



# Pathway Home Grant Program: Implementation Evaluation Design and Overview of Impact Evaluation

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### I. Introduction

Since July 2020, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has awarded approximately \$113 million to two cohorts of Pathway Home grantees to expand the availability of employment-focused reentry services for individuals incarcerated in state correctional facilities and local jails. The Pathway Home grants aim to provide linked pre- and post-release employment services to improve individuals' chances of finding meaningful employment and avoiding recidivism.

In September 2020, DOL contracted with Mathematica and its partners Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) and the Council of State Governments Justice Center (CSG) to design and carry out an evaluation of the implementation and impact of the Pathway Home Grant Program. In this report, we present designs for three evaluations of grant implementation:

- **Evaluation of Cohort 1 implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic (June 2020 – December 2021).** The Cohort 1 grants were awarded early in the pandemic, making it challenging for grantees to provide intensive pre-release services because they had to adjust to the unexpected impacts of the pandemic on their partnerships and on access to facilities and participants. This initial study of Cohort 1 will focus on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected planning and operations of the first cohort of grants and what can be learned from their experiences. For example, lessons learned about the use of virtual services might help future grantees in rural areas or communities lacking transportation.
- **Start-up and early implementation of Cohort 2 grants (June 2021 – July 2022).** We will evaluate the early period of the Cohort 2 grants when grantees planned for the rollout of their programs, including establishing their partnerships with correctional facilities and service providers; putting in place their outreach, recruitment, and enrollment plans; planning for the coordination of pre-release and post-release case management and other services; and setting up data tracking and reporting systems.
- **In-depth implementation of the Cohort 2 grants (August 2022 – December 2023).** We will also study implementation over the full course of the grant period, focusing on how grantees enrolled and served participants, provided employment and training services, provided support and follow-up services, and made plans for service sustainability after the grants end.

In addition to studying implementation of the Pathway Home grants, the evaluation will include an impact study for Cohort 2 grantees. The impact evaluation design will be described in detail in a future report, but we provide a high-level overview of our initial design considerations at the end of this report.

#### A. Knowledge to inform the designs

The evaluation team engaged in several knowledge-gathering activities from October 2020 to February 2021 to inform the research questions, methods, and data sources for the implementation and impact evaluations. A summary of each activity is below, and more detailed information is in Appendix A.

- **Targeted literature review.** Building off previous reentry literature reviews, we summarized recently published, rigorous studies of employment-focused reentry interventions and their impacts on education, employment, and recidivism outcomes.

The literature review highlighted the efficacy of education and vocational training programs on reducing recidivism, but the evidence on employment outcomes was mixed. Limited rigorous

research exists about the impacts of linked employment-focused reentry services on employment outcomes. The Pathway Home Evaluation is an opportunity to build evidence about the implementation and impact of linked employment-focused pre- and post-release services.

- **Stakeholder engagement.** We engaged the DOL program office in a meeting to understand its learning priorities. We also convened an advisory group of people with lived experience in the justice system (who were not participating in the Pathway Home program) to engage in participatory research activities and advise the evaluation design (discussed further in Chapter VIII).

People who are reentering the community need various supportive services to be successful. Advisory group members noted the importance of supportive services such as housing assistance and behavioral health treatment. They also emphasized the value of peer support provided through peer support groups or mentors who can help motivate and facilitate successful reentry. The implementation evaluation will explore whether and how programs incorporate peer support into their service models.

- **Document reviews and clarifying calls.** We reviewed grant applications and conducted clarifying calls with each grantee to develop a preliminary understanding of all 42 Pathway Home grantees' plans for program implementation.

The Pathway Home grants are diverse in terms of the geography (nationwide); the types of organizations awarded grants (nonprofit organizations, postsecondary institutions, state or local governments, and American Indian and Native American entities); and the types of facilities with whom grantees partnered (jails, prisons, and community correctional facilities). This variation across grantees may pose challenges for the impact study but creates opportunities for further exploration in the implementation study.

### B. Organization of the report

In the next two chapters of the report, we summarize how the activities discussed above have informed our understanding of the Pathway Home program. Chapter II presents a conceptual framework for the Pathway Home grant program, and Chapter III provides more detail about the grants and how grantees have adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapters IV through VIII present detailed plans for studying the grants' implementation in Cohorts 1 and 2. Chapter IV discusses the implementation study of Cohort 1 grants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapters V and VI describe plans for the early implementation and in-depth implementation evaluations of the Cohort 2 grants. Chapter VII describes our common approach to data analysis and reporting across the implementation evaluations. Chapter VIII presents our plans for stakeholder engagement during the implementation evaluations. Following these detailed chapters, Chapter IX summarizes the approach to studying the implementation of the Pathway Home grants and provides an overall timeline for conducting the research. Chapter X discusses the preliminary design for an impact evaluation, which we will describe in a subsequent report once the design has been finalized.

## II. Conceptual framework for the evaluation

Our conceptual framework for the Pathway Home Evaluation is based on the framework we developed for the Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) evaluation<sup>1</sup> (Bellotti et al. 2018). The LEAP evaluation looked at earlier grants, similar to the Pathway Home model, that involved both pre- and post-release employment-related services with an emphasis on linking services during both phases. We refined the conceptual framework from the LEAP evaluation based on the knowledge development activities described in Chapter I. The updated framework (Figure II.1) illustrates the characteristics of the correctional systems, communities, service providers, and participants that we expect will influence program services and participants' intermediate and long-term outcomes, such as employment and avoidance of recidivism.

Our conversations with stakeholders and the grantees highlighted important factors that we added to the conceptual model, as described below.

### A. Correctional system characteristics

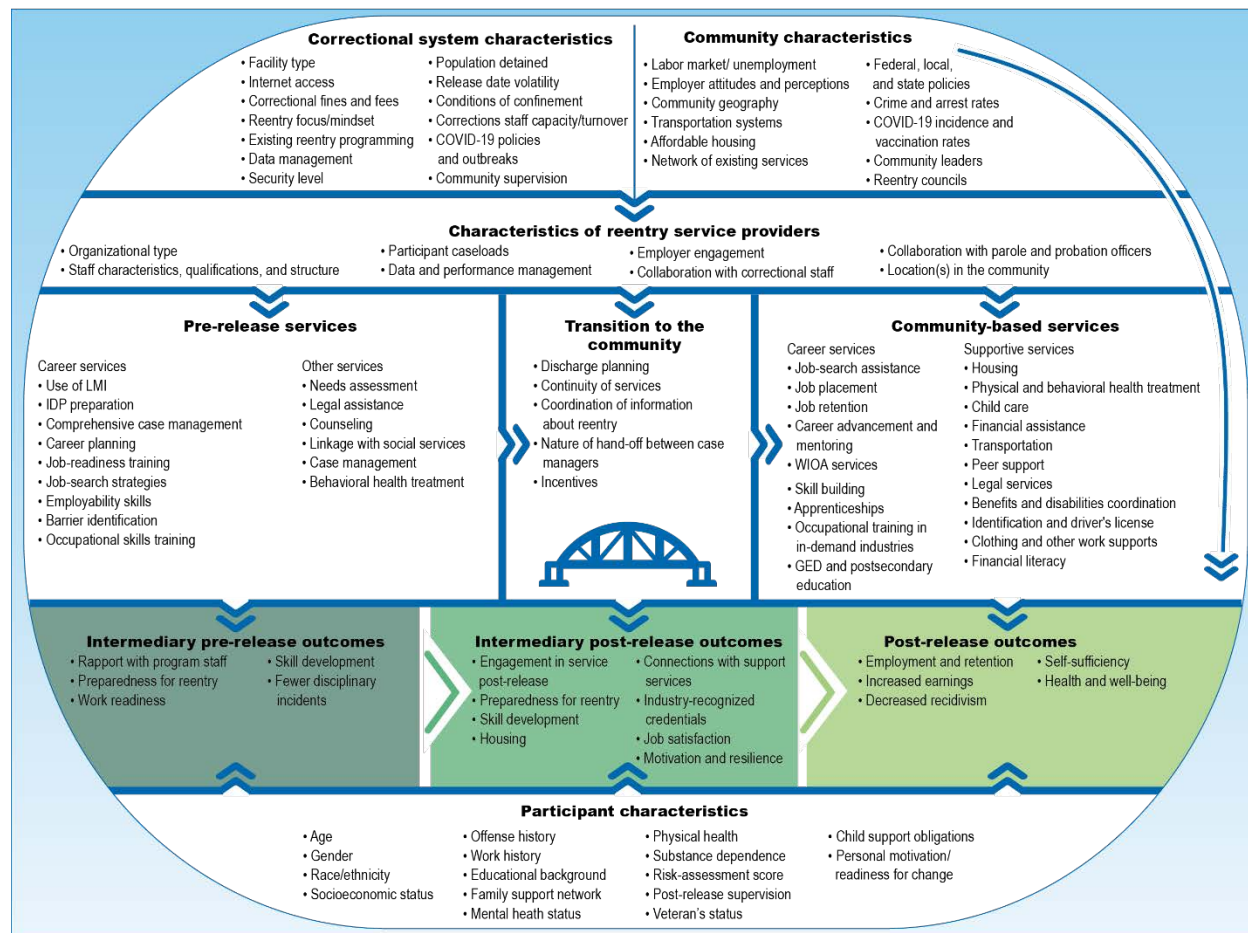
Many of the characteristics of correctional facilities relevant in LEAP also apply in Pathway Home, such as a facility's focus on reentry and rehabilitation versus punishment, its security level (for example, whether it is a maximum- or minimum-security facility), and the characteristics of its detained population. These characteristics, along with the others listed in Figure II.1, can influence how Pathway Home programs are implemented, including a program's ability to identify, recruit, and serve participants. Based on the knowledge development activities, we added these characteristics to the framework:

- **Facility type.** Pathway Home grantees operate in jails, prisons, and community correctional facilities, unlike LEAP, which operated solely in jails. Each facility type is unique and influences many of the other factors described in the model, such as the flow of individuals in and out of the facility, the extent of programming available, and the proximity to the community. For example, average jail stays tend to be shorter in duration than average prison stays.
- **Internet access.** The evaluation of LEAP highlighted the challenges grantees can face if a partner facility does not have Internet or procedures in place so individuals who are incarcerated can use the Internet. Given increased restrictions due to COVID-19 on who can enter facilities, many grantees moved or planned to move to virtual services, making access to the Internet especially critical.
- **Correctional fines and fees.** Many correctional facilities charge people for the cost of their incarceration (Eisen 2015). These fees are sometimes implemented while on community supervision or garnered from wages earned through work release. Some community-based facilities also charge individuals for their stay in transitional housing. These costs can hinder individuals' ability to meet their basic needs, support themselves or their families, and save money—all of which can, in turn, reduce their motivation to work.

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<sup>1</sup> The 36-month evaluation of the Employment and Training Administration's Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) grants was conducted by Mathematica and Social Policy Research Associates. The evaluation examined the early start-up and implementation of 20 LEAP pilots, which created jail-based American Job Centers (AJCs) to support the successful reentry of participants and directly link them to community-based AJCs upon release. The LEAP conceptual framework captures the service delivery approaches that emerged during the LEAP grant implementation as well as the characteristics of the jails, communities, and service providers that shaped the delivery of services and participant outcomes.

Figure II.1. Pathway Home grant program conceptual framework



Source: Adapted from LEAP conceptual framework (Bellotti et al. 2018).

GED = high school equivalency; IDP = individual development plan; LMI = local market information; WIOA = Workforce Investment Opportunity Act.

- **Conditions of confinement.** Facilities can have strong conditions to facilitate reentry, such as a variety of service options for people involved with the justice system prior to release. However, some factors such as overcrowding in jails and prisons can hinder staffs' ability to identify, recruit, and serve participants. Similarly, people can experience challenges in unsafe and unhealthy living environments in transitional housing if it lacks appropriate supervision.
- **Community supervision.** Community supervision agencies have a role in post-release experiences, and reentry programs' efforts to coordinate if not collaborate with community supervision may help to reduce barriers to participants' success.

## B. Community characteristics

Community characteristics can influence who ends up in the correctional system and the ability of people who were formerly incarcerated to find employment upon return to the community (Stahler et al. 2013). For example, employer attitudes and willingness to hire individuals with justice involvement, along with the general level of opportunity in the local labor markets to which participants return (particularly



because the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically altered employment rates), will impact participants' ability to find and maintain employment.

Our conversations with stakeholders indicated that access to affordable housing was especially critical and should be included in the framework. Members of the advisory group emphasized that securing independent housing or supportive housing options that are safe and in a prosocial environment is necessary for facilitating successful reentry. Stakeholders also described the difficulty of not earning a living wage that could support a decent housing situation—particularly in coastal cities, where the cost of living greatly exceeds the minimum wage. Our advisory group also highlighted the importance of community leaders and reentry councils or task forces who can bring relevant stakeholders and partners together to support reentry programs' success.

### C. Characteristics of reentry service providers

Characteristics of reentry service providers also influence program implementation. Factors such as the types of organizations providing services and staff members' relationships with corrections staff and other stakeholders in the community, such as employers, collectively affect program services and participant outcomes. Based on stakeholder input and our conversations with grantees, we also added the following characteristics as important aspects of reentry service providers:

- **Staff characteristics.** Establishing a meaningful connection with staff can facilitate retention in services; provide participants with needed support; and, ultimately, affect participant outcomes. The extent to which staff share demographic characteristics, are members of the community they are serving, and have lived experience in the justice system might influence participants' receptivity to, and connections with, program staff. Likewise, the extent to which staff are supportive, are motivating, and show commitment to the participants they work with could also affect this relationship and the extent to which participants feel motivated. The advisory group also stressed the importance of peer support, and one way to provide peer support is to have staff in the program with relatable experiences.
- **Proximity to participants in the community.** Whether service providers are stationed in a facility and where their community-based offices are located will likely influence the uptake of services. One lesson from LEAP was the power of having frontline staff in facilities and forging connections with participants pre-release. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has hampered many grantees' plans to have staff stationed inside facilities, a situation that may negatively impact recruitment, enrollment, and retention in pre-release services. Likewise, accessibility of service locations in the community will influence engagement after release. Programs partnering with prisons might experience greater challenges because prisons generally serve wider geographic regions than jails.

### D. Pre-release, transition, and post-release services

All of the factors mentioned above influence the services Pathway Home programs provide. Similar to the LEAP conceptual framework, Figure II.1 highlights a continuum of services for participants, including pre-release services provided within correctional facilities, the preparation and planning for a transition to the community, and the post-release services available in the community. The main changes to this aspect of the original LEAP framework were the addition of the following services:

- **Pre-release occupational skills training.** DOL intended for greater flexibility in using funds to develop more intensive occupational training programs pre-release. It will be important to explore whether and how grantees are implementing this in their models and how it influences outcomes.
- **Coordination of information about reentry.** Advisory group members highlighted both the lack of coordination between correctional institutions and community-based agencies about reentry and the need for greater information sharing about post-release service offerings before people are released. They described how individuals inside the correctional facility are unaware of services that exist outside and have a limited understanding of whom to contact or where to go after release, which may lead to homelessness or recidivism. It will be important for the evaluation to explore how information about reentry services is shared by the corrections institutions and grantee staff.
- **Peer support.** The advisory group stressed the value of receiving post-release support from someone who has been through similar experiences in the justice system. The authors of the Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration study used a random assignment research design with a sample of 771 incarcerated individuals and concluded that RecycleForce’s positive employment outcomes may be due to having peer mentorship as a part of its model (Barden et al. 2018). The topic of peer-support specialists or mentors was raised as a potential programmatic solution to this need, although it was not part of the required services outlined in the announcement for the Pathway Home grants. Ideally, peer mentors or sponsors would begin working with people before release to motivate successful reentry and would continue supporting them once they transition into the community.
- **Financial assistance.** The advisory group reported that many programs or jobs available to people released from jail or prison pay less than a living wage, making it difficult for them to meet their and their families’ basic needs post-release. Financial assistance can help participants meet these needs and make it easier for them to attend skills training if they have to forgo work. Pathway Home grant funds can be used for participant wages, stipends, financial incentives, or need-based payments within certain limits.

### E. Participant characteristics

Participants’ characteristics also influence how they experience reentry. These include their age, race, and ethnicity; their educational background, work experience, and criminal offense histories; their family support network; and other protective and risk factors. Based on conversations with stakeholders, we added motivation to the framework. Advisory group members stressed that individuals need to be motivated and ready to change for programs to effectively reduce recidivism and improve employment outcomes.

### F. Intermediate and long-term participant outcomes

Some or all of the factors mentioned above may influence participants’ outcomes, as shown in the shaded section of the conceptual model. The main change to this part of the original LEAP framework is the addition of intermediate pre-release and post-release outcomes, or early indicators of the program’s desired long-term outcomes, including increased employment and earnings and desistance (that is, reduced recidivism). Intermediate outcomes can serve as early indicators of longer-term success and are often easier to measure than long term outcomes. The following are potential intermediate outcomes that Pathway Home might influence:

- **Pre-release disciplinary incidents.** Most correctional facilities track disciplinary infractions. Cochran and Mears (2017) established among a sample of 7,584 individuals convicted of felonies from Florida that pre-release disciplinary infractions are predictive of new felony convictions within three years after release. More recently, Courtney (2019) examined the impact of pre-release prison education programming with a total sample of 344 incarcerated individuals. The study used a pre-post causal-comparative design with control condition. The author found that the programming was correlated with fewer disciplinary infractions.
- **Post-release housing situation.** Given the importance of housing in facilitating successful reentry, we added housing as an intermediate outcome. Cohen (2020) conducted a quasi-experimental study of a housing assistance program in Los Angeles among a sample of 26,752 people experiencing homelessness. The author found that 18 months after intake, housing assistance significantly reduced repeat homelessness by 20 percentage points; reduced jail stays and charges for new crimes; and, among a subset of the sample, increased the probability of employment compared to individuals who received social services but not housing assistance.
- **Post-release job satisfaction.** A quasi-experimental study using data on 869 participants in the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative evaluation found that increases in job satisfaction significantly increased the time to first rearrest for individuals who were within three months of release (Niebuhr and Orrick 2020).
- **Intrinsic motivation and resilience.** Researchers have been exploring the link between psychological self-sufficiency and employment outcomes for several years (Hong et al. 2012, 2018), and some programs for job seekers with low incomes have sought to incorporate strategies that address barriers to motivation and resilience, such as the Transforming Impossible Into Possible program (Hong and Hong 2019). Given the possible link between resilience and economic self-sufficiency, it may be important to measure resilience as an intermediary indicator.

The Pathway Home Evaluation advisory group also highlighted the importance of considering long-term participant outcomes beyond employment, earnings, and recidivism. Recommendations included the following:

- **Self-sufficiency and financial independence.** Although employment is an important indicator of a program's success, participants can also experience success as independence from needing public assistance and being able to support themselves and/or their families with their own resources.
- **Health and well-being.** Mental and physical health is an important part of being able to maintain employment in the long run, and many Pathway Home programs plan to provide supports to participants to address health needs. Although not a primary outcome, understanding how the program improves mental and physical well-being may be beneficial.

### G. Continuing to refine the model

This conceptual framework depicts our current understanding of how the Pathway Home model links characteristics of communities, service providers, and participants to services and outcomes. The framework will guide which factors we explore in our implementation evaluation, what types of data we collect and when, and what constructs we will measure to answer the research questions of most interest. We will combine the contextual factors specific to the Pathway Home program with more general program implementation factors highlighted in the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR), which outlines factors that could be important for successful implementation or replication of a

program (CFIR Research Team 2022), and the Community Coalition Action Theory (CCAT), which outlines factors that underlie effective partnerships (Osmond 2008). We will also use this framework to explore changes over time in the grants and to inform our interpretation of the impacts of the program on key intermediate and long-term participant outcomes. Findings from the implementation evaluations could be used to update the framework to reflect new barriers, implementation factors, or outcomes that emerge as important.

### III. Overview of grants and grantees

In July 2020, DOL awarded nearly \$65 million in grants to the first cohort of 20 grantees (Cohort 1). In July 2021, DOL awarded almost \$58 million in grants to second set of 22 grantees (Cohort 2). Figure III.1 shows the location of each grantee and subgrantee across both cohorts. Programs serve adults ages 18 and older who have been convicted under federal, state, or local law and are incarcerated in state correctional facilities; local or county jails; or community correctional facilities, such as transitional housing.

Participants must be between 20 and 180 days from release, scheduled to reside in the program's target area upon release, be low-income as defined under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 3(36), and be legally eligible to work in the United States to be eligible for enrollment (US DOL Pathway Home FOA-ETA-20-02). Required pre-release services include job preparation, creating individual development plans (IDPs), career exploration and planning, counseling, and assistance with social services. (Second-round grants also include obtaining state identification required for employment.) Required post-release activities include skill-building services such as apprenticeships and occupational training in in-demand industries that lead to industry-recognized credentials. Participants should also have the same caseworker pre- and post-release. Each 42-month grant cycle started with a six-month planning period, followed by 24 months of participant enrollment and 12 months of follow-up when grantees tracked outcomes for participants. In this chapter, we summarize information from each cohort's grant applications and clarifying calls conducted by the evaluation team and discuss what we know about the variation across the two cohorts of grantees.

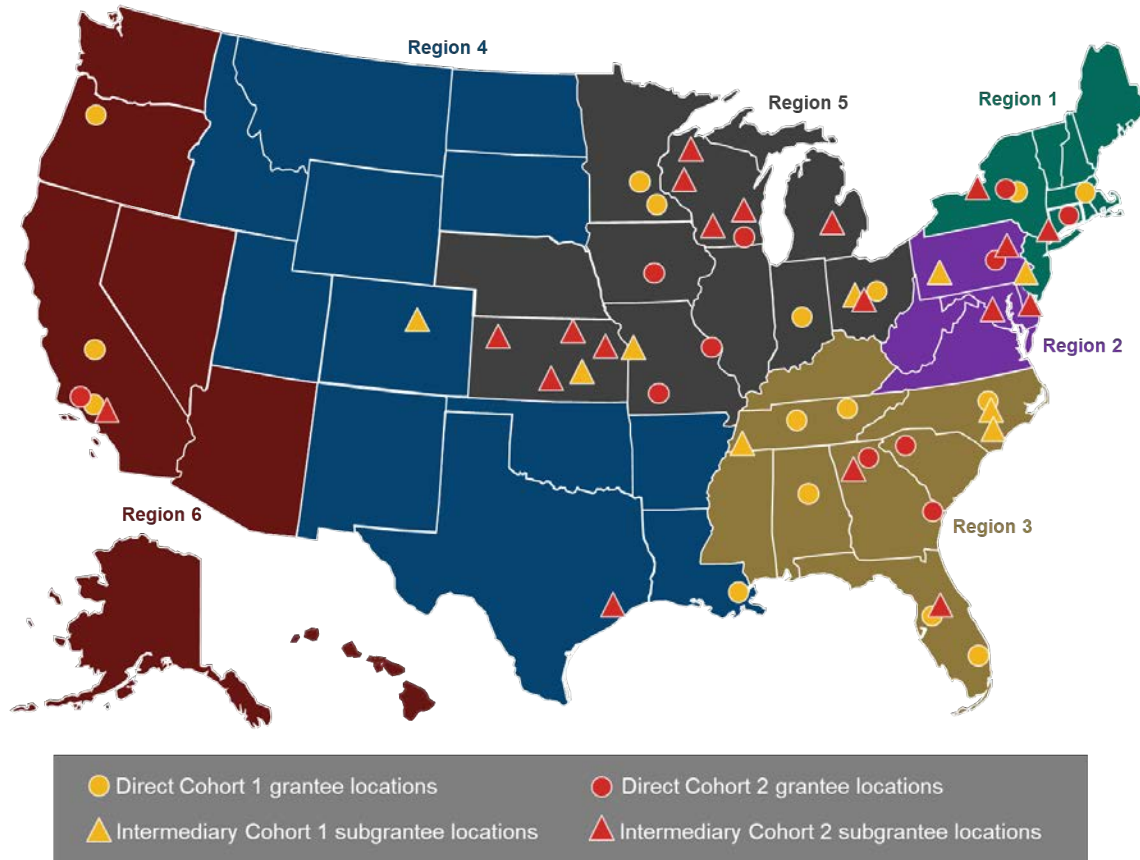
#### A. Cohort 1

**Grant structure and size.** Sixteen of the 20 grantees in Cohort 1 are directly serving participants, and four are intermediary grantees with multiple subgrantees who will serve participants. The grants awarded ranged from \$849,892 to \$4,000,000, with an average of \$3,220,103 (Table III.1). Grantees planned to serve between 100 and 550 participants, with an average of 354 participants.

**Types of grantees.** Of the 20 Cohort 1 grantees, 15 are community-based nonprofit organizations (including one faith-based nonprofit), four are government agencies (such as state agencies), and one is a consortium of workforce development boards (Figure III.2). Grantees had a range of experience providing reentry services, with one grantee having no experience, 15 having fewer than five years' experience, and four having more than five years' experience (Table III.1).

**Number of geographic areas served.** Of the 20 Cohort 1 grantees, seven serve only one distinct geographic area or region and 13 serve multiple regions (Figure III.3, Table III.1). Geographic areas vary across grantees; some grantees serve counties, whereas others serve parishes or a judicial district. Each subgrantee of the four intermediary grantees serves one distinct area. Grantees are located in all six DOL regions, with most grantees located in DOL Regions 3 and 5 (Figure III.1). Many grantees received the only Pathway Home grant in their state; however, there are multiple grantees serving the states of Tennessee, Ohio, California, Florida, and Minnesota.

Figure III.1. Locations of direct grantees and intermediary subgrantees across DOL regions



Source: 2020 and 2021 Pathway Home grant applications.

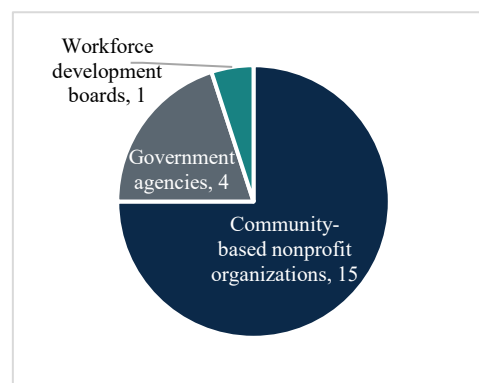
Note: Some grantee locations could be geographically close and represented by one dot or triangle.

Department of Labor (DOL) regions are areas served by each regional DOL office (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/centers-offices/about/regions/map>).

**Correctional facilities and other partners.** As shown in Table III.1, 14 of the 20 grantees partnered with jails, 12 partnered with prisons, and four partnered with community-based facilities. These numbers sum to more than 20 because nine grantees partnered with multiple types of facilities. The number of facilities with which grantees partnered ranged from one to 13, with an average of five participating facilities per grantee.

Grantees also partnered with a variety of non-corrections partners, such as nonprofits, state or local workforce boards, educational institutions, employers or industry associations, law enforcement agencies, employment development corporations, and other partner types such as reentry networks. These partners

Figure III.2. Variation in organization type across Cohort 1 grantees



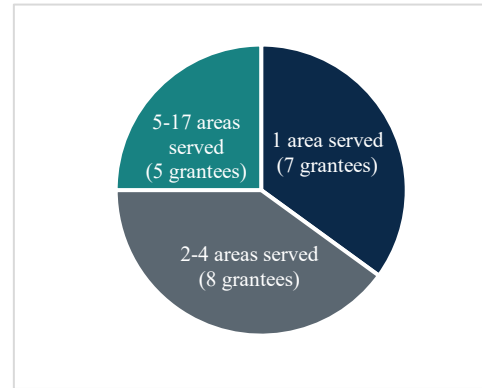
Source: 2020 grant applications and clarifying calls.

plan to provide education and training; behavioral, physical, and mental health services; jobs and apprenticeships; legal services; housing; and other social services such as financial literacy or child care.

**Types of pre-release services offered.** Before COVID-19, all grantees planned to provide pre-release services such as case management services, an individual development plan, or other services such as job readiness training, as specified by the grant requirements. The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced grantees' access to, and movement within, their partner facilities. In response, 18 grantees have adapted their plans. Eleven grantees plan to offer pre-release services virtually; two grantees plan to offer services through corrections or facility staff, such as facility case managers; and five plan to offer both. Even for grantees who are able to provide pre-release services, most face challenges with reduced jail and prison populations and a higher prevalence of early releases, which grantees anticipate will lead to enrollment challenges. At least 12 grantees indicated in clarifying calls that they were postponing the start of enrollment and services. Only six grantees expect that participants will receive services from the same case manager both pre- and post-release (linked case management), although before COVID-19, all grantees had planned to have linked case management services.

**Types of post-release services offered.** In addition to traditional employment-focused services (such as job search assistance, job readiness training, and job placement), many grantees are planning to offer more intensive education and training as well as supportive services after release. Nineteen grantees plan to offer occupational training, eight grantees will connect participants to pre-apprenticeships or apprenticeships, and six grantees will provide on-the-job training (Table III.2). During the clarifying calls, 12 grantees mentioned their plans to address participant barriers to employment by providing supportive services such as housing or emergency shelter, health or mental health care, legal assistance, mentoring, transportation assistance, and financial literacy services. We should note that grantees may offer more services than were discussed in our clarifying calls.

**Figure III.3. Variation in number of distinct geographic areas served by Cohort 1 grantees post-release**



Source: 2020 grant applications and clarifying calls. Distinct geographic areas encompass the variety of locations grantees reported serving, including cities, counties, parishes, or judicial districts.

**Table III.1. Pathway Home grantee and grant characteristics for Cohort 1**

| Grantee   | Grant structure | Grantee type            | Reentry experience | Grantee location  | Geographic areas served | Grant funding (\$) | Enrollment target | Corrections partner type |       |                            |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------|----------------------------|
|   |                 |                         |                    |                   |                         |                    |                   | Prisons                  | Jails | Community-based facilities |
| American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Centers                         | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 6–10 years         | Minneapolis, MN   | 2 communities           | 3,227,570          | 420               | ✓                        |       | ✓                          |
| Colorado Department of Labor and Employment                                     | Intermediary    | Government              | 5–15 years         | Denver, CO        | 7 counties              | 3,998,578          | 350               | ✓                        | ✓     | ✓                          |
| The Dannon Project  | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 21 years           | Birmingham, AL    | 1 county                | 4,000,000          | 400               | ✓                        | ✓     |                            |
| Family Resource Center South Atlantic   | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 4–5 years          | Raleigh, NC       | 3 counties              | 2,572,242          | 300               | ✓                        |       |                            |
| Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Louisiana, Inc.                             | Direct          | Nonprofit               | n.a.               | New Orleans, LA   | 17 parishes             | 3,479,989          | 520               | ✓                        |       | ✓                          |
| GRID Alternatives Central Valley  | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 4 years            | Fresno, CA        | 2 counties              | 2,388,759          | 100               |                          | ✓     |                            |
| Knoxville Leadership Foundation   | Direct          | Nonprofit (faith-based) | 5+ years           | Knoxville, TN     | 1 county                | 2,770,428          | 300               |                          | ✓     |                            |
| Mental Health & Addiction Association of Oregon                                 | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 5+ years           | Portland, OR      | 3 counties              | 3,967,635          | 250               |                          | ✓     |                            |
| Midwest Urban Strategies  | Intermediary    | Workforce boards        | 3–5 years          | Milwaukee, WI     | 3 metro areas           | 3,504,541          | 300               | ✓                        | ✓     |                            |
| Ohio Area 7 Consortium of Chief Elected Officials                               | Intermediary    | Government              | n.a.               | Springfield, OH   | 6 counties              | 4,000,000          | 400               |                          | ✓     |                            |
| Ohio Department of Job and Family Services                                      | Direct          | Government              | <5 years           | Columbus, OH      | 11 counties             | 4,000,000          | 540               | ✓                        |       |                            |
| Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America                              | Intermediary    | Nonprofit               | 1–3 years          | Philadelphia, PA  | 3 cities                | 4,000,000          | 450               | ✓                        | ✓     |                            |
| Opportunities Industrialization Centers of South Florida                        | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 19 years           | Oakland Park, FL  | 2 counties              | 4,000,000          | 500               | ✓                        |       | ✓                          |
| Schenectady Community Action Program  | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 5 years            | Schenectady, NY   | 1 county                | 849,892            | 100               |                          | ✓     |                            |
| South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance                                      | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 5+ years           | Spring Hill, TN   | 1 judicial district     | 1,630,417          | 150               |                          | ✓     |                            |
| Southeastern Minnesota Private Industry Council dba Workforce Development, Inc. | Direct          | Nonprofit               | None               | Rochester, MN     | 10 counties             | 1,594,300          | 240               | ✓                        | ✓     |                            |
| Tampa Bay Academy of Hope   | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 8 years            | Tampa, FL         | 3 counties              | 4,000,000          | 500               | ✓                        |       |                            |
| Volunteers of America Massachusetts Inc.  | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 8 years            | Jamaica Plain, MA | 1 county                | 4,000,000          | 550               |                          | ✓     |                            |
| Workforce Development Board of Ventura County                                   | Direct          | Government              | n.a.               | Ventura, CA       | 1 county                | 2,417,711          | 300               |                          | ✓     |                            |
| Workforce Inc. dba RecycleForce   | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 14–16 years        | Indianapolis, IN  | 1 county                | 4,000,000          | 400               | ✓                        | ✓     |                            |

Source: 2020 grant applications and clarifying calls with grantees.

Note: Cohort 1 is defined as the grantees that received Pathway Home grants in 2020. Direct grantees directly serve participants. Intermediary grantees have subgrantees that serve participants.

dba = doing business as; n.a. = not available.



**Table III.2. Post-release services planned across Pathway Home grantees for Cohort 1**

|   | Occupational training | Pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship | On-the-job training | Housing/emergency shelter | Physical/mental health care | Legal assistance | Mentoring/peer support | Transportation assistance | Financial literacy services |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center                          | ✓                     |                                       |                     |                           | ✓                           | ✓                |                        |                           |                             |
| Colorado Department of Labor and Employment                                     | ✓                     | ✓                                     |                     | ✓                         |                             |                  |                        | ✓                         |                             |
| The Dannon Project  | ✓                     | ✓                                     | ✓                   | ✓                         |                             |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| Family Resource Center South Atlantic   | ✓                     | ✓                                     | ✓                   |                           | ✓                           | ✓                | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Louisiana, Inc.                             | ✓                     |                                       |                     |                           |                             |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| GRID Alternatives Central Valley  | ✓                     | ✓                                     |                     |                           |                             |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| Knoxville Leadership Foundation   | ✓                     | ✓                                     | ✓                   |                           |                             |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| Mental Health & Addiction Association of Oregon                                 |                       |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| Midwest Urban Strategies  | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         |                             |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| Ohio Area 7 Consortium of Chief Elected Officials                               | ✓                     |                                       | ✓                   |                           |                             |                  |                        |                           | ✓                           |
| Ohio Department of Job and Family Services                                      | ✓                     | ✓                                     |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| Opportunities Industrialization Center of America                               | ✓                     |                                       |                     |                           |                             |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| Opportunities Industrialization Center of South Florida                         | ✓                     |                                       |                     |                           |                             |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| Schenectady Community Action Program  | ✓                     |                                       |                     |                           |                             |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance                                      | ✓                     | ✓                                     |                     |                           |                             |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| Southeastern Minnesota Private Industry Council dba Workforce Development, Inc. | ✓                     |                                       |                     |                           | ✓                           |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| Tampa Bay Academy of Hope   | ✓                     | ✓                                     |                     |                           |                             |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| Volunteers of America Massachusetts Inc.  | ✓                     |                                       |                     |                           |                             |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| Workforce Development Board of Ventura County                                   | ✓                     |                                       | ✓                   |                           |                             |                  |                        | ✓                         |                             |
| Workforce Inc. dba RecycleForce   | ✓                     |                                       | ✓                   |                           |                             | ✓                | ✓                      |                           |                             |

Source: 2020 grant applications and clarifying calls with grantees.

Note: Cohort 1 is defined as the grantees that received Pathway Home grants in 2020. Some services mentioned by grantees may be provided through referrals to other partners.

dba = doing business as.

## B. Cohort 2

**Grant structure and size.** Sixteen grantees in Cohort 2 are directly serving participants, and four are intermediary grantees with three to five subgrantees that will serve participants. The grants awarded ranged from \$1,225,266 to \$4,000,000, with an average of \$2,771,937 (Table III.3). Grantees expect to serve between 150 and 800 participants, with an average of 325 participants.

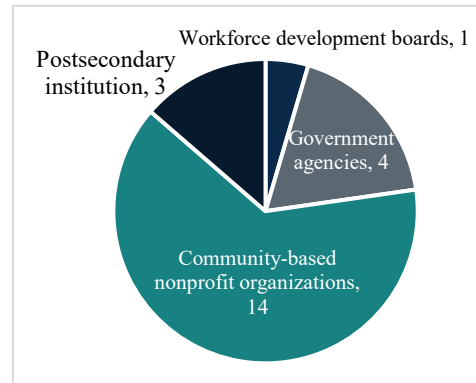
**Types of grantees.** Of the 22 Cohort 2 grantees, 14 are community-based nonprofit organizations (including one faith-based nonprofit), four are government agencies, three are postsecondary institutions, and one is a consortium of workforce development boards (Figure III.4). We learned from 20 grantees that the range of experience they have operating reentry programs is wide, with one grantee having no experience, five having fewer than five years' experience, and 14 having more than five years' experience.

**Number of geographic areas served.** Of the 22 grantees, four serve only one distinct region and 18 serve multiple areas (Figure III.5). Grantees are located in all six DOL regions, with most grantees located in DOL Regions 3 and 5 (Figure III.1). The grantees serve different parts of the United States, although there are multiple grantees serving the states of Georgia, California, New York, Wisconsin, and Florida.

**Correctional facilities and other partners.** As shown in Table III.3, 17 of the 22 grantees partnered with prisons, nine partnered with jails, and three partnered with community-based facilities. These numbers sum to more than 22 because six grantees partnered with multiple types of facilities. The number of facilities that grantees partnered with ranged from one to 27, with an average of five participating facilities per grantee.

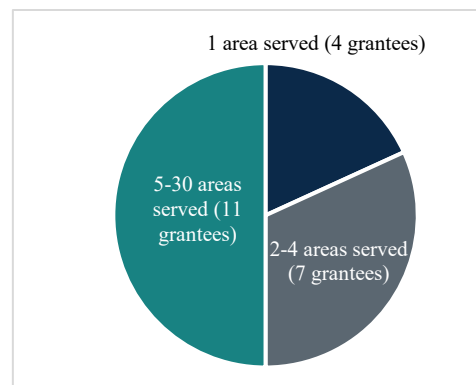
Like Cohort 1 grantees, Cohort 2 grantees also partnered with a variety of non-corrections partners, such as nonprofits, educational institutions, employers or industry associations, law enforcement agencies, employment development corporations, and other partner types such as reentry networks. These partners plan to provide education and training; behavioral, physical, and mental health services; jobs and apprenticeships; legal services; housing; mentoring; and other social services such as financial literacy or emergency food.

**Figure III.4. Variation in organization type across Cohort 2 grantees**



Source: 2021 grant applications and clarifying calls.

**Figure III.5. Variation in number of distinct geographic areas served by Cohort 2 grantees post-release**



Source: 2021 grant applications and clarifying calls. Distinct geographic areas encompass the variety of locations grantees reported serving, including cities, counties, parishes, or judicial districts.

**Types of pre-release services offered.** Twenty-one Cohort 2 grantees planned to provide pre-release services such as case management, an individual development plan, and other services such as job readiness training, as specified by the grant requirements. Eighteen grantees plan to offer pre-release services virtually, and three grantees plan to offer services in-person through corrections or facility staff. One grantee has been unable to arrange either virtual or in-person pre-release services due to COVID-19 facility restrictions. The 21 grantees that have been able to arrange pre-release services expect that participants will receive linked case management services.

**Types of post-release services offered.** Almost all Cohort 2 grantees are planning to offer supportive services in addition to intensive education and training after release. All 22 grantees plan to offer occupational training, three grantees will connect participants to pre-apprenticeships or apprenticeships, and two grantees will provide on-the-job training (Table III.4). During the clarifying calls, almost all Cohort 2 grantees mentioned their plans to address participant barriers to employment by providing supportive services such as housing or emergency shelter, health or mental health care, legal assistance, mentoring, and transportation assistance. We should note that grantees may offer more services than were discussed in our clarifying calls.

**Table III.3. Pathway Home grantee and grant characteristics for Cohort 2**

| Grantee  | Grant structure | Grantee type            | Reentry experience | Grantee location     | Geographic areas served          | Grant funding (\$) | Enrollment target | Corrections partner type |       |                            |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------|----------------------------|
|  |                 |                         |                    |                      |                                  |                    |                   | Prisons                  | Jails | Community-based facilities |
| Area Committee To Improve Opportunities Now, Inc.                                    | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 4 years            | Athens, GA           | 5 counties                       | 1,225,266          | 150               | ✓                        | ✓     |                            |
| Cape Fear Community College  | Direct          | Postsecondary           | 25 years           | Wilmington, NC       | 2 counties                       | 3,997,285          | 400               | ✓                        | ✓     |                            |
| City of Springfield's Department of Workforce Development                            | Direct          | Government              | 15 years           | Springfield, MO      | 7 counties                       | 3,000,545          | 400               | ✓                        |       |                            |
| County of Santa Barbara  | Direct          | Government              | 14 years           | Santa Barbara, CA    | 6 cities                         | 2,499,999          | 250               |                          | ✓     |                            |
| Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Inc.  | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 20 years           | Clearwater, FL       | 3 counties                       | 3,499,999          | 350               |                          | ✓     |                            |
| Family and Workforce Centers of America  | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 10+ years          | St. Louis, MO        | 1 county                         | 4,000,000          | 400               |                          |       | ✓                          |
| The Florida Concrete Masonry Education Council Project                               | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 5+ years           | Orlando, FL          | 3 counties                       | 1,960,133          | 200               | ✓                        |       |                            |
| Forward Careers, Inc.  | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 10 years           | Waukesha, WI         | 7 counties                       | 1,499,999          | 150               | ✓                        |       |                            |
| Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina, Inc.                         | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 9 years            | Greenville, SC       | 8 counties                       | 1,862,327          | 200               | ✓                        |       |                            |
| Kansas Department of Commerce  | Direct          | Government              | 10+ years          | Topeka, KS           | 28 counties                      | 3,997,764          | 520               | ✓                        |       |                            |
| Lancaster County Workforce Development Board   | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 10+ years          | Lancaster County, PA | 1 county                         | 1,499,999          | 150               | ✓                        |       |                            |
| Metro Community Ministries, Inc.   | Intermediary    | Nonprofit (faith-based) | 15 years           | Atlanta, GA          | 6 counties                       | 4,000,000          | 400               | ✓                        | ✓     |                            |
| National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation                               | Intermediary    | Nonprofit               | 2 years            | Washington, D.C.     | 9 cities                         | 4,000,000          | 430               | ✓                        |       |                            |
| Marron Institute at New York University  | Intermediary    | Postsecondary           | 5+ years           | New York, NY         | 28 counties                      | 3,999,906          | 400-500           | ✓                        |       |                            |
| PathStone Corporation  | Intermediary    | Nonprofit               | 20+ years          | Rochester, NY        | 5 counties and 22 municipalities | 4,000,000          | 400               | ✓                        |       |                            |
| Persevere  | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 3 years            | Memphis, TN          | 3 counties                       | 1,499,914          | 340               | ✓                        |       |                            |
| Savannah Technical College   | Direct          | Postsecondary           | 0 years            | Savannah, GA         | 1 county                         | 3,965,000          | 500               | ✓                        | ✓     |                            |
| Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Inc.                                | Direct          | Consortium of WDBs      | 1+ years           | Platteville, WI      | 4 WDB regions                    | 3,858,861          | 800               | ✓                        | ✓     | ✓                          |
| UAW-Labor Employment and Training Corporation  | Direct          | Nonprofit               | n.a.               | Los Angeles, CA      | 4 cities                         | 1,328,082          | 150               | ✓                        |       |                            |
| United Way of Central Iowa   | Direct          | Nonprofit               | n.a.               | Des Moines, IA       | 3 counties                       | 1,856,288          | 201               | ✓                        |       | ✓                          |
| Workforce Alliance   | Direct          | Nonprofit               | 10+ years          | New Haven, CT        | 30 towns                         | 1,471,122          | 150               |                          |       | ✓                          |
| Workforce Development Board Herkimer, Madison, & Oneida Counties (Working Solutions) | Direct          | Government              | 1+ years           | Utica, NY            | 1 county                         | 1,960,133          | 200               |                          | ✓     |                            |

Source: 2021 grant applications and clarifying calls with grantees.

Note: Cohort 2 is defined as the grantees that received Pathway Home grants in 2021. Direct grantees directly serve participants. Intermediary grantees have subgrantees that serve participants.

n.a. = not available; UAW = United Auto Workers; WDB = workforce development board.

**Table III.4. Post-release services planned across Pathway Home grantees for Cohort 2**

|  | Occupational training | Pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship | On-the-job training | Housing/emergency shelter | Physical/mental health care | Legal assistance | Mentoring/peer support | Transportation assistance | Financial literacy services |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Area Committee To Improve Opportunities Now, Inc.                                    | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| Cape Fear Community College  | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| City of Springfield's Department of Workforce Development                            | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           | ✓                |                        |                           |                             |
| County of Santa Barbara  | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Inc.  | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           | ✓                | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| Family and Workforce Centers of America  | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| The Florida Concrete Masonry Education Council Project                               | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           | ✓                |                        | ✓                         |                             |
| Forward Careers, Inc.  | ✓                     | ✓                                     |                     | ✓                         |                             | ✓                | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina, Inc.                         | ✓                     | ✓                                     |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           | ✓                |                        |                           |                             |
| Kansas Department of Commerce  | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         |                             |                  |                        | ✓                         |                             |
| Lancaster County Workforce Development Board   | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      | ✓                         |                             |
| Metro Community Ministries, Inc.   | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      | ✓                         |                             |
| National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation                               | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      | ✓                         |                             |
| Marron Institute at New York University  | ✓                     |                                       |                     |                           | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| PathStone Corporation  | ✓                     |                                       | ✓                   | ✓                         | ✓                           | ✓                | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| Persevere  | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| Savannah Technical College   | ✓                     | ✓                                     |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Inc.                                | ✓                     |                                       |                     |                           |                             |                  |                        |                           |                             |
| UAW-Labor Employment and Training Corporation  | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           | ✓                | ✓                      |                           | ✓                           |
| United Way of Central Iowa   | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| Workforce Alliance   | ✓                     |                                       |                     | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      |                           |                             |
| Workforce Development Board Herkimer, Madison, & Oneida Counties (Working Solutions) | ✓                     |                                       | ✓                   | ✓                         | ✓                           |                  | ✓                      |                           |                             |

Source: 2021 grant applications and clarifying calls with grantees.

Note: Cohort 2 is defined as the grantees that received Pathway Home grants in 2021. Some services mentioned by grantees may be provided through referrals to other partners.

UAW = United Auto Workers.

## IV. Study of implementation of Cohort 1 grants during the COVID-19 pandemic

As mentioned in Chapter III, the Cohort 1 grants began early in the COVID-19 pandemic, and grantees had to adjust their plans accordingly. They adjusted to COVID-19 restrictions on in-person activity in the community but also accommodated changes to the willingness of their correctional partners to allow pre-release services and the evolving restrictions to facility and participant access. In this chapter, we describe our plans for examining the implementation of the Cohort 1 Pathway Home grants during the COVID-19 pandemic and exploring lessons learned from grantees' experience. We list our research questions and plans for data collection to answer those questions.

### A. Research questions

Our study of Cohort 1 will focus on grantees' experience implementing their programs during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will gather information about grantees' plans for the various components of their Pathway Home programs and how they had to modify them due to the pandemic. Below are the research questions this study will address:

1. How did the COVID-19 pandemic influence recruitment and enrollment?
2. How did the COVID-19 pandemic influence partnerships between programs and partners, including correctional facilities and community partners?
3. How did the COVID-19 pandemic influence pre- and post-release services planning and delivery?
4. What successes and challenges related to implementation did grantees experience during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic?

### B. Data sources and collection

We plan to collect data from three sources to examine the implementation of all grantees in Cohort 1:

#### 1. Grant documents and clarifying calls.

Our initial review of grant applications and clarifying calls with grantees (described earlier) provide the foundation of our understanding of the services, partnerships, and initial challenges experienced during the grants' planning phase.

#### 2. Grantee quarterly performance reports.

We will collect grantees' quarterly performance reports (QPRs) submitted to DOL for the period ending September 30, 2021, to understand the characteristics of participants enrolled in the grants and the services provided during the early implementation period. We will also collect quarterly narrative reports (QNRs), which grantees are required to submit to DOL, for the same period to provide contextual information for grant performance.

#### 3. Virtual group discussions about implementation.

We plan to conduct five virtual group discussions with program staff from four or five grantees for each discussion. Our goal is to include each of the 20 grantees in at least one of the sessions. The virtual discussions will focus on COVID-19's perceived impact on recruitment and enrollment, partnerships for

pre-release service provision, case management during pre- and post-release, supportive services after release, and employment-focused services. These discussions will allow the evaluation team to identify the common challenges and successes experienced by Cohort 1 grantees in the first year of program implementation.

### C. Timeline of activities

Our study of Cohort 1’s early implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic continues through early 2022 (Table IV.1).

**Table IV.1. Timeline for Pathway Home Cohort 1 study activities**

| Date              | Activities  |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>2020</b>       |   |
| June              | DOL awarded grants  |
| July              | Grantees started grant planning   |
| December          | Grantees finished grant planning  |
| <b>2021</b>       |   |
| November–December | The study submitted Institutional Review Board (IRB) application<br>The study scheduled and conducted five virtual group discussions with Cohort 1 grantees |
| <b>2022</b>       |   |
| February          | The study collected QPRs and QNRs for quarter ending September 30, 2021<br>The study analyzed data  |
| May               | The study drafted and submitted the brief for DOL review  |
| July              | The study will brief DOL  |

### D. Anticipated challenges

We anticipate minor challenges during the evaluation. Due to the nature of the group discussions, our findings will not be representative of all grantees. The study team will collect the information each grantee discusses and report on the findings without generalizing across all grantees. Additionally, the analysis of QPR data will be subject to availability and quality of the data. If the data are unavailable or take longer to receive than anticipated, we will either not include the analysis in the early implementation brief or extend the timeline for the brief.

## V. Start-up and early implementation evaluation of Cohort 2 grants

An evaluation of the start-up and early implementation of the Cohort 2 grants will allow us to learn about the various components of the Pathway Home programs that Cohort 2 grantees develop, the staffing and partnerships they put in place, and the challenges and successes they encounter while implementing both the planning phase and initial rollout phase of service delivery. The study thus has a narrower focus than the in-depth implementation evaluation (discussed in Chapter VI) that focuses on the entirety of program implementation during the grant. This portion of the evaluation will present reported lessons to inform current and future grantees about designing and scaling up employment-focused reentry programs with both pre- and post-release components. To gather this information, we will use a combination of existing data already being reported for the purposes of the grant and data from primary sources, such as surveys and focus groups.

In this chapter, we discuss the research questions for the early implementation evaluation of Cohort 2 grantees and our plans for data collection from five data sources to answer those questions.

### A. Research questions

The start-up and early implementation evaluation will answer a range of research questions presented in Table V.1 with corresponding data sources to inform the questions. These research questions reflect our plan to gather and use a combination of existing program data, short surveys of grantees and facilities, and targeted discussions with program and partner staff to inform the early implementation evaluation.

### B. Data sources and collection

We plan to collect data from five sources for the start-up and early implementation evaluation for all grantees in Cohort 2. Our data collection will focus on the planning period and the rollout of the initial plan for program delivery, for both the grantees and their partner organizations.

#### 1. Grant documents

The evaluation team will leverage existing documentation on grant plans and progress to support the implementation analysis. These documents include grant applications, grant modifications, grantee QPRs and QNRs, and information shared through grantee convenings and technical assistance meetings. We expect the documents will provide details about grantee implementation progress as well as the challenges they encountered and the solutions they developed. Although this information can provide more frequent insights into grant progress, the narrative information grantees report to DOL will be less systematic than the data the evaluation team will collect through other, primary data sources. As a result, instead of requesting from DOL all grantee reports for each quarter, we will identify specific quarters that could inform other data collection activities planned for the evaluation. We will review quarterly reports for the first quarter of enrollment ending March 31, 2022.



**Table V.1. Pathway Home Cohort 2 start-up and early implementation research questions and data collection activities**

| Research questions  | Data sources    |              |                 |                  |                           |
|---|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------------|
|   | Grant documents | Program data | Grantee surveys | Facility surveys | Virtual group discussions |
| <b>Grant background</b>   |                 |              |                 |                  |                           |
| What did grantees do during the planning phase of the grant (for example, hire individuals with lived experiences, develop relationships with partners, gather input from employers about the program, etc.)? How did grantees prepare to establish partnerships and implement programs within facilities? How did grantees prepare for community-based services? What steps did grantees take to train and hire staff to provide pre- and post-release services? What other activities did they undertake? Which activities are perceived as most and least helpful? | X               |              |                 |                  | X                         |
| What factors are perceived to influence the transition from planning to operations (for example, prior program experience, support from reentry committees or coalitions, partnerships, supplemental funding, etc.)?  |                 |              | X               |                  | X                         |
| What is the organizational structure of the Pathway Home grants? How are data managed and shared across partners?   | X               |              | X               |                  |                           |
| <b>Partnerships</b>   |                 |              |                 |                  |                           |
| How did grantees develop and use partnerships during planning and early implementation? Which types of partners were reported to be most critical during planning, operations, or both? What partnerships did grantees have prior to the grant, and which partnerships needed to be developed? What factors were perceived to support or impede establishing new partnerships or growing existing ones (for example, differences between workforce and justice system policies, procedures, or staffing)?   |                 |              | X               | X                | X                         |
| How did partnerships operate both during planning and once the program was operating?   |                 |              |                 |                  | X                         |
| What partners are involved in overseeing and operating pre-release services? Post-release services?   | X               |              | X               | X                |                           |
| <b>Recruitment and enrollment</b>   |                 |              |                 |                  |                           |
| How were participants recruited for Pathway Home pre-release services? How did the grantee and facility coordinate outreach? What outreach activities were conducted? Did grantees seek to engage specific subpopulations? At what stage in the outreach/recruitment process did prospective participants disengage?  |                 |              | X               | X                | X                         |
| How many participants were enrolled in the program in the early months? How long were participants served pre- or post-release?   | X               | X            | X               |                  |                           |
| <b>Pre- and post-release program services</b>   |                 |              |                 |                  |                           |
| What services were planned, both pre- and post-release, during the early implementation period? What skill building and career services were planned (including apprenticeship, occupational training, and credential attainment), both pre- and post-release? What additional supports were planned, both pre- and post-release? Which of these services were implemented and what did program participants receive?   | X               | X            | X               |                  |                           |
| How did the career and non-career services available pre-release compare to other services available in the facility? How did the career and non-career services post-release compare to other services available in the community?   |                 |              |                 | X                |                           |
| <b>Perceived successes and challenges</b>   |                 |              |                 |                  |                           |
| What factors do respondents report as supporting or hindering implementation of planned service model elements during early implementation?   |                 |              | X               | X                | X                         |
| What challenges did grantees face, and what solutions did they develop? How did this differ by facility partner type (such as state correctional facilities vs. jails); location (rural vs. urban); or other factors (number of corrections partners, number of post-release service locations, for intermediary vs. single program grantees)?  | X               |              | X               | X                | X                         |
| How did COVID-19 influence each stage of implementation (planning and early implementation) and service delivery (recruitment and enrollment, pre-release services, post-release services) for Cohort 2?  | X               | X            |                 |                  | X                         |

## 2. Program data

Data collected by grantees on enrolled participants could provide valuable insights into who is served by the program and how services and outcomes may vary by participant characteristics, facility type, program model, or other factors. We plan to obtain data on enrolled participants from the Pathway Home management information system (MIS) database that each grantee uses to report their performance to DOL. These data will include all grantees and individual-level information about all participants enrolled in the program over time, including their program outcomes.<sup>2</sup> An overview of the data elements included in the program MIS is in Table V.2. Both DOL and grantees technically have these data, but DOL has data for all grantees, which is stored in DOL’s Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS). We will prioritize formalizing the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with DOL to acquire these data from the WIPS because it will require only one agreement with one organization. We will set up a secure Box site where the evaluation team can securely upload and download the data.

Individual-level data will allow us to describe how participant characteristics and services vary by grantee and program model and how they interact for different subgroups of participants, such as by race, gender, and age. For example, we could use the Criminal Justice System Identifier to look at how pre-release services varied for participants based on the type of facility where they enrolled in Pathway Home. If we are not able to obtain individual-level data for the evaluation from either DOL or grantees, we could instead use aggregate performance data from DOL. Aggregate data would allow us to describe the trends across grantees but would not allow us to look at how trends differ by subgroups of participants or by factors such as facility type.

**Table V.2. Pathway Home program MIS data elements that could be used in evaluation**

| Topic                               | Data elements  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Participant characteristics         | Date of Program Entry; Date of Program Exit; Incarcerated at Program Entry (WIOA); Unique Individual Identifier (WIOA); State Code of Residence (WIOA); County Code of Residence; Zip Code of Residence; Date of Birth (WIOA); Sex; Individual with a Disability (WIOA); Ethnicity; Veteran Status; Employment Status at Program Entry; Employment Status at Incarceration; Long-Term Unemployed at Program Entry; Most Recent Employment; Highest Educational Level Completed at Program Entry; Public Assistance Recipient; Ex-Offender Status at Program Entry; Social Security Number; Most Recent Type of Offense |
| Services (types and dosage)         | Participation in WIOA programs; Date of Most Recent Career Service; Most Recent Date Received Staff-Assisted Career Guidance Services; Most Recent Date Received Staff-Assisted Job Search Activities; Received Pre-Vocational Activities; Received Training (WIOA); Most Recent Date Referred to Employment; Date Entered Training; Type of Training Service; Participated in PSE Leading to a Credential or Degree from an Accredited PSE Institution; Enrolled in Secondary Education Program (WIOA); Most Recent Date Received Supportive Services; In Work Release Program; Received Needs-Related Payments       |
| Transition from pre-to post-release | Date of Anticipated Release from Incarceration; Date Released from Incarceration (WIOA); Post-Release Status; Housing Status at Six Months After Program Entry   |
| Outcomes <sup>a</sup>               | Training Completed; Date Completed or Withdrew from Training; Date Enrolled in Education or Training Program Leading to a Recognized Postsecondary Credential; Employed in 2nd Quarter After Exit Quarter (WIOA); Employed in 4th Quarter After Exit Quarter (WIOA)  |

<sup>2</sup> Outcomes information in the MIS data will be subject to the ability of grantee staff to collect this information accurately from participants or other sources. If Social Security numbers are collected for participants and accessible to the evaluation team, they could be used to collect data on participants’ employment and earnings from the National Directory of New Hires.

| Topic  | Data elements  |
|--|--|
| Variations in program models across grantees | Criminal Justice System Identifier; Suite of Services Offered Using Elements from Participant Characteristics and Services Above; Types of Participants Served Based on Transition Variables Above |

Source: U.S. Department of Labor (2020).

Note: Table includes a subset of elements available in program MIS data.

<sup>a</sup> The in-depth implementation analysis will use outcomes variables.

PSE = postsecondary education; WIOA = Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

### 3. Grantee survey

A web-based grantee survey offers a cost-effective way to collect systematic information on grant implementation from all grantees and subgrantees. The evaluation team will develop a survey for this purpose that builds on our experiences developing similar grantee surveys for other DOL-funded evaluations. To help expedite instrument development, the grantee survey will draw from previous instruments developed for similar populations, such as the grantee survey for the evaluation of the Reentry Projects grants (US DOL 2021), and will cover topics related to the organizational and administrative structure of the grantees’ programs, program features, partnerships, and challenges and successes. The Pathway Home grantee survey will also capture information on implemented pre-release services and the grantees’ plans for sustainability. Appendix B contains a detailed list of topics and items that will be included in the survey.

All 22 Cohort 2 Pathway Home grantees will be asked to complete the same survey; however, intermediary grantees will be asked to complete an additional section to capture information about their subgrantees’ characteristics and implementation efforts. Subgrantees will receive a separate survey that asks questions similar to those in the grantee survey but that includes a section on their experiences working with the intermediary grantee. We anticipate 95 percent of grant administrators will complete the survey. We will work closely with grantees to ensure high response from grantee staff. If we do not achieve the expected response rate, we will determine whether systematic differences exist between respondents and nonrespondents in presenting the data.

Pending Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval, the grantee survey will be administered at about six months into Cohort 2 program enrollment (June 2022) to capture what implementation looks like during the start-up period (Table V.3).

### 4. Facility survey

A web-based survey administered to Cohort 2 grantees’ corrections partners will capture corrections partners’ perspectives on the services provided through Pathway Home and the perceived successes and challenges in coordinating services both within and outside of correctional system facilities. We will administer the survey to the partners overseeing the correctional institutions where participants are recruited and enrolled and where pre-release services are delivered. We will survey all facilities connected to the Cohort 2 Pathway Home grant programs to learn about the range of facility types and partnerships in place. We expect 80 percent of facility administrators will complete the survey. We will work closely with grantees to ensure high response from facility partners; however, if we do not achieve the expected response rate, we will determine whether systematic differences exist between respondents and nonrespondents in presenting the data.

Topics for this survey are similar to those for the grantee survey but are from the corrections partner perspective and provide greater context about correctional system operations. Topics that may be included are also listed in Appendix B. We will ask the grantees in Cohort 2 to identify and share the contact information of the facility administrator responsible for overseeing programs within the facilities from each of their partner facilities, and we will reach out to confirm the correct respondent to complete the survey. By surveying both grantees and correctional facilities, we can gather a broader range of perspectives and identify areas in which one partner identified issues or concerns that the other did not.

We will administer the facility survey at the same time as the grantee survey so that responses will be based on the same time period and can be analyzed together.

### **5. Virtual group discussions with grantee staff**

Discussions with program and partner staff are critical for learning about the on-the-ground implementation of the grants over the course of the grant period and about successes and challenges experienced by grant administrators and staff. We plan to conduct up to five virtual, small-group discussions with staff from grantees in Cohort 2 during the early enrollment period of their grants. Potential respondents include grant administrators, subgrant administrators, and program coordinators. One respondent from each grantee will attend only one group discussion. Each virtual discussion will focus on a particular aspect of the planning and rollout of the grants, including recruitment and enrollment challenges, partnerships for pre-release service provision, pre- and post-release case management, supportive services after release, and employment-focused services. This information will provide some contextual information to support our interpretation of data from other sources that are less nuanced, such as the grantee surveys. These discussions will also allow the evaluation team to understand firsthand what the common challenges and successes have been for the grantees in starting up their programs. Each discussion will be facilitated by a member of the evaluation team using a unique discussion guide. Because there will be fewer than nine respondents in each group, we will not request OMB approval to conduct these discussions.

We plan to hold discussions for Cohort 2 in July 2022, when the grantees are several months into enrolling participants. We will select grantees for each group based on our understanding of common challenges they may be facing or common program models that may align with the topic of one of the discussions. These selections will be based on clarifying calls with grantees early in their planning period or grant documents.

### **C. Timeline of activities**

Table V.3 presents an estimated timeline to conduct an evaluation of Cohort 2's early implementation of the grants.

### **D. Anticipated challenges**

We anticipate minor challenges during the evaluation. Due to the nature of the group discussions, our findings will not be representative of all grantees. The study team will collect the information each grantee discusses and report on the findings without generalizing across all grantees. Additionally, the analysis of QPR and WIPS data will be subject to availability and quality of the data. If the data are unavailable or take longer to receive than anticipated, we will either not include the analysis in the early implementation briefs or extend the timeline for the briefs.

**Table V.3. Planned timeline for early implementation evaluation of Pathway Home Cohort 2**

| Date        | Activities   |
|-------------|--|
| <b>2021</b> |  |
| June        | DOL awarded grants   |
| July        | Grantees started grant planning  |
| August      | The study submitted draft OMB package for grantee and facility surveys and 60-day FRN<br>The study reviewed grant applications                     |
| September   | The study held initial clarifying calls with grantees  |
| October     | Enrollment for some grantees started   |
| <b>2022</b> |  |
| January     | Enrollment for most grantees started   |
| March       | DOL signed the MOU for WIPS program data<br>The study received OMB approval  |
| June        | The study will collect WIPS data, QPRs, and QNRs for quarter ending March 31, 2022<br>The study will administer surveys to grantees and facilities |
| July        | The study will conduct virtual focus group discussions with grantee staff  |
| December    | The study will submit draft versions of two early implementation briefs on Cohort 2 for DOL review   |

DOL = Department of Labor; FRN = Federal Register Notice; MOU = memorandum of understanding; OMB = Office of Management and Budget; QNR = quarterly narrative report; QPR = quarterly performance report; WIPS = Workforce Integrated Performance System.

## VI. In-depth implementation evaluation of Cohort 2

The in-depth implementation evaluation will examine the implementation of the Pathway Home Cohort 2 grants over the course of the grant from rollout to full scale-up of the program, the participants served, and the sustainability of the grantees' efforts. This evaluation has a broader focus than the early implementation evaluation (discussed in Chapter V) that focuses on only the planning phase and initial rollout of service delivery. We plan to leverage information from the early implementation evaluation to reduce the data collected for the in-depth implementation evaluation. The early implementation evaluation will also inform site selection for the in-depth evaluation.

In this chapter, we discuss the research questions for the in-depth implementation evaluation as well as our plans for additional data collection to supplement data collected for the early implementation evaluation.

### A. Research questions

In carrying out the in-depth implementation evaluation, the evaluation team will answer key research questions about how the Pathway Home grantees implemented their programs through the entire grant period to help participants return to their communities and secure employment. Table VI.1 lists the research questions along with the data sources to be used to answer them. The evaluation team has included specific questions in the data collection instruments to dig deeper on issues highlighted by the advisory group, including (1) how facilities provide information to inmates about their options for pre-release services and support available after release and (2) how grantees coordinate with facilities to share information about individuals' service needs to support their transition from pre- to post-release. The in-depth evaluation will also explore the non-employment supportive services provided to participants to improve their chances of success in the community—such as health, peer support, and housing services—and explore the different successes and challenges associated with providing these services pre- and post-release, including sustaining programs after the grant period ends.

**Table VI.1. Research questions for the Pathway Home in-depth implementation evaluation**

| Research questions  | Data sources    |              |                  |   |
|---|-----------------|--------------|------------------|---|
|   | Grant documents | Program data | Staff interviews | Participant focus groups and interviews |
| <b>Grant background</b>   |                 |              |                  |   |
| Were there any changes to the organizational structure of the Pathway Home grants as compared with the organizational structure of the Pathway Home grants in the early implementation stage?   | X               |              | X                |   |
| What staffing structure did the program have in place a year after rolling out its program? Have any staff been previously incarcerated or participated in reentry programs? To what extent, if any, did the programs experience staff turnover over the course of the grant?   |                 |              | X                |   |
| <b>Partnerships</b>   |                 |              |                  |   |
| With what types of partners did Pathway Home grantees engage? What partners are involved in overseeing and operating the pre-release services? Post-release services? How did grantees leverage resources and services from their partners in the community?  | X               |              | X                |   |
| How did grantees and facilities coordinate sharing participant information? How are data managed and shared across partners?  | X               |              | X                |   |
| How were partnerships maintained? Which factors are reported to influence this (for example, existing partnerships, cultural differences between workforce and justice system policies, procedures, or staffing)?   |                 |              | X                |   |
| <b>Recruitment and enrollment</b>   |                 |              |                  |   |
| How were participants recruited for Pathway Home pre-release services? Did grantees focus on specific subpopulations? What assessments were conducted of potential participants, and what criteria were used to determine eligibility and enrollment?   |                 |              | X                | X                                       |
| How did the grantee and facilities coordinate outreach to potential participants?   |                 |              |                  | X                                       |
| How many potential participants express interest in programming but do not enroll? How many potential participants apply and are not accepted? At what stage in the outreach/recruitment process do potential participants disengage?   |                 |              | X                | X                                       |
| <b>Pre- and post-release program services</b>   |                 |              |                  |   |
| What are the variations in the model (types of participants served, types of training provided, target employment industries, etc.); structure (direct vs. intermediary grantee, etc.); partnerships; and services of the Pathway Home grants across sites? What are the reasons for these variations? How might respondents perceive such differences to influence participant outcomes? | X               |              | X                |   |

| Research questions  | Data sources    |              |                  |   |
|---|-----------------|--------------|------------------|---|
|   | Grant documents | Program data | Staff interviews | Participant focus groups and interviews |
| How did program implementation change over the course of the grant? How did implementation differ by institution type (state correctional facilities, local jails, and transitional homes)?   | X               |              | X                |   |
| What pre-release career services were provided to help prepare individuals to return to their communities and obtain employment? What career post-release services were provided to help individuals return to their communities and obtain employment? What pre-release or post-release non-career services were provided? What services did participants use? | X               | X            |                  | X                                       |
| What were the implications of offering training services for careers that do not restrict entry based on criminal records?  |                 |              | X                | X                                       |
| Who provided services to participants?  |                 |              | X                |   |
| How do the pre-release career and non-career services compare to other services available in the facility? How do the post-release career and non-career services compare to other services available in the community?   |                 |              | X                | X                                       |
| <b>Transition from pre- to post-release</b>   |                 |              |                  |   |
| How do grantees manage the transition from pre- to post-release service delivery, including plans for staffing and service delivery? After release, do participants keep the same caseworker that they had while incarcerated?  |                 |              | X                | X                                       |
| What strategies, such as incentives or transportation support, did grantees use to engage participants after release?   |                 |              | X                | X                                       |
| <b>Challenges and successes</b>   |                 |              |                  |   |
| What factors (such as correctional system and community characteristics) are reported to influence implementation?  |                 |              | X                |   |
| What challenges did programs face, and what solutions did they develop to address those challenges?   | X               |              | X                |   |
| <b>Participants' characteristics and outcomes</b>   |                 |              |                  |   |
| Whom do the Pathway Home grants serve? What are the characteristics of those served? What services did they receive? What outcomes have been reported for them? How do outcomes vary by background characteristics or program models?   | X               | X            | X                | X                                       |
| What do participants see as the most valuable aspects of the program? How helpful did they perceive program staff to be?  |                 |              |                  | X                                       |
| <b>Sustainability</b>   |                 |              |                  |   |
| Do grantees have plans for sustainability? What services do they plan to continue providing? What sources of funds have they identified to support continued services? What changes do they anticipate to their model (types of participants served, type of training provided, target employment industries, etc.) moving forward?                             |                 |              | X                |   |



## B. Data sources and collection

To study in-depth implementation of the Cohort 2 grants, we will use a mix of data sources that will provide an understanding of both the program staff and participant experiences in the grants. In addition to leveraging the information collected for the early implementation evaluation, we will collect new data from four sources. The focus will be to gather firsthand accounts from grant administrators, staff providing services, staff in the correctional facilities, and Pathway Home program participants through data collection activities such as interviews and focus groups. We will analyze the information across these sources to get a comprehensive picture of implementation and understand the challenges from multiple stakeholder perspectives.

### 1. Grant documents

As with the early implementation evaluation, we will request QPRs and QNRs for the grantees for three additional quarters: the quarters ending June 30, 2022; September 30, 2022; and March 31, 2023. The first two quarters will inform the site visits, and the third quarter will inform virtual group discussions on sustainability near the end of the Cohort 2 grants.

### 2. Program data

As with the early implementation evaluation, we plan to collect and analyze data from the WIPS on participant characteristics, services, and outcomes. We will pull data for the same quarters for which we will request quarterly performance reports. We will collect these data for all grantees.

### 3. Grantee and partner staff interviews

The evaluation team will collect perspectives from grantee and partner staff, including grant and program administrators, frontline staff, correctional facility partners, service provider partner staff, employer partners, and other partner staff who will describe how the program has been designed, managed, and delivered. As described below, we plan to have in-person semistructured interviews with staff as part of site visits as well as hold virtual discussions with small groups of staff to discuss program sustainability.

#### *a. Site visits and semistructured interviews with staff*

The evaluation team will conduct up to six site visits to get a comprehensive look at the layout of the correctional facility where pre-release services are provided as well as at locations where post-release services are provided. We will conduct the site visits in early 2023 after a year of participant enrollment for most grantees. The site visits will also allow the evaluation team to speak to a range of staff in a short time period and build rapport as we try to understand the successes and challenges from various stakeholders' perspectives. We will visit grantees when they have scaled up their programs and can reflect on their models and partnerships at scale.

**Structure of the visits.** The site visits will require two to three days of on-site time, which will include visits to one or two of the program's participating correctional facilities and their community-based locations, preferably where the impact study is taking place. The evaluation team will aim to interview grant administrators and managers, program managers, frontline staff, correctional system partner staff, and staff from other key partners such as employers and supportive services providers; the team will also aim to interview training providers during the site visits. The sample site visit agenda in Table VI.2 outlines a possible schedule for a site visit to a direct Pathway Home grantee. The example details a two-

day visit; however, some sites may require a three-day site visit because of the number of Pathway Home locations and partners involved in implementing the core Pathway Home program services. Additionally, for grants with intermediaries, the evaluation team will determine which of the subgrantee sites to visit based on information gathered from the grantee survey and planning calls with the intermediary grant administrator. The selection criteria might include the proximity of the subgrantee sites to one another as well as the variation in the subgrantee sites’ program model, the types of facility partners, and the number of participants served.

**Table VI.2. Sample site visit agenda**

| Date and time  | Activity  |
|--|---|
| <b>Day 1</b>   |   |
| <b>Location: Correctional facility</b>                     |   |
| 9:00 a.m.–10:30 a.m.                                       | Interview with correctional facility-based Pathway Home coordinator |
| 10:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m.                                      | <i>Tour of correctional facility</i>                                |
| 11:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m.                                      | Interview with correctional facility administrator                  |
| 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.                                      | Interview with pre-release career services staff                    |
| 12:30 p.m.–1:30 p.m.                                       | <i>Lunch break</i>  |
| 1:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.  | Focus group with pre-release participants, including set-up time    |
| 2:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.  | Interview with case managers  |
| 3:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m.  | Interview with job readiness workshop facilitator                   |
| 4:30 p.m.–5:30 p.m.  | Interview with employer/employer association partner                |
| <b>Day 2</b>   |   |
| <b>Location: Community-based Pathway Home program site</b> |   |
| 9:00 a.m.–10:30 a.m.                                       | Interview with Pathway Home project manager                         |
| 10:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.                                      | Interview with case managers  |
| 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.                                      | Interview with post-release career services staff                   |
| 12:30 p.m.–1:30 p.m.                                       | <i>Lunch break</i>  |
| 1:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.  | Interview with supportive services partners                         |
| 2:30 p.m.–3:00 p.m.  | Interview with occupational training provider partners              |
| 3:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.  | Interview with Pathway Home participant, including travel*          |
| 4:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.  | Interview with Pathway Home participant, including travel*          |

\* Location of participant interviews to be determined, and interviews could be done virtually.

The evaluation team will be flexible in scheduling interviews to accommodate respondents’ needs. Interviewers will take detailed notes and request approval from respondents to audio record the interviews. The recordings, to be stored in a secure location, will be used to facilitate the discussion’s transcription and coding. The recordings will be destroyed when the evaluation is complete. However, not all of the desired interview respondents may be available to participate in interviews. If a respondent is unable to meet while the team is on-site, we would request to meet with the respondent’s designee or schedule a follow-up call at a more convenient time. Although the evaluation team will prioritize in-person site visits, the COVID-19 pandemic may not allow for such visits. If we are unable to schedule in-person site visits because of COVID-19 restrictions, we will schedule virtual interviews and request to attend virtual sessions of the program to get a feel for the participant experience.

The master discussion guide for the semistructured interviews will cover topics such as the Pathway Home grant organization and management, partnerships established under the grant, recruitment of

program participants, case management services and service planning, training and employment services, supportive services, participant experiences and outcomes, and perceptions of the Pathway Home program. For intermediary grantees, we will include questions about how intermediary grantees and their subgrantee operate (Appendix C).

**Selection of sites.** The implementation evaluation will prioritize visiting up to six sites participating in an impact evaluation of the grants. Depending on the number of sites participating in the impact evaluation, we may use other criteria such as geographic diversity, jail-based or state correctional facility-based services, or innovative program strategies to determine which sites to visit. Administrator and staff interview respondents will be purposively selected based on their engagement with Pathway Home program activities. Respondents will include 112 direct grantee and 18 intermediary grant administrators, 160 partner administrators, and 240 frontline staff to understand how the program has been developed, managed, and delivered.

*b. Virtual group discussions with grantee staff on sustainability*

To learn about grantees' sustainability efforts, we will hold virtual small-group discussions and/or phone interviews with grantees near the end of their grant period, in fall 2023. We will include all grantees in at least one group discussion and possibly focus longer interviews on the grantees that were visited by site visit teams, to allow more time to probe on issues that may have arisen during site visits. The evaluation team will develop a focus group protocol to gather the information on sustainability from grantees and the partners involved in their sustainability efforts.

#### **4. Participant focus groups and interviews**

In addition to interviews with staff, the site visit schedule includes (1) time for a focus group in the correctional facility with Pathway Home participants enrolled in pre-release services and (2) time for one-on-one interviews with participants who have been released. The perspective of program participants on the grants is an important part of extracting meaningful lessons from grant implementation. Focus groups and interviews will explore participants' reasons for enrolling, their impressions of the program, and the extent to which the program has helped them prepare to return to their communities and obtain employment.

*a. Pre-release focus groups*

We will conduct in-person focus groups with participants who are still incarcerated and receiving pre-release services during our site visits to the correctional facilities in early 2023. It would likely be difficult to coordinate one-on-one conversations with participants who are still incarcerated, given restrictions in most correctional facilities. We would ideally conduct one pre-release focus group of five or six participants for each grantee visited in person.

We will purposively select the focus group participants in coordination with the grantees to identify engaged participants who can speak about their experiences with the program. To ensure the focus group size is manageable and allows all participants ample time to speak, no more than six participants will be invited. To help broaden the range of perspectives shared by the focus group participants, we will hold focus groups at each grantee's facility partners and ask the grantees to select participants who vary in characteristics such as gender, race, and work experience.

### *b. Post-release one-on-one interviews*

With participants who have been released and who may or may not be currently engaged with the program, we will conduct a mix of in-person and virtual, one-on-one, in-depth interviews. We are including a mix of in-person and virtual interviews to allow us to include researchers with lived experience (from organizations outside of the core partnership for the study) in the interview team, who will conduct interviews virtually. The evaluation team will develop an interview protocol to ask participants about their experiences with the Pathway Home program and how the program prepared them for employment and their return to their communities. We will engage the advisory group in spring 2022 to gather feedback on the interview protocol and on our selection process for the participant focus groups and interviews (see Chapter VIII for more information). We will select a sample of respondents from a list of participants, and the evaluation team will schedule interviews to be conducted while they are on site for a site visit with a program or on the phone after the site visits are complete. The sample will be selected to ensure a mix of participants across gender, race, facility type, length of time since release, and program engagement after release. We will ideally interview two post-release participants for each grant.

We planned for one-on-one interviews rather than a focus group because interviewers can better accommodate respondents' location and schedule in conducting interviews. Individuals who make the effort to show up to an interview in person may be more likely to be those who had a positive experience with a program or have an existing connection with program staff. Reducing the burden of traveling to an interview could mean that a more representative pool of participants engages in interviews. To encourage participation in interviews, we will offer participants a \$50 gift card to compensate them for their time.

### *c. Limitations*

Focus groups and interviews provide nuanced experiences that are difficult to capture through other means. These discussions can also provide insightful and illustrative quotes that will enrich the presentation of findings for the evaluation and dissemination materials. However, the focus group data have some limitations. For example, the method of the pre-release focus group is limited in its generalizability. Therefore, the data collected from focus group participants on their experiences will not be generalizable to all Pathway Home program participants. However, the focus groups will still provide a more nuanced narrative of what a participant experiences and what they see as important aspects of the program. These focus groups will provide insights to help answer research questions about the types and combinations of services that participants received and participants' experiences accessing those services.

In addition to COVID-19, other logistical challenges could prevent the evaluation team from visiting each Pathway Home service location. For example, if the facility does not allow visitors, we may not be able to conduct a pre-release focus group. Even if visitors are allowed pre-release, the facilities may limit the number of people in the same room as the Pathway Home participants. A limited number of people per room would limit the size of the participant focus groups, which could result in the evaluation team needing to schedule multiple focus groups at one facility. The evaluation team will talk through these potential challenges during planning calls with the grantee. If we determine that the challenges to conducting an in-person focus group with pre-release participants would greatly reduce the quality of the information gathered through this activity, we may propose Zoom focus groups or one-on-one interviews with pre-release participants as alternatives.

### C. Timeline of activities

We estimate a timeline for activities to conduct an evaluation of Cohort 2’s in-depth implementation of the grants through 2024 (Table VI.3).

**Table VI.3. Planned timeline for in-depth implementation evaluation of Pathway Home Cohort 2**

| Date             | Activities   |
|------------------|--|
| <b>2022</b>      |  |
| August           | The study will collect WIPS data, QPRs, and QNRs for quarter ending June 30, 2022  |
| November         | The study will collect WIPS data, QPRs, and QNRs for quarter ending September 30, 2022   |
| <b>2023</b>      |  |
| January–February | The study will hold site visits to select grantees and conduct semistructured interviews with the grantee and partnership staff<br>The study will hold pre-release participant focus groups<br>The study will select post-release participant interviews |
| March            | The study will complete the remaining post-release participant interviews  |
| June             | The study will collect WIPS data, QPRs, and QNRs for quarter ending March 31, 2023   |
| August           | The study will hold virtual staff discussions on sustainability  |
| December         | Enrollment ends for grantees   |
| <b>2024</b>      |  |
| January–April    | The study will submit draft implementation report and other products on a rolling basis  |
| December         | Grants end   |

QNR = quarterly narrative report; QPR = quarterly performance report; WIPS = Workforce Integrated Performance System.

## VII. Analysis and reporting for the implementation evaluations

The primary focus of the early and in-depth implementation evaluations is to inform DOL on the progress of the grants from their planning period through the end of program enrollment and to provide answers to the research questions discussed above. Our analytic approach will allow us to triangulate the multiple perspectives of interview, focus group, and survey respondents as well as administrative data on participant characteristics and services. With this approach, we can provide a comprehensive picture through an implementation report and a series of products describing how the Pathway Home programs were implemented and identifying lessons learned reported by the participants and stakeholders.

### A. Analysis

Our analysis of information gathered through the implementation evaluation data collection efforts will allow us to quantitatively and qualitatively describe the Pathway Home programs and answer the research questions specified above. This analysis will be informed by the conceptual framework (Figure II.1), which describes the implementation factors that will be important to explore in our analysis and the aspects of the program and program context that are important to capture.

We will approach the data using three main lines of analysis:

1. **Descriptive analysis.** A descriptive analysis will provide an account of what grantees did during the planning process and what programs they planned to implement, including information such as grantee organizational information (for example, location and organizational type) as well as facility information, program model, services, and partnerships planned. We will also describe expectations and experiences for the participants whom programs planned to serve.
2. **Comparative analysis.** We will then compare what we know about grantee plans against how the programs were actually implemented and who was actually served by denoting both the changes that grantees made from planning to start-up and any changes that occurred over the duration of their grants. We will also explore the reasons for those changes and the implications for the program and participants, including participant outcomes.
3. **Thematic analysis.** We will also conduct a more in-depth analysis of our data that will examine elements that hindered or supported grantees in the implementation of their programs as planned, how they adapted to any challenges they encountered along the way, and the implications of those factors for the experiences and outcomes of participants.

In conducting each of these analyses, we will treat different types of data differently:

**Survey data from grantees and facilities.** We will analyze survey data using simple descriptive measures to generate aggregated counts of responses and show variation in responses by type of grantee, program component, or model. Responses to open-ended questions will be coded to identify key themes across respondents. When analyzing the information from the correctional facility survey, we may break down responses by facility type because some grantees are working with multiple facilities including prisons, jails, and community correctional facilities.

**Program data.** WIPS data will be tabulated using descriptive methods (including simple frequencies, cross-tabulations, and means, when appropriate) to provide information about the characteristics of participants served by Pathway Home grants, the services they received, service dosage, and participant

outcomes. We will analyze differences across types of grantees, program models, and other factors using these descriptive statistics.

**Qualitative data from interviews, focus groups, and grant documents.** The evaluation team will be collecting primary qualitative data from program staff, partner staff, and participants through in-person and virtual focus groups and interviews. We will also collect secondary qualitative data from grant documents such as quarterly reports. We will analyze this information using a thematic analysis informed by our conceptual framework and implemented in NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. To extract data on key themes and topics, the evaluation team will develop a coding scheme, which will be organized according to key research questions and topics and guided by the conceptual framework, as well as more general constructs from the CFIR and CCAT on factors that affect implementation. We will then analyze data across grantees for each theme and determine trends in the data that suggest differences among types of grantees, program models, facility types, or other important aspects of the program.

Although each data collection activity is distinct, we will use the information gathered across different data sources to answer the same research questions. For example, to look at what services the grants offered and participants received, we will combine qualitative information from the staff and participant respondents with quantitative data collected through the grantee survey and the WIPS data. The triangulation of multiple data sources allows the evaluation team to provide a comprehensive assessment while acknowledging the limitations of any single data source.

### B. Reporting and dissemination

In the interest of providing findings on a rolling basis throughout the course of the grants, we will develop a mix of topical briefs or reports that are shorter and tailored for specific purposes. Our final report will present more detailed findings.

**Cohort 1 COVID-19 brief.** We will develop one brief to describe the experience of Cohort 1 grantees implementing the program during the COVID-19 pandemic. The brief will summarize findings from the five group conversations with Cohort 1 grantees to answer the related research questions focused on aspects of implementation, including recruitment and enrollment, pre-release and post-release services, partnerships, case management, and employment services.

**Cohort 2 early implementation briefs.** We will develop two briefs that will present program findings from the early implementation evaluation for Cohort 2. The briefs' topics may emerge from ongoing conversations with DOL or from data collected for the evaluations but could include an overview of who was initially served by the grantees in Cohort 2, what strategies grantees used to recruit them to the program, and recruitment and enrollment challenges and lessons learned. The briefs could utilize WIPS data and QNRs as well as the grantee survey and virtual discussions with staff.

**Grantee profiles.** We will develop short profiles of each grantee, first updating the ones developed previously by the study team for Cohort 1 and then drafting profiles for grantees in Cohort 2. The profiles will focus on key program elements such as the target population, eligibility criteria, key partners, and program services.

**Final implementation report.** We will develop a report with in-depth implementation evaluation findings addressing the research questions for Cohort 2. The report will document the characteristics of the sites that provided services to Pathway Home participants and discuss the characteristics of the program participants, the flow of participants through the programs, the delivery of services, participation

rates, any challenges affecting implementation, and successes related to providing participants with services intended to help them return to their communities and obtain employment. In addition to reporting the implementation findings, the report will present lessons learned and practices that were reported by grantees as improving employment outcomes among people with histories of justice involvement. The final in-depth report in February 2024 will present findings based on all of the data sources for Cohort 2.

**Implementation briefs and fact sheet.** We will develop two briefs that will present program findings from the in-depth implementation evaluation for Cohort 2. We will also develop a one-page fact sheet to summarize information from across the 22 grantee profiles into a concise and more approachable format. The issue briefs and fact sheet will be developed after the final report.

**Webinars and briefings.** We will hold up to three webinars or briefings for different audiences to inform them about the Pathway Home Evaluation and to present findings. For example, a webinar focusing on findings from individual briefs drafted for the early implementation evaluation could provide useful information for Cohort 2 grantees as they continue to scale up their programs.

To disseminate evaluation findings to a broader audience, the evaluation team will develop a communication strategy to post dissemination products online, in blogs as well as other media outlets. We will determine the full set of dissemination activities in partnership with DOL.



## VIII. Participatory research approach

One hallmark of our approach has been the use of participatory research activities to engage key stakeholders and collect their input about program concepts and goals. These methods can help establish trusting relationships between researchers and communities under study and ensure findings are viewed as valid and action-oriented (Viswanathan et al. 2004). Their input informs our research questions, data sources, and data collection instruments. We will continue incorporating stakeholder input into our data collection approaches and the interpretation and presentation of findings. Below, we describe how we will engage a range of stakeholders in the research process.

### A. Engaging individuals with lived experience

Of critical importance, stakeholders with lived experience with the justice system help to ensure that research about the Pathway Home grant program speaks to the needs of those being served.

#### 1. Current advisory group

Our evaluation continues to benefit from the input of our advisory group, whose direct experience with the reentry process provides valuable insight. We will engage them to help inform the development of our data collection instruments and findings from the evaluation, including whether the language is clear and the presentation of the data is unambiguous.

- Virtual meetings.** We will engage the advisory group four times over the course of the project to provide input on the implementation evaluation. The first group meeting was held in August 2021 and focused on data collection by gathering input on data collection instruments for the study, including the grantee and facility surveys (see Table VIII.1). The second meeting will be held in spring 2022 to gather feedback on additional data collection instruments, including the protocols for in-depth site visits. The focus of the meeting will be to explore the topics and specific questions in the protocols and to gather the group’s feedback on our selection process for the participant focus groups and interviews. The third meeting will be held in winter 2022 and will focus on reviewing preliminary findings from the early implementation evaluation of the Cohort 2 grants and informing any refinement to the data collection instruments for the site visits if necessary. The final (fourth) meeting will be held in 2025 and will focus on findings from the in-depth implementation and the impact evaluation. Throughout these meetings, we will explore whether we are approaching activities and framing findings equitably and in a way that addresses participant interests and concerns. Group meetings will follow the same virtual two-hour session structure as those previously held during the knowledge development phase, and we will continue to compensate advisory group members for their participation.

**Table VIII.1. Tentative schedule for advisory group meetings to inform implementation evaluation**

| Date          | Meeting topics  |
|---------------|---|
| August 2021   | Grantee and facility surveys  |
| March 2022    | Site visit protocols  |
| December 2022 | Early implementation findings and refining the data collection instruments for the site visit |
| 2025          | In-depth implementation and impact evaluation findings  |

- **Ad hoc review.** We also propose engaging individual members of the advisory group, through email or phone communication, to provide feedback on evaluation materials or other forms of input that leverage their expertise. We will amend our honoraria agreements with advisory group members to compensate them for these additional engagements.

### 2. Researchers with lived experience

Along with engaging advisory group members, we plan to identify researchers, either internal or external to our current partner organizations, who have both lived experience with the justice system and experience conducting research. These researchers could conduct interviews (by phone) with program participants as part of the in-depth implementation evaluation. These individuals can leverage their personal experiences to improve the collection of data. They can also provide a unique perspective on what can be learned from staff and participants in the implementation of the grants. We propose to identify two or three individuals to include in our data collection and analysis team. To find them, we may partner with an external organization or recruit individuals from our advisory group.

### B. Engaging DOL staff

The evaluation team plans to engage DOL Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) and Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) staff in ongoing communication, including biweekly meetings, to keep them apprised of evaluation progress, to review data collection tools and deliverables, and to seek their input at key decision points.

### C. Engaging grantees

In addition to the data collection, we will continue engaging grantees in various ways around the evaluation. Our goal in doing so is to build support for the various evaluation efforts, to make sure we are considering grantee interests in how research could be useful to them, and to alleviate any concerns they may have. Engagement activities may include hosting a meeting to give grantees an opportunity to provide input on what they wish to learn from the evaluation, as well as having members of the evaluation team attend one or two meetings hosted by the technical assistance provider for the grants to answer grantee questions about the implementation evaluation. Engaging the grantees in this manner will establish rapport and increase our understanding of grantee perspectives about the evaluation.

## IX. Summary of implementation evaluation schedule

In this design report, we present plans for studying the implementation of grants in each of the two current cohorts of the Pathway Home grants. Each of the cohorts is likely to experience a different environment and could offer unique lessons—the first cohort experiencing the height of a pandemic and providing the bulk of pre-release services virtually, and the second cohort ideally operating in a post-pandemic world with fuller access to facilities for pre-release services and case management.

Throughout the evaluation process, we will aim to continue our approach of integrating participatory research practices into the evaluation by engaging different stakeholders and providing feedback to those same stakeholders as our learning and understanding evolve. In Table IX.1, we provide a comprehensive schedule for conducting both evaluations in tandem for both cohorts of grantees, indicating how evaluation activities line up with the timeline for each of the grant cohorts as well.

**Table IX.1. Timeline of Pathway Home implementation evaluation activities from 2020 to 2024**

| Date        | Evaluation activities  | Cohort 1 timeline   | Cohort 2 timeline              |
|-------------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>2020</b> |  |   |                                |
| June        |  | DOL awarded grants  |                                |
| July        |  | Grantees started grant planning                                     |                                |
| November    | The study reviewed grant documents for Cohort 1  |   |                                |
| December    | The study held initial clarifying calls with Cohort 1  |   |                                |
| <b>2021</b> |  |   |                                |
| January     |  | Grantees finished grant planning and some grantees began enrollment |                                |
| June        |  |   | DOL awarded grants             |
| July        |  | Last grantee begins enrollment                                      | Grantees begin grant planning  |
| August      | The study reviewed grant documents for Cohort 2  |   |                                |
| September   | The study held initial clarifying calls with Cohort 2  |   |                                |
| October     |  |   | Some grantees began enrollment |
| December    | The study held virtual group discussions with Cohort 1 grantee staff   |   |                                |
| <b>2022</b> |  |   |                                |
| January     | The study collected WIPS data, QPRs, QNRs, and grant documents for Cohort 1 for quarter ending September 30, 2021  |   | Most grantees begin enrollment |
| March       | The study will receive OMB approval<br>The study will sign the MOU for WIPS data<br>The study will hold an advisory group meeting<br>The study will draft the brief for Cohort 1 evaluation for DOL review |   |                                |

## Pathway Home Grant Program: Implementation Evaluation Design

| Date               | Evaluation activities  | Cohort 1 timeline | Cohort 2 timeline |
|--------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| June               | The study will administer surveys to Cohort 2 grantees and facilities  |                   |                   |
| July               | The study will hold the virtual group discussions with Cohort 2  |                   |                   |
| August             | The study will collect WIPS data, QPRs, QNRs, and grant documents for Cohort 2 for quarter ending June 30, 2022  |                   |                   |
| December           | The study will collect WIPS data, QPRs, QNRs, and grant documents for Cohort 2 for quarter ending September 30, 2022<br>The study will draft briefs for Cohort 2 early implementation evaluation | Enrollment ends   |                   |
| <b>2023</b>        |  |                   |                   |
| January - February | The study will perform site visits for Cohort 2 grantees<br>The study will hold pre-release participant focus groups<br>The study will select post-release participant interviews                |                   |                   |
| March              | The study will finish the remaining post-release participant interviews  |                   |                   |
| April              | The study will receive OMB approval for virtual group discussions  |                   |                   |
| June               | The study will collect WIPS data, QPRs, QNRs, and grant documents for Cohort 2 for quarter ending March 31, 2023   |                   |                   |
| August             | The study will hold virtual group discussions with Cohort 2 grantee staff  |                   |                   |
| October            | The study will hold an advisory group meeting  |                   |                   |
| December           |  | Grant ends        | Enrollment ends   |
| <b>2024</b>        |  |                   |                   |
| February–April     | The study will submit final implementation reports for Cohort 2 and other products for DOL review  |                   |                   |
| December           |  |                   | Grant ends        |

DOL = Department of Labor; MOU = memorandum of understanding; OMB = Office of Management and Budget; QNR = quarterly narrative report; QPR = quarterly performance report; WIPS = Workforce Integrated Performance System.

## X. Overview of impact evaluation options for Cohort 2 grants

The evaluation team continues to learn about the Cohort 2 grants to understand the feasibility of studying the impact of grant programs on participants in select sites. This chapter provides an overview of an impact evaluation design given the current understanding of the grants, with a discussion of considerations for the final design. A subsequent report will document the final design of the impact evaluation and methods that will be employed to determine the impact of the grant programs on participants.

### A. Research questions

The goal of the impact evaluation will be to gain an understanding of whether and how access to Pathway Home services resulted in improved outcomes (such as employment and earnings, recidivism, skill development and credential attainment, economic well-being, and health and stability) for participants. We will also explore how participant characteristics and program-specific factors may influence impact estimates. Our proposed design will examine the following primary research questions. The ability to measure secondary outcomes will depend on the types of data we are able to collect, and our ability to measure subgroup impacts will depend on the sample size and composition:

1. What was the impact of offering Pathway Home services on the primary outcomes of employment, earnings, and criminal justice system involvement as well as secondary outcomes of skill development and credential attainment, economic well-being (including job quality and total income), and indicators of health and stability (including safe housing and mental health status)?
2. To what extent do impacts vary across selected subpopulations, including those based on age; type of offense; type of institution; veteran status; gender, race, and ethnicity; and criminal history or criminogenic risk?
3. How does effectiveness vary by grantees' characteristics, such as institution type, population served, services offered, partnerships, program model, program structure, and infrastructure? Are there core components that are common to successful models of comprehensive reentry programs (for example, service delivery pre- and post-release, supportive services offered)?

As indicated above, our plan is to develop a more detailed impact evaluation design report that will include an updated program conceptual framework, information on how sites are to be selected, and a detailed description of data sources and data collection activities. It will also contain data collection instruments and a detailed explanation of our analytic methodology, including the primary and secondary outcomes, power calculations, and key measurement issues. One particularly important measurement issue to consider is our approach for measuring ongoing criminal justice involvement. Consistent with prior studies (for example, Berk et al. 2020; Wiegand and Sussell 2016), we will consider recidivism measures including arrest, conviction, and reincarceration. Criminal justice involvement is related to individual behavior, but it also reflects criminal justice policy, enforcement, and sanctions that vary across states and locations. We also know that indicators of criminal justice involvement and recidivism reflect racial bias in policing, prosecution, and sentencing (Chouldechova 2017; Skeem and Lowenkamp 2016). We will consider these differences as we specify our outcome measures and consider approaches to estimating impacts for specific grantees or participant subgroups. We will discuss how this bias may affect impact estimates and avoid calculations that are likely to suffer from the most bias.

### B. Impact evaluation designs

For the impact evaluation, we will consider several different evaluation designs, each capable of providing strong evidence that the estimated effects are solely attributable to Pathway Home services.

#### 1. Randomized controlled trials

The preferred method for the impact evaluation is to conduct a randomized controlled trial (RCT), whereby participants are placed at random into a program (treatment) group that has access to program services and a control group that typically does not (although there are variations, as we outline below). RCTs are the gold standard of impact (Hariton and Locascio 2018; Webber and Prouse 2018).

Several challenges affect implementing an RCT to study the impact of employment services, particularly in the context of correctional facilities. These include ethical considerations, especially around withholding treatment from individuals who could benefit from the services, limited choice within correctional facilities, and pressure to consent; the need for more people to be eligible and interested than there are program slots; and complicated logistical considerations around implementing random assignment within correctional settings. As a result, a successful experiment will require close partnership with grantee and facility staff. An important step leading up to finalizing the design will be to work closely with grantees to determine the feasibility of each potential approach. To advise our research design, we will also convene a Technical Working Group comprising members with substantial experience working with and evaluating prisoner populations.

To better reflect what we learn from grantees, we will also consider a variety of potential RCT designs to account for the unique challenges of implementing an RCT in a correctional facility setting, including (1) random assignment before the delivery of pre-release services; (2) random assign of components of pre-release services, such that some participants would receive the full set of services and some would receive partial services; (3) random assignment of components of post-release services; and (4) random assignment of participation incentive, including offering differing levels of incentives (such as payments) to participate.

#### 2. Alternative designs

If an RCT is not feasible, we will gather information to assess the feasibility of various quasi-experimental design (QED) options. These primarily include a regression discontinuity (RD) design and a matched comparison group design (Imbens and Lemieux 2008; Abadie and Imbens 2016). An RD design will depend on identifying key discontinuities in eligibility criteria such as the use of risk assessment tools to determine eligibility and a sufficient sample size (RD designs require a larger sample size than do other designs). We will work with grantees and partners to identify whether there are any key discontinuities in eligibility criteria that could be leveraged for a regression discontinuity design. For example, among the Cohort 1 grantees, two grantees reported using a risk assessment tool to determine eligibility and four grantees reported using a risk or needs assessment. If this cutoff is binding or close to binding, this could be considered for a regression discontinuity design. We will also use interviews with grantees and their partners to determine whether there is a sufficient sample size for a regression discontinuity analysis. Matched comparison designs compare outcomes between similar individuals who did and did not participate in Pathway Home. This approach will involve identifying a comparison group of individuals who would likely have had similar outcomes to Pathway Home participants in the absence

of the program. To make this work, we must identify potential comparison groups either within correctional facilities where participants are first enrolled or at nonpartner facilities.

We also recognize that the most rigorous impact evaluation design might be feasible at only one or a small set of facilities. We will therefore consider a hybrid approach of available options, combining a more rigorous impact evaluation (for example, an RCT that includes one or a small set of sites) with a QED leveraging a larger and broader sample. Mathematica and SPR previously used this approach in the Evaluation of Youth CareerConnect to produce rigorous causal evidence while also providing insight into variation across grantees and the relative effects of program components.

### C. Selecting grants for evaluation

Prior evaluations of employment-focused reentry evaluations have highlighted factors to consider when designing an impact evaluation and selecting programs to evaluate. A recent article in *Rethinking Reentry* (Lattimore 2020) highlights potential reasons that program impacts could be difficult to detect including:

- The treatment group receives a relatively low dose of services, perhaps due to program design or lack of participant engagement in the program.
- The control group receives substantial services from other providers, which reduces the overall contrast between the treatment and control groups. When a program is operating in a service-rich environment, it can be difficult to demonstrate significant program effects even if the program is having meaningful impacts on the lives of program participants.
- Criminal justice outcomes may use a binary measure of recidivism that could miss important aspects of desistance from criminal activity.

The impact evaluation will build on this knowledge by paying close attention to the intensity of the program services and the contrast between program services and the other services available in the facility and in the community post-release. We will also consider alternative measures of recidivism that can indicate progress toward desistance from criminal activity.

In addition, we will leverage the information gained through the knowledge development activities and ongoing stakeholder engagement with the program office, people with lived experience in the justice system, and reentry program staff to inform selecting the grants for the impact evaluation. As highlighted in the discussion of the conceptual framework, stakeholders and the literature highlight a number of service components that are paramount for facilitating successful reentry. Our site selection will prioritize programs that include (1) strong pre-release services that include occupational skills training and industry-recognized or employer-valued credentials, (2) linked pre- and post-release case management (ideally by the same case manager), (3) post-release housing supports or peer-support models, and (4) enough participants to provide sufficient sample size and power.<sup>3</sup>

We anticipate that restrictions due to COVID-19 as well as the current recession are likely to make it challenging for many grantees to recruit and place participants. These challenges raise several concerns we will need to address in site selection: the intensity of pre-release services may be lower than planned, and quality could be uncertain; continuous case management could be affected by interruptions to staffing due to COVID-19; and obtaining employment after release could be challenging for job seekers in a

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<sup>3</sup> We will provide power calculations and minimum detectable effect sizes in our final design report, but presently we are estimating that we would need a sample size of approximately 1,000 program participants and 1,000 comparison group members.

volatile labor market. The pandemic-related recession has affected all parts of the country, resulting in businesses slowing down hiring and high rates of unemployment, particularly for workers with less work experience and for Black and Latinx workers, who are overrepresented in the incarcerated population (Couch et al. 2020).

The first cohort of grantees will not be a focus of the impact evaluation. This cohort began enrolling participants in 2021 and the program will be well underway when the impact evaluation begins enrolling study participants. The enrollment period for Cohort 1 grants also ends in December 2022, which does not leave enough time to enroll sufficient sample into the study. Because of these challenges, we will focus an impact evaluation on Cohort 2 grantees exclusively. Cohort 2 grantees will enroll participants from January 2022 to December 2023. We will therefore aim to start enrolling participants in the study in fall 2022, to maximize the potential sample size in the context of study limitations. Because the Cohort 2 grantees were also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, we may consider discussing COVID-19 in the impacts.

### D. Data sources for the impact evaluation

The data collected for the evaluation should be driven by the underlying conceptual framework for how participation in Pathway Home could affect an individual's outcomes (see Figure II.1). According to this framework, data collection would include (1) receipt of services; (2) outcomes, such as employment, earnings, and recidivism; and (3) contextual (moderating) factors that could affect the implementation or impacts of participation in Pathway Home, such as correctional system, community, service provider, and participant characteristics. In this section, we list the data sources we propose to use to collect this information.

To minimize study costs and burden on grantees, we plan to rely heavily on grantee records and administrative records on employment and recidivism when possible. Although Pathway Home participants will already be required to provide identifiers, we must also develop procedures to collect identifiers from the control or comparison group that we can use to collect different types of data. The key types of data we anticipate gathering include (1) demographic and service delivery data from grantee and partner agencies for service receipt and contextual factors; (2) employment and earnings data from the National Directory of New Hires for outcomes; (3) criminal justice data, including arrests, convictions, and incarcerations (both jail and prison data) for outcomes; (4) baseline information including criminal history, employment history, and other data at the point of enrollment for contextual factors; and (5) follow-up data for outcomes through a survey including a variety of other measures (such as well-being, occupation type, housing status) not as easily captured through administrative sources.

### E. Analysis overview

For our analysis, we will use a treatment effects framework to estimate impacts. We will consider both the impact on the group of individuals who were given access to Pathway Home services (intent to treat) and the impact on individuals who received services (average treatment effect on the treated)<sup>4</sup>. We expect

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<sup>4</sup> The intent-to-treat estimate will measure the impact of receiving access to Pathway Home services, regardless of whether the individual actually took up treatment. Therefore, this is a weighted average of the impact of Pathway Home services and the impact of access to Pathway Home services for those who do not actually receive the services. If we assume there is impact of access to Pathway Home services on individuals who did not actually receive services, we can also measure an average treatment effect on the treated. This estimates the treatment effect for individuals who received treatment.



to use a regression analysis controlling for demographic and environmental characteristics. The impact evaluation will also document the setting, participant, program, and implementation characteristics of the impact evaluation sites to allow us to analyze core components that may be associated with positive program impacts. Although our primary results will be traditional frequentist estimates, we will also explore using Bayesian methods to understand the variation in program impacts in two ways (Finucane and Deke 2019). First, Bayesian methods are well suited for studying subgroups with a relatively small number of subjects that cannot reliably be examined using traditional methods (Breck and Wakar 2021). This approach would allow us to use the impact estimates from all grantees to inform grantee-specific impact estimates without pooling results across all grantees. Second, we can use Bayesian additive regression trees to leverage outcomes data to determine which characteristics of participants are associated with larger program impacts, rather than testing pre-specified hypotheses that may not be correct (Chipman et al. 2010). This is a machine learning technique that allows the data to identify the most poignant differences between subgroups rather than relying on our own preconceived beliefs.

### F. Reporting

We plan to pursue developing a mix of briefs that are shorter and tailored for specific purposes as well as drafting a final report on the impact evaluation. Deliverables include a brief on impact study sites characteristics (that is, implementation characteristics of the impact evaluation sites that may influence the effectiveness of a program); the impact evaluation report, which will present the findings on the impacts of access to Pathway Home services and will place the impact findings in the context of policy, labor markets, and implementation features that may be driving the findings; and a synthesis brief, which is a short nontechnical brief that will summarize succinctly, for a broad audience, the major lessons learned from the evaluation, going beyond reiterating the impact evaluation findings.

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## Appendix A: Knowledge that informed the design

The evaluation team engaged in several knowledge gathering activities to inform the research questions, methods, and data sources for the implementation and impact evaluations. This appendix provides a summary of each of these activities.

### A. Literature review

We searched for recently published,<sup>5</sup> rigorous studies of employment-focused reentry interventions and their impacts on education, employment, and recidivism outcomes. We combined our findings with previous reentry literature reviews and noted the following key takeaways:

- Our review suggests positive evidence that educational and vocational reentry programs improve recidivism, but there is mixed evidence of their impacts on employment.
- Our review also found that subsidized employment and job placement programs reduced recidivism, but again there were mixed impacts on employment. A current Pathway Home grantee, RecycleForce in Indianapolis, Indiana, was one of the few programs that impacted recidivism and employment in the long term.
- The review found limited research on the impacts of supportive services such as substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, and housing as part of reentry programs. The few studies we identified showed positive effects on housing and employment outcomes.

Taken together, the literature suggests that it would be valuable to study how programs can strengthen the provision of pre-release education and vocational training, post-release work-based training and job placement, and supportive services such as housing assistance. The implementation evaluations will address these areas by exploring the successes and challenges of grantees in developing and maintaining partnerships and services, the types and intensity of the services provided, and the experiences of participants in these programs. These implementation evaluations will also help to inform the impact study.

### B. Grantee program information

The evaluation team reviewed the grant application for each of the 20 Cohort 1 grants and then conducted clarifying calls with each grantee in December 2020 to understand what changes administrators had made to the program since the application.

Similarly, we reviewed each of the 22 grant applications for the Cohort 2 grantees and conducted clarifying calls with those grantees in September 2021. Given the global health emergency caused by COVID-19, the clarifying calls for each round of grantees explored the extent to which grantees faced limited or restricted access to and limited movement within the correctional facilities where they had planned to establish their Pathway Home programs. We discussed with grantees the obstacles they were

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<sup>5</sup> The study conducted a scan for evidence of the impacts of education- and employment-focused reentry interventions on education, employment, and recidivism outcomes, including peer-reviewed literature published between 2017 and 2020 in the United States using SocIndex, Academic Search Premier, Business Source Corporate Plus, EconLit, and Google Scholar. We combined findings from the scan with studies summarized in prior literature reviews conducted for DOL's Linking to Employment Activities Pre-release (LEAP) Evaluation, the Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) project, and the Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) Evaluation, which included similar literature through 2017. Our scan for new literature identified 11 impact studies of employment-focused reentry interventions published in that time frame.

facing and how they were adjusting their programs to accommodate COVID-19 related restrictions. In Cohort 1, 15 of the 20 grantees planned to offer pre-release services virtually, and seven of the 20 planned to offer services through corrections or facility staff. Even grantees who expected to provide pre-release services were facing challenges with reduced jail and prison populations and a higher prevalence of early releases. Grantees anticipated this would lead to enrollment challenges, and at least 12 grantees requested to defer their expected start date for enrollment.

### C. Stakeholder engagement

The evaluation team also engaged two key types of stakeholders to inform the designs: (1) DOL program office staff and (2) individuals with lived experience in reentry employment programs.

***DOL program office staff.*** In November 2020, the evaluation team engaged staff from DOL’s Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) program office to understand their learning priorities, including perspectives on key service components, contextual factors influencing implementation, important research questions to answer, outcomes of interest, and questions or concerns about the evaluation.

Several key points emerged through this human-centered engagement process with DOL staff. Although COVID-19 will alter some program plans, DOL expressed an interest in understanding whether the timing of key services such as occupational training and cognitive-behavioral therapy impact engagement in services, completion rates, and Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act (WIOA) primary indicators,<sup>6</sup> among other short- and long-term outcomes. The evaluation plans to explore these questions in the impact evaluation. DOL was also interested in learning what types of participant and service data grantees collect (including data shared from partners and participating facilities) and how implementation and outcomes differ across jails, prisons, and community corrections. These topics were integrated into the grantee and facility survey instruments and will be reflected in the analysis conducted for the early and in-depth implementation evaluations. Although grantees were already expecting delays in the pace of enrollment, DOL was also interested in learning about the impacts of COVID-19 on completion rates. The early implementation study of Cohort 1 grantees will look at qualitative data on this topic.

***Individuals with lived experience.*** We also formed an advisory group of people who had participated in reentry employment programs in jurisdictions where Pathway Home programs are located to help advise on the evaluation design. The evaluation team began recruitment for the advisory group in November 2020. We reviewed grant applications to identify grantees that have a strong history of providing reentry services, including experience operating initiatives funded by DOL. We also asked for grantee recommendations from DOL’s technical assistance provider, Coffey Consulting. We developed a recruitment letter that explained the purpose of the advisory group and eligibility criteria, and we shared the letter with six grantees to help them identify one or two candidates each to participate in the group. We reviewed recommendations and conducted email and phone outreach to 10 candidates; eight agreed to participate in the advisory group.

The advisory group members are diverse in terms of geographic location; gender, race, and ethnicity; and time since release. Most advisory group members are currently employed—some as practitioners in reentry programs—and all are older than 25. We facilitated three virtual two-hour sessions with the advisory group between December 2020 and January 2021 to inform the evaluation designs. Each session engaged the group in a process of co-investigation, reflection, and discussion of their experiences

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<sup>6</sup> WIOA primary indicators include the following: employment rate at second quarter after exit; employment rate at fourth quarter after exit; median earnings; credential attainment; measurable skill gains; business indicators.

participating in reentry and employment programming, focusing on key challenges, barriers, and successes involved at each phase in the reentry process: pre-release, transition, and post-release.

Several key findings emerged from the advisory group meetings:

- **Individuals reentering the community value peer support systems.** The advisory group noted the importance of having people with similar backgrounds in their support system. They raised having peer support specialists or mentors as a potential programmatic solution to this need. Advisory group members expressed the need for peer mentors or sponsors who begin working with people six to 12 months before release to motivate successful reentry. The implementation evaluation could explore whether programs hire staff with experience in reentry employment programs or incorporate peer support in other ways.
- **Case management and coordination of pre- and post-release services were reported to be critical for effective service delivery.** The advisory group indicated that there is often not enough focus on case planning before a person's release from prison or jail. Members recalled waiting for long periods of time for assistance and perceived the case managers or workers as having large caseloads or lack of interest in providing assistance. As a result, advisory group members were unaware of services that existed outside of the correctional facility and had a limited understanding of whom to contact or where to go after release. The implementation evaluations could look at what information the correctional facilities are providing to inmates about their release and the post-release services available to them, as well as what strategies grantees are using to communicate to participants what services are available to them in the community from the grantee or other organizations. We could also explore whether participants feel they have the information they need when they are released and what communication strategies were most helpful.
- **People who are reentering the community need a variety of supportive services to be successful.** Advisory group members noted the importance of supportive services such as housing assistance and behavioral health treatment, sharing that securing independent housing or supportive housing options that are safe and in a prosocial environment is necessary for most people reentering. They also emphasized the need for counseling and therapy post-release, focusing particularly on trauma, and the need for support groups or mentors who can assist with the transition from an institutionalized environment to the community. The evaluation team considered ways to learn about grantees' implementation of these types of supportive services and whether they are associated with outcomes of interest.

We will continue to engage members of the advisory group as we design instruments for the implementation and impact evaluation, conduct analysis, and share findings.

## Appendix B: Topics for grantee and facility surveys

Topics that may be included in the grantee and facility surveys for the early implementation evaluation of the Cohort 2 grants appear below (Table B.1).

**Table B.1. Potential topics for the grantee and facility surveys**

| Topic                                       | Survey items  |
|---|---|
| <b>Grantee survey</b>                       |   |
| Pathway Home organizational characteristics | Organization type (nonprofit, government, etc.); type of Pathway Home grant (primary, intermediary, subgrant); prior experience (years providing career education or training programs, years providing services to justice-involved individuals); leveraged funds to support Pathway Home  |
| Program characteristics                     | Type of community served (entirely urban/suburban, entirely rural, etc.); number of pre-release and post-release staff; staff prior involvement with the justice system; staff training/professional development to support implementation; staff qualifications  |
| Recruitment and enrollment                  | Outreach and identification mechanisms (identification by staff and criteria used, referrals, posting to correctional facility boards, information sessions, etc.); screening procedures (correctional or grantee staff involved, information shared, process for review); eligibility requirements (in addition to DOL requirements)   |
| Partnerships                                | Partner types (employers, community-based organizations, legal service providers, etc.); types of newly established partnerships as a result of the Pathway Home grant  |
| Pre- and post-release program services      | Pre-release: Career services (use of assessments, career advancement and mentoring, job-readiness training, etc.); other services (needs assessment, legal assistance, counseling, etc.)<br>Transition services: Discharge planning (continuity of services, coordination of information); pre- to post-release handoff (incentives, contact approach)<br>Post-release: Career services (job search assistance, job placement, GED, apprenticeships); supportive services (housing, child care, financial assistance, legal services, peer support, etc.) |
| Alternative programming                     | Availability beyond Pathway Home of education, training, and employment programs; case management; other services   |
| Successes and challenges                    | Participant related (motivation for program, readiness for program, recruiting participants, engagement and retention after release, etc.); staff related (staff turnover, staff capacity, etc.); partner related (organizational cultural differences, engaging and retaining partners, sharing data with partners, relationships with employers, etc.); service delivery and infrastructure (Internet, room scheduling, security, access to facilities, transition to post-release services, COVID-19 interruptions)                                    |
| Sustainability                              | Plans for continuing Pathway Home program services  |
| Questions for intermediaries                | Whether subgrantee models of service delivery were specified, requirement of specific intake or screening processes, types of technical assistance offered to subgrantees   |
| Questions for subgrantees                   | Types of technical assistance offered by intermediaries, need for additional technical assistance   |
| <b>Facility survey</b>                      |   |
| Organizational characteristics              | Facility type (jail, prison, etc.); security levels; number of beds in facility; demographics of persons in custody there (race, ethnicity, gender, age, etc.); number of people in custody during 2021; average length of stay; average daily number of people in custody during 2021; average number of people sentenced; employment of reentry navigators  |

## Pathway Home Grant Program: Implementation Evaluation Design

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| Topic   | Survey items  |
|---|---|
| Program planning and implementation                 | Availability of program services in facility before grant; role and level of involvement in grant planning; facility role in Pathway Home recruitment, screening, eligibility determination; coordination between correctional facility and grantee; availability of training from program staff; types of data collected; operational or logistical considerations in implementation (Internet access, access to services, security trainings, etc.) |
| Non-Pathway Home services available within facility | Counseling; career services; occupational training; other services (education-related services, legal services, well-being and supportive services, etc.); how participants express interest  |
| Services offered at the facility                    | Internet access for people in custody and program staff, access to virtual case management, access to employer websites, access to email for people in custody, discharge planning  |



## Appendix C: Topics for site visits

Potential topics and elements for the site visit interviews with five types of respondents include the following (Table C.1): (1) Pathway Home grant program administrators and managers, (2) correctional facility and other partner administrators, (3) Pathway Home frontline staff, (4) staff from other key partners such as employers and supportive services providers, and (5) training providers. Not every topic will be asked of each respondent; we will develop tailored protocols with appropriate subsets of questions for each respondent type.

**Table C.1. Potential topics for site visit interviews**

| Topic  | Items   |
|--|---|
| Participant background   | Name, title, and organization/affiliation; role in the grant program and other organization roles; length of involvement with the organization and with the program   |
| Local context  | Local economy and the state of unemployment in area; barriers to avoiding recidivism (mental health or substance abuse problems, unstable housing, lack of family support, etc.); employment skill gaps for population (basic literacy and numeracy, vocational or technical skills, credentials, etc.); availability of other reentry services in the community; perceived impact of COVID-19 on the local economy and job opportunities for people who are justice involved   |
| Grantee background   | Organization type (nonprofit, government, etc.); prior experience (years providing services to justice-involved individuals before or after release); alignment of the Pathway Home grant with organization’s mission; support for program within respondent organization   |
| Grant and program planning                                     | Decision to apply to grant; process for rolling out the program after the grant was awarded; challenges during planning that affected implementation; modifications to the grant since it was awarded; partners involved in the planning process and their roles; core team responsible for setting policy for the program; impact of COVID-19 on planning  |
| Integration of Pathway Home within the correctional facilities | Correctional facility administrator perspective of program implementation; grantee perspective of program implementation within correctional facility; alignment of correctional facility culture with vision of program; role of district attorney, the public defender’s office, the local probation department, or other criminal justice agencies played in the planning or implementation of the program; operational and logistical issues faced when implementing Pathway Home program (access to Internet, security access for program staff, changes in protocols for jail staff, etc.); security incidents related to the program; challenges and successes of integrating the program within correctional facility   |
| Partnerships   | Main partner organizations that are involved in the program (partners in corrections/law enforcement, housing, public assistance, etc.); partner roles and whether partners are well suited for their role; selection of correctional facility partners and other types of partners; previous experience working with partners; partners’ prior experience working with justice-involved populations; coordination and co-location between grantee and partner staff; perceptions of effectiveness of partnerships; resources leveraged from partners; sharing of participant information and other data across partners; shared decision making for the program and approach to coordinating the program among the various partner agencies; shared vision for the Pathway Home program among respondent organizations and partners; type of contract, subgrant, or memorandum of understanding in place with each of the Pathway Home partners; monitoring partner implementation of the program (use of quality/fidelity measures, use of protocols for processes); process for maintaining partnerships |
| Relationship with employers                                    | Representation of employer interests during planning stage; employer involvement in the provision of services through Pathway Home; challenges and successes in getting employers to participate in the program; encouraging employers to hire people returning from incarceration  |

## Pathway Home Grant Program: Implementation Evaluation Design

| Topic   | Items  |
|---|--|
| Administrative structure and staffing                 | Overall structure of oversight and staffing for the program; primary staff roles and responsibilities; whether staff work pre-, post-, or both pre- and post-release; staff turnover; staffing challenges related to COVID-19; management of day-to-day program operations; staff qualifications for their roles; program staff training and professional development; facility staff training and professional development  |
| Participant recruitment and enrollment                | Description of population served by program; identification of eligible participants; outreach strategies; how participants express interest and find out about program; enrollment and intake process (e.g., cohort vs. rolling); incentives for enrollment; perceived influence of COVID-19 on recruitment and enrollment  |
| Pre-release services and participant access           | Implementation of pre-release program services; usability/functionality of the facility space use for program services; availability of Internet access; special accommodations for the program or for staff; challenges with the logistics of participant access to the pre-release program services; perceived impact of COVID-19  |
| Pre-release services: case management                 | Use of an individual development plan, or IDP, for each participant; use of interest or skills assessments to determine the types of services that should be offered to a participant; typical caseload for case managers (of Pathway Home participants only and in total); average length of time participants receive case management; whether caseload is solely program participants; whether case managers spend the full day inside the correctional facility, or divide their time between the facility and community-based program; typical case management topics; frequency of pre-release case management sessions with participants; perceived impact of COVID-19  |
| Pre-release services: employment and support services | Types of employment and support services offered (career services, use of assessments, career planning, job-readiness training, needs assessment, legal assistance, counseling, etc.); employer involvement within the facility; whether services provided result in a credential or certificate and anticipated completion rate; typical sequence of services for participants and duration of each phase; how long participants are active in the program before they are released; tracking participant receipt of non-Pathway Home services (e.g., substance use treatment or groups, cognitive therapy, etc.); challenges with providing pre-release services to participants; perceived impact of COVID-19 on pre-release services |
| Transition to post-release services                   | Description of the transition process; structure of hand-off of participants at the time of their release to the community-based program services; strategies used to ensure that participants come to the community-based program site; referrals to other community-based services to support reentry; how often community resource lists are updated; frequency and content of case management post-release   |
| Post-release: employment and support services         | Types of post-release services offered; employment services offered (occupational skills training/apprenticeships); typical sequence of services for participants and duration of each phase; customization of services; other supports or wraparound services available (housing assistance, mental health treatment, parenting or relationship counseling, peer support etc.); tracking participant receipt of non-Pathway Home services; relationship with probation/parole providers; challenges with providing post-release services to participants; perceived impact of COVID-19 on post-release services   |
| Participant outcomes                                  | How grantees track employment and recidivism outcomes; experience with MIS; program completion and drop-out; services and maintaining contact with participants during follow-up; perspective on observed outcomes for participants and program; perception of most impactful program component(s); perceived successes and challenges related to achieving expected outcomes  |
| Lessons learned                                       | Changes made to how the program is delivered based on participation and outcomes and changes made for other reasons; biggest successes and challenges in starting up and carrying out the program; other challenges affecting whether program participants are able to achieve positive employment and recidivism outcomes; program improvements to better serve this population   |

| Topic          | Items  |
|----------------|--|
| Sustainability | Interest in continuing Pathway Home program beyond the grant period; program components respondent would like to sustain; factors for determining whether the program will be sustained beyond the end of the grant; potential sources of funding identified to support program; obstacles to sustainability; perceptions of key program elements for a successful program |