



A SUCCESSFUL PRISONER REENTRY PROGRAM EXPANDS

Lessons from the Replication of
the Center for Employment Opportunities

Joseph Broadus
Sara Muller-Ravett
Arielle Sherman
Cindy Redcross

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BUILDING KNOWLEDGE
TO IMPROVE SOCIAL POLICY

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OVERVIEW

This report presents results from a fidelity assessment and implementation analysis of five Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) replication programs in New York, California, and Oklahoma. Between 2004 and 2010, MDRC conducted a rigorous random assignment evaluation of the original CEO program as part of the Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration and Evaluation funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The evaluation found that CEO was effective at reducing recidivism rates — the rates at which participants committed new crimes or were reincarcerated — among important subgroups of its participant population. Based in part on these findings, the CEO program was selected by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation in 2011 to be part of its Social Innovation Fund and receive funding and technical assistance to expand and replicate the model in various locations across the United States.

Based in New York City, CEO is one of the nation's largest transitional jobs programs for former prisoners. The program offers participants temporary, paid jobs, along with employment counseling and other services, all aimed at making them more employable and preventing their return to prison. The current study describes how the model was replicated in other locations, assesses its implementation in various contexts, and reports on findings from a qualitative study of participants' perceptions of and experiences in the CEO program. The findings presented in this report focus on the implementation of CEO's core elements at the replication sites and provide a description of participants' experience with the program. One additional goal of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of which aspects of the CEO model may have contributed to the reductions in recidivism found in the initial evaluation of the New York City program.

This report's findings include the following:

- Overall, the replication programs operated with high fidelity to the original program model.
- Participants in replication programs engaged in CEO activities at similar rates as did participants in New York City, although replication programs did a better job of moving participants through the model's early stages and into working with the staff to obtain unsubsidized employment.
- Participants said that the program's most essential and distinctive elements were its structure and the support of its staff members.
- While CEO work crews offered some opportunities for skills training, they functioned primarily as jobs, with the habits and competencies that make for a good employee emphasized through the routine of reporting for work each day, cooperating with colleagues, and following supervisors' directions.

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	iii
LIST OF EXHIBITS	vii
PREFACE	ix
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	xi
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ES-1

CHAPTER

1	Introduction	1
	The Social Innovation Fund	1
	Background on the Problem and CEO's Evidence	3
	This Report	6
2	Methods, Data Sources, and Participant Characteristics	9
	Introduction	9
	Methods Used to Assess Fidelity and Implementation	10
	Data Sources	12
	Baseline Characteristics of Program Participants	16
3	Fidelity and Adaptation: Replication of the CEO Model	19
	Introduction	19
	Overview of the CEO Model	20
	CEO Institutional Structure and Staffing	22
	Recruitment and Enrollment	22
	Implementation of Core Program Components	23
	Conclusion	34
4	Participant Perspectives on the CEO Experience	35
	Introduction	35
	Description of Tables and Measures	35
	Findings from Questionnaires and Interviews	37
	Conclusion	43
5	Conclusion	45
	Integrating Employment and Reentry	47
	Summary and Looking Ahead	48

CONTENTS *(CONTINUED)*

APPENDIX

A	The Process of Replicating CEO: An Account from CEO's Executive Director, Sam Schaeffer	49
B	Supplementary Exhibits for Chapter 2	59
C	Supplementary Tables for Chapter 3	71
D	Supplementary Tables for Chapter 4	83

REFERENCES	87
-------------------	----

EARLIER MDRC PUBLICATIONS ON THE CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	89
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LIST OF EXHIBITS

TABLE

ES.1	Participation in CEO Activities: Replication Programs Compared with the New York City Program	ES-7
1.1	History of CEO Expansion	3
2.1	Profile of CEO’s Programs at the Time of the Initial Site Visit, by City	12
2.2	Data Sources in the CEO Replication Study	13
2.3	Selected Characteristics of CEO Participants, by Program	17
3.1	Participation in CEO Activities: Replication Programs Compared with the New York City Program	27
3.2	Work-Site Supervisors’ Perceptions of Their Role	30
3.3	Job Developer Tasks and Responsibilities	33
4.1	Participants’ Outlook on Employment and Well-Being	36
4.2	Participants’ Perspectives on Support, Relationships, and Preparation for Future Employment	37
4.3	Participants’ Other Reflections on CEO	38
B.1	Participant and Staff Questionnaire Response Rates	67
B.2	Selected Characteristics of CEO Participants: Each Replication Program Compared with New York City	68
B.3	Selected Characteristics of CEO Participants: All Replication Programs Compared with New York City	69
C.1	Participation in CEO Activities: Each Replication Program Compared with New York City	73
C.2	Participant Experiences, by Program	75
C.3	Program Staff Questionnaire Responses	80
D.1	Participant Questionnaire Responses	85

LIST OF EXHIBITS *(CONTINUED)*

TABLE

D.2	Program Staff Background Characteristics	86
------------	--	----

FIGURE

ES.1	CEO Conceptual Model	ES-4
3.1	CEO Conceptual Model	21
B.1	CEO Replication Rating Matrix	61

BOX

ES.1	Program Elements Measured for Fidelity	ES-6
1.1	The EMCF Social Innovation Fund	2
1.2	Pay for Success	7
2.1	Program Elements Measured for Fidelity	11
3.1	Life Skills Education Class	24
3.2	Examples of Transitional Work Sites and Tasks Performed	25
3.3	Plugging In	26
3.4	Passport to Success	31
A.1	Criminal Justice Realignment	52
A.2	Testing an Affiliate Approach to Expansion	56

PREFACE

Although the nation's prison population has declined slightly in the recent past, the United States continues to lead the world in incarceration. Former prisoners face a range of challenges to successful reentry into the community, and rates of recidivism — the rates at which they commit new crimes or are reincarcerated — are high. Recidivism imposes huge social and fiscal costs on families, communities, and taxpayers. In this context, there is a pressing need to identify effective models for making the reentry process more successful.

Studies have shown a correlation between higher employment and lower recidivism. Employment can help pave the way to better housing conditions and help ex-prisoners forge better relationships with their families and communities. However, it is difficult to find a job after serving a prison sentence. Many formerly incarcerated individuals find it difficult to break into the workforce because they have limited school and work histories, which make them less appealing to potential employers. Reentry initiatives in recent years have sought to address that lack of work history. Transitional jobs give formerly incarcerated individuals both recent work experience and a source of legitimate income in the critical months following their release, and help participants build basic work skills and behaviors before they seek jobs in the regular labor market. The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), based in New York City, is one of the nation's largest and most highly regarded transitional jobs programs.

Between 2004 and 2010, MDRC conducted a rigorous random assignment evaluation of the New York City CEO program. The three-year evaluation showed large increases in employment during the first year of follow-up, while participants had their transitional jobs. Those impacts faded the longer participants were out of the program, but significant reductions in recidivism persisted despite the fading effect on employment. It is likely that this recidivism effect resulted in part from the structure and employment participants received from CEO after their release from prison. Based on these findings, CEO and MDRC worked together to strengthen CEO's job placement component, to improve its ability to help participants make the transition to unsubsidized employment.

This report describes the implementation of five CEO replication programs in New York State, California, and Oklahoma. Sponsored by the Social Innovation Fund, the study evaluates replication programs' fidelity to the original CEO model and supplements the evidence from the earlier evaluation of CEO with a more in-depth look at participants' experiences. It is hoped that this research will provide criminal justice researchers and practitioners with evidence they can use to improve transitional jobs programs for returning prisoners.

Gordon L. Berlin
President, MDRC

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This report is based on work supported by the Social Innovation Fund, a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The Social Innovation Fund combines public and private resources with the goal of increasing the impact of innovative, community-based solutions that have compelling evidence of improving the lives of people in low-income communities throughout the United States. We particularly thank Gabriel Rhodes and Bob Granger from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation’s Social Innovation Fund for their support throughout the project.

For their help in scheduling site visits and participating in several interviews on-site and in the months following site visits, we thank Dave Covey in Albany, NY, Jeff Conrad in Buffalo, NY, Anisa Mendizabel in Rochester, NY, Keiara Auzenne in San Diego, CA, and Kelly Doyle in Tulsa, OK. This report would not have been possible without their cooperation and the cooperation of their staff members. We also thank Bill Heiser at the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) for talking through the ways replication programs were established in California and elsewhere, and Mick Munoz for welcoming MDRC staff members to the New York City program on several occasions and setting up introductions and interviews with staff members and participants throughout the evaluation. We are also indebted to Terry Salo and her colleagues at the Department of Criminal Justice Statistics for offering critical background information on the criminal justice and reentry context in New York State. Finally, we are especially thankful to Sam Schaeffer at CEO for his contribution to this report and his consultations throughout the research and report-drafting process.

We would also like to extend a particular thanks to all of the CEO participants who spoke with MDRC staff members and shared their stories and perspectives during site visits and in interviews over the course of the study. Their willingness to speak openly about their lives, goals, challenges, and successes made this report immeasurably richer than it otherwise could have been.

At MDRC, we are grateful to many people’s valuable contributions to this project. David Butler played a large role in conducting site visits and helping with the design and analysis of the study. We thank Bret Barden, Brian Bayes, Shirley James, and Sally Dai for processing and analyzing the baseline and participation data presented in this report and Melanie Skemer for her hard work developing staff and participant questionnaire materials and analyzing questionnaire results. Mifta Chowdhury assisted in the administration of participant and staff questionnaires and Janaé Bonsu coordinated the production of the report. We are also very grateful to the people who reviewed this report and advised us on it: Dan Bloom, Rob Ivry, and John Hutchins. Lastly, we would like to thank MDRC’s publications staff. Joshua Malbin edited the report, and Carolyn Thomas prepared it for publication.

The Authors

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), based in New York City, is one of the nation's largest transitional jobs programs for former prisoners. The program offers participants temporary, paid jobs, along with employment counseling and other services aimed at making them more employable and preventing their return to prison. Between 2004 and 2010, MDRC conducted a rigorous random assignment evaluation of the program as part of the Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration and Evaluation funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The evaluation found that CEO was effective at reducing recidivism rates — the rates at which participants committed new crimes or were reincarcerated — among important subgroups of its participant population. Based in part on these findings, the CEO program was expanded to several additional cities around the country with financial assistance from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and the Social Innovation Fund.

This report presents results from a fidelity assessment and implementation analysis of five CEO replication programs in New York, California, and Oklahoma. The findings presented here focus on how the replication programs implemented CEO's core elements and provide a description of participants' experience. One additional goal of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of which aspects of the CEO model may have contributed to the recidivism reductions found in the initial evaluation of the New York City program.

BACKGROUND ON CEO AND RESEARCH ON EMPLOYMENT AND RECIDIVISM

Over the past three decades, incarceration has increased dramatically in the United States. Although the prison population has leveled off or declined in recent years, the proportion of Americans who are involved in the criminal justice system (in prison or jail or under probation or parole supervision) remains far above the rate that prevailed for most of the 20th century.¹ Former prisoners face a range of challenges in reentering the community, and rates of recidivism remain high. Within three

1. Nathan James, *The Federal Prison Population Buildup: Overview, Policy Changes, Issues, and Options* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014). Jails are locally operated, short-term facilities used to detain people who are awaiting trial and those who are serving sentences of less than one year. Prisons are long-term facilities run by the state or the federal government that typically hold felons and inmates with sentences of more than one year. Probation and parole are both forms of community supervision. Probation typically occurs as an alternative to incarceration in jail or prison, but it can also be built into a sentence to follow a period of incarceration. Parole refers to a period of supervision following an early release from prison. In both cases, supervision entails a range of rules and reporting requirements, the violation of which can result in a variety of penalties.

years of being released, two-thirds of former prisoners are arrested again and half return to prison.² Such high recidivism takes a serious toll on families and communities and imposes high costs on taxpayers. There is a pressing need to identify effective models for reintegrating former prisoners into society, lowering recidivism rates, and establishing paths to self-sufficiency.

Various studies have shown a correlation between higher employment and lower recidivism.³ For people returning from prison, employment can help pave the way to better housing and improved relationships within their families and communities. Unfortunately, it is a major challenge for former prisoners to find a steady job upon release. In addition to the stigma of a criminal record, most people returning from prison also have other attributes — such as limited school and work histories — that make them less appealing to potential employers.⁴ When they are able to secure work, many have competing demands on their time from drug-treatment programs, curfews, or other restrictions on mobility that can make it harder to keep a full-time job.

MDRC's previous studies on the New York City CEO program found mixed results: The program proved cost-effective and led to significant reductions in recidivism, but did not lead to long-term employment gains. Nonetheless, the impacts on recidivism were impressive (particularly given the difficulty other transitional jobs programs serving the formerly incarcerated had in achieving the same result), and raised questions about what aspects of CEO may have been driving the effect.⁵ This report aims to build on that understanding by offering more detail on the CEO model and the experiences of participants who went through the program.

THE CEO MODEL

CEO's model is based on the assumption that people recently released from prison have an immediate need for stable income and employment. Although there is some variation from one program to the next, in every location the core services are the same: participants are provided with a basic job-readiness and life-skills class for one week and then are quickly placed in temporary jobs in small work crews performing structured tasks, for which they receive a daily paycheck. Participants work three to four days on the work crews and spend the fifth day in the CEO office, meeting with

-
2. Matthew R. Durose, Alexia D. Cooper, and Howard N. Snyder, *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 30 States in 2005: Patterns from 2005 to 2010* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014).
 3. See, for example, Christopher Uggen, "Work As A Turning Point in the Life Course of Criminals: A Duration Model of Age, Employment, and Recidivism," *American Sociological Review* 67 (2000): 529-546; David B. Wilson, Catherine A. Gallagher, and Doris MacKenzie, "A Meta-Analysis of Corrections-Based Education, Vocation, and Work Programs for Adult Offenders," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 37, 4 (2000): 347-368; Edward J. Latessa, "Why Work Is Important, and How to Improve the Effectiveness of Correctional Reentry Programs that Target Employment," *Criminology and Public Policy* 11, 1 (2012): 87-91.
 4. Harry J. Holzer, Steven Raphael, and Michael A. Stoll, "Employment Barriers Facing Ex-Offenders," Reentry Roundtable Discussion Paper (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2003); Devah Pager, "The Mark of a Criminal Record," *American Journal of Sociology* 108, 5 (2003): 937-975.
 5. Cindy Redcross, Dan Bloom, and Erin Jacobs (MDRC); Alford A. Young, Jr., and Kristin Seefeldt (Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy); and Michelle Manno, Sara Muller-Ravett, Jennifer Yahner, and Janine Zweig (Urban Institute), *Work After Prison: One-Year Findings from the Transitional Jobs Reentry Demonstration* (New York: MDRC, 2010).

job coaches or job developers who help participants obtain unsubsidized jobs in the private sector. (The role of a CEO job coach is to work with new participants and those who are not considered “job-start ready,” helping them get ready to search and interview for unsubsidized positions while in transitional jobs. Job developers focus on moving participants into permanent employment by working with both outside employers and participants.)

Participants’ daily performance on work crews is evaluated by work-site supervisors through the use of a “Passport to Success,” which participants can show to potential employers when they apply for jobs. Bonus payments called “Rapid Rewards” are offered to former participants as incentives to stick with jobs they obtain after going through the CEO program.

Figure ES.1 illustrates the model’s conceptual framework, showing the components of the intervention and how those components are intended to lead — through stability, positive peer and staff influences, short-term employment, and work-readiness training — to long-term improvements in employment and reduced recidivism. Specifically, the program’s intervention of daily paid work along with job-search assistance, interview preparation, and training in workplace expectations is expected to improve participants’ stability, incomes, and job readiness. The thinking is that these short-term changes during the critical period immediately following release from prison will ultimately lead to longer-term employment gains, improved attitudes and behaviors, and reductions in recidivism.

REPLICATING CEO AND ASSESSING FIDELITY

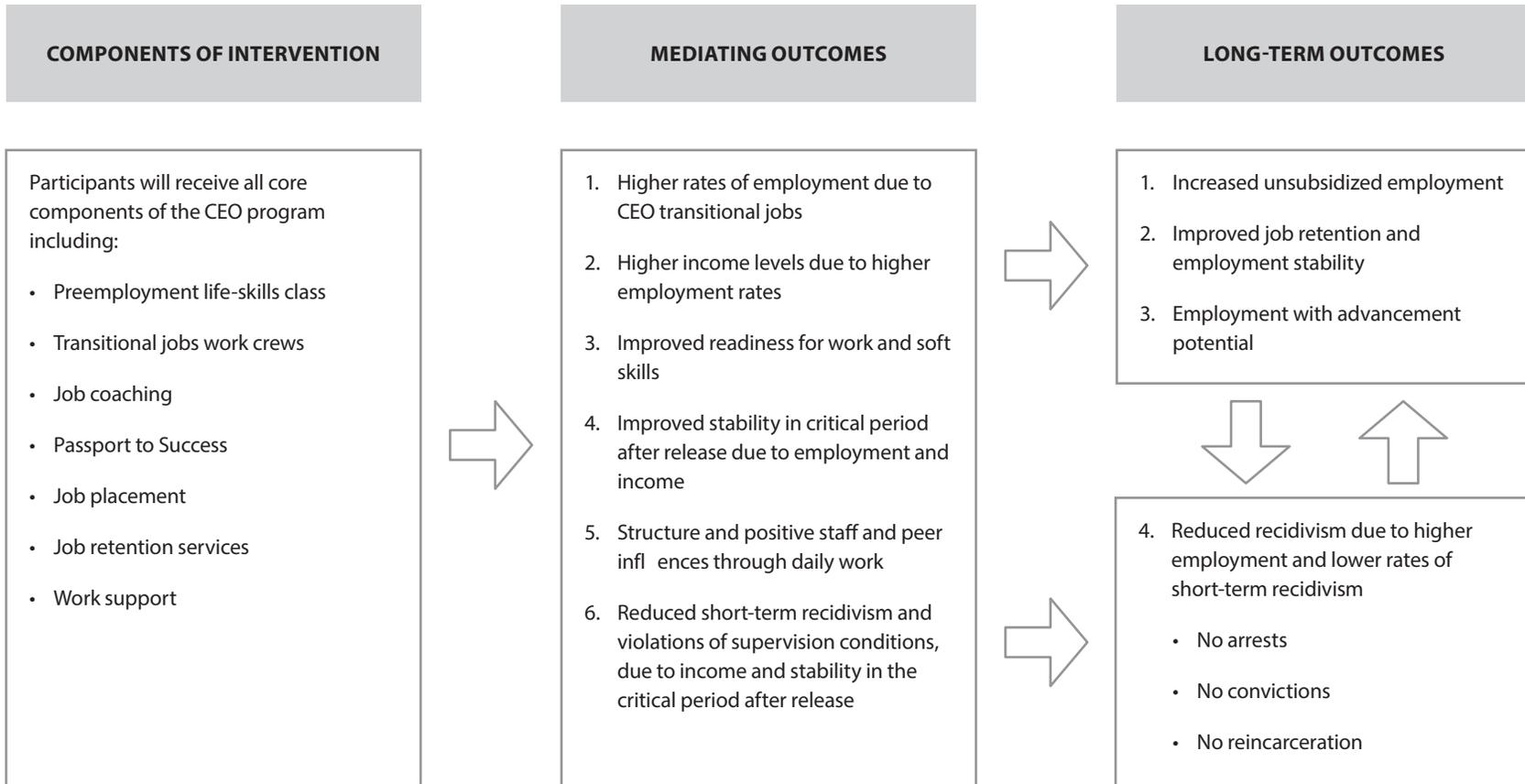
The replication of CEO’s program model outside of New York City took place as a part of the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a federal initiative aimed at expanding and replicating promising program models serving socially and economically disadvantaged communities. The SIF is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation has responsibility for selecting models for replication and providing matching funds to assist their expansion to a larger scale. CEO is one of 12 evidence-based programs selected in 2011 to be part of the SIF and receive funding and technical assistance to replicate its model in other cities around the country.⁶

In expanding the program, CEO leaders looked for cities that had a clear need (meaning that CEO’s services would fill a niche among local reentry providers); a sufficient number of people returning home on parole for CEO to serve at least 150 people a year; support from local stakeholders (including a strong champion in a government position); and partners to provide transitional jobs to work crews.

In 2011 MDRC began a fidelity assessment of those CEO replication programs that were fully operational. As new programs got off the ground, they were added to the assessment. Ultimately all five replication programs that became operational during the study time frame were included.

6. EMCF matched \$30 million from the SIF with \$30 million from its own endowment and, through the True North Fund, developed by EMCF in 2011, helped the 12 SIF grantees secure the \$60 million they were required by statute to raise to match this funding.

FIGURE ES.1 CEO Conceptual Model



MDRC staff members visited the programs and conducted a series of interviews with program staff members and managers, participants, and service and referral partners. MDRC determined whether replication programs were faithful to the New York City model using a structured process developed in consultation with CEO leaders. This process was designed to focus on aspects of the model that CEO leaders deemed “essential.” These core program elements are shown in Box ES.1, and the full fidelity assessment instrument is included with the full text of this report as Appendix B.1.

MAIN FINDINGS

In addition to assessing programs’ fidelity to the original program model, research visits also focused on gaining a deeper understanding of which components of the CEO model — or combination of components — may have contributed the most to the reductions in recidivism found in the initial evaluation. To that end, the research team conducted a series of conversations with stakeholders (including representatives from mental health providers, other job training centers and nonprofit organizations, staff members in the local district attorney’s office, parole and probation agencies, and employers); administered questionnaires to program staff members and participants; and engaged over a dozen participants in in-depth interviews focused on their path to CEO and their experience with its services.

This report’s findings include the following:

- **Overall, replication programs operated with high fidelity to the original model.** Despite dramatic differences in scale relative to the New York City program, participants in all replication programs received similar orientation messages, performed similar work-crew tasks, and had similar experiences with job counseling and on-site supervision. Most of the variation that did occur owed to the size of the programs: Outside of New York City, the CEO programs were much smaller, typically serving about 250 to 400 people per year, compared with over 2,500 served in New York City.
- **Participants in replication programs engaged in CEO activities at similar rates as participants in New York City, although replication programs did a better job of moving more participants through the early stages and into working with a job developer to obtain unsubsidized employment.** Across all the programs, between about 80 percent and 90 percent of participants made it through the initial Life Skills activities and into a transitional job, and the average time worked in these jobs was typically around 20-23 days. As shown in Table ES.1, the primary differences in participant engagement between replication programs and the New York City program were that more participants in replication programs were deemed ready to work with a job developer on finding an unsubsidized job (about 75 percent across the replication programs compared with about 65 percent in New York City) and more were placed in unsubsidized jobs and received at least one Rapid Rewards bonus (92 percent in the replication programs and 75 percent in New York City). These rates suggest that the program was placing more emphasis on the transition to unsubsidized employment, one of the main enhancements suggested by the original MDRC evaluation of the New York City program.

BOX ES.1

Program Elements Measured for Fidelity

CATEGORY	PROGRAM ELEMENT
Recruitment and Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of service to intended target population • Size of target population • Presence of a committed criminal justice referral partner (that is, parole and probation offices) • Standing in the community
Service Model and Core Program Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Life Skills Education class • Implementation of “Job Readiness Assessment” and formal follow-up processes to assess attainment of goals • Length of time it takes to place participants at work sites • Adoption of the CEO work crew model of transitional jobs • Presence of a designated work-site supervisor who is sensitive to the needs of the program’s population • Provision of transitional jobs that allow participants to build basic work skills • Length of time working in the transitional job • Implementation of office-based job coaching • Implementation of job placement services • Implementation of job retention services
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of a structure regarding organizational policies, practices, and goals that is commonly understood by staff members • Frequent and active communication among staff members and between staff members and managers • Adequacy of staffing • Availability of organizational resources • Use of CEO’s management information system • Quality of managers’ responses to problems • Degree of coordination across locations

TABLE ES.1 Participation in CEO Activities: Replication Programs Compared with the New York City Program

OUTCOME	NEW YORK CITY	REPLICATION PROGRAMS
Ever worked in a CEO transitional job (%)	88.4	79.3 ***
Assessed for job-start readiness (%)	88.2	85.9 **
Determined to be job-start ready (%)	64.5	75.8 ***
Met with a job coach (%)	81.7	76.9 ***
Met with a job developer (%)	56.4	71.8 ***
AMONG THOSE WHO WORKED IN A CEO TRANSITIONAL JOB		
Days worked in a CEO transitional job ^a (%)		***
1-10	33.7	37.5
11-20	20.5	25.0
21-30	14.0	14.8
31-40	11.6	9.5
More than 41	20.2	13.2
Average number of days worked in a CEO transitional job	23.2	19.9 ***
Average number of meetings with job coach	3.2	1.5 ***
Average number of meetings with job developer	3.8	3.7
Total weeks of active engagement with program ^b	13.2	10.9 ***
Placed in an unsubsidized job ^c (%)	34.7	50.0 ***
AMONG THOSE WHO WERE PLACED IN AN UNSUBSIDIZED JOB		
Unsubsidized job characteristics		
Average starting wage (\$)	9.72	9.19 ***
Hours per week	33.5	35.8 ***
Employer-provided benefits (%)	17.7	29.2 ***
Ever received a Rapid Rewards payment ^d (%)	75.2	92.2 ***
AMONG THOSE WHO RECEIVED A RAPID REWARDS PAYMENT		
Number of Rapid Rewards payments ^d	2.8	5.7 ***
Total amount of Rapid Rewards payments ^d (\$)	177.81	172.89
Sample size	2,560	1,668

(continued)

TABLE ES.1 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from CEO's management information system.

NOTES: The samples from all programs include people who enrolled in CEO between January 2012 and September 2013. To assess differences in participation between the New York City program and the replication programs, chi-square tests were used for categorical variables and two-tailed t-tests were used for continuous variables. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. See Appendix Table B.1 for a comparison of each individual replication program with the New York City program.

^aDays worked may not be consecutive.

^bThis measure is calculated from the date of first enrollment to the date of first placement in an unsubsidized job, or to the last date of employment in a CEO transitional job.

^cThis includes unsubsidized employment placements by CEO and self-placement employment that CEO was made aware of or that the client reported to CEO.

^dThis measure reflects whether individuals received Rapid Rewards in the 12 months following enrollment into CEO. It includes only people who enrolled in CEO between January 2012 and March 30, 2013 to allow for 12 months of follow-up, as individuals can receive Rapid Rewards for up to six months following placement into an unsubsidized job.

- **Participants said that the program's most essential and distinguishing elements were its structure and the support of the staff members.** In-depth interviews, semistructured interviews on work sites, and questionnaires administered to active participants collectively suggested that participants found the formal structure of the program to be particularly valuable, saying that the program balanced concern for their long-term employment goals with their short-term financial needs. The coupling of daily, paid work with office-based employment support provided stability during a critical and challenging time in participants' lives.
- **Participants and staff members expressed different views of the value of the CEO experience in affecting personal behavior outside of work.** While staff members reported that CEO work crews function primarily as jobs that allow participants to build work experience and learn appropriate workplace behavior, participants reported receiving valuable advice and support that they applied in their personal lives. Interestingly, participants reported receiving both personal and professional advice from supervisors at much higher rates than supervisors reported providing it. One of the goals of this study was to clarify the nature of the work crew experience, including the role of work-site supervisors and the degree to which work crew participants received mentorship or skill development. Interviews, questionnaires, and observations suggest that the crews primarily focused on accomplishing the task at hand and that most supervisors saw the role as managerial first (with some disregarding the notion of mentorship). Participants generally appreciated the work orientation and anticipated that the crew experience would be valuable to them in their future jobs.

CONCLUSION

The primary goals for this study were (1) to assess the degree to which five CEO replication programs were able to implement the CEO model with fidelity to the New York City program, (2) to examine whether CEO was succeeding in revamping its approach to helping participants obtain unsubsidized jobs, and (3) to explore more fully the mechanisms that may have led to the impacts on recidivism found in the earlier random assignment study of the New York City program. The findings from this study confirm that the five replication programs have been effective in implementing the core components of the model. Despite minor variations in the delivery of services, the research team found that all core components were in place in the replication programs and that participants across the replication programs received comparable services and experiences.

Going into this assessment, one important hypothesis held that CEO may have achieved its earlier impacts because the work crews offered a forum for mentoring or coaching that led to changes in participants' attitudes and behaviors, ultimately leading to reductions in crime. Interestingly, participants and staff members responded differently to questions on this topic. Although staff members generally defined their roles narrowly and did not set out to provide mentoring or advice to participants, participants reported that they did receive support and guidance from staff members that they were able to apply to their lives outside of CEO. Questionnaire and interview responses suggest that crew supervisors saw their role as managers first and only delivered coaching or mentoring incidentally and as appropriate. Overall, though, interviews and questionnaires with participants suggested that it was chiefly the structure and the daily pay of the program that were its most valuable elements.

The expansion and evaluation of CEO's model will continue beyond the publication of this report. In 2013, CEO was awarded a \$12 million Pay for Success grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to continue to deliver and evaluate the effectiveness of its services in New York City and Rochester. The Pay for Success project involves a random assignment evaluation that will yield early results in the next few years, offering valuable information to the field about how the findings from the first random assignment study might be replicated and whether improvements in CEO's targeting strategies lead to even larger reductions in recidivism. CEO also continues to build upon the hypothesis mentioned in the previous paragraph by seeking ways to train staff members to address thinking and behaviors directly. For example, MDRC is currently working with CEO to pilot test and evaluate an innovative cognitive behavioral therapy curriculum to address thinking and behavior change more deliberately in the context of employment for former prisoners.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This report presents findings from an in-depth fidelity and implementation study of five programs replicating the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), a large and highly regarded transitional employment program in New York City. Over the past several years, CEO began replicating its model in several locations in upstate New York, Oklahoma, California, and Pennsylvania. The New York City CEO program was rigorously evaluated as part of an earlier random assignment study and was found to be effective at reducing recidivism rates — the rates at which participants committed new crimes or were reincarcerated — among important subgroups of its participant population. The program was also effective at increasing employment early in the follow-up period, while participants were working in the transitional jobs, but these increases could be attributed to the program jobs themselves and were not sustained in the long run. The current study describes how the model was replicated in other locations, assesses its implementation in various contexts, and reports on findings from a qualitative study of participants’ perceptions and experiences.

This study is likely to be of particular interest to those who have followed the evaluation evidence of the first CEO study and other recent and ongoing studies of transitional jobs programs. In this report they will see how CEO has adjusted to meet the demands of expanding to a larger scale, while simultaneously building upon and making operational the lessons of the earlier evaluation. CEO’s heavy involvement with the growing Social Impact Bond movement adds further relevance to the study.

THE SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND

This study is funded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (EMCF) as part of the Social Innovation Fund (SIF). The SIF is an important federal initiative designed to promote the expansion and replication of promising programs to improve the economic opportunities and development of individuals and communities. The Corporation for National and Community Service administers the fund and EMCF is one of the intermediaries responsible for identifying and selecting promising interventions and providing matching funds to help the programs replicate their models and expand them to a larger scale (see Box 1.1).¹

1. For more information about the Social Innovation Fund see Corporation for National and Community Service (2015) or Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (2015).

BOX 1.1

The EMCF Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF), an initiative enacted under the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, targets millions of dollars in public-private funds to expand effective solutions across three issue areas: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development and school support. This work seeks to create a catalog of proven approaches that can be replicated in communities across the country. The SIF generates a 3:1 private-public match, sets a high standard for evidence, empowers communities to identify and drive solutions to address social problems, and creates an incentive for grant-making organizations to target funding more effectively to promising programs. Administered by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the SIF is part of the government's broader agenda to redefine how evidence, innovation, service, and public-private cooperation can be used to tackle urgent social challenges.

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, in collaboration with MDRC and The Bridgespan Group, is leading a SIF project that aims to expand the pool of organizations with proven programs that can help low-income young people make the transition to productive adulthood. The project is particularly focused on young people who are at greatest risk of failing or dropping out of school or of not finding work, who are involved or likely to become involved in the foster care or juvenile justice system, or who are engaging in risky behavior such as criminal activity or teenage pregnancy.

EMCF, with its partners MDRC and Bridgespan, selected an initial cohort of nine programs and a second cohort of three programs to receive SIF grants: BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life), Center for Employment Opportunities, Children's Aid Society-Carrera Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program, Children's Home Society of North Carolina, Communities in Schools, Gateway to College Network, PACE Center for Girls, Reading Partners, The SEED Foundation, WINGS for Kids, Youth Guidance, and Children's Institute, Inc. These organizations were selected through a competitive process based on prior evidence of impacts on economically disadvantaged young people; a track record of serving young people in communities of need; strong leadership and a potential for growth; and the financial and operational capabilities necessary to expand to a large scale.

The EMCF Social Innovation Fund initiative, called the True North Fund, includes support from CNCS and 15 private coinvestors: The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Duke Endowment, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The JPB Foundation, George Kaiser Family Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Open Society Foundations, The Penzance Foundation, The Samberg Family Foundation, The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, The Starr Foundation, Tipping Point Community, The Wallace Foundation, and the Weingart Foundation.

The Center for Employment Opportunities is 1 of 12 evidence-based programs selected by EMCF in 2011 to be part of the three-year SIF effort and receive funding and technical assistance to replicate its model in various locations across the United States. Between 2011 and 2012, with the assistance of the SIF, CEO began operating replication programs in New York State, Oklahoma, and California. As part of the SIF, MDRC was asked to conduct a fidelity study of five replication programs. This report describes the results from that study. Table 1.1 outlines CEO's expansion over the course of the SIF replication and lists the locations evaluated in the study.

TABLE 1.1 History of CEO Expansion

PRE-SIF	BEGINNING OF THE SIF	LATER-STAGE SIF	POST-SIF	CITIES INCLUDED IN THE EVALUATION AS PART OF THE SIF REPLICATION
June 30, 2011 and before	July 1, 2011 to January 31, 2012	August 1, 2013	July 1, 2015 to December 30, 2015	
New York City, NY	Tulsa, OK	San Bernardino, CA	Philadelphia, PA	Albany, NY
Albany, NY	Oakland, CA	Oklahoma City, OK	San Jose, CA	Buffalo, NY
Buffalo, NY	San Diego, CA			Rochester, NY
Rochester, NY	Binghamton, NY			San Diego, CA
Syracuse, NY				Tulsa, OK

BACKGROUND ON THE PROBLEM AND CEO’S EVIDENCE

Over the past three decades, incarceration has increased dramatically in the United States. Although the nation’s prison population has leveled off or declined slightly in the recent past, the proportion of Americans who are involved in the criminal justice system (in prison or jail or under probation or parole supervision) remains far above the rate that prevailed for most of the 20th century.² Former prisoners face a range of challenges to successful reentry into the community, and rates of recidivism are high. Within three years of their release, two-thirds are arrested and half return to prison.³ Recidivism imposes huge costs on taxpayers, families, and communities. There is a pressing need to identify effective models for promoting behavioral change among individuals involved in the justice system.

The relationship between employment and recidivism is complicated and research regarding that relationship is mixed. However, studies have shown a correlation between higher employment and lower recidivism.⁴ Employment can help former prisoners obtain better housing and improve their relationships within their families and communities. Unfortunately, it is a major challenge for former prisoners to find a steady job upon release. In addition to a criminal record, most recently released people have other attributes, such as limited schooling and work history, that make them less appealing to potential employers. They may have competing demands on their time from drug-treatment

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2. James (2014). Jails are locally operated, short-term facilities used to detain people who are awaiting trial and those who are serving sentences of less than one year. Prisons are long-term facilities run by the state or the federal government that typically hold felons and inmates with sentences of more than one year. Probation and parole are both forms of community supervision. Probation typically occurs as an alternative to incarceration in jail or prison, but it can also be built into a sentence to follow a period of incarceration. Parole refers to a period of supervision following an early release from prison. In both cases, supervision entails a range of rules and reporting requirements, the violation of which can result in a variety of penalties.
 3. Durose, Cooper, and Snyder (2014).
 4. See, for example, Uggen (2000); Wilson, Gallagher, and MacKenzie (2000); Latessa (2012).

programs, and curfews or other restrictions on mobility that can make it harder to find and keep a full-time job. Further, formerly incarcerated people are legally barred from working in certain occupations and many employers are reluctant to hire people with criminal records.⁵

In recent years, many states and localities have developed multifaceted prisoner reentry initiatives. Reentry initiatives often include a range of services and other forms of support, but almost all include a strong emphasis on employment. The transitional jobs model has been particularly attractive because it gives formerly incarcerated individuals a source of legitimate income in the critical months following release and provides staff members with an opportunity to help participants build basic work skills and behaviors before they seek jobs in the regular labor market.⁶ CEO, originally based in New York City, is one of the nation's largest and most highly regarded transitional jobs programs for formerly incarcerated people. The program serves nearly 4,500 people each year and provides immediate paid work to individuals returning to the community after being released from prison. Individuals are referred by their parole officers and are placed in paid jobs immediately after completing an initial weeklong preemployment class. City and state agencies have contracts with CEO for work crews who perform maintenance and repair functions at more than 30 sites around the city. These crews consist of CEO participants and are supervised by a CEO staff member. Participants also receive assistance in finding unsubsidized jobs from office-based job coaches and job developers.⁷

Between 2004 and 2010, MDRC conducted a rigorous random assignment evaluation of the New York City CEO program.⁸ The three-year evaluation results showed that participation in CEO led to significant reductions in important measures of recidivism, including a 65 percent reduction in violent crime. The largest impacts occurred among former prisoners who had been released from prison within the previous 90 days and among those at relatively high risk of recidivism when they enrolled in the program.⁹ CEO produced large increases in overall employment during the first year of follow-up, largely the result of the CEO transitional jobs. There were few impacts on unsubsidized employment, though there was some evidence of increases in employment stability after participants left the program, also concentrated among the recently released subgroup.¹⁰

In the past decade, a total of five large-scale random assignment studies have been conducted of transitional jobs programs serving individuals who were recently released from prison (including the CEO study).¹¹ These evaluations found that, like CEO, the other transitional jobs programs also

5. Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll (2003); Pager (2003).

6. For more information on the transitional jobs model, see Heartland Alliance (2014) and Bloom (2010).

7. The role of a CEO job coach is to work with new participants and those who are not considered "job-start ready," helping them get ready to search and interview for unsubsidized positions while in transitional jobs. Job developers focus on moving participants into permanent employment by working with both outside employers and participants.

8. CEO was one of four programs included in the Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

9. Redcross, Millenky, Rudd, and Levshin (2012); Zweig, Yahner, and Redcross (2011).

10. Redcross, Millenky, Rudd, and Levshin (2012).

11. Redcross, Millenky, Rudd, and Levshin (2012); Redcross et al. (2010).

produced very large increases in employment initially. The employment rates for people who had access to the transitional jobs programs were typically 40 percentage points or 50 percentage points higher than the rates for those assigned to the control groups, who usually received low-intensity help looking for unsubsidized jobs. These findings confirm that the programs provided jobs to many people who would not otherwise have worked in the formal economy. But the large initial effects could be attributed almost exclusively to the transitional jobs themselves and the employment gains disappeared when those jobs ended. Within one year after enrollment, the program and control groups' employment rates were the same and they remained that way through the rest of the two- or three-year follow-up periods.

Interestingly, unlike CEO, the four other programs had no statistically significant impact on recidivism (arrests, convictions, or reincarceration). This was true even in the early months of follow-up, when the program group was substantially more likely to be working than the control group. At a minimum, this pattern indicates that the connection between work and crime is not straightforward, despite the correlational results described earlier.

There are many possible reasons why CEO lowered recidivism when other transitional jobs programs did not. One potential explanation relates to the structure of CEO's transitional jobs, where participants are placed in small crews closely supervised by a CEO staff member. The four other transitional jobs programs did not use this model. It may be that the interpersonal dynamic within a crew, or the relationship between the supervisor and the participants, led to the kind of changes in attitudes that criminologists believe are necessary to lower recidivism. The study did not explicitly test for these effects, but a survey showed that program group members were more likely than control group members to report that there was a person in their lives they could turn to for advice and support.

Criminal justice researchers have argued that employment programs are unlikely to be successful at reducing recidivism unless they address the core "criminogenic needs" of individuals involved in the criminal justice system. The term "criminogenic needs" is used to describe dynamic (that is, changeable) risk factors. Most researchers agree that the most important dynamic risk factors are impulsivity, lack of self-control, antisocial thoughts, and antisocial peers. These findings have led many corrections programs to focus on cognitive behavioral therapy as a treatment approach.¹² There are many different kinds of cognitive behavioral therapy interventions, but all share the assumption that the "cognitive distortions" that lead people toward criminal behaviors are learned rather than innate, and thus can be changed. Cognitive behavioral therapy approaches are used to teach offenders new, "prosocial" skills to replace the antisocial ones they often possess, through modeling, practice, and reinforcement.¹³ Research has further shown that cognitive behavioral therapy approaches are most effective at reducing recidivism for those at the highest risk of recidivism initially — as was found to be the case for the CEO program.¹⁴

12. Van Voorhis and Lester (1997); Hubbard and Latessa (2004).

13. Latessa (2012). "Prosocial" activities are the antithesis of antisocial behaviors such as substance use. Prosocial activities include church participation, civic engagement (for example, through a political organization or by being registered to vote), volunteer participation, and involvement in social clubs.

14. Zweig, Yahner, and Redcross (2011).

As an employment-focused program, CEO did not directly seek to target cognitive behavioral skills in the way cognitive behavioral therapy does. Nonetheless, CEO does aim to change individuals' behavior, as it seeks to improve individuals' job readiness through on-the-job coaching that applies techniques similar to those commonly used in cognitive behavioral therapy: prosocial modeling, education in problem solving, and positive reinforcement. This possibility led to the hypothesis described above that CEO's work-crew model promoted improvements in attitudes and behaviors and is the mechanism behind CEO's success in reducing recidivism. The current study includes a qualitative examination of the experiences of program participants in the hope of addressing this hypothesis.

THIS REPORT

This report briefly describes the process of replicating CEO and presents the results from a fidelity assessment of five CEO replication programs in New York, Oklahoma, and California. The replication programs chosen for this report included all CEO programs that were fully operational during the study. Three additional replication programs have launched successfully — in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; San Bernardino, California; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — since the data collection for this report was completed. In addition to discussing results from the fidelity study, this report attempts to supplement the evidence from the earlier rigorous evaluation of the CEO program through a more in-depth look at participants' experiences.

Importantly, CEO is not a “manualized” intervention. In other words, it does not dictate a step-by-step treatment plan or curriculum, allowing some flexibility in *how* the various components are delivered. The program does have a clear structure, however, and a set of core components, including an initial one-week life-skills class, a paid job in CEO's work crews, daily pay, job coaching, job placement, and services to help participants retain jobs once they get them. Each component comes with specific systems that guide how it should be carried out, such as assessments of job readiness, a formal performance rating system for participants (the Passport to Success), and expectations for how staff members will coach participants to develop “soft skills” (the general habits and competencies that make for an effective employee).

While this study closely examines the implementation and fidelity of the replication programs, it does not include an impact evaluation.¹⁵ The replication programs were found to operate with high fidelity to the model, but it is not possible from this assessment to determine whether the replication programs would have the same effects on employment and recidivism as were found in the earlier study of the New York City program. It is reasonable to assume that if the replication programs operate the same model, with the same population, the results should be similar (or perhaps better, since CEO implemented various improvements based on the results of the earlier study). However, many external factors can influence programs' success, including the service environment, labor

15. The study was originally planned to include a random assignment impact evaluation of three upstate New York CEO replication programs. However, it was determined early on that a random assignment study would not be feasible given the relatively small size of the parole populations in the areas served by the replication programs, and given the numbers the programs had the capacity to serve.

BOX 1.2

Pay for Success

New York State was selected to take part in the U.S. Department of Labor's Pay for Success project. The Pay for Success project is a contract between the government and an intermediary organization. Under this contract objectives were set by New York State and the state's nonprofit intermediary, which raised operating funds from private and philanthropic investors for the program.

The Pay for Success project targets parolees assessed by the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision as being at a high risk of recidivism, who are referred immediately upon release. CEO is the exclusive service provider for the project. The state will pay the intermediary, which will in turn repay investors, based on CEO's ability to increase employment and reduce recidivism. This type of funding mechanism is also known as a Social Impact Bond.

Success in the Pay for Success project is measured based on three factors: (1) recidivism (whether a parolee is reincarcerated), (2) engagement in transitional jobs, and (3) employment. For investors to be repaid, the program must reduce recidivism by at least 8 percent or increase unsubsidized employment by at least 5 percentage points, or both. CEO's effectiveness in reducing recidivism and increasing employment will be measured using a random assignment research design. The evaluation will compare the outcomes of program group participants with those of a control group to assess the impact of the Pay for Success program and determine whether the investors will be repaid.

market, and structure of the criminal justice system in each locale. Notably, a separate random assignment evaluation is currently being conducted of CEO's New York City and Rochester, New York programs as part of the New York State and U.S. Department of Labor's Pay for Success initiative. Results from that evaluation will be available in 2017. See Box 1.2 for a description of Pay for Success.

The second goal of this study is to take a closer look at the implementation of the CEO model and the experiences of participants while they are in the program, which may help clarify the mechanisms through which CEO reduces recidivism. By taking a closer look at implementation this evaluation provides insight into the structure of the program, with particular attention to the components that differ from the other transitional jobs programs studied in the past (important information that was not available for the earlier study). This study also includes a multifaceted qualitative examination of the perceptions and experiences of participants, the relationships that form in work crews between staff members and participants, and the ways staff members support participants as they transition from prison to the community. The protocols that guided the qualitative study were designed to obtain information that would inform the hypothesis arising from the earlier study: that the structure of CEO's transitional jobs — specifically the work crews — provide the opportunity for program staff members (and peers) to influence participants' outlooks, attitudes, and perceptions in a way that other transitional jobs programs do not, thereby leading to reductions in criminal behaviors.

It can be difficult even for very experienced and well-managed programs to replicate themselves and expand to a larger scale. This report therefore also tells the story of CEO's approach to replication, including the factors it considered in choosing one replication location rather than another, the ingredients it found necessary for success, the critical role of local partners and the influence of local context, and its decision to centralize management rather than taking a franchise or "affiliate" approach.

Chapter 2 describes the research approach taken to assess fidelity to the model and the data sources used in this evaluation. Chapter 3 describes the core components of CEO's program and the findings of the fidelity and implementation study. Chapter 4 describes results from an in-depth qualitative study highlighting the perspectives of participants and their experiences in the program. Chapter 5 presents a brief conclusion. Appendix A, contributed by Sam Schaeffer, the executive director of CEO, provides some background on the process CEO took in founding the five replication programs in this study. It also includes a text box describing an experience with using an affiliate approach to create one replication program in California, which highlights some of the challenges organizations may encounter when using such an approach.

CHAPTER 2

Methods, Data Sources, and Participant Characteristics

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, MDRC began fidelity and implementation assessments of five Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) replication programs — all replication programs that were considered fully operational during the study time frame. These replication programs were in Albany, Buffalo, and Rochester, New York; San Diego, California; and Tulsa, Oklahoma. The goal was to assess their fidelity to the program model that was developed in New York City.¹ MDRC visited each of the programs and conducted a series of interviews with staff members and managers, participants, and service and referral partners. In addition, the research team conducted an in-depth qualitative study that sought to capture staff members' and participants' perspectives on the program. This chapter will describe the methods and data sources used in this study.

The questions guiding the fidelity and implementation research were:

- Is the replication program operating the core CEO components with fidelity to the service model?
- How is the replication program different from the original New York City program, and why?
- What operational challenges arose in the replication program and how were they addressed?
- Do participants in the replication program receive the same level of CEO's core services as participants at the New York City program?
- What are characteristics and qualifications of staff members and how do they view their roles and responsibilities in supporting and coaching participants?
- What kinds of challenges do participants face when they leave prison and rejoin their communities?

1. CEO has since added replication programs in other cities, but at the time of the study these were the only five that were fully operational.

- What did participants expect and what did they gain from the program?
- How is CEO viewed by parole/probation agencies and other community stakeholders?
- What policies are in place governing parole/probation and reentry in each of the cities? Do differences in the local criminal justice policy environment affect the implementation of CEO or the characteristics of the population served by the program?

METHODS USED TO ASSESS FIDELITY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The study of CEO’s replication programs began with an assessment of their fidelity to the core elements of the model. The research team defined 24 program elements, based on the “essential elements” identified by CEO’s leaders (see Appendix A). The elements fell into three categories: (1) recruitment and enrollment, (2) the service model and core program components, and (3) management. These elements were summarized in a rating structure that was used to quantify findings after the research team visited each of the replication programs (see Appendix Figure B.1). The program elements are summarized in Box 2.1 and discussed in further detail below.

The first group of program elements shown in Box 2.1 are the processes in place for recruiting and enrolling CEO participants. A clear recruitment procedure and target population are critical to successful program replication, and the enrollment mechanisms CEO put in place (for example, a streamlined referral process and defined eligibility criteria) contribute to the replication programs’ ability to reach the people the model was designed to serve (described in more detail in Chapter 3). The second group of program elements shown in Box 2.1 captures CEO’s service model and core program components. Replication programs were expected to operate all of CEO’s core components (life-skills training, transitional jobs, job coaching, job placement, and job retention services). In addition, the research team paid close attention to the frequency and intensity of service delivery, or “dosage” of program services (for example, the number of days or hours in each program component and the incentives for participation). The third and final group of program elements relates to program management. CEO management was characterized by its clear staffing structure, heavy use of the Salesforce management information system, and active leadership. Taken together, all of these program elements provided a common set of benchmarks against which the research team could measure the fidelity of the replication programs in operating the CEO model.

It is also important to note that, as mentioned in the previous chapter, CEO’s model is not “manualized,” which means that the replication programs may differ from the original program in certain ways without compromising fidelity to the CEO model.² The most striking example of this variation can be observed in the size of the target population. Selected measures of program capacity are shown in Table 2.1. It was never the expectation that replication programs, operating in much smaller cities, would serve a client population as large as the one in New York City. Thus, while this

2. A “manualized” program follows a step-by-step curriculum, protocol, or plan. See Wilson (1998) for more on manualized programs and practice.

BOX 2.1

Program Elements Measured for Fidelity

CATEGORY	PROGRAM ELEMENT
Recruitment and Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of service to intended target population • Size of target population • Presence of a committed criminal justice referral partner (that is, parole and probation offices) • Standing in the community
Service Model and Core Program Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Life Skills Education class • Implementation of “Job Readiness Assessment” and formal follow-up processes to assess attainment of goals • Length of time it takes to place participants at work sites • Adoption of the CEO work crew model of transitional jobs • Presence of a designated work-site supervisor who is sensitive to the needs of the program’s population • Provision of transitional jobs that allow participants to build basic work skills • Length of time working in the transitional job • Implementation of office-based job coaching • Implementation of job placement services • Implementation of job retention services
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of a structure regarding organizational policies, practices, and goals that is commonly understood by staff members • Frequent and active communication among staff members and between staff members and managers • Adequacy of staffing • Availability of organizational resources • Use of CEO’s management information system • Quality of managers’ responses to problems • Degree of coordination across locations

TABLE 2.1 Profile of CEO's Programs at the Time of the Initial Site Visit, by City

	NEW YORK CITY ^a	ALBANY	BUFFALO	ROCHESTER	SAN DIEGO	TULSA
Year established	1996	2009	2009	2010	2011	2011
Date of initial site visit	November 2010	March 2011	March 2011	December 2011	April 2013	July 2012
Number served annually ^b	1,435	209	192	185	124	213
Number of staff members ^c	59	7	6	6	7	9
Number of CEO work crews	30-35	3	2	2	3	4

SOURCES: Program data based on MDRC site visits to CEO program offices, CEO's management information system, and communication with CEO New York City managers.

NOTES: ^aUnlike the initial visits to CEO's replication programs, which were to assess fidelity to the program model, the purpose of the visit to New York City in 2010 was to observe and document how the program model was implemented in the original location, with particular attention paid to changes that had been made since the conclusion of the earlier evaluation (see Redcross, Millenky, Rudd, and Levshin, 2012).

^bThis measure shows the number of people who enrolled in each CEO program in 2012. The number served in New York City only includes people under the supervision of parole. If CEO's other target populations, such as probationers, were included, the number served annually would be closer to 2,000.

^cThese data represent the approximate number of staff members involved in one or more of the following job responsibilities: enrollment, life-skills education, job coaching, job placement, job-retention support, and work-site supervision. Staff members in New York City who worked with people on probation are not included.

difference was important to keep in mind, it did not affect the findings with regard to the replication programs' fidelity.

Visits to the replication programs were conducted between 2011 and 2013, allowing time for each newly established program to become fully operational before the assessment visit. MDRC researchers conducted interviews with program staff members and managers, participants, and service and referral partners. Following the visits, each program was assessed for fidelity to the CEO model using the rating matrix presented in Appendix Figure B.1. The findings from these visits are described in detail in Chapter 3.

DATA SOURCES

The data in this report are drawn from a number of sources, summarized in Table 2.2 and described in more detail below.

TABLE 2.2 Data Sources in the CEO Replication Study

DATA SOURCE	SAMPLE	ALL PROGRAMS		NEW YORK CITY		ALBANY		BUFFALO		ROCHESTER		SAN DIEGO		TULSA	
		SAMPLE SIZE	ROUNDS	SAMPLE SIZE	ROUNDS	SAMPLE SIZE	ROUNDS	SAMPLE SIZE	ROUNDS	SAMPLE SIZE	ROUNDS	SAMPLE SIZE	ROUNDS	SAMPLE SIZE	
Semistructured interviews	CEO program staff members ^a	69	2	29	1	6	2	11	1	5	1	6	2	12	
Observations of work sites	CEO work sites	14	2	2	1	2	2	4	1	1	1	1	2	4	
Contextual sources (interviews)	State and local stakeholders ^b	35	1	4	2	5	2	14	2	5	1	11	2	8	
CEO management information system	CEO participants enrolled from Jan. 2012 to Sept. 2013 ^c	4,228	NA	2,560	NA	342	NA	372	NA	292	NA	274	NA	388	
Participant questionnaires	CEO participants working in transitional jobs	193	1	46	1	9	2	48	1	25	1	30	2	35	
Staff questionnaires	CEO program staff members ^a	90	1	59	1	5	1	7	1	5	1	7	1	7	
In-depth participant interviews	CEO participants who agreed to be interviewed ^d	20	NA	NA	NA	NA	2	11	NA	NA	NA	NA	2	9	

NOTES: Data collection for the CEO replication study began in November 2010 and ended in April 2014. The participant and staff questionnaires were administered in 2013 and 2014. NA = not applicable.

^aCEO program staff members included employees with the following job responsibilities: enrollment, life-skills education, job coaching, job placement, job-retention support, and work-site supervision. Some of the staff members in New York City, Buffalo, and Tulsa were interviewed more than once, but each individual is counted only once in the table.

(continued)

TABLE 2.2 (continued)

^bState and local stakeholders in the field of prisoner reentry included parole/probation agencies, service providers, and funders. For the statewide policy context in New York, MDRC conducted a phone interview with four representatives from the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision and the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. In the table, the interview is counted as a contextual source for each of the CEO programs operating in New York but is counted once in the “All Programs” column.

The research team acquired these data in April 2014. A cutoff date of September 2013 was selected to permit the research team to analyze six months of postenrollment data for each participant in the sample. Measures of participation in Rapid Rewards were calculated for participants who enrolled in CEO from January 2012 through April 2013 to allow for 12 months of postenrollment data analysis.

^cThe research team asked local CEO program staff members to identify participants to interview who would represent a variety of experiences with CEO and prisoner reentry and who had at least a couple of weeks of participation in the program.

Semistructured Interviews

MDRC conducted interviews with CEO program staff members and managers to obtain an understanding of operations in each replication program. Staff members were asked to describe the CEO services the program delivered and their own roles and experiences. Other interview questions examined important partnerships, participant characteristics, participants’ trajectories through the program, and local factors affecting prisoner reentry.

Observations of Work Crews

MDRC researchers visited 14 transitional job crews across CEO’s programs, making firsthand observations of participants at work and conducting informal interviews with participants and their supervisors.³

Contextual Sources

The research team met with the referring criminal justice agency in each city to learn about its policies and practices, and also interviewed community stakeholders in the field of prisoner reentry to learn about the context in which each replication program operates.

Management Information System Data

All CEO programs rely heavily on their management information system, Salesforce, to aid in the delivery of client services and program management. The management information system data files obtained by the research team included information about the following measures: program enrollment, job readiness, job placement, transitional work and earnings, and job-club and job-

3. This report refers to both “work crews” and “work sites.” A work crew is the group of people employed at a work site — the transitional job location.

placement activities. The main analysis sample was composed of individuals who enrolled in CEO between January 2012 and September 2013, allowing for six months of follow-up data relative to the participants' enrollment dates.⁴

Questionnaires

Staff and participant perspectives on CEO were solicited through questionnaires that asked about individuals' experiences as current employees or clients. Ninety staff members completed the questionnaires across all five replication programs and the New York City program (an 85 percent response rate). The participant questionnaires were administered to 193 participants across all of the replication programs in 2013 and 2014, only to individuals who were working in transitional jobs at the time.⁵ Detailed response rates for both questionnaires are presented in Appendix Table B.1. The results of both the staff and participant questionnaires are discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

In-Depth Participant Interviews

In-depth interviews with CEO participants were conducted when researchers visited the programs in Buffalo and Tulsa a second time. The primary purpose of these interviews was to gather detailed qualitative information about participants' experiences in CEO, with other reentry and employment programs, and with the criminal justice system. Two rounds of interviews were conducted: The first took place in person, while the participant was working in the CEO transitional job; the second was conducted by phone about three to five months later. Interviews were based on a common set of questions, participants were compensated for their time, and each interview lasted about 45 to 60 minutes. Thirteen participants were interviewed in the first round; the research team succeeded in reaching seven of them for follow-up interviews.

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4. CEO provided the research team with data exported from Salesforce. The data were at the event level (that is, there was a distinct record for every activity that took place for an individual), and contained no personally identifying information. Instead, the files contained a unique identifier for each individual referred to the program. Data were stored in designated project directories on MDRC's servers where only research staff members working on the project had access to them. Data were checked for completeness and quality, and cleaned for usage in analysis files. All analyses and summary statistics shown in the report were produced using SAS, a statistical analysis program. The total number of participants administered the questionnaire includes nine participants in Albany. However, the Albany program has been excluded from the participant questionnaire analysis, shown later in the report, due to the low response rate there.
 5. At the time of the survey, just under a third of the respondents (30 percent) had been employed for less than one month and almost 20 percent had been employed for more than three months. The remainder had been employed for one, two, or three months. A sensitivity analysis was conducted that excluded individuals who had been in the program for less than one month to see if the brevity of their time in the program affected their responses about their work experience (the thought being that people who had spent less time in the program may not have had sufficient time to engage with it). However, the amount of time people had been working in transitional jobs did not appear to affect their responses about their work experiences.

The Albany replication program has been excluded from the analysis of the participant questionnaire because the response rate there was very low.

BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

The research team obtained data files from CEO for all participants in the five replication programs and the New York City program who enrolled in CEO from January 2012 through September 2013. By January 2012, all of the replication programs in the study were firmly established; including data for participants enrolled through September 2013 ensured that all of the people included in the sample would have had an opportunity to participate in the program for six months after enrolling. As expected, these parameters yielded a much larger sample size in New York City (2,560 participants) than in the replication programs (274 to 388 participants in each). Selected characteristics of this sample are presented in Table 2.3.⁶

As Table 2.3 shows, although CEO serves a similar population in all of its locations, the characteristics of the participants differed in notable ways from one program to the next (see Appendix Table B.2 for the results of significance tests comparing sample characteristics in New York City to each replication program). For example, in New York (both New York City and upstate programs), participants were much more likely to be black/African American (72 percent to 90 percent) than white (7 percent to 16 percent), whereas only half of the sample in San Diego and Tulsa is black/African American. The proportion of participants who are female is much larger in Tulsa than in the other programs. Since Oklahoma incarcerates more women per capita than any other state in the country,⁷ this finding is not altogether surprising.

Similarly, there were important differences in the proportion of participants in each program who were supervised through parole. During the study period, the Albany and Rochester programs recruited solely from the parole system, meaning 100 percent of the sample from those programs was on parole.⁸ The Buffalo program, however, began serving people on probation in April 2013, which explains why a smaller proportion of the sample from that location is on parole (85 percent). In Oklahoma, probation and parole are administered by a single agency, and the Tulsa program enrolled people under either form of supervision. The most striking outlier is the San Diego program, where only 64 percent of the sample was on parole. This is a direct result of a major reform of California's correctional system enacted in 2011, known as Realignment (described in Appendix A.1 and Appendix Box A.1).

It is especially important to note the average number of days between when participants were released from prison and when they enrolled in CEO. As the previous study of CEO showed, recently released former prisoners stand to benefit the most from CEO services.⁹ There were striking differences in the number of days between release and enrollment, with the Albany and Tulsa programs keeping the average time to about four to six months. In New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, and San Diego,

6. Sample characteristics and a significance test comparing sample characteristics for the pooled replication programs are shown in Appendix Table B.3.

7. Carson (2015).

8. The sample from New York City includes only individuals on parole because CEO's nonparolee populations were excluded from this analysis.

9. Redcross, Millenky, Rudd, and Levshin (2012).

TABLE 2.3 Selected Characteristics of CEO Participants, by Program

CHARACTERISTIC	ALL PROGRAMS	NEW YORK CITY	ALBANY	BUFFALO	ROCHESTER	SAN DIEGO	TULSA
Age (%)							
18-25 years	34.0	26.1	35.1	46.2	53.1	55.5	44.1
26-30 years	18.6	19.7	18.1	14.8	15.4	17.2	18.8
31-40 years	23.2	25.3	24.6	20.2	15.4	13.5	23.5
41 years or older	24.2	28.9	22.2	18.8	16.1	13.9	13.7
Average age (years)	32.5	34.1	32.1	30.4	29.0	29.0	29.6
Race/ethnicity (%)							
Black/African American	71.1	72.1	81.4	77.4	90.3	50.6	50.0
White	13.9	6.5	15.7	13.2	8.7	45.4	42.8
Other	15.0	21.4	3.0	9.4	1.0	4.0	7.2
Male (%)	92.9	94.3	93.8	93.6	95.2	89.8	82.2
High school or high school equivalency diploma (%)	63.0	65.3	64.1	63.2	51.7	55.8	59.8
Days between release and enrollment (%)							
90 or fewer	51.5	53.5	51.9	42.9	45.5	23.5	69.1
91-120	7.2	5.7	11.0	13.7	9.5	11.2	3.6
121-180	9.3	8.5	14.0	11.8	9.1	12.3	6.7
181-365	14.3	13.2	10.7	14.0	16.0	30.6	12.4
More than 365	17.7	19.1	12.5	17.7	20.0	22.4	8.3
Average days between release and enrollment	215	226	166	227	255	248	117
Supervision type (%)							
Parole	94.8	100.0	100.0	85.2	100.0	63.9	83.5
Probation	5.2	0.0	0.0	14.8	0.0	36.1	16.5
Sample size	4,228	2,560	342	372	292	274	388

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from CEO's management information system.

NOTES: The samples from all cities include people who enrolled in CEO between January 2012 and September 2013.

in contrast, it takes an average of seven to nine months for participants to enroll in CEO after being released. One can also see the contrast by reviewing the percentage of participants who enrolled in the program within 90 days of release. Here, the differences are statistically significant; almost 70 percent of participants in Tulsa enrolled during this three-month window, compared with only 23 percent in San Diego. In other programs, this proportion is around 40 percent (Buffalo and Rochester) or about 50 percent (Albany and New York City). Notably, the proportion of participants who enrolled in the New York City program within 90 days of release is an increase from what was found in the earlier evaluation of the program. This increase probably reflects CEO's efforts to respond to that study's finding that the program was more effective at reducing recidivism among those who were recently released from prison.¹⁰

There were notable differences in the age of participants across programs. For example, the proportion of sample members ages 18 to 25 was much greater in most of the replication programs than it was in New York City. There are at least two reasons for this: First, the New York City sample shown in the table excludes people on probation, who tend to be younger than people on parole.¹¹ Second, CEO began targeting younger age groups in more recent years, and it was easier for the newer replication programs to set expectations with their referral partners to make a priority of that younger group than it was for the long-established New York City program.

The next chapter discusses how the CEO model was implemented by the replication programs and presents information about participation and service receipt using data from CEO's management information system.

10. Redcross, Millenky, Rudd, and Levshin (2012).

11. New York City probation clients receive an array of services from CEO that differ somewhat from CEO's core services; therefore, the data on this population do not provide appropriate benchmarks for assessing replication program fidelity.

CHAPTER 3

Fidelity and Adaptation: Replication of the CEO Model

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) model and the degree to which core model components were in place in the five replication programs that were part of this fidelity study. As discussed earlier, CEO has established a set of “essential elements” based on the earlier evaluation that were used in guiding MDRC’s assessment of the replication programs’ fidelity to the model. Although fidelity to the core elements of the model was not explicitly measured relative to the New York City program, that program did provide a helpful benchmark for specific aspects of the implementation analysis. In particular, this chapter makes comparisons with the New York City program to gauge the level of participation and service receipt that might be expected in the replication programs. This comparison is especially useful because the core model does not prescribe the “dosage” (that is, the frequency and intensity) of the services participants should receive, but one can assume that a certain minimum dosage is necessary for the program to be effective. At a minimum, the New York City program’s participation rates are helpful in assessing whether the replication programs are meeting the dosage standards of a program that was found to be effective.

As Chapter 2 pointed out, however, it is important to keep in mind that the New York City program is roughly 10 times the size of any of the replication programs, so some examples of variation in implementation can be explained by the relative sizes of the programs. Likewise, since the CEO model rarely provides detailed instructions concerning exactly how replication programs are supposed to deliver services, the assessment of fidelity presented here is more broadly focused on the implementation of core model elements, the development of partnerships with parole and other city agencies, and staff members’ qualifications and understanding of the program mission.

The next section describes each core CEO model component followed by examples of how replication programs did or did not adapt that component based on their local contexts. Participation rates in important program activities are presented, along with selected responses from a short questionnaire administered to staff members and active participants.

OVERVIEW OF THE CEO MODEL

CEO's program model is based on the assumption that people recently released from prison have an immediate need for stable income and employment. There is considerable evidence showing that the first three months out of prison are a critically vulnerable time for former prisoners, and the previous evaluation of CEO found that the program was most effective for people at the highest risk of reoffending and those most recently released from prison.¹

In every location, the core sequence of services is intended to be the same: Participants are recruited through partnerships with parole or probation offices (in recent years, giving priority to younger recruits and those recently released from prison). They take a basic job-readiness and life-skills class, and then they are quickly placed in small work crews performing highly structured, generally low-skilled work, for which they receive a daily paycheck. CEO participants work three to four days a week on the work crews and spend a fifth day in the office meeting with job coaches or job developers. Participants receive job placement assistance through these weekly individual consultations focused on résumé and interview preparation, career planning, referrals to appropriate job openings, and follow-up on progress made so far. Finally, those participants who secure regular work after CEO receive continuing consultations and cash bonuses to help them retain their jobs.

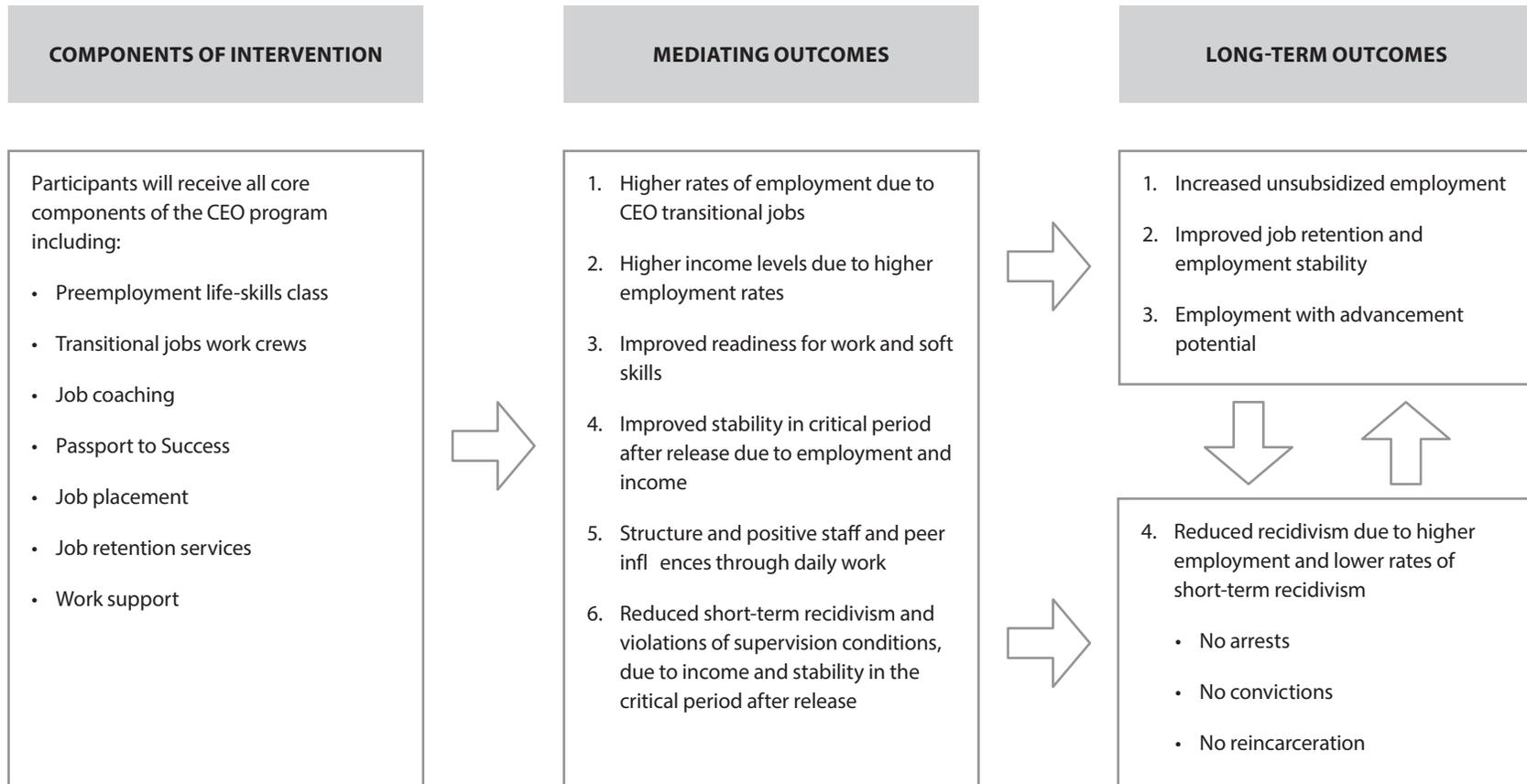
CEO's structured work-crew model and daily paycheck set it apart from many other employment service providers and, in interviews with staff members, participants, and partners, these elements were consistently described as indispensable pieces of the program.² A participant in Tulsa, for example, summed up the way the two features (daily pay and daily structure) worked together to help him after he exited prison. The daily pay, he said, allowed him "to cover my basic needs." Another participant pointed to the value of having a daily obligation, saying, "It gave me something to get up for in the morning. You know, not just to be laying around." As these participants understood, the transitional jobs are designed with a few principal goals in mind: (1) to provide stability and income, which may reduce the incentive to turn back to crime during the critical period just after release; (2) to expose participants to workplace skills and expectations so that they may be better prepared to succeed when they begin working in the regular labor market; and (3) to signal to prospective employers that the individuals were able to show up to work on time and perform satisfactorily in a job after being released from prison.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the model's conceptual framework, showing the components of the intervention and how those components are intended to lead — through stability, positive peer and staff influences, short-term employment, and work-readiness training — to long-term improvements in employment and reduced recidivism. Specifically, the program's intervention of daily paid work alongside job placement assistance, interview preparation, and training in workplace norms and expectations is expected to improve participants' stability, incomes, and job readiness in the time shortly following their release from prison, and reduce their criminal behaviors and recidivism.

1. Blumstein and Nakamura (2010); Redcross, Millenky, Rudd, and Levshin (2012).

2. See Chapter 4 for more detail on this point.

FIGURE 3.1 CEO Conceptual Model



These short-term improvements, the thinking goes, will ultimately lead to longer-term employment gains, improved attitudes and behaviors, and reductions in recidivism.

CEO INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

CEO has two operational goals: (1) implementing the transitional work component of the model and (2) supporting individuals in transitional jobs and helping them find permanent positions. Staff members focused on transitional jobs identify and develop work sites, assign participants to work crews, supervise participants while they are employed at work sites, and pay participants daily for the work they do. In the replication programs, several aspects of the transitional work component are managed by staff members in the New York City office, including identifying and developing work sites, assigning participants to work sites, and handling the daily payroll system. The deputy executive director of CEO National (based in New York City) takes responsibility for the management of the replication programs.

Several types of staff members focus on the other CEO service offerings. In the replication programs, recruitment and enrollment are typically handled by job coaches. Job coaches also serve as individual case managers supporting participants. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the role of a CEO job coach is to work with new participants and those who are not considered “job-start ready,” helping them get ready to search and interview for unsubsidized positions while in transitional jobs. Job coaches also teach the preemployment job-readiness classes — called Life Skills Education — that are required before participants begin work in transitional jobs. Job developers focus on moving participants into permanent employment by working with both outside employers and participants. Over time, CEO added another type of staff member — retention specialists — who took over some responsibilities of job coaches. These staff members focus on supporting participants once they have permanent jobs.

RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT

The CEO programs rely on parole and probation officers to identify and refer potential participants who meet CEO’s eligibility criteria. Specifically, those referred to the programs must be 18 or older, ready and able to work (as determined by the parole officer and CEO), and unlikely to find permanent employment without help. They also can never have been convicted of a sex offense against a minor or arson. While CEO originally only served people returning from prison, the New York City program and certain replication programs began enrolling people on probation in the year leading up to MDRC’s fidelity and implementation study, and continued to do so during the study. As Table 2.3 shows, however, the vast majority of participants were on parole when they enrolled in CEO.

Since parole and probation officers are the main source of referrals for all CEO programs, CEO staff members must maintain strong and constructive relationships with them, and ensure that they have a clear understanding of the kinds of participants who are best suited for CEO’s services. MDRC’s conversations with CEO staff members and parole and probation officers revealed that programs did establish these strong working relationships and that officers generally had a good understanding of the program and of the kinds of parolees who were appropriate for referral.

Despite this evidence of good understanding, most of the CEO programs enrolled a number of participants who were not ideal candidates, according to the existing evidence. As discussed in Chapter 1, the previous impact evaluation of the New York City program showed that CEO's impacts on recidivism were concentrated among people who enrolled in the program shortly after being released and people at highest risk of recidivism. In several CEO programs, however, this study found that a large proportion of participants did not enroll within the first few months of their release. There are any number of possible explanations for this finding. For example it may be that CEO programs do not emphasize quick enrollment when they define to parole officers whom to refer. It may be difficult for them to ensure that parole officers adhere to narrow eligibility guidelines. It may be difficult for them to serve their target number of participants while at the same time enforcing strict restrictions on eligibility. It is likely that many factors contribute to the delay. Further, the recidivism risk level of participants is unknown since these data are not available in CEO's management information system.

While community supervision agencies in all the areas where CEO operates do use risk and needs scores, those scores are rarely shared with CEO and thus are not used to determine eligibility or guide service delivery. That said, CEO communicates to those agencies its desire to serve high-risk individuals in need of employment services, emphasizing that education, experience, and attitude are not criteria for entry. Interviews with staff members and referral partners support this conclusion.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CORE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Life Skills Education

CEO's services in replication programs begin with a one-week class called Life Skills Education. This class serves as an orientation to the rules and expectations of CEO, as well as an introduction to the sorts of job-search skills and soft skills that CEO considers essential (including résumé building, interviewing, discussing one's conviction record, punctuality, communication, appropriate workplace attire, and decorum). The class is also used as an opportunity to deal with most basic barriers to employment such as the lack of identification and Social Security cards needed to establish a participant's status as a citizen or legally employable immigrant. The class is based on a curriculum developed by CEO, but instructors are also free to adapt the lessons and emphasis based on their own backgrounds and perspectives as well as those of the participants. Box 3.1 features an example of the kinds of topics that may be covered during this class.

In each replication program, this component was in place and followed the same basic outline as shown in Box 3.1. What variation from the framework that did exist appeared to be a result of instructors bringing in different perspectives and emphasizing different pieces of the curriculum. One instructor, for example, said that his primary goal with the class, beyond the basic orientation activities, was to build trust and rapport with the participants. This instructor saw the "posturing attitude" that some participants brought to the program as a major impediment to success, and said that he uses class time to overcome that attitude and create an environment in which participants feel safe and confident. In another replication program, the staff agreed that the Life Skills Education instructor's use of guest speakers was especially popular with the participants. Whatever the slight variations that different instructors brought to the class, though, it was clear that participants in all programs received essentially the same message: If you are serious about getting a job and staying

BOX 3.1

Life Skills Education Class

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
DAY ONE	
Personal document photocopying	Participants bring birth certificates, Social Security cards, photo IDs, Medicaid cards.
Icebreaker	Participant and staff members are introduced; participants discuss program and career goals.
CEO rules and policies	Participants are introduced to CEO rules and expectations, process for plugging into job sites, submitting Passports, etc.
Goal setting	Participants complete worksheets to identify long-term and short-term goals.
DAY TWO	
Establishing appointment days	Each participant receives an appointment day and is measured for work boots.
Barriers at work	Participants discuss barriers they are likely to face in the job market and workplace, and how to overcome them.
Sample application	Participants complete a sample job application for a real job.
Résumé development	Participants review a sample résumé and complete a worksheet to think about what skills employers should know they have.
30-second pitch	Participants discuss how to pitch themselves to a potential employer in 30 seconds.
DAY THREE	
Interview preparation	Participants complete a worksheet with sample interview questions, discuss the rationales for questions and how to respond to them.
Tips for discussing background	Participants learn how to discuss their background in an application and during an interview.
Job developer introduction	Job developer introduces participants to job search responsibilities and the services the specialist provides.
CEO IDs	Participants take photos and get signatures for ID cards.
DAY FOUR	
Career planning activity	Participants complete a worksheet activity to plan for long-term goals and how CEO will help them to achieve those goals.
Review of CEO core principles	Participants learn the five principles for succeeding at CEO: (1) cooperation with supervisors, (2) effort at work, (3) being on time, (4) cooperation with coworkers, and (5) personal presentation.
Life Skills Education quiz	Participants take a quiz and review the week's lessons.
Retention introduction	Retention specialist discusses the final phase of CEO.

BOX 3.2

Examples of Transitional Work Sites and Tasks Performed

LOCATION	AGENCY	TASKS PERFORMED
New York City	Bronx Community College	Grounds maintenance (pick up litter, rake leaves, shovel snow)
	Criminal Courts Building	Janitorial building maintenance (sweep, mop, and wax floors; break down boxes)
Albany	Empire State Plaza	Janitorial building maintenance (trash collection and cleaning facilities)
Buffalo	City of Buffalo: Mayor's Impact Team	Street cleaning, some sidewalk and tree maintenance, weekly participation in "clean-sweeps"*
	Habitat for Humanity	Installing drywall, light construction
	Buffalo-Niagara Medical Campus (probation only)	Campus and facilities cleanup and maintenance
Rochester	Office of People with Developmental Disabilities	Janitorial building maintenance (cleaning, repair work, painting)
	Monroe County Parks Department	Grounds maintenance (shoveling snow, litter abatement, landscaping)
San Diego	Chula Vista Department of Public Works	Buildings and grounds maintenance (janitorial, construction, landscaping)
Tulsa	Tulsa Community College	Painting, janitorial work, carpentry, landscaping
	Metropolitan Environmental Trust	Unloading trucks, baling recyclable materials, operating forklift
	City of Jenks and Sand Springs	Maintenance of parks and roads, janitorial work, decoration and painting, and display maintenance at local aquarium

NOTE: *Clean-sweeps are a long-standing city program that targets high-crime or high-vacancy blocks for intensive one-day interventions from a number of city agencies and social service programs.

out of prison, CEO will help you by providing daily support and structure through the work crews and through individual job-search assistance.

Transitional Jobs

After completing the Life Skills Education class, CEO participants quickly move into transitional employment with crews of about five to seven participants. Placement on a CEO work site is the core of CEO's model. Each program has arrangements with various city, county, and state agencies for CEO participants to perform specific tasks under the supervision of a CEO staff member. Box 3.2 provides a few examples of the kinds of agencies and tasks where participants worked during the time

of MDRC’s fidelity and implementation study, and Box 3.3 describes the process of “plugging in” to get onto a CEO work crew. Participants generally travel to these work sites together in a CEO van and work six-and-a-half hours per day, four days per week. They are paid minimum wage and are allowed to work for up to 75 days. Each crew is supervised by a CEO staff member who has the job of supervising and providing job coaching to the participants, and who also navigates relationships with the agencies for which CEO provides services.

As Table 3.1 shows, among participants who completed the Life Skills Education class, the majority made it into a transitional job (over 88 percent in New York City and just under 80 percent in the replication programs). Among those who started a transitional job, the length of time working in the job and engaged in the program are also comparable, with an average of 20 working days in replication programs and 23 in New York City. On average, over half of all participants spend between 1 and 20 days on the crews before exiting the program or finding work — which means most of them leave before reaching the maximum number of days they are allowed to work in the crews.³ Participants were engaged with CEO, on average, for about three months (between 11 and 13 weeks).

Because the experience of working with a transitional job crew was so important to the CEO model, the research team examined several elements of that experience during visits to the programs and in interviews with staff members and participants. Below, implementation and variation in two important aspects of the transitional job experience — the tasks performed on work crews and the relationships between participants and supervisors — are discussed, along with participant perspectives on each.

- **Most participants performed basic janitorial and landscaping tasks on work crews. In certain locations, work-site partnerships offered opportunities for higher-skilled work and more training opportunities.**

Participants did relatively similar work in all the programs. Most performed fairly basic janitorial and outdoor cleanup tasks. (About 80 percent of participants indicated “cleaning and maintaining

BOX 3.3

Plugging In

Assignments to CEO work sites are made through a process called “plugging in.” Each week, participants in each program call a central phone number in New York City. The operator, called a “Data Specialist” tells the caller which work sites have openings in his or her location and the participant can choose which site to report to for that week. Callers may also “unplug” from sites if they have a job interview or are sick. The process allows CEO to ensure that each work crew will be filled each week and that there is no confusion about who should be reporting where. Eligible participants who fail to plug in are generally suspended for one day and then must meet in person with either a job coach or job placement specialist before the suspension is lifted.

3. As Table 3.1 also shows, active engagement includes work in a transitional job, meetings with a job coach or job developer, and receipt of job retention bonuses. See Appendix Table C.1 for differences in participation across programs assessed for statistical significance.

TABLE 3.1 Participation in CEO Activities: Replication Programs Compared with the New York City Program

OUTCOME	NEW YORK CITY	REPLICATION PROGRAMS
Ever worked in a CEO transitional job (%)	88.4	79.3 ***
Assessed for job-start readiness (%)	88.2	85.9 **
Determined to be job-start ready (%)	64.5	75.8 ***
Met with a job coach (%)	81.7	76.9 ***
Met with a job developer (%)	56.4	71.8 ***
AMONG THOSE WHO WORKED IN A CEO TRANSITIONAL JOB		
Days worked in a CEO transitional job ^a (%)		***
1-10	33.7	37.5
11-20	20.5	25.0
21-30	14.0	14.8
31-40	11.6	9.5
More than 41	20.2	13.2
Average number of days worked in a CEO transitional job	23.2	19.9 ***
Average number of meetings with job coach	3.2	1.5 ***
Average number of meetings with job developer	3.8	3.7
Total weeks of active engagement with program ^b	13.2	10.9 ***
Placed in an unsubsidized job ^c (%)	34.7	50.0 ***
AMONG THOSE WHO WERE PLACED IN AN UNSUBSIDIZED JOB		
Unsubsidized job characteristics		
Average starting wage (\$)	9.72	9.19 ***
Hours per week	33.5	35.8 ***
Employer-provided benefits (%)	17.7	29.2 ***
Ever received a Rapid Rewards payment ^d (%)	75.2	92.2 ***
AMONG THOSE WHO RECEIVED A RAPID REWARDS PAYMENT		
Number of Rapid Rewards payments ^d	2.8	5.7 ***
Total amount of Rapid Rewards payments ^d (\$)	177.81	172.89
Sample size	2,560	1,668

(continued)

TABLE 3.1 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from CEO's management information system.

NOTES: The samples from all programs include people who enrolled in CEO between January 2012 and September 2013. To assess differences in participation between the New York City program and the replication programs, chi-square tests were used for categorical variables and two-tailed t-tests were used for continuous variables. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent. See Appendix Table B.1 for a comparison of each individual replication program with the New York City program.

^aDays worked may not be consecutive.

^bThis measure is calculated from date of first enrollment to date of first placement in an unsubsidized job, or to the last date of employment in a CEO transitional job.

^cThis includes unsubsidized employment placements by CEO and self-placement employment that CEO was made aware of or that the client reported to CEO.

^dThis measure reflects whether individuals received Rapid Rewards in the 12 months following enrollment into CEO. It includes only people who enrolled in CEO between January 2012 and March 30, 2013 to allow for 12 months of follow-up, as individuals can receive Rapid Rewards for up to six months following placement into an unsubsidized job.

work spaces” as the kind of work they performed in a typical day. See Appendix Table C.2 for full list of tasks.) In interviews, most participants said that they appreciated this work. Some noted that cleaning up neighborhood streets gave them a gratifying sense of community and others simply acknowledged that they did not expect to find more skilled or challenging work quickly after leaving prison, and that the structure and community of the cleanup crews helped acclimate them to workplace expectations. One participant in Buffalo who worked on a street cleanup crew said, “I need something to do. Put me to work. Put me out on the street. I’m more happy there. Those people that I work with are the only people that I’m around.” Another Buffalo participant captured the humility and perspective he tries to bring to the work, saying, “It’s better than six cents an hour. You can’t just come out of prison and then expect for somebody to [say], ‘Here, we have this \$70,000-a-year job for you because you just got out of prison.’ It doesn’t work like that.”

Some participants viewed their work on the crews simply as a job, or a paycheck, and not as a potential mechanism to develop new skills that would help with future employment, but they expressed satisfaction nonetheless. One participant articulated this succinctly: “To me it’s a job. I look at it like that.”

While participants generally expressed appreciation for the work regardless of the task, interviews with a few Tulsa and Buffalo participants and visits to the work sites in those cities suggested that some of them particularly valued crews where they could learn skills that might serve them in their next job more directly. In Tulsa, crews working with a recycling center and with Tulsa Community College performed tasks including painting, operating a forklift, and light carpentry. Participants here appreciated the opportunity to learn more advanced skills, with one participant even deciding to pursue a career in carpentry based on the experience, saying the work “gives you a chance to learn something. I took carpentry from just doing a two-week job at [Tulsa Community College]. That made me make my mind up to go be a carpenter.”

In Buffalo, the program developed a partnership with Habitat for Humanity in which CEO workers installed drywall in homes before Habitat volunteers finished the work on the houses. Participants in Buffalo requested to work on this crew based on their interest in carpentry and repair work and those interviewed on-site generally appreciated the opportunity to take part in more skilled, technical work than was available on other crews. As one participant put it, “It’s more like an art form when you’re doing the housing crew, because nobody wants a wrong angle on their house, or have you put a beam in wrong.”

- **Observations of work crews and interviews with supervisors suggested that some crews struggled at times to find tasks to fill the full workday.**

Chapter 4 discusses some of the perspectives participants had on the work they were doing through their CEO crews. While the reflections were generally positive regardless of the participants’ tasks, those who worked on more advanced, higher-skilled tasks spoke particularly highly of the experience, in some cases going so far as to say the work had influenced their long-term career goals. These comments mirrored the research team’s observations that, at times, it appeared that certain work crews struggled to find tasks for participants, while others appeared to keep participants actively engaged on clearly defined projects. Specifically, work crews doing street cleaning and janitorial work sometimes finished the day’s tasks early or struggled to find projects for participants to do to fill the workday. Those crews that were engaged in project-based tasks or that had real-world performance benchmarks (such as the Habitat for Humanity crew in Buffalo and the Metropolitan Environmental Trust crew in Tulsa) did not appear to struggle as much with this issue.

- **Crew supervisors primarily oversaw the successful completion of the day’s tasks. While some on-site coaching and mentoring occurred, it was limited, and workplace skills were transferred more through experience than explicit lessons or coaching.**

Participants generally had positive relationships with supervisors in all the programs, although in a few exceptional cases participants mentioned having personality clashes with their supervisors. On-site supervisors did not appear to be focused on explicit mentoring or coaching in skills for future jobs; rather, the research team’s observations and interviews with supervisors suggested that they emphasized finishing the task at hand. Supervisors were observed to have a generally familiar and friendly rapport with participants, but their interactions were limited to conversations about the status of job tasks and small talk during breaks. There was little evidence of any structured coaching. Several participant interviews supported this. One participant said, “We talk about jobs. You know, when we’re working, we work. We do our jobs and stay focused on what we’re doing.” A participant in a different program echoed this, saying supervisors would “crack a couple of jokes with you and things, but when it’s time to work, it’s time to work.”

The responses to a few questions on a short questionnaire further support these observations. As Table 3.2 shows, a sizable majority of site supervisors (almost 80 percent) agreed that part of their role was to help participants learn “soft skills” (the general habits and competencies that make for an effective employee, such as how to present oneself at work, how to get along with coworkers, and how to see a task through to its completion). However, fewer than 40 percent agreed that part of their role was to help participants deal with personal problems that get in the way of working. This

TABLE 3.2 Work-Site Supervisors' Perceptions of Their Role

MEASURE	ALL PROGRAMS (%)
Level of agreement with the following statements: ^a	
Part of my role is to help participants learn "soft skills." ^b	78.1
Part of my role is to help participants learn "hard skills." ^b	37.5
Part of my role is to help participants address personal problems that get in the way of working.	38.2
I use other staff members as a resource to help resolve issues for participants.	35.3
I can relate to my participants.	64.5
Work-site supervisor was asked to provide a reference for a participant	69.7
Sample size	34

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the CEO staff and supervisor questionnaire.

NOTES: ^aPercentage of work-site supervisors who selected 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree."

^b"Soft skills" refer to the general habits and competencies that make for an effective employee, such as how to show up to work on time and how to work cooperatively with others. "Hard skills," in contrast, refer to more tangible skill sets that require technical knowledge.

discrepancy suggests that supervisors convey their lessons about how to function on the job through their supervision feedback, and perhaps by providing a model for behavior, but that they do not see themselves more broadly as mentors or counselors to the participants. See Appendix Table C.3 for full results of staff questionnaire responses. Chapter 4 discusses this relationship in more detail from both the participant and supervisor perspective.

One area of variation among the programs was in the degree to which supervisors were integrated with other CEO staff members. In New York City, there was less direct communication between supervisors and other staff members, and most communication occurred through participants' Passport to Success (described in Box 3.4). In the smaller replication programs, in contrast, work-site supervisors tended to be more integrated with the office-based staff. For example, work-site supervisors were included in weekly staff meetings, which was not the case in New York City.

Job Coaching

The role of the CEO job coach is to work with new participants and those who are not considered "job-start ready" to help them get ready to search and interview for unsubsidized positions. A participant's job-start-ready status is determined after he completes CEO's Life Skills Education class.

The job-start-ready assessment gauges whether the participant has addressed his most basic needs and barriers to employment (such as housing, identification, mental health, and alcohol or drug abuse) and has demonstrated an attitude that suggests he could present himself well in an interview and on the job. Across programs, staff members reported that the majority of participants are determined to be job-start ready shortly after they begin working on CEO's crews.

Job coaches work with those participants who aren't yet job-start ready during weekly meetings to focus on overcoming barriers to employment, preparing documents, and doing some basic preparation for applications and interviews. Once an individual is deemed to be job-start ready, she no longer works with the job coach and spends office time working with a job developer looking for or preparing for job interviews.

As Table 3.1 shows, almost 90 percent of those who enrolled in CEO received a job-start-ready assessment and 65 percent of participants were determined to be job-start ready at some point during their participation. A similarly high number — about 80 percent — met with a job coach at least once; participants who worked in a transitional job had an average of 2.4 meetings with a job coach before exiting the program or moving on to work with a job developer. Interestingly, the number of job coach meetings in New York City (3.2 per participant) was noticeably higher than the average number of meetings in the replication programs (1.5). This is likely connected to the fact that more participants in the replication sites were deemed to be job-start ready than was the case in New York (about 76 percent compared with 65 percent).

The research team's interviews with staff members across the replication programs revealed that this model component appeared to be implemented fairly consistently. Job coaches at multiple replication programs discussed working with participants on issues such as punctuality, staying on task, and managing personality conflicts with coworkers and supervisors. Job coaches also worked with participants on more basic challenges such as obtaining transportation, gathering proper documents and identification, gaining housing assistance, and addressing substance abuse.

Job Placement

Participants begin meeting with job developers once they have been determined to be job-start ready. The role of the job developer is twofold: First, he or she is responsible for cultivating relationships with employers in order to identify job openings that may or may not be advertised, and then match-

BOX 3.4

Passport to Success

CEO participants receive daily feedback on their job performance through a small booklet called the Passport to Success. Supervisors use the passport to give participants a rating of 1 to 5 on how well they performed the day's tasks within each of CEO's *Core Principles of Success*: "cooperation with supervisors," "effort at work," "on time," "cooperation with coworkers," and "personal presentation." These graded passports are shared each week with the participants' job developer or job coach. Participants are also encouraged to mention the passport — if their scores have been high — during interviews with employers as evidence of their work ethic and performance.

ing appropriate participants with those openings. Second, job developers work with participants to provide job leads, conduct mock interviews, guide them through the application and interview process, and, in some cases, follow up with employers after a participant has applied or interviewed.

Job developers across the replication programs approached their job in subtly different ways. In some cases, they appeared to focus mostly on their work preparing participants for the job search and interview process, placing the responsibility for finding openings on the participant. In other cases, they worked aggressively with employers to find and carve out positions for participants. Similarly, some job developers took a supportive, motivational approach in their interactions with participants, while others were more strict and tough in enforcing their expectations of participants and encouraging participants to take responsibility for their own progress. In all cases, though, job developers kept a book of employer contacts and reported making regular outreach calls to maintain relationships with employers that had hired participants in the past.

Table 3.3 shows a total of 15 job developers' responses to a series of questions about how they spent their time working with employers and participants. The results are consistent with the activities job developers reported in interviews and that participants identified in interviews. There were a few tasks which almost all of the job developers indicated they made a high priority. Specifically, 14 out of 15 job developers reported that they performed the following tasks "all the time" or "often": helping participants decide which jobs to look for; helping participants prepare for an interview with a specific employer; discussing specific participants with a potential employer; making contact with employers to inquire about job openings; and following up with employers after participants' interviews. It is particularly notable that caseload sizes for job developers in New York City are substantially higher than those in the replication programs. On average, the four New York City job developers reported that they were working with 43 participants compared with just 13 among the 11 job developers in the replication programs (not shown in Table 3.3). Nonetheless, for the most part, job developers in New York City reported providing services similar to those in the replication programs.

Table 3.1 shows that about 56 percent of participants in New York City and 72 percent in the replication programs met with a job developer at least once. Among those who worked in a transitional job at some point, the average number of meetings was about 3.8. In interviews, nearly all participants were enthusiastic about the work the job developers put in on their behalf, while acknowledging that the responsibility for finding a job was ultimately their own. Participants particularly valued the preparation for job interviews they received. One said, "I used to go in an interview and be very nervous, very nervous. Now, I just go right on in there and let them know I'm confident, this is what I want to do.... Whatever you give me, I can handle it." Another participant, a woman in Tulsa, was effusive in describing what she learned about talking to employers on the phone and in interviews: "I learned to be bubbly. When you talk on the phone you've got to be bubbly."

Job-Retention Services

Those participants who find unsubsidized work through CEO become eligible for the program's Rapid Rewards retention incentives. These incentives — a series of American Express cash card payments distributed monthly for retaining a job for up to a year — are intended to keep participants linked to the program so that CEO can continue to assist them should they lose their jobs for any

TABLE 3.3 Job Developer Tasks and Responsibilities

MEASURE	ALL PROGRAMS
Number of job placement specialists responding "all of the time" or "often" when asked how often they:	
Help participants decide what kinds of jobs to look for	14
Help participants prepare a résumé or fill out a job application	12
Help participants practice job interviewing skills	13
Help participants prepare for an interview with a particular employer	14
Schedule interviews for participants	13
Discuss specific participants with a potential employer	14
Make contact with employers to inquire about job openings	14
Make contact with employers to inquire about job openings for a specific participant	14
Discuss a participant's transitional job experience with employers	12
Follow up with an employer after a participant's interview	14
Follow up with an employer after a participant's hire	13
Average number of participants job developer is currently working with to find an unsubsidized job	21.1
Average number of participants job developer referred to specific job openings in the past week	10.2
Sample size	15

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the CEO staff and supervisor questionnaire.

reason. The payments are offered to participants who are working at least 20 hours per week and are handed out once the participant furnishes proof of employment (such as a pay stub). The amount of the reward varies depending on the month, with the largest award being \$300 at the 12-month milestone; participants can receive up to \$1,000 in total over the course of a year.

In the replication programs, every individual placed in a full-time job receives Rapid Rewards and is assigned a retention specialist. In New York City, because of the program's larger caseloads, all participants are eligible for Rapid Rewards, but only individuals in categories considered to be at higher risk of losing their jobs (for example, young adults) are assigned retention specialists as soon

as they are placed in a permanent job. Other participants are provided these services only after six months of continuous employment.

Table 3.1 shows the rates at which participants placed in unsubsidized jobs received Rapid Rewards payments. Most people who worked an unsubsidized job received at least one Rapid Rewards payment. The proportion receiving a payment was higher in the replication programs (92 percent) than in the New York City program (78 percent). On average, each person who received Rapid Rewards was paid about \$175 over a maximum follow-up period of 12 months.

CONCLUSION

As Chapter 1 discussed, a central goal in replicating the CEO model was to achieve the same impact on the life prospects of former prisoners as was demonstrated in the original evaluation of the New York City program. That impact could not be achieved without effective program implementation, and this fidelity and implementation assessment has shown that the replication programs have accomplished that.

As discussed here and in Chapter 1, CEO is most effective for people who have been recently released from incarceration (within the previous three months) and those at the highest risk of recidivism. In most CEO programs, many people enroll within seven to nine months of release and risk assessments have not been used regularly to determine eligibility or to deliver services. A number of factors may make it difficult for programs to restrict eligibility: Programs may have to respond to the needs of referring agencies and adhere to funder requirements to serve a minimum number of people, and may also need a minimum number of people to operate work crews. CEO managers and staff members are aware of the findings of the earlier study and are working actively to increase the proportion of their client population who meet the targeted characteristics. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the New York City program is now part of a Pay for Success project, in partnership with the New York State Department of Corrections, that includes a formalized referral mechanism to ensure that over the next couple of years, Corrections will only refer people to the CEO program as part of the release process if they have been assessed to be at moderate or high risk of recidivism.⁴

Beyond this issue of targeting, however, all core components of the CEO model have been implemented in five replication programs with generally high fidelity to the model. While there was variation in some aspects — such as the work performed by the work crews and the approaches of job developers — and certain replication programs had more success than others in their partnerships with parole and probation agencies, the basic intervention was the same for participants across all programs. Interviews with staff members at each program also revealed general consistency in their understanding of CEO’s mission and target population, and in the emphasis they placed on helping participants find and maintain unsubsidized employment.

4. The New York State Department of Corrections uses COMPAS, a validated risk- and needs-assessment tool, to measure each person’s risk level upon release from state prison facilities.

CHAPTER 4

Participant Perspectives on the CEO Experience

INTRODUCTION

As Chapter 1 described, the primary goals of this study are, first, to assess how the model was replicated in the five cities involved in the evaluation and, second, to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions and experiences of Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) participants, as a way to further inform hypotheses about the mechanisms through which CEO reduces recidivism.

This chapter describes the results from a series of interviews and questionnaires motivated by the second goal. It outlines the opinions participants expressed about the program's value and about how CEO is helping them find employment and stay out of prison.

As discussed in Chapter 1, there were a number of possible reasons why CEO may have lowered recidivism in the earlier impact study when other transitional jobs programs did not. One theory points to the work-crew experience and the positive influence of site supervisors and peers as the central factor. Through the work-crew model, CEO participants may have connected with staff members and coworkers more than participants in other programs did, and these positive influences, in turn, may have affected their attitudes and behaviors.¹

The questionnaires and interviews discussed in this chapter were designed to explore which aspects of CEO participants thought were most helpful as they transitioned from prison to the community.²

DESCRIPTION OF TABLES AND MEASURES

Table 4.1 presents results from the participant questionnaires. Measures were created from questions that asked participants to respond to statements related to CEO. Respondents were asked to check as many responses as they felt applied to the statement: "As a result of CEO..." The responses are

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1. Redcross, Millenky, Rudd, and Levshin (2012).
 2. Similar participant questionnaires are being administered in other evaluations and will be presented in future reports.

TABLE 4.1 Participants’ Outlook on Employment and Well-Being

STATEMENT	AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE (%)
OUTLOOK ON EMPLOYMENT	
I feel prepared to find a new job.	72.9
I have better job skills.	72.4
I am better at working with others.	67.4
I feel better able to handle responsibilities and challenges in my personal life so that they don't get in the way of my job.	60.2
SENSE OF PERSONAL WELL-BEING	
My self-esteem has improved.	58.6
I have a greater sense of well-being.	58.0
I feel better able to meet my basic needs.	48.6
I feel more in control of my finances.	48.1
My relationships with my family members are better.	39.2
Sample size	184

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the CEO participant questionnaire.

NOTES: Calculations for this table do not include participant responses from CEO Albany.

The table shows the percentage of questionnaire respondents who agreed with each statement. Respondents were instructed to select all statements that applied to them.

divided into two categories: The first relates to participants’ outlook on employment and the second relates to their outlook on their personal well-being. Appendix Table C.2 provides responses to the full participant questionnaire.

Table 4.2 shows the percentage of participants who responded to a series of survey questions with “agree” or “strongly agree.” These questions focused on participants’ level of support at work, their relationships with coworkers, and their perceived degree of preparation for future employment. Item responses were based on a scale from 1 (indicating that the respondent “strongly disagreed” with the statement) to 7 (indicating that the respondent “strongly agreed”). Appendix Table D.1 includes all individual responses from Table 4.2.

Table 4.3 presents additional results from the participant questionnaires. Item responses are based on the same seven-point scale, and include the mean score across all responses.

TABLE 4.2 Participants’ Perspectives on Support, Relationships, and Preparation for Future Employment

STATEMENT	AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE (%)	MEAN SCORE
I RECEIVE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE AT WORK.	86.7	6.5
I know whom at work to ask for help when I need it.		
I get the support or guidance that I need from my supervisor.		
I understand what is expected of me on the job.		
My supervisor gives me advice about how to handle situations at work.		
MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH CURRENT COWORKERS ARE POSITIVE.	79.8	6.2
My relationships with coworkers are positive and supportive.		
My coworkers understand me and want me to succeed.		
CEO PROVIDES PREPARATION FOR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT.	74.7	6.1
I am learning how to cooperate better with supervisors.		
This job has helped me learn to present myself better at work.		
I am learning how to work better with coworkers.		
I have met people through this job who may help me find a job in the future.		
The kind of work I am doing will help me get a decent-paying job later.		
I am learning specific job skills that I will use in the future.		
Sample size		184

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the CEO participant questionnaire.

NOTES: The measures presented in this table (“I receive support and guidance at work,” “my relationships with current coworkers are positive,” and “CEO provides preparation for future employment”) were created based on an exploratory factor analysis of a pool of question responses. The questions asked participants about their level of agreement with a particular statement on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 indicated strong disagreement and 7 indicated strong agreement. Based on the results of the factor analysis, questions were grouped into composite measures and a mean score was calculated across the questions included in a given composite. The percentages above represent the proportions of questionnaire respondents who averaged scores of 6 or higher on the questions in that composite measure, indicating a high level of satisfaction with their program experiences in that area.

Calculations for this table do not include participant responses from CEO Albany.

FINDINGS FROM QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS

- **The structure CEO provided of daily paid work addressed an acute need participants felt after leaving prison.**

Across several interviews, participants consistently pointed to the value of having “something to do” with their day. Perhaps more than any single component of the model, participants appreciated the sense of engagement that CEO provided, with several participants noting that they would likely be

TABLE 4.3 Participants' Other Reflections on CEO

STATEMENT	AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE (%)	MEAN SCORE
Overall, I feel better about myself since beginning this job.	81.0	6.3
My supervisor helps me if personal issues come up.	69.0	5.9
I am satisfied in this job.	63.0	5.7
Without CEO, I would likely still be unemployed.	58.2	NA
Without CEO, I would likely be back in prison.	23.4	NA
Sample size		184

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the CEO participant questionnaire.

NOTES: Calculations for this table do not include participant responses from CEO Albany.

The second-to-last column shows the percentage of participants who selected 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree." The last column shows the average overall score participants gave the statement, based on the same 7-point scale. NA = not available

idle, growing frustrated with searching for jobs on their own, or — in a few cases — “maybe doing some illegal things” if they were not participating.

The structure of CEO — particularly the work crews — provided participants with a consistent schedule, one that many, especially those who had been incarcerated for a long time, needed in order to provide stability in their lives. One participant spoke specifically about the structure of the work crews: “Well, with the work crews, [gave] me some — I can say structure. You know, getting me up in the morning ... looking forward to doing something and making things better, as far as the schools that need to be cleaned up and painted.” Another participant, who had recently been released after eight years in prison, articulated what many participants seemed to feel: “In prison but you have everything you need. You’re told when to eat. You’ve got food. You’re told when to sleep. You’ve got structure in your life. You get out here and it’s just ... wide open, no structure, and people need structure when they get out.”

Not surprisingly perhaps, the daily pay was instrumental in generating this sense of structure and stability. The daily paycheck is a distinctive component of the CEO model, and several participants said it served as an incentive to continue participating. While most participants acknowledged that the amount of the paycheck is small (and for many, even less after child support was taken out), the daily check helped. One participant explained: “When my parole officer told me about the daily paycheck [at CEO], even though it’s \$40 a day, it helps. It helps tremendously ... but I need more.” Another participant also recognized the small amount of the paycheck, but appreciated that it was something: “You get paid every day. I mean, it’s not a lot of money, but it’s some money.”

In addition to the daily pay, some participants explicitly noted the benefit of the transitional work. For example, one participant who had previously gone through a different reentry program that didn't include paid work said, "With CEO, they equip you with on-the-job training for a period of time [and] you're getting paid. So it gives you an incentive to try to acquire a skill and effort of better supporting you beyond the CEO program. [The other program] wasn't — I mean they don't send you to a job where there's on-the-job training where you're going to get paid."

Interestingly, while several participants did acknowledge that the daily paycheck provided an incentive for participation (and often referred to their CEO participation as "a job"), the paycheck did not appear to go far toward meeting their basic needs or helping them gain a sense of control over their finances. As Table 4.1 shows, fewer than half of participants agreed that they felt "better able to meet my basic needs" as a result of CEO or that "I feel more in control of my finances" as a result of CEO. From these questionnaire and interview responses, it appears that the paycheck functioned more as an incentive to participate than as a substantial means of support for participants or their families.

- **Participants also identified the safety and support staff members provided as a critical aspect of the program.**

Not all participants who were interviewed had previously participated in employment or case-management programs. Among those who had though, there was wide agreement that the combination of the crews and the office staff provided a distinctively supportive and safe environment in which participants felt motivated and uplifted.

One of the first participants to be interviewed noted this aspect of the experience: "It's a place where you're safe. You're actually safe. You get a chance to be you, for real.... You've got a chance to do all the things that you might not want to do when you're out there hanging with your men on the corner, like taking responsibility or picking up a piece of paper." Another participant expressed a similar point when describing the experience of having a small community of people assisting her and working on her behalf. She said she valued the experience of having "people trying to help you and not judge you from your background or anything that ... happened in the past. Just people that believe in you and that take the time out to want to actually help you get a job — that really was encouraging. Because when you're in prison and you get out, the first thing you think is, 'Oh, I'm not gonna get a job. I'm a convict.' So, they [CEO] make you feel confident enough that it's gonna happen if you want it to happen."

Along these lines, the work crews also offered participants an opportunity to develop a small network of relationships with their coworkers. Although these relationships were not a central topic in interviews, participants generally noted that there was a benefit to working alongside people with similar backgrounds and experiences, who could understand their background without needing to have it explained. As one participant put it, "People that work for CEO can kind of relate, because we're all in sort of in the same situation." Another, when describing a job he had lost prior to coming to CEO, identified the loss of that previous job network as a factor in his decision to commit a new crime that sent him back to prison: "Because I [had] no work and no one to talk to or network with, I caught a DWI." This participant also said that CEO was valuable to him in large part because it functioned as a support community of people who were trying to help him and who had had similar

life experiences: “[Before CEO] I didn’t have anyone that I could go and talk to. I didn’t have anyone that was going to assist me and help me with employment. I didn’t have anyone to speak about anything personally with me, [like the] participants here.”

The nature of these relationships can be seen in the participant questionnaires as well, with around 80 percent of participants reporting in Table 4.2 that their relationships with coworkers were generally positive and supportive and that their coworkers understood them and wanted them to succeed.

- **While work crews rarely incorporated formal mentoring, participants valued the feedback they received from supervisors, and felt they were developing positive work habits through the transitional job.**

As noted, one of the hypotheses from the first CEO study was that the small work-crew model encouraged an interpersonal relationship between work-site supervisors and participants. This relationship may have even fostered an unintentional or even subconscious mentoring relationship between supervisors and participants. Interviews with staff members and participants suggested that formal mentoring was not an explicit aspect of the work on the crews. It was clear, however, that participants felt supported by supervisors and received valuable guidance on the job. As Table 4.2 shows, around 87 percent of participants indicated that they got the support and guidance they needed from their supervisors, knew whom to ask for help at work, understood what was expected of them on the job, and got advice from supervisors about how to handle situations at work.

Participants also felt that they could talk with supervisors about personal issues when they came up. As Table 4.3 shows, almost 70 percent of participants felt that they were able to talk with their supervisors about personal problems. Interestingly, only 38 percent of supervisors identified their role as “helping participants address personal problems that get in the way of work” (as shown in Table 3.2). It is clear that participants felt their supervisors supported them in dealing with personal issues, even if the supervisors themselves didn’t intend for that to be the case or recognize that this was how participants perceived them. It is interesting to note that among the CEO staff members who responded to the survey, almost 20 percent reported that they had been previously incarcerated, and almost 30 percent reported that they had received public assistance in the past. (See Appendix Table D.2, Program Staff Background Characteristics.) It is possible that participants connected with staff members because some of them came from similar backgrounds. It is also likely that staff members’ and participants’ conversations went beyond job-related matters during informal settings or in down time between task-oriented jobs, and that these interactions reinforced a sense of shared experience, learning, and support.

Beyond personal support, participants also pointed to the value of the Passport to Success and some of the work habits they had learned on the work crews. One participant, discussing the Passport to Success, said, “what makes it a positive experience for me is just getting feedback from [my supervisor] and people telling [me that I’m] doing a good job, you know, being able to look back and see where you was at in the past.... It gives you a great sense of accomplishment and determination.” Another described the way he came to appreciate, after several conflicts with a strict site supervisor, that jobs sometimes require enduring conflicts with supervisors and coworkers and that he would need to get over these conflicts to succeed at work: “After a while, I understood what he liked — he

liked to work, and he liked to get the job done. So, after I figured that out, then I was just, like, you know, this is what he likes. If this was a supervisor at another job ... then I'd have to buckle down, you know, and just abide the rules. So, that's one thing I actually learned."

- **Participants believed that the individual job-search assistance and work-crew experience left them better prepared for future work.**

It was clear from interviews with participants that CEO had adequately communicated the goals of the program to them. In almost all cases, participants understood their responsibilities in the job-search process and understood that the ultimate goal was permanent, unsubsidized work, not simply a temporary paycheck. Results from the questionnaires and interviews also suggest that the experience did leave participants feeling more prepared for their next job, both in terms of on-the-job performance and preemployment preparation (such as résumé development, interviewing skills, and increased discipline in the job-search process).

Table 4.2 shows that close to 75 percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed with a series of statements about their preparation for future employment. Among other things, they felt that CEO was helping them learn to get along with coworkers and supervisors and to present themselves appropriately at work, and they had a sense that the people they met through CEO (coworkers and staff members) would be helpful to them in their future job searches. Additionally, Table 4.1 shows that over 70 percent agreed that, as a result of CEO, they felt more prepared to find a new job and had better job skills. Just under 70 percent agreed that they were better able to work with others. Participants did not agree as much with the statement that CEO had left them better able to handle their personal responsibilities and challenges so that they didn't get in the way of their jobs. (This finding is discussed in more detail in the next section.)

As noted above, the work crews allowed participants to acquaint themselves with workplace norms and learn how to get along better with coworkers and supervisors. As one participant said, "I just learned self-control, patience, and how to respect the higher authority, you know?"

Participants also repeatedly pointed to the preparation they received in interviewing skills and job-search skills through their work with job coaches and job developers. One man described the work he did with his job developer to improve his interview skills and presentation, saying his job developer would consistently remind him, "Come to your mock interview. Always come dressed. Always be prepared to go to a job interview. Always ... keep your hygiene up, keep your appearance nice. Keep your hair cut and shaved and stuff because you never know when someone might call you for an interview.' She used to constantly stay on me about that. And I did." The same participant described the experience of learning how to talk about his past conviction, saying the job developer would ask him interview questions and then coach him on how to improve his answers: "She's like, okay, look, that question you just answered, don't answer it like that. Let's put it in these words, and I would put it in [those words], and I would feel comfortable when I say it the way she told me to say it."

Virtually all of the participants who were interviewed valued this coaching in how to go through a job interview, with several of them pointing out the way their confidence improved through the process. One participant, for example, said, "Now it's like when you go to an interview, you feel more

confident you're going to get the job, even if you don't have any experience. It's just as long as you got that ready-to-work ethic.”

As noted earlier, most participants understood their responsibilities in the job-search process and understood that they had to work with job developers to demonstrate that they were ready to work in unsubsidized work environments and committed to doing so. Sometimes job developers were not able to match job leads with participants' interests, particularly when a participant lacked experience or training and when the transitional job period didn't allow sufficient time for the individual to develop these skills. Some interviewees expressed frustration that job developers were not able to match jobs with their fields of interest, leading them to believe that the job developers were unable to help them in the way they desired. The majority of the interviewees, however, appeared to understand that ultimately it was their responsibility to secure jobs, and that the job developers tried their best to match them with jobs appropriate to their job background and experience.

- **In spite of the structure CEO provided and the support it offered for employment preparation, participants still had numerous challenges and unmet needs related to their past incarceration.**

When speaking with staff members in the field of reentry and employment programs for disadvantaged communities, it is not uncommon to hear that participants come in with unrealistic expectations about what those programs can help them accomplish. Often, staff members say that they have to manage overly lofty employment goals and coach participants to take a hard look at the jobs they are qualified for, based on their experience and their barriers to employment. It was notable, then, that participants in CEO appeared to have a clear sense of what the program was — and was not — designed to address, with most participants clearly acknowledging their own responsibility in the process and most expressing a humble appreciation for the small paycheck (as Chapter 3 described).

It is probably a consequence of this narrowly defined mission that some of the lowest “agree” responses on questionnaires related to improvements in participants' broader well-being. As Table 4.1 shows, roughly half of the participants reported a greater sense of overall well-being or felt better able to meet their basic needs as a result of CEO, and fewer than 40 percent indicated that the program had resulted in improved family relationships. Participants described a variety of challenges and responsibilities related to housing, transportation, managing supervision fees and appointments, and generally maintaining the discipline to avoid returning to old behaviors. It was often when describing these other pressures that participants expressed appreciation for the structure of CEO, but these other pressures were also often the reasons participants dropped out of CEO or lost unsubsidized work they had found through the program.

Participants also discussed the experience of being physically or emotionally “ready” for the multiple tasks required of them to rebuild their lives upon release, including — in addition to their parole supervision obligations — attending mandated classes, obtaining proper identification, and reconnecting with family and friends. After leaving the structured environment of prison, many said that to manage this new schedule of responsibilities and challenges one must take things slowly in order to avoid getting overwhelmed or falling back into old patterns. As one interviewee succinctly put it, “People got to take teeny baby steps.... Especially after a bunch of time [in prison] you can't just get out and just go straight into it.” Another interviewee spoke about what happened when he lost

discipline after he was first released: “Well, when I got released, I was moving so fast. Being locked up six-and-a-half years, I was, you know, I was excited. But at the same time, I was careless. I was real careless with my decisions. I wasn’t thinking. And then when [I violated my parole] I came [back out] with a different mentality.³ I had to man up and take care of my responsibilities, have that self-discipline in my life. You know what I’m saying? That’s what helps me strive to be better every day.”

CONCLUSION

Participants’ responses to the questionnaires and interviews confirm that their experiences in CEO are generally in line with the core goals of the program: to develop work skills and prepare people for outside employment. It is clear that participants felt they were learning valuable skills from both crew supervisors and office staff members and that they were being well prepared for future employment. The interviews and questionnaires demonstrate what a structured support network can provide to people exiting prison and navigating all of the challenges and responsibilities stemming from their incarceration. CEO participants did not identify a single component of the model that particularly stood out for them, suggesting that CEO’s value stems from its unique combination of: (1) paid, structured work alongside coworkers from similar backgrounds and (2) qualified office staff members whom participants believe to be devoted to respectfully helping them prepare for interviews and job searches.

3. Parole violation occurs when a person breaks the terms or conditions of parole. A parole violation may result in significant penalties such as heavy fines, extended parole, or jail time.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Although there are strong practical reasons to believe that employment plays an important role in reducing the likelihood of recidivism when prisoners are released, research has shown that the relationship between employment and recidivism is complex. In the past decade, a total of five large-scale random assignment studies of transitional jobs programs serving individuals recently released from prison have been conducted, including the previous Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) study.¹ These evaluations found that transitional jobs programs are successful at providing jobs to people leaving prison and that many would not have worked if not for the program jobs. The findings also showed that the programs do substantially raise employment during the period when participants are enrolled. But most of the programs did not improve recidivism outcomes, even when there were substantial short-term improvements in employment.

At a minimum, this pattern indicates that the connection between work and crime is not straightforward. Among the transitional jobs programs evaluated, only CEO showed improvements in participants' recidivism outcomes over the long term. These impacts lasted longer than the employment effects and were concentrated in specific subgroups of the population: those who were recently released, more disadvantaged (with low education levels and employment histories), and at the highest risk of recidivism when they started the program.

These findings are consistent with evidence from the larger criminal justice field. Few studies show a direct causal relationship between employment and recidivism.² But research does support the notion that employment can effectively reduce recidivism if employment service providers address individuals' antisocial attitudes and beliefs associated with crime, many of which also affect their ability to succeed in the workplace.³ One hypothesis for CEO's impacts on recidivism originated from this theoretical perspective. To shed light on the mechanisms responsible for CEO's impacts on recidivism, this report set out to gather information on the experiences and perceptions of participants.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the earlier evaluation of CEO hypothesized that perhaps its work crews mimicked elements of cognitive behavioral therapy, which has been shown to improve the attitudes

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1. Redcross, Millenky, Rudd, and Levshin (2012); Redcross et al. (2010).
 2. Wilson, Gallagher, and MacKenzie (2000); Latessa (2012).
 3. Latessa (2012).

and behaviors of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated participants, leading to reductions in crime.⁴ Cognitive behavioral therapy techniques include modeling prosocial behaviors, role playing, and other forms of active learning, which are also important underlying elements of the roles CEO staff members play in supervising people on work sites.⁵ Further, both job coaches and job developers often reported using role-playing techniques when helping participants practice for job interviews.

In exploring that theory as part of this study, it was interesting to find that while supervisors did not report providing formal coaching, mentoring, or advice to participants about controlling their responses or impulsive reactions, participants nonetheless felt their supervisors (as well as other staff members) played a supportive role in their lives that otherwise would not have been filled. Participants also reported receiving both personal and professional advice from supervisors at much higher rates than supervisors reported “helping participants address personal problems that get in the way of work.” This discrepancy in perceptions between staff members and participants suggests that, as suspected, if staff members’ influences, supervision practices, or relationships with participants did play a role in CEO’s success in reducing recidivism, it was an unintentional effect.

CEO is continuing to experiment with variations and enhancements to its service delivery model, approaching behavior change in a more purposeful manner. For example, in recent years, CEO has placed greater emphasis upon training office staff members to use motivational interviewing techniques in their work with participants.⁶ Currently, MDRC and CEO are working with the University of Cincinnati to develop a new cognitive behavioral therapy curriculum that builds upon traditional adult-learning and behavior-modification techniques with an emphasis on employment and job readiness. These workshops are designed to formally address behavior change in the context of work. A second aspect of this newly developed, behaviorally focused component involves training work-site supervisors to incorporate aspects of so-called “core correctional practices” with participants while on the work sites.⁷ It will be interesting to see how site supervisors, who have tended to focus on the task at hand, will bring these techniques into their work.

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4. There is growing evidence that traditional cognitive behavioral therapy interventions are effective in helping former prisoners identify and change patterns of behavior that have led to conflict and incarceration, thereby reducing their likelihood of reoffending. See Milkman and Wanberg (2007).
 5. As noted in Chapter 1, “prosocial” activities are the antithesis of antisocial behaviors such as substance use. Prosocial activities include church participation, civic engagement (for example, through a political organization or by being registered to vote), volunteer participation, and involvement in social clubs.
 6. Motivational interviewing is a method for changing behavior by developing inner motivation. The aim of this approach is to help clients identify and change behaviors that make it harder for them to achieve their personal goals.
 7. Core correctional practices are designed to give corrections staff members the ability to interact more effectively with offenders and manage behavior. These practices include anticriminal modeling, effective reinforcement and disapproval, problem-solving techniques, structured learning procedures to build skills, effective use of authority, cognitive self-change, relationship practices, and motivational interviewing. See Washington State Department of Corrections (2015).

INTEGRATING EMPLOYMENT AND REENTRY

In the future, it will be important for CEO to improve its *targeting* — that is, to increase the proportion of its participants who are enrolled shortly after their release from prison and who are formally assessed to be at moderate to high risk of recidivism. Results from the earlier CEO evaluation and evidence from other studies of criminal-justice interventions show that it is important to direct services at those who can benefit from them the most, and to avoid wasting those intensive services on people who already have a low risk of recidivism. In fact, intensive services can have negative effects on people at low risk.⁸

The Council of State Governments Justice Center recently published a document designed to help government agencies and workforce service providers integrate reentry and employment services in a meaningful way, so that they can use their limited resources efficiently and make sure individuals receive the appropriate level of services to meet their needs.⁹ This strategy incorporates principles that have been shown to be effective in serving individuals involved in the criminal justice system, and that were supported by findings from the recent evaluations of CEO and other transitional employment programs for ex-offenders.

The basic premise of the document is that service providers working with individuals leaving incarceration should obtain risk and needs assessments on the people they serve from corrections agencies, so that they can direct services to the people who can benefit from them the most: those who are the most disadvantaged, least job-ready, and at the highest risk of recidivism. As the authors write, “These assessments provide information necessary for maximizing limited services, by helping both workforce professionals and corrections professionals match the right people with the right services.”¹⁰

It can be difficult to identify and recruit the most appropriate people, as CEO is experiencing in its replication programs. Working with local corrections agencies to do so requires collaboration and flexibility, as discussed in Appendix A. Furthermore, parole and probation officers may not reach the same conclusions about the services individuals need as the corrections agencies’ assessments, or may not prefer that clients receive the types of services a replication program is capable of providing.

Nonetheless, CEO has already made strides in targeting the right service population through its participation in the U.S. Department of Labor’s Pay for Success initiative. As part of that initiative, CEO’s New York City and Rochester programs will be undergoing another random assignment evaluation in the next few years. The findings from that evaluation will determine whether CEO has been effective in replicating its earlier success in reducing recidivism, and will help determine whether recent changes have made CEO more effective at improving participants’ long-term employment. The project, which includes a close partnership with the New York State Department of Corrections, ensures that parolees are referred to the program through a formal mechanism immediately upon

8. Duran, Plotkin, Potter, and Rosen (2013).

9. Duran, Plotkin, Potter, and Rosen (2013).

10. Duran, Plotkin, Potter, and Rosen (2013).

release and explicitly targets those assessed by Corrections as being at moderate or high risk of recidivism. Early results from that evaluation are due in 2017.

SUMMARY AND LOOKING AHEAD

The findings from this study confirm that CEO has effectively implemented the core components of its model in five additional locations. Despite minor variations, the research team found that all core components were in place in the replication programs and that participants across the replication programs received comparable services and had comparable experiences.

This study also set out to shed light on the possible mechanisms for CEO's impacts on recidivism. The research team approached this question using qualitative techniques, including in-depth interviews with participants, to gain a deeper understanding of how participants experienced the program, how the program fit into their lives after prison, and which pieces they identified as the most valuable to them. Not surprisingly, the findings suggested that participants valued the transitional job, primarily because of the structure it provided them day to day. A small proportion of participants felt they were receiving training that would help them with future employment, but for most participants, CEO offered a paycheck and a structured routine during a difficult transition period.

Interestingly, the results from this study accord with the earlier finding that participants felt supported by staff members and felt they were receiving advice that applied to both professional and personal challenges they encountered. Few staff members reported giving such advice to participants, which is consistent with CEO's focus on employment. If participants' thoughts and behaviors were influenced by CEO staff members, it was likely an unintentional effect.

In the next couple of years, results from the Pay for Success project's evaluation of CEO's New York City program will be released and will provide valuable information to the field about whether the findings from the first random assignment can be replicated and whether improvements in CEO's targeting strategies lead to even larger reductions in recidivism. CEO continues to build upon the hypothesis from the earlier study by seeking ways to train staff members in innovative strategies intended to address thinking and behaviors directly. MDRC is working with CEO to develop and evaluate an innovative cognitive behavioral therapy curriculum being designed by the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute to address thinking and behavior change in the context of employment services.

By early 2016 findings will be available from the latest large-scale random assignment demonstration studies of subsidized and transitional employment programs funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Department of Labor project targets recently released prisoners and noncustodial parents and builds on the findings of earlier studies, including the CEO evaluation. The programs provide enhancements to services that seek to improve upon the earlier models tested.

APPENDIX
A

**The Process of Replicating CEO: An Account
from CEO's Executive Director, Sam Schaeffer**

For the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), replication efforts began with pilot programs in three jurisdictions in upstate New York: Albany, Buffalo, and Rochester.¹ These cities were a priority for New York State, being in counties that had experienced a two- to threefold increase in their prisoner reentry populations over the previous decade. Resources from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, also known as the “stimulus”) were available for this expansion, allowing CEO to pay for all elements of the program, including, initially, transitional work wages. Eventually, however, CEO would need to sustain the operations through contracts with local government agencies and with support from philanthropies. CEO was able to launch each of these offices with a site director, two work-crew supervisors, and a full complement of vocational staff members (two job developers and a life-skills educator/job coach).

This early growth process helped the organization learn the most effective staffing, operations, and management models for these replication programs, and beginning in New York State offered a particular advantage. CEO’s principal government partners are generally state corrections and parole agencies, with secondary partners being state labor agencies. Expanding to upstate New York allowed the organization to navigate new geographies within a familiar government milieu. The combination of ARRA funding, the known state infrastructure, and the proximity to its headquarters in New York City made CEO comfortable with the rapid expansion. In turn, the success of these replication programs gave the organization confidence that it could expand outside of New York State.

CRITERIA FOR EXPANSION PROGRAMS

The upstate New York experience also helped CEO develop a set of six growth criteria, or requisite conditions for expansion programs. The first three address the market share that CEO must be able to establish locally; the remaining three involve knowledge, support, and work-crew customers.

- **Targeted population.** Enough people must be returning home on parole for CEO to operate at least two work crews (150 people per year).
- **Need for services.** CEO must have confidence that it fits a niche in the local reentry service delivery system.
- **Criminal justice pipeline.** State parole officials and local officers both must commit to referring a stream of participants to CEO’s program.
- **Local expertise.** CEO must have the ability to navigate — by itself or through an intermediary — the complexities of state and local governments, political structures, and community/neighborhood dynamics.

1. During this initial pilot period CEO also operated an office in Westchester focusing on a probation population. That office operated for a limited time and was not part of this study.

APPENDIX BOX A.1

Criminal Justice Realignment

Criminal justice realignment was enacted in California by the Budget Act of 2011 in response to a United States Supreme Court order to reduce California's prison population and the state corrections budget. Realignment effectively transfers responsibility for managing and supervising certain offenders from the state level (prison and parole) to the county level (jail and probation).

Major sentencing provisions include:

- Defendants convicted of nonserious, nonviolent, and nonsexual felonies with no prior such offenses serve their time in county jail rather than in state prison.
- County probation departments, rather than the state parole system, are now responsible for supervising people released from state prison after serving a term for a nonserious, nonsexual, or nonviolent felony.
- Trial courts are responsible for conducting parole revocation hearings; the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation can no longer revoke parole without court involvement.
- With the exception of those serving life terms, parolees who violate their parole terms serve any detention sanction in a local jail instead of state prison.

- **Government champion.** There must be a strong executive-level government supporter for CEO to help launch and sustain the program. Relationships may be built at any level of government (federal, state, or local).
- **Transitional job partners.** Transitional job providers must be able to substantially cover the costs of work crews over time, and must be able to ensure that assignments build basic work skills and can be accomplished by participants without particular skills.

The following are some examples of how these criteria came into play in the selection and operation of CEO's expansion programs in upstate New York, California, and Oklahoma.

TARGETED POPULATION AND NEED FOR SERVICES

In identifying promising cities for expansion outside of New York State, CEO analyzed data on releases onto parole and found that California had more than four times as many as any other state. Multiple counties had parole populations between 5,000 and 10,000, numbers larger than several states across the country. CEO could be confident that notwithstanding any existing employment reentry programs, there would be a need for its services in multiple California communities. In addition, a federal judicial panel had recently ordered the state to reduce the size of its prison population, and the state had enacted a law realigning responsibility for state prisoners. (See Box A.1.)

CEO's management and board agreed that this combination of factors created strong conditions for growth in California.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE PIPELINE

Developing a pipeline bringing people from the criminal justice system to a CEO program generally requires three to five meetings with local parole or probation offices, starting with supervisors and then moving to line officers. In these meetings, CEO staff members begin identifying the characteristics of the participants the organization aims to serve, based on evidence garnered from the random assignment evaluation and CEO's operational experience: people who are deemed to be at high risk of recidivism, who have been recently released (within the past 90 days), who have limited or no work experience, who are in need of immediate income, and who have the ability to perform manual labor.

CEO policy requires that every participant must be referred by a parole or probation office. CEO has found it important to maintain a balance, making a priority of the types of participants for whom the program works best without placing so many conditions on entry that parole officers are discouraged from making referrals to the program.

LOCAL EXPERTISE AND GOVERNMENT CHAMPION

CEO's expansion beyond New York depended on its ability to identify supportive and knowledgeable partners in government and in the community. Corrections officials in both California and Oklahoma became champions of CEO. In California the secretary of corrections organized an initial meeting for CEO with the San Diego County district attorney and others involved in prisoner reentry in that community. The fact that CEO was not requesting financial resources from these departments at this early point may have made them more receptive to the program.

The George Kaiser Family Foundation (GKFF), based in Tulsa, was an early, strong supporter of CEO in Oklahoma. GKFF, which focuses its resources on education, community health, and social services, among other areas, initially sought reentry services for women in Tulsa who were involved with the justice system. This interest was spurred by Oklahoma having the highest female incarceration rate in the country. But CEO was not confident that it could find adequate market share, given existing criminal justice programs for women, or that it could effectively operate a female-only program. Instead, GKFF and CEO worked to find a way to serve both men and women while meeting CEO's growth criteria. In the prelaunch phase of the project, GKFF was instrumental in helping CEO develop relationships with both criminal justice and community partners.

TRANSITIONAL JOB PARTNERS

Transitional jobs customers' commitment to cover a substantial portion of work-crew expenses is an essential criterion for CEO's replication — and frequently the most time-consuming element.² To date, all initial work crews necessary to launch a new office have been developed by CEO senior management in New York and California.

The profile of CEO's work-crew customers in its national expansion has been largely consistent with the customers at the flagship in New York City: departments of transportation, public works, and housing; local colleges; and other public agencies make up the core customer base. To develop work-crew opportunities, CEO has mostly worked with executive-level officials (mayoral and gubernatorial) for initial access to infrastructure agencies that are most likely to need supplemental labor. Ultimately, CEO has to sell work crews to individuals who have budgetary authority and responsibility for infrastructure maintenance. While they may be sympathetic to CEO's mission, these officials decide to work with the organization based on their agencies' budgets and needs.

In some cases, CEO's replication has yielded new types of work-crew customers and opportunities. In Buffalo, CEO developed a relationship with Habitat for Humanity in which crews help build homes and prepare home-building sites for the local volunteer labor force. In Tulsa, CEO operates a recycling and baling facility on behalf of the local environmental authority.

In California, CEO's business development strategy has been to build a work-crew customer base that consists of both "anchor" and "venture" customers. Caltrans, the state agency responsible for highway, bridge, and rail transportation planning, construction, and maintenance, has been CEO's anchor customer for all three of its California replication programs. Caltrans provides multiyear contracts in which revenue covers all work-crew costs. Recognizing the need for a diverse portfolio of customers, CEO is also pursuing "venture" customers — ones that might have strategic advantages based on the type of work they can offer (high-profile, interesting work assignments) but that might not cover full costs. To ensure sustainability, the goal is for each replication program to have work crews serving a balance of anchor and venture customers.

MANAGING EXPANSION

Replication programs are expected to implement CEO's "essential elements" with fidelity. These include transitional work, providing daily pay, life-skills education, job coaching, job placement, and at least six months of job-retention incentives. CEO also identified "negotiable elements," such as the business sectors in which participants are placed and the length of time they spend in transitional work. The most leeway is given to replication programs when it comes to the style of job placement they employ and the sectors into which they make full-time placements.

2. A "customer" in this context funds CEO's work crews.

CEO's New York City office takes responsibility for day-to-day operational and program management, but it has hired local staff members at each of its replication programs to bring in people familiar with the local workforce and criminal justice systems. Given that new staff members in replication programs have had relatively little time (two to four weeks) between starting work at CEO and launching operations, CEO makes every attempt to hire the site director first, so he or she can help recruit and train the balance of the team. While CEO requires neither workforce nor criminal justice experience, most directors have work history in one of these two domains.

CEO offers the new staff extensive training in its program, operations, data and systems, and core values and organizational culture. CEO also supplies a replication manual with guidelines on the administrative aspects of starting up a new office.

Local staff members are expected to monitor performance outcomes on a daily basis and communicate successes and challenges to the national office. Particular emphasis has been placed on running crews that meet work-crew customer expectations while providing enriching experiences for participants. Vocational performance benchmarks are generally modest in the first year — 105 enrollments and 40 full-time job placements — typically doubling in the second year.

For offices struggling to meet performance benchmarks, CEO's New York City office steps in and develops performance improvement plans. These corrective actions have resulted in dramatic improvement in at least two offices. To execute the plan, a local director is teamed with a central staff member who provides coaching and support both in person and remotely.

In 2012, CEO tested an alternative to centralized management through an affiliated replication in Oakland. Ultimately, this affiliate was unable to meet CEO's goals, and today CEO operates this contract through its central management structure, the same way it does its other replication programs. Box A.2 describes that experience and the lessons it offered.

LESSONS AND LOCAL CHALLENGES

For several reasons, CEO has sought the opportunity to create replication programs in more than one city in a state at a time. This strategy leads to operational and funding efficiencies. First, operating in multiple locations means CEO has more to offer state officials, leading to deeper support and increased funding opportunities. Second, once managers come to understand a state's parole and workforce policy, that expertise can be transferred to new programs. Third, office proximity fosters cross-program learning and training. Finally, a statewide presence has enabled CEO to engage in efforts to change policies and systems better than it could as a single-site organization (as it has done in working with the California Corrections Advisory Group).

The program model has so far proved readily adaptable to diverse geographies. CEO found that despite the geographic differences, the model needed surprisingly little alteration in replication cities. The most significant challenges in new cities have centered on location-specific challenges. For example, New York City has a strong bus and subway infrastructure, but several of the new communities where CEO works have limited transit options, many jobs are not on bus routes, and

APPENDIX BOX A.2

Testing an Affiliate Approach to Expansion

The replication of CEO in Oakland was launched in August 2012. The year before, CEO had worked with the city to draft a solicitation for nonprofit organizations to implement the CEO model. The solicitation required organizations to use CEO's essential elements and to receive technical assistance from the CEO staff. The City of Oakland awarded the contract to two organizations in partnership, one of which would manage the work crews and the other of which would deliver all vocational services. Both organizations had transitional work and job placement experience, as well as deep knowledge of working with the reentry population.

The partnership was effective at operating work crews to the specifications of Caltrans and was successful in implementing daily pay for participants. The partnership had difficulty, though, in achieving important vocational milestones such as job placement and retention, as well as interim indicators such as job readiness and employer interviews. CEO observed that participants were receiving mixed messages about their progress because of communication failures between the "field" (crews) and the office. Disciplinary measures taken by one partner were often not reinforced by the other, nor were positive messages relayed. This lack of coordination was seen as a major factor in the partners' inability to hit milestones. These differences eventually led to the dissolution of the partnership, after which CEO took over operations in Oakland.

While CEO has not ruled out expanding through affiliates in the future, it will be critical for those affiliates to be run by only one organization so that there is cohesion among all aspects of the program. CEO has also learned it is important for all staff members to be entirely dedicated to operating the model (that is, not assigned to other contracts or projects) and for staffing changes to be made quickly when results are subpar.

few participants have had valid driver's licenses. In response, CEO has in some cases worked with transit agencies to extend bus routes and hours. The organization is now pilot testing van- and ride-sharing services for individuals placed in full-time jobs so that they can pool expenses while saving time on their commutes.

Such local issues appear both at the grassroots and with government systems. For example, in California, unlike in New York, CEO has not established a dedicated procurement mechanism (language in the state budget that allows agencies to buy CEO's work-crew services directly), making it more complicated for them to purchase CEO services. This is another way in which CEO has had to work closely with local partners, to determine the most effective means of purchasing within each jurisdiction.

CONCLUSION

As described in this appendix, CEO identified several criteria to optimize growth and replication in new geographic regions. These include: (1) a sufficient number of people returning home onto parole in the community, (2) a gap in the local reentry service delivery system, and (3) access to statewide and local criminal justice referral systems. Additionally, CEO needs to have or obtain the expertise needed to deal with local and state systems and be able to secure the support of a government champion (at the federal, state, or local level). Lastly, there needs to be anchor funding (at least at the start) to cover the cost of the work crews. Typically, anchor funding comes from a combination of sources, usually involving a local, city, or state agency. Over time, the agencies that contract for CEO's work crews are expected to cover the full cost of running the work crews in their location. CEO must also have a sufficient organizational structure to replicate the program in other geographic areas. This includes: a capacity for administrative oversight, an understanding of the essential program elements, and the capability for initial and ongoing staff training and monitoring to ensure their fidelity to and understanding of the model. Even so, local complications are bound to arise. CEO has found it essential to keep an eye on benchmarks and to be ready to step in the event replication programs face challenges.

APPENDIX
B

Supplementary Exhibits for Chapter 2

APPENDIX FIGURE B.1 CEO Replication Rating Matrix

Goal:

The goal of this matrix is to rate the CEO replication program **based on their replication and fidelity to the core CEO program model**. Provide examples or justifications for rating in concise bullets. Base your decisions on information you collected during your site visit (e.g., interviews with staff). If applicable, you should also include examples of other practices that the replication programs may be implementing differently from CEO’s core program model. Rate each component to the best of your ability. Each component will be equally rated.

Rating: “Compared to core CEO program model”

H:	High Fidelity: Program implements component fully compared to core CEO model; component is strongly present.
M:	Medium Fidelity: Program implements component partially compared to core CEO model.
L:	Low Fidelity: Program does not implement the component; feature non-existent; component has problematic implementation.

COMPONENT		RATING Compared to core CEO model (High, Medium, Low)	CORE CEO MODEL CURRENT PRACTICES	JUSTIFICATION OF RATING AND OTHER OBSERVATIONS ➤ Include justification of rating ➤ If applicable, include other practices that replication program may be implementing similarly or differently from core CEO model
Recruitment and Enrollment	1	Serving intended target population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals released from prison • 18 and older • Must have referral from parole • Ready and able to work • Unlikely to find permanent employment without help • Exclude sex offenders and arson (ever) 	
	2	Size of target population Alternative rating: 1=Insufficient, substantial expansion required 2=Insufficient, some expansion required 3=Sufficient 4=More than sufficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number served annually compared to target goal 	

(continued)

APPENDIX FIGURE B.1 (continued)

COMPONENT		RATING Compared to core CEO model (High, Medium, Low)	CORE CEO MODEL CURRENT PRACTICES	JUSTIFICATION OF RATING AND OTHER OBSERVATIONS ➤ Include justification of rating ➤ If applicable, include other practices that replication program may be implementing similarly or differently from core CEO model
Recruitment and Enrollment	3	Formal collaboration with parole offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program has a formal collaboration with parole for referrals and exchanging information about participants 	
	4	Standing in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program has strong relationship with key stakeholders in the community • Program model known and understood by key community stakeholders (e.g. task force, criminal justice partners) 	
Service Model and Program Components	5	Life Skills class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program requires 4-day Life Skills class before clients begin transitional job • Class sets expectations for participants while enrolled in the program, prepares participants to work on crews, helps participants obtain documents needed for work • Has formal curriculum/lesson plans/binder 	
	6	Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements "Job Readiness Assessment" • Formal process for outlining areas of improvement. • Follow-up assessment utilized to check for goal attainment 	
	7	Length of time to place in worksite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant is placed on a worksite within one week (if not immediately) after completing life skills class. 	
	8	Work crew model of transitional jobs in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operates in work crew model with 5-7 participants per crew • Has sufficient number of work crews to serve work demand • Participants are paid minimum wage for a maximum of 7 hours each day • Participants are allowed to work 3-4 days per week • Participants are paid at the end of each day, in the form of a check 	

(continued)

APPENDIX FIGURE B.1 (continued)

COMPONENT		RATING Compared to core CEO model (High, Medium, Low)	CORE CEO MODEL CURRENT PRACTICES	JUSTIFICATION OF RATING AND OTHER OBSERVATIONS ➤ Include justification of rating ➤ If applicable, include other practices that replication program may be implementing similarly or differently from core CEO model
Service Model and Program Components	9	Worksite supervisor credentials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worksite supervisor is sensitive to the needs of specific population (varies) • Designated worksite supervisor supervises work crews 	
	10	TJ provides opportunity for learning basic work skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations that worksite supervisor plays a role in teaching basic work skills, providing on-site job coaching. • Communication with office-based staff is minimal and through Passport • Passport to Success is used 	
	11	Length of time working in the transitional job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 75 days 	
	12	Office-based job coaching (Life Skills Educator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are sensitive to the needs of the population/credentials in some cases (varies) • Staff coordinate with parole officers, other community organizations, as needed • Help participant become “job ready” • Help teach workplace behavior, ethics, communication • Helps JD identify job openings, employer relationships • Make referrals to substance abuse treatment; anger management – minimal? • Prepares client for unsubsidized employment 	
	13	Job development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are sensitive to the needs of the population/credentials in some cases (varies) • Staff establish relationships with potential employers in industries willing to hire • Staff communicate openly with other staff as needed about specific cases 	

(continued)

APPENDIX FIGURE B.1 (continued)

COMPONENT		RATING Compared to core CEO model (High, Medium, Low)	CORE CEO MODEL CURRENT PRACTICES	JUSTIFICATION OF RATING AND OTHER OBSERVATIONS ➤ Include justification of rating ➤ If applicable, include other practices that replication program may be implementing similarly or differently from core CEO model
Service Model and Program Components	13	Job development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff accountable for making appropriate matches to ensure long term success for both participant and employer • Staff make individualized referrals (e.g. don't just have a job club and pass out job openings they have heard about) • Contact employers in advance to set appointments, vet positions, etc. • Follows up with employers and participants after interviews • Transitional job allows flexibility to encourage job interviews as needed 	
	14	Retention services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated retention staff for elig. clients • Retention services provided for at least 6 months, preferably 12 • Rapid Rewards retention incentives offered • Mechanisms for ensuring that participants aware of incentives and milestones, process. 	
	15	Fatherhood program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers Fatherhood program • Offers parenting classes • Offers child support advocacy • Partnerships with child support enforcement agency 	
	16	Training opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified/aware of opportunities or linkages to training for specific occupations • Educational/vocational training partnerships, identification, awareness by staff 	
	17	Support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency clothing, food, referrals • Transportation supports • Referrals for substance abuse, housing, anger management in some cases, primarily through parole 	

(continued)

APPENDIX FIGURE B.1 (continued)

COMPONENT		RATING Compared to core CEO model (High, Medium, Low)	CORE CEO MODEL CURRENT PRACTICES	JUSTIFICATION OF RATING AND OTHER OBSERVATIONS ➤ Include justification of rating ➤ If applicable, include other practices that replication program may be implementing similarly or differently from core CEO model
Management	18 Structure		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonly understood procedures for policy and practice (among staff and management) • Commonly understood goals of the program (among staff and management) • Agreement upon key outcomes of program • Staff have common understanding of roles/jobs 	
	19 Communication among staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate in team structure • Open communication across staff about participants • Frequent team meetings encourage staff collaboration and communication • Implement Passport to Success 	
	20 Adequate staffing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff positions are filled • Staff have varied experience with population and appropriate to roles • Turnover in line staff average 	
	21 Organizational resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate equipment, office space • Job search equipment/resource room available for participants 	
	22 MIS (management information system)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIS/Salesforce is used to track key information about participants upon program entry e.g. intake assessments and participant profiles • MIS is systematically used to track program participation • MIS is systematically used in decision making, assess service receipt, keep track of milestones, etc. 	
	23 Response to problems		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management is aware of problems and is responsive • Actions taken when issues arise • Management aware of staffing changes/needs. 	

(continued)

APPENDIX FIGURE B.1 (continued)

COMPONENT			RATING Compared to core CEO model (High, Medium, Low)	CORE CEO MODEL CURRENT PRACTICES	JUSTIFICATION OF RATING AND OTHER OBSERVATIONS ➤ Include justification of rating ➤ If applicable, include other practices that replication program may be implementing similarly or differently from core CEO model
Management	24	Coordination across locations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration and communication across CEO locations 	

OVERALL RESEARCHER'S ASSESSMENTS (NARRATIVE)	DESCRIBE IN THE SPACE BELOW
What do you believe are the most effective components/strengths of this program?	
What do you believe are the least effective components/weaknesses of this program?	

APPENDIX TABLE B.1 Participant and Staff Questionnaire Response Rates

	All Cities		New York City		Albany		Buffalo		Rochester		San Diego		Tulsa	
	Sample Size	Response Rate (%)	Sample Size	Response Rate (%)	Sample Size	Response Rate (%)	Sample Size	Response Rate (%)	Sample Size	Response Rate (%)	Sample Size	Response Rate (%)	Sample Size	Response Rate (%)
Participant questionnaires	193	44.1	46	18.0	9	69.2	48	77.4	25	73.5	30	100.0	35	64.8
Staff questionnaires	90	84.9	59	88.1	5	71.4	7	100.0	5	71.4	7	87.5	7	70.0

NOTE: Response rates for participants are estimates based on the total number of individuals recorded in CEO's management information system as working in a transitional job during the week of or the week prior to the visit.

APPENDIX TABLE B.2 Selected Characteristics of CEO Participants:
Each Replication Program Compared with New York City

Characteristic	New York City	Albany	Buffalo	Rochester	San Diego	Tulsa
Age (%)		***	***	***	***	***
18-25 years	26.1	35.1	46.2	53.1	55.5	44.1
26-30 years	19.7	18.1	14.8	15.4	17.2	18.8
31-40 years	25.3	24.6	20.2	15.4	13.5	23.5
41 years or older	28.9	22.2	18.8	16.1	13.9	13.7
Average age (years)	34.1	32.1 ***	30.4 ***	29.0 ***	29.0 ***	29.6 ***
Race/ethnicity (%)		***	***	***	***	***
Black/African American	72.1	81.4	77.4	90.3	50.6	50.0
White	6.5	15.7	13.2	8.7	45.4	42.8
Other	21.4	3.0	9.4	1.0	4.0	7.2
Male (%)	94.3	93.8	93.6	95.2	89.8 ***	82.2 ***
High school or high school equivalency diploma (%)	65.3	64.1	63.2	51.7 ***	55.8 ***	59.8 **
Days between release and enrollment (%)		***	***	**	***	***
90 or fewer	53.5	51.9	42.9	45.5	23.5	69.1
91-120	5.7	11.0	13.7	9.5	11.2	3.6
121-180	8.5	14.0	11.8	9.1	12.3	6.7
181-365	13.2	10.7	14.0	16.0	30.6	12.4
More than 365	19.1	12.5	17.7	20.0	22.4	8.3
Average days between release and enrollment	226	166 ***	227	255	248	117 ***
Supervision type (%)			***		***	***
Parole	100.0	100.0	85.2	100.0	63.9	83.5
Probation	0.0	0.0	14.8	0.0	36.1	16.5
Sample size	2,560	342	372	292	274	388

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from CEO's management information system.

NOTES: The samples from all programs include people who enrolled in CEO between January 2012 and September 2013. In order to assess differences in characteristics between the New York City program and the replication programs, chi-square tests were used for categorical variables and two-tailed t-tests were used for continuous variables. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

APPENDIX TABLE B.3 Selected Characteristics of CEO Participants: All Replication Programs Compared with New York City

Characteristic	New York City	Replication Programs	
Age (%)			***
18-25 years	26.1	40.3	
26-30 years	19.7	22.8	
31-40 years	25.3	19.9	
41 years or older	28.9	17.0	
Average age (years)	34.1	30.1	***
Race/ethnicity (%)			***
Black/African American	72.1	69.6	
White	6.5	25.2	
Other	21.4	5.3	
Male (%)	94.3	90.6	***
High school or high school equivalency diploma (%)	65.3	59.4	***
Days between release and enrollment (%)			***
90 or fewer	53.5	48.4	
91-120	5.7	9.5	
121-180	8.5	10.6	
181-365	13.2	16.0	
More than 365	19.1	15.5	
Average days between release and enrollment	226	196	***
Supervision type (%)			***
Parole	100.0	86.9	
Probation	0.0	13.1	
Sample size	2,560	1,668	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from CEO's management information system.

NOTES: The samples from all programs include people who enrolled in CEO between January 2012 and September 2013. In order to assess differences in characteristics between the New York City program and the replication program, chi-square tests were used for categorical variables and two-tailed t-tests were used for continuous variables. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

APPENDIX
C

Supplementary Tables for Chapter 3

APPENDIX TABLE C.1 Participation in CEO Activities:
Each Replication Program Compared with New York City

Outcome	New York City	Albany	Buffalo	Rochester	San Diego	Tulsa
Ever worked in a CEO transitional job (%)	88.4	70.8 ***	70.4 ***	67.5 ***	94.2 ***	93.8 ***
Assessed for job-start readiness (%)	88.2	88.6	86.3	79.5 ***	89.4	85.6
Determined to be job-start ready (%)	64.5	74.3 ***	78.8 ***	76.4 ***	73.4 ***	75.8 ***
Met with a job coach (%)	81.7	58.5 ***	86.0 **	67.8 ***	76.3 **	91.5 ***
Met with a job developer (%)	56.4	61.4 *	77.7 ***	65.8 ***	68.6 ***	82.2 ***
Among those who worked in a CEO transitional job						
Days worked in a CEO transitional job ^a (%)		***	***	***	***	***
1-10	33.7	38.8	34.7	41.1	40.7	34.3
11-20	20.5	26.0	30.9	23.9	19.8	24.5
21-30	14.0	13.2	12.6	13.7	16.7	16.8
31-40	11.6	8.7	8.8	9.6	11.6	9.1
More than 41	20.2	13.2	13.0	11.7	11.2	15.4
Average days worked in a CEO transitional job	23.2	19.7 ***	19.0 ***	18.4 ***	19.5 ***	21.7
Average number of meetings with job coach	3.2	1.0 ***	1.3 ***	1.3 ***	1.7 ***	1.7 ***
Average number of meetings with job developer	3.8	2.3 ***	3.2 ***	3.9	4.5 **	4.3 *
Total weeks of active engagement with program ^b	13.2	10.3 ***	12.2	12.6	11.7 *	8.9 ***
Placed in an unsubsidized job ^c (%)	34.7	48.8 ***	53.4 ***	57.4 ***	38.8	52.5 ***

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE C.1 (continued)

Outcome	New York City	Albany	Buffalo	Rochester	San Diego	Tulsa
Among those who were placed in an unsubsidized job						
Unsubsidized job characteristics						
Average starting wage (\$)	9.72	9.59	9.43	9.10 **	9.00 ***	8.79 ***
Hours per week	33.5	34.8 ***	36.0 ***	33.4 *	36.7 ***	37.6 ***
Employer provided benefits (%)	17.7	23.0	24.9 **	28.8 ***	57.4 ***	24.1 *
Ever received a Rapid Rewards payment ^d (%)	75.2	93.4 ***	93.8 ***	96.0 ***	79.3 *	93.0 ***
Among those who received a Rapid Rewards Payment^d						
Number of Rapid Rewards payments	2.8	5.4 ***	5.8 ***	6.2 ***	4.7 ***	5.9 ***
Total amount of Rapid Rewards payments (\$)	177.81	150.76 ***	186.95 ***	216.55 ***	125.60 ***	169.58 ***
Sample size	2,560	342	372	292	274	388

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from CEO's management information system.

NOTES: The samples from all programs include people who enrolled in CEO between January 2012 and September 2013. In order to assess differences in characteristics between the New York City program and the replication programs, chi-square tests were used for categorical variables and two-tailed t-tests were used for continuous variables. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^aDays worked may not be consecutive.

^bThis measure is calculated from the date of first enrollment to the date of first placement in an unsubsidized job, or to the last date of employment in a CEO transitional job.

^cThis includes unsubsidized employment placements by CEO and self-placement employment that CEO was made aware of or that the client reported to CEO.

^dThese measures include only people who enrolled in CEO between January 2012 and March 30, 2013 to allow for 12 months of follow-up, as individuals can receive Rapid Rewards for up to six months following placement into an unsubsidized job.

APPENDIX TABLE C.2 Participant Experiences, by Program

Measure (%)	All Programs	New York City	Albany	Buffalo	Rochester	San Diego	Tulsa
Length of employment							
Less than one month	30.2	17.4	22.2	31.9	32.0	20.0	54.3
One month	16.7	8.7	33.3	17.0	32.0	16.7	11.4
Two months	22.4	15.2	33.3	29.8	20.0	26.7	17.1
Three months	12.0	19.6	0.0	10.6	12.0	10.0	8.6
More than three months	18.8	39.1	11.1	10.6	4.0	26.7	8.6
Tasks during a typical day^a							
Assemble parts	7.3	10.9	0.0	4.3	12.0	3.3	8.6
Operate machines or equipment	20.3	13.0	0.0	21.3	8.0	6.7	54.3
Check or inspect products or equipment	10.4	6.5	0.0	10.6	12.0	6.7	20.0
Answer or make telephone calls	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0
Use a computer	5.7	2.2	11.1	6.4	0.0	13.3	5.7
Do general office work (filing, copying, etc.)	2.6	2.2	0.0	2.1	4.0	3.3	2.9
Interact with customers	9.4	6.5	0.0	6.4	4.0	16.7	17.1
Clean or maintain work spaces	79.2	82.6	88.9	74.5	72.0	73.3	88.6
Stock or organize products	15.1	21.7	33.3	6.4	4.0	6.7	28.6
Operate cash register	1.6	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	3.3	0.0
Provide food service	2.1	2.2	0.0	2.1	0.0	6.7	0.0
Other	39.1	21.7	22.2	38.3	56.0	46.7	48.6

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE C.2 (continued)

Measure (%)	All Programs	New York City	Albany	Buffalo	Rochester	San Diego	Tulsa
Services received ^a							
Help arranging child care	4.8	7.1	0.0	10.4	4.0	0.0	0.0
Transportation assistance	38.3	45.2	37.5	35.4	32.0	23.3	51.4
Help addressing housing problems	9.6	4.8	0.0	18.8	12.0	3.3	8.6
Anger-management classes	3.2	4.8	0.0	6.3	4.0	0.0	0.0
Alcohol or substance abuse treatment	4.3	4.8	12.5	8.3	4.0	0.0	0.0
Counseling/parenting classes	2.7	2.4	0.0	2.1	4.0	3.3	2.9
Help with work-appropriate clothing	42.6	42.9	50.0	39.6	36.0	23.3	65.7
Computer training	17.0	9.5	12.5	16.7	8.0	33.3	20.0
GED preparation	9.6	23.8	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	2.9
Career planning/résumé writing/job interview preparation/job search help	67.6	57.1	75.0	62.5	64.0	83.3	74.3
General money-management assistance	18.6	21.4	25.0	27.1	16.0	20.0	2.9
Help setting up a bank account	11.2	28.6	62.5	6.3	0.0	0.0	2.9
Access to benefits	13.3	26.2	12.5	20.8	8.0	3.3	0.0
Help understanding or changing child support payments	4.3	9.5	12.5	6.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Legal assistance	5.3	9.5	0.0	6.3	8.0	0.0	2.9
Parole assistance	23.4	35.7	37.5	12.5	40.0	3.3	25.7
Other	8.0	4.8	12.5	12.5	4.0	3.3	11.4
None	5.4	4.9	0.0	8.3	8.0	6.9	0.0
Services needed but not received ^a							
Help arranging child care	8.3	17.1	0.0	4.9	8.3	7.1	5.7
Transportation assistance	17.2	25.7	16.7	7.3	20.8	14.3	20.0
Help addressing housing problems	14.8	22.9	16.7	7.3	20.8	10.7	14.3

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE C.2 (continued)

Measure (%)	All Programs	New York City	Albany	Buffalo	Rochester	San Diego	Tulsa
Anger-management classes	5.9	8.6	0.0	2.4	12.5	7.1	2.9
Alcohol or substance abuse treatment	5.9	8.6	0.0	2.4	4.2	10.7	5.7
Counseling/parenting classes	4.7	2.9	16.7	0.0	8.3	7.1	5.7
Help with work-appropriate clothing	9.5	14.3	0.0	4.9	12.5	17.9	2.9
Computer training	10.1	17.1	16.7	4.9	8.3	7.1	11.4
GED preparation	8.3	5.7	0.0	7.3	12.5	17.9	2.9
Career planning/résumé writing/job interview preparation/job search help	9.5	14.3	0.0	7.3	4.2	14.3	8.6
General money-management assistance	12.4	20.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	14.3	20.0
Help setting up a bank account	13.6	20.0	0.0	2.4	16.7	17.9	17.1
Access to benefits	9.5	14.3	33.3	2.4	8.3	7.1	11.4
Help understanding or changing child support payments	5.9	5.7	16.7	4.9	4.2	7.1	5.7
Legal assistance	5.9	0.0	16.7	7.3	8.3	7.1	5.7
Parole assistance	5.9	5.7	0.0	4.9	4.2	10.7	5.7
Other	5.9	0.0	16.7	7.3	0.0	14.3	5.7
None	36.7	31.4	33.3	58.5	20.8	32.1	31.4
Agree or strongly agree with the following statements: ^b							
I am doing work that is very important to the organization/company where I work.	63.7	52.2	44.4	64.6	68.0	73.3	71.4
I understand what is expected of me on the job.	85.0	84.8	66.7	83.3	76.0	90.0	94.3
I know whom at work to ask for help when I need it.	88.6	93.5	66.7	87.5	76.0	90.0	97.1
I get the support or guidance that I need from my supervisor.	83.9	78.3	33.3	85.4	84.0	93.3	94.3
My supervisor gives me advice about how to handle situations at work.	82.4	71.7	33.3	89.6	80.0	90.0	94.3
My supervisor helps me if personal issues come up that get in the way of working.	66.3	52.2	11.1	79.2	76.0	66.7	74.3

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE C.2 (continued)

Measure (%)	All Programs	New York City	Albany	Buffalo	Rochester	San Diego	Tulsa
My relationships with coworkers are positive and supportive.	82.4	80.4	66.7	85.4	72.0	80.0	94.3
My coworkers understand me and want me to succeed.	74.6	71.7	66.7	77.1	64.0	73.3	85.7
My responsibilities have increased since I began this job.	72.5	73.9	44.4	72.9	64.0	80.0	77.1
I have opportunities to grow and take on new responsibilities in this job.	71.5	67.4	44.4	81.3	64.0	70.0	77.1
I am satisfied in this job.	61.1	54.3	22.2	79.2	68.0	50.0	60.0
Overall, I feel better about myself since beginning this job.	78.2	71.7	22.2	79.2	80.0	86.7	91.4
The kind of work I am doing will help me get a decent-paying job later.	67.4	60.9	44.4	70.8	68.0	73.3	71.4
I am learning specific job skills that I will use in the future.	67.9	71.7	55.6	70.8	68.0	63.3	65.7
I have met people through this job who may help me find a job in the future.	69.9	63.0	55.6	79.2	80.0	63.3	68.6
I am learning how to work better with coworkers.	75.1	76.1	55.6	81.3	68.0	76.7	74.3
I am learning how to cooperate better with supervisors.	78.8	82.6	44.4	75.0	76.0	83.3	85.7
This job has helped me learn to present myself better at work.	78.8	80.4	55.6	77.1	76.0	83.3	82.9
I am late to work less often than when I began this job.							
Agree	26.5	26.1	22.2	17.4	36.0	34.5	26.5
Disagree	18.5	21.7	11.1	23.9	24.0	13.8	8.8
Does not apply (did not need to improve in this area)	55.0	52.2	66.7	58.7	40.0	51.7	64.7
Without CEO, I would likely still be unemployed. ^b	56.5	50.0	22.2	64.6	56.0	66.7	54.3
Without CEO, I would likely be back in prison. ^b	22.3	21.7	0.0	20.8	28.0	23.3	25.7

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE C.2 (continued)

Measure (%)	All Programs	New York City	Albany	Buffalo	Rochester	San Diego	Tulsa
As a result of CEO... ^a							
I have better job skills.	72.5	72.1	75.0	75.0	52.0	83.3	74.3
I am better at working with others.	66.7	67.4	50.0	68.8	52.0	83.3	62.9
I feel more in control of my finances.	48.7	48.8	62.5	58.3	16.0	50.0	54.3
I have a greater sense of well-being.	57.1	53.5	37.5	56.3	44.0	73.3	62.9
I feel better able to handle responsibilities and challenges in my personal life so that they don't get in the way of my job.	59.8	74.4	50.0	54.2	28.0	73.3	62.9
My relationships with my family members are better.	38.6	46.5	25.0	35.4	28.0	46.7	37.1
I feel better prepared to find a new job.	73.0	76.7	75.0	68.8	48.0	83.3	82.9
I feel better able to meet my basic needs (for example, food, clothing, shelter, transportation).	48.1	55.8	37.5	41.7	32.0	70.0	42.9
My self-esteem has improved.	57.7	60.5	37.5	50.0	36.0	70.0	74.3
Other	9.5	11.6	0.0	16.7	4.0	6.7	5.7
Sample size	193	46	9	48	25	30	35

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the CEO participant questionnaire.

NOTES: GED = General Educational Development

^aThese measures show the percentages of questionnaire respondents who agreed with each statement. Respondents were instructed to select all statements that applied to them.

^bThese measure show the percentages of participants who selected 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree."

APPENDIX TABLE C.3 Program Staff Questionnaire Responses

Measure	All Programs	New York City	Albany	Buffalo	Rochester	San Diego	Tulsa
Work environment							
Number of staff members selecting 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree"							
My organization allows me to make the kinds of professional judgments that I should be making.	38	20	2	3	2	5	6
I have the information/tools/resources I need to do my job well.	47	31	2	3	2	2	7
I have the skills and experience I need to do my job well.	75	46	5	7	5	6	6
I understand the policies and rules of my organization.	66	43	3	3	4	7	6
I can relate to my participants.	54	37	4	6	3	2	2
For the most part, I work with the clients on my caseload independently, without consulting others.	32	22	3	1	2	3	1
In general, the staff at my organization works well together as a team.	45	25	4	2	2	5	7
I get the support or guidance I need from my supervisor.	50	29	2	5	2	6	6
I am satisfied with my current job.	46	30	1	4	1	4	6
Reports of worker satisfaction and morale among staff members							
Very low	7	4	1	1	1	0	0
Below average	10	6	1	2	1	0	0
Average	32	24	1	3	1	3	0
Above average	25	14	2	1	2	4	2
Very high	11	6	0	0	0	0	5
Sample size	90	59	5	7	5	7	7

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE C.3 (continued)

Measure	All Programs	New York City	Albany	Buffalo	Rochester	San Diego	Tulsa
Supervision, among work-site supervisors							
Number of work site supervisors selecting 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree"							
Part of my role is to help participants learn "soft skills." ^a	25	17	1	2	1	2	2
Part of my role is to help participants learn "hard skills." ^a	12	9	0	2	1	0	0
Part of my role is to help participants address personal problems that get in the way of working.	13	8	0	2	1	1	1
I use other staff members as a resource to help resolve issues for participants.	12	7	1	2	1	1	0
Participants are usually ready to work when they start their subsidized jobs.	14	9	1	0	1	1	2
I would be likely to provide a good reference for a participant if asked.	17	12	1	1	1	0	2
Frequency of communication with participants about work							
Several times each day	15	9	1	2	1	1	1
Once a day	8	8	0	0	0	0	0
A few times a week	7	6	0	0	0	0	1
Once a week	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Less than once a week	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hardly ever	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Frequency of communication with other staff members about things that come up at the work site							
More than once a week	14	9	1	2	0	1	1
Once a week	5	4	0	0	0	1	0
Several times a month	3	2	0	0	1	0	0
Once a month or less frequently	7	6	0	0	0	0	1
Never or hardly ever	5	5	0	0	0	0	0
Work-site supervisor was asked to provide a reference for a participant							
Number of references requested (mean)	6.4	5.5	6.0	4.0	7.0	0.0	20.0
Sample size	34	26	1	2	1	2	2

APPENDIX TABLE C.3 (continued)

Measure	All Programs	New York City	Albany	Buffalo	Rochester	San Diego	Tulsa
Unsubsidized job placement, among job developers							
Number of job developers saying they conducted tasks "all of the time" or "often"							
Help participants decide what kinds of jobs to look for	14	4	1	2	2	3	2
Hold group job search meetings with participants	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Help participants prepare a résumé or fill out a job application	12	3	1	2	2	2	2
Practice job interviewing skills	13	4	1	2	2	2	2
Help participants prepare for an interview with a particular employer	14	4	1	2	2	3	2
Schedule interviews for participants	13	4	1	2	2	3	1
Discuss specific participants with a potential employer	14	4	1	2	2	3	2
Make contact with employers to inquire about job openings	14	4	1	2	2	3	2
Make contact with employers to inquire about job openings for a specific participant	14	4	1	2	2	3	2
Discuss the participant's transitional job experience with employers	12	4	1	1	2	3	1
Follow up with an employer after a participant's interview	14	4	1	2	2	3	2
Follow up with an employer after a participant's hire	13	4	1	2	2	3	1
Number of participants job developer is currently helping to find an unsubsidized job (mean)	21	43	5	17	17	10	12
Number of participants job developer referred to specific job openings in the past week (mean)	10	15	3	6	16	9	3
Sample size	15	4	1	2	2	3	3

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the CEO staff and supervisor questionnaire.

^a"Soft skills" refer to the general habits and competencies that make for an effective employee, such as such as how to show up to work on time and how to work cooperatively with others. "Hard skills," in contrast, refer to more tangible skill sets that require technical knowledge.

APPENDIX
D

Supplementary Tables for Chapter 4

APPENDIX TABLE D.1 Participant Questionnaire Responses

Statement	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
I receive support and guidance at work.	86.7
I know whom at work to ask for help when I need it.	89.7
I get the support or guidance that I need from my supervisor.	86.4
I understand what is expected of me on the job.	85.9
My supervisor gives me advice about how to handle situations at work.	84.8
My relationships with current coworkers are positive.	79.8
My relationships with coworkers are positive and supportive.	83.2
My coworkers understand me and want me to succeed.	75.0
CEO provides preparation for future employment.	74.7
I am learning how to cooperate better with supervisors.	80.4
This job has helped me learn to present myself better at work.	79.9
I am learning how to work better with coworkers.	76.1
I have met people through this job who may help me find a job in the future.	70.7
The kind of work I am doing will help me get a decent-paying job later.	68.5
I am learning specific job skills that I will use in the future.	68.5
Sample size	184

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the CEO participant questionnaire.

NOTES: A promax, four-factor structure was used to identify subscales. Only factor items with loadings greater than 0.30 are shown, based on factor analysis. Factor loadings indicate items that were used to create the respective scales. Items were included with the factors on which they loaded most highly.

The table shows the percentage of participants who selected 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree."

Calculations for this table do not include participant responses from CEO Albany.

APPENDIX TABLE D.2 Program Staff Background Characteristics

Measure (%)	All Programs	New York City	Albany	Buffalo	Rochester	San Diego	Tulsa
Age categories							
18-24	2.8	4.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
25-34	35.2	24.4	40.0	57.1	20.0	71.4	50.0
35-44	28.2	26.8	40.0	14.3	40.0	28.6	33.3
45-59	21.1	22.0	20.0	28.6	40.0	0.0	16.7
60 or older	12.7	22.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Gender							
Male	67.1	77.8	20.0	57.1	80.0	28.6	57.1
Female	32.9	22.2	80.0	42.9	20.0	71.4	42.9
Previously incarcerated	18.8	16.7	20.0	42.9	60.0	0.0	0.0
Previously received public assistance	27.4	17.0	60.0	42.9	40.0	42.9	42.9
Length of employment at current organization							
Less than 1 year	17.4	14.6	40.0	28.6	0.0	0.0	42.9
1 year to less than 3 years	32.6	25.5	40.0	57.1	20.0	42.9	57.1
3 years to less than 5 years	19.8	14.6	0.0	14.3	80.0	57.1	0.0
5 years to less than 10 years	16.3	25.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
10 years or more	14.0	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Educational background							
High school diploma or equivalency, associate's degree, or some college	20.5	32.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Associate's degree or some college	37.4	34.6	40.0	42.9	20.0	57.1	42.9
Bachelor's degree	25.3	19.2	40.0	28.6	40.0	28.6	42.9
Some graduate work, MSW, or other graduate degree	16.9	13.5	20.0	28.6	40.0	14.3	14.3
Sample size	90	59	5	7	5	7	7

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from CEO staff and supervisor questionnaire.

NOTE: MSW = Master of Social Work degree.

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