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Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow: Treatment Effects of the Stages of Employment Job Readiness Program on Program Completion and Employment Outcomes for Ex-Offenders

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University of Nevada, Las Vegas
School of Environmental and Public Affairs
PUA 729 – Summer 2014
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Submitted to Dr. Jaewon Lim
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Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow: Treatment Effects of the Stages of Employment Job Readiness Program on Program Completion and Employment Outcomes for Ex-Offenders
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Executive Summary

Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow (FIT) is a local not for profit organization that seeks to assist residents of Southern Nevada by providing workforce development services (e.g., interviewing skills, job searching techniques, resume assistance) to increase a program participant’s opportunities to obtain and maintain employment. FIT is currently being federally funded through the Department of Labor’s Workforce Investment Act (WIA) grant, with a specific goal of serving the re-entry, or ex-offender, population. This population presents with a very unique set of barriers to obtaining employment, and in order to combat these barriers, FIT created the Stages of Employment job readiness course to better serve this specialized population.

HPH Consulting met with FIT’s program director and was commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of the Stages of Employment job readiness course, with a specific look at the duration of the course and its impact on employment outcomes. FIT provided HPH with data from the completion of their first program year, which resulted in a sample size of 452 participants. Once the data was cleaned and compiled, the resulting population of the sample was 61. With a population smaller than expected, HPH decided to create two separate data sets, one to study the impact to program completion (N = 94) and the other to study annual salary (N = 61).

The results of the regression analyses were for the most part insignificant, with few regression models showing significant impact on program completion or annual salary. These results may be due to the fact that the Stages of Employment job
readiness program was not mandatory the first year, as well as experimentation with the program duration. HPH recommends a comprehensive cohort study be conducted after the completion of FIT’s third contract year.

**Introduction**

Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow (FIT) is a local workforce development non-profit founded in 1997. The mission of FIT it to provide job training, coaching and support, based on job seekers’ individual needs and the skills employers tell us they are looking for (Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow, n.d.). FIT has grown substantially since its 1997 inception, where it was once an organization that was supported solely on private donation, to an organization that receives substantial federal funding through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) with a budget of about 3 million dollars per year. Although FIT has held to its mission, the change in funding has led FIT to see a change and evolvement of their client demographics.

2008, the first year FIT received WIA funding, a grant through the Department of Labor, which is administered at the state level through Workforce Connections. While administering this grant, FIT witnessed their client population change from mostly single women with children, low education, little to no viable working skills, and/or no work history, to a population that varied greatly. FIT saw its population evolve to include both men and woman who had a substantial work history in very skilled positions (construction, accounting, real-estate, etc.), to individuals that had high levels of formal education, as well as, those who fell victim to company downsizing after being employed with the same company for many decades.
The acceptance of and administering of the WIA grant meant FIT had very high and clearly defined goals to meet in order to satisfy all the federal grant requirements, while providing workforce development services to diverse client population. Ultimately, the end game for each FIT client is obtaining employment, however WIA common measures, have taken this goal to the next level. WIA states that each client must meet the three following common measures for successful participation in any WIA program:

1. Entered employment
2. Employment retention
3. Average earnings (wdr.doleta.gov).

Entered employment pertains to those individuals who are not currently employed when their participation with FIT begins. Employment retention pertains to those individuals who have been able to maintain their employment for at least two consecutive quarters after their participation with the FIT program, and average earnings pertains to those individuals who have been able to maintain employment for three consecutive quarters after their participation with the FIT program, and have seen an increase in earnings from the second and third quarters (wdr.doleta.gov).

FIT’s re-entry program was piloted in 2010, when a case manager found herself with a case load that seemed to be equally split between individuals with a criminal background and those without, and after some time found that those with a criminal background presented with a very different set of barriers preventing them from obtaining and maintaining employment. After some research, Stages of Employment, a job readiness class was created to meet the specific employment barriers pertaining to
those with a criminal background. Stages of Employment differs from a “traditional” job readiness class as it catered to the specific employment needs of someone with a criminal background with obtaining employment, e.g. addressing a criminal background during an interview, and properly addressing workplace conflict.

Finding employment upon release is integral to the success of returning citizens. Employment provides not only income for basic needs but also offers the returning offender increased confidence and stability (McKean & Ransford, 2004). A complex relationship exists between obtaining employment and reducing the risk of reoffending, we are keenly aware that it is essential, no matter challenging, to change the barriers that returning citizens face when attempting to obtain employment. FIT has created a program that attempts to address not only continued internalized behavioral patterns but will also address educational and vocational skills gaps thereby increasing the likelihood of stable employment.

Varghese, F.P. (2012) notes one of the greatest predictors of an ex-offender’s success in obtaining employment is the client’s attitudes and expectations. Often, these “anti-work” attitudes may be due to not only reestablishing previously held negative networks after release, but may also be attributed to an inability to establish concrete and realistic employment goals (Johnson, 2013). FIT’s Stages of Employment job readiness curriculum utilizes motivational interviewing and problem solving techniques in order to maximize client motivation. Motivational interviewing has recently been modified for use with the re-entry population and looks to assist clients in overcoming career ambivalence and increasing self-efficacy.
In 2012 Workforce Connections issued the Re-Entry Initiative (REI) RFP, the same WIA grant issued through the department of labor, however the REI initiative had a specific goal of reaching those men and women re-entering the workforce with a criminal conviction in their past. Successful administration of this grant still meant that all participants needed to meet the three common measures pertaining to the WIA grant. FIT applied for and was awarded this grant, and has successfully maintained the Stages of Employment course and the REI grant since July 2012, and is currently in the third and final year of the current WIA-funded REI contract.

**Adult Learning Theory**

While adult learning theories are continuously being developed upon (Meriam, p.93), it is generally agreed that three major theories exist: Andragogy, Self-Directed Learning, and Transformative learning (TL) (Teal Center Fact Sheet No.11: Adult Learning Theories). The earliest concrete theory of adult learning theory, *andragogy* is based upon the belief that the manner in which adults process and internalize information fundamentally differs from children. Particular observance is made to such differences as “need to know” (adults typically require an understanding as to the reason for their learning), “experience” (adults tend to draw upon their personal experiences to aid in learning), and “self-concept” (adults feel compelled to be responsible for their involvement). Perhaps more of an outgrowth of andragogy than a competing theory, “*Self-Directed Theory*” is based upon the self-education of adults, that is, the independent and unassisted steps taken by individuals to improve or build upon their existing skill sets. This is perhaps most relevant to the subjects of college
and continued education, though may be applied more broadly as well. The youngest of
the adult learning theories, transformative theory examines not only the process by
which adults are educated but the effects of the educational process upon the students;
how their thought processes, values, and core beliefs are altered. “TL is a rational
process. As individuals reflect on and discuss their assumptions about the world, they
often experience a shift in their frame of reference or world view. For this to happen,
individuals engaging in reflective discourse need to challenge each other’s assumptions
and encourage group members to consider various perspectives.” (Teal Center Fact
Sheet No.11: Adult Learning Theories).

While each of these theories provides strengths and weaknesses, it is the TL
theory which will be the focus of our attention, TL lending itself most strongly to the
nature of FIT’s Stages of Employment job readiness program. Fortunately, research
exists already on this subject, with a number of researchers advocating the use of TL
theory among both prisoner and ex-offender populations. Stevens (2000) argues for the
use of transformative learning theory in offender/ex-offender education, asserting “Adult
learners require help in understanding their own realities and theories about those
realities. Central to this process of learning is critical reflection and testing new
meanings through deliberate reflection on the evidence, on arguments based upon
alternative points of view, and on critically examining assumptions (Mezirow, 1991).

In discussing his own theory, Mezirow (1991) recounts isolating a 10-stage
process of TL. First, there is a disorienting dilemma, typically caused by being
confronted with new information. This disorientation will prompt self-examination with
“feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame” in the student at his or her lack of understanding. With guidance from an instructor, the student will perform a critical assessment of his or her assumptions, coming to understand that recognition of the issue is the first step in addressing that issue. Students will explore options for new roles, relationships and action and participate in planning a course of action. After acquiring knowledge and skills necessary for the implementation of their plans, students will provisionally try their new roles. If successful, competence and self-confidence in their new roles will be developed, culminating ultimately in the integration of these new perspectives into their daily lives (Mezirow, p. 94). With this outline provided for us, we must examine whether or not the Stages of Employment job readiness course fits the framework that Mezirow (1991) provides.

First, we must address education as a “disorienting dilemma”. While perhaps more of an observation on Mezirow’s (1991) part than an actual “step” in his theory of learning, it is nevertheless evident that many students at FIT are in a state of confusion. With so many still readjusting to life outside of incarceration, or with others struggling after extended periods of unemployment, or unable to return to their previous vocational field, FIT’s clients easily match the descriptions of bewilderment provided by Mezirow (1991) and his adherents. Likewise, many struggle with feelings of embarrassment, guilt, and frustration at their inability to secure work or adjust to a rapidly changing job market. It may be argued that both the dilemma and feelings of fear and shame pre-date the client’s arrival at FIT, and that their independent attempts to seek assistance are the culmination of their self-assessment and recognition of their deficiency. It is the role of FIT to assist in the introduction and exploration of this “new role” of a job-seeker
and ultimately, professional employee, providing a plan of action through breaking down the job-search process in concrete “stages” (search, application, interview, 2\textsuperscript{nd} interview, retention). Through exercises conducted in class, as well as through their independent job searching, students are given the opportunity to experiment with this new perspectives, becoming increasingly confident and competent, and finally internalizing these perspectives and problem-solving skills into their existing mentalities.

In short, FIT’s job readiness course would appear to progress in lockstep with the outline of transformative learning as described by Mezirow (1991). The largely ex-felon students of the course are able to not only solve the immediate problem of addressing their unemployment but in doing so develop essential self-assessing and problem-solving skills essential to their reintegration into society. Indeed, it could be argued that simple participation in any course further provides the integration of such habits as patience, attentiveness, and cooperation. Citing the works of colleagues in this same field, Mezirow (1991) argues “Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feeling and action. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and the natural world… our visions of alternative approaches to living…” (p. 98). It must be noted that while, on a theoretical basis, FIT’s job readiness program would seem to match perfectly the requirements of transformative learning, in quantifying the actual efficacy of the program, we are met with challenges. While all students are asked to fill out anonymous evaluations of the course upon its conclusion,
there has been no formal or in-depth examination of either the short or long-term effects of the course, and all observances are largely anecdotal.

Re-Entry Initiatives/Benchmark Studies

The issues facing individuals attempting to re-integrate into society after incarceration are plenty, with challenges in housing, employment, and education chief among them. With increasing awareness of these challenges, recent years have seen the establishment of re-entry programs and initiatives in most major cities, both state and privately-operated agencies, aiming to provide effective services and reduce recidivism rates. While certain states, such as California, are home to a number of different agencies providing services to the ex-offender population, organizations were examined based upon their similarity to, or significant differences from, FIT.

Nevada

Las Vegas Urban League ReXo

While only recently awarded a grant from the Department of Labor, the Las Vegas Urban League has developed a “Re-Entry Ex-Offender” or “ReXo” program, designed to provide vocational training to approximately 200 ex-offenders over the next three years (LV Urban League, 2013). Services will include group mentoring, individual case management, and job readiness courses.
Hope for Prisoners

Hope for Prisoners is a Las Vegas based nonprofit which provides ex-offenders with mentoring, leadership training, and pre-vocational skills, asserting “we help to create reference points for them where reference points may have never existed” (Hope for Prisoners, n.d.).

Ridge House

Ridge House is a Reno based non-profit providing such services as resume development, interview workshops, and job placement. Similar to FIT, Ridge house makes use of a case management system to provide services to its target population, and asserts that it additionally provides both behavioral health and substance abuse counseling (Ridge House, n.d.). Ridge House additionally provides temporary housing, with six facilities housing a total of 42 individuals.

California

California Re-Entry Program

The California Re-Entry Program stands unique as one of the few organizations examined who provide pre-release services. Specifically targeting individuals soon to be paroled, the California Re-Entry Program provides clients with information on local resources, such as housing- mental health, or employment opportunities- and creates “parole plans”, designed to map out the steps individual clients may take to successfully re-integrate. Additionally, the California Re-Entry Program emphasizes education, and
provides assistance with DMV issues, GEDs, and college programs. The program asserts that it currently has approximately 25 volunteers and serves approximately 150 to 200 clients per month (California Re-Entry Program, 2014).

EPIC

“Empowering People, Illuminating Change” or “EPIC” is a subsidiary program of the Weingart Center. While placing an emphasis on housing issues, ranging from short-term housing for ex-offenders to TB-specialized facilities to long-term housing placement, EPIC provides a broad range of additional services. Epic provides vocational training designed to “culminate in an industry-recognized certification” in addition to a job club course, described as a “three-week employment preparation curriculum that includes resume… job search techniques, interview skills… grooming and dress, and job retention skills”. Epic likewise provides one-on-one case management and “Individual Service Plans”, designed to create milestones for clients to prepare for, secure, and retain employment (Weingart Center for Homelessness, n.d.).

SOS

While the mission state of “Starting Over Strong” or “SOS” asserts that their ultimate goal is re-integration “by obtaining meaningful employment”, the vast majority of SOS’s services are targeted towards record expungement and restoring voting rights. SOS further coordinates with local faith-based organizations and mental health facilities to provide life skill classes and direct clients towards “informal support networks.” (SOS, 2014).
Utah

Salt Lake County Re-Entry Services

The Salt Lake County Re-Entry Services program is a state-operated organization tasked with the provision of short-term re-entry services to newly released inmates. Case management is provided “up to 90 days” from release, with a “re-entry plan” developed to address such barriers as housing, employment, education, transportation, and substance abuse.

The Resource & Reentry Center

A non-profit based out of St. George, Utah, the Resource & Reentry Center provides mentoring to individuals with criminal backgrounds. While training is cited as an offered service, the emphasis appears to be on mentoring services. This client base is comparatively small, serving an average of 30 clients per year and providing follow up services for 3 years.

Arizona

Arizona Women’s Education and Employment

Arizona Women’s Education and Employment or “AWEE” is a vocation-centered nonprofit which has, as of 2012, received funding to specifically address the needs of the ex-offender population (AWEE, 2012). AWEE cites that these funds will be used to provide occupational training, in addition to “connecting formerly incarcerated adults with… housing, substance abuse programs and mental health treatment”. AWEE
utilizes individual case-management in the creation and implementation of “individual success plans”, again designed to establish step-by-step goals and benchmarks in individual employment and long-term stability. AWEE further provides such services as “job coaching, peer support groups and professional mentoring, and job placement assistance” (AWEE, n.d.)

**Family Service Agency**

The Phoenix-based Family Service Agency operates the “Community Re-Integration Program”, designed to help ex-offenders obtain and retain long-term employment. In operation since 2003, the Community Re-Integration Program provides an “intensive 16 Hour job readiness workshop”, “individual case management”, “financial literacy” courses, and federal bonding. Services are not available to individuals who have committed sexual-offenses (Family Service Agency, n.d.).

**Comparison and Contrast with FIT Services**

The lack of common measures across the various funding streams of the agencies profiled makes a full comparison of efficacy difficult, as documentation, stipulations for follow up, and indeed, final goals and objectives vary greatly from organization to organization. Indeed, rubrics for determining recidivism rates further differ from both agency to agency and from area to area, making an estimate of FIT’s efficacy even more challenging. Nevertheless, the range and depth of individual services in overcoming challenges to employment may, to some extent, be used to
demonstrate the range of an organization’s capabilities, and it is on this basis that FIT will be compared and contrasted with similar organizations.

While not universal, two major commonalities between FIT and the services provided by similar organizations are those of individual case management and individual plans. This may be seen in the face of AWEE, EPIC, the California Re-Entry Program, and the Salt Lake County Re-Entry Services program, all of which utilize some form of “plan” to establish objectives for their clients. Likewise, FIT utilizes “Individual Employment Plans” or “IEPs”, which outline expectations of clients in regards to applications or training to be completed, as well as setting long-term employment goals in the client’s chosen field. Similar to these organizations, FIT provides one-on-one case management to call clients, in order to provide highly individualized services and ensure the highest possible degree of efficacy of each IEP.

Almost every organization with a specific goal of employment further operates a class or workshop for development of “soft-skills” (e.g., interviewing, professionalism, appropriate clothing, etc.). Such pre-vocational skills are, of course, vital to the success of the clients, who must be able to independently job search, submit applications, and interview. FIT is no different in this regard, mandating that all re-entry clients attend a three-week “Stages of Employment” course, in which these skills are both taught and practiced. FIT additionally provides classes on resume building, online applications, and advanced interviewing, though such classes are voluntary.

As a WIA provider, the vast majority of FIT’s services are directed solely towards the obtaining of full-time, permanent employment, and strict regulations placed upon
FIT’s grant often lead the organization to struggle to meet the additional needs of the client. A key advantage demonstrated by such groups as Ridge House and the California Re-Entry Program is their ability to address not only the vocational needs of the clients (through soft-skill development and occupational training) but additionally meeting such needs as housing, clothing, and record sealing/expungement, and other major barriers to full reintegration into society. Although FIT does partner with local community organizations to address such needs, full coordination and speed of service remain an issue.

It must be noted that FIT was the only WIA provider found in Nevada, California, and Utah with the specific goal of addressing the employment needs of the ex-offender population. This, of course, must be taken into account in the comparison and contrast of FIT with similar agencies. As a recipient of federal funds, FIT is required to adhere to strict regulations regarding the scope of services offered, documentation, and follow-up. While able to address a larger population, FIT may be expected to lack certain freedoms and flexibility of organizations funded through non-WIA grants, or through private donations. Nevertheless, this same characteristic, while limiting FIT in terms of scope of service, allows the organization a degree of intensity which similar agencies may not be able to match. The entirety of FIT’s resources may be placed towards addressing immediate vocational needs of the clients, as well as developing a job-readiness curriculum and other courses tailored to the unique vocational needs of the target population. FIT further continues to evolve and develop with the shifting needs of both the population and the job market, and has recently attempted to expand its services through offering men’s group mentoring, further digital literacy courses, and
what is currently the only Certified Logistics Associate/Technician training-course available in Nevada.

**Employment Barriers**

According to Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll (2003), ex-offenders’ employment capabilities are hampered by a lack of education; approximately 70% of current offenders as well as ex-offenders dropped out of high school. Additionally, limited work experience, issues with mental health or substance abuse, and the fact that most ex-offenders are minorities further impede their attempts to obtain gainful employment.

Schmitt and Warner (2011) note “…research has established that a felony conviction or time in prison makes individuals significantly less employable”. The impact of reduced employability is measured by an employment rate that is lower for ex-offenders, with African American men experiencing the most negative impact. Male ex-offenders without a high school diploma are also significantly impacted (Schmitt & Warner, 2011, p. 98).

**Economic Conditions**

In addition to the traditional difficulties for felon re-entry to the workforce, employment opportunities for felons were further diminished in the aftermath of the Great Recession. The 2008 crash devastated the Nevada economy and sent the unemployment rate to the highest in the nation. The Las Vegas Valley was even more devastated due to the housing bubble following explosive growth in the early 2000’s (Luhby, 2012). In addition, tourism dropped dramatically as disposable income shrank
and left two valuable industries for employment paralyzed.

The Stages of Employment job readiness course began in 2012, when the Las Vegas economy was still sluggish with an unemployment rate still hovering above 12% and 1 in 16 homes underwater (Luhby, 2012). Nevada also was at the bottom in education and quality of life, further complicating employment in Nevada (Bristol, 2012). With such severe economic woes, employment was difficult for most and had a chilling effect on people with a criminal history.

Methodology

Research Questions

Stages of Employment, the Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow’s job readiness program, is intended to improve employment outcomes for the ex-offender population. Interviews with FIT’s program director revealed concerns with the participant attrition rate, which is approximately 50% prior to the participant attending the first course of the program. Classes are offered in both the AM and PM; however, according to FIT’s program director, the PM class retention rate is low. Subsequently, FIT expressed a desire to identify the ideal duration of the Stages of Employment job readiness course as well as examine the effectiveness program on employment outcomes.

The Stages of Employment job readiness course underwent several schedule changes. These schedule changes were attempts to design a course length that was able to provide participants with the skills necessary to succeed in the workplace
without being such a length that would cause participants to disengage from the program. The Stages of Employment job readiness course was offered as a 6-week, 2-week, and 3-week course from July 2012 until June of 2013. Participant feedback indicated six weeks was too long and participants disengaged and dropped from the program. The 2-week course was too short, so FIT trialed a slightly longer course by extending it one week, resulting in a 3-week course.

Based on this information, HPH Consulting designed the following research questions:

- Which course duration is the most effective in improving employment outcomes for ex-offenders – the 6-week, 2-week, or 3-week course?
- What factors impact participants' income after exposure to the Stages of Employment job readiness course?

**Research Design**

A fixed-sample panel design was used for this evaluation. All participants in the program are required to meet two criteria: be an ex-offender that is unemployed. Data is collected at the beginning of the program via a questionnaire. The population changes as participants' dropout of the program or are unavailable for follow-up. At set points throughout the year, employment data is gathered such as employer, employment start date, pay rate, number of hours per week, and employment stop date. Employment information for each job is captured separately.
Stages of Employment job readiness courses consists of participant-level treatments provided as a 2-week, 3-week, or 6-week programs. Treatment is defined as exposure to the Stages of Employment job readiness course for either a 2 week, 3 week, or 6 week period of time. Effectiveness is defined as obtaining minimum wage employment after exposure to the program.

Based on the two research questions, two distinct areas of research emerged: determining the impact of the Stages of Employment job readiness course on participant’s employment outcomes as defined by their annual salary, and identifying the effectiveness of each course duration, 2-week, 3-week, or 6-week, on program completion. Since there were two distinct focus areas to be analyzed, the data was stratified by annual salary and program completion and two separate data sets were developed. Data set 1 consists of participant-level annual salary of those participants that were exposed to the Stages of Employment job readiness course (either the 2-week, 3-week, or 6-week course) and obtained employment. The N size for data set 1 is 61.

Data set 2 consists of participant-level program completion data. The participants in data set 2 were enrolled in the 2-week, 3-week, or 6-week program and were identified as either completing their program or not completing their program.

Data set 1 focused on identifying which variables of the program had a significant impact on participant’s annual salary (dependent variable). Data set 2 focused on identifying the variables of the program that had a significant impact on program completion (dependent variable), as defined as a binary where “Yes” means the
participant completed the program with the cohort to which they were assigned, or “No” the participant did not complete the program.

Ideally, a comparison group would be identified and a stratified random sample would be generated in order to determine causation between the Stages of Employment job readiness course and employment outcomes and program duration. However, since all ex-offenders participate in the Stages of Employment job readiness program, a control group could not be established.

As indicated, two dependent variables were identified: annual salary and program completion. Independent variables include the following:

*Table 1* Independent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Type of Crime</th>
<th>Program Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Black</td>
<td>• Trust Offense</td>
<td>• 6 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• White</td>
<td>• Sexual Offense</td>
<td>• 2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hispanic</td>
<td>• Violent Offense</td>
<td>• 3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other race</td>
<td>• Drug/Alcohol Offense</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Drug/alcohol history</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marital status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dependents</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For Data Set 1 with annual salary as the dependent variable, multiple iterations of linear regression analysis were conducted to identify the independent variables that had a significant impact on the participant’s annual salary. For Data Set 2 with program completion as the dependent variable, multiple binary logistic regression analyses were conducted to accommodate for the dependent variable, program completion, being binary.

**Samples & Data Limitations**

FIT compiled data at the end of the first program year. The data compiled for analysis was collected during the first day of orientation of the Stages of Employment job readiness course, and the data was self-reported by participants. The data set originally included over 450 records; however, there were many blank responses. After scrubbing the data by removing nulls and N/A’s, the resulting sample size was significantly reduced. Due to the significant decrease in sample size as well as a need to analyze the program from two perspectives, two separate data sets were instead developed: data set 1 for the dependent variable, annual salary, and data set 2 for the other dependent variable, program completion.

Annual salary was calculated using employment information for job(s) obtained after program completion. To calculate the annual salary, it was first determined how many hours per week were worked for each job with a start and stop date. The number of hours worked per week was then multiplied by the rate of pay after adjusting for the
type of rate (e.g., hourly, weekly, monthly). If the last job worked did not have a stop date, the hours per week were multiplied by the remainder of the year and the result was multiplied by the rate of pay. The pay for each job was added together to determine the total annual salary.

Program completion was reported by FIT and was recorded as either the participant completed the program or the participant dropped out of the program. The program completion data element was coded as a binary: 1 = completed the program and 2 = did not complete the program.

Analysis Results

Descriptive Statistics – Data Set 1

Table 2 displays the mean and standard deviation of data classified into four categories: Socioeconomic Statuses, Demographics, Types of Offenses, and Program Models. As indicated in table 2, 68% of the population in data set 1 is between 33.9 and 53.2 years of age (one standard deviation) and 75% of this sample population are male. Of this data set, approximately 70% are minorities and almost half of the participants in data set 1 are black. Over 40% committed a trust offense and over 45% committed a violent offense. The majority of participants were exposed to the 2-week program. Of the 61 participants in this data set, 72% completed the program, and 28% dropped out of the program.
Table 2  Means and standard deviations of data set 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Set 1</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socioeconomic Statuses</strong></td>
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<td>Drug/Alcohol Offense</td>
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<td><strong>Program Models</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration 2 weeks</td>
<td>.80</td>
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<td>Duration 3 weeks</td>
<td>.11</td>
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<td>Complete</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.452</td>
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<td>Total Annual Salary</td>
<td>$2,1363.38</td>
<td>$8,816.41</td>
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As figure 1 indicates, 49% of the participants from data set 1 are Black, 30% are White, 15% are Hispanic, and 7% are Other.
FIT Job Readiness Program: Program Completion and Employment Outcomes

Figure 1 Pie chart of ethnicities from the Total Annual Salary data set

Figure 2 displays the various types of crimes as reported in data set 1. As indicated in figure 2, the majority of crimes for this population (51%) are drug/alcohol related crimes. 46% of this sample population committed a trust crime, and 43% committed a violent crime. It is important to note that the total equals more than 100% due to the fact that some participants were convicted of more than one type of crime.

Figure 2 Bar chart of types of crime from the Total Annual Salary data set
Linear Regression Analysis – Data Set 1

A bivariate correlation was run for data set 1 and included Age, Education Level, Gender, Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, Other Races, Divorced/Separated, Married, Single, Widowed, Dependents, Violent Offenses, Trust Offenses, Sex Offenses, Drug/Alcohol Offenses, Drug/Alcohol History, Duration 2 weeks, Duration 3 weeks, Duration 6 weeks and Program Completion. Only two independent variables were significantly correlated to Annual Salary at the 0.05 level: Trust Offense and Drug/Alcohol Offense. Sexual Offense was correlated to Annual Salary at the 0.126 level, while Gender, Black, and White were correlated to Annual Salary at the 0.154 level, 0.164 level, and 0.181 level respectively. Interestingly, although research indicates education and drug/alcohol history to be a significant barrier to employment, these variables did not indicate a significant correlation, with Education Level at a correlation at the 0.556 level and Drug/Alcohol History at the 0.807 level (see Appendix A).

The impact of the Stages of Employment job readiness program on annual salary was examined by conducting multiple iterations of a linear regression analysis to identify the combination of independent variables that had a significant impact on the dependent variable, annual salary. Significance was established with a P value of 0.05 or less. As indicated in figure 3, two independent variables met this threshold.

Data Set 1 Regression Model A (see Appendix A):

Annual Salary = 21126.917 – 3569.563*Trust Offense – 7996.917*Sexual Offense
### Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>(Constant)</td>
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<td>Beta: -.316 &lt;br&gt;.014146</td>
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<td>-2.037</td>
<td>.046</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: ANNLSAL

**Figure 3** Coefficients from a linear regression analysis with annual salary as the dependent variable

Results from regression model A for data set 1 indicates participants in this sample that committed a trust offense are likely to earn $3,570 less than participants that did not commit this type of offense, and participants in this sample that committed a sexual offense are likely to earn $7,997 less than participants that did not commit this type of offense.

When the independent variable, program completion was included in the regression analysis, the findings indicate that program completion, as part of this particular model, was not significant and did not have an impact on annual salary.
Figure 4  Coefficients as a result of a linear regression analysis with annual salary as the dependent variable

Descriptive Statistics – Data Set 2

As indicated in Table 3, 68% of the population of the data set 2 sample is between 31.1 and 50.7 years of age and 74% of the sample are male. As figure 5 indicates, 54% of data set 2 are Black, 29% are White, 11% are Hispanic, and 6% are Other.

Table 3  Means and standard deviations from data set 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socioeconomic Statuses</th>
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<th>N</th>
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a. Dependent Variable: ANNSAL
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<td>Duration 3 weeks</td>
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<td>Duration 6 weeks</td>
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<td>.323</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
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<td>.499</td>
<td>94</td>
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</table>

**Figure 5**  Pie chart of ethnicities from data set 2

Figure 6 displays the various types of crimes committed by the population in data set 2. As indicated, the majority of crimes for this population (49%) are trust crimes. 43% of this population committed a violent crime, 41% committed a drug/alcohol related crime, and less than 10% committed a sexual offense. Please note that the total equals more than 100% due to the fact that some participants were convicted of more than one type of crime.
Figure 6  Bar chart of types of crime from data set 2

Binary Logistic Regression– Data Set 2

A primary goal of our client was to determine what program duration had the highest completion rate for the program. To test the effect program duration had on course participants we compared the competition rates by gender, race, marital status, offense type, program duration and whether they had dependents. As indicated in Figure 7, males are slightly more likely to complete the course compared to females.
When comparing completion based on the race of the individuals we found that African American and White participants were statistically the most likely to complete with a completion rate of 45% and 47% respectively. There was a substantial decline in likelihood of completion if the individual was Hispanic, with a 30% completion rate.
When comparing completion with the marital status of the participant, those who were single were slightly more likely to complete the course than their married counterparts with a 47% completion to a 44%.

Figure 8  Pie Chart indicating completion by race

Figure 9  Pie Chart indicating completion by marital status
When comparing likelihood of completion based on whether the participant had dependents, those with kids were 14% less likely to complete.

![Completion with Dependents](image)

*Figure 10*  Pie Chart indicating completion depending on if they had dependents

When comparing likelihood of completion with the type of offense, those who have committed a trust offense are slightly less likely to complete than those who have committed a violent offense at 42% to 49%, respectively. Individuals who have committed a sex crime had a completion/non completion rate of 50%.
The likelihood of program completion was approximately 50% with the two week course duration. Participants in the six week course were substantially more likely to complete with a completion rate of 60%.
Completion by Course Duration

Figure 12  Pie Chart indicating completion by program length

Following the initial analysis a binary logistic regression was run to determine what variables had an impact on program competition. With Program Completion set as the dependent variable, the regression analysis was conducted to determine what variables had a significance level of .15 or less. Linear regression model B (see Appendix E) was developed based on the significance of the variable:

\[ PrgmComp = -8.223 + 0.126\times\text{SESAge} + 3.136\times\text{PGMDur 2Wks} + 3.433\times\text{PGMDur6Wks} \]
Using this model the two week program and the six week program yielded the best number of competitions at the significance level of .05 or below. If the three week course was eliminated in this model because the sample size was too small in this data set. Age was the only variable that was significant in the model, with an increase in likelihood of competition 12.6% per year. Individuals who were in the two week course were 23 times more likely to complete, whereas individuals in the 6 week course were 31 times more likely to complete.

**Recommendations**

The data provided for this research was from the first year of the Stages of Employment job readiness course, and although the original sample size started at 452, HPH Consulting ultimately ended up with a relatively small sample size for each of our two dependent variables, annual salary and program completion. Based on the findings from these two data sets, the fact that the Stages of Employment job readiness course was not mandatory the first year, and due to the experimentation with program duration schedules, HPH Consulting is recommending FIT continue to gather data and conduct a
three-year cohort study at the completion of their third and final year of the current WIA funded grant. This would allow for each year of the program to be treated as a cohort and compared against each other. Ideally, the additional data will provide FIT with a more robust, complete data set in which to conduct statistical analyses, including re-visiting the types of variables in which research identified as specific barriers to the ex-offender population attempting to re-enter the workforce.

Conclusions

Based on the smaller than expected sample size (N = 61), HPH consulting created two separate data sets in order to evaluate the Stages of Employment job readiness course, one set to analyze program completion (N = 94) and the other to analyze annual salary (N = 61). These two dependent variables were compared against a multitude of independent variables (demographic, type of crime, and program duration), and the results of the regression analyses were largely inconclusive with very few models showing a statistically significant impact. HPH Consulting believes FIT’s Stages of Employment course is addressing a critical need in the Las Vegas community, by assisting this difficult population with increasing their skills in order to obtain and maintain employment. However, due to limited data results and small sample size, the results of this study have been largely inconclusive, and do not accurately represent the impact that this program provides to its participants.
## Appendices

### Appendix A
### Appendix B

**Coefficients**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Model</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>1412.764</td>
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<td>CRM-SexOff</td>
<td>-7996.917</td>
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<td>-.255</td>
<td>-2.037</td>
</tr>
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</table>

a. Dependent Variable: ANNLSAL
Appendix C

Stages of Employment Participants by Age

- Age Range
- # of Participants
Appendix D

RE-ENTRY INITIATIVE APPLICATION FOR SERVICES

Please complete each question as thoroughly as possible. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant and may lead to a delay in services. If a question does not apply, please indicate that by writing “N/A” or “None” in the space provided. Thank you.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Name: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Last 4 Digits of SSN: XXXX- XXXX- _______ Date of Birth: __________

Address: __________________________________ Apt. Number: __________

City: __________________________ State: __________ Zip Code: __________

Phone Number 1: __________________________ Phone Number 2: __________________________

Email Address: __________________________________________

Do you currently live in a transitional or group home? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, which one? __________________________________________

How did you hear about FIT? __________________________________________

If you are on parole/probation, please list PO name: __________________________
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:
The following is collected for statistical purposes only

Gender:
☐ Male        ☐ Female

Race/Ethnicity:
☐ American Indian/Alaska Native        ☐ Asian
☐ Black/African American              ☐ Hispanic/Latino
☐ Pacific Islander/Hawaii Native      ☐ White/Caucasian
☐ Multiracial                           ☐ Other (please specify): ________________

Current Marital Status:
☐ Married       ☐ Divorced       ☐ Separated       ☐ Widowed       ☐ Single

ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENTS:
Please indicate which of the following you have; check all that apply:

☐ Nevada ID          ☐ Other State ID
☐ Social Security Card  ☐ Birth Certificate
☐ Selective Service Registration ☐ Lease/Mortgage (must be in your name)
☐ Power/Gas Bill (must be in your name) ☐ Public Assistance Documentation
☐ DD-214

DEPENDENTS AND OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS:
Are you considered the Head of Household?  Yes ☐  No ☐

Please list all other household members:

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<th>Dependent (Y or N)</th>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5)</td>
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(Please continue on a separate sheet of paper, if necessary)
### HOUSEHOLD INCOME SOURCES AND AMOUNTS:

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<td>______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) _____________________________________________________</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) _____________________________________________________</td>
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*(Please continue on a separate sheet of paper, if necessary)*

### MONTHLY EXPENSE TYPES AND AMOUNTS:

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<td>Car Payment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation (Gas or Bus Fare)</td>
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<td>Car Insurance</td>
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<td>Power/Gas/Electric</td>
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<td>Cable/Phone</td>
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<td>Daycare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Support</td>
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<td>Food/Groceries</td>
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<td>Personal Hygiene/Clothing</td>
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<td>Loan/Credit Card Payments</td>
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<td>Medical Bills or Prescriptions</td>
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<td>Other: ___________________________________</td>
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</table>

**TOTAL MONTHLY EXPENSES:**

__________________________________________

__________________________________________
What is your total debt amount?

If applicable, what is your total restitution owed?

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

Are you currently employed?  Yes  □  No  □

Please list below your employment history for the last 10 years, starting with your current or most recent job. Be sure to include any jobs held while incarcerated. If you do not remember the exact dates worked, it is okay to estimate. Please continue on another sheet of paper, if necessary.

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<td>-</td>
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<td>Hours Per Week</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly Wage</td>
<td>Hours Per Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hourly Wage</td>
<td>Hours Per Week</td>
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### EDUCATION HISTORY:

Do you have either of the following?  
- High School Diploma  
- GED

If yes, where and when did you receive it?  
City/State:  
Year: 

If no, what is the highest grade level you completed? 

Please indicate any post-high school education or training you have completed:

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<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Area of Study</th>
<th>City &amp; State</th>
<th>Year Completed</th>
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Have you ever worked in any of the fields in which you were trained?  
- Yes  
- No

If yes, in what position and for how long? 

If no, why have you not worked in that field? 

---

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>Hourly Wage</td>
<td>Hours Per Week</td>
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DISABILITY STATUS:

Please list any documented disabilities, physical limitations or chronic health problems you have that would restrict the types of jobs you can have:

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<th>Doctor’s Release (Y or N)</th>
</tr>
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Are you currently under a doctor’s care?  
Yes ☐  No ☐

Physician Name: ______________________  Phone Number: ______________________

Do you currently have health insurance?  
Yes ☐  No ☐

Do your dependents have health insurance?  
Yes ☐  No ☐

Have you ever been diagnosed with a mental health disorder?  
Yes ☐  No ☐

If yes, are you currently receiving treatment for the disorder?  
Yes ☐  No ☐

Counselor Name: ______________________  Phone Number: ______________________

LEGAL HISTORY:

Please provide information below on any all current or past legal issues. *FIT assists people with all types of legal histories; however, failure to provide accurate information pertaining to your legal history may result in delayed or disrupted services.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conviction 1:</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>City &amp; State</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conviction 2:</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>City &amp; State</td>
<td>Sentence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conviction 3:</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>City &amp; State</td>
<td>Sentence</td>
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</table>

Do you have any current warrants or other pending legal matters?  
Yes ☐  No ☐
FIT Job Readiness Program: Program Completion and Employment Outcomes

Are you currently receiving assistance from any other programs?  

Yes ☐  No ☐

If yes, please list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization/Agency</th>
<th>Contact Name</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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**EMPLOYMENT GOALS AND ASSISTANCE DESIRED:**

Please indicate the type(s) of services you are most interested in at this time:

☐ Job Search Assistance  ☐ Vocational Training  ☐ Both

Please select the employment sector that interests you the most (this information is collected for statistical and initial career-planning purposes only and choosing a sector now will not prevent you from changing your mind at a later date):

☐ Aerospace & Defense  ☐ Agriculture  ☐ Clean Energy

☐ Healthcare  ☐ Information Technology  ☐ Logistics & Operations

☐ Manufacturing  ☐ Mining & Materials  ☐ Tourism & Hospitality

Please select the occupation that interests you the most (this information is also only collected for statistical and initial career-planning purposes and can be changed):

☐ Class A or B Commercial Truck Driver  ☐ Construction Worker

☐ Customer Service Representative  ☐ Food Server

☐ Guest Room Attendant  ☐ HVAC Technician

☐ IT Technician  ☐ Porter/Bus Person/Steward

☐ Professional Cook  ☐ Retail Sales/Cashier

☐ Warehouse Worker  ☐ Other: __________________________
 RELEASES AND NOTIFICATIONS:

I hereby certify that all information provided in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that as a condition of participation in the FIT program, I may be asked to provide written documentation regarding some of the information I have provided.

_________________________________________  _____________________________________
Date                                               Applicant Signature

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. The TTY/TDD access number is (800) 326-6868 / Nevada Relay 711. A sign language interpreter may also be made available with twenty-four (24) hour advance notice. FIT is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program.
References


