

How do Reentry Courts work? Findings from NIJ's Multi-State Research on Reentry Courts

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Introductions

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Overview

- Background
 - The need for reentry programs
 - Research on reentry programs
- National Evaluation of the Second Chance Act Adult Reentry Courts (NESCAARC)
 - Process evaluation results
 - Prospective interview results
 - Preliminary outcome evaluation results
- Harlem reentry court results



The Need for Effective Reentry Policies

- By the end of 2014, over 1.5 million individuals were incarcerated in state and federal prisons (Carson, 2015)
- 95% will be released (Hughes & James, 2003)
- Two thirds (68%) will be rearrested within 3 years, more than half by the end of the first year (57%) (Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014)
- 50% return to prison or jail (Durose et al., 2014)



Barriers to Success in Reentry

- Substance abuse and dependence
- Employment
- Housing
- Mental health and medical issues
- Criminal thinking
- Education
- Neighborhood influences
- Limited investment/support from system



The Promise of Reentry Courts

- Assess risk and need
- Coordinate community resources to address these needs, including:
 - Court oversight
 - Supervision and case management
 - Treatment
 - Other services and programming



Issues Identified in the Previous Research

- Reentry programs with no court involvement struggled with:
 - Forming collaborative relationships with justice agencies
 - Maintaining offender compliance
 - Improved short-term outcomes (reduced drug use) but no long-term impact on recidivism
 - Or adverse impacts on recidivism



Issues Identified in the Previous Research

- Reentry *Court* programs struggle with:
 - Mixed results
 - Decreased revocation and time incarcerated but no impact on rearrests
 - Reduced rearrests but no impact on revocations or incarceration rates



National Evaluation of Second Chance Act Adult Reentry Courts

- The National Institute of Justice awarded a grant to:
 - NPC Research (NPC)
 - Research Triangle Institute (RTI)
 - Center for Court Innovation (CCI)



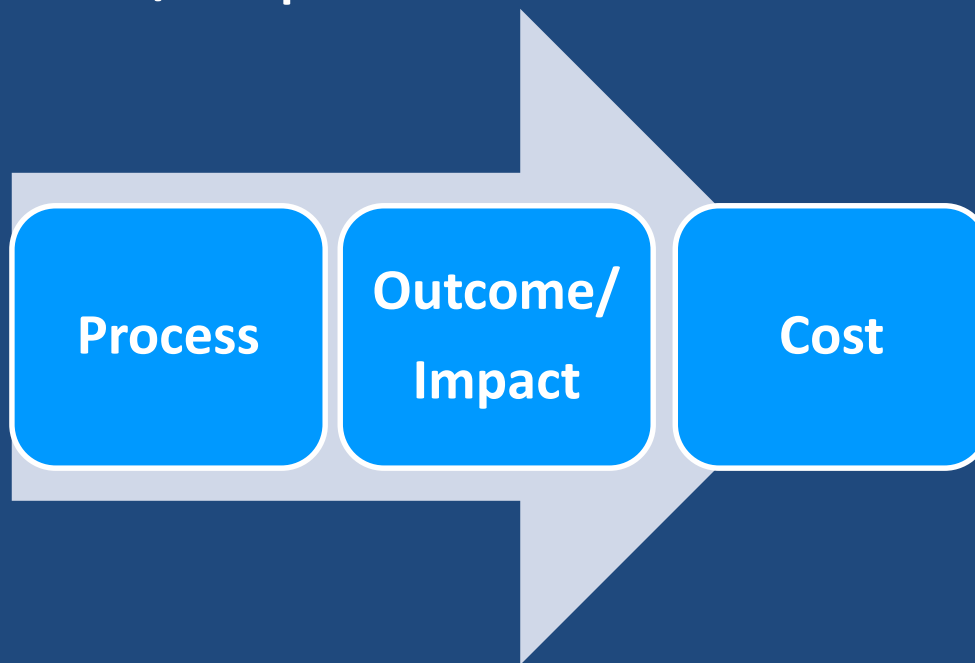
Research and Evaluation Objectives

- Identify common practices of successful courts
- Outline challenges and solutions to inform future courts
- Identify populations for whom RCs are most effective
- Identify cost savings, if any, in using RCs compared to business-as-usual



Evaluation Approach

- Three main areas of evaluation:
 - Process
 - Outcome/Impact
 - Cost



Process Evaluation

- Implementation: Were the programs implemented and providing services as intended?
- Program History: How were the programs implemented? What decisions were made in developing the programs? Who were the key players?
- Program Operation: How do the programs operate? What services do they deliver? What kind of practices do they follow?



Outcome Evaluation

- Do reentry courts reduce arrests, reconvictions, and reincarceration?
- Do reentry courts reduce problems related to criminal behavior, drug and alcohol abuse, employment, housing, mental health, and family relationships?
- What policies and practices explain the impact of reentry courts on recidivism and other outcomes?
- For which categories of probationers/parolees are reentry courts most effective?



Evaluation Phases

- Started with 8 sites (AR, DE, FL, MO, OH, NH, TX, VA)
- Process evaluation
 - 3 annual site visits to describe implementation and program process in all 8 sites
- Prospective Interviews
 - Baseline and 12-month follow-up interviews with reentry court participants and comparison group in 4 sites
- Outcome and cost evaluation
 - Based on administrative data in 7 sites



Process Evaluation Results

- Site implementation and process vary widely in:
 - Program establishment/longevity
 - Population served
 - Program capacity/enrollment
 - Program duration
 - Services offered

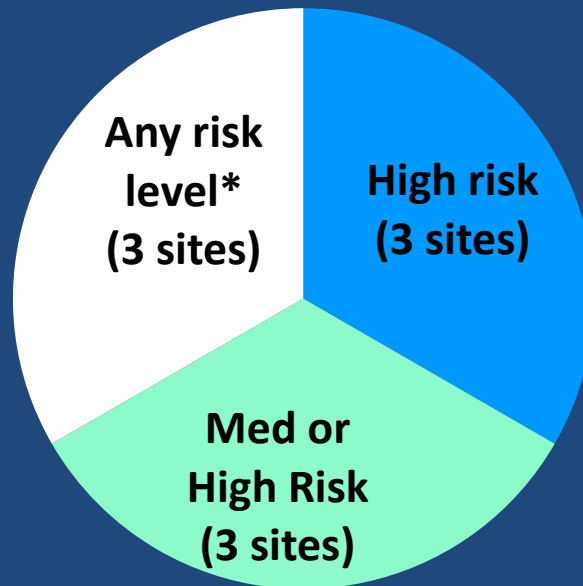


Populations Served

- Criminal justice status
 - About half the sites serve multiple “tracks”
 - Returning from state prison (6 sites)
 - VOP/Parole (4 sites)
 - Returning from county jail (3 sites)
 - Returning from residential treatment facility (1 site)

Populations Served (cont'd)

- Risk level targeted



- *1 of these sites requires that low-risk clients who lack stable employment or housing be eligible
- Participation limited to nonviolent offenders in 2 sites and to felony convictions in 2 sites

Enrollment Process

- Point of identification for reentry court
 - At sentencing (5 courts)
 - During incarceration (5 courts)
 - In the community (4 courts)
 - Participation is voluntary in 4 sites and mandatory in 3. One site has both a voluntary and mandatory track.

Enrollment and Capacity

- Cumulative enrollment (as of 2014) ranges from 4 clients to 564
 - < 10 – 1 site
 - 50 to 100 – 1 site
 - 100 to 200 – 2 sites
 - > 200 – 4 sites
- Estimated capacity ranges from 15-180 (most sites hope to serve 70–100 at a time)



Program Components and Services: Duration and Timing

- Program duration ranges from 6 months to 2 years
 - Average is about 12 months
- Most programs focus on post-release services
 - 4 programs provide some reentry planning prior to release
 - 2 programs bring individuals into court prior to release



Program Components and Services: Court Monitoring

- Status hearings required in all but 1 site
 - Typically weekly status hearings initially, with decreasing frequency as individuals progress
- All courts use sanctions and rewards (and team approach to decision making) similar to the drug court model



Program Components and Services: Supervision

- Virtually all reentry court participants are on probation or parole while in the program
- All programs involve drug testing
- All programs provide case management to participants



Program Components and Services: Post-Release Services

- Substance abuse treatment
- Employment assistance
 - 2 sites provide subsidies to employers
- Housing assistance
 - 1 site transfers all participants to transitional housing upon release
- Educational assistance

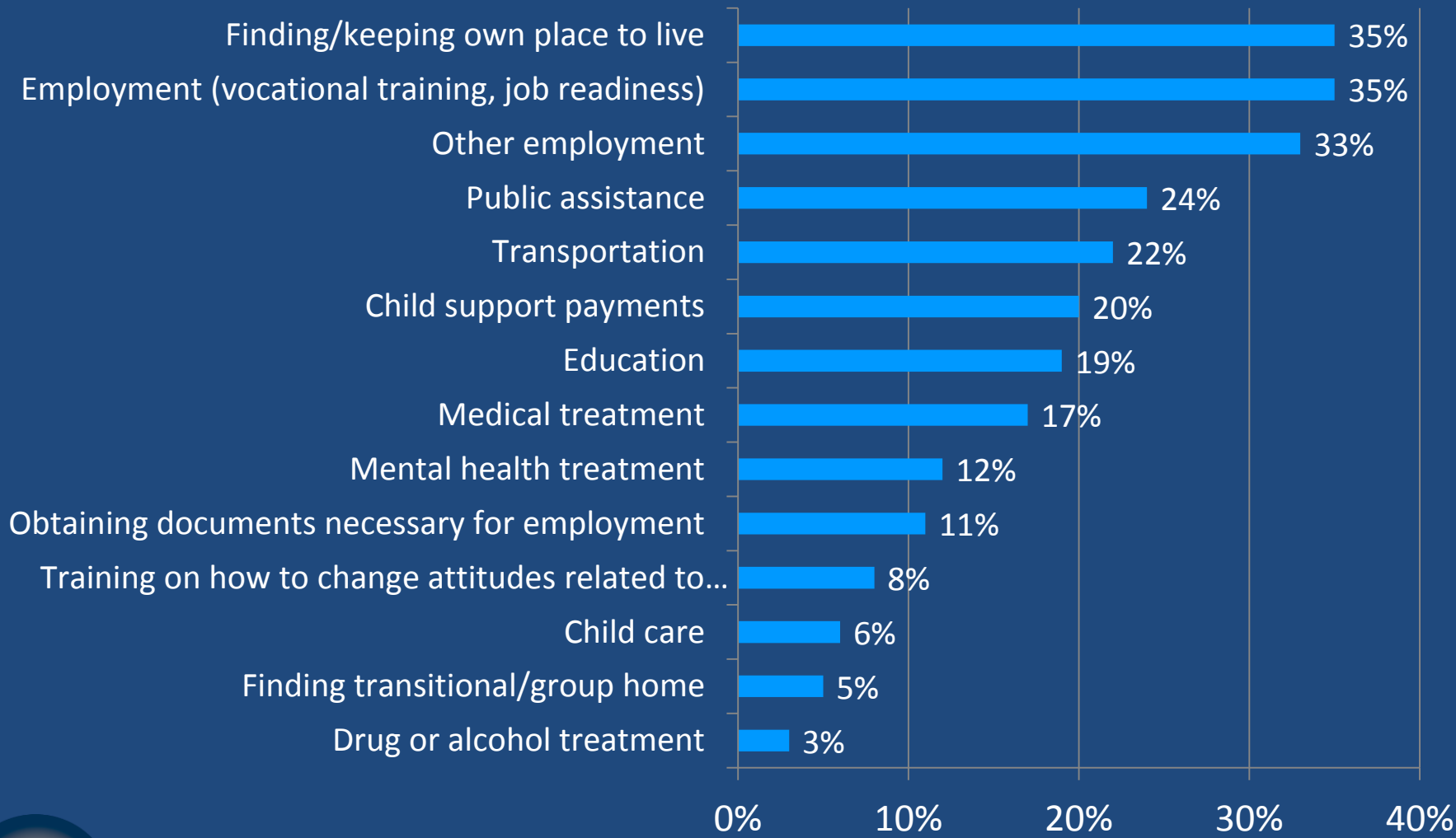


Program Components and Services: Post-Release Services (cont'd)

- Mental health services
- Anger management
- Life skills
- Parenting
- Transportation assistance
- Peer support groups



Perceived Service Needs (from Interviews)



Program Challenges

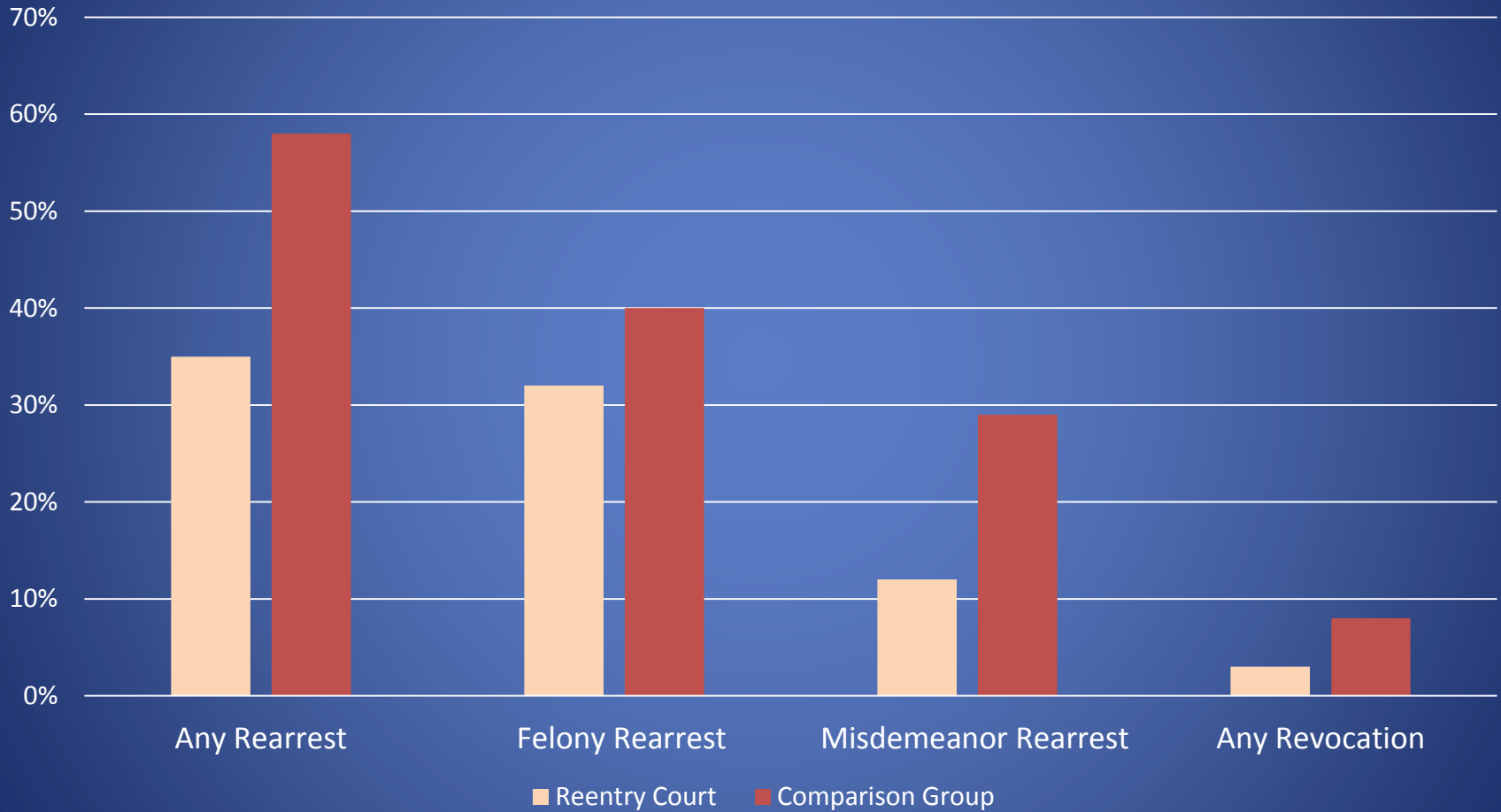
- Staff – hiring, turnover
- Training (shift from punishment to treatment)
- Communication issues (interpersonal, interagency)
- Gaps in available services (mental health, housing, employment)
 - New partnerships are hard to establish, especially when resources are limited



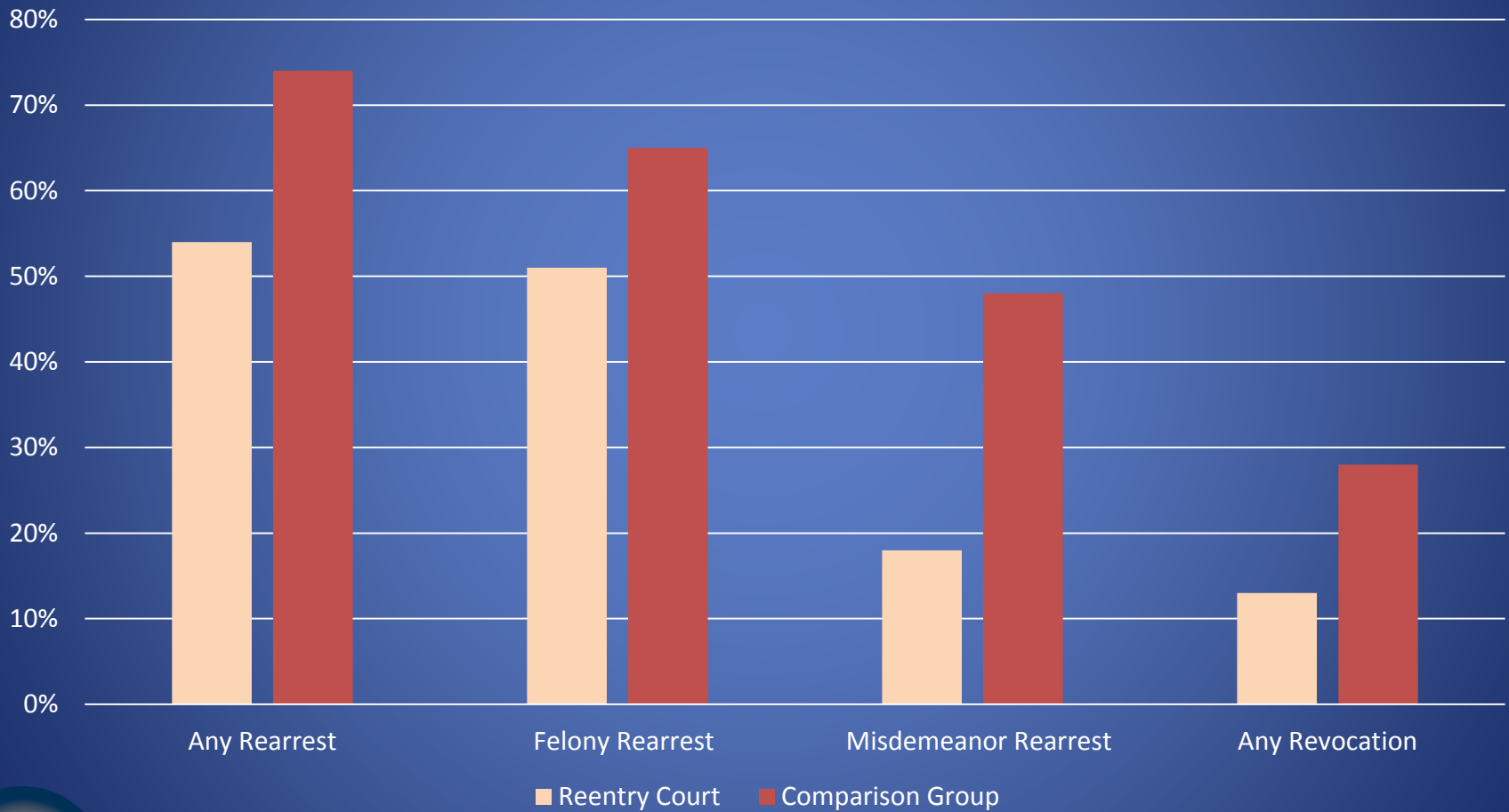
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM THE IMPACT EVALUATION



Site 1: Recidivism at 12 months



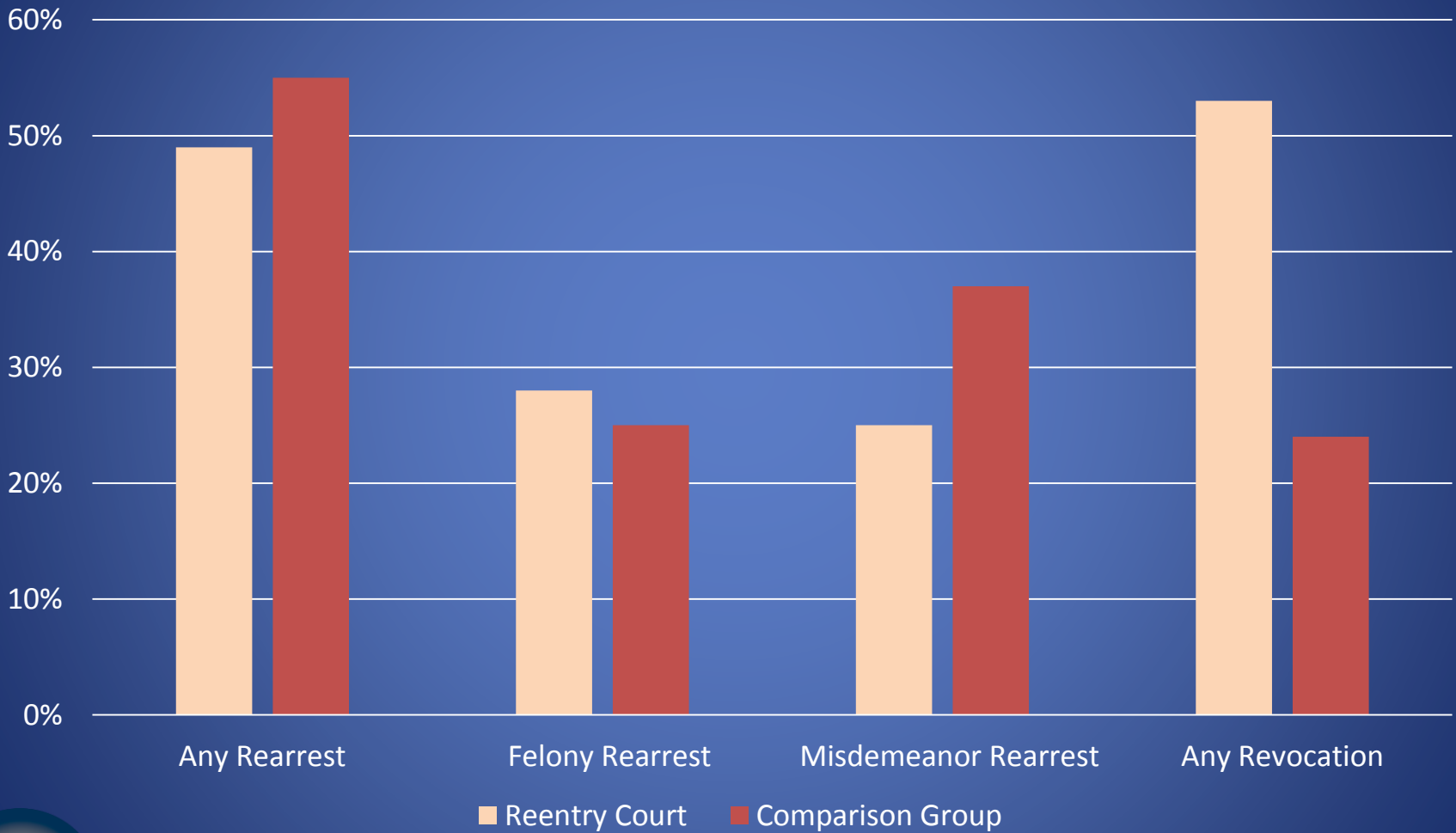
Site 1: Recidivism at 2 Years



Site 2: Recidivism at 1 Year



Site 2: Recidivism at 2 Years



Prospective Interview Study



Prospective Interview Study

- Reentry and business-as-usual
- 1-hour in-person interviews:
 - Perceptions of justice system & actors
 - Mental health, substance use, & criminal thinking/behaviors
 - Service utilization & ongoing needs
- 2 time points:
 - Within 30 days of release (baseline)
 - 1 year after release (follow-up)

Prospective Interview Study

- 4 locations: DE, MO, OH, TX
- 6 contracted interviewers
- Over 500 individuals interviewed
- Oral swab drug test at follow-up
- **82% follow-up rate!**



Reentry Participant Sample

- 206 Reentry Participants

	Baseline N	1 Year Follow-up N (%)
Delaware	56	40 (71%)
Missouri	38	35 (92%)
Ohio	74	56 (76%)
Texas	38	37 (97%)
Total	206	168 (82%)

Reentry Participant Sample

- Across all Reentry participants interviewed at follow-up:
 - 64% male
 - About 32 years old (median = 31; 19 to 60)
 - 39% Black/African-American
 - 35% White
 - 19% Hispanic
 - 7% Multiracial

Reentry Participant Sample

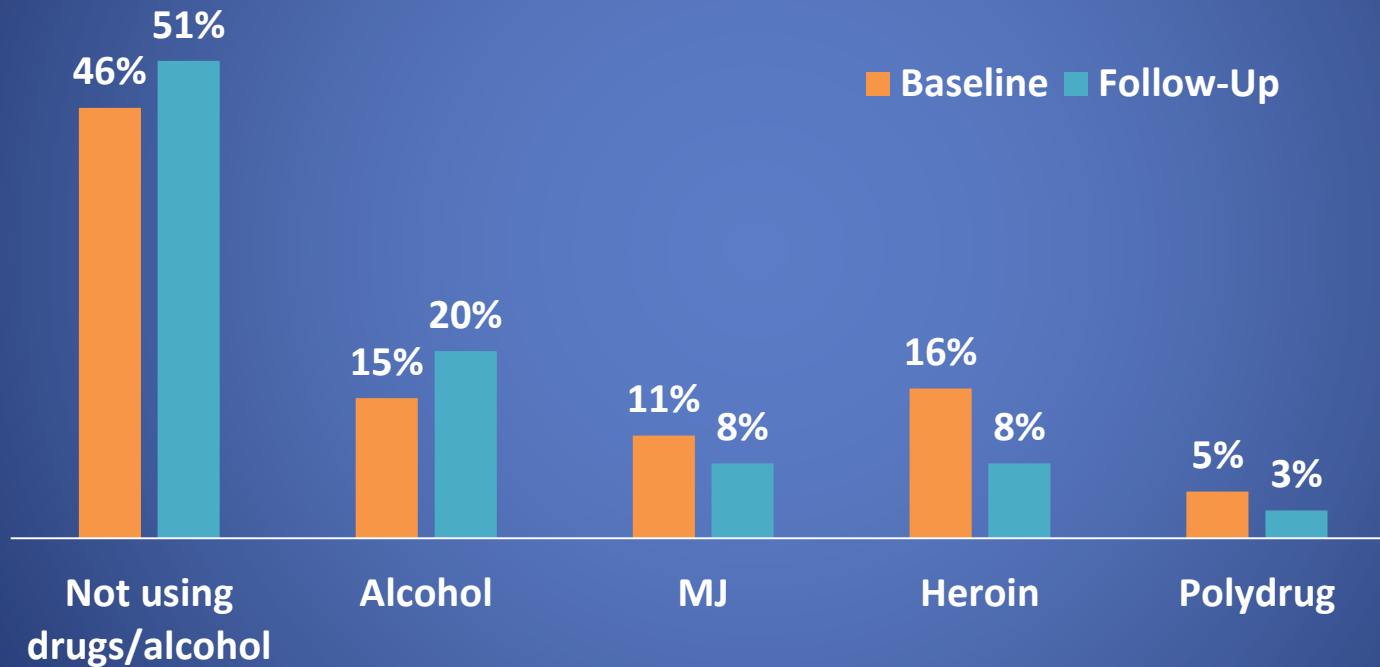
- Across all Reentry participants interviewed at follow-up:
 - 99% born in U.S.
 - 5% served in U.S. Armed Forces
 - 67% H.S. degree or GED
 - 70% suspended or expelled from school

Preliminary Results: How Are Reentry Participants Doing One Year Later?



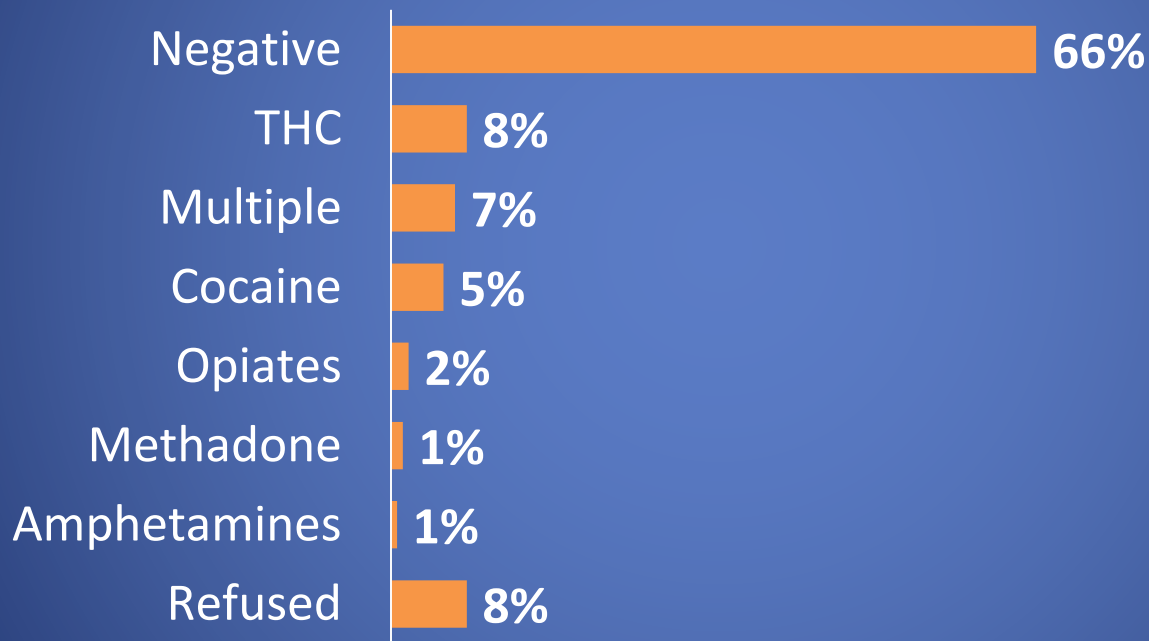
Self-Reported Substance Use

Primary Drug of Choice (self-reported)



Results of Oral Swab Drug Test

- Oral swab results confirm self-report



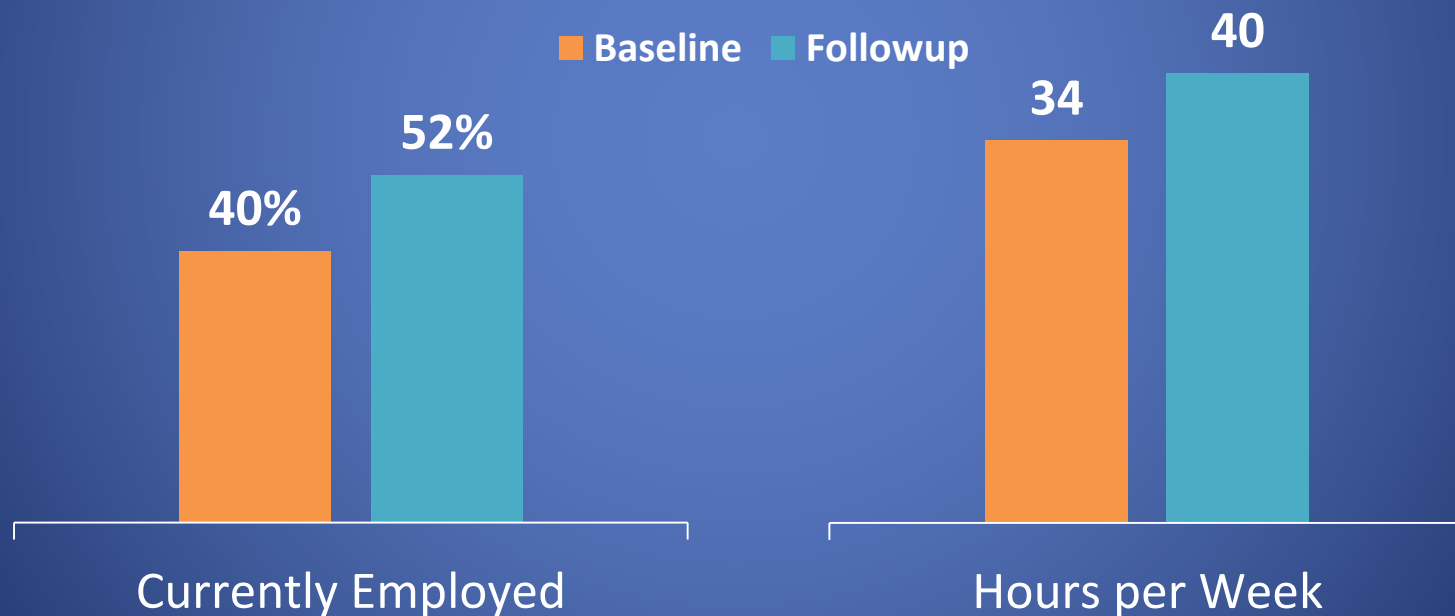
Drug Use Disorders

- 12-item Drug Use Disorder Questionnaire
- SUD = “Yes” to 2 or more questions

	Baseline	Follow-Up
Mean Score	3.3	1.6
Median Score	0	0
Yes to 2+	62 (37%)	40 (24%)

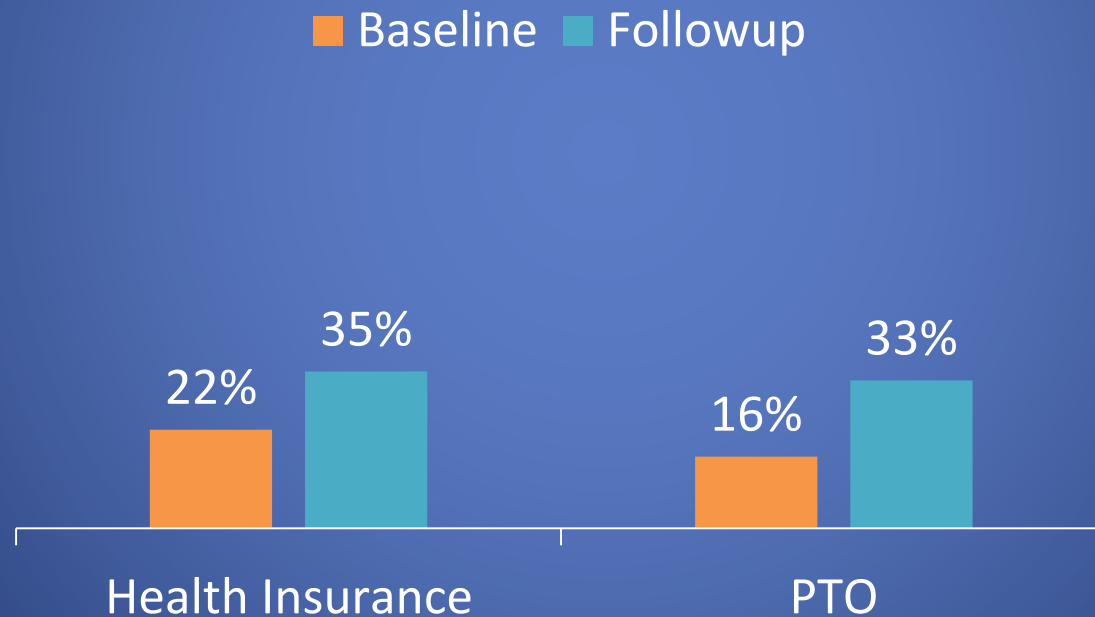
Employment

- More participants are employed, and more have full time jobs



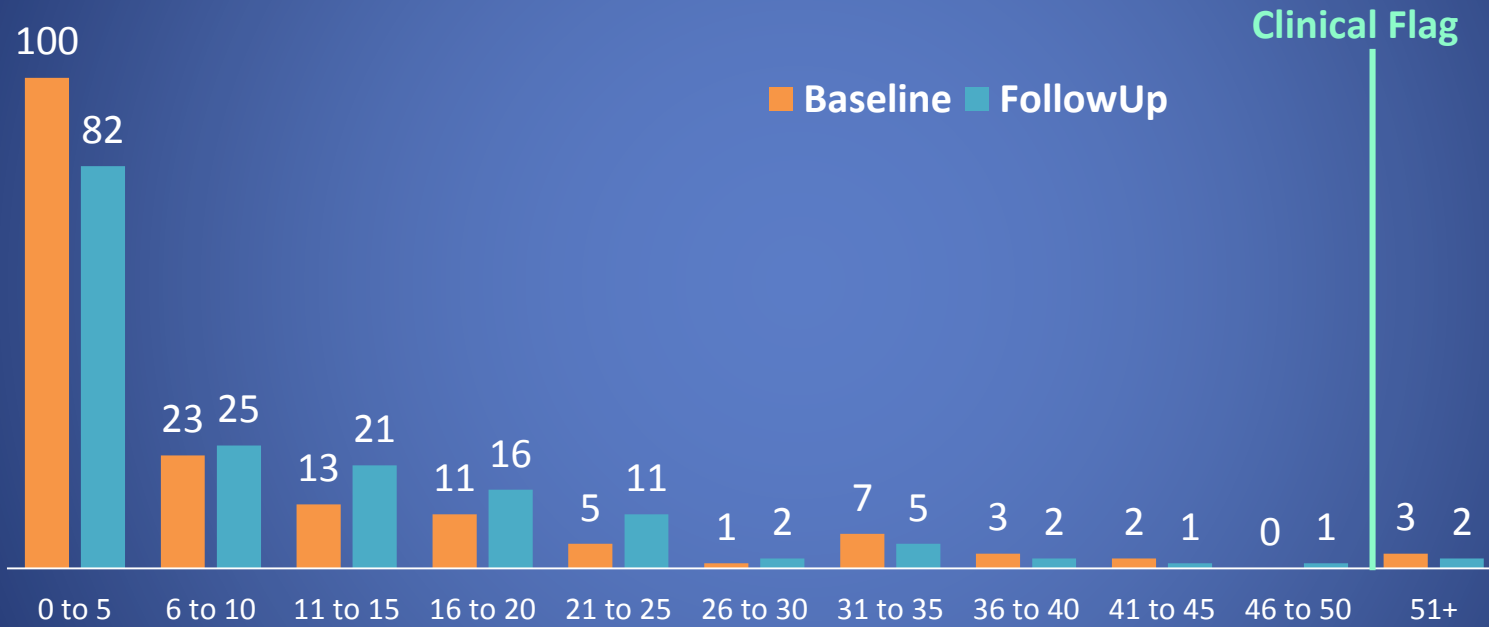
Employment

- More participants have jobs that offer benefits, including health insurance and PTO



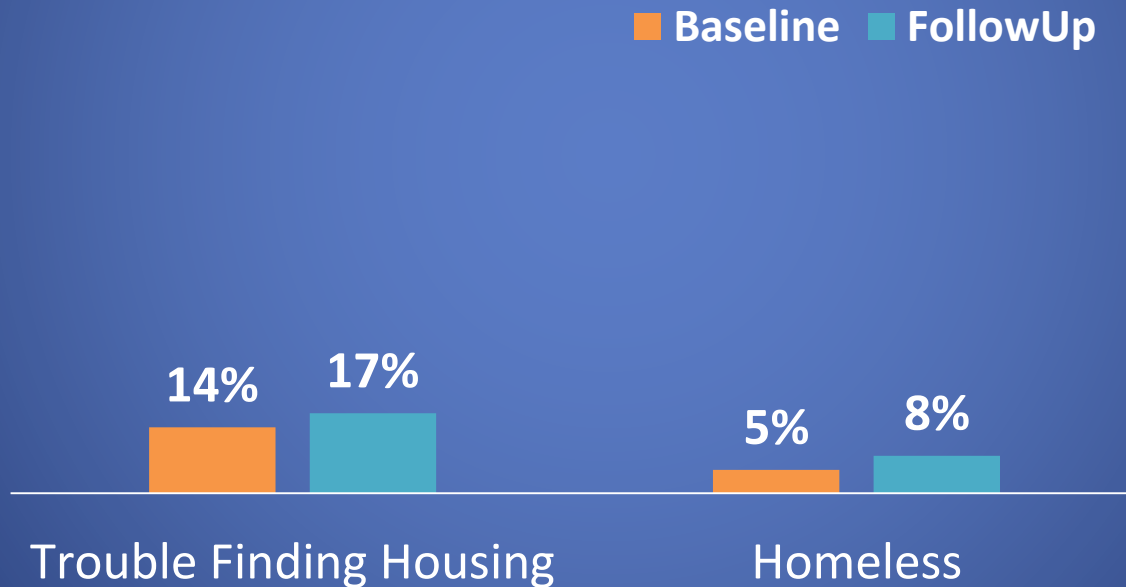
Mental Health

Overall Scores from Brief Symptom Inventory 18
(ranges from 0 to 72)



Housing

- One out of six participants reported difficulty finding housing



Summary

- One year after Reentry:
 - Most participants reported little psychological distress (depression, anxiety, somatization)
 - About half were not using drugs/alcohol
 - Those that were using reported fewer indicators of SUD
 - 1/6 experienced difficulty finding housing
 - 1/12 were homeless

Interview Study Next Steps

- Continue analyzing participant responses
- Compare results to business-as-usual group
- Weight samples by criminal history and other background characteristics
- Analyze more!

Stay tuned....