

Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ

Transitional Jobs for Ex-Prisoners:

Three-Year Results from a Random Assignment Evaluation of the Center
for Employment Opportunities (CEO)

APPAM

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The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)

- One of the largest and best known employment programs for ex-prisoners. Uses transitional jobs model.
- Started by the Vera Institute of Justice; independent since 1996.
- Serves approximately 2,000 parolees annually.

The CEO Model: Immediate Work

- Participants placed in CEO work crews (TJs) within one week after enrollment; supervised by CEO staff.
- Work 4 days/week; paid daily.
- Day 5: Meetings with job coach, job developer, fatherhood program, etc.
- When deemed “job ready,” receive help finding permanent job, then retention services after placement.
- Participation in CEO is voluntary for most, but meets a parole condition to seek or maintain employment.

CEO Evaluation Overview

- Funded by HHS, with additional funding from DOL. One of four sites in Hard to Employ Project, each targeting a different type of hard-to-employ population.
- Evaluation led by MDRC, with Urban Institute and other partners.
- Two transitional jobs models being tested in larger evaluation.
 - ❑ Long term welfare recipients, scattered site.
 - ❑ Ex-prisoners, work crews.
- CEO evaluation started in 2004. Three year findings now available.

Evaluation Design

- Evaluation targets a subset of CEO's population: parolees who showed up at CEO after referral by regular parole officer.
- During 2004-2005, ex-prisoners who showed up at CEO were assigned, at random, to:
 - ❑ Program group: Regular CEO program, or
 - ❑ Control group: Limited job search assistance.
- Random assignment only in weeks when there were more participants than slots. Sample size: 977 (P: 568; C: 409).

Evaluation Components

- Implementation study, including qualitative study of TJ worksites.
- Impact analysis compares outcomes for the program group with outcomes for the control group.
 - Assesses CEO's effects on employment, recidivism, and other outcomes.
- Benefit-cost analysis, conducted by Vera Institute of Justice.

Data Sources

- Baseline.
- UI-covered earnings from NY State and Nat'l Directory of New Hires.
- Criminal justice data: arrests, convictions in NYS; incarceration in NYS prisons and NYC jails.
- Client survey (n=531; response rate=68%).
- Data from CEO MIS and payroll system.
- Fiscal data from CEO program, New York City and State budget offices and criminal justice agencies.

Characteristics of Participants

- Average age: 33.
- Over half are fathers; few live with children.
- 2/3 African-American; 1/3 Latino.
- 43% no high school diploma or GED.
- 57% live with family or friends at time of baseline; 18% rent or own, 12% lived in transitional housing.
- 81% ever worked; 61% ever steady employment of 6 months or more.

Criminal History Characteristics

- Average of 7 prior convictions (3 felony).
- Average of 5 years in state prison in lifetime.
- 75% had a prior drug offense.
- Half had a prior violent conviction.
- Time since release:
 - ❑ 40% came to CEO within 3 months after release from state prison; model was designed for them.
 - ❑ 60% came to CEO longer after release (not expected).
- Nearly 3 years remaining on parole.

Participation in CEO Activities

- Good test:
 - 79% of program group completed initial 4-day life skills class.
 - 73% of program group worked in CEO crew (TJ).
 - Average of 9 weeks in TJ.
 - Most met with job coaches and job developers (79-83%).
 - Very few controls accessed CEO transitional job over 3 years.

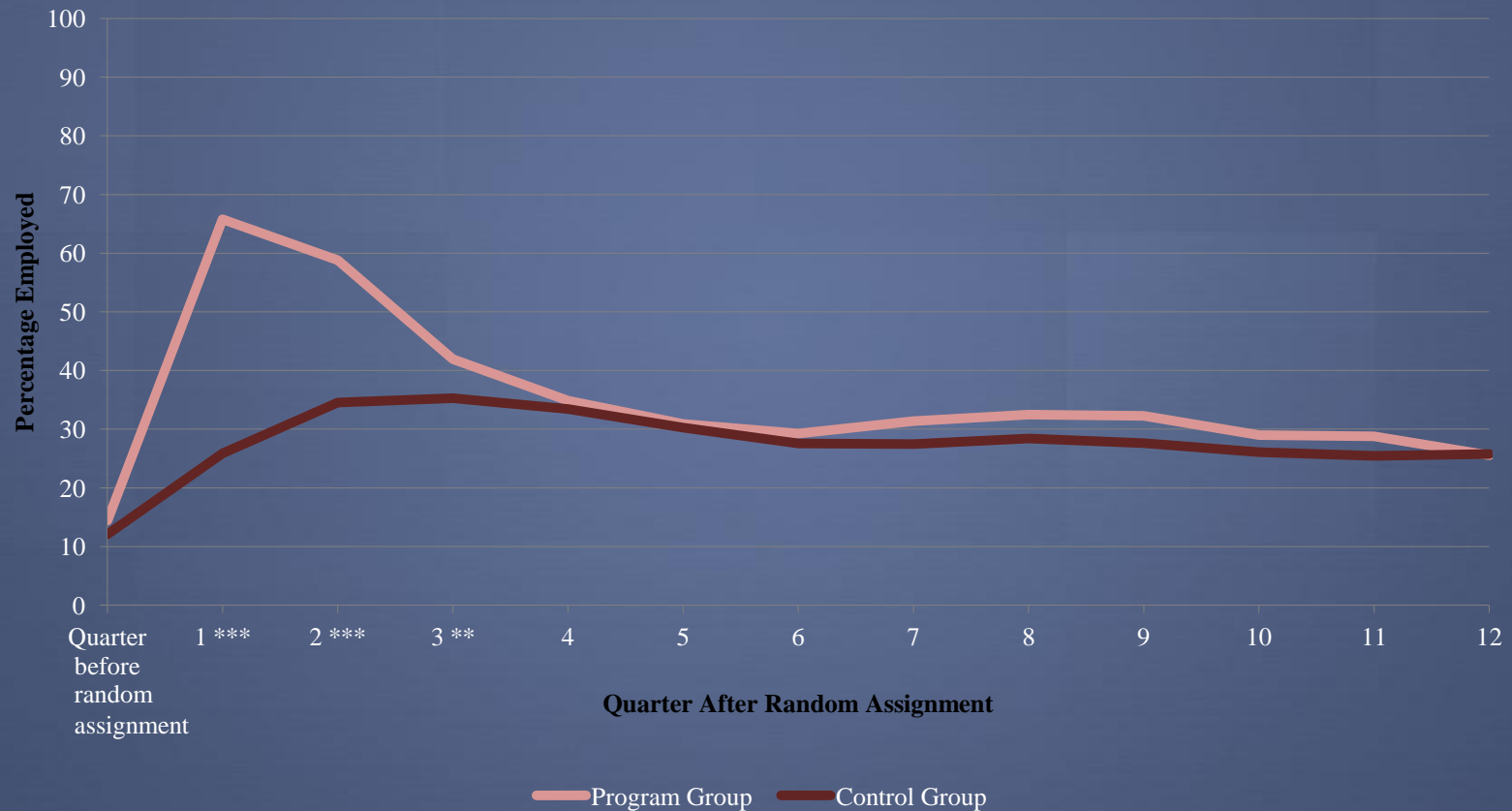
Impacts on Employment Services and Support

Outcome (%)	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Job search activity	67.9	64.3	3.6
Help putting a resume together	57.7	60.0	-2.3
Advice about discussing criminal history with employers	69.1	60.7	8.4**
Advice about how to behave on a job	66.4	55.9	10.6**
Referred for specific job opening	32.3	18.8	13.5***
Staff provides advice with personal or family issues	40.5	30.8	9.7**

Statistical significance levels:

*=10% **=5% ***=1%

Percent Employed in UI Covered Jobs (Including CEO's Transitional Jobs) Full Sample



Statistical significance levels:

*=10% **=5% ***=1%

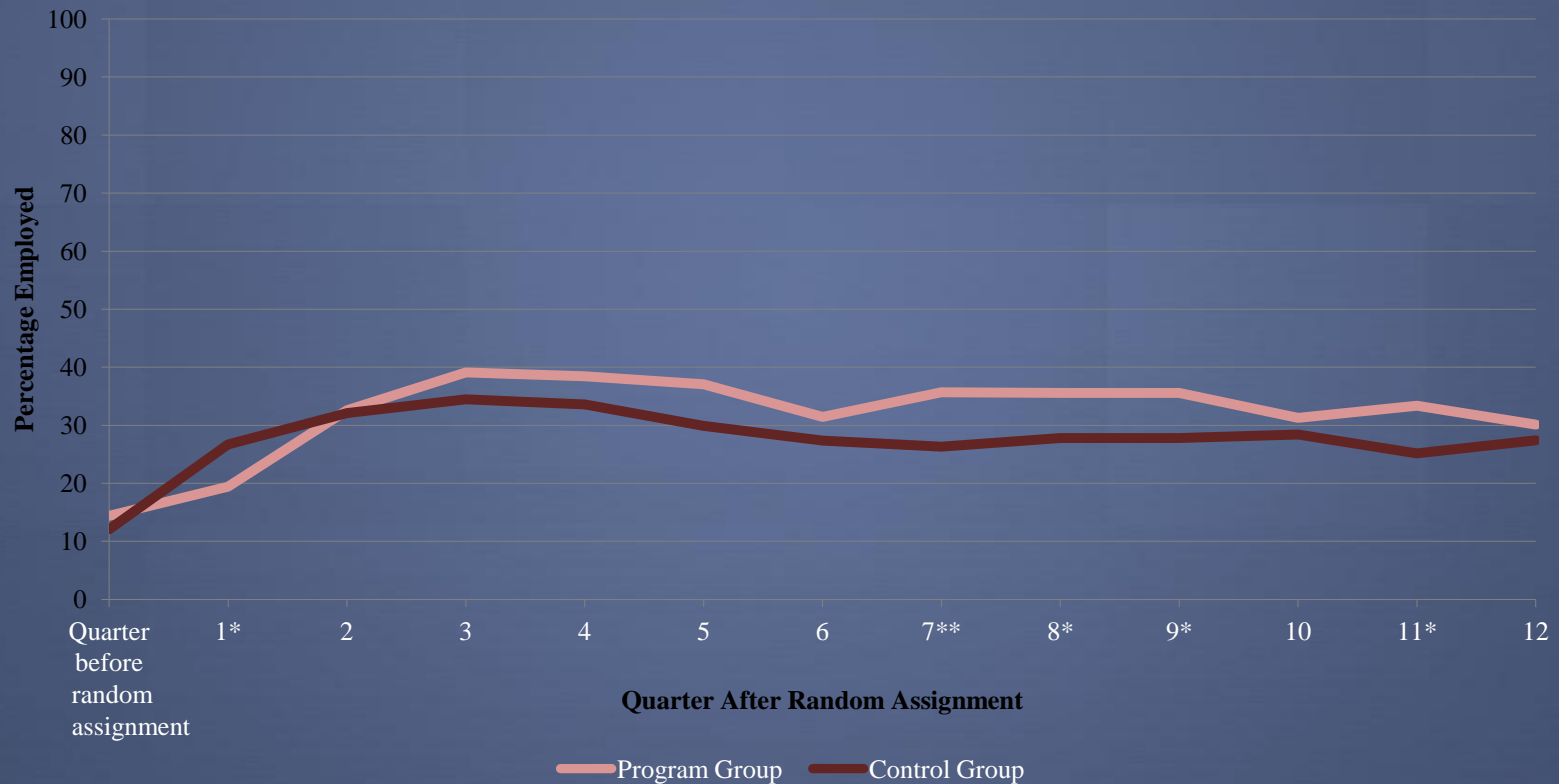
Percent Employed in UI Covered Jobs (Without CEO's Transitional Jobs) Full Sample



Statistical significance levels:

*=10% **=5% ***=1%

Percent Employed in UI Covered Jobs (Without CEO's Transitional Jobs) Recently Released Subgroup



Statistical significance levels:

*=10% **=5% ***=1%

Three-Year Impacts on Recidivism

Full Sample

Outcome (%)	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Arrested	48.1	52.8	-4.7
Convicted of a crime	43.1	48.8	-5.7*
Convicted of a violent crime	7.0	9.4	-2.4
Incarcerated in jail or prison	58.1	65.0	-6.9**
Incarcerated for a new crime (%)	23.7	28.0	-4.3
Arrested, Convicted, or Incarcerated (%)	64.9	70.6	-5.7*

Statistical significance levels:

*=10% **=5% ***=1%

Recidivism Impacts by Time Between Release and Random Assignment

Recently Released from Prison

Outcome (%)	Program group	Control group	Difference
Arrested	49.1	59.1	-10.0*
Convicted of crime	44.0	56.7	-12.7**
Convicted of a violent crime	5.4	14.3	-8.9*** ††
Incarcerated in jail or prison	60.2	71.3	-11.2**

Not Recently Released from Prison

Outcome (%)	Program group	Control group	Difference
Arrested	47.0	50.5	-3.5
Convicted of a crime	42.7	45.7	-3.0
Convicted of a violent crime	7.5	6.7	-0.8 ††
Incarcerated in jail or prison	57.1	63.2	-6.1

Statistical significance levels:

*=10% **=5% ***=1%



Statistical significance levels for difference in subgroup impacts: †=10% ††=5% †††=1% 16

Benefits and Costs of CEO

- CEO program services cost \$3,600 more per person than services for the control group.
- CEO generated net benefits to taxpayers of approximately \$3,800 dollars per person.
 - When victim benefits and participant earnings are included, CEO's total net benefit is \$4,600 per person.
- For the recently released subgroup, CEO generated benefits to taxpayers of approximately \$7,500 including victim benefits.
 - \$4,500 in criminal justice savings.

Summary of Findings

- CEO generated large increases in employment early in the follow-up.
 - Increases were due to the transitional jobs.
- Difficulty in transition to unsubsidized jobs.
 - No impacts for full sample.
 - Small impacts on unsubsidized employment late in the follow-up period among recently released.
- CEO led to reductions in several measures of recidivism.
 - Reductions in recidivism were mostly driven by large decreases for the recently released subgroup.
- CEO's monetary benefits outweighed the costs for both the full sample and the recently released subgroup.

Coming Attractions

- The three year final report will come out in 2011, including results presented here. Two-year report on MDRC's website: www.mdrc.org.
- Random assignment evaluation of CEO replication models in the next couple of years.
- The Joyce Foundation has developed another 4-site RA evaluation of TJ programs serving ex-offenders in Midwest; results available now.
- HHS and DOL are planning large scale evaluations of enhanced transitional jobs models for various populations, including former prisoners.