

# IMPACT OF VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS ON RECIDIVISM RATES

## *ChancesR fact sheet*

September 2016



The aim of ChancesR is to engage offenders, their families, and natural supports in a re-entry process that results in successful community integration, with the overarching goal to reduce recidivism and increase public safety.

One of the ways the program seeks to reduce recidivism is by offering participants access to vocational and educational programming.

The connection between recidivism and education programs has been widely established. Researchers have repeatedly shown that those enrolled in educational and vocational programs are less likely to recidivate than those who do not participate (Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders & Miles, 2013; Mohammed & Mohamed, 2015).

Beaver County Rehabilitation Center (BCRC) provides vocational and educational services to ChancesR participants. BCRC's mission is "to provide the opportunity for vocational growth and independence while respecting the dignity and uniqueness of each individual." The following presents details about the number of people who received services through BCRC.<sup>2</sup>

The Beaver County ChancesR: Re-Entry, Reunification, and Recovery program focuses on people with behavioral health or co-occurring disorders (COD) who are sentenced to the Beaver County Jail.<sup>1</sup>

The ChancesR model seeks to assess offenders' needs, engage them in treatment, and link them to formal and natural supports, in an effort to reduce recurring involvement in the criminal justice system.

This factsheet focuses on the impact of educational/vocational services on the recidivism rates of ChancesR participants.

<sup>1</sup> The program was supported by a Bureau of Justice Assistance grant awarded to Beaver County Behavioral Health.

<sup>2</sup> The number of individuals who received their GED and secured employment are only those "known" to BCRC and may be higher.

### ***Psychiatric Rehabilitation***

**139** individuals had at least 1 session. Average number of sessions is 4.2.

### ***Supported Employment***

**361** individuals had at least 1 session. Average number of sessions is 4.2.

### ***Vocational Assessments***

**403** individuals received an assessment.

### ***Job Placement***

**118** individuals secured employment post release.

### ***GED Support***

**66** individuals received assistance.  
**4** individuals received their GED.

### ***Education***

**7** individuals enrolled in school or training programs.

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Table 1 compares recidivism rates between those who received Supported Employment, Vocational Assessments, or Psychiatric Rehabilitation, and those who did not.<sup>3</sup>

**RECIDIVISM is defined as re-incarceration within 12 months of release.**

In all three comparisons, those who received BCRC services had a lower recidivism rate than those who did not.

These results support the findings of other research that indicate the value of vocational services for returning citizens.

**Table 1. Recidivism Rates by Receipt of BCRC Services**

	Frequency	Recidivism Rate
<b>Supported Employment</b>		
Yes	112	29.5%
No	54	40.7%
<b>Vocational Assessment</b>		
Yes	142	32.4%
No	16	37.5%
<b>Psychiatric Rehabilitation</b>		
Yes	38	26.3%
No	127	35.4%

While research consistently demonstrates the importance of vocational/educational programs, there is not conclusive evidence to determine which services and/or aspects of a program perform the best (RAND Corporation, 2013). The results from the ChancesR program make strides to address this gap in the research.

**Table 2. Recidivism Rates by Combinations of BCRC Services**

	Total	Recidivism Rate
All 3 Services Received	45	35.6%
2 Services Received	94	37.2%
1 Service Received	57	54.1%

Table 2 shows that the likelihood of returning to jail is lowest for participants who receive all three services (SE, VA, PR). The rate for those who received any combination of two of the services was slightly higher. Those who received only one service had the highest recidivism rates.

This finding suggests that to achieve the benefit of lower recidivism rates associated with vocational programs, there needs to be a combination of assessment, assistance with employment, and rehabilitation.

More research should be conducted with a larger representative sample to further understand and substantiate this finding.

Mohammed, H., & Mohamed, W. A. W. (2015). Reducing recidivism rates through vocational education and training. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 204, 272-276.

Davis, L. M., Bozick, R. Steele, J.L., Saunders, J. and Miles, J.N.V. (2013). Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education: A meta-analysis of programs that provide education to incarcerated adults. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

RAND Corporation. (2013). Education and vocational training in prisons reduces recidivism, improves job outlook. Retrieved from <http://www.rand.org/news/press/2013/08/22.html>

<sup>3</sup>The subset of participants included in this analysis only includes those enrolled in the program between October 2011 and March 2016.