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Candidate Outcome Indicators: Prisoner Re-entry Program

Implementing an outcome monitoring process enables organizations to track progress in achieving the program's mission. With this information, program managers can better develop budgets, allocate resources and improve their services. This document includes the following suggestions for starting or improving outcome measurement efforts:

1. **Outcome sequence chart** – *Identifies key outcomes presented in the sequence that are normally expected to occur.* The chart illustrates how one outcome leads to the next and identifies specific indicators that might be used to track each outcome. Intermediate outcomes tend to be on the left, and end (or final) outcomes are on the right. The program description at the top of the chart is meant to encompass a range of similar programs.
2. **Candidate outcome indicators** – *Lists outcomes and associated indicators as a starting point for deciding which outcomes to track.* They were chosen based on a review of the program area and consultation with program experts. Only outcome indicators are included (not physical outputs, such as number of classes held; not efficiency, such as cost per counseling session; and not organization issues, such as success in fundraising or staffing). The focus is on program beneficiaries (clients, customers, citizens, participants) and what has been accomplished for them. A data source or collection procedure is suggested for each indicator.

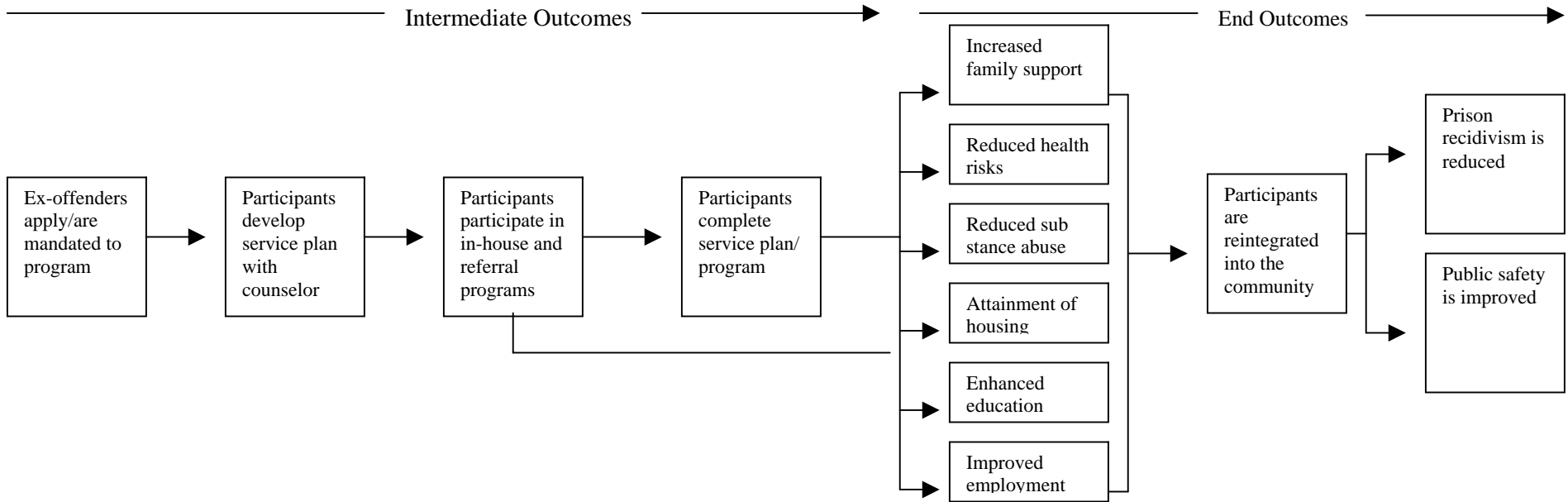
Suggestions and Limitations for Use of the Materials

- Involve others in deciding which outcomes and indicators to track. Obtain input from staff, board members, and clients. As an early step, prepare your own version of an outcome sequence chart—one that you believe fits the needs of your program.
- Review the project report for additional ideas on relevant indicators and additional resources: *Building a Common Framework to Measure Nonprofit Performance.*
- Tabulate the outcome information by various categories of clients to see if outcomes are different for different clients (e.g., gender, age group, income level, handicap level, and race/ethnicity). Use that information to help better target your efforts.
- Start with a small number of the indicators, especially if you have had only very little experience with such data collection and have very limited resources. Add more outcomes and indicators to the performance measurement system later, as you find that information is likely to be useful.
- Outcome information seldom, if ever, tells *why* the outcomes have occurred. Many internal and external factors can contribute to any outcome. Instead, use the outcome data to identify *what* works well and what does not. Use the data to determine for which *categories of clients* your procedures and policies are working well and for which they are not working well. To the extent that the program is not working as well as expected, then attempt to find out the reasons. This investigation process leads to continuous learning and program improvement.

Prisoner Re-Entry Program Description

To reintegrate former prisoners into the community, reduce prison recidivism, and improve public safety through addressing the educational, employment, healthcare, housing, and family relationship needs of prisoners re-entering society by providing support and connection to needed services in the community after prisoners have been released.

Outcome Sequence Chart



Indicators

1. Number of ex-offenders that apply to the program.

2. Number of ex-offenders that are mandated to the program.

3. Number and percent of participants with a service plan.

4. Number and percent of participants who attend in-house and referral programs X days after release from prison.

5. Number and percent of participants who complete service plan and/or "graduate" from the program.

6-8. Number and percent of participants who are reunited with/supported by/support family.

9. Number and percent of participants with appropriate housing.

10-11. Number and percent of participants abusing alcohol/drugs.

12-15. Number and percent of participants with a post-release health plan/no high risk behaviors/negative HIV test/no psychiatric hospital stays.

16. Number and percent of participants involved in education.

17-20. Number and percent of participants who had job placement help/found jobs X days after prison release/retained employment X months after placement/have steady earnings 12 months after prison release.

21. Number and percent of participants who are law abiding and supported by family twelve months after their release from prison.

22. Number and percent of participants who are law abiding and self-sufficient twelve months after their release from prison.

23. Number and percent of participants who return to prison within twelve months of release from prison.

24-25. Number and percent of participants who are convicted of violent crime or misdemeanor within twelve months of release from prison.

Participant satisfaction

Satisfaction with program services is an outcome that occurs in almost every program area, yet does not necessarily have a sequential placement. The indicator may be: Number and percent of program participants satisfied with prisoner re-entry programs and services.

Sources Consulted: Outside the Walls: A National Snapshot of Community-Based Prisoner Re-entry Programs by Solomon, Waul, Van Ness, Travis (2004); Returning Home: Understanding the Challenged of Prisoner Reentry (2004).

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	Common Outcome	Program Specific Outcome	Indicator	Data Collection Strategy	Notes	Outcome Stage
1	Improved Outreach/ Enrollment	Ex-offenders apply to program.	Number of ex-offenders applying for program over 12 month period (either by referral or on their own).	Internal program records	Program may also want to include inquiries about the program.	Intermediate
2	Improved Outreach/ Enrollment	Ex-offenders are mandated to program.	Number of ex-offenders mandated to program over 12 month period.	Internal program records		Intermediate
3	Increased Client Base	Participant develops service plan with counselor.	Number and percent of participants who develop a service plan with a counselor within 30 days of program application.	Internal program records		Intermediate
4	Improved Participation	Participant participates in in-house and referral programs.	Number and percent of participants who attend in-house and referral programs X days after release from prison.			Intermediate
5	Improved Program Participation/Retention/ Completion Rate	Participant completes service plan/ program.	Number and percent of participants who complete their service plan and/or "graduate" from the program.	Internal program records		Intermediate
6	Increased Family Support	Increased Family Support	Number and percent of participants who are reunited with family members and/or significant others upon or as of X days after their release from prison.	Internal program records	Participants that have histories of domestic violence and sex offenses can be excluded from this measure. Program may want to separately measure women participants' reunification with their children.	End
7	Increased Family Support	Increased Family Support	Number and percent that are receiving support from family to meet basic needs X days after release from prison.	Internal program records, survey of program participants	Support may be either financial or in-kind.	End

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	Common Outcome	Program Specific Outcome	Indicator	Data Collection Strategy	Notes	Outcome Stage
8	Increased Family Support	Increased Family Support	Number and percent that contribute to the support of family members, especially child support, as of 12 months in the program.	Internal program records, survey of program participants		End
9	Attainment of Housing	Attainment of Housing	Number and percent of participants with appropriate housing (see notes) X months after their release from prison.	Internal program records, survey of program participants	Appropriate housing includes: own/rent apartment, room, or house; someone else's apartment, room or house; halfway house; residential treatment; other housing.	End
10	Reduced Substance Abuse	Reduced Substance Abuse	Number and percent of participants abusing alcohol X months after release from prison.	Internal program records, survey of program participants		End
11	Reduced Substance Abuse	Reduced Substance Abuse	Number and percent of participants who tested positive for drug abuse X months after their release from prison.	Internal program records, survey of program participants, parole records		End
12	Reduced Health Risks	Reduced Health Risks	Number and percent of participants with a post-release health plan that connects them with community-based health service providers.	Internal program records	For continuity with participants' health program from prison and/or in case of health emergency.	End

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	Common Outcome	Program Specific Outcome	Indicator	Data Collection Strategy	Notes	Outcome Stage
13	Reduced Health Risks	Reduced Health Risks	Number and percent of participants that engage in high-risk behaviors (see notes) X months after their release.	Internal program records, survey of program participants	High risk behaviors include but are not limited to: having multiple sexual partners, having a partner with a past history of any STD, having a partner who is an IV drug user, having unprotected sex.	End
14	Reduced Health Risks	Reduced Health Risks	Number and percent of participants who tested positive for HIV during the 12 months after their release from prison.	Internal program records, survey of program participants	See Note #1.	End
15	Reduced Health Risks	Reduced Health Risks	The number and percent of participants with mental health issues who remain free of psychiatric hospitalizations during the 12 months after their release from prison.	Internal program records, survey of program participants	Program may want this to include remaining free of any institutionalization including prison. See Note #1.	End
16	Enhanced Education	Enhanced Education	Number and percent of participants involved in education or training (see notes) during the 12 months after their release from prison.	Internal program records	May include job training courses, courses towards a high school equivalency, vocational, or college degree.	End
17	Improved Employment	Improved Employment	Number and percent of participants who participated in job placement activities (see notes) during the 12 months after their release from prison.	Internal program records	Job placement activities may include resume creation, interview skills development, attendance at job fairs, and other job search efforts. See Note #1.	End

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	Common Outcome	Program Specific Outcome	Indicator	Data Collection Strategy	Notes	Outcome Stage
18	Improved Employment	Improved Employment	Number and percent of participants who are placed in/find jobs X days after their release from prison.	Internal program records	Program may want to separately measure full-time and part-time employment.	End
19	Improved Employment	Improved Employment	Number and percent of participants who retained employment for X days or months after most recent job placement.	Internal program records	Program may want to separately measure full-time and part-time employment.	End
20	Improved Employment	Improved Employment	Number and percent of participants who have steady earnings above minimum wage 12 months after their release from prison.	Internal program records	Program may want to separately measure full-time and part-time employment. See Note #1.	End
21	Reintegration into Community	Reintegration into Community	Number and percent of participants who are law-abiding and supported by family 12 months after their release from prison.	Internal program records, survey of program participants, state criminal justice repository, parole records	Family may include significant others. Program may want to separately measure those who are unable to work due to physical or mental health problems. See Note #1.	End
22	Reintegration into Community	Reintegration into Community	Number and percent of participants who are law-abiding and self-sufficient 12 months after their release from prison.	Internal program records, survey of program participants, state criminal justice repository, parole records	Law-abiding means participants have not broken parole or had encounters with the law. Self-sufficient means employed in a job above minimum wage and not reliant on assistance programs (public or private).	End

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	Common Outcome	Program Specific Outcome	Indicator	Data Collection Strategy	Notes	Outcome Stage
23	Reduced Prison Recidivism	Reduced Prison Recidivism	Number and percent of participants who return to prison within 12 months of their release from prison.	State criminal justice repository, parole records	Program may want to separately measure parole violations and convictions for new crimes as cause for return to prison. See Note #1.	End
24	Improved Public Safety	Improved Public Safety	Number and percent of participants who are convicted of violent/serious crime within 12 months of their release from prison.	State criminal justice repository, parole records	Program may also want to track arrests in this area. See Note #1.	End
25	Improved Public Safety	Improved Public Safety	Number and percent of participants who are charged with misdemeanor offenses within 12 months of their release from prison.	State criminal justice repository, parole records	Program may also want to track arrests in this area. See Note #1.	End
Note #1: Regarding the 12 month time suggestion: While it would be preferable to track former prisoners for a longer period of time, as a practical matter, re-entry programs are not likely to be able to follow former prisoners much longer than this time period.						
Sources Consulted:						
Solomon, A., Waul, M., Van Ness, A., Travis, J., <i>Outside the Walls: A National Snapshot of Community-Based Prisoner Reentry Programs</i> (2004)						
Visher, C., LaVigne, N., Travis, J., <i>Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry</i> (2004)						