

*Evaluation News is produced by BJA's Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement at the Justice Research and Statistics Association.*

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*Evaluation News provides information on the BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement, promotes the exchange of information on evaluation and performance measurement, and publicizes criminal justice research and evaluation reports for use by state and local criminal justice agencies.*

### Our Final Issue

We are sad to announce that this will be our last issue of *Evaluation News*. As of the end of May, BJA will no longer be funding the Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement. The partnership between BJA and JRSA to enhance the evaluation capacity of states and localities began in 1987. Over the last 25 years, we have conducted training, provided technical assistance, produced publications, and developed the online Center, all with the goal of enhancing program evaluation, performance measurement, and the use of evidence-based practices in the states and localities.

JRSA is continuing its work in this area through two ongoing projects: developing a self-assessment tool for State Administering Agencies on the use of evidence-based practices (in partnership with BJA and the National Criminal Justice Association); and the National Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center (NJJEC), a partnership with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to assist state, local, and tribal entities with the evaluation of juvenile justice programs and implementation of evidence-based initiatives.

Users can continue to access the information on the BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement at: <https://www.bja.gov/evaluation/index.html>. Evaluation-related questions and requests may be addressed to Dr. Edward Banks at BJA ([Edward.Banks@usdoj.gov](mailto:Edward.Banks@usdoj.gov)).

### Announcements

The BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement recently added a new program area focusing on Place-Based Policing Strategies. These are the strategies that attempt to address crime by focusing on the areas where crime is highly concentrated. More information about Place-Based Policing Strategies and what has been learned from evaluations of these strategies can be found at:  
<https://www.bja.gov/evaluation/program-law-enforcement/place-based-index.htm>

### Research Summaries

#### *Reentry*

MDRC recently released an evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO). Based in New York City, CEO is a comprehensive employment program for former prisoners. CEO provides temporary, paid jobs and other services in an effort to improve participants' labor market prospects and reduce the odds that they will return to prison. This three-year study

Useful resources for criminal justice program evaluation and performance measurement are available at the BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement web site:  
<https://www.bja.gov/evaluation/index.html>.

employs a rigorous random assignment design that compares outcomes for individuals assigned to the program group, who were given access to CEO's jobs and other services, with the outcomes for those assigned to the control group, who were offered basic job search assistance at CEO along with other services in the community. This evaluation found that CEO substantially increased employment early in the follow-up period but that the effects faded over time. The initial increase in employment was due to the temporary jobs. It also found that CEO significantly reduced recidivism, with the most promising impacts occurring among a subgroup of former prisoners who enrolled shortly after release from prison (the group that the program was designed to serve). Among the subgroup that enrolled within three months after release, program group members were less likely than their control group counterparts to be arrested, convicted of a new crime, and reincarcerated. In general, CEO's impacts were stronger for those who were more disadvantaged or at higher risk of recidivism when they enrolled in the study. A cost benefit analysis demonstrated the financial benefits of CEO exceeded the costs for taxpayers, victims, and participants. The majority of CEO's benefits were the result of reduced criminal justice system expenditures. The full report, "More Than a Job: Final Results From the Evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Transitional Jobs Program," is available at:

<http://www.vera.org/download?file=3480/more-than-a-job-full-report.pdf>

The National Institute of Justice recently released the final report on the Serious Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI). This report presents the results from a secondary analysis of data collected for a large multi-site evaluation of state and local reentry initiatives. These data include administrative recidivism data as well as extensive, detailed information on background characteristics, including criminal and employment history and substance use; treatment and service needs; services and program receipt; and outcomes across multiple domains, including criminal justice, employment, health (including substance use and mental health), and housing. The original data were augmented with updates from administrative records for arrests and incarcerations and used to examine the questions of "what works, for whom, and for how long" in prisoner reentry programs. In addition, a search of death records identified 55 individuals who participated in the original evaluation who had died as of spring 2011. The original data were collected during interviews 30 days before and 3, 9, and 15 months after release. Data from state agencies and the National Crime Information Center documented post-release recidivism; the original data were augmented with additional years of post-release arrest and reincarceration data for adult subjects. Many of the specific services had no effect on housing, employment, substance use, or recidivism outcomes and in some cases the effect was actually deleterious rather than beneficial. There were significant effects of SVORI program participation on arrests following release, with SVORI program participation associated with a 14% reduction in arrests for adult men, 48% reduction for adult women, and 25% reduction for the juvenile males over the fixed follow-up periods. The results suggest the need for additional research into the sequencing and effects of specific reentry services, with an understanding that some programs may be harmful if delivered at the wrong time or in the wrong way. The results also suggest that follow-up periods longer than 2 years may be necessary to observe positive effects on criminal behavior and criminal justice system interaction, as the strong effects observed at 56 months were not observed at 24 months after release. The full report, "Prisoner Reentry Services: What Worked for SVORI Evaluation Participants?" is available at:

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/238214.pdf>

### **Other Evidence-Based Resources**

The National Reentry Resource Center's What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse offers easy access to important research on the effectiveness of a wide variety of reentry programs and practices. It provides a user-friendly, one-stop shop for practitioners and service providers seeking guidance on evidence-based reentry interventions, as well as a useful resource for researchers and others interested in reentry. Currently the clearinghouse has areas focusing on brand name programs, employment, housing and mental health. Future areas will focus on substance abuse education and sex offender treatment. The National Reentry Resource Center and The What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse are projects of the Council of State Government's Justice Center. For more information about the What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse see:

[http://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/what\\_works](http://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/what_works)

**Tip of the Month**

Is your organization engaging in evaluative thinking?

Evaluative thinking is a reflective practice that incorporates the use of systematically collected data to inform organizational actions. Key components of evaluative thinking include: asking questions to determine what data are needed to address the questions; gathering appropriate data in systematic ways; analyzing data and sharing results; and developing strategies to act on evaluation findings. In 2005 Bruner Foundation evaluation consultants and representatives from 12 non-profit organizations in Rochester, New York created the Evaluative Thinking Assessment Tool to assess the extent to which evaluative thinking is present in various organizational capacity areas. The purpose of the tool is to help organizations obtain data about and discuss evaluative thinking in multiple organizational areas. The tool was designed to be used with multiple respondents in each organization so that varied perspectives, knowledge of, and experiences with evaluative thinking could be obtained. For more information on evaluative thinking and to access the Evaluative Thinking Assessment Tool, see:

[http://www.evaluativethinking.org/sub\\_page.php?page=tools#evalthoughts](http://www.evaluativethinking.org/sub_page.php?page=tools#evalthoughts)