active change, the stage in which different behaviors are learned and applied;
- Maintenance, a steady state of sustained new behavior; and, possibly,
- Relapse, a return to the state before the behavioral change was attempted.

Maruna (2000) argued that successful desistance from crime is based on a decision to stay straight, reached by the offender in reviewing the overall narrative of his or her life, and that the decision to do so is best made before the offender is released. Help during the transition to free-world living will be very important for those who have taken these first steps toward life change while in prison, but it will be virtually useless for those who have not.

Lozano (2004) showed that the client's own choice of a treatment goal made it more likely the goal would be reached. Similarly, Hall (2003) concluded that adherence to the lifestyle of the 12-step program is the pre-eminent factor in recovery, and that "[p]articipation or involvement in decision making in aspects of treatment proves motivational for those in the program."

Developing intrinsic motivation is a key starting point. Bloom (2006) wrote, "It may be that programs need to do more than provide services to address specific barriers." Bloom cited Bushway and Reuter's suggestion that employment programs must work against the powerful forces of peer pressure and community norms that militate against steady work in the formal labor market, and their conclusion that programs "need to address the social and psychological issues confronting the communities and individuals they intend to help."

Similarly, Bushway (2003) argued that work programs are "only helpful for people who are ready and willing to exit from a life of crime." He suggested that a critical element is creating motivation, particularly for young males. Uggen (2000) found that supported work programs had a positive impact

on earnings and recidivism for ex-offenders older than 26 years of age, but he observed that the aging out process of desistance from crime "is not well understood."

Bushway (2003) continued,

> To reach people heavily embedded in crime, it is necessary to focus on motivating individuals rather than simply providing skills or a job. For a young man, the benefits of crime will always outweigh the costs of crime without a massive change in the way they look at the world. In other words, simply changing the incentive structure within reasonable ranges will not be enough to effect change. True change will only occur if people embedded in crime change the way they evaluate the consequences of their actions – a process which can only start when the individual is willing to actively participate in the process. . . . Ultimately it seems possible to effect deep-seated change in how an individual views the world in addition to improving work outcomes; the process is very expensive and poorly understood."

Reconceptualizing the individual's inner challenges can be one way to improve motivation and buy-in. Lettner's 2000 dissertation study focused on how former alcoholics and addicts learn to enjoy themselves in their leisure time without the abuse/misuse of substances. To remain sober and to maintain a positive approach to life, people often have to learn new entertainments and leisure activities to have fun while "clean." Doing so represents a complete departure from the patterns they learned as youths and young adults. Similarly, formerly incarcerated persons who have little to no work history may need to learn a completely different way of thinking about work and the day-to-day rhythm of their lives.

Solomon et al. (2008) summarized prevailing views of behavior management as an evidence-based practice. Specifically, "a system of rewards and sanctions should be used to reinforce behavior change, with a priority on reinforcing positive behaviors." They referred to findings of Andrews, et al. (1990), that "incentives and positive reinforcements may be more effective than negative sanctions." "Concrete incentives ranging from bus tokens to increased curfew hours or reducing the frequency of office visits could motivate probationers to comply with conditions and stay on the right track."

Fry (2007a) discussed the importance of staff skills in motivating clients toward change. Once motivation is established, clients need to develop the ability to maintain their resolve in the face of strong and seductive emotions, and to recognize risky situations. Confidence is learned through experience, but in the early phases the counselor plays a key role in supporting a sense of hope.

5.3.3 Motivational interviewing

Motivational interviewing is a communication approach that allows the client to explore issues and possible solutions rather than having staff occupy the role of an "expert" who dictates all the answers. Walters et al. (2007) addressed many aspects of motivational interviewing for probation and parole clients, as well as showing how this technique helps to prepare ex-offenders for change, build their motivation for change, help them navigate tough times, and more.

Fuller and Taylor (2008) observed that, "[w]ithout self-motivation, there is at worst resistance and at best hesitancy and compliance." They cited a description by Miller and Rollnick (2002) of motivational interviewing as a "client centred, directive method for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence."

Fuller and Taylor (2008) presented five principles of motivational interviewing that dovetail very well with the principles of relapse prevention.

1) Clarify contracts. The use of clear contracts allows, from the start, that the organisation, the worker, and service user may not share all the same expectations or goals and makes these explicit in order to find collaborative common ground. To be conducive to self-motivation the contract is jointly owned. A good starting point is for both the worker and the service user to ask: 'How come I am working with this person towards change?'

2) Express empathy. An accurate understanding of the particular needs of each individual who is considering change is sought, without judging, criticising, labelling or blaming. Empathy is particularly associated with client-centred therapy (Rogers 1951), but has also been successfully incorporated into most other approaches which help people to change. Luborsky et al. (1985) and Miller et al. (1980) found that the degree of empathy experienced by service users accounted for behaviour change significantly more than the type of counseling method.

3) Develop desire to change. [The motivational interviewer] guides the service user towards considering change by drawing out how present behaviour conflicts with longer term values or goals. . . The aim of a motivational approach is for people to identify their own reasons to change; not for the facilitator to impose their reasons. It is the difference between 'intrinsic' motivation, which comes from within and 'extrinsic' motivation, which needs external rewards or threats.

4) Avoid argument. A motivational approach seems to work by reducing negativity.. . . When the facilitator behaves in a way that does not lead to resistance, change is much more likely to follow.

5) Support self-belief and self-responsibility. [The principle here is that] the more you believe you can achieve something, the more likely you are to take on higher level tasks and the more likely you are to achieve them.

Fry (2007b) discussed the concepts of motivational interviewing and provided sample dialogues between a probationer and supervising officer. He explained, "Anytime an offender makes a statement about the disadvantages of the status quo, the advantages of change, the intention to change or is optimistic about change, you ask him to amplify those comments. Anytime an offender shows resistance, you roll with it – let it go."

5.3.4 Self-efficacy and locus of control

In the relapse prevention model, a sense of self-efficacy is essential for the client's confidence in meeting challenging situations. Self-efficacy is strengthened each time the client achieves a behavioral goal. Programs that acknowledge step-by-step progress toward goals help to build a sense of self-efficacy.

Another way to foster self-efficacy is to include formerly incarcerated persons on the program staff. VanDeCarr (2007) wrote that "It is essential to have ex-prisoners on staff in reentry programs, once they have become stabilized in society and in sobriety. Their presence "sends the message that participants are active and empowered in the program, not simply 'objects' of a social service." Wallace and Wyckoff (2008) observed that some organizations have had had success when hiring "former prisoners to work with former prisoners, people who can relate to participants' circumstances and offer guidance based on their own experience with the criminal justice system."

Breeding (2008) points out that "[a]ctivities inherent in the rehabilitation counseling process (e.g., intake, assessment, vocational counseling, planning, job development and placement, follow-up) can be used by counselors to enhance consumer self-understanding in relation to environmental opportunities (i.e., contextual self-understanding) and promote the development of positive SE [self-efficacy] in both counselor-assisted and self-directed vocational development efforts."

Locus of control is related to self-efficacy. People feel they have power and choice in areas within their perceived locus of control. In areas outside their perceived locus of control, people feel subject to outside forces. Two main scales are used to measure locus of control: Rotter's Internality-Externality Scale (I-E) and Nowicki and Strickland's Internality-Externality Scale (NSIE).

Research has shown a cultural trend over the last few decades in the United States toward more externality of control, leading to more alienation, cynicism, and feelings of helplessness (Twenge, Zhang, and Im, 2004). These authors' study findings, tracking shifts in locus of control from 1960 to 2002, "are consistent with an alienation model positing increases in cynicism, individualism, and the self-serving bias. The implications are almost uniformly negative, as externality is correlated with poor school achievement, helplessness, ineffective stress management, decreased self-control, and depression." This pattern of attitudes and behavior appears to be prevalent in the underemployed and criminal offender populations, though this review did not locate a published source to make the connection.

On the positive side, Van Praag, Van der Sluis, and Van Witteloostuijn (2004) examined the significance of locus of control in regard to work success among young U.S. citizens. They demonstrated that people with a higher-scoring internal locus of control also had higher hourly earnings, that this effect was stronger among entrepreneurial workers than for employees, and that educational levels interact positively with internality. This suggests that programs that address issues related to locus of control could be beneficial for clients' employment prospects.

5.3.5 Planning ahead

A definitive element of the relapse prevention model is anticipating issues and developing coping strategies to handle tough times if they should arise. In the workplace, formerly incarcerated persons confront challenges of various types, such as a lack of opportunity, low work rewards, interpersonal friction, and overall life pressure and stress.

Self-awareness and coping skills can address individual clients' predispositions to emotional responses such as anger, impulsivity, and hopelessness. This involves recognizing one's own attitudes and patterns and resolving how they conflict with personal, work, and career goals. By behaving in accordance with stated intentions, the client is better able to keep his or her job.

External issues, such as budgeting, family care needs, and peer pressure that disrespects traditional work, also can be better managed when they are anticipated in advance and coping strategies are outlined. Formal or informal assessments can surface areas that will benefit from advance attention.

Recapping ideas from Dowden et al. (2003) with input from Laws (1989), the client needs to:

- Identify attitudinal and other clues that warn the worker that his or her tenure of the job may be at risk;
- Rehearse specific scenarios that can lead to job loss and role-play different responses and behavior; and
- Identify high-risk situations for job loss and plan how to better manage them. These can be on-the-job situations or life situations, such as difficulty with peer attitudes or the logistics of getting work on time.

5.4 Supporting motivation to work

Self-motivation is the most powerful tool available to formerly incarcerated persons as they reenter the job market, and it is virtually essential to keeping a job from the relapse prevention perspective.

Program staff can reinforce clients' motivation to keep jobs by helping their clients identify their goals and experience success. Adding incentives to the mix can reward clients for their adherence to program targets and provide recognition of their achievements.

This section addresses:

5.4.1 Workplace attitudes and goals

The first element in success at work and keeping a job is understanding what is required of the worker. An evaluation of the Going Home program observed that "reentry programs need to incorporate strategies that help former prisoners to essentially enter the work force for the first time" (George, LaLonde, and Haitsma, 2007). Assistance can focus on the basic expectations of the workplace, development of vocational skills and qualifications, and steps in the job pursuit process.

Attainment of job-specific vocational and educational goals can promote job retention. Learning the attitudes and behaviors of the workplace is also advantageous. This knowledge prepares new workers for stresses so they are better able to stick with the job if things become difficult. Attitudes are especially linked to relapse.

Formerly incarcerated persons may need to develop a new sense of their identity as a worker and employee. This identity comes with associated social norms and expectations of emotional control.

For a portion of the ex-offender population, the behavior patterns of the workplace are unfamiliar. Some new workers need to understand the basics of time clocks, workplace hierarchies, and how to get along with supervisors and co-workers in a productive manner. A cognitive/behavioral perspective can help clients develop the "soft skills" and emotional intelligence for understanding themselves, their co-workers, and their employers and supervisors.

For example, Ohrberg (2007) developed a nine-week program workbook to help formerly incarcerated women become aware of their emotions and understand how emotions influence their behavior and communications. Readings and activities are intended to help prepare women for the job market by giving them skills to maintain effective interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

Similarly, Ryan (2005) stated, "Without cognitive-behavioral skills to ensure socially acceptable and civically responsible decisions implemented in behaviors and attitudes, there is little if any chance for released offenders to maintain employment after placement."

Fahey, Roberts, and Engel (2006) studied the effect of specific types of workplace readiness programming for ex-offenders. Their recommendations for improving job placements included these top strategies:

- Agencies should provide structured transitional employment opportunities that allow ex-offenders to build positive work experience – found to have a "positive" or "very positive" effect in 90 percent of cases;

- Agencies should train on specific job skills for an industry – shown to have a "positive" or "very positive" effect in about 70 percent of cases; and

- Agencies should train on general work readiness – resulting in a "positive" or "very positive" outcome in about 44 percent of cases.

The authors concluded that "[s]howing up on time, in appropriate attire, with good work ethic were threshold requirements, while specific training or skills . . . allowed a candidate to be competitive in the marketplace."

Tarlow (2001) described the importance of understanding the elements of a realistic employer-employee relationship. This helps to reduce the risk of interpersonal conflict and defuse negative emotional states. Conflict in the workplace and negative attitudes toward work are the top reasons why CEO program participants lost their jobs, and poor attitude was more than twice as likely as substance abuse to cause job loss. In one interaction, for example, the CEO staff advised a participant that he should not expect his employer to ask nicely for his cooperation. This advice contributed to his staying on the job.

Helping workers to understand the importance of good supervisor relationships is also helpful (Stork et al., 2005) before they enter their first placement.

In regard to specific skills development, vocational education in prison was found to save $13,738 per program participant in a meta-analysis of four studies (Aos, Miller, and Drake, 2006), ranking first in the list of interventions studied. Vocational education also was associated with a decrease in crime of, on average, about 9 percent.

Assistance can be given on large or small scales. Tarlow (2001) profiles a case in which the CEO staff allowed a woman to come to their offices in the evenings to practice answering the telephones. This helped the woman develop the confidence that enabled her to keep her job.

5.4.2 Rapid placement and transitional work

Placing clients in jobs quickly after their release from prison can be beneficial in several ways. For one, it allows the clients to act immediately on their intention to work, reinforcing their feelings of self-worth and self-efficacy. Secondly, the clients gain up-to-date experience in the work force and the patterns of regular employment, which places them in a stronger position for moving into subsequent, more desirable jobs. Clients also benefit by quickly beginning to earn a steady, lawful income. Some evidence suggests that early placement relates to better retention outcomes and lower rates of recidivism.

The National Transitional Jobs Network (2008) stated, "By working in a subsidized, Transitional Job for three to twelve months, participants earn a paycheck, learn technical skills for higher wage jobs, become eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit, and receive intensive mentoring and support." Workers in transitional jobs average a 3- to 12-month affiliation with the program and have a 50 to 70 percent permanent employment retention rate.

“Transitional jobs demystify the workplace for the individual,” according to Joe Antolin of the Heartland Alliance, as quoted by the Joyce Foundation (2005). “We’re talking about folks who have not worked successfully. Everyone has fear of the unknown, and in their minds working becomes more imposing than it is. In transitional jobs they have a mentor and a case manager who want them to succeed and work.” The piece continues, “If someone has a spotty work history, a transitional jobs program is 6 months of work history that says they were showing up and doing what they were supposed to do.” The foundation cites a University of Washington study that showed that transitional jobs programs are more effective in moving hard-to-employ individuals into the workplace than typical job-training programs, including job search, pre-employment training, and unpaid work experience, delivering a 33 percent increase in employment rates.

Tarlow and Nelson (2007) observed that “[t]ransitional work serves as an employment lab, teaching employees how to work. On the transitional work site, people learn the workforce behavior skills that permanent employers say they most want, and have a hard time finding, in the entry-level workforce. These include skills such as showing up on time, taking direction from a supervisor, being a good coworker, working hard, and using good communication skills. Transitional work offers a chance to teach these skills on the job, through coaching and trial and error, in a way that might not be tolerated in a permanent job. Upon exiting transitional work, people should be more employable than when they entered: they have experience and a reference.” They continue, “Importantly, they have also been paid. Transitional work employees are paid real money for the real work they provide at transitional work sites. It is important to prepare these workers for the experience of a permanent work world of creating a product or service for a paying customer. The transitional work should, in the best circumstances, also be providing a service or product for a paying customer: the transitional work employer.” (Tarlow and Nelson, 2007)

Rapid job placement is also associated with improved recidivism outcomes. Tarlow and Nelson (2007) found that the speed of connecting releasees with job assistance makes a significant difference in recidivism, based on 1 year’s data in a 3-year study. Having work within the first 6 months is more critical to success than whether an ex-offender is working at the 1-year point. The authors conclude that if a person is still free at the 1-year point after release, the fact that they’ve stayed out of custody has less to do with their job status than with other personal factors. Transitional work is a good way to increase job skills for later retention of permanent jobs.

Visher and Courtney (2007) also found that men who worked more during the first six months after release were more likely to be working at the one-year point.

The Going Home study found similar evidence. “Our analysis of previous cohorts of IDOC reentrants to Cook County indicates that employment during the first full quarter after their paroles is associated with lower recidivism rates throughout the first three years following parole. This relationship is strongest for reentrants who were under 25 when they were paroled. This finding should help reentry program providers identify reentrants soon after parole who are the least likely to return to prison.” (George, LaLonde, and Haitsma, 2007)

MDRC analyzed study participants separately based on when they were released from prison: people who entered the study three months or less from release (the “reentry group”), and those who entered the study after three months from release. After one year from random assignment into treatment (CEO) and control groups, MDRC found that the CEO group had substantially lower rates of felony convictions, parole revocations, incarceration for new crimes, and overall incarceration than control group members. . . . Yet for study group members who entered the study more than three months from release, and thus received CEO’s paid transitional work and job placement services much further from release, there was no statistically significant difference in recidivism between treatment and control groups. Notably, however, the better performing group was no better than the control group at the end of the year, with 39 percent employed compared to 34 percent. (Tarlow and Nelson, 2007)

Solomon et al. (2008) write, "The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) in New York City provides transitional work programs and job training and placement to individuals returning from Rikers Island. Staff from CEO's Jail to Work Program meet individuals at the moment of release and transport them directly to their transitional work site. CEO offers employment training classes and works to find individuals permanent employment in areas that match their interests and skills. Immediate placement in temporary employment quickly offers a paycheck, structures individuals' time, and boosts their morale while preparing them for long-term employment."

As a cautionary note, however, Wallace and Wyckoff (2008) noted that, "[i]n short-term programs, especially those emphasizing rapid placement, job seekers may not have time to clean up their rap sheets, explore having their records expunged (sealed or erased) or obtain certificates of rehabilitation. Continuing to help people take corrective actions after they are employed can lower the risk that they will be denied advancement opportunities—and become disillusioned after initial employment success."

5.4.3 Alternative work choices

Employment goals for clients may not necessarily be limited to employer/employee situations and full-time work. Workforce initiatives can create a stronger sense of purpose in clients by supporting their exploration of alternative work paths that may better meet their unique circumstances. Though traditional, the single-employer, full-time job is not the only form of employment in today's job market. Part-time work or self-employment may be viable alternatives for some formerly incarcerated persons.

A full-time job may be too demanding for at least some clients while they are still adjusting to life on the outside. NIC-supported work on evidence-based practice found that rehabilitation is most effective when, during the initial 3 to 9 months after release, 40 to 70 percent of the releasee's time is occupied with services, such as treatment, employment assistance, and education (Bogue et al., 2004).

The usual view is that having a paid job—even a low-level and uninteresting job—is inherently more worthwhile than taking care of family members and other life domains that have traditionally fallen to women. However, it is commonly understood that women releases, in particular, are likely to be custodial parents and to have a caretaker role in their immediate and extended families. On this basis, it is possible that programs could produce better outcomes when they acknowledge that part-time work may be the best goal for some clients. Explorations on this point should be weighed against findings that releasees who work a typical full-time job are more likely to stay employed and to avoid reincarceration (see, for example, Gooden and Bailey, 2001).

The goal of employment assistance may not necessarily be limited to a job or career per se – entrepreneurship and self-employment have been shown to be viable options for some formerly incarcerated persons. Entrepreneurship refers to the process of starting a business venture with the aim of becoming self-sufficient. Self-employment offers the further benefit of helping formerly incarcerated persons avoid the difficulties of job-seeking with the burden of a criminal history.

Lindahl and Mukamal (2007) suggested that entrepreneurial thinking can benefit prison releases. They wrote,

> While self-employment may not be a viable option for many individuals leaving prison, exposure to entrepreneurship training can play an important role in fostering successful reentry. A small percentage may have the resources and mindset to use entrepreneurship as the key to their successful reintegration, either as their sole form of employment, or in addition to a traditional job. Others will open a business once they have achieved reentry stability through other forms of employment. For many, because entrepreneurial thinking is infused with the philosophy of empowerment, exposure to entrepreneurial training will reshape their perspective on their role in society. These individuals may

never become entrepreneurs themselves, but will use their entrepreneurship training to improve their performance as employees and to proactively engage with their families and communities.

In 1969, Lindahl and Mukamal further noted, a study found that "the risk associated with self-employment was lower for people with criminal records than the general population due to their marginal position in the labor market." (Jansyn, Kohlhof, Sadowski, and Toby, 1969). The attractions of self-employment then remain the same today. Examples of microenterprises started by formerly incarcerated persons include repair services, cleaning services, specialty foods, jewelry, arts and crafts, gifts, clothing and textiles, computer technology, childcare and environmental products and services (Lindahl and Mukamal, 2007). An evaluation using welfare-to-work populations "helped convince welfare professionals that entrepreneurship can be a legitimate source of employment for traditionally 'hard-to-employ' individuals (Klein, Lisultanov, and Blair, 2003)."

Lindahl and Mukamal (2007) shared the example of the Learning to Earn program in Cobb County, Georgia, designed to "provide the education and support necessary to develop successful business plans and resources for self employment." They wrote, "124 individuals attended an information session about the Learning to Earn Project [in 2006]. Of these, 70 moved on to the 'Exploring Entrepreneurship' course, 29 participated in the 'Plan for Success' workshops, and 12 graduated."

Fletcher (2004) wrote that self-employment is attractive for some offenders because it can help them "bypass the discrimination that they face in the labour market" and allows them to operate independently. It may also be a route to higher earnings than might be gained through the secondary labor market. Fletcher shared a cautionary note that expectations may be unrealistic, and formerly incarcerated persons may "lack the objectivity, balance, support and resources to be successful."

5.4.4 Employment incentives

Solomon et al. (2008) wrote that in the absence of a specific legal obligation for clients to stay involved in transition programs after release, jurisdictions may find it helpful to focus on incentives, either informally or as part of formal case plans and contracts. They described a New York City health department program that offered incentives for follow-up appointments for tuberculosis treatment, which improved appearance from less than 20 percent to 92 percent (Frieden et al., 1995; Hammett, 2000). They noted that creating "meaningful incentives will require creativity and will depend on the presence of a case manager who monitors progress and encourages engagement."

CEO's Rapid Rewards program provides immediate incentives for ex-offenders to stay employed. When participants show their paystubs to verify their employment status, they are rewarded with grocery store and public transportation vouchers. At quarterly intervals, they receive rewards of increasing value, and there is a reward of $200 for 12 months of consecutive employment. A total of $615 in incentives can be earned in a year. Participants who reported to the program site to show their paystubs also were more likely to work with a CEO job retention specialist, and they had significantly improved employment outcomes. Participants appreciated being able to share the incentive benefits with their families and said that they valued the "sense of recognition, care and support they felt through this program, especially during difficult times." "[I]f the Rapid Rewards Program is helping to fill a void in recognition, compensation and respect, especially for low-wage workers, then it may be encouraging employment retention in an indirect way." (Bryan, Gunn, and Henthorn, 2007)

Holzer and Martinson observed (2005) that financial incentives were being used in the "Jobs Plus" demonstration evaluated by MDRC (Bloom et al., 2005) at six public housing projects. Residents were offered a drop in the rate at which their rents increased with higher earnings. "Earnings increases in the three sites where the implementation of the program was strongest averaged an impressive 14 percent per year, and roughly 20 percent in the fourth year of the program. On the other hand, it was unclear

exactly which part of the treatment contributed most to the improvement, and the extent to which these results would apply to residents outside of public housing projects."

Federal probationers in the Eastern District of Missouri who need help with transportation may be eligible for the award of an automobile through the Wheels for Success partnership. (Weygandt, Anders, and Mata, 2008).

Ryan (2005) recommended stipends, either in money or in-kind assistance, as an essential intervention to support employment retention by addressing the problem of ex-offenders' lack of resources. She asserted that released offenders must be able to survive, and if their job income is not sufficient to keep themselves and their loved ones out of poverty, they may be forced to crime. "The evidence is incontrovertible that the majority of ex-offenders resorting to crime do so to support themselves and their dependents."

5.5 Maximizing client support

Support from professional staff, social networks, and significant others helps formerly incarcerated persons to maintain their motivation and confidence, each essential in a relapse framework. VanDeCarr (2007) notes that a mentoring relationship with staff can provide program participants with a social outlet that is particularly important when family ties have been broken.

This section addresses:

5.5.1 Case management
5.5.2 Wrap-around assistance at transition
5.5.3 Mentoring
5.5.4 Support from family, friends, and peers

5.5.1 Case management

Farrell et al. (2006) described positive effectiveness of a case management approach to assist people in the UK who were returning to work after experiencing health issues. The perspectives of program staff suggest that what success means and how to achieve it depends on the circumstances and needs of each client. They suggested that staff need: to keep tied in with the workplace world rather than "getting lost" in the health and welfare systems; to remain client-centered and led by client needs, and by the needs of the service agencies accessed on the clients' behalf; to think holistically and tackle clinical, psychological and social aspects of people's problems in a coordinated way; to offer tailored packages of support; to make themselves available for clients at all times; to have the flexibility to spend money as required; and to have quick access to a broad range of high quality services. An interdisciplinary, team approach was viewed as essential, as was liaising directly with employers. "Key actors, such as employers, GPs, other health services staff, family and friends, helped to remove barriers, change clients' perceptions about themselves and work, offered encouragement and support, and imparted knowledge."

Holzer and Martinson (2005) outlined some findings on the value of postemployment case management services. At a site in Illinois, a case management approach helped TANF recipients increase their earnings in their current job, or to find a better job, reducing their need for welfare assistance. However, Bloom (2004) found that similar services used in South Carolina's Moving Up program did not have the same effects.

Focusing on individual needs rather than a package of set services is recommended. “Although usually more labor intensive, individualizing services to address needs is widely recognized as more effective than traditional service methods. Wrap around approaches to meet individual plan objectives are hallmarks of the most innovative and successful employment and training systems” (Health & Disability Advocates, 2007).

Non-traditional methods may be required, suggest Solomon, Waul, et al. (2004). A mix of traditional workforce development interventions is recommended, “with supportive services to deal with issues of health, substance abuse, and housing—particularly during the time immediately following release from prison.”

Jucovy (2006) identifies four “promising practices” for case management, from a preliminary evaluation of Ready4Work programs:

- Have a clear definition of case managers’ roles and responsibilities.
- Keep caseloads manageable so there is ample time for ongoing one-to-one contact with each participant.
- Identify the personal qualities, not just the credentials, that will contribute to someone being an effective case manager in Ready4Work.
- Provide training and supervision for case managers who are less experienced or come from nontraditional backgrounds.

Fletcher (2007) wrote, “A common mistake” in welfare-to-work programs, “occurs when staff members intentionally or unintentionally disaggregate the various types of support needed by participants. Welfare-to-work programs simultaneously require multiple forms of support.” A program can have multiple objectives, but, according to the program director, “our primary objective is to economically empower impoverished people….And how we do that under our program is through education, training, case management, but most of all, handholding. And we emphasize the handholding, because a lot of these people have never had a helping hand. . . . The emotional and social supports that are extended to participants are central in the strategies of successful welfare-to-work programs.”

Solomon et al. (2008) wrote, “Case managers . . . can serve an important role in planning and overseeing service delivery both in jail and in the community and in engaging individuals in their own transition process. Although the research is limited, some studies have illustrated the importance of case management in improving reentry outcomes. For example, an evaluation of a community-based comprehensive aftercare program, Opportunity to Succeed, found that participants who interacted with their case managers were more likely to report full-time employment and maintain employment for a longer time than those receiving no case management (Rossman and Roman, 2003). Similarly, a study of substance-abusing arrestees found that those who had ongoing case management were more likely to have access to drug treatment and less likely to commit crimes than individuals in a control group who received only referrals or a single counseling session (Rhodes and Gross, 1997).”

5.5.2 Wrap-around assistance at transition

While the formerly incarcerated population tends to have many different issues that interfere with employability, they also tend to have a very weak sense of where to go for help with employment. A wrap-around approach to programming and development of action plans before release both address the need for clients to have immediate support in the community. Promptly making connections for assistance benefits job placements and retention outcomes.

Interviewing Going Home participants (parolees in the Chicago area), George, LaLonde, and Haitsma (2007) found that these young men were open to help from “the system” to make changes in their lives,

but they did not have much experience with getting help. Their families often had been poor and "stretched thin," many had had unstable families and had been in and out of foster care. "As children and teenagers when their families were torn apart by traumatic losses and deaths, some coped alone. Others reported taking on added responsibility of caring for younger siblings. They had grown up on the edges of the educational system, and in the mainstream of the drug culture." Now as adults, they needed "outreach services that gave them structure, direction, and a chance to catch up on what they had missed out on in life" and an opportunity to change.

Brooks et al. (2008) found that, among Massachusetts parolees who were returned to prison, 44 percent had not taken advantage of any available services after release. Their parole officers ranked the services that would have been useful in averting returns to prison as follows:

- Job-related training – 63%
- Financial support – 58%
- Health insurance – 56%
- Employment readiness assistance – 55%
- Education – 53%

To help inmates transitioning from jail in San Bernardino County, California, "the workforce development department dedicates two employment services specialists to work in the jail to facilitate prerelease classes, organize annual job fairs, and assist inmates with services necessary for gaining employment such as obtaining driver's licenses and Social Security cards and settling child support issues. These employment services specialists also provide community case management after release." (Solomon et al., 2008)

Regarding trends in reentry, Joan Petersilia stated, "More and more, I see wraparound services, where mental health, alcohol and drug abuse, housing, and medical services agencies are planning an offender's case management plan together." (Pew interview, 2007)

Solomon et al. (2008) refer to transition accountability plans (TAPs) as a good example of a reentry planning tool for jails, though the concept was originally developed for use by inmates leaving prison. "TAPs span the phases of the transition process, from incarceration to release to community reintegration. TAPs are a product of and depend on collaborative effort involving the individual, correctional staff, community supervision officers, human services providers, and community organizations. The TAP is a formal agreement that outlines the roles and expectations of all involved parties and holds each one accountable for their respective responsibilities during each phase of the transition process." The Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative (2006) provides a detailed discussion of the elements in that state's transition accountability planning process, which begins at admission to prison.

5.5.3 Mentoring

The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines a mentor as "a person who gives another person help and advice over a period of time and often also teaches them how to do their job." The extended time frame for the relationship is an essential difference from other types of advisement and support. Some programs refer to the participants in such a relationship as mentors and mentees, while others use the term "life coach" to replace "mentor" because of the implied lesser role for the mentee. Another program refers to the client as a "protégé."

The value of a mentoring approach with Ready4Work reentry program participants is clear from several evaluation, including a U.S. Department of Labor analysis (2008). More than 60 percent of

Ready4Work participants received mentoring as part of their services. Participants who met with a mentor at least once showed stronger outcomes than those who did not participate in mentoring:

- Mentored participants remained in the program longer than unmentored participants (10.2 months versus 7.2 months).

- Mentored participants were twice as likely to obtain a job. After the first encounter, an additional month of mentoring sessions increased the hire rate by 53 percent.

- Meeting with a mentor increased a participant's odds of getting a job the next month by 73 percent over participants who did not take advantage of mentoring. An additional month of meetings increased a participant's odds of finding a job by another 7 percent.

- Those who met with a mentor were 56 percent more likely to remain employed for three months than those who did not. An additional month of meetings with a mentor increased the participant's odds of remaining employed three months by 24 percent.

Jucovy (2006) identifies several promising practices for mentoring, based on early evaluations of Ready4Work sites:

- Hire a mentor coordinator.
- Recruit mentors from congregations whose pastors are strong believers in the power of mentoring and will convey that message to congregation members.
- Address the practical and psychological barriers that can hinder participants' involvement in mentoring.
- Provide training in building relationships and other relevant skills and knowledge, to help prepare mentors for their roles.
- Ensure that the case manager has a role in supporting the mentor-mentee relationship.
- Be sure mentors comply with federal guidelines that prohibit the use of federal money for proselytizing or requiring their mentees to participate in any form of religious activity.

Fletcher (2007) wrote about evidence that mentoring helps in employment retention of formerly incarcerated people. Ready4Work participants who met with a mentor were 56 percent more likely to meet the benchmark of continued employment for 3 months than those who did not. Mentored participants also were less likely to commit new crimes. "At the 1-year post-release mark, mentored Ready4Work participants, regardless of whether they attained employment, were 39 percent less likely to recidivate than those participants who were not mentored." Fletcher states, "Other research has also established the importance of pro-social relationships in keeping people out of prison. In our work with numerous reentry programs around the country, we have heard from program participants and mentors alike about the power of these relationships." Mentored participants were more successful in finding jobs, keeping jobs, and remaining in the Ready4Work program, and their recidivism rates were lower.

Farley and McClanahan (2007) found that Ready4Work participants "who received mentoring of any kind in a given month were 60 percent less likely to leave the program during the following month than participants who were not mentored." In terms of employment benefits, "More than 60 percent of those who found a job remained employed for three consecutive months and a third of them for six months or more. . . . Enrollees who took part in one-on-one mentoring were more than twice as likely to find jobs as participants who had never been mentored." Mentoring was also associated with helping enrollees remain employed.

Gender influences participation in mentoring opportunities. Farley and McClanahan (2007) noted that women who were Ready4Work participants were more likely than men to be mentored, "perhaps indicating that some men resist forming a mentoring relationship."

Villanueva and de Souza (2008) studied the use of mentoring with women in reentry in the WomenCare program. They wrote that "[a] mentoring relationship with another adult can serve as a place of solace and safety, while also providing practice at a non-competitive relationship in which there is a mutual desire to promote each other's well-being and success. This can be especially meaningful for women who have a history of negative relationships." Further, they note, "it is widely believed that men and women form relationships in different ways and for different reasons." The authors continue, "Social psychologists have observed that women's friendships are often based on intimacy, empathy and self-disclosure, while men tend to maintain relationships through activities. Further, women are more likely than men to go to their friends to seek emotional support or help during times of distress. Additional discussion is available in Rhodes (2005).

Bloom, Owen, and Covington (2003), in their work on gender-informed programming, referred to Jean Baker Miller's theories on how men and women form relationships, writing, "Females develop a sense of self and self-worth when their actions arise out of, and lead back into, connections with others. Connection, not separation, is thus the guiding principle of growth for girls and women." Villanueva and de Souza refer to Bloom et al. in suggesting that "a problem-focused and goal-oriented mentoring program may be appealing to men, while women seek mentoring relationships in which they feel safe and can form interpersonal relationship that serve as a basis for support."

Volunteer mentors from faith organizations can be an effective resource for mentoring. Lambert (2008) quotes theologian Jim Wallis, who stated,

> Believing is the essence of faith, and the beginning of any change. Indeed, every important social change begins with some people believing it is possible. Hope always precedes change. Hope is the substance of faith and the only absolutely indispensable ingredient for individual and social transformation.

5.5.4 Support from family, friends, and peers

Including family members in the overall strategy for case management is an evidence-based practice. Bogue et al. (2004) stated, "Research indicates that many successful interventions with extreme populations (e.g., inner city substance abusers, homeless, dual diagnosed) actively recruit and use family members, spouses, and supportive others in the offender's immediate environment to positively reinforce desired new behaviors."

Dowden et al. (2003) demonstrated that training offenders' significant others about the relapse intervention model was the single most effective factor in enhancing program effectiveness. "The program trains significant others such as family, friends, and school and work peers in the program model so the offender is properly reinforced for displaying pro-social behaviors learned in the program."

Joan Petersilia commented (Pew interview, 2007), "Research over the last several decades . . . reinforces the importance of the community and familial supports as sources of informal social control. Effective programs involve family and community members in a very real and proactive way. Effective programs recognize that government programs ultimately end, and the handoff between the formal and informal systems is ultimately what determines success."

Bogue et al. (2004) identified engagement with family members, spouses, and others in the offender's immediate environment as an element of effective programming. The authors said that many successful interventions with extreme populations, such as inner-city substance abusers, homeless

persons, and dually diagnosed offenders use these social networks to help reinforce new behaviors. This approach has been found to be effective in employment programs.

Ryan notes (2005), “The support of family members is critical for ex-offenders to maintain employment. The working environments are not always positive and supportive for released offenders; support from family members at the end of a working day often makes the difference between success and failure for a newly released offender.”

Close partner relationships and supportive families were found by Visher and Courtney (2007) to contribute notably to employment after release. Other positive factors included earning a GED in prison, having a job while in prison, and conditions of release that required employment.

Weiman (2007) wrote, regarding the Urban Institute’s Returning Home program evaluation, that “[r]eleased prisoners recognized the many lures in their old neighborhoods that could lead them back into their ‘old ways,’ such as an active drug trade and former friends and associates embedded in it. Those determined to change their lives, consequently, relied more heavily on familial ties.”

Parks, et al. (2006) suggest that case managers should create an “educated network of collateral contacts,” including the client’s family, friends, employers, and others, who can help monitor and intervene in client behaviors that increase risk. Rakis (2008) favors the concept of peer support groups to affirm challenges, discuss coping strategies, and acknowledge progress and achievements.

Fletcher (2007) described four types of support that are provided in a faith-based welfare-to-work program. Among them, emotional support may be the most important element in the participant’s experience of the program. This can take the form of “handholding, love, care, understanding, forgiving participants for transgresses, boosting of self-esteem, [and] being non-judgmental.”

Wallace and Wyckoff (2008) found that Fathers at Work demonstration project participants had exceptionally small employment networks, that is, people they could ask for assistance in finding a job. “In fact, more than two thirds reported that they had two or fewer people who could help them secure employment. Through group activities, programs offered the potential for participants to build a network of peers engaged in finding and keeping employment.”

Visher, Debus, and Yahner (2008) found that “[m]ost respondents who found work did so by speaking with friends and family; however, the most successful strategy for long-term employment was returning to a previous employer.”

In a study of factors affecting job tenure for workers in a training hospital (Harris et al., 2007), social support accounted for about 9 percent of the observed variance in job tenure. Within the social support category, coaching and task support were most directly predictive of increased job tenure.

5.6 Intervening with threats against job retention

Program staff contribute an alertness to client needs and the specific stresses that can lead clients to lose jobs. Rakis (2005) described the interventionist role of staff in helping clients avoid job loss in this way, using the specific example of parole officers:

> [Parole officers] can also provide parolees with the guidance they need to remain employed. The parole officer can prevent job loss by watching for indicators of relapse and providing timely, structured interventions. When necessary, they can require ongoing drug-testing of those under their supervision, thus encouraging parolees to remain abstinent from drugs and increasing the comfort level of employers who hire them.

This section addresses:

5.6.1 Signals of difficulty

Each client has his or her own specific risk factors for difficulty in the community and specifically for job loss. As discussed, assessment can help identify these factors so that the client and the workforce professional can plan how to address them before there is a crisis. With a better understanding of job loss dynamics and precursors, and the skills to help clients conceptualize and implement new coping strategies in order to stay on the job, future employment retention specialists can make a difference in individual lives and the well-being of their communities.

Reasons for leaving or losing a job vary widely. Major factors include a lack of work maturity or an inability to manage personal and work responsibilities (Tarlow, 2001). People who have not had actual work experience may have very high and often unrealistic expectations relative to their educational backgrounds and vocational skills (Brooks et al., 2008).

Brooks et al. (2008) summarized research on the problems Massachusetts parolees were experiencing at the time of an arrest or technical violation that resulted in reincarceration. From a relapse viewpoint, these elements are the stressors that threaten the releasee's ability to conform with expected behaviors and remain in the community.

The most common problems encountered by parolees who were returned to prison in the Brooks study were:

- Problems with drugs or alcohol (28 percent),
- Problems at work (27 percent),
- Problems with money (25 percent), and
- Emotional problems (19 percent).

More than half of respondents in the Brooks study described their emotional state at that time as stressed out (57 percent), and more than a third reported general anger or frustration (37 percent).

Brooks et al. (2008) added that over half of those returned to prison for new crimes reported that something—most commonly employment, children, or sobriety—could have prevented them from committing the new offense.

Further exemplifying the elements of the relapse perspective, the Brooks report emphasizes the link between attitudes and success on parole and in the community. “Parolees, consumed with feelings of optimism immediately following release, believe that everything will fall into place. When they have difficulty finding employment or dealing with old problems, many realize that the negative circumstances and people in their lives have not changed, and, as one parole officer stated, ‘If they didn’t have it easy before, they won’t have it easy when they come back.’ The combination of high expectations and low sense of self-worth is detrimental to many parolees’ success.” While fear of failure can motivate some parolees into compliance, others are not dissatisfied enough with the direction of their lives to make changes. Parole officers say that parolees who take things slow and don’t try to compensate for lost time in prison have a greater chance of long-term success.

When asked about the first signs of failure on parole supervision, parole officers in the Brooks study identified the following:

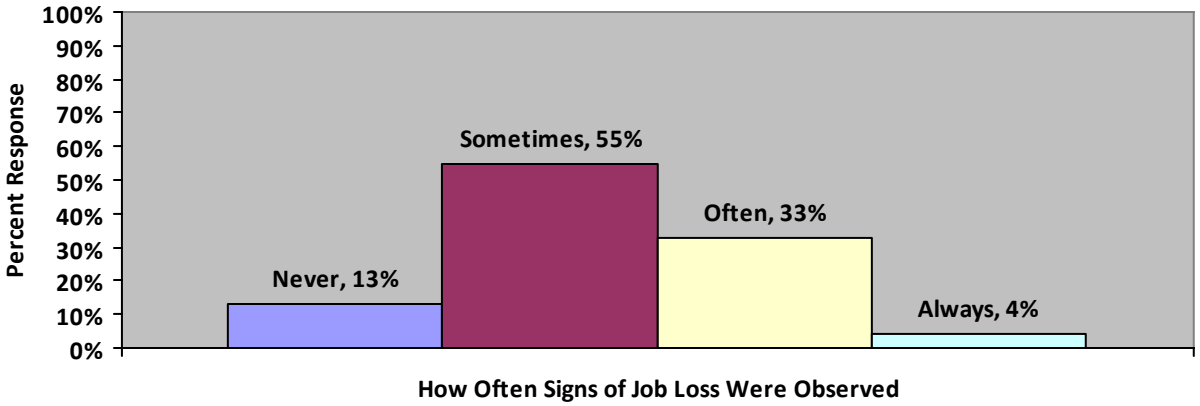
- Lack of contact with the parolee, or the parolee no longer showing up for appointments;
- Smoking;
- Calls from family members or partners who have not heard from a parolee or are worried about a parolee’s behavior. (Brooks et al., 2008)

The tangible benefits of some jobs may not feel worth the effort. In their report on Massachusetts offenders paroled and returned to prison, Brooks et al. (2008) present the views of parole officers that “finding and sustaining gainful employment is as central a challenge for parolees as substance abuse. They estimated that 85 to 90 percent of the people on their caseload have a hard time finding meaningful employment. When they do find employment, it is often low-wage, making it difficult to support themselves and their families. In addition to providing for themselves and their families, parolees are often faced with overwhelming financial obligations, including supervision fees, court fines, and restitution.”

Epstein (2008) described the two main causes for job loss—similar for ex-offenders and other populations that face barriers to employment—as inadequate housing (in shelters and other unstable living situations), and substance abuse relapse. Difficulty with anger management and time and attendance expectations also undermine individuals’ job performance. The difficulty of juggling family responsibilities tends to be far more significant for women, on average, she noted, than for men. Though women who are ex-offenders are less likely than other women to have custody of children, it still is often an issue. Women are also more likely to be caring for aging parents and other family members. Commuting exhausts people and wears down their commitment to work, especially when they are in low-wage jobs. Low skills and low education limit access to better jobs. The burden of any of these challenges, singly or taken together, can mean that a relatively small additional stressor can tip the balance to make people give up their jobs.

In an NIC survey of offender job training and placement professionals (summarized by Houston, 2001), most respondents said they were not particularly likely to observe specific signs of an offender's impending job loss (Figure 1):

Figure 1. Staff Awareness of Precursors of Job Loss



Source: NIC data, 2000.

In the same report, Houston observed that service providers who responded to a 2000 NIC survey noted these relatively consistent and specific indicators of impending job loss among post-correctional populations receiving job assistance:

- Expressions of job dissatisfaction by the client (reported as a relapse indicator by 84% of respondents);
- Increased substance abuse (83%);
- Chaotic family life (81%);
- Missed appointments (80%);
- Offenders staying out late at night (72%); and
- Family expressions of concern (69%).

On the client-specific level, Clymer and Wyckoff (2003) shared "clues" to problems on the job that program staff need to watch for in their interactions with clients. They present these clues with specific examples of how to turn a problem into an opportunity to share workplace savvy or to move the client forward into finding new solutions and developing needed coping skills. Their problem clues include:

- Lack of enthusiasm;
- Failure to fit in; chronic lateness;
- Lack of confidence/lack of skills;

- Failure to make work a priority;
- Lack of support for working (by the client's family or close associates); and
- Lack of confidence/problem with authority.

5.6.2 Personal life conflicts

Behind the symptoms of life imbalance or workplace friction are the individual stressors and difficulties of each case. Formerly incarcerated persons experience a wide and pervasive range of barriers and difficulties with employment within the realm of their personal lives.

Program staff will engage with clients to find solutions to a wide range of conflicts that have been identified throughout this paper. Examples include:

- Difficulty coping with schedules and conflicting priorities of work, family, correctional supervision and reporting, and treatment, education, or training;
- Life stability issues in areas such as housing and relationships;
- Transportation issues;
- Lack of support, or undermining of resolve, by friends and peers; and
- Inadequacy of work income and benefits to meet personal or family monetary needs.

Epstein observed (2008) that one of the best tools for making a difference in keeping people employed is having a fund for discretionary, ad hoc assistance. Relatively small amounts of cash can help people make it through difficult phases or personal crises without having to abandon their jobs. For example, if a client must make the difficult choice between purchasing a family member's needed medication or using the money for bus fare to get to her workplace, a quick transfer of money can keep the client on the job.

Ryan (2005) recommended stipends, either in money or in-kind assistance, as an essential intervention to support employment retention by addressing the problem of ex-offenders' lack of resources. She asserted that released offenders must be able to survive, and if their job income is not sufficient to keep themselves and their loved ones out of poverty, they may be forced to crime. "The evidence is incontrovertible that the majority of ex-offenders resorting to crime do so to support themselves and their dependents."

Graffam and Shinkfield (2006) suggested that attention to helping clients maintain a substance-free lifestyle should be important to employment counselors. They cited U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics data showing that 74 percent of inmates awaiting release in 1997 had been identified as having a drug use or alcohol abuse history (Mumola, 1999).

General readiness, around the clock, to aid clients in crisis can be very beneficial (Rakis, 2008). This echoes Epstein's comments about the tenuousness of life circumstances for many clients after reentry. When housing, personal relationships, and family security are unstable, support from any corner can prevent a disruption from escalating into a complete breakdown of the daily routines that include work.

5.6.3 Problems on the job

Program staff often help clients to understand workplace conflicts and choose how to move forward. Common points of friction or difficulty include:

- The client's lack of experience with the workplace and its expectations in areas such as communication with supervisors and the importance of reporting for work on time;
- Mismatch of job skills and interests with available employment options;
- Conflicts with immediate supervisors; and
- Unrealistic expectations of success, especially compared with typically low education and skill levels.

Employment retention assistance will need to address these and many other issues that discourage the client from maintaining a strength-based response to the challenge of sustained employment. Program staff may also take on an intermediary role between clients and their employers to help bridge the two worlds, address and resolve conflicts and misunderstandings, and provide support in both directions.

In situations where a client is dissatisfied with the job, program staff can coach the client to reframe the issue and plan a solution, or can help the client determine what sort of job would be a better fit.

For some clients, however, there may be no easy fit. In such circumstances, as indicated by Evans, Souma, and Maier (1989), program staff may play an important role in connecting clients with job situations that can accommodate their particular needs. For example, a client may need a low-stress position that requires little or no interaction with the general public.

5.6.4 General retention strategies

The general principles of job retention are relevant for different employment-challenged populations, with specializations according to the needs of each group.

Clymer and Wyckoff (2003) approach job retention as a shared responsibility of the worker, the employer, and the employment and training organization. They outlined ways to improve job retention for low-wage workers and those with erratic work histories and limited skills. "With few options other than to take entry-level, low-wage jobs, [these workers] seldom stay long enough to gain the skills or the job experience necessary for better positions." It can be difficult for these workers to find "the time, energy, or resources to set employment goals, seek out good employers, and shoehorn training and education into their economically precarious lives."

Clymer and Wyckoff present eight elements in their retention-focused program development guide:

1. Focus on retention continuously (at an organizational level)
2. Develop trusting relationships with participants
3. Involve employers
4. Get people into jobs they will keep (partly by promoting good decision-making)
5. Help people establish a work history
6. Provide opportunities to develop job skills
7. Help people deal with challenges
8. Provide ongoing support

Their guide presents keys for employment retention, such as looking at specific connections that can be made within a program (e.g., alumni support groups) and maintaining a realistic, honest, and concerned and upbeat atmosphere.

The career ladder approach is also described by Holzer and Martinson (2005) as a strategy for improving work in low-wage occupational categories. Career ladder initiatives seek to lay out a sequence of connected skill upgrading and job opportunities, with each education step on the ladder leading to a job and/or to further education or training. Programs generally focus on private-sector workplaces, giving employees more advancement potential in their jobs and more incentive to retain their employment. Unlike incumbent worker training programs, career ladder efforts are generally not geared toward a specific employer, but typically cover a certain sector or industry, such as health care.

Holzer and Martinson (2005) also describe a growing trend among the states toward regional career ladder initiatives (citing work from Duke et al., published in 2006). An example is Kentucky's Career Pathways program, which provides grants to advance the movement of low-income individuals into occupations that meet employer needs. Similar work to build career ladders in nursing home care have been undertaken in Massachusetts, the Bronx, Chicago, and other locations. As the employment assistance agencies gain a deeper understanding of the staffing needs and issues of the employers, they are better able to help both the employers and their would-be worker clients.

Holzer and Martinson (2005) suggest some relevant conclusions:

> Financial incentives and supports seem to generate more steady employment for low earners, especially if they are tied to full-time work; but these supports must be permanent, and their impacts alone on advancement are likely very limited.
>
> Temp agencies (and perhaps other intermediaries) can improve the access of low earners to higher-wage employers, where their retention and advancement are both strengthened. Some kinds of post-employment services provided at the workplace seem to strengthen retention as well.
>
> Education and job training for low earners are most successful when they provide workers with credentials (such as Associates Degrees, and perhaps other training certificates) that employers value, and when the training provides skills that match private sector demands in local labor markets.
>
> The returns to privately-provided training by employers are high.
>
> Some programs based on mixed strategies – especially those that provide some training, a range of services and supports, financial incentives and/or access to better employers – have worked well, especially when implemented in an environment where pressures to gain employment are strong.

Fischer's 2005 study examined three programs that have shown success in placing young, low-skilled workers in jobs that they keep for more than a year. "All told, the Jobs Initiative has supported more than 40 jobs projects, accounting for over 9,500 placements and an overall 12-month retention rate of more than 54%." The three programs in this study are Work Link in St. Louis, Individualized Placement in Seattle, and Office Occupations, also in Seattle. The office occupations project "brings in a menu of field specific skills for job seekers looking to make careers in the corporate field," and has the highest wage outcomes and retention rates of the three programs studied. Approaches that were shared among the successful programs were:

- Stay flexible;
- Maintain strong employer ties;
- Provide work supports and related services;
- Build strong partnerships;
- Use good screening and assessment tools;

- Provide ongoing case management; and
- Develop a range of industry or employer placement options.

It is also important that workers be placed in jobs that offer a living wage. The Missouri Economic Research and Information Center developed a tool to help individuals who are pursuing economic self-sufficiency calculate their income needs (accessed 2008). “The Missouri Family Affirming Wages study attempts to quantify the wages needed to meet a Missouri family’s basic needs. This measure of family need identifies basic expenses for different family types for each county in the state and the subsequent wages the family would need to earn to cover those expenses.” The goal is to create a pathway for individuals and families to move from dependency to economic self-reliance.

5.6.5 Lessons from the welfare to work field

Formerly incarcerated persons experience many of the same employment issues that are encountered by people leaving the welfare system.

“People often leave the welfare system for jobs with low wages, lack of health benefits, and few opportunities for career advancement” (Crandall, 2004). To keep these workers employed in a job with a family-supporting wage, employment assistance agencies can focus on providing access to training and advancement opportunities. However, it can be too difficult to balance work, family obligations, and a job, and also to pursue training. Strong relationships between workforce agencies and employers are beneficial. Other factors in improved job retention include effective selection tools to match worker and job, linkage with meaningful work, growth opportunities (training, career ladders, mentoring), excellent supervision, and compensation that is higher relative to local competition and links pay to performance, and has family-friendly benefits.

Rangarajan (1998) identified the main challenges to sustained employment for welfare recipients as follows:

- Low wages compared with high costs to work
- Lack of affordable and reliable child care
- Transportation
- Affordable housing
- Lack of budgeting skill
- Workplace demands
- Physical health, mental health, and substance abuse
- Inadequate personal support systems
- Losing a job and seeking new employment

Rangarajan observed, “Many welfare recipients who find jobs lose them fairly quickly. For instance, one out of four sample members had lost their initial jobs within three months, and nearly 60 percent had lost their jobs by the end of a year.” “Many welfare recipients' reasons for losing a job are complicated. Most find low-paying jobs but still have to deal with the standard costs associated with work (such as finding affordable child care and transportation). Many must cope with a reduction in other forms of social support (such as housing subsidies and, perhaps, food stamp and medical benefits). Nearly one in three work nonstandard hours (evening, night, or swing shifts), making child care and transportation arrangements more complex. Because they have little prior work experience, many welfare recipients have unrealistic work expectations and walk out of their jobs when these expectations are not met. Many have little in the way of personal or social support and find the transition from welfare to work overwhelming and stressful.” (Rangarajan, 1998)

Haimson and Hershey (1997) suggested four keys to effective promotion of employment retention for participants in the Postemployment Services Demonstration Project for welfare-to-work populations:

- Encouraging staff to develop a rapport with clients through good communications, and to keep aware of their individual ongoing and emerging difficulties;
- Emphasizing the need for staff to help clients access any and all benefits for which they are eligible, such as child care subsidies and Medicaid;
- Providing clarity on how far staff should extend themselves in mediating issues that arise in the client's workplace; and
- Providing thorough staff training on all areas related to job retention, including specific practical matters that are important for supporting clients, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Gooden and Bailey (2001) summarized preliminary outcome data from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). The results "suggest a variety of job-retention rates for welfare recipients. In FY 1997, 68 percent of Virginia's TANF population had retained their first job for at least three months (Senate Finance Committee Report, 1997). Washington Works, a nonprofit service provider in Seattle, reported that 73 percent of its participants remained employed at 90 days post hire (Gooden 1998). An Indiana study found that 61 percent were still working after three months (Meyer, Bagby, and Klotz 1997). However, job retention is not consistently defined, making it difficult to compare job-retention rates."

MDRC (2008) notes that "mixed goals" programs for welfare recipients who are searching for jobs focus on job placement, retention, and advancement, in that order.

Holzer, Stoll, and Wissoker (2001) found that welfare hires are considered as good as or better than typical employees, but a fraction experience serious difficulties. "Problems such as absenteeism and other 'soft skill' deficiencies are pervasive." Child care and transportation services can alleviate absenteeism, and addressing "soft skills" in work-readiness training or job mentoring may be very cost effective. Those that are hardest to place in jobs may need alternatives such as basic skills training or community service employment in the short term.

Gooden and Bailey (2001) examined job retention outcomes for welfare-to-work and non-welfare-to-work employees and various sub-groups:

- At intervals over the first six months of employment, welfare-to-work employees became increasingly more likely to remain employed. At six months, their retention rate was twice as high as non-welfare-to-work employees.
- Age, education, work schedule, grade, and veteran's status are generally associated with job retention.
- Workers in full-time jobs were more likely to hold jobs than those in part-time jobs.
- White-collar employees retained their jobs better than blue-collar employees at three and six months.
- "At three months, the odds of blacks and Hispanics retaining their jobs are .70 less than the odds of whites. At six months, this relationship is no longer present. American Indians/Alaskan Natives have greater odds of remaining employed than whites at six months.

- Males demonstrate a higher propensity for job turnover. The odds of males retaining their jobs at six months are .78 less than that of females."

Navarro, van Dok, and Hendra (2007) showed that the post-assistance self-sufficiency (PASS) program in Riverside, California increased participants' employment and earnings but did not extend their tenure in the initial job placement. The purpose of the program is to help participants keep their jobs, stay off TANF support, and advance their earning potential. Voluntary participants received case management and counseling, job search assistance, and/or referrals and support for education and training. People left their initial jobs at the same rate whether they were in PASS or the control group, but the PASS group was more likely to find subsequent jobs.

5.6.6 Special circumstances: clients with mental health issues

Considerable literature exists on employment assistance for people with mental illnesses, people with substance abuse problems, people with a dual diagnosis of mental illness and addiction issues, and people with traumatic brain injuries.

Correctional populations include a higher percentage of individuals with mental health issues than the general population. In addition, it can be helpful to recognize that incarcerated people and those who have recently been released from jail or prison each experience unique stresses.

Graffam and Shinkfield (2006) examined the emotional state of inmates – in terms of depression, anxiety, and anger – at pre-release and at two critical stages of reintegration. Their study also looked the interactivity of emotional state and other variables influencing successful reintegration. They cite earlier work by Renzema (1982), who "found that the stress levels of prisoners were highest just prior to release, and that they reduced over the course of their return to the community. Upon release, stress levels were typically lowest in the first month of release, and had increased by the third month. At six months post-release, the stress levels of the participants approached pre-release levels."

Other psychological factors, such as depression, are also relevant. Graffam and Shinkfield (2006) found that "[m]ean depression scores were lowest at 1-4 weeks following release and then rose again at 3-4 months post-release, suggesting that psychological adjustment to community reintegration is a long-term and fluctuating process." One assessment instrument used to measure depression is the Beck Depression Inventory.

Supported employment (SE) is a major theme in job assistance to people with clinically significant mental health issues. The SE model of programming for persons with mental illness involves rapid job search and placement services as well as continuous individualized follow-along services. Anthony (2006) cites research findings from Cook et al. (2005), which found that SE participants in the Employment Intervention Demonstration Program in seven states were more likely (55 percent) than comparison participants (34 percent) to achieve competitive employment. (Cook, 2005a and 2005b). Cook found that, as of December 2005, no known studies had been conducted of the use of SE with justice-involved persons with mental illness, though there was some supportive preliminary evidence.

Cook and O'Day (2006) found the SE program model very beneficial. SE programs use a rapid job search approach to help clients obtain jobs directly (rather than providing lengthy assessment, training, and counseling), and provide them with ongoing support to maintain and improve their earnings after they start work. The study included 1,600 participants, among whom half had a schizophrenia spectrum diagnosis, and another 40 percent were diagnosed with major depression or bipolar disorder. Ongoing vocational supports were available throughout the study period, in addition to other services.

The authors commented:

- "The advantage of SE over other programs increased over the 24-month study period, making it apparent that programs offering ongoing support and services that build on career achievements had greater success."

- "Some successful experimental programs made supported educational services available, so that workers could enhance their levels of education and obtain better and higher paying jobs. These findings support the importance of providing on-going SE services with no time limits as a best practice in vocational rehabilitation for people with psychiatric disabilities (Cook, Leff, et al., 2005)."

- "SE models that integrated vocational services and clinical psychiatric services, such as medication management and individual therapy, were more effective than models with low levels of service integration."

The authors further observed that "funding and service systems can increase success by encouraging and supporting continued education and training for clients who are already working. Most supported employment jobs are unskilled, part-time positions; half of all clients leave their supported employment positions within six months (Bond 1997). [Our] findings imply that educational and training opportunities delivered as part of an SE program may help clients obtain higher quality jobs and more satisfying careers, thereby escaping poverty and reducing reliance on public support."

Bond et al. (2001) concluded that supported employment is an effective form of job assistance for people with severe mental illness, on a review of findings from eight randomized controlled trials and three quasi-experimental studies. Among the key elements that relate to program success are commitment of the service agency to competitive employment, speedy job placements, integration of work assistance with the mental health team, and the idea that follow-along supports should be "maintained indefinitely." They observe, "The effectiveness of supported employment appears to be generalizable across a broad range of client characteristics and community settings." Further, they assert, "No other vocational rehabilitation approach for people with severe mental illness has attained the status of evidence-based practice despite a half century of program innovation and informal experimentation by many psychiatric rehabilitation programs."

Huff, Rapp, and Campbell (2008) conducted exit interviews with people who had psychiatric disabilities, were placed in supported employment positions, and who either remained in (N = 25) or left (N = 25) those jobs at 6 months after placement. The study found that engagement in the job was the strongest motivator for sticking with it, followed by the worker's relationship with his or her supervisor; the worker's feelings of competence and confidence in performing the work was the third strongest influence toward remaining on the job.

As discussed by the authors, placement efforts are often very effective in supportive employment, but employment retention effects have been weaker.

> Almost 15 years of research on the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment has found consistently high rates of employment of around 60% (Becker & Drake, 2003). This research shows the effectiveness of IPS as compared to other approaches (e.g. day treatment, work units and transitional employment, usual vocational rehabilitative approaches) and across racial and ethnic groups and geographic locations, and led to its designation as an evidence-based practice (EBP) (SAMHSA, 2003).
>
> The majority of practice research in vocational rehabilitation has used the total number of SE clients employed as the primary variable that determines program success. Job tenure has been of lesser concern. Even at EBP practice sites, job tenure rates seem to be modest. Bond, Drake, Mueser, and

> Becker (1997) and Bond et al. (2001) reported the mean job tenure rate for EBP SE programs (i.e., those sites using what is known to be most effective) to be only 6 months.
>
> Age and work history of the client have been the two most frequently found predictors of job tenure (Bond et al., 1997; Cook, 1992; MacDonald-Wilson, Rogers & Anthony, 2001; Shafer & Huang, 1995). Even if age and previous work history are influences on job tenure, they provide little direction for developing interventions to increase job tenure. Two studies have found a relationship between job satisfaction and job tenure (Resnick & Bond, 2001; Xie, Dain, Becker & Drake, 1997). A few studies are suggestive that workplace climate (Resnick & Bond, 2001; Kirsh, 2000, 1996) and job match (Gervey & Kowal, 1995) are important dimensions but even in these studies only a small part of the variance is explained.
>
> The findings from the exit interview data suggest that job match was particularly important. Job match is comprised of at least two dimensions, interest/enjoyment and perceived competence and that these two dimensions are related to job tenure. Interest or engagement with the work was the most commonly identified theme by participants (51%) related to their decision to stay or leave. Furthermore, confidence or competence was also commonly referred to by participants (31%) as a reason for staying or leaving. When accounting for duplications, over three quarters of participants made at least one comment related to one of these two areas.
>
> Labeling clients as unmotivated or noncompliant is common in mental health settings. Taking the focus off of the client as the source of the motivational problem places it on the motivational elements in jobs. The challenges for the job developers becomes one of looking beyond the obvious job market (e.g., fast food, janitorial, clerical, etc.) to the hidden job market of unique niches that reflect the particular interests of clients (Bissonnette, 1994).
>
> Regarding support, “However, high performing SE programs educate clients on strategies and the benefits of requesting needed accommodations, while low performing programs tend to discourage workers from taking this step (Gowdy, Carlson, & Rapp, 2003).

Ahrens, Frey, and Burke (1999) concluded that innovative vocational interventions can affect successful work outcomes for people with severe and persistent mental illness, even in the presence of multiple risk factors. Prevocational skills were addressed in their work with some clients, emphasizing general work competencies, increased work motivation, and decreased disincentives to work. More than half of the clients (55.6 percent) who received intensified vocational services under the Progressive Work Opportunities Grant were able to benefit in terms of securing and maintaining competitive work.

> Beyond the normalizing and structuring effects of social contacts and joint activities, these interventions were designed to enhance clients' self-esteem. As a natural consequence of increased activity and social engagement, clients were expected to develop a more complex need structure, including a greater need for financial resources and social approval, which were seen as important motivators for vocational involvement. When appropriate, incentive money was provided for participation in structured activities with the goal of raising expectations regarding attendance, timeliness, and interactions with peers. At the same time, disincentives to work were addressed, for example by educating clients' families about the rehabilitative value of work, time-structuring activities, and reducing financial support from families where appropriate, or by providing transportation to structured activities. Treatment modalities included individual, group and family interventions.

Bell, Lysaker, and Bryson (2003) demonstrated the effectiveness of using repeated situational assessments of work performance to measure progress in work rehabilitation of people with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder, as well as for feedback and goal setting. Results of working with 63 people, including a control group, showed that those receiving a behavioral intervention had greater improvement on the Work Behavior Inventory subscales overall and specifically on the Social Skills, Personal Presentation, and Cooperativeness scales. (The two other subscales are Work Habits

and Work Quality.) People receiving the behavioral intervention worked 36 percent more hours and 22 percent more weeks. They also showed improvement in motivation, sense of purpose, and enjoyment in life. The authors conclude that behavioral interventions improved participants' work performance, particularly in regard to interpersonal behaviors that are considered less likely to be addressed by work supervisors.

5.7 Responding constructively to job loss

Another basic tenet of relapse theory is that the person in recovery needs to have, or develop, the confidence to go forward and remain in treatment even if a setback or failure occurs. In the context of job loss, this can mean learning what went wrong in the lost job so that the client can be better prepared to succeed in a subsequent job. The loss of a job should not be permitted to erode the client's self-efficacy.

Ultimately, sustained and rewarding employment is a greater goal for clients than job retention per se. Clients can learn from setbacks, and the employment skills they acquire will benefit both short-term job performance and longer-term attainment of personal work and career goals. All program interventions are likely to lead to greater work satisfaction over the long haul and a productive career path.

Larimer, Palmer, and Marlatt (1999) referred to the importance of "restructuring the client's perceptions of the relapse process." They recommended that clients be taught to view lapses "not as failures or indicators of a lack of willpower but as mistakes or errors in learning that signal the need for increased planning to cope more effectively in similar situations in the future." Similarly, Dowden et al. (2003) said that intervention programs should teach the offender to deal with failure or relapse constructively and not to lose hope or experience profound discouragement at a setback.

As stated by George, LaLonde, and Haitsma (2007), losing a job after reentry may not indicate failure so much as an ongoing movement toward a job that provides a better fit for the client and employer. They suggest reentry programs should be prepared "to help reentrants retain their jobs and to move them from job to job quickly when they become unemployed." Tarlow (2001) also referred to the value of a strategy that accepts early failure as part of the process of recovery to successful life after release.

Staff and others who provide support to clients can frame their response to a job loss around these relapse theory basics:

- Focus on the positive. The client is not a failure, and the situation is not hopeless.
- Examine the individual or combined factors that led to job loss. What were the contributing factors, and what critical event or events irreparably changed the equilibrium?
- Learn what coping strategies were missing or were ineffective, and why. If there was a blind spot in the recovery plan, or if there was a weak link in transportation, or if a supervisor relationship went awry, or if an incident of substance abuse caused the client to be terminated from a job, understanding can lead to a better future strategy.
- Reconnect with inner motivation. Commitment to a better future starts from within.
- Return to work. Getting a new job will reinforce the client's value as a worker and bring in renewed income.

SECTION 6. Conclusions

While the relationship between employment and recidivism is complex, there is much evidence to support the need for providing offenders with services that improve their short-term and long-term employment outcomes. Unemployed offenders have a higher re-arrest rate than offenders who are employed and thus present an increased risk to public safety. Their increased involvement with the criminal justice system also poses a financial burden to the taxpayer, a cost that siphons valuable resources from other vital government services. Because they cannot meet the basic financial needs of their families and are separated from them during periods of incarceration, their spouses and children suffer many negative consequences. In short, unemployed offenders are a burden to the criminal justice system, their communities, and their families. They don't pay taxes and consume scarce resources that might be better allocated elsewhere.

Interventions that promote positive employment outcomes can provide offenders and their families with structure and stability while simultaneously making their communities safer and reducing criminal justice costs. These interventions must address the difficulties associated with obtaining employment and the challenges associated with maintaining attachment to the workforce. To meet the latter challenge, we have examined the efficacy of the relapse prevention model, a strategy that has been successfully used in the treatment of offenders with substance abuse and other addictive behavior. Relapse prevention seeks to reduce or prevent the reoccurrence of negative behavior by teaching how to recognize high risk situations and learning effective coping responses.

The high risk situations that cause substance abuse relapse are not unlike those that lead to job loss among offenders. Negative emotional states such as anger or depression can cause a former substance abuser to relapse and the same emotional states can cause an ex-offender to quit his job or engage in behavior that would lead to his or her dismissal. Substance abusers who associate with other substance abusers are much more likely to relapse than those who associate with persons who are clean and sober. Similarly, offenders who limit their friendships to persons engaged in criminal activities are more likely to engage in similar behavior and risk job loss. Persons in substance abuse treatment learn that successful recovery depends on staying away from the "people, places and things" that are associated with their past drug abuse. Former offenders who seek to be gainfully employed for the long-term must learn a parallel lesson. They must build pro-social support networks with people in their community and avoid those places where they are likely to engage in an activity that can lead to their arrest.

Learning how to avoid negative behaviors and effectively manage emotional states are behaviors that can be taught using cognitive/behavioral training. This literature review has examined the evidence of the effectiveness of cognitive/behavioral programs and it is clear that these programs can reduce recidivism rates. As identified by Bogue et al. (2004), the elements of these programs that are supported by research include assessing risks and needs, enhancing intrinsic motivation, targeting interventions, providing skill training with directed practice, using positive reinforcement, engaging ongoing support in pro-social communities, measuring relevant processes and practices, and providing measurement feedback. These elements promote positive employment outcomes for former offenders.

It is important to note that the effectiveness of an offender employment program, even if it is based solely on evidenced-based practices, will be limited unless all the personal employment challenges facing offenders are systematically addressed, preferably beginning early in the incarceration process and continued long after release. These challenges include educational and work experience deficits,

substance abuse, health and mental health problems, the lack of family and community support, and poor financial literacy and living skills. As illustrated in this literature review, each of these factors can be addressed by program interventions, preferably in partnership with community and faith-based organizations that can offer a continuum of services. Reentry partnerships are achieving measurable results and these efforts can serve as models for replication.

Additionally, it is necessary to address the external barriers to employment faced by persons with criminal convictions such as unreasonable bars to employment, the prejudice many employers have toward offenders, and the lack of suitable housing. This requires advocacy work on the part of criminal justice practitioners, their community partners, and the general public. Reentry partnerships can also play an important role in changing public attitudes toward the offender population and amending laws and regulations that preclude offenders from pursuing careers with a livable wage.

No single type of intervention can address the multiple needs of prisoners returning to their communities. Ideally, a variety of interventions should be available and only those interventions required -- as determined by an assessment process -- should be applied. This is not only an evidenced practice, but a prudent use of scarce resources.

Given the complexity of the tasks and challenges associated with providing workforce development services and creating partnerships with community-based providers, there is a need to provide staff with the competencies needed to ensure positive employment outcomes. At a minimum, they should understand career theory and the role of assessment in career planning, possess motivational interviewing skills, be knowledgeable about the barriers to employment faced by offenders, the interventions required to overcome these barriers, and the skills needed to find and maintain employment, and be able to use the Internet in support of their work. To that end, the National Institute of Corrections has developed a wide range of training products and services that not only provide the required competencies, but offer opportunities for bringing people together and establishing partnerships where none may have existed before.

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Appendix E-1: ERS DACUM Profile Validation

National Institute of Corrections

Employment Retention Specialist

DACUM Profile Validation

05/06/2009 (Original 03/25/2009)

DACUM Validation Panel of Experts

Participant	Title	State
JoAnn M. Brown	Job Skills Coordinator	Minnesota
Mark Pisano	Senior Probation Officer	New York
Ivey A. Webb	TOPPSTEP Coordinator	Georgia
Dyeatra Williams	Managing Partner	Ohio

DACUM Facilitators

Barry Mulcahy	Academy Administrator	Vermont

Organized By

Patricia E. Taylor
500 First Street
Washington, D.C. 20534
202-353-9354
petaylor@bop.gov

Bernie Iszler
791 Chambers Rd.
Aurora, CO 80011
303-365-4409
biszler@bop.gov

Original DACUM Panel (03/25/2009)

Participant	Title	State
Diana Bailey	Workforce Development/Transition Coordinator	Maryland
Collie Brown	Sr. Level Criminal Justice Professional	Maryland
Lisa Gunn	Retention Manager	Illinois
Ronald Harvey	President/CEO	Maryland
Mark Pisano	Senior Probation Officer	New York
Hillel Raskas	Work Release Coordinator, OWDS, OWDS-1, GCDF	Maryland
Angela Talley	Work Release Coordinator, OWDS, OWDS-1, GCDF	Maryland

The DACUM Process uses experts in the field to describe their occupation. An occupation can be described in terms of DUTIES (arbitrary groupings of related tasks) and TASKS (observable units of work).

DACUM Profile for Employment Retention Specialist

Knowledge

Evidence Based Practices **N=1**	Boundaries	Labor Laws
Successful retention strategies from research **N=1**	Career assessment	Workforce needs
Occupational skills necessary for the specific job **N=1**	Cultural diversity	Federal and state benefits
Case management techniques	Working with offenders **N=3**	Employer incentives
Employer needs **N=1**	Identifying barriers	Computer applications
Occupational training programs	Marketing **N=1**	Public relations
Agency policies and procedures **N=1**	Motivational interviewing **N=1**	Problem solving strategies
Correctional security practices	Data collection and analysis	Conflict resolution
Criminal Justice System **N=1**	Correctional theory	Behavioral signs of relapse
Relapse prevention **N=1**	Community resources	Report writing procedures
Stress reduction techniques	Behavioral assessment	

Attitudes

Compassion	Decisive	Interpersonal
Empathy **N=1**	Confidentiality	Communicative **N=1**
Flexibility	Realistic **N=1**	Proficient
Patience	Experienced	Principled **N=1**
Competence **N=2**	Certified	Ethical
Non-biased	Knowledgeable **N=1**	Accomplished
Culturally aware **N=1**	Reliable **N=1**	Credible
Open minded	Skilled	Customer service oriented
Innovative **N=1**	Trained	Technical
Positive **N=1**	Educated	Internet savvy
Persistent	Motivated **N=1**	Risk taker
Resilient	Punctual	Adaptable
Fairness	Conscientious	Conscience builder
Standards	Manageable	Equiptable
Practical	Assertive	

Skills

Facilitation **N=2**	Interpersonal	Analytical **N=1**
Evaluate workforce trends	Organized	Evaluation/feedback
Summarizing best practices and data to develop new	Multi-task	Interview **N=1**
Communication, verbal and written	Data collection **N=1**	Presentation
Job readiness/retention training **N=1**	Adaptability	Develop job placement
Collect and evaluate statistical data	Flexibility	Review job placement
Observation	Prioritize **N=1**	Evaluate job placement
Computer	Crisis intervention	Computation
Listening **N=2**	Conflict resolution	Marketing **N=1**
Problem solving/decision making **N=1**	Incorporate theory into practice	

N=Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes rated most important for an Employment Retention Specialist. The higher the number the more important.

Appendix E-2: ERS DACUM Profile Validation

DACUM Profile for Employment Retention Specialist

An Employment Retention Specialist is one who develops and implements workforce development services and by utilizing evidence based practices for career planning and successful, long term, gainful employment that leads to sustained economic self-sufficiency

	Duties	Tasks 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	***Support Case Management***	Develop an individual retention plan **C=1 F=1**	Enroll client in job retention program **C=1 F=1**	Refer client to support systems **C=1 F=1**	Establish positive client/employer rapport **C=1**	Communicate work issues with case managers/service providers **C=1**	Establish process for communicating with case managers/service providers **C=1 F=1**	Provide conflict resolution
		Provide conflict resolution	Disseminate required information **C=1**	Support financial literacy	Develop occupational skills	Monitor and report client progress	Enhance participant soft skills development **C=1 F=2**	Expand support networks
		Provide stakeholder feedback	Facilitate ongoing assessment **F=1**	Identify client relapse trigger signs	Monitor trigger signs	Provide client crisis intervention and referral	Maintain acurate records **F=1**	Evaluate employer employee relationships **C=1**
		Interact with family members/ significant others **F=1**	Collaborate with other agencies **C=1 F=1**	Identify assets and deficits **C=1 F=1**	Identify barriers to employment **C=2 F=1**	Establish client/employer expectations **C=1**	Establish/maintain stakeholder trust	Implement participant relapse prevention strategies **C=1**
		Support participant employment progress **F=1**	Evaluate participant employment progress **C=1**	Develop/support participant coping skills	Monitor relapse prevention plan	Communicate with employer regarding participant relapse to maintain employer relationship **C=1**	Maintain ongoing employer communication **F=1**	Utilize motivational interviewing **C=1**
B	***Train/Support Employability Skills***	Implement personal development skills training	Promote Soft Skills **C=3 F=2**	Assist client with conflict resolution **C=1 F=1**	Support/Promote cultural diversity	Support Job Retention Skills **C=2 F=1**	Address Employability/ employment Barriers **C=4 F=3**	Identify appropriate/ inappropriate workplace behavior
		Promote Workplace Ethics **C=1 F=1**	Facilitate Social Skills Development **C=1**	Provide Financial Literacy Training **C=1 F=1**	Assist client goal development	Demonstrate workplace senarios **C=1**	Monitor job loss indicators **C=1 F=1**	Record workplace behaviors
		Provide job performance feedback **F=1**	Provide timely intervention **F=1**	Encourage ongoing resiliency	Encourage positive job outcomes	Recognize participant's success	Adjust client employability contract **C=1**	Evaluate workplace behaviors
C	***Facilitate Employment Readiness Classes/Skills***	Train on interview skills **C=4 F=3**	Define appropriate workplace attire **C=1**	Model appropriate workplace behaviors **F=1**	Instruct on application completion	Assist participant with resume development **F=2**	Conduct mock job interviews **F=1**	Review job application/ resume **C=2 F=1**
		Identify employment barriers **C=2 F=2**	Develop strategies to manage/overcome participant barriers **C=1 F=1**	Develop a transportation plan **C=1 F=1**	Instruct in job search strategies **C=1 F=1**	Review/administer career assessments **C=1**	Develop relapse prevention strategies **C=1**	Provide financial literacy training **C=1**
		Identify bench marks for job success **C=1**	Identify triggers and coping skills **C=1 F=1**	Review legal issues/ corrections law **C=1**	Discuss job expectations **C=2 F=1**	Define short/long term goals	Assess participant's employment readiness **F=1**	Identify educational and occupational training needs **F=1**

		Create/update career portfolio	Invite guest speakers **C=1**	Recommend career pathways	Provide self empowerment skills training **C=1 F=1**	Procure necessary employment documents	Demonstrate computer/ internet resources **F=1**	Provide computer literacy training
		Provide diversity training	Discuss employment policies and procedures	Develop time management	Develop decision making skills	Follow-up on goal attainment **F=1**		
D	***Maintain employment data***	Conduct client follow up **C=1 F=3**	Record/track job seperations	Communicate with employers and other agencies **C=3 F=2**	Design data collection instrument	Prepare retention data reports	Analyze data outcomes **F=1**	Modify service delivery based on participant's data outcome
		Implement data collection process	Identify industries and employers **C=1 F=1**	Update employer listings	Conduct quality assurance in data **C=1**	Review participant's employment history **C=1 F=1**	Provide data based participant's feedback **C=1**	Provide employment data to related agencies and sevice providers **F=1**
		Review employment data	Validate employment data **F=1**	Provide continuous updates to the database **C=1 F=1**	Verify and document participant self employment			
E	***Work with employers***	Educate employers regarding the criminal justice system **C=1 F=1**	Recruit potential employers with workforce vacancies	Communicate routinely about participant progress	Identify employer needs **C=1 F=1**	Assist employers with filling job vacancies **C=1**	Establish/ maintain liason with employers	Mediate participant and employer issues
		Obtain written progress report	Locate new and emerging career fields **F=1**	Work with employers to develop participant support strategies **F=1**	Provide/identify occupational training to meet employer needs **C=1**	Invite employers as speakers	Identify customized training opportunities to support employer needs **C=1 F=1**	Provide recognition events for employers **C=1**
		Customize classroom training based on employer feedback	Review best practices in employer recruitment and retention strategies **C=1 F=2**	Inform employers of tax credits and incentives **C=1 F=1**	Engage employers in the promotion of hiring offenders **F=1**	Develop and utilize marketing tools to hire participants **C=1 F=1**	Utilize other successful employers to help market former participants **C=1**	Maintain relationship with employer even when no participant's are currently employed **C=1 F=1**
		Communicate in a straightforward/ honest manner	Acknowledge/ recognize model employers					
F	***Research best practice retention strategies***	Evaluate relapse prevention programs **C=1**	Identify job loss indicators **C=1**	Identify appropriate assessment instruments **F=2**	Identify the appropriate role of family/mentors **C=1**	Identify successful instructional delivery systems for employment readiness **C=2 F=2**	Identify appropriate occupational training materials **F=1**	Identify high risk situations
		Modify best practices to fit retention specialist/ site needs **C=3 F=1**	Identify/highlight promising and best practices **C=1 F=1**	Design case management system and implementation based on best practices **F=1**	Identify financial literacy instructional materials **C=1**	Consult with employers to develop employment benchmarks	Conduct ongoing performace evaluations **C=1 F=1**	Evaluate local implementation of best practices **C=1**

		Identify the cost benefit of implementation						
G	***Collaborate with agencies***	Identify common linkages **C=1 F=1**	Participate in outreach events **C=2 F=2**	Identify appropriate counterparts	Develop working groups to discuss specific issues **C=1 F=1**	Market the program **C=1 F=1**	Facilitate sharing of appropriate information **C=1 F=2**	Establish job clearinghouse
		Minimize resource overlap	Facilitate memorandum of understanding where necessary	Define professional/agency boundaries	Co-locate services and staff when possible **C=1**	Participate in inter-agency meetings	Implement inter-agency training regarding partici[ant's workforce development issues and needs **C=1 F=1**	Make appropriate client referrals **C=1**
		Evaluate quality of agency services	Share participant information	Utilize digital interagency case management systems	Facilitate cross-agency case review	Demonstrate positive relationships and cooperation **C=2 F=2**	Identify/model inter-agency collaborations **F=1**	

C=Criticality **F**=Frequency; The higher the number associated with C or F the more people ranked the task as critical or frequent in their job.

Appendix E-3: ERS DACUM Profile Validation

DACUM Profile for Employment Retention Specialist

An Employment Retention Specialist is one who develops and implements workforce development services and by utilizing evidence based practices for career planning and successful, long term, gainful employment that leads to sustained economic self-sufficiency

	Duties	Top 2 highest ranking tasks per duty				
A	***Support Case Management***	Enhance participant soft skills development **C=1 F=2**	Identify barriers to employment **C=2 F=1**			
B	***Train/Support Employability Skills***	Promote Soft Skills **C=3 F=2**	Address Employability/ employment Barriers **C=4 F=3**			
C	***Facilitate Employment Readiness Classes/Skills***	Train on interview skills **C=4 F=3**	Identify employment barriers **C=2 F=2**			
D	***Maintain employment data***	Conduct client follow up **C=1 F=3**	Communicate with employers and other agencies **C=3 F=2**			
E	***Work with employers (4 way tie for 2nd)***	Review best practices in employer recruitment and retention strategies **C=1 F=2**	Maintain relationship with employer even when no participant's are currently employed **C=1 F=1**	Identify customized training opportunities to support employer needs **C=1 F=1**	Identify employer needs **C=1 F=1**	Educate employers regarding the criminal justice system **C=1 F=1**
F	***Research best practice retention strategies***	Identify successful instructional delivery systems for employment readiness **C=2 F=2**	Modify best practices to fit retention specialist/ site needs **C=3 F=1**			
G	***Collaborate with agencies***	Participate in outreach events **C=2 F=2**	Demonstrate positive relationships and cooperation **C=2 F=2**			

C=Criticality F=Frequency; The higher the number associated with C or F the more people ranked the task as critical or frequent in their job.