

# **EVALUATION REPORT**

## **For Reach Violence Intervention Via Employment Initiative**

### **PLAYA VISTA JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND BUSINESS SERVICES**

**Dr. La Tanya Skiffer, Ph.D., J.D.**

**January 31, 2022**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Project Description	3
Project Goals and Objectives	4
Evaluation Design	4
Process & Outcome Evaluation	4
Evaluation Methodology	5
Participant Demographics	5
Data Collection	5
Quantitative Data	6
Qualitative Data	6
Focus Groups	6
Feasibility	7
Results	7
Process Observations	7
Referrals	7
Assessment Tool	7
Individual Employment Plan	7
Legal Counseling	8
Training	8
Gender and Training	8
Employment and Supportive Services	8
Outcome Observations	8
Recidivism	9
Group Counseling Services, TIC	9
Positive Behaviors	9
Legal Advice, Expungement Clinics	9
Employment	10
Starting Wages	10
Control Group, Hatch Program	10
Job Developer Outreach	11
Pre-Test and Post-Test	11
Discussion	16
Limitations	16
Recommendations	16
Bibliography	17

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Playa Vista Job Opportunities and Business Services (**PVJOBS**), a not-for-profit public-benefit corporation, was formed in 2010 with 50 employees. Its mission is to place at-risk youth, adults, and veterans in career-track employment.

In 2018 the organization initiated a new program entitled Reach Violence Intervention Via Employment (**ReVIVE**). The purpose of ReVIVE was to reduce violence among participants and the surrounding community. PVJOBS is located in south Los Angeles, a community that has been disproportionately impacted by violence, including group and gang-involved homicides, shootings, and aggravated assaults.

Workforce development services have been proven to prevent violence and its correlated recidivism in at-risk populations. Project ReVIVE was designed to reduce violence in the target area (population) via the provision of job training and services including, but not limited to, placement in an employment training pathway, connections to job leads and interviews, and placement in career-track employment. Currently, 11.8% of current PVJOBS clients are on parole or probation and/or have been arrested or sustained a conviction within the last year, and have been both victims and perpetrators of violence. Specifically, Project ReVIVE utilized an intensive case-management model to interrupt violent activity among participants. The overall goal under this project was to implement a comprehensive case-management structure involving screening, tracking and monitoring of program participants from initial intake through employment placement. Project ReVIVE proposed to serve 200 participants

under the California Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program (CalVIP), established by the State Legislature in 2017-2018. CalVIP replaced the California Gang Reduction, Intervention, and Prevention Grant Program.

ReVIVE utilized a five-phase program designed to remove barriers so that participants could access educational and employment opportunities. ReVIVE used a wrap-around service model to engage social, emotional and psychological supportive services to participants to obtain and retain gainful employment. ReVIVE's job-driven re-entry strategy flowed through five (5) critical phases: (1) referral, (2) assessment, (3) legal counseling, (4) trauma informed care, (5) training, and (6) employment services. The overarching objective of the PVJOBS' ReViVE Program was to reduce violence through education and career track employment opportunities.

PVJOBS has twenty years of experience implementing prevention and intervention programs that target violence reduction in those at highest risk of perpetuating or being victimized by violence e.g., gang members and, more recently, veterans. Referring agencies included: the Los Angeles County Probation Department (Probation), the Los Angeles Superior Court (Courts), Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and a host of other community organizations. The organization also implements two Department of Labor Employment and Training (DOLETA) re-entry programs to provide pre-employment services to prepare participants to enter the workforce. Work-ready participants are referred to ReVIVE from the PVJOBS'

Hatch Program and the PVJOBS Right Turn Program.

## **Project Goals and Objectives**

1. Less than 15% of participants recidivate back into the justice system
  - a. Direction – Throughout the program, reentry individuals will receive focused, group counseling services to help them to re-integrate into the workforce. Additionally, each participant will be paired with a mentor/role model
  - b. Timeframe – Over the two-year period of the grant
  - c. Target Population – ReVIVE participants - 200 members of the reentry population of Los Angeles County, ages 21 – 50.
2. Improved, positive behaviors to lead to self-sufficiency
  - a. Direction – Throughout the program, reentry individuals will receive legal advice to help them to re-integrate into the workforce
  - b. Timeframe – Over the two-year period of the grant
  - c. Target Population – ReVIVE participants
3. To find employment for at least 60% of the Project ReVIVE participants
  - a. Direction – Throughout the program, the Job Developer and Jobs Coordinators will outreach and meet with prospective employers to explain ReVIVE and glean

new employment opportunities for participants

- b. Timeframe – Over the two-year period of the grant
- c. Target Population – Los Angeles County construction trade employers and other employers who are open to hiring from the reentry population.

## **EVALUATION DESIGN**

The principal reason for conducting this evaluation was to learn whether the wrap-around service, job training, employment assistance model utilized in Project ReVIVE achieved its intended outcomes e.g., program effectiveness. The question of program effectiveness is two separate questions (McDavid and Hawthorne, 2006):

- (1) Was the program responsible for the observed outcomes?
- (2) Were the observed outcomes consistent with the expected outcomes?

A quasi-experimental research design was utilized to collect outcome evaluation data and performance measures to determine whether the program produced its intended benefits (success/failure). The quasi-experimental design was employed to address the high cost and administrative challenges of doing a randomized experiment, because it retains some of the features of experiments but is more feasible to implement.

## **Process & Outcome Evaluation**

The evaluator analyzed both process and outcome variables. Process evaluation was employed to determine whether Project ReVIVE's activities were implemented as

intended and produced the desired outputs. Program directors reported results in quarterly reports and used the information to improve ReVIVE program activities in following quarters.

Process evaluation data collection included *a five-phase process*: Phase 1. Referral – Participants are referred to PVJOBS by our 132 collaborators, local community services, probation departments or training organizations. Phase 2. Legal – Participants receive referrals for legal services – e.g. record expungement, child support assistance and help with citizenship paperwork or other services. Phase 3. Training & Employment – Participants will receive training in Construction 101 and Tech Math classes. Job placement services are led by the PVJOBS Case Managers, Job Coordinators, and Job Developers. Phase 4. Assessment – Participants are assessed by PVJOBS Case Managers to determine their level of employment-readiness and identify their skills, strengths, and needs: certifications needed, job history, etc. Phase 5. Trauma Informed Care (TIC) – This includes professionally-conducted group counseling sessions along with mentors – role models who will help make their transition to our community a success.

Outcome evaluation was employed to measure the ReVIVE program’s effects in the target population by assessing the progress in achieving the outcomes. Did participation in ReVIVE result in changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills among program participants?

Outcome evaluation data collected via pre-test and post-tests and included knowledge regarding society, mental health, substance use; attitudes regarding crime, education,

community service; and coping skills employable skills.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### *Participant Demographics*

Reporting race and ethnicity in this evaluation was mandated by the funder, consistent with California law, which requires the collection of race and ethnicity data. Reporting race and ethnicity is also consistent with the policy for inclusion of Women and Minorities and best practices in program evaluation.

A total of two hundred and twenty-eight (228) participants enrolled in the ReVIVE Program. Gender and race was self-reported by ReVIVE Program participants. Of the two hundred and twenty-eight (228) participants, one hundred and ninety-eight (198) self-reported as male and thirty (30) self-reported as female participants.

Fourteen (14) participants self-reported as White/Caucasian. One hundred and twenty-nine (129) participants self-reported as Black, while eighty-three (83) participants self-reported as Latino. One (1) participant self-reported as Pacific Islander and one (1) participant self-reported as Middle Eastern. The average age of participants was 32 years old.

### *Data Collection*

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected over the course of the project period. Quantitative and qualitative data provide important information for evaluation and have been shown to improve community engagement. Data collection included

document reviews, observations, surveys, and focus groups.

Likewise, quantitative data collected before and after the ReVIVE program intervention were used to measure outcomes and impact. While there are some benefits of quantitative data (generalizability, ease of analysis) there are also some limitations (poor survey response).

Similarly, there are benefits (providing context for quantitative data) and limitations (lack of generalizability, and time and difficulty in analyzing) of qualitative data as well.

#### *Quantitative Data*

Quantitative data collected included pre/post surveys of participants, the number of participants receiving services through the participant file, the number of participant arrests and probation violations reported by probation and police, and participants program attendance through the use of program attendance logs.

Moreover, pre/post-surveys were administered to collect information directly from participants to get a general idea of their perceptions of participating in ReVIVE's job-driven re-entry program.

#### *Qualitative Data*

Specifically, program documents and literature were reviewed and provided insights into the project as well as historical data on ReVIVE. Observations were conducted in order to learn how ReVIVE actually operates, including its processes and activities. Qualitative data collected also included focus groups with a subset of ReVIVE participants.

#### *Focus Groups*

Focus group research is another way of collecting qualitative data from a small number of participants around a particular topic simultaneously. Focus groups provide a means of capturing participants' responses in real space and time, whether face-to-face or virtually. Focus groups were conducted to collect in-depth information with four groups of participants about their experiences while enrolled in ReVIVE. Since focus groups can be conducted either in person or online, this research method was uniquely suitable to COVID-19 protocols.

Both face-to-face and online focus groups were used to explore how ReVIVE participants responded to the intervention. A total of four (4) focus groups were conducted, two (2) face-to-face and two (2) online via Zoom. The online focus groups were held in lieu of face-to-face due to the COVID-19 shutdown.

Fourteen (14) semi-structured focus group interview questions were developed to explore participants' attitudes and experiences while enrolled in the program. Thematic analysis was employed to capture the major ideas that emerged during the focus group discussions. Moreover,

Focus group research was primarily utilized to improve ReVive intervention program outcomes. Participants were encouraged to discuss their experiences freely. Each participant was required to consent prior to participating in the focus group. Data from the focus groups will be presented at a later date due to the pandemic.

Finally, ReVIVE program participants' outcomes were compared to the control group Hatch Program participants on reduction in recidivism and job placement. This research design was intended to test the hypothesis that participation in the ReVIVE program would reduce recidivism and increase job placements among its participants. The experiment was run for two years and during that time data on recidivism and job placement were collected and compared.

*Feasibility*

PVJOBS budgeted \$20,000 for the evaluation component of the project. Decisions about feasibility of what evaluation questions could be addressed were determined in collaboration with staff and stakeholders.

**RESULTS**

*Process Observations*

As stated above, ReVIVE used a five-phase wrap-around service program model to engage social, emotional and psychological supportive services to participants to obtain educational, trade skill opportunities and retain career track employment. ReVIVE's job-driven re-entry strategy flowed through five (5) critical phases: (1) referral, (2) assessment, (3) legal counseling, (4) trauma informed care, (5) training, and (6) employment services.

*Referrals*

Project ReVIVE participants were referred for a variety of resources offered by PV Jobs: supportive service (1); employment services (2); construction (82); hospitality (9); tech, gal services, trauma informed care

(3); legal services. Numerous participants were referred for more than one: supportive services/employment (51); construction/hospitality/tech (3); gal/employment/supp. services (10); legal services/employment/support services (1); all (61).

Referrals were received from:

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| HR 360 (40)           | Sober Clarity (7)     |
| Vinewood (18)         | Orientation (4)       |
| Halfway (1)           | Parole (11)           |
| A New Way of Life (2) | Probation (13)        |
| CDCR (1)              | MCS/HLDW WSC (2)      |
| Amity (5)             | Hatch (1)             |
| Worksource (2)        | House of Hope         |
| Phoenix House (1)     | LACOE (1)             |
| Ella's Foundation (1) | Hollywood Reentry (1) |
| CCMinitries (2)       | Walk in (1)           |
| Kedren Com Health (1) | Friends Outside (1)   |
| Francisco Homes (1)   | NA (96)               |
| Unknown (15)          |                       |

*Assessment Tool*

PVJOBS provided intake orientations to over two hundred and eighty (280) participants during the program period. During orientation, staff identified the two hundred and twenty-eight participants (228) who met ReVIVE eligibility criteria. One hundred and eighty-four (184) participants were assigned to a case manager. The participants identified completed the 9 Network Assessment prior to enrollment into the ReVIVE program. The organization did not provide the data from the assessment tool for this evaluation report.

*Individual Employment Plan*

All participants completed an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) prior to enrollment. The organization did not provide the data from the IEP for this evaluation report.

### *Legal Counseling*

Legal services were provided by the Anchor of Hope International Ministries. These free legal clinics were provided onsite at PVJOBS each second Saturday of the month. The clinics were facilitated by qualified attorneys and included record sealing, expungement, family law issues, proposition 47, child support and more. A total of one hundred and one (101) participants received legal counseling.

### *Training*

One hundred and forty-eight participants (148) completed training, while two participants are in progress of completing training. Participants completed a variety of types of training, such as:

Con 101 (109)	Project Book 1 (1)
Hatch U. (8)	Hosp. 101 (13)
Tech Math (14)	Con Prim (6)
None (58)	Unreported (20)

### *Gender and Training*

Of the 109 participants who completed Con 101, seven (7) were female. Twelve (12) female participants did not complete any training. Moreover, of the fourteen (14) participants who completed Tech Math, three (3) were female.

Of the thirteen (13) participants completing Hosp. 101, six (6) were female. Training was not reported for two (2) female participants.

### *Employment and Supportive Services*

Seventy-seven (77) participants received employment and supportive services. In

total, \$14,609.35 was contributed to provide the following resources: tools; clothes, boots, drill, gas, shoes, books, and a laptop. Additionally, participants received funds to apply to union and initiation fees, incentives, stipends.

Tools/Un/Other	Clothing
Boots	Tools/Boots/Other
Tool/Drill	Tools/Init Fee
Stipend	Tools/Gas/Other
Boots/Other	Incentive
Tools	Clothing/Shoes
Gas/Union/Boots	Gas/Clothing/Tools
Union/Other	Laptop/Other
Books	Union
Boots/Union	Gas

Eighty-one (81) participants did not receive any of the above listed resources. Two participants received all of the resources offered. Forty-three (43) participants were listed as NA, meaning that the resources were “not applicable” to them. In the case of twenty-five (25) participants, this information was not reported.

### *Outcome Observations*

This evaluation looked at outcomes for 200 members of the reentry population of Los Angeles County enrolled in the ReVIVE Program, ages 21 – 50, over a two year period. Results reveal a range of skill growth in different areas of interpersonal development, stability in home and family life, and employability.

Project ReVIVE was able to reduce violence in the target area (population) via the provision of job training and services including, but not limited to, placement in an employment training pathway, connections to job leads and interviews, and placement in career-track employment.



**1. Less than 15% of participants recidivate back into the justice system**

Of the two hundred and twenty-eight (228) Project ReVIVE participants, only two participants re-entered jail or prison during the intervention period.

In contrast, numerous participants had prior involvement in the following justice systems:

- Probation - 19 participants
- Parole - 18 participants
- Halfway - 72 participants
- Previous - 101 participants
- Rec Release - 2 participants
- Sober Living - 1 participant
- MSS Letter - 1 participant

***Group Counseling Services***

Trauma Informed Care (TIC) sessions were held by a licensed therapist on 7/10/2019; 8/2/2019; 8/23/2019; 9/26/2019; and 11/14/2019. Forty (40) ReVIVE participants participated in the sessions. Specifically, thirty-nine (39) participants were male, while one (1) participant was female. The majority, eighteen (18), participants were African American/Black, seventeen (17) were Hispanic/Latino, and five (5) were white/caucasian.

Eleven (11) additional TIC sessions were held (based on billing) but no dates/rosters were tracked by previous managers.

**2. Improved, positive behaviors to lead to self-sufficiency**

Positive behaviors have been proven to lead to self-sufficiency in re-entry research. Volunteering in one's community is not only

a positive behavior, but can also help show potential employers competency and the desire to work. Eight-eight (39%) of Project ReVIVE participants reported having engaged in volunteer activities. Participants volunteered in a variety of settings, including but not limited to: Feeding the homeless; Church; food giveaways; Health Right 360; babysitting; motivational speaking; Habitat for Humanity; Salvation Army; COVID Testing; community clean up; mentoring; women’s conferences; reading to kids; coaching little league football; Homeboy Industries; and Community Coalition.

***Legal Advice***

Expungement clinics were hosted every month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> week of the month until the end of the grant but the managers at that time did not track and I do not have the information available.

Below are the dates of the clinics and number of participants who attended. PV Jobs did not have the data to determine how many records have been expunged.

<b>Expungement Program</b>	
March 9th, 2019	6 attended
April 10th, 2019	7 attended
April 13th, 2019	5 attended
May 8th, 2019	3 attended
May 9th, 2019	4 attended
May 13th, 2019	17 attended
June 12th, 2019	3 attended
July 10th, 2019	4 attended
July 24th, 2019	9 attended

August 15th, 2019	7 attended
October 9th, 2019	8 attended
November 19th, 2019	4 attended
January 8th, 2020	1 attended
January 15th, 2020	6 attended
February 12th, 2020	2 attended
June 10th, 2020	15 attended

### 3. To find employment for at least 60% of the Project ReVIVE participants

Full-time career employment includes entering apprenticeships and being referred to unions. In total, 58.5% of participants entered full-time career employment. Specifically, seventy-eight (78) participants (39%) were placed in full time career employment with an average wage of \$36.54. Thirty-nine (39) participants (19.5%) joined trade unions.

The following unions were represented:

Local 105/A-1	Local 213
Local 300	Local 416
Local 78	Local 661
Local 4/L1	Local 416/A-1
Local 213/A1	Local 36/A1
Local 4/Level 2	Local 721
Local 213/3 <sup>rd</sup>	Local 36/A1
Local 416	Local 4
Local 562/A1	A-1
Journeyman	Local 562
3 <sup>rd</sup> A	Local 11

#### **Starting Wage**

Starting wage for participants range from a low of \$12.00 to a high of \$57.78. Five (5) participants were offered salaries in excess of \$40 per hour. Of the five (5) participants with starting wages exceeding \$40 per hour, all were male participants. Three of the

highest wage offers were for union supported positions, while the two highest salaries were non-union positions. Of the thirty (30) female participants, starting wage was reported for seven (7). The average starting wage for these women was \$15.90.

The five (5) participants with starting wages exceeding \$40 per hour were hired by the following employers:

- :
- GJM Engineering - \$41.52 – Local 78
- CJW Construction – \$57.78
- Gayton Painter - \$46.47 – Journeyman
- Cabinet Solutions - \$53.73
- GJM Engineering - \$41.62 – Local 78

#### **Control Group HATCH Program**

The Hatch Program served as the control or comparison group with the ReVIVE participants. While the control group participants were not randomly selected, participant outcomes are informative of the success of ReVIVE. There were ninety-six (96) Hatch program participants. All ninety-six (96) had a history of being involved in the justice system. Only one (1) was convicted of a new crime after enrollment in the Hatch program. Thirty-seven (39%) of the ninety-six (96) participants were placed in jobs, with an average wage of \$17.69. Sixty-four (67%) of the ninety-six (96) participants completed training and earned certifications. 66.67% of participants were admitted into unions.

Thus, while Hatch Program participants had a lower rate of recidivism, comparable rates of job placement, and higher percentage of union admittance, Project ReVIVE participants average wage was nearly double that of Hatch Program participants.

### ***Job Developer Outreach***

Creating opportunities for participants to move into the paid labor market was integral to the goals and successful outcomes of Project ReVIVE. The construction industry job development component is “demand driven” –focused on the needs and expectations of employers as well as the larger economy.

The job developers and job coordinators recruited employers using local labor market information to target sectors that hire the population PV Jobs serves. These former offender friendly employers provided useful area-specific data on labor market demand for particular trades and industries.

Specifically, seventy (70) Los Angeles County construction trade employers and other employers who are open to hiring from the reentry population were contacted via email and telephone.

The job developers completed over one hundred one-on-one and small group interviews with executive, hiring managers, and human resource professionals representing the following seventy (70) employers.

Letner Roofing	Perez Construction
Martinez Steal	GJM Engineering
JT Resources	Reliable Resources
UPS	G&A Fire Sprinkler
KC Removal Svcs	Winegarden
Peopleready Inc.	LA County Metro
Shaquilles’s	CMC Rebar
Skillset Group	Rhired Staffing
CJW Construction	Swinerton
Courtney Inc.	Paramount Tile, Inc.
McCarthy Building	Largo Concrete
AGI Marble Com.	MG-Building Svcs
DHI	Joans on Third
Morley Brothers	Taft Electric Co.
Int. Line Builders	Chrysalis

Eastridge Constr.	Aerotek
Avalon Envir. Svcs	KTLS
Gayton Painter	Cabinet Solutions
ACE Industrial	Amazon
TFR Builders	Farmer John
Cova Construction	Trusted Builders
Baldwin Plaza	Air Tec
Change Inc.	WLACA
C&J Metal	Career Strategies
Superior Gunit	Marrow Meadows
North California Con.	

### ***Pre-/Post-Tests***

The data from pre-/post-test is best described as ordinal data reported as frequencies. The data points in the pre-/post-test are not interval-level data and therefore the data points are not equidistant. Thus, in lieu of reporting averages (means), we will instead provide descriptive information about the change that occurred and percentages. A total of sixty-one (61) participants completed the pre-/post-test instrument.

### ***Drugs***

Interpreting average percentages by response categories, we see that in general there was a 69% decrease in thoughts about using drugs (e.g., marijuana, cocaine, etc.) to help reduce life stress and anxiety. Based on this analysis, at post-test, significantly fewer participants reported having thought(s) about using drugs to cope with the stressors of life and anxiety.

Table 1 Thoughts About Using Drugs (n=61)		
Frequency	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Yes	52 (85%)	10 (16%)
No	9 (15%)	51 (84%)

### *Alcohol*

Regarding the question of alcohol use to cope with life challenges, few participants at pre-test (12) and post-test (6) responded affirmatively. In general, there was a small decrease amongst the small number of participants who reported they recently used alcohol (e.g., beer, wine, liquor, etc.) to self-medicate. Specifically, there was a 10% decrease in the number of participants who reported they had used alcohol (e.g., beer, wine, liquor, etc.) to help reduce life stress and anxiety.

Table 2 Alcohol Use (n=61)		
Frequency	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Yes	12 (20%)	6 (10%)
No	49 (80%)	55 (90%)

### *Law Enforcement*

There was a decrease in participants reporting zero law enforcement contacts (18%) from pre-test to post-test. However, there was also a slight increase in the

number of participants reporting one (1) law enforcement contact (8%) as well as two law enforcement contacts (16%). The number of participants reporting 4 or more contacts decreased slightly (6%) as well.

Table 3 Law Enforcement Contact (n=61)		
Frequency	Pre-Test	Post-Test
0	41 (67%)	30 (49%)
1	8 (13%)	13 (21%)
2	3 (5%)	13 (21%)
3	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
4 or more	8 (13%)	4 (7%)

### *Mental Health*

Between pre-test and post-test there was a 10% increase in recognition of the importance of incorporating mental health care into their personal and family life, 82% and 92%, respectively.

Table 4 Mental Health Care (n=61)		
Important	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Yes	50 (82%)	56 (92%)
No	10 (16%)	5 (8%)
Blank	1 (2%)	0 (0%)

### Substance Abuse Treatment

Results of the substance abuse treatment question demonstrated significant improvement in Project ReVIVE participants’ perceptions of the importance of incorporating substance abuse treatment (i.e., AA, ALANON, etc.) in their personal and family life. There was a positive trend (43%) in percent change from pre-test (39%) to post-test (82%).

Important	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Yes	24 (39%)	50 (82%)
No	37 (61%)	11 (18%)

### Housing

A substantial proportion (70%) of participants reported they felt “very stable and secure” about their current housing situation (Table 6). Between pre- and post-test there was a 36% increase in perceptions of current housing.

Stability Level	Pre-Test	Post-Test
very stable/secure	21 (34%)	43 (70%)
fairly stable/secure	10 (16%)	11 (18%)
just somewhat stable/secure	17 (28%)	3 (5%)

fairly unstable and insecure	5 (8%)	3 (5%)
very unstable and insecure	4 (7%)	1 (2%)
No Response	4 (7%)	0 (0%)

### Stability

A majority, 79%, of participants further reported that they felt “very hopeful and confident” about their housing situation looking forward to the next year.

Optimism Level	Pre-Test	Post-Test
very hopeful and confident	30 (49%)	48 (79%)
fairly hopeful and confident	10 (16%)	8 (13%)
just somewhat hopeful and confident	9 (15%)	3 (5%)
fairly unhopeful and unconfident	6 (10%)	0
very unhopeful and unconfident	2 (3%)	0
No Response	4 (7%)	2 (3%)

### Past Work

Likewise, a majority, 79%, also reported that they had worked within the last 6 months.

Table 8 Worked Last 6 Months (n=61)		
Important	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Yes	15 (25%)	48 (79%)
No	46 (75%)	11 (18%)
Blank	0 (0%)	2 (3%)

### *Current Employment*

Finally, 70% of participants reported that they are currently working. This represents a 34% increase from pre-test (36%) to post-test (70%).

Table 9 Currently Working (n=61)		
Important	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Yes	22 (36%)	43 (70%)
No	39 (64%)	16 (26%)
Blank	0	2 (3%)

## **DISCUSSION**

The evaluation sought to assess the effectiveness of Project ReVIVE, a locally developed intervention program designed to reduce violence in the target area (population) via the provision of job training and services including, but not limited to, placement in an employment training pathway, connections to job leads and interviews, and placement in career-track employment. The two questions regarding program effectiveness were as follows:

- (1) Was the program responsible for the observed outcomes?
- (2) Were the observed outcomes consistent with the expected outcomes?

Although it is impossible to prove causation, it is more likely than not that Project ReVIVE was at least partially responsible for the observed outcomes. Moreover, the observed outcomes were consistent with the expected outcomes as well as the literature on evidence-based violence intervention and prevention programs.

In general, findings offer preliminary support for the effectiveness of an intensive case-management model involving screening, tracking and monitoring of program participants from initial intake through employment placement to interrupt violent activity among participants.

Overall, Project ReVIVE was effective in reducing recidivism since less than 15% of the target population reentered the criminal justice system, participants improved positive behaviors to lead to self-sufficiency, and 37.5% of target participants found employment. Although the program fell short of the employment target goal of 60%, participants' employment outcomes would certainly still constitute a success during a global pandemic. While the effects of the Coronavirus continue to unfold, of the 18.1 million Americans unemployed, 11.3 million (63%) were unable to work because their employer closed or lost business due to the pandemic (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). Thus, skilled trades training has proven to be a path forward for the next generation of workers. It is safe to say that PVJobs fills an important gap with Project ReVIVE and its other training programs.

Additionally, findings from this evaluation add to the existing literature on the importance of the under-acknowledged role community-based organizations (CBOs) play in violence prevention strategic plans and the need to include vocational rehabilitation, skill development programs, and employment provision services to interrupt the cycle of violence in communities.

The results of Project ReVIVE coupled with previous program evaluation findings illustrate that a successful violence prevention program requires more than just relying on more police; at-risk youth and adults benefit from a wrap-around system of social, emotional and psychological supportive services. Further, ReVIVE's job driven re-entry strategy is an effective tool against escalating community violence. In short, having gainful employment improves self-worth and self-esteem, which decreases involvement in delinquency and crime, particularly serious and violent offences (Fisher, Montgomery, and Gardner, 2008).

Moreover, patterns of improvement in positive behaviors and decreased recidivism among participants were generally congruent with existing literature. The evaluation findings further revealed that Project ReVIVE was generally effective in mitigating the negative effects of prolonged unemployment in reentry populations that can derail successful reentry. There were reductions in self-reported thoughts about drug use to help reduce life stress and anxiety. There were also reductions in actual alcohol use as a coping mechanism.

According to Steven Raphael's article *Incarceration and Prisoner Reentry in the United States*, "Most former inmates have poor job skills and face stigma associated

with their criminal records." (Raphael, 2011, p. 193). These stigmas advanced by institutionalized racism create barriers for groups of ex-offenders in the workplace because they are not able to find a stable job after incarceration. Removing barriers so that participants can access educational and employment opportunities is essential to any successful violence intervention and prevention program.

Lack of job opportunities and difficulty reintegrating into society leads to increased recidivism among former offenders and veterans (Raphael, 2011). Lack of involvement in convention activities, like work, contribute to the risk of violence. However, the employment pre-screening process frequently disqualifies those with criminal records. According to Schnepel, a majority of employment opportunities are not accessible to former offenders as they may not have the requisite educational background and far too many employers remain reluctant to hire applicants with criminal records (Schnepel, 2018).

Another negative effect of prolonged unemployment in reentry populations that can derail successful re-entry is housing instability. Project ReVIVE participants reported to have a more positive perception of their current housing. One possible explanation for this finding is that while participants did not physically move, there was an improved sense of community pride despite the challenges their community still faced.

Project ReVIVE participants also reported to have a more hopeful outlook about their future housing and employment opportunities. One possible explanation for this finding is that gainful employment is integral in helping individuals secure stable

housing. Therefore, participants were more hopeful about their future housing prospects because they were now working as well.

Finally, previous research has shown that TIC was effective in reducing violent behavior and aggression. TIC has also been shown to reduce negative emotional and behavioral responses after traumatic events. While we do not have data to analyze the impact of TIC on Project ReVIVE participants, anecdotal evidence would suggest that participants benefited from participating in the sessions.

## **LIMITATIONS**

(1) Project ReVIVE participants were not randomized. Specifically, participants were not assigned to experimental or control groups at random. This is a best practice in program evaluation, but can be costly and difficult to accomplish. Random assignment makes it safer to assume that the intervention caused any differences between groups at the end of the project.

(2) The evaluation suffered from missing and incomplete data collection due to a high employee turnover and the closure during the beginning of the pandemic. Employee turnover is not unique to PV Jobs as nonprofits face challenges that for-profit organizations may not. Employee compensation, ability to promote upward, excessive workloads, and inflexible schedules are more prevalent. However, these are areas that can be improved with planning and thoughtful strategies.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Regarding program implementation, the organization is encouraged to prepare for the unexpected in the following ways:

- (1) Employees should be cross-trained on multiple positions within the organization. This will ensure continuity in the event someone gets sick or leaves the organization. It will also promote promotion within the organization, reduce recruiting cost, and increase efficiency.
- (2) Maintain a shared drive for all important organization related documents, reports, and information. This will ensure that information and important documents are not misplaced or destroyed during employee turnover.
- (3) Keep a master list of contacts on the shared drive as well as a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual for each project. This will ensure that anyone taking over the position will have a manual to guide them.
- (4) Create a special grant management team to add value to your organization, and include the evaluator and subcontractors. This will establish structure and systems to comply with grant requirements.
- (5) Maintain a master calendar of report due dates and a backward looking timeline for deliverables to ensure timely delivery grant requirement compliance. Ideally, a digital version and a whiteboard version would be appropriate.
- (6) Establish a weekly training hour (ex. Thursdays 2-3pm) where senior employees provide hands-on, practical training for staff to bridge the knowledge gap and information chasm that plagues organizations. One or a few people should not hold all of the information.
- (7) Develop common tracking procedures for all programs and



grants, with appropriate forms and logs. Funder-required documents can be included where appropriate. Keep case notes at the beginning of each project where each required task is logged, signed, and dated.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Apel, Robert, and Julie Horney. 2017. "How and Why Does Work Matter? Employment Conditions, Routine Activities, and Crime Among Adult Male Offenders." *Criminology* 55(2):307–343.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12134>
- Bender, Kimberly A., Jennifer E. Cobbina, and Edmund F. McGarrell. 2016. "Reentry Programming for High-Risk Offenders: Insights from Participants." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 60(13): 1479–1508.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X15578204>
- Braga, Anthony A, Anne M. Piehl, and David Hureau. 2009. "Controlling Violent Offenders Released to the Community: An Evaluation of the Boston Reentry Initiative." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 46(4):411–436.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427809341935>
- Cherney, Adrian, and Robin Fitzgerald. 2016. "Finding and Keeping a Job: The Value and Meaning of Employment for Parolees." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 60(1):21–37.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X14548858>
- Fisher, Herrick, Paul Montgomery, and Frances Gardner. 2008. "Opportunities Provision for Preventing Youth Gang Involvement for Children and Young People (7-16)." *Cochrane Database Systematic Reviews* 2:1-22.
- McDavid, James C., and Laura R. L. Hawthorn. 2006. *Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement: An Introduction to Practice*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Medina, Juanjo, Robert Ralphs, and Judith Aldridge. 2012. "Mentoring Siblings of Gang Members: A Template for Reaching Families of Gang Members?" *Children & Society* 26 (1):14–24.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1099-0860.2010.00307.x>
- Nakamura, Kiminori, and Kristofer Bret Bucklen. 2014. "Recidivism, Redemption, and Desistance: Understanding Continuity and Change in Criminal Offending and Implications for Interventions." *Sociology Compass* 8(4):384–397.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12150>
- Palmer, Catrina, and Johnna Christian. 2019. Work Matters: Formerly Incarcerated Men's resiliency in Reentry. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* 38 (5):583–598.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-10-2018-017>

Ramakers, Anke, Paul Nieuwbeerta, Johan Van Wilsem, and Anja Dirkzwager. 2017. "Not Just Any Job Will Do: A Study on Employment Characteristics and Recidivism Risks After Release." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and*

*Comparative Criminology* 61 (16):1795–1818.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X1663614> 1

Steven Raphael. 2011. "Incarceration and Prisoner Reentry in the United States." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 635(1):192–215.