



Emerging Research Results

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Outcomes for Offender Employment Programs: The Impact of CORCAN Participation

KEY WORDS: CORCAN, offender employment, correctional employment program outcomes

Why we are doing this study

Approximately 60% of offenders in the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) have employment needs identified at intake. Employment programs are one of the core correctional interventions offered to offenders in CSC. CORCAN is a key rehabilitation program that focuses on providing offenders with employment and employability skills training during incarceration. In addition to generic employability skills and vocational training and certification, CORCAN offers offenders the opportunity to gain work experience and on-the-job skills training through employment in CORCAN production shops. CSC requires information on the impact of CORCAN participation on correctional results.

What we are doing

The current research compared the outcomes of three groups of offenders based on participation in institutional employment activities during incarceration: 1) Those who were employed in CORCAN production shops only, 2) those who were employed in CSC work assignments only, and 3) those who did not participate in any type of CORCAN activity or CSC work assignment. Analyses examined rates of institutional charges and admissions to segregation, time to release, type of first release, community job attainment and retention, any return to federal custody, and revocation of release with a new offence.

What we have found so far

- Offenders participating in CORCAN employment had overall lower rates of admission to segregation in comparison to those who were CSC employed and non-employed.
- Offenders participating in CORCAN employment had overall fewer institutional charges than CSC employed offenders.
- Sixty-one percent of CORCAN employed offenders were granted day parole in comparison

to 41% of CSC employed offenders and 51% of non-employed offenders.

- CORCAN employed offenders were significantly more likely than CSC employed offenders (1.09 times) and non-employed offenders (1.37 times) to attain a job in the community, even after controlling for important risk factors.
- Vocational certification in addition to CORCAN employment was found to contribute to an increased likelihood of being released on discretionary release and attaining a job in the community in comparison to being CORCAN employed only.

Participation in CORCAN was not found to have a significant impact on the length of time that offenders retained their first job post-release.

Consistent with previous research, although the current study did not demonstrate an overall association between CORCAN participation and reductions in recidivism, offenders who were employed in the community were almost three times less likely to be revoked with a new offence than those who were not employed.

What it means

Emerging research results suggest that CORCAN helps offenders find employment after release, but raises the issue of how to help offenders retain that initial employment which may provide protection against new offending. The findings further highlight the importance of community employment in reducing the likelihood of reoffending and readmission to federal custody.

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