



Charting the Path to Employment After Incarceration: A Research Synthesis of Employment-Focused Reentry Programs

SUMMARY

This report synthesizes findings from recent evaluations of employment-focused reentry programs to inform the Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD) Grants Evaluation. Building on a prior literature review of employment-focused reentry programs (Lacoe & Betesh, 2019), the PROWD Grants Evaluation synthesized recent evidence from rigorous research (randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental designs) published between 2018 and 2023 that examined impacts on recidivism, employment, and earnings. Key details from 31 publications, including peer-reviewed resources and gray literature, were systematically abstracted and analyzed.

In addition to reviewing rigorous evaluations, this synthesis drew from an expanded body of literature, including older publications and less rigorous program evaluations, implementation studies, and case studies to document reentry program implementation, including common service models, focal populations, differential access to treatment and differential effects by participant subgroups, the timing and continuity of services, partnerships, and peer mentoring.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Seven of the 11 employment-focused reentry programs were associated with statistically significant positive effects on employment. Five of the eight interventions evaluated that measured earnings outcomes demonstrated statistically significant positive effects.
- Only three of the 10 interventions evaluated in rigorous studies measuring recidivism showed statistically significant impacts.

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