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Author(s): Jennifer Hardison Walters, Lindsey Cramer, Lara Markovits, Aaron Horvath

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FY 2011 Second Chance Act Adult Offender Reentry Demonstration Projects: Evaluability Assessment of the Minnesota Department of Corrections High Risk Recidivism Reduction Demonstration Project

Jennifer Hardison Walters (RTI International)
Lindsey Cramer (Urban Institute)
Lara Markovits (RTI International)
Aaron Horvath (Urban Institute)

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Minnesota Department of Corrections High Risk Recidivism Reduction Demonstration Project Summary

The MN DOC's High Risk Recidivism Reduction Demonstration Project⁵ is a new reentry program developed by DOC's Community Services Division to serve release violators⁶—a unique, high-risk population, including sex offenders, that historically has not received reentry support services. The overarching case management framework used in the program's design is the National Institute of Corrections' Transition from Prison to Community (TPC) model. MN DOC's focus on reentry increased around 2005 with the introduction of the TPC model by the National Governor's Association and the formation of a unit dedicated to reentry services. The design of the SCA grant program was influenced by preceding reentry initiatives including the Serious and Violent Reentry Initiative, the MN Comprehensive Offender Reentry Program, and the Prisoner Reentry Initiative.

The SCA program serves release violators committed to the Minnesota Correctional Facility (MCF)—Lino Lakes who will be returning to Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, or Ramsey County under community supervision. Eligible participants receive individualized transition planning and case management from a reentry coordinator for two to six months prior to release. Soon after enrollment, participants attend an orientation group session during which they are introduced to the program's services and expectations and meet key community partners. Upon release, a reentry team meeting is held to review client goals and to set up a schedule of services. Post-release services are offered through a community hub for 6 to 12 months. Co-located services include case management, employment assistance (including wage subsidies for transitional employment), transitional housing assistance, bus cards, and weekly life skills and mentoring groups.

Implementation

Three SCA awards have supported the program since October 2010.⁷ After a delayed implementation, enrollment began in April 2011. Enrollment has been conducted in three waves that align with the SCA funding. Random assignment, built into the program's design, has resulted in a total of 192 treatment group participants and 114 control group members over the three waves (Exhibit A shows program enrollment by study group and wave). Enrollment stopped in February 2013 to ensure that participants receive the full duration of post-release services before the grant end date (September 30, 2013). Despite several implementation challenges, discussed below, program operations were stable at

⁵ Program staff and stakeholders universally referred to the project as “the Second Chance grant.” For the purposes of this report, the project is referred to as the SCA program from this point forward.

⁶ A release violator is an individual who has been found to be in violation of his/her release conditions during their community supervision period and returned to prison for an amount of time up to and including their remaining sentence. According to MN sentencing guidelines, offenders committed to the Commissioner of Corrections to serve a prison sentence following conviction for a felony offense, serve two-thirds of their sentence in the community under supervision.

⁷ FY 2010 (October 1, 2010 to March 31, 2012, with no cost extension); FY 2011 (October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012); FY 2011 supplemental (October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2012, with no cost extension).

