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PROCESS EVALUATION OF SELECT RESTORE, REINVEST, AND RENEW (R3) FUNDED GRANTEES

ICJIA
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Process Evaluation of Select Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Funded Grantees

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Executive Summary 4
Introduction 9
Evaluation and Methodology Overview 12
Report 1: Cook County 20
Service Delivery: Alternatives, Inc. 23
Service Delivery: Cornerstone Community Development Corporation 40
Service Delivery: Emerald South Economic Development Collaboration 50
Service Delivery: Metropolitan Family Services 62
Limitations and Key Takeaways 83
Appendix A: Cook County Programmatic Logic Models 90
Report 2: Northern Illinois 94
Assessment and Planning: Garfield Park Community Council 99
Assessment and Planning: Will County 108
Service Delivery: Kankakee School District 111 117
Service Delivery: Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization 126
Service Delivery: Perfectly Flawed Foundation 136
Service Delivery: Prairie State Legal Services 145
Appendix B: Northern Illinois Programmatic Logic Models 162
Report 3: Central Illinois 171
Assessment and Planning: City of Springfield 175
Assessment and Planning & Service Delivery: East Springfield Community Center Commission 181
Service Delivery: Land of Lincoln Legal Aid 188
Service Delivery: Board of Education, City of Peoria 199
Service Delivery: Springfield Urban League 209
Findings and Analysis 218
Appendix C: Central Illinois Programmatic Logic Models 231
Report 4: Southern Illinois 236
Assessment and Planning: Centralia Juvenile Justice Council 252
Service Delivery: Academic Development Institute 254
Service Delivery: Arrowleaf 263
Service Delivery: Lutheran Social Services of Illinois 273

Service Delivery: United Way of Greater St. Louis 280
Key Recommendations 291
Appendix D: Southern Illinois Programmatic Logic Models 297
Appendix E: SIUC Interview Guide 301
Conclusion 305

Executive Summary

Restore, Reinvest, Renew Grant Program

On June 25, 2019, Illinois joined the growing list of states that legalized adult recreational cannabis use. The legislation included the creation of a new grant program called Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3). The R3 program reinvests a portion of cannabis tax revenue into communities via the distribution of grant funds to five program areas (economic development, violence prevention services, reentry services, youth development, and civil legal aid) in an effort to address issues within communities experiencing high rates of gun injury, unemployment, child poverty, and incarceration.

During its first year, the R3 program awarded $31.5 million to communities in need. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's (ICJIA) Center for Violence Prevention and Intervention Research, in collaboration with Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC), the University of Illinois at Chicago Great Cities Institute (GCI), and the University of Illinois Springfield (UIS), conducted site specific process evaluations to learn about the implementation and operations of select R3 grantees.

Process Evaluation

The purpose of a process evaluation is to learn about the implementation and operations of a program. In the current evaluation, researchers sought to gain a better understanding about the work of select grantees of the R3 grant program during its initial implementation. Across the whole state, 16 service delivery grantees and 6 planning grantees were selected as full evaluation sites.

Community-Based Participatory Research Approach

Employing a community-based participatory research approach (CBPR) was a priority for the evaluation teams and was a novel approach for ICJIA evaluation. CBPR differs from traditional research in that it emphasizes collaboration and power sharing between evaluators, programs, community members, and stakeholders. In the current evaluation, this approach focused heavily on relationship building and researchers worked in partnership with program staff to determine the goals, research questions, and methods of the process evaluation.

Research Questions

To allow for continuity across the multi-site R3 program, each evaluation team adopted the same set of research questions developed by the ICJIA evaluation team. The research questions encompassed general topics related to program implementation. Additionally, staff from individual R3-funded sites were provided the opportunity to add any additional research questions specific to their program. Research questions are listed below.

1. What was involved in the implementation of the program?
2. How were the program's clients recruited, engaged, and retained?
3. How many people received services and/or completed the program?
4. What capacity does the program have to undergo a rigorous outcome evaluation?
5. What community engagement strategies were utilized by the program during implementation and were they effective?
6. How can researchers best engage with staff and clients of funded programs?
7. How can a future outcome evaluation incorporate the needs and values of program staff, clients, and potential clients and best encompass a community-based research approach?

Regional Program Process Evaluations

Cook County

The Center for Violence Prevention and Intervention Research at ICJIA conducted four process evaluations of R3 service delivery programs in Cook County. Researchers convened multiple virtual meetings with staff at each site to develop research questions, create logic models, understand available data sources, and gain staff perspectives through unstructured interviews.

Service Delivery.

- Alternatives, Inc. received a grant to expand restorative justice and behavioral health programming provided to youth ages 10 to 24 and their families in Chicago. In addition to providing direct services, program staff conduct professional development training to improve partner schools' culture and climate.
- Cornerstone Community Development Corporation received a grant to provide workforce development services to clients in South Suburban Cook County. Cornerstone's program offers training and certification in a wide variety of employment sectors with the aim of stabilizing, sustaining, and empowering participants.
- Emerald South Economic Development Collaboration received a grant for its Terra Firma program, which develops vacant lots throughout Chicago's mid-south side. Terra Firma's partners provide workforce training, support, entrepreneurship education, and business coaching, all specifically aligned with the environmental jobs sector.
- Metropolitan Family Services received a grant to increase its service provision to clients in southwest suburban Cook County. Its services link justice-involved and housing-insecure clients to needed resources. Services also train participants through workforce development programs and build community capacity through collaboration.

Northern Illinois

The Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois Chicago conducted six process evaluations of R3 programs in Northern Illinois. GCI carried out two rounds of interviews with program staff, organizations' board members, and community members. Researchers also analyzed administrative data and observed program activities, such as planning meetings and service provision.

Assessment and Planning.

- Garfield Park Community Council received a grant to conduct a planning initiative to improve a section of the local neighborhood, employing results from a community survey and an economic development assessment. Findings sought to provide new and actionable information to develop future proposals for improving the area.
- Will County received a grant to develop a plan to address community concerns, identify existing community resources, measure service gaps, and evaluate strategies for targeting R3 priority areas. The planning initiative aimed to produce a comprehensive plan document and build collaborative relationships.

Service Delivery.

- Kankakee School District 111 received a grant for its Youth Empowerment Program, providing sixth through twelfth graders with specific interventions, diversion, and prevention programming. Participants receive programming aligned with their needs and interests, such as mentoring, community service, college visits, job training, and youth employment.

- Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization received a grant to provide self-directed recovery services to justice-involved individuals in the northeast Lake County area. The program aims to build recovery capital for participants through services and referrals. It addresses needs such as clinical treatment, employment, housing, and transportation.
- Perfectly Flawed Foundation received a grant to provide a peer-supported, harm reduction-informed recovery program to individuals in LaSalle, Bureau, and Putnam counties. Staff provide participants with case planning, referrals for clinical needs, and direct supportive services (e.g. transportation) to further clients' self-directed recovery plans.
- Prairie State Legal Services received a grant to provide civil legal assistance, legal education, and complementary restorative justice activities in the Rockford area. Staff attorneys offer legal advice, representation, and pro se assistance determined by the complexity of the client issue.

Central Illinois

Researchers at the University of Illinois Springfield conducted process evaluations of six R3 grantees in Central Illinois. The evaluation team interviewed program leaders, made site visits to each grantee, and collaboratively developed logic models for the four service delivery programs. The availability and utility of existing data varied widely between grantees.

Assessment and Planning.

- The City of Springfield received a grant for an assessment and planning project that addresses economic disinvestment. A consultant collected data from residents and other stakeholders. This information and administrative data were utilized to develop a strategic plan with actionable goals and objectives regarding the community's priorities.
- The East Springfield Community Center Commission received a grant to conduct a planning initiative to assess the Springfield area's needs related to reentry. The planning group coordinated meetings to gather information on the reentry process and on potential needs of returning citizens, including employment, housing, education, and treatment.

Service Delivery.

- The East Springfield Community Center Commission received a grant to provide reentry services to individuals in the Springfield area through Returning American Citizens Empowered. The project emphasizes employment-related services for high-need clients returning from incarceration, with the goal of reducing recidivism and improving public safety.
- Land of Lincoln Legal Aid received a grant in the Northeast Central funding region to provide more civil legal services to reduce or eliminate legal barriers to health, safety, and economic well-being. This agency also received a grant in the Central funding region to provide similar services, including direct legal assistance and referrals.
- The City of Peoria Board of Education received a grant to expand wraparound services provided to students through their Hope, Health, and Healing program. These services include legal and reentry resources, counseling and other services to address trauma, career coaching, mentoring, and a middle to high school transition program.
- Springfield Urban League received a grant funding its Community Empowerment Program. Youth and young adult participants receive assistance obtaining a high school diploma, job-readiness training, work-based learning, and career planning. Industry partners offer occupational and job training as well as customized training to address specific workforce needs.

Southern Illinois

Researchers at Southern Illinois University Carbondale conducted five process evaluations of R3 grantees in Southern Illinois. Evaluators conducted semi-structured interviews and focus groups with program staff members at the four service delivery grantees. Qualitative and supplementary administrative data were analyzed. Logic models were created and reviewed with all service delivery sites.

Assessment and Planning.

The Centralia Juvenile Justice Council received a grant to conduct a collaborative assessment of the juvenile justice system and community needs through meetings and a survey of residents. Based on the findings, a strategic plan was created to outline a community-specific program for future development.

Service Delivery.

- Academic Development Institute received a grant funding its Youth Engagement Program in the East St. Louis area. The Institute and its partners provide services to young people and their families related to early childhood development, educational achievement, and job training. They provide trauma-informed professional development for school staff, as well.
- Arrowleaf received a grant to provide youth development and violence prevention services in Alexander and Pulaski counties, such as social and behavioral development groups and service-learning projects. Arrowleaf supports families through parenting skills training, family engagement events, and referrals to additional services.
- Lutheran Social Services of Illinois received a grant to expand reentry services and employment opportunities for returning citizens in Southern Illinois. The program offers virtual and in-person job skills training, certifications, and employment placements. Funds also targeted increasing community awareness and bolstering the program's employer network.
- United Way of Greater St. Louis received a grant to provide out of school time programming for youth in the East St. Louis area. United Way and partners offer a variety of academic and extracurricular activities to improve youths' educational, social, and emotional development.

Findings

The programs evaluated in this report intentionally represent a diverse group of grantees with respect to, among other characteristics, location, service type, funding amount, and collaborative processes. However, some themes emerged across all the evaluation sites.

Programs placed a strong emphasis on addressing specific needs of the communities they serve; and, by incorporating client/community feedback into their program processes, many demonstrated an ability to adapt programming into responsive service delivery. There were challenges in the initial implementation and administration of funding. However, nearly all programs experienced increases in capacity as the grant program period progressed. The amount and types of available data varied widely among funded programs, which resulted in limitations to present work that would be good to address in preparing for future evaluations.

The assessment and planning initiatives examined here succeeded in bringing together relevant stakeholders and incorporating perspectives of various groups, often including community

residents. For many of these grantees, the question remains how the results of the planning projects will be used.

Despite initial delays, service delivery programs have largely been successfully implemented and are providing services to clients as designed. The majority of programs examined in this process evaluation are meeting or exceeding their goals for a number of clients served. For sites that are not yet meeting these objectives, barriers have been identified, and strategic adaptations have been planned or carried out.

Limitations

Evaluation teams in the various regions faced limitations while carrying out the process evaluations. First, the current evaluation was ICJIA's inaugural attempt at implementing a CBPR approach for a statewide grant program. As indicated previously, CBPR methods require considerable buy in and time from all partners. For smaller grassroots organizations (like those R3 funds), this kind of commitment can be particularly challenging. Further, data systems and data availability varied widely across sites, due in part to capacity differences. In the current work, evaluators recognized that many of the programs did not have the capacity for, or interest in, certain evaluation methodologies. As such, evaluators prioritized the capacity and research interests of the programs themselves when developing process evaluation methodologies. Second, programs experienced delays in implementation and early outreach/engagement due in part to administrative processes and the impacts of COVID-19. This had direct implications on planning processes and service delivery as well as the evaluation work.

Introduction

On June 25, 2019, Illinois joined the growing list of states that legalized adult recreational cannabis use through Public Act 101-27. Public Act 101-27 established the Illinois Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act (the Act).[1] The legalization of adult recreational cannabis use through the Act included the intent of establishing an equitable legal cannabis industry, as well as repairing harms done by economic disinvestment and historical overuse of criminal justice responses in communities. Part of these reparations included using cannabis tax revenue to make positive change through reinvestment in communities via grant funds. This restorative mission included the creation of a new grant program for Illinois communities called Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3).[2] The R3 program reinvests a portion of cannabis tax revenue into communities via the distribution of grant funds to five program areas (economic development, violence prevention services, reentry services, youth development, and civil legal aid) in an effort to address issues in communities experiencing high rates of gun injury, unemployment, child poverty, and incarceration.

The Act went into effect on January 1, 2020, allowing adults ages 21 and older to legally purchase recreational cannabis from licensed dispensaries in the state. It also permitted arrest and conviction record expungements for minor violations of the Cannabis Control Act. Further, the Act enabled law enforcement to shift focus from enforcing cannabis laws to addressing violent and property crimes; earmarked cannabis tax revenue for education, substance abuse prevention, and treatment; and allocated public resources for community investment. The R3 program seeks to:

- Directly address the impact of economic disinvestment, violence, and the historical overuse of criminal justice responses to community and individual needs by providing resources to support local design and control of community-based responses to these impacts.
- Substantially reduce the total amount of gun violence and concentrated poverty in the state.
- Protect communities from gun violence through targeted investments and intervention programs.
- Promote employment infrastructure.[3]

Public Act 101-27 also established an R3 Board to oversee the R3 program. Per the Act, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) was tasked with administering R3 grant funds to address economic development, youth development, violence prevention, reentry, and

[1] See 410 ILCS 705/1-1 *et al.*
[2] See 410 ILCS 705/10-40.
[3] See 410 ILCS 705/10-40(a)(1-4).

civil legal aid in eligible areas (referred to as R3 areas, which ranged from "0001" to "0769" during the first round of funding[4] the time, and could be designated as "high need"[5]).

With support from key stakeholders, ICJIA developed and released two Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) solicitations for applicants to receive R3 funds. The first NOFO was for service delivery (for applicants providing services in communities) and the second was for assessment and planning activities (for applicants seeking to build community capacity within and between organizations). A NOFO is "an agency's formally issued announcement of the availability of State, federal or federal pass-through funding through one of its financial assistance programs. It provides eligibility and evaluation criteria, funding preferences/priorities, the submission deadline, and information on how to obtain an application for the funding opportunity."[6] Release of the R3 NOFOs involved several key phases, including: determination of eligible application areas (R3 areas), development of NOFOs emphasizing equity, a time window during which applications could be submitted, technical assistance to potential applicants, scoring by implicit bias trained external reviewers, and a training series for funded R3 grantees.[7]

Geography requirements are a key element of the R3 NOFO— organizations applying for funding were given priority if they were located in an R3 area or if a majority of their employees lived in an R3 area. Further, available funding amounts were based on applicant location. The R3 Board voted to divide Illinois into 12 regions, with total funding allocation percentages in each region as follows: Central (5.1%), Collar (9.7%), Cook-Chicago Northern (5.7%), Cook-Chicago Southern (28.3%), Cook-Chicago Western (13.1%), Cook-Suburban (15.3%), Northeast Central (6.1%), Northern (5.1%), Northwest (1.7%), Northwest Central (2.2%), South Central (5.9%), and Southern (1.9%).[8] Applicants could submit one application for each region where services would be provided. During its first year, the R3 program awarded $31.5 million to communities in need (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 2021). Overall, 80 organizations received R3 funding, including 58 for service delivery and 22 for assessment and planning activities (Weisner & Gatens, 2022).

Another key element of the R3 program is ongoing evaluation. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's (ICJIA) Research and Analysis unit, in collaboration with Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC), the University of Illinois at Chicago Great Cities Institute (GCI), and the University of Illinois Springfield (UIS) conducted site specific process

[4] ICJIA is required by legislation to reanalyze the data used to determine R3 areas every four years. New areas were calculated in 2023 and now range from 1001 to 1906.
[5] High need status was determined during the eligibility analysis phase of R3, during which census tracts in the 75th percentile on the indicators used to determine eligibility were labeled as "high need." For more, please visit https://r3.illinois.gov/eligibility/.
[6] See 44 Ill. Admin Code 7000.30.
[7] For more details on the R3 grant making, grant review, and funding processes during the program's inaugural year of performance, please see: https://icjia.illinois.gov/researchhub/articles/restore-reinvest-and-renew-program-grantmaking-and-implementation-an-examination-of-a-state-cannabis-tax-funded-grant-programs-inaugural-performance-period.
[8] Available funding percentages were designated for each region by dividing the summed population of eligible R3 zones within a region by the total summed population across all eligible R3 zones.

evaluations to learn about the implementation and operations of select R3 grantees. This report lays out the methodology, background, and findings from each of the evaluation teams' respective process evaluations.

Evaluation and Methodology Overview

Purpose

The purpose of a process evaluation is to learn about the implementation and operations of a program (Bureau of Justice Assistance, n.d.). In the current evaluation, researchers sought to gain a better understanding about the work of select grantees of the Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) grant program during its initial implementation. Understanding the implementation of these programs is of vital interest to the communities they operate in, the staff and leaders who run them, and the people who support them through legislation and funding. Additionally, the process evaluation provides a chance to understand what parts of the program are working well and what aspects present room for growth. Staff from select R3-funded sites were asked to provide a highly detailed account of program activities and share administrative data collected as part of client intake and case management. While program staff have many ongoing duties, undertaking a process evaluation can be a good opportunity to examine program operations and goals from a higher perspective and reflect on areas of interest for ongoing research.

Site Selection

Due to the 80 total R3 grantees, only a subsection of funded sites was considered for full evaluation. Across the whole state, 16 service delivery grantees and six planning grantees were selected as full evaluation sites. To ensure variation in sites selected, researchers (from ICJIA, GCI, UIS, and SIUC) considered several key criteria in identifying the proposed sample:

- **Location:** Where were services located? Funded programs were grouped by their service location to ensure that each evaluation team was selecting sites within its local area. For ease, the 12 funding regions were collapsed into four evaluation regions: central (to be covered by University of Illinois Springfield), Cook (to be covered by The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority for service delivery programs and by the University of Illinois Chicago Great Cities Institute for assessment and planning programs), northern (to be covered by University of Illinois Chicago Great Cities Institute), and southern (to be covered by Southern Illinois University).
- **Services Provided:** What kind of services were provided? Services could fall within five priorities: civil legal aid, reentry, violence prevention, economic development, and youth development. If the grantee had submitted quarterly reports for their program, researchers considered the services that the program indicated in their quarterly report submissions. If the grantee had not submitted quarterly reports, researchers considered the services that were coded based on the applications that the program initially submitted in response to the NOFO. The quarterly reported activities were deemed the most accurate priority areas, as grantees could select which of the five priorities they engaged in. Their services based on their application to the R3 program were qualitatively coded based on their answers and were more subjective. Each evaluation region aimed to cover all five service priorities within the proposed sample.
- **Funding Amount:** How much money did the site receive? Potential sites in each region were sorted by the amount of funding received, and researchers aimed to obtain a range of funding amounts within their proposed sample.
- **Workload:** How much time and energy would a specific site require? Researchers also considered different aspects of the program that could affect the workload undertaken.

These included whether the program was a collaborative (a group of two or more organizations that received funding under one application for a single cooperative program) and whether the program had been submitting quarterly reporting data to ICJIA (a requirement to receive state funds). Specifically, researchers aimed to select both collaboratives and single organizations within their proposed sample to help balance the amount of work to be done with subrecipient sites. Additionally, researchers recognized that potential sites that had submitted quarterly reporting data in the proper format were less likely to require significant technical assistance upfront and were more likely to be prepared for an evaluation.

- **Volunteers:** Did program staff volunteer to be evaluated? The research process aimed to involve as many community-based research principles as possible, prompting ICJIA researchers to give programs the opportunity to reach out and indicate interest in participating, following two presentations from research staff detailing the evaluation. Programs that indicated interest were reviewed, and those that were deemed possible sites based on program documents were included in the proposed sample.[9]

Table 1 lays out characteristics of the service delivery and assessment and planning programs chosen for the current evaluation.

Table 1

Evaluation Sample: Grantee Characteristics

Region	Grant Type	Evaluation Team Responsible	Grantee Count	Year One Funding Range	Collaboratives (#)
Cook	Service Delivery	ICJIA	4	$250,000 - $2,500,000	2
Northern	Service Delivery	GCI	4	$91,069 – $732,032	3
Central	Service Delivery	UIS	4	$57,486 - $858,669	3
Southern	Service Delivery	SIUC	4[a]	$228,702 - $830,000	2
Cook	Assessment and Planning	GCI	1	$177,968	1
Northern	Assessment and Planning	GCI	1	$151,697	1
Central	Assessment and Planning	UIS	2	$80,000 - $80,899	2
Southern	Assessment and Planning	SIUC	2[b]	$25,548 - $86,442	1

Note. Information in the table based on analysis of R3 grant application information.

[a] Four service delivery grantees were selected in the Central region; however, one grantee was funded in two separate R3 areas within this region and both sites were included in the evaluation.

[b] Two assessment and planning grantees were selected in the Southern region; however, one site dropped out of the evaluation process.

[9] A total of four sites indicated interest in participation. Two were included in the proposed sample.

Approach

Employing a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach was a priority for the evaluation team. Traditional research and evaluation involves an outside research entity imposing their research plan onto a program and its community, collecting and analyzing data without community input and publishing the results in a space that the community may not have access to. CBPR, however, is a research framework that encourages collaboration between program stakeholders, communities, and researchers (Collins et al., 2018). CBPR emphasizes power sharing and equal partnership, recognizing that everyone has a diverse perspective to bring to the table and that research is improved when these unique perspectives are included (Collins et al., 2018). These diverse perspectives can be particularly valuable in creating more comprehensive approaches to addressing complex social challenges, like those targeted by the R3 program (Collins et al., 2018). The key principles of the CBPR framework are (Collins et al., 2018; Israel et al., 1998; Israel et al., 2001):

1. ***Recognizing community as a unit of identity.*** CBPR recognizes that individuals are part of a larger community, whether that be a geographic community or a dispersed group of individuals that share a common identity. This approach integrates community identities into the work and helps to build upon them.
2. ***Building on resources and strengths in the community.*** CBPR identifies and builds on community strengths and resources to improve overall health of the community. This principle also avoids duplication of work and wasted resources.
3. ***Facilitating collaborative and equitable partnership throughout.*** CBPR encourages equity and power sharing throughout the research process. Further, each partner shares control of the overall process and products.
4. ***Integrating knowledge and action for mutual benefit.*** CBPR aims to build a knowledge base that incorporates community perspective. Additionally, the process focuses on utilizing the results for positive community change.
5. ***Promoting co-learning and creating an empowering process that acknowledges social inequities.*** CBPR acknowledges the benefit of reciprocal transfer of knowledge between researchers and partners. Further, this framework recognizes that marginalized communities have historically been excluded from research activities and thus explicit attention should be paid to their voices.
6. ***Creating an iterative process.*** CBPR understand the importance of being responsive to ideas or concerns that emerge during research processes, building on what has previously been learned from research activities, and expanding the activities as needed. This helps to ensure the sustainability of processes and findings.
7. ***Addressing health from positive and ecological perspectives.*** CBPR examines health through a positive and ecological lens, understanding that broader forces have an impact at the individual level.
8. ***Disseminating findings and knowledge gained to all partners.*** Findings and products from CBPR acknowledge all those who contributed and are shared with all partners involved.
9. ***Committing long-term.*** As CBPR intends to build on previous work, it is meant to be a long-term partnership between researchers, stakeholders, and communities. Further, relationship and trust building require long-term work and commitment.

To help facilitate CBPR in the current evaluation, the university teams were intentionally selected based on their locations throughout the state, which allowed the evaluation teams to work in closer proximity to the programs being evaluated (as seen in Table 1). Further, as ICJIA had not previously implemented CBPR practices into its research and evaluation work, we commissioned a guidebook for community-based evaluation from the University of Illinois Chicago Great Cities Institute (GCI). All evaluation teams were asked to utilize this guidebook in designing and carrying out their evaluations.

The current evaluation work incorporated CBPR principles where possible and focused heavily on relationship building. As ICJIA was in a unique position of being both the funder of the R3 program and the funder of the evaluation, it was important for programs and evaluation teams to build trust before evaluation work could begin. In general, evaluation teams worked closely with program staff to learn about the programs' activities, needs, and challenges and assess evaluability. This allowed the program staff to define their community and identify existing strengths and resources. While ICJIA grantees are contractually obligated to participate in evaluation activities, the evaluation teams strove to approach the process evaluation design and execution with an emphasis on a mutually beneficial and collaborative process. Researchers worked in partnership with program staff to determine the goals, research questions, and methods of the process evaluation. For example, evaluation teams utilized methodologies that programs felt were most useful and would result in the greatest participation (e.g., focus groups over surveys). Further, to gain insight into the program, and provide a deliverable that the program could use internally, researchers worked with each evaluation site to develop and refine logic models. Logic models map out the relationship between program activities and intended impact by visually depicting the relationships between program resources, activities, output, assumptions, and outcomes (Center for Violence Prevention and Intervention Research, 2019). Logic models are useful tools for both program planning, implementation, and evaluation. They also encourage iterative processes, as they should be updated as programs make adaptations.

There are some inherent challenges in implementing this framework. CBPR methods are labor-intensive and require considerable buy in, effort, resources, and time (Resnik & Kennedy, 2010). In the current evaluation, teams had to find and manage a balance between scientific rigor and research interests and the interests of the program staff. Literature examining CBPR in the field has found this to be a common challenge faced by researchers (Horowitz et al., 2009; Kennedy et al., 2009; Resnik & Kennedy, 2010). However, equally prioritizing both researcher and community partner interests can be a way to build trust (Christopher et al., 2008). In the end, the process evaluation focused on primary data collection from program partner staff via detailed accounts of activities, supplemented with administrative data provided by programs.

In general, ICJIA viewed the community-based approach as a way to build the capacity of the programs by providing guidance and consultation on modifications that could resolve gaps in the program model and/or program administration. One of R3's guiding principles is a focus on equity and providing funds to smaller or new community-based programs. This meant that programs were in varying stages of development and had varying capacity for evaluation. Thus, some programs may need, and benefit greatly, from the technical assistance provided in a CBPR evaluation. However, evaluation work is bound to the timeline of grant contracts, meaning work can only continue while programs are receiving R3 funds. Evaluation teams understood that the grantees that participated in the current evaluation would not receive funding indefinitely and thus, evaluation work would have to end. While this does not fully reflect the CBPR principle of

long-term commitment, evaluation teams attempted to build capacity for programs to continue evaluation work, at least internally, when contract periods ended. ICJIA anticipates building on lessons learned from this inaugural implementation of CBPR processes as we move into future cohorts of R3 funding and evaluation work.

Research Questions

To allow for continuity across the multi-site R3 evaluation, each evaluation team adopted the same set of research questions. The research questions were developed by the ICJIA evaluation team and encompassed general topics related to program implementation. In addition, staff from individual R3-funded sites were provided the opportunity to add any additional research questions specific to their program. Research questions are listed below.

1. What generally was involved in the implementation of the program? For example, how was the program structured, what activities did it engage in to address the five R3 program priority areas, and what challenges were encountered during implementation?
2. How were the program's clients recruited, engaged, and retained? Also, how were participants matched with appropriate services? What was missing in recruitment, engagement, or retention of clients?
3. How many people received services and/or completed the program? In addition, what might explain the reason for client attrition?
4. What capacity does the program have for a rigorous outcome evaluation? For example, what kind of data do they collect on clients, how accessible is it, and what is the quality of that data?
5. What community engagement strategies were utilized by the program during implementation, and were they effective? In addition, what are the characteristics of the target community?
6. How can researchers best engage with staff and clients of funded programs? What was involved in designing and developing evaluation questions and activities with service delivery programs?
7. How can a future outcome evaluation incorporate the needs and values of program staff, clients, and potential clients and best encompass a community-based research approach?

Timeline

The original grant period for the first round of Restore, Reinvest, and Renew funding began on February 1, 2021; however, some programs initiated services before contracts were signed. The original contract period ended in January 2022, but programs were given the opportunity to apply for a second year of extended funding through January 2023.

The specific time periods covered throughout this report vary between sites, as sites received signed contracts and started implementing assessment and planning programming or delivering services at varying times. In general, R3 reporting periods did not always perfectly fall under a typical quarter system. Table 2 lays out the reporting periods for the first cohort of R3 funding. For clarity, the first five quarters are considered year one of the program, and quarters six through 10 fall under year two of the program. Site specific timelines are detailed in their unique sections throughout this report.

Table 2

Reporting Periods for the First Cohort of R3 Grants

Quarter (Reporting Period)	Year Covered	Month(s) Covered
1	2021	February, March
2	2021	April, May, June
3	2021	July, August, September
4	2021	October, November, December
5	2022	January
6	2022	February, March
7	2022	April, May, June
8	2022	July, August, September
9	2022	October, November, December
10	2023	January

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Report 1: Cook County

Center for Violence Prevention and Intervention Research
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

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Overview

Procedure

Researchers, evaluation sites' leadership and staff engaged in several one-on-one discussions about the evaluation. The team of researchers and site personnel next jointly developed and finalized a logic model. Finally, the team created shared research questions and goals for the evaluation and determined what research questions were feasible to answer. Researchers began meeting with potential process evaluation sites in November 2021 and continued communication (e.g., emails and scheduled meetings) through November 2022.

Data and Analysis

Several data sources were used across all sites for the current evaluation, including: 1) NOFO application packet provided by the ICJIA Federal State and Grants Unit (FSGU); 2) administrative program and client data provided by the funded R3 program through an electronic reporting system (Periodic Performance Reports); 3) primary data about the program, its processes and clients collected by researchers from the funded program staff and collaborating organizations; and 4) target community characteristic data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Table 1 lays out the data used in the evaluation, the sources, the description of the data, and the research question theme associated with the data. Additional data sources used for specific site evaluations are detailed in their respective sections.

Table 1

Data Sources Used in ICJIA Process Evaluation

Data	Source	Description	Associated Research Question Theme
NOFO application packet	ICJIA Federal and State Grants Unit	Grant application narrative which detailed: application region, geographic area, statement of need, program design, program staffing, applicant capacity and experiences, budget details, goals, objectives, and performance measures, implementation schedule, and contact information	1, 2, 5
Administrative program and client data	Programs, via Program Periodic Performance Reports submitted through online system	Quarterly program data that covers clients served, activities, etc.	1, 2, 3 5
Primary data about the program, its processes and clients	Programs, via communications with funded program staff and collaborators	Detailed narratives of program activities, processes, and clients	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Primary data from program's survey response	Programs, via ICJIA developed survey	Voluntary survey to better understand the operations of funded programs, the level of technical assistance needed, and generally inform the implementation of grants and evaluation work	4
Target community characteristics	U.S. Census Bureau, via American Community Survey	Community characteristics of R3 areas served by the program	5

Service Delivery: Alternatives, Inc.

Introduction

Program Overview

Alternatives' website describes the program in the following way: "Alternatives supports and empowers Chicago youth to build safer and more vibrant communities through a combination of restorative justice and behavioral health services. Its mission is to inspire young people to create a just future through practices that heal individuals, restore communities, and transform systems. Alternatives' programs and services use an asset-based model that focuses on enriching young people's lives by building on individual strengths within the context of their family and community."

Alternatives' program is funded as a youth development program under the R3 grant. Their programming serves youth between the ages of 10 and 24 and their families. It provides services citywide through Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and youth centers in Uptown and Washington Park. Alternatives' programming focuses on both the direct services to youth and families described above and on improving school culture and capacity to provide a healthy environment for the youth. The latter goal is attempted by providing trainings for staff, giving technical assistance, building a youth services pipeline, and sharing data with Alternatives' school partners. Alternatives broadly refers to its partnerships with schools as providing either foundational services or intensive services. In general, foundational services are focused on services to improve the environment around the students, such as teacher trainings and needs assessments. Intensive services include direct services to students, such as individual or group therapy delivered by Alternatives staff. Exact services delivered by Alternatives vary by the needs of the school and often change from year to year. A goal of Alternatives is to build schools' capacities and infrastructures to levels at which schools can continue to provide students with restorative justice and trauma informed services "on their own," all the while maintaining a relationship with Alternatives, should a specific need occur. The R3 grant primarily funded intensive services at four schools located in R3 areas: Edward Tilden Career Community High School (Tilden), Edward A. Bouchet Math and Science Academy (Bouchet), Gary- Coomer Preparatory School (Gary-Coomer), and John Fiske Elementary School (Fiske).

Alternatives received funding for the first year of R3 activities in the Chicago Southern region in the amount of $513,997. It received an extension for the second year for this same amount. This yearly amount was 97% of the amount the program had originally requested in their grant application ($525,796).

Program Connection to R3 Goals

Alternatives' mission and programmatic activities are consistent with the mission of R3. Youth development programs like Alternatives are designed to prevent violence in several ways. First, the youths themselves become better equipped to handle stressors that can lead to violence than they do from the skill building practices of conventional youth programs (World Health Organization, 2019). Second, students' emotional well-being increases and leads to better performance at school, which, in turn, in adulthood leads to stronger economic prospects (Batenburg-Eddes & Jolles 2013). Adults with more stable employment and financial security

are less likely to engage in violence (Bullinger et al., 2023). A stronger workforce can lead to more investment from businesses in the local economy and reduce concentrations of poverty. Alternatives' programming is designed to promote protective factors and healthy youth development, address multiple levels of the system surrounding the youth. the program has a strong data collection system for evaluation and programmatic improvement. Together, all of these features provide a promising violence prevention effect of the program.

Community Context

Alternatives is funded to do work in the Southern part of Chicago. Its headquarters was previously located outside an R3 area, but, as of August 31, 2022, it was relocated to the South Side Youth Center (SSYC). SSYC has always operated in a high need zone, just as the schools that are receiving intensive services have. Alternatives has a wide reach due to the combination of sites and its model of referring students from multiple schools to the SSYC. In total, Alternatives reaches 49 R3 areas. Their services touch multiple schools (which draw students from the surrounding areas) and as well as the SSYC (which accepts referrals for individuals from throughout the 49 zones. However, this evaluation focuses on the intensive schools and students from those schools that are most directly impacted by R3 funding. We do not have address information for students from these schools to specify which specific zones in which they reside. All R3 areas are communities that have been underserved and disproportionately affected by historical economic disinvestment. They have the highest rates of gun injury, unemployment, child poverty, individuals committed to prison, and individuals returning from prison. High need status is defined as being in the 75th percentile on these indicators based on statewide data. For Alternatives, 61% of its zones are considered high need zones.

The 49 R3 areas serviced by Alternatives have an estimated total population of 118,834 and a youth population (ages 10-19) of 15,781, which is the primary population Alternatives serves (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019c). The community is approximately 92% Black; 66% of households make less than $50,000 per year; and 21% make less than $10,000 per year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019c).

Existing Evidence for Activities

Alternatives has existed for over 50 years and has maintained a mission to promote social justice and improve the lives of people in higher need communities, particularly children. It has updated its programming to reflect the latest trends and scientific understanding of how to promote healthy individual development and healthy community development. The project that the R3 grant supports is focused on trauma in youth and is based on existing models of trauma-informed care and trauma-informed schools. Alternatives provides training for school personnel in restorative justice practices that are promising practices in providing better disciplinary and developmental outcomes for youth (Mahoney, 2020). Furthermore, the STSS services match the youth development R3 program priority. Six critical components of effective youth development programs include:

- **A foundation in relevant theory and incorporation of validated strategies and/or best practices:** Alternatives' Behavioral Health (BH) services and Restorative Justice

(RJ) programs focus on interventions, leadership development, and prevention of violence and substance abuse as the foundation of best practices. The interventions, particularly individual therapy, are supported by a strong research base (Mahoney, 2020; Payne et al., 2015; Schotland et al., 2016; Stoiber & Gettinger, 2016).

- **Promotion of protective factors and reduction in risk factors:** Risk and protective factors are elements of an individual's background or personal characteristics that either increase or decrease an individual's likelihood of successful life outcomes (Weisner, 2020). For instance, poverty and abuse are risk factors that harm individuals' well-being directly and indirectly, reducing their abilities to achieve successful life outcomes. In contrast, supportive parents, access to quality healthcare and education, and the development of coping skills are protective factors that increase an individual's ability to achieve successful outcomes.

  Alternatives' licensed, certified therapists and highly skilled RJ Specialists work with young people and their families to address a range of issues. They aim to increase protective factors and decrease risk factors. Therapy and case management services emphasize positive communication, conflict resolution, problem solving, and life skills development. To do so they use cognitive-behavioral approaches and other related practices. To deal with substance abuse, treatment involves outpatient assessment and treatment services with youth who are using substances or dealing with codependency issues related to substance use by a caregiver or significant other. Case management services are designed to connect youth with the range of resources and supports available within Alternatives, at other agencies, and throughout the community. The restorative justice team for Alternatives provides training, leadership development, and capacity building to support schools in developing a more restorative culture in which young people can thrive.
- **A focus on multiple behaviors and systems:** Alternatives' BH and RJ programming is designed to support youth and address their behaviors. It is also designed to support the overall school system to create the culture and infrastructure needed to support both BH and RJ programming.
- **A focus on preventing problems and promoting healthy development:** Restorative justice practices include talking circles, creating shared agreements, and community building activities. These activities build skills in youth to identify and communicate feelings and needs and explore different perspectives by reflecting on root causes of others' actions. They also help youth acknowledge positive and negative impacts, anticipate challenges and solve problems, and undertake self-advocacy (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2021). Youth participating in proactive restorative practices are taught to handle potential challenges like dealing with gossip on social media and at school, having difficult and effective conversations with their friends and adversaries, and advocating for themselves with authority figures. The behavioral health program supports youth with therapy to address the reasons they presented for treatment and prevent future issues from reoccurring.

- **Appropriate intensity and duration:** Intensity and duration are two factors that must be considered when designing an intervention for a population. Intensity refers to how concentrated or substantial an intervention is (Bernat & Resnick, 2006). For instance, placing positive messages about reading in a classroom is a very low intensity reading intervention compared to individual one-on-one tutoring which is a high intensity reading intervention. Duration refers to how long an intervention continues; too short and the effects are unlikely to occur and too long leads to wasted resources (Bernat & Resnick, 2006). Both factors must also be balanced against their effects on other aspects of an individual's life. For instance, a youth with behavioral problems could be placed in an intervention that removes them from the school and places them in 24-hour care with psychologists. However, such an intervention is highly disruptive to their education and is impractical for large scale implementation.

  Alternatives has found it most beneficial to provide youth with integrated services in schools for a substantial amount of time - preferably a semester or more. The intensity of the intervention is designed to be minimally disruptive to a youth's distinct needs for a normal school day. Tailored in this way, intensity and duration can take the form of daily, weekly, or even monthly individual or group sessions. To create sustainable change in the school environment on an ongoing basis Alternatives provides schools with the necessary training and framework. The programming is designed to create structural change from the top down and has been most beneficial when implemented for a minimum of an entire school year.
- **Continuous, rigorous evaluation**: Alternatives assesses the impact of its RJ capacity building work by providing pre- and post-surveys and observations for all training and coaching modules. Results of those surveys show strong support for the trainings. Assessment tools cover restorative infrastructure and practices, school and team "temperature checks," restorative conversations, talking circles, peace circles, and student impact surveys. The school-wide Restorative Infrastructure Assessment Tool, developed in partnership with CPS and a researcher from Northwestern's School of Education and Policy, identifies 25 areas that support the implementation of proactive and responsive RJ practices with students, staff, and parents. This assessment includes interviews with students, parents, administrators, and staff and is informed by data from the observation and assessment tools listed previously.

  The primary instruments used to assess youth with some additional questions specific to Alternatives activities are the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).) YASI tracks risk levels for youth; SDQ provides behavioral screening. Outcomes measured at termination include decreases on overall risk factors on the YASI, increases in the percentage of youth who develop and use substance-use refusal skills, improvements in caregiver relationships, and the development of new coping mechanisms and skills to address treatment concerns. Additionally, outcomes reveal the percentage of youth who experience an increase in their functioning levels as defined by the following measures: a decrease in the SDQ

subscale scores related to emotional control, conduct (ranging from fighting to gang activity), hyperactivity, and peer problems. Finally, the assessment outcomes identify the percentage of students who report that their presenting problem is a “bit better” or “much better.”

Site Specific Methodology

Research Questions

ICJIA researchers and Alternatives staff discussed the research questions to be covered in the current process evaluation, and, while other potential research questions were discussed, Alternatives did not add specific research questions to the list presented by ICJIA.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data used for this report was from Alternatives’ administrative data and through conversations that occurred over the course of the evaluation during regular meetings discussing the program. Alternatives uses the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) data management system to manage the different assessments and referrals for therapy.

Some of the data for this report was part of the Periodic Performance Reports that Alternatives was required to submit to ICJIA. The rest was administrative data shared with ICJIA in aggregate form from ETO. The data presented is primarily analyzed using descriptive statistics as they reflect a cross-section of current functioning of the program rather than an assessment of outcomes. Alternatives’ data manager was able to generate summary statistics reports using ETO. ICJIA staff conducted additional data summaries as needed using Excel.

Timeline

The initial grant period for R3 was February 2021 to January 2022. However, the program timeline was significantly impacted by COVID-19 disruptions and contract delays. When the signed contract was received in February 2021, the program staff reached out to schools while remote learning was happening to verify that the schools were still interested after the initial application process in the summer of 2020. Most schools were still struggling with daily attendance by students who were only engaged in online learning. Many were working to transition to hybrid/optional in-person through the spring of 2021. In fall 2021, all schools were transitioning to in-person services amidst massive staffing shortages and instability, including an eventual work stoppage due to disputes between the district and the Chicago Teacher’s Union. Implementation of the program was challenging and, for some activities, impossible. R3 programs were given the opportunity to apply for extended funding from February 2022 through January 2023. Alternatives applied for and received this extension. The planning for the 2022-2023 school year strongly suggests that implementation will be closer to the initial design outlined in Alternatives’ grant application. Alternatives has been collaborating with some the same teachers, staff, and administrators to build on the foundation and develop the full interdisciplinary model of behavioral health and restorative justice in partner schools. Data covered in this report reflect activities and services provided between February 2021 and March 2022.

Site Specific Findings

Program Components and Activities

Staff. At Alternatives, the Director of Restorative Justice (RJ) and Director of Behavioral Health (BH) work together to ensure successful service provision under the STSS program. They work to define and implement the strategic program direction in a consistent manner. Several months into the grant period, the Director of Restorative Justice left for a new employment opportunity. The BH director assumed the duties of the RJ director on a temporary basis while Alternatives attempted to find a replacement RJ director. However, the search for a replacement RJ director was challenging due to the requirements and skills needed to fill the position and was still in progress as of this reporting period.

Additional roles at Alternatives include:

- The RJ training coordinator, who tailors trainings to school needs; coordinates the delivery of training; and, with RJ specialists, facilitates the trainings.
- RJ specialists, who are responsible for facilitating RJ training in schools.
- The SEEIT coordinator, who is responsible for administering, in conjunction with school administrators, the universal assessment to all students enrolled in the schools and for providing social-emotional learning (SEL) trainings and administrative support.
- The clinical supervisor, who is accountable for the therapists who provide direct therapeutic services to clients.
- Master's level therapists, who provide direct therapy for 20 youth each and who participate in culture-building throughout the school, including participating in the Behavioral Health Team (BHT) meetings at the schools and developing relationships with school staff, administrators, and teachers.

Southside Together Organizing for Power (STOP), which, by contracting with Alternatives, helps build the culture of restorative justice and deepen relationships at Hyde Park Academy and surrounding schools with its additional training support in Restorative Justice Circle Keeping for students, parents, teachers, and the community.

Clients. Alternatives provides intensive services to the school communities of Edward Tilden Career Community High School, Edward A. Bouchet Math and Science Academy, Nobel-Gary- Coomer Preparatory School, and John Fiske Elementary School. These schools collectively serve a total of 2,186 students, 76% of whom are low income (Chicago Public Schools, n.d). Demographics from CPS for these four schools report 91% are Black youth (Chicago Public Schools, n.d). The community in which these schools are located is approximately 92% Black; 66% of households make less than $50,000 per year; and 21% make less than $10,000 per year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019c). Youth who participate in Alternatives reflect the community in terms of race and income.

The data presented in Table 2 below reflect an analysis of quarterly reporting data submitted by Alternatives. Specifically, self-report data provided by clients from intensive schools. As such, client demographics from foundational schools are not represented. Further, data may differ from

CPS school student demographic data, as the options available are not the same. For instance, the Alternatives data has a much higher percentage of multiracial students than the CPS data.

Table 2

Self- Reported Demographics of Alternatives Clients in Intensive Schools, by Quarter

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Quarter 5	Quarter 6
Race						
White Hispanic	0	1	0	0	2	1
White	0	0	9	7	6	5
Black Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black	6	63	44	57	88	103
Asian	0	0	4	2	3	2
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	1	0
Native American	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other/Multiracial	0	0	37	161	365	59
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Quarter 5	Quarter 6
Gender						
Male	1	23	21	29	48	50
Female	5	41	61	37	50	64
Nonbinary	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transgender	0	0	1	1	0	0
Genderqueer	0	0	1	0	0	0
Cisgender	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note. ICJIA analysis of Alternatives data. These totals do not necessarily represent unique clients served; the same individual could be counted as a client served in reporting period 4 and 5 if they received services during both time periods. Differences from CPS data are due to which options are available and self-report of adolescents compared to school records.

Stakeholders. Some of the primary stakeholders that work with Alternatives are the schools listed above whose students receive intensive services. Other primary stakeholders are those that receive foundational services. They include Parkside Elementary Community Academy, Irvin C. Mollison Elementary School, Adam Clayton Powell Paideia Community Academy Elementary School, Hyde Park Academy High School, Kenwood Academy High School, Henry O Tanner Elementary School, and Robert A. Black Magnet Elementary School. In addition, the Community Advisory Committee of both Woodlawn and Bronzeville support Alternatives' mission. Likewise, South Shore Principals and Strive Together South Side (STSS) provide similar support.

Goals. Alternatives' goals are to meet underlying needs of students through restorative justice practices and trauma-informed services that include: 1) individual supports, and 2) initiatives to shift school culture and build school capacity to support a healthy culture.

Activities. Alternatives provides services to improve the lives of youth in their target area. Changes to the environment and to school and school staff capacities are designed in the hope of building a stronger baseline of emotional support for students along with a pipeline for providing more intense individual services to students with greater needs. These individual

services are also administered by Alternatives. Alternatives labels schools as receiving intensive services or foundational services based on the amount of "hands on" work that their staff is currently engaging in with the school. Intensive services are designed to build a restorative justice culture from the earliest stages of development, provide intensive training to school staff, and provide extensive individual and group services to students. Foundational services are designed to maintain a restorative justice culture that has been established and provide a system of referral support for students with significant needs. The goal is to move schools from intensive services to foundational services. However, schools who have transitioned to foundational services can still request and receive additional services based on community need and Alternatives' capacity. This report focuses on schools receiving intensive services from Alternatives that are supported by R3 funding.

Foundational Services. Foundational services primarily focus on building/maintaining school and community capacities (e.g. workshops and trainings). At this level of service, Alternatives does not provide individual therapy to students at the school, but they do help with referrals to their South Side Youth Center (SSYC). The level of foundational services provided can be adjusted to fit the needs of the school. Schools may begin their relationship with Alternatives by engaging in limited foundational services and increase them over time or move from intensive services to foundational services as overall school community well-being improves. Alternatives currently is providing foundational services to seven schools.

- **School Staff Training and Technical Assistance.** Alternatives provides professional development training in restorative justice (RJ) for schools, and all schools in its target neighborhoods have access to virtual and onsite training for all staff or smaller teacher teams. Additionally, interactive trainings are customized to meet the needs of each school and accompanied by technical assistance. During the current grant period, Alternatives provided training for 165 staff members at participating schools. Alternatives shared the results of their satisfaction surveys which showed over 90% of school staff expressed support for and satisfaction with the trainings.

Alternatives also gathers school disciplinarians, security staff, and education support personnel for trainings specific to their roles. Trainings include: Introduction to Restorative Justice Practices, Restorative Communication, Restorative Conversations, Introduction to Virtual Circle Experience, Virtual Talking Circle Training, Introduction to Socio-Emotional Learning and Universal Screening, Trauma-Informed Responses to the Impact of COVID-19, Creating Trauma-Informed Schools, and Introduction to Mental Health in the Classroom. From February 2021 to January 2022, Alternatives provided technical support for 61 Restorative Justice self-assessments. The self-assessments are internal documents that are designed to inform programmatic and service delivery decisions. These self-assessments were performed by teams of school staff and Alternatives staff and included an assessment of current disciplinary and classroom procedures. Based on responses to self-assessments, Alternatives then designed professional development to target specific topics aimed at moving toward a more Restorative Justice based culture. Results of training feedback were nearly unanimous in endorsing that the content of the training was useful and that the facilitators were effective and engaging. A majority of respondents (65%) reported that they "feel like the knowledge learned in this training

will help my ability to positively influence behavior and strengthen the community." However, in additional comments about further trainings or additional support materials, participants indicated that they might want more training before feeling comfortable fully utilizing the skills This finding is consistent with other training feedback. In general, participants endorsed that the trainings were valuable and well conducted yet still desired more trainings or additional resources to implement the strategies.

Trauma-informed training is provided by the Systemic Evaluation, Enhancement, and Institutional Training (SEEIT) Coordinator. One course, Introduction to Socio-emotional Learning (SEL) and Universal Screening, teaches school personnel to restructure how they assess the mental health needs of their students. It also instructs them in implementing interventions and evaluating their effectiveness. Including SEL education in the classroom and in trainings for school staff is a means for better preventing student mental health crises and for decreasing the strain placed on individual therapists. Universal screening and its outcomes can identify what mental health needs the overall student body has and what SEL education and staff trainings to offer. The screening and its outcomes can also identify the students who are in most critical need of group and individual therapy, which Alternatives also provides to schools and through the South Side Youth Center. Thus far, two schools have participated in the screening, and over 85% of students were screened. From the universal screening, 177 youth were referred to Alternatives' South Side Youth Center for services or on-site therapy.

- **Youth and Family Therapy.** Foundational services schools do not have an Alternatives therapist at their school but are able to refer students and families to the Alternatives Southside Youth Center (SSYC) for in-person or virtual therapy (telehealth). Since March 2020, Alternatives' behavioral health clinicians have adopted videoconferencing for therapy sessions and continue to work with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to be sure that they are responsive and flexible. Participating in telehealth can be easier and more accessible for some families. Alternatives upgraded its telehealth capacity through a donation from Blue Cross Blue Shield Illinois, and it continues to safely provide services at SSYC.

- **Parent Workshops.** Parent leadership groups, including local school councils, parent advisory councils, and bilingual advisory councils, have access to restorative justice and trauma-informed trainings through Alternatives. To increase parent capacity, Alternatives offers more in-depth training on topics such as facilitating family meetings and circles at home; supporting children when they are the target or source of harm; and effectively engaging in important but difficult conversations with teachers, administrators, and other parents. From January 2021 to February 2022, Alternatives hosted five workshops with a total of fifteen participants.

For parents of children who struggle behaviorally, targeted workshops and coaching are provided. Parents in these tailored workshops get coaching on communicating effectively with staff and utilizing restorative responses to their child's behaviors. As a complement to these workshops and to support a restorative collaboration with parents, schools receiving intensive services get parallel coaching with the relevant teachers, staff, and disciplinarians. Moreover, discussions from each workshop inform the content of the next one. These efforts ensure that parents are receiving information that they want and promote a spirit of collaboration.

- **After-School Youth Programming.** Alternatives offers regular after-school and summer programming at the Alternatives Southside Youth Center, partner schools, and online. The specific topics/goals of activities are decided collaboratively by Alternatives and youth. Making joint decisions helps increase both the relevance of the activities to the youth and their ownership of them. Young people work on projects to make a difference in their community and to participate in restorative justice skill-building activities. Additionally, students needing more intensive supports benefit from ongoing restorative mentorship in one-on-one or group settings throughout the year. These supports build positive social networks, self-confidence, conflict resolution and communication skills in addition to building students' leadership abilities. Moreover, students have access to case management and behavioral health services as part of a holistic, wraparound approach. During the current grant period, administrative data indicates 94 youths participated in after-school programming. Likewise, administrative data indicates Alternatives hosted 56 virtual gatherings, 16 virtual support groups, and 31 virtual workshops (virtual due to COVID), and Alternatives also referred 52 students to wraparound services that address challenges that Alternatives was not equipped to address directly.

Intensive Services. The primary difference between intensive and foundational services is the presence of at least one Alternatives therapist who conducts sessions with students at the school. Additional interventions like group therapy is also offered to intensive service schools. Alternatives utilizes R3 funds for an intensive level of support at four schools. Before service provision can begin, Alternatives requires information and space to conduct its service from partner schools. Developing the buy-in to meet these requirements takes time. Intensive levels of support involve the placement of an Alternatives therapist and restorative justice specialist at the school. Research suggests such school-based mental health services are uniquely positioned to reach the target population and are effective at overcoming barriers to accessing care such as stigma and cost (Radez et. al., 2021).

The current schools receiving intensive support are not the exact schools listed in the initial grant application, but Alternatives administrators said such adjustments are common. Their partnerships with schools are voluntary and changes in administrators or priorities can lead to schools choosing not to partner further with Alternatives. Even in non-pandemic years, Alternatives pursues multiple schools to meet its goals, and participation by schools can vary over time. For example, some schools may initially express interest in intensive services but only be equipped for foundational services. Another instance is that they may not have the space to host individual therapy or a willingness to allow students to leave class for services; or it may be the case that they are receptive to the idea of conducting some of the trainings but reluctant to dedicate the time or resources to implement them. One more reason for not being equipped may be that the relationship building at the schools with which Alternatives works have varying levels of buy-in and are not able to meet what is needed before true service delivery can begin. Such were the initial situations at Gary-Comer and Tilden. Prior to receiving R3 funding Alternatives had already been working with these schools, but was constrained from providing all the services detailed in this report. With the expanded resources they were now able to provide them.

- **Behavioral Health Services.** Alternatives' therapists embedded in a school provide a comprehensive array of adolescent behavioral health services to address trauma, depression,

anxiety, substance abuse, and other presenting concerns. Behavioral health specialists provide school-based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) services to children and their families. These services include individual and family counseling services, substance abuse treatment, and, when needed, psychiatric support and prescription management. During the current grant period, 119 students received behavioral health services.

The behavioral health team at each school is also made up of school staff to ensure holistic services are provided to each student. Behavioral health teams can vary in their configurations of participating school staff members (e.g. School Psychologist, Nurse, Counselor, Dean of Students, etc.), but all are tasked with coordinating supports for students. During the current grant period, behavioral health teams convened 42 meetings to assess individual cases and school practices.

For therapy, Alternatives' master's level therapists are trained to use individual, family, and group CBT models, which treat trauma and support emotional skill development. The primary evidence-based interventions include:

1. Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS): This group strategy reduces symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and behavioral problems by improving peer and parent support and coping skills. This service is not currently being offered, but Alternatives intends to implement it when possible.
2. Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT): This proven approach focuses on working with adolescents with significant emotional and behavioral problems related to traumatic life events. All providers are currently trained and engaged in delivering these services.
3. Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (A-CRA): This evidence-based program centers on finding reinforcers to replace substance use and increase pro-social skill-building in communication, problem-solving, and family relationships. Alternatives was forced to discontinue this service because the training was prohibitively expensive.
4. Somatic Therapy: These clinical approaches connect the body and mind. They engage young people in their thinking, emotions, and actions to provide a vision for individual and collective healing. Somatic Therapy focuses on changing the autonomic nervous system and on discharging trauma, which reduces stress and anxiety physiologically. Somatic approaches can be more effective than behavioral approaches for complex trauma, which is common in the population served by Alternatives (Payne et al., 2015).

Alternatives administrative data indicates that currently, 173 youth have been or still are receiving therapy through R3-funded Alternatives services. Based on determined needs, some individual students also engage in family therapy. In total, Alternatives administrative data indicates that 169 additional family members have been or still are involved in this process.

- **Universal Mental Health Screening.** Alternatives conducts a universal screening in intensive schools to identify students who need greater services. It then connects them with the appropriate service. It also allows schools to share aggregated data with each other to better inform their cultural change and their staff development efforts. To conduct the screening the program utilizes a custom student survey derived from the KADS (Kutcher Adolescent

Depression Scale) survey, Traumatic Events Screening Inventory (TESI) Part A, and parts of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The team works with the district Social Emotional Learning (SEL) staff to review and approve the survey for use in CPS. Students take the assessment during class time on district-provided computers. Each student is assigned a survey number to protect their privacy. Once all students have completed their assessments, the district consolidates the data and shares them with both Alternatives and its school health partner in order to determine the best course of treatment. The school health partner comes from one of several Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) or similar organization that has contracted with Chicago Public Schools to provide a nurse and/or a therapist in the school setting. According to administrative data, between January 2021 and February 2022, 1,303 students were screened.

- **On-Site Group Therapeutic Interventions.** Once the universal assessment is completed, all stakeholders meet to review results and consider the appropriate next steps. Records are stored electronically, and Alternatives is currently in the process of improving this system to be faster and more efficient for internal use. By decreasing lag time between administering the assessment and discussing next steps with schools, the program hopes to enhance momentum within the process. School administration and SEL staff refer students as needed, to the school health partner. The school health partner does a mental health assessment and refers students to Alternatives for therapeutic support. The schools' SEL staff and Alternatives' staff collaborate on developing a plan for group therapy where appropriate. They engage in an ongoing collaboration that includes participating in weekly care team meetings; evaluating and improving assessment tools; and monitoring student outcome data (improvements in relationships, stress, and academic performance).

- **Case Management.** Alternatives staff coordinate referrals for medical care, basic needs, and interactions with the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems in all schools receiving intensive services. Case management involves school collaboration and advocacy, including collaborations with teachers, principals and other school-based resources.

- **Restorative Practice Facilitation.** Alternatives seeks to shift school culture towards utilizing restorative practices in their intensive schools. Specially trained Alternatives staff members present workshops and other group activities to promote buy-in for engaging in restorative practices with teachers, students, staff, and parents. During these activities, participants learn about and practice restorative practices. Specific practices that Alternatives' staff facilitate include restorative conversations; talking circles; peace circles; and restorative return circles for staff-to-staff, staff-to-student and student-to-student relationships.

- **School Staff SEEIT Training.** Alternatives' SEEIT Coordinator trains school staff and teachers so that all partners share a framework to provide ongoing support to students. The training program is reviewed with the school SEL team, who collaborate on its implementation. Schools run the SEEIT training as part of the school's currently scheduled teacher training days.

The Alternatives' SEEIT Coordinator customizes the curriculum to the needs of the school. Teaching staff deliver it to students as part of the school's health and wellness programming.

- **School Staff Coaching.** Alternatives' model for coaching school staff rests on the premise that restorative practices are more likely to be sustained successfully when they are integrated into schools' everyday routines, culture, and measurement systems. Alternatives trains school staff as a team on the premise that this allows them to grow from each other's experiences, to provide each other feedback, and to support each other as they develop their skills and strategies over the year. Focusing on culture and system-building protects against the loss of momentum that can happen when one or two lead staff are no longer there to move the work forward. However, this process requires an initial period of adoption for the change to "take root" at a broad level. To establish those roots Alternatives works with existing school-based teams, such as grade level/band meetings, discipline teams, behavioral health teams, culture and climate teams, and others. In response to COVID-19, Alternatives' restorative justice team worked with the district to develop remote learning modules so that CPS teachers and school administrators could continue with professional development even if schools closed. As COVID-19 restrictions were discontinued, Alternatives shifted back to in person trainings.

- **School Administrative Supports.** Alternatives provides technical assistance to school administrative teams to create sustainable, restorative, and trauma-informed implementation plans and ongoing support in dealing with the day-to-day challenges of schoolwide culture shift.

Program Challenges and Solutions

Slow Starts. Under normal conditions, building rapport with schools and integrating new services can be slow processes. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, additional and significant disruptions occurred to schools and programs that work with schools. Some Alternatives staff reported inconsistent school policies about in-person meetings or face-to-face student services. After significant re-engagement and CPS ending most pandemic precautions, partnerships are now developing, and students are receiving services. Furthermore, Alternatives expressed a desire for more streamlined grant administration processes.

Staffing. Alternatives programming requires staff with specific skills that are not always available in a wide variety of hiring candidates. Particularly, finding qualified candidates for the restorative justice aspects of the program can be challenging. Unfortunately, the Director of Restorative Justice left for another opportunity, and the search for qualified candidates has not been successful thus far, but they are continuing to interview candidates. Alternatives engaged in temporary restructuring to accommodate this situation, and both RJ and BH programs are running through one director. Some duties have been assumed by other staff. Aside from this major development, staffing has been stable, with one additional staff member departing and two being hired during the grant period.

Partnerships and Collaborations. Alternatives has over fifty years of experience working in the community with youth and schools. Its established experience working with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has been advantageous for implementing the R3 funding. CPS has

a robust, if at times complicated, system in place for working in partnership with non-profit organizations like Alternatives. Even with prior experiences with CPS, Alternatives' task of establishing strong partnerships with individual schools was challenging. Schools, particularly those in high need areas, such as the communities targeted by Alternatives, often have significant staff turnover. According to the Chicago Public Schools Office of Communications there was a 3.3% vacancy rate for teachers, but this did not account for teachers who transferred within the district (Chicago Public Schools, 2021). Furthermore, one of the schools with which Alternatives partnered had a first-year principal, and it took time to establish rapport with this principal. Part of the initial success in establishing rapport was that the dean and counselor of the partner school had worked with Alternatives for several years. Unfortunately, they too left the school. Buy-in from school personnel is critical when implementing a program like Alternatives. A challenge to buy-in for Alternatives' has been that its embrace of restorative justice practices, despite being evidence based, represents a significant cultural change. For school staff, students, and parents it has been a change from previously common punitive and reactive approaches to school discipline. Alternatives reported that even the school counselors have had hesitancy about restorative justice at some schools. Combined with high turnover, establishing buy-in with schools has been difficult. Reflective of these challenges two of the four schools took longer for services to be implemented.

Another challenge for Alternatives has been balancing capacity needs when partnering with schools. As mentioned above, significant buy-in is important for successful implementation of the programming offered by Alternatives. Successful implementation also depends on meeting school needs for staffing (e.g. a data manager) and physical resources (e.g. a secure room for therapy or crisis intervention). Unfortunately, the schools least likely to have these resources for initial implementation have often been the schools with the highest need students. Adding another layer of complexity, these challenges co-occurred with COVID-19. Schools were engaged in a hybrid attendance system at the start of the grant period, and the summer of 2022 was the shortest in CPS history. These realities had an impact on school planning at all levels, and they reduced the time available to build partnerships with community organizations like Alternatives. Moreover, COVID-19 had negative impacts on school personnel's morale, which further exacerbated challenges in forming partnerships.

Yet another challenge, Alternatives staff perceived that some aspects of the collaboration with ICJIA could be strengthened. They felt that ICJIA support slowed after the initial trainings and onboarding processes. They would have appreciated additional support throughout the grant.

Engaging Participants and Clients. The challenges to Alternatives in engaging participants and clients are like those of other programs of this type (Radez et al., 2020). Some resistance often occurs due to stigma attached to services and sensitivities about peers' perceptions (Radez et al., 2020). Alternatives programming had intended to overcome this resistance by presenting teachers with strategies for supporting students and by shifting culture views about mental health. However, these changes have taken time and continue to take time. In addition, some students have had multiple challenges, not least of which is access to such basic

needs like housing. Those challenges have interrupted school attendance and, by extension, engagement with Alternatives services.

Program Accomplishments and Successes

Partnerships and Collaborations. Access to healthcare is critical to student well-being, and many students from the Alternatives' partner schools often lack other forms of healthcare. Thus, Alternatives collaborated with Federally Qualified Health Centers and school-based health centers, such as Access and Howard Brown Health. These partnerships have been bi-directional. That is, as students become connected to either service and gain trust in the provider, they may be referred to the other. This increased trust can be important in reducing stigma an overcoming hesitancy to engage in services.

Alternatives staff attended trainings provided by ICJIA for R3 grantees on different aspects of the grant process, such as budget revisions, data reporting, and site visits. They indicated that the recordings of these trainings were useful and that they later referred to them to clarify questions on their own. Additionally, they reported that they valued the patience of ICJIA trainers when dealing with complicated processes like financial documents.

Engaging Participants and Clients. Alternatives has a well-developed data management system and process whereby students are connected to services. Its universal screener has provided a baseline indication of need to supplement referrals from teachers and self-referrals. Students then have been connected to either the in-school therapist or the SSYC therapist. The SSYC also has been a strong resource for additional support for students and after-school activities. The records are stored in the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) data management system. Alternatives has a dedicated data manager who oversees the system and reports data trends to leadership to inform decision making. During the current grant period Alternatives made a total of 177 referrals to SSYC. Of these referrals, 173 received therapy services through SSYC, indicating a strong system from referral to service.

Alternatives seeks to engage parents as well as students. It hosted five parent workshops with 15 total participants. Parent engagement has often been challenging. Knowing it is a strong positive factor in youth outcomes Alternatives continues to examine additional avenues to increase it. One area Alternatives specifically has identified as absent from their current practices is data collection related to parent engagement outside of the workshops.

Capacity for Outcome Evaluation

Infrastructure.

Staffing. Alternatives has a dedicated data manager whose job is to maintain the flow and accuracy of its administrative data and impact survey data. The staff who engage in direct services are reliable in completing paperwork and gathering assessments.

Communication with Partners. Participation in a future outcome evaluation will require strong communication between ICJIA, Alternatives, and its partner schools. Alternatives meets schools "where they are," which means it provides services that schools are requesting and are prepared to receive. Some schools are prepared for direct services at an early stage while others experience shifts in their priorities. Frequent changes in priorities may make it difficult to

establish strong communication channels, especially for such commonly occurring barriers as data sharing. For example, at some schools, identification of potential participants required that the school share data with Alternatives, but schools were slow to provide them. Likewise, satisfying requirements for the number of meetings was a significant barrier to implementation. So were challenges in scheduling meetings.

Data Availability.

Existing Data Collection. Alternatives has a well-developed infrastructure for data collection that includes outcome data. It utilizes the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) electronic data management system for administrative data, including intake forms, referrals, and attendance records. Alternatives has been conducting assessments of its schools' environments to determine individual needs for the schools through the SEEIT universal assessment. Workshops have been assessed by surveys administered to attendees. Further, all youth participants have been administered the Alternatives Impact Survey to assess outcomes. In the future, Alternatives' established relationships with school partners may give rise to opportunities to include academic data in potential outcome evaluations. CPS, for instance, has existing agreements with Alternatives to conduct data collection with students. Alternatives has a dedicated data manager, who has been responsive to communications and data requests. Collaborative relationships can potentially identify new and valuable uses for existing data and identify ways to address some gaps in the data systems.

Gaps in Data Collection. Alternatives has several gaps in its data collection, not uncommon in programs of this type. The first is the absence of a system for assessing parent engagement beyond participation in workshops. Without these data it is hard to know the degree to which parents adjust their behaviors or access new services in response to the workshops. The second is a gap in assessing school climate change in response to restorative justice trainings and practices. Assessing cultural change is challenging under ideal circumstances, and, unfortunately, given that the schools with which Alternatives partners have had higher than normal turnovers, long term assessments of cultural shift have been even more challenging. While schools can often implement many of the "core" school-wide activities within a year, culture change can lag behind implementation. Moreover, culture change is difficult to define. Evaluation of a cultural shift would require dedicated staff and research resources beyond current capacity in partner schools. Lastly in regard to gaps, compared to some programs that have very well-defined start and completion timelines, Alternatives' activities have been open ended. Many students have received individual services for a full school year, but their needs have been highly individualized, and "completion" has been difficult to define broadly.

Conclusion

Program Operations

Despite several unique COVID-19 related challenges faced during the period examined, Alternatives' direct service activities have functioned quite well. The system of intake, referral, data tracking, and review has identified students who need supports effectively and has connected them to supports successfully. The services themselves have been well established, evidence-based practices that have been shown to produce positive outcomes for the target population. Alternatives also has provided clients with referrals to wraparound services when

they have shown multiple needs in a variety of domains (i.e. basic needs, mental health support, academic support, and legal support).

Likewise, Alternatives has successfully implemented trainings for school staff in restorative justice practices and in trauma-informed practices. These trainings have been well attended and well regarded by staff. Less clear is the degree to which these trainings have led to significant changes in cultural and disciplinary practices at the individual or school level. Conceptually, restorative justice fits many schools' desired goals and culture, but overcoming existing disciplinary culture has been challenging.

Anticipated Needs

Alternatives has existed for 50 years, demonstrating organizational stability. Establishing and maintaining partnerships with schools have been challenging but are normal parts of its operations. Receiving R3 funds has allowed Alternatives to expand its services at some schools, form new relationships with additional schools, and increase the number of students served. For instance, historically Alternatives has worked with Mollison Elementary in Woodlawn, Gary Comer College Prep in Greater Grand Crossing, and Edward Tilden Career Community Academy High School in Fuller Park. However, Alternatives has not previously had all 4 services available for those schools (therapy, SEEIT, RJ coaching, and RJ youth leadership development). Now it does. Additionally, R3 funding has allowed it to expand services to Bouchet Elementary Math and Science Academy, Fiske Elementary School, Parkside Community Academy, Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Paideia Academy, Hyde Park Academy, Kenwood Academy High School, Tanner Elementary School, and Robert A. Black.

For sustainability and program implementation, Alternatives needs more time to establish foundational referrals within schools. It also needs more time to provide consistent trainings and supports to school staff, teachers, and administrators aimed at creating sustained cultural change. Cultural change facilitates giving students who need it increased access to services. Moreover, it improves the well-being of all students. The hope is that the most disruptive aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic are in the past. Nonetheless, the current reality is that schools have been and still are negatively affected by teacher turn-over, shortages, and missed time due to the pandemic. The communities themselves also continue to struggle amidst the challenges of community violence and disinvestment. Given these realities, Alternatives must continue to remain flexible in its school-specific services and reflect changes in school needs. Doing so may result in differing measures and activities each school year. With continued funding, Alternatives can build on the current foundation, apply lessons learned, and continue to increase and sustain services in their R3 areas.

Service Delivery: Cornerstone Community Development Corporation

Introduction

Program Overview

Founded in 1968, Cornerstone Community Development Corporation (Cornerstone) provides solutions to unemployment and under-employment in the south suburbs of Chicago. According to its website, Cornerstone's core mission is to improve the quality of life for the underprivileged and to assist vulnerable populations in times of crisis. It emphasizes emergency, supportive, and educational services to individuals and families until they stabilize (Cornerstone Community Development Corporation, n.d.). Cornerstone operates an integrated, one-stop center for family stabilization, life skills training, and workforce development (Cornerstone Community Development Corporation, n.d.).

Cornerstone provides computer literacy and numeracy training, job training and life skill development for adults age 18 and older. It serves low-income individuals, ex-offenders, and veterans. Supportive services and coaching are essential parts of the program for stabilization and self-sufficiency. Additionally, the organization partners with licensed and accredited providers to offer job specific trainings and certifications. Cornerstone's workforce program, "Securing Opportunities for Success" (SOS), provides the job and life skill training to help clients succeed in a variety of jobs and careers. SOS features the following core services: substance use recovery support services, life skills training, vocational training, employment coaching and placement assistance, peer coaching and mentoring, and financial literacy. Participants can join apprenticeship programs and/or achieve occupational skills certification/licensure. Cornerstone's grant application narrative notes that "vocational training gives clients a realistic view of their skills, abilities, and limitations while effectuating necessary changes in their lifestyles by setting goals" (Cornerstone Community Development Corporation, 2020).

Further, Cornerstone staff indicated that all clients are required to participate in a comprehensive individual assessment. Clients are interviewed to determine their interests and qualifications as well as their course for counseling and recovery support services, if applicable. Case management then creates individualized development plans to identify additional services that may assist the client in successfully completing the training. Participants are expected to complete employment readiness and workforce safety training before they can move into additional, specific workforce development training (e.g., drone operator training).

Cornerstone received $250,000 in R3 funding during the first year of services and an additional $250,000 the second year. This was 100% of the amount requested in the grant application it submitted in the Cook Chicago Suburban region.

Program Connection to R3 Goals

Cornerstone programming connects directly to three of the five R3 programmatic areas: economic development, reentry services, and violence prevention. Additionally, the program services connect directly to several of the following key goals of the R3 program itself:[10]

[10] For more information, see the legislative language, found here: https://r3.illinois.gov/downloads/R3LegislativeLanguage.pdf.

- *Substantially reduce concentrated poverty in the state.* Cornerstone's focus on workforce development ties directly to this R3 goal. Subsidized, customized job training has been linked to positive earning outcomes for workers, suggesting that it is associated with poverty reduction (U.S. Department of Labor et al., 2014).
- *Reduce recidivism.* Many clients who engage with Cornerstone services have a criminal history. Stable employment is very important for everyone, including those who have a history of arrest or incarceration, and Cornerstone's workforce development assists clients in finding stable employment (Green, 2019). Furthermore, research suggests that programs that provide services such as the case management and mentorship provided by Cornerstone are most effective at reducing recidivism (Bushway & Apel, 2012).
- *Promote capacity building related to social determinants of health.* Most of Cornerstone's key services are directly linked to improving social determinants of health. Social determinants of health refer to environmental conditions that impact an individual's quality of life and health (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, n.d.). These conditions include but are not limited to access to stable housing, employment, and safe neighborhoods. As examples, Cornerstone's homelessness prevention services reduce the burden of housing costs for eligible clients; its workforce development services provide training/certification in well-paying fields.

Community Context

Cornerstone provides R3-funded services in South Suburban Cook County, which includes Ford Heights, Chicago Heights, Park Forest, and Sauk Village. The program's service area, R3 area ID 474, contains areas of high need.

The average median age across census tracts in Cornerstone's service area is 33.5, and the average median household income is $44,269.75 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b). Table 3 highlights some additional demographic information about each community that Cornerstone serves with R3 funding.

Table 3

Race, Gender, Employment Status and Ethnicity of Cornerstone's Service Area

Service Area	Median Age	Percent Black[a]	Percent Male	Unemployment Rate	Percent Hispanic or Latino
Ford Heights	31.9	87.9	47.7	26.4	3.5
Chicago Heights	33.8	39.1	47.6	13.1	38.9
Park Forest	39.3	66.4	46.9	7.9	4.6
Sauk Village	29.1	70.6	47.3	16.3	12.9

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table S0101, S2301, and B03002 2019 5-year estimates

[a] This percentage is calculated from the "Black or African American alone" category. It does not include individuals who indicate two or more races.

Existing Evidence for Activities

Cornerstone's comprehensive program model is built on several key activities: workforce development (including mentoring), recovery support, case management (including wraparound services and referrals), and homelessness prevention. The program's overall goal is to stabilize, sustain, and empower clients. Cornerstone's programming resembles a traditional economic

development model of investment in the workforce. This model aims to build worker skills, connect them with jobs, and match job-seekers with employers (Weisner, 2020). Cornerstone also incorporates several aspects of reentry and violence prevention programming. Reentry programming can be defined as a program, activity, or approach that aims to assist returning citizens with a safe and smooth transition from incarceration into their communities (Green, 2019; Petersilia, 2004). Cornerstone provides reentry programming by offering workforce development and other comprehensive social services to its clients, including clients with criminal histories. Violence prevention programming is a byproduct of Cornerstone's approach to reducing and managing client risk factors while building up and promoting client protective factors (Escamilla, 2020).

Job Training and Certification

Cornerstone's job trainings/certifications are supported by research. Job certifications have been found to have a positive quarterly earnings impact for both men and women (Jepsen et al., 2014). Furthermore, research shows that job training has a more positive impact on per capita earnings than tax incentives do, and that the most effective job trainings are those that train for in-demand jobs (Bartik, 2016). Cornerstone adapts by expanding into sectors that are in-demand. For example, during COVID it began to train and certify clients in COVID-19 regulated cleaning.

Wraparound Services and Case Management

Cornerstone primarily serves an under-employed population through wraparound services and job training. For disadvantaged adults, and more specifically those returning from prison, job training in itself may not be enough to drastically improve participants' lives (Bushway & Apel, 2012). This insufficiency is likely due, in part, to the complex needs of this population. This population needs basic life skills, lacks key supports like transportation, and encounters barriers to employment like criminal history or substance abuse (Martinson & Holcomb, 2007). Cornerstone's focus on stabilizing and sustaining clients through recovery support services and wraparound services is imperative to setting clients up for success.

Risk and Protective Factors

Managing risk factors and building protective factors in individuals are key to preventing violence (Escamilla, 2020). Cornerstone's comprehensive program model addresses risk factors such as favorable attitudes toward drug use through recovery support and lack of housing through wraparound services. It promotes protective factors such as unemployment through workforce development and employment readiness training. As research supporting this program model suggests, it is important to address risk and protective factors as early as possible and to target multiple factors, rather than just one (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2015; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, n.d.).

Site Specific Methodology

Research Questions

ICJIA researchers and Cornerstone staff discussed the research questions to be covered in the current process evaluation, and Cornerstone staff did not request including any additional, site specific research questions on the list presented by ICJIA.

Data Collection and Analysis

In the current evaluation, ICJIA researchers met and communicated exclusively with the executive director and the R3 program manager. These Cornerstone staff provided highly

detailed accounts of their program services and clients through a series of informal conversations and follow up emails. Researchers took detailed notes during the four in-depth conversations, spanning from January 2022 to September 2022, and summarized themes at the end of each meeting for inclusion in this report. This information was supplemented with qualitative information from the grant application materials that Cornerstone submitted in response to the R3 NOFO, provided by ICJIA's Federal and State Grants Unit. Researchers also analyzed Cornerstone's quarterly data reporting, or Periodic Performance Reports (PPRs), submitted through ICJIA's online Qualtrics reporting tool. Data examined in this report included staffing numbers and client demographics. Data was downloaded from Qualtrics and summarized via Excel. Lastly, researchers used the online Census data explorer to summarize demographics of Cornerstone's service area.

Timeline

Cornerstone received a signed contract on May 26, 2021 but began providing services in February, albeit at a limited capacity. It applied for and received extended funding into January 2023. The timeline covered in this process evaluation is from February 2021, when Cornerstone began its R3 services, to January 2022, the date of the program's last Periodic Performance Report (PPR).

Site Specific Findings

Program Components and Activities

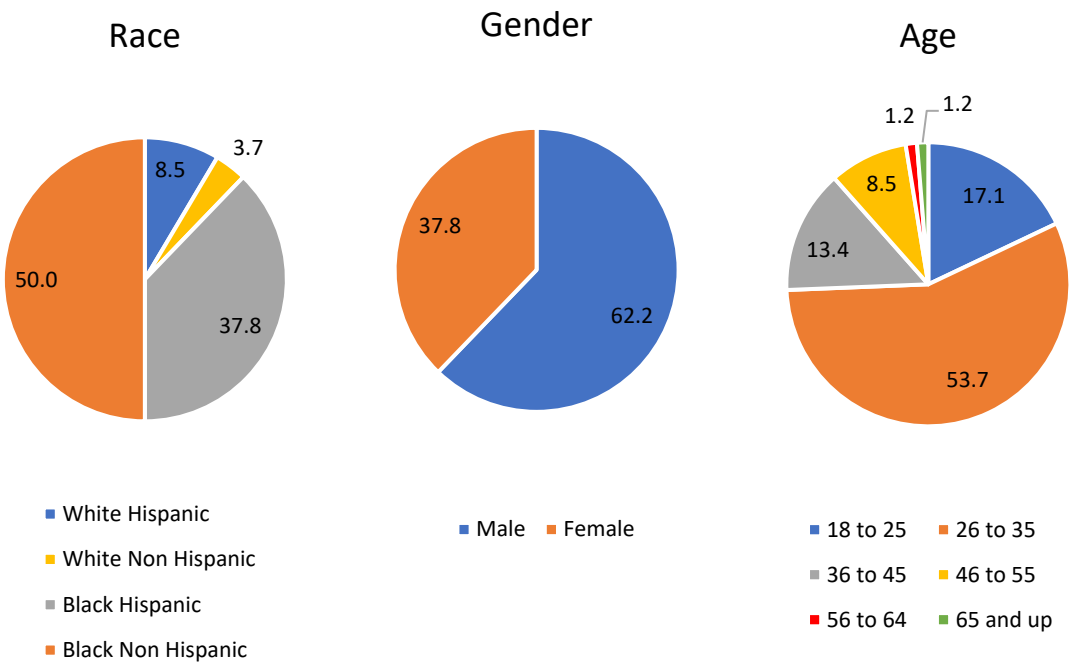
Staff. At the time of the grant application, Cornerstone staff working on the R3 program included an executive director, deputy director, director of programs, accountant, grants administrator, workforce development program coordinator, SOS instructors, and employment navigator. At the beginning of the program, Cornerstone reported six staff working on the R3 program. By the end of Quarter 5 (January 2022), Cornerstone had 25 staff working on the R3 program. This is likely due in part to the program's expansion into additional services.

Clients. Cornerstone submits quarterly data information to ICJIA through an online reporting system, as required by their grant contract. At the writing of this report, Cornerstone had submitted data through January 2022 (Quarter 5). Based on the data submitted, it has served a total of 82 clients.[11] The majority of these clients have been Black males between the ages of 26 and 35 (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Race, Gender and Age of Cornerstone Clients

[11] This total does not necessarily represent unique clients served; the same individual could be counted as a client served in quarter 4 and 5 if they received services during both time periods.



Note. ICJIA analysis of Cornerstone data, *n*=82

With the quarterly reporting tool, grantees can report on the services provided to clients each quarter based on specific categories of R3 programming. The categories include civil legal aid, violence prevention, reentry, economic development, and/or youth development. Between February 2021 and January 2022, Cornerstone indicated it engaged in violence prevention and reentry and programming.[12] During this time, 100% of clients (*n*=82) were engaged in violence prevention activities and 20.7% of clients (*n*=17) were assisted with a reentry issue.

Of clients served, 79.3% reported (*n*=65) having an associate (family member, friend, etc.) physically harmed by another person; 32.9% (*n*=27) reported having a mental or emotional injury inflicted on them by someone else; 18.3% (*n*=15) reported engaging in physical violence; and 6.1% (*n*=5) reported having a physical injury inflicted on them by someone else. Furthermore, 12.2% (*n*=10) of clients were on probation, parole, or another form of community supervision.

Additionally, 78% (*n*=64) had household incomes under the federal poverty line, 41.5% (*n*=34) obtained new employment; 31.7% of clients (*n*=26) were unemployed; and 14.6% (*n*=12) experienced an increase in salary.

Goals. Cornerstone indicated that its short-term goals for the program are to expand its SOS program, help clients access full benefits from their employers, increase client employability, and assess the full spectrum of client needs. In the intermediate term, the program's goals are to decrease recidivism, increase opportunities for those with criminal

[12] Cornerstone CDC did not indicate themselves as an economic development program in their quarterly reports and thus did not report on the number of clients engaged in economic development activities each quarter.

records, and increase overall client employment. Long-term goals are to increase the quality of life for clients and stabilize, sustain, and empower them.

Activities. The following section describes in detail the activities included in the logic model that researchers developed with the program staff. See Appendix A for the visual depiction of this model.

Case Management. Cornerstone clients complete individualized development plans that help to identify additional services that a client may need. According to program staff, these plans allow the program to connect clients with necessary services and meet the clients' individualized needs while engaged in programming.

Recovery Support Services. Cornerstone also offers support services for substance use recovery. While technically separate services, workforce development clients may be referred by their case manager to receive recovery support services in order to bolster their employment options. Cornerstone is a lead agency with the Southland Recovery Coalition (an agency that works to establish recovery-oriented systems of care in the community) and a partner agency with the United Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Coalition (an agency that provides direct recovery services in the community to individuals and families who have been affected by addiction and mental health issues). Furthermore, Cornerstone works in partnership with the Recovery Supportive Services program through the Illinois Department of Human Services.

Employment Readiness. One key component of Cornerstone's workforce programming is employment readiness, which gets participants set for success. This programming is considered a pre-requisite for the later workforce development training. Activities include developing a Life Action Plan; training on financial capability, computer skills, and numeracy; and providing such social behavioral training as conflict resolution and leadership development. The goal is to impact clients' lives overall and provide them with the necessary skills to keep the jobs they obtain through the more detailed job training.

Workforce Safety. Cornerstone clients who are interested in workforce training must also complete workforce safety training, the last prerequisite for the workforce development training. To prepare clients for engaging in the workforce this training focuses on OSHA safety training and First Aid/CPR training and certification.

Workforce Development. Cornerstone partners with community colleges, private employers, labor unions, and community and faith-based organizations to offer several key activities under workforce development. These activities include career coaching, job placement, employment/job fairs, and job training/certification. Following the completion of employment readiness and workforce safety training, clients can engage in training and/or certification in the following categories:

- Introduction to construction (training)
- Construction Flagger (training and certification)
- Forklift (training and certification)
- Environmental Abatement (training and certification)
- COVID-19 Regulated Cleaning (training and certification)
- Home Inspection (training and certification)
- Security Training (training and certification)

- Drone training (training and certification)
- Electrician 101 (training)
- Hospitality and food service (training and certification, added on year two)

The training/certification courses occur Monday through Friday for four weeks from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm and on Saturday mornings for four to six weeks (dependent upon the discipline and/or certification requirements by industry). Most of this training is on-site at Cornerstone's facilities, but some trainings are off site.

Outreach and Community Navigation. Cornerstone conducts outreach in the community to increase awareness of the available programming and to increase the number of clients in the program. Outreach activities include placing flyers and sharing program information with businesses in high need areas (such as fast food restaurants, local barbershops, grocery stores, and other private businesses). Outreach staff also attend community presentations to provide information on programming.

Peer Coaching and Mentoring. Cornerstone offers employment and workplace etiquette-based coaching and mentoring to its workforce development participants. In this coaching and mentoring, previous participants who have been successful in job placements speak to current participants to discuss the difference that the program has made for them in leadership, job skills, workplace etiquette, and more. They communicate how the program has improved things like increasing their job choices and salary.

Homelessness Prevention. Central to Cornerstone's programming is preventing homelessness in the community. Cornerstone is a HUD certified housing counseling agency that works to provide housing services to clients in partnership with the Cook County Department of Economic Development, the Recovery Supportive Services program through the Illinois Department of Human Services, and United Way South Suburban. Through Cornerstone, homelessness prevention clients get a case manager who assists with housing issues. Additionally, the program offers subsidized housing and provides housing assistance to clients in need.

Wraparound Service and Referrals. To help achieve the core goal of stabilizing clients, Cornerstone provides wraparound services and referrals. Partnerships with local community organizations are key, and Cornerstone works with many other community-based organizations to provide referrals for services it does not provide directly. Cornerstone is currently the lead and fiscal agency for the HUB information and referral network. This network comprises four non-profits in Suburban Cook County, functioning as a centralized resource and a service delivery and information network for the entire region. Cornerstone also partners with the Southland Human Services Leadership Council, an independent nonprofit consortium. This consortium comprises over 80 social service agencies in the 62 south and southwest suburban municipalities in the Southland area. Additionally, Cornerstone offers a network of emergency case management and supportive services through Cook County's Community Development Block Grant & Emergency Solutions Grants program.

Program Challenges and Solutions

Slow Starts. Cornerstone staff noted that a late start to its R3-funded program was a major challenge during program start up. The length of time that elapsed between application submission and execution of the grant, along with slower than expected reimbursements, resulted

in some original service partners deciding not to move forward. Cornerstone filled the service gap itself. Moreover, the need to engage new partners and amend contracts led to an even later start to the program.

Due to later than anticipated contract execution, Cornerstone took a conservative approach to participant recruitment, by providing limited client slots and not implementing a waiting list until it received a fully executed contract. Cornerstone wanted to make sure it was able to be reimbursed for its pre-contract activities.

Partnerships and Collaborations. With the withdrawal of originally slated service partners and as contract initiation dragged on, Cornerstone had to engage new partners. This engagement involved ensuring that potential partners could provide the services indicated in the grant application. If not, Cornerstone had to ensure that it could expand internally to provide the services itself.

Engaging Participants and Clients. Cornerstone's recruitment strategy focuses heavily on in person interaction and outreach events. The program hires community navigators to go into the community and share information about the program and its services in spaces such as grocery stores, churches, local businesses, and city-wide pop ups. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cornerstone faced challenges engaging participants in the SOS program early on. Given that many facilities were not open for in person gathering or services, the program did not have the capability to access or recruit people through postings at partner agencies and churches. Thus, the agency had to shift to social media and alternative forms of advertising. Moreover, due to COVID-19, many clients were sick and unable to participate. Due to poor access to public transportation in Cornerstone's service area, others were forced to drive their own vehicles and often missed class because they could not afford gas.

Additionally, Cornerstone staff indicated that they did not have as many participants early on as they could have. A possible reason was that competing training certification programs provided as much as $600 a week in stipends to participants while Cornerstone did not offer a stipend at the time.

Program Accomplishments and Successes

Partnerships and Collaborations. Overall, Cornerstone has well established partnerships with local organizations and networks that assist them in providing services to clients. Throughout the grant period, Cornerstone relied on existing partnerships to provide necessary services in the community and worked to establish new partnerships to expand on available services. For example, Cornerstone partnered with manufacturing companies and accredited training programs to expand into Environmental Abatement and COVID-19 Regulated Cleaning.

Engaging Participants and Clients. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic limiting the outreach and service delivery options at the beginning of the grant period, Cornerstone was able to adapt and successfully engage clients. During the period examined, Cornerstone was able to remain competitive by expanding into additional training/certification topics, by acquiring

necessary equipment (such as a heavy equipment simulator) to meet the needs of employers in their area, and by providing stipends to participants.

Capacity for Outcome Evaluation

Infrastructure. Looking forward, much of an outcome evaluation relies on receiving data from the program of interest to determine client outcomes. Cornerstone does not have a dedicated person to assist with providing data; nor does it utilize a client management system to track client outcomes outside of an Excel tracking system. Future evaluation work will have to consider ways to consolidate existing data, and the program should consider approaches to improve existing infrastructure and collection methods.

Data Availability and Gaps. Cornerstone utilizes multiple electronic client management systems, paper files, and an Excel tracking system to track client information (including enrollment and placements). The program's workforce and reentry coordinator is responsible for inputting and tracking client data. Cornerstone collects client information, but the different systems, in addition to Excel and initial intake forms, have made it difficult to pull data solely for an evaluation. As such, researchers have been unable to fully determine the gaps in data collection, partly because they have been limited to analyzing data solely found in the program's quarterly reporting. Future evaluations will need to closely examine all the information collected on site to determine the gaps that exist and potential ways to fill them.

Conclusion

Program Operations

Cornerstone Community Development Corporation provides critical and holistic services in their community, including workforce development, wraparound services, and homelessness prevention. The program model itself is supported by research, and the applied model provides diverse services to meet the needs of those in the community. During the period examined, Cornerstone worked successfully overall towards its goals of stabilizing, sustaining, and empowering clients by expanding services, clientele, and partnerships.

Program Link to R3 Goals

Close examination of the program demonstrated that Cornerstone's services connect directly to overall goals within the R3 program, specifically to economic development, reentry, and violence prevention. Additionally, Cornerstone's programming is tied to several goals of the Restore, Reinvest, and Renew program, specifically to substantially reducing concentrated poverty in the state, reducing recidivism, and promoting capacity building related to social determinants of health.

Anticipated Needs

Cornerstone appears to have a sustainable program model. The agency was founded in 1968 and has been providing services in the community via outside funding before R3 funding was available. Cornerstone should continue to seek outside funding to keep expanding services into areas of demand, specifically job training.

In the future, Cornerstone should consider participating in a data gap analysis to determine where it could expand its current data collection to help track participant outcomes. Furthermore, it should consider implementing a client tracking system to make it easier for both the program and

future evaluations to track and manage data. Also, because the program changes to reflect the needs in the community and industry, future evaluations should examine the impacts of the changes.

Service Delivery: Emerald South Economic Development Collaboration

Introduction

Program Overview

The Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative (ESEDC) was first created in 2017. It bases its mission and structures on local community needs, informed by input from focus groups, community meetings, and direct communications with community-based board members. ESEDC broadly focuses its activities within Chicago's "mid-south" side (i.e. the Emerald South), which includes Douglas, Oakland, Grand Boulevard, Kenwood, Washington Park, Hyde Park, Woodlawn, South Shore, Greater Grand Crossing, and South Chicago. One of the primary activities in this region involves attracting capital to enable ESEDC to engage in new projects focused on enriching the neighborhoods. Other primary activities involve collecting and disseminating information about the program to encourage data-driven decision-making and community-based narratives about the region, bringing local organizations together to collaboratively focus on "economic growth work," and advocating for policies and partnerships that enable ESEDC to do its work, help it to evolve and, ultimately, pave the way for expansion.

ESEDC's R3-funded Terra Firma program was created to bring together community stakeholders who are working toward the goal of individual and community improvement in Chicago's "Emerald South" and to focus them on the greening of vacant lots in the region. Specifically, the targets are the Washington Park, Woodlawn, and South Shore community areas. Greening in this sense includes cleaning up and installing flowers, plants, shrubs, trees, grass, fencing, and art. The work also extends to designing and maintaining the greened lots and engaging with the surrounding community about the outdoors. This work, combined with the closely integrated training of workers and business owners in related fields, aims to enhance local job and business opportunities, the mental and physical health of nearby residents, and safety within the service areas. According to a program update provided to the ICJIA by ESEDC, year one of the Terra Firma program largely consisted of "developing projects and partnerships, hiring project staff to support the training program, developing satellite operations for outdoor and indoor training, engaging community and recruitment of new job training participants in the service area."

In 2021, ESEDC requested and received R3 funding in the amount of $2,500,000 in the Cook Chicago Southern region. Most of these funds were budgeted to pay for contractual services and personnel. Budgeted personnel include the Director of Data and Research and the contracted services of Greencorps Chicago, which is listed in the organization's grant application as an official collaborator. ESEDC application lists three Greencorps Chicago contract positions for Terra Firma: Project Director, Project Manager, and Director of Engagement. Other sources of funding for the Terra Firma initiative include The Chicago Community Trust, Citi Foundation, and the Pritzker Traubert Foundation. ESEDC's Terra Firma program received an extension to their initial grant contract from ICJIA through January 2023 for an additional $2,500,000, totaling $5,000,000. The revised budget for this extension includes paid contracts or partnerships with Greencorps Chicago, Sunshine Enterprises, Bowa Construction, and Urban American City.

Emerald South Economic Development Corporation's Terra Firma initiative was brand new and had not served anyone prior to receiving R3 funding. However, many, if not most, of the collaborative organizations that make up ESEDC existed prior to the R3 grant and had

previously served clients in their independent workforce development and entrepreneurship training programs.

Program Connection to R3 Goals

ESEDC and its Terra Firma project are focused primarily on the R3 program priority of economic development. Terra Firma's work within this space consists of workforce development and the linking of skilled employees with employers. ESEDC's aim to improve the conditions of local economies and public spaces through the development of vacant lots (i.e., public realm improvements) may also go beyond economics to enhance social cohesion and health and well-being (see Bogar and Beyer, 2016) and create attractive spaces that bring businesses and jobs. Moreover, the Terra Firma project touches both youths and community members returning home from prison. The work ESEDC is doing connects both directly and indirectly to several specifically stated goals of R3, including the following:

- *Substantially reduce concentrated poverty in the state.* Through its focus on guiding local workers in developing personal and professional skillsets and its emphasis on employment placement and post-training follow-up, ESEDC's Terra Firma project has the potential to reduce concentrated poverty and increase employment in R3 areas and surrounding areas from which its clients are recruited. Research shows that the Philadelphia LandCare model increased housing wealth and raised home values (Branas et al., 2018). The Terra Firma project may also be able to improve the level of social cohesion and mental health of people who are exposed to newly greened lots.
- *Promote economic viability through employment infrastructure.* In helping to build the skills of local workers so that they better fit the skills needed by local employers, ESEDC has the potential to improve the employment infrastructure of local communities. For example, local landscaping and related businesses can draw from a pool of local, skilled workers. The Terra Firma vacant lot greening projects directly involve local businesses and workers, thereby facilitating connections, sharing knowledge, and building a sense of community.
- *Reduce recidivism.* The Greencorps training program is "background friendly," meaning it accepts individuals who have a criminal history. For those who are returning to their communities after prison, the program has the potential to provide them with valuable personal and professional skills, job placement, and a career trajectory. These assets can contribute to divergence from illicit means of income, productive uses of free time, and even protective social bonds (Bushway & Reuter, 2002).
- *Promote capacity building related to social determinants of health.* As a whole, the program helps communities through personal and professional development, job/skill training, employment, wages, and reductions in observable social disorganization. These contributions have the potential to improve individuals' efforts toward attaining personal goals, to increase their usage of medical services (through wages and benefits as part of a career), and to enhance their mental health through productive social interactions and a personal sense of purpose. Indeed, some studies have indicated greening vacant lots can contribute to mental health improvements for community members exposed to the new green spaces (Branas et al., 2018).
- *Produce new community programs.* ESEDC brings together many existing community organizations to focus on shared goals. Its strength is in bolstering connections between those organizations to support their missions and make them more effective in the work

they do, all while directing them in a concerted, new (but familiar) effort (i.e., Terra Firma). Technically, the Terra Firma initiative is a new program, but it leverages existing assets in communities to achieve its work. Some may consider this an example of R3 funding creating a new program, but in more practical terms R3 funding has enabled existing organizations to collaborate, enhance, and scale their activities.

Community Context

The geographic focus of ESEDC activities includes Grand Boulevard, Greater Grand Crossing, South Chicago, South Shore, Washington Park, and Woodlawn on the south side of Chicago in Cook County, IL. In its initial grant application, ESEDC proposed to serve 47 R3 areas, 30 of which were reported as high need zones.[13] Figure 2 illustrates the service area of the Terra Firma Program.

Figure 2

Service Area of Emerald South Economic Development Collaboration's Terra Firma Program

Note. Provided to ICJIA by ESEDC.

For the 47 R3 areas proposed for service in the program's application, the average tract-level median age was 36 years old (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a). In the same 47 R3 areas, the average tract-level percentage of males was 43.1%. For comparison, the percent of male in the statewide population was 49% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a). Across the 47 R3 areas proposed for service, the average percent of population identifying as White alone was 3.8%; the average percent identifying as Black or African American alone was 89.5% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019c). The

[13] High need status was determined during the eligibility analysis phase of R3, where census tracts in the 75th percentile on the indicators used to determine eligibility were labeled as "high need." For more, please visit https://R3.Illinois.gov.

average percent of population identifying as Hispanic or Latino was 3.2% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019c).

In the 47 R3 areas reported for service by the program, the average tract-level unemployment rate was 17.4% (range 6.4% - 38.4%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b). The average median household income for the 47 R3 areas reported to be served by the program was $33,607 (range $13,676 - $66,944) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019d).

Existing Evidence for Activities

ESEDC's vision for this project originated in community-informed discussions and planning (e.g., existing community plans, focus groups, and community meetings) and in explorations of existing research-supported models that fit the developing mission and goals of the collaborative. ESEDC aims to improve the health and well-being of residents by contributing to the local economy and reducing crime. It built out Terra Firma with a nod to a particularly promising vacant lot restoration model evaluated in Philadelphia but expanded it with a greater focus on workforce development. A 2018 evaluation of the Philadelphia LandCare model examined its impact on violence, crime, and fear. The implementation used a rigorous "intervention-control group" research design, with some randomly selected lots getting the intervention of greening while others did not. The evaluation found that residents near the lots being greened perceived less crime and fewer safety concerns and reported more use of outdoor spaces than those in neighborhoods with lots that did not receive greening (Branas et al., 2018). In the same evaluation the researchers utilized police data and confirmed that levels of violent crimes and nuisances in neighborhoods under the poverty line were reduced significantly (Branas et al., 2018). In a similar quasi-experimental study on vacant land reuse and crime in Youngstown, Ohio, researchers found reductions in felony assault, burglary, and robbery in the areas around lots that were cleaned and greened or reused as community gardens (Kondo et al., 2016). A systematic review of 10 studies that examined the relationship between greened spaces and crime or violence found 19 instances of reductions in crime or violence related to green spaces (Bogar & Beyer, 2016).

Greening efforts also may have benefits like reduced flooding and green stormwater infrastructure, which refers to strategies for handling storm water where it falls and not after it has run into the sewer system (City of Chicago, 2014). A growing body of research on green stormwater infrastructure suggests that the benefits span a range of health, economic, climate, and transportation advantages, including improved air quality, less heat stress, better mental health, increased property values, improved workforce development, increased sales revenue, reduced flooding, reduced greenhouse gases, and increased opportunities for active transportation (Center for Neighborhood Technology, 2020).

Site Specific Methodology

Research Questions

ICJIA researchers and ESEDC staff discussed the research questions to be covered in the current process evaluation, and ESEDC staff did not request including any additional, site specific research questions on the list presented by ICJIA. Outside of the scope of this process evaluation, ESEDC has engaged researchers with expertise in other fields (e.g. environmental impacts) to answer additional research questions.

Data Collection and Analysis

For the evaluation, ICJIA researchers primarily met and communicated with ESEDC's CEO and Director of Research and Data. These staff contributed detailed narratives of ESEDC services, goals, and clients. Researchers virtually met with these staff several times and took detailed notes for inclusion in the report. Researchers supplemented this with information provided in ESEDC's grant application materials submitted in response to the R3 NOFO, provided by ICJIA's Federal and State Grants Unit. Further, ICJIA researchers attended research meetings convened by ESEDC with external research stakeholders who were working on research projects with ESEDC. While these projects are outside of the scope of the current evaluation, the information provided was relevant to learning more about program goals, outputs, and outcomes. Lastly, researchers summarized data collected from the online Census data explorer for inclusion on community descriptives.

Timeline

Some aspects of the program's original timeline were adversely affected by factors that called for adjustments to programming. See "Program Challenges and Solutions" for more detail. ESEDC did not receive its first reimbursement payment until mid-October 2021, which meant recruitment started later than desired. Once funding was obtained, further delays occurred in receiving the materials needed for greening tasks due to supply chain issues. The original contract period ended in January 2022, but programs were given the opportunity to apply for extended funding from February 2022 through January 2023. ESEDC applied for and received this extension. The Terra Firma program has since revised its timeline to reflect the activities for this additional year of funding. The current report reflects data and activities between February 2021 and June 2022.

Site Specific Findings

Program Components and Activities

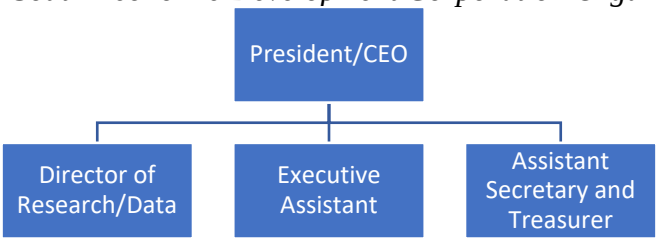
Staff. ESEDC program staff who engage in R3 programming include:

- *President and CEO*—leads ESEDC and primarily works to bring all stakeholders together in a concerted, organized effort to achieve the organization's goals. That is, he convenes the meetings and sets the agenda including guiding discussion of coordination between different stakeholders. The ICJIA evaluation team interacted with the CEO a handful of times as part of ESDEC-led research meetings and in informal ICJIA interviews with program staff.
- *Director of Research and Data*— manages Terra Firma's data collection, storage, and analysis. The ICJIA evaluation team met several times with the Director discuss the program, its rollout, and the data available to help tell the story of program implementation and impact. The Director provided ICJIA researchers with various program materials such as the results of mapping projects and recruitment materials. Further, they coordinated efforts among research stakeholders interested in evaluating the impact of Terra Firma's work.
- *Executive Assistant*— facilitates all manner of program coordination and activities The Executive Assistant provided ICJIA researchers with program materials and helped in setting up meetings with stakeholders.
- *Assistant Secretary and Treasurer*— provides administrative support to ESEDC staff.

Figure 3 depicts the organization chart of ESEDC.

Figure 3

Emerald South Economic Development Corporation Organization Chart



Note. Provided to ICJIA by ESEDC.

Clients. ESEDC's primary clients are Terra Firma trainees at Greencorps Chicago and students of Sunshine Enterprise's Community Business Academy. ICJIA researchers were not able to engage directly with trainees or students at this stage of the evaluation. The number and characteristics of program clients (where available) were reported by ESEDC as part of data reporting to ICJIA on the progress of the program's implementation. Local businesses (like landscaping companies) could be considered clients of the program since they are the intended beneficiaries of a pool of skilled workers suited to their needs and have the opportunity to acquire new contracts to tend to greened lots. Community members who are exposed to the greened lots could be considered clients as well, since the intention is for them to benefit from Terra Firma's work. The organization seeks feedback from trainees, students, and community members about its work, and uses that information to understand where to make improvements and to promote its work where things are going well.

Stakeholders. There are numerous collaborators involved in the planning and development of Terra Firma, but in year one of the program, four stakeholders were key to the implementation phase:

- *Greencorps Chicago* offers training and employment support related to jobs in the environmental field (e.g. pollution/contamination removal such as asbestos).
- *Sunshine Enterprises* offers entrepreneurship education and business coaching related to running a business focused on environmental work (e.g. a landscaping company).
- *Bowa Construction* selects and prepares local subcontractors to work on installing and maintaining lots.
- *Local community gardens* serve as partners and venues to serve and engage with communities by offering clean up and carpentry services.

Goals. Short-term goals for the program include improving the aesthetics of vacant lots through clean up and greening, maintaining the lots over time, building relationships with local community members and organizations, and connecting community members with needed services. Intermediate goals include establishing a green industry workforce in the community and building capacity for local landscape contracts and community gardens. Long-term goals include improving the physical and mental health of the community, improving the physical

spaces in the community (e.g., improved walkability and vacant sites and increased land values), and building environmental resiliency.

Activities. The following descriptions go into detail about the work of key stakeholders in the Terra Firma project, like ESEDC leadership team, Greencorps Chicago, and Sunshine Enterprises. These activities are also highlighted in the logic model developed with the program staff. See Appendix A for the visual depiction of this logic model.

***ESEDC Leadership*.** ESEDC leadership team applied for the R3 grant and brought together the partners required to accomplish the work of Terra Firma. They negotiated the grant contract with the ICJIA grants unit and dealt with administrative issues, such as delays in contracting and distribution of grant funds. In year one, they organized and promoted community events, connected trainees and entrepreneurs in training with wraparound services, coordinated across collaborators, selected city-owned vacant lot sites for improvement based on their concentration and visibility in the community (e.g. near public transportation), and negotiated for access agreements to the lots.

Greencorps Chicago. Greencorps Chicago is a public/private partnership between the Chicago Department of Transportation and WRD Environmental. Its headquarters is located in an R3 area designated as high need. Greencorps has been allocating 100 percent of its staff and resources to the Terra Firma project as a new initiative.

Greencorps' adult workforce training covers "horticulture, tree care, landscaping, ecological restoration, pesticide use, green infrastructure, construction basics," and other topics that might arise specific to a project at one of the greening sites. This prepares trainees 18 years and older for careers in "landscaping, tree care, ecological restoration, and brownfield remediation." Greencorps adheres to a training structure that involves classroom-based education on the topics mentioned above followed by on-the-job training so that trainees can apply classroom knowledge to real-world settings. Knowledge is reinforced through periodic classroom sessions that coincide with the on-the-job training. Job placement and career development take place both directly, by paying trainees to be part of Greencorps' training/work on Terra Firma projects, and indirectly, by providing personal and professional skill building, certifications, and guidance on viable careers outside of the Greencorps platform. The program puts considerable effort into seamlessly integrating the two. In addition to job training and career development, trainees are supported via a myriad of wraparound services during the program to help them succeed. The program has in the past run for approximately 7 months, starting around March, but extenuating factors (described later) have required the Terra Firma program to shorten Greencorps training to run from November through January.

Greencorps Chicago also runs a summer youth program called Greencorps Chicago Youth Program (GCYP). This program takes a similar approach to the adult workforce training but tailors its content to horticulture (landscaping, urban agriculture, and urban forestry) and bicycling (bike safety and traffic laws, bike mechanics, and bike advocacy). Activities in the GCYP include education about the communities in which the youth live, field trips to green/outdoor spaces, education and training in key greening activities (e.g. planting, weeding/harvesting vegetable gardens within the community), and applied "workdays" for putting new knowledge to use.

Potential Greencorps trainees are recruited through a two-pronged approach utilizing both direct recruiting (e.g., public flyers, word of mouth, etc.) and recruiting through community partners (e.g. referrals from other non-profits, social service agencies, and community organizations). Hopeful trainees must attend an open house at which Greencorps staff explain the program, its offerings, and its requirements. After attending, potential trainees can fill out an application. Their applications are reviewed by Greencorps leadership, and interviews are granted to those who meet the initial minimum requirements and appear to be a good fit for the program. The interview assesses applicants' understanding of the program and the work they do as well as the applicants' existing skillset and their likelihood of being able to conduct the work necessary to complete the training program. Greencorps leaders make a collective decision to accept applicants into the program and invite those accepted into an official 1- to 2-week program orientation One week of the orientation serves as an introduction to Terra Firma projects and activities and gives participants the option to choose to participate in Terra Firma activities. The rest of the orientation lays out trainee expectations and begins preliminary trainings on critical certifications that are relevant to working in viable careers within environmental remediation and similar fields, such as Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER). The orientation also covers fundamental topics, like introduction to horticulture, and guides trainees in goal setting.

Sunshine Enterprises. To complement the training and employment placement of skilled workers, the Terra Firma program supports the development of local business owners and the growth of local businesses. Sunshine Enterprises (SE) offers entrepreneurship training through its 12-week Community Business Academy (CBA). The SE headquarters is in an R3 area, a zone designated as high need during the eligibility determination phase of R3. SE dedicates a few staff members exclusively to tracking and supporting Terra Firma clients. Otherwise, most of the SE staff who are available to Terra Firma clients also work with its non-Terra Firma clients.

For Terra Firma, SE focuses its CBA on businesses related to the greening work of Terra Firma (e.g., landscaping). During a 12-week course, the CBA provides its students with classroom and simulation-based training, coaching, and follow-up support throughout a student's entrepreneurship journey. The education/training units cover budgeting, marketing, bookkeeping, cash flow, pricing strategies, and credit building. Once interested parties complete an application, SE's operations team collectively assesses applicants for admission. Assessments examine the clarity of an applicant's business idea, their ability to execute on the idea, and the completeness and comprehensiveness of their application. If the application itself has obvious issues, an admissions officer will follow up with the applicant, whenever possible. Students pay a fee to enroll in the CBA, but there are ways of having the fee waived in certain cases. More ways to waive the fee (or be reimbursed) may be added in the future. Students receive consistent weekly communications from the CBA operations team as well as periodic communication directly from their instructor to keep them engaged.

Within the course, students are assigned a business coach, who helps them apply concepts they learn to their own business model and who might assist them in shifting their business model as their ideas develop. Once students reach week 11 of the CBA, their business is assessed, and they develop an action plan. Between the last week and graduation, students meet with an instructor and are assigned a secondary business coach, typically with a follow up period of about 90 days. Structured reporting is expected. The CBA was offered online in year one, but SE has recently begun offering its course in a hybrid setting.

Every team at SE is designed to be a touch point for Terra Firma clients. From presenters at information sessions, to recruiters, operations team members, instructors and various types of coaches, SE extends its existing services to Terra Firma clients. Specific to Terra Firma, Sunshine Enterprises has identified partner organizations from which to recruit clients, including existing landscaping and land care businesses. It also has brought on board an expert to advise in the recruitment process and provide group coaching to CBA students. Furthermore, it has partnered with three local Illinois Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) that have provided various resources to CBA students. As mentioned, SE has provided Terra Firma clients with not only a primary business coach who can help them with general business guidance but also a secondary business coach focused on the green ecosystem industry to help with specific topics in that realm. The goal of ESEDC's Terra Firma program is to enable those who complete the CBA to bid for a contract with Greencorps to maintain lots that have been rehabilitated by Greencorps and Greencorp trainees, which would include tasks like watering new plantings, trash pickup, and mowing the sites twice per month. This arrangement is designed to provide synergy between the two groups who are part of the Terra Firma collaboration.

Potential CBA students who are not in the Terra Firma program are referred/recruited to the SE by other CBA alumni and local partners already serving the community. For example, Windy City Harvest and other urban farming organizations make completion of the CBA a prerequisite to being accepted into their community farming programs. Typically, potential students attend a general information session at which the Terra Firma program is discussed alongside other partnerships and possible business sectors that an entrepreneur might explore. As mentioned, there are also some information sessions exclusively about Terra Firma to encourage clients to choose a Terra Firma partnership.

Program Challenges and Solutions

Slow Starts. Delays in receiving funding, season-dependent activities, and the impact of COVID-19 on labor and family conditions caused the program to adjust its year one activities and timeline. For example, ESEDC intended for the Greencorps job training program to be the primary source of workers/trainees for initial lot improvements. Instead, they utilized Greencorps' previous Spring trainees and contracted with Bowa Construction for local landscaping companies to do the initial work on lots in addition to the maintenance work for which these groups were originally slated. Additionally, ESEDC's plan proposed to have the community training program follow the training modules of the Greencorps job training program. However, after engaging with the community and talking to local partners in community gardens about their needs, ESEDC staff pivoted from this aspect of the program as well. Instead, they offered generalized education about green spaces (sometimes during community events) and hands-on assistance with community gardens.

Engaging Participants and Clients. Greencorps staff indicated that they anticipated some trainee attrition during their program and, in fact, some program dropout occurred. Trainee's may drop out if they obtain or decide to seek out employment in a different area, find a position in the field that has higher wages, or do not feel that the jobs offered fit them. In the plan, trainees are considered to have completed the program if they start their involvement at the beginning of the program year (often March) and work on one or more projects through the completion of that program year. According to staff, some trainees did not reach this milestone.

Program staff followed up with trainees who missed a class or day on a job site in order to understand what happened and tried to get the trainee back on track. Staff stated that since the first year of the program, they have noticed that trainees often have several other responsibilities, like families and outside employment, which may have led to some attrition. However, staff also noted that, given the job market at the time, their training program competed with entry-level jobs offering higher wages than what Greencorps was offering. Greencorps initially paid trainees the City of Chicago minimum wage of $14.00 an hour, but after experiencing some initial program attrition due to wage competition, Greencorps increased trainees' hourly salary after a trainee's 90th day in the program to $19.00. It is not yet clear how much of a positive impact this increase has had. Initial anecdotal reports from program staff suggest it has been at least somewhat successful in retaining more trainees for longer.

Additionally, client attrition occasionally occurred within Sunshine Enterprise's Community Business Academy likely due in part to challenges clients faced with technology in the digital classroom environment. Some students were not technically savvy enough to do the work needed to complete the CBA. SE staff offered general information on the technical aspects of accessing the class and completing its assigned work during the orientation and began offering assistance to individual students experiencing technical issues. In addition, the program eventually offered a location where students could access the technical resources needed to complete the course online. The staff are now starting to push for CBA to become a hybrid course (partly in person, partly online). At times, CBA students also had difficulty applying course content and completing assigned homework. As solutions, SE added separate instructors to conduct homework help sessions, made sample homework available to students, had instructors do regular homework reviews, and opened one-on-one homework help sessions to troubleshoot homework with instructors. As part of SE staff's continuing effort to understand and improve program retention, they conducted an early version of a feedback survey of first year students and will continue to survey students about their experiences and challenges with things like technical issues and homework assignments.

Program Accomplishments and Successes

Partnerships and Collaborations. The Terra Firma program worked well with its partners and collaborators and especially, as mentioned, with bringing its partners into the fold and coordinating efforts between them. As part of ESEDC's planning and development, staff created the Commercial Corridor Collaborative (C3) with 14 local business support organizations and 3 local Illinois Small Business Development Centers (SBDC). The SBDCs (Build Bronzeville, South Shore Chamber, and YWCA Metro Chicago) have been an important supplement to Sunshine Enterprises' entrepreneurship training. Specifically, they provided "confidential, one-on-one counseling, training and technical assistance in all aspects of small business management." ESEDC staff also created a Data & Research Collaborative, including the University of Chicago's Urban labs, World Business Chicago, Maps Corps, and Mass Economics. The purpose of this collaborative is "…to collect and disseminate asset-based research to take ownership of the narrative of the South Side and execute data-driven decision making." Researchers who partnered with ESEDC for this collaborative include ICJIA; the Delta Institute; the Metropolitan Planning Council; the University of Chicago's (UC) Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice; and the UC Radical Innovation for Social Change

Center. These partners all have had an interest in evaluating different aspects of Terra Firma's impact on Chicago communities, including flooding, mental health, crime, and other outcomes.

Engaging Participants and Clients. Some particular highlights of program activities and accomplishments so far include the green transformation of 96 vacant lots (or 27 acres of land) in Washington Park and Woodlawn, the employment of 20 adults and 44 youth in paid green industry training programming, and the graduation of 12 adults from the CBA. Highlights also include a contract with 4 local minority landscape companies to install split rail fencing, other contracts and partnerships with local business and organizations, and direct support for 17 community-gardens.

The Greencorps Chicago program experienced some initial recruitment issues but was still able to onboard 7 new training participants. Several trainees gained certifications in First Aid and CPR, HAZWOPER, and OSHA general safety standards. Terra Firma also engaged over 300 community members during "activation events," (i.e., public community events). These events are meant to "reactivate" vacant land and community assets, like give-away/festival events at a vacant Chicago Public School building, pop-up art and installations, a professional portrait event, community health and wellness events, and, most recently, a community bike ride. Other key highlights included a CBA graduate recently being awarded a contract to maintain greened vacant lots.

Capacity for Outcome Evaluation

Existing Data Collection. ESEDC's Terra Firma program has a large network of partners that collect information on their own operations. To the extent required by the R3 grant contract, ESEDC has collected enough information from all of these partners and has reported summary data to ICJIA along with progress related to key Terra Firma program goals, objectives and measures. Two key collaborators, Greencorps Chicago and Sunshine Enterprises, have reported data about their operations to ESEDC, which uses Salesforce to track program data. In addition to client-level data, Greencorps and SE both already collect some form of feedback from their trainees, students, and community partners to understand their experiences and needs. They currently use this data internally but do not report it or connect it to outcome data. Greencorps also collects detailed information about the greening projects it undertakes in project reports. Likewise, this data is primarily used internally, but they do include it in their reports as intermediate output data. Overall, program data are scattered and stored in multiple electronic spreadsheets, paper files, and unique databases across numerous partners. Such diffused sources make it difficult to share and access for evaluation purposes. Future evaluation work will have to consider the data needs of ESEDC staff when requesting data, and may consider

Gaps in Data Collection. ESEDC submits data to ICJIA on a regular basis as completely as possible. Nonetheless, some gaps exist in categories like the demographics of the clients it serves. It is also challenging to fully understand who the program reaches with community engagement/activation events. The program is sometimes free flowing and allows for casual/anonymous participation. The data that ESEDC currently reports to ICJIA on a periodic basis are helpful for understanding program implementation and progress towards long-term program goals, but they are severely limited in providing information that can assist in a rigorous client-level or community-level outcome evaluation.

Based on the data available within the partner organizations of ESEDC, many opportunities exist to more deeply examine who the program's clients are and how the program impacts their lives and communities. For example, programs collect application and intake data for people who go through Greencorps Chicago's training or SE's CBA course. At the very least, these data could be used to create a sample of clients who could then provide primary data through surveys, interviews, or focus groups. These data could aid future research studies. For example, by linking data from client samples to other data sources, researchers could explore the history or future of clients' employment, criminal justice involvement, involvement with other R3 programs, and more. Greening project data could be linked to long-term community outcomes through community surveys and property value records, but these changes would not be expected within the grant period.

Conclusion

ESEDC's Terra Firma program had a slow start in its first year, experiencing some initial delays in funding, in acquiring materials, and in engaging an ideal number of new recruits. However, the program put into place key partnerships, processes, and guiding frameworks critical for the program to thrive in year two. It engaged with community members in their intended service areas, served communities through the greening of vacant lots and assistance with gardens in their neighborhoods, and helped adults and youth build skills in topics that provide job and career opportunities. The program has already started seeing the fruits of its labor after its initial year of set up. It has seen increased participation and smoother operations. As an economic development program that touches on various aspects of violence prevention, youth development and reentry support, the program has several links to the goals of R3. The successful, full implementation of the program will require sustained, long-term funding, maintenance of key partnerships, effective client recruitment, and refinements to its vacant lot selection and acquisition. In order to measure the effects of their efforts, ESEDC would need a stronger data system, staff to manage it, and greater coordination and integration of data between the different partners. Such a system would allow for longitudinal data collection for client-based outcomes and for the data from different activities to be combined into a cohesive analysis of program effects.

Service Delivery: Metropolitan Family Services

Introduction

Program Overview

Metropolitan Family Services (MFS) is a large non-profit organization that has operated in the Chicagoland region for more than 160 years. The services offered by MFS include behavioral health, workforce development, and family support to violence prevention and legal aid. The organization's operating budget in fiscal year 2022 was $104,011,000. MFS has seven service centers across the region. Its Southwest Center received R3 funds and is highlighted in this process evaluation.

The R3 funds were used by MFS to facilitate access to needed services for community members in southwest suburban Cook County. The program aims to leverage existing MFS programming and to facilitate linkages to services provided by partner organizations. It also aims to provide services that are responsive to needed resources as identified by the clients and community they serve, including workforce development, violence prevention, and civil legal assistance. The program offers multiple access points to services and sustained case management, helping clients efficiently and effectively navigate systems.

MFS applied to deliver services to the Cook – Suburban R3 region and was awarded $1,169,729 in grant funding for the first year of the grant. MFS received a continuation of funding for another year, receiving another $1,169,729 for year two. In its original application budget, MFS requested $2,166,010 for year one, the maximum amount allowable for service delivery programs in that region. The amount it received equals approximately 54% of its requested amount. The partial award amount was due to limited funds within each region and the amounts requested by applications that scored higher than MFS within the Cook – Suburban region.

MFS's program design addresses all five R3 program priorities: civil legal aid, economic development, reentry services, violence prevention, and youth development. Due to the nature of program start-up and implementation, not all services were provided from the outset of the program. Based on information from performance data submitted to ICJIA, in the first two reporting periods (February-March 2021 and April-June 2021) MFS provided only economic development services. In the third reporting period (July-September 2021), MFS provided only civil legal aid services. In reporting periods four, five, six, and seven (October-December 2021, January 2022, February-March 2022, and April-June 2022), the program provided services in all five priority areas.

Program Connection to R3 Goals

MFS staff indicated that they provide services in all five R3 program priority areas: civil legal aid, economic development, reentry services, violence prevention, and youth development.

- Through MFS's legal aid society, the program provides comprehensive civil legal aid services to strive for equal access to justice.
- The program promotes the R3 goal of economic viability and employment infrastructure through its provision of workforce development services.
- The MFS R3 program specifically targets reentry populations in its range of direct services. These services include civil legal aid and workforce development as well as linkages to additional support services aimed at reducing recidivism.

- The R3 goals of violence prevention and reductions in gun violence are addressed through a partnership with a local Ceasefire program, which includes workforce development for participants.
- Youth development is advanced through partnerships with school districts and provisions of behavioral health services to children.

One of the principal goals of R3 is promoting capacity building related to social determinants of health. MFS works to build the capacity of the individuals they serve, the capacity of communities in which they operate, and capacity within its own organization. For example, through MFS, staff and partners access professional development opportunities and training. Additionally, the community-centered approach and emphasis on trauma-informed practices by MFS are aligned with the community-driven lens of R3.

Community Context

The Southwest community center is the MFS location that received R3 funding. This community center is in a high need R3 area (0420) and provides services to the following surrounding R3 areas, as well: 0415, 0416, 0421 (high need), 0422, 0440, 0442 (high need), 0451 (high need), and 0474 (high need). In their initial application, program staff noted that unemployment in their target service regions was higher than in the Chicago metropolitan area as a whole, and median income was lower. For the nine R3 areas reported to be served by the program, the average tract-level unemployment rate was 13.8% (range 7.8% - 20.9%). By contrast, the unemployment rate of the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI Metro Area was 6.1%, and the unemployment rate of the City of Chicago only was 8.1% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b). The median household income when averaged for the nine R3 areas reported to be served was $39,520 (range $22,500-$53,229). The median household income for the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI Metro Area was $71,770; and for the City of Chicago it was $58,247 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019d).

For the nine R3 areas proposed to be served in the program's application, the average tract-level median age was 34.7 years old, somewhat lower than the statewide median age of 38.1 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a). In the same nine R3 areas, males made up, on average, 47.8% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a). The percent of population identifying as White alone in these 9 R3 areas averaged 8% and Black or African American alone averaged 60.7% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019c). On average, across the 9 R3 areas proposed for service, the average percent of population identifying as Hispanic or Latino was 27% (range 1.2% - 62%). This percentage was higher than the 17.1% of the statewide population who identify as Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019c).

Existing Evidence for Activities

The MFS R3 program employs programming from a variety of models. The following sections describe models relevant to three key program components that MFS staff have developed as part of the R3-funded work. The review below draws from research that supports the models. It does not cover additional services referred to and provided by program partners.

Comprehensive Service Linkage

Provision of wraparound services has been utilized and studied in numerous fields of care, including medicine, mental health, substance use treatment, education, and reentry (McCarter, 2016). In the wraparound model, services are not one static plan of treatment but instead are a process or strategy to deliver effective and individualized services to meet clients' needs (Bruns et al., 2008). The wraparound approach integrates community-based services from multiple providers where the goals of the services reflect the participant's unique choices and preferences (Eber et al., 2002). Services are often co-located within a central hub of available providers with related expertise (Vest et al., 2018). In the model, the wraparound design often includes an extension of service provision at the family or household level (Carney & Buttell, 2003). In addition to designing a treatment plan and making referrals to services, a client's case manager also serves as an advocate for the participant and aids in navigating complex systems (McCarter, 2016). An evaluation of a school-based, wraparound services model in Illinois found that students receiving intensive wraparound services for six or more months saw significant positive effects in educational, behavioral, and emotional functioning (Eber et al., 2011).

Workforce Development

Workforce development programming can be defined broadly to include any classroom or on-the-job training that prepares participants for specific employment, whether they are currently employed or unemployed (Holzer, 2008). Target outcomes for workforce development programs typically involve new employment, job retention, increased average earnings, or credentials achieved (King & Heinrich, 2011). Workforce development programming can benefit communities by providing employment opportunities and skill development for workers. It can bolster the capacity of key community organizations by matching purposively-trained workers with in-demand jobs (Dean et al., 2014). The Washington State Institute for Public Policy has performed cost-benefit analyses on many workforce development programs. Findings show that benefits exceed costs in programs employing models that include career and technical education academies, job training with work experience, or job search and placement services (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2019a; Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2019b; Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2019c). However, research on outcomes of largescale workforce development programming has found variation in the magnitude of results depending on the program implementation and population served (Heinrich et al., 2008; Holzer, 2008).

Ceasefire Partnership

The Ceasefire model is a structure for violence prevention programs that has been used in multiple US cities (Circo et al., 2021). The program model employs outreach workers, commonly called violence interrupters. They mediate conflicts and deescalate them before firearm violence occurs (Whitehill et al., 2014). Individuals hired as violence interrupters are selected to be credible messengers from the community, often with lived experience similar to those involved in violence (Whitehill et al., 2014). Violence interrupters link high-risk individuals involved in conflict with targeted community services, such as employment and educational opportunities (Skogan et al., 2008). A 2008 evaluation of the Ceasefire program in Chicago found a reduction in shootings linked to the program in over half of the "hot spot" areas examined (Skogan et al., 2008).

Site Specific Methodology

Research Questions

Metropolitan Family services and ICJIA researchers discussed the research questions to be covered in the process evaluation, and no additional, site specific research questions were identified as evaluable in the scope of the present evaluation.

Data Collection and Analysis

Researchers met with an MFS program director and the R3 program supervisor to understand the program's implementation and operations through discussion during multiple unstructured virtual meetings. Researchers summarized information from these discussions in combination with information from the program's grant application to describe goals and activities.

Researchers employed existing administrative data to quantify various aspects of program performance. Administrative data came from two sources: 1) Periodic Performance Report (PPR) data reported by the program to ICJIA, 2) data from MFS's internal case management data system, RedCap (Table 4). Both data sources cover the time period February 2021 to June 2022. The program updated their unique PPR metrics between year one and year two of the grant.[14] Researchers retrieved data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey to provide community context. Researchers analyzed data using Excel and R.

The PPR data provided information on the number of clients receiving services, client demographics, staff activities, and outputs and outcomes related to program goals and activities. Clients are counted in every reporting period they receive services, so it does not indicate the number of unique clients served. Clients receiving multiple types of services are counted as a client of each program area. Clients may also receive services outside of the five R3 priority areas (e.g. general case management, behavioral health) so the total of clients served may exceed the sum of clients receiving the types of services designated under the five R3 priority areas.

The RedCap data provided an additional source of information on client intakes, desired services, records of case notes, and staff activities. There were 118 unique R3 client intake forms provided from RedCap for the time period requested. These forms are completed during an initial meeting between a client and an MFS R3 program staff member. R3 client intake forms are unavailable for some clients who completed intake with another MFS department (e.g. legal aid society or behavioral health). MFS staff members complete a case note entry each time they attempt to make contact with an R3 client. There were 514 case note entries completed during the requested time period. One client can have many case note entries in RedCap.

Table 4

MFS R3 Administrative Data Sources Employed in the Process Evaluation

Data Source	Measure	RP 1	RP 2	RP 3	RP 4	RP 5	RP 6	RP 7	Total

[14] At the time of writing, two of five reporting periods in year two were complete, therefore all year two goals should be considered "in progress."

PPR Data	Total Clients Served	0	0	2	99	129	138	175	543
	CLA Services	0	0	2	3	8	35	49	97
	ED Services	0	0	0	22	25	14	12	73
	RE Services	0	0	0	4	8	21	23	56
	VP Services	0	0	0	34	34	30	23	121
	YD Services	0	0	0	15	15	6	4	40
RedCap Data	Unique Client Intakes	0	0	0	40	14	29	35	118
	Client Contact Case Note Entries	0	0	0	88	12	93	321	514

Note. CLA = Civil legal aid; ED = Economic development; RE = Reentry services; VP = Violence prevention; YD = Youth development. RP = Reporting period. See Table 2 above for specific dates covered in each reporting period.

Timeline

Figure 4 provides a timeline of program implementation and activities anchored around the grant PPR reporting periods for year one (periods 1-5) and year two thus far (periods 6-8). The large circles outlined in blue mark reporting periods. Activities within each period are broadly grouped as grant administration (grey), program capacity building (yellow), community collaboration (green), service provision (blue), and process evaluation milestones (orange).

Figure 4

Timeline of Metropolitan Family Services R3 Grant Program

Note. CLA = Civil legal aid; ED = Economic development; RE = Reentry services; VP = Violence prevention; YD = Youth development.

Site Specific Findings

Program Components and Activities

Staff. A portion of the R3 funding was used for MFS to hire additional staff. The number of staff members employed by the program increased from 0 at the start of reporting period one to 9.85 FTE at the conclusion of reporting period seven. The largest number of staff members were hired in reporting period three. The four new hires in this period increased the number of employed staff members from two to six. The staff hired by the organization reflects its commitment to equity. New hires have connections to the communities served by the program, and their lived experiences align with the experiences of the program's clients. Based on reports from current program administrative staff, recruiting and processing such applicants have required time, thereby lengthening the hiring process.

Clients. The R3 program at MFS has served increasingly more clients as time has progressed. The program reported serving zero clients in the first two reporting periods and two clients in the third reporting period. By reporting period four, the number of clients served increased to 99, followed by 129 in period five, 138 in period six, and 175 in period seven. The grand total was 543 clients served over the first seven reporting periods (February 2021 – June 2022).[15]

[15] These totals do not necessarily represent unique clients served; the same individual could be counted as a client served in reporting period 4 and 5 if they received services during both time periods.

MFS reported select demographics on their 543 clients to ICJIA. For clients served through the first seven reporting periods, 64% identified as female and 36% as male. Clients were most commonly between the ages of 36 and 45 years old (25%), followed by ages 26 to 35 (24%), and ages 46 to 55 (15%). The majority of clients served identified as Black (88%).

Information on client community of residence is captured in the RedCap system. The most commonly reported area of residence was Harvey (20%), followed by Calumet City (19%) and Robbins (18%).[16] No other community has accounted for more than 12% of the total reported. Twenty-four different communities are represented.

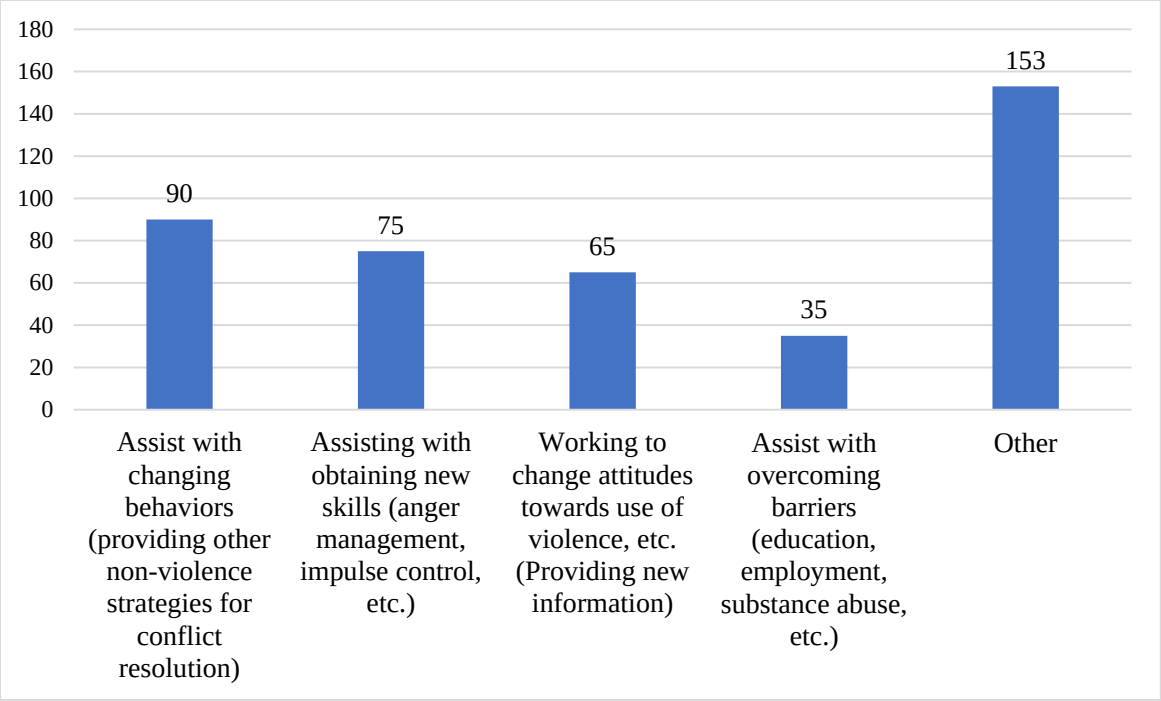
In PPR reporting, MFS indicated that as of the seventh reporting period 523 clients (96%) had household incomes below the federal poverty line. Thirty-two clients were on community supervision. Although intake information captured in the RedCap system tracks clients' level of education, it was not available for 34% of client intakes.[17] A high school diploma is the education level most commonly reported (22%), followed by some college (12%) and then currently attending/completed some high school (10%).[18]

Across all PPR reporting periods, services received by the most clients have been, in descending order, violence prevention services (*n*=121), civil legal aid (*n*=97) and economic development services (*n*=73). Also viewed as program priorities, reentry services have been delivered to 56 clients and youth development to 40 clients. Intake data in the RedCap system also indicate clients' principal service interest(s). At the time of initial contact, behavioral health was the most frequently cited interest (*n*=48), followed by employment (*n*=43) and housing (*n*=43).[19]

Case managers recorded the primary area of focus for each instance they are in contact with the client. Figure 5 displays the primary focus areas of client contacts as reported in the 514 case note forms entered in the RedCap data system. If none of the listed focus areas applied, case managers selected "Other" and wrote in a description. Analysis of the open-text responses in the other category showed that topics related to employment were most common (*n*=54), followed by general case management communication (e.g. check-ins, paperwork) (*n*=32), behavioral health needs (*n*=29), and housing (*n*=23).

Figure 5
R3 Program Client Contacts' Primary Focus Area(s) (February 2021 – June 2022)

[16] These data come from the RedCap system showing unique client intakes (*n*=118).
[17] The denominator for this percentage is the 118 unique client intakes in the RedCap system.
[18] The denominator for this percentage is the 118 unique client intakes in the RedCap system.
[19] These data come from the 118 unique client intake forms. Clients could indicate more than one primary service interest.



Note. ICJIA analysis of Metropolitan Family Services RedCap system data. N=514. Staff could select multiple primary areas of focus per case note form.

Stakeholders. MFS collaborates with many partners in its work with the R3 program, and many groups are invested in the work being performed through this grant. In addition to MFS, program stakeholders include: Blue Island Public Library, Blue Island-Robbins Neighborhood Network, Ceasefire Roseland, Christian Life Center (CLC) - Hope Center, Educational institutions (Districts 130 and 218), I Can Dream Center, Pathlights, and Together We Cope.[20] Further, ICJIA and the members of the R3 community are considered stakeholders.

Blue Island Public Library is a member of BIRNN and offers literacy programming. BIRNN is a United Way Neighborhood Network that brings together community organizations to collaborate on local challenges and improve service provision. Ceasefire Roseland is a community-based violence prevention program that collaborates with MFS on violence prevention and workforce development services. The CLC Hope Center provides career-related services in technology, auto mechanics, and agriculture (which also provides food to community members). The I Can Dream Center offers youth services and parenting skills workshops. Pathlights offers resources and services related to aging to older adults and caregivers in the community. Together We Cope provides services to prevent homelessness by supplying shelter, food, and other basic necessities.

Goals. The initial application submitted by MFS stated that the overall goal of the program is to "strengthen care coordination systems across multi-disciplinary efforts to better engage vulnerable high-risk populations and access needed resources and services." Intermediate

[20] MFS staff made the evaluation team aware that Together We Cope will not be continuing as a subcontract recipient in year two of the grant. They will remain a member of BIRNN so they can still be considered a stakeholder of the R3 program.

program goals identified by staff and measured in the PPRs include increasing economic stability and sustained employment as well as decreasing trauma-related symptoms for clients and community. The program's short-term goals include linking justice-involved and housing insecure clients with services, training the workforce, and building organizational capacity.

Activities.

Community Engagement. R3 funding was used to facilitate community engagement activities by MFS. MFS devotes time to identifying strategic partnerships and establishing trust with complementary organizations that provide services in the same communities. To increase community awareness about services offered by MFS, staff have participated in existing community events and have joined ongoing meetings as guest presenters.

Program staff track information about the community events in which they participate through their RedCap data system. During the period of the requested data (February 2021 – June 2022), R3 program staff participated in 27 community events. The estimated total attendance across all 27 events was over 3,900 individuals. Many of these events were employment-centric, such as job fairs, while others were more general resource fairs, community celebrations, and events or meetings with community leaders.

The program staff created objectives to complete six focus groups with various stakeholder groups by December 1, 2021 and six community meetings with 25 participants each by January 31, 2022. At the end of reporting period five (January 2022), four focus groups and five community meetings had been conducted. Year two saw the creation of a new objective: "Participate in or host six meetings or events by January 31, 2023." As of reporting period seven, program reports documented five such meetings/events.

Community Collaboration. MFS acts as the convening organization of BIRNN. The neighborhood network model brings together more than 30 local organizations and stakeholders to collaborate and work toward achieving collectively defined goals of the neighborhood. This work provides a channel for MFS to engage with others who are invested in the program's target area and who understand any potential gaps in services that may exist. Additionally, the work provides an opportunity to mutually promote awareness of local resources and build pathways for effective linkages. MFS stated the objective of completing 18 BIRNN meetings by January 31, 2022; it met this goal, completing the 18th BIRNN meeting in January of 2022. In year two, this objective was updated, at this point targeting the completion of an additional 12 BIRNN meetings by January 31, 2022. According to the most recently available data, MFS successfully completed this objective. It reported completing 12 BIRNN meetings as of the end of reporting period seven (June 2022).

***Client Outreach*.** R3 program staff at MFS engaged in many different types of client outreach over the program period. Outreach activities are targeted to both new and existing clients. An example of outreach to new clients would be occupying a booth at a community resource fair, while existing client outreach might include follow-up emails with referral information for specific services. Listed outreach types in the PPRs include: phone calls, in-person one-on-one contacts, community meetings, virtual meetings, instant messages or text messages, emails, physical posters and advertisements, and social media outreach. An available option of "other" in the PPR reporting tool let the program describe types of outreach not covered by the listed categories. MFS detailed its "other" outreach to be letters and general

"outreach within the community." Data indicated staff performed all listed outreach types in at least one reporting period. The PPR reporting tool did not ask for the number of times each outreach activity was performed. Instead, it asked respondents to rank the activity types based on relative frequency. Across all seven reporting periods, the three most common types of MFS staff outreach were in-person one-on-one contacts, community events, and virtual meetings.

The client intake form from the RedCap data system captures how clients are recruited or referred to MFS programming. Staff outreach has accounted for 30 of the 118 clients with available intake source data; this is the second most common source of intakes, behind referrals from another organization (57 clients).[21] Case managers submit case note forms into RedCap for each attempt made to contact clients. During the requested time period (February 2021 – June 2022), staff submitted 514 case note entries, 85% of which were successful contacts. In-person contacts were the most frequent mode associated with successful contacts (78%), followed by phone calls (19%) and text messages (3%).[22] The average amount of case management time received over the requested period (February 2021 – June 2022) was approximately 4 hours per client.[23]

Workforce Development. One of the main areas of programming that MFS provides through the R3 grant funding is workforce development. These activities include career coaching, job training and placements, financial literacy, and outreach to employers. Job readiness training is a 30-hour curriculum used across different MFS locations. Job placements are opportunities for individuals to gain experience and determine if a career is a good fit while their wages are subsidized by the program. This type of programming was assessed as a primary need in the community. One-hundred and twenty of MFS's 543 clients were reported as unemployed, and seven were reported to have lost a job over the seven reporting periods for which data are available.

The program set a goal of providing workforce development services to 80 clients by January 31, 2021 (Table 5). After experiencing barriers to initial implementation, the program served 51 workforce development clients in reporting periods four and five and provided on-the-job training placements to 34 clients. This goal was also included in year two, aiming to provide the same services to 80 clients by January 31, 2023. An additional 20 clients were served in reporting periods six and seven, and 10 clients were placed in on-the-job training. The program also aims to have 80% of workforce development participants gain unsubsidized employment. Staff reported that 20 participants (39%) in reporting periods four and five gained employment, and 12 participants (60%) in reporting periods six and seven gained employment.[24]

[21] There were 118 total unique client intakes available from the RedCap data system. The total number of client referral sources indicated was 143, meaning that clients could report referral/recruitment from multiple sources.
[22] These percentages are based on 437 successful client contacts.
[23] This average was calculated for the 118 clients with an intake form in the RedCap system.
[24] Percentages are calculated using the denominator of actual clients receiving workforce development services (i.e. 51 in year 1 and 20 thus far in year 2).

Program staff members conduct follow-ups with participants to support job retention and advancement. A related outcome metric determined by the program is for at least 65% of workforce development participants to maintain unsubsidized employment for a minimum of six months. This is a longer-term objective since the program requires implementation time before placing clients, and then it requires at least more six months before the goal can be met. In reporting period five, one individual met these criteria and maintained employment, and an additional 18 participants did so in reporting periods six and seven.[25]

Table 5

MFS Workforce Development Goals, Objectives, and Measures

Year	Objective	Measure	RP 1	RP 2	RP 3	RP 4	RP 5
1	Provide access to WD services including skill development, coaching and job placement to target R3 community members	Provide WD services to 80 adults	0	0	0	26	25
	Provide access to sustainable employment opportunities for R3 WD participants	Provide OJT placements to 15 WD participants	0	0	0	26	8
	R3 WD participants will gain unsubsidized employment	80% of WD participants will gain unsubsidized employment	0	0	0	1	19
	R3 participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment will maintain employment for a minimum of six months	65% of WD participants placed in unsubsidized employment will maintain employment for a minimum of six months	0	0	0	0	1
			RP 6	**RP 7**			
2	MFS will provide WD activities to 80 participants by end of January 31, 2023	Number of adults who receive WD services by January 31, 2023	8	12			

[25] Percentages are unable to be compared based on the input of the data because it is not possible to determine from aggregate data which reporting period an individual's placement occurred in vis-à-vis when they were recorded as meeting the six-month objective.

20 WD participants will receive OJT placements by end of year January 31, 2023	Number of OJT placements provided to adults by January 31, 2023	6	4
80% of WD participants will gain unsubsidized employment	% of WD participants who gain unsubsidized employment	8	4
65% of participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment will maintain employment for a minimum of six months	% of placement participants who maintain employment for a minimum of six months	3	15

Note. ICJIA analysis of PPR data. RP=reporting period. WD=workforce development. OJT=on the job training.

Civil Legal Aid. MFS has a robust legal aid department. Clients coming to the R3 program can receive assistance for a wide range of civil legal issues, such as expungement processes and housing/tenant advocacy. Civil legal aid staff provide "Know Your Rights" clinics and trainings that are tailored to the needs of specific client populations. For this program, the legal aid staff at MFS employs a "community lawyering" approach. It places attorneys and paralegals within the neighborhoods targeted for service, allowing them to become familiar with the needs of residents and facilitating more direct access for clients.

Staff reported that 57 clients received legal services through reporting period five, and an additional 36 and 49 received legal services in reporting periods six and seven, respectively (Table 6). [26] These totals indicate the program met its goal of serving 40 clients in year one and was on pace to meet year two's goal of serving 100 clients. Program staff noted that of all 543 clients served, 88 clients had an actively pending criminal or civil court case. Engagement with the community and initial direct service provision has demonstrated to program leadership that civil legal assistance related to housing matters is a crucial area of need, and the program expects to continue to strengthen its capacity to provide resources to address the demand for these services. More recently, the program implemented a client satisfaction survey, with a goal of 90% of clients indicating satisfaction with the services received. PPR data regarding the client survey were only available in reporting period five. Staff reported that all 30 (100%) of the clients served in that reporting period indicated satisfaction with the legal services received.

[26] In the initial aggregate reporting portion of the PPR tool, staff reported that 97 clients received civil legal aid services during the first seven reporting periods. These discrepant totals can arise due to the ongoing nature of services where the same individual continues to receive services over multiple reporting periods. Future reporting tools created by the funder should be improved to differentiate new and existing clients.

Table 6

MFS Civil Legal Aid Goals, Objectives, and Measures

Year	Objective	Measure	RP 1	RP 2	RP 3	RP 4	RP 5
1	Provide needed legal services including linkage, representation and consultation to target R3 community members	Provide legal services to 40 adults	0	0	2	25	30
	R3 participants receiving legal aid services will endorse satisfaction with services	90% of legal aid clients will be satisfied with the civil legal representation they received	0	0	0	0	30
			RP 6	**RP 7**			
2	MFS will provide legal services for 100 adults by January 31, 2023	Number of adults who receive legal services by January 31, 2023	36	49			
	90% of legal aid clients will be satisfied with the civil legal representation they received	% of legal aid clients who will be satisfied with the civil legal representation they received	NA	NA			

Note. ICJIA analysis of PPR data. RP=reporting period.

Behavioral Health. R3 clients also have access to a range of behavioral health services. Therapy and crisis counseling are available through in-house providers affiliated with MFS. Individual behavioral health services are available to school-age children and adults. The original program design included recovery support services with peer providers. However, this element proved difficult to implement and was discontinued by the program after year one.

Program staff developed an objective for year one to enroll 50 residents in mental health services in the target geography, and the program surpassed this goal (Table 7). Staff enrolled 52 clients in reporting periods four and five. This same target was increased to 60 clients for year two, and 52 additional clients already have received services in the first two reporting periods of year two. Staff employs a standardized assessment instrument to measure trauma symptoms in clients. The year one goal was to realize a 75% reduction in symptom scores between pre- and post-test administration for every client. In the program period for which data are available, 29 clients were reported to have met this objective. In year two, this objective was altered to aim to facilitate any decrease in trauma related symptoms for 75% R3 participants receiving behavioral

health services. In reporting periods six and seven, 67% clients were reported to have decreased symptoms (37 of 55 clients who received behavioral health services).

Table 7

MFS Behavioral Health Goals, Objectives, and Measures

Year	Objective	Measure	RP 1	RP 2	RP 3	RP 4	RP 5
1	Connect target R3 community members with access to needed mental health services including individual, family and group therapy and access to medication monitoring	Enroll 50 residents in the target geography in mental health services	0	0	0	23	29
	R3 participants receiving mental health services will indicate decreased trauma related symptoms	75% reduction in trauma related symptoms per pre-post implementation of the PCL-5	0	0	0	0	29
			RP 6	**RP 7**			
2	MFS will provide mental health services (individual, family and group) across the life span to 60 clients by end of January 30, 2023	Number of residents in the targeted R3 geography who will be enrolled in and receive mental health services by January 31, 2023	23	32			
	75% of R3 participants in mental health services will indicate decreased trauma related symptoms per pre-post implementation of the PCL-5	% reduction in trauma related symptoms per pre-post implementation of the PCL-5	3	34			

Note. ICJIA analysis of PPR data. RP=reporting period.

Violence Prevention. Violence prevention services are provided in cooperation with program partner Ceasefire Roseland. Examples of violence prevention services provided by Ceasefire Roseland include conflict mediation, post-shooting incident crisis response, after school programming for at-risk youth, and referrals for counseling and therapy. Awareness and community education components are promoted through MFS's wide network of partners. Additionally, MFS supports the training of violence prevention outreach workers through its

workforce development programming. MFS reported that 121 clients were engaged in violence prevention services across reporting periods four through seven.

The program facilitates an anger management program that fulfills a court ordered condition for some justice-involved individuals. The program also allows individuals who are not justice-involved to self-refer and participate. The provision of these services aligns with another program goal: to build community capacity by utilizing restorative justice practices. The anger management program fulfills a specific need of the reentry/justice-involved population and offers skills training that benefits the larger community.

Comprehensive Service Linkage. An additional primary goal of the R3 program at MFS is to link clients to existing community services that can address their unmet needs. The program created a position for community navigators who are dedicated staff trained to support individual clients and leverage available resources. Through case management and referrals, clients receive services from various collaborators. For example, they receive parenting classes and support, individual and family literacy programming, housing assistance, and domestic violence services. Per the RedCap system data, each case manager serves 20 clients on average.

Based on the case notes data from RedCap, 50% of the 437 successful client contacts resulted in a referral. Community navigators provide follow-up contact with both the client and the referral entity to complete successful linkages. Program staff record referrals and what services they referred clients to in RedCap. These entries are analyzed and grouped by type. Referrals to external agencies for additional case management are most common, followed by referrals for employment-related services.

In year two, the program added financial assistance services. The goal is to provide financial assistance to at least 50 clients. The assistance aims to support clients with funds for basic life needs, including housing, transportation, food, and childcare application/enrollment fees. In reporting periods six and seven, the program provided financial assistance to 18 clients.

One specific population identified for comprehensive service linkages is individuals returning from jail or prison. In year one, the program aimed to provide needed resources to 50 individuals in this target population (Table 8). Twenty returning citizens were served by the program in year one. For year two, this objective has been broadened to include any adults or youth who experience involvement with the justice system. In reporting periods six and seven (February – June 2022) the program enrolled 22 individuals from this population. The program objective has been to keep 45% of clients who are returning citizens from re-entering the criminal justice system (based on case-level tracking by staff). Thirty-one of the 42 clients in this population (74%) were reported to have met this objective. Program staff are currently only aware of clients' justice involvement through self-report or other ad hoc sources of information. Future outcome evaluations could enhance the program's understanding in this area by systematically examining client involvement with the justice system using administrative databases.

Table 8

MFS Reentry Services Goals, Objectives, and Measures

Year	Objective	Measure	RP 1	RP 2	RP 3	RP 4	RP 5
1	Provide needed resources across workforce, legal aid, behavioral health and other basic life needs to the target population of community members who are transitioning back into their communities from jail/prison	Enroll and provide needed resources across workforce, legal aid, behavioral health and other basic life needs to 50 returning citizens	0	0	0	12	8
	R3 participants who are returning citizens will not re-enter the criminal justice system	45% of participants who are returning citizens do not re-enter the criminal justice system	0	0	0	0	8
			RP 6	**RP 7**			
2	MFS will provide services for 50 justice involved youth and adults by January 31, 2023	Number of justice involved youth and adults enrolled in services by January 31, 2023	21	1			
	Of the 50 participants who are returning citizens, 45% will not re-enter the criminal justice system	% of 50 participants who are returning citizens who do not re-enter the criminal justice system	0	23			

Note. ICJIA analysis of PPR data. RP=reporting period.

Program Challenges and Solutions

Slow Starts. One process that required extended time for resolution was legal approval for subawardees. The time spent resolving legal approval caused delays in establishing partnerships and disbursing funds to organizations designated to receive subawards. In the initial grant application, the program applied as a single organization, and this decision presented unforeseen barriers because MFS intended to partner with other service providers. The award was made to MFS as a single organization, which resulted in challenges when allocating funds to partner providers.

Due to these initial challenges, most subaward agreements were not completed until June 2022, with one agreement remaining unexecuted until August 2022. One partner did not continue after year one, and the significant delays caused MFS to reconsider adding more subawardees in year two and beyond. One of the program's objectives for year two was to maintain subawards with at least four of the current partners and provide subawards to two additional agencies by May 1, 2023. In year two of the grant period (February - June 2022), the program reported four subawardees in each reporting period that met these criteria.

Partnerships and Collaborations. Due to the delays in finalizing subaward agreements and the contractual obligation to provide periodic data reports on relevant measures, MFS staff noted that the quarterly PPR data submissions did not fully reflect the work being done by their subawardees. This mismatch was cited as an issue that could present an area for future growth.

In the initial program objectives, MFS R3 staff created the goal of establishing five memoranda of understanding (MOU) with partner agencies for service delivery by October 1, 2021. Through the first year of the grant period, no MOUs were reported. However, this objective was extended in year two, still striving to target establishing five MOUs with five new partner agencies but now by January 31, 2023. As of June 2022, five MOUs were established, meeting the program's goal.

Engaging Participants and Clients. At the outset of the program, MFS staff made it a priority to engage the community in providing first-hand information on existing needs and priorities. They received some general feedback that members of the community were experiencing "research fatigue" and that residents were tired of completing surveys and attending meetings, particularly if no tangible results came from the efforts.[27] This informed MFS's strategy for engaging the community, and staff subsequently aimed to highlight the community's perspective without creating a burden to participate in research activities. MFS staff pivoted from initial plans to conduct focus groups and host meetings, and instead pursued engagement with attendees at existing community events and offered presentations at other scheduled community meetings to expand their outreach. By leveraging existing partnerships and making a variety of inroads into the community, MFS staff were able to build trust with residents. Using these outreach strategies, staff reached a broader segment of the target community than had they only solicited feedback through traditional methods in their existing network.

MFS collected information on client barriers to accessing services as part of its RedCap intake form. Sixty-four percent of the 118 clients with intake forms reported no barriers to accessing services. The most commonly reported barriers include homelessness (15%) and a lack of transportation (10%).

Program Accomplishments and Successes

Partnerships and Collaborations. Aligned with a community-based approach, MFS spent a great deal of effort establishing trust and rapport among potential clients and among other community organizations. R3 program staff attended community events (in-person and

[27] For further discussion of research fatigue's causes and consequences, see Chicago Beyond. (2018). *Why am I always being researched?* https://chicagobeyond.org/researchequity/.

virtually), reached out to local churches and schools, and worked with community leadership to increase awareness of program resources. Staff reported that it was critical to build a solid foundation on which to form partnerships prior to entering into a more formal agreement, such as a subcontract or memorandum of understanding. Effective working relationships between service providers has allowed organizational and community capacity to expand exponentially.

R3 funds allowed MFS to grant subawards to partner agencies in their target communities, enabling other organizations to provide services complementary to its own services. While the initial subaward process was slow due to grant administrative delays, all partners except one have been retained. MFS will continue to evaluate its collaborative work and make strategic partnerships as community needs evolve.

As an example, MFS and Ceasefire Roseland, a violence prevention organization, formed a successful partnership under the R3 program. This collaboration allows MFS to support targeted community violence prevention services through the established Ceasefire model. Ceasefire Roseland's participants provide a targeted source of potential clients for MFS's job training and workforce development services. MFS's R3 programming creates a paid training opportunity for individuals participating in the Ceasefire model so that they can become outreach workers and provide street intervention services in the local community. Further, individuals acting as outreach workers are well versed in MFS's wide range of services and can make effective linkages to community members with whom they interact during their outreach and violence prevention work.

Engaging Participants and Clients. The MFS program has been particularly successful in taking lessons learned and feedback from individuals they serve and adapting available services to align with those priorities. For example, housing was consistently cited as an unmet need for clients seeking services. Based on client intake forms in RedCap, clients frequently sought housing assistance from MFS-- approximately the same number as those who sought employment assistance. As MFS staff learned of the depth of the need for housing assistance, clients with unstable housing were included as a population of primary focus. MFS staff adaptively identified partners in the community and referred participants to them for housing assistance. In the future, staff plan to continue to develop ways to offer comprehensive support to clients who experience housing instability. Similarly, program leadership also broadened the project's initial emphasis on individuals re-entering the community from incarceration to include the larger population of those who have experienced involvement at any stage of the criminal justice system.

Capacity for Outcome Evaluation

Infrastructure.

Staff. For the process evaluation, researchers were in contact with and received information primarily from two program staff members. Staff time is very focused on managing and carrying out program operations. This demanding workload makes it infeasible for staff to engage in a great deal of meeting time, in extensive document review/revision, and in the production of materials. More staff continue to be hired as part of the organization's capacity building efforts. The substantial effort that was dedicated to outlining the program's

implementation and operations during the process evaluation phase created a foundational body of work that will enhance program staff and researchers' ability to efficiently gather the data and materials required for an outcome evaluation.

Communication with Partners. The program has had largely consistent partners over the grant period. Yet program staff have reported that the current information captured by the PPR does not fully reflect the work being done by the partners. In looking ahead to the outcome evaluation, input from MFS's partners and collaborators will be needed to contextualize the design and findings of the evaluation. Toward this end, researchers can provide technical assistance in developing goals, objectives, and measures that address the gaps in the reporting points noted by program staff. If these metrics are enhanced, the outcome evaluation has the potential to reveal changes demonstrated by the new reporting points that better incorporate partner activities. Further, research staff will plan to examine partners' existing data related to R3 program activities and potentially integrate that information into outcome analyses.

Data Availability.

***Existing Data Collection*.** Client intake data are standardized and collected in a system that is easy to access and analyze (RedCap). Information about program events and some staff activities are also captured in the database. Feedback from clients has started to be collected but the program has identified a need for growth through continued efforts to formalize/standardize its processes across all R3-related services. One of the program's year two objectives includes completing client surveys to provide feedback about services. As of the end of reporting period seven, staff reported that 38 client feedback surveys have been completed. A facet of the prospective outcome evaluation will incorporate the information provided from the ongoing collection of client feedback surveys.

MFS program staff reported interest in employing data to drive decision-making more directly. Currently, beyond what is necessary for quarterly reporting, data have not been accessible in a format that allows for timely analyses to inform program processes. As staff continue to refine program activities, researchers and staff aim to examine which data are most relevant and how frequently the metrics should be reviewed. The intent is to make existing reported data more accessible and illuminate areas for future expansion of data collection.

Gaps in Data Collection. In its original application, MFS applied as a single organization, not a collaborative. Later, a subaward was granted to BIRNN partners but the MFS PPR information was not altered to reflect this change. MFS staff felt their uniquely created reporting points in their initial application did not fully capture the work being done by their subawardees. Additionally, because the subaward process took longer than anticipated, data were not able to be requested from partners until the subaward agreements were executed. Consequently, a lapse in gathering information on early service provision occurred. These missing data created gaps in understanding the program's overall implementation and activities, particularly because the program model placed a great emphasis on linkages and collaboration. For the prospective outcome evaluation, it will be important for the program to conceptualize and implement better processes for integrating data from subawardees.

General staff training was tracked using an online platform. However, R3 specific training was not captured in that system. Staff reported that the R3 training modules could be integrated into the larger system in the future. If they are integrated, the system will also allow staff feedback on trainings to be more easily analyzed and inform improvements for future training.

Providing services to the justice-involved population and reducing recidivism are two stated goals of the MFS program. Information on justice-involvement and recidivism are currently gathered through self-report and/or anecdotal staff awareness. In the future outcome evaluation, researchers ideally will be able to more systematically examine participant interaction with the criminal justice system by comparing client information with an administrative criminal history database.

While existing data can showcase program activities for the process evaluation, program stakeholders are interested in learning about the collective impact of the holistic service model and will look to obtain that information in the outcome evaluation. Program staff also reported that they would like to understand the relationship between R3 programming referrals and other available agency services. Linking data across systems will allow researchers to examine how many clients from other agency programs are referred, how many participate in R3 services, and how many R3 program clients engage in services offered by other branches of MFS. Careful examination of potential data sources will be necessary to determine if it is possible to link the dosage or breadth of services received with differential client outcomes.

Addressing a similar question, MFS staff discussed potential opportunities to examine the number of referrals to R3 programming from their various collaborative partners and to identify partners to which R3 staff most often refer clients. Current program administrative data are set up to capture clients' recruitment/referral sources, additional services to which clients are referred, and scheduled appointments resulting from referrals. As a goal for the future outcome evaluation, existing data from partner agencies could be integrated to provide context on the referral linkages and additional services received.

Conclusion

The process evaluation examined program operations, goals, successes, and challenges. Researchers employed a community-based approach to the evaluation, collaborating with program staff on developing research questions and methods. Future directions for further research and program sustainability are considered below.

Program Operations

Metropolitan Family Services is a large, multi-site service provider in the Chicago metropolitan area. R3 funds were awarded to the MFS Southwest Service Center to create a new program that expands on existing community service provision to address unmet needs of residents. The R3 program implemented by MFS is largely operating as intended, with strategic adaptations undertaken when appropriate. Initial grant administrative challenges delayed collaboration. Hiring staff and client services were pushed back. MFS, however, overcame these barriers and program operations were more fully realized by the second half of year one of funding. Year two

of funding has allowed the programs to strengthen partnerships, continue to increase the number of clients served per reporting period, and refine services provided.

Program Connection to R3 Goals

The program's goals are aligned with the overall goals of R3 to fulfill unmet needs in target communities with a focus on equity and capacity building. Using grant funding, MFS has built its capacity by hiring staff and devoting resources to form partnerships with other community organizations. Program staff have utilized community stakeholders' perspectives to inform areas of emphasis for service provision. MFS activities relate to all five of the R3 program priorities. Some priorities are accomplished through direct service provision (e.g. economic development through job training) while others are targeted through collaborations and referrals (e.g. violence prevention through a partnership with Ceasefire Roseland).

Anticipated Needs

Further information on the programmatic content delivered to clients will be necessary to examine related outcomes. Continued enhancement of data collection will also be critical to understand participants' experiences during and after the program period. Additionally, administrative data from collaborators will be needed to understand gaps in the current reporting points. In the near term, program staff, researchers, and grant administrators need to examine potential improvements to disambiguate reported data (e.g. new versus existing clients served). The program has evolved and adapted already over the grant period. These modifications have an impact on evaluators' ability to pinpoint specific aspects of the service delivery model that result in various outcomes.

Program sustainability is important to consider in the context of time-limited grant funding. Much of the program's progress in relationship building and community engagement has created a foundation that is likely to remain without continued R3 funding. Increased community awareness of services and effective collaborative relationships are likely to produce lasting positive impacts beyond the term of the grant period. However, program staff noted an ongoing need for resources to support continued collaborations and organizational efforts for capacity building in the region. Additionally, without R3 funding some program service provision would require alternative funding to be sustained, such as client financial assistance and subsidized job placements. Information acquired through a rigorous outcome evaluation will be useful for further program refinement and demonstration of program impact.

Limitations and Key Takeaways

Limitations

The current report reflects ICJIA's process evaluation of four select R3-funded sites. As this was an inaugural attempt at implementing Community-Based Participatory Research, there are several limitations specifically related to CBPR. Researchers prioritized relationship building, program interests, and limiting data collection burden over scientific interests. As such, most data collected came from existing administrative data collection or detailed conversations with program staff, and the data were limited to what staff were interested in or were willing to share. If shared, data were provided at the aggregate level (e.g., MFS, Alternatives) which did not allow for detailed analysis. Some programs, such as Cornerstone, were unable to share internal data at all, and researchers were limited to using quarterly reporting data from programs' Periodic Performance Reports for measures like clients served and demographic information. In that case, data only reflect the submitted quarterly reports.

Key Takeaways

The aim of the current evaluation was to conduct a process evaluation examining the implementation of select R3-funded programs in their inaugural year. During this process, ICJIA was able to identify common themes across all four examined programs.

- **Time to Receive Funding:** The contracting and reimbursement processes required many sites to alter proposed timelines. Some programs were able to begin providing services before funding was received, but smaller organizations that did not have funds on hand to do so were at a disadvantage.
- **Impact of COVID-19:** Programs began their work in early 2021 and had to deal with the impacts of COVID-19 and the policies implemented to limit the spread. All programs experienced delays getting services implemented and some noted difficulties with early outreach and client engagement which likely impacted data collected and overall services provided.
- **Implications for Future Evaluation:** All programs included in this report are complex, involving multiple service types, partner organizations, and sets of program participants. When developing potential outcome evaluation methods for the complexity of the sites, researchers will need complex methods and designs, adequate time to create them, and buy-in from the programs. Further, data systems and data availability varied drastically across sites. Some programs were able to complete requested data pulls with ease; others were not. They were obstructed by complex systems, staffing shortages, and time restrictions.
- **Gaps in Data Collection:** The current evaluation encountered gaps in the data and in the data collection processes, and it would have benefitted from fewer gaps. Qualitative input from program staff, along with basic administrative client data, serves as the basis for the current report. Going forward, gaps can be closed by including primary data collected systematically from additional staff, stakeholders, and clients across all sites. The data collection process also can be enhanced by including additional perspectives, such as clients, and by researchers developing or helping to develop more comprehensive tools

for primary data collection. For the current evaluation, however, time and staffing restrictions made these enhancements difficult.

Moving forward, ongoing evaluation is a key aspect of the R3 legislation, and, as such, process evaluations of R3-funded programs should utilize the lessons learned from this inaugural evaluation to inform and improve methods. For the current cohort, researchers are currently engaging sites in conversations and are developing research plans to measure client outcomes and the impacts of their programming. Research staff are also providing ongoing technical assistance, as needed. For example, a dashboard visualization product presenting R3 programs' PPR data is presently in development by the evaluation team to make existing reported data more accessible and to illuminate areas for future expansion of data collection.

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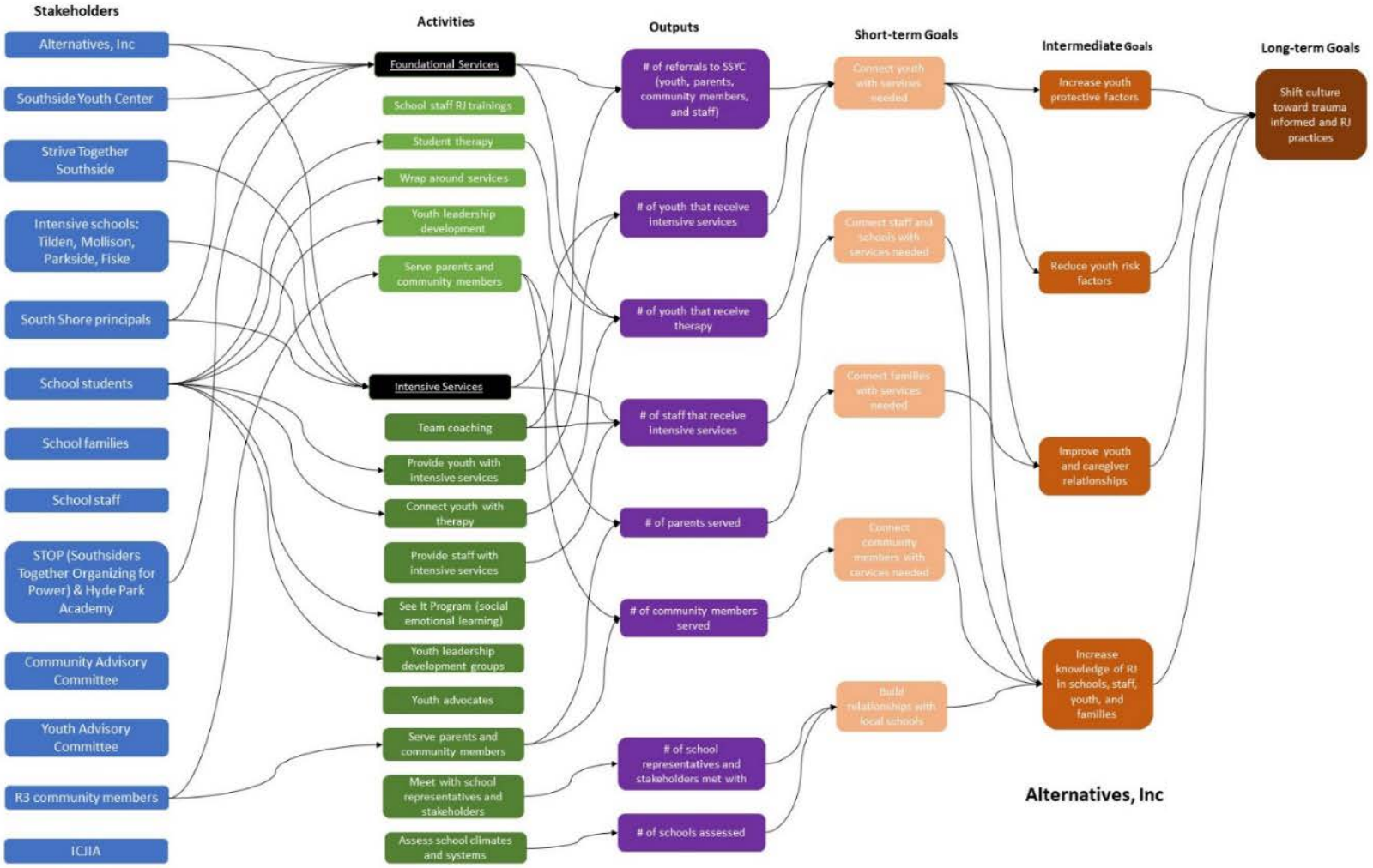
Appendix A: Cook County Programmatic Logic Models

Alternatives, Inc.



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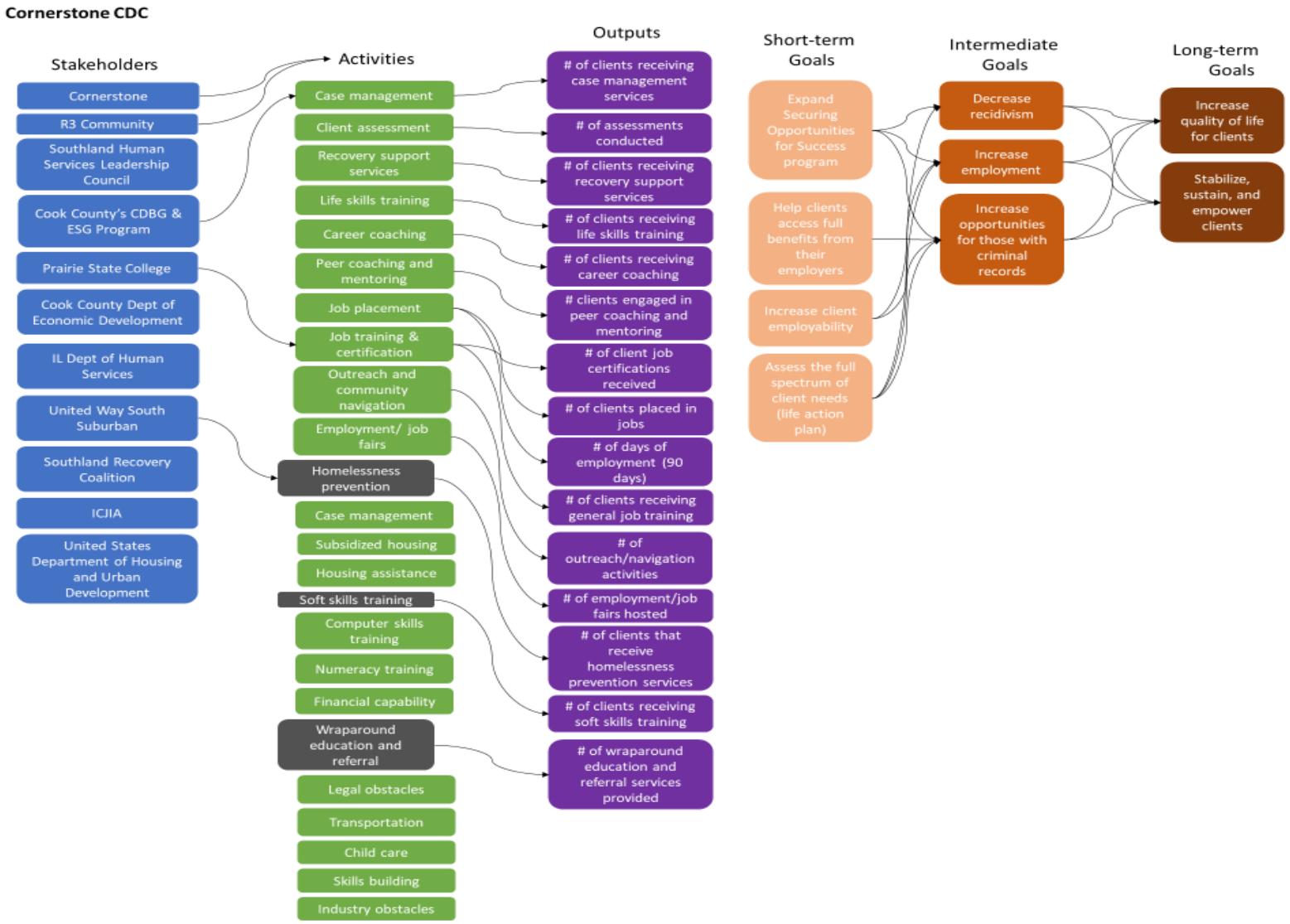

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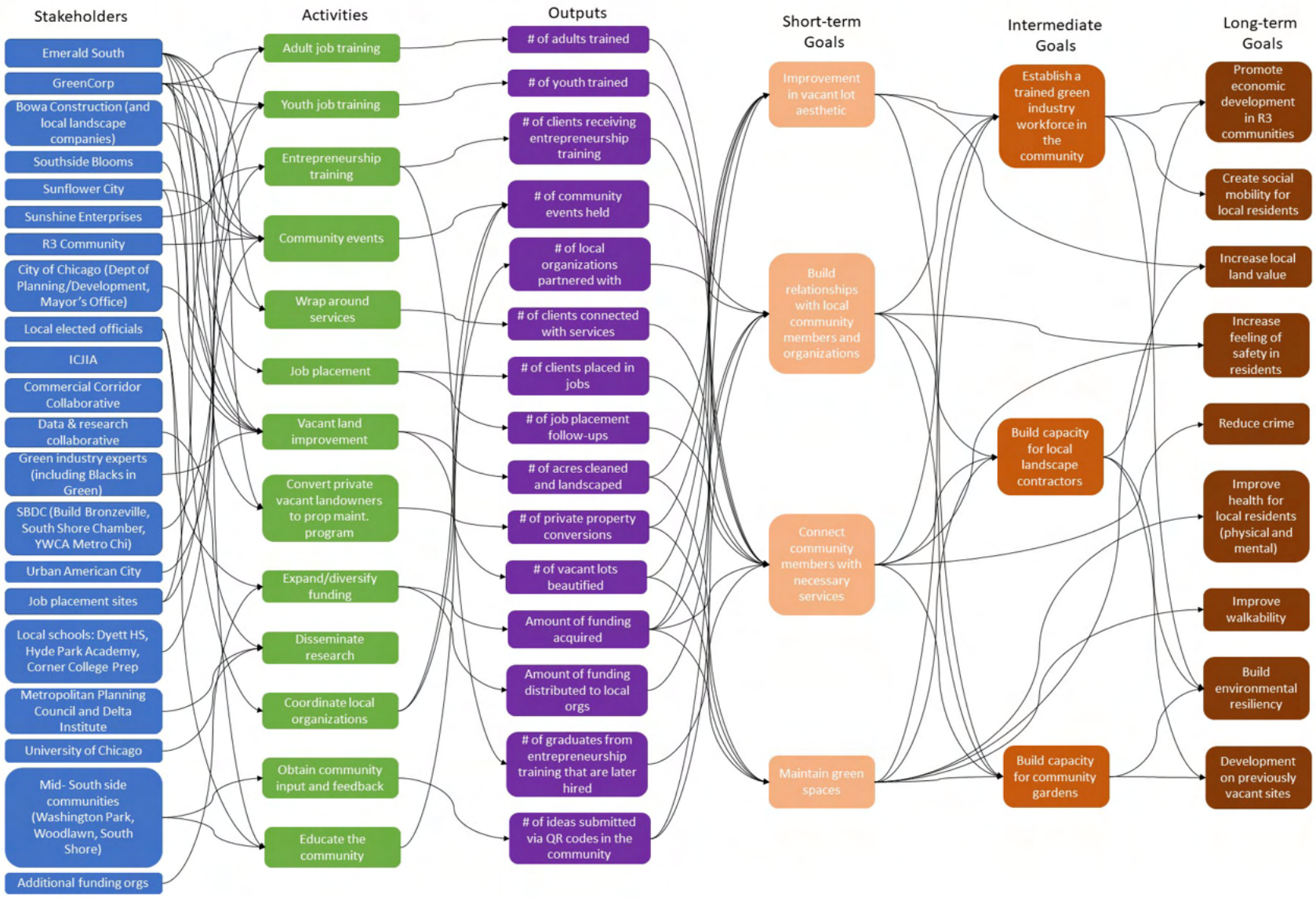
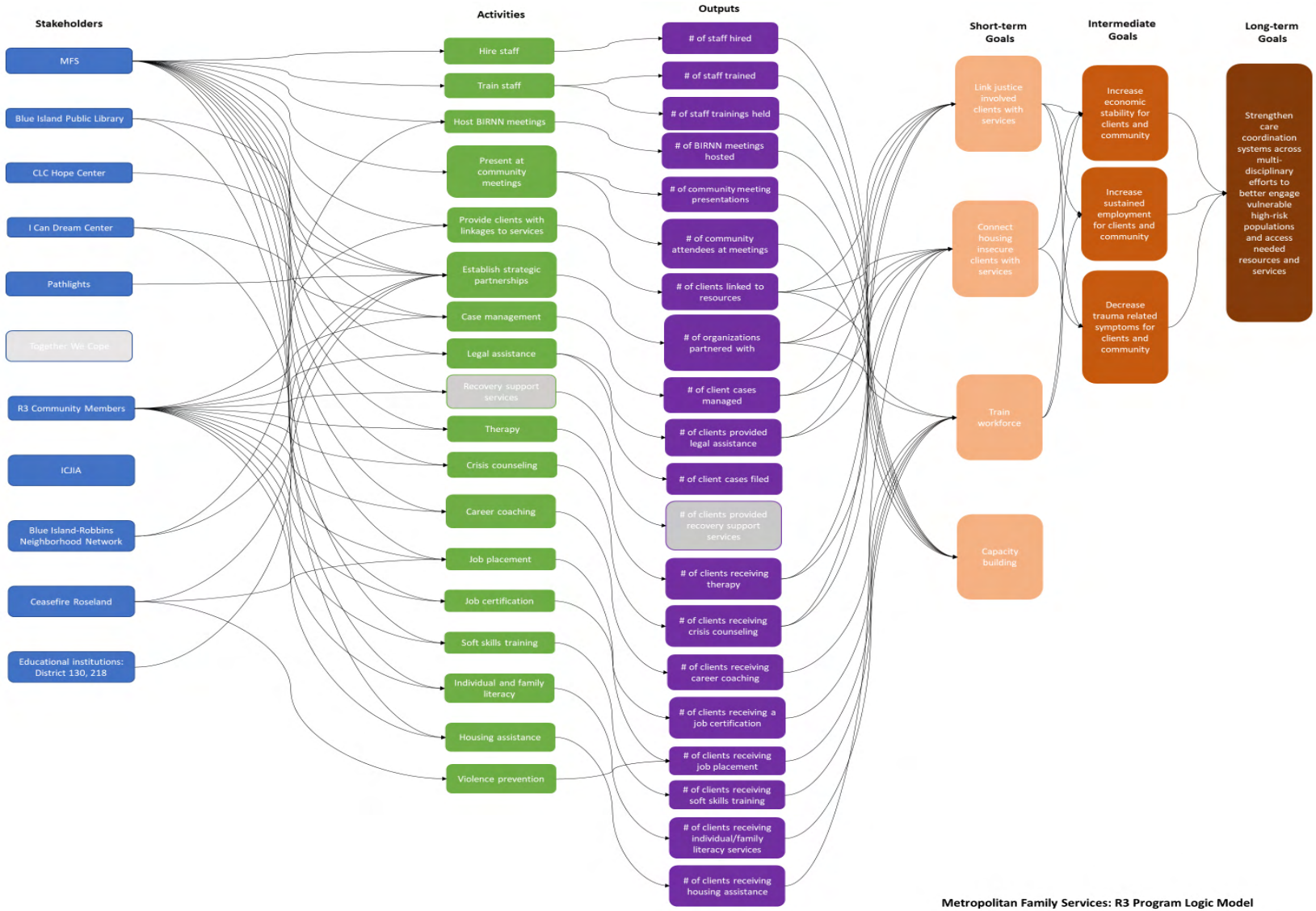


Metropolitan Family Services



Metropolitan Family Services: R3 Program Logic Model

Report 2: Northern Illinois

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Background
ICJIA engaged the Great Cities Institute (GCI), University of Illinois Chicago to conduct process evaluations of six R3-funded programs located in northeastern (Lake County), central Illinois (LaSalle), the Garfield Park neighborhood in Chicago, Kankakee, Greater Joliet region (Will County), and Rockford in Winnebago County. Findings from the process evaluation can be used for continuous quality improvement of individual programs and organizations, and for operation of the R3 initiative more generally.

Evaluation Purpose and Focus
The purpose of the process evaluation is to consider the effectiveness of the program's design and implementation, including how the service delivery programs can optimize positive impacts for their clients and how providers can be further supported in their service delivery aims. The evaluation is also intended to inform future investment in the program and support continuous improvement and learning.

GCI addressed the following research question themes detailed earlier in the report. The individual sections on the six funded programs address the first six categories of questions. We address the questions regarding community engagement in research separately below.

Research Methods
As ICJIA requested, GCI utilized a community-based evaluation method for conducting the evaluation. The essence of the method is that researchers and stakeholders view the evaluation process as a collaboration and that the evaluation is conducted primarily in the service of the stakeholders. Additional key elements of community-based evaluation include collaborating on research questions, involving stakeholders in the work as much as possible and collaborating on the production of the final report.

In keeping with the community-based evaluation approach, our evaluations proceeded with the following sequence of activities:

1. Conduct introductory meeting including ICJIA staff to introduce GCI and the purpose of the evaluation and to meet key site staff.
2. Conduct meeting with sites to identify any research questions of interest to community stakeholders and identify available data and the first round of persons GCI could interview.
3. Conduct meeting with sites to review GCI's proposed research plan based on discussion in the previous meeting.
4. Begin first set of interviews with stakeholders including recommended site staff, board members and community members.
5. Begin receiving available data
6. Begin attending program activities such as planning meetings, public meetings or service provision.
7. Revise project logic models as needed.
8. Establish regularized calls with a key program staff member(s) at each site to discuss evaluation matters, answer questions and request data.

9. Conduct a second set of interviews with persons recommended by the first set of interviewees and persons GCI chose to re-interview.
10. Write first drafts of each project report.
11. Share drafts with designated project leaders for review and comment.
12. Complete final report.

GCI conducted evaluation interviews over Zoom. GCI staff spoke with clients or program participants from five of the six programs either through Zoom interviews or in-person at program activities. The program that we did not directly observe raised the possible need for parental consent. GCI elected to conduct this stage of evaluation without direct observation of that program. Additional data sources included the grantees' proposals, budgets, and performance reports. Other sources included organizations' program data sets, websites, Facebook postings, needs assessments, organizations' own research, and media articles.

The evaluation process began in November 2021 and the process evaluations assess program activities through June 30, 2022.

Observations

Assessment and Planning Programs

The two planning programs operated in distressed neighborhoods on the west side of Chicago and in the greater Joliet area. They proposed to have consultants do significant community assessment and produce recommendations for future developments and/or policies. In one case the project involved developing a new collaboration.

The two planning programs each completed their proposed community research, but it remains to be seen whether the research will become actionable as of this writing. This points up items for R3 planners to consider in the future:

1. Planning proposals should have clear plans for how needs assessments will be converted into prioritized action items. This includes being clear about how decisions will be made, how future resources might be secured, and how much time it will take.
2. Planning processes require some flexibility because long-standing community problems do not have obvious answers and various parties will contend over policy choices if the planning process is legitimate. It can be hard to pre-determine how long it will take to reach agreement or develop plans that are likely to succeed.
3. The action and implementation stages of plans require resources just as the needs assessment stage does. To be successful, collaborations usually need paid staffing to coordinate activity, seek additional resources and, depending on the project, sometimes execute portions of it.
4. Both projects lacked clarity at the proposal stage and as the project unfolded, regarding who was leading it, who owned it, and who would move recommendations forward once the assessment stages were complete. In both cases, this has yet to be worked out. Future R3 planning grants might state explicitly that they are short-term grants for new collaboratives, intended to develop the collaborative itself prior to possible receipt of a larger grant. If the collaborative does not mature sufficiently, funding may not continue.

In disinvested communities, but even sometimes in others, work with a consultant who does organizational development can be useful for building the collaborative so that it is prepared to begin the technical work of a quality planning process. Alternatively, R3 could simply require that a collaborative be strongly functioning with committed membership, leadership, governance structure, an institutional home, a clear plan for prioritizing action steps and a plan for implementing them.

5. With both planning projects, it was our judgement that the consultants, while highly competent, did not get as much community input into the production of their plan documents as might have been desirable. We think this was primarily due to neither project having a clear governance structure at the outset that would have provided more project leadership and engaged the consultant as it worked. In both cases the assessment work was well done, but we are not sure at this point how that good work will be utilized moving forward. Leaders of community-based organizations often know one another but it takes time for them to either learn or become accustomed to working together on a new and complex project. That work needs to be done before commencing the actual work of research and planning.

Service Delivery Programs

Each of the four service providers launched their programs expeditiously and reached their program targets comfortably as of late June 2022. Two of the organizations were grassroots providers with small boards and small budgets, but with highly committed staffs and boards. Two were well established organizations – a statewide legal services provider and a school district.

Each of the four service programs extended or expanded work that it was already doing. While innovation and start-ups are touted in human services, the private sector, and the wider popular culture, these four programs demonstrated the advantages of supporting programming that already has experience delivering its service and is following established models.

Perfectly Flawed Foundation and Northern Illinois Recovery Organization, substance addiction and reentry recovery organizations, are highly client-directed and flexible. Both organizations are fairly new and do not bill third party payers, such as Medicaid, for their services. They anchor their service provision in harm reduction and peer support, two approaches that, while not favored by everyone in the addiction recovery field, are well established by a large portion of the field and are the subject of growing research literatures.

All four service providers raise the problem of maintaining consistent funding streams. The two smallest ones have organizational budgets of $200,000 or less and the R3 funding substantially augmented their revenue streams. In the short run, they will almost certainly lose staff members if or when R3 funding concludes. Neither is positioned at this time to find comparable amounts of new funds to offset the loss of R3 dollars.

The projects ran by Kankakee School District 111 and Prairie State Legal Services are embedded in organizations with large annual budgets, multiple funding streams, and highly experienced resource developers. Fundraising is always challenging and while neither of these two organizations has surpluses that could quickly offset the loss of R3 funding, they would have far

better opportunities to raise the funding necessary should R3 funding end. Of these four, we think Kankakee School District 111's Youth Empowerment (YEP) Program is the best-positioned R3 initiative to continue at or near its current service level because it engages several organizations in its program components that are accustomed to raising their own funds and would continue their programming, but perhaps with less service or with fewer clients. Prairie State Legal Services also has highly professional fundraising.

All four of the service organizations implemented their programs with fidelity and address important needs in their communities but we note two related things: 1) the underlying causes of the problems the services address remain in their communities including inadequate public education, lack of jobs, shortage of affordable housing, untreated behavioral health, and discrimination, and 2) even operating well, for most of the clients served by each of the programs, the program will address a portion, but not all of their client's needs.

Research cited in the reports on each of the funded projects demonstrates that even with service provision, recidivism in substance use and incarceration are very common and in the case of substance use disorder, recidivism is often serial. Legal services address a particular problem an individual faces, but do not typically help the client with other issues that may significantly impact their quality of life. Likewise, out-of-school time youth programs can be very helpful for connecting youth to caring adults, providing diversions from unhealthy activities, providing mentoring, tutoring, and other functions, but may not in themselves address the underlying problems related to poverty, parenting, having already fallen behind in school, or clinical diagnoses that can cause poor school performance, truancy, mental health disorders, unhealthy behavioral choices or other problems. Accomplishing measurable community improvement requires intervention in multiple domains, however well service is provided in any one of them.

Assessment and Planning: Garfield Park Community Council

Background

Description and Purpose of Project

Garfield Park Planning Council (GPCC) is a planning initiative aimed at improving the corridor defined by the intersection of Madison and Pulaski streets in the Chicago neighborhood of West Garfield Park. It aims to improve overall neighborhood quality of life, with particular attention to those returning from incarceration. To achieve this, GPCC engaged MAAFA Redemption Project, Institute for Non-Violence Chicago (INVC) and Westside United to conduct a survey of neighborhood residents. It also engaged a community development consulting firm, Houseal Lavigne Associates, to identify development opportunities and strategies in the corridor. The planning is intended to inform longer-term community economic development efforts, coordinated partly by a six-month planning process that the Rite to Wellness Collaborative conducted from May 2022 through December 2022 (Hometz, 2022; Rite to Wellness Collaborative, 2022). According to their website, the Rite to Wellness Collaborative is a group of residents, local institutions, nonprofits, and other stakeholders that work and live in Garfield Park (Rite to Wellness Collaborative, 2022).

The Garfield Park Corridor Plan contains seven specific goals (Houseal Lavigne, 2022):

1. Promote affordable and diverse housing options for all residents.
2. Support black-owned businesses and the economic vitality of the corridors.
3. Improve the safety of the corridor through the built environment.
4. Create attractive third spaces (spaces outside of the home and work, the first two spaces) for community gathering and socializing (Finlay et al., 2019).
5. Enhance the character of the corridor through street-scaping, place-making, and gateway improvements.
6. Preserve and enhance community facilities and assets along the corridors.
7. Improve multimodal connectivity and safety along the corridors.

The project aims to address four of R3's five priorities: violence prevention, reentry, economic development, and youth development.

Project Budget

Garfield Park Community Council received a grant of $177,968 in year one and an extension of $74,153 in year two, for a total of $252,121. The project was budgeted for $251,953. The most significant items in year one were consulting contracts for the planning research: $37,264 for MAAFA, $37,264 for INVC, $18,000 for Westside United, $33,400 for Houseal Lavigne, $58,000 for Project Forward to manage the community planning process, and $33,400 to plan a neighborhood wellness center.

Community Context

Located on Chicago's west side, West Garfield Park is one of Chicago's most disinvested and impoverished neighborhoods. Between 2010 and 2020, West Garfield Park's population fell by

3.2% (Chicago Health Atlas, 2020a). The neighborhood is also very young, with 53.7% of neighborhood residents under the age of 35 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a).

West Garfield Park residents suffer from low educational levels and a lack of access to employment. As of 2020, the community had an unemployment rate of 20.9% compared to 8.1% in the city overall (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020c). As of 2020, 21% of the community's housing units were vacant compared to the city's 11.2% vacancy rate (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020a).

Safety and health are also major concerns. As of 2020, life expectancy in West Garfield Park was 67.5 years, much lower than the City of Chicago overall (75.4 years) (Chicago Health Atlas, 2020b). In 2021, the Healthy Chicago Survey found that 8.0% of respondents in West Garfield Park reported feeling safe "all of the time" or "most of the time", compared to 62.7% of Chicago overall (Chicago Health Atlas, 2021b). According to data provided by the Chicago Health Atlas (2021a), West Garfield Park ranks second highest in opioid-related overdose deaths and third in drug-induced and drug overdose deaths in Chicago. Garfield Park is located between other struggling neighborhoods – East Garfield Park, North Lawndale, Austin, and, to a lesser degree, Humboldt Park. This proximity complicates development efforts as events in each of these neighborhoods affect one another.

As we observe in this report, the community benefits from a number of highly engaged and motivated local community leaders and several high-quality leadership organizations. As the planning for an R3 application began two years ago, community leaders were developing interest in community-wide planning.

Description of Stakeholders

The neighborhood residents of West Garfield Park are the primary stakeholders of the project as are residents of Chicago at large. West Garfield Park has high levels of violence and drug transactions, and the target population of the violence prevention services are community stakeholders at highest risk. Organizational stakeholders include the Garfield Park Community Council and its partner organizations.

Equity Consideration

Participation in project-related meetings indicates to us that the primary equity considerations for project participants are promoting racial equity and recovery of the Black community, empowering reentering citizens, and reversing disinvestment visited upon the neighborhood by the legacy of racial discrimination.

Planning Process

Activities, Structure, and Model

The West Garfield Park R3 project has two layers:

1. Completion of an economic development assessment of the Madison/Pulaski Corridor and a survey-based report on residents' interests and needs.
2. Incorporation of these research projects into a larger planning effort directed principally by the Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative.

The basic model of the planning process has several dimensions:

- Conduct a data-informed planning process.
- Utilize professional expertise (Houseal Lavigne) to assess economic development prospects for the Madison/Pulaski Corridor and to analyze survey results (Westside United).
- Assure that voices of residents are heard in a survey by utilizing community members to administer a face-to-face survey.
- Assure that the planning process is driven by local leadership accountable to local residents.
- Assure that collected information covers the multi-domain considerations that a later and final quality-of-life plan will require, including economics, health, safety, land use and others.

The basic structure of the two R3 products was to be as follows:

1. *Development of the Corridor Plan (Houseal Lavigne, 2021; Houseal Lavigne, 2022)*
    - Formation of a project Steering Committee by GPCC.
    - Selection and engagement of Houseal Lavigne, an experienced community development consultant, as the project consultant.
    - Collection of a wide variety of community data by the consultant.
    - Conversations engaging the consultant and Steering Committee members as well as other community members about ideas and interests in the Corridor.
    - Production of a data-driven "Existing Conditions" report, summarizing land use, demography, relevant policies and regulation, economic data, crime data and other material.
    - Discussion of the Existing Conditions report with the project Steering Committee.
    - Community charrettes to solicit resident input based on findings of the Existing Conditions report.
    - A Corridor tour, involving the consultant, Steering Committee members, and staff from the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development.
    - Review of the Plan outline with GPCC.
    - Production of the final Corridor Plan.
2. *Development of the Community Survey (Westside United, 2021a; Westside United, 2021b; Westside United, 2021c).*
    - Development of a survey strategy, led by GPCC staff and including staff of MAAFA, INVC, and Westside United.
    - Recruitment of "Community Liaisons" by MAAFA and INVC to help design and distribute the survey.
    - Training sessions led by Westside United for project staff and liaisons to identify interests and develop survey questions.
    - Meetings with project staff and liaisons led by leaders in Westside United to plan survey distribution and to train liaisons.
    - Completion of in-person surveys conducted by 14 liaisons, gathering responses from nearly 500 Garfield Park residents.

- Focus groups with liaisons and community members to discuss survey responses and community issues.
- Data analysis and the production of a survey report by Westside United.
- Submission of the report to GPCC.
- Discussion of the report in the Rite to Wellness Collaborative's Quality of Life planning process.

Organizational responsibilities overlap in activities related to the R3 project. Garfield Park Community Council is the grant recipient for the R3-funded activities and is responsible for the Corridor Plan and community survey. GPCC's work, however, is embedded in a larger, interlocking network of Garfield Park organizations engaged in the Rite to Wellness Collaborative's Quality of Life Plan, which was to be completed in December 2022. For example, although the community survey is R3-funded through the GPCC, the introduction to the survey document presented the survey as a project of the Rite to Wellness Collaborative. A wider planning process led by the Rite to Wellness Collaborative, of which GPCC is a member, involves numerous local organizations.

The Rite to Wellness Collaborative operates on a distributed leadership model. For instance, the collaborative website lists member organizations but does not explain who its leaders are. Its members include the Garfield Park Planning Council, MAAFA, the Institute for Non-Violence, Westside United, and numerous other local health, arts, and civic organizations. Project Forward is facilitating the work on the Quality of Life Plan.

Major Milestones

The project met several milestones related primarily to executing the two research projects:

1. Engagement of consultants and collaborating organizations.
2. Preparation for the community survey: Westside United worked with MAAFA and INVC to prepare the survey document and train surveyors.
3. Completion of the community survey: Surveyors collected a significant number of surveys, and Westside United tabulated findings and produced a report.
4. Completion of the Corridor Assessment: Houseal Lavigne, working with the GPCC Steering Committee, completed the assessment document, "Existing Conditions" and presented it in meetings and on its website.
5. Completion of the Corridor Plan.
6. Integration of the community survey and Corridor Plan into Quality of Life planning and into the operations of the City of Chicago Department of Planning and of the Chicago Community Safety and Coordination Center. The anticipated use of these materials will represent another milestone.

Stakeholder Engagement

Planning Process Design

The Garfield Park Community Council designed the R3 project by consulting GPCC Board members and staff. GPCC identified Houseal Lavigne, engaged the firm, and managed the firm's work assessing the corridor. The plan for the community survey was a collaborative effort begun

by MAAFA, INVC and GPCC, with Westside United joining later in the process. Staff at Westside United directed and designed the survey process in collaboration with MAAFA and INVC staff.

GPCC Board and staff discussed the idea for a Corridor Plan and community survey for several years before the R3 opportunity became available. A decade earlier, East Garfield Park developed a plan with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), and it was clear to staff that the Madison/Pulaski area formed a coherent economic and social place that was disinvested. Reviving Garfield Park and the corridor would require intentional efforts and a growth strategy. Moreover, increased violence in Chicago in recent years and in Garfield Park specifically revealed the need to engage the community in conversations around how to reduce violence. Conversations were needed to learn more about resident priorities and interests regarding what would make the community safer and healthier. These concerns interested both GPCC and the Rite to Wellness coalition, many of whose members were and still are affiliates of GPCC.

Stakeholder Participation

Stakeholder participation in the project has been strong. The community survey was conducted by neighborhood residents affiliated with MAAFA and the Institute for Non-Violence. The 30-plus surveyors managed to collect face-to-face surveys from nearly 500 residents, thereby engaging locals in the process. Board and staff of both the Garfield Park Community Council and the Rite to Wellness Collaborative along with Rite to Wellness's leaders were and still are deeply engaged in the neighborhood as residents, employees, or both. We attended several planning meetings involving the R3 work, including the Quality of Life Plan summit. These meetings were locally led and attended by interested and engaged residents. Rite to Wellness members include representatives from Bethel New Life, Bobby Wright Center, INVC, MAAFA, and Westside United. All these organizations are affiliated with GPCC's R3 work. Member organizations also include the YMCA, Rush University Medical Center, Habilitative Systems, The Community Builders, and others.

Information Flow and Project Management

Houseal Lavigne and Westside United efficiently managed the Corridor Plan and the community survey. Each produced its products on time and as proposed per their engagement agreements.

Across the project, participants conveyed information in a number of ways. From the ground up, residents had ample opportunity to communicate community needs and interests by responding to a community survey, by participating in open neighborhood visioning workshops, and by engaging in a "FriendsGiving" visioning event. The latter event was facilitated by Houseal Lavigne and co-sponsored by the Rite to Wellness Collaborative, a local business, and the Quality of Life Community summit. Findings in the interim Corridor Plan were shared in several open community meetings, and Corridor Plan documents (such as the Existing Conditions report and the final Corridor Plan) were made available on a website created for the project. Project leaders shared information and planned among themselves, particularly in Garfield Park Planning Council board and leadership meetings and in leader meetings within the Rite to Wellness Collaborative.

Information Used in the Project

As explained elsewhere in this report, the R3 project relied extensively on local knowledge and experience. The project was led by persons with long and deep engagements in the community in every domain. A hallmark of the project was collecting local opinions through a community survey and through resident input into the Corridor assessment.

Houseal Lavigne utilized various economic and neighborhood analysis tools to complete its Corridor analysis, considering demographic composition, types of land use, retail markets, crime location, quality of buildings, and the like. It also considered types of governmental structures that were in place to shape development opportunities. Westside United utilized its expertise in developing surveys, in training surveyors, and in compiling data. It relied on MAAFA and INVC to identify and recruit resident surveyors and respondents. All combined, their work resulted in obtaining survey information about the community from around 500 residents.

Results of the Planning Process

Changes in Stakeholder Capacity

The Corridor Plan and the community survey report were designed to provide new information for local residents and leaders that could be used to create action plans. Looking ahead to action plans, project planners are hopeful that local resident capacity to engage will be enhanced from having the neighborhood surveys distributed face-to-face by clients and members of MAAFA and INVC.

Sustainability of Planning

Sustaining the planning effort will be challenging. At the time of writing, the R3-funded research products commissioned by GPCC will be incorporated into the larger Garfield Park Community Development Plan. That planning process has been nominated by the Pritzker-Traubert Foundation for its 2020 Chicago Prize. Should it win, it would receive $10 million in development capital, and major portions of the Corridor Plan would likely be implemented.

As for the proposed six-month Quality of Life planning process, our interviews and observations suggest that sufficient energy and commitment of local leadership exist to see it through. The Quality of Life's consulting firm, Project Forward, is engaged in the process, but without additional financial resources, this process as a whole will not be well-funded. It is unclear to us whether, lacking funding, staff of local organizations and technical consultants will be sufficiently engaged. However, as the Quality of Life planning continues to evolve, GPCC intends to proceed with advocacy for the goals and components of the Corridor Plan, as follows:

- GPCC plans to institutionalize its work by collaborating with the City of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development (DPD) to have the Corridor Plan formally adopted as the official Madison/Pulaski Corridor Plan by the DPD. DPD has similarly adopted other Chicago development and corridor plans. Following adoption, the Plan would be posted on the DPD website and would be a source to help guide city development activity in the region.
- As of May 2022, DPD has included the Madison/Pulaski Corridor in its Corridor Ambassador program. Ambassadors are trained to create a welcoming presence at

commercial centers by greeting passersby, sharing information on neighborhood events, and promoting safety. This work will facilitate implementation of the Corridor Plan.
- The community survey results have been shared with the City of Chicago's new Community Safety Coordination Center, which is charged with coordinating government and non-profit resources to reduce violence.

Meaningful plans take years to implement. Whether the Garfield planning is sustained will depend on achieving successes that keep participants engaged, on attracting capital and government support to implement plans, and on making local changes that are within the power of local residents to achieve.

Unexpected Outcomes

The two main research processes have been well-planned and directed by people highly knowledgeable and engaged in the community. With such participants, the outcomes mostly have met expectations. Most unexpected, however, is that the community survey, which was initially conceived as being primarily about community safety and reentry, came to cover a broader range of community concerns. As the planning proceeded, the community researchers decided that the survey needed to expand in scope.

Successes

At this writing, the major success of the R3 project has been the completion of the two planning documents. First, Houseal Lavigne produced a high-quality analysis of factors affecting development in the Madison/Pulaski corridor. Second, working with MAAFA and INVC, Westside United executed and documented findings from a survey of several hundred neighborhood residents regarding various aspects of quality of life.

As noted above, successes included:

1. Using the products in Garfield Park Quality of Life Planning.
2. Engaging the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development.
3. Engaging the City of Chicago Community Safety Coordination Center.
4. Engaging local residents and MAAFA clients in the planning process.

Challenges

Producing positive and sustainable change in very low-income communities is highly challenging. For the planning process major challenges included the following:

- Obtaining sufficient funding to hire consultants to conduct needs assessments, create development and action plans, facilitate the development process over multiple years, and attract investment.
- Gathering community input from residents unaccustomed to having much control over their environment and local decision-making.
- Persuading government to act on needs and requests originating in the neighborhood and attracting patient investment.
- Creating positive change where problems are intersectional and, ideally, solved simultaneously. Business development, employment, quality education, crime reduction

and health are interdependent. It is very difficult to improve in one domain absent improvement in the others.
- Engendering legitimacy of a planning and implementation process when community residents are mostly accustomed to disinvestment in the neighborhood and to a lack of influence in civic matters.
- Overcoming the notion that West Garfield Park is an "island community," realizing instead that its health is affected by activity in East Garfield Park, Lawndale, Austin, and Humboldt Park.

So far, we have not observed local elected officials participating in the process. At some point, the Alderman, City Hall, and possibly state legislators will need to be engaged, either to shape the Plan or to implement portions of it. How and when that occurs are functions of strategy. In some community planning, local officials are closely involved in the development of a plan. In others, residents prefer to develop a plan and then work with public officials to implement what they have created. GPCC has hosted a Corridor tour with the City of Chicago Department of Planning staff, and the Alderman is aware of the planning process.

Economic development will be crucial, generally, to neighborhood development and, particularly, to the success of the Corridor. One driver of West Garfield Park's struggles, and one of the reasons for the Corridor planning process, is a lack of businesses in the neighborhood. At the beginning of the process, one of the few grocery stores accessible to the neighborhood closed, deeply inconveniencing many residents and furthering disempowering the community. This lack of strong local businesses coupled with a dearth of neighborhood residents owning many businesses and housing creates challenges for local development planning and investment.

Integrating a number of ongoing neighborhood initiatives into a coherent plan is challenging. To name a few of the initiatives, Rite to Wellness has been working to develop a new wellness center at Madison and Kildare that it hopes will "spark transformation in the entire neighborhood" (Thometz, 2022). The Chicago Department of Planning and Development's Outdoor Plaza program is locating a plaza at 4453 W. Madison (City of Chicago, 2022). Since 2020, GPCC has worked with the City of Chicago, Goldin Institute, and Studio Gang on street-scape development in the Corridor. The Corridor recently became a Special Service Area (SSA) managed by the Westside Health Authority, facilitating activities like sidewalk, street and façade improvements. The Corridor is in the Madison/Austin TIF (City of Chicago, 2021). In April 2022, the Chicago Community Trust announced a collaboration with the Connecting Capital and Community (C3) program of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and JP Morgan Chase to develop affordable housing (Studenkov, 2022).

Limitations

We observed several limitations to the process. First, producing meaningful economic development and social change in a place as complex as Garfield Park requires expert design of an action plan and expert implementation. In most communities, such expertise is not necessarily found within the community itself. Engaging that expertise usually requires financial resources. The R3 grant has provided funds for information gathering but not for an implementation. It

remains to be seen where Garfield Park planners will find those resources. It is possible they could apply for R3 funds in the future for service delivery and/or capacity building.

Second, an experienced consultant completed the Corridor analysis and considered conditions at a granular level. For example, the consultant identified specific neighborhood assets and segmented the geography so as to describe at a detailed level different challenges and opportunities for development. The community survey, by contrast, was not correspondingly granular. While it identified a variety of problems and needs within the neighborhood, it did not provide a structure for how to address them practically. To address them meaningfully, further study will be required.

A third limitation was that the proposed scope of the R3 project outstripped available time and money. Two items included in the project budget were not pursued. They were the engagement of a consultant to begin implementing outcomes of the Corridor Plan and the hiring of a planner to lead community engagement aimed at developing a proposed Wellness Center. This Center has long been considered a potential center-piece of a revived Madison/Pulaski Corridor (Garfield Park Community Council, 2020). For each case, work on it had to follow the completion of the Corridor Plan, which meant that it fell significantly outside the R3 planning period and the current capacity under the grant.

Conclusion

At this writing, we do not know the final outcomes of the planning processes. While the work products are completed, they are only the first step toward the desired outcome of a better quality of life in West Garfield Park. The community survey administered by West Side United was completed in February 2022 but the Garfield Park Quality of Life project, for which its findings will hopefully be considered, began in May 2022. We do not know, at this point, what its use in that process will be. Houseal Lavigne completed its Corridor study in June 2022. Action plans will need to be created to implement the Corridor Plan, and then much work will be needed for commercial and residential development, infrastructure, public safety, and an expansion of various human services.

Assessment and Planning: Will County

Background

Description and Purpose of Project

Will County sought an R3 grant to "develop a plan to address community concerns about poverty, safety, and well-being due to neighborhoods in our community having been harmed by violence, excessive incarceration, and economic disinvestment" (Will County, 2020). Through the proposed planning process Will County intended to identify "existing resources in the community, measure programmatic and services gap and develop a strategic plan that addresses the five R3 priorities" (Will County, 2020).

To accomplish these goals, Will County received an R3 grant to launch the Will County R3 Community Collaborative project. The project hired a consultant team charged with "documenting [County] strengths and weaknesses, identifying gaps and opportunities with existing programs and service delivery, conducting research, developing a strategic plan and recommending what is feasible with fostering the connections" (Will County, 2020).

The project was led by the collaborative, which comprised leaders and representatives of many prominent organizations and government institutions in the Joliet area. Beyond creating a plan as a deliverable, a major goal of the work was to forge relationships between Joliet-area organizations and to build organizational capacity through interactions, data collection, and analysis (Will County, 2020).

Project Budget

Will County received $151,697 in year one and $63,207 in year two, for a total of $214,904. The biggest budget line item supported the Bronner Group, the consultant team that staffed the project.

Community Context

The Will County/Joliet R3 areas consist of portions of Joliet, Crest Hill, Joliet Township, and Lockport Township, including Preston Heights and Fairmont.

Joliet and its neighbors are a satellite community of Chicago with significant levels of poverty and crime, challenges around business development and retention, and scarcity of quality affordable housing. Joliet and several neighboring areas suffer from neighborhood economic and racial segregation and concentrated poverty. The City of Joliet's unemployment and poverty rates are higher than Will County as a whole. In Joliet, the unemployment rate is 6% compared to 4.7% for Will County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019c). Its overall poverty rate is also higher: 10.9% compared to 6.7% for Will County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019d). For children under 18 specifically, its poverty rate is 17.3% compared to 9.5% for Will County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019d). Joliet compares unfavorably to Will County as a whole on a number of additional measures, as well. Joliet's median household income is $70,509 compared to Will County's at $86,961 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019d). The percentage of adults in Joliet with a high school education or more is 6% lower than in Will County, and adults with a bachelor's degree or higher is 12% lower in Joliet (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b). Joliet, moreover, has a higher

eviction rate and higher unemployment (Housing Action Illinois, n.d.; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019d).

Even before receiving the R3 grant, Joliet and some neighboring areas instituted a variety of plans, including land use plans, the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP), and Collaborative Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). Yet they have not had a visionary and comprehensive strategy for developing the greater Joliet area. In fact, the last city-wide Joliet plan was adopted in 1959 (Will County, 2020). Sensitive to this gap, the leaders who created the R3-funded planning process wanted greater Joliet to benefit from an effective strategic planning process that would identify approaches for addressing the many problems facing the community and for securing the needed resources to address them.

Downtown Joliet is the site of several government buildings and significant redevelopment. The city also has historic housing stock. The region is home to one of the largest warehousing hubs in the nation, which continues to grow. Yet Joliet suffers from the decline of the historic smokestack economy on which it grew. Other areas of the county have newer housing. Shopping patterns in the region have evolved away from the Joliet city center. Given all these factors, the R3-funded planning process is timely in its comprehensive focus on improved economic and social assets.

Description of Stakeholders

The most direct stakeholders include the residents of the Joliet-area R3 areas, who tend to be lower income, less educated, and more likely to identify as a minority than the average population of the county. However, communities are not islands, and residents of Will County, at large, are stakeholders too. A stronger Joliet will generate more tax revenue and job opportunities available to both Joliet residents and the region. Additionally, better-prepared K-12 graduates will create a stronger labor market for area employees, benefitting all of Will County. That is, if a labor market is weak for area employees in disinvested neighborhoods, then, to some degree, residents county-wide share in paying the high social welfare costs required for law enforcement and healthcare.

Equity Consideration

Equity concerns were a major motivator for the planning project. In evaluators' conversations and observations, residents often framed equity in terms of opportunity for racial/ethnic minorities and lower income residents and for the development of specific neighborhoods. Planning participants often spoke of disparity between the lower income and disinvested east side of Joliet and the more prosperous west side.

Planning Process

Activities, Structure, and Model

To launch the project and planning process, the stakeholder leadership group organized a Collaborative to oversee and contribute to the planning process. The collaborative then determined three "phases" for the planning process: 1) "Confirmation of a shared vision, mission, and assessment;" 2) "evaluat[ion of] the need for services" in the R3 areas; 3) and the development of a "shared strategic plan" (Will County, 2020).

The basic structure and model of the process involved forming a stakeholder collaborative, as mentioned; hiring a consultant group; having the consultant team conduct a needs assessment governed by the R3 priorities; and having the consultant team recommend goals, strategies, and actions. In this consulting role, the Bronner Group was charged with gathering and analyzing information and bringing findings and reports before the collaborative for review, amendment, and adoption. Additionally, the consultant was to lead discussions around the mission and vision statements, the goals of the collaborative, its strategies, and actions.

Major Milestones

The project proposal details twelve benchmarks paraphrased below, most of which were achieved by the project at the time of this writing:

- Periodic meetings of the collaborative
- Confirmation by the collaborative of the Strategic Plan's vision, mission, and outcomes
- Completion of numerous small groups or one-on-one meetings with stakeholders
- Completion of 8 neighborhood meetings
- Completion of 5 community forums – one for each R3 priority area
- Completion of a Conditions Analysis and Needs Assessment
- Community forum for sharing a draft of the Conditions Analysis and Needs Assessment
- Completion of a Strategic Plan draft
- Community forum for sharing the Strategic Plan draft
- Completion of the final Strategic Plan
- Adoption of the Strategic Plan by the collaborative

The collaborative's vision statement for the planning process says: "The Will County R3 Collaborative envisions stable, safe, and empowered communities with better access to services." The Mission Statement reads: "The Will County R3 Collaborative will improve outcomes for individuals and communities harmed by violence, excessive incarceration, and economic disinvestment by communicating local conditions and best practices to increase and coordinate resources."

The collaborative settled on five strategic goals:

1. Build awareness among elected officials, community members, funders, and partners.
2. Increase access to services.
3. Increase engagement with the community.
4. Identify and engage new partners with the Collaborative.
5. Obtain additional resources.

Key findings from the Conditions Analysis and Needs Assessment Report that the consultant presented to the community are:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Need for better last mile connections and transportation
- Lack of access to healthcare, food and nutrition, and substance abuse resources

- Siloed (social services) resources and difficulty in obtaining referrals

Stakeholder Engagement

Planning Process Design

Initial interest in applying for a R3 grant to conduct a planning process came from community leaders and the executive leadership at Will County. Leaders of eight neighborhood-based organizations also showed interest. These organizations are Community Lifeline Ministries, Fairmont Community Partnership Group, Forest Park Community Center, Harvey Brooks Motivation & Developmental Foundation, National Hookup of Black Women, River Walk Homes – Holsten Human Capital Development, Spanish Community Center, and Warren Sharpe Community Center. Leaders from these organizations previously collaborated on a grant and are known for representing the grassroots community and for collaborating at various times to consider and address neighborhood issues.

During the grant writing, the eight organizations were led by the Executive Director of the Spanish Community Center. Interviewees told us Will County's initial interest was inspired by the Chief of Staff to the county executive. But early in the application process, these two initial leaders left their positions for other jobs. The planning process was then led by planning staff at Will County and the City of Joliet. The Will County and Joliet staff authored the proposal document describing the planning process.

Once funding came through, staff initiated the project collaborative and originally convened it. Will County hired the Bronner Group as the consultant in the summer of 2021, and the consultant designed the operational processes. These processes include conducting community meetings, gathering and analyzing information, and forming strategies, goals and actions.

Stakeholder Participation

Membership in the Collaborative expanded from the initial eight organizations to several additional social services organizations. It also extended membership to advocacy organizations and such local institutions as the Workforce Investment Board, Joliet Public Schools, City of Crest Hill, and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. By mid-2021, the Collaborative consisted of about 25 community leaders and/or representatives of key organizations and institutions working in Joliet. Collaborative members met periodically with consultant staff upon request to provide input and to approve work product and planning process activities. Members' attendance was consistently good throughout the project.

Stakeholders across the community, including residents and organizations, have taken advantage of many opportunities to participate in the project. The Strategic Plan draft composed by the consultant lists the following opportunities for engagement convened during the second half of 2021 (we include the number of people who participated in each) (Will County Collaborative, 2022a):

1. 10 Collaborative Meetings, averaging 20 attendees
2. 5 Community Leader Forums, with nearly 200 total attendees
3. 7 Focus Groups, averaging 9 participants
4. 10 Working Groups Meetings, averaging 7 participants

5. 7 Neighborhood Meetings, with over 80 attendees
6. 4 Community Forums, with around 120 attendees
7. 34 Stakeholder Interviews, with 40 participants

Many of these meetings were held via Zoom, but others were held at convenient sites in Joliet neighborhoods. These include a Spanish language-focused meeting, a focus group with formerly incarcerated individuals, and a focus group with students. Also, working groups and community leader groups met to focus on each of the five R3 priorities. Participants in all these engagement opportunities are stakeholders. Yet the broadest group of stakeholders comprises members of the greater-Joliet community and, particularly, residents of the R3 areas. A strength of the project is that residents had abundant opportunities for input through their participation in the neighborhood meetings, community forums and focus groups facilitated by the consultant. Attendance at most of these meetings has been strong.

Public officials are also stakeholders in the project, and, at various points in the process, the Mayor of Joliet, the Will County Executive, and members of the Joliet City Council have participated, as well.

Information Flow and Project Management

Project start-up was slow, which seems to have had a long-term effect on processes and outcomes. As mentioned, at start-up the project did not have the same leaders at the helm as it had during grant-writing. The importance of these grant-writing leaders cannot be overlooked. It appears that decisions regarding the process and structure flowed through them. Without them in the newly funded project, the collaborative appeared to need more time to fully organize itself before launching the plan activities. The collaborative did not arrive at a governing structure that might define membership, committees and leadership (Will County Collaborative, 2022a). Due to this, the Mission and Vision Statements were created in April, 2022, toward the end of the process rather than at the beginning (Will County Collaborative, 2022a). Additionally, in a community meeting that the evaluator attended relatively late in the process, some community leaders/members still remained unsure of the purpose of the plan and its relationship to R3 funding. To his credit, the consultant brought order to a very complex planning environment that lacked clear guidelines, and he led the Collaborative's meetings.

Information Used in the Project

As noted above, the consultant conducted an impressive number and variety of community meetings that surfaced a large number of problems and possible programmatic responses. These were clearly the product of extensive community knowledge and local experience on the parts of hundreds of meeting participants. This information was catalogued by meeting note-takers and compiled in meeting reports analyzed by the consultant. These documents were available to Collaborative members. In addition, the consultant compiled information from numerous policy-oriented reports and documents, providing a fairly complete description of the community, its institutions, and conditions bearing on the R3 categories.

The consultant was tasked with gathering information from and about the Joliet community, placing it before the Collaborative in actionable forms, and producing documents for the

planning process. The information from the Conditions Analysis and Needs Assessment process was condensed into common themes, apparent gaps, strategies, and actions. The final Conditions Analysis and Needs Assessment document included these sections (Will County Collaborative, 2022b):

- Introduction & Background describing the project and the focus on the Greater Joliet Area
- Description of community engagement and the analytical framework
- A review of research discussing previous planning efforts and project evaluations
- Will County data
- Analysis of current conditions and needs assessment for each of the five R3 priority areas
- Appendix with information describing sources and meetings held

The consultant's condensed themes, gaps, strategies and actions were presented to the collaborative in a meeting in May 2022. There, the consultant led the group through a voting exercise that prioritized various issues and strategies and located them among various goals previously identified by the collaborative. The results of this process became the framework for the draft Strategic Plan.

Table 1 highlights the community weaknesses and opportunities reported by planning participants and, in turn, reported to the community by the consultant in its June 16, 2022 Forum.

Table 1

Community Weaknesses and Opportunities Identified

Key Weaknesses	Key Opportunities
Legal Aid Services	**Accessing Services**
Sealings and Expungements	Transportation
Housing	Language Interpreter Services
Financial/Credit	Hours of Availability
Personal Identity (ID, Driver License)	De-stigmatization
Violence Prevention	**Engagement**
Collaboration with Law Enforcement	Business Leaders
Education to Stop Normalization of Violence	Appointed and Elected Officials
	Parents
Expanded Services	**Awareness**
Improved Referrals	Identifying what is Available
Expanded Social Safety Net	Understanding Requirements to Access
More Mental Health Services	Services

Note. Hand out, June 17, 2022, R3 Community Forum.

The next steps in the process were for the consultant to incorporate information from the Forum into the plan document and then present it to the Collaborative at its final R3-supported meeting.

Results of the Planning Process

Changes in Stakeholder Capacity

Development of the Conditions Analysis and Needs Assessment document provides an excellent compilation of community conditions and structure and could be used to frame specific policy

recommendations, development plans, and support funding requests to government and philanthropy.

The formation of the collaborative itself may be an outcome, but the collaborative has yet to form a governance structure. For example, it still needs a structure for determining such matters as ownership of particular goals, responsibility for undertaking particular activities, and the identification of resources when needed. Creating more structure and process will enable the collaborative to realize its potential as a guide to comprehensive planning for the Joliet area and to establish itself as a respected local institution.

On a positive note, people we interviewed indicated that the breadth of the planning process makes some leaders aware of problems in sectors outside their own, and new relationships may have formed because of the various information-gathering meetings. But the COVID-19 pandemic also affected the course of the project. In our view, it was unfortunate that the planning process was conducted during and immediately following the COVID-19 crisis. The Zoom format of the collaborative meetings during at least the first half of the work inevitably limited the cross-talk, sidebars and after-meeting networking that typically characterize in-person meetings. With limited opportunities for networking and making new acquaintances, a vital part of building effective communities was missing.

Sustainability of Planning

At the time of this writing, the Joliet community has not yet identified the resources to sustain the planning effort. Persons we interviewed felt that the collaborative needs a more formal structure and at least one paid person to coordinate plan development and implementation work going forward. While the project thus far has surfaced important issues and created a framework for addressing them, much work is needed to make the framework actionable.

To fully realize project goals, the planning and action processes led by the collaborative will require multiple years of effort. Some persons we interviewed recommended that future R3 funding for planning might include funds for the planning phase and at least a period of implementation. The Joliet Mayor spoke briefly at the June 16th Community Forum, where attendees were invited to comment on the presentation of the plan thus far, and he expressed commitment to the process.

We sensed commitment to the planning process on the part of the collaborative members and while our observations of neighborhood groups were limited, participants appear to be happy to assist. The process still awaits the debates typical of major civic efforts once a process reaches the point of having to prioritize activities for action, determine where to allocate funding, and where to situate civic improvements.

As the formal recipient of the grant, the Will County government is the official owner of the project. Based on what we learned in a collaborative meeting and in informal conversations, staff from Will County, at this point, appear willing to consider being official owners in the next steps of the collaborative and the plan. Will County, however, has yet to commit to what that will mean regarding staff or resources. For the plan to be sustainable as a process shaping Joliet's future, stronger participation will be required from the other members of the collaborative and

possibly others, such as local elected officials, who are not members of the collaborative and have not yet participated deeply in the planning.

While the past year's planning process has been supported by R3 and, therefore, focused on R3 areas, as the work moves forward independently it will need to expand beyond that focus. While the R3 area should remain the priority because of its development needs and conditions, places are interdependent. What takes place narrowly in the R3 areas affects other areas and developments outside the R3 areas and vice versa. For instance, decisions made in a school district outside the zone affect zone students. Business growth or losses outside the zone affect job seekers who live in the zone. Crime reduction in the zone might result in rising housing values or a better business climate outside the zone.

Successes

The project has produced several clear successes:

- The Conditions Analysis and Needs Assessment contain a thorough compilation of data and describe significant policy issues relevant to the R3 priorities.
- A large number of neighborhood meetings and residents participated in the information gathering process thus far and can be reactivated to work on more specific policy and development proposals, to plan action steps, and to implement some portions of the plan.
- The project created the collaborative, and member attendance remained steady throughout the process. The potential exists for the collaborative to become the leading table for Joliet-regional multi-sector planning.

Challenges

The planning process faced a number of challenges, with others still in sight:

- The amount of time needed to construct a complex urban planning process is difficult to know. It may be relatively easy to acquire nominal support for civic initiatives by community organizations, institutions and leaders. Yet determining mission and vision, building trust, and investing adequate resources in a process take much longer. How long can be hard to predict. Time and interaction are needed at the beginning for a successful process. Successful outcomes depend on formulating plans that may require an allocation of financial resources or a change in organizational behavior for the good of the greater community, both of which may favor some interests over others. The fixed time frame of this planning process appears to have made it necessary to work on strategies and actions before mission, vision, governance and commitment were adequately in place. Ideally, some of this work might have been completed before the consultant was engaged.
- As we note above in the discussion of sustainability, going forward without an implementation plan or funding for an implementation phase will be a challenge. Some combination of greater contributions of time and resources by institutions and funds for hiring a project staffer or coordinator are typically necessary to sustain work at a high level for multiple years.
- Weighing both the significance of various issues raised during planning and the demands of prioritizing needs, strategies and resource allocation are big challenges going forward.

Until now, the process has been additive, and collaborative members have yet to deliberate hard choices about which they may not agree, for example about the issues on which to place the most resources or ways to achieve policy changes that may be needed.

Limitations

As discussed above, limitations of the R3-funded planning process included a fixed end to the funded portion of the planning process, the use of Zoom for conducting the collaborative's meetings, and insufficient time to fully frame the vision and governance of the project before engaging in much of its work.

More time and energy were spent on gathering information and input than on assembling a plan that prioritized problems and that addressed which policies may need to change or which resources should be allocated differently.

Conclusion

The final plan could develop into one of two things: 1) a menu of problems needing to be solved and actions to be taken, with various community organizations and institutions deciding to take them on based on available resources or interests (which is what many community plans become); or 2) an action plan for building the community by prioritizing problems, strategizing approaches, planning implementations, engaging elected officials and procuring resources in a systematic way. Either approach would entail significant work, the second much more ongoing than the first. At this writing, we don't know which path the community will follow.

Service Delivery: Kankakee School District 111

Background

Program Description

The Kankakee Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) is managed by senior staff in Kankakee School District 111. It provides a broad menu of programmatic options for young people that provide specific interventions and diversion and prevention activities. The latter are aimed at replacing potential wrong-doing with constructive activities and at putting youth on a path to success in education, employment, and their future lives. Project components and their aims include the following:

- **District 111 student service planning:** gives students guidance and referral to programming.
- **Masai Justice Project- Kankakee County State's Attorney:** diverts arrestees from prosecution and teaches alternatives to further justice involvement.
- **Project Fresh Start- State's Attorney:** facilitates record sealing and expungement.
- **City Life mentoring:** helps students develop life plans and capabilities.
- **City Life Streets to Work:** involves students in learning community leadership and participation.
- **Toastmasters:** helps students improve performative speaking/interviewing.
- **Hippocrates Medical Center services:** works toward improved physical and mental health.
- **Family Career Community Leaders of America:** teaches students civic participation.
- **Parent education:** educates parents in skills for helping their children.
- **Remote Control Car program:** instructs students in social skills and provides mentoring.
- **Youth entrepreneur:** teaches students teamwork and motivation.
- **Community service/job training:** helps students develop self-esteem, empathy, and responsibility.
- **College visits:** counsels students in choosing colleges and making good choices.
- **Gold Star boxing:** helps young people to divert and use energy constructively.
- **African American Male Initiative:** stimulates students to be motivated and advance in school.

According to its grant proposal, the YEP intends to serve more than 600 young people annually across these programs. Young people self-select into programs of interest, thereby gaining access to counseling and guidance provided by program staff and other resources available through the YEP and potentially by District 111.

Goals

Kankakee District 111 stated in its original proposal that the overall goal of its R3 project is to "enhance youth development through improved quality of and increased access to diversion,

intervention, and prevention activities, resulting in improved life outcomes" (Kankakee School District 111, 2020). More specific programmatic goals or objectives are listed above.

Logic Model and R3 Objectives

The overarching methodology described by the YEP logic model is for the YEP to use R3 funds to support and expand mostly pre-existing programs as a means for addressing service gaps identified by the project's planners. To hundreds of young people in the Kankakee community these programs provide mentoring, diversion activities, skill-building, civic experience, and support. The long-term goals of these supportive programs are to enable more students to complete high school, attend college, gain employment, and become productive members of their communities. See Appendix B for a visual depiction of the logic model.

The Youth Empowerment Program addresses the R3 priority of youth development through the entirety of its programming. It addresses economic development through its Youth Job Training and Employment; violence prevention through Peer Jury, mentoring, remote control car program, community service, and mental health education; reentry through Fresh Start Seminars, Community Service and Youth Employment; and civil legal aid through Fresh Start.

Community Context

Although Kankakee County is socially diverse, poverty is disproportionately high among the Black/African American, Native American/Alaskan Native, and Hispanic/Latino populations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020b). The majority of students enrolled in Kankakee School District 111 are African American and Hispanic/ Latino (Illinois State Board of Education, 2022d). District 111 demonstrate at-risk student demographic indicators. The district has a 2.5% homeless rate and a 65% chronic truancy rate (Illinois State Board of Education, 2022a; Illinois State Board of Education, 2022b). Fourteen percent of students have an Individualized Education Program (Illinois State Board of Education, 2022e). Some indicators do not seem to be diminishing. Between 2018 and 2022, the percentage of low-income students increased from 67.4% to 85.3% (Illinois State Board of Education, 2022c). Moreover, evaluation interviewees expressed concern about rising violence and drug use among young people.

Kankakee School District 111 is the largest of Kankakee County's 12 school districts. It comprises 11 schools serving 5,151 Pre-K-12 students, in the city of Kankakee, rural communities east and south of Kankakee, and the village of Aroma Park. District 111 is a high-need Local Educational Agency (LEA) serving primarily low-income students. As such, it serves as an ideal hub for a youth empowerment program aimed at Kankakee's youth who need it most.

Kankakee County has a variety of social resources, and YEP programming is embedded within what appears to be a cohesive social services community. Local elected leadership are committed to developing strong youth services, including restorative justice strategies. While many of Kankakee's social concerns are significant, we found a network of people with access to resources committed to addressing them.

Description of Stakeholders

The immediate stakeholders for the YEP are youth in grades 6 through 12 living in Kankakee County R3 areas. The R3 areas include Kankakee's North Side and parts of its South and West

sides, Hillcrest, Marycrest, The Grave Yard Junction, parts of Upper and Lower Riverview, Sunnyside, and Pembroke/Hopkins Park. The program serves a wide variety of young people, and they need to meet no particular qualification or criterion to become involved. However, the YEP has a particular interest in serving youth from lower-income families, who may have physical, social and mental health needs, and youth who are justice-involved.

Although young people are the immediate stakeholders, members of the greater Kankakee County community beyond the R3 areas are also stakeholders. They have a strong interest in seeing young people in the R3 areas succeed. Many of Kankakee's youth will be future members of the community. They will work for Kankakee area employers, and it is in everyone's interest that justice involvement be minimized. Successful people use fewer publicly funded health and social services. Kankakee as a whole will benefit when its young people mature to become good friends and neighbors.

Equity Considerations

The primary equity focus of the YEP is that every child deserves to have a responsible adult in their life; a quality education; safe spaces to learn and recreate; and quality opportunities to advance in school, work, and personal life. The Kankakee community is diverse, so equity involves youth of different races/ethnicities, boys and girls, youth with disabilities, youth lacking financial resources, and students who may be struggling in school for any number of reasons. The YEP has programs that are aimed at specific populations, such as African American males and Hispanic young people, to address particular challenges members of these groups may experience within the Kankakee community.

Project Budget

The project received $1,464,064 in grant funding for the grant period from February 1, 2021 through January 31, 2023. The major expenses were personnel and contractual services. Personnel expenses included support for an intake coordinator, intake clerk, junior high school program lead, sixth grade program lead, and program sponsors for Stop the Violence. Contractual services included transportation for college visits and conferences, visits to colleges, interactions at the State's Attorney's Teen Court, and activities related to the City Life Center mentoring programming.

Project Design Process

Design

The project as a whole was designed by senior staff at Kankakee District 111 and was led by the district Superintendent, who holds a doctoral degree and has experience in the fields of educational instruction, administration, and social work. The Superintendent also has experience working with leaders of community organizations and institutions that have long-standing relationships with the District.

For some time, senior staff have been aware of a variety of problems facing young people in the Kankakee schools and in nearby communities, particularly mental health and violence problems. Young people in Kankakee have psychosocial needs and also require personal and educational guidance. They also need help in reducing delinquent behavior and avoiding justice system

involvement. Program leadership saw the possible availability of R3 funding as an opportunity to address these issues through a wide range of programs. Some programs were already underway prior to R3 funding. For others, project leaders had been wanting to develop them and R3 provided the opportunity. District 111 staff have close relationships with many types of service providers, including City Life and the Black Chamber of Commerce. However, the Superintendent's closest work relationship is with Kankakee County State's Attorney Jim Rowe, who has been a major leader in collaborative goals and services. To develop its grant proposal and R3 program, District 111 staff formed formal collaborative relationships with a number of these service providers and proposed to develop service coordination among participants in those programs under the YEP umbrella. To identify areas of concentration for the grant application, program managers sent surveys to students soliciting their interest in different types of programs.

At the time of the R3 proposal submission, most of District 111's R3 program components did not need designing due to the lengthy history of several of the proposed programs. The programs had already been created in collaboration with community members and potential clients. While it may be true that in our broader American culture and business community many people celebrate start-ups, established programs like those specified in the grant proposal can be put into play much more quickly and dependably. For example, District 111 contracted with the Kankakee County States Attorney to operate its Masai Teen Court. The Court had lost funding after operating for 15 years with close ties to District 111 staff. With R3 funding, however, State's Attorney Rowe was able to restart it. Similarly, District 111 contracted with the already established City Life Center to provide mentoring and psychosocial support. Other programs and activities that required implementation with minimal design requirements included conducting college tours, paying for treatment at Hippocrates Medical Center, and referring youth to Gold Star Boxing. The Remote Control Car program, Youth Entrepreneur, and Parent University are operated by the District and are principally are designed and implemented by school staff.

Local Engagement

The YEP leadership, the principal planners of the program, are all deeply engaged in the community and clearly understand the young people with whom they work. Accordingly, the program is very strong on incorporating local knowledge and the experiences of participating organizations. The District 111 Superintendent and her staff grew up and live in Kankakee. So do leaders of the New Life Center and the State's Attorney, who has a background in social work himself. All of these leaders know the neighborhoods and have long experience working closely with young people. Their programs reflect those experiences and clearly respond to them. Programming, such as mentoring and tutoring at the City Life Center, Remote Control Cars, Hippocrates Medical Care, Gold Star Boxing and College Tours, were clearly informed by ongoing conversations between adults and young people.

The Youth Empowerment Program embodies a broad range of stakeholders. The project was designed to incorporate youth who may not attend District 111 schools, but the program also addresses community problems that may impact educational outcomes but are not unique to the schools. For instance, justice involvement makes the educational mission more difficult but is also a broader community problem, both for the involved persons and local residents.

Expungement services, Parent University, and employment programs each address wider missions and populations across Greater Kankakee than the K-12 educational mission.

Our interviews revealed the strong network of community-based organizations operating in Kankakee and District 111's connection to it. Leaders of a wide variety of social and community services serve on one another's Boards, are aware and thoughtful about each other's work, and understand how different elements of the community affect the others. These people collaborate and communicate in a variety of community settings and organizations, which results in sharing information and program planning.

Program designers also utilized a variety of community needs assessment sources. These include school district Report Card data, Census data, and Erikson Institute Early Development Instrument reports. The team has reviewed school behavioral data, justice involvement data, and area crime data. Their reviews also extend to data from 2016 Illinois Youth Survey, a 2019 teen survey, and a 2020 R3C Planning Survey. Finally, the team has analyzed the availability of community resources to identify where gaps appear and where they appear to overlap (Kankakee School District 111, 2020). Discussions with District 111 leaders are punctuated with references to what student data they have collected and how they have identified and understood problems by analyzing the data.

Best Practices

The Youth Empowerment Program models best practices in a number of ways. First, a wide variety of programmatic options exists alongside numerous high school and middle school programs in arts, music, athletics and other areas. This co-existence makes it more likely that students can participate in programming that interests them. Generating such enthusiastic engagement by participants is essential to achieving desired outcomes. School districts commonly utilize the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model to prioritize student support and offer interventions appropriate for students' varying levels of need (Hanselman, 2015).

A review of the various YEP programs indicates that a student actively participating in the program would receive dosage, measured by sessions per week, number of weeks, and hours per session, consistent with high quality out-of-school-time programs evaluated in the academic literature (Durlak et al., 2010; Heller et al., 2013). Additionally, most of the programs appear to have sufficient numbers of adult participants, essential for achieving positive results. Mentoring (Bayer at al., 2015; Borden, n.d.; Guryan et al., 2020; Resnick et al., 1993), youth courts (Cotter & Evans, 2017; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2010), employment (Davis & Heller, 2017; Gelber et al., 2014; Leos-Urbel, 2014), college tours (Bettinger & Evans, 2019; Carrell & Sacerdote, 2017; Swanson et al., 2021), and expungement are all associated in the academic literature with greater likelihood of various combinations of educational achievement, future employment, and avoidance of criminality. It is important to note, however, that participation in any one of these activities is not by itself a guarantee of future success and that programs must be fairly intensive to produce measurable results.

Young people, and in some cases parents, are free to join YEP program options, and by so doing, they are enrolled in the YEP. Case management is conducted upon enrollment by each program's coordinator, who forms an individual relationship with the participant, as needed and feasible. The coordinator mentors the participant, follows their progress, and may refer them to other services. The YEP, thereby, mirrors the three-tier MTSS strategy used by District 111. In Tier 1, all students participate in at least one extra-curricular activity. Tier 2 students, who appear to be struggling in some area of their lives, receive additional program referrals, support, and oversight. One of the YEP staff provides these additional supports. Tier 3 students may have a more serious problem with justice or other traumatic experiences, and they receive intensive support.

Project Operation

Program Fidelity

Evaluator observation of the wide range of programs will have to await the upcoming outcome evaluation process, but data reports and discussions with administrators suggest that programs are operating mostly as designed. Masai Teen Court, City Life mentoring and tutoring, Gold Star Boxing, and College Tutoring have long track records in Kankakee and/or with District 111. The other programs are newer and, in some cases, are evolving. Thus far, their enrollments are strong. The Minibike program has had some delay in starting due to changes in the availability of essential supplemental funding following the submission of the R3 application.

Overall, it appears the planning was done soundly. The leaders had the authority and management skills to implement what they designed, and the program operation follows District 111's R3 proposal.

Clients

The YEP's clients are mostly teens who have attended or still attend District 111, although the program also draws from other Kankakee County communities. District 111 has a large number of students who are testing below satisfactory achievement levels, and conversations with community and project leaders have communicated concerns about youth justice involvement and mental health, as well. Many of the participants across the various communities have struggled educationally; others are performing well in school but enroll in a YEP program because it addresses a particular need of theirs.

A strength of the YEP is that the program recognizes that different young people have distinct needs and interests and that a youth who succeeds through City Life may not be the same one who succeeds through boxing. The Masai Teen Court participants are young people who have already become justice-involved and, therefore, have particularly acute needs to address.

Sufficiency and Appropriateness of Services

YEP services are appropriate for the youth participants, but leadership hopes to build out the program further to better address the breadth of needs. Leadership hopes to add additional programs and increase the capacity of existing ones, which could include additional staff supervision and more adult mentors. The program structure also lends itself well to year-round programming because, while District 111 coordinates the YEP, most of the individual program

components are operated by outside organizations and, thus, not dependent upon the school district calendar. A potential question for next year's outcome evaluation could focus on how YEP programming is addressing both immediate and latent problems that particular students face. In most fields of behavioral health, assets like employment, quality educational opportunities, and positive parental and/or adult engagement correlate with positive life outcomes to varying degrees. None of these assets itself, however, guarantees individual success across large populations.

Client Engagement

The YEP has an unusual client engagement process. Most participants find programs and enroll in them on their own. A YEP web page provides an enrollment portal. This approach has the effect of enabling clients to choose activities of personal interest, reducing the burden on centralized counseling staff and opening opportunities to youth beyond District 111 students. The approach does place a burden on the programs and District to advertise them widely and well. As noted above, participation in a program constitutes membership in the YEP initiative and access to the additional oversight and resources that membership potentially provides. The YEP participants are assessed by program staff, and information is recorded in a District 111 YEP database. Some clients may find their way to District 111 counseling staff, but most receive ongoing mentoring and assessment from the program component's staff leader. Counseling staff are currently working on creating service plans for students and staff. They estimate that maybe half the students have complete service plans at this writing.

Program Coordination

From the point of view of system-level project management, the YEP appears well-managed, particularly for an initiative that has so many components both within and beyond the district. The leadership team is well-informed about program operations, client needs, and operational challenges and has been working together for multiple years. The biggest managerial question, again a topic for the outcome evaluation, is how effectively clients with complex needs receive appropriate referrals, support, and accountability. The YEP operates on a "distributed" client advocacy model by allocating the case management function to multiple program managers. This approach has the advantages noted above but also carries the risk of a client with complex needs not receiving the service intensity, service coordination, or professional interventions that might be needed.

Early Outcomes

Client Outcomes

To this date, most of the program outcomes we can observe are properly regarded as process outcomes. Almost all the proposed program components are operating as designed, and youth enrollment has met the proposed targets. As of early 2022, notable enrollment figures include over 650 participants in the program, 155 participants in Masai Teen Court, 58 adults provided with services, 120 youth in City Life, 50 in the Stop Violence program, 70 in remote car, and 16 in Youth Entrepreneur. Thirty-two students participated in college visits. Other components are on track to achieve goals.

The YEP leadership reported to us immediate behavioral improvements and successes among a number of clients, but systematic data on participant outcomes beyond participation are wanting. As with most behavioral health programs, the YEP's ultimate impact on each youth will be challenging to assess. However, in some cases the result can be immediate, such as college enrollment following college visits even if enrollment occurs a year later. Additionally, the Masai program has service data from earlier years that indicate very low recidivism among its participants, and we have no reason to think that has changed with this year's participants. As a caveat, however, some well-regarded programs in the research literature produce immediate results that are not necessarily sustained in succeeding years (Heller et al., 2013).

By contrast, some results could take years to be sufficiently observed, such as the effects of City Life participation or mentor engagement flowing from the remote car or youth entrepreneur programs.

As noted above, the literature tells us something about what is associated with outcomes, such as educational achievement, employment, and justice involvement but falls far short of predicting outcomes. Multivariate studies report these associations, but across the huge array of influences on a young person's life, those associations can be individually weak statistically. Future evaluation research can explore what predicts outcomes for young people in Kankakee and how participation in out of school activities may mediate outcomes.

The YEP did not design most of the program activities to have a participant completion *per se*. Expungement, Teen Court, and college visits are exceptions. For most programs, the YEP's theory of action is for participants to stay engaged with an activity and its program mentors sufficiently long to improve an outcome, an outcome like being motivated for school, having formed healthy relationships, or becoming employed. Another research question for future evaluation might be to inquire into why participants leave program activities and whether leaving should be viewed as success or attrition.

Challenges

The YEP managers did an outstanding job standing up a project that has many programmatic components. All youth programs have the challenges of enrolling participants, addressing their needs, staffing programs with quality personnel, and engaging adult volunteers. Program data and our interviews indicate the YEP has met those challenges. The staff's largest programmatic challenge has probably been starting the proposed mini-bike program. External funding for the initiative beyond the R3 resources has not materialized on the expected schedule, and, as of this writing, the project has yet to begin. The program is aimed at improving public safety for youth and the community and reducing needless encounters with law enforcement, Staff remain interested in implementing it.

Unexpected Outcomes

Judging from multiple conversations with program leaders, we would characterize their response to outcomes as being satisfying thus far but also expecting to be satisfied. As we have noted, District 111 staff leadership are experienced in many of the program components and were well-

grounded in their expectations of how the programs would proceed. Staff clearly have close touch with students and know what will appeal to them.

Stakeholder Capacity

The YEP program appears to be on a successful path for growing capacity and for sustaining its work. The improved capacity comes in several forms. Most important may be the growth in linkages between managers of the many programs and their growing capability to utilize a variety of programmatic options to address the needs of clients with Tier 2 needs. These are young people who need more assistance than the standard workings of the educational system or community can give them but are not so complex as to obviously require a clinician to address them. The YEP has also expanded the activity and support systems for the Tier 1 majority. We suspect that the greatest capacity challenges will be delivering sufficient clinical-level services to Tier 3 students, who have mental health concerns, more than incidental justice involvement, substance use, or significant educational deficits.

Sustainability

District 111 leadership as well as leaders of City Life and Masai view the need to reduce violence, address youth mental health, and improve educational outcomes as long-term concerns for Kankakee County. They agree that these concerns require sustained resources and effort. The YEP leaders told us that the vision was to expand the program from its original goal of 600 participants to 1,000. The District hopes to expand programming, as well. It has applied for funding to support mental health professionals to work with parents.

The YEP leadership appears well-positioned to sustain the program for a number of reasons. First, the distributed nature of programs outside of the school system is an asset. The Masai program, City Life and Gold Star, in particular, are successful community institutions. While the R3 funding extends their capacities, the existence of their services and organizations does not depend on it. Second, leadership is working on several promising sources for future funding that could be stable for foreseeable years should they materialize. These include funding from Kankakee County and the State of Illinois Community Partnership Program. The YEP is positioned well to secure additional funding, given the District's commitment to grow the program; its home within a school district; and its established institutional support, credibility, and range of community relationships.

Service Delivery: Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization

Background

Program Description

The Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization (NIRCO) Recovery Support for Justice-involved Individuals (RSJII) R3 program provides a wide variety of direct services and referrals to justice-involved individuals. These individuals may also present with substance use and/or mental health disorders. Program staff conduct intake, utilize motivational interviewing, assist with a variety of client needs, and provide referrals for clinical services. Clients may be referred to the program by the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), Lake County jail staff, or other sources. Alternately, they may learn about the program through word of mouth and can simply drop-in to a program facility. NIRCO is designed to develop a sense of community among its clients. For example, the program provides group sessions for mutual support and engagement (Circle). Sessions focus on parenting, anger management, and such other topics as financial freedom and job readiness.

The purpose of RSJII is to provide justice-involved individuals with resources that enable them to avoid recidivating and to recover from substance use or mental health disorders. Ultimately, achieving this purpose will lead to a higher quality of life for clients and their allies and will help to develop communities in the Waukegan/Zion/North Chicago region.

The project directly addresses the R3 program reentry priority.

Goals

NIRCO's proposal lists a number of intended outcomes. The most fundamental outcome is to have 85% of participants achieve recovery from substance and mental health disorders. This outcome would reduce recidivism and enable clients to become thriving members of their communities. Other goals include 85% of participants obtaining and/or maintaining stable housing and employment; feeling confident in their abilities to reintegrate into the community; and feeling supported, confident of resources, and knowledgeable about where to find assistance (Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization, 2020).

Logic Model and R3 Objectives

The logic model (see Appendix B) shows that NIRCO's inputs include professional staff, organizations that provide client referrals to NIRCO, and organizations to which NIRCO refers clients. Staff work with clients directly, mostly at a client's initiative, to direct the client to recovery supports or to provide such supports themselves. This work results in a set of activity outputs, such as clinical treatment, employment, housing, and transportation. Activity outputs also include other services that build recovery capital, support clients' needed treatments, and reduce likelihood of clients engaging in unhealthy behaviors. NIRCO believes that supported, healthy individuals will mostly make productive choices and that these choices, in turn, will likely lead to productive and satisfying lives.

Community Context

NIRCO's project serves clients in the northeast Lake County area whose largest municipalities are Waukegan, North Chicago, and Zion. Compared to Lake County as a whole, these

communities have higher-than-average poverty, lower than average access to the internet, and relatively low employment, as demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Select Demographics of North Chicago, Waukegan, and Zion

Description	North Chicago	Waukegan	Zion	Lake County
Percent Households < $25,000 Income	28.4%	22.4%	24.7%	11.7%
Median Income	$43,094	$49,803	$51,702	$92,645
No Internet Access	12.6%	14.1%	11.5%	6.7%
Unemployed	4.2%	7.7%	9.1%	5.2%
Not in Labor Force	22.8%	30.7%	35.1%	31.1%

Note. Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Community Data Snapshots. (2022). Retrieved 29 June 2022, from https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/data/community-snapshots.

High need also pertains to these areas' social, health, and educational situations. For example, Advocate Condell Medical Center reported in its 2014-2016 Community Health Needs Assessment that North Chicago, Waukegan and Zion ranked as the top three municipalities in the county for socio-needs and Medicaid use (Advocate Condell Medical Center, 2016). Area high schools suffer from low graduation rates and achievement scores, as well.

While specific data on incidence of substance use is unavailable for so small a geography, our interviews indicated community concern about the problem and a lack of sufficient access to mental health services. Lake County reported 110 opioid fatalities in 2021 (Illinois Department of Public Health, 2022), and Waukegan and North Chicago have the county's highest age-adjusted ER visits for alcohol abuse. Community leaders are also concerned about service provision for reentering citizens. As described below, the area does have a variety of service providers for persons who are reentering and/or have substance use or mental health disorders. However, the area lacks well-funded organizations that can provide the full range of referrals and direct services needed by that population. NIRCO services, therefore, fill a vital niche in the community.

Description of Stakeholders

The RSJII's most direct stakeholders are justice-involved individuals, including those with substance use and/or mental health disorders. Stakeholders also include their families and acquaintances – or "allies." People in the wider community beyond the designated R3 area are also affected by re-offending and substance abuse, given the costs of both and given the productive potential that is lost when large numbers of residents in the county engage in these behaviors.

Upon reentry, justice-involved individuals have numerous needs that can be addressed by connecting with the right services. They often return to their communities with serious personal resource gaps, also known as a lack of recovery capital. Criminal records often create barriers to employment or housing, and justice-involved individuals need help navigating obstructions. Some justice-involved individuals are legally obligated to include their name in a criminal

register. Most who have been incarcerated for a significant period of time have little or no savings or income upon returning. They need help with transportation, finding a job, securing healthcare, securing identification, and other living needs. Beyond material needs, substance use or mental health disorders may contribute to a client's offending and need to be addressed to lessen the likelihood of re-offending. Many justice-involved individuals need access to professional and clinical services and need help navigating their bureaucracies. In short, most need assistance making plans to build productive lives.

Equity Considerations

NIRCO's primary equity focus is to assure that justice-involved persons and persons using substances are fully respected and enabled to succeed in life. For NIRCO, equity means allowing clients to direct their own recovery paths. NIRCO serves clients of all racial/ethnic backgrounds, males and females, and without regard for other personal conditions or identities.

Project Budget

NIRCO's year one grant funding amount for its R3 program was $225,000. The program received the same amount in year two, resulting in a total of $450,000. Its largest budgeted year one expenses were $144,560 for personnel (Program Manager, Project Coordinator, Administrative Assistant/Peer Recovery Specialist, and a percentage of Executive Director). It also includes $28,728 for its evaluation consultant. The evaluation consultant is employed by the Buehler Center at Northwestern University and manages client intake and activity data.

Project Design Process

Design and Local Engagement

NIRCO is a fairly new organization. It was founded in 2019 by its Executive Director, Dr. Mary Roberson, who works in the behavioral health field in Northeastern Illinois. At the time of its R3 application, NIRCO had a budget of around $25,000, and the R3 program presented an opportunity to significantly expand its service provision.

NIRCO has a small Board, typical of young, founder-driven organizations. Its members have close connections to the community, and most have lived experience with substance use. Dr. Roberson has deep history in the community (over 25 years), is a former president of the Waukegan Coalition to Reduce Recidivism and has connections to larger organizations and institutions that operate in the recovery community. She also has ties to grassroots organizations such as the Legacy Reentry Foundation and Waukegan Coalition to Reduce Recidivism. NIRCO had been providing recovery support services to returning citizens who participate in the Veteran Treatment Court, which Dr. Roberson helped plan. Given the lived experience of the organization's leaders and their many interactions with persons with substance use or backgrounds, the organization's leaders are well-positioned to design an effective recovery program in their own community. The project has engaged an evaluation consultant from Northwestern University to facilitate program monitoring and data collection, and the consultant has worked with NIRCO staff to design the data collection process and its surveys.

NIRCO Board members and the executive staff have close ties to state government and learned about R3 through conventional grant alerts. NIRCO's focus is the non-clinical aspect of recovery

and reentry support. Other State of Illinois grants and contract opportunities are clinically focused, and, for NIRCO, the R3 program provided an opportunity otherwise not afforded by the state.

A key factor shaping the design of the NIRCO project was that the Executive Director and Board recognized early on that substance use is very common among justice-involved individuals. A second factor was that these individuals often have no insurance or funds to pay for help. Offering free services thus became essential to the design. Third, NIRCO designers realized that justice-involved individuals who live or have lived in the community are likely drawn to receiving services from staff who share their experiences. Finally, in keeping with the harm reduction model, Board and staff recognized that clients might need services off and on for a length of time, perhaps measured in years, and that clients do not necessarily satisfy some enrollment criteria specified by other service providers– such as abstaining from substance use.

NIRCO fills a special niche in the area. Before it was founded, Lake County lacked a strong, multi-service organization dedicated to assisting with reentry. Lake County has a variety of organizations that provide substance disorder treatment, including the Lake County Health Department, several Oxford House recovery homes, and Nicasa Behavioral Health Services. It is less equipped to integrate justice-involved individuals into the community, particularly when individuals also may be substance users. As an exception, Waukegan Township has one multi-service organization that is equipped. It provides employment and a legal help desk, expungement assistance through Prairie State Legal Services, and employment services through the Lake County Job Center. No other multi-service organization appears to exist to assist justice-involved individuals long-term in the Waukegan/Zion/North Chicago area. The Lake County Sheriff's office provides some assistance through its Community Bridge program but only provides services for 30 days post-release. Grassroots organizations lack the continuity of service that NIRCO now provides.

With R3 funding, NIRCO has been able to hire a Program Manager, Project Coordinator, Peer Recovery Specialist, and Administrative Assistant, and to partially support the Executive Director. These staff work alongside NIRCO's Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) team, which predates the R3 grant and provides peer support for NIRCO's non-R3 project clients.

Best Practices

RSJII follows widely accepted best practices for reducing recidivism and substance use and for addressing mental health disorders. Specifically, their service model features peer-driven recovery and the building of recovery capital.

The literature identifies a variety of best-practices for reducing recidivism by reentering citizens. Many factors contribute to whether a justice-involved individual recovers to a crime-free life, including their mental health (Abracen et al., 2014; Cloyes et al., 2010), education and skills, employment status (Uggen, 1999; Visher et al., 2011), age (Sampson & Laub, 2005), use of substances, the seriousness of their offenses, and their receiving community. Other factors include whether they associate with people who create risk or people who live healthy lifestyles

(Jacobs & Skeem, 2021), whether they are housed (Geller & Curtis, 2011), and whether they have financial resources (Jaffe et al., 2012). Successful reentry also depends upon many related factors. Success increases as the number of unaddressed risk factors falls and as the amount of recovery capital increases. NIRCO focuses on building a client's recovery capital and provides either direct services or referrals to address the various risk and opportunity factors listed above.

For RSJII's justice-involved client base, substance use is a key recovery barrier. How best to reduce substance use addiction is a highly debated topic among practitioners, scholars, and advocates (Kras, 2013; Wild, 1999). Different approaches have varying degrees of support. Possible approaches include a) criminalization and abstinence; b) regimented treatment plans; and c) self-directed recovery with support options, utilizing a harm reduction approach. What constitutes best practice depends upon the preferred approach, but the general trend in the past decade has been toward decriminalizing addiction and viewing it increasingly as a public health rather than law enforcement problem. RSJII helps its clients implement mostly self-directed recovery, although for some clients that self-direction includes assistance (or sanctions) from a parole officer, clinician, out-patient treatment, or others.

Much of NIRCO's service is provided by "peer" supporters who themselves have experienced addiction and recovery. It follows a harm reduction approach that assumes clients will relapse. The philosophy is that, in most instances, individuals should make their own choices about how they want to live their lives. If they make choices that could endanger themselves, they should do so as safely as possible. NIRCO's work follows best practices for self-directed recovery, peer support, and harm reduction (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1999; National Institute on Drug Abuse & National Institutes of Health, 2012; Taxman, 2014).

NIRCO is working to build professional program evaluation into its organization. It engaged a consultant from the Northwestern University Buehler Center to help with the client monitoring process by constructing and managing a client database and generating periodic service reports.

Project Operation

Clients

NIRCO's intake statistics indicate that the majority of program clients are African-American (57%); 27% are White, and two-thirds are male. Client ages are fairly even distributed from 23 to 65. At intake, about half the clients reported substance use and half a mental health diagnosis. Surprisingly, 89% claimed to have medical insurance, although 47% were unemployed and only about half had a car. Lack of a car is a major obstacle in northeastern Lake County, where public transportation is inadequate for reaching most job opportunities and many services. About 30% of clients needed food assistance and about 30% reported unstable housing. About one-third of clients were on probation or parole and about 60% said they have a criminal record that they were interested in sealing or expunging. NIRCO found that significant numbers of clients dealt with family problems ranging from child support and child welfare to challenges of parenting.

While careful analysis of client support systems awaits a longer-term evaluation study, our interviews and reviews of client data suggest that clients vary in their support needs and interests. Some clients appear to rely heavily on NIRCO staff for assistance, but others come to NIRCO

seeking help with a single problem, such as finding a job, and do not return for additional services. Clients vary, too, in their levels of justice involvement. Clients coming to NIRCO from IDOC generally served longer sentences for more serious crimes than clients held in the Lake County jail, most of whom were held for periods measured in weeks or months rather than years.

Sufficiency and Appropriateness of Services

How appropriate and sufficient the services are to client needs is a question for a longer term, outcome-oriented evaluation. To adequately answer that question, more follow-up data are needed than are currently available. That said, responses to NIRCO's follow-up surveys with clients found that the vast majority of respondents reported being treated with "respect and dignity." Almost all were satisfied or very satisfied with services provided and would recommend NIRCO to others, suggesting that the project's services are meeting critical client needs. NIRCO's array of referral and service options address the range of services typically needed by justice-involved individuals, as explained above. As also noted above, no one service is likely to divert a client from re-offending or to determine the course of their addiction or mental health recovery. The "sufficiency" of services depends on clients having most or all their needs adequately met through direct service, referral, or their own personal and social resources.

Two related signs suggest that RSJII meets an important community need. First, NIRCO has had no trouble meeting its RSJII client enrollment goals; and second, clients are not required by any institutions to participate. As discussed above, Lake County has a variety of social service organizations, including substance use disorder treatment, but no others that try to address as wide an array of practical needs as NIRCO.

We did a preliminary analysis of public data sets and data on IDOC and Lake County Jail and derived some idea of what the service demand for NIRCO might be. IDOC data suggests that about 69 inmates sentenced from Lake County will be released during 2023, and at least another 60 will be in 2024. If those projected figures prove to be fairly consistent with recent years' release figures and if most inmates return to the communities from which they came, then several hundred to one thousand former IDOC inmates probably reside in or near the Waukegan R3 areas. NIRCO also serves persons who have been held in the Lake County Jail. While we could find no single figure for the number of persons held in the jail for more than the time needed to make bail, the 2022 average daily census was around 450 persons, down from the low 600s in 2017. Jail inmates average about 20 days. From these figures, we estimate that the number of persons who have arrest records and jail time in Lake County is measured in the thousands. Again, a more careful outcome evaluation may be able to determine these estimates more precisely.

Referrals

The essence of RSJII's referral system lies in its constant communications and networking with key personnel in the Lake County Jail, in the State of Illinois probation and parole offices, and in other organizations that encounter substance impacted individuals. RSJII receives most of its clients from relationships with organizations in the reentry field, including the Lake County Jail and the IDOC parole department. RSJII tries to remain current regarding persons released and sends information about RSJII services. State probation and parole staff also may make referrals

to RSJII. Program staff also work with Lake County Jail's Bridge Reentry program and with Waukegan Township. The Township provides some reentry services: Nicasa Behavioral Health Services, New Day Apartments, Lake County Black Lives Matter, the Lake County Public Defender, Good Family Tattoo, Eddie Washington Center (housing), and the Legacy Reentry Foundation. Additionally, RSJII receives walk-ins. NIRCO staff emphasize the importance of clients participating voluntarily within their service model, and most do. Recently, probation officers have become somewhat more assertive in their referrals for probationers with substance use issues. However, they do not require them to work with NIRCO. When clients are initially assessed as justice-involved individuals with substance use or mental health needs, they are served by the R3 staff; others are served by NIRCO's ROSC staff.

Client Engagement

NIRCO clients are self-selected. While many are referred and even when a parole officer strongly suggests that the individual follow the referral, clients ultimately decide for themselves to work with RSJII. Staff are willing to conduct intakes and assessments over the phone but try to schedule appointments with prospective clients for face-to-face meetings in their offices. Those meetings may take from one to three hours and utilize motivational interviewing. NIRCO follows a recovery capital strategy for assessing needs. Responses to the recovery capital assessment tool items and other intake form items are entered into an electronic database.

RSJII works with each client on a strength-based recovery plan but expects client recovery to be largely self-directed. The intake materials include an assessment of recovery capital and trauma. While RSJII makes referrals, it does not verify attendance with the destination organization; rather it asks the client to communicate back to RSJII staff. About half the clients appear to do so. Many of NIRCO's clients come to them for one particular need, such as a job or housing, but others come to NIRCO offices regularly for assistance, referrals, and perhaps for the personal contact and emotional support.

Services

RSJII provides a number of direct client services. These include job searches (although this is a direct service, this function is supported through a relationship with the Lake County Job Center), finding and securing housing, basic recovery planning, and various weekly healing discussion circles. In these circles, discussions are based on restorative justice principles and various self-help topics and issues raised by participants. RSJII refers clients out for substance use disorder treatment; clinical mental health services; domestic violence cases; and medical, dental and vision services.

Program Coordination

Our interviews indicated that NIRCO staff effectively coordinate their various service roles and that NIRCO has solid relationships with the organizations to which it refers clients.

To supplement these strengths, RSJII might benefit from closer coordination and tighter institutional relationships among NIRCO, Lake County Jail, and the Illinois Department of Corrections. One benefit would be that more clients might reach NIRCO upon release. From this expanded reach, client follow up could increase. In some reentry programs, community service

providers have pre-release contact with justice-involved individuals, and service referrals may be formal components of parole or probation conditions (Osher et al., 2003). Follow-up with clients is difficult and time consuming. Pre-release contact negotiated through stronger relationships with Lake County Jail and the Illinois Department of Corrections might enable stronger follow-up with clients. In turn, this might allow NIRCO to do stronger evaluations of its own service outcomes.

Program Fidelity

RSJII is mostly operating as proposed. Staff positions have been filled with skilled case workers, client recruitment has achieved its goals, and staff have made the referrals and provided the services anticipated in the proposal. RSJII follows the peer support/harm reduction service philosophy discussed in the proposal. The proposal emphasizes providing four social supports, emotional, informational, instrumental and affiliational, and the program appears to be addressing each of these needs with clients (Kankakee School District 111, 2020).

Early Outcomes

Client Outcomes

At the time of this writing, NIRCO had completed intake assessments with 118 RSJII clients. As logged in the project database in May 2022, the number of clients receiving various services were, as follows:

Table 3

Number of Clients Receiving Various NIRCO Services

Service Type	Number of Clients Receiving Service
Employment	42
Substance Abuse	36
Housing	33
Food	19
Educational	16
Expungement	15
Health	14
Transportation	13
Identification	12
Job Readiness	11
Legal	10
Life Skills	9
Mental Heath	5
Financial Resources	5
Advocacy	3

Note. GCI analysis of NIRCO data.

Looking only at these raw data on referrals to substance abuse treatment may give an incomplete picture of clients' experiences with substance use. Because only 36 persons received substance abuse treatment referrals does not mean that only a minority of RSJII clients suffer from the problem. Many NIRCO clients already receive treatment, or in cases of older clients, may have received treatment some years ago but continue to need recovery-supportive services.

Most clients indicated satisfaction with their amount of contact with NIRCO staff, and follow-up surveys indicated that clients reported increased confidence about their futures. Most clients reported that, since beginning work with NIRCO, they have abstained from substance use and have had little or no contact with law enforcement.

The service model followed by NIRCO does not emphasize client program retention or completion beyond what clients choose for themselves. NIRCO's program statistics do not project how many clients will return to the program for services. Gaining a better understanding of likely return and factors affecting it could be one of the objectives of an additional evaluation study, but it is a challenging objective. Clients who come to NIRCO for a single purpose, such as a job or housing, may not return for additional services so it is unclear whether they should be considered when examining "retention." Clients in need continue to have access to NIRCO services, even if they have previously completed an exit survey. Given the service model, which places responsibility for the client's life outcomes more on the client than on the service provider, we might argue that for a client, program "completion" occurs when a client receives satisfactory service that the client sought.

Challenges and Unexpected Outcomes

NIRCO faces several challenges operating its R3 program. Client follow-up has been lower than NIRCO has hoped for. Only about 50% of clients completed follow-up surveys and reported back after connection to services. NIRCO staff also face the challenge of finding affordable housing for clients and available recovery beds – a problem common across social services providers in many locations. Additionally, temporary or part-time jobs are easier to find than the permanent jobs that usually lead to more client stability.

NIRCO staff discovered early on that family-related issues bear heavily on persons going through reentry. The program has provided a parenting support group and has improved support for parents involved with the child welfare system or child support.

Capacity

The R3 program has improved service capacity for reentering citizens in Lake County and fills a need for a flexible service option. Not every client needs or wants to progress through a highly monitored and formally defined self-improvement regime. Other service providers may require client abstinence as a precondition for receiving services. NIRCO's harm reduction recovery model, however, argues that for many substance users, recovery is not a linear process. Rather, to advance their recovery, persons in need of services may not actually abstain throughout the recovery period.

For RSJII, assessing stakeholder capacity and understanding predictors of a client's outcomes are similar enterprises. Ultimately, stakeholder capacity improves when persons can self-direct their lives, make prudent choices consistent with healthy goals, solve problems that most people normally solve, and get help when problems exceed one's own resources. This sense of efficacy occurs for us all. To ascertain whether NIRCO clients have reached or are moving toward this high-level goal, NIRCO will need to conduct ongoing client follow-up.

The organization also has a narrower project goal. It aims to reduce or eliminate incarceration. Periodic checks of public records could go a long way toward assessing the extent to which NIRCO reaches this goal. Assessing whether a client misuses substances is a harder task. This assessment would require more intensive relationship development with clients and persistent follow-up.

Sustainability

The sustainability of RSJII recovery services depends heavily on R3 grant availability. NIRCO's R3 grant covers the salaries of about half of its staff, and R3 funding will be difficult to replace if it concludes. NIRCO has yet to develop steady revenue streams with conventional sources, such as government service contracts, reimbursed services, corporate and foundation grants, or individual contributions. Lake County has a wealthy individual donor and a corporate philanthropic base, but many of its donors are more oriented toward Chicago non-profits than to the Waukegan/Zion/North Chicago region. While organizational budget growth is certainly possible, lack of R3 funding would likely lead to some reduction in services. Time and energy will be required to develop and sustain new funding sources. Indirectly, R3 funding might aid this search for new funding sources. Every new organization has to prove its credibility and effectiveness with potential funding sources, and the R3 grant has allowed the organization to operate more fully and to serve more clients, thereby helping to build that credibility.

Service Delivery: Perfectly Flawed Foundation

Background

Program Description

Perfectly Flawed Foundation (PFF) aims to help R3 area residents who are using or have used substances lead fulfilling lives. It operates a peer-supported, harm reduction-informed addiction recovery program. PFF's R3 program is an expansion of current services to its broad service area within LaSalle, Bureau, and Putnam counties. PFF employs several staff with lived experience or deep knowledge of addiction to provide a wide variety of supportive services and referrals to address clinical needs. PFF has an office adjacent to downtown LaSalle and receives drop-ins, persons who call the agency describing service needs, and persons referred or whom staff have met in their outreach activities. It provides care coordination services, makes referrals to address clinical needs, and provides direct social services, including transportation to the extent it is able. PFF operates a mobile unit to distribute Narcan and Fentanyl test strips and to provide outreach to users. PFF also does other extensive outreach and education around how best to address addiction recovery and build community.

Expanding on its current work, PFF's R3 work addresses the R3 priorities of violence prevention and reentry. Substance use can lead to commission of crime, and it is not unusual for substance addictions to contribute to domestic violence. Addiction can also be a byproduct of past trauma. Many substance users have experienced incarceration and/or criminal convictions; and mitigating their effects and avoiding recidivism are significant parts of recovery.

Goals

The R3-funded project's ultimate goals are for substance users, in particular those with addictions, to live fulfilling, joyful and happy lives, largely by achieving the personal goals they define for themselves. More broadly, the program aims to create a stronger community in PFF's R3 area as people become more accepting and supportive of one another and as residents become less justice-involved.

Logic Model and R3 Objectives

The fundamental logic supporting the PFF work is that persons with addiction can recover as they grow their recovery capital, which is associated with a hierarchy of needs. In a recovery capital approach, support services should be consistently available to address relapses, and recovery planning is deemed most effective and ethical when it is as self-directed as possible. Authentic experience with recovery supports and a harm reduction approach are more efficacious than required abstinence. Accordingly, with the help of R3 funding PFF seeks to provide as many services as possible, work with clients to develop their own goals, and work with the wider community on its health. See Appendix B for a visual depiction of the logic model.

PFF's work addresses the R3 mission in the most direct way possible. It directly works with persons in central Illinois who have been deeply affected by having their drug addiction treated fundamentally as a law enforcement problem rather than as a mental health, public health, and recovery capital problem. Most of the R3 program clients with whom PFF works became addicted to opiates after facing seemingly insurmountable personal problems associated with

dysfunctional or dangerous family life, mental health struggles, lack of housing or employment. or other forms of personal loss.

Community Context

Perfectly Flawed's service area is the city of LaSalle, located in LaSalle County in central Illinois. Like many urban centers located in Illinois rural areas, LaSalle has suffered from loss of employment opportunities, resulting in declining home values and increased poverty. Interviewees told us about how these social changes have placed pressure on people who have chosen to remain in the community. These pressures have contributed to mental health disorders and substance use disorders, particularly involving opioid use. Between 2016 and 2020, LaSalle County had higher than average deaths from suicide (17.1 per 100,000 compared to 10.9 per 100,000 for Illinois) and drug overdoses (31.7 per 100,000 compared to 22.3 per 100,000 for Illinois) (Morris Hospital and Healthcare Centers, 2022). Further, the death rate from opioid overdoses was 26 per 100,000 compared to 18.1 per 100,000 for Illinois (Morris Hospital and Healthcare Centers, 2022). In 2022, 16% of LaSalle County respondents indicated that had poor overall physical health and 14% indicated they had poor mental health (LaSalle County Health Department et al., 2022).

Service delivery is challenging in rural areas. The areas lack a density of providers, and people live long distances from where treatments and services are located. For LaSalle County residents, mental health and drug treatment frequently require travelling across counties and sometimes as far as the Chicago area due to limited providers in the area. Residents have little, if any, public transportation. For those without cars or financial resources, this can lead to geographic isolation and/or dependence on others.

The LaSalle community as a whole tends to have socially conservative attitudes toward substance use and how it should be addressed. Interviewees told us that while some in law enforcement have moved toward viewing addiction as a public health problem, the majority continue to view substance use as a criminal issue. While PFF has made some progress toward changing social attitudes in LaSalle, interviewees told us there is still a need for improvement.

The needs of persons with addictions in LaSalle, Bureau. and Putnam counties combined with these social conditions inspired PFF to create a community for persons recovering from addiction; to work towards changing public attitudes about recovering people; and to provide for, as directly as possible, the material needs of lower-income people in their largely rural environment.

Description of Stakeholders

Perfectly Flawed works hard to build community in LaSalle. The most immediate R3 project stakeholders are recovering substance users and/or persons with addiction, their families, and acquaintances. However, the broader LaSalle community is also a stakeholder. The community is adversely affected by the loss of human capital and community that flows from addiction, its harms, and related dysfunctional behavior. The community also bears the costs of law enforcement and service provision. Law enforcement is also a stakeholder. Its mission in central

Illinois is strongly shaped by opioid addiction and by its framing of opioid addiction as a criminal justice rather than public health problem.

Equity Considerations

PFF services are available to any area resident. The organization emphasizes the importance of peer support and service providers having lived experience. This is a corollary of viewing substance use and addiction as public health problems as opposed to criminal justice problems. PFF seeks just and equitable community understanding of and responses to substance use and addiction. PFF's emphasizes acceptance of recovering persons wherever they are on their path and respect for the choices individual make in living their lives. This acceptance extends to welcoming members of any population without regard to race or ethnicity, sex or gender, disability, or other identities or conditions.

Project Budget

For its R3 project PFF received a grant of $91,069 in year one and received a year two extension for the same amount, totaling $182,138. In its grant application, PFF initially proposed a year one budget of $106,069, which included salary support for the Executive Director, a newly appointed Project Coordinator and a Peer Support Specialist. Additional costs included leased office space.

Project Design Process

Design and Local Engagement

The Perfectly Flawed Foundation office is in LaSalle, and its service extends to neighboring Putnam and Bureau counties in central Illinois. The organization was founded by a former substance user, and it operates on the peer support model, with many of its employees being former users or allies of users. PFF has a small board that guides agency operations, several of whose members are professionals who work around and/or with persons with substance use disorders. Board and staff members have long experience living and working in the organization's three-county region and clearly have a deep understanding of the area's people and the challenges many of them have faced in their lives.

The planning for PFF's R3 project involved the participation of PFF staff, board members, and clients who live in the community. The R3 proposal was authored by the Executive Directors of Perfectly Flawed and the Arukah Institute of Healing, a nearby mental health service provider, with PFF taking the lead. Spending time with PFF, one is struck by how well PFF staff know and relate to their clients and how impressed board members and other key community stakeholders are with the work of the organization. Staff members are highly attuned to the needs of clients as they navigate their paths to recovery.

Understanding PFF's planning requires appreciating the unique origins of its mission. Its founder, the current Executive Director, experienced substance use and evolved a vision for how best to help persons struggling with addiction. The work began with his personal outreach to persons in the community struggling with addiction and his commitment to providing whatever help he could through "peer support" and "harm reduction." These approaches argue that many persons struggling with addiction benefit most if they are assisted by persons who have a shared

experience – that is, by persons who have either been addicted to substances or have lived close to those who have. These approaches also argue that, for many persons, beating addiction requires many attempts, often over years, with many relapses (Hser et al., 2008; Li et al., 2010).

PFF is a relatively new organization, founded in 2017, and the R3 grant program provided an opportunity to expand its operations. The original PFF R3 proposal included funding for service provider staff in the organization. It also introduced innovations for the organization. For example, staff believed that closer relationships with law enforcement would benefit the organization and its clients and would help to shift local thinking away from a law enforcement approach to fighting the substance use epidemic. Other innovations included working with a mental health provider (Arukah) to create synergy between its mental health services and PFF's substance abuse work and collaborating with Ax Church, a progressive congregation in LaSalle. The final R3 grant amount excluded the subcontracts with Arukah and the Ax Church that were originally proposed. Arukah did receive R3 funding through a different collaboration.

PFF has worked hard to build a sustainable organization operating in a socially conservative community. People we interviewed consistently indicated that a majority of people probably continue to view substance use primarily through a law enforcement and morality lens. They also indicated, however, that many residents are supportive of harm reduction approaches to substance use and do view the problem as fundamentally a product of social pressure, mental health, and public health. To implement its vision, PFF, like many new organizations, has had to build itself out project by project and employee by employee. It currently has five staff members, several of whom are supported by R3 funds. As implemented, R3 funding has allowed PFF to add staff members who support direct client service, harm reduction outreach to users, and community development projects that integrate a healthy lifestyle supporting the well-being of the local neighborhood.

Best Practices

Our interviews and observations indicate that PFF is following best practices in peer-supported recovery, in keeping with a harm reduction model. While most of the PFF staff are not clinically trained, they have been trained in the Smart recovery method, SAMHSA guidelines, and motivational interviewing. They have also worked on the Reducing Opioid Mortality in Illinois (ROMI) study of case management and peer recovery coaching (Pho et al., 2021). Staff have also participated in Faces and Voices of Recovery trainings endorsed by the Illinois Department of Human Services.

How best to reduce substance use addiction is a highly debated field among patients, practitioners, scholars and advocates (Ashford et al., 2018; Bassuk et al., 2016; Logan & Marlatt, 2010). Approaches include criminalization and abstinence; rigorous treatment regimens; and self-directed recovery with support options, utilizing a harm reduction approach (Dugosh et al., 2016; Hawk et al., 2015; Hawk et al., 2017; Kimmel et al., 2021; Pearson et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2021). What constitutes best-practice depends, therefore, upon one's preferred overall approach to reducing addiction (Scherbaum & Specka, 2008). PFF helps its clients implement mostly self-directed recovery (Vanderplasschen et al., 2007), although for some that self-direction includes assistance (or sanctions) from a parole officer, clinician, out-patient treatment

or others. Much of PFF's service is provided by "peer" supporters who have experienced addiction and recovery themselves. PFF follows a harm reduction model, whose features include provision of naloxone (i.e., Narcan) and clean needles. Harm reduction assumes that relapses will occur and teaches that, in most instances, individuals should make their own choices about how they want to live their lives. If they make choices that could endanger themselves, they should do so as safely as possible.

Project Operation

Design and Fidelity

PFF operates its program consistently with its design and with fidelity to best practice insofar as resources allow. The organization clearly models its public face through its practice and executes the specific goals feasible within the resources provided by its R3 funding. A direct relationship exists between what the organization plans to do, including at both the Board and staff levels, and what it actually does.

Clients

PFF's clients appear to be a cross-section of persons in central Illinois who have become substance users and are in various stages of their recovery. They range in age from their late teens to later middle age. They include persons who have been long-time users and have been through many arrests and attempts at treatment. younger persons who have suffered an overdose or an arrest. and former users who are farther down the road to recovery. PFF staff's commitment to help anyone who approaches them and to continue the relationship as long as the client wishes means that staff are always working with people with various needs. Some of PFF's clients have specific needs, such as finding housing or employment. Many need help with transportation. More complicated are those who suffer from a lack of community or friendship. PFF's Tuesday evening group sessions address that need to some degree.

PFF performs a unique and much needed role in its community. No other organization in the region is available to persons with addictions to assist them when they need it, without the barriers of complicated intake processes, eligibility for health insurance, requirements around abstinence, or constraints around types of services that can be provided. PFF probably appeals most to persons who are mistrustful of organizations and institutions and who may struggle to conform to regulations or procedures. PFF is striking for the friendliness of its staff; and someone seeking help is not confronted by a receptionist trying to enforce a schedule or requiring paperwork to be filled out and completed before any service can be rendered.

Sufficiency and Appropriateness of Services

PFF meets as much of its client needs as an organization of its size and mission can. To address many client needs, it depends upon local resources and institutions. It cannot itself provide treatment beds, affordable or supported housing, or clinical services. Persons who suffer from substance addiction, particularly if it is long-term and has become justice-involved, usually have multi-faceted and acute needs. No single organization meets them for most people. Particular problems, such as finding a job, finding a residence, or figuring out transportation usually have, at least, a temporary immediate solution. The overarching problem of minimizing or eliminating the addiction itself, however, is difficult and usually long-term. Recovery is often tied to the

equally complex problems of addressing any long-term mental health challenges and having meaningful relationships with caring, healthy persons.

We cannot know the number of persons suffering addiction or in recovery in PFF's service area, but with more resources for outreach PFF would likely reach more clients. It also needs more resources for transporting clients in a mostly rural environment that lacks sufficient public transportation. Other resource challenges external to the organization but vital to its success include affordable and accessible housing; accessible treatment beds; and opportunities for employment, particularly employers who will hire ex-offenders.

Client Engagement and Assessment

PFF encounters its clients in a number of ways: via telephone calls, walk-ins, mobile units, and referrals. PFF staff do not work with persons under 18 but will assist anyone else. While staff may offer simple help over the phone, the preferred method is for a potential client to meet with a staff person in the PFF office adjacent to downtown LaSalle. The case worker discusses with the client the client's views about their needs and makes a paper intake record that includes whatever information the client chooses to share. Service and case planning is done only to the extent preferred by the client. PFF utilizes a simple recovery capital form with case notes and has yet to implement an electronic database. To this point, PFF focuses on being responsive to client needs without prescription – unless asked – and is limited only by available resources. PFF has come to understand, however, that as it grows and as it may need to operate in a more formal way to secure resources, such as Medicaid reimbursements or other government support, it will have to regularize service provision more than it does now.

Program Coordination

PFF has a high level of coordination within the organization, partly owing to its small size and partly because its service philosophy is shared consistently by the Board, management, service staff, and probably most of its clients. Strong communication exists between staff members, as well. PFF does not really engage in care coordination in the sense that most clients are not executing complex service delivery plans supervised by PFF staff. Service provision and referrals are mostly ad hoc, and clients may come and go to work with the organization over periods of years. While some in the field may favor a more focused recovery program, PFF staff work with many clients who would reject, or have rejected, more routinized or sanction-based recovery processes.

Early Outcomes

Client Outcomes

A rigorous assessment of client outcomes will require a deeper evaluation of the program during the coming year. Data indicate that in March, 67 peer support meetings were conducted, 24 persons attended SMART Recovery meetings, 62 assisted transportations were conducted, and 45 nights of shelter assistance were facilitated. Staff distributed 192 Narcan doses, and 41 persons were encountered through remote outreach. In April, 64 peer support meetings occurred, 38 attended SMART Recovery meetings, 33 assisted transportations were conducted, and 42 persons were encountered on mobile unit trips. That month, PFF distributed 172 Narcan doses and 57 Fentanyl Test strips.

PFF's program reporting during our review period has been consistent with what PFF projected. Our limited program observations suggested clients were satisfied with services received, and many have remained engaged with the organization over lengthy periods, suggesting that the organization fulfills important functions in their lives.

The program does not have goals for program completion other than having clients utilize the service for as long as the they feel it is needed. While PFF has the overarching objective of seeing people with addictions live happy, joyful and fulfilling lives, it leaves it to the client to determine whether and when that may occur. The efficacy of mental health treatment is notoriously hard to measure, in part because of lack of clarity regarding what success is. Many in the mental health and substance use disorder communities have eschewed conventional notions of treatment effectiveness. They favor conceptualizing client success by clients' functionality as opposed to whether their addiction or mental health affliction has been "cured" (McKnight & Kashdan, 2009).

While community outreach and education are not client work *per se*, they are important parts of PFF's work. They contribute to PFF's efforts to build the community resources that support recovery and to publicize PFF's work to recovering persons, their friends, and family. Examples of PFF's education and outreach activities during a typical month include:

- Radio interview on WCMY
- Live Well Streator Coalition Meeting
- LaSalle County Veterans Assistance Commission Opioid Working Group Meeting
- C5 Rural Meeting
- You Will Be Found Tour, Grace Theater in Bureau County
- IVCC Health Fair
- LPHS Challenge Day
- Lee County meeting
- IHRRC Diversity, Inclusion & Outreach Work Group
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials meeting
- City of LaSalle Council Meeting
- Earth Day LaSalle community activities

PFF tries to monitor recovery capital, a set of validated measures of capabilities associated with recovering from various afflictions for individual clients and communities (Ashfored et al., 2021; Jason et al., 2021). PFF staff believe "the more recovery capital the better" but would not argue that having it necessarily produces recovery or obviates the need to access services. With or without treatment, addiction recovery is fraught with relapse, and the scholarly literature clearly indicates that success is often marked by fewer rather than more relapses rather than by abstinence.

Challenges

Programmatically, PFF faces the challenge of shifting public and policy views of addiction from it being primarily a matter for criminal justice to it being a public health responsibility. Many advocates of this shift in viewpoint believe that criminalizing substance use has the effect of

actually increasing rather than decreasing its social costs. Costs increase because stigma is reinforced; and criminal records obstruct individuals' efforts to recover; access employment and housing; and, in the case of some service providers, grant access to services.

Other programmatic challenges include helping clients find employment and suitable housing in a struggling rural community, locating treatment beds within a reasonable distance from LaSalle, and providing transportation. Transportation is crucial and a particularly difficult problem for lower income persons living in a predominantly rural setting. Patients may have to travel as far as Joliet, Aurora, or Chicago for treatment, and cars are needed for most employment opportunities.

PFF programming is also continually challenged by the clients themselves. Their needs are persistent and can be difficult to address in the LaSalle County area. As noted above, jobs, housing, mental health services, and treatment beds are scarce and/or distant. Additionally, social mores around substance use and addiction make fundraising more challenging than for other social services. In other social services clients are generally viewed as more morally deserving. PFF, by contrast, has to change outside perceptions to align with its mission, advocating for people with substance disorders as people with health needs rather than criminals.

Sustainability

The R3 funding came at an opportune time for PFF, a time when fundraising was severely limited by the constraints on gatherings caused by COVID-19. The R3 funding both sustained and built capacity by enabling the continued build-out of service provision.

PFF's R3 programming faces numerous, significant challenges regarding its sustainability. While its Board support is deep, it is not wide. Like a lot of small, founder-driven organizations, PFF has a dedicated, but small Board. It is not a Board that brings a lot of funding to the organization. Finances are a persistent challenge to the stability and growth of the organization. Outside of Chicago and its immediately surrounding counties, few significant philanthropic resources are available to non-profits (Lewis, 2018). Central Illinois has a scarcity of wealthy potential donors, and fee-for-service is not feasible from clients or from many private insurers. The R3 grant has provided a significant boost to the organization and would be hard to replace. Converting some of PFF's services to reimbursement by Medicaid or other Illinois DHS programming may be a possibility. Doing so, however, could change some of how the organization works, and PFF is only beginning to consider it. PFF has been deliberate in its commitment to delivering service in the manner it considers best and would be reluctant to alter its mission or services in order to secure funding.

The commitment of PFF's staff to the mission aids sustainability. Most of PFF's staff are not professionally trained in addiction treatment. Rather staff have a strong personal commitment to their work and were selected, in part, for that commitment along with their keen instinct for performing this type of service work and advocacy. With these traits comes a willingness to work without demanding high wages. So far, the organization has depended upon training modules offered by IDHS, SAMHSA and other sources available on-line to provide staff with basic preparation. However, PFF may need to find a way to better compensate staff. Better

compensation will help retain staff as their wage needs evolve, and, if PFF desires, it will eventually enable the organization to attract clinical staff who have requisite education and certification.

Service Delivery: Prairie State Legal Services

Background

Program Description

Prairie State Legal Services (PSLS) has a 45-year history of providing federally-subsidized legal services across much of Illinois. PSLS has several R3 grants, and we are evaluating the grant for services in Rockford, which has two major components:

1. Expanding legal services within R3 high need areas.
2. Creating a strong outreach and education program on the law.

PSLS offers legal advice and representation to residents in R3 high need areas. Additionally, PSLS's work focuses on preparing residents to solve legal problems on their own. In a pilot program, local residents are trained in basic legal principles and procedures as "Community Navigators," who, following training, can spread legal knowledge to their acquaintances. PSLA staff are also conducting peace circles in a Rockford school as part of its restorative justice approach.

Goals

The PSLS project has several related goals. The first is to improve the employment and housing of clients by providing them needed legal advice and representation. Given that PSLS emphasizes self-empowerment for residents, another principal goal of its R3 project is making residents more knowledgeable about their legal rights and responsibilities and knowing better how to resolve some legal problems on their own using available tools. More broadly, the work is aimed at reducing racial disparities, fighting discrimination, and improving conditions in Rockford, particularly in lower-income neighborhoods.

In its grant application, PSLS provided evidence for why these goals are important for its targeted community. It cited studies suggesting that many minority persons distrust the legal system, in part due to their treatment within the criminal justice system. This distrust may prevent low-income minority residents from seeking legal services in important civil matters. The project has the long-range goal of improving low-income minority residents' trust in the legal system such that they will seek legal help in a timely manner to avoid or resolve legal issues. This goal shapes PSLS's approach to working within the R3 neighborhoods.

Logic Model and R3 Objectives

The theory behind Prairie State's approach is that extensive community engagement is essential for learning the needs of residents, for making legal services accessible to them, and for providing legal training. Legal education is essential because most people are more empowered by solving the problems they face on their own and there are insufficient resources for litigating most disputes. This model emphasizes individual empowerment and the use of attorneys for advice rather than litigation. It is an important component of clients' achieving the most benefit within available resources. See Appendix B for a visual depiction of the logic model.

According to the PSLS program model, successful litigation and self-advocacy have the benefits of 1) helping individual clients retain housing, find a job, or secure a benefit; and 2) ensuring that

landlords, employers, and public agencies know they are accountable for their actions and decisions. Litigation produces community-wide benefits beyond the narrow legal issues addressed in a particular matter. According to the model, employment, housing, access to public benefits, and education are important for lifting an individual out of poverty. Sometimes legal action is necessary for an individual or group to secure these rights.

The project directly addresses the R3 priority of providing civil legal aid. It also aids reentry by assisting with criminal records relief.

Community Context

A number of statistics document social conditions that create the need for effective, low cost legal services in Rockford. The Rockford R3 areas include significant numbers of low-income and largely African American and Hispanic residents in Rockford. In 2020, Rockford's population was around 148,000, a 4,000 person decline since 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Rockford as a whole is about 59% white, 22% Black, and 19% Hispanic, although the R3 areas include somewhat higher percentages of Black and Hispanic residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Rockford's median income is around $44,000, and around 22% of its residents live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). PSLS's R3 proposal points out a number of factors in Rockford that inform its work. Heartland Alliance's 2020 poverty report found that over 109,000 out of a total population of less than 300,000 had arrest or prison records (Buitrago & Escobar-Schulz, 2020). A Princeton University report found Rockford's eviction rate of 4.6% to be the highest, large city eviction rate in Illinois (Princeton University Eviction Lab, n.d.). Finally, Rockford school data revealed that Black students accounted for 61% of expulsions, although they are only 31% of the district's students (Prairie State Legal Services, 2020).

Our interviewees as well as PSLS's own local needs assessments and surveys described a wide variety of needs for legal services, as detailed more fully below. PSLS is by far the largest non-profit and free, legal service provider in the region, and its work is necessitated by the lack of other low-cost legal service providers. The only other provider is the Zeke Georgi Center, which staffs its clinic with law students from Northern Illinois University.

Effective community lawyering and the practice of poverty law require close relationships with neighborhood-based organizations through which a legal provider can identify and support clients. Rockford has a variety of community-based organizations that PSLS works through to reach its client base. We referenced many of these below in the discussion of PSLS's goals and how PSLS conducts its outreach.

These data and our interviews show that Rockford has a mix of problems that generate legal needs for residents related to poverty and, to varying extents, race. These problems occasioned PSLS's R3 application.

Description of Stakeholders

The direct stakeholders for the Prairie State project are the individuals in need of legal services to address matters of housing, employment, family law, benefits, and other matters within Prairie State's domain. More broadly, as discussed above, the entire community is a stakeholder insofar

as PSLS litigation encourages landlords, employers, government administrators, and others in positions of authority to act legally and ethically.

Consideration of Equity

The concept of equity has several meanings for PSLS. PSLS tries to bring fairness to systems that have historically been unfair to certain demographic groups. According to the PSLS mission, whether a person is of a particular racial/ethnic group, age, income, disability status, or criminal justice status, they should be treated fairly according to the law. They should have the same chance of winning a legal case on the merits of their case as anyone else and should be as knowledgeable as possible regarding the operation of laws and regulations. PSLS supports principles of restorative justice, which focus on resolutions that promote community and mutual understanding and that, ideally, help parties to proceed fairly and justly. Restorative justice favors the well-being of the community by encouraging dialogue that fosters victim support and personal accountability for criminal acts.

Project Budget

Prairie State Legal Services received a year one grant for $193,085 in 2021 and received an extension in 2022 for the same amount, totaling $386,170 in all. Most of Prairie State's project budget provides support for a Staff Attorney, who serves as Project Coordinator; another Staff Attorney, who also pilots a peace circle at Kikifers Academy located in New Zion Baptist Church; a Community Advocate; and administrative support.

Project Design Process

Design

PSLS's Rockford project was designed by senior PSLS management staff working with the Managing Attorney who practices in Rockford. PSLS began by considering the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the R3 program at its central office and made initial decisions about where the funding would potentially be most valuable. PSLS has a "strategic framework" rather than a "strategic plan." The framework includes strong community integration of services and a move toward client services that are as holistic as possible. The PSLS R3 program advances that vision.

Local Engagement

During interviews, PSLS management stated that they highly value local engagement, and, upon learning of the R3 grant opportunity, intended to work with local leaders and organizations to shape their proposal. Staff told us that the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the face-to-face meetings they had hoped to have and, given deadlines for completing the application, PSLS mostly wrote the proposal themselves. As such, the aforementioned PSLS charter school peace circles were not in their original R3 application, and the peace circle work at Kikifers Academy in New Zion Baptist Church flowed directly from later interactions between PSLS's new R3-funded Staff Attorney and the church's pastor, who has a longstanding relationship with PSLS.

According to PSLS staff, because clients and stakeholders did not write the proposal does not mean they did not have meaningful impacts on shaping it. PSLS staff report that they have been immersed in the Rockford community for many years, working closely with Rock River

Homeless Coalition, Abuse in Later Life CCR, LifeScape Community Services, Boys & Girls Club of Rockford, the Swedish American health system, Crusader Community Health, Remedies Renewing Lives, and RAMP. In addition, PSLS maintains a court house help desk. Staff also conduct periodic surveys and needs assessments in Rockford to understand local conditions and legal needs (Campbell et al., 2010; Hanson & Walsh, 2022). We found that planning has reflected the needs, interests, and perspectives of local residents. PSLS hired a Community Advocate specifically to build stronger relationships with local residents and organizations and to assure that some PSLS staff would come from the targeted community, both for the credibility they would bring to the organization, and to make sure local resident perspectives were part of PSLS. Before being hired, the PSLS R3 Community Advocate did outreach in the community for PSLS as an Americorps volunteer. The R3 grant enabled PSLS to bring him onto the staff full-time to continue that work. The new R3 Staff Attorney also had experience in the community, having served as a public defender in Winnebago County since 2017.

Best Practices

The services and engagement that PSLS provides through R3 funding are consistent with best practices. PSLS attorneys provide legal advice and guidance, work closely with their clients, and know their clients and communities well. Organizations aspiring to be community-based must have strong relationships with residents and with the organizations in which residents engage. The record suggests that PSLS achieves these community engagement goals. All three of the paid R3 staff do this relationship-building work in one form or another as part of their community engagement role. They are well prepared for their roles and are well-equipped to engage community members. The lead project attorney, for example, has nine years of experience working in the community with individuals and organizations. Additionally, restorative justice and peace circles are a well-acknowledged strategy for addressing conflict and creating understanding across social groups and cultures. The PSLS staff who implement peace circles are experienced and well-versed in school-based practices.

Project Operation

Program Fidelity

The project has demonstrated strong fidelity to its design. PSLS is an experienced legal services organization accustomed to doing professional work in the field. Its management provides structure and expert oversight. Its professionalism extends to its community engagement in Rockford. PSLS's R3 program continues to deliver high-quality legal services, and it has executed its outreach program to community residents and organizations. It has also operated peace circles in a Rockford school. At this writing, PSLS has three Community Navigators to communicate legal information to the community.

Clients

For PSLS's general services, clients are persons in Rockford with incomes 125% of the federal poverty level, or 200% if they have various household expenses. These eligibility criteria are often prescribed by requirements of federal funding sources. For the R3 program, PSLS has expanded financial eligibility to 80% of the State Area Median income. This enables the program to use a locally relevant eligibility threshold to serve working low-income residents of the R3

targeted areas. About 60% of recent clients are Black and around 40% are White. Nearly two-thirds are female. About one-third have reported a disability.

Sufficiency and Appropriateness of Services

PSLS services address significant needs in the Rockford community in regard to landlord/tenant matters, domestic violence, access to benefits, and expungements. Records shared with us indicated a busy law practice. We also anticipate future demand for services. It is likely that many aggrieved persons who could bring complaints or cases to the system abstain from initiating litigation due to lack of awareness. Knowledge of available services may bring in clients for representation. Further, many unaddressed legal issues in the community are likely simple enough that with legal education, clients may be able to settle the issue on their own.

Research that we conducted for our review suggests that several areas would be potentially useful to Rockford's low-income minority community that PSLS either cannot address or has chosen not to. Three issues that PSLS does not work on are employment, criminal matters, and child support. One example explains how PSLS is actually proscribed from engaging in certain activities. PSLS receives federal funding through Legal Services Corporation (LSC). Congress has established laws limiting the activities of LSC grantees, including services fully funded by other funding sources. This includes prohibitions on organizing, lobbying, class actions, criminal cases, desegregation of public schools, welfare reform and labor organizing. PSLS engages the community and provides a range of services to meet client needs within these constraints.

Client Engagement

PSLS works hard to make Rockford residents, particularly low-income minority persons, aware of its services. As stated in its R3 proposal, PSLS has remained engaged with the African American Resource Center at Booker T. Washington, City of Rockford and its social services agencies, the Rock River Homeless Coalition, Eliminate Racism 815, Youth Services Network, Boys and Girls Club, Jubilee Center, and the Rockford Public Library. Clients may be referred from social services organizations, from churches, through word-of-mouth with friends of family; or they may identify themselves.

PSLS staff perform an in-person client intake consistent with standards of the legal profession. Likewise, staff conduct on-site legal case intakes at Freeport Lawyers in the Library and Rockford Lawyers in the Library. PSLS maintains an electronic database that includes information on client demographics, types of services rendered, matters addressed, hours used, and outcomes.

Program Coordination

The PSLS R3 program is well managed. Program staff are executing the proposal objectives, and central office development staff appear well informed about the work of regional offices.

Early Outcomes

Client Outcomes

As of this writing, client outcomes for the project have met targets. The number of individuals receiving legal services through the R3 program has steadily increased during the project period, reaching a total of 202 at the end of March 2022. One hundred and forty persons have attended

various training events on their legal rights. PSLS has established ten new relationships with organizations that will refer clients to PSLS, and 14 persons had individual client meetings at several remote locations.

The median amount of time a case is open is about 35 days. Many cases involve only a single meeting or two where legal advice is given. About a quarter of cases are open for 100 days or more.

PSLS records indicate that clients achieve their goals in virtually every case where they are represented by a PSLS attorney. These cases are mostly expungements, evictions, and debt relief. PSLS knows the outcome of cases when a PSLS attorney represents a client or when the attorney is personally involved in the case's resolution. However, in many cases the attorney is not involved over a long period of time, and then PSLS often does not know how the matter was resolved. Most matters are instances in which PSLS staff advise a client or provide pro se assistance.

To better track these matters, PSLS has e-mailed follow-up surveys to clients after they complete their cases but has received few responses. A possible topic for the coming year's outcome evaluation might be to develop new methods for reaching these clients. Through these efforts, we can measure outcomes to matters brought to PSLS attorneys and how those outcomes affect clients' life courses. These issues are understudied in the research literature.

Beyond direct client service, PSLS's R3 grant also includes reaching out to Rockford organizations, engaging their staff, and providing legal education presentations to them. Program reports and interviews indicate that PSLS has created numerous new organizational relationships that promise to increase its value to the community. Over 200 people have attended Know Your Rights presentations. These presentations have focused on:

- Expungement, with the reentry group Get Connected 815
- Renters' rights, with the Rockford Rescue Mission homeless shelter
- Clearing criminal records, at the Rockford Rescue Mission
- Special education at the African American Resource Center at Booker Washington, with Equip for Equality

Meetings also advance community engagement, and they typically have included:

- City of Rockford Neighborhood Improvement Initiative to discuss summer events in R3 areas
- Renewal Turning Point Programs to discuss youth-oriented programs and suspension/expulsion in Rockford schools
- Community meetings to discuss school discipline and special education
- Delta Sigma Theta African American sorority discussions of police safety and protester rights

Predictors of Client Outcomes. The outcome of legal cases can generally can be predicted based on a combination of five factors: the relative strengths of the plaintiff's and defendant's

cases or arguments, the ability of the parties to present their arguments, a party's determination (including time and resources) to prevail in the matter, the quality and quantity of legal representation or assistance, and the fairness of the legal process. PSLS attorneys likely have a sense of how these factors balance and how they may affect outcomes; and they advise and assist their clients accordingly. As evidence of the merits of this approach, when a client and PSLS attorney have determined to enter an official proceeding, they have nearly always prevailed. Analyzing some or all of these factors for PSLS matters could be a subject for next year's evaluation.

Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a challenge to organizational planning, preparing the R3 application, and executing PSLS's plan, as the proposal required intensive contact between PSLS staff and local residents.

Unexpected Outcomes

Overall, the PSLS R3 program proceeded as planned. The two new professional staff hired for the program each had experience working in the community and were well equipped and positioned to extend Prairie State's work among Rockford organizations and institutions. Thus, the program experienced few unexpected outcomes. However, as noted elsewhere, the school-based peace circle program was not anticipated by the original proposal, so it was an unexpected outcome.

Stakeholder Capacity

The process evaluation suggests that PSLS stakeholder capacity has increased as a result of the R3 program. PSLS has strong roots in the Rockford community and has done good work to broaden its contacts and form additional institutional relationships with community-based organizations. Maintained, these relationships will lead to more legal matters reaching PSLS and will open more opportunities and channels for PSLS to educate residents. The additional legal staff supported by the R3 grant provide attorneys more time to work with clients. Additionally, R3 funding gives attorneys the potential to take more cases and to have more resources for sharing legal expertise with the community. For example, PSLS has demonstrated its added capacity to facilitate group discussions of human relations issues (school peace circle) and to recruit and train Community Navigators. Our view is that the Rockford community needs this work, and, should PSLS choose to do so, it is well positioned to extend it. However, it appears that opportunities to extend PSLS-led learning circles into the public schools are limited due to PSLS institutional conflicts of interest. These limitations are explained in detail in the next sub-section.

Sustainability

PSLS would like to receive R3 funding as long as possible to continue its work. Like other community service non-profits, PSLS pursues as much grant support annually as it can to balance its budget. The loss of a grant that supports newly hired staff cannot be automatically replaced. Should R3 funding end, PSLS would have to reduce the staffing supported by R3 until it could raise replacement funds.

PSLS has found it challenging to hire new attorneys, a problem common to legal aid organizations. Legal aid organizations need legal staff comparable in quality to attorneys found in the private sector or in government but are usually unable to pay competitive salaries. Consequently, organizational expansion is hard.

A benefit of R3 for PSLS is that its funding does not place any restrictions on the legal activities of the PSLS attorneys it supports. This autonomy matters because many grants PSLS receives restrict the grant's use to a specific purpose, such as landlord/tenant or domestic violence matters. Such restriction makes it hard for PSLS to provide a full range of legal services. PSLS also cannot accept fee-generating cases, forestalling a potential source of revenue due to restrictions placed on it by the federal Legal Services Corporation. This Corporation places a number of other restrictions on PSLS activities, as well.

The program's peace circle work may face the largest challenges for sustainability. The circles work with students in a small, private Rockford charter school. The most obvious place to expand the model would be into the Rockford public schools, which have large numbers of low-income students and a strong interest in preventing violence. For many years, the Rockford public schools have been subject to desegregation litigation. However, PSLS has not found the Rockford Public School system willing to work with them. PSLS does not have active litigation against the school district but does represent students appealing disciplinary actions and advocates for students in special education issues. The School District may be hesitant to work with PSLS because of this. The Rockford School District was the subject of a class action lawsuit that resulted in a finding of racial discrimination. This lawsuit was not filed by PSLS but may cause the district to refrain from collaborating with a legal services organization. PSLS hopes that, with success of its peace circle work, other educators will learn about the local use of peace circles and utilize them even if PSLS is not directly involved.

The R3 funding has enabled PSLS to implement a service model in which staff increasingly provide services in community settings rather than basing all services within PSLS offices. Many of PSLS's existing grants strictly apply only to compensating individuals on an hourly basis for legal services on a case. The R3 funding, by contrast, allows PSLS to test implementation of a more intensive community lawyering approach. PSLS has reported that other funders have taken an interest as a result. Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois is one funder interested in exploring funding for this approach in the future.

Philanthropic foundation funders often want proof of concept prior to funding, and R3 funding for a sustained period may allow for documentation of the impact of this approach. PSLS suggests increased funding may be needed to provide sufficient staff to document the impact of this work.

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Appendix B: Northern Illinois Programmatic Logic Models

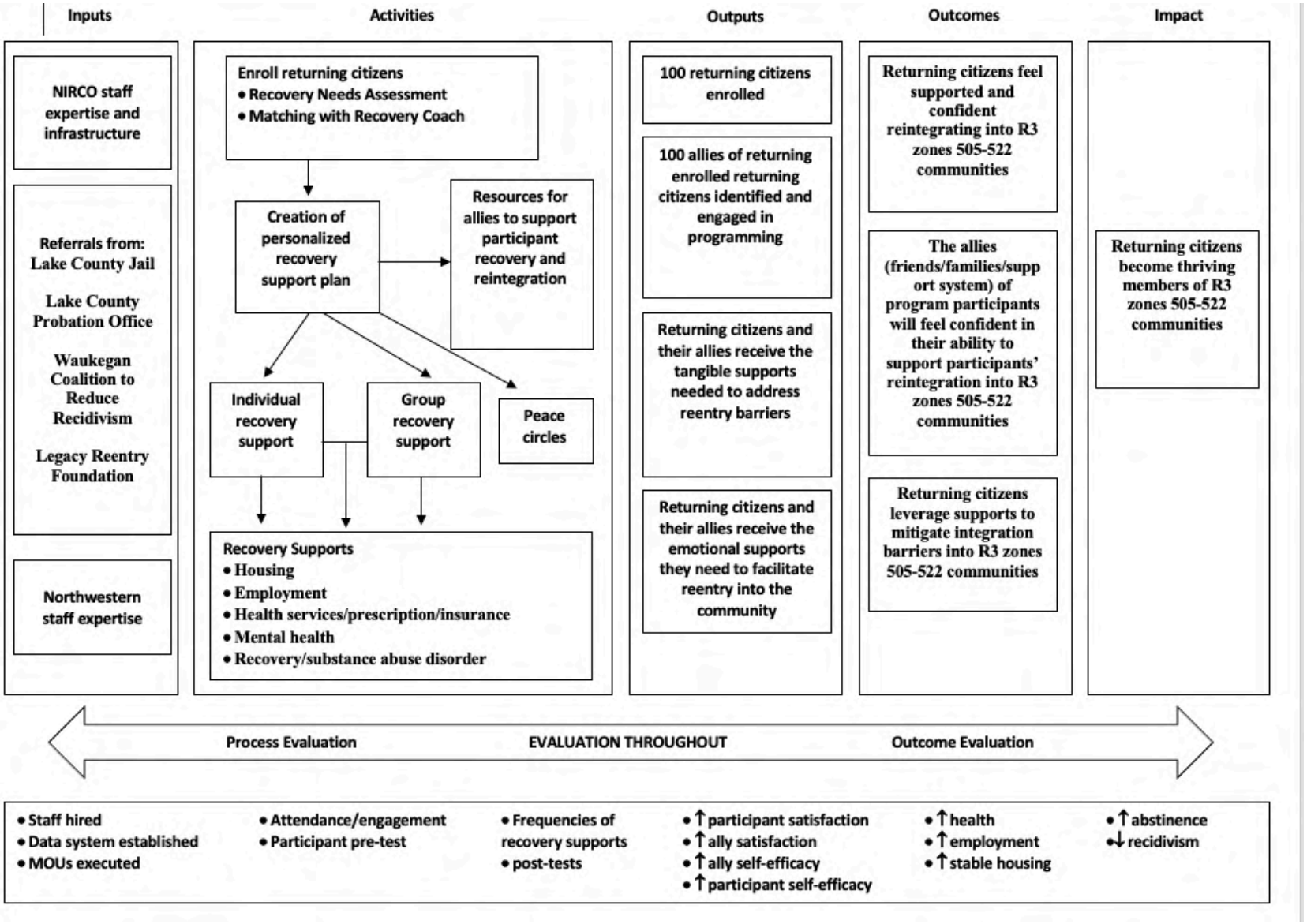
Kankakee School District 111 Youth Empowerment

Resources	Activities	Outputs	Short Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes (Impact)
R3 Funds District Funding Staff and organization outreach, student records	Personalized service plans based on social/emotional and academic needs	Students receive assistance or referral to programs that will develop them	Students participate in meaningful activities, are diverted from danger, and have personal and educational needs met	More students complete high school More students attend and excel in college More students have a trusted adult in their lives More students become employed
Kankakee County State's Attorney office and R3 Funds	Masai Justice Program: Teen Court Students participate in peer justice processes and receive counseling	Participants better appreciate the justice system and their role as responsible citizens	Fewer youth become justice-involved and Justice-involved youth avoid prosecution	
Kankakee County State's Attorney office and R3 Funds	Project Fresh Start – Expungement and Sealing training	Students and families understand record expungement and sealing	Justice-involved youth pursuing sealing and expungement have new opportunities for employment and education	
City Life staff and R3 Funds	City Life mentoring, tutoring and engagement	Students receive mentorship from young people and adults, and have a trusted adult	Students are able to make plans, execute them and mature	
City Life staff and R3 Funds	Streets to Work program Students in Internship and debate and community experiences	Students develop better speaking and social skills	Students advance educationally and socially and understand community leadership	

R3 Funding	Toastmasters – student training and practicing speaking strategies	Students constructively engaged and improve confidence and speaking	Students perform better in interviews and have useful activity	Fewer students become justice-involved These outcomes develop young people, support economic development, reduce violence, and facilitate reentry and legal aid services.
Hippocrates Medical Center R3 Funding	Hippocrates Medical Center – physical and mental health services	Students receive mental and physical health services Contact between school district and Hispanic community	Students have better mental and physical health and engagement with school	
R3 Funding and potentially added grant money	National Youth Program Using Minibikes	Students understand safe and legal operation	Students ride safely and avoid law enforcement contact	
Affiliation with national FCCLA and R3 Funding	Family Career Community Leaders of America Springfield conference and various civic activities	Students are better participants in civic life and better understanding of it	Students more likely to attend college and thrive	
R3 Funding	Parent Education – parents receive training in resumes, computers, college prep and trades	Parents are better able to assist their children	Students are more likely to complete high school and attend college and families are stronger	
City Life staff and R3 Funding	Remote Control Car Program Students participate in recreational activity and develop social skills	Students have better social skills and confidence Students have useful activity	Students trust adults and relate better to one another	
WORLD Learning and R3 Funding	Youth Entrepreneur Students receive training in how to start your own business	Students develop team-work, innovation and social innovation skills. Student in useful activity	Students are more motivated and successful in school	

Kankakee High School staff and R3 Funding	Community Service/Job Training Students do activities such as work with camps, clean parks, support elders	Students build self-esteem and empathy. Students have useful activity	Families become stronger, community benefits from more engaged young people. Students do better in school	
Kankakee High School staff and R3 Funding	College Visits Student visits to HBCU, colleges in other states, and local schools	Students are more aware of and confident in college choices	Students choose to attend college and make good college choices	
Gold Star Gym and police officers and R3 Funding	Gold Star Boxing Club Students train in boxing technique with police officer volunteers	Activity that acquaints students with police and keeps students in safe space off streets	Less adversarial contact with law enforcement and youth. Students expend energy constructively	
Kankakee High School staff and R3 Funding	African American Male Initiative Students engage in mentoring and counseling	Students become more self-aware and positively motivated	African American students do better in school and are more likely to attend college and work	

Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization



Perfectly Flawed Foundation

Resources	Activities	Outputs	Short Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes (Impact)
R3 Funding and PFF Operating funds Program Staff	<u>Peer Support Services:</u> Peer support for individuals Family support meetings ECovid screenings SMART recovery Meetings SMART friends & family meeting Clothing provision Employment assistance Food pantry Shelter assistance Transportation assistance Interventions mitigating domestic violence	Individual mental health supported and needs met Clients are aware of Covid status Individual mental health supported and needs met Clients adequately clothed Clients access employment opportunities Clients receive food Clients are sheltered Clients are transported Violence is prevented Clients receive treatment	Individuals progress toward personal goals and/or less substance use Fewer Covid infections Attainment of individual and personal goals Clients are healthier and better social acceptance Employment Clients are healthy Clients are sheltered and more stable Clients receive treatment or meet other needs People are safe and avoid criminal justice Clients reduce substance use	Quality of life is improved as more clients and their families attain their personal goals live lives with joy and happiness, or achieve what is possible. As this occurs, LaSalle will experience less violence and become more supportive of youth and families.

	Substance use treatment navigation Medicated assisted treatment Care kits distributed			
R3 Funding and PFF Operating funds Program Staff Mobile Unit	<u>Wellness and Harm Reduction</u> Visits to clients Referral to services Direct connection to services Fentanyl test strips distributed Narcan doses distributed Overdose reversals	Clients have opportunity for service or receive service Clients use more safely Clients have opportunity for overdose reversal	Clients have either less or safer substance use Clients have safer use Overdoses are reversed and lives saved	Client well-being is improved as persons choosing to use do so more safely
R3 Funding and PFF Operating funds Management Staff	<u>Education and Advocacy</u> Presentations made Media interviews Client advocacy meetings	Publics are informed of substance crisis and useful responses Better planning and practice addressing substance use PFF voice heard in policy-making	Members of public become advocates for useful drug policy and support people in need Clients receive best treatment from practitioners Clients and public benefit from better public policy	Quality of life is improved as aware individuals support people in need and public policies respond to authentic needs that build families and youth and reduce violence.

	Policy meeting participation Community wellness activities: Earth Day event Community Garden events	Community members engaged with environment. Connections to client community.	Members of public increase personal commitment to environmental activism Potential clients learn about Perfectly Flawed	

Prairie State Legal Services

Resources	Activities	Outputs	Short term Outcomes	Longer term
Staff attorneys Community Advocate Training Partners	Legal information presentations Outreach Intake Legal advice Legal Representation Training of community members Coordination with partners	70 people trained on legal information 25 People training to be community navigators 190 People receiving legal services 46 people received legal representation in court, negotiations, agency appeals 10 peace Circles conducted # of students participating in peace circles # of school staff receiving information on trauma informed services, peace circles and restorative justice. 1 community organization that develop a written plan for ongoing coordination of efforts in the R3 area. 6 community meetings and focus groups in which local residents participate and offer input.	90% of persons who complete surveys related to legal information presentations or training report increased knowledge or understanding of the law as a result of such training. 90% of clients for whom legal advice is the primary service provide report understanding of the legal advice provided. 75% of school staff receiving the materials report increased knowledge of trauma informed practices, restorative justice practices, and their applications in the classroom. 80% of students surveyed at peace circles for middle and high school students report increased knowledge of strategies to avoid and reduce conflict. (This will be done at at least one larger peace circle per completed semester.)	Community residents are more knowleable about their legal rights and responsibilities aiding them in making informed choices. Community residents believe the legal system can benefit them. Community residents resolve some legal problems on their own using available tools. Legal representation helps residents reduce barriers to jobs and housing stability. Legal representation is targeted to those issues that the community residents have identified as important to them as a community. Community residents feel empowered to find legal information on their own and to

			70% of persons represented obtain favorable outcomes Local residents express their opinions and priorities related to community issues. PSLS staff document the community issues in which there may be legal remedies.	seek legal representation when self-representation is not possible. School at which we have presented information on trauma informed services and restorative justice integrates such practices into their ongoing model of education. Community organizations are working with PSLS and residents on issues identified by residents as important to them.

Report 3: Central Illinois

University of Illinois Springfield

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Background

For the current evaluation, the team adopted a community-based research approach that engages community members, program staff, and clients, thus requiring close collaboration between researchers and local stakeholders to implement community engagement strategies. The project includes an assessment of program operations, planning/service delivery capacity, program design, and the capability of programs to participate in future outcome evaluation. This document describes process evaluation activities for R3 programs in the Central Illinois region. The planning/service providers included in the evaluation activities are:

- The City of Springfield
- East Springfield Community Center Commission, Inc (for both assessment and planning and service delivery activities)
- Land of Lincoln Legal Aid, Inc
- Board of Education City of Peoria
- Springfield Urban League Inc.

Scope of Work

A process evaluation, also known as an implementation evaluation, focuses on whether a program or intervention is being implemented as envisioned and whether results align with the program's desired outputs. During such an evaluation, researchers attempt to gather data from program stakeholders to determine whether the program is being implemented in the fashion those involved intended. Process evaluations ask "who, what, when, and where" questions. For example, what aspects of the program have been implemented? Who has the program served and where? Other questions explore what has worked the way the stakeholders intended, what barriers they have encountered, what successful outputs and outcomes they have achieved, and what strengths and weaknesses they have identified to this point. This review is reflective and helps provide feedback to strengthen the program's success.

Specific to the process evaluations in Central Illinois, the UIS team explored the following research questions for each of the agreed-upon grant awardees:

- To whom did you direct program efforts?
- What has your program done to this point?
- When did your program activities take place?
- Where did your program activities take place?
- What barriers/facilitators to implementing program activities have been encountered?

These project priorities were developed in collaboration with R3-funded program administrators. The evaluation team constructed an evaluation plan that assisted in structuring meetings with both planning and service providers and set expectations and a timetable for the process evaluation. Follow-up site visits were scheduled and completed. The evaluation team maintained close contact with the planning and service delivery providers to support evaluation priorities.

The steps in completing the process evaluation included developing and administering interview questionnaires and survey instruments to stakeholders, program staff, and clients; and analyzing the results of these instruments. It also involved developing and conducting focus group sessions

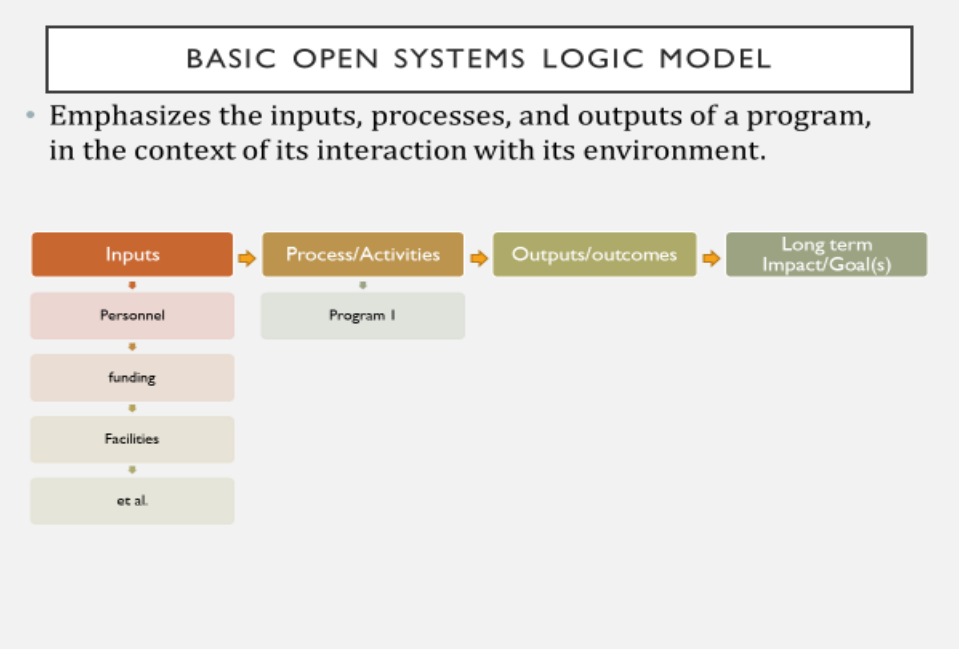
to get input. The process evaluation also included analysis of administrative data. The steps in completing the administrative data analysis included obtaining the data, cleaning the data, visualizing the data, and analyzing the data. As described in the next section, a logic model was developed. The steps for completing the logic model development included developing and administering interview questionnaires for program staff and leadership, analyzing the results, building the logic model, and an iterative step that sought input on the proposed logic model from program staff and leadership. Finally, we completed outcome evaluation proposals. The steps for the community-based outcome evaluation proposal were to meet with the ICJIA community-based research consultant, assess the evaluability of each program, and develop a research design and data collection strategy for a community-based outcome evaluation. Overall, the client sites were of different types and at various stages of maturity for their programs. Consequently, the evaluation team utilized select data gathering techniques over others.

Logic Models

The conceptual framework for this evaluation system was developed collaboratively, with active participation by R3 investigators, funders, planning/service providers, and other community stakeholders. Concept mapping was utilized to construct a comprehensive map of both the input and outcome domains that needed to be addressed in the evaluation. From the concept maps, logic maps were built for each of the six planning/service providers for the Central Illinois region. Logic models depicted assumptions about the resources needed to support program activities and to produce outputs. They also depicted the activities and outputs required to realize the intended outcomes of a program (Wholey, 1994). In the evaluation field, many specialists refer to this logic as a program theory (Bickman, 1987; Weiss, 1997; Rossi et al., 2018). It identified a program's main components and how they should relate to one another. Logic models included process and outcome components.

Figure 1

Conceptual Example of a Logic Model



Logic models were not relevant to sites funded for assessment and planning programs. For service delivery sites, we developed a draft program logic model based on the grant application proposals before the first meeting with each client site. We shared the draft of the logic models with the clients at our initial Zoom meetings and received some feedback, but we recognized that they needed more time to complete more detailed feedback. We sent copies of the logic model drafts to the client sites and used clients' feedback to create the finalized drafts included in this report. As expected, the logic models for the clients using the R3 grant funds to build upon their existing programs appeared to be the most accurate. See Appendix C for visual depictions of all logic models.

Assessment and Planning: City of Springfield

Overview

The City of Springfield's R3-funded planning project prioritizes economic development. This assessment and planning program aims to directly address the impact of economic disinvestment by providing the necessary resources to support local design and control of community-based responses to those impacts. The city wants to gain a deeper understanding of the community's underlying culture and social structure and explore how the community would like to see growth occur.

The assessment and planning program aims to utilize an assessment tool to gather information regarding initiatives relevant to community development, inquiring into what success would look like for the neighborhood regarding housing, health, and decreased crime and poverty rates. According to its R3 proposal, questions critical to an inclusive plan include:

1. How do we value and respond to the history of a place (mainly if that history is unpleasant or challenging) while designing ways to improve it for its present and future uses?
2. How can we have new development in communities and not discard the existing programs that have organically created the existing community?
3. How can the change process include all stakeholders at the table for planning?
4. How can we incorporate diverse cultures (including the arts) historically rooted within communities in a meaningful and respectful manner?
5. What financial and human resources do community-based cultural organizations need to affect sustained and stabilizing community development?
6. What do we do when things don't work out, despite good-faith efforts, to reduce tensions, repair relationships, and carry lessons forward?

Program staff focused on improving citizens' quality of life by hearing from them and by creating a plan representing their input and perspectives.

The City of Springfield received a grant of $80,000 in year one and an extension of $33,333 in year two, totaling $113,333.

Program Goals

The assessment and planning program targets residents in two identified R3 areas (0694 and 0696), both of which experience high poverty rates, 49% and 46%, respectively. Here, residents of several neighborhoods in the City of Springfield and Sangamon County are still experiencing the effects of historic "redlining." *Governing* named Springfield among the worst third of American cities for racial segregation (Vock et al., 2019).

Recent data on these R3 areas show a large percentage of vacant housing and higher crime rates than in the rest of the city. There is agreement that the perception of the neighborhood as unsafe inhibits its development and attractiveness to businesses.

As such, this assessment and planning project aims to create a comprehensive assessment by gathering and analyzing views of residents and representatives of various neighborhood

organizations, such as local hospitals. Information gathering also includes reviewing public input at ward meetings, tax incentive planning reports, and current census and geographic data.

Community Context

We gathered data for the program's targeted R3 areas on five economic variables. All data were gathered from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) data profiles. Table 1 presents the economic conditions of the program's targeted census tracts and Illinois.

Table 1

Economic Conditions of Target R3 Areas and Illinois

Geography	Median HH Income ($)	Below Poverty (%)	Owner-Occupied Housing (%)	Unemployment Rate (%)	Employment-Population Ratio (%)
R3 area ID 694	24,861	45.1	34.0	9.5	32.7
R3 area ID 696	24,946	53.0	35.1	18.3	48.1
Illinois	65,886	12.5	66.1	5.9	61.2

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table S1901, B17001, DP04, and S2301 2019 5-year estimates

Table 2 details the racial composition of the grantee's service areas compared to Illinois.

Table 2

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Target R3 Areas and Illinois

Geography	Other Non-Hispanic (%)	Hispanic (%)	Black Non-Hispanic (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)
R3 area ID 694	.1	0	55.0	42.7
R3 area ID 696	.6	0	62.2	25.0
Illinois	.2	17.1	14.2	61.3

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table DP05 2019 5-year estimates

Program Services

According to their R3 grant proposal, the City aims to compile existing data and hear directly from residents and business owners through additional, newly conducted community surveys and workshops. The City hopes to hear directly from residents and business owners to assess their priorities for addressing the impacts of disinvestment in the community. Further, quantitative and qualitative data will allow the City and its partners to develop an economic development program. The aim of the program is to focus on investing in the community with concrete goals and action items and on identifying resources for investing in infrastructure, housing, and other area-based initiatives.

To launch its project, the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify and retain a qualified planning consultant to implement the required assessment and planning. The selected consultant(s) has conducted similar studies, has relevant work experience, and has the necessary education and credentials. The selected consultant organized and conducted community outreach and engagement strategies (e.g., 11 focus groups and in-person constituent surveys), compiled and analyzed existing assessments, and developed a clear and actionable plan. The plan outlines deliverables ready for implementation. This plan still needs to be finalized in electronic and hard-copy forms and distributed and published on the City's web page. It will be utilized to attract investment.

Consultant's Key Findings

The consultant has identified several areas of need based on the community perspectives, including a focus on adult education, adult recreation, business development and expansion, and comprehensive health services. Other identified needs include faith-based partnerships, affordable housing and homeownership, quality childhood education, youth recreation, violence prevention and reintegration, and transportation.

Alignment to R3 Program Priorities

The assessment and planning program addresses the R3 priority of economic development, as attested to by its goal and methods. Its goal is to direct investment to infrastructure, housing, the public realm, or area-based initiatives. Its methods aim to incorporate the knowledge and perspectives of local community stakeholders by implementing a community participatory approach assessment (CPAA). CPAA is a proactive, community-driven process that brings numerous voices and experiences to the table. The voices include the local chapter of the NAACP; the Black Chamber of Commerce; and Route History, an initiative highlighting black entrepreneurs along Route 66. All three entities provide a deep understanding of the area and its history, vital to social and economic equality for all persons.

Alignment to Restorative Justice

The regions of this proposed study have suffered years of disinvestment and unfulfilled promises, leading to residents' distrust and lack of confidence in the justice and governmental agencies that should have been their advocates. Thus, the assessment and planning program hired a trusted consultant with roots in the community to use affective questions, active listening, and restorative dialogue. These approaches convey an understanding of the current situation and the root causes of conflict and challenging behavior.

Program Theory

The City hired Gina Lathan, PhD from LathanHarris, Inc. as a consultant to facilitate the planning process and the information gathering to support it. The aim of the project is described in the preliminary report from LathanHarris: "The intent of the project is to develop an economic focused strategic plan that, once implemented and used as a resource, will build capacity within the target area with a specific focus on the prioritized areas" (Harris, 2022, p. 2). The assessment and planning processes led to developing a strategic plan for the East Springfield R3 areas 0694 and 0696. The planning process included gathering data from active community representatives. Representatives broadly ranged from residents, businesses, and faith-based entities to schools and organizations that reside and engage in the target area. To gather data from residents,

LathanHarris, Inc. used “surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, community engagement and meeting participation with community members” (Harris, 2022, p. 2). Data generated reflected “local experiences, knowledge, feedback, and recommendations from local community members and provided content that was fully integrated into the strategic plan’s goals and objectives” (Harris, 2022, p. 2).

Harris (2022) analyzed the data and organized it around 15 priority areas in their report:

- Affordable Housing and Home Ownership,
- Quality Child Education,
- Violence Prevention and Reintegration,
- Elected Officials,
- Senior Supportive Services,
- Neighborhood Association,
- Business Development, and Expansion,
- Quality Youth Recreation,
- Faith Based Partnerships,
- Comprehensive Health,
- Quality Adult Education,
- Financial Lending and Literacy,
- Meaningful Employment,
- Preparedness and Response, and
- Adult Recreation

Within the LathanHarris, Inc. report, goals and objectives are detailed for all 15 priority areas. Two critical areas highlighted frequently in the interviews and focus groups were transportation and legal assistance, detailed as follows:

> Transportation is needed for senior citizens to access healthcare and recreational activities and for youth who live in the target area but are bused out of the target area and do not have transportation home so that they can participate in after-school tutoring and recreational activities. Legal assistance was identified as a need for estate planning, child custody, co-parenting agreements, and business development and ownership (Harris, 2022, p. 6).

The planning process produced a strategic plan with goals and objectives, but it is not yet publicly available. Once it is, the aim is for it to be used to frame economic development activities in the zones: The document will be publicly available, and:

> It is expected that local organizations and planning groups will use the content to foster economic development and increased capacity, program development, and improved service delivery in the target area (Harris, 2022, p. 3).

The city of Springfield will also monitor the objectives/outcomes on a dashboard on the City of Springfield’s website.

Model for Planning Approach

The theoretical framework used to guide the process is the Quality of Life Framework developed by Habitat for Humanity (Habitat for Humanity, 2022). The Quality of Life Framework states:

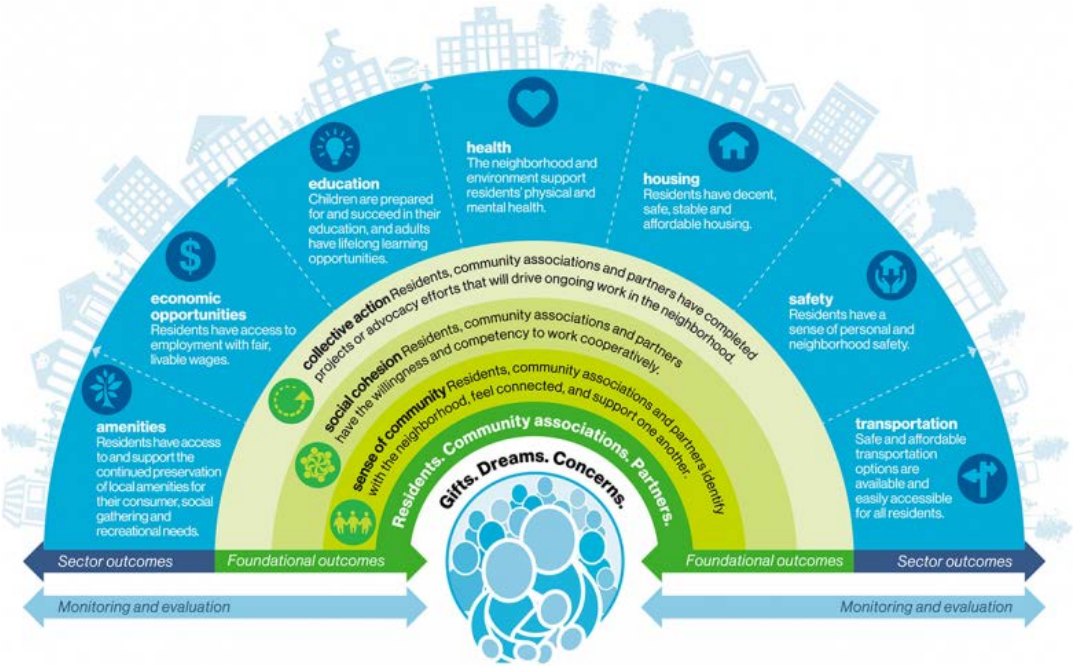
> To create change that leads to an improved quality of life, community efforts focus on three foundational outcomes:
>
> 1. Sense of community: Identifying with the neighborhood, feeling connected, and supporting one another.
> 2. Social cohesion: Being willing and able to work together.
> 3. Collective action: Sustaining ongoing projects and advocacy efforts.

This framework explains how and why neighborhoods change. It provides a road map for holistic change in a neighborhood while remaining flexible enough to honor the gifts, dreams, and concerns of individual, unique neighborhoods (Habitat for Humanity, 2017). Further, according to Habitat's Chicago website:

> The Quality of Life Framework is Habitat's hypothesis on how systemic and sustainable change happens in a neighborhood. It starts first by understanding everyone's gifts, dreams, and concerns about the neighborhood; then building a strong foundation around a sense of community and social cohesion; and finally, utilizing this base to collectively act and implement projects that contribute to sector outcomes. It is an iterative process where we continue to build social capital in a neighborhood throughout the revitalization process (Habitat for Humanity, 2022).

Figure 2

Habitat for Humanity's Quality of Life Framework



Note: Habitat for Humanity. (2022*). Habitat's Quality of Life Framework: The importance of healthy neighborhoods.* https://www.habitat.org/our-work/neighborhood-revitalization/importance-of-healthy-neighborhoods.

Figure 2 visually depicts Habitat's Quality of Life Framework for improving the quality of life and neighborhood revitalization in a focused neighborhood. Habitat argues that the most significant change happens in a neighborhood when people work together—residents, community associations, and partners.

This depicted framework provides general guidance on themes and key features that have to be present in the intended neighborhood revitalization project. The framework helped organize some of the data analysis for the City of Springfield R3-funded project. In analyzing large-scale qualitative data projects, researchers used theories/models/frameworks to help structure and analyze the data. These acted as guiding propositions or theoretical patterns that researchers used during the data analysis for pattern matching (Yin, 2009). The 15 priority areas identified in the planning process overlap and expand on some key factors for revitalized communities identified in Habitat's Quality of Life Framework.

Results of Site Visits

The evaluation team met with the City of Springfield per the evaluation plan. By utilizing R3 funds for planning purposes and by working with an outside consultant, the City of Springfield appears to have done most of the work on the front-end parts of the program. From its work, it has identified the services and needs of the target population for R3 services. The target location is Ward 2 in the City of Springfield, an area characterized by racial segregation, low income, low education and skills attainment, poor housing, and poor transportation. The City of Springfield utilized R3 funding to engage in stakeholder analysis by initiating multiple focus groups and interviews and developing an action plan.

Assessment and Planning & Service Delivery: East Springfield Community Center Commission

Overview

The East Springfield Community Center Commission, Inc. (ESC3) is a not-for-profit organization comprising individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences. The ESC3 has provided mentorship, school support, athletic programs, and civic duty experiences for nineteen years but has been an incorporated organization for only the last eight years. ESC3's program priorities focus on reentry and economic development. Priorities are selectively based on contributions from community stakeholders, health departments, social service agencies, policymakers, the Department of Corrections, probation and parole, and law enforcement.

R3 funding supported both an assessment and planning project as well as service delivery for ESC3. According to ESC3, the planning project aims to "assess means to create generational wealth through economic development in disproportionately impacted areas," "assess community needs through town hall meetings," and plan services "tailored to the needs expressed" by the community (East Springfield Community Center Commission, 2020a).

Its service delivery program is Project "Returning American Citizens Empowered" (R.A.C.E.). ESC3 proposed for R.A.C.E. to serve highly vulnerable and at-risk individuals ages 25 and up throughout Springfield, Illinois. R.A.C.E. focuses on at-risk areas of Springfield, which have concentrations of low-income individuals from all ethnicities. As described in the grant proposal, one target of R.A.C.E. is to evaluate 50 possible participants and select 30 ex-offenders with the highest risk factors. Then, by working closely with these ex-offenders and establishing trust, Project R.A.C.E aims to increase training and certification, decrease recidivism and unemployment rates, and reduce at-risk behavior by presenting alternatives to street life. The model is for Project R.A.C.E to identify individuals and groups needing outreach, mentorships, and behavioral change; to connect them to the program; and to link them to any additional support necessary to ensure success.

As proposed in the grant application, Project R.A.C.E. intends to reach and serve this at-risk population by hiring two intervention specialists familiar with the targeted neighborhoods and capable of building strong relationships with individuals and families in low-income and African American communities. These intervention specialists are to come from the targeted community and have demonstrated success in their lives. This approach aims to provide relevant reentry services for formerly incarcerated people and support and help them reintegrate into society after imprisonment. It aims to reduce criminal behavior, lower returns to prison, and promote positive development.

ESC3 received a year one assessment and planning grant of $80,899 and a year two extension in the amount of $33,708 for a total of $114,607. It received a year one service delivery grant of $728,093 and a year two extension in the same amount for a total of $1,456,186. The organization's current annual operating budget was reported in the grant application as $10,000.

Program Goal

For both grants, the program goal is to reduce the rate of recidivism and new criminal behavior among offenders released from prison through employment, training, and behavior change methods.

Community Context

We gathered data for the program's targeted R3 areas on five economic variables. All data were gathered from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) data profiles. Table 3 presents the economic conditions of the program's targeted census tracts and Illinois.

Table 3

Economic Conditions of Target R3 Areas and Illinois

Geography	Median HH Income ($)	Below Poverty (%)	Owner-Occupied Housing (%)	Unemployment Rate (%)	Employment-Population Ratio (%)
R3 area 687	50,870	21.1	66.2	7.7	64.5
R3 area 688	59,818	12.7	87.1	8.5	55.9
R3 area 689	30,677	31.7	77.9	7.5	48.1
R3 area 690	39,840	27.6	61.8	10.1	55.0
R3 area 691	24,528	48.7	25.0	10.4	49.0
R3 area 692	22,813	51.0	22.5	11.6	52.4
R3 area 694	24,861	45.2	34.0	9.5	32.7
R3 area 695	25,347	37.8	31.6	16.6	46.0
R3 area 696	24,946	53.0	35.1	18.3	48.1
R3 area 697	50,872	24.3	45.6	12.9	70.7
R3 area 699	29,559	33.4	53.0	8.2	54.6
R3 area 700	27,888	34.5	50.8	17.5	49.0
R3 area 701	48,958	35.7	68.1	7.5	49.5
R3 area 702	35,234	27.0	54.2	13.3	60.3
R3 area 703	47,917	15.0	66.0	5.9	55.4
R3 area 705	53,350	23.5	85.3	10.1	60.4
Illinois	65,886	12.5	66.1	5.9	61.2

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table S1901, B17001, DP04, and S2301 2019 5-year estimates

Table 4 details the racial composition of the grantee's service areas compared to Illinois.

Table 4

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Target R3 Areas and Illinois

Geography	Other Non-Hispanic (%)	Hispanic (%)	Black Non-Hispanic (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)
R3 area 687	0	.2	14.8	76.0
R3 area 688	.3	2.9	11.5	81.9
R3 area 689	.4	.3	14.0	80.7
R3 area 690	.6	2.9	9.3	79.3
R3 area 691	0	1.7	58.8	36.7
R3 area 692	.4	.6	38.6	57.9
R3 area 694	.1	.0	55.0	42.7
R3 area 695	0	7.2	68.2	21.6
R3 area 696	.6	.0	62.2	25.0
R3 area 697	0	1.3	33.0	57.6
R3 area 699	4.5	5.0	35.2	53.2
R3 area 700	0	1.5	66.3	24.7
R3 area 701	0	2.8	29.9	60.6
R3 area 702	0	.9	15.3	81.8
R3 area 703	.1	2.2	7.7	87.4
R3 area 705	2.1	.0	1.7	86.0
Illinois	.2	17.1	14.2	61.3

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table DP05 2019 5-year estimates

Alignment to R3 Program Priorities

American prisons and jails hold over 2.1 million individuals, and many of these individuals will return to their home communities once they have been found innocent or complete the sentence imposed for their unlawful conduct (Sawyer & Wagner, 2023). For our justice system to achieve its goal of increased public safety, it must take steps to ensure that these individuals can become successful contributing members of their communities.

More than 10% of those coming in and out of prisons and jails are homeless in the months preceding and following their incarcerations (The Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2016). Being homeless, being unstably housed, or living in a high-crime neighborhood heightens an individual's risk of reoffending. Currently in Springfield, Illinois, no reentry program is

focused on re-introducing individuals into the community from the local county jail and the region's prisons. Project R.A.C.E. provides such a focus and addresses the educational, employment, healthcare, housing, and family relationship needs of prisoners reentering the Springfield, Illinois community. The project provides former prisoners with much-needed support and connections to services to reduce recidivism and improve public safety.

Alignment to Restorative Justice

This program is consistent with the Risk-Need-Responsivity model developed in the 1980s and first formalized in 1990. The Risk-Need-Responsivity model has been used to assess and rehabilitate criminals in Canada and worldwide (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). According to the model, treatment and controls for offenders should be based on criminal justice risk and criminogenic need factors related to offending behaviors. Assigning the appropriate treatment, controls, and correctional programming can reduce criminal offending. The underlying theory is that offending is a product of criminal justice involvement and specific criminogenic needs. One can affect criminal behavior by attending to dynamic criminogenic needs through proper treatment, control, and programming. The model includes three core principles:

- Risk principle: Match the level of service to the offender's risk to re-offend.
- Need principle: Assess criminogenic needs and target them in treatment.
- Responsivity principle: Maximize the offender's ability to learn from a rehabilitative intervention by providing cognitive behavioral treatment and tailoring the intervention to the offender's learning style, motivation, abilities, and strengths.

Assessment and Planning Grant

In the grant proposal, ESC3 noted key factors critical to its building and planning process, including (East Springfield Community Center Commission, 2020a, p. 4):

1. Identify what agencies to contact based on the program strategy; develop a comprehensive list of partners; and build the partnership around offender needs (i.e., employment, housing, education, treatment) that ensure the program's goals are met.
2. Calculate the rate of recidivism in the County.
3. Determine the number of probation/parolees scheduled to be released in the year.
4. Identify the number of halfway houses in the community.
5. Identify the buy-in from the community in supporting the program.
6. Identify how many community drug and mental health facilities and what type of insurance are needed.
7. Know where restorative justice operations exist.
8. Determine the number of non-criminal justice agencies that work with ex-offenders
9. Prisoner deinstitutionalization.

For the evaluation/assessment, ESC3 staff indicated the following intentions (East Springfield Community Center Commission, 2020a, p. 5):

> Evaluation will be a set of linked activities, and the process for undertaking this evaluation will include four main phases – planning (logic model development, defining purpose and scope, and selecting an evaluator), development (creating an evaluation plan),

implementation (data collected and analyzed), and action and improvement (communicating and applying findings).

The critical questions to be answered are the following:

1. Does the problem occur frequently? (Frequency)
2. How long has the problem lasted? (Duration)
3. Does the problem affect many people? (Scope or range)
4. Is the problem disruptive to personal or community life and possibly intense? (Severity)
5. Does the problem deprive people of legal or moral rights? (Equity)
6. Does the problem affect the economic stability of the community? (Economy)
7. Does the problem reflect a health and safety issue in the community? (Public health & Safety)

In meetings with ESC3 leadership and subsequent follow ups, they reported the following groups with whom they had met or were still planning to meet and reasons for meeting:

- Illinois Department of Corrections for client referrals
- Sangamon County Department of Probation and Parole for client referrals
- Springfield, Illinois Mayors' office for violent offender status
- Springfield, Illinois Police Department for offender tracking
- Contact Ministries Homeless Shelter-Resource for backup residential
- Urban Action Network for support for healthcare initiatives
- Southern Illinois University School of Medicine for healthcare initiatives
- Wynne Coplea for community resources
- University Illinois of Chicago for healthcare

Methods of Planning and Assessment

For the assessment and planning grant, ESC3 noted, “We have chosen to model one of the most praised assessment and planning tools, which is the Community Tool Box. The Community Tool Box is a free online resource for those working to build healthier communities and bring about social change. It offers thousands of pages of tips and tools for taking action in communities” (East Springfield Community Center Commission, 2020a, p. 4). Thus, ES3 aligned its activities with the openly available Community Tool Box and, in particular, used its templates to create a logic model (Community Tool Box, 2022).

Service Delivery Grant

According to the R3 service delivery proposal narrative, ESC3 planned to offer programs to aid economic empowerment and reduce recidivism and criminal behavior. In the application, ESC3 describes its program, Project R.A.C.E. The program's goals are to “Reduce the rate of recidivism and new criminal behavior among offenders released from prison to community supervision through the provision of employment, training, and behavior change methods” (East Springfield Community Center Commission, 2020b, p. 17).

Risk-Need-Responsivity Model

According to the application, the Project R.A.C.E. program is consistent with the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model. As introduced earlier in this report, Bonta and Andrews described the three core principles of the model: the risk principle, the need principle, and the responsivity principle (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). Further, Bonta and Andrews elaborated:

> There are two parts to the responsivity principle: general and specific responsivity. General responsivity calls for using cognitive, social learning methods to influence behavior. Cognitive and social learning strategies are the most effective regardless of the type of offender (i.e., female offender, Aboriginal offender, psychopath, sex offender). Core correctional practices such as prosocial modeling, appropriate reinforcement and disapproval, and problem-solving (Dowden & Andrews, 2004) spell out the specific skills represented in a cognitive, social learning approach (Bonta & Andrews, 2007, p. 9)

The RNR model assumes the General Personality and Cognitive Social Learning (GPCSL) perspective of criminal behavior (Andrews et al., 1990). Essentially, criminal behavior is learned from a combination of the individual's expectations and the consequences of their actions. As Bonta and Andrews specified:

> Criminal behavior is likely when the rewards and costs for crime outweigh the rewards and costs for prosocial behavior. Others can deliver rewards and costs (e.g., family, friends, teachers, employers, and co-workers). They can be produced from within (e.g., feelings of pride and shame). Sometimes they arise automatically from the behavior itself (e.g., a feeling of relaxation after ingesting a drug or the feeling of excitement when breaking into a house) (Bonta & Andrews, 2007, p. 21).

Those using the RNR model conduct risk assessments that sample the rewards and costs related to criminal conduct. Then previous offenders are directed toward interventions that help address identified risk factors that might cause them to recidivate.

Program Logic Model

An initial logic model was constructed depicting in detail the inputs, activities, outputs, and associated outcomes for the East Springfield Community Center Commission. The initial logic model was based primarily on the program proposal, so it represented a “rough draft” based on the self-reported elements provided by the organization. After meeting with the ESC3 service provider and providing a draft of the model, the evaluators developed an updated logic model to incorporate staff feedback. The logic model reflects the differences between expected inputs, processes, and partners and what occurred during the year. There were significant differences in the outputs associated with service delivery for this provider. The evaluation team worked with the provider to develop their logic model. The provider faced staffing issues that impacted their ability to scale and build capacity. As the logic model illustrates, this provider has focused principally on housing location and support to reduce recidivism amount formerly incarcerated clients. The logic model is detailed in Appendix C.

Results of Site Visits

The evaluation team met with the ESC3 service provider and the ESC3 service provider detailed how R3 support assisted with their overarching mission. In our meeting, follow-up emails, and

meetings with program staff, challenges related to staffing, scope, capacity, and clients emerged as potential constraints on service delivery. Due to these challenges, the service provider appeared to have deviated significantly from the goals detailed in their R3 proposal. Specifically, challenges the program encountered related to service delivery partners. Additionally, lack of a systematic approach to program design and implementation resulted in underdeveloped structures and processes, which may impede the service provider's capacity and ability to scale in the future. Researchers requested data related to intake, processes, and reporting, and those data were provided. An analysis of the data provided is detailed in the Findings and Analysis section of this report.

Service Delivery: Land of Lincoln Legal Aid

Overview

Organized in 1972, Land of Lincoln Legal Aid, Inc. (LOLLA) is an Illinois not-for-profit corporation whose mission is to provide low-income and senior residents of central and southern Illinois with high-quality civil legal services. It offers advice, representation, advocacy, education, and collaboration or connections to empower clients. It gives them a voice and helps them obtain and maintain their basic human needs.

LOLLA is the sole provider of the full range of civil legal services for low-income persons in 65 central and southern Illinois counties. It has five regional offices, three satellite offices, and a centralized Legal Advice and Referral Center (LARC). LOLLA's current staffing includes 53 attorneys, 6 paralegals, 5 intake specialists, and 21 secretaries/administrative staff. It has over 650 active pro bono attorneys who volunteer to take cases throughout the region.

The R3 grant awarded to Land of Lincoln Legal Aid supports services in the areas covered by two of its regional offices: The Eastern Regional Office and the Northern Regional Office, which fall under the R3 funding regions of Northeast Central and Central respectively. LOLLA's Eastern Regional Office (ERO), located in Champaign, Illinois (serving Macon County) and its Northern Regional Office (NRO), located in Springfield, are responsible for implementing the R3 project. Activities and services include community intake/outreach, prioritizing and streamlining referrals for those with unmet legal needs, and attending regularly scheduled meetings with the COs. These meetings ensure continual communication regarding community needs and the improvement of services. The project also includes participating in community events, such as "Know Your Rights" presentations, expungement and sealing fairs, and attending other collaborative meetings suggested by COs to promote advocacy and change.
The R3 program provides direct legal assistance to community residents, from advice and brief services to extended representation, including litigation. The program targets communities of color and includes holistic screening to determine and address additional unmet needs affecting a community member's health, safety, or economic well-being. The project prioritizes community lawyering and embedding its services within the COs serving the R3 region.

Through advice, representation, advocacy, education, and collaboration, as stated in its program narrative, LOLLA seeks "… to achieve justice for those whose voices might otherwise not be heard, to empower individuals to advocate for themselves, and to make positive changes in the communities we serve" (Land of Lincoln Legal Aid, 2022).

Eastern Regional Office

The Eastern Regional Office (ERO), assessed here, is located in Champaign, R3 area 544. It serves a 14-county service area, and Champaign and Vermilion Counties have the highest poverty and minority population level in their service territory.

Of the 657 cases closed on behalf of Champaign County residents, 46% were on behalf of minority clients. Of the 311 cases closed on behalf of Vermilion County residents, 23% were on behalf of minority clients. ERO attorneys provided extended service, including litigation, in approximately 50% of these cases. In addition to casework, the ERO partners with many

community organizations in Champaign and Vermilion Counties for outreach, community education, and collaborative, systemic work.

In Champaign County, the ERO has served the community for nearly 50 years by partnering with many community organizations, such as Family Service, workforce development boards, Champaign County Health Care Consumers, the Urban League, the Salvation Army, Frances Nelson Community Health Center, and Carle Foundation Hospital and clinics. It has created projects to assist with vehicle purchases and auto repair, asset development and home ownership, community gardening and improved nutrition, and veterans' support.

In Vermilion County, the ERO has served the community for nearly 50 years by partnering with many community organizations, such as CRIS Senior Services, workforce development boards, the East Central Illinois Community Action Agency (which hosted us for office hours for many years), the Salvation Army, the VA Medical Center, and Carle Clinic. In addition to the projects outlined above, the ERO provides services to address domestic violence issues.

LOLLA provides direct legal assistance to community residents. It conducts outreach and intake, as requested by community organizations (COs), and prioritizes their referrals. Land of Lincoln partners with COs to provide events targeting marginalized populations with unmet legal needs. For example, community events include the "Know Your Rights" presentations, expungement and sealing fairs, and collaborative meetings to promote advocacy and change.

Northern Regional Office

Land of Lincoln's Restorative Justice Project through the Northern Regional Office (NRO) is a partnership between Land of Lincoln Legal Aid (LOLLA) and community organizations (COs) serving individuals living in all 36 R3 areas in Macon and Sangamon Counties, primarily in communities of color. LOLLA identified the unmet needs of their community's residents using community member surveys, client surveys, focus groups, and input from COs. Services support those harmed by poverty, violence, and over-incarceration, including efforts to overcome barriers to justice and racial equality.

Program Goals

The program will:

- Reduce or eliminate legal barriers to health, safety, and economic well-being.
- Reduce concentrated poverty.
- Promote employment infrastructure.
- Promote capacity building associated with social determinants of health.

Community Context

We gathered data for the program's targeted R3 areas on five economic variables. All data were gathered from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) data profiles. Table 5 presents the economic conditions of the Eastern Regional Office's targeted census tracts and Illinois.

Table 5

Economic Conditions of Eastern Regional Office's Target R3 Areas and Illinois

Geography	Median HH Income ($)	% Below Poverty	% Owner-Occupied Housing	Unemployment Rate (%)	Employment -Population Ratio (%)
R3 area 544	21,385	43.2	38.9	12.2	50.8
R3 area 545	40,074	24.3	54.4	10.3	65.1
R3 area 546	54,864	8.5	30.0	2.6	77.3
R3 area 547	36,602	28.3	33.3	10.3	68.3
R3 area 548	21,563	49.6	16.7	8.0	55.5
R3 area 549	60,774	14.8	54.2	7.4	68.8
R3 area 550	50,253	14.7	53.0	6.7	60.2
R3 area 551	20,366	54.2	34.2	7.8	34.3
R3 area 552	28,352	39.6	49.5	29.3	40.8
R3 area 553	24,338	39.2	53.7	20.8	41.1
R3 area 554	28,354	51.3	38.6	9.9	54.1
R3 area 555	38,135	24.3	50.4	5.3	51.4
R3 area 556	27,778	37.1	49.3	14.7	43.8
R3 area 557	42,945	15.3	72.4	NA	NA
R3 area 558	36,017	33.5	54.1	9.8	25.8
Illinois	65,886	12.5	66.1	5.9	61.2

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table S1901, B17001, DP04, and S2301 2019 5-year estimates

Table 6 details the racial composition of the Eastern Regional Office's service areas and Illinois.

Table 6

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Eastern Regional Office's Target R3 Areas and Illinois

Geography	Other Non-Hispanic (%)	Hispanic (%)	Black Non-Hispanic (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)
R3 area 544	0	3.2	75.0	13.6
R3 area 545	0	12.1	33.7	45.1
R3 area 546	0	4.3	24.0	52.0

R3 area 547	.9	15.7	49.1	31.5
R3 area 548	1.8	3.4	32.2	30.1
R3 area 549	0	7.5	23.1	60.4
R3 area 550	.3	8.1	20.3	58.3
R3 area 551	0	5.6	16.6	74.0
R3 area 552	0	4.1	51.5	39.1
R3 area 553	0	17.2	40.2	38.6
R3 area 554	.3	1.1	68.0	24.6
R3 area 555	0	1.7	31.9	61.1
R3 area 556	0	11.6	31.2	54.7
R3 area 557	0	9.9	1.1	88.0
R3 area 558	0	12.4	42.0	42.9
Illinois	.2	17.1	14.2	61.3

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table DP05 2019 5-year estimates

We gathered data for the program's targeted R3 areas on five economic variables. All data were gathered from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) data profiles. Table 7 presents the economic conditions of the Northern Regional Office's targeted census tracts and Illinois.

Table 7

Economic Conditions of Northern Regional Office's Target R3 Areas and Illinois

Geography	Median HH Income ($)	Below Poverty (%)	Owner-Occupied Housing (%)	Unemployment Rate (%)	Employment-Population Ratio (%)
R3 area 666	24,406	38.7	40.7	16.7	52.1
R3 area 667	28,659	32.0	50.3	10.7	46.1
R3 area 668	39,519	29.6	83.9	19.7	42.5
R3 area 669	23,926	45.8	31.7	7.5	57.1
R3 area 670	15,201	60.4	36.8	18.5	43.4
R3 area 671	25,063	36.7	42.1	22.8	46.1
R3 area 672	32,500	31.4	48.5	12.3	49.6
R3 area 673	41,875	19.5	59.4	10.8	61.8

R3 area 674	31,382	28.0	47.6	19.1	47.5
R3 area 675	25,273	28.7	41.0	17.1	41.2
R3 area 676	27,273	29.9	73.2	17.2	52.8
R3 area 677	28,991	29.0	27.6	9.9	47.2
R3 area 678	16,571	57.9	9.1	29.1	23.3
R3 area 683	39,613	20.4	75.1	9.7	56.4
R3 area 684	36,512	22.6	54.1	6.1	60.9
R3 area 685	34,904	28.0	46.1	14.0	47.1
R3 area 686	47,560	8.1	78.8	3.3	61.2
R3 area 687	50,870	21.1	66.2	7.7	64.5
R3 area 688	59,818	12.7	87.1	8.5	55.9
R3 area 689	30,677	31.7	77.9	7.5	48.1
R3 area 690	39,840	27.6	61.8	10.1	55.0
R3 area 691	24,528	48.7	25.0	10.4	49.0
R3 area 692	22,813	51.0	22.5	11.6	52.4
R3 area 693	45,266	20.6	28.4	7.7	68.7
R3 area 694	24,861	45.2	34.0	9.5	32.7
R3 area 695	25,347	37.8	31.6	16.6	46.0
R3 area 696	24,946	53.0	35.1	18.3	48.1
R3 area 697	50,872	24.3	45.6	12.9	70.7
R3 area 698	32,874	27.4	31.4	7.0	67.6
R3 area 699	29,559	33.4	53.0	8.2	54.6
R3 area 700	27,888	34.5	50.8	17.5	49.0
R3 area 701	48,958	35.7	68.1	7.5	49.5
R3 area 702	35,234	27.0	54.2	13.3	60.3
R3 area 703	47,917	15.0	66.0	5.9	55.4
R3 area 704	46,837	12.3	67.0	5.0	67.0
R3 area 705	53,350	23.5	85.3	10.1	60.4
Illinois	65,886	12.5	66.1	5.9	61.2

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table S1901, B17001, DP04, and S2301 2019 5-year estimates

Table 8 details the racial composition of the Northern Regional Office's service areas and Illinois.

Table 8

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Northern Regional Office's Target R3 Areas and Illinois

Geography	Other Non-Hispanic (%)	Hispanic (%)	Black Non-Hispanic (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)
R3 area 666	1.0	1.0	37.6	48.1
R3 area 667	0	4.1	46.1	41.9
R3 area 668	0	1.7	36.2	50.3
R3 area 669	.4	3.8	22.0	59.5
R3 area 670	0	.8	55.4	31.5
R3 area 671	0	.2	54.5	36.3
R3 area 672	0	3.1	18.8	68.7
R3 area 673	1.1	3.7	29.9	62.6
R3 area 674	1.8	3.1	21.4	68.4
R3 area 675	0	8.7	28.7	54.6
R3 area 676	0	2.1	1.3	74.6
R3 area 677	0	6.1	21.4	61.0
R3 area 678	.5	3.7	67.5	21.8
R3 area 683	0	.4	5.6	89.8
R3 area 684	0	4.5	25.6	66.7
R3 area 685	0	3.8	16.2	74.0
R3 area 686	0	2.0	7.1	87.7
R3 area 687	0	.2	14.8	76.0
R3 area 688	.3	2.9	11.5	81.9
R3 area 689	.4	.3	14.0	80.7
R3 area 690	.6	2.9	9.3	79.3

R3 area 691	0	1.7	58.8	36.7
R3 area 692	.4	.6	38.6	57.9
R3 area 693	0	5.5	28.1	60.1
R3 area 694	.1	0	55.0	42.7
R3 area 695	0	7.2	68.2	21.6
R3 area 696	.6	0	62.2	25.0
R3 area 697	0	1.3	33.0	57.6
R3 area 698	0	4.8	22.5	70.6
R3 area 699	4.5	5.0	35.2	53.2
R3 area 700	0	1.5	66.3	24.7
R3 area 701	0	2.8	29.9	60.6
R3 area 702	0	.9	15.3	81.8
R3 area 703	.1	2.2	87.4	87.4
R3 area 704	.1	3.8	15.1	75.0
R3 area 705	2.1	0	1.7	86.0
Illinois	.2	17.1	14.2	61.3

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table DP05 2019 5-year estimates

Program Services

Replicated at both Central and Northeast Central sites, LOLLA completed a client needs assessment mid-summer 2019, including a community survey with over 400 respondents, client surveys, focus groups, and outreach to community organizations. The bullets below outline assessment-based retooling of priorities for providing high-quality legal assistance.

- *Public Benefits:* The most prevalent civil legal issue was the denial, reduction, or termination of various income benefits, as experienced by 40% of client survey participants. For example, 86% of the clients reported that they or someone in their household received Medicaid or Medicare. Of these individuals, 24% experienced denial of payment for specific medicines or treatments, and 20% were terminated from or denied Medicaid/Medicare. Without adequate income or healthcare, individuals and their families cannot meet vital day-to-day needs.
- *Tenant issues:* The majority (64%) of surveyed clients and community members were recent or current renters. The most common legal issue among renters was eviction, followed by a landlord's refusal to make repairs. Eviction or the threat of it is common for those living at or below the poverty level. Evicted families often end up in shelters or

in unsafe housing. They face significant barriers to obtaining subsequent rental housing, and some tenants evicted from federally subsidized or public housing units may never be able to get housing assistance again.

- *Consumer protection:* The needs assessment showed debt as another top unmet need. Medical bills were the highest type of unpaid bills at 36%, followed by utility bills at 33%. For those with unpaid bills, the consequences were significant. Eighteen percent (18%) of respondents indicated they had utilities shut off, 12% had court-ordered payments, 8% had their car repossessed, 7% had their income garnished, and 3% had their bank accounts frozen.
- *Expungement/sealing of criminal records:* One-third (31%) of all clients reported having criminal records. Of the one-third, 70% advised that their criminal record prevented them from getting a job, and 57% of clients said it prevented them from obtaining housing.

Alignment to R3 Program Priorities

Eastern Regional Office

LOLLA's R3 program is equity-based and focuses on community-identified needs, as informed by trusted Community Organizations (COs) and outlined above. Unmet legal needs continue to have a disproportionately negative effect on minority populations. The ERO, serving Champaign and Vermilion Counties, is the only legal aid program in these counties providing free, full-service delivery to the identified priority areas of civil legal aid. The services and priorities are led and staffed by community citizens. They are the product of working collaboratively and are subject to revision based on meetings with partners to discuss challenges and successes and feedback from COs.

Northern Regional Office

The NRO targets unmet legal needs based on the needs assessment and recommendations by the COs (i.e., solutions that value the knowledge and perspectives of local community stakeholders). Civil legal aid work includes consumer bankruptcy, including asset and income protection, protection from consumer fraud, and income and health benefits (e.g., social security, supplemental nutrition assistance program, temporary assistance for needy families, Medicaid, Medicare, and other public benefits eligibility). It also addresses housing, including but not limited to eviction defense, access to housing, and approval of more time before eviction. Legal aid covers education cases (including discipline, special education, and access), expungement/sealing, and driver's license reinstatement.

Alignment to Restorative Justice

The R3 program was created to meet the needs of communities impacted by economic disinvestment, violence, and the severe and multilayered harm caused by the war on drugs. Poor and disadvantaged communities, particularly communities of color, have experienced severe negative consequences of the war on drugs, especially marijuana. LOLLA's project provides services and activities to those R3 areas that are high-poverty, minority neighborhoods/cities that have been underserved, over-policed, ravaged by violence, and lack adequate and effective infrastructures.

Program Theory

The grant application did not provide a specific model or theory underlying the program service delivery. However, the staff followed up with the research team to provide additional information about the theory/models supporting their activities.

As LOLLA staff described, “Access to Justice is an overarching theory that drives our work.” Access to justice refers to the theory that it is a human right to understand and utilize the legal system to advocate for oneself and one's interests (Howard University School of Law Library, 2022). According to *Access to Justice is a Necessary Condition:*

> There is no access to justice where citizens (especially marginalized groups) fear the system, see it as alien, and do not access it; where the justice system is financially inaccessible; where individuals have no lawyers; where they do not have information or knowledge of rights; or where there is a weak justice system. Access to justice involves normative legal protection, legal awareness, legal aid and counsel, adjudication, enforcement, and civil society oversight (United States Institute of Peace, n.d,, para. 1).

The provision of legal aid services through Legal Services Corporation (LSC) is one method/model used to improve access to justice. LOLLA staff noted that as a Legal Services Corporation grantee, they utilize this model. There is evidence in the literature of the economic benefits and impacts on social determinants of health for people receiving assistance through legal aid services (Abel, 2012).

As noted in the grant proposal for R3 funding, LSC is LOLLA’s largest current grant funder at $3 million, constituting 34% of its grant funding. LSC is a not-for-profit corporation established by Congress in the Legal Services Corporation Act of 1974 and amended in 1977 (Legal Services Corporation, 2017; Legal Services Corporation, 2020).

To understand the principles that guide LOLLA’s R3 funding, it is important to know the purposes and framework that drive LSC and, by extension, LOLLA. A Congressional document lays out the purposes for the Legal Services Corporation, as follows:

> Congress finds and declares that — 1) there is a need to provide equal access to the system of justice in our Nation for individuals who seek redress of grievances; 2) there is a need to provide high-quality legal assistance to those who would be otherwise unable to afford adequate legal counsel and to continue the present vital legal services program; 3) providing legal assistance to those who face an economic barrier to adequate legal counsel will serve best the ends of justice and assist in improving opportunities for low-income persons consistent with the purposes of this Act (Legal Services Corporation Act, 1974).

Accordingly, the LSC 2020 Annual Report asserts, “The purpose of LSC is to provide financial support to independent organizations that directly provide legal assistance in non-criminal proceedings or matters to persons financially unable to afford such counsel” (Legal Services Corporation, 2020, p. 36). LOLLA is among many organizations that receive funding from LSC to serve that purpose.

The LSC's primary aim is to reduce the "justice gap." Working with the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, LSC created a report on what they refer to as the justice gap. The LSC report defines the justice gap "as the difference between the civil legal needs of low-income Americans and the resources available to meet those needs" (Legal Services Corporation, 2022, p. 6). Survey report data indicated that "in the past year, 71% of low-income households experienced at least one civil legal problem"; however, "86% of the civil legal problems reported by low-income Americans in the past year received inadequate or no legal help" (Legal Services Corporation, 2022, p. 6). The chief reasons reported for not seeking legal help were: "Deciding to deal with a problem on one's own; not knowing where to look for help or what resources might exist; not being sure whether their problem is 'legal'" (Legal Services Corporation, 2022, p. 7).

The general idea of a justice gap has been around for some time in the legal/justice literature. The LSC report has helped to quantify the problem. As quantified by the LSC report, efforts to address the justice gap are well represented in the recent peer-reviewed literature (Cannon, 2022; Geiger, 2021; Keene et al., 2020; Lannetti & Eaton, 2022; Waldman, 2019). As noted in these studies, at its most basic level, the gap will be addressed through legal services like those offered by LSC and those organizations it funds, such as LOLLA, through partnerships, and through greatly expanding pro-bono work (Keene et al., 2020; Lannetti & Eaton, 2022).

In addition, staff indicated that LOLLA employs other models to deliver services. Many innovative ways exist to help people access justice (Udell, 2016). For example, to the extent that LOLLA has embedded paralegals and attorneys in the identified communities to address legal needs of individuals and share concerns among residents, the R3 project utilizes a model similar to a community-based legal empowerment model. The community-based legal empowerment movement "values individual legal services, but prioritizes systemic reform, including expanding the capacity of communities to advocate for themselves" (Udell, 2016, p. 76). In this approach, organizations use community-based paralegals and others in the community to help connect people to services, empower them to connect to legal services and advocate for policy change.

Results of Site Visits

The evaluation team met with LOLLA R3 service providers on two separate occasions. LOLLA service providers were very specific regarding how the organization has leveraged R3 support. This specificity was due to a planning process initiated several months before the submission of their grant application. It ensured that their organizational mission aligned with R3 interests. A key strategy of their project is to build community trust by leveraging community partners. Those community partners, in turn, provide a conduit for R3 services to clients. This strategy informed how LOLLA has interacted with clients in the Central and Northeast service areas. Specifically, Land of Lincoln Legal Aid works primarily with organizations with a significant community presence. R3 funds have made legal services more available to populations that previously could not access those services.

LOLLA has invested significantly in training its community partners to identify potential R3 clients. R3 funding has helped LOLLA bring services to areas where its services did not previously exist. In addition, LOLLA has participated in several community events and

engagement opportunities to build social capital in both regions. The service provider appears to have well-developed structures and processes to deliver required R3 services with the capacity to scale. One challenge the provider has identified is tying the funding to the region instead of the area of law. Other challenges relate to training community partners in R3 client identification and to overcoming limitations that COVID imposed on some of their client engagement opportunities.

LOLLA received a year one grant of $57,486 and received a year two extension in the same amount for a funding total of $114,972 in the Northeast Central funding region. Additionally, LOLLA received a grant in the Central funding region for $114,918 in both year one and year two, for a total of $229,836. The organization's current annual operating budget was reported in the proposal as $8,124,424.

Program Logic Models

An initial logic model was constructed for the service provider depicting in detail the inputs, activities, outputs, and associated outcomes for the LOLLA Northeast Central and Central R3 Program. The evaluation team constructed an initial logic model for the LOLLA Northeast Central and Central R3 Program team. It depicted the inputs, activities, outputs, and related outcomes and was based primarily on the program proposal. It represented a "rough draft" based on the self-reported elements of the LOLLA. After meeting with the service provider team and sharing a model draft, the evaluation team developed an updated logic model to incorporate staff feedback. The logic model reflects the differences between expected inputs, processes, and partners and what actually occurred during the year.

In the Northeast Central region, there were very few differences in the outputs associated with service delivery for this provider. In the Central region, there were no differences in expected inputs, processes, and partners between what was submitted and what happened during the year. The logic models are detailed in Appendix C.

Service Delivery: Board of Education, City of Peoria

Overview

The Peoria Public Schools (PPS) program, "Hope, Health, and Healing," seeks to serve students in its district by helping them meet basic needs, receive legal support, and utilize economic development opportunities. It also helps them acquire skills for reentering the community after imprisonment, for disengaging from and avoiding being a victim of violence, and for healthy development throughout their youth. The intention is to serve students both before and after their behavior brings them into contact with the law. The service area for the program mostly aligns with four zip codes of the city of Peoria and includes services at twelve schools.

The program focuses on all five R3 service priorities in its aims to expand and support programs offered at the Peoria Public Schools Wraparound Center and to expand the reentry program at the Peoria County Jail. The five R3 priorities are civil legal aid, economic development, reentry, violence prevention, and youth development. The program's design separates each service delivery partner into one of the five R3 priority categories; however, many interventions cross multiple service priority boundaries and thus interact with multiple service delivery partners. reentry

The Peoria Board of Education program has four collaborative partners and several other groups involved in providing services. The four collaborative partners proposed in their application include the Peoria public schools (overall support and the "What I Need Now in Ninth Grade" (W.I.N.N.I.N.G) program to help youth transition into high school), the Hult Center for Healthy Living, the Peoria County Sheriff's office (offering Successful Transition and reentry classes and support), Kavanaugh, Scully, Sudow, White & Frederick P.C., and the Chestnut Health Systems. Additional groups involved in the program include The Order of St Francis (OST) Medical Center and its OST Strive program, Jobs Partnership Peoria, and Family Core.

The partnership with the Sheriff's Office, however, did not pan out. In one of our meetings, the program staff reported that they had developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Sheriff's Office to work with its STAR program. As the grant proposal narrative indicated, the Sheriff's program focuses on the Risk-Need-Responsibility (RNR) Model. One of our meetings with district program staff indicated that the partner's follow-through did not occur, so the staff "pivoted away" from that portion of the wraparound services. From our evaluation perspective, this is not uncommon for programs. Plans are made, but changes are often necessary for the implementation phase. Nonetheless, mentoring and assistance are intended to be woven throughout the program.

PPS received a year one grant of $858,669 and a year two extension in the same amount, for a total of $1,717,338. The organization's current annual operating budget, as reported in the proposal, is $208,516,237.

Program Goals

- Reduce recidivism.
- Reduce concentrated poverty.
- Reduce gun violence.

- Secure housing and employment.

Community Context

We gathered data for the program's targeted R3 areas on five economic variables. All data were gathered from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) data profiles. Table 9 presents the economic conditions of the program's targeted census tracts and Illinois.

Table 9

Economic Conditions of Target R3 Areas and Illinois

Geography	Median HH Income ($)	Below Poverty (%)	Owner-Occupied Housing (%)	Unemployment Rate (%)	Employment-Population Ratio (%)
R3 area 642	29,076	44.0	49.6	23.7	44.0
R3 area 643	25,750	36.9	50.2	18.7	42.4
R3 area 644	17,563	44.0	NA	28.6	28.7
R3 area 645	33,261	38.5	46.1	25.3	41.5
R3 area 646	12,744	67.8	3.6	31.3	32.6
R3 area 647	16,736	56.4	17.8	17.8	43.0
R3 area 648	18,316	53.7	22.2	20.2	34.7
R3 area 649	23,686	40.4	40.5	26.2	48.2
R3 area 650	24,338	38.6	27.6	20.8	49.7
R3 area 651	35,823	34.0	35.9	7.6	53.4
R3 area 652	40,652	24.3	58.1	11.9	60.8
R3 area 653	46,196	15.4	58.4	7.5	66.3
R3 area 654	50,492	14.4	70.2	11.3	65.9
R3 area 655	42,649	31.1	50.8	12.6	55.5
R3 area 656	52,273	18.5	71.7	10.8	55.9
R3 area 657	44,434	13.7	53.4	10.6	45.8
R3 area 658	40,446	24.0	54.5	10.4	46.2
Illinois	65,886	12.5	66.1	5.9	61.2

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table S1901, B17001, DP04, and S2301 2019 5-year estimates

Table 10 details the racial composition of the grantee's service areas compared to Illinois.

Table 10

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Target R3 Areas and Illinois

Geography	Other Non-Hispanic (%)	Hispanic (%)	Black Non-Hispanic (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)
R3 area 642	.6	11.9	55.2	31.9
R3 area 643	0	11.9	41.8	42.8
R3 area 644	0	7.7	59.9	28.0
R3 area 645	0	7.1	60.4	29.5
R3 area 646	0	3.5	78.0	17.8
R3 area 647	0	10.5	37.1	43.7
R3 area 648	0	21.2	44.6	33.9
R3 area 649	0	15.7	32.9	48.0
R3 area 650	0	7.1	54.0	29.1
R3 area 651	0	6.0	29.9	55.2
R3 area 652	0	9.8	61.3	25.7
R3 area 653	0	9.5	34.0	53.4
R3 area 654	0	10.7	25.3	54.7
R3 area 655	.6	6.6	51.9	28.6
R3 area 656	0	4.1	39.7	47.4
R3 area 657	0	7.7	26.1	62.6
R3 area 658	.8	1.8	28.7	63.3
Illinois	.2	17.1	14.2	61.3

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table DP05 2019 5-year estimates

Program Services

1. Provide Legal Resources
    a. The program provides legal resources for students in the form of an attorney who supports individuals filling out legal documents and needing legal representation and guidance as they navigate the legal system–criminal justice, family law, and housing cases. Justice advocates provide a second legal resource to support students involved in the criminal justice system. Justice advocates are not attorneys but provide mentoring, guidance, and support for students engaged in the justice system.

2. Employment Readiness Skills and Jobs
    a. The program provides employment readiness skills and jobs for students and aids them with basic needs, such as access to the food pantry and referrals to health and wellness agencies. Career coaches work in conjunction with justice advocates to provide mentoring and guidance to students.
3. Reentry Interventions for Students
    a. Another focus area in the program is helping students succeed in reentry after having encountered the justice system. For those who have been incarcerated or otherwise engaged with the judicial system the primary goal is to help reduce or remove barriers to reentry. These individuals typically encounter barriers to getting jobs, attaining housing, providing for children and families, and becoming otherwise positive contributing members of the community. Ultimately, services that the program provides link to the goals of reducing recidivism, improving public safety, and saving taxpayer money.
4. Violence Prevention Program
    a. The Order of Saint Francis (OSF) Medical Center in Peoria, Illinois runs OSF Strive to provide counseling and other services to guide individuals through the healing process needed after trauma. This service addresses program goals related to reducing and/or preventing violence and the consequences of violence.
5. W.I.N.N.I.N.G.
    a. The District provides a summer program, W.I.N.N.I.N.G., for students between eighth and ninth grade to facilitate their transition to high school. W.I.N.N.I.N.G. targets thirty incoming freshman students. Students participate in activities and presentations to prepare for a successful transition to high school.
6. Youth Development Services
    a. Youth development services are interwoven among all the other services provided by the program. Youth developmental services aim to provide supportive interventions for students who are already engaged with the justice system or are demonstrating aggressive behaviors in school. Hult Center for Healthy Living, a Peoria nonprofit provider of comprehensive health education and wellness services, provides services for youth development.

Alignment to R3 Program Priorities

Program activities address all five R3 priorities. To address youth development the program focuses on community interventions, social and behavioral skills training, and prevention of adverse childhood experiences trauma. Hult Center for Healthy Living offers preventative health and violence workshops for students. OSF Strive focuses on recovery and healing from adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Career coaches and justice advocates focus on social and behavioral skills training and community intervention.

Economic development is addressed through various interventions as well. These include interventions conducted by career coaches, justice advocates, OSF Strive staff, and staff in Jobs Partnership to provide occupational and job training, customized training programs, and workforce intermediaries.

Services related to violence prevention are provided by career coaches, justice advocates, and staff in the Chestnut Health Systems. Chestnut Health works on abeyance, a temporary suspension of adjudication or a suspended sentence allowing individuals to meet certain conditions instead of serving a sentence. The strategy-environment relationship is managed through Chestnut's and Family Core's efforts. Family Core has worked in district schools for approximately ten years on students' social and emotional learning needs. These services, as well as all intervention activities, address the strategy of changing individual knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors by teaching conflict resolution and social and job skills training.

Civil legal aid is managed by a new R3-funded attorney hired by the District and OSF Strive. They provide services for students and families, such as reading legal documents to provide consumer protections, addressing family court needs, helping to fill out forms for income maintenance, helping to understand legal documents associated with house and health, and, most specifically, working on expungement and sealing of criminal records.

Adults mentoring youth is a common thread in all partners' work. The justice advocates and career coaches focus on helping students successfully return to school to gain credits and, if old enough, to get a job. As noted, the Sheriff's program did not connect as expected with the other programs. However, the other supporting service providers connected students to physical and behavioral health services, childcare, legal assistance, housing, social support, basic needs, and return to education.

Alignment to Restorative Justice

For the goal of restorative justice, four collaborative partners focus on some aspect of the repair work that needs to happen after a crime has been committed, as follows:

1. Peoria Public Schools' commitment to justice advocates and career coaches provides reentry opportunities through skill development, mentoring relationships, and support for securing a job. These repairs support the individual and help them define a purpose to better their lives.
2. Hult Center for Healthy Living informs students how to make good choices in their lives, avoid decisions that will lead to harmful consequences, and give students a voice in improving their schools. The attorney provides support with expungements and other legal issues to allow students to move on from past situations and apply for jobs without a former record holding them back.
3. Chestnut Health Systems support students as they deal with life's challenges before and after convictions. Counseling support can help students understand the consequences of their actions and the "why" behind them and can help them move forward by making better choices.

Program Theory

In their grant proposal narrative, the Peoria School District indicated that the "Hope, Health, and Healing" wraparound services program intended to provide several services to students to help them meet basic needs, including "providing legal support, economic development opportunities, reentry skills, violence prevention, and youth development to students in the district" (Board of

Education, City of Peoria, 2020, p. 8). Furthermore, as part of these services, the program described that its aim for each support was to "connect students to physical and behavioral health services, childcare, legal assistance, housing, social support, basic needs, and return to education" (Board of Education, City of Peoria, 2020, p. 12). Hence, in the program's implementation, several partners provide the services to which students are directed.

Wraparound Services

The District did not specifically note citations in the literature for wraparound services, but that may be because they use a general approach rather than one specific wraparound model. The District did briefly describe some models/theories partners used to deliver their services.

The concept of wraparound services has been around for decades. The term is used in several social service delivery fields, such as healthcare, K-12 education, education for students at risk, juvenile justice, youths at risk of severe social or behavioral disorders, child welfare, mental health, and other evidence-based practices (Bruns et al., 2006; Bruns et al., 2007; Carney & Buttell, 2003; Clark et al., 1998; Eber et al., 2002; Fries et al., 2012; Hill, 2020; McCarter, 2016; Schurer Coldiron et al., 2017; Vest et al., 2018; Walter & Petr, 2011). There is significant variation in how the term is used in practice. However, in its basic form, wraparound services provide comprehensive services using an intake process for individuals and their families. In this process, intake staff gather information about a client's social service needs, evaluate services that may best meet those needs, then connect the client with appropriate service providers (Malysiak, 1997; Malysiak, 1998; VanDenBerg et al., 2003; Walter & Petr, 2011). The social service delivery environment is complex, and those with needs are often unfamiliar with what services are available, what they do, who provides them, and how to access them. For programs intended for youth, the inclusion of family and integration with the community are integral parts of the wraparound services. In sum, wraparound services connect individuals and their families to various services that may aid them.

The application, reflecting on the wraparound services approach, indicates, "The level of collaboration by partners at the Wraparound Center is unique and one of a kind… The Wraparound Center meets with clients and refers to services within the Wraparound Center and other programs throughout the community. Other agencies provide a few services but do not support clients through a referral process and resolution if going to other agencies, businesses, or organizations. The Wraparound Center is a one-stop-shop to meet the needs of our students, families, and community with various services and resources" (Board of Education, City of Peoria, 2020, p. 12). Furthermore, "Each support will connect students to physical and behavioral health services, childcare, legal assistance, housing, social support, basic needs, and return to education" (Board of Education, City of Peoria, 2020, p. 12).

Detailing the roles of the partners, the District noted that it partners with many agencies. The Wraparound Center connects students with community organizations that offer needed services. The grant proposal listed numerous organizations with which the Wraparound Center might interact and how. For example, Peoria County Juvenile Probation supports and connects juveniles and their families to services within the Wraparound Center and around the community. HAND Up Peoria, Inc. provides a food pantry, recipe cards, resource guides, and

baby and toiletry items. The Center for Youth and Family Solutions provides pregnancy options and adoption services, behavioral health counseling, senior in-home counseling, senior outreach, a family guardianship program, and foster care services. Positive Health Solutions provides gender-affirming and PrEP services, case management services, LGBTQ services, and STI and HIV education, testing, and treatment. OSF Strive Trauma Recovery Program offers trauma-specific counseling for survivors of violent crime, case management, and advocacy services.

Legal Resources

According to the grant proposal narrative, "The program will provide legal resources for individuals. The primary goal will be to provide an attorney to support individuals as they fill out legal documents, need legal representation, and guidance as they navigate the legal system – criminal justice, family law, and housing cases…Justice Advocates would provide a second legal resource to support students involved in the criminal justice system. Justice advocates attend hearings with students, help them adhere to the judge's directives, locate housing and services if needed, work collaboratively with career coaches, and get students back on track to earn high school credits to graduate. Two justice advocates will work with middle school students, and two with high school students" (Board of Education, City of Peoria, 2020, p. 8).

No specific model/theory was identified for the justice advocate services, but the justice advocate positions appear consistent with the wraparound approach. Students involved in the criminal justice system are often unfamiliar with the complex system. They need assistance navigating the system to successfully transition back to school or enter the workforce. The grant proposal and our interviews with district program staff reported that before the R3 grant, the district only had two justice advocates, who operated with an unrealistically high caseload. As the application noted, "A new position, called justice advocate, was created in the school district and started in December 2019. This current position supports high school students involved in the criminal justice system from their first hearing, ensuring students are enrolled/engaged in school, supporting them to get back on track academically, and completing graduation requirements. Justice advocates attend hearings with students, help them adhere to the judge's directives, locate housing and services if needed, work collaboratively with success career coaches to obtain employment, and create educational plans that lead to graduation. Since starting in January and only taking on new cases (not managing students currently in the system), the two justice advocates have attended over 150 hearings (multiple for some students) and worked with 92 students served. At this point, they have helped four students graduate, twenty-four students earn high school credits, and seven students gain employment. There are eighty-two active cases at this time" (Board of Education, City of Peoria, 2020, p. 7).

Through R3 funding, the number of justice advocates has expanded to six, and the scope now extends to middle school and high school students going through the criminal justice system.

Employment Readiness Skills and Jobs

The positions of career coach and justice advocate are part of the wraparound approach that supports employment readiness. According to the grant proposal narrative, "Another focus of the program was on economic development in providing employment readiness skills and jobs for students as well as meeting basic needs such as having access to the food pantry and referrals to

health and wellness agencies to benefit the overall community. Career Coaches will work hand in hand with Justice Advocates for students to receive employment skills classes such as how to interview, handle stressful situations, fill out paperwork, and keep a job. The Career Coaches will help students secure a job and will continue to monitor students while on their job to support their employment. This component links back to employment data listed before that show a low number of eligible people in the workforce in the R3 areas or living below the poverty line. This component will also provide students access to the food pantry linked to the food insecurity data listed prior and to health and general wellness agencies. It also links to the large percentage of individuals who do not have regular check-ups and the needs students may have regarding their social and emotional well-being" (Board of Education, City of Peoria, 2020, p. 7).

No specific model/theory was cited for this area beyond the wraparound services model. It appears to be about linking students to services, helping them navigate complex social service environments and instituting an evaluation/intake system, career coaches, and justice advocates to help them stay in school and/or obtain employment.

Reentry Interventions for Students

The reentry interventions aim to help individuals who have engaged with incarceration or the judicial system to reenter society by reducing or removing barriers to help individuals get jobs, attain housing, provide for their children and families, and become contributing members of the community. As noted, justice advocates address this.

W.I.N.N.I.N.G. Transition Program to High School

The District provides a summer program, W.I.N.N.I.N.G., for students between their eighth and ninth-grade years, that is, for freshman entering high school in the fall. Students provide activities and presentations that prepare them for a successful transition to high school. Additionally, program summer career experiences include field trips to colleges, work with various job/career individuals, and classes on goal setting. As with other aspects of the R3 program, the grant proposal did not reference a specific theory/model to describe the summer program. However, it aligns with approaches to improving college readiness and developing "college knowledge" to enhance the likelihood of postsecondary entry (Conley, 2010). It also is consistent with the wraparound approach of maintaining mentoring and community engagement opportunities to improve student success.

Youth Development Services

Other theories beyond wraparound services are mentioned in the District narrative for the partners' youth services and health programs. According to the grant proposal narrative, "The final focus area will be providing developmental youth services which are interwoven among all priorities. The overall goal of providing for youth developmental services is to provide interventions to support students who are already engaged with the justice system or are demonstrating aggressive behaviors in school. Hult Center for Healthy living will also focus on this priority." In addition to Hult Center, Chestnut Health Systems also provides these services. According to the application, "Chestnut Health Systems uses evidence-based practices (EBP) in all of our counseling and treatment programs to increase the success of the individual youth. Chestnut has experience in the following EBPs (among others): 1. Illinois Medicaid

Comprehensive Assessment of Needs and Strengths (IM+CANS); 2. Global Assessment of Individual Needs (GAIN); 3. Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT); 4. Motivational Interviewing (MI); 5. Seeking Safety (Trauma), 6. Community Reinforcement Approach (CRA), 7. Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (CRA); 8. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA); 9. Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA); 10. Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TFCBT); 11. Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS); and 12. Supported Education (SE). The EBPs listed above incorporate effective assessment, engagement, and therapeutic alliance skills and have been successfully used with diverse populations. Each EBP can affect the identification, screening, assessment, and/or treatment of Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED), Substance Use Disorders (SUD), and Co-Occurring Disorders (COD), providing the tools needed to reduce the prevalence of SED, SUD, and COD; unemployment; poverty; and homelessness in the defined service area" (Board of Education, City of Peoria, 2020, p. 17).

Additional Services

In addition to these specified service areas, the application materials presented details about other services the District offers that students and their families can access through the wraparound approach. The application noted that the district started providing counselors to every middle and high school in 2015 and has Family Core liaisons in each K-4th grade to help address students' social and emotional learning needs. Family Core has worked in district schools for approximately ten years and uses the Strong Kids curriculum and assessment instruments (Merrell's Strong Kids, n.d.). The district has data indicating successful outcomes for program participants. For example, outcome measures suggest that 95% of students met their individualized goals, and 77% showed improvement as measured by the Strong Kids assessment. Furthermore, the average attendance rate of students working with Family Core was over 90%, and discipline referrals were reduced by 88%. As measured by Strong Kids, Tier 3 (intensive) interventions showed that 69% of students met their individualized goals, 67% showed improvement, and 90% attained a 90% or better attendance rate. Finally, the District offers childcare and after-school activities, such as an intramural sports league.

Results of Site Visits

The evaluation team met with the Peoria Public Schools R3 service providers. Peoria Public Schools detailed how R3 support assists with the overall mission of the Wraparound Center. Specifically, the Wraparound Center is located inside Trewyn School. It is a one-stop-shop for students and families to receive therapeutic support and access services and resources from community agencies. It is open to all Peoria families, regardless of whether they have students attending Peoria Public Schools. R3 funding has assisted in expanding the reentry program at the Peoria County Jail. The service provider appears to have well-developed structures and processes to deliver R3 services required with the capacity to scale. The provider offers intake; processes; and reporting data, with results published in this report.

Program Logic Model

An initial logic model was constructed for the service provider by the evaluation team depicting in detail the inputs, activities, outputs, and associated outcomes for the Peoria Public Schools R3

Program. The initial logic model was based primarily on the program proposal, so it represented a “rough draft” based on the self-reported elements provided by the District. After meeting with the service provider, an updated logic model was developed. The logic models show the differences between expected inputs, processes, and partners and what has actually occurred during the year. The initial draft did not require much revision, reflecting the quality of the detail in the grant proposal. The primary difference between the initial constructed logic model and the actual logic model that details inputs, ongoing activities, outputs, and associated outcomes is the Summer W.I.N.N.I.N.G. program for incoming freshmen that serves 30 participants. The final logic model is depicted in Appendix C.

Service Delivery: Springfield Urban League

Overview

The Springfield Urban League (SUL), Community Empowerment Program, strengthens sustainable Black communities in R3 areas throughout Springfield by utilizing evidence-based programming, skills training, and resources that serve three segments of the community:

- Youth and young adults ages 16-24.
- Unemployed and underemployed adults.
- Entrepreneurs and small business owners.

SUL received a year one grant of $419,702 and received a year two extension in the same amount, for a total of $839,404. The organization's current annual operating budget, as reported in the proposal, is $465,423.

Program Goals

- Improve youth academic performance.
- Raise employment and income levels among program participants who reside in a high poverty/high crime community.
- Improve employment opportunities for youth/young adults who have no work experience or who have been unemployed or underemployed for 3 months or longer.
- Support entrepreneurs in launching and growing their businesses to build capacity, sustain operations, and stimulate the local economy.

Community Context

We gathered data for the program's targeted R3 areas on five economic variables. All data were gathered from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) data profiles. Table 11 presents the economic conditions of the program's targeted census tracts and Illinois.

Table 11

Economic Conditions of Target R3 Areas and Illinois

Geography	Median HH Income ($)	Below Poverty (%)	Owner-Occupied Housing (%)	Unemployment Rate (%)	Employment-Population Ratio (%)
R3 area 683	39,613	20.4	75.1	9.7	56.4
R3 area 691	24,528	48.7	25.0	10.4	49.0
R3 area 693	45,266	20.6	28.4	7.7	68.7
R3 area 694	24,861	45.2	34.0	9.5	32.7
R3 area 695	25,347	37.8	31.6	16.6	46.0
R3 area 698	32,874	27.4	31.4	7.0	67.6
R3 area 699	29,559	33.4	53.0	8.2	54.6

R3 area 700	27,888	34.5	50.8	17.5	49.0
R3 area 702	35,234	27.0	54.2	13.3	60.3
Illinois	65,886	12.5	66.1	5.9	61.2

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table S1901, B17001, DP04, and S2301 2019 5-year estimates

Table 12 details the racial composition of the grantee's service areas compared to Illinois.

Table 12

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Target R3 Areas and Illinois

Geography	Other Non-Hispanic (%)	Hispanic (%)	Black Non-Hispanic (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)
R3 area 683	0	.4	5.6	89.8
R3 area 691	0	1.7	58.8	36.7
R3 area 693	0	5.5	28.1	60.1
R3 area 694	.1	.0	55.0	42.7
R3 area 695	0	7.2	68.2	21.6
R3 area 698	0	4.8	22.5	70.6
R3 area 699	4.5	5.0	35.2	53.2
R3 area 700	0	1.5	66.3	24.7
R3 area 702	0	.9	15.3	81.8
Illinois	.2	17.1	14.2	61.3

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table DP05 2019 5-year estimates

Program Services

The SUL Community Empowerment Program provides services to the target populations through the following components:

- Youth development and academic enrichment.
- Workforce development.
- A small business help center.

Through its various programs, the Springfield Urban League addresses the needs of young people in poverty who are exposed to crime and un/underemployed. It offers (1) Project Ready and (2) Strengthen Communities - Ready to Work.

Project Ready

Project Ready focuses on the strategic goals of educational equity and student achievement. It serves high school students ages 17-19 who are at the point of dropping out of school with no job-readiness skills for employment opportunities. Students are referred to Project Ready for services that help them obtain their high school diplomas. Demonstrated progress in the program is reflected by the following criteria:

- Preparation for graduation.
- Improvement in math and English.
- Positive changes or improvement in behavior.
- Increased involvement by parents.

In addition, the program highlights workforce development and career opportunities through the following:

- Workforce readiness skills and opportunities to cultivate soft skills.
- Socio-emotional support to become work-ready.
- Educational support to improve school attendance, progress to graduation, or attainment of a GED.

Strengthen Communities – Ready to Work

The Ready to Work program addresses critical steps and milestones to gain workforce readiness for Black adolescents and young adults ages 16-24 who are out of school. The phases include outreach (the recruitment phase); intake (career pathway introduction, eligibility verification, youth survey, development of an individual services strategy (ISS)); registrant experiences (includes work-based learning and career planning, such as workshops, career counseling, and work experiences); the Strengthen Communities - Ready to Work Program Celebration; and follow-up services. These key steps provide a holistic approach to serving youth, paying close attention to ecology (i.e., youths' interactions with environmental factors and their impacts).

Alignment to R3 Program Priorities

The Community Empowerment Program addresses students' academic deficiencies while supporting their progress and helping them navigate socio-emotional challenges. It offers youth interventions that increase protective factors and decrease risk, which is an activity outlined for youth development programs in the R3 Notice of Funding Opportunity. Youth development interventions in the SUL Community Empowerment Program target cognitive, social, and emotional development domains.

The Community Empowerment Program supports economic development by increasing local businesses' access to skilled workers. The local businesses are key industry partners for this program. The workforce investment includes occupational and job training to prepare individuals for employment in a particular occupation or field and customized training programs to address specific requirements for an employer.

The Community Empowerment Program demonstrates investment in the marketplace through the Small Business Empowerment Center. Implementing best practice guidance, the SUL and its minority-owned, small business enterprise partner administer the Kauffman Foundation's

Money, Markets, Management (3Ms) framework (Bates & Bates, 1997; Boston & Boston, 2007; Brush et al., 2009; Kaufman & Englander, 2005; Malecki, 2018). They use the framework to help Black-owned businesses needing assistance in the R3 areas.

Alignment to Restorative Justice

The restorative justice philosophy runs throughout the Springfield Urban League programming for youth and adults. Community service is common in restorative justice. It provides a path for repairing harm to the community. Community service combined with a service-learning model allows participants to achieve learning objectives and develop meaningful skills, such as leadership and work readiness soft skills, rather than just logging hours of community service. The various projects are administered within the target area—the neighborhoods where participants live. Participants' interests and personal and career goals are factored into planning the service-learning projects. For instance, construction trainees may volunteer for Habitat for Humanity; food service trainees may serve meals at St. John's Breadline; healthcare trainees may assist Timberlake Senior Center residents with daily activities and escort them on outings; and customer service trainees may volunteer at Goodwill and Salvation Army. In one case, a restorative justice project involved renovating a home in Springfield's historic (but blighted) Enos Park Neighborhood. The house was subsequently sold, and the profit supported the construction of an orphanage in Haiti. Project ideas are obtained from violence prevention coalition partners, which include the Illinois States Attorney's Office, Sangamon County Community Resources, and the Office of Juvenile Justice.

Program Theory

According to its R3 proposal narrative, SUL provides services through the following components: youth development and academic enrichment, workforce development, and a small business help center. SUL addresses the needs of young people in poverty who are exposed to crime and un/underemployed through its various programs, including (1) Project Ready and (2) Strengthen Communities-Ready to Work. Project Ready focuses on the goals of educational equity and student achievement. It helps high school students ages 17-19 who are at the point of dropping out by providing services to help them obtain their high school diplomas. Outcomes include the demonstration of progress in preparation for graduation, improvement in math and English, positive changes or improvement in behavior, and increased involvement by parents. The program offers training in workforce readiness skills and opportunities to cultivate soft skills. It provides socio-emotional support to become work-ready, and educational support to improve school attendance, progress to graduation, or the attainment of a GED.

As proposed in According to the R3 grant proposal, the Community Empowerment Program addresses students' academic deficiencies while supporting their progress and helping them navigate socio-emotional challenges. It offers youth development interventions that increase protective factors and decrease risk. Youth development interventions in the SUL Community Empowerment Program target cognitive, social, and emotional development issues. The Community Empowerment Program strives to accomplish economic development outcomes by increasing access to skilled workers who meet the workforce needs of local businesses. These businesses are industry partners in this program, and the workforce investment includes occupational and job training and customized training programs.

The SUL staff provided the following list of evidence-based practices/models they use for program delivery:

- National Urban League's Project Ready Curriculum.
- Cure Violence.
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy.
- An integrated service model.

The following section discuss supporting literature for the theory/models.

Project Ready

The Springfield Urban League 2020 Annual Report provides an overview of the program: "Project Ready is a program of the National Urban League (NUL) that provides enhanced academic and social support to young people and their families as they prepare for the challenges of post-secondary success. This program prepares adolescents for the critical transition from high school to college and/or professional work. The Project Ready curriculum comprises three key components: academic development, social development, and cultural and global awareness. The core components of the Project Ready initiative utilize evidence-based strategies to successfully map out a continuum of activities, exercises, and strategies designed to enable students to pursue post-secondary education" (p. 13).

Project Ready is a long-running NUL program that SUL has adopted and implemented, thanks to R3 funding. According to a 2016 report by the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute of the United Negro College Fund gives background on Project Ready. It stated, "Project Ready develops an individual student's knowledge and attitude toward, and capacity for, post-secondary success via strong local partnerships, an emphasis on academic support, the innovative use of learning time, exposure to enhanced content, positive youth development and out-of-school time (OST)" (Anderson, 2016, p. 13). As described in the 2016 report, the program included partnerships with schools, districts, and higher education institutions. It also included model practices for youth development, adolescent literacy, and OST learning. The model practices included those that focused on "STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math), service learning, cultural and historical literacy, and mentoring" (Anderson, 2016, p. 13). By 2016, about 10,000 middle and high school students had participated in Project Ready.

The National Urban League's Project Ready curriculum was supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and was developed in partnership with Dr. Noel Anderson, the Director of Leadership and Innovation and a Clinical Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at New York University (Indianapolis Urban League, 2022; Read, 2009). It has been refined over time, with the curriculum now referred to as Project Ready 2.0 (Anderson, 2016). Project Ready "creates a safe space for students to convene and gain insight into the higher learning process, and it provides academic support, life skills, and cultural and global awareness. Project Ready also provides an interactive and iterative process for designing, implementing, and expanding a new program" (Read, 2009, p. 18). The core Project Ready model includes several curricular elements, including middle school transitions, literacy coaches, mentors, historical and

cultural literacy, STEM programming, financial capability programming, and service-learning opportunities (National Urban League, 2022, para. 7).

As reported by Hal Smith, Senior Vice President for Education, Youth Development and Health with the National Urban League, "Project Ready develops an individual student's knowledge and attitude toward, and capacity for, postsecondary success via strong local partnerships and a clear emphasis on positive youth development and out of school learning time (OST). Project Ready builds on six principles: shared responsibility and accountability; improved access to high-quality content; individualized college and career planning; diverse, innovative, and effective partnerships; robust, durable, and meaningful engagement; and the innovative use of OST" (College Board, 2012, p. 18).

Cure Violence

The Springfield Urban League staff reported that SUL employs the Cure Violence model in its organization's approach to reducing violent crime. The R3 grant funding is primarily used for Project Ready and Strengthen Communities - Ready to Work Program, but the Cure Violence approach is a part of the SUL's overall approach. The career and workforce preparation aspects of Project Ready and Strengthen Communities - Ready to Work Program align with the Cure Violence approach by providing alternative paths for success in life that do not include violence. These programs particularly connect through the Cure Violence outreach workers' contact with participants.

The former head of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Intervention Development Unit, Dr. Gary Slutkin, developed the Cure Violence model and founded the non-profit Cure Violence Global® to promote the approach. The core assumption of the Cure Violence model and its innovation is to treat violence as an epidemic disease. The Cure Violence model applies the epidemic model to tackle violence using the WHO's three main strategies for addressing epidemics: "1) Interrupt transmission of the disease, 2) prevent the future spread of the disease, and 3) change social norms or conditions (in this case to use precise social pressure to shift behaviors) that increase transmission" (Slutkin et al., 2014, p. 1). The program was started in Chicago and has spread both nationally and internationally. The model seeks to prevent violence through three strategies: detect and interrupt, identify and change the thinking of the highest potential transmitters, and change group norms.

To implement the detect and interrupt strategy, "The Cure Violence model deploys a new type of worker called a Violence Interrupter who is specially qualified and trained to locate potentially lethal, ongoing conflicts and respond with a variety of conflict mediation techniques both to prevent imminent violence and to change the norms around the perceived need to use violence" (Slutkin et al., 2014, p. 2). Violence interrupters are "culturally appropriate workers who live in the affected community, are known to high-risk people, and have possibly even been gang members or spent time in prison, but have made a change in their lives and turned away from crime." They receive training on various methods "for detecting potential shooting events, mediating conflicts, and keeping safe in these dangerous situations" (Slutkin et al., 2014, p. 3). Interrupters are trained in ways to detect potential conflicts, such as "intercepting whispers, going to hospitals after shootings occur to prevent retaliation, paying attention to anniversaries

and other important dates, being present at key locations, and being a resource to those in the community with information who are not comfortable contacting the police" (Slutkin et al., 2014, p. 2). Interrupters act as mediators by meeting with aggrieved individuals, hosting small group peace-keeping sessions, bringing in a respected third party to discourage violence, and attempting to de-escalate situations to ones that do not require violence or buy time for cooling off. These strategies are meant to reduce "exposure to" and "transmission" of violence.

To identify and change the thinking of the highest potential transmitters, Cure Violence "employs a strong outreach component to change the norms and behavior of high-risk clients" (Slutkin et al., 2014, p. 2). Mentors and outreach workers are provided for program participants who discourage violence, help participants obtain services like job training, education, housing, and drug abuse counseling; and work with high-risk participants to develop a risk reduction plan to help them move away from violence (Butts et al., 2015; Slutkin et al., 2014).

The change group norms strategy reflects "the idea that the norms can be changed if multiple messengers of the same new norms are consistently and abundantly heard" (Slutkin et al., 2014, p. 4). To do so, Cure Violence employs "a public education campaign, community events, community responses to every shooting, and community mobilization" by involving willing participants, especially "community residents, local businesses, clergy, social service agencies, and police" (Slutkin et al., 2014, p. 4).

For proper implementation, the model emphasizes the need for three essential components (Slutkin et al., 2014). The first is data and monitoring to measure and provide constant feedback. Second is an extensive training of workers. The third component is that a group needs to establish partnerships with local hospitals so that workers are immediately notified when gunshot victims are admitted and are able to respond quickly to prevent retaliation.

Several studies and evaluations have shown positive outcomes associated with the Cure Violence program. The initial Cure Violence model was implemented in Chicago's West Garfield Park community, at the time one of the most dangerous communities in the U.S. One year into implementation, shootings in West Garfield Park had reduced by 67%. The program was expanded to five more communities, and all six experienced a reduction in shootings by an average of 42% (Butts et al., 2015; Ransford et al., 2010). After eight new Chicago communities were added from 2005 to 2006, the average reduction was statistically significant at 27% (Ransford et al., 2010).

Cognitive Behavior Therapy

The SUL partners with state and local government and community and faith-based organizations to serve the health needs of those from underserved communities. Students with social/emotional challenges will be referred to the SUL Health Initiatives Division. The SUL partners with state and local government and with community and faith-based organizations to serve the health needs of those from underserved communities. Services are based on a cognitive behavioral model of therapy.

According to the *Johns Hopkins Psychiatry Guide*, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is "an empirically supported approach to psychotherapy characterized by teaching the patient a set of

coping skills. The skills intend to modify maladaptive cognitions, behaviors, and physiological responses that maintain and/or exacerbate psychopathology. The approach is present-focused and problem-specific, and CBT sessions are structured and goal-oriented. The course is time-limited (i.e., typically one-hour session per week for 10-20 weeks), and the CBT therapist is "directive- and action-oriented" (Drake et al., 2020, p. 1). Meta-analyses have reported strong evidence of the effectiveness of CBT in treating a variety of issues, such as anxiety disorders, eating disorders, anger problems, depression, and stress (Cuijpers et al., 2016; David et al., 2018; Drake et al., 2020; Gould et al., 2012; Hofmann et al., 2012).

An Integrated Service Model

Although not explicitly mentioned in the R3 proposal narrative, our conversations with SUL staff revealed that they use an integrated services model. The integrated services model is reflected in the approach of the Strengthen Communities - Ready to Work Program. Integrated service delivery has been around for decades and is considered an effective method of delivering social services related to alleviating and addressing poverty. Attesting to the merits of this method in its Center for Working Families (CWF) approach, the Annie E. Casey Foundation reports, "[T]he findings suggest that integrated service delivery approaches like CWF that offer bundled services in a coordinated manner can help to improve the financial stability of working families, low-income students of color and individuals who are unemployed or underemployed" (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2020, p. 7). Quasi-experimental evaluation findings have indicated positive outcomes for participants in integrated service delivery models (Rankin, 2015; Roder, 2015).

By way of example, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) has employed an integrated services delivery program based on the Casey Foundation model at its Financial Opportunities Centers (FOC). LISC described the rationale for the program, as follows: "The premise of FOCs is that these bundled services lead to better employment outcomes and better long-term economic outcomes for low-income workers" (Rankin, 2015, p. 1). The report describes details of program: "At our FOCs, based on an innovative program model developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, clients have access to integrated (or bundled) services. Standard training and placement services are available. However, those are financial coaching services designed to help clients manage their money in the short and long term. Income support counseling ensures that clients access the social supports for which they are eligible. Economic stability is not just a matter of having a job; it requires that a person's income be enough to meet their expenses. Financial coaching helps clients make the most of their current income. At the same time, they plan a course to increase their earnings prospects" (Rankin, 2015, p. 1). LISC reported that a commissioned analysis indicated "a clear association between receiving bundled program services—particularly the combination of employment and financial counseling services—and having improved employment and financial outcomes" (Rankin, 2015, p. 15)

Results of Site Visits

The evaluation team met with the Springfield Urban League R3 service providers. The service providers furnished a narrative overview of R3 services and a background related to the target population. The service providers appear to have well-developed structures and processes to deliver required R3 services with the capacity to scale. The service providers indicated that the planning process was a response to a violence prevention program associated with the social

determinants of health. The lens of “social determinants of health” led to using various theoretical frames to inform the delivery of R3 services, as partially described previously. Broadly, those theories fall into three categories: economic, familial, and educational. These theories translate to using the National Curriculum Training Institute curriculum, with staff addressing mental health needs using cognitive behavioral therapy techniques focused on addressing violence and aggression.

The service provider uses an integrated service model, starting with a generalized intake form. The intake information is then disaggregated to identify R3 clients and is used to generate other referrals to community partners. This process leads to creating an Individualized service plan for each client. The service provider goes beyond the intake process to identify clients for R3 services. It also targets R3 clients during community events and through its website. It then partners with other community organizations related to homelessness, crime, education, and employment to connect clients to services that will meet their specific needs. The service provider indicated that they had not anticipated the hesitancy related to COVID-19 relative to employment opportunities for client placement.

Program Logic Model

An initial logic model was constructed by the evaluation team for the service provider depicting in detail the inputs, activities, outputs, and associated outcomes for the Springfield Urban League Community Empowerment R3 Program. The initial logic model was based primarily on the program proposal and it represented a “rough draft” based on the self-reported elements provided by the SUL. After meeting with the service provider and providing a draft of the model, the evaluation team developed an updated logic model that incorporated staff feedback. The logic model reflects the differences between expected inputs, processes, and partners and the actual implementation during the year. Significant differences occurred in the outputs associated with service delivery for this provider. For example, there were more specific outputs for Project Ready, a youth development program, and some other more specific short-term outcomes. The logic model is depicted in Appendix C.

Findings and Analysis

Community Engagement Strategies

Significant variation existed in the community engagement strategies implemented by service and planning providers. Organizations with well-developed processes with excess capacity have tended to seek more community input. They have been able to deliver services to clients more effectively based on evaluation team observations and interactions with R3 planning/service providers. COVID has been a significant barrier across all planning/service providers relative to community engagement.

Observations

This section outlines overall observations from the process evaluation of the selected central region planning and service delivery R3 sites. The overarching R3 themes serve as the organizing thread for this section.

Community Focus

With some variation in intensity, the R3 service delivery grantees relied on community input to identify their priorities and develop their programming. However, it appears that this connection was waning in the implementation stage. The grantees will likely need some assistance in building formalized mechanisms for community feedback in succeeding years.

The grantees recognized the importance of demonstrating or communicating their impact on the community. Yet, they seemed incapable of making it a priority due to the demands of their work. Our evaluation team will need to assist them in articulating their value proposition and develop a data collection strategy to assess their impact and communicate this value. Further, the grantees may need communication assistance from ICJIA to get the message out (e.g., communications campaigns on R3 impact).

Our evaluation team shares the R3 commitment to community-engaged research. Most grantees were open to providing us with access to stakeholders and community partners. However, there was some reluctance to provide access to service recipients. Given the sensitive nature of each program's work, we understand this reluctance.

Thus, we engaged grantees in discussions about the mechanisms they were using to assess the needs of target populations and those they were using to garner feedback from those served. These mechanisms were underdeveloped as most grantees relied solely on data sources that provided no direct input—some of which required grantees to make many assumptions about services targeting the R3 goals. If they remain underdeveloped, the programs may be less responsive to the needs of communities and target populations. As such, they may not have the information they need to critically assess their program logic and adapt to the conditions on the ground.

Creating Partnerships

For the most part, it seems that the grantees viewed the evaluation process as compliance, at best, but more often as a burden that detracted from the time that could have been better spent on serving their clients. They did not see it as an opportunity to showcase what they were doing and teach the State about it. Based on the experiences of our evaluation team, this apprehensive view

was somewhat expected. To address it, we regularly reiterated the purpose and goals of the evaluation and shared that we were there to help them make a more significant impact. We also clarified the process to alleviate any uncertainties and ensure that the grantees knew that the evaluation team would do the heavy lifting.

The grantees did not seem to know what other grantees were doing unless there was some formal connection. We recommend that ICJIA provide the opportunity for connections among programs that could allow sharing of best practices (e.g., what is working and not working in other parts of the State).

Individualized Evaluation

Through a series of meetings and document reviews, our evaluation team grew in its understanding of the specific challenges and abilities of the grantees' organizations. It became clear that many faced COVID-19-related implementation challenges and got off to a slow start. Others differed in their understanding of program design and execution and the role or purpose of evaluation in both.

Our team recognized that some grantees were proceeding from a well-developed model (i.e., theory of change/evidence-based practice) while others were not. Yet, none of the grantees were working from a logic model. So, we were responsive to the variation in praxis and worked with grantees to develop logic models that reflected their theories of change. As outlined earlier, we built draft logic models for all service delivery grantees as a starting point for such refinement.

The above efforts were critical to building a sustainable evaluation practice for each grantee. Our team viewed the process as follows: 1) clarify the program's theory of change using evidence-based practices and input from stakeholders and target populations, 2) display that theory in the form of a logic model depicting the necessary inputs, activities, outputs (whom those activities reach), and expected outcomes (short, medium, and long term).

With the above in place, we helped the grantees build the capacity to make such assessments as:

1. Whether they had the necessary inputs.
2. Whether their activities were reaching the targeted populations at the desired level.
3. Whether those activities were addressing the correct problems and leading to the expected outcomes.

Our team believes such evaluation capacity hinges on grantees' openness and ability to build formalized feedback mechanisms; data collection strategies for the appropriate indicators; and a commitment to analysis, learning, and adaptation.

Surveys and Interviews

Surveys and interviews were the tools for obtaining data to answer the process evaluation's "who, what, where, when" questions. We got good information through meetings with clients, staff, and leadership, but we did not survey beyond that. We met with the site teams for each client site at least twice. Additionally, we emailed and/or talked off-schedule several times with the client's site staff. We treated our meetings as interview opportunities with the team leaders who attended. In some instances, the meeting was only with the designated grant staff; in others, it was with the

organizational leadership. For example, in our first meeting regarding the City of Springfield planning grant, the grant staff lead and the mayor and legal counsel met with us; but in the second meeting, only the grant staff lead met with us. In another follow-up meeting, we met with the grant staff lead, the mayor, and their consultant for the planning grant.

We have discovered that some client sites are in very early stages of implementation, whereas others have made much more significant progress. In some cases, the interview site's designated grant staff were the actual program frontline staff, but in other cases they were the grant managers. In the case of Land of Lincoln, we met with two grant staff leads, but they were frontline staff in the past and, therefore, were able to bridge that gap for us.

We pursued options for asking the client sites about the efficacy of adding a survey to obtain feedback from their clients. Some sites, such as Land of Lincoln and Springfield Urban League, have used community needs surveys to develop their proposals. The City of Springfield hired a consultant who held community meetings, interviewed people, and held focus groups. The Peoria school district did not survey its students/parents but did develop its programs with community partners. East Springfield Community Center is still too early in its implementation and has struggled to scale. As a consequence, East Springfield Community Center has too few clients for a survey to be of value. As we continued our discussions with the client sites, we determined they would gain limited utility in this evaluation phase. We also decided that the grantees should begin collecting client data via surveys to assist them in the outcome evaluation phase.

Literature Review

In our meetings with the client sites, we asked about the models/theories underlying their approaches to delivering their programs. We started by looking at the models/theories they had identified in their grant proposals. We also discussed restorative justice/restorative theories pertaining to their projects. Some people we met with were conversant with their program's approaches; others were not confident in discussing supporting literature and how it undergirds their program. This unevenness presented challenges for the evaluation of program fidelity. Some of this was expected. For example, the Peoria School district grant staff we spoke to understood that their partner Chestnut Health Systems uses evidence-based practices (EBP) in their counseling and treatment programs. The contact staff were not familiar with those practices. However, they were very familiar with the Peoria Public Schools Wraparound Center programs related to justice advocates, career coaches, and their summer program W.I.N.N.I.N.G (What I Need Now in Ninth Grade). Land of Lincoln Legal Aid employs the legal aid evidence-based best practice and guidance from the National Legal Aid and Defenders Association. Springfield Urban League uses the Community Empowerment Program Model (CEP). Opportunities for the outcome evaluation will be to investigate how the client sites make structured use of these models for program delivery.

Data Collection Efforts

We made inquiries as to the data from program activities that were available. We were able to obtain data from grantees. However, they were primarily limited to intake-related data provided to ICJIA and some pre-existing client surveys that did not necessarily align with this evaluation.

We did utilize census tract data to supplement these data to provide context. To reiterate our previous point, a primary focus for phase two will be to assist grantees with developing and implementing client and partner surveys.

Client Volume and Average Cost Analysis

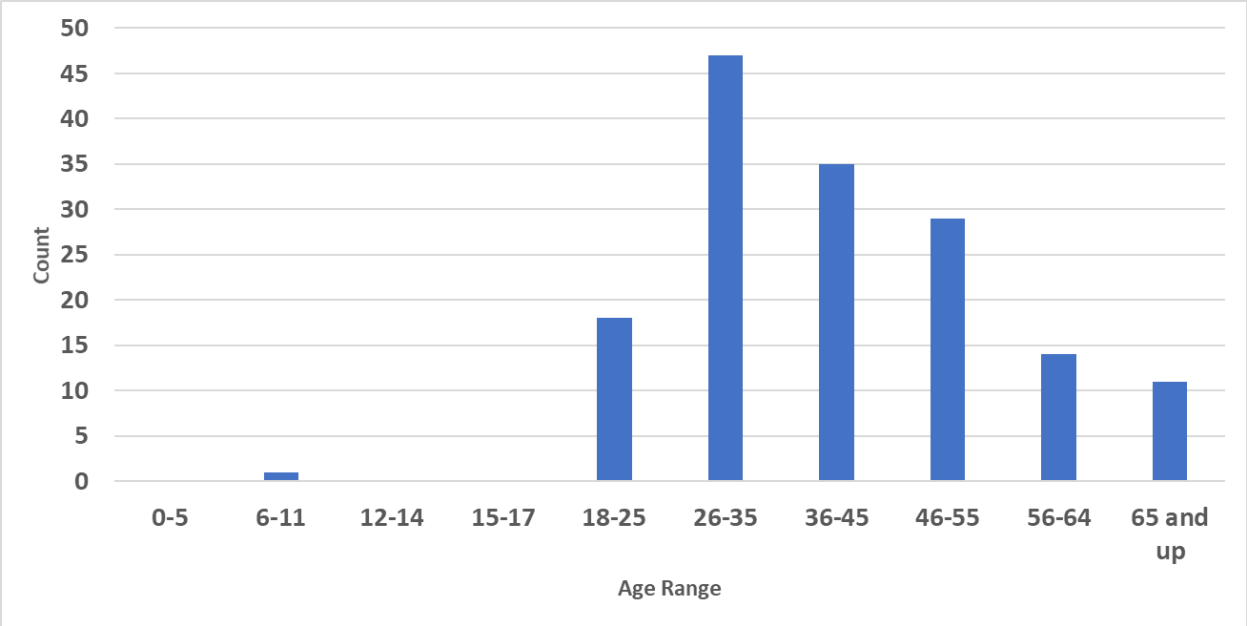
In this section, we calculated each service delivery grantee's client output and the estimated average cost per client. The data for each grantee were very uneven, so our estimates have varying confidence levels. The primary source of data for each grantee is the Periodic Performance Report (PPR), but for one of the grantees, the data are partial. For another, they are not available.

Land of Lincoln Legal Aid: Eastern Regional Office

The Land of Lincoln data had the best quality. One question was whether the data were reported cumulatively or quarterly (in other words, whether the total clients served on the PPR were cumulative or consisted of unique counts per quarter). After analyzing the data provided by LOLLA, we assumed they were cumulative, as discussed below. The NE Central LOLLA operations reported 155 clients served on their PPR, consisting of two White, Hispanic; 38 White, Non-Hispanic; 108 Black, Non-Hispanic; one Asian; and six Other race clients. They reported 42 male and 113 female clients. The age distribution of clients is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Age Distribution of LOLLA Eastern Regional Office Central Clients



Note. UIS analysis of LOLLA data

Another question with LOLLA is whether the services funded by the R3 program were actually not new but rather an expansion of existing services. That is, were the clients new clients due to the R3 funding or were they clients who would have sought assistance from LOLLA without it? Analysis of time-series data provided by LOLLA indicated that the total number of clients during 2021 that could be attributed to the R3 funding ranged from eight to 211, at 95% confidence with

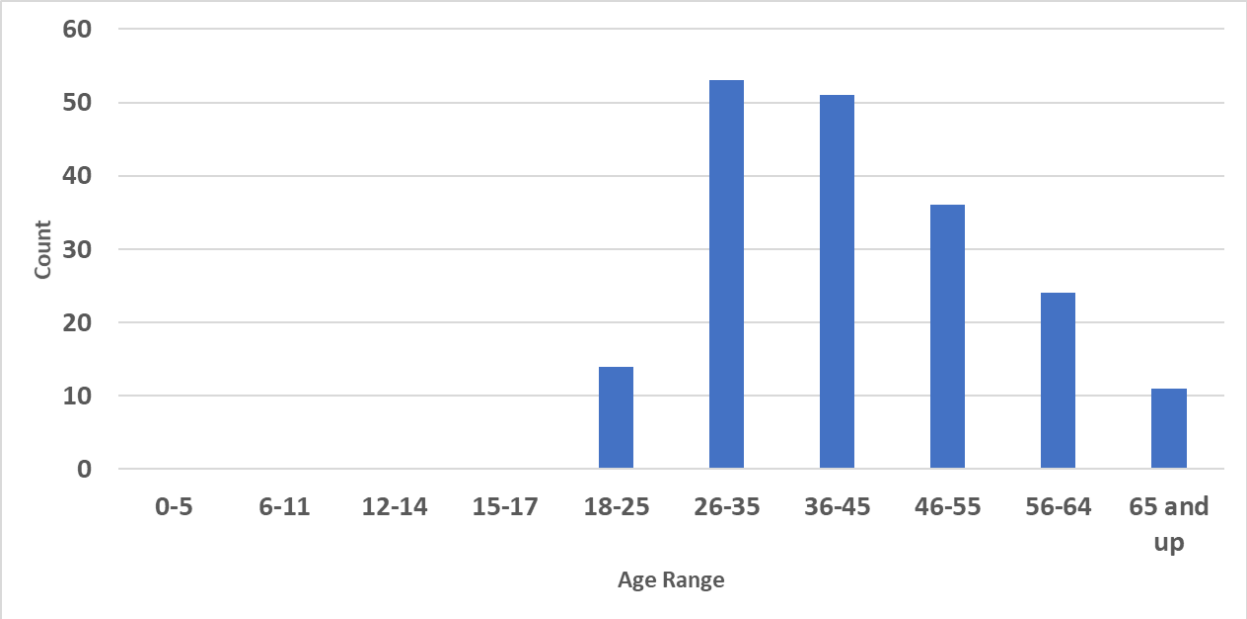
a point estimate of 109. Given that the LOLLA reported value of 155 lay within the 95% credible interval, we accepted it. This estimate supported cumulative reporting by LOLLA. Therefore, the calculated unit cost given a $57,486 grant award was $370.88 per client served.

Land of Lincoln Legal Aid: Northern Regional Office

For the Central LOLLA operations, the grantee reported 189 clients served on its PPR, consisting of five White, Hispanic; 72 White, Non-Hispanic; 104 Black, Non-Hispanic; and seven Other race clients. It reported 54 male and 135 female clients. The age distribution of clients is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Age Distribution of LOLLA Northern Regional Office Clients



Note. UIS analysis of LOLLA data

Analysis of time-series data provided by LOLLA indicated that the total number of clients during 2021 that could be credibly attributed to the R3 funding ranged from 0 to 102, at 95% confidence with a point estimate of 0. Given that the LOLLA reported value of 189 lay outside the 95% credible interval, we adopted the largest reasonable estimate of 102 clients served in the Central region. Therefore, the calculated unit cost given a $114,918 grant award was $1,126.05 per client served.

Board of Education, City of Peoria

The Peoria Board of Education grantee did not provide PPR data. Instead, it included an annual report for 2021. Table 13 below shows the total number reported in the annual report. There are many caveats to these data. First, no effort was made to identify unique clients. For example, in reporting on the use of a Justice Advocate, reference was made to 106 high school students without detailing that they were part of the 153 clients reported for this activity. Also, no attempt was made to assess whether, for example, a client who used a justice advocate also used a career coach.

Table 13

Total Clients Served, Peoria Board of Education

Program	Clients Served
Family Core	46
Wrap Around Center	144
Hult Health Center	2,634
Justice Advocates	153
Career Coaches	402
Total Served	3,379

Note. UIS analysis of LOLLA data

Assuming that the clients were unique across activities, for a grant budget of $858,669, the unit cost would be $254.12 per client.

East Springfield Community Center

The East Springfield Community Center data were difficult to analyze. Though East Springfield did deliver PPRs, much of the data did not make sense. For example, in the Q3 report, the grantee reported 21 clients served. However, the total broken out by race, gender, and age was 15. Therefore, we hesitate to report demographic breakouts. The organization produced a list of clients served during 2021. There were 14, which agrees with the Q4 PPR number. Using this number and a $728,093 grant amount, we calculated the unit cost as $52,006.64 per client.

Springfield Urban League

The Springfield Urban League submitted the lowest quality data. It submitted portions of two PPRs but filled them out in pen. The Q3 PPR was impossible to analyze because the numbers varied across programs. We believe that the 63-client number under their Community Empowerment Program was the number of clients served. No demographic information was included. For Q4, the organization reported 29 “new clients,” consisting of two White, Non-Hispanic and17 Black, Non-Hispanic individuals; 14 males and 15 females; nine clients in the 16-17 age range; and 20 clients “18+.” As the Q4 reporting specifically identified the 29 clients as “new,” we estimated that 92 total clients were served in 2021. A $419,702 grant amount resulted in an average cost of $4,561.98 per client.

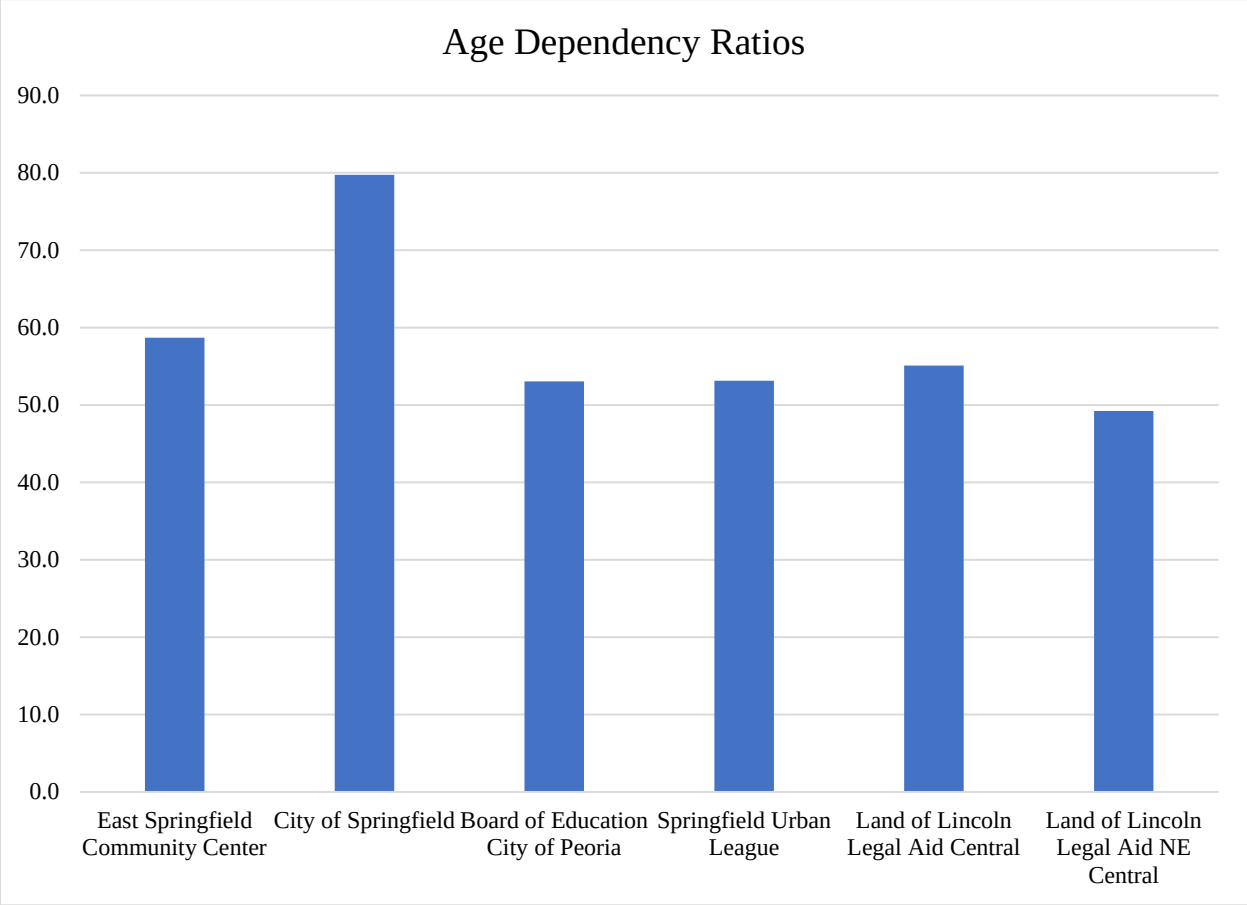
Age Composition of Service Areas

A demographic structural feature may be relevant over the intermediate term related to the age composition of the R3 census tracts where both planning/service providers operate. The graph below shows the average age dependency ratios for census tracts served by each grantee. The age dependency ratio is the proportion of those who are too young (under age 15) or too old (65 years and older) to work compared to the “prime working-age” population (age 15-64). So, for example, in the East Springfield Community Center service area, for each prime working-age individual, there are almost 0.6 individuals too old or too young to work. As the age dependency ratios rise, it becomes increasingly difficult to resolve structural poverty issues because there are not enough workers to generate substantial family incomes. Most grantees serve areas with similar age dependency ratios, except for the City of Springfield, which has far more young and older people than other grant service areas. The East Springfield Community Center serves an

area with a higher ratio, and the Land of Lincoln Northeast Central service area has a slightly lower ratio.

Figure 5

Age Dependency Ratios



Note. UIS analysis of LOLLA data

Barriers Encountered

The primary barriers we have encountered are a function of the diverse types of organizations and stages of maturity for the programs and of time constraints. For some grantees, like the East Springfield Community Center, it was challenging to conduct a process evaluation because the organization and its programs were so new. Others, like the Peoria School District and the Land of Lincoln Legal Aid, were quite familiar with the grant funding process. The City of Springfield planning grant was very different from the others since they had not delivered a program yet. Hence, the process evaluation is not about delivery yet. Typically, juggling time constraints, in general, is a problem for public and nonprofit organizations. As expected, the staff of these organizations were extremely busy, so setting up meeting times and getting data requests fulfilled were a challenge. This challenge was especially true during the grant reapplication period, which is to be expected for a grant staff. Nonetheless, the meetings were productive, and the client sites were very receptive.

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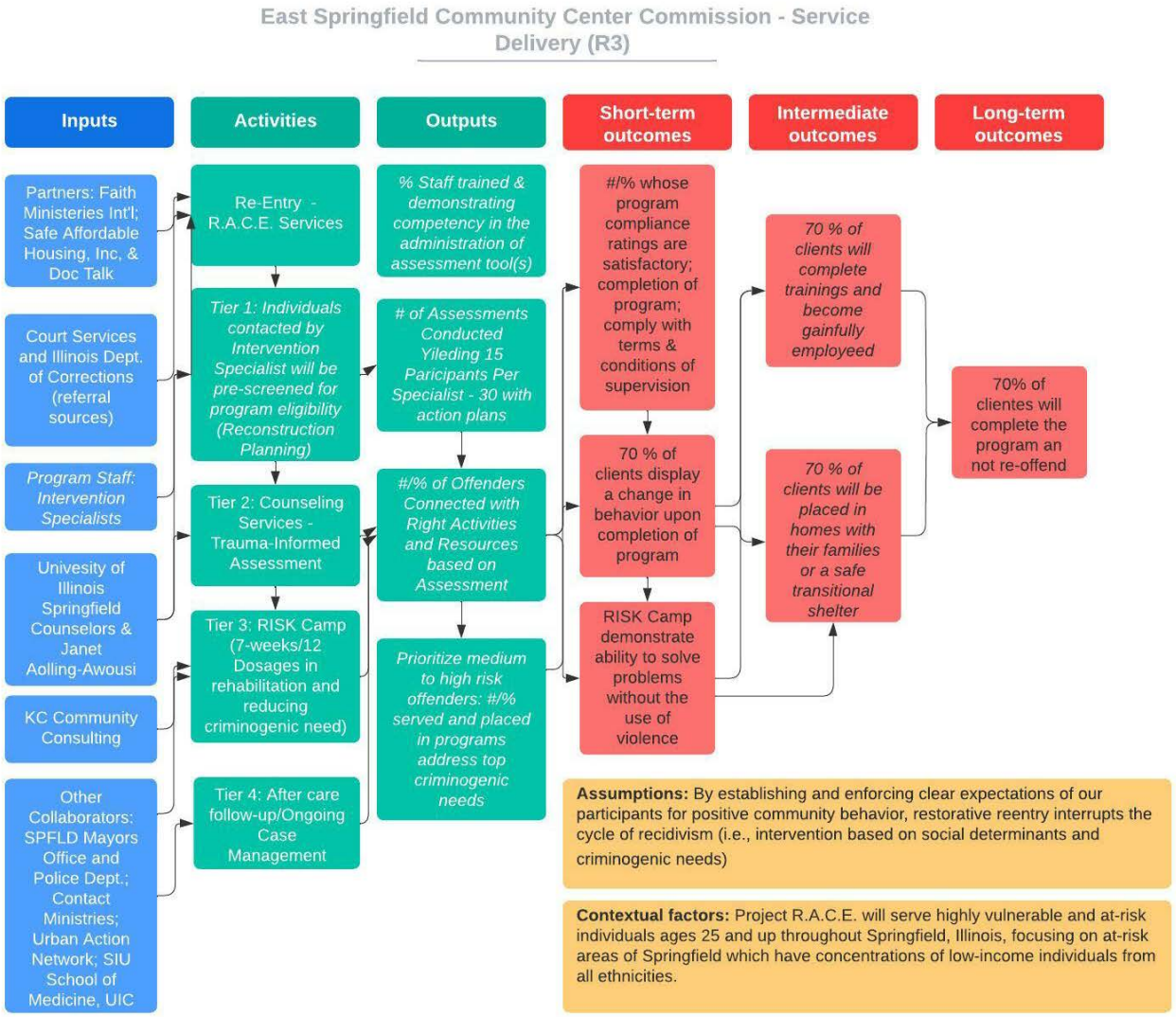
Appendix C: Central Illinois Programmatic Logic Models

East Springfield Community Center Commission (Service Delivery)



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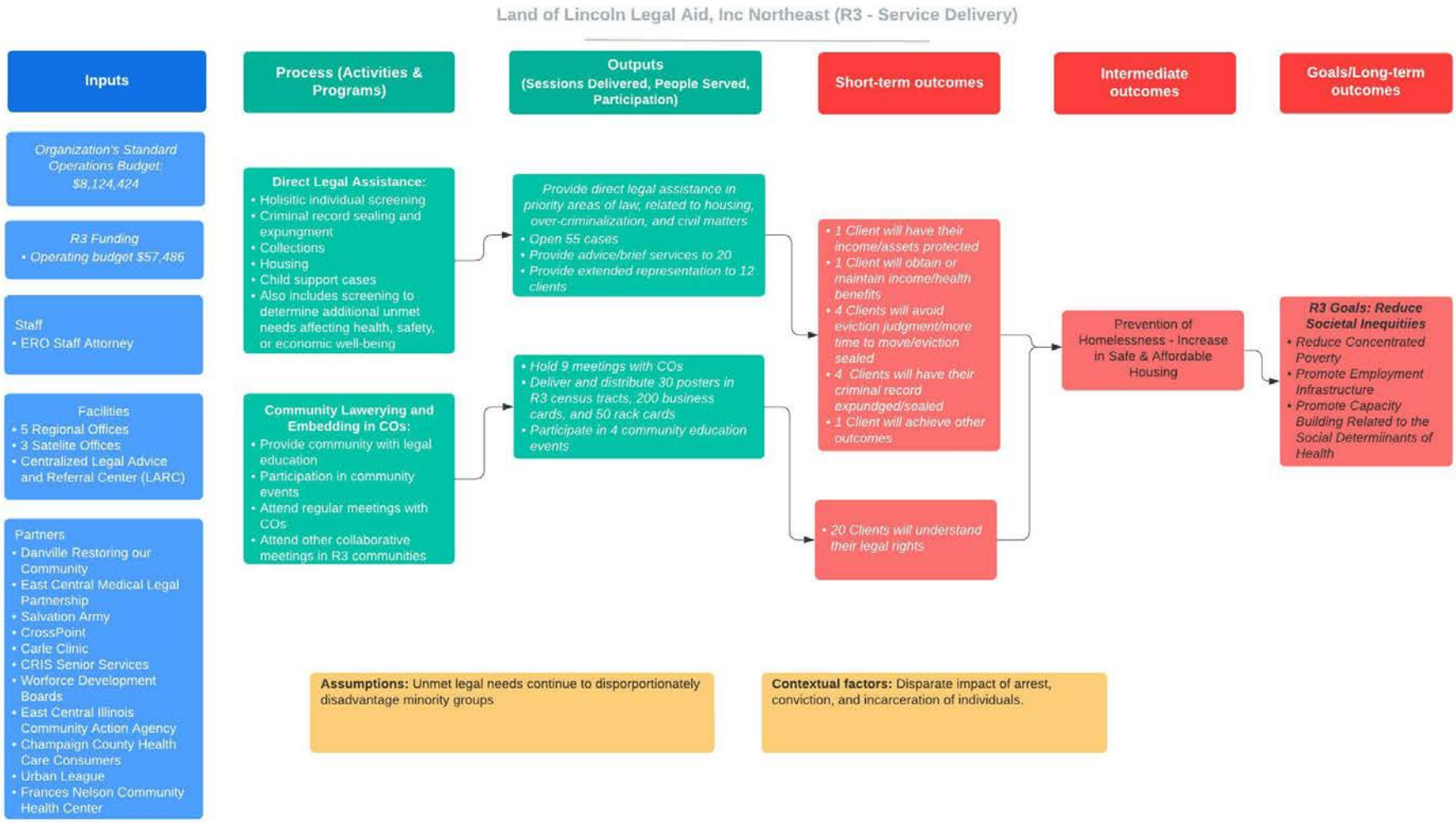

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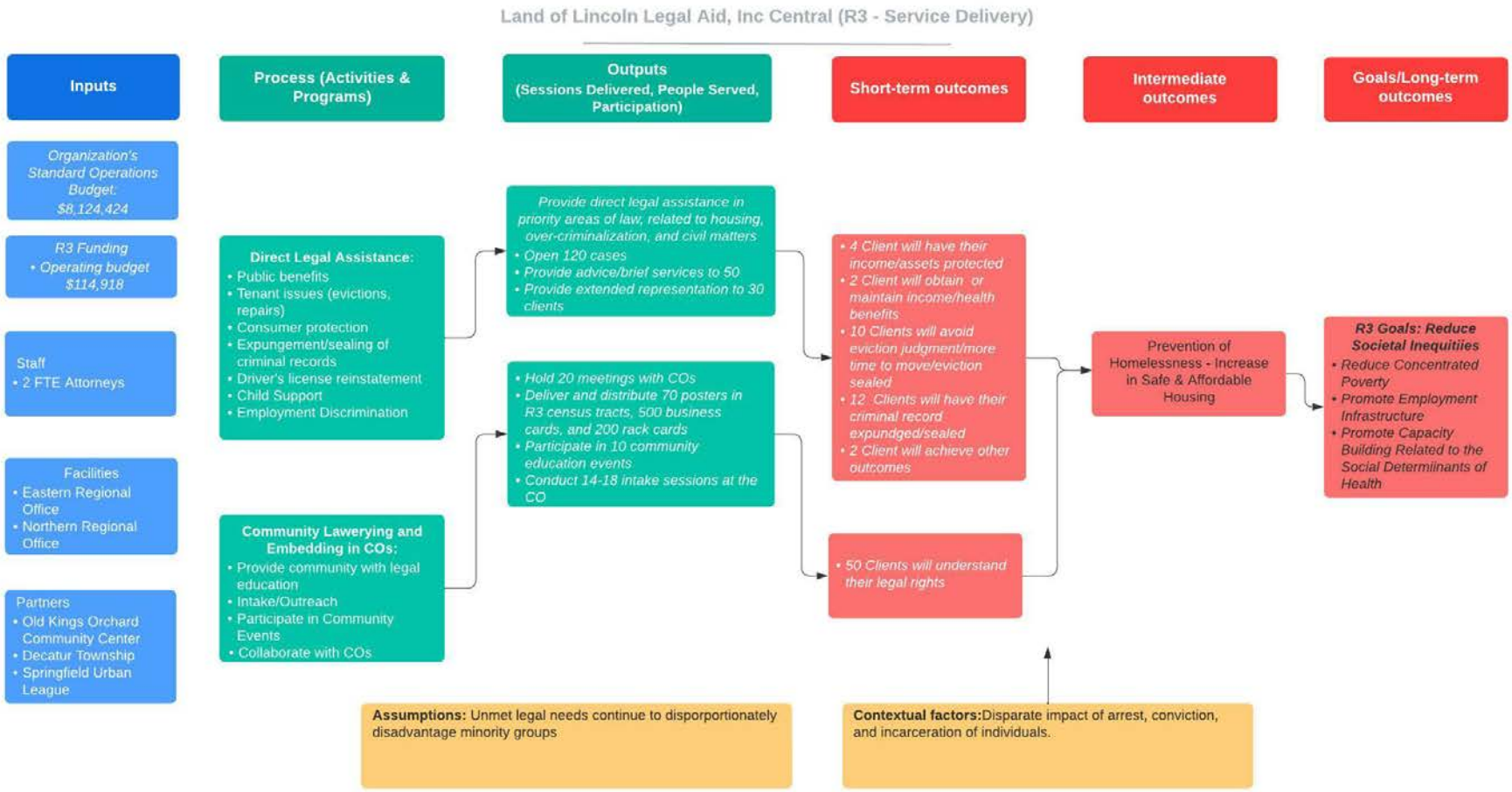
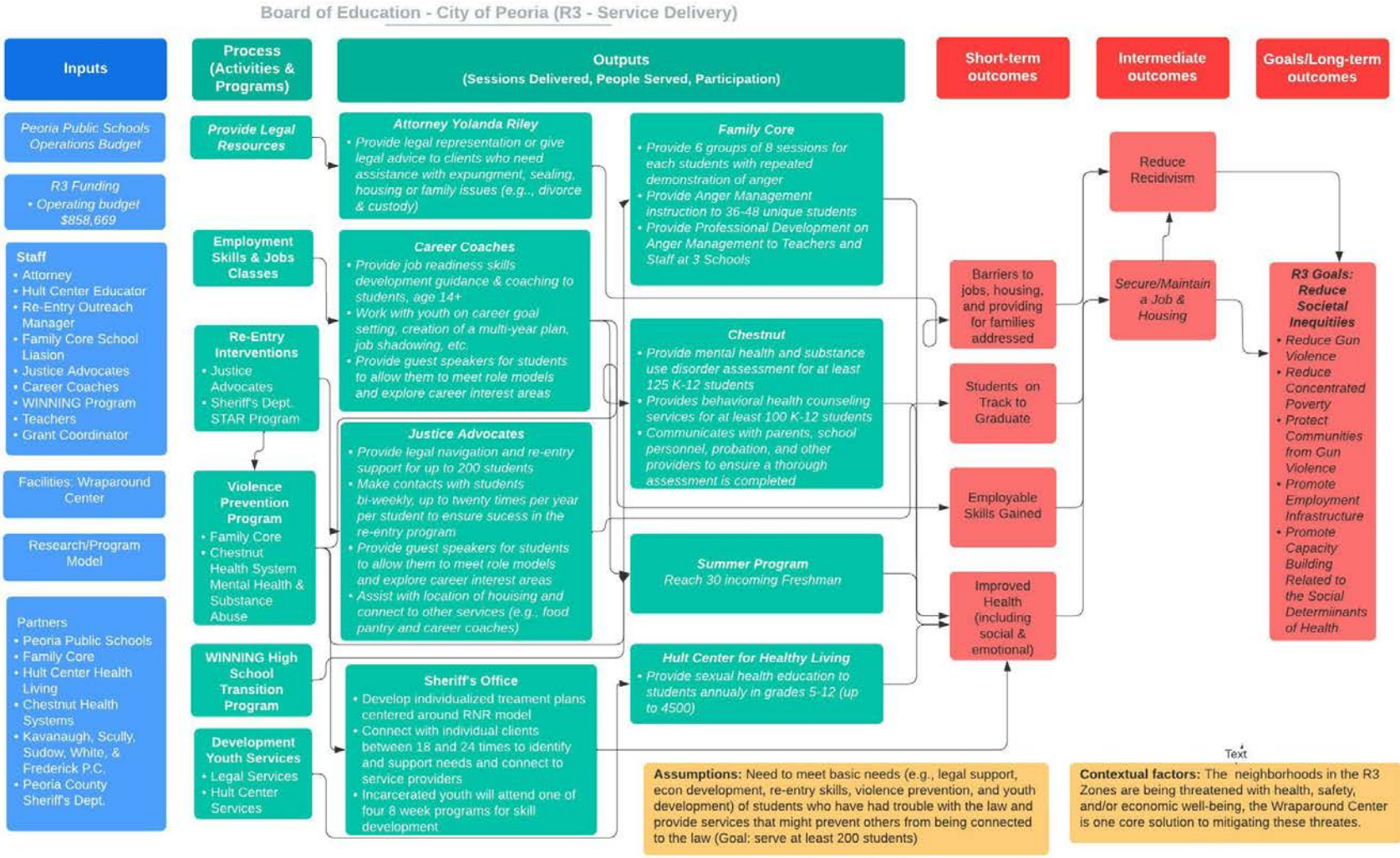
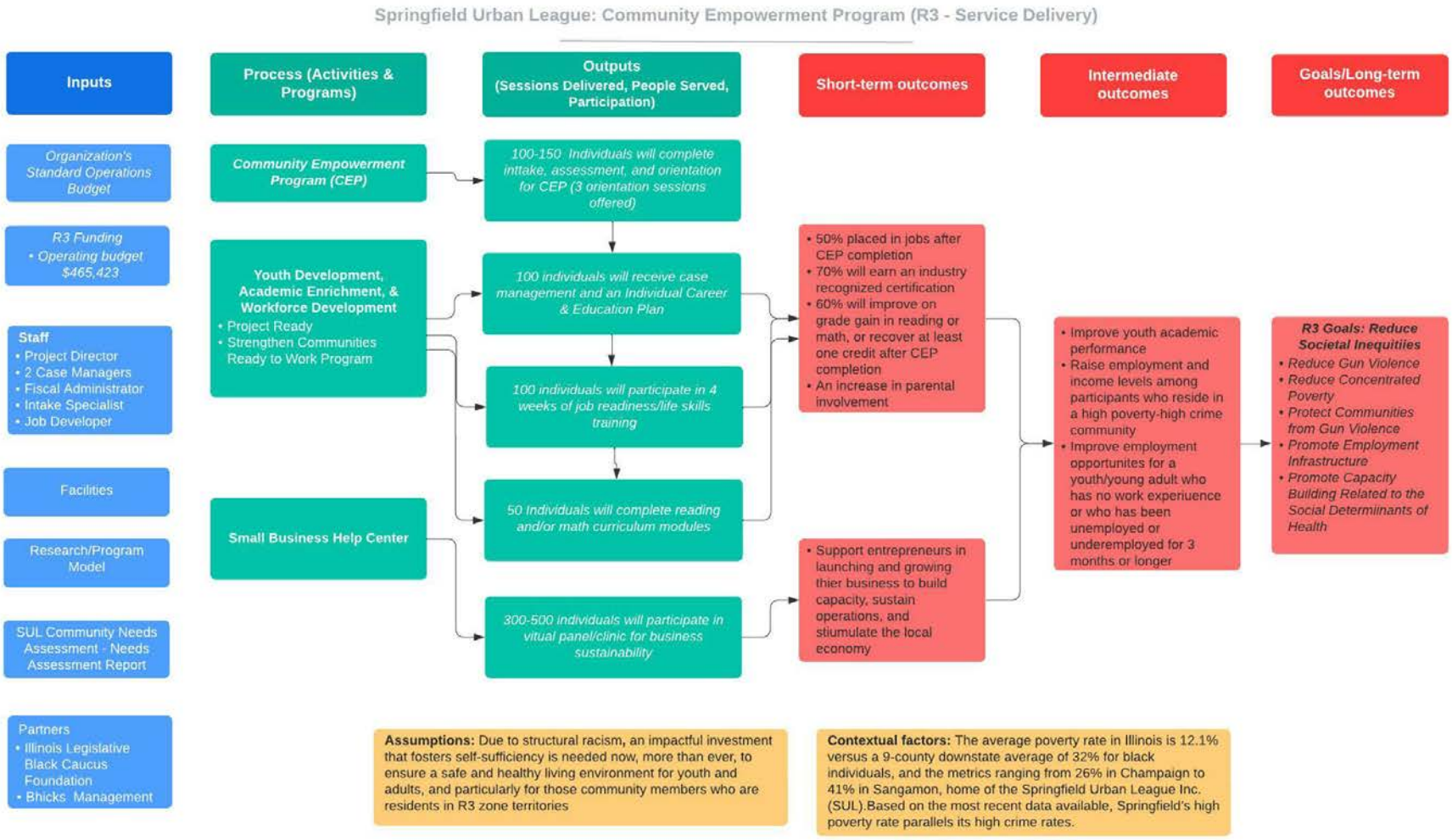


Board of Education, City of Peoria



Springfield Urban League



Report 4: Southern Illinois

Southern Illinois University

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Introduction

For this research evaluation project, we adopted a community-based research approach that engages community members, program staff, and clients of select R3-funded programs. The evaluation includes assessments of program operations, planning/service delivery capacity, program design, and the capability of programs to participate in future outcome evaluation.

Scope of Work

SIU addressed the research question themes detailed earlier across all sites. This process evaluation involved:

1. Conducting evaluations of four service delivery programs and one assessment and planning project in Southern Illinois,[28]
2. Commenting on the research design and progress of the evaluation
3. Participating in the development and implementation of community-based research strategies, and
4. Carrying out project work in compliance with federal regulations related to research involving human subjects.

The resulting evaluation for each program covers areas of program design and implementation, development of program logic models, each program's fidelity to their proposed activities, their adherence to evidence-informed practices, contextual information on service delivery, programmatic successes and challenges, descriptions of potential/actual unexpected outcomes of the programs, and a proposal for a community-based outcome evaluation.

Literature Review

Community-Based Initiatives and Goals

Community-based initiatives involve numerous agencies, organizations, and community members working together to implement programs for community improvement. A common goal of these initiatives is to increase understanding and accountability and to demonstrate causal linkages for positive outcomes associated with the provided services.

Evidence-based Practices and Implementation

Overview. Evidence-based practices have three key features: 1) a conceptualizable outcome, 2) a measurable outcome, and 3) a practical outcome (National Institute of Corrections, (2022). Evidence-based practices and related background information relevant to the R3 programs will be discussed according to the following topics: prevention targets, case management, and quality implementation and integrity.

Prevention Targets. Prevention targets are important considerations for service delivery providers. These targets are especially important for the goals of the R3 program as the targets can support each broad goal in a number of different ways. These development and prevention targets include leisure time, attitudes, skill building and leadership, and education and employment.

[28] Originally, there were two (2) assessment and planning (AP) sites. However, one of them did not continue its R3 work with ICJIA.

Leisure Time. Organized leisure-time activities (OLTA) have been the focus of many studies (Badura et al., 2016; Kaljača et al., 2019; Quarmby et al., 2019). Research has shown that youth who participated in organized leisure-time activities experienced many benefits, including increased school engagement and academic achievement and decreased levels of school-related stress (Badura et al., 2016). Further, care-experienced youth – those who were at some point "removed from their family and placed in the care of local authorities" – benefited from access to positive leisure activities (Quarmby et al., 2019). Care-experienced youth associated sports and other physical activities with increased levels of confidence, competence, character, and connections. Care experienced youth also associated arts-based leisure activities with creative outlets and self-management (Quarmby et al., 2019).

Attitudes. The attitudes of both providers and clients of service delivery programs are critical to the success of these programs; unfortunately, research on provider and client attitudes is lacking. One study examined the attitudes of practitioners in the field of criminal justice and their attitudes towards mental illnesses and substance use (Lowder et al., 2019). In their research, Lowder and colleagues found that those who worked with individuals under less restrictive criminal justice sanctions, such as attorneys and community corrections officers, had more positive attitudes on mental illness and substance abuse than those who interacted with individuals under stricter supervision by the criminal justice system, such as correctional staff or prosecuting attorneys (Lowder et al., 2019).

Skill Building and Leadership. Zeldin (2004) found that community actions that allowed young people to be involved in decision-making processes are effective strategies for preventing crime and addressing problems of violence in the community. Such actions included skill building and leadership activities, which also has been shown to improve the relationship of young people with society by recognizing their active role within it (Morrel-Samuels et al., 2016). These studies suggest that facilitating youth participation in supervision through decision-making or the development of civic skills and youth togetherness can contribute to youths' integration into the places where they live. Unfortunately, labeling youth into fringe groups (i.e., groups based on cultural trends) can lead to isolation for the youth.

Empirical evidence has consistently shown that young people who had connections to their school environments (teachers, administrative staff, and students) and their families were less likely than those who lacked connection to engage in deviant behavior and had higher levels of respect and supportive behavior towards others (Battistich & Hom, 1997; Roderick, 1993). As previously mentioned, the isolation of young people from their environment has these same adverse effects. Similarly, youth who felt rejected by the school community faced even more challenges, such as community isolation, higher rates of school dropout, drug use, and participation in criminal activity (Gilliam & Bales, 2001). Additional research supports this finding, revealing that young people engaged in academic extracurricular activities involving decision-making processes presented an increase in performance (Zeldin, 2002). Moreover, schools where teachers allowed student participation in problem-solving and facilitated connection in the community had less school delinquency and greater altruistic feelings among students.

Youth skill development is also important. One study found that young people faced disadvantages in the labor market when they lacked certain knowledge and techniques that could improve their hiring success (Datta et al., 2018). On the same note, high quality and stable jobs were associated with literate individuals with certain cognitive skills, skills that focused on problem-solving, a focus on task development, teamwork, adequate time management, long-term project goals, and proper management of information and communication technologies (ICT).

It is evident that inadequate training increases the gap between job stability and access to better resources. Young people who lacked the experience and skills required by the labor market can experience feelings of depression, frustration, and disappointment which can contribute to violent antisocial behavior (Datta et al., 2018). Consistent with the youth labor gap, studies also have shown that ethnic minority youth with families located in poor neighborhoods were most likely to experience difficulties finding work during the summer or between school terms (Sum et al., 2013).

Additionally, spending periods of time without legitimate routine activities can lead to an increased risk of exposure to criminal behavior, urban violence, and social isolation. For this reason, researchers have concluded that opportunities for extracurricular activities, even in inter-semester periods, can help reduce the rates of violent youth behavior, risky activities, and opposite economic scenarios among youth with economic vulnerability. This conclusion is supported by the results of the evaluation of the Youth Violence Prevention Funder Learning Collaborative Initiative (Sum et al., 2013).

Education and Employment. Multiple studies have found that education and employment are key success factors in efforts to enhance youth development, facilitate prisoner reentry, prevent violence, improve economic development, and increase participation in civil legal aid. For example, one program in Ohio, Incarceration to Reentry, implemented curricula to assist reentering individuals in building employment skills, in gaining comprehensive educations, in accessing outside resources, and in engaging in career-focused curricula (Taliaferro & Pham, 2018). Overall, this program aimed to close the educational gaps between the incarcerated population and the total United States population. Documenting these gaps, a 2014 survey of incarcerated adults showed that approximately 30% reported less than a high school education, whereas this number was approximately 14% for the U.S. population. Likewise, only 6% of incarcerated persons reported any post-secondary credentials compared to approximately 37% for the total U.S. population (Taliaferro & Pham, 2018). While holistic reentry services are not always associated with improved reintegration to society, the body of empirical evidence supports educational services; other meta-analyses and reports have yielded similar findings (Bozick et al., 2018; Halkovic et al., 2013; Lattimore et al., 2012).

Case Management. Case management models consider clients' access to safe, affordable, and stable housing; they also consider ways to assist clients in meeting these essential needs and in meeting potential treatment needs for drugs, substance abuse, or mental health conditions (Godley et al., 2000; Polcin et al., 2018; Ricciardelli, 2018). Case managers consider making it routine to express interest in helping their clients communicate concerns to parole officers, psychologists, or others. Literature supports this case manager role. In one study of

former male prisoners on conditional release in Canada, individuals expressed some reliance on their case managers to help communicate concerns to parole officers or psychologists, especially in cases where they did not feel comfortable doing so themselves. Overall, there was no real difference in experiences reported by participants and the nature of the crime for which they went to prison. This finding suggests that case management has the potential to be helpful for all ex-prisoners, regardless of the offense for which an individual was incarcerated (Ricciardelli, 2018). By providing this assistance to clients as a buffer to other institutions and agencies, case managers may help encourage clients to get the mental health or substance abuse treatment they need. Former prisoners in the Canada study described the case management program to be a valuable source of assistance after leaving prison and described the program as a "buffer" between life in prison and life in the community (Ricciardelli, 2018).

Research suggests that case management can improve the provision of other services, such as housing, substance abuse treatment, and mental health treatment for those reentering society after incarceration (Godley et al., 2000). For example, case management on its own may be helpful for individuals with drug or substance use issues. Case managers provide vital support that strives for client growth and development. The implementation of case management plays a large role in program outcomes.

While there is no universal "best" model for case management due to the unique needs of different communities, it is important to take into account the research findings discussed in this section. They are empirically supported characteristics of case management that appear to be beneficial to the delivery of prisoner reentry assistance (Polcin et al., 2018; Ricciardelli, 2018). These findings are significant for the service delivery component of Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) service delivery programs, and they aid in analyzing whether the programs funded by R3 are engaging in what is considered best practices for case management.

Quality Implementation and Integrity. Quality implementation and integrity are essential components of successful service delivery providers. Many factors can account for quality implementation and integrity of service delivery providers in relation to the R3 program. One set of factors relates to day-to-day practices and strategies. Two empirically supported strategies, for example, are cognitive behavioral therapies (CBTs) and trauma-informed practices (Hofmann et al., 2012; McCartan, 2020). Other factors relate to the quality of the staff and program design. These can include the training and quality of the staff members and effective program delivery (e.g., dosage, intensity, and modality) (Kimberly & McLellan, 2006; Schmid et al., 2020).

CBT and Trauma-Informed Practices. The use of therapy is becoming a more common practice in the United States criminal justice system. Therapies utilized in the criminal justice system include justice-based occupational therapy, occupational therapy, and cognitive behavioral therapy (Hofmann et al., 2012; Jaegers et al., 2020; Muñoz et al., 2016).

CBTs are integral to the goals of the R3 program in Illinois. These types of therapies focus on the ways in which cognitive factors interact with mental disorders and psychological distress (Hofmann et al., 2012). CBT practices aim to counteract maladaptive cognitions, such as one's

general beliefs, in order to change a person's experiences with emotional distress and problematic behaviors. While CBT is widely practiced, it can also benefit individuals in specific groups, including those who are at high risk for violence and reoffending and those who participate in community correction programs. Experimental studies with individuals under community supervision have shown positive impacts on recidivism (Aytes et al., 2001; Barnes et al., 2017).

Specific to the R3 program in Illinois, CBT practices can assist with three of the program's targets: 1) youth development, 2) reentry, and 3) violence prevention. While the use of cognitive behavioral therapy in the criminal justice system focuses on offenders, preventing recidivism, and reentering society, these therapy practices can also benefit others in the communities targeted by the R3 program. A considerable number of studies have focused on the use and impacts of CBT practices with children and adolescents (Crawley et al., 2010; Kendall, 1993). These practices can be especially beneficial when working with children from the R3 communities as these practices focus specifically on the cognition of the participant. For example, with CBT, children and adolescents from R3 communities can learn positive strategies for coping with personal problems (Crawley et al., 2010).

Trauma is a broad concept, and the ways in which it is defined can vary between organizations and individuals (McCartan, 2020). Trauma comes in many forms. It can derive from a short, one-time event or can come from a series of repeated or similar events. One way people deal with trauma is through trauma-informed practices. Trauma-informed practices are another area of integration with the R3 program. The communities served by R3 funding are those that have potentially faced immense amounts of trauma. Specifically, the R3 program focuses on communities that have any of the following issues: high "rates of gun injuries, child poverty, unemployment, and incarceration." Institutions that utilize trauma-informed practices, such as domestic violence shelters, aim to help their clients understand and heal from any experienced trauma (Sullivan et al., 2018).

Sullivan and colleagues have defined trauma-informed practices in five parts (Sullivan et al., 2018). First, those involved in trauma informed practices must reflect and understand trauma and the ways in which it can impact health and behavior. Second, these practices address physical and psychological safety concerns associated with trauma. Third, trauma-informed practices utilize strength-based approaches that are culturally informed. Fourth, these practices highlight the ways in which trauma affects a person's everyday life. Fifth, trauma-informed practices give individuals the opportunity to regain control in their lives.

Trauma-informed practices can also benefit the individuals and communities served by the R3 program in Illinois. As mentioned, this program focuses on youth development, reentry, violence prevention, and economic development. Extending our earlier discussion of trauma that focused on youth, this portion focuses on individuals who have been involved in crime and the traumas they may face. Those with criminal histories may have faced many losses or trauma while incarcerated. Incarceration can result in loss of autonomy and security (Sykes, 2021). While these losses may be seen as a component of successful incarceration, they may be trauma-inducing. Likewise, those who offend or are charged with offending are also likely to have been

victimized at some point in time. The victim-offender overlap proposes that categories of victims and offenders may not be as black and white as they may appear (Reingle, 2014). Often, the line between the two is blurred. Victimization can be a source of significant trauma, and often those who offend have a history of victimization. Yet, offenders may not be perceived as victims who experienced trauma.

Program Delivery. Staff training and qualifications are major concerns in any service delivery project. Effective and sustainable delivery are needed to meet specific goals and outcomes. For many high-risk populations, trauma treatment, such as Trauma Informed Care (TIC), require specially trained professionals (Schmid et al., 2020). Training for these types of service delivery programs is a critical component in many institutions, including juvenile programs, juvenile facilities, and adult psychiatric centers (Branson et al., 2017). A similar program is "Trauma Smart," which is monthly training for teachers. In it, teachers learn about trauma exposure, attachment, and resilience in order to cope better with stress, to respond effectively to behavior problems, and to create accommodating and supportive classrooms (Orapallo et al., 2021).

Effective training and high quality program staff not only benefit program participants but also can prevent the secondary trauma and burnout often experienced by program providers. In addition to trauma or burnout, staff are also at risk of verbal or physical aggression by their clients. One study found that during the study period 91% of the staff members who were interviewed experienced client-based verbal aggression, and 24% experienced client-based physical aggression at least once (Schmid et al., 2020).

Many service delivery programs, especially those funded by the R3 program, provide for both the internal and external safety of their clients and staff, even while working to prevent violent behavior. In order to provide safety successfully, staff training is critical.

Achieving effective service delivery is a large task. Many service providers have different targets and goals and serve distinct populations. Studies have noted many factors that can hinder the operations of service delivery providers, including lack of accountability and transparency, understaffing, poor monitoring, and poor evaluation (Makanyeza et al., 2013). Structural and organizational problems can also negatively impact service (Kimberly & McLellan, 2006). One study identified four key factors in the success of service delivery providers. The first is the quality of the staff, which directly affected uses of evidence-based approaches. Second is the type of organization (public or private), which played a significant role in day-to-day practices. In the study, service providers in private organizations were more likely to rely on approaches that involve medication, whereas service providers in public organizations were more likely to adopt vouchers or contingency management protocols. The third success factor was strong staff commitment to the organization, which was more likely to occur when staff perceive that their workplace is "just." The last factor was for organizations to have connections with other agencies to enhance service delivery. These connections assisted in creating more open organizations that promoted some of the readiness for adopting innovations (Taxman et al., 2009).

Research has also identified avenues for improving the effectiveness of service delivery providers and programs. These avenues include increasing citizen and community participation, providing informal and formal outlets for feedback, building capacity, enhancing employee motivation and satisfaction, and cultivating agency partners (Humphreys, 1998; Makanyeza et al., 2013). More recently, implementing technology into service delivery programs has become another avenue. Research has shown that programs have utilized technology, such as cell phones, to create individualized programs for each participant (McBride & Rimer, 1999). This type of technology sent specific information to clients based on the needs of their cases and, at times, aligned with their schedules (McBride & Rimer, 1999).

Project and Methodology

R3 Funding and Implementation

This process evaluation of Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) grant recipients began November 2021. The four service delivery (SD) and two assessment and planning (AP) sites were selected by SIUC evaluators in conjunction with ICJIA. The methodology described in this section refers to the evaluation process for the SD sites (see the initial section for the methodology for the AP evaluations). The R3 grantees applied for service delivery funding in July 2020 for fall 2020 start dates. The year one funding and service delivery work was ongoing in November 2021 when the SUIC evaluation began. The second-year funding cycle for R3 SD grantees did not begin until spring 2022. The SIUC evaluation team held online information gathering meetings with the R3 SD sites from December 2021 through May 2022. Initial meetings and data collection were held virtually in light of COVID-19 protocols. This process is further described in the Site Research section below. When these meetings began in late 2021/early 2022, the service delivery grantees had implemented most of their program activities. Adjustments to milestones and development are described in the Findings section within the Changes and Adaptations sub-section for each program. The SIUC team conducted site visits and semi-structured interviews with R3 SD grantees in May-June 2022. Those evaluation processes are described in the Site Interviews section below. SIUC Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the research tasks outlined here as evaluative work.[29]

Site Descriptions

A brief summary of the service delivery sites is provided below. Full details on each site are provided in the sites' respective service delivery sections, which further outline issues related to each site's community context (e.g., poverty, education, violence). Table 1 provides a high-level comparison of key community characteristics from the primary ZIP code for each site from the U.S. Census.

Table 1

Summary of Service Delivery Sites' Community Characteristics

[29] Initial SIUC IRB determination that the project "does not meet the regulatory definition of human subjects research at 45 CFR 46.102" on 11/01/21 for tasks outlined in Site Research sub-section below. Additional determination on 04/05/2022 for amendment to IRB to include semi-structured interviews as described in Site Interviews.

Community Characteristics	ADI ZIP: 62205	Arrowleaf ZIP: 62914	LSSI ZIP: 62959	United Way ZIP: 62205	IL
Median Household Income	$24,838	$28,275	$53,876	$24,838	$68,428
Employment Rate[1a]	40.6%	41.3%	52.6%	40.6%	61.2%
Employment Rate[1b]	84.4%	91.3%	95.2%	84.4%	N/A
Poverty[2]	30.2%	36.6%	15.0%	30.2%	12.0%
Household Composition[3]	52.2%	43.0%	28.0%	52.2%	N/A
High School Graduate or Higher[4]	85.6%	86.4%	93.7	85.6%	89.7%

Note. Data sourced from the American Community Survey Table S1901, DP03, B17001, DP02, S1501 2020 5-year estimates

[1a]Employment rate for population 16 years and older (includes those not in labor force); [1b]Employment rate for population 16 years and older calculated by dividing percent employed from percent in civil labor force; [2]Poverty refers to all people in the given area; [3]Household Compositions refers to percent of "female householder, no spouse present, family households"; [4]High school graduate or higher, percent of persons 25 years and older

Academic Development Institute (ADI). The R3 work for the Academic Development Institute (ADI) is organized under the collaborative Youth Engagement Program (YEP). Through YEP, ADI partners with three other organizations to foster a system of care (SOC) for young people ages 0-24 and their families living in their target area. The three partners are: Uni-Pres Kindercottage, Teens against Killing Everywhere (TAKE), and the Venice Community Unit School District #3. ADI works with each of these sub-grantors to provide programs. ADI partners with Uni-Pres Kindercottage to improve childhood social and behavioral skills. It partners with TAKE to offer Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Training (PACT), which provides education and job training; and ADI and Venice partner to provide trauma-informed professional development.

YEP has three branches: youth development, economic development, and violence prevention. In these branches, services include early childhood education, information technology training and certification, and youth camps. ADI has a Cross-Site Youth Council that provides youth with alternatives to violence and provides resources for youth to become successful leaders. ADI also has educational camps (Camp Lead and Camp Succeed), which focus on increasing students' academic and social engagement while preparing youth for college and future careers.

Arrowleaf. Arrowleaf (formerly Family Counseling Center) provides R3 services to youth, parents, and the broader community in Alexander and Pulaski Counties. Services to youth include training in social and behavioral skills. Training groups use the Botvin Life Skills Training and Transitions Curriculum. Additionally, Arrowleaf leads a Youth Advisory Council to give youth a voice and opportunity to speak up for changes they would like to see in the area and to connect youth with service-learning projects. Arrowleaf also has a scholarship program as part of R3. Arrowleaf runs a parenting skills training group, as well, ("Parents as Leaders" (PALs); and it uses the Community-Based Education in Nurturing Parenting Curriculum (CBENP-CD), after having formerly used the Botvin Life Skills Training. In the weekly

parenting group meetings, R3 funding helps to provide a meal for attendees, which is prepared onsite. Arrowleaf partners with the Southern 7 Health Department for assessments (Social Determinants of Health) and for services for parents (e.g., "Hidden in Plain Sight" event). Finally, in efforts targeted at the broader community, Arrowleaf partners with Prevention First on its Violence Prevention and Promotion Campaign and with sundry community partners to offer safe, prosocial events (e.g., a Community Block Party).

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) provides employment and reentry services to citizens returning to the community following incarceration. LSSI connects returning citizens to services that facilitate employment and reduce recidivism. LSSI's work in this area falls under its Prisoner and Family Ministry (PFM) program. Using intake assessments, case managers develop plans of action to assist returning citizens with developing and meeting short- and long-goals, and with addressing immediate needs, such as obtaining proper identification. LSSI makes referrals for food pantries and clothing stores and helps clients apply for government assistance, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid. The Employment Skills School (ESS) includes Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) safety training, various certification programs, and job placement assistance. Part of LSSI's R3 reentry work includes increasing community awareness (a marketing campaign) and establishing an employer network.

United Way of Greater St. Louis (UW). United Way of Greater St. Louis (UW) sub-contracts with multiple partner agencies to provide a network of out-of-school time (OST) programs for K-12 students. The sub-grantors include: Catholic Urban Programs, Christian Activity Center, East Side Alliance, East St. Louis School District 189, Join Hands East St. Louis, Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House, and Sinai Family Life Center. Each of these programs has its own specific goals and target populations. However, for the overall network of OST services uniting these sub-grantors, UW has set three priorities: 1a) increasing OST programs, 1b) increasing the quality of OST programs; 2) improving youth social and emotional development; and 3) improving the career readiness of participants. Individual OST providers engage youth in a variety of academic and leisure activities and services, giving high priority to activities in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM). In addition to year-round OST work, UW R3 engages in summer camps and is currently working to get its youth chess league up and running.

Data Sources and Methodology

Site Research. Starting December 2021, the research team began site research by conducting a content analysis and synthesis of material submitted to ICJIA (e.g., program narratives from funding proposals) and of publicly available information on each site (e.g., agency websites). This research served as preliminary background work for the evaluation project. In conjunction, the research team compiled academic literature on elements relevant to the sites' work in areas where the programs intended to provide assistance (e.g., education and employment), strategies (e.g., case management), and quality implementation (e.g., trauma-informed practices). In parallel, the research team began gathering information via informal virtual meetings with the sites. Researchers compiled field notes from these conversations and

integrated this information into the documentation of program design and implementation. This preliminary background site research provided the material for draft logic models, which were reviewed with the R3 grantees during site visits and collaboratively finalized. The scope of the programs is visually represented in the logic models in terms of expected inputs, activities, and outcomes. The final logic models are presented in Appendix D. This preliminary work also informed the development of the site interview protocols (detailed below). From the site interviews, the research team assessed the scope of the R3 programs as implemented and the adjustments programs made from implementation through the first several months of 2022.

Site Interviews. The research team developed a semi-structured interview guide informed by the preliminary site research. The interview protocol posed questions about the major areas of R3 service delivery implementation, asking for a program overview and inquiring into recruitment and staffing, day-to-day activities, strengths and challenges, and evaluation. The interview questions also asked program staff about their education and training. See Appendix E for a copy of the interview guide. The interview guide was shared with the primary contacts for each R3 site, and they were asked to identify key staff to participate in the interviews. Across the sites, interview participants included administrative staff (program directors, compliance officers, managers, fiscal officers, grant directors) and program providers and coordinators (educators and trainers, volunteers, curricular coordinators, advocates, case managers). Table 2 describes the sample of interview participants. There were additional participants in provider focus groups for whom information is not summarized in Table 2. The interviews were scheduled in conjunction with site visits in May-June 2022.

Table 2

Site-Specific Breakdown of Interview Participants by Demographics, Education, and Length of Employment

Participant Characteristics	Total	ADI	Arrowleaf	LSSI	UW
N	16	6	4	3	3
Gender					
Male	4	2	1	0	1
Female	12	4	3	3	2
Race					
White	4	0	1	2	1
Black	11	5	3	1	2
Other	1	1	0	0	0
Education[1]					
High school or less	2	0	1	1	0
Some college	1	0	1	0	0
College graduate	7	2	1	1	3
Graduate degree or higher	2	1	0	1	0
Years in current role (Mn) [2]	8.3	13.3	0.6	8.5	9.3

Note. [1]Data not available for all respondents; [2] Data not available for all respondents. ADI (n=4), Arrowleaf (n=3).

During the site visits, participants were approached during a scheduled meeting time, and researchers were directed to private rooms to conduct the interviews. Participants were informed of the purpose of the evaluation and the voluntary nature of their participation. Participants then gave consent for the interviews to be recorded with digital audio recorders. Interviews were typically between 30 to 45 minutes in length. In addition to the site interviews, two additional focus groups following the same interview guide were conducted via Zoom with service providers from agencies partnering with ADI and UW. As part of the site visits, the research team also took field notes on their observations of the sites' community contexts, facilities, and other staff interactions.

Audio files from the interviews were transcribed by SIUC researchers. During the transcription process, the interviews were de-identified with pseudonyms assigned to maintain confidentiality. Once transcribed, the interview texts were uploaded to Nvivo for qualitative data analysis. First, using the interview guide, researchers created a codebook of general themes covered. Ten codes were created: program provisions, program goals, change and adaptation, outcomes and successes, program participants, community, staffing, challenges and improvements, evaluation and sustainability, and interviewee information. Using Nvivo, researchers went through each interview and coded the content based on these major themes. Second, interview texts were sorted and filtered by these themes. By analyzing these theme-sorted texts, the research team created memos that outlined the key qualitative findings. Third, these memos were used to summarize the process evaluation findings by research question and thematic area. These qualitative findings are reported in the Findings section.

Site Supplemental Materials

A final component of data collection included supplemental materials provided by the sites. These varied by site but included items such as summary reports, assessment materials, and some de-identified aggregate participant data. These materials are integrated into the Findings section as supporting evidence and descriptive statistics.

Findings

Many of the research questions have site-specific answers, which are explored in each designated site report that follows. In general, however, a brief overview of the collective effort and observations common to each of these can be made.

Research Question 1: Assessment and Implementation

Broadly, most sites adhered to their proposed programming and anticipated delivery, hitting targets for intended recipients and numbers served (with minor exceptions) and complying with the activities and programs proposed in their narratives.

Challenges. While some delays and alterations existed, they were primarily related to staffing constraints, COVID-19-related delays, or a shift to alternative, better suited programming. Greater detail is provided in RQ5.

Structure, Model, and Goals. Goals of the programs aligned primarily with Youth Development, Violence Prevention, and Prisoner Reentry, with some emphasis on Economic Development.

Activities. Activities varied dramatically between sites but commonly included structured programs with specific curricula (e.g., for youth, parents, returning citizens); academic enrichment activities; and social, emotional, and behavioral trainings. Many sites included wraparound services to further meet participants' needs. Larger community events were more limited in nature, due to both structural and safety related challenges (e.g., COVID-19).

Outcomes. Given varying goals, outcomes are diverse but across the board include improvements to academic achievement, attendance, stability (employment), and long-term behavioral change (e.g., early adulthood achievements, graduation, reduced recidivism).

Who Was Served. Target inclusion was primarily geographically driven (see results in RQ2), where residents of the associated R3 area and within communities with identifiable needs and challenges were served (e.g., high rates of poverty, single income household, lower educational attainment).

Equity. Equity was established though inclusive enrollment criteria. Few exclusionary criteria existed and only in extreme circumstances. Recruitment efforts were multi-modal (e.g., virtual, in-person), and vast referral networks were leveraged to reach as broad an audience as possible.

Capacity. Capacity and served populations tended to increase in all sites. Limited initially by COVID-19 restrictions and concerns, all sites saw participation grow over time. Two of the four service delivery sites were able to expand capacity and increase accessibility.

Sustainability. Most sites had existing structure and programs upon which to build R3 directed programming. Across established, ongoing funding sources and community and network resources, the likelihood of continued and enhanced programming across sites seems likely. Sustainability of programming is primarily dependent on continued access to outside grant funding, and most sites received monies from a variety of sources to support the service delivery.

Research Question 2: Client Engagement and Matching

Many of the services had broad goals of youth development and engagement, and, therefore, had few specific assessment or qualifying criteria. Typically, target clientele was geographically based, and enrollment was open to individuals in specific school districts or community boundaries. For more tailored programming, minimal qualifying criteria were used (e.g., age-based or status-based (parent, returning citizen).

Engagement. Overall, many of the service delivery programs have been able to continue and build their enrollments by relying on existing structures and long histories of involvement in their communities. Routinely, word of mouth among communities and relatively small geographical targets led to enrollment. Additional strategies included using and growing a presence on social media as well as using school registration and enrollment in other service agencies within the community as referral bases. Many of the sites encouraged cross-program enrollment into R3-funded services, drawing in individuals who were known to the programs from their engagement in existing services. This focus on re-enrollment and continuity was an important strategy to reach target clients and their families with new offerings.

Targets. Sites designed programs based on broad community needs. Communities typically were situated in economically depressed areas with many educational, supervision, and diversion needs. The broad nature of program design and delivery resulted in few enrollment requirements or specific assessments for participation. Rather, general inclusion criteria were linked to residence. In terms of target numbers and short-term goal setting, two sites met their target participation and enrollment goals while two faced greater challenges in meeting their proposed numbers. In all cases, the sites have continued to make strides toward expanding enrollment and participation in program delivery.

Delivery and Dosage. Sites adhered to their identified community and target participants' needs. In some cases, the specific program delivery evolved, adapting itself to a more fitting curriculum or delivery. Sites with a specific program curriculum abided by the recommended dosage (e.g., weekly lessons or modules). Some sites had more broadscale programs with flexible timing, such as out-of-school time (OST), and they operated according to whatever hours were needed for their delivery.

Research Question 3: Completion Information

Data and time limitations preclude strong conclusions on completion and retention. Many of the programs operated on a rolling basis and had less specific completion data. Some programs were still in progress at the time of data collection and had not yet gathered such data. In some ways, completion is not an applicable measure for the programs that offered less structured activities.

Assessing retention was difficult because some programs aimed to retain participants in services for as long as they remained eligible (e.g., until they aged out). Further, in many cases, the providers described a model where individuals who had completed structured program requirements would transition to participation in other, complementary provider services. That said, interview responses indicated positive observations of retention, highlighting that many clients, participants, and staff reenrolled or requested additional programming. Three of the sites indicated long-term goals of retaining participants in a volunteer or mentorship capacity, extending their program involvement.

Research Question 4: Generalized Gains and Drawbacks

Generally, sites have thus far experienced positive gains in their programs and efforts. They reported relatively successful implementations. Anecdotally in the interviews, key site personnel consistently mentioned examples of global benefits in quality-of-life domains to participants specifically and to the community generally. These quality-of-life benefits pertain to family relationships, school engagement, and community stability. Limited data and short time frames prevent more specific documented claims of individual and community improvements.

The greatest challenges tended to be consistent community engagement and cooperation with community agencies that were external to the R3 funding (i.e., not sub-awardees). Staffing and continuity also presented challenges. One other challenge that was observed, although not universally, was developing trust within the community more broadly.

In totality, the sites displayed a great deal of reflexive adaptation in response to the general funding, community needs, and external factors such as COVID-19. To best serve their home

communities, they made responsive program changes and implementations; adjustments to curricula; changes in program delivery; and modifications to planning and feedback gathering, as needed.

Research Question 5: Staff and Participant Satisfaction

Strengths and Weaknesses. Across sites, some of the greatest strengths included the collaborative nature of the staff regarding program development, implementation, and adaptation. Their inherent teamwork was observed during evaluation site visits and further elaborated in documentation of their consistent in-person and virtual meetings. Another strength was that the agencies and programs tended to be well-established as known and trusted entities in their communities (though there was some variation in this). This reputation benefited recruitment and participation, drew in the community to serve as volunteers and to provide resources, and created space for more concrete feedback. In terms of challenges, many sites faced and continue to face challenges in hiring quality, dedicated staff. They asserted that hiring pools were somewhat shallow and that they were developing strategies to overcome the main issues.

Delivery as Intended. For the most part, proposed and implemented programs mirrored each other. Where adjustments were made (noted in each site in Changes and Adaptation), it was in response to community or participant needs. In some cases, sites were able to expand their offerings by expanding the modalities (e.g., virtual delivery) and by increasing capacity. The eventual loosening of COVID-19 restrictions allowed for more community-based events to develop and for in-person offerings to resume as intended.

Research Question 6: Future Evaluability

On the whole, an already developed agency structure for program delivery at the various sites has established a strong foundation for future evaluations. Many sites already have a number of program components in place, such as procedures for structured self-evaluation, an ongoing use of pre/post assessments for program participants; academic achievement measures; participant feedback procedures; and partnerships with schools and other agencies to consider outcome data. Some sites already used these data for their own assessment procedures, while others have administrative data with the potential to be used in evaluation. Key personnel gave consistent indications that quantitative evaluation data were available; however, the timeline for the current process evaluation precluded data sharing.

Individually, there is site variability in the accessibility and/or viability of independent data collections. Many sites have juvenile program participants or individuals who have experienced trauma and may feel it is burdensome to be assessed and studied repeatedly. Future evaluations should take thoughtful measures for collecting additional evaluation data in order to minimize any potential harm or confidentiality concerns.[30]

Research Question 7: Community Engagement

[30] The phenomenon addressed in the Chicago Beyond Equity Series, Volume One, "Why am I always being researched?" (2018).

Community engagement is a major part of the R3 programming at each of the sites. For example, the service delivery providers leveraged resources (e.g., informal networks, volunteer hours, resource donations) and reached participants (e.g., recruitment) through religious institutions, schools, local government agencies, private businesses, and non-profits. This community engagement feature provides a sound basis for future research into how research teams can engage R3 communities more broadly. This will build the relationships built between the research team (SUIC) and R3-funded providers throughout the evaluation. During this initial process evaluation, the research team and service delivery providers mutually developed ideas for the evaluation. Utilizing the community engagement foundation at each site, future evaluations can incorporate the needs and values of the larger community in addition to those identified by stakeholders within the funded sites (e.g., staff, clients).

Conclusion

In sum, while details ultimately vary across sites in the following sections, general evaluations of the sites have proven their implementation to be responsive and flexible in light of any structural or other challenges and delays. On the whole, they are well positioned to move forward to examine short and mid-point outcomes more closely. It is important to continue to build out and connect with communities, from both the site and research team levels, and to understand the impacts and processes of implementing community-based initiatives.

Assessment and Planning: Centralia Juvenile Justice Council

The Centralia Juvenile Justice Council serves as a forum for developing community-based, interagency assessments of the juvenile justice system and the needs of the community. It particularly addresses the needs of traumatized children and families. Successful service delivery or participating in service planning involves collaborating with community partners and obtaining community input. In order to improve the sense of safety and quality of life in the R3 area and surrounding community areas, the Centralia Juvenile Justice Council collaborates with the Illinois Association of Juvenile Justice Councils (IAJJC); the Bond, Clinton, Marion and Washington (BCMW) Community Services; the Centralia Community Youth Center; and School District 135.

The Centralia Juvenile Justice Council participates in assessing and analyzing root causes of issues in the community such as poverty and violence. BCMW participates in the assessment process, to include adhering to recommendations of IAJJC staff regarding strategies for conducting the assessment. The Centralia Community Youth Center assists in advertising and disseminating assessment tools and questionnaires. District 135 serves as the home to many of the social services that assist children, including the wraparound program, “Home to School Connection;” counseling services; an intensive and wraparound truancy diversion court; and the Centralia Connected mentoring program.

The collaborative received a year one grant of $86,442 and a year two extension of $36,018, for a total of $122,460.

Initially, the proposed assessment plan aimed to evaluate the need for services by analyzing data produced by the assessment processes. The team proposed to hold town-hall style meetings to obtain community input and gather answers to specific questions recommended by the IAJJC experts. Answers would help to concretely define and assess existing resources within the community and identify service providers and the services that they offered. An analysis of community input and answers would also pinpoint gaps that needed to be addressed by the program.

Between May and July 2021, a survey on the Centralia R3 community’s strengths and needs was given to citizens and stakeholders. Issues were identified for youth development, economic development, and violence prevention. For youth development, the main issues were a lack of parenting skills, insufficient mental health services, and a need for pro-social activities for children and adults. Issues related to economic development included a significant lack of transportation, insufficient programs in job and life skills training, and a scarcity of affordable housing. For violence prevention services the main issues identified were a lack of positive relationships with authority and citizens’ safety awareness.

Following the results of the assessment, the data collected from the assessment were reviewed by the IAJJC research experts and turned into a format that could be easily accessed by the grant coordinator, the collaborating agencies, and the local team. Data from the assessment was used to develop a strategic plan.

R3 grant funds were also used to contract with Saint Francis Ministries, Inc. to develop the strategic plan to address R3 program priorities in community contexts (youth development, economic development, and violence prevention.) In doing so, the needs of the R3 population and the existing resources of the community were considered to create a holistic program that, at its core, has the goal of creating positive, lasting relationships.

The current strategic plan encompasses six goals/objectives: 1) developing a communication and outreach initiative to engage Centralia citizens and stakeholders; 2) increasing awareness of the R3 project to community stakeholders and citizens across the R3 area and surrounding community areas; 3) improving community infrastructure to enhance quality of life and safety; 4) improving the quality of life for youth, families and neighbors in the R3 area and surrounding communities; 5) increasing the number of youth who are prepared and have adequate skills to complete high school, then enter military, community college, or technical schools; and 6) increasing the number of R3 area businesses and business owners by encouraging entrepreneurship and partnerships.

Service Delivery: Academic Development Institute

The breadth of programming offered by Academic Development Institute (ADI) are designed to generate a wide variety of long- and short-term outcomes for clients. In turn, these outcomes are intended to impact the community in the realms of youth development, violence prevention, and economic development. ADI is located in the East St. Louis area (ZIP code 62205). This area experiences high levels of poverty, with 30.2% of people in poverty (IL average is 12%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019c). The median income in this area is $24,838 according to the US Census (IL median is $68,000) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b). The proportion of single parent households headed by mothers is also high in this area (52.2%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019e). Among adults (age 25 and older), 85.6% have a high school diploma/equivalency or higher level of education (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a). Of the individuals in the labor force (age 16 and higher), 84.4% are employed (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019d).

In their grant proposal narrative, ADI identified several community issues that highlighted the need for R3 funding. These community issues include high rates of violence, unemployment, and incarceration. Gun violence is also a leading problem. ADI reported that gun injury resulted in a hospitalization rate of greater than 9.1 per 10,000 residents (Academic Development Institute, 2020). ADI also reported a gun related death rate of greater than 1.6 per 10,000 residents (Academic Development Institute, 2020). Incarceration rates in this area are reported at greater than 70.6 prison commitments per 10,000 (Academic Development Institute, 2020). These issues impact the stability of families and economic security, which are both areas of need.

Specifically, ADI proposed a focus on a “System of Care” approach that would offer programming at each youth developmental stage. The program it instituted targets improvement of overall service delivery within the school system by implementing trauma-informed professional development. Broadly, ADI aims to promote communication between all partners involved with the “System of Care” and to formulate programs and delivery based on evidence-based practices, as outlined below.

ADI received a year one grant of $830,000 and a year two extension in the same amount, totaling $1,660,000 in funding.

Logic Model and Narrative

See Appendix D for a visual depiction of the logic model.

Inputs

Inputs for ADI include grant funding, resources, and partnering agencies. In terms of grant funding, ADI has had funding from over thirty foundations and corporations besides R3; it also has had federal and state grants, state contracts, and local support. In part, R3 support has allowed ADI to fund existing programs and provide additional programs and services for youth in education and job training. ADI also considers other resources (financial, human services, knowledge, and physical) as important inputs. As for the input of resources, ADI leverages a variety of physical, social, and environmental resources to aid families in need. Finally, ADI relies on valuable partnering agencies that assist in providing R3 services. Uni-Pres

Kindercottage provides early childhood education, behavioral and social skills/training along with a safe environment where families can interact. TAKE (Teens Against Killing Everywhere) provides youth with education and employment skills by involving them in rehabilitating homes, which are then provided to low-income families. Additionally, Venice School District collaborates with ADI on several efforts, including trauma-informed professional development education.

Activities

Activities in the logic model are divided into participants and strategies. Participants include the providers and roles that implement the R3 grant work. The major groups include the ADI leadership team and collaborators. Participants also include providers who partner with ADI. These participants serve various roles, as teachers and educators, program staff volunteers, and counselors. Strategies include the components of ADI R3 programs and services. No connecting lines are drawn between the participants and strategies in the logic model as the connections are overlapping and interrelated.

ADI has several interrelated strategies. A community needs assessment conducted in 2019 identified the need for better youth reading skills, such as vocabulary and comprehension skills. Direct youth services are provided through a variety of ADI R3 strategies**.** Training programs for education and employment skills help participants learn the hard and soft skills that will help them develop in the workforce. These programs provide participants with resources for GED completion, youth construction training, leadership, and value-based skills. Another strategy is enacted through high-quality educational camp activities, which enhance students' social and academic engagement, leadership skills, and build future-oriented goals. Camps address students' demonstrated needs with activities directed at future educational and occupational opportunities. Additionally, the Cross-Site Youth Council strategically facilitates youth in gaining academic, social, and leadership skills. Two more strategies provide employment-targeted skills: Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Training (PACT) and C-Tech. PACT prepares participants for work in construction with up to nine months of training. For six hours each day, participants receive construction training and experience, and they acquire certifications. C-Tech's information technology training provides certifications specific to technology work in a nine-month program. The final strategies listed in the logic model (see Appendix D) help enhance the ADI "System of Care." For example, trauma-informed professional development includes 66 hours of trauma-instructed development training with support staff that is culturally responsive and is offered in a variety of formats. This training helps providers engage youth who have experiences in victimization and trauma.

Outcomes

The short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes in the ADI logic model have multiple interconnections. Two short-term outcomes stem from the trauma-informed professional development strategy, and they are the creation of a trauma-sensitive workforce and an enhancement of the social and emotional development of youth served by the "System of Care." The short-term outcome of academic engagement results from several of the youth-focused strategies. Security systems and rehabilitated homes will result from the employment-targeted

programs (C-Tech and PACT respectively). Broader short-term outcomes include increased awareness of ADI programs and the creation of feedback loops between "System of Care" partners and their services. A demonstration of these two outcomes rests on apparent connections and communications among partners and a consistent use of trauma-informed practices.

Mid-term outcomes flow directly from the short-term outcomes with which they are linked in the logic model. Program participants across the "System of Care" will show improved social and emotional skills and improved youth academic achievement over a longer period. Mid-term outcomes for participants in the employment-targeted programs are improved youth career readiness. As awareness of ADI increases, ADI should be able to document increased ADI enrollment and attendance.

Long-term outcomes highlight the ultimate impact of ADI's R3 work. Concerning sustainability and effectiveness of its "System of Care," the outcomes include sustained social and emotional skills for R3 service recipients and cohesive and expanded out-of-school time (OST) systems. These outcomes will demonstrate the R3 model's long-term presence and impact in the community. Long term community outcomes will be evident through reduced gun violence and poverty and through reduced incarceration rates. As a result of the steady improvements in social and emotional skills, academic achievement, and career readiness of participants, ADI expects long-term gains in areas of poverty, violence, and criminal justice contacts.

Program Practices

The logic model was developed based on program proposals, narratives, and external research and refined with additional interviews and observations with the site. The program description and delivery in this section is culled from interviews and field observations to add depth and perception regarding specific activities and program components.

Program Description

ADI provides programs for participants from early childhood to adulthood by emphasizing a "System of Care" model that encompasses ages 0-24. The model promotes Youth Enrichment Programs (YEP) that enhance academic, interpersonal, and communication skills. ADI incorporates family involvement by including counseling, daycare services, and the general development of culture responsiveness and academic achievement. In program delivery, trauma-informed practices remain a priority for staff and take such forms as training and application. Through these practices, staff can adequately address participants residing in impoverished areas who are exposed to violence and/or traumatic environments.

In children's early stages of development (ages 0-5), ADI partners with Uni-Pres Kindercottage programming, which provides childcare and educational enrichment activities for toddlers and young school aged children. Uni-Pres Kindercottage emphasizes peer and adult communication development.

For youth participants who are older, ADI directs a variety of structured programs, including leadership camps, youth councils, and culturally responsive education. Youth camps are available for youth ranging from 5th through 8th grades (Camp Lead) and for high school students (Camp Succeed). These camps target relationship building, leadership skills, and emotional

development. Young adults (ages 15-17) are also provided with the opportunity to participate in the Youth Council, which provides leadership skill building and an environment to facilitate broad peer interactions. The Council meets monthly and provides exposure to and communication with community speakers (e.g., local political representatives, local police), and it provides opportunities to participate in cultural and social events.

For older youth (ages 16-24), ADI offers academic and vocational training that targets workforce development. TAKE, for example, provides training in carpentry and information technology. This space provides youth access to academic achievement, such as completing GED programs, and employment skills, such as certifications in heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), technology, construction, and electrical wiring. The vocational programs offer training and stipends and are more narrowly focused on specific skill development.

In addition to structured programming, ADI hosts a variety of events throughout the year. They include socially driven events (e.g., Easter egg hunt, ice cream social), end of school year celebrations, information sessions and communications, and opportunities to enroll in further programming.

ADI utilizes a broad range of staffing to oversee and run programs, with little dependence on volunteers. Program providers, associated staff, and administrators meet regularly to discuss and navigate the activities associated with the "System of Care" model. They host advisory meetings to keep up to date with programming, participants' needs, and any challenges that may arise. In sum, ADI's programming attempts to promote the development of a variety of skills for the participants, including career readiness, social behavioral growth, and academic readiness through leadership camps. The programming also addresses other broader needs that the COVID-19 pandemic revealed, such as housing, shelters, and access to resources.

Served Populations, Eligibility, and Recruitment

Target Participants and their Characteristics. ADI targets participants from early childhood to young adult with residential addresses in the East St. Louis area (Southern R3 area) who are predominantly Black with higher rates of poverty and violence exposure. The target participants have many needs, which often revolve around social and emotional skill development and access to resources. The community can be characterized as a resource desert, with deficits in quality housing, job opportunities, and retail (e.g., groceries). ADI's participants are described by program staff as "determined" children, who are trying their best to navigate their environments. Often, they reside in environments that present them with myriad challenges. The internet and other essential technologies are lacking; parental supervision and assistance may conflict with other demands; and opportunities may be limited. Nonetheless, participants' families often take the initiative to enroll their children as ADI participants, and they motivate their youth to attend and actively participate in the programs offered by ADI.

Eligibility. As a result of their broad targets, ADI has few requirements for participation in any of its programs. While programming is specific to age groups and space is limited, there are no economic or behavioral requirements for participants. It is ADI's goal to provide a safe,

healthy environment for a wide range of the population. The only limits to participation may relate to capacity and potential legal concerns.[31] For example, the program may deem a participant with consistent and excessive attendance problems as ineligible for a program to serve waiting youth instead. According to ADI program staff, such cases are excessively rare.

Recruitment and Accessibility. Recruitment for ADI's programming relies heavily on word-of-mouth, especially from ADI's participating families. ADI also recruits through door-to-door efforts, church announcements, and school partnerships. In their recruitment process, ADI staff seek out repeat participants, encouraging them to participate in multiple activities and/or community and familial referrals. ADI also attempts to recruit more generally with the use of flyers, which are posted in housing projects, local retail and grocery stores, churches, youth gathering places, and other community access points. Parents are also welcome to stop into ADI's centrally located office. ADI offers in-person community events that are partially designed to gain participation and recruitment. These events provide information sessions and direct opportunities to complete paperwork and enrollments. Many of these recruitment initiatives are conducted by community leaders and partners.

Staffing, Partnerships, and Communications. ADI's R3 programming is run primarily by hired staff but also collaborates with subcontractors, consultants, service-learning groups, and other volunteer groups within the area. The qualifications may vary, but the collaborative dynamic among staff is consistent and clear. One subcontracted position fills the compliance role and is responsible for reviewing paperwork processes and providing feedback to management. The compliance officer ensures that the chief cultural officer, program manager, and project assistants are on track in terms of benchmarks. The compliance officer monitors compliance of R3 grant deliverables as well as compliance with data, federal regulations, and any other controlling practices or procedures that might impact service or program delivery. A staff supervisor holds check-in meetings, is available in-person or virtually for staff and is generally responsible for being available to the staff. In formally designating these leadership positions, ADI has created the necessary structure to successfully manage its vast "System of Care" model. Additionally, ADI has recently hired trauma-informed specialists.

ADI requires basic qualifications and skills for employment but also prioritizes soft skills, such as the ability to communicate with diverse populations. Communication among staff appears to be a very strong component of ADI, as staff reported that they get along well with each other and with participants in ways that create comfortable and informative dynamics. Regular check-ins with staff contribute to strong communication. The resulting environment is one in which people share achievements and challenges and, for the latter, collectively brainstorm solutions.

ADI seeks individuals who identify strongly with the community and who have an interest in serving the community and building relationships. Current staff members have diverse experiences and are dedicated to the program and its goals. ADI staff report that they need additional staff who meet these qualifications. They report that the program has the means to hire

[31] This example was hypothetical; however, youth with violent criminal justice histories, specifically sex offending, may be excluded from the programming as a way of protecting the other participants.

more staff and serve more participants but finding qualified staff with the "right heart" for effective program delivery is a challenge. With this deficit, current staff members may serve in multiple roles, which may be overwhelming and lead to burnout. However, at present, the staff generally reports that a strong team dynamic alleviates potential workload stressors.

Community Integration. ADI's integration into the community exists on several levels. A great deal of collaboration occurs across the different arms of the program. There is also a great deal of broader community integration. Community partnerships and organizations contribute to ADI's recruitment efforts, referrals, and resources. As an example, local schools and churches provide physical space and welcoming environments to promote and provide ADI's programs.

In relation to specific program provisions, community partnerships are essential, and ADI relies heavily on existing networks and capital. Schools work with ADI to create and deliver culturally responsive education, including trauma responsive and social and emotional learning aspects. The Youth Council also develops bridges to community representatives (e.g., politicians, law enforcement).

In sum, ADI recognizes that community needs vary and works with partnering individuals and agencies toward common goals. It also branches out to cover more locations with different types of programs. Although ADI operates in a relatively resource deprived environment and has had some integration efforts stymied by COVID-19 restrictions, community integration exists is a strength. As noted by an ADI staff member, "families live here," and community investment and efforts tend to emerge in a fairly consistent manner.

Delivery Assessment

Changes and Adaptations

ADI has a strong history of implementing evidence-based practices, demonstrating a wealth of knowledge regarding trauma-informed practices and childhood development. It developed its "System of Care" model based on this history and organizational knowledge, and it has adapted it, as needed. For example, ADI staff adapted their focus on skills and trainings to incorporate a greater emphasis on social and emotional skills and to offer varied types of vocational programming. ADI exists in a community with elevated levels of poverty and violence. ADI recognizes these issues and focuses on access to physical and mental healthcare.

ADI staff were acutely aware of impacts to the agency stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff hiring and pay suffered, and many felt burnout. Obstacles hindered both the recruitment of participants and program delivery (in-person, virtual, or hybrid).

Challenges and Strengths

At present, ADI's challenges include difficulty finding qualified and dedicated staff (as noted in the "Staffing, Partnerships, and Communications" section above). ADI staff also identified lingering challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. To counteract limits to in-person communication during the peak phases of the pandemic, ADI increased communication via social media. Additionally, the structural challenges faced by families in the community were exacerbated during the pandemic, making it difficult to retain youth in services when families

experienced homelessness and other disruptions. Further, ADI staff noted a general lack of resources in the broader community. While community partnerships are strong, many have their own resource limitations. As an additional challenge, the reimbursement model complicates the execution of the program for partnering agencies. It puts a strain on ADI's available cash flow. While reimbursement is intended to provide an advance to staff in the program, it appears its actual use goes towards playing catch up, remunerating people for work that was done for a period of time when they went without pay.

ADI's programs come with many strengths. Programs utilize systematic processes, are organized to promote and perform events, and focus on youth advocacy. Likewise, ADI's programs are designed to build a community of welcome and connection. These programs encourage participants to work toward long-term education, to build healthy peer relationships, and to develop teacher-student relationships. ADI's programs offer opportunities for continued enrollment and connections to other programs. The broad age range targeted by the "System of Care" model establishes an expansive resource for the community and an opportunity for continued growth.

Fidelity and Compliance

ADI has engaged, as it proposed it would, in the broad services outlined in their "System of Care" model, with specific programs/services provided for each developmental group. It has substantially expanded its programming and has estimated that it has more than 200 youth in its youth engagement programs, outpacing its proposed estimate of 195. It has successfully implemented the Youth Council, leadership camps, and vocational programming; and it has coordinated with Uni-Pres Kindercottage to implement social and behavioral skills training in addition to counseling services.[32] Working with the school district, ADI's virtual trauma-informed professional development has remained ongoing and in high demand among staff and teachers.

Overall, ADI was able to implement and grow a substantial amount of programming. It has incorporated feedback and is considering adding programs to its curricular offerings for youth enrichment (e.g., reading programs). It plans to both continue delivering current programs and also expand long-term systems of care.

Ongoing Successes and Moving Forward

Early Outcomes

ADI has been successful in meeting metrics of planned enrollments, including meeting approximate goals of camp participation; running a youth council; and engaging former participants as interns, who relate their experiences to program development. More informally, ADI has noted improved coping and communication skills in participants as an early behavioral outcome. Moving forward, ADI has a comprehensive plan for summer camps, programs, and offerings to carry forward in the upcoming months. ADI also hopes that participants, upon

[32] Camps and trainings were ongoing and exact numbers were unavailable in terms of enrollment and completion, but site observations and interviews generated knowledge of approximate numbers and implementation.

program completion, will return to ADI (e.g., as interns) to guide and mentor future participants. This type of outcome helps both ADI and the community because it builds a strong sense of trust and continuity. Concerning provider goals, ADI has reported increases in participation and attendance in professional development. In cases of trauma-informed trainings, staff have requested additional meetings and education to keep examining the content and applications of the material. This motivation illustrates the broad willingness and motivation of program staff to meet the program's goals.

ADI has identified high areas of need in its community and has addressed them. ADI has been successful in networking within the community by gaining resource lists and referrals. ADI also has established supportive networks to provide physical space for program provision. Community partnerships have furthered program delivery and have offered a feedback loop that improves assessment of community needs and generates participation. The established trust ADI has as a community resource provides a strong foundation and collective means for managing goals while the collaborative and informed nature of the staff promotes effective programming.

Evaluability and Sustainability

ADI utilizes both formal and informal means to develop a comprehensive program for getting immediate and long-term feedback and evaluating changes. ADI has concrete performance measures such as pre- and post-tests for specific programs (Youth Council; social and emotional programming), data-sharing partnerships with the local school district, and program attendance and completion records. ADI's participants complete assessments and surveys on a daily and weekly basis.

ADI regularly completes informal self-evaluation as well. A particular strength is the collaborative and communicative approach of the providers. This approach extends into regular meetings and communications at a weekly level. These meetings emphasize the systemic processes associated with evaluations, which include remaining compliant and providing a platform of communication that focuses on goals and overcoming challenges. More informal means of self-evaluation include site visits to program providers that allow for ongoing assessments of the needs of the various programs, participants, and communities.

ADI collects ample data for evaluability. Its populations and partnerships, however, may make broad access somewhat challenging. Concerns regarding privacy are well founded as ADI serves primarily juveniles. There is also a concern about burdening participants by involving them in additional external data collection,[33] particularly in ways that may re-traumatize them.

Overall, the general sustainability of ADI programs appears to be promising. ADI has utilized its funding to build upon its foundational provisions and has increased its programming and capacity. Importantly, the nature of program design in a "System of Care" model requires both time and funding to remain sustainable for all participants. The existing infrastructure, resources, and community involvement provide a very solid foundation from which ADI functions. The

[33] The phenomenon addressed in the Chicago Beyond Equity Series, Volume One (2018), *"Why am I always being researched?"*

agency aims to maintain this foundation through continued applications for funding and staff collaborations.

Conclusion

Overall, ADI has experienced strong implementation, highlighted by several key factors:

- ADI consistently draws upon strong community relations and involvement. The collaborative approach has led to a team-based setting where a variety of participants are involved in their many activities and events.
- One of ADI's greatest strengths is the core of the program design in its "System of Care." This comprehensive system enables ADI to provide age- and grade-appropriate programming in a variety of ways for youth ages 0-24.

Moving forward, ADI's areas for advancement include:

- Prioritizing dedicated and quality staff members who are well-suited to serve ADI's target populations and who can help manage increasing program capacities and program management demands.
- Considering the development of broader recruitment measures beyond the current reliance on word of mouth, referrals, and flyers. Effective as current methods are, a central source or website and/or greater social media presence could reach additional target audiences and could provide information regarding the totality of the available programming.

Finally, ADI is on a positive trajectory for continued service provision and has a strong potential foundation for internal and external evaluations. Importantly, evaluation teams and ADI should work together to strategize best practices and methods for comprehensive evaluation of how well it meets goals and understands outcomes.

Service Delivery: Arrowleaf

Arrowleaf focuses on the R3 priorities of youth development and violence prevention, with efforts incorporating restorative justice and community engagement. Arrowleaf is located in Cairo, Illinois (ZIP code 62914). This area experiences high levels of poverty, with 36.6% of people in poverty (IL average is 12%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019c). The median income in this area is $28,275 (IL median is $68,000) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b). Single parent households headed by mothers are also high in this area (43.0%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019e). Among adults (age 25 and older), 86.4% have a high school diploma/equivalency or higher level of education (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a). Among individuals in the labor force (age 16 and higher), 91.3% are employed (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019d).

Arrowleaf has identified several community issues that highlight the need for R3 funding in Alexander and Pulaski counties. Arrowleaf cited this area as having among the highest unemployment, poverty, violent crime, and teen pregnancy rates in the state of Illinois. For example, Alexander County is estimated to have a teen birth rate of 14.3% (Arrowleaf, 2020). In Alexander County, 60.5% of children receive public assistance; in Pulaski County 45.5% of children receive public assistance, while the state average is 27.5% (Arrowleaf, 2020). Arrowleaf cited the 2020 Kids Count report for evidence that Alexander and Pulaski Counties have the lowest rate of connectivity to computers and the internet in the state (Arrowleaf, 2020). In addition to these issues, Arrowleaf reports that the total population is declining (Arrowleaf, 2020).

To address various community needs, Arrowleaf's objectives are to increase youth and parental development by implementing educational and social programming and to address violence more broadly through community-wide campaigns. Its programs help participants improve parenting and communication skills (parent groups) and attitudes. Programs also improve self-management and social skills (youth groups and council). Community campaign efforts target bullying and violence reduction more broadly. In providing this work, Arrowleaf aims to expand its community awareness, increase the use of its available programs and resources, and develop more connections to help increase partnerships within the community.

Arrowleaf received a year one grant of $253,906 and a year two extension for the same amount, for a total of $507,812 in funding.

Logic Model and Narrative

See Appendix D for a visual depiction of the logic model.

Inputs

Inputs for Arrowleaf begin with grant funding**.** The communities in Alexander and Pulaski Counties are important inputs. Arrowleaf's R3 team works with the community to promote violence prevention and youth development activities with a restorative justice lens that focuses on improving the social determinants of health of community members. Arrowleaf acknowledges the importance of area school districts (Egyptian, Meridian, Century, Cairo) as inputs. The R3 Service Delivery personnel work with the local schools to promote related prevention and

development activities. Finally, Arrowleaf relies on valuable parenting agencies, which assist in providing R3 services. For example, one consultant, Southern 7 Health Department, serves as the local health expert on the agency's R3 service delivery program. It focuses on prevention problems and promotes healthy development via recommended youth development interventions. Prevention First is the primary partner for the violence prevention community campaign.

Activities

Activities in the logic model are divided into participants, who include the providers and people who are in roles that implement the R3 grant work, and strategies, which include the components of Arrowleaf's R3 programs and services. No connecting lines are drawn between the participants and strategies in the logic model as the connections are overlapping and interrelated.

Participants include the roles of grant manager, program manager, R3 program coordinator, R3 community advocate, parent group facilitator, and Youth Advisory Council facilitator. Single staff can hold multiple roles. Role distinctions in the logic model are intended to show the unique elements, not the number of staff.

Arrowleaf has several interrelated strategies. The community block party is a strategy for violence prevention and youth development. It aims to increase engagement opportunities between formal (e.g. police, schools) and informal means of social control (e.g. families, community members). The violence prevention community campaign intends to increase violence prevention initiatives in the proposed R3 service delivery area. It is aimed at reaching the most at-risk individuals proactively by building legitimacy and informal means of social control. The parenting skill training program strengthens communication between parents and their children and reduces risk factors while promoting protective factors. The program started with one evidenced-based curriculum (Botvin Life Skills Training) and transitioned to another that better fit the needs of the participants (Community-Based Education in Nurturing Parenting (CBENP-CD) Curriculum). Social-behavioral skills training utilizes an evidenced-based curriculum (Botvin Life Skills Training – Transitions) to strengthen youth participants' abilities (ages 16+) in personal self-management skills (e.g. decision-making, managing stress) and in general social skills (e.g. communicating, building and maintaining relationships). The Youth Advisory Council ensures youths' input and engagement in R3 service delivery programming by increasing protective factors in adolescence. The scholarship program aims to invest in students, with the hope of increasing their desire to enter the workforce and improve the overall labor force participation rates in Alexander and Pulaski Counties.

Outcomes

The short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes in the Arrowleaf logic model have multiple interconnections. First, short-term outcomes expected from the block party and violence prevention campaign are increased protective factors. Second, parenting skills training will increase communication skills among parents. Another short-term outcome is an increase in self-management and in general social skills, and it is tied to participation in the parent and youth programs and in the Youth Advisory Council. Additionally, the outcome of promoting violence reduction follows from people's participation in the violence prevention community campaign

and in parenting skill training. Finally, participation in the Youth Advisory Council and scholarship program is intended to increase educational stimulation.

Mid-term outcomes flow directly from the preceding short-term outcomes, as illustrated by the links in the logic model. Multiple short-term outcomes contribute to the mid-term outcomes of strengthening protective factors in adolescence and strengthening informal means of social control. Sustainable development and prevention of problems flow from R3 service participants' short-term gains in self-management and general social skills. Finally, the logic model links improved educational stimulation, which encourages youths to pursue their career and academic goals, to the mid-term outcome of increased high school graduation rates.

Long-term outcomes highlight the ultimate impact of Arrowleaf's R3 work. Concerning adolescents' protective factors against violence, the outcome includes having violence reduction as an ultimate outcome of strengthening protective factors in adolescence and sustainable development and prevention of problems among R3 participants and their families (and the community more broadly). The expected results of sustainable development/prevention of problems are long-term gains in community involvement and collaboration. This will give people opportunities to make communities more vibrant and prosperous. Sustainable development/prevention of problems also link to sustainable employment and academic successes. Similarly, healthy youth development is another desired long-term outcome. Ideally, as youths have more opportunities to develop close relationships with peers, families, and people in their schools and community, it will also reinforce their healthy behaviors and choices. A final long-term outcome is increased awareness of the program. By providing more services and by educating the community about the importance of Arrowleaf's R3 work, awareness of its available tools and resources will expand.

Program Practices

The logic model was developed based on program proposals, narratives, and external research; it was refined based on additional on-site interviews and site observations. The program description and delivery in this section is culled from interviews and field observations to add depth and perception regarding specific activities and program components.

Provided Programs and Delivery

Arrowleaf offers many programs to encourage youth development and violence prevention, including parenting programs, a Youth Advisory Council, social and behavioral courses, community engagement campaigns, and scholarship distribution.

For community parents, Arrowleaf provides a 10-week "Parents as Leaders**"** (PALs) course that follows a curriculum provided by the Department of Child and Family Services. Arrowleaf also subcontracts with other agencies to assist with parent lessons (e.g., the health department). The PAL group meets weekly in person. Lunch is provided to participants. In this relatively informal environment, the group discusses each week's topic. Overall, the group dynamic provides communal support, an outlet for sharing challenges and struggles of parenting, and opportunities to find solutions to issues that arise. The program also allows out-of-class messaging and support among staff and participants. PAL's participants also have opportunities to attend fun family

engagement events and generally learn better family communication skills (e.g., managing aggressive tones). The parenting group is offered in multiple formats. Face-to-face is preferred, but hybrid options are available, as needed; and for further assistance parents can request individual meetings.

For youth, Arrowleaf's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) focuses on leadership and skill development through decision making, community planning, and service opportunities for a variety of different age groups. The YAC meets approximately monthly, or more as needed. The group provides a safe space to discuss issues that the community identifies and finds challenging. The service learning-based activities provide students with a voice in community planning and with opportunities to focus awareness on local challenges (i.e., food deserts). Participants also engage in environmental improvements by identifying unsafe areas in their communities and determining strategies that may offer improvements. Efforts to carry out the solutions are supported with R3 funding.

In targeting the broader community, Arrowleaf's current communication campaign utilizes data and general trends to identify bullying and violence as important issues to address. As a first step, the campaign draws attention to the importance of bullying behaviors and their prevalence, including online bullying, which is often overlooked. The communication campaign hosts motivational speakers, holds conversations in schools to raise awareness of the social problem, and aims to prevent further incidents of bullying and violence.

For general academic and social development, Arrowleaf provides a course that focuses on the social and behavioral health of participants, utilizing the Botvin curriculum for high school juniors and seniors. Currently, the social skills class meets face-to-face once or twice each week for six weeks in two schools and aims to secure a course in a third school. Arrowleaf's plan also includes greater communication with local schools and community colleges to better identify and distribute financial scholarships, thereby assisting with post-secondary educational costs.

Outside of direct R3 related funding, Arrowleaf has broad agency provisions, including a newly developed food pantry and lists of resources and connections. These lists focus on needs that the agency does not have direct resources to address, such as mental health provisions or Medicaid assistance. In maintaining such holistic services, Arrowleaf can identify potential participants in R3 related programs and further develop and assess community needs.

Served Populations, Eligibility, and Recruitment

Target Participant and Description. Generally, the needs within Alexander and Pulaski counties derive from economic depression, specifically childhood poverty, single-parent/working households, and other resource deprivations in education and employment. The site observers noted that parents and children alike would benefit from greater community engagement as well as from social and behavioral programming to improve general communication and academic skills. Along these lines, the target populations for Arrowleaf's programming include "anyone in the community to positively impact" with provisions, programs and events, which includes interested adults and youth alike. Arrowleaf participants commonly need mental health treatment. They score high on health risk and needs assessments and have early developmental

markers for need. Despite these common needs, Arrowhead welcomes all community members and attempts to provide general support to all interested participants.

Arrowleaf provided copies of the assessment materials and data for one cohort[34] of parenting skill training program participants. Demographics for the cohort are presented in Table 3. Most participants are female, and they have an average of 3.3 children in their households.

Table 3

Parenting Program Participant Demographics (N=8)

Demographics	#/Mn
Age	
18-25	2
26-35	3
36-45	2
56-65	1
Sex	
Male	2
Female	6
Race	
Black	4
White	3
N/A	1
Ethnicity	
Non-Hispanic	7
N/A	1
Number of Children (Mn)	3.3

Note. SIU analysis of Arrowleaf data.

At intake and exit, participants completed the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI), which corresponds with the training curriculum (Community-Based Education in Nurturing Parenting (CBENP-CD) Curriculum). This inventory measures the following parenting constructs: expectations of children, empathy, punishment, family roles, and children's power and independence. Results in standardized scores (Sten scores) [35] are presented in Table 4. Standardized scores range from 1-10, with 1-3 indicating high risk, 4-7 medium risk, and 8-10 low risk. In both pre- and post-tests, the cohort scored in the medium risk range for the parenting constructs. The scores are relatively stable from the pre- to the post-test. The largest change is seen in the increased scores for the family roles construct, indicating an improvement in recognizing appropriate parent-child roles and dynamics.

Table 4

Parenting Program AAPI Standardized Scores (N=8)

Construct	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Change

[34] The March 24, 2022 to June 2, 2022 cohort.

[35] Sten scores are "standard ten scores" that are built for a normal distribution. See https://assessingparenting.com/assessment/aapi for more information.

Expectations	4.0	4.0	0.0
Empathy	4.5	4.0	-0.5
Value of Corporal Punishment	4.2	3.8	-0.3
Family Roles	5.0	5.7	0.7
Power-Independence	5.2	4.7	-0.5

Note. SIU analysis of Arrowleaf data.

Eligibility. For all programs**,** most Arrowleaf participants reside within an R3 area in Alexander and Pulaski Counties in Southern Illinois. Specific to the "Parents as Leaders" groups, a participant is required to be a caregiver of a person under the age of 18 years old. Arrowleaf screens participants in the parenting program at intake, using a Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) form. This screening identifies areas of concern in household, financial, and physical security (building safety, family violence); in parent mental health and substance use; and in support networks (behavioral and financial). Summary data from the SDOH screening were not available for this report. Generally, parenting group participants must maintain good attendance; however, participants can make up weekly lessons or attend virtually. For youth programming, participants must fall within certain age ranges, as programs are designated by associated age groups.

Recruitment and Accessibility. Arrowleaf utilizes many different recruitment initiatives to gain awareness and participation within the community. Broadly, Arrowleaf staff utilize flyers throughout its target communities, social media efforts to promote general engagement and enrollment in programs and relies on word-of-mouth and other in-person recruitment activities. Arrowleaf providers ask participants, parents, and school staff to share information on their programming; and they host meetings and community events, such as conferences, youth development tours, and focus groups. Arrowleaf attempts to generate a community presence by forming partnerships with community agencies, including school staff and administrators. They also connect with different political representatives. Arrowleaf staff are working on building relationships with schools in target areas, and youth may be referred to the program by their guidance counselors.

Staffing, Partnerships, and Communications

The Arrowleaf program manager is responsible for managing R3 services and for directly supervising staff members who serve as direct service staff community advocates. The program manager also facilitates the Youth Advisory Council and provides service-learning projects, volunteer opportunities, and community strengthening events. Staff in the community advocate role facilitate the parenting group. Community advocates are certified to teach the nurturing parent curriculum. Most staff are required to possess a high school diploma or GED. Some positions include a preference for a bachelor's degree. Specific to program development and implementation, training is done primarily internally. Staff are self-taught and seek out professional certifications in specific programs based on developing needs and the utilized curricula.

Arrowleaf staff communicate strongly and consistently with each other. Regular staff meetings result in informed staff who respond reflexively to community needs, demands, and innovations.

Staff also appear to have frequent communication with external parties: program partners, providers, and subcontractors. Communication and trust are less robust with school-based partners, but strategies are developing in response to this challenge.

Staffing challenges at Arrowleaf include turnover and a steep learning curve. Many of Arrowleaf's staff are relatively new in their positions, but familiar with the broader community. While this offers a bridge to community needs and relationship building, it also means staff must keep up with new position appointments, new program development, and implementation. Thus far, Arrowleaf has demonstrated a strong responsiveness to programming and provisional needs, but this can come with the risk of increased staff requirements and delays in implementation. In sum, Arrowleaf has increased its staffing of local, community-invested individuals, which is an asset. However, multiple duties and demands require a period of growth and transition. With staff turnover, new staff are routinely required to learn positional requirements quickly to ensure efficient implementation.

Community Integration. Community is recognized as an essential component of Arrowleaf's service delivery. Long-term goals that pertain to this component include building community awareness of current issues as well as garnering greater community engagement. There have been some challenges, detailed more fully below, to developing trusting relationships with the community, which have limited consistent participation and engagement. Having staff from these communities has helped resolve some of these challenges as the staff are familiar with the community population, problems, and networks. R3 funding has also helped reduce uncertainties by promoting resources in the community and providing a stage for engagement. The community has the potential to offer and support available structures, and Arrowleaf is working toward greater utilization of community resources.

In terms of efforts to establish working relationships, Arrowleaf is strongly embedded in the community. Arrowleaf has worked and continues to work toward partnerships with local schools, subcontractors, and other social agencies, such as DHS and DCFS. Interagency collaboration is a key component of Arrowleaf's service delivery as well as a base for recruitment and referrals. Arrowleaf has a presence in the community, partly established by attending and holding meetings with school personnel, school boards, and city councils to demonstrate their involvement and investment. As an example, Arrowleaf altered an original plan to provide block parties for community engagement and instead now works with and supports existing events and partners with established community groups (e.g., Cairo Community Foundation). This recognition of community needs illustrates Arrowleaf's flexibility. Being adaptable to community needs benefits the development of trust with the community and aims to bolster participation.

Delivery Assessment

Changes and Adaptations

Arrowleaf faces several structural community challenges, including one that is more substantial than others- limited community engagement. This limited engagement has led to some delays in implementation and barriers to participation, but Arrowleaf has proven to be innovative, receptive to feedback, adaptable in its program delivery. For example, they implemented more

virtual program delivery, which overcomes transportation barriers in the large geographic area of Alexander and Pulaski Counties. They are also engaged in ongoing communication with the community, schools, and other partners to determine different age ranges for some of their targets for community awareness and initiatives (e.g., slating bullying awareness to target younger age groups).

Most notably, Arrowleaf has implemented new strategies and goals to facilitate community engagement and to build upon existing networks and relationships. It also has targeted improved communication and resources with local partnerships, particularly school districts to facilitate greater participation and awareness of the program provisions. It aims to coordinate with partnering agencies to overcome obstacles such as transportation and uncertainty.

Challenges and Strengths

Arrowleaf is acutely aware that one of the largest challenges to program delivery is a lack of community awareness and/or participation in some of the offerings. In particular, Arrowleaf has faced obstacles in enrolling youth in community events and courses and has continually incorporated new ideas and brainstorming sessions to better address this challenge. Adding staff also helps to address these challenges, given that staff are local representatives of the community and help to establish initial trust and communication. Additional challenges for the site include achieving consistent staffing, managing the wide geographic dispersion, and dealing with limited transportation for potential participants.

Despite the challenges, Arrowleaf offers programs throughout many communities, and the program has built rapport with many other community agencies. Arrowleaf has created safe spaces for all participants in which they can have open conversations, share and motivate parenting discussions, and evaluate parenting styles. Programs are very structured and utilize evidence-based practices. Arrrowleaf incorporates feedback into program delivery, effectively demonstrating its flexibility and responsiveness to best practices and participants' needs.

Fidelity and Compliance

Arrowleaf has incorporated some adjustments to their original proposals but has made substantial progress in general implementation. Coordinated efforts to adjust curricula to community needs and evidence-based practices have had positive early results. Additionally, to support and generate awareness Arrowleaf is shifting from individually promoting community block parties to becoming partners with existing community events.

Arrowleaf's future plans address some of the limits of its current implementation, including strategies to incorporate more specific efforts to develop and distribute scholarship opportunities. It is also giving high priority to increasing enrollment in its youth social and behavioral programming.

Early Outcomes and Moving Forward

Early Outcome Perceptions

Arrowleaf originally intended for 100 participants to complete its parental and youth program. However, that number was reduced to better conform with its curricular adaptations. The program provides participants with a safe, comfortable, and supportive environment, and it

expects high attendance from its participants without mandating it. By targeting and providing services to both children and parents, the program aims to strengthen family environments after the interventions. Arrowleaf hopes to increase its enrollment through its campaigns, word of mouth, community involvement, and program awareness. By incorporating flexibility into its programming, the programming has become inclusive and responsive to community needs. Arrowleaf continues to strategize ways to better harness community engagement to improve communication.

Broad benefits demonstrate the strength of a collaborative approach. The current staff is very supportive and well-connected within the community. They help build togetherness and trust within the community and communicate to the community the benefits and resources that Arrowleaf can provide. Arrowleaf encourages its participants to stay involved with its organization and to come back and mentor future participants in need. The creation of a safe and supportive environment has resulted in a very committed and communicative staff and is leading toward growing enrollment.

Evaluability and Sustainability

Arrowleaf has demonstrated a strong capacity for evaluation. It conducts consistent self-evaluation at staff meetings and community events. They also pursue formal and informal feedback measures for compliance and fidelity checks. Assessment data for program participants include pre- and post-tests, informal feedback loops, and post-program, 30-day follow-ups to examine continued needs. As a result, Arrowleaf has developed an environment that facilitates evaluation and demonstrates adaptability to needs and changes.

Arrowleaf is a site that displays acute awareness of community needs and strives for sustainable involvement and engagement. The overall sustainability of its R3 program is highly dependent on community support and the development of relationships and trust with partners, schools, and the general community. Arrowleaf's efforts in building these bridges have resulted in recent surges in participation and in hiring decisions that have facilitated growth in the perception of their programming as a place of safety, resources, and trust.

Arrowleaf is dependent on several funding streams for the totality of its programming and is accustomed to seeking out external funding to facilitate the programming. Its flexibility and established patterns of adaptation to external and internal challenges make sustainability likely for the Arrowleaf program.

Conclusion

Overall, Arrowleaf has many strengths to draw upon for continued program delivery:

- It relies on evidence-based curriculum and matches community and individual needs with extensive, structured programs. In utilizing modules and content well suited to participants, Arrowleaf also demonstrates its responsiveness and flexibility in program delivery while still adhering to best practices.
- It demonstrates a strong record of evaluation and established means for documenting and utilizing feedback from participants and the community. It prioritizes program evaluation

and expresses a desire for continuity of services so that program "completion" can lead to additional service delivery and give access to follow up information.

For future program delivery, Arrowleaf is working toward improvement in several areas:

- It has quality staff but also has continuing need to provide training and certifications to fully prepare them for new roles and revised program curricula. These needs may cause delays or uncertainties in service implementation.
- The size and economic challenges of the target community (Alexander and Pulaski Counties) present additional challenges to Arrowleaf's program delivery. As in other sites, having more consistently available transportation to accommodate larger numbers of youth may improve participation in activities, such as Youth Advisory Council or community-based events.

Community integration and relationship development are ongoing efforts. Arrowleaf is already taking steps to make improvements through targeted outreach (e.g., to schools) and is generating broad involvement via social media and general community events (e.g., community drives may bolster communication and awareness).

In sum, Arrowleaf's adaptation to programming needs and delivery makes sustainability likely, as they are attuned to the community. In moving forward, evaluation efforts may be able to work toward common goals, advantageously using Arrowleaf's already structured data and feedback collection to further advance goals and positive outcomes.

Service Delivery: Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

In their R3 grant application, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) proposed programming that focuses on reentry services and reduced recidivism through case management and employment assistance. LSSI is located in Marion, IL (ZIP code 62959), an area that experiences poverty slightly above the state average. The median income in this area is $53,876 (IL median is $68,428) and 15.0% of residents live in poverty (IL average is 12%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019c). The percentage of single parent households headed by mothers is 28.0%. Among adults (age 25 and older), 93.7% have a high school diploma/equivalency or higher level of education (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019e). Among individuals in the labor force (age 16 and higher), 95.2% are employed (U.S. Census Bureau. (2019d). However, these general numbers belie the challenges faced by returning citizens generally, and in the program target area, specifically. Many residents return to the community from nearby correctional facilities and have difficulty finding quality jobs.

LSSI identified several community issues that highlight the need for R3 funding to target prison reentry. LSSI reports that these individuals have great difficulty finding employment upon release, estimating unemployment rates for formerly incarcerated persons at over 27%. LSSI reports that stigma surrounding criminal offenders create challenges for returning citizens. However, there are industries in Marion that may offer formerly incarcerated persons employment opportunities. Manufacturing provides 11% of Williamson County's GDP, and the city is home to a number of other entry level and service industries.

Broadly, LSSI aims to provide formerly incarcerated individuals and their families with greater connections to services. LSSI staff use intake assessments and individualized case plans and provide clients with resources and services to aid their employment prospects post-incarceration. Specifically, as proposed in their grant application, LSSI aims to further develop their employment skills trainings and expand community awareness and program enrollment. LSSI staff have set two short-term goals: having clients complete the program, which includes short term follow ups, and enrolling more individuals in trainings. Long-term LSSI goals include reducing recidivism and improving employment outcomes for clients, including obtaining and maintaining steady employment. By providing clients with programs and a targeted curriculum, LSSI staff hope that clients will obtain and maintain employment, housing, transportation, and develop an overall better connection with the community. LSSI staff hope to reintegrate clients into the community and create community awareness of clients' values, hard work, and determination in the reentry process. Through building strong interrelated connections with other organizations in the community, it is expected that LSSI's awareness and recruiting efforts will continue to grow, increase participant enrollment, and further develop its curriculum, as needed.

LSSI received a year one grant of $228,702 and a year two extension for the same amount, for a total of $457,404 in funding.

Logic Model and Narrative

See Appendix D for a visual depiction of the logic model.

Inputs

Inputs for the LSSI logic model begin with existing grant funding and the broader community in Marion (Williamson County), in which it is embedded. One specific input within the broader community is the employer network that LSSI has cultivated to assist its program participants with a pipeline to meaningful, long-term employment. It also has inputs from several partnering agencies that assist in providing R3 services. Southern Illinois University Workforce Development provides the curriculum of the Employment Skills School (ESS), which was developed by Marcia Anderson, a professor in the College of Education and Human Services at Southern Illinois University. A partnership with the Illinois Department of Corrections Parole Division helps inform returning citizens about LSSI services. It also provides LSSI with input on first-hand needs of returning citizens. LSSI's partnership with local churches provides returning citizens with opportunities to gain materials and support, such as hygiene kits, meeting spaces, and monetary donations. LSSI has significant connections and support from Our Redeemer in Marion, Faith Lutheran Church in Jacksonville, and Epiphany Lutheran Church in Carbondale. These local churches have provided LSSI with a continuing invitation to partner in numerous ways and have been of value to the Prisoner and Family Ministry (PFM) Program. Finally, LSSI partners with other social services providers, such as Elevate Energy, which provides training on solar panel installation for returning citizens. OSHA safety training certifications are included in this training. Both the training and certifications have been identified as helpful for achieving employment.

Activities

Activities in the logic model are divided into participants and strategies. Participants are the providers and roles tasked with implementing the R3 grant work; and strategies are the components of the LSSI R3 program and services. No connecting lines are drawn between the participants and strategies in the logic model as the connections are overlapping and interrelated.

Participants perform in the following primary roles on the LSSI R3 team: clinical director, business manager, program aide, program supervisor, and case manager. Single staff can hold multiple roles. The distinction of roles in the logic model is intended to show unique roles, not the number of staff members.

LSSI's R3 strategies are organized around its primary mission of improving employment outcomes for returning citizens. First, marketing campaigns via online and print marketing help LSSI increase awareness of and exposure to its services for returning citizens and their families. Second, LSSI provides intake and case management. Direct services begin with intake assessments to guide a case manager in developing an individualized plan for reentry that addresses short-term and long-term goals, areas of risk and need, facilitates referrals for outside assistance, and assesses eligibility for outside services. The case management activities include referrals for a variety of services, such as medical and mental health support, and immediate needs, such as food vouchers from local pantries and clothing. Referrals may also assist participants in applying for Medicaid, food stamps, and other services. Overall, referrals help provide proper services to make reentry successful. The final strategic activity that is most directly related to employment outcomes is the Employment Skills School (ESS). ESS is a 6-week training program that integrates employment training, resume writing, interview

preparation, and a free certification in OSHA safety training. This program provides an open computer lab, educational activities, career counseling services, and career development services. If participants fully complete the program, an incentive of $250 is provided to fund basic job search needs, such as attire, equipment, or transportation.

Outcomes

The short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes in the LSSI logic model have multiple interconnections, especially between mid- and long-term outcomes. Short-term outcomes include outcomes related to LSSI's marketing campaign to release one marketing campaign a quarter and for 100 individuals to complete an intake assessment. These outcomes demonstrate evidence of growth in LSSI's recruiting efforts. The final two short-term outcomes are employment-oriented: completing eight sessions of the Employment Skill School with 70% of enrolled participants completing the program.

Mid-term outcomes follow directly from associated short-term outcomes, as linked in the logic model. Releasing one marketing campaign a quarter and completing 100 intake assessments flows into the respective mid-term outcomes of increasing marketing campaigns and increasing assessment completions. Employment oriented short-term goals generate the mid-term outcome of increased employment for ESS participants and completers.

Long-term outcomes highlight the lasting impacts of LSSI's R3 work. Mid-term outcomes related to marketing and client success link to the long-term outcome of promoting reentry services to the community. Once participants complete the program, it is expected that they will have the skills, knowledge, training, and support to obtain employment and succeed in the community. Given their program experiences and achievements and given the support participants receive, it is expected that participants will not have further justice system involvement. Therefore, short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes contribute to the overall goal of reduced recidivism within the community and increased community awareness of LSSI services and values.

Program Practices

The LSSI logic model was developed based on program proposals, narratives, and external research, then refined with additional interviews and observations with the site. The program description and delivery in this section is based on interviews and field observations to add depth and perception regarding specific activities and program components.

Provided Programs and Delivery

LSSI provides programming that helps participants to find jobs, maintain employment, and handle stressors in the workplace. LSSI's career readiness curriculum includes many components, such as resume building, financial planning, practice interviews, development of teamwork skills, keyboarding practices, technology skills, and the creation of a job search portfolio. LSSI further prepares participants for the job market by teaching them how to answer "red flag" job interview questions on incarceration and employment gaps. For example, participants are provided instruction on how to frame incarceration experiences when characterizing their employment histories and how to handle other employment-related stressors,

such as work loss, stability, and time off requests. LSSI staff provide all participants with application readiness materials, which include a portfolio with a pencil case and copies of relevant employment readiness documents. These documents include cover letters, resumes, certifications, and other practical materials, such as writing utensils and a flash drive. LSSI staff provide virtual and face-to-face employment skill courses over a period of six weeks. Every two weeks class participants submit assigned work associated with the structured curriculum modules. Virtual students submit work via email and participate in real-time activities through conference calls. For participants who are seeking employment, LSSI staff provide a list of employers who have demonstrated a willingness and history of hiring individuals with felony convictions. LSSI staff regularly post job advertisements in the office.

The Employment Skills School exists within the broader LSSI agency and incorporates a holistic case management approach. Its intake assessment addresses multiple areas of need, including housing, medical, and other social service components. Although R3 funding is directly linked to employment services, the broader nature of the agency is interlinked with referral and general assistance. Reciprocity exists between program delivery and potential recruitment and service provision.

Served Populations, Eligibility, and Recruitment

Target Participants and their Characteristics. LSSI's programs serve a large geographic area in Southern Illinois that spans multiple counties and targets formerly incarcerated individuals. LSSI's program participants are those requiring aid upon reentry, specifically in navigating post-release employment markets. Individuals may be referred to LSSI and the Employment Skills School from their parole officer or other service agencies and community institutions (e.g., health services; churches), but some participants individually seek out services. Because LSSI serves a large area, it offers both virtual and in-person program options.

Eligibility. LSSI and the Employment Skills School are extremely inclusive of formerly incarcerated individuals and those with previous histories of violent offenses. LSSI does not have any exclusion criteria other than legally binding orders, such as restraining orders between participants. Capacity constraints are rare. In-person programs have a 10-person capacity per session, but virtual offerings have no capacity limit.

Recruitment and Accessibility. LSSI recruits participants in many ways, relying heavily on word-of-mouth and community referrals. The agency has connections with social service providers, shelters, pastors, and other community organizations for referrals, and LSSI staff post flyers throughout the community in accordance with the LSSI marketing campaign. LSSI staff also travel to host in-person recruiting events throughout Southern Illinois, as they offer services in a large portion of the region. LSSI staff network directly with potential employers to determine employment needs and criteria for employment and to make their presence known in the community.

Staffing, Partnerships, and Communications

LSSI has three key staff members, with some support provided from its oversight agency. One person is designated to directly provide the ESS curriculum. The two other staff function in the roles of director and case manager. All have some overlap and involvement in program delivery, including ESS. LSSI is currently hiring additional full or part-time staff but has faced challenges with turnover and finding qualified, dedicated staff. The limited number of staff may create challenges with burnout due to work overload.

Most staff training is done internally through self-teaching and internal communication among staff. Hiring decisions underscore efforts to find the "best-fit" worker for the LSSI environment and services. LSSI develops and refines staff skills in-house to assure that they are responsive to its program efforts and informative for its participants. LSSI also utilizes local networks for program development and delivery. For example, LSSI has brought in a local workforce expert to provide assistance when developing the Employment Skills School curriculum, and it utilizes volunteers to help deliver and assess some program components. LSSI also has a strong community network with local employers and service providers, which aids in the program's success.

Community Integration

In general, LSSI has a positive and established presence in the community. LSSI utilizes a restorative justice approach in its relationships with the community of Marion, Illinois. LSSI and ESS partner with the Illinois Department of Corrections, local businesses, social service agencies, and the general community to make its services known to potential participants. Importantly, to achieve intended outcomes from its programs, LSSI collaborates with local employers, namely with the plentiful local restaurants where entry level positions are available and with local industries where lasting connections can result in positive experiences for all involved. LSSI also promotes contact with temporary employment agencies to stay updated on current job openings in the community. Many surrounding employers are reported to be accepting of the program participants. LSSI also has relationships with local social service agencies to provide referrals for other needs including housing, substance use, and health concerns. Other community members, such as pastors, are aware of LSSI and its services and often contact LSSI about potential program participants.

Delivery Assessment

Changes and Adaptations

Like other rural sites, LSSI serves a substantial geographic area. Over the course of its program delivery, LSSI has expanded its outreach to facilitate more virtual deliveries of its employment skills training. These changes offer more flexibility in addressing geographic obstacles of distance, transportation, and conflicting time commitments.

LSSI employment services have incorporated responsive measures for individuals, who may request enhanced activities or access to specific skills (e.g., keyboarding exercises) or to any other assistance. LSSI employment services continually update types of job postings and employer requirements and aim to serve a very broad and inclusive population.

Overall, the ESS curriculum is adaptable and open to changes. There were few significant changes or adaptations necessary in recent implementations, but the site generally expressed a willingness to update or alter programming and targets, as needed.

Challenges and Strengths

A major challenge to program delivery for LSSI is transportation within the area that it serves, which comprises a rural and substantially large geographic expanse of possible employers and participants. Lack of mass public transportation in LSSI's zone is a barrier to participants accessing programs and maintaining employment. To overcome this barrier, program staff have made efforts to develop access to resources and to develop relationships with locally-based employers within biking and walking distance. Yet, obstacles still remain and can be exacerbated in extreme weather, especially for persons with disabilities or physical constraints or for those who live outside the Marion city limits. Outside of Marion, transportation accessibility diminishes further.

Despite these obstacles, participation in LSSI's program comes with many benefits. LSSI staff check in regularly with active participants and follow up with those who complete the course and find employment. LSSI also completes a holistic case management assessment of all participants upon intake, which determines a participant's needs. LSSI has developed strong connections to many community agencies, organizations, and employers to assist with the various needs of their participants. The responsiveness among staff and the broad program benefits promise to work effectively toward participants achieving employment and experiencing greater stability, in general, in their other life circumstances.

Fidelity and Compliance

Overall LSSI and ESS have implemented R3 programming in an effective manner. Facing some delays in full program distribution, recent enrollment and participation have increased substantially. While not meeting the target goal of having 100 individuals complete the intake assessment, estimates from 2022 suggest that the trajectory is on an upward track. LSSI has targeted 50 individuals this year and, thus far, is on track to meet this goal. Its expanded modalities of program delivery have reached a greater target audience, and virtual and in-person enrollment has grown. LSSI maintains a well-developed and strong curriculum for employment preparation. The curriculum is perceived to be a very successful component of its organization and will continue to contribute to longer-term outcomes and an adherence to compliance measures.

Early Outcomes and Moving Forward

Early Outcome Perceptions

LSSI has developed a network of strong connections to other organizations in the community, such as local employers, churches, the Salvation Army, and other social service agencies. Participants feel connected and confident in seeking help from the staff at LSSI. As a huge perceived success, clients have gained employment and housing in addition to providing for their families.

Evaluability and Sustainability

As a part of the larger LSSI program, ESS and the site overall are accustomed to self-assessments of performance evaluations. They have maintained quarterly reporting, as required by R3 funding criteria, and are mandated to complete annual self-appraisals. They also are required to complete accreditation renewals as part of their programs. Their emphasis on case management and holistic provisions offers a rich source of data for further assessment, as well as a strong community network for tracking employment and other participant outcomes.

The LSSI program goals include growth in staffing and resources. Continued financial and organizational support for achieving these goals at the R3 site should make the program much more sustainable and consistent. In addition to the several services and supports that LSSI offers, ESS for formerly incarcerated persons and its clear goals, curriculum, and delivery have created a model that is very likely sustainable here and adaptable elsewhere.

Conclusion

LSSI has an established presence in the community, which works to its benefit in several ways:

- As advocates and resource providers, the broader community seems to be relatively accepting of formerly incarcerated persons, who otherwise often face stigma. The integration and communication between social service agencies (including LSSI) and employers help to overcome the challenge of obtaining employment with a felony conviction. The broad range of employers (e.g., manufacturing and food service industries) familiar with the marginalized population is to the overall benefit of program delivery.
- LSSI also has proven to be flexible in recognizing its population's needs and delivering services accordingly. It has been able to expand its delivery modality to reach more geographically distant individuals, which has bridged economic, distance, and transportation barriers. The agency also has expressed an openness to adapt curricular materials to the needs of their target audience.

Despite these strengths, LSSI may consider some areas of further development:

- Given the holistic approach of case management and service delivery, the agency has a relatively small local staff. Although staff function well, implicit risk resides in overloaded work schedules, burnout, and limited capacity.
- With an expanding target population, LSSI may consider continuing to add innovative methods to promote outreach to broader communities. It has a stable presence in the immediate area but, as discussed, has a very large geographical area to cover. Continuing to build networks of referral and employment opportunities will be key to ensure programmatic success and long-term sustainability.

In sum, the focused nature of the LSSI R3 program makes its ESS program delivery strong. The program is intertwined with other services and client needs but also is well-positioned to continue and advance their programming efforts. Moving forward research teams and the site should collaborate to ensure best practices for evaluating the program and its outcomes.

Service Delivery: United Way of Greater St. Louis

The R3 work for United Way of Greater St. Louis (United Way) targets the R3 priorities of youth development, economic development, and violence prevention. The United Way of Greater St. Louis's R3 proposal incorporated multiple sites within its school district (IL District 189) to implement out-of-school time (OST) initiatives. Through these initiatives, United Way aims to facilitate external programs that enhance education, skill building, and prosocial leisure activities. Its proposed goals are to increase participation in staff trainings, develop a chess league, and expand program hours and offerings.

OST programming is directed at youth who live in an area with resource challenges. United Way is in the East St. Louis area (ZIP code 62205). This area experiences high levels of poverty, with 30.2% of people in poverty (IL average is 12%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b). The median income in this area is $24,838 according to the US Census (IL median is $68,428) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b). The proportion of single parent households headed by mothers is also high in this area at 52.2% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019e). Among adults (age 25 and older), 85.6% have a high school diploma/equivalency or a higher level of education (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a). Among individuals in the labor force (age 16 and higher), 84.4% are employed (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019d).

United Way identified several community issues that highlight the need for R3 funding. Issues include poverty, academic achievement, violence, and trauma. United Way also cited the COVID-19 pandemic as a community issue. According to United Way, 56% of families with children under 18 live in poverty; one in three youth lives in a household with an income less than $15,000 a year (United Way of Greater St. Louis, 2020). Students in this area struggle with meeting educational expectations and standards, and the district's absenteeism rate is at 66% (state average 18%) (United Way of Greater St. Louis, 2020). Regarding violence, many youths in this area express witnessing violent acts, such as bullying and assault. Youth in the area are exposed to traumatic events such as domestic violence, dating violence, incarceration of parents, and murder. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated academic achievement issues within the community. In addition, the pandemic highlighted the severity of poverty in the area.

United Way strives to improve academic performance by addressing "opportunity gaps" to create better long-term outcomes. Specifically, the OST programs under United Way aim to improve school attendance, academic achievement measures, and graduation rates. More generally, United Way aims to build character and life skills for participants, striving to provide them with the ability to obtain positive school, employment, and social outcomes. Additionally, the program aims to provide skills that will aid in developing better relationships and communication skills with peers and staff. United Way has established a strong community alliance, offering greater services to children so that they may have a better chance of success. It plans to increase community alliances in the future.

United Way received a grant of $829,240 and an extension for the same amount, for a total of $1,658,480 in funding.

Logic Model and Narrative

See Appendix D for a visual depiction of the logic model.

Inputs

Inputs for United Way includes the community of Greater St. Louis and six partnering agencies that provide community-based, R3 services. United Way also considers grant funding as an important input to accomplish the three main goals of increasing access and quality of OST programs, improving youth social and emotional development, and improving youth career readiness. Catholic Urban Programs provides a variety of programming aimed at addressing the educational and developmental needs of youth. Christian Activity Center offers high quality OST programming, such as: fine arts classes, sports, activities, and software technology trainings. East Side Alliance focuses on early childhood development, healthy food access, behavioral health, and juvenile justice. East St. Louis School District 189 focuses on coordinating work-based learning connections and building systems to improve youth workforce development. Join Hands East St. Louis provides teens with supervision to ensure that youth are engaged in activities that reinforce positive self-worth, value, and potential. This program also acts as a conduit for opportunities that will allow teens to reach their full potential. Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House implements an expansion of its 17-year-old teen REACH program, which provides structured learning and recreational activities for youth. Finally, Sinai Family Life Center offers tutoring, homework assistance, and support for online reading/math/science/social studies curriculum.

Activities

Activities in the logic model are divided into participants and strategies. Participants include the providers and roles associated with implementing the R3 grant work; strategies include the components of United Way R3 programs and services. Connecting lines are drawn between the participants and strategies in the logic model.

For participants, the major roles include staff and volunteers in the partnering agencies, teachers and educators, and the staff who are the backbone of the United Way.

Among United Ways's several interrelated strategies, out-of-school time (OST) programs are organized by partnering agencies' staff and volunteers and include a series of supervised events for school aged participants during the hours in which school is not in session. These events are intended to improve academic readiness and participants' well-being. Summer camps, also organized by partnering agencies' staff and volunteers, are part of the OST, and they target advocacy, academic monitoring, and violence prevention. Summer camps include a variety of on- and off-site activities (e.g., structured activities, community service projects), field trips (e.g., zoo, Magic House, Science Center), and recreation (e.g., bowling, swimming, skating, movies, library). Another strategy, educational programs in school, is organized by teachers and educators to provide youth with a variety of educational enhancement opportunities. A final strategy, outreach and promotion of OST, focuses on increasing the reach of United Way and its six partnering agencies' R3 services. Outreach and promotion are carried out by all participant roles.

Outcomes

The short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes in the United Way logic model have multiple interconnections. Short-term outcomes for participating youth include increasing youth satisfaction, improving social and emotional learning (SEL), and increasing enrollment in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEAM) and career courses. Short-term outcomes for services include an increase in the quality of the OST programs and an increase in the number of support staff for STEAM and career support courses.

Mid-term outcomes flow directly from associated short-term outcomes, as linked in the logic model. Each mid-term outcome has multiple connections to various short-term outcomes. The youth-oriented short-term outcomes are expected to link to three mid-term outcomes, which are to achieve more peer referrals to the programs, to have 75 participants in the chess league, and to have 1500 participants who attend the OST program more than once or regularly. Another mid-term outcome for OST youth and the community more broadly is a decrease in the rate of school misconduct. A final mid-term outcome is an increase in staff trained in Second Step (a violence prevention curriculum).

Long-term outcomes highlight the ultimate impact of United Way's R3 work. Short- and mid-term outcomes for participating youth link to several long-term academic outcomes, including increased school attendance, academic progress, increased graduation rates, and increased job placement. Earlier outcomes for participants also connect to the long-term outcome of a decrease in the rate of youth violence. Finally, long-term outcomes for R3 service provision include improvements in staff longevity and an enhanced program experience.

Program Practices

The logic models were developed based on program proposals, narratives, and external research and refined with additional interviews and observations with the site. The program description and delivery in this section is culled from interviews and field observations to add depth and perception regarding specific activities and program components.

Provided Programs and Delivery

United Way's general provisions focus on OST programming for youth participants by partnering with six sites in the Greater St. Louis geographic area. General programming includes academic support, technology access, extracurricular enrichment, and consistent provision of food. The goal behind program delivery is to provide a safe and comfortable environment in which participants build academic and social skills. Generally, the sites may vary in specific day-to-day activities but typically offer homework assistance, learning labs, recreational activities, and relaxation areas. More specific examples of enrichment activities include gardening, creative activities, scientific exploration, reading programs, and financial literacy information. OST programs are held daily,[36] primarily in-person, from approximately 3:00PM to 5:45PM after school for the K-12 participants. However, some programs may go later until approximately 7:30PM, depending on home needs of the participants. It is atypical for sites to have reliable and consistent transportation for their students to and from the program locations, which was cited as a possible limitation of program delivery.

[36] Only one program offers services on Fridays. Program attendance for this site increases every Friday.

Served Populations, Eligibility, and Recruitment

Target Participant and Description. United Way's target clients are geographically based within the East St. Louis area and the boundaries of School District 189,[37] and the programs are "open to any kid in the community." The communities served by United Way include high proportions of single-income households and other families in need of resources related to economic development, academic assistance, and after-school supervision. United Way's participants aim to gain a variety of skills, such as improved creative, academic, social, and emotional abilities. They are able to apply the concepts that they learn at school to United Way's programming through the academic assistance that is offered.

United Way provided a brief description of youth participants.[38] Except for summer 2020, program enrollment served around 1,400-1,600 youth per period (see Table 5). In spring 2020, Youth Development Alliance (YDA) – the OST provider group – was over-capacity. However, the COVID-19 pandemic decreased their numbers for summer 2020. Program participants are generally balanced on gender (38%-52% female across the periods). Most program participants are African American (97% and higher, each period), and most are other than Hispanic/Latino (93% and higher, each period). Ages of youth served are presented in Figure 1. During the school year, the largest group of participants are nine to eleven years old (around one-third), while, in summer 2020, the largest group was eight years old and under.

Table 5

Total Number of United Way Program Slots and Enrollment

Period	Program Slots	Youth Enrolled
F19	1855	1596
S20	1204	1529
Su20	1045	206
F21	1643	1411

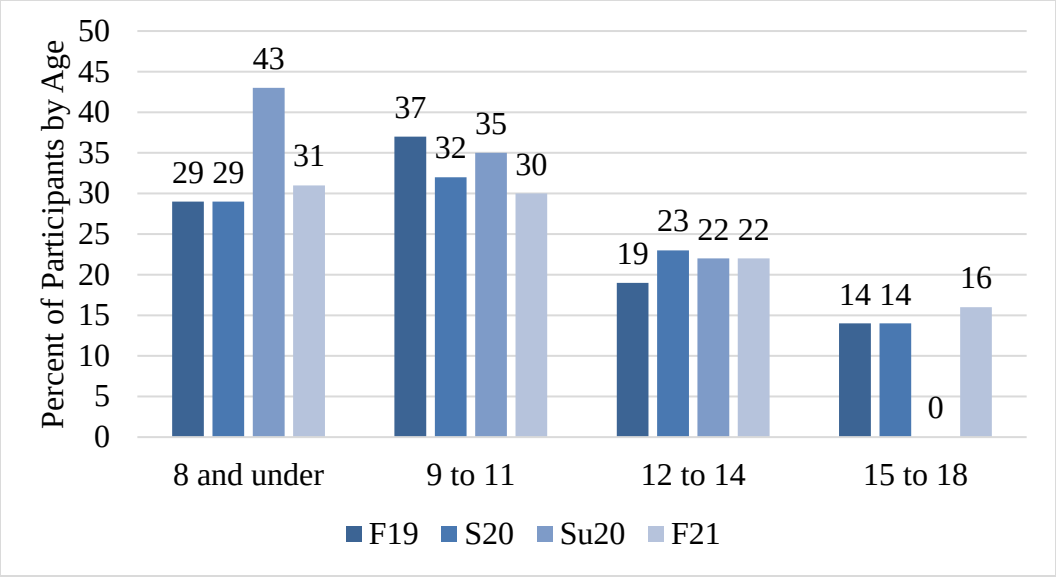
Note. SIU analysis of United Way data.

Figure 1

Percent of United Way Youth Participants, by Age

[37] United Way also serves some participants who are located outside of its boundary or those who previously enrolled in programming but have since moved.

[38] The quantitative data in this section come from Youth Development Alliance (YDA) biannual reports for four time periods: fall 2019, spring 2020, summer 2020, and fall 2021.



Note. SIU analysis of United Way data.

Eligibility. Participants who are eligible for United Way's programs must be youth who have transportation to the program site (for sites without the ability to provide such a resource), have the appropriate parental support, and are enrolled for the academic year. Each of the six OST program sites has its own enrollment cap, which may limit participation at some locations. Limits to the broad inclusion criteria may be imposed if youths have unresolved poor attendance or severe behavioral outbursts. However, the program makes sincere efforts to create action plans prior to any exclusion.

Recruitment and Accessibility. OST agencies recruit participants using word of mouth, community flyers, and social media. They partner with the school district to transmit information and enrollment procedures to interested parents. OST agencies use a rolling enrollment strategy throughout the academic year and summer to ease the process and accessibility for interested participants. The agencies make strong efforts toward re-enrollment and multi-program participation, emphasizing continuity and accessibility.

Staffing, Partnerships, and Communications. OST agencies utilize a mix of volunteers and hired staff for program facilitation, with many serving multiple roles and responsibilities. As designated essential roles, a network manager is responsible for data, evaluation, and the facilitation of meetings. A program provider has administrative and hiring responsibilities. OST agencies have considerable autonomy to dictate staffing, training, and service needs. There is great variation in qualification requirements based on the position and type. Different positions have different educational requirements, with some positions requiring a bachelor's degree, while others have lower requirements. As shown in Figure 2, both administrators and program staff total declined in 2020. Figure 3 displays the breakdown of hours worked by staff each week. In the summer session a higher proportion of staff worked longer hours, as would be expected with OST programming when school is not in session. In fall 2021, a jump occurred with staff working under 10 hours, which corresponds with a large increase in staffing (i.e., more staff/volunteers, shorter hours).

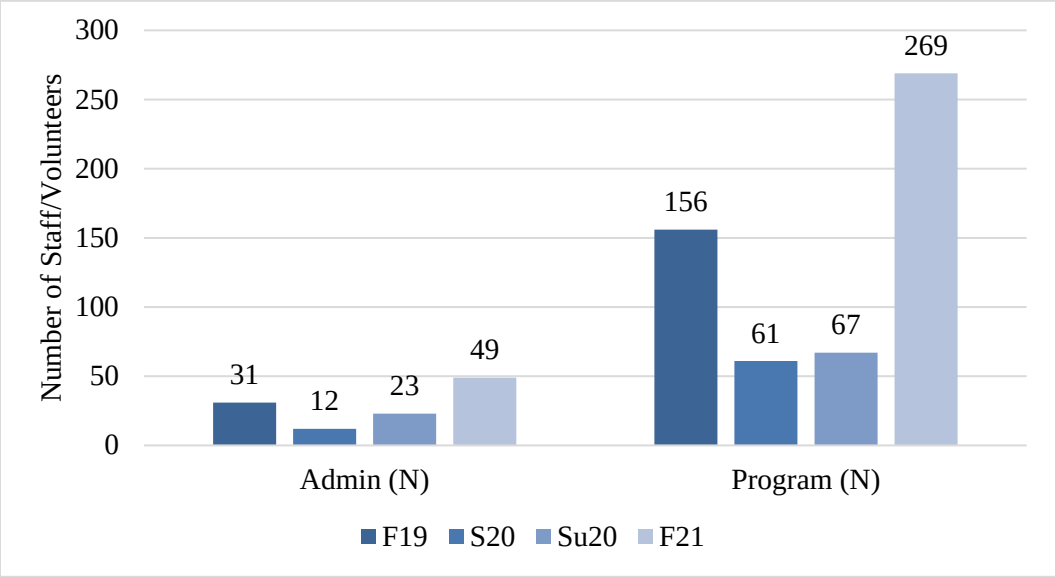
For staff, OST agencies incorporate a multitude of professional trainings. Table 6 summarizes the number of trainings by period from the YDA reports. Internally, trauma-informed training was the only training offered every period, with a large number of trainings in program content offered in summer 2020. For external trainings, program administration was offered most consistently (3 periods), while a large number of trainings on restorative practices were offered in fall 2021.

To promote coalition leadership, virtual monthly meetings are held with representatives from each site and members of the collaborative coalition. The monthly meetings are used to generate ideas on additional needs for staff and providers. They also offer an opportunity to discuss ongoing program implementations, challenges, and changes. As a result, staff appear to have a clear understanding of what is beneficial for their program and its goals.

Staff turnout and potential burnout were noted as potentially significant challenges for OST agencies. Staff are reported to benefit from mental health services, which has become an accessible resource for all parts of the program. Another need is for a greater number of staff, resulting from losses during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent challenges in meeting ideal participant-staff ratios for effective programming. The staffing problem has persisted as postings for hiring do not always generate enough applications to fill necessary roles. OST agencies have also increased their minimum qualifications which limits the pool of potential new hires. In their planning goals, they intend to develop a professional community that brings in more volunteer or program provisions to help address staffing shortages.

Figure 2

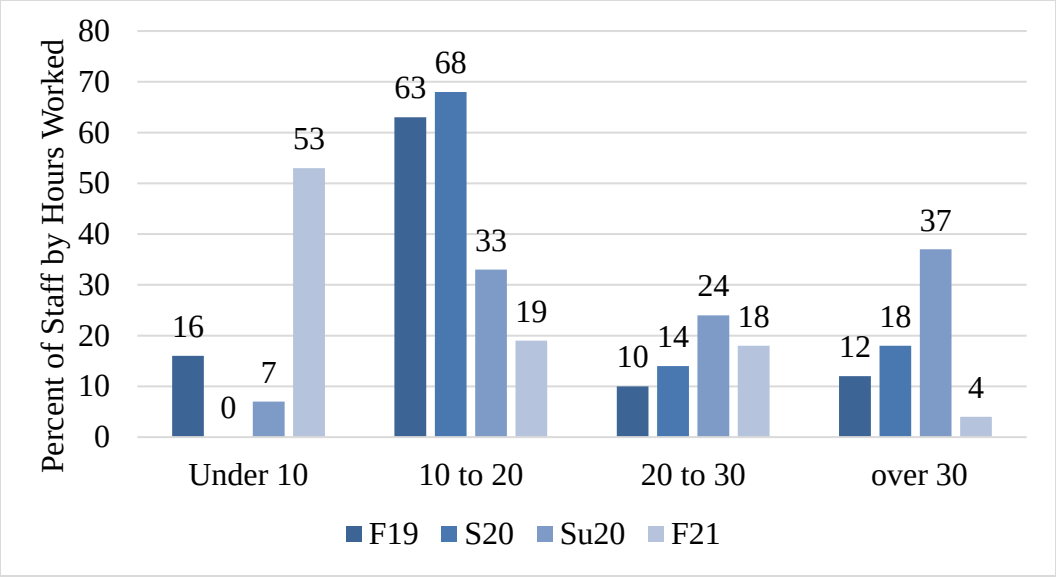
United Way Out of School Time Staffing Numbers



Note. SIU analysis of OST agencies data.

Figure 3

Percent of United Way Staff, by Hours Worked



Note. SIU analysis of OST agencies data.

Community Integration. United Way and OST programming aim to address opportunity gaps in the community and have a concrete and well-known presence in the local community. Many OST agencies' staff reside or invest in the community and can tap into their own community capital for recruitment purposes, representing the attitude of "it takes a village." United Way also hosts a monthly community meeting open to those already working or actively seeking to work with youth. Held virtually, participation in these meetings has increased and has further integrated agencies toward common goals and discussions of resources, recruitment, and program offerings.

All United Way OST sites utilize volunteers for program delivery, including former youth advisory council members who remain associated with United Way to provide service and mentorship. A clear strength of United Way and the partnering sites is the use of existing social, community, and professional networks to harness individuals to facilitate programming. United Way staff report having "armies of volunteers" who provide resources, donations, supplies, and mentorship. Although basic economic and other logistical challenges exist in this environment, United Way is able to benefit from this community being so rich in human capital.

Table 6

Types of United Way Trainings Available, by Time Period

Available Trainings	F19	S20	Su20	F21
Internal Trainings				
Positive Youth Development	1	2	3	
Program Administration			5	
Program Content		1	18	
Restorative Practices				

Safety, Health, and/or Nutrition			3	
Trauma-informed Practices	1	1	1	2
Other			1	
Total	*2*	*4*	*31*	*2*
External Trainings				
Positive Youth Development	2		6	
Program Administration	3	2	4	
Program Content	3	2		4
Restorative Practices				39
Safety, Health, and/or Nutrition	2			
Trauma-informed Practices				2
Other				
Total	*10*	*4*	*10*	*45*

Note. SIU analysis of YDA data.

Delivery Assessment

Changes and Adaptations

A common theme among OST sites was a strong responsiveness to participant needs and changing circumstances. United Way has proven to be particularly adaptive in forward thinking. It incorporates roles and aligns program curriculum to suit participants' needs. As an example, based on its own self-evaluation, the program included greater mental health counseling for *both* participants and staff. Extensive examples of additive portions to the curriculum also show adaptability. Specifically, the program increased its efforts and funding for the arts (STEM à STEAM). They also noted that their general structure of activities is flexible and can be altered based on student needs and attitudes.

The community structure and support proved essential during COVID-19, where the site provided spaces for virtual learning where participants were able to utilize internet access to attend virtual classes and receive tutoring assistance. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted program delivery as United Way wanted to provide additional resources for those who did not have parents who could stay home. United Way provided meals to participants offered them Chromebooks to help spread services out by hosting virtual and in-person participants, and offered aid, as needed, during virtual classes. While participation and staffing were impacted by the pandemic, United Way has been recovering and working toward greater capacity overall.

Challenges and Strengths

The greatest challenges to program delivery for OST relate to accessibility, often due to insufficient transportation. Most of the involved sites are unable to consistently provide

transportation. Even those who do state that it remains an ongoing management and funding issue. Lack of transportation is related to broader structural challenges, including “food deserts.” The OST sites provide meals and safe spaces for participants as part of wraparound services. Another community resource obstacle is finding, hiring, and maintaining willing and qualified staff. While adjustments have been made to updating or reconsidering pay scales, attracting and maintaining potential employees remains a challenge. Finally, some programs remain below pre-COVID-19 enrollments, though attendance is growing. New efforts at recruitment and partnerships aim to continue to grow the programs.

As a strength, United Way’s programs are modeled after other quality after-school time programs, and they share their outcomes of the youth activities. Despite citing some enrollment issues, OST programming serves many participants under the agency’s current plan. Overall, United Way is very present and connected with other programs; it has good working relationships with other agencies and comfortable environments for participants. It has consistently demonstrated flexibility and adaptive responses to internal and external challenges, and its embedded presence in the community has played a central role in the facilitation and continuation of OST programming.

Fidelity and Compliance

Overall, United Way and OST program sites generally adhere to their proposed activities and goals. While some activities, such as the chess league, did not develop as planned, the sites have mapped out development strategies, including shifting the lead position for the league from a volunteer to a designated employee. All other planned activities and programs have been implemented, and they have generally been expanded. For example, a new sixth site has been able to open for enrollment. Although the program is not operating at maximum enrollment, participation has been steadily increasing and continued growth is expected as well as the ongoing assessment of participant and staffing needs. Monthly meetings have exceeded capacity of training/meeting expectations with the coalition cohort, with consistent report measures.

Early Outcomes and Moving Forward

Early Outcome Perceptions

United Way OST programs aid students in developing academic and social skills, which, in turn, expands future opportunities and increases students’ chances of success in academia, employment, and future relationships. To ensure that children have the best chances of success, OST programs utilize a holistic approach, intervening in multiple areas of their lives. United Way OST invests heavily in student literacy development and expects to see improved performances in this targeted area. United Way intends to serve 1,000 youth within the community, reaching out through recruiting and advertising. United Way has made it a goal to address mental health for the students and the staff. Therefore, it has implemented measures to expand mental health support.

United Way has seen a tremendous amount of collaboration and support within the community and partnering organizations. Generations of families are continuing to contribute to United Way’s programs and have created a family-like orientation. United Way has not been able to do everything it envisioned due to COVID-19. However, it has adapted to the situation and provides

resources of need, such as shelter, food, and transportation. Even after the COVID-19 shut down, parents continued to trust United Way to provide a safe environment for the children, and United Way was even able to expand its services by opening a sixth center during the pandemic. United Way's original goal was to serve 1,000 youth, and they managed to serve 1,400. Its word-of-mouth recruitment efforts have been successful. Yet, they plan to create a website in the future as a central source of information about their program. The staff at United Way have developed strong relationships with the students, and the students like to succeed and be involved in the activities. United Way's reading programs have been found to increase performance in literacy and reading tests, which is seen as a huge accomplishment.

Evaluability and Sustainability

United Way and the associated OST programming have substantial practices and data that translate seamlessly into evidence to use for evaluation. In relation to both internal and external evaluation, the site has a bi-annual reporting system that disseminates summaries of populations served, staffing and volunteer accounting, and preliminary survey results. United Way assesses program participants in the fall and spring on a variety of attitudinal assessments. It keeps records on site attendance and maintains connections to the associated school district so that, if needed, it can evaluate changes in participants' academic performances.

United Way also consistently displays self-evaluation on an ongoing basis. It organizes two meetings per month, one for sites to gather and discuss programs and implementation and another for broader community engagement. Site meetings demonstrate substantial informal communication and collaboration; and, in fact, they have given rise to a coalition, which has expedited data sharing, meeting presence, and a shared network to promote better program implementation and evaluability.

With an established community presence, United Way and the out-of-school programming efforts remain on track for long-term sustainability. Like other larger sites, United Way utilizes a variety of funding sources to support its programming. It is able to capitalize on a substantial network of community providers, volunteers, and staff to sustain program efforts over time.

Conclusion

United Way has capitalized on its resources to deliver a range of activities within their OST programming:

- Community and agency partnerships have proved to be a key resource in program provision. United Way harnesses community and social capital to supplement volunteer hours, resource provisions, and program provision. It benefits from local recruitment and tight-knit, local connections to advance its programming.
- The site also has proved focused and adaptive in response to OST activities and needs. The breadth of the activity delivery offers a variety of engagements and opportunities for academic enrichment and offers a safe environment for students after school.

Areas in which United Way may consider additional support or focus include:

- Drawing from similarly situated sites regarding needs of juveniles, including trauma-informed communications and responses, may be beneficial. While relatively well-versed, staff certifications and trainings may be useful to further bolster this.
- In moving forward, the site may further consider broadening its target population to include families so that it can promote improved parent-child relationships and communication styles. The focus on social and emotional skills can extend to the broader community, as well.
- As noted, one area in which implementation was unsuccessful is the development of a chess league. Given the size of the program, instituting a permanent hire for this position would better secure this targeted program.

Overall, United Way is well situated to move forward. It continues to have strong community connections and is accustomed to conducting evaluations and tracking accountability measures. Examining site differences and outcomes as part of future evaluations will continue to improve services to participants.

Key Recommendations

In consideration of the evaluated sites, each has many strengths and promising avenues upon which it should continue to build upon. General areas of advancement could also be addressed. The recommendations that follow consider the collective strengths and weaknesses of the sites in five key areas and offer some examples of growth or improved access.

Community Involvement

A major aspect of R3 generally involves community initiatives, and many of the sites had a foundational presence in their community. All recognize specific community needs and are responsive and adaptive to ongoing and new challenges. While continuing to draw upon these existing resources and behaviors, sites can also address specific opportunities, as follows

- Develop a greater presence in large scale community events. This broader presence may help establish and confirm existing relationships and generate more awareness of program offerings. As an example, Arrowleaf is partnering with existing community events as a link, and ADI has a presence in larger social events that serve as informational and enrollment opportunities for the program.
- Cultivate various avenues through which community members can offer time, resources, or support. Many of the programs rely, to some degree, on community volunteers to supplement their staff. United Way provides a strong example of a community network in program delivery, and LSSI also illustrates the value in direct links to networks as a referral process.

Responsiveness and Adaptability

A consistent strength across the evaluated sites is their adaptation to external forces (e.g., COVID-19 requirements) and to procedural challenges. In continuing to implement programs, sites should be sure to continue to:

- Include flexibility in program delivery. LSSI has turned to greater virtual programming to deliver Employment Skills School, which has created more accessibility opportunities for a population that is geographically diverse and that varies widely in the time people can commit to a program.
- Continue to consider new program growth and adjustments to curriculum. Arrowleaf has reconsidered planned programming in response to community needs, with positive feedback. We recommend consistent reconsideration of necessary curriculum and the means for incorporating changes. ADI has demonstrated a clear plan of consideration of future curriculum and programming including reading enrichment and other evidence-based practices.

Staffing

Uniformly, personnel at sites have concerns regarding staffing. Concerns focus on shortages, qualifications, workloads, and support. Sites have already devised notable strategies for many of these obstacles, including:

- Reviewing the qualifications and/or pay scales of the applicant pool. Many of the sites note the import of ideal candidates and the difficulty of attracting them. With broader considerations of employment, some sites have been able to re-budget in accordance with similar jobs of this type, making employment more competitive.
- Considering the provision of mental health care. Many sites are understaffed, leading to concerns regarding over work and burnout. To address workload and burnout, United Way has incorporated greater access to mental health support for both participants and staff.

Growth in Participation and Information

Sites report positive trajectories in regard to enrollment and participation and have consistently utilized measures of recruitment. In consideration of continuing to grow, sites may consider:

- Using central online sites and social media use. While most personnel note some utilization of these methods at their sites, websites offer greater informational provision and a centralized opportunity to enroll or inquire about participation. Arrowleaf's use of Facebook and other online connections is a strong example of creativity in recruitment and informative methods.
- Finding ways to address limitations to participation tied to transportation or accessibility. While not ideal for every site, examination of provided reliable transportation for youth to and from sites may be a future consideration in light of the geographic distribution of the communities served. This examination benefited one of the site's involved with United Way in terms of improving access and recruitment.

Evaluation

Evaluation is critical to continued success. Many of the sites are well prepared to engage in rigorous evaluation. Some have procedures in place to do so on an annual basis; others actively collect change and feedback data. Continuation of these practices is critical in addition to additional actions, such as:

- Perpetuating self-assessment and data collection and disseminating outcomes. United Way provides biannual reports to all sites with summaries of services and trainings. Doing so aided evaluation and helped identify areas of improvement.
- Incorporating feedback into program delivery. Arrowleaf's creation of post-test as well as follow up measures for adults who complete a parenting course have yielded program feedback. They also have created the potential to extend service delivery while ADI incorporates additional trauma-informed training in response to the positive feedback from staff.
- Attending to "outcome" measures. Notably, completion has variable meanings. Many sites seek to extend connections and different methods of participation. All sites use continuity in some ways to offer better services or to advance their clients in positive ways. Similarly, establishing a variety of outcomes will yield important and nuanced understanding of program impact.

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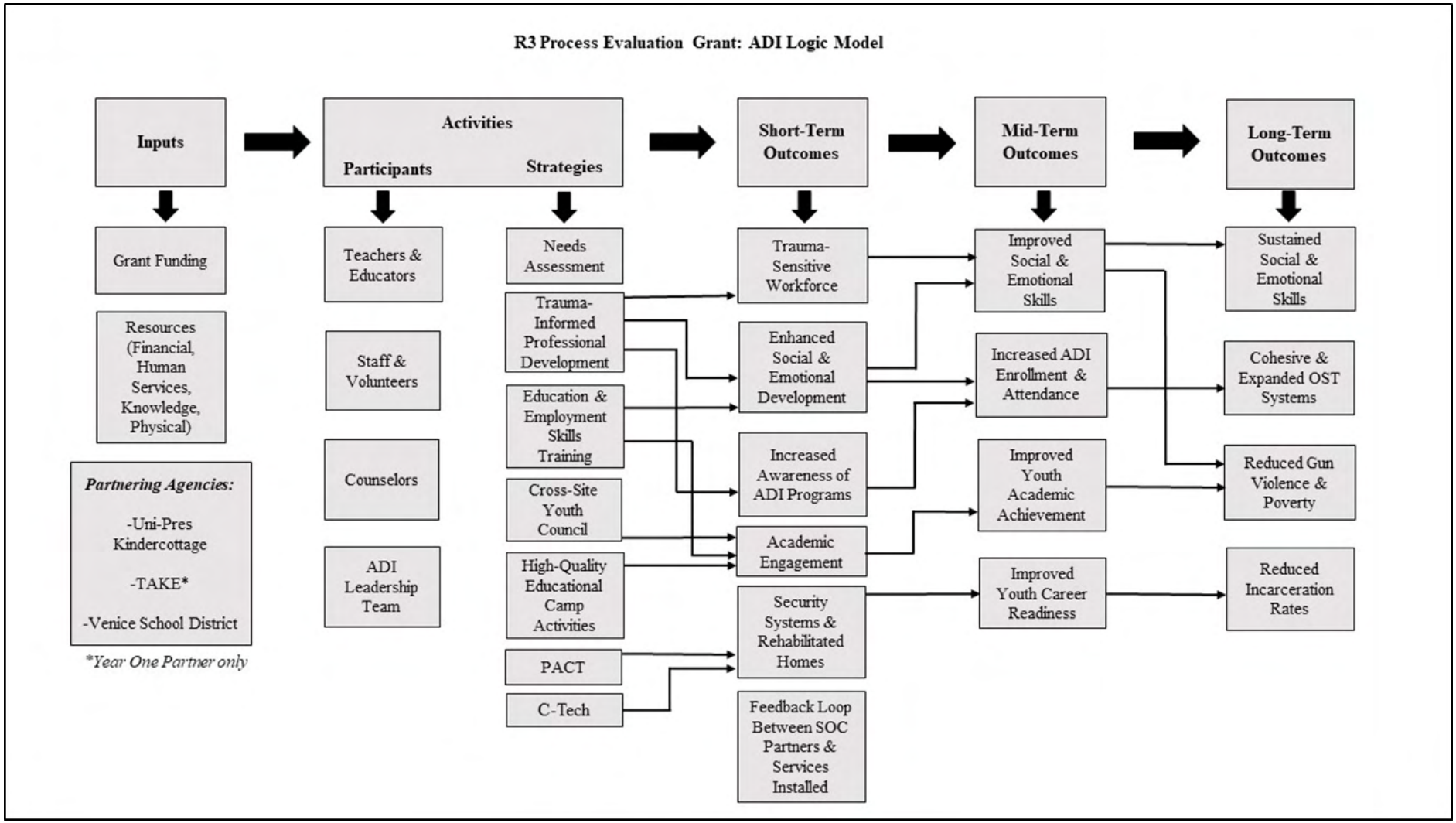
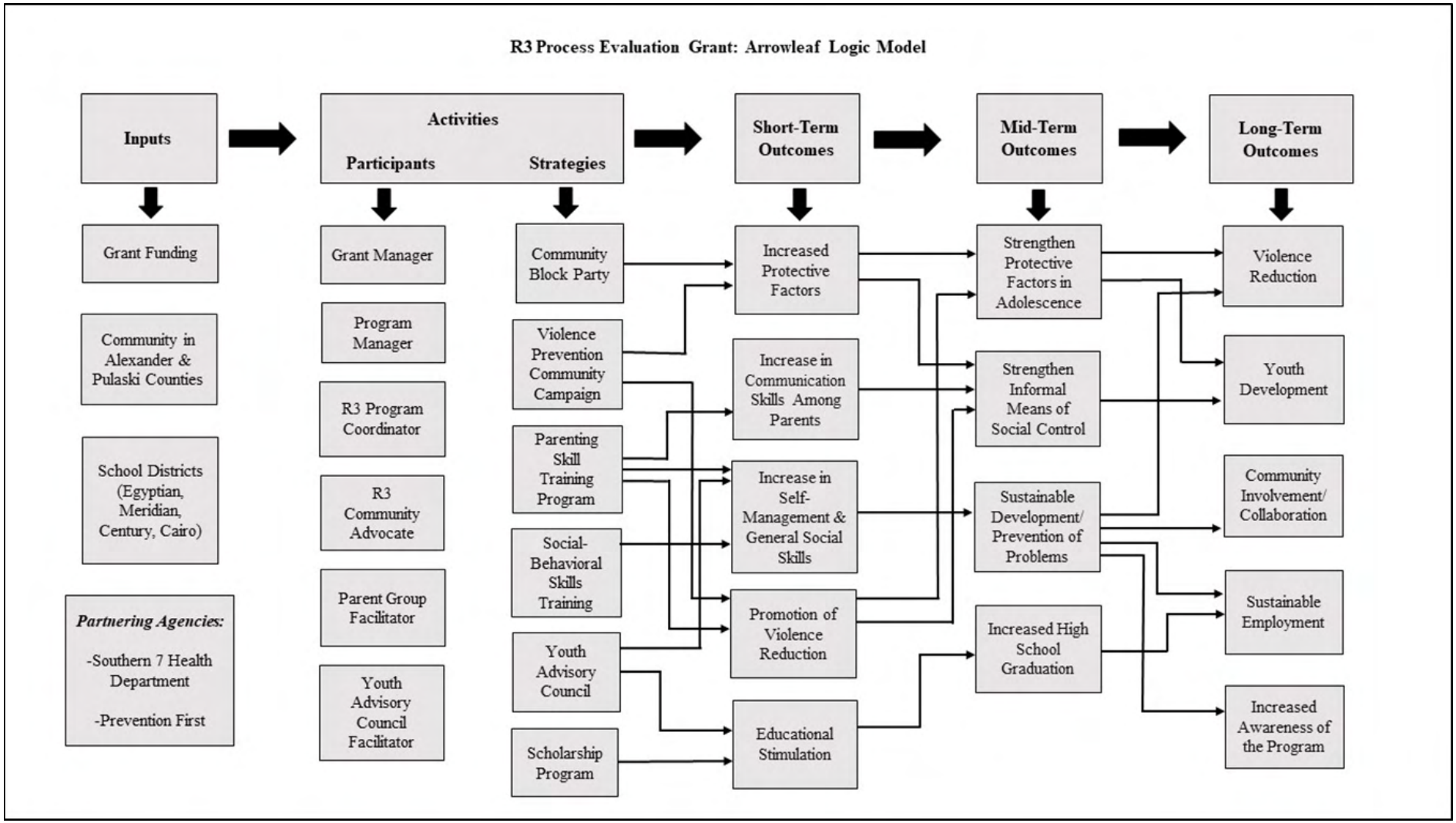
Appendix D: Southern Illinois Programmatic Logic Models

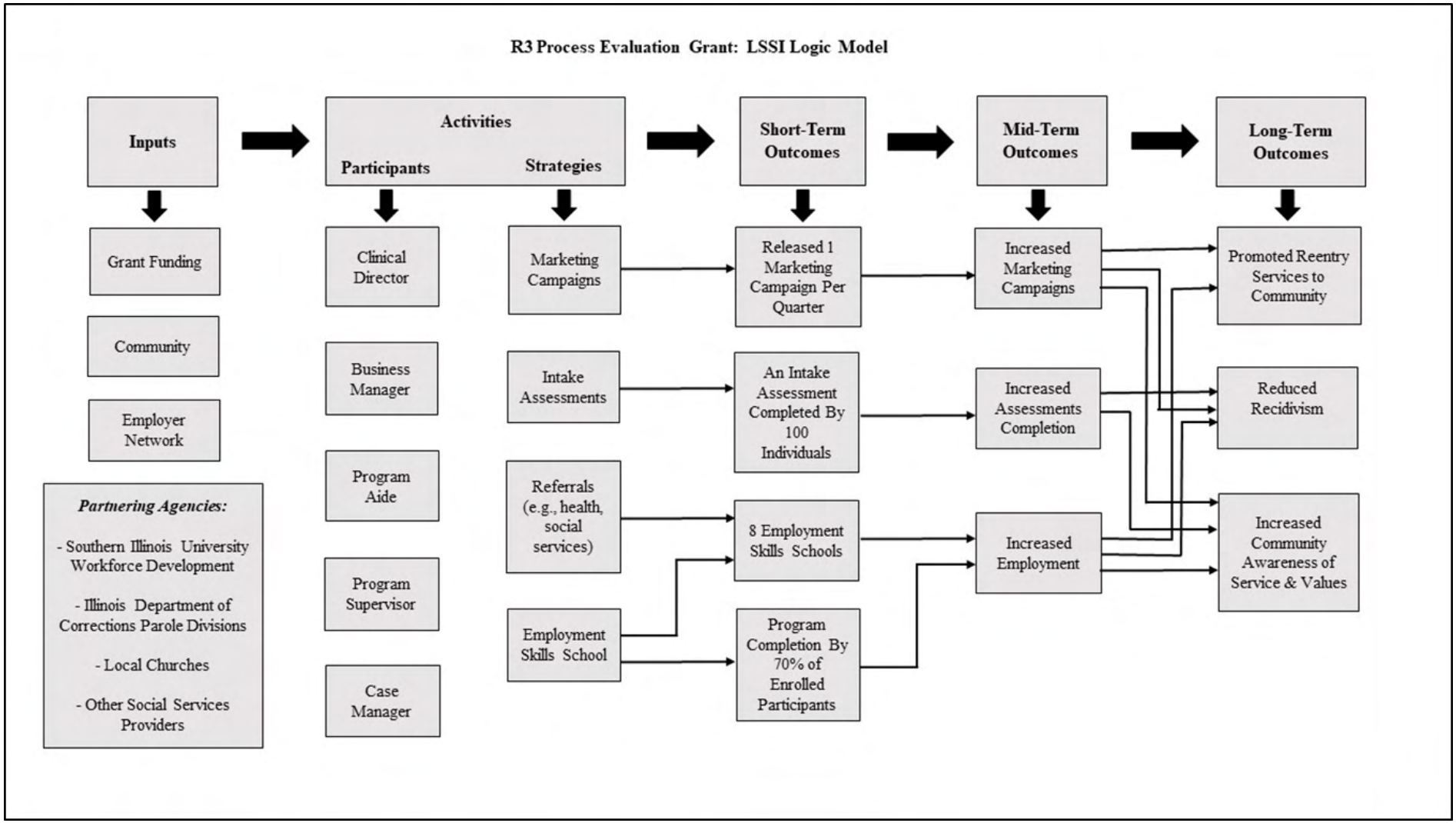
Academic Development Institute



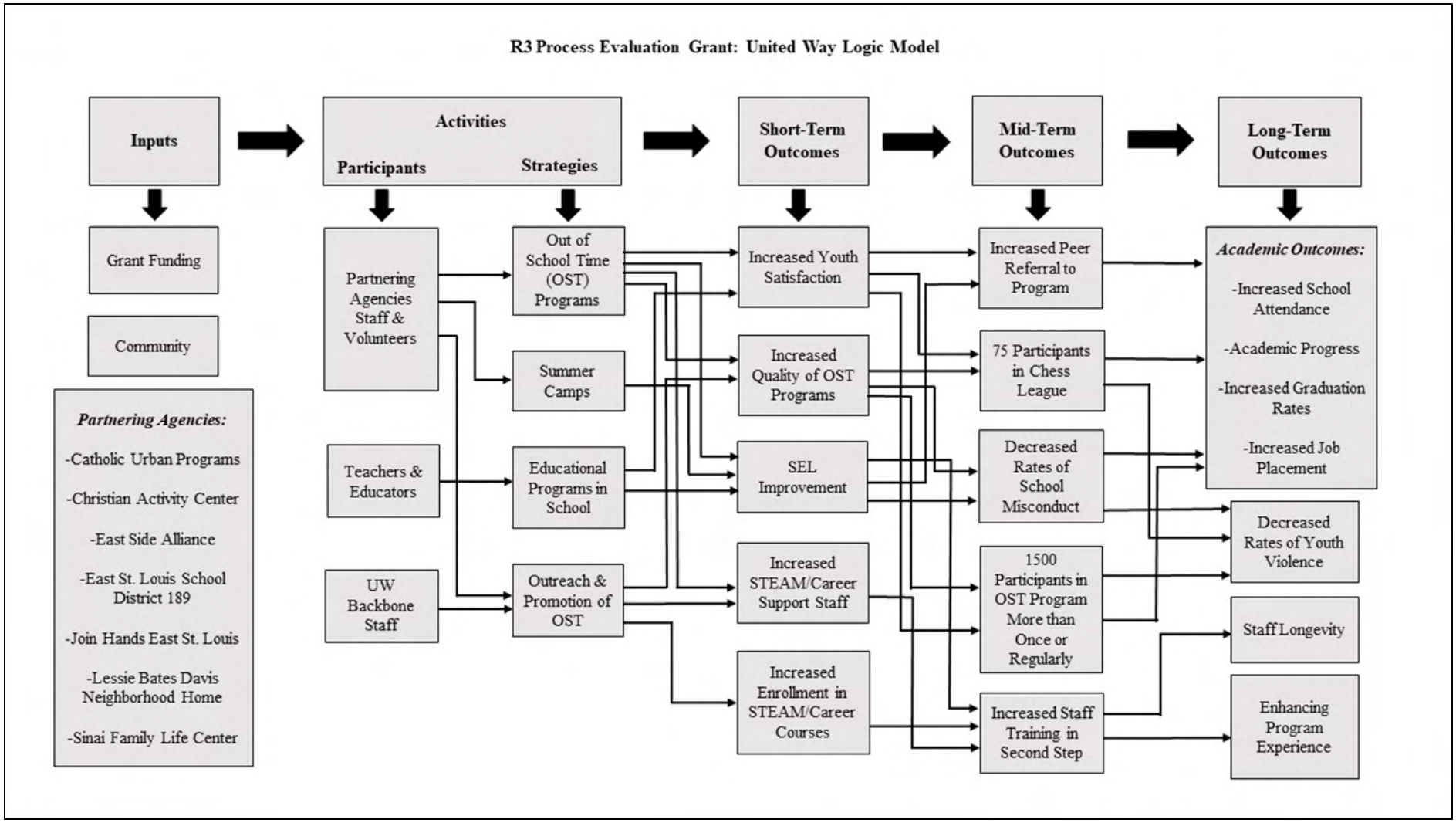
Arrowleaf


R3 Process Evaluation Grant: Arrowleaf Logic Model
Inputs
Activities
Participants
Strategies
Short-Term Outcomes
Mid-Term Outcomes
Long-Term Outcomes
Grant Funding
Community in Alexander & Pulaski Counties
School Districts (Egyptian, Meridian, Century, Cairo)
Partnering Agencies:
-Southern 7 Health Department
-Prevention First
Grant Manager
Program Manager
R3 Program Coordinator
R3 Community Advocate
Parent Group Facilitator
Youth Advisory Council Facilitator
Community Block Party
Violence Prevention Community Campaign
Parenting Skill Training Program
Social-Behavioral Skills Training
Youth Advisory Council
Scholarship Program
Increased Protective Factors
Increase in Communication Skills Among Parents
Increase in Self-Management & General Social Skills
Promotion of Violence Reduction
Educational Stimulation
Strengthen Protective Factors in Adolescence
Strengthen Informal Means of Social Control
Sustainable Development/ Prevention of Problems
Increased High School Graduation
Violence Reduction
Youth Development
Community Involvement/ Collaboration
Sustainable Employment
Increased Awareness of the Program

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois



United Way of Greater St. Louis



Appendix E: SIUC Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR R3 PROVIDERS AND STAFF

(*italicized are more staff/R3 direct related questions)*

(1) BROAD PROGRAM INDIVIDUAL OVERVIEW

A). Can you describe the general provisions of your program? What is your role in this?

a. What are some of your tasks in this?

b. What do you view as your role in the process?

c. What does your program offer?

d. What common needs do you address for your participants?

B). Goals

a. What are the ideal long-term outcomes for those who participate in your programming?

b. What are some more immediate goals?

c. How many participants successfully complete the program every year?

d. What does sustainability look like for your program?

C). Changes

a. Is the program implemented according to the proposed plan? What has changed since your proposal/original plan?

b. What has your timeline looked like? Are there some delays in the program deployment?

c. What is the planned delivery of the activity? (virtual, face to face, hybrid)? Has this varied?

d. In general, how successful would you consider this program (outcome perceptions?)

(2) RECRUITMENT AND STAFFING

A). Recruitment

a. Who is the target client? [*Prompts*: what risks; needs]

b. How do you identify the right people to serve? Are there any requirements for initial program admission?

c. How is this determined?

1. How do you get the information on possible participants?
2. What tools are used? Who is generally responsible for this?

d. How do you recruit participants for your program? (I.e. email blasts to families, posters, calls, social media)

e. Does anyone get turned away from the program? If yes, for what reason? Are there exclusionary criteria? (Characteristics that are a 'no'?)

f. Are there any requirements for retaining enrollment in the program?

B). Served Population

a. What do your participants look like? (education; neighborhood; community; needs/risks)

b. Have you ever had to deny enrollment? For what reason? (capacity; criteria?)

c. Do your clients/participants have common challenges or struggles? Strengths?

d. Where are your program(s) provided?

e. Can you tell me about the community context?

1. What are challenges specific to your community context? (understand history and current context)

2. What are strengths of your community context?

3. What sort of connection do you have with the community/partnerships with other providers/orgs outside of R3-funded ones? (how the R3 program fits into larger community)

C). Staffing

a. What are your minimum requirements for staff members/program providers?

b. Are staff hired, volunteers, or both?

c. How do you ensure staff are properly trained?

d. Are staff regularly supervised/have check-ins to monitor their progress?

e. What are the main challenges faced by staff?

f. How is staff compliance with the goals and requirements of the program monitored?

g. FOR BOTH: what type of training did you have for (case management/service provision?)

(3) DAY-TO-DAY

A). Services

a. What requirements do you have for your participants?

1. i.e., materials they must provide, work that must be completed outside of program meeting time

b. If your program targets individuals at different ages, do participants of different ages all go through the same thing? Or are there differences in how the program is tailored to different ages?

c. How has the program changed over time?

d. What day-to-day activities are offered?

e. What is the intensity level of this program? How often does it meet? What are the demands for participants (low/medium/high?)

B). Relationships

a. What are the goals of the relationship between your participants and providers/staff? What does this look like?

b. Is it a case management/caseload approach, or more informal? How so?

c. What is the availability of the program/staff providers?

C). *Support/Resources*

a. Which are the available resources for deploying this program?

1. How has the R3 funding cycle/approach worked for your organization?

2. Has it been difficult to access/manage?

3. What suggestions would you have for future years and/or future applicants?

b. How as your work changed as a result of R3? For the better? For the worse?

c. How can this evaluation process and the work of the R3-funded researchers/evaluators (us) help you with your program goals?

1. What do you want to learn from the evaluation process – this year and/or in later phases?

(4) STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

A). What do you feel are the successful components of the program?

a. Examples?

b. What went well about the application, support of R3?

B). What are some of the main challenges you face? Specifically

a. Specific to the program

b. Institutional (budget; hiring; availability)

C). Can you describe your perceptions of the service quality?

a. What are the goals? What programs help meet those goals? What seems most difficult to accomplish?

b. What improvements or changes do you perceive would be useful?

c. What type of relationship do you have with providers/staff (or vice versa?) - communications; frequency

(5) EVALUATION

A). *Does the program undergo evaluation? (Yes/ No)*

a. How do you monitor your success?

1. in addition to any outcome data mentioned, specifically ask: Do you gather any information on participant and/or stakeholder satisfaction? Please describe.

b. Are the goals and intended outcomes clear? (provide examples?)

c. How do you measure participant success or progress?

1. If paper documents are taken, how are they kept/stored?

2. If data is electronic, how is it managed?

3. Is there any communication with participants after program completion? If so, what does this look like? Who is responsible for follow-ups? When do they occur? What information is covered?

d. Are the program's learned lessons being shared amongst governmental institutions? (How are things disseminated?)

B). *Storage*

a. What/how is information stored for those who you serve?

b. If the participant completes (or leaves) the program, how long is their information kept on file? Once the information is no longer needed, how is it disposed of?

c. Who has access to this information? How is it stored and/or secured?

(6) EDUCATION AND TRAINING

A). What is your educational background?

a. What is your degree(s) in?

b. Do you have any specialized certifications?

B). What type of training did you receive for this specific job?

a. Continuing education/training? (annual; voluntary/mandatory?)

b. How are they trained? Where are they trained? How often are they trained? Who trains the staff? Who funded the trainings?

C). Experience

a. How long have you worked here? With (SITE)?

b. What other work experiences have you had?

Conclusion

The Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) program reinvests a portion of cannabis tax revenue into communities via the distribution of grant funds to five program areas (economic development, violence prevention services, reentry services, youth development, and civil legal aid). It focuses on issues within communities experiencing high rates of gun injury, unemployment, child poverty, and incarceration. The R3 program seeks to:

- Directly address the impact of economic disinvestment, violence, and the historical overuse of criminal justice responses to community and individual needs by providing resources to support local design and control of community-based responses to these impacts.
- Substantially reduce the total amount of gun violence and concentrated poverty in the state.
- Protect communities from gun violence through targeted investments and intervention programs.
- Promote employment infrastructure.

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's (ICJIA) Research and Analysis unit, in collaboration with Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC), the University of Illinois at Chicago Great Cities Institute (GCI), and the University of Illinois Springfield (UIS), conducted site specific process evaluations to learn about the implementations and operations of select R3 grantees. Researchers employed a community-based approach by working in partnership with program staff to determine the goals, research questions, and methods of the process evaluation.

Findings

The programs evaluated here intentionally represent a diverse group of grantees, with respect to location, service type, funding amount, and collaborative processes, among other varying characteristics. Site-level and regional conclusions are detailed in their respective regional report; however, some themes emerged across all the evaluation sites.

Community Focus

Programs placed a strong emphasis on addressing specific needs of the communities they serve, with many utilizing a formal assessment process to understand needs and gaps in services. Many grantees adapted programming to provide responsive service delivery and incorporate client or community feedback into their program processes. Moving forward, a number of grantees have the opportunity to continue to ensure their services meet community needs by improving their knowledge of clients' experiences with their services through instruments assessing client satisfaction and other relevant outcomes. Evaluators provided technical assistance in this area during the process evaluation, but additional support could serve to increase grantee capacity for ongoing self-evaluation.

Delays

Grantees experienced challenges related to funding administration and program implementation.[39] The impacts of these challenges varied. Some grantees were unable to provide services until funding was disbursed, while others lost supportive partners due to changes in timelines. Further, programs had to deal with the impacts of COVID-19 and the policies implemented to limit the spread. This impacted both implementation and client engagement. However, nearly all programs experienced increases in capacity as the grant program period progressed.

Data Availability

The amount and types of available data varied widely between funded programs. Some sites collected systematic information that is readily accessible, while others are still working to develop appropriate measures and methods for tracking program activities and outcomes. This evaluation supplemented grantee-provided data with demographic data to provide contextual descriptions of the communities in which these programs operate. Future research should consider these data variations and limitations when designing an outcome evaluation, and funders should be aware of the need for technical assistance in developing effective data collection systems.

Assessment and Planning Programs

The assessment and planning initiatives examined here succeeded in bringing together relevant stakeholders and incorporating perspectives of various groups, often including community residents. For many of these grantees, the question remains as to how the results of the planning projects will be used. Some initiatives chose to plan a specific community program for future development, while others used the project period to focus on assessing community needs. In the future, grant administrators could employ the products of these planning processes to examine the extent to which assessment and planning grantees go on to successfully secure R3 funding.

Service Delivery Programs

Despite initial delays, service delivery programs have largely been successfully implemented and are providing services to clients as designed. The majority of programs examined in this process evaluation are meeting or exceeding their goals for the number of clients served. For sites that are not yet meeting these goals, barriers have been identified and strategic adaptations have been carried out or planned.

Similar to the entire group of funded programs, grantee organizations examined here ranged from small grassroots providers to large statewide institutions. However, the maturation stage of funded programming varied independently of the organizations' sizes and budgets. Some small organizations used R3 funds to expand services they had been providing for decades in their communities, while some large organizations launched brand new program types. These factors

[39] For a detailed review of the R3 grant program implementation, see: Weisner, L., & Gatens, A. (2022). *Implementation of Restore, Reinvest, and Renew: The inaugural year of a cannabis tax funded grant program*. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

all combined to create unique contexts for program implementation and had implications for how the grantees delivered their services.

In some sites, programs employed evidence-based program models. Other sites, by contrast, utilized service types that have not been rigorously evaluated but were designed to address needs specific to their communities. To deliver services that aimed to meet the wide-ranging needs of their client populations, many programs provided some evidence-informed practices in conjunction with other programming aspects that may not have been empirically proven as effective.

Community-Based Research

In alignment with the overall goals of R3, evaluators aimed to prioritize a community-based approach to the research. The Great Cities Institute at University of Illinois-Chicago, our statewide partners on the evaluation, developed a practicable guidebook for conducting community-based research, which was a valuable resource to the evaluation teams and can be used to inform additional future research outside of R3.

Future Research

The second year of the R3 grant funding period concluded in January 2023. Service delivery programs in good standing were invited to apply for a third year of funding to extend through January 2024. Following the completion of this process evaluation, the research teams began conducting site specific outcome evaluations with the service delivery sites included in this report to understand the impacts of their described services. The efforts undertaken in this process evaluation have facilitated a significant understanding of program implementations and operations, which benefitted the outcome phase of the evaluation. Researchers continued to engage the funded service delivery sites and incorporated specific questions of interest to program stakeholders where possible in furtherance of a community-based approach.

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