EVALUATION OF THE PRISONER RE-ENTRY INITIATIVE

INTERIM REPORT

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Background

Numerous issues have contributed to an increased awareness of the challenges facing prisoner re-entry in recent years. This awareness has helped to create a renewed sense of urgency to develop improved methods to address the phenomenon. Increasing numbers of releasees are returning to affected communities—over 650,000 annually from state prisons and federal institutions (Osborne and Solomon 2006). After they return, ex-offenders face limited employment options due to a range of laws, attitudes, and other limitations that restrict the occupations in which they can work. Limits on access to public assistance programs for some offenders and to subsidized public housing are additional forms of institutionalized barriers to ex-offenders' successful reintegration into the community. Ex-offenders also typically have multiple personal barriers to employment, including little education and high rates of illiteracy, substance abuse and mental health problems, and limited work histories.

Some communities experience disproportionately negative affects from returning ex-offenders, many of whom return to their former communities alone, having seen ties with their families—parents, siblings, spouses, and children—wither during their periods of incarceration. Facing an environment with few employment prospects and a lack of other supports for re-integration, many ex-offenders return to criminal behavior, with recidivism rates approaching 67 percent in some studies (Langan and Levin 2002). Home communities then experience the social costs of higher unemployment, a loss of social cohesion, and other negative consequences resulting from the return of ex-offenders.

As part of a presidential initiative to reduce recidivism and the societal costs of reincarceration by helping inmates find work when they return to their communities, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) joined the Departments of Justice (USDOJ), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Health and Human Services (HHS), and other federal partners to create a demonstration program—the Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (PRI). The initiative seeks to strengthen urban communities affected by large volumes of returning prisoners through employment-centered projects that incorporate job training, housing referrals, mentoring, and other comprehensive transitional services. Although it is designed to offer ex-offenders a comprehensive array of services to meet their diverse needs, this initiative is based on the core premise that helping ex-offenders find and maintain stable and legal employment will reduce recidivism.

The PRI is intended to draw upon the unique strengths and skills of faith-based organizations (FBOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) to implement the demonstration program. Recognizing that faith-based and community-based organizations (FBCOs) are well respected within their communities and have a long history of providing social services to some of the hardest-to-serve populations, the initiative identified FBCOs as the types of entities it would authorize to lead local re-entry projects. In November 2005, USDOL awarded grants to 30 FBCOs across the country to implement such projects for a base year, with an option of three additional years of funding. USDOL selected Coffey Communications, LLC, and its subcontractors—Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Maryland—to evaluate the demonstration program.

Under the overall plan for the PRI developed by several federal agencies, the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) was to issue parallel grants so that State Departments of

Correction (DOCs) could provide pre-release services for inmates. Upon release, many of these individuals would be referred to USDOL PRI sites for post-release assistance. The USDOJ grant awards were announced in September 2006.

This interim report, the first major product of the evaluation effort, is an analysis of the early implementation experiences of the USDOL PRI grantees. Its purposes are to identify the principal program services provided by the projects, describe the degree and form of cooperation with key partners, and identify the primary challenges encountered by project sites. The report also seeks to lay a foundation for future qualitative and quantitative research of the PRI grants, particularly as a means to improve the framing of PRI issues and the collection of data for the final evaluation report on this initiative.

The PRI draws upon FBCOs' unique strengths and skills—their respected status within their communities, their experience in providing social services to some of the hardest-to-serve populations, their ability to tap into sizable networks of volunteers, and the enthusiasm behind many of their undertakings. In addition, those FBCOs chosen as grantees are expected to develop relationships with public, private, and nonprofit service providers, corrections agencies, and policymakers; access non-federal resources; and ensure connections to a wide range of services in order to help their projects meet the program goals.

Grantees are limited in terms of the individuals they may serve and the services they may support with USDOL funds. To be eligible for project services, individuals must be 18 years of age or older, have been convicted as an adult and imprisoned pursuant to an Act of Congress or a state law, and have never been convicted of a violent or sex-related offense. Grant funds may be used for counseling and case management, job placement assistance, basic skills training and remedial education, occupational skills training, mentoring, and supportive services. Funds may

not be expended for three specific categories of re-entry services: (1) pre-release services other than those necessary to establish connections with prisoners, (2) substance abuse treatment services, and (3) housing services. In lieu of using grant funds for these services, grantees are expected to establish linkages with local criminal justice institutions, substance abuse treatment providers, and housing providers.

USDOL identified four key outcome measures to assess project performance—entered employment rate, employment retention rate, earnings, and recidivism rate. Other measures such as achievement of stable housing and abstinence from substance abuse are to be used as additional "indicators of success." Grantees are required to report quarterly on their progress toward achieving those goals.

The Evaluation

The three-stage Prisoner Re-Entry Framework (see Exhibit I.1 in text) has been used to identify the principal groups of activities that represent the needs of most offenders for re-entry services. The framework suggests that, in many instances, new working relationships and collaborations among a significant number of organizations will be needed to effect successful offender transitions between the phases.

This interim report is an implementation analysis that addresses research questions concerning planning, start-up, ongoing operations, and the participation of the faith-based community across all 30 grant sites. The evaluation team has gathered information on the various program designs among grantees and the successes they have realized in structuring project frameworks that are supportive of an ex-offender's range of re-entry needs. This information was gathered from four sources: interviews of staff and observations of activities during two-day site visits to each grantee, project documents (e.g., grant

agreements), secondary data sources (primarily for local economic data), and limited amounts of data from the PRI Management Information System (MIS). However, the principal sources of data for this interim report are the interviews conducted during the first round of site visits.

The timing and scope of data collection for this interim report affect the scope and depth of the analysis to date. Site visits began less than four months after the grantees were expected to have begun enrolling participants. This was a period when many grantees were reformulating portions of their program designs and collaborating entities were just beginning to experience actual project operations. Furthermore, project designs are continually evolving, and changes may have occurred between the time of the site visit and the writing of this report. As a result, the information presented herein reflects the status of the PRI at a prior point in time.

Key Findings

1. Grant communities vary considerably, especially with respect to their economic situation and public infrastructure.

PRI sites have significantly different characteristics as shaped by labor force size, local unemployment rates, median wages, housing costs/availability, and access to public transportation.

2. Grantees with more organizational resources at their disposal and those with prior experience in providing prisoner re-entry services typically experienced fewer problems during the start-up phase.

Variations among start-up efforts appear to be related to differences in prior grantee experience, particularly experience in dealing with the criminal justice system and/or in providing services to ex-offenders. Differences are also tied to the size of the grantee organization, as measured by their annual budgets *before* receipt of the PRI grant. Organizations

that had supportive infrastructures and staff with the knowledge necessary to carry out project start-up activities were typically more effective at getting their projects operational. The selection of appropriate staff on the one hand and staff turnover on the other were relatively common challenges among grantees and appear to have contributed to start-up problems.

3. Grantees were challenged by the PRI eligibility requirements.

In general, to be eligible for the program, individuals must be 18 years of age or older, have been convicted as an adult and imprisoned pursuant to an Act of Congress or a state law, and have never been convicted of a violent or sex-related offense. For a number of reasons—including unfamiliarity in interpreting and using criminal history records and statutes, difficulties in communicating USDOL eligibility requirements among partners, and delays in establishing strong linkages with state criminal justice (CJ) agencies—grantees were often confounded in their attempts to apply the eligibility requirements of the PRI program. The expectation that sites would work out these issues with their local corrections/CJ agencies was difficult to fulfill for sites with minimal previous experience—and relationships—with those agencies. Additionally, state/local CJ agencies may vary in their interpretation and application of criminal histories regarding violent and sex-related crimes, as evidenced by some sites being told that domestic violence victims or those with prostitution charges would be ineligible. Many grantees also had problems obtaining verification from their state DOCs that an applicant had never been convicted of a violent or sex-related offense.

4. Most projects are designed to recruit and serve ex-offenders in general.

Only four projects identified a target group within the larger framework of ex-offenders eligible for PRI services. The other sites established recruitment and service strategies for ex-offenders as a generic group. Grantees that focused services on a particular subset of ex-

offenders usually did so because their organizations considered such individuals as their primary target audiences.

5. Grantees' approaches toward the enrollment process vary considerably, with some sites taking significantly more deliberate approaches as to whom they enroll than others.

Some projects utilize an extended "orientation" period of as many as ten days prior to enrolling interested ex-offenders in project services. This has the effect of "weeding out" those who are not sufficiently motivated to attend the entire orientation session; it also allows project staff an opportunity to get to know future participants before getting down to the important tasks of job placement and other PRI services.

6. To carry out the holistic role envisioned in the Solicitation for Grant Applications, most projects would have to enhance their practices related to participant assessment and case management.

Most projects perform some type of assessment activity with participants, although it appears that few sites conduct comprehensive assessments across multiple dimensions of participants' characteristics and need. Because most ex-offenders who inquire about project services state that they are seeking one goal—a job—a more holistic approach may be unnecessary. However, given the incidence of substance abuse by offenders, mental illness, and other common problems, it would seem important to document whether an individual has needs other than a job. Participant assessments or communication from other providers (e.g., the referring criminal justice agency) would indicate whether other needs exist and what they are. The relative absence of in-depth assessments is paralleled by the low incidence of any developed formal individualized plan that documents the goals of participants, the services the projects provide, and any established referrals. Although it may be possible to achieve the broad objectives of ex-offender re-entry without a deliberate, holistic approach to participant

assessment and case management, the approach that predominates in the PRI sites is very employment-centric and appears to be focused on achieving short-term employment goals.

7. Project approaches to employment involve relatively traditional, one-at-a-time job development techniques.

Early approaches to job development and participant placement involved the identification of individual job openings appropriate for participants. Almost half of the grantees utilize or are developing a database of "ex-offender friendly" or "second-chance" employers. Few sites attempted to recruit employers as partners in the projects; rather, they contacted employers for the primary purpose of job development. Several sites, however, are attempting to identify firms that are willing to hire more than one PRI participant at a time.

8. Most PRI training involves pre-employment skills, with little basic/remedial education and occupational skills training taking place.

Because many participants are unfamiliar with traditional jobs and may not possess the types of work habits expected by most employers, at least 80 percent of the projects provide "soft skills" training to help prepare participants for the job market. Other approaches to preparing participants for employment are less common. For example, few projects are providing occupational skill training or work experience to any significant degree. Because most ex-offenders on parole or probation are required to be employed, sites report that very few are interested in and/or willing to engage in classroom-type training activities.

Many sites do not offer basic/remedial education and related activities. Project staff said that participants did not have the time to take classes towards their General Educational Development (GED) or similar classes, especially while employed or intensely engaged in seeking employment. In addition, a relatively high percentage of PRI participants have a high school diploma or equivalent, in contrast with the overall offender population.

9. Follow-up job placement services and follow-up for participant tracking and data collection purposes were relatively undeveloped at the time of the site visits.

Participant follow-up and monitoring is important to the Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative for two reasons. First, projects are expected to provide post-placement support to help ex-offenders with the continuing process of re-entry and reintegration into their communities. Second, sites need to maintain contact with former project participants, even after their need or desire for assistance had ended, in order to collect the information necessary to complete entry of the MIS data required for three calendar quarters of follow-up employment and earnings data. At the time of the site visits, most projects had not developed strategies for gathering such data or for supporting participants' long-term placement and retention.

10. Relationships that would allow participants in need of substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and other health services to access such services are generally not well-developed.

Substance abuse and mental health issues are significant challenges that many ex-offenders face upon re-entry; but, at the time of this study, sites did not have fully developed relationships with providers of substance abuse and mental health treatment services. For example, although over half of the grantees refer participants in need of substance abuse treatment to referral partners in the community, treatment space is not guaranteed. The absence of comprehensive assessments at most locations makes it difficult to know how many participants who have substance abuse problems are actually identified and referred to such treatment.

11. Considering their starting point, sites made considerable progress in constructing productive working relationships with criminal justice system entities.

Potential CJ partners include state, federal, and local corrections institutions housing offenders eligible for services under the PRI and the agencies responsible for community supervision at each of those jurisdictional levels. Grantees developed partnerships with local,

state, and federal criminal justice authorities in an effort to recruit potential PRI participants. Although sites that already had some positive relationship with agencies in the criminal justice system were more successful at establishing productive connections under the PRI, sites without prior relationships also started creating valuable partnerships.

Because of unanticipated delays in the award of the USDOJ grants, many sites had to increase their relationship-building efforts in order to recruit a sufficient supply of eligible ex-offenders. As a result, grantees developed relationships with representatives from federal prisons and/or halfway houses, state DOC staff, and local/county authorities. The criminal justice authority has designated a dedicated point of contact to work with the PRI grantee and/or participants in at least seven sites.

Grantee relationships with entities involved in community supervision are even closer and perceived to be more positive than they are with the corrections agencies. At least 20 grantees have developed good relationships with local parole and probation officers, and an identical number of sites reported that parole and probation officers are referring participants to the PRI projects. The U.S. Probation Office is also an important source of participants for some projects.

12. Relationships with the workforce investment system were generally nominal, but the absence of stronger ties does not appear to have a significant adverse effect on project operations.

For the majority of sites, the most significant component of their relationship with the workforce investment system was access to the job listings available to all job seekers through local One-Stop Career Centers. The relatively few sites with more substantive relationships with the workforce investment system typically either purchased additional services from local One-Stop Centers using grant resources, or had relationships with the workforce investment system that predated the grant awards. However, project staff did not express significant concerns that

these relationships needed significant improvement. Because few ex-offenders are interested in training, the typical PRI relationship with a One-Stop may be limited to receiving job listings and access to an occasional job search skills workshop.

13. Partnerships with housing providers that would allow participants in need of housing to access such services are generally not well developed.

The majority of sites identified housing as a pressing service delivery need; however, few sites had actual partnerships that provided rooms or bed space to more than a handful of project participants. Because the use of grant funds for participant housing is prohibited by the terms of the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA), grantees are obligated to partner with housing providers if they are to assist ex-offenders with their housing needs. Sites struggled with numerous issues around the topic of housing and relationships with housing partners. These included the limited supply of affordable housing, difficulties in navigating the housing sector due to fragmentation among public and private housing providers, and various restrictions on participants' access to housing. Sites that did not see housing as a major challenge were likely already to have close partners and/or were themselves active in providing housing to individuals in need.

14. Most sites with developed mentoring programs relied on previous experience in the field and integrated their mentoring activities into overall project services.

Although some sites had fully functioning mentoring programs, most projects had made changes in their mentoring programs and/or had yet to get their mentoring activities up and running. The mentoring component is clearly a work in progress for the initiative as a whole. Grantees must overcome participants' sense of being overscheduled and, in some cases, their perception that mentoring will not help them. At least one grantee requires its participants to be involved in its mentoring program as a condition of receiving other assistance under the PRI

project. Mentoring programs were generally operational in sites where either the grantee or the mentoring partner had prior experience in providing mentoring to adults outside prison. In general, those projects that implemented the mentoring activity as an integral component of project services were more successful at engaging project participants in mentoring.

15. Mentoring activities are the PRI project services that are most likely to be provided by FBOs.

FBOs provided mentoring at was provided by twenty sites: ten grantees that were FBOs, and another ten grants operated by CBOs that utilized FBO partners to provide mentoring services. Mentoring partners are often churches, and in these sites, many mentors are affiliated with the church(es) that manage the mentoring activity. Churches appeared to be relatively successful at recruiting mentors, who are often motivated by their faith to work with the PRI participants.

I. INTRODUCTION

The challenge associated with prisoner re-entry has been a topic in the public policy arena for decades, but the large number of ex-offenders returning to vulnerable communities in recent years has raised the visibility of this issue. As part of a presidential initiative to reduce recidivism and the associated societal costs of reincarceration by helping inmates find work when they return to their communities, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA), joined the Departments of Justice (USDOJ), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Health and Human Services (HHS), and other federal partners to create a demonstration program: the Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (PRI). The initiative seeks to strengthen urban communities affected by large volumes of returning prisoners by introducing employment-centered projects that incorporate job training, housing assistance, mentoring, and other comprehensive transitional services. In November 2005, USDOL awarded grants to 30 faith-based and community-based organizations (FBCOs) across the country to implement such projects for one base year, with an option of three additional years of funding. In June 2005, USDOL selected Coffey Communications, LLC, and its subcontractors—Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., David Altschuler of Johns Hopkins University, and Douglas Young of the University of Maryland—to evaluate the demonstration program. Over a three-year period, the evaluation will assess the evolution of PRI implementation, the short-term outcomes of participants served by the program, and the costs of providing PRI services.

This interim report, the first major product of the evaluation effort, is an analysis of the early implementation experiences of the USDOL PRI grantees. Its purposes are to identify the principal program services provided by the projects, describe the degree and form of cooperation with key partners, and identify the primary challenges encountered to date by project sites. The

report also seeks to lay a foundation for future qualitative and quantitative research of the PRI grants, particularly as a means to improve the framing of PRI issues and data collection for the final report on this initiative.

A. Prisoner Re-Entry

1. Historical Perspective

A set of stark realizations about prisoner re-entry emerged among policymakers and scholars in the late 1990s. Increasing numbers of releasees were re-entering communities—more than 600,000 annually from state prisons—as a result of the quadrupling of prison and jail admissions that occurred over the prior 20 years (Harrison and Beck 2003). Along with this increase in the ex-offender population, policymakers saw the converging effects of tougher laws affecting returning prisoners, the wide range of needs facing this population, and the potentially negative implications for the families and communities to which former prisoners return. Many States dropped longstanding systems of earned early release and good-time credits that often motivated inmates to participate in prison programs that helped them prepare for community reintegration. (Inmates who demonstrate good work and behavior are eligible to earn "good-time credits," which decrease part of the term of their incarceration.) In some instances, prison programs themselves were eliminated or cut back. A shift towards stricter sentencing led to longer prison terms, extending the time that inmates are detached from jobs and families and the responsibilities these bring. In addition, parole was curtailed or abolished in some States, resulting in increasing numbers of inmates released with no parole obligations (Rhine 1997; Travis et al. 2001).

Ex-felons face a number of barriers to employment, including state laws and licensing requirements for certain positions, difficulties in obtaining needed documentation, and

increasingly easier access to criminal records by employers and the public at large (Clear and Cole 2000). Restricted access to public assistance programs for some offenders and to subsidized public housing are further examples of institutionalized barriers to ex-offenders' successful reintegration into the community.

The prevalence and multiplicity of releasees' service needs—needs that essentially constitute risk factors for recidivism—also conspire to reduce their prospects for success. About three-fourths of released prisoners have a history of substance abuse (Belenko et al. 1998); and mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety disorder, may occur in at least one quarter of the prison population. Petersilia (2003) summarizes data indicating that nearly 60 percent of state prison inmates are either completely or functionally illiterate. One in three inmates reports being unemployed before entering state prison, and one study found that fewer than half of released prisoners had a job lined up for their return to the community (Steurer et al. 2002). Ex-prisoners' records, their poor job histories, and their detachment from conventional society—factors that particularly affect those individuals embedded for years in criminal activity—reduce what chances ex-prisoners may have of achieving stable employment (Bushway and Reuter 2002).

Returning prisoners have a disproportionate impact on some communities. Many lose ties with their families and, as a result, return to the community alone, with no one to meet them upon release (Nelson et al. 1999; Byrne and Young 2002). Long stays in prison inhibit offenders' ability to maintain ties with their children and to resume a provider role upon return to the community. Research has also pointed to the possible negative impacts of removing and returning offenders *en masse* from and to the vulnerable inner city communities in which they reside: high per capita rates of incarceration and the repeated shuttling back and forth of

offenders may reduce social cohesion and stability in these neighborhoods, loosen informal social controls, and ultimately contribute to crime (Rose et al. 1999).

Widely cited statistics prompting calls for a new approach to re-entry include estimated rearrest rates for state prisoners approaching 45 percent in the first year of release and 67 percent within three years—figures that have been remarkably stable since the 1960s (Langan and Levin 2002). Although substantial progress was being made in some local areas, the provision of comprehensive services to this population was largely isolated and unstudied. With increasing numbers of releasees, continuing high rates of recidivism, increased concentrations of returning offenders in certain urban areas, and reduced prospects for ex-offenders' successful reintegration into their communities, federal agencies began several large initiatives to respond to the issue of re-entry.

This growing recognition of the prisoner re-entry dilemma in the late 1990s prompted the Federal Government to begin a series of programs to address the issue. An overview of these federal initiatives can be found at Appendix A. The government hopes that the PRI demonstration program will build upon previous and current federal efforts by developing innovative employment-focused initiatives that target the diverse needs of the ex-offender population. The initiative is described in detail in the next section.

2. The Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative

The PRI seeks to strengthen urban communities with large numbers of returning prisoners through an employment-centered program that incorporates mentoring, job training, and other transitional services. Although participants will be offered a comprehensive array of services to meet their diverse needs, the initiative is based on the core premise that helping ex-offenders find and maintain stable and legal employment will reduce recidivism. The PRI draws upon the

unique strengths and skills of FBCOs to implement the demonstration program. In 2001, President Bush issued the first in a series of executive orders that established the White House Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI). Recognizing that FBCOs are well-respected within their communities and have a long history of providing social services to some of the hardest-to-serve populations, the underlying premise of the FBCI is that a more open and competitive federal grant-making process will increase the delivery of effective social services to those whose needs are greatest. Appendix B contains a brief summary of a recent evaluation of a USDOL project to establish collaborative relationships between local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) and FBCOs in twelve communities.

Under the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) for the PRI issued by USDOL, only FBCOs within urban communities that are heavily impacted by large numbers of returning ex-offenders were eligible to apply for grants. This demonstration program thus focuses on the potential of FBCOs—among the most trusted institutions in the urban neighborhoods to which ex-offenders return, many of which have expertise in dealing with hard-to-serve populations and access to community resources—to fill a critical role in addressing the prisoner re-entry issue. PRI grantees are expected to develop relationships with public, private, and nonprofit service providers, corrections agencies, and policymakers; access non-federal resources; and ensure connections to a wide range of services in order to help their projects meet program goals.

In November 2005, USDOL awarded $19.84 million in initial funding for the 30 selected grantees, with the goal of having each site serve 200 participants in the first year of program operations. The first section of Chapter II describes the initiative and the characteristics of the 30 grantees in more detail. Early in 2007, USDOL awarded a similar amount for the first option

year for the PRI grants, providing grantees the opportunity to continue to develop and implement strategies for providing customized and flexible services to help meet the needs of ex-offenders.

In the SGA, USDOL established parameters affecting the local project designs and operations. In particular, USDOL provided guidance in four areas: the eligibility criteria for PRI participants, the allowable uses of PRI grant funds, the limitations on the use of grant funds, and the performance expectations for local projects.

Eligibility. The SGA stated that to be eligible for the program, individuals must be 18 years of age or older, have been convicted as an adult and imprisoned pursuant to an Act of Congress or a state law, and have never been convicted of a violent or sex-related offense. Priority of service is also accorded to veterans and spouses of certain veterans, pursuant to Public Law 107-288. USDOL expects most participants to be enrolled within 180 days of their release from prison, jail, or halfway house, but up to 10 percent of the individuals served can be enrolled more than 180 days following their release. Should there be an insufficient supply of offenders who meet the criminal history criteria in a locality for grantees to meet their enrollment goals, a grantee could request approval to expand its eligibility criteria, subject to safeguards related to serving individuals convicted of violent crimes. Finding eligible ex-offenders and establishing applicants' eligibility for the program proved to be a challenge for many grantees, and USDOL has responded to questions from grantees by issuing additional guidance regarding PRI program eligibility. Eligibility challenges and the USDOL response are described in Chapter II.

Allowable Uses of Grant Funds. The SGA articulates USDOL's expectations for the use of PRI grant funds. The services anticipated for these projects include counseling and case management, job placement assistance, basic skills training and remedial education, occupational skills training, and mentoring. Each of these is discussed below:

- *Counseling and case management* usually require the assignment of an individual or "case manager" to guide or counsel the participant throughout his or her period of participation in the project. The case manager typically meets with the participant close to the time of enrollment to begin mapping out a service plan (often called an Individual Development Plan (IDP) or Individual Employment Plan (IEP)) to take the participant through the remainder of the re-entry process. USDOL has encouraged grantees to make contact with and enroll participants as quickly as possible to allow the case management process to begin promptly upon release.[1] In most cases, the case manager conducts an assessment, identifies the participant's service and vocational needs, provides referrals to sources of assistance (e.g., housing services, mental health and substance abuse treatment), and assists the ex-offender with the development of "soft" skills, like resume preparation and interviewing skills.

- *Job placement assistance* aims to help a participant find a job. It could be the first job following release, a better job after training is completed, or a new job after leaving the old one. In some sites, the case manager provides placement assistance; in others, this function is performed by a job developer or other individual.

- *Basic skills and remedial education* typically include math and English language classes, General Educational Development (GED) preparation (for those not already possessing a high school diploma or GED), and workforce readiness classes, such as introductions to the world of work.

- *Occupational skills training* can include on-the-job training, classroom training, and work experience. Such training could range from brief (two- to three-week) classes teaching basic computer skills to semester-length (or longer) training at a private or public post-secondary school.

- *Mentoring* is described in the SGA as a key part of the initiative, with the expectation that grantees will offer mentors to every released prisoner who desires these services during their first year of enrollment. Participants can be matched with an individual mentor or participate in a group mentoring activity.

Pursuant to the SGA, USDOL expected that vouchers or another mechanism of choice would be provided to participants who need educational services or vocational training. These services must be provided by organizations that grant industry-recognized credentials.

Sites may provide other re-entry services to help meet many of the remaining needs of PRI participants. Grantees can offer the traditional supportive services that are found in many

[1] Subject to the limitation on pre-release services discussed in the next subsection.

locally-funded Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs, such as transportation and child care assistance. They can also use grant funds for the more specialized services that are commonly associated with ex-offenders, such as assistance in obtaining required forms of identification and help in renegotiating child support payments. Many returning offenders will also require extended follow-up services to support job retention and continued adjustment to life outside the walls. Under the terms of the grant, sites may provide these kinds of services, as well.

Limitations on Use of Funds. In the SGA, ETA also described three major limitations on the use of USDOL grant funds. First, PRI funds cannot be "used for pre-release services other than recruitment, introductory meetings, orientations, and other activities necessary to establishing program connections with prisoners prior to their release" (70 *Federal Register* 16856). Rather, within the federal support framework, the SGA envisioned that grants from the USDOJ would be used to provide support for pre-release services. As the evaluation proceeds, we will attempt to determine the extent to which USDOL PRI grantees are able to link their post-release services with those provided prior to release to facilitate a smooth and seamless transition between the two environments.[2] Second, USDOL grant funds may not be used to directly provide substance abuse treatment services. Grantees are expected to establish local partnerships to refer participants for services that are financed through other sources. Third, the SGA specifies that funds are not available to provide housing services for participants, further stating that linkages will have to be developed in the community to provide necessary housing services to participants. USDOL later provided guidance indicating that grant funds may be used "for housing and one-month's rent in an emergency situation;" but in December 2006 it further

[2] The timing of the award of the USDOJ grants affected project operations, particularly as they relate to participant recruitment. This project activity is discussed in Chapter III.

revised the policy to eliminate authorization for using any PRI funding for housing (ETA Q&A #1 and Q&A #7).

Performance Expectations. To assess the ongoing effectiveness of the projects, USDOL identified four key outcome measures (entered employment rate, employment retention rate, earnings change, and recidivism rate[3]), as well as several "leading indicators" such as enrollment rate and the proportion of enrollees in stable housing that it expects to serve as predictors of success. During the proposal process, USDOL required applicants to provide expected goals for these measures. Subsequent to the award of the grants, USDOL (in January 2006) announced project-specific goals on the following measures: (1) enrollment rate, (2) participation rate, (3) entered employment rate, (4) employment retention rate, (5) average earnings, (6) recidivism rate, (7) degree/certificate attainment rate, (8) substance abuse abstinence rate, and (9) stable housing rate. Grantees are required to report quarterly on their progress toward achieving these goals. The impact of performance expectations on project design and services is discussed in Chapter II.

Management Information System (MIS). In the SGA, USDOL informed prospective applicants that a government-procured MIS would be provided to all grantees. Development of this system was well under way at the time that the grants were awarded, and in January–

[3] `These measures are defined as follows:
- **`Entered Employment Rate**: Of those who are not employed at the date of participation (enrollment) and who exit the program: the percentage of participants who are employed in the first quarter after the exit quarter.
- **`Employment Retention Rate**: Of those who exit the program and are employed in the first quarter after the exit quarter: the percentage of participants who are employed in both the second and third quarters after the exit quarter.
- `Earnings Change was later revised to become **Average Earnings**: Of those who exit the program and who were employed in the first, second, and third quarters after exit: the average total earnings for the second and third quarters after exit.
- **`Recidivism Rate**: The percentage of participants who were re-arrested for a new crime or re-incarcerated for revocation of the parole or probation order within one year of their release from prison. If a participant is re-arrested and subsequently released without being convicted of a new crime, they may be taken out of the recidivism rate.

February 2006 the Department offered a two-day MIS training program to grantee representatives at three sites in different parts of the country. The PRI MIS is a Web-based system that provides grantees a means of fulfilling their obligation to submit participant data and quarterly aggregate reports on individuals who receive services through PRI program funds and through grantee partnerships with other entities. The reports include aggregate data on demographic characteristics, types of services received, placements, outcomes, and follow-up status. The MIS reporting and record-keeping system also provides for a "level of information collection to comply with Equal Opportunity requirements, to hold PRI grantees appropriately accountable for the Federal funds they receive, and to allow the Department to fulfill its oversight and management responsibilities." (70 *Federal Register* 55922).

In addition to its use by grantees to meet USDOL reporting requirements, the MIS allows grantees to collect information on individuals' characteristics and service needs and provides a means for staff to record case notes and other narrative information. Since its introduction, the PRI MIS has undergone a series of enhancements, including the creation of capabilities that allow grantees to produce management reports for use in tracking participant services and status.

Training and Technical Assistance. At the same time that USDOL procured an evaluator for the initiative, it secured a contractor to provide technical assistance (TA) to PRI grantees. Through a separate bidding process, Coffey Communications, LLC, was the organization selected to provide TA.[4] It arranged for number of technical assistance activities for the PRI grantees during the first 14 months following their grant award, often through the TA contractor working with USDOL. These included the following:

[4] Coffey Communications, LLC, maintains separate project direction for its TA and evaluation activities. To ensure the independence of its work on both of these contracts, staff overlap between the two projects is kept to a minimum.

- An initial conference call for all grantees, which took place on November 21, 2005, less than two weeks after grant awards were announced
- A three-day grantee meeting, attended by over 100 representatives of grantee organizations, held in December 2005
- A second grantee meeting, called a "peer-to-peer" meeting, held in Denver in mid-September 2006

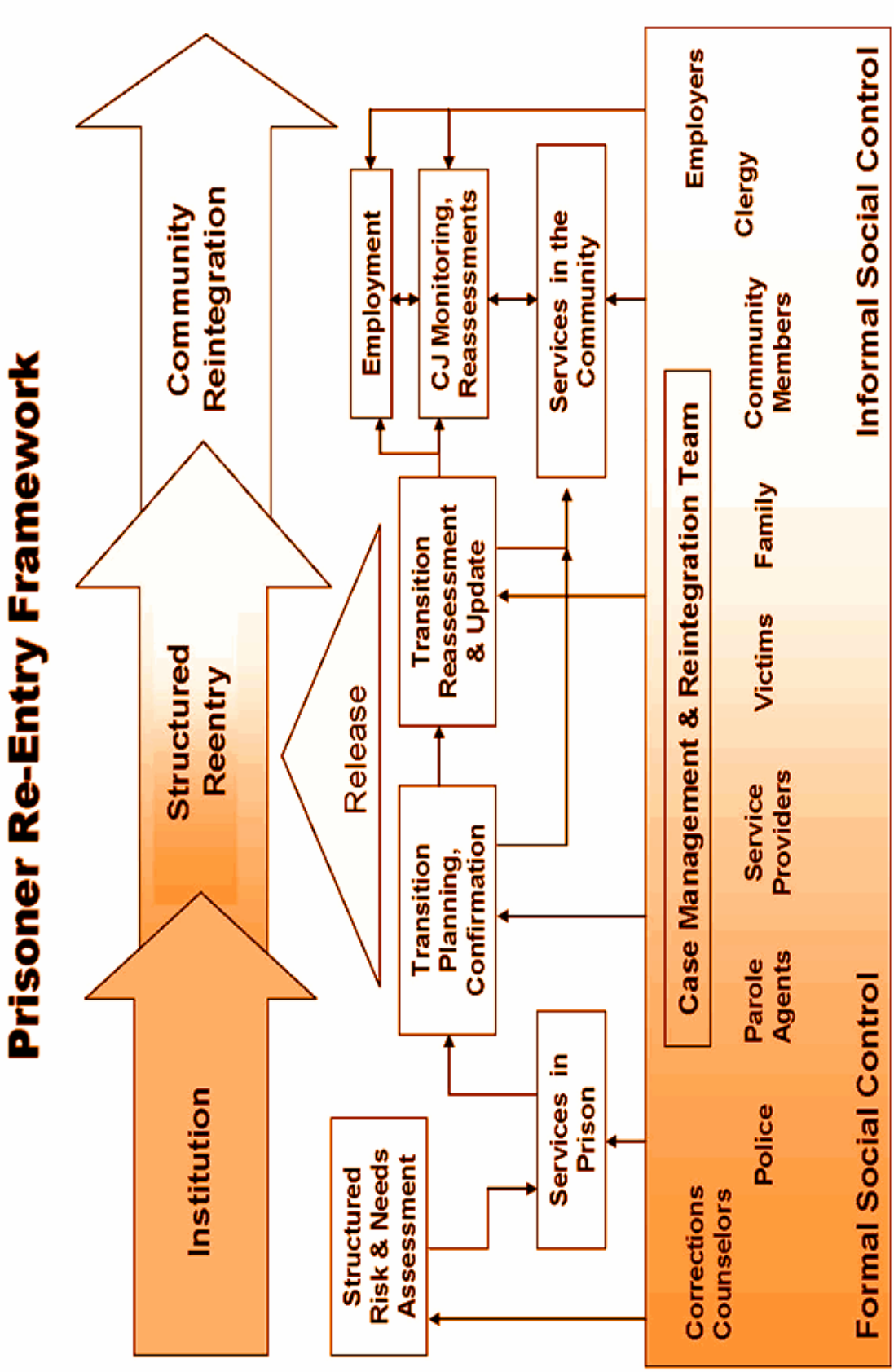
A number of advisors and experts participated in the two grantee meetings, including representatives from the National Institute for Corrections, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and USDOL's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, among others.

The TA plan also calls for "TA coaches" to be assigned to each site. According to the original plan, the coaches are to be in weekly contact with grantees, providing general and specialized assistance with the support of a handful of subject matter experts. They also visit project sites to provide hands-on assistance, particularly when challenges arise, such as low recruitment levels or other issues.

B. Conceptual Approach to the Evaluation

The government's approach to the PRI is consistent with the perspective offered by the three-stage Prisoner Re-Entry Framework. The framework (Exhibit I.1—Taxman et al. 2004) depicts re-entry as three distinct but intertwined phases: (I) institutional, (II) structured re-entry, and (III) community reintegration. In Phase I of the framework, the traditional institutional phase, the offender is assessed, classified, and placed in an appropriately secure facility. Ideally, offenders begin to receive services that address identified needs at this stage. Phase II, the structured re-entry phase, begins once an individual is identified and selected to participate in a re-entry program. Transcending organizational and physical boundaries,

Exhibit I.1


Prisoner Re-Entry Framework
Institution
Structured Reentry
Community Reintegration
Release
Structured Risk & Needs Assessment
Services in Prison
Transition Planning, Confirmation
Transition Reassessment & Update
Employment
CJ Monitoring, Reassessments
Services in the Community
Case Management & Reintegration Team
Corrections Counselors
Police
Parole Agents
Service Providers
Victims
Family
Community Members
Clergy
Employers
Formal Social Control
Informal Social Control

structured re-entry begins in prison and carries over into the ex-offender's first month or so in the community. This period is characterized by activities that involve increasing the intensity of preparation for release, formalizing basic elements of the reintegration plan, and establishing stable connections in the community. Phase III, the community reintegration phase, begins soon after release and continues until the termination of the supervision period. In this phase, the focus shifts to sustaining gains made in the initial release period, refining and maintaining the re-entry plan, and achieving independence from the formal case management process (Taxman et al. 2004; Altschuler et al. 1999).

Consistent with USDOL's overall expectations for the PRI projects, the evaluation will gather information on grantee program designs and success in structuring project frameworks that are supportive of the ex-offender's range of re-entry needs. The three-stage re-entry framework has been used to identify the principal groups of activities that represent the re-entry service needs of most offenders. The framework suggests that, in many instances, new working relationships and collaborations between and among a significant number of organizations will be needed to effect successful offender transitions between the phases. To a large extent, these new collaborations will be among entities rooted in environments characterized by different attitudes and beliefs—correction versus redemption and bureaucratic versus grassroots—involving entities that will need to share information, coordinate assistance, and cooperate to ensure continuity of services. The divergent cultural environments of the entities involved may inspire efforts to bridge organizational gaps through planning and communication; or they may serve to create major bottlenecks in enrollment, service delivery, and offender employment.

C. The PRI Evaluation

The primary objective of this evaluation is to conduct a thorough analysis of the implementation, outcomes, and costs of PRI demonstration activities during the first two years of project operations. The study's detailed description and analysis of the early evolution of the PRI projects is expected to provide a rich body of information to DOL, its federal partners, and other organizations serving ex-offenders.

The evaluation includes two principal products: this interim report and a final report that is currently scheduled to be delivered prior to June 30, 2008. Much of the analysis of project outcomes will take place after the second of two rounds of site visits, once the USDOJ pre-release grants are actively serving inmates and "graduates" of those programs are being referred to the USDOL grants.

This interim report is an implementation analysis that addresses research questions about planning, start-up, ongoing operations, and the participation of faith-based and community-based organizations across all 30 grant sites. Information and data gathered during the first round of site visits have been incorporated in the report. It seeks to paint a picture of the approaches grantees took to designing and delivering services to reintegrate returning offenders into their respective communities and the barriers grantees faced in implementing their designs. It reviews the partnerships formed with the workforce investment system, the criminal justice system, the business community, faith-based and community-based organizations, and other stakeholders that deliver employment-centered services; and it identifies the institutional and other barriers to those partnerships. Further, the report seeks to identify the participants' barriers to successful reintegration and how grantees work with offenders to overcome them. Finally, it describes perceived successes, challenges, and early lessons learned at the major stages of project

operations, including recruitment, intake, service provision, and placement, as identified by interviewees and discerned by site visitors during the initial round of site visits.

One particular aspect of this re-entry framework analysis involves the specific grantee relationships with actors in the criminal justice system. The interim report begins to examine three areas:

- The nature, extent, timing, and approaches employed by grantees to forge connections and relationships with institutional corrections (pre-release and structured re-entry) and community corrections (post-release)
- The strategies grantees used to navigate the cultural differences between the faith- and community-based entities on the one hand, and the institutional and community supervision components of the criminal justice system on the other
- The sites' approaches to working with the criminal justice system and community service providers to effect a continuity of services from pre-release to post-release to successful community reintegration and the termination of formal supervision

Preliminary information and analysis in these key areas are presented in this report.

D. Research Design and Data Collection

1. Key Research Questions

As stated above, the primary objective of this evaluation is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the implementation, outcomes and costs of PRI demonstration activities during the first two years of project operations. To accomplish this core objective, the evaluation collects information on grantee implementation and participant and partner experiences so that quantitative outcomes and costs can be analyzed in relationship to service design and receipt. Through this process, results can be considered in the context of project designs and operations. Consequently, the overall evaluation is designed to address six main research questions, the first four of which will be initially taken up in this interim report:

1. ***Who are the PRI grantees and their partners?*** What types of participants have they served in the past, and what services have they provided? What are the characteristics and qualifications of staff and volunteers? What role does faith play within the organizations, in their choice of partners, and in their provision of services? To what extent have grantees collaborated with other local organizations and agencies in the past, and what worked well? What are the demographic and economic characteristics of grantee communities?

2. ***What are the principal approaches to organizing, implementing, operating, and administering PRI projects?*** What organizational roles and linkages are developed during the planning phase? What array of services is planned? How do those services change over time? If voucher-based services are offered, how are they structured? To what extent do project designs provide for a continuity of services throughout the re-entry process? In what ways do grantees' faith-based focuses influence their proposed service strategies? What are the start-up and ongoing challenges, and what strategies do projects develop to overcome them? What factors facilitate or impede implementation? What are the grantees' successes in tracking participants? What barriers do grantees face in tracking participants, and how do they attempt to overcome these barriers? How do grantees and project partners change during their involvement in the initiative?

3. ***What patterns of cooperation and linkages evolve between PRI projects and partners such as the workforce investment system, the criminal justice system, local employers, training providers, and other stakeholders?*** What significant institutional issues influence project design and implementation? What opportunities and challenges arise in new partnerships between faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, and other actual or potential project partners? How do grantees capitalize on these opportunities and address these challenges?

4. ***Who participates in the PRI projects, and what services do they receive?*** How do projects' eligibility requirements, recruitment techniques, and enrollment patterns evolve over time, and how do these features correlate with participation and the services participants received? How do service use and completion vary based on participants' backgrounds? What are participants' barriers to entry into the project, to service receipt, and to successful reintegration into the community? What are grantee, partner, and focus group respondents' perspectives of project success in addressing these barriers?

5. ***What are PRI participants' short-term outcomes, including employment, degree attainment, housing, substance abuse, and recidivism?*** How do these outcomes vary for different types of PRI participants? How do they compare to outcomes for other programs seeking to assist ex-offenders?

6. ***What are the resource costs to communities of operating PRI job training and employment preparation projects for ex-offenders?*** What is the cost, on average, per PRI participant? What is the cost of each program component? What is the cost

per participant of each component? What in-kind resources are projects able to leverage from the community and for what service components? What factors explain important variations in costs across grantees?

Questions on participant outcomes and program costs will be addressed in the final report, as will some of the issues related to service use and the perspectives of focus group respondents that are not covered in this report. Additional analysis of the questions covered by this report, based on the continued development and experiences of the projects, will also be included in the final report.

These questions were developed through an iterative process among the evaluation team, USDOL, and other federal partners. The questions are, of necessity, a subset of the key research questions of interest to federal policymakers in that the scope of this evaluation is limited by the parameters of the PRI demonstration program and the time frame available for the evaluation. By providing a detailed description of the early evolution of the PRI projects, the evaluation will also help to identify issues that USDOL might face if it chooses to introduce a long-term outcomes study or a random assignment impact evaluation in the later years of implementation.

2. Data Sources and Data Collection for the Interim Report

Data for the interim report has been collected from four sources:

1. ***Site Visits.*** Much of the qualitative data on project operations was collected during visits to each of the demonstration sites, conducted from June through October 2006. These site visits included interviews with staff members from the grantees and their partners, observations of activities, and interviews with participants and employers.

2. ***Management Information System (MIS) for Project Tracking.*** The grantees collect information on participant characteristics at enrollment, ongoing data on the services received, and employment and other outcome-related measures. This information is then entered into an Internet-based tracking system developed by USDOL for this demonstration program. Limited MIS data analysis is included in this report; however, a comprehensive analysis of MIS data will be conducted for the outcomes and costs analysis in the final report.

3. ***Project-Related Documents.*** Grantee proposals contain a rich body of information about the grantee organizations, their histories, and their plans for the PRI demonstration. Other relevant documents (such as implementation plans, grantee quarterly reports, and grant amendments) produced during the course of the demonstration have also been reviewed to obtain a better understanding of the guidance offered by USDOL and the implementation successes and challenges of the grantees.

4. ***Secondary Data Sources.*** Data on the socioeconomic characteristics of the local PRI communities help to provide a context for the demonstration. Limited research on other initiatives serving ex-offenders and on programs offering similar services to different populations also helps to provide a basis for comparison when examining the findings of the evaluation.

The principal data sources for the interim report are the interviews conducted during the first round of site visits. Project-related documents provide start-up and ongoing background information for the synthesis of implementation changes over time, and secondary data sources provide information on the state of research on offender re-entry, as well as consistent and comparable information on the local communities served by the grants.

Collection and Analysis of Site Visit Data

Site visitors conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews, observed project activities, and performed additional research during their two-day visits to PRI locations. Key interviewees included project managers, case managers, job developers, and representatives from key service providers and partners (including those involved with workforce investment, criminal justice, mentoring and housing). Semi-structured interview guides were designed to lead interviewees into discussions about program designs, principal processes, partnership relationships, and key challenges they had experienced through the time of the site visit. The information collected thus varies from one site to the next; and although attempts were made to collect similarly basic information from all sites, in some instances such information is not strictly comparable across all 30 sites.

Qualitative data collected during the site visits, as well as other grant-related information, were organized into a structured framework based on the principal research questions, a framework that was designed to ensure that this report captured the progress grantees made through the project implementation phase. As the process went forward, the site visit team sought to identify trends, patterns, and themes encountered by sites during the first several months of project operations.

In the SGA, ETA placed certain parameters and constraints on the grantees. Yet, given that the PRI is a demonstration initiative, ETA also provided considerable flexibility to encourage demonstration sites to try different approaches and service designs. Grantees will achieve varying outcomes under their different circumstances and through their differing approaches, all of which will provide a rich source of qualitative data for examining what appears to work and not work in different contexts and why. Although it would be premature to base a significant portion of the analysis for this report on outcome data for the first several months of enrollees, the report does incorporate PRI MIS data on those occasions where such information is helpful in describing such topics as implementation challenges or comparisons of projects' early implementation experiences. Additional information on site visit methodology can be found in Appendix C.

Limitations

Time and resource constraints limit the implementation analysis for this report. Site visits began less than four months after the grantees were expected to have begun enrolling participants. During this period, many grantees were reformulating portions of their program designs, and collaborating entities were just beginning to experience actual project operations.

Furthermore, project designs may be continually evolving, and changes have occurred between the time of the site visit and the writing of this report.

The overall design of the initiative anticipates a relatively lengthy post-placement period during which follow-up services for participants are likely to be provided. Given when the site visits took place, few grantees had significant experience serving participants in any extended follow-up mode. In addition, with 30 grantees, the amount of detail that could be collected from each site had to be limited.

Although the time frame for observation represented by this report is sufficient to capture initial planning and implementation lessons, it is not long enough to identify major program successes associated with steady state operations or to gather complete information on how successful these projects are in building effective organizational/partnership structures, in designing successful program and service components, in placing participants in stable employment situations, and in effecting offender reintegration that has a long-lasting, positive impact on the community and the participant. Additional data collection and a second round of site visits, beginning in the fall of 2007, promise to provide more detailed information on how relatively mature PRI projects assist ex-offenders to secure steady employment and re-integrate into their communities. The analysis of information collected during these activities will be an important component of the final evaluation report.

E. Organization of the Report

This chapter laid out the background of the prisoner re-entry issue, described the federal government's re-entry initiative, and provided a summary of the approach to the evaluation. Chapter II describes the PRI grantees and their communities, and it provides an overview of how the projects are organized. It also examines project administration and partnerships, with

specific discussion of developments and arrangements with key partners in criminal justice, workforce investment, housing, substance abuse, and mental health organizations. Chapter III analyzes and compares project start-up experiences, along with approaches to outreach and recruitment. Chapter IV contains a review of project service designs and services being delivered. Finally, Chapter V summarizes key findings and includes a discussion of the implications of these findings for the initiative as a whole and for the other evaluation tasks.

II. PRI GRANTEES, COMMUNITIES, AND PROJECT ORGANIZATION

This chapter presents information on the environments within which the PRI projects seek to provide services to ex-offenders. Section A of the chapter describes the 30 organizations awarded PRI grants, including their size and the extent of their previous work with ex-offenders. Section B provides information on the communities in which the projects operate, with the objective of laying out the economic environment for projects and their participants. Section C reviews the overall project organizational structures, including the staffing, partners and project administration. This section includes a review of grantee partnership relationships with entities in the key areas of criminal justice, workforce investment, housing, substance abuse, mental health, mentoring, and employment. The final component, Section D, contains further information on the overall framework established by USDOL for project operations, including a discussion of the performance expectations for the projects.

A. Grantee Characteristics

Grantee organizations span a broad spectrum, with respect to their affiliation, experience, orientation, size, and other characteristics. Table II.1 illustrates key variables among the PRI grantee organizations.

Grant Awards. For this program, grant amounts vary within a narrow range, from $659,000 to $684,250. In their proposals, awardees also identified additional ("matching") resources that would be part of their overall project activities, thereby expanding the range of services available to ex-offenders participating in their projects. The ability to leverage additional resources to support prisoner re-entry services may be an important factor that contributes to project success in achieving the goals of the program. At this point, however, it is unclear how many of those matching resources were actually integrated into PRI project services. Shortly after the grants

TABLE II.1:
Overview of PRI Grantees

Grantee Name	City	State	Initial Grant Amount	Faith/ Comm. [a]	Year Estab.	Annual Budget (millions)
Arizona Women's Education and Employment, Inc.	Phoenix	AZ	$660,000	C	1980	$2.3
The Primavera Foundation, Inc.	Tucson	AZ	$660,000	C*	1983	$2.5
Fresno Career Development Institute, Inc.	Fresno	CA	$660,000	C*	1992	$1.7
Allen Temple Housing & Economic Devlpmnt. Corp.	Oakland	CA	$660,000	F	1989	$0.8
Mexican American Alcoholism Program, Inc.	Sacramento	CA	$660,000	C	1975	$6.0
Metro United Methodist Urban Ministry	San Diego	CA	$665,935	F*	1966	$3.2
The Empowerment Program	Denver	CO	$660,000	C*	1986	$1.3
Community Partners In Action, Inc.	Hartford	CT	$666,671	C*	1875	$10.0
OIC of Broward County, Inc.	Ft. Lauderdale	FL	$660,474	C	2000	$0.8
The Directors Council [b]	Des Moines	IA	$660,000	C*	1999	$0.75
The Safer Foundation	Chicago	IL	$663,746	C*	1972	$18.0
The Church United for Community Development	Baton Rouge	LA	$659,391	F	1997	$0.2
Odyssey House Louisiana, Inc.	New Orleans	LA	$684,250	C	1973	$2.3
Span, Inc. [c]	Boston	MA	$660,000	C	1976	$2.0
Episcopal Community Services of Maryland	Baltimore	MD	$657,935	F	1927	$1.0
Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency	Pontiac	MI	$660,000	C*	1964	$30.0
Connections to Success	Kansas City	MO	$659,432	F*	1998	$1.2
St. Patrick Center	St. Louis	MO	$660,000	F	1985	$9.2
Career Opportunity Development, Inc.	Egg Harbor City	NJ	$660,000	C	1970	$5.3
Goodwill Industries of Greater NY & Northern NJ [c]	Newark	NJ	$660,000	C*	1920	$90.0
Urban Youth Alliance International, Inc. (UYAI) [d]	Bronx	NY	$660,121	F	1970	$0.5
The Doe Fund, Inc.	Brooklyn	NY	$659,000	C	1990	$47.6
Talbert House	Cincinnati	OH	$660,000	F	2001	$30.0
SE Works, Inc.	Portland	OR	$660,000	C	1997	$1.8
Connection Training Services	Philadelphia	PA	$660,000	C*	1990	$1.8
Urban League of Greater Dallas & North Central TX	Dallas	TX	$660,000	C	1967	$4.6
WABC Central City Comprehensive Comm. Center [e]	Houston	TX	$660,000	F	1963	n/a
Goodwill Industries of San Antonio	San Antonio	TX	$663,045	C	1945	$38.0
People of Color Against AIDS Network	Seattle	WA	$660,000	C	1987	$1.8
Word of Hope Ministries, Inc	Milwaukee	WI	$660,000	F*	1996	$0.9

Sources: Data from grant proposals, with the exception of some budget information as noted below.
Notes:
All budgets are for Fiscal Year 2005 except Goodwill of NY/NJ which is Projected 2006.
a - Entries for faith-based/community-based (F/C) designation were obtained from OMB Form 1890 (where provided, as indicated by *), or from information in the grantee's application. Information was verified during site visits.
b - The Directors Council indicated their annual budget was between $500,000 and $1 million.
c - Span and Goodwill of NY/NJ indicated that their budgets exceeded the figures shown.
d - UYAI financial data were obtained from http://www.uyai.org
e - WABC 5C's budget information was unavailable at the time of preparation.

were awarded, a USDOL official advised grantees to eliminate all matching funds from their official budgets, a step that makes them unaccountable for demonstrating that such funds were actually used for PRI purposes. A cost analysis of the PRI projects and ex-offender re-entry services provided through those projects, using financial data and information from grantee interviews, is planned during the final phase of the evaluation and will appear in the evaluation's final report. The cost analysis will incorporate information on matching funds and leveraged resources used to support project objectives.

Orientation (Faith-Based or Community-Based). Ten of the grantees can be characterized as FBOs. FBO grantees are not concentrated in any geographical region, nor are they limited to cities of a particular population size. The other twenty grantees are CBOs, and these sites are also dispersed throughout the country. Most of the projects operated by CBOs involve FBOs as subgrantees or partners, particularly in the mentoring area. In these projects, FBOs typically hold or share responsibility for recruiting, training, and assigning mentors and overseeing mentoring activities. Assisting with participant housing, substance abuse treatment, and supportive services are among the other major roles for faith-based entities, although these roles are also assumed by some CBOs.

Affiliation. Although the participating FBOs are primarily locally based organizations, the community-based grantees include three affiliates of nationally known entities: the National Urban League (in Dallas) and Goodwill Industries (in San Antonio and Newark, New Jersey).

Experience. Grantees' previous experience with one or more components of the criminal justice system and/or in providing services to ex-offenders would be expected to contribute to their success at implementing PRI projects and ultimately in providing services to ex-offenders. Several of the grantees had such experience. At least four were recipients of grants under

USDOL's Ready4Work program (R4W): the Safer Foundation in Chicago; Word of Hope Ministries, Inc., in Milwaukee; Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church in Houston; and Allen Temple in Oakland, California. R4W brought together employers, the criminal justice system, and faith-based and community-based social service organizations to reintegrate former prisoners; it used employment as a primary goal and mentoring and case management as means to support employment and reduce recidivism. A number of grantees also received grants under USDOL's Youth Offender program. Findings from this latter initiative point to the potential for positive outcomes from employment-centered interventions. Appendix A describes in greater detail federal efforts at the re-integration of ex-offenders.

Size. As measured by their annual budgets *before* receipt of the PRI grant, grantees varied significantly. The largest grantee organization reported a budget in excess of $90,000,000 per year, while the smallest reported an annual budget of a little over $200,000. A new $660,000 grant can place considerable burdens on a small and inexperienced organization. Smaller organizations are likely to have less infrastructure and human knowledge available to support project start-up activities, which could affect the efficiency of grantees' project implementation efforts. Chapter III reviews in greater detail the interplay between these factors and grantee start-up issues.

B. Grant Communities

The PRI project sites are located in 29 different cities in 20 different States across the country, as illustrated by the map in Figure II-1. Seven States are home to a total of 17 projects: four grants serve communities in California, three are in Texas, and two each focus on communities in Arizona, Louisiana, Missouri, New Jersey, and New York State. Thirteen States host the remaining 13 projects. Project sites are located in every major section of the country.

The SGA limited eligible applicants to urban communities. Within this framework, however, there is still the question of the level of "community" that can accurately represent each grantee's operating environment. It should be noted that most of the projects located in larger cities identified "communities" or neighborhoods as their primary targeted areas, while their proposals also provided for the enrollment of individuals from a larger area, such as the entire city or county. In fact, most projects were not geographically selective in their recruitment strategies, opting to enroll individuals from the larger metropolitan areas in which their projects operate.

For analytical purposes, one possible approach to comparing project "communities" is to look at the sites in terms of their "city," i.e., their local political jurisdiction. Table II.2 presents population data for the cities themselves and for the local metropolitan areas. Civilian labor force data by metropolitan area are also included. Nine of the projects are located in eight of the nine largest cities by population (Bureau of the Census 2005). Of the ten largest cities in the United States by population, only Los Angeles and San Jose do not have projects. (Communities in New York City account for two projects.) The 25 largest cities host 14 projects, and the 50 largest cities, 21. Only two of the projects target cities of fewer than 100,000 in population.

Many of the projects are taking place within labor markets that are much larger than the specific communities in which the grantees themselves are located. Pontiac, Michigan, for example, is host to a PRI project. The city itself in 2003 had a population of around 67,000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Pontiac, however, is located in the Detroit Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), with a population exceeding 4.4 million.

Labor markets and commuting areas are largely irrelevant for many ex-offenders, though, who often lack their own means of transportation. For most PRI participants, the geographic


Figure II.1
PRISONER RE-ENTRY INITIATIVE GRANTEES
Grant Locations and Grantee Organization Type
Seattle
WA
Portland
OR
CA
Sacramento
Oakland
Fresno
San Diego
NV
UT
AZ
Phoenix
Tucson
CO
Denver
NM
MT
ND
SD
WY
NE
KS
OK
TX
Dallas
San Antonio
Houston
MN
IA
Des Moines
MO
Kansas City
AR
LA
Baton Rouge
New Orleans
MS
WI
Milwaukee
Chicago
IL
St. Louis
MI
Pontiac
IN
OH
Cincinnati
KY
TN
AL
ID
AK
HI
NY
PA
Philadelphia
Newark
Bronx
Brooklyn
NJ
Egg Harbor City
Baltimore
MD
DE
WV
VA
NC
SC
GA
FL
Fort Lauderdale
ME
VT
NH
Boston
MA
CT
RI
Hartford

TABLE II.2:
PRI City and Metropolitan Area Statistics

Grantee Name	Location		City	Metropolitan Area	
	City	ST	Population	Population	Civilian Labor Force
AWEE	Phoenix	AZ	1,461,575	3,805,123	1,896,329
The Primavera Foundation	Tucson	AZ	515,526	902,720	437,245
Fresno Career Dvmt Institute, Inc.	Fresno	CA	461,116	858,948	389,290
Allen Temple ATHEDCO	Oakland	CA	395,274	3,225,651	2,140,010
MAAP	Sacramento	CA	456,441	2,004,476	1,000,015
Metro United Methodist Urban Ministry	San Diego	CA	1,255,540	2,824,259	1,380,486
The Empowerment Program	Denver	CO	557,917	2,327,901	1,288,761
Community Partners In Action	Hartford	CT	124,397	1,140,319	617,677
OIC Of Broward County	Ft. Lauderdale	FL	167,380	5,334,685	2,629,492
The Directors Council	Des Moines	IA	194,163	511,565	295,355
The Safer Foundation	Chicago	IL	2,842,518	9,272,117	4,805,440
Church United for Community Dvmt	Baton Rouge	LA	222,064	706,909	356,107
Odyssey House Louisiana, Inc.	New Orleans	LA	454,863	1,292,774	641,667
SPAN, Inc.	Boston	MA	559,034	4,270,631	2,337,546
Episcopal Community Services of MD	Baltimore	MD	635,815	2,583,923	1,366,045
Oakland Livingston HAS	Pontiac	MI	67,331	4,428,941	2,219,110
Connections to Success	Kansas City	MO	444,965	1,909,666	1,037,951
St. Patrick Center	St. Louis	MO	344,362	2,725,336	1,446,583
Career Opportunity Development, Inc.	Egg Harbor City	NJ	4,497	264,403	139,665
Goodwill Industries of NY/NJ	Newark	NJ	280,666	18,351,099	9,171,400
Urban Youth Alliance Int'l	Bronx	NY	8,143,197	18,351,099	9,171,400
The Doe Fund, Inc.	Brooklyn	NY	8,143,197	18,351,099	9,171,400
Talbert House	Cincinnati	OH	308,728	2,026,216	1,070,294
SE Works, Inc.	Portland	OR	533,427	2,063,277	1,113,657
Connection Training Services	Philadelphia	PA	1,463,281	5,644,383	2,909,181
Urban League of Greater Dallas	Dallas	TX	1,213,825	5,727,391	3,045,486
WABC 5C's	Houston	TX	2,016,582	5,193,448	2,656,346
Goodwill Industries of San Antonio	San Antonio	TX	1,256,509	1,844,018	888,517
POCAAN	Seattle	WA	573,911	3,133,715	1,706,260
Word of Hope Ministries, Inc	Milwaukee	WI	578,887	1,480,517	773,790

Sources: Data for all cities except Egg Harbor City and Pontiac are from "Annual Estimates of the Population for Incorporated Places over 100,000, Ranked by July 1, 2005 Population: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005" from the U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. This report was released June 21, 2006. Pontiac and Egg Harbor City data are from 2005 Population Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.

scope of their employment options does not extend far beyond their immediate neighborhoods. They sometimes find that relying on public transportation for cross-town trips is unrealistic, and some participants are reportedly wary of crossing into neighborhoods controlled by rival gangs.

Differences in sites' total population and civilian labor force could suggest potential challenges in terms of recruitment (less populous jurisdictions would be expected to have a smaller pool of potential participants from which to recruit) and placement (regional economies with fewer persons in the labor force could be assumed to be less diverse and potentially more troublesome in terms of job development). A closer examination of the communities' economic and housing situations reveals several other factors, such as housing availability and access to public transportation, that could contribute to challenges faced by projects as they seek to help ex-offenders gain stable employment and stay out of prison. Table II.3 provides data on four factors related to local economic, housing, and transportation conditions.

Each of the four measures in Table II.3 represents a distinctly different indicator of the environment within which the PRI projects are taking place.

Unemployment Rate. Projects operate in communities where official unemployment rates for 2006 ranged from 3.4 percent to 8.0 percent. Two sites—Fresno and Pontiac—had rates of relatively high unemployment, 8.0 percent and 7.2 percent, respectively. Three other locations—Des Moines, Phoenix, and Fort Lauderdale—operate in much more robust local economies, where the unemployment rate was at or below 3.6 percent. Sites with higher unemployment rates may face greater challenges in the placement area. A review of apparent relationships between local unemployment rates and some of the challenges identified by interviewees during the evaluation site visits appears in Chapter IV.

Median Wage. Workers' median wages for 2002 (the most recent year for which such data are available) also span a broad spectrum. Fresno, the site with the highest unemployment rate, also has the lowest median wage, $28,814 per annum, a figure that is less than 80 percent of the national average. Other sites with relatively low median wages include Tucson, Baton Rouge

TABLE II.3:
PRI Site Economic and Related Statistics

Grantee Name	Location	Unem-ployment Rate (percent)	Median Wage (annual)	Median Rental (monthly)	Public Transpor-tation Expend. (per capita)
AWEE	Phoenix	3.6%	$36,045	$708	$34.55
The Primavera Foundation	Tucson	4.0%	$31,673	$605	$53.99
Fresno Career Dvmt Institute, Inc.	Fresno	8.0%	$28,814	$728	$38.73
Allen Temple ATHEDCO	Oakland	4.2%	$46,877	$889	$127.88
MAAP	Sacramento	4.7%	$39,354	$852	$65.08
Metro United Methodist Urban Ministry	San Diego	4.0%	$39,305	$1,104	$26.81
The Empowerment Program	Denver	4.4%	$42,133	$704	$136.11
Community Partners In Action	Hartford	4.4%	$44,387	$664	$47.23
OIC Of Broward County	Ft. Lauderdale	3.5%	$34,475	$815	$61.18
The Directors Council	Des Moines	3.4%	$35,641	$618	$27.25
The Safer Foundation	Chicago	4.5%	$43,239	$783	$110.16
Church United for Community Dvmt	Baton Rouge	3.8%	$31,366	$626	$18.53
Odyssey House Louisiana, Inc.	New Orleans	4.8%	$32,407	$590	$82.54
SPAN, Inc.	Boston	4.6%	$45,685	$1,075	$266.41
Episcopal Community Services of MD	Baltimore	4.1%	$38,718	$667	n/a
Oakland Livingston HAS	Pontiac	7.2%	$43,224	$704	$66.37
Connections to Success	Kansas City	5.0%	$36,731	$664	$32.30
St. Patrick Center	St. Louis	5.0%	$36,712	$567	$63.92
Career Opportunity Development, Inc.	Egg Harbor City	5.7%	$32,201	$835	n/a
Goodwill Industries of NY/NJ	Newark	4.5%	$48,781	$769	$265.33
Urban Youth Alliance Int'l	Bronx	4.5%	$57,708	$778	$265.33
The Doe Fund, Inc.	Brooklyn	4.5%	$57,708	$869	$265.33
Talbert House	Cincinnati	5.2%	$37,168	$524	$37.22
SE Works, Inc.	Portland	5.1%	$37,650	$696	$146.88
Connection Training Services	Philadelphia	4.6%	$41,121	$725	$159.94
Urban League of Greater Dallas	Dallas	4.8%	$43,000	$685	$73.39
WABC 5C's	Houston	4.9%	$42,712	$682	$62.09
Goodwill Industries of San Antonio	San Antonio	4.6%	$31,336	$649	$60.37
POCAAN	Seattle	4.5%	$46,093	$804	$140.39
Word of Hope Ministries, Inc	Milwaukee	4.9%	$36,523	$456	$96.87
NATIONAL AVERAGES		**4.6%**	**$36,764**	**$728**	**$99.73**

Sources: Unemployment Rate is for the relevant Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006 Annual Averages. Median Wage is for individual workers in the MSA, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002 data. Median Rent is for renter-occupied units in the principal city of the MSA, from the US Census Bureau 2005 American Community Survey. Public Transportation Expenditure is the closest approximation of public transportation expenditures for the MSA per capita per annum, calculated using data on government investment in public transportation from the 2005 National Transit Database.

and New Orleans (both pre-Katrina), Egg Harbor City (NJ), and San Antonio. Seven projects are located in areas with median wages that range from 20 to 57 percent above the national average, including Seattle, Oakland, Boston, Hartford, Brooklyn, Newark (NJ), and the Bronx. Variations in local wages could affect the success projects realize in meeting the wage goal for the initiative.[5] The relationship between wage conditions and project services and performance will be explored in more detail in the final evaluation report, where outcome data will be incorporated into the analysis.

Median Rent. As with the first two variables, data on median monthly rent show considerable variation across project sites. Median monthly rental costs are above $1,000 in two locations—San Diego and Boston—and below $600 in three—Milwaukee, Cincinnati, and St. Louis.[6] Since housing supply is inversely related to housing costs (Glaeser 2004), these data on median rents serve to highlight differences in the relative demand-supply relationship (in addition to other factors). In Chapter IV's review of projects' experiences in facilitating participants' access to housing, the presented data compares those experiences with local rental costs.

Public Transportation Expenditures. Because many sites identified transportation as a major barrier to participant success, we sought a means to illustrate differences among sites in public transportation systems. Expressed in per capita terms, this admittedly crude measure is meant to be an approximate indicator of the extent to which public resources are used to support the local

[5] It should be noted here that USDOL's performance goals are not adjusted for variations in local economic conditions.

[6] New Orleans also appears below $600 in these data, but rents in both New Orleans and Baton Rouge have soared post-Katrina.

public transportation infrastructure.[7] As might be expected, these figures vary considerably, with larger cities, particularly those in the northeast, generally figuring at the higher end of the results.

C. Project Organizational and Management Structures

1. Project Staffing

Sites exhibit significant differences in their approaches to organizing project staff and to delivering services under the PRI grants. Table II.4 illustrates the approximate distribution of staff across major program functions for the grantees.[8] Note that the table does not include project managers, or the executive directors who may also work on project administration and operations. Contractor staff are included.

Noteworthy observation follows:

- Total staff counts (not including the project manager) range from three to thirteen.
- Almost 80 percent of the sites had from four to seven staff, and almost half had five to six.
- Over two-thirds (21) of the sites had two or three case managers.
- Only four sites had dedicated retention specialists on staff.

The grantee with the highest number of staff, Goodwill Industries of San Antonio, provides participant services in a series of locations throughout a large metropolitan area. The six full-time equivalent (FTE) staff from this organization who appear in the case manager column have a relatively broad range of responsibilities for participant intake and ongoing support, and they also carry out job development and placement functions, in addition to MIS data entry. These individuals are supported by assistants, who also perform some of these functions, although at a

[7] To the extent that the availability of transportation appears to be a meaningful factor affecting project performance and participant outcomes, evaluators will continue to seek out more accurate methods by which to measure this variable.

[8] Because staffing patterns for most sites fluctuate over time, data presented represent the situation in each site at the time of the site visit, as noted by the site visitor. Where grantee leadership indicated vacancies existed, they are so noted on the table.

TABLE II.4:
Distribution of PRI Project Personnel (Approximate Full-Time Equivalents)

Grantee	TOTAL	Case Managers	Job Developer	Retention Spec'ist	Intake Coordinator	Mentor Coordinator	Office Assistant	Emp. Skills Spec'ist	Other Staff	Comments
Goodwill Industries of San Antonio	13	6					5.5	1	0.5	
Goodwill Industries of NY/NJ	12	2 (1)	1 (1)	(2)		(1)	1	2	(1)	*7*
St. Patrick Center	9	3	3		2	1				*5*
The Empowerment Program	9	6	2			1				
Career Opportunity Dvmt, Inc.	8	3	3		1	1				*1*
OIC of Broward County	7	4	2		1					*1,2*
Connection Training Services	7	2	1	1			1	1	1	
Community Partners in Action	6.5	2	1	1		1.5		1		*1*
Odyssey House Louisiana, Inc.	6	3	2			1				
SPAN, Inc.	6	2 (1)	1 (1)			1				*1, 3*
Word of Hope Ministries, Inc.	6	3	1			1	1			
Connections to Success	6		2.5				0.5		3	*5*
SE Works, Inc.	6	4	1						1	*2*
Episcopal Comm. Services of MD	6	3	1		1	1				*4*
WABC 5C's	6	3	2			1				*1*
POCAAN	6	2	2		1		(1)			*1*
Metro United	6	3	1		1				1	
The Safer Foundation	6	4	2							*2, 5*
The Primavera Foundation	5.5	3.5	1			1				*1*
Allen Temple ATHEDCO	5	2	1			(1)	1			
Fresno Career Dvmt Institute, Inc.	5	2	1 (1)		1					
MAAP	4	3					(1)			*1, 4*
Urban League of Greater Dallas	4	1 (1)	1				1			*1*
The Directors Council	4	3				1				
Church United for Comm. Dvmt.	4	3					1			
Talbert House	4	2	2							*1*
Urban Youth Alliance International	4	2	1		1					
Oaklkand Livingston HAS	4	3					1			
The Doe Fund, Inc.	3	1	1	1						*1, 2, 6*
AWEE	3	2		1						

Sources: Data derived from grant documents including budgets, budget narratives and proposals, and from evaluation site visits.

Notes: All sites had project directors and/or executive level staff not included in staff count.

Numbers in parenthesis () indicate vacant positions

Grantees are shown by size without any alphabetizing in cases of ties.

Key for "Comments" column entries:

(1) Includes subcontracted position(s).
(2) One or more case managers are outstationed.
(3) Vacancies to be filled once enrollments increase.
(4) Intake Coordinator is also Office Manager.
(5) Does not include staffing for subgrantees who enroll participants and provide case management services.
(6) Many staff who serve PRI participants also serve other clients, making it difficult to determine staffing counts.
(7) "Employment Skills Specialists" are job coaches responsible for tracking the client after the initial placement.

more basic level. In addition, the assistants carry out general office work (e.g., answering telephones, maintaining brochures and files). Individual staff in both job categories spend about half of their time on PRI and work on other projects in addition to PRI.

Many sites had experienced significant staff turnover prior to the site visit, with one site reporting six vacancies for its twelve positions. Many of the staffing changes at the grantees can be ascribed to "growing pains," as site leadership and staff alike became more familiar with the requirements of PRI project operations and administration. In addition, staff turnover also seems to be relatively common in social service positions such as those at PRI grantees.

The relative absence of dedicated retention specialists is likely attributable to the projects' life cycle stage at the time of the site visits. At most sites, very few participants had achieved employment, and any "hand-holding" and other ongoing support for employed participants was typically handled by job developers and/or case managers. As increasing numbers of PRI participants obtain employment, it is likely that the retention function will take on greater importance. It will be informative to see whether projects respond by assigning this responsibility to a specialist or by adding it to the responsibilities of existing staff.

A handful of projects provide all services directly through staff employed by the grantee. Other grantees have numerous subcontractors who are responsible for substantial portions of service delivery. Wherever possible, Table II.4 indicates those situations where key functions are subcontracted. According to the table, over one-third of the sites subcontracted major portions of project operations. The strength of such subcontracting relationships, and the degree to which the subcontractors' missions are aligned with those of the project and the grantee, would be expected to affect the grantees' ability to achieve the PRI objectives.

2. Partners and Partnership Development

The breadth and complexity of the assistance needed by returning ex-offenders requires grantees to reach out to other entities in order to construct a menu of services that responds to the SGA requirements and meets the needs of project participants. In general, this report refers to these other entities as "service providers." Other types of partners whose participation is vitally important for grantees to achieve project objectives in an efficient manner are the array of organizations that are part of the criminal justice (CJ) system in each PRI community. These "CJ partners" include state, federal, and local corrections institutions that house offenders who are eligible for services under the PRI; they also include the agencies responsible for community supervision at each of those jurisdictional levels. In locations where diversion programs offer alternatives to incarceration, the CJ partners may include components of the courts systems. The creation of effective working relationships among multiple partners and the management of project services may require more complex organizational structures and interagency agreements than many grantees have been accustomed to.

Criminal Justice System

Grantees developed partnerships with local, state, and federal criminal justice authorities in an effort to recruit potential PRI participants. These relationships include contacts with representatives from State Departments of Correction (DOCs), prisons and jails, and community supervision agencies. It appears that PRI grantees that already had some positive relationship with agencies in the criminal justice system were more successful at establishing productive connections with criminal justice agencies under the rubric of the PRI. Table II.5 displays examples of the types of interactions that take place through these relationships.

Table II.5:
Examples of PRI Grantee Relationships
with Criminal Justice Institutions and Community Agencies

Description of relationship	Total
Parole/Probation Officers Referring to Grantee	20
Dedicated Staff Person to Coordinate with PRI	7
Drug Court or Family Court Refers to Grantee	1

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantee response categories are not mutually exclusive.

Based on information reported by site visit interviewees, at least four grantees have developed working relationships with representatives from federal prisons and/or halfway houses; eight grantees have relationships with state DOC staff; and seven grantees work closely with local/county authorities. For example, one grantee has case managers that are co-located at the county parole office. This allows case managers to keep parole officers informed of participant progress; likewise, if the ex-offender has special parole conditions or needs, or if a re-arrest occurs, parole agents can efficiently provide this information to case managers. With co-location, the information flow is fluid and informal, thereby allowing frequent updates and facilitating collaboration between case managers and parole officers. Several interviewees at this site noted that the parole office has seen a reduction in the number of technical violations of parole.

Another grantee also has case managers and parole officers working closely together, and two parole officers spend a part of the week at the grantee's site so that grantee staff and parole officers can work as a team with the PRI participants. Yet another grantee has developed a close relationship with community justice officers through frequent meetings and presentations. Grantee staff members go to county parole offices to give presentations to the parole officers so that the latter are aware of the services that PRI can provide. There is also a parole officer who

has been assigned to work with the PRI grantee and attend all of the weekly partner meetings that the grantee holds.

A fourth grantee has worked closely with a community corrections supervisor to maintain open lines of communication and to resolve quickly and positively any issues with PRI participants. For instance, parole restrictions require that participants submit to urine tests, yet many of the PRI participants had a difficult time getting to the parole office during the work day so that they could be tested. The grantee approached the supervisor at community corrections, and the two parties were able to arrange Saturday testing for PRI participants whose schedules interfered with weekday testing. The grantee was also able to arrange for an ex-offender who owns a local business to hire current PRI participants, despite the common parole condition of current parolees not being able to associate with ex-offenders. The business owner plans to hire up to 20 PRI participants; this would not have been possible without negotiation and cooperation between the grantee and parole office.

In at least seven sites, the criminal justice authority has designated one of their staff members to be a "dedicated point of contact" to work with the PRI grantee and/or participants. The value of this kind of relationship is apparent to other grantees, who expressed concerns over the delay in funding the USDOJ pre-release grants. Nine grantees explicitly noted that the delay hindered the partnership relationship with the state DOC officials. In other sites, the delay forced grantees to develop positive relationships with CJ officials to support project recruitment needs.

Seven grantees reported having a difficult relationship with state corrections authorities. At several sites, dealing with parole and probation offices was described as a "bureaucratic nightmare." One interviewee noted that other reentry programs had been able to secure a

dedicated point-of-contact at parole and/or probation offices in their home cities, yet this grantee had been unsuccessful in its attempts to achieve this type of relationship. Another grantee reportedly had focused on recruiting inside prisons and had not spent much time cultivating relationships with community corrections officers. At one site, according to grantee staff, parole and probation officers perceive the grantee as only handling the "easy" participants; thus, community justice officers believe that they have little to gain by working with the grantee.

Compared to their connections with the institutional side of criminal justice systems, grantees see their relationships with entities on the community supervision side as closer and more positive. At least 20 grantees have developed good relationships with parole and probation officers, who could be state or local employees, depending on how that function is organized in the locality. At least one of the grantees provides space in the project offices to parole officers responsible for supervising the site's PRI participants.

Relationships with the federal court system, particularly the U.S. Probation Office, appear to be a key "prize" for many of the PRI grantees. Federal prisoners and probationers benefit from a relatively well-resourced system of incarceration and post-release supervision. Interviewees who offered opinions on this topic were unanimous in their praise for the level of support that the U.S. Probation Office provides to ex-offenders.

In general, however, sites found it difficult to establish productive relationships with the full range of possible partners in the criminal justice system. Although relationships across the entire spectrum of partners would not be a requirement for running an effective prisoner re-entry project, collaboration with one or more such entities would be necessary to ensure a minimally sufficient inflow of qualified candidates for project services. Such partnerships could be even more valuable if they possessed some added features—e.g., coordinated services provided pre-

and post-release, referrals of those individuals who would benefit from project services (i.e., who were a good match to the grantee's program), and/or the right "mix" of supervision so that releasees were more likely to comply with their conditions of release.

The topic of connections with community supervision officials, specifically parole officers (POs), is a delicate and thorny one for some PRI projects. Staff at some sites expressed their belief that the presence of a PO as part of the re-entry team, even if on an ex-officio basis, improves the chances for a participant's success. However, others expressed concern that under these conditions participants could perceive the staff as becoming too friendly with POs and thus possibly betraying confidences. One PO supervisor went so far as to say that projects should view POs as "the Hammer" to help maintain participants' focus and sense of purpose.

Workforce Investment System

Under WIA, publicly funded labor exchange and job training services are provided through a series of locally directed sites known as One-Stop Career Centers ("One-Stops"). The One-Stop service delivery structure is intended to unify numerous training, education, and employment programs into a single, customer-friendly system. The underlying notion of "One-Stop" is the integration of programs, services, and governance structures. WIA *requires* the establishment of a One-Stop system comprised of numerous partners that provide employment-related core services, such as information on the labor market and program services in each local workforce area. Every local system is intended to represent true collaboration among all of the One-Stop partners.

As it is realized, the success of these collaborative efforts varies. Grantees reported varying levels of cooperation and partnership with local One-Stops, as displayed in Table II.6. For example, at least nine grantees reported that there were few or no referrals/little interaction

between the project and the local One-Stop. On the other hand, three PRI grantees or subcontractors are full-service or satellite One-Stop offices. An additional eight grantees reported that they consider communication with the One-Stop to be good (e.g., there are regular meetings between the two parties). A few grantees also worked with their local One-Stop partners while writing the grant proposals. At least one One-Stop has a staff member dedicated to working with PRI participants.

The PRI grantees that were involved in One-Stop activities prior to their grant award appeared to benefit from their pre-existing relationships. Projects that were relatively more successful in this area generally had one of the following attributes: (1) the grantee was an active player in the One-Stop system prior to the award of the PRI grants (usually as a One-Stop operator or an affiliated site), or (2) the grantee was purchasing services from the One-Stop.[9] For most other projects with either positive or neutral relations, the most significant component of the One-Stop relationship was the access to job listings that the One-Stop Career Center is required to provide to all job seekers through the universal access feature of the One-Stop system.

For the majority of sites, the typical relationship with the One-Stop system involves little more than project staff and/or participants occasionally consulting the One-Stop's job listings. Some participants attend One-Stop workshops on resumé preparation and basic job-search skills, but those are offered to all job seekers and are unlikely to address the particular needs of ex-offenders (e.g., how to deal with a potential employer's questions about felony convictions on a job application or in an interview).

[9] In February 2007 it was reported that one site that had subcontracted with the local One-Stop operator to provide job placement services to PRI participants had decided to end that relationship for reasons of inadequate performance by the One-Stop operator.

TABLE II.6:
PRI Grantee Descriptions of Relationships with the One-Stop System

Description of Relationship	Total
Few or no referrals to One-Stop or little interaction between One-Stop and grantee	9
Good communication between One-Stop and grantee (e.g. regular meetings, presentations)	8
Smooth referral process between One-Stop and grantee	7
Dedicated staff person at One-Stop to coordinate with PRI	7
Grantee or subgrantee is a One-Stop office (satellite, affiliate or full-service office)	3
One-Stop staff involvement in developing PRI grant proposal	2
PRI Clients will receive customized services from One-Stop	1
Full-Time One-Stop staff member dedicated to PRI	1

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantee response categories are not mutually exclusive.

Employers

Few sites attempted to engage employers as partners in the projects; rather, they contacted employers primarily for the purpose of job development. As a result, most projects' approaches to employer connections were focused more on making contacts with individual employers and not on cultivating a particular industry or employer grouping. A handful of sites attempted to establish positive relationships with businesses that hire multiple project participants. In describing the perceived value of investing in such job development efforts, representatives from these sites typically spoke of the importance of providing job-ready participants who have been screened and matched to the employers' requirements. This approach is the exception, however, as most job development takes place one employer and one job at a time. The one-by-one approach to job development is arguably more likely to be customized to each participant's individual needs and circumstances. However, it is also likely to be more time-intensive; and

considering the general lack of work experience among the ex-offender population, the impact of this approach may not be substantively different from group placement efforts.

Many sites acknowledge the importance of creating and maintaining a positive image among employers in the community, with some going so far as to impress upon participants the fact that when they go to an interview and later go to work, the employment prospects of all the releasees who come after them will be enhanced or diminished as a result of their performance during the interview and on the job.

In one project, a significant portion of training services was tied to a particular employer who provided on-the-job training (OJT) to participants and hired some upon completion. This relationship did not begin with the PRI project, however, as the business owner is also the head of the grantee organization.

Some sites took noteworthy approaches to cultivating employer partnerships: hosting "employer lunches" to informally network and develop a better understanding of employer needs and sending "thank you" letters to employers after participant interviews.

Housing

Because grant funds are not available to provide housing for participants, linkages with housing providers were required so that sites could assist participants with their housing needs. PRI sites' partnerships with housing agencies varied depending on the sites' perceptions of their participants' needs for housing. A number of sites already had connections with sources of housing—emergency, transitional, permanent, or treatment-based—often through services they already provided. These entities benefited to some degree from preferential access to beds and living space. However, few sites had actual partnerships that provided bed space to more than a

handful of project participants. One site that is an exception is the Primavera Foundation, which has a background in housing but also partners with other providers to help meet the housing needs of its participants (see Exhibit II.1).

EXHIBIT II.1:
Housing Options in Tucson

With nine properties, Primavera's involvement in providing housing in the Tucson area may have eased the PRI project's burden in assisting ex-offenders to find appropriate and available housing. A temporary living facility run by Primavera, Five Points (located adjacent to Primavera's headquarters), had a partnership with the Arizona Department of Corrections prior to the PRI grant, through which it provides one month of housing for released inmates suffering from co-occurring disorders. Co-occurring disorders refers to the condition when a patient has both mental health and substance abuse issues at the same time. Another Primavera resource is a less restrictive transitional housing facility in a Weed and Seed neighborhood. (Please see Appendix A for additional information on the Weed and Seed program.) (One of Primavera's goals is to help break down barriers faced by ex-offenders by helping neighborhood residents understand that ex-offenders will want to come back to their old "hoods.")

Five Points houses both male and female residents, who may stay for between six months and two years. Most stay longer than the minimum. Prospective residents need to be drug-free for 30 days prior to their residency in order to come in. A local Veterans Affairs Hospital will sponsor eligible ex-service members for the first 30 days. The facility has a set of rules and requirements. House meetings are at 7 p.m. on Mondays, and Life Skills class is on Thursdays (both are required – there are no waivers). Alcoholics Anonymous is on Fridays. Residents are also required to attend two outside meetings and get a sponsor. Most residents are in recovery. The facility has official visiting hours; residents' children under ten years of age can visit twice a month for overnight stays.

A 100-bed men's shelter is located nearby. Like Five Points, this shelter utilizes meal teams, groups of community volunteers who prepare dinners and other meals for residents. Rather than adhering to rigid schedules like many shelters, this one tries to be flexible to allow for residents' work schedules; it even gives wake-up "calls." They also hire from within. An individual who is working is allowed to stay for up to 90 days, and the shelter coordinates social service needs with other providers.

A partner, Old Pueblo, also has several units, including a five-bedroom home for men, a complex with twelve two-bedroom units, and two women's houses. Several of these facilities have counselors on staff who provide assessments of residents' needs. In addition to providing housing options for PRI participants, at least one of these facilities provides referrals for enrollment into the project.

Policies affecting ex-offenders are becoming less punitive in the public housing sector in Pima County. Ex-offenders can be banned from access to public housing for five years, although there is a process to allow them back in before the expiration of the five-year period if an assessment of risk takes place before waiving these rules. An ex-offender may apply for public housing and Section 8 assistance when s/he demonstrates evidence of rehabilitation. If the ex-offender is a PRI project enrollee and is close to completing her/his participation, s/he is allowed to enter public housing.

Generally, however, sites were struggling with multiple issues around the topic of housing and relationships with housing partners. These issues included the limited supply of affordable housing in many jurisdictions; difficulties in identifying and accessing available bed space and rental units due to the fragmentation among public and private housing providers; the varied and inconsistent approaches to housing restrictions among public and private housing providers; and the plethora of housing programs available only to individuals with particular characteristics (e.g., one housing program targets women of color who are HIV positive). Various sites had listings of landlords who were "offender-friendly," but a common complaint was that these listings were often out-of-date and of limited help.

TABLE II.7:
Available Housing Options

Description of Relationship / Type of Assistance	Total
Housing funds from grantee or grantee-provided housing	7
Sober-living homes	7
Developers or landlords that are willing to assist PRI clients	6
Criminal justice partner assistance with housing	4
Subgrantee assistance with housing	4
Community Development Block Grant / Community Services Block Grant	2
Faith-based housing	2
Housing through substance abuse programs	2
Other (employer-sponsored, HIV-positive, permanent, senior, veterans' housing)	4

Source: Data were obtained during semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantee response categories are not mutually exclusive.

As noted in Table II.7, referral to faith-based housing is provided through at least two of the grantee sites. In one site, the grantee has established relationships with two sober-living, faith-based homes: one for males and one for females. The homes are willing to accept PRI participants, and at the time of the site visit, several PRI participants were planning to move to these homes after they completed their substance abuse treatment programs. One of the homes requires that the tenants attend weekly prayer meetings and abide by the rules and principles of the home (e.g., no music other than Christian music, no swearing). Frequent prayer is also encouraged in the home. The other faith-based home is not as overtly religious, but the tenants must be employed and follow curfew rules (with the exception of work and school) in order to remain in the house. A third example of faith-based housing, described by staff at a different site from the first two mentioned, requires daily attendance at prayer services, although the housing provider reportedly allows residents to attend the services of their choice.

At least six grantees have been able to partner with local developers or landlords for housing for PRI participants. One subcontractor has a contract with a local developer who will rent to any PRI participant with a job (subject to availability). However, many of the developer's properties are in high-crime neighborhoods, constituting a potential problem. In another grantee city, a shared housing program is run by one of the subcontractors. This program has been able to work out arrangements with local landlords so that tenants pay less than $300 a month for a room. Most of the landlords involved in the program own duplexes or triplexes, and as one interviewee pointed out, many of the landlords are "generous-hearted" people interested in helping others in the community. At the time of the site visit, there were approximately 100 people living in 15 homes in the city.

A particular challenge reported by some grantees was the existence of rental agencies that offer housing and work to ex-offenders (and others), usually as day laborers. In these cases, the housing seeker must sign a contract with the provider, paying a weekly rental rate that may be above market because of the limited options available to the ex-offender. This may result in a dependency relationship between the ex-offender and the housing provider/employer where it becomes difficult for the individual to seek alternate employment. Because his rental expenses continue to accrue regardless of whether he is employed, a participant cannot easily stop working for the housing provider in order to look for a different job.

Substance Abuse

TABLE II.8:
Projects' Substance Abuse Treatment Partners and Services

Activity	Number of Sites		
	TOTAL	CBO	FBO
Referral Partners for Substance Abuse Treatment	15	11	4
Grantee or Subgrantee has Treatment Program (Outpatient or Inpatient or Counseling)	6	5	1
AA/NA Meetings or Other Relapse Prevention Groups at Grantee or Referral Partners	5	4	1
Department of Corrections or Community Corrections Makes Substance Abuse Referrals or Helps Pay for Substance Abuse Treatment	5	4	1

Source: Data were obtained during semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantee response categories are not mutually exclusive. Not all sites were classified into a category.

In the area of substance abuse treatment, projects appeared to have a limited number of approaches to forming and utilizing partnerships (see Table II.8). Overall, half of the grantees reported having referral partners for substance abuse treatment. In some of these cases, the PRI grantees or one of their partners operated one or more treatment programs. Counseling programs are also available at some project sites. Five sites noted that agencies in the criminal justice

system played a role in the treatment process; this number is likely to increase as the USDOJ grants Become operational In at least one instance, the PRI grantee was receiving referrals from an organization providing substance abuse treatment services to ex-offenders. This type of complementary relationship produces a mutually beneficial situation for both parties, with the PRI grantee providing employment-related assistance and the treatment organization offering substance abuse services, both to the benefit of the participant.

Information on substance abuse treatment was also analyzed against several other variables, revealing some minor differences between CBOs and FBOs in their substance abuse partners and services. Table II.8 includes a breakdown that shows the substance abuse treatment arrangements reported by CBO and FBO grantees in separate columns. In all instances, a higher percentage of CBO sites reported having substance abuse treatment connections or services. CBO grantees were more likely to have had prior experience in providing substance abuse services and/or to have partners already active in that field.

Mental Health

As illustrated in Table II.9, sites reported a limited range of partnerships in the mental health area, and six of the grantees acknowledged having few if any resources to assist those with mental health problems. Oftentimes, mental illnesses are not diagnosed among the prison population. Complicating matters, inmates attach a stigma to admitting such problems, especially in certain cultures. Additionally, PRI sites' relatively superficial assessment processes, described in Section A of Chapter IV, may help to explain the limited connections between the projects and mental health service providers. Participants who enroll but are not identified as having a mental illness may be identified only after they experience difficulties in holding a job or otherwise adjusting to life outside the prison.

TABLE II.9:
PRI Mental Health Treatment Partners and Services

Activity	Number
Referral Partners for Mental Health Services	12
Few or No Resources to Help Those with Mental Health Issues	6
State or County Provides Mental Health Services (Counseling, Medication, etc.) for Ex-Offenders or Those Meeting Income Requirements	5
Grantee or Sub-Grantee Have Resources to Help with Mental Health Issues (e.g. Counseling On-Site)	3
Cognitive Change Therapy at Grantee or Sub-Grantee	2
Assistance with Getting Medications for Ex-Offenders (Referral Partners, Pharmaceutical Companies)	2
Grantee Conducts Mental Health Assessments	1

Source: Data were obtained during semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Notes: Grantee response categories are not mutually exclusive. Not all sites were classified into a category.

Mentoring

At the time of the site visits, the grantees were in various stages of implementing their mentoring program. Some sites had fully functioning programs; others had newly instituted programs, only to discover that they needed to make change in order to be successful; and the remaining sites were in the initial stages of organizing the program and its operators. The mentoring component is clearly a work in progress for the initiative as a whole.

Several of the sites were struggling with implementing their mentoring component. In at least two instances, grantees initially planned to use faith-based subgrantees for mentoring activities, but the relationships with those FBOs were terminated because of the FBOs' concern over having a fiduciary responsibility for a federal grant and/or their unwillingness to eliminate religion from their approach. In these cases, the grantee has had to re-think how it will offer

mentoring to its participants. The first round of site visits found these sites and several others still working to get their mentoring programs established.

Many of the concerns expressed by grantees about the providers of mentoring services relate to the frequency and/or the content of communications between the grantee and the mentoring entity. These sites had not established an effective process for sharing information between those involved in mentoring (mentors and the mentor coordinators) and project staff. At some sites, project staff described uncertainties regarding how to balance the potential benefits of information exchanges between case managers and mentors against considerations of confidentiality and participant perceptions.

Other Partnerships

Additional partnerships exist at virtually each of the 30 projects that are part of the PRI. Some of these were relatively minor components of a comprehensive menu of services, involving organizations that provide interview clothing; provide participants with access to social activities, such as sporting events and the theatre; or offer eye exams. Other partners were perhaps more integral as parts of a comprehensive service strategy, such as those providing assistance to participants on family reunification matters.

D. Project Administration and Performance Expectations

1. Project Administration

The PRI grants were established under the framework in the USDOL SGA, which provided guidance on program eligibility, allowable uses of funds, performance measures, and similar topics. This subsection outlines the general parameters within which each grantee was expected to design and operate its program of services for ex-offenders.

Successful project and financial management requires knowledge and awareness of federal procurement, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements not commonly found in smaller faith-based and community organizations. The ease with which grantees adopt and follow federal procedures is likely to affect their ability to focus on the service delivery aspects of their projects. The federally supported technical assistance effort described in Chapter I assists grantees unfamiliar with these procedures.

Beginning shortly after grants were awarded in November 2005, grantees began to seek clarification on various aspects of the PRI demonstration project framework. As grantees continued to identify questions about various PRI policies, USDOL provided additional guidance, usually through "Questions and Answers" (Q&A) documents. These documents were released on an intermittent basis, starting in December 2005. Most of the questions addressed in the Q&A documents concern program eligibility—how long an individual was required to have been incarcerated, what kind of crimes constitute violent crimes that eliminate an individual from eligibility for the program, how eligibility should be verified, and similar issues. For a number of reasons—including delays in establishing strong linkages with state CJ agencies, unfamiliarity in interpreting and using criminal history records and statutes, difficulties in communicating USDOL eligibility requirements among partners, and challenges associated with enrolling sufficient numbers of eligible ex-offenders—grantees were often challenged by the PRI program's eligibility requirements. Chapter III reviews in greater detail grantee questions and issues on the especially troublesome area of participant eligibility.

Through the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), one of the federal partners, USDOL arranged for AmeriCorps VISTA to sponsor 20 positions to be dedicated to PRI projects. As a result, 20 of the 30 PRI grantees are expected to receive assistance from a

VISTA member who would serve for one year at no cost to the grantee.[10] USDOL also worked with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to facilitate cooperation between the PRI grantees and SAMHSA's Access to Recovery (ATR) grantees.[11] These prospective VISTA staff resources and ATR linkages had not begun prior to the initiation of site visits; therefore, site-specific information on these arrangements is not included in this report.

2. Performance Measurement

Because federal grantees may decide to organize the service strategies of their projects around federal outcome goals, an important component of the policy framework for project activities involves the measures designed to gauge project performance. In their applications, grantees proposed a wide range of metrics to measure project progress toward key goals. Formal performance expectations were announced in early 2006 (ETA, "Prisoner Reentry Initiative Performance Goals," 2006). In the memorandum, USDOL stated that these goals were not "formal, public goals to report to Congress or any external entities." The initial goals were described as targets for grantees to strive toward, and the memorandum indicated that the goals would be adjusted as USDOL received first-year data.

[10] According to the March 2006 announcement, volunteers could work on any of a variety of PRI activities, including leveraging public and private sector resources in support of PRI services, building local networks and collaboratives, working with the faith and secular community to engage them in local re-entry initiatives, and working with the criminal justice system and prisons in developing reentry program initiatives. At last report, progress appeared to be slow in actually bringing on volunteers.

[11] SAMHSA is responsible for building resilience and facilitating recovery for people with or at risk for mental or substance use disorders. ATR is a three-year competitive discretionary grant program that provides vouchers to clients for purchasing support services for substance abuse clinical treatment and recovery. The goals of the program are to expand capacity, support client choice, and increase the array of faith-based and community-based providers for support services for clinical treatment and recovery. States receiving ATR grants that also have PRI projects are California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, New Jersey, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin. (http://atr.samhsa.gov/faq120105.htm) Because PRI grantees are precluded from expending any grant funds on substance abuse treatment and related services, the ATR grants in those States where PRI projects are located might serve an important role in supplementing other available resources for this type of assistance.

The following five measures are among those identified by ETA:

- Enrollment Rate (the number of participants divided by the enrollment goal)
- Referrals from USDOJ Pre-Release Grant who are then enrolled into PRI
- Entered Employment Rate
- Employment Retention Rate
- Average Earnings
- Recidivism Rate

The PRI performance measures and associated goals were discussed in some detail during three MIS training sessions held around the country in February and March 2006. Most sites sent two representatives to learn about the system's data elements, data entry screens, reporting procedures, and similar topics.

At this time, the projects are not at a stage where significant performance data are available, making it premature to analyze the projects' performance to date. The final report will include an outcomes analysis that covers most of the short-term outcomes that the PRI demonstration sites are trying to effect through the range of services they provide. This analysis will examine the early experiences of PRI participants after release and their abilities to reach short-term milestones. The analysis will also determine whether short-term outcomes vary for different types of participants. The final report will also include the goals that ETA establishes for the projects after it reviews the first year of project performance.

The performance data may reflect how some projects organize and provide their services, when prospective participants are enrolled, how follow-up assistance is provided, and how projects carry out activities to follow up on participant status. Sites have already demonstrated their interest in how USDOL measures their performance and expect that USDOL's decisions on future funding for their projects will be affected in part by their ability to demonstrate positive

outcomes. Possible connections between project design and USDOL's performance measures are incorporated into the discussion of various aspects of program design in Chapter I.

III. PROJECT START-UP, OUTREACH, AND RECRUITMENT

This chapter provides information on the initial stages of project operations, including activities aimed at recruiting eligible ex-offenders. Section A of the chapter describes project start-up activities, including the challenges the projects faced and the support that was provided through USDOL. Section B reviews grantee approaches to outreach, intake, and enrollment—activities that were especially troublesome areas for most grantees. This section also discusses processes utilized by grantees to orient applicants or new enrollees to the services available through the project. Section C explores in greater detail the challenges reported by grantees in their start-up efforts and in the services they provided to early participants.

A. Overview of Project Start-Up Activities

Pursuant to written guidance and direction provided by USDOL at the first grantees' meeting in December 2005, grantees had time to plan and organize program services before they were expected to begin serving participants. USDOL guidance established March 1, 2006, as the deadline for projects to begin enrollments. As a result, grantees utilized the period between November 8, 2005 (when awards were announced) and March 1, 2006 to hire and assign staff, confirm formal and informal agreements, carry out subcontractor procurement activities,[12] and undertake other tasks related to preparing their projects to begin.

After the grants were awarded, USDOL asked the grantees to prepare implementation plans describing how they would operationalize their proposed projects. Implementation plans were to include a staffing plan; a budget; information on how participants would be able to access

[12] The requirement that grantees adhere to procurement requirements contained in the relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars was initially stated in the Department's SGA. It was reiterated by a USDOL speaker on the subject at the December 2005 Grantee Meeting.

supportive services to facilitate their employment; a clear articulation of referral processes for housing, substance abuse treatment, family support, and other supportive services; plans for coordination with criminal justice agencies; and answers to any grant-specific issues on which USDOL required clarification. Although many grantees had submitted implementation plans that had been approved by USDOL in the period prior to March 1, USDOL reported that several plans were still being adjusted in early April.

Some projects apparently began enrolling participants and delivering services later than the dates targeted by USDOL. As of April 14, 2006, six weeks after the deadline for start-up, four PRI grantees were still without any participants enrolled, according to the PRI Management Information System (MIS). Another six grantees had five or fewer participants.[13] Ten grantees reported not having delivered any project services to participants through that date. Evidently, the expectation that all projects provide assistance to enrolled participants by March 1 was not met by one-third of the grantees. Essentially, many projects were slow to start up.

For the most part, delays in initiating project operations can be explained by three factors. The first was the need to identify and put in place qualified staff. Although a few sites, including some of those with R4W grants, were able to assign management and front line staff responsibilities to existing employees, most grantees were faced with the challenge of hiring new workers specifically for the PRI project. Then, the grantees had to ensure that new staff were familiar with project plans and program requirements. A second explanation involves delays in partnership development, in particular, delays in establishing the necessary connections with the criminal justice system for referring ex-offenders to project services. The final factor is related

[13] USDOL has stated that these data may actually overstate the actual level of project enrollments.

to the second, and involves eligibility issues. Many sites experienced delays and what they considered bureaucratic "red tape" in creating processes to verify the eligibility of ex-offenders applying to enroll in their PRI projects.[14] The challenges related to recruitment and enrollment are discussed in Part B of this chapter.

B. Outreach, Recruitment, and Intake

1. Pre-Release Connections

Consistent with the presumptions inherent in the three-stage re-entry process, the PRI envisions strong linkages between the PRI grantee and relevant CJ agencies. To recruit participants, individual projects could link with a single correctional facility and parole agency, with multiple institutions and state and county agencies, and even with non-CJ referral sources. As an additional option, they may accept "walk-in" applicants who qualify as eligible ex-offenders.

Projects with strong relationships with agencies that work with offenders before they are released are characterized by one or more of the following:

- Staff view their working relationship with criminal justice partners as positive.
- A well-functioning referral process exists between the grantee and criminal justice partners.
- Grantee staff are stationed on site at criminal justice partners and/or criminal justice representatives (e.g., parole officers) are stationed on site at grantee.

Based on these general criteria, approximately half of the projects appear to have strong relationships with criminal justice institutions that allow them to take a pro-active approach to participant recruitment.

[14] Another possible explanation is that grantees had difficulties entering data onto the PRI MIS, which may have caused the enrollment process at some locations to appear slower than it actually was.

The USDOJ initiated its portion of the PRI in January 2006, announcing the opportunity for the 20 States that were home to at least one PRI project to apply for grant funds for pre-release services. With these federal grant funds, correctional institutions are expected to provide a range of pre-release services and to coordinate with USDOL's PRI grantees (see Exhibit III.1). USDOL grantees were expected to coordinate services with, and accept referrals from, other organizations receiving funding through the USDOJ grants.

EXHIBIT III.1
USDOJ Pre-Release Grant Requirements

Among the activities that USDOJ grantees are required to perform are the following:

- Develop and implement offender screening and assessment processes using dynamic risk and needs assessment tools
- Develop a written implementation plan for critical pre-release services to the target population and program participants
- Develop and implement for each program participant a transition planning process that includes an individualized transition plan and a description of the type and level of pre-release services to be provided; that coordinates with faith-based/community-based organization(s) (FB/CBO(s)), local law enforcement and/or a community supervision agency; and that includes other local service and community organizations.
- Ensure that at least 200 offenders successfully complete pre-release programming and participate in post-release community-based services and that over 200 individual transition plans are implemented in collaboration with the FB/CBO; and provide supervision or periodic contact with law enforcement.
- Manage a rigorous screening process for all potential candidates for effective participation, including use of eligibility criteria.
- Oversee pre-release programming and services, including the coordination of pre-release orientation meetings with FB/CBO, such as employment service providers and mentors.

The USDOJ grants represent the institutional side of the three-stage prisoner re-entry framework, and they are a significant, potential source of eligible participants for USDOL projects. However, these projects were not operating during most of the first year of PRI operations, and as a result USDOL sites had to invest considerable effort in identifying recruitment sources, developing relationships, and recruiting participants. As noted in Chapter

II, PRI grantees with pre-existing relationships with their area's criminal justice agencies were in a better position to access ex-offenders eligible for PRI assistance.

2. Participant Recruitment

Particularly because of the delays in getting the USDOJ pre-release projects funded, most projects recruit potential participants through multiple avenues. Table III.1 displays the recruitment sources identified by the projects. The most common reported source is word-of-mouth, with community supervisory agencies and state prisons being important sources as well.

TABLE III.1:
PRI Grantee Descriptions of Recruitment Sources and Processes

Recruitment source	Number
Word of Mouth	25
Parole / Probation	23
State Prisons	21
One-Stops	10
Contact Prior to Release	10
Community Organzations / Other Partner Referrals	8
Halfway Houses	8
Local Jails	8
Flyers	7
Substance Abuse Partners	7
U.S. Probation	7
Housing (Transitional, Sober Living, Shelters)	6
Church	3
Courts	3
Other Grantees	3
Job Fairs	2
Newspaper Ads	1

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantee response categories are not mutually exclusive.

3. Special Target Groups

TABLE III.2:
Grantees and Targeted Groups

Grantee	Target Group
Arizona Women's Education and Employment, Inc.	Women
Episcopal Community Services of Maryland	Men who are not in "active addiction"
Community Partners in Action	Males ages 25-40
Urban Youth Alliance	Young adults ages 18 through 24

Source: Data obtained during site visits and from grantee documents.

As shown in Table III.2, only a small number of projects identified a target group that is more specific than the group of individuals who meet USDOL eligibility requirements for PRI project participation. Grantees that focused services on a particular subset of ex-offenders usually did so based on familiarity with that group, often because the grantee organizations defined those types of individuals as their primary target audiences. Most of these grantees do not refuse services to individuals who fall outside their target group; instead, they have designed their recruitment activities and project services to more specifically address the needs of a particular subset of ex-offenders. One project, for example, used focus groups to ask members of its target group, both in and out of prison, what kind of mentoring they wanted or found helpful, and developed mentoring content based on the responses. This project, which focuses on female ex-offenders, also offers family reunification services, partly in response to the desire of their target group members to reconnect with their children and other family members.

4. Services for Special Populations

PRI grants operate under federal requirements to make serving veterans a priority and not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation or belief. A handful of projects specifically acknowledged having special procedures

for serving veterans and/or individuals with disabilities. At least two projects refer individuals with disabilities to the local provider of vocational rehabilitation services. One site specifically mentioned providing placement services for participants with disabilities. Two projects acknowledged staff or services dedicated to serving veterans. One site located near a veterans hospital indicated that PRI participants with additional needs in such areas as mental health and substance abuse treatment were more likely to be able to access the services they needed if they happened to be veterans.

5. Eligibility Verification Procedures

In general, projects have adopted a cautious approach to ensuring that participants are eligible for PRI services. This is consistent with USDOL guidance on the subject. That is, the sites seek positive verification from an authoritative source in the criminal justice system that an applicant does not have any prior conviction for violent or sex-related offenses. In cases where this appears to work most effectively, projects have established strong connections with one or more criminal justice entities—prisons, jails, halfway houses—or community supervision agencies—the U.S. Probation Office for the area, a state parole or probation office, or a local law enforcement agency—for participant referrals. In such situations, those individuals who are referred to the PRI project have been pre-screened to determine whether or note they meet the PRI eligibility requirements; and the paperwork verifying the applicant's non-violent and non-sexual-related criminal history is often faxed directly to project staff. Other sites reported challenges in identifying sufficient numbers of ex-offenders who met USDOL eligibility criteria and/or in obtaining DOC certification of eligibility based on the applicants' criminal histories.

In addition, in at least two instances, projects were not enrolling anyone whose release date was more than 180 days prior to the date they applied for project services. In one instance, this appears to have been because project leadership was unaware of the "180-day window," the provision that allows up to 10 percent of a project's participants to have been released from incarceration more than 180 days prior to enrollment.

The difficulties associated with projects getting positive confirmation of an ex-offender's non-violent criminal history from a departments of correction or another criminal justice source contributed to the low enrollment rates at many sites. Generally, the organizations that had the more significant challenges in this area were among the smaller ones that were less experienced with how federally funded projects operate and/or with how to work with CJ agencies.

6. Role of Faith-Based Entities in Recruitment and Service Provision

Faith-based entities possess useful strengths and competencies related to their mentoring services. Their involvement in the majority of the PRI projects as grantees and/or as lead agencies for mentoring allowed sites to leverage these strengths. At least three grantees recruit participants through churches, and at least eight grantees rely on faith-based referral partners to provide services for PRI participants. One grantee refers interested participants to faith-based sober-living homes.

On the other hand, at least four grantees noted that, for their projects, there was not a large role or need for faith-based partners to assist with participant services. At many sites, questions about the impact of faith on project activities were met with vague or unrevealing responses. Because this report describes these projects in the early stages of operations, it may be premature to expect significant information in this area.

Federal rules prohibit use of grant funds to directly support religious instruction, worship, prayer, proselytizing or other inherently religious practices. They also prohibit various forms of discrimination against individuals, such as exclusion from participation in programs or activities because of religion or belief (70 *Federal Register* 16860). During the site visits, the majority of the grantees stated that participants had not complained about or refused to use services provided by FBOs. One grantee did have to respond to a participant's complaint about a faith-based partner perceived to be proselytizing. The grantee investigated the charge and determined it to be unsupported.

Mentoring is the largest service component offered by FBOs. Grantees were required to utilize neutral, secular criteria that neither favor nor disfavor religion in the selection of service providers (70 *Federal Register* 16860). Grantees that were CBOs often sought out faith-based entities to perform mentoring activities under the PRI projects. Additional programs available at or through many projects, such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, incorporate a spiritual component. Several interviewees expressed views suggesting that participants who have some manifestation of spirituality in its broadest sense (e.g., through devotion to a faith or recognition of an innate goodness in their fellow humans) are more "ready" for mentoring and re-entry.

7. Approaches to Intake and Enrollment

After an ex-offender makes contact with the PRI site but before being enrolled, the grantee may take steps to ensure that its services are matched to the candidate's needs. While some projects initially attempted to serve every ex-offender who arrived requesting assistance, at least 20 projects have adopted approaches to enrollment that serve to screen out certain candidates.

Sometimes, these approaches appeared to be rather informal, and occasionally they were based on the experience of the individual (usually a case manager) who was conducting the intake procedure. At other times, the process featured a more deliberate, project-wide approach that applied to all applicants and was followed by all staff. One procedure that a handful of projects incorporated from the outset involved providing an extended "orientation" period to prospective enrollees.[15] Information on these findings is presented in Table III.3, below:

TABLE III.3:
PRI Project Pre-Enrollment Procedures

Requirement	Number of Grantees
No Specific Procedure	10
Orientation	5
Informal Demonstration of Commitment	4
Complete Job Readiness/ Life Skills	4
Program Agreement	3
Parole Officer or Institutional Recommendation	2
Urine Test	1

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantee response categories are not mutually exclusive.

On the less formal/less rigorous end, at least four projects require "**an informal demonstration of commitment**" to the objectives of the re-entry program. However, 'informal' does not necessarily mean 'easy.' At some sites, applicants may be expected to proceed through as many as three interviews prior to being formally enrolled in the project. An initial interview might provide the candidate with information about project services and the interviewer would

[15] Because these screening processes result in less motivated offenders not receiving services, they could be seen as running counter to current thinking on treatment and re-entry. The literature of evidence-based practices on substance abuse treatment and offender re-entry underscores the important role of motivational interviewing, client engagement, and breaking down resistance and patterns of criminal thinking. If potential participants face barriers to services that are put in place to test client motivation, the less motivated are unlikely to receive the assistance they need. See Clark 2005 and Ginsburg 2002 for in-depth discussions of this topic.

learn about the prospective participant's background and interests. If the individual was interested after the first interview, a second session would be scheduled a day or two later, during which additional information would be exchanged. If the candidate remained interested in the project, a third meeting would be scheduled to finalize the application process and complete enrollment. Individuals who did not keep appointments and/or did not contact the project were not re-contacted by project staff.

At least five other projects had **orientation sessions** that all applicants were required to attend before becoming enrolled. These sessions ranged from a one-day workshop to five days of workshops lasting two hours per day. Three sites require applicants to sign a **program agreement** that spells out expectations and commitments on the parts of the ex-offender and the project (see Exhibit III.2 for an example).

EXHIBIT III.2
Pre-Enrollment Requirement: Participant Agreement

During the intake process, applicants sign a participant agreement containing terms and conditions set by the Moving Forward program regarding project participation. Among the terms to which the applicant agrees are the following:

- Attending required services/classes until completion of each activity or a job opportunity becomes available.
- After completing required classes, reporting to Moving Forward offices at least three days a week for job leads and referrals until employment is obtained.
- Reporting to the office once a month for face-to-face contact with his or her case manager.
- Actively participating in the mentoring program, including meeting or communicating at least four times per month with his/her mentor.

The agreement also states that, in the event of non-compliance with project rules, a letter of non-compliance may be sent to the individual's parole or probation officer.

The most formal approach, in the view of the evaluators, involves a requirement that applicants **successfully complete a job readiness or life skills class**. For one grant, this type of approach to the enrollment process involves a requirement that all applicants attend a 64-hour course in personal and professional development prior to their enrollment. This two-week class

provides applicants with a strong foundation from which to conduct job search and other project activities; it also serves to eliminate those ex-offenders who are not sufficiently motivated to complete the regimen.

As also discussed in Chapter II, these "screens" generally serve to reduce the number of less-motivated individuals who enroll in PRI projects. It is not clear whether all of the sites with more rigorous pre-enrollment procedures had established those processes with the intention of eliminating those who are less motivated. Discussions with grantee staff suggest that some of the less formal approaches grew out of the experience of individual staff members with the target population.

A few sites allow a broader range of ex-offenders to initiate the intake process. In these situations, in addition to the PRI project, grantees typically operate programs with less restrictive eligibility requirements; thus, an ex-offender who has a prior conviction for a violent crime can receive ongoing assistance through a source other than PRI funds.

8. Participants' Barriers to Successful Reintegration into the Community

Table III.4 highlights many of the barriers that ex-offenders face upon re-entry. The counts represent the total number of grantees that mentioned the particular barrier, and multiple responses per grantee/barrier were only counted once.

The issues identified by interviewees clearly represent various actual barriers to participant re-entry into the community, as well as barriers to effective service provision and barriers to program entry. They also range from the obvious (employer reluctance to hire ex-offenders) to the less readily apparent (cognitive behavioral issues). For the latter barrier, a number of projects followed service strategies that specifically addressed the need to break the participants'

TABLE III.4:
Reported Participant Barriers to Re-Entry

Barrier	Number
Inadequate Transportation	18
No Work Experience / History or No Work Skills	18
Difficulties in Securing Housing	16
Substance Abuse	15
Society Does Not Accept Ex-Offenders or Embrace Re-Entry	13
Employer Reluctance to Hire Ex-Offenders	11
Lack of Self Confidence / Social Skills	11
No Support System	11
Accepting Responsibility / Living Responsibly	9
Cognitive Behavioral Issues	8
Lack of Education	8
Mental Illness	8
Not Motivated / No Work Ethic	8
No Identification / License Upon Release	7
Child Support Obligations	6
Need to Find New Friends / Move to a New Neighborhood	6
No Soft Skills	6
Poor Money Management Skills	5
Unrealistic Expectations	5

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantee counts reflect the number of sites in which at least one interviewee identified the subject as a barrier to participant re-entry.

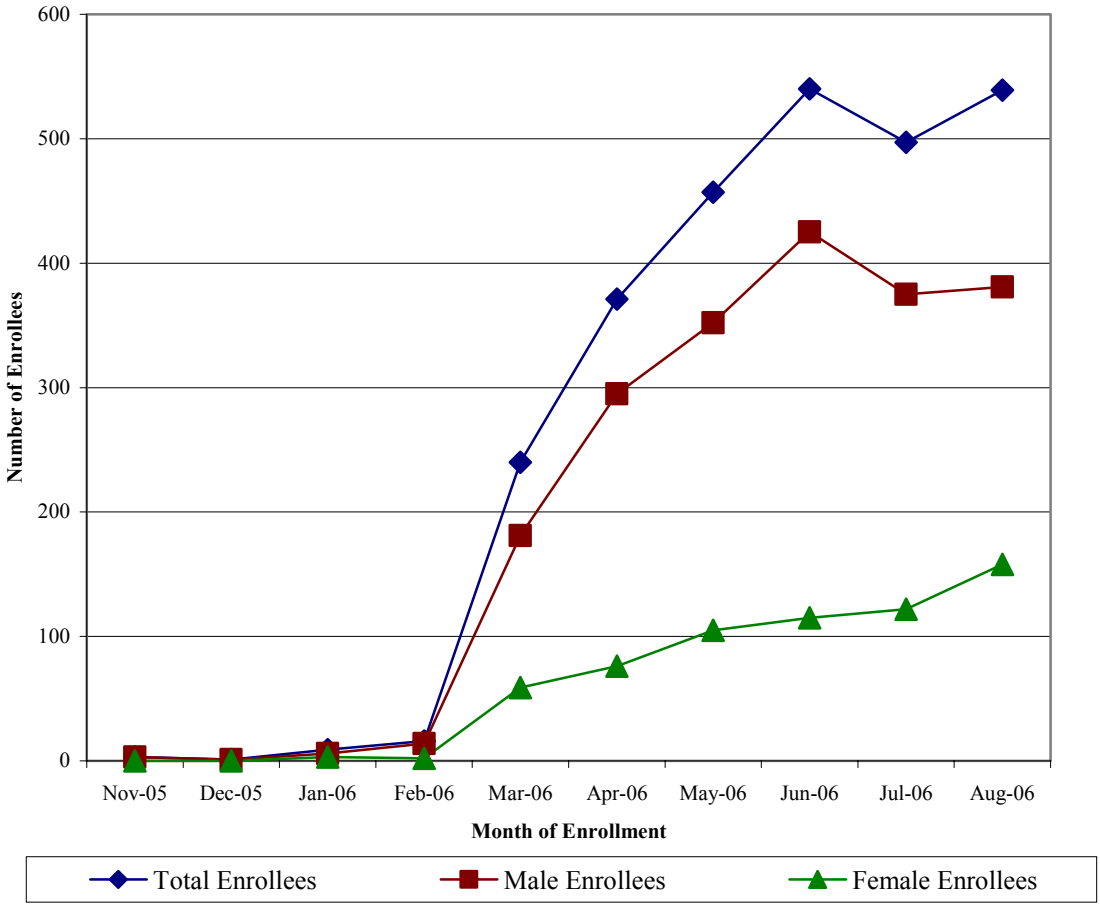
patterns of criminal thinking. In addressing this particular challenge, at least one site used the National Institute of Corrections' Thinking for a Change (T4C) program;[16] another integrates cognitive behavioral strategies into its staff interactions with participants and has also trained its mentors on this approach.

[16] Introduced in December 1997, T4C is an integrated cognitive behavior change program for offenders. It is in use by correctional agencies in over forty States, including state correctional systems, local jails, community-based corrections programs, and probation and parole departments. The National Institute of Corrections provides this program without charge to correctional agencies working to develop their continuum of programmatic interventions in this area. See http://nicic.org/T4C for further information.

9. Enrollment Patterns

Chart III.1 below shows the enrollment patterns for the PRI through September 30, 2006, based on the data reported by grantees through the PRI MIS. These data show that monthly enrollments did not reach 500 until June 2006. (Enrollments must exceed 500 participants per month for the initiative to achieve its goal of serving at least 6,250 ex-offenders in its first year of operation.) In addition, Table III.5 shows that male participants outnumbered females by a 3:1 ratio; that the majority of participants were black; that approximately 8 percent were

Chart III.1:
Number of Enrollees by Gender and Month of Enrollment



Source: PRI MIS data as reported by grantees.
Note: Data as of September 30, 2006.

veterans; and that just over 5 percent were recorded as having a disability. Because the sites were still at relatively early stages in their implementation of their PRI projects, this report does not provide an in-depth review of participant characteristics; the evaluation's final report, due in 2008, will examine this topic in far greater detail.

TABLE III.5:
Selected PRI Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	Number of Participants	Percent of Total
Gender		
Men	2097	76.3%
Women	653	23.7%
Race		
White	829	30.1%
Black	1604	58.3%
Asian	25	0.9%
Native American	44	1.6%
Pacific Islander	7	0.3%
Missing	263	9.6%
Ethnicity = Latino/Hispanic		
Yes	426	15.5%
No	2128	77.4%
Missing	196	7.1%
Veteran Status		
Yes	221	8.0%
No	2529	92.0%
Persons with a Disability		
Yes	149	5.4%
No	2601	94.6%

Source: PRI MIS data as reported by grantees.
Note: Data as of September 30, 2006.

C. Challenges with Start-up, Recruitment, and Intake

The projects faced various challenges as they started and then maintained their grant-related operations. Table III.6 below illustrates the frequency with which projects faced those

challenges as they were identified by project staff during site visit interviews. If more than one interviewee cited a particular problem, it was counted only once for that site.

TABLE III.6:
PRI Project Start-Up and Recruitment Challenges

Challenge	Total Sites
Staffing and Internal Organization	**21**
Communication Among Grantee Staff Members	6
Hiring Proper Staff / Staff Turnover	17
Staff Training, Written Policies/ Documentation of Procedures	6
Partnership	**20**
Communication Between Sub-Grantees or Other Partners and the Lead Grantee	11
Criminal Justice Partnerships	12
Referral Process Between Partners (e.g., Slow Process, Process Not Well Defined)	9
Relationships with Parole/ Probation Officers	4
Recruitment/Enrollment	**20**
Low Enrollment Numbers / Slow Start-Up	9
DOJ Funds / Enrollment of 100 Pre-Release Clients	10
Recruitment in Prisons	4
Convincing Parole / Probation Officers to Use PRI Program	6
Eligibility	**15**
Eligibility Criteria Gray Areas	7
Eligibility Criteria Too Restrictive	13

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantees may have identified more than one challenge in each area.

The challenge cited most often by sites related to project staffing. Seventy percent of the projects experienced difficulties in hiring the proper staff to carry out the project functions, and/or these projects reported staff turnover as a persistent problem. Partnership-related issues also presented significant challenges and were cited by two-thirds of the sites. Problems related to recruitment/enrollment were also cited by two-thirds of the projects, whereas eligibility

challenges were mentioned less frequently. This section reviews these challenges, along with any differences observed in the frequency with which they were mentioned by individuals associated with FBO and CBO grantees.

Hiring proper staff and losing trained staff account for the most commonly cited challenges. Issues related to communication among staff members and to staff training and the development of procedures were lesser concerns. None of the FBO interviewees cited the area of staff training/procedures as a challenge.

Partnership issues primarily involved challenges in communicating with partner organizations and establishing relationships with the criminal justice sector. Difficulties with referral processes and relationships with parole/probation officers were mentioned less often than other partnership issues; perhaps because such relationships had not yet fully materialized, problems in those partnerships had not yet surfaced. Difficulties in establishing effective referral processes and in creating productive relationships with parole officers were identified by interviewees at 13 sites, all of which had CBO as grantees.

Recruitment and enrollment challenges represent the third major category of challenges. Within this area, interviewees mentioned the following issues: the delay in the release of the USDOJ funds, the issue of low enrollments, the difficulties involved in recruiting from prisons, and the problems faced in convincing parole/probation officers to use the PRI program. For example, at least one grantees tried to establish a relationship with criminal justice institutions, but grantee staff were told that they would not be allowed to conduct pre-release recruitment until the USDOJ funds were released. Interviewees stated that this limitation hampered their ability to develop relationships and trust with potential participants before their release.

There are marked differences between the CBOs and FBOs in their methods of recruiting from prison and of convincing community supervision officers to use the PRI grants. Two of the 20 CBOs discussed the difficulties of convincing community supervision agencies to refer participants to the PRI, compared to four out of ten FBOs. Only one in twenty of the CBOs felt that prison recruiting was an issue, while three of the ten FBOs cited this as a challenge.

The other broad area in which projects identified challenges relates to participant eligibility. Faith-based grantees were far less likely to cite eligibility as a challenge—only 30 percent of the FBOs identified eligibility as an issue, compared with 60 percent of the CBOs.

Assistance to Individuals Served and Referred by USDOJ Grantee

One-third of the grantees identified challenges associated with the USDOJ pre-release grants. In many instances, they were concerned that the delay in getting those projects up and running meant that a significant number of the individuals eligible for their PRI projects was not going to enter the program for an indeterminate period of time. This placed grantees in the position of having to devote unanticipated amounts of staff time and resources to recruitment activities, often at the expense of serving participants (to the extent that the projects had participants to serve). It also exacerbated any existing stresses or problems in relationships between the grantee and probation and parole offices.

The process for linking with USDOJ grantees also created other concerns for the projects, independent of the issues caused by funding delays. Although ETA described the government's intent to provide USDOJ-funded grants for pre-release services to inmates who would later enroll in PRI projects in the SGA, it was silent on any expectation that USDOL grantees would serve a specific number of individuals referred from USDOJ projects. USDOL determined that

its grantees should enroll 100 individuals referred to them from the USDOJ grants out of the 200 total enrollments expected by March 31, 2007. This expectation was communicated in writing to the grantees through a Q&A issued on May 12, 2006.

IV. PROJECT SERVICES

As previously noted, recently released prisoners have numerous and varied needs, and PRI projects must consequently have a wide variety of services available, either directly or through partners and referrals, to address those needs. After initial assessment and planning, most sites provide immediate assistance to help participants obtain jobs through placement and other employment services. Many released prisoners need to find employment relatively quickly as a condition of parole and/or to acquire funds for subsistence.

This chapter examines project approaches to each of the major services that ex-offenders may require. The first six sections cover those services most directly related to meeting participants' employment-related needs:

- Section A: Participant assessment
- Section B: Case management practices
- Section C: Approaches to job development and placement, including a review of any steps taken by sites to prepare participants to enter the job market
- Section D: Basic/remedial education
- Section E: Occupational skills training
- Section F: How the sites used work experience and other workforce preparatory activities not described elsewhere

Sections G through J focus on those services that are indirectly related to employment and jobs:

- Section G: Mentoring services
- Section H: Housing assistance
- Section I: Health-related services, including substance abuse and mental health
- Section J: Supportive services

The last four sections in this chapter cover a final range of service-related topics:

- Section K: Participant follow-up and monitoring
- Section L: Faith-based influences on project services and service designs
- Section M: Challenges faced in the design and provision of services
- Section N: Summary observation

As noted in the Chapter II discussion of partnerships, some PRI services are provided directly by project-supported staff, and others are available to participants through referrals to organizations not funded through PRI. Variations in these approaches to service delivery appear to be based principally on four factors: the grantees' own expertise in different service areas, their experience with different partner organizations, their perceptions of the primary needs of ex-offenders in their communities, and their success in cultivating new relationships with public and private entities to supplement the services that they and their previous partners already provide.

For each type of PRI service, this chapter addresses the extent to which the service is offered to participants, describes how the service is made available, and provides additional insight into the timing, duration, and intensity of the service. Where possible, preliminary indicators are used to help identify project trends and characteristics, taking into account the service information for each grant within the context of such factors as local conditions (economy and housing), the grantee's orientation (faith- or community-based), and its initial start-up experiences (participants enrolled).

A. Assessment

Table IV.1 provides a summary of the types of assessment instruments used by the PRI sites. Most projects perform some type of assessment activity with participants, although it appears that few sites conduct comprehensive assessments across multiple dimensions of participants'

TABLE IV.1:
Assessment Instruments Used by Grantees

Type of Instrument	Total Sites
Educational Attainment (TABE, CASAS)	11
Aptitude and/or Vocational Skills Tests	10
DOL MIS "Assessments"	10
Health Assessments [a]	7
Risk Assessments (LSIR, SPIN)	4
Barriers to Employment Success Inventory	2
No In-Depth / Structured Assessments	2

Source: Data were obtained during semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Notes: Categories are not mutually exclusive.
a - Includes substance abuse, mental health, physical health and pesonality tests.

characteristics and needs. The most common form of assessment addresses education in the form of either the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) or the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). Eleven sites indicated that they utilize one of these tools when they determine that such an assessment would be helpful for a participant. Aptitude and vocational skills tests are used by at least ten sites. Another ten sites indicated that they consider the information required for the USDOL MIS system an "assessment" in itself—in most instances, this is the only "tool" these sites use to collect information on a participant's background, interests, and needs.[17] Seven sites indicated that they perform a health assessment of one form or another, and only four sites perform a risk assessment (such as Level of Service Inventory—Revised (LSIR) and Service Planning Instrument (SPIN)). Two sites said that they do not perform any in-depth or structured assessment—this number likely underrepresents the actual count of projects that do not conduct any type of formal assessment for participants.

[17] The MIS includes mandatory data elements covering a participant's race/ethnicity, marital status, education, special characteristics (veteran, limited English proficient, individual with a disability), employment status and related employment information, housing status, abusive alcohol or drug use (legal or illegal), and criminal history information. The MIS also includes a series of optional data elements that are designed to provide project operators, case managers, and the evaluators with more detailed information about participants' criminal history, education, child support obligations, employment history, receipt of public assistance, and other factors.

The relative scarcity of sites that conduct comprehensive assessments of the needs of participants may be explained by the perception that most ex-offenders approach the PRI sites seeking one goal—a job. In fact, one could suggest that a more comprehensive assessment process by the PRI sites is unnecessary for those participants who (1) do not have any needs that the PRI project could meet, other than a job; or (2) under the continuum of care model, are receiving services to address those other needs through community supervision agencies. At many sites, assessment appears to be a relatively informal process undertaken gradually by case managers. Many ex-offenders are reluctant to be completely candid when they initially enroll in project services, a condition that project staff, particularly case managers, try to break through by demonstrating their personal commitment to the participants' success. As ex-offenders gain confidence in a project and its benevolent intent, they become more trusting in the project staff and are more likely to acknowledge past diagnoses or problems.

Fifteen sites reported that they prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP) or a similar document for each participant. The other sites that created a written record of a participant's objectives and service strategy did not characterize such information as an IDP or its equivalent. Information documenting the contents of IDPs was not collected, so it is uncertain how comprehensive these plans are. It appears clear, however, that a number of PRI sites do not approach the assessment and case management functions with the objective of creating a comprehensive, individualized service plan that addresses the full range of a participant's needs.

Site visitors identified one project in particular where the process to create an IDP appeared to be comprehensive and likely to produce a sense of "ownership" on the part of project staff as well as the participant. At this site, case managers work to identify a participant's basic needs; and the case manager, job developer, mentor coordinator, and participant jointly develop an IDP

before entering participant data into the MIS database. All four of these individuals sign the IDP, and the job developer keeps a copy in the participant's records. The IDP addresses goals related to employment, family, and spirituality; furthermore, the IDP provides insight into the reality of a participant's expectations. Motivation, employability, and anger management issues can also be assessed through the IDP.

B. Case Management Practices

Case management is usually seen as a critical component of successful service delivery, especially for individuals with multiple barriers to employment. Case managers for PRI projects play many roles. At most sites, they are responsible for much of the human interface between the project and participant. While case managers may be responsible for some intake functions, they are largely responsible for participant assessment—including both any formal assessment that is done, as well as the informal assessment that takes place when project staff evaluate a new enrollee. The case manager is usually the person who works with the participant to create the IDP or other similar plan that documents objectives and strategies. Additionally, the case manager is usually responsible for inputting most of the participant data into the MIS.

At some sites case managers perform additional duties:

- Recruiting mentors
- Assigning participants to mentors
- Placing participants into jobs

As noted on Table II.5, the number of case managers varies considerably across the 30 sites, from a low of one (in one site) to a high of six (again, in one site). About half of the projects had three case manager positions at the time of the site visits. Generally, the sites with greater

numbers of case managers were also the sites for which case managers carried out a wider range of functions.

Grantees have adopted different approaches to the administration of case management services. The most common approach involves maintaining case management functions on-site, most often at the location where the primary project operations are conducted. This centralized model has certain advantages. When project staff are co-located and a participant's primary contact is away from the office, another project employee can typically assist with the participant's questions or needs. This may improve staff communications and make it easier for project participants to develop a sense of belonging to a group.

Another approach used by at least four projects involves a "decentralized" model, where case management is conducted exclusively by subgrantees or other partners, and the lead grantee's primary responsibilities consist of service coordination and project oversight. In these projects, the lead grantee organization typically spearheads the entire project, while case management and many other functions are run by FBCO subgrantees in the community. In essence, these grants are supporting in several areas in the community "mini one-stops" to reach out to and accommodate ex-offenders. Having several locations alleviates transportation problems for some participants, since they can then chose the most convenient location. Furthermore, if the lead grantee were to leave the area, the re-entry work could continue to go forward because of the strong network of FBCOs that is being developed.

However, the decentralized approach also has its challenges. For instance, communication issues can arise when multiple entities are working on case management, particularly when their staff members have different backgrounds and levels of experience. To improve communication

between the partners, one site with a decentralized approach hosts weekly partner meetings where at least one staff member from each subgrantee is in attendance. The meetings were reported to be useful, in part because any issues or concerns raised there would be addressed by the lead grantee in a timely and effective manner. Although valuable, such meetings require staff time, forcing trade-offs between using time for direct participant services and using time to coordinate participant services to create an environment that is more conducive to participant success. At this point in the evaluation, it is too early to suggest whether one approach is more efficient or effective than the other.

One site with a decentralized approach encountered communications difficulties, despite having weekly partner meetings. Several interviewees at this site reported that meetings and other lines of communication among partners (e.g., email and telephone) were ineffective. For example, not all case managers were included on all emails, even though they should have been.[18] Although this problem may have been resolved shortly after it surfaced, it is indicative of one of the challenges facing grantees with multiple partners, regardless of whether their service delivery mode is centralized or decentralized.

C. Approaches to Job Development and Placement

One of the principal functions of any project dedicated to finding employment for ex-offenders involves making the connection between project participants and job opportunities. The activities under "job development and placement" include helping participants prepare for the job search process, identifying potential job openings, making the initial contact with employers to facilitate participant job applications and interviews, and providing support and

[18] These difficulties were observed first-hand during the evaluation site visit.

assistance to ex-offenders and employers, as appropriate, to help participants keep their jobs. Projects may also help participants obtain a new or better job, if circumstances require it, repeating the same cycle of activities. Thus, the three phases of activities related to job development are pre-placement, initial placement, and follow-up retention and re-placement.

1. Pre-Placement

TABLE IV.2:
Approaches to Preparing Participants for Employment
(Number of Sites Using Indicated Approach)

Approach	Total Sites
Soft Skills	24
Temporary/ Seasonal Employment	9
Transitional Employment	9
Employer Presentations at Grantee Site or Informational Interviews with Employers	3
Clients Call or Visit Employers with Staff Assistance	5
Pre-Apprenticeship Classes	3
Subsidies to Employers / Tryouts, Internships	3
Civic Justice Corps / Volunteer Work	2

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantee response categories are not mutually exclusive.

Projects have adopted several approaches to helping prepare participants for competing in the job market.[19] (See Table IV.2.) Eighty percent of the projects explicitly identified providing soft skills training as one of their approaches. Such training is often referred to as "workforce readiness training." Because many participants are unfamiliar with traditional nine-to-five jobs and may not possess the types of work habits expected by most employers, projects have tended to focus their services on this broad category of assistance. These soft skills training programs

[19] Approaches that involve remedial education and occupational skills training are discussed in Sections D and E, respectively.

are generally provided to all participants, except those with proven work histories, and usually involve a mix of basic workplace, job search, and behavior management skills. Training in workplace skills commonly includes such topics as timeliness, appearance, and communication with supervisors and co-workers. Job search training includes the job application process, resumé writing techniques, interviewing skills, and strategies for explaining a criminal history. Behavioral components, such as how to deal with unsympathetic supervisors and anger management, may be woven into other topics or addressed separately. The majority of these classes lasts from one to three days.

Other approaches to preparing participants for employment are less common. It should be noted that several of the approaches listed in Table IV.2 may also be considered as project job development strategies. Taking transitional employment as an example, that activity can serve the purpose of helping a participant become familiar with work through the development of good work habits and other valuable traits, and it can also provide an intermediate or transitional avenue to employment by introducing an ex-offender to an employer, with the possibility that the employer will decide to retain that worker after the transitional period is over.

When reviewed according to each site's enrollment numbers as of September 30, the results in Table IV.2, show that sites with the smallest number of enrollees employed the highest number of approaches to preparing participants for employment. At this point in the evaluation, it would be premature to draw conclusions from these data, which are not presented in the table.

2. Initial Placement

Participant placement is one of the most significant activities undertaken by PRI grantees. Nearly half of the sites reported utilizing databases or lists of "offender-friendly" employers as a

tool to identify businesses with potential job openings. Job listings generated by the One-Stop system are used by 11 sites to identify job openings. A few sites used newspaper classified advertisements or other methods. As with job preparation services, sites with higher numbers of enrollments tended to have fewer methods of placing participants than did sites with lower enrollments.

TABLE IV.3:
Approaches to Job Development and Placement
(Number of Sites Using Indicated Approach)

Approach	Total Sites
Employer Database	14
One-Stop Job Listings	11
Temporary / Seasonal Employment	9
Transitional Employment	9
Cold Calls to Employers	7
Contracted Placement Partner	6
Newspaper Classifieds	6
Clients Call or Visit Employers with Staff Assistance	5
Job Club	3
Job Fairs	3
On-Site Computers for Participants' Use (e.g., to access job listings, prepare resumes)	3
Pre-Apprenticeship Classes	3
Subsidies to Employers / Tryouts, Internships	3
Employment with Grantee Partners or Grantee	2

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Sites used more than one approach.

Almost half of the grantees reported that they utilize or are developing an employer database. Various methods have been used to create these databases; typically though, the job developer makes cold calls, networks, attends job fairs, and takes other steps to engage

employers who are willing to hire ex-offenders. Some sites refer to the employers included in these databases as "ex-offender friendly" or "second-chance" employers. One of the often-cited aims of creating and maintaining these databases is to be able to identify firms that are willing to hire more than one PRI participant at a time.

As shown in Table IV.3, six grantees have contracted with professional job placement agencies. One site's approach is described in Exhibit IV.1. Another grantee is referring a

EXHIBIT IV.1
One Site's Approach to Professional Job Placement

One grantee will use two different firms to place 175 of its 200 participants. At the time of the site visit, the two placement firms were to be paid per placement, regardless of the length of time that the participant remained at the employer. One interviewee at this particular grantee expressed a desire to add incentives to the placement contracts so that the placement firms would be rewarded for the quality of the placement and not just the quantity of placements. In fact, several participants had already needed a new placement after only a few weeks at the employer where they were first placed.

significantly smaller percentage of its participant base (at the time of the site visit, approximately 25 percent) to its contract placement firm. The placement firm will provide occupation-specific training and three weeks of job readiness and/or soft-skills training classes tailored to the needs of ex-offenders. The grantee will be charged a fee for each placement and a separate fee for the targeted training. This placement firm focuses on finding a good first job on a career path for the ex-offender so that the participant will be more likely to maintain employment.

A third grantee terminated its job developer shortly before the site visit and opted for the placement agency approach. According to discussions with representatives of the placement firm, four dedicated staff members will be responsible for placing PRI participants. The employment firm will be paid on a per-placement basis.

The first round of site visits did not collect uniform data on grantees' perceived effectiveness of the various approaches to job development and placement. It may be informative to collect more detailed information on this topic during the second round of visits in order to provide additional analysis on this important topic.

3. Follow-Up Retention and Placement

Table IV.4 displays counts of who was responsible for retention and subsequent re-placement at sites performing this function during the first round of site visits.

TABLE IV.4:
Who Conducts Follow-Up After Placement

Person Responsible	Total
Job Developer	9
Case Managers	3
Retention Specialist	3
Human Resources Manager	1
Parole Officers	1

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: At the time of the site visits, not all sites had assigned this function.

Because many sites were in the middle of determining how they would conduct follow-up activities at the time of the site visits, these data are incomplete, and sites are likely to clarify these assignments as the number of individuals who require follow-up increases. Twelve of the grantees did report plans to have case managers or job developers follow up with the participants. At sites with retention specialists,[20] those individuals were generally responsible for follow-up, as it is their job to maintain ongoing contact with employers and/or participants. Because the site visits took place relatively early in the grantees' start-up phase, limited

[20] The actual titles of these individuals vary from grant to grant, but the nature of the job is to maintain contact with participants and help them retain and/or improve their employment.

information was collected on these retention specialist positions; Exhibit IV.2 describes the responsibilities of a retention specialist at one project's subcontractor. (Note: Many of the responsibilities are based on the organization's existing service design and did not have to be developed specifically for the PRI grant.)

EXHIBIT IV.2
An Example of Retention Specialist Functions

CEO, a subgrantee of the Doe Fund in Brooklyn, provides participant services through its existing, well-established structured program, "The CEO Model," which grew out of an innovative demonstration project conducted by the Vera Institute of Justice in the late 1970s. CEO's 12-month retention/post-placement (aftercare) services are coordinated by a retention specialist who is assigned to the client early in the enrollment period and works with the assigned case manager and job developer. Once the participant is placed in a first job, the retention specialist assists him or her in obtaining any CEO services needed. Specifically, retention specialists meet with clients in the field at their jobs and contact employers regularly to see how things are going. Rewards are provided to clients for staying on the job (e.g., metro cards, movie tickets, up to a total value of $615 over the 12 months); the rewards are provided each month the person stays on the job upon presentation of a pay stub. If the person loses the job, assistance is provided in getting another. Additionally, the retention specialist works with the participant on job upgrades/advancement needs, including providing assistance in obtaining additional vocational training or post-secondary education. For those needing training, the specialist helps the participant to navigate the systems (research possible training programs and providers) and to secure financial aid. Finally, the retention specialist will assist clients with any legal issues that may arise (CEO has volunteer lawyers). As with The Doe Fund, CEO is also seeking ways to strengthen its aftercare program with more training and education opportunities.

Table IV.5 presents early statistics related to the frequency and duration of contacts after placements are made.

TABLE IV.5:
Grantee Contacts After Placement

Measure	Contact Description	Number of Grantees
Frequency	Weekly or Bi-Weekly Contact with Client During the First Month	14
	Client Follow-Up for 30 Days after Placement	9
Duration	Client Follow-Up for 90 Days after Placement	6
	Client Follow-Up For Up to One Year After Placement	4
	Client Follow-Up for More Than One Year After Placement	3
Other	Contact Employer (30 - 180 Days)	14

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structed interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Information was not available for all sites.

At many of the sites, the staff members plan to contact participants at least weekly during the first month of employment, and then bi-weekly or monthly after that. At least six grantees have plans to track participants for up to 90 days; another four discussed their plans to maintain contact with participants for up to one year; and at least three grantees will contact participants for more than one year. About half of the sites did not have explicit plans to follow up with employers either by phone or by email after participants have been placed. Exhibit IV.3 offers a representative description of the stage of development of retention-oriented follow-up plans for those sites that had them.

EXHIBIT IV.3
One Site's Plans for Retention-oriented Follow-up

To track clients, Goodwill of New York/Northern New Jersey planned to hire job coaches. These individuals are expected to track participants for 90 days after placement to make sure that their needs are addressed and that the job placement is successful. At the time of the site visit, the job coaches had not been hired, so case managers were tracking clients until the positions of job coach were filled. One client noted that staff told him that he could come back any time for services, and his case manager still calls to check in on him. The job developer also went to the client's job site and met with the client and his supervisor. Goodwill also has a "Member for Life" program that allows former clients to come back any time in the future for job placement assistance.

Grantees are using various methods of contact, including email, telephone, face-to-face, and "snail mail" (i.e., the U. S. Postal Service) to reach out to participants and employers. One grantee noted during the site visit that snail mail is their preferred method of contact because many ex-offenders do not have phones, while letters circumvent scheduling conflicts and offer an added level of confidentiality.

Interviewees at several sites discussed the use of the MIS database as a follow-up tool. One staff member noted that participant follow-up has been difficult because the PRI population is very transient and difficult to track. Therefore, keeping participant information updated in the MIS can be difficult.

D. Basic/Remedial Education

GED classes were the most common form of basic and remedial education offered to project participants. General remedial and basic education (math and verbal literacy), pre-apprenticeship classes (also included as a job preparation component), and English as a second language classes were offered by smaller numbers of sites.[21] Specifics are shown in Table IV.6.

TABLE IV.6:
Sites Offering Basic and Remedial Education

Type of Educational Service	Number
General Educational Development (GED)	16
Remedial / Basic Education	6
Pre-Apprenticeship	3
English as a Second Language	2

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantee response categories are not mutually exclusive.

Interviewees at several different sites noted that because many ex-offenders need to get a job quickly (e.g., it is a condition of their parole/probation), participants often do not have the time to invest in working towards their GED. Rather, the participants and staff members might develop a plan where the ex-offender can find a job and later enroll in a GED program that fits into his or her schedule, if such a program is available in the community. Also, interviewees stated that a surprisingly high percentage of participants already have a high school diploma or GED. The MIS data revealed that, at the end of September 2006, 47 percent of the participants enrolled at faith-based grantees were receiving mentoring services, while approximately 32 percent of all participants enrolled at the other received mentoring services.

[21] The MIS data as of September 30, 2006 show that approximately 7 percent of the PRI population is limited-English proficient.

E. Occupational Skill Training (Including Use of Vouchers)

Site visits identified few projects that were making significant use of any form of occupational skill training supported by grant funds or other resources, as shown in Table IV.7. As previously noted, most ex-offenders on parole or probation are required to be employed, and very few others appear to be interested in and/or willing to engage in classroom-type training activities. Based on interviews with project staff, it appears that PRI participants are more amenable to occupational skill training if it occurs in a non-classroom setting (e.g., OJT, internships, or similar contexts). One CBO offers a monetary incentive to ex-offenders who pursue training: they pay a five-dollar-an-hour "wage" to participants who attend a keyboarding and computer skills class.

TABLE IV.7:
Types of Occupational Skills Training

Type of Training	Total Sites
Non-Construction (not including computer skills training)	12
Computer Skills Training	10
Construction and Forklift Skills	6
Total Sites Offering Occupational Skills Training	**21**

Source: Data obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantee response categories are not mutually exclusive.

Despite the USDOL requirement that training be provided through vouchers, only six sites indicated that they used or planned to use vouchers for this purpose. Two of the sites had budgeted for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) or vouchers, but had not yet begun to access

those funds. At least one of the six sites indicated that participants' use of vouchers would be contingent on their being enrolled in services provided by the local One-Stop Career Center.[22]

F. Work Experience and Other Approaches Not Covered Elsewhere

Seven projects indicated that they utilize or plan to utilize some type of tryout employment, work experience, and/or OJT to help ex-offenders become familiar with the world of work, acquire soft employment-related skills (and possibly some occupational skills), and earn the money necessary to survive. Occupational areas in which these forms of assistance have occurred include construction, warehouses, food service, and special events. One site was planning to establish a combination classroom training and OJT placement in the fields of culinary arts and auto mechanics. All but one of these sites use grant funds to support these activities.

Three projects specifically identified work experience as a service strategy for their participants. In mainline workforce programs, work experience is considered to be a means of affording an individual with little or no prior involvement in the traditional workforce an opportunity to perform meaningful work in what is usually a fully subsidized job for a relatively limited period of time. One of the benefits of work experience is that it gives new entrants to the workforce a chance to get a "taste" of what work is like before they are expected to perform at the level of their peers. Because 100 percent of the wage costs of an individual in a work experience setting are typically covered by the program, the expectations placed on the participant by the employer are less than in OJT, and the participant has an opportunity to learn

[22] Another project was using what it called "vouchers"; however, they do not appear to be synonymous with the "mechanisms of choice" referred to in the SGA. At this site, the grantee's case managers and project manager determine where the voucher funds are going to be spent. It appears that vouchers are simply a convenient way for the grantee to acquire the services of the partners with whom they want to work.

more gradually than would be expected in an OJT setting. Work experience also provides an opportunity for the participant to "learn by doing" and put into practice the appropriate work habits of timeliness and civility that may have been taught in a work readiness class.

Site visitors encountered numerous examples of projects helping participants gain work experience through ongoing programs or by the projects themselves serving as "employers of last resort" for some participants. One FBO grantee has an on-site restaurant facility where individuals with disabilities can receive training on all aspects of restaurant work. Several other grantees will hire participants to work at the grantee organization or with a subgrantee so that the ex-offenders can gain valuable on-the-job experience. This not only provides the participants with a steady income, but it also affords them an opportunity to build their resumés. At two of the sites, two females had been hired to work for the grantee as office assistants because both of these women had limited previous work experience.

Overloaded schedules precluded some efforts to provide training for participants. For example, an employed participant may have a 40-hour-a-week job, an obligation for a weekly meeting with a parole officer, one or more mentoring sessions, several AA or NA sessions, and occasional meetings with a case manager or other project staff. Coupled with the need to take public transportation everywhere and the time it requires, the participant ends up with very little free time. Although skill training or remedial education may provide a viable pathway to achieving individual and program goals, they may simply be unfeasible for a significant number of participants, especially during the early stages of their post-institutional re-entry process.

G. Mentoring

In the SGA, post-release mentoring is described as "a key part" of PRI, and it is seen as an essential element in the reintegration of the ex-offender into the community. Grantees are expected to offer mentors to each participant who desires this service. Furthermore, grantees should provide mentoring in coordination with the relevant supervisory structure for ex-offenders (e.g., parole offices) by matching participants with appropriate mentors who will be responsible for supporting the releasee in both the community and the workplace. Mentors are to be provided by faith-based and community organizations. In short, the grantees are to arrange for and provide the re-entry services needed by the ex-offenders; and the mentors offer support, guidance, and assistance with the ex-offenders' many challenges. According to PRI MIS data from September 2006, approximately 39 percent of participants enrolled in PRI had received mentoring services.

1. Mentor Recruitment

While the processes for recruiting mentors vary widely, most grantees expressed the goal of having an effective volunteer mentoring process in place and available to all enrolled participants. In some communities, mentoring activities were being organized before significant numbers of participants were enrolled. Several sites report success in securing mentors, with a number of projects having over 50 mentors available for their participants. (One project, reportedly with 200 mentors available, matches two mentors to each participant, and thus needs a large pool of potential mentors.) Sites with larger numbers of mentors-in-waiting often had mentoring providers who have had some experience in offering mentoring or other services to offenders or ex-offenders. Much of the mentor recruitment for such projects occurs in places of

worship. The majority of the PRI projects had more modest numbers of mentors, consistent with their participant levels, their mentoring strategies, and the kinds and degree of challenges they've faced in establishing their mentoring programs.

A few of the grantees do not allow ex-offenders to be mentors, while five grantees encourage peer-to-peer mentoring or "alumni" involvement in the mentoring program. Sites that utilized ex-offenders as mentors observed that project participants readily connected with individuals who had preceded them in the re-entry process, with some of them having come out of the same institutions where the current participants had recently been incarcerated. Staff at projects using peer mentors reported that new releasees seemed to be encouraged by seeing that someone who has had similar challenges with the legal system and experiences with incarceration had now reached a level of stability outside of an institutional setting.

Those projects that require a specific time commitment from mentors typically ask mentors to participate for at least one year.

2. Mentor Training

Many of the grantees see value in providing their mentors with specialized training in the mentoring of ex-offenders. Training curricula range from proprietary products such as the Prison Fellowship Ministries' *Principles for the Effective Mentoring of Ex-Prisoners*, to products developed individually by the grantees or their consultants.

Because mentoring activities at many locations were in a state of flux at the time of the site visits, initiative-wide data are not available on this subject. As can be observed in Table IV.8, grantees differ on the amount of training that they require of a successful mentoring program, but

almost all of the grantees with active mentoring programs require some amount of formalized training for their mentors.

TABLE IV.8:
Mentor Training

Formal Training Requirement	Number of Grantees
Less Than Eight Hours of Training	7
Eight or More Hours of Training	4
Ongoing Training Sessions	5
Informal Training	1
No Training at the Time of the Site Visit	1

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Mentor training plans were not yet developed at some sites.

At least five of the grantees have regularly scheduled, ongoing training sessions that allow project staff (including mentor coordinators, case managers, and/or project managers) and mentors to discuss significant issues, such as current literature on the topic of ex-offender mentoring and models that increase the likelihood of success when working with the ex-offender population. At one project, the mentoring coordinator also teaches work readiness classes to participants shortly after they enroll. During the weekly mentor meetings/training sessions, one individual ensures that mentors know the topics that are being covered in class so that they can reinforce the classroom themes as they engage with mentees. Several of the grantees require a criminal background check of the mentors, in addition to their attendance at training.

3. Mentoring Program Design

Mentoring activities in general help to provide a level of support to ex-offenders who are re-entering non-institutional life. Mentors can provide valuable emotional support simply by listening to participants as they confront their challenges. Because mentoring normally takes

place at times that are convenient for both the mentor and mentee, the mentoring activity can be an important counterweight to the mandatory activities that ex-offenders face after they leave institutions (e.g., work, parole, and drug testing). Sites had a relatively wide set of options to choose from in establishing their mentoring programs.

One of the grantees requires its participants to be involved in the mentoring program as a condition of receiving other assistance under the PRI project. While many of the grantees offer a voluntary mentoring option to their ex-offenders, there is still an expectation that once the mentees elect to enter the mentoring program, they will agree to remain engaged with their mentors. In an effort to provide ex-offenders with an ongoing interpersonal relationship, most of the grantees request that mentors be available to their mentees for four to six hours a month for approximately one year.

TABLE IV.9:
Mentoring Activities Across Grantees

Activity	Number of Grantees
Group Mentoring Sessions or Group Activities	13
Individual Mentoring	6
Both Individual and Group Mentoring	5
Mentoring Program Not Fully Developed at Time of Site Visit	13

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.

Table IV.9 provides data on the number of grantees involved in group and/or individual mentoring components across all grantees. Sites with group approaches to mentoring typically provided a single mentor for two or three PRI participants. A few sites formed groups consisting of two mentors and four or five participants, so that mentors could share the mentoring role and,

at any given time, at least one mentor would be available for group sessions and individual discussions.

Five sites utilized a hybrid approach that combines group and individual mentoring. Benefits of a group mentoring approach as described by project staff include the additional perspectives and insights that can occur in a group, along with the efficiencies of exposing the assembled mentors and mentees to lessons or themes (interviewing skills, dealing with re-entry challenges, and the like) through presentations to the group. The individual themes can then be discussed in smaller or one-on-one settings. Some projects begin with a group approach and eventually match participants with mentors based on the degree of compatibility (or 'chemistry') observed during the larger sessions.

4. Processes for Matching with Participants

When matching participants with mentors, many of the grantees utilize a mentor-matching model that incorporates mentors' and mentees' gender, motivation, geography, educational background, similar personal likes/dislikes, and avocational interests, which are then taken into account when making the match. The assignment of a mentee to a mentor is accomplished in a variety of ways. Some grantees have the mentoring services supervisor select the mentor/mentee combinations; others allow the mentors and mentees to come together for a social event and then

EXHIBIT IV.4
Mentor-Mentee Matching Process

One-on-one mentoring matches are made by the case manager and mentor coordinator. The case manager provides the mentor coordinator with a "snapshot" form that outlines a client's key characteristics, and the mentor coordinator then tries to match mentor to mentee. Typically, the mentor coordinator tries to pair mentor and mentee by finding individuals of similar age. This way, the two can "become friends," in the words of the coordinator. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to also attend the two-and-one-half-hour group mentoring event held on the second Saturday of each month.

make their own selections. Exhibit IV.4 describes one site's approach to helping the mentor coordinator make an informed decision about mentor-mentee pairings.

During the first round of the site visits, as noted in the discussion of mentoring partnerships in Chapter II, many grantees were not at a fully operational stage in the implementation of their mentoring plan. This is largely due to one or more of the following factors:

- Low enrollments, resulting in the lack of a "critical mass" to get the mentoring programs fully operational
- Termination of relationships with planned mentoring entities due to the grantee's perception of the mentoring provider's poor performance of mentoring tasks, along with issues around restrictions on mentoring content (of a religious nature), among other explanations
- Participants' reluctance to sign-up for mentoring services because of feeling over-programming and because of logistical challenges they face (timing, transportation)

To the extent that they had a mentoring program that could be offered to participants, projects appeared to be making a bona fide attempt to "sell" participants on the mentoring concept. As a result of the uneven nature of mentoring activities to date, during the Round Two site visits the site visitors will place an added emphasis on ascertaining the status and successes/challenges of each grantee's mentoring program.

5. Oversight/Supervision

Oversight and supervision of the mentoring component is accomplished by a variety of methods. Several of the grantees have elected to have a mentoring coordinator on staff, while others have a subgrantee operating the mentoring program with a subgrantee staff member as the supervisor/coordinator. One grantee's unique approach to the oversight and supervision of its mentoring program utilizes multiple partners. A brief description of this site's approach to

mentoring is found in Exhibit IV.5. Each partner varies somewhat in its approach to mentoring, but this PRI grantee takes steps to ensure that they all operate within the established protocols of the PRI program.

EXHIBIT IV.5
An Approach to Mentoring

This project has four faith-based (FB) mentoring partners, each of which brings its own dynamic and creativity to the mentoring component. Each partner varies somewhat in its approach to mentoring within the overall protocols established by the PRI grantee. The project-wide protocols and key elements of the PRI mentoring service component include the following:

- *Staffing*: Each FB site has an assigned volunteer mentoring coordinator from the congregation who recruits, screens, and matches mentors to mentees, in conjunction with the site's case manager. The coordinator also organizes formal group mentoring sessions and tracks mentoring activities.
- *Commitments:* A commitment of one year is mandatory for all PRI participants (as is the commitment to the program). Mentor commitment is for one year, with a minimum of four to six hours per month.
- *Mentoring approaches/activities:* A group mentoring approach is used for formal mentoring meetings/sessions (two, two-hour sessions per month), which include ongoing mentor training. Sessions are facilitated and may involve any number of topics or activities. Other mentoring activities may include bowling, pizza night, or helpful sessions involving activities like assistance in filling out forms, for example. Beyond the twice-a-month formal sessions, mentor-mentee contact is when/as needed.
- *Ratio:* two mentors to five mentees (some FB partners had moved to a 1:2 ratio based on mentor feedback).
- *Mentor screening/interviewing*: While there is no mentor job description, a standard Mentor Interview Guide is used for screening. Screening is jointly conducted by the case manager and mentoring coordinator. The PRI grantee conducts background checks on all mentors.
- *Mentoring tracking:* Log sheets are kept by each mentor; the sheets record all contacts/dates, how long the contact lasted, and what topics were address and what activities took place. The log sheets are compiled by the mentoring coordinator, with monthly reports provided to the site-based case manager.

H. Housing

Because the SGA prohibits projects from using grant funds for participant housing,[23] grantees are obligated to partner with housing providers if they are to assist ex-offenders with

[23] Subject to limited exceptions, as discussed in Chapter II.

their housing needs. Table IV.11 summarizes information on approaches to housing that sites undertook. Only one of the nine FBO projects in this group either is a housing provider or has a direct relationship with a housing provider, while ten of the remaining twenty-one sites report that they have grantee-supported or grantee-provided housing.

Table IV.10:
Forms of Housing Assistance

Type of Assistance	No.
Transitional Housing	12
Grantee Support or Grantee-Provided Housing*	11
Sober Living Homes or Substance Abuse Treatment Housing	10
Emergency Housing	9
Landlords Willing To Assist PRI Clients	6
Criminal Justice Partner Assistance	4
Shared Housing	4
City Housing Authority Assistance	3
Housing for Special Groups (HIV, Seniors, Veterans)	3
Faith-Based Housing	2

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: * - Most often through grantee- or partner-operated emergency or transitional housing.

One CBO has apartments, dormitory-style buildings, and emergency beds that more than 30 PRI participants have used. This organization's housing units are comfortable, clean, attractive, well maintained, safe, and secure. Despite the fact that this organization has a comparatively wide array of housing options for its participants, at least one interviewee noted that these resources are still insufficient, and housing can be provided only to those who need it the most.

Another grantee is able to provide housing services through two of its subgrantees. One of these organizations provides dedicated emergency and transitional housing for all female PRI participants, provided that they participate in various life-skills classes while living in the

transitional facility. The second subgrantee has housing for participants with unique needs. For example, the subgrantee has dormitory-style housing where each floor is dedicated to serving a separate population (e.g., tenants who are ex-offenders or who have mental health problems or substance abuse issues).

Participants at four grantee sites could potentially benefit from housing assistance offered by criminal justice partners. In one location, the Department of Corrections has funds available to assist ex-offenders with security deposits. In a different state, the parole office can help ex-offenders with finding and obtaining short-term housing at a few select sites. This parole office also has funds to help pay for this short-term housing.

Sympathetic landlords and faith-based housing are two other housing options that the grantees have utilized for PRI participants. In some grantee cities, assistance from landlords simply means that landlords who are willing to rent to ex-offenders have been identified. In other grantee sites, the help from landlords is more extensive, as some landlords are willing to offer housing at a rental price that is below market value. Faith-based housing options were used in two grantee cities; typically, this type of housing is a sober living home where tenants must follow curfews and religious rules of the house.

Interviewees at more than half of the sites repeatedly expressed the sentiment that providing ample housing resources to participants is one of the biggest challenges the grantees face. Interviewees also often noted that despite the challenge of finding housing, all or almost all of the PRI participants have been able to find housing. The problem appears to lie more with finding quality housing so that the participant is in a stable and safe environment over an extended period of time. That is, interviewees at several sites noted that participants might not

have an immediate need for housing upon enrollment into the PRI program because they were staying with family/friends or living in a halfway house. However, these temporary/transitional arrangements do not address the need for permanent housing.

Grantees also discussed the difficulties associated with Section 8 housing. Public housing restrictions vary from city-to-city; therefore, while PRI participants may qualify for public housing in one area, they would not qualify in a different site. Convictions related to crystal methamphetamine or other drugs typically disqualify a potential tenant; and, as many interviewees stated, the majority of ex-offenders have substance abuse issues and convictions. In at least one location, all PRI participants are excluded from Section 8 housing due to a ban on any individual with a felony conviction.

An added burden for ex-offenders seeking suitable housing is the popularity in some communities of so-called "crime-free zones." The zones are created in the name of public safety, and they can affect ex-offenders' ability to rent or stay in housing in certain complexes. The stated purpose of these local initiatives usually involves eliminating criminal activity from rental properties and neighborhoods, but the reported effect is to close off housing options to ex-offenders.[24]

I. Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Other Health Services

Substance abuse and mental health issues were cited as challenges that ex-offenders face upon reentry. In fact, several interviewees stated that at least 75 percent of ex-offenders have substance abuse or mental health issues. To address substance abuse treatment needs, at least half of the grantees refer participants in need of this kind of treatment to partners in the

[24] The initiative is promoted by the International Crime Free Association, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization "dedicated to those whose mission is related to the goal and purpose of the Crime Free Programs."

community.[25] At least six grantees (or subcontractors) have substance abuse treatment programs at their facilities, and five grantees sponsor Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings. Grantees also offer other group activities such as relapse prevention classes to assist ex-offenders with substance abuse issues. One grantee will not accept ex-offenders as PRI participants if they are not sober; that is, the participant must either be in recovery or in treatment and on the road to recovery.

TABLE IV.11:
Substance Abuse Treatment and Counseling Services

Service	Number of sites
Referral Partners for Substance Abuse Treatment	15
Grantee or Sub-Grantee has Treatment Program (Outpatient or Inpatient or Counseling)	6
AA/NA Meetings or Other Relapse Prevention Groups at Grantee or Referral Partners	5
Department of Corrections or Community Corrections Makes Substance Abuse Referrals or Helps Pay for Substance Abuse Treatment	5

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantee response categories are not mutually exclusive.

For those ex-offenders needing mental health treatment, 40 percent of the grantees offer referrals to community mental health service providers. Six grantees noted that they had few or no resources to help participants with mental health issues. Three grantees provide on-site counseling, and two grantees can aid participants in obtaining medicine for mental health disorders. As mentioned previously in the section on housing, one grantee is able to provide mental health and/or substance abuse treatment in their dormitory housing facility.

[25] Regardless of whether and how the partnership is codified (i.e., an informal agreement or a formal document such as a Memorandum of Understanding), none of the "referral partners" identified to date *guarantees* drug and alcohol treatment space for PRI participants.

Several grantees were also able to offer physical health services. One subgrantee has a new free clinic that provides a wide array of services. For example, patients have access not only to standard "western" medicine, but also to an "eastern" medicine clinic that provides acupuncture and other practices in a spa-like atmosphere.

As captured in Table IV.12, of the sites reporting the provision of mental health services, twelve sites make referrals to partners. Six sites have few or no resources devoted to mental health issues.

TABLE IV.12:
Mental Health Services Offered by PRI Sites

Activity	Total Sites
Referral Partners for Mental Health Services	12
Few or No Resources to Help Those with Mental Health Issues	6
State or County Provides Mental Health Services (Counseling, Medication, etc.) for Ex-Offenders or Those Meeting Income Requirements	5
Grantee or Sub-Grantee Has Resources to Help with Mental Health Issues (e.g. Counseling On-Site)	3
Cognitive Change Therapy at Grantee or Sub-Grantee	2
Assistance with Getting Medications for Ex-Offenders (Referral Partners, Pharmaceutical Companies)	2
Grantee Conducts Mental Health Assessments	1

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantee response categories are not mutually exclusive.

J. Supportive Services

In terms of barriers faced, ex-offenders are among those individuals most in need of all types of employment assistance and other forms of help. ETA provided that sites could use grant

funds for a range of supportive service assistance. Table IV.13 provides a breakdown of grantee-provided information regarding those supportive services.

TABLE IV.13:
Supportive Services Provided by PRI Sites

Service	Number of Sites
Clothes, Boots or Shoes, Toiletries	21
Bus or Subway Passes/ Tickets	18
Assistance with Obtaining Drivers' Licenses / Identification	14
Food	11
Work Tools	10
Van or Staff-Provided Transportation	9
Life Skills Classes / Counseling / Anger Management	8
Legal Assistance	7
Furniture / Home Accessories	4
Gas Vouchers / Cards	4
Money Management Classes or Assistance with Bank Accounts	3
Family Reunification Assistance / Parenting Classes	3
Eyeglasses / Eye Care / Dental Care / Medicines	3
Voice Mail and/or Phone Cards	3
Bicycles	2
Child Care Assistance	2

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.
Note: Grantee response categories are not mutually exclusive.

The most common supportive services provided were related to transportation (bus passes, gas cards, and direct assistance via a van or private car), basic needs (food and clothes), and work-related items (tools and boots). Assistance in obtaining identification and related documents was another service that was frequently provided.

Relatively less common was assistance with home furnishings, various health-related items (e.g., eyeglasses), the development of financial management skills, and communications (e.g., voicemail). A few projects had arranged to provide specific additional supportive services to PRI participants. Based on information gathered during site visits, the following forms of

assistance were usually available at only one or two locations: child care, bicycles for transportation, legal assistance (see Exhibit IV.6), family reunification services[26] (see Exhibit IV.7), and tattoo removal. However, after the tattoo removal service was included in one grantee's proposal, it was reportedly only infrequently utilized, and the grantee was reportedly planning to reduce or remove the item from its budget.

EXHIBIT IV.6
Legal Assistance

One site offers participants access to assistance with a range of legal services. This is based, in part, on the premise that many ex-offenders face significant challenges to re-integration in its most comprehensive sense because of real or perceived barriers that can be addressed through a better understanding of the law – although not always through the legal system itself.

Legal services will initially be provided through "clinics" to groups of people dealing with legal issues faced by ex-offenders. Individualized assistance would follow on an as-needed basis. Many ex-offenders need information on such subjects as re-obtaining their drivers licenses, having their convictions expunged, and understanding family law (including what is involved in regaining custody of their children). One interviewee observed that the courts' focus is on the children—usually the ex-offender will not get the children back—and it is usually a long path for those who are successful.

The partner providing legal services plans to hold a divorce workshop for simple divorce. Another module covers the laws and regulations affecting access to housing and mental health services (there is a single, state-funded provider, and sometimes a person needs to file in court to get help). The plan is to hold five clinics through February 2007. For participants needing individualized assistance, as might be expected, communications between participants and legal services staff are considered privileged—no confidential information about a participant will be provided to the project.

Generally speaking, the less complex projects that tended to operate more independently offered a more limited menu of supportive services. As the initiative matures and sites learn more about the ancillary services that appear to make a difference in participants' chances for successful re-entry, it is possible that projects will increase the types of supportive services they

[26] For background on family reunification, see Littell and Schuerman 1995, and Child Welfare League of America 2002. The concept of family reunification originated in the context of attempts to reunite children who had been placed in foster care with their parent(s). For returning ex-offenders, family reunification has a broader connotation that may involve reconnecting releasees with any family member.

offer. The evaluation will attempt to gauge these changes during the next round of site visits and address this issue in the final report.

EXHIBIT IV.7
Family Reunification Services

In the field of prisoner re-entry, *family reunification* is a planned process by which an ex-offender is reconnected with children, parents, spouse, and/or other family members. At one site, the family reunification provider had received four referrals at the time of the site visit. Two of these were described as successfully resolved. All services are provided in-home, which allows provider staff to observe the participant's living situation. Services may continue for a maximum of 90 days. The partner uses both a licensed clinician (Family Counselor) and a Family Support Specialist. One aspect that they work on is parenting, noting that it is important that ex-offenders not parent out of guilt. They also assist with accessing other resources needed (e.g., food stamps and medications) and activities such as budgeting (e.g., for repayment of support arrearages). A client can receive assistance up to three times per week, but most go once a week.

K. Participant Follow-Up and Monitoring

The topic of participant follow-up and monitoring is important to the Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative for two reasons. First, projects are expected to provide post-placement support to help ex-offenders with the continuing process of re-entry and reintegration into their communities. Second, entry of the MIS data is required for three calendar quarters of follow-up employment and earnings data; consequently, sites need to maintain contact with former project participants, even after their need or desire for assistance had ended, in order to collect that necessary data. At the time of the site visits, most projects had not developed complex strategies for gathering such data or for supporting participants' long-term placement and retention. At least three sites plan to maintain contact with participants for at least one year after placement. At the time of the site visits, almost half of the sites reported that they contact employers at least once during the first 30 days after placement, but most grantees had not yet developed formal procedures for maintaining contact with employers.

L. Influence of Grantee and Partner Faith-Based Focuses on Service Strategies

The faith-based orientation of ten of the PRI grantees, coupled with the faith-based nature of mentoring providers in at least ten additional sites, suggests that aspects of faith and religion may be more prominent in project services under PRI than in other USDOL demonstration programs. The most common service component provided by FBOs is mentoring; more than 20 sites reported having faith-based mentoring.

A review of PRI MIS data as of September 30, 2006, reveals two essential distinctions so far between CBO and FPO participant services. The 10 FBO grantees provided mentoring services to 47 percent of their participants, while the 20 CBO sites provided those services to 32 percent of their participants. On the other hand, about 21 percent of participants at FBO sites received education or training services, while about 38 percent of those at CBO sites received such assistance.

It is important to note, however, that almost half of the grantees also stated that their mentoring programs were not as well developed as they would have liked at the time of the site visit. Although the ten FBOs had a larger percentage of their participants in mentoring services and a smaller percentage in education and training, this stage of the evaluation does not allow an explanation for these differences.

Mentoring partners are often churches, and many mentors in these sites are affiliated with the churches that manage the mentoring activity. Several interviewees pointed out that mentors are motivated by their faith to work with the PRI participants. Interviewees at several sites stated that the federal restriction against proselytizing is emphasized during mentor training and honored during mentoring.

Another common way that faith is incorporated into the PRI projects is through the staff themselves. Staff members at many different FBOs explained that they came to work on PRI because it was their "calling," or it was something they were drawn to by their faith and desire to help others. While this may be their motivation for the employment they chose, these staff members were also quick to point out that they were well aware of the need to separate religion and church activities from their work on the PRI projects. In fact, at only one site was there a claim made by a participant that a staff member was proselytizing. The grantee investigated the charge and eventually found it to be without merit.

At least four locations have a church/chapel on site. As one interviewee pointed out, if a participant would like to use the chapel/church, staff will end the PRI case management or job placement session with the participant (creating a formal separation of services) and then provide the participant with access to the chapel or ask one of the ministers to work with the person in a capacity that is separate from the PRI. At another site, a similar protocol is followed, and staff members will allow the participants to have access to the church/chapel if they request it.

Some faith-based partners provide food and clothing to the PRI participants, and other faith-based partners offer services to specific groups of people. For example, at one site, there is a faith-based partner to serve HIV-positive PRI participants and another FBO that works with African-American males and females. For participants in need of substance abuse treatment, the voluntary Twelve Steps programs of Alcoholics Anonymous provide another spiritual component. These programs are offered by at least five different grantees.

Because grant funds are not available to provide housing for participants, grantees have typically sought out entities in their communities that offer assistance with housing. At least two

grantees have partnered with faith-based housing providers. At one of these homes, elements of Christianity are visible upon entry. Furthermore, house rules require that all tenants attend church and prayer groups, and all radios must be turned to Christian music stations. Staff at the grantee that uses this home as a referral partner noted that they inform the participants of the rules before the participant visits the house, and if the participant is uncomfortable or unwilling to live in the house, alternate arrangements with other partners can be made.

M. Challenges in the Design and Provision of Services

TABLE IV.14:
PRI Project Service-Related Challenges
(Overall and by Organizational Type)

Service Challenge	Number of Sites
Housing	18
Transportation	10
Training Clients Takes Too Long (e.g. Client Could Violate Parole Conditions or Refuse Because of Time Involved, Scheduling Conflicts)	4

Source: Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted during site visits.

PRI grantees faced numerous challenges in designing and delivering services to ex-offenders. Housing was far and away the most commonly cited service challenge. As shown in Table IV.14, 18 grantees cited housing as a significant service-related issue. Only one FBO stated that housing was a concern—as noted in Section H, FBO grantees were less likely to offer housing assistance through their own programs or those of a partner, and may be more likely to recruit participants who already have stable housing.

Table IV.15 displays participant housing status at intake (obtained from the MIS database) compared to the PRI community's rank in terms of median rent. Participants living in the ten areas with the highest median rent (Tercile 3) are four times more likely to be homeless than

participants in Tercile 1. Additionally, on average, there are only 15 participants who live in halfway houses or transitional houses in Tercile 3, compared to approximately 40 participants in both Terciles 1 and 2. The presumption is that, in communities with the most expensive housing, the availability of bed space is more limited and more participants are likely to be homeless.

TABLE IV.15:
Housing Status and Tercile of Median Rent

	Median Rent Category		
	Low (Tercile 1)	**Mid-Range (Tercile 2)**	**High (Tercile 3)**
Own/Rent Apartment, Room or House	12.0%	12.9%	13.4%
Staying at Someone's Apt, Room or House (Stable)	42.9%	40.7%	51.3%
Halfway House/Transitional House	33.5%	37.1%	15.1%
Residential Treatment	1.8%	4.1%	4.1%
Homeless	1.9%	2.5%	9.0%
Staying at Someone's Apartment, Room or House (Unstable)	7.9%	2.6%	7.1%
Average Number of Enrollees for Tercile	109.1	109.9	98.5

Source: Housing Status from PRI MIS data. Median rental cost covers renter-occupied units in the principal city of the MSA, from the US Census Bureau 2005 American Community Survey.
Note: The terciles are arranged from lowest to highest. Sites in Tercile 3 are the ten with the highest Median Rent.

N. Summary Observation

One challenge that was both observed by site visitors and articulated directly by interviewees is that many ex-offenders simply want to "get on with their lives." PRI staff often expressed the view that many ex-offenders arrive at their doors primarily wanting a job. Some were not interested in the additional services available (testing, mentoring, and the like), and others wanted some support and assistance, but not at the comprehensive or holistic levels envisioned in some project plans or in USDOL's SGA. Because most projects do not perform comprehensive participant assessments, it will be impossible to determine whether the ex-

offenders who receive various project services represent all of those who need them, or simply those who happen to have the time or interest to avail themselves of those services.

V. SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Key Findings

Considering the scope of the challenge that the grantees accepted in applying for funds to operate prisoner re-entry projects, most of the sites made significant strides toward establishing employment-centered, re-entry projects for ex-offenders. Delays, unanticipated obstacles, and red tape affected most projects in at least one aspect of their undertaking. Nonetheless, sites were largely operational at the times of the site visits, had most aspects of their basic program under operation, and were actively seeking ways to improve their processes and outcomes.

1. Project Start-Up and Organization

Grantees encountered considerable challenges in implementing prisoner re-entry demonstration projects. In general, grantees that were smaller and less experienced in managing federal grants and/or in providing prisoner re-entry services experienced longer delays and more challenges than organizations that were larger and had more experience in these fields. Staffing challenges—finding the "right" personnel and dealing with staff turnover—were the leading issues in this area.

Sites also experienced difficulties in establishing partnerships with local workforce organizations. For most sites, the extent of their relationship with local One-Stop entities was limited, consisting of access to One-Stop job listings and occasional participant attendance at job-search classes that were open to the general public. Only a few participants were receiving intensive services or training from local workforce programs.

Forming partnerships with the institutions in the criminal justice system was also a challenge. Sites experienced problems in ex-offender recruitment, due in part to delays in awarding the USDOJ grants for pre-release services. In some locations, grantees also found it difficult to obtain from their criminal justice partners the necessary verification of a participant's eligibility.

Due to the delay in the award and start-up of the USDOJ pre-release grants, the sites had to make special efforts to develop linkages with criminal justice agencies on their own, at the very least for participant referral/recruitment purposes. Many sites were effective at engaging criminal justice agencies for recruitment and/or eligibility connections. Sites had a better chance of creating these partnerships more rapidly and with less effort if they already had relationships with a criminal justice agency prior to the grant award. A few sites benefited from working with State Departments of Correction that had already committed to re-entry programming and principles. The existence of such relationships or programming, however, was not in itself sufficient to guarantee a successful start-up.

The staffing structure of most of the PRI sites followed the conventional re-entry model that centers around case managers, with specialists either on staff or available through referral to address common needs/challenges faced by new releasees. A closer examination reveals that most program structures were clearly focused on participants' immediate vocational/employment needs. Many programs did not conduct comprehensive, multi-domain needs and risk assessments, and half did not report developing individualized service plans for participants. Many sites had not yet developed mechanisms for maintaining ongoing contact with participants and monitoring their progress in employment, much less their participation in other services. Surprisingly, none of the sites reported that addressing participants' substance abuse, mental

health, or medical needs—problems that are prevalent among releasees—was a particular challenge. These findings serve to underscore the employment focus of the projects. Although this approach apparently serves to address participants' most pressing needs (sites report that offenders come to them looking for employment and not much more), this design commonly observed in the sites' early implementation period is more limited than the comprehensive model outlined in the re-entry best practices literature.[27] Such an employment-focused model could be effective if ex-offenders' other assistance needs and the ongoing, proactive case management are being handled elsewhere. Housing is the one non-vocational area that many sites indicated was a particular challenge, and many sites were making efforts to address this other instrumental need.

2. Project Operations

On the operational side, the principal challenges found during the review of the projects' early implementation experiences involved recruiting and mentoring participants, meeting participants' housing needs, and hiring/providing effective project staff.. Lesser problems involved meeting participants' substance abuse and mental health treatment needs, assisting participants in finding necessary transportation, and maintaining participants' interest in project services.

Recruitment. Many sites encountered considerable difficulties in accessing a pool of eligible individuals large enough to meet USDOL's enrollment goals. In some cases, recruitment challenges might have been alleviated had USDOJ released its grant funds earlier. If this had happened, the re-entry services that were to be provided to inmates on a pre-release basis and the referrals of individuals leaving such programs might have begun earlier in the

[27] Although many sites had significant program components that did not specifically address participants' employment needs, few sites offered a range of services that approached the full menu of ex-offender needs.

USDOL projects' implementation period. In other instances, recruitment difficulties occurred in part because projects misestimated the number of individuals who would (1) meet the USDOL eligibility criteria and (2) be interested in their program of services. Considering the information presented in grantees' applications to USDOL, it would appear that some grantees took a superficial look at prison releasee data for their area and assumed that those whose "most recent offense" was not of a violent or sexual nature would be eligible for PRI, neglecting to consider whether such data was an accurate indicator of whether an individual had ***ever*** been convicted of a violent or sexual offense. There was also some indication that in certain jurisdictions, the PRI sites are "competing" with other programs to provide assistance to ex-offenders. Because the research to date has not involved a review of other re-entry services available in the PRI communities, there is not sufficient information to determine the extent to which local competition and/or ex-offender disinterest are factors in some sites' low recruitment numbers.

Inmates leave prisons either under supervision—parole or probation for a period of up to three years or more—or "without paper," meaning that they have no reporting requirements. For the first group of ex-offenders, some structure and continued supervision holds the promise of a gradual segue into non-institutional life, during which an external force is exerting less and less control over behavior over time. For inmates leaving without paper, the amount of control suddenly changes from a life of guards and externally imposed schedules to one without guards, without schedules, and with the local police being the only regular supervisory authorities. By helping participants with employment needs and in many instances offering a wide-ranging set of supportive services, PRI projects can address the needs of both groups of ex-offenders.

PRI staff often expressed the view that many ex-offenders arrive at their doors merely wanting that first job. Whether to meet the conditions of parole, to get the money for rent and

meals, or to satisfy some other goal, most often applicants are seeking employment. They do not have the inclination to sit through an extensive battery of tests to determine educational attainment, aptitude, skills, interests, risk of violence, tendency toward substance abuse, mental capacity, and other, often critically important, indicators of their needs.

Some of the PRI programs seek to cajole ex-offenders into sitting through tests; spending time in various workshops; or (in those instances when the project has a viable partner) being referred out for specialized assistance. Many sites do not attempt this level of assessment.

Mentoring. Several factors contributed to grantee difficulties in implementing mentoring programs. Sites experienced problems in finalizing relationships with mentoring partners. Some faith-based organizations decided to cease their involvement after they understood the restrictions on the use of federal funds for religious activities. Other organizations initiated mentoring activities, but grantees were not satisfied with these organizations' performance and decided to pursue different avenues for services. Several grantees chose to bring the mentoring function in-house in order to supervise more closely the activities. In addition to difficulties in finding adequate mentoring partners, sites addressed the challenges of participants' disinterest in mentoring services and participants' lack of time for mentoring, of establishing functioning communications procedures with mentoring organizations, and of identifying or creating appropriate content or protocols for mentoring services.

Many of the mentoring problems can be traced back to the complexities of putting together a comprehensive program of services for ex-offenders. For mentoring, in particular, there appears to be no ready-made product or how-to guide that would help inexperienced organizations identify what to look for in potential mentor providers (a sort of *Consumer Reports*

for mentoring organizations). Much of the faith-based mentoring currently takes place "behind the walls" of jails and prisons, and thus serves a captive audience who face fewer temptations while incarcerated and have few alternatives as to how they spend their time. Several interviewees suggested that many faith-based organizations and individuals who find success in prison ministry and mentoring situations are ill-prepared for the changes in the relationship and in the mentee's situation that take place once inmates leave the institution. On the other hand, many PRI sites were operating relatively successful mentoring programs, using FBOs as mentoring providers and, often, as sources of mentors.

Housing. Housing was cited as a service challenge by over half of the sites. The numerous housing-related issues included the limited supply of affordable housing, difficulties in navigating the housing sector due to fragmentation among public and private housing providers, and various restrictions on participant access to housing. Sites that did not see housing as a major challenge were likely to have close partners and/or were active themselves in providing housing to individuals in need. To address the housing challenge, sites used listings of renters who were "offender-friendly" and tried to cultivate relationships with public, private for-profit, and private not-for-profit housing providers. Another solution used by one site was to hire a case manager who had worked in the housing sector and was familiar with providers in the community. A further challenge involves helping participants find stable, long-term housing after arrangements such as halfway houses or transitional homes are over. These issues will likely become more immediate for sites as increasing numbers of participants move through the re-entry process.

B. Future Trends and Directions

1. Challenges in Recruitment and Coordination with USDOJ Grantees

A number of challenges appear on the horizon for the USDOL grantees. Continued delays are expected before any current inmates are brought through the pre-release pipeline provided under the Department of Justice-funded grants, and this will complicate attempts to plan recruitment strategies and project services. Some USDOJ grantees report that project staff will not be hired until summer 2007, with project start-up and ultimately ex-offender referrals happening much later.

The two federal agencies have arranged for different technical assistance providers and management information procedures. USDOJ grantees expressed concern at their grantee meeting in January 2007 that they would not be using the same MIS as the USDOL grantees. They were concerned that the absence of a single system will make data exchanges more problematic and increase the likelihood of PRI sites operating with less than complete information on the USDOJ referrals.

2. Challenges of Participant Follow-Up

As noted, at the time of the site visits, few projects had put in place a proven process for tracking and following up on participants. This activity is important because it can help ex-offenders through those rough periods when a little extra assistance is sometimes necessary to prevent recidivism. It can also identify those situations when they need a new or better job. Follow-up is also a means by which projects can track participant progress and status and know how to reach the individual to collect the follow-up information necessary to complete the MIS

requirements.[28] More information will be available during the second site visits and provided in the final report.

C. Implications

1. Implications for the Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative

As the sites move into their second year of operations, the USDOJ grants are about to become operational. This should somewhat alleviate the problems experienced by some grantees in the recruitment area. It also may create new administrative procedures related to data sharing and aligning pre-release referrals with project eligibility criteria.

Increasing numbers of participants enrolled during the first year of project operations will be in follow-up status during the second year of the grants. This will require projects to expand the attention they pay to participant retention and assistance. Projects may find themselves seeking ways to "wean" some participants from being dependent on PRI services as ex-offenders move closer to establishing stable lives for themselves. It may be necessary for projects to increase their assistance to participants in order to support a transition into higher-paying jobs, both to improve self-sufficiency and to help the sites achieve the program's income and retention goals.

2. Implications for the Evaluation

The final report will draw upon all sources of data collected for the evaluation. It will update implementation lessons contained in this interim report by describing the evolution of program practices that will be identified in the second round of site visits. It will also describe the grantees' enrollment patterns, their participant populations, and the types, intensity, and

[28] Follow-up occurs for a minimum of three quarters following an individual's exit from the program.

duration of services that participants receive through the program. The report will also provide information about the short-term successes that PRI participants are able to achieve in finding employment and remaining free of the criminal justice system. The final analyses will assess the key factors that drive the costs to the government and society of providing PRI services. Combining all aspects of the evaluation, the final report will seek to capture what appear to be important lessons learned about dealing with discreet aspects of ex-offender programs; and it will identify approaches that can inform future years of the PRI demonstration and later generations of prisoner re-entry activities.

PRI projects appear to have found a niche that addresses the expressed needs and interests of recently released offenders, needs and interests that fit the projects' service expertise/capacity (at least relative expertise). On the other hand, re-entry researchers and experienced practitioners point to the importance of comprehensive assessment, multi-domain needs matching, and ongoing monitoring and case management. It will be interesting to see whether (1) this approach evolves significantly as sites mature and the USDOJ grants come on-line, and (2) this type of specialized re-entry model can achieve desired impacts on recidivism.

In the relatively healthy economy that most sites enjoy in 2006 and 2007, ex-offenders who are motivated and can present themselves can usually find employment. Whether participants can keep their jobs, move into jobs that pay a living wage, and deal with the other issues surrounding their lives are areas that we hope to learn more about and address in the PRI Evaluation Final Report.

APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL RE-ENTRY ACTIVITIES PRECEDING THE PRISONER RE-ENTRY INITIATIVE

Early federal program efforts to focus specifically on offender reintegration include Weed and Seed programs, specialized re-entry courts, and the Reentry Partnership Initiative (RPI). Weed and Seed is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ), and the program's primary goal is to reduce violent crime, gang activity, and drug abuse using criminal justice agencies to "weed out" criminals and community-based organizations to "seed" supportive services. Three hundred communities across the country participate in this program. RPI, organized by the USDOJ's Office of Justice Programs, began in 1999 as an eight-site, community-based initiative and was a precursor to current re-entry efforts. RPI is notable for its emphasis on cross-system partnerships that bridge barriers among correctional institutions; among community, public, and private agencies; and among criminal justice, social and health services. (Taxman et al. 2003; Taxman et al. 2004) The process evaluation of RPI resulted in a three-stage re-entry framework that describes the scope of the re-entry process as it evolved in the demonstration. The framework is described in more detail in Chapter I of this report.

Also prominent among federal initiatives responding to re-entry are the Youth Offender Demonstration Program (YODP), funded by USDOL, and the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI), funded by USDOJ and other federal partners. YODP was initially funded by a $13.1 million Congressional set-aside in 1998. Through three separate rounds of grants, USDOL made over 50 awards to help link the justice system to employment efforts and the workforce investment system. Findings from the studies of the first round of YODP grantees

point to the potential for positive outcomes from employment-centered interventions (Miller and MacGillivray 2002; USDOL 2002).

SVORI is a collaborative effort spearheaded by the DOJ in 2002 to develop and evaluate re-entry strategies to ensure the safety of local communities and reduce serious, violent crime. The preliminary assessment of progress in the 69 funded sites and the work under way on an impact evaluation in twelve of the original sites are further evidence of the prioritization being given by the federal government to re-entry efforts and the study of their implementation and impact. The implementation assessment of SVORI has already documented the extent and nature of the involvement of community-based organizations linked to employment, the faith-based community, families, peers, and victims (Lattimore et al. 2004). Also highlighted in the assessment are barriers and challenges, such as coordinating activities across disparate systems and partnering with community organizations that have not previously worked with correctional agencies or their populations. The period covered by the impact evaluation extends to 15 months post-release, with final participant interviews slated to cover outcome status as of April 2007.

A program that was even more closely aligned with the objectives and design of the PRI was the Ready4Work (R4W) initiative, launched in 2003. The three-year, $27 million national demonstration was funded primarily by USDOL, with additional support from USDOJ, two private foundations—the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Ford Foundation—and Public/Private Ventures (P/PV). Annual costs per participant were $4,900. Like the PRI grants, R4W brought together employers, the criminal justice system, and faith-based and community-based social service organizations. Under the R4W framework, grantees were expected to work in partnership with other local entities toward the common goal of reintegrating former prisoners.

Eleven organizations – one local government entity, one for-profit organization, two secular non-profits, and seven faith-based organizations – were funded to serve returnees who are between 18 and 34 years old (Good and Sherrid 2005).

R4W built on evidence that returnees who find jobs are less likely to recidivate; it also incorporated mentoring as a critical service to support re-entry. In addition, rigorous case management assisted participants in accessing other needed services, such as housing and health care. Through P/PV, grantees were provided mentor training, technical assistance, and skills development to help meet the challenges of preparing ex-offenders to reenter the marketplace and the workplace. Experience from the R4W program and from grantee operations has provided knowledge about designing and implementing employment-focused offender re-entry programs, including related services such as mentoring. P/PV documented some potentially promising practices in their preliminary field report, *When the Gates Open* (Good and Sherrid 2005).

More recent information on R4W outcomes is contained in the P/PV *In Brief* paper dated September 2006 (Farley and Hackman 2006). Because of differences between the R4W and PRI designs, the experiences of the two programs are not comparable. The recent P/PV paper notes a number of preliminary experiences, including the following:

- The median period of program retention was eight months.
- Half of the participants met with a mentor for at least a one-month period, and female participants were more likely to be mentored than males.
- Participants involved in one-to-one mentoring were more than twice as likely to become employed as those who had never been mentored.

P/PV acknowledges that these preliminary results do not indicate that the R4W model *caused* the observed outcomes. Additional information on R4W outcomes is expected to be released in the future.

APPENDIX B: CHALLENGES FOR FBO/WORKFORCE SYSTEM COLLABORATION

A current USDOL project is supporting the efforts of twelve Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) to increase collaboration with faith-based organizations. The LWIBs have entered into a range of new partnership arrangements with small, faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) to increase access points to the workforce investment system for new participants, expand the service options available for existing (and future participants) of the system, or introduce the system to very hard-to-serve clientele. These partnerships span a broad spectrum of possible arrangements and service provision. Some participating FBCOs have reached out to populations of hard-to-serve job seekers who are often underserved by One-Stop centers, including returning prisoners.

According to the project evaluator, Mathematica Policy Research (MPR), experience so far in these collaboration-building grants has produced several challenges. The evaluators noted that the relatively low number (1.6 proposals per grant) and quality of FBCO proposals were indicative of the problems in recruiting smaller FBCOs to partner with local WIBs. Further, although the FBCOs and the grantees (generally WIBs) tended to produce strong collaborations, relationships between the FBCOs and local One-Stop Centers were not as strong and were characterized, in some instances, as strained. In addition, many FBCOs required large doses of capacity-building assistance, even on a daily basis, from WIB or intermediary staff (McConnell et al. 2006). Once finalized for release, the findings may provide additional background for the PRI evaluation.

APPENDIX C: A NOTE ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Site Visit Data Collection

Site visitors conducted visits lasting approximately two days in each of the 30 PRI sites, between June 8 and October 15, 2006. Because the site visits required the collection of a significant amount of information on a variety of topics, the evaluation team attempted to ensure maximum efficacy of its time in each location. Site visitors worked collaboratively with individual grantees to arrange site visit dates. To the maximum extent possible, interviews were conducted in a central location to minimize travel time. When feasible, off-site visits were incorporated to gain a broader perspective of grant operations and operating environments. Such visits included trips to prisons, housing facilities, One-Stop Career Centers, residential drug treatment facilities, and other locations where partner involvement in the PRI projects is critical to the holistic service delivery strategy envisioned in the SGA. In a handful of instances, telephone discussions were conducted with selected interviewees when they could not be scheduled on site.

Four data collection methods were employed for the site visits: (1) in-depth, semi-structured interviews; (2) observations of activities; (3) interviews of participant case histories; and (4) a review of site-specific documents. The majority of the site visit time was spent holding in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a wide range of respondents. The purpose of these discussions was to obtain detailed information on PRI grantees and their staffs, project operations and administration; on patterns of cooperation between grantees and their partners; on the evolving recruitment and service delivery processes; and on the associated challenges, barriers, successful strategies, and lessons learned in planning and developing the projects. Pre-visit "interviews"

with project directors were utilized to ensure that interview agendas were tailored to the individual circumstances of the site.

Interviews typically lasted about one hour. When the schedule so required, respondents were occasionally grouped together (e.g., two case managers); however, the desire for candid and frank discussions required that most interviews were conducted one-on-one. Key respondents, based on job function rather than job title, included administrators; project managers, case managers and job developers (from the grantee and subgrantees), liaisons from other key service providers and partners (including One-Stop, criminal justice, mentoring and housing, liaisons from key referral entities, individual mentors, and employers.

Eight different custom interview guides were developed to direct the questions for the key respondent categories. These included guides for the following positions:

1) Grantee Administrators or Executive Directors
2) Project Managers
3) Case Managers
4) Job Developers
5) Mentors
6) Criminal Justice Partners
7) Specific Other Partners (e.g., One-Stop, Housing, Substance Abuse Treatment)
8) Employers

Separate guides were also developed for observation activities and the participant interview.

Site visitors observed a wide range of activities, including participant orientation sessions, meetings of project partners, drug abuse counseling sessions, and presentations to prospective participants. Whenever possible, at least one participant interview was held in each location to capture specific participant experiences with the grantee and perspectives on a number of issues, such as any pre-release services received, perceived barriers to re-entry, PRI project services to

date, and parole/probation interactions. Visitors also collected written material, such as copies of partnership agreements (where they existed), position descriptions of key staff, and minutes of partnership meetings. All site visit agendas were customized to address individual grantee structures, circumstances, and scheduling needs.

All site visitors attended a day-long training session covering key topics to prepare them for the site visits. They were trained on data collection interview guides and forms and on standard reporting and documentation formats. Additionally, the training included a review of interview techniques as applied to community-based grantees, a discussion of key PRI terms and their definitions, and a session on how to connect the study questions and terms to the grantees' frames of reference so that all interview questions would be clearly understood and addressed.

Information for the interim report included a review of project-related documents such as grantee proposals and detailed implementation plans. These documents informed the site visitors, supplemented field data collection, and provided interim snapshots over time for tracking implementation changes and the rationales for any changes.

Documentation and Data Analysis

Given the large number of sites and vast amount of qualitative data collected for the evaluation, structured documentation is vital to the development of a report that responds to the key research questions. In organizing and synthesizing all relevant qualitative data, we have used the research questions and topics as the overall framework, ensuring that we capture grantees' progress through project implementation.

Site visit results were documented through detailed Excel spreadsheets for use in developing interim syntheses and in conducting analyses for the interim evaluation report. Individual site

visit documentation reports were prepared by each site visitor according to a standard template that parallels the key research questions and topics.

After site visits began, the team met periodically, by phone and in-person, to discuss preliminary findings, emerging themes, data collection challenges, and other site visit experiences. The team reviewed site visit information and experiences to begin to tentatively identify the following:

- Planning and implementation challenges, opportunities, strategies employed to address challenges or embrace opportunities, rationales for design and organizational changes, and lessons learned accordingly
- Trends, patterns, or themes concerning common and different project or service component design features
- Relationships, if any, between identified trends, patterns, or themes and short-term outcomes

To construct tables of findings for the interim report, information from site visit documentation was first reviewed for each major partnering activity, project service, and other data field. Based on this review, detailed categories of results were then created to reflect both common and occasional responses. Results for each site and variable were then coded according to the detailed categories. For the report, many of the more detailed categories were aggregated into more general groupings of responses.

Given that the PRI is a demonstration initiative, the SGA placed certain parameters and constraints on the grantees, yet provided considerable flexibility for trying different approaches and service designs. The combination of grantee flexibility and the multitude of service needs evidenced by ex-offenders mean that the PRI projects are incredibly complex and diverse undertakings. Grantees will achieve varying outcomes under different circumstances and

through different approaches, all of which provide a rich source of qualitative data for examining what appears to work and not work in different contexts and why. As the sites move into their second year of service delivery and begin to form partnerships with pre-release service partners, they will become even more complex, thus ensuring that the second round of site visits and subsequent analysis of qualitative and quantitative data will require an informed and deliberate approach to data collection.

APPENDIX D: LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
ATR	Access to Recovery
CASAS	Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CJ	Criminal Justice
CNCS	Corporation for National and Community Service
DOC	Department of Corrections
ESL	English as a Second Language
ETA	Employment and Training Administration
FB	Faith-Based
FB/CBO	Faith-Based/Community-Based Organization
FBCI	Faith-Based and Community Initiative
FBCO	Faith-Based and Community Organization
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
GED	General Educational Development
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
IDP	Individual Development Plan
IEP	Individual Employment Plan
ITA	Individual Training Account
LSIR	Level of Service Inventory - Revised
LWIB	Local Workforce Investment Board
MIS	Management Information System
NA	Narcotics Anonymous
OJT	On-the-Job Training
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
P/PV	Public/Private Ventures
PRI	Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative
R4W	Ready4Work
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
SGA	Solicitation for Grant Application
SPIN	Service Planning Instrument
SVORI	Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative
TA	Technical Assistance
TABE	Test of Adult Basic Education
USDOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
USDOL	U.S. Department of Labor
VISTA	Volunteers In Service To America
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WIB	Workforce Investment Board
YODP	Youth Offender Demonstration Program

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