



the NATIONAL REENTRY  
RESOURCE CENTER

# Integrating Best Practices from Corrections and Workforce Systems to Match Jobseekers to Services: The IRES Pilot Project

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Brought to you by the National Reentry Resource Center and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice



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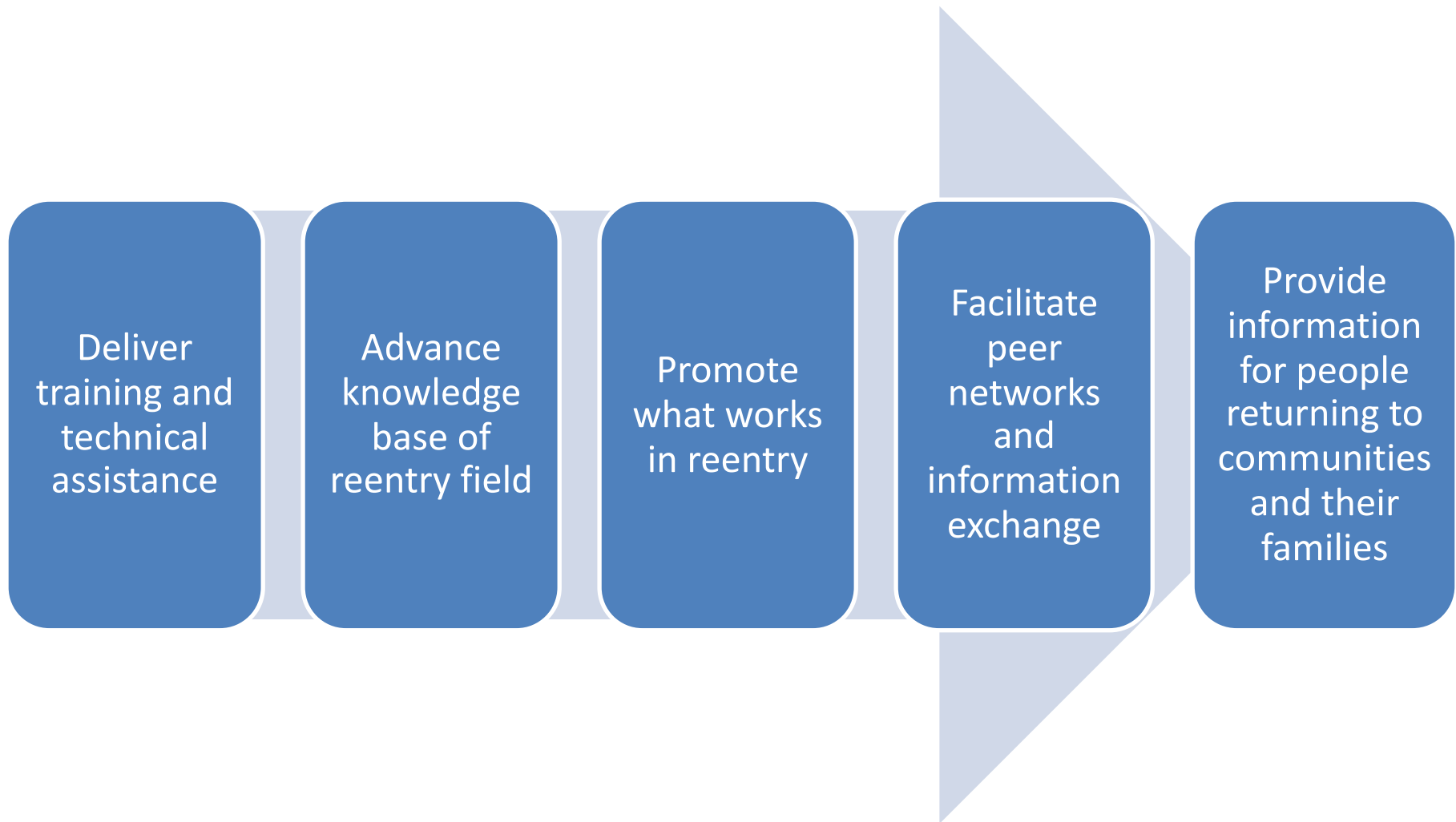
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# The National Reentry Resource Center



[www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org](http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org)

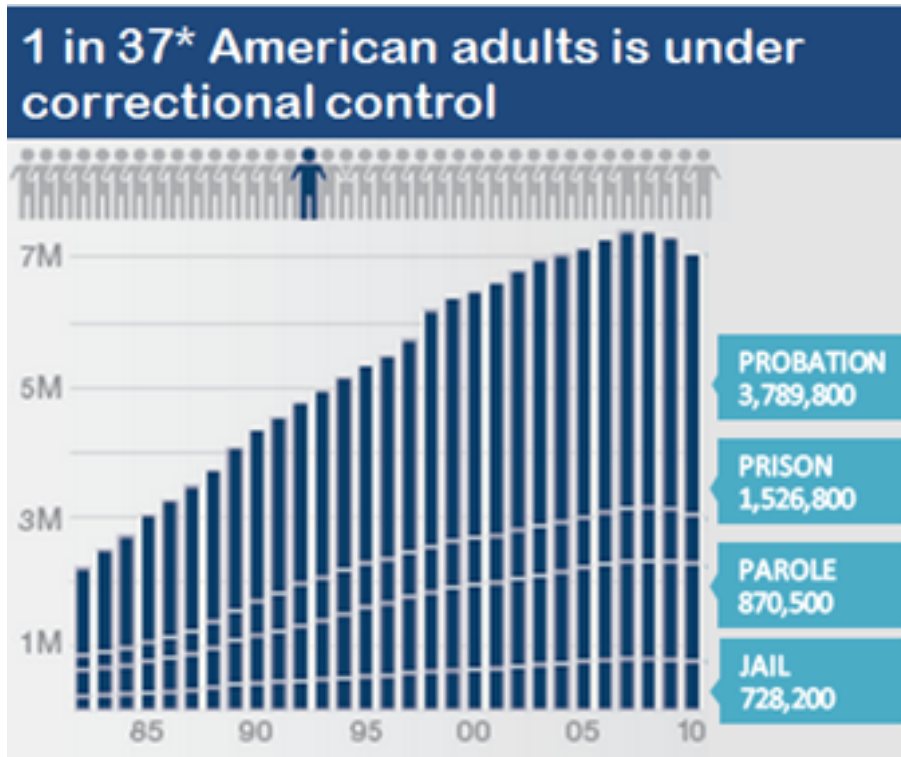
# Overview

- 01** Understanding the intersection of reentry and employment
- 02** Engaging key stakeholders
- 03** Assessing risk and needs
- 04** Inventorying available services
- 05** Making service referrals and tracking outcomes

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# The scope of reentry is too big to ignore



**10 million adults** in the U.S. are returning from incarceration each year\*

**70 million adults** nationwide have an arrest or conviction record

\* 600,000 people released from state and federal prisons, plus 9 million people released from jails

SOURCES: National Employment Law Project (2013) *"The Business Case – Minimizing Risk, Maximizing Talent: Hiring People with Records"*; The Pew Charitable Trust (2010) *"Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility"*; Bureau of Justice Statistics (2016), *"Annual Probation Survey, Annual Parole Survey, Annual Survey of Jails, Census of Jail Inmates, and National Prisoner Statistics Program, 2000, and 2005–2015"*; The Council of State Governments Justice Center (2015) *"Reentry Facts & Trends"*.

# Quiz: How many working age adults in the U.S. have a felony record?

- (A) ~1 million
- (B) ~6 million
- (C) ~15 million

SOURCE: Cherrie Bucknor and Alan Barber (2016). "The Price We Pay: Economic Costs of Barriers to Employment for Former Prisoners and People Convicted of Felonies"

**Quiz:** How many people are out of work in the U.S. because of their felony record?

(A) ~825,000 fewer workers

(B) ~1.8 million fewer workers

(C) ~5.0 million fewer workers

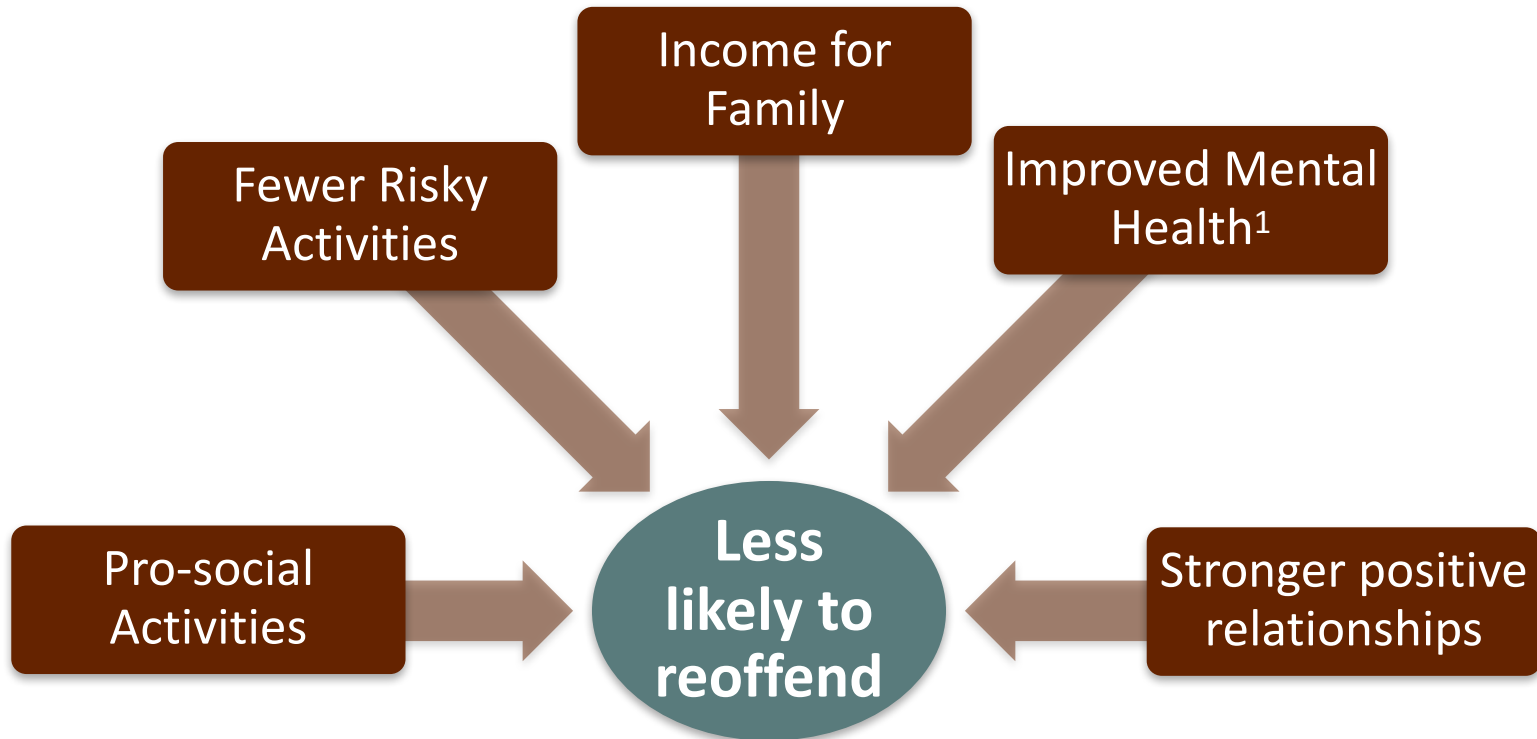
A felony record results in:

- Skill deterioration
- Lack of access to pro-social networks
- Employer bias
- Legal barriers to employment

SOURCES: Schmitt & Warner (2010), *“Ex-offenders and the Labor Market”*; Cherrie Bucknor and Alan Barber (2016). *“The Price We Pay: Economic Costs of Barriers to Employment for Former Prisoners and People Convicted of Felonies”*



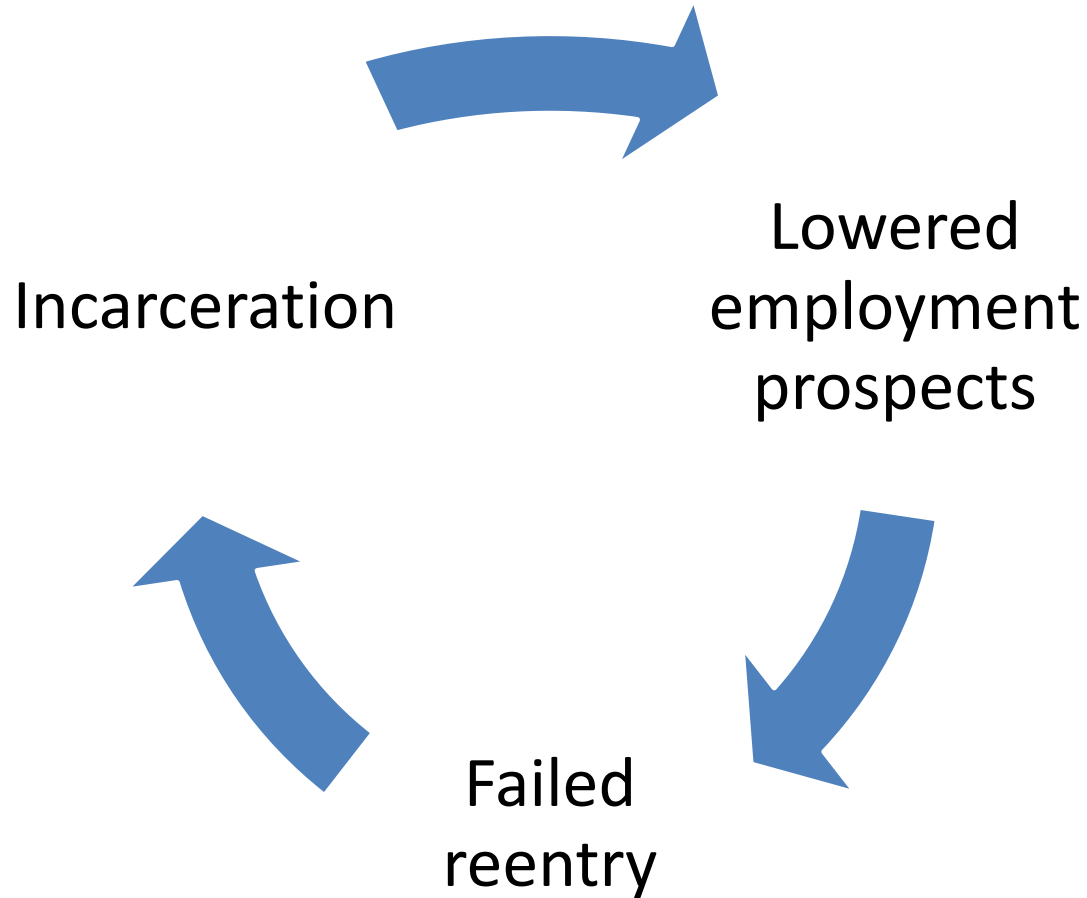
# Employment is an important part of reentry



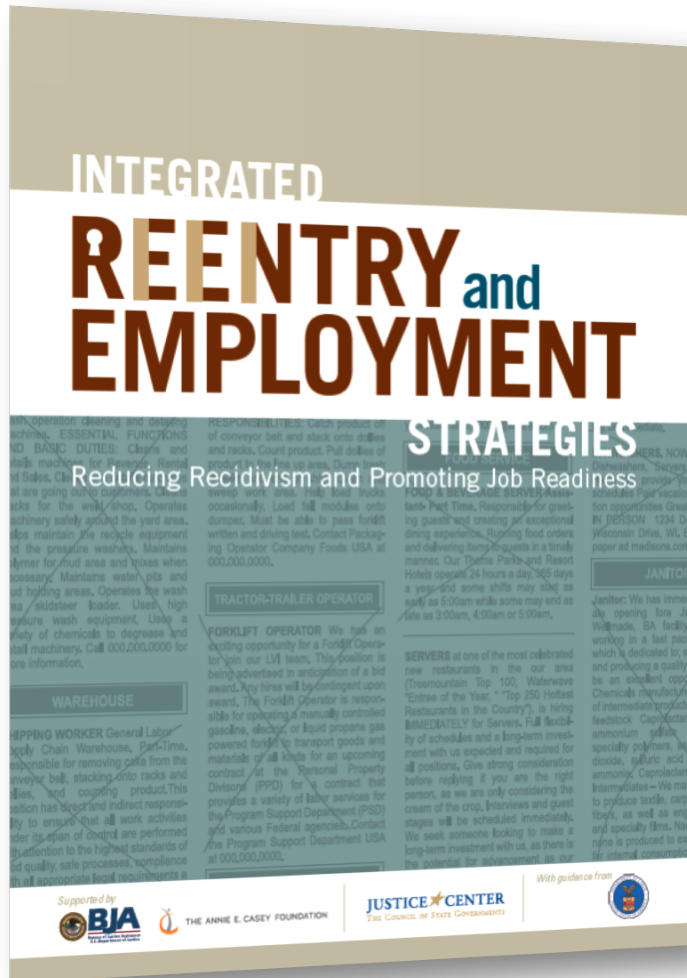
- Especially when earnings are above minimum wage<sup>2</sup>
- Especially with stable jobs<sup>3</sup>

SOURCES: (1) Graffam, Shinkfield, & McPherson (2004), "Variables Affecting Successful Reintegration as Perceived by Offenders and Professionals"; (2) Urban Institute (2008), "Employment after Prison: A Longitudinal Study of Releasees in Three States"; (3) Sampson & Laub (1993), "Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life"

# How do we break the cycle?

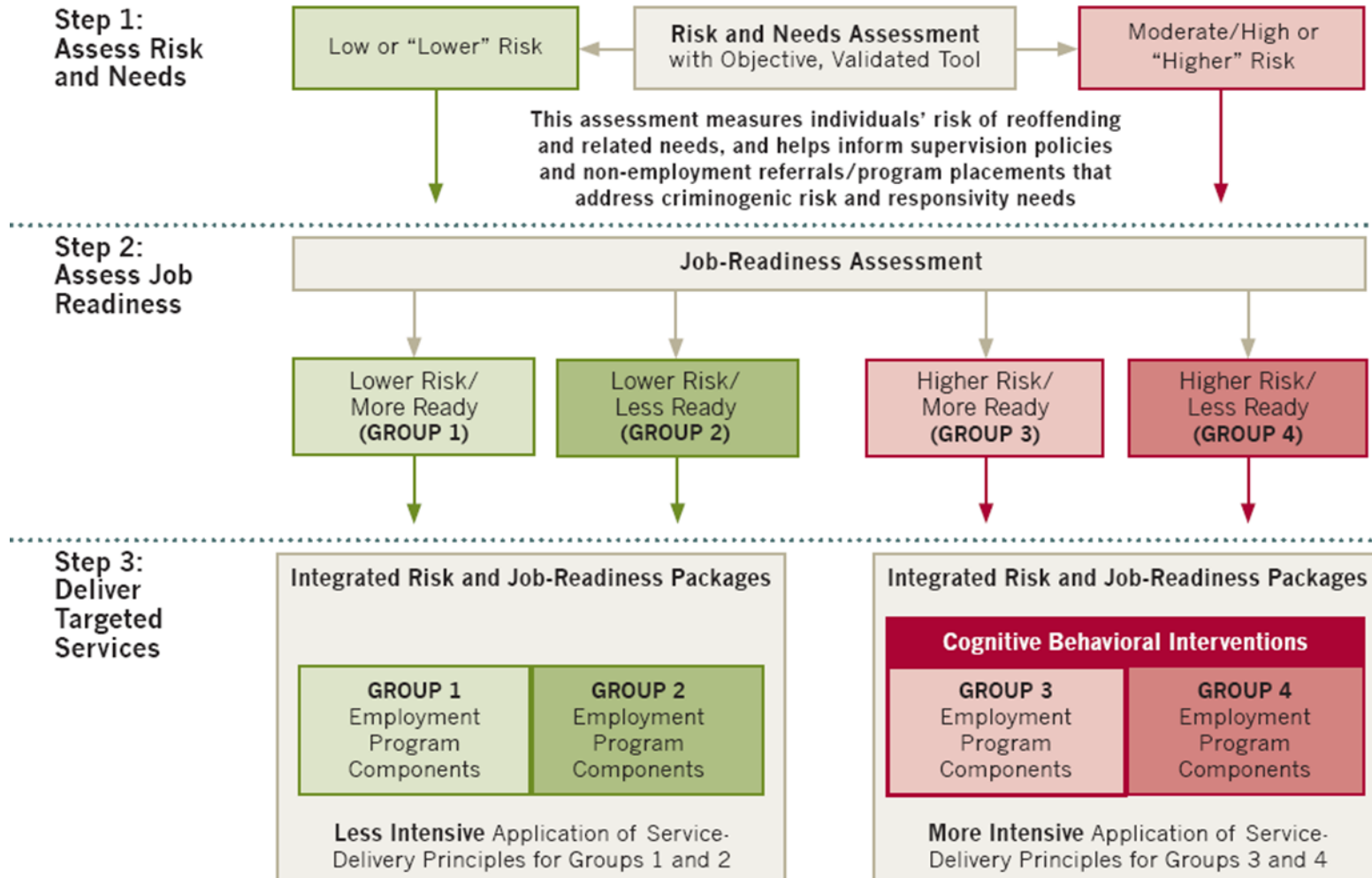


# Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies (IRES) white paper released in 2013



- Supported by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, with guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor
- Purpose: Bridge and integrate best practices from the **reentry, corrections, and workforce development** fields

# Connect people to appropriate services based on assessed risk and needs



# Two pilot sites selected to test the framework at a systems level



1. Is our **leadership** committed to a collaborative approach?
2. Do we conduct timely risk-needs **assessments** and job-readiness **screenings**?
3. Have we conducted a comprehensive process analysis and **inventory of employment services**?
4. Do we have a **coordinated process** for making service referrals and tracking data?

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# Policymakers and Practitioners across the political spectrum are prioritizing employment as a key issue



“Employment is an instrumental part of success after incarceration, and it’s also a monumental hurdle for many reentering society.”

– *Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch (R), WI*



“Employment is one of the greatest predictors of reentry success...”

– *Harold Clarke, Director Virginia DOC*



“We need to not just get them a job, but teach them the value of employment, of providing for themselves and providing for their families.”

– *John Wetzel, Sec. Pennsylvania DOC*



“We must do more to stop the revolving door of recidivism once and for all.”

– *Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D), NY*

# Is our leadership committed to a collaborative approach?





# Example: Planning teams in Wisconsin

- Core Planning Team
- Full Steering Committee
- Executive Steering Committee
- Other coordinating councils and task forces

# Challenges to prioritizing employment services for the reentry population



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# Conducting timely risk-needs assessments and job readiness screenings

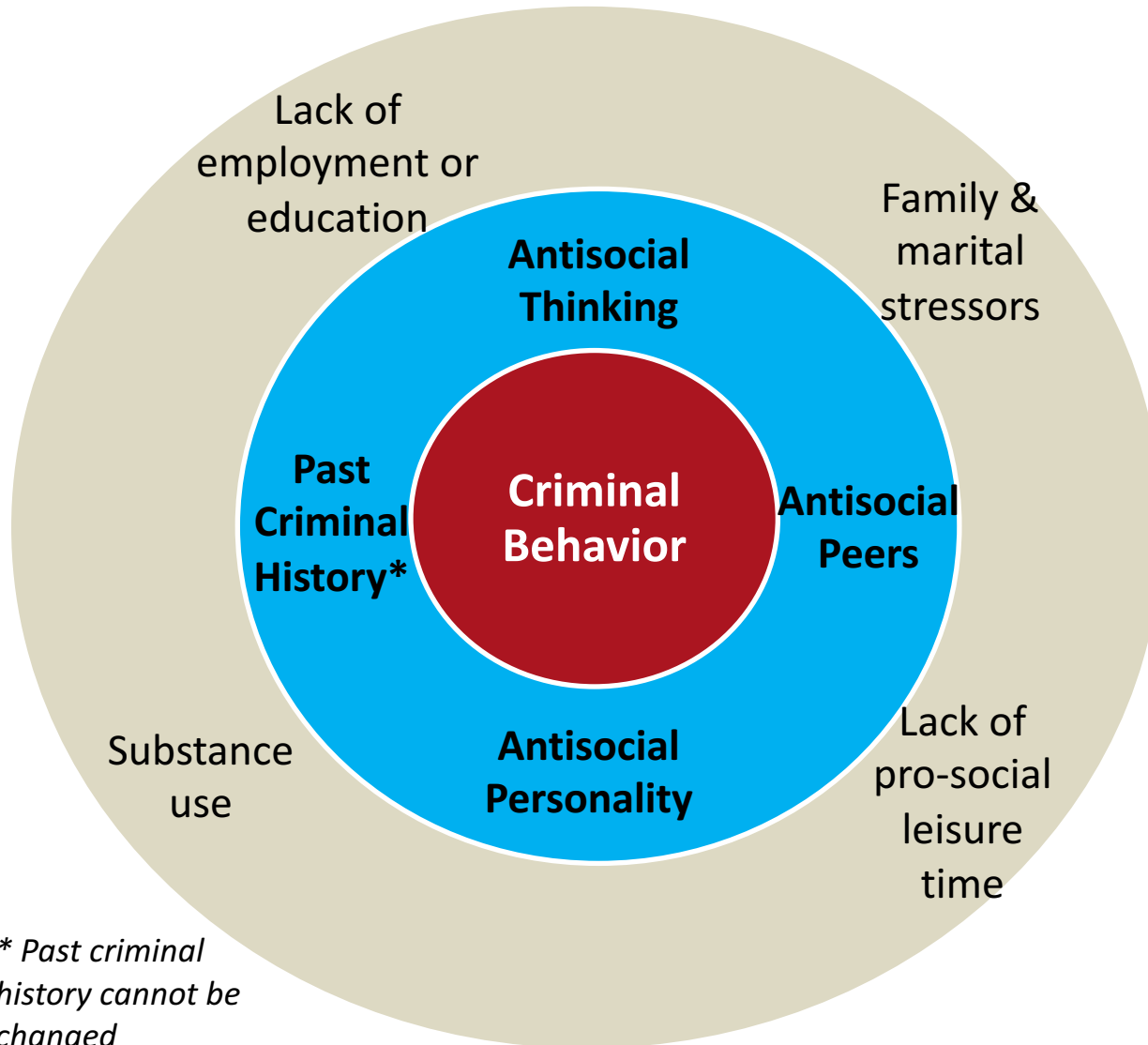
- Validated risk-needs assessments
- System-wide definition of job readiness
- Job readiness screenings
- Mechanisms for information sharing
- Baseline data

# Quiz: What are the top 4 predictors of recidivism?

Please select only 4 from below

- (A) Antisocial Thinking
- (B) Lack of Education/Employment
- (C) Family & Marital Stressors
- (D) Antisocial Peers
- (E) Past Criminal History
- (F) Antisocial Personality
- (G) Substance Use
- (H) Mental Disorders
- (I) Lack of Pro-social Leisure Time

# What are the predictors of recidivism, and how are they measured?



*\* Past criminal history cannot be changed*

## Risk/Needs Assessments

Measure criminogenic risk factors and specific needs that, if addressed, will reduce likelihood of future criminal activity

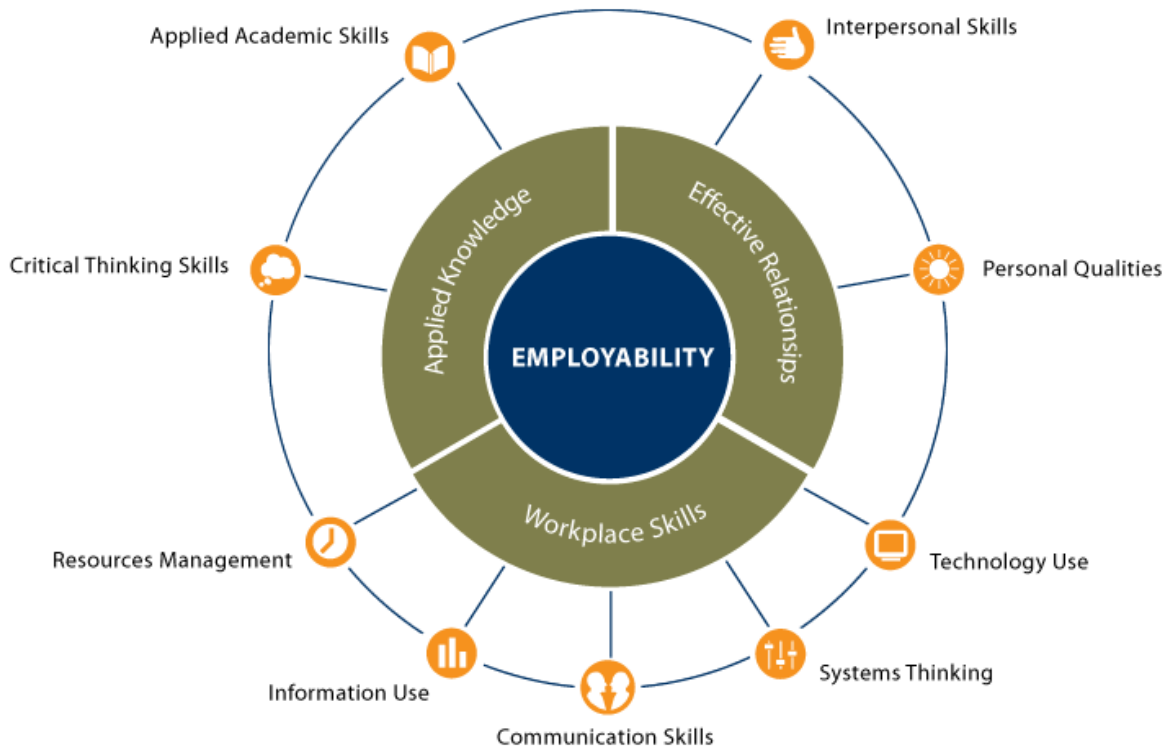
Help prioritize programming to make the best use of limited resources

## **Example: Assessment process and information sharing in Palm Beach County, FL**

- Contracted community-based reentry agencies conduct risk-need assessment 9 months pre-release
- Case conferencing with correctional staff and community-based reentry providers to develop reentry plan pre-release
- Information shared in database accessible to Criminal Justice Commission (CJC), contracted community-based reentry service providers, and local workforce board

# What are the predictors of job readiness, and how are they measured?

## EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FRAMEWORK



**No national consensus on defining or assessing job readiness**

Employability skills are general skills necessary for success in the labor market at all employment levels, across all sectors



# Example: 50% of people returning to Milwaukee Co. are at a higher risk of reoffending and less job ready



## Data Definitions

**Higher Risk:** Medium, Medium with Override Consideration, or High Recommended Supervision Level

**Lower Risk:** Low Recommended Supervision Level

**More Ready:** Unlikely Education/Vocational Need Scale or Unlikely Employment Expectations Scale

**Less Ready:** Probable or Highly Probable Education/Vocational Need Scale or Probable or Highly Probable Employment Expectations Scale

*Data was analyzed for everyone released from four institutions of focus to Milwaukee Co. in 2015.*

\* WI DOC data analyzed by The Council of State Governments Justice Center

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# Have we conducted a comprehensive process analysis and inventory of employment services?

- Detailed process analysis
- Service capacity
- Evidence-based services
- Identifying existing services
- Alignment of funding requirements

# **What** services are delivered should be based on a person's level of job readiness



**More Job-Ready**

**Less Job-Ready**

## **Primary Focus:**

### **Finding and Retaining Employment**

- Permanent unsubsidized employment
- Job development and coaching
- Retention and advancement services (*including continuing education and training*)
- Financial work incentives

## **Primary Focus:**

### **Promoting Job Readiness**

- Education and training
- Soft-skill development
- Transitional job placements
- Non-skill-related interventions

# How services are delivered should be based on a person's risk of reoffending



## Service Delivery Principles

**Less Intensive Application for Lower-Risk People**

**More Intensive Application for Higher-Risk People**

### Engagement

Avoid intensive case management

Intensive case management and cognitive-behavioral interventions

### Timing

Important to connect to services upon release

Connect to services pre-release or immediately upon release

### Incentives

Less of a need for motivation

Enhance motivation through communication and incentives

### Coordination

Community supervision should not be intensive

Work closely with community supervision officers, who can assist with intensive engagement

### Structured Time

Avoid disrupting existing pro-social ties

Structure time in a pro-social environment

# An example



## Joseph

- 28
- Felony conviction
- GED



## Michael

- 27
- Felony conviction
- High school graduate

# An example



## Joseph

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- Felony conviction
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## Michael

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- Felony conviction
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---

Other Risk  
Factors:

- No prior convictions
- Maintained family ties

- 3 prior convictions
- Criminal thinking
- History of substance use

# An example



## Joseph

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## Michael

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### Other Risk Factors:

- No prior convictions
- Maintained family ties

- 3 prior convictions
- Criminal thinking
- History of substance use

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### Other Job Readiness Factors:

- Employed at time of arrest
- Worked in correctional industries while incarcerated

- Unemployed at time of arrest
- Gaps in employment history
- Limited skills



# An example



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Other Job  
Readiness  
Factors:

- Employed at time of arrest
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- Unemployed at time of arrest
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- Limited skills

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Joseph?

- (A) Group 1- Lower Risk/More Ready
- (B) Group 2- Lower Risk/Less Ready
- (C) Group 3-Higher Risk/More Ready
- (D) Group 4-Higher Risk/Less Ready

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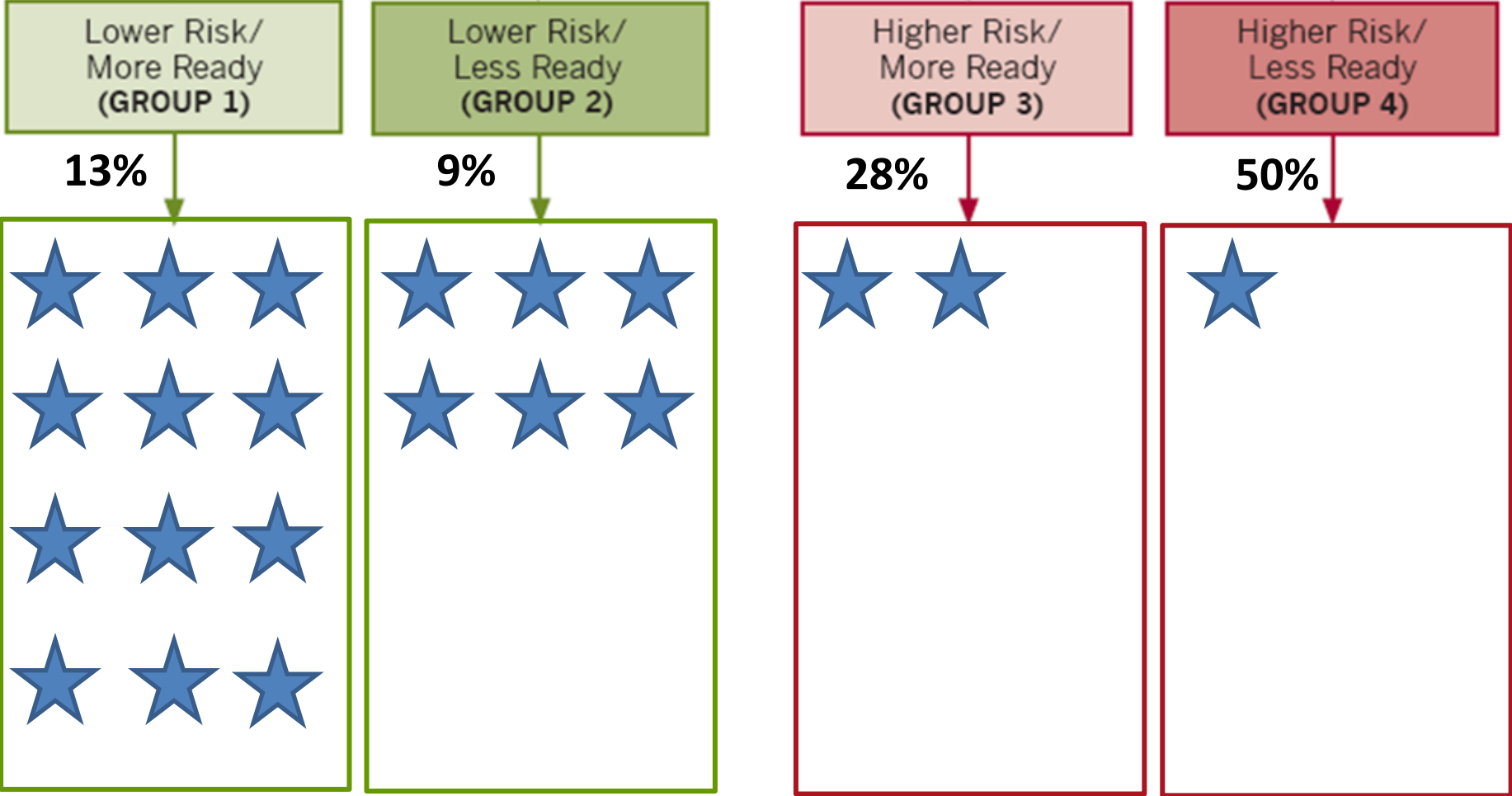
Michael?

- (A) Group 1- Lower Risk/More Ready
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# An example

<b>Group 1</b> Lower Risk/ More Ready	<b>Joseph</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 28</li><li>• Felony conviction</li><li>• GED</li></ul>	<b>Group 4</b> Higher Risk/ Less Ready	<b>Michael</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 27</li><li>• Felony conviction</li><li>• High school graduate</li></ul>
Other Risk Factors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No prior convictions</li><li>• Maintained family ties</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3 prior convictions</li><li>• Criminal thinking</li><li>• History of substance use</li></ul>
Other Job Readiness Factors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employed at time of arrest</li><li>• Worked in correctional industries while incarcerated</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unemployed at time of arrest</li><li>• Gaps in employment history</li><li>• Limited skills</li></ul>
Appropriate Services:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connect with services that focus on job attainment and retention</li><li>• Low intensity service delivery and supervision</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intensive engagement and structured programming</li><li>• Focus on soft skill development and building job readiness</li></ul>

# Example: Employment agencies may not be able to meet service needs of target population

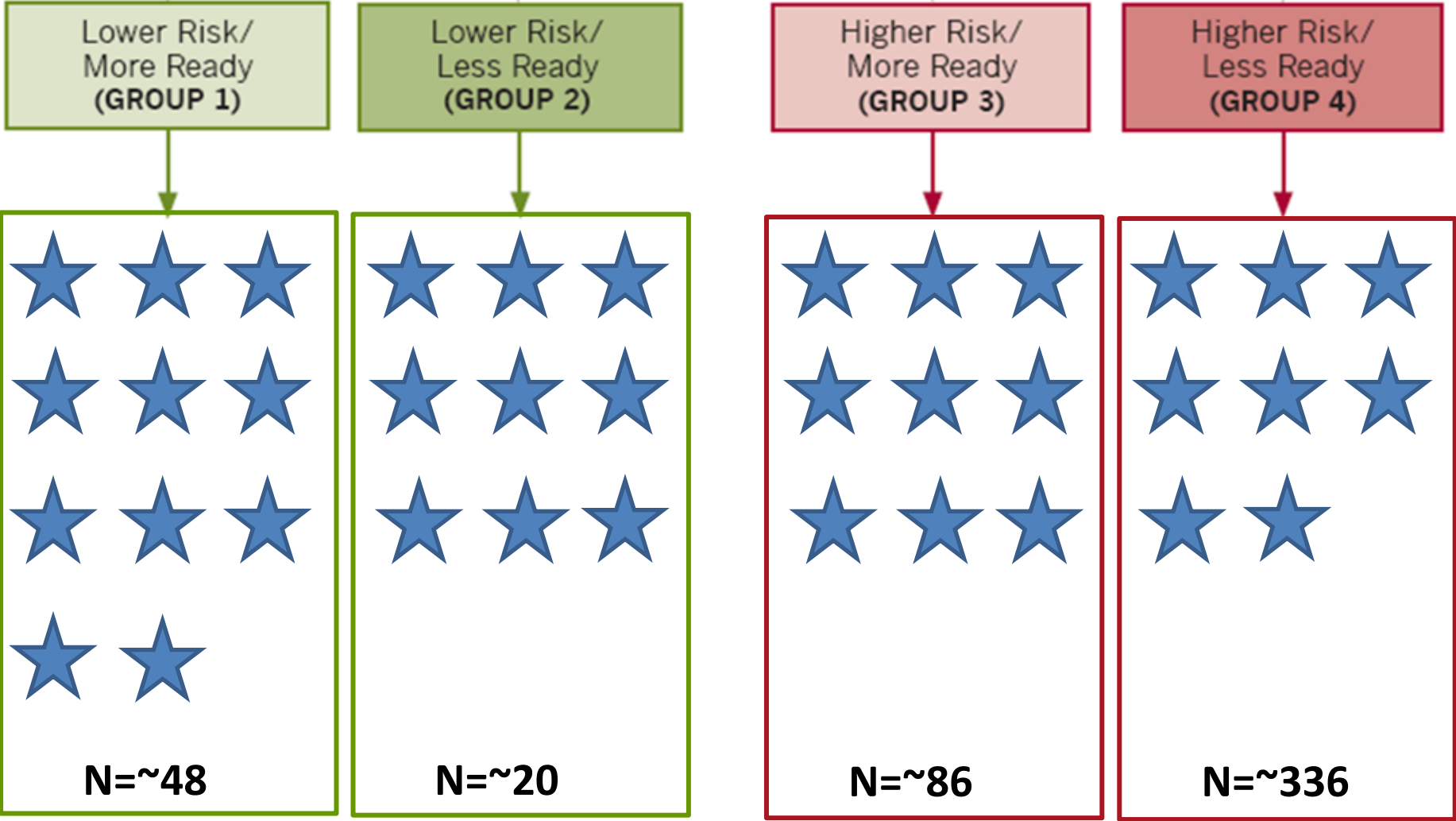


*Each star represents an employment agency in Milwaukee County that serves the reentry population.*

# Building capacity and ensuring service contracts promote evidence-based practices

- Develop differentiated service tracks based on a participant's level of job readiness
- Increase knowledge of evidence-based practices and promote coordination and collaboration
- Align reentry service contracts with evidence-based practices
- Refer people to the agencies that are best equipped to meet their needs
- Incorporate cross-agency referrals to provide targeted services

# Example: Employment agencies may move from one grouping to another with minor changes\*



\* Changes may include the addition of cognitive programming, creation of clear services tracks, or the allocation of contract funds

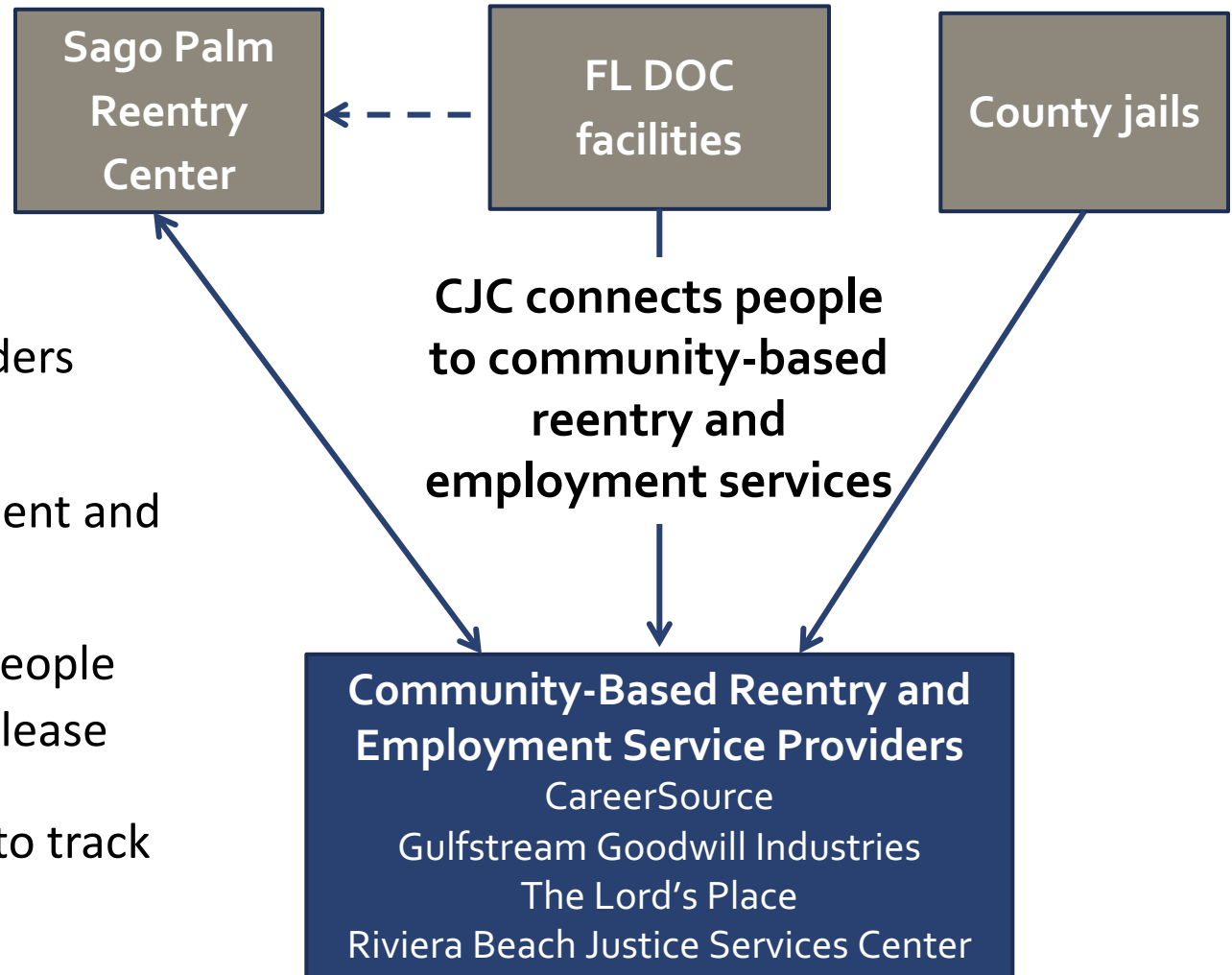
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# Do we have a coordinated system for making service referrals and tracking data?

- Establishing a lead coordinating agency
- Ongoing evaluation of community-based reentry services
- Coordinating transition planning
- Tracking referrals and services
- Promoting coordination, collaboration, and sustainability

# Example: Connecting people to reentry services in Palm Beach County, FL



## CJC Functions:

1. Contract with providers for service delivery
2. Coordinate assessment and referral processes
3. Engage and enroll people in programming pre-release
4. Maintain database to track individual outcomes





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## Thank You!

For more information, contact Erica Nelson at  
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