



National Institute of Corrections

FACT SHEET

EMPLOYMENT RETENTION INVENTORY EXPLORES THE PREDICTIVE FACTORS OF JOB LOSS: RESEARCH PROJECT

By P. Elizabeth Taylor

As justice-involved individuals move through the criminal-justice system, correctional staff use case management tools to monitor progress. Case management involves monitoring individuals to ensure their completion of court-ordered sanctions, such as community service hours, payment of fees, or restitution, without reoffending. The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) also expands the definition to include evaluating and assessing the need to connect justice-involved individuals to appropriate services and resources based on their risk to reoffend.

A new case management tool, the Employment Retention Inventory (ERI), is the focus of a study funded by the National Institute of Corrections. The study aims to:

- Determine the effectiveness of the ERI in predicting job loss.
- Identify and target the risk factors related to recidivism that also contribute to job loss.

The tool and the results of the study may be useful for employment specialists working in the field of corrections, as outcomes may affect their ability to help justice-involved individuals secure and maintain long-term employment.

Research studying the factors affecting long-term employment for justice-involved individuals is currently limited, making the NIC-funded study an important contribution to the available body of research. In addition, results from the study will help shape effective policy and practice throughout the nation, helping jurisdictions establish and maintain employment services that successfully engage medium- to high-risk justice-involved adults.

BACKGROUND

OERS

The Employment Retention Inventory (ERI) was developed to be used in conjunction with the NIC Offender Employment Retention Specialist (OERS) training curriculum. Focusing on the barriers to long-

term attachment to the workforce, OERS training combines cognitive behavioral principles with motivational interviewing techniques to broaden the ability of practitioners to develop a non-judgmental communication style that encourages self-exploration while addressing a justice-involved individual's ambivalence for change. In addition, the training increases the knowledge of employment specialists with regard to employment retention, facilitation skills, transitional intervention, and career development theory and application.

Employment specialists with the skills to help justice-involved individuals be successful in maintaining a job long term will be better able to identify individuals at high risk for job loss. OERS training teaches specialists to focus on the indicators and chain of events that lead to job loss, so they can provide better assistance to justice-involved individuals in developing plans to avoid high-risk situations in the workplace (and/or successfully deal with adverse situations if they occur).

Programming for justice-involved individuals should target those who are at medium to high risk for job loss or at medium to high risk of returning to criminal activities. This is done with the understanding "that most offenders are not high risk for recidivism because they have one risk or need, but rather are high risk because they have multiple risk and need factors."¹ Additionally, the programs should target risk factors correlated with criminal conduct.

Validation Study

Validation of the ERI, as well as study of the relationship between employment retention and recidivism, will be conducted in collaboration with the Urban Institute from September 9, 2013–September 8, 2015. Probation offices in Jackson County, Oregon, and Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, have been selected as the research sites.

For more information about the Employment Retention Inventory, contact P. Elizabeth Taylor, Correctional Program Specialist with the National Institute of Corrections, at petaylor@bop.gov.

Endnotes

¹ Latessa, E. and C. Lowenkamp. 2005. What are criminogenic needs and why are they important? *For the Record – 4th Quarter*, 15. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Judicial Conference.

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