

First Year Recidivism Reduction from an Intensive Reentry Program with a Quasi-Experimental Design: Results of the 9 Yards Program

Report by OpenDoors

Data analysis assistance by Professor Rebecca Goldstein, University of California Berkeley

Abstract: The 9 Yards program provided intensive, long-term reentry support through a controlled, randomized, experimental design to high risk offenders leaving prison. 99 individuals in the control cohort were compared to 110 individuals in the experimental cohort. Those selected for the program were convicted of 45% fewer felonies and sentenced to spend 47% less time in prison due to recidivism during the twelve months after release, for an average reduction of 81 days per person. 9 Yards participants also were paroled at a greater rate, with parole rates of 52% versus 34% for the control, a 53% increase. The overall results demonstrate that 9 Yards reduced the reported crime rate and time spent in prison during the first year after release and also increased the parole rate amongst clients relative to similarly situated nonparticipants. These results corresponded with an independent analysis of the data, which found that participants in the 9 Yards program had a 36% reduced likelihood of reincarceration and a 34% reduced likelihood of being resentenced to prison.¹

Introduction:

9 Yards is a prisoner reentry program that provides a range of supportive services to select cohorts of men starting while they are at the Rhode Island Adult Department of Corrections (DOC). The pool of eligible individuals are identified based on a set criteria, and program participants were randomly selected from this eligible pool, with those not selected then comprising the control group. The eligibility criteria for this eligible pool, which is the same as the eligibility for the 9 Yards program, is explained in the next section. The primary analysis in this report compares recidivism for 110 selected individuals in the experimental group to 99 individuals in the control group.

9 Yards is an intensive program that provides opportunities for a large amount of services to all participants. These services in prison include: academic classes, vocational classes, cognitive self-change classes, and pre-release preparation, all provided in a group setting to the same selected cohort of individuals. All participants in the program have the opportunity for parole reviews, and if paroled they are released to the second phase of the program. Those that do not receive parole enter the second phase when they complete their sentence. Phase II includes six months of transitional supportive housing, intensive case

¹ Analysis by Dr. Leo Carroll, 2019. "Recidivism Results of 9 Yards." Unpublished.

management, employment coaching and placement, and addiction treatment and drug testing. Those on parole are monitored by GPS.

This analysis compares two distinct cohorts: those that had the opportunity to enroll and participate in 9 Yards and those that did not. Those selected into the program all have the opportunity to participate in a range of services, but their participation varies considerably. Some drop out of the program in prison, some drop out after release, some are paroled to the transitional house, and some participate in the program post-release but do not opt to live in the transitional housing. Program participants that drop out or have lower levels of participation are all included together in the experimental group. High-risk participants would be comparatively likely to drop out or not participate, so keeping them in the analysis avoids the pitfall of only including outcomes for the more motivated participants. Because the assignment between these two groups was mostly random and there are no issues with selection bias, this is a quasi-experimental design.

This analysis first evaluates the effect of the program by comparing recidivism results for the experimental and control cohorts. In order to attempt to determine if the program had an effect on recidivism, recidivism outcomes for new sentences to prison, felony convictions, and days in prison are compared between the experimental and control cohorts.

9 Yards Services:

The first phase of the program includes a range of classroom instruction offered in prison. These classes have changed and developed since the start of the program, but for the individuals analyzed here, they may have included, at various points: Rhode Island Community College enrollment in several general studies classes, Algebra, Math for the Trades, the Thinking 4 Change cognitive self-change curriculum, Personal Finance, and Composition. Some of the earlier rounds of participants also took part in computer repair training and a small number were enrolled in a 250 hour welding program, which were offered in 2015 and 2016. Most participants² also took part in a range of other classes offered by the DOC, including Victim's Impact, Anger Management, and Addiction Treatment.

The second phase of the program starts when clients are either paroled to the program as a group or finish their sentence naturally. The transitional supportive housing is an apartment style living in which clients have their own bedrooms. There is consistent residential supervision on-site. Participants must either work, be enrolled in school, or be actively participating in the structured employment readiness and job search program. 9 Yards places some participants into work directly, but does not manage a transitional employment program itself.

Individuals that are granted parole are released specifically to the 9 Yards program. They must reside at the transitional housing program for 6 months or the duration of their parole if it is less than 6 months. Part of the program criteria selects for individuals that will still have

² The terms "enrolled clients" or "selected individuals" are used throughout this report to refer to individuals selected to be in the 9 Yards program, and is synonymous with the sample of individuals in the experimental cohort. The term "participant" is used to refer to clients that actively participated in the program.

time left on their sentence so that they will have time left to serve on parole. During this time, they are monitored through GPS ankle bracelets, see their parole officer weekly, take weekly drug tests, and must fulfill various conditions of their parole such as addiction treatment, mental health counseling, and community service. Those participants with significant histories of opiate abuse are highly encouraged to participate in Medication Assisted Treatment using Methadone or Suboxone. Those that are not paroled are released on probation at the end of their sentences and still have the option to participate in the 9 Yards program.

Methodology

Selection:

Individuals are selected for the program by analyzing data provided by the Department of Corrections that includes information on the below criteria on all inmates at the ACI at that time. At the time of selection, from the roughly 2,400 inmates, between thirty and sixty fit the program criteria.

The program administrators attempt to randomly select cohorts of 15-30 clients every 6-12 months. Since July, 2013, five sets of cohorts have been selected and are included in this analysis. Half of the individuals are selected to be in the treatment group, and at the same time, the eligible individuals that were not selected for 9 Yards became part of the control group. The control cohort had access to a large number of other possible services aside from 9 Yards that were also available to 9 Yards participants, including the many generally available courses offered by the DOC, discharge planning, and a variety of community based post-release services. However, they did not have the opportunity to participate in 9 Yards.

Initially, the selection and randomization process was conducted entirely by the 9 Yards program staff. Since the beginning of 2017, cohort randomization was conducted by Rebecca Goldstein, who was a doctoral student at the Harvard School of Government, using a matched pairs methodology. In addition to this process, a pseudo control of 13 individuals was selected in December of 2013, consisting of individuals that otherwise would have qualified for the 9 Yards program had it existed in January 2013. Overall, due to some of the changes in this process over time, programmatic considerations, and the fact that the process was not overseen independently during the first three years, it was not an entirely random selection process for the first three cohorts. However, cohort assignment was conducted as randomly as possible given those constraints.

The eligibility criteria is as follows:

Age: Individuals must be 22-50 years old. In the first round of 9 Yards, the maximum age was 34 years old. In later rounds the upper age limit was increased to 50.

Time left on sentence: At the time of selection, the individual had 16-30 months left on their sentence. Selection also required that they would have served at least 45% of their sentence at the time of the 9 Yards parole review.

Holds: Individuals with out-of-state holds or immigration holds were not deemed eligible.

In Medium Security Men's Facility: The program only operates in the Medium Security Men's Facility at the ACI, so only individuals in that building at the time of selection were eligible.

Parole: The individual had not already been paroled.

Origin: Originally, individuals had to be from the Providence Metro region. In later rounds, this criteria was relaxed to only require a Rhode Island address. Because individuals were identified from database records, geographic origin was determined using all records of previous reported addresses.

Education level: Initially, individuals had to test high enough on the CASAS educational assessment offered by the DOC to be eligible for GED classes. For the second and third cohorts, an additional criteria requiring a GED was added, and then that criteria was relaxed later.

Enemy and gang issues: At some points during this process, the DOC removed names from the list of eligible individuals due to safety concerns regarding enemy or gang issues. These decisions were made before cohort assignment.

Demographic Comparisons:

The two cohorts are compared based on several demographic variables to demonstrate their similarity: length of sentence, charge type, age, amount of time left on their sentence at time of selection, % without a GED, LSI-R, and race. The LSI-R is an industry standard, means-tested risk assessment that parametrizes risk factors including employment, education, family, peers, substance abuse, mental health, and criminal history.

Approaches to recidivism analysis:

Two outcomes were tested for this report, summarized below:

Outcome	Type of analysis	9 Yards cohort sample size	Control Cohort sample size
1 year recidivism	Compares the recidivism of the 9 Yards cohort versus the control cohort across a number of recidivism indicators for recidivism occurring within one year of release	110	99
Parole rate	Compares the rate of receiving parole for 9 Yards participants and the control cohort that have a final parole outcome	115	107

In the 1 year recidivism analysis, a control cohort of 110 individuals is compared to an experimental cohort of 99 individuals. Only individuals that have been out of prison for at least 12 months are included in the analysis. Only recidivism events that occurred within 12 months

of release are included. While there are many subjects that have been out for more than one year, there is not yet a sample size large enough to provide a reliable perspective on these longer results.

Limitations: There were several methodological limitations to the study, none of which have created any substantial bias in the results.

Dropouts: Thirty one clients were considered to have dropped out of the program of a total of 110--a 72% participation rate.³ These dropouts are included in the analysis of the experimental cohort so dropouts do not bias the results.

Excluded participants: If cohort members had not been out of prison for a full year at the time of this analysis, September 1, 2019, they were not included in this study. A total of eight individuals in the control and four individuals in the treatment cohort were excluded as a result. These cohort members took longer to be released from prison because they had longer sentences or they had behavioral infractions in prison that extended their length of stay.

Deaths in Cohorts: Four individuals originally in the experimental group died of opiate overdoses, one died from gun violence, and one died in a motorcycle accident. If individuals died within nine months of release, they were removed from the analysis because they were no longer at risk of recidivating. At least one individual in the control cohort also died of an opiate overdose, however no comprehensive death records check was conducted so it is possible mortality in the control cohort was greater.

Pseudo-control: Thirteen individuals in the control group are actually a 'pseudo' control. The Pseudo Control Cohort is identical aside from a six month difference in selection time. The demographic characteristics of the pseudo controls are equivalent to the other cohorts. The only assumption required for their inclusion is that the conditions in the prison and outside of the prison did not change in any substantial way due to this six month shift. If they are excluded from the analysis, the 9 Yards effect size actually increases, since the pseudo control group exhibited less severe recidivism than the rest of the control group.

Randomization Issues: For the first three cohorts, randomization and cohort assignment was conducted internally by 9 Yards staff. In the third cohort, there were some slight compromises made in this process in an attempt to assure there were sufficient clients in the program. Also, in this cohort, the size of the treatment and control groups was very imbalanced. The fourth and fifth cohorts were entirely random and were selected by an independent researcher. However, overall, these slight variations in the process and the use of the pseud-control mean the selection was not entirely random.

Program changes: There were substantial program changes over the five and a half years of implementation that this evaluation covers, such as changes to the course offerings in prison, curriculum changes, and staff changes. Throughout this time, the overall model stayed

³ The dropouts left the program for the following reasons: they were uninterested in classes or engagement in prison and were then transferred to Minimum Security and so could not participate; they were paroled almost immediately upon acceptance into the program to a different post-release environment and had no involvement after release; they were uninterested in classes and then transferred to Maximum and had no contact after release; they participated while in prison but then refused all engagement after release.

consistent: in-prison programming and case management, parole review and supervision, and post-release transitional housing, case management, and connection to supportive services. The most substantial change to implementation came in November 2018, to the in-prison programming. The Department of Corrections halted the in programming within prison and simultaneously OpenDoors went through significant staffing changes. As a result, most of the fifth cohort, which comprises 20 of the 86 individuals in the experimental cohort, received very limited in-prison programming. This resulted in a decrease in preparatory services, and in prison engagement. It also resulted in a decrease in post-release services-- clients were less engaged with the program in prison and so less motivated to engage post-release, and also the parole board reduced its parole rate to the program. For example, the overall percentage of clients living in the transitional house was 62% prior to 2018 and was only 45% in 2018.

Sample sizes are not large enough to formally evaluate the overall effect of these changes. The disruption to program implementation could have resulted in a decrease in outcomes as program exposure decreased, and this is discussed more in the results section.

Parole Rate: In addition to a recidivism analysis, an analysis of parole rates was also conducted. The goal was to determine whether or not 9 Yards increased the rate the Parole Board granted parole. This analysis uses different samples of individuals than the recidivism analysis, because it includes individuals in the cohorts that have had their parole determined but have not yet been released from prison or been out of prison for a substantial amount of time. There are 107 individuals in the control group and 115 individuals in the experimental group that had received final parole determinations.⁴

Participant Cohorts: Results are also shown for the individuals selected for 9 Yards that actually participated. While these results cannot be compared to non-participants due to selection bias issues, they are still of interest.

Participants spent a large amount of time in prison in 9 Yards classes. Participation is reported based on in prison class attendance and post-release transitional housing tenancy. The total number of classes attended on average per participant was reported using attendance records. Housing participation was based on whether clients lived in the transitional house for at least two weeks.

Recidivism Indicators:

Three types of recidivism are analyzed:

Portion of individuals who recidivated: This metric includes the portion of individuals from each cohort that recidivated by being reincarcerated, including both new charges, court

⁴ If an individual waived parole this is recorded as 'not paroled,' even though the decision was not made by the Parole Board. Many individuals who know they are unlikely to receive parole will waive parole, so removing these individuals would have biased the results. If an individual was selected for 9 Yards and paroled, but not paroled to 9 Yards, they are still recorded as 'paroled.' This applied to 8 of the 45 in the experimental cohort.

finances, arrest leading to incarceration, and probation and parole violations. This metric does not include any consideration of the severity of each recidivism event or the amount of recidivism committed by each individual. An individual that is resentenced to prison for 1 day on a parole violation is analyzed equally to someone who recidivates three times, including a new felony. This metric was included despite these limitations because it is a very common definition of recidivism.

Portion of individuals who recidivated with a felony: This is the portion of individuals from each cohort that recidivated by being resentenced to prison for a new felony. This metric has the advantage of focusing on new, serious crimes, which are of particular interest in this analysis. This metric has the disadvantage of generalizing between felonies--a felony drug possession charge leading to 90 days in prison is tallied the same as a felony gun possession charge leading to 13 years in prison.

This study uses the time of incarceration as the date of this event. If an individual is re-incarcerated six months after release from prison and then convicted eight months after that, the felony recidivism still occurred within one year after release. If an individual is reincarcerated for a new felony charge and then the charge is dismissed, this is not counted as felony recidivism.

Recidivism days: This variable represents the total number of days spent in prison due to recidivism. This variable does not just include days already served, but rather is based on the length of the sentence and the total days to be served.

If an individual has finished serving this sentence, the actual days served is reported. If an individual has not finished serving the sentence, 65% of the sentence is reported for the purpose of recidivism comparisons, since on average these defendants only serve 65% of the total sentence due to parole and good-time sentence reduction⁵. This recidivism result is probably the most reliable of the four recidivism indicators and it also probably most accurately answers the question 'what effect does 9 Yards have on incarceration?'

Many standard recidivism analyses look only at the days in prison already served. However, because prison sentences may be quite long, this approach does not take into account the full impact of the prison sentence and the total number of days which will ultimately be served. This report uses an approach that fully accounts for the effect of longer sentences.

Results:

Cohort demographics: Those selected and those not selected for 9 Yards were compared along a number of demographic variables as shown in Table 2 for the full samples. The two groups were highly similar across indicators. The cohorts had average LSI-R scores of 27 or 30, which is considered moderate risk.

⁵ This estimate is based on the percentage of time served for the preceding incarcerations for the control cohort.

		Total individuals selected	Percent paroled	Length of initial sentence (days)	Age at release	Race (% black, hispanic, asian, native american)	Average LSI-R Score
9 Yards		110	53%	1701	30	73%	27
Control		99	34%	1908	29	78%	29
Table 2--Experimental and Control Cohort Comparison							

These variables indicate that in terms of age, race, and risk level the control and treatment groups are similar. There was a notable difference in the length of the initial sentence--the amount of time the individual was serving in prison when selected for the study. This is likely due to the nonrandom selection in cohort three and the use of the pseudo control.

Recidivism: Those picked for 9 Yards were reincarcerated less, were convicted of fewer felonies, and spent less time in prison than those not in 9 Yards. The results of all analyses are shown in Table 3.

1 year observation period	Sample Size		Reincarcerated		Reduction	Felony conviction rate		Reduction	Days in prison (average)		Reduction	Reduction in days
	9 Yards	Control	9 Yards	Control		9 Yards	Control		9 Yards	Control		
Everyone enrolled	110	99	44.5%	45%	2%	7%	13%	44%	90	171	47%	81
Parolees	59	36	42%	51%	18%	3%	8%	60%	79	91	12%	12
Non-parolees	51	63	45%	43%	-6%	12%	16%	28%	97	222	56%	125
Active 9 Yards Housing Participants	54	-	43%	-	-	7%	-	-	80	-	-	-

Table 3. Recidivism Results

There was no appreciable difference in overall reincarceration rate between the treatment and control cohorts. However, 45% fewer of those selected for 9 Yards were reconvicted of felonies stemming from charges in the first 12 months after release. The felony rate for the experimental group was 7% versus 13% for the control group. Those in the

treatment cohort were sentenced to 47% less time in prison due to recidivism one year after release from prison, or 81 days fewer on average.

Parole Rate: 9 Yards participants were more likely to be released onto parole than those not in 9 Yards. 52% of those selected into the 9 Yards program are paroled versus 34% of the control group, a 53% increase.

In addition, those paroled to 9 Yards were less likely to recidivate than individuals in the control cohort that received parole, as shown in Table 3. Comparing outcomes for parolees is less rigorous because there are confounding variables--the people in 9 Yards that make parole are likely to vary considerably from those not in 9 Yards that make parole.

Nevertheless, a comparison of recidivism between treatment and control parolees was still conducted. This comparison has a smaller sample size and also is not the result of an experimental design, unlike the previous recidivism results. The results showed that 9 Yards participants who were paroled had lower rates of recidivism than control group participants that were paroled. In the first year after release, the treatment group on parole were sentenced to 12% fewer days in prison in the first year after release and were convicted of 60% fewer felonies.

The results showed that 9 Yards participants who did not make parole also had lower rates of recidivism than the control group members that did not make parole. In the first year after release, the treatment group was sentenced to 56% fewer days in prison in the first year after release and were convicted of 28% fewer felonies versus the control.

Lastly, the rates of technical parole violations in the first year after release were the same for both treatment and control cohorts--35%. There is no evidence that the program overall either increases or decreases the rate of technical parole violations.

Actively Participating Clients: The 72% of the treatment cohort that participated in the program were involved substantially either in the prison or after release in prison programming. Within this group, there were still large differences in participation levels. For example, of the 110 individuals who have been out for one year, 54 lived in the transitional house for at least two weeks after release (49%).

Comparisons between actively participating clients are less rigorous because they are skewed by selection bias--only certain types of individuals actively participate. A comparison between clients that actively resided in the 9 Yards transitional house and the control cohort was still conducted. This comparison has a smaller sample size and also is not the result of an experimental design, because the decision to participate is a confounding variable. Nevertheless, the results showed that 9 Yards housing clients had lower rates of recidivism than the control group. In the first year after release, housing clients were sentenced to 22% fewer days in prison in the first year after release and were convicted of 44% fewer felonies, as shown in Table 3.

Cohort differences: There were five distinct selections done during this quasi-experiment, with each one producing a group of participants that was released from

prison and received programming during a different time period. The recidivism results for each group are listed below.⁶

Number	Year of release ⁷	Control Sample Size	Treatment Sample Size	1st Year Days to serve (Control)	1st Year Days to serve (Treatment)	1st Year Felony Recidivism Rate (Control)	1st Year Felony Recidivism Rate (Treatment)
I	2014	22, 12 (pseudo control)	15	131	134	13%	9%
II	2015	14	13	168	62	14%	8%
III	2016	4	31	296	27	25%	3%
IV	2017	28	26	357	176	18%	15%
V	2018	21	25	98	67	11%	0%

Table 4. Differences in recidivism between cohorts.

The sample sizes for all of these cohorts are too small for any conclusions, but there are some potential patterns that emerge. The treatment group released in 2016 had the biggest recidivism reduction effect, followed by the group in 2015. The group in 2018 experienced no felony recidivism but was not markedly successful in terms of reduction in recidivism days--there were a large number of parole violations that year. These results give some indication of the fact that there was significant variation in program implementation each year. The overall results are indicative of the effects of the general program design, which stayed consistent.

Conclusions:

Recidivism: This report is not a complete evaluation of how 9 Yards clients progress after release. It instead focuses on comparing recidivism rates between those selected for 9 Yards and those not selected. According to this analysis, 9 Yards resulted in a reduction in reported criminal activity, time in prison, and prison spending during the first year after release from prison. The study found a mean reduction in days in prison of 81 days in the first year. The rate of felony recidivism decreased from 13% in the control cohort to 7% amongst the 9 Yards cohort.

The results in this report should be considered preliminary. One year of recidivism data only describes the first phase of the effect period, and conclusive studies generally look at

⁶ The sample sizes reflect the number of individuals analyzed, not initially selected, with differences accounted for by death or by the fact that a small number of the samples have not yet been out of prison for a full year and so were not included in the analysis.

⁷ Generally--some individuals may have been released earlier or later, but the majority were released during these years.

recidivism for up to three years post-release. Nevertheless, while the magnitude of the effect on crime and incarceration is unclear, the results demonstrate that the 9 Yards program decreased both in the year after release. An important, remaining question is whether or not these results persist.

While the impact on one year felony recidivism was clear, the effect on rate of reincarceration was negligible and inconclusive. This indicates that 9 Yards seems to be having a bigger effect on serious criminal activity than other types of recidivism, including parole violations, technical probation violations, and misdemeanor offenses. The reduction in prison time is thus tied to the effect on felony activity, which seems to generate most of the potential to reduce incarceration levels.

This study does not provide definitive evidence of a specific mechanism for the overall recidivism reduction; however, the 9 Yards program design points to several possible causes. Studies of recidivism show that the risk of recidivism is influenced by an array of factors, including antisocial personality, antisocial peers, family support systems, education, employment, stability of housing, and substance abuse.⁸ 9 Yards clients all experienced very targeted provision of reentry services which resulted in a guarantee of stable housing opportunities for six months after release and high rates of employment. These services alone would be expected to reduce recidivism. They also were provided with intensive academic instruction and cognitive self-change classes in prison, frequent case management after release, addiction treatment and drug testing, and a group of peers that were also engaged in positive, pro-social activities. All of these could have assisted in the rehabilitative process.

Parole also could have had an important influence on these results. A larger portion of those in 9 Yards were on parole. To the extent that parole mandates treatment and closely supervises the reentry process, it is possible that this could have resulted in fewer recidivism events.

Overall, these results are consistent with those found in an independent analysis of this data performed by Dr. Leo Carroll. This analysis found that participation in 9 Yards decreased the likelihood of reincarceration by 36% and decreased the likelihood of resentence to prison by 34%. This report's methodology differed from the methodology of that analysis in a number of respects. This analysis looks only at the first year after release, that analysis included the full period after release, which for some individuals lasted over five years. This analysis focused on felony recidivism rates and time sentenced to prison, while the other analysis did not use those same outcomes and instead focused on reincarceration and resentence to prison. Both analyses indicate that program participation results in a decrease in recidivism. Dr. Carroll's analysis looks at a longer period of time after release, so the results indicate that at least a portion of the positive impact of the program persists beyond the first year after release.

Dr. Carroll's analysis also looked at the effect of the program on days in prison. His analysis found that participants in 9 Yards spent about 71 more days in the community than the

⁸ James Bonta and Don Andrews, *Risk-Need-Responsivity Model for Offender Assessment and Rehabilitation* (Ottawa: Public Safety Canada, 2007); Visser, et al. *Employment After Prison: A Longitudinal Study of Releases in Three States* (Washington: Urban Institute, 2008); Baer, et. al, *Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry: Research Findings from the Urban Institute's Prisoner Reentry Portfolio* (Washington: Urban Institute, 2006).

control group. Dr. Carroll's report thus also consistently found that the program reduced time spent in prison.

This study found that 9 Yards participants were sentenced to 81 fewer days in prison in the first year after release. While this number is larger than that found in Dr. Carroll's analysis, the two studies looked at different variables, so the exact numbers are not completely comparable. This study looked at total days sentenced to prison, while Dr. Carroll looked at days served.

Parole: The results suggest an increase in parole rates for those selected in 9 Yards. Rates increased from 34% to 52%, or a 53% increase in parole rates. The parole process is a key component of the 9 Yards program. A higher parole rate allows for faster release from prison and so there is a benefit to the parolee and financial savings to the state simply from this increased parole rate.

Parolees in 9 Yards also had reduced recidivism in comparison to those not in 9 Yards. In particular, those in 9 Yards had substantially lower rates of felony recidivism in the first year after release. This indicates that the program is a safer environment for parolees than alternative parole options. Throughout the program, only one parolee was charged with a felony while actively living in the 9 Yards transitional house, also indicating a relatively safe environment. Despite this decrease in felony rate for the treatment group, overall the reduction in prison time was less substantial for parolees than non-parolees. Felony rates are already so low for parolees in the first year after release, that the decrease in felonies did not have as big an effect on the incarceration days outcome.

The parole violation rates for 9 Yards participants were the same for those not in 9 Yards, indicating there is no evidence of a negative effect from the increased parole supervision. Some studies have shown that increased levels of supervision for parolees can have detrimental effects since this supervision will result in more technical violations.⁹ There was no evidence overall of this being the case for this program.

A program that creates a safe, effective parole experience and that increases parole rates has cost saving potential for the state. Parole is a rehabilitative environment, so higher parole rates also increase the opportunity for rehabilitation, in contrast to releasing individuals straight from prison to an unsupervised life. Higher parole rates also provide an incentive to clients to participate, which could decrease the chances of dropouts in the future.

Participants: 9 Yards housing participants recidivated less than the control group. Felony recidivism results are very similar to those reported for the more objective comparison between those selected and those not selected into the program. Both results suggest that those in 9 Yards commit fewer crimes and spend less time in prison than those not in 9 Yards.

Without more detailed data on the progress of those not in 9 Yards post-release, such as employment and housing history, no conclusions can be drawn as to how or why 9 Yards seems to have an effect on recidivism. Attempts were made to gather this data on the control group, but there was not a high response rate.

⁹ Lowenkamp, Christopher; Latessa, Edward. "Understanding the Risk Principle: How and Why Correctional Interventions Can Harm Low-Risk Offenders," *Topics in Community Corrections*, 2004.

Cohort differences: There were substantial potential differences between the experiences of these different groups. These differences were potentially caused by differences between the types of people in the cohorts or other exogenous variables unrelated to the treatment effect. They also were likely related to the changes in the program implementation, as staff and programming changed from year to year, and there were important interruptions to service at several points. However, the sample sizes for the cohorts are far too small to independently analyze results by cohort. The very low recidivism days in prison and felony recidivism rates for cohort three could indicate that the program has a much higher potential to impact felony recidivism than shown by the overall results. Or, alternatively, the relatively smaller treatment effect for the first cohort and fourth cohorts could indicate more modest outcome expectations.

Cost and Savings: The total effect of 9 Yards on incarceration time is of interest because of financial considerations in addition to crime reduction considerations. It is estimated that the 110 clients in this study that were enrolled in 9 Yards, based on current 1 year recidivism outcomes, have been sentenced to 81 fewer days in prison per person, or 8,910 days total, or 24.4 years. A conservative cost-benefit analysis would look at only the per diem savings associated with the cost of a single inmate at the ACI. The DOC uses a figure of \$16.04/bed-day¹⁰ to estimate per-diem savings, which includes food, medical, clothing and other basic supply costs. It does not include any administrative, Correctional Officer, programming, facility, or counseling costs. Using this figure, those in 9 Yards so far cost Rhode Island an estimated \$142,916 less in projected obligated prison spending¹¹ in the first 12 months after release.

This is not a complete cost benefit analysis of the 9 Yards program. That would have to include the savings associated with crime reduction, reduction in associated judiciary spending, increased tax revenue due to possible increases in employment, and other possible financial repercussions of rehabilitation. This estimate is only a baseline figure to put prison reduction into financial terms.

In addition, this estimate does not include any of the large potential prison reduction savings if this project were replicated at a larger scale. If a 81-day prison reduction per client effect could be maintained at 100 clients a year for three years, that would likely have the potential to result in larger scale savings at the Department of Corrections.

Comparison to other program evaluations: The recidivism reduction associated with the 9 Yards program compares favorably to other reentry program evaluations. Both the OpenDoors analysis and that conducted by Dr. Carroll found a sizable reduction in recidivism, and increase in days in the community, and the quasi-experimental design increases the rigor of the results compared to non-experimental program designs which rely entirely on multivariate regression to determine outcomes.

¹⁰ 2019 estimate provided by DOC Department of Research and Planning

¹¹ This spending and savings will be spread out over multiple years, since these recidivism sentences are multiple years long.

For example, the Center for Employment Opportunities conducted a large scale evaluation of their transitional employment program in 2012.¹² The evaluation had a much larger sample size, with a total of 977 participants. However, the effect on recidivism was small. The evaluation found a nonsignificant, 4% reduction in reincarceration for a new crime. A sub-population analysis within this study that looked only at those participants recently released found a significant 8.9% reduction in reincarceration for a new crime.

The 9 Yards program demonstrated a potential for a larger recidivism reduction effect. In comparison, Dr. Carroll's analysis of 9 Yards, which looked at recidivism between one and five years after release, found a 34% reduction in incarceration for a new sentence. This is reasonable considering the program design includes a number of different elements--such as pre-release programming, parole coordination, and transitional housing. This evaluation indicates that combining those elements, though difficult, has a worthwhile benefit in terms of decreased crime and incarceration.

¹² Redcross, Cindy, et. al. January, 2012. "More than a Job: Final Results from the Evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Transitional Jobs Program." Office of PLanning Research and Evaluation, US Department of Health and Human Services.