

# VERMONT RESULTS FIRST INITIATIVE - PRELIMINARY RESULTS COMPARING the BENEFITS and COSTS of CRIME REDUCTION

## Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative

The Results First Initiative, a project of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trusts, works with states to implement an innovative benefit-cost analysis approach that helps states invest in policies and programs that are proven to work and are cost effective. Results First provides Vermont with an econometric model that analyzes the estimated costs and benefits of current and potential investments in evidence-based programs. The model uses the best available research to predict the outcomes of each program, based on the state's unique population characteristics. It calculates the cost to produce these outcomes including separate projections for benefits that would accrue to taxpayers, through the reduction of criminal justice system resources used, and to society, through the reduction of victimizations.

The term "Marginal Cost" is used in this brief to describe how costs are calculated for Results First. The marginal cost is the amount the total agency budget changes when there is a small change in the workload of the agency as one additional person is being served. Although some Vermont programs calculated their marginal cost as zero, recidivism has a cost overall and reducing recidivism produces savings.

## Data Sources

In order to use the Results First model in Vermont, it is necessary to gather a fair amount of data from a variety of sources. The Cost-Benefit Working Group compiled the costs of one additional offender entering the myriad steps of the Vermont criminal justice system in [2014](#). These costs were used to derive the potential benefits to tax payers. Offender recidivism trends were calculated from Vermont Crime Information Center criminal histories. The costs of the programs currently offered in Vermont are based on Vermont specific data, while the cost of prospective programs not currently offered in Vermont were approximated using Washington State data. Washington State's actual or estimated costs are used by the Results First Model when state data is not available. The Joint Fiscal Committee provided funding for the work and has been instrumental in moving it forward.

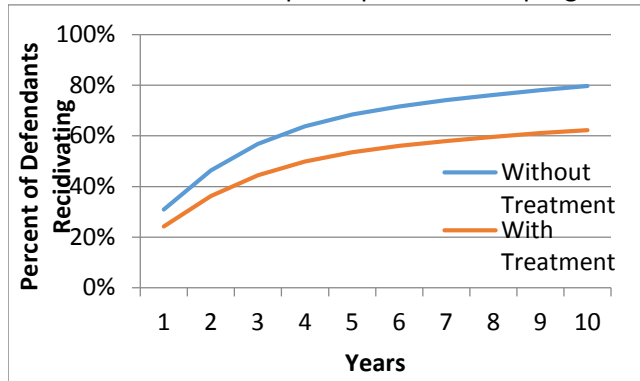
**Recidivism in Vermont** (calculated as any new conviction in Vermont during the 10 year follow up period)

- 63% of offenders with a prison sentence are convicted of a new crime in the following ten years.
- 41% of offenders with a sentence of supervision (probation) are convicted of a new crime in the following ten years.

(Note: VT data was obtained for defendants released or sentenced to probation from 2000-2004 and followed for 10 years.)

## **An Example of How Programming Can Help**

Therapeutic Communities for offenders with co-occurring disorders are highly structured communities where offenders gain responsibility as they progress. In Washington State, the treatment costs \$3,717 per participant and the Results First model shows it can potentially net savings of \$5,520 through reducing each offender's chance of recidivating by 22% annually. Vermont could realize the same savings assuming the costs are similar as applied to the VT population. The graph below illustrates the effect of participation in this program.



## **Obtaining Vermont Program Costs**

In order to get useful and reliable results with this initiative, determining the cost of current programs in Vermont is crucial. To obtain this information, service providers in Vermont were surveyed to obtain the costs of VT criminal justice programs. The Vermont calculations are reflected in Table 1. If an agency is interested in an evidence-based program, Crime Research Group can calculate the costs and benefits anticipated in Vermont. Crime Research Group can also conduct evaluations on programs.

Table 1: Estimated Benefits & Costs of Current & Prospective Adult Criminal Justice Programs in Vermont

<b>Preliminary Results Programs Offered in Vermont</b> (Results are reflected in 2014 Dollars)	Projected Change in VT Recidivism <sup>1</sup>	Total Benefits to Vermont <sup>2</sup>	Estimated Marginal Cost (based on VT costs)	Net Benefits (VT)	Chance of Positive Net Present Value <sup>3</sup>
Drug Courts (as alternative to incarceration)	-18.4%	\$15,409	\$10,549 <sup>4</sup>	\$4,860	100%
Correctional industries in prison	-5.7%	\$4,919	0 <sup>5</sup>	\$4,919	100%
Correctional Education (basic or post-secondary)	-25.3%	\$15,950	\$11,564 <sup>6</sup>	\$4,368	86%
Mental Health Courts (as alternative to incarceration)	-16.1%	\$14,667	\$10,549 <sup>7</sup>	\$4,018	81%
Vocational education in prison	-16.3%	\$13,732	11,564 <sup>8</sup>	\$2,168	80%
Mental Health Courts (as alternative to probation)	-24.8%	\$8,769	\$10,549 <sup>9</sup>	(\$1,880)	24%
Drug Courts (as alternative to probation)	-27.8%	\$8,673	\$10,549 <sup>10</sup>	(\$1,876)	3%
Electronic Monitoring (in lieu of incarceration) <sup>11</sup>	-22.8%	\$2,610	NA <sup>12</sup>	NA	NA
DUI Courts <sup>13</sup>	-13.5%	\$6,582	NA	NA	NA
Supervision with Risk-Need Responsivity High Risk Prison Offenders <sup>14</sup>	-17.6%	\$4,175	NA	NA	NA
Therapeutic Communities (Tapestry) <sup>15</sup>	-8.65%	\$4,054	NA	NA	NA
Housing Supports <sup>16</sup>	-5.2%	\$2,460	NA	NA	NA
Restorative Justice (as alternative to traditional probation) <sup>17</sup>	-12.5%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ignition Locks (in lieu of incarceration) <sup>18</sup>	-33.4%	NA	NA	NA	NA

Table 2:  
Estimated Benefits & Costs of Programs Not Currently Offered in Vermont for Defendants with Substance Abuse

<b>Programs Not Currently Offered In Vermont and Modeled in Results First - Targeting Defendants with Substance Abuse Needs</b>	Projected Change in VT Recidivism	Total Benefits to Vermont	Estimated Cost (based on WA costs)	Net Benefits (WA and VT)	Chance of Positive Net Value
Outpatient/non-intensive drug treatment (community)	-9%	\$1,457	\$592	\$865	84%
Therapeutic communities for chemically dependent offenders (community)	-17.4%	\$2,992	\$2,464	\$528	72%
Inpatient/intensive outpatient drug treatment (community)	-3%	\$1,162	\$941	\$221	60%
Swift and certain/graduated sanction case management	-30%	\$4,677	\$4,815	(\$138)	53%
Other case management for substance abusing offenders	-9%	\$1,728	\$4,840	(\$3,112)	1%
Naltrexone treatment in addition to Probation <sup>19</sup>	-61.4%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Naltrexone treatment for incarcerated individuals <sup>20</sup>	-48.2%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Methadone treatment in addition to Probation	-44.4%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Methadone treatment for incarcerated individuals <sup>21</sup>	-31.8%	NA	NA	NA	NA

Table 3:  
Estimated Benefits & Costs of Programs Not Currently Offered in Vermont for Defendants with Mental Health Needs

Programs Not Currently Offered In Vermont and Modeled in Results First - Targeting Defendants with Mental Health Needs	Projected Change in VT Recidivism	Total Benefits to Vermont	Estimated Cost (based on WA costs)	Net Benefits (WA and VT)	Chance of Positive Net Value
Therapeutic Communities for Co-Occurring Disorders (incarceration)	-21.8%	\$9,237	\$3,717	\$5,520	97%
Jail Diversion-Post Booking (community)	-2.3%	\$1,067 <sup>22</sup>	(\$4,701)	\$5,768	75%
Offender Re-entry supports for Dangerously Mentally Ill <sup>23</sup>	-51.8%	NA	NA	NA	NA

Table 4: Programs Not Offered in Vermont – Miscellaneous Programs

Programs Not Currently Offered In Vermont and Modeled in Results First - Miscellaneous Programs	Projected Change in VT Recidivism	Total Benefits to Vermont	Estimated Cost (based on WA costs)	Net Benefits (WA and VT)	Chance of Positive Net Value
Employment Training/Job Assistance in the Community	-9%	\$1,606	\$138	\$1,468	97%
Work Release	-5.3%	\$2,551	\$689	\$1,862	97%
Intensive Supervision (treatment)	-23%	\$4,426	\$8,021	(\$3,595)	0%
Day Reporting Centers	-20.1%	\$4,478	\$3,922	\$556	NA

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- <sup>1</sup> This is calculated by applying the effect size to Vermont recidivism patterns. This is reported as an annual rate.
- <sup>2</sup> The benefits include those to VT taxpayers and benefits to victims from avoided crimes and the associated costs.
- <sup>3</sup> When the benefit-cost analysis is repeated 10,000 times with small random variation in inputs, this is the chance of net positive benefits.
- <sup>4</sup> The costs are derived from the 2009 NPC Evaluation of the Rutland Treatment Court and in consultation with the Court Administrator's Office Treatment Court Coordinator.
- <sup>5</sup> The Department of Corrections reports that this program is self-funded and costs DOC no taxpayer dollars to run resulting in a marginal cost of zero.
- <sup>6</sup> The costs are derived from total program budget for the Community High school divided by the total number of graduates in both the Vocational and High School Programs. Costs do not reflect the recent reorganization of the Community High School of Vermont. Source: DOC Vantage Report: <http://doc.vermont.gov/about/reports/department-of-corrections-budget-documents/fy-2016-doc-vantage-reports-final/view> p. 5
- <sup>7</sup> Costs are derived from the 2009 NPC Evaluation and in consultation with the CAO Treatment Court Coordinator. Since the marginal cost for probation as reported by DOC is zero, it raises the cost to run the program with probationers.
- <sup>8</sup> Costs do not reflect the recent reorganization of the Community High School of Vermont. The new costs for FY'16 are not yet available. Source: DOC Vantage Report: <http://doc.vermont.gov/about/reports/department-of-corrections-budget-documents/fy-2016-doc-vantage-reports-final/view> p. 5
- <sup>9</sup> Costs are derived from the 2009 NPC Evaluation and in consultation with the CAO Treatment Court Coordinator.
- <sup>10</sup> Costs are derived from the 2009 NPC Evaluation and in consultation with the CAO Treatment Court Coordinator.
- <sup>11</sup> Original projections of the Windham Electronic Monitoring program using Results First showed a positive impact. The program has been implemented in lieu of detention and is currently being evaluated. The VT costs are in the process of being determined. The initial benefit-cost projection was completed in 2013 and can be found here: [http://leg.state.vt.us/ifo/issue\\_briefs\\_and\\_memos/Electronic\\_Monitoring\\_Issue\\_Brief.pdf](http://leg.state.vt.us/ifo/issue_briefs_and_memos/Electronic_Monitoring_Issue_Brief.pdf)
- <sup>12</sup> N/A pertains to programs where there is not enough information to run the benefit-cost model at this time.
- <sup>13</sup> The DUI Court participated in a process evaluation in 2015. A benefit-cost analysis has not been completed.
- <sup>14</sup> This program is equivalent to the Second Chance Offender Re-entry Grant received by DOC in 2014. The program is currently in the early stages of implementation.
- <sup>15</sup> Vermont costs have not been determined. The annual budget is \$350,000. Source: DOC Vantage Report: <http://doc.vermont.gov/about/reports/department-of-corrections-budget-documents/fy-2016-doc-vantage-reports-final/view> p. 149
- <sup>16</sup> Vermont costs have not been determined. Annual budget is \$6.3 million. Source: DOC Vantage Report <http://doc.vermont.gov/about/reports/department-of-corrections-budget-documents/fy-2016-doc-vantage-reports-final/view> P. 150
- <sup>17</sup> Vermont costs have not been determined. The annual budget (including non-restorative justice programs) is \$2.5 million.
- <sup>18</sup> Costs are paid by participants. The benefit-cost analysis cannot be completed at this time because the program has not yet been added to the Results First model by WA/Pew.
- <sup>19</sup> The trade name for Naltrexone is Vivitrol. Neither VT nor WA have readily accessible cost estimates for Medication-assisted Treatment (MAT).
- <sup>20</sup> The Vermont Department of Health has recently received a Federal grant for a pilot to provide Vivitrol to inmates re-entering the community. It is unknown at this time if this program is the same program as those in the Results First model and so has not been moved to the Vermont table yet.
- <sup>21</sup> DOC continues to provide inmates with MAT if they are expected to be released in 30 days or less and in many facilities that is the continued practice. In the demonstration sites, the Northwest and Chittenden facilities, DOC extended the period up to 90 days. It is unknown at this time if this program is the same program as those in the Results First model and so has not been moved to the Vermont table yet.
- <sup>22</sup> Benefits include expected benefits for earnings and decreased hospitalization. Those benefits are based on WA data.
- <sup>23</sup> WA has not yet developed cost estimates for this program.