



Research at a glance

Does the Type of Community Employment Obtained by Offenders on Release Correspond with their Institutional Vocational Certification?

KEY WORDS: *vocational training, vocational certification, community employment*

What it means

The majority of offenders are obtaining vocational certification and community employment in the areas of Trades and Sales and Services. These two areas also have the greatest level of congruence between institutional vocational certification received and types of community employment obtained, suggesting that the delivery of vocational training in these areas is appropriate for Correctional Service Canada's (CSC) offender population.

There is a low level of congruence for other occupational areas (e.g., primary industry, processing), which raises the question of the value of the delivery of vocational training in these areas. Future research should examine the benefits or value of these certifications, and what factors are most likely to influence offenders obtaining these types of occupations.

What we found

Of the 834 offenders who received at least one vocational certificate while incarcerated and obtained at least one job in the community prior to the end of the supervision or follow-up period:

- In the area of Trades, 81% received vocational certification and 70% obtained community employment;
- In the area of Sales and Services, 29% received vocational certification and 31% obtained community employment;
- In other areas, less than 7% received vocational certification and community employment;
- In the area of Trades, 58% had a match;
- In the area of Sales and Services, 12% had a match;
- Less than 1% had a match in all other areas.

Why we did this study

Vocational training is one of the core correctional employment interventions offered to offenders by CSC to enhance job readiness and employability skills while incarcerated and upon release. However, the rate of congruence between the type(s) of vocational training and community employment has been a considerable gap in the research. The purpose of the present study was to assess whether the type(s) of community

employment obtained by offenders on release corresponded with their institutional vocational certification.

What we did

The sample was taken from all offenders on the first term of their current federal sentence supervised in the community between April 1st, 2010 and March 31st, 2011 ($N = 4,460$). Types of vocational certification were classified into nine potential occupational categories based on the National Occupational Classification system that included: Business, Natural and Applied Sciences, Health, Social Sciences, Education, Government Services, Art and Culture, Sales and Services, Trades, Primary Industry, and Processing. Offenders who received *only* vocational certificates in areas that could not be matched to one particular type of community employment (e.g. safety training) were excluded from analyses ($n = 815$). Descriptive analyses were conducted for the remaining offenders who obtained both vocational certification while incarcerated (that fell within an occupational category) and community employment upon release ($n = 834$). A "match" was considered to occur when both of these employment activities fell within the same occupational category.

For more information

Nolan, A., & Power, J. (2014). *Does the Type of Community Employment Obtained by Offenders on Release Correspond with their Vocational Certification?* (Research Report R-306). Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

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