A National Scan of Policies, Practices, and Systems Affecting Young People

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Connecticut's Unspoken Crisis

A National Scan of Policies, Practices, and Systems Affecting Young People

Megan Millenky, Louisa Treskon, and Farhana Hossain

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BUILDING KNOWLEDGE TO IMPROVE SOCIAL POLICY

FUNDER

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FOREWORD

Adhlere Coffy
Senior Portfolio Director, Connecticut Opportunity Project at Dalio Education

Samantha Miller
Portfolio Director, Connecticut Opportunity Project at Dalio Education

Amanda Olberg
Senior Portfolio Director, Connecticut Opportunity Project at Dalio Education

In October 2023, a report prepared by the Boston Consulting Group and published by Dalio Education revealed an unspoken crisis in Connecticut: 119,000 young people ages 14 to 26 are at risk of dropping out of high school or are disconnected from work and school entirely in our state, one of the wealthiest in the country. But we know disconnection is a crisis affecting young people beyond Connecticut as well.

As a parallel research project to inform efforts in our home state and elsewhere to change these outcomes, the Connecticut Opportunity Project (CTOP), a social investment fund of Dalio Education, commissioned MDRC to undertake a scan of programs, practices, and policies across the country that help or hinder young people in reconnecting to school and work. Focused specifically on young people who are disconnected and reluctant to actively seek support, as well as young people reconnecting to school and work following incarceration, this report identifies characteristics and implementation practices of promising programs as well as challenges and opportunities in the policy arena most relevant to helping young people transform their lives.

This report affirms many realities CTOP sees in our work of investing in and helping to build the capacity of nonprofit organizations in Connecticut, including the urgent issue that there are not nearly enough programs serving the young people who are the focus of this report, nor sufficient funding available to meet the true cost of providing the services required to address the complex barriers they face.

We anticipate that many of the strategies, implementation practices, and policies highlighted in this report will resonate with practitioners dedicated to working with young people who are disconnected. Our hope is that elevating good work being done around the country can yield improvements in program implementation and policy adoption, and inspire a growing commitment of resources and funding to this work—all in furtherance of better outcomes for young people who cannot afford to wait a moment longer for support that has been promised but not yet delivered by the systems that serve them.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Authors

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, approximately five million young people in the United States were not in school or working.[1] This group of young people transitioning to adulthood, roughly ages 16 to 24, are often referred to as "opportunity youth" and sometimes "disconnected youth." Young people from low-income families and from communities of color—such as Native, Black, and Latino Americans—experience higher rates of disconnection, as they face significant obstacles related to poverty and racial inequality.[2] Research shows that disconnection from school and work during these transformative years can have negative, long-term consequences on a range of outcomes—from earnings to incarceration to homeownership to physical and mental well-being—that result in significant costs for these individuals, their communities, and society at large.[3]

YOUNG PEOPLE FROM LOW-INCOME FAMILIES AND FROM COMMUNITIES OF COLOR EXPERIENCE HIGHER RATES OF DISCONNECTION, AS THEY FACE SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLES RELATED TO POVERTY AND RACIAL INEQUALITY.

For most young people, disconnection from school or work is not a steady state. Some people find ways to reconnect as they age, while others remain persistently disconnected over early adulthood. Those who are disconnected for long periods and those who become less connected as they get older are also those who face more barriers to success, including poverty, limited education, and involvement with the criminal legal system.[4] Community-based programs are an important source of support for young people to reconnect to school and work. They may help young people work toward a

1. Kristen Lewis, *Ensuring an Equitable Recovery: Addressing COVID-19's Impact on Education* (New York: Measure of America, Social Science Research Council, 2023).

2. Measure of America, "Youth Disconnection in America" (website: https://www.measureofamerica.org/DYinteractive/, 2023).

3. Kristen Lewis and Rebecca Gluskin, *Two Futures: The Economic Case for Keeping Youth on Track* (New York: Measure of America, Social Science Research Council, 2018); Clive R. Belfield, Henry M. Levin, and Rachel Rosen, *The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth* (Washington, DC: Corporation for National and Community Service, 2012).

4. Daniel Kuehn, Michael Pergamit, Jennifer Macomber, and Tracy Vericker, *Vulnerable Youth and the Transition to Adulthood* (Washington, DC: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Office of Human Services Policy, 2009).

high school credential, connect to postsecondary education or training, earn an occupational credential, gain employability skills and work experience, and advance in the labor market. But these programs often tend to reach people who are more active in their efforts to reengage in school, training, or employment, whether on their own or with a push from family or friends. Those who are reluctant to seek help—due to past negative experiences in their lives, difficulties in navigating systems, or the hurdles of the program requirements—often fall through the cracks.

THOSE WHO ARE RELUCTANT TO SEEK HELP—DUE TO PAST NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES IN THEIR LIVES, DIFFICULTIES IN NAVIGATING SYSTEMS, OR THE HURDLES OF THE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS—OFTEN FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS.

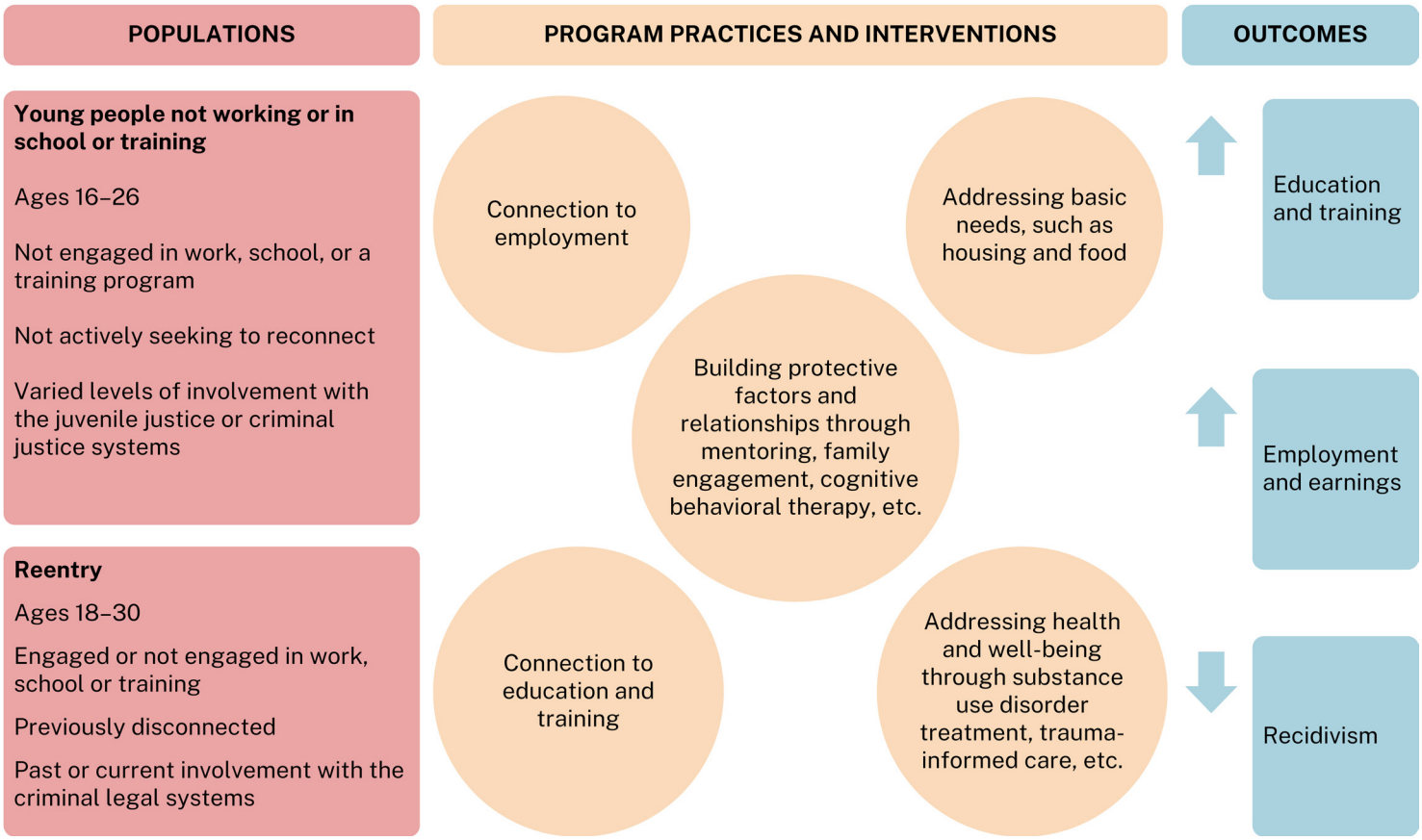
Dalio Education's Connecticut Opportunity Project (CTOP) partnered with MDRC to conduct an evidence-focused scan of the landscape of programs and practices that are relevant to this specific subset of young people who are furthest from opportunities in their communities: (1) young people who are disconnected from education, training, or employment and are reluctant to actively seek help in reconnecting; and (2) young people reconnecting to education and employment after incarceration and past or current disconnection from education, training, or employment (see Figure ES.1). Hereafter, these two groups of young people are referred to as the "populations of interest."

Methodology

The landscape scan was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the programs working specifically with the populations of interest? What practices do these programs use? What is the evidence base of these programs and practices?
- What factors affect the implementation of these programs and pose challenges to young people in connecting to them, including the role of policies in different systems (such as the juvenile and criminal legal systems)?

FIGURE ES.1 Scope of the Landscape Scan



Data sources included the following:

- **Interviews** with more than 25 experts (practitioners, program leaders, advocates, researchers, and funders) with knowledge of programs that serve the populations of interest and policy domains that affect them.
- **Impact and outcome studies of community-based programs** that focused on populations of interest, had been in operation for at least one year, and sought to improve participant outcomes related to education, training, employment, or involvement in the criminal legal system. The scan identified 34 quantitative studies of 32 programs that met these criteria.[5]

5. There were 24 impact studies that included a comparison group either as part of a randomized controlled trial or a quasi-experimental design, and 10 outcome studies that measured participant outcomes but not against a comparison group. The studies were released between January 2000 and June 2023.

- **A scan of additional community-based programs** that serve the populations of interest but do not have published impact or outcome studies as of June 2023. This effort involved gathering information primarily from the programs' websites. The scan identified 52 programs that met the criteria above.[6]

- **A scan of policies in different systems** that affect the populations of interests and programs that serve them, as identified in the evidence review and expert interviews.

Programs, Practices, and Evidence

As noted above, the research team reviewed two sets of community-based programs for the analysis presented in this report—32 programs that had at least one impact or outcome study, and 52 programs for which such evaluations were not available as of June 2023. The analysis found that programs that have impact or outcome studies are generally similar to programs without such studies in most ways, including in the types of services that they offer to young people. Programs without studies that are included in this analysis had to have enough information publicly available about them to confirm that they met the same criteria for inclusion, and programs that have that information typically are more mature—like programs that have undergone formal evaluations of their outcomes.

THE RESEARCH TEAM REVIEWED TWO SETS OF COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS FOR THE ANALYSIS PRESENTED IN THIS REPORT—32 PROGRAMS THAT HAD AT LEAST ONE IMPACT OR OUTCOME STUDY, AND 52 PROGRAMS FOR WHICH SUCH EVALUATIONS WERE NOT AVAILABLE.

Programs identified in the scan were generally less than 15 years old, operated by community-based organizations using public funding, and located in urban areas. Many programs combined funding from multiple sources to meet the complex needs of the young people they served. Programs also developed partnerships with other community-based organizations, employ-

6. The list of programs included in this scan should not be considered exhaustive, as there are other programs that probably serve these populations either exclusively or in part, but not enough information was available to the research team to determine whether they definitively meet this scan's criteria for inclusion.

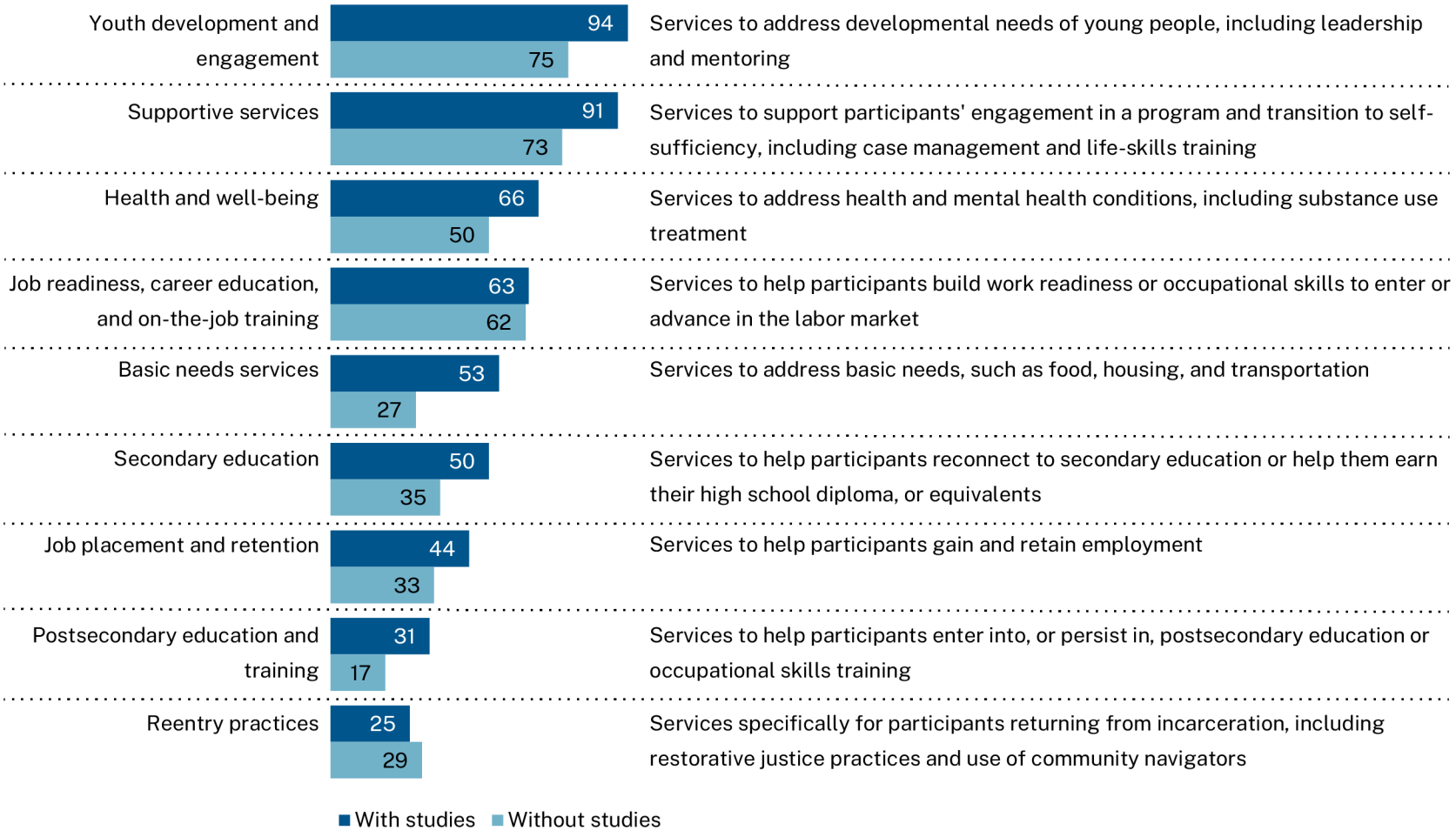
ers, and public and private institutions (such as the local police or a trade union) to fund their services, recruit participants, and connect participants to other services or resources in the community. The geographic and community contexts of the programs thus significantly affect their abilities to engage and serve young people.

Taken together, the programs in this scan offered services in multiple domains targeting outcomes related to education, employment, and the criminal legal system. They often combined educational or employment services with services to foster positive youth development (such as mentoring, family engagement, or leadership opportunities) and to support a young person's engagement in the program (such as case management to coordinate services, tailor them to the individual's needs, and monitor progress). Since the programs in this scan served a wide age range of young people with different educational backgrounds and skill levels, the types of educational and employment services offered also varied widely (for example, some young people with low literacy or numeracy skills and no high school diplomas may need basic remediation services, whereas those who have diplomas may pursue postsecondary education or occupational training). As shown in Figure ES.2, nearly all programs described services in more than one domain, reflecting the extensive needs of these populations that require programs to bundle services. (For example, while participating in a job-focused program, participants may need help with housing instability or food access.) The most common services were in the domain of youth development and supportive services; a majority of programs also provided services to prepare young people for the world of work. Programs with outcome and impact studies tended to be older and larger, and provided services in more domains, compared with those without such evaluations.

NEARLY ALL PROGRAMS DESCRIBED SERVICES IN MORE THAN ONE DOMAIN, REFLECTING THE EXTENSIVE NEEDS OF THESE POPULATIONS THAT REQUIRE PROGRAMS TO BUNDLE SERVICES.

The rest of this section describes findings from the analysis of programs with studies, where more detailed information was available about participant characteristics, program practices, implementation strategies, and evidence of outcomes.

FIGURE ES.2 Percentage of Programs Providing Services in Each Domain and Domain Definitions



SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on published information available for 32 programs with studies and 52 without studies.

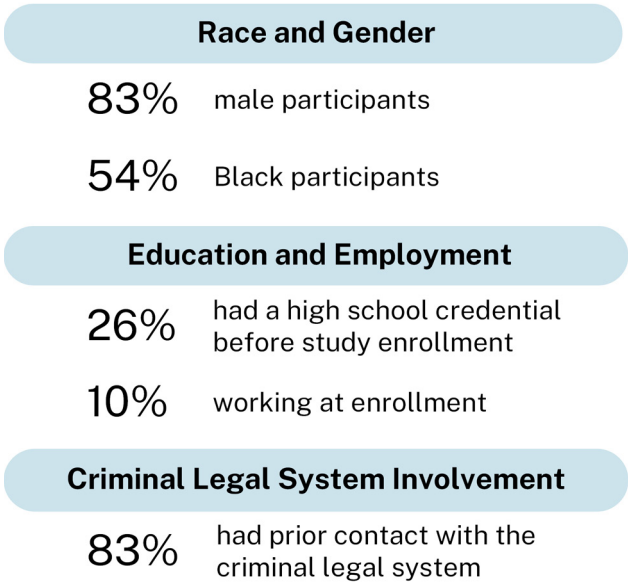
Populations Served

As shown in Figure ES.3, participants were overwhelmingly male and had had contact with the criminal legal system. Most were young people of color; a little more than a half were Black. About a quarter had obtained their high school credentials at the time of enrollment, and a very small share were working. These characteristics align with the overrepresentation of boys and men of color among groups disconnected from school or work and those involved with the criminal legal system, particularly young Black people, who face discrimination in schooling, policing, and employment.[7]

Recruitment

Many programs serving the populations of interests had well-considered strategies to reach and engage these young people, many of whom are disillusioned from past negative experiences with systems and institutions that serve young people and are not likely to show up to the programs on their own. One-third of the programs employed street outreach strategies to connect to young people in their communities, and others partnered with organizations in the community—particularly law enforcement—to refer young people to their programs.

FIGURE ES.3 Characteristics of Program Participants



SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on published information available for 34 studies.

7. Akiva Liberman, Jeanette Hussemann, Brice McKeever, and Douglas Young, *Evaluation of the OJJDP FY2010 Second Chance Act Juvenile Offender Reentry Demonstration Projects: Technical Report* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2019); Jillianne Leufgen, Charles Lea, Brandon Nicholson, Anna Rubin, and Kate Dunham, *The Evaluation of the Newark Prisoner Re-entry Initiative Replication: Final Report* (Oakland, CA: Social Policy Research Associates, 2012); Lewis (2023).

Promoting Participant Engagement

Most programs consider strong and meaningful relationships between young people and staff members to be essential for recruiting young people and sustaining engagement with them. Strategies for creating a program culture that can facilitate such relationships included (a) hiring staff members who have experience working with young people and who understand the needs of these populations due to shared demographic background or shared experiences; (b) offering training and development opportunities that equip staff members to deliver services as designed; and (c) helping participants build relationships with multiple staff members to reduce the risk of disengagement due to staff turnover.

As noted above, many programs built robust partnerships in the community to connect participants with resources the programs did not offer directly and to help participants navigate multiple systems (such as health care, food assistance, housing, and the criminal legal system, among others). Such partnerships are crucial for sustaining engagement with populations that face a multitude of challenges and need assistance with different facets of their lives.

Studies also described the need for programs to be flexible about how participants move through different phases and activities. Young people who connect to programs after a period of being out of school and work often do not progress through those programs at a steady pace; they may stop attending for periods of time due to life events and emerging challenges, and then may reengage when circumstances change or after outreach efforts from staff members. The analysis suggested that programs need to offer flexibility in their timelines, allow young people to disengage and reengage as they navigate their life circumstances, and dedicate staff time to reengagement efforts.

STUDIES ALSO DESCRIBED THE NEED FOR PROGRAMS TO BE FLEXIBLE ABOUT HOW PARTICIPANTS MOVE THROUGH DIFFERENT PHASES AND ACTIVITIES.

Promising Strategies for Implementing Program Practices

Case management, transitional employment (temporary, often subsidized jobs), and job placement and mentoring were among the most common practices the programs used, and promising strategies for implementing these services included the following:

- **Strive for low caseloads and flexible approaches to case management.** Case managers with caseloads that are too high may not have sufficient time to dedicate to building relationships with young people and providing them with support.[8] Flexibility in how and when case managers were available to young people also helped services reach participants—for example, by allowing for unscheduled meetings. Small caseloads were described in the studies as fewer than 12 to 25 young people per case manager.

- **Design transitional jobs to fit the specific needs of program participants.** Many programs in the scan developed transitional job opportunities for young people to build their readiness for the world of work while providing an income. Transitional jobs can serve different purposes for different segment of the populations of interest, and studies pointed to ways programs designed transitional job offerings to fit their particular populations. For example, a program that serves young people with very limited work experience and job skills included a job-readiness training component; and a program that serves young people who are believed to be at the highest risk of violence in their communities used transitional jobs as an incentive for them to learn and practice cognitive behavioral skills that can help them make safer choices and avoid violence. One study found that allowing young people more choice in identifying tran-

CASE MANAGEMENT, TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT, AND JOB PLACEMENT AND MENTORING WERE AMONG THE MOST COMMON PRACTICES THE PROGRAMS USED.

8. Liberman, Hussemann, McKeever, and Young (2019).

sitional job opportunities that are aligned with their interests and goals was effective in engaging them.

- **Dedicate staff time to job development and support young people after job placement.** To improve employment outcomes for young people, programs need to devote staff time to developing job opportunities outside of the program by building relationships with local employers, identifying job openings that may be appropriate for the participants they serve, and helping participants with their job search efforts. One study indicated that it might be possible to overcome this reluctance by addressing employers' concerns about young people who have been involved in the legal system and by providing financial incentives to hire them.[9] Postplacement support, where a program continues to work with participants after they have been placed in jobs or education, could help address issues with job retention or persistence in school.

The studies also pointed to challenges related to providing mentoring and mental health services to young people. Mentors can be hard to recruit and retain, and providing consistently high-quality mentoring that is aligned to a program's goals and curriculum requires investments in recruiting the right people and training them to deliver services as intended.[10] Mental health services are essential for many young people, but access can be difficult due to the limited number of providers in many places, especially those that can provide culturally competent services in a youth-friendly way. Some studies found that programs needed to build their own capabilities to deliver mental health support to ease access to services for their participants.

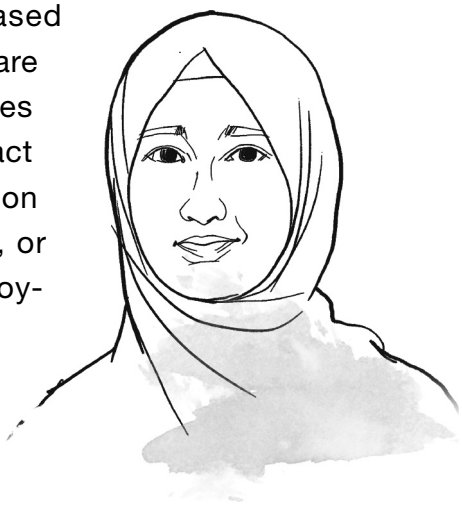
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR MANY YOUNG PEOPLE, BUT ACCESS CAN BE DIFFICULT DUE TO THE LIMITED NUMBER OF PROVIDERS IN MANY PLACES.

9. Leufgen et al. (2012).

10. Dan Bloom, Alissa Gardenhire-Crooks, and Conrad Mandsager, *Reengaging High School Dropouts: Early Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program Evaluation* (New York, MDRC, 2009); Mathew Lynch, Nan Marie Astone, Juan Collazos, Micaela Lipman, and Sino Esthappan, *Arches Transformative Mentoring Program: An Implementation and Impact Evaluation in New York City* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2018).

Evidence of Effects

One important lesson from the scan is that the evidence base is currently very limited with respect to which practices are effective at helping the populations of interest with education and employment and at preventing their involvement in the legal system. Indeed, the number of programs for these populations that have undergone rigorous evaluations is very small. The analysis suggests that community-based programs *can* successfully reach and engage those who are furthest from opportunity and produce positive outcomes in education, employment, or recidivism.[11] Of the 24 impact studies reviewed for the scan, 23 found positive impacts on at least one outcome related to education, employment, or recidivism: 9 found impacts on outcomes related to employment; 4 found impacts related to education; and 15 found impacts related to recidivism. Most studies analyzed outcomes in the year or two following the start of the program services. Impacts were not consistent across domains or even within a single domain. For example, one study found an impact on recidivism but not employment, and another found impact on felony convictions but not arrests. The small sample of studies and the variations in program services and study design, among other factors, limited the research team's ability to identify patterns in practices or outcomes.



There is much to be learned about which program strategies and combinations of services can produce consistent and long-term effects across these domains for young people of different ages, needs, and challenges. The scan also highlights the importance of investing in strong implementation research that documents how and under what conditions program services are implemented on the ground, as part of studies designed to assess the impact of programs. There is also a strong need for practitioner-focused implementation research that examines how program staff members put in-

11. In this context, "recidivism" refers to new interactions a person—who has had past experience with the criminal legal system—might have with the criminal legal system, including arrests, detainment or incarceration, and convictions.

terventions, practices, and policies into use effectively (for example, research into promising strategies to build large-scale partnerships with employers).[12]

Systems and Policies

As young people journey from adolescence to adulthood, they interact with many systems and organizations. Some themes related to policies affecting the populations of interest emerged from the interviews with experts, the literature review, and studies of programs. The research team found that experts and the literature often described a need to:

- **Change disciplinary policies in the K-12 system that push young people out of schools and into the juvenile or criminal legal systems.** These policies include ones that criminalize truancy or chronic absenteeism and "zero-tolerance" policies that mandate suspensions or expulsions for students for varying levels of misconduct.

- **Meet the developmental needs of young people at different stages of adolescence and adulthood.** In the context of the juvenile and criminal legal systems, meeting these needs would mean enacting policies grounded in an understanding of brain development for people entering adulthood. For example, policies may try to increase alternatives to incarceration or court involvement, or incorporate elements of juvenile rehabilitative approaches for young adults, among other possibilities. In the employment and training domains, meeting these needs would mean recognizing that these populations need multiple options as they gain skills and experiences to create a long-term pathway to economic advancement.

SOME THEMES RELATED TO POLICIES AFFECTING THE POPULATIONS OF INTEREST EMERGED FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH EXPERTS, THE LITERATURE REVIEW, AND STUDIES OF PROGRAMS.

12. Carolyn J. Hill, Lauren Scher, Joshua Maimson, and Kelly Granito, *Conducting Implementation Research in Impact Studies of Education Interventions: A Guide for Researchers* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, 2023).

- **Match funding practices to the scope of need for evidence-based programs and services.** Experts and the literature noted that funding levels should be aligned with and appropriate to the intensive nature of the services often needed to serve the populations of interest and the growing demand for services, as the pandemic has increased the rate of youth disconnection.[13] Bringing funding to that level would mean meeting the true cost of recruiting, engaging, and providing evidence-based services to young people who face serious challenges, such as street outreach to recruit young people who may not volunteer for programs, and long-term support for young people after they graduate from programs.

EXPERTS AND THE LITERATURE POINTED TO A NEED FOR MORE CROSS-SYSTEM COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS EDUCATION, LAW ENFORCEMENT, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND OTHER SYSTEMS.

- **Increase service coordination and data sharing among systems that serve young people.** Experts and the literature pointed to a need for more cross-system collaborations and partnerships across education, law enforcement, social services, and other systems that affect the lives of these young people, to ensure that they can navigate services and receive them in a beneficial sequence, and that they do not fall through the cracks at transition points.

- **Remove policy barriers that prevent young people who have been involved in the legal system from gaining access to employment, housing, mental health, and safety net services.** These policies include ones that limit access to public benefits for food, housing, or health care for people with criminal records, as well as policies that restrict them from holding licenses and jobs in a wide array of occupations.

- **Test policies and partnerships for large-scale employer engagement in employing young people in quality jobs.** Such testing includes investing in building evidence on how public policies can fight stigma and discrimination in employer hiring practices, particularly in fields with long-term, high-wage opportunities for young people, as well as the

13. Lewis (2023).

most effective ways for employers to engage in education and training programs.

The scan also found that experts and the literature commonly discussed a need to strengthen the evidence regarding how policies affect the implementation of programs and practices for young people, and regarding how policies affect the outcomes those programs aim to affect.

Looking Ahead

The populations of interest for this scan—young people who have had significant periods of disconnection from work and school and those who have been involved in the juvenile or criminal legal system—need time, resources, and understanding to help them meet their goals. Programs and policies often look to serve or affect a broader population of young people and young adults; young people in these subsets of that larger population often need more intensive and numerous forms of support and may take longer to meet their goals—and therefore are often overlooked by policymakers and funders, who may be deterred by the cost of providing effective services to them. The research base and experts consulted for this scan suggest the following implications for what the field could do—in public policy, program practices, and research—to better support these young people.

Funding

Funders of programs—including government agencies and private philanthropies—should align the amount and duration of funding they provide with the true costs of program operations and the flexibility necessary to serve these populations. Programs need enough funding to meet the varied and often complex needs of these populations—which includes more time to support participants—and they also need reliable funding to provide stability for them, their staffs, and their community partners.

Coordination Across Systems

To reach their goals, young people need assistance navigating the different systems that touch their lives. Similarly, programs and government agen-

cies need better tools and processes for identifying young people who are most in need, and for sharing information across systems and organizations to assist them. Improving the coordination and data sharing across systems (for example, criminal legal and educational) lessens the risk of disconnection when young people move between systems, and makes it more likely that they have access to all the forms of support available to them.

Policy Opportunities

Decision makers can look to address areas where there are persistent gaps in services young people need, such as in housing and mental health services. In addition, adopting policies that ease a person's transition following a period of incarceration could help many people move more quickly to self-sufficiency.

In addition, the scan of the current evidence base for the populations of interest points to the need for strengthening the understanding of programs, practices, and policies that are effective in helping these young people to improve their long-term educational and labor market outcomes, and to stay out of prison. This need includes the need to build evidence related to program design and implementation strategies, as well as evidence concerning policies in domains such as the educational and criminal legal systems. For example, reforms to adult legal system practices for emerging adults could be studied in more places.

CHAPTER

1

Introduction

About one in eight young people between the ages of 16 and 24—nearly five million people—were both out of school and unemployed in 2021.[1] Often referred to as "opportunity youth" or "disconnected youth," this group of young people disproportionately have low incomes and are people of color, and are more likely to have a disability than the average person their age.[2] For many in this group, disconnection is a result of a multitude of systemic barriers related to poverty and racial inequality, including housing instability, exposure to violence and traumatic events, underfunded schools, unequal policing and law enforcement, and limited opportunities for employment that can result in upward mobility.[3]

Research shows that disconnection from school and work during these transformative years can have negative, long-term consequences on a range of outcomes—from earnings to incarceration to homeownership to physical and mental well-being—that result in significant costs for these individuals, their communities, and society at large.[4] These costs include lost earnings, lost tax payments, and increased public and private spending on health care, social services, and law enforcement and corrections. According to one estimate, a young person who remains disconnected by the age of 25 will, on average, result in more than $650,000 in costs to society over the person's

1. Lewis (2023).
2. Lewis (2023).
3. Burd-Sharps and Lewis (2018); Fernandes-Alcantara (2015).
4. Lewis and Gluskin (2018); Belfield, Levin, and Rosen (2012).

lifetime (in 2022 dollars).[5] Consequently, the need to build pathways these young people can follow to reach long-term success and to address the systemic barriers that limit their connection to opportunities remains urgent.

For most young people, disconnection from school or work is not a steady state, and periods of work and education can be interspersed with spells of disconnection. A 2009 study using longitudinal data emphasized the "dynamic nature" of youth disconnection and that some people find ways to reconnect as they age, while others remain persistently disconnected over early adulthood. Not surprisingly, the study also found that those who are disconnected for long periods of time and those who become less connected as they get older are also those who face more barriers, including coming from families with low incomes, dropping out of high school without a diploma, and being involved with the criminal legal system.[6] In addition, during their journey from adolescence to adulthood, young people experience significant changes in physical, social, and emotional development, which can add to the challenges of navigating these barriers and balancing the risks and benefits of decisions that affect their future, especially if they do not have connections to supportive adults.[7]

DURING THEIR JOURNEY FROM ADOLESCENCE TO ADULTHOOD, YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN PHYSICAL, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Community-based programs are an important source of support for young people to reconnect to school and work. They may help young people work toward high school credentials, connect to postsecondary education or training, earn occupational credentials, gain employability skills and work experience, and advance in the labor market. But these programs often tend to reach people who are more active in their efforts to reengage in school, training, or employment, whether on their own or with a push from family or friends, and not those who may be reluctant to seek help. Negative or traumatic experiences with institutions and systems (such as schools, law enforcement, child welfare, or health care),[8] disappointment with a lack of positive adult relationships in

5. Belfield, Levin, and Rosen (2012).
6. Kuehn, Pergamit, Macomber, and Vericker (2009).
7. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2019); Arain et al. (2013).
8. The child welfare system responds in cases of alleged child abuse or neglect.

their lives, or difficulties in navigating program requirements can discourage young people from seeking out these programs and engaging with them.

Scope of the Landscape Scan

In the fall of 2022, Dalio Education's Connecticut Opportunity Project (CTOP) partnered with MDRC to conduct an evidence-focused scan of the landscape of programs and practices that are relevant to this specific subset of young people who are farthest from opportunities in their community—those who are not actively seeking help in reconnecting to education, training, or employment—as well as young adults who are reconnecting to education and employment after incarceration and past or current disconnection from education, training, or employment. The scan builds on previous work MDRC and others have done with programs that serve the broader population of young people who are disconnected from school or work, and on the body of evidence on those programs.

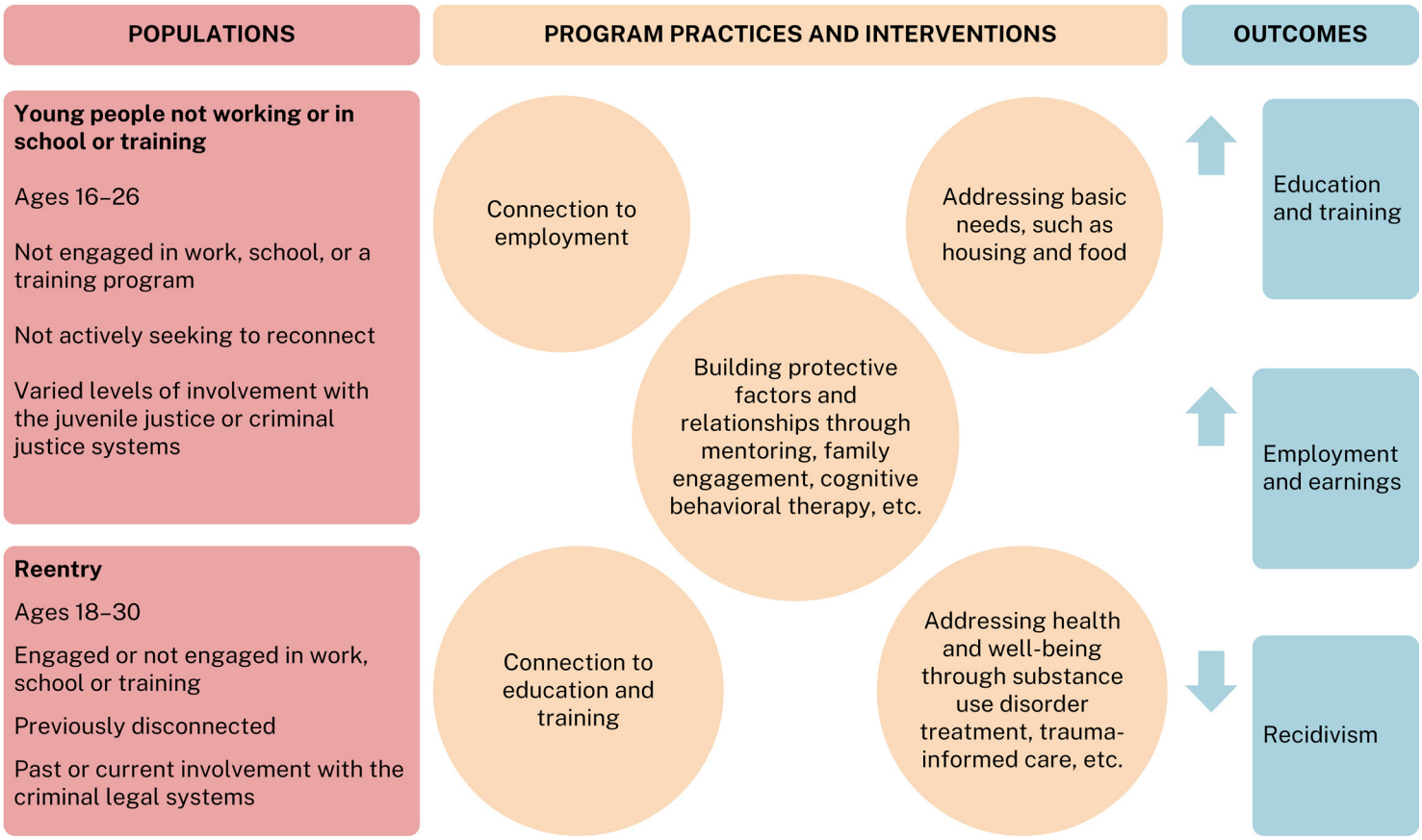
THE SCAN BUILDS ON PREVIOUS WORK MDRC AND OTHERS HAVE DONE WITH PROGRAMS THAT SERVE THE BROADER POPULATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE DISCONNECTED FROM SCHOOL OR WORK, AND ON THE BODY OF EVIDENCE ON THOSE PROGRAMS.

CTOP focuses its resources on youth-serving organizations in Connecticut to help them work effectively and sustainably. These organizations work with young people, ages 14 to 26, who are severely off the track to high school graduation or who are disconnected from school and work, to support them on their path to self-sufficiency through education, employment, case management, behavioral health services, and other services.

In conducting the scan, the research team focused on two groups of young people, as shown in Figure 1.1:

- **Those disconnected from school or work**: The first group includes young people, ages 16 to 26, who are not working, not in school, and not in a training program and—distinguishing them from other young people in the "opportunity youth" population—who are not actively trying to reconnect to any of these opportunities. They may have different levels of involvement with the juvenile or adult criminal legal systems—some may have had no or very minimal involvement, while others may have

FIGURE 1.1 Scope of the Landscape Scan



had more extensive or ongoing involvement with one or both systems. While definitions of "opportunity youth" typically include those between the ages of 16 and 24, this scan uses an extended age range to align with CTOP's population of focus and to align with recent research that shows young people's brains continue to mature until the age of 25, as discussed in Box 1.1.

- **Those reentering the community after incarceration:** The second group includes young adults, ages 18 to 30, who may be currently engaged in work, school, or training, but who have been incarcerated and have experienced disconnection from education and employment. Disconnection from school and work increases the likelihood of involvement in the juvenile or criminal legal system, which, in turn, derails educational progress and the accumulation of work experience. The experience of incarceration is often traumatic and has consequences for young people's mental well-being and employment prospects, fur-

ther limiting their opportunities for success.[9] This group may thus be seen as an extension of the group above, and reflects the trajectory of those who were persistently disconnected from school and work over a long period.

Hereafter, these two groups of young people are referred to as the "populations of interest."

THE FOCUS HERE IS ON PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY AND SEEK TO IMPROVE INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL OUTCOMES.

While there are many types of programs that might work with these populations of interest, the focus here is on programs that provide services to young people *in the community* and seek to *improve individual-level outcomes* related to education, training, employment and involvement in the criminal legal system.[10] To accomplish those goals, these programs may offer one or more of the following: services to create connections to employment, education, or training; services that address basic needs (such as housing or food) or health and well-being (such as mental health or substance use treatment); and services that build protective factors and relationships (such as mentoring and cognitive behavioral therapy).[11]

For its own work and to inform the larger community of public and private funders and practitioners, CTOP posed the following research questions:

- What are the programs working specifically with the populations of interest? What practices do these programs use? What is the evidence base of these programs and practices?

9. Mendel (2023b).

10. The following types of programs, among others, did not meet the scope of this scan: programs for young people who are already connected to school and work (including alternative schools); interventions for young people involved in the juvenile legal system who have returned to school after detention; programs focused on working with young people solely while they are detained or incarcerated; and initiatives or programs that focus only on community-level outcomes such as reduction of violence. Programs that offer services while a young person is incarcerated and then continue those services in the community as part of reentry support were included in the scan.

11. Decades of research suggests that an approach that focuses on such protective factors can help young people make the transition to adulthood more successfully. See Family and Youth Services Bureau (2017).

BOX 1.1. Developmental and Policy Context of Young People's Journey from Adolescence to Adulthood

The populations of interest for this landscape scan spans an age range from 16 to 30 years old, years that are defined by significant changes in physical, social, and emotional development as adolescents mature into adulthood. It is a particularly dynamic period of brain development that prepares young people's brains to respond to the demands and challenges of their transition into adulthood, while also increasing the vulnerability for risky behavior.* Young people's brains continue to mature into their mid-20s, making them prone to risk-taking and impulsive behavior well into their adult years.† Young people's life experiences, relationships, and environment also shape their developmental trajectories. Exposure to poverty, housing instability, food insecurity, traumatic events, and community violence has negative effects on young people's development and their education and employment pathways.‡

The education-to-career trajectories for young people who are more affluent and who face fewer systemic challenges to success can be relatively straightforward. Many complete high school, earn college degrees, participate in internships and other work opportunities while in school, and then enter the labor market full time. Young people who are the focus of this scan do not have such linear paths into adulthood, and their trajectories are marked by significant periods of disconnection from education and work, involvement with the juvenile or criminal legal systems, or both. As they look to reconnect with education and employment, they move in and out of secondary and postsecondary education systems and community-based programs, including adult education, workforce training, and reentry programs. Many continue to cycle in and out of juvenile or criminal legal systems, and when they face specific challenges, they also interact with the child welfare system and safety net programs such as housing, food assistance, disability, and health care, among others.

In this context, there is substantial heterogeneity in the skill and support needs among this scan's populations of focus based on: (a) their early experiences with education, patterns of disconnection from schooling and amount of schooling; (b) their patterns of involvement with the legal system and time spent in detention or incarceration facilities; and (c) the challenges they face at the individual and community level and the level of support available to them to work through those challenges (such as availability of family support or community resources). Programs and policies that affect these populations of young people therefore span a wide range of systems and legislative domains at the federal, state, and local levels, as shown below.

Education and Employment	Other Domains
K-12 public schools, alternative schools	Juvenile and criminal legal systems
Career and technical education programs	Kinship and foster care systems
Adult education programs	Housing policies, independent living programs
Community-based, out-of-school programs	Health care, disability, substance use treatment
Postsecondary education and training programs	
Labor, licensing, and employment regulations	

NOTES: *National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2019).

†Arain et al. (2013).

‡National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2019).

- What factors affect the implementation of these programs and pose challenges to young people in connecting to them, including the role of policies in different systems (such as the juvenile and criminal legal systems)?

Analysis Approach and Data Sources

The research team interviewed experts in the field and conducted an extensive review of relevant evidence and literature to answer these research questions. MDRC started with a list of programs, reports, articles, and experts identified from the organization's long experience working with a broader transition-age youth population, and conducted the activities outlined below in an iterative manner:

- **Expert interviews:** Between November 2022 and May 2023, the team conducted interviews with more than 25 people with knowledge of and expertise in programs that serve the populations of interest and in policy domains that affect them, including the juvenile and criminal legal systems, workforce development, and education. The goal was to learn about the range of programs and policies that are relevant for these populations across the country from different perspectives. In addition to covering a broad range of domains, CTOP and MDRC sought to engage stakeholders with experience in different roles, such as practitioners, program leaders, advocates, researchers, and funders. The team also conducted the interviews in three rounds, asking interviewees in the first two rounds to provide names of others who might inform this work, and using that information to reach out to additional experts. (See Appendix A for a list of the people/organizations interviewed.) During the interviews, experts were provided framing information about the scan and the populations of interest and were asked to share thoughts and any information on relevant programs,

THE RESEARCH TEAM INTERVIEWED EXPERTS IN THE FIELD AND CONDUCTED AN EXTENSIVE REVIEW OF RELEVANT EVIDENCE AND LITERATURE TO ANSWER THESE RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

practices, studies, and policies. Notes from these interviews were coded using NVivo qualitative analysis software.

- **Program evidence review:** To locate quantitative studies of relevant programs, the team started with a list of known impact and outcome studies (including those identified during the interviews), and then searched databases and clearinghouses extensively for others that met the criteria described below.[12] The scan identified 34 studies that met the criteria for inclusion: 24 impact studies that included a comparison group (either as part of a randomized controlled trial or a quasi-experimental design), and 10 outcome studies that measured participant outcomes but not against a comparison group.

    - *Criteria for inclusion:* The program focused on the populations of interest (completely or mostly) or the study conducted a subgroup analysis that fit the populations of interest (for example, "under age 27" or "those previously convicted"). The study was released between January 2000 and June 2023. The program had been in operation for at least one year. Study outcomes included at least one of the following domains: education, training, employment, or recidivism.[13] Part or all of the program's services were offered outside of a prison, jail, or detention center. The study also had to be conducted independently by a researcher.

    - *Coding of information:* Information about research design, program practices, population served, and other program characteristics (discussed more in Chapter 2) were coded by a team of trained

12. Clearinghouses and other resources searched included the Model Programs Guide from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the U.S. Department of Labor's Clearinghouse for Labor and Evaluation Research, Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development from the University of Colorado Boulder's Institute of Behavioral Science, the Pathways to Work Clearinghouse from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Urban Institute's What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse. In addition, the team reviewed relevant journals and existing literature and meta-analyses. A detailed search of EBSCO combined search terms about the populations of interest and settings (for example, "opportunity youth," "reentry," "juvenile justice") and other filters, such as "intervention," "evaluation," "youth engagement," and "job placement."

13. In this context, "recidivism" refers to new interactions a person—who has had past experience with the criminal legal system—might have with the criminal legal system, including arrests, detainment or incarceration, and convictions.

coders. More than 20 percent of the studies were double coded to check and resolve any interrater reliability issues.

- **Program scan:** The team also conducted a search for programs that serve the populations of interest but did not have a published impact or outcome study as of June 2023, identifying programs through information from experts, a literature review of publications about services for the populations of interest, internet searches, and a review of programs listed on the websites of major funders. For these programs, the research team gathered information primarily from the programs' websites and any relevant sources linked on those websites; the team also reviewed information available through web searches about the program. Generally, there was less information available about these programs than there was about the programs with quantitative studies, resulting in less detailed coding of program characteristics and practices. For example, there was generally less information available about program practices, participant characteristics, and program duration. The scan identified 52 programs that serve the populations of interest by providing services in the community with the aim of improving individual-level outcomes.

- **Policy scan:** The team focused on exploring policy issues and examples found in the evidence review and highlighted by expert interviews, and conducted additional literature review on federal policies and funding streams that affect these populations.[14]

Limitations

The information presented in this report focuses on programs that the MDRC team was confident targeted the scan's populations of interest. Identifying programs that focused on the subset of young people who are disconnected but are less likely to pursue programs on their own proved challenging. The

14. The research team initially sought to assess how different policies shape the implementation of programs and services for the populations of interest. However, the impact and outcome studies reviewed had few discussions of how state, local, and federal policies facilitate or complicate the implementation of different program models and their practices. Generally, rather than discussing how policies influence program implementation, evaluations of programs spoke more to policies that affect young people's trajectories and how contextual factors limited or promoted their success.

team reviewed information available about each program's target population and its outreach and recruitment practices to assess whether it served the populations of interest. Programs that screened applicants extensively during the recruitment process or programs that had high barriers to entry (such as requirements related to work experience or literacy levels) were not included, as they were not likely to serve young people who do not typically volunteer for programs. The list of programs included in this scan should not be considered exhaustive, as there are other programs that probably serve these populations either exclusively or in part. However, not enough information was available to the research team to determine whether they met this scan's criteria for inclusion.

Roadmap to the Report

The remainder of the report presents the results of the landscape scan. Chapter 2 presents findings from an analysis of the programs identified in the scan, including a detailed discussion of services offered and implementation strategies, and a review of the evidence of effects on outcomes. Chapter 3 presents a discussion of systems and policies that affect the populations of interest and the implementation of programs serving them. Chapter 4 summarizes the findings from this scan through a discussion of potential implications of the findings for practice, policy, and research.

CHAPTER

2

Programs, Practices, and Evidence

Although there are existing scans of programs for "opportunity youth," none has focused specifically on the populations of interest for this scan, who represent a wider age range and more substantial barriers to connection (see Figure 2.1).[1] This chapter describes the programs that specifically target these populations, the services and practices they use, factors that facilitate or complicate program implementation and participant engagement, and findings on participant outcomes where available. (Appendix

FIGURE 2.1. Populations of Interest

Populations of Interest		
YOUNG PEOPLE NOT WORKING OR IN SCHOOL OR TRAINING		**REENTRY**
16 to 26 years old	**AGE**	18 to 30 years old
Not engaged in work school, or a training program	**EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORK**	Engaged or not engaged; previously disconnected
Varying levels: none to extensive	**LEGAL SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT**	Past or current involvement

1. Alexander et al. (2023); Treskon (2016); Treskon, Sacks, and DeCoursey (2022); Hossain and Bloom (2015); Lacoe and Betesh (2019).

B has the list of the programs with impact or outcome studies, and Appendix C has the list of the programs without impact or outcome studies that are part of this analysis.)

One area of inquiry for this project was whether the programs with studies of participant outcomes differed from programs that have not undergone such evaluations, and if so, in what ways. This inquiry provides information about the extent to which existing evidence reflects the landscape of programs that are operating. The analysis found that programs that have impact or outcome studies are generally similar to programs without such studies in most of their characteristics, including the types of services that they offer to young people. They are similar probably because programs without studies that are included in this analysis had to have enough information publicly available about them to confirm they met the criteria for inclusion, and programs that have that information typically are more mature, like programs that have undergone formal evaluations of their outcomes. Thus, programs that are small, are new, have fewer resources, or have a combination of those traits are less likely to be represented in this analysis.

MUCH OF THE DISCUSSION IN THIS CHAPTER REFLECTS FINDINGS FROM AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAMS WITH IMPACT AND OUTCOME STUDIES.

Much of the discussion in this chapter reflects findings from an analysis of the programs with impact and outcome studies, as more detailed information was available about these programs, their participants, and their implementation strategies, unless noted otherwise. Differences between these two groups of programs—those with and without such studies—are highlighted when relevant.

Program Characteristics

This section describes the general characteristics of all programs that were identified, those with impact or outcome studies and those without. Programs were generally less than 15 years old, were generally operated by community-based organizations using public funding, and were located in urban areas. Most programs were established in 2010 or later. Programs with studies tended to be older, as might be expected, since they would have had more time to participate in evaluations. The programs were located throughout the United States but tended to be concentrated in urban locations in the Northeast, Midwest, and West Coast. There were fewer programs identified in the South or the Plains states, and there were fewer rural programs.

For programs without studies, community-based organizations operated more than two-thirds of the programs; for programs with studies, 40 percent were operated by community-based organizations. The other operators of programs were city or state agencies, often police departments, prisons, or juvenile justice agencies. It was rare for a K-12 or postsecondary educational institution to operate a program. Although alternative schools funded by or operated by school districts are common reconnection points for the broader "opportunity youth" population, few of these schools had outreach or enrollment practices that were directed at the populations of interest.

A REVIEW OF PROGRAMS' RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT PRACTICES FOUND THAT ABOUT A THIRD USED STREET OUTREACH.

Programs combined funding from multiple sources to fund their services. One funding source was often insufficient to meet the complex service needs of the young people in these populations, and combining funding streams was a strategy to address this challenge. Though a minority of programs were operated by public agencies, most programs received funding from public sources. Federal sources were common, particularly among programs with studies, including funding from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Second Chance Act, as well as other funding from the U.S. Department of Labor, the National Institutes of Justice, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. State and local funding was also commonly mentioned, including funding from public safety or corrections agencies, economic and community development departments, and health and human services agencies. Very few programs described their funding as coming only from private sources (such as grants from foundations or businesses or donations from individuals).

Programs drew on partners to fund their services, recruit participants, and connect participants to other services or resources in the community. Table 2.1 shows the partnerships that were described in studies and on program websites, and the role they commonly played in program delivery. Programs commonly relied on local partners and other community-based organizations to provide access to services they were not able to provide on their own.

The research team explored the information available about program staffing approaches to identify whether there were specific attributes, education levels, or other characteristics that programs sought in staff members to serve the populations of interest. However, limited information was available about staffing approaches in the studies reviewed, and programs without studies had limited public information available about their staffing approaches. About a third of programs described using staff members who were

TABLE 2.1 Common Partnerships and Roles

Partner Type	Function
Federal agency	Funder
State agency	Funder, referrals
Local agency	Funder, referrals, education delivery
Community-based organizations	Referrals to support not offered through the program directly
Community members	Funders, referrals, mentors
Employers	Internships, job placement

"credible messengers" or whose life experiences aligned with those of participating young people (such as experience as a member of the same community, or experience with the criminal legal system).[2]

Recruitment and Populations Served

A review of programs' recruitment and enrollment practices found that about a third used street outreach, which involves staff members visiting places in the community where young people are likely to be and engaging with them about the program.[3] As discussed earlier, many of the young people in these populations of interest are not actively looking to engage in programs, and often do not trust institutions and individuals due to prior negative experiences—making it important for programs to pursue them in their communities persistently to build trust and relationships. Programs also commonly partnered with the courts or law enforcement to have young people involved with the juvenile or criminal legal systems referred to them directly. Though courts were referring young people to these programs, most participants were not mandated by the courts to participate.

2. Mendel (2023a).
3. This proportion is calculation among programs that reported on their outreach practices across programs with impact or outcome studies and those without.

Programs generally had eligibility requirements related to age and risk factors, which tended to align with the criteria stipulated by common funding sources.[4] Common criteria included being between the ages of 16 and 24 and having been involved in the juvenile or criminal legal system. Few programs had age criteria that were outside of these ranges (for example, being under age 30), reflecting that few funding streams are dedicated to young adults over the age of 24. Some programs had other eligibility requirements, such as being unemployed, and, less often, being a specific gender.

As shown in Table 2.2, data reported in impact or outcome studies show that participants of these programs were overwhelmingly male and had been in contact with the criminal legal system.[5] Most were young people of color; a little more than a half were Black. About a quarter had obtained their high school credentials at the time of enrollment and a very small share were working. These characteristics align with the overrepresentation of male and Black young people among groups disconnected from school or work and those involved with the criminal legal system, and highlight the deep obstacles that Black boys and men continue to face in society.[6] On average, Black boys and men are more likely to be harshly disciplined in school than their White peers, increasing their odds of dropping out; they are more likely to be arrested and incarcerated; and they continue to face widespread discrimination from employers in the labor market.[7] These experiences—harsh discipline while in school; early disconnection from secondary education; and arrests, detentions, and incarceration—create additional barriers for young Black men that contribute to long-term disconnection from education and work and their distrust of mainstream institutions and systems.

Duration and Intensity of Services

For programs with impact and outcome studies, the research team investigated the "dosage," or the amount of time participants spent engaging in program services, which includes the overall duration and frequency of services. In general, many studies were missing detailed information about dosage, making it hard to gauge the amounts of

4. Division of Youth Services (2023); Reentry Employment Opportunities Program (2023).
5. Detailed information about participant characteristics was not consistently available for programs without impact or outcome studies.
6. Burd-Sharps and Lewis (2017); Essex and Hartman (2022); Badger, Miller, Pearce, and Quealy (2018).
7. U.S. Government Accountability Office (2018); Peterson (2021); Clark-Moorman and Velázquez (2023); Holzer (2021).

TABLE 2.2 Characteristics of Participants at Enrollment

Characteristic	Average Across Studies	Number of Studies Reporting
Demographics		
Mean age (number of years)	19.6	27
Male (%)	83.2	32
Race/ethnicity[a] (%)		
Black	54.0	30
Hispanic	23.4	26
White	27.3	28
Native American	10.1	9
Other race/ethnicity	9.6	23
Other background experiences (%)		
Working at enrollment	9.5	10
Has at least a high school diploma or equivalency	26.0	17
Has had contact with the criminal legal system	83.0	26
Parenting at least one child	30.4	10

SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on published information available for 34 individual studies.

NOTES: [a]Average percentages of racial and ethnic identities are based on published information available for individual studies, where participants could have self-identified as more than one racial or ethnic category. Percentages will therefore not sum to 100.

services that participants typically received. The studies often noted that the amounts of services participants received in a program could vary widely based on differences in needs.

The average intended duration of services reported in these studies was about six months. Some programs delivered their core services in a high-engagement phase,

followed by a period with less frequent contact to check up on participants' progress and needs. One study indicated that its program's "follow-up" or "alumni phase" could last from 30 days to "forever," reflecting the flexibility that the program offered in staying in touch with participants for as long as they needed.[8] Services were delivered in person, and often included one-on-one interactions between a young person and a staff member, which could be combined with activities that involved a group of participants or family members. The use of in-person services may reflect the fact that most of the studies were completed before the COVID-19 pandemic, when virtual services were less common.

THE AVERAGE INTENDED DURATION OF SERVICES REPORTED IN THESE STUDIES WAS ABOUT SIX MONTHS.

Detailed information about service dosage was typically not available for programs without impact or outcome studies.

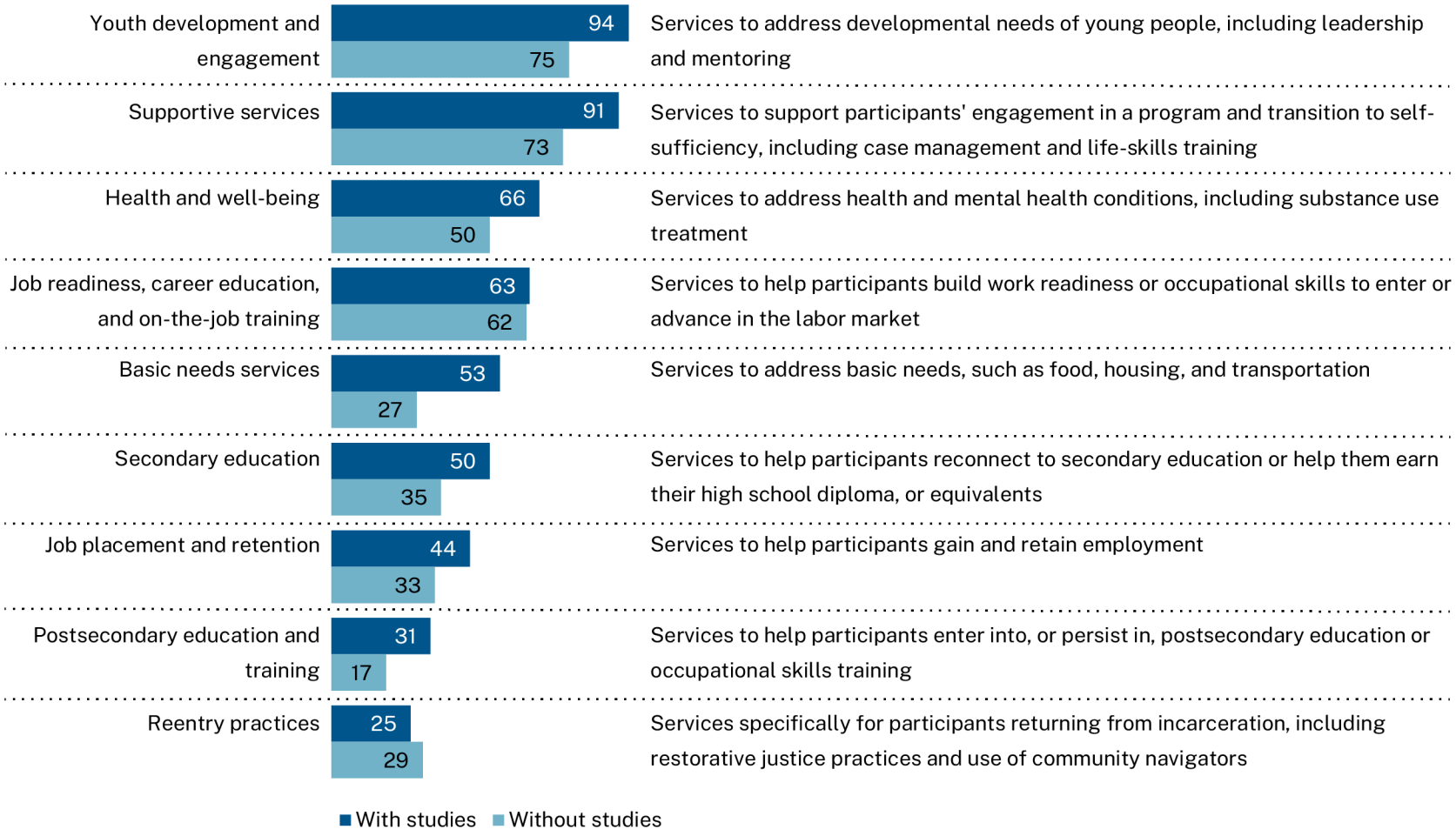
Practices Used by Programs

The research team developed a list of 44 practices commonly used by programs identified for this scan—those with impact and outcome studies and those without. These practices were further categorized into nine domains, as shown in Figure 2.2. (Appendix D provides a more detailed list of services in each domain of practice.)[9] Taken together, the programs in this scan offered services in multiple domains targeting outcomes related to education, employment, and the criminal legal system. They often combined educational or employment services with services to foster positive youth development (such as mentoring, family engagement, or leadership opportunities) and to support a young person's engagement in the program (such as case management to coordinate services, tailor them to the individual's needs, and monitor progress). Since the programs in this scan served a wide age range of young people with different educational backgrounds and skill levels, the types of educational and employment services offered also varied widely. For example, some young people with low literacy or numeracy skills

8. Cramer et al. (2019).

9. Programs with studies were also coded based on whether the service they provided was a "core" service, meaning that the majority of participants were expected to receive the service as part of the program, or "noncore," meaning that the service was available for those who needed or desired it, but it was not described as an activity that all participants should receive. Appendix E provides a detailed list of core services for each program with an outcome or impact study.

FIGURE 2.2 Percentage of Programs Providing Services in Each Domain and Domain Definitions



SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on published information available for 32 programs with studies and 52 without studies.

and no high school diplomas may need basic remedial education, whereas those who have high school credentials may pursue postsecondary education or occupational training. Nearly all programs described services in more than one domain, reflecting how programs for the populations of interest combine services to help young people advance toward their goals.

Figure 2.2 shows the share of programs providing one or more practices in each domain. The most common services were in the domains of youth development and supportive services, where mentoring and case management were two of the more common practices, respectively. Most programs (about 60 percent) provided services to prepare young people for jobs. More resource-intensive activities to place and support young people in jobs were less common. A little over half of programs described activities to support a young person's well-being, often describing efforts to support mental health through therapy (on-site or through referrals) or using behavioral health curricula in case management or group sessions within the program.

AMONG THE PROGRAMS WITH STUDIES, THE MAJORITY OFFERED SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES ALONGSIDE EMPLOYMENT- OR EDUCATION-FOCUSED PRACTICES

Programs with studies tended to offer services in multiple domains. For example, among the programs with studies, 75 percent offered supportive services and youth development practices alongside employment- or education-focused practices. Within the supportive services domain, approximately 70 percent of programs with studies provided case management. Nearly half also provided services to help an individual work toward a high school credential.

In addition to attempting to summarize the broader range of program practices, the research team specifically investigated the use of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) with the populations of interest. Approximately 20 percent of the programs with studies included CBT as a component of the services they offered. CBT is a common form of psychotherapy for depression and anxiety; it centers on the idea that emotions, thoughts, and actions are interrelated, and that helping people change patterns of thoughts and emotions can support desired changes in behavior. There is a growing body of evidence that CBT can be effective in reducing recidivism more broadly with young people and adults involved with the criminal legal system. CBT has become an increasingly popular component of programs that seek to address risky behaviors and antisocial thoughts and actions among young people, especially as recent research shows that young people's

brains continue to develop well into adulthood, as discussed in Chapter 1. (See Box 2.1 for an additional discussion of CBT and the research available on it.)

Evidence of Participant Outcomes

The research team found 10 outcome studies and 24 impact studies published since 2000 that met the criteria of the scan. (See Box 2.2 for a description of the two types of studies and Appendixes B and E for a full list of the studies and the core practices they used.) Among these studies, most were published after 2010 and most programs have only one completed study (there are 32 programs with 34 studies in this analysis).[10] Most studies reported on the effects of programs in the one to three years after participants entered them.

As noted in Chapter 1, these programs focused on delivering services to individuals, served the specific populations of interest, and aimed to improve outcomes related to recidivism, employment, or education. The populations of interest for this scan fit within larger groups—"opportunity youth" and an adult reentry population—who were more commonly eligible for a program's services. Therefore, the studies included in this analysis met one of the following criteria: (a) the programs involved only served the populations of interest; (b) the programs mostly served the populations of interest; or (c) the study specifically analyzed outcomes for a subgroup of the program participants who fit the populations of interest. Program models and settings varied greatly across the set of studies identified. Programs combined services across and within practice domains (such as education and supportive services) according to the needs of those whom they served.

NEARLY ALL PROGRAMS DESCRIBED SERVICES IN MORE THAN ONE DOMAIN.

Outcome studies were more likely to track education and employment outcomes and less likely to measure recidivism outcomes than the impact studies. Many of these studies reported gains in educational outcomes (such as people's skill levels or credentials) or in employment after people participated in the programs. However, since these studies

10. This period includes a federal focus on evidence building for social programs, including the Corporation for National and Community Service's Social Innovation Fund (https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/SIF-Pioneering-an-Evidence-Based-Investment-Model_1.pdf) and the Department of Labor's Workforce Innovation Fund (https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/research/publications/workforce-innovation-fund-wif-evaluations-synthesis-report).

BOX 2.1 Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

The tools of CBT enable individuals to identify, understand, and change thought patterns; new or restructured thinking patterns can lead individuals to make different choices.* Typically, CBT is delivered through a series of workshops or sessions.

There is a broader body of evidence of CBT's effectiveness in reducing recidivism. A meta-analysis of 58 CBT programs that served both adult and juvenile offenders concluded that CBT programs work well for both juvenile and adult offenders.† However, there is limited evidence that CBT programs are effective specifically for young adults who are involved with the legal system. Overall, few programs have been rigorously tested that focus on young adults in particular. Young adults may not experience the gains observed among older adults. Relatedly, CBT programs have rarely been developed with young adults involved in the legal system in mind. Young adults are harder to engage and are less likely to attend sessions consistently.‡

Among the 20 percent of programs in this scan that implemented CBT in some way, most focused on serving young people involved in the legal system. Studies of them therefore often collected data on recidivism outcomes for participants. Some studies, such as those of READI and Justice Corps, found no statistically significant effects on recidivism outcomes (such as arrests for violent crimes and arrests or convictions, respectively). The Arches program evaluation found the program had positive effects on convictions, including felony convictions (that is, it reduced convictions). Roca, well-known for its CBT program, had not completed its "pay-for-success" impact study at the time this report was written.§

Among the programs included in this scan of impact or outcome studies, the form and implementation of CBT varied based on the setting and the population. As one example, in partnership with Massachusetts General Hospital, the Roca program created its own CBT-based curriculum—Rewire—with the framework that the young people it serves may not be sitting in a classroom. Instead, Rewire can be delivered by nonclinicians and in a car or young person's home, if necessary. The idea behind this approach is a "saturation model": every Roca staff member can model and teach these cognitive behavioral skills in every interaction with a Roca participant. To that end, a recent dosage and fidelity assessment of Roca's CBT curriculum analyzed information on both formal CBT lessons and informal instances where CBT skills were taught.‖

Another example is the Arches Transformative Mentoring program, which incorporates cognitive behavioral skills through an interactive journaling curriculum delivered by mentors in a group setting. To complete the program, a young person must attend 48 mentoring sessions and complete four journals. The Arches implementation research notes that while the program is intended to last six months, it often takes longer—sometimes up to a year—for a young person to attend all the sessions.

A third example, READI in Chicago, used a modified version of the University of Cincinnati's Cognitive Behavioral Interventions Core Curriculum. Program participants took part in 90-minute group CBT sessions three times a week. As noted elsewhere, these sessions were a requirement for participation in the program's subsidized employment component and the subsidized employment setting was a place for practicing the CBT skills.

NOTES: *Clark (2010).

†Landenberger and Lipsey (2005).

‡The Vera Institute's Study of the Adolescent Behavioral Learning Experience program at Rikers Island in New York City provides one example of the difficulties of implementing a CBT model. Intended to reach 16- to 18-year-old detainees, the program faced a number of challenges in reaching young people and providing the CBT model consistently. A study using a quasi-experimental design found that the program did not lead to reductions in recidivism over a one-year follow-up period. See Parsons, Weiss, and Wei (2016).

§Elkins and Zeira (2017).

‖Abt Associates (2021).

did not have a comparison group, like the impact studies do, it is not possible to evaluate whether the outcomes seen following program involvement are due to the program or other factors.

Figure 2.3 categorizes the impact studies by the domains of outcomes they measured and presents whether there were statistically significant effects (differences between the program and control or comparison group for a given outcome) in that domain, there were no effects, there were negative effects, or the domain was not measured in the study.[11] Nearly all the impact studies measured at least one recidivism outcome, and more than half of the studies that measured recidivism outcomes found at least one statistically significant, positive effect.

Table 2.3 highlights some of the impact studies with statistically significant effects on outcomes related to education, employment, or recidivism. These studies represent a range of interventions in different settings, and all measured recidivism outcomes as part of the impact analysis. These studies, and others in the scan, measured several outcomes in each domain; many of the studies also measured outcomes in multiple domains. These studies and the effects they present illustrate the

11. When this document discusses a "program" and "control" group, it is referring to participants in a randomized controlled trial who were randomly assigned to receive or not receive a program. When it discusses a "program" and "comparison" group, it is referring to subjects in a study with a quasi-experimental design who received a program and who were in a comparison group constructed for the purposes of statistical comparison.

BOX 2.2. Types of Quantitative Studies

This report refers to quantitative studies of specific programs serving young people. These studies assess relevant participant outcomes based on a program's goals and the services it offers. As shown in Figure 1.1, in this report outcomes of interest fall into three domains: education and training, employment and earnings, and recidivism.

Outcome Studies

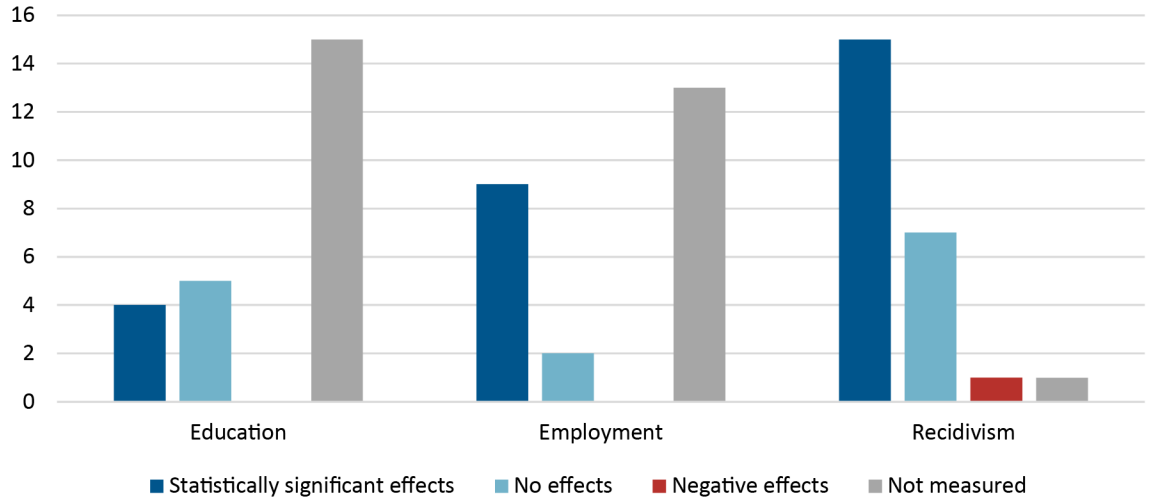
These studies follow a sample of people who enrolled in a program over a period (during and sometimes following program services) and present program participant outcomes. For example, "45 percent of program participants received a high school equivalency credential" or "24 percent of participants experienced incarceration." When available, outcomes may be compared with similar information preceding program enrollment for individuals to show "pre-post" differences in outcomes.

Impact Studies

- **Quasi-experimental design:** This category includes a range of study designs that compare outcomes for program participants with a "comparison group." These designs can include methods such as propensity score matching and regression discontinuity, among others.*
- **Randomized controlled trial:** This design uses random assignment to divide eligible study participants into a "program group" who are offered a program's services and a "control group" who are not offered these services. Comparing the outcomes of the groups over time makes it possible to estimate the impacts or effects of the program.

NOTE: *See U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (2018) for more information about quasi-experimental designs.

FIGURE 2.3 Number of Impact Studies with Effects, by Domain



SOURCE: MDRC calculations from published information available from 24 studies.

difficulty in drawing conclusions about effective types of interventions and practices for the populations of interest in this scan.

Further complicating any analysis, in many cases, effects were not consistent across domains or even within a single domain. A program's array of services might affect some but not all intended outcomes due to a variety of factors related to quality of program implementation, community context, and individual participants' needs, among others. For example, New York City–based Justice Corps and Florida-based Avon Park Academy each targeted a population involved in the legal system, and studies of them found no positive effects on recidivism outcomes. They did find statistically significant effects on earnings ($3,321 over a two-year period) and high school credential receipt (21 percentage points after leaving residential care), respectively.[12] Similarly, the study of the Arches Mentoring Program found an effect on convictions but found those assigned to the program group were more likely to be arrested than those in the comparison group.[13]

Some studies that included a temporary or subsidized employment component—such as studies of the Los Angeles Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (LA:RISE), Bridges to Pathways, and the Center for Employment Opportunities—saw statistically significant

12. Bauer et al. (2014); National Council on Crime and Delinquency (2009).
13. Lynch et al. (2018).

TABLE 2.3 Sample of Impact Studies and Findings

Program Name (Study Design)	Population Served	Study Enrollment Period	Program Practices	Program Length	Sample Size	Follow-Up Period	Key Findings	Study Limitations
NYC Justice Corps (randomized controlled trial)	Ages 18 – 24; involvement in the legal system in the year before enrollment; mostly male; Black and Hispanic populations	2008-2009	Youth and community development; crime prevention and workforce development strategies; subsidized internships	6 months	712	30 months	Increased earnings in 8 quarters after the program (difference of $3,321). No effects on education outcomes or recidivism outcomes.	The evaluation began near the start of program operations. When study enrollment started, the program was still hiring staff and finalizing program activities. Sample sizes vary by data source.
Street Smart and Avon Park (randomized controlled trial)	Ages 16 – 18; committed to residential care in FL; need or interest in vocational training/ ability to pass a high school equivalency exam	2002-2003	Job skills and on-the-job training; transitional services—job placement and support; family engagement	10 months in detainment and 11 months in the community	705	3 years following release from detainment	More likely to earn a high school credential in the 2 years after release (20 percentage points). More likely to be employed in Year 1 following release (8 percentage points) but no difference in Years 2 and 3. No pattern of effects on recidivism outcomes during the 3-year period following release.	
RExO (randomized controlled trial)	18 or older; conviction as an adult; previous incarceration of 4 or more months	2010	Mentoring (group); employment services—work readiness, job placement; case management and supportive services	12 weeks	4,655	2 years	For the younger subgroup, an effect on total income (difference of $940) during the follow-up period and no effects on recidivism outcomes.	Employment outcomes are self-reported.

(continued)

TABLE 2.3 (Continued)

Program Name (Study Design)	Population Served	Study Enrollment Period	Program Practices	Program Length	Sample Size	Follow-Up Period	Key Findings	Study Limitations
Center for Employment Opportunities Transitional Jobs Program (randomized controlled trial)	Reentry population—parolees; age 18 and older	2004-2005	Life-skills education; transitional jobs; job coaching; job development	3-4 months	997	3 years	Large, short-term, statistically significant effect on employment due to transitional jobs (24 percentage points) in Year 1. No effects on employment in Years 2 or 3. Lowered rates of recidivism, including misdemeanor convictions (5 percentage point difference) and incarceration (6 percentage point difference in jail stays).	Average age of the sample is 33; nearly half are under 30. A subgroup analysis of those who came to the program sooner after being released from prison showed larger effects on recidivism.
Arches Transformation Mentoring Program (quasi-experimental design)	Adult probation clients; ages 16 – 24	2013-2014	Mentoring; CBT; credible messengers; youth development; transportation and stipends to address participants' basic needs	6-12 months	961	2 years	Program group more likely to be arrested over a 2-year period than the comparison group (by 8 percentage points). Statistically significant reduction in felony convictions (8 percentage points).	A propensity score matching approach was used to create a comparison group. Authors noted "systematic differences" between the program group and matched comparison group.

effects on short-term employment that did not translate into longer-term improvements in employment outcomes.[14] This finding echoes those of a recent synthesis of subsidized employment programs that presented an increase in employment and earnings for adults while they were active in the subsidized jobs.[15] However, it is worth noting that not all programs incorporated this component with an immediate goal of longer-term or unsubsidized employment. As the READI study authors noted, the model incorporated subsidized employment with CBT for a subset of participants who made it through earlier program stages, and the program remained focused on "preventing violence" as its key outcome: employment outcomes were not collected or measured during the follow-up period. Subsidized employment provided an incentive to participate in CBT, an opportunity to practice those skills, and a source of legal income, among other things.[16]

While the approach of bundling services is necessary to meet the needs of young people with different challenges, evaluations of the programs do not make it possible to isolate the effectiveness of a specific practice within a bundle. Given the variety of settings and program models, it is also difficult to identify patterns with respect to practices used or effects on outcomes. The research team compared the practices used by programs with effects in a given domain with practices used by programs that did not have statistically significant effects in that domain and found no major differences. This lack of differences is not surprising given the limited number of studies included in this scan and the breadth of services many of these programs provide to meet the needs of participants. The programs also served different segments of the populations of interest—with differences in age range and history of involvement with the criminal legal system, among other characteristics—which further divides the services offered and the types of outcomes the studies reported. Additionally, the differences between programs with effects and those without may be attributed to implementation rather than program design (in other words, it is not just about the services offered or the practices that are used but rather how they are implemented).

14. Other studies of programs with this employment component did not assess effects on employment during the program period, did not measure employment outcomes at all, or were not impact studies.
15. Cummings and Bloom (2020).
16. Bhatt et al. (2023).

Promising Strategies for High-Quality Program Implementation

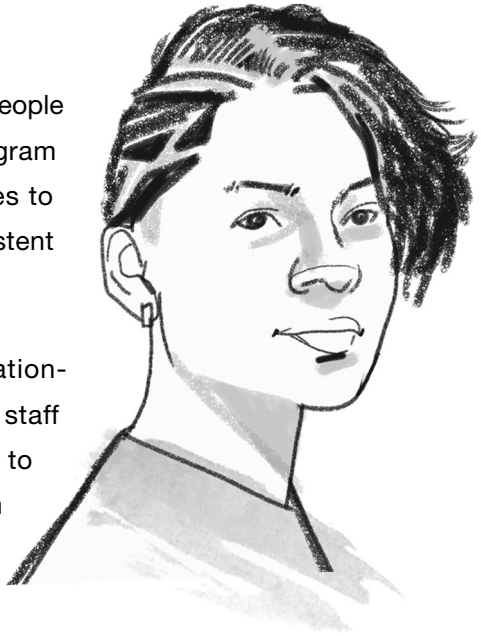
In addition to collecting information on the participant outcomes measured in the studies, the research team reviewed the studies to identify the challenges that programs faced in providing services as they intended, and to assess how those challenges could be addressed. One of the themes that emerged relates to participant engagement: sustaining the participation of young people in the program could be challenging. The first section below describes factors that promoted or hindered engagement. The research team also found that some common practices were challenging to implement well. The second section below describes these challenges and ways programs tried to address them.

Promoting Participant Engagement

One of the most common challenges discussed in the literature was related to sustaining participants' engagement in services. Many of the young people in the populations of interest avoid or are hesitant to engage in programs due to their past experiences or barriers they may be facing. They may initially engage but then disengage in response to events in their lives. The literature review identified strategies that the programs used to keep young people in program activities. They include having a positive program culture that includes strong participant-staff relationships, training and retaining staff, having robust community partnerships, and having flexibility about the level of engagement they require from participants. These findings align with what other studies of programs for "opportunity youth" have found.[17] The examples provided below are drawn from the studies identified for this scan.

- **Building strong participant-adult relationships:** Studies noted that opportunities and practices to build strong and meaningful relationships between staff members and young people are essential to recruiting and engaging young people in services.[18] The study of the Arches Mentoring program in New York City contended that the family atmosphere of the program helped participants develop positive relationships, and these relationships promoted their engagement in the program.[19] The implementation study of the Young Adult Literacy program in New York City,

17. Wiegand et al. (2015); Treskon, Wasserman, and Ho (2019).
18. Pittman et al. (2003).
19. Lynch et al. (2018).



which provided academic and work-readiness skills to young people with very low literacy levels, found that staff members at program locations that produced good outcomes employed strategies to build personal relationships with young people through consistent and informal communications.[20]

- **Training and retaining staff:** Given the importance of relationships in these programs, studies pointed to the need to hire staff members who have experience working with young people, to offer training and development opportunities that equip them to deliver services as designed, and to employ strategies to sustain relationships with young people when there is staff turnover. The evaluation of the Newark Prisoner Re-entry Initiative Replication, which provided intensive case management and other services to people leaving incarceration, noted that having case managers who had extensive experience working with this population enabled them to gain the trust of participants.[21] Because these relationships are central to a young person's engagement, staff turnover can have an outsized negative effect. The study of the Youth Offender Demonstration noted that continuity was crucial to staff members' relationships with young people, and described how some sites set up services so that participants would build relationships with multiple staff members, to reduce the risk of disengagement due to staff turnover.[22] Beyond relationship building, trained and experienced staff members are more likely to deliver services as intended. The study of Roca found that staff members who were more comfortable with the program's CBT curriculum were better able to implement it as intended.[23]

- **Connecting participants with resources not directly offered by the program:** Many programs helped participants gain access to other services in the community, for example, by helping them connect with health care, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, educational opportunities, or legal assistance. Since these services are often fragmented and not coordinated, direct partnerships between programs can help participants gain access to them. The

20. Hossain and Terwelp (2015).
21. Leufgen et al. (2012).
22. Jenks, MacGillivray, and Needels (2006).
23. Abt Associates (2021).

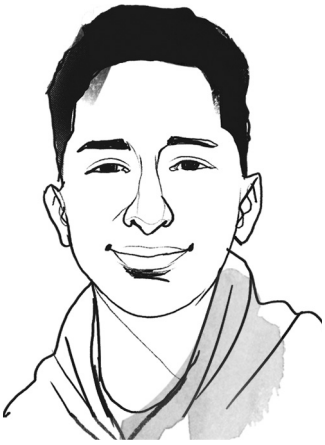
Youth Offender Demonstration evaluation pointed to program locations that did not establish partnerships and attempted to meet young people's needs directly; these sites found it more difficult to respond to participants' crises quickly when they did not have the resources to address them directly.[24]

- **Offering flexibility in how a participant engages with the program:** Studies also described the need for programs to be flexible about how participants move through different phases and activities. Young people who connect to a program after a period of being out of school and work often do not progress through the program at a steady pace. The studies reported that young people may stop attending for a time, and then may reengage in response to staff outreach efforts. One study—of an unnamed program for young people who were involved in gangs or the juvenile justice system or who were experiencing homelessness—found that nearly all participants dropped out at least once, and more than half dropped out two or more times. The same study highlighted how participants could be positively engaging in a program, and then experience a sudden and significant decline in engagement as the result of some event in their lives, which they could recover from with the support of the program's staff.[25] A study of the Reentry Project grants, a grant program of the U.S. Department of Labor aimed at improving employment outcomes and reducing recidivism for formerly incarcerated people, found that youth-focused grantees reported that participants took more time to move through their programs than did participants in the programs of adult-focused grantees.[26] As noted earlier, the Arches program was 48 sessions that were intended to be completed in six months, but participants who graduated needed up to a year to complete the program.[27]

These examples suggest that if programs stick to rigid requirements for participants, many young people in the populations of interest will not be able to complete the programs. Programs thus need to offer flexibility in their timelines and dedicate staff members' time to reengagement efforts. Doing so requires more resources and longer timelines than funding or other constraints may allow, making it challenging for programs to structure

24. Jenks, MacGillivray, and Needels (2006).
25. Zaff, Ginsberg, Boyd, and Kaki (2014).
26. Stapleton, Ladinsky, and Bellotti (2022).
27. Lynch et al. (2018).

their services in the way the evidence indicates is necessary to serve the populations of interest effectively. A study of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act found that it does not cover a lot of the services that participants need if they are to engage in programs, which forces those programs to seek out flexible funding sources to be able to provide those services. [28] Thus, programs that strive to serve the populations of interest are at high risk of being chronically underfunded, and if they attempt to impose eligibility requirements to reduce the services they must offer, they effectively screen out young people in the populations of interest.



Practice-Specific Implementation Strategies

Case management, transitional employment (temporary, often subsidized jobs), job placement, and mentoring were among the most common practices adopted by the programs in this scan that had impact and outcome studies. The impact and outcome studies discuss that these practices could be challenging to implement well, and some studies describe strategies that programs used to deliver these practices. This section summarizes those findings.

- **Strive for low caseloads and flexible approaches in case management:** Though case management was an element of many programs, the team's review of the studies showed that programs varied in how they provided this element, and it could be challenging to implement well. Case managers with caseloads that were too high might not have sufficient time to dedicate to building relationships with young people and providing them with support.[29] Flexibility in how and when case managers were available to young people helped services reach participants—for example, by allowing for unscheduled meetings or being able to connect remotely.[30] No optimal caseload size can be prescribed from the studies, but small caseloads were described in the studies as being fewer than 12 to 25 young people per case manager.[31] For a couple of interventions that involved working with the whole family of a young person, therapist caseloads were very small—not exceeding six families.[32]

28. Green, Donovan, and Palius (2022).
29. Liberman, Hussemann, McKeever, and Young (2019); Leufgen et al. (2012).
30. Manno, Yang, and Bangser (2015).
31. Mathur, Clark, and Gau (2019); Manno, Yang, and Bangser (2015); Liberman, Hussemann, McKeever, and Young (2019).
32. Trupin et al. (2011); Timmons-Mitchell, Bender, Kishna, and Mitchell (2006).

- **Offer transitional jobs that fit the goals and needs of program participants:** The studies found that engaging participants in transitional employment—intended to build their readiness for employment while providing an income—could be challenging if participants were not interested in the type of work offered through the program and did not see its value to them.[33] New York City Justice Corps modified the delivery of subsidized internships to allow young people more choice in identifying internships that were of interest to them. The same program also included more job-readiness training at the beginning of the program to better prepare young people to be successful in the internships since they came into the program with limited job skills.[34] The study of LA:RISE noted how transitional employment programs for young people serve different goals than those for adults; in the case of that initiative, transitional employment served the purpose of supporting young people financially while they were in training or education, rather than providing an on-ramp to full-time employment.[35]

  CASE MANAGEMENT, TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT, JOB PLACEMENT, AND MENTORING WERE AMONG THE MOST COMMON PRACTICES ADOPTED BY THE PROGRAMS IN THIS SCAN.

  Relatedly, evidence suggests that programs serving the populations of interest (and even the broader population of "opportunity youth") must consider the financial needs of these young people when designing employment programs. For example, the staff of Young Adult Literacy Program struggled to engage young people in the internship component of the program, as it only offered six hours per week of paid activities with a limited stipend and some students needed to work more and earn more to make ends meet.[36]

- **Dedicate staff time to job development:** Employment and earnings were the primary goals of many of the programs' studies, yet studies consistently described it as difficult to place participants in unsubsidized employment. Programs needed to devote staff time to developing job opportunities for young people outside of the program by building relationships with local employers, identifying job openings that might be appropriate for the participants the programs served, and helping

33. Geckeler et al. (2019); Cramer et al. (2019); Wasserman et al. (2019).
34. Bauer et al. (2014).
35. Geckeler et al. (2019).
36. Hossain and Terwelp (2015).

participants with their job search efforts. Staff turnover, competition from other nonprofits, or lack of time were cited as hindrances to job development.[37] One study wrote that larger organizations with more resources to dedicate to job development had greater success.[38]

STUDIES CONSISTENTLY DESCRIBED IT AS DIFFICULT TO PLACE PARTICIPANTS IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT.

Challenges with job development extend beyond what a program alone can address, as employers may be reluctant to hire people from these populations because their skills do not match what employers want and because employers have biases against people with criminal records.[39] One study indicated that it might be possible to overcome this reluctance by addressing employers' concerns about young people who have been involved in the legal system and by providing information about financial incentives available to hire them.[40]

- **Support young people after placement:** Placement support, where a program continues to work with participants after they have been placed in jobs or education, could help address issues with job retention or persistence in school. But studies found that it could be hard for programs to stay in touch with participants.[41] Programs tended to have limited follow-up services, but a small number of programs had more developed alumni programs, and staff members and participants described them as valuable. Staff members appreciated the structure that alumni programs provided for engaging with participants after placement, and participants liked having a safe place to go and seek support.[42]

- **Connect young people with culturally competent mental health services:** Mental health services are essential for many young people, but access can be a challenge. Youth-friendly and culturally competent providers may be limited, and young people may feel uncomfortable seeking services. A few studies pointed to strategies for easing access to needed mental health services. The study of

37. Bauer et al. (2014); Leufgen et al. (2012).
38. Geckeler et al. (2019).
39. Geckeler et al. (2019); Campie et al. (2020); Slesnick, Zhang, and Yilmazer (2018).
40. Leufgen et al. (2012).
41. Geckeler et al. (2019).
42. Bauer et al. (2014); Cramer et al. (2019).

the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative in Massachusetts, which provided street outreach and case management to young people deemed at high risk for using firearms, found that program locations that had in-house mental health support were less concerned about connecting participants to needed support than those that had to refer participants to external providers.[43]

- **Doing mentoring well requires investments in recruitment and training:** Mentors are often challenging to recruit and retain.[44] One program tried using group mentoring because it demanded fewer resources than one-on-one mentoring.[45] The evaluation of Arches found that mentors had high variation in fidelity to the curriculum, pointing to the need to train and support them.[46]

Conclusion

One important lesson from the scan is that the evidence base is currently very limited with respect to which practices are effective at helping the populations of interest with education and employment and at preventing their involvement in the legal system. Indeed, the number of programs for these populations that have undergone rigorous evaluations is very small. The analysis suggests that community-based programs can successfully reach and engage those who are furthest from opportunity and produce positive outcomes in education, employment, or recidivism. But there is clearly much to be learned about which program strategies and combinations of services can produce consistent and long-term effects for young people of different ages, needs, and challenges. The scan thus also points to the importance of investing in strong implementation research that documents how and under what conditions program services are implemented on the ground, as part of studies designed to assess the impact of programs. There is also a strong need for practitioner-focused implementation research that examines how program staff

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR MANY YOUNG PEOPLE, BUT ACCESS CAN BE A CHALLENGE.

43. Campie et al. (2020).
44. Bloom, Gardenhire-Crooks, and Mandsager (2009); Lynch et al. (2018).
45. Leufgen et al. (2012).
46. Lynch et al. (2018).

members put interventions, practices, and policies into use (for example, research into promising strategies to build large-scale partnerships with employers).[47]

THE EVIDENCE BASE IS CURRENTLY VERY LIMITED WITH RESPECT TO WHICH PRACTICES ARE EFFECTIVE AT HELPING THE POPULATIONS OF INTEREST.

The discussions of practices available in the studies included in this analysis suggest that programs need well-considered strategies for reaching and engaging these young people, many of whom are disillusioned from past negative experiences with systems and institutions that serve young people and are reluctant to seek help to reconnect with education or employment. Programs need to go into the community to meet young people and recruit them, and develop their organizational capabilities and culture to keep young people engaged (through staff hiring, training, development, and retention practices that can facilitate effective relationships, mentoring, and case management). Most programs are also not able to meet the different needs of young people on their own; to provide all the forms of support young people need they must build relationships and partnerships with other community-based organizations, employers, and public and private institutions, such local police departments or trade unions. The geographic and community contexts of the programs therefore significantly affect their abilities to engage and serve young people. Last, the evidence suggests that young people in the populations of interest need the flexibility to fail, disengage, and reengage as they face emerging needs and challenges.

47. Hill, Scher, Haimson, and Granito (2023).

CHAPTER

3

Systems and Policies

During their journey from adolescence to adulthood, young people interact with many systems and organizations, including schools, colleges, training programs, health systems, law enforcement, child welfare, social services, and employers. Programs and policies affecting the populations of interest for this scan thus span a wide range of systems and domains.

FIGURE 3.1. Populations of Interest

Populations of Interest		
YOUNG PEOPLE NOT WORKING OR IN SCHOOL OR TRAINING		**REENTRY**
16 to 26 years old	**AGE**	18 to 30 years old
Not engaged in work school, or a training program	**EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORK**	Engaged or not engaged; previously disconnected
Varying levels: none to extensive	**LEGAL SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT**	Past or current involvement

To explore the role of policies that affect the implementation of the programs and practices outlined in the previous chapter, the research team focused on exploring policy issues and examples found in the evidence review and

those that were highlighted by the experts interviewed for the scan, and conducted additional literature review. This chapter summarizes these efforts, and highlights policy challenges and opportunities most relevant to outcomes related to education, employment, and the criminal legal system.

A few themes emerged from the conversations with the experts and the literature review around programs and policies in different domains. These sources often pointed to a need to:

1. Change disciplinary policies in the K-12 system that push young people out of schools and into the juvenile or criminal legal systems

2. Meet the developmental needs of young people at different stages of adolescence and adulthood

3. Increase service coordination and data sharing among systems that serve young people

4. Match funding practices to the scope of need for evidence-based programs and practices

5. Remove policy barriers that make it more difficult for young people who have been involved in the legal system to gain access to employment, housing, mental health services, and safety net benefits

6. Test policies and partnerships for large-scale employer engagement in employing young people in quality jobs

These themes are explored in the rest of the chapter.

Major Themes

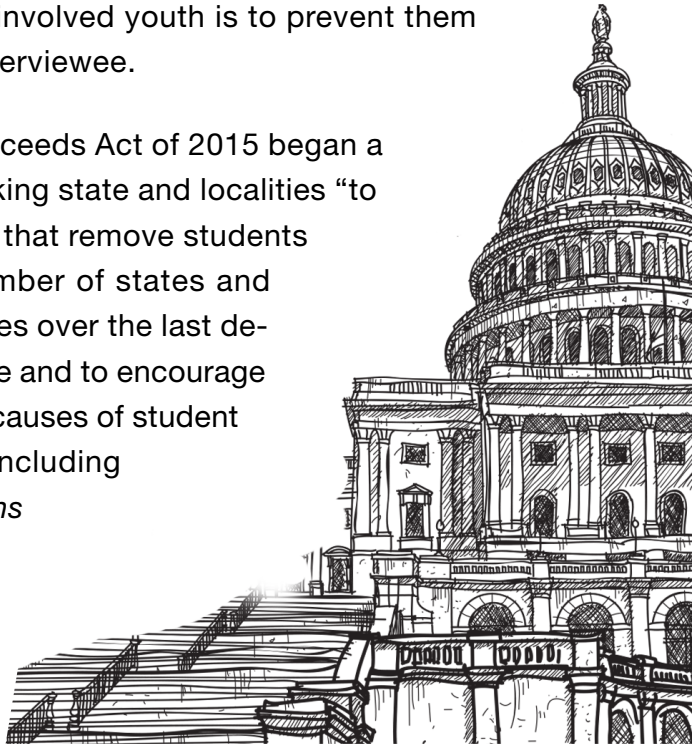
1. Change disciplinary policies in the K-12 system that push young people out of schools and into the juvenile or criminal legal systems.

Interviewees emphasized the need to reform educational policies that push young people out of schools and into the juvenile or criminal legal systems.[1]

1. Since this landscape scan focused on populations of young people who are already

(continued)

Such policies include ones that criminalize truancy or chronic absenteeism in schools through court involvement and subsequent detention, and "zero-tolerance" disciplinary policies that remove students from the traditional school setting, and that lead to arrests and referrals to juvenile detention (as well as placement in alternative schools that struggle with low graduation rates).[2] "Advancing well-being of system-involved youth is to prevent them from being system-involved," said one interviewee.



At the federal level, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 began a policy shift toward discipline reform by asking state and localities "to reduce the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom."[3] And a growing number of states and localities have revised policies and practices over the last decade to restrict the use of punitive discipline and to encourage the use of strategies that address the root causes of student behavior challenges and disconnection, including *school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports* (SW-PBIS), restorative practices focused on relationship building and conflict resolution, and trauma-informed practices.[4] For example, in 2013, the city of Los Angeles stopped suspending

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disconnected from school and formerly incarcerated young people, the expert interviews and literature review did not focus on programs, policies, or practices that keep young people connected to schools and prevent them from dropping out. Recent resources on these topics include a 2023 report from the U.S. Department of Education on evidence-based practices to create and maintain "safe, inclusive, supportive, and fair learning environments," and a 2015 meta-analysis from the Center for Educational Partnerships at Old Dominion University that assessed the effectiveness of various dropout-prevention strategies. See U.S. Department of Education (2023) and Chappell, O'Connor, Withington, and Stegelin (2015).

2. Ricks and Esthappan (2018); Goldstein et al. (2019); Lopez and Haskins (2021).

3. Alliance for Excellent Education (2016), citing the Every Student Succeeds Act.

4. Rafa (2018). SW-PBIS is a framework for developing systems and practices to teach and sustain positive student behavior and prevent disciplinary problems across an entire school, including classrooms, cafeterias, and playgrounds. The approach is implemented in tiers, with some forms of support available to all students, to set school-wide expectations and to prevent behavior challenges, and with other, more targeted group or individual interventions provided to students who need more intensive forms of support. See Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (n.d.) and Brusnahan and Gatti (2008). Trauma-informed approaches in school settings include the incorporation of policies, procedures, and practices that help educators and administrators to understand the effects of trauma on student behavior, and to engage students effectively in the learning process without stigmatizing them or introducing additional trauma. See McInerney and McKlindon (2020).

students for "willful defiance," a highly subjective category of behaviors that teachers or school authorities deemed to be disruptive (such as not removing a hat or chewing gum in class) and that disproportionately affected students of color. In 2023, California became the first state to ban such suspensions from kindergarten through twelfth grade, expanding on its previous efforts to ban such practices for younger students. The legislation also prohibits suspensions and expulsions due to tardiness or truancy.[5]

Evidence of the effects of shifts in disciplinary policies and practices on student outcomes are emerging. For example, a 2023 study found that the adoption of restorative practices at several Chicago schools in the 2013-2014 school year led to reductions in suspensions and arrests among students, and the shifts in outcomes for Black male students were particularly large.[6]

2. Meet the developmental needs of young people at different stages of adolescence and adulthood.

The populations of interest for this scan span an age range from 16 to 30 years old, encompassing various developmental stages as young people move from adolescence to adulthood. Experts interviewed for this report emphasized that policies and programs should be grounded in what research has learned about young people's physical, social, and emotional development, and designed to address different stages of a young person's journey and evolving needs for skills and support:

EXPERTS EMPHASIZED THAT POLICIES AND PROGRAMS SHOULD BE GROUNDED IN WHAT RESEARCH HAS LEARNED ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE'S PHYSICAL, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

- In the juvenile and criminal legal systems, policies would need to take account of recent research that suggests that brain development continues in the mid-20s, making young adults more likely than older people to take risks and less likely to regulate their emotions and behaviors when faced with challenging situations.[7] In this context, many states have sought to reduce court involvement and adult prosecution of young adults through "raise the age" laws, and to combine elements

5. Frey (2013); Sosa (2023); Rios (2023).
6. Adukia, Feigenberg, and Momeni (2023).
7. National Institute of Mental Health (2023).

of juvenile and adult criminal legal systems to create a hybrid jurisdiction for young adults (see Box 3.1 for more details on such policy shifts). There is not enough rigorous evidence available yet to gauge the effect of these policies on young people.

BOX 3.1 Examples of Policies to Address the Developmental Needs of Young People in the Juvenile and Criminal Legal Systems

- **Raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to 18**

As of 2021, 3 states—Vermont, Michigan, and New York—have raised the age of maximum juvenile court jurisdiction to 18; 44 states have set the maximum age at 17. Only 3 states—Georgia, Texas, and Wisconsin—continue to try people over 16 in adult criminal courts. Most states have different types of statutory exceptions, for example for felony crimes, that allow young people to be tried in adult criminal courts.*

- **Modify adult legal system practices for "emerging adults" between the ages of 18 and 25.**

These modifications include specialized parole mechanisms that create opportunities for early release or for sentence reduction after some time served, and specialized "young adult courts" within the criminal legal system that provide alternatives to incarceration and connect young people to the services and case management they need. For example, in the San Francisco Young Adult Court, young people develop individual "Wellness Care Plans," appear regularly before a dedicated judge with a specialized docket to discuss their progress on their plans, and participate in programs related to life skills, job readiness, and other aspects of their development.†

A recent report from the Columbia Justice Lab documented the creation of "hybrid" legal systems for emerging adults in several states that apply some of the protective elements of the juvenile legal system to the adult criminal legal system, for example statutes that limit confinement and automatically expunge criminal records when a sentence is complete. The report identified the District of Columbia and six other states as having hybrid systems for emerging adults: Alabama, Florida, Michigan, New York, South Carolina, and Vermont. There are wide variations across states in how these hybrid systems operate, and in the degree of protections they offer to emerging adults.‡

Additionally, some reform activities for emerging adults have sought to minimize the trauma associated with incarceration and ensure that young people in prison have developmentally appropriate services and conditions of confinement. An example is the Restoring Promise initiative, which redesigns prison living spaces for young adults, offers them continual access to mentors who also live in these housing units, provides skill-building opportunities through educational workshops, and trains corrections staff members to help young people develop leadership and conflict-resolution skills.§ A small-scale randomized controlled trial of the initiative in South Carolina found that the program reduced incidences of violence for emerging adults in prison.‖

NOTES: *National Governors Association (2021); Dodds (2020).

†Emerging Adult Justice Learning Community (2021).

‡Perker and Chester (2023).

§Vera Institute of Justice (2023); Shanahan, Djokovic, and Vasquez (2023).

‖Shanahan, Djokovic, and Vasquez (2023).

- In the employment and training domains, experts recommended policies that facilitate a range of flexible pathways for skill development, secondary and postsecondary completion, and credential attainment. For example, research shows that transitional employment programs can reduce recidivism and improve short-term labor market outcomes for people who face high barriers to labor market entry and have limited education (such as those reentering the workforce after incarceration), but they typically do not improve long-term employment and earnings.[8] On the other hand, sector-focused programs that offer training in targeted, in-demand sectors have been found to improve employment outcomes in the long run, but they are currently largely accessible to those who have high school credentials, can meet literacy and numeracy requirements to participate in the training, and can demonstrate certain levels of stability and motivation (such as participating in a multistep interview process for entry).[9]

FOR A CHANCE AT LASTING ECONOMIC SUCCESS, YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE DISCONNECTED FROM SCHOOL AND WORK FOR SIGNIFICANT PERIODS OF TIME MAY NEED ACCESS TO BOTH TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND SECTOR-FOCUSED PROGRAMS.

For a chance at lasting economic success, young people who are disconnected from school and work for significant periods of time may need access to both types of programs, with additional support to help them bridge gaps in academic skills, credentials, and work readiness, as well as pathways to long-term employment once they are prepared for it. For example, in New York City, the nonprofit organization Per Scholas, which offers employment and training programs for low-income people that focus on the information technology (IT) sector, has partnered with The Door, a community-based organization focused on youth development, to offer a bridge program that helps young people raise their basic academic skills and that also provides additional support so that they can enter and complete Per Scholas' IT Support program.[10] The TechBridge program was not included in this scan as the eligibility criteria require that young people demonstrate

8. Cummings and Bloom (2020).
9. Bloom and Miller (2018).
10. Ortiz, Jr., et al. (2020).

passion and readiness for the sector. (In other words, it is a program that recruits young people actively looking to engage.) However, it is an example of how community-based organizations can work with training providers to offer programs in a sequence that helps young people bridge gaps in skills and support. Another example is the Advance & Earn program funded by the Department of Youth and Community Development in New York City, which provides a sequence of education, employment, and supportive services for young people with different academic skill levels to increasingly build their skills, credentials, and work experience—with the ultimate goal of helping them enroll in college or find work related to their interests and training.[11]

EXPERTS AND THE LITERATURE REVIEW HIGHLIGHTED HOW A LACK OF COORDINATION ON POLICIES, FUNDING, AND DATA SHARING ACROSS SYSTEMS CAN HAMPER OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT.

Practitioners and advocates in the literature reviewed for this scan often identified the need to expand and bolster funding for programs and practices with some evidence behind them—such as subsidized transitional employment, sector-based occupational training, apprenticeships, and "bridge" programs to remediate foundational skills and help young people connect to advanced education or training—to meet the diverse and evolving needs of young people. Some have also advocated for federal financial assistance for high-quality, short-term, postsecondary training programs for young people who are not pursuing a traditional college education.[12]

3. Increase service coordination and data sharing among systems that serve young people.

Programs that target outcomes related to education, employment, and the criminal legal system for these populations of interest receive funding from an array of federal, state, and local sources, and as previously noted, policies that affect these young people span a range of systems. Expert interviews and the literature review conducted for the scan highlighted how the general lack of alignment and coordination on policies, funding, and data sharing

11. NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (2021).

12. Only programs requiring at least 600 hours of instruction offered during a minimum of 15 weeks are currently eligible for Pell Grants, the main form of need-based federal financial aid for education. In addition, only students enrolled in for-credit programs at accredited institutions are eligible for federal student aid. As of August 2023, federal lawmakers had introduced at least three bills to expand Pell Grants to short-term programs. See Dortch and Collins (2023).

across systems can hamper outreach to and the engagement of young people who are most in need of services.[13] Young people often find it difficult to navigate the different options available to them in their communities and to put them into a beneficial sequence; without strong support at transition points across systems (such as moving from secondary to postsecondary education or reentering employment after incarceration), young people can get lost, and the cycle of reconnection and disconnection continues.

Experts across all policy domains urged for more collaborations and partnerships across education, law enforcement, and social services, among other systems. Barriers to service coordination that were frequently mentioned were: (1) administrative limitations and burdens that make it difficult to "braid" and "blend" funds from different public funding streams that serve young people, many with differing eligibility requirements (such as age cutoffs); and (2) data-collection practices and systems that prevent organizations that serve young people from exchanging information.[14]

EXPERTS ACROSS ALL POLICY DOMAINS URGED FOR MORE COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS EDUCATION, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND SOCIAL SERVICES, AMONG OTHER SYSTEMS.

The federal government launched the Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth (P3) in 2014 to test strategies to improve coordination across systems and programs that receive funding from the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services, and the Corporation for National and Community Service, among others. The pilot programs strive to improve the abilities of participating state, local, and tribal entities to coordinate services across multiple federal discretionary programs, allowing them to braid and blend funds and waiving certain statutory, regulatory, and administrative requirements that are barriers to providing more comprehensive services for young people.[15]

13. Robson, Korman, and Daulton (2021); Carnevale, Gulish, and Campbell (2021); Mendelson et al. (2018).

14. Both "blending" and "braiding" combine funds from two or more funding sources to support program services for a target population. When funds are braided, each funding stream typically retains its own requirements for program delivery and reporting, with the possibility that some requirements might be waived. With blending, funds are pooled together, and the dollars and requirements for each source are not tracked individually. See Brown (2020).

15. Rosenberg et al. (2021).

While evidence from the P3 pilot tests is still emerging, implementation studies have found that the pilot programs allowed community partners to serve a broader population of disconnected young people (some expanded services to "hard-to-serve" young people such as parents or people who are connected to the justice system); to serve their target populations more flexibly (for example, by extending daily program hours or extending service periods for up to two years); and to reduce administrative burdens related to determining youth eligibility and performance reporting.[16] (See Box 3.2 for examples.) Most early P3 pilot programs took steps to strengthen partnerships among local organizations serving young people and improve coordination and information sharing among them; however, as of 2020, only 3 out of 14 pilot programs made "systems change activities a central component of their efforts," for example through shared governance or data systems.[17] Lessons from P3 suggest that systems and organizations serving young people need significant technical assistance, planning time, and resources to support activities and coordination needed for systems change, and that performance measures may need to provide incentives for goals related to systems change, for example by quantifying policy changes and

16. Stanczyk, Yañez, and Rosenberg (2020).

17. Stanczyk, Yañez, and Rosenberg (2020), p. 11.

BOX 3.2. Examples from Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth (P3)

- **Phoenix, Arizona**

This pilot program brought together education, workforce, and evaluation partners across the city, and combined funds from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), along with philanthropic funding, to create, implement, and evaluate a manufacturing apprenticeship program for out-of-school, out-of-work young people ages 17 through 24. ESEA funds typically could not be spent on individuals older than age 21, but the program was able to obtain a waiver of that limitation through P3.*

- **Albany and Rochester, New York**

This pilot program blended funds from multiple federal streams to staff a "transition coordinator" who worked with school districts and community-based organizations to identify young people who were disconnected from work or school or involved with the legal system, and provide them with intensive case management and work-based learning opportunities. Through P3, the pilot program was able to waive requirements of one of the federal funding streams—21st Century Community Learning Centers—allowing it to serve young people who were not in school and to offer services during hours and weeks when school was not in session, and allowing school districts to pay community-based organizations to provide services.†

- **Broward County, Florida**

This pilot program established cross-sector partnerships to design, plan, and build an integrated system to collect data on service delivery and young people's outcomes. It brought together various state and county partners—including Broward County Public Schools, the Florida Department of Children and Families, the Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, the Broward Behavioral Health Coalition, and the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice—to develop the data system's governance structure.‡

NOTES: *Stanczyk, Yañez, and Rosenberg (2020).
†Stanczyk, Yañez, and Rosenberg (2020).
‡Brown (2020).

interagency collaborations, not just individual-level outcomes among young people.[18]

4. Match funding practices to the scope of need for evidence-based programs and practices.

There was consensus among the experts and the program and policy literature reviewed that while substantial dollars are spent each year on programs and initiatives for the populations of interest, the amount is not nearly enough to meet the growing demand for services after the pandemic and the cost of providing evidence-based services to young people with serious barriers.[19]

The federal government is the biggest source of funding for community-based programs for young people, but funding streams dedicated to serving young people who are disconnected or are involved with the legal system are limited, which affects the availability of services for the populations of interest. For example, state grants under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA—the primary federal workforce funding stream for young people who are out of school and facing barriers to employment such as involvement in the criminal legal system) have not kept up with inflation, and the amount allocated to youth services does not meet the magnitude of the need for this population.[20] In 2021, WIOA's youth program served about 95,000 out-of-school young people—a fraction of the 4.6 million people estimated to be disconnected from school and work.[21] In addition, many grant programs for young people—such as the U.S. Department of Labor's Reentry Employment Opportunities program and YouthBuild, and the U.S. Department of Justice's Second Chance Act grants for reentry services—are competitive. While competitive grants are important in designing and testing new ideas and innovations, they do not offer stable funding for programs over a significant period and are subject to changing priorities of different presidential administrations, among other

THERE WAS CONSENSUS THAT WHILE SUBSTANTIAL DOLLARS ARE SPENT EACH YEAR ON INITIATIVES FOR THE POPULATIONS OF INTEREST, THE AMOUNT IS NOT ENOUGH TO MEET THE GROWING DEMAND.

18. Brown (2020).
19. Green, Donovan, and Palius (2022); Thompson (2017).
20. Derenzis, Laprad, Ricks-Pettyjohn, and Taylor (2023).
21. Ross (2023); Lewis (2023).

factors. Their predominance affects the stability of staffing and partnerships necessary for delivering and sustaining evidence-based programs across communities.[22]

Some experts interviewed for the scan, as well as practitioners in the literature reviews, emphasized that public and private funding streams do not adequately underwrite the true costs of running effective programs, particularly administrative costs associated with building the organizational culture and infrastructure necessary to support evidence-based practices (such as data systems, hiring, staff training and development, and partnerships).[23] For example, connection to a caring adult is one of the most important forms of support a program can provide for young people who face significant barriers and who have experienced trauma; however, low pay and limited opportunities for training and advancement lead to high rates of turnover among youth workers and affect the development of those relationships.[24]

COST INFORMATION AVAILABLE FOR THE PROGRAMS IN THIS SCAN SUGGEST THAT IT MAY COST MORE THAN $20,000 A YEAR TO SUPPORT A YOUNG PERSON FROM THE POPULATIONS OF INTEREST COMPREHENSIVELY.

Additionally, funding levels and guidelines may not adequately support the implementation of evidence-informed practices needed to reach, engage, and serve young people who face serious challenges. As discussed in the previous chapter, serving the populations of focus for this scan requires significant resources for outreach and recruitment; opportunities for paid and supported work experiences; flexibility in how participants move through program phases; intensive case management; employer engagement for job development; coordination among community partners for services related to basic needs and mental health; and a relatively long follow-up period until young people reach desired outcomes. Cost information available for the programs in this scan suggest that it may cost more than $20,000 a year to support a young person from the populations of interest comprehensively, especially if that young person has extensive legal system involvement.[25] For example, the

22. Zhavoronkova, Preston, Schweitzer, and Amaning (2023).

23. Altshuler and Tirona (2019).

24. McGuiness-Carmichael (2019); Borden, Schlomer, and Bracamonte (2016).

25. Cost-per-participant information was available for about one-third of the programs included in

YouthBuild USA Offender Project spent approximately $35,000 per participant (in 2023 dollars) for 6 to 24 months of in-program and follow-up services; and the READI program in Chicago spent about $52,000 per participant for 20 months of services between 2017 and 2021.[26] While these costs are high, programs that can produce positive outcomes on recidivism, education, and employment can produce large, long-term savings to society in the form of increased tax revenues and reduced spending on health care, social services, and incarceration.[27]

Administrative hurdles and paperwork burdens associated with federal funding streams, including requirements to submit documents proving one's eligibility for programs, also pose barriers to reaching and serving young people. For example, a study of Second Chance Act reentry programs found that young people do not often receive the assistance that they need from providers to navigate the administrative processes of securing housing assistance because providers cannot spare the staff time or resources.[28] Practitioners and advocates have also long contended that proof-of-eligibility document requirements are burdensome for young people and providers.[29] In 2023, WIOA guidelines began allowing for "self-attestation" from young people as an acceptable source of documentation to ease recruitment of young people who may be most in need of services. This change means that young people can acknowledge their eligibility status on a form—for

ADMINISTRATIVE HURDLES AND PAPERWORK BURDENS ASSOCIATED WITH FEDERAL FUNDING STREAMS ALSO POSE BARRIERS TO REACHING AND SERVING YOUNG PEOPLE.

this scan. Variations in costs per participant probably reflect the needs and barriers of the populations served, the number and types of services offered, and the duration and intensity of services offered.

26. Cohen and Piquero (2015); Bhatt et al. (2023).

27. Belfield, Levin, and Rosen (2012). For example, the Boston Consulting Group estimates that there were 63,000 "disconnected" 14- to 26-year-olds in Connecticut in 2022, and that connecting them to work or educational opportunities could result in up to $350 million in increased tax revenues and up to $450 million in cost savings due to lower rates of incarceration and reduced spending on social safety net services. It should be noted that the definition of "disconnected" for these estimates does not precisely align with the populations of interests of this scan and includes high school nongraduates who are employed and those who are incarcerated. But the estimates provide a sense of the magnitude of the economic toll of not addressing the challenges faced by young people who face barriers connecting to education and employment. This report is part of the Connecticut Opportunity Project's recently commissioned research. See Boston Consulting Group (2023).

28. Beck et al. (2023).

29. National Youth Employment Coalition (2021).

example, that they have low incomes, are out of school, or are parenting or pregnant—and vouch for its authenticity, instead of tracking down documents to prove their status.[30]

5. **Remove policy barriers that make it more difficult for young people who have been involved in the legal system to gain access to employment, housing, mental health services, and safety net benefits.**

Expert interviews and literature review for this scan highlighted the need to reform various exclusionary policies that pose significant barriers to young people who have been involved in the criminal legal system, including policies that prohibit people with a criminal record from receiving forms of basic-needs support such as assistance with food, housing, or health care, as well as policies that restrict this population from holding licenses and jobs in a wide array of occupations. For example:

- Some occupations and industries explicitly bar the hiring of people with criminal records, and under federal law, some individuals convicted of certain crimes are barred from working in the banking and transportation sectors, as well as from various state-licensed jobs in health care and education.[31] Employment or licensing restrictions based on a person's criminal record may be automatic or subject to employer discretion. Industries where job growth, pay, and mobility are relatively high, such as health care, are often affected the most by these restrictions—shutting out those with records, or in some cases even arrests, from sector-based occupational training programs and pathways to economic advancement.[32] In a recent study, Indiana was ranked as the best state in the nation for ex-offenders seeking a license to work; the state bans agencies from using arrest and expunged records as well as vague standards like "moral turpitude" and "good character" to disqualify applicants.[33]

SOME OCCUPATIONS AND INDUSTRIES EXPLICITLY BAR THE HIRING OF PEOPLE WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS.

30. Parton (2023).
31. Sibilla (2020); Collateral Consequences Resource Center (n.d.).
32. Sibilla (2020).
33. Sibilla (2020).

- It is difficult for people with criminal records to gain access to most public housing programs. Although federal mandates only bar people convicted of certain felonies from publicly funded housing programs, federally assisted housing providers and public housing agencies have historically expanded those limitations to broader groups with involvement in the legal system, including people convicted of misdemeanor crimes and those with arrests. As a result, formerly incarcerated young people have faced challenges in reuniting with families who live in public housing.[34] Over the last 10 years, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has urged state and localities to loosen their restrictions on allowing people with criminal records to rejoin families or friends in public housing, and to not deny an applicant housing assistance automatically based on the presence of a criminal conviction.[35]

FORMERLY INCARCERATED YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE FACED CHALLENGES IN REUNITING WITH FAMILIES WHO LIVE IN PUBLIC HOUSING.

- Federal laws ban people with felony drug convictions from receiving food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and cash assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. States are allowed to opt out of this federal rule, and many states have done so. But more than 20 states still restrict access to food assistance for at least some people with felony drug convictions, and South Carolina still disqualifies these individuals for life.[36]

- Federal policy prohibits states from using Medicaid funds for most health care services for people detained in juvenile and adult correctional facilities, ensuring that nearly all incarcerated people on Medicaid lose coverage upon entering the legal system.[37] This "inmate exclusion policy" applies to young people detained in a state or local juvenile facility, and to adults who are in jails or prisons.[38] While individuals can be enrolled in Medicaid while incarcerated or detained, many states either

34. Beck et al. (2023).
35. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2023); Hackman (2016).
36. Burnside (2022).
37. Albertson, Scannell, Ashtari, and Barnert (2020).
38. Acoca, Stephens, and Van Vleet (2014).

terminate or suspend coverage when young people enter the system, causing gaps in coverage after their release.[39] These gaps in Medicaid coverage for people reentering the community after incarceration or detention reduces their access to ongoing, comprehensive physical and mental health care.[40] In 2023, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launched a demonstration project that will allow states to cover a package of services for up to 90 days leading up to an individual's expected release date that could not otherwise be covered by Medicaid, including case management and medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorders.[41]

6. Test policies and partnerships for large-scale employer engagement in employing young people in quality jobs.

Engaging employers in the training and employment of young people who have been involved in the legal system, young people of color, and young people with little work history and limited education has been historically challenging, and evidence of policies designed to engage employers is not conclusive. Most employers do not offer the support and flexibility that the populations of interest often need to retain and advance in jobs; and young people of color and young people involved in the legal system face racism and stigma from employers that pose additional challenges.[42]

EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT NONPROFIT AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE EMPLOYERS MAY OFFER A MORE SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT, AND MAY BE MORE MOTIVATED THAN FOR-PROFIT EMPLOYERS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO DISADVANTAGED WORKERS.

Federal efforts to engage employers in workforce development for disadvantaged workers have generally relied on financial incentives, such as wage subsidies and tax credits for placing people in jobs; but even then, participation from private-sector employers has been limited and dependent on the level of subsidy.[43] The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (which provides

39. Scannell, Albertson, Ashtari, and Barnert (2022); Haldar and Guth (2021).

40. Barnert, Scannell, Ashtari, and Albertson (2022).

41. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (2023).

42. Decker, Spohn, Ortiz, and Hedberg (2014); Pager, Western, and Sugie (2009); Holzer, Offner, and Sorenson (2004).

43. Gueron (1984).

employers up to $2,400 in federal tax savings for hiring individuals with barriers to employment, including those with felony convictions) is not heavily used, and is most often claimed for short-term, low-wage job placements.[44] A large-scale federal evaluation of subsidized and transitional job programs by MDRC found that many for-profit employers were not willing to hire very disadvantaged workers even with generous subsidies, whereas nonprofit and public agencies or social enterprise employers (businesses with a social purpose that typically sell products and services but have an explicit goal of employing workers who face barriers in the mainstream labor market) were more willing.[45] The reasons for this discrepancy are not well understood, but evidence suggests that nonprofit and social enterprise employers may offer a more supportive work environment, and may be more motivated than for-profit employers to provide opportunities to disadvantaged workers due to their mission of helping others.[46]

IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONTINUE TO EXPLORE AND BUILD EVIDENCE ON HOW PUBLIC POLICIES CAN FIGHT STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYER HIRING PRACTICES.

Sector-based employment and training programs have had better success in engaging private employers by taking a "dual customer" approach, where they focus on the needs and wants of both job seekers and employers to fill jobs. However, as previously noted, these types of programs have significant barriers to entry in terms of skill and work readiness, and employers value the vetting process the programs apply to job seekers.[47] According to recent studies, it is often difficult for programs to find a balance between attracting employers and maintaining their satisfaction and meeting the needs of hard-to-employ populations.[48]

Efforts to prevent discrimination in employer hiring of populations involved in the justice system may also interact with the efforts to subsidize their employment. The Federal Fair Chance to Compete for Jobs Act of 2019 builds on decades of reforms across states and localities that delay inquiries into

44. Qian (2019); Corwin (2022).

45. Bloom (2020).

46. Anderson, Farrell, Glosser, and Barden (2019).

47. Holzer (2022); Kazis and Molina (2016).

48. Walter, Navarro, Anderson, and Tso (2017); Kazis and Molina (2016).

a job applicant's criminal records until later in the application process. The evidence on these "ban the box" policies has thus far been mixed, as some studies suggest that in absence of information about an applicant's criminal history, employers may discriminate more strongly based on racial stereotypes instead, leading to poor outcomes for Black and Hispanic applicants who do not have criminal records.[49] There have been no published studies on the effect of ban-the-box policies on employers' use of Work Opportunity Tax Credits, but it has been hypothesized that such policies may lead fewer employers to use the credits to hire people with felony convictions because they must delay their inquiries into applicants' legal system history. [50]

In this context, it is important to continue to explore and build evidence on how public policies can fight stigma and discrimination in employer hiring practices, particularly for long-term, high-wage work opportunities for young people, and expand employer engagement in employment and training programs. Some have argued for a national, large-scale, federally funded and locally administered jobs program for young people and other workers who face barriers in the traditional labor market (like the Works Progress Administration created during the Great Depression).[51] There is also evidence that some of the funds provided under future subsidized employment programs should be reserved for nonprofit, public, or social enterprise employers, who are more likely to create opportunities for young people.[52] Many of the programs that serve young people leaving incarceration, such as Roca Baltimore or the Center for Employment Opportunities, operate social enterprises that have contracts with public agencies and nonprofit organizations for their transitional, subsidized programs (for example, Roca's program in Baltimore has partnerships with the city's Recreation and Parks Department).[53]

49. Agan and Starr (2016); Doleac and Hansen (2016).

50. English (2018).

51. Urban Institute (2020); West, Vallas, and Boteach (2015); Ross, Showalter, and Bateman (2021).

52. Bloom (2020).

53. Hossain and Wasserman (2023); Redcross et al. (2009).

Conclusion

The discussion of policies presented here is by no means a comprehensive scan of all policies that affect this paper's populations of interest. There are various policies in other domains that affect these young people, including K-12 education, postsecondary education, and child welfare. Discussions with experts in the field and a review of program literature highlighted how the wide variety of systems and policies at different legislative levels affect this population across the country—something that cannot be fully captured within the scope of this scan. Even in its limited scope, however, the scan identified many areas that could be improved, as discussed above.

The scan also identified a need for greater investments in research and evaluation, to strengthen the evidence on how policies affect the implementation of programs and practices for young people and the outcomes they target. A few of the interviewees said that the policymaking process should incorporate research and evaluation before changes are adopted widely, to assess their effects and the potential for unintended consequences, but that evidence building was often an afterthought—something that needed to change. "This is an area where we're still in the era of leeches in medicine. We just don't know enough about what works [for these populations] .... We could be having even more impact if we were willing to actually do the programming and learn at the same time," said one interviewee.

CHAPTER

4

Looking Ahead

This chapter draws together the discussions of the previous two chapters. It presents the implications for what the field could do—in terms of public policy, program practices, and research—to better support young people furthest from opportunities as they transition to adulthood. The populations of interest in this scan—young people who have had significant periods of disconnection from work and school and those who have been involved in the juvenile or criminal legal system—need time, resources, and understanding to help them meet their goals.

FIGURE 4.1. Populations of Interest

Populations of Interest		
YOUNG PEOPLE NOT WORKING OR IN SCHOOL OR TRAINING		**REENTRY**
16 to 26 years old	**AGE**	18 to 30 years old
Not engaged in work school, or a training program	**EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORK**	Engaged or not engaged; previously disconnected
Varying levels: none to extensive	**LEGAL SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT**	Past or current involvement

Funding

Programs need stable and adequate funding to cover the true cost of providing evidence-based services to young people who face serious challenges and to support them comprehensively over a substantial period. This type of funding allows programs to bring in appropriate staff and potentially lowers staff turnover. In turn, engaged and seasoned staff members can lead to engaged young people; young people can build trusting relationships with caring adults who can remain a positive presence throughout their program participation and potentially beyond. Sufficient funding also allows programs to offer the supportive services (such as case management or behavioral health services) and flexibility that young people may need to sustain program engagement and reach major milestones in education or job training. For example, young people might need additional time to complete all required program activities or require mental health treatment. These services, whether offered directly by a program or through community partnerships, take significant resources to implement successfully. While the cost of serving these populations of interest effectively can be high, relative to the broader "opportunity youth" population, the human and social cost of long-term disconnection or incarceration is exponentially higher.

SUFFICIENT FUNDING ALLOWS PROGRAMS TO OFFER THE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND FLEXIBILITY THAT YOUNG PEOPLE MAY NEED TO REACH MAJOR MILESTONES.

Funders of programs—including government entities and private philanthropies—should align the amount and duration of funding they provide with the true cost of program operations and the flexibility necessary to serve these these populations. The funding needs to allow programs to meet the varied and often complex needs of these populations. Performance metrics can inadvertently encourage programs to screen out participants who are most in need, as programs may face a disincentive to recruit young people who are unlikely to reach performance targets within the time or resource constraints of their funding. Additionally, grants or funding streams that require renewal every few years create instability for programs, their staffs, and their hard-won community partnerships. Smaller pilot programs are one way to test tweaks to existing funding formulas, performance metrics, or program requirements, and assess their success.[1]

1. The U.S. Department of Labor conducted such a test through its Job ChalleNGe grants that built on the existing National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program. The grants both extended program services and expanded eligibility for the existing program to young people involved in the juvenile legal system. See Berk et al. (2020).

System Coordination

Young people in these populations face challenges when attempting to navigate the many systems that touch their lives. Such challenges can manifest when the juvenile justice system does not coordinate with the education system to ensure continuity in education, or when young people cannot obtain the documents they need to apply for public benefits. Improving coordination and data sharing across systems lessens the risk of disconnection when young people move between systems, and makes it more likely they will be able to take advantage of all the forms of support available to them.

Additionally, system coordination could help young people make the transition from one program or set of goals to another. Young people with low levels of basic skills, limited work experience, or other challenges in their lives are not going to get on a path to self-sufficiency and living wages through the support of one program alone. Strategies that foster connections between programs to help young people progress toward their next set of goals are needed to ensure that the young people continue along a pathway to success.

Policy Opportunities

Coordination alone cannot address areas where there are large and persistent gaps in needed services. Access to housing is a critical challenge that the government could address through housing policy that increases access to housing for people with low incomes, allows people who have been involved in the criminal legal system to receive housing support, and increases housing opportunities for young people in particular. And, more generally, policymakers could adopt policies that better prepare people while they are incarcerated for life after release, and end counterproductive policies that hinder them from achieving self-sufficiency.

Areas for Future Research

Practitioners, decisionmakers, funders, and researchers continue to yearn for a better understanding of "what works" and "for whom." The scan of the current evidence base for the populations of interest points to the need for more research into what programs, practices, and policies are effective in helping these young people improve their long-term educational and labor market outcomes and stay out of prison. Such research

would include building evidence on program design and implementation strategies, as well as on policies in domains such as education and the criminal legal system. For example, reforms to adult legal system practices for young adults could be studied in more places.

Additionally, when funding allows, researchers can provide more detailed descriptions of program staff qualifications, specifics about how services are offered and received, and more information on how different groups experience the program. Impact analyses of programs that serve a broader population can try to identify individuals with more barriers to success and explore the programs' effectiveness for those groups. Replications of studies of programs that already have evidence of effectiveness is another way to build evidence.

APPENDIX

A

List of Experts Interviewed

APPENDIX TABLE A.1 List of Experts Interviewed

Name	Title	Organization
Amy Barch	Founder and Executive Director	Turn90
Andrew Moore	Director of Youth and Youth Adult Connections	National League of Cities
Carol Thompson Cole	President and CEO	Youth Invest Partners[a]
Christopher Watler	Executive Vice President	Center for Employment Opportunities
Katja Russell	Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships	Youth Villages
Lael Chester	Director	Emerging Adult Justice Project at Columbia University
Lashon Amado	Interim Project Director	Opportunity Youth United
Lisa Johnson	Director, National Institute for Work and Learning	Compass Ross/FHI360
Luana Marques	Director of Community Psychiatry PRIDE and Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School	With Pride
Lucretia Murphy	Vice President of the Center for Justice and Economic Advancement	Jobs for the Future
Margaret Olmos	Staff/Director of Compassion Education Systems California	National Center for Youth Law
Mary Ann Haley	Executive Director	National Youth Employment Coalition
Melissa Sickmund	Director	National Center for Juvenile Justice
Michael P. Lawlor	Associate Professor	University of New Haven College of Criminal Justice
Michael Umpierre	Director of the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, McCourt School of Public Policy	Georgetown University

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE A.1 (Continued)

Name	Title	Organization
Michael Wald	Jackson Eli Reynolds Professor of Law, emeritus	Stanford Law School
Naomi Smoot Evans	Former Executive Director	Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Nate Balis	Director, Juvenile Justice Strategy Group	Annie E. Casey Foundation
Nia West-Bey	Director of Youth Policy	CLASP
Roseanna Ander	Executive Director, Crime Lab and Education Lab	University of Chicago
Sam Cobbs	CEO	Tipping Point Community
Sherilyn Adams	CEO	Larkin Street Youth
Telaekah Brooks	Former Partner	Youth Invest Partners[a]
Thomas Abt	Founding Director	Center for the Study and Practice of Violence Reduction, Council on Criminal Justice
Wendi Davis	Assistant Executive Director	Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators

NOTE: [a]Youth Invest Partners was formerly named Venture Philanthropy Partners.

APPENDIX

B

Programs with Impact and Outcome Studies

APPENDIX TABLE B.1 Programs with Impact and Outcome Studies

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Arches Transformative Mentoring	New York, NY	Young people on probation Ages 16 – 24	Seeks to reduce recidivism and increase education and workforce engagement by strengthening young people's problem-solving and social skills. Uses an intensive group mentoring model centered on cognitive behavioral therapy principles and an evidence-based Interactive Journaling curriculum. Mentors are "credible messengers" (people with backgrounds and characteristics similar to the populations they serve) who develop robust relationships with program participants built on authentic shared experiences and understanding.	Mathew Lynch, Nan Marie Astone, Juan Collazos, Micaela Lipman, and Sino Esthappan 2018 *Arches Transformative Mentoring Program: An Implementation and Impact Evaluation in New York City* Washington, DC: Urban Institute	QED—propensity score matching	Arches program participants were significantly less likely to be convicted of a crime than members of the control group.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Avon Park Youth Academy and STREET Smart Program	FL	Young men committed to justice residential care Ages 16 – 18	Provides wraparound services that begin while in residential care and continue after release. Services include counseling, vocational and educational training, and transition services.	National Council on Crime and Delinquency 2009 *In Search of Evidence-Based Practice in Juvenile Corrections: An Evaluation of Florida's Avon Park Youth Academy and STREET Smart Program* Madison, WI: National Council on Crime and Delinquency	RCT	Program group was more likely to earn a high school credential in the 2 years following release. Some early impacts on employment and earnings were not sustained. No clear pattern of impacts on recidivism following release.
Bridges to Pathways Program	Chicago, IL	Young men previously incarcerated in the criminal or juvenile justice system who did not have a high school credential Ages 17 – 21	Designed to provide a varied package of services to help participants attain a high school credential, obtain unsubsidized employment, and reduce their involvement with the criminal justice system.	Kyla Wasserman, Johanna Walter, Beata Luczywek, Hannah Wagner, and Cindy Redcross 2019 *Engaging Young Men Involved in Chicago's Justice System: A Feasibility Study of the Bridges to Pathways Program* Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	RCT	Program group was more likely to be employed early due to the program's subsidized internship, but the effect was not sustained. Program group had lower felony and violent crime arrest rates.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Cadet Leadership Education Program (CLEP)	KY	Males who graduated from a residential placement ordered by a juvenile court. Mean age of 17	Residential boot camp program with after-care component. Aims to reduce delinquency by promoting discipline through physical conditioning and teamwork, instilling responsibility and prosocial values, and education.	James B. Wells, Kevin I. Minor, Earl Angel, and Kelli D. Stearman 2006 "A Quasi-Experimental Evaluation of a Shock Incarceration and Aftercare Program for Juvenile Offenders" *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 4, 3: 219–233	QED—matched comparison group	Participants who completed the CLEP residential phase had lower conviction rates (for any offense or violation) than control group members, though differences were only significant at 4 months (no differences at 8 or 12 months).
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Transitional Jobs Program	New York, NY	People leaving incarceration—parolees Ages 18 and older, average age 34; subgroup of participants under 29	Provides temporary, paid jobs and other services to improve participants' employment outcomes and reduce future involvement in the criminal legal system.	Cindy Redcross, Megan Millenky, Timothy Rudd, and Valerie Levshin 2012 *More Than a Job: Final Results from the Evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Transitional Jobs Program* Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	RCT	Large and short-term impacts on employment due to transitional jobs. Reduced involvement in the criminal legal system, especially for those recently released. The under-29 group had impacts on overall employment and incarceration.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Family Integrated Transitions	WA	Young people returning from incarceration who had substance use or mental health disorders Ages 13 – 18	Family- and community-based treatment following a prescribed manual, using Multisystemic Therapy, specifically designed to address a young person's range of biopsychosocial needs (risk and protective factors).	Eric J. Trupin, Suzanna E. U. Kerns, Sarah Cusworth Walker, Megan T. DeRoberts, and David G. Stewart 2011 "Family Integrated Transitions: A Promising Program for Juvenile Offenders with Co-Occurring Disorders" *Journal of Child and Adolescent Substance Abuse* 20, 421–436	QED	Participation was associated with a reduction in felony recidivism.
Florida Environmental Institute	FL	Young people charged with a serious felony Unspecified age range	Residential diversion program in a rural environment intended to decrease recidivism. Includes transitional planning and support after release from incarceration.	Richard A. Mendel. 2001 *Less Cost, More Safety: Guiding Lights for Reform in Juvenile Justice* Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum	Outcomes	Lower reconviction rate for program participants compared with a statewide group of similar young offenders.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration's Mentoring Program	Seattle, WA	Young people returning from a Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration facility Unspecified age range; average age of 16 at release	Mentoring program aimed at creating community partnerships to prevent and reduce violence by recruiting and training adults from diverse cultural backgrounds to serve as mentors.	Elizabeth K. Drake 2006 "Recidivism Findings for the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration's Mentoring Program" Final Report" Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy	QED—matched comparison group	Effects in the first year on felony offenses but none seen in the second or third years.
Los Angeles Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (LA:RISE)	Los Angeles, CA	People with high barriers to employment, including those not in work or school, those who had been involved in the legal system, and those with unstable housing Ages 18 – 55+; around half between 18 and 24	A collaborative effort of private social enterprise organizations and public workforce development system partners along with personal support providers and employer partners to deliver transitional employment services paired with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult and Youth program services to the program's three priority populations.	Christian Geckeler, Lea Folson, Leela Hebbar, Josh Mallett, Anne Paprocki, and Maureen Sarver 2019 *The Impact of a Social Enterprise and Workforce System Operated Transitional Employment Program in Los Angeles* Oakland, CA: Social Policy Research Associates	RCT	No impacts on overall rates of arrest, conviction, or jail incarceration. Positive impact on employment during the first three quarters that was not sustained. No impact on earnings over a 12-quarter follow-up period. For the 18-24 subgroup, no impacts on outcomes related to earnings, employment, or criminal justice.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Multisystemic Therapy for Emerging Adults (MST-EA)	Unspecified urban/ suburban region of a Northeastern state	Young people recently arrested or released from incarceration, who have a mental health condition and who can reside in a community setting Ages 17 – 20	Juvenile recidivism reduction intervention, modified for use with young adults with serious mental health conditions and recent involvement in the justice system, targeting mental health symptoms, recidivism, problem substance use, and young adult functional capabilities.	Maryann Davis, Ashlie J. Sheidow, and Michael R. McCart 2015 "Reducing Recidivism and Symptoms in Emerging Adults with Serious Mental Health Conditions and Justice System Involvement" *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research* 42, 2: 172–190	Outcomes	Reduced charges after the intervention compared with before the intervention
MST-EA with Vocationally Enhanced Coaches	Unspecified urban/ suburban region of a Northeastern state	Young people who had been arrested or released from incarceration in the previous 18 months and who had a diagnosed, specialized mental health condition Ages 17 – 20	Small pilot study of an enhanced coaching component for MST-EA. Enhanced coaching emphasized education and employment components.	Maryann Davis, Ashli J. Sheidow, Michael R. McCart, and Rachael T. Perrault 2018 "Vocational Coaches for Justice-Involved Emerging Adults" *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* 41, 4: 266–276	RCT	Significantly more of those receiving enhanced coaching were in school or working than those receiving standard coaching.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program	CA, FL, GA, IL, MI, MS, NM, NC, TX, WI	Young people who had not finished high school, were unemployed, and were not heavily involved with the criminal legal system Ages 16 – 18	Program with a residential phase focused on positive youth development and education followed by a nonresidential phase that involves a structured mentoring program.	Megan Millenky, Dan Bloom, Sara Muller-Ravett, and Joseph Broadus 2011 *Staying on Course: Three-Year Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Evaluation* New York: MDRC	RCT	High school equivalency completion and employment rates increased for the subgroup of sample members who had been arrested or convicted before random assignment.
Newark Prisoner Re-entry Initiative Replication	Newark, NJ	Individuals returning from incarceration Unspecified age range with a subgroup under 27	Aims to help returning ex-offenders find work and avoid recidivism through an array of services, including intensive case management, workforce-preparation and employment services, mentoring, and supportive services, all to be delivered through faith-based and community organizations.	Jillianne Leufgen, Charles Lea, Brandon Nicholson, Anna Rubin, and Kate Dunham 2012 *The Evaluation of the Newark Prisoner Re-entry Initiative Replication: Final Report* Washington, DC: Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor	Outcomes	62 percent of participants were placed in unsubsidized employment; 29 percent of participants were arrested for a new crime or reincarcerated.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
NYC Justice Corps	New York, NY	Young people with recent involvement in the justice system Ages 18 – 24	Engages participants in activities related to behavioral development, workforce readiness, and community engagement, including CBT groups, one-on-one case management, community-benefit projects, and placements in employment, educational classes, vocational training, or youth development programs. Provides a stipend for participants' engagement in program activities.	Lindsey Cramer, Mathew Lynch, Margaret Goff, Sino Esthappan, Travis Reginal, and David Leitson 2019 *Bridges to Education and Employment for Justice-Involved Youth* Washington, DC: Urban Institute	Outcomes	26 percent of NYC Justice Corps program enrollees received an employment placement and 32 percent received a nonemployment placement. Those employed received an average of $11 per hour.
				Erin L. Bauer, Scott Crosse, Karla McPherson, and Janet Friedman 2014 *Evaluation of the New York City Justice Corps: Final Outcome Report* Rockville, MD: Westat	RCT	Program group saw an increase in cumulative wages following program completion. No effects on any education outcomes or on rate of arrests resulting in conviction.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Project Rise	Kansas City, MO; Newark, NJ; New York, NY	Young people who did not have a high school diploma or equivalent, and who had not been in school, work, or a training program in the past six months Ages 18 – 24	Engages participants in a 12-month sequence of activities centered on case management, classroom education focused mostly on preparation for a high school equivalency certificate, and a paid part-time internship that was conditional on adequate attendance in the educational component.	Michelle S. Manno, Edith Yang, and Michael Bangser 2015 *Engaging Disconnected Young People in Education and Work: Findings from the Project Rise Implementation Evaluation* New York: MDRC	Outcomes	More than a quarter of participants earned a high school equivalency within one year of enrolling.
Rapid Employment and Development Initiative (READI Chicago)	Chicago, IL	Men at the highest risk of being involved in a shooting Over 18 years old, average age of 25	Offers up to 18 months of paid transitional jobs and cognitive behavioral therapy, plus supportive services.	Monica P. Bhatt, Sara B. Heller, Max Kapustin, Marianne Bertrand, and Christopher Blattman 2023 "Predicting and Preventing Gun Violence: An Experimental Evaluation of READI Chicago" Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research	RCT	There was suggestive evidence of an impact on "shooting and homicide arrests."[a]

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Reentry Services Project	Clay County, MN	Young people returning from out-of-home placement Ages 13 – 20	Offers comprehensive reentry case management to help young people in obtaining and maintaining long-term employment; maintaining stable housing: and addressing substance use, physical health, and mental health issues.	Kathleen J. Bergseth and Thomas D. McDonald 2007 *Reentry Services: An Evaluation of a Pilot Project in Clay County, MN* Fargo, ND: North Dakota State University, Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science	QED	The authors noted an overall pattern of "better recidivism outcomes" for the program group.
Reentry services program (unnamed)	Two neighboring counties in a Midwestern state	Young people returning from out-of-home placements Unspecified age range, with an average age of 17 when released	Uses a three-phase design: services and reentry planning while a person is still in out-of-home placement, services to ease the transition out of that placement, and case management and mentoring once a person is back in the community. Activities include assessments, individual case planning, case management, and the integration of supervision and treatment services.	Jeffrey A. Bouffard and Kathleen J. Bergseth 2008 "The Impact of Reentry Services on Juvenile Offenders' Recidivism" *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 6, 3: 295–318	QED—geographic comparison group	Program was associated with a reduction in all court contacts and in criminal contacts (with significance determined based on a one-tailed p-value).

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Reintegration of Ex-Offenders (RExO)	MD, LA, MA, IL, OH, TX, CO, IA, NJ, FL, CA, CT, MO, PA, AZ, MI, OR, WA	Individuals returning from incarceration Ages 18 – 55+, with a subgroup under 27	Employment-focused programs that included mentoring and case management and "aimed to capitalize on the strengths of faith-based and community organizations" to serve people returning from prison.	Andrew Wiegand, Jesse Sussell, Erin Valentine, and Brittany Henderson 2015 *Evaluation of the Re-Integration of Ex-Offenders (RExO) Program: Two-Year Impact Report* Washington, DC: Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor	RCT	The younger-age subgroup saw positive effects on total income over the follow-up period. There were no effects on recidivism outcomes.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Returning Educated African-American and Latino Men to Enriched Neighborhoods (REAL MEN)	New York, NY	Young men incarcerated in jail and eligible for release within 12 months of intake Ages 16 – 18	Thirty-hour psychosocial intervention that began before release from jail and continued after release. Intervention provides health education and referrals to employment and education services, while addressing the connections between social constructions and risky behavior.	Nicholas Freudenberg, Megha Ramaswamy, Jessie Daniels, Martha Crum, Danielle C. Ompad, and David Vlahov 2010 "Reducing Drug Use, HIV Risk, and Recidivism Among Young Men Leaving Jail: Evaluation of the REAL MEN Reentry Program" *Journal of Adolescent Health* 47, 5: 448–455 Jessie Daniels, Martha Crum, Megha Ramaswamy, and Nicholas Freudenberg 2011 "Creating REAL MEN: Description of an Intervention to Reduce Drug Use, HIV Risk, and Rearrest Among Young Men Returning to Urban Communities from Jail" *Health Promotion Practices* 12, 1: 44–54	RCT	There were no effects on rates of arrest, incarceration, or education enrollment/advancement. An exploratory bivariate analysis found that program group members spent fewer days in jail than control group members.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Reentry Intervention and Support for Engagement by Integrating Technology (RISE-IT)	A South-western state	Young people incarcerated in a juvenile correctional facility Unspecified age range; mean age of 17	Uses technology to enhance transition planning, vocational skill development, and career planning, to allow incarcerated young people to acquire specialized career preparation and training through a multicomponent framework, aiming to increase their employability after release and decrease recidivism.	Sarup Mathur, Heather Griller Clark, and Jeff M. Gau 2023 "Technology Integration: A Promising Way to Mitigate Recidivism of Youth in Juvenile Justice" *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*	QED	The program was associated with a decreased probability of recidivism.
Roca (Rewire)	MA; Baltimore, MD	High-risk young men and mothers Ages 17 – 24	Implements a formal and informal curriculum, based on the tenets of cognitive behavioral theory, to increase program engagement, increase the probability of employment, and reduce recidivism.	Abt Associates 2021 *Final Report: Phase II Evaluation of Roca's CBT Curriculum* Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates	Outcomes	Increases in participants' number of CBT skills.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI)	Multiple cities in MA	Young men at high risk of gun violence Ages 14 – 24	Varied services, but always including: (1) the use of street outreach workers to engage young men and (2) a comprehensive case management approach. Additional services such as job training, subsidized employment, GED classes, and mental health treatment, among others.	Patricia E. Campie, Mary Vriniotis, Nicholas Read, Trevor Fronius, and Anthony Petrosino 2014 *A Comparative Study using Propensity Score Matching to Predict Incarceration Likelihoods Among SSYI and Non-SSYI Youth from 2011-2013*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services. Patricia E. Campie, Nicholas W. Read, Trevor Fronius, Garima Siwach, Kevin Kamto, Sarah Guckenburg, Olivia Briggs, Hannah Persson, and Anthony Petrosino 2020 *Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) Evaluation: 2018–19 Final Programmatic Report* Boston, MA: Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services	QED—propensity score matching QED[b]	Receipt of services was associated with a decrease in the likelihood of incarceration. Young people enrolled in SSYI were charged with fewer violent, weapon-related, and nonviolent offenses than those not enrolled in SSYI

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI)	CO, FL, KS, SC	Young men released from juvenile facilities Ages 16 – 18	Designed to improve outcomes related to employment, housing, health, and recidivism, and to achieve systems change through multiagency collaboration and case management strategies.	Stephanie R. Hawkins, Pamela K. Lattimore, Debbie Dawes, and Christy A. Visher 2009 *Reentry Experiences of Confined Juvenile Offenders: Characteristics, Service Receipt, and Outcomes of Juvenile Male Participants in the SVORI Multi-site Evaluation* Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International	QED—propensity score matching	There were positive effects on enrollment in school 3 months after release and on having a job with benefits 15 months after release. No effects were found on recidivism.
Strengths-Based Outreach and Advocacy	Columbus, OH	Young people who were unhoused and unaccompanied for the previous three months, with no service contact in a shelter or drop-in center or substance use/ mental health treatment program, or who reported at least six uses of alcohol or drugs in the past 30 days Ages 14 – 24	Model of aggressive outreach that emphasizes the relationship between outreach workers and their clients, includes a focus on strengths, and is guided by clients' goals.	Natasha Slesnick, Jing Zhang, and Tansel Yilmazer 2018 "Employment and Other Income Sources Among Homeless Youth" *Journal of Primary Prevention* 39: 247–262	Outcomes	Employment rates and income from formal employment increased over the 9-month follow-up period.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Tidewater Re-entry Initiative	VA	Young people returning from incarceration Ages 13 – 19	Coordinated services before and after release, including individual case planning, therapeutic services, housing assistance, intensive supervision, and substance abuse treatment.	Akiva Liberman, Jeanette Hussemann, Brice McKeever, and Douglas Young 2019 *Evaluation of the OJJDP FY2010 Second Chance Act Juvenile Offender Reentry Demonstration Projects: Technical Report* Washington, DC: Urban Institute	QED—geographic comparison group with propensity score weighting	The study found no significant effects on arrest, conviction, or incarceration outcomes, though program group members showed longer times to rearrest and reconviction.
Transitional Living Program or YVLifeset	TN	Young people previously in foster care or juvenile justice custody. Ages 18 – 24	Aims to help young men and women make the transition to adulthood by providing intensive, individually tailored, and clinically focused case management, support, and counseling.	Melanie Skemer and Erin Jacobs Valentine 2016 *Striving for Independence: Two-Year Impact Findings from the Youth Villages Transitional Living Evaluation* New York: MDRC	RCT	The study found modest, positive effects on selected earnings outcomes over two years. There were no effects on enrollment in postsecondary education, arrests, or convictions.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Wayne County Second Chance Reentry Program	MI	Young men who were treated in a secure residential treatment facility Ages 13 – 18	Assigned reentry specialists who begin working with young people during residential treatment, continuing after their release. Planning includes regular meetings with young people and families, assessments, and referrals to other services in the community.	Nancy G. Calleja, Ann M. Dadah, Jeri Fisher, and Melissa Fernandez 2016 "Reducing Juvenile Recidivism Through Specialized Reentry Services: A Second Chance Act Project" *Journal of Juvenile Justice* 5, 2: 1–11	QED	Program group members were less likely to have a new charge or violation than comparison group members.
Young Adult Literacy	New York, NY	Young people who were not in school or working, and who had fourth- through eighth-grade literacy skills Ages 16 – 24	Seeks to improve the academic and work-readiness skills of young people who are not in school, do not have a job, and have very low literacy skills. Offers literacy and numeracy instruction, social support services, life skills and work-readiness training, a paid internship, and incentives.	Farhana Hossain and Emily Terwelp 2015 *Improving Outcomes for New York City's Disconnected Youth* New York: MDRC	Outcomes	The study found grade level gains in math and reading for participants.

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
Youth Offender Demonstration Project[c]	OH, CO, IA, PA, WA, MN, FL	Young people currently involved, or at risk of involvement, in the court system or gangs Ages 14 – 24	Helps participants find long-term employment at wage levels that would prevent future dependency and break the cycle of crime and juvenile delinquency.	Stephen S. Jenks, Lois MacGillivray, and Karen Needels 2006 *Youth Offender Demonstration Project Evaluation: Final Report – Volume One* Washington, DC: Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor	Outcomes	The study collected education, employment, and recidivism outcomes.
Youth Services of Tulsa SCA program	Tulsa, OK	Young people returning from incarceration Ages 12 – 19	Provides case management and intensive family services, before and after release, to ease the transition home.	Akiva Liberman, Jeanette Hussemann, Brice McKeever, and Douglas Young 2019 *Evaluation of the OJJDP FY2010 Second Chance Act Juvenile Offender Reentry Demonstration Projects: Technical Report* Washington, DC: Urban Institute	QED—historical cohort with propensity score weighting	The study found no significant effects on recidivism (defined as reconviction).

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APPENDIX TABLE B.1 (Continued)

Program/ Organization Name *(Linked When Available)*	Locations in the Study	Population Served	Program Description	Study Information *(Linked When Available)*	Study Design	Key Outcome Findings Related to Education, Employment, or Recidivism
YouthBuild USA Offender Project	Nationwide	Young adults with low incomes who are involved in the justice system Ages 16 – 24	Targeted intervention organized around employment (within the context of building and rehabilitating housing) and educational training.	Mark A. Cohen and Alex R. Piquero 2010 "An Outcome Evaluation of the YouthBuild USA Offender Project" *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 8, 4: 373–385	Outcomes	YouthBuild graduates were less likely to have served time or have their parole revoked compared with young people who dropped out of the program.

NOTES: RCT = randomized controlled trial; QED = quasi-experimental design. The table includes reports published between 2000 and May 2023.

For RCTs, impacts are reported on the intent-to-treat approach, unless otherwise specified.

[a]These were effects on exploratory outcomes, and the study used a treatment-on-treated analysis approach.

[b]Few details about the study design were included, though the article notes the analysis compared "offending outcomes of SSYI participants" with those of "nonparticipants in each community who have similar offending histories to those of SSYI participants."

[c]Projects included in the outcomes study were in the following locations: Cincinnati, OH; State of Colorado; Denver, CO; Des Moines, IA; Erie, PA; Pittsburg, PA; Seattle, WA; St. Paul, MN; West Palm Beach, FL.

APPENDIX

C

Programs Without Impact and Outcome Studies

APPENDIX TABLE C.1 Programs Without Impact or Outcome Studies

Program Name	Organization Name	Location	Target Outcomes	Description of Practices	Program's Description of Participants	Website
Advance Peace	Advance Peace	CA	Recidivism	Peer-delivered services, incentives, life skills and financial literacy	Young people at the center of gun violence	https://www.advancepeace.org/
Back to Our Future	Chicago Public Schools	Chicago, IL	Education, recidivism	Mentorship, mental health support, family engagement, high school reengagement	Young people disengaged from Chicago Public Schools or involved in the juvenile justice system Ages 14 – 20	https://www.cps.edu
Boston Uncornered	Boston Uncornered	Boston, MA	Education, employment, recidivism	Preenrollment support for the transition to postsecondary education, trauma-informed care, mentorship, incentives	Young people involved in gangs or incarcerated	https://uncornered.org/
BUILD Violence Intervention Curriculum	BUILD, Inc.	Chicago, IL	Recidivism	Case management, mentorship, trauma-informed care	At-risk young people involved in gangs or courts	https://www.buildchicago.org/
C/HOPE	Coalition for Engaged Education	Santa Monica, CA	Employment, recidivism	Case management and job workshops, work-readiness training, occupational skills training	Incarcerated or formerly incarcerated young people Ages 14 – 24	https://www.c-youngpeople.org/programs
Cafe Momentum	Cafe Momentum	Dallas, TX; Nashville, TN; Pittsburgh, PA	Employment, recidivism	Case management, career exploration and career counseling, temporary and transitional work experiences, and job placements	Young people involved in the justice system Ages 15 – 19	https://cafemomentum.org/

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APPENDIX TABLE C.1 (Continued)

Program Name	Organization Name	Location	Target Outcomes	Description of Practices	Program's Description of Participants	Website
Chicago CRED	Chicago CRED	Chicago, IL	Education, employment, recidivism	Mentoring, trauma-informed care, preparation or instruction for high school equivalency, work-readiness training, postprogram support	Young people at risk of involvement in gun violence	https://www.chicagocred.org/
Choice Jobs Program and Choice Education Program	The Choice Program at UMBC	MD	Education, employment, recidivism	Case management, work-readiness training, temporary and transitional work experiences, job placement, preenrollment support for transition to postsecondary education	Young people involved in the juvenile justice system	https://choice.umbc.edu/
College Bridge Academy	SHIELDS for Families	CA	Education	Preparation or instruction for high school diplomas, life-skills and financial literacy education, case management, mental health services	Young people who have dropped out of or been expelled from traditional school systems	https://www.shieldsforfamilies.org/
Community & Youth Outreach		Oakland, CA	Recidivism	Mentoring, case management, trauma-informed care, CBT, life skills and financial literacy	High-risk young people involved in violence or the justice system	http://www.cyoinc.org/
Compass Rose Collaborative	FHI 360	AK, CA, CO, CT, KY, MA, MD, MO, NC, NY, PA	Education, employment, recidivism	Housing, food, transportation, mental health services, work-readiness training, job placement	Young adults who have been involved in the criminal legal system Ages 18 – 24	https://www.fhi360.org/

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APPENDIX TABLE C.1 (Continued)

Program Name	Organization Name	Location	Target Outcomes	Description of Practices	Program's Description of Participants	Website
CT Violence Intervention Program	Connecticut Violence Intervention Program	New Haven, CT	Recidivism	Mentoring	High-risk young people who are active in street violence	https://www.ctintervention.org/
DC's Young Men Emerging Unit	Washington, DC Department of Corrections	DC	Education, employment. recidivism	Work-readiness training, entrepreneurial skills training, life-skills and financial literacy education, mentoring, mental health services	Incarcerated young people Ages 18 – 25	https://doc.dc.gov/
Employment and Education ReEngagement Program	Young Community Developers	San Francisco, CA	Education, employment, recidivism	Career counseling and career exploration, work-readiness training, case management	Young people currently on parole or probation Ages 14 – 21	https://www.ycdjobs.org/
exalt youth program	exalt youth program	New York, NY	Education, employment, recidivism	Temporary and transitional work experiences, high school reengagement	Young people who have been involved in the justice system Ages 15 – 19	https://www.exaltyouth.org/
EXCEL Work Readiness Program	South Bay Community Services	San Diego, CA	Employment, recidivism	Work-readiness classes, stipends and incentives, temporary and transitional work experience, occupational skills training, preenrollment support for transition to postsecondary education	Young people affected by the justice system Ages 16 – 24	https://sbcssandiego.org/

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APPENDIX TABLE C.1 (Continued)

Program Name	Organization Name	Location	Target Outcomes	Description of Practices	Program's Description of Participants	**Website**
Gang Reduction and Youth Development	The City of Los Angeles Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development	Los Angeles, CA	Recidivism	Mentoring, case management	Young people involved in gangs who have been released from correctional placement Ages 14 – 21	https://www.lagryd.org/
Gentlemen Course (G-Course) Program	Free Dem Foundations	LA	Education, employment	Life-skills and financial literacy education, trauma-informed care, preparation or instruction for high school diploma or equivalency	Young men who do not have a positive male figure in their lives and who are not in school or working Ages 17 – 24	https://freedemfoundations.org/
Getting Out and Staying Out	Getting Out and Staying Out	New York, NY	Education, employment, recidivism	Preparation or instruction for high school equivalency, work-readiness training, temporary and transitional work experiences, job placement	Men involved in the justice system Ages 16 – 24	https://www.gosonyc.org
GoodPath Program	Goodwill	VA	Employment, recidivism	On-the-job training, work-readiness training, life-skills and financial literacy education	Young people recently released from a juvenile corrections facility and on parole or probation Ages 16 – 20	https://goodwillvirginia.org/

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APPENDIX TABLE C.1 (Continued)

Program Name	Organization Name	Location	Target Outcomes	Description of Practices	Program's Description of Participants	Website
Growth Opportunities program	U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration	AL, CA, FL, IA, IN, MN, NC, NY, PA, TX, WI	Education, employment, recidivism	Occupational skills training, mentoring, job placement	Young people who have been expelled from school or who have come in contact with the justice system Ages 18 – 24	https://www.dol.gov/
Invictus	Domus	Stamford, CT	Employment, recidivism	Racial equity, diversity, and inclusion; trauma-informed care; family engagement; preenrollment support for the transition to postsecondary education; occupational skills training	Young people at risk of dropping out of high school or those who have recently left a correctional facility Ages 12 – 25	https://www.domuskids.org/
Juvenile Justice Services	Youth Outreach Services	Chicago, IL	Recidivism	Mentoring, restorative justice, mental health services	Young people involved in the justice system Ages 14 – 26	https://www.yos.org/
Larkin Street Youth Services	Larkin Street Youth Services	San Francisco, CA	Education, employment	Case management, housing, preparation or instruction for high school diploma or equivalency, work-readiness training, temporary and transitional work experiences	Young people without homes Younger than 25	https://larkinstreetyoung people.org/

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APPENDIX TABLE C.1 (Continued)

Program Name	Organization Name	Location	Target Outcomes	Description of Practices	Program's Description of Participants	**Website**
More Than Words	More Than Words	Boston, MA	Employment, recidivism	Temporary and transitional work experiences, life-skills education, case management	Young people involved in the foster care, juvenile justice, or legal systems Ages 16 – 24	https://shop.mtwyouth.org/
Opportunity YOUth Academy	JEVS Human Services	Atlantic City, NJ	Education. employment, recidivism	Work-readiness training, job placement	Young people who have been involved with the juvenile or adult judicial system Ages 16 – 24	https://www.jevshumanservices.org/
Pathways	Youth ALIVE!	Oakland, CA	Recidivism	Mentoring, case management	Young people at risk of exposure to violence, on probation, or emerging from incarceration	https://www.youthalive.org/
Peacebuilders	COMPASS Youth Collaborative	Hartford, CT	Education, employment, recidivism	Case management, mentoring, cognitive behavioral therapy, high school reengagement, preparation or instruction for high school equivalency	High-risk young people	https://compassyc.org/

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APPENDIX TABLE C.1 (Continued)

Program Name	Organization Name	Location	Target Outcomes	Description of Practices	Program's Description of Participants	Website
Project GO	Gang Alternative, Inc	Miami-Dade County, FL	Employment, recidivism	Occupational skills training, transitional and temporary work experiences, case management	Young people who have dropped out of high school, who have a history of violent criminal offenses or gang affiliation, or who have been assessed as having antisocial attitudes Ages 18 – 24	https://myga.org/
Project STAND	G.W. Carver College and Career Academy	TN	Education, employment, recidivism	Mentoring, work-readiness training, preenrollment support for the transition to postsecondary education, mental health services	Young Black males who have been involved in the juvenile justice system	https://schools.scsk12.org/gwcarveracademy
Rebound	Good Shepherd Services	Brooklyn, NY	Employment, recidivism	Work-readiness training	Young people who are unemployed, who are not engaged in school or the community, or who have been involved in the justice system Ages 17 – 24	https://goodshepherds.org/
Reengagement Center	Colorado Youth for a Change	CO	Education	High school reengagement, instruction or preparation for a high school diploma or equivalency	Young people who are not in school Ages 11 – 20	https://youthforachange.org/

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APPENDIX TABLE C.1 (Continued)

Program Name	Organization Name	Location	Target Outcomes	Description of Practices	Program's Description of Participants	Website
Residential Programs	Oregon Youth Authority	OR	Employment, recidivism	Housing, mental health services, substance use disorder treatment, occupational skills training, mentoring, life-skills and financial literacy education	Young people on parole or probation Ages 12 – 25	https://www.oregon.gov/oya/Pages/defa ult.aspx
Restorative and Transformative Justice for Youths and Communities	New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission	Camden, Newark, Paterson, and Trenton, NJ	Education employment, recidivism	High school reengagement, restorative justice, mentoring, mental health services, life-skills and financial literacy education, housing, education and employment services	Young people who have been released from juvenile detention or who are at risk of being involved in the legal system	https://www.njoag.gov/about/divisions-and-offices/juvenile-justice-commission-home/
Restorative Reentry	Community Works	San Francisco and Alameda County, CA	Recidivism	Restorative justice, cognitive behavioral therapy, family engagement	Young people exiting San Francisco jails	https://communityworkswest.org/
Roca Hartford Young Mothers Program	Roca	Hartford, CT	Employment, recidivism	Trauma-informed care, cognitive behavioral therapy, case management	Young mothers who have experienced extensive trauma and are the primary victims or drivers of urban violence Ages 16 – 24	https://rocainc.org/

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APPENDIX TABLE C.1 (Continued)

Program Name	Organization Name	Location	Target Outcomes	Description of Practices	Program's Description of Participants	Website
StreetSafe Bridgeport	Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership	Bridgeport, CT	Education, employment, recidivism	Mentoring, conflict interruption	Young people involved in gangs or gun crime	https://www.ryasap.org/
STRIVE Future Leaders	STRIVE International	CA, CT, GA, IL, LA, NY, PA	Education, employment, recidivism	Mentoring, preparation or instruction for high school equivalency, career exploration and career counseling, temporary and transitional work experiences, work-readiness training	Young people involved in the justice system Ages 18 – 24	https://strive.org/
Strong Futures	Chicago Department of Family Support and Services	Chicago, IL	Employment, recidivism	Mentoring, job placement	Young men who are involved in the justice system or have other barriers to stability Ages 18 – 28	https://saintsabinapeacemakers.org/strong-futures
T.R.U.E.	Cheshire Correctional Institution	Cheshire, CT	Recidivism	Mentoring, peer-delivered services, life-skills and financial literacy education	Incarcerated young men Ages 18 – 25	https://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/05/08/the-connecticut-experiment
T.R.U.S.T.	Power Corps PHIL	Philadelphia, PA	Employment, recidivism	Temporary and transitional work experiences	Young people who are returning from incarceration and who are underemployed or unemployed Ages 18 – 30	https://www.powercorpsphl.org/

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APPENDIX TABLE C.1 (Continued)

Program Name	Organization Name	Location	Target Outcomes	Description of Practices	Program's Description of Participants	Website
The Writing Program and Alumni Program	InsideOUT Writers	Los Angeles, CA	Education, employment, recidivism	Case management, trauma-informed care, high school reengagement, preenrollment support for the transition to postsecondary education, work-readiness training, job placement	Young people currently incarcerated in or exiting from a juvenile detention center Ages 16 – 25	https://www.insideoutwriters.org/
Train and Earn	New York Department of Youth and Community Development	New York, NY	Education, employment	Work-readiness training, preparation or instruction for high school equivalency, occupational skills training	Young people not working or in school Ages 16 – 24	https://www.nyc.gov
UP Program (Unleashing Potential)	Think Make Live Youth	OH	Education, employment, recidivism	Case management, peer-delivered services, mental health services, preparation or instruction for a high school equivalency	Young people with a misdemeanor or felony charge Ages 18 – 24	https://tmlyouth.org/
UTEC, Inc.	UTEC, Inc.	MA	Education, employment, recidivism	Mental health services, community navigator, temporary and transitional work experiences, life-skills and financial literacy education, preparation or instruction for high school equivalency	Young people who are out of school and have histories of gang involvement or incarceration Ages 17 – 25	https://utecinc.org/

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APPENDIX TABLE C.1 (Continued)

Program Name	Organization Name	Location	Target Outcomes	Description of Practices	Program's Description of Participants	Website
Workforce and Education	Anti-Recidivism Coalition	CA	Training, employment	Preapprenticeships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training for a particular industry, stipends and incentives	Formerly incarcerated young people	https://antirecidivism.org/our-programs/workforce-education/
Workforce and Reentry	Bay Area Community Resources	CA	Education, employment, recidivism	Work-readiness training, life-skills and financial literacy education, temporary and transitional work experiences	Young people with barriers to success, including involvement in the justice system	https://antirecidivism.org/
Youth Advocate Programs	Youth Advocate Programs, Inc	AL, AZ, AK, CA, CO, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MI, MO, NV, NH, NJ, NY, NC, OH, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, UT, VA, WI, WV	Recidivism	Mentoring, peer-delivered services, family engagement, stipends and incentives, trauma-informed care	High-risk young people who have been involved in the juvenile justice system	https://www.yapinc.org/
Youth Re-Entry	Homeboy Industries	Los Angeles, CA	Education, employment, recidivism	Mental health services, peer-delivered services, work-readiness training, preenrollment support for the transition to postsecondary education	Young people who have been incarcerated or involved in gangs Ages 14 – 24	https://homeboyindustries.org/

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APPENDIX TABLE C.1 (Continued)

Program Name	Organization Name	Location	Target Outcomes	Description of Practices	Program's Description of Participants	**Website**
Youth Reporting Center diversion program	La Plazita Institute	NM	Education, employment, recidivism	Preparation or instruction for high school equivalency, life-skills and financial literacy education, family engagement, youth leadership and civic engagement	Young people in New Mexico's Community Custody Program	https://laplazitainstitute.org/
Youth Services Division	The Mentoring Center	CA	Employment, recidivism	Case management, mentoring, life-skills and financial literacy education, work-readiness training, job placement, housing, transportation	At-risk young people	https://mentor.org/direct-service-programs/
Youth With Faces	Youth With Faces	Dallas, TX	Employment, recidivism	Life-skills and financial literacy education, work readiness training, occupational skills training	Young people involved in the juvenile justice system	https://youngpeoplewithfaces.org/about-us/our-story-2/

APPENDIX

D

Services by Practice Domain, Across All Programs Identified

APPENDIX TABLE D.1 Services by Practice Domain, Across All Programs Identified in the Scan

SECONDARY EDUCATION CONTENT	
Preparation or instruction for a high school diploma	Program provides classes directly or through a partner that lead to a high school diploma.
Preparation or instruction for a high school equivalency	Program provides classes or preparation directly or through a partner that lead to a high school equivalency (GED, HiSET, TASC).
High school reengagement	Program provides services to reconnect participants who did not complete high school to a high school completion program.
Dual enrollment in high school and college programs	Program has a partnership with an institution of higher education that allows participants to enroll in college courses and earn high school credit and college credit at the same time.
Basic education services	Program provides nondegree educational services to increase students' level of competency in reading, writing, and math, so that they can be successful in the workplace or enter a high school diploma or equivalency program. Includes tutoring or study-skills programs for students who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent.
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONTENT	
Preenrollment support for the transition to postsecondary education	Program provides services to participants who have not yet matriculated to college to help them select a college and apply. Includes college-readiness activities.
Postsecondary education advising and coaching after enrollment	Program provides continued coaching after enrollment into postsecondary education, such as help selecting classes, coaching to help students navigate challenges that come up in college, help to reenroll students after a pause, and connections to other forms of support. Also includes mentoring.
Academic support for postsecondary success	Program provides academic support to participants enrolled in postsecondary education, such as tutoring, developmental education, writing workshops, study halls, study-skills training.
Occupational skills training, sectoral training, and industry-recognized credential training	Program provides instruction, classes, or training, either directly or through a partner, that is specific to an industry or occupation, including industry-recognized certificates.
Support to pay for postsecondary education	Program helps participants find financial support to defray the cost of postsecondary education, including financial aid advising, support for financial aid applications, scholarships for college, emergency financial aid.

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE D.1 (Continued)

JOB READINESS, CAREER EDUCATION, AND ON-THE-JOB TRAINING CONTENT	
Career exploration and career counseling.	Program provides career education and awareness services, including assessments to identify careers of interest, information about careers, and information about in-demand careers and the local labor market.
Work-readiness training	Program provides services to prepare participants for the workplace, including training or coaching on workplace etiquette, employer expectations, time management, interpersonal skills, "soft skills," job search skills, résumé development, and interviewing skills.
Entrepreneurial skills training	Program provides training on the basics of starting and operating a small business, may also provide support to help participants obtain loans or grants to start a business.
Preapprenticeships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training for a particular industry	Program provides or places participants with jobs that provide on-the-job training. Includes preapprenticeships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training.
Temporary and transitional work experiences	Program provides or places participants in temporary, paid work experiences, which may include transitional jobs for those who have difficulty obtaining and maintaining employment, internships, or summer youth employment opportunities. Also includes employment in social enterprises operated by programs, or paid work experiences as part of a Conservation Corps or YouthBuild program.
JOB PLACEMENT AND RETENTION CONTENT	
Job placement	Program provides services to place participants in jobs, including information about job opportunities, referrals to employers, or direct-placement partnerships with employers.
Help maintaining employment	Program provides services to help participants keep and advance in jobs, such as counseling to navigate barriers to persisting in jobs, coaching on resolving workplace challenges, check-ins with supervisors.
Support for employers	Program provides training for employers on hiring, supervising, and retaining young people in jobs.

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APPENDIX TABLE D.1 (Continued)

REENTRY CONTENT	
Peer-delivered services/staff members with lived experience similar to participants'	Program employs staff members with experience with the criminal legal system, which includes being personally affected by the legal system (for example, by having been arrested or incarcerated) or affected through others close to them (for example, by having family members or close friends who have been arrested or incarcerated).
"Conditionless" probation/ coaching probation model	Program focuses on coaching young people to meet their goals, rather than meeting conditions to finish a probation period.
Community navigator	Trained peers or social workers who work with individuals to locate, connect, engage, and stay involved with services they need across systems, agencies, and organizations to meet their goals.
Restorative justice practices	Program aims to "repair the harm" done by a young person's behavior. This repair could include restitution (financial payment to victims or community service) or mediation (apology to victim, either written or in person).
BASIC NEEDS SERVICES	
Food	Program provides food directly to participants.
Transportation	Program provides transportation or financial support for transit (for example, transit cards), including transportation to and from program activities.
Childcare	Program provides childcare, including while participants are attending program activities.
Housing	Program directly provides housing or financial support to pay for housing or is a residential program.
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING CONTENT	
Mental health services	Program provides direct services to meet participants' mental health needs, including counseling, therapy, mental health treatment, counseling groups.
Trauma-informed care	Program staff members provide services with an awareness of how trauma may affect participants' lives and their ability to engage in other program services.
Substance use disorder treatment	Program provides direct treatment for substance use disorder.
Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)	Program provides CBT, which enables individuals to identify, understand, and change thought patterns.
Parenting services	Program provides services for participants who are parents, including pregnancy services, parenting education, on-site day care, and education about child support.

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE D.1 (Continued)

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES CONTENT	
Case management	Program provides dedicated case management services to participants, meaning each individual is assigned to a case manager. Program refers individuals to other support services they may need.
Assessments	Program conducts formal assessments after enrollment. They may include risk assessments, health assessments, or needs assessments.
Life-skills and financial literacy education	Program provides training in life skills (communication, sexual education, healthy relationships, healthy living, executive functioning) or financial literacy (budgeting, opening a bank account, credit scores).
Legal services	Program helps with juvenile and criminal justice record sealing and expungement, other legal services, support to stay in compliance with parole/probation conditions. Staff members testify on behalf of participants in court.
Postprogram support	Program provides continued access to services or staff members after participants have completed the core program.
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES	
Youth leadership and civic engagement	Program provides youth leadership opportunities (for example, youth governance, youth councils, youth committees) or opportunities for civic engagement (community services, volunteerism, advocacy).
Stipends and incentives	Program provides stipends to participants while they are in the program or incentives to promote engagement in services or completion of milestones.
Family engagement	Program engages with participants' families to support their success in the program and progress toward goals (for example, check-ins with families on progress).
Cohort model	Participants enter the program in a group and move through it together.
Mentoring	Participants are provided a mentor from the program or the community as part of their participation in the program.

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APPENDIX TABLE D.1 (Continued)

OTHER PRACTICES	
Two-generation models	Program provides services to parents and children from the same family with the goal of interrupting the cycle of poverty.
Collective-impact approaches	Program participates in community collaboration to benefit young people, for example a data-sharing collaborative or convening group to align services for young people in the community.
Racial equity, diversity, and inclusion approaches	Program uses practices intended to advance racial equity (a racial equity framework, representation of participant demographics in program leadership and staffing, culturally driven practices, staff training on unconscious bias).

APPENDIX

E

Core Services by Practice Domain, Across All Programs with Impact or Outcome Studies

APPENDIX TABLE E.1 Core Services by Practice Domain, Across Programs with Impact or Outcome Studies

Program	Secondary Education	Postsecondary Education and Training	Job Readiness, Career Education, and On-the-Job Training	Job Placement and Retention	Reentry	Basic Needs Services	Supportive Services	Youth Development and Engagement	Health and Well-Being
Arches Transformative Mentoring					Peer-delivered services/staff members with lived experience similar to participants'		Case management	Stipends and incentives; cohort model; mentoring	Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)
Avon Park Youth Academy and STREET Smart program	Preparation or instruction for high school diploma; preparation or instruction for high school equivalency; high school reengagement		Work-readiness training; pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training for a particular industry; temporary and transitional work experiences; career exploration and career counseling	Job placement; help maintaining employment			Case management; assessments; life-skills and financial literacy education; postprogram support	Stipends and incentives; family engagement	Mental health services; trauma-informed care; other behavioral health services
Bridges to Pathways Program	Preparation or instruction for high school diploma; preparation or instruction for high school equivalency		Work-readiness training; career exploration and career counseling; temporary and transitional work experiences	Job placement			Case management; life-skills and financial literacy education; postprogram support	Mentoring; cohort model	CBT

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE E.1 (Continued)

Program	Secondary Education	Postsecondary Education and Training	Job Readiness, Career Education, and On-the-Job Training	Job Placement and Retention	Reentry	Basic Needs Services	Supportive Services	Youth Development and Engagement	Health and Well-Being
Cadet Leadership Education Program (CLEP)	Preparation or instruction for high school diploma; preparation or instruction for high school equivalency; basic education services	Occupational skills training, sectoral training, and industry-recognized credential training					Postprogram support	Youth leadership and civic engagement; cohort model; family engagement	Mental health services
Center for Employment Opportunities Transitional Jobs Program			Work-readiness training; temporary and transitional work experiences	Job placement; help maintaining employment			Case management; postprogram support	Stipends and incentives	
Family Integrated Transitions								Family engagement	Mental health services; substance use disorder treatment; other behavioral health services
Florida Environmental Institute	Preparation or instruction for high school equivalency				Community navigator	Food; housing	Case management; postprogram support		

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE E.1 (Continued)

Program	Secondary Education	Postsecondary Education and Training	Job Readiness, Career Education, and On-the-Job Training	Job Placement and Retention	Reentry	Basic Needs Services	Supportive Services	Youth Development and Engagement	Health and Well-Being
Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration's Mentoring Program								Mentoring	
Los Angeles Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (LA:RISE)			Career exploration and career counseling; work-readiness training; temporary and transitional work experiences	Job placement			Case management; assessments	Stipends and incentives	
Multisystemic Therapy for Emerging Adults							Life-skills and financial literacy education	Family engagement; mentoring	Mental health services; substance use disorder treatment; CBT; other behavioral health services
Multisystemic Therapy for Emerging Adults with Vocationally Enhanced Coaches			Career exploration and career counseling; work-readiness training	Job placement; help maintaining employment			Life-skills and financial literacy education; postprogram support; case management	Coaching	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE E.1 (Continued)

Program	Secondary Education	Postsecondary Education and Training	Job Readiness, Career Education, and On-the-Job Training	Job Placement and Retention	Reentry	Basic Needs Services	Supportive Services	Youth Development and Engagement	Health and Well-Being
National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program	Preparation or instruction for high school equivalency		Career exploration and career counseling; work-readiness training				Life-skills and financial literacy education; postprogram support	Youth leadership and civic engagement; cohort model; mentoring	
Newark Prisoner Re-entry Initiative Replication			Work-readiness training; temporary and transitional work experiences	Job placement; help maintaining employment			Life-skills and financial literacy education; case management	Mentoring	
NYC Justice Corps	Preparation or instruction for high school equivalency; basic education services		Work-readiness training; pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training for a particular industry; temporary and transitional work experiences	Job placement; help maintaining employment			Case management; postprogram support	Youth leadership and civic engagement; stipends and incentives; cohort model	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE E.1 (Continued)

Program	Secondary Education	Postsecondary Education and Training	Job Readiness, Career Education, and On-the-Job Training	Job Placement and Retention	Reentry	Basic Needs Services	Supportive Services	Youth Development and Engagement	Health and Well-Being
Project Rise	Preparation or instruction for high school diploma; preparation or instruction for high school equivalency; basic education services		Career exploration and career counseling; work-readiness training				Case management	Stipends and incentives; cohort model	
Rapid Employment and Development Initiative (READI Chicago)			Work-readiness training; temporary and transitional work experiences	Help maintaining employment; job placement		Transportation	Case management	Stipends and incentives	CBT
Reentry Services Project					Community navigator	Transportation	Case management; assessments	Mentoring	
Reentry Services Project (RSP)					Community navigator	Transportation; housing	Case management; assessments	Family engagement; youth leadership and civic engagement	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE E.1 (Continued)

Program	Secondary Education	Postsecondary Education and Training	Job Readiness, Career Education, and On-the-Job Training	Job Placement and Retention	Reentry	Basic Needs Services	Supportive Services	Youth Development and Engagement	Health and Well-Being
Reintegration of Ex-Offenders (RExO)		Occupational skills training, sectoral training, and industry-recognized credential training	Work-readiness training;	Job placement; help maintaining employment		Housing; Transportation	Case management; legal services	Mentoring; stipends and incentives	Mental health services
Returning Educated African-American and Latino Men to Enriched Neighborhoods (REAL MEN)	Preparation or instruction for high school diploma; preparation or instruction for high school equivalency	Occupational skills training, sectoral training, and industry-recognized credential training							Substance use disorder treatment
RISE-IT (Reentry Intervention and Support for Engagement by Integrating Technology)		Career exploration and career counseling; occupational skills training, industry-recognized credential training			Community navigator		Case management; assessments; postprogram support		
Roca (Re-Wire)			Temporary and transitional work experiences						CBT

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE E.1 (Continued)

Program	Secondary Education	Postsecondary Education and Training	Job Readiness, Career Education, and On-the-Job Training	Job Placement and Retention	Reentry	Basic Needs Services	Supportive Services	Youth Development and Engagement	Health and Well-Being
Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI)	Preparation or instruction for high school equivalency		Temporary and transitional work experiences; work-readiness training			Transportation	Case management		Trauma-informed care; mental health services; CBT
Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI)							Case management; life-skills and financial literacy education; postprogram support	Family engagement	Mental health services
Strengths-Based Outreach and Advocacy							Case management	Stipends and incentives	
Tidewater RE-entry Initiative						Housing	Case management		Mental health services
Transitional Living Program or YVLifeset			Career exploration and career counseling				Case management; assessments; life-skills and financial literacy education		Substance use disorder treatment; mental health services
Wayne County Second Chance Reentry Program (WC-SCR)					Community navigator		Case management	Family engagement	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE E.1 (Continued)

Program	Secondary Education	Postsecondary Education and Training	Job Readiness, Career Education, and On-the-Job Training	Job Placement and Retention	Reentry	Basic Needs Services	Supportive Services	Youth Development and Engagement	Health and Well-Being
Young Adult Literacy	Preparation or instruction for high school equivalency; basic education services		Work-readiness training; temporary and transitional work experiences					Youth leadership and civic engagement; stipends and incentives; cohort model	
Youth Offender Demonstration Project	Basic education services; preparation or instruction for high school diploma; preparation or instruction for high school equivalency	Occupational skills training, sectoral training, and industry-recognized credential training	Work-readiness training	Job placement; help maintaining employment		Transportation	Case management; assessments		
Youth Services of Tulsa SCA program							Case management	Family engagement	Mental health services
Youthbuild USA Offender Project	Preparation or instruction for high school diploma; preparation or instruction for high school equivalency		Temporary and transitional work experiences				Life-skills and financial literacy education	Youth leadership and civic engagement	Mental health services

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ABOUT MDRC

MDRC, A NONPROFIT, NONPARTISAN SOCIAL AND EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCH ORGANIZATION, IS COMMITTED TO finding solutions to some of the most difficult problems facing the nation. We aim to reduce poverty and bolster economic mobility; improve early child development, public education, and pathways from high school to college completion and careers; and reduce inequities in the criminal justice system. Our partners include public agencies and school systems, nonprofit and community-based organizations, private philanthropies, and others who are creating opportunity for individuals, families, and communities.

Founded in 1974, MDRC builds and applies evidence about changes in policy and practice that can improve the well-being of people who are economically disadvantaged. In service of this goal, we work alongside our programmatic partners and the people they serve to identify and design more effective and equitable approaches. We work with them to strengthen the impact of those approaches. And we work with them to evaluate policies or practices using the highest research standards. Our staff members have an unusual combination of research and organizational experience, with expertise in the latest qualitative and quantitative research methods, data science, behavioral science, culturally responsive practices, and collaborative design and program improvement processes. To disseminate what we learn, we actively engage with policymakers, practitioners, public and private funders, and others to apply the best evidence available to the decisions they are making.

MDRC works in almost every state and all the nation's largest cities, with offices in New York City; Oakland, California; Washington, DC; and Los Angeles.