



RESEARCH REPORT

# Safer Return Demonstration

Impact Findings from a Research-Based Community Reentry Initiative

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# Executive Summary

The Safer Return demonstration began with the basic premise that policies and procedures to adequately support prisoner reentry were lacking. By augmenting and leveraging existing community-based public and private services, Safer Return was intended to focus on promoting successful reentry and reintegration by (1) addressing key individual needs, (2) introducing system reforms, and (3) improving local (community) conditions. The demonstration was codesigned by researchers in the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute and staff members of the Safer Foundation, in consultation with other reentry experts. Key services and elements that were envisioned included comprehensive family-inclusive case management, prerelease and postrelease transitional planning, housing, mentoring, physical and mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, transitional employment opportunities, job placement, and opportunities for participants to engage with community residents to build prosocial informal support networks. Safer Return was also designed to use neighborhood-based parole agents, graduated sanctioning, and reward practices to reduce reincarceration for technical violations.

The Safer Foundation, an employment services provider to individuals with criminal histories, was the lead service agency for the demonstration. The Safer Foundation worked with several organizations to provide various services as part of the demonstration. East Garfield Park, on the west side of Chicago, was selected as the demonstration site since it was (and is) a high-density prisoner reentry community with high levels of economic and social disadvantage. Shortly after Safer Return began, eligibility boundaries for program participation and service delivery were revisited and expanded to include West Garfield Park (we refer to the demonstration community as “Garfield Park,” encompassing both neighborhoods).

To understand whether the Safer Return demonstration met its intended goals, Urban researchers designed a quasi-experimental outcome and impact evaluation. We selected a comparison community, West Englewood, and collected multiple waves of survey data from community residents, former prisoners, and their family members in both communities. We also examined program and cost data from the agencies providing services to Safer Return participants. In addition, we analyzed administrative records from the Illinois Department of Corrections and the Illinois Department of Employment Security to examine two-year reincarceration and employment outcomes for Safer Return participants and nonparticipant comparison groups in Garfield Park and West Englewood.

Each of these data sources was specifically chosen based on the initial vision for the Safer Return demonstration; the evaluation logic anticipated causal linkages between various program activities and outcomes experienced by formerly incarcerated individuals, their families, and the community. As not all program components were implemented as envisioned, our analysis plan for this impact and cost evaluation was informed by the actual implementation of the program components. Our companion report, *Safer Return Demonstration: Implementation Findings from a Research-Based Community Reentry Initiative*, presents the findings of an in-depth assessment of Safer Return’s implementation.

## Key Findings

Based on descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate analyses of the various data, we highlight the following key findings:

- The reentry and reintegration context in both neighborhoods was less than favorable, but, from the perspective of residents, it was significantly better in Garfield Park than West Englewood while the demonstration was being implemented. Based on these responses, we expected reentry and reintegration outcomes to be better for Safer Return participants returning to Garfield Park than for West Englewood comparisons (chapter 2, Community Context).
- There may be a relationship between Safer Return implementation and community conditions: Safer Return implementation may have benefitted from Garfield Park’s more favorable reentry and reintegration context, and Safer Return implementation may have also led to some of the more favorable reentry and reintegration conditions perceived by the residents (chapter 2, Community Context).
- Safer Return participants received significantly more services than comparisons, including many services that were consistent with the program model, such as a reentry plan in prison, a case reentry plan after release, and referrals for reentry-related services (chapter 3, Self-Reported Reintegration Outcomes).
- Safer Return participants were significantly more likely to report legal employment immediately after release and four months later, and were significantly less likely to report illicit drug use (chapter 3, Self-Reported Reintegration Outcomes).

- Safer Return and West Englewood family members reported strong relationships with their formerly incarcerated family members, shown in reported contact, attachment, and activities (chapter 4, Self-Reported Family Outcomes).
- Despite their own limited incomes and resources, personal need for services, and relatively poor outlook on various aspects of their lives, family members were willing to provide an array of resources to the former prisoners, including job search assistance, financial assistance, and transportation assistance (chapter 4, Self-Reported Family Outcomes).
- Family members' direct and indirect experiences with the criminal justice system and reentry—as shown in the share who had been arrested or incarcerated and who reported experience with other family members returning home from prison—may have contributed to their willingness and ability to assist the former prisoners' reentry processes by providing resources and maintaining high levels of contact and attachment (chapter 4, Self-Reported Family Outcomes).
- Family members have their own resource needs, and the resources they can provide are limited. In light of family members' limited resources and the prominent role they play in the lives of the formerly incarcerated, continued attention to families' needs and their continued inclusion in the reentry process seems warranted (chapter 4, Self-Reported Family Outcomes).
- Safer Return participants had the lowest rate of return to state prison within two years in comparison to nonparticipant parolees in Garfield Park and West Englewood. This difference is statistically significant in comparison to nonparticipants in Garfield Park, but is not statistically significant in comparison to West Englewood parolees (chapter 5, Administrative Reincarceration Outcomes).
- Significant differences in rates of return to state prison were largely driven by differences in technical violations. Safer Return participants were significantly less likely to be returned for a technical violation within two years than nonparticipants in West Englewood and Garfield Park (chapter 5, Administrative Reincarceration Outcomes).
- There were no significant differences between any of the comparison groups in the rate or number of reoffenses within two years after controlling for available demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release information (chapter 5, Administrative Reincarceration Outcomes).

- Safer Return participants were significantly more likely to have had any postrelease employment than nonparticipant parolees in Garfield Park and West Englewood. They also earned significantly higher wages and found employment the quickest (chapter 6, Administrative Employment Outcomes).
- Though the results are overwhelmingly positive in support of Safer Return’s effectiveness at improving employment outcomes, these effects appear to attenuate over time (chapter 6, Administrative Employment Outcomes).

## Conclusions

Overall, the findings are highly consistent with Safer Return’s implementation. As discussed in our companion report, Safer Return implementation was strongest at addressing the service needs of former prisoners, particularly by extending case management services, providing referrals to nondemonstration-provided services, and providing employment services. Therefore, actual implementation of Safer Return would have led us to expect the program to significantly increase the number of reentry services individuals said they received, as well as their employment rates and earnings. Activities focused on the other two goals—introducing system reforms and improving local conditions—were not as well implemented, with one notable exception: the demonstration was successful in establishing a strong partnership with parole officers assigned to the program, which likely contributed to reductions in reincarcerations due to technical violations.

Because of the lack of robust findings along all the domains we analyzed, a cost evaluation showed that the program was not cost beneficial. The high cost of the program relative to its outcomes likely resulted from implementation issues. As detailed in the companion report, implementation challenges were chiefly related to management issues, service delivery and coordination problems, and difficulties with the program’s design-build model. These three main issues combined to reduce the overall impact the demonstration could have had on individual, family, and community outcomes.

Had the overall implementation of Safer Return been more robust, the outcomes associated with the demonstration would almost certainly have been greater. Despite its implementation challenges, Safer Return was able to improve reentry outcomes for individuals returning to Garfield Park from state prison relative to comparison groups, though not as much as had been hoped for. The lessons we can learn from Safer Return’s implementation successes and challenges, and how those successes and

challenges were related to outcomes and impacts, will no doubt prove useful for those planning future reentry programming efforts.



# Chapter 1. Introduction

This research report—the second of two final reports from the Urban Institute’s evaluation of the Safer Return demonstration—describes the findings of an outcome, impact, and cost evaluation based on a quasi-experimental design. Various data were collected for this evaluation, including

1. two waves of former prisoner surveys drawn from a sample of Safer Return participants and a sample of individuals released to the evaluation’s comparison community, West Englewood, administered 4 months and 16 months after prison release;
2. two waves of family surveys drawn from a sample of family members of the Safer Return participants and of the West Englewood comparisons who completed the former prisoner survey, administered 4 months and 16 months after prison release;
3. three waves of community surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents, administered in November 2009, May 2011, and November 2012;
4. program and cost data from the agencies providing services to Safer Return participants; and
5. administrative records from the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) on two-year reincarceration outcomes and the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) on two-year employment outcomes for the sample of Safer Return participants and comparisons in Garfield Park and West Englewood released during the demonstration’s enrollment period.

The program’s implementation, including how specific program elements were envisioned and implemented, is discussed in the first final evaluation report (Rossman and Fontaine 2015).

Each of the data sources used for the outcome, impact, and cost evaluation was specifically chosen based on the initial vision for the Safer Return demonstration. Safer Return was intended to address the key reentry needs and challenges faced by formerly incarcerated individuals and their families, to introduce system reforms, and to improve local conditions that presented barriers to reentry success. Therefore, the evaluation logic anticipated causal linkages between various program activities and the outcomes experienced by formerly incarcerated individuals, their families, and the community. As we discuss in the implementation report, not all program components were implemented as envisioned. The analysis plan for this impact and cost evaluation was informed by the actual implementation of the program components.

This report develops over six remaining chapters. Chapters 2 through 6 each focus on one of our data sources: former prisoner surveys, family surveys, community surveys, IDOC administrative data, and IDES administrative data. Each chapter includes a description of the data source and the reason for

its inclusion in the impact evaluation, as well as a discussion of our methodology, data analyses and findings, and the analyses' limitations and key takeaways.

Specifically, chapter 2 describes community context from the perspective of residents living in Garfield Park and West Englewood during program implementation. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on self-reported individual and family outcomes experienced by a subsample of Safer Return participants and formerly incarcerated people living in West Englewood, and by corresponding subsamples of their family members. Chapter 5 describes the two-year reincarceration outcomes of the Safer Return participants and two comparison groups based on data from IDOC, and chapter 6 describes these groups' two-year employment outcomes based on data from IDES.

The conclusions of the cost evaluation, which was based on program and cost data and information from stakeholders, are discussed in chapter 7. This concluding chapter also remarks on the impact and cost evaluation findings within the context of the implementation findings discussed in the companion report (Rossman and Fontaine 2015).

# Chapter 2. Community Context

This chapter uses information from three waves of Garfield Park and West Englewood resident surveys implemented at 18-month intervals during Safer Return’s enrollment period. The resident surveys focused on perceptions of quality of life, neighborhood crime and victimization, neighborhood safety and precautionary behavior, neighborhood cohesion and social control, and support for formerly incarcerated people. These surveys were implemented for two reasons: (1) to contextualize the communities the formerly incarcerated individuals in the evaluation returned to, and (2) to determine whether Garfield Park residents had better perceptions of their neighborhood, over time, than West Englewood residents.

Residents’ perceptions of the reentry context were critical to developing a fuller understanding of the reentry outcomes of formerly incarcerated individuals included in our sample, as well as of the overall impact and effectiveness of the Safer Return demonstration. The resident surveys, for example, provide context as to why reentry outcomes might be better (or worse) for individuals released to Garfield Park than for those released to West Englewood. The resident surveys also provide an indication of whether the Safer Return demonstration was associated with differences in community context (as perceived by community residents).

Based on the implementation of Safer Return, we focus on community outcomes for three main reasons (Rossman and Fontaine 2015). First, Safer Return was intended to work with neighborhood residents and organizations to improve community conditions that present barriers to successful reentry (e.g., lack of informal support, resources, and prosocial opportunities and relationships). Second, Safer Return was intended to involve neighborhood residents and organizations in the demonstration by providing them with opportunities to mentor and engage Safer Return participants through job opportunities and prosocial activities. Third, a specific component of the Safer Return model, Civic Community Works, included transitional job activities in the Garfield Park neighborhood. Through the Civic Community Works component, Safer Return participants completed beautification and restoration projects in the Garfield Park neighborhood, such as tree pruning, viaduct cleaning, and graffiti removal. These projects were intended to directly benefit the community since they reduced neighborhood disorder and provided participants an opportunity to be viewed by community residents as making a meaningful contribution to the neighborhood.

Because community engagement was so integral to the Safer Return model, the resident surveys help contextualize the reintegration and reincarceration findings discussed in chapter 3 and chapter 5

and provide an overall sense of how the demonstration’s implementation was associated with community conditions.

We begin this chapter with a general description of Garfield Park and West Englewood, using publicly available data on the neighborhoods’ sociodemographic, crime, and reentry characteristics. Next, we detail the methodology used to analyze the survey results, including the specific domains included in the survey instrument. We then discuss the survey findings in detail, paying particular attention to the descriptive information uncovered in the surveys and to the differences between Garfield Park and West Englewood respondents. We conclude this chapter by discussing the analyses’ limitations and key takeaways.

## Garfield Park and West Englewood

When the Safer Return demonstration was implemented in 2008, its services were targeted to individuals released from prison to the East Garfield Park community. East Garfield Park, on the west side of Chicago, is a high-density prisoner reentry community with high levels of economic and social disadvantage. We analyzed data on crime trends, sociodemographic characteristics, and reentry patterns in 2008, and subsequently selected West Englewood as the comparison community for East Garfield Park for the purposes of the quasi-experimental evaluation. West Englewood, on the south side of Chicago, was initially considered as a demonstration site. Like East Garfield Park, it is a high-density prisoner reentry community with high levels of crime and economic and social disadvantage.

Shortly after implementation of Safer Return began, service delivery in the demonstration community was expanded to include West Garfield Park for reasons discussed in this report’s companion (Rossman and Fontaine 2015). We refer to the demonstration community as Garfield Park in this and all subsequent chapters, since it includes East and West Garfield Park. Safer Return’s community boundaries were Governors Parkway (north), Talman Street (east), Taylor and Arlington Streets (south), and Cicero Avenue (west).

Table 2.1 summarizes Garfield Park and West Englewood along some of the key characteristics known to be related to crime and prisoner reentry. As shown in the table, the West Englewood and Garfield Park populations are comparable; each neighborhood is majority African American or black with higher levels of poverty, unemployment, and female-headed households with children—and lower levels of educational attainment—than national averages. At the time of Safer Return’s implementation in 2008, the communities also had crime rates that were substantially higher than Chicago’s average:

4,500 index crimes were reported in Garfield Park (East and West), and 4,600 index crimes were reported in West Englewood (Chicago Police Department, n.d.). One difference between the two communities was the rate of individuals returning from state prison: Garfield Park had about double the per capita reentry rate of West Englewood around the start of the demonstration.

TABLE 2.1

**Characteristics of Garfield Park and West Englewood**

	Garfield Park <sup>a</sup>	West Englewood <sup>b</sup>
<b>Reentry rate (state prisoners per 1,000 residents)</b>	31.1 <sup>c</sup>	18.8
<b>Community characteristics</b>		
Total population	42,803	41,973
Population density (population per square mile)	14,375	13,364
Owner-occupied households (%) <sup>d</sup>	27.7	47.5
Moved in the past five years (%) <sup>d</sup>	47.6	38.5
Vacant housing units (%)	26.6	23.1
<b>Sociodemographic characteristics</b>		
African American/black (%) <sup>e</sup>	95.0	95.1
Per capita income (2011 inflation-adjusted dollars) <sup>e</sup>	12,690	11,380
Female-headed households with children (%) <sup>f</sup>	48.0	40.4
Individuals living below the federal poverty level (%) <sup>g</sup>	41.9	40.6
Families living below the federal poverty level (%) <sup>f</sup>	37.9	32.9
Households on public assistance (%) <sup>d</sup>	9.3	5.2
Individuals who are unemployed (%) <sup>h</sup>	22.1	34.7
Adults who have earned a high school degree or equivalent (%) <sup>i</sup>	36.7	34.8
Adults who have had some college education (%) <sup>i</sup>	22.9	25.5
Adults who have earned an associate's degree or higher (%) <sup>i</sup>	16.1	12.1
Individuals who have never been married (%) <sup>j</sup>	61.9	57.5
Married individuals (%) <sup>j</sup>	17.0	18.9
Divorced, separated, or widowed individuals (%) <sup>j</sup>	21.0	23.6

**Sources:** Urban Institute analysis of data from the Illinois Department of Corrections (2004–06) and the American Community Survey (2007–11).

<sup>a</sup>The Safer Return catchment area (Governors Parkway, Talman Street, Taylor and Arlington Streets, and Cicero Avenue) includes the East Garfield Park and West Garfield Park communities, which include parts of the 60612 and 60624 zip codes.

<sup>b</sup>West Englewood includes the 60636 zip code.

<sup>c</sup>Reentry rate in Garfield Park was calculated using data on releases to zip codes 60612 and 60624 and the corresponding population numbers for those zip codes.

<sup>d</sup>Percentage of the total number of households.

<sup>e</sup>Calculated using the total population.

<sup>f</sup>Percentage of the total number of families.

<sup>g</sup>The population for whom poverty status has been determined.

<sup>h</sup>Percentage of individuals 16 and older.

<sup>i</sup>Percentage of individuals 25 and older.

<sup>j</sup>Percentage of individuals 15 and older.

## Methodology and Data Sources

To understand community members' perceptions, a 75-question survey was implemented at three points in time: November 2009, May 2011, and November 2012. The survey was designed to take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to administer, and it contained questions on the following domains:

- Sociodemographic characteristics
- Neighborhood residency
- Quality of life
- Neighborhood friendships
- Neighborhood social cohesion and social control
- Quality of neighborhood resources
- Neighborhood safety and precautionary behaviors
- Knowledge of and experiences with crime and victimization
- Police-community relations and police responsiveness
- Support for individuals returning from prison

To garner a sample of residents in the two neighborhoods, we implemented a variation on the Red Hook Survey model and trained local residents recruited by the Safer Foundation who were familiar with the two neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup> Interviewers recruited residents by knocking on their doors, visiting neighborhood businesses and churches, and speaking to them on neighborhood streets. Survey participants were offered a modest non-monetary incentive for completing the survey. Each wave of surveys was implemented over a period of four to five days, including weekends.

We attempted to target each quadrant of the neighborhoods to gather a representative sample of residents. Individuals were eligible to participate in the survey if they were over the age of 18 and self-identified as living in the neighborhood. To check neighborhood residency, we asked respondents to identify the street they lived on. In total, more than 1,400 residents completed the survey over the three survey waves. In November 2009, 382 individuals completed the survey, and results from 354 were considered valid (by checking street addresses) and therefore analyzed. In May 2011, 543 individuals completed the survey, and results from 467 were considered valid and analyzed. In November 2012, 489 individuals completed the survey, and results from 448 were considered valid and analyzed. The total number of valid surveys in each neighborhood is shown in table 2.2.

TABLE 2.2

**Number of Valid Surveys**

	Garfield Park	West Englewood
November 2009	159	195
May 2011	244	223
November 2012	226	222
<b>Total</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>640</b>

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

This chapter focuses on all the survey domains to examine whether Garfield Park residents had different perceptions than West Englewood residents. We performed bivariate analyses of difference (two-tailed *t*-tests and chi-square tests) on each domain. For all the domains, we created scaled measures that demonstrated acceptable reliability (an alpha score of 0.7 or higher) and assessed whether Garfield Park and West Englewood residents differed on those scales using two-tailed *t*-tests.

Instead of discussing the findings by each wave, we analyzed the pooled data across the three waves to present an overall picture of residents' perspectives over time, focusing particular attention on differences between the two neighborhoods. We did this for several reasons. First, we found little variation in the differences between the neighborhoods across waves. For the most part, the differences between residents in wave one (as reported by Fontaine and Gilchrist-Scott [2014]) were consistent with the differences in waves two and three.<sup>2</sup> Second, the pooled analysis provides an overall picture of the community context while Safer Return was being implemented and provides a better description of the community context during this time than a discussion of wave-to-wave variation would yield. The three survey waves do not neatly correspond with any meaningful milestones or changes in the implementation of the Safer Return program.

Third, the pooled analysis minimizes the wave-to-wave variation that may be evident in specific domains as a result of the timing of the different sample waves. For example, wave two surveys were conducted in the summer, and wave one and wave three surveys were conducted in the fall. In addition, a 2012 crime spike in Chicago may have affected residents' perceptions of neighborhood quality (the city's crime spike received national attention). Finally, as discussed by Rossman and Fontaine (2015) in great detail, actual implementation of Safer Return included minimal direct engagement or outreach to the community that would provide the impetus for analyzing change over time. Any changes evident over time and differences mentioned between the Garfield Park and West Englewood residents should not be mischaracterized as being the direct result of Safer Return implementation. In summary, the

findings we discuss here provide an overall sense of the treatment and comparison neighborhoods, as rated by their residents.

## Findings

### Sociodemographic Profiles

The sociodemographic profile of survey respondents is presented in table 2.3. Responses were gathered from male and female residents ranging in age from 18 to 84 years in Garfield Park and 18 to 89 years in West Englewood. The majority of respondents surveyed identified themselves as African American or black with limited annual family incomes and relatively low educational attainment. Roughly half of the respondents had never been married, and nearly half attended religious services at least weekly. Respondents reported relatively long tenures in their neighborhood and current home. A sizable group of individuals also reported direct experience with the criminal justice system.

A comparison of the sample characteristics in table 2.3 and the neighborhood population characteristics in table 2.1 shows that the local surveyors recruited participants who were fairly representative of the overall neighborhood. The survey findings are not intended to be generalized to the entire neighborhood—particularly since the sampling strategy was not random—but we have confidence that they are not an aberration of the sampling strategy.

There were a few sociodemographic differences in the residents recruited from the two neighborhoods. The respondents in the two neighborhoods were similar in gender, age, race, marital status, annual family income, and neighborhood tenure. Marginally significant differences were observed in educational attainment and religious service attendance: individuals recruited from West Englewood reported slightly higher educational attainment and more frequent religious service attendance than those recruited from Garfield Park. West Englewood respondents also reported living in their current home significantly longer than Garfield Park respondents. Finally, significantly more individuals who had ever been incarcerated were recruited from Garfield Park (51 percent) than from West Englewood (37 percent), which is consistent with the different reentry rates in these communities shown in table 2.1.

With the exception of their history of incarceration, we might expect Garfield Park and West Englewood residents to have comparable feelings about their neighborhood resources and conditions.

However, to the extent that direct exposure to the criminal justice system affects perceptions of neighborhood conditions and resources—and we believe it does—we might expect Garfield Park respondents to have a more negative overall view of their neighborhood than West Englewood respondents. Given the known challenges with reentry, including challenges finding and gaining access to certain neighborhood services and overcoming negative perceptions among community residents, the significantly greater percentage of formerly incarcerated individuals among the Garfield Park sample may account for observed differences in perceived neighborhood conditions and resources.

TABLE 2.3

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents, 2009–12

	Garfield Park	West Englewood
<b>Male (%)</b>	55.3	59.4
<b>Mean age (years)</b>	45.0	44.3
<b>African American/black (%)</b>	95.9	96.4
<b>Never married (%)</b>	50.3	46.8
<b>Education (%)*</b>		
Less than high school degree	17.7	14.8
High school degree or GED	50.5	55.2
Some college	17.4	17.3
Two year college or vocational degree	7.4	7.1
Four year college degree	4.7	5.1
Attended graduate school	2.3	0.5
<b>Annual family income (%)</b>		
Less than \$10,000	55.8	55.9
\$10,000 to \$29,999	18.6	17.6
\$30,000 to \$39,999	11.2	13.6
\$40,000 to \$49,999	5.7	6.8
\$50,000 or more	8.7	6.0
<b>Residential stability</b>		
Mean years living in the community	16.5	16.0
Mean years living in current home*	12.2	13.5
<b>Religious service attendance (%)*</b>		
Daily	5.0	7.7
Weekly	40.6	40.8
Monthly	15.6	18.4
A few times a year	29.2	24.0
Never	9.6	9.0
<b>Ever incarcerated (%)***</b>	50.9	37.0

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 1,269$  (except “male” and “ever incarcerated,” asked in waves 2 and 3 only; valid  $n = 915$ ). Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

## Quality of Life and Community Friendships

Respondents were asked questions on how they felt about their quality of life in the community and how well they felt connected to their community. Quality of life and number of friendships may be related to residents' perceptions of neighborhood cohesion and control, and may be affected by their perceptions of community resources, crime and victimization, and formerly incarcerated people returning to their neighborhood. Responses about quality of life provide an indication of overall satisfaction with the neighborhood. Residents were asked to rate their quality of life in the community on a scale of 1 (very bad) to 5 (excellent) and to identify the number of friendships they had in the neighborhood, excluding those they lived with.

Respondents' impressions of their quality of life in the community were, on average, more negative than positive in both neighborhoods (table 2.4). Garfield Park respondents reported a significantly higher quality of life (average rating of 2.8 out of 5) than West Englewood respondents (2.3 out of 5). At the same time, approximately one-third of respondents in each neighborhood rated their quality of life in the middle of the 5-point scale (3 out of 5). Less than 10 percent of respondents in each neighborhood rated their quality of life as "excellent."

There were significant differences in reported number of neighborhood friendships. In general, number of friendships varied considerably among respondents in both neighborhoods. One-third of respondents reported 2 or fewer neighborhood friendships, and another third reported 10 or more. Overall, Garfield Park respondents reported more neighborhood friendships than West Englewood respondents.

TABLE 2.4

## Quality of Life and Neighborhood Friendships, 2009–12

	Garfield Park	West Englewood
<b>Quality-of-life rating (%)***</b>		
1 (very bad)	18.3	32.6
2	18.3	22.6
3	39.9	31.8
4	14.9	8.8
5 (excellent)	8.6	4.2
<b>Quality-of-life rating<sup>a</sup> (average)***</b>	2.8	2.3
<b>Number of neighborhood friendships (%)<sup>b***</sup></b>		
None	17.9	21.0
1 to 2	17.5	15.9
3 to 5	21.1	20.4
6 or 9	7.2	12.2
10 or more	36.2	30.5

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 1,269$ . Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>On a scale of 1 (very bad) to 5 (excellent.)

<sup>b</sup>Excludes individuals living in the same household.

## Collective Efficacy

To assess respondents' connectedness with other residents, the survey included validated questions about social cohesion and informal social control developed by Morenoff and Sampson (1997).

Research has consistently shown that social cohesion and social control, otherwise known as collective efficacy, are inversely related to crime, victimization, and delinquency (Morenoff, Sampson, and Raudenbush 2001; Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley 2002). Neighborhoods with greater levels of collective efficacy have been found to have lower rates of crime, victimization, and delinquency than those with lower levels of collective efficacy (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997). Differences in residents' perceptions of collective efficacy provide some context as to whether to expect better or worse reentry and reintegration outcomes in Garfield Park than West Englewood.

Consistent with Sampson and colleagues' measure of collective efficacy, respondents were asked several questions about the likelihood that their neighbors would intervene in certain scenarios, and another set about the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with certain statements. Garfield Park and West Englewood respondents provided significantly different responses to the five validated questions assessing neighborhood social control, which asked them to rate the likelihood that their neighbors would intervene in the following situations on a scale of 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely):

1. If a group of children was skipping school and hanging out on a street corner, how likely is it that your neighbors would do something about it?
2. If some children were spray-painting graffiti on a local building, how likely is it that your neighbors would do something about it?
3. If a child was showing disrespect to an adult, how likely is it that people in your neighborhood would scold that child?
4. If there was a fight in front of your house and someone was beaten up or threatened, how likely is it that your neighbors would break it up?
5. Suppose that because of budget cuts the fire station closest to your home was going to be closed down by the city: how likely is it that neighborhood residents would organize to try to do something to keep the fire station open?

Responses are summarized in table 2.5. On four of the five questions, Garfield Park residents felt it was more likely that neighborhood residents *would* intervene. A scale of social control ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ) was significantly different in the two neighborhoods. In both neighborhoods, the likelihood of intervening was reported to be highest if the local fire station was going to close and lowest if neighborhood children were skipping school.

Garfield Park and West Englewood respondents also provided significantly different responses to the five questions assessing neighborhood social cohesion, which asked them to rate the following statements on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree):

1. This is a close-knit neighborhood.
2. People around here are willing to help their neighbors.
3. People in this neighborhood generally get along with each other.
4. People in this neighborhood share the same values.
5. People in this neighborhood can be trusted.

Responses to these questions are also summarized in table 2.5. A marginally reliable scale of social cohesion ( $\alpha = 0.61$ ) was significantly different across the two communities: there was more agreement with the statements assessing social cohesion among Garfield Park respondents than among West Englewood respondents. Significantly more Garfield Park respondents agreed that the neighborhood was close-knit, that people in the neighborhood were willing to help their neighbors, and that people in the neighborhood could be trusted. The only statement that significantly more West Englewood respondents agreed with was that people in the neighborhood shared the same values. From the perspective of the neighborhood residents, there appeared to be more social control and social

cohesion (that may have provided a better context for reentry and reintegration) in Garfield Park than in West Englewood.

TABLE 2.5

Neighborhood Social Control and Social Cohesion, 2009–12

	Garfield Park	West Englewood
<b>Social control rating (average)<sup>a</sup></b>		
Children were skipping school	2.6	2.4
Children were spray-painting graffiti <sup>***</sup>	3.0	2.7
Child was showing disrespect <sup>***</sup>	2.9	2.6
Fight in front of your house; someone was beaten or threatened <sup>***</sup>	3.0	2.7
Fire station to be closed because of budget cuts <sup>***</sup>	3.3	2.8
Social-control scale average <sup>b***</sup>	3.0	2.7
<b>Social cohesion rating (average)<sup>c</sup></b>		
This is a close-knit neighborhood <sup>***</sup>	3.1	2.5
People are willing to help their neighbors <sup>***</sup>	3.0	2.6
People generally get along	3.3	3.3
People share the same values <sup>***</sup>	3.1	3.3
People can be trusted <sup>d***</sup>	2.4	2.2
Social-cohesion scale average <sup>d***</sup>	3.0	2.8

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 1,269$ . Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests; \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup> Average ratings on a scale of 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely) on the five social control questions.

<sup>b</sup> Additive scale divided by the number of items;  $\alpha = 0.83$ .

<sup>c</sup> Average ratings on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) on the five social cohesion questions.

<sup>d</sup> Additive scale divided by the number of items;  $\alpha = 0.61$ .

## Community Resources

To get a sense of residents' feelings about the resources in their communities, some of which are critical to successful reentry, respondents were asked to rate the quality of community resources on a scale of 1 (very bad) to 5 (excellent). Several of these resources—notably churches, health clinics, social services agencies, and substance abuse treatment agencies—were to be leveraged as part of the Safer Return model (Rossman and Fontaine 2015). Table 2.6 shows the results of these ratings. Across both neighborhoods, respondents give the highest average ratings to community churches and the lowest average ratings to community recreational centers. Garfield Park respondents provided higher average ratings than West Englewood respondents for community churches, health clinics, recreational centers, schools, parks and public spaces, social service agencies, and substance abuse treatment agencies.

TABLE 2.6

## Average Ratings of Community Resources, 2009–12

	Garfield Park	West Englewood
Churches	4.2	4.1
Soup kitchens	3.7	3.7
Health clinics***	3.4	3.2
Recreational centers***	2.9	2.6
Schools***	3.8	3.5
Parks and public spaces**	3.2	3.1
Social service agencies***	3.2	2.9
Substance abuse treatment agencies***	3.2	2.8
Community-resources scale average <sup>a</sup>	3.4	3.3

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** Respondents provided ratings on a scale of 1 (very bad) to 5 (excellent). Valid  $N = 1,269$ . Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests; \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items;  $\alpha = 0.86$ .

A two-tailed test of statistical differences between the two respondent groups on a scale of community resources ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ) approached marginal statistical significance ( $p = 0.12$ ). Differences in the highest ratings for community resources (table 2.7) may account for the lack of significance in the scale average. Though average ratings of resources were higher in Garfield Park than West Englewood overall, the percentages of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents with high ratings of community resources were not substantially different (with the possible exception of schools and substance abuse treatment agencies). It is worth mentioning that the two community resources that are critical for successful reentry and reintegration, social services agencies and substance abuse treatment agencies, were rated significantly higher in Garfield Park than West Englewood.

TABLE 2.7

## High Ratings of Community Resources, 2009–12

	Garfield Park (%)	West Englewood (%)
Churches	74.3	71.8
Soup kitchens	56.7	60.0
Health clinics	50.3	42.2
Recreational centers	32.8	29.9
Schools	63.1	53.7
Parks and public spaces	42.1	38.5
Social service agencies	41.9	35.5
Substance abuse treatment agencies	46.4	35.0

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** High ratings are ratings of 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 (very bad) to 5 (excellent). Valid  $N = 1,269$ .

## Crime and Safety

Garfield Park and West Englewood are both high-crime, high-reentry neighborhoods. Safer Return intended to increase the successful reentry of returning citizens while increasing public safety in Garfield Park relative to the comparison community. To understand respondents' perspectives on the frequency of crime and experiences with crime and safety measures, we asked about their perceptions of the safety of specific community landmarks, the frequency with which they engaged in precautionary behaviors out of concern for their safety, and their knowledge of and experiences with crime and victimization. The survey did not ask about the timing of victimization experiences relative to engagement in precautionary behavior or relative to the perceived safety of community landmarks. Therefore, we do not know whether victimization leads to precautionary behaviors and changes perceptions of safety, or whether precautionary behaviors and perceptions of safety lead to (presumably less) victimization. Therefore, we discuss findings around different crime and safety perceptions independently, but with an understanding that they are likely related. The questions on crime and safety provide further context on the ubiquity of crime in the two neighborhoods and contextualize the crime and victimization outcomes discussed in chapters 3 and 5.

As shown in table 2.8, Garfield Park and West Englewood respondents felt significantly differently about the safety of key neighborhood landmarks. On a scale of 1 (dangerous) to 5 (very safe), West Englewood residents rated all six community landmarks well below 3 on average: they felt that their community landmarks were relatively dangerous. Meanwhile, Garfield Park residents rated at least one of their six community landmarks—the nearest public transportation stop—as relatively safe. However, they rated neighborhood parks and their neighborhood as a whole as relatively dangerous. Garfield Park respondents gave higher ratings to each community landmark (i.e., they thought they were safer) than West Englewood respondents. Although Garfield Park residents had higher average ratings than West Englewood residents on every community landmark, they did not necessarily perceive their community as safe: along the 5-point scale, the average rating on the scale of landmark safety ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ) was only 3.0 in Garfield Park and 2.5 in West Englewood.

TABLE 2.8

## Average Ratings of the Safety of Community Landmarks, 2009–12

	Garfield Park	West Englewood
Respondent's block***	3.0	2.6
Respondent's neighborhood***	2.8	2.3
Way to and from public transportation***	3.0	2.6
The nearest public transportation stop***	3.2	2.6
Neighborhood stores***	3.0	2.6
Neighborhood parks***	2.9	2.5
Landmark-safety scale average <sup>a***</sup>	3.0	2.5

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** Respondents provided ratings on a scale of 1 (dangerous) to 5 (very safe). Valid  $N = 1,269$ . Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests; \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.89.

The perceived dangerousness of community landmarks is illustrated in table 2.9. With the exception of the nearest public transportation stop, only around a third or fewer of Garfield Park respondents thought that their community landmarks were safe (rated at 4 or 5). A quarter or fewer of West Englewood respondents thought their community landmarks were safe. These numbers indicate that although Garfield Park residents might perceive their neighborhood as less dangerous overall, neither neighborhood is perceived as particularly safe.

TABLE 2.9

## High Ratings of the Safety of Community Landmarks, 2009–12

	Garfield Park (%)	West Englewood (%)
Respondent's block	37.1	24.4
Respondent's neighborhood	28.1	18.1
Way to and from public transportation	35.1	22.0
The nearest public transportation stop	42.9	21.9
Neighborhood stores	34.9	24.0
Neighborhood parks	33.2	22.4

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** High ratings are ratings of 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 (dangerous) to 5 (very safe). Valid  $N = 1,269$ .

To further explore the safety of the two neighborhoods, respondents were asked how often they avoided certain streets, stayed in at night, avoided traveling alone, avoided certain buildings, and carried a weapon out of concern for their own safety (table 2.10). With the exception of carrying a weapon, respondents in both neighborhoods were in the middle of the four-point scale, indicating that they engaged in these behaviors occasionally. Although a scale of precautionary behavior (omitting the weapon question) was not significantly different between the neighborhood residents ( $\alpha = 0.71$ ),

Garfield Park respondents did report engaging in some precautionary behaviors significantly less often than West Englewood respondents (e.g., avoiding certain streets and carrying a weapon).

TABLE 2.10

**Average Frequency of Precautionary Behaviors, 2009–12**

	Garfield Park	West Englewood
Avoid certain streets**	2.5	2.3
Stay in at night	2.3	2.3
Avoid traveling alone	2.4	2.4
Avoid certain buildings	2.3	2.2
Carry a weapon*	3.3	3.2
Precautionary-behavior scale average <sup>a</sup>	2.4	2.3

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** Respondents provided ratings about the frequency of their engagement in precautionary behaviors out of concern for their own safety on a scale of 1 (all the time) to 4 (never). Valid *N* = 1,269. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed *t*-tests; \* *p* < 0.10, \*\* *p* < 0.05, \*\*\* *p* < 0.01.

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items, excludes “carry a weapon”; alpha = 0.71.

As shown in table 2.11, approximately one-third of respondents in each community reported engaging in these precautionary behaviors—with the exception of carrying a weapon—all the time.

TABLE 2.11

**Share of Respondents Who Engage in Precautionary Behaviors All the Time, 2009–12**

	Garfield Park (%)	West Englewood (%)
Avoid certain streets	30.6	32.8
Stay in at night	33.1	30.5
Avoid traveling alone	31.8	30.6
Avoid certain buildings	37.6	37.1
Carry a weapon	15.7	16.9

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** “All the time” is a rating of 1 on a scale of 1 (all the time) to 4 (never). Valid *N* = 1,269.

Residents were also asked how often crimes had occurred in their neighborhood over the past year and whether they had been victimized by any of these crimes in the past year. Their responses provide context for their perceptions of community safety and reported engagement in cautionary behavior.

Respondents were asked to rate the frequency of certain types of crime on a scale of 1 (daily) to 5 (never). Average ratings skewed toward the high end of the scale and indicate that respondents perceived the crimes as occurring a few times in the past year (table 2.12). The responses of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents differed significantly: Garfield Park residents perceived all eight

crime types as happening less frequently. A scale of the frequency of neighborhood crime ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ) was significantly different across respondents from the two neighborhoods.

Perceived frequency varied by crime type; in general, respondents' perceptions were that rapes and sexual assaults occurred less frequently and that shootings and attempted shootings occurred more frequently. The difference in the perceived frequency of certain criminal events is probably related to the likelihood that a crime would come to the attention of the larger community and those not involved in the criminal activity directly. The difference in perceived frequency is also likely a result of the fact that sexual assaults and home burglaries are reported less frequently and do not usually receive the same local media attention that shootings receive.

TABLE 2.12

**Average Ratings of the Frequency of Crimes over the Past Year, 2009–12**

	Garfield Park	West Englewood
Violent fight between neighbors***	3.4	3.2
Mugging or robbery***	3.6	3.1
Home burglary***	3.9	3.3
Car theft***	3.8	3.3
Assault***	3.4	3.1
Rape or sexual assault***	4.2	3.8
Stabbing or stabbing attempt***	3.6	3.2
Shooting or shooting attempt***	3.0	2.5
Crime scale average <sup>a</sup> ***	3.6	3.2

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** Average ratings on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = daily, 2 = weekly, 3 = monthly, 4 = a few times, and 5 = never. Valid  $N = 1,269$ . Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests; \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items;  $\alpha = 0.93$ .

To understand whether community residents experienced crime personally, we asked respondents whether they knew a victim of any of these types of crime in their neighborhood, and whether they themselves had been victimized by any of these crimes in the past year. Table 2.13 shows that the share of respondents who knew someone who had been a victim any of these types of crime in the past year was significantly different in the two neighborhoods. More West Englewood respondents indicated that they knew victims of all eight crime types than those in Garfield Park, with the exception of the share of those who knew victims of a stabbing or stabbing event.

The difference between the neighborhoods is reflected in the significant difference in the scale of known victimization ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ). Moreover, 18 percent of West Englewood respondents reported that they themselves had been a victim of one of the crimes listed in table 2.13, compared with 12 percent of

Garfield Park respondents. Taken together, tables 2.8 through 2.13 indicate that crime and victimization are greater concerns for West Englewood residents than for Garfield Park residents, but that residents in both neighborhoods engage in comparable precautionary behaviors out of concern for their own safety.

TABLE 2.13

**Share of Respondents Who Knew or Were a Victim of Crime in Their Neighborhood in the Past Year, 2009–12**

	Garfield Park	West Englewood
Violent fight between neighbors (%)***	39.1	50.6
Mugging or robbery (%)***	32.7	43.3
Home burglary (%)***	24.7	43.5
Car theft (%)***	30.4	41.6
Assault (%)***	39.0	49.3
Rape or sexual assault (%)***	16.7	23.8
Stabbing or stabbing attempt (%)	35.1	36.3
Shooting or shooting attempt (%)**	52.4	58.7
Known-victimization scale average <sup>a</sup> ***	33.2	43.3
Respondent victim of any of the above (%)***	11.9	18.2

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 1,269$ . Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests; \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.87.

Because relationships between law enforcement and high-crime minority neighborhoods tend to be fractured, the survey also included two questions assessing respondents' views of local law enforcement. Responses provide yet another assessment of the neighborhood context. Questions on local law enforcement were also included because Safer Return's effort to effect system reform was intended to include a partnership with local law enforcement (Rossman and Fontaine 2015). Respondents were asked to rate the relationship between the police and the community during the past 12 months on a scale of 1 (very bad) to 5 (excellent), and then to rate the response of police to community issues during the past 12 months using the same scale. On both of these questions, Garfield Park and West Englewood respondents' ratings skewed toward the low end of the scale: they perceived that police-community relations and police response to community issues were relatively poor. Garfield Park respondents had significantly higher ratings than West Englewood respondents on both of these topics, yet their ratings were still quite low (table 2.14).

TABLE 2.14

## Average Ratings of Police Response and Police-Community Relations, 2009–12

	Garfield Park	West Englewood
Relationship between police and your community***	2.5	2.1
Response of police to community issues***	2.6	2.2

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** Average ratings on a scale of 1 (very bad) to 5 (excellent). Valid  $N = 1,269$ . Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests; \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

## Perceptions of Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

Finally, the survey asked a series of questions about formerly incarcerated individuals to explore commonly held perceptions about the reentry population. These questions were used to assess the community climate for returning prisoners, based on the perceptions of residents. As mentioned, residents in Garfield Park were expected to be active participants in—and to benefit from—the Safer Return demonstration. Though actual implementation of the demonstration did not include significant direct community participation, it did include several community projects that residents would have benefitted from; these projects may have changed residents' perceptions of formerly incarcerated individuals in their neighborhood (Rossman and Fontaine 2015).

As shown in tables 2.15 and 2.16, there is general support for returning individuals, particularly in Garfield Park. There were several significant differences in opinions of formerly incarcerated individuals among Garfield Park and West Englewood residents. A scale of perceptions of returning individuals ( $\alpha = 0.74$ ) was significantly different in the two communities; more Garfield Park residents disagreed with negative statements or opinions of formerly incarcerated people. The majority in both neighborhoods *disagreed* that community resources should not be increased for returning individuals, that returning individuals were dangerous to them and their families, that returning individuals strained neighborhood resources, and that returning individuals made the neighborhood dangerous. Meanwhile, roughly two-thirds in Garfield Park also *disagreed* that community members were too supportive of returning individuals, that returning individuals were a bad influence on children, and that they preferred to live in an apartment or on a block without any returning individuals.

These findings suggest that the reentry and reintegration context was more supportive in Garfield Park than West Englewood or that Garfield Park residents' perceptions reflect the community outreach efforts that Safer Return was conducting. It is worth noting again that Garfield Park and West

Englewood both have high concentrations of returning prisoners and that our sample included a substantial number of respondents who had ever been incarcerated, particularly in Garfield Park.

TABLE 2.15

**Average Ratings of Statements about Returning Individuals, 2009–12**

	Garfield Park	West Englewood
This community does not welcome returning individuals***	2.7	3.0
Community resources targeted to returning individuals should not be increased***	2.0	2.4
Returning individuals are a danger to me and my family***	2.0	2.3
Community members are too supportive of returning individuals***	2.2	2.5
Community members do not socialize with returning individuals***	2.6	3.1
I would prefer if returning individuals returned to a different neighborhood***	2.3	2.7
Returning individuals are a bad influence on children***	2.2	2.6
In this community, returning individuals are not treated the same as everyone else	3.0	3.1
Returning individuals strain neighborhood resources***	2.2	2.4
Returning individuals don't want to change their ways	2.6	2.7
I would prefer to live in an apartment or block without any returning individuals***	2.2	2.7
Returning individuals have made this neighborhood dangerous***	2.1	2.4
Perceptions-of-returning-individuals scale average <sup>a</sup> ***	2.3	2.7

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** Average ratings on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Valid  $N = 1,269$ . Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests; \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.74.

TABLE 2.16

**Share of Respondents Who Disagree with Common Perceptions of Returning Individuals, 2009–12**

	Garfield Park (%)	West Englewood (%)
This community does not welcome returning individuals	45.8	31.4
Community resources targeted to returning individuals should not be increased***	67.1	51.2
Returning individuals are a danger to me and my family***	66.0	54.5
Community members are too supportive of returning individuals***	63.1	48.6
Community members do not socialize with returning individuals***	48.0	30.0
I would prefer if returning individuals returned to a different neighborhood***	59.3	47.3
Returning individuals are a bad influence on children***	61.5	49.3
In this community, returning individuals are not treated the same as everyone else	40.0	31.4
Returning individuals strain neighborhood resources***	61.6	52.0
Returning individuals don't want to change their ways	42.8	41.3
I would prefer to live in an apartment or block without any returning individuals***	64.1	47.6
Returning individuals have made this neighborhood dangerous***	65.4	50.6

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents.

**Notes:** Disagreement is a rating of 1 or 2 on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Valid  $N = 1,269$ . Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests; \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

# Conclusions and Key Takeaways

## Limitations

Before we discuss the key takeaways of this analysis, we will mention two important limitations. First, the sample of residents recruited to take the surveys was not random. Our sampling strategy was never intended to generate a representative sample of individuals living in either neighborhood, and our findings may not be generalizable to the larger community. A random sample of Garfield Park and West Englewood residents may uncover different findings in the percentage of residents agreeing or disagreeing with any question or in the magnitude of differences between respondents from the two neighborhoods. That said, according to observable (i.e., sociodemographic) characteristics, our recruitment method does not appear to have gathered a group of individuals substantially different from those in the larger community.

Second, there were some significant differences between the respondents in the neighborhoods that are related to several of the survey domains and could therefore account for the observed differences. In particular, the fact that more individuals who had ever been incarcerated were surveyed in Garfield Park than in West Englewood may account for some of the observed differences between the neighborhood respondents, particularly differences in opinions of returning citizens. Nonetheless, we believe that the findings are robust and show more favorable community conditions in Garfield Park than in West Englewood. West Englewood was, in fact, one of the neighborhoods initially under consideration for Safer Return implementation. Garfield Park was chosen over West Englewood, in part because of a more favorable reentry context that was evidenced through discussions with community stakeholders while the design for Safer Return was being finalized (see Rossman, Fontaine, and Perry [2014] for discussion).

## Key Takeaways

Our focus on community conditions provides context for the reentry and reintegration outcomes discussed in chapters 3 and 5 of this report and also serves to provide a general sense of whether the demonstration's implementation was associated with community conditions. With this in mind, there are two key takeaways:

1. The reentry and reintegration context in both neighborhoods was less than favorable, but it was significantly better in Garfield Park than West Englewood while the demonstration was being implemented (from the perspective of residents). That is, we have reasons to expect reentry and reintegration outcomes to be better for Safer Return participants returning to Garfield Park than for West Englewood comparisons. This finding supports the decision to implement Safer Return in Garfield Park over West Englewood.
2. There may be a relationship between Safer Return implementation and community conditions:
  - » First, Safer Return implementation may have benefitted from Garfield Park's more favorable reentry and reintegration context. Specifically, ratings of key community resources and opinions of returning individuals were much better in Garfield Park than in West Englewood throughout the demonstration, and these conditions may have helped Safer Return program managers put key aspects of the program into place. This likely indicates that the Safer Foundation and program planners selected an appropriate neighborhood that was favorable to returning citizens and had more favorable reentry and reintegration conditions (at least relative to West Englewood). Safer Return implementation may have been less successful in a neighborhood with less favorable conditions, including West Englewood.
  - » Second, Safer Return implementation may have led to some of the more favorable reentry and reintegration conditions perceived by the residents. To the extent that community residents benefitted directly or indirectly from the demonstration, the findings may reflect positive outcomes of Safer Return's implementation (e.g., the Civic Community Works component included neighborhood beautification projects that made community landmarks appear safer, and better reentry outcomes among program participants may have led to fewer community crimes). However, since we did not survey residents before Safer Return's implementation, this takeaway is only speculative. We do not know the extent to which the observed differences between Garfield Park and West Englewood residents were evident before the demonstration began.

# Chapter 3. Self-Reported Reintegration Outcomes

This chapter presents data collected from surveys administered to a sample of Safer Return (SR) participants in Garfield Park and formerly incarcerated individuals in the evaluation's comparison community, West Englewood (WE). The purpose of these surveys was twofold: to capture self-reported reentry and reintegration experiences of formerly incarcerated people over time, and to examine whether Safer Return participants exhibited better reentry and reintegration outcomes than formerly incarcerated people in West Englewood. As discussed in the companion implementation report, the demonstration succeeded in addressing several key needs of the program participants, particularly employment services and referrals for other services, such as substance abuse treatment. These surveys were intended to complement our analysis of administrative data on reincarceration outcomes (discussed in chapter 5) to determine whether the program was associated with broadly defined reintegration outcomes.

The first section of this chapter details the study methodology and data sources used for this portion of our analyses, focusing on the analytic strategy we used to compare the characteristics and outcomes of SR participants with those of the WE comparison sample. We then present the findings of these analyses before concluding the chapter with a discussion of limitations and key takeaways.

## Evaluation Methodology and Data Sources

To examine whether Safer Return had a positive effect on the reentry and reintegration experiences of formerly incarcerated individuals, this component of the quasi-experimental evaluation used surveys of a sample of Safer Return participants and former prisoners living in West Englewood. Because of resource limitations and because only a limited number of women were expected to participate in Safer Return, only men were included in the survey subsample. Surveys of former prisoners were administered in two waves: baseline and follow-up. The baseline survey was conducted in person four months after the former prisoners were released to the community, and it captured three distinct periods of time: four months before incarceration; during incarceration; and four months after release from incarceration. The baseline instrument included 206 questions covering the following domains:

- sociodemographic characteristics,

- family relationships and friendships,
- employment,
- perceptions of the community,
- mental and physical health,
- substance use,
- housing,
- recreation,
- spiritual beliefs,
- criminal history and victimization,
- programs and services,
- reentry experiences,
- parole supervision, and
- satisfaction with Safer Return.

A 97-question follow-up survey was conducted in person one year after the baseline survey (16 months after respondents' release from prison). The follow-up instrument was designed to explore the extent to which there were changes in the aforementioned domains one year after the baseline survey.

Former prisoners in Safer Return and West Englewood were recruited to take the baseline survey from April 2010 through December 2011. We used Safer Return program data and Illinois Department of Corrections release data to determine who participated in the program and who was being released to West Englewood (defined as the 60636 zip code), and reached out to individuals approximately one month after their release date to determine their interest in participating in the surveys. Five hundred and sixty-three men indicated an interest in participating. Of these, 385 were located and agreed to complete the baseline survey four months after their release: 154 SR participants and 231 WE comparisons. A total of 252 formerly incarcerated men completed the follow-up survey, including 100 SR participants and 152 WE comparisons. Of the 252 men who completed the follow-up survey, 33 had not completed the baseline survey.

## Evaluation Strategy

The goal of the analysis was to understand whether SR participants fared better than WE comparisons across a host of domains. Although the baseline survey covered three points in time, our analyses focus

on the postrelease outcomes available in the baseline and follow-up surveys. Specifically, we examine outcomes in the following domains:

- perceptions of police and community,
- family relationships and friendships,
- employment,
- mental and physical health,
- substance use,
- housing,
- criminal activity and victimization,
- reentry expectations and experiences, and
- services received.

For many of these measures, we used interrelated questions to create scaled measures that demonstrated acceptable reliability (an alpha score of 0.7 or higher). We then conducted preliminary analyses using bivariate tests—chi-square and two-tailed *t*-tests, as appropriate—on these outcomes to examine whether there were statistically significant differences between SR participants and WE comparisons. Next, we identified a set of outcomes from the bivariate tests that were (1) key outcomes based on the logic of the demonstration, and (2) statistically suitable for multivariate analyses. These outcomes included the following:

- At baseline
  - » A binary indicator for any legal employment since release
  - » A binary indicator for legal employment at the time of the survey
  - » A binary indicator for any alcohol use since release
  - » A binary indicator for any illicit drug use since release,
  - » A binary indicator for the development of a reentry plan in prison
  - » A binary indicator for the development of a reentry plan after release
  - » A binary indicator for having met with a case manager or service provider since release
  - » A binary indicator for having received any service since release
  - » Number of services received since release
- At follow-up
  - » A binary indicator for any legal employment since last survey
  - » A binary indicator for legal employment at the time of the follow-up survey
  - » A binary indicator for any alcohol use since last survey

- » A binary indicator for any illicit drug use since last survey
- » A binary indicator for any criminal behavior since last survey
- » A binary indicator for any criminal justice involvement since last survey
- » A binary indicator for having met with a case manager or service provider since last survey
- » A binary indicator for having received any service since last survey
- » Number of services received since last survey

We conducted multivariate analyses on the set of key outcomes using the baseline and follow-up survey data, controlling for demographic, educational, employment, health and mental health, criminal, and substance abuse history data that were available from the baseline survey. For each binary outcome, we used multivariate logistic regression. For the count outcomes (number of services received), we tested whether Poisson or negative-binomial regression models were more appropriate and chose the preferred model based on the Akaike information criterion.<sup>3</sup>

The multivariate logistic regressions were conducted using “doubly robust” models.<sup>4</sup> These models include independent variables as controls and are weighted by inverse propensity weights.<sup>5</sup> Propensity weights were used because they efficiently combine all available demographic, educational, employment, health and mental health, criminal, and substance abuse history data in a single metric to control for selection bias. In a multivariate model, the coefficient on any independent variable is less reliable in an unweighted model than it is in one that accounts for this balancing metric. One potential drawback to using weights, however, is that they reduce precision and increase the possibility of type 2 errors (false negatives). In light of the demographic, criminal history, and substance abuse history differences we observed between the groups (discussed in detail below), we assume that selection bias is a more salient concern to our analyses than precision.<sup>6</sup>

## Findings

### Demographic Profiles of Formerly Incarcerated Individuals in Safer Return and West Englewood

The characteristics of the men who participated in the baseline survey are reported in table 3.1. The majority of study participants self-identified as 30 to 40 years old, black or African American, and never married, and as having low levels of educational attainment. The average respondent had at least one

child. More than two-thirds of respondents had been diagnosed with a physical health condition at some point, and approximately one-fifth had at some point been told by a doctor that they had a mental illness. The men reported high rates of unemployment in the four months before their incarceration, and nearly 1 in 10 reported that he had never been legally employed. Relative to those in West Englewood, Safer Return men were significantly older (38 years compared with 35 years), and a significantly greater share reported being homeless at least once in their lifetime (31 percent compared with 22 percent). Significantly fewer SR participants self-identified as black or African American compared with WE comparisons (the next most reported racial/ethnic category was Hispanic/Latino).

The former prisoners also reported extensive, varied histories of substance use. Most of the men reported a history of drinking alcohol and using marijuana. Only a few of the former prisoners from either community reported ever using hydrocodone, methadone, or amphetamines or methamphetamines, but roughly 15 percent reported a history of ecstasy use. Compared with the WE comparisons, a greater proportion of SR participants had used heroin (40 percent compared with 20 percent), methadone (13 percent compared with 5 percent), and cocaine (43 percent compared with 23 percent) at some point.

Both groups reported extensive contact with the criminal justice system. Regarding their most recent prison commitment, the most common offenses reported by men in both groups were drug-related (i.e., drug possession or sale). On average, the men had spent approximately two and a half years in prison before release. A little more than one-third of those surveyed reported that they were in a gang before incarceration, and nearly the entire sample had been on parole since release. Safer Return participants reported significantly more contact with the criminal justice system than the comparison men in West Englewood. Indeed, compared with the WE men, SR participants had significantly more adult convictions, prison sentences, and parole revocations. A significantly greater proportion of SR participants also indicated that they had been on parole since their release and that they had ever spent time in a juvenile detention or correctional facility for a crime committed before the age of 18.

Overall, SR men appeared to be at a higher risk for recidivism and poorer reentry and reintegration outcomes because of their more extensive histories of criminal justice system contact, substance use, and residential instability. The demographic, educational, employment, health and mental health, criminal, and substance abuse characteristics presented in table 3.1 were controlled for in the multivariate regression models discussed later in this chapter.

TABLE 3.1

**Demographic Characteristics of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Average age in years***</b>	38.1	34.9
<b>Race (%)*</b>		
Black or African American	90.9	95.2
Other	9.1	4.8
<b>Highest level of education ever completed (%)*</b>		
Less than high school graduate or GED	42.2	49.8
High school graduate or GED	35.1	39.0
Vocational program certificate	2.0	0.9
Some college	18.2	9.1
College graduate or higher	2.6	1.3
<b>US military veteran (%)*</b>	5.8	2.2
<b>Ever married (%)</b>	26.0	22.1
<b>Average number of children</b>	1.1	1.3
<b>Ever homeless (%)**</b>	31.2	21.7
<b>Employment history (%)</b>		
Unemployed in the four months before prison	64.3	58.8
Never legally employed	9.1	10.4
<b>Health history (%)</b>		
Ever diagnosed by a doctor with a physical condition <sup>a</sup>	76.0	69.7
Ever diagnosed by a doctor with a mental illness <sup>b</sup>	19.5	22.1
<b>Substance use history (%)</b>		
Alcohol	91.6	92.2
Marijuana	84.4	81.0
Heroin***	40.3	19.5
Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Tussionex)	7.8	6.1
Methadone***	13.0	4.8
Cocaine (powder, crack, rock)***	42.9	22.5
Amphetamines or methamphetamines (crank, ice, crystal, speed)	2.0	1.3
Ecstasy (X)	17.5	14.3
Other illegal drug(s)	8.5	4.3
<b>Criminal history</b>		
Average age at first arrest	18.0	17.3
Ever in a juvenile detention center or correctional facility (%)*	40.9	31.7
Average number of adult convictions***	5.8	3.9
Average number of prison sentences***	3.8	2.7
Average number of times parole revoked and sent back to prison ***	1.1	0.5
Member of gang in the four months before most recent prison term (%)	36.4	35.5
Length of most recent prison stay before release (average number of months)	30.7	31.6
<b>Primary conviction offense for most recent prison term (%)***</b>		
Person <sup>c</sup>	12.3	10.0
Property <sup>d</sup>	25.9	29.6
Society <sup>e</sup>	7.8	20.0
Drug <sup>f</sup>	50.0	38.3
Other <sup>g</sup>	3.9	2.2
<b>Been on probation since release (%)</b>	0.6	0.4
<b>Been on parole since release (%)*</b>	100.0	97.8

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 385$ ; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup> Conditions include asthma; cancer; chronic lung disease (bronchitis, emphysema); diabetes; heart trouble, heart disease, or angina; high blood pressure or hypertension; high cholesterol or triglycerides; arthritis or rheumatism; stroke; chronic back pain or trouble; tuberculosis; HIV or AIDS; hepatitis B or C; sexually transmitted disease other than HIV; hearing condition or ear, nose, or throat condition; eye or vision problem; dental problem; kidney or bladder problem; stomach or digestive disorder; seizure problem; and problems walking or lost limbs.

<sup>b</sup> Conditions include major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, and anxiety disorder.

<sup>c</sup> Category includes homicide, voluntary or involuntary manslaughter, rape or sexual assault, and assault.

<sup>d</sup> Category includes personal or business robbery, burglary, vehicle theft, theft, forgery, and fraud.

<sup>e</sup> Category includes driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated and unlawful use or possession of a weapon.

<sup>f</sup> Category includes drug sales and drug possession.

<sup>g</sup> Category includes driving on a revoked license, parole or probation violations, aggravated fleeing and eluding, and escape.

## Four-Month Outcomes

Table 3.2 presents the former prisoners' perceptions of their respective communities. These questions were included in the survey to assess the degree to which formerly incarcerated men felt positive about and connected with their communities. Safer Return was intended to provide residents in the demonstration neighborhood with opportunities to engage with SR participants through the program's employment activities and prosocial activities. Some of the SR men participated in transitional job opportunities in the neighborhood, including projects focused on neighborhood beautification and restoration (e.g., tree pruning, viaduct cleaning, and graffiti removal).

### PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY

Former prisoners from both groups had above-average scores on the neighborhood-control scale: they believed that their neighbors were somewhat likely to take action in the scenarios representing crime and disorder in their neighborhoods (both groups had average scores of 2.8 on a scale of 1 [very unlikely] to 4 [very likely]). There was only one significant difference between SR men and WE comparisons: compared with Safer Return participants, formerly incarcerated men in West Englewood indicated that their neighbors were more likely to do something if they saw children skipping school and hanging out in a street corner. Overall, there was no significant difference between the two groups in the scale of neighborhood control.

TABLE 3.2

**Perceptions of Community among Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Likelihood that neighbors would do the following (average rating)<sup>a</sup></b>		
Do something if children were skipping school and hanging out on the street corner**	2.5	2.8
Do something children were spray-painting on the side of a building	3.0	2.9
Do something if children were showing disrespect to an adult	2.8	2.8
Do something if a fight broke out in front of your home	2.8	3.0
Do something if the fire station or school closest to your home was going to be closed down	2.8	2.7
Report information to police if they saw a crime being committed	3.0	2.9
Take action to stop drug dealing in the area	2.7	2.6
Neighborhood-control scale average <sup>b</sup>	2.8	2.8

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 385$ ; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Average ratings on a scale of 1 (very unlikely) to 4 (very likely).

<sup>b</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.90.

### FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Four-month outcomes related to the former prisoners' family members and friends are presented in tables 3.3 and 3.4, and outcomes related to their children are shown in table 3.5. Although family reunification itself was not a core component of the Safer Return demonstration, the program did include a family-inclusive case management component. The case management component was intended to leverage the strengths of participants' social networks and to actively and directly include members of those networks in the Safer Return program to achieve better reentry and reintegration outcomes for participants (Rossman and Fontaine 2015). Therefore, the questions about family, friend, and children outcomes were intended to explore whether the program led to differences in these outcomes relative to those in the comparison group.

Table 3.3 shows that although WE men reported having regular contact with more family members and friends after release from prison, the differences were not statistically significant. The differences in average numbers of family and friends are consistent with other findings; namely, that more SR participants lived in transitional housing after release than WE comparisons. These housing arrangements may have impeded participants' ability to maintain close relationships with family and friends. The implementation report (Rossman and Fontaine 2015) discusses the significant number of SR participants who were living in transitional housing with no or few social networks in the Garfield Park neighborhood.

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their perceptions of support from family and friends (table 3.3) and the degree to which family and friends could pose a negative influence in their lives (table 3.4). Generally, both groups viewed their family and friends as a source of support, though family members appear to be a greater source of support than friends. There were significant differences between SR participants and WE comparisons on only 2 out of 20 statements measuring family and friend support: on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), WE men agreed more strongly that there was someone in their family to talk to about their problems and that they had someone in their family to do something enjoyable with. The reliable scales assessing family strength (alpha = 0.77) and friendship strength (alpha = 0.87) were not significantly different for the two groups.

TABLE 3.3

**Relationships with Family Members and Friends among Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Average number of family members in regular contact since release</b>	10.7	12.0
<b>Average rating on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)</b>		
You want your family to be involved in your life	3.8	3.7
You consider yourself a source of support for your family	3.2	3.3
Your family is a source of support for you	3.4	3.5
You have someone in your family you can count on to listen to you when you need to talk	3.7	3.8
You have someone in your family to talk to about yourself or your problems**	3.6	3.8
You have someone in your family whose advice you really want	3.5	3.5
You have someone in your family to do something enjoyable with***	3.6	3.8
You have someone in your family who will provide transportation to work or other appointments if needed	3.4	3.4
You have someone in your family who provides you with financial support	3.2	3.3
Your family does not criticize you a lot	3.1	3.0
Family-strength scale average <sup>a</sup>	3.5	3.5
<b>Average number of friends in regular contact since release</b>	6.6	8.0
<b>Average rating on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)</b>		
You want your friends to be involved in your life	2.9	2.8
You consider yourself a source of support for your friends	2.8	2.8
Your friends are a source of support for you	2.6	2.7
You have friends you can count on to listen to you when you need to talk	3.4	3.4
You have friends to talk to about yourself or your problems	3.4	3.3
You have friends whose advice you really want	3.0	2.9
You have friends to do something enjoyable with	3.5	3.5
You have friends who will provide transportation to work or other appointments if needed	3.0	3.1
You have friends who provide you with financial support	2.6	2.7
Your friends do not criticize you a lot	3.2	3.1
Friendship-strength scale average <sup>b</sup>	3.0	3.0

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid N = 385; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed *t*-tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.77.

<sup>b</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.87.

The survey also asked former prisoners about negative influences from their family and friends. Respondents reported more negative influences from friends than from family members, but overall they did not report many negative influences from either group. There were no significant differences between SR participants and WE comparisons in the number or source of negative influences. The two reliable scales assessing negative family influences (alpha = 0.72) and negative friendship influences (alpha = 0.81) show that men from both groups reported between none and some family members and friends who were negative influences: on most statements, both groups had average scores of less than 1 on a scale of 0 (none) to 3 (all). In general, the findings in tables 3.3 and 3.4 are consistent with the fact that family members of SR participants and WE comparisons reported strong support for the former prisoners (findings of the family member surveys are discussed in chapter 4).

TABLE 3.4

**Negative Influences from Family and Friends among Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Share of close family members who do the following (average rating)<sup>a</sup></b>		
Drink heavily	0.6	0.5
Use drugs	0.4	0.5
Manufacture or sell drugs	0.2	0.2
Negative-family-influences scale average <sup>b</sup>	0.4	0.4
<b>Share of close friends who do the following (average rating)<sup>a</sup></b>		
Drink heavily	1.0	1.0
Use drugs	0.7	0.8
Manufacture or sell drugs	0.5	0.6
Have been convicted of a crime	1.2	1.2
Have been in prison (not including Cook County jail)	1.1	1.0
Negative-friendship-influences scale average <sup>c</sup>	0.9	0.9

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid *N* = 385; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed *t*-tests; significant differences are noted by \* *p* < 0.10, \*\* *p* < 0.05, \*\*\* *p* < 0.01.

<sup>a</sup>Where 0 is none, 1 is some, 2 is most, and 3 is all.

<sup>b</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.72.

<sup>c</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.81.

Table 3.5 describes the forms of financial and nonfinancial support former prisoners provided to their children, as well as their primary forms of contact with them. Only about half the sample (203 men) reported having minor children, and slightly more than 40 percent of the sampled men (167) reported that at least one of their minor children did not currently live with them. As a result of how the survey questions were asked, we were not able to determine how many of the men lived with at least one of

their minor children, but we were able to determine that less than 10 percent (36 men) lived with all their minor children.

Only a few statistically significant differences between the two groups were found, but, overall, the WE comparisons provided support and engaged in activities with their minor children more frequently than SR participants. The lack of significant findings may be due to the fact that relatively few men reported having minor children. On a scale of 0 (none of the time) to 2 (a lot of the time), SR participants with minor children reported less frequently participating in their children’s school events, attending their children’s after-school and weekend activities, and going to religious services with their children. The activities-with-children scale (alpha = 0.83) shows that men from both groups engaged in all these activities with their children between some of the time and a lot of the time (both groups had an average score of 1.1).

Further, of the men with at least one minor child not living with them, a significantly greater proportion of those in West Englewood reported that they supported their children by providing child care, housing, and household items. Almost all the men in both groups indicated that their primary form of contact with minor children not living with them was either in-person visits or telephone calls. The significant differences in interaction with their children may be related to the outcomes depicted in table 3.3: WE men were in more regular contact with their family members in general than SR participants (perhaps because more SR participants lived in transitional housing facilities away from their families).

TABLE 3.5

**Contact with and Support of Children among Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Any children under 18 (%)</b>	52.6	52.8
<b>Frequency of activities with children under 18 (average)<sup>a,b</sup></b>		
Play or spend time with your children	1.4	1.4
Talk with and listen to your children	1.8	1.8
Put limits on how late your children can stay up or stay out	1.1	1.3
Put limits on who your children can hang out with	1.2	1.2
Help with your children’s homework or school projects	1.0	1.1
Participate in your children’s school events*	0.6	0.8
Attend your children’s after-school or weekend activities**	0.5	0.7
Talk with your children about the importance of grades or graduation	1.6	1.5
Attend religious services with your children*	0.4	0.5
Activities-with-children scale average <sup>c</sup>	1.1	1.1
<b>Any children under 18 not currently living with you (%)</b>	44.2	42.4
<b>Financially support children not living with you (%)<sup>d</sup></b>	67.7	69.7

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Forms of non-monetary support provided to children not living with you (%)<sup>d</sup></b>		
Food or formula	45.6	57.6
Child care**	7.4	22.2
Housing*	10.3	20.2
Toys, school supplies, sports supplies	61.8	63.6
Transportation	25.0	33.3
Clothes or diapers	70.6	78.8
Household items**	22.1	40.4
Other	1.5	3.0
<b>Primary form of contact with children not living with you (%)<sup>d</sup></b>		
In-person visits	55.9	64.1
Telephone	41.1	35.9
Texting	1.5	0.0
Letter or mail	1.5	0.0

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 385$ ; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate. Significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Of those with any children under 18. Valid  $n = 203$ ; SR = 81, WE = 122.

<sup>b</sup>Where 0 is never, 1 is some of the time, and 2 is a lot of the time.

<sup>c</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.83.

<sup>d</sup>Of those with at least one child under 18 who does not currently live with them. Valid  $n = 167$ ; SR = 68, WE = 99.

## EMPLOYMENT

Employment experiences and sources of financial support four months after release are reported in table 3.6. As designed, Safer Return intended to improve employment outcomes of participants by addressing barriers to employment (such as substance abuse), enhancing job-related skills through training opportunities and transitional jobs, and placing individuals in permanent jobs. Table 3.6 shows that in the first month after release SR participants relied significantly more on the financial support they received from legal employment and public assistance than their WE comparisons. Overall, men in both groups reported a range of sources of financial support, and roughly three-quarters reported relying on the financial support of family members. A significantly greater proportion of SR participants had engaged in any legal employment since release and were currently employed at the time of the four-month survey.

Respondents who were employed at the time of the survey provided notably different responses about the methods they had used to find their current jobs. While nearly half (48 percent) of SR participants relied on a case manager or reentry coach to find their current job, only 3 percent of WE respondents reporting using a similar resource. Compared with SR participants, however, significantly more members of the WE comparison group said they used a friend, neighbor, or relative to find a job (53 percent compared with 22 percent) or that they found the job online (6 percent compared with 0

percent). Consistent with the program model, a significantly greater proportion of SR participants found a job through a transitional job program.

TABLE 3.6

**Employment Experiences of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Sources of financial support available in first month after release (%)</b>		
Family members	74.5	77.5
Friends	34.6	37.2
Own savings	11.8	14.3
Legal employment <sup>***</sup>	25.2	13.0
Public assistance <sup>***</sup>	52.9	35.1
Illegal sources	3.3	6.1
<b>Any legal employment since release (%)<sup>***</sup></b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>35.9</b>
<b>Held a legal job at time of survey (%)<sup>*</sup></b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>28.6</b>
<b>Average number of legal jobs currently held<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>
<b>Methods of finding legal jobs (%)<sup>a</sup></b>		
Found position online <sup>*</sup>	0.0	6.1
Found position through newspaper	0.0	0.0
Returned to job held before prison	13.0	19.7
Received help from friend, neighbor, or relative <sup>***</sup>	22.2	53.0
Received help from parole officer	7.4	4.6
Received help from case manager or reentry coach <sup>***</sup>	48.2	3.0
Given transitional job by an employment program <sup>*</sup>	11.1	3.0
Went to an employment agency	0.0	1.5
Went to a temporary staffing agency	1.9	0.0
Other	20.4	16.7
<b>Average weekly hours worked at legal job<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>34.0</b>
<b>Average weekly wages (\$) <sup>a</sup></b>	<b>340.1</b>	<b>372.9</b>
<b>Looking for legal employment at time of survey (%)<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>83.7</b>	<b>86.0</b>
<b>Average number of jobs applied for since release<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>12.6</b>

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid *N* = 385; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed *t*-tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \* *p* < 0.10, \*\* *p* < 0.05, \*\*\* *p* < 0.01.

<sup>a</sup> Of those who held a legal job at the time of the survey. Valid *n* = 122; SR = 56, WE = 66.

<sup>b</sup> Of those who did not hold a legal job at the time of the survey. Valid *n* = 262; SR = 97, WE = 165.

**MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH**

Safer Return was also designed to serve as a link to substance abuse and mental health treatment for those assessed as having those treatment needs; these are well-known needs among members of the reentry population. The baseline survey revealed no statistically significant differences in the mental and physical health of SR participants and WE comparisons (table 3.7). When asked to rate their physical and mental health on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), men in both groups indicated that their

physical and mental health was great (i.e., average score of approximately 4). Further, the average score on each item in the reliable depression scale (alpha = 0.91) showed that men had symptoms of depression less than some of the time (i.e., a score of less than 1 on a scale of 0 [never] to 3 [all the time]).

TABLE 3.7

**Mental and Physical Health of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
Overall physical health rating (average) <sup>a</sup>	3.9	3.9
Overall mental health rating (average) <sup>a</sup>	4.0	4.0
Depression indicators rating (average) <sup>b</sup>		
Sad, empty, or depressed	0.8	0.9
So sad nothing would cheer you up	0.6	0.6
Discouraged about your life	0.8	0.8
Hopeless about the future	0.6	0.6
Loss of interest in almost all things	0.6	0.6
Nothing was fun	0.7	0.7
Depression scale average <sup>c</sup>	0.7	0.7

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid *N* = 385; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed *t*-tests; significant differences are noted by \* *p* < 0.10, \*\* *p* < 0.05, \*\*\* *p* < 0.01.

<sup>a</sup>Where 1 is poor, 2 is fair, 3 is good, 4 is great, and 5 is excellent.

<sup>b</sup>Where 0 is never, 1 is some of the time, 2 is most of the time, and 3 is all the time.

<sup>c</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.91.

There were, however, significant differences in the former prisoners' reported substance use at baseline (table 3.8). Significantly more men from West Englewood had used alcohol and marijuana in the four months since their release from prison, and significantly more SR participants had used cocaine during this same period. The finding for cocaine use is unsurprising given the differences between these two groups in reported histories of substance use (see table 3.1). Table 3.8 also shows that although alcohol and drug use were relatively high, very few men reported having problems as a result of their drinking or drug use. The most reported problems were feelings of guilt and financial or money problems.

TABLE 3.8

**Substance Use of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)**

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
Respondents reporting use of the following since release		
Alcohol**	59.1	68.8
Marijuana**	14.3	22.9
Heroin	9.7	6.5

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Tussionex)	2.6	1.3
Methadone	1.3	0.4
Cocaine (powder, crack, rock)**	7.8	3.0
Amphetamines or methamphetamines (crank, ice, crystal, speed)	0.0	0.0
Ecstasy (X)	1.3	1.7
Other illegal drug(s)	1.3	0.9
<b>Respondents reporting that drinking or drug use has caused the following problems since release</b>		
Problems at work or school	0.6	0.4
Problems with family	2.6	3.5
Problems with friends	2.0	3.5
Physical fights or property damage	2.0	3.9
Arrests, including arrests for driving under the influence	1.3	2.2
Health problems (withdrawal, memory loss, hepatitis, convulsions, or injuries)	1.3	2.6
Feelings of guilt	7.1	7.8
Financial or money problems	6.5	10.4

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 385$ ; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

## HOUSING

Outcomes related to housing are reported in table 3.9. Housing is one of the critical challenges often faced by the returning population and is one of the needs Safer Return was explicitly designed to address. The intervention was initially designed to provide housing through Oxford Houses in the Garfield Park community. However, the demonstration’s housing component was never implemented. Over time a sizable portion of SR participants were paroled to Jack Clark Family House, a transitional housing treatment facility in the Garfield Park neighborhood (Rossman and Fontaine 2015). In comparison to the WE men, a significantly greater proportion of SR participants lived in a treatment facility or halfway house after release. Very few men in either group reported being homeless after release.

Because more Safer Return participants reported living in a treatment facility or halfway house, it makes sense that significantly more reported moving at least once since their release compared with the sampled men in West Englewood (24 percent compared with 13 percent) though their reasons for moving varied.

Respondents were asked to indicate where they had lived for most of the time since their release. A significantly greater proportion of WE respondents reported living with a family member (84 percent versus 60 percent of SR participants), and fewer WE respondents reported that they had lived in their own house or apartment, a friend’s house or apartment, or a treatment facility or halfway house most of

the time since their release. This is consistent with the findings presented in table 3.3: SR participants had fewer relationships with family members than the WE comparisons, and apparently relied on them less for housing supports.

TABLE 3.9

**Housing Experiences of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)**

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
<b>Lived in a treatment facility or halfway house at any point after release***</b>	23.4	6.5
<b>Homeless at any point after release</b>	3.9	1.7
<b>Moved since release***</b>	24.0	12.6
<b>Reasons for move<sup>a</sup></b>		
Household member kicked you out	2.7	6.9
Evicted	5.4	0.0
Unable to pay rent or utilities	18.9	6.9
Saved enough money to move into your own place	13.5	6.9
Worried you would get into trouble if you were hanging around the same neighborhood as before	5.4	3.4
Moved back in with family or friends	29.7	48.3
Shelter or other temporary housing did not have enough room	2.7	0.0
You were homeless	0.0	3.5
Other reasons	45.9	44.8
<b>Lived most of the time since release***</b>		
Own house or apartment	15.6	8.3
Family member's house or apartment	59.7	84.4
Friend's house or apartment	9.1	3.5
Halfway house or treatment facility	15.6	3.9
Other <sup>b</sup>	0.0	0.0

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid N = 385; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup> Of those who had moved since release. Valid  $n = 66$ ; SR = 37, WE = 29.

<sup>b</sup> Other categories include shelter; hotel, motel, or rooming house; abandoned building or vacant unit; no set place or moved around a lot; and homeless or on the street.

**CRIME, VICTIMIZATION, AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT**

A critical goal of the Safer Return program was to reduce recidivism. To examine recidivism outcomes, respondents were asked several questions regarding their criminal activity and victimization. The men who were surveyed were all in the community at the time of the survey; any men who were in jail or prison are not represented in the sample. Data from the Illinois Department of Corrections on returns to incarceration for new crimes and parole violations are discussed in chapter 5.

As shown in table 3.10, the baseline survey revealed no statistically significant differences between SR participants and the WE comparisons in terms of self-reported criminal activity, criminal justice

involvement, or victimization at baseline. Very few men in either group reported engaging in any criminal activity in the four months after their release from prison. Similarly, only a small portion reported being arrested or convicted of a crime, spending time in jail or prison, or violating their conditions of parole in the four months since their release from prison. This is perhaps unsurprising since, other than an arrest, it is not likely that many men would have been convicted of a crime or incarcerated so shortly after release. Similarly, very few men reported any type of personal victimization during this period.

TABLE 3.10

**Criminal Activity and Victimization of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)**

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
<b>Engaged in the following types of crime since release</b>		
Person <sup>a</sup>	1.3	0.9
Property <sup>b</sup>	2.6	1.3
Society <sup>c</sup>	0.7	0.0
Drug <sup>d</sup>	5.2	5.6
<b>Experienced the following types of criminal justice involvement since release</b>		
Been arrested	3.9	7.4
Been convicted of a crime	0.6	0.4
Been in county jail 30 days or less	2.6	4.3
Been incarcerated in prison	1.3	1.3
Violated conditions of parole	3.2	1.3
<b>Experienced the following types of victimization since release</b>		
Someone threatened to hit or hurt you	4.5	3.0
Someone punched, hit, or kicked you with intention of hurting you	3.2	1.3
Someone hit you with an object	2.6	0.9
Someone hurt you with a weapon	2.0	0.9
Someone choked you or held you under water	0.7	0.0
Someone broke one of your bones or cut you	1.3	0.4
Someone sexually assaulted you	0.0	0.0
Someone robbed you	3.9	2.2
Someone stole your vehicle	0.0	0.9
Someone burglarized your home	2.0	0.4
Other <sup>e</sup>	0.7	0.0

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 385$ ; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Category includes homicide, rape or sexual assault, and assault.

<sup>b</sup>Category includes robbery, burglary, vehicle theft, theft, fraud, and forgery.

<sup>c</sup>Category includes panhandling.

<sup>d</sup>Category includes drug dealing and drug possession.

<sup>e</sup>Other includes theft of bus pass.

## REENTRY EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

To help assess whether the Safer Return program led to more positive reentry expectations and experiences for participants than the comparison group, respondents were asked a series of questions about these expectations and experiences (tables 3.11 and 3.12). The overwhelming majority of men in both groups (more than 80 percent) indicated that they believed it was very easy or somewhat easy to stay out of prison at the time of the survey. Similarly, more than 80 percent of the sample felt somewhat or very prepared to return to the community.

However, the two groups differed in their reasons for feeling prepared: relative to the WE comparisons, significantly fewer SR participants reported that the support of their family members or friends was one of the reasons they felt prepared for reentry. Conversely, a significantly greater portion of SR men felt that a program or service received in prison, an exit orientation, a postrelease program or service, a case manager’s support, or a parole officer’s support helped prepare them for reentry (all these factors are related to aspects of the SR program; see Rossman and Fontaine [2015]). That is, while SR participants and WE men felt similarly well prepared for release, more SR participants felt prepared as a result of aspects of the Safer Return demonstration, and more WE men felt prepared as a result of the support of their family and friends. A high percentage of SR participants also felt prepared to return to the community because of family support.

TABLE 3.11

### Reentry Expectations of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
<b>How easy or hard is it to stay out of prison right now?</b>		
Very easy	48.0	46.3
Somewhat easy	35.5	33.3
Somewhat hard	7.9	13.9
Very hard	8.6	6.5
<b>How prepared did you feel to return to the community?</b>		
Very prepared	52.0	53.3
Somewhat prepared	34.4	29.9
Somewhat unprepared	6.5	13.4
Not prepared at all	7.1	3.5
<b>Reasons for feeling prepared to return to the community<sup>a</sup></b>		
Program or service received in prison**	16.0	8.7
Prison release packet	13.0	7.8
Exit orientation*	11.5	5.7
Program or service you were looking forward to after release**	16.0	7.8
Having a job to begin or return to	13.0	16.1
Family support**	67.2	78.1
Friends’ support**	24.4	34.9
Case manager’s support**	19.1	5.2

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
Parole officer's support*	18.3	11.5
Something else	28.3	21.4
None of these	4.6	3.6

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 385$ ; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Of those who felt "somewhat" or "very" prepared. Valid  $n = 325$ ; SR = 133, WE = 192.

Table 3.12 shows that a significantly greater share of WE comparisons were met by someone at the time of release (26 percent, compared with 18 percent of SR participants). Safer Return participants and West Englewood comparisons did not feel significantly different about their overall life at the time of the survey; more than two-thirds of the men from both groups reported feeling very or somewhat satisfied. Respondents were also asked to list the most helpful thing that their parole officers did for them. While the most selected category in both groups was "nothing," there was some indication that parole officers provided respondents with encouragement and advice and helped them search for jobs. The Safer Return program included a neighborhood-based parole component and efforts to meet individuals at the gate at the time of release; therefore, the lack of significant findings in table 3.12 is inconsistent with expectations for the demonstration.

TABLE 3.12

**Reentry Experiences of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)**

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
<b>Met by someone at prison at release*</b>	18.2	26.0
<b>Feelings about overall life</b>		
Very satisfied	31.2	29.4
Somewhat satisfied	46.1	47.6
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13.6	10.4
Somewhat dissatisfied	7.1	8.2
Very dissatisfied	2.0	4.3
<b>Most helpful thing done by parole officer</b>		
Nothing	37.9	37.6
Gave encouragement	11.1	13.7
Gave advice	15.0	13.3
Communicated and was understanding	9.2	12.0
Helped with job search	17.0	15.0
Helped find a drug program	2.0	3.5
Helped with living situation	3.3	0.4
Other	4.6	4.4

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 385$ ; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Finally, table 3.13 presents various services that the former prisoners received in the four months after they were released from prison. Safer Return was funded to provide a host of prerelease and postrelease services directly and to connect participants with resources available in the community (Rossman and Fontaine 2015). As expected, there are several significant differences in service receipt reported by SR participants and WE comparisons. A significantly greater proportion of SR participants received a reentry plan in prison, as well as after release. Significantly more Safer Return participants also met with a case manager after release; on average, they rated their case management experiences as more helpful than men in West Englewood (average score of 2.6 compared with 2.3, on a scale of 0 [not helpful at all] to 3 [very helpful]). Safer Return participants also reported meeting with their case managers significantly more often than West Englewood comparisons (average score of 2.3 compared with 1.9, on a scale of 1 [a few times] to 4 [daily]).

Relative to WE comparisons, a significantly greater portion of SR participants received several types of services, including job readiness training, referral services, mentoring, transportation, mental health treatment, money management skills, and individual or group counseling. These seven services are all in line with Safer Return’s core service delivery model (Rossman and Fontaine 2015). However, we would have expected SR participants to also report significantly more receipt of housing assistance and alcohol or drug treatment, and this was not the case. On average, SR participants also reported receiving significantly more services than the WE men (3.5 services compared with 2.5 services).

TABLE 3.13

**Services Received by Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Reentry plan developed in prison (%)***</b>	64.0	48.0
Agree that reentry plan fit individual needs <sup>a</sup>	79.2	75.2
<b>Reentry plan developed after release (%)***</b>	53.0	19.1
Agree that reentry plan fit individual needs <sup>b</sup>	87.5	79.1
<b>Met with case manager or service provider after release (%)***</b>	60.4	31.2
<b>Helpfulness of the case management (average rating)<sup>c,d,**</sup></b>	2.6	2.3
<b>Frequency of case management meetings after release (average rating)<sup>d,e,**</sup></b>	2.3	1.9
<b>Services received after release (%)</b>		
Vocational job classes	19.0	14.8
Job readiness training (e.g., how to interview)***	35.3	21.7
Referral services**	32.7	22.6
Mentoring***	30.7	13.0
Housing assistance	7.2	5.6
Legal assistance	5.9	7.0
GED or other education classes	9.8	9.5
Transportation***	32.0	18.6
Sex offender treatment	0.0	0.9

	Safer Return	West Englewood
Medical treatment	21.6	20.4
Tattoo removal	0.7	0.9
Mental health treatment**	11.1	4.3
Help getting medications	14.4	10.0
Health care insurance	7.8	6.1
Financial assistance	22.2	18.3
Spiritual or religious assistance	24.2	23.8
Money management skills***	14.4	6.1
Individual or group counseling***	22.2	11.7
Family-based programs	4.6	5.6
Parenting classes	1.3	1.7
Child support payments for your children	0.0	0.9
Domestic violence support group	0.0	0.0
Anger management	11.8	11.3
Victims' group for physical or sexual abuse	0.0	0.4
Alcohol or drug treatment	18.3	20.0
Some other program or service <sup>f</sup>	3.3	3.5
Services-received scale average <sup>g***</sup>	3.5	2.5

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 385$ ; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Of those who received a reentry plan in prison. Valid  $n = 205$ ; SR = 96, WE = 109.

<sup>b</sup>Of those who received a reentry plan after release. Valid  $n = 123$ ; SR = 80, WE = 43.

<sup>c</sup>Where 0 is not helpful at all, 1 is somewhat unhelpful, 2 is somewhat helpful, and 3 is very helpful.

<sup>d</sup>Of those who received case management. Valid  $n = 165$ ; SR = 93, WE = 72.

<sup>e</sup>Where 1 is a few times, 2 is monthly, 3 is weekly, and 4 is daily.

<sup>f</sup>Includes assessment, church, other employment services or job classes, therapy, and health-related services.

<sup>g</sup>Additive scale; items are summed (range 0–26); alpha = 0.82.

## Four-Month Multivariate Analyses

Table 3.14 summarizes the way we applied key bivariate outcomes from the baseline survey to the multivariate analyses. We attempted to model the outcomes that were most central to Safer Return's program logic. We recoded the outcomes on criminal behavior, criminal justice involvement, drug use, and service receipt to make them more suitable for the multivariate analyses.

Our goal was to conduct multivariate analyses on the entire set of key outcomes, but some of the outcomes were not suitable for, and were thus not included in, the multivariate analyses. There were two primary reasons for not including outcomes in the multivariate analyses. First, there was not enough variation in some of the outcomes to support a multivariate model. For example, a large majority of respondents from both groups reported strong relationships with family members and friends, as indicated by the very high average scores for the family-strength and friendship-strength scales (i.e., 3.0 or more on a scale of 1 to 4). Second, some of the outcomes had too few observations. It is

difficult to detect significant differences using multivariate regression techniques if there are not enough observations eligible for the analysis. Outcomes based on only a portion of the total sample were excluded from the multivariate models.

TABLE 3.14

**Summary of Key Bivariate Outcomes for Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Not included in multivariate analyses</b>		
Family-strength scale average <sup>a</sup>	3.5	3.5
Friendship-strength scale average <sup>a</sup>	3.0	3.0
Activities-with-children scale average <sup>b</sup>	1.1	1.1
Financially support children not living with you (%) <sup>c</sup>	67.7	69.7
Average weekly wages (\$) <sup>d</sup>	340.1	372.9
Any criminal behavior (%) <sup>a,e</sup>	8.4	6.5
Any criminal justice involvement (%) <sup>a,f</sup>	7.1	9.5
<b>Included in multivariate analyses</b>		
Any legal employment since release (%) <sup>***</sup>	49.0	35.9
Held a legal job at time of survey (%) <sup>*</sup>	36.6	28.6
Any alcohol use since release (%) <sup>**</sup>	59.1	68.8
Any drug use since release (%) <sup>g</sup>	24.3	28.6
Moved since release (%) <sup>***</sup>	24.0	12.6
Reentry plan developed in prison (%) <sup>***</sup>	64.0	48.0
Reentry plan developed after release (%) <sup>***</sup>	53.0	19.1
Met with case manager or service provider after release (%) <sup>***</sup>	60.4	31.2
Received any service (%) <sup>h**</sup>	74.3	63.5
Number of services received <sup>h***</sup>	3.5	2.5

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 385$ ; SR = 154, WE = 231. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup> Excluded because of insufficient variation.

<sup>b</sup> Of those with any children under 18. Valid  $n = 203$ ; SR = 81, WE = 122. Outcome excluded because of small sample size.

<sup>c</sup> Of those with at least one child under 18 who does not currently live with them. Valid  $n = 167$ ; SR = 68, WE = 99. Outcome excluded because of small sample size.

<sup>d</sup> Of those who held a legal job at the time of the survey. Valid  $n = 122$ ; SR = 56, WE = 66. Outcome excluded because of small sample size.

<sup>e</sup> Recoded as a binary indicator of whether respondents engaged in a person, property, society, or drug crime since release.

<sup>f</sup> Recoded as a binary indicator of whether respondents were arrested, were convicted of a crime, were held in county jail 30 days or less, were incarcerated in prison, or violated their conditions of parole.

<sup>g</sup> Variable not shown in previous tables; recoded responses to create binary indicator for any illicit drug use (i.e., marijuana, heroin, hydrocodone, methadone, cocaine, amphetamines or methamphetamines, ecstasy, or other illegal drugs).

<sup>h</sup> Includes all services listed in table 3.13.

The multivariate findings comparing SR participants with WE comparisons, summarized in table 3.15, largely mirror the findings from the bivariate analyses summarized in table 3.14. Safer Return participants fared significantly better than West Englewood men on several reentry outcomes, with one

exception.<sup>7</sup> Use of the doubly robust regression models that include propensity weights and control for all available demographic, educational, employment, health and mental health, criminal, and substance abuse history characteristics reveals several statistically significant findings. Based on predicted probabilities, the multivariate analyses show the following:

- Safer Return participants were 15 percent more likely than comparisons to have had legal employment since their release from prison.
- Safer Return participants were 11 percent more likely than comparisons to have held a legal job at the time of the four-month survey.
- Safer Return participants were 9 percent less likely than comparisons to have used any illicit drug since their release from prison.
- Safer Return participants were 9 percent more likely than comparisons to have moved since their release from prison.
- Safer Return participants were 16 percent more likely than comparisons to have had a reentry plan developed while they were in prison.
- Safer Return participants were 41 percent more likely than comparisons to have had a reentry plan developed after their release from prison.
- Safer Return participants were 33 percent more likely than comparisons to have met with a case manager or service provider since their release from prison.
- Safer Return participants were 14 percent more likely than comparisons to have received any service since their release from prison.
- Safer Return participants had received an average of 1.2 more services than comparisons in the four months since their release from prison.

There were no significant differences between Safer Return participants and West Englewood comparisons on alcohol use at baseline.

TABLE 3.15

### Summary of Multivariate Findings Comparing Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (baseline)

	Model used	Coefficient	Interpretation
Any legal employment <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.62**	SR participants more likely to have had legal employment
Held legal job at time of survey <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.53**	SR participants more likely to have been currently employed
Any alcohol use since release <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.26	No significant difference
Any drug use since release <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.53*	SR participants less likely to have used drugs
Moved since release <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.77**	SR participants more likely to have moved
Reentry plan developed in prison <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.64**	SR participants more likely to have received a reentry plan in prison
Reentry plan developed after release <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	1.91***	SR participants more likely to have received a reentry plan after release
Met with case manager or service provider <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	1.36***	SR participants more likely to have met with case manager or service provider
Received any service <sup>a,b</sup>	Logistic regression	0.71**	SR participants more likely to have received any service
Number of services received <sup>b</sup>	Negative-binomial regression	0.42***	SR participants received more services

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 385$ ; SR = 154, WE = 231; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Denotes doubly robust regression weighted by inverse propensity weights.

<sup>b</sup>Includes all services listed in table 3.13.

## Sixteen-Month Outcomes

There was considerable attrition between the two survey periods; fewer than 60 percent of the men surveyed at baseline completed the follow-up survey (219 out of 385). In response to this attrition, we included an additional 33 men who did not participate in the baseline survey (11 SR participants and 22 WE comparisons) to increase power, for a total of 252 observations available for analysis. We analyzed the demographic characteristics of the baseline and follow-up samples and found little difference between them. Our analysis of the follow-up data uses the same outcomes and analytic procedures as our analysis of the baseline data.

## PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY

Respondents' perceptions of their communities are shown in table 3.16. There were no significant differences between the two groups on any of the perceptions of their community. Consistent with the baseline findings, respondents believed that their neighbors were somewhat likely to take action against crime and disorder in their communities. In fact, respondents from both communities had higher average scores on the neighborhood-control scale at follow-up than at baseline.

TABLE 3.16

### Perceptions of Community among Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (follow-up)

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Likelihood that neighbors would do the following<sup>a</sup></b>		
Do something if children were skipping school and hanging out on the street corner	2.6	2.8
Do something if children were spray-painting on the side of a building	3.2	3.1
Do something if children were showing disrespect to an adult	2.8	2.8
Do something if a fight broke out in front of your home	3.0	3.1
Do something if the fire station or a school closest to your home was going to be closed down	3.1	2.9
Report information to police if they saw a crime being committed	3.2	3.1
Take action to stop drug dealing in the area	2.7	2.7
Neighborhood-control scale average <sup>b</sup>	2.9	2.9

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 252$ ; SR = 100, WE = 152. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup> Average ratings on a scale of 1 (very unlikely) to 4 (very likely).

<sup>b</sup> Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.84.

## FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Consistent with the results from the baseline survey, formerly incarcerated men in both groups viewed their family and friends as significant sources of support, with few differences (table 3.17). Compared with WE men, a significantly smaller proportion of SR participants wanted their families to be involved in their lives. While WE respondents reported regular contact with a greater number of family members and friends than SR participants at baseline, the two groups had no significant difference in number of family and friends one year later. There was also no significant difference between the SR participants and WE comparisons according to the family-strength and friendship-strength scales.

TABLE 3.17

**Relationships with Family Members and Friends among Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (follow-up)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Average number of family members in regular contact since last survey</b>	11.4	12.2
<b>Average rating on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)</b>		
You want your family to be involved in your life*	3.7	3.8
You consider yourself a source of support for your family	3.4	3.5
Your family is a source of support for you	3.5	3.6
You have someone in family you can count on to listen to you when you need to talk	3.7	3.8
You have someone in your family to talk to about yourself or your problems	3.7	3.8
You have someone in your family whose advice you really want	3.5	3.6
You have someone in your family to do something enjoyable with**	3.6	3.8
You have someone in your family who will provide transportation to work or other appointments if needed	3.5	3.4
You have someone in your family who provides you with financial support	3.3	3.2
Your family does not criticize you a lot	3.0	3.0
Family-strength scale average <sup>a</sup>	3.5	3.5
<b>Average number of friends in regular contact since last survey</b>	5.6	5.5
<b>Average rating on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)</b>		
You want your friends to be involved in your life	3.1	3.2
You consider yourself a source of support for your friends	3.0	3.2
Your friends are a source of support for you	2.9	2.9
You have friends you can count on to listen to you when you need to talk	3.5	3.5
You have friends to talk to about yourself or your problems	3.4	3.4
You have friends whose advice you really want	3.1	3.0
You have friends to do something enjoyable with	3.5	3.5
You have friends who will provide transportation to work or other appointments if needed	3.0	3.1
You have friends who provide you with financial support	2.6	2.8
Your friends do not criticize you a lot	3.1	3.1
Friendship-strength scale average <sup>b</sup>	3.1	3.2

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N=252$ ; SR = 100, WE = 152. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.77.

<sup>b</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.83.

Consistent with the baseline findings, both groups reported few negative influences from family and friends, though friends appeared to be a greater source of negative influence than family members. Table 3.18 shows that both SR participants and WE comparisons said that some or few of their family and friends were engaged in negative behaviors related to drinking, drugs, or crime. Overall, former prisoners in both groups report a great deal of support and few negative influences from their family and friends in the months following their release from prison and one year later.

TABLE 3.18

**Negative Influences from Family and Friends among Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (follow-up)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Since the last survey, share of close family members who do the following (average rating)<sup>a</sup></b>		
Drink heavily	0.4	0.5
Use drugs	0.3	0.4
Manufacture or sell drugs	0.1	0.2
Negative-family-influences scale average <sup>b*</sup>	0.3	0.4
<b>Since the last survey, share of close friends who do the following (average rating)<sup>a</sup></b>		
Drink heavily	0.8	0.9
Use drugs	0.7	0.7
Manufacture or sell drugs	0.3	0.3
Have been convicted of a crime	1.0	0.9
Have been in prison (not including Cook County jail)	0.9	0.9
Negative-friendship-influences scale average <sup>c</sup>	0.7	0.7

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 252$ ; SR = 100, WE = 152. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Where 0 is none, 1 is some, 2 is most, and 3 is all.

<sup>b</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.61.

<sup>c</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.74.

As shown in table 3.19, the men in both groups had an active role in their children's lives 16 months after their release from prison. Many of the men engaged in an array of activities with their minor children. On a scale of 0 (none of the time) to 2 (a lot of the time), the mostly frequently reported activities among both groups of former prisoners were playing and spending time with their children, talking and listening to them, and talking with them about the importance of grades and graduation. Compared with Safer Return participants, those in West Englewood reported more frequently helping with their children's homework or school projects and attending their children's after-school or weekend activities.

The overwhelming majority of the men, 95 percent in Safer Return and 87 percent in West Englewood, financially supported minor children who were not living with them. The share of men who reported financially supporting their children was greater at follow-up than baseline. The men also provided several forms of nonfinancial support to their minor children. In particular, a large majority supported their children by providing toys, school supplies, sports supplies, and clothes or diapers. The majority in both groups also reported providing food or formula for their children. Relative to WE men, significantly fewer SR participants supported their children by providing child care. There were fewer

differences in forms of nonfinancial support at follow-up than at baseline. Men in both groups reported contacting their children mostly through in-person visits versus texting or sending letters.

TABLE 3.19

**Contact with and Support of Children among Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (follow-up)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Any children under 18 (%)</b>	51.0	55.3
<b>Frequency of activities with children under 18 (average)<sup>a,b</sup></b>		
Play or spend time with your children	1.5	1.5
Talk with and listen to your children	1.7	1.7
Put limits on how late your children can stay up (bed times) or stay out (curfews)	1.2	1.4
Put limits on who your children can hang out with	1.2	1.3
Help with your children's homework or school projects*	1.0	1.2
Participate in your children's school events	0.8	1.0
Attend your children's after-school or weekend activities*	0.5	0.7
Talk with your children about the importance of grades or graduation	1.7	1.7
Attend religious services with your children	0.5	0.6
Activities-with-children scale average <sup>c</sup>	1.1	1.2
<b>Any children under 18 not currently living with you (%)</b>	40.0	48.7
<b>Financially support children not living with you (%)<sup>d</sup></b>	95.0	86.5
<b>Forms of non-monetary support provided to children not living with you (%)<sup>d</sup></b>		
Food or formula	75.0	79.5
Child care**	7.8	19.2
Housing	25.0	21.9
Toys, school supplies, sports supplies	87.5	84.9
Transportation	60.0	46.6
Clothes or diapers	87.5	86.3
Household items	55.0	45.2
Other*	7.5	1.4
<b>Primary form of contact with children not living with you (%)<sup>d</sup></b>		
In-person visits	65.0	50.7
Telephone	32.5	48.0
Texting	0.0	1.4
Letter or mail	2.5	0.0

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 252$ ; SR = 100, WE = 152. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Of those with any children under 18. Valid  $n = 135$ ; SR = 51, WE = 84.

<sup>b</sup>Where 0 is never, 1 is some of the time, and 2 is a lot of the time.

<sup>c</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.77.

<sup>d</sup>Of those with at least one child under 18 who does not currently live with them. Valid  $n = 114$ ; SR = 40, WE = 74.

## EMPLOYMENT

The employment experiences and sources of financial support the men reported at follow-up are shown in table 3.20. Consistent with baseline findings, a significantly greater share of SR participants than WE comparisons used legal employment and public assistance as sources of financial support. Significantly more SR participants also used their own savings as a source of financial support. A high percentage of men in both groups relied on support from their family members. Although significantly more SR participants than WE comparisons reported any legal employment at baseline, the two groups' levels of reported legal employment were not significantly different at follow-up. In fact, among those with a legal job at the time of the follow-up survey, WE comparisons reported significantly more jobs than SR participants (1.2 jobs compared with 1.1 jobs). Fifteen percent of the WE men with legal employment reported that they had multiple legal jobs, compared with only 5 percent of legally working SR participants (results not shown in table).

The two groups reported fewer differences in methods of finding legal jobs at follow-up than they had at baseline. There was still a significant difference in the share of each group that reported using help from a case manager or reentry coach to find a legal job: 18 percent of SR participants, versus 0 percent of WE men (48 percent and 3 percent at baseline). Men from both groups reported working a similar number of weekly hours and making similar total weekly wages at follow-up.

TABLE 3.20

### Employment Experiences of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (follow-up)

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Sources of financial support available since last survey (%)</b>		
Family members	73.0	71.0
Friends	36.0	32.9
Own savings*	32.0	21.7
Legal employment**	67.0	51.3
Public assistance*	50.0	39.5
Illegal sources	5.0	4.0
<b>Any legal employment since last survey (%)</b>	71.0	67.5
<b>Held a legal job at time of current survey (%)</b>	40.0	43.4
<b>Number of legal jobs currently held (average)<sup>a*</sup></b>	1.1	1.2
<b>Methods of finding legal jobs (%)<sup>a</sup></b>		
Found position online	5.0	4.5
Found position through newspaper	2.5	3.0
Returned to job held before prison	15.0	15.2
Received help from friend, neighbor, or relative	35.0	35.0
Received help from parole officer	2.5	1.5
Received help from case manager or reentry coach***	17.5	0.0
Given transitional job by an employment program	2.5	6.0
Went to an employment agency	2.5	7.6

	Safer Return	West Englewood
Went to a temporary staffing agency	1.5	3.0
Other	25.0	18.2
Average weekly hours worked at legal job <sup>a</sup>	36.4	33.3
Average weekly wages (\$) <sup>a</sup>	410.3	404.3
Looking for legal employment at time of current survey (%) <sup>b</sup>	80.0	88.4
Average number of jobs applied for since last survey <sup>b</sup>	15.8	18.2

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 252$ ; SR = 100, WE = 152. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Of those who held a legal job at the time of the survey. Valid  $n = 106$ ; SR = 40, WE = 66.

<sup>b</sup>Of those who did not hold a legal job at the time of the survey. Valid  $n = 146$ ; SR = 60, WE = 86.

## MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Sixteen months after release, men in both groups reported good mental and physical health overall (table 3.21). On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), men in both groups indicated that their physical health and mental health were great (i.e., an average score of approximately 4). Safer Return participants, however, reported feeling discouraged about their lives significantly more often than West Englewood comparisons. Meanwhile, WE comparisons reported a loss of interest in almost all things significantly more often than SR participants. There was no significant difference between SR participants and WE comparisons in the overall depression scale.

TABLE 3.21

### Mental and Physical Health of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (follow-up)

	Safer Return	West Englewood
Overall physical health since last survey (average rating) <sup>a</sup>	3.7	3.7
Overall mental health since last survey (average rating) <sup>a</sup>	4.1	4.1
Depression indicators rating (average) <sup>b</sup>		
Sad, empty, or depressed	1.4	1.4
So sad nothing would cheer you up	0.8	0.8
Discouraged about your life*	1.1	0.8
Hopeless about the future	0.7	0.6
Loss of interest in almost all things*	0.5	0.8
Nothing was fun	0.8	0.8
Depression scale average <sup>c</sup>	0.9	0.8

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 252$ ; SR = 100, WE = 152. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Where 1 is poor, 2 is fair, 3 is good, 4 is great, and 5 is excellent.

<sup>b</sup>Where 0 is never, 1 is some of the time, 2 is most of the time, and 3 is all the time.

<sup>c</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.87.

At follow-up, there were few significant differences in the reported substance use of SR and WE men (table 3.22). One of the few differences was marijuana use: significantly more WE men reported using marijuana since the previous survey. A high percentage of men in both groups (more than 80 percent) reported using alcohol, and very few in both groups reported using hydrocodone, methadone, cocaine, or amphetamines or methamphetamines. Few men reported that their drinking or drug use had caused problems; the most commonly reported problems were financial or money problems, family problems, and feelings of guilt. Although the share reporting problems was low, more men reported problems related to their drinking or drug use at follow-up than at baseline.

TABLE 3.22

**Substance Use of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (follow-up)**

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
<b>Respondents reporting use of the following since last survey</b>		
Alcohol	81.0	83.6
Marijuana**	26.0	40.1
Heroin	12.0	10.5
Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Tussionex)	5.0	2.0
Methadone	4.0	2.0
Cocaine (powder, crack, rock)	7.0	7.2
Amphetamines or Methamphetamines (crank, ice, crystal, speed)	1.0	0.7
Ecstasy (X)	4.0	5.9
Other illegal drug(s)	0.0	0.0
<b>Respondents reporting that drinking or drug use has caused the following problems since the last survey</b>		
Problems at work or school	3.1	2.6
Problems with family	13.3	11.2
Problems with friends	8.2	6.6
Physical fights or property damage	3.1	7.9
Arrests, including arrests for driving under the influence	5.1	5.9
Health problems (withdrawal, memory loss, hepatitis, convulsions, or injuries)	2.0	6.6
Feelings of guilt	10.2	17.1
Financial or money problems	19.4	22.4

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 252$ ; SR = 100, WE = 152. Statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

## HOUSING

As shown in table 3.23, men from both groups reported similar housing experiences at follow-up. Consistent with the baseline findings, significantly more SR participants than WE comparisons reported that they had lived in a treatment facility or halfway house at some point since the last survey. Roughly one-third of men in both groups reported having moved in the last year. Despite the differences in living arrangements reported at baseline, there were no significant differences in where the men reported

living most of the time. Men in both groups most commonly reported living with family, followed by their own house or apartment. Only a few men reported living in a friend's house or apartment or a halfway house or treatment facility.

TABLE 3.23

**Housing Experiences of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (follow-up)**

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
<b>Lived in a treatment facility or halfway house at any point since last survey*</b>	13.0	5.9
<b>Been homeless at any point since last survey</b>	4.0	2.6
<b>Moved since last survey</b>	38.0	35.5
<b>Reasons for move<sup>a</sup></b>		
Household member kicked you out	0.0	3.7
Evicted	0.0	1.9
Unable to pay rent or utilities	5.4	3.7
Saved enough money to move into your own place	21.6	13.0
Worried you would get into trouble if you were hanging around the same neighborhood as before	8.1	3.7
Moved back in with family or friends	10.8	14.8
Shelter or other temporary housing did not have enough room	0.0	0.0
You were homeless	2.7	1.9
Other reasons	75.7	68.5
<b>Lived most of the time since last survey</b>		
Own house or apartment	26.0	23.0
Family member's house or apartment	57.0	69.1
Friend's house or apartment	9.0	4.6
Halfway house or treatment facility	8.0	2.6
Other <sup>b</sup>	0.0	0.7

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 252$ ; SR = 100, WE = 152. Statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Of those who had moved since last survey. Valid  $n = 92$ ; SR = 38, WE = 54.

<sup>b</sup>Other categories include shelter; hotel, motel, or rooming house; abandoned building or vacant unit; no set place or moved around a lot; and homeless or on the street.

## CRIME, VICTIMIZATION, AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT

Crime, criminal justice, and victimization experiences are shown in table 3.24; the two groups reported very few differences in crime, criminal justice, and victimization experiences. Few men in either group reported involvement in criminal activity or experiences with the criminal justice system in the year since the baseline survey. The most reported criminal activities were drug offenses, including possession and dealing. Significantly more WE men than SR participants reported engaging in property crimes such as theft or burglary; however the share of WE men who reported engaging in these crimes was extremely small (5 percent). Reported experiences with the criminal justice system, including

arrest, conviction, jail or prison incarceration, and parole violations, were low among men in both groups. Reports of victimization among SR participants and WE men were also low. Those who did report victimization most commonly reported being threatened with physical injury and being punched, hit, or kicked. They were least likely to report being sexually assaulted or choked, or having their vehicle stolen. There were no significant differences in the victimization experiences of SR participants and WE comparisons.

TABLE 3.24

**Criminal Activity and Victimization of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (follow-up)**

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
<b>Engaged in the following types of crime since last survey</b>		
Person <sup>a</sup>	1.0	1.3
Property <sup>b**</sup>	0.0	4.6
Society <sup>c</sup>	3.0	4.0
Drug <sup>d</sup>	17.0	16.5
<b>Experienced the following types of criminal justice involvement since last survey</b>		
Been arrested	15.0	15.8
Been convicted of a crime	3.0	3.9
Been in county jail 30 days or less	14.0	12.5
Been incarcerated in prison	5.0	7.9
Violated conditions of parole	6.0	7.9
<b>Experienced the following types of victimization since last survey</b>		
Someone threatened to hit or hurt you	16.0	17.9
Someone punched, hit, or kicked you with intention of hurting you	14.0	13.9
Someone hit you with an object	9.0	5.3
Someone hurt you with a weapon	5.0	4.6
Someone choked you or held you under water	2.0	1.3
Someone broke one of your bones or cut you	4.0	2.7
Someone sexually assaulted you	0.0	0.0
Someone robbed you	7.0	8.0
Someone stole your vehicle	3.0	0.7
Someone burglarized your home	5.0	5.3
Other <sup>e</sup>	4.0	0.7

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid N= 252; SR = 100, WE = 152. Statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Category includes homicide, rape or sexual assault, and assault.

<sup>b</sup>Category includes robbery, burglary, vehicle theft, theft, fraud, and forgery.

<sup>c</sup>Category includes panhandling.

<sup>d</sup>Category includes drug dealing and drug possession.

<sup>e</sup>Includes vehicle was broken into, vehicle was vandalized, and respondent was shot at.

## REENTRY EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

Men in both groups reported positive reentry expectations and experiences in the follow-up survey (table 3.25), mirroring their responses to the baseline survey. Safer Return participants thought it was significantly easier to stay out of prison than West Englewood comparisons, but more than three-quarters of the men in both groups thought it was easy to stay out of prison. Additionally, more than three-quarters of the men reported feeling very or somewhat satisfied with their lives. More than 40 percent of SR participants and about one-quarter of WR comparisons said that the most helpful thing their parole officer did for them was “nothing.”

TABLE 3.25

### Reentry Expectations and Experiences of Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (follow-up)

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
<b>How easy or hard is it to stay out of prison right now?*</b>		
Very easy	54.0	48.0
Somewhat easy	31.0	25.7
Somewhat hard	11.0	13.2
Very hard	4.0	13.2
<b>Feelings about overall life</b>		
Very satisfied	29.0	28.3
Somewhat satisfied	51.0	52.0
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9.0	10.5
Somewhat dissatisfied	10.0	4.6
Very dissatisfied	1.0	4.6
<b>Most helpful thing done by parole officer<sup>a</sup></b>		
Nothing	42.9	23.1
Gave encouragement	11.9	12.3
Gave advice	2.4	15.4
Communicated and was understanding	7.1	10.8
Helped with job search	14.3	21.5
Helped find a drug program	4.8	1.5
Helped with living situation	0.0	0.0
Other	16.7	15.4

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 252$ ; SR = 100, WE = 152. Statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Of those for whom this question was applicable. Valid  $n = 108$ ; SR = 42, WE = 66.

Services received by SR participants and WE comparisons at follow-up are shown in table 3.26. Consistent with baseline results, a significantly greater share of SR participants reported that they had met with case managers or service providers since the last survey. In fact, the share of SR participants who had met with a case manager or service provider over the past year (64 percent) was more than

double the share of WE men who reported a similar experience (31 percent). Many of the services that were central to the SR program—including vocational job classes, job readiness training, mentoring, and transportation services—were received by significantly more SR participants than WE comparisons. More SR participants also reported receipt of legal assistance, individual or group counseling, and anger management services. On average, Safer Return participants received significantly more services than men in West Englewood (an average of 4.7 services over the past year, compared with 3.3 services).

TABLE 3.26

Services Received by Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (follow-up)

	Safer Return	West Englewood
Met with case manager or service provider since last survey (%)***	64.0	30.9
Frequency of case management meetings since last survey (average rating) <sup>a,b</sup>	2.5	2.4
Helpfulness of case management (average rating) <sup>a,c</sup>	2.5	2.3
<b>Services received after release (%)</b>		
Vocational job classes***	37.0	21.1
Job readiness training (e.g., how to interview)***	55.0	32.2
Referral services	45.0	36.2
Mentoring***	47.0	19.1
Housing assistance	7.0	4.0
Legal assistance*	11.0	4.6
GED or other education classes	12.0	13.9
Transportation**	40.0	27.6
Sex offender treatment	1.0	0.0
Medical treatment	32.0	28.3
Tattoo removal	1.0	0.0
Mental health treatment	8.1	6.6
Help getting medications	18.0	11.8
Health care insurance	12.0	8.0
Financial assistance	23.0	23.0
Spiritual or religious assistance	36.0	35.5
Money management skills	11.0	5.9
Individual or group counseling***	27.0	12.5
Family-based programs	4.0	4.6
Parenting classes	7.0	6.6
Child support payments for your children	1.1	1.3
Domestic violence support group	1.0	0.7
Anger management**	15.0	6.6
Victims' group for physical or sexual abuse	0.0	0.0
Alcohol or drug treatment	23.0	18.4
Some other program or service <sup>d</sup>	3.0	3.3
Services-received scale average <sup>e***</sup>	4.7	3.3

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N=252$ ; SR = 100, WE = 152. Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Of those who received case management. Valid  $n=111$ ; SR = 64, WE = 47.

<sup>b</sup>Where 1 is a few times, 2 is monthly, 3 is weekly, and 4 is daily.

<sup>c</sup>Where 0 is not helpful at all, 1 is somewhat unhelpful, 2 is somewhat helpful, and 3 is very helpful.

<sup>d</sup>Includes housing assistance; job assistance, placement, and training; small business management training; spiritual counseling, help with public speaking, and U-Turn Program.

<sup>e</sup>Additive scale; items are summed (range 0–26); alpha = 0.78.

## Sixteen-Month Multivariate Analyses

Table 3.27 summarizes the bivariate analyses of key outcomes observed in the follow-up survey and discussed in the previous section. The key outcomes from the follow-up survey shown in table 3.27 are consistent with those highlighted in the baseline survey (table 3.14), with two exceptions: the follow-up survey did not ask about whether a reentry plan was developed in prison or after release. Consistent with the methodology presented in the four-month multivariate analyses, three of these key outcomes were recoded (i.e., any criminal behavior, any criminal justice involvement, and any drug use) and an additional key outcome was added (i.e., received any service). Following the same procedure used for the four-month multivariate analyses, outcomes without enough variation or with a small number of observations were not analyzed in a multivariate regression model. As a result, we did not analyze the family-strength scale, friendship-strength scale, or activities-with-children scale because of low variation. We did not analyze the binary indicator for financial support or respondents' total weekly wages because of the small number of observations available for the analysis.

TABLE 3.27

### Summary of Key Bivariate Outcomes for Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (follow-up)

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Not included in multivariate analyses</b>		
Family-strength scale average	3.5	3.5
Friendship-strength scale average	3.1	3.2
Activities-with-children scale average <sup>a</sup>	1.1	1.2
Financially support children not living with you (%) <sup>b</sup>	95.0	86.5
Average weekly wages (\$) <sup>c</sup>	410.3	404.3
<b>Included in multivariate analyses (%)</b>		
Any legal employment since last survey	71.0	67.5
Held a legal job at time of current survey	40.0	43.4
Any alcohol use since last survey	81.0	83.6
Any drug use since last survey <sup>d</sup>	38.4	48.3
Moved since last survey	38.0	35.5
Any criminal behavior since last survey <sup>e</sup>	20.0	19.7
Any criminal justice involvement since last survey <sup>f</sup>	21.0	21.1
Met with case manager or service provider since last survey <sup>***</sup>	64.0	30.9
Received any service <sup>g**</sup>	82.8	80.1
Number of services received <sup>g***</sup>	4.7	3.3

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 252$ ; SR = 100, WE = 152. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Of those with any children under 18. Valid  $n = 114$ ; SR = 40, WE = 74.

<sup>b</sup>Of those with at least one child under 18 who does not currently live with them. Valid  $n = 135$ ; SR = 51, WE = 84.

<sup>c</sup>Of those who held a legal job at the time of the survey. Valid  $n = 106$ ; SR = 40, WE = 66.

<sup>d</sup>Includes any illicit drug use (i.e., marijuana, heroin, hydrocodone, methadone, cocaine, amphetamines or methamphetamines,

ecstasy, or other illegal drugs).

<sup>e</sup> Includes person, property, society, or drug crime.

<sup>f</sup> Includes being arrested, being convicted of a crime, being in county jail 30 days or less, being incarcerated in prison, or violating conditions of parole.

<sup>g</sup> Includes all services listed in table 3.26.

The summary of multivariate regression findings comparing SR participants with WE comparisons is shown in table 3.28. Using doubly robust regression models that include propensity weights and control for all available demographic, educational, employment, health and mental health, substance abuse, and criminal history characteristics, there are three statistically significant findings. Though limited, the findings are in support of the Safer Return program. Based on predicted probabilities, the follow-up multivariate analyses show the following:

- Safer Return participants were 27 percent less likely than comparisons to have used any illicit drug since the baseline survey.
- Safer Return participants were 44 percent more likely than comparisons to have met with a case manager or service provider since the baseline survey.
- Safer Return participants had received 1.2 more services than comparisons since the baseline survey.

There were fewer significant differences observed at follow-up than at baseline. There were no statistically significant differences between SR participants and WE comparisons on outcomes assessing any legal employment, legal employment at the time of the survey, any alcohol use, moves since last survey, any criminal behavior, any criminal justice involvement, or receipt of any service.

TABLE 3.28

**Summary of Multivariate Findings Comparing Formerly Incarcerated Men in Safer Return and West Englewood (follow-up)**

	Model used	Coefficient	Interpretation
Any legal employment <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.29	No significant difference
Held a legal job at time of survey <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.37	No significant difference
Any alcohol use <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.24	No significant difference
Any drug use <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-1.12***	SR participants less likely to have used drugs
Moved since last survey <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.26	No significant difference
Any criminal behavior <sup>a,b</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.24	No significant difference
Any criminal justice involvement <sup>t,a,c</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.26	No significant difference

	Model used	Coefficient	Interpretation
Met with case manager or service provider <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	1.87***	SR participants more likely to have met with case manager or service provider
Received any service <sup>a,d</sup>	Logistic regression	0.06	No significant difference
Number of services received <sup>d</sup>	Negative-binomial regression	0.31**	SR participants received more services

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of Safer Return participants and West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 219$ ; SR = 89, WE = 130. Significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Denotes doubly robust regression, weighted by inverse propensity weights.

<sup>b</sup>Includes person, property, society, or drug crime.

<sup>c</sup>Includes being arrested, being convicted of a crime, being in county jail 30 days or less, being incarcerated in prison, or violating conditions of parole.

<sup>d</sup>Includes all services listed in table 3.26.

## Conclusions and Key Takeaways

### Limitations

A few limitations inform our discussion of this chapter’s key conclusions. First, the former prisoners included in this sample were not necessarily representative of the Safer Return participant population or of former prisoners living in West Englewood. The sample included men the research team was able to locate who agreed to complete the surveys 4 and 16 months after their release from prison. The survey sample included men only, although Safer Return served both men and women. Therefore, the characteristics and outcomes of the sampled men may be significantly different than those of the Safer Return participant population and former prisoners in West Englewood, and findings of statistically significant differences between the two groups may not be generalizable to former prisoners participating in Safer Return or living in West Englewood.

Second, there were significant key demographic differences between the two groups of men, many of which are known to be related to reentry success or failure (e.g., substance abuse history and history of homelessness). Most of the observed differences would suggest that Safer Return participants were likely to have worse reentry and reintegration experiences than the West Englewood comparisons. Although the use of doubly robust regression models that used propensity weights and covariates helped isolate Safer Return’s effects, it is nonetheless worth mentioning that an evaluation that used random placement into Safer Return may have yielded different results.

Third, there was significant attrition between the baseline and follow-up samples. Less than 60 percent of the baseline sample completed the follow-up survey. Many of those who did not participate in the follow-up survey were unavailable or could not be located because they had been incarcerated, had moved away, or had passed away since completing the baseline survey. The follow-up sample was biased because it included individuals who were more stable and easier to locate and contact; thus it was more likely to include those with greater reentry success. There is no reason to believe that this bias favors either Safer Return participants or the West Englewood comparisons or, therefore, that our analysis of differences in the treatment and comparison group is biased. However, the issue of attrition is important because it means that our findings are not generalizable to the larger group of Safer Return participants and former prisoners living in West Englewood. Further, attrition makes direct, specific comparisons between the samples at baseline and follow-up difficult. As a result, our discussion of findings focuses on general observations of the two groups (Safer Return and West Englewood) at two points in time (baseline and follow-up), rather than on changes over time.

Fourth, the follow-up sample included a relatively small sample size. Therefore, many of the null findings may have been caused by low power. Further, several key outcomes were observed only within a subsample of the respondents. For example, only men with children answered the questions about activities with their children, and only those who were working at the time of the survey answered the questions about wages. As a result, several key outcomes that were critical indicators of the program's success could not be included in the multivariate regression models.

Finally, all the data in this chapter are self-reported. There are known issues with self-reported data, since these data can suffer from social-desirability bias. Although individuals were assured confidentiality, their answers may have been biased. In particular, crime and victimization may have been over- or underreported. There is no reason to believe that the self-reported data are biased for or against program participants; however, more objective data may yield significantly different findings for some outcomes. Because of the known issues with self-reported data, and to increase the validity of the evaluation findings, we also use administrative data to assess some of the outcomes presented here. Specifically, we use data from the Illinois Department of Corrections to evaluate reincarceration outcomes (chapter 5) and data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security to evaluate employment outcomes (chapter 6). Taken together, the self-reported data and official records form a more complete picture of Safer Return's success.

## Key Takeaways

Despite the limitations, there are several key conclusions that can be drawn from the analyses.

1. The findings indicate that Safer Return participants received many services that were consistent with the program model. In particular, Safer Return participants were significantly more likely than West Englewood comparisons to have received a reentry plan in prison and a case reentry plan after release. In both baseline and follow-up surveys, they were also more likely to have met with a case manager and reported receiving significantly more services. Though these findings are not direct measures of successful reentry, they do show that the program provided men with services that were expected to improve their reentry and reintegration back into the community.
2. Some of the outcomes that are direct measures of reentry and reintegration success indicated that the program had a positive effect. Benefits of Safer Return participation appear most notable in employment outcomes. For example, Safer Return participants were significantly more likely to have been legally employed after release and at the time of the four-month survey. Men who participated in Safer Return were also significantly less likely to have used illicit drugs—such as marijuana, heroin, or cocaine—4 months and 16 months after release. The positive substance abuse finding is particularly noteworthy since Safer Return participants had more extensive substance abuse histories than the West Englewood comparisons.
3. The benefits of program participation appear to be relatively short-lived. More significant differences between Safer Return participants and West Englewood comparisons were observed in the bivariate and multivariate analyses 4 months after release than 16 months after release. This finding is not inconsistent with the program model, since program participation was allowed for up to one year after release. It appears that program participation may have more short-term benefits than long-term benefits or, alternatively, that reentry outcomes are easier to obtain shortly after release than one year later.

# Chapter 4. Self-Reported Family Outcomes

This chapter focuses on outcomes experienced by family members of Safer Return participants and family members of formerly incarcerated men in the comparison community, West Englewood. The family members discussed in this chapter are part of the family and social networks of the men in the SR and WE samples discussed in chapter 3. We begin this chapter by providing a brief overview of Safer Return’s case management approach, which provides the rationale for our decision to focus on family member outcomes. Next, we discuss the methodology used for this chapter, briefly describe how the evaluation was structured, and discuss the available data sources. We then discuss the specific analytic strategy we used to understand the characteristics and outcomes of the family members sampled. After discussing the findings in detail, we conclude with some limitations of the analyses and key takeaways.

As discussed in greater detail in the companion to this report (Rossman and Fontaine 2015), the case management component of Safer Return was intended to leverage the strengths of individuals and their families and social support networks to increase public safety and contribute to successful reentry. Safer Return’s case management model was based in part on the Family Justice Institute’s<sup>8</sup> La Bodega de la Familia (Bodega) model, which is considered a promising comprehensive, family-focused, strengths-based reentry practice (Bradley 1995; Quinn and Van Dyke 2004; Sullivan et al. 2002).

Individual participants were the focus of the case management services provided by Safer Return reentry coaches, but family members were encouraged to participate in the reentry process and were eligible to receive limited resources. For example, reentry coaches might provide family members with individual counseling or information about community-based services. Safer Return reentry coaches sought family member participation, although family participation was not a required program component.<sup>9</sup> Consistent with the Bodega model, the reentry coaches used a broad definition of family, including relatives, close friends, mentors, faith leaders, and others who were sources of significant social support.

## Evaluation Methodology and Data Sources

As discussed in chapter 3, 385 men in Safer Return and West Englewood completed an evaluation survey designed to assess whether Safer Return participants experienced more positive reentry and

reintegration outcomes than those living in West Englewood.<sup>10</sup> To understand whether Safer Return led to positive outcomes among family members, the evaluation also included surveys of these men's family members. Within approximately one month of release from prison, all 385 respondents identified up to four adults who were significant sources of social support for them. Consistent with Safer Return's definition of family,<sup>11</sup> respondents could identify relatives, friends, mentors, or any other adult they deemed appropriate. Surveys of family members were completed in two waves, baseline and follow-up (consistent with the former prisoner evaluation survey). Baseline surveys, which were conducted in person four months after the formerly incarcerated person's release, covered three time periods: four months before incarceration; during incarceration; and four months after prison release. In addition to gathering data on family members' sociodemographic and behavioral characteristics and their perspectives on aspects of their life, the baseline instrument covered the following domains:<sup>12</sup>

- types of contact with the former prisoner before, during, and after incarceration;
- attachment to the former prisoner;
- activities engaged in with the former prisoner;
- provision of resources for the former prisoner;
- experience with former prisoner's parole officer and case manager or reentry coach;
- hardships experienced as a result of the former prisoner's return from prison; and
- need for, and receipt of, resources and assistance.

Follow-up surveys were conducted in person 16 months after prison release, one year after the baseline survey. The follow-up survey was designed to explore the extent of change in these domains since the time of the baseline survey.

From April 2010 through December 2011, 299 family members of SR participants and WE comparisons completed the baseline survey (117 family members of SR participants and 182 family members of WE comparisons). A total of 184 family members completed the follow-up survey, representing approximately 62 percent of the baseline sample. Of these 184 family members, 67 were family members of SR participants and the remaining 117 were family members of WE comparisons.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, the evaluation included quantitative data from separate focus groups held with SR participants, WE comparisons, and their respective family members. These focus groups focused on former prisoners' and family members' knowledge of the reentry and release process, contact and

experiences with the SR reentry coach (or, in the case of the comparisons, other relevant case managers), and relationships with each other. The focus groups with SR participants and their family members also focused on aspects of the family-inclusive case management model. Over 2010 and 2011, a total of 16 focus groups were conducted: 4 groups with SR participants, 4 groups with WE comparisons, 4 groups with SR participants' family members, and 4 groups with WE comparisons' family members. In total, 40 family members and 56 former prisoners participated in these focus groups. Interim findings using a subset of the available data from the baseline family member surveys and all the data from the focus groups have been reported in two previous reports (Fontaine, Gilchrist-Scott, and Denver 2011; Fontaine et al. 2012). These two reports focused mostly on the progress, performance, and outputs of the family-inclusive case management component of Safer Return; their key findings are described in the following section.

## Summary of Previous Analyses

This chapter includes final findings on whether SR families did better than comparison families; these findings are built on those reported in two previously published interim reports. Both earlier reports used qualitative and quantitative data gathered through the process, outcome, and impact evaluation, including data from surveys and focus groups of family members and information gleaned through semistructured interviews with SR staff and reentry coaches as part of the process evaluation.<sup>14</sup> Both reports showed similarities between SR family members and comparison family members, as well as the following main findings:

- The majority of surveyed family members were female; they were most likely an intimate partner, parent or stepparent, or sibling of the returning family member.
- The majority of family members reported having limited resources; many had extremely low incomes, were unemployed, and had not graduated from high school or obtained a GED.
- At baseline (four months after prison release), family members generally reported strong, positive relationships with their returning family member.
- Family members were highly supportive of their returning family member at baseline.
- Most family members were currently living with the SR participants and WE comparisons at the time of the baseline survey and reported that they had also lived with the former prisoner before his most recent prison stay.

- In the focus groups, former prisoners reported feeling inadequately prepared to return from incarceration and relying heavily on their family members after release for an array of emotional and financial supports.
- Despite the efforts of SR reentry coaches to incorporate families into the case management component, few family members were directly engaged in the SR demonstration. There were many reasons more family members did not get involved, including reentry coaches' inability to engage family members whose needs matched or exceeded those of the participants, SR participants' unwillingness to have their family members engaged directly in their reentry process because of strained family ties, SR participants' desire to disengage with family members they perceived as negative influences, some family members' disinterest in or inability to be involved in the former prisoner's reentry process, and some SR participants' lack of family and social support networks when they returned to the community.
- During the focus groups, family members and former prisoners said that incarceration strained their relationships and led to feelings of shame, depression, and demoralization.

The findings in this chapter build on the prior analyses by reporting on the full sample of 299 family members recruited at baseline<sup>15</sup> and on findings from the 16-month follow-up survey. The remainder of this chapter is divided into four sections. In the methodology section, we discuss the analytic approach used for the current analyses. Next, we present findings from the descriptive and bivariate analyses of the baseline survey, followed by findings from the same bivariate analyses of the follow-up survey outcomes. In the final section, we discuss limitations of the analyses and highlight key conclusions.

## Methodology

We asked about several outcomes in the 4-month (baseline) and 16-month (follow-up) surveys to understand whether SR family members fared better than WE family members at these two points in time. In this analysis, we focus specifically on whether SR and WE families experienced different levels or frequency of (1) contact with the returning family member, (2) attachment to the returning family member, (3) engagement in activities with the returning family member, (4) provision of postrelease resources for the returning family member, and (5) hardship as a result of their family member's return. For most of these primary outcomes, we created scaled measures that demonstrated acceptable reliability (an alpha score of 0.7 or higher), using several questions that assessed contact, attachment, activities, resources, and hardships. Other outcomes of interest were family members' reported (6)

contact and interactions with parole officers and reentry coaches or case managers, and (7) need for, and receipt of, resources and assistance. We conducted bivariate analyses on these seven primary outcomes to test for statistically significant differences between family members of SR participants and family members of WE comparisons. Because of low variation in the outcomes of interest and the lack of differences between SR and WE families, we did not conduct multivariate analyses that controlled for demographic characteristics.

## Findings

### Demographic Profiles of Safer Return and West Englewood Family Members

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 show characteristics of the SR and WE family members as identified through the four-month survey. There are few significant differences between the two groups. The overwhelming majority of family members in both groups were black or African American, and more than three-quarters were female. A smaller share of Safer Return family members self-identified as black or African American than those in West Englewood.

Family members in both groups reported similar economic and social capital. The majority were single and never married, had low educational attainment, were not employed, and reported relatively low incomes from legal employment and government programs. Self-reported experiences with the criminal justice system were also similar across the two groups: approximately 42 percent of SR and WE family members had been arrested before, and the majority had previously experienced a family member returning home from prison. Perhaps because of all these challenges and realities, family members in both groups rated their quality of life as average or below average on multiple domains. On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), family members in both groups reported an average quality of life rating of about 3; however, SR family members reported significantly lower quality of housing and health than WE family members.

TABLE 4.1

## Characteristics and Experiences of Safer Return and West Englewood Family Members (baseline)

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Race (%)**</b>		
Black or African American	94.0	98.3
Other	6.0	1.7
<b>Gender (%)</b>		
Male	23.3	21.4
Female	76.7	78.6
<b>Employment and income</b>		
Currently employed (%)	41.0	38.1
Number of jobs (average) <sup>a</sup>	1.2	1.2
Number of weekly hours worked at all jobs (mode) <sup>a,b</sup>	31-40	31-40
Individual annual income from all sources (mode) <sup>c</sup>	<\$10,000	<\$10,000
<b>Education (%)</b>		
Less than high school graduate or GED	30.8	34.6
High school graduate or GED	34.2	29.7
Vocational program certificate or some college	28.2	26.9
College graduate or above	6.8	8.8
<b>Marital status (%)</b>		
Single, never married	56.4	50.0
Married or living as married	27.4	24.7
Widowed, legally separated, or divorced	16.2	25.3
<b>Prior criminal justice experience (%)</b>		
Ever arrested	42.7	42.3
Ever incarcerated in prison or jail	23.1	16.5
First time a family member returned home from prison	33.0	34.8
<b>Average quality rating of the following on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)</b>		
Housing*	3.4	3.7
Job	2.8	2.7
Health*	3.4	3.6
Financial situation	2.4	2.6
Involvement in the community	2.3	2.5
Support system	3.4	3.5
Quality-of-life scale average <sup>d</sup>	3.0	3.1

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 299$ ; SR = 117, WE = 182. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Of those who are employed.

<sup>b</sup>Categories were less than 20 hours, 21-30 hours, 31-40 hours, more than 40 hours, and varies from week to week.

<sup>c</sup>Income from all sources, including jobs and government programs such as General Assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Social Security. Categories were less than \$10,000, \$10,000-19,999, \$20,000-29,999, \$30,000-39,999, \$40,000-49,999, \$50,000-59,999, and \$60,000 and more.

<sup>d</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items, excluding item related to job; alpha = 0.70.

As shown in table 4.2, SR and WE family members reported long, intimate histories with the former prisoners. The majority lived with their formerly incarcerated family member before and after

incarceration. West Englewood family members reported significantly more total years living with the former prisoner. In both communities, approximately three-quarters of the family members were immediate family members or intimate partners of the former prisoners, including partners and former partners, parents and stepparents, siblings, and children.

TABLE 4.2

**Relationships between Family Members and Former Prisoners (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Length of relationship and living arrangements</b>		
Years known (average)	22.6	23.7
Years lived in same household (average)**	11.0	14.4
Lived with before prison (%)	61.5	64.1
Live with currently (%)	70.9	75.8
<b>Connection to former prisoner (%)<sup>a</sup></b>		
Spouse or former spouse	5.1	7.1
Partner or former partner <sup>b</sup>	29.1	21.4
Parent or stepparent	19.7	23.1
Sibling	18.8	21.4
Child, stepchild, or foster child	0.9	3.9
Grandparent	4.3	8.2
Aunt, uncle, or cousin	11.1	8.2
Friend, preacher, or other connection	11.1	7.7

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N=299$ ; SR = 117, WE = 182. Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Categories represent respondents' descriptions of themselves in relation to the former prisoners.

<sup>b</sup>Including girlfriend, boyfriend, fiancée, and fiancé.

## Four-Month Outcomes

Tables 4.3 through 4.8 show differences in the SR and WE families four months after release in respect to the seven primary outcomes described in this chapter's methodology section (contact, attachment, activities, resources, hardship, contact with parole officers and case managers, and need for assistance). The two groups of family members exhibited few significant differences in four-month outcomes.

Table 4.3 shows that family members reported frequent face-to-face contact with the former prisoners in the four months before incarceration and the four months after incarceration, and that a smaller share of SR families than WE families reported weekly face-to-face contact after prison. As might be expected given the known challenges family members face interacting with the incarcerated, weekly face-to-face contact and weekly phone calls decreased substantially during incarceration.

Family members reported more weekly phone calls in the four months after release than before or during incarceration. This is notable since weekly face-to-face contact was also high after release. Findings showing such high levels of contact are not surprising since the majority of SR and WE family members were living with the former prisoners at the time of the baseline survey (table 4.2).

TABLE 4.3

**Frequency and Types of Contact between Family Members and Former Prisoners (baseline)**

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
<b>At least weekly contact <i>before</i> prison</b>		
Face to face	84.5	86.2
Phone calls	64.7	66.1
Written communication <sup>a</sup>	25.0	27.7
<b>At least weekly contact <i>during</i> prison</b>		
Face to face	16.5	19.9
Phone calls	34.5	43.9
Written communication <sup>a</sup>	26.7	29.3
<b>At least weekly contact <i>after</i> prison</b>		
Face to face <sup>**</sup>	95.7	99.5
Phone calls	75.2	71.3
Written communication <sup>a</sup>	37.6	33.7

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 299$ ; SR = 117, WE = 182. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Includes letters, email, texting, and Internet messages.

As shown in table 4.4, consistent with reported levels of contact, both SR and WE family members reported high levels of attachment with the former prisoner. There are no significant differences between the two groups in reported levels of attachment before, during, or after incarceration. Levels of attachment appear to dip for both SR and WE family members during incarceration relative to pre- and postincarceration levels, but are still relatively high.

TABLE 4.4

## Levels of Attachment between Family Members and Former Prisoners (baseline)

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Level of attachment <i>before</i> prison (average rating)<sup>a</sup></b>		
Felt close to former prisoner	3.6	3.7
Wanted former prisoner to be involved in your life	3.8	3.8
Former prisoner was a source of emotional support for you	3.3	3.3
Were satisfied with your communication with former prisoner	3.5	3.4
Were able to calmly discuss problems with each other	3.4	3.4
Expressed your true feelings to former prisoner	3.6	3.7
Attachment scale average <sup>b</sup>	3.5	3.6
<b>Level of attachment <i>during</i> prison (average rating)<sup>a</sup></b>		
Felt close to former prisoner	3.3	3.2
Wanted former prisoner to be involved in your life	3.6	3.7
Former prisoner was a source of emotional support for you	3.0	3.0
Were satisfied with your communication with former prisoner	2.9	2.9
Were able to calmly discuss problems with each other	3.0	3.0
Expressed your true feelings to former prisoner	3.3	3.4
Attachment scale average <sup>c</sup>	3.2	3.2
<b>Level of attachment <i>after</i> prison (average rating)<sup>a</sup></b>		
Felt close to former prisoner	3.8	3.8
Wanted former prisoner to be involved in your life	3.8	3.8
Former prisoner was a source of emotional support for you	3.5	3.4
Were satisfied with your communication with former prisoner	3.7	3.6
Were able to calmly discuss problems with each other	3.6	3.6
Expressed your true feelings to former prisoner	3.7	3.8
Attachment scale average <sup>d</sup>	3.7	3.7

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 299$ ; SR = 117, WE = 182. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Where 1 is strongly disagree, 2 is somewhat disagree, 3 is somewhat agree, and 4 is strongly agree.

<sup>b</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.85.

<sup>c</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.86.

<sup>d</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.79.

Table 4.5 shows the frequency and types of activities that SR and WE family members reported engaging in with the former prisoners during the four months before incarceration and the four months after release. With one exception—spending time together in a group of family or friends—there were no significant differences in the frequency and types of activities the two groups engaged in before incarceration and after release. Safer Return family members reported more activities in the four months after incarceration than in the four months before incarceration, and West Englewood family members reported approximately the same number of activities in both time periods. This increase may be explained by the fact that more family members reported living with the former prisoner after release than before incarceration. The most frequently reported activity was spending time together

one-on-one, followed closely by watching television and spending time together in a group of family or friends. Significantly more WE family members than SR family members reported spending time together in a group of family or friends in the four months before incarceration.

TABLE 4.5

**Frequency and Types of Activities Family Members and Former Prisoners Engaged in Together (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Before incarceration, at least weekly (%)</b>		
Watch television together	53.1	56.2
Go to the movies together	2.7	3.4
Hang out in a park or playground together	18.6	23.0
Shoot pool or play card games together	26.6	32.2
Exercise or play sports together	8.0	14.0
Spend time together in a group of family or friends**	47.8	59.6
Spend time one-on-one	66.4	68.0
Eat out at a restaurant together	24.8	27.0
Go to a play, museum, or cultural event together	1.8	2.8
Attend local civic or social organization meetings	1.8	2.8
Attend religious services together	12.4	9.6
Play instruments or perform together	2.7	4.0
Activities scale average <sup>a</sup>	1.1	1.2
<b>Since incarceration, at least weekly (%)</b>		
Watch television together	73.5	69.2
Go to the movies together	6.8	3.9
Hang out in a park or playground together	20.5	23.1
Shoot pool or play card games together	28.2	25.3
Exercise or play sports together	9.4	14.8
Spend time together in a group of family or friends	60.7	66.5
Spend time one-on-one	82.9	83.0
Eat out at a restaurant together	29.1	24.7
Go to a play, museum, or cultural event together	0.0	4.4
Attend local civic or social organization meetings	1.7	1.1
Attend religious services together	13.7	9.9
Play instruments or perform together	6.0	5.5
Activities scale average <sup>b</sup>	1.2	1.2

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid *N* = 299; SR = 117, WE = 182. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed *t*-tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \* *p* < 0.10, \*\* *p* < 0.05, \*\*\* *p* < 0.01.

<sup>a</sup>Where 1 is a few times, 2 is monthly, 3 is weekly, and 4 is daily; additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.85.

<sup>b</sup>Where 1 is a few times, 2 is monthly, 3 is weekly, and 4 is daily; additive scale divided by the number of items; alpha = 0.80.

Table 4.6 shows the share of SR and WE family members who reported providing various types of resources to the former prisoners. There were no significant differences between the two groups in the provision of any of the 13 resources they were asked about. Family members reported providing

various resources to the former prisoners; these reports were consistent with the fact that the majority of respondents were living with their formerly incarcerated family member at the time of the survey.

The majority of family members in both groups said that they had helped the former prisoner look for a job, get financial support, purchase food or find food assistance programs, and find transportation. Far fewer family members reported helping former prisoners find child care, mental health counseling services, or parenting or relationship classes. The small share of family members reporting that they helped with these three services may suggest that the former prisoners needed less assistance in these areas. On average, family members reported providing nearly 4 of the 13 resources they were asked about.

TABLE 4.6

**Resources Family Members Provided for Former Prisoners (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
Since release, helped former prisoner (%)		
Look for a job	57.3	60.4
Find housing	33.3	25.8
Find drug and/or alcohol treatment	12.8	11.5
Find child care	3.6	5.6
Get financial support	49.6	52.2
Enroll in education programs	27.4	33.0
Enroll in job training programs	29.9	28.0
Purchase food or find food assistance programs	60.7	58.2
Find transportation	52.1	50.3
Purchase medications and health care or find health care providers	20.5	22.7
Find mental health counseling services	6.8	8.2
Find community activities	27.4	29.7
Find parenting or relationship classes	4.3	5.0
Resources scale average <sup>a</sup>	3.8	3.9

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 299$ ; SR = 117, WE = 182. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by number of items; alpha = 0.81.

Family members were asked how the return of the former prisoner had affected their lives; specifically, whether the return had created hardships for them. This question is particularly relevant since the majority of respondents reported living with and providing resources to their formerly incarcerated family member at the time of the four-month survey (table 4.6), despite their own limited resources (table 4.1).

Findings summarized in table 4.7 suggest that family members reported relatively few hardships as a result of the former prisoners' return. On average, family members reported experiencing approximately 1 of the 13 hardships they were asked about. Family members of SR participants were significantly less likely than WE family members to report feeling stressed because they were worried about the former prisoner. This disparity may be related to the former prisoners' participation in Safer Return. On the other hand, Safer Return family members were significantly more likely than West Englewood family members to report that they had begun using drugs or alcohol, or were using them more frequently, as a result their family member's return (though the share of SR families reporting this outcome is extremely low: 5 percent).

The top three hardships reported by family members in both groups were feeling stressed because of worries about the former prisoner, having financial hardships, and feeling general anxiety or stress. All other hardships were reported by less than 10 percent of sampled family members in both groups.

TABLE 4.7

**Hardships Experienced by Family Members as a Result of Former Prisoner's Return (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>As a result of former prisoner's return ... (%)</b>		
Have you lost your job?	1.2	0.9
Have you had to move or been worried about eviction?	2.4	7.6
Have your family or friends pulled away from you?	7.3	5.1
Have your children had adjustment problems at home, in school, or with friends?	3.8	1.8
Have you had trouble in your relationships with others?	6.1	5.9
Have you felt more anxious or stressed?	18.3	22.2
Have you begun using alcohol or drugs, or begun to use more frequently?*	4.9	0.9
Have you been arrested?	4.9	2.5
Have you had financial hardship?	20.7	18.8
Has your daily routine been interrupted by parole visits or requirements?	2.4	6.8
Has the former prisoner brought unwelcome guests into your home?	9.8	7.6
Have you felt stressed because you are worrying about the former prisoner?*	32.9	44.9
Have you experienced some other challenge?	3.4	2.7
Hardships scale average <sup>a</sup>	1.2	1.2

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid N= 200; SR = 82, WE = 118 (99 survey respondents were erroneously told to skip this section of the survey). Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed t-tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by number of items; alpha = 0.77.

Consistent with the Safer Return case management model, which stresses partnerships with case managers and parole officers, family members were asked about their experiences with the former

prisoner’s parole officer and reentry coach or case manager. Table 4.8 shows that less than half of the SR and WE family members reported ever having contact with the former prisoner’s parole officer, but that the overwhelming majority reported that they understood what was expected of their formerly incarcerated family member’s parole regulations, procedures, and requirements (for reference, 94 percent of the former prisoners were on parole at the time of the baseline survey). There were no significant differences between SR and WE family members in contact with parole officers or understanding of parole regulations, procedures, and requirements.

Family members in West Englewood were significantly more likely than Safer Return family members to report ever having contact with the former prisoner’s case manager or reentry coach. This finding is the opposite of what we expect, although it is not unlikely that former prisoners in West Englewood would have case managers assisting them with reentry planning. Unfortunately, the survey did not ask specific information about the case managers WE family members were reporting about. Of particular interest here—consistent with previous findings on the evaluation—is the fact that only 50 percent of sampled SR family members reported that they had ever had contact with their formerly incarcerated family member’s reentry coach.

TABLE 4.8

**Family Members’ Experiences with Former Prisoner’s Parole Officer and Reentry Coach or Case Manager (baseline)**

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
<b>Ever had contact with</b>		
Former prisoner’s parole officer	44.3	49.3
Former prisoner’s reentry coach or case manager***	50.4	70.9
<b>Understand what is expected of former prisoner’s parole regulations, procedures, and requirements</b>		
Strongly agree	84.3	81.4
Somewhat agree	9.3	13.4
Somewhat disagree	0.9	1.7
Strongly disagree	5.6	3.5

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** *N* = 299; SR = 117, WE = 182. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed *t*-tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \* *p* < 0.10, \*\* *p* < 0.05, \*\*\* *p* < 0.01.

Finally, family members were asked whether they were in need of any assistance since the former prisoner’s release and about the extent to which their formerly incarcerated family member’s reentry coach or case manager had provided referrals for these needed services. As shown in table 4.9, SR and WE family members reported needing assistance with various services and resources. Approximately

one-quarter of the sampled family members indicated that they needed assistance finding a job, getting financial support, and finding housing. Significantly more SR family members than WE family members reported needing assistance finding child care, and significantly more WE family members reported needing assistance purchasing medications and health care or finding health care providers.

On average, surveyed family members reported needing fewer than 2 of the 13 resources they were asked about. The relatively low average is notable in light of the limited resources family members reported (table 4.1). A question not shown in table 4.9 asked family members whether they had received a service referral for needed assistance from their formerly incarcerated family member’s reentry coach or case manager. Only 11 family members, including 3 SR family members, reported that they had received a referral for any of the items listed in table 4.9.

TABLE 4.9

**Family Members’ Need for Assistance (baseline)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Since the former prisoner’s release, have you needed assistance with the following? (%)</b>		
Finding a job	28.2	34.6
Finding housing	23.9	18.7
Finding drug and/or alcohol treatment	0.9	1.1
Finding child care**	5.1	1.1
Getting financial support	27.4	25.4
Enrolling in educational programs	15.4	14.3
Enrolling in job training programs	14.5	16.0
Purchasing food or finding food assistance programs	15.4	12.1
Finding transportation	18.0	15.9
Purchasing medications and health care or finding health care providers**	4.3	12.2
Finding mental health counseling services	1.7	3.9
Finding activities going on in the neighborhood	4.3	8.8
Finding parenting or relationship classes	1.7	2.8
Resource-need scale average <sup>a</sup>	1.6	1.7

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid N= 299; SR = 117, WE = 182. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed *t*-tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \* *p* < 0.10, \*\* *p* < 0.05, \*\*\* *p* < 0.01.

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by number of items; alpha = 0.81.

## Sixteen-Month Outcomes

There was considerable attrition among the family members between the baseline and follow-up surveys (184 of the 299 family members surveyed at baseline participated in the follow-up survey). We

analyzed the demographic differences between the two samples and found no notable differences in terms of the two samples' race and gender. The types of relationships between family members and former prisoners were also similar across the baseline and follow-up surveys. As shown in table 4.10, with the exception of current employment status, there were no significant differences in the characteristics and experiences of the SR and WE family members responding to the follow-up survey.

One year later, the majority of SR and WE family members were still living with the former prisoner, although fewer were living together overall (refer to table 4.2 for baseline comparisons). Significantly more SR family members than WE family members were currently employed at follow-up (48 percent and 35 percent, respectively). In spite of higher employment rates, the modal annual income in both groups remained less than \$10,000. A handful of family members had been arrested or incarcerated in the year since the baseline survey. As at baseline, family members in both groups rated the quality of different aspects of their life as average or below average.

TABLE 4.10

**Characteristics and Experiences of Safer Return and West Englewood Family Members (follow-up)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Length of relationship and living arrangements</b>		
Number of months living together since previous survey (average)	6.0	6.4
Currently living with former prisoner (%)	50.8	58.1
<b>Employment and income</b>		
Currently employed (%) <sup>*</sup>	47.8	35.0
Individual annual income from all sources (mode) <sup>a</sup>	<\$10,000	<\$10,000
<b>Marital status (%)</b>		
Single, never married	52.2	44.4
Married or living as married	30.3	27.4
Widowed, legally separated, or divorced	18.2	27.4
<b>Criminal justice experience (%)</b>		
Arrested since previous survey	3.0	1.7
Incarcerated since previous survey	0.0	0.9
<b>Average quality ratings on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)</b>		
Housing	3.3	3.6
Job	2.7	2.8
Health	3.4	3.4
Financial situation	2.6	2.5
Involvement in the community	2.3	2.3
Support system	3.4	3.4
Quality-of-life scale average <sup>b</sup>	3.0	3.1

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid *N* = 184, SR = 67, WE = 117. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed *t*-tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \* *p* < 0.10, \*\* *p* < 0.05, \*\*\* *p* < 0.01.

<sup>a</sup> Income from all sources, including jobs and government programs such as General Assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Social Security. Income categories were less than \$10,000, \$10,000–19,999, \$20,000–29,999, \$30,000–39,999, \$40,000–49,999, \$50,000–59,999, and \$60,000 and more.

<sup>b</sup> Additive scale divided by the number of items, excluding item related to job; alpha = 0.69.

Consistent with the baseline findings, family members in both groups reported high levels of contact, attachment, and activities with the former prisoners (table 4.11). Safer Return and West Englewood family members did not significantly differ with each other in reported frequency or level of any of these outcomes. Weekly face-to-face contact was reported by the overwhelming majority of family members, and more than three-quarters also reported weekly phone calls. Reported levels of face-to-face contact were lower at follow-up than baseline, but this decrease likely reflects the fact that fewer respondents were living with their formerly incarcerated family members at the time of the follow-up survey.

Respondents' ratings of attachment to their formerly incarcerated family members varied: some metrics of attachment received higher ratings at follow-up, and others received higher ratings at baseline. Overall, the attachment scale is slightly lower at follow-up (3.6) than at baseline (3.7). The average number of activities reported at follow-up is unchanged from the average reported at baseline (1.2 on the activities scale).

The same three activities were reported by the majority of family members at baseline and follow-up: watching television together, spending time together one-on-one, and spending time together in a group of family or friends. However, each of these activities was reported by fewer family members at follow-up than at baseline. For example, approximately 83 percent of SR and WE family members reported that they spent weekly one-on-one time with the former prisoner four months after release, but only approximately 70 percent reported this one year later. This change likely reflects the finding that fewer family members were living with the former prisoners at follow-up than baseline.

TABLE 4.11

**Frequency and Types of Contact, Attachment, and Activities Shared by Family Members and Former Prisoners (follow-up)**

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Since baseline, at least weekly (%)</b>		
Face-to-face contact	84.9	87.9
Phone calls	77.3	75.9
Written communication <sup>a</sup>	37.4	37.1
<b>Level of attachment since baseline (average rating)<sup>b</sup></b>		
Felt close to former prisoner	3.6	3.7
Wanted former prisoner to be involved in your life	3.7	3.7
Former prisoner was a source of emotional support for you	3.4	3.3
Were satisfied with your communication with former prisoner	3.5	3.5
Were able to calmly discuss problems with each other	3.5	3.4
Expressed your true feelings to former prisoner	3.8	3.9
Attachment scale average <sup>c</sup>	3.6	3.6

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Since baseline, at least weekly (%)</b>		
Watch television together	61.5	53.0
Go to the movies together	3.1	1.7
Hang out in a park or playground together	24.6	16.5
Shoot pool or play card games together	20.0	25.2
Exercise or play sports together	13.8	11.3
Spend time together in a group of family or friends	48.4	51.3
Spend time one-on-one	73.4	65.2
Eat out at a restaurant together	26.2	20.0
Go to a play, museum, or cultural event together	1.5	3.5
Attend local civic or social organization meetings	3.5	1.5
Attend religious services together	13.9	16.5
Play instruments or perform together	1.5	2.6
Activities scale average <sup>d</sup>	1.2	1.2

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:**  $N = 184$ ;  $SR = 67$ ,  $WE = 117$ . Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Includes letters, email, texting, and Internet messages.

<sup>b</sup>Where 1 is strongly disagree, 2 is somewhat disagree, 3 is somewhat agree, and 4 is strongly agree; scale is divided by the number of items.

<sup>c</sup>Additive scale divided by the number of items;  $\alpha = 0.85$ .

<sup>d</sup>Where 1 is a few times, 2 is monthly, 3 is weekly, and 4 is daily; scale is divided by the number of items;  $\alpha = 0.85$ .

Table 4.12 shows the types of resources respondents reported providing to their formerly incarcerated family members since baseline. A comparison with table 4.6 reveals that a greater share of family members reported providing almost every type of resource at follow-up than at baseline. During the year between the baseline survey and the follow-up survey, family members provided an array of resources to their formerly incarcerated family members. The most frequently reported forms of assistance were helping the former prisoner look for a job, get financial support, purchase food or find food assistance programs, and find transportation. Significantly more SR family members than WE family members reported helping the former prisoner find housing. The average number of resources is higher in both groups at follow-up than baseline. That is, family members in both groups reportedly provided more resources 16 months after prison release than they reportedly provided 4 months after prison release.

TABLE 4.12

## Resources Family Members Provided for Former Prisoners (follow-up)

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Since baseline, helped former prisoner (%)</b>		
Look for a job	68.7	71.6
Find housing**	34.3	19.1
Find drug and/or alcohol treatment	16.4	17.4
Find child care	4.5	2.6
Get financial support	52.2	51.7
Enroll in education programs	31.3	25.0
Enroll in job training programs	35.8	28.5
Purchase food or find food assistance programs	59.1	57.8
Find transportation	56.7	50.9
Purchase medications and health care or find health care providers	31.3	27.6
Find mental health counseling services	11.9	10.3
Find community activities	27.6	28.4
Find parenting or relationship classes	6.0	5.2
Resources scale average <sup>a</sup>	4.4	3.9

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 184$ ; SR = 67, WE = 117. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by number of items; alpha = 0.80.

With few exceptions, SR and WE family members reported experiencing more hardships as a result of the former prisoner's return at follow-up than they had at baseline. The share of family members reporting specific hardships is shown in table 4.13. The increase in hardships could be related to the increase in resources provided by family members (table 4.12). The increase might also suggest that hardships increase over time, the longer the former prisoner is in the community.

By far, the most commonly reported hardship was feeling stressed because of worry about the formerly incarcerated family member. Safer Return family members were significantly more likely than West Englewood family members to report family or friends pulling away or having trouble with their other relationships. It is notable that the share of family members reporting these hardships increased from baseline to follow-up, as the share of family members living with the former prisoner decreased.

TABLE 4.13

## Hardships Experienced by Family Members as a Result of Former Prisoner's Return (follow-up)

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Since baseline, as a result of former prisoner's return . . . (%)</b>		
Have you lost your job?	3.0	3.4
Have you had to move or been worried about eviction?	4.5	2.6
Have your family or friends pulled away from you?*	11.9	4.3
Have your children had adjustment problems at home, in school, or with friends?	9.0	3.4
Have you had trouble in your relationships with others?*	11.9	4.3
Have you felt more anxious or stressed?	23.9	27.4
Have you begun using alcohol or drugs, or begun to use more frequently?	4.5	6.0
Have you been arrested?	1.5	0.9
Have you had financial hardship?	19.4	16.2
Has your daily routine been interrupted by parole visits or requirements?	6.0	5.1
Has the former prisoner brought unwelcome guests into your home?	13.4	11.1
Have you felt stressed because you are worrying about the former prisoner?	41.8	36.8
Have you experienced some other challenge?	14.9	7.7
Hardships scale average <sup>a</sup>	1.6	1.3

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 184$ ; SR = 67, WE = 117. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by number of items; alpha = 0.81.

Table 4.14 shows that a greater percentage of family members reported having contact with parole officers and case managers at follow-up than at baseline (see table 4.8 for baseline figures). Fewer than half of the family members said that they had contact with the former prisoners' parole officers at baseline, but nearly two-thirds reported such contact one year later. Family members also reported a more solid understanding of their formerly incarcerated family member's parole regulations, procedures, and requirements than they had at baseline.

Consistent with the baseline findings, West Englewood family members were significantly more likely than Safer Return family members to report having contact with the former prisoner's case manager or reentry coach in the year between the baseline and follow-up surveys. The share of SR family members reporting contact with the reentry coach was about the same at follow-up and baseline (roughly 50 percent).

TABLE 4.14

### Family Members' Experiences with Former Prisoner's Parole Officer and Reentry Coach or Case Manager (follow-up)

	Safer Return (%)	West Englewood (%)
<b>Since baseline, had contact with</b>		
Former prisoner's parole officer	65.1	61.3
Former prisoner's reentry coach or case manager**	53.0	71.9
<b>Understand what is expected of former prisoner's parole regulations, procedures, and requirements</b>		
Strongly agree	90.6	83.6
Somewhat agree	4.7	11.8
Somewhat disagree	1.6	3.6
Strongly disagree	3.1	0.9

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 184$ ; SR = 67, WE = 117. Statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

The final outcome we compared at baseline and follow-up was family members' need for assistance with various resources and services. More than one-third of the sampled family members indicated needing assistance finding a job (table 4.15). There were no significant differences in the share of SR and WE family members who reported needing assistance with the 13 items included in the survey. A question not shown in table 4.15 was whether family members had received a service referral from the former prisoner's reentry coach or case manager. Only seven family members, including four SR family members, reported that they had received a referral for any of the items listed in table 4.15.

TABLE 4.15

### Family Members' Need for Assistance (follow-up)

	Safer Return	West Englewood
<b>Since baseline, have you needed assistance with the following? (%)</b>		
Finding a job	37.3	34.2
Finding housing	25.4	19.7
Finding drug and/or alcohol treatment	0.0	3.4
Finding child care	4.5	2.6
Getting financial support	23.9	24.8
Enrolling in educational programs	10.5	11.1
Enrolling in job training programs	7.5	14.5
Purchasing food or finding food assistance programs	20.9	12.8
Finding transportation	17.9	15.4
Purchasing medications and health care or finding health care providers	10.5	13.7
Finding mental health counseling services	1.5	4.3

	Safer Return	West Englewood
Finding activities going on in the neighborhood	10.5	10.3
Finding parenting or relationship classes	4.5	4.3
Resource-need scale average <sup>a</sup>	1.7	1.7

**Source:** Urban Institute surveys of family members of Safer Return participants and family members of West Englewood former prisoner comparisons.

**Notes:** Valid  $N = 184$ ; SR = 67, WE = 117. Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using two-tailed  $t$ -tests and chi-square tests, as appropriate; significant differences are noted by \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Additive scale divided by number of items; alpha = 0.83.

## Conclusions and Key Takeaways

### Limitations

Our discussion of the main takeaways from the analyses takes place within the context of three important data limitations.

First, the sample of family members surveyed was relatively small, and there was substantial attrition between the baseline and follow-up surveys: only 62 percent of the family members who participated in the baseline survey went on to complete the follow-up survey. Indeed, only 67 Safer Return family members completed the follow-up survey. The relatively small sample size may have contributed to our inability to detect differences between the two groups of family members, particularly in the follow-up survey. We cannot account for all the attrition we experienced in implementing the survey, but we do know that a sizable share of family members were not surveyed at follow-up because we could not locate them.<sup>16</sup> Our success in locating former prisoners to survey, discussed in chapter 3, dictated the number of family members available for the family survey. The former prisoner survey was completed with 385 men, so a relatively small number of family members were available for inclusion in the evaluation. Given the small sample size and high rate of attrition, the overall null findings that Safer Return family members had better outcomes than West Englewood family members may be the result of low power.

Our sampling strategy presents another limitation of the analyses. Overall, the findings presented here are not necessarily generalizable to family members of former prisoners in Safer Return or West Englewood. As mentioned, Safer Return participants and West Englewood comparisons were asked to

identify family members who were significant sources of support. As a result of this approach, the survey was completed by family members who were supportive of the former prisoners.

This factor likely contributed to the lack of variation in contact, attachment, and resources outcomes. Had the sampling strategy been random; that is, had we sampled from the formerly incarcerated individuals' family networks randomly, our findings would likely have been much different. Other family members, including those who were not as close to the former prisoners, would likely have felt differently about their experiences and relationships with their formerly incarcerated family members. That said, our sampling strategy was purposeful because we wanted to understand whether those likely to be included in the family-inclusive case management component had positive outcomes with their formerly incarcerated family members over time. The survey was not intended to generate a more general perspective on family members' experiences and relationships. Nonetheless, it is worth mention that the findings herein are representative of *close* family members' contact, attachment, activities, resource provision, and hardships.

Finally, and most importantly, the share of family members reporting contact with Safer Return reentry coaches, and the lack of service referrals they received, limited our ability to execute the analyses as intended and thus limit the conclusions we can draw. As shown in tables 4.8 and 4.14 and the surrounding discussions, significantly more West Englewood family members than Safer Return family members reported contact with the former prisoners' case managers and reentry coaches. This finding is inconsistent with our expectations. Although we expected West Englewood family members to report contact with case managers, we expected, based on the demonstration's design, that Safer Return family members would have even greater contact with the reentry coaches. Certainly, we expected more than half of the surveyed family members to report contact with Safer Return reentry coaches. However, the survey results confirm what we have learned through the process evaluation: family engagement in the Safer Return program was relatively low (Rossman and Fontaine 2015). Though this finding is reasonable, we will briefly explore two possible explanations for its inconsistency with our expectations: one based on the construction of the survey question and the other based on the sampling frame.

In the surveys, West Englewood family members were asked if they had contact with the former prisoners' case managers, and Safer Return family members were asked if they had contact with Safer Return reentry coaches. Had Safer Return family members been asked about their contact with case managers—including, but not limited to, Safer Return reentry coaches—their responses would likely have been higher. It is reasonable to assume that both groups of former prisoners interacted with various case managers (e.g., mental health or substance abuse counselors, peer mentors). In

consequence, it could be argued that the two groups' responses to this question are incomparable. The question nonetheless demonstrates Safer Return family members' lack of engagement with reentry coaches.

The second possible explanation is related to the composition of our sample. As a result of our method of recruiting family members, the Safer Return family members who completed the survey may not have been the same individuals reentry coaches targeted for participation in the former prisoners' reentry plans. We did not seek specifically to recruit the family members reentry coaches identified as those they engaged (or tried to engage) in participants' reentry plans. Rather, the family member sample was identified by the former prisoners themselves, based on whom they identified as sources of social support. We believe that this limitation has minor consequences for the overall findings. Although our sample of Safer Return family members may have differed from the set of family members engaged by the reentry coaches, our process evaluation findings indicated that reentry coaches tried to engage the family members living with participants. Most of those who responded to the survey were indeed living with participants. Further, our sample was made up of close family members, including intimate partners and parents—precisely the same individuals the reentry coaches intended to engage.

In combination with the lower reported contact with reentry coaches than expected, the paucity of referrals received by Safer Return families (three at baseline and four at follow-up) further hindered our ability to draw strong conclusions. In consequence, we were only able to assess whether Safer Return family members *indirectly* benefitted from the Safer Return demonstration through the former prisoners' participation and presumed reintegration success.

Since very few family members of Safer Return participants received any direct services (or service referrals), any differences in outcomes uncovered in the analyses would have been based on whether Safer Return participants did better than West Englewood comparisons. For example, instead of assessing whether family members reported better contact with and attachment to former prisoners because of family members' inclusion in the Safer Return case management component and receipt of services, we are assessing whether contact and attachment are better because of reentry services the participants received (e.g., case managers encouraging them to engage with their families). Even if we had found significant differences among family member outcomes, our conclusions would have been tentative since any differences between the two groups could have been attributable to a host of factors, including, but certainly not limited to, the former prisoners' participation in Safer Return.

## Key Takeaways

In spite of these considerable limitations, three key conclusions can be drawn from the analyses discussed in this chapter.

1. Safer Return and West Englewood respondents report strong relationships with their formerly incarcerated family members, as shown in levels of reported contact, attachment, and activities 4 months and 16 months after release. Although contact, attachment, and activities diminish slightly over time, these outcomes are still generally quite high 16 months after prison release. Despite their own limited incomes, limited resources, personal need for services, and relatively poor outlook on various aspects of their lives, family members appear willing to provide an array of resources for the former prisoners, including job search assistance, financial assistance, and transportation assistance.

Family members' reported direct and indirect experiences with the criminal justice system and reentry—as shown in the share of family members who had been arrested or incarcerated and who reported experience with other family members returning home from prison—may have improved their willingness and ability to assist with the former prisoners' reentry processes by providing resources as well as maintaining high levels of contact and attachment. These experiences may have also accounted for the relatively small share of family members reporting hardships as a result of the formerly incarcerated individuals' return. That is, the family members surveyed have direct and indirect knowledge of former prisoners' reentry needs and are willing to provide as much assistance and as many resources as possible.

2. Though we used a broad definition of family to include biological and nonbiological family members (consistent with Safer Return's family-inclusive case management model), the majority of family members in our survey were parents or current or former intimate partners of the former prisoners. While this is perhaps unsurprising, it is nonetheless notable that formerly incarcerated individuals' main sources of social support are their core family members. The main sources of social support are also likely to be individuals the former prisoners are living with.
3. Family members have their own resource needs, and the resources they can provide are limited. Family members provide a host of resources and services to former prisoners, despite their own significant resource limitations. While the majority did not report needing assistance with various services, a sizable group did report needing assistance at baseline and follow-up. Further, it appears that the number of resources family members provide for former prisoners

increases over time. Given their limited resources and the prominent role they appear to be playing in the lives of the formerly incarcerated, continued attention to families' needs and their continued inclusion in the reentry process seem warranted. It is important to recognize just how challenged the support networks of formerly incarcerated individuals are, and to consider how this reality might further challenge successful reentry.

# Chapter 5. Reincarceration Outcomes Based on Administrative Data

This chapter examines two-year reincarceration outcomes by using administrative data from the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to evaluate whether Safer Return had an effect on recidivism. Safer Return’s primary goal was to reduce recidivism, as defined through returns to IDOC. We begin the chapter with a discussion of our methods and data sources, including a brief description of the evaluation strategy, available data from IDOC, and the analytic strategy we used to construct the comparison groups. We then discuss the statistical methods we used to understand Safer Return’s effect on reincarceration outcomes. Next, we provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of the analytic groups and present the findings of our analyses of two-year reincarceration outcomes. We also discuss the numerous sensitivity tests we conducted to explore whether the findings were robust to different assumptions. We conclude the chapter by discussing the analyses’ limitations and main takeaways.

## Methodology and Data Sources

### Evaluation Strategy

This reincarceration analysis uses the quasi-experimental design of the Safer Return evaluation, using comparisons to provide neighborhood context and multiple views of Safer Return’s impact on reincarceration (Fontaine, Taxy, and Rossman 2014). Safer Return’s implementation was initially planned in the East Garfield Park neighborhood in Chicago, and the research team selected West Englewood as the comparison community. Although the two communities are demographically similar and present similar challenges for formerly incarcerated individuals returning to their communities, they are geographically far apart. East Garfield Park is situated on the west side of Chicago and West Englewood is on the south side. The selection of West Englewood as the comparison community helped minimize contamination. Soon after the demonstration began, the demonstration community was

expanded to include West Garfield Park (the neighborhood immediately west of East Garfield Park); we therefore refer to the demonstration, or treatment, community as Garfield Park.

Though Safer Return was conceived as a community-wide program intended to serve all individuals released from IDOC to the demonstration community, it was anticipated that some individuals would decide not to participate in the program. Therefore, the evaluation strategy includes within-neighborhood comparisons as well as across-neighborhood comparisons. To measure Safer Return's effect on reincarceration outcomes, we analyzed the outcomes of three separate groups of formerly incarcerated individuals:

1. Safer Return participants
2. Parolees returning to the West Englewood (comparison) neighborhood during the project period
3. Parolees returning to the Garfield Park (treatment) neighborhood during the project period who did not participate in the Safer Return program

Because of data availability, the comparison groups are made up of parolees only and exclude people discharged directly from state prison. While Safer Return was available to all individuals returning to the demonstration community regardless of their conditions of parole or community supervision, all those included in the current analyses were released on parole. Using these three groups, we make three primary comparisons:

1. To provide general context on the landscape of reentry and reincarceration outcomes in the two neighborhoods, we compare (1) people paroled to the Garfield Park (treatment) community *who did not participate in Safer Return* with (2) people paroled to the West Englewood (comparison) community *who did not participate in Safer Return*.
2. To understand how Safer Return participants' reincarceration outcomes differed from those of formerly incarcerated people who were not eligible to participate but were paroled to a demographically similar neighborhood, we compare (1) Safer Return participants with (2) people paroled to the West Englewood (comparison) community *who did not participate in Safer Return*.
3. To understand how Safer Return participants' reincarceration outcomes differed from those of formerly incarcerated people paroled to the same community, we compare (1) Safer Return participants with (2) people paroled to the Garfield Park (treatment) community *who did not participate in Safer Return*.

Through these three sets of comparisons, we sought to understand whether Safer Return led to better reincarceration outcomes. The use of three comparisons helped us identify impacts unique to the program sample while minimizing observable bias.

The first comparison provides general context for reincarceration outcomes among people paroled to the two communities. The second comparison reduces the threat of selection bias by comparing Safer Return participants with people who were ineligible for the program because they were paroled to a community where Safer Return services were not offered. Although this comparison introduces the confounding variable of community, we have some indication of how community may be related to the reentry success or failure of formerly incarcerated people. Though the evaluation was not designed to collect a robust and reliable set of community-level variables to assess how community characteristics are related to reentry success in Garfield Park or West Englewood, it did include three waves of resident surveys in both communities to better understand the similarities and differences between the two communities and how they may have changed over the demonstration period (see chapter 2).

The third comparison reduces the threat of the community as a confounding variable by examining parolees returning to the treatment community who did not participate in Safer Return. This final comparison is, however, subject to selection bias since all Garfield Park parolees had an opportunity to participate in Safer Return. Those in the comparison group chose not to participate in the program, and their reasons for doing so may be related to their reentry success or failure.

## Data Sources

The primary data sources used for these analyses are administrative records from IDOC and Safer Return program files. Safer Return program files were used to determine which individuals participated in Safer Return upon release and their period of participation, including the date of the release from IDOC that made them eligible for the program. Illinois Department of Corrections records were used to determine the universe of individuals paroled to West Englewood and Garfield Park and to generate demographic and outcome variables for the three comparison groups.

The groups of parolees released to the treatment and comparison communities who did not participate in Safer Return were identified using archived parole plans from IDOC. Because of limitations with the IDOC data, it was not possible to determine the addresses individuals were released to if they did not have a parole plan. Therefore, individuals released from IDOC facilities without a period of community supervision were not included in the comparison groups. These results,

then, only pertain to individuals released from IDOC facilities on parole, and not to the entire population of individuals returning from state prison to the community.<sup>17</sup> Zip codes listed in the parole plans were used to determine the communities individuals were returning to. For these analyses, Garfield Park (East and West) is defined as the 60612 and 60624 zip codes, and West Englewood is defined as the 60636 zip code.

For each Safer Return participant and comparison parolee released to West Englewood and Garfield Park, we obtained information on demographic characteristics, criminal histories and conditions of release, and reincarceration outcomes. Specifically, IDOC data were used to capture the following:

- **Demographic variables,**<sup>18</sup> including age, age at the first offense that led to IDOC incarceration, race/ethnicity (includes black, Hispanic, white, and other),<sup>19</sup> and gender (includes male and female)
- **Criminal history and conditions-of-release variables,** including number of previous offenses resulting in IDOC incarceration, charge of each previous offense (includes six main crime types: person, society, property, drugs, traffic, and other),<sup>20</sup> facility security level for instant release (includes maximum, medium, minimum, other, and reception and classification centers),<sup>21</sup> and year of release (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, or 2012)
- **Reincarceration outcome variables,**<sup>22</sup> including reincarceration within two years, whether first reincarceration within two years was for a new crime, whether first reincarceration within two years was for a technical violation, time to first reincarceration within two years, number of reincarcerations within two years, and number of offenses resulting in reincarceration within two years

## Determining the Analytic Comparison Groups

Before describing the demographic characteristics and outcomes of the sample, we outline our classification criteria for determining which individuals belonged in each analytic comparison group. The retrospective nature of our data collection method complicated our efforts to identify an individual's analytic comparison group since many individuals in the sample had experienced multiple releases during the study timeframe. The demonstration prospectively enrolled participants from April 2008 through January 2012; however, data to identify the comparison group of parolees to Garfield Park and West Englewood had to be constructed retrospectively by the evaluation team.

Our data on the comparisons were constructed using archived parole plan data on individuals paroled to Garfield Park and West Englewood from April 2008 through January 2012. Parole plan data from before April 2008 were not available. In consequence, we can identify IDOC admission and release patterns for every individual in our sample after April 2008, including parolees outside the treatment and comparison neighborhoods. Although this provides a rich set of data to, perhaps, explore how residential stability or instability is related to reincarceration outcomes generally, it is nonetheless bounded by the April 2008 cutoff—an arbitrary date along any individual’s criminal trajectory. As the following examples illustrate, the reality of multiple releases necessitated the classification criteria.

Some individuals were paroled to neighborhoods other than Garfield Park and West Englewood at the beginning of the demonstration period, were reincarcerated, and were subsequently released to one of the evaluation neighborhoods. Other individuals were released to Garfield Park multiple times from April 2008 through January 2012 and did not participate in Safer Return after an earlier release but did participate after a subsequent release. These individuals could be accurately described (and categorized) both as a Garfield Park parolee who did not participate in Safer Return (during one release) and as one who did participate (during another release). Other individuals were released to both Garfield Park and West Englewood during the demonstration period. These individuals and their movement in and out of different analytic categories could contaminate the analysis if we included individuals with exposure to the program in the comparison group. Based on these realities, we developed the following classification criteria to categorize parolees with multiple releases:

1. Parolees who participated in Safer Return in any release were always classified as Safer Return participants; the first parole during which they participated in Safer Return was used for these analyses.<sup>23</sup>
2. Parolees who did not participate in Safer Return were always classified using the first release that put them in one of our analytic comparison groups (Garfield Park or West Englewood) during the study timeframe.
3. Parolees who had been released to other neighborhoods during the demonstration period before the release that made them eligible for inclusion in the evaluation were always classified using the first release that put them into one of our analytic comparison groups; we did not make use of the data on their previous communities of release.<sup>24</sup>

We refer to the release that put an individual into an analytic group (the index release) as the “first” release that put him or her into said group. This may not actually be the individual’s first release during the demonstration period, but it is the first one that is used for our analytic purposes. For the primary analyses, these analytic groups are mutually exclusive; no person is counted twice across different

groups or has multiple releases that are included in the analyses. Therefore, references to Garfield Park parolees solely indicate Garfield Park parolees who did not participate in Safer Return.

These classification criteria suit our purposes because focusing on the individual, assigning a single analytic release date to each person, and analyzing outcomes accordingly makes more conceptual sense than analyzing outcomes by release (including multiple releases of the same individual). However, a potential drawback to the set of classification criteria is that it might bias the results against Safer Return participants relative to other Garfield Park parolees who did not participate. Individuals who had multiple releases during the demonstration period also, by definition, had more reincarcerations. These individuals are included disproportionately in the Safer Return group, though they could just as easily be categorized as Garfield Park parolees based on their first relevant release during the demonstration period. Therefore, the classification system possibly underestimates Safer Return's effect on reincarceration outcomes relative to Garfield Park parolees. To account for these multiple releases, we performed sensitivity analyses that are discussed in greater detail at the end of this chapter's findings section.

## **Bivariate and Multivariate Analyses Used**

We generated six outcomes from IDOC data:

- a binary indicator for reincarceration within two years of release,
- a binary indicator for first reincarceration being for a new offense,
- a binary indicator for first reincarceration being for a technical violation,
- time to first reincarceration within two years of release,
- number of reincarcerations within two years of release, and
- number of offenses that resulted in reincarceration within two years of release.

First, we performed bivariate analyses of difference (*t*-tests) on the outcomes, both unweighted and weighted by propensity weights. The inverse propensity weights for each of the comparisons were calculated by fitting a logistic regression predicting inclusion in the treatment group using all available demographic data, criminal history data, and conditions-of-release data (i.e., predicting participation in Safer Return for comparisons to West Englewood and Garfield Park, and predicting Garfield Park parole relative to West Englewood parole). The model was then run iteratively, each time excluding

variables with coefficients that had  $p$  values greater than 0.5 until each coefficient had a  $p$  value below 0.5. These bivariate findings and the models predicting group assignment are available from the authors upon request.

Second, we performed multivariate analyses that controlled for demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release information for each outcome. We used multivariate logistic regression for each binary outcome (any reincarceration, reincarceration for a new offense, and reincarceration for a technical violation). We used multivariate Cox proportional-hazards models to model time to reincarceration, and tested various count models for their applicability to the number of reincarcerations within two years and number of new offenses that resulted in reincarceration. These outcomes have a negatively skewed distribution since most individuals have zero or one reincarceration within two years and a few individuals have several reincarcerations within two years. For each comparison, we tested both Poisson and negative-binomial regression models along with zero-inflated variants of those models and choose the preferred model for each comparison and outcome based on the Akaike information criterion.<sup>25</sup>

Where appropriate, we present doubly robust models.<sup>26</sup> These multivariate models include independent variables as controls, and inverse propensity weights. Propensity weights are used because they efficiently combine all available demographic data, criminal history data, and conditions-of-release data into a single metric to control for selection bias. In a multivariate model, the coefficient on any independent variable is less reliable in an unweighted model than in one that accounts for this balancing metric. However, one potential drawback to using weights is that they reduce precision, increasing the possibility of type 2 errors (false negatives). We assume that selection bias is a more salient concern to our analyses than precision in light of the demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release differences between the groups and the relatively large sample size of each analytic comparison group.<sup>27</sup>

# Findings

## Demographic Profiles

Demographic, criminal history and conditions-of-release data are presented for all three analytic groups in tables 5.1 and 5.2. Bivariate analyses of difference are presented in their entirety in appendix B (available [online](#)), and all statistically significant findings are discussed and summarized below.

TABLE 5.1

**Demographic Profiles of Safer Return Participants, Garfield Park Parolees, and West Englewood Parolees in Reincarceration Outcome Data**

	Safer Return participants	Garfield Park parolees	West Englewood parolees
Age at release (years)	37.6	36.0	34.0
Age at first custody (years)	25.6	25.6	25.2
Male (%)	94.4	93.6	90.0
Race/ethnicity (%)			
Black	88.2	84.9	96.5
Hispanic	2.8	5.7	1.6
White	8.8	9.2	1.9
Other	0.3	0.1	0.0

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Notes:** *N* = 719 Safer Return participants, 4,930 Garfield Park parolees, and 1,405 West Englewood parolees. One Garfield Park and two West Englewood parolees were missing information on date of birth.

TABLE 5.2

**Criminal History and Release Profiles of Safer Return Participants, Garfield Park Parolees, and West Englewood Parolees in Reincarceration Outcome Data**

	Safer Return participants	Garfield Park parolees	West Englewood parolees
Number of previous offenses	5.1	4.6	3.7
Type of previous offense(s) (%)			
Person	20.2	19.5	18.3
Society	25.0	23.4	34.3
Property	54.9	55.2	50.1
Drug	70.2	66.9	59.5
Traffic	1.4	2.0	1.9
Other	7.1	7.1	6.3
Release-facility security (%)			
Maximum	3.3	4.2	5.0
Medium	51.3	42.8	43.2

	Safer Return participants	Garfield Park parolees	West Englewood parolees
Minimum	38.3	37.7	37.4
Other	5.3	6.3	6.6
Reception and classification	1.8	9.0	7.8
<b>Year of first release (%)</b>			
2008	8.6	25.2	23.6
2009	27.7	28.9	30.5
2010	36.4	22.0	22.2
2011	26.6	21.8	21.8
2012	0.7	2.1	1.9
<b>Jack Clark parolees<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>0.0</b>

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Notes:**  $N = 719$  Safer Return participants, 4,930 Garfield Park parolees, and 1,405 West Englewood parolees. One Garfield Park parolee was missing offense information, one West Englewood parolee was missing offense history information, and one Safer Return participant was missing facility-security information. Garfield Park parolee category does not include any Safer Return participants.

<sup>a</sup> Jack Clark Family House is a residential treatment center in the Garfield Park neighborhood. As discussed in the implementation report (Rossman and Fontaine 2015), Safer Return program staff and parole officers working with Safer Return staff used the Jack Clark Family House as a housing and treatment option for program participants. We identified the number of parolees in Jack Clark since we believed those living in the facility may have had different reincarceration outcomes than those who did not live in the facility (discussed in further detail in this chapter's section on sensitivity testing).

## SUMMARY OF BIVARIATE ANALYSES OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ANALYTIC COMPARISON GROUPS

The data presented in tables 5.1 and 5.2 indicate that there are fairly substantial differences in the demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release characteristics of the three analytic comparison groups. Our summary of the significant differences follows.

- Comparison of nonparticipant Garfield Park parolees ( $n = 4,930$ ) and West Englewood parolees ( $n = 1,405$ ).** Garfield Park parolees were older and more predominantly male than West Englewood parolees. Garfield Park parolees were also less likely to be black. Garfield Park parolees had more offenses in their criminal histories, on average, than West Englewood parolees and the offenses that made up their criminal histories were different: they were more likely to have committed at least one property or drug offense, but less likely to have committed at least one society offense. Though many of these variables are associated with reincarceration outcomes, the bivariate analyses do not suggest which group may have had a greater likelihood of reincarceration. Garfield Park parolees did, however, have more extensive criminal histories than those paroled to West Englewood.<sup>28</sup>

- **Comparison of Safer Return participants ( $n = 719$ ) and West Englewood parolees ( $n = 1,405$ ).** Safer Return participants were older and more predominantly male and less likely to be black than West Englewood parolees. Safer Return participants also had significantly more offenses in their criminal histories than West Englewood parolees, and the types of offenses that make up the two groups' criminal histories differ: Safer Return participants were more likely to have committed at least one property offense and at least one drug offense, but were less likely to have committed a society offense. Safer Return participants' conditions of release were also markedly different from those of West Englewood parolees. Safer Return participation peaked in 2010, with low enrollment in the first year of the program (2008); meanwhile, paroles to West Englewood were relatively consistent between 2008 and 2011, with a slight increase in 2009. The two groups' release facilities also differed: Safer Return participants were more likely to be released from medium-security facilities, and West Englewood parolees were more likely to be released from reception and classification centers. These bivariate analyses do not suggest which group may have had a higher likelihood of reincarceration. Safer Return participants did, however, have more extensive criminal histories.<sup>29</sup>
- **Comparison of Safer Return participants ( $n = 719$ ) and nonparticipant Garfield Park parolees ( $n = 4,930$ ).** Safer Return participants were older than Garfield Park parolees who did not participate in Safer Return. The racial composition of the two groups was also different: Safer Return participants were more predominantly black. Safer Return participants had more offenses in their criminal histories. Drug offenses, which Safer Return participants were more likely to have committed, were the only type of offense that significantly differed between the groups. There were also differences in release facilities: Safer Return participants were more likely to have been released from medium-security facilities, and Garfield Park parolees were more likely to have been released from reception and classification centers. Finally, the distribution of release years also varied between Safer Return participants and nonparticipating Garfield Park parolees. Safer Return participation peaked in 2010, but releases to Garfield Park were relatively consistent between 2008 and 2011. Though the bivariate analyses indicate significant differences, it is not evident which group had a higher likelihood of reincarceration. Safer Return participants did, however, have more extensive criminal histories than Garfield Park parolees.<sup>30</sup>

## Reincarceration Outcomes

In our analyses of reincarceration outcomes, we first describe the outcomes observed, then discuss the multivariate regression findings. Complete regression results are in appendix B (available online).

### REINCARCERATION OUTCOME PROFILES

Table 5.3 presents outcomes for each of the three analytic comparison groups. Bivariate analyses are not reported in table 5.3 since they do not account for the significant differences between the three groups described in the previous section. Nevertheless, several trends become immediately apparent. Reincarceration rates within two years are high across all three groups, ranging from almost 44 percent for Safer Return participants to almost 50 percent for Garfield Park parolees who did not participate in Safer Return. For reference, this rate of return is nearly equal to the *three-year* statewide reincarceration rate of 47 percent.<sup>31</sup> Consistent with our previous analyses focusing on one-year reincarceration outcomes (Fontaine, Taxy, and Rossman 2014), Safer Return participants had the lowest reincarceration rate of all three analytic comparison groups. The three groups' differences in reincarceration are driven by differences in technical violations; rates of reincarceration for new offenses are relatively equal between all three groups. On average, the first reincarceration occurs roughly nine months after release. Some formerly incarcerated individuals in each group were reincarcerated multiple times and for multiple offenses in the two-year timeframe.

TABLE 5.3

#### Two-Year Reincarceration Outcomes

	Safer Return participants	Garfield Park parolees	West Englewood parolees
Any reincarceration (%)	43.53	49.98	45.41
For new offense (%)	21.28	21.91	20.36
For technical violation (%)	22.25	28.07	25.05
Days to reincarceration	285.5	266.1	283.2
Number of reincarcerations	0.552	0.643	0.612
Number of offenses	0.303	0.343	0.306

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Notes:** *N* = 719 Safer Return participants, 4,930 Garfield Park parolees, and 1,405 West Englewood parolees. Garfield Park parolee category does not include any Safer Return participants.

### MULTIVARIATE CRIMINAL JUSTICE OUTCOMES

**Comparison of nonparticipant Garfield Park parolees and West Englewood parolees.** The multivariate regression results in table 5.4 show that Garfield Park parolees who did not participate in Safer Return had generally worse criminal justice outcomes than West Englewood parolees. Controlling for

demographic, criminal history, and release information, there are several statistically significant findings:

- Garfield Park parolees were 8 percent more likely than West Englewood parolees to be reincarcerated in an IDOC facility within two years.
- Garfield Park parolees were nearly 14 percent more likely than West Englewood parolees to be reincarcerated for a technical violation within two years.
- Garfield Park parolees' hazard rate was 16 percent higher than that of West Englewood parolees (meaning that they were reincarcerated more quickly).
- Garfield Park parolees had 11 percent more incarcerations within two years than West Englewood parolees.

There are no statistically significant differences between Garfield Park and West Englewood parolees in returns to prison for a new offense or in number of offenses within two years.

TABLE 5.4

**Summary of Multivariate Findings Comparing Reincarceration Outcomes of Garfield Park and West Englewood Parolees**

	Model used	Coefficient	Interpretation
Any reincarceration <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.154***	GP parolees more likely to be reincarcerated
Reincarceration for new offense <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.043	No significant difference
Reincarceration for technical violation <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.175***	GP parolees more likely to be reincarcerated for a technical violation
Time to reincarceration <sup>a</sup>	Cox proportional-hazards regression	0.148***	GP parolees reincarcerated more quickly
Number of reincarcerations	Zero-inflated Poisson regression	0.102**	GP parolees had more reincarcerations
Number of offenses	Zero-inflated negative-binomial regression	-0.020	No significant difference

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Note:** *N* = 4,929 Garfield Park parolees and 1,403 West Englewood parolees.

<sup>a</sup> Doubly robust regression weighted by inverse propensity weights.

\* *p* < 0.10 \*\* *p* < 0.05 \*\*\* *p* < 0.01

**Comparison of Safer Return participants and West Englewood parolees.** Although the multivariate regression results in table 5.5 show promising results in support of Safer Return’s effectiveness, Safer Return participants did not perform appreciably better than West Englewood parolees on most criminal justice outcomes. Controlling for demographic, criminal history, and release information, there are two statistically significant findings:

- Safer Return participants were 15 percent less likely than West Englewood parolees to be returned to prison for a technical violation.
- Safer Return participants had 13 percent fewer incarcerations within two years than West Englewood parolees (marginally significant).

Though the two groups differ significantly with regard to reincarceration for technical violations, there is no statistically significant difference in the likelihood of the two groups being reincarcerated for *any* reason. In addition, there is no statistically significant difference in time to reincarceration, reincarceration for a new offense, or number of offenses within two years.

TABLE 5.5

**Summary of Multivariate Findings Comparing Reincarceration Outcomes of Safer Return Participants and West Englewood Parolees**

	Model used	Coefficient	Interpretation
Any reincarceration <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.135	No significant difference
Reincarceration for new offense <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.062	No significant difference
Reincarceration for technical violation <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.218**	Safer Return participants less likely to be reincarcerated for a technical violation
Time to reincarceration <sup>a</sup>	Cox proportional-hazards regression	-0.039	No significant difference
Number of reincarcerations	Zero-inflated Poisson regression	-0.122*	Safer Return participants had fewer reincarcerations
Number of offenses	Zero-inflated negative-binomial regression	-0.109	No significant difference

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Note:** N= 718 Safer Return participants and 1,403 West Englewood parolees.

<sup>a</sup>Doubly robust regression weighted by inverse propensity weights.

\*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Comparison of Safer Return participants and nonparticipant Garfield Park parolees.** The multivariate regression results shown in table 5.6 indicate that Safer Return participants performed better than nonparticipant parolees released to Garfield Park on most of the criminal justice outcomes analyzed. Controlling for observable demographic, criminal history, and release variables, there are several statistically significant findings:

- Safer Return participants were 12 percent less likely to be reincarcerated within two years than Garfield Park parolees.
- Safer Return participants were 22 percent less likely to be reincarcerated for a technical violation within two years than Garfield Park parolees.
- Safer Return participants' hazard rate was 14 percent lower than that of Garfield Park parolees (meaning they were reincarcerated less quickly).
- Safer Return participants had 18 percent fewer reincarcerations within two years than Garfield Park parolees.

The two groups do not differ in the rate of reincarceration for new offense or in number of offenses.

TABLE 5.6

**Summary of Multivariate Findings Comparing Reincarceration Outcomes of Safer Return Participants and Garfield Park Parolees**

	Model used	Coefficient	Interpretation
Any reincarceration <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.236***	SR participants less likely to be reincarcerated
Reincarceration for new offense <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.036	No significant difference
Reincarceration for technical violation <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.336***	SR participants less likely to be reincarcerated for a technical violation
Time to reincarceration <sup>a</sup>	Cox proportional-hazards regression	-0.152***	SR participants reincarcerated less quickly
Number of reincarcerations	Zero-inflated Poisson regression	-0.193***	SR participants had fewer reincarcerations
Number of offenses	Zero-inflated negative-binomial regression	-0.052	No significant difference

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Note:** N= 718 Safer Return participants and 4,929 Garfield Park parolees.

<sup>a</sup>Doubly robust regression weighted by inverse propensity weights.

\*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

## Sensitivity Testing

Based on what we learned through the implementation evaluation (Rossman and Fontaine 2015) and the methods we used to determine the analytic comparison groups, we sought to isolate three sources of uncertainty in these analyses of reincarceration outcomes.

First, we expected different outcomes among those released and housed in the Jack Clark Family House (Jack Clark) facility. The Jack Clark facility is a residential treatment facility in the Garfield Park neighborhood where many prisoners, particularly those who needed to be on electronic monitoring as a condition of parole, were sent directly upon release from IDOC prisons. Because individuals in this facility were under greater surveillance, were participating a residential treatment program, and were more likely to be from a different neighborhood, we expected their outcomes to be different from those of Safer Return participants not residing there.<sup>32</sup>

Second, we expected different outcomes depending on year of release. Our analyses include year of release as an independent variable in each multivariate regression to control for changes in economic conditions that happened across the city of Chicago (and throughout the United States) over the course of the 2008 to 2012 demonstration period. Though these controls account for trends such as the Great Recession insofar as the trends applied to both neighborhoods, they cannot account for ways in which the Great Recession (or any other trend) may have affected each comparison group in different ways. As discussed in chapter 2, the two neighborhoods changed in different ways during the demonstration period. Further, as discussed in detail in the companion final report, Safer Return implementation was stronger during the later years of the demonstration period. This context is further complicated by the changing profiles of those being paroled to Garfield Park, particularly those who enrolled in Safer Return. Specifically, the number of Safer Return participants living in the Jack Clark facility increased precipitously in the final year of the demonstration. While we expected different outcomes depending on the year of release, we did not have specific hypotheses on the nature and direction of such changes.

Third, as discussed beginning on page 92, our classification criteria may have increased the number of higher-risk individuals counted in the Safer Return participant group relative to the Garfield Park parolee group. We thus ran analyses accounting for this possibility in the composition of the Safer Return and Garfield Park analytic groups.

### JACK CLARK PLACEMENTS

Parolees released to the Jack Clark facility differed from other Garfield Park parolees and Safer Return participants in observable (e.g., demographic) and unobservable (e.g., motivation to change) ways. In

terms of observable characteristics, tables 5.7 and 5.8 show that parolees living in the Jack Clark facility differed significantly from other Garfield Park parolees and Safer Return participants.

TABLE 5.7

**Demographic Differences between Jack Clark Parolees and Non-Jack Clark Garfield Park Parolees**

	Jack Clark parolees	Non-Jack Clark parolees
Age at release (years)***	38.0	35.8
Age at first custody (years)	25.8	25.5
Male (%)***	100.0	92.8
Race/ethnicity (%)***		
Black	65.0	90.5
Hispanic	9.7	4.2
White	24.7	5.2
Other	0.6	0.2

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Notes:** *N* = 4,499 non-Jack Clark parolees and 1,150 Jack Clark parolees. One parolee was missing information for age at first custody. *T*-tests were used to test for statistical differences between Jack Clark and non-Jack Clark parolees for all categories except race/ethnicity. A chi-square test was used for race/ethnicity.

\*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Demographically, parolees to Jack Clark were notably different from other parolees released to the Garfield Park neighborhood (non-Jack Clark parolees). Jack Clark parolees were exclusively male and were, on average, two and a half years older than non-Jack Clark parolees. The groups were also markedly different in race/ethnicity: over 90 percent of non-Jack Clark parolees to Garfield Park were black, but less than two-thirds of Jack Clark parolees were black. These differences are consistent with what we learned about Jack Clark parolees during our process evaluation. The Jack Clark facility only served men, and the racial differences may be explained by the fact that the Jack Clark facility served men from other Illinois neighborhoods who needed to be released to a facility with electronic monitoring capabilities.

TABLE 5.8

**Criminal History Differences between Jack Clark Parolees and Non-Jack Clark Parolees**

	Jack Clark parolees	Non-Jack Clark parolees
Number of previous offenses***	5.2	4.5
Previous person offense (%)***	31.3	16.6
Previous society offense (%)	25.3	23.2
Previous property offense (%)***	71.5	51.1
Previous drug offense (%)***	51.1	71.5
Previous traffic offense (%)**	2.6	1.7

	Jack Clark parolees	Non-Jack Clark parolees
Other previous offense (%)***	10.1	6.3
Release-facility security (%)***		
Maximum	3.2	4.3
Medium	60.9	39.5
Minimum	30.6	39.6
Other	2.0	7.3
Reception and classification	3.3	9.3
Year of first release (%)***		
2008	19.9	23.9
2009	25.8	29.6
2010	22.6	24.1
2011	29.3	20.7
2012	2.4	1.8

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Notes:**  $N = 4,499$  non-Jack Clark parolees and 1,150 Jack Clark parolees. Offense type information was missing for one parolee and release-facility security information was missing for one parolee.  $T$ -tests were used to test for statistical differences between Jack Clark and non-Jack Clark parolees for all categories except race/ethnicity. A chi-square test was used for race/ethnicity.

\*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Jack Clark parolees' criminal justice histories and conditions of release were also markedly different from those of non-Jack Clark parolees. Jack Clark parolees had significantly more offenses in their criminal histories and were more likely to have committed at least one person, property, traffic, and other offense. Non-Jack Clark parolees were significantly more likely to have committed drug offenses. Parolees released to Jack Clark were significantly more likely to have been paroled from a medium-security facility and were less likely to have been paroled from a minimum-security or reception and classification facility or other type of facility. Finally, the distribution of release years within the sampling timeframe is also different between the two groups; non-Jack Clark parolees peaked in 2009, and Jack Clark parolees peaked in 2011.

Taken together, available data suggest that Jack Clark parolees had a higher risk of reincarceration than non-Jack Clark parolees. Jack Clark parolees were all male, were more likely to have been released from higher-security facilities, and had, on average, more extensive criminal histories (with the exception of drug offenses). Other unobservable characteristics Safer Return stakeholders described to Urban Institute researchers during the implementation evaluation further suggest that Jack Clark parolees may have been at greater risk for reincarceration.

First, as noted above, many Jack Clark residents were originally from other Chicago neighborhoods or cities in Illinois. In other words, many were far from the social support networks that could have been helpful in their reentry and reintegration process (e.g., assistance finding employment or independent housing). Additionally, the Jack Clark facility was one of IDOC's preferred contractors with electronic

monitoring capacity. This suggests that those paroled to the Jack Clark facility were at greater risk of reincarceration and required greater surveillance. Further, Jack Clark residents may also have been at higher risk of reincarceration because they were on electronic monitoring and under greater surveillance: their offenses and parole noncompliance were more likely to be observed. Throughout the demonstration's enrollment period, Jack Clark parolees made up a greater share of Safer Return participants than nonparticipating Garfield Park parolees. Half of all Safer Return participants released in 2011 (when paroles to Jack Clark peaked) were living in the Jack Clark facility.

In response to these factors, we performed multiple sensitivity analyses to control for the possibility of bias originating from the presence of Jack Clark in the Garfield Park neighborhood and among Safer Return participants. These analyses are not intended to replace or supersede the findings in tables 5.5 and 5.6, but rather to provide context for those findings. It is particularly important to explore how Safer Return may have differentially affected the disproportionately higher-risk individuals paroled to Jack Clark in comparison to those who were paroled to the neighborhood but not to Jack Clark. We therefore make two comparisons:

1. outcomes of Safer Return participants who were not released to Jack Clark compared with those of nonparticipating Garfield Park parolees who were not paroled to Jack Clark (i.e., outcomes excluding Jack Clark parolees), and
2. outcomes of Safer Return participants who were released to Jack Clark compared with those of nonparticipating Garfield Park parolees who were also released to Jack Clark (i.e., outcomes including Jack Clark parolees only).<sup>33</sup>

The full regression results are shown in tables 5.9 and 5.10 and appendix B (available online).

The findings of these analyses are mixed. Table 5.9, which summarizes the multivariate findings comparing the two groups of non-Jack Clark parolees, shows that Safer Return participants were less likely to be reincarcerated within two years than nonparticipant parolees. However, although Safer Return participants were much less likely to be reincarcerated for a technical violation, they were significantly more likely to be reincarcerated for a new offense. Additionally, the analysis reveals statistically significant differences in time to first reincarceration and in number of reincarcerations within two years that favor Safer Return participants.

TABLE 5.9

**Summary of Multivariate Findings Comparing Safer Return Participants and Nonparticipant Garfield Park Parolees, excluding Jack Clark Parolees**

	Model used	Coefficient	Interpretation
Any reincarceration <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.181***	SR participants less likely to be reincarcerated
Reincarceration for new offense <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.158**	SR participants more likely to be reincarcerated for new offense
Reincarceration for technical violation <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.391***	SR participants less likely to be reincarcerated for a technical violation
Time to reincarceration <sup>a</sup>	Cox proportional-hazards regression	-0.098**	SR participants reincarcerated less quickly
Number of reincarcerations	Poisson regression	-0.177***	SR participants have fewer reincarcerations
Number of offenses	Zero-inflated negative-binomial regression	-0.043	No significant difference

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Note:**  $N = 4,011$  Garfield Park parolees and 486 Safer Return participants.

<sup>a</sup>Doubly robust regression weighted by inverse propensity weights.

\*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Among Jack Clark parolees only, Safer Return participants were significantly less likely than nonparticipants to be reincarcerated for a new offense. This largely drives the finding that Safer Return participants released to Jack Clark were less likely to be reincarcerated within two years. As with non-Jack Clark parolees, Safer Return participants exhibited a longer time to reincarceration and fewer reincarcerations within two years. Jack Clark Safer Return participants also had fewer offenses resulting in reincarceration within two years than nonparticipating Jack Clark parolees (this finding was marginally significant). This difference was perhaps driven in part by their lower likelihood of reincarceration for a new offense.

TABLE 5.10

**Summary of Multivariate Findings Comparing Safer Return Participants and Nonparticipant Garfield Park Parolees living in the Jack Clark Facility**

	Model used	Coefficient	Interpretation
Any reincarceration <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.316**	SR participants less likely to be reincarcerated
Reincarceration for new offense <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.319**	SR participants less likely to be reincarcerated for new offense
Reincarceration for technical violation <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	-0.131	No significant difference
Time to reincarceration <sup>a</sup>	Cox proportional-hazards regression	-0.208**	SR participants reincarcerated less quickly
Number of reincarcerations	Zero-inflated Poisson regression	-0.312***	SR participants had fewer reincarcerations
Number of offenses	Zero-inflated negative-binomial regression	-0.269*	SR participants committed fewer offenses leading to incarceration

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Note:** *N* = 918 Garfield Park parolees and 231 Safer Return participants.

<sup>a</sup>Doubly robust regression weighted by inverse propensity weights.

\*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

In summary, these analyses generally confirm the findings in table 5.6. In general, Safer Return participants have better reincarceration outcomes than Garfield Park parolees who did not participate in the program.

## COHORT YEAR

As described in chapter 1 and in the implementation evaluation report, implementation of Safer Return and the community context changed throughout the demonstration period. Though release year was a covariate in each of the previous multivariate regressions, it only provides a control for citywide trends and does not take into account the possibility of the communities changing in different ways over time. Further, Safer Return participant demographics, as well as the types of services provided through Safer Return, changed throughout the demonstration period. A particularly concerning variation is the fact that in the final full year of Safer Return enrollment, 2011, approximately half of Safer Return participants were Jack Clark parolees. In light of these changes over time, we analyzed each of the aforementioned multivariate models by cohort. These analyses did not change the overall findings; however, they revealed substantial variation in outcomes by release year (table 5.11). Findings for

participants released in 2012, the final demonstration year, are not shown because there were too few observations to draw meaningful conclusions.

TABLE 5.11

Two-Year Reincarceration Outcomes, by Cohort Year

Year	Safer Return participants (%)	Garfield Park parolees (%)	West Englewood parolees (%)
2008	35.5	50.2	36.3
2009	49.3	51.1	49.2
2010	40.8	52.5	48.7
2011	45.0	46.8	47.1

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Notes:** Number of Safer Return participants = 62 in 2008, 199 in 2009, 262 in 2010, and 191 in 2011.

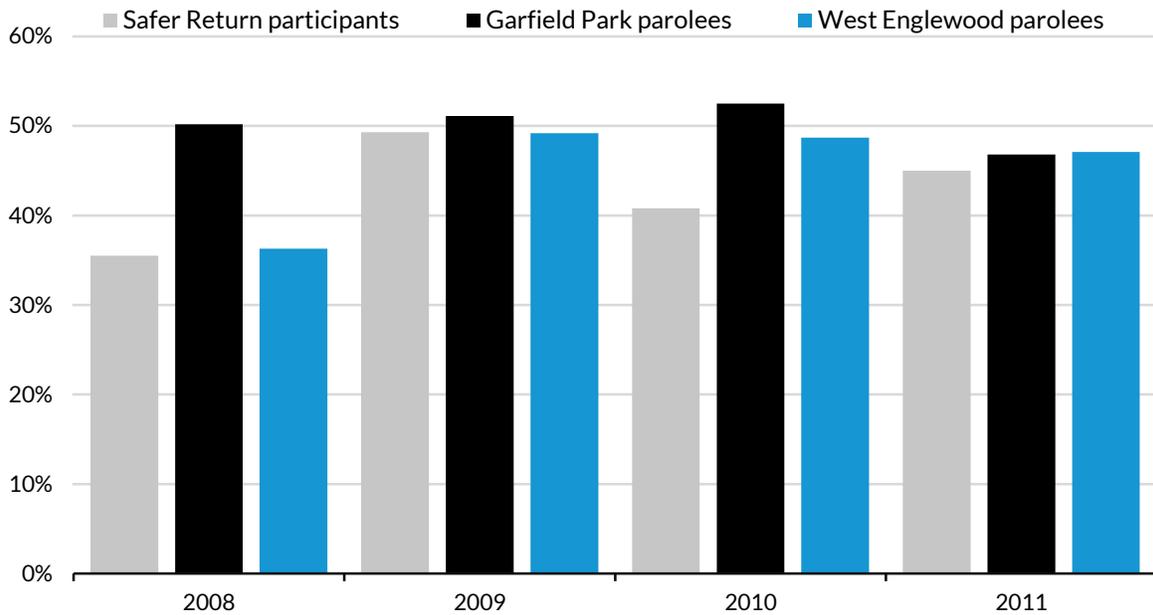
Number of Garfield Park parolees = 1,240 in 2008, 1,428 in 2009, 1,083 in 2010, and 1,076 in 2011.

Number of West Englewood parolees = 331 in 2008, 429 in 2009, 312 in 2010, and 306 in 2011.

Table 5.11 and figure 5.1 show that though the trends presented in table 5.3 largely remain the same when analyzed by cohort year—Safer Return participants were generally the least likely to be reincarcerated and nonparticipant Garfield Park parolees were the most likely to be reincarcerated—there is variation from year to year. Though West Englewood parolees consistently have a lower reincarceration rate than nonparticipant Garfield Park parolees, 2008 is the only year this difference is significant. Likewise, 2010 is the only year there is a significant difference between Safer Return participants and West Englewood parolees. Finally, while Safer Return participants had a lower reincarceration rate than Garfield Park parolees in each year of the demonstration, this difference is significant only in 2008 and 2010.

FIGURE 5.1

Share of Safer Return Participants, Garfield Park Parolees, and West Englewood Parolees Reincarcerated within Two Years, by Cohort Year



**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Notes:** Number of Safer Return participants = 62 in 2008, 199 in 2009, 262 in 2010, and 191 in 2011.

Number of Garfield Park parolees = 1,240 in 2008, 1,428 in 2009, 1,083 in 2010, and 1,076 in 2011.

Number of West Englewood parolees = 331 in 2008, 429 in 2009, 312 in 2010, and 306 in 2011.

Figure 5.1 shows the considerable fluctuation in the share incarcerated within two years, particularly among Safer Return participants in different cohort years. For example, the 2008 cohort of Safer Return participants had a reincarceration rate that was notably low (36 percent), but the 2009 release cohort had a reincarceration rate of almost 50 percent. In the next two years, the reincarceration rate was lower than 50 percent but higher than 36 percent.

There is no obvious trend in these findings. However, the implementation evaluation findings and the Jack Clark analyses presented above provide some context. In the first year of the demonstration, Safer Return enrolled only those who identified Garfield Park as the community of their release *before release* and then remained in the neighborhood after release. Enrollment was also generally low in the first year of the demonstration. There may have been a selection effect early on, where the recruiting pool was narrowed to those with more concrete reentry plans before release and perhaps greater residential stability upon return to Garfield Park.<sup>34</sup> The trend in the final two years is likely explained by

information collected through our implementation evaluation. Safer Return implementation improved in 2010 and 2011, though the improvements may have been partially counterbalanced by the significant increase in Jack Clark parolees in 2011, whom our analyses have identified as having a higher risk of reincarceration.<sup>35</sup>

## MULTIPLE RELEASES

The reality of multiple releases in our sample meant that different people could qualify for different analytic sample groups on different releases. For parolees who never participated in Safer Return, we used the first parole during the demonstration period to one of the two communities (treatment or comparison). For parolees who participated in Safer Return in any release, we always used the first release during which they participated in the program for our analyses to avoid contaminating the comparison groups with exposure to Safer Return.

This approach presents an analytic challenge because we are purposefully excluding people who did not participate in Safer Return (for an unknown reason) the first time they were eligible for the program if they enrolled in the program upon release from a later incarceration. This particular group may be a high-risk group, so their inclusion in only one analytic group may bias the analysis. Therefore, we reran our analyses in two ways: (1) we excluded people who could have been considered Garfield Park parolees based on a different release from the Safer Return analytic group, and reran each of the analyses that previously included them; and (2) we included people with multiple releases in both analytic groups and reran each of the analyses that previously included them.<sup>36</sup> These analyses revealed no substantive differences from our earlier findings.

# Conclusions and Key Takeaways

## Limitations

Overall, these findings are positive; however, they are subject to several important limitations. First and foremost, there were numerous observable and unobservable differences in the three groups' demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release variables that we cannot account for in the current analyses. Though we balanced these differences using propensity weights, multivariate regression, and doubly robust regression, we know that there are outstanding differences between the groups. Because the IDOC database overwrites certain key variables, relevant institutional information

and parole information was not available retrospectively. This information included IDOC's assessed risk level, parole supervision levels, and demographic variables such as relationship status.

On a macro level, the community contexts in Garfield Park and West Englewood were different at the time of the Safer Return demonstration (we discussed these differences in depth in chapter 2). The current analyses show that the groups were demographically different as well. In the same vein, many of the findings that pertain to technical violations may be due to differences in parole practices between agents or districts since Garfield Park and West Englewood are in different areas of the city.

A key unobservable variable is motivation or readiness to change. This factor plagues most quasi-experimental studies where assignment into the treatment is not random. The issue of motivation is particularly problematic for the comparisons between Safer Return participants and nonparticipant Garfield Park parolees. Knowledge of the program or the decision to enroll may be correlated with many traits that reduce individuals' risk of reincarceration or propensity to engage in further criminal activity. For example, participants may have had better support networks in the community who informed them about the program and encouraged them to participate, or they may have simply been more motivated to change their behavior.

Another limitation is that our outcome data consist solely of IDOC data on returns to state prison. Outcome data from the Chicago Police Department and the Cook County Department of Corrections (local jail) were unavailable to the research team, so we were unable to assess other recidivism outcomes, such as rearrests or returns to local jail that did not result in returns to state prison within two years. Findings based on these outcome data might differ from the findings presented here.

A similar limitation is that this analysis relied on archived parole plan data to construct comparison groups, so it did not include individuals released directly from state prison with no conditions of community supervision. Our internal comparisons between the comparison groups and Safer Return participants are valid because valid release information could only be constructed for people on parole. However, these findings may not be generalizable to the entire population of formerly incarcerated individuals returning to these communities. However, based on our review of IDOC data for a subset of time during the study period, we found that the vast majority of releases were released on parole, suggesting that these findings have generalizability to the majority of individuals released from IDOC to these two communities. It should be noted, though, that insofar as most of the positive findings pertain to technical violations, they are of limited relevance to the population of formerly incarcerated individuals not on community supervision.

A final limitation is that these analyses use individuals as the unit of analysis. Though this is the most appropriate method for tracking two-year outcomes, it means that we are examining parolees in the comparison groups at an arbitrary point in their lives—beginning in April 2008 and ending in January 2012. Through our strategy of identifying every parolee returning to each zip code, we identified many people who were undoubtedly at different points in their lives, with different histories of contact with the criminal justice system. Had these people been released one month earlier or later, they would not have been included in this analysis. We do not have enough information to analyze incarceration or criminal justice histories before April 2008 because of limitations with the IDOC data, so the threshold of April 2008 for inclusion in the sample is, to some extent, arbitrary.

## Key Takeaways

The IDOC data show support for Safer Return’s effectiveness in reducing reincarceration. In addition, our analyses resulted in four key takeaways.

1. There are significant differences in the demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release characteristics of the three analytic groups. Though there is variation within most of these variables, Safer Return participants had significantly greater criminal histories than the comparison groups.
2. Controlling for available demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release information, Safer Return participants had the lowest rate of return to state prison within two years. This difference is statistically significant in comparison to other parolees to Garfield Park who did not participate in the program, but is not statistically significant in comparison to parolees in West Englewood.
3. Controlling for available demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release information, significant differences in rates of return to state prison were largely driven by differences in technical violations. Safer Return participants were significantly less likely to be returned for a technical violation within two years than both of the comparison groups.
4. Controlling for available demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release information, there were no significant differences between any of the analytic groups in the rate or number of reoffenses within two years.

The reincarceration findings for the two-year follow-up period confirm and expand upon the interim findings reported by Fontaine, Taxy, and Rossman (2014): Safer Return participants had the

lowest reincarceration rates of the three analytic groups within a one-year follow-up period, and the differences were largely driven by differences in technical violations rather than new offenses.

# Chapter 6. Employment Outcomes Based on Administrative Data

To explore whether Safer Return had an impact on employment, this chapter examines two-year earnings outcomes using administrative data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES). Because economic stability is critical to reentry and reintegration success, employment services were a core function of the Safer Return demonstration (discussed in depth in the companion implementation report).

We begin the chapter with a discussion of our methods and data sources, including a brief description of the evaluation strategy and available data from IDES and other sources. We then discuss the statistical methods we used to understand Safer Return’s impact on earnings, which included a range of bivariate and multivariate analyses. Next, we present the demographic characteristics of the analytic groups, followed by our analyses of two-year reincarceration outcomes. We then provide an overview of the sensitivity tests we conducted to explore whether the findings were robust to different assumptions. The chapter concludes by noting the limitations of the analyses and main takeaways.

## Methodology and Data Sources

### Evaluation Strategy

This employment analysis uses the quasi-experimental design of the Safer Return evaluation, using multiple comparisons to provide neighborhood context and different views of Safer Return’s impact on employment. This strategy is consistent with the strategy we used to assess reincarceration outcomes (chapter 5). Though Safer Return was conceived as a community-wide program intended to serve all individuals released from IDOC to Garfield Park, it was anticipated that some individuals would decide not to participate in the program. Therefore, the evaluation strategy includes within-neighborhood comparisons in addition to across-neighborhood comparisons. To measure Safer Return’s effect on employment outcomes, we analyzed outcomes of three separate groups of formerly incarcerated individuals:

1. Safer Return participants,

2. parolees returning to the West Englewood (comparison) neighborhood during the project period, and
3. parolees returning to the Garfield Park (treatment) neighborhood during the project period who did not participate in the Safer Return program.

Because of data availability, the comparison groups are made up only of parolees; they exclude people discharged directly from state prison. Though Safer Return was available to all individuals returning to the demonstration community regardless of their condition of parole or community supervision, all those included in the current analyses were released on parole. Using these three analytic groups, we make three primary comparisons:

1. To provide general context regarding the landscape of employment outcomes in Garfield Park and West Englewood, we compare (1) people paroled to the Garfield Park (treatment) community *who did not participate in Safer Return* with (2) people paroled to the West Englewood (comparison) community *who did not participate in Safer Return*.
2. To understand how Safer Return participants' employment outcomes differed from those of people who were not eligible to participate but were paroled to a demographically similar neighborhood, we compare (1) Safer Return participants with (2) people paroled to the West Englewood (comparison) community *who did not participate in Safer Return*.
3. To understand how Safer Return participants' employment outcomes differed from those of nonparticipants paroled to the same community, we compare (1) Safer Return participants with (2) people paroled to the Garfield Park (treatment) community *who did not participate in Safer Return*.

Like the reincarceration analyses discussed in chapter 5, each of these comparisons provides different context and a different view of how Safer Return may have affected employment outcomes. Though each comparison may be subject to bias, using the three together helps triangulate any independent effect of Safer Return.

## Data Sources

The primary data sources used for these analyses are administrative records from IDES, IDOC, and Safer Return program files. Safer Return program files were used to determine which individuals participated in Safer Return upon release from IDOC and their period of participation, including the date of the release from prison that made them eligible for the program. IDOC records were used to

determine the universe of individuals paroled to West Englewood and Garfield Park and to generate demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release variables. For an in-depth discussion of comparison group and demographic variable construction, see the data sources section of chapter 5. Specifically, IDOC data were used to capture the following:

- **Demographic variables**, including age, age at the first offense that led to IDOC incarceration, race/ethnicity (includes black, Hispanic, white, and other),<sup>37</sup> and gender (includes male and female)
- **Criminal history and conditions-of-release variables**, including number of previous offenses resulting in IDOC incarceration, charge of each previous offense (includes six main crime types: person, society, property, drug, traffic, and other), facility security level for instant release (includes maximum, medium, minimum, other, and reception and classification centers), and year of release (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, or 2012)

We also generated a variable to control for “time on the street.” This variable makes an adjustment for individuals who were released in the middle of an earnings quarter and thus have a truncated first quarter of earnings, and for individuals who were reincarcerated during an earnings quarter.<sup>38</sup>

A file including identifiers shared by IDOC and IDES was used by IDES to generate quarterly employment and earnings histories for this analysis. We used the quarterly histories to generate the following outcomes at two years: any wages within two years, time to first wages within two years, total wages within two years, and quarters with earnings within two years.

## Data Limitations

There were several limitations in using the IDES database to identify and query earnings for individuals in the three analytic groups. The primary issues are interrelated and result from the method that IDES uses to obtain and store its data. Although most employers in the state are required to submit quarterly employee earnings to IDES, there are some exceptions to these requirements (e.g., small nonprofits and individuals employing domestic workers), as well as other reasons the wages would not be reported (e.g., wages obtained illegally).<sup>39</sup> Employers typically use employees’ self-reported identifying information for reporting purposes. Once the data is obtained by IDES, it is stored for approximately two years before being archived. Once the data is archived, IDES staff must query it manually (which made it cumbersome to query data predating the start of the Safer Return program).

These limitations posed a problem for the research design. We used IDOC data to identify individuals in Safer Return and the comparison groups. Then, IDES matched the identifying information IDOC provided for each of the individuals in our sample to IDES employment records from 2008 to 2014.<sup>40</sup> Once IDES matched the IDOC identifying information to the employment records, we added the original IDOC data that included demographic variables to complete the final analytic file. The identifiers IDOC and Urban researchers used to match individuals' release information with their employment and earnings histories are self-reported. According to IDOC and IDES staff, these particular identifiers had low data quality; however, they were the only reliable way to link the IDOC data with IDES wage data.<sup>41</sup>

A large portion of identifying information as provided to IDOC was missing or invalid.<sup>42</sup> An even larger proportion of individuals had no valid IDES earnings data during the study period (from the first quarter of 2008 through the second quarter of 2014). These missing data indicate one of two things: (1) the person had no earnings in the quarter, or (2) the person provided invalid identifying information to IDOC or to his or her employer. Because IDES staff can only query their database manually for archived years, it was not possible to determine whether these individuals *ever* had wages (which could have been used as a check on the invalid identifying data). Therefore, both interpretations of the missing data are plausible.

Since we cannot accurately verify that the zeros in our analysis are “true” zeros, we consider them as missing for the purposes of this analysis. The “match rate”—that is, the number of individuals we were able to identify as having valid data in the IDES data from the master IDOC dataset—varies considerably by analytic group:

- We were able to match 56 percent of Safer Return participants with valid IDES data ( $n = 402$ ).
- We were able to match 44 percent of nonparticipant Garfield Park parolees with valid IDES data ( $n = 2,190$ ).
- We were able to match 37 percent of West Englewood parolees with valid IDES data ( $n = 520$ ).

The missing data and varying match rates could be indicative of several trends. It is not surprising that Safer Return participants had a higher match rate than Garfield Park parolees who were eligible for the program but did not participate. It is possible, for example, that Safer Return participants were more motivated to change their behavior or were more engaged in their reentry process than nonparticipating Garfield Park parolees. This unobservable characteristic is likely correlated with both participating in the program and providing correct identifying information to IDOC. It is also logical that

such unobservable characteristics (e.g., motivation) could be correlated with better outcomes (e.g., finding employment). The differences between the two neighborhoods are a bit more perplexing, but may be attributable to any number of factors, including demographic and criminal history differences between parolees released to the two neighborhoods, differences in opportunities for legal employment in the two neighborhoods, and differences in IDOC's practice of collecting and maintaining identifying information between parole districts.

Excluding missing values, instead of counting them as true zeros, prevents our analyses from attributing selection bias or neighborhood effects to program participation. However, it may also cause the analyses to understate the effectiveness of Safer Return relative to the two comparison groups. If the missing values were, in fact, true zeros, then the Safer Return group would have a much higher employment rate than either comparison group. The implications of these concerns are discussed in greater detail in the limitations section of this chapter.

## **Bivariate and Multivariate Analyses Used**

For each subsample of individuals with valid data, we generated four outcomes from IDES data:

- a binary indicator for any wages within two years,
- time to first wages within two years,
- total wages earned within two years, and
- number of quarters with wages earned within two years.

First, we performed bivariate analyses of difference (two-tailed *t*-tests) on the outcomes, both unweighted and weighted by propensity weights. We generated inverse propensity weights for each comparison using the same methodology described in chapter 5. Next, we performed multivariate analyses that controlled for all available demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release information for each outcome. For the binary indicator for any wages, we used logistic regression. For the time-to-first-wage variable, we used a Cox proportional-hazards model. For total wages earned, we used a robust ordinary least-squares model.<sup>43</sup> Finally, for the number of quarters with wages earned, we tested both Poisson and negative-binomial regression models, along with zero-inflated variants of those models, and choose the preferred model for each comparison based on the Akaike information criterion.<sup>44</sup> Consistent with analyses presented in chapter 5, we present doubly robust regression models where appropriate.

# Findings

## Demographic Profiles

Demographic profiles, criminal history, and conditions-of-release data are presented for all three analytic groups in tables 6.1 and 6.2. Bivariate analyses of difference are presented in their entirety in appendix C (available online), and all statistically significant findings are discussed and summarized below. Note that though these analyses rely upon IDOC data, their findings differ from those presented in chapter 5 because they only consider individuals with at least one matching IDES record.

TABLE 6.1

**Demographic Profiles of Safer Return Participants, Garfield Park Parolees, and West Englewood Parolees in Employment Outcome Data**

	Safer Return participants	Garfield Park parolees	West Englewood parolees
Age at release (years)	37.68	35.98	33.89
Age at first custody (years)	25.59	25.75	25.11
Male (%)	94.03	94.29	91.15
Race/ethnicity (%)			
Black	85.07	80.09	95.38
Hispanic	3.73	7.17	2.31
White	10.95	12.47	2.12
Other	0.25	0.28	0.19

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Note:** *N* = 402 Safer Return participants, 2190 Garfield Park parolees, and 520 West Englewood parolees.

TABLE 6.2

**Criminal History and Release Profiles of Safer Return Participants, Garfield Park Parolees, and West Englewood Parolees in Employment Outcome Data**

	Safer Return participants	Garfield Park parolees	West Englewood parolees
Number of previous offenses	5.07	4.48	3.79
Type of previous offense(s) (%)			
Person	20.40	19.95	19.42
Society	24.38	22.42	33.27
Property	58.71	56.07	51.92
Drug	66.67	64.52	57.88
Traffic	1.24	1.96	21.20
Other	7.71	6.58	63.50

	Safer Return participants	Garfield Park parolees	West Englewood parolees
<b>Release-facility security (%)</b>			
Maximum	2.99	3.29	4.04
Medium	50.37	40.96	42.31
Minimum	37.91	39.54	36.15
Other	7.23	8.04	9.81
Reception and classification	1.50	8.17	7.69
<b>Year of first release (%)</b>			
2008	7.96	24.61	25.00
2009	27.11	26.94	26.73
2010	37.06	22.97	24.04
2011	26.87	23.15	22.12
2012	1.00	2.33	2.12
<b>Jack Clark parolees (%)</b>	36.82	20.87	0.00

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Notes:**  $N = 402$  Safer Return participants, 2190 Garfield Park parolees, and 520 West Englewood parolees. One Safer Return participant is missing release-facility security information.

## Summary of Bivariate Analyses of Differences between Groups

The data presented in tables 6.1 and 6.2 indicate that there are fairly substantial differences in the demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release characteristics of the three analytic comparison groups. Our summary of the significant differences follows.

- **Comparison of nonparticipant Garfield Park parolees ( $n = 2190$ ) and West Englewood parolees ( $n = 520$ ).** Garfield Park parolees were older and more predominantly male than West Englewood parolees. Garfield Park parolees were also older at the time of their first custody (this difference is marginally significant). Garfield Park parolees were also significantly less likely to be black than West Englewood parolees, and were more likely to be Hispanic or white. Garfield Park parolees had more offenses in their criminal histories and were more likely to have been incarcerated for at least one drug or property crime. West Englewood parolees were more likely to have been incarcerated for a crime against society. These analyses do not suggest which group may have had a higher likelihood of reincarceration. Garfield Park parolees did, however, have more extensive criminal histories than West Englewood parolees.<sup>45</sup>
- **Comparison of Safer Return participants ( $n = 402$ ) and West Englewood parolees ( $n = 520$ ).** Safer Return participants were significantly older than West Englewood parolees and were marginally more likely to be male. Safer Return participants were less likely to be black than West Englewood parolees, and more likely to be white. Safer Return participants had more

offenses in their criminal histories than West Englewood parolees. They were more likely to have committed at least one drug or property crime, but less likely to have committed at least one crime against society. Safer Return participants were also more likely to have been released from a medium-security facility and less likely to have been released from a reception and classification center. Finally, year of release differs between the two groups: the year of release is constant across the West Englewood parolees, whereas Safer Return participation was notably low in the demonstration's first year (2008) and peaked in 2010.<sup>46</sup>

- **Comparison of Safer Return participants ( $n = 402$ ) and nonparticipant Garfield park parolees ( $n = 2190$ ).** Safer Return participants were, on average, older than nonparticipating Garfield Park parolees. There were marginal racial differences; Safer Return participants were slightly more likely to be black. Safer Return participants had more offenses in their criminal histories, but there were no differences in offense types. Safer Return participants were more likely to have been released from a medium-security facility and were less likely to have been released from a reception and classification center. The year of release also varied—Safer Return participants were less likely to have been released in 2008 and more likely to have been released in 2010.<sup>47</sup>

## Employment Outcome Profiles

In our analyses of employment outcomes, we first describe the outcomes observed, then discuss the multivariate regression findings. Complete regression results are in appendix C (available online).

Table 6.3 presents outcomes for each of the three analytic comparison groups. Bivariate analyses are not reported in table 6.3 since they do not account for the significant differences between the three groups described on the previous page. Nevertheless, several trends become immediately apparent. First, Safer Return participants appear to have the best outcomes across all the employment outcomes we analyzed. On average, between 60 and 75 percent of each of the three analytic groups had at least one quarter with earnings within two years of release.

The average number of quarters, which ranged from nearly two to more than two and a half quarters, indicated that although a majority of parolees with valid IDES data found at least some legal employment within two years of release from prison, that employment was not long-lasting. Similarly, the average quarterly wages (between \$5,628 and \$6,408) translate to 726 to 827 hours worked at minimum wage.<sup>48</sup> Considering that the typical full-time work year consists of over 2,000 hours (so the

two-year period would entail over 4,000 hours), these averages suggest that all groups were severely unemployed for the two years immediately following release.

TABLE 6.3

### Two-Year Employment Outcomes

	Safer Return participants	Garfield Park parolees	West Englewood parolees
Any wages (%)	73.88	64.25	60.19
Average time to first quarter of employment (quarters)	3.04	3.59	3.88
Average total wages (\$)	6,408.30	5,628.10	6,005.90
Average number of quarters with wages	2.63	2.14	1.92

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Employment Security earnings data and Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Notes:** *N* = 402 Safer Return participants, 2190 Garfield Park parolees, and 520 West Englewood parolees. Total wages includes outliers.

## Multivariate Employment Outcomes

### COMPARISON OF NONPARTICIPANT GARFIELD PARK PAROLEES AND WEST ENGLEWOOD PAROLEES

The multivariate regression results in table 6.4 show that nonparticipant Garfield Park parolees may have had better employment outcomes than West Englewood parolees. Controlling for available demographic, criminal history, and release information, Garfield Park parolees were 4 percent more likely than West Englewood parolees to have earned any wages within two years of release.

There were no significant differences between the two groups for any of the other three outcomes measured: number of quarters with wages, total wages, and time to first wages.

TABLE 6.4

### Summary of Multivariate Findings Comparing Employment Outcomes of Garfield Park and West Englewood Parolees

	Model used	Coefficient	Interpretation
Any wages <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.120**	GP parolees were more likely to have earned any wages
Time to first quarter of wages <sup>a</sup>	Cox proportional-hazards regression	0.052	No significant difference
Total wages <sup>a</sup>	Robust ordinary least-squares regression	-97.935	No significant difference
Number of quarters with wages	Zero-inflated negative-binomial regression	0.072	No significant difference

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Employment Security earnings data and Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Notes:**  $N = 2,190$  Garfield Park parolees and 520 West Englewood parolees.

<sup>a</sup>Denotes doubly robust regression weighted by inverse propensity weights.

\*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

### COMPARISON OF SAFER RETURN PARTICIPANTS AND WEST ENGLEWOOD PAROLEES

The multivariate regression results shown in table 6.5 indicate that Safer Return participants performed better than parolees released to West Englewood along each of the employment outcomes analyzed. Controlling for observable demographic, criminal history, and release variables, there were several statistically significant findings:

- Safer Return participants were 19 percent more likely than West Englewood parolees to have earned any wages within two years of release.
- Safer Return participants had an average of over \$1,300 more in earnings over the two years after release than West Englewood parolees.
- Safer Return participants had a hazard rate that was 42 percent higher than that of West Englewood parolees (meaning Safer Return participants found employment more quickly than West Englewood parolees).
- Safer Return participants were marginally more likely to have had 16 percent more quarters of employment than parolees released to West Englewood.

TABLE 6.5

**Summary of Multivariate Findings Comparing Employment Outcomes of Safer Return Participants and West Englewood Parolees**

	Model used	Coefficient	Interpretation
Any wages <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.559***	SR participants were more likely to have earned any wages
Time to first quarter of wages <sup>a</sup>	Cox proportional-hazards regression	0.352***	SR participants found employment more quickly
Total wages <sup>a</sup>	Robust ordinary least-squares regression	1,319.11***	SR participants earned more total wages
Number of quarters with wages	Zero-inflated negative-binomial regression	0.145*	SR participants had more quarters with wages (marginally)

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Employment Security earnings data and Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Notes:** N= 401 Safer Return participants and 520 West Englewood parolees.

<sup>a</sup>Denotes doubly robust regression weighted by inverse propensity weights.

\*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

**COMPARISON OF SAFER RETURN PARTICIPANTS AND NONPARTICIPANT GARFIELD PARK PAROLEES**

The multivariate regression results shown in table 6.6 indicate that Safer Return participants performed better than nonparticipating parolees released to Garfield Park along most of the employment outcomes analyzed. Controlling for observable demographic, criminal history, and release variables, there were several statistically significant findings:

- Safer Return participants were 12 percent more likely than nonparticipating Garfield Park parolees to have earned any wages within two years of release.
- Safer Return participants had an average of over \$1,060 more in earnings over two years than nonparticipating Garfield Park parolees.
- Safer Return participants' hazard rate was 26 percent higher than that of nonparticipating Garfield Park parolees (meaning that they found employment more quickly).

The two groups did not differ in the total number of quarters of employment.

TABLE 6.6

### Summary of Multivariate Findings Comparing Employment Outcomes of Safer Return Participants and Nonparticipating Garfield Park Parolees

	Model used	Coefficient	Interpretation
Any wages <sup>a</sup>	Logistic regression	0.360***	SR participants were more likely to have earned any wages
Time to first quarter of wages <sup>a</sup>	Cox proportional-hazards regression	0.234***	SR participants found employment more quickly
Total wages <sup>a</sup>	Robust ordinary least-squares regression	1,061.14***	SR participants had more total wages
Number of quarters with wages	Zero-inflated negative-binomial regression	0.075	No significant difference

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Employment Security earnings data and Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Notes:**  $N = 401$  Safer Return participants and 2,190 Garfield Park parolees.

<sup>a</sup>Denotes doubly robust regression weighted by inverse propensity weights.

\*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

## Sensitivity Testing

Based on what we learned through the implementation evaluation of Safer Return (Rossman and Fontaine 2015) and the methods we used to determine the analytic comparison groups, we sought to isolate two primary sources of uncertainty in these analyses of employment outcomes.

First, we tested whether the observed effects of Safer Return participation on employment outcomes attenuated over time. Although Safer Return might have helped participants find employment, it is possible that these effects were short-lived and that participants were no better off than nonparticipants by the end of the two year follow-up period. Safer Return was intended to encourage both short- and long-term impacts on reentry and reintegration outcomes; however, the program services were only offered for up to one year after release. The multivariate findings just presented show that Safer Return participants were more likely to have employment after release, but they say little about when the employment occurred within the two-year follow-up period and whether program participation placed individuals on a trajectory toward full-time permanent employment.

Second, as explained in chapter 5, we knowingly classified more parolees with a higher risk of recidivism as Safer Return participants, when they could have been justifiably classified as nonparticipating Garfield Park parolees using an earlier release date. We ran analyses accounting for

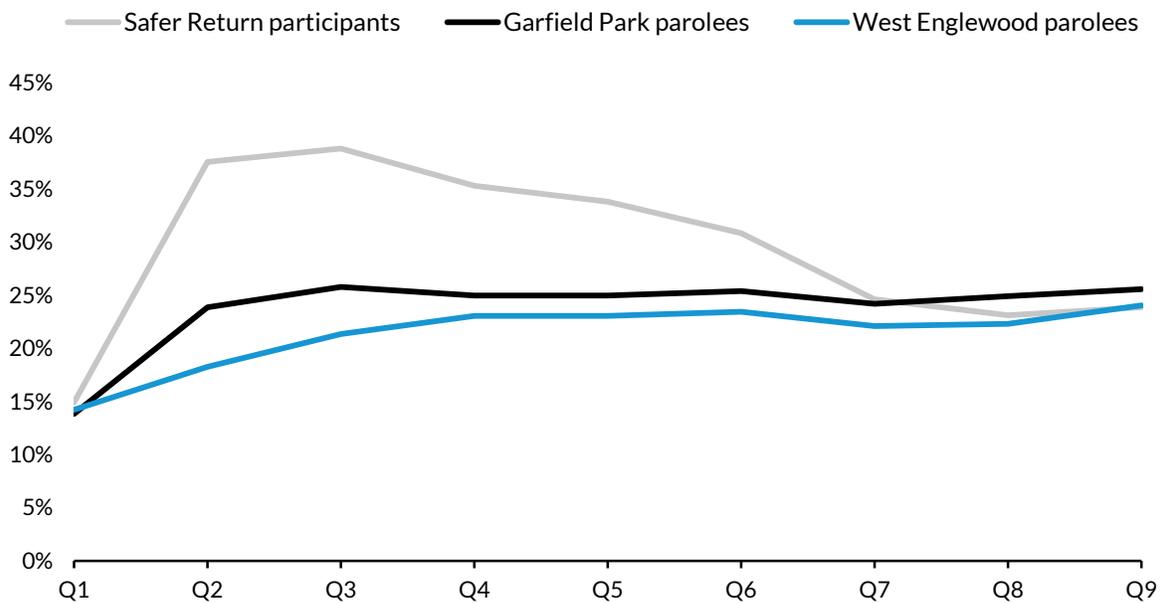
the possibility that this classification decision altered the multivariate findings on employment outcomes.

### ATTENUATION OVER TIME

One possibility we sought to isolate is whether Safer Return was effective at initial job placement, but less effective at generating better outcomes for participants over a longer term. As shown in figure 6.1, we compared each analytic group's employment rates in each quarter.

FIGURE 6.1

Employment Rate by Analytic Group over Time



**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of Illinois Department of Employment Security earnings data and Illinois Department of Corrections and Safer Return administrative records.

**Note:** *N* = 402 Safer Return participants, 2,190 Garfield Park parolees, and 520 West Englewood parolees.

Following the first quarter after release (which is truncated for some individuals<sup>49</sup>), Safer Return participants were substantially more likely to have earnings reported to IDES. These effects begin to attenuate about a year after release; by the end of the two year follow-up, Safer Return participants have an employment rate approximately equal to those in the two comparison groups. This generally corroborates the findings from the self-reported employment outcomes data discussed in chapter 3, where differences in the observed 4-month employment outcomes are not observed in the 16-month employment outcomes.

## MULTIPLE RELEASES

As discussed in greater detail in chapter 5, the criteria we used to determine how to classify individuals with multiple releases included some individuals with a higher risk of recidivism in the Safer Return–participant category, when they could have been classified as non–Safer Return participants using an earlier release date. If the unobservable characteristics that put an individual at a higher risk of recidivism are also correlated with worse employment outcomes, this classification criterion would have caused us to understate Safer Return’s effect on employment outcomes. We therefore reran each of the analyses excluding parolees with multiple releases, to ensure that these analyses did not understate Safer Return’s effect.<sup>50</sup>

Excluding these individuals does not substantively alter the findings that Safer Return participants had notably better employment outcomes two years after release. The only way the findings differ from those presented in this chapter is that when compared with both West Englewood parolees (coefficient = 0.18;  $p < 0.05$ ) and nonparticipating Garfield Park parolees (coefficient = 0.11;  $p < 0.10$ ), Safer Return participants exhibited *more* total quarters of employment than our earlier analyses revealed.<sup>51</sup> As we have already noted, these individuals were at a heightened risk of reincarceration and may therefore have been expected to be at greater risk of worse employment outcomes. This sensitivity analysis confirms that excluding these individuals shows slightly more positive findings for Safer Return participants than other parolees.

# Conclusions and Key Takeaways

## Limitations

Overall, these findings are overwhelmingly positive for the program. However, there are several notable limitations to these analyses. First, there were numerous observable and unobservable differences between each of the three analytic groups. There were also limitations to the IDOC data we used to construct each of the comparison groups and generate demographic and criminal history information. For a more detailed discussion of the limitations of the IDOC data used in this analysis or the evaluation strategy generally, see chapter 5.

These limitations plague nearly all quasi-experimental evaluation designs or research efforts relying on administrative data, but are especially problematic for this analysis: over half of the

individuals included in our reincarceration analysis did not have valid IDES data. This actually poses two problems. First, the extent to which these employment findings are generalizable to the entire population of Safer Return participants and parolees to Garfield Park and West Englewood is unclear. The findings are limited to those who both legally earned money between 2008 and the beginning of 2014 *and* reported correct identifying information to both their employers and IDOC. More importantly, it is not possible to describe the employment experiences of a substantial portion of individuals returning to these two neighborhoods with any precision using this data.

A second problem is one of interpretation: missing values could be interpreted as either a true zero—where an individual correctly reported identifying information and did not earn wages—or as a false zero—where an individual did earn wages, but incorrectly reported identifying information to his or her employer or IDOC.<sup>52</sup> Our analysis treats each of these missing values as false zeros, but some may be true zeros. As we have already discussed, match rates (i.e., correct and consistent identifying information) are highest for Safer Return participants. Treating missing values as zeros—and thus assuming that all identifying information was correctly reported to IDES, IDOC, and employers—would have amplified Safer Return’s effect on employment outcomes. Put another way, these estimates are a conservative interpretation of Safer Return’s effects on employment outcomes using available data.

## Key Takeaways

Using administrative data from IDES and IDOC, we find promising results in support of Safer Return’s effectiveness at increasing the likelihood of postrelease employment. Specifically, we have identified the following the key findings:

1. There were significant differences in the three analytic groups’ demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release characteristics. Though these variables differed, Safer Return participants’ significantly greater criminal histories suggest that they would have had worse employment outcomes than the comparison groups.
2. Controlling for available demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release characteristics, Safer Return participants were by far the most likely of the three groups to have had any postrelease employment, to have earned the highest wages, and to have found employment the quickest.
3. Though the results are overwhelmingly positive in support of Safer Return’s effectiveness at improving employment outcomes, these effects appear to attenuate over time.

# Chapter 7. Conclusions

The Safer Return demonstration resulted in several positive outcomes that were consistent with our expectations. In summary, Safer Return participation was associated with the following:

- reductions in returns to prison, mostly as a result of reductions in technical violations;
- increases in employment and wages;
- reductions in self-reported substance abuse; and
- increases in self-reported receipt of prerelease and postrelease supportive services.

Overall, these findings are highly consistent with Safer Return’s implementation. The Safer Return demonstration was intended to promote successful reentry and reintegration by addressing key individual needs, introducing system reforms, and improving the local conditions that create barriers to successful reintegration. As discussed in Rossman and Fontaine (2015), Safer Return implementation was strongest in addressing the service needs of former prisoners, particularly by extending case management services; providing referrals to external, nondemonstration-provided services; and providing employment services. Therefore, actual implementation of Safer Return would have led us to expect the program to significantly increase the number of reentry services individuals said they received as well as their employment rates and earnings, as shown in chapter 3 and chapter 6.

Activities focused on the other two goals—introducing system reforms and improving local conditions—were not as well implemented, with one notable exception. The demonstration was successful in establishing a strong partnership with parole officers assigned to the program, which likely contributed to reductions in reincarcerations due to technical violations. The family and community outcome findings discussed in chapters 2 and 4 are interesting, but cannot be entirely associated with Safer Return’s implementation.

There is untapped potential among family members and the community at large. As clearly demonstrated in our surveys of family members (chapter 4) and community residents (chapter 2), families and community residents were overwhelmingly supportive and welcoming of former prisoners, in spite of their own circumstances and limited capacities. Although Safer Return included some activities with and services for families and the community, it fell short of the program model. Purposeful inclusion of families and community residents in the reentry and reintegration of former prisoners has tremendous potential to lead to better outcomes.

Because of the lack of robust findings along all the domains we analyzed, a cost evaluation showed that the program was not cost beneficial.<sup>53</sup> Using data from the survey of program participants and formerly incarcerated individuals in West Englewood in conjunction the administrative data from IDES and IDOC, we monetized each of the outputs and outcomes associated with program participation. These findings are consistent with those of the implementation and impact evaluations: although Safer Return encouraged positive reentry and reintegration outcomes, these results were outweighed by the high cost of implementing the program.

The high cost of the program relative to the outcomes it was associated with likely resulted from implementation issues. As summarized in Rossman and Fontaine (2015), implementation challenges were chiefly related to management issues, service delivery and coordination problems, and difficulties with the program's design-build model. These three main issues combined to reduce the overall impact the demonstration could have had on individual, family, and community outcomes.

Three examples illustrate how these implementation challenges could have manifested in fewer impacts among individuals, families, and the community. First, as a result of the design-build model (whereby core program components were introduced over time), housing services, among other services, were not available to all the participants who needed them. If the demonstration had been able to provide housing services to participants and their families, the reintegration and reentry outcomes might have been better.

Second, the program's management challenges led opportunities to develop more cohesion and connectedness in the program components to go untapped. In the absence of some of those management challenges, the program may have had more success incorporating family members and the community into the demonstration and may, therefore, have been associated with better family and community outcomes.

Finally, service delivery and coordination problems in the demonstration led to fewer services for the program participants, their families, and the larger community. For example, the program was unable to establish special service agreements with nondemonstration-provided services (e.g., mental health and substance abuse treatment providers). Since these services are associated with better reentry outcomes, more service delivery and greater coordination would likely have led to better outcomes among individuals and perhaps even their families and the larger community.

Had the overall implementation of Safer Return been more robust, the outcomes associated with the demonstration would almost certainly have been greater. Despite challenges in implementation, Safer Return was able to improve reentry outcomes for individuals returning to Garfield Park from

state prison relative to comparison groups, though not as much as had been hoped for. The lessons we can learn from Safer Return's implementation successes and challenges, and from how those successes and challenges were related to outcomes and impacts, will no doubt prove useful for those planning future reentry programming efforts.

# Notes

1. A handful of those assisting with data collection were Safer Return participants.
2. Full survey results are available from the authors upon request.
3. Poisson and negative-binomial regression models take differing distributions of count data into account.
4. Following Desmond and colleagues (2013), we do not weight count models based on inverse propensity weights.
5. Inverse propensity weights were calculated by fitting a logistic regression model that predicted inclusion in the treatment group using all available demographic, educational, employment, health and mental health, criminal, and substance abuse history information (i.e., predicting participation in Safer Return for the comparisons in West Englewood). The model was then run iteratively, each time excluding variables with coefficients that had  $p$  values greater than 0.5 until each coefficient had a  $p$  value below 0.5. These bivariate findings and the models predicting group assignment are available from the authors upon request.
6. The doubly robust models produce estimates similar in magnitude and statistical significance to those not weighted by propensity weights, suggesting that including the weights did not hamper the results.
7. Although we expected Safer Return participants to have moved more often than West Englewood comparisons given the use of the Jack Clark Family House treatment facility by the program and parole officers working with the program, higher residential mobility was not a goal of the demonstration. Residential mobility can be considered a positive or negative reentry outcome, depending on the reason for the move (e.g., moving because of greater financial independence or to sever criminal ties versus moving because of eviction or strained family ties)—see Fontaine and Beiss (2012) for further discussion. The data used herein cannot assess whether the moves are for positive or negative reasons.
8. The nonprofit Family Justice Institute closed in late 2009. The organization's national training and technical assistance work continues as the Family Justice Program of the Vera Institute of Justice.
9. This is a departure from the Bodega model, which requires family participation.
10. The survey administered to formerly incarcerated men in the treatment and comparison groups covered several domains and constructs, including sociodemographic characteristics, family relationships, friendships, employment, health, perceptions of community, substance abuse, housing, recreation, spiritual beliefs, criminal history and victimization, conditions of supervision, programs and services, reentry experiences, parole supervision, and program satisfaction.
11. Hereafter, "family member" is synonymous with "family or social support network member," consistent with Safer Return's broad definition of family.
12. The survey also asked appropriate family members (e.g., intimate partner or other family member who was a caregiver of the former prisoner's children) about children/codependents with the returning prisoner and the returning prisoners' experiences and types of contact with their children/codependents. Only 39 family members responded to these questions at baseline and 26 at follow-up. Given the small sample size, we did not analyze these survey questions in depth here.
13. A subset of 72 family members was also surveyed six months after the baseline survey (10 months after release), including 23 family members of Safer Return participants and 49 family members of West Englewood comparisons. These surveys were completed over the phone, using supplemental funding provided by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Because of the differences in the survey methodology (over the phone versus in person) and the small sample size, findings from this subset are not reported here. These data were summarized in Fontaine and colleagues (2012).
14. Fontaine and colleagues (2012) also used data on short-term reincarceration outcomes from the Illinois Department of Corrections to explore whether family members' reports of attachment, closeness, and communication before and during prison were related to former prisoners' reincarceration outcomes within one year of release.

15. Fontaine, Gilchrist-Scott, and Denver (2011) and Fontaine and colleagues (2012) described characteristics of 100 and 235 family members, respectively, who were enrolled in the evaluation survey at the time of the report.
16. Our records indicate that nearly 30 percent of the 115 family members who did not complete the follow-up survey could not be located by field interviewers, in spite of our use of various methods to track individuals over time.
17. Focusing on individuals released on parole is consistent with the program model of Safer Return, which included a partnership with the parole department (Rossman & Fontaine 2015). An overwhelming majority of Safer Return participants were on parole, but some were not. Based on a limited extract of IDOC release data from the project period, which contained releases that were and were not under community supervision, we found that a majority of those returning to the treatment and comparison communities were released with a period of community supervision. Based on this extract, we estimate that approximately 80 to 90 percent of individuals returning to these communities were under community supervision after release.
18. Key variables such as marital status, number of children upon prison admission, and release risk level are available in the IDOC database, but are overwritten once an individual has another contact with the IDOC system (i.e., is reincarcerated or released). These data could therefore not be used ex post to describe the demographic and risk profile of these individuals at the time of release.
19. The data extracts included one variable called "race" and another called "ethnicity." Both variables contain data that could be categorized as both race (e.g., white) and ethnicity (e.g., Hispanic). For consistency, we report the race variable exclusively; a substantial proportion of values in the ethnicity variable were missing and the overwhelming majority of those that were not missing were consistent with the race variable. Because the race variable contains information about both race and ethnicity, we refer to it as the race/ethnicity variable.
20. Offense histories were coded following the National Incident-Based Reporting System categorization. Person offenses include homicide, kidnapping or abduction, sexual offenses (forcible and nonforcible), and assault. Society offenses include pornography/obscene material, gambling, prostitution, weapons, vagrancy, disorderly conduct, driving under the influence, drunkenness, family offenses, liquor offenses, peeping tom, and trespassing. Property offenses include robbery, arson, extortion, burglary (breaking and entering), theft, motor vehicle theft, forgery, fraud, embezzlement, stolen property, damage or destruction, bribery, and bad checks. Drug offenses include all drug and narcotic related offenses. Traffic offenses include all traffic violations. Other offenses include all offenses not coded into the person, society, property, drug, and traffic categories; these include escape, obstructing justice, and failure to report, among other crimes.
21. Our categorization of the release facility was determined using the IDOC classifications reported on the IDOC website (<https://www.illinois.gov/idoc/facilities/Pages/correctionalfacilities.aspx>). Reception and classification centers are described as facilities where individuals newly admitted to IDOC are initially housed before transfer to a permanent facility. Other includes all other facilities, including transitional facilities operated by IDOC, interstate transfers, and others.
22. We generated data for these variables using IDOC transactional data fields.
23. Through Safer Return program files, we identified 727 unique program participants. Of these, we were able to match 719 (99 percent of the total) with valid release information from IDOC that corresponded with their participation in the program. The vast majority (568, or 79 percent) participated in Safer Return on their first parole to the demonstration neighborhood during the enrollment time period (April 2008 to January 2012). Sixty-three individuals (9 percent) participated in the program on a subsequent parole to the demonstration neighborhood. For one reason or another, these individuals did not participate in the program the first time they were eligible to do so. Finally, 88 individuals (12 percent) participated in Safer Return after moving into the demonstration neighborhood after initial release to another neighborhood. As described in Rossman and Fontaine (2015), during various points in Safer Return's implementation, individuals who were initially released to neighborhoods outside the demonstration community were eligible to participate in Safer Return upon moving into Garfield Park, as long as they moved within 45 days of release.
24. Other criminal history data available to the evaluation (e.g., offenses for which an individual was incarcerated) are not bounded by the April 2008 cutoff and thus provide a strong proxy for criminal history. These variables

are used in regression analyses as a control for criminal history before Safer Return enrollment or release to Garfield Park or West Englewood.

25. Poisson and negative-binomial regression models take into account differing distributions of count data. Both models can be run with a zero-inflation component that takes into account distributions that contain a larger number of zeros than predicted by the model.
26. For example, following Desmond and colleagues (2013), we do not weight count models based on inverse propensity weights. This conforms to the procedure specifications in SAS 9.2 used to generate logistic, Cox proportional-hazards, and count models.
27. The doubly robust models produce estimates that are similar in magnitude and statistical significance to those not weighted by propensity weights, thus suggesting that including the weights did not hamper the results.
28. We used logistic regression models predicting inclusion as a Garfield Park parolee, which provided the basis for the propensity scores used in the doubly robust regressions. Controlling for available demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release variables, the following variables were positively associated with propensity toward being a Garfield Park parolee relative to a West Englewood parolee: more previous offenses, increased age, being male, having committed a drug offense, and having been released from a reception and classification facility. Being black and having committed a society offense were negatively associated with this propensity (i.e., these variables were positively associated with being a West Englewood parolee).
29. We used logistic regression models predicting inclusion as a Safer Return participant, which provided the basis for the propensity scores used in the doubly robust regressions. Controlling for available demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release variables, the variables that were significantly associated with Safer Return participation were increased ages, higher number of offenses, being male, and having committed a drug offense. Relative to a 2008 release date, Safer Return participants were also more likely to have been released in 2009, 2010, and 2011. Variables negatively associated with participation (i.e., positively associated with being a West Englewood parolee) were younger age at first offense; being black or Hispanic; having committed a person, society, or property crime; and having been released from a reception and classification facility or “other” facility.
30. We used logistic regression models predicting Safer Return participation, which provided the basis for the propensity scores used in the doubly robust regressions. Controlling for available demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release variables, increased age was a significant predictor of Safer Return participation. Relative to the reference year of 2008, releases from 2009 through 2011 also predicted Safer Return participation. Variables negatively associated with Safer Return participation (i.e., positively associated with nonparticipation) included increased age at the first offense, being Hispanic, having committed a property offense, and having been released from a reception and classification facility or “other” facility.
31. The three-year reincarceration rate for all individuals released from IDOC facilities is 47 percent (Illinois Department of Corrections 2012).
32. The Jack Clark Family House is discussed in greater detail in Rossman and Fontaine (2015). Safer Return staff and parole officers from the west side of the city indicated that the Jack Clark facility was one of the few residential treatment centers in the area that allowed electronic monitoring surveillance in the facility. Many individuals returning from state prison who were originally from other neighborhoods or cities were paroled to the center. Though we could not identify individuals’ neighborhoods of residence before parole to Jack Clark, we observed that the parolees in our sample paroled to Jack Clark differed substantially from other Garfield Park parolees in observable demographic and criminal history information.
33. Jack Clark parolees proved an especially challenging factor because we have no reliable measure of which Jack Clark residents should be considered exogenous out-of-neighborhood parolees, and which should be considered Garfield Park parolees (who happen to be higher risk). There is also, to our knowledge, no way of identifying similarly high-risk individuals in the comparison community, West Englewood. Analyzing the differences between non-Jack Clark Safer Return participants (or Garfield Park parolees) and West Englewood parolees would exclude a subset of higher risk individuals in the demonstration community without a reciprocal exclusion in the comparison community. This would bias the results toward showing better results in the treatment community relative to the comparison community. Confirming this hypothesis, when we compared West Englewood parolees with Garfield Park parolees who were not paroled to Jack Clark, the

findings were less negative for Garfield Park. Safer Return participants who were not paroled to Jack Clark likewise have notably better reincarceration outcomes than all West Englewood parolees. We do not present these findings since they come from an apples-to-oranges comparison; the inherent bias in the comparison renders them meaningless.

34. This hypothesis is supported by the distribution of propensity scores by year. The propensity for inclusion in the Safer Return participation group is markedly different in 2008 compared with the following three years, suggesting that the first cohort of releases were substantively different and that there were unobservable selection biases.
35. Variation by cohort year is manifest across each of the outcomes we analyzed using multivariate regression, but the general trends described here are also evident. The analyses are too complex to present here, but are available from the authors upon request.
36. These findings are available from the authors upon request. Because some individuals participated in Safer Return within two years, we did not include the analyses examining the number of reincarcerations or offenses within two years in this sensitivity analysis.
37. See note 19 for an explanation of the race/ethnicity variable.
38. The full follow-up time period could have been up to two years and three months. To give each parolee at least a full two-year follow-up period, we had to add a ninth quarter.
39. There are several reasons employment data would not be reported. First, certain small nonprofit organizations, for example, are not required to report their employment data. For information on which organizations are required to report, see the IDES website ([www.ides.state.il.us](http://www.ides.state.il.us)). Second, the data are not reported when employers and employees illegally collude to underreport legal wages to pay fewer taxes. Third, illegal work, such as drug dealing, is not reported to IDES. There is no way to account for wages that are not reported to IDES.
40. For the reincarceration analyses, the unique identifier generated by IDOC is used to match across datasets. IDES does not match use IDOC numbers, so IDOC provided self-reported Social Security numbers for each individual in our sample, which IDES then matched with employment records. In turn, IDES provided us with the matched quarterly wage data and each person's name as reported to IDES, which we cross-referenced with the names provided by IDOC.
41. These identifiers were not the same ones used to generate the demographic, criminal history, or outcome variables discussed in chapter 5.
42. To test for invalid matches, we used the name field as recorded in IDOC records, which had higher data quality than other identifiers. For each record, if the name in IDOC records did not match the name on the IDES query, we manually checked to ensure that it was not a false negative (e.g., a transposed letter or hyphenated last name). We dropped observations with names that did not match.
43. The ordinary least-squares regression is, admittedly, not the most appropriate statistical test as it assumes normality and is not robust to outliers. Robust methods largely remedy these concerns (Huber 1973). The standard procedure for using wage data is typically to normalize it by using the logarithm of wages earned, thereby reducing the influence of outlier observations. We tested this metric, replacing zero wages with one to account for potentially missing values from taking a logarithm of zero. We do not present the findings of this test here because the preponderance of zero wages is so great that this methodology did not, in fact, create a normal distribution and is difficult to interpret. These findings, available from the authors upon request, verify that the findings presented using a robust ordinary least-squares regression do not substantively differ depending on the test used. The results of the ordinary least-squares regression are presented here because they are substantially more interpretable for dollars earned. The coefficient indicating treatment condition can be interpreted as the increase in two-year wages associated with treatment.
44. See note 25 for an explanation of these models.
45. We used logistic regression models predicting inclusion as a Garfield Park parolee, which provided the basis for the propensity scores used in the doubly robust regressions. Controlling for available demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release variables, the following variables were positively associated with being a Garfield Park parolee relative to a West Englewood parolee: more previous offenses, increased age, being male, and having committed a drug offense. Being black, having committed a society offense, and being

released from an “other” facility were negatively associated with being a Garfield Park parolee (i.e., these variables were positively associated with being a West Englewood parolee).

46. We used logistic regression models predicting inclusion as a Safer Return participant, which provided the basis for the propensity scores used in the doubly robust regressions models. Controlling for available demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release variables, the variables that were significantly associated with Safer Return participation were higher ages and release in 2009, 2010, and 2011 (relative to 2008). Variables negatively associated with participation (i.e., positively associated with being a West Englewood parolee) were being black, having committed a crime against society, having been released from a reception and classification facility or an “other” facility, and (marginally significant) having committed a person or property offense.
47. We used logistic regression models predicting inclusion as a Safer Return participant, which provided the basis for the propensity scores used in the doubly robust regression models. Controlling for available demographic, criminal history, and conditions-of-release variables, higher age marginally predicts Safer Return participation. Safer Return participants were also more likely to be released in 2009, 2010, and 2011 relative to 2008, and were less likely to have been released from a reception and classification center.
48. Minimum wage changed throughout the course of the project implementation, but between 2009 and 2011 it was \$7.75 an hour. We used \$7.75 as the minimum wage to calculate hours worked.
49. Because IDES data is reported quarterly, some parolees have more time in the first quarter after release than others, depending on the timing of their release from prison relative to the end of the reporting quarter. This variation is accounted for in the multivariate analysis.
50. Unlike in chapter 5, we do not present analyses that include all potential duplicate observations twice. This is because such analyses would mean that the Garfield Park observations were contaminated by exposure to Safer Return. This was of less concern for reincarceration outcomes because reincarceration was used to determine release dates. Reincarceration outcomes could be considered discrete incidents, while employment outcomes are continuous.
51. Full results of these analyses are available from the authors upon request.
52. It is also possible that an individual did not correctly report identifying information *and* did not earn legal wages during the study time frame.
53. We completed a cost evaluation based on the impact findings presented in chapters 3, 5, and 6 (based on former prisoner survey data, administrative IDOC data, and administrative IDES data) by monetizing the outcomes discussed in each chapter.

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