



# Pathway Home Reentry Evaluation: Early Implementation Study Findings

## SUMMARY

In September 2020, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and commissioned contractor Mathematica, and their subcontractors Social Policy Research Associates, to conduct the Evaluation of the Pathway Home Grant Program. The implementation and impact evaluation aims to build the knowledge base about reentry employment programs by (1) describing how the grantees implemented Pathway Home programs and who they served, (2) identifying successes and challenges of implementation as reported by the grantees, and (3) assessing the impact of services on participant employment, recidivism, and other outcomes. This series of early implementation briefs focuses on the second cohort of Pathway Home grants awarded in 2021 and their experiences implementing their programs between January and December 2022.

Individuals released from incarceration face substantial obstacles to successful reentry and self-sufficiency once in the community. The [Pathway Home Grant program](#) seeks to help mitigate these obstacles by providing linked pre- and post-release employment services to improve individuals' chances of finding meaningful employment and avoiding recidivism. In 2020 and 2021, DOL awarded nearly \$113 million in Pathway Home grants to two cohorts of 42 grantees across 21 states and Washington, D.C. with the goals of increasing the provision of workforce services to eligible incarcerated individuals and strengthening the continuity of pre-release and post-release employment and other support services.

This Department of Labor-funded study was a result of the annual process to determine the Department's research priorities for the upcoming year. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform [Reentry](#) and [Employment and Training](#) programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Pathway Home Evaluation Brief: 2021 Grants at a Glance*

- All grantees partnered with correctional facilities to provide pre-release, post-release, and transition services. Participating prisons were predominantly minimum and medium security facilities, with a little over a third having maximum security designations. Participating jails, on the other hand, had similar security levels across the board.
- Nearly all grantees offered pre-release education and employment services and all reported offering supportive services. However, grantees reported more variety in their post-release education, employment, and supportive service offerings than pre-release.



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- When asked which partners they considered most critical for program success, grantees identified employers, education and training providers, workforce development boards or American Job Centers, housing service providers or agencies, and correctional agencies (not including partner facilities) as critical partners.

## *Pathway Home Evaluation Brief: Establishing Grant Programs Inside Correctional Facilities*

- Grantees described engaging in several activities with their partners during the planning phase such as visiting correctional facilities, meeting with facility staff, developing partnerships with facility and training provider partners, and creating informational materials to share with their facility partners. They recommended meeting with facility partners and other key partners early and frequently.
- When implementing Pathway Home services in facilities, grantees faced challenges—including COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and correctional facility staff shortages. They worked to overcome challenges by improving their communication with facility partners and adapting their service delivery plans, such as by moving to virtual services.

## *Pathway Home Evaluation Brief: Establishing Reentry Services to Support People After Release*

- Grantees reported facing several barriers in connecting participants to jobs, including limited housing, transportation, and health services; the stigma of criminal records; and difficulty maintaining employment while complying with the requirements of community supervision and mandated treatment or services.
- To build partnerships with employers, grantees attended job fairs, reimbursed employers for training opportunities, attended chamber of commerce and workforce development board meetings, employed dedicated employer outreach staff, and established industry advisory boards.
- Grantees suggested that an effective strategy for supporting participants post-release was to encourage post-release participant engagement through alumni groups, providing incentives for milestones, and forming meaningful relationships.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)



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**TIMEFRAME:** 2020-2025

**SUBMITTED BY:** Mathematica and Social Policy  
Research Associates

**DATE PREPARED:** November 2023

**PARTNER AGENCY:** Employment and Training Administration

**SPONSOR:** Chief Evaluation Office

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