



Overview Report of Allegheny County Jail Collaborative Evaluation Findings

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January 3, 2008

Acknowledgments

The research team is forever grateful of critical roles fulfilled by wonderful 28 trackers (interviewers) who despite enormous difficulties stayed in touch with inmates after their release and secured survey information based on face-to-face interviews.

Sincere thanks to Pitt School of Social Work Jail Study Group: M.A. Zorich as dedicated and effective coordinator on this complex research project, Jen Thornton for technical assistance and filling in to do what ever was needed, Michelle Smith for conquering difficult database management challenges, Hyunzee Zung for providing astute statistical analysis assistance; Aaron Mann, Lambert Maguire, and Jody Bechtold for their continued theoretical and pragmatic enlightenment, and Solveig Spjeldnes for comprehensive integration of contemporary criminal justice research articles, and tirelessly contributing to the final report production process.

This research team is also appreciative of a special group of people involved with Allegheny County Jail Collaborative for their assistance: Marc Cherna, Warden Ramon Rustin, Ruth Howze, Jack Pischke, Joan MacLennan, Dana Phillips, Erin Dalton, Steve Devlin, and James Allen.

Finally, many thanks also goes to Human Service Integration Fund, which represents insightful foundations of Allegheny County, for their commitment to welfare of all individuals. This study was made possible through their generous financial support.

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Executive Summary

Allegheny County is a national leader in formulating and implementing a collaboration-based jail inmate reintegration program called the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative. This unique human service system is co-chaired by the Director of the Department of Human Services, the Warden of the Allegheny County Jail (ACJ), and Director of the Department of Health.

Researchers from the Center on Race and Social Problems, housed in the School of Social Work University of Pittsburgh, evaluated the ACJ Collaborative. The major purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which the Collaborative achieved successful community reentry goals among released male jail inmates. On a typical day, over 700,000 individuals are incarcerated in US jails. Yet potential benefits of the investment in best practice reintegration and crime reduction interventions are relatively unknown.

Evaluation Findings. The three-year evaluation study findings reflect the ACJ Collaborative's capacity to generate impressive positive results including: (a) a significantly lower recidivism rate among inmate participants; (b) similar service benefits across racial groups; and (c) successful reintegration into community life among a high majority of participants. More specifically, major outcome findings are as follows:

1. Allegheny County is saving over \$5.3 million annually by the ACJ Collaborative serving 300 inmates per year;
2. The greatest cost-savings generated by ACJ Collaborative is in areas of public safety and reduced victimization among county residents;
3. Cost-savings ratio is approximately 6 to 1 (i.e., for a dollar investment to the ACJ Collaborative, the cost-savings return is approximately \$6);
4. At 12 months post-release the Collaborative inmates are achieving a 50% lower recidivism rate compared to matched comparison group (i.e., 16.5% vs. 33.1%, respectively);
5. In contrast to historical trends nationally, there were no statistically significant differences in the recidivism rate between Black and White Collaborative inmate participants.

The findings shown above were derived using a cost-savings analysis strategy selected by the Urban Institute (Roman & Chalfin, 2006). This strategy includes estimates of (1) cost of jail stay; (2) cost of processing offenders in the criminal justice system; (3) costs of crime victimization; (4) cost of providing services at the jail; and (5) cost savings associated with Collaborative participants' recidivism reduction. The differential recidivism rate was derived based on a stratified and matched sample group comparison method.

During the 12 months after release from ACJ, intermediary process outcomes among Collaborative consumer inmates showed positive transitions to community life including: (a) higher enrollment in various community-based service organizations; (b) improved housing obtainment for both racial groups; and (c) increased employment rates among former White offenders. Other areas that remained relatively unchanged (but did not significantly deteriorate) included drug and alcohol usage rate, Black employment rates, and mental and physical health treatment needs.

ACJ Collaborative. ACJ Collaborative Committee consists of approximately 25 members including representatives from Jail Social Services, Allegheny Correctional Health, the Department of Human Services Offices of Behavioral Health (Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Programs, Drug Court and Mental Health Court, Children, Youth and Families, Community Services -- Employment and Training Programs, and the DHS Executive Office -- Coordinator of the children of prisoner's project).

Major human services offered to Allegheny County Jail (ACJ) inmates include a highly regarded drug and alcohol treatment and education, and programs for GED preparation, computer literacy, stress and anger management, parenting skills, creative writing and publishing, life skills, and vocational training. To encourage and establish connections with community-based services, ACJ offers soon-to-be released inmates with a group presentation given by multiple human service organizations and representatives from the probation department. The central goal of the ACJ Collaborative is to increase former inmates' likelihood of successful reintegration into community life and reduce recidivism by providing: (a) in-jail human services to inmates; and (b) transitional reentry services to released inmates through referrals to community-based organizations.

A. Profile of Allegheny County Jail

Allegheny County Jail (ACJ) is a detention and incarceration facility, which also provides “lock-up” services for arrestees who are held pending formal identification by the City of Pittsburgh Bureau of Criminal Identification, for City Magistrate and District Justice Pre-Arrest Hearings (ACJ Annual Report, 2005). Parallel to the national trend, the average daily inmate number in the ACJ has risen steadily throughout the past decade (1996-2006). During typical days, the number of releases tends to be slightly fewer than admissions. Thus, the Jail’s population continues to grow. The ACJ has 35 living units/pods on eight two-level floors and opened in 1996 with capacity for holding 1,850 inmates but frequently houses over 2,000 inmates (ACJ Annual Report, 2005). The total annual ACJ budget during the year 2005 was nearly \$45.5 million.

B. Allegheny County Jail Collaborative

Allegheny County is a national leader in formulating and implementing a collaboration-based county jail inmate reintegration program called the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative. This unique human service system is co-chaired by the Director of the Department of Human Services, the Warden of the Allegheny County Jail (ACJ), and Director of the Department of Health.

The Collaborative committee consists of approximately 25 members including representatives from Jail Social Services, Allegheny Correctional Health, the Department of Human Services Offices of Behavioral Health (Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Programs, Drug Court and Mental Health Court, Children, Youth and Families, Community Services-- Employment and Training Programs, and the DHS Executive Office--Coordinator of the Children of Prisoner’s Project).

Former Warden Calvin Lightfoot initially organized the Collaborative in 1997 to provide in-jail human services and transitional community services. During recent years, ACJ provides an array of human services to inmates, including drug and alcohol education and treatment, GED preparation, computer literacy, stress and anger management, parenting skills, creative writing and publishing, life skills, and vocational training. To encourage and establish connections with community based services, ACJ provides information to soon-to-be released inmates via a group presentation given by human service organizations and representatives from the probation department.

C. ACJ Collaborative Goal

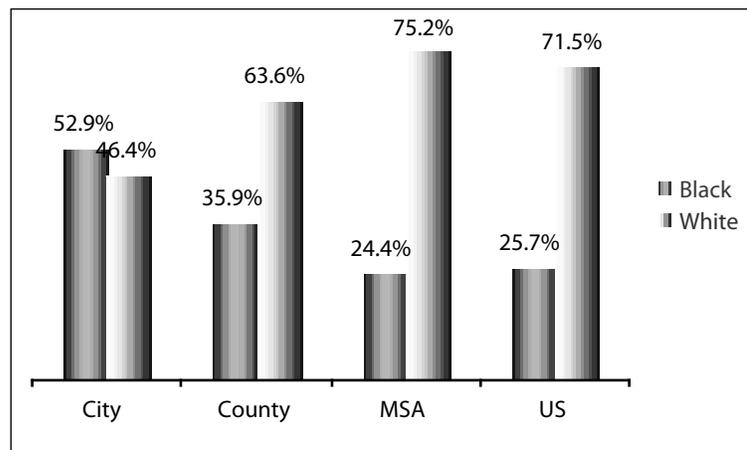
The ACJ Collaborative’s central goal is to increase former inmates’ likelihood of successful reintegration into community life and reduce recidivism by providing: (a) in-jail human services to inmates; and (b) transitional reentry services to released inmates through referrals to community-based organizations.

D. Race and Incarceration-- National and Local Trend

On a typical day, more than 700,000 individuals are incarcerated in US jails. Yet the investment in best practice reintegration and crime reduction interventions are relatively unknown, despite strong evidence of resulting cost savings. Scarce jail resources and public sentiment towards jail time for public safety, as well as the challenging human service needs of offenders obscures decisions regarding appropriate level of resource investment (Roman & Chalfin, 2006).

Racial comparison of factors related to criminal justice in the Pittsburgh region showed a significantly higher rate of arrests and crime victimization among African Americans for various types of crimes compared to U.S. statistics (Wallace and Bangs, Center on Race and Social Problems, 2007). Based on ACJ historical data (2003 to 2006 combined), jail entry distribution strongly reflects racial inequity in reference to the population profile of Allegheny County. African American over-representation is particularly evident in the City of Pittsburgh (see below Chart 1).

Chart 1: Total Arrest by Race and Location (2004)



Although African Americans consist of only a quarter (27%) of Pittsburgh's population, they comprise:

- More than half of the total number of arrestees
- Nearly two-thirds of persons arrested for serious crimes
- More than two-thirds of persons arrested for violent crimes
- More than half of persons arrested for property crimes

In 2005, Pennsylvania had the fifth highest number of jail inmates (34,455) among all states. In mid-2006, local US jails had 766,010 inmates who were mostly minorities: 39% Black, 16% Hispanic, 2% other, and 44% White (Sabol, Minton, & Harrison, 2007).

It should be noted that Blumstein, Cohen, Roth, and Visher, (1986) advises that early onset of criminal activity, heavy drug use, and long-term unemployment predict higher rates of criminal frequency. A common mistake made in measuring frequency is not to consider time spent incarcerated versus street time. Offending rates can be significantly under assessed without this information.

E. Evaluation Study

Researchers from Center on Race and Social Problems, housed in the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, evaluated the ACJ Collaborative, which is viewed as a national model demonstration project. The major purpose of this study was to evaluate the extent to which the Collaborative achieved their goals with released male jail inmates. We conducted process and outcome assessments using following four major data sets:

- (a) Jail inmate needs assessment data – Data gathered by Allegheny Correctional Health, Inc. during 2006 (N=16,383);
- (b) Face-to-face interviews of former inmates – Data gathered through inmate interviews in a community setting for up to 3 times during the first 1-year post-release period (total interviews = 636 among 276 released inmates);
- (c) Allegheny County Jail’s historical inmate data sets – These data included the (1) pre-Collaborative intervention period--1994 to 1997 (N=33,487); and (2) post-Collaborative intervention initiation—2003 to 2006 (N=41,865); and
- (d) Qualitative assessment – These data came from focus group sessions with the former ACJ inmate participants and inmate interviewers (trackers).

We completed an ultimate outcome assessment including post-release recidivism rates and estimates of cost savings based on a combination of these quantitative data sets along with available cost savings information.

F. Major Findings

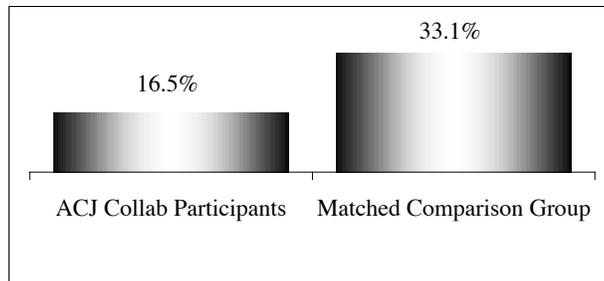
1. Overall Recidivism Rate Comparison.

The ACJ Collaborative recidivism rate was derived based on a sub-sample of inmates who received various ACJ Collaborative services and were released in 2005 (N=140). This group was compared to a demographically similar sample comprised of inmates released in 1996 (prior to the start of the Collaborative). Because overall national recidivism rates have remained fairly stable during the past 10-year period, it was prudent to select a comparison group of ACJ inmates prior to the inception of the Collaborative.

The 1996 comparison group was selected based on a matched stratified random selection method--inmates’ race (2) by age category (5)--matching 10-sample parameters across the post-Collaborative and pre-Collaborative groups. This matching criteria strategy was instituted based on a number of literatures indicating that race and age are highly associated with recidivism rates (e.g., Langan & Levin, 2002; Bonczar, 2003; and Sabol, Minton, & Harrison, 2007).

Based on a matched comparison assessment, the ACJ Collaborative participants had significantly lower recidivism rate (by relative difference of 50% lower rate) at the 12-month point after release from jail compared to the comparison group of inmates released during the pre-Collaborative period ($X^2 = 4.28$; $p=0.03$). Such a recidivism rate difference strongly suggests usefulness and positive outcome associated with ACJ Collaborative interventions.

**12-month Recidivism Rate Comparison:
Collaborative Inmates vs. Matched Comparison Group**



It should be noted, however, that the 12-month comparison underestimates an overall positive impact induced by the Collaborative system. This is because a significant number of inmates return to jail after 12 month and many are multiple recidivists during three years after their release. Based on these considerations, the estimated difference in recidivism rates over a 3-year period show that the difference extends beyond the 12-month rate (i.e., 34.4% vs. 52.2% between the Collaborative participants and comparison group, respectively).

Furthermore, over a three-year period, 65% of ACJ recidivists were multiple-recidivists (i.e., on average 4 times in jail during 1994 to 1996). Thus, based on such relationship patterns the estimated recidivism reduction among people exposed to Collaborative services (among 300 inmates annually over a three year period) equal 122.8 less than the comparison group with an equal number of inmates.

Beyond three years post-release, we expect that the total amount of savings generated by Collaborative activities will continue to increase because the initial Collaborative cohorts' recidivism rates beyond three years will drop further compared to the cohorts unexposed to Collaborative services (recidivism is positively correlated to the previous recidivism rate). Therefore, annual savings should increase even more if subsequent years beyond the first three years are incorporated into the calculation.

2. Recidivism Rate by Race

Historically, criminal justice research studies reported differential recidivism rates by race--significantly higher recidivism rates among Blacks compared to their White counterparts (e.g., La Vigne, N.G., Visher, C., & Castro, J., 2004); Bonczar & Beck, 1997; Bonczar, 2003; Kansal, 2005; Sabol, Minton, & Harrison, 2007; and Bureau of Justice Statistics, n/a). Therefore, we conducted further comparisons of recidivism rates by racial group. Our findings indicated that among the ACJ Collaborative group, no statistically significant differences existed between Black and White participants. In contrast, among the 1996 matched ACJ comparison group, the recidivism rate for the Black sample group was significantly higher

than for their White counterpart group ($X^2=306.5$; $p=0.001$). This finding suggested that the Collaborative system counteracted factors that traditionally are associated with racial differences in recidivism rates. A hallmark of a desirable service program is the ability to create an impact equity across racial groups.

3. Cost and Savings Profile

The selected cost-savings analysis was based on a strategy reported by the Urban Institute (Roman & Chalfin, 2006). More specifically, the assessment consisted of following steps:

- (1) Estimated average cost of jail stay;
- (2) Estimated cost of processing offenders in the criminal justice system;
- (3) Estimated costs of crime victimization; and
- (4) Calculation of cost savings associated with the Collaborative system by comparing recidivism reduction among its participants with in-jail service costs.

We adjusted the costs of processing offenders and crime victimization based on the types of offenses committed by the ACJ sample group. The offenses were: (1) violence (e.g., rape, murder, assault, etc.); (2) property (e.g., burglary, larceny/theft, vehicle theft, fraud, position of stolen property, etc.); (3) Drugs (e.g., drug possession and trafficking); (4) public order (e.g., DUI, weapons offense) and other offenses such as public intoxication, etc.

a. Average Cost of Jail Stay

To calculate the cost structure associated with the Collaborative, we first estimated the cost of keeping inmates at ACJ. This estimation was based on the 2006 ACJ budget (\$46,504,976) and its total bed capacity (1,850), which was \$68.87 per bed day. It should be noted that derived cost per bed day assumes that the 2006 budget is a good estimate of jail cost when operating at full capacity. Based on an informal assessment, ACJ's personnel budget should be increased (e.g., to hire more case managers and security guards per inmate). Additionally, cost calculation is based only on operating costs--amortized capital costs were not included. According to Cunniff (2006) who conducted ACJ's bed utilization analysis, two variables determined the demand for jail beds: the number of persons entering the jail and the amount of time that these persons stayed in the facility. Based on his study, ACJ inmates spent an average of 45 days in the Allegheny County Jail--between booking and release. Thus, the average cost of ACJ inmate stay equaled the average cost per day (\$68.87) multiplied by the average length of stay (45 days) or a total of \$3,104. It should be noted that distinguishing fixed and variable costs of ACJ operation could further refine the selected cost assessment.

b. Estimate of Cost of Processing Offenders in the Criminal Justice System

Roman and Chalfin (2006) suggested average costs of processing offenders in the criminal justice system based on each major type of offense. Thus, ACJ inmates' offenses profiled between 2003 and 2006 were used to estimate the average total cost of processing offenders in the criminal justice system. Based on this calculation method (suggested by Roman and Chalfin), the average cost of processing offenders among ACJ inmates equaled \$2,955 per individual. This estimate is slightly higher (by \$900) than the cost

of criminal justice administration reported by Lombard, Krouse, Krouse, Pflueger, and Hudson (2004) but noticeably lower (by \$3,100) than an estimate provided by Cohen and associates (2000) which was based solely on the most costly offenders who committed violent offenses.

c. Estimated Costs of Economic Damages Resulting from Crime Victimization.

Released inmates who commit new offenses generate large costs for the public in the form of crime victimization. As noted by Roman and Chalfin (2006), although the costs of victimization cannot be directly measured, estimates exist in the literature. These costs include medical expenses resulting from injury, productivity losses, and intangible costs associated with pain and suffering. McCollister (2004) and Lombard and associates (2004) reported estimated total victimization costs by offense type as well. The resulting average victimization costs for each category are: violent offenses - \$145,332, property offenses - \$3,144, drug offenses - \$8,595, and public order offenses - \$13,179. Based on the suggested estimation method, an average cost of crime victimization across major types of offenses committed by the ACJ inmates equaled \$37,603.

d. Average Direct cost of Inmates to ACJ

Adding cost estimates as reported above, total average cost of ACJ inmates equaled \$43,662 as shown below.

Estimated total average cost of ACJ inmate incarceration

| | |
|---|----------|
| ACJ cost per inmate (on average 45-day stay)..... | \$3,104 |
| Cost of criminal justice system processing..... | \$2,955 |
| Costs of crime to victims..... | \$37,603 |
| Total | \$43,662 |

The Urban Institute’s estimate using the distribution of offenses reported by Roman, Kane, Turner and Frazier (2006) for expected cost per recidivating inmate is close to but somewhat higher than our estimate (\$49,123). Primarily this number is due to differences in the distribution of major types of offenses among ACJ inmates, which had a relatively lower rate of violent offenses.

e. Estimated Cost Saving and Ratio Generated by Collaborative Participants.

As reported previously, a significant number of inmates return to jail within 12 months and many are multiple recidivists during the three years after their initial release. Thus, estimated average annual cost savings associated with the Collaborative was calculated based on the estimated average annual recidivism reduction of 122.8 jail stays among services to 300 inmates each year for a three-year period. Total average annual cost savings can be derived by multiplying the estimated cost per ACJ inmate per incarceration (\$43,662) times 122.8 or a total of over \$5.3 million (i.e., \$5,363,267). Such an estimated cost-savings amount is substantial.

The estimated cost of providing ACJ collaborative services at jail included average costs of service per inmate by outside organizations plus costs of Jail personnel’s commitment rate to human services. Cost per inmate ranged from virtually no cost due to volunteers earning no salary (i.e., POD of HOPE)

to drug and alcohol services that involved investing \$1,984 per inmate. Based on the calculation method, we estimated that on average \$2,570 the Collaborative spent per inmate by for services at jail. This cost estimation did not include costs associated with the Collaborative Committee meetings, community at-large presentations, and conferences. Thus, the cost-savings rate is \$6.00 (a dollar investment yields \$6 return). Such a rate of cost-savings is impressively positive compared to other human service programs.

It should also be noted that the greatest cost-savings generated by ACJ Collaborative is in areas of public safety and reduced victimization among county residents-- 86.1% of total cost-savings generated by the ACJ Collaborative.

According to Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Amos, Phipps, Baronski & Lieb, 2001) based on a review of available reports of drug treatment in jails, the average cost savings ratio was estimated to be \$3.87 (a dollar investment yields \$3.87 return). These programs were solely drug rehabilitation programs and not based on a collaborative system involving other service providers. Based on the same authors report of an assessment of work release programs showed a slightly more cost-savings rate of \$6.16. Another assessment by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy indicated that in-prison (not in-jail) vocational education programs generated a cost-benefit ratio of \$7.13. Thus, ACJ Collaborative impact is relatively similar to other study findings even considering limitations such as less than perfect comparability.

4. Human Service Needs of ACJ Inmates

Inmate needs assessment data were gathered by the Allegheny Correctional Health, Inc. (a major ACJ Collaborative member) upon arrestees' admission to ACJ during 2006 (N= 16,383 male inmates). The demographic profile of ACJ inmates matches some criminogenic factors associated with incarceration in the criminal justice literature—relatively low levels of education, high unemployment prior to incarceration, lack of home ownership and typically living with someone else (see Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic Profile of ACJ Arrestees (2006)

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Did not complete high school | 6,091 (41.9%) |
| Unemployed prior to incarceration | 8,718 (53.2%) |
| Do not own home or renting | 9,162 (63.3%) |
| Living on the streets/ agency housing | 896 (6.2%) |
| Living in other's residence (mostly with friend) | 8,266 (57.1%) |

A majority of ACJ arrestees were parents (with children 18 or younger). Among them, approximately 31.5% lived with their children prior to incarceration and 38.5% owed child support payments at the time of ACJ admission.

This needs assessment also generated various human service requests at admission to ACJ. Examples included: drug and alcohol intervention (N=1,575); mental health care (N=1,444); and education (N=453). We also compared the aforementioned service needs by race. A major finding was a lower demand for mental health and D&A services among Black inmates compared to Whites. However, more Black inmates requested educational, family counseling, vocational, and parenting services than did Whites.

5. Inmate Transition into Community Life.

As part of the study sample recruitment process, ACJ inmates had to sign a consent form in jail and another consent form 30-days post-release from ACJ in the community setting. The total sample group retained post-release from ACJ were: at 30-days (N=276), at 6-months (N=220), and at 12-months (N=140). The total number of face-to-face interviews completed for the analysis was 636. Although the jail inmate recruitment was based on those men who were supposed to be released within 30 days, many stayed for much longer periods. The average stay was 165 days, or 5.5 months after consenting to participate in this study.

Despite the lagged effect and technical terminations, the response rate was adequate. For example, four released inmates' requested to discontinue participation; four died during the study period; and 19 individuals returned to jail at 6-months, which made them ineligible to interview for the next round at the 12-month period. The sample response rates of the three interview periods were as follows:

- First 30-day interview at community setting (92%);
- Second 6-month interview (89.5%); and
- Last 12-month interview (87.3%).

The percentage of inmates that could not be found or missed appointments repeatedly for the 6-month and 12-month interviews consisted of relatively few individuals—10.5% and 12.7%, respectively. In other words, our 28 trackers were highly successful in locating and retaining study participants. Such a retention rate is exceptionally difficult to attain in this type of study.

a. Descriptive Profile of Collaborative Sample Group

The face-to-face interview sample group consisted of 276 former inmates at the first 30-day interviews that were nearly evenly distributed by race--Black (N=142; 51.4%) and White (N=134; 48.6%). The average age of the total group was 36. The average age of ACJ inmates during 2006 was 33. Our study sample was slightly older compared to the total population of ACJ inmates, which was due in part to the fact that our sample excluded anyone under 21 years of age. The ACJ included adult inmates of all ages (i.e., 18 and older) and many who were released on the same day they were admitted, which were excluded from our study.

A majority of the study sample group included individuals (57.7%) who had served two or more separate jail sentences during the prior five years. In other words, our sample, which the ACJ Collaborative served, included substantial numbers of multiple offenders.

Table 2: Recidivism rate among ACJ Collaborative served sample group

| Sentenced | Black | White | Total |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Once | 44.7% | 40.0% | 42.4 % |
| Twice | 32.5% | 33.3% | 32.9% |
| 3 or more times | 22.8% | 26.7% | 24.8% |

Based on the highest educational level attained, nearly half (46.5%) of the Collaborative sample group did not complete high school. This attainment was lower than the overall population of ACJ 2006 inmates (41.9%). The White sample group included a slightly higher number of individuals without high school diplomas compared to Blacks. Among participants who had not completed high school, 77.9% and 73.9% of Black and White sample groups had earned a GED.

Table 3: Educational level of Collaborative sample

| | Black | White | Total |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Up to 8th grade | 3.7% | 6.1% | 4.5% |
| 9th-11th grade | 40.4% | 45.0% | 42.0% |
| 12th grade | 33.8% | 29.8% | 33.3% |
| 12th grade plus | 22.1% | 19.1% | 20.1% |

The distribution of primary conviction offenses for the latest term evaluated showed that drug-related offenses were the most common.

Table 4: Primary offense for conviction

| | Black | White | Total |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Drug possession | 28.6% | 21.6% | 25.1% |
| Drug dealing | 12.1% | 6.7% | 8.8% |
| Theft | 12.9% | 23.9% | 17.6% |
| Assault | 13.6% | 16.4% | 13.9% |
| Burglary | 3.6% | 17.2% | 9.8% |
| Forgery | 1.4% | 9.0% | 4.7% |
| Fraud | 0.7% | 3.0% | 1.7% |
| Homicide | 1.4% | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| DUI | 0.0% | 0.7% | 0.3% |
| All Other | 35.7% | 20.9% | 31.2% |

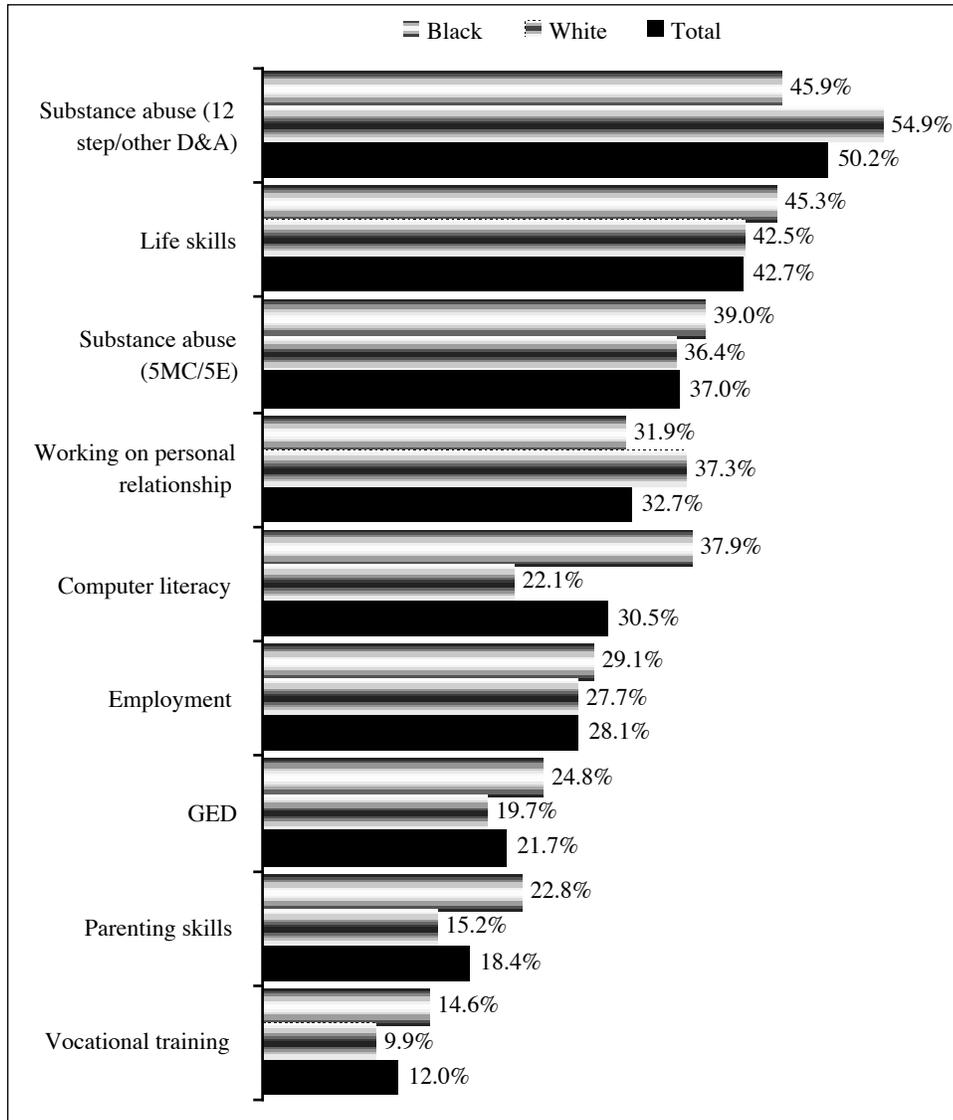
In summary, despite various recruiting and retention challenges, the sample group well represented over all ACJ inmates.

No literature was found that reported whether an association exists between the extent to which recently released inmates' worry about returning to jail and its impact on the recidivism rates. We found that more members of the White sample group worried about returning to jail than did their Black peers 57.9% and 47.5%, respectively. However, when asked whether they would commit crimes within the next 6 months if they knew for sure that they would not be caught, more Whites reported that they would commit crimes than did Blacks—23.8% and 21%, respectively.

b. Former inmates' Assessment of Collaborative Services at ACJ

About 30 days post-release, the study group sample was asked to indicate which of the Collaborative services they actually received and their usefulness. Major findings follow. As Chart V-1 shows, a majority of the sample group received substance abuse prevention and rehabilitation services during their jail time. Nearly 70% of the Collaborative sample group received three or more services at ACJ as listed in the Chart below.

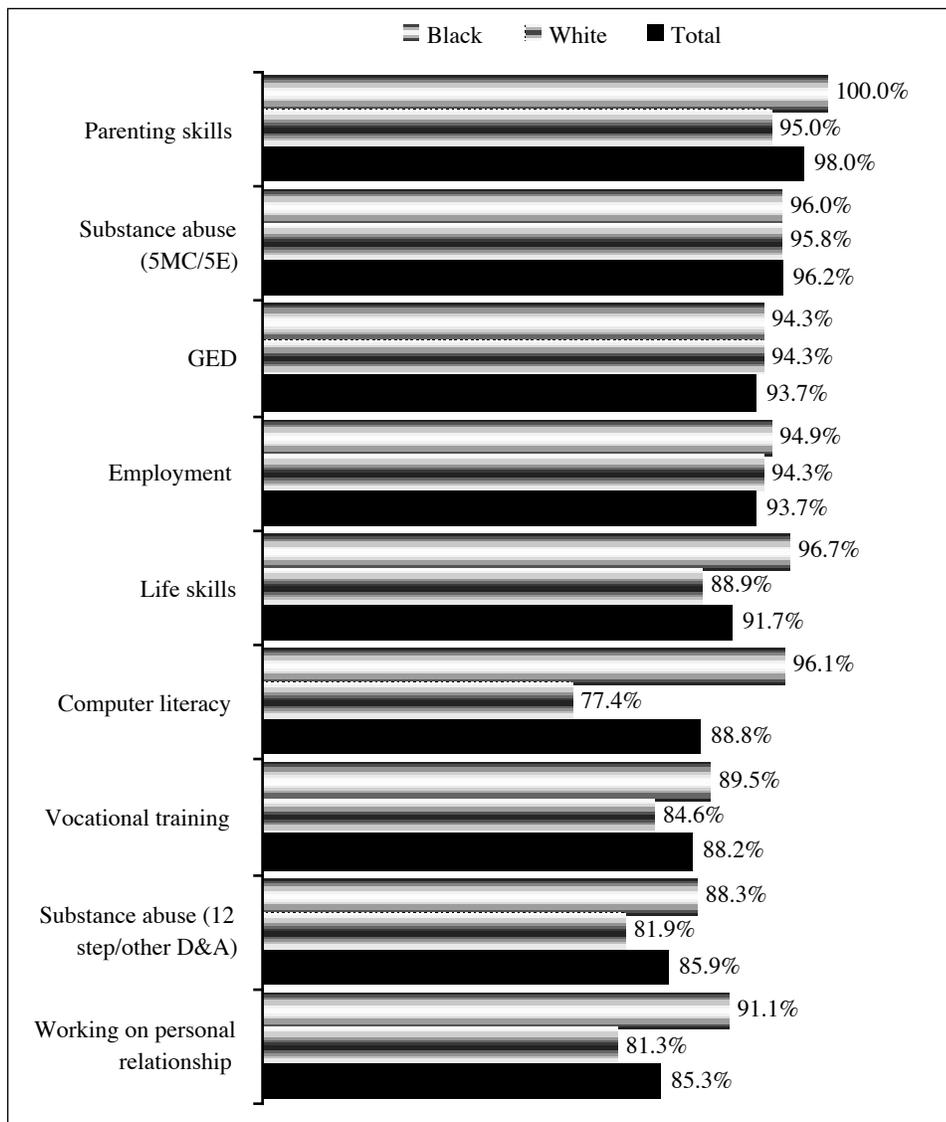
Chart V-1: Services Received



c. Helpfulness of Collaborative Services

As Chart V-2 indicates, participant inmates highly rates most of the services in reference to their usefulness after their release. The top three most highly rated included parenting skills, substance abuse (5MC/5E), and GED services (see Chart V-2).

Chart V-2: Helpfulness of the services



Ex-inmates, the ACJ Collaborative served, confirmed the positive ratings noted in Chart V-2 during our focus group discussion session.

d. Community-based Service Usage

Upon the release of the inmate participants involved with the ACJ Collaborative services, they were directed to seek services they needed and wanted. Table V-6 shows the top six types of community services and the more than 60 community-based organizations at which the former inmates enrolled for services.

Table V-6: Community services enrolled by former inmates served by ACJ Collaborative

Drug/alcohol Treatment

*ACTA, Mercy behavioral
Ada's House
AHSP
Alpha House
Alternatives
ARC House
Braddock Detox
Cove Forge
Cromisa
Goodwill
Greenbrier, White Deer Run
Harbor Light
County Health Dept After Care
Light of Life
Mercy Behavioral Health
Methadone Program
Michaels Place
Mon Yough Behavioral Health
Next Step Foundation
Operation Nehemiah
Pyramid clinic
Renewal
Salvation Army
Strength
Tadiso
UPMC
VA hospital
WPIC outpatient*

AA/NA Services

*12 step/Christ Lutheran Church
AA- local
ACAC
ACTA
AHSP
Birmingham towers
Brookline Group
Cash Club/Onala Club
Centre Ave
Cromisa
County Health Dept
Hill District
Hope Shot Mgmt
Light of Life
Methodist Church
NA Meetings/ church
Onala Club
Salvation Army*

*Shady Group
Strength
This is it, " Back to life"
Wake Up*

Church Sponsored

*Assembly of God
Brown Chapel
CMA
Food Bank
HOPE
Light and Boat Min.
meetings
Miracle Temple Church
Mosque
Potter House
Renewal
Salvation Army
St Benedict
Trinity Lutheran
Wesley Center
WORD channel*

Job Search

*ACTA
ACTA CTEPH
Bethel Park HS
Career Links
Deco, TOP staffing
Workforce Dev.
DPA/VA
Goodwill
Hill House
Hope
Life Works
Mon Yough (Pindua)
OVR
Strength
Urban League*

Mental Health

*Cove Forge
Cromisa
Mercy Behavioral
Mon Yough
Northview MH
PACT
Penn Plum PCP
Renewal*

*Turtle Creek-
Anger Mgmt
VA Hospital
WPIC*

Job training

*5C Youth Build
Career Links
Career Day
Goodwill
Life Works
OVR
Renewal
Strength
Urban League*

e. Community Survival and Social support

Immediately upon release from ACJ, the majority (67.5%) moved in with someone they knew (relatives or friends) or to their own house/apartment, as shown in Table V-7. Relatively few newly released offenders slept at shelters, motels, residential treatment/halfway houses or on the streets.

Table V-7: Where slept first night out-of-jail

| | Black | White | All |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Relative's or friend's | 47.1% | 49.2% | 48.4% |
| Own house or apartment | 22.5% | 15.2% | 19.1% |
| Residential treatment facility | 13.8% | 15.9% | 14.4% |
| Transitional or halfway house | 4.3% | 11.4% | 7.6% |
| Other (church, met someone) | 8.0% | 6.1% | 7.2% |
| Shelter | 1.4% | 0.8% | 1.1% |
| Hotel/Motel/Rooming house | 1.4% | 0.8% | 1.1% |
| Street | 1.4% | 0.8% | 1.1% |

As expected, newly released inmates from ACJ had little available cash. Although only a few had no money on hand (3.5%), median values of accessible cash were \$40 for Black and \$50 for White former inmates.

The community organizations accessed by the former inmates most often included County Health Department, ACTA, Cromisa, Goodwill, Light of Life, Mon Yough (PINDUA), Salvation Army, Urban League of Pittsburgh, Strength, and the VA hospital.

f. Housing

Former Collaborative inmate study participants, both Black and White, had a fairly positive housing situation. The rates of living in one's own home or rented apartment gradually increased from 24.7% to 40.4% and 46.6% at the 30-day, 6-month and 12-month period, respectively—indicating significant progress among participants who avoided recidivism. At the same time, other housing situations including treatment facilities, transitional/half-way houses or homelessness (i.e., living on the street or has no set place) decreased over time.

g. Employment Status of the Collaborative Sample

By the first 30-day post-release point, approximately 46.8% of former offenders reported full- or part-time employment. During this same period, 29.3% of Black and 32.1% of White former inmates in the sample were unemployed and looking for work. In contrast, 11.4% of Blacks and 5.2% of Whites reported that they were unemployed but not looking for work. A number of interviewees were discouraged from looking for work because despite their efforts, because no jobs were offered. Overall, employment-related distributions improved progressively for Whites (by 8.4%) but Blacks reported no improvement during the first 12-month period.

h. Drug Usage

At the 30-day after release, a number of individuals reported that despite their efforts they were unable to stop using drugs or alcohol (15.8% and 17.5% between Black and White sample groups, respectively). Drug use was more pervasive in both racial groups, particularly Whites. Among participants who used alcohol to intoxication, 29% of Black and 32% of White sub-sample groups reported using alcohol eight times or more during the previous 30 days. In contrast, among users, a majority of Black and White sub-sample groups admitted to eight or more days of illegal drug use. This rate is fairly similar during subsequent periods--drug and alcohol usage rate among the sample group did not deteriorate--usage did not change significantly.

i. Mental and Physical Health Treatment Services Utilized by Former inmates

Within 30 days of release from ACJ, approximately 9% and 14% of individuals visited emergency rooms (Black and White sample groups, respectively) mainly for physical health reasons (compared to mental health and alcohol/drug related issues). significantly higher rates of mental health-related prescriptions were issued to Whites compared to their Black counterparts (8.9% vs. 37%, respectively) at the first 30-day point but this pattern reverses for Blacks who increased intake of mental health medications as time elapsed. The percentage of those on medication was nearly identical through the three periods (about one-third of entire sample group).

j. Focus Group Findings

1. Former Inmates Comments, Suggestions, and Opinion

Based on the focus group session discussions, the former inmates' top priorities were: 1) housing; 2) employment; and 3) schooling. However, they noted that "it is difficult to get housing or a job with a felony on your record." "It affects everything you do." "There should be something that helps you despite of the felony." "There should be a distinction made between violent and non-violent crimes...drug offenses are not valid felonies."

Drugs and alcohol were a huge part of a large percentage of ex-offenders' lives. According to focus group findings, taking part in AA/NA programs during incarceration as well as post-release was helpful. These interventions allowed individuals to open up in an understanding and comfortable environment, "let go of issues" they had repressed and began to heal and grow.

Participants reported that addiction was a vicious circle. "You'll do whatever you have to in order to secure your drug of choice." "Drugs and alcohol make you do things you do not want to and wouldn't normally do. It is difficult if you're trying to clean up your act and the system won't give you a chance." "Mindset plays a big role." "Knowing in your mind and finding the proper programs and facilities (i.e. ACTA, CROMISA, methadone clinics) is a big step towards leading a straight life." In jail, "the 5E and 5MC drug programs help a lot and they keep in touch outside of jail." "Feeding the addiction, being selfish, losing control and reacting to situations in the wrong way, and making small mistakes when there is a paper trail following you."

Six out of nine participants indicated that they had enrolled in a drug-rehabilitation program. However, several participants cautioned that “many programs have long waiting lists unless you know someone on the inside.” HOPE is good but has limited space. “If you’re doing it on your own, there are big gaps of time which could lead you back to using.” The enrolled participants reported that their treatment plans consisted of counseling from therapists and groups such as AA/NA, attending methadone clinics, and adhering to the parole officers’ requirements. Four out of nine said they had the opportunity to select their own drug and alcohol (D&A) plan. The others reported that they were just happy to be out of jail. As noted in an earlier section of this report, these nine participants also had contacted D&A programs prior to release. These D&A organizations included: Alliance, Cromisa, local AA and NA, methadone clinics, ACTA, Neomyer, VA and Greenbrier.

2. Trackers Focus Group Discussion

The trackers, who spent a year interviewing study participants, gained considerable insight into the character, strengths, challenges, struggles, and progress of their interviewees. Based on our focus group sessions, trackers reported the following key observations that in many ways matched the positive findings reported previously:

Best situations observed include “guys who take initiative, determined not to go back to jail/prison, bettering their life with school. Want to make it on their own--(positive) self-motivation.” Change in attitude when they are staying on the right track and doing the right thing. They have a sense of pride in knowing they are making it somehow. They are trying hard not to go back, but it is difficult for them to get a long-term and keeping the job. There is a fear of going back to jail but most are too proud to admit it, especially to women (trackers).

Saddest situations noted by trackers included: (a) “a guy had no clothes of his own – not even undergarments or toiletries - had to use someone’s that were left behind. He had no money to buy these things;” (b) “walking into their homes full of roaches and rodents. They all have sad stories...this is mostly because they burned all their bridges and have no one to turn to anymore;” and (c) “watching them either jittery or nodding off in the middle of a conversation (high on a drug intake).”

The trackers’ opinions regarding additional reentry needs in the community include: (a) safe, stable housing -- “housing programs are in places that are infested with drugs, making it difficult for them to get a clean start. The temptation is too great in these areas”; (b) stable jobs-- “getting them prepared for the reality of when they get released into the community.” “This way they land on their feet, minimizing their desire to return to their old ways;” and (c) transportation- “jobs are hard enough for them to keep without the added difficulty of finding a way to get to work.”

Perceived factors that will keep offenders out of jail include: (1) positive social support connections; (2) stable housing; and (3) legitimate long-term employment. “People that know people who can get them a job and a place to live have an easier time reintegrating into the community.” “People who weren’t in jail for drug issues (e.g., DUI’s, child support payments) have an easier time staying out because they are not addicted to illegal substances that set them on a vicious cycle.” “Parents, girlfriends, and kids help keep them out.” “Kids are a reason to clean up your act.” “Parents and girlfriends act as a crutch to help you get

on your feet.” “Hitting rock bottom makes them realize they want a better (life)--getting sick due to your drug or alcohol addiction.” “Self-motivation is a huge factor--having it makes all the difference.”

H. Advisory Committee Members and Research Team

The Advisory Committee members included nationally recognized research and policy experts: Alfred Blumstein and Jonathan Caulkins (Carnegie-Mellon University), Martin Horn (New York Departments of Correction and Probation), Stephen Ingley (former President of American Jail Association), Nancy La Vigne (a national leader in reintegration research from the Urban Institute, Washington D.C.), and Calvin Lightfoot (Former Warden, Allegheny County Jail who initiated the ACJ Collaborative).

Researchers from the Center on Race and Social Problems, housed in the School of Social Work University of Pittsburgh, conducted this study, including Hide Yamatani, Ph.D. (Principal investigator), Larry Davis, Ph.D. and Ralph Bangs, Ph.D. (Co-investigators), and M.A. Zorich, MSW, MDiv. (Research Coordinator). It should be noted that a comprehensive technical report on the ACJ Collaborative evaluation would be available by January 2008.

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