

# Developing American Job Centers in Jails: Implementation of the Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) Grants

## LEAP



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## CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	vii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION .....	1
A. Policy context.....	2
B. Overview of the LEAP grants .....	3
C. A conceptual framework for the LEAP grants .....	6
D. LEAP evaluation .....	7
E. Structure of the report.....	9
CHAPTER II: GRANT ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT, AND STAFFING .....	11
A. Grant organization and management.....	12
B. Staffing for jail-based AJCs and post-release services.....	16
CHAPTER III: ESTABLISHING THE JAIL-BASED AJCS .....	25
A. Engaging jail administrators and corrections officers .....	26
B. Identifying and preparing jail-based AJC spaces .....	27
C. Scheduling jail-based AJC services .....	30
D. Challenges and strategies related to scheduling jail-based AJC services.....	31
E. Arranging Internet access.....	32
CHAPTER IV: PARTICIPANT ENROLLMENT .....	37
A. Participant eligibility .....	37
B. Recruitment .....	39
C. Screening and enrollment.....	40
D. Characteristics of enrolled participants .....	41
E. Challenges and strategies related to enrolling participants.....	43
CHAPTER V: PRE-RELEASE SERVICES .....	45
A. Integration with existing jail services .....	46
B. Services offered through jail-based AJCs .....	47
C. Challenges and strategies related to providing services in jail-based AJCs.....	53
CHAPTER VI: LINKING PARTICIPANTS TO COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES POST- RELEASE.....	55
A. Status of participants .....	56
B. Transition to the community and reengagement after release.....	56
C. Challenges and strategies related to participant transition and reengagement.....	59
D. Location of services in the community .....	63
E. Types of post-release services.....	63
F. Challenges related to providing post-release services.....	67
G. Strategies for providing post-release services .....	68

CHAPTER VII: TRACKING AND MANAGING PRE- AND POST-RELEASE DATA.....	71
A. Types of data, common uses, and approaches to data collection .....	71
B. Systems for tracking data pre- and post-release.....	76
C. Data reporting .....	79
CHAPTER VIII: OUTCOMES FOR LEAP PARTICIPANTS .....	81
A. Sources of information on outcomes .....	82
B. Work readiness at release.....	83
C. Post-release placement in employment and education .....	83
D. Recidivism at one year after release .....	88
CHAPTER IX: LOOKING FORWARD: SUSTAINABILITY AND PROMISING PRACTICES .....	91
A. Key implementation findings.....	91
B. Practices that appear promising for future jail-based employment service efforts.....	92
C. Approaches to sustainability .....	94
D. Perceptions of change in the corrections and workforce systems .....	95
REFERENCES.....	97
ACRONYMS .....	99
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	101
APPENDIX A.....	A-1

## TABLES

I.1. Characteristics of LEAP grantees .....	6
II.1. Benefits and challenges of three staffing models .....	20
VI.1. Status of participants as of March 2018.....	56
VI.2. Post-release support services received .....	66
VIII.1. Number of participants who reached employment, education, and training milestones .....	85
A.1. LEAP quarterly report fields .....	A-3
A.2. LEAP grant performance targets .....	A-7

## FIGURES

ES.1.	LEAP conceptual framework.....	viii
ES.2.	Profile of LEAP participants .....	ix
ES.3.	Key performance measures for LEAP grants .....	xii
I.1.	Overarching goals of the LEAP grants.....	1
I.2.	U.S. jails by the numbers .....	2
I.3.	Locations of LEAP grantees .....	3
I.4.	DOL’s participant eligibility criteria .....	5
I.5.	LEAP conceptual framework.....	7
I.6.	LEAP grant and evaluation timeline .....	8
II.1.	Key organizations involved in providing services .....	13
II.2.	Examples of organizational structures for service delivery.....	13
II.3.	Other partners involved in LEAP.....	14
II.4.	Staff training topics.....	17
II.5.	Demographic characteristics of frontline and partner staff .....	18
II.6.	Primary responsibilities of frontline staff .....	19
II.7.	Staffing continuity.....	20
II.8.	Types of staff serving participants in the community .....	21
III.1.	Jail space policy considerations for AJC operations.....	28
III.2.	Interiors of jail-based AJCs .....	29
III.3.	Key steps to securing Internet connections for jail-based AJCs.....	33
IV.1.	Examples of criminogenic risk assessments used in screening.....	40
IV.2.	Characteristics of LEAP participants.....	42
V.1.	Contents of a typical IEP for jail-based AJC participants.....	47
V.2.	Percentage of participants who received workforce preparation services.....	50
V.3.	Percentage of participants who received education and job training services .....	51
V.4.	Percentage of participants who received supportive services before release.....	52
VI.1.	Strategies to encourage participant engagement .....	57
VI.2.	Staff checklist for a smooth transition from pre- to post-release services .....	58
VI.3.	Post-release enrollment rate .....	60
VI.4.	Percentage of participants by expected housing at time of release .....	61

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VI.5.	Locations where participants primarily received post-release services.....	63
VI.6.	Employer perspectives on the benefits of hiring participants.....	69
VII.1.	Types and uses of data collected for reentry programming.....	72
VII.2.	Sites' access to corrections data .....	73
VII.3.	Number of MISs sites used .....	76
VII.4.	Structure of case file reviews .....	77
VII.5.	Types of electronic MISs used.....	77
VII.6.	Reasons sites entered data into multiple MISs.....	78
VIII.1.	Participant work readiness at release .....	83
VIII.2.	Measure of placement in employment and education .....	84
VIII.3.	Barriers to employment listed by participants and staff .....	85
VIII.4.	Measure of retention in employment and education.....	86
VIII.5.	Educational outcomes of participants .....	87
VIII.6.	Measure of recidivism .....	89
IX.1.	Considerations for future evaluation .....	94
A.1.	LEAP quarterly report fields .....	A-3

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## Executive Summary

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To help individuals successfully reenter society after time in jail, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded \$10 million in grants to 20 local workforce development boards (LWDBs) in June 2015 for the Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) initiative. Central to the LEAP initiative was creating jail-based American Job Centers (AJCs) with direct linkages to community-based AJCs. A complex array of factors including jail and local community characteristics influenced the development and operations of jail-based AJCs as well as the experiences and outcomes of participants (Figure ES.1). The overarching goals were to increase participants' work readiness at the time of release, increase employment after release, and reduce recidivism; additional goals for the pilot initiative included demonstrating that corrections and workforce agencies could effectively collaborate to provide pre-release services, generate lessons learned around promising strategies and common challenges that could inform future efforts; and identify ways for grantees to sustain the jail-based AJCs when the DOL-funded grant ended. The grants covered 9 months of planning and 15 months of service delivery, with many grantees receiving up to a one-year no-cost extension to finish spending down remaining grant resources. Grantees were geographically diverse, located in 13 states across 5 DOL regions, and involved a total of 22 county jails.<sup>1</sup>

- **The LEAP initiative demonstrated the feasibility of offering AJC services in a jail setting.** This was a new approach for DOL and the majority of the sites, but all sites successfully operated jail-based AJCs. Eleven of the 20 sites planned to maintain the jail-based AJC after the end of the grant, and 6 were exploring options for sustainability.

### Overview of the evaluation

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In September 2015, DOL's Chief Evaluation Office contracted with Mathematica Policy Research and Social Policy Research Associates to conduct a 36-month evaluation of the Employment and Training Administration's Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) grants. The evaluation examined the early-start up and implementation of 20 LEAP pilots, which created jail-based American Job Centers (AJCs) to support the successful reentry of participants and directly link them to community-based AJCs upon release. Through site visits, phone interviews, focus groups, and the grantees' quarterly performance reports, the evaluation examined the LEAP pilots' approaches to providing services before and after incarceration at all 20 sites.

Beyond this report, the evaluation also produced:

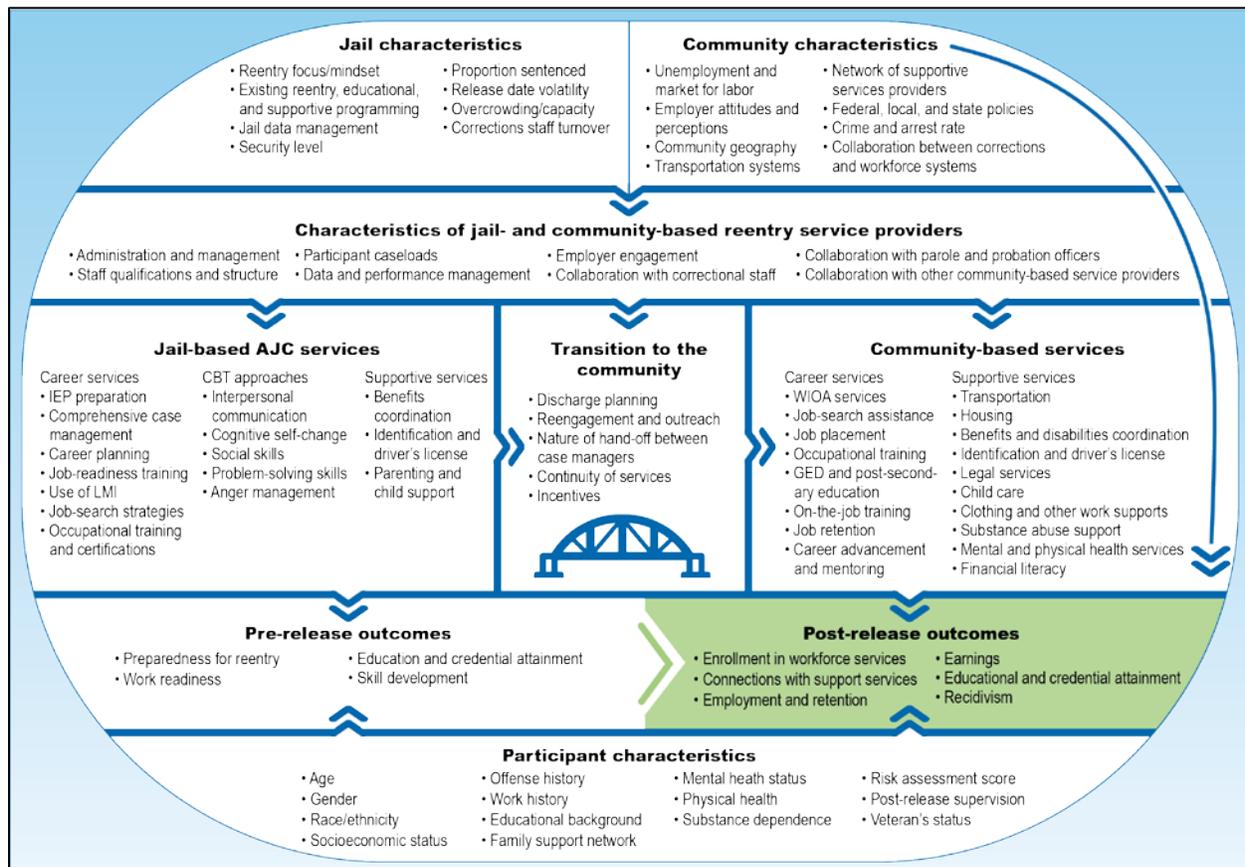
- A series of 5 early-planning issue briefs that explore lessons from the planning phase (first 9 months) of the LEAP grants.
- A series of 5 implementation issue briefs that explore lessons from the operation (last 15 months) of the grants.
- A compendium that presents a summary of findings from both the planning and implementation phases of the LEAP pilots, and includes the 10 issue briefs, organized around key themes.

These reports are available online at: <https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/CompletedStudies.htm>.

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<sup>1</sup> There were 20 grantees also referred to as "sites." There were a total of 22 county jails because two grantees worked with participants in more than one jail.

Figure ES.1. LEAP conceptual framework

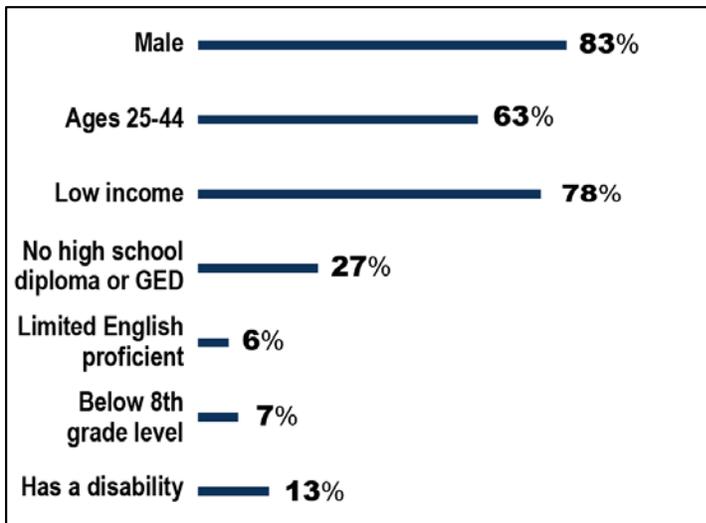


IEP = individual employment plan; LMI = labor market information; CBT = cognitive behavioral therapy; WIOA = Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

- **Close collaboration between the workforce agencies and the jails was crucial for successful implementation.** For many sites, the LEAP grant was the first opportunity for LWDBs to work with local corrections partners. Early, frequent, and ongoing communication helped bridge cultural differences and create buy-in among jail administrators and staff. Strong partnerships were also essential to gain jail approval and support for developing the jail-based AJCs, recruiting participants, delivering pre-release services, and planning for participants' transition as they approached release. Jail staff also helped workforce staff acculturate to the jail environment by serving as effective "translators" of jail culture for workforce partners.
- **The jail environment—including the jail layout, security level, and the degree to which jail staff were focused on reentry—shaped the physical spaces for services, and schedules of jail-based AJCs.** Although all 20 sites established jail-based AJC spaces, jail rules limited their ability to fully recreate the feel of and range of services available at a community-based AJC. Jail procedures also affected the schedule of services and the manner in which participants could move to and from the AJC. Fourteen of the 20 sites successfully worked with jails to configure Internet access and develop policies for safe Internet use in the AJC.

- **LEAP sites enrolled 3,805 individuals as of March 2018.** Although many sites faced challenges identifying eligible participants due to large unsentenced populations and lack of access to jail data, sites exceeded their enrollment target for pre-release participants by March 2018. The majority (83 percent) were men, ages 25 to 44, and low income (Figure ES.2).<sup>2</sup> About one-quarter (27 percent) did not have a high school diploma or GED, and approximately six percent had limited English proficiency.

Figure ES.2. Profile of LEAP participants



Source: Quarterly performance reports from 20 grantees as of March 31, 2018.

Note: Figure represents percentage of enrolled participants. N=3,805. Low income is defined as family income that is below 150 percent of the poverty level.

challenges, to support participants throughout these stages. Regardless of their approach, sites strove to offer a continuity of services in which participants were prepared to find work before release and then—after release—supported in their reentry process, job search, and employment.

- **Sites highlighted the need to remain flexible to adapt to changing jail conditions.** Jail-based AJC staff noted that day-to-day activities did not always unfold as expected. Certain participants would not show up on a given day, instruction periods were cut short or canceled due to security concerns or scheduling issues, and participants were sometimes released with little or no notice at all. Staff reported the importance of designing a service approach that took these uncertainties into account, including covering the most important content early during pre-release services and remaining willing and able to adjust to changing circumstances quickly.

Implementation experiences highlighted the importance of three distinct stages of service delivery—pre-release, transition, and post-release. As shown in the conceptual framework, the pre-release stage focused largely on preparing participants for work and other positive life outcomes. The transition stage was critical for discharge planning and reengagement in the community. Finally, the post-release stage aimed to provide a continuity of care to help participants with career and supportive services. Sites used different staffing approaches, each with benefits and

<sup>2</sup> Low income is defined as family income that is below 150 percent of the poverty level.

- **Pre-release participants appreciated being treated like AJC customers.** Participants noted the significance of being treated like an AJC customer—a job seeker rather than an inmate—while in the jail-based AJC. Staff and participants reported that the jail-based AJCs helped participants increase their confidence, understand and expand their skills, think beyond the jail walls, and feel like members of society deserving of employment.

**“The [jail-based AJC] class was trying to show me a lifestyle that was healthier and that I’m not used to. You don’t even know who you really are, or potential that you have, but they see it.”**

**“It’s a confidence builder. It encourages you. It lets you know it’s not over for you.... I didn’t know how to do a resume and I was worried about the job interview. But now I am going out there in a couple of weeks with a different mentality. I feel like I am going to succeed.”**

**“It’s not just about getting a job. It’s finding something that you like to do, that you want to do. And to me that right there, that’s the key thing from going back to doing everything else, and actually wanting to work.”**

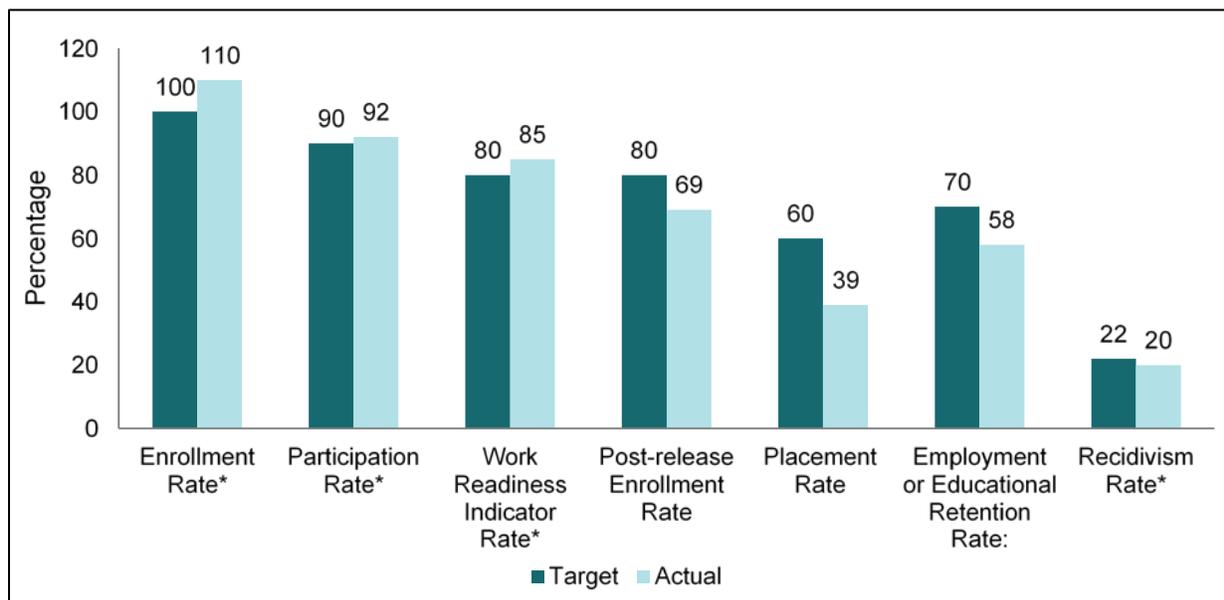
**“They go above and beyond. People have blinders on and focus just on one thing. When you take the blinders off, you see how much help is out there.”**

**“You got to think looking at my record...I don’t see that door open...and now the door is open for me to be somewhere with benefits, with longevity, with positions of advancement within the company and staying at the company.”**

*- LEAP participants describing their experiences with jail- and community-based AJC services*

- **Grantee performance reports indicated that most participants remained engaged while in the jail and were work ready at the time of release (Figure ES.3).** Sites reported that 92 percent of participants received at least one service each month before release. Work-readiness training was the most common service received, followed by workforce information services and career and life skills counseling. Sites reported that 85 percent of participants were work ready or had increases in work readiness by the time of release.

Figure ES.3. Key performance measures for LEAP grants



Source: Quarterly performance reports as of March 31, 2018.

Notes: \*Indicates that grantees met or exceeded the DOL target for that performance measure.

Definitions of performance measures are available in Appendix A. Sample sizes for enrollment and participation rates were 3,805 participants who ever enrolled in pre-release services; for work readiness, the sample included the 3,076 participants who were released from jail; for post release enrollment, the sample included the 1,936 participants who had been released for at least 30 days and had not enrolled in education or employment; for placement, the sample included the 2,682 participants who had been released for a quarter; for retention, the sample included the 734 participants who were placed in employment or education and had been released for at least three quarters; and for recidivism, the sample included the 1,115 participants who had been released for at least a year.

- Despite connecting pre-release with participants, sites struggled to engage participants after release.** Once released, participants had many competing demands, including parole and probation requirements, and staff often had poor contact information for them. Some participants left the local area, found jobs on their own, or did not think they needed help. To improve rates of post-release contact, staff increased participants' level of contact with community-based AJC staff before their release and provided incentives for participants who came to the community-based AJC. Sites also provided transportation assistance, coordinated with parole and probation agencies to avoid conflicts, or employed dedicated post-release outreach staff. Although just short of DOL's target of 80 percent, grantees were able to enroll 69 percent of participants who were not immediately placed in education or employment in career services in their first 30 days out of jail as of March 31, 2018.

- **In most sites, grantees required partnerships with more specialized service providers to deal with the significant challenges facing the reentry population.** Although sites

**“There’s the plan and there’s the reality of the lives of these guys. The reality is they get out and they maybe have \$50 and no ID. Getting them past the bus stop can be a challenge.”**

*- Community-based AJC staff  
describing the barriers  
participants face to engaging in*

noted the many benefits of having LWDBs lead the LEAP grants and provide employment services through jail-based AJCs, partnerships with other service providers helped grantees begin to address the full range of participant needs that were crucial for successful reentry. Lack of transportation and housing were the most frequently mentioned key barriers, but participants and staff also discussed the need for substance abuse and mental health counseling and treatment, legal support, registration for health care and public assistance, work clothing and supplies, help getting IDs, tuition assistance, and help filling out college applications.

- **Nearly 40 percent of participants found unsubsidized employment or participated in post-secondary education, occupational skills training, or Registered Apprenticeship in their first quarter after release (Figure ES.3).**

Staff interviews indicated that participants found jobs primarily in the service, manufacturing, construction, and warehousing industries because these employers are typically more willing to hire individuals with a history of incarceration. As context for this placement rate, focus group participants mentioned many barriers to employment, including probation requirements, distance to available jobs and lack of transportation, and a lack of stable or affordable housing. Staff also described the prevalence of mental health issues and substance abuse.

Both participants and staff indicated that many employers were also not always receptive or able to hire individuals with a criminal history. The placement rate varied considerably across sites from a high of 84 percent to a low of 2 percent. It also likely underreports actual placement given that sites were unable to track all participants over time, particularly those who did not engage in services after release. Of those reported as placed in employment or education, 58 percent had retained that placement three quarters after exit.

**“Individual passions make for strong partnerships. There’s an understanding that not one organization can provide the service – it takes a village. In order for us to provide effective assistance, it requires a lot of partners to come together.”**

*- LWDB leader on the  
importance of partnerships*

- **Of participants who had reached one year after release, 20 percent were rearrested for a new crime or were reincarcerated because their parole or probation was revoked (Figure ES.3).** This rate is less than half of the most recent estimate of 44 percent recidivism at the national level based on individuals released from prison (Alper, Durose, and Markman 2018), although it should be noted that jail and prison inmate populations may not be similar. Recidivism data should be interpreted with caution given that many participants had not yet reached a full year after release and the nature and quality of data that sites were able to gather on recidivism

varied substantially. In particular, some sites were only able to capture recidivism to the same facility or county. Many staff reported feeling that participants recidivated less often than the typical justice-involved individual, and that the majority of recidivism among participants stemmed from parole or probation violations rather than new charges.

### Conclusion and context for study findings

The LEAP pilots implemented innovative and groundbreaking approaches to providing pre-release services in jail-based AJCs and linking participants to post-release services upon release. All sites developed new jail-based AJCs within the nine-month planning period, and most were establishing new partnerships and services through that process. As context for the reported outcomes, the sites had only been serving participants for 16 to 24 months at the point when the final performance data were reported, with some participants still incarcerated. Many who had been released were still working toward key education and employment milestones that were only reported for the first quarter after release and had not yet received a full year of post-release services in the community.

**“If I can show it’s been successful, we can’t afford not to continue to fund it.”**

*- Jail administrator describing plans for sustaining the jail-based AJC after the grant ends*

Workforce development, corrections, and other partners, as well as participants, identified many successes along with significant challenges and promising strategies to address them. The qualitative evidence collected through this implementation evaluation suggests that introducing new services, partnerships, and ways of thinking about reentry hold promise for lasting effects on the workforce and corrections systems in some sites. The experiences of the LEAP grantees highlight important lessons learned and some areas for continued refinement or potential replication in similar or different contexts. Although this implementation evaluation cannot make causal claims, the evidence suggests that it is possible to use jail-based AJCs to link participants to post-release services and that this may be a promising approach to support returning individuals in successful reentry.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

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**“Getting [services] into place and operating like a well-oiled machine is what I’m most proud of.”**

*--Administrator describing successful LEAP implementation*

**“[Jail-based AJC staff] don’t look at us any different even though we are in jail. They just look at us like another person looking for help.”**

*--Participant discussing receiving services in the jail-based AJC*

**“This is an opportunity for a reset.”**

*--Participant reflecting on the value of receiving services*

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To help individuals address the barriers to successful reentry into the community after time in jail, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded \$10 million in grants to 20 local workforce development boards (LWDBs) in June 2015 for the Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) initiative. The initiative encouraged greater coordination between the corrections and workforce development systems to support people returning to their communities after incarceration. Central to the LEAP initiative was creating jail-based American Job Centers (AJCs) with direct linkages to community-based AJCs. The overarching goals were to increase participants’ work readiness at the time of release, increase employment after release, and reduce recidivism (Figure I.1.).

DOL’s Chief Evaluation Office contracted with Mathematica Policy Research and its subcontractor Social Policy Research Associates to evaluate the implementation of the LEAP grants. The evaluation examines sites’ implementation experiences at three points to capture a comprehensive picture as the grants unfolded. It examines early start-up, perceived successes and challenges, steady-state operations, and plans for sustainability as the grants ended. This report describes our findings and considers lessons learned and practices that appear potentially promising for future efforts to improve employment outcomes among people with histories of justice involvement.

### **Figure I.1. Overarching goals of the LEAP grants**

The innovative LEAP pilot has four main goals:

- Break the cycle of recidivism by linking participants to the workforce system early—while still in jail—to begin preparing them for employment;
- Connect participants to the community-based American Job Centers (AJCs) for continued services and support immediately upon release;
- Demonstrate how corrections and workforce development agencies can work together to provide employment services within jails—an environment that presents unique implementation challenges; and,
- Provide workforce and corrections partners with the opportunity to identify best practices and strategies to sustain jail-based AJC services beyond the life of the DOL grant.

## A. Policy context

Experts and former justice-involved individuals alike believe that obtaining stable, high quality employment is critical for successful reentry following incarceration (Raphael 2014; Uggen 2001). Despite this belief, little rigorous evidence exists about the types of employment-based reentry services that improve employment and recidivism outcomes, particularly for people being released from jails (Solomon et al. 2008; White et al. 2008).

The reentry period presents a critical opportunity for intervention. Former jail inmates face serious structural and psychological obstacles to successful reentry. They enter the system with low rates of educational attainment; limited work experience; and a high rate of health-related issues, such as substance abuse, mental health issues, and physical problems (James 2004; Karberg and James 2002; James and Glaze 2006; Maruschak 2009; Travis et al. 2001; Re-Entry Policy Council and Council of State Governments 2005). Jail inmates also have a high incidence of homelessness before incarceration (Greenberg and Rosenheck 2008). Once released from jail, they face numerous challenges that include difficulties finding employment, housing, reliable transportation, and health and social services; large child support back payments; and challenges reuniting with their families and avoiding negative peer and neighborhood influences.

LEAP promotes a continuity-of-care model by linking pre- and post-release employment services. The services offered before release give the opportunity for a relatively high dose of services and allow staff to develop relationships with participants to prepare for and initiate the transition to community services. This has the potential to address some of the shortcomings of previous programs that struggled to engage participants who face competing demands after their release.

Although providing reentry services within a facility might increase participant engagement, offering services within the jail setting comes with significant challenges. Jails house a diverse population including individuals awaiting arraignment, trial, conviction, or sentencing as well as sentenced individuals. In most jails, sentenced inmates account for a minority of total inmates, 35 percent on average (Figure I.2). Those awaiting sentencing have short and unpredictable stays. Monitoring the churning jail population requires significant staff attention, and fewer resources are available for programming (Solomon et al. 2008).

Although the logistical challenges to providing reentry services within the jail environment are significant, other characteristics of jails make them ideally suited for employment services. Jail stays for sentenced inmates are relatively short (Kaeble

Figure I.2. U.S. jails by the numbers

- Typically administered at the local level by counties and cities
- 2,850 jail jurisdictions
- 10.6 million admissions during 2016; 731,300 inmates on any given day
- Mean average daily population (ADP) of 257 inmates; 20 percent of inmates housed in large jails with ADP above 2,500
- Expected length of stay was 25 days
- Only 35 percent of inmates were sentenced offenders or convicted offenders awaiting sentencing

Source: Zeng (2018). Numbers reported as of 2016.

and Cowhig, 2018). Unlike individuals incarcerated in state prisons who have been sentenced to five years on average, most jail inmates have sentences of one year or less (Bonczar et al. 2011; Zeng 2018).<sup>1</sup> As a result, reentry is a more immediate reality even at the beginning of a jail sentence. Another advantage of providing employment services typically offered through community AJCs within the jail is that most inmates will be released to the surrounding community. This is very different from a state prison environment where individuals are released all across the state and might live quite far from their releasing institution. Additionally, because jail inmates' arrests are relatively recent, they might have more current ties to the labor market and community connections that facilitate reentry (Solomon 2008).

## B. Overview of the LEAP grants

In June 2015, DOL awarded grants to 20 local workforce development boards (LWDBs) in 13 states to implement the LEAP pilot (Figure I.3). Grantees were awarded \$500,000 grants on average per grantee to support the development and implementation of AJCs within jails to help inmates prepare for employment before release and then facilitate a coordinated "hand-off", or transfer of services, from the jail-based AJC to the community-based AJC upon release. The grants covered 9 months of planning and 15 months of service delivery.

Figure I.3. Locations of LEAP grantees



Source: LEAP grant applications.

<sup>1</sup> California, where four of the LEAP grantees were located, is an exception because the state introduced a public safety realignment in 2011 that shifted incarceration responsibility for many lower-level felons from the state prison system to the county-operated jails. This realignment increased the average sentence length for inmates housed in California's jails and changed the composition of inmates (Lofstrom and Martin 2015).

AJCs are the cornerstone of the nation's system for delivering public workforce development services, providing "one-stop" resources for millions of Americans seeking employment information and access to employment, work-related training, and education. Created by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and continued under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014, AJCs bring together key workforce, education, and other partners with the goal of providing comprehensive services to individuals searching for jobs and seeking to build their skills, and to employers looking for skilled workers to fill their job openings.

A primary goal of the AJC system is to provide coordinated, seamless services for job-seeking customers. The mix of services available to AJC customers depends on the types of partner programs connected to the AJC, available staff, eligibility criteria, and the customers' needs. AJCs offer job seekers a variety of services, many of which are available on-site. These services include self-directed services in resource rooms, assessments of skills and barriers to employment, and career planning. Job seekers can also access other services, such as education, training, and support services, through programs that might enroll customers at the AJCs initially, but offer the actual service off-site.

Although all grantees shared the same goal of establishing jail-based AJCs, the LEAP pilot allowed significant flexibility to design an approach that was appropriate for the local workforce and corrections

**"An integrated service delivery approach...that combines workforce development and reentry services for transitioning offenders prior to release"**

*- LEAP funding opportunity announcement describing the jail-based AJC*

context. According to the grant's funding opportunity announcement, the jail-based AJC needed to provide "an integrated service delivery approach...that combines workforce development and reentry services for transitioning offenders prior to release." Plans for pre-release services typically included work-readiness training, workforce information services, career counseling, and life skills counseling. Some of the grantees also planned to provide training including in occupational skills and leadership.

Planned pre-release services varied in intensity, with most grantees proposing to use a group service delivery model and others focused on one-on-one services. All grantees were required to connect participants with post-release services including those available at the community-based AJC. As this report will discuss, grantees adopted different approaches to making that connection and varied in their ways of organizing and staffing post-release services.

DOL specified multiple eligibility criteria for individuals to receive jail-based AJC services (Figure 1.4). Beyond those, many grantees imposed additional eligibility criteria driven by factors such as their desired target population, the service model, and facility constraints (discussed in Chapter IV).

Figure I.4. DOL's participant eligibility criteria

DOL's criteria specified that individuals:

- Must have been convicted as an adult and imprisoned under municipal, county, federal, or state law
- Must not have been convicted of a sexual offense other than prostitution
- Must be a sentenced offender confined in the municipal, county, or regional correctional facility for adults in which the jail-based specialized AJC operates on the date of the participant's enrollment in the program
- Must have a release date scheduled within 180 days of the participant's enrollment in the program

Source: LEAP funding opportunity announcement (DOL FOA-ETA-15-03)

The LEAP grantees and their local context varied along important dimensions (see Table I.1):

- Grantees were geographically diverse, located in 13 states across five DOL regions. Most of the jails were located in urban counties, but two grantees were in mostly rural areas.
- The number of participants who grantees planned to serve varied. Grantees expected to enroll an average of 173 participants, but there was a fairly broad range. One grantee planned to enroll 35 participants, whereas another grantee planned for 500. Five of the grantees proposed to provide two levels of services with some inmates receiving light-touch services such as access to computers and workshops.
- Almost all grantees (18) partnered with a single jail for implementation, but the jail environments and institutional constraints differed. The jail facilities hosting the jail-based AJCs ranged in size from 120 to more than 4,000 beds. The share of the jail population with sentences also ranged substantially from 4 to 93 percent. As discussed in later chapters, the jail environment affected the availability of space for the AJC, access to the Internet, the types of participants who could receive services, the ease of recruitment, and other aspects of service delivery.
- Seven grantees expanded existing jail-based programs with LEAP grant funds, two adapted services that had been used in other locations or with other populations to the specific jail setting, and slightly more than half (11) developed new services.
- The majority of grantees did not have experience serving participants within corrections facilities. Two grantees also had very little experience providing services to people with criminal records in their community AJCs.

Table I.1. Characteristics of LEAP grantees

Location	Grantee	Targeted number of participants	Source of pilot
Hayward, California	Alameda County WIB	75	Existing
Santa Ana, California	Orange County WIB	65	New
San Diego, California	Workforce Partnership	500	New
Ventura, California	Ventura County WIB	35	Existing
New Haven, Connecticut	Workforce Alliance	175	New
West Palm Beach, Florida	CareerSource	150	Adapting
Indianapolis, Indiana	EmployIndy	100	New
Springfield, Massachusetts	Regional Employment Board	150	Existing
Brunswick, Maine	Coastal Counties Workforce	100	New
Kansas City, Missouri	Full Employment Council	150	New
St. Louis, Missouri	Division Workforce Development	200	New
Utica, New York	WIB of Herkimer, Madison, & Oneida	500	New
Cleveland, Ohio	Cleveland/Cuyahoga County WIB	200	New
Portland, Oregon	Worksystems	125	Existing
Allentown, Pennsylvania	Lehigh Valley WIB	212	New
Norristown, Pennsylvania	Montgomery County WIB	200	New
Warsaw, Virginia	Bay Consortium WIB	150	Existing
Vienna, Virginia	The SkillSource Group	150	Existing
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Milwaukee Area WIB	125	Existing
Madison, Wisconsin	Workforce Development Board	101	Adapting
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3463</b>	

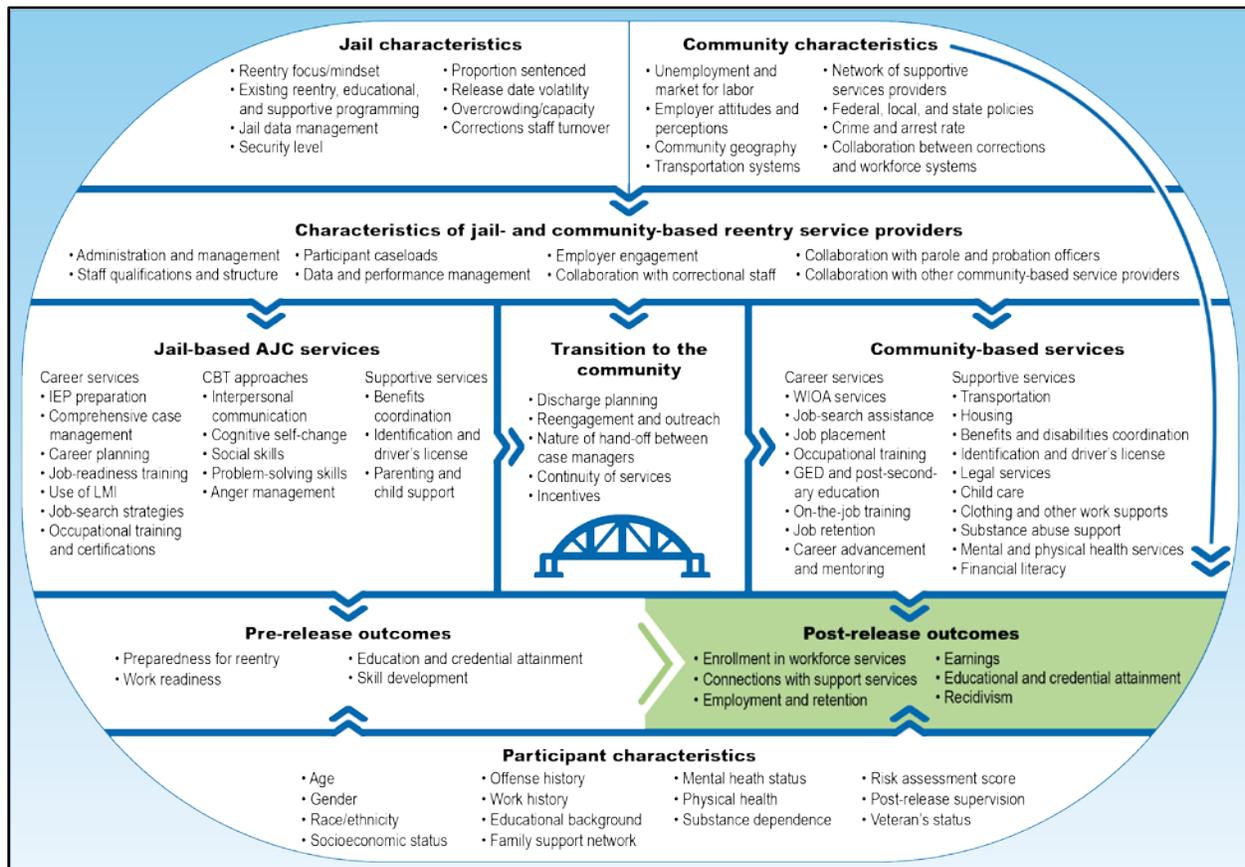
Source: LEAP grant applications and quarterly performance reports.

Notes: WIB = Workforce Investment Board.

### C. A conceptual framework for the LEAP grants

A conceptual framework developed during the evaluation design guided the evaluation. The evaluation team refined the original framework to capture the service delivery approaches that emerged during grant implementation as well as the characteristics of the jails, communities, and service providers that shaped the delivery of services and participant outcomes (Figure I.5). The framework represents the complex array of factors that influenced the development and operations of jail-based AJCs as well as the experiences and outcomes of participants. The “hand-off” or link that is an essential feature of the LEAP grants is showcased by the central box in Figure I.5 (transition to the community). The shaded box highlights ultimate goals for participant outcomes.

Figure I.5. LEAP conceptual framework



IEP = individual employment plan; LMI- Labor market information; CBT = cognitive behavioral therapy; WIOA = Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

#### D. LEAP evaluation

The LEAP evaluation is an implementation study designed to provide a comprehensive picture of how the grantees created and implemented jail-based AJCs to help participants reenter the community and directly link them to community-based AJCs upon release. The evaluation addressed seven main research questions:

1. How is the LEAP grant tailored to the local jail and workforce system context?
2. What types of services are delivered through the jail-based AJCs funded by LEAP?
3. How do participants move through the jail-based AJC and transition to services at community-based AJCs upon release?
4. What types of services do participants receive at community-based AJCs?
5. How are the data on participants collected, shared, and reported?
6. How do stakeholders view LEAP?

7. What do LEAP grantees report as the most promising elements of implementation, and how can they inform future efforts?

## 1. Data collection

Our analysis draws on a mix of quantitative and qualitative data from five primary sources that bring together information at different points in time (Figure I.6) to address the questions.

- **Early implementation site visits** to all sites in early 2016 explored planning and infrastructure issues during the start-up period. Site visits focused on five topics: jail space and scheduling, Internet access, navigating workforce and jail system culture, staffing, and factors that facilitated a quick launch. Visits included interviews with 91 program managers and administrators and 47 frontline staff as well as observations of the 20 jail-based AJC spaces.
- **Site visits** conducted between December 2016 and March 2017 examined all sites during full implementation. Visits included semi-structured interviews with 115 program managers and administrators, focus groups with 128 frontline staff and partners, 18 focus groups with a total of 78 pre-release participants, 9 focus groups with a total of 29 post-release participants, observations of workshops and counseling sessions, and 173 case file reviews. Respondent information forms were administered to all staff and participant focus group members to gather information about their demographic characteristics and work histories.

Figure I.6. LEAP grant and evaluation timeline



Source: DOL funding opportunity announcement, grant extensions, and evaluation design.

Note: QPR = quarterly performance reports. Twelve LEAP grantees received a no-cost extension. The extensions ranged from 3 months to one year.

- **Telephone interviews** with key representatives from all sites in May and June 2017 documented changes in service provision, plans for continuing jail-based AJC services beyond the grant, broad lessons learned, and ways in which the LEAP grant will influence future work.
- **Virtual grantee focus groups** conducted in June 2017 focused on four topics: participant tracking and report systems, participant recruitment, linkages between pre- and post-release services, and post-release participant engagement. About six grantees were invited to each discussion. In total, representatives from 18 grantees participated across the discussion groups.
- **Grantee performance reports** from the quarter ending March 31, 2018, include aggregated data on participant characteristics, service receipt, and outcomes, including DOL-specified performance indicators. As discussed further in Chapter VIII, analyses of participant characteristics and service receipt include all 20 sites whereas analyses of participant outcomes include 18 sites because of data quality and reporting issues among 2 sites.

## 2. Analysis methods

The evaluation team analyzed the information collected from all sources using following steps: (1) organizing and coding the qualitative data from site visits, telephone interviews, and virtual focus groups; (2) conducting descriptive analyses of the quantitative data in the grantee quarterly performance reports (QPRs); (3) triangulating the coded data across the various sources to provide a full picture of LEAP implementation in each site; and (4) comparing data across sites to reveal common challenges and promising practices.

It is important for readers to understand two limitations of the implementation evaluation. First, information from administrators, staff, and participants about implementation quality, successes, and challenges is subjective. To improve our ability to accurately capture these dimensions, the data collection methods included multiple sources of information about implementation. Our primary informants were the grantee and partner administrators, but frontline staff and the participants themselves offered additional perspectives. Furthermore, first-hand observations by the evaluation team and reviews of actual case files provided additional data. Second, the data available on participant outcomes, as discussed in Chapters VII and VIII, vary in quality and should be interpreted with caution. The outcomes also do not represent the impact of the LEAP grants, given that the study did not examine what would have happened to participants in the absence of services.

### E. Structure of the report

This report describes grantees' experiences planning and establishing jail-based AJCs, delivering services before and after release, and considering options for sustainability. Woven throughout the chapters are examples of challenges and potential solutions that grantees shared about each aspect of implementation.

- Chapter II describes grant organization, management, and staffing.
- Chapter III explores the establishment of the jail-based AJCs.
- Chapter IV covers recruitment, enrollment, and characteristics of participants.
- Chapter V discusses the pre-release services offered in the jail-based AJCs to prepare participants for employment upon reentry to the community.
- Chapter VI discusses how jail-based AJC staff helped participants prepare for release, transition to the community, and reengage with community-based AJC services.
- Chapter VII describes how data on participants was collected, shared, and reported.
- Chapter VIII examines the outcomes of LEAP participants.
- Chapter IX concludes with lessons learned, plans for sustainability, and considerations for future evaluations.

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## Chapter II: Grant Organization, Management, and Staffing

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*“Collaboration benefits our mutual population.”*

--Corrections staff reflecting on jail capacity to address participant barriers

*“A lot of officers [at the jail] are senior officers, they’ve bought into making a difference. They enjoy coming into work. Does not have the issue of sick calls, people not showing up to work. Officers are on board.”*

--Correctional staff reflecting on buy-in of jail staff

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### Key findings

- LWDBs and corrections agencies operating the jails formed the core partnership to support the LEAP grant. Sites also leveraged AJC providers, community-based organizations specializing in serving justice-involved populations, and other partners to provide direct services.
- Sites that had existing partnerships or built strong relationships with corrections partners during the grant application process reported smoother collaboration during the planning and implementation phases.
- Sites’ approaches to staffing varied. In eight sites, different staff served participants in the jail and in the community, whereas in seven sites, the same staff served participants both pre- and post-release. Five sites took a mixed approach. Each approach had advantages and disadvantages related to the ease of reengaging participants after release, flexibility in post-release scheduling, and caseloads.
- Recruiting and hiring jail-based AJC staff took longer than expected partially because the position required a criminal background check. Background checks also made it hard to find the right candidate because they screened out qualified applicants who had a criminal history.
- Most sites experienced staff turnover during implementation, which required additional hiring, training, and onboarding of new staff. Fifteen sites reported staff turnover, staffing vacancies, or internal staffing changes over the course of the grant period.

All LEAP grantees were required to partner with corrections to establish their jail-based AJCs and leverage additional partners to either provide direct services or support participants through referrals. The types of organizations involved, the structure for oversight and management, as well as the

staffing structure for pre- and post-release services influenced every aspect of their day-to-day operations. This chapter explores each aspect of organization, management, and staffing in turn.

## A. Grant organization and management

The workforce development system, corrections system, and social services community joined forces to support LEAP participants in the grant communities. As the grantee organizations, LWDBs took the lead in establishing and managing the partnerships to ensure smooth implementation of the jail-based AJCs and related services to support reentry.

**“Individual passions make for strong partnerships. There’s an understanding that not one organization can provide the service – it takes a village. In order for us to provide effective assistance, it requires a lot of partners to come together.”**

*- LWDB administrator on the importance of partnerships*

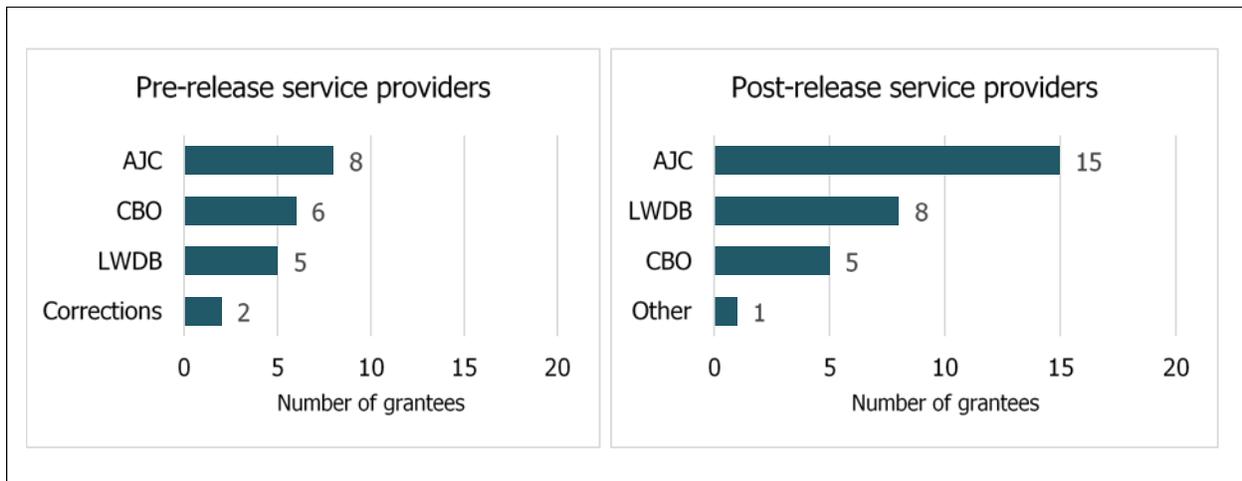
### 1. Organizational structure of the LEAP grants

Each of the 20 LWDB grantees coordinated with corrections partners overseeing and operating the participating local jail (or two jails in the case of two sites) to implement their jail-based AJCs. Nineteen jails were operated by the county, with one operated by a state corrections department, one by a district, and one by a private corrections provider. Before they received LEAP funding, 8 grantees had collaborated with these corrections partners on other grants, such as the DOL’s Reintegration of Ex-Offenders (now Reentry Employment Opportunities) grants and the Department of Justice’s Second Chance Act Grants and Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative. For these grantees, LEAP represented an opportunity to build on prior collaborations. For example, one grantee already had a small-scale program for pre-release employment services in a local jail, and LEAP offered a chance to expand that model and serve more inmates.

For the remaining 12 sites, the LEAP grant provided an opportunity to fund relationships they were eager to develop. In these cases, LWDBs wanted to expand their capacity to serve justice-involved populations given the needs of their communities and the priority to do so under WIOA. Some jails were also looking for opportunities to collaborate with post-release service providers. Many of these sites had begun to develop relationships with corrections stakeholders through forums such as reentry councils and state realignment efforts, but had not yet established dedicated, funded collaboration on a specific program.

Beyond their jail partners, LEAP grantees typically worked with a range of local organizations to implement pre-release services, link participants to post-release services, and address participant needs once in the community. Although one site chose to provide all services directly with their own staff, 19 sites worked with partners—such as community-based AJC providers, community-based organizations (CBOs) specializing in services to justice-involved individuals, and corrections partners—to provide direct services (Figure II.1).

Figure II.1. Key organizations involved in providing services



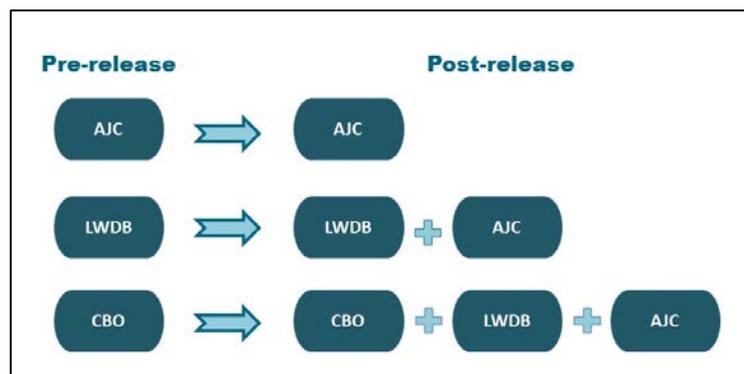
Source: Site visits and telephone interviews.

Notes: Categories are not mutually exclusive as some sites used multiple providers. AJC = American Job Center; CBO = community-based organization; LWDB = local workforce development board.

Most sites used one of three organizational structures to deliver services (Figure II.2). Six of the 20 sites used the community-based AJC provider to deliver services both pre- and post-release. Another five sites relied largely on staff hired directly by the LWDB to serve participants, with four of these sites also using the community-based AJC to support post-release services. Five sites relied primarily on CBOs specializing in justice-involved populations to serve participants, with two of these sites also providing post-release services through LWDB and community-based AJC staff. Less common organizational structures involved using corrections staff to provide pre-release services or combinations of organizations working together to provide direct services.

Many sites also partnered with other organizations to support the diverse needs of participants (Figure II.3). Staff interviews highlighted nine sites partnered with educational or occupational skills training providers, such as technical and community colleges, in-jail charter schools, and community-based training providers, to provide GED instruction, vocational education, or certifications in the jail. Nine sites also worked with employer and industry partners, who provided services such as career exposure activities during pre-release

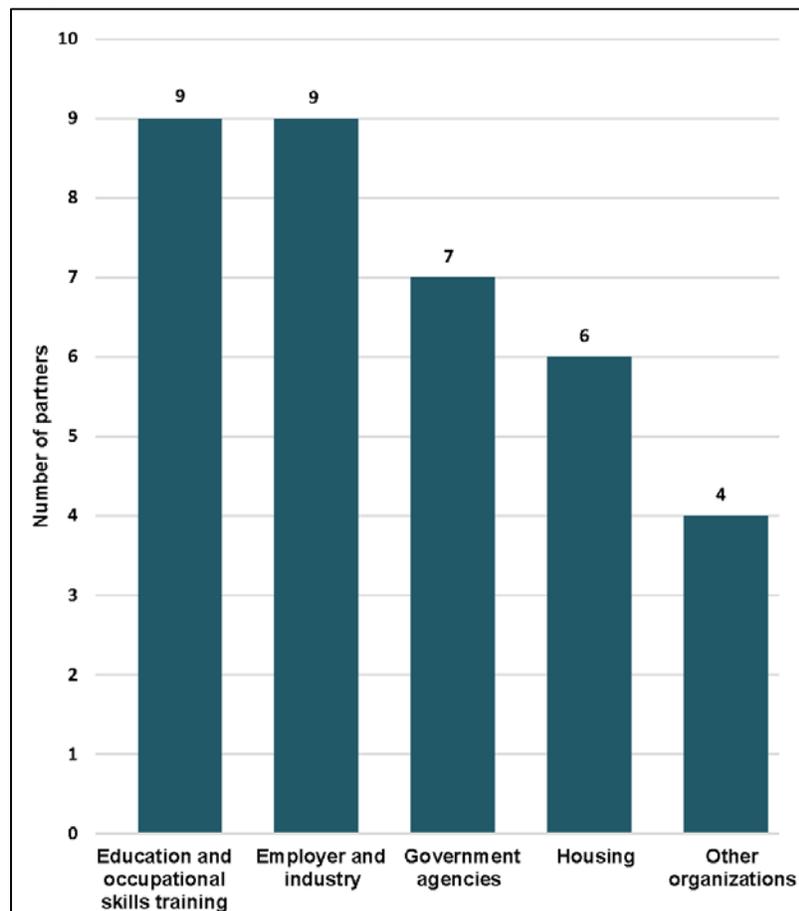
Figure II.2. Examples of organizational structures for service delivery



Source: Site visits and telephone interviews.

Note: AJC represents the operator of the community-based AJC.

Figure II.3. Other partners involved in LEAP



Source: Site visits and telephone interviews.

workshops, in-jail mock interviews or interview advice, resume assistance, and placements for work release. Government agencies provided access to public assistance such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Medicaid, with a two sites enrolling participants in benefits while incarcerated. Housing and city partners provided access to sober living and transitional housing, a crucial supportive service. Although most housing partners provided services post-release, two did come to the jail to advertise their services or sign up eligible individuals for transitional housing. Other direct service partners, mostly social service organizations, provided services such as a men's empowerment group, clothing, mentoring opportunities, and in-jail guest speakers.

## 2. Overseeing and managing grants

LWDBs had administrative control over their LEAP grants and were responsible for overseeing and managing all aspects of the grant. They maintained fiscal responsibility for grant funds, communicated with federal project officers, prepared budgets, and moved funding across different counties or jail sites when needed. LWDBs ensured all staff, including contracted service providers, complied with grant requirements and achieved outcomes mandated by DOL. Finally, LWDBs were responsible for tracking and reporting data to DOL.

In all but one case, the leadership role of LWDBs extended to overseeing programming. All LWDBs negotiated the establishment of jail-based AJCs, as discussed in detail in Chapter III. LWDB administrators also led high-level programming decisions and developed strategies for providing services, although providers were responsible for overseeing services day to day.

LWDB and partner staff described several advantages to the LWDBs overseeing and managing the grants. As leaders in the public workforce system, LWDB administrators brought workforce and local labor market knowledge, partner relationships and connections, and expertise around funding coordination and AJC governance to partners who were less familiar with the workforce system. For

**“Now people know who we are and our value to the reentry population – we bring labor market information and career pathways.”**

*- LWDB administrator on the benefit of leading the grant*

example, one CBO partner explained that its LWDB connected them to information about the regional labor market that they then used to guide their discussions with participants around career exploration. Partners appreciated the LWDBs’ ability to bring different stakeholders together, such as DOL leadership, community nonprofits, and reentry councils. They also appreciated the LWDBs’ knowledge of federal funding and grant-writing expertise.

### 3. Challenges and strategies related to overseeing and managing the grants

Grantees reported the following key challenge to overseeing and managing grants:

- **Coordinating across multiple organizations added complexity to grant management decisions.** As evidenced by the diversity in organizational structure, there was no clear “right” way to structure a LEAP grant. Where more than three organizations were involved, sites reported more challenges in coordination and consensus building, some of which resulted in delays.
- **LWDB administrators ultimately deferred to the corrections system for any management decisions on pre-release services.** For grantees that had previously worked with corrections partners, these cross-leadership relationships were already established. However, as a jail administrator at one such site noted, “If the [LWDB] were a brand new organization that we hadn’t worked with before, they would still be trying to get inside the jail.”

To address these challenges, sites noted two key strategies:

- **Structured and regular communication between partners appeared essential to managing grants successfully.** Based on staff and partner interviews, it appears strong and recurrent communication between key partners—such as the LWDB, corrections partners, and service providers—helped integrate jail-based AJC services into the jail and connect them more strongly to post-release services. Starting this communication during the grant proposal process helped coordinate all stakeholders and helped sites understand the requirements and constraints of the jail system.

- **Buy-in from corrections system administrators and officers seemed to enable all partners to do better at managing and understanding their roles in the jail environment.** Jail administrators who were advocates for the jail-based AJC appeared to strengthen the overall management of the grant and served as effective “translators” of jail culture for leadership staff from the LWDB and CBOs. These partners could then focus on managing their responsibilities, rather than trying to promote their work to an unfamiliar system.

**“Community partnerships are what made us successful.”**

*- Jail-based AJC manager on the value of partnerships*

## B. Staffing for jail-based AJCs and post-release services

Regardless of the organizational structure that sites selected, appropriate and adequate staffing was critical to delivering services successfully, both pre- and post-release. Most sites structured their staff teams similarly, but the ways in which they distributed responsibilities for providing services in the jail-based AJC and in the community varied.

### 1. Staffing structures, hiring, and onboarding processes

Sites used an average of five staff members to carry out grant-funded activities. All sites used an administrative grant manager from the LWDB who had ultimate authority and responsibility to ensure that services were high quality and delivered in line with grant requirements. In 3 sites, the grant manager also served as a program manager (or program coordinator) responsible for direct oversight of frontline staff. In the remaining 17 sites, program management was delegated to a separate individual or a contracted partner organization providing direct services. Sites typically used another two or three direct service staff members who provided case management, job-readiness training, and employment services. In some sites, corrections reentry coordinators also played major roles in recruiting participants, determining eligibility, transporting participants within the facility, providing direct services, or supervising frontline staff. These staff were most often employed by the jail. Some sites also employed other administrative staff, such as data managers, who often split their time between the LEAP grant and other responsibilities.

Eighteen sites reported hiring at least some new staff (either at the administrative level, such as program managers, or at the direct service level, such as case managers or job developers). In general, the organizations that employed these new staff created job descriptions and spearheaded the hiring process. Fifteen sites sought partners’ input on staffing. Some invited jail staff or other partners to participate in candidate interviews, which they reported helped establish a sense of buy-in and accountability for staffing decisions.

Jail requirements influenced the hiring and onboarding processes. Background checks were mandatory for staff working in all jail-based AJCs, though the time to receive clearance varied significantly depending on jail policy and the level of security clearance required. Background check clearance varied from 48 hours to more than three months. For instance, at one site, the county was short-

staffed to only three employees who conducted background checks for the entire county and the process itself was intensive. It included a review of a candidate's financial documents, including outstanding debts, interviews with neighbors and former employers, and a review of responses to a 500-question psychosocial exam. Generally, staff who had more autonomy in the jail received more intensive screening.

All staff working in the jail-based AJC required training, although sites varied significantly in the type and intensity of training provided (Figure II.4). At every jail, new staff involved in pre-release services attended an orientation on jail policies and procedures that included a combination of topics on safety, security procedures, receiving approval for materials, dress code, chain of command, and jail

staff roles. Beyond these topics, some sites trained new staff in case management skills, orientations to the workforce system, and approaches to working with incarcerated populations. The amount of training ranged widely from less than 8 hours to more than 100. In general, staff who were already employed by the organizations delivering services received less training than new hires.

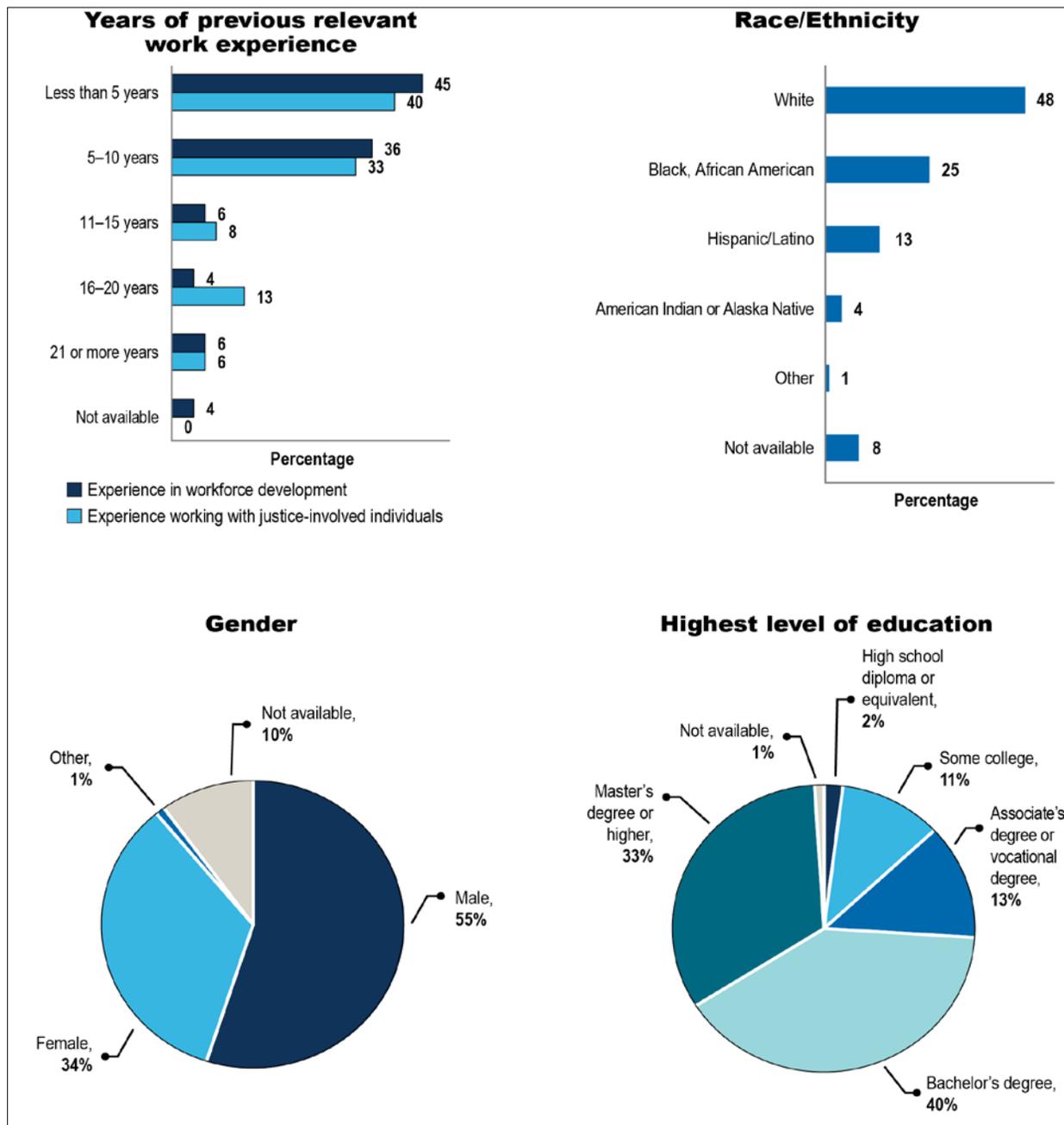
Staff working in community-based AJCs did not always report receiving the same level of specialized training as jail-based AJC staff or LEAP staff who exclusively serve justice-involved individuals. However, one grantee explained that the LEAP program helped them realize the need for employment services among the reentry population. As a result, LWDB staff now receive specialized training to better serve individuals with criminal records and emphasize how important appropriate training for community-based AJC staff is to the success of LEAP.

Figure II.4. Staff training topics

- Jail safety trainings
- Jail security procedures
- Chain of command
- Approval processes for materials
- Dress code
- Jail staff roles
- Case management skills
- Workforce system orientations
- Motivational interviewing
- Administering assessments
- Therapeutic relationship models for employment support
- Factors for criminological thinking
- Approaches to working with an incarcerated population

Source: Site visits and telephone interviews.

Figure II.5. Demographic characteristics of frontline and partner staff



Source: Forms administered to frontline and partner staff interviewed during the site visits.

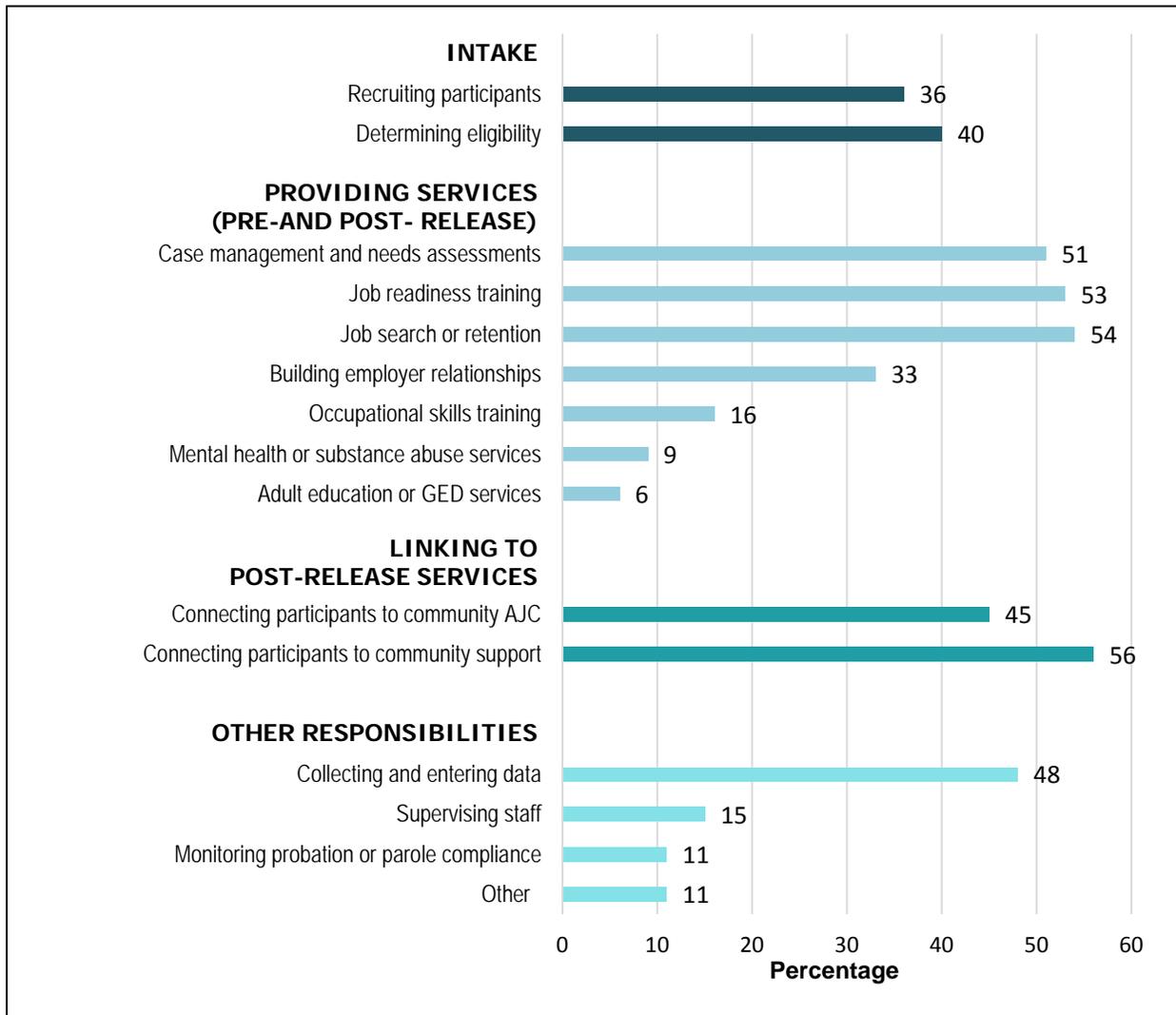
Notes: Sample size is 95 frontline staff and partner staff who participated in focus groups during the site visits. Sample is not representative of all staff. Respondents could select more than one race/ethnicity category.

## 2. Staff characteristics and responsibilities

Focus groups conducted during site visits provided a picture of both the characteristics and responsibilities of staff carrying out grant activities. The groups included 95 frontline and partner staff across the 20 grantees. Nearly three-quarters had a four-year college degree or higher (Figure II.5).

However, many (45 and 40 percent, respectively) had relatively limited experience of five years or less in workforce development or work with justice-involved populations. In fact, sites reported difficulty finding qualified individuals who had an ideal combination of workforce experience, criminal justice experience, group facilitation skills, and interpersonal skills.

Figure II.6. Primary responsibilities of frontline staff



Source: Forms administered to staff and partners during site visit focus groups.

Note: Sample size is 95 frontline staff and partner staff who participated in focus groups during the site visits.

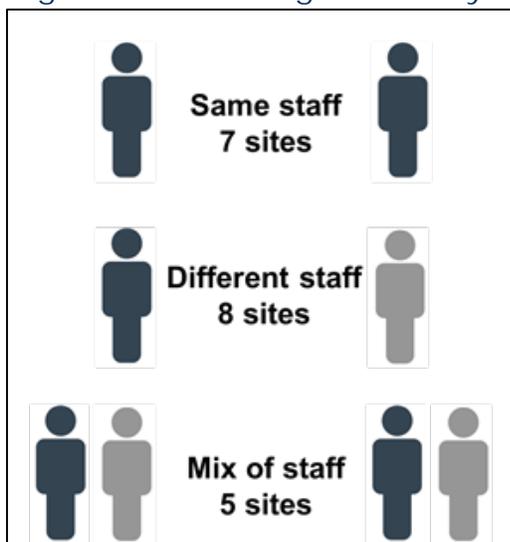
Staff and partners performed a range of day-to-day activities (Figure II.6). Of the 95 individuals who participated in the group discussions, 13 percent (or 12 individuals) indicated that their sole responsibilities were administrative, which included overseeing staff, managing data, or offering non-service functions. All other respondents indicated several primary activities involving providing direct services. At least 36 percent of staff participated in recruitment and screening for eligibility. Once participants were enrolled, the most common staff responsibilities included case management, job-readiness training, and job search and retention services. More than half of staff also helped link

participants to community AJCs and other community support services upon release. Chapters IV, V, and VI provide details on the nature of pre-release, transition, and post-release services.

### 3. Approaches to pre- and post-release staffing

The ways in which sites assigned staff members to work on pre- and post-release services differed. Sites used one of three primary models: same staff pre- and post-release; different staff pre- and post-release, or mixed (Figure II.7, Table II.1, Figure II.8).

Figure II.7. Staffing continuity



Source: Site visits and telephone discussions.

**Same staff pre- and post-release.** In seven sites, jail-based staff served participants both before and after release from jail. Four sites identified the days of the week on which staff would be in the jail-based AJC or the community and scheduled appointments accordingly. Alternatively, they reserved blocks of informal drop-in times, usually at a community AJC, for participants who had been released. Staff in one site did not have a regular schedule and adapted to the availability of its released participants.

Relying on the same staff to provide both jail-based and community-based services eliminated the hand-off process from one staff person to another after a participant’s release. Jail-based AJC staff built trust with participants by familiarizing themselves with participants’

personalities, needs, and barriers. Staff indicated that this facilitated quick contact after release with more participants. In many cases, they also understood the environment to which the participants would be returning.

Table II.1. Benefits and challenges of three staffing models

Jail-based staff served participants both pre- and post-release	
<b>Benefits:</b> Avoids handoff process; staff familiarized with needs and contact information; post-release service by staff specializing in justice involved populations	<b>Challenges:</b> Caseloads grow indefinitely; lower staff availability for appointments
Participants transitioned from jail-based staff to community-based staff	
<b>Benefits:</b> Dedicated teams; flexible about meeting times	<b>Challenges:</b> Lack of prior relationships; unexpected release dates
A mix of jail-based and community-based staff	
<b>Benefits:</b> Leveraged trust; increased communication with community partners	<b>Challenges:</b> Balancing caseloads across staff; some post-release staff may not specialize in serving justice-involved populations

Source: Site visits and telephone discussions.

This model was not without disadvantages, however. Staff had to coordinate schedules with three distinct caseload populations. The first were those in jail without an imminent release date who needed assessment, individual planning, and scheduling of in-jail services. The second were those nearing release who required transition planning. The third were those who were released and moving to community services. The degree and nature of planning and service delivery varied for each group.

**“That’s one thing that I do like about them, we’re in here interacting with them, they know about us, our background, what we want to do. Instead of having to explain to them all over again what we like to do.”**

*- Participant describing the advantages of continuity in staffing*

**Different staff pre- and post-release.** In eight sites, participants transitioned from jail-based staff to community-based staff. At a minimum, staff gave participants basic contact information for the new, community-based staff so they could reach out for services. However, many sites introduced community-based staff to participants before release through jail visits or virtual meetings and helped schedule the first meeting after release.

Using separate jail-based and community-based staff had different benefits and challenges. Participants who transitioned to community-based staff often encountered a team dedicated to serving only released participants, but three of the eight sites used general community-based AJC case

Figure II.8. Types of staff serving participants in the community

<p><b>General community AJC case manager</b> 4 sites</p>	<p><b>Specialized community AJC case manager</b> 3 sites</p>
<p><b>Jail-based AJC case manager</b> 7 sites</p>	<p><b>Community-based provider or workforce board staff</b> 6 sites</p>
<p><b>General population caseload</b></p>	<p><b>Reentry-focused caseload</b></p>

Source: Site visits and telephone discussions.

managers without a specialization in serving justice-involved participants. Regardless of specialization, community-based staff could be more flexible about when and where they met participants, coordinating schedules more easily with other partners such as probation officers. Jail-based or community-based staff also only dealt with one population and could focus on the specific services for jailed or released participants.

The main perceived disadvantage of this model was that it was difficult for post-release staff to build a relationship with participants after they were released. It was often difficult even to make initial contact with participants. Another challenge was rapidly changing release dates. Community-

based staff were often surprised by unexpected releases, and, because they were not based in the jail, they relied heavily on their colleagues to communicate a participant’s release in a timely manner.

**Mix of staff.** A mix of jail- and community-based staff provided services after release in the five remaining sites. These sites had originally planned for the same staff to work with participants both before and after release, but as the caseload of released participants grew and other challenges emerged, they elected to expand their teams. In two sites, some team members worked with participants in both the jail and the community, while the remaining staff worked exclusively in the jail-based AJC. In the other three sites, case managers worked with participants before and after release to coordinate supportive services and keep them motivated and engaged. Participants were also encouraged to work with community-based AJC case managers, who would provide or link them to career services available in the AJC.

Sites using this model experienced some of the advantages outlined in the other two models, such as leveraging trust between staff and participants built in jails, but also faced the challenge of balancing caseloads. In one site, staff working only in the community had smaller caseloads than staff serving both jailed and released participants, overburdening some staff while underutilizing others. However, this model's staffing flexibility seemed to promote more collaboration between grant leadership, partners, and direct-service staff, because staff who worked in both locations moved between the jail and community frequently and interacted with different teams.

#### 4. Challenges and strategies related to staffing

Sites reported a couple of challenges in staffing their jail-based and community-based services:

- **Sites reported that recruiting and hiring the right staff took longer than they expected, which ultimately affected some sites' ability to meet their implementation schedules.** Specifically, the following challenges affected hiring timelines: (1) sites had a limited pool of job candidates with the right combination of desired qualifications and were willing to work in a jail, especially in rural areas; (2) background checks further limited this pool by screening out some qualified candidates who were passionate about the work due to their personal experiences, such as having a criminal history or a close family member with a criminal history; (3) procedural requirements, such as background checks and the hiring process for civil service employees, were time consuming; and (4) although sites valued achieving consensus among key partners on hiring and selecting staff, scheduling meetings to make staffing decisions with multiple partners was logistically challenging.
- **Most sites experienced staff turnover during implementation, which started the hiring and onboarding process anew.** Fifteen sites reported staff turnover, staffing vacancies, or internal staffing changes. Because of security procedures and training in jails, hiring new staff could take several months as staff background checks cleared.

To address these challenges, sites noted two key strategies:

- **To expedite replacement of vacant positions, some sites transferred existing staff rather than hiring new staff.** Seven sites reported leveraging existing staff, in conjunction with

hiring new staff, to fill positions. These staff were often transferred from other programs to work full time with LEAP participants, and less often, shared their time between different projects. Two sites used corrections staff to provide pre-release services and transferred existing corrections staff to these positions.

- **To ensure that new hires had appropriate experience and characteristics for delivering pre-release services, some sites encouraged jail partners to refer candidates for new positions.** One strategy perceived as successful by sites was to connect with corrections partners before making hiring decisions. Sites that did this were referred staff who had already met background check criteria (either because they had applied for positions in the jail or had already worked in the jail), expediting their hiring.

The organizational and staffing structures the 20 LEAP sites used form the backbone of their efforts to prepare participants for work and support them through their transition back into the community. Despite some challenges, all of the sites leveraged local partnerships and the skills of their staff to move ahead with establishing jail-based AJCs, providing pre-release services, and linking participants to post-release community-based AJCs.

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## Chapter III: Establishing the Jail-Based AJCs

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*“We only have to build the infrastructure once—now we have the wiring and the room, so we just need to keep it going.”*

--LWDB administrator on establishing the jail-based AJC

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### Key findings

- To establish jail-based AJCs, sites needed to identify and prepare space, create a schedule for delivering services, and arrange for Internet access. This required flexibility, adaptation to the jail environment, and buy-in from high-level jail administrators.
- Bridging cultural differences between corrections and workforce development systems required early and ongoing communication.
- Sites reported a smoother launch to their jail-based AJCs in facilities that focused on reentry or alternative sentencing and those with lower inmate security levels. Higher-security facilities and those with a limited focus on reentry often needed significant renovations or used less-private space for their AJCs.
- Fourteen of the 20 sites overcame challenges to successfully provide Internet access to participants pre-release. Six sites either lacked approval from jail administrators or faced issues acquiring appropriate space and equipment. Three of these provided Internet access to staff, and three had no Internet access at all.
- Sites had to adapt curricula to the jail-based population and pre-release context given restrictions on the Internet, which is typically central to AJC services.

Jail environments differ in important ways from the contexts in which most workforce partners had previously operated AJCs, due to jails' heightened need for security, order, and adherence to established protocol. Establishing the jail-based AJCs therefore required significant upfront effort. The process involved engaging jail administrators and corrections officers, identifying and preparing jail-based AJC spaces, scheduling jail-based AJC services, and arranging Internet access. This chapter describes each of these steps, as well as challenges encountered and strategies for addressing them.

## A. Engaging jail administrators and corrections officers

Active engagement and buy-in from jail administrators and corrections officers were cited by grantees as important prerequisites for establishing the jail-based AJCs. Although 12 of the grantees laid the groundwork through pre-existing relationships with corrections stakeholders, others only began building those relationships through the grant proposal process. Upon grant award, partners were still learning about one another's systems and priorities. The planning period was an important time for grantees and jail-based AJC staff to engage with jail administrators and corrections officers.

### 1. Early communication and time in the jail

Regular and systematic communication between partners helped ensure that planning decisions around establishing the jail-based AJC could move forward efficiently. Early in-person meetings to discuss space and scheduling logistics were an important part of the planning period. Because decisions often required high-level input *and* affected day-to-day planning, one strategy that sites reported working well was having two sets of regular meetings with different groups: (1) key decision makers, such as the project manager, jail reentry coordinator, and manager of contractor staff; and (2) all partners and senior administrators, such as the LWDB executive director and jail director. In many cases, the core team of key decision makers would meet and then share decisions with the second, larger group.

Early on-site time at the jail was also critical for planning and implementing the jail-based AJC. Sites stressed that being in the jail early in the planning phase helped them better understand how jail regulations might influence the jail-based AJC and how providing services would work operationally before enrolling participants. Being physically present in the jail also allowed jail-based AJC staff to acclimate to the jail environment and understand how to navigate it.

### 2. Challenges and strategies related to engaging corrections staff

To establish the jail-based AJC, workforce staff engaged jail administrators and corrections officers in a way that was appropriate to the culture of the jail. Staff reported two main challenges to adapting to jail culture and engaging these staff:

- **Importance of jail security concerns.** One important realization for jail-based AJC staff was that the primary goal of jail administrators and corrections officers was, as one respondent described, to ensure “care, custody, and control” in the facility. With the focus on security, decisions that would be easy in other environments—such as installing Internet access in a classroom—became significantly more complex when viewed through the lens of being a safety threat.
- **The corrections hierarchy.** Relatedly, jail-based AJC staff had to adjust to the fact that jails are generally more hierarchical than the environments to which they were accustomed (that is, the workforce system and other CBOs). In a jail setting, staff must clear all decisions through a chain of command and use formal titles such as “commander” and “lieutenant” to refer to one another.

This was an adjustment for jail-based AJC staff accustomed to more flexibility in relationship styles and decision-making processes.

Sites noted two strategies for adjusting to these differences and forging positive and effective relationships within the jail to support the establishment of jail-based AJCs:

- **Jail orientations helped workforce partners learn about jail policies and procedures.**

As discussed in Chapter II, most sites implemented a mandatory jail orientation to train pre-release staff on jail rules and safety requirements. A staff member from one workforce partner described entering the jail as “going into someone else’s house,” recognizing that although the LWDB oversaw the grant, jail-based AJC staff would ultimately have to follow safety procedures set forth by their corrections partners.

**“The only other program that uses the LEAP space is on the weekend or in the evening. This location is also ideal for exit in case of incident, because the facilitator can take the stairs out.”**

*- Jail administrator discussing the benefits of the location identified for the jail-based AJC*

- **Jail-based staff oriented corrections officers to the jail-based AJC to answer their questions, build trust, and showcase the value of AJC services.** Corrections officers played an important role in many sites because they escorted participants to and from the jail-based AJC. To educate corrections staff on the role and purpose of the AJC, one site arranged a tour of a community-based AJC for jail staff to see what an AJC looks like. Another site held an open house for jail staff to tour the jail-based AJC space and ask questions.

## B. Identifying and preparing jail-based AJC spaces

To establish a jail-based AJC, workforce system partners first collaborated with corrections administrators to identify, secure, and prepare space within the jail that was suitable to deliver services. For 12 sites, the primary AJC space consisted of a single room, often a classroom. The remaining sites had access to additional spaces, including classrooms, computer labs, libraries, or staff office spaces. Three sites used a gymnasium, multipurpose room, or open space in a housing pod. Only one site had a standalone jail inmate programming building as its primary AJC space.

### 1. Factors considered when choosing jail space

In jails with limited space, jail administrators typically assigned the jail-based AJC space, rather than allowing grantees to select among multiple options. For jails with multiple space options, sites considered several factors when selecting their AJC space:

- **Proximity to target populations and other programming areas.** Some sites prioritized finding space near the housing units of specific groups of inmates, such as those participating in work-release, to facilitate those inmates’ access the AJC. To encourage easy movement between

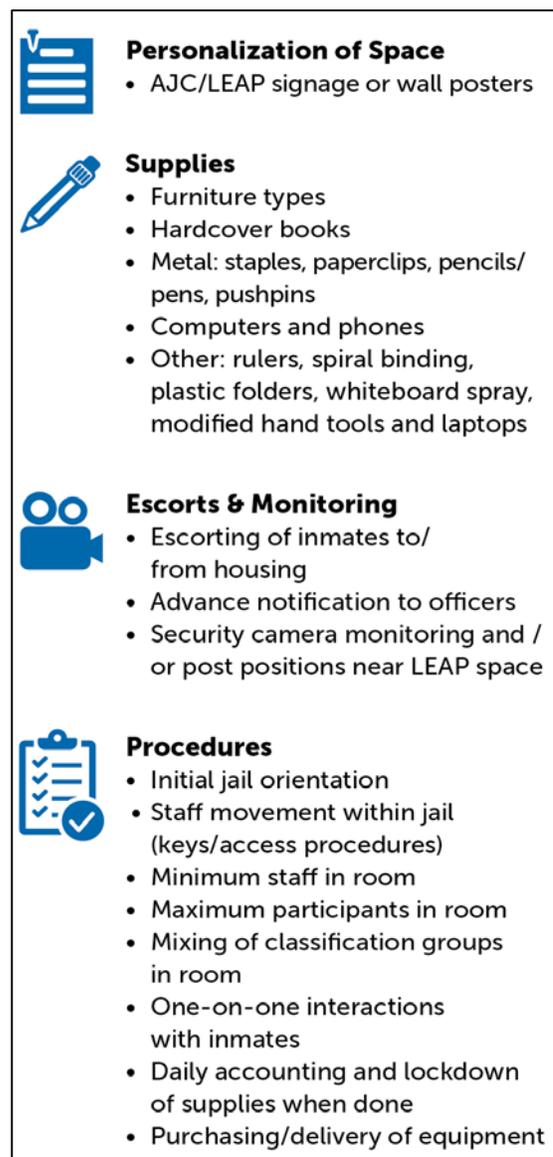
activities outside the housing units, sites also tried to find space near classrooms and other programming spaces such as a library, computer lab, vocational shops, a chaplain's room, or a medical office.

- **Availability of exclusive space.** Where possible, sites preferred an exclusive-use space specifically for AJC programming. Eleven of the 20 jail-based AJCs had access to at least some space that they did not share with other programs, whereas the other 9 shared space on a rotating basis with other programs such as GED preparation classes, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and religious services.
- **Suitability of space for reentry programming.** Facilities with lower security levels typically already had a reentry focus before establishing their jail-based AJCs and had suitable learning spaces, complementary programming, and relative freedom of movement for inmates. In addition, respondents indicated that the design and layout of relatively newer jails, or jail areas, were more compatible with an emphasis on rehabilitation and reentry programming. By contrast, higher-security facilities or those with a limited focus on reentry often did not have adequate existing classroom space in reasonable proximity to housing units, an important consideration given these facilities' stricter restrictions on inmate movement outside of units. These jails either had to make significant renovations to prepare their jail-based AJC or, if renovation was not feasible due to cost or facility layout, create an AJC in a less-private space such as a gymnasium or open space in a housing pod.

## 2. Influence of jail policy on AJC spaces and logistics

The jails' existing layout, security level, and reentry focus affected the ways in which jail-based AJC staff could prepare and use the space for which they were approved. Although specific policies and restrictions varied across jails, several key considerations (Figure III.1) influenced how the specialized AJC spaces were ultimately configured and operated.

Figure III.1. Jail space policy considerations for AJC operations



Source: Site visits and telephone interviews.

- **Jail regulations affecting the personalization of space.** Nine jail-based AJCs had some simple AJC or LEAP signage such as a decal, poster, or banner. The remainder were not allowed to personalize the space due to space-sharing considerations or rules prohibiting posters or other governing decoration. For example, although many sites painted their jail-based AJCs, jail policy generally restricted paint colors to gray or white to keep the space aesthetically consistent with other areas of the jail. Only two jails allowed somewhat more welcoming colors like blue or tan.
- **Allowable supplies.** Nine jails prohibited various forms of metal, including staples and pushpins, as well as furniture and supplies (including hardcover books) that could be repurposed as weapons. Grantees and jail-based AJC staff coordinated closely with the jails to order furniture and supplies that met jail requirements and follow jail procedures for counting and securely storing supplies after each class.
- **Procedures for assembling participants.** Jail-based AJC staff followed jail procedures for assembling groups of inmates for services. These included minimum and maximum numbers of participants allowed in a room and rules against mixing security levels, genders, or individuals considered “incompatible” given combative history or gang affiliations.

The resulting jail-based AJCs ranged in atmosphere and features (Figure III.2). Primary AJC spaces ranged in size from a 70-square foot cubicle area in a gymnasium to a 2,000-square foot classroom; half of the primary spaces measured 400 to 800 square feet. Fourteen jail-based AJC spaces were relatively sparse classrooms with desks, tables, chairs, and assorted equipment such as whiteboards, projector screens, computers, and filing cabinets. Eighteen out of 20 jail-based AJCs lacked exterior windows, though five of these had interior windows for monitoring purposes. As a result, many were not strongly identifiable as an AJC, but three sites designed the space to approximate the look and feel of their community AJCs to some extent—for example, with customized signage, inspirational posters, and employment materials.

Figure III.2. Interiors of jail-based AJCs



Source: Photos taken during early implementation site visits.

### 3. Challenges and strategies for identifying and preparing jail-based AJC spaces

Sites reported the following challenges to securing and preparing spaces for their jail-based AJCs:

- **Jail rules limited sites' ability to recreate the feel of a community-based AJC.** As noted above, strict rules, particularly with regard to allowable materials and supplies, and the need to share space with other programs, meant that jail-based AJC spaces were often not distinguishable from other jail spaces.
- **Without buy-in from jail administrators, securing preferred space was often difficult.** Ultimately, jail administrators approved spaces for the jail-based AJCs, and this posed a challenge for sites partnering with jails where administrators were not receptive to requests for different or additional space. As one staff member explained, her AJC would have liked to serve more inmates but "we've asked for more space and it's always been a 'no.'"

To address these challenges, jail-based AJC staff perceived two strategies to be the most successful:

- **Time at the jail during early planning facilitated both acculturation and realistic plans.** As mentioned earlier, spending time at the jail before launching services allowed jail-based AJC staff to become accustomed to the jail environment without the pressure of programming. This benefit was particularly important for identifying space because on-site presence facilitated early and direct communication with jail administrators and corrections officers. This presence enabled jail-based AJC staff to understand what would be truly feasible within the parameters of the jail space and make any necessary adjustments to original expectations and plans.
- **Understanding the jail's mission and philosophy helped jail-based AJC staff interpret and adjust to jail space policies.** Although the workforce development system prioritizes creating a professional environment for employers and job-seeking customers in community-based AJCs, the preeminent concerns of corrections facilities are security and containment. Sites reconciled these two perspectives on space to create an environment that was professional and welcoming within the requirement to limit potential threats to security.

#### C. Scheduling jail-based AJC services

All sites developed and adapted their jail-based AJC services not only within jail spaces but also within jail schedules. Integrating AJC services into jail operations and inmate schedules required flexibility and coordination, the ability to learn and adhere to jail procedures, accounting for escorting and monitoring, and consideration of participant availability.

- **Coordinating schedules.** To schedule their programming, jail-based AJC staff generally worked with jail social service or reentry coordinators before launching services. In some sites, the resulting schedules were subject to approval by jail administrators. Also, jail-based AJCs that shared space with other programs coordinated with staff running these programs and were mindful of beginning and ending at their allotted time slots. Given that the schedules of other

programs often changed, the AJCs had to be flexible and coordinate continually to accommodate changes.

- **Complying with jail procedures.** AJC staff had to schedule around multiple jail activities. These included head counts (for which inmates must be present in their housing units for corrections officers to account for them), lockdowns during which movement within the jail is prohibited (which could occur weekly or even daily at some jails), strictly enforced mealtimes, laundry exchange schedules (where inmates must bring laundry bags to a central location), and visiting hours.
- **Escorts and monitoring.** Jail-based AJC schedules had to account for any required time for escorted inmate movement. Thirteen of the 20 sites required that escorts accompany inmates to and from AJC services. Arranging for escorts had considerable logistical and financial implications for jails that did not have sufficient capacity among existing corrections officers. For example, one site reassigned two deputies from the local probation office to the jail to cover escort responsibilities and partially covered their salaries using LEAP grant funds. Ten of the 20 sites also required jail-based AJC staff to notify corrections officers in advance when inmates were scheduled to attend activities. Other forms of monitoring included security cameras and posted officer positions in or near jail-based AJC spaces.
- **Participant availability.** Many inmates had competing time commitments, such as working in the jail or work-release assignments for up to 40 hours per week. Some jails also had several other programming opportunities for inmates, which meant that inmates were not often available for long blocks of time. To the extent possible, jail-based AJCs tried to schedule services so eligible participants with other commitments could attend.

#### D. Challenges and strategies related to scheduling jail-based AJC services

Jail-based AJC staff identified the following challenges to scheduling services:

- **Unanticipated events affected participants' ability to attend regularly scheduled services.** Beyond known scheduling constraints, the jail environment also introduced unanticipated scheduling changes. For example, at one jail-based AJC, when an inmate could not be located, a regularly scheduled head count ran over and shortened available time for class. Although security incidents inside the jail-based AJC space were reportedly rare, emergency lockdowns due to fights or security breaches elsewhere in the jail resulted in delayed transport to, or even cancellations of, scheduled class time at five jail-based AJCs.
- **Restrictions on inmate interaction further complicated scheduling.** As mentioned earlier in the discussion of selecting jail spaces, jails may not permit certain groups of inmates to interact. Jail-based AJC staff therefore adapted their scheduled programming to keep these individuals or groups separate.

To address these challenges, jail-based AJC staff reported the following strategies for successfully negotiating jail-based AJC schedules:

- **Staff developed relationships with corrections officers responsible for inmate movement.** In addition to working with jail administrators to schedule services, jail-based AJC staff noted the importance of early and frequent communication with corrections officers. Those officers who were receptive to the jail-based AJC advocated for the services within the jail and helped facilitate inmate movement. Staff at six jail-based AJCs noted successful strategies for ensuring buy-in, such as holding open houses for officers to tour the jail-based AJC, spending time at the jail before launching AJC services, and maintaining ongoing communication with officers.
- **Flexibility was essential to successfully navigating scheduling issues.** Jail-based AJC staff had to think creatively about adapting their planned structure to a jail setting. For example, due to policies requiring separating particular inmate groups, staff sometimes needed to schedule services in specific or smaller groups than originally planned. To accommodate inmates' other commitments, one instructor divided a daylong class into smaller blocks of time over multiple days. In three instances, jail-based AJC staff also worked nights and weekends. In at least two cases, jails themselves adapted to accommodate jail-based AJC programming; one moved laundry exchange to the evening, and another allowed head counts in class rather than requiring participants to return to housing units.

## E. Arranging Internet access

Given that AJCs typically rely on the Internet to facilitate assessments, instruction, and job search assistance, arranging Internet access was an important, and unexpectedly complicated, step in establishing the jail-based AJCs. The LEAP funding opportunity announcement explicitly required a plan for providing Internet access within the jail. Although jail partners signed letters of support, sites noted that they had to revisit these basic agreements to work through specifics. As one jail representative explained, "It's one thing to say, 'Yes we'll allow you to do this,' but it's another thing to go forward." A jail information technology (IT) director noted, "Internet access and jails usually don't go together," primarily due to concerns about Internet access enabling inmates to view inappropriate content (such as violent or pornographic videos) or facilitating unmonitored communications between inmates and their friends, family, or witnesses in their criminal cases.

### 1. Steps for securing Internet access

Ultimately, 14 of the 20 jail-based AJCs provided LEAP participants with limited access to the Internet for pre-release services. Developing and executing plans for delivering Internet-based services involved administrators and IT staff at both jails and grantee sites. The three key stages of this process included (1) finalizing Internet access plans and configuring equipment, (2) developing a list of approved websites, and (3) arranging for wiring and installation (Figure III.3).

Figure III.3. Key steps to securing Internet connections for jail-based AJCs

- **Finalize Internet access plans and configure equipment for secure Internet access in the jail setting.** Local partners first had to determine whether they could use an existing, secure Internet connection for the jail-based AJC or whether a new connection was required.
- **Develop an approved website “white list.”** Of the 14 jail-based AJCs that could install Internet connections, 11 limited accessible websites to a documented “white list” of approved websites for job search, assessment, and training. Commonly included websites were job search sites (such as Monster, Indeed, and state job banks); online career and basic skills assessments (such as CareerReady 101, tests for adult basic education (TABE), and WorkKeys); and online training sites (for GED practice, occupational skills training, and computer literacy).
- **Arrange for wiring and installation.** After receiving approval for Internet access plans and white lists, sites still needed to engage other county departments (such as a county public works or IT department) or use outside vendors to survey the space, pursue structural modifications for wiring, and install Internet access. It was important to clarify early in the planning phase which county departments needed to be involved and what procurement processes and clearance procedures would be necessary for outside vendors to work inside the jail.

Source: Site visits and telephone interviews.

## 2. AJCs that were unable to provide Internet access

Six jail-based AJCs were unable to provide Internet access for participants due to either lack of approval by jail administrators or issues acquiring appropriate space and equipment. These jail-based AJCs fell evenly into two categories: those that secured Internet access for AJC jail-based staff only, and those in which neither participants nor staff had Internet access.

**Staff-only Internet access.** Three jail-based AJCs provided Internet access for staff, but not for participants. In two cases, Internet access for participants was still not available at the time of the follow-up phone calls (two years after grant award) due to space and equipment issues. At one site, the jail-based AJC was a small office that only had space for a staff computer off-limits to participants. At the other, approved equipment had been ordered but the request had still not been fulfilled. At a third site, jail administrators would not allow Internet access for participants due to the security concerns around unmonitored communications but did allow staff to have Internet access on computers in an office next to the jail-based AJC.

**No access.** Three jail-based AJCs did not provide Internet access for either participants or staff. At one AJC, participants and staff intended to access the Internet from a jail-issued laptop that was on order but had yet to be fulfilled two years into implementation. For the other two sites, jail administrators did not approve Internet access. At one of these sites, the security context in the jail dramatically changed after a jailbreak occurred between proposal submission and the grant award. Due to a policy created in response to this incident, jail staff were no longer allowed to use cell phones, laptops, or tablets within the secure areas of the jail, including the jail-based AJC, and inmates were not allowed access to the Internet in any part of the jail.

### 3. Challenges and strategies related to arranging Internet access

Two primary challenges emerged as sites arranged for Internet access in jail-based AJCs:

- **Arranging for Internet access was more expensive than anticipated.** Sites had not anticipated all of the costs related to space upgrades and equipment. Most jail buildings have thick concrete walls and floors, and sites had not planned for the extensive work needed to drill for appropriate wiring. Equipment costs were higher than planned in some cases because sites had planned to repurpose older computers but discovered that jail IT security policies required that all machines be delivered directly from the manufacturer to ensure they did not have any unauthorized programs installed.

**“This is the first jail in all of [the county] to get the program approved...IT, internet, going through all the training etcetera. We really pushed hard and kept going through the channels to get the program approved.”**

*- Jail administrator on the success of arranging Internet access for participants*
- **The timeline for finalizing Internet access was longer than planned.** Grantees had anticipated having functional Internet access by the time the 9-month planning period ended, but only six grantees had Internet access by that point. Unanticipated delays in installing the Internet fell into three categories. First, delays in obtaining approval from jail directors and IT staff occurred either because stakeholders needed more time to resolve differences in vision or, in one case, because there was turnover in jail administration during the planning process. Second, delays due to jail infrastructure issues occurred often. For example, many needed to procure contractors to install additional electrical outlets in rooms not previously used for computer work. Finally, delays occurred due to county procurement processes and availability of Internet service providers. Although specific procedures varied by jail, all work orders—for example, for drilling to create ports and electrical outlets, or for contractors to configure machines to meet jail security settings—typically had to go through an extensive contractor procurement process. Installing Internet access also required using an Internet service provider, such as Comcast or AT&T, which often had long wait lists for major projects.

Reflecting on the factors that helped them navigate these challenges, sites identified two key facilitators of installing Internet access successfully:

- **High-level support from jail administrators expedited the process.** Securing buy-in from jail administrators at the proposal stage minimized the need for continued discussions about whether to allow Internet access in the jail, and enabled sites to focus on installation details. Three sites also noted that having the support of an entity who oversees both jails and LWDBs, such as the county executive, helped expedite Internet installation.

- **Sites involved both jail administrators and IT staff in developing detailed plans.** To ensure that plans met the jail security requirements, sites stressed the importance of developing a detailed plan for Internet access with jail administrators and for jail IT staff as early as possible, even at the proposal stage. This could help anticipate time-intensive processes and potential infrastructure costs. They also suggested that identifying the websites necessary for planned pre-release programming was important earlier rather than later so jail administrators and IT staff could review and approve the sites on time.

Given the challenges of securing and preparing the physical space as well as integrating services into the strict environment of a jail, establishing the jail-based AJCs in all 20 sites was itself a significant accomplishment. Whether they were able to arrange for Internet access, all of the sites developed the infrastructure to provide pre-release services to participants and aid in their transition back to the community. With that infrastructure in place, sites could begin recruiting and enrolling participants in services.

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## Chapter IV: Participant Enrollment

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*"[The] buzz about the program in the pods [where inmates reside] is good."*

-- Participant describing word of mouth about jail-based AJC services

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### Key findings

- The 20 sites enrolled a total of 3,805 participants in pre-release services as of March 31, 2018, exceeding the goal established with DOL of enrolling 3,463 participants.
- Most sites supplemented DOL eligibility requirements with their own criteria to identify inmates who were likely to be cooperative and successful or who did not have geographic or time constraints preventing access to services.
- Participant recruitment proved challenging in some facilities. Some jails had large unsentenced populations that limited their pool of eligible applicants. In addition, some jails restricted jail-based AJC staff access to parts of the facility (such as housing units or common areas), limiting their ability to recruit across the jail.
- Sites used different approaches to target services to those most in need. Five sites considered criminogenic risk when prioritizing applicants and four sites considered work readiness and employment aspirations when assessing applicants for enrollment in LEAP.

From August 1, 2015, to March 31, 2018, the 20 sites enrolled 3,805 participants in pre-release services through their jail-based AJCs. This exceeded the overall target of 3,463 participants established by DOL through negotiations with each grantee. This chapter discusses the criteria used to identify eligible participants, as well as the processes sites used to recruit, screen, and enroll participants into jail-based AJC services.

### A. Participant eligibility

Although the jail-based AJCs had a relatively engaged population from which to recruit, enrolling participants into services was not straightforward. Staff were tasked with identifying inmates who met specific criteria established by DOL as well as additional criteria established by site partners.

#### 1. Eligibility criteria specified by DOL

As mentioned in Chapter I, DOL specified that participants who received LEAP-funded services must have been convicted and incarcerated as an adult, could not have been convicted of a sexual offense other than prostitution, confined to a location with a jail-based AJC, and have a scheduled release

date within 180 days of enrollment. However, enrolling participants who met these eligibility criteria was challenging for some sites. Sites struggled to get accurate release dates from their corrections partners, and sites with large pre-trial populations struggled to identify enough sentenced inmates. To accommodate these sites, DOL modified two eligibility criteria on a case-by-case basis:

- **Date of release.** Two sites reported that DOL allowed them to serve participants without set release dates so they could meet proposed enrollment numbers. One site used anticipated release dates, which were not formal dates, to satisfy this requirement.
- **Sentenced inmates.** Five sites with large pre-release populations reported that DOL allowed them to serve unsentenced participants without release dates.

## 2. Additional eligibility criteria established by sites

In addition to the variation in the eligibility criteria specified by DOL, thirteen sites also applied their own site-specific criteria. In nineteen sites, inmates had to voluntarily opt in to participate; only one site reported that a judge sometimes mandated participation in jail- and community-based AJC services. Most criteria either identified inmates who were likely to be cooperative and successful participants or ensured that inmates would not have movement or time constraints that would prevent them from accessing pre- or post-release services. The criteria that sites established included the following:

### Likelihood of success

- **Compliance with jail regulations.** Seven sites reviewed applicant behavior in the corrections facility. They required participants to be incident-free, though one site allowed individuals with incidents older than 30 days to be eligible.
- **Participation in jail activities.** At two sites, only individuals who were engaged in other jail programming qualified for jail-based AJC services. Staff verified this by reviewing jail records or observing such participation.
- **Health and medical requirements.** Four sites required that participants meet physical and mental health standards to safely and actively participate in services and be able to work.
- **Educational and work experience requirements.** Two sites required that participants have work experience or meet an education requirement. One site used work history to narrow down a large pool of eligible inmates. Another required a high school diploma or GED.
- **Conviction history.** Two sites restricted eligibility to participants with nonviolent records.

**“I warmed up after two sessions. Now I look forward to coming and don’t want to make the same mistakes.”**

*- Participant mandated to participate as a sanction for a parole violation*

### Ability to participate

- **Proximity to community services.** Four sites restricted enrollment to individuals expected to return to the local service area after release. Sites reported that this ensured participants’ access

to all aspects of services, including post-release services. One site that required participants to live near one of its three community-based AJCs reported a 91 percent post-release enrollment rate.

- **Substance abuse services.** One site did not accept applicants with mandated post-release drug rehabilitation because it conflicted with the schedule for community-based AJC services.
- **Other justice-related eligibility criteria.** One site would not accept individuals being tried in drug court, because it perceived that these inmates would be released too quickly to participate in the full sequence of jail-based AJC programming. Another site mandated that applicants could not have detainers that would prevent them from being released after serving their time.

## B. Recruitment

Participants could enroll in jail-based AJC services using many channels, and jail-based AJC staff worked closely with corrections staff to identify and recruit potential participants.

- **Jail data on inmates.** Sites used the jails' rosters of inmates to identify potential participants. In most cases, jail staff reviewed their lists of inmates to determine who met the site's criteria and provided the information to the jail-based AJC. In some cases, jail-based AJC staff had access to the jail's management information system (MIS) or reports of jail inmates and reviewed these data sources themselves.
- **Referrals.** In addition to this systematic approach, jail-based AJC staff received referrals from jail staff and other in-jail partners and direct requests from inmates themselves. As enrollment increased, sites reported that more inmates heard about the jail-based AJC from peers. Those interested submitted inmate request forms expressing their interest in participating in jail-based AJC services.
- **Outreach.** Jail-based AJC staff also cast a wider net through town halls in the jail, outreach to housing units, and through flyers and other materials posted in housing units. Logistics in the jail influenced how staff could reach out to and recruit participants. As discussed in Chapter III, jail-based AJC staff sometimes could not access particular spaces or had to be accompanied by corrections officers when conducting outreach and recruitment sessions in housing units. In one site, jail-based AJC staff relied heavily on corrections officers to make referrals to services because of the challenges visiting housing units.

**"It was posted on my billboard on my door. I would always look at it and say they helped with job readiness, resume, all this.....I thought about it to myself, I laid on it, I slept on it, and when I woke up and talked to my counselor...[I asked] 'Can I talk to you about the job center?'"**

*- Participant describing how he decided to apply to the jail-based AJC*

When inmates expressed interest or were identified through jail records, jail-based AJCs invited them to orientations. Nine sites used group orientations while three used exclusively one-on-one meetings.

Orientations mainly provided an opportunity for interested individuals to hear about available services but sometimes also involved collecting applications or background information, conducting early assessments of participant interests and skills, communicating rules for the jail-based AJC, or sharing information on community-based services such as WIOA.

### C. Screening and enrollment

After establishing a potential participant's eligibility, jail-based AJC staff in many sites conducted additional screening to prioritize applicants for enrollment. This happened most often when the potential pool of applications was greater than the number the jail-based AJC could serve. Sites considered motivation and interest, criminogenic risk, work readiness, age, and post-release supervision, among other factors. Sometimes the information to determine eligibility and priority was available from the jail, but, in many cases, staff had to conduct assessments to determine an inmate's fit for services. This took place in the form of in-person assessments administered to the inmate, an in-person interview, or observations of in-jail behavior.

- Motivation and interest.** Six sites reported evaluating participants' motivation and interest in the recruitment and enrollment process; staff screened out applicants who appeared interested in programming only as a way to pass time. Assessments were subjective; staff also asked applicants what their motivation for being part of the program was and evaluated their answers or assessed if applicants were interested in employment and not just auxiliary services.
- Criminogenic risk.** Five sites considered criminogenic risk when prioritizing applicants. AJC staff used risk assessment tools or information on criminogenic risk from the jail (Figure IV.1). Four sites believed that participants with higher criminogenic risk would benefit more from the intensive services offered in the jail-based AJC and prioritized applicants with moderate to high risk scores. One site prioritized applicants with low to medium risk scores believing those populations would benefit most.
- Work readiness.** Four sites noted that they considered work readiness and employment aspirations in considering applicants for enrollment. For example, one site indicated that they would not enroll individuals who scored below a certain threshold on a basic education test given that they would not be able to participate fully in all services. Staff administered assessments such as the Test of Adult Basic Education, the My World of Work career test, and other career assessments available through O\*NET.
- Age.** Two sites prioritized applicants by age. One indicated that older participants were more motivated than younger participants to seek help, prioritizing participants ages 25 to 45. Another

Figure IV.1. Examples of criminogenic risk assessments used in screening

- Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions
- Level of Service/Case Management Inventory
- Indiana Risk Assessment System

Source: Site visits and telephone interviews.

prioritized younger inmates so they could be co-enrolled in a jail program targeting this population.

- **Supervision and work release.** One site preferred to enroll participants with mandatory community supervision after release. Another preferred to work with participants who were co-enrolled in work release while in the jail. Both sites described preferring these participants because they would be receiving additional support either inside or outside the jail.

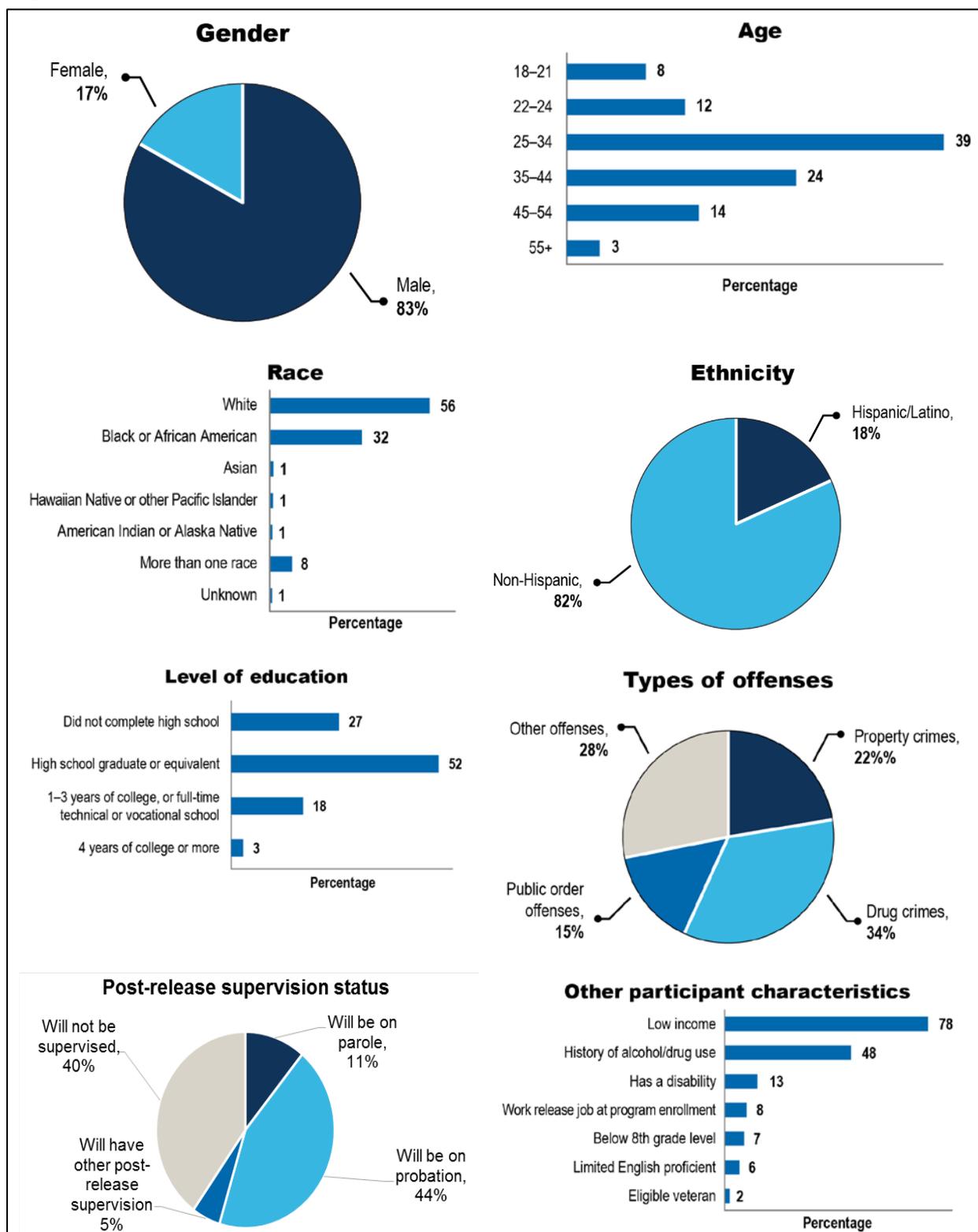
Jail-based AJC staff managed most of the screening and enrollment process, receiving some assistance from corrections staff with assessments and establishing eligibility. Notably, in one site, the jail managed the entire eligibility, screening, and enrollment process. Staff in this site reported that they generally received qualified applicants and met their enrollment target. As jail populations fluctuated or sites struggled to meet enrollment targets, staff scaled back the extent to which they used additional priorities to screen out individuals.

After staff had determined that a participant was eligible for services and could be enrolled, they would notify the participant of his or her acceptance either in person, through a letter, or by sending a schedule for workshops. In most cases, participants were considered enrolled while receiving their first service, whether a group class or one-on-one activity.

#### D. Characteristics of enrolled participants

Figure VI.2 presents demographic characteristics for the 3,805 participants enrolled in jail-based AJC services as of March 31, 2018. The vast majority were men, with women making up only 17 percent of participants. Although participants ranged in age from 18 to older than 55, nearly two-thirds were ages 25 to 44. More than half were white, and one-third were black or African American. Most had low levels of education, with 27 percent not having a high school diploma or GED. The types of offenses for which they were convicted included drug crimes (34 percent); property crimes such as burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and receipt of stolen property (22 percent); public order offenses, including driving while intoxicated (15 percent); and other offenses (28 percent). Sites also reported that 60 percent will be on some form of community supervision, such as probation or parole, upon release.

Figure IV.2. Characteristics of LEAP participants



Source: Quarterly performance reports for 20 grantees as of March 31, 2018.

Note: Sample size is 3,805 participants enrolled in jail-based AJC services as of March 31, 2018.

## E. Challenges and strategies related to enrolling participants

Sixteen of the twenty grantees met or exceeded their enrollment targets established with DOL; the remaining four grantees achieved from 71 percent to 95 percent of their goal. Across all the sites, regardless of whether they ultimately met their enrollment target, two main challenges emerged around recruiting and enrolling participants, and grantees identified some strategies to help address those challenges.

- **Eligibility criteria.** Sites reported that DOL’s eligibility criteria posed an early challenge in recruiting participants. Some jails had large unsentenced populations or inmates with unknown release dates, which limited their pool of eligible applicants. In one case, a grantee decided early in the planning period to implement the jail-based AJC in a different corrections facility with a larger eligible population. However, other sites did not have that option. These sites worked with jail staff to identify anticipated sentencing dates to build a pipeline of potentially eligible individuals, asked DOL to waive the sentencing requirement, or adapted as best they could as release dates became available.
- **Jail logistics.** Safety concerns restricted both the mobility of jail-based AJC staff in some facilities and their ability to recruit participants across different sections of the jail. Five sites relied on their relationships with jail administrators and buy-in from corrections officers to receive recruitment help from the jail. As enrollment grew, inmates who heard about services from enrolled participants or saw participants attending classes in the facility began expressing interest in enrolling.

**“The hardest thing is to identify sentenced individuals eligible for LEAP”**

*-Jail-based AJC staff about recruiting challenges*

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## Chapter V: Pre-Release Services

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*“LEAP has provided a lot of resources and a lot of hope.”*

--Participant noting the value of jail-based AJC services

*“At [LEAP program] jail inmates take their study guides out and are actually studying. They get the LEAP program and it relaxes them and works their minds. Inmates talk to him about how they are doing, that has never happened at [the other jail] site.”*

-- Correctional Officer in a LEAP jail

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### Key findings

- Pre-release services focused on work-readiness training, workforce information services, and career/life skills counseling, with 85, 69, and 68 percent of participants receiving them, respectively. Education and training services were less common, with 22 percent receiving vocational and occupational skills training.
- Participants and corrections staff appreciated programs that were grounded in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) principles. Eight of the 20 sites administered the CBT-based Thinking for a Change curriculum.
- In sites where reentry services were limited before receiving the LEAP grant, jail-based AJCs reportedly had a significant effect on jail culture. Respondents indicated that the jail-based AJCs demonstrated the value of employment-focused reentry services to both jail administrators and corrections staff.

LEAP grantees offered pre-release services designed to prepare participants to find and keep employment when they re-entered their communities. Before the LEAP grant, more than one-third of participating jails had limited or no services to prepare returning citizens for gainful employment and other positive life outcomes. In addition, most jails lacked strong links to post-release community services. Through the LEAP grants, DOL required that jail-based AJC activities “include all required [Workforce Investment Act] core and intensive services for participants,” including but not limited to comprehensive case management, job-seeking services, and assistance with education or training. However, sites had flexibility in their choices about how to structure these pre-release services. This chapter describes how the sites integrated services with existing offerings in the jails, and the types of services offered across the jail-based AJCs.

## A. Integration with existing jail services

In the majority of sites (60 percent), the jail-based AJC established by LEAP added to existing services available in the jail. In general, the types of other programming available in the jails fell into the following categories:

- **Employment services.** Jails facilitated work-release programs, employment-readiness services, occupational skill certificates, and work experience opportunities. Four sites reported these services as less “deliberate or intensive” than what the jail-based AJCs were offering. For example, in one site, volunteers provided these services ad hoc.
- **Educational programs.** GED preparation was the most common educational service jails provided. Other programs included typing and computer courses, English as a Second Language courses, and independent study opportunities.
- **Health and substance abuse programs.** Most jails offered medical discharge planning and enrollment and mental health counseling and treatment. Nine of the jails reported offering substance abuse treatment and counseling services.
- **Counseling and life skills development.** Almost half of the jails provided life skills services such as budgeting and financial planning, parenting courses, mentoring, anger management programs, and other counseling programs.
- **Other reentry programs.** Seven jails used the LEAP grant to enhance or expand existing programs or had dedicated centers for reentry services.
- **Supplementary services.** Jails also typically had libraries, benefits counselors and enrollment, religious programs and services, legal consultations, and inmate volunteering opportunities.

Sites leveraged these existing services in many cases to both supplement what the jail-based AJC could offer and provide a more comprehensive menu of services to inmates. Jails with minimal to moderate services before the grant offered life skills counseling, substance abuse programs, or GED classes, but often had limited employment-related services. In some of these jails, jail-based AJC staff became the de facto reentry service provider in the jail.

**“LEAP has added an extra layer of resources for residents.”**

*-Jail administrator on the value of the jail-based AJC*

In jails where more robust services existed before the LEAP grant, jail-based AJC staff either coordinated with existing jail programs to ensure that material would not be redundant, or located themselves within the jail’s service center to make coordination easier. Six jails with lower security levels and a reentry focus had more extensive services that offered inmates opportunities to work, enroll in training and certificate programs, and receive other supportive services. One site required inmates to participate in the jail’s reentry program before enrolling in the jail-based AJC. In another, jail-based AJC staff took on coordinating and scheduling responsibilities for the jail’s entire menu of service options. At these sites, the LEAP grant expanded services to more

inmates or enabled the jail to shift staff to provide services other than the employment services offered in the jail-based AJC.

## B. Services offered through jail-based AJCs

By integrating and coordinating LEAP-funded services with existing jail services, sites and their corrections partners offered a host of reentry-related services through the jail-based AJCs. These services represented five broad categories: (1) individual service planning, (2) career and life skills counseling, (3) workforce preparation services, (4) education and training services, and (5) supports and other services.

### 1. Individual service planning

Staff developed an individual employment plan (IEP) for each participant to inform service delivery in the jail-based AJC and upon reentry to the community. The plans themselves varied by site but commonly included educational and employment histories, career and personal goals, identification of employment barriers, and supportive service needs (Figure V.1). Sites used results from both career and skill assessments and corrections-specific assessments to help construct the IEP, or, as was the case in two sites, to serve as the IEP. Jail-based AJC staff typically developed IEPs during enrollment or case management appointments, and most eventually shared the plans with community-based staff working with participants after release. However, in at least two sites, the IEP was not created until just before release or when participants were in the community.

Figure V.1. Contents of a typical IEP for jail-based AJC participants

- Career interest assessment
- Work-readiness score
- Educational history
- Work experience and resume
- Career goals
- Identification of barriers and supports needed
- Services planned and received

Source: Site visit case file reviews.

Although every participant had an IEP, using it did not usually translate into customization of pre-release services, as would normally occur in a community-based AJC. This was likely due to the limitations of scheduling that required services to take place in groups and the need for classes to include broad topics on job and life skills. Participants generally had access to the same classes, with staff providing individualized help during class time when possible. One site was an exception, offering solely individualized case management and job search assistance for

participants, with no group classes or workshops. More often, the jail-based staff used the plans to guide one-on-one counseling and to help serve participants post-release by providing community-based staff with background information on participants and the services they already received.

The grant also required staff to assess each participant's work readiness. Sites could determine whether a participant was work ready at the time of release or had improved his or her work readiness before release. Five sites administered a pre/post test to participants at enrollment into the jail-based

AJC and either when they completed services or were about to be released from jail. One site's pre-test also doubled as its IEP. Two other sites reported that a participant was ready for work if he or she completed services in the jail-based AJC. Five sites reported that staff used general guidelines about the aspects of work readiness most important to assess in deciding whether participants were ready for work or had demonstrated improvement in work readiness. Information was not available on the specific approaches the other eight sites used to determine work readiness.

## 2. Career and life skills counseling

Of all pre-release services, one-on-one counseling or case management offered a strong opportunity for forging personal connections and tailoring plans and services to individual goals, interests, education, and work history. Grantee performance reports indicated that 68 percent of participants received some form of career or life skills counseling.

**Career counseling.** Participants worked with case managers in the jail and for up to one year after release. Although caseloads varied over time, jail-based AJC staff across sites reported working with anywhere from 6 to 40 participants at a time. On average, participants met with a case manager every one to two weeks to receive individualized support and guidance on topics such as participant goals, plans for pre-release services, ways to address personal barriers to success, employment plans, impending release dates, and supportive services needed after release.

Staff and participants viewed case managers as the strongest influence on participants' likelihood of success. They indicated that the most effective case managers treated participants in the jail-based AJCs as fellow "human beings" rather than as inmates, showed a profound level of personal caring and dedication to participants' success, and had dynamic, inspiring personalities that engaged participants and laid important groundwork for post-release contact and engagement. The human component was particularly valuable from the participants' perspective.

**"[Case managers] help you – teach you how to build...your self-esteem. They help you build the way to live, teach you how to pay rent. They get you into the habit of doing what you need to do to survive."**

*- Participant discussing the influence of jail-based AJC staff*

**Life skills counseling.** Sites also recognized the unique personal, financial, and emotional barriers to employment success that justice-involved individuals face and delivered instruction on life skills such as time management, organizational and decision-making skills, financial literacy, workplace conflict, and anger management. Two sites required participants to attend classes that addressed individual barriers before they could attend job-readiness classes. One of the two sites required participants to complete a reentry "action plan" class that addressed cognitive and emotional barriers before they could begin the classes that concentrated solely on job readiness.

**“[It helps us] stay out of the prison thinking process”**

*- Participant describing the role of life skills counseling*

Participants in focus groups highlighted the extent to which jail-based AJC services helped change their frames of mind. Eight of the 20 sites used the curriculum Thinking for a Change to work with participants or as a resource for training jail-based AJC staff. Thinking for a Change is an integrated, cognitive behavioral change curriculum for justice-involved individuals. Regardless of curriculum, participants across sites repeatedly stressed that AJC services helped them see themselves as potential employees and to focus on self-esteem, positive attitude, managing anger, and listening. Participants highly valued the skills they developed for managing stress, making better decisions, and controlling their emotions—skills they said would help them stay employed.

### 3. Workforce preparation services

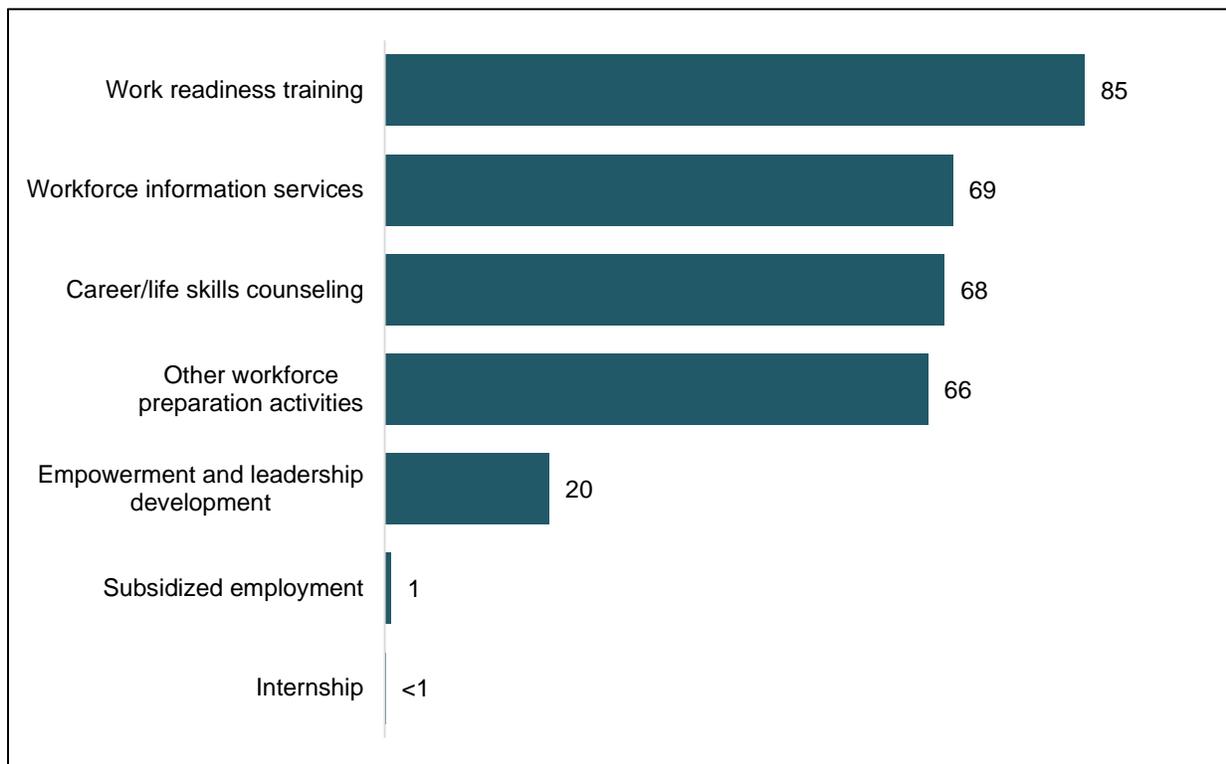
Job preparation was at the core of jail-based AJC services (Figure V.2). Work-readiness training was the most common service, reaching 85 percent of participants, followed by workforce information services (69 percent). Sixty-six percent of participants reported receiving other workforce preparation services, such as mock interviews, computer literacy or typing lessons, securing right-to-work documentation, registering with the state jobs database or enrolling in WIOA services, job interviews and fairs, and orientations to community AJC services. Twenty percent of participants also engaged in empowerment and leadership development activities. Job preparation services ranged in length from two weeks to three months, with six to eight weeks being the most commonly reported time frame.

**“It was really my first time and I was kind of excited about getting my first resume done.”**

*- Participant explaining the value of workforce preparation activities*

Work-readiness training was broad in scope and usually delivered through group classes. Depending on the length of pre-release programming, job-related classes could occur daily or one or two times per week. Classes were often paired with access to a computer (to work on resumes, for example) and case management meetings to provide individualized support. A couple of sites noted the need to adapt class content because of variation in education levels, though such customization was minor. Classes covered topics including job searches, job applications, resumes and cover letters, and interviewing techniques. Classes also commonly taught workplace etiquette, such as dress code and co-worker interactions, and communication, including email and phone etiquette and, less commonly, maintaining an appropriate social media presence. Eight sites also explicitly mentioned integrating labor market information into pre-release services. Outside of classes, participants in some facilities could access other non-LEAP-funded employment-related services, such as work release or computer literacy offered by the jail. In one site, if participants were very close to their release date, jail-based AJC staff reported foregoing classes and focusing exclusively on managing individual cases and helping participants search for jobs.

Figure V.2. Percentage of participants who received workforce preparation services



Source: Quarterly performance reports for 20 grantees as of March 31, 2018. N = 3,618.

Participants reported valuing the job search preparation and assistance the jail-based AJCs provided. When reflecting on the most useful AJC services, focus group participants often mentioned guidance that enhanced their job search skills or helped with the job search process. This included help preparing resumes (and cover letters, job applications, and thank-you notes); developing interviewing skills; identifying career interests; learning about the local labor market; and searching for work. Participants who had never received such instruction expressed particular enthusiasm: “It’s great—I never knew how to be interviewed,” said one participant.

#### 4. Education and training services

Opportunities for occupational training and certification were less common but strongly valued by focus group participants when available. Twenty-two percent of jail-based AJC participants received vocational or occupational skills training (Figure V.3). Training opportunities were sometimes available through the jail's laundry and print shop, or through other jail vocational programs such as culinary arts, landscaping, and industrial mechanics. Staff in six sites indicated that

Figure V.3. Percentage of participants who received **education** and job training services



Source: Quarterly performance reports for 20 grantees as of March 31, 2018. N = 3,618.

Note: HSE = high school education

opportunities to certify for Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), ServSafe Food Handler, hazardous material remediation, National Retail Federation, and National Career Readiness Assessment were available to participants in the jail-based AJC. OSHA and other certifications were sometimes already offered through the jail, and sites took advantage of those existing resources.<sup>2</sup> The availability and types of training services was affected by what was feasible or already present in the individual jail, and secondary, what was likely to be of value in the labor market. Participants reported in focus groups that they particularly valued these trainings because they provided nationally recognized credentials that demonstrated to employers a commitment to learning, and boosted participants' confidence while in jail. Staff at one site described certification as a prized feature of their pre-release services.

Six sites developed occupational skills training programs for jail-based AJC participants when not already available through the jail. One site developed a partnership with a community college to deliver training courses with associated credentials in customer service and OSHA. The college offered the courses in conjunction with soft-skills classes provided by jail-based AJC staff. Another site worked with a community college partner to design and offer a six-week web-based industrial mechanics

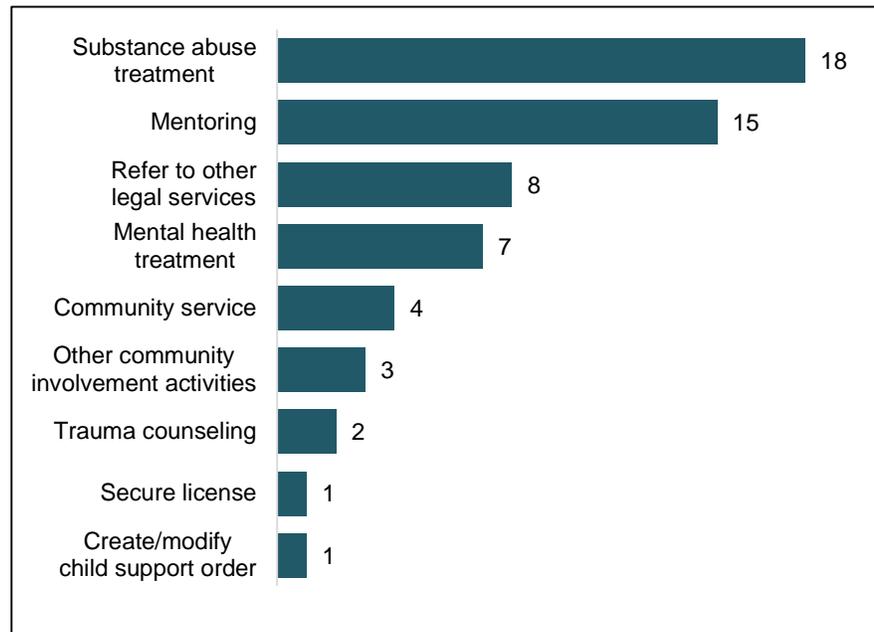
<sup>2</sup> Some certifications participants could complete in the jail-based AJC did not meet the definition of a recognized postsecondary credential as defined for the WIOA Credential Attainment performance indicator in Employment and Training Administration guidance.

course—with associated OSHA general safety and construction credentials—at the jail using portable equipment.

## 5. Supportive services

In addition to workforce preparation and training services, participants received other supports from jail-based AJC staff or from existing service providers at the jail. In terms of healthcare, 18 percent of participants received substance abuse treatment, 7 percent received mental health treatment, and 2 percent received trauma counseling (Figure V.4). Fifteen percent received mentoring services, 8 percent got referrals to legal services, 4 percent participated in community

Figure V.4. Percentage of participants who received supportive services before release



Source: Quarterly performance reports for 20 grantees as of March 31, 2018.  
N = 3,618.

service, and 3 percent participated in other community involvement activities, such as volunteering in the jail. Staff indicated that other supports included legal services and referrals, parenting classes, social services and benefits enrollment, help with child support orders, and assistance obtaining official identification. Although helping participants obtain identification before release proved challenging for some sites, at least one site had particular success helping participants acquire a valid ID in the form of an occupational limited driver's license. This type of ID was less expensive than a traditional driver's license and enabled participants to travel to interviews and jobs.

**Participants truly appreciated supportive services.** During focus groups, participants highlighted supportive services as a key component. "While the program focused on employment," one participant noted, "it has also provided help and services well beyond those which relate to employment." One participant considered supportive services a necessary precursor to securing or keeping a job. "I don't know what's going to happen...about me having housing," said one participant before his release, "but I'm hoping that [the staff] tells me 'You know what, we got a bed for you.' And that's all I need so I can keep on going." Participants repeatedly said the help AJC staff provided to secure driver's licenses, Social Security cards, and other forms of identification (before and after

release) was one of the most valuable AJC services. Indeed, one focus group came to the consensus that the range of assistance in social services was as beneficial as help with resumes or interviewing. "Social service help was big," a participant remarked. "That stuff takes forever. Our food stamp cards were waiting for us when we got out."

### C. Challenges and strategies related to providing services in jail-based AJCs

Sites identified the high level of need for supportive services as the biggest challenge to providing services in the jail and shared some strategies for providing those supports. Despite that challenge, they also indicated that jail-based AJC services could have a lasting effect on the jail environment.

- **High need for supportive services.** Staff in jail-based AJCs found that participants' need for supportive services was greater than the amount available to them through the jail or the jail-based AJC. Although the jail-based AJCs focused heavily on work-readiness services, staff noted that housing and transportation were critical needs for their clients and crucial for successful reentry. Staff also felt that participants could have benefited from more case management before release. Sites that partnered with community organizations to provide supportive services that were not allowable or were not in the budget under the grant described those resources as "huge" in the context of perceived implementation and participant success. These sites encouraged others to leverage the expertise and resources available through community partners to supplement the jail-based AJCs.
- **Lasting effect of jail-based AJC.** In sites where reentry services were minimal before the LEAP grant, staff reported that jail-based AJCs had a visible effect on the culture of the jail. Jail administrators spoke about the value of reentry services to both themselves and the corrections staff who work with inmates on a daily basis. For example, after witnessing how the jail-based AJC used assessments to highlight inmates' barriers to reentry, one jail administrator decided to implement the Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS) risk assessment with the entire jail population. COMPAS uses an algorithm to predict an individual's risk of committing another crime based on their responses to a questionnaire. Similarly, sites that had never used CBT principles or curricula reported that they would continue to use the strategy more deliberately. Finally, staff in two jails noted that disciplinary incidents had decreased during the implementation of jail-based AJC services. One corrections staff member shared, "When you have happy inmates, you do not have bad stuff going on in jail."

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## Chapter VI: Linking Participants to Community-Based Services Post-Release

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*“The sooner we get them engaged, the more successful they are. The longer they take to follow up, the less likely they are to be successful.”*

--Staff member describing the transition to post-release services

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### Key findings

- As of March 2018, 3,076 participants, or 81 percent, had been released from jail. About 14 percent were still actively engaged in jail-based services, and the remaining 5 percent had exited services before release for other reasons.
- Preparing for the transition from jail to the community was a critical time that involved discharge planning, familiarizing participants with post-release staff, transferring information about participants from the jail-based AJC to the community-based AJC, and identifying participants' immediate needs to ensure a smooth reentry.
- Sites reported that 69 percent of individuals who did not enter employment or education had enrolled in comprehensive career services in their first month after release. This is lower than DOL's goal of 80 percent.
- To improve rates of post-release contact, staff used two strategies: (1) incentives, such as cash or gift cards, for participants who came to the community-based AJC; and (2) increasing the duration or level of contact participants had with community-based staff before their release.
- In most cases, CBOs involved in the LEAP grant reported offering more tailored services for reentering individuals than community-based AJCs did, possibly due to their longer history serving reentering individuals and broader focus on both career and supportive services.
- Sites reported that developing relationships with parole and probation agencies, although sometimes challenging, could facilitate initial contact with participants after release and help participants avoid conflicts between their supervision obligations and their service receipt, job search activities, and employment.

Individuals completing their incarceration spell and reentering the community have an uphill battle to restart their lives and remain self-sufficient. Most will return to the same environment from which they came, but with the added challenge of a criminal background that will follow them to every job interview. The period immediately following release could be the most critical for intervention and

connecting individuals to employment. This chapter describes how sites helped participants transition to the community, and how staff engaged and served them in the year after their release from jail.

### A. Status of participants

As of March 2018, about 14 percent of participants were still actively engaged in jail-based services, whereas the vast majority (81 percent) had been released from jail and were considered “exited” for purposes of grant performance reporting (Table VI.1). About 6 percent of participants exited before release from jail. Reasons included health issues, death, or transfer to a different corrections facility. Jail-based AJC staff also terminated participation if an individual did not end up “being a good fit” either for lacking motivation or suffering disciplinary issues. In addition, staff reported that individuals sometimes decided to stop participating because of changes in interest, a desire to participate in other programs that conflicted with the jail-based AJC schedule, or finding employment in the jail or through work release. Some participants were also released early from the jail if their sentences were reduced or they benefited from a jail diversion program, thus making them unable to complete the services in the jail-based AJC. One site mentioned that a few individuals who exited the jail-based AJC this way did engage with staff in the community, though they were no longer counted in performance reports.

Table VI.1. Status of participants as of March 2018

	Number of participants	Percentage
<b>Total participants enrolled</b>	<b>3,805</b>	<b>100</b>
Total still active in jail	529	14
Total exited before release	200	6
Total exited at release	3,076	81

Source: Quarterly performance reports for 20 grantees as of March 31, 2018.

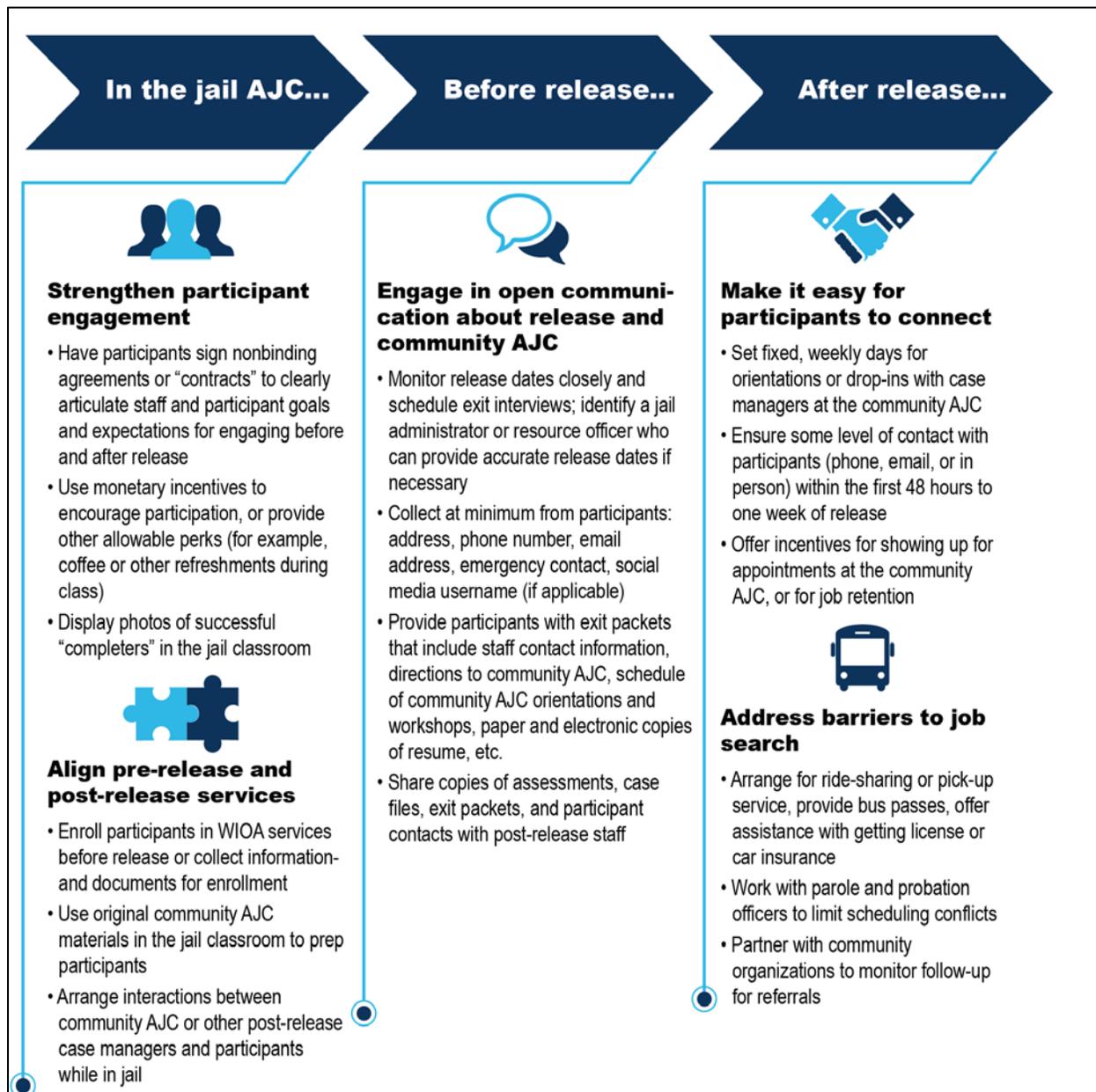
### B. Transition to the community and reengagement after release

Jail- and community-based AJC staff reported focusing on the long term when serving participants and developing strategies to sustain engagement throughout the service process (Figure VI.1). While working with participants in jail, staff attempted to develop and strengthen relationships with participants, encourage their engagement, and celebrate their successes. As participants moved toward release, staff engaged openly with them about this change, their plans for transition, and services available in the community. After release, staff tried to make it easy for participants to contact them, provided incentives for continued engagement, and attempted to address barriers to job search success.

Across sites, staff reported several important steps during the transition period to help participants successfully link to community-based services (Figure VI.2). The extent of transition planning relied heavily on whether staff knew participants’ release dates or whether they arrived unexpectedly. The focus of the transition period also depended on whether the same or different staff were serving participants pre- and post-release, as discussed in Chapter II. Sites with the same staff providing pre- and post-release services focused largely on maintaining contact with participants after release. Sites

with different pre- and post-release staff had the added focus of introducing participants to new staff members and sharing participant information with staff to facilitate a continuity of care.

Figure VI.1. Strategies to encourage participant engagement



Source: Site visits and telephone interviews.

## 1. Obtaining reliable contact information

Several days leading up to a participant's release, staff reported confirming participant contact information and scheduling a post-release appointment. Because participant contact information often ended up being unreliable for getting in touch with participants staff asked for phone numbers of family members, friends, and other acquaintances as added insurance. One site asked for the contact

information for the person who would be picking up the participant from jail on his or her release date, as this person was usually in contact with the participant after release.

## 2. Transitioning case managers

Transitioning participants to a different case manager was a priority in sites that had different staff working with participants before and after release. Staff reported that in this period they focused on ensuring the participants had some interaction with their post-release case manager in the jail, both to smooth the transition process and because staff believed participants were more likely to reach out to someone they were familiar with once they were in the community.

## 3. Transferring case information

Staff were particularly concerned that information about participants' career goals, assessment results, and identified needs were relayed in a timely manner to staff working with participants in the community. As discussed in Chapter V, the IEP typically contained assessment results, goals, and important information for service planning. It was clearly critical for staff newly working with participants in the community—including community-based AJC staff, other community providers, or CBOs—to have this information to develop plans for additional services and supports. Chapter VII includes a discussion on the details of transferring case file information.

## 4. Making initial contact

Staff in all sites tried to establish contact with participants within the first week of release. They reported that connecting with participants as soon as possible was crucial for keeping them engaged. The period immediately after release was also seen as a vulnerable time, and staff

Figure VI.2. Staff checklist for a smooth transition from pre- to post-release services

- ✓ *Exchange contact information with participants.* Staff made sure they had contacts for participants and friends or family who could reach them, and that participants had staff contact information.
- ✓ *Make an appointment to meet in the community.* Staff scheduled post-release appointments for participants with staff in the community while the participant was still in jail or immediately after release, preferably within a week of release.
- ✓ *Introduce participants to post-release staff.* When community-based staff visited the jail-based AJC to meet or work with participants, participant familiarity with new staff increased.
- ✓ *Identify immediate needs for supportive services.* Staff determined participants' needs for housing, transportation, identification, mental and physical health, public assistance, and basic essentials such as clothes and food, and helped develop a plan to address those needs before or after release.
- ✓ *Ensure a continuity of services.* Jail-based AJC staff reported passing information—including case files, assessments, IEPs, and employment plans—to staff who would work with participants after release to help align services provided before and after release.
- ✓ *Equip participants with job search tools.* Staff tried to make sure participants had hard or electronic copies of their resume, documents to fill out job applications, and other materials they created for their job search in the jail-based AJC.
- ✓ *Provide information about the community-based AJC.* Staff gave participants information about the location of the community-based AJC and services available for job search, training, and education, such as a calendar or list of available workshops.

Source: Site visits and telephone interviews.

reported that many participants lacked a strong support system in the community to get them back on their feet. Sites took different approaches to the point of first contact with participants after release:

- **At the moment of release at the jail exit.** Staff in four sites reported they met some or all participants at the jail exit on the day of their release, especially if staff knew the release date ahead of time. They might take participants to buy basic essentials such as food and hygiene supplies, give them a bus pass, or drop participants off at their home.
- **Within the first few days based on a pre-scheduled appointment.** Staff in nine sites pre-scheduled appointments to see participants within the first few days after release, or—if they were released unexpectedly—contacted them within the first few days to schedule an appointment.
- **When the participant initiated contact.** Five sites waited for participants to make the first connection on their own, then reached out using the available contact information if a participant did not make a connection within the first week or so after release.

If participants did not keep their appointments or reach out to schedule an initial meeting on their own, staff used phone calls, email, text messages, letters, social media, and even in-person visits to reach participants. Two sites used a closed Facebook group to communicate with participants.

### C. Challenges and strategies related to participant transition and reengagement

Sites reported that 69 percent (or 1,336 of 1,936 participants) of those who had been out of jail for at least 30 days enrolled in comprehensive career services, if they were not already employed or enrolled in education (Figure VI.3).<sup>3</sup> Although the overall rate across the sites was just short of DOL's target of 80 percent, 10 sites did meet that target. Three sites also noted that many of their participants did not engage within the first 30 days, as defined in DOL's post-release enrollment rate, but a significant number showed up at the community AJC or CBO after three to six months, when they had exhausted options for looking for work.

#### 1. Common challenges in engaging participants

Sites mentioned several challenges that affected their ability to enroll participants in the community-based services offered.

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<sup>3</sup> The remaining 1,084 participants (36 percent) who had been released were either employed or in education programs within their first month after release or were still within the 30-day window of release. The outcome reported here is based on data from 18 of the 20 sites; outcome data for 2 sites were not used in the analysis of the following outcomes: post-release enrollment rate, placement rate, employment/education retention rate, and recidivism rate.

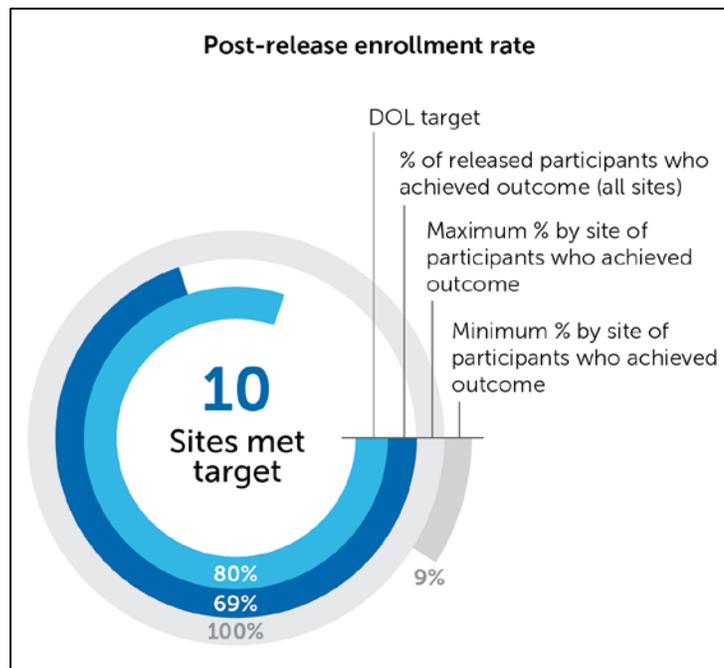
- **Unpredictable release dates impeded staff in conducting discharge planning.** Volatility in actual release dates and sometimes a lack of coordination with jail administrators about participants' releases often affected jail-based AJC staff's ability to prepare for release and discuss discharge plans. This unpredictability also made it hard to schedule post-release appointments while a participant was still in jail, an important part of reengagement after release in many sites.

- **Contacting participants entering residential treatment was challenging.** Grantee QPRs showed that 4 percent of enrolled participants were likely to be in residential treatment facilities after

release, though the rate was as high as 13 percent in one site (Figure VI.4). Staff reported that many entered sober-living housing or rehabilitation after release from jail. Some of these programs restricted residents' ability to leave the facility, which meant that AJC or provider staff could not work with them for an extended period.

- **Transportation was a significant barrier for many participants.** Staff reported that many participants did not have access to a car, or their license had been revoked and they could not afford to reinstate it. Public transportation was not always convenient for participants, was not always near the community AJC, and was sometimes cost-prohibitive for participants. Some participants also relocated far from the jail, making it harder to travel to the community AJC or provider locations where staff familiar with LEAP were located. Staff in some sites did try to connect participants to case managers in other AJCs, but it was unclear how widespread this practice was.

Figure VI.3. Post-release enrollment rate



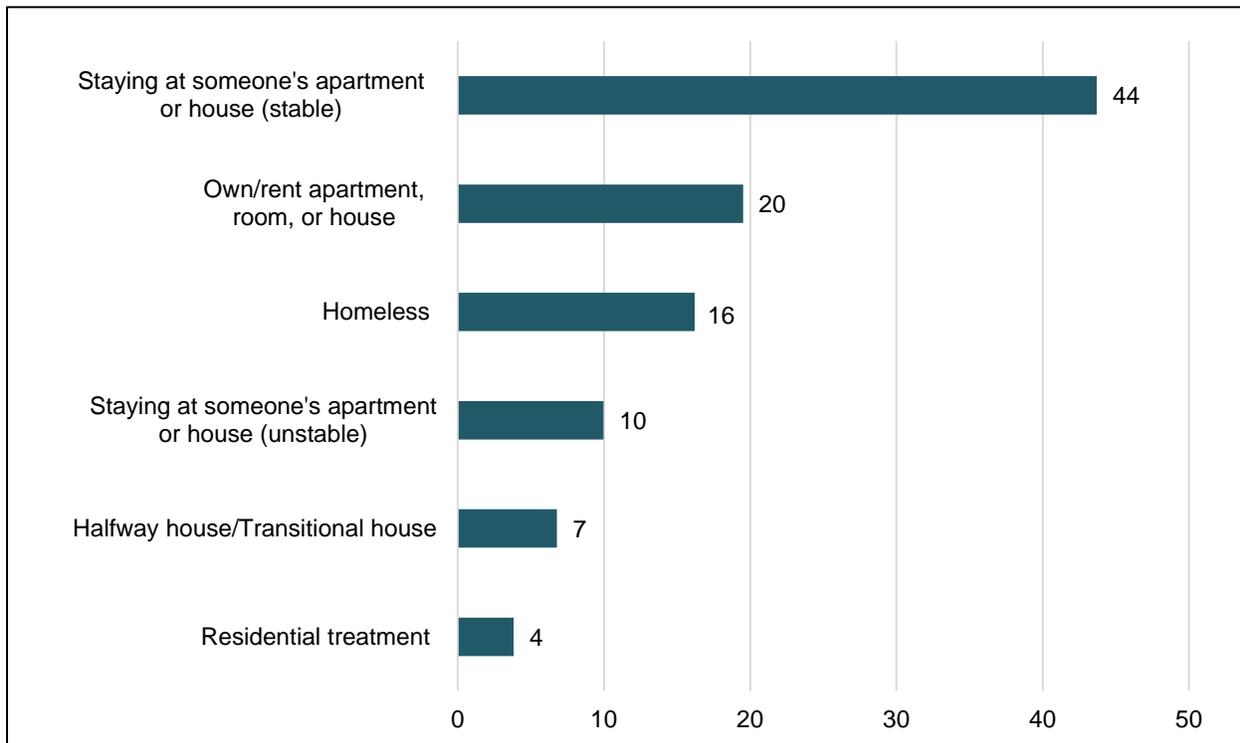
Source: Quarterly performance reports for 18 grantees as of March 31, 2018.

Notes: Sample size is 1,936 participants who had been released for at least 30 days and not enrolled in education or employment.

**“There’s the plan and there’s the reality of the lives of these guys. The reality is they get out and they maybe have \$50 and no ID. Getting them past the bus stop can be a challenge.”**

*- Post-release staff member describing the barriers participants face to engaging in services*

Figure VI.4. Percentage of participants by expected housing at time of release



Source: Quarterly performance reports for 20 grantees as of March 31, 2018. Sample size is 3,805 enrolled participants.

- Housing instability hindered locating participants.** Figure VI.4 shows that 37 percent of participants were likely to be in a temporary or unstable housing situation after release from jail, including 16 percent likely to be homeless. Staff noted that participants in an unstable housing situation after release were harder to locate and less likely to show up for service appointments, job interviews, and work. Severe shortages of affordable housing in some regions further impeded participants' search for suitable housing.
- Some participants were not interested in the services available after release.** Staff reported that some participants did not want to continue services, either because they found work or preferred to find work on their own. Fines and other financial obligations—including housing, food, unpaid court fees, and back payments on child support—pushed many to accept any job in the first few weeks after release rather than attend further training or education services, or hold out for a job with opportunities for advancement. After participants began working, engaging them became more challenging because of the limited time they had to meet with staff. Staff also noted that some participants seemed skeptical that case managers could help find them a job quickly and, as a result, were less likely to engage after release.

## 2. Strategies to improve participant engagement

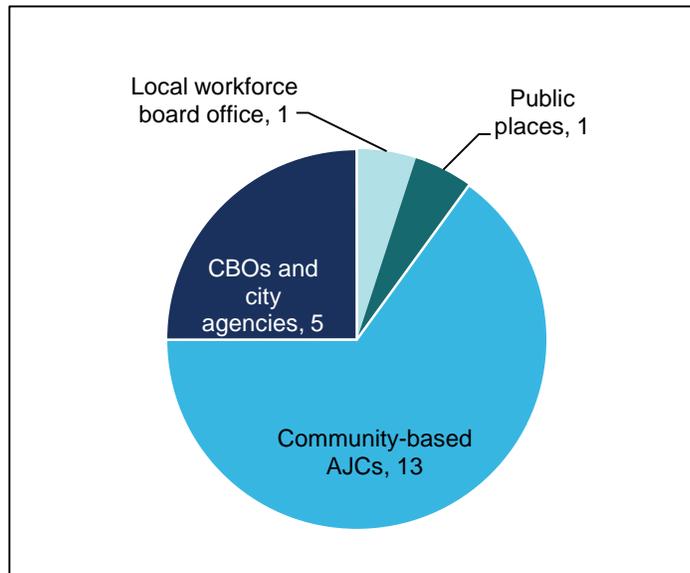
To address these challenges, staff noted five strategies they found particularly helpful for getting participants in the door once they left the jail:

- **Incentives.** Seven sites instituted incentives for meeting certain obligations or milestones, such as showing up at the community-based AJC or service provider for scheduled appointments, being placed in a job, and keeping a job for 90 days. Incentives took the form of cash or a gift card, bus passes, clothing, and identification cards and documents (or vouchers for these documents waiting to be picked up from their case manager in the community). One site anecdotally reported an increase in participation of at least 50 percent after introducing incentives.
- **Coordination with parole and probation.** Because 60 percent of participants were likely to be on parole or probation, sites increased their outreach to parole and probation officers to leverage their support. Staff in nine sites reported establishing a relationship with local parole and probation officers, ranging from informally asking for help reaching participants, to formally including probation officers on all communications about the participant.
- **Level of contact with post-release staff before release.** Sites that had different pre- and post-release staff reported increasing the duration or level of contact that participants had with community-based staff before their release. For example, one site introduced participants to post-release staff earlier during pre-release services, enabling post-release staff to administer relevant assessments while participants were in jail.
- **Level of contact with pre-release staff after release.** Two sites took the opposite approach, with jail-based AJC staff maintaining contact with participants after release and then gradually transitioning participants to working with other community-based staff.
- **Dedicated staff for post-release outreach.** Two sites introduced a dedicated staff person for post-release outreach, which they felt improved participation dramatically.

#### D. Location of services in the community

Participants received services in community-based AJCs, other CBOs, workforce board offices, and convenient public spaces. The organizational structure of the grant discussed in Chapter II influenced the primary location for services. Of the 20 LEAP sites, 13 served individuals after release primarily in a local community-based AJC, usually the one serving the geographic area in which the jail was located

Figure VI.5. Locations where participants primarily received post-release services



Source: Site visits and telephone interviews.

Note: Figure represents number of sites that offered post-release services in each type of location. Sample size is 20 sites.

(Figure VI.5). Sites with experience serving reentering individuals in the jail or in partnership with a corrections agency were more likely to offer services through one of their community-based AJCs.<sup>4</sup> One additional site served participants primarily through the workforce board office.

In sites that did not have as much experience with reentry, or had a strong partner in the community with a history of serving reentering individuals, services were more likely to be provided primarily through that community-based partner.<sup>5</sup> In five sites, participants met with staff at participating CBOs and, in one case, they met at a city agency. In another site, the community-based provider met with participants in public places that were convenient for participants.

#### E. Types of post-release services

Outside of jail, participants had access to a broader range of resources for career and educational planning than was available in the jail-based AJCs, in addition to wraparound services to help them obtain stability and avoid recidivating. The sequence of providing post-release services was often the same across sites, with an initial meeting and then ongoing follow-up and referral to workshops, training, and other services as appropriate. The types of services available to participants, however, varied from site to site based on existing resources and partnerships. There were also broader differences in the services available at community-based AJCs than at participating CBOs.

<sup>4</sup> Ten of the 12 sites with prior experience primarily offered services through an AJC.

<sup>5</sup> Five of the eight sites that did not have prior experience primarily offered services through a community-based partner.

## 1. Post-release service planning

During initial post-release meetings, participants and case managers reviewed existing information and identified ongoing needs. Staff reviewed or created new IEPs, reviewed resumes and assessment results, discussed career goals and interests, created an account for the participant in a state jobs database, and may have entered participant information into a state MIS. Subsequent meetings centered on tailoring a service plan for participants and connecting them to workshops, trainings, and other services in the community. A few sites reported scheduling participants to attend an orientation on services available in the community AJC.

In focus groups, participants who worked with the same staff pre- and post- release appreciated not having to repeat their background again in the community and being able to start from where they left off in the jail. Among sites that had different staff providing services before and after release, one site noted that frequent meetings between pre- and post-release staff ensured that participants were getting the right services that built off, rather than repeated, what they received in the jail.

## 2. Services provided in the community-based AJC

Participants who were served primarily through the community-based AJC received an experience typical for the average AJC job seeker customer, with some exceptions. Case managers conducted intake and assessment; registered participants in the state jobs database; and directed them to available resources at the AJC such as labor market information, job search and job-readiness workshops, GED classes, work experience, and job placement. Some case managers mentioned spending more one-on-one time with LEAP participants than with other AJC customers, noting that LEAP participants often needed more “hand holding” than other AJC customers.

Case managers also helped provide supportive services, such as clothing, transportation and IDs, help accessing public benefits, and referrals for other supports that were not available in the AJC, such as mental health and substance abuse treatment, legal aid, and housing assistance. In addition, case managers who served all AJC customers reported enrolling LEAP participants in WIOA services, such as for on-the-job training, individual training accounts, and support services. Five sites mentioned enrolling all or most of their LEAP participants in WIOA services.<sup>6</sup> Staff noted that they usually waited until participants were ready for work to co-enroll them in WIOA.

A few community-based AJCs already offered reentry-focused services. In one site, participants attended an existing weekly job club for reentering individuals, received a resource guide for reentry-focused services, could receive specialized mentoring, and had access to a monthly reentry-specific resource fair that both service providers and employers attended. In another site, participants were referred to reentry-focused staff who provided tailored services and connected them to employers

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<sup>6</sup> In addition to the five sites that enrolled all or most participants in WIOA services, nine sites reported little or no co-enrollment with WIOA services, five sites reported some enrollment, and one site did not have data available.

who hired justice-involved individuals. In both sites, staff reported that participants ready for work would be enrolled in WIOA to take advantage of these reentry-focused offerings.

### **3. Services provided by CBOs**

Participants who worked with staff from CBOs had access to similar services as those offered in the community-based AJC, but with a more targeted focus specialized for reentering individuals. CBOs reported offering intensive case management, job-readiness training, career exploration and job search assistance, vocational training and certifications, GED preparation and literacy education, and financial literacy classes. Some CBO staff had training in behavioral therapy and trauma-informed care, which they reported as particularly useful when working with reentering individuals.

Staff also reported having extensive contacts with employers who hired formerly incarcerated individuals and placing participants directly into certification programs—such as forklift training, welding or shipyard certification, and commercial driver license training—that would accept individuals with a criminal record. These sites were also more likely to offer financial incentives for participation, such as showing up for appointments at the CBO office.

CBOs providing post-release services also tended to have more support services available in-house. These included sober housing and substance abuse counseling, mental health counseling and treatment, legal support, registration for health care and benefits, work clothing and supplies, housing assistance, transportation assistance, help getting IDs, tuition assistance, and help filling out federal student aid and college applications.

In four of the seven sites with CBOs providing post-release services, staff encouraged participants to visit the community AJC and work with a case manager there, particularly if they were eligible for and could benefit from WIOA services. Although two of the CBO sites mentioned co-enrolling LEAP participants in WIOA services, the extent of co-enrollment was limited.

### **4. Steps to address participant barriers to employment**

Across both AJCs and CBOs, staff worked with participants to identify their immediate support needs such as transportation, clothing, and housing, and made referrals to other staff or organizations as needed. Staff also helped participants fill out applications for identification such as birth certificates, Social Security cards, and driver's licenses, and apply for public benefits. Participants often struggled to obtain ID cards and other work-related documentation while in the jail, so this was a focus in 11 sites immediately upon release. As discussed in Chapter V, participants reported in focus groups that support services were critical for securing and keeping a job.

Sites were not required to report data for all post-release services that participants received, but did report on support services participants typically received after release. Transportation was the most common post-release support participants received, followed by housing assistance (Table VI.2). As mentioned previously, transportation was a significant barrier for many participants, both for

participating in services at the community AJC or provider location and for getting to job interviews and work sites. Transportation assistance was usually in the form of bus passes and tickets, but sites also paid for taxi pick-ups and drop-offs, drove participants to job interviews, and helped participants pay for their licenses and make car payments. Housing assistance involved connecting participants to city or community partners that provided access to sober living and transitional housing or offered general support in finding available housing.

Table VI.2. Post-release support services received

Service type	% of participants who received service (all sites) *	# of sites where at least 1 participant received service	Minimum % by site of participants who received service (>0%)	Maximum % by site of participants who received service (>0%)
Transportation services	16	14	2	75
Housing assistance/referral	9	13	2	60
Follow-up vocational/occupational skills training	4	13	1	51
Needs related payments	3	7	2	31
Follow-up mentoring	2	8	3	32
Family reunification assistance	1	5	3	6
Follow-up HSE preparation	1	6	2	5
Referral to domestic abuse treatment shelter	0	3	1	1
Other follow-up services	31	11	5	100
Other supportive services	34	18	7	100

Source: Quarterly performance reports for 20 grantees as of March 31, 2018. Although data are intended to indicate the percentage of participants who ever received each type of service, some sites likely reported multiple instances of the same participant receiving services. As a result, statistics in this table should be considered an upper bound.

\* Percentages calculated from total participants enrolled, which was 3,805 participants for first column; average based on sites where at least one participant received service.

HSE = High school equivalency.

## 5. Service frequency and intensity

The frequency of ongoing post-release engagement varied considerably from participant to participant across the sites. Some sites reported contacting or meeting with participants once per week to once per month, but contact was largely based on the particular needs and situation of the individual participant.

**“Social service help was big. That stuff takes forever. Our food stamp cards were waiting for us when we got out.”**

*- Post-release participant discussing supportive services*

In a few sites, staff reported feeling that they did not have the capacity to provide sufficient one-on-one support for all of the participants in their post-release caseload. Many participants needed frequent contact and “hand holding” to relearn how to live on their own. Some staff, particularly those who worked with both pre- and post-release participants, found this required more time than they had available. Participants voiced this concern as well, noting in focus groups that some staff seemed stretched thin. One post-release participant shared that she would like “a caseworker that can call [her] back.”

Participants who did find work continued to need the support of staff in retaining their jobs. One site created a position for a retention specialist because employers reported that participants they had hired still needed support to maximize their potential on the job. Staff in another site expressed concern that although they offered a support system for employers who hired participants, some employers were not aware those supports existed.

## F. Challenges related to providing post-release services

Keeping participants engaged in services after release proved just as challenging as getting them to their first post-release appointment. Transportation remained an ongoing challenge, particularly for sites in rural areas or where the public transportation system was relatively weak. Staff also continued to find that participants were not inclined to enroll in training or education programs because they felt pressured to work.

Providing ongoing services was associated with two specific challenges:

- **Coordinating with parole and probation agencies was particularly challenging in sites where prior collaboration between the workforce and these agencies was limited.** After release, participants could be asked to check in with their parole officers at the same time they were scheduled to attend employment services, classes, or be at work. Staff in 11 sites reported no relationship with the parole or probation agencies to prevent this issue, including sites where the LWDB maintained a good relationship with jail administrators. Participants in some sites also noted that the jail and parole systems did not always facilitate their participation in AJC services. “The program wants to help people, but parole doesn’t let it,” one participant said, explaining that the Department of Corrections “is the hurdle inside, and parole [is the hurdle] outside.” One participant noted feeling that they needed to choose between meeting their obligations to parole or searching for a job.

**“Once you get released, and you’re faced with real life, bills, and everything else, it’s a little more upon you to take advantage of the services and actually come down, make it to the meetings or appointments you have set with these people. They’re not going to be there like in jail holding your hand, and calling you over the loudspeaker.... It’s a matter of desire for us.”**

*- Post-release participant explaining the challenges after release*

- **Many participants found it difficult to find an employer that would hire applicants with criminal records.** Even with the support and connections they received through staff, participants still faced reluctance from many employers. Some staff pointed to institutional barriers that made hiring participants difficult for employers. One staff member explained that under the state's gaming law, all staff at a casino needed a gaming license, even if they were not actively involved in gaming. This regulation prohibited many participants from working at a new casino, even though the casino itself might be willing to hire them.

### G. Strategies for providing post-release services

To address these specific challenges, staff highlighted approaches they used that could be useful for others facing the same barriers.

- **Staff helped participants navigate their parole and probation requirements.** As mentioned before, nine sites reported establishing some type of relationship with parole and probation agencies to facilitate engaging participants after release. These relationships were also useful for helping participants manage their parole and probation obligations. Staff in two sites mentioned attending parole or probation meetings with participants with the goal of preventing conflicts between participants' supervision obligations and expectations for scheduling and attending services. In one of the two sites, staff noted that the court sometimes ordered participants to comply with jail- and community-based AJC staff recommendations for services. Another site worked with its parole partner to allow participants who worked during the day to check in with their parole officers in the evening.
- **LWDBs leveraged their relationships with employers to increase openness to hiring justice-involved individuals.** LWDBs with reentry councils and industry or employer partnerships used these connections to place participants in jobs. Through their networks, they also hoped to increase the willingness of all employers toward hiring justice-involved individuals (Figure VI.6). Employer partners reported that referrals from other employers who have formerly incarcerated employees can be one of the most effective strategies to convince reluctant employers to hire.

### Figure VI.6. Employer perspectives on the benefits of hiring participants

Two owners of mid-size manufacturing firms elaborated on the benefits of hiring participants for their company and their bottom line. One reported “more successes than failures” when working with justice-involved employees. The other remarked that “everyone feels good about giving people a second chance.” They emphasized the following:

- Assessing and hiring anyone is a costly process with uncertain outcomes, but they knew that jail- and community-based AJC staff had already screened potential hires to determine fit.
- People who are reentering are more motivated to do well in their jobs and show employers that they made a good choice by hiring them.
- Participants are respectful and deliver results.
- Their other employees worked well with participants and were unfazed by their criminal backgrounds.
- Given the low local unemployment rate, many participants were more qualified than other job seekers.

Beyond the benefit of participants’ work ethic and skills, the employers also noted the tax credits they received for hiring justice-involved job seekers. This was a major incentive for these employer partners that offset any perceived risk or time commitment associated with partnering with LEAP.

Source: Interviews with two employers during site visits.

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## Chapter VII: Tracking and Managing Pre- and Post-Release Data

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*“Know your system and know what’s feasible with the system you have—and work early to identify challenges.”*

-- LEAP project manager’s advice on planning for data management

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### Key findings

- Tracking data for the LEAP grant was a demanding effort given the need to both access and enter data across corrections and workforce systems. This was the first time many sites had coordinated data needs across these two systems. Strict security of corrections data, inability to modify existing databases, and lack of staff Internet access within jails presented key challenges.
- Most sites relied on a mix of paper files and multiple MISs to track participant data. As a result, aggregating data from multiple sources and entering them into multiple systems created capacity challenges for staff in many sites.
- Gaining access to corrections data required buy-in and approval from high-level corrections administrators and was critical to providing and linking pre- and post-release AJC services and to measuring outcomes.
- The majority of sites wanted technical assistance on grant performance-reporting requirements. Sites particularly struggled to understand the data definitions and use the reporting spreadsheet from DOL.

To successfully provide jail- and community-based services, LEAP grantees needed to collect and manage data gathered by different stakeholders from different organizations including jail administrators, workforce administrators, case managers in the jail- and community-based AJCs, partner service providers, and participants. Differences in overall management and staffing structures described in Chapter II often affected how sites used data to manage their caseload or track participants over time. For most sites, this was their first attempt to track data across corrections and workforce systems—a large and demanding effort. This chapter describes the types of data that sites collected and why, how sites collected and managed their data, and how they synthesized data across multiple tracking systems to produce QPRs for DOL.

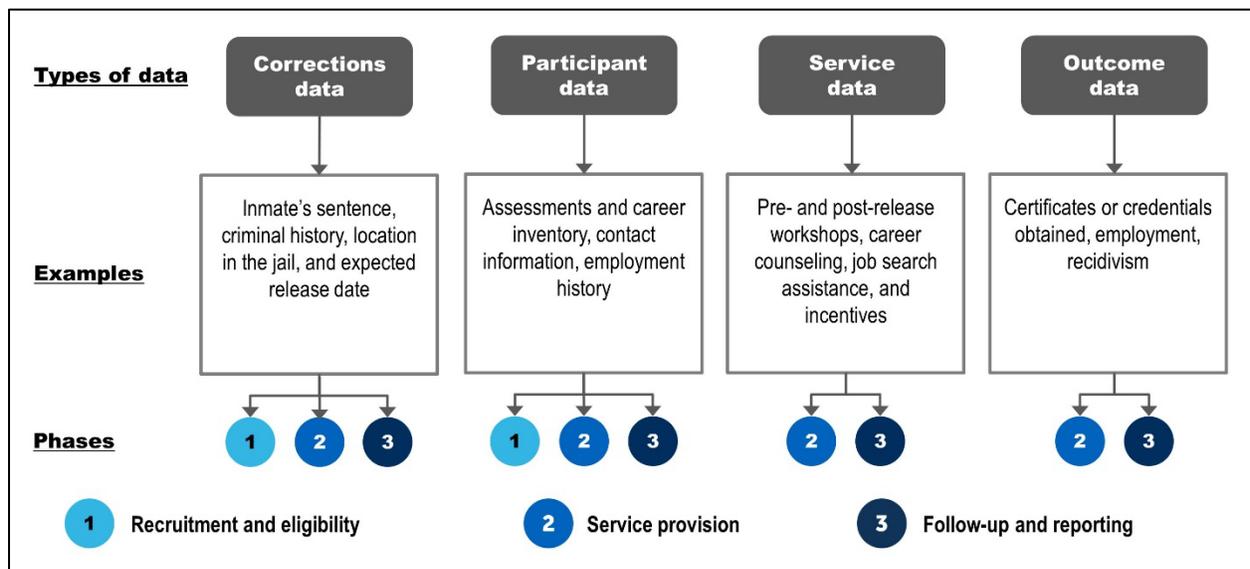
### A. Types of data, common uses, and approaches to data collection

Staff collected four main types of data: corrections data, participant data, service data, and outcome data (Figure VII.1). Sites collected data from pre- and post-release frontline staff, participants,

corrections officers, the jail MIS and/or paper criminal justice records, and employers and public records databases, as well as information from other agencies, such as inpatient treatment centers where many inmates went after release from prison. Staff used the data for the following activities:

- Identifying potential participants
- Determining eligibility
- Planning programming
- Reengaging participants in the community
- Measuring outcomes

Figure VII.1. Types and uses of data collected for reentry programming



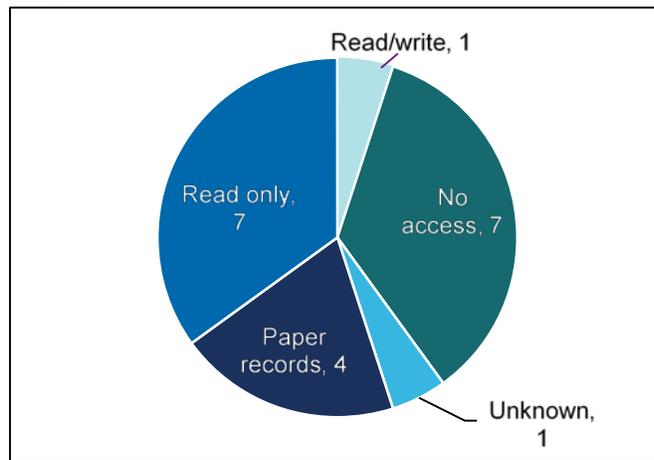
Source: Site visits, telephone interviews and case-file reviews.

## 1. Corrections data

The need to collect and use corrections data was new and challenging for most LEAP grantees.

**Using corrections data.** Corrections data—such as information about which inmates were sentenced, the charges brought against them, and their expected release date—was critical to implementing the grant from recruitment through post-release follow-up and reporting. Jail-based AJC staff needed access to corrections data to identify participants who met the DOL-specified eligibility criteria, plan services around the jail schedule, and locate participants to escort them to programming within the jail. Importantly, as discussed in Chapter VI, corrections data were also critical for transition planning and connecting with participants after release. Post-release staff needed to carefully monitor expected release dates in order to quickly engage participants after their release.

Figure VII.2. Sites' access to corrections data



Source: Site visits, telephone interviews and case-file reviews.

Note: Figure represents the number of sites with each type of access. Sample size is 20 sites.

**Collecting corrections data.** Sources of and access to corrections data varied (Figure VII.2). Jail-based AJC staff in 12 sites had access to jail data through the jail MIS, reports from the MIS, or rap sheets or booking sheets, whereas staff in the remaining 8 sites did not have access to these sources. Among sites with access to jail data, the format of the data and staff's ability to edit the data varied. Staff in one site had read/write access to the jail MIS, meaning that in addition to looking up inmates in the MIS, they could add case notes. Staff in 7 sites had read-only access to the jail MIS, whereas staff in the other 4 sites had access to paper records (such as booking or rap sheets) or inmate reports the jail generated daily or weekly.

The remaining eight sites could not access jail data and relied on jail staff to refer inmates to the jail-based AJC and share participants' release dates. In these sites, the quality of information depended on correction staff's (1) knowledge of eligibility requirements, (2) perceptions of the value of jail-based AJC services, and (3) capacity to spend time identifying potential participants and monitoring release dates.

Corrections staff who helped jail-based AJC staff refer and recruit potential participants were familiar with LEAP eligibility requirements and valued jail-based AJC services. However, these staff were focused largely on other duties, and their capacity to provide information was limited. This was especially true in facilities with high turnover or shortages among corrections staff. However, when jail-based AJC staff partnered with a reentry coordinator or veteran service provider operating within the jail to access critical information, staff reported slightly fewer challenges than sites that relied solely on corrections staff to identify and refer inmates.

Regardless of the approach to accessing the corrections data, jail-based AJC staff typically transferred relevant corrections data manually to paper records or into their own MIS.

## 2. Participant data

Similar to other workforce providers, staff collected data about all participants who enrolled in services.

**Using participant data.** Participant data included background characteristics, demographics, contact information, measures of work readiness, and measures of participants' risks, needs, and

interests. Sites often collected these data through career interests and work-readiness assessments used to assess level of existing skills, set goals, and complete participants' IEP. Sites also used assessments to gather information on criminogenic risks and potential needs upon release. Sites used these participant data to determine eligibility, enroll participants, plan for release, report outcomes post-release, and keep in touch with participants.

**Collecting participant data.** Staff gathered participant data throughout the course of services, but major points included at the time of intake, during the assessment phase, and during case management. Jail-based staff particularly emphasized the need and effort to collect updated and accurate contact information leading up to and after release so they could stay in touch with participants. Sites with service providers beyond the LWDB grantee also had to collect data from those providers. The data were typically stored in paper files or at least one MIS. Some sites reported that sharing information across pre- and post-release systems was challenging given the combination of systems being used, requiring staff to re-collect information from participants post-release.

### 3. Service data

Sites needed to track participants' use of services in the jail-based AJC and in the community-based AJC.

**Using service data.** Service data included tracking services, activities, and other related assistance pre- and post-release and was used primarily for grant management and reporting. The types of services and related assistance that staff tracked often differed pre- and post-release, as did their methods for tracking service data. Pre-release service tracking frequently included attendance at counseling, mentoring, education and job training activities, career counseling, job search assistance, and other workforce preparation activities. Staff also tracked incentives and other services participants received pre- and post-release. Frontline staff reported tracking some similar services post-release including attendance at pre-release workshops or services, but they also tracked other services such as on-the-job training, transportation passes, and vouchers for interview clothes or work uniforms.

**Collecting service data.** Pre- and post-release frontline staff were the primary source of data on service receipt across the sites, but in two sites partners in the jail and community also tracked services. These data were typically stored in paper files or at least one MIS.

### 4. Outcome data

Sites tracked participants' progress and achievement of key outcomes over time.

**Using outcome data.** DOL required sites to collect data to document participants' progress toward employment and successful reentry for one year after release from jail. This included tracking interim indicators of success such as work-readiness indicators and post-release enrollment rates. Additionally, sites needed to track longer-term outcomes including rates of education or employment placement, retention in education and employment, and recidivism.

Sites primarily used these data for grant reporting, but they also used outcome data to help with program improvement. For example, multiple sites reported that monitoring outcome data early on helped alert them to low post-release participation. A number of sites implemented changes such as providing incentives when participants showed up to the community-based AJC or transportation passes to help participants attend services. In addition, the majority of sites (80 percent) shared outcome data with partners and external stakeholders to help garner continued support for LEAP.

**Collecting outcome data.** Staff collected outcome data from participants, partners, employers, and corrections sources. Staff working with participants after release typically tracked down and recorded information on when participants secured employment or earned a credential. They typically verified information that participants provided through paystubs or directly with employers or educational institutions. In one site, staff used a third-party employment service to verify employment.

To measure recidivism, most sites relied on corrections partners. The ways in which corrections staff gathered this information differed across sites. Three sites had access to information on whether participants returned to any corrections facility in their state. In contrast, four sites could only identify individuals who returned to the same facility, which made it harder to track recidivism for participants who committed new crimes in another county and were sent to a different jail or prison. Two sites used public databases to track recidivism. Staff found that participants often returned to jail for reasons other than new crimes, such as for violations of parole or probation, missed court dates, or prior outstanding warrants.

## 5. Challenges and strategies related to collecting data

Sites reported three key challenges to collecting data:

- **A lack of access to corrections data made recruiting participants and providing services more challenging.** Sites that did not obtain access to corrections data via an MIS or paper criminal justice records relied heavily on corrections staff for information from jail data systems. This sometimes led to extra challenges recruiting participants and tracking release dates.
- **Tracking pre- and post-release services was more challenging when frontline staff did not have access to the Internet in the jail.** Staff in three sites had to leave the jail with paper files to enter data at the community-based AJC or service provider's office because they could not access the Internet from within the jail. Sometimes staff did not enter data until days or weeks after they provided the services, which hindered staff's ability to recall sufficient detail when entering data and increased the chance of introducing errors. Staff in one site entered case notes for pre-release participants monthly at the community-based AJC and reported that this delay sometimes prevented community-based AJC staff from having the most current contact information for released participants.

- **Tracking pre- and post-release services was more challenging when different organizations provided these services.** When different organizations delivered services, staff did not use a single MIS. In these instances, staff often needed to enter data into their own organization's data management system and a shared tracking system that the pre- or post-release staff could all access.

To address these challenges, sites noted two strategies for collecting data successfully:

- **Tasking a specific corrections staff member with sharing information helped jail-based AJC staff collect the data they needed.** In sites without direct access to corrections data, identifying a dedicated member of the jail staff whose job was to provide access to information from the jail database was helpful. This person was often (1) a reentry coordinator employed by the jail who helped inmates find services, or (2) a staff member from an organization that had a long-standing relationship operating in the jail and hence had access to information necessary for sites to recruit and serve inmates.
- **Early planning paved the way for data and Internet access.** As described in Chapter III, planning early was crucial for ensuring Internet access. Sites suggested that negotiating access to the Internet in the jail as part of the proposal and engaging IT staff early helped ensure that the jail was committed to facilitating access.

## B. Systems for tracking data pre- and post-release

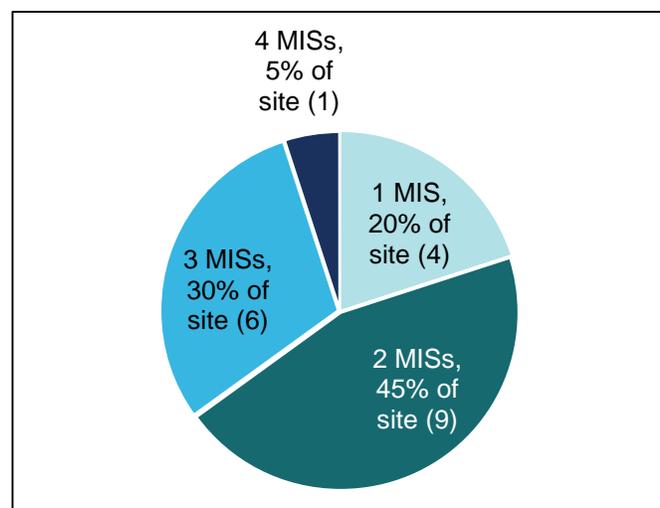
All sites reported using paper files as well as at least one MIS (Figure VII.3). Staff focus groups and case file reviews (described in Figure VII.4) provided information on sites' data storage systems and the reasons sites tracked data across multiple paper and electronic systems.

### 1. Paper files

All sites used some form of paper files to track participants' intake, eligibility, services, and outcomes. In most sites, the paper files remained at the jail while the participant was receiving pre-release services and were then given to the participant upon release or transferred to the community-based service provider after release. In one site where jail-based AJC staff did not have access to the Internet or a place to store the paper files in the jail, staff transported paper files in and out of the jail each day.

Additionally, all sites used paper files to hold documentation. For example, a photocopied

Figure VII.3. Number of MISs sites used



Source: Site visits, telephone interviews, and case-file reviews.

Note: Figure represents the number of sites using each number of MISs. Sample size is 20 sites.

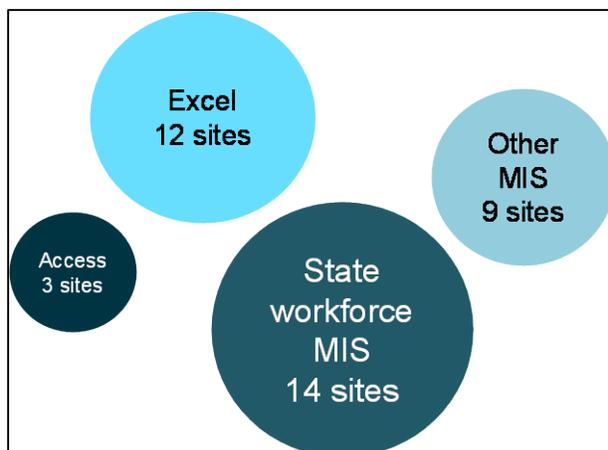
pay stub might document a participant's employment status, or files might contain records of transportation vouchers that participants received. Paper files at some sites contained participant resumes and career interest forms. One site's paper files contained flash drives that stored the work participants completed in the jail-based AJC.

## 2. Electronic MIS

In addition to paper files, all sites stored data in at least one electronic MIS (Figure VII.5). Five sites used a single electronic MIS to track data pre- and post-release, while the remaining 15 sites entered data in two or more electronic data systems. In the most extreme case, one site entered data into four different electronic MISs in addition to maintaining a paper case file. Staff reported a range of reasons for using multiple systems (Figure VII.6).

**Excel.** More than half of sites used Excel to track services pre-release, post-release, or both. Many sites reported that Excel was the lowest-cost option, and even sites that used some other type of MIS used Excel to track some aspect of implementation.

Figure VII.5. Types of electronic MISs used



Source: Site visits and telephone interviews.

Note: Figure represents the number of sites using each type of electronic MIS. Sample size is 20 sites but sites are counted more than one once if they used more than one type of MIS.

Figure VII.4. Structure of case file reviews

The evaluation team reviewed 173 case files using the following methods:

- Site visitors attempted to review files for some pre-release and some post-release participants.
- Site visitors drew files at random whenever possible; however, sites often hand-selected 10 files for review. As a result, the files were not representative of the typical case file at each site.
- Site visitors attempted to check whether the information in the paper files was also stored in an electronic MIS and compared the data for completeness and similarity across sources.

**State workforce MIS.** Fourteen sites used the state workforce MIS as one of their primary databases. Of the 20 sites, half reported that they entered records for all participants into the state workforce system regardless of enrollment in other programs. Another five sites entered participant records into the state system only if they qualified for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth programs. In the remaining sites, staff reported that they did not enter participant records into the state workforce MIS, either to avoid entering duplicative data or because of concerns that entering data on jail-based AJC participants would negatively affect their WIOA performance metrics.

Figure VII.6. Reasons sites entered data into multiple MISs

- Strict security requirements often limited access to data in specific systems, especially within jails.
- Lack of data-sharing agreements and resources prevented data linking across different organizations.
- Some sites needed separate systems to track potential participants before enrollment. One site had a large unsentenced population, so it used the jail data entered in a separate MIS to identify and track potentially eligible participants before sentencing, with the aim of enrolling them immediately following sentencing.
- Some sites lacked time or resources to modify existing MISs to accommodate grant data-tracking requirements. Many sites wanted to modify their MIS to track services, but few felt they had enough time or resources to implement these changes. Smaller organizations with fewer resources dedicated to data management were hesitant to invest in developing an MIS specific to a short-term grant. A few sites suggested that greater alignment between the specific grant definitions and requirements for WIOA or other federal funding might have enabled and encouraged sites to invest in modifying or developing an MIS for LEAP.
- Some sites could not use the state workforce MIS for LEAP data after receiving specific instruction not to enroll incarcerated individuals in WIOA. Others worried that entering data on jail-based AJC participants into the MIS pre-release would negatively affect their WIOA performance metrics.
- When partner staff provided services, they often needed to enter data into their own organization's MIS as well as the state workforce MIS.
- Staff in some sites agreed to enter data on service receipt into the data systems that corrections partners, such as the jail or probation or parole office, maintained.
- Some sites used other databases such as Access or software such as FileMaker to tabulate participants' baseline, service, and outcome information to submit QPRs to DOL. In these instances, the sites could not easily manipulate the data from the system they used for routine tracking. Instead, they exported the data to another format so they could more easily tabulate them for required reporting.

Source: Virtual focus group with subset of grantees.

**Other MIS.** Linking data across systems can require intense coordination, including data-sharing agreements, technical specifications, and software programming to export and import data from one system to another. As a result, none of the participating sites linked data systems across corrections and workforce entities, noting security concerns and funding as hurdles. However, staff in two sites established a shared MIS in which jail staff and service partners regularly entered data. Finally, more than half of sites (also used some other MIS, such as Access or products like Efforts to Outcomes).

### 3. Data transfer

As described in Chapter VI, transferring information about customers' strengths, needs, and goals was crucial for providing post-release services. Files were transferred from jail-based AJCs to community providers in paper or electronic formats, sometimes both. When paper or electronic sharing was not possible, staff used informal methods, such as phone calls or meetings between case managers. Jail-based AJCs tailored their approaches to transferring information from the jail to the community to accommodate their jails' restrictions around data systems.

Sites reported difficulty sharing information with staff who were not part of the grant-funded activities, especially when participants were not enrolled in WIOA or the state workforce MIS, or when organizations were not part of the workforce system. In most cases, the data collected did not clearly reveal how staff shared information when they made referrals to other providers. One site entered information from the IEP and case file into the state workforce MIS so that other community-based AJC staff could access it if they were working with that participant. Staff noted that it was hardest to communicate about participants with staff in AJCs not participating directly in the LEAP initiative. Such communication might be necessary if a participant moved to a community away from the jail and visited a different AJC.

#### 4. Challenge and strategies related to managing data

Sites reported data entry burden as the main challenge for managing data:

- **Data entry burden.** Staff often had to enter service data into multiple MISs, which added staff burden, increased the risk of data entry errors, and hindered service delivery. Data entry burden was an even bigger issue for staff who provided both pre- and post-release services because of the sheer volume of customers to track. In sites with multiple MISs, entering data into one system often occurred days or sometimes weeks after the services were provided, which could introduce errors and impede staff's ability to recall information in sufficient detail when entering data. Lastly, staff in some sites reported that delays in data entry sometimes prevented community-based AJC staff from having the most current contact information for released participants.

To address this challenge, sites noted three promising strategies:

- **Dedicated staff eased the burden.** Two sites had staff dedicated to data management, which eased the burden on case managers so they could focus on engaging and serving participants.
- **Internet access improved data quality.** Having Internet access in the jail for entering data in real time appeared to improve data quality and make it easier for staff to serve participants.
- **Excel databases facilitated data sharing across fewer systems.** Staff reported that Excel was the easiest, lowest-cost option when different organizations provided pre- and post-release services. Excel enabled several sites that to track services across organizations.

#### C. Data reporting

DOL required sites to collect and report data about participant enrollment, service receipt, and outcomes and submit aggregate data quarterly using a standard Excel spreadsheet. DOL developed several performance indicators and related targets for sites (Appendix A).

##### 1. Approaches to preparing data

In most sites, the project manager reconciled data across MISs and tabulated it for the QPRs, but there were some exceptions. Three sites had a data manager who helped manage analysis and reporting for many grant streams, including LEAP. In two sites, frontline staff compiled the QPRs.

Although some sites manually prepared the QPRs, nine used a separate database to facilitate reporting. This enabled them to tabulate their data to populate the QPR Excel spreadsheet for DOL.

## 2. Challenges and strategies related to data reporting

Sites reported three main challenges data reporting:

- **Tabulating the data to complete the QPRs was challenging for most sites.** The majority of sites (80 percent) had to look across several systems to gather information necessary to complete the QPRs. This was time and labor intensive because it often required additional data entry or manual tabulation.
- **Most sites reported confusion over the data definitions or the functionality of the reporting spreadsheet.** The majority of sites (80 percent) reported difficulty understanding the data definitions and 30 percent of sites reported problems using the QPR spreadsheet. A number of sites (20 percent) noted that they received the data definitions after they had set up a satisfactory MIS. Consequently, sites had to revise intake forms and MISs after enrollment had begun to capture mandatory data.
- **Sites reported difficulty tracking and adequately accounting for special cases.** In particular, two sites noted having many individuals who graduated from the pre-release curriculum during the post-release period due to early release and they struggled with how to track this in the DOL reporting spreadsheet.

To address these challenges, sites noted three promising strategies:

- **Periodic data reviews resulted in cleaner data.** One-third of sites (30 percent) found it useful to periodically review the data to ensure the data were clean before producing the QPRs. However, sites noted that this was time consuming.
- **Requiring partners to submit quarterly aggregate data made reporting easier.** In one site, the program manager requested aggregate data from partners to facilitate combining data across sources to complete the QPRs.
- **Sites indicated that technical assistance would help ensure more accurate reporting.** Many sites (35 percent) expressed a desire for more guidance on completing QPRs. They suggested that a call, webinar, or other technical assistance would have been more helpful than relying solely on the manual provided by DOL. In contrast, one site noted that DOL was responsive and helpful when they requested assistance interpreting the data definitions and using the spreadsheet.

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## Chapter VIII: Outcomes for LEAP Participants

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*“[I was] lucky enough to hook up with [an employer] who didn’t care about my background.”*

--Participant discusses advancing to a more desirable job

*“People won’t give me the opportunity”*

--Participant describes how a criminal record can make it difficult to find a job

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### Key findings

- Sites reported that 85 percent of participants released from jail were work-ready at the time of program exit or had demonstrated an increase in work-readiness through pre- and post-tests. This exceeded DOL’s target of 80 percent.
- Sites reported that 39 percent of participants were placed in employment or education in the first quarter after release, which was lower than DOL’s target of 60 percent. However, this figure likely underreports employment because sites could not track all participants over time, particularly those who did not engage in services after release.
- Of those reported as placed and in the third quarter after exit, 58 percent remained in employment or education, a retention rate slightly lower than DOL’s target of 70 percent.
- Reporting on participants who had reached a full year after release, data indicate that 20 percent had recidivated. About three-quarters of sites reported recidivism rates lower than the DOL target of less than 22 percent. However, the quality of recidivism data sites collected differed, and many participants had yet to reach a full year post-release and thus were not included in the measure.

The ultimate goal of the LEAP grants was to increase participants’ work readiness, improve their employment outcomes after release from incarceration, and reduce their recidivism rate. Decisions about organizational structure, staffing, service delivery, and data management described in previous chapters had implications for participants’ experiences. Differences in the intensity and duration of services, size of caseloads, frequency with which participants had contact with staff, and the ease of sharing data for providers were also likely to influence the outcomes that sites reported. Although this evaluation was a descriptive study of grant implementation and was not intended to study the impacts of services on participants, this chapter describes the work-readiness, employment, education, and recidivism outcomes of participants as reported by sites and how those outcomes compare with grant targets. The chapter begins by describing available data sources on participant outcomes and then

turns to trends in the aggregated data across sites.<sup>7</sup> As a reference, DOL's spreadsheet for quarterly performance reporting, definitions of key outcome measures, and targets for sites is available in Appendix A.

## A. Sources of information on outcomes

The evaluation team looked at three main sources of data to inform the assessment of outcomes for participants: (1) standardized QPRs LEAP grantees submitted to DOL; (2) site visits and telephone interviews and focus groups with jail- and community-based AJC staff and participants released from jail; and (3) forms administered to participants during the focus groups.

### 1. Grantee quarterly performance reports

Grantee QPRs included site-level data (as opposed to individual-level data) on participant enrollment, background characteristics, and services received for the duration of the grant. The reports also included data on participant education and employment attainment and specific indicators of grant performance of placement, retention, and recidivism, as defined by DOL.

The outcomes described in this chapter are based on data for 3,020 participants who were released from jail before March 31, 2018. This accounts for roughly 83 percent of the 3,618 total participants enrolled in 18 of the 20 sites.

There are two important caveats about the data:

- **Time since release.** Across all sites, participants had been out of jail for varying amounts of time at the point when outcomes were measured, including some who were just released. Two of the 18 sites had grants that were still active in March 2018; these sites planned to continue serving participants in the jail and the community until the end of their grants.
- **Data accuracy.** The accuracy of the data is unclear for some outcomes, particularly post-release placement and recidivism. Chapter VII discussed some of the challenges sites encountered with tracking participants and reporting these outcome data.

### 2. Qualitative anecdotes

Qualitative anecdotes supplemented the quantitative performance data. Interviews and focus groups with staff provided anecdotal perspectives on whether participants were accessing services, how well they were succeeding in finding employment and staying out of jail, and the paths staff saw participants taking in terms of education, training, and work. Focus groups with released participants provided the same information from a different perspective—that of the participants themselves—and helped identify some of the challenges and successes they faced in the months after their release. An

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<sup>7</sup> Two sites were excluded from the analysis of all outcomes measures, and two additional sites were excluded from the recidivism outcome because of issues with reporting their performance data to DOL.

important note, however, is that the participants who attended focus groups may not be representative of all participants and their experiences.

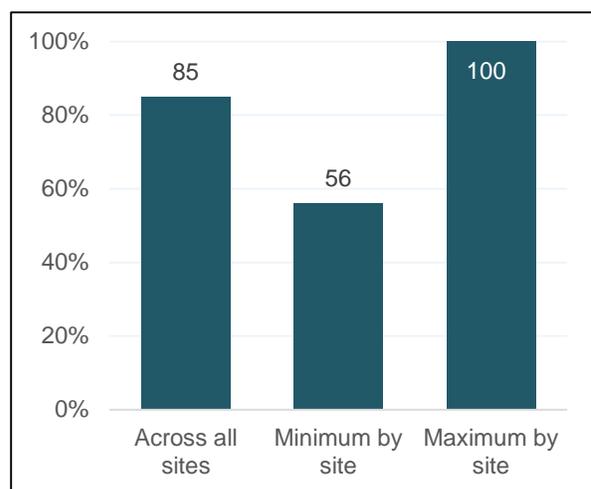
### 3. Respondent information forms

Respondent information forms were administered to pre- and post-release participants who attended focus groups. The forms asked for information about highest education level, credential attainment, work experience, employment status, incarceration history, and demographics.

#### B. Work readiness at release

Pre-release services offered within the jail-based AJCs aimed to prepare participants for work upon release. The work-readiness indicator DOL established was defined as the percentage of participants who were ready for work or had demonstrated an increase in work-readiness through pre- and post-tests by the time of release or program exit. Chapter V discusses sites' approaches to assessing work readiness, including confirming completion of service milestones, administering qualitative assessments, and administering pre- and post-tests of work readiness. Sites reported that 85 percent of participants achieved work readiness or experienced increases in work readiness by the time of release, exceeding DOL's target of 80 percent (Figure VIII.1). Across the 18 sites with available data, 14 reported work-readiness rates of at least 80 percent, while 4 were unable to meet that target.

Figure VIII.1. Participant work readiness at release



Source: Quarterly performance reports for 18 grantees as of March 31, 2018. N=3,076

Note: Work readiness is defined as participants who achieved work readiness or experienced increases in work readiness by the time of their release or exit from program.

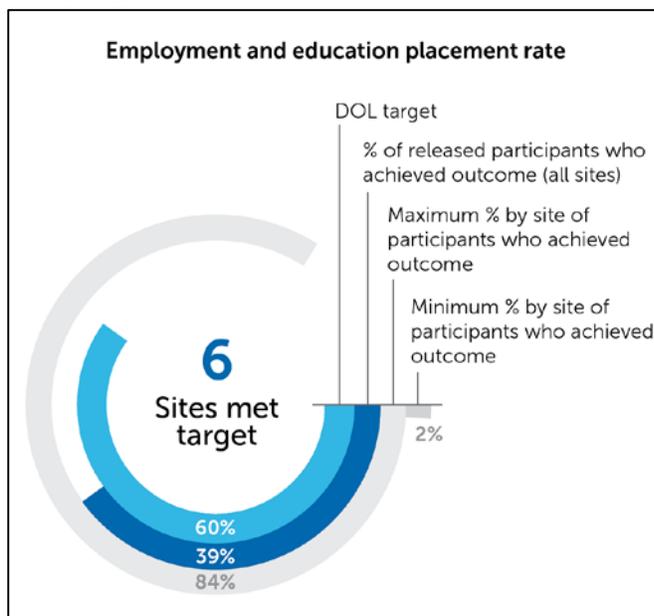
#### C. Post-release placement in employment and education

DOL required sites to document participants' placement in employment and education for one year after release from jail. This included (1) reporting on specific measures of grant performance related to participant outcomes; and (2) reporting the number of participants who reached certain employment, education, and training milestones within the first year after release.

**Placement rate.** According to sites' data, 39 percent of participants who had been released for at least one calendar quarter had been placed in unsubsidized employment, post-secondary education, occupational skills training, or Registered Apprenticeship in their first quarter after release (Figure VIII.2). Although the overall rate of placement fell below DOL's target of 60 percent, 6 of the 18 sites

met or exceeded the target, with another site just shy of the target at 59 percent. The placement rate varied considerably across sites from a high of 84 percent to a low of 2 percent. The site with the lowest rate had difficulty re-engaging participants post-release, and others with rates less than 20 percent appeared to have challenges with outcome data collection.

Figure VIII.2. Measure of placement in employment and education



Source: Quarterly performance reports for 18 grantees as of March 31, 2018.

Notes: The sample size is 2,682 participants who exited and were in their first quarter or beyond.

Staff interviews and other performance measures (discussed below) suggest that the vast majority of individuals in this measure were placed in an unsubsidized job, rather than entering education or training. Staff in several sites indicated that employers in particular industries—such as tourism, construction, and fishing—were desperate to hire workers or needed a high volume of seasonal employees, which may have contributed to a higher placement rate among participants in some sites.

Staff interviews indicated that participants found jobs primarily in the service industry or in roles where they performed some form of manual labor. Staff also indicated that participants commonly found jobs in the manufacturing, construction, and warehousing industries because employers

in these industries are typically more willing to hire individuals with a history of incarceration. Focus group participants reported holding a variety of positions in the restaurant and retail industries, as well as more specialized roles such as a machine operator, sewage cleaner, roofer, or mover.

The placement rate of 39 percent in the first quarter after release was similar to the share of released participants who found a job at any point before March 31, 2018, which was 41 percent (Table VIII.1). Four percent were also placed in a second or subsequent job. This suggests that engaging participants early after release is critical, as the vast majority of participants who found a job were placed in their first quarter after release.

Table VIII.1. Number of participants who reached employment, education, and training milestones

Outcome	Percentage of released participants who achieved outcome (all sites)	Number of sites where at least 1 participant achieved outcome	Minimum percentage by site of participants who achieved outcome (>0)	Maximum percentage by site of participants who achieved outcome (>0)
<b>Job placements and replacements</b>				
Initial job placements	41	18	10	100
Job replacements	4	14	1	23
<b>High school diploma and certificates</b>				
Obtained high school diploma or equivalency credential	1	5	2	7
Obtained certificate	16	13	2	100
<b>Post-secondary education, training, and apprenticeship</b>				
Entered post-secondary education	1	11	1	11
Entered vocational/occupational skills training	6	15	1	38
Entered Registered Apprenticeship	0	1	1	2

Source: Quarterly performance reports for 18 grantees as of March 31, 2018.

Notes: Sample size is 3,020 released participants for all measures. Although DOL set targets for grant performance measures, targets were not set for achievement of milestones. The milestone categories are not mutually exclusive, which means participants could achieve multiple milestones. Figures reported in grantee reports greater than 100 percent were capped at 100 percent.

As discussed in previous chapters, participants mentioned several factors that were barriers in their search for employment, including issues related to their criminal record, probation requirements, distance to available jobs and lack of transportation, and a lack of stable or affordable housing (Figure VIII.3). Staff interviewed also cited the prevalence of mental health issues and substance abuse among participants as common barriers to employment.

Several post-release participants, both employed and unemployed, said that their incarceration history became an issue if prospective employers ran background checks or searched the Internet and discovered their record. Two participants went through multiple steps of the hiring and interview process before they were told they would not be eligible for a position due to their past offenses, despite what they understood to be the employers' stated openness to hiring individuals with a criminal history. Many focus group participants who were not employed reported

Figure VIII.3. Barriers to employment listed by participants and staff

- Criminal record
- Probation requirements
- Distance to available jobs
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of stable or affordable housing
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse

having attended one or more interviews with potential employers, but either had not received offers or were holding out for better positions. Some unemployed participants described recent sporadic, short-term, or seasonal employment but expressed a desire for more stable opportunities.

**Retention rate.** Of the participants who were placed in education or employment and were in their third quarter after release from jail, 58 percent were still in education or employment (Figure VIII.4). This retention was lower than DOL's target of 70 percent. Of the 18 sites with data, 5 met DOL's target and 13 did not. The retention rate varied from 26 percent to 90 percent across sites. Staff in some sites voiced intentionally focusing its services on "better" jobs with higher wages or a focus on career over taking any job, but it was not clear whether these sites had better retention rates than others.

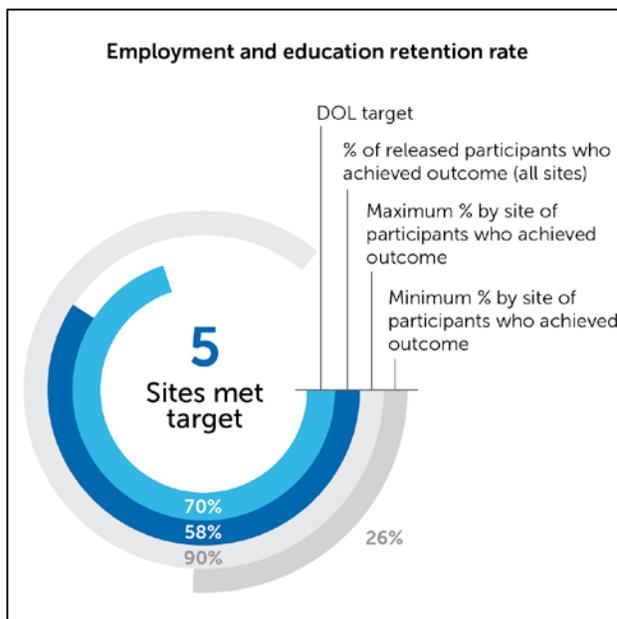
The placement rate and other outcomes from sites' data should be interpreted with some caution. By the end of the grant period of performance for which data were available, 11 percent of the participants across the 18 sites were still incarcerated and 58 percent had not yet reached a full year since release. As a result, it is possible that some released participants did not

have time to achieve an outcome by the end of the data collection period. In addition, only 69 percent of participants who had been released (and were not immediately placed in education or employment) enrolled in career services in their first 30 days out of jail. It is possible that participants who were not engaged with services after release had found employment or other placements on their own, but had not reported it to jail-based or community-based staff. Given these caveats, these outcome figures

**"They have big dreams and goals, but to translate that to real life situation is different.... The first month is make or break [for] the idea of success. When it doesn't work out, they lose hope quickly. It's important to have support and transition."**

*- Community-based AJC staff describing the support needed post-*

Figure VIII.4. Measure of retention in employment and education

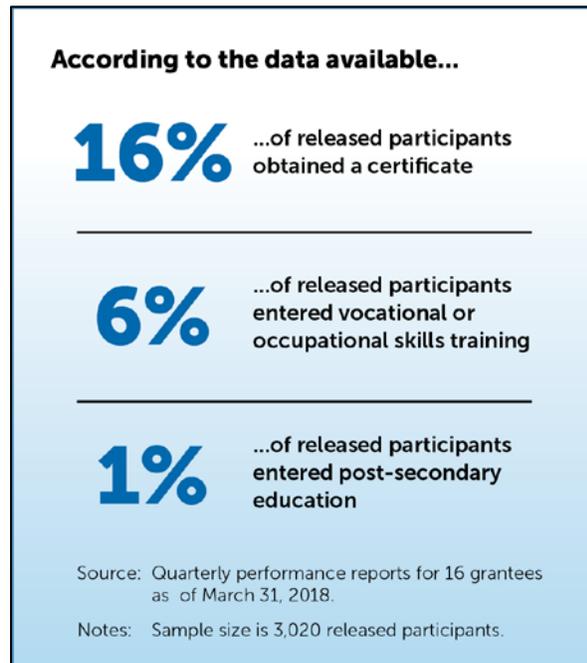


Source: Quarterly performance reports for 18 grantees as of March 31, 2018.

Notes: The sample size is 734 participants who were placed in education and employment and were in or beyond their third quarter after exit.

should be considered a lower bound. It is worth noting that the site with the lowest placement rate also had one of the lowest rates of post-release enrollment in career services. Staff in that site reported having issues tracking participant outcomes due to a lack of participant engagement after release. As discussed in Chapter V, 10 sites met DOL's target of 80 percent for post-release enrollment in career services, and 8 did not.

Figure VIII.5. Educational outcomes of participants



**Education and training attainment.** Sites reported that 16 percent of released participants obtained a certificate, defined as an industry-recognized certificate affirming achievement of technical or occupational skills. In four sites, at least one-quarter of participants obtained a certificate. One site offered a customer service certification exam to all participants who were interested and covered the associated costs; the same site reported that more than half of its participants obtained a certificate.

Based on the respondent information forms, the majority of post-release participants who held specialized certificates had certifications that were relevant for the construction, warehouse, or service industries. Common examples included certifications in forklift operation, specialized equipment operation, and food service or

preparation. A relatively small number of focus group participants reported having a certificate or training in finance or real estate. The number of certificates obtained was higher than the number of participants entering training (Figure VIII.5), which could suggest that most of the certifications were not connected to occupational credentialing programs.

Obtaining a high school diploma or equivalency was not common across the sites. More than a quarter of participants across sites lacked a high school diploma or GED (27 percent), yet only 1 percent reported receiving one after release. Seven sites reported offering services to help participants obtain their GED or referrals to those services, but only five sites reported that any participants achieved such a credential. These data suggest that additional educational services may be necessary either pre- or post-release to better position participants for successful long-term employment.

Six percent of released participants entered vocational or occupational skills training, and 1 percent entered post-secondary education. As expected, the percentage of participants attaining these outcomes varied significantly; one site reported less than 2 percent of participants entered training, whereas another reported 38 percent. Ten sites mentioned in interviews that they connected participants to vocational training opportunities, either directly to specific programs with which staff had a relationship or through referral to WIOA services. Still, 9 of the 20 sites did not mention further

**“Going back into the same environment where they had the problem and being exposed to those same factors can lead to a negative outcome. That is one of the challenges or obstacles... it’s not like they have a lot of places where they can go. [W]ith the same influences that got them incarcerated in the first place, it becomes difficult.”**

*- LWDB administrator on factors leading to recidivism*

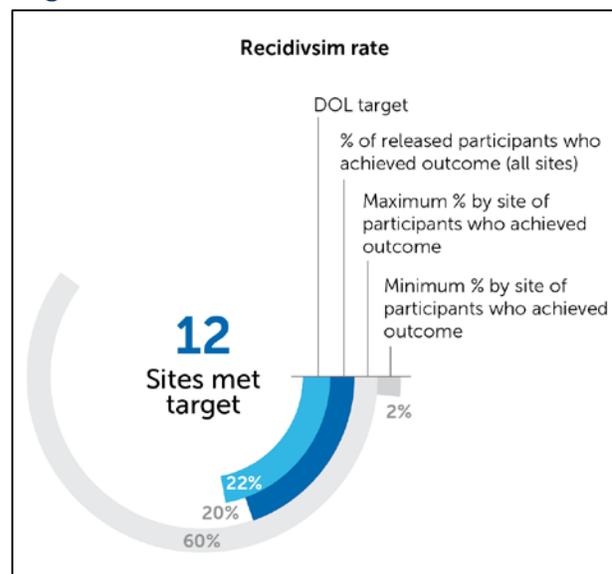
education or vocational training as a focus for post-release services. Five sites specifically mentioned in interviews that they connected participants to community college or post-secondary education and tuition assistance, and one of the five provided referrals to other organizations that could provide that help. Only one site reported a participant entering a Registered Apprenticeship.

**Challenges with placing participants.** Staff interviews suggest that participants prioritized employment over education or training because of financial pressures and a desire to continue in the types of jobs in which they had prior experience. Staff recalled participants accepting jobs even if they did not necessarily align with their career goals because they were desperate for money to support themselves and their families. Staff found it challenging to shift participants’ mindsets toward thinking more long term about their careers. According to staff interviewed, many participants were not ready to embrace a different skill set even if it could lead to higher-paying positions because of a lack of self-confidence or motivation. Staff in one site noted that participants seemed to benefit most from services when they were ready for a change.

#### D. Recidivism at one year after release

Of the participants who had been released for at least one year, 20 percent were rearrested for a new crime or were reincarcerated because their parole or probation was revoked (Figure VIII.6). This rate is based on 1,115 participants who were at or beyond one year since release across 16 sites with valid data for this measure. DOL’s target for the recidivism rate was 22 percent or lower, which is half of the most recent estimate of 44 percent recidivism at the national level based on individuals released from prison (Alper et al. 2018). Of the 16 sites for which recidivism data were available, 12 sites reported a recidivism rate at or below the target of 22 percent. However, as discussed in Chapter VII, sites’ methods of

Figure VIII.6. Measure of recidivism



Source: Quarterly performance reports for 16 grantees as of March 31, 2018.

Notes: The sample size is 1,115 participants who were at or beyond one year after release. Recidivism includes rearrests for new crimes and re-incarceration for technical violations.

Unlike other performance measures, lower numbers are better. Grantees with percentages lower than 22 percent met the DOL target.

measuring recidivism differed. Some sites could only capture recidivism to the same facility or county. Many staff felt that participants recidivated less often than the typical justice-involved individual, and that the majority of recidivism among participants stemmed from parole or probation violations rather than new charges.

As context for both the recidivism and placement outcomes, it is important to reflect on the early stage of implementation for the LEAP initiative. All sites developed new jail-based AJCs within the nine-month planning period, and most were establishing new partnerships and services through that process. Sites had only been serving participants for 16 to 24 months when the final performance data were reported, with some participants still incarcerated.<sup>8</sup> Many participants who had been released were still working toward reaching the LEAP grants' education and employment milestones and had not yet received a full year of post-release services in the community. Nonetheless, sites reported placing 1,053 participants into jobs, education, or training in their first quarter after release. Having more time to follow up on participants and capturing more accurate data on participant outcomes would likely show more participants with positive outcomes.

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<sup>8</sup> LEAP grants began in July 2015 with a nine-month planning period and 15-month implementation period. However, 11 sites began enrolling before March 2016 (as early as August 2015), and 17 grants received extensions beyond the original end date, including two that were still active as of March 2018.

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## Chapter IX: Looking Forward: Sustainability and Promising Practices

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*“If I can show it’s been successful, we can’t afford not to continue to fund it.”*

--Jail administrator describing plans for sustaining jail-based AJC services after the grant ends

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The LEAP evaluation findings demonstrate the accomplishments and challenges sites faced implementing the LEAP initiative. Using DOL grant funds, 20 sites operated jail-based AJCs and linked participants to employment services post-release. Many of these sites developed new initiatives and introduced employment services into the jails. Over the course of the LEAP pilot, more than 3,800 participants received jail-based services funded by the grant. In this chapter, we summarize our key findings, practices that appear promising for future efforts, grantee approaches to sustainability, and considerations for future evaluation.

### A. Key implementation findings

In previous chapters, we examined grant structure, the establishment of the jail-based AJC, pre-release services, preparation for release and post-release services, data collection, and the outcomes of LEAP participants. Here we look across those topics to highlight six key findings.

- **The LEAP pilot demonstrated the feasibility of offering AJC services within a jail setting.** This was a new approach for DOL and the majority of the sites, but all sites piloted jail-based AJCs as intended by the grant program and at least 11 sites planned to maintain the jail-based AJC after the end of the grant.
- **Bridging cultural, mission, and operations differences between workforce development and corrections partners required early and ongoing communication from leaders and staff members from both systems.** Workforce development partners aim to help customers find and maintain employment, while the primary role of corrections agencies is security. The LEAP grants found that early and ongoing communication between workforce and jail administrators helped bridge these different cultures, create buy-in, and facilitate high-level decision making. Sites with existing partnerships and jails that already focused on reentry appeared to experience smoother implementation. However, all sites had to build trust, educate one another, and make accommodations to create successful partnerships.
- **Close collaboration between the workforce agencies and the jails was crucial for establishing the jail-based AJCs, recruiting participants, delivering pre-release services, and planning transitions.** In collaboration with the LWDB grantees, jail

administrators made ultimate decisions on allocating jail space for the AJCs, scheduling pre-release services, and providing Internet access. Corrections officers and jail reentry coordinators were critical to daily service delivery, identifying potentially eligible inmates, escorting participants to services, and helping jail-based AJC staff access jail data. The LEAP grantees found that engaging these staff in the proposal and early planning phases helped ensure that jail-based AJC plans were feasible, and continuing those relationships throughout the grant allowed sites and jail-based AJC staff to leverage jail support and navigate jail requirements more effectively.

- **Despite connecting pre-release with participants, sites struggled to engage participants after release.** Once released, participants had many competing demands, including supervision requirements, and staff often had poor contact information for them. Some participants left the local area, found jobs on their own, or did not think they needed help. Sites reported that developing strong relationships pre-release and offering incentives, including cash and transportation vouchers, helped get and keep participants engaged in community services. Ultimately, 69 percent of participants who were not immediately placed in education or employment enrolled in career services in their first 30 days out of jail.
- **In most sites, grantees required partnerships with more specialized service providers to deal with the significant challenges facing the reentry population.** Beyond the challenges of finding employment, participants faced significant barriers to successful reentry, including homelessness, drug use, and personal reentry challenges. Many of the community-based AJCs partnered with specialized providers that offered more intensive services to help participants address these barriers.
- **Although sites met the recidivism targets established by DOL, the employment and education outcomes appear less encouraging.** Thirty-nine percent of participants who had been released for at least one quarter had an education or employment placement, significantly lower than DOL's target placement rate of 60 percent. Participants and staff mentioned a number of factors that were barriers to employment, such as having a criminal record, parole requirements, lack of transportation and distance to available jobs, lack of stable or affordable housing, mental health issues, and substance abuse. However, the percentage sites reported should be considered a lower bound given that they were not able to maintain contact with many participants who may have gotten jobs on their own.

## B. Practices that appear promising for future jail-based employment service efforts

DOL allowed grantees significant discretion to design services that were appropriate for the local context. Grantees adopted a diverse set of approaches to designing and implementing LEAP-funded services. Our implementation study did not allow us to compare the effectiveness of these different approaches, but we did find certain practices grantees adopted to be potentially promising. Local areas looking to create or enhance a jail-based AJC might find it valuable to consider the following practices:

- **Recognize that service delivery has three distinct stages.** The approach to service planning needs to go beyond a pre-release and post-release orientation to think about the critical middle stage involving preparing for the transition and reengagement post-release. To prepare for the transition, participants need supportive services including help securing an ID, applying for public assistance benefits, and developing a housing and transportation plan. This preparation needs to start early if release dates are uncertain. Sites also need to think about a range of strategies for reestablishing contact after release. Having a full array of post-release services is not sufficient to ensuring that participants reengage.
- **Leverage the expertise of specialized service providers in local communities.** Although sites noted the many benefits of having LWDBs lead the LEAP grants, grantees reported that their partnerships with other service providers helped LWDBs begin to address the full range of critical participant needs that were crucial for successful reentry. Transportation and housing were the most frequently mentioned key barriers, but participants and staff also discussed the need for substance abuse and mental health counseling and treatment, legal support, registration for health care and public assistance benefits, work clothing and supplies, help getting IDs, tuition assistance, and help filling out federal student aid and college applications.
- **Remain flexible in adapting to changing jail conditions.** Jail-based AJC staff acknowledged that day-to-day activities did not always unfold as expected. Certain participants would not show up on a given day, instruction periods were cut short or canceled due to security concerns or scheduling issues, and participants were released with little or no notice at all. Staff reported the importance of designing a service approach that recognized that uncertainty, incorporating the critical service content early during service delivery, and remaining willing and able to adjust to changing circumstances quickly.
- **Treat participants in the jails as AJC customers.** Participants noted the significance of being treated like an AJC customer rather than an inmate. Helping participants increase their confidence, understand and expand their skills, think beyond the jail walls, and feel like members of society deserving of employment was an important feature of the jail-based AJCs.
- **Plan staffing and service delivery to facilitate overlap between pre-release and post-release services to promote continuity.** Sites used different approaches to facilitate a smooth transition for participants. Three approaches that promoted continuity included using the same staff to provide services pre- and post-release, bringing post-release staff into the jail early to build relationships, and enabling pre-release staff to reach out after release to facilitate connection.
- **Use incentives and transportation support as important tools to boost post-release engagement.** Sites reported that cash or gift card incentives were valuable tools to maintain contact with participants after release. Other sites had success offering transportation vouchers or providing a van service to take participants to the community-based AJC or to work.

Although this implementation evaluation cannot make causal claims about the effectiveness of these strategies or the LEAP grants, the evidence suggests that it is possible to use jail-based AJCs to link participants to post-release services and that this may be a promising approach to support returning individuals in successful reentry. This evaluation provided a comprehensive picture of the perceived successes and challenges in implementing jail-based AJCs across 20 sites and laid the foundation for future efforts to study the continuation, expansion, and effectiveness of this approach to supporting individuals as they return to the community (Figure IX.1).

Figure IX.1. Considerations for future evaluation

**Using evaluation to strengthen the initiative.** Ensuring a continuous bridge between jail-based AJCs and community services was an important feature of the LEAP conceptual framework. However, sites faced significant challenges linking participants to community-based services. Rigorous testing of the impact of various strategies to support successful post-release connections (such as different staffing models or incentives) could strengthen individual sites' approaches and provide important evidence on effective practices for successfully transitioning individuals to post-release services.

**Using evaluation to test effectiveness.** The initial LEAP grants and evaluation provide the foundation for a rigorous evaluation of the overall effectiveness of one or more of the approaches piloted by these grantees. Key research questions of interest could include:

- Does linking participants to post-release services improve employment and recidivism outcomes?
- What is the right package of services to provide pre-release? Do sites need to provide career services, CBT, and supportive services? What is the impact of each type of service on interim outcomes such as work readiness, misconduct while in jail, and reengagement after release as well as longer-term outcomes such as post-release employment, retention, and recidivism?

**Selecting sites for future evaluations.** The LEAP grantees that chose to sustain services are natural candidates for a rigorous evaluation. These sites have overcome initial implementation challenges and have services operating in a steady state. Alternatively, if DOL wanted to test a specific model or models of services, it could use the findings of the implementation study to shape a grant announcement to ensure that grantees were implementing these models or services. To effectively test site approaches, evaluators would need access to reliable data. Ideally, grantees and evaluators would have access to administrative earnings and recidivism data to use for continuous program improvement; evaluators could then access these data to measure effects.

### C. Approaches to sustainability

DOL issued the LEAP grants as a pilot to serve as seed money in establishing AJCs in jail settings, clearly emphasizing in the initial funding announcement the desire for sustainability beyond the life of the grant. To facilitate this sustainability, a large share of the funding for the LEAP grants was dedicated to planning and establishing the physical and service infrastructure. The intent was for sites to continue operating these types of services with significantly fewer resources.

All grantees expressed some interest in continuing services provided under the LEAP grants, but they noted the challenges of finding sufficient resources. This interest typically centered on finding means to continue providing jail-based services. Sites were less focused on sustaining post-release services,

perhaps because providing jail-based services was more novel than offering post-release services, which were typically available in the community before the grant.

At the time of our final interviews in May 2017, 11 of the 20 LEAP sites had funding in place to operate aspects of the jail-based AJC after the grant. Sites sustaining the AJCs identified a variety of potential resources, including funds from local and state workforce programs, county jails, and partner/nonprofit relationships. Two sites were funded by a county jail, three sites used local workforce funds, five sites braided funding streams, and one site was funded by a nonprofit that had been a service partner. Six of the remaining sites were actively looking for resources to continue operations. Multiple sites reported applying for the latest round of DOL's Reentry Employment Opportunities grants, and other sites were exploring whether they could use WIOA funds to cover expenses.

The other three sites were not planning to continue operations after the end of the LEAP grant funding. Two sites noted that the pilot grant did not generate the evidence of outcomes that would allow them to effectively sustain services. Staff noted that outcome data are an important and compelling part of building evidence, but not all sites had sufficient information to report. The pilot was short—particularly for sites that were starting without an existing infrastructure in the jail. One administrator expressed frustration that the initiative was just hitting its stride when the grant ended and had not had time to demonstrate its effectiveness to stakeholders.

#### D. Perceptions of change in the corrections and workforce systems

The qualitative evidence collected through this implementation evaluation suggests that introducing new services, partnerships, and ways of thinking about reentry hold promise for lasting effects on the workforce and corrections systems in some sites. There are several examples of substantial changes to the service delivery landscape for reentering individuals that likely stemmed from the LEAP grants.

**New services became available for reentering individuals.** Beyond sustaining services established through the LEAP grants, many sites reported that other new services were developed through the workforce system to benefit reentering individuals as well as other workforce customers.

- A community-based AJC in one site reached out to the CBO partnering on the LEAP grant as part of a roundtable on reentry-focused employment services. That AJC has now introduced new reentry-focused workshops even though LEAP participants were not primarily being served through the community-based AJC.
- A community-based AJC serving participants in one site partnered with local organizations to address substance abuse and mental health needs, which will continue to serve AJC customers after LEAP.

- A community-based AJC in one site partnered with an industry-specific training academy to host construction safety classes that initially served mostly LEAP participants but will continue to train others beyond the grant.
- One site reported that it established a satellite community-based AJC near the jail to enhance its ability to serve individuals who live in that area.

**Many sites reported that the LEAP grants altered how the corrections system approaches reentry.** Partnerships between the corrections and workforce development systems often had broader implications than just grant activities. Corrections partners in many sites saw the value of their active participation in supporting successful reentry.

- After witnessing the use of assessments to highlight inmates' barriers to reentry, one jail administrator planned to implement the COMPAS risk assessment with the entire jail population.
- Jails that had never used CBT principles or curricula reported that they would continue to use the strategy.
- The corrections agency in one site began dropping off individuals on the day of their release directly at the local community-based AJC.
- The jail administration in another site has become more comfortable allowing visitors to the jail than was the case before the LEAP grant. Past participants who received jail-based AJC services can now serve as guest speakers in the jail.
- One site reported creating change beyond its local area. Its successful effort to encourage its state's Department of Motor Vehicles to provide licenses to LEAP participants while still in jail was eventually replicated in more jail facilities in the state.

**"The [LEAP staff] go above and beyond to stay involved with these guys while here and outside. The inmates have never seen that. I've never seen anything like that in my 23 years in corrections. It's the real deal and you won't see it anywhere else in the state. This is huge that you can form a working relationship and continue it once they are released. These guys have never had that continuation of someone who wants them to succeed."**

*- Jail administrator describing the value of the LEAP grant*

LEAP was a pilot implementing an innovative and groundbreaking approach to providing pre-release services in jail-based AJCs and linking participants to post-release services in the community. Workforce development, corrections, and other partners, as well as participants, identified many successes along with significant challenges and promising strategies to help overcome those challenges. Although the experiences of the LEAP grantees highlight important lessons learned, the findings from this evaluation suggest that the basic approach of using jail-based AJCs to link participants to post-release services holds promise for supporting returning individuals in successful reentry.

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## Acronyms

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ADP = average daily population

AJC = American Job Center

CBO = community-based organization

CBT = cognitive behavioral therapy

DOL = U.S. Department of Labor

FOA = Funding Opportunity Announcement

HSE = High school equivalency

IEP = individual employment plan

IT = information technology

LEAP = Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release

LMI= labor market information

LWDB = local workforce development boards

MIS = management information system

OSHA = Occupational Safety and Health Administration

QPR = quarterly performance report

WIB = Workforce Investment Board

WIOA = Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

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## APPENDIX A

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**Table A.1.** LEAP quarterly report fields

		Rpt. Per.	Cum.
<b>A. Program Summary</b>			
<i>Enter the Enrollment Goal For the Entire Program</i>		<b>0</b>	
A.1.	Total Participants Enrolled		<b>0</b>
A.1.a.	- Release Date 3 to 6 Months		<b>0</b>
A.1.b.	- Release Date less than 3 Months		<b>0</b>
A.2.	Total Exiters	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
A.2.a.	Program Exiters		<b>0</b>
A.2.b.	Other Exiters		<b>0</b>
A.3.	Total Pre-Exit (Active)		<b>0</b>
<b>B. Participant Characteristics</b>			
B.1.a	Male		<b>0</b>
B.1.b	Female		<b>0</b>
B.2.a	Hispanic/Latino		<b>0</b>
B.2.a.i	- American Indian or Alaska Native		<b>0</b>
B.2.a.ii	- Asian		<b>0</b>
B.2.a.iii	- Black or African American		<b>0</b>
B.2.a.iv	- Hawaiian Native or Other Pacific Islander		<b>0</b>
B.2.a.v	- White		<b>0</b>
B.2.a.vi	- More than One Race		<b>0</b>
B.2.b.	Non-Hispanic		<b>0</b>
B.2.b.i	- American Indian or Alaska Native		<b>0</b>
B.2.b.ii	- Asian		<b>0</b>
B.2.b.iii	- Black or African American		<b>0</b>
B.2.b.iv	- Hawaiian Native or Other Pacific Islander		<b>0</b>
B.2.b.v	- White		<b>0</b>
B.2.b.vi	- More than One Race		<b>0</b>
B.3.a.	8th Grade and Under		<b>0</b>
B.3.b.	9th Grade - 12th Grade		<b>0</b>
B.3.c.	High School Graduate or Equivalent		<b>0</b>
B.3.d.	1-3 years of College, or Full-time Technical or Vocational School		<b>0</b>
B.3.e.	4 Years of College or More		<b>0</b>
B.3.f.	High School Drop-Out		<b>0</b>
B.3.g.	Limited English Proficient		<b>0</b>
B.3.h.	Basic Skills Deficient		<b>0</b>
B.4.a.	Age 18-21		<b>0</b>
B.4.b.	Age 22-24		<b>0</b>
B.4.c.	Age 25-34		<b>0</b>
B.4.d.	Age 35-44		<b>0</b>
B.4.e.	Age 45-54		<b>0</b>
B.4.f.	Age 55 or Older		<b>0</b>
B.5.a.	At Release - Own/Rent Apartment, Room, or House		<b>0</b>
B.5.b.	At Release - Staying at Someone's Apartment or House (Stable)		<b>0</b>

Table A.1. (continued)

		Rpt. Per.	Cum.
<b>B. Participant Characteristics</b>			
B.5.c.	At Release - Halfway House/Transitional House		0
B.5.d.	At Release - Residential Treatment		0
B.5.e.	At Release - Staying at Someone's Apartment or House (Unstable)		0
B.5.f.	At Release - Homeless		0
B.6.	History of Alcohol/Drug Use		0
B.7.	Low Income		0
B.8.	Persons with a Disability		0
B.9.	Eligible Veteran		0
B.10.	Work Release Job at Program Enrollment		0
B.11.a.	Will Be On Parole		0
B.11.b.	Will Be On Probation		0
B.11.c.	Will Have Other Post-Release Supervision		0
B.11.d.	Will Not Be Supervised		0
B.12.a.	Property Crimes		0
B.12.b.	Drug Crimes		0
B.12.c.	Public Order Offenses		0
B.12.d.	Other Offenses		0
<b>C. Participants in Services, Activities, and Other Related Assistance</b>			
C.1.	Received Education or Job Training Activities	0	0
C.1.a.	- Math/Reading Remediation		0
C.1.b.	- HSE Preparation		0
C.1.c.	- Vocational/Occupational Skills Training Services		0
C.1.d.	- Post-Secondary Educational Degree/Diploma Program		0
C.1.e.	- On-the-Job Training		0
C.1.f.	- Other Education or Job Training Activity		0
C.2.	Received Workforce Preparation Activities	0	0
C.2.a.	- Subsidized Employment		0
C.2.b.	- Internship		0
C.2.c.	- Workforce Information Services		0
C.2.d.	- Work Readiness Training		0
C.2.e.	- Empowerment & Leadership Development		0
C.2.f.	- Career/Life Skills Counseling		0
C.2.g.	- Other Workforce Preparation Activities		0
<b>C. Participants in Services, Activities, and Other Related Assistance</b>			
C.3.	Community Involvement and Leadership Development Activities	0	0
C.3.a.	- Community Service		0
C.3.b.	- Other Community Involvement Activities		0
C.4.	Received Mentoring Activities	0	0
C.4.a.	- Mentoring		0
C.5.	Received Health Services	0	0
C.5.a.	- Substance Abuse Treatment		0

Table A.1. (continued)

		Rpt. Per.	Cum.
<b>C. Participants in Services, Activities, and Other Related Assistance</b>			
C.5.b.	- Mental Health Treatment		0
C.5.c.	- Trauma Counseling		0
C.5.d.	- Emergency Medical Care		0
C.5.e.	- Non-Emergency Medical Care		0
C.5.f.	- Other Medical Care		0
C.6.	Received Legal Services	0	0
C.6.a.	- Secure License		0
C.6.b.	- Expunge Criminal Record		0
C.6.c.	- Create/Modify Child Support Order		0
C.6.d.	- Referral to Other Legal Services		0
C.7.	Received Support Services	0	0
C.7.a.	- Child Care Services		0
C.7.b.	- Needs Related Payments		0
C.7.c.	- Follow-Up Mentoring		0
C.7.d.	- Family Reunification Assistance		0
C.7.e.	- Parenting Classes		0
C.7.f.	- Housing Assistance/Referral		0
C.7.g.	- Referral for Domestic Abuse Treatment Shelter		0
C.7.h.	- Transportation Services		0
C.7.i.	- Other Follow-Up Services		0
C.7.j.	- Other Supportive Services		0
C.7.k.	- Follow-Up HSE Preparation		0
C.7.l.	- Follow-Up Vocational/Occupational Skills Training		0
<b>D. Short-Term Indicators of Performance</b>			
D.1.	Enrollment Rate	#DIV/0!	
D.2.	Number of Initial Job Placements		0
D.3.	Number of Job Re-Placements		0
D.4.	Number Obtained High School Diploma or Equivalency Credential		0
D.5.	Number Obtained a Certificate		0
D.6.	Entered Post-Secondary Education		0
D.7.	Entered Vocational/Occupational Skills Training		0
D.8.	Entered Registered Apprenticeship		0
<b>E. Long-Term Indicators of Performance</b>			
E.1.	Participation Rate	#DIV/0!	
E.1.a.	Total Active during Quarter (Denominator)		0
E.1.b.	Total From E.1.a. who Received Services Each Month (Numerator)		0
E.2.	Work Readiness Indicator Rate	#DIV/0!	
E.2.a.	Total Exited (Denominator)	0	0
E.2.b.	Total From E.2.a. Demonstrated Work Readiness Increase (Numerator)		0
E.3.	Post-release Enrollment Rate	#DIV/0!	

Table A.1. (continued)

		Rpt. Per.	Cum.
<b>E. Long-Term Indicators of Performance</b>			
E.3.a.	Total Exited Beyond 30 Days Post-release less those Employed/In Education (Denominator)		0
E.3.b.	Total From E.3.a. Enrolled in Comprehensive Career Services within 30 Days (Numerator)		0
E.4.	Placement Rate	#DIV/0!	
E.4.a.	Total Exited and in 1st Q or Beyond (Denominator)	0	0
E.4.b.	Total From E.4.a. Employed/In Education in 1st Q (Numerator)		0
E.5.	Employment/Education Retention Rate	#DIV/0!	
E.5.a.	# in E.4.b. In or Beyond Their 3rd Q After Exit (Denominator)	0	0
E.5.b.	Total From E.5.a. Who Remain in Employment/Education in 3rd Q (Numerator)		0
E.6.	Recidivism Rate	#DIV/0!	
E.6.a.	Total Number At /Beyond 1 Year From Release Date		0
E.6.b.	From E.6.a. Total Number Rearr./Reincar. Within 1 Year of Release		0

Table A.2. LEAP grant performance targets

Performance target	Definitions	Target
<b>Interim targets</b>		
Enrollment Rate	Number of participants enrolled in the program divided by the grantee enrollment goal.	100%
Participation Rate	Percentage of enrolled participants who received at least one LEAP service (excluding supportive services) each month pre-release.	90%
Work Readiness Indicator Rate	Percentage of participants who are deemed work-ready or demonstrate an increase in work-readiness after receiving pre-release services as determined by a pre- and post-test.	80%.
Post-release Enrollment Rate	Percentage of participants who are not employed or enrolled in an educational placement who report for and are enrolled into services within 30-days post-release.	80%
<b>Post-program targets</b>		
Placement Rate	Percentage of participants who enter in one of the following four activities in the first 30-days post release: (1) Apprenticeship, (2) unsubsidized employment, (3) post-secondary education, or (4) occupational skills training OR enroll in post-release career services and are placed into one of the above mentioned in the first quarter after release.	60%
Employment or Educational Retention Rate:	Percentage of participants who were placed and remain in employment or educational placements in the third quarter after release.	70%
Recidivism Rate	Percentage of participants who were re-arrested and convicted of a new crime or re-incarcerated for revocation of probation or parole within one year of their release from jail.*	22%

Source: DOL LEAP Performance Goals Memo

\*If a participant is re-arrested but is not convicted of a new crime, he/she may be taken out of the recidivism rate.

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