Model Education Programs for Rikers Dischargees:
CUNY Catch
A Program of the New York City Department of Correction (DOC)

PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

1. Introduction

The Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) has funded approximately 40 initiatives across some 20 sponsoring agencies aimed at reducing the number of working poor, young adults, and children living in poverty in New York City. CEO is committed to evaluating its programs and policies and is developing a specific evaluation plan for each of its initiatives. For example, several major new initiatives will implement random assignment evaluations or other rigorous designs. Some programs are slated to receive implementation and outcome evaluations, while others may be evaluated using readily available administrative data. This differentiated approach reflects the varied scale of the CEO interventions, data and evaluation opportunities, and finite program and evaluation resources. Westat and Metis Associates are evaluating many of these programs on behalf of CEO. The purposes of the evaluations are to collect and report data on the implementation, progress, and outcomes of the programs in the CEO initiative to inform policy and program decision-making within CEO and the agencies that sponsor the programs.

The first phase of the Westat/Metis evaluation is to conduct a systematic review of selected CEO programs. The program reviews involve Westat/Metis staff reviewing program documents, obtaining available implementation and outcome data, interviewing program administrators, and, where appropriate, going on-site to observe program activities and interview direct service staff and participants. The results are used to assess the program design and implementation, develop a logic model to represent the underlying theory of each program, determine the extent to which the program meets key CEO criteria, examine the measurement and information systems for the program, and provide options for next steps. This Program Review Report provides an overview and assessment of the program on several dimensions, including its goals, fidelity to the program model, target population and clients served thus far, program services, and agency management.

The CUNY Catch program, initiated by the College Alliance for Transitional Career Help at LaGuardia Community College (LCC), is one of three CEO Model Education initiatives sponsored by the New York City Department of Correction (DOC) that all aim to improve the social and economic transitioning of young people released from Rikers Island jails into the neighborhoods to which they return. CUNY Catch was founded in 1992 and provides outreach and educational and career counseling on Rikers Island and post-release services including pre-GED, GED, and college preparation courses as well as vocational training, career development, and preparation for entry into the labor market. The CEO initiative expands the program at LaGuardia and Bronx Community Colleges and establishes a new program at Medgar Evers with the goal of serving 500 formerly incarcerated students each year.

Information and data for this Program Review Report are based on interviews conducted by Westat/Metis staff between March and May 2008 with staff of the CEO and DOC; site visits to the three CUNY Catch sites at LaGuardia Community College (LCC), Bronx Community College (BCC), and Medgar Evers Community College (ME); a review of program documents and monthly

data reports through May 2008 and management reports from DOC through June 2008; and observations of recruitment practices on-island at Rikers Island's Austin H. MacCormick Island Academy and Horizon Academy high schools.[1]

This Program Review Report provides an overview and assessment of the program on several dimensions, including its goals, fidelity to the program model, target population and clients served thus far, program services, and agency management. The CEO and DOC were invited to identify specific questions of interest to be included as part of these standardized program reviews.

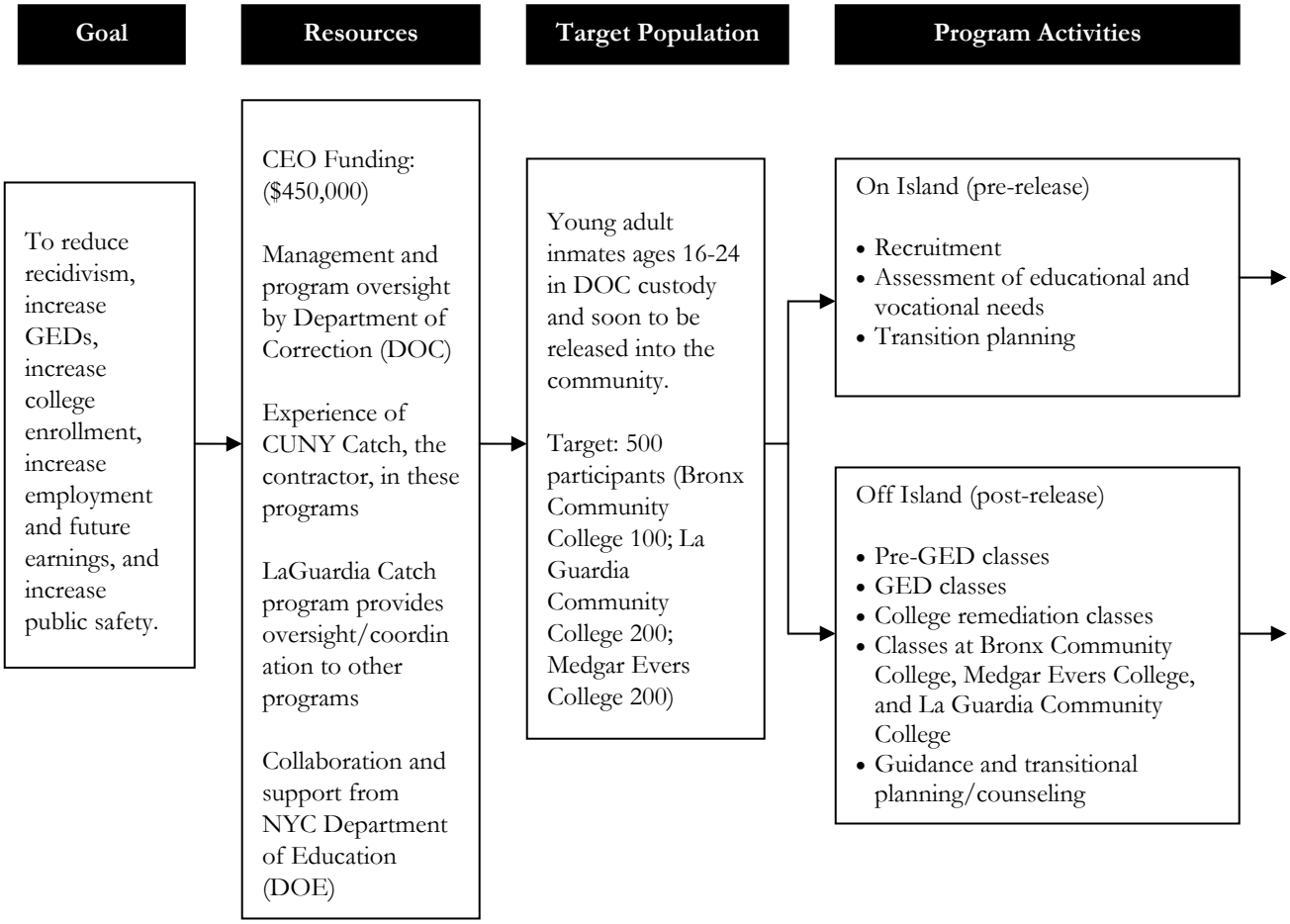
A key analytic tool in the program review is the development of a logic model that serves as a visual representation of the underlying logic or theory of a program. The program logic model details the program's context, assumptions, and resources and their relationships to one another. By examining the program's internal logic and external context, the evaluation team and reader are able to determine if the program design is consistent with overall goals and capable of achieving its intended outcomes. Toward this end, this brief focuses on early outcomes and the challenges faced in achieving them.

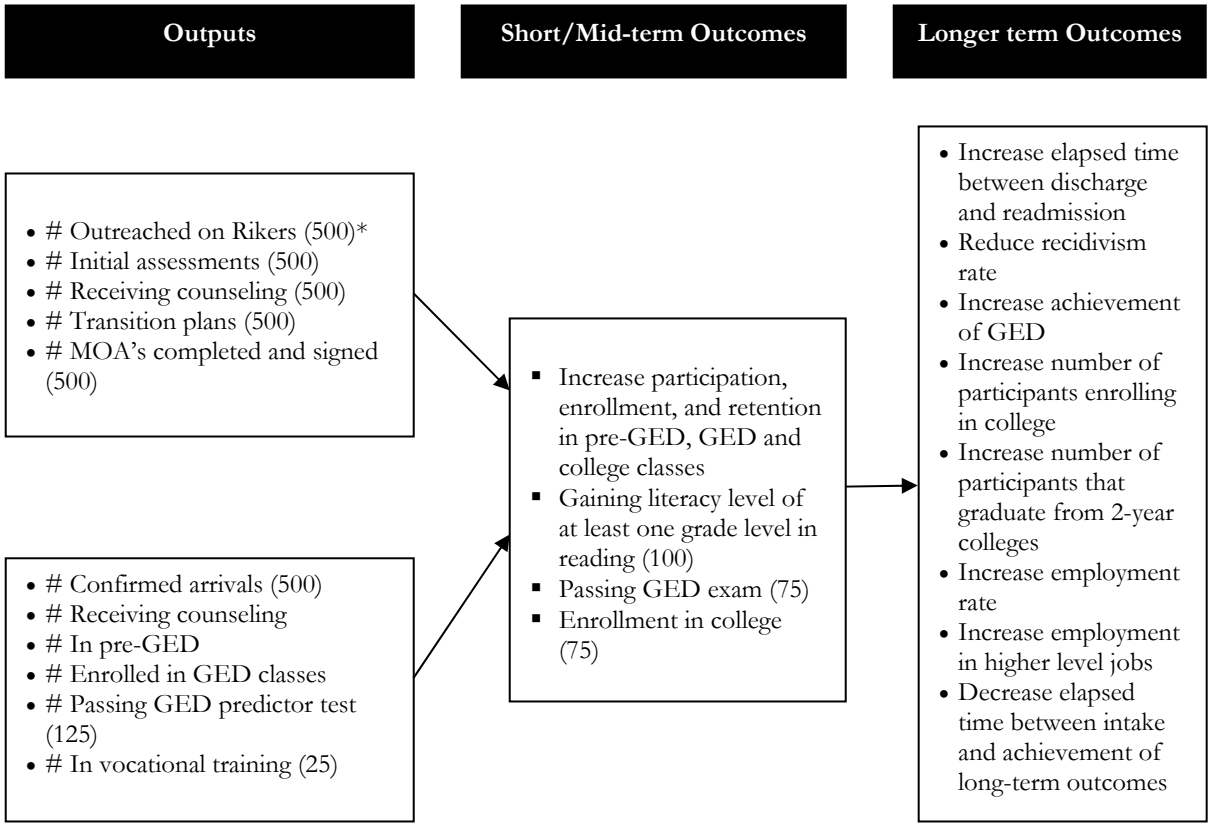
2. Overview and Assessment of the Program

Program Goal. The overall goal of CUNY Catch is to reduce recidivism, increase attainment of GEDs, increase college enrollment, increase the employment and future earnings of formerly incarcerated young adults, and increase public safety. The program model is displayed in logic model—or theory of action—format on the following two pages. The logic model includes the program's context, assumptions, and resources. Each activity is linked to the number of individuals targeted to participate in the different activities (outputs), as well as short- and long-term participant outcomes. Please note that program activities are not always sequential. For example, it is possible for a participant to enter the program with a GED and go directly into college.

[1] Island Academy and Horizon Academy are the two high schools on Rikers Island and operate under District 79 (Alternative Schools and Programs) of the New York City Department of Education (DOE). District 79 was created to help students with an array of challenges succeed by providing diverse and innovative educational opportunities combining rigorous academic instruction with meaningful youth development. Island Academy has three school sites and serves detained and sentenced male and female inmates ages 16-24 in three jails. Horizon Academy serves detained male inmates ages 18-24 in five jails.

Model Education Programs for Rikers Dischargees:
CUNY Catch
Logic Model





* Numbers in parentheses indicate payment milestones/performance targets from the DOC performance-based contract with CUNY Catch.

Context

(1) Approximately 70% of 16-24 year-olds who are incarcerated are high school dropouts.[1] (2) About 50% of the aforementioned young adults are "functionally illiterate."[2] (3) There is a two-thirds re-incarceration rate for adolescents released from Rikers Island.[3] (4) Best practices indicate that temporary employment programs should be coupled with education and a continuum of care (e.g., counseling) to be effective.[4] (5) Rikers Island has approximately 14,000 inmates in custody on an average day.[5]

[1] Center for Economic Opportunity (December 2007), *Strategy and Implementation Report*. New York: Center for Economic Opportunity.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Brown, D., Maxwell, S., Dejesus, E., & Schiraldi, V. (2002). *Barriers and Promising Approaches to Workforce and Youth Development for Young Offenders*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation. New York City Department of Correction CEO Contract. (2007). *Getting Out-Staying Out FY 2008 Scope of Work*. New York: Author.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Muske-Dukes, C. (July 18, 2007). "A Prison Tale Suffering From Overpopulation," a review of "Channeling Mark Twain" by Chris Bohjalian, *The Washington Post*.

Fidelity to the Program Model. The CUNY Catch program was developed as a response to the rising jail population and the absence of programs in NYC that assist post-incarcerated young adults to transition back to their communities. In addition, it was also an opportunity to combat the high recidivism rates (approximately two-thirds)[2] of released individuals. The program established an approach to the transition process based on the CUNY Catch Career Development model, a complement to the New York State Adult Career Counseling Manual.[3] The model focuses on six counseling areas (self-knowledge, skills-identification, career exploration, preference strategies, educational options, and job hunting), all of which are presented in a series of workshops on Rikers Island. In addition, information on best practices of programs that target young offenders indicate that effective programs provide a continuum of care that includes temporary employment placement, education, and counseling.

The basic model includes outreach on Rikers and post-release pre-GED and GED courses, college preparation, individual counseling, career workshops, and referrals to social service agencies and employment agencies. DOC negotiated a performance-based contract with CUNY Catch with very specific performance targets and payment milestones. The model calls for LCC to serve as the administrator for all three CUNY Catch sites, providing oversight and coordination. As administrator, LCC was expected to clearly communicate to all sites the nature and expectations of the performance-based contract and the milestones to be achieved and provide any necessary start-up support and training. The three sites were intended to be coordinated as one program. Information gathered through our interviews demonstrates that LCC had some deficiencies in its management capabilities and the administration of the CUNY Catch sites has not occurred as intended. DOC staff shared that LCC communication with the other two programs was not as expected (e.g., ensuring that ME understood the nature of a performance-based contract and the milestones it was expected to achieve and providing copies of the contract) nor providing expected support (e.g., ensuring that staff were adequately trained and assisting ME with start-up activities). Coordination between the three sites has also been weak. Conversely, the CUNY Catch name and history has positively facilitated visits and a welcoming attitude from both the DOE and the DOC into all facilities on island.

Based on our interviews at all three sites (including discussion with the counselors, GED teachers, other staff, program participants, and all of the program directors), two of the program sites are conducting all of the major off-island components. However, Medgar Evers is an exception; it has been delayed in fully implementing the program (e.g., does not have career counseling and job placement) due to staff and leadership turnover, and lack of additional funding. Interviews with DOC staff revealed that staff at ME changed without any notification, often did not show up for scheduled recruitment sessions on Rikers, and were often late in submitting monthly billing reports. As discussed previously, ME suffered the brunt of the deficiencies exhibited by LCC in terms of poor administration and communication. Recent DOC site visits suggest that ME is currently engaging more students. For example, during one visit, DOC staff observed 30 participants in summer GED classes.

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[2] Brown, D., Maxwell, S., Dejesus, E., & Schiraldi, V. (2002) *Barriers and Promising Approaches to Workforce and Youth Development for Young Offenders*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

[3] Shapiro. S., et al. (1989). *Adult Career Counseling Manual. Administering and Implementing Adult Career Counseling Services in Comprehensive Public Adult and Continuing Education Programs in New York State. A Manual for Administrators and Counselors in Administering Adult Career Counseling Centers, Conducting Adult Group Career Counseling Model, Adapting Adult Group Career Counseling Model for Literacy Students.* Albany, NY: New York State Department of Education. Available from ERIC, #ED304534.

There is some consistency and uniformity of other services across the three sites, predominantly in the pre-GED and GED classes, the location of the program within a community college, and to some extent in the counseling provided off-island. The LCC and BCC sites are very similar. The ME site was still in the early implementation stage, however, and it is important to note that the ME program operates in a different context from the other two. It is part of a larger initiative called Bridge to Education, Training, and Advancement (BETA), which is a post-incarceration community reentry program and is more comprehensive than the programs at LCC and BCC. In addition, GED classes at ME are provided by instructors from the college, not instructors provided by the City's Department of Education (DOE) as is the case in the other two sites.

There is also variation in the combination of services/intervention that a participant receives at the three sites. There are required assessments such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), which determines the GED course-level in which participants are placed. The Strong Interest Explorer[4] provides students an estimate of their interests and strategies for linking those interests to educational and occupational opportunities. Students then use this information to make decisions on pursuing vocational training along with the required GED coursework, if applicable. CUNY Catch also provides job placement and assistance with college admission as part of its continuum of services.

The level of support, counseling, and follow-up is different for each participant, and currently the program does not have an electronic tracking system that could help determine the level of staff effort in these areas by client. Additional information is needed to better understand the degree to which the interventions are provided in the same/uniform manner across the three CUNY sites. Because on-island outreach and recruitment efforts are coordinated between the three sites, these activities occur in a uniform manner.

Target Population and Clients Served. The program targets Rikers' inmates 16 to 24 years old (whether sentenced or detained) who are students at the Horizon Academy or Austin H. MacCormick Island Academy, as well as sentenced individuals who do not attend the schools but reside in various dorms within the facilities that house the schools. The overall recruitment target is 500 students per year, which is broken down into individual site targets (200 for LCC, 200 for ME, and 100 for BCC). Information gathered through our interviews, program documentation, and observations confirms that the program is specifically targeting only age-eligible inmates from the various correctional facilities on Rikers Island.

Enrollment figures from both the provider data and reconciled DOC agency data (data from the three sites that are aggregated and unduplicated by the agency) show that CUNY Catch is meeting the program's on-island milestone enrollment criteria (500 enrolled). However, according to data sources, there is a large drop-off from recruitment/enrollment on-island to actual confirmed arrivals at the program sites off-island.[5] For the purposes of this report, the combined reconciled DOC data

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[4] The Strong Interest Explorer (Morris, M., Chartrand, J., and Donnay, D., 2002, *Instrument Development: Reliability and Validity of the Strong Interest Explorer*, Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press) is a tool best used with students and individuals exploring new career directions or reentering the workforce. It contains a condensed number of items taken from the longer Strong Interest Inventory (Harmon, L., Hansen, J., Borgen, F., and Hammer A., 1994, *Strong Interest Inventory: Applications and Technical Guide*, Stanford, CA: Stanford Unviersity Press), basic interpretive information, and steps to help identify educational and career options.

[5] DOC provided only cross-site milestone monthly data that had been cleaned and reconciled. Monthly milestone and demographic data by site are available through the provider, LCC. Site-level data submitted by the provider shows that there is great variability among the three sites in the arrival and enrollment numbers off-island. For example, LCC confirmed arrivals and enrolled only 104 participants on-site; BCC had only 41 arrivals; and ME had 23. However, these provider data have not been unduplicated and only

are used as they more accurately represent the actual numbers across the sites. These data, as of June 2008 (8 months of program operation), show that CUNY Catch has completed the 500 initial assessments on-island but has had only 193 (39% of target) confirmed arrivals to the off-island sites (see Table 1). Interviews with DOC staff reveal that in addition to the target population being extremely challenging to work with, the drop-off from recruitment to arrival may be due to many factors such as the time needed to conclude judicial processes necessary for release, the potential that a student was sentenced and sent to a State facility and therefore did not return to the community, as well as the need for the program to perform on-island outreach and assessment beyond what is required in the milestones to achieve the necessary confirmed arrivals. When the milestone targets were initially set, it was not expected that it would be possible for all 500 of the initial assessments to translate into 500 confirmed arrivals. DOC staff explained that it was presumed that CUNY Catch would need to perform outreach and assessment beyond the milestone target to reach the 500 confirmed arrivals, but it would only receive payment for the first 500 initial assessments. In fact, according to DOC, CUNY Catch should be attempting on-island outreach and assessment of three to four times the milestone target of 500. Given the short time span of the data—November 2007 through June 2008—it might be that the rate of arrivals will increase as enrollees are discharged from Rikers Island, and the ME site continues to progress toward full implementation. However, although recruitment is ongoing during the summer months, we would anticipate successful recruitment to slow down during this time, as summer school programs are limited to special education classes that may have far fewer participants who are ready for pre-GED classes.

Table 1. CUNY Catch Recruitment and Confirmed Arrivals (Program Year Through June 2008)*

Recruitment and Confirmed Arrivals	Target Numbers	Actual Numbers	Percent of Target Met
Recruitment	500	500	100%
Confirmed Arrivals	500	193	39%

*Data provided by DOC.

Outreach and Recruitment. Outreach and recruitment for the program are conducted on Rikers Island through individual and group sessions that include an assessment of educational and vocational needs and transition planning. Outreach and recruitment are conducted on a regular schedule in both classrooms and dormitories and are scheduled to accommodate the school schedule as provided by the principals. A schedule of recruitment indicates the facility and times in which the program staff will carry out their recruitment activities. CUNY Catch staff members from LCC, ME, or BCC visit Rikers Island and present the program, usually addressing an entire class at one time when recruiting from schools. Presentations are also made to inmates as part of the Rikers Island Discharge Enhancement (RIDE) Program.[6] More recently, CUNY Catch staff members have expanded outreach and recruitment, meeting with large groups of students (up to 50 youth) in a

go through May 2008. If available, unduplicated case-level data for each individual site will need to be reviewed to validate the extent of variability across the three site locations where CUNY Catch is operating.

[6] RIDE helps inmates maximize their chances for success after release by matching clients with community programs appropriate to their individual needs.

special dormitory for young men.[7] Based on our observations at Rikers, the correctional officers are very involved and supportive of CUNY Catch recruitment; they participate in the workshops and describe feeling a sense of ownership of the program.

During recruitment sessions, CUNY Catch staff members introduce themselves and explain what the CUNY Catch program can offer. The staff speak with the young people about the need for a plan of action once released. Each recruiter carries a CUNY Catch business card that contains their name and the name, location, and contact information for each of the three sites. The LCC site coordinates this information. The CUNY Catch staff also holds workshops in which it helps participants identify their strengths and skills and guides the participants in linking these to potential careers. These workshops follow the career development model discussed previously, which values the group format as the most effective model for helping young adults learn about themselves, clarify values, examine options, establish short- and long-range goals, and make decisions that can be carried out upon release**.** The sessions are ongoing and encompass the length of an inmate's stay on Rikers. For each recruitment session, the presentations are tailored to the needs of the audience. For example, when meeting with students who have taken or are about to take the GED exam, the focus is on college prep, bringing in sample college applications, and talking about financial aid. If the class is predominantly below GED levels, the focus is on the pre-GED/GED portion of the CUNY Catch program.

Recruiting on Rikers Island is challenging. All movement within Rikers is controlled by the correctional officers, and time is often spent waiting for inmates to be moved from one location to the next before a planned program can start. Bathroom breaks also are controlled by correctional officers and interrupt the classes regularly. If for any reason there is a lockdown (which might not happen often, but does occur from time to time), recruitment time is delayed or lost.

Program Services. As shown in the logic model, LCC provides administration to all three CUNY Catch sites in the form of oversight and coordination. Pre-release services include outreach and recruitment activities, which are described in the preceding section. Additional services are:

On-Island Services (Pre-Release):
CUNY Catch staff are available and able to meet with interested inmates who request admittance into the program while on Rikers Island. Students meet with the staff in order to complete an Authorization for Release of Confidential Information, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), a Successful Reentry Contract, and a Transitional Plan. During this session, they discuss participants' goals and begin mapping out post-release transition plans. The MOAs are given to the LCC site, which maintains these records. Post-release services start when a client is discharged from Rikers Island, with the goal of drawing the youth who signed MOAs and developed initial Transitional Plans on-island into the CUNY Catch program and a completed Confirmation of Arrival at CUNY Catch form. Throughout their participation on the island, CUNY Catch staff members work with the DOE transitional counselors to discuss individual inmates' progress and on-island legal status.

[7] This dorm is called The Institute for Inner Development or IID. This is a new program for violent youth that is run by the correctional officers and provides intensive counseling as well as self-confidence and conflict resolution workshops to work toward a reduction in violence.

Off-Island Services (Post-Release):
Off-island services include pre-GED courses, GED classes, college remediation classes, career counseling, assistance with job placement, assistance with college application and enrollment, and counseling. All three sites administer the adult basic education (TABE) test to determine if the student should be placed in pre-GED or GED classes. The GED and pre-GED classes are taught by teachers provided by the DOE at BCC and LCC and by instructors from the college at Medgar Evers. At all three sites, there is an orientation where students are introduced to staff, teachers, and the program; however, this orientation varies somewhat among the sites. LCC has a more extensive formal orientation that occurs several hours a day over a 3-day period and includes an in-depth assessment of student skills and interest. BCC requires a program interview before enrolling a student into classes.

Once enrolled in CUNY Catch, participants have access to all of the community college facilities and services that are offered to the general community college population, such as financial aid and library services. The program at BCC also has partnered with the college campus child care center to provide participating parents with affordable child care so that they can attend the program's classes and activities.

Upon completion of their GEDs, students are assisted in applying to and enrolling in college.[8] CUNY Catch staff also works closely with the financial aid counselors who work with program participants to facilitate enrollment. During the entire process, counselors (at LCC and BCC) or a project intern or administrative coordinator (at ME) are responsible for continuously following up with students to make sure they attend all program activities and follow through with their goals.

At LCC and BCC, the program also assists participants in finding employment.[9] Pre-employment services include mock interviews, help with resume writing, identification of potential employers, and setting up interviews. The program can also help students obtain internships in the areas that interest them.

Outputs and Outcomes. The target and actual numbers for the key participant status categories are presented in Table 2, as well as the percentage of each target obtained and the remaining targets pro-rated for the final 4 months of the contract, are as of June 2008. As discussed earlier, individual site-level milestone data are not available through DOC. All three sites are under a single contract, and payments are tied to achieving the milestones; DOC data requirements are generally limited to contractual requirements. The June DOC reconciled monthly milestone data show that after 8 months of program operation, CUNY Catch has completed the 500 initial assessments on-island, but has only had 193 (39%) confirmed arrivals (participants who have arrived and enrolled). The low number of confirmed arrivals can likely be attributed to the need to perform on-island outreach and assessment beyond what is required in the milestones as well as the poor administration of the three sites and implementation delays at ME. While only 15 percent of participants achieved the milestone of gaining literacy, this was a significant improvement from the previous 3 percent completion seen in Quarter 1 data. Thirty percent of participants passed the GED Predictor, 20 percent of participants received a GED, and 28 percent enrolled in college. The milestone of vocational training showed great improvements since Quarter 1, increasing from 28 percent to 100 percent.

[8] College prep and enrollment assistance is also provided through Robin Hood funding at LCC and BCC or via financial aid at the individual colleges.
[9] Medgar Evers is still at an early stage of implementation. The program planned to assist participants in finding employment and developing job skills with the assistance of a job developer; however, additional funds will need to be raised in order for this to happen.

Given the slow progress (largely stemming from low off-island arrivals) made toward achieving the milestones in the 8 months of program operation, it is unlikely that the program will meet the remaining milestones.

Table 2. CUNY Catch Outputs and Outcomes through June 2008*

Milestone Category	Target Numbers	Actual Numbers	Percent of Target Met	Monthly Targets Remaining **
Recruitment	500	500	100%	0
Confirmed Arrivals	500	193	39%	77
Gaining Literacy Level	100	15	15%	21
Passing GED Predictor Test	125	37	30%	22
Receiving GED	75	15	20%	15
Enrolled in College	75	21	28%	14
Vocational Training	25	25	100%	0

*Data provided by DOC.
**Numbers are per month based on 4 months remaining in contract.

While visiting the CUNY Catch sites, the research team met with participants at LCC and BCC to ask them questions about their experience with the program.[10] Their responses revealed a high degree of satisfaction with the program and its ability to support them in attaining their GED. The participants gave examples of how the program was helpful in navigating the paperwork and other requirements necessary to obtain their GED. In one case, a participant mentioned the special attention and caring attitude demonstrated by the GED teachers compared to past teachers in "regular" school. Another participant spoke about feeling motivated by the program's staff to continue improving his life and reach the expected educational level for his age. Each participant was very complimentary of the pre-GED and GED classes and believed that the CUNY Catch staff cared about his future.

Provider Capacity. Through May, CUNY Catch has provided services to at least 500 individuals on-island and 193 individuals off-island. The on-island recruitment numbers may actually be higher, as the program stopped reporting after meeting the milestone of 500, but they have continued to recruit at Rikers Island. The program is designed to serve 500 students across all three sites off-island; however given the current number of arrivals, it is unlikely that it will reach this target. Staff at LCC suggested that there are no capacity limits for the program; while there is a waitlist for enrollment into some classes, participants from Rikers receive priority on the waitlist.

In terms of the administrative capacity, LCC has demonstrated weak skills in this area. As discussed in the "Fidelity to the Program Model" section of this report, communication and support provided to ME and BCC has been insufficient and has resulted in delays in implementation as well as poor outputs and outcomes. In addition to the previously discussed concerns of DOC staff, staff at ME expressed concerns with LCC's communication capabilities. Staff shared that LCC did not efficiently communicate the dates of relevant meetings, which resulted in ME missing important meetings at DOC and Rikers. Both ME and BCC expressed a preference not to be managed by LCC, mainly due

[10] The interviewed participants were those who were enrolled in pre-GED or GED classes, available in the office that day, over age 18, willing to be interviewed, and not on probation (as required by the Westat IRB, which approved the research). The research team was not able to speak with participants at ME because none of the participants met the Westat IRB requirements.

to the desire to be held accountable only to themselves. DOC staff noted that while BCC may not be pulling in the highest numbers of participants, it has been the strongest site, with no implementation problems and excellent communication. The ME program appears to be stabilizing with new leadership in place, is engaging more students, and recently had a full summer GED class in session.

The capacity to collect data and report accurately at the provider level is limited. The rigor of data collection and reporting and the infrastructure and personnel to support it are quite different across the three CUNY Catch sites. For example, BCC is using two separate Microsoft Access databases to collect and report data: (1) the Adult Literacy Information and Evaluation System (ALIES), a New York State Department of Education case management database, and (2) a separate standalone database that staff began using to collect the CUNY Catch milestone data. ME uses an Access database that is part of its BETA program, and LCC is using an Excel spreadsheet. Additionally, there is not a single system for the provider, LCC, to share information with the other two sites that would allow them to track participants recruited on-island and all recruitment paperwork maintained in hard copy at LCC. Both BCC and ME noted that they might inadvertently repeat MOAs, transitional plans, and other paperwork that was already completed on-island but did not make it over to their individual campus site. Across the three sites, there is a lack of effective sharing of these forms.

Since CEO implementation, the provider agency (LCC) has managed to maintain only the required CEO performance data electronically, while a large amount of case-level or administrative data remain in hard-copy records. Each site is responsible for verifying its own case-level data by identifying duplicates. There is no consistent quality assurance protocol for data entry. Two staff members at LCC collect and review the data for all three CUNY Catch sites. Data are aggregated by milestone and demographics manually, making the preparation of the report time-consuming and cumbersome. The monthly billing report to DOC is submitted by the LCC staff with the hard-copy back-up forms for all three programs verifying students' participation. Other cross-site reports include a summary milestone report in Microsoft Word and an internal attendance roster in Excel, initiated in March 2008, which shows the total hours of attendance each student completes in classroom instruction. Prior to March 2008, attendance data were maintained by the DOE teacher. Students' test scores are maintained in the hard copy file by the DOE teacher and also in the DOE Automatic Tracking System, a mainframe database system that collects and maintains students' test scores, using the DOE identification number as the unique identifier to track a student.

The sponsoring agency, DOC, requires that the provider submit performance reports each month. DOC's staff members review the provider milestone billing data and transpose them into an Excel spreadsheet where they are checked for duplicates, completeness, and accuracy before payment is issued to the provider.[11] After DOC completes reconciliation of the provider data, there is communication with the provider about actual participant cases that were reconciled. However, there is not a formal process that would help ensure that the provider can reconcile and update its system of record.

Agency Management. DOC has continued to monitor CUNY Catch's implementation progress in various ways. DOC meets monthly with the program directors from all three sites to discuss the

[11] When DOC receives the provider billing data, they are verified and reconciled using the NYSID number to identify duplicate records before issuing payment to the provider and posting the cleaned data.

program's progress and review any issues related to visitation practices at Rikers. In addition, CUNY staff attends a monthly Officers Meeting with DOC on Rikers Island to inform Rikers staff of their presence and activities. DOC personnel also have visited individual sites to observe implementation of the program and speak with staff. DOC continuously monitors CUNY Catch progress through the milestone achievements as outlined in its performance-based contract with CUNY Catch. Furthermore, DOC staff are in contact with the on-island school principals, through whom they learn of the program's ongoing efforts on Rikers.

Conclusions. As implemented, the CUNY Catch program is in alignment with the CEO mission and is meeting key CEO criteria.

- The program is serving an underserved population, as a limited number of programs provide transitional services to post-incarcerated youth.

- The program is serving a population of young adults living in poverty.

- The program is providing innovative programming, as few programs exist to help post-incarcerated youth with educational and career advancement.

- Agency oversight is in place, enabling it to remain stable, make improvements, and be replicable in other sites.

- Specific and measurable outcomes have been articulated.

Other program elements are not yet in alignment with the CEO mission and criteria.

- Program administration provided by LCC is weak. LCC has not implemented an administrative structure as planned and lacks the capabilities required to adequately manage data. These deficiencies have resulted in negative effects to implementation of program activities as well as outputs and outcomes.

- The program is conducting all of the major off-island components with fidelity, with the exception of ME which is not yet providing career counseling and job placement services and has no concrete plans in place to provide these services.

- Implementation at ME was slow to start and continues to exhibit problems that have been further affected by LCC's weak administration. However, a recent site visit by DOC resulted in suggested improvements at ME.

At this point, although the provider is making great progress in reaching and recruiting the target population, only 39 percent of those recruited on-island have actually made it to the program off-island after release from Rikers. As indicated in Table 2, there has been progress in achieving outcomes such as passing the GED predictor (30% of target met), receiving GED (20% of target met), college enrollment (28% of target met), and enrollment in vocational training (100% of target met). The program emphasizes educational outcomes rather than vocational trainings and intentionally set low targets (payment milestones) for vocational training. However, job training does

seem to be an interest of this population and a greater emphasis on employment may help attract and retain participants.

3. Programmatic Recommendations

A change to the structure of the program's current administration is recommended. Instead of LCC, as a participating college serving as the administrator of the three CUNY Catch sites, it is suggested that a new administrative structure be developed. An independent entity could serve as the central administrator of the program, which would keep the three participating colleges under one umbrella, or each site could become self-administered. A new administrative structure should help ensure that each site is more individually accountable for their performance, and have the ability to evaluate their work and improve upon it.

The appropriateness of the milestone targets does not appear to be an issue because they were based on the history of clients previously served at CUNY Catch. But in order to bridge the gap between recruitment and enrollment with this challenging population, it is suggested that the program dramatically increase its on-island recruitment and assessment beyond the numbers required in the milestone. It is possible that the off-island numbers will naturally increase as more enrollees are discharged from Rikers Island and the program at ME is fully implemented. The actual arrival of discharged youth from Rikers to off-island services has traditionally been difficult. On-island recruitment efforts should target three to four times the off-island milestones. The Westat/Metis team recommends that ramifications for the level of effort not covered by the performance-based contract should be examined and resolutions discussed with DOC and CEO. However, DOC maintains that the necessary level of effort is an inherent part of the jail-based performance-based contracts and that the CUNY catch providers should be able to support the level of effort on-island to achieve the off-island milestones.

Additionally, due to the population's service needs, perhaps social work case management could be integrated into the program off-island. Program staff also highlighted the need to address mental health issues among participants. The program has had to provide varying levels of outreach, support, counseling, and follow-up for each participant to keep him engaged in program activities; however, the program lacks an efficient tracking system that could help determine the actual level of staff effort directed in this area and plan accordingly.

The program could benefit from technical assistance in all areas of data collection, coordination, reporting, validation, and analysis, including quality assurance protocols on data entry, managing duplicate cases, and sharing data effectively across the sites. Additionally, a protocol to update the file after DOC has completed its reconciliation would add to data validity at the site level. The provider could benefit from a review of all the case-level data that should be collected and maintained in a database for planning and monitoring program outcomes effectively and efficiently. Additional performance data that would be useful include the date the participant enrolled in the program, re-arrest, probation violations, withdrawal, and the length of time it takes each participant to achieve each outcome. Technical assistance is also needed to develop canned reports that the provider could easily and routinely produce for on-going planning and monitoring.