Criminal Justice Reentry in Durham and Orange County: An Exploratory Case Study

By

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Chapter 1: Significance and Specific Aims

Significance and Specific Aims

An overwhelming majority of incarcerated people in the U.S. eventually return to their communities, but many are unable to successfully transition into productive and self-sufficient citizens. In order to prevent recidivism, it is important for former offenders to have access to services that help them combat and overcome obstacles to successful reentry. Reentry programs provide a wide range of services, such as vocational skills, connection with employers, housing, and treatment for those with substance use disorders, among other things. State and local governments provide some services, but many jurisdictions rely on community-based organizations to fill in service gaps.

In North Carolina, community-based organizations administer reentry programs. The North Carolina Department of Corrections’ Office of Transition Services Transition and Reentry Model expects that as individuals reenter society, they will have “involvement with mentors and local community support networks, gainful employment and self-sufficiency,” (NC Department of Corrections Office of Transition Services, n.d.).

This is an exploratory case study intended to examine how well local service providers align their programs with state and federal recommendations and also seeks to identify areas where public policy can improve the effectiveness of those local providers. Interviews with and surveys of local service providers will help answer those questions.

Background and Policy Context

Federal policymakers are moving away from “tough on crime” policies established through legislation like the Drug Abuse Act of 1986, which introduced mandatory minimum sentences for federal drug trafficking offenses, and the Violent Crime Control and Law
Enforcement Act of 1994, which (among other major provisions including a ban on certain assault weapons) promoted harsher penalties for gang-related crimes (U.S. Sentencing Commission, 2011; U.S. Department of Justice, 1994). The tough on crime era and its policies coincided with a massive jump in the U.S. prison population; a new prison opened every week between 1985 and 2000 (Vera Institute of Justice, 2014). Upon release, formerly incarcerated individuals come up against a second wave of punishment, known as “collateral consequences.” Collateral consequences are “the penalties, disabilities, or disadvantages imposed upon a person as a result of a criminal conviction,” especially those convicted of violent crimes or drug offenses (The Council of State Governments Justice Center [CSGJC], 2013, n.p.). In North Carolina, for example, collateral consequences can affect an individual’s ability to work in over 100 professional fields, obtain a driver’s license or business license, access TANF, SNAP, federally assisted housing, or other public programs, as well as make an individual ineligible for scholarships and financial aid (North Carolina Justice Center, 2015).

By focusing on punishment, though, policymakers overlook the importance of reentry programming for individuals who spend time in prison or jail. Recently, there have been several federally funded efforts to improve the reentry process for those with criminal convictions. In the early 2000s, the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) provided $100 million in grants to reentry organizations across the country. SVORI designated four program objectives for grantees:

1) Improve the quality of life and self-sufficiency of released offenders through employment, housing, and family and community involvement;
2) Improve the health of released offenders by addressing substance use and physical and mental health problems;
3) Reduce recidivism through services, supervision, and monitoring; and
4) Promote system-wide changes through multiagency collaboration and better case-management strategies (US DOJ Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, 2011).
A large program evaluation on SVORI collected data on over 2,000 individuals who participated in SVORI-funded reentry programs between 2004 and 2007. The study revealed that “practical services,” including life skills and employment training, “did not improve…housing, employment, [or] drug use outcomes.” However, the evaluation concluded that “individual change” services, especially educational programs like GED courses, may have had “modest beneficial effects” for post-release men (Lattimore, et.al., 2012, p. vi). The study authors concluded that program impacts may not be visible in the short term, advising, “[o]bservation for the longer follow-up periods may be particularly important” (Lattimore, et.al., 2012, p. vi).

Overall, the SVORI program evaluation suggests that “more services are not necessarily better,” and that the effectiveness of reentry programming is likely contingent on appropriate planning, client readiness, and proper sequencing (Lattimore, et.al., 2012).

Since SVORI, the federal government has emphasized the importance of forming “broad-based partnerships” between federal and state governments and community-based organizations in order to “foster collaborative new approaches” that tackle complex reentry challenges (Cole, 2012, p.21). A cornerstone of that effort is the Federal Interagency Reentry Council (FIRC), which leverages the resources of more than a dozen federal agencies, including the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of Labor (DOL), the Department of Health and Human Services (DHS), and the Department of Education (United States Department of Justice, 2016). The FIRC funds several demonstration and pilot programs related to employment, housing, and substance use outcomes and also provides a vast library of online resources for reentry service providers. These resources aim to equip community-based organizations offering reentry services with the knowledge and best-practices necessary to implement successful programs. The Federal Interagency Reentry Council works closely with the Council of State Governments.
Justice Center (CSGJC) to house comprehensive online resources for reentry providers. The What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse allows anyone to explore interventions, each rated (through the use of a color-coded scale) on its ability to improve employment, recidivism, and substance abuse outcomes. CSGJC also maintains the Clean Slate Clearinghouse, which provides, “current policies governing adjudication and adult criminal record clearance at a state level” (CSGJC, 2016, n.p.). Reentry service providers can take advantage of dozens of webinars, videos, and guidebooks that provide instruction and support (CSG, 2016).

Organization

Chapter 2 of the thesis reviews relevant literature regarding reentry challenges and effective practices. Chapter 3 explains the case study method used in this thesis as well as the sampling procedure, data collection, and instrument design. It also offers background information on the state and local context of criminal justice reentry in North Carolina.

Chapter 4 first profiles each participating organization and then shares key findings from service provider surveys and interviews.

Chapter 5 applies the findings discussed in Chapter 4 to answer the research questions posed in the introduction. Based on those conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for future research are then discussed. Chapter 5 also discusses the limitations of this research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Reentry Challenges

Reentering individuals face challenges in nearly all aspects of life including obtaining employment, curbing substance use, finding affordable housing, pursuing education, dealing with personal finances, and caring for their mental and physical health, and the kind of services and programs needed to address those challenges vary greatly. For the purposes of this thesis, employment and substance use are the two life areas of interest. These two areas appear in studies relating to recidivism and other life outcomes of reentering individuals (Lattimore, et.al., 2012; Lutze, Rosky, and Hamilton, 2014; Tripodi, Kim, and Bender, 2009; Stewart and Kurbin, 2011; Friedmann, Taxman, and Henderson, 2007; Latessa, 2012).

These areas were chosen because of the high demonstrated need for employment and substance abuse related services among reentering prisoners and probationers in North Carolina. In 2013, 36% of reentering individuals in North Carolina were identified as having a substance abuse related need while 30% were identified as having an employment-related need; these were two of the three most frequently identified needs in North Carolina’s reentering population (North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, 2016, p.25). Transportation was also an identified need of about one-third of the reentering population, but there are very few service providers in Durham County or Orange County who work in this area. Thus, this thesis focuses on substance use and employment service providers.

Employment

Finding consistent, legal employment soon after reentering the community is essential to former offenders’ ability to “get back on their feet,” and is associated with reduced instances of criminal activity and substance use in former offenders (Rossman and Roman, 2003; Bloom,
2006). However, it is exceedingly difficult for most people leaving the criminal justice system to secure employment. The prison population is more likely to exhibit anti-social behaviors and thoughts and also tends to lack vocational skills and professional attributes including basic literacy and math skills (Duran, et.al., 2013; Bloom, 2006). In fact, approximately 70% of the prison population is “apt to experience difficulty in performing tasks that require them to integrate or synthesize information,” (National Center for Education Statistics, 1994, p.xviii) and 40% of the prison population has neither a high school diploma nor GED certificate (Visher, Debus, & Yahner, 2008, p. 1). These education deficits contribute to post-release unemployment (Vishner, Winterfield, & Coggeshall, 2005) and help explain why between 60% and 75% of ex-offenders are jobless a year after their release (Pager and Western, 2009).

Collateral consequences and the widespread use of criminal background checks also complicate the job search for ex-offenders. Collateral consequences include occupational licensing restrictions and other categorical bans affecting those with criminal records, especially those convicted of violent crimes or drug offenses (North Carolina Justice Center, 2015). In fact, about half of all collateral consequences are job-related (FIRC, 2015). Even for jobs that are not formally “off-limits” to people with criminal records, criminal background checks are conducted by 92% of employers (FIRC, 2015) in the early stages of the hiring process. This means that many people with any kind of criminal record are turned away or not called back (Bloom, 2006). Guidance issued in 2012 from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission cautions employers that categorical rejection of all job applicants with a criminal record has a disparate racial impact and therefore violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Employers must demonstrate that an applicant’s conviction is relevant to the job he or she is applying for and that the conviction would adversely impact performance or employee security (FIRC, 2015). There is
little available information on how employers have responded to this change, but one survey administered by EmployeeScreenIQ, a background check firm, found that 53% of respondents reported asking candidates about their criminal backgrounds on initial job applications, a practice that is now out of compliance with EEOC best practices (Fishman and Jusko, 2015).

*What Works for Employment?*

Unfortunately, knowledge about what conditions and outcomes matter for successful reentry does not directly translate into a plethora of effective services. Job-training and employment reentry programs are often the most readily available services in any given community. However, recent research, including the SVORI evaluation, shows that many of these programs fail to reduce recidivism—the most important measurable outcome for reentering individuals (Bloom, 2006; Aos, Miller, and Drake, 2006). Even programs deemed “successful” tend to have only modest effects on recidivism and employment outcomes (Dean, 2014; Bloom, 2006; Aos, Miller, and Drake, 2006; Latessa, 2011; Lattimore, et.al., 2012). Latessa (2011) concludes that ineffective employment-focused reentry programs focus too much on educational and didactic elements instead of action-based elements. These programs may fail because they act as band-aid fixes that pair former offenders with willing employers without addressing the behavioral and cognitive needs of those offenders (Latessa, 2011). Latessa (2011) also recommends that employment-focused reentry programs should work toward “changing attitudes, values, and beliefs and the learning of new skills…[through] modeling, graduated practice, and reinforcement,” all while incorporating cognitive and social learning theories that address “present circumstances and current risk factors…” for reentering individuals (2011, p.90).
Latessa’s work is representative of recent calls for a focus on the criminogenic needs of former offenders in employment-focused reentry programs (Kooy, 2007; Lipsey & Cullen, 2007). In 2005, Latessa and Lowenkamp defined criminogenic needs as “dynamic, crime-producing factors that are strongly correlated with risk,” including, “offenders’ attitudes and values, their lack of problem solving skills,” and more traditionally considered risk-factors such as employment and substance use (p.15).

In 2013, the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the Federal Interagency Reentry Council funded the creation of the program guide Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness to help policymakers and service providers “determine how to allocate resources, deliver services, and place the right people into the right interventions” (Duran, et.al., 2013, p.9). The guide outlines a “Risk-Needs-Responsivity” framework that outlines how providers should incorporate criminogenic needs into service provision strategy. Within the RNR framework, the risk component states that providers should match the intensity of services to a person’s level of risk for criminal activity. The need component means that services should target an individual’s criminogenic needs, and the responsivity component means that providers should account for a person’s abilities and learning styles when designing services (Duran, et.al., 2013).

In the same guide, specific program components and service delivery principles of employment-focused reentry programs that utilize RNR principles were shared. The first recommended reentry program component related to job readiness is education and training, which incorporates basic education (adult literacy, ESL, etc.), secondary education (GED and community college programs), and vocational education. The second component, soft and cognitive skill development, helps former offenders develop conflict resolution and professional
skills that prepare them for a work environment. After providing education and skill-building, programs should offer transitional job placements or short term employment programs designed to re-introduce former offenders to a work environment. Finally, providers should regularly conduct screenings for behavioral health and other needs that may affect employability throughout the phases of service provision. Once participants are cognitively, vocationally, and emotionally ready for employment, reentry providers should offer the following program components relating to finding and retaining full-time employment. First, programs should offer non-transitional subsidized employment that includes on the job training, accompanied by job development and coaching services, along with retention and advancement services and financial work incentives (Duran, et.al., 2013).

Establishing a program with the proper components will still be ineffective if those components are not delivered in an effective way. The report also recommends that providers follow certain service delivery principles. The first principle—engagement—requires that providers offer, “positive interactions between program participants and staff [because] [p]eople at a higher risk of reoffending will have entrenched antisocial thinking and behaviors, making it important to establish support systems and prosocial ties” (Duran, et.al., 2013, p.31).

In addition, the time-sensitive nature of reentry means that timing is also critical for effective service delivery. Put another way, “it is not enough to provide the right services to the right people, they also need to be provided at the right time,” (Duran, et.al., 2013, p.31). Reentering individuals should be paired with service providers as soon as possible and service providers should also adapt to how clients’ needs will change over time (Duran, et.al., 2013). In addition, service providers should “increase motivation for positive change and improve job performance with such measures as stipends for maintaining employment and peer supported recognition for
program completion,” (Duran, et.al., 2013 p.32). Incentives, proper timing, and engagement can go a long way to improve the effectiveness of employment-focused reentry programs, but it is near impossible for one service provider to be able to cover the entirety of an individual’s reentry needs. Therefore, it is important to coordinate and to “collaborate with corrections, workforce, and reentry professionals and other service providers to ensure that interventions are provided in ways that support recidivism reduction and employment goals,” (Duran, et.al., 2013, p.33).

Finally, providers should aim to minimize the opportunity and potential for clients to become involved in criminal activity or spend time in unproductive social circles (Duran, et.al., 2013).

Substance Use

Substance abuse is a major barrier to successful reentry. Bales, VanSlyke, and Blomberg (2006) found that of the approximately 600,000 people released from prison each year, about 450,000 likely had drug or alcohol issues prior to incarceration; 410,000 of those individuals did not receive substance treatment while incarcerated. Problems with substance abuse do not vanish upon exiting prison. In fact, new research finds that although “individuals reentering the community following incarceration are at high risk for experiencing mental health and substance use problems,” the level of service engagement was much lower than needed (Begun, Early, and Hodge 2016, p.207). Additionally, an Urban Institute report found that even though “the majority of returning prisoners can be characterized as substance abusers,” only a small proportion of the population are able to access post-release treatment programs (Mallik-Kane and Visher 2008, p. 45). In fact, 95% of released state inmates with histories of drug use will eventually return to drug use, and 67% of drug offenders (the majority of whom are also drug users) will be re-arrested (Stahler, et.al., 2013).
Adequate access to substance abuse treatment is a crucial factor for successful reentry because it “reduces an offender’s risk of recidivism, decreases substance abuse, improves prospects for employment, and increases pro-social behavior” (National Institute on Drug Abuse 2011, p.2). For example, a 2006 study found that 59.6% of substance-addicted individuals on work release who participated in a drug treatment program and aftercare did not have an additional arrest within 5 years, compared to only 27% of substance-addicted work release participants who did not participate in the program or aftercare (Butzin, et.al., 2006, p.561).

When substance abuse goes untreated, it is associated with poor housing, employment, and criminal activity outcomes for reentering individuals (Mallik-Kane and Vishner, 2008). For instance, 25% of men with untreated substance addictions were re-incarcerated within one year of release compared to 12% of men without substance addictions (Mallik-Kane and Vishner, 2008, p.53).

Substance addiction among the reentering population is highly dangerous. A meta-analysis of studies examining drug related deaths among recently released individuals found that of 1,033 reported deaths within the first 12 weeks of release, 612 were drug-related. The meta-analysis confirmed that there is an elevated risk of drug-related death within the first two weeks of being released from prison (Merrall, et.al., 2010). Similarly, a widely cited 2007 study of Washington state prisoners found that drug overdose was the most likely cause of death within the first two weeks of release, with those released from prison facing between an 89 and 200 times greater risk of dying from an overdose compared to other state residents (Binswanger, et.al., 2007).
**What Works for Substance Abuse?**

While best practices for employment-focused programs are in development and the effects of these programs tend to be modest, there is substantial evidence pointing to the most effective interventions for reentering individuals who struggle with substance use. According to program evaluations found in the What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse, intensive, residential programs are the most effective for reducing recidivism and criminal activity while simultaneously improving employment prospects (Wexler, Melnick, and Cao, 2004 as cited by CSGJC, n.d; Inciardi, et. al., 2009 as cited by CSGJC, n.d.). However, these programs tend to be expensive, making it hard for all those who could benefit to have access (Begun, Early, and Hodge, 2016). Evidence also supports high frequency random drug tests with “immediate results, sanctions, and treatment referral,” for parolees (Grommon, et. al., 2013, p.10).

Successful substance abuse treatment providers are those who communicate well with other reentry programs and collaborate with the criminal justice system (Henderson, et. al., 2007; Fletcher, et. al., 2009). Fletcher (2009) administered a survey adapted from the National Criminal Justice Treatment Practices Survey to substance abuse service providers and criminal justice agencies involved in substance abuse treatment. The survey distinguished between low level “cooperation and coordination” activities, which included items like “share information on offender treatment services,” and high level “collaboration and consolidation” activities like developing joint policy and procedure manuals (Fletcher, et. al., 2009, p.S57). The study found that some informal networking, cooperation, and coordination activities were much more common than “participation in more structured or more formalized activities,” but 37% of corrections agencies reported no shared activities with [community-based] substance abuse treatment programs (Fletcher, et.al., 2009, p.S60).
Friedmann (2007) reiterated the importance of an evidence-based, collaborative approach to substance abuse treatment programs and found that programs that were accredited, performance-oriented, did not utilize punitive measures for components, had more training resources available for staff and partners, and had leadership with an understanding of evidence based-practices tended to be more effective (Friedmann, 2007). Individuals who participated in an evidence based treatment program during incarceration followed by an evidence based community treatment program were 7 times more likely to be drug free and 3 times less likely to be arrested than those not receiving treatment (Chandler, et.al., 2006, p.3 as cited in Friedmann, 2007).

One of the most well-known evidence based community treatment programs is Oxford House, which has been studied by researchers at DePaul University for over 25 years. Oxford House is a democratically-run, self-sustaining sober living program that offers housing to individuals looking to recover from drug and/or alcohol addiction. Within each Oxford House, residents rotate through leadership positions and act as accountability partners for their fellow housemates (Oxford House, 2017). Each Oxford House resident is responsible for paying his or her own expenses and must abstain from substance use entirely. Oxford House is the largest provider of this sort of recovery programming in the country (Oxford House, 2017). Jason, et.al. (2001) found that close to 90% of Oxford House residents maintain sobriety, compared to just 30% of individuals who reside in “therapeutic communities that do not offer the opportunity for self-governance,” (p.6).

The literature confirms that reentry must be taken seriously. Service providers must design and implement effective and accessible programs that comprehensively address ex-offenders’ needs. National policy debate and funding streams about criminal justice reform have
renewed states’ and localities’ interest in improving reentry programs, but it is unclear whether or not findings from pilot programs and other innovative approaches have trickle down effects beyond the localities where they were implemented. In sum, we do not know how well service providers are learning from each other.
Chapter 3: A Case Study of Service Providers in Two North Carolina Counties

North Carolina has made important changes to its criminal justice policies and placed a renewed focus on successful reentry programming. However, an unofficial reentry resource network made up of community-based service providers exists in parallel to the state’s official programs, and little is known about how it operates and what challenges those service providers face. Nevertheless, North Carolina continues to rely on this network to offer reentry services and, as mentioned in Chapter 1, promotes the use of community-based services as part of its Transition and Reentry model (North Carolina Department of Correction Office of Research and Planning, n.d.). Largely due to resource and time constraints faced by the researcher, this thesis explores the community-based reentry resource network in two North Carolina counties: Durham and Orange.

Reentry and Justice Reinvestment in North Carolina

The federal government provides money and information, but, in general, reentry programs are administered at a local level. As Hansen explains, the recent influx of federal dollars toward state reentry efforts (through grants, direct appropriations, etc.) means that:

What once fell to a relatively small number of corrections managers, jail administrators, and scattered service providers has become a major priority for state officials. The result has been an exponential growth in the number of individuals, organizations, and government agencies whose mission includes assisting people who have been incarcerated (2012, p.529).

This trend is evident in North Carolina. Since 2002, North Carolina’s government allocated approximately $2 million to new reentry initiatives and also received $2.4 million in federal grants to develop innovative reentry programs, most of which involved direct partnerships with community organizations (North Carolina Office of Transition Services, n.d).
In 2009, the state became one of the first to sign on to the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI), a Department of Justice effort “to manage and allocate criminal justice populations and spending more cost-effectively, thereby generating cost-savings that can be reinvested in evidence-based strategies that increase public safety,” (US DOJ Bureau of Justice Assistance, n.d., n.p.). To achieve this, North Carolina focused on expanding post-release supervision to all felons, establishing advanced supervised release for some prisoner and lowering prison populations by creating more successful periods of community supervision,” (North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, 2016a). Advanced supervised release through the JRI is contingent upon the completion of evidence-based programs including cognitive behavior interventions (North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, 2016a). Over six years, these policy changes are expected to save the state of North Carolina $560 million and allow for a $4 million annual reinvestment in reentry programs (Hansen, 2012, p.531).

So far, the money made available through the program has paved the way for over 10,000 individuals to participate in community-based recidivism reduction programs with a core purpose of either substance abuse treatment or cognitive behavioral intervention, but they may also provide educational/vocational support services (North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, 2016a; North Carolina Department of Public Safety Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice, 2016). In order to determine who is eligible to receive services through the JRI, North Carolina uses a validated risk assessment instrument to understand the needs of reentering individuals. Although substance abuse, employment, and transportation are the top three identified risk areas, only substance abuse treatment providers are afforded the opportunity to apply for JRI funds. Access to these programs has been expanded, but engagement remains an issue. Only 50% of individuals participating in JRI-funded community-
based substance abuse treatment programs completed their treatment and only 43.1% of those enrolled in cognitive behavioral intervention programs completed their treatment (North Carolina Department of Public Safety Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice, 2016, p.6). In order to address this concern, North Carolina is implementing a performance-based funding mechanism for service providers receiving funds through the JRI (North Carolina Department of Public Safety Division of Adult Corrections and Juvenile Justice, 2016, p.9).

Providers interested in pursuing JRI funding must win a competitive bid process in order to enter into a contract with the state. In Durham County, the Criminal Justice Resource Center (a public entity) received $285,004 between 2014-15, while Freedom House Recovery Center in Orange County received $115,821 (North Carolina Department of Public Safety Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice, 2016, p.11-12). No other organization in Durham or Orange County receives funds through the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, even though the state expends only 68% of available funding (North Carolina Department of Public Safety Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice, 2016, p.10). At present, the state is looking for ways to streamline the procurement process and increase the flexibility of funding mechanisms so that more service providers may have access to JRI funds (North Carolina Department of Public Safety Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice, 2016, p. 10).

It is too early to tell how adjustments to supervision and release guidelines will affect recidivism among former prisoners in North Carolina. However, state officials are optimistic, with preliminary data showing that probationers eligible for JRI initiatives (currently a small percentage of the population, but it will grow over time) have reduced instances of having their probation revoked (North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, 2016a). Before the Justice Reinvestment Initiative was implemented, the prison population in North Carolina
grew by 29% between FY 2000 and FY 2009. Since 2011, the prison population has fallen by 9.6% (North Carolina Department of Public Safety: Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice, 2016, p.4).

North Carolina’s adoption of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative is not the only evidence of State alignment with federal recommendations. For example, the What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse is based upon empirical evaluations of reentry programs and nearly every publication and implementation guide shared on the Council of State Government’s reentry online resource hub names “evidence-based interventions” as a critical component of any reentry program. North Carolina’s rhetoric on criminal justice reentry programs shares a similar emphasis on an evidence-based approach. The Community Corrections arm of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety asserts, “The goal in North Carolina for Community Corrections is to use practices that have been empirically tested and have been shown to reduce recidivism among offenders. The emphasis will be in using evidence-based practices to meet our overall goal…” Evidence-based practices, according to North Carolina Community Corrections, follow these principles:

1) Assess actuarial risks/needs
2) Enhance intrinsic motivation
3) Target interventions
4) Skill train with directed practice
5) Increase positive reinforcement
6) Engage ongoing support in natural communities
7) Measure relevant process/practices
8) Produce measurement feedback

(North Carolina Department of Public Safety, 2014)

There are similarities between federal and state understandings of best practices for criminal justice reentry programs. The first principle matches with the “Risk” element in the federally-endorsed “Risk-Need-Responsivity” framework, which recommends tailoring the
intensity of services to a person’s level of risk for criminal activity and the third principle reflects the “Need” component of RNR. Finally, principles 2, 5, and 6 demonstrate “Responsivity,” (Duran, et.al., 2013).

Although there is substantial state and federal guidance on what the goals of reentry programs should be and on the practices they should implement, that guidance does not necessarily correlate to high levels of collaboration between the state’s many community-based service providers and state agencies, all of whom are working to implement “evidence-based” programs despite the fact that, “a large reliable body of evidence,” does not currently exist for even the most promising reentry efforts like those promoted through FIRC resources (MRDC, 2013, p.1). On the ground, this makes for a patchwork of providers (with varying levels of knowledge, connectedness, and efficacy) that have to find ways to collaborate with state agencies. Ideally, state agencies would leverage their authority and ability to procure financial resources in order to support the work of community organizations that have intimate knowledge of their service environments. But, in reality, "[s]tate departments of corrections and faith-based and community organizations working in the area of prisoner reentry…[often] have distinct cultures, maintain few mechanisms for routine communication between one another, and face other barriers that often make it difficult to partner effectively,” (Yoon & Nickel, 2008, p.v).

This is not to say that effective collaboration is impossible. In North Carolina, Project Reentry is the flagship example of an effective partnership between state and community-based entities. Project Reentry operates in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and has received national recognition for its 80 percent success rate. Project Reentry “shares a strong partnership with Project Safe Neighborhoods coalitions, law enforcement agencies, the Division of Adult Corrections, local JobLinks, and other assistance agencies,” such as Goodwill Industries of
Northwest North Carolina and Tri-County Industries (Piedmont Triad Regional Council, 2012, n.p.). The program works with individuals for 12 months and begins before their release in order to learn skills, build relationships, reconnect with family, and provide support through post-release transitional services (The NCJA Center for Criminal Justice Planning, 2017).

North Carolina conducts an annual performance review of community-based reentry programs for youth, but not for adults, making it difficult to tell how reentry programs across the state measure up to the “gold standard” set by Project Reentry (North Carolina Department of Public Safety, n.d.). In 2002, the state published Lessons Learned: Best Practices for Criminal Justice Partnership Programs, which provides an extensive discussion guide and checklist to evaluate juvenile reentry programs, but it does not appear that the state ever published evaluations of reentry programs for adults using that criteria (North Carolina Department of Correction Office of Research & Planning, 2002). Despite this, community organizations remain an integral part of North Carolina’s reentry strategy. The Office of Transition Services maintains the County Resource Guide, a searchable database that allows users to find services in their area that address various Life Areas including Behavior, Education, Employability, Housing, Legal, Mental/Physical Health, Sobriety, and Transportation (North Carolina Department of Public Safety Office of Transition Services, n.d.). According to the state, this is the primary way that former offenders, probation/parole officers, prison case managers, and social workers navigate the reentry resource network in North Carolina (North Carolina Department of Public Safety Office of Transition Services, n.d.).

Community Context: Durham County and Orange County, North Carolina

Designing effective reentry programs requires that service providers consider not only empirical evidence on particular treatment and service delivery models but also the community
context in which they operate. As Kurbin and Stewart (2011) demonstrate, place matters when it comes to prisoner reentry. Areas with greater neighborhood disadvantage—high crime, fewer employment opportunities, etc., are associated with greater recidivism rates among the reentering population (Kurbin and Stewart, 2011). Durham County and Orange County are adjacent counties in central North Carolina and both are home to major research institutions: Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, respectively. See Table 1 for socioeconomic indicators relating to each county.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Durham County</th>
<th>Orange County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty rate (% of individuals)</td>
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<td>15.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median household income</td>
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<td>$59,290</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (%)</td>
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<td>4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labor force participation rate (%)</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2015)

Durham County receives a far higher number of individuals exiting the prison system compared to Orange County, with 746 people released from prison reentering in Durham County and 136 people reentering in Orange County in 2016 (North Carolina Department of Correction Office of Research and Planning, 2017). Statewide recidivism data for FY 2013 show that North Carolina probationers and released prisoners had a combined re-arrest rate of 40%, an increase from previous years, but a re-conviction rate of 20% and a re-incarceration rate of 15%, both of which
represent a decline from years past (North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, 2016a). North Carolina’s one-year re-arrest, re-conviction, and re-incarceration rates are all below the national rates of 50%, 26%, and 22%, respectively (US DOJ Office of Justice Programs, n.d).

**Method: Exploratory Case Study**

This thesis applied an exploratory case study method to four reentry service providers serving Durham County and/or Orange County, North Carolina. An exploratory case study, “represents and reconstructs multiple realities,” in order to address complex questions and identify hypotheses deserving further study (GAO, 1990, p.9 & p.87). Considering that North Carolina has yet to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of community-based reentry programs, this is a demonstrated need. An exploratory case study is an appropriate method for examining the research questions posed by this thesis because, at present, there is, “considerable uncertainty,” regarding the operations, goals, and results of reentry programs in Durham County and Orange County, North Carolina (Government Accountability Office [GAO], 1990, p.42).

Exploratory case studies do not require a probability sample; it is more important for the selected cases to represent the diversity of programs that the researcher is interested in studying (GAO, 1990). If the sample appropriately represents the diversity of programs and the purpose of the study, then generalizability is not an issue, even with a very small sample size (GAO, 1990). In some cases, a convenience sample is also appropriate as long as the researcher is confident that the sample does not miss any important variations in programs (GAO, 1990). For this reason, the focus of this thesis was narrowed to include only employment and/or substance abuse service providers in Durham and Orange County. This way, there is less of a chance that important variations within the programs of interest are not captured in the case study. Further,
the literature identifies these two areas as critical variables in determining reentry success, and risks assessments conducted by North Carolina show that employment and substance abuse rank as two of the top three risks for reentering probationers.

In conducting an exploratory case study, several methods of data collection may be employed (GAO, 1990). In this thesis, open-ended interviews were conducted, surveys were administered, and existing online archives/documents were examined as part of the data collection process. In order to analyze case study data, the researcher may use an “explanation building” approach that allows the observations to “shape the picture of what is happening and why,” rather than form hypotheses and then decide whether those hypotheses fit or do not fit with the observations (GAO, 1990, p.74). To organize findings, these explanations are usually expressed as themes (GAO, 1990). This chapter now turns to discuss sampling and data collection methods.

**Sampling**

The County Resource Guide published by the North Carolina Department of Corrections was used to identify providers. To identify potential participants, search results within the Guide were filtered to show only providers serving Durham County and/or Orange County who provide substance abuse and/or employability services. 108 organizations fit these criteria, with 57 located in Durham County (30 employability-focused providers and 27 sobriety-focused providers) and 51 (26 employability-focused providers and 25 sobriety-focused providers) located in Orange County. Of the 108 organizations provided through the original query, seven were located far outside Durham and Orange county in places like Burlington, Asheville, and Asheboro. Those organizations were eliminated from consideration because they did not serve the counties of interest. The next step was to eliminate any duplicate or ineligible listings. For
example, the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition is listed as a provider of sobriety-focused services for both Orange and Durham Counties. Through this process, 30 duplicate listings were discovered with 15 in Orange County and 15 in Durham County. In addition, about half of the sobriety-focused listings were for different Oxford House locations, making up 12 out of 27 listings in Durham County and 14 of 25 listings in Orange County. These listings were also considered to be duplicates. Because this thesis is focused on community-based reentry service providers, public agencies such as the DMV and the North Carolina Vital Records Office (both listed as organizations providing employment credentials) were removed from the sampling frame, eliminating 14 organizations from Durham County’s listings and 13 from Orange County’s listings. With all of these factors taken into consideration, just 18 employability-focused service providers and 9 sobriety-focused providers met the criteria for this study.

The first organizations contacted were ones with email addresses listed on the County Resource Guide—just 14 Orange County organizations and 16 Durham County organizations had emails listed. An introductory email was sent to each of these organizations. The email described the purpose and aims of the study and then asked if the organization would be interested in participating in a brief survey and/or interview to gain information on programs, organizational challenges, and public policy objectives. A copy of this email can be found in Appendix 2. When possible, emails were addressed to the staff member(s) whose position description seemed to best match the kind of questions asked by the survey and interview guide—that is, individuals who would have knowledge about a program’s budget, specific components, and challenges to effective service provision, as well as knowledge about criminal justice reentry in North Carolina. Contacting individuals directly was more effective than
sending emails to “general information” accounts—no email sent to a general information email account generated a response.

Among the 30 organizations contacted through email addressed provided through the County Resource Guide, two responded, and one organization agreed to complete a survey. Follow-up phone calls were made to the organizations that did not respond, but this did not increase the participation rate among those organizations. Organizations that answered phone calls declined to participate, and those that did not answer phone calls also did not respond to voicemail messages. Thus, a second round of outreach was conducted. However, instead of using contact information provided through the County Resource Guide, the researcher used email addresses and phone numbers provided on the organization’s webpage. This was a more effective method—four out of fifteen organizations contacted responded to either an email or phone call and all who responded agreed to participate. Overall, 5 providers of reentry services in the two counties agreed to participate in the study, representing 16% of employability-focused service providers and 22% of sobriety-focused service providers in the service area of interest.

Data Collection

The researcher submitted an application to the IRB because there was a possibility that this work could be considered human subjects research. After reviewing the application, the IRB determined that this project did not require IRB approval. Please see Appendix 1 for more information.

Both the interview guide and survey instrument used in this thesis were based on the 2002 report published by the North Carolina Department of Corrections Lessons Learned: Best Practices in Criminal Justice Partnership Programs. The discussion guide and evaluation checklist provided in the appendices of the report focused on six key areas: Program Goals,
Priority Target Population, Inputs/Resources, External Context/Environment, Program Activities, and Intended Outcomes. Questions related to Program Goals, Priority Target Population, and External Context/Environment were the focus of the interviews, while Inputs/Resources and Intended Outcomes were the focus of the survey. This is because information regarding Inputs and Outcomes lend themselves better to quantitative, multiple-choice questions (for example, “what is your annual operating budget?”) but questions like, “can you speak about some of the public policy obstacles your organization faces?” are more appropriately (and less burdensome on the part of the respondent) answered through verbal, free form responses. See Appendices 3 and 4 for the survey instrument and interview guide.
Profiles of Participating Organizations

Employment Provider 1: *StepUp Ministry*

StepUp is an employment and life skills program located in Raleigh and serves individuals in Wake, Orange, and Durham Counties. StepUp does not exclusively serve individuals with criminal backgrounds, however, these individuals comprise between 60 and 70 percent of StepUp’s clients. Last year, StepUp served 255 reentering individuals. StepUp has an annual operating budget of $1.6 million and is almost entirely privately funded (StepUp, 2017).

StepUp’s programming begins with an intensive Employment Week. The Employment Week curriculum includes information on resume writing, interview skills, job readiness, and how to communicate effectively with employers to “bridge the gap” stemming from extended employment gaps and/or criminal records. At the conclusion of Employment Week, participants complete a 32-question evaluation that determines whether they are ready to enter the job market. If they are, participants are paired with an employment counselor who helps guide job seekers through the employment process. StepUp participants then begin a year-long Life Skills program. Life Skills has a goal of promoting “stability in all aspects of life over the long term,” (StepUp, 2017). The Life Skills curriculum has six components: budgeting, credit restoration, managing emotions, goal setting, conflict resolution, and relational development. Within four months of completing Employment Week, 85 percent of participants have secured employment. StepUp does not publish recidivism or employment retention data, and the StepUp representative who participated in this study did not respond to requests to provide that information.
Employment Provider 2: Community Empowerment Fund

The Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) is based in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. CEF’s services are available to any individual experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness, including those transitioning out of the justice system. Like StepUp, CEF is not an exclusive reentry service provider, however, about one quarter of CEF’s members have a criminal background (Frasica, personal communication, February 2017). In 2015, CEF brought in approximately $420,000 in revenue from a combination of private and public sources and has approximately $277,000 in expenses.

CEF provides relationship-based support alongside “financial services that achieve equity,” and offers one-on-one employment assistance, Safe Savings accounts, and Opportunity Classes on money management, obtaining housing, building credit, and health (CEF, 2017). In 2015, 115 of CEF’s 760 active members participated in Opportunity Classes, 155 members secured employment, and 201 members with Save Savings accounts made “active progress” toward their savings goals. In the community, CEF staff works to establish relationships with employers in order to provide a pathway for individuals with criminal records to secure and retain meaningful work (Frasica, personal communication, February 2017). Although CEF does not collect data on program participants, no data on recidivism rates for CEF members is available. However, CEF’s goals for its members: sustained employment, financial education and asset building, and stable housing, are all linked to improved post-release outcomes for formerly incarcerated individuals (Tripodi, Kim, and Bender, 2010; Martin, 2011; Lutze, Rosky, and Hamilton, 2013).
Substance Use Provider 1: North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition

The North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition (NCHRC) describes itself as, “North Carolina’s only comprehensive harm reduction program,” (NCHRC, 2017). Harm reduction is a set of public health strategies designed to reduce harmful consequences associated with drug use, sex work, and other high risk activities (NCHRC, 2017). NCHRC operates needle exchange programs throughout the state, engages in direct legislative advocacy, and distributes naloxone (opiate overdose reversal medication) to law enforcement, community members, and at-risk populations. NCHRC works within the Durham County Detention Center, offering monthly overdose prevention classes and distributing naloxone to inmates who have taken the class upon their release. The Durham County Detention Center is one of just three jails in the state of North Carolina to offer substance use treatment programs, and just one of five that offers overdose prevention education courses. Approximately 40 people per month take part in NCHRC’s classes within the Durham County Detention Center (NCHRC, 2017).

NCHRC’s current legislative priorities include advocating for statewide fair chance hiring, a mandate already in place for government employees in a few municipalities across the state, including Durham County. If it were to become state law, Fair Chance Hiring would delay the point at which employers would be legally allowed to inquire about an applicant’s criminal background with the aim of reducing employment discrimination against this population (NCHRC, 2017). NCHRC also recently lobbied the North Carolina legislature to amend the current Good Samaritan law so that individuals on probation or parole who call 911 to report a drug overdose (on behalf of themselves or someone else) would not face negative consequences (Wilson, personal communication, February 2017).
NCHRC is less focused on lowering recidivism rates as opposed to reducing the incidence of “serious adverse health consequences,” stemming from drug use, including HIV and Hepatitis C transmission (NCHRC, 2017). However, NCHRC maintains that harm reduction principles and programs bring individuals engaging in high-risk behaviors closer toward prevention and health services and ultimately a more stable and productive life (NCHRC, 2017).

**Substance Abuse Provider 2: Oxford Houses of North Carolina**

Oxford House is a national nonprofit organization that provides a “democratically run, self-supporting, and drug free home,” for individuals recovering from alcohol or drug addiction (Oxford House, 2017). Oxford House is largely funded through federal grants but receives supplemental funding from a variety of public and private sources. In total, Oxford House has an approximate $6.7 million budget (unfortunately, state-level budget information is not publicly available) (Oxford House, 2017). There are 224 Oxford Houses in North Carolina and 26 in Durham and Orange Counties with an average of 8 beds per house. Oxford House does not exclusively serve the reentering population, but a significant percentage of residents have some kind of criminal background (Taylor, personal communication, March 2017). Nationally, 78% of Oxford House residents have spent time in jail or prison. In order to be eligible to live in an Oxford House, an individual must be an active participant in a recovery program, must have abstained from substance use for at least 14 days, and must not have a sexual offense or arson charge on his or her criminal record. If an individual’s application is approved, a current resident of Oxford House will interview the applicant and residents will vote on whether to accept or reject the applicant (Oxford House, 2017). Oxford House has a zero-tolerance policy for substance use—any resident who uses drugs or alcohol is expelled. Finally, Oxford House residents are responsible for paying $542 in rent each month (Taylor, personal communication,
March 2017). The objective of living in an Oxford House is to independently relearn responsible behaviors and utilize peers for accountability and support; there are no internal recovery programs or residential staff in any Oxford House (Taylor, personal communication, March 2017). However, Oxford House provides a detailed manual that guides residents on how to manage the house democratically and foster a productive and supportive environment (Oxford House, 2017).

The North Carolina Oxford House chapter has received accolades within the nationwide organization for its highly effective reentry program. Nearly 1,000 individuals have transitioned directly from North Carolina correctional facilities into Oxford Houses and fewer than 100 have been discharged due to substance use relapse. 70 of those discharges came within the first three months of residency; none have been discharged due to criminal activity or charges (Oxford House, 2017). The success of the North Carolina program is credited largely to Kurtis Taylor, the reentry program coordinator. Mr. Taylor was recently selected to advise the North Carolina Task Force on Mental Health and Substance Use (Oxford House, 2017).

Surveys

The purpose of the web-based survey was to provide insight on organizations’ funding sources, operating budgets, and data collection practices. Survey items relating to data collection were based on recommendations from the 2002 Lessons Learned guide published by the state of North Carolina. The 10-item survey was designed and distributed using Qualtrics software. Each program representative was emailed a personalized link and was allowed to complete the survey on his/her own time using any resources available. Respondents were allowed to skip any questions that they did not feel comfortable answering and were also allowed to anonymize their responses. All but one participant requested that their responses not be linked to the organization.
they were representing. For that reason, survey results are presented as aggregates. Because the sample size for the survey was so small (n=5), statistical analysis was not appropriate. Instead, survey responses were used to characterize the sample but results should not be generalized or assumed to represent the population. The survey instrument is provided in the Appendix.

*Survey Findings*

The survey asked respondents to identify funding streams. Of the respondents who chose to answer this question (4 of 5 organizations), 75% hold fundraisers, 75% receive donations from private citizens, 25% receive grants from nonprofit organizations, and 75% receive grants from one or more levels (i.e. local, state, federal) of government. However, there is variability within the sample in terms of how much of an organization’s budget comes from a given source. For example, StepUp Ministry is almost entirely privately funded (Martin, personal communication, February 2017) while Oxford House receives the vast majority of its revenue from federal grant awards (Oxford House, 2017).

North Carolina acknowledges regular and robust data collection as a best practice for reentry programs (North Carolina Department of Corrections Office of Research and Planning, 2002; Friedmann, 2007; North Carolina Department of Corrections, 2014 ). Survey results indicate that the organizations participating in this study collect a wide range of data, with two-thirds of respondents indicating that they gather demographic information about participants (age, race, etc.), participation data (enrollment, attendance, completion, etc.), outcome data (employment, sobriety, etc.) and participant survey data (regarding program satisfaction, suggestions for improvement, etc.).

Only one respondent indicated that their organization collected just participation data, and one respondent chose not to answer this question. Although the majority of respondents said
that their organizations collected outcome data, no organization that participated in an interview was willing and/or able to share information on recidivism data among program participants; this may be because only one of the participating organizations—InStepp, Inc.—serves only individuals who are reentering society from prison or jail. This is an unfortunate reality of the local resource environment: organizations that address the needs of reentering individuals. Along with data collection, conducting a program evaluation provides evidence that a service provider is concerned with improvement and development. 40% of survey respondents said that their organizations had conducted a program evaluation, 40% said theirs had not, and 10% said they were not sure or did not know. The survey did not inquire about who/what organization conducted the evaluation, or whether or not the evaluation was internal or external. Reasons for inconsistencies in data collection practices and lack of program evaluations were expanded upon in interviews.

**Interviews**

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, meaning that the questions asked (and answered) varied from respondent to respondent. The questions included on the interview guide served as a jumping off point but additional questions were asked to clarify or expand upon an answer. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Before conducting the interview, each participant gave informed consent about the purposes, risks, and benefits associated with participation in this study. In cases when interviews were conducted over the phone, participants were read the consent form and asked to verbally give consent. Participants were informed that they had the right to skip any questions they did not feel comfortable answering and were also allowed the option to anonymize their interview responses. None of the participants requested that their interview responses be anonymized. Please see Appendix 5 for a copy of the consent
Representatives of four organizations—StepUp, CEF, NCHRC, and Oxford House—agreed to be interviewed as part of the study. InStepp, Inc. declined to participate in this portion of the study due to time constraints. Interviews were used to inquire about service providers’ perspective and experience regarding reentry challenges, obstacles to success for their organizations (public policy obstacles in particular), collaboration with other organizations, as well as to learn more about their reentry programs and the evidence base used to inform those programs.

A thematic analysis framework was applied to analyze the content of the interviews, using both coding software and manual reviews of interview transcripts to identify key trends and themes. Thematic analysis is derived from content analysis, the qualitative research technique that uses a coding system to “set up the potential for a systematic comparison between the set of texts one is analyzing,” (Joffe & Yardley, 2004, p.61). However, content analysis somewhat limits the researcher’s ability to “analyze code meanings in context,” which is where thematic analysis provides an advantage through its capability to extract both manifest and latent themes from source material (Joffe & Yardley, 2004, p.57). In addition, thematic analysis allows for both inductive and deductive coding—meaning that some codes may be pre-established before examining themes present in source material and some codes are established during the examination of source material (Joffe & Yardley, 2004). For this study, deductive coding was used to create broad codes, while inductive coding was used to create a hierarchical structure to pre-established coding categories. The pre-established codes for interview responses were: reentry challenges, collaboration, public policy challenges, and program administration. These are very general categories that reflect the aims of the study. Upon analyzing interview
transcripts, additional categories were created. For example, within “reentry challenges,”
mentions of “frustration/desperation” and “cost of living” were cataloged as distinct codes.

After analyzing each interview, Huberman and Miles’ (1984) recommendations on
quantitative data analysis (as cited in Joffe & Yardley) were applied:

- Note patterns and themes that emerge in responses. Which themes are rare? Which
  are common?
- Extract a plausible story that relates to ideas explored in the literature review
- Examine evidence that conforms to and strays from what the literature review and
  implicit bias may lead the researcher to conclude (2004).

Interview Findings

Reentry Challenges

Service providers shared very similar insights regarding the challenges facing individuals
reentering society. Difficulty finding and retaining employment was mentioned often, even in
interviews with providers who offered sobriety-related services. Kurtis Taylor, reentry
coordinator for Oxford House, noted that Oxford House residents who are reentering from prison
or jail have a difficult time finding employment because of the “ridiculous” stigma attached to
convicted felons that makes it nearly impossible to get hired combined with a system that can
make it seem “as if the world has been set up to guarantee that some people come back.” This
statement was nearly identical to a comment made by Laura Martin, program director of StepUp:
“The system as a whole is not necessarily built to understand what you’re going through…with a
criminal background.” Mr. Taylor then explained that employers often do not understand that
prison is a traumatizing experience and that the adjustment back into “regular society” coming
from an environment where individuals are “caged animals” is a difficult process. These
statements show that StepUp and Oxford House are aware of the unique criminogenic and
behavioral health needs of individuals who are reentering.
Steven Frasica, CEF’s workforce development specialist, said that a large part of his job is to educate employers that “bad workplace behavior” such as tardiness and insubordination are often signs of underlying mental health or substance use issues and should be treated as calls for help, not calls for immediate dismissal. In effect, Mr. Frasica is teaching private sector employers about the Risk-Need-Responsivity framework, which recommends that reentry programs account for and adapt to individuals’ abilities and learning styles. Further, this response is evidence that Mr. Frasica (and, in all likelihood, CEF) is concerned about improving the employment retention rate of individuals with criminogenic needs. Mr. Frasica also expressed concern about the use of criminal background checks during the employment process and shared an anecdote about a CEF member who had a dismissed charge on her record that caused her to be denied employment. He reflected, “It's kind of flawed. It's really disheartening to see individuals who've just had…records or cases that were dismissed…not get a job.” Job seekers know that nearly all employers will inquire about their criminal background and have to brace themselves for repeated rejection. Often, this leads to decreases in morale. Ms. Martin, from StepUp, finds that “desperation and frustration” is common among StepUp clients, just as Mr. Frasica from CEF notices discouragement and loss of worker hope as, “members apply to various jobs, they come in here every week and fill out 2 or 3 job applications--and who knows how many they're doing on their own--they don't get any calls back because of criminal background checks…” In response, service providers aim to provide motivation and encouragement for their clients, a practice in line with the service delivery principle of engagement outlined in *Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness.*
Even when job seekers are able to find work, the jobs are often low-skill and/or low-wage, which also leads to loss of morale: “most of the jobs we can connect individuals to are lower-skilled, close to minimum wage, so even then they're not excited about those types of jobs because they're still going to be working…to barely get by,” (Frasica, personal communication, February 2017). Low income levels among formerly incarcerated individuals makes it difficult to live in central North Carolina, where “a 2 bedroom apartment…is $900 [per month] and 1-star, in-home daycare runs $6[00],” (Martin, personal communication, February 2017). For reentering individuals, it is also much harder to gain and retain access to benefits “as simple as food stamps” (Taylor, personal communication, March 2017), in some cases because of the nature of an individual’s conviction (North Carolina Justice Center, 2015) or, as Mr. Frasica of CEF explained, because of asset limits and work requirements that require an individual to maintain steady employment without building up savings. Even though programs that promote retention and advancement in employment are recommended as best practices for employment-focused reentry service providers (Duran, et.al., 2013), collateral consequences like restricted access to public benefits and environmental conditions like high cost of living and low wages make achieving this standard very difficult for service providers in Orange County and Durham County.

Loftin Wilson, Outreach Director for the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition, said that stable housing is “the first piece of the puzzle for people who are working on stabilizing different aspects of their li[ves],” but the challenges mentioned above—lack of employment opportunity, low-wage work, and high cost of living—mean that affordable housing is inaccessible for reentering individuals. Cost is often prohibitory, but even when affordable housing options exist, service providers said that landlords are reluctant to rent to someone with
a criminal background. And, criminal backgrounds can sometimes be enough to disqualify an individual from being able to utilize Housing Choice vouchers or apply to live in public housing (North Carolina Justice Center, 2015). In his work, Mr. Taylor finds, “it’s very difficult to find somebody who will rent to somebody who has a felony on their record.” In addition, wait-lists and restrictions for sober-living homes are a significant issue in Orange County and Durham County. According to Mr. Frasica, “there are always” wait-lists for sober-living housing programs, and even then, the programs may not be effective or may not be safe or supportive places to live for individuals who are looking to halt their substance use. Mr. Frasica shared that CEF members have come to him to say that they did not want to live in certain sobriety homes because there was drug use or other illegal activity happening on the premises.

Oxford House, the largest provider of recovery homes for reentering individuals in Durham and Orange County, does not have those restrictions. However, Oxford House does require individuals to have $542 in rent beginning their first month of residence and to pay their own rent and bills for the duration of their time living in an Oxford House (Taylor, personal communication, March 2017). Oxford House has a zero-tolerance policy for substance use of any kind, a practice that Mr. Wilson of NCHRC says limits the effectiveness of recovery programs and perpetuates barriers to housing for reentering individuals who are dealing with substance addiction. An ideal reentry system would ensure that an individual could secure post-release housing while still incarcerated as to minimize instability, but information from Mr. Taylor’s interview suggests that inmates currently have difficulty identifying appropriate housing options while still incarcerated. He said that when reading applications to reside in Oxford House submitted by incarcerated people, he often finds that those individuals “check no” when asked if
they are a recovering alcoholic or drug addict, even though that is a clear prerequisite for residing in an Oxford House.

Service providers shared that substance use and abuse presents an immense challenge to successful reentry. As mentioned earlier, substance use can make it more difficult for individuals to find and retain employment. An even more fundamental risk associated with substance use for reentering individuals, however, is the increased likelihood of fatal overdose. Mr. Wilson from NCHRC said that the reason why NCHRC prioritizes the reentering population is because, “when [people] are in situations such as being incarcerated, where their [drug] tolerance level decreases, once they go back into the community…their overdose risk is much, much higher,” in fact, “[i]t’s actually the leading cause of death…for people leaving prison or jail.” The high rate of fatal overdose among reentering individuals demonstrates how lack of access to substance abuse treatment during incarceration can create risk of injury or death for reentering individuals with a history of substance abuse. Considering that the majority of the prison population can be characterized as having a substance abuse problem, the number of people at risk for an overdose is large (Mallik-Kane & Visher, 2008). When asked how the service environment for reentering individuals who battle substance addiction could improve, Mr. Wilson expressed desire for broader acceptance of medication-assisted recovery homes, saying, “a lot of abstinence-based housing will not accept people who are…doing medication assisted treatment…[even though it is] what helps people succeed the most.” Mr. Wilson’s claim is grounded in empirical evidence: medication assisted treatment combined with residential recovery services does improve outcomes for individuals overcoming opioid addiction, but “many substance abuse treatment providers assert that [medication assisted treatment] is incompatible with…the abstinence-based treatment models of most residential treatment programs,” (Hettema and Sorenson, 2009, p.469).
For example, a study submitted to the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services found that zero out of 49 participating residential recovery programs allowed methadone (Sperber and Manzo, 2016, p.4).

However, Oxford House is the largest provider of residential recovery services in both Orange County and Durham County, and, according to Mr. Taylor, Oxford Houses do permit the use of medication assisted treatment. Therefore, this particular barrier to reentry may not be as pronounced in Durham County and Orange County as it is in other localities.

**Challenges for Reentry Service Providers**

Reentry service providers have the daunting task of helping individuals overcome numerous barriers and challenges of their own so that they can integrate successfully back into society. In navigating those challenges, service providers run up against obstacles of their own. After analyzing the content of interviews with service providers, two themes emerged: public policy challenges and challenges with collaboration.

Service providers understand that employers carry implicit biases that cause them to see individuals with criminal backgrounds as “inherently risky” (Martin, personal communication, February 2017) and not as “people who’ve made mistakes,” (Frasica, personal communication, February 2017). In order to work around that bias, service providers pursue the option of expunction, but find that the process is arduous and unproductive. Currently, an individual is only eligible for expunction if he or she has a single nonviolent conviction that occurred at least fifteen years ago (N.C.G.S 5-15A). Service providers believe that simplifying the expungement process and broadening the eligibility criteria for expunction will improve the job market for reentering individuals (Frasica, personal communication, February 2017; Martin, personal communication, February 2017). Even though StepUp was successful in lobbying for
adjustments to North Carolina’s expunction laws, the new legislation is still very restrictive. Of 750 people with criminal backgrounds who had been through StepUp for services, just two qualified for expunction under current North Carolina law. Mr. Frasica of CEF says that CEF members have had similar interactions with expunction. During CEF’s expunction clinics with North Carolina Legal Aid attorneys, “we [CEF] connect[ed] members who were formerly incarcerated or just had records of sorts…but, upon watching the webinar and learning the facts from the videos and having a question and answer session with attorneys, practically all of them except for maybe one couldn't get their record expunged. It's not even that the resource is there and we can't use it, it's that the resource itself is just flawed.”

CEF and StepUp have different strategies for pursuing changes to North Carolina expunction laws. CEF plans to work with nonprofit organizations like the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, Legal Aid of North Carolina, and the North Carolina Justice Center to, “see what kind of policy changes could occur.” StepUp plans to lobby the North Carolina legislature directly and recently worked to get the required post-conviction time period for expunction to be reduced from 15 years to 10 years. Although the bill “got to the short session” and “got the votes it needed in committee,” the “Bar [Association of North Carolina] was not positioned to make the administrative changes they needed to make in order to have that go through…so [StepUp] will go back next year,” (Martin, personal communication, February 2017). Ms. Martin described lobbying as, “a long slow grind of…continuing to educate legislators on the people who are trying to work and the barriers that the policy around expungement presents.” Mr. Wilson from NCHRC also described legislative advocacy as a difficult process that requires effective and persistent messaging in order to overcome misunderstandings—both in communities and at the policy level—surrounding people who use drugs and substance use
disorders, but did not find this to be a unique obstacle because “no advocacy work really is [easy].”

Although Mr. Frasica and Ms. Martin mentioned the challenges associated with the near-universal use of criminal background checks during the job application process, neither brought up fair chance hiring or “Ban the Box” legislation as a way to improve employment outcomes for their clients. However, both Mr. Taylor of Oxford House and Mr. Wilson of NCHRC support the implementation of Fair Chance Hiring in North Carolina. Of all the organizations participating in this study, NCHRC has the most comprehensive advocacy agenda and plans to prioritize fair chance hiring legislation at the state level. In the past, NCHRC has also successfully lobbied the North Carolina legislature to legalize syringe exchanges and to modify the Good Samaritan law to protect individuals on probation or parole in North Carolina as ways to reduce the instance of drug-related deaths for individuals leaving the criminal justice system. NCHRC’s advocacy goals suggest a high level of awareness on issues affecting reentering individuals—even those that go beyond harms associated with high-risk behaviors like substance use---and also indicates that NCHRC sees itself as a collaborative partner within the local reentry service network. For example, although NCHRC does not offer any direct services relating to employment, it advocates for fair chance hiring and other policies that would likely improve employment outcomes for individuals participating in programs offered by StepUp or CEF. NCHRC’s diverse advocacy portfolio also reinforces that employment and sobriety are often inextricable co-requisites for successful reentry.

All interview participants shared information about partnerships with other local service providers. Collaboration allows service providers to learn from each other and leverage each other’s capabilities in order to offer more robust services for reentering individuals (these
effective partnerships are discussed in the following section), but it also presents challenges. Insufficient funding and administrative hurdles limit service providers’ ability to work with public organizations, while quality concerns and lack of a streamlined system for developing and sustaining partnerships affected the ability of community-based service providers to partner with each other.

Local Reentry Councils are intended to convene local stakeholders and service providers with a vested interest in the reentry and re-integration of formerly incarcerated citizens. However, funding shortages limit the effectiveness of these Councils. In some cases, Reentry Councils are formed but not funded, leaving no room for direct service provision or salaried specialist positions (Taylor, personal communication, March 2017). Similar to Re-Entry Councils, Workforce Development Boards bring together public and private-sector organizations interested in strengthening employment opportunities for vulnerable populations, including the reentering population and those with criminal backgrounds. StepUp Ministry used to receive about $150,000 in funding from the Capital Area Workforce Development Board to serve people with criminal backgrounds, but when the Board decided to consolidate its employment services, StepUp did not win the bid. The organization that did win the bid “doesn’t necessarily have a preference for prioritizing people with [criminal] backgrounds,” but StepUp, “still work[s] closely with them and still [needs to] be good partners with them, but it cost [them] $150,000 in funding.”

In another example, Mr. Frasica from CEF said that Orange County’s Rapid Rehousing program was extremely helpful in assisting its members overcome barriers to obtaining affordable housing by providing funds for security deposits, first month’s rent, etc., but “that funding has been gone since December [of 2016]…people should theoretically have access to
[this resource] but they don’t.” Another obstacle to effective public/private collaborations is administrative “red tape” that places restrictions on the kind of services and assistance that public organizations can offer. Mr. Taylor from Oxford House explained, “A lot of agencies and organizations, their hands are tied. You know, we can only do this. This money can’t pay for that…” whereas local churches and community based organizations have the capability to provide immediate, practical aid such as purchasing work shoes or paying a light bill (Taylor, personal communication, March 2017). The spending restrictions that Mr. Taylor described may come into play with agencies and organizations that are funded by narrowly tailored grants that only allow funds to be spent on pre-approved projects or services.

The structure of reentry resources in Durham and Orange Counties—primarily small, faith- and/or community-based organizations—means that service providers do not have the capacity or expertise to provide all the services or programs that a reentering individual may need. Therefore, establishing a strong referral network helps organizations meet the comprehensive needs of their clients without straying from their organization’s core focus. Service providers do not take this responsibility lightly and acknowledge that by referring individuals to other organizations without knowledge of their programs/effectiveness they “run the risk of putting members at risk of harm…So [although they want to] give members access to an organization or network that they wouldn’t otherwise have access to…” it is critical to “be really careful and make sure they’re getting the type of support that they need and not just send them somewhere assuming that it’s going to work,” (Frasica, personal communication, February 2017). Service providers also expressed desire for more streamlined collaboration, saying that although there are high quality programs, “we aren’t all working together,” and end up “passing
people around” instead of providing comprehensive, individualized reentry services (Frasica, personal communication, February 2017).

While representatives from Oxford House, StepUp, and CEF mentioned service provision partnerships with other community-based reentry service providers, Mr. Wilson from NCHRC said that although NCHRC regularly works with organizations like the NC Second Chance Alliance and the Southern Coalition for Justice (CEF, Oxford House, and StepUp also mentioned partnering with these organizations) “on the advocacy side,” he “…hasn’t had a ton of direct connection with reentry resources [that provide direct services]. I don’t know whether that’s because they don’t exist or if that connection just hasn’t happened yet.” It is possible that NCHRC’s relative isolation from other service providers stems from the controversial nature of its harm reduction efforts, which “advocate for things to improve the lives of people who use drugs,” (Wilson, personal communication, March 2017). For example, although it may be beneficial for NCHRC to offer trainings to Oxford House residents on overdose prevention and how to administer Naloxone, Oxford House’ strict abstinence-based policy is at odds with NCHRC’s belief that abstinence-based recovery housing is less effective than more forgiving programs (Wilson, personal communication, March 2017).

Employment-focused service-providers like StepUp and CEF work to establish relationships with local employers in order to strengthen the job prospects of reentering individuals. StepUp and CEF must demonstrate to employers that their clients/members are willing, capable, and ready to work and do not present a liability or danger to the employer. This is difficult, especially when employers are unclear about their exact policy regarding hiring individuals with criminal backgrounds. Ms. Martin from StepUp explained, “….having clearer [HR] policy would help us…we work really hard to find people who are willing to share with
use what their [criminal] background requirements actually are—most companies won’t share that…they’re looking at liability and they’re thinking about liability, but it makes really difficult to discern who to send them.” When StepUp is successful in establishing a relationship with an employer over time, the negotiation process is still quite subjective, “…they’ll say, ‘you know what, if it’s nonviolent we can talk about it; if it’s specifically this, maybe…if it’s specifically that, maybe,’.” This closely resembles the dynamic that Mr. Frasica from CEF described, “when CEF’s done it, we’ll talk to the employer and they’ll say, ‘Yeah, we’ll talk to this person because you told us they have A and B on their record but not C or D, so we’ll allow it.” These experiences are in line with a California study that found wide variability in employers’ willingness to consider hiring individuals with criminal backgrounds. For example, only 23% of employers said they would consider hiring an individual with a drug-related conviction, but over 80% said they would consider hiring someone convicted of a minor misdemeanor (Fahey, Roberts, and Engel, 2006 as cited by the National Employment Law Project, 2016, p.4).

Mr. Frasica expressed frustration with employers who do not take advantage of Work Opportunity Tax Credits and federal bonding programs that alleviate some of the liability associated with hiring a person with a criminal background. In North Carolina, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit offers employers a one-time tax credit of $2,400-$9,600 for hiring an individual with a criminal background (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2017). The federal bonding program offers $5,000 in financial protection for the first six months of employment for companies who hire “at risk” individuals, including those with criminal records or histories of substance addiction (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2017a). Mr. Frasica said that even though CEF points out the availability of these programs, “managers just don't even want to take that risk; they don't want to bother with it. They'd rather have someone
with a clean record who, in their eyes, is going to be a better employee. They use the excuse of paperwork.” Mr. Frasica shared that CEF sometimes offers to complete the applications for employers, but says that for the system to be sustainable in the long term, employers must take initiative and complete the paperwork on their own.

*Effective Partnerships*

All participating service providers mentioned at least one partnership or collaboration that they felt contributed to their organization’s success. Service providers described effective partnerships with both public agencies and other community-based organizations. Some responses indicated that these partnerships are driven by research-based recommendations and best practices. For example, Ms. Martin from StepUp shared, “We’re in about 3 or 4 different collaborations. We’re looking at…how do we practice integrated systems and systems change? Most of that will be informed by national research.” Ms. Martin’s language echoes the language in *Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness*, which emphasizes collaboration between service providers as a service delivery principle that can improve both reentry and employment outcomes (Duran, et. al., 2013).

Similarly, Mr. Frasica from CEF acknowledged that collaborating with mental health, substance use, and housing service providers is essential to help CEF members prepare for employment. He explained CEF’s partnership with another local service provider that offers in-house employment opportunities (meant to serve as a stepping stone into private-sector employment) and financial education, which meshes well with the asset building tools and job search services that CEF offers its members (Frasica, personal communication, 2017). Collaborations with other service providers ensure that CEF can safely refer clients whose needs may not be well matched with the expertise of CEF staff, such as individuals who have experienced domestic violence or those
who need vocational rehabilitation (Frasica, personal communication, 2017). Through collaboration, CEF is able to provide (either directly or indirectly) its members with a majority of the recommended program components for employment-focused reentry programs. Most of these referrals are informal, though, so there is not information on exactly how many CEF members are participating in other community-based programs or receiving services from community-based organizations. CEF’s programs cover several of these components, including education and training, job development and coaching, and soft and cognitive skills development. In cases when members’ needs cannot be met with CEF’s resources or programs, such as transitional job placements and screenings for behavioral health issues, collaboration and coordination with other organizations allow CEF to fill its service gaps. In doing so, CEF embraces the Risk-Need-Responsivity framework endorsed by the Federal Interagency Reentry Council and the Council of State Governments Justice Center.

Neither of the employment-focused service providers who participated in the study mentioned working directly with law enforcement or the justice system, meaning that their first contact with individuals in need of reentry services likely comes after release from custody. However, both NCHRC and Oxford House have a presence within the justice system itself, reflecting the high-level collaboration that Friedmann links to higher efficacy in sobriety-focused reentry programs (2007). As the reentry coordinator for Oxford House, Mr. Taylor strives to reduce the number of individuals who leave prison or jail without knowing where they are going to live by working “as a liaison between the incarcerated person and any of the Oxford Houses anywhere in the world.” NCHRC recently established a partnership with the Durham County Detention Center that allows NCHRC staff to lead monthly overdose prevention trainings and offer Naloxone (opioid overdose medication) to those who complete the class upon their release.
(Wilson, personal communication, March 2017). NCHRC also offers harm-reduction and overdose prevention trainings for law enforcement officers across the state, and find that “law enforcement can be very, very effective as messengers,” around disarming misconceptions about harm-reduction, syringe exchange, and Naloxone distribution (Wilson, personal communication, 2017).

NCHRC’s strategic partnership with law enforcement assists the organization in its advocacy goals, as does its partnerships with the Second Chance Alliance and the Southern Coalition for Social Justice (Wilson, personal communication, 2017). StepUp has also worked with the Second Chance Alliance on advocacy, in particular, advocating for reforms to North Carolina’s expungement laws (Martin, personal communication, February 2017). Membership-based organizations like the Second Chance Alliance and local Reentry Councils can strengthen service providers’ lobbying power and also help keep service providers “in the loop” regarding successful practices of other service providers. Ms. Martin shared that StepUp is in “monthly contact” with the Capital Area Reentry Council to, “[be] aware of what else is going on in the community and what seems to be working for people.” So, although the Reentry Council may be lacking the funds necessary to be an effective direct service provider, it plays an important role as a facilitator of collaboration and information sharing between providers.

Finally, along with being a well-established and thoroughly documented best practice for the sustained success of reentry programs, partnerships and collaborations are also helpful in meeting short-term, practical needs of those seeking reentry services. As mentioned earlier, Mr. Taylor of Oxford House values the ability of local churches and ministries to “buy a pair of work boots tonight for someone who is going to work tomorrow morning,” just as Mr. Frasica from CEF mentioned that some vocational rehabilitation programs that CEF works with are also able
to, “pay for a car repair if they [members] need it to get to work.” Interview responses indicate that coordination and collaboration among service providers ultimately strengthens the resource network for reentering individuals in Orange County and Durham County by facilitating a comprehensive response to demonstrated needs and helping to ensure that the timing of services are appropriate.

**Relationship Building**

Falling in line with recommendations from the Federal Interagency Reentry Council (FIRC) and independent research shared through its What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse, both employment-focused service providers in the Study—CEF and StepUp—had a clear focus on relationship-building and individualized support services in a way that closely resembles the Risk-Needs-Responsivity framework and other evidence-based principles for service delivery. Ms. Martin from StepUp acknowledged, “It’s important to us that we’re very hospitable and warm and open [because] those things make a big difference in terms of people accessing services…taking a little bit more time to build relationships…it’s not just the content. You can teach a host of skills, but if you’re neglecting to form a relationship, it’s kind of just another class.” Along those same lines, Mr. Frasica from CEF mentioned a “one-on-one” or “relationship-based” approach to CEF’s work several times during his interview. When asked what an ideal reentry program would look like, he responded, “A great reentry program would cater to the individual with services, not with a one-size-fits all approach.” CEF and StepUp both view relationship building as a way to identify and address the unique criminogenic needs of reentering individuals, which is critical to providing them with effective employment services (FIRC, 2013a). Once this is accomplished, service providers can then proceed with the appropriate programming.
Although best practices research regarding substance use-focused reentry programs recommends intensive residential treatment as an effective approach, Oxford House is notably more “hands off” than any of the other service providers that participated in the study. Mr. Taylor was very clear that Oxford House does not provide any internal services or programs to its residents. However, because Oxford House is a communal program with a detailed “house manual” that incorporates democratic procedures and rules, residents likely form bonds with each other and are able to lean on their peers for the kind of relationship-based support that CEF members or StepUp clients would receive from staff. In addition, all Oxford House residents are required to participate in an external recovery program and may also be participating in educational or job training programs offered by CEF, StepUp, or similar programs. However, Mr. Taylor was not able to provide specifics on how many Oxford House residents in Durham and Orange Counties were engaged in external reentry programs in addition to living in an Oxford House.

**Continuous Improvement and Evidence Base**

As with any human services intervention, it is critical that reentry service providers strive to improve their programs based on data collection, feedback, and research (Vedung, 2009). As described in the Survey Results section of this study, all service providers participating in this study collect data about program participants. However, interviews reveal that some organizations place more emphasis on utilizing collected data than others. Of the service providers that participated in this study, Laura Martin from StepUp placed the most emphasis on program evaluation. StepUp has not yet completed a formal program evaluation due to resource constraints, but StepUp meets with its board of directors every other month to review its strategic plan, which Ms. Martin described as, “a constant source of engagement around program quality
and program function.” In addition to the input of board members, StepUp sends surveys to clients as they complete StepUp’s Employment Week program. Through this, StepUp is able to “allow that qualitative data to inform the design of [its] programs…what was effective or ineffective.” For its 48-week Life Skills program, StepUp incorporates a pretest/post-test method to “see what people learned and get feedback from them on how the process is going,” using this information to “tweak content, revise classes that aren’t seeming to work.” StepUp also utilizes its relationships with other service providers to learn about the application of research-based best practices and how to balance “what the voice of our participants are saying [with] best practices that we might be reading about.” To this end, StepUp staff have done site-visits with similar “localized employment efforts” in Chicago and Cincinnati. Ms. Martin described these visits as “learning trips” that were very helpful in terms of learning how StepUp could potentially scale up its programs to serve a larger population.

StepUp’s continuous improvement efforts are focused on refining its existing programs, whereas CEF seems to be more focused on creating new programs a means to improve its effectiveness as an organization. At the time of his interview, Mr. Frasica shared that he had just arranged a meeting with Durham Tech (Durham Technical Community College) in order to flesh out the possibility of creating a “streamlined approach” to vocational education, bringing work-ready individuals to Durham Tech to receive vocational training while also identifying employers who would agree to hire those individuals upon their successful completion of those courses. CEF is also working to put on a workforce convening that would bring together employers who have hired CEF members with criminal backgrounds and other local employers who have yet to do so in order to, “show the success that some have had with hiring people with
criminal backgrounds...just to show that they can be successful and are contributing to the community.”

In their interviews, neither Mr. Taylor of Oxford House nor Mr. Wilson from NCHRC made explicit mention of any program evaluation efforts, but Mr. Taylor did assert that Oxford House’s programs are grounded in decades of peer-reviewed research, largely done by DePaul University, and said that Oxford House is “definitely evidence based, best-practice.” During his interview, Mr. Wilson referenced a “housing-first model” and also grounded his support for medication-assisted treatment (as a substance abuse treatment tool) as the “gold standard” in “research and medicine.” This terminology suggests that although neither representative directly shared the extent to which their organizations use outside research and evidence to inform and improve their programs, they are certainly cognizant of principles reflected in that research. For example, “housing first model” is referenced in the context of prisoner reentry in a 2013 Urban Institute report by Roman and Travis and several guides and outlines on examples of housing-first models are featured in the What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse.
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The sample size of this study was small, but the cohesiveness of responses among participants illuminated important trends that should be studied further in order to improve the service environment for reentering individuals in Durham County and Orange County. While the generalizability of these results to all reentry service providers in Durham County and Orange County is unknown, all organizations that participated in this study demonstrated thorough understanding of reentry and community-specific reentry challenges. They are all established organizations, operating for at least 5 years, and, in the case of Oxford House especially, are the flagship provider of a particular service (i.e., if an individual is looking for post-release sober living, he or she is mostly likely going to apply to live in an Oxford House).

Conclusions

As an exploratory case study, one aim of this research was to identify areas where public policy can intervene to improve the strength and effectiveness of the reentry resource network in Durham County and Orange County, North Carolina. Another research question this thesis sought to address is to what extent reentry service providers in Durham County and Orange County aligned their programs and services to best practices endorsed by federal and/or state entities. Data gathered from participant surveys and interviews illuminate several key findings relating to those questions. There is clear academic literature and state interest in promoting evidence-based practices among reentry service providers, but service providers are often constrained in their ability to conduct program evaluations due to a lack of financial resources. However, service providers do tend to base the content of their programming on evidence-based practices. In addition, service providers would like to pursue strong collaborations with other community-based providers and government-run programs, but red tape, inefficient funding, and
inefficient information provision harms those cooperative efforts. Finally, service providers advocated for changes to North Carolina’s expunction laws as well as for fair chance/ “Ban the Box” hiring policies as ways to improve the reentry process and outcomes for their clients. A more detailed discussions of these findings follows.

Service providers would like to do more to incorporate evidence-based best practices into their programs, but can only work in components that fit within their budgets. In particular, service providers expressed interests in external program evaluations but said that they were too expensive to conduct. Rigorous program evaluations for reentry programs can determine whether a program is producing its intended results, generating the greatest possible impact, and making the best possible use of its resources (CSGJC, 2017). However, neither the state of North Carolina nor federal agencies currently offer grants for the purpose of evaluating existing reentry programs for adults. The Corporation for National and Community Service (n.d.) estimates that program evaluations can cost an organization between 13% and 28% of its annual budget—meaning that an evaluation for StepUp, a program with an annual budget of $1.5 million, could expect to spend anywhere from $195,000 to $420,000 on a rigorous program evaluation. Without assistance from government entities, the community-based organizations that comprise the majority of Orange County and Durham County reentry resources will be unlikely to dedicate a large sum of money to something other than direct service provision.

Despite resource constraints, participating reentry programs were moderately aligned with federal recommendations in the actual content of their programs. Employment-focused service providers shared that their programs aim to do more than simply teach vocational skills. They also incorporate behavior modification elements and other life skills important to long-term economic stability such as savings accounts and how to use credit safely. However, neither of the
employment-focused service providers who participated in the interview portion of the thesis shared that their programs included direct financial work incentives, internal transitional employment opportunities, or ways to subsidize employment with external employers (as recommended in *Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness*). When asked about their knowledge of these best practices and of guidance offered by the Federal Interagency Reentry Council and Council for State Governments Justice Center, providers said they were aware but often perceived those resources to be incompatible with the reality of on the ground service provision in their communities.

While all participating providers reported collecting at least some data, there was not a focus on tracking recidivism among program participants. Providers collected data on employment retention, housing status, sobriety status, etc., but did not report or did not share data on recidivism. This is not to say that service providers were not concerned with recidivism. In interviews, it was clear that all service providers had a vested interest in making sure that their clients became productive and self-sufficient members of society, but that concern had yet to be operationalized through formal data collection on recidivism. One reason for this may be that none of the service providers who participated in this study (along with the vast majority of Durham County and Orange County service providers listed in the County Resource Guide) do not exclusively serve reentering individuals and, in interviews, often conflated individuals who were just beginning the reentry process with all individuals who have criminal backgrounds. Another reason may be that smaller, community-based providers lack the technical infrastructure or staff knowledgeable enough to oversee data collection and analysis. The lack of program evaluations and strong data collection practices among community-based reentry service
providers regarding recidivism are concerning, as those two things are extremely important in determining what works, what does not work, and what can be improved.

Another concerning finding of this thesis is that publicly funded resources meant to assist these small community-based providers are often underfunded. In theory, these bodies—Reentry Councils, local social services programs, etc.—should serve to enhance and improve the programs offered by community-based providers, but that does not happen in practice because there are not funds to do so. In particular, Reentry Councils are unable to assist in direct service provision nor do they have a staff large enough to perform the collaborative actions Reentry Councils are designed to conduct. In some cases, unpredictable funding streams mean that resources often used by community-based providers (say, Orange County’s rapid rehousing program) may become unavailable without notice. Further, collaboration between public and private reentry programs is limited by “red tape” that constricts what publicly funded entities are allowed to do with their resources. For example, Reentry Councils do not have the flexibility to offer money for miscellaneous, small-scale direct services such as buying clothing or food for an individual in need.

When asked about public policy-related barriers to reentry, service providers advocated for changes to North Carolina’s expunction laws as well as for the adoption of fair chance hiring policies. Service providers described North Carolina’s expunction process as a large and persistent obstacle to their clients’ ability to secure employment and also said that the process contributes to discouragement and loss of motivation among their clients because it is confusing, expensive, and inaccessible for the majority of people with criminal records in North Carolina. In addition to expunction, service providers explained that fair chance hiring laws that delay employers’ inquiries about an applicant’s criminal background would also be helpful. Service
providers wanted to see those changes (expunction reform and the expansion of fair chance hiring) largely because they believed they would improve employment outcomes for reentering clients and reduce the amount of bartering they have to do with employers. At present, reentry organizations have to navigate unclear or inconsistent hiring policies and sometimes have to perform duties outside the scope of their responsibility or expertise (like filling out paperwork for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit) in order to cultivate relationships with private sector employers who would otherwise not hire someone with a criminal record.

**Recommendations**

If North Carolina is to continue to rely on a network of community-based organizations to provide essential social services, it should support the improvement and evaluation of those programs through funding program evaluations and laying the groundwork for stronger data collection practices. Program evaluation serves three purposes: promote accountability, facilitate improvement, and contribute to basic knowledge (Vedung, 2009, p.101) and contribute to the “gold standard” of evidence-based policy, which requires governments and nonprofits to “continually analyze and evaluate the impacts of their programs,” (The Arnold Foundation, 2017, n.p.). To fund program evaluations, North Carolina should allocate money from the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (recall that only about 70% of available funds are expended) toward a program evaluation grant that would be available to all reentry service providers, not just the select few that receive direct state support through the JRI.

To strengthen data collection practices, service providers should consult a 2009 guide written by the Center for Effective Public Policy and sponsored by the Department of Justice titled *Measuring the Impact of Reentry Efforts*. The guide was developed for Department of Justice grantees—including the North Carolina Department of Corrections—that received funds
through the 2007 Prisoner Reentry Initiative. This guide provides a detailed list of meaningful performance indicators and how to track them, including average earnings, employment retention, and—perhaps most crucially—recidivism rates. The guide also includes information on how to build a data collection plan, how to measure end outcomes, and how to ensure quality control through data collection and analysis. The motivation for federal grantees to collect data is straightforward: their funding is contingent on performance measurement and reporting.

While these practices allow the evidence base surrounding effective reentry programs to grow, they also likely contribute to the constrictive “red tape” that community-based providers participating in this study said limited their ability to form meaningful partnerships. The absence of formal reporting requirements may allow community-based providers more flexibility, but it also means that they run the risk of missing important empirical evidence that points to areas where programs are not working as intended. North Carolina should facilitate and promote data collection practices that encourage continuous improvement and efficiency while avoiding an excessive or overbearing administrative responsibility for service providers.

One way to do that while simultaneously improving collaboration among service providers would be through funding Reentry Councils at an appropriate level. If properly equipped, Reentry Councils in Durham County and Orange County could hire a small staff in charge of facilitating meetings, guiding strategy, and fostering collaboration. Reentry Councils could also service as educational spaces for service providers, offering workshops and professional development sessions dedicated to the promotion and incorporation of evidence-based best practices. These organizations have the potential to be key players in strengthening the reentry resource networks in their respective counties, but they need the proper support from state and local governments in order to do so.
Durham County receives approximately $280,000 in JRI funds to run its Criminal Justice Resource Center, a publicly-funded entity that serves as a resource hub. It connects individuals with “a wide array of supportive services so that they may achieve their full potential as contributing members of society,” as well as offering its own programming (Durham County Criminal Justice Resource Center, 2017, n.p.). Its Reentry Program coordinates substance abuse treatment, basic education, employment services, cognitive behavioral intervention, and case management (Durham County Criminal Justice Resource Center, 2017a). The Criminal Justice Resource Center partners with the Durham County Sheriff, the Durham Police Department, the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, the Durham Housing Authority, and several nonprofit organizations (including the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition). These partnerships and the services they help provide are important—but it is clear that more evaluation is needed to work toward greater effectiveness. For example, only 112 reentering individuals out of the approximately 750 who reentered in Durham County that year received employment services in FY 2015-16 and just 53% completed the program or left because they obtained a job (Durham County Criminal Justice Resource Center, 2017b, p.7).

Orange County also has a Criminal Justice Resource Office but it is much more limited in its capabilities. Notably, the Criminal Justice Resource Office in Orange County is not the recipient of JRI funds, showing that increased state investment can correlate with more robust service offerings. However, the Orange County office does collect and report data to justice stakeholders and others in order to reduce recidivism and improve programming (Orange County Criminal Justice Resource Office, 2017).

Although these resources technically exist, none of the service providers interviewed for this thesis mentioned either organization. Therefore, both organizations should work to conduct
more outreach with community-based providers in Durham County and Orange County. The collaboration challenges unearthed in this thesis demonstrate a clear need for a responsive and accessible resource hub as well as more robust and standardized methods of data collection and reporting. Criminal Justice Resource Centers and Reentry Councils could meet that need if given adequate resources.

North Carolina should also take notice of service providers’ suggested policy changes. To reform expunction laws to make the process more accessible and navigable, North Carolina could follow Maryland’s example. Maryland recently revamped its expunction laws to allow individuals to expunge more than one conviction, including minor drug possession charges and other nonviolent offenses. It also reduced the amount of time that must elapse post-conviction for an individual to be eligible for expunction from 15 years to 10 years (Knezevich, 2016). North Carolina should require that all criminal charges that do not result in conviction be permanently and immediately shielded from public view and must not be allowed to appear or influence the results of a criminal background check used by employers. These changes would vastly improve the job market for reentering individuals and could also serve as an incentive for reentering individuals to avoid engaging in further criminal activity.

Expunction reform would work over the long term to alleviate the permanent burden of a criminal record while the expansion of fair chance hiring policies would work in the short term to improve employment prospects for reentering individuals. There is growing support for fair chance hiring or “Ban the Box” laws across the country, but their effectiveness is contentious. Some say that “banning the box” delays the inevitable: as soon as an employer finds out about an applicant’s criminal background, he or she will be eliminated from consideration (Doleac, 2016). In addition, there is also evidence to suggest that Ban the Box policies may only help white
applicants with criminal backgrounds (Agan and Starr, 2016, as cited in Doleac, 2016).

However, some localities in North Carolina—including Durham County and the Town of Carrboro (located in Orange County)—have already instituted fair chance hiring policies for county/town employees and initial evaluations show promising results. A 2014 white paper published by the Southern Coalition for Social Justice found that since implementing a fair chance hiring policy for county employees, 96% of people with criminal backgrounds who applied to a job with Durham County were hired. The white paper concluded that, at the time of evaluation, fair chance hiring for government employees did not impose an outsize risk on employers and offered diffuse economic and social benefits across the community (Southern Coalition for Social Justice, 2014). Findings highlighted in a National Employment Law Project fact sheet show that, in one study, employees with criminal records were found to be 1 to 1.5 more productive than those without criminal records and that 80% of employed, formerly incarcerated individuals said that their employers knew about their records and were satisfied with their work (National Employment Law Project, 2016).

**Additional Findings**

While executing the methods and data collection, this thesis exposed a major flaw in the reentry resource network available to individuals in Orange County and Durham County. The County Resource Guide, described by the state as the primary directory for reentry services for case workers, reentry programs, and reentering individuals, is out-of-date and often inaccurate. The difficulties encountered in constructing the sampling frame for this study demonstrate that an individual looking for help may not be able to identify and contact appropriate services in a timely and efficient manner. For example, the first Durham County service provider listed offering a residential sober-living program is actually located in Asheville—a 4 hour drive from
Durham County. In addition, the majority of listings did not include a website and several phone numbers and email addresses were incorrect or no longer in service. The query system used to generate lists of service providers is not user-friendly and should be improved to be more up-to-date and accurate.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this thesis is the small number of organizations that participated. However, resource and time constraints meant that the sample size had to be kept small. The sample size and response rate could have been improved through a longer outreach time period and the opportunity to recruit participants in person. The sample size might also be improved by expanding the area of interest beyond Durham and Orange County. Because this thesis aims to explore and identify trends, not to identify a causal mechanism or to demonstrate correlation, its results should be used as preliminary findings that guide future research.

Although a standard set of broad questions were posed to all interviewees, follow-up questions were not identical across all cases. For example, during one interview, the participant used Salesforce to look up how many clients they served last year, so I asked a follow-up question about how else they use Salesforce. In addition, participants skipped some questions because they did not feel comfortable or knowledgeable enough to answer them. Discrepancies in information depth across topics poses a challenge for comparing programs. However, as this is an exploratory study, I would rather allow the conversation to flow naturally. The interviewees had an insider perspective on how their programs operate and were able to provide relevant insights that are specific to their organization; obtaining the nuance and detail within those insights was a key objective of this study.
Suggestions for Future Research

This small, evaluative study provides initial qualitative evidence to support improvements to the community-based reentry resource network in Durham County and Orange County, North Carolina. Although the service providers that participated in the study are likely representative of the employment and substance-use focused providers in Durham County and Orange County, their experiences and perspectives may differ from organizations who did not participate—especially organizations with a focus on financial assistance, housing, or health care. The small sample size was a result of two factors: 1) the relatively low number of service providers who fit the desired criteria of the study in Durham County and Orange County and 2) eligible providers who declined or did not respond to requests to participate in the study.

There needs to be a rigorous and formal evaluation of the reentry service environment in Durham County and Orange County. The findings shared in this study illuminate that the current system is far from perfect, but only a large-scale, well-resourced study would have the capabilities to provide more insight on why that is, a conclusion that is beyond the scope of this paper. As demonstrated in a Heritage Foundation report, “More experimental evaluations, especially large-scale multisite evaluations, are needed to shed light on what works and does not work,” regarding criminal justice reentry programs (Muhlhausen, 2015, p.1). An experimental design that incorporates random selection provides the strongest internal validity, but there are ethical concerns associated with excluding individuals from receiving services that could offer substantial benefits and insulate them against negative outcomes stemming from post-release challenges.

In the future, researchers should continue conducting interviews with service providers in order to grow the knowledge base on the successes and challenges faced by community-based
reentry organizations. Considering the barriers that service providers face in collecting robust program data, future researchers might also design a study that collects quantitative data on program outcomes, focusing specifically on recidivism. In addition, this study focused exclusively on the perspectives of service providers and did not incorporate the experiences or viewpoints of the individuals served by these organizations. As a result, the study was not able to uncover or discuss any discord between service providers and their clients. These are important questions: What kind of programs do individuals find most helpful? How can service providers offer better emotional support? Research studies that seek to answer these questions in a community-specific context will help service providers and collaborative bodies like Reentry Councils understand how programs and strategies can be modified to better meet the needs of the reentering population in Orange County and Durham County.

The process of transitioning from life within a correctional facility to life as a productive member of a community is difficult to accomplish without help. Individuals who spend time in the justice system have an increased likelihood of mental health and/or substance abuse issues as well as lower literacy rates and fewer vocational skills. Then, upon release, they face the sweeping collateral consequences of a criminal background. Community-based reentry service providers must navigate these challenges within a resource-constrained environment that does not always foster effective collaboration while tailoring to the diverse needs of the population they serve. There are public policy levers available to make services more effective, especially by improving the feasibility and accessibility of program evaluations and the implementation of robust data collection practices that prioritize recidivism.

…

“…they live here, they're part of our community, and if they're coming in good faith and putting in time and effort and commitment and showing up, then we have to find ways and opportunity for them.” –Laura Martin, StepUp Ministry
Appendix 1: IRB approval

The researcher submitted an IRB approval application to the UNC IRB. After reviewing the application and the attached study documents (survey instrument and interview guide), it was determined that the study did not constitute human subjects research and did not require IRB approval. IRB #: 16-3335

To: Devon Genna
Public Policy

From: Office of Human Research Ethics

Date: 1/19/2017
RE: Determination that Research or Research-Like Activity does not require IRB Approval
Study #: 16-3335

Study Title: Evaluation of the Reentry Environment for Recently Released Individuals

This submission was reviewed by the Office of Human Research Ethics, which has determined that this submission does not constitute human subjects research as defined under federal regulations [45 CFR 46.102 (d or f) and 21 CFR 56.102(c)(e)(l)] and does not require IRB approval.

Study Description:

Purpose: I plan to evaluate the landscape of community resources in Orange County to determine if it is effective and sufficient in shaping "prosocial and law-abiding lifestyles" in ex-offenders after their release. I expect my findings to guide recommendations as to what local and state policymakers can do to improve the service environment for community organizations, as well as evaluate the overall effectiveness of relying on nongovernmental organizations to address the needs of former offenders.

Participants: Reentry service providers in Durham and Orange County

Procedures (methods): Electronic survey and in-person interviews, potential secondary data analysis

Please be aware that approval may still be required from other relevant authorities or "gatekeepers" (e.g., school principals, facility directors, custodians of records), even though IRB approval is not required.

If your study protocol changes in such a way that this determination will no longer apply, you should contact the above IRB before making the changes.
Appendix 2: Outreach Email

The following is a copy of the initial outreach email sent to service providers. In some cases, organizations only provided generic contact information, for example, info@organization1.org. In other cases, staff directories were available and emails were sent to the appropriate personnel, for example, ProgramDirector@organization2.org

Dear ____________.

My name is Devon Genua, and I’m currently conducting an undergraduate research study on community-based reentry service providers in Durham County and Orange County, North Carolina. [Organization Name] is listed within the NC Dept. of Corrections County Resource Guide as an organization that provides [Life Area] services to members of the population who are transitioning back to independent civilian life.

I’m writing to ask if you would be willing to participate in my research, which examines barriers to effective service provision and seeks to provide policy guidance in order to strengthen reentry resources in North Carolina. Your ground-level perspective would be extremely valuable to my work, and I hope that you will consider lending your expertise to the project.

To participate, you would:
1) Fill out a brief, web-based survey that asks about funding, data collection, and other operational characteristics of [Organization Name].
2) Participate in a 20-30 minute, semi-structured interview that focuses on programs and services provided, as well as challenges faced by [Organization Name].

If you have any questions or concerns about the scope or purposes of the study, please feel free to reach out at any time.

Best,
Devon Genua
(919) 455-3068
Appendix 3: Survey Instrument

Reentry Service Provider Survey

Q1 You are about to complete a survey that will inquire about funding sources, annual budget, and data collection practices for your organization. Please select an answer choice:
- Yes, I agree to participate and I understand that any information I provide may be linked to the name of the organization that I am representing. I give permission for my answer choices to be linked to my name and to the name of the organization I am representing in the published version of this research study. (1)
- Yes, I agree to participate. However, I do not give permission for my answer choices to be linked to my name or to the name of the organization I am representing and I wish for my answers to be de-identified before they are incorporated into the published version of this research study. (2)
- No, I do not agree to participate. (3)

Q2 Would you describe your organization as a "community-based" organization?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know (3)

Q3 How would you describe the geographic area where you provide reentry programs and/or services?
- Primarily within Durham County, North Carolina (1)
- Primarily within Orange County, North Carolina (2)
- Primarily within Durham and Orange County, North Carolina (3)
- Other: (4) ____________________

Q4 Last year, how many clients participated in reentry programs or received reentry services through your organization? If no exact number is available, please estimate to the best of your knowledge and indicate that the number you provide is an estimate.

Q5 What is your organization's annual operating budget? If no exact number is available, please estimate to the best of your knowledge and indicate that the number you provide is an estimate.
Q6 How is your organization funded? (Please check all that apply)
- Donations from private citizens (1)
- Fundraisers hosted by your organization (2)
- Fundraisers hosted by other organizations or private citizens (3)
- Grants from non-profit organizations (4)
- Direct budget allocation from local, state, or federal government (5)
- Grants from local, state, or federal government (6)
- Investment income (7)

Display This Question:
If How is your organization funded? (Please check all that apply) Grants from local, state, or federal government Is Selected
Or How is your organization funded? (Please check all that apply) Grants from non-profit organizations Is Selected

Q7 Please list the names and sources of any grants greater than $1,000 that your organization received in the past 3 years. If the grants listed may not be an exhaustive list, please make a note of that in your answer. If you are unable to answer this question, please write "n/a".

Q8 How many years has your organization provided reentry services and/or programs?
- Less than 1 year (1)
- Between 1 and 3 years (2)
- Between 3 and 5 years (3)
- 5 or more years (4)

Q9 Has your organization ever conducted a program evaluation?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I do not know/Unsure (3)

Q10 Does your organization collect data on participants?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know (3)
Q11 What kind of data is collected?

- Demographic information (name, age, race, etc.) (1)
- Participation data (2)
- Employment data (3)
- Substance use data (6)
- Recidivism data (7)
- Survey data from clients (satisfaction with program, items for improvement, etc. (4)
- Other: (5) ____________________
Appendix 4: Interview Guide

Interview Guide for Reentry Service Providers

*Interviews will be semi-structured. Additional clarifying questions not listed in this guide may be asked in response to the information provided by the interviewee.*

1. What is your role within your organization?
2. What are the central goals of your organization?
3. What are the main components of your reentry program(s)/service(s)?
   a. If needed, ask clarifying questions, especially about target population (i.e., are re-entering individuals the primary population that you serve?)
   b. What kind of resources do you use to help inform your programming?
      i. Knowledge of federal resources/best practices? Opinion about them?
      ii. Does your organization collect data?
         1. How is it used?
4. Does [org name] collaborate with other organizations?
   a. If yes, what is the nature of those partnerships? Have they changed over time?
   a. What else affects your organization’s ability to collaborate?
5. In your view, how does public policy affect your organization?
   a. If specific obstacles are pointed out, ask if [Organization] has an advocacy plan/agenda
   a. What kind of legislative/policy changes would you like to see in the future?
6. Is there anything else you’d like to share or feel is important for me to know?
Appendix 5: Consent Form

Reentry Service Provider Consent Form
IRB #: 16-3335

You are being asked to take part in a research study evaluating the service environment for individuals who are transitioning from time in the criminal justice system to independent living. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

*What the study is about:* The purpose of this study is to learn more about the programs offered by organizations that offer employment and/or substance-use related services to individuals who were formerly involved in the justice system. The primary objective of this study is to identify barriers and challenges to effective service provision and to provide policy recommendations to overcome or mitigate those circumstances.

*What I will ask you to do:* If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to complete an online survey and/or interview you. The online survey will ask about funding sources, operating budget, and data collection practices of your organization. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. During the interview, you will be asked about your role, your organization’s programs, and for your perspective on challenges the organization faces. The interview will last between 15-30 minutes. You will not be asked any questions that would lead you to reveal any identifying information about anyone you serve.

Your answers will be recorded and digitally transcribed. All files will be password protected. If requested, your answers can be de-identified. *(Initial here if you wish your answers to be de-identified: ________)* Otherwise, your name and the name of your organization may be included in the final published version of this study. If a direct quote from your interview is to be used in the study, you will be contacted in order to confirm that I have your permission to publish the quote(s).

*Risks and benefits:*

I do not anticipate any major risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. There is a small risk that you may find some of the questions about your job or the organization you work for to be sensitive.

There are no guaranteed benefits to you for participating in this study. Findings from this study may help your organization (and organizations like yours) identify strategies to better serve your clients.

*Compensation:* There is no compensation for participation in this study.

*Taking part is voluntary:* Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.
If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Devon Genua. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Devon Genua at (919) 455-3068 or dcgenua@live.unc.edu If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the UNC Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (919)-966-3113 or access their website at http://www.research.unc.edu.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature ___________________________________ Date ________________________

Your Name (printed) ____________________________________________________________

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview recorded. Only sign if you intend to be interviewed.

Your Signature ___________________________________ Date _________________________

Signature of person obtaining consent ___________________________________ Date ________________

Printed name of person obtaining consent ___________________________________ Date ________________
References


Latessa, E. (2011). Why the risk and needs principles are relevant to correctional programs (even to employment programs). Criminology & Public Policy, 10(4), 973-977. Retrieved from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9133.2011.00759.x


