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Reentry Court Research: Overview of Findings from the National Institute of Justice's Evaluation of Second Chance Act Adult Reentry Courts

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Reentry Court Research: An Overview of Findings from the National Institute of Justice's Evaluation of Second Chance Act Adult Reentry Courts

Abstract

Background: There are myriad challenges associated with the reentry of formerly incarcerated individuals, coupled with a dearth of rigorous research examining reentry courts. It is well known that formerly incarcerated individuals face overwhelming obstacles, such as limited occupational or educational experiences to prepare them for employment, drug and alcohol addictions, mental and physical health challenges, strained family relations, and limited opportunities due to the stigma of a criminal record. Reentry courts seek to address these challenges by assessing the individuals for risks and needs; linking them to appropriate community-based services; and overseeing the treatment process through ongoing court oversight, probation or parole supervision, and case management. Under the Second Chance Act (SCA) of 2007 (Pub. L. 110-199), the Bureau of Justice Assistance funded reentry programs including the eight sites participating in this National Institute of Justice Evaluation of SCA Adult Reentry Courts. This document provides a summary overview of the evaluation and complements three annual reports that provide more detailed information on the program processes and populations, research methods, and findings.

Study Goals: This study of eight SCA reentry courts across the U.S. had four goals: 1. Describe the SCA reentry courts through a comprehensive process evaluation. 2. Determine the effectiveness of the SCA reentry courts at reducing recidivism and improving individual outcomes through a rigorous impact evaluation. 3. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis. 4. Contribute to the development of a “true” reentry court model.

Methods: The study used a multi-method approach including 1. a process evaluation in all eight sites involving yearly site visits from 2012 to 2014 with key stakeholder interviews, observations, and participant focus groups; 2. a prospective impact evaluation (in four sites) including interviews at release from jail or prison and at 12 months after release (as well as oral swab drug tests) with reentry court participants and a matched comparison group; 3. a recidivism impact evaluation (in seven sites) with a matched comparison group tracking recidivism for 2 years post reentry court entry and 4. a cost-benefit evaluation (in seven sites) involving a transactional and institutional cost analysis (TICA) approach. Final administrative data were collected through the end of 2016.

Results: Results were mixed across sites. One site consistently demonstrated positive outcomes across the interview, recidivism, and cost analyses with the reentry court successfully delivering more substance abuse treatment and other services than what was received by the comparison group. In addition, reentry court participants out-performed the comparison group in reduced recidivism (re-arrests and re-conviction) and re-incarceration (revocation and time in jail or prison). Two sites had neutral, trending toward positive, results with reduced participant re-arrests but with other outcomes (such as convictions and re-incarceration) not significantly different between the participants and the comparison group. Two other sites had mixed results (e.g., participants had significantly fewer re-arrests but significantly increased re-incarceration) and two had negative results (e.g., participants had significantly more re-arrests and incarceration while other outcomes were no different between groups). Cost findings were similarly mixed with two sites experiencing cost savings due mainly to lower recidivism costs and fewer victimization costs for reentry court participants (\$2,512 and \$6,710 saved per participant) and the remainder experiencing loss (ranging from just over -\$1,000 to almost -\$17,000 loss per participant). The research protocol and process evaluation findings are documented in three annual project reports; research caveats include a lack of detailed treatment service data. Also, reentry court

program investment costs are described, but the comparison of cost estimates is limited to outcomes and does not include net benefits based on investment in non-reentry court case processing in the comparison group.

Conclusions: Key processes that set the one site with positive outcomes apart from the other sites was the high level of consistency and intensity of substance abuse treatment, wraparound services for multiple criminogenic needs, high intensity supervision, as well as an increased use of praise from the judge along with other incentives and sanctions. In addition, the eligibility criteria for this site required that participants have a substance use disorder with risk levels ranging from moderate to high (based on their local risk assessment with a three point scale that ranged from low to high). In contrast, other site eligibility criteria did not require a substance use disorder and participant risk levels were mostly high to very high (depending on the assessment tool used and their specific scoring and risk category criteria).¹ It is possible that the sites with less positive results did not have the appropriate level and type of services consistently available to best serve the varying risk levels of their participants.

¹ SCA legislation provided support for alcohol and other drug (AOD) testing, clinical assessment, and treatment services; however substance use disorder was not a criterion for reentry court eligibility under the SCA, and study participants varied in AOD service need levels

Reentry Court Research: An Overview of Findings from the National Institute of Justice's Evaluation of Second Chance Act Adult Reentry Courts

INTRODUCTION

This report presents final summary findings of the National Institute of Justice's (NIJ's) *Evaluation of Second Chance Act Adult Reentry Courts* (NESCAARC). The NESCAARC study, funded by NIJ in 2010, includes a process evaluation, impact evaluation, and cost-benefit study of eight adult reentry courts. These eight programs received funding and technical assistance from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) under the Second Chance Act (SCA) of 2007 (Pub. L. 110-199). The research was performed through a collaboration between NPC Research, the Center for Court Innovation, and RTI International.

Background

The importance of this evaluation stems from policymaker attention to the myriad challenges associated with the reentry of formerly incarcerated individuals, coupled with a dearth of "what works" knowledge generally, and a paucity of rigorous research examining reentry courts in particular. There is a clear need for effective reentry policy. By the end of 2015, over 1.5 million individuals were incarcerated in state and federal prisons (Kaeble & Glaze, 2016). Over 95% will be released and two thirds (68%) will be re-arrested within 3 years (Hughes & James Wilson, 2002). More than half will be re-arrested by the end of the first year, and 50% of those will return to prison or jail (Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014). It is well known that formerly incarcerated individuals face overwhelming obstacles, such as limited occupational or educational experiences to prepare them for employment, drug and alcohol addictions, mental and physical health challenges, strained family relations, and limited opportunities due to the stigma of a criminal record (Lattimore & Visser, 2009; Petersilia, 2003; Travis & Visser, 2005). Reentry courts seek to address these issues by assessing the individuals for risks and needs; linking them to appropriate community-based services; and overseeing the treatment process through ongoing court oversight, probation or parole supervision, and case management.

Research on reentry courts has resulted in mixed findings, including studies that found reduced revocation and re-incarceration but no impact on re-arrests (Judicial Council of California, 2014) or reduced re-arrests but no impact on revocations or re-incarceration (Hamilton, 2010). These mixed findings are possibly due to wide variation in how reentry courts are implemented but still point to a potential for positive impacts. Results from a randomized controlled trial of the Harlem Parole Reentry Court indicated, over an 18-month follow-up period, a 22% reduction in the re-conviction rate, a 60% reduction in the felony re-conviction rate, and a 45% reduction in revocations (Hassoun Ayoub & Pooler, 2015). In an evaluation of six reentry courts in California, participants in reentry court were no less likely

to be re-arrested than a matched comparison group in most sites but participants were revoked less often in the year after entering the program and spent fewer days incarcerated in the 2 years after entering (Judicial Council of California, 2014). Similarly, a quasi-experimental evaluation of the Supervision to Aid Reentry program in Pennsylvania found that reentry court participants were no less likely to be re-arrested than a matched comparison group of probationers, although they were less likely to have experienced supervision revocations (Taylor, 2013). Notably, only 47% of the comparison group were employed at the end of the 18-month study period compared to 63% of reentry court participants (Taylor, 2014).

Despite this research, there is still a substantial lack of knowledge about 1. the challenges associated with reentry court implementation, 2. the difficulties reentry courts face in meeting the needs of the target population, and 3. the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of reentry courts. Accordingly, the research presented in this report adds to the knowledge base in all three of these areas. The research protocol and process evaluation findings are documented in three annual project reports (see the scholarly products listed at the end of this report), and the data will be documented with instrumentation at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data.

Study Goals. Through a study of eight reentry courts from across the U.S., the NESCAARC evaluation addressed the following goals:

- Goal 1: Describe the SCA reentry courts through a comprehensive *process evaluation*.
- Goal 2: Determine the effectiveness of the SCA reentry courts at reducing recidivism and improving individual outcomes through a rigorous *impact evaluation*.
- Goal 3: Conduct a cost-benefit analysis.
- Goal 4: Contribute to the development of a “true” reentry court model.

Study Sites. The reentry courts that participated in NESCAARC were in eight different states:

- Union County, Arkansas (Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts) - AR
- New Castle County, Delaware (Delaware Criminal Justice Council) - DE
- Pinellas County, Florida (Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners) - FL
- Boone County, Missouri (Missouri Office of State Courts Administrator) - MO
- Strafford County, New Hampshire (Strafford County Commissioners) - NH
- Stark County, Ohio (Stark County Court of Common Pleas) - OH
- Bexar County, Texas (Bexar County) - TX
- Norfolk County, Virginia (Supreme Court of Virginia) – VA

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was performed in two phases. Phase 1 addressed Goal 1 of this evaluation (the process study) and involved annual site visits to examine program policies and practices as well as an evaluability assessment to determine potential quasi-experimental impact designs in each site.² Phase 2 addressed Goals 2 through 4 and involved the collection of administrative data; selection of a comparison group for each site; implementation of a longitudinal impact study involving in-depth interviews with program participants and comparison group members in four sites; and the collection of cost data to calculate the costs of the programs and their outcomes/impacts. Following is a summary of the methods used for this evaluation.

Process Evaluation Methods

The **process evaluation** involved annual site visits over 3 years and included key stakeholder interviews, structured observations of court (judicial status hearings) and staffing sessions, participant focus groups, a survey measuring collaboration among team members and service providers, and a review of program documents (such as the policy and procedures manuals and participant handbooks).

Impact Evaluation Methods

There were two components to the **impact evaluation**: 1) a *prospective interview study* using individual participant and comparison group interview results and administrative data (in four sites), and 2) a *recidivism study* using administrative data (in seven sites).

1) Prospective Interview Study Methods

The **prospective interview study** included individuals enrolled in the reentry court or standard post-release supervision beginning in 2012. Four sites—the reentry courts in Delaware, Missouri, Ohio, and Texas—were selected for the interview study based on their large volume of cases and the availability of an appropriate contemporaneous comparison group on standard supervision. Comparison group members were selected based on each site’s eligibility criteria and were individuals who were eligible for the reentry court programs but not referred. Reentry court participants were included in the prospective interview study regardless of whether they ultimately graduated or exited the program unsuccessfully. Individuals were interviewed within 30 days of release from incarceration (or from the date of referral to the program if the local program model did not include referral at release) and 12 months later. As shown in Table 1, 81% of the baseline sample completed the follow-up interview with

² Based on the evaluability assessment, the reentry court in Arkansas was dropped from Phase 2 of the study due to extremely low case flow and the eventual closing of the program.

some variation across sites.³ Table 1 provides the 12-month follow-up response rates for interviews in each site.

Table 1. Percent Retained at Follow-Up by Site and Group

	Delaware	Missouri	Ohio	Texas	All Interviewees
Reentry Court	71%	92%	77%	97%	82%
Comparison	73%	83%	51%	96%	80%
Total	72%	85%	65%	96%	81%

Interviews were conducted in person and lasted approximately 1 hour. Topics included demographics, substance use and treatment, education, employment, service utilization, and supervision experience. The 12-month follow-up interview also included an oral swab drug test for an objective measure of recent drug use. The consent rate for oral swabs was 96% with the majority of those who did not consent citing recent drug use as their reason for not agreeing to the oral swab.⁴

Data on official recidivism outcomes were merged from administrative sources (e.g., arrest and court records) and reflected a 24-month follow-up. For most analytic purposes, data were pooled across sites to maximize statistical power. The final pooled samples included 169 reentry court and 243 comparison group members who had been interviewed at *both* baseline and follow-up. Attrition analyses were conducted to test the differences between those who were interviewed at both time periods and those who were interviewed only at baseline. The selection bias was minimal. The differences between the group at baseline and follow-up were due to site distribution and controlled through weighting. No further corrections were necessary to control for attrition bias.

Interview participants in both reentry and comparison groups were mostly male and averaged 33 years in age. About 40% of participants identified as White, about a third as Black, and a quarter as Hispanic/Latino. There were no significant differences between the two groups in regard to charge, severity, or release type for the instant arrest that led to their supervision. Summary measures were created based on interview questions that were in similar categories; a Cronbach's alpha (α) was used to measure reliability, with a cutoff of $\alpha \geq 0.7$. In most cases, summary measures included all relevant items; in other, items were added or removed through an iterative process to maximize the alpha for

³ The comparison group for the interview study in Ohio was from a different county with similar demographics and similar court and probation practices as the county with the reentry court. This comparison county was across the state from the reentry court county and interviewers had difficulty re-connecting with interviewees from that county. The Delaware reentry court and comparison populations were extremely high risk and the majority had a history of violence; there were several deaths in both the reentry court and comparison samples, many from violence.

⁴ A 12 panel test was performed including the most common drug of choice such as cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamines, heroin/opiates, amphetamines, hallucinogens, some prescription drugs, etc.

each measure. Any attempted measures that could not reach the alpha were presented instead as individual item-level means or dichotomous measures. Analysis involved examining differences in weighted means between the two groups at the follow-up interview; t and chi square tests were used as appropriate.

2) Recidivism Study Methods

The ***recidivism study*** assessed re-arrest, re-conviction, and revocation for a large sample of reentry court participants and a matched comparison group at each site.⁵ The study samples included all reentry court participants who had entered the seven programs since the implementation of BJA grant activities and could be tracked for at least 1 year after entry—regardless of final program status—along with a comparison group of similar individuals who received treatment as usual in the jurisdiction. The comparison groups were matched to the participants at each site through propensity score weighting and/or matching techniques. Precise propensity score adjustment strategies varied by site, given relative sample size in treatment and comparison groups and other technical considerations (see Table 2).

Local and state administrative criminal justice data were obtained, and sample members were followed for up to 2 years.⁶ Tables 2 and 3 provide the sample sizes and key background characteristics of reentry court participants by site. Because sample size was sufficient to support site-specific analysis, and given the substantial differences in program processes as well as between-site variations in resulting recidivism impacts, this study overview focuses on site-specific results. Pooled analyses were also conducted and the results will be published in forthcoming journal articles. Recidivism outcomes included simple bivariate comparisons (e.g., re-arrest, re-conviction, and revocation rates) as well as multivariate models looking at impacts for specific participant subgroups (e.g., by race, age, criminogenic risk).

⁵ The prospective interview study participants make up about 15% to 25% of the overall recidivism study samples in the relevant sites (DE, MO, OH, and TX).

⁶ Recidivism data sources varied across sites and included court, department of corrections, state police, jail, and probation records.

Table 2. Final Sample Sizes by Site

	DE	FL	MO	NH	OH	TX	VA ^a
Reentry Court Participants	224	392	145	145	265	106	44
Comparison Group	448	392	132	159	505	106	41
Propensity Score Technique	1:2 Match	1:1 Match	Weighting	Weighting	Weighting	1:1 Match	Weighting

^a The Virginia reentry court had the most selective eligibility criteria of all the sites, leading to lower intake numbers than other programs. In addition, the program itself conducted a randomized control trial for the purposes of their own program evaluation, further reducing the number of reentry court participants eligible for the current study.

Table 3. Reentry Court Participant Characteristics by Site

	DE 224	FL 392	MO 145	NH 145	OH 265	TX 106	VA 44
Demographics							
Age	29	28	34	28	32	33	40
Male	100%	69%	80%	77%	84%	59%	94%
Race/Ethnicity							
Black/African-American	93%	36%	37%	1%	37%	8%	91%
White	2%	64%	63%	97%	62%	30%	5%
Hispanic/Latino	5%	0%	0%	1%	0%	61%	0%
Other	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%
Criminal History^a							
Any Prior Arrest	39% ^b	91%	73%	98%	97%	90%	93%
# Prior Arrests	0.8	2.30	1.86	1.85	5.13	2.10	2.69
Any Prior Conviction	47%	57%	75%	N/A	72%	72%	100%
# Prior Convictions	1.17	0.74	1.47	N/A	1.10	1.77	2.15
Any Prior Incarceration Sentence	55%	N/A	100%	98%	73%	100%	N/A
Any Prior Supervision Revocation	18%	3%	17%	N/A	N/A	39%	40%
Instant Case^c							
Instant Case Charge Severity							
Felony	62%	100%	100%	52%	87%	91%	81%
Misdemeanor	38%	0%	0%	48%	13%	9%	19%
Instant Case Charge Type							
Person Top Arrest Charge	25%	0%	7%	16%	35%	5%	2%
Property Top Arrest Charge	6%	0%	14%	26%	27%	19%	37%
Drug Top Arrest Charge	31%	0%	9%	25%	17%	40%	19%
Other Top Arrest Charge	38%	0%	71%	34%	20%	37%	42%
Supervision Violation Flag ^d	23%	100%	61%	N/A	N/A	3%	81%

^a Criminal history represents events in the 2 years preceding the index event (the event that prompted program entry such as release from incarceration or a supervision violation).

^b Most participants in Delaware were incarcerated for the full two years prior to program start and were released directly into the program.

^c Instant Case = The case that led to incarceration and/or subsequent program referral.

^d Indicates that the charges for the instant case included a parole or probation violation charge.

Cost Evaluation Methods

For the **cost-benefit** evaluation, cost data are divided into program investment costs and outcome costs. The program investment costs, calculated only for participants, are those associated with activities performed within the program, such as court hearings, case management, drug tests, substance abuse treatment, and any other unique services provided by the program to participants (for which administrative data were available).⁷ The outcome costs, calculated for both reentry court and comparison samples, included criminal justice involvement (e.g., new arrests, subsequent court cases, jail/prison days, and probation/parole days), and victimizations.

The cost-benefit study used a transactional and institutional cost analysis (TICA) approach and focused on costs to the taxpayer. The TICA approach views an individual's interaction with publicly-funded agencies as a set of transactions in which the individual uses resources contributed from multiple agencies and institutions. Step 1 in the TICA methodology is to determine the program process in detail through process evaluation; Step 2 is to identify the program transactions, such as court hearings, various types of services, drug tests and case management; Step 3 is to identify the agencies involved with each transaction; Step 4 is to determine the resources used (such as staff time and materials) by each agency in performing each transaction; Step 5 is to determine the cost of the resources (e.g., staff salaries, the cost of urine cups for drug testing); and Step 6 is to calculate the cost results, which involves multiplying the cost of each transaction by the number of transactions for each participant. For example, to calculate the cost of drug testing, the unit cost per drug test was multiplied by the average number of drug tests per person. All the transactional costs for each individual were added to determine the overall cost per reentry court participant/comparison group individual. This sum is reported as an average cost per person for the program. Similarly, the outcome costs for each outcome transaction (e.g., arrests, jail days) are added and reported as a total outcome cost per individual. The "benefit" is calculated by subtracting the total outcome cost per reentry court individual from the outcome cost per comparison individual and reported as the average benefit per reentry court participant (where positive numbers are considered a "savings" and negative numbers are a "loss."

⁷ It is important to note that the comparison group also has "investment" costs that may be substantial for supervision and other services they receive at the time of reentry. These costs are difficult to measure as data on individuals outside of reentry court are typically not tracked as consistently as those participating in a reentry court. There is also no start and end for comparison group "investment costs" equivalent to the start and end date for a reentry court program. For these reasons, it was not feasible to calculate equivalent "program investment" costs for the comparison group as a part of this study. Instead, the reentry court participant and comparison group costs are compared using outcome data (e.g., re-arrests, court cases, days incarcerated) from the administrative data sources available on both groups.

MAIN FINDINGS

Process Study

Detailed, site-specific characteristics and findings over the 3 years of the NESCAARC process study are documented in three annual reports (see the scholarly products listed at the end of this report).

Of the eight NESCAARC reentry courts that originally received BJA SCA funding, all but one became fully operational and, at the conclusion of the final round of evaluation site visits, six appeared to have positive prospects for sustaining their programs after the grant funding.

Basic characteristics of each NESCAARC site—including program goals, target population, cumulative enrollment (as of the final site visit), and program components and services—are shown in Table 4. Several programmatic characteristics were common across most NESCAARC sites, including an **emphasis on post-release service delivery**, the provision of a **breadth of services** relevant to the target population (with substance abuse treatment and employment services offered in all sites), the use of a **case management approach to coordinate and monitor services**, the use of **court hearings** for the purposes of monitoring participants' progress in the program, the use of **drug testing**, and a **team approach to decision-making** regarding incentives and sanctions. Reentry court participation was typically used as a condition of supervision, with the sentencing judge retaining jurisdiction over the participant. The judicial function was carried out by a judge in the local court system (with a split sentence the most common mechanism for the judicial branch to retain authority over participants).

The major sources of cross-site variability were **program size**, with total cumulative enrollment ranging from 61 to 564 (and annual enrollment ranging from approximately 15 to 200); **whether participation was voluntary or mandatory**, (i.e., voluntary in three sites, mandatory in three, and mixed voluntary and mandatory in 1); and the **population targeted**, particularly with regard to criminal justice status, with most programs enrolling offenders at multiple stages of the criminal justice process and some programs enrolling participants who had not recently completed a jail or prison sentence.

A key factor that appeared to be strongly associated with both implementation success and the likelihood of continued program operations was having built upon an existing program and/or **leveraging a preexisting infrastructure** for problem-solving courts, such as drug or mental health courts, within the jurisdiction. Sites without that foundation found the need to build and maintain new working relationships with the relevant agencies and organizations challenging and time-consuming. Other factors associated with implementation success were **support for the program from high-level personnel** within relevant justice system agencies, **shared vision** among reentry court team members (particularly the supervision officers), **stability** among reentry court team members, and an extensive **network of organizational partners** to meet the extensive and varied needs of the target populations.

As summarized in Lindquist et al. (2014), reentry court staff and stakeholders believed that communication and collaboration among their partners were very high. Participant focus groups provided further insight. In general, although participants were often unclear about what they were getting involved in before they began participation in reentry court, the majority had positive perceptions about the program. In most courts, participants expressed positive attitudes toward reentry court staff, particularly the judge. Participants believed that one-on-one case management and service referrals were particularly helpful. Suggestions for improvement focused on addressing transportation and employment barriers and reducing the multitude of requirements.

Table 4. NESCAARC Site Characteristics

Site	Target Population and Enrollment	Program Components and Services
New Castle County, DE	Moderate- to high-risk men who are returning to the City of Wilmington after serving at least 1 year in a state prison and who will have 12-18 months of probation supervision after release. <i>Total cumulative enrollment: 233</i>	Enhanced pre-release planning and service coordination. Post-release, participants receive regular judicial oversight through court hearings and enhanced supervision provided by a dedicated team of probation officers. Participants also receive enhanced case management for substance abuse treatment provided by a dedicated case manager from the state Treatment Access Center (TASC) and enhanced access to post-release employment, housing, and education services provided through a contract with a community-based service provider.
Pinellas County, FL	Moderate- to high-risk men and women who are residents of Pinellas County and are either released (usually unconditionally) from the DOC or released from the county jail (and under supervision) following a felony violation of probation/parole. <i>Total cumulative enrollment: 435</i>	Through a case management approach entailing assessment and individualized treatment plans, the program connects participants to needed services, including substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, housing, and job placement. Participants also have regular contact with their supervision officers and are required to participate in court hearings.
Boone County, MO	Men and women who are returning to Boone County after successfully completing a 120-day program in a state prison, consisting of either residential substance abuse treatment or “shock incarceration” (i.e., the individual receives life skills and other programming but lives with the general prison population). <i>Total cumulative enrollment: 157</i>	A 120-day MO DOC program that includes substance abuse treatment, followed by transfer to a transitional home upon release. Participants attend regular court appearances, receive supervision, and complete individualized goals and objectives regarding housing, employment, education, and drug and alcohol and mental health services.
Strafford County, NH	Men and women who are residents of Strafford County; meet the DSM IV criteria for chemical dependency; and are misdemeanor, felony, or parole offenders. <i>Total cumulative enrollment: 330</i>	An Intensive Outpatient Treatment substance abuse program, regular court hearings, case management and drug testing by Strafford County Community Corrections, supervision by state probation/parole, and reentry assistance from reentry specialists.

Site	Target Population and Enrollment	Program Components and Services
Stark County, OH	<p>Men and women who are felony offenders, returning to Stark County after incarceration (jail or prison), and who have at least 1 year of community supervision to serve. Individuals classified as high risk are eligible for an intensive reentry court program and those classified as low/medium risk and who lack employment or stable housing are eligible for a less intensive reentry court program.</p> <p><i>Total cumulative enrollment: 564</i></p>	<p>Court monitoring and reentry assistance to support individuals in finding a job and housing. Employment is a major emphasis, and the program has contractual relationships with several employment service providers and other agencies that offer a range of services including substance abuse treatment, mentoring, and family support. Other services include Individual Community Plans, transportation assistance, security deposits/first month rents, and post-secondary education in welding.</p>
Bexar County, TX	<p>High-risk, high-need men and women with a substance abuse diagnosis who are returning to Bexar County after serving a sentence in the local jail or county probation department's Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities, who were sentenced for non-violent felony offenses related to their substance abuse, and who have a minimum of 18 months on supervised probation.</p> <p><i>Total cumulative enrollment: 110</i></p>	<p>The program offers assistance to participants transitioning from a structured inpatient treatment program. Participants receive pre-release contact with a reentry court case manager and are released to transitional housing for 30 days. Post-release, participants continue to receive case management and community supervision, and participate in court hearings. Services include substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, individual and group counseling, job placement/employment readiness assistance, housing assistance, and benefits enrollment.</p>
Norfolk County, VA	<p>Moderate- to high-risk and need men and women with no history of violent offenses (within the past 10 years), no certified gang affiliations, no predatory sex offenses, and no possession of a firearm or deadly weapon, who are released from the city jail.</p> <p><i>Total cumulative enrollment: 61</i></p>	<p>Individualized supervision plans, with services matched to offender needs. Pre-release assistance from a reentry case manager and court hearings. Upon release, participants are connected to needed social services—such as substance abuse treatment, counseling, anger management, and parenting skills—through the case manager. They also receive probation supervision and continue to participate in court hearings.</p>

Prospective Interview Study

Prospective interviews were conducted in: Delaware (DE), Missouri (MO), Ohio (OH), and Texas (TX).

Program Impacts on the Reentry Experience. Across multiple measures, reentry court participants described quite different supervision and court monitoring experiences over the 12-month follow-up period when compared to the comparison group (Table 5). Reentry court participants reported a significantly greater number of in-person meetings with their supervision officer: an average of 2.2 meetings over the past year, compared to 1.3 for the comparison group. They also reported more meetings with case managers. Participants reported an average number of 14.5 court status hearings in the past year compared to about one court appearance for the comparison group. Both study groups were well informed about supervision expectations. While about a third of both study groups met their supervision officer before release, reentry court participants were far more likely than the comparison group to have met other staff (e.g., case managers or service providers) before release. Of those who met with staff, reentry court participants were much more likely to have that staff person follow up after their release (93% of participants reported follow-up v. 68% of the comparison group).

Another hallmark of reentry courts is the use of incentives and graduated sanctions. About 87% of reentry court participants reported receiving a reward or incentive in the past year, compared to 74% of the comparison group (a statistically significant difference; $p < .01$). In fact, individuals in the comparison group were significantly less likely to receive a reward on every measure, including praise from the supervision officer or a judge, increased privileges and tokens, vouchers, or small gifts. About 58% of those in the comparison group reported praise from their supervision officer compared to 70% of reentry court participants (a statistically significant difference). Only 8% of those in the comparison group reported receiving praise from a judge while 73% of the reentry court participant received praise from a judge. The only reward that the two groups did not differ on was the use of decreased requirements, such as meeting with supervision less frequently or less drug testing, which are typically standard practice as individuals under supervision progress. Despite all of these differences, it worth noting that the business as usual procedures also utilized incentives, given that virtually three quarters (74%) reported receiving a reward at some point in the past year.

The reentry court group was also significantly more likely to have received a sanction or other response (e.g., incentive or service adjustment) in the past year, with 59% reporting having received at least one compared to 48% of the comparison group. Specifically, reentry court participants were significantly more likely to receive additional drug testing or treatment, required community service, or jail time than those in the comparison group.

Table 5. Prospective Interview Results: The Reentry Court Experience

	Reentry Court	Comparison
N	189	223
Supervision Experience		
On supervision at follow up	99%	99%
Avg. # of in-person meetings with Supervision Officer	2.2***	1.3
Avg. # of in-person meetings with Case Manager	1.4***	0.2
Avg. # of regularly scheduled monitoring/court hearings	14.5***	0.3
Met staff from outside before release	41%**	28%
Staff followed up after release	93%***	68%
Rewards and Sanctions		
Received any reward or incentive	87%**	74%
Received any sanction	59%*	48%
Well informed, accurate expectations (Index of 5 measures) ^a	3.95+	3.84
Perceived likelihood of PO detection of noncompliance	3.68	3.70
Perceived certainty of response ^b to noncompliance	3.23*	3.09
Substance Abuse Treatment (Tx) Experience		
ER or Hospital Stay for drug/alcohol Tx	1%	4%
Hospital stay for detox	4%*	1%
Residential drug/alcohol Tx program	12%	11%
Medicinal interventions (methadone, naltrexone, buprenorphine)	4%*	1%
Outpatient group counseling for substance abuse Tx	41%***	22%
Avg. # weeks outpatient group counseling	8.90***	2.56
Outpatient individual counseling for substance abuse Tx	39%***	20%
Avg. # weeks outpatient individual counseling	8.23***	1.87
Services Experience		
Employment/Education	56%*	45%
Criminal Thinking/Life Skills	44%**	29%
Health Care - mental or physical	43%	40%
Assistance with transportation	38%**	24%
Assistance accessing public programs	27%*	16%
Housing	15%**	7%

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

^a The information and expectations index is the mean of 5 measures. Each measure is a categorical variable ranging from 1-5, with 5 being strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha is 0.733.

^b Certainty of response is an average of the perceived likelihood of receiving each of 8 sanctions - the range is 1 (somewhat unlikely) to 3 (very likely). The Cronbach's alpha is 0.778.

At baseline, the reentry court and comparison groups were virtually identical in substance abuse needs. The mean score for drug problems was 3.38 for the reentry court participants and 3.22 for the comparison group, as assessed by the TCU Drug Screen. While the comparison group was more likely to report using marijuana recently, the reentry court sample was more likely to report using heroin. Reentry court participants generally reported receiving more help than the comparison group—including significantly greater numbers and types of services in the areas of substance abuse treatment, employment and education, housing, group counseling for mental health issues, public assistance, transportation, criminal thinking, and life skills trainings. Regarding substance abuse treatment, reentry court participants reported significantly more hospital stays for detox, medicinal interventions, outpatient group counseling or individual counseling, and self-help groups. Among those who received *any* counseling (participants and comparison), reentry court participants reported significantly higher dosages.

Program Impacts on Outcomes. Shown in Table 6, the reentry court group generally outperformed the comparison group on measures of drug use, criminal activity, and incarceration at follow-up (based on the self-report interview data). Only 17% of reentry court participants had a severe substance use issue at follow-up, compared to 28% of the comparison group, as assessed by the TCU Drug Screen. Oral swab results likewise suggested lower drug use among the participant population; 26% of participants and 36% of comparison interviewees tested positive for drug use at follow-up. Self-reported criminal activity was also significantly lower for the reentry court sample. In addition, criminal activity based on official records (administrative data sources) trended lower for the reentry court interview sample, although only re-incarceration demonstrated a statistically significant difference.

Intermediate outcomes such as employment and education, however, did not yield significant differences. About 55% of reentry court and comparison group participants indicated being employed or in school at the follow-up interview. They reported relatively similar income and the majority supported themselves through a job or family members. Other domains had no significant differences between the two groups including family support, housing stability and quality, victimization, mental health, and criminal thinking/attitudes (data not shown).

In broad overview, the aforementioned results largely replicate those found in *NIJ's Multi-Site Evaluation of Adult Drug Courts* (Rossman et al., 2011), in which the drug courts were found to significantly reduce drug use and criminal activity—the core outcomes that such programs tend to be designed to produce—yet had more modest or non-significant impacts on nearly all other types of outcomes, including socioeconomic and family relationship factors.

Table 6. Prospective Interview Results: Outcomes at 12-Month Follow-Up

	Reentry Court	Comparison
N	189	223
<i>Substance Use</i>		
TCU Drug Screen Severe Drug Problem	17%**	28%
Frequency of Use, Average # for past month at follow-up		
Alcohol	2.67	2.81
Marijuana	2.68	3.17
Crack	0.25	0.55
Cocaine	0.66	0.43
Heroin	1.58	2.00
Other ¹	0.32	0.38
Tested Positive (Any Drug) on Oral Swab	26%*	36%
<i>Criminal Activity, Self-Report</i>		
Engaged in any violence against another person	10%	13%
Carried gun, knife, other weapon	5%*	12%
Committed property crimes	2%**	8%
Any criminal behavior during past year	46%	52%
<i>Criminal Activity, Official Records (2 Years)</i>		
<u>Re-Arrest</u>		
Any Re-arrests	52%	53%
Any Felony Re-arrests	26%+	34%
<u>Supervision Revocation</u>		
Any Supervision Revocations	33%	26%
<u>Incarceration</u>		
Any Incarceration (jail or prison)	44%*	56%
Mean # Days Incarcerated	105	87
Any Jail	40%*	52%
Any Prison	14%	18%

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

¹ Other includes: amphetamines, hallucinogens, prescription medications, street methadone, designer drugs, and others.

Recidivism Study

The impact study used administrative data to measure, 1. recidivism and 2. the characteristics of participants for whom the reentry courts were most successful. While the prospective interview study was conducted in four sites (those that had a case flow large enough to provide a sufficient participant sample size) with a subset of participants in each site, the impact study included all seven reentry court sites with a full sample of participants who had entered the program after SCA grant funding. Table 7 shows the

detailed results for each site. Similar to findings in prior research on reentry courts, results are mixed, with some sites showing significantly lower recidivism rates for reentry court participants and others showing significantly higher recidivism or no difference in recidivism between groups. A general characterization of overall site performance with regard to these outcomes (e.g., positive, negative, mixed, neutral) is provided for each site followed by a more detailed discussion of the various recidivism findings. Overall, the essential story is as follows:

- Positive: One reentry program (TX) had a clear positive impact across all outcomes.⁸
- Neutral-to-Positive: Two programs (DE, FL) had a positive to neutral impact. In both sites, reentry court participants show some improved outcomes relative to the comparison group, but the majority of outcomes measured show no differences.
- Mixed: Two programs (MO, OH) had a mixed impact—defined as some positive and some negative impacts, depending on the specific measures.
- Negative: Two programs (NH, VA) had a generally negative impact across multiple outcomes.

Re-Arrest and Re-Conviction. Re-arrest rates among program participants ranged from a low of 38% (TX) to a high of 89% (NH). Five reentry courts (DE, FL, MO, OH, TX) saw at least *some* positive impacts (i.e., reductions) on re-arrest and re-conviction at 2 years; three of these five (MO, OH, TX) showed more significant positive impacts across measures of re-arrest and re-conviction. These impacts remained even when controlling for time at risk (i.e., days incarcerated over the 2-year period). Two reentry courts (NH, VA) saw generally negative impacts on re-arrests and re-convictions.⁹

Supervision Revocations. In one site (MO), reentry court participants were more likely to have their supervision revoked during the 2-year follow-up period than the comparison sample. Findings in four other sites were not significant (two sites had no available revocation data).

Returns to Incarceration. In one site (FL), reentry court participants were less likely to have a new jail sentence and spent fewer days incarcerated over the 2 years following program entry (or equivalent). In four sites (MO, NH, OH, VA), reentry court participants were more likely to have a new incarceration sentence than those in the comparison sample. In all four of these sites, participants were more likely to have a new jail sentence; participants in Ohio were also more likely to have a new prison sentence. Ohio participants also spent *more* days incarcerated within 2 years of program entry (or equivalent).

⁸ While several of the findings in this site do not reach the level of statistical significance due to small sample sizes, overall percentages suggest that reentry court participants were less likely to have a new arrest or a new conviction and had *fewer* of each.

⁹ While small sample sizes in Virginia preclude the findings from reaching the threshold for statistical significance, the effect size between the raw percentages are suggestive of negative impacts.

Table 7. Reentry Court Impacts at 2 Years Post-Entry¹

	DE		FL		MO		NH		OH		TX		VA	
	Re-Entry Court	Comparison Group	Re-Entry Court	Comparison Group	Re-Entry Court	Comparison Group	Re-Entry Court	Comparison Group	Re-Entry Court	Comparison Group	Re-Entry Court	Comparison Group	Re-Entry Court	Comparison Group
Number of Cases	181	362	326	326	145	132	124	159	141	505	77	77	31	34
RE-ARREST²														
Any Re-Arrest	87%	83%	73%	72%	49%**	66%	89%	83%	50%*	58%	38%	51%	61%	50%
Mean # Re-Arrests	2.24+	2.54	1.41	1.45	0.96	1.22	3.30***	1.92	0.93+	1.13	0.69	0.87	1.68+	0.95
Any Felony Re-Arrest	38%	37%	70%	67%	26%	29%	46%+	35%	39%*	49%	25%*	44%	55%	44%
Any Violent Felony Re-Arrest	9%	13%	9%	9%	2%+	6%	3%	3%	18%	19%	1%	5%	0%	0%
Any Drug Re-Arrest	28%	27%	12%+	16%	9%	10%	15%	11%	8%***	19%	8%+	17%	19%	15%
RE-CONVICTION²														
Any Re-Conviction	84%	83%	25%	29%	40%+	50%	89%	83%	34%**	46%	57%	65%	45%	41%
Mean # Re-Convictions	2.04	2.19	0.36	0.41	0.63	0.71	3.30***	1.92	0.54*	0.76	1.17	1.42	0.79	0.62
Any Felony Re-Conviction	14%*	22%	14%	16%	23%*	12%	46%+	35%	22%*	31%	29%	40%	45%	35%
Any Violent Felony Re-Conviction	2%	5%	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%	3%	8%	12%	1%	3%	0%	0%
Any Drug Re-Conviction	15%	19%	8%	7%	9%	5%	15%	11%	3%**	10%	16%	21%	9%	12%
REVOCATION														
Any Supervision Revocations	42%	37%	21%	24%	41%+	30%	No Data		No Data		46%	47%	26%	32%
INCARCERATION														
Any Incarceration (jail or prison)	55%	51%	33%*	41%	74%**	55%	89%	83%	73%*	64%	75%	82%	71%*	44%
Mean # Days Incarcerated	107.24	85.03	82.76+	106.85	160.75	120.36	239.46	177.35	168.14***	98.60	141.82	131.64	201.24	242.73
Any Jail	49%	45%	17%**	27%	74%***	52%	89%*	79%	70%*	63%	75%	74%	68%***	24%
Any Prison	13%	12%	21%	21%	41%+	30%	9%	10%	35%**	23%	16%	16%	13%	24%
OVERALL IMPACT TREND³	Positive-Neutral		Positive-Neutral		Mixed		Negative		Mixed		Positive		Negative	

+*p* < 10 **p* < 05 ***p* < 01 ****p* < 001

Key: Reentry Court has a Positive Impact Reentry Court has No Impact Reentry Court has a Negative Impact No Data Available

Note: In some sites, findings that did not reach the threshold for statistical significance, but where effect sizes suggest a notable difference between the reentry court and comparison samples, findings were color coded as having an impact. This practice was limited to the two smallest sites, where sample size was felt to limit our ability to detect statistical differences.

¹ Follow-up period for all impact analyses begins on date of release from incarceration on the instant case in all sites except Ohio. In that site, the longer period between release and program entry date necessitated an alternate calculation. The Ohio follow-up period begins on the Program Entry Date (for reentry court participants) or estimated equivalent (i.e., date of release from incarceration on the instant case + 70 days for comparison cases).

² Re-arrest and re-conviction charge categories (felony, misdemeanor, drug) represent the top arrest/conviction charge only.

³ Overall impact trends are characterized as positive (i.e., reentry court performs better than comparison); negative (i.e., reentry court performs worse than comparison); mixed (i.e., reentry court performs better on some measures, worse on others); and neutral (no difference between the two groups).

Demographic Subgroups. Through select subgroup analyses, the reentry courts were examined to determine whether they were particularly effective for specific groups of individuals (by age, sex, and race/ethnicity). Subgroup analyses were limited to two primary outcomes of interest: any re-arrest within 2 years of program entry and felony re-arrest during the same period. Two reentry court programs were particularly effective at reducing re-arrest among male participants. The reentry courts in Florida and New Hampshire made a relatively greater impact among male participants; male participants were significantly less likely than men in the comparison sample to have any re-arrest (FL) and any felony re-arrest (FL, NH). The reentry court programs in two sites (MO, OH) were not particularly effective with younger participants; participants under 25 years of age were more likely than young members of the comparison group to have a new arrest. The Delaware program, by contrast, was particularly effective with young participants; those under 25 years of age were significantly less likely than young members of the comparison sample to have a new arrest. There were no differential program impacts detected by participant race/ethnicity.

Criminogenic Risk.¹⁰ As with the subgroup analyses by demographic characteristics, there were two outcomes of interest with regard to disparate program impacts by participant risk: Any re-arrest within 2 years after program entry and any felony re-arrest during the same period. The only finding approaching statistical significance was in Ohio, where program participants at very high risk of re-offense were somewhat less likely than participants in the low- to moderate-risk group to have a new arrest relative to comparison defendants in the same risk category, suggesting that the program may be particularly effective at targeting the very highest risk offenders.¹¹

Cost Benefit Study

The cost study conducted in all seven participating sites estimated investment costs for the reentry courts, as well as costs due to criminal justice outcomes for both groups. Programs transactions are defined as those related to program operation and services provided to participants from the time they

¹⁰ Risk scores were assigned based on an empirical analysis of the factors that actually predicted re-offending within each site. Available factors varied by site but tended to include: prior arrests and convictions; prior jail or prison incarceration; charges on instant case; entry into the reentry court on a new arrest or probation/parole violation; entry into the reentry court from a jail or prison; prior history of supervision violations; and demographic characteristics. For each site, an actuarial model was constructed based on predictors of risk that assigned each individual a predicted probability of re-arrest within 2 years.) Modeling was repeated with and without the reentry court sample in order to investigate whether treatment within the reentry court might have changed the risk levels of the reentry court sample, effectively altering key relationships. The essential predictors, however, did not change in any site. Having obtained predicted probabilities of re-arrest for each sample measure, standard steps were taken to construct a post-hoc risk prediction tool—dividing the sample based on logical cut-points and then confirming the predictive accuracy of the final set of categories based on computing Area Under the Curve statistics.

¹¹ The distribution of risk scores varied across the sites. While in all sites the vast majority of participants were moderate to very high risk, in three sites nearly all (i.e., 90% or more) participants were high risk or above; the other sites included up to one-third moderate risk participants and one site included low to moderate risk participants.

enter the program to exit. Table 8 lists the investment cost per participant for each transaction and total cost per participant for the program at each study site. The “NA” designation in this table indicate transactions that did not occur in the program at a particular site. There was a wide variety of transactions that occurred across sites. While all reentry court sites had case management, court hearings, drug testing, and jail sanctions, treatment and other services were different at every site. The amount of funds spent on each transaction also varied widely, indicating more or less use of each type of service. For example, the reentry courts in Ohio and Texas showed relatively low court costs per participant (\$742 and \$501 respectively for the length of the program) indicating less time spent on court appearances, while the reentry court in New Hampshire spent over \$3,000, indicating a large amount of participant (and team member) time in court. The types of treatment available varied the most, with no consistent use across sites. Some reentry courts provided group and individual outpatient substance abuse treatment while others did not. Some had residential treatment and intensive outpatient, while others did not. Three of the reentry courts required that the participants pay program fees. These fees went to the court in New Hampshire and to probation in Missouri and Texas.

Table 8. Reentry Court Investment Costs by Transaction

Transaction	DE	FL	MO	NH	OH	TX	VA
Court Sessions	\$2,046	\$829	\$328	\$3,414	\$742	\$560	\$1,630
Case Management	\$2,032	\$922	\$1,053	\$2,182	\$895	\$1,488	\$2,022
Group Tx Sessions	\$1,171	\$277	\$1,355	NA	NA	\$1,128	\$500
Individual Tx Sessions	\$1,254	NA	\$4,444	NA	NA	\$1,685	\$73
Day Tx or IOP Days	NA	NA	\$71	\$14,751	\$795	NA	NA
Residential Tx Days	NA	\$133	\$871	NA	\$20	\$567	NA
Drug Tests	\$31	\$35	\$365	\$20	\$117	\$0	\$179
Jail Sanctions	\$1,707	NA	\$189	\$73	\$660	\$2,728	\$262
Participant Program Fees	\$0	\$0	(\$1,431)	(\$1,496)	\$0	(\$1,000)	\$0
TOTAL PROGRAM COST	\$8,241	\$2,196	\$7,245	\$18,944	\$3,229	\$7,156	\$4,666

The total cost of the reentry courts across sites ranged from just over \$2,000 to nearly \$19,000 per participant. The average cost for reentry court across sites (weighted based on the sample size in each state) came to \$6,573. For most sites, the majority of funds were spent on court and case management, or on substance abuse treatment, or on all three.

Table 9 shows the program costs per participant according to the amount contributed by each agency. Note that the majority of sites do not include attorneys on the team—five out of seven do not include a

prosecutor and four out of seven do not include a defense attorney; therefore, those agencies contribute no funds towards these programs. In addition, some agencies are actually earning funds in the operation of these courts. In New Hampshire, the participant fee more than covers the court costs, while in Missouri and Texas the participant fees cover more than the time probation spends on these programs, resulting in a “benefit” for these agencies.

Table 9. Reentry Court Investment Costs by Agency

Agency	DE	FL	MO	NH	OH	TX	VA
Court	\$649	\$76	\$410	(\$1,010)	\$1,595	\$970	\$1,332
Prosecuting Attorney	NA	NA	NA	\$173	NA	NA	\$388
Defense Attorney	NA	NA	NA	\$184	NA	\$59	\$243
County/State Health or Social Services	\$520	\$82	NA	NA	NA	\$91	\$296
Probation/Parole	\$2,179	NA	(\$1,431)	\$3,012	\$27	(\$431)	\$1,140
Treatment/Services	\$3,186	\$2,038	\$7,661	\$15,691	\$947	\$3,739	\$763
Corrections	\$1,707	NA	\$416	\$820	NA	NA	NA
Sheriff/Law Enforcement	NA	NA	\$189	\$73	\$660	\$2,728	\$504
TOTAL	\$8,241	\$2,196	\$7,245	\$18,943	\$3,229	\$7,156	\$4,666

Table 10 provides the costs for each outcome transaction per individual for 2 years post program entry (or equivalent for the comparison group). Outcome transactions are events that occur outside of the reentry court, but may occur any time after entry, such as new arrests and new court cases. The largest cost for both groups across all sites was for time spent incarcerated. The next largest was due to victimizations (either person or property crimes). The final row of Table 10 provides the difference in outcome costs (either a savings or a loss to the criminal justice system) per person when the cost for reentry court outcomes is subtracted from the cost of the comparison group outcomes (not including investment costs). Only two sites (Delaware and Texas) demonstrated a cost savings for reentry court participants in the 2 years post program entry. For some sites there is relatively small loss (less than \$2,000 per participant). Others have more substantial losses.¹²

¹² The TICA approach used in this study views savings or loss in terms of “opportunity resources” so that the savings or loss may not be in terms of direct monetary impact but may actually be a difference in the availability of resources, like jail bed days. The fully loaded cost of the resource is reported rather than any marginal costs.

Table 10. Two-Year Outcome Costs per Individual by Transaction

Transaction		DE	FL	MO	NH	OH	TX	VA
Re-Arrests	Reentry	\$312	\$137	\$162	\$381	\$238	\$95	\$150
	Comparison	\$363	\$141	\$208	\$227	\$289	\$116	\$79
Misdemeanor Court Cases	Reentry	\$1,244	\$159	\$0	\$352	\$308	\$0	\$337
	Comparison	\$2,230	\$224	\$0	\$503	\$347	\$0	\$256
Felony Court Cases	Reentry	\$746	\$252	\$649	\$3,142	\$686	\$473	\$1,273
	Comparison	\$1,372	\$263	\$706	\$2,675	\$876	\$674	\$942
Probation/Parole Days	Reentry	\$6,390	\$3,268	\$323	\$6	\$0	\$0	\$537
	Comparison	\$6,187	\$525	\$194	\$0	\$0	\$1,115	\$308
Jail Days	Reentry	\$0	\$1,622	\$1,046	\$10,913	\$3,952	\$3,457	\$8,371
	Comparison	\$0	\$2,898	\$482	\$7,841	\$3,409	\$4,819	\$5,976
Prison Days	Reentry	\$12,086	\$6,242	\$13,225	\$10,737	\$17,335	\$5,410	\$22,586
	Comparison	\$12,762	\$7,376	\$8,356	\$8,913	\$10,423	\$4,552	\$21,030
Property Victimizations	Reentry	\$3,275	\$3,412	\$3,957	\$2,456	\$5,868	\$1,774	\$6,686
	Comparison	\$4,094	\$3,685	\$3,548	\$4,913	\$7,642	\$3,548	\$4,230
Person Victimizations	Reentry	\$15,473	\$8,841	\$3,979	\$4,863	\$17,241	\$442	\$10,610
	Comparison	\$15,030	\$6,189	\$7,957	\$6,631	\$15,915	\$3,537	\$884
Total Outcome Costs	Reentry	\$39,526	\$23,933	\$23,341	\$32,850	\$45,628	\$11,651	\$50,550
	Comparison	\$42,038	\$21,301	\$21,451	\$31,703	\$38,901	\$18,361	\$33,705
Difference (savings or loss)		\$2,512	(\$2,632)	(\$1,890)	(\$1,147)	(\$6,727)	\$6,710	(\$16,845)

Table 11 provides the difference when the outcome cost for reentry court is subtracted from the outcome cost for the comparison group for each type of transaction. A positive number means that there is a savings for the reentry court (i.e., the reentry court cost less) while a negative number indicates a loss. Texas has the highest savings, due primarily to fewer victimizations committed by reentry court participants and less time spent incarcerated as well as less time on probation. Conversely, Virginia has the largest loss due mainly to a higher number of person crimes committed by reentry court participants resulting in higher victimization costs as well as higher incarceration costs. Ohio's substantial loss is due almost entirely to more time incarcerated for reentry court participants.

Table 11. Outcome Savings/Loss by Transaction per Reentry Court Participant

Transaction	DE	FL	MO	NH	OH	TX	VA
Re-Arrests	\$51	\$4	\$46	(\$154)	\$51	\$21	(\$71)
Court Cases	\$1,612	\$76	\$57	(\$316)	\$229	\$201	(\$412)
Probation/Parole Days	(\$203)	(\$2,743)	(\$129)	(\$6)	\$0	\$1,115	(\$229)
Jail/Prison Days	\$676	\$2,410	(\$5,433)	(\$4,896)	(\$7,455)	\$504	(\$3,951)
Property Victimizations	\$819	\$273	(\$409)	\$2,457	\$1,774	\$1,774	(\$2,456)
Person Victimizations	(\$443)	(\$2,652)	\$3,978	\$1,768	(\$1,326)	\$3,095	(\$9,726)
TOTAL OUTCOME SAVINGS/LOSS	\$2,512	(\$2,632)	(\$1,890)	(\$1,147)	(\$6,727)	\$6,710	(\$16,845)

Finally, Table 12 illustrates the average difference per individual between the reentry court and the comparison group (the savings or loss) by agency. Interestingly, although most of the sites showed an overall loss (total is negative number) for reentry court participants, most agencies showed a cost savings (positive number) due to reentry court participation; see the court, prosecutor, defense, and probation costs. Corrections exhibited the greatest losses, due to a larger amount of time reentry court participants spent incarcerated. The only exception is Delaware, where all agencies experienced a cost savings (or broke even) for reentry court participants.

Table 12. Outcome Savings/Loss per Reentry Court Participant by Agency

Agency	DE	FL	MO	NH	OH	TX	VA
Court	\$523	\$11	\$13	(\$288)	\$91	\$75	(\$71)
Prosecuting Attorney	\$485	\$44	\$24	(\$15)	\$90	\$71	(\$216)
Defense Attorney	\$604	\$22	\$19	(\$12)	\$48	\$55	(\$124)
Probation/Parole	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$6)	\$0	\$1,115	(\$229)
Corrections	\$473	(\$1,609)	(\$4,997)	(\$1,824)	(\$6,912)	(\$791)	(\$1,556)
Sheriff/Law Enforcement	\$51	\$1,280	(\$518)	(\$3,227)	(\$492)	\$1,316	(\$2,467)
Victimizations	\$376	(\$2,380)	\$3,569	\$4,225	\$448	\$4,869	(\$12,182)
TOTAL OUTCOME SAVINGS/LOSS	\$2,512	(\$2,632)	(\$1,890)	(\$1,147)	(\$6,727)	\$6,710	(\$16,845)

Implications for Policy and Practice

The prospective interview study provides insight into the experiences of reentry court participants and the services they received.¹³ At minimum, the findings indicate that the four reentry courts included in this component (Ohio, Texas, Delaware, and Missouri) were indeed providing their participants with more intense supervision and more services than similar individuals on standard supervision. Based on the interviews, the reentry courts provided case management in conjunction with supervision, used incentives and graduated sanctions, and connected participants with a wide range of services based on their needs. While the substance use needs of the reentry court participants and comparison groups were similar at baseline, those in the reentry group ultimately received far more substance abuse treatment over the 12-month follow-up period. In addition, they were less likely to report a severe drug problem at follow-up and less likely to test positive in an oral swab drug test than the comparison group; this suggests that reentry court participation was associated with improvements in substance use outcomes relative to standard supervision. The combined recidivism findings for the four sites in the interview study were modest but generally trended lower recidivism for the reentry court group. Self-reported criminal activity at follow-up was lower among reentry court participants, as was felony re-arrest and re-incarceration. Although the administrative data results for these four sites do not show a strong effect on recidivism, the interview measures provided valuable information about the experience of the individuals in the reentry courts. The interview findings provide the story of how individuals' lives were impacted by their participation in a way that cannot be measured by counting arrests from administrative datasets or by quantifying monetary gains or losses.

¹³ Note that neither site that had poor recidivism findings (NH and VA) was selected for the prospective interview study that would yield detailed information on participant and comparison group experiences.

The findings from the full recidivism study, which included all seven sites and was based on the full samples of individuals enrolled in the programs over the course of the grantees period of performance (and a matched comparison group in each site), paint a less promising picture of program impact. Although all of the four courts that were included in the prospective interview study had some positive findings in the recidivism analysis and none were classified as negative, the findings from this component generally suggest a lack of positive impacts in many sites. Indeed, in some of the sites that were not included in the prospective study, recidivism outcomes were primarily negative.

The only site characterized as having consistently positive recidivism findings was Texas. Texas reentry court participants were less likely to be re-arrested, re-convicted, and re-incarcerated than the comparison group. While not every result was statistically significant, they all trended lower for reentry court participants than comparison group members. In considering aspects of the reentry court that could be helpful in interpreting the findings, this court (Bexar County) was established by building on the foundation of a long-standing drug court. While the reentry and drug court dockets were separate, and had separate staff and differences in their practices, they shared the same access to services and the same judge (who has received formal drug court training and was consistently described in extremely favorable terms by reentry court participants during the focus groups conducted for the evaluation). This foundation helped ensure that the reentry court was grounded in best practices from the drug court model. However, the reentry court implemented in one other site also largely built upon an existing drug court did not achieve reductions in recidivism, suggesting that this model alone is not a sufficient condition for positive impact. A more nuanced implication to draw is that where there is a preexisting, high-quality drug court, with strong leadership from an effective judge, building upon a drug court could be advantageous.

Arguably, a clearer and more compelling area where the Texas program distinguished itself was in both the quality and breadth of its treatment services across multiple areas of criminogenic need—extending not only to substance abuse treatment but also to mental health treatment, cognitive-behavioral therapy for criminal thinking, and housing assistance. Substance abuse treatment played a particularly integral role in the Texas model, since participants must have a substance abuse diagnosis to be eligible. Once enrolled, they receive structured, in-patient treatment prior to release (in addition to other services); and are immediately provided post-release transitional housing for 30 days (as well as other services that are based on assessed level of care); and, after program completion (which takes around 18 months), participate in a structured 6-month aftercare component. Because Texas was also included in the prospective interview study, interview data were used to determine the extent of the treatment differential (based on self-reported data on service receipt) between reentry court participants and comparison group members in this site. These analyses indicate that the Texas reentry court participants received significantly more substance abuse treatment than the

comparison group and the other three courts in the interview study. For example, 82% of Texas reentry court participants report they received outpatient individual counseling compared to only 32% of the comparison group. About 74% of the reentry court participants overall (in the four interview sites) reported receiving outpatient group counseling, compared to only 33% in the comparison group. Further, of those who did receive substance abuse treatment in both groups, the reentry court participants received significantly higher doses. For example, they reported participating in significantly more months of outpatient group and individual counseling at more times per week. In addition, Texas reentry court participants received more of other service types, including mental health treatment (28% v. 7%), housing assistance (12% v. 3%), and criminal attitudes training, such as cognitive behavioral therapy programs (57% v. 31%).

The Texas reentry court also excelled in supervision practices compared to standard supervision and to the other sites in the study with Texas reentry court participants having more supervision officer contacts and substantially more time in front of the judge in court hearings. Interestingly, because Texas also saw the greatest cost savings, this finding suggest that its approach to addressing participant needs while achieving significant positive outcomes for participants was also cost-effective.

For those sites where the recidivism study yielded mixed results, the interview findings showed participants reporting fewer wrap-around services compared to Texas (particularly a lack of mental health treatment), substantially less substance abuse treatment, less consistency in incentives and sanctions, and fewer appointments with their supervision officers. Also, Texas is the only site where a substance use disorder (substance dependence) was required for eligibility while other sites served a reentry population with more varied needs. It is possible that attempting to serve a larger variety of risks and needs may be more difficult in terms of achieving impacts. On the other hand, Texas also successfully provided more wrap-around services to meet a variety of participant needs than the other sites, so the population in the other sites may not be the most relevant explanation for the difference in findings.

In all sites with either mixed or overall negative results, the participants were significantly more likely to be re-incarcerated than their comparison groups and these sites also had substantial monetary losses. This result indicates that the use of jail or prison is not an effective use of resources in terms of improving outcomes.

Finally, a review of the process findings showed that the three sites characterized as having more positive results (Delaware, Florida, and Texas) all targeted high-risk high-need individuals while the programs with less positive results mixed lower and higher risk participants. Also, those sites with more positive outcomes rarely used jail as a sanction and when they did use jail, it was for short periods (less than 1 week). The sites with mixed and negative outcomes were more likely to use jail as a sanction for participant non-compliance and were more likely to use long periods of incarceration (2 weeks or more). Readers can examine the detailed process study results found in the three project reports, in conjunction with the recidivism and cost findings in

this report, to gain further insight on how the implementation of specific practices and the level of collaboration among different partners can impact program outcomes.

In sum, policies and procedures vary greatly among different reentry courts and the outcomes varied greatly as well. It is thus impossible to determine a “true” model or whether reentry courts as a whole are effective in reducing recidivism. Based on the program practices for those sites with the most positive results, working in an established drug court model with a trained judge, as well as offering access to a variety of treatment and wraparound services, appear to be key components of program success.

Study Limitations

An important limitation of the study is that the prospective interview data are self-reported information. Although some information can be confirmed through connecting it to the administrative data for recidivism analyses (which when separated by site confirmed the positive recidivism findings in TX), little to no accessible official data exists on participants’ employment, housing, mental health status, and other measures captured in the interview data. However, program and comparison groups are unlikely to differ significantly in their reporting on these topics and the results were in fact very similar in many areas, especially at baseline. Any missing information, underreporting, or false information would be similar in both groups and likely random in nature.

Another limitation is missing administrative data in some sites, particularly the lack of consistent data on treatment participation. This gap necessitated the creation of treatment cost estimates based on program treatment policies (e.g., a treatment provider would indicate that a CBT class was intended to be 6 weeks) rather than based on actual use of treatment. The accuracy of these estimates is unknown.

Future Research

Follow up qualitative interviews with practitioners from these reentry courts, or from other reentry courts, to obtain their interpretations of the reasons for the mixed results and potential insights into areas in which additional research is needed would be beneficial.

The field would also benefit from future research that explicitly compares reentry court programs that closely follow the drug court model and have incorporated known research-based best practices from this model with reentry courts that are not following this model. Including a much larger sample of reentry court sites in a study of process and outcomes would allow coding of the program characteristics for multivariate analyses to determine what program components are associated with positive outcomes. Finally, a study of the differences between a reentry population and a typical drug court population would help reentry courts better determine how to adjust supervision and services within the drug court model to best fit the unique needs of their participants.

SCHOLARLY PRODUCTS

There are several scholarly products that have been completed and are anticipated coming out of this evaluation.

Reports. Three reports have been completed stemming from the process evaluation:

1. Lindquist, C., Hardison Walters, J., Rempel, M., & Carey, S. M. (2013, February). The National Institute of Justice's Evaluation of Second Chance Act Adult Reentry Courts: Program characteristics and preliminary themes from year 1. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International, Center for Court Innovation, and NPC Research. <https://www.nij.gov/topics/corrections/reentry/pages/evaluation-second-chance.aspx>
2. Lindquist, C., Hassoun Ayoub, L., Dawes, D., Harrison, P. M., Malsch, A. M., Hardison Walters, J., Rempel, M., & Carey, S. M. (2014, September). The National Institute of Justice's Evaluation of Second Chance Act Adult Reentry Courts: Staff and client perspectives on reentry courts from year 2. Portland, OR; NPC Research. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/248187.pdf>
3. Lindquist, C., Ayoub, L. H., & Carey, S. M. (2017). Lessons learned about reentry court program implementation and sustainability (from year 3 of The National Institute of Justice's Evaluation of Second Chance Act Adult Reentry Courts). Portland, OR; NPC Research.

Journal Articles. There are also three anticipated journal articles planned from this research. These journal articles cover the following topics:

- 1) *The Impact of Reentry Court Participation on Recidivism*
- 2) *The Impact of Reentry Court Participation on Drug Use, Employment, and Other Outcomes (from prospective study; will include a section on how reentry courts work, based on moderation models)*
- 3) *The Costs and Cost Effectiveness of Reentry Courts*

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