

Improving Reentry for Ex-Offenders in San Diego County

SB 618 FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

JUNE 2012



CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH



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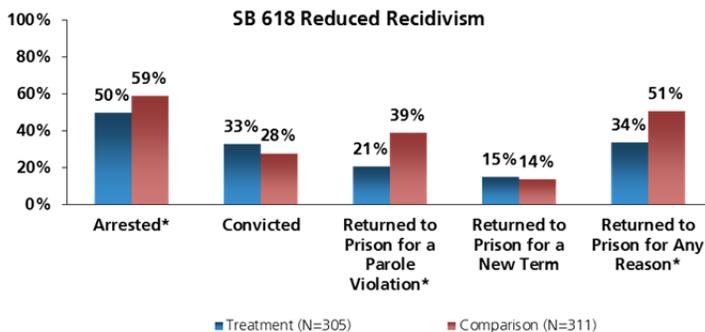
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REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Improving Reentry for Ex-Offenders in San Diego County – SB 618 Final Evaluation Report

In response to crowded prisons and high recidivism rates among parolees, the Senate Bill 618 (SB 618) San Diego Prisoner Reentry Program was designed and implemented from February 2007 through June 2012. The research findings from an impact evaluation indicate that the program improved outcomes for participants.



* Differences significant at .05 level

Recidivism was reduced during the 12 months following release from prison for some recidivism measures.

Treatment participants were less likely to be re-arrested (50%) relative to the comparison group (59%), though the two groups were similar with respect to re-convictions. Further, significantly fewer SB 618 participants were returned to prison relative to the comparison group (34% and 51%, respectively). While the proportion returned to prison for a new term was similar for both groups, significantly fewer treatment participants returned to prison for a parole violation than the comparison group (21% and 39%, respectively).

Three factors were predictive of success. Participants who followed through with service referrals in the community were less likely to recidivate than those who did not. In addition, residing in stable housing and obtaining employment predicted desistance from continued criminal behavior in the post period.



The evaluation findings support the inclusion of particular strategies in offender reentry programs. Specifically, intermediate sanctions in response to lack of program compliance can protect public safety while limiting costs to taxpayers. Motivational techniques and incentives for achieving benchmarks or milestones help to engage and retain participants in order to maximize the impact of the investment of providing reentry programs. Cognitive behavioral programming transforms thought processes, which is critical to stopping continued criminal behavior.

The SB 618 program was more cost effective than treatment as usual when success rates are included in the analysis. The short-term costs of providing the SB 618 program resulted in long-term savings, an estimated \$10 million for the 1,078 individuals served during the duration of the program.



Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

As the number of ex-offenders paroling to communities across the nation increased in the late 1990s, the issue of reentry came to the attention of policymakers, public safety officials, and community leaders alike. This high number of parolees evolved from the drastic increase in the prison population over the last 30 years, due in part to changes in many jurisdictions from indeterminate sentencing to determinate sentencing (which mandates specific sentence type and length for many crimes) (Austin, Clear, Duster, Greenberg, Irwin, McCoy, Mobley, Owen, & Page, 2007). As a result, by 2008, the United States had the highest incarceration rate in the world with 1 of every 100 adults behind bars (The Pew Center on the States, 2008).

The quantity of individuals in prison was exacerbated in California by policies related to parole, creating a revolving door. In one analysis (Langan & Levin, 2002) utilizing 1994 discharge data from prisons in 15 states (including California), the researchers found that within three years of release from prison, 68 percent were re-arrested for a new offense, 47 percent were re-convicted for a new crime, and 52 percent were back in prison serving time for a new sentence or a technical violation.

In California, the response to these crowded conditions was legal action, concluding with a U.S. Supreme Court ruling to reduce the number of prisoners. Efforts to comply with this ruling included transferring the responsibility for housing offenders completing sentences for lower level offenses to local jurisdictions and early releases to parole.

At the same time that more offenders were locked up for longer periods of time, many in-prison rehabilitation programs were cut back or eliminated completely due to budget constraints. Thus, many of the issues these offenders entered prison with, and which may have been related to

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SB 618 AND PUBLIC SAFETY REALIGNMENT

Implementation of the San Diego Prisoner Reentry program began in 2005 with the initiation of Senate Bill (SB) 618, six years prior to California's Public Safety Realignment (AB 109). This effort is one example of how San Diego County has been at the forefront of implementing evidence-based practices to reduce recidivism and ideally reduce revocations to prison for non-violent offenders. Eligible offenses resulting in SB 618 participation were similar to criminal involvement of those targeted for AB 109, in that many were non-violent drug or property crimes. As June 30, 2012, State funding for SB 618 was discontinued due to the shift in responsibilities for offender reentry for non-violent, non-serious, non-sexual offenders from the State to local jurisdictions as of October 2011. The lessons learned from SB 618 implementation by policymakers committed to evidence-based practices, an earlier effort to reduce recidivism for a post-prison population, may be helpful as local governments seek to facilitate successful offender reentry into their communities.

their criminal activity (such as substance abuse and few job skills), went unaddressed during the confinement period, decreasing the chances of successful reintegration (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001).

With researchers and policymakers across the country noting these trends and their implications for communities, there was more attention paid to determining how this revolving door to prison could be closed for a greater number of individuals, thereby increasing public safety and ensuring best use of citizens' tax dollars. One program resulting from this increased focus was the Senate Bill (SB) 618 San Diego Prisoner Reentry Program. This report describes the SB 618 effort, outlines the research methodology used to evaluate the program's effectiveness, and presents key findings from the evaluation.

SB 618 KEY COMPONENTS

The local SB 618 program, which incorporated evidence-based practices, was unique compared to traditional California correctional practices in a number of ways, including the following.

- ▶ Participants' needs were assessed before the prison sentence began and an individualized Life Plan created by a multi-disciplinary team comprised of program staff, in conjunction with the participant. The Life Plan was designed to be modified with participant input throughout the course of program delivery and created to ensure services meet identified needs.
- ▶ Case management was provided both during prison and after release to ensure services were accessed to meet identified needs.
- ▶ Since SB 618 was a voluntary program, it was crucial that staff employ motivational interviewing techniques effectively to maximize participant retention and facilitate their entry into substance abuse treatment.
- ▶ Upon release, a Community Roundtable (comprised of the Community Case Manager, Parole Agent, and other individuals identified by the ex-offender) met regularly to ensure reintegration challenges were addressed.

WHAT IS SB 618?

SB 618 (Speier), effective January 2006, was one of several efforts across California to reduce recidivism and increase the probability of successful reentry by addressing concerns about the State's correctional system cited by the Little Hoover Commission in 2003 and 2007. Initiated by the San Diego County District Attorney's (DA's) Office, SB 618 was designed using evidence-based and best practices and the concept that providing tangible reentry support services would increase parolees' chances of successful reintegration into the community (as evidenced by increased parole compliance and desistance from criminal activity). The ultimate goal was to produce law-abiding and self-sufficient members of the community and enhance public safety.

Although SB 618 allowed for the possibility of three California counties to implement a program, San Diego County was the only jurisdiction authorized to create a multi-agency plan and develop policies and programs to educate and rehabilitate non-violent felony offenders. The diverse group of program partners, led by the DA's Office, included the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), San Diego County Probation Department, San Diego County Sheriff's Department (including a subcontract with Grossmont Union High School District to do educational assessments), San Diego County Public Defender's Office, San Diego County Defense Bar, San Diego County Superior Court, and the University of California, San Diego.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

This final report presents the results from the impact evaluation of SB 618 conducted by the Criminal Justice Research Division of the San Diego Association of Governments.

The purpose of the impact evaluation was to determine whether participation in SB 618 improved reintegration and reduced recidivism (i.e., return to prison for a new term) and to identify the conditions under which the program

was most likely to accomplish these goals. Additionally, the impact evaluation assessed whether the reentry program was cost effective relative to traditional parole supervision and whether positive change was realized in other areas of participants' lives (e.g., employment).

To complete this study, the most rigorous research design possible, given programmatic constraints, was used and compared SB 618 participants to individuals who would have been eligible to receive services but were not approached to do so. To help mitigate possible confounding factors between the two groups, propensity score matching was conducted to ensure equivalency so the effect of receiving SB 618 services could be isolated to determine if goals were met. The results from this study are presented below.

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

The target population of SB 618 was nonviolent felony offenders. As such, individuals in the study groups were most commonly convicted of property and drug-related offenses for the instant offense (i.e., the behavior which led to SB 618 consideration), as well as during the two years prior to the instant offense. Under AB 109, this type of offender serves the sentence in local custody, suggesting that the findings from this evaluation are particularly relevant to local jurisdictions in California as they implement strategies to facilitate reentry while reducing recidivism.

RECIDIVISM

Ultimately, SB 618 aimed to assist ex-offenders in becoming productive law-abiding citizens, while protecting the public and saving taxpayer dollars. The impact of the program on offender behavior was assessed with respect to parole violations, arrests, convictions, and return to prison rates for the 12-month period following prison release.

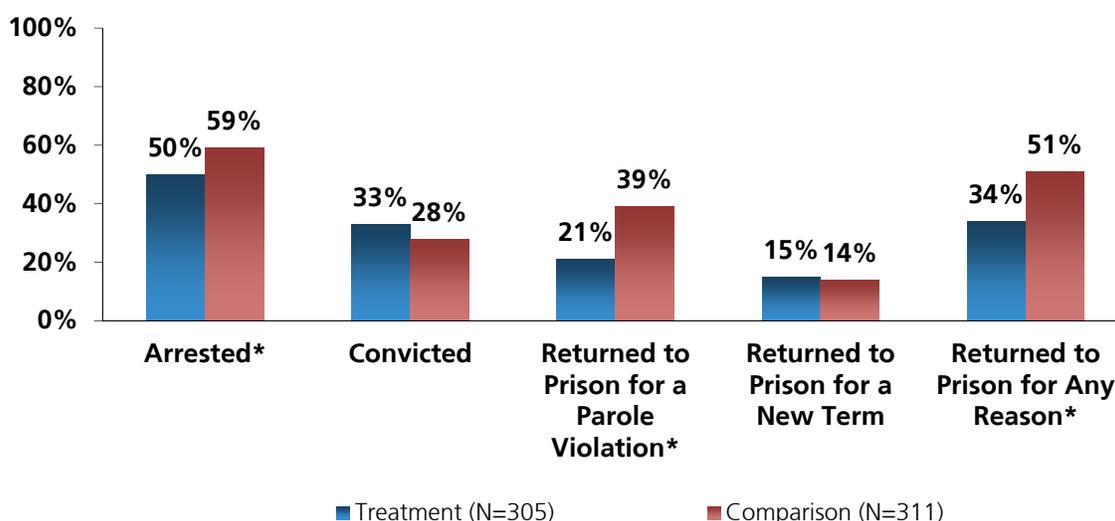
SB 618 participants were less likely than the comparison group to be re-arrested, returned to prison for a parole violation, or returned to prison for any reason (Figure 1). However, SB 618 participants and the comparison group were

similar with respect to re-conviction and receiving a prison sentence for a new offense during the one year after release.

The research finding that fewer SB 618 participants returned to prison for parole violations suggests that SB 618 assisted offenders with parole compliance. Given that California has historically had one of the highest technical parole violation rates in the country, stakeholders at the State level may want to utilize a system of intermediate sanctions for dealing with parole violations rather than additional prison time since some parolees will continue to be supervised by the State despite realignment. In San Diego, the Community Corrections Partnership, the group tasked with implementing realignment, included the use of intermediate sanctions for violations, as well as incentives for positive behavior, in the local public safety realignment plan as key components of the community supervision strategy.

The SB 618 program was based on the philosophy that successful reentry is tied to understanding prisoner's needs and providing related programming in prison, followed by support and services in the community. Based on this perspective, the analysis examined the relationship between receipt of services (i.e., following up on referrals to community services by the Community Case Manager) and success (i.e., desistance from crime). Receiving services was related to, as well as predictive of, not being arrested, convicted, and/or returning to prison in the 12 months following prison release. Acquiring stable housing and employment were also protective against criminal activity (not shown). Further analysis identified several individual characteristics predictive of following up on a referral in the community including increased age, being Black, not being at high risk in the criminal thinking domain, and having received alcohol treatment in the past. These research findings highlight the importance of motivating offenders to fully participate in reentry programs, locating stable housing, and addressing barriers to employment.

Figure 1
SB 618 PARTICIPATION RELATED TO REDUCED RECIDIVISM



*Differences significant at .05 level.

SOURCES: San Diego County Sheriff's Department, SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

RISK REDUCTION

Addressing the needs of offenders (e.g., employment and housing) has been found to facilitate the reentry process and relate directly to lowering recidivism rates. This process is referred to as "risk reduction" (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001). For the treatment group, it appears that SB 618 is associated with risk reduction in terms of stable housing and employment within the one-year period following release from prison. Four-fifths (80%) of the treatment group was living in stable housing and about two-thirds (67%) were employed, higher proportions than found in than other prisoner reentry studies.

COST ANALYSIS

Based on the cost-effectiveness and cost-avoidance analyses, the SB 618 program was a cost-effective program and provided long term savings when compared to treatment as usual.

- **The SB 618 program was more cost effective than treatment as usual when success rates were included in the analysis.** The average cost per successful SB 618 participant was \$123,648. For a successful comparison case, the cost was

\$131,814, a savings of \$8,166 per individual. These costs consider both the extra costs associated with the SB 618 program and differential success rates.

- **The average cost per successful case was higher for comparison cases because more of them returned to prison.** Initially, the cost per case was higher for SB 618 participants (due to the extra costs associated with providing the program, such as additional assessments and case management); however, the costs were lower when the analysis factors in the number returning to prison.
- **The short-term costs of providing the SB 618 program resulted in long-term savings.** The reduction in recidivism (50.8% - 33.8% = 17%) translated into approximately 183 offenders not returning to prison within the first year following release into the community. Avoiding the cost of re-incarceration (\$49,893 on average) and parole supervision (\$4,771) for one year would amount to a cost savings of an estimated \$10 million.

LESSONS LEARNED

The experiences of SB 618 and evaluation results provide valuable lessons to guide others considering implementation of offender reentry programs.

- **Importance of program fidelity:** Over the course of the project, modifications to the original program design were necessary due to real world constraints. Documentation of these changes through the process evaluation put the results of the impact evaluation in context. It is possible that recidivism reductions could have been greater if the program had been implemented more closely to the original design.
- **Communication is key to collaboration:** A culture of open communication was fostered among program partners across agencies. Operational Procedures Committee meetings were first convened in November 2005 and served as one vehicle for communication throughout the duration of the project. These meetings were regularly attended by key individuals to discuss issues, brainstorm possible solutions, and come to agreement on the best course of action. Further, the Web-based data management system facilitated timely communication between everyone working with each participant.
- **Beneficial role of collaboration in provision of services through partnerships across systems:** The primary method of collaboration in the SB 618 program involved incorporating interdisciplinary team approaches at two key points in a participant's progress, both of which received positive feedback from participants. The first of these was the MDT meeting held prior to participants' sentencing to review eligibility and discuss screening and assessment results. These meetings were staffed by a Probation Officer, case managers and prison classification counselor. The second of these interdisciplinary forums, the Community Roundtable, was convened on an ongoing basis from the participants' release to their exit from

the program. The Parole Agent, case manager, participant and any other individuals significantly involved in the participant's reentry effort attended these meetings.

- **Link services to assessed needs:** As part of SB 618, assessments were conducted locally, beginning before a participant was transferred to the prison reception center. During program development, partners thoroughly discussed which assessments should be conducted and agreed that additional information would be useful regarding participants' substance use and vocational needs. The information gained from these assessments was used in the creation of each participant's Life Plan. A relatively high proportion of participants received services matching their overall needs, suggesting the effectiveness of these assessments.
- **Utilize custody time to prepare for reentry:** By assessing needs in a timely manner, a Life Plan was developed with SB 618 participant input prior to prison entry so that the participant could access relevant services while in custody and then build upon this foundation once in the community.
- **Applicability to other prison inmates:** The successes of SB 618 suggest that program components previously mentioned (e.g., risk and needs assessment, case plan development, and service provision starting in custody that is linked to assessed needs) may be effective for other offenders prior to parole (e.g., higher level offenders). Since most offenders are eventually released from prison, applying these program components could potentially reduce the revolving door to prison, along with the prison population.
- **Importance of stable housing and employment:** The success of SB 618 in reducing factors linked to recidivism (i.e., employment and stable housing) point to the importance of addressing these basic issues in other reentry programs.

- **Value of intermediate sanctions:** The research finding that SB 618 participants were less likely to be returned to prison for a technical parole violation suggests that the use of intermediate sanctions (e.g., residential substance abuse treatment in response to drug use) are valuable alternatives for addressing offender behavior rather than additional prison time.
- **Need to transition offenders immediately into services upon release into the community, along with motivational techniques, including incentives for achieving benchmarks or milestones:** Almost three-quarters (71%) of the treatment group followed up on referrals to community services (i.e., full treatment participants). However, this level of service utilization still means that three in ten did not, highlighting the critical need for developing ways to transition offenders from custody into needed services. For example, upon release from custody, offenders could be transferred to a community transitional center where their needs are assessed, followed by transportation to residential treatment if needed. In addition, motivational techniques and other strategies (e.g., incentives for achieving benchmarks or milestones) to engage participants in all services could help with program retention.
- **Cognitive behavioral programs as a critical component:** Full treatment participation (i.e., following up on referrals to services in the community) was associated with program success (i.e., desistance from crime). Further, full treatment participants, scored lower on criminal thinking scales than the individuals who did not take advantage of these services. These research findings highlight the importance of addressing the thought processes of offenders (e.g., through cognitive behavioral programming) as early as possible in the reentry process, ideally in custody before release.

- **Usefulness of on-going data tracking:** From the beginning of this effort, SB 618 stakeholders made it a priority to put data tracking systems in place. Since that time, process and impact evaluation findings were shared in a timely fashion to help program partners determine what works to prevent recidivism.

SUMMARY

Based on the research findings in this evaluation report, the SB 618 San Diego Prisoner Reentry Program improved outcomes for participants. Specifically, program participants were significantly less likely to be arrested for a new offense or be returned to prison for a parole technical violation. As a result of this success, the program was more cost effective compared to treatment as usual. The factors found to be most significantly related to success were engagement in community services (i.e., utilization of referrals provided by case managers), acquiring stable housing, and being employed. The evaluation findings support the inclusion of intermediate sanctions in response to lack of program compliance, motivational techniques to engage and retain participants (including incentives for achieving benchmarks or milestones), and cognitive behavioral programming to transform thought processes in offender reentry programs.

Introduction and Project Description

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

As the number of ex-offenders paroling to communities across the nation increased in the late 1990s, the issue of reentry became an issue for local communities. In addition, many individuals re-offended in the years immediately following release creating public safety concerns. The State of California's budgetary challenges and scrutiny of the state's prison system further pressed stakeholders to find solutions to stop the revolving prison door. One of several efforts across California to reduce recidivism and increase the probability of successful reentry was Senate Bill (SB) 618. This law was based on the concept that providing tangible reentry support services would increase parolees' chances of successful reintegration into the community (i.e., successfully completing parole conditions and desistance to criminal behavior). The anticipated results were that parolees would become law-abiding and self-sufficient members of the community and public safety enhanced.

Since SB 618 was implemented, Assembly Bill (AB) 109, or Public Safety Realignment, has changed the circumstances of offender reentry, by shifting responsibility for housing and supervising non-violent, non-serious, and non-sexual offenders from the State to local authorities. As a result, now more than ever, local jurisdictions are seeking strategies to facilitate successful reentry into the community and reduce recidivism. Since SB 618 has a similar mission, the results from this evaluation are of interest.

This section outlines what experts in the field know about both evidence-based and best practices¹ shown to be effective in reducing recidivism and describes the SB 618 program.

¹ Evidence-based practices are a subset of best practices which have been scientifically validated through research, whereas best practices are those that are generally regarded to be effective by professionals in a particular field (Jannetta, Elderbroom, Solomon, Cahill, Parthasarathy, & Burrell, 2009).

THE SOLUTION

In an effort to address the multitude of challenges offenders face to remaining crime-free, a large body of research evaluating reentry programs offers direction regarding strategies that are evidence-based and those generally accepted as "best practices" in the field to reduce recidivism (CDCR, 2008). When San Diego stakeholders began envisioning the SB 618 program, they based its design on the literature and incorporated many of these proven strategies.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In response to California's high rate of recidivism and prison overcrowding, the San Diego County District Attorney's (DA's) Office initiated the SB 618 legislation in 2005. The bill was successfully steered through the legislature by State Senator Jackie Speier (D-San Francisco/San Mateo), passed into law in October 2005, and became effective January 1, 2006². This bill was based on the concept that providing tangible reentry support services would increase parolees' reintegration into the community. While it allowed for the possibility of three California counties to implement a program, San Diego County was the only one authorized to create a multi-agency plan and develop policies and programs to educate and rehabilitate nonviolent felony offenders. As part of this plan, male offenders sentenced to the Richard J. Donovan (RJD) Correctional Facility³ and female offenders sentenced to the California Institution for Women (CIW)⁴ were eligible for the program.

² A copy of the legislation, as well as other SB 618 program documents can be accessed at www.sandag.org/sb618.

³ RJD is located approximately 24 miles south of downtown San Diego. According to CDCR statistics as of midnight on September 28, 2011, RJD had a total population of 4,308 and a design capacity of 2,200.

⁴ CIW is the nearest women's facility, located approximately 90 miles northeast of downtown San Diego in Riverside County. According to CDCR statistics as of midnight on September 28, 2011, CIW had a total population of 1,960 and a design capacity of 1,356.

SB 618 AND PUBLIC SAFETY REALIGNMENT

Implementation of the San Diego Prisoner Reentry program began in 2005 with the initiation of SB 618, six years prior to California's Public Safety Realignment (Assembly Bill 109). This effort is one example of how San Diego County has been at the forefront of implementing evidence-based practices to reduce recidivism and ideally reduce revocations to prison for non-violent offenders. Eligible offenses resulting in SB 618 participation were similar to criminal involvement of those targeted for AB 109, in that many were non-violent drug or property crimes. As June 30, 2012, State funding for SB 618 was discontinued due to the shift in responsibilities for offender reentry from the State to local jurisdictions as of October 2011. The lessons learned from SB 618 implementation by policymakers committed to evidence-based practices, an earlier effort to reduce recidivism for a post-prison population, may be helpful as local governments seek to facilitate successful offender reentry into their communities.

KEY PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Since SB 618 was created based on evidence-based and best practices identified through research in the field of offender reentry, the program design exceeded treatment as usual in several tangible ways. For example, research finds that wrap-around services are most effective when provided through a team process consisting of shared goals, objectives, and strategies for monitoring results based on successes (Walker, 2008). The SB 618 program incorporated this strategy (Table 1) by providing case management services to facilitate participants' successful reintegration into their family and community. This level of care began with the administration of several standardized screenings and assessments

prior to entering the prison reception center⁵ to identify primary needs and reduce time in the reception center. Program staff discussed participant eligibility based on the results from these screenings and assessments during weekly Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings (MDT). Level of risk and need were identified during the MDT to begin development of the participant's Life Plan, which mapped out the most appropriate services to ensure the participant's success. Services were facilitated by a designated Prison Case Manager (PCM) and continued throughout the duration of participants' prison sentence. The PCM met with participants to ensure expedited access to programs (educational, vocational, and substance abuse treatment). The frequency of meetings between participants and PCMs varied throughout the prison term, similar to an hourglass, with fewer in the middle of the participant's sentence compared to more frequent meetings upon prison entry and six months prior to release.⁶

SB 618 relied on evidence-based and best practices, including pre-sentencing assessment, multi-disciplinary input into service plans, and ongoing case management from prison to the community.

To prepare participants for reentry, the Community Case Manager (CCM) conducted an intake assessment at the prison, reviewed the participants' Life Plan (a formal and dynamic document that charted their needs and progress from assessment to program completion), and discussed steps for transitioning to the outside world. CCMs met regularly with participants in

⁵ All arriving prisoners were processed at one of CDCR's 14 reception centers where they were screened before being assigned to one of the state's 33 prisons. Both RJD and CIW had a reception center within their facilities when SB 618 was implemented.

⁶ In addition to one-on-one meetings, CIW held monthly PCM-led group meetings with all SB 618 participants to provide an opportunity to share information regarding the program and obtain updates on the progress of participants paroled into the community.

their final months of incarceration to maintain a high level of motivation and adjust reentry plans as needed. In addition, PCMs and CCMs met as needed to discuss programming and staffing issues and troubleshoot resolutions. This process also involved the Parole Agent to ensure a smoother reentry transition for participants. Once

released, participants continued to receive consistent care from the CCM, Reentry Employment Coordinator (REC), and Community Roundtable (comprised of the participant, CCM, Parole Agent, REC, and other individuals deemed useful to successful reentry such as a family member, friend, or sponsor).

Table 1
SB 618 PROGRAM RELIED ON BOTH EVIDENCE-BASED AND BEST PRACTICES

Program started at signing of the Letter of Intent (at readiness conference when plea was taken)
Ongoing needs assessment conducted
A multi-disciplinary team approach utilized
Life Plan created with input from the participant and built on identified strengths
PCM and CCM provided advocacy and brokerage, both in prison and after release in the community
Custody time focused on rehabilitation
Services tailored to meet identified needs and risks
Services included drug treatment, vocational training, and education
Physical and mental health needs addressed*
Intensive case management provided during the first 72 hours after release from prison with emphasis on ensuring stable housing
Treatment-oriented service provision continued after release from custody
Emphasis placed on high-quality staff contact with participants as frequently as needed
Life Plan evolved with input from participants and individuals involved in their successful reentry
Staff roles were clearly defined and collaboration and community emphasized
Services were gender responsive and culturally competent

* While offenders with mental health issues were accepted into the SB 618 program, these offenders were often housed in areas of the prison where SB 618 services were not available. In the community, SB 618 linked offenders to behavioral health services providers as needed.

SOURCE: SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

COMPARISON TO TREATMENT AS USUAL

To facilitate reentry into the community following a prison sentence and to reduce recidivism, SB 618 provided a variety of services not otherwise available to offenders. Table 2 outlines the differences between services available to SB 618 participants and those receiving “treatment as

usual” within the prison and parole systems. All prisoners completed a pre-sentence interview with Probation, had access to prison services, were eligible for parole supervision, and could access community services. This section describes the enhanced services provided by SB 618 beyond the traditional roles of probation, prison, and parole.

Table 2
SB 618 SERVICES COMPARED TO “TREATMENT AS USUAL”

	SB 618	Treatment as Usual
Prior to Entering Prison		
Pre-sentencing interview with Probation	■	■
Screening and assessment	■	
Individualized Life Plan	■	
MDT meeting	■	
In Prison		
Prison case management	■	
Expedited entry into prison services	■	
Access to all prison services	■	■
Vocational assessment in prison	■	
Post Release		
Community case management	■	
Parole supervision	■	■
Vocational services	■	
Community Roundtable	■	
Access to community services	■	■

SOURCE: SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

PROGRAM PARTNERS

One of the many positive aspects of the SB 618 program was the unprecedented collaboration between local and state agencies. In December 2005, stakeholder meetings were coordinated by the San Diego County DA's Office and CDCR representatives to begin the task of developing a forward-thinking, evidence-based and best practices approach to reentry. Throughout program implementation, a core group of program partners – referred to as the Operational Procedures Committee – met regularly to design, implement, and tailor the program and confront issues and challenges as they arose. In June 2006, the local SB 618 leadership submitted its multi-agency plan to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, which unanimously approved it, paving the way for full implementation. Table 3 shows all of the SB 618 program partners and their function(s) within the program during the final year of operation, including the DA's Office; Public Defender's Office; Defense Bar; Sheriff's Department; Probation Department; CDCR (Division of Community Partnerships, both prisons, and Parole); Grossmont Union High School District Adult School; and the University of California, San Diego, Department of Psychiatry, Center for Criminality and Addiction Research, Training and Application (UCSD); and AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America).

Multi-agency collaboration was included in the design and implementation of the local SB 618 program.

Modifications to Program Partnerships

The program experienced reductions in the number of program partnerships over the course of program implementation. A significant change to the composition of the program partners occurred in July 2009, when budget cuts eliminated two key positions created by CDCR Department of Community Partnerships, namely the SB 618 Program Manager and the Assistant Program Manager (a position created in the second year of the program). The Program Manager played a key role in developing the SB 618 program from the ground up, while the Assistant Program Manager represented the Program Manager in his absence and served as a liaison between the local agencies and CDCR when bureaucratic challenges arose. To mitigate the loss of these individuals' leadership, a representative from the DA's office and the Probation Department took over the duties of meeting with CDCR leaders in Sacramento to advocate for the program and provide a consistent leadership presence at Operational Procedures Committee meetings.

The original program design included a contract with Comprehensive Training Systems, Inc. (CTS), a community-based organization specializing in employment readiness services. CTS conducted the vocational assessments in prison and provided an array of post-release services to participants seeking assistance with employment, education, and vocational skills. Due to budget cuts, the program partners terminated CTS's contract in October 2009 and transferred a portion of these functions to UCSD's CCM program.

While some staff positions were lost due to budget cuts, program partners were diligent in maintaining effective leadership and service delivery.

Table 3
PROGRAM PARTNERS AND THEIR SB 618 FUNCTION

CDCR - Division of Community Partnerships

Cooperated with staff from the DA's Office and Probation Department to provide leadership and oversee program activities.

San Diego County DA's Office

Initiated the SB 618 legislation; coordinated committees to implement the program; provided leadership; pre-screened cases for eligibility; coordinated court process to facilitate program entry; developed and maintained the SB 618 database; tracked new crimes committed by program participants; supervised AmeriCorps*VISTA volunteers who provided services related to capacity building and sustainability (voucher process, SB 618 manual development, and meeting support).

San Diego County Public Defender's Office

Facilitated resolution to legal issues potentially impacting reentry.

San Diego County Defense Bar

Confirmed offenders' eligibility and willingness to participate.

San Diego County Sheriff's Department

Administrator of local jail facilities; transported participants from jail to prison; conducted dental, mental health, and educational screenings.

San Diego County Probation Department

Served as the local SB 618 fiscal agent; provided leadership; conducted pre-sentencing interviews utilizing motivational interviewing techniques; administered the Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS)* and the Addiction Severity Index (ASI)*; coordinated and staffed the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings; and produced the Life Plan.

CDCR – Richard J. Donovan (RJD)

Prison for male offenders; conducted medical screenings; endorsed all prisoners for housing status; provided prison case management and rehabilitative programs; administered the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE)*; conducted pre-sentencing interviews and participated in the MDT.

CDCR – California Institution for Women (CIW)

Prison for female offenders; conducted medical screenings; endorsed prisoners for housing status; provided prison case management and rehabilitative programs; administered the TABE*; conducted pre-sentencing interviews and participated in the MDT.

CDCR – Parole

Supervised participants post release; participated in the Community Roundtable; collaborated closely with the CCM to coordinate community services for participant.

Grossmont Union High School District Adult School

Correctional education services subcontractor with the Sheriff's Department; administered the TABE and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)*.

University of California, San Diego (UCSD)

Subcontractor providing community case management; prepared participant, family, and community for reentry; participated in the MDT and Community Roundtable; served as SB 618 training coordinator; conducted vocational assessments (O*NET and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*) in prison, employment referrals and outreach post release.

* All standardized assessments are discussed in detail in Table 4.

SOURCE: SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

ELIGIBILITY AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

All SB 618 participants were culled from the DA's felony prosecution caseload⁷ and all served their prison sentences at either RJD or CIW. The opportunity to voluntarily enroll in the program was offered to both male and female nonviolent offenders. To be considered for the program, the candidate had to be in local custody, be a legal resident of San Diego County, and have previously agreed (or "stipulated") to a prison sentence of 8 to 72 months. Individuals with prior convictions for great bodily injury or murder were excluded, as were arson and sex offender registrants. Offenders with a violent conviction over five years old were evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Other eligibility criteria centered on classification issues allowing a participant to serve time at either of the two prison facilities noted above. This is further discussed in the following section. The program was not offered after sentencing, and participation in the SB 618 program did not affect the individual's prison sentence in any way⁸.

Modifications to Eligibility and Exclusion Process

Although the criteria dictating eligibility for the SB 618 program remained unchanged throughout implementation, modifications were made to processes that affected whether a participant would be retained in the program or excluded. For example, in August 2007, the program partners were successful in reaching agreement with CDCR to allow inmates with mental health issues to be endorsed to prison housing where they could participate in the program and still receive treatment for their mental health needs. Additionally, as of April 2010, a policy was implemented in RJD to improve population movement which resulted in excluding participants with certain medical conditions (e.g., asthma, hypertension, and diabetes) who were previously held in in the Minimum Security Facility (MSF). CDCR amended their policy to require inmates with these medical conditions to be

housed in a higher-security unit because it provided a greater range of medical care than the MSF, and medical devices (e.g., needles and inhalers) were capable of being used for inappropriate purposes inside prison, therefore warranting a higher level of security to monitor inmates. These criteria negatively impacted the flow of enrolling six participants each week and using resources unnecessarily by conducting services (e.g., assessments, MDT meetings, Life Plan development) prior to exclusion in prison.

PARTICIPANT ENROLLMENT PROCESS

In the first four months of the program (February to May 2007), all potential participants were obtained from the San Diego Superior Court's Downtown branch, the largest of the County's four courts⁹. As written in the Public Entity Agreement, the program began accepting up to six participants per week and focused on one courthouse in order to facilitate program start-up.

Modifications to Enrollment Process

With a commitment to expand the SB 618 program to all four county court houses, the program expanded to the Superior Court East County branch in the City of El Cajon in May 2007 and to the North County branch in the City of Vista in July 2011. The feasibility of expanding to the fourth courthouse was being investigated when the Public Safety Realignment Act (AB 109) was passed shifting the responsibility for these offenders from the State to local jurisdictions and ultimately leading to the closure of SB 618.

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

Screening and assessment of all SB 618 participants prior to service delivery was one of the evidence-based practices included in the original program design. Program partners recognized the importance of accurately identifying risks and needs prior to creating a service plan and enrolling participants in prison programs. A cursory screening of candidates was conducted by a trained Deputy District Attorney (DDA) in order to identify individuals who were

⁷ The DA prosecutes all felony and misdemeanor offenses occurring within the County of San Diego, with the exception of misdemeanors in the cities of San Diego and Poway.

⁸ Information regarding program eligibility can be found on-line at www.sandag.org/sb618.

⁹ A detailed diagram outlining how individuals are identified, screened, and enrolled in SB 618 can be found at www.sandag.org/sb618.

potentially eligible based on type of current offense, criminal history, and stipulated prison sentence of 8 to 72 months. After defendants decided to plead guilty and agreed to the stipulated sentence, they expressed their agreement to participate by signing a Letter of Intent (LOI) and Release of Information Waiver at the time the court took the change of plea¹⁰. At this point, a sentencing date was set for at least 20 court days from the date of the plea, during which time more formal screenings and assessments were conducted by the Sheriff's Department, Probation, and CDCR classification staff¹¹. Specifically, four standardized assessments were conducted to determine the level of risk of recidivism and the need for substance abuse treatment and other criminogenic needs, including life skills, basic education, and literacy training. Based on the program design, these assessments were to be completed within 14 days of court referral.

The next section and Table 4 summarize the timing of these assessments, some of which go beyond what is traditionally completed when offenders are sentenced to prison. Along with the assessments, a probation officer conducted a thorough, pre-sentencing interview with participants to explore the facets of their criminal and personal history. At the sentencing hearing, the participant's defense attorney spoke directly with the participant to explain the sentencing terms, provide a general overview of SB 618 services, and ask the participant to sign the contract¹² between themselves and the program indicating what is expected of both the participant and the program throughout SB 618 participation.

SB 618 adhered to evidence-based practices by conducting a series of screenings and assessments prior to service delivery.

The following information provides details of SB 618 program assessments (also shown in Table 4), which demonstrates the program partners' efforts to broaden the assessment of criminogenic risk factors.

- **Medical/Dental/Mental Health Screenings:**

The program's original design included the Sheriff's Department conducting screenings for medical, dental, and mental health issues in order to bypass lengthy stays in the reception center and streamline participants' entry into prison programming. However, as a result of lawsuits filed on behalf of California state prisoners, CDCR's medical system was under federal jurisdiction and administered by a court-appointed medical receiver. Consequently, medical screenings were never conducted by the Sheriff, but rather upon entry in the prison reception center.

- **Addiction Severity Index (ASI):**¹³ The ASI was used to measure individual needs and improvements related to substance abuse, mental health, and trauma-related issues for SB 618 participants. The tool was administered by the Probation Department prior to imprisonment. This tool was not part of the traditional prison assessment process. Therefore, this assessment goes beyond treatment as usual.

¹⁰ The Letter of Intent and Release of Information Waiver can be found at www.sandag.org/sb618.

¹¹ CDCR classification staff screens all prisoners to determine appropriate housing placement. For example, RJD does not accept offenders who are confined to a wheelchair because the prison is not equipped to meet these special needs. CIW is able to accommodate these special needs for females.

¹² The contract can be found on-line at www.sandag.org/sb618.

¹³ Numerous studies have verified the validity and reliability of the ASI with different populations (Alterman, Brown, Zaballero, & McKay, 1994; Hendricks, Kaplan, Van Limbeek, & Geerlings, 1989; Hodgins & El-Guebaly, 1992; Kosten, Rounsaville, & Kleber, 1983; Leonhard, Mulvey, Gastfriend, & Schwartz, 2000; Stöffelmayr, Mavis, & Kasim, 1994), including prisoners (Amoureux, van den Hurk, Breteler, & Schippers, 1994) and the homeless (Joyner, Wright, & Devine, 1996; Zanis, McLellan, Cnaan, & Randall, 1994).

- **Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS):**¹⁴ Educational issues and life skills were assessed through a contract between the Sheriff's Department and the Grossmont Union High School District Adult School. This assessment went beyond basic math and reading skills examined by the TABE (described below) to include listening, writing, and speaking skills. The CASAS also was used in the prison with inmates who completed 15 hours of instruction.
- **Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS):**¹⁵ The COMPAS assessed criminogenic risk and needs and was administered one-on-one to SB 618 participants by Probation prior to sentencing.
- **Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE):**¹⁶ The TABE examined level of education and was administered with participants while in local jail by the Grossmont Union High School District

Adult School. In the prison reception center, educational staff conducted the reading portion of the TABE to inmates in groups to determine reading level. Once an inmate entered the general population, staff conducted the full battery TABE as a pre-test. For inmates participating in educational classes, staff administered subsequent TABEs every six months to any prisoner with an initial score of 9.0 or lower (indicating a ninth grade reading level).

- **Vocational Assessments:** Participants received assessments for vocational aptitudes, interests, and abilities using the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI) tools after prison entry. As with the ASI, vocational assessments were only available to SB 618 participants, which is beyond treatment as usual.

¹⁴ According to the CASAS Web site (www.casas.org), the reliability and validity of the tool have been verified through "rigorous statistical procedures." SB 618 uses the CASAS 85R level C Reading Life and Work.

¹⁵ Northpointe Institute for Public Management, Inc. (the company that designed the COMPAS) indicates that all risk factor items were developed using standard factor analytic and psychometric procedures. In addition, validation studies have been conducted across the nation supporting the predictive and construct validity and generalizability of COMPAS (Austin & McGinnis, 2004; Farabee, Zhang, Roberts, & Yang, 2010), including across gender and race/ethnicity (Brennan, Dieterich, & Ehret, 2009). However, one study has found variation across racial/ethnic groups (Fass, Heilbrun, DeMatteo, & Fretz, 2008).

¹⁶ The TABE is a nationally-named test of adult basic education developed by CTB/McGraw-Hill. SB 618 uses the TABE form 9.

Table 4
ASSESSMENT TIMING FOR SB 618 PARTICIPANTS

Assessment	Pre	Mid	Post
▶ Medical/Dental/ Mental Health	Pre-MDT	None	None
▶ ASI	Pre-MDT	None	None
▶ CASAS	Pre-MDT	None	None
▶ COMPAS	Pre-MDT	None	None
▶ TABE	Pre-MDT	In prison	Every 6 months
▶ O*NET & Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®	In prison	None	None

* The specific O*NET tools utilized for SB 618 focus on career interests, values, and abilities.

SOURCE: SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

Modifications to Screening and Assessment

- Mental Health Screening:** CDCR recognized the Sheriff's mental health screening until August 2009, when the CDCR Regional Chief of Mental Health (responsible for overseeing quality assurance of mental health screening of male inmates) requested that this screening be duplicated upon an inmate's arrival at RJD's reception center. However, the program partners remained committed to minimizing the amount of time participants spent in reception center and made numerous requests to CDCR to honor the local mental health screenings. As a result of their diligence, the Regional Chief agreed that the duplication was not necessary and, as of August 2010, agreed to use the information from the local screenings.
- ASI and COMPAS:** As originally designed, the program called for the pre/post administration of the ASI and COMPAS to allow for a comparative analysis between scores. UCSD's CCMs conducted the ASI 30 days after release and again at 12 months after release; and they administered a post-COMPAS at program exit. Due directly to budget cuts and subsequent CCM staffing reductions in October 2010, UCSD and program partners agreed to stop conducting the mid- and post-ASI and post-COMPAS assessments to allow CCMs more time to concentrate on their increased caseload.

- Vocational Assessments:** Finally, there were modifications regarding the administration of the vocational assessments as a result of the termination of CTS's contract in October 2009 when UCSD assumed the role of conducting vocational assessments in prison. Although the program continued to use the same four assessment tools, UCSD decided to improve the process and administer the assessments five months prior to release, rather than 180 days after entry into prison as originally designed. The reasoning behind this change was to wait until participants enrolled in or completed prison vocational programs and had time to reflect on their vocational needs and aspirations.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM (MDT) AND LIFE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Research supports that successful reentry is realized through collaboration across systems, not only to provide leadership, but also in the delivery of services (La Vigne, Davies, Palmer, & Halberstadt, 2008; Petersilia, 2004). One way that the SB 618 program incorporated best practices was by utilizing the MDT to discuss participants' eligibility and level of risk and need based on standardized assessments. The MDT was comprised of staff from Probation, CDCR (PCM and Classification Counselor), and UCSD.

According to the program design, MDT meetings were to be held within 14 days of participants' referral to the program by the court and before they were sentenced. The objectives of the MDT meeting were to discuss the results of the screenings, assessments, and pre-sentencing interview; agree on the participant's suitability for the program; and create a course of action for services and case management. These meetings took place at one of two local jails (Las Colinas Detention Facility for females and George Bailey Detention Facility for males) and allowed participants to meet the MDT members, ask questions and provide input, learn the results of their assessments, and get information about the program and their role in it.

A key component of the SB 618 program was the creation of the Life Plan¹⁷, as previously mentioned. Information maintained in the Life Plan included personal demographics, screening and assessment results, and case management notes entered by the PCM and CCM. At no particular point in service delivery did only one program staff member make a stand-alone decision regarding participants' course of programming. Rather, decisions were made by consensus among program staff and participants. Three forums at which the Life Plan was formally discussed included prior to prison entry at the MDT meeting; during incarceration through discussions between the PCM and CCM; and post release at the Community Roundtable meetings. The Life Plan was available to participants throughout their involvement in the program with the intention that it would be particularly useful as they reintegrated into their family and community.

Decisions regarding service planning and delivery were made by consensus with input from program staff and participants.

Modifications to MDT and Life Plan Development

In April 2008, key staff refined the MDT system to give participants greater opportunity to identify their goals and provide input, as well as generate ownership in the Life Plan. For example, team members enhanced the MDT meeting by identifying three core issues (i.e., education, vocation, and substance abuse) and then providing participants with information about services available in prison and the community. At that point, participants were asked for input on services they felt would help them most in overcoming these issues and key staff made every effort to enroll participants in these programs. To streamline information sharing among program staff working directly with participants in developing the Life Plan, the program successfully automated the Life Plan into the DA's database in May 2008, which greatly enhanced the flow of participant information between key staff.

PRISON SERVICES

The SB 618 program was designed with an emphasis on giving participants an opportunity to engage in rehabilitative activities in prison. These activities included learning vocational skills, moving forward with education goals, and treatment of substance use issues. Participants were rewarded for achieving benchmarks along the way (e.g., a gift card to use upon release from

¹⁷ The Life Plan can be found at www.sandag.org/sb618.

prison).¹⁸ The prison components of the SB 618 program, as originally designed, are described in detail below.

Prison Case Management

One of the best practices utilized in SB 618 was ongoing case management during the participants' prison sentence. This component was believed to encourage participants to remain constructively engaged while serving their time. The role of the PCM was to advocate on behalf of the participants as they maneuvered through the complex prison system and ensure that they were expedited into classes and programs relevant to their Life Plan objectives. In setting up this design, program partners believed the benefit of entering programs more quickly would be an enticement to program recruitment. SB 618 was originally designed for each prison to hire sufficient PCMs to maintain a caseload ratio of 60 to 1 and for the PCMs to be supervised by a Prison Case Management Coordinator (PCMC).

The first step in any therapeutic relationship is engagement, or building rapport and trust between the helping professional and client. According to the program design, the PCM engaged participants by identifying their goals in prison, as well as after release; formulating an in-prison programming plan; and providing more information about the SB 618 program. At both prisons, once participants transitioned to permanent housing within the general population, PCMs met with participants to review and update the Life Plan and ensure that participants were expedited into appropriate programs.

• **Modifications to Prison Case Management:**

The program partners originally anticipated that the program would utilize a social work model for the prison case management component. However, at the start of the program, RJD opted to use educational staff to fill these positions, while CIW hired licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs). However, over the course of program implementation, qualitative differences between the two prisons' case management

services became apparent¹⁹; and program partners felt it would be in the best interest of the participants to maintain consistency in the PCMs' professional backgrounds at both prisons. As a result, RJD began recruiting LCSWs in May 2008 to replace the four existing educator PCMs and one PCMC. RJD struggled to fill these five positions due to budget constraints, hiring freezes, and recruitment and retention challenges, resulting in their PCM program never being fully staffed as intended. In comparison to RJD, the staffing at CIW remained stable and unchanged throughout program implementation, with one PCM and one PCMC.

Vocational and Education Programming

- **Vocational:** Research shows that having a stable job that a parolee wants to keep will reduce the likelihood of recidivating (Aos, Miller, & Drake, 2006). However, over the past few decades, many vocational training programs in California's prisons, including RJD, were dismantled as a result of overcrowding and the emphasis on "punishment" rather than "rehabilitation" (CDCR, 2007). Since 2005, when CDCR shifted its focus to "rehabilitation," prisons struggled to restore programs due to bureaucratic hurdles. For example, in 2002 RJD lost all 19 vocational programs because of overcrowding and found it necessary to remodel classrooms, install new equipment, meet safety standards, and recruit and hire new instructors in order to provide SB 618 participants with relevant vocational training. As a result of these efforts, RJD opened classes for Welding in August 2007, Machine Shop in February 2008, Cable Technology in April 2008, and Mill and Cabinet Making in January 2009, though the prison struggled to maintain these classes throughout SB 618 implementation. Unlike RJD, CIW's vocational programs were not negatively impacted to the same degree, with

¹⁸ More details regarding the benchmarks can be found at www.sandag.org/sb618.

¹⁹ An example of differences between prison practices was that PCMs in RJD began the engagement process while participants were in the reception center awaiting final classification and housing placement. In contrast, CIW's PCMs opted to begin the engagement process prior to prison entry by meeting privately with participants at the jail before the MDT meeting.

Prison Industry Authority (PIA) training continuing in Sewing and Construction.

- **Education:** Research indicates that individuals involved in the justice system are less likely to have completed higher education compared to those with no history of incarceration. For example, around two in five (41%) prisoners and one in three (33%) probationers have not completed high school or obtained a General Equivalency Diploma (GED), compared to 18 percent of the general population. In addition, dropping out of school is negatively associated with employment (prior to incarceration) and positively associated with recidivism (Harlow, 2003). However, the relationship between educational attainment and an increased propensity for criminal activity is not necessarily a simple one. It is important to note that individuals who recidivate usually have a variety of risk factors in addition to educational deficiencies (i.e., criminal histories that began at an earlier age than non-recidivists; more hostile and nonconformist behavior; abuse in the past; mental health issues; and frequent homelessness, unemployment, and addiction to alcohol and other drugs). While not having the ability to read does not cause one to commit crime, it can be an important part of the equation (Newman, Lewis, & Beverstock, 1993).

Further, improving offenders' educational status provides gains in self-esteem and improves the chances of obtaining gainful employment after release. Upon entering local custody, SB 618 participants were administered the TABE, which rates an individual's basic educational skills. Based on the TABE results,²⁰ SB 618 participants had the opportunity to enroll in level-appropriate classes in prison, such as basic literacy, GED, or college level coursework.

- **Modifications to Vocational and Educational Programming:** State legislation passed in 2010 affected an inmate's eligibility for rehabilitative programming. Senate Bill (SB) 18 allowed CDCR to implement policies to reduce both the prison and parole population by amending the California Code of Regulations governing inmate credit earnings. Inmates could receive day-for-day credits in both local custody and state prison, thereby reducing the length of time spent incarcerated. This policy change affected an inmates' eligibility for education or vocational programs because the inmates needed at least one year left to serve on their sentence before enrolling in the program. With a greater number of time credits, fewer inmates had enough time left on their sentence to meet these enrollment criteria. While this change had a minimal effect on the evaluation (i.e., fewer than 20 treatment group members were still in prison at the time the change was made), it impacted the program's ability to provide rehabilitative services in prison to participants.

In January 2010, RJD closed the Mill and Cabinet vocational program and in April 2011 the Cable Technology program also closed, leaving Welding and Machine Shop. At that time, Welding restricted participation to inmates with a GED and who mentioned this field in their Life Plan. Program partners were able to negotiate funds for an instructor for the Food Handler's Certificate program which re-opened on the Minimum Security Facility in April 2011. CIW closed one vocational program (Graphic Arts) but their Cosmetology program opened in May 2011. Project New Start was introduced at RJD in September 2010 and was comprised of a four-week curriculum focusing on pre-employment skills and financial literacy. The curriculum, created by the Sacramento Workforce Partnership, was taught by a community-based organization contracted through the San Diego Workforce Partnership. Classes were held daily on the Minimum Security Facility.

²⁰ The initial assessment examined reading comprehension. Reassessments were administered only to those with reading levels below 9.0. These reassessments examined reading comprehension and math.

Also in January 2010, RJD closed its college-level classes but maintained Basic Literacy and Adult Basic Education classes. To augment the loss of college classes, SB 618 program partners reached out to Southwestern College, a local two-year community college, to explore opportunities for providing coursework to RJD participants. Unfortunately, due to limited resources at Southwestern College, this plan was not fully realized. In the interim, Southwestern made career counseling services available to SB 618 participants upon release from prison.

Substance Abuse Treatment

According to Petersilia's 2006 report, *Understanding California Corrections*, 21 percent of California's prisoners served time for a drug-related offense, 43 percent had a "high need" for alcohol treatment, and 56 percent faced a "high need" for drug treatment (compared to the national prison average of 49%). Based on these statistics, as well as data from the DA's caseload, local SB 618 leaders expected that the majority of program participants would have serious substance abuse issues; and in fact, approximately four-fifths of participants entered the program with issues of alcohol and/or drug dependence. Prison Substance Abuse Programs (SAP) were administered by CDCR's Office of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (OSATS). CDCR contracted with outside agencies to provide in-prison substance abuse programs and OSATS administered both in-prison and community aftercare substance abuse treatment, which adhered to the therapeutic community model and provided gender-specific services for females.

- **Modifications to Substance Abuse Treatment:** The SAP program at RJD faced numerous challenges, which precluded participants from receiving treatment in prison. The first challenge occurred between July and October 2008, when the SAP program was suspended due to breaches in security by contracted staff. As a result, CDCR gave the contractor the opportunity to remedy the problems that allowed such breaches to occur.

Steps taken by the contractor included the termination of 18 of the 36 employees and improved screening and training for new employees. Despite taking steps to remedy the security breaches, budget cuts forced CDCR to close SAP at RJD approximately one year later in October 2009, leaving no drug treatment services available to inmates in the prison.²¹ In June 2011, SAP at CIW lost 50 beds (from 170 to 120) and was shortened from 6 to 5 months. The lack of in-prison drug treatment jeopardized participants' recovery efforts and their ability to enter aftercare treatment funded by Substance Abuse Services Coordinating Agencies (SASCA). SASCA was instrumental in placing parolees into community-based programs within the county to which they parole and requires that prisoners complete 90 uninterrupted days of SAP treatment immediately prior to release from prison in order to qualify for residential treatment services in the community.

Another loss of substance abuse treatment services occurred in September 2009 when CDCR announced the closure of all state drug treatment furlough (DTF) programs, including the two DTF facilities in San Diego county (the Lighthouse for males and Freedom House for females). The DTF program had allowed eligible inmates (i.e., non-serious, non-violent, and non-sex offenders) to complete their sentence in a community-based residential substance abuse treatment program. Although the Lighthouse no longer provided a DTF facility, they did agree in December 2009 to enter an MOU with program partners and provide "fee for treatment" for SB 618 male participants.

Program partners remained very committed to finding an alternative solution to SAP, including the addition of a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy module focusing on substance abuse at RJD. In addition, there were discussions between program partners and Solano State prison in northern California to explore the possibility of

²¹ In January 2010, SAP at CIW was available only to inmates deemed civil addicts by the court but was opened to SB 618 participants in April 2010.

training suitable RJD inmates in Solano's Certified Offender Mentors²² program to provide peer recovery treatment. Although SB 618 closed before this idea could be realized, it again illustrates program partners' ability to "think outside the box" in order to adhere to their original goal of evidence-based service delivery.

POST-RELEASE SERVICES

As the number of parolees returning to the community soared, it was clear that neighborhood leaders and public safety officials had a vested interest in exploring strategies to reduce recidivism and promote a productive way of life for ex-offenders. With this information in mind, SB 618 was designed to include a seamless transition of case management between prison and the community. In addition to being supervised by a Parole Agent, participants received post-release case management and vocational services from the CCM. The Parole Agent, CCM, the participant, and any other individual(s) (i.e., family, friends, sponsors, and clergy) deemed helpful to reentry efforts met regularly as the Community Roundtable to provide support and monitor progress. As with prison services, participants received rewards for achieving benchmarks while in the community. These post-release services are described in detail below.

Community Case Management

Research reveals that community-based services that include intensive advocacy are more effective in reducing recidivism than institutional programs alone (Andrews, 2006; Matthews, Hubbard, & Latessa, 2001; Sherman, Gottfredson, MacKenzie, Eck, Reuter, & Bushway, 1997). As such, UCSD's Center for Criminality and Addiction Research, Training and Application (CCARTA) provided community case management to all participants for 12 months after release, followed by six months of aftercare if needed. The role of the

CCM was multi-pronged and included pre-release discussions with the PCM, Parole Agent, and participant to review and revise the Life Plan as necessary. The CCM and participant discussed concrete plans for residential options immediately after release. This pre-release engagement strategy was rooted in the belief that by offering a helping hand on the other side of the prison door and creating a structured plan of action, participants would begin to see that successful reintegration can be a reality.

Community case management began prior to release in order to foster success during the participant's reentry into the community.

Furthermore, the CCM's role was to ensure a seamless transition by meeting participants at the prison gate and transporting them directly to the agreed-upon residential treatment facility. Paying mind to experts' claim that the first 72 hours after release were critical in a parolees' success (Ball, Weisberg, & Dansky, 2008), the CCM remained on call for 72 hours after the participants' release to answer any questions and continue the momentum of post-release engagement and motivation. Once in the community, according to the program design, participants met with their CCM on a regular basis²³ to receive referrals and services, including monetary assistance ("stabilization funds") to offset costs such as clothing for work, public transportation passes, and other amenities as needed.

- **Modifications to Community Case Management:** The original program design called for UCSD to hire new full-time CCMs as more participants entered the program and

²² The Offender Mentor Certification Program at Solano State Prison began in 2009 and offered long-term inmates (primarily "lifers") the opportunity to receive California Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (CAADAC) certification. Under supervision of the Office of Substance Abuse Treatment prison staff, these offender mentors provided peer recovery services to other inmates (CDCR, 2009).

²³ The frequency of meetings between CCMs and the participant depended on needs of the participant. See Chapter 4 in *Improving Reentry for Ex-Offenders in San Diego County: SB 618 Fourth Annual Report* for data regarding the frequency of these meetings, which can be accessed at www.sandag.org/sb618.

maintain a 30:1 caseload. However, budget cuts significantly affected this original plan. In August 2010, UCSD was required to cut their operating budget by one-third, resulting in the lay-off of two full-time CCMs and leaving a total of four CCMs. At their most fully staffed in 2009, UCSD had eight CCMs; however, with two consecutive years of budget cuts and lay-offs, the CCM caseload increased from the original design of 30:1 to 55:1. To augment these staffing reductions, five college interns (four bachelor's and one master's level) were placed by local colleges at UCSD to assist CCMs. The interns shared a caseload of six participants with one CCM and performed much of the same duties as the CCM. Another modification began in December 2010, when UCSD conducted reentry orientation groups giving a forum to participants to learn more about community services available, program expectations, and to have any questions answered.

Vocational Services

The design of the SB 618 program included vocational specialists, whose role began in prison by administering the O*NET and MBTI assessments within 90 days of the participant's entry into the general prison population. The results of these assessments were interpreted and explained to the participants. A follow-up visit with each participant by the vocational specialist further explored their employment strengths as demonstrated from the O*NET assessment in conjunction with past employment history. Job-readiness workshops were held in prison in which participants learned soft skills (interviewing and résumé writing), as well as realities of the job market in San Diego County. This combined information was used to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) to assist with post-release job search and employment placement or referral into vocational, education, or post-secondary educational opportunities. If, after release, participants required assistance with vocational readiness beyond what was currently offered in the community, the vocational specialist assisted with job-readiness skills and resources, as well as created positive linkages with prospective

employers to maximize participants' vocational success.

- **Modifications to Vocational Services:** As previously mentioned, CTS's contract was terminated in October 2009 and vocational services were provided by UCSD's Reentry Employment Coordinator. As such, the Reentry Employment Coordinator administered the O*NET and MBTI assessments with participants 180 days prior to release from prison and met with participants to interpret the results of these assessments. The Reentry Employment Coordinator trained the PCMs and CCMs to interpret the scores of the assessments and discuss the results with the participants in custody and in the community. One benefit of this change was that CCMs were more closely involved in a participant's referral for vocational services since this component was part of UCSD. In addition, UCSD's Reentry Employment Coordinator developed broader linkages with several local employment service providers, felon-friendly employers, and community colleges, as well as chaired the Employment Subcommittee of the San Diego Reentry Roundtable²⁴. In April 2011, UCSD developed "Community Check-in" workshops focusing on employment and education. Guest speakers from the community were invited to present on a variety of programs and services they have available, and participants were able to interact with program providers to ask questions and sign up for services.

Community Roundtable

Another best practices approach is the inclusion of informal social supports in the participant's reentry plan (Backer, Guerra, Hesselbein, Lasker, & Petersilia, 2005; Byrne, Taxman, & Young, 2002; Matthews et al., 2001; Petersilia, 2007; Reentry Policy Council, 2005). Specifically, research shows that the likelihood of a participant following

²⁴ The Reentry Roundtable is a local collaborative comprised of approximately 200 community members, private and governmental agencies, and formerly incarcerated individuals. Meeting monthly, the Reentry Roundtable serves as a forum to share information, discuss ways to provide integrated services, review existing policies and procedures, and recommend necessary changes.

through with their reentry plan increases when there is formal involvement by family members (Braithwaite, 2002). The SB 618 program followed that guidance by developing the Community Roundtable, a multi-disciplinary group which met regularly and included the participant, Parole Agent, and CCM to discuss existing needs, review the Life Plan, and ensure that the participant was on the right path. In addition to the above-mentioned professionals, participants were encouraged to invite any individuals supportive of their success, including family, friends, sponsors, and clergy. The Community Roundtable was another example where the program design included opportunities for decision making about the participant's Life Plan in concert with the participant and program staff.

- **Modifications to Community Roundtable:**

The program held its first Community Roundtable in January 2008, approximately two months after the first participant was released from prison. Using feedback from participants and key staff, program partners took steps to refine the roundtable process to make sure it was as productive as possible. An example of the collaborative effort among SB 618 staff was the agreement reached between the CCMs and Parole Agents to hold Community Roundtables the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Parole Agent's office to ensure consistency in scheduling and maximize attendance by all key stakeholders. To enhance accessibility of the Community Roundtable meetings and increase participant attendance, the CCMs and Parole Agents expanded the locations of the meetings to include community venues other than the Parole office, such as residential treatment facilities and the participant's home.

Aftercare

During the parole period (which was typically 13 months for those who successfully met parole conditions), the parolee and Parole Agent agreed upon appropriate aftercare services, such as drug treatment and employment training. However, due to high caseloads, most Parole Agents were limited in the extent of case management they could provide. In response, SB 618 was designed to augment parole services by providing one year of post-release case management to strengthen the safety net and facilitate successful reentry. After this one-year period, participants could continue to receive assistance and support for up to six additional months (i.e., the aftercare period), with CCMs touching base with them as needed.

SUMMARY

The San Diego County DA's Office initiated SB 618, which was signed into law in October 2005 and became effective January 2006. The program that resulted from this legislation was modeled on evidence-based and best practices in the field of offender reentry to facilitate an ex-offender's successful reentry from prison into the community and prevent recidivism. Over the course of program implementation, modifications occurred to all components. Several of these changes were implemented to improve services; however, other changes were the result of budget cuts and other policy changes that were beyond the control of program partners. With the advent of public safety realignment, the effectiveness of SB 618 remains of interest to local policymakers as they strive to protect public safety. This section described the original design of the SB 618 program that was based upon evidence-based and best practices and the program modifications that occurred throughout implementation.

Evaluation Methodology

INTRODUCTION

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) believed that a formal evaluation of the SB 618 program was warranted to show other interested parties how the program was designed and implemented, as well as whether or not it worked. Discussions were held throughout 2006 with various researchers to provide expertise in developing a research design and offer insights into best practices learned from other jurisdictions. The Criminal Justice Research Division of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) was a regular participant at these early meetings and, in September 2006, was selected to conduct the independent process and impact evaluation.

SANDAG has a rich 30-year history serving as the Clearinghouse for crime data analysis for the San Diego region. Over the years, SANDAG has conducted various reentry-related research studies with a variety of populations (e.g., programs for adults, juveniles, and mentally ill offenders); collaborated with the San Diego County District Attorney's Office on the Reentry Mapping Network, part of a cross-site project managed by the Urban Institute and funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation; and served as an active member of the San Diego Reentry Roundtable, since its inception in 2003.

The goals of the evaluation were to determine if the program reduced recidivism (i.e., being returned to prison for a parole violation or new felony conviction) and/or resulted in other positive outcomes, as well as identify the conditions under which the program was most likely to accomplish these goals. Additionally, the evaluation determined whether the reentry program was cost effective relative to treatment as usual. This section describes the methodology for the evaluation, including research questions, data sources and measures, and analysis plan.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To determine what effect the program had on participants, the following questions were investigated:

1. Was recidivism (being returned to prison for a parole violation or new felony conviction) reduced among the treatment group relative to the comparison group?
2. Did participants make improvements in other areas of their life following release from prison (e.g., employment, housing)?
3. What factors are associated with desistance from crime?
4. Was the program cost effective?

RESEARCH DESIGN

To determine if SB 618 reduced recidivism (or increased desistance), it was necessary to ask, "Compared to what?" For the current evaluation, four possible research designs were proposed. First, a true experimental, randomized design was proposed in which all eligible candidates who met program criteria and agreed to participate in this project would be randomly assigned to receive SB 618 services (the treatment group) or to receive "treatment as usual" (the comparison group). This research design would have been the strongest methodologically because both study groups were equivalent starting out. In addition, if demand for the program was greater than capacity, it would have been more equitable because all individuals would have an equal chance of receiving services. However, because this design required flexibility that was not feasible in the number of assessments done per week (because every eligible person should be able to be in either study group and program staffing levels permitted only six assessments per week), an experimental design was not possible.

A second design option, pseudo-random assignment, also was proposed that would have entailed random assignment procedures prepared by the research team for a certain number of participants per week (10 for example) based on a

pipeline study (which would track how many offenders were eligible each week); however, this design option also required more flexibility than was possible given program staffing constraints. That is, workload did not allow for catch-up in one week for a smaller number of cases in a previous week.

A third option, a quasi-experimental research design aimed at preventing selection bias, was proposed in which the first six eligible candidates each week who met program criteria and agreed to participate would be assigned to receive SB 618 treatment services (the treatment group). The remaining participants who were deemed eligible and also agreed to participate, but were not enrolled in the program because of lack of space (e.g., first six slots that week were already filled), would be placed into the comparison group to receive “treatment as usual.” However, due to concerns from program staff that it was not ethical to ask people to participate in a program in which they do not have a chance of actually participating, it also was not an option.

Given these constraints, the only practical option was a quasi-experimental, nonequivalent study group design with possible selection bias. As such, the first six eligible participants per week willing to participate after July 1, 2007, were assigned to the treatment group. This date was chosen to allow sufficient time for the program to become fully operational. The comparison group consisted of individuals who were eligible since the program began (February 2007), but were never asked if they would have participated. Those offered the program but who declined to participate since February 2007 also were tracked. Study group selection continued until at least 320 individuals

were assigned to the treatment and comparison groups.²⁵

Since this research design did not include random assignment, individuals in the treatment group could differ systematically from those in the comparison group, potentially biasing the results of the impact evaluation (i.e., it was unknown if the comparison group would volunteer for the program if it were offered). During the time individuals were assigned to the treatment group (between July 2007 and November 2008), 195 individuals were offered and refused²⁶ program services. Around two in every three individuals (64%) who were offered the program accepted, and approximately one out of three declined (36%). Reasons for declining participation were not available because individuals who refused were not asked to provide reasons for doing so.²⁷ Given this situation, the research team searched the literature and sought input from SB 618 program partners to identify variables related to why someone chose to participate (or not to participate) for the propensity score matching model to account for this self-selection bias, which will be described later.

²⁵ This sample size was based on a power analysis, using a conservative measure of recidivism (50%) and a 20 percent estimated variance between the two study groups in recidivism (based on meta-analysis by Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta, Gendreau, and Cullen [1990] as summarized by Gendreau [1996]). Using a .05 threshold for significance (the alpha level), it was anticipated that 80 percent power would be achieved with the 320 target sample size each for the treatment and comparison groups. Statistical power is the probability one can detect a meaningful difference if one truly exists. This sample size enabled comparisons between the study groups (i.e., two sample tests), as well as examinations of changes over time to the treatment group only (i.e., pre-post, single sample tests).

²⁶ Information was not available regarding factors (such as housing issues at the prison or prior prison gang membership) that may have later deemed individuals who refused to participate as ineligible for program services.

²⁷ Because eligible individuals were offered the program by their defense attorney, it was not possible for program staff to coordinate with the large number of defense attorneys to get these data directly from clients.

STUDY GROUP ASSIGNMENT METHODS

This program evaluation involved data collection by practitioners, as well as the research team. The responsibilities of program staff began at study group selection. The flow of this process is shown in Figure 2. Cases were screened for SB 618 eligibility on an ongoing basis until the treatment group slots were filled each week.²⁸ Anyone identified as eligible after that point was added to the comparison group (i.e., the “not offered” group).

The intention was to complete this process in a standardized manner so that the pool from which these cases were pulled could be described; however, the system of processing non-violent felony cases was not centralized and there was no way to know all potential cases eligible for SB 618 until data were entered into the DA’s Case Management System (CMS). To identify a larger number of cases for inclusion in the comparison group, a list of non-violent felony cases prosecuted in the Central and East County Divisions of the DA’s office was compiled quarterly from CMS. This list included cases meeting the following criteria:

- assigned to the Central or East County districts of the DA’s Office;
- not assigned to the following special divisions within the DA’s Office: Gangs, Sex Crimes, Family Protection, Cold Case, or Special Operations;
- readiness hearing date between March 2007 and September 2009;
- non-violent current offense as defined by Penal Code 667.5(c);
- not diverted to drug treatment;²⁹
- sentence length of 8 to 72 months; and
- not sentenced to life in prison or death.

The DDA assigned to SB 618 screened each case file based on the following criteria:

- in custody throughout judicial process;
- legal residence in San Diego County;
- no prior convictions of great bodily injury or murder;
- prior violent felony convictions (defined by Penal Code 667.5(c)) over five years old were screened on a case-by-case basis;
- agreed to a stipulated sentence;
- time to serve of no more than 36 months and no less than 4 months;
- no mental health or medical holds;
- no holds by another jurisdiction;
- no immigration holds;
- no arson registrants; and
- no sex offender registrants.

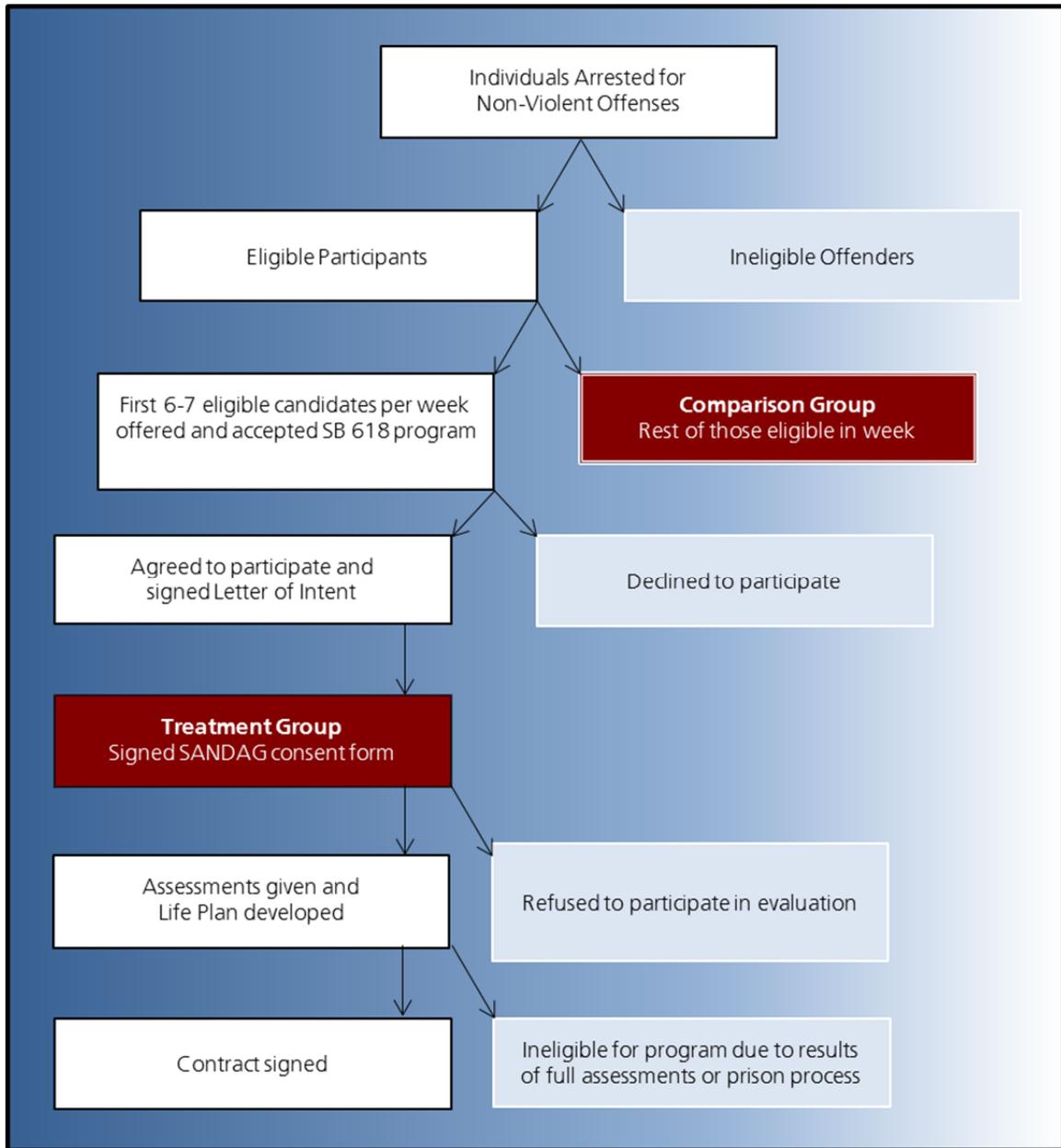
All cases previously assigned to the program (i.e., signed the Letter of Intent) were kept in the treatment group.³⁰ The remaining cases meeting these criteria were added to the comparison group (i.e., the “not offered” group). Cases not meeting any of these criteria were put in the ineligible group and not tracked as part of the evaluation. As a result, there were 381 comparison cases available to match with 332 in the treatment group.

²⁸ Any participants deemed ineligible through the assessment process during the same week were replaced with another individual.

²⁹ Proposition 36 and PC 1000 are the two types of drug diversion in California.

³⁰ Upon prison entry, participants could be excluded from the program due to housing issues (e.g., HIV positive status for male participants), a previous history of maximum security housing (i.e., Level IV) in prison, prison gang affiliation, and extensive psychiatric needs and/or physical disabilities that preclude housing in areas of the prison eligible for SB 618 services.

Figure 2
STUDY GROUP IDENTIFICATION PROCESS



SOURCE: SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

PROPNESITY SCORE MATCHING

As previously mentioned, propensity score matching was used to balance variables possibly related to selection differences before conducting the analysis. This technique matched participants with non-participants according to multiple determinants of program participation. Of all the potential comparison individuals, only those who were actually comparable to the treatment group were retained in the comparison group.

The first step in this process was to isolate any differences between the groups regarding the data available in order to identify appropriate variable for the propensity score matching model. Because it was not known if the comparison group would have volunteered to participate in the program if offered, measures of volunteerism were of interest. While the literature search and input from program partners did not produce any measurable factors related to “volunteerism,” differences between the treatment group and individuals refusing the offer of SB 618 participation were assessed to determine if volunteerism impacted comparability with respect to demographic and criminal history characteristics between those groups.

As for all analysis in this report, significant differences were determined using the .05 significance level. That is, there was a 95 percent chance that the differences between the two groups were true for the entire population.

Results of analysis comparing those who were offered and accepted SB 618 services (i.e., the treatment group) and individuals who refused services (i.e., the refusal group) showed that the two groups were similar in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, and some measures of prior criminal justice system contact. Although, the average age for the refusal group was 37 and the average age for those in the treatment group was 35, this difference was not statistically significant (not shown).

Examination of criminal history in the two years prior to intake into SB 618 revealed mixed results in regard to the criminal backgrounds of individuals in the two groups. Specifically, significantly fewer individuals in the refusal group had prior criminal involvement during the two years before the program offer date; however, of those individuals who had a prior history, the criminal backgrounds were similar to the treatment group. As Table 5 shows, the refusal group was significantly less likely to have a prior conviction (47%) or jail sentence (27%) than the treatment group (58% and 36%, respectively). However, further analysis of just those individuals who had been convicted found the two groups to be similar in the intensity (i.e., the number of convictions), level, and type of charges (not shown). These findings suggest that the refusal group may have had less exposure to the criminal justice system and were less aware of the challenges associated with reentry. To account for these differences, prior conviction and prior jail sentence were included in the propensity score model.

Table 5
REFUSAL GROUP LESS LIKELY TO HAVE PRIOR CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT
TWO YEARS BEFORE PROGRAM OFFER DATE*

	Treatment	Refusal
Prior Convictions	58%	47%
Prior Jail Sentence	36%	27%
TOTAL	347	195

* Differences significant at .05 level.

SOURCE: San Diego County Sheriff's Department, SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

The second step was to identify a measure of risk for re-offending (the primary goal of SB 618) for inclusion in the propensity score matching model. The California Static Risk Assessment (CSRA)³¹ compiles a score by combining age at release, gender, and counts of prior felony and misdemeanor convictions by type. Matching on this score was used to help balance the two groups in their propensity to re-offend, which could be related to why someone would volunteer for the program (Rosenfeld, Petersilia, & Visser, 2008).

Based on this information, the propensity score matching model included CSRA scores, ethnicity, as well as a conviction or jail sentence prior to program assignment. The model was restricted to cases with no missing data because missing information impacted less than 5 percent of each group. As a result of this process using the nearest neighbor matching technique, 332 comparison cases were matched with the 332 treatment group cases available for analysis, reducing 69 percent of the bias. The 332 cases in the treatment group represent 31 percent of all participants (1,078³²) served during the duration of the program.

DATA SOURCES

In order to monitor the criminal history and recidivism rates (i.e., desistance) of individuals in both study groups, data regarding their contact with the criminal justice system prior to and following selection for the evaluation was collected from a variety of sources. The Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS) (a computer system for information sharing among local justice agencies) was the source for arrest information, and the DA's computer system was the source for conviction and sentencing information. Booking information (i.e., another arrest measure) and local custody time were obtained from the Sheriff's computer

system, while time in State prison was provided by CDCR. The Community Case Managers (CCMs)³³ provided information on services delivered for the treatment group to the research team on hard copy forms.

ANALYSIS PLAN

RECIDIVISM

The overriding goal of SB 618 was to reduce recidivism. Therefore, using the study groups previously described, the first objective of the impact evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the reentry program relative to traditional procedures in reducing recidivism (i.e., release from prison to parole with no reentry services) and to identify the factors of participants' success or failure. To measure program effectiveness, the treatment group was assessed relative to the comparison group using multiple measures of recidivism/desistance/relapse and a variety of analytical techniques. The dependent variables and statistical analyses are presented in Table 6.

While the SB 618 program sought to reduce return-to-prison rates, the additional measures of recidivism/desistance/relapse listed in Table 6 were included in this evaluation in order to provide a more complete picture of the impact of SB 618 on offender behavior, as has been advocated in the literature since there is no "universally accepted measure" of recidivism (Jannetta, Elderbroom, Solomon, Cahill, Parthasarathy, & Burrell, 2009). This information was obtained from official records (i.e., arrest, court, and corrections records).

³¹ The CSRA is an actuarial risk prediction tool using available automated data (including age and gender) developed for CDCR by Susan Turner at the University of California, Irvine.

³² This number includes all eligible participants entering the program from February 2007 through March 2012 when SB 618 closed with a few exceptions (e.g., people who were not paroled to San Diego, died, etc.).

³³ Dosage/intensity of community services was available for Community Case Management contacts and Community Roundtable meetings only.

Table 6
DEPENDENT VARIABLES AND STATISTICAL ANALYSES

Variable	Comparison	Significance Test
Arrest		
Arrest for any offense	Means (proportions)	t-test
Conviction		
Conviction for any crime	Means (proportions)	t-test
Parole	Means (proportions)	t-test
Days on Parole	Means	t-test
Custody Time		
Time in jail (days)	Means	t-test
Time in prison (days)	Means	t-test

* yes = 1 / no = 0

SOURCE: SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

As the first step in isolating the effect of participation in SB 618, the following variables were examined relative to recidivism using the statistics noted to identify correlations:

- age (means with t-tests);
- race/ethnicity (cross-tabulations with Chi-square statistic);
- gender (cross-tabulations with Chi-square statistic);
- employment status (cross-tabulations with Chi-square statistic);
- living arrangements (cross-tabulations with Chi-square statistic); and
- prior criminal history (cross-tabulations with Chi-square statistic and means with t-tests).

These bivariate comparisons were followed with multivariate analysis (i.e., regression). There were two goals of this regression analysis: 1) to determine which factors were predictive of success and 2) to control for other factors that might account for recidivism differences in an attempt to isolate the impact of the SB 618 program (i.e., whether SB 618 contributed to reduced recidivism or increased desistance from criminal activity). Logistic regression was used to analyze the dichotomous dependent variables (i.e., yes/no). The previously mentioned variables were controlled in the regression analysis in order to build a model of factors related to success and

to determine if SB 618 participation lowers recidivism and improves desistance.

One factor that logistic regression does not handle well is time. Therefore, Cox Regression analysis was used to examine the impact of time on recidivism/desistance. The number of days until relapse or recidivism was the focus of this analysis. The advantage of survival analysis is that recidivism during the beginning of a follow-up period is treated differently than behavior at the end.

Using these techniques, it was determined if program participants had significantly lower levels of recidivism (or higher levels of desistance) than offenders in the comparison group and if program participants recidivated at a slower rate than offenders in the comparison group. Finally, the factors that predicted recidivism among program participants were identified. This final analysis determined the types of offenders most likely to benefit from the SB 618 program and quantify the specific benefits of program participation.

As previously mentioned, significant differences were determined using the .05 significance level. That is, there was a 95 percent chance that the differences between the two groups were true for the entire population.

RISK REDUCTION

Another indicator of the SB 618 program's success was a reduction in the number and type of risk factors for recidivism, such as unemployment or homelessness. Therefore, the second objective of the impact evaluation determined whether the program was effective in reducing risk factors for recidivism. To measure this relationship, a single-sample, post-test only design was used because this information was not available for the comparison group. The following dependent variables were collected for the 12 months following prison release:

- stable housing (yes/no);
- length of time (in days) to stable housing;
- employment (yes/no); and
- length of time employed (in months).

COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS

The purpose of the cost-effectiveness analysis was to determine if the SB 618 program was a worthy investment for the taxpayers by weighing the program costs against the benefits (i.e., individuals not recidivating) relative to the traditional approach with no services specifically designed to address reentry issues. Cost-effectiveness analysis is often used when the monetary amount of the benefit would be the same for both the treatment and comparison groups. For example, in this case, the cost offset (the amount saved) from an individual not re-offending would likely be the same regardless of which group they were in.

The costs were based on the "taxpayer" perspective, which means it took into account only the costs incurred by local and state government. Treatment (assessment and services) and criminal justice (incarceration, including prison, probation, parole, arrests, and convictions) costs were collected and analyzed as part of the cost-effectiveness analysis.³⁴ The cost-effectiveness analysis measured the monetary cost

differences between the treatment and comparison groups. Benefits were measured based on successful cases (those not recidivating, measured as not returning to prison) within 12 months of release from prison. The cost-effectiveness built upon the recidivism analysis by comparing cost per successful case (i.e., those not recidivating). This efficiency measure showed whether SB 618 had the expected recidivism impact compared to the cost of providing the program. This cost was calculated by dividing total cost by total number of successful cases (previous analysis checked for statistically significant differences). Sensitivity analysis also was conducted, which varied key assumptions to test if the results were robust. Table 7 summarizes the cost-effectiveness analysis plan. The end result was a comparative measure that revealed whether the program costs were worth the return on investment.

This information was augmented with a cost-avoidance analysis in which future expenses avoided due to successful treatment were projected. Utilizing a formula developed by the Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (Report Number 00-23, page 48), cost avoidance was derived by multiplying the number of offenders completing a program by the reduction in recidivism percentage and multiplying this number by an annual incarceration rate per offender plus average parole costs per offender.

SUMMARY

This section detailed the research methodology and analysis plan for the evaluation of the SB 618 San Diego Prisoner Reentry Program to determine if the program achieved the goal of recidivism reduction and was more cost effective than treatment as usual. The remainder of the report presents the results from this work.

³⁴ Start-up costs were excluded from this study because they are not appropriate to add without also adding the start-up costs for the current system. Additionally, start-up costs were not part of the Public Entity Agreement and were minimal since local agencies used existing resources.

Table 7
SB 618 COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS

Group	Costs (\$)	Benefits (Cases)	Impact Measures
TREATMENT GROUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ County Probation SB 618 program staff cost paid by the State ▶ SB 618 program Sheriff assessment costs paid by the State ▶ In custody case management costs ▶ Prison incarceration costs³⁵ ▶ Parole costs ▶ Community case management and vocational specialist services paid by the State ▶ District Attorney database costs paid by the State ▶ Other County operational, admin. and indirect staff costs paid by the State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Individuals not returning to prison within 12 months of release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Average cost per successful case
COMPARISON GROUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Incarceration ▶ Parole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Individuals not returning to prison within 12 months of release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Average cost per successful case

SOURCE: SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

³⁵ Incarceration costs also include program services (e.g., drug treatment, vocational programs, education) while in prison.

PROCESS EVALUATION FINDINGS

In addition to the impact evaluation, a detailed process evaluation was conducted. Major research findings from this portion of the project are summarized below. More details were reported in *Improving Reentry for Ex-Offenders in San Diego County: SB 618 Fourth Annual Report*, which can be accessed at www.sandag.org/sb618.

Program Implementation and Management

- ▶ The numerous program partners involved in SB 618 implementation remained committed to the original program design and worked diligently to overcome bureaucratic obstacles and budgetary constraints that grew more significant over the course of the evaluation. As a result, evidence-based practices were implemented.
- ▶ Since program inception, a culture of open communication was fostered among program partners across agencies. Operational Procedures Committee meetings were first convened in November 2005 and served as one vehicle for communication. These meetings were regularly attended by key individuals to discuss issues, brainstorm possible solutions, and come to agreement on the best course of action.
- ▶ Another method of communication utilized a Web-based data management system designed specifically for the local SB 618 program. The database captured information on each participant from screening/assessment through program exit and included automation of the Life Plan to allow it to be updated online, facilitating timely communication between everyone working with each participant.

Participant Characteristics and Needs

The typical SB 618 participant had the following characteristics.

- ▶ Most served time in jail or prison in the past.
- ▶ About nine in ten were assessed as high risk for re-offending due to previous non-compliance and prior criminal involvement.
- ▶ Almost all were assessed as having severe or significant vocational or substance abuse needs.
- ▶ Literacy was not an issue for most, but two-thirds still had limited educational achievement.
- ▶ About one-third had medical, mental health, or dental issues.
- ▶ Over half had criminogenic risks related to residential instability.
- ▶ Consistent with other research findings (Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003), female participants were significantly more likely to report being a victim of abuse (i.e., emotional, physical, or sexual abuse).

Based on assessed needs, reentry services for non-violent offenders should focus on vocational training, substance abuse treatment, and gender-responsive programming.

PROCESS EVALUATION FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Service Delivery

- ▶ Consistent with the SB 618 program design, the days spent in the prison reception center were fewer for SB 618 participants compared to inmates not participating in SB 618 and needs/risks assessments were completed within the expected time frame so that prison time could be used for rehabilitative programming.
- ▶ Nearly all participants received some type of program services while in prison. However, the match between needs and the specific services received was not always consistent due in large part to program availability.

Program Satisfaction

An important measure of program impact is participant satisfaction, which can impact engagement in services and ultimately program effectiveness. Overall, treatment participants had a favorable opinion of the program. Specifically, aspects of SB 618 that appeared to have the strongest positive impact on participants included:

- ▶ development of an individualized Life Plan that included personal input;
- ▶ interactions with CCMs;
- ▶ participation in MDT and Community Roundtable meetings; and
- ▶ services brokered through community-based agencies (e.g., education, housing, substance abuse treatment).

Evaluation Results

INTRODUCTION

This section begins with a description of the study groups to put the outcome analysis in context. This description is followed by a presentation of the results from the analysis of criminal involvement and risk reduction data for the one year following release into the community. Results from the cost benefit and cost avoidance analysis portion of the study also are included here.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Although 332 individuals were in the treatment group and 332 in the comparison group after the propensity score matching was performed, not all individuals had been out of prison for at least 12 months as of October 31, 2011 for inclusion in this report. The number of cases available for analysis at 12 months post-prison release was 305 (92%) treatment group cases and 311 (94%) comparison group cases.

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY GROUPS

To verify the success of the matching process, analyses were conducted to determine if the treatment and comparison groups differed in any systematic way. As Table 8 illustrates, the two study groups were comparable to each other with respect to age, gender, and ethnicity. On average, individuals in the SB 618 program evaluation (treatment and comparison groups) were about 35 years of age and the majority was male (85% overall, not shown). With respect to race/ethnicity, over two-fifths were White (45% of the treatment group and 42% for comparison cases), about one-third Black (31% and 34%, respectively), and about one-fifth Hispanic (19% and 21%, respectively).

Table 8
SB 618 STUDY GROUPS COMPARABLE ON DEMOGRAPHIC MEASURES

	Treatment	Comparison
Age		
Mean	35.16	35.27
Range	19 – 65	20 - 58
Standard Deviation	9.91	9.61
Gender		
Male	83%	88%
Female	17%	12%
Race/Ethnicity		
White	45%	42%
Black	31%	34%
Hispanic	19%	21%
Other	4%	3%
TOTAL	332	332

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

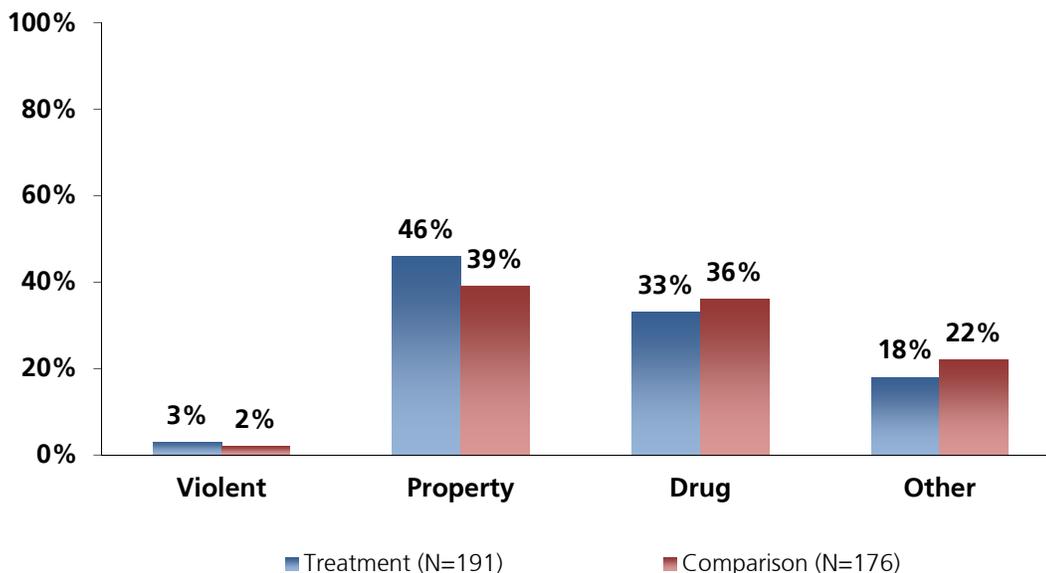
SOURCE: SB 618 Database, SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

Data collected from San Diego County Sheriff’s Department official records clearly showed that the SB 618 treatment group and the comparison group had previous involvement in the justice system during the two years prior to program assignment (i.e., were not first time offenders). Overall, prior to the instant offense, the two groups were similar in their criminal history background. In the two years prior to SB 618 enrollment, more than half of the treatment (58%) and comparison (53%) groups were convicted for a new offense or violation of terms of supervision (not shown).

At the point of conviction, each group was comparable in the level and type of conviction charges. Of those with a prior offense, approximately three-quarters of both study groups

were found guilty at the felony level (73% for the treatment group and 74% for the comparison group), followed by a misdemeanor conviction (27% and 26%, respectively), and less than one percent (.5% and .6%) had an infraction as their high charge (not shown). Furthermore, there was no statistical difference between the two groups in the type of highest conviction offense. As Figure 3 shows, property (46% and 39%, respectively) and drug (33% and 36%, respectively) offenses were the most common prior high charges for the offenders, followed by other (18%, and 22%, respectively), and violent crimes (3% and 2%, respectively). As previously described, the prior criminal history standards delineated in the SB 618 eligibility criteria considered convictions, which may explain this consistency across the study groups.

Figure 3
SB 618 STUDY GROUPS MOST COMMONLY CONVICTED OF PROPERTY AND DRUG OFFENSES



NOTE: “Other” includes other misdemeanors and felonies, probation violations, infractions, and violent exceptions.

SOURCE: San Diego County District Attorney’s Office, SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

Further analysis revealed that the two groups also were similar in the degree of their involvement in the criminal justice system over the past two years. Of those who had been convicted of an offense in the two years prior to group assignment, one-half or more (62% of the treatment group and 58% of the comparison group) served time in jail and about one-third (32% of the treatment group and 36% of the comparison group) received a prison sentence. Both groups, on average, had been sentenced to jail less than once (.76, SD=.70 and .69, SD=.69,

respectively) and served less than one prison sentence (.32, SD=.48 and .39, SD=.51, respectively) (not shown). They also had fewer than two prior convictions. As Table 9 shows, though there were differences regarding the length of time spent in jail and prison custody over the two years prior to program enrollment, when the total average time in any type of custody was calculated there were no differences. That is, the treatment group spent about 9 ½ months in custody while the comparison group was incarcerated for slightly less than 10 months.

Table 9
SB 618 STUDY GROUPS HAVE PRIOR CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT

Convictions	Treatment	Comparison
Mean	1.65	1.55
Range	1-6	1-4
Standard Deviation	1.04	0.79
Jail Days		
Mean*	131.05	102.48
Range	3-572	0-486
Standard Deviation	108.90	104.92
Prison Days		
Mean*	153.66	194.39
Range	0-700	0-686
Standard Deviation	178.21	194.10
TOTAL	332	332

*Differences significant at .05 level.

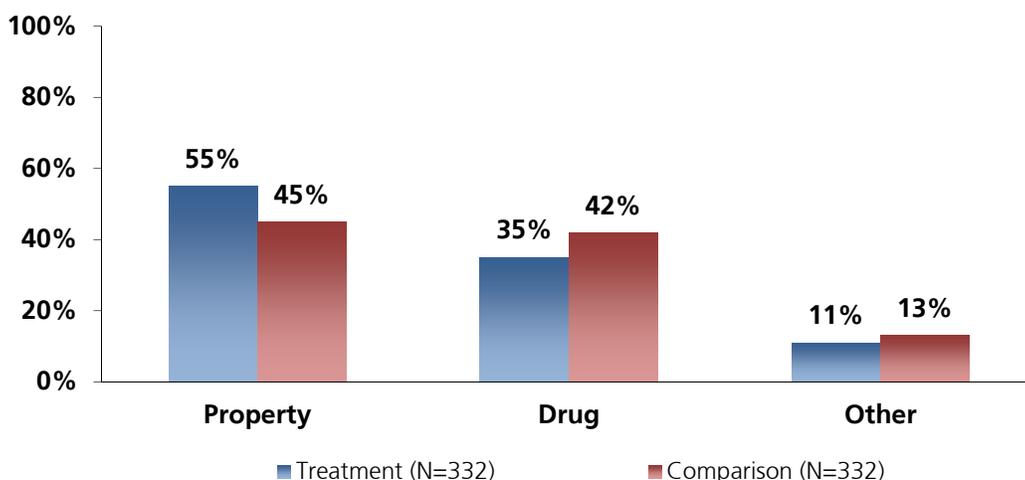
NOTE: Based on two years prior to program assignment.

SOURCE: San Diego County District Attorney's Office, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012.

Overall, the two study groups had a similar level and length of involvement in the justice system during the two years prior to program assignment. The extent of their past criminal involvement suggests that the study groups were at risk for having problems with successful community reentry upon release and avoiding future criminal involvement. Therefore, these individuals were a good fit with the program’s intended target group.

As anticipated, there were no differences between the two study groups in the conviction charges associated with the instant offense. All of the offenders were convicted of a felony-level offense (100%) (not shown) and the most common type of high charge was related to a property offense (55% for the treatment group and 45% for the comparison group), followed closely by a drug conviction (35% and 42%, respectively), and other (11% and 13%, respectively) charge (Figure 4).

Figure 4
SB 618 STUDY GROUPS MOST OFTEN CONVICTED OF PROPERTY AND DRUG CHARGES FOR THE INSTANT OFFENSE



NOTE: "Other" includes other misdemeanors and felonies, probation violations, infractions, and violent exceptions.
 SOURCE: San Diego County District Attorney’s Office, SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

While there were no differences between the groups with respect to convictions, analysis of the time incarcerated for the instant offense reveals a longer jail detainment on average for the treatment group (78.71 days, SD=48.70) compared to the comparison group (50.51 days, SD=46.50). Given that the two groups are comparable in the level and type of conviction

charge, this difference is probably related in part to the time needed to conduct the SB 618 assessments prior to transfer to prison. Additionally, the number of days served in prison for offenders in each study group is slightly over one year (456.32 days, SD=243.71 and 425.72 days, SD=239.28, respectively) (Table 10).

Table 10
SB 618 PARTICIPANTS SERVED LONGER JAIL TIME FOR INSTANT OFFENSE THAN THE COMPARISON GROUP

Jail Days*	Treatment	Comparison
Mean	78.71	50.51
Range	0-297	0-242
Standard Deviation	48.70	46.50
TOTAL	332	332
Prison Days**		
Mean	456.32	425.72
Range	50-1,194	79-1,429
Standard Deviation	243.71	239.28
TOTAL	327	328

* Differences significant at .05 level.

** Excludes 5 treatment and 4 comparison cases still in prison as of October 31, 2011.

SOURCE: San Diego County Sheriff's Department, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The importance of motivating and engaging clients in services has been highlighted in the literature as important for program retention and ultimately successful outcomes (McMurrin, 2009; Clawson, Bogue, & Joplin, 2005). Overall, 217 SB 618 participants utilized one or more services referred to them by the CCM (71%) and 88 did not (29%) (Table 11). The lack of follow-up by over one-quarter of the participants highlights the importance of motivating and engaging participants in order to retain them in offender reentry programs.

Analyses were conducted to determine if there were any differences between those who followed up on a community referral (full treatment participants) versus those with no referral follow-up (partial treatment participants). Almost three-quarters (71%) of the treatment group followed up on referrals for services. As shown in Table 11, differences did exist between the two groups. Specifically, the full treatment

participants tended to be older and scored lower on criminal thinking scales than the partial treatment group counterparts. Also, interestingly Blacks were overrepresented in the full treatment group which may indicate that services available in the community were culturally competent. These differences may help stakeholders implementing reentry programs identify strategies to engage participants who may need to change their thought processes (e.g., through cognitive behavioral programming) before they can be motivated (e.g., using motivational techniques, including incentives for achieving benchmarks or milestones) to follow through on resources that may keep them from recidivating. Additionally, although full treatment participants spent a significantly greater number of days in the community on average (323.0 days), the number of days partial treatment participants spent in the community (259.4 days) likely would have been sufficient to utilize a community service referral. These results were confirmed through multivariate regression analysis.

Table 11
SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES EXISTED BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS WHO FOLLOWED THROUGH ON A COMMUNITY REFERRAL COMPARED TO PARTICIPANTS WHO DID NOT*

	Full Treatment Participants	Partial Treatment Participants
Mean age (Standard Deviation)	36.82 (9.85)	31.36 (9.12)
Black	35%	22%
Criminal thinking/attitudes/cognitions (high risk)	29%	55%
Needs alcohol treatment	32%	9%
Days in the community post release (Standard Deviation)	323.0 (78.0)	259.4 (117.61)
TOTAL	217	88

*Differences significant at .05 level.

NOTES: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: CCM Records, SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

RECIDIVISM

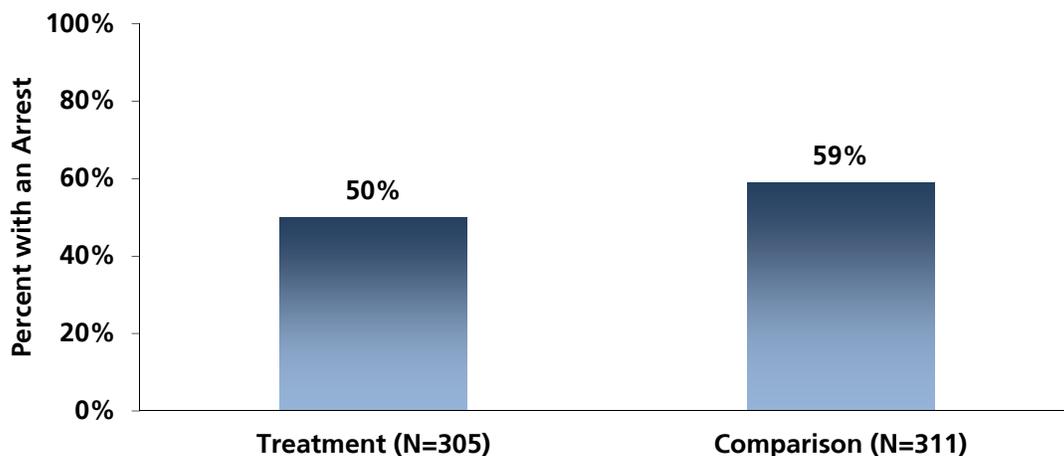
Overall, the analysis of recidivism revealed positive outcomes for the treatment group relative to comparison cases one year after release from prison. Significantly fewer members of the treatment group were re-arrested or returned to prison for a probation violation than the comparison group. No significant differences existed between the two groups with respect to receiving a new conviction or returning to prison with a new conviction after release.

RE-ARREST

Treatment group members were significantly less likely to be re-arrested during the 12 months post-prison release, compared to their counterparts in the comparison group. Specifically, 50 percent of the treatment group was re-arrested during this time while 59 percent of the comparison group had an arrest (Figure 5).

The treatment group was less likely to have a new arrest 12 months after prison release, compared to the comparison group.

Figure 5
TREATMENT GROUP MEMBERS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY LESS LIKELY TO BE RE-ARRESTED 12 MONTHS POST RELEASE THAN THE COMPARISON GROUP



*Differences significant at .05 level..

SOURCE: Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS), SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

Analyses conducted to identify any differences in level and type of arrest during the 12-month period after prison release revealed some significant differences between the treatment and comparison groups. Specifically, significantly fewer treatment group members were arrested for a parole violation as their highest level of arrest compared to the comparison group (7% and 14%, respectively) (not shown). One possible explanation for this difference in parole violation arrests could be attributed to SB 618's intermediate sanctions approach to community supervision. Specifically, when participants re-offended, the Parole Agent, Community Case Manager (CCM), and the Deputy District Attorney (DDA) coordinated to determine the most appropriate response. For example, rather than sending an individual back to prison on a parole violation involving drug offenses, the individual was often ordered to participate in substance abuse treatment.

Examination of the type of arrest revealed the treatment and comparison groups were arrested for similar types of offenses. Both groups were arrested for a drug related offense most often (20%), followed by an arrest for a property offense (13%), "other" (e.g., DUI, weapons charge) offense (9%), or a violent offense (7%) (not shown).

RE-CONVICTION

Examination of conviction data 12 months post release showed that similar proportions of the treatment and comparison groups had a new conviction (33% and 28%, respectively) one year after release from prison (not shown).

In regard to level of conviction, the treatment and comparison groups were equally likely to receive a conviction at the felony (27% and 23%, respectively) and misdemeanor (7% and 4%, respectively) level. Similarly, analysis of the type of new conviction revealed no significant differences in the proportions of treatment and comparison group members convicted of a property (13% and 10%, respectively), "other" (5% each), or violent

(2% and 4%, respectively) offense. However, treatment group members were significantly more likely to be convicted for a drug (15%) offense than those in the comparison group (9%) (not shown). This finding suggests that those individuals who participated in the SB 618 program may have benefitted from more enhanced substance abuse programming as well as motivational techniques by program staff, including incentives for achieving benchmarks or milestones, and more formal cognitive behavioral programming to ensure a greater level of engagement.

RETURNED TO PRISON

Because the primary goal of SB 618 is to reduce the rate of ex-offenders returning to prison, analyses were conducted on the percentage of those individuals who returned to prison either because of a new conviction or parole violation. Although the proportion who returned to prison as a result of a new conviction did not differ significantly between the treatment and comparison groups (15% and 14%, respectively), when parole violations were the reason for returning to prison, significantly fewer individuals in the treatment group (21%) returned to prison 12 months post release compared to the comparison group (39%) (Table 12). Consistent with these return to prison rates, the treatment groups spent less time in prison than the comparison group (36.8 and 55.0 days on average, respectively). As described earlier, these differences may be related to the intermediate sanctions approach used by the SB 618 program.

Significantly fewer treatment group members were returned to prison for a parole violation one year after release than the comparison group.

Table 12
TREATMENT GROUP SPENT SIGNIFICANTLY FEWER DAYS IN PRISON 12 MONTHS POST RELEASE

	Treatment	Comparison
Returned to prison		
New conviction/new term	15%	14%
Parole violation*	21%	39%
Days in custody		
Jail (Mean)	22.5	22.9
Range	0-333	0-258
Standard Deviation	46.0	46.2
Prison (Mean)*	36.8	55.0
Range	0-298	0-343
Standard Deviation	69.6	83.3
Total Days (Mean)*	59.3	77.9
Range	0-347	0-357
Standard Deviation	95.5	101.3
TOTAL	305	311

*Differences significant at .05 level.

SOURCE: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

RISK REDUCTION

Addressing the needs of offenders (e.g., employment, housing) has been found to facilitate the reentry process and relate directly to decreased recidivism. This process is referred to as risk reduction (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001). With this information in mind, this study evaluated the results of SB 618 related to risk reduction, as well as recidivism (as discussed in the previous section). This section describes the impact of the program on social outcomes related to risk for continued criminal activity, including housing stability and employment, as opposed to the previous section that examined these factors as predictors of recidivism.

HOUSING

Data regarding stable housing was available for 252 participants³⁶ released from prison for at least one year as of October 31, 2011, from records maintained by the Community Case Managers (CCMs). Four-fifths (80%) of these individuals were in a stable living situation³⁷ (not shown). This level of housing stability is relatively high. For example, while the definition of stable housing may differ, the Urban Institute's longitudinal study of prisoner reentry found that, one year after prison release, about half (46%) of parolees considered their living arrangements temporary (Visher & Courtney, 2007). This stability was achieved immediately upon release for 64 percent

³⁶ Participants dropping out of the program prior to receiving CCM services are excluded because the CCM did not maintain files on these individuals.

³⁷ Stable housing includes government supported and monitored accommodations, sober living, board and care, and residential treatment, as well as permanent housing (i.e., when an individual is responsible for paying rent/mortgage).

of the participants according to CCM records. For the 73 individuals needing more time to achieve stability, 86 percent were stable within the first six months following release and the average number of days was 108.68 (SD=87.68, range 1 to 365) (not shown).

This housing stability was most likely related to housing referrals initiated while in custody. Specifically, about two-fifths (42%) of the treatment group were referred specifically to housing assistance. This process began prior to leaving prison for 20 percent and over half of these individuals (52%) used the referral. The majority (86%) of individuals with stable housing accessed any service in the community (i.e., followed up on referrals to community services by the Community Case Manager).

More than four-fifths (85%) of the treatment group secured stable housing within one year of release from prison, a key factor in preventing recidivism.

EMPLOYMENT

The relationship between employment and desistance is well documented (National Research Council, 2008; Nelson, Deess, & Allen, 1999). With respect to employment, data were collected from files maintained by the CCMs. Based on those with CCM case files, about two-thirds (67%) of the treatment group were employed at some point during the one-year period following prison release (not shown).

Additional information was available regarding full-time employment and wages based on CCM records. Of 127 treatment group cases employed at some point during the year following prison release, two-thirds were employed full-time (67%), with a mean hourly wage of \$11.39 (SD=\$3.24, range \$7.00 to \$25.00) (not shown). While this average is higher than the \$9

per hour median found in a longitudinal study of parolees in Illinois, Ohio, and Texas (Visher, Debus, & Yahner, 2008), it is lower than the local living wage. According to the San Diego Workforce Partnership (2008), the basic needs budget³⁸ for a single person in San Diego is \$33,734 or about \$16 per hour (not shown). This research finding highlights the challenge for ex-offenders of finding employment above a living wage in the current economic climate. While solving high unemployment is beyond the scope of offender reentry programs, discussing this issue during the process of developing the Life Plan to address offender needs may facilitate realistic expectations and potentially result in creative solutions for coping with unemployment.

Given that these outcomes were for the first year following release from prison, it is not surprising that time spent in these positions was relatively short, with an average of 5.08 months employed (SD=2.95, range 0.23 to 12.00), which is consistent with other studies regarding parolees (Visher, et al., 2008) (not shown).

The specific types of jobs obtained by participants during this period included positions as construction workers (48%), sales people (18%), drivers (15%), and food and beverage servers (13%).³⁹ The top three occupations expected to have the most job openings in San Diego County from 2008 through 2018 (according to the California Employment Development Department [2010]) are for salespeople, waiters, and cashiers, though they are relatively low-paying positions (median hourly wage ranging from \$9.10 to \$10.06) (not shown).

³⁸ A basic needs budget includes rent/utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, clothing/personal items, and taxes, with no money for entertainment, vacations, or savings for education or retirement (San Diego Workforce Partnership, 2008).

³⁹ The positions related to driving and food and beverage service may be related to the training provided in prison (i.e., Class B driver's license and food handler's card classes available in the Richard J. Donovan [RJD] Correctional Facility). The number of participants obtaining these types of jobs was small, limiting the analysis.

About two-thirds (67%) of the treatment group were employed during the 12 months following release, another key factor associated with reduced recidivism.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH DESISTANCE FROM CRIME

To better understand the effect SB 618 program participation had on success, as well as to determine if other factors (e.g., individual characteristics, criminal history, and/or employment) were related to these outcomes, multivariate analyses (i.e., regression) were conducted. As such, four logistic regression models were created with the dependent variable being the four definitions of success (as explained below). Since bivariate analysis previously described showed that the treatment and comparison group varied with respect to re-arrest and return to prison for a parole violation in the post-release period these variables were included in the models. Additionally, although no differences by group were identified earlier in relation to receiving a new conviction or returning to prison for a new term and since these factors remain critical outcome measures at the State level, the measures are also included here. So for the purposes of analysis, success was defined as follows:

- not having a new arrest;
- not having a new conviction
- not being returned to prison for a parole violation, and/or
- not being returned to prison for a new term.

The models included eight variables:

- participation in the SB 618 program (yes/no);
- gender;
- age;
- ethnicity;
- total arrests in the pre period (i.e., two years prior to program entry);
- felony arrest in pre period (yes/no);
- property arrest in the pre period (yes/no); and
- drug arrest in the pre period (yes/no).

Overall, the outcome results showed that relative to the comparison group, participation in SB 618 did protect an individual from being re-arrested and returned to prison for a parole violation within the one year period following prison release. Specific findings included were:

- Comparison group individuals were 1.44 times more likely to have been arrested
- Comparison group individuals were 2.37 more likely to return to prison for a parole violation in the post period than the treatment group.
- However, individuals in the treatment and comparison group were equally likely to be convicted and returned to prison for a new term.

In regard to identifying possible individual characteristics that could contribute to success, two factors were shown to have a significant impact on re-arrest and return to prison for a parole violation.

- **Gender:** Despite which study group an individual was in, females were 3.1 times less likely to be re-arrested and 2.4 times less likely to return to prison for a parole violation compared to men.
- **Past parole violation:** Those individuals with an arrest for a parole violation prior to entering the program were 1.9 times more likely to be re-arrested and 2.7 times more likely to return to prison for a parole violation 12 months post release than those without this prior history of parole violations (not shown).

PROGRAM SPECIFIC FACTORS

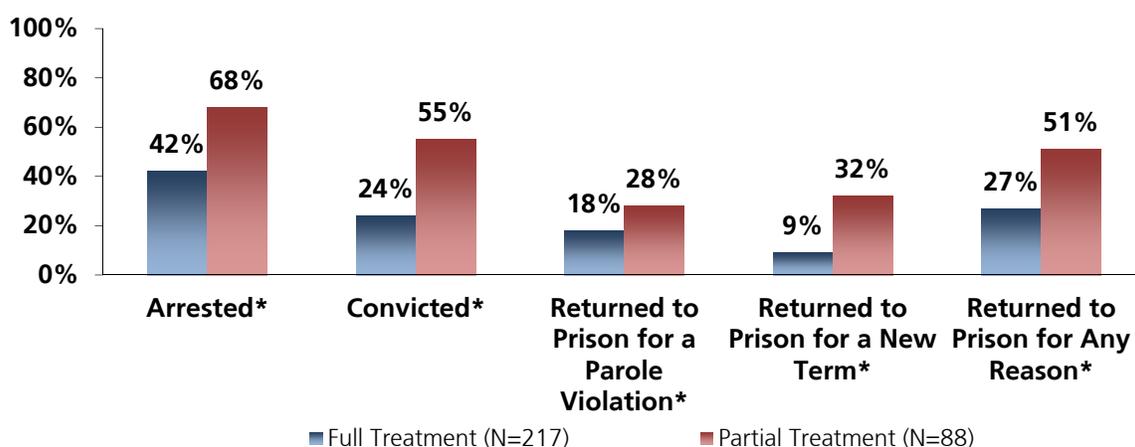
Additional analysis was conducted to provide information to program partners regarding services that may have the greatest impact on SB 618 participant success. Because of limited data on the comparison group, this additional analysis focused solely on the treatment group and factors predictive of success. That is, the next set of analysis only examined the interventions received by the treatment group since services received by the comparison group while in the community were unavailable. As with the previous analysis, this analysis focused on re-arrest, receiving a new conviction, and returning to prison for a parole violation and/or a new term.

As noted in the methodology section, several variables (such as employment, substance abuse, and receipt of services) were examined to determine what, if any, factors were associated with recidivism. The first step in this analysis was bivariate comparisons. These analyses demonstrated an important relationship between receiving services in the community, stable housing, and employment with recidivism for treatment group participants. As Figure 6 shows,

those individuals who accessed services in the community (i.e., followed up on referrals to community services by the Community Case Manager, or full treatment participants) were significantly less likely to be arrested, have a new conviction, or return to prison related to a parole violation, a new prison term, or for any reason compared to those participants who did not receive services outside of prison. Almost all (86%) of those SB 618 participants who secured stable housing in the 12 months post release also received services in the community (not shown). It is not surprising that they too were significantly less likely to recidivate (Figure 7). Although not as large, this recidivism pattern also was evident for individuals who found employment (90% of whom also received services in the community) after initial prison release (Figure 8).

Receiving services in the community, having stable housing, and obtaining employment was related to SB 618 participants remaining crime-free one year after prison release.

Figure 6
PARTICIPANTS RECEIVING SB 618 SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY LESS LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM 12 MONTHS POST RELEASE

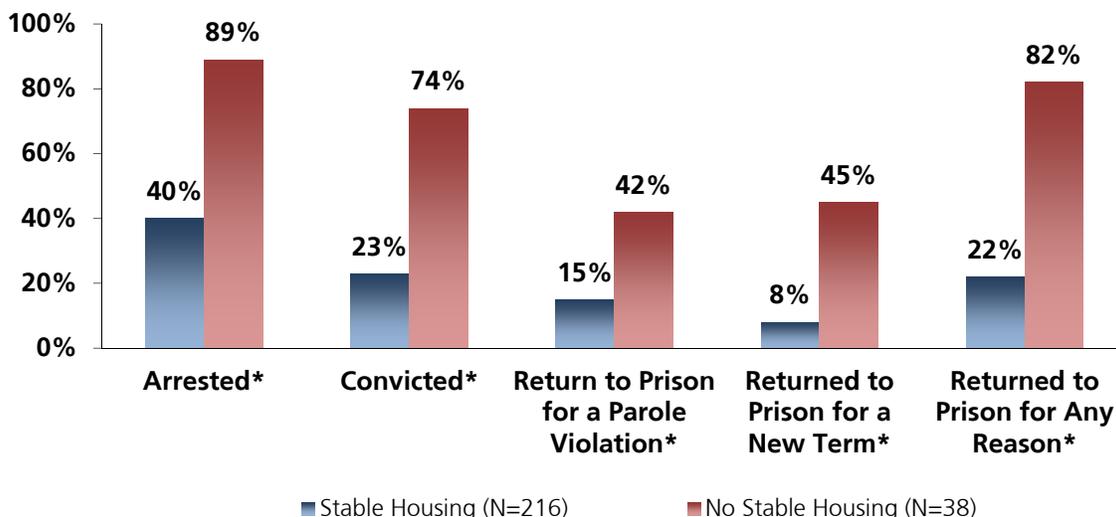


* Differences significant at .05 level.

NOTES: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCES: Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS), CCM Records, San Diego County District Attorney’s Office, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

Figure 7
PARTICIPANTS WITH STABLE HOUSING LESS LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM 12 MONTHS POST RELEASE

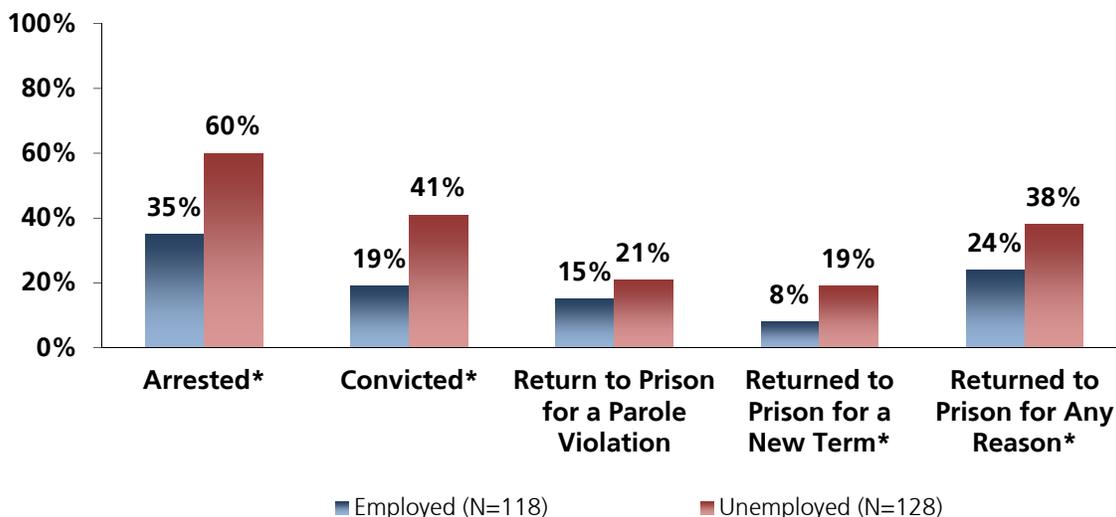


*Differences significant at .05 level.

NOTES: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCES: Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS), CCM Records, San Diego County District Attorney's Office, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

Figure 8
EMPLOYED PARTICIPANTS LESS LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM 12 MONTHS POST RELEASE



* Differences significant at .05 level.

NOTES: Differences significant at .05 level. Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCES: Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS), CCM Records, San Diego County District Attorney's Office, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

In addition to these SB 618 program traits, the only personal characteristic that was associated with recidivism was gender, with females significantly less likely to be arrested (28%) compared to males (54%) (not shown).

Additional multivariate analyses controlling for the demographic and criminal history characteristics supported the above findings.

- **Services in the community:** Treatment individuals who received services in the community were about three times less likely to be arrested, receive a new conviction, and return to prison for a new term (2.9 times, 2.7, and 3.0, respectively) than those who did not access community services (not shown).
- **Stable Housing:** Treatment participants who had stable housing in the post-release period were less likely to have criminal justice contact during that same time period. Specifically, they were 9.4 times less likely to be re-arrested, 6.2 times less likely to be convicted of a new offense, 4.3 times less likely to return to prison for a parole violation. In addition, the partial treatment group members were 1.4 times more likely to return to prison for a new term and 1.5 times more likely to return to prison for any reason.
- **Employment:** Having a job was predictive of re-arrest and receiving a conviction in the one year period after release (i.e., employed treatment participants were 2.0 and 2.2 times less likely to be re-arrested or convicted, respectively during that time).

TIME UNTIL RECIDIVISM

Understanding when an individual is most likely to recidivate, in relation to the time released from prison, is not only helpful from a programmatic point of view (i.e., determining time and intensity of service provision), but from a fiscal perspective as well. That is, fewer days spent in prison equates to reduced cost to all systems involved. To assess this factor, Cox Regression was used to explore differences in time to recidivating between the treatment and comparison groups, as well as

differences between those who fully and partially participated in services.

The initial analysis revealed statistically significant differences in time to arrest in the 12-month post period between the treatment and comparison groups. The comparison group was re-arrested sooner on average than treatment participants (arrested 232.8 days after prison release compared to 256.0 days, respectively) (not shown).

SUMMARY

The primary goal of the SB 618 program was to reduce the likelihood of an ex-offender returning to prison, which is not only important for public safety, but also a cost-savings issue, especially in these tight budgetary times. To determine the impact of the program on offender behavior, data were collected regarding arrests, convictions, and return to prison for a parole violation or new term, as well as employment and housing (i.e., social outcomes outlined in the correctional literature as related to risk for continued criminal involvement).

A large portion of the treatment group secured stable housing (a higher percentage than found in other studies of parolees) and were employed during the one year following release from prison (a factor identified in the literature as contributing to desistance from crime through income and expanded social bonds among co-workers). In addition, treatment participants were less likely than the comparison group to be arrested or returned to prison for a parole violation. Further, examination of factors within SB 618 associated with success (i.e., not re-offending) revealed that treatment participants who received services in the community post release were less likely to be arrested, convicted, returned to prison for a parole violation, or returned to prison for a new term compared to treatment individuals who did not receive services in the community. A similar pattern was found when differences were examined for treatment individuals who had stable housing or were employed.

Cost Analysis

INTRODUCTION

The final portion of the impact evaluation involved analysis of cost effectiveness and cost avoidance. The cost-effectiveness analysis compared costs to relative outcomes (i.e., the percent not returned to prison), and the cost-avoidance analysis projects future expenses that are avoided due to successful treatment. This section begins with the results, following by a detailed explanation of the methodology used.

COST ANALYSIS RESULTS

The SB 618 program was the more cost-effective option when the success rates are considered. The average cost per successful SB 618 case was \$123,648 relative to \$131,814 for the comparison group. These results indicate that the SB 618 program was more successful at reducing recidivism than treatment as usual. Of the 305 SB 618 clients, 103 (33.8%) returned to prison, compared to 158 (50.8%) of the 311 comparison cases. This analysis suggests that the SB 618 program is the better return on investment than treatment as usual (Table 13).

The average cost per successful case was higher for the non-SB 618 program participants because more of them returned to prison. While initially the cost per case was higher for SB 618

participants because of the extra costs associated with the program, the costs were lower for them when the analysis factored in the number returning to prison.

The figures in Table 13 show whether the additional cost for SB 618 participants was worthwhile when factoring in the effectiveness of the program. By comparing it to the non-SB 618 program participant figure, it can be determined whether spending the additional money for the program was a cost-effective investment. It is important to evaluate both cost and effectiveness together because the goal of this program was to prevent offenders from returning to prison and, in essence, prevent future costs for the State of California. Using a comparative cost figure combined with an effectiveness measure is crucial for understanding the complete picture.

Also, it is important to point out that these figures do not represent the average prison costs of inmates in general. The costs are averaged only by cases that do not recidivate (successful cases) – not *all* cases. Thus, the figures are higher than one might expect for average prison costs per person.

Additionally, a cost-avoidance figure was calculated as part of this analysis. While the previous analysis compares costs to relative outcomes, the cost-avoidance analysis projects *future* expenses that are avoided due to successful treatment.

Table 13
SB 618 BETTER RETURN ON INVESTMENT THAN TREATMENT AS USUAL

	Treatment	Comparison
Average Cost per Successful Case	\$123,648	\$131,814
Percent Returned to Prison	33.8%	50.8%

SOURCE: SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

Using the recidivism rates from Table 13 and the entire population of clients enrolled in SB 618 throughout the duration of the program, the reduction in recidivism (17.0% = 50.8% - 33.8%) translated into approximately 183 offenders (17.00% * 1,078 = 183.26) not returning to prison. Avoiding the cost of re-incarceration (\$49,893 on average) and parole supervision (\$4,771) for one year would amount to a cost savings of an estimated \$10 million.

METHODOLOGY

The first step in the cost analysis was to consider the success rate (the percent not returned to prison for any reason within 12 months following release from prison) for both the treatment and comparison groups. Consistent with the previously reported data, these figures were based on the number of persons in each group that had been released for at least 12 months as of October 31, 2011. As Table 14 shows, the recidivism rate for SB 618 program participants was lower in this first 12-month period than for non-SB 618 program participants (33.8% versus 50.8%, respectively).

Table 14
TREATMENT GROUP MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN THE COMPARISON GROUP*

	Treatment Group (SB 618 Participants)	Comparison Group (Non-SB 618 Participants)
Returned to Prison	33.8%	50.8%
Not Returned to Prison	66.2%	49.2%
Total	305	311

*Differences significant at .05 level.

SOURCE: SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

Cost-Effectiveness Analysis

During the evaluation research planning stages, SANDAG met with CDCR staff and local program partners to determine the most appropriate cost analysis methodology. A cost-benefit and a cost-effectiveness methodology were both considered. A cost-benefit analysis is typically used when two different policy choices have different costs and potentially different monetary benefits associated with them. A comparison of total net benefits (total benefits minus total costs) shows which policy has the higher return. A cost-effectiveness analysis is typically used when the potential benefits do not need to be in monetary form, because the cost savings of the benefit (successful case not being returned to prison) would be the same for both groups; *and* when potential benefits may be difficult to quantify, such as cost per crime prevented.

All meeting representatives agreed that a cost-effectiveness methodology was the more practical choice given the data available and since the potential benefit (cost savings when re-incarceration is avoided) is the same for each group. Thus, the purpose of this cost-effectiveness analysis is to determine if the SB 618 program is a worthy investment for the taxpayers by comparing the program costs and success (i.e., individuals not recidivating) to treatment as usual.

Since a cost-effectiveness analysis requires both costs and a relevant effectiveness measure, the costs were based on those that had been released from prison for at least 12 months as of October 31, 2011. This resulted in 305 SB 618 program participants and 311 non-SB 618 program participants included in the cost analysis for this report.

The costs included in this analysis for SB 618 program participants were as follows:

- additional SB 618 program staff cost to County Probation paid by the State;
- SB 618 program assessment costs conducted by County Sheriff paid by the State;
- in custody case management costs;
- prison incarceration costs;⁴⁰
- parole costs;
- community case management and vocational specialist services paid by the State;
- District Attorney database costs paid by the State; and
- additional County operational, administrative, and in-direct staff costs paid by the State.

The costs included in this analysis for non-SB 618 program participants:

- prison incarceration costs,⁴⁰ and
- parole costs.

All costs shown in Table 15 are in current dollars (FY 2011-12). The costs were calculated for each category (assessment, incarceration, parole, etc.).

Table 15 shows how the “average cost per person” was calculated for each. Then, the relevant average costs (depending upon which group) were multiplied by the total in each (305 or 311) to get a total cost. This total cost represents the cost for either the SB 618 program group or the non-SB 618 program group since the beginning of the program.

⁴⁰ Incarceration costs also include program services (e.g., drug treatment, vocational programs, education) while in prison.

Table 15
AVERAGE COSTS PER PERSON FOR SB 618 PARTICIPANTS AND NON-PARTICIPANTS
(in FY 2011-12 dollars)

SB 618 Program Participant Costs	Average Cost Per Person	Source	Formula
Additional Probation Staff	\$1,542.65	CDCR	Total probation staff costs from CDCR budgets (FY06/07 to FY10/11) divided by total SB 618 participants.
SB 618 Program Assessment – Male ¹	\$1,043.00	County Sheriff	Cost per participant to conduct the ASI ² assessment, dental, educational, and mental health screening
SB 618 Program Assessment – Male ³	\$1,147.00	County Sheriff	Cost per participant to conduct ASI, dental, educational, and mental health screening
SB 618 Program Assessment – Female ⁴	\$1,043.00	County Sheriff	Cost per participant to conduct ASI, dental, educational, and mental health screening
SB 618 Program Assessment – Female ⁵	\$1,147.00	County Sheriff	Cost per participant to conduct ASI, dental, educational, and mental health screening
Prison incarceration – RJD ⁶ (Males)	\$64,506.62	CDCR	Average daily rate of \$136.60 * Average number of days in prison (472.23)
Prison incarceration – CIW ⁷ (Females)	\$65,094.74	CDCR	Average daily rate of \$171.60 * Average number of days in prison (379.34)
In-custody case management – RJD (Males)	\$3,116.72	CDCR 09/10 PEA ⁸ Budget	Average daily rate of \$6.60 * Average number of days in prison (472.23)
In-custody case management – CIW (Females)	\$3,690.98	CDCR 09/10 PEA Budget	Average daily rate of \$9.73 * Average number of days in prison (379.34)
Parole	\$4,771.00	CDCR DAPO ⁹	Average monthly rate of \$367 * Average parole of 13 months per person
Community services	\$5,784.97	CDCR	Total UCSD ¹⁰ and CTS ¹¹ costs from CDCR budgets (FY06/07 to FY10/11) divided by total SB 618 participants.
DA database	\$478.80	CDCR	Total costs from CDCR budgets (FY06/07 to FY10/11) divided by total SB 618 participants.

SB 618 Program Non-Participant Costs	Average Cost Per Person	Source	Formula
Prison incarceration - (Males)	\$58,705.22	CDCR	Average daily rate of \$136.60 * Average number of days in prison (429.76)
Prison incarceration – (Females)	\$68,056.56	CDCR	Average daily rate of \$171.60 * Average number of days in prison (396.60)
Parole	\$4,771.00	CDCR DAPO	Average monthly rate of \$367 * Average parole of 13 months per person

1 – Applied to 50% of cases

2 – ASI = Addiction Severity Index

3 – Applied to 50% of cases that received extra mental health screenings

4 – Applied to 75% of cases

5 – Applied to 25% of cases that received extra mental health screenings

6 – RJD = R. J. Donovan Correctional Facility

7 – CIW = California Institution for Women

8 – PEA = Public Entity Agreement

9 – DAPO = Department of Adult Parole Operations

10 – UCSD = University of California, San Diego

11 – CTS = Comprehensive Training Systems, Inc.

SOURCE: SANDAG SB 618 Final Evaluation Report, 2012

Total costs only represent the cost for the sample size in each group, and does not reflect total program costs. This distinction is important because this is not a cost-benefit analysis. As previously mentioned, it does not consider the total costs spent on the program versus the total net benefits. Rather, this analysis creates a comparative measure that can be used to determine whether the SB 618 program has the same or better return than “treatment as usual” for every dollar spent. These cost figures should not be used as an estimate of total dollars spent on the SB 618 program.

The effectiveness measure (successful cases) equals those not returning to prison 12 months after release.

The cost-effectiveness measure for each group (SB 618 program participants or non-SB 618 program participants) was calculated as:

**Total costs for all group members / Number of persons not returning to prison within 12 months =
Average cost per successful case**

This average cost per successful case measure shows whether the additional cost for SB 618 program participants is worthwhile when factoring in the effectiveness of the program. By comparing it to the non-SB 618 program participant figure, it can be determined whether spending the additional money for the program is a cost-effective investment.

Cost-Avoidance Analysis

In addition to the cost-effectiveness analysis, a cost-avoidance analysis was conducted. Cost-avoidance is a method for projecting future expenses that are avoided due to successful treatment (in this case the SB 618 program).

The methodology in this analysis was based on a formula developed by the Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (Report Number 00-23, page 48). Cost-avoidance was derived by multiplying the number of inmates who complete a program by the reduction in recidivism percentage and multiplying this number by an annual incarceration cost per inmate plus average parole costs per inmate. These figures were based on total number of people in a program. (At the time the data was compiled for this analysis, 1,078 were in the SB 618 program even though they were not all in the evaluation sample.)

Using this methodology, the formula in this project was:

[(17% recidivism rate reduction * 1,078 program participants) * \$49,893.15 annual prison cost] + [(17% recidivism rate reduction * 1078 program participants) * \$4,771.00 average of 13 months of parole] = \$10,017,752

The figures used in this formula are described below.

- Recidivism rate reduction: 17% = 50.8% (recidivism rate non-SB 618 program participants) – 33.8% (recidivism rate SB 618 program participants)
- Program participants: 1,078 = Number of total SB 618 program participants enrolled during the duration of the program (February 2007 through March 2012)
- Annual Prison Costs: \$49,893.15= Average cost per inmate based on average prison daily rate for RJD \$136.60 (Table 15) * 365.25 days⁴¹
- 13 Months of Parole: \$4,771 (Table 15)

This calculation also assumes that a reoffender would return to prison for one year.

⁴¹ Due to the small number of females recidivating in both samples, the male daily rate was used in this analysis. This is a more conservative approach because male daily cost is less than female daily cost and it simplifies the analysis (parsimony).

SUMMARY

The results from the cost-effective and cost-avoidance analyses suggest that the SB 618 program is a cost-effective option for the State of California. Having fewer SB 618 clients return to prison within 12 months of release resulted in a lower cost per successful case and may justify the additional costs for a greater variety of services. Additionally, these data support the conclusion that this program could save the State of California almost \$10 million in future costs. This potential savings was based on a relatively small number of successful clients. Therefore, it is possible that serving more offenders could result in even more future State cost savings.

The SB 618 program was more cost effective than treatment as usual. The short-term costs of providing the program resulted in long-term savings.

Conclusions

INTRODUCTION

In response to high incarceration rates with few rehabilitative programs offered in prison, the San Diego County District Attorney's (DA) Office initiated Senate Bill (SB) 618 with the goal of reducing recidivism and increasing the probability of successful reentry for individuals leaving prison and returning to California communities. SB 618 was based on national knowledge of evidence-based practices in offender reentry and the concept that providing tangible reentry support services will increase parolees' chances of successful reintegration into the community. While the program closed effective June 30, 2012 due to the shift in responsibilities for offender reentry from the State to local jurisdictions as of October 2011, the lessons learned from SB 618 implementation by policymakers committed to evidence-based practices, an earlier effort to reduce recidivism for a post-prison population, may be helpful as local governments seek to facilitate successful offender reentry into their communities.

PROGRAM IMPACT

Ultimately, SB 618 aimed to assist ex-offenders in becoming non-recidivating productive citizens in order to protect the public and save precious taxpayer dollars. The impact of the program on offender behavior was assessed with respect to parole violations, arrests, convictions, and return-to-prison rates for the 12-month period following prison release.

- **SB 618 assisted offenders in adhering to their conditions of parole.** The comparison group was more likely to be returned to prison for a parole technical violation one year after release.

With respect to social outcomes related to risk for recidivism, several improvements occurred for SB 618 participants, particularly as related to housing and employment.

- Four-fifths (80%) of the treatment group secured stable housing within one year of release from prison, which included government supported and monitored accommodations, sober living, board and care, residential treatment, and permanent housing (i.e., responsible for paying rent/mortgage).
- About two-thirds (67%) of the treatment group were employed at least once during the year following prison release.

The SB 618 program was based on the philosophy that successful reentry is tied to understanding needs and providing services in prison, followed by support and services in the community. Based on this perspective, the analysis examined the relationship between receipt of services and success (i.e., desistance from crime).

- Receiving services in the community (i.e., utilizing the referrals provided by the CCMs) was related to not being arrested, convicted, returning to prison for a parole violation and/or receiving a new prison term in the 12 months following prison release.
- Obtaining stable housing and employment also were protective against criminal activity.

COST ANALYSIS

Based on the cost-effectiveness and cost-avoidance analyses, the SB 618 program was a cost-effective program and provided long-term savings when compared to treatment as usual.

- **The SB 618 program was more cost effective than treatment as usual when success rates were included in the analysis.** The average cost per successful SB 618 participant was \$123,648. For a successful comparison case, the cost was \$131,814. These costs consider both the extra costs associated with the SB 618 program and differential success rates.
- **The average cost per successful case was higher for comparison cases because more of them returned to prison.** Initially, the cost per case was higher for SB 618 participants (due to the extra costs associated

with providing the program, such as additional assessments and case management); however, the costs were lower when the analysis factors in the number returning to prison.

- **The short-term costs of providing the SB 618 program resulted in long-term savings.** The reduction in recidivism (50.8% - 33.8% = 17.0%) translated into approximately 183 offenders not returning to prison within the first year following release into the community. Avoiding the cost of re-incarceration (\$49,893 on average) and parole supervision (\$4,771) for one year would amount to a cost savings of an estimated \$10 million.

LESSONS LEARNED

The experiences of SB 618 and evaluation results provide valuable lessons to guide others considering implementation of offender reentry programs.

- **Importance of program fidelity:** Over the course of the project, modifications to the original program design were necessary due to real world constraints. Documentation of these changes through the process evaluation put the results of the impact evaluation in context. It is possible that recidivism reductions could have been greater if the program had been implemented more closely to the original design.
- **Communication is key to collaboration:** A culture of open communication was fostered among program partners across agencies. Operational Procedures Committee meetings were first convened in November 2005 and served as one vehicle for communication throughout the duration of the project. These meetings were regularly attended by key individuals to discuss issues, brainstorm possible solutions, and come to agreement on the best course of action. Further, the Web-based data management system facilitated timely communication between everyone working with each participant.
- **Beneficial role of collaboration in provision of services through partnerships across systems:** The primary method of collaboration in the SB 618 program involved incorporating interdisciplinary team approaches at two key points in a participant's progress, both of which received positive feedback from participants. The first of these was the MDT meeting held prior to participants' sentencing to review eligibility and discuss screening and assessment results. These meetings were staffed by a Probation Officer, case managers and prison classification counselor. The second of these interdisciplinary forums, the Community Roundtable, was convened on an ongoing basis from the participants' release to their exit from the program. The Parole Agent, case manager, participant and any other individuals significantly involved in the participant's reentry effort attended these meetings.
- **Link services to assessed needs:** As part of SB 618, assessments were conducted locally, beginning before a participant was transferred to the prison reception center. During program development, partners thoroughly discussed which assessments should be conducted and agreed that additional information would be useful regarding participants' substance use and vocational needs. The information gained from these assessments was used in the creation of each participant's Life Plan. A relatively high proportion of participants received services matching their overall needs, suggesting the effectiveness of these assessments.
- **Utilize custody time to prepare for reentry:** By assessing needs in a timely manner, the Life Plan was developed with SB 618 participant input prior to prison entry so that the participant could access relevant services while in custody and then build upon this foundation once in the community.
- **Applicability to other prison inmates:** The successes of SB 618 suggest that program components previously mentioned (e.g., risk and needs assessment, case plan development, and service provision starting in custody that is linked to assessed needs) may be effective for other offenders prior to parole (e.g., higher level

offenders). Since most offenders are eventually released from prison, applying these program components could potentially reduce the revolving door to prison, along with the prison population.

- **Importance of stable housing and employment:** The success of SB 618 in reducing factors linked to recidivism (i.e., employment and stable housing) point to the importance of addressing these basic issues in other reentry programs.
- **Value of intermediate sanctions:** The research finding that SB 618 participants were less likely to be returned to prison for a technical parole violation suggests that the use of intermediate sanctions (e.g., residential substance abuse treatment in response to drug use) are valuable alternatives for addressing offender behavior rather than additional prison time.
- **Need to transition offenders immediately into services upon release into the community, along with motivational techniques, including incentives for achieving benchmarks or milestones:** Almost three-quarters (71%) of the treatment group followed up on referrals to community services (i.e., full treatment participants). However, this level of service utilization still means that three in ten did not, highlighting the critical need for developing ways to transition offenders from custody into needed services. For example, upon release from custody, offenders could be transferred to a community transitional center where their needs are assessed, followed by transportation to residential treatment if needed. In addition, motivational techniques and other strategies (e.g., incentives for achieving benchmarks or milestones) to engage participants in all services could help with program retention.
- **Cognitive behavioral programs as a critical component:** Full treatment participation (i.e., following up on referrals to services in the community) was associated with program success (i.e., desistance from crime). Further, full treatment participants, scored lower on criminal

thinking scales than the individuals who did not take advantage of these services. These research findings highlight the importance of addressing the thought processes of offenders (e.g., through cognitive behavioral programming) as early as possible in the reentry process, ideally in custody before release.

- **Usefulness of On-Going Data Tracking:** From the beginning of this effort, SB 618 stakeholders made it a priority to put data tracking systems in place. Since that time, process and impact evaluation findings were shared in a timely fashion to help program partners determine what works to prevent recidivism.

SUMMARY

Based on the research findings in this evaluation report, the SB 618 San Diego Prisoner Reentry Program improved outcomes for participants. Specifically, program participants were significantly less likely to be arrested for a new offense or be returned to prison for a parole technical violation. As a result of this success, the program was more cost effective compared to treatment as usual. The factors found to be most significantly related to success were engagement in community services (i.e., utilization of referrals provided by the case managers), acquiring stable housing, and being employed. The evaluation findings support the inclusion of intermediate sanctions in response to lack of program compliance, motivational techniques to engage and retain participants (including incentives for achieving benchmarks or milestones), and cognitive behavioral programming to transform thought processes in offender reentry programs.

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