

**The Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (PRI) Grant Program
Iowa Department of Correctional Services**

Contract for Services dated January 2, 2007

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The Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (PRI) Grant Program

The Iowa Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Department of Human Rights, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) entered into a contract for services from January 2, 2007 to June 30, 2008 for the purposes of assisting in the evaluation component for the two-year Prison Re-Entry Initiative (PRI) grant awarded to the DOC by the U.S. Office of Justice Programs.

The PRI grant period ran from July 2006 through June 2008 and included two primary components. First, all PRI participants returning to Polk County would participate in a Lifeskills curriculum offered through the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) at four Iowa prison institutions located at Mitchellville, Newton, Fort Dodge and Rockwell City. Second, all PRI participants returning to Polk County would be referred to The Directors Council (TDC) for community-based wrap-around services.

It was apparent from the beginning of the project that meeting the objective of referring 200 non-violent offenders to TDC based on the original criteria was not feasible. The original criteria included:

- 18 yrs of age or older
- No violent charges
- Offenders with juvenile violent record may be included
- LSI-R Score <40
- No sex offenses (includes those in juvenile records)

In July 2007 project criteria were expanded to include the following:

- 18 yrs of age or older
- No violent charges
- Past violent serious and aggravated misdemeanors may be included
- Offenders with juvenile violent record may be included
- LSI-R Score <40
- No sex offenses (includes those in juvenile records)
- No murder offenses

In order to maintain maximum participation in Life Skills classes, offenders other than those returning to Polk County were included in the PRI- Life Skills program. Total participation during the grant period was 414 participants, 240 of whom were scheduled to be released to Polk County. This report will track the 240 participants who were scheduled to be returned to Polk County.

Data for this report were taken from The Iowa Corrections Offender Network (ICON), which is an automated information system that supports seamless offender tracking between prison and community supervision. ICON contains all relevant information pertaining to offender risk and needs; referrals; offender interventions (treatment) including pre-release services; transition plan; successful completions of individual interventions; and the final supervision outcome (work release, probation, parole) including reason for revocation. Data were also provided by the Iowa Justice Data

Warehouse, which contains key information from the Iowa Court Information System and the Department of Criminal Investigation records.

A list of participants accepted into the community-based wrap-around services program was obtained from Spectrum, a member of The Director’s Council. Data for the Community-based wrap-around services were not entered in the ICON system.

Program Description

Life Skills

The first component of the PRI program was the Life Skills curriculum presented by the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC). Components of the program included basic skills, career interests, time management, obtaining and retaining employment, personal communication, healthy relationships, family communication, re-entry support, housing, relapse prevention, personal financial skills and computer literacy. The curriculum was taught in the four prison institutions involved in this grant.

Spectrum Wrap-Around Services

Upon release from prison, PRI Life Skills participants were referred to Spectrum for wrap-around services. Spectrum worked closely with each offender’s parole officer and the client to develop a team of service providers to create a program intended to enable successful reentry based on the needs of the offender. Areas addressed were housing, substance abuse, mental health issues, social service needs, education, employment, and faith-based mentoring. It was the responsibility of the wrap-around worker to hold the service providers accountable for providing identified services.

Participants

The majority of Polk County participants were white males. Thirty-five percent of participants were female. Blacks made up 32% of the total population, with a slightly higher percentage for black males than black females. Results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. PRI - Life Skills Participants by Gender and Race

Race	Males		Females		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
White	98	63.2%	63	74.1%	161	67.1%
Black	55	35.5%	21	24.7%	76	31.7%
Native American	1	0.6%	1	1.2%	2	0.8%
Asian	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	0.4%
Total	155	100.0%	85	100.0%	240	100.0%

The highest educational level attained by the participants included 60.4% having attained their GED, 20% holding a high school diploma, and 2.1% completing at least some higher education. See Table 2 below.

Table 2. Highest Educational Level Attained

Level	Polk County Participants	
	n	%
Higher Education	5	2.1%
High School Diploma	48	20.0%
GED	145	60.4%
Technical Training	4	1.7%
10th - 12th grade	20	8.3%
6th - 9th grade	13	5.4%
Unknown	5	2.1%
Total	240	100.0%

The LSI-R was used as one of the criteria for participation in the program. The LSI-R is a quantitative risk/need assessment instrument used to identify an offender's risk of committing criminal behavior and need for clinical services. Results are used in the formulation of case plans and selection of programs appropriate to each individual offender.

The table below shows LSI scores for the Polk County participants. ¹The majority of participants were in the medium to medium-high risk category; females were at a slightly lower level of risk than males. Just over 14% exceeded the level of risk score outlined in the July 2007 project criteria.

Table 3. LSI-R Risk Level by Gender

Risk Level	Males*		Females		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
low risk (0-13)	2	1.3%	3	3.5%	5	2.1%
med-low risk (14-23)	13	8.4%	19	22.4%	32	13.4%
medium risk (24-33)	63	40.9%	33	38.8%	96	40.2%
med-high risk (34-40)	53	34.4%	19	22.4%	72	30.1%
High risk (41+)	23	14.9%	11	12.9%	34	14.2%
Total	154	100.0%	85	100.0%	239	100.0%

**one participant did not have a LSI-R score on file.*

At the end of the grant period, June 30, 2008, 41.7% of the Polk County participants remained incarcerated, 35.8% had been released on parole, and 16.3% were on work release. The remaining participants either discharged their sentences or were placed on shock probation. See table 4 below.

¹ The score used was the latest score available prior to entering PRI Life Skills classes.

Table 4. Polk County Participants by Release Type

Release Type	Polk County Participants	
	n	%
Parole	86	35.8%
Work Release	39	16.3%
Discharged	12	5.0%
Probation	3	1.3%
Prison	100	41.7%
Total	240	100.0%

Nearly all (94.6%) of the individuals referred to the PRI Life Skills project were able to successfully complete the Life Skills component while in the prison institution. Only a few were transferred to a different location or discontinued Life Skills at the case managers' discretion. Four participants did not complete the program due to noncompliant/behavioral issues. See Table 5 below.

Table 5. Completion Rates for Life Skills Component

	Life Skills Program	
	n	%
Completed Requirements	227	94.6%
Noncompliant/Behavioral Issues	4	1.7%
Sentence Discharged	2	0.8%
Transferred to Different Location	4	1.7%
Case Manager Discretion	3	1.3%
Total	240	100.0%

Participants in the Community

As of June 30, 2008, 140 Polk County participants had been released into the community, with 26 (18.6%) of these having been accepted into the Spectrum Wrap-around Services program. The other participants received traditional services provided by the Department of Corrections. Breakdown of the 26 Spectrum participants shows that, unlike the original population, a majority were female. See Table 6 below. Of these 26, 24 had been released on parole, one had discharged his sentence and one was on work release.

Table 6. Spectrum Participants by Race and Gender

Race	Males		Females		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
White	7	87.5%	14	77.8%	21	80.8%
Black	1	12.5%	4	22.2%	5	19.2%
Total	8	100.0%	18	100.0%	26	100.0%

Time in Community

As of June 30, 2008, the Polk County released participants (140) had been in the community an average of 6.8 months. The majority had been released for less than one year; with 24% released for less than three months and 15% released for over one year.

Substance Use Monitoring

One of the issues addressed in this program was substance abuse. Substance use monitoring was part of the ongoing community-based component. Below is a list of substances tested and results of these tests as recorded in ICON. A total of 1,878 tests were conducted for the 140 participants released from prison (or approximately 13.4 per participant over an average of 6.8 months). For the entire group substance use appeared to be rather low, with only 2% positive results.

Table 7. Substance Use by Substance Monitored

	Positive	Negative	Total	% Positive
Alcohol	6	506	512	1.2%
Cocaine	14	389	403	3.5%
Hallucinogen other than PCP	0	5	5	0.0%
Heroin and Other Opiates	1	50	51	2.0%
Methamphetamine	10	444	454	2.2%
PCP/Phencyclidine	0	7	7	0.0%
Other Narcotics	0	11	11	0.0%
Other Sedatives	0	8	8	0.0%
Other Stimulants	2	23	25	8.0%
THC	5	397	402	1.2%
Totals	38	1840	1878	2.0%

Violations

Field rule violations were accessed through ICON data for those participants who had been released from prison. Of the 140 participants, 77 or 55% had been issued a violation report that warranted being written up in ICON. In all, 266 violations were reported, for an average of 3.5 per participant.

RECIDIVISM AND OTHER OUTCOME DATA

In addition to recidivism, several other outcome measures were identified as being relevant to this project. Employment was part of the overall focus of the program, both in the Life Skills component and the community-based component. Housing was also determined to be an important indicator of positive outcomes as it can be seen as a stabilizing factor in the lives of participants. Below are results for employment and housing as well as an assessment comparison and recidivism data.

Employment

The tables below reflect the employment statuses of those 112 participants who had been released from prison at least six months. As of June 30, 1008, 54 (48.2%) of the 112 were still employed at the end of the project. Table 8 shows the primary job statuses held by participants while they were employed and Table 9 shows the number of jobs held by participants during the project period. Only those participants who were out of prison at least six months were included in these analyses. Results indicate a majority of participants held full-time jobs and had not changed jobs often.

Table 8. Job Statuses

Job Status	n	%
Full-time	70	62.5%
Part-time	8	7.1%
Seasonal	1	0.9%
Unemployed	26	23.2%
Unknown	7	6.3%
Total	112	100.0%

Table 9. Number of Jobs per Participant

Number of Jobs	n	%
one or two	58	51.8%
three to five	15	13.4%
over five	6	5.4%
not employed	26	23.2%
Unknown	7	6.3%
Total	112	100.0%

Housing

The table below shows the number of addresses held by participants who had been out of prison at least six months. The participants appeared to have quite stable housing with the majority living in the same address or moving only once during the project period.

Table 10. Number of Addresses per Participant

Number of Addresses	n	%
One	46	41.1%
Two	34	30.4%
Three	19	17.0%
Four	10	8.9%
Five	3	2.7%
Total	112	100.0%

LSI-R Comparison

A review of LSI-R scores prior to PRI programming and after programming suggests a reduction in risk level as revealed by the LSI-R scoring paradigm. The table below

shows risk levels for those participants who had been released from prison and had both an LSI-R assessment prior to entering PRI (time one) and one after being released from prison (time two). Generally speaking risk levels were lower in time two than in time one, with a median score of 31 at time one and 26 at time two. See table 11 below.

Table 11. LSI-R Risk Level at Time one and Time two

Risk Level	Prior to PRI (one)		After Release from Prison (two)	
	n	%	n	%
low risk (0-13)	1	1.0%	5	5.0%
med-low risk (14-23)	15	15.0%	35	35.0%
medium risk (24-33)	42	42.0%	35	35.0%
med-high risk (34-40)	27	27.0%	23	23.0%
High risk (41+)	15	15.0%	2	2.0%
Total	100	100.0%	100	100.0%
Median Score	31		26	

Recidivism

The overall recidivism rate for participants was 21.4% revoked to prison and 23.2% new arrests. The data below breaks these figures down by gender and race; looks at recidivism in a specific time frame; and examines the effect of the Spectrum program on recidivism rates. All recidivism data are based on participants who had been released from prison for at least 90 days (3 months).

Males were more likely to be revoked to prison and/or arrested than were females. Blacks were more likely to be revoked to prison than whites and nearly three times more likely to be arrested for a new crime. See Tables 12 and 13 below. Only white and black races were included in the race calculations due to small numbers in other race categories.

Table 12. Recidivism Rates by Gender

	Males (n=70)		Females (n=42)		Total (n=112)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Revoked to Prison	18	25.7%	6	14.3%	24	21.4%
New Arrest	18	25.7%	8	19.0%	26	23.2%

Table 13. Recidivism Rates by Race

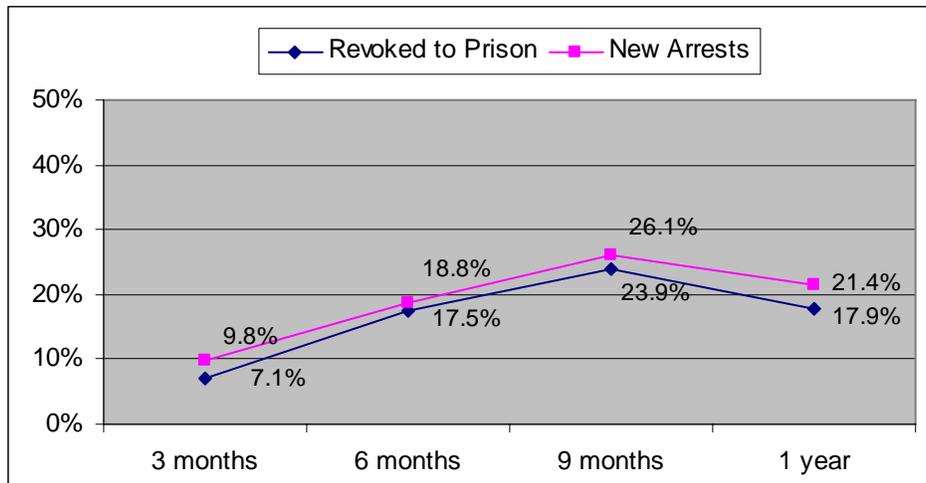
	Whites (n=77)		Blacks (n=34)		Total (n=111)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Revoked to Prison	14	18.2%	10	29.4%	24	21.6%
New Arrest	12	15.6%	14	41.2%	26	23.4%

More than half (54.2%) of the revocations were due to technical violations; new arrests tended to be for misdemeanors with 65.3% identified as serious or simple misdemeanors.

The following table and graph charts recidivism over a one-year period, breaking down the data into 3 month intervals. Participants were more likely to be revoked to prison or arrested for a new crime the longer they stayed out of prison. A slight drop was seen at the one-year period but this may be due to the small number of participants in this group.

Table 14. Recidivism Rates by Time Since Released from Prison

	Participants	Revoked to Prison		New Arrests	
		n	%	n	%
3 months	112	8	7.1%	11	9.8%
6 months	80	14	17.5%	15	18.8%
9 months	46	11	23.9%	12	26.1%
1 year	28	5	17.9%	6	21.4%



A comparison was made between those participants who participated in the Spectrum component of this project and those who did not. Because of the small number of male participants (8) in the Spectrum program, the following table includes only females. A word of caution is given due to the small numbers of participants in Spectrum; however, the data below would appear to suggest that females who participated in the Spectrum component of the project were less likely to recidivate than those who did not. See table 14 below.

Table 15. Comparison between Spectrum and Non-Spectrum Female Participants

	Spectrum (n=17)		Non-Spectrum (n=25)		Total (n=42)	
	n	%	n	%	N	%
Revoked to Prison	1	5.9%	5	20.0%	6	14.3%
New Arrest	3	17.6%	5	20.0%	8	19.0%

Comments

The PRI – Life Skills project was an ambitious one, as the target population was to include only non-violent offenders from four prison settings where the majority of offenders have at least one violent offense in their background. Another issue was the requirement that offenders must return to Polk County to be included in PRI programming. After the project got under way, the original criteria were amended to include some violent offenses and, to comply with the grant request for numbers, the project population was supplemented with offenders from outside Polk County.

The majority of participants successfully completed the Life Skills portion of the PRI project. Of concern was the lack of numbers of participants released from prison. As of June 2008, 41.7% of the participants had not been released to CBC programming.

Contributing further to determining the true impact of the project, of the 140 participants who were released, only 26 were referred to Spectrum, the second part of the project programming, of which the majority of the referrals were females. Spectrum reported 91 referrals from CBC during the project period, but the majority of these referrals were not PRI participants. Although numbers are too small to draw conclusions, analyses of the females participating in Spectrum suggests the Spectrum program contributed to the success of female offenders in that recidivism was lower for these females than for females who did not go to Spectrum.

Recommendations

CJJP makes the following recommendations for future projects of this nature:

1. Develop better communication between the project management staff and the Board of Parole so that a higher percentage of the target populations are released from prison during the project period.
2. Make a commitment to greater involvement and supervision by the project manager and research team during the project period. Ongoing participation by the management and research teams could better ensure the overall success of the project and avoid some lapses that seem to have occurred here.
3. Establish closer monitoring of project data to ensure that relevant, accurate data are available to project managers and evaluators for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation.
4. Although establishing a comparison group in a correctional setting is difficult, it is recommended that this step be taken in future projects so that a true measure of project impact can be determined. The provision of additional research funding could have provided for a comparison group component in the current project.

