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U.S. Department of Education

Reentry Education Model Implementation Study

**Promoting Reentry Success Through
Continuity of Educational Opportunities**

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Reentry Education Model Implementation Study

Promoting Reentry Success Through
Continuity of Educational Opportunities

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For
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education

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June 2015

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Abbreviations

AEFLA	Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
BASICS	Building Academic Skills in Correctional Settings
GED	General Educational Development (test or diploma)
IU 13	Intermediate Unit 13
KDOC	Kansas Department of Corrections
LCP	Lancaster County Prison
LCMHF	Larned Correctional Mental Health Facility
OCTAE	Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education
PROVEN	Positive Reentry Offered Through Vocation- and Education-focused Narratives
PRSCOE	Promoting Reentry Success Through Continuity of Educational Opportunities
RMO	Reentry Management Organization
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TJC	Transition from Jail to Community (initiative)

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Executive Summary

In 2012, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) released its Reentry Education Model, an evidence-based effort “to bridge the gap between prison and community-based education and training programs.” (Tolbert 2012). The model focuses on establishing a strong program infrastructure, strengthening and aligning correctional and reentry education services, and integrating education into the correctional system. Three demonstration projects — two education providers working with county jails and another working with state prisons — were selected through a competitive process and received grant funding to help implement the model beginning in March 2013. This report uses observations from the first full year of the Promoting Reentry Success Through Continuity of Educational Opportunities (PRSCO) demonstration projects to tell the story of each site’s implementation of the Reentry Education Model and to look across the three sites to identify the model’s strengths and limitations.

Project staffs at all three PRSCO demonstration sites indicated that implementing the Reentry Education Model gave them a valuable opportunity to expand and improve their correctional and reentry education programs. Each site was able to identify a number of places in which the model improved its policies and practices, particularly those related to communication among partner agencies. On the other hand, the three sites indicated that the Reentry Education Model could also be strengthened by incorporating insights gleaned during the implementation study. Lessons learned from the demonstration sites underlie the recommendations listed below.

Target Audiences for the Reentry Education Model

Clarify key differences between local jails and state prisons in discussing ways to implement the Reentry Education Model most effectively. This clarity can be achieved either by creating two versions of the model or by acknowledging the differences in more detailed discussions of model elements. Of particular importance is recognizing the challenges of providing education programs and reentry counseling during short-term incarceration in a local jail setting as well as the larger geographic scope of partnerships needed to fully implement the model in a state prison setting.

Program Infrastructure

Highlight the significance of strong partnerships in the Reentry Education Model by giving the topic equal weight as is given to program infrastructure, and discuss practices that help partnerships function effectively. These practices include facilitating good communication among partners, particularly through face-to-face meetings; recognizing and respecting the different priorities and organizational culture of each partner; reaching out to frontline staff as well as to senior leadership; and preparing to reengage with partners after staff or leadership turnover.

Include a section on program capacity in the Reentry Education Model (under program infrastructure), and describe capacity issues that are essential to effectively implementing the model. Staffing is of particular importance to program capacity and includes having sufficient staff, placing the right people in the right jobs and offering staff training, and creating a full-time staff position to coordinate correctional and reentry education services. Other important program capacity issues include having adequate classroom space and providing access to educational technology.

Add sustainability to the Reentry Education Model's existing discussion of resources. Emphasize the importance of considering how to sustain funding for key areas such as staffing and the value of promoting awareness of the program's success to key stakeholders in the local community.

Combine the Reentry Education Model's sections on electronic data systems and evaluation, and clarify the important relationship between the two. Note the importance of documenting programmatic changes that result from informal evaluations of program effectiveness as a way to preserve the reasons that the changes were made as well as to make the changes transparent to partner staffs. Identify challenges associated with data-sharing across partners, and provide information on any resources that can help programs address these challenges. Emphasize ways to obtain comprehensive data on long-term student outcomes.

Expand the Reentry Education Model's definition of policy. Include local and institutional policy as areas for potential review during implementation of the model, while still noting the important role that state policy plays in correctional and reentry education programs.

Education Services

Use the Reentry Education Model to emphasize the value of offering correctional and reentry education services within the context of career pathways. Demonstrate that a focus on high-demand career pathways with stackable

credentials and on jobs accessible to individuals with criminal histories offers students more opportunities to enter living-wage occupations and avoid recidivism. Career assessment and exploration should be integral to education services, and students should be helped to understand how their interests connect to potential careers. Make clear to them what credentials are needed for various jobs along career pathways.

Retain the Reentry Education Model's emphasis on evidence-based curricula and instructional practices. However, note that prison- and jail-based correctional education programs have different capacities for offering formal peer mentoring.

Provide more direction in the Reentry Education Model on overcoming the challenges associated with student recruitment and retention. Clarify that developing and refining a student recruitment and retention plan is essential to successful implementation of the model. Explain that recruitment and class assignment strategies are likely to affect retention (as when Barton improved retention by ensuring that the students enrolled in classes with limited seating were the ones most motivated and equipped to succeed). Discuss the challenges of maintaining contact with students after their release, recognizing that many of them will need time to stabilize their lives before they can continue their education. Finally, note that some students may be re-incarcerated, and emphasize the important role that wraparound support services play in recruiting and retaining students in community-based programs.

Intake and Prerelease Processes

Revise the Reentry Education Model to highlight transitions across different correctional and reentry education programs and settings. In particular, the model should acknowledge that some individuals are released without going through prerelease counseling and/or are not subject to supervision after their release. The model also should reinforce the understanding that referrals from a range of community reentry service providers are key for helping newly released students continue their educational and career trajectories. In addition, a focus on intake into the education programs themselves, rather than into a correctional facility or community corrections, will help ground the model in the experiences of correctional and reentry education providers.

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Introduction

In 2012, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) released its Reentry Education Model, an evidence-based effort "to bridge the gap between prison and community-based education and training programs" (Tolbert 2012). The model focuses on establishing a strong program infrastructure, strengthening and aligning correctional and reentry education services, and integrating education into the correctional system. Based on reviews of research studies and advice from experts in the field, the model provides clear, specific guidance on how to build stronger education programs and smooth reentry transitions for individuals with criminal histories. Given recent research that demonstrates the value and cost effectiveness of education in reducing recidivism and improving employment outcomes for formerly incarcerated individuals (Davis et al. 2013), this model represents a timely addition to the literature on correctional education.

One of OCTAE's goals for the Reentry Education Model was to test its applicability in existing correctional and reentry education settings as a means to improve and validate the model's recommendations. In November 2012, OCTAE requested applications for model demonstration projects on Promoting Reentry Success Through Continuity of Educational Opportunities (PRSCOE). In March 2013, three grantees — two education providers working with county jails and another working with state prisons — were selected through a competitive process. The grantees received awards of approximately \$270,000 to \$360,000 to be used between March 2013 and July 2015.

OCTAE, together with RTI International, which was selected to provide technical assistance to the demonstration sites, contracted with Strix Research LLC to conduct an implementation study of the Reentry Education Model based on the experiences of the sites during the first full year of project implementation (July 2013-June 2014). The intent of this study was to tell the story of the three sites' implementation of the model in an effort to identify its strengths and limitations. Data collection for the study was largely qualitative and included two visits to each site; interviews and focus groups with project leaders, staff, students, and partners; and a review of relevant documents for each project.

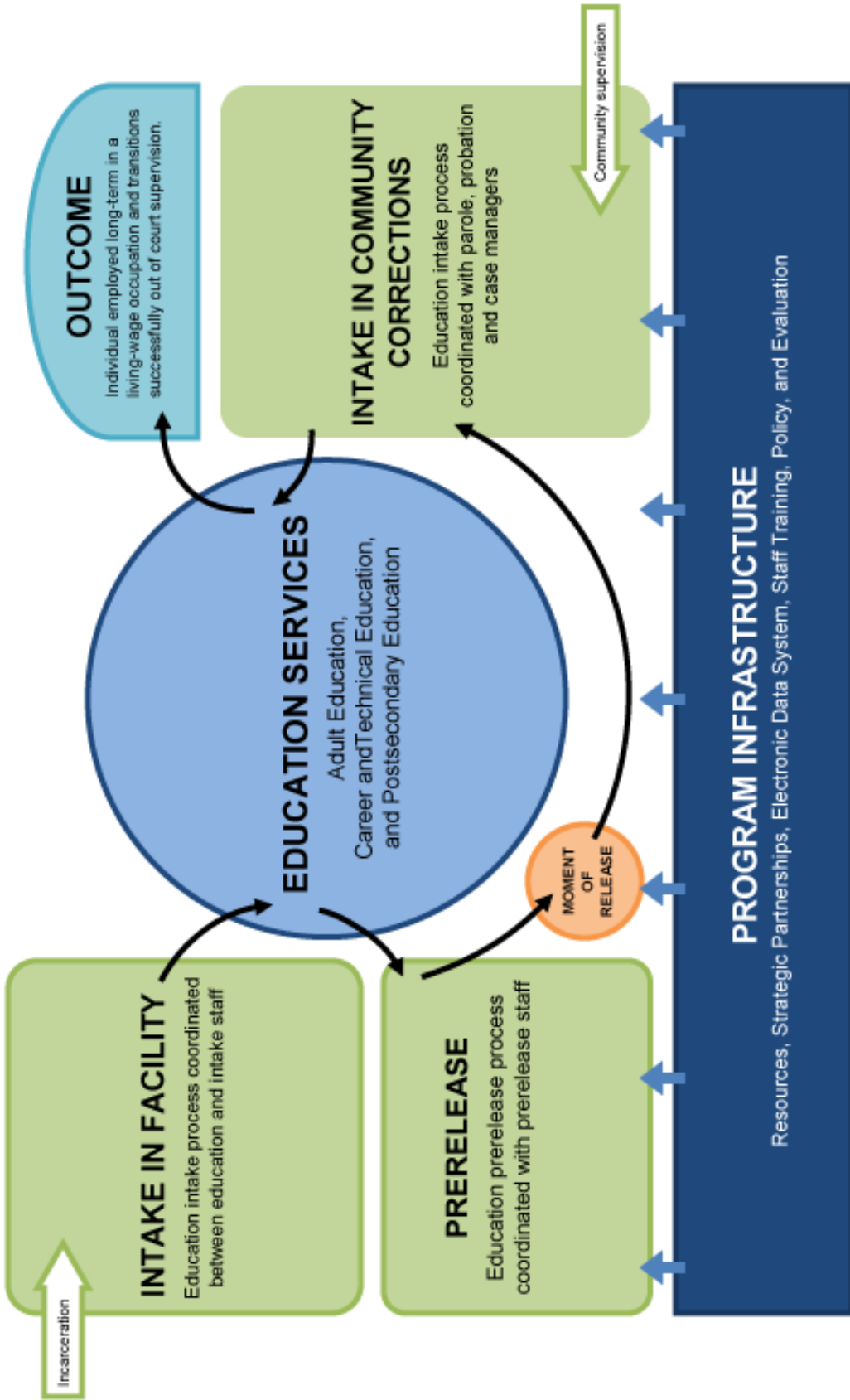
The three PRSCOE demonstration sites clearly demonstrated that the Reentry Education Model is a valuable tool that helps project staffs with the complexities of connecting correctional and reentry education services. Nonetheless, the data sug-

gest that some revisions and reorganization could strengthen the model. This report uses these data to support recommendations on improving the model for future use.

Following brief descriptions of the three demonstration projects, the report examines target audiences for the model, identifying key differences noted at the demonstration site working with state prisons versus the two working with county jails. (See the Appendix for a more complete description of each site's project.) Using the structure of the original model (see Figure 1 for a graphic depiction of the original model), the report then addresses the experiences of the demonstration sites under the broad categories of program infrastructure, education services, and intake and prerelease processes. Within each section, a discussion ensues about the ways in which the model can be revised to reflect the lessons learned at each of the PRSCEO demonstration sites during implementation of their projects. (See Figure 2 for a graphic depiction of the proposed revised model.)

Figure 1: Reentry Education Model (Tolbert 2012)

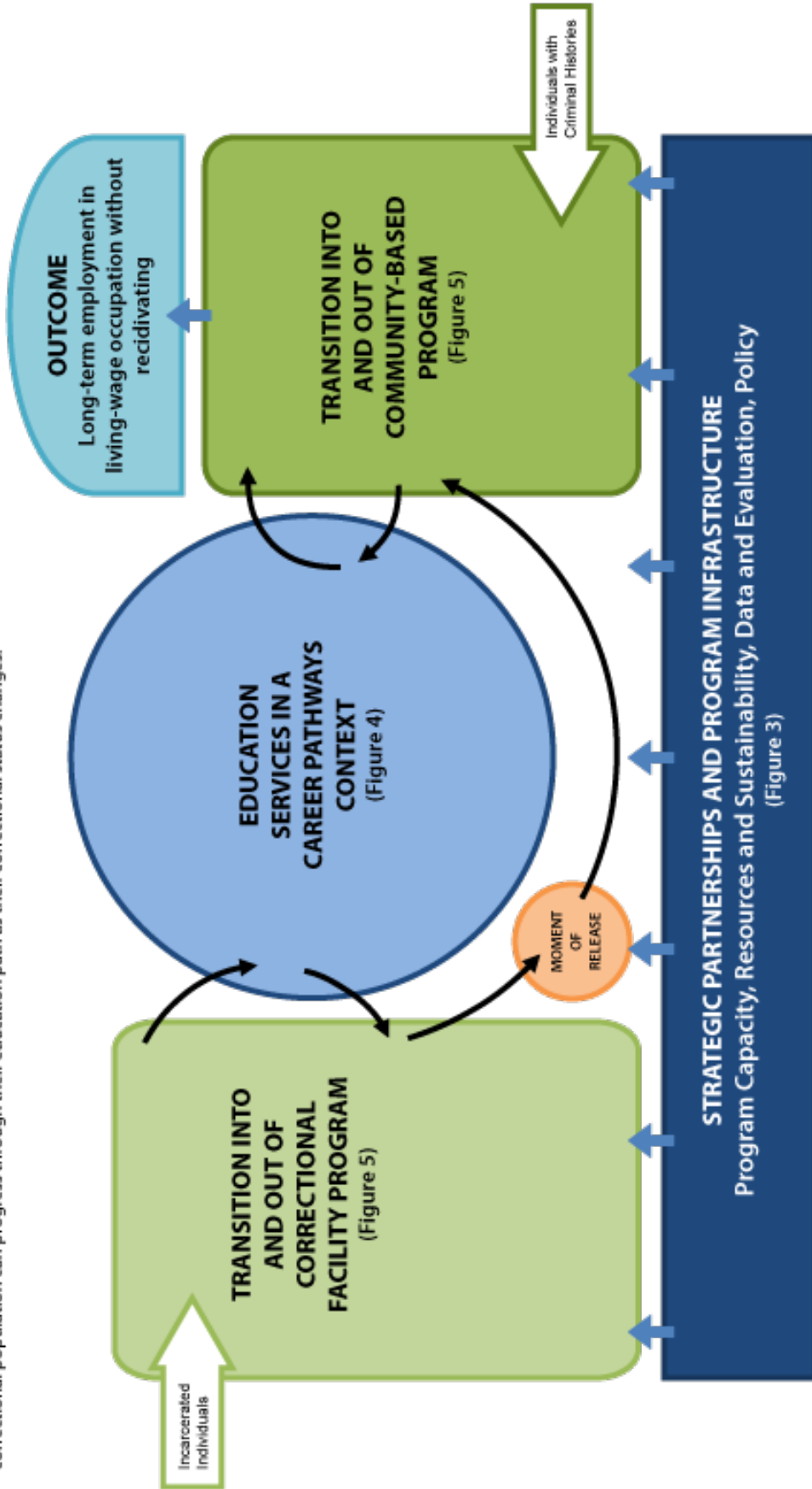
GOAL: To coordinate services among institutional and community-based education providers and their partners to ensure individuals in the correctional population can progress through their education path as their correctional status changes.



How to read: Figure 1 illustrates a reentry education model that makes education an integral part of the corrections system to ensure individuals can progress through their education path as their correction status changes. Whether the individuals enter the system by being incarcerated (see top left side) or placed under community supervision (see bottom right side), they should be assessed upon intake and referred to the appropriate education service. As noted by the blue circle in the center of the figure, education services offered in the correctional facility should be the same as the services offered in the community. The figure also illustrates how the reentry education model is supported by a strong program infrastructure that includes resources, strategic partnerships, electronic data system, staff training, policy, and evaluation (see blue rectangle at bottom of the page).

Figure 2: Proposed Revised Reentry Education Model

GOAL: To coordinate services among institutional and community-based education providers and their partners to ensure individuals in the correctional population can progress through their education path as their correctional status changes.



How to read: Figure 2 illustrates proposed changes to the reentry education model based on lessons learned from the implementation study. The ultimate goal of the model is the same – education should be an integral part of the corrections system to ensure individuals can progress through their education path as their correctional status changes. Figure 2 differs from Figure 1 in that it recognizes that the intake and prerelease processes (see green box on left side) for jails may be less defined than for prisons and, therefore, combines these processes in a general transition box. It also shows the role community-based programs play with the intake and transition processes in the community (see green box on right side). Another distinction between Figure 1 and 2 is that Figure 2 includes some changes to the program infrastructure—it makes strategic partnerships more significant, combines data collection and evaluation, and adds sustainability.

Promoting Reentry Success Through Continuity of Educational Opportunities (PRSCOE) Demonstration Sites

Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 — Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 (IU 13), one of Pennsylvania’s regional education service agencies, has offered adult basic education and General Educational Development (GED) classes to incarcerated students for decades. However, IU 13 has found that the demand for these classes far outweighs their capacity, and that coordination of education services with the offender workforce development services has been lacking. The latter are offered through the Pennsylvania CareerLink of Lancaster County, a workforce one-stop career center.

The goal of IU 13’s PRSCOE project was to enhance adult education services for individuals with criminal histories in Lancaster and to strengthen the pipeline for them as they move from incarceration to the education and workforce services available at CareerLink and eventually to employment. In partnership with Lancaster County Prison, which despite its name functions as a county jail, and the Lancaster County Reentry Management Organization, IU 13 used PRSCOE funds to increase the number of adult education classes offered at the prison and created reentry-focused adult education classes at CareerLink. The project also afforded additional time for instructors to provide one-on-one education and case management services, and follow up with individuals who dropped out of classes.

Western Technical College — La Crosse, Wisconsin

Western Technical College has offered adult basic education and GED classes at the nearby La Crosse County Law Enforcement Center since 2008. Prior to the PRSCOE project, Western’s classes at the jail were not well integrated with adult basic education and GED courses offered on the Western campus, and transitions for students from the jail to the campus after release were challenging.

The goal of Western's PRSCEO work was to help students who take classes at the jail make a successful transition to college when released. Project staff planned to achieve this goal by establishing partnerships with other community agencies that work with the reentry population. Staff also wanted to develop a new certificate program that helps individuals with criminal histories improve their readiness for employment and further career and technical training. Toward these ends, Western built a core team that includes the jail program coordinator and the director of Justice Support Services, the agency that evaluates individuals entering the criminal justice system and oversees jail alternatives such as electronic monitoring. With support from this team and other Western staff, a newly hired project coordinator with experience in community reentry work developed a curriculum for the Positive Reentry Offered through Vocation- and Education-Focused Narratives (PROVEN) certificate program and implemented it in February 2014.

Barton Community College — Great Bend, Kansas

Through a memorandum of understanding with the Kansas Department of Corrections, Barton Community College offers adult basic education and GED classes, as well as postsecondary career and technical and academic courses, to incarcerated students at state prisons in neighboring counties. For more than a decade before receiving the PRSCEO grant, Barton had a well-established correctional education program, which offered a range of educational opportunities for incarcerated students.

Barton expected this grant to support improvements in and good documentation of its processes for recruiting, advising, and retaining incarcerated students, rather than to expand educational services; however, grant funding has also paid the tuition for some incarcerated students with insufficient financial resources. As part of the PRSCEO grant, Barton also streamlined the enrollment process, which in the past often took place at the last minute. Barton staff members have found that this more structured process, which includes a mandatory meeting with a career advisor, improves retention and yields students who are better equipped to succeed in their classes.

Target Audiences for the Reentry Education Model

The Reentry Education Model was originally designed for state prison systems. However, when the PRSCOE grants were awarded in 2013, two of the demonstration sites selected through a competitive process — IU 13 and Western — had proposed projects for use in county jails. Prisons and jails play very different roles in the American correctional system. Prisons house convicted felons who are sentenced to be incarcerated for at least a year. Jails house a more diverse population, including pretrial detainees, convicted individuals with shorter sentences (typically less than a year), those awaiting transfer to a different facility, and inmates who have been incarcerated due to a parole or probation violation (Schlanger 2003). While jail inmates account for about only a third of the average daily incarcerated population (Glaze and Herberman 2013), jails admit and release many more individuals each year than do state prisons (O’Toole 1996).

The experience of the two PRSCOE county jail sites clearly shows that the Reentry Education Model can be used in a local jail setting, thus expanding the model’s reach to a far greater number of individuals whose interaction with the criminal justice system is through a jail rather than a prison. Both IU 13 and Western were able to develop programs that addressed the needs of incarcerated students in nearby county jails, and upon release helped these students maintain some continuity in education services. Nonetheless, key differences between state prison and local jails have an impact on such factors as the type of programs offered in the correctional facility, the education provider’s role in facilitating student transitions between the correctional facility and community settings, and the scope of partnerships required for the successful use of the Reentry Education Model. These differences suggest a need for either multiple versions of the model or a revised model that addresses them.

State Prisons

Education programs in state prisons face challenges when students are released without completing credentials. At the facilities Barton serves, as is the case with most state prisons, the vast majority of individuals released do not stay in the local area. Great Bend is located in the sparsely populated western part of Kansas; most, of the individuals who are released go to larger cities in eastern Kansas.

While corrections staff involved in reentry counseling have many contacts with community corrections, workforce, and social service agencies in these larger cities, they are less likely to have contacts with education providers in them. Barton staff and their PRSCEO-funded career advisor have worked informally to help incarcerated students transfer to a new college on release. But, to ensure educational continuity for those reentering communities from state prisons, the experience of this demonstration site indicates the need for statewide partnerships with education providers both near correctional facilities and in areas where many formerly incarcerated persons live.

On the other hand, while state prison systems often move inmates from one facility to another, the considerably longer periods of incarceration that result from felony sentences mean that education providers can offer more diverse programs. They can also provide students with opportunities to complete educational credentials, such as GEDs, career and technical certificates, and, in some cases, even postsecondary degrees. Completing a credential while incarcerated reduces the likelihood that an individual will need to continue in an education program after release. At Barton, in fact, the goal is to start the education process early enough for an individual to complete both a GED and a career and technical certificate, and still have time to gain work experience through prison industries. A challenge to implementing this plan, however, has been corrections policies that prioritize education programs for those prisoners nearest to release.

Fortunately, state prison staff are aware of the approximate time an individual may be released, based on sentence length, time served, and credit for good behavior or program participation. This knowledge allows the staff to offer reentry counseling to each individual prior to release — counseling that may include a discussion of the individual's education and career goals and what is needed to reach them. If the student has not completed a credential while incarcerated, prison and education staff can work to ensure that he or she receives assistance in transferring to an appropriate education program.

Local Jails

Unlike state prisons, jails do not have the luxury of time. Individuals move in and out of jails so quickly and with so little notice that completion of a credential or even taking advantage of prerelease counseling can be very difficult. At Lancaster County Prison,¹ for example, prior to the PRSCEO grant IU 13 instructors tried

¹ In Pennsylvania, correctional facilities that would be called county jails elsewhere are called county prisons. As with other jails, these facilities house a variety of individuals, including pretrial detainees, individuals awaiting transfer to a different facility, individuals who have been incarcerated due to a parole or probation violation, and individuals whose sentences are relatively short (less than two years in Pennsylvania).

to select students who would be incarcerated for at least three months in order to maximize the opportunities for completing GEDs while still incarcerated. Even then, however, some IU 13 students were released with little warning. After the grant allowed creation of reentry-focused GED classes at the local workforce one-stop career center,² the IU 13 instructors opted to work on helping students through the transition into those classes, rather than focusing on those who would be incarcerated for a longer time. In addition, both Western and IU 13 had students in their community-based programs that were re-incarcerated during the initial year of the program's implementation and thus needed to receive education services again in the local jail. While the PRSCOE programs focused on county jails were challenged by the rapid flow of program participants moving in and out of the correctional facility and the community-based education program, they had the advantage of geographical proximity. Western and IU 13 serve as primary adult education providers both in the county jail and in the local community, eliminating the need to transfer student data to a new provider upon release or re-incarceration. Geographical proximity also meant that program coordinators had some knowledge of reentry resources available in the local community and could facilitate face-to-face meetings with current and potential partners.

In fact, the corrections and community-based partners working with the two county jail demonstration sites had collaborated prior to the PRSCOE grant. In Lancaster County, for example, the Reentry Management Organization regularly brings together representatives from corrections, community corrections, workforce, adult education, and a range of reentry service providers. When IU 13 undertook its PRSCOE work, the Reentry Management Organization provided a venue for staff to share information about the new program with the many partners who could refer potential students.

Similarly, in La Crosse, corrections, community corrections, and reentry service providers had previously worked together on a Transition from Jail to Community initiative supported by the National Institute of Corrections and the Urban Institute. While Western had not been involved in the initiative, its PRSCOE grant helped reenergize the reentry group, and the existing network of partners allowed the college to get up to speed more quickly than might have been the case otherwise. Such existing collaborations may not be in place in many communities, but they illustrate the potential for close collaboration among local jails, community corrections, and community-based organizations, a factor the demonstration sites

² The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 required states to develop one-stop career centers where job-seekers can receive a variety of services at one location. These one-stop career centers have different names in different states (Pennsylvania, for example, calls them CareerLinks), but all provide similar services, including career and job search counseling, listings of available local jobs, and referrals to training programs.

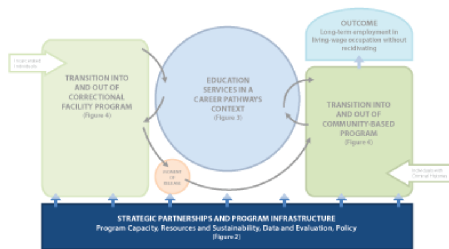
have shown to be very important to successful use of the Reentry Education Model.

- ✓ **Recommendation: Clarify key differences between local jails and state prisons in discussing ways to implement the Reentry Education Model most effectively.** This clarification can be accomplished either by creating two versions of the model or by acknowledging these differences in more detailed discussions of model elements. Of particular importance is recognizing the challenges of providing education programs and reentry counseling during short-term incarceration in a local jail setting. It is equally important to recognize the larger geographic scope of partnerships needed to fully implement the model in a state prison setting.

Program Infrastructure

The areas covered in the program infrastructure section of the Reentry Education Model — resources, strategic partnerships, electronic data system, staff training, policy, and evaluation — were aspects of the model that, for the demonstration sites, needed the most work during the early stages of the program’s implementation. Experiences at the demonstration sites also suggest that it would be helpful to rethink how these infrastructure areas are organized and described in the model (see Figure 3 for the proposed reorganization). Strategic partnerships, in particular, are so important to the model that they ought to be considered separately from program infrastructure. Other recommended changes include creating a section on program capacity, which would cover the current staff training area as well as other capacity concerns; emphasizing the importance of sustainability in the discussion of resources; merging the sections on electronic data systems and evaluation; and expanding the policy section to include local and institutional as well as state policies.

Figure 3. Establishing strong strategic partnerships and program infrastructure



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS	PROGRAM INFRASTRUCTURE			
Needs assessment, balanced priorities, regular communication, leadership and front-line staff buy-in, preparation for staff turnover	Program Capacity Staffing, staff expertise and training, space, technology, educational tools and resources, program reputation	Resources and Sustainability Funding, in-kind support, community outreach, sustainability planning	Data and Evaluation Electronic data systems, data-sharing agreements, process documentation, outcomes evaluation	Policy Federal, state, local, institutional

Strategic Partnerships

Strong strategic partnerships are central to the Reentry Education Model's success and should be given weight equal to that of program infrastructure rather than as simply a part of it. While an education provider can have excellent program capacity and plenty of resources, without partnerships there will be no way to promote educational continuity during inmates' reentry into their communities. Based on the experience of the demonstration sites, the model should address the following key strategies to make partnerships operate more effectively.

Partnering with corrections

PRSCOE demonstration sites found that the relationship between the participating correctional facilities and the education provider is particularly important to the project's success. This relationship can be a challenging one because corrections and education providers have substantially different priorities. Education providers must be able to understand and respect the concern for security that is central to the correctional facility's mission. On the other hand, for the education provider to offer incarcerated students the best possible services, corrections staff must be open-minded about the possibility of trying new ways of operating. Barton, for example, was able to get computer-based GED testing up and running in the participating correctional facilities with less difficulty than they had expected because the groundwork had already been laid in conversations with senior corrections staff.

A crucial step in establishing a positive relationship between education providers and correctional facilities is to ensure that everyone is on the same page regarding even such seemingly simple things as shared definitions. For instance, in the Kansas prison system, "successful completion of a program" means that the individual attended the required number of sessions. For Barton, as with other community colleges, "completion" means that the individual has met all the requirements for a class or credential, which goes well beyond class attendance. In recording data on incarcerated Barton students in the Kansas Department of Corrections data system, the two parties had to agree on how to code students who had completed a class or program by Barton's standards versus those who had merely attended the required number of sessions.

Mapping resources to identify potential partners

Beyond the crucial partnerships between the education provider and one or more correctional facilities, additional partnerships can enhance correctional and reentry education programs. Such partnerships would allow for referrals, provide subject-matter expertise in areas such as career planning, and offer the wrap-around social

services needed to facilitate successful reentry into the community. Resource mapping has proven to be a valuable strategy, particularly for the two county jail sites, for identifying all of the reentry resources available in the community. The mapping has enabled program staff to identify potential new partners and instructors, and allow other education staff to refer their students to appropriate services. Because of an earlier project conducted by the local United Way, IU 13 had created a brochure identifying many of its existing key resources. Western staff, however, found it more challenging to undertake resource mapping while also creating its new certificate program. The different experiences of these two projects suggest that mapping resources should be an important early step for sites trying to implement the Reentry Education Model in a specific geographic area.

Building buy-in from partner leadership and staff

In all their partnership work, the PRSCOE demonstration sites found that, while partner leadership has to be on board before beginning the work, building buy-in from front-line staff is crucial to successfully implementing the Reentry Education Model. Without the awareness and cooperation of such individuals as community corrections officers or unit counselors in correctional facilities, information about education services will not reach the inmates — precisely those who could benefit from those services. IU 13 staff, for example, found that they began to receive many more referrals from community corrections officers after the project coordinator attended several of their staff meetings to explain the PRSCOE program. Similarly, Barton found that unit counselors in the correctional facilities they serve needed more information about the requirements and selection process for various Barton programs in order to both share that information with potential students and make appropriate referrals. To address this situation, Barton has developed a plan to hold quarterly lunch meetings at which college and facility staff can discuss upcoming education programs.

Because of the labor-intensive nature of partnership building, staff turnover is a major challenge to maintaining partnerships. Thus, to attain success in reaching front-line reentry staff in their communities, IU 13 and Western will need to ensure continued outreach as new staff take on those jobs. Similarly, Barton will need to continue its outreach to unit counselors at partner correctional facilities. Western has found one strategy particularly effective — using grant funds to offer training on motivational interviewing to front-line staff from partner agencies as well as to its own staff. This shared training has facilitated contact among individuals who might not otherwise have met, built awareness of and buy-in for the education program among staff from other agencies, and helped make the education program's processes and policies more transparent for its partners.

Leadership transitions can be even more of a challenge to partnerships, particularly changes in leadership at partner correctional facilities. Among the demonstration projects, only Western experienced a leadership change at the partner correctional facility during the implementation study period, and the new jail administrator was an inside hire who was familiar with and supported Western's work. Nonetheless, staff at all three demonstration sites noted that they were very aware of the potential for changes in leadership at partner correctional facilities that could endanger their programs. If that were to occur, staff indicated, a need would exist to engage with the new wardens, demonstrate the value of the education programs, and reassure the wardens about security concerns.

The same principle applies to leadership at other levels of authority. Barton, for example, has experienced changes at the state department of corrections level that altered the programs and funding streams available at the correctional facilities they serve. This demonstrated the necessity of ongoing engagement with corrections leadership. Transitions in leadership at the education provider also may prove challenging; for example, a new community college president or other senior administrator may need to be persuaded of the importance of working with the correctional and reentry populations, and thus program coordinators must be prepared to respond to questions about that.

Communicating with partners

Project and partner staff most often cited improved communication among partners as an outcome of their PRSCEO work. While many of the demonstration site partnerships existed prior to the PRSCEO grant, the funding and focus the grant provided gave project staff an opportunity to reengage with partners, expand and improve communication, and develop new solutions to challenges. Program and partner staff at each demonstration site stressed the importance of recognizing and meeting the goals of all partners, a task that requires staff members to understand their partners well and how they work.

To facilitate this understanding, project and program staff at all sites pointed to the value of regular face-to-face meetings, and allocating sufficient time to discuss challenges and reach mutually agreeable solutions. At Barton, for example, even though the college had worked with its correctional facilities partner for some time, the addition of monthly face-to-face meetings added a new dimension to the partnerships. Over the course of the project, such additional staff members as the information technology coordinator at one correctional facility asked to join the meetings. This illustrated their perceived value as well as the work Barton did to ensure that the gatherings were substantive and efficiently run. The wardens of both par-

ticipating correctional facilities typically attend these meetings and noted how important they have been to the partnerships, even though they require either prison staff or Barton staff to drive 30 to 45 minutes to attend.

- ✓ **Recommendation: Highlight the significance of strong partnerships in the Reentry Education Model by giving the topic equal weight as is given to program infrastructure, and key practices that help partnerships function effectively.** These practices include facilitating good communication among partners, particularly through face-to-face meetings; recognizing and respecting the different priorities and organizational culture of each partner; reaching out to front-line staff as well as to senior leadership; and preparing to reengage with partners after staff or leadership turnover.

Program Capacity

The Reentry Education Model includes program capacity under the category of resources, but all three of the demonstration sites, when considering resources, focused primarily on financial resources. However, a range of program capacity issues, such as staffing, staff expertise, space, technology, educational tools and resources, and program reputation, were also frequently mentioned by project staff. This suggests that program capacity should have its own section under program infrastructure in the model.

Staffing

While the Reentry Education Model includes staff training as an element of program infrastructure, all three demonstration sites noted lessons learned related to staffing more broadly. In particular, having a full-time staff position to coordinate the education provider's corrections and reentry work seems key to program effectiveness. This individual functions as a contact person for other agencies and for prospective and current students, convenes partner meetings, and serves as a crucial public advocate for the project's work. Simply having such a person on the education provider's staff makes the work of other partners easier because they know whom to call with any questions, and can provide the coordinator's name and contact information to potential students. This gives all partners an individual rather than an anonymous office with whom to connect. If such a position does not already exist, creating one is likely to be an important step for implementing the model. At Western, for example, the small adult education program at the county jail became a much more prominent part of the college's work with the hiring of a full-time coordinator who could accomplish the following: support the jail-based instructor; develop a transitional curriculum to help students move from the jail to eventual enrollment in college, career, and technical programs; assist currently

and formerly incarcerated students in navigating the bureaucratic complexities of a college campus; and bring together staff from the jail, the college, and various community partners to discuss strategies for improving the program.

Beyond having a full-time project coordinator, all three demonstration sites raised concerns about having enough staff to serve the many students interested in their programs. Especially for Western and IU 13, the number of instructors the project can employ limits the number of students that can be served. In addition, ensuring that the right people were working in the right job was an important issue for project coordinators.

Working with the reentry population, particularly within correctional facilities, is not a job suited to everyone. Anyone working in such an institution must be willing to follow strict security protocols, be flexible enough to handle the frequent schedule changes and lockdowns that occur, and feel comfortable working with a population often perceived as difficult or even dangerous. Given this, the project coordinators found it necessary to articulate the skills needed and, in the case of Barton, to conduct rigorous interviews when hiring instructors and other staff members to work with its correctional and reentry students as well as, if necessary, when replacing staff members who did not work out as well as hoped.

As the Reentry Education Model indicates, moreover, providing appropriate training and regularly evaluating staff performance are also important for maintaining a high-functioning staff. All three demonstration sites used grant funds to address these issues. Barton, for instance, developed a more formal process for training instructors who teach classes in the correctional facilities it serves. Project coordinators at the demonstration sites also found that they needed to raise awareness among their staffs about the needs of correctional and reentry students. Many staff members were unaware of the extent to which they were already serving individuals with criminal histories and sometimes had negative perceptions of this student population.

Classroom space

Classroom space became another capacity concern for the demonstration sites. Space in correctional facilities is often limited, and finding appropriate and available rooms for education services can be a challenge that limits the number of students served. Both Western and IU 13 have limited classroom space at the local jail. IU 13, because of its location in the Pennsylvania CareerLink of Lancaster County's workforce one-stop career center, has also experienced difficulties finding space for community-based adult education classes serving individuals with criminal histories. Program staffs acknowledge that they could serve more students if additional classroom space were available. At the same time, though, CareerLink

offers a wealth of valuable resources and is conveniently located for many students, which makes moving to a different location undesirable.

Educational technology

The Reentry Education Model includes technology in its section on education services, noting that technology can be used to “enhance and increase program access.” (Tolbert 2012). However, with the change to computer-based GED testing in January 2014, access to computers has become critical for adult education programs and ought to be treated as part of program capacity. Not only must students be able to take the new GED test on a computer, they also need keyboarding skills in order to test effectively.

PRSCOE demonstration sites varied in their ability to provide technology for their GED students. The correctional facilities served by Barton already had computer labs, so their primary concern was arranging access to the GED tests themselves, a goal that Barton achieved several months before the GED changed to exclusively computer-based testing. Reaching this goal was a tribute to the relationships the Barton staff has developed with the prison staff. For both Western and IU 13, providing computer-based GED testing in the county jail required identifying trained test administrators who could administer the tests using laptop computers, as well as working with the jail to make space available for the testing and resolve security concerns. In both cases, this process lasted well into 2014.

At this point, only Barton has been able to use technology to expand access to its education services, offering many of its noncareer and technical postsecondary courses through an interactive television system. This system allows students from separate correctional facilities to take the same class simultaneously and frees the instructor, who teaches from Barton’s campus, from having to go through the complicated process of regularly entering and exiting a correctional facility.

The use of such technology does have its challenges. Technical difficulties sometimes lead to class cancellations, and Barton has spent time developing a system in which student homework can be scanned by a member of the correctional facility’s program staff and emailed to the instructor for grading. This system replaced Barton’s previous one, which required a college staff person to collect the work at the correctional facility. In addition, Barton is using Incarcerated Persons Education Pads, secure tablet computers that Union Supply developed in collaboration with the Correctional Education Association, as a way to enhance student learning in its adult education program.

- ✓ **Recommendation: Include a section on program capacity in the Reentry Education Model (under program infrastructure), and describe capacity issues that are essential to effectively implementing the model.** Staffing is of

particular importance to program capacity and includes having sufficient staff, placing the right people in the right jobs, offering staff training, and creating a full-time staff position to coordinate correctional and reentry services. Other important program capacity issues include classroom space and access to educational technology.

Resources and Sustainability

As suggested in the Reentry Education Model, all three demonstration sites rely on a variety of funding streams, with the PRSCEO grant providing only a portion of the funding necessary to sustain their correctional and reentry education programs. The use of any grant funds, however, highlights the importance of considering how a project will continue when the grant ends. Spending choices play a large role in program sustainability. Grant funds spent on nonrecurring costs, such as planning and infrastructure, are less likely to need immediate replacement, but demonstration site experiences make it clear that funding, particularly for staff salaries, has to be sustained if correctional and reentry education programs are to continue and, ideally, grow to meet the strong demand for them, evidenced at these sites.

All demonstration sites found that having a full-time project coordinator was immensely beneficial, and additional instructor time is a necessary expense to support program growth. IU 13, for example, has found that scheduling reentry-focused GED classes in the community and allowing jail-based instructors additional time for case management were particularly valuable uses for their grant funds. Maintaining the staff positions has become a central sustainability concern for the program. Western, on the other hand, has used campus- and community-based volunteers to provide some of the instruction in its PROVEN reentry curriculum, although volunteer support is also labor-intensive to sustain. For any program planning to implement the Reentry Education Model, identifying sustainable resources for program staffing should be a central concern.

One approach to sustainability is to promote awareness of the program's success in the local community. Barton staff, for example, work with the correctional facilities they serve to sponsor regular "learning celebrations" that recognize the incarcerated students who have completed GEDs, career and technical certificates, and associate degrees. While the focus of these often moving events is on celebrating student achievement, Barton staff are careful to invite campus leaders and board members, donors to the college's foundation, state department of corrections officials, and other key stakeholders, and many events have good turnouts. Students are also allowed to invite their families to the learning celebrations, and Barton staff hope that former students and their families will become a source of contributions to their scholarship fund.

Similarly, IU 13 recognizes GED completers from the PRSCO program at its annual GED graduation ceremony and invites key stakeholders to it, including the prison warden, who attended the graduation for the first time in 2014. For both of these sites, drawing community and key stakeholder attention to the program's success can lay the groundwork for future funding requests. In addition, both IU13 and Western have raised awareness of their correctional and reentry education programs through the local media.

- ✓ **Recommendation: Add sustainability to the Reentry Education Model's existing discussion of resources.** Emphasize the importance of considering how to sustain funding for key areas, such as staffing, and the value of promoting awareness of the program's success to key stakeholders in the local community.

Data Systems and Evaluation

The Reentry Education Model includes both evaluation and electronic data systems as important but distinct areas of its program infrastructure. This separation has caused confusion among some demonstration project staff about the distinction between data and evaluation. Combining them in the model would help to emphasize that a key purpose of data collection is to evaluate program success at achieving desired student outcomes. In addition, data-sharing across partners has been a considerable challenge for the demonstration sites and continues to take place in relatively informal ways. This suggests that data systems and evaluation will require particular attention for programs planning to implement the Reentry Education Model.

Evaluation, in general, was an area in which all demonstration sites needed additional capacity. While each site was already collecting data on short-term student outcomes, finding data sources to determine longer-term outcomes has proved more challenging.³ Barton, through its partnerships with state corrections and workforce agencies, obtained recidivism and employment outcome data for a cohort of its students and compared this data with that about inmates released from the same facilities during the same time frame who did not participate in education programs. On the other hand, while both IU 13 and Western were able to obtain recidivism data on their students from their partner correctional facilities, obtaining employment data on them was more difficult. IU 13, for example, got employment data on students who obtained a job through CareerLink, but the program coordinator noted that some students may have found jobs in other ways. Moreover,

³ Available data on student outcomes for each of the three demonstration projects can be found in the detailed project descriptions in the Appendix.

obtaining comprehensive long-term data on recidivism, education, and employment outcomes requires access to state-level data, which may take more time and expertise than are available to many reentry education programs.

In addition, while each demonstration site regularly makes changes to program policy, process, and content as a result of issues raised by project or partner staff, most do not have a formal method for documenting these changes. This situation makes it more difficult to establish for historical purposes why the changes were made and ensure that they are transparent to those outside the decision-making process. A lack of adequate administrative support has also made data entry and documentation of processes particularly challenging for some demonstration sites.

Although the partners at all three demonstration sites are committed to sharing student data and use electronic data systems, project staff found that these systems did not provide an easy solution to data-sharing challenges. Each partner agency has functional and legal requirements that dictate what information is entered in its electronic data system and who can access it. An overarching electronic data system that would link corrections, education, and social service data would be of considerable value to project staff, but action at the state level would be required if such a data system were to replace the individual agencies' data systems. Unless this change occurs, using an overarching data system at the local level would still require that most data be entered into two different data systems.

Several of Western's partner agencies noted that reentry clients are often asked to complete intake forms at each agency that include duplicate information. The partners suggested the possibility of creating a shared intake form that would cover necessary information, including educational goals and attainment, so that the individual would not have to fill out the form more than once (although the information would still need to be entered into each agency's separate electronic data system).

To manage data-sharing needs, project staff found that they could resolve some problems by gaining limited access to a partner's data system. Key Barton staff, for example, can enter student data into the Kansas Department of Corrections data system, which helps ensure that incarcerated students are not transferred to another facility while enrolled in an academic program. Similarly, the Western project coordinator can enter student data into the system used by state and county agencies, where other case managers can see it. However, in both cases, student data also has to be entered into the college data system so that students can be awarded course credit.

- ✓ **Recommendation: Combine the Reentry Education Model's sections on electronic data systems and evaluation, and clarify the important relationship between the two.** Note the importance of documenting programmatic changes that result from informal evaluations of program effectiveness as a way to

preserve the reasons that the changes were made as well as to make the changes transparent to partner staffs. Identify challenges associated with data-sharing across partners, and provide information on any resources that can help programs address these challenges. Emphasize ways to obtain comprehensive data on long-term student outcomes.

Policy

The Reentry Education Model emphasizes state reentry policy and its influence on correctional education programs. Such policies were crucial for each demonstration site, particularly in terms of delineating the career pathways they could offer to individuals with criminal histories. For the two county jail sites, however, local policies were often more salient, because areas such as data-sharing, coordination among service providers, and decisions about the role of education programming in community supervision are largely handled at the local level.

In Lancaster, for instance, Reentry Management Organization leaders have contacted the district attorney and director of adult probation and parole to discuss the possibility of mandating workforce and/or adult education programs as a form of alternative sentencing or pretrial diversion. If implemented, this policy could send a substantial number of students to IU 13's reentry-focused GED classes, although concerns remain about court mandates that require individuals to obtain a GED in a specific period of time without taking into consideration that person's initial skill level.

Institutional policies, whether those of correctional facilities or education providers, can also significantly affect correctional and reentry education programs. Western, for example, does not allow students to enroll in credit or noncredit classes if they owe money to the college. Because many of the students participating in the PRCEO-funded PROVEN certificate program do owe money to the college from previous attempts at obtaining a credential, this policy places significant limits on the program's ability to help students transition into other Western programs. On the other hand, after the Western project coordinator identified certain application and testing fees as significant obstacles for PROVEN students, the program clarified college policy so that students for whom these fees would be a burden could be given fee waivers.

All three demonstration sites confronted challenges concerning the new computer-based GED tests because of security policies at their partner correctional facilities. The sites also needed to ensure that any instructor entering the correctional facility knows and abides by policies on what materials can be taken into the facility. These

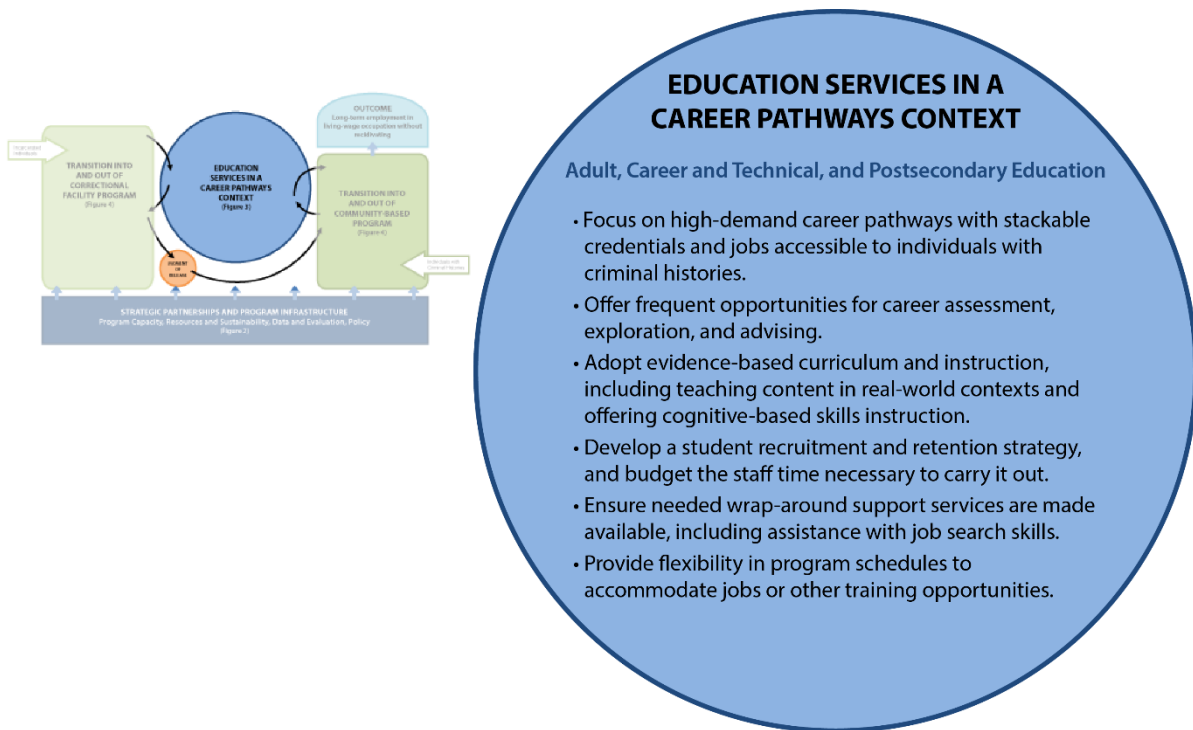
sorts of policy concerns are inevitable when dealing with bureaucratic organizations, and any effort to implement the Reentry Education Model will have to take them into consideration.

- ✓ **Recommendation: Expand the Reentry Education Model's definition of policy.** While implementing the model, consider reviewing local and institutional policy, still noting the important role that state policy plays in correctional and reentry education programs.

Education Services

Education services are central to the Reentry Education Model and undoubtedly should remain so. However, an important outcome for individuals with criminal histories identified by the model is long-term employment in a living-wage occupation. The model already notes the value of combining career and technical with academic training in correctional and reentry education programs. It also indicates that education providers should align their programs with local labor markets and jobs that do not have criminal history restrictions. Nonetheless, the experience of the PRSCO demonstration sites suggests that it would be valuable to take the model a step further by explicitly recommending that correctional and reentry education services be offered in the context of career pathways (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Strengthening education services and emphasizing career pathways



Career Pathways

Ideally, career pathways “provide a seamless system of career exploration, preparation, and skill upgrades linked to academic credits and credentials, available with multiple entry and exit points.” (Jacobs and Warford 2007). Among the key features of successful career pathway programs are credentials recognized by and aligned with the needs of an industry sector, contextualized and integrated learning strategies, career navigation and employment assistance, and wrap-around support services (Alliance for Quality Career Pathways 2014; Clagett and Uhalde 2011). In 2012, the U.S. departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services issued a joint Dear Colleague letter promoting their commitment to this approach to adult education and training.

While the PRSCOE demonstration sites do not necessarily describe their work in terms of career pathways, all three sites have adopted programs and services that reflect the career pathway features described above. Each project team recognizes that individuals with criminal histories can benefit from understanding their own career interests and aptitudes, the types of educational credentials required for jobs along a specific career pathway, and the relevance of education programs to those jobs.

IU 13’s PRSCOE program benefits from its location in the Pennsylvania CareerLink of Lancaster County workforce one-stop career center. The center allows reentry clients to take GED classes while participating in the range of services offered at CareerLink, including job search skills workshops and career readiness certification. GED graduates can also enroll in one of CareerLink’s occupational skills training programs. In addition, four offender workforce development specialists provide personalized career counseling through the Reentry Employment Program, supplementing the work of IU 13’s education services.

Western’s PROVEN reentry curriculum is offered primarily to formerly incarcerated individuals who have already earned a high school diploma or GED. The program helps students become comfortable on the college campus, learn about potential careers and their educational requirements, improve their job search skills, and find preliminary employment before enrolling in postsecondary classes that will put them on a career pathway.

Barton’s welding program shows the advantage of partnering with local employers who provide in-kind support to the program as well as employment for both currently and formerly incarcerated individuals. Welding is a high-demand field in Kansas, and local employers have been very willing to hire graduates of Barton’s welding certificate program, even while they are still incarcerated.

Moreover, each site has emphasized the importance of offering career counseling and job search assistance as part of its PRSCOE grant. Project staff from Barton,

for instance, note that creating a career advisor position has been a key outcome of their PRSCOE-funded work. The project coordinators at all three sites also point to the value of having team members who are offender workforce development specialists, credentialed through a National Institute of Corrections program that provides specialized training to individuals working with corrections and reentry populations (U.S. Department of Justice n.d.-a).

- ✓ **Recommendation: Use the Reentry Education Model to emphasize the value of offering correctional and reentry education services within the context of career pathways.** Demonstrate that a focus on high-demand career pathways with stackable credentials and on jobs accessible to individuals with criminal histories offers students more opportunities to enter living-wage occupations and avoid recidivism. Career assessment and exploration should be integral to education services, and students should be helped to understand how their interests connect to potential careers. Make clear to them what credentials are needed for various jobs along career pathways.

Evidence-Based Curriculum and Instructional Practices

The Reentry Education Model emphasizes the importance of using evidence-based curricula and instructional practices, and the implementation study shows that sites found this aspect of the model easy to manage, suggesting that this portion of it does not need much revision. Prior to receiving the PRSCOE grant, all three demonstration projects had in place robust adult education programs that used evidence-based practices, particularly for GED instruction. Nonetheless, the career pathways focus that the projects took encouraged them to consider better contextualizing the content of their GED instruction.

Toward this end, the Western instructor working in the jail has begun to use in her GED classes materials from some of the career and technical education programs at the college. This was possible now that her students can use the PROVEN reentry curriculum to transition into Western career pathway programs after completing a GED. The changes to the GED test that took effect in January 2014 also led sites to provide professional development for GED instructors. Staff members at IU 13, for example, used their 2013 end-of-year retreat to share changes and challenges in instructional practice resulting from the new College- and Career-Readiness Standards and their implications for the new GED test.

Cognitive-based skills instruction, another aspect of the Reentry Education Model, is available at all three sites, as a separate class in correctional facilities and/or through community-based organizations. Most often the class uses the National Institute of Correction's Thinking for a Change curriculum (U.S. Department of

Justice n.d.-b). This arrangement allows project staff to refer students who might benefit from this approach.

In addition, at IU 13, instructors experimented with teaching a separate cognitive-based skills module, using the Decisions for Action curriculum (Vita Education Services 2014), and with blending some of those materials into their GED classes. They concluded that the blended approach was more effective, given that students tend to miss the separate class too often to get the most benefit from the curriculum. With the blended approach, instructors found they could adapt the curriculum more effectively to the needs of the students who came to class on any given day.

Peer mentoring is another evidence-based practice recommended in the Reentry Education Model. While incarcerated students in programs run by IU 13 and Western indicated that they engage in informal peer mentoring and tutoring in the cell blocks, the short length of students' stays makes formal peer-mentoring programs impractical in local jails. Barton, on the other hand, has found peer support to be of considerable value in its correctional education program. During PRSCOE implementation, project staff identified incarcerated students who have completed certificate programs and engaged them as peer tutors in career and technical classes, which they hope will allow for an increase in class size in the future.

Another possible role for peer tutors is in the correctional facilities' computer labs, where students are allowed to spend time on homework outside of class. In addition, one of Barton's partner correctional facilities uses incarcerated individuals to staff a resource room and even has an inmate clerk who can administer and interpret the O*Net career assessment, which connects an individual's skills, interests, and work preferences with possible career paths (U.S. Department of Labor n.d.). All of these peers provide additional instructional time and tutoring for incarcerated students and serve as role models who demonstrate that academic success while incarcerated is a real possibility.

- ✓ **Recommendation: Retain the Reentry Education Model's emphasis on evidence-based curricula and instructional practices.** However, note that prison- and jail-based correctional education programs have different capacities for offering formal peer-mentoring opportunities.

Student Recruitment and Retention

Recruiting and retaining students in their education programs were noted as significant challenges at all of the PRSCOE demonstration sites. This highlights the importance of having student recruitment and retention plans, as noted in the Reentry Education Model, and suggests that the model could be improved by providing additional guidance in these areas.

Recruitment

Project staff at all three sites found that, in the correctional facilities, simply providing a brochure or flier describing available programs is enough to elicit interest from potential students. Barton staff also have access to the one-way email system at the correctional facilities so that colleges serving them can announce upcoming courses and information sessions. Demand for the education programs is high enough in all participating correctional facilities that the true recruitment challenge becomes identifying the students most likely to benefit from enrolling in them. Barton, for example, recently had 150 applicants for 40 available course seats, and it has to balance offering services to new students with requests for further classes from successful returning students.

Project staff at each demonstration site also found that, as the Reentry Education Model suggests, recruitment, especially in a correctional setting, works best with a structured application process, which makes it easier to ensure that students are enrolled in the appropriate classes. Both Western and Barton hold formal information and orientation sessions in their partner correctional facilities to identify potential students and have them complete program applications. The information on these applications is then used to determine which students will be enrolled in various programs.

Attracting students was more of a challenge for the community-based programs run by IU 13 and Western. Despite significant efforts at both sites to ensure that students who were enrolled in an education program while incarcerated transitioned to the corresponding community-based program shortly after release, in many cases even students who promised to continue did not follow up on that commitment. IU 13 assigned one of its PRCEO-funded instructors to follow up with newly released students by phone or email but found them hard to reach and often preoccupied with immediate life necessities, such as finding housing or a job. Western, on the other hand, concluded that the limited time available for case management would be best spent on assisting students who came to the college without prompting, as more of these students had relatively stable lives and thus were better equipped to commit to an education program.

Referrals and word-of-mouth proved to be the crucial factors for successfully recruiting for both community-based reentry education programs. Many students interviewed indicated that they had heard about the program from peers, while others were directed to the program by reentry counselors, probation officers, or social service staff. In Lancaster, for example, individuals who attend the weekly “Landing a Job with a Criminal Background” workshop offered at the CareerLink workforce one-stop career center are directed to IU 13 if they lack a high school diploma

or GED. Students at these community sites also often suggested that the community-based programs could be improved by additional public outreach so more individuals who might benefit could learn about them.

With many students entering the community-based education programs without transitioning directly from the jail, the demonstration sites found it essential to have ways to identify individuals with criminal backgrounds who could benefit from tailored services. In Lancaster, front-line staff from both IU 13 and Career-Link learned to be on the lookout for clients who indicated that they had previously been incarcerated and refer them to the reentry education program coordinator. Similarly, Western project staff have found it useful to create an automatic hold in the Western data system for students who have taken classes in the jail, which allows on-campus advisors to direct them to project staff for specialized assistance if they arrive on campus without having contacted the PRSCEO project coordinator directly.

Retention

Retention also proved to be a challenge, particularly for the community-based programs. Demonstration sites improved retention in correctional facilities by using a more structured application process, involving front-line correctional staff in determining which students are allowed to enroll, and using a case management approach to follow up on dropouts. For example, Barton found that, after beginning a more structured application process, retention in its welding program increased considerably.

For the community-based programs, follow-up with students who had stopped attending classes was an important strategy for retention. However, as with the practice of following up with recently released students discussed above, project staff at the demonstration sites found it difficult to make time to reach out to students individually. In addition, the transient nature of the reentry population sometimes made it difficult to find correct contact information.

Overall, the PRSCEO demonstration sites with community-based reentry education programs found that their partnerships with other community-based service providers are crucial to student retention. When students disappear from classes, the problem often proves to be related to housing, transportation, employment, alcohol and drug use, or one of the many other challenges individuals face when they are released from incarceration. Community-based programs have found that finding ways to help students overcome small challenges can draw them back to class. For example, by offering a free bus pass to reduce transportation problems, as Western has done. In many cases, however, students face larger challenges that cannot be easily resolved, and referring them to community partners has proven

to be the best way to meet student needs until the students are prepared to continue their education.

IU 13 and Western were also confronted with the challenge of retaining students who were enrolled in the community-based education program and then re-incarcerated. At both sites, program staff recognized that movement between the community and the jail often happened in both directions. The program coordinators and jail-based instructors at these sites found it helpful to regularly check the jail's public list of current detainees and reach out to those individuals who could continue their education while in jail.

- ✓ **Recommendation: Provide more direction in the Reentry Education Model on overcoming the challenges associated with student recruitment and retention.** Clarify that developing and refining a student recruitment and retention plan is key to successfully implementing the model. Explain that recruitment and class assignment strategies are likely to affect retention (as when Barton improved retention by ensuring that the students enrolled in classes with limited seating were the ones most motivated and equipped to succeed). Discuss the challenges of maintaining contact with students after they are released, recognizing that many of them will need time to stabilize their lives before they can continue their education. Finally, note that some students may be re-incarcerated, and emphasize the important role that wrap-around support services play in promoting both recruitment and retention for students in community-based programs.

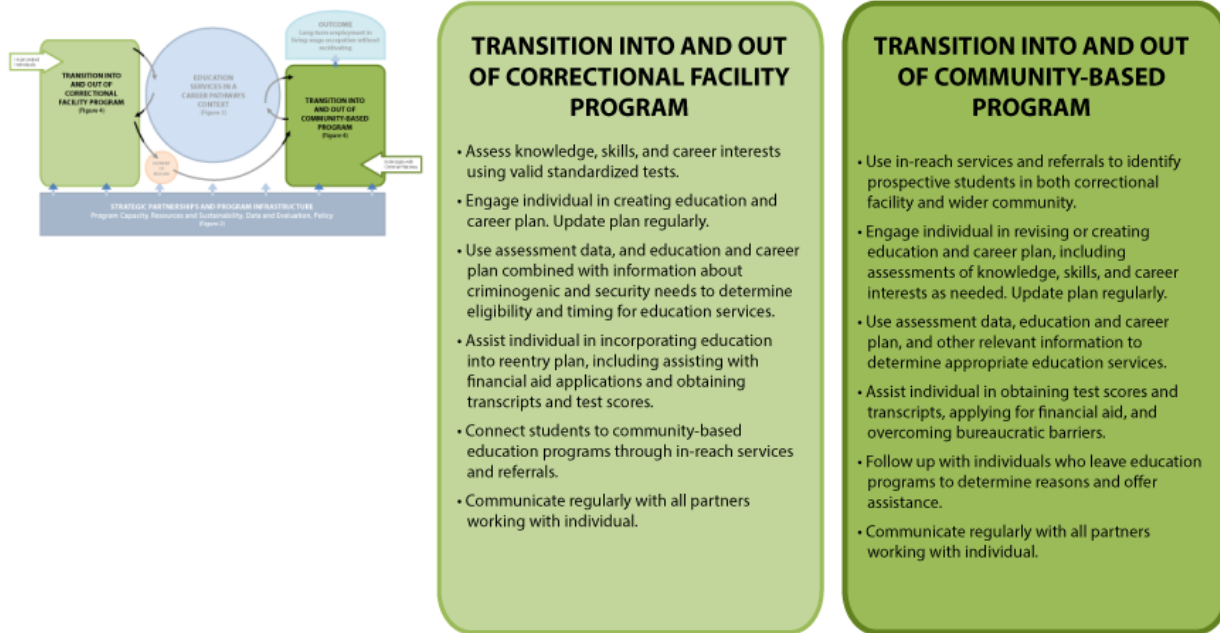
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Intake and Prerelease Processes

In the Reentry Education Model, the final section — incorporating intake into the correctional facility, prerelease services, and intake into community corrections — is titled “Ensuring education is well integrated into the corrections system” (Tolbert 2012). This portion of the model was particularly challenging for the PRSCOE demonstration sites to understand and implement, in large part because the lead agency for each project is an education provider rather than a corrections agency. Staff at the two county jail sites were concerned that they were not doing enough work within the correctional facility, while Barton staff were disheartened when they were unable to build a partnership with community corrections in their local area.

From an education provider’s perspective, the Reentry Education Model could be improved by expanding the emphasis from integrating education into the corrections system to facilitating transitions across different correctional and reentry education programs and settings (see Figure 5). This change is not intended to downplay the importance of integrating education into the corrections system, which both corrections and education staff should certainly keep in mind when working together. However, the explicit goal of the reentry model is “... [t]o coordinate services among institutional and community-based education providers and their partners to ensure individuals in the correctional population can progress through their educational path as their correctional status changes.” (Tolbert 2012). As such, the model may be stronger if its central focus is on the complex process that individuals need to maintain their educational and career trajectories after release from jail or prison.

Figure 5. Facilitating transitions across different correctional and reentry education programs and settings



- ### TRANSITION INTO AND OUT OF CORRECTIONAL FACILITY PROGRAM
- Assess knowledge, skills, and career interests using valid standardized tests.
 - Engage individual in creating education and career plan. Update plan regularly.
 - Use assessment data, and education and career plan combined with information about criminogenic and security needs to determine eligibility and timing for education services.
 - Assist individual in incorporating education into reentry plan, including assisting with financial aid applications and obtaining transcripts and test scores.
 - Connect students to community-based education programs through in-reach services and referrals.
 - Communicate regularly with all partners working with individual.

- ### TRANSITION INTO AND OUT OF COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAM
- Use in-reach services and referrals to identify prospective students in both correctional facility and wider community.
 - Engage individual in revising or creating education and career plan, including assessments of knowledge, skills, and career interests as needed. Update plan regularly.
 - Use assessment data, education and career plan, and other relevant information to determine appropriate education services.
 - Assist individual in obtaining test scores and transcripts, applying for financial aid, and overcoming bureaucratic barriers.
 - Follow up with individuals who leave education programs to determine reasons and offer assistance.
 - Communicate regularly with all partners working with individual.

Key Factors in Facilitating Educational Transitions

Despite the differences between Barton’s work with state prisons and the two county jail sites, project staff noted a number of similar challenges to and effective practices for making transitions across education programs and settings. Project staff at all three sites stressed the importance, as an overarching factor, of maintaining regular communication among all partner agencies working with a specific individual so that services can be coordinated, and reentry needs identified and met. As in the discussion of effective partnerships, staff members repeatedly spoke in their interviews of good communication among partners as the crucial factor that makes the Reentry Education Model work.

A second key factor proved to be the value of personal contact. Several project participants mentioned the importance of having a “friendly face,” an individual whom potential students recognize and feel comfortable talking with as they move through the process of enrolling in an education program. While this individual is usually the project coordinator or an instructor, all three sites were working on expanding the number of staff members who move back and forth between the correctional facility and community-based programs in order to provide students with more people they recognize. At Western, for example, an associate dean, an advisor trained as an offender workforce development specialist, and a member of the career services staff have joined the project coordinator and the jail-based instructor in teaching portions of the PROVEN reentry curriculum, leading jail staff to remark that they now see Western staff members much more often than in the past.

Intake in Facility

At the county jail sites, the number of people processed for entry on a daily basis and the very short time most are incarcerated means that, typically, there is no opportunity for a structured intake process beyond assessing immediate criminogenic and medical needs. As a result, these individuals generally do not receive any educational assessments until after they ask to participate in education programs and the jail programs administrator places them in a class, usually in collaboration with the education project coordinator and/or instructors. At this point, an education staff person works with each student to develop an education and career plan, and set goals the student would like to achieve while incarcerated.

For Barton, the intake situation is actually not that different from the one at the county jail sites, despite working instead with the state prison system. In Kansas, prisoners are sent first to a central reception facility before being assigned to a

prison such as those that Barton serves. This central facility has begun to incorporate education into the intake process by administering career and educational assessment tests and making referrals to education programs. Nonetheless, Barton staff typically engages in an intake process, including career and educational assessments if needed, once an individual has asked to participate in one of Barton's programs. While implementing the Reentry Education Model using PRSCEO funds, Barton made some changes to its intake process, which included requiring potential students to take the O*Net career assessment and meet with the career advisor before enrolling in any postsecondary classes. According to Barton staff, the more structured application process, combined with career-focused advising, helped to improve retention significantly.

Prerelease

In a county jail setting, the length of time an individual will be incarcerated and the date of release are both very unclear. Sometimes, for example, prisoners go to court and are released by the judge immediately. Even individuals who have been sentenced may be released early for a variety of reasons. Because of this uncertainty, corrections staff at the county jail demonstration sites are generally unable to provide prerelease counseling, although Lancaster County Prison does have a reentry unit staffed with adult probation and parole officers. As a result, developing a reentry plan can become an important element of education services in this setting and must be started as soon as a student enters the education program. In-reach services that the education provider and other community service providers offer are also of considerable importance for helping students maintain educational continuity.

While opportunities for prerelease counseling are limited in county jails, such counseling is central to implementing the Reentry Education Model in state prisons. In the correctional facilities Barton serves, reentry is a primary focus, and facility staff work to ensure that incarcerated individuals receive all the programming they need during their prison time for a successful reentry. Prerelease counselors in these facilities are already in contact with community corrections and reentry service providers in the locations where their clients will be released. Counselors also could provide educational opportunities in their prerelease planning by forging stronger relationships with education providers in these locations. However, doing so would likely require some assistance from Barton to make sure that students' test scores and transcripts are transferred to the new education providers and to help the receiving colleges understand the needs of formerly incarcerated students if that is not currently a priority at the college.

Intake in Community Corrections

Although the Reentry Education Model, in its section on education services, assumes that most participating individuals will enter community corrections after they are released, all of the PRSCOE demonstration sites have found that many of their incarcerated students are not subject to supervision after release. While this situation was particularly true for IU 13 and Western, 16 percent of Barton's students released during 2013–14 were released with their sentences discharged. As a result, while community corrections serves as an important source of referrals to community-based education programs at the two county jail sites, in-reach into correctional facilities by education providers and referrals from community-based organizations are clearly also crucial to the transition.

Because so many formerly incarcerated individuals are not subject to supervision after release, IU 13 and Western typically manage intake into their community-based reentry education programs without much coordination with corrections. When students return to classes soon after release, this situation poses few problems. However, most formerly incarcerated students do not return to classes immediately. For them, concerns such as finding a job or housing and participating in addiction treatment programs tend to take priority over school. As a result, when students do return to classes, they often need to be reassessed, especially if they do not yet have a GED. In addition, both IU 13 and Western have found that their community-based reentry education programs attract significant numbers of individuals with criminal histories who have not participated in education programs at the partnering correctional facility or who have been released from a different facility, often a state prison. These students typically must also complete educational and career assessments before starting classes and work with instructors to develop education and career plans.

- ✓ **Recommendation: Revise the Reentry Education Model to highlight transitions across different correctional and reentry education programs and settings.** In particular, the model should acknowledge that some individuals are released without going through prerelease counseling and/or are not subject to supervision after their release. The model also should reinforce the understanding that referrals from a range of community reentry service providers are key for helping newly released students continue their educational and career trajectories. In addition, a focus on intake into the education programs themselves, rather than into a correctional facility or community corrections, will help ground the model in the experiences of correctional and reentry education providers.

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Conclusion

Project staff at all three PRSCOE demonstration sites indicated that implementing the Reentry Education Model gave them a valuable opportunity to expand and improve their correctional and reentry education programs. Each site was able to identify a number of places in which use of the model improved policy and practice in their work, particularly communication among partner agencies. Given the extent to which the demonstration sites found value in using the Reentry Education Model in its current form, it seems that this model provides an important contribution to correctional and reentry education.

On the other hand, the experiences of the three sites indicate that the Reentry Education Model could be strengthened. In particular, the demonstration projects showed that important differences exist in how the model works in projects in county jails versus those in state prisons. Lessons learned from the demonstration sites also underlie recommendations for reorganizing the model's program infrastructure section. In particular, they emphasize the need to offer correctional and reentry education services in a career pathways context, and refocus the model to highlight transitions into and out of education programs across correctional and reentry settings. Together these recommendations led to the proposed revised Reentry Education Model shown in Figure 2 near the beginning of this report.

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Appendix: PRSCOE Demonstration Sites

Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 — Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Lancaster, Pennsylvania, is about 70 miles west of Philadelphia in the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch country. The county's primary industries include agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism. The Lancaster County population is approximately 500,000, with nearly 60,000 of those residing in the county seat, Lancaster City (U.S. Department of Commerce, n.d). Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 (IU 13) is one of Pennsylvania's regional education service agencies and provides technical assistance and support to its region's 22 school districts. IU 13 also offers direct services in such areas as early childhood education, special education, English as a Second Language, adult education, and professional development for educators (Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 2014). Through its adult education program, IU 13 provides adult basic education and GED instruction at Lancaster County Prison (LCP). Despite its name, LCP functions as a county jail, with 85 percent of its population made up of pretrial detainees and parole violators (the remainder are individuals with sentences of less than two years). LCP admits a total of more than 6,000 men and women each year and has an average daily population of more than 1,100, half of whom return to Lancaster City after release (County of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, n.d.).

Both IU 13 and LCP are members of the Lancaster County Reentry Management Organization (RMO), a coalition of more than 50 governmental and community-based organizations that serve reentry clients. The RMO director works with member agencies to coordinate intensive services provided to a limited number of clients and to make appropriate referrals for those whom RMO cannot directly serve. The RMO's board works to improve county policy concerning reentry issues, enhance coordination across agencies serving formerly incarcerated individuals, and identify gaps in reentry services available in Lancaster County (Lancaster County Reentry Management Organization 2012). IU 13 was a founding member of the RMO, and the PRSCOE grant has raised awareness of the role that education plays in successful reentry.

In partnership with the local workforce investment board, the RMO has designated the Pennsylvania CareerLink of Lancaster County, a workforce one-stop career

center, as the community's central hub for reentry services. The Reentry Employment Program at CareerLink offers the orientation workshop Landing a Job with a Criminal Background, additional job search skills workshops, individual employment counseling with an offender workforce development specialist, career readiness certification, occupational skills training in several different fields, and job placement services. Some of IU 13's adult education programs are housed at CareerLink, as are the offices of several social service organizations. In addition, CareerLink has become a center for offender workforce development services for parolees from Pennsylvania state prisons who are released in the Lancaster area. This one-stop approach to reentry reduces the need for individuals with criminal histories to visit multiple locations in order to receive services, including adult and career and technical education. The approach also facilitates collaboration among different agencies.

Through a contract with LCP, IU 13 has offered adult basic education and GED classes to incarcerated students for decades. But IU 13 has found that demand for these classes far outweighs the capacity, and education services the agency provides often lacked coordination with other services offered through CareerLink. The goal of IU 13's PRSCEO work was to enhance adult education services for individuals with criminal histories in Lancaster and to strengthen the pipeline for formerly incarcerated individuals from prison to the education and workforce services available at CareerLink and eventually to employment.

Using PRSCEO funds, IU 13 increased the number of adult education classes offered at LCP and created reentry-focused adult education classes at CareerLink. The project also provided additional time for instructors to spend on one-on-one education and case management with individuals taking their adult education classes and to follow up with those who dropped out of classes. Partway through the PRSCEO implementation process, the project coordinator recognized that students coming to the community-based GED classes immediately after completing their foundation skills assessment seemed unclear about the process of earning a GED. To provide students with information about this process, the coordinator and her staff developed a new student orientation that explains the education and career services available at CareerLink and that is offered weekly on the day following the foundations skill testing. IU 13 is also now offering informational workshops on postsecondary opportunities at local colleges for GED graduates.

The most crucial challenge for IU 13's PRSCEO project was to build new relationships and improve communication across partner agencies, particularly for reaching front-line staff. In the past, communication between IU 13 and LCP was limited to a handful of individuals, typically those involved with the RMO. While communication with prison staff still remains a challenge, the project coordinator notes that it improved during the PRSCEO implementation year. In addition, IU 13 has

worked with LCP to offer computer-based GED testing in the prison, a practice that the prison's technology staff had initially resisted.

The project coordinator also has worked to raise awareness of the PRSCOE program among LCP intake counselors, pre-parole officers, county and state probation and parole officers in the Lancaster community, and staff at the many community-based reentry service providers that are members of the RMO. All of these individuals are potential sources for referrals to IU 13's PRSCOE program, and staff members have begun to see significant increases in their referral numbers. In addition, individuals with criminal histories who participate in the Reentry Employment Program, as well as former state prisoners who report to counselors at CareerLink, are now being directed to IU 13 if they need to earn a GED or hone their math skills for the career readiness certification. The project coordinator also reports that the grant has improved communication among the instructors in both the prison and the community, allowing them to share more information about students as well as curricula and instructional practices.

During the first year of implementing the PRSCOE grant, IU 13 provided at least 12 hours of instruction to 120 individuals with criminal histories — 68 at LCP, 42 at CareerLink, and 10 at both locations. These figures exceeded the 75-student goal set in the grant proposal. At LCP, 50 percent of the students completed at least one level of basic skills instruction, meeting IU 13's goal, although only 39 percent of the CareerLink students achieved the same outcome. Between July and December 2013, 37 program participants earned GEDs (23 at LCP and 14 at CareerLink), representing 82 percent of the students who took all sections of the GED test, and well above IU 13's goal of a 60 percent pass rate. It is important to note, however, that the GED changed significantly as of January 2014. These changes, combined with difficulties in getting new computer testing labs open — a requirement for the new GED — meant that IU 13's PRSCOE program had no students who could attempt the GED during the first quarter of 2014. Among IU 13's GED graduates, 42 percent entered occupational skills training at CareerLink or enrolled in postsecondary education, more than double IU 13's goal of 20 percent. In addition, 25 percent of formerly incarcerated individuals served at CareerLink obtained employment, while 11 percent were re-incarcerated.

As IU 13 moves into the final year of the PRSCOE grant, a key concern is finding replacement funding to continue the added GED classes at LCP and the case management and follow-up services that instructors provide. The program did receive a new contract with LCP, which includes a 10 percent increase in funding and additional money to cover GED testing at the prison, and the project coordinator has been working with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections to obtain funding for services provided to individuals released from state prisons. The project coordinator would also like to establish a formal memorandum of understanding regarding data-sharing with LCP. Finally, project staff hope to sustain the new

relationships and improved levels of communication they have achieved during the grant period, both internally and with partner agencies, and to raise awareness of the PRSCEO program, both locally and statewide.

Western Technical College — La Crosse, Wisconsin

La Crosse, Wisconsin, is on the east bank of the Mississippi River about 150 miles southeast of Minneapolis, Minnesota. The county's primary industries include health care, manufacturing, and higher education, with two universities — the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and Viterbo University — located nearby. The La Crosse County population is approximately 115,000, with just over 50,000 of them residing in the city of La Crosse, which is the county seat, (U.S. Department of Commerce, n.d.). A third postsecondary institution, Western Technical College, has its main campus in downtown La Crosse and serves approximately 4,500 students annually by offering certificate and associate degree programs, primarily in career and technical fields (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). The La Crosse County Law Enforcement Center, where the county jail is located, is across the street from Western's main campus. Nearly 80 percent of the jail's average daily population of less than 200 men and women comprises pretrial detainees and probation violators, with the remainder primarily individuals serving sentences of less than a year (U.S. Department of Justice and the Urban Institute 2014). The county also has an active Justice Support Services program, which evaluates individuals entering the criminal justice system, recommends and oversees such jail alternatives as electronic monitoring, and provides life skills and other programs in the jail (La Crosse County Human Services n.d.).

Using *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)* and county funding, Western Technical College has offered adult basic education and GED classes at the La Crosse County Law Enforcement Center since 2008. During this same period, as part of the Transition from Jail to Community (TJC) initiative, which is supported by the National Institute of Corrections and the Urban Institute (U.S. Department of Justice and the Urban Institute 2014), criminal justice and social service agencies in La Crosse have promoted positive outcomes for individuals leaving the county jail through better engagement and coordination among stakeholders in identifying the barriers to successful reentry, and through developing targeted interventions to address those barriers. The TJC initiative brought together, in many cases for the first time, a range of criminal justice and social service agencies working in the area of reentry. The initiative also led to changes that provide formerly incarcerated individuals with better coordinated services and, more important, established relationships and lines of communication among groups that had previously worked largely in isolation.

Prior to the PRSCOE project, Western's classes at the jail were not well integrated with adult basic education and GED courses offered on the Western campus, making the jail-to-campus transitions a challenge for many students. Similarly, Western was not a part of the TJC initiative, and education has not been a primary focus of the initiative's work. The goal of Western's PRSCOE work was to improve the transition to college for students who take classes at the jail. Toward this end, Western established partnerships with other community agencies working with the reentry population and developed a new certificate program to help individuals with criminal histories become better prepared for employment and further career and technical training. With support from a core team that includes the dean for the college division that supports adult education, the jail program coordinator, and the director of Justice Support Services, a newly hired project coordinator with experience in community reentry work developed a curriculum for the certificate program and implemented it in February 2014.

The Positive Reentry Offered through Vocation- and Education-focused Narratives (PROVEN) certificate provides 16 hours of instruction plus lab time on such topics as job search skills, communication skills, behavior on the job, budgeting and money management, and computer skills. The curriculum is structured so that each class is self-contained and students can move in or out of the program at any point. Classes are offered twice a week, once in the jail and once on campus, with a follow-up session in a computer lab to allow participants to work on assignments. Instruction is led by the project coordinator and a pool of volunteers including staff from Western and from Justice Support Services, as well as representatives from the local one-stop career center and a consumer credit counseling service. The PROVEN curriculum also calls for mentoring student participants, but this component is not yet in place. PROVEN students are being referred to an established mentoring program on the Western campus, and in the future the project coordinator hopes to develop a group of program completers to serve as peer mentors. In addition, the project coordinator has worked with local employers to increase awareness of the value of the PROVEN certificate and open job opportunities for program graduates. A notable success for the project occurred when a local temp agency agreed to waive its usual six-month work history requirement for PROVEN certificate-holders.

The PROVEN certificate serves as a supplement to the existing adult basic education and GED classes that Western provides. Most PROVEN participants already have a GED or high school diploma. The program's goal is to provide them with the skills and confidence necessary to obtain employment and, ideally, enroll in one of Western's career pathway training programs. Western's jail-based GED instructor also has drawn upon the experience of Western's partners to revise her curriculum and instructional practices. She now provides a broader reentry and career

focus in her classes and, in some cases, assigns materials from Western's introductory career and technical classes to her students. In light of recent and extensive changes to the GED, she believes this approach will increase students' engagement and improve their outcomes.

Prior to the PROVEN project, Western faculty and staff had little awareness of the existing population of formerly incarcerated individuals on campus and their particular needs. The project coordinator has reached out to a number of campus divisions and programs to raise awareness of the PROVEN program and to make connections to support its work. The learning curve for Western staff involved with the project has been steep, but several campus staff members have become actively engaged with PROVEN students, including the new associate dean in the adult education division. This individual assisted in developing the employability and career training for Western's broader adult education population based on her extensive work with at-risk youths, and she and the project coordinator have worked together to ensure that their work is complementary. On-campus PROVEN students, for example, are required to attend the larger employability session while the associate dean is leading some of the PROVEN classes.

Western's PROVEN project has also led to new and enhanced partnerships with community agencies that provide reentry services. In addition to the various partners who are contributing to the PROVEN curriculum, the project has built connections with a number of transitional housing agencies whose clients can benefit from the program and has begun to see more referrals from parole officers and other community agencies. Existing partnerships with the jail and Justice Support Services have been strengthened through more frequent communication, both about the project as a whole and about specific individuals who need wrap-around services. The PROVEN project has also helped to reignite some enthusiasm about reentry that had wavered a bit after the TJC initiative ended. Staff members from local agencies were invited to attend training on motivational interviewing and appreciated both this opportunity and the chance to connect with staff from other agencies. Plans for two Bridges out of Poverty training sessions, one for Western faculty and staff and one for the broader community, are currently under way (aha! Process, Inc. 2014). The project coordinator has also facilitated subcommittee meetings of the TJC group that is focused on increasing employment opportunities for individuals with criminal backgrounds.

During the first five months of offering the PROVEN curriculum (February–June 2014), Western enrolled 66 students who began the program in the jail and 12 who began at the college. Among those who began the program while incarcerated, 38 percent successfully transitioned to the on-campus program after their release. As of June 2014, no PROVEN students had transitioned to postsecondary education, but 20 students did enroll in various Western for-credit programs in the fall. Among the PROVEN students enrolled in the first half of 2014, 38 percent were

employed by June 2014 (compared to 10 percent of similarly situated individuals whom the project did not serve). Similarly, among the same group of PROVEN students, 44 percent were re-incarcerated because of probation violations or arrest on a new offense (compared to 70 percent of similarly situated individuals whom the project did not serve).

Western's PROVEN project fits well with both the mission of the college, which has recently set strategic goals for improving retention and completion, and with the needs of the La Crosse community. While the earlier TJC initiative had improved reentry processes in the region, PROVEN offers a missing step for many individuals who need to make the transition from jail or intensive support services to education and employment. Current partners are enthusiastic about the work, and the project coordinator's outreach efforts, together with some media attention, have begun to raise the larger community's awareness of the program. For the immediate future, a key task will be obtaining additional funding, particularly for maintaining the project coordinator position. Project leaders hope this position will be written into Western's budget, and the project coordinator has also begun looking for local public and private funding to support the project. In the longer term, project staff see possibilities to grow — for example, by offering the PROVEN curriculum at Western's satellite campuses, expanding the curriculum to include other at-risk individuals such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients or vocational rehabilitation clients, and partnering with a nearby state prison whose staff recently reached out to Western to discuss possible collaboration.

Barton Community College — Great Bend, Kansas

Great Bend, Kansas, is the county seat of Barton County, Kansas, located in the center of the state. The Barton County population is slightly less than 28,000, with nearly 16,000 of those residing in Great Bend (U.S. Department of Commerce n.d.). Barton Community College has its main campus in Great Bend and serves approximately 5,200 students annually in certificate and associate's degree programs in both technical and academic fields (U.S. Department of Education n.d.). Barton's service area includes three state prisons: Ellsworth Correctional Facility, Larned Correctional Mental Health Facility (LCMHF), and Larned Juvenile Correctional Facility. Housing approximately 1,600 inmates (Kansas Department of Corrections 2013), these three correctional facilities are important economic drivers in central Kansas, where the economy also includes such industries as agriculture, oil, and manufacturing.

Through a memorandum of understanding with the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC), Barton offers the Building Academic Skills in Correctional Settings (BASICS) program, which offers adult basic education and GED classes as well as postsecondary career and technical and academic courses to incarcerated students at Ellsworth and LCMHF. (Some services are also offered at the juvenile facility but were not the focus of this report). Adult basic education, GED, and career and technical classes are offered at the prisons, as are some academic classes. Other academic classes are offered through interactive television.

Using funds from an earlier Community-Based Job Training grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Barton built a welding lab at Ellsworth where a welding certificate program is offered. Local employers, faced with a shortage of welders, employ individuals who have completed Barton's welding program both at two welding shops in Ellsworth (for medium security inmates) and through work-release programs (for minimum security inmates). Other programs offered in the prisons include *WORKReady!* certification (a Kansas career readiness program), a manufacturing skills certificate, a building trades certificate, Microsoft Office skills, and Certiport computer skills certification. Courses leading to an associate degree in general studies are also available. KDOC covers some of the Barton programs' costs, and the correctional education program also receives AEFLA funding for adult basic education as well as state formula funding for postsecondary courses. Academic and career and technical courses are offered to incarcerated students on a self-pay basis, some of which is covered by scholarships available through Barton's foundation.

For more than a decade before Barton received the PRSCEO grant, its BASICS program was already well established in the three correctional facilities, offering incarcerated students a range of educational opportunities. The grant was expected to allow the program to improve and document its ability to recruit, advise, and retain incarcerated students. Although an expansion of education services was not anticipated, grant funding is being used to pay tuition for some incarcerated students enrolled in Barton's BASICS program who were not eligible for other funding.

One activity Barton undertook as part of the PRSCEO grant was to streamline the enrollment process, which in the past had often taken place at the last minute. Now, interested students must file a request with prison staff well before the enrollment period, meet with the career advisor, complete a pre-enrollment checklist, and attend an informational meeting. Following the meeting, Barton staff screen the students based on their test scores, career interests, program needs, time left to serve, and disciplinary records. The screeners then work with facility staff to identify those students most likely to benefit from enrollment and with the Barton foundation staff to identify possible scholarship recipients. Barton staff members have found that this more structured process improves retention and yields stu-

dents who are better equipped to succeed in their classes. The Barton project coordinator has also assembled a procedures manual to document processes for the BASICS program. The manual, intended to be a living document, currently includes an organizational chart, program and course descriptions, Barton's modified version of the Reentry Education Model, and comments from students about their program experiences.

The career advisor, a new staff position, has been pivotal to Barton's implementation of the Reentry Education Model. This position is shared by three agencies — Barton, KDOC, and the Kansas Department of Commerce — and the individual filling it has extensive experience in supporting reentry clients, which includes training as an offender workforce development specialist and an offender employment retention specialist. The career advisor's role is multifaceted. She meets with prospective students at Barton's partner facilities to provide career counseling and helps them complete an education and career plan prior to enrolling in classes. She also meets with those who will soon be released to help them obtain information about colleges, complete college applications or financial aid forms, and plan their next educational steps. If they are more focused on employment, she communicates their needs to prison reentry staff and/or puts them in touch with her colleagues in the community. She provides similar counseling to individuals with criminal histories who seek assistance at workforce one-stop career centers in the western part of the state, including the center located in Great Bend, which is also the site of Barton's adult education program.

As she travels across the state, she engages with probation and parole officers, employers, community college admissions offices, health and human services agencies, community-based organizations, and other key contacts who can benefit from understanding more about the educational and employment needs of individuals with criminal histories. As she learns more about education and employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals throughout the state and beyond, she brings that information back to Barton and correctional facility reentry staff in an effort to increase the number of people who can advise incarcerated students.

Barton has also strengthened its partnerships with the correctional facilities it serves. Both Barton and facility staffs, including both wardens, have noted the value of the regular face-to-face meetings that began as part of the PRSCOE grant. Over the course of the first year of the project, these meetings have provided opportunities to address problems both large and small, to balance the sometimes competing concerns of the college and the correctional facilities, and to brainstorm with others about future plans. Meeting attendance has increased over the year, as more staff members at the correctional facilities recognize the value of having a say in the partnership plans. Barton's partners have also become more familiar with the organization of the correctional education program, which now includes newly hired coordinators of adult education and correctional education (replacing staff

members who left) as well as the career advisor and a new data and records specialist position, all of them funded by the grant.

During the first full year of implementing the PRSCEO grant, Barton had 70 incarcerated students attempt the GED, with an 80 percent pass rate. In addition, Barton's postsecondary correctional education program served 170 first-time postsecondary students. Of the 63 participating students who were released from prison during the 2013-14 academic year, Barton was able to track outcomes for 47. Of these students, 83 percent were employed, and 13 percent were re-incarcerated. This compares red with rates of 46 percent and 34 percent, respectively, for a group of incarcerated individuals whom Barton did not serve who were released from the same correctional facilities during the same year.

Continued funding remains a key challenge for Barton. KDOC will no longer be paying for academic postsecondary courses, leaving the cost of tuition to students who can afford to pay through scholarships, family support, or private industry jobs. In addition, the success of this program relies heavily on the career advisor working with incarcerated students to ensure that they have been appropriately assessed and that they enroll in courses that can lead to a credential and eventual employment. Funding from the KDOC will not be available for this position after the PRSCEO grant ends, which will make it more difficult for Barton to keep the position. Furthermore, the current career advisor has years of experience working with reentry service providers throughout the state and an extensive network of contacts statewide in community corrections, workforce, and higher education. While she has worked hard to model the work she does and to provide useful information to Barton and correctional facility staff, filling her shoes when she leaves the position will be a challenge and require that Barton and the two prisons work together to find ways to institutionalize some of her work.



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