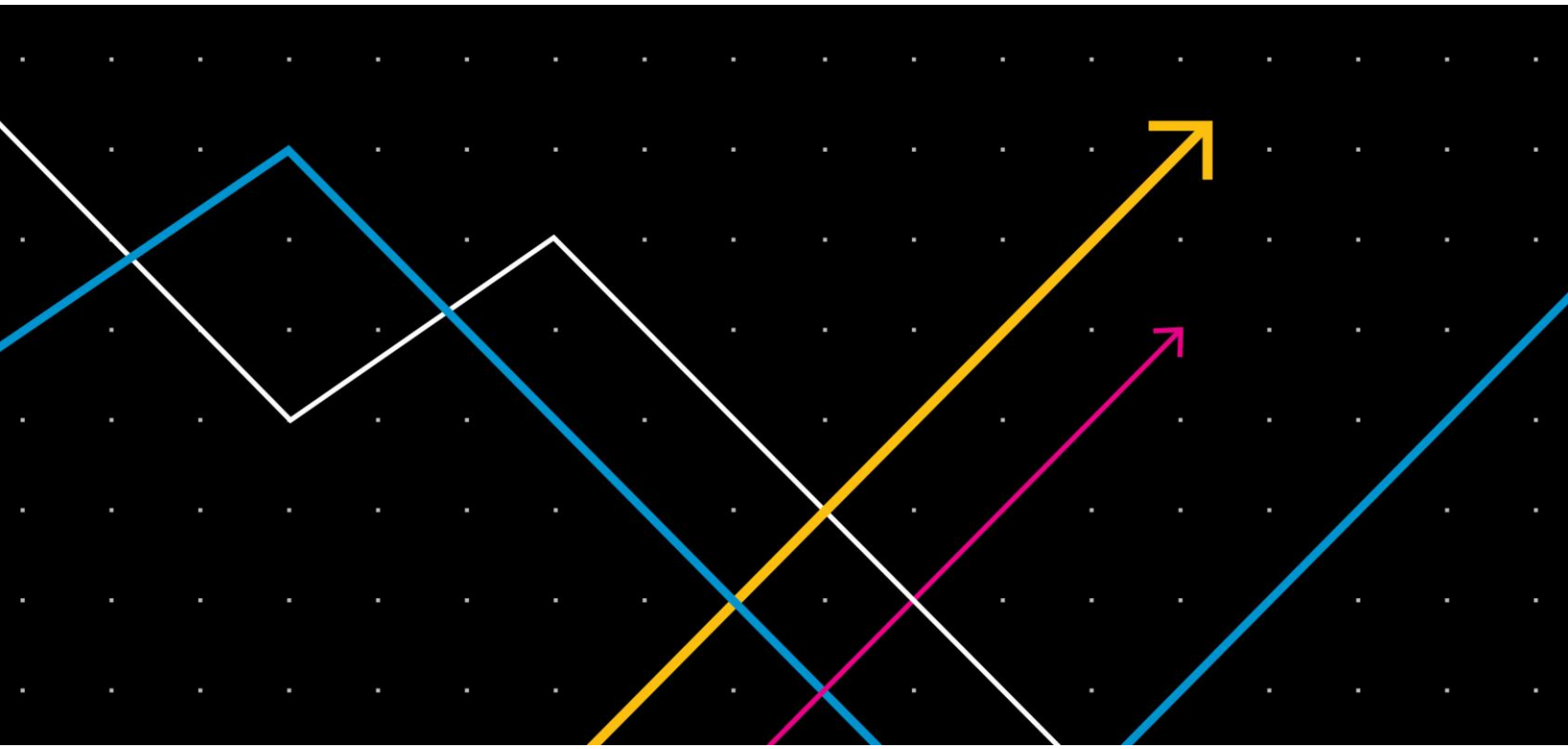

RESEARCH REPORT

Bridges to Education and Employment for Justice-Involved Youth

Evaluation of the NYC Justice Corps Program

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NYC Opportunity Response to Urban Institute Evaluation of NYC Justice Corps

April 2019

This report presents the findings of an implementation and outcome evaluation of NYC Justice Corps (NYCJC), a cohort-based workforce development and recidivism reduction program for justice-involved young adults that operated from 2008 to 2018. The evaluation examines a 2015 redesign of the NYCJC program model, which is found to have improved core aspects of service provision while providing a more streamlined set of services. Drawing on findings from this research, the report highlights a set of considerations intended to inform current and future youth justice programming.

Launched by the Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (PRI) and the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity), and expanded in 2012 by the Young Men's Initiative (YMI), NYCJC operated at four sites across New York City. The program served 18- to 24-year-olds with recent justice system involvement.

In 2015, NYC Opportunity and YMI initiated a comprehensive redesign, spurred by multiple factors, including a prior evaluation that showed mixed results on key outcomes of interest. The program had positive impacts on employment and wages but no impact on recidivism. Rather than end the program, NYC Opportunity decided to work with the providers to better align it with New York City's Career Pathways initiative.[1] The redesign was coupled with a decrease in funding for the program to test a lower cost model. Upon relaunching in 2016, NYCJC introduced new sector-focused work readiness services and occupational training, more flexible placement options, and expanded cognitive behavioral therapy. The program maintained certain core components of the existing model, including community benefit projects (beautification and civic engagement projects designed and executed by participants), case management, stipends and incentives, and alumni services. The redesign ended components of the original program model that had experienced challenges, including on-site academic instruction and external internship placement.

NYC Opportunity sought lessons that could be learned from the redesigned approach and selected the Urban Institute (Urban) to conduct this evaluation. Urban utilized an action research framework—a

participatory approach in which key stakeholders, including program provider staff, were engaged in the evaluation design, execution, and analysis.

The evaluation finds that the NYCJC redesign improved service delivery by increasing flexibility for providers—including increased provider autonomy over recruitment strategies, therapeutic services, and community benefit project design—and by expanding options for post-program placement outcomes.

The report also identified challenges in the redesign. Because the flexibility permitted an early placement option that allowed for dual enrollment in NYCJC and other services, providers and participants experienced challenges juggling the programmatic responsibilities of (and managing travel between) multiple programs. Moreover, the report highlights challenges related to the sector focus introduced in the redesign. A priority within the Career Pathways initiative, sector-focused workforce development programming is an evidence-based strategy that can, when implemented appropriately, have positive impacts on participants' employment outcomes. However, NYCJC providers felt that this approach limited participants' ability to explore different career interests, which had been a feature of the original program model.

Drawing on their evaluation findings, Urban provides recommendations for the City's efforts to serve justice system–involved youth and young adults. The report highlights the need for expanded and enhanced programming, including peer mentorship, child care, social service navigation support, and structured post-program aftercare. Moreover, the report calls for pairing youth programming with services targeting participants' families and caregivers, such as education, workforce development, parent support groups, and case management services. The report also highlights the value of giving practitioners input and flexibility in the design and operation of services. While recognizing the importance of program model fidelity, Urban contends that operational flexibility creates opportunities for providers to incorporate their organizational mission and to leverage staff expertise and networks to enhance program activities.

Although NYCJC ceased operation in June 2018 when existing provider contracts ended, the findings and recommendations in this report come at an opportune time as New York City embarks on significant justice reform efforts such as New York State's "Raise the Age" legislation and a move to close the Rikers Island jail complex, both of which will serve to divert justice system–involved young people toward rehabilitative and community-based services. As the City works to implement these reform efforts, the findings and recommendations from this evaluation can inform programming and services.

The report's program design recommendations align with ongoing efforts by NYC Opportunity to elevate stakeholder input in the development and procurement of services. The NYC Opportunity Service Design Studio uses human-centered design processes to help City agencies analyze, test, and build effective service solutions, informed by direct engagement with the people who use or administer public services.[2] NYC Opportunity's *Guide to Collaborative Communication with Human Services Providers*[3] supports City agencies to strengthen collaboration with the nonprofit sector on program and service design while adhering to the requirements of City procurement rules.

NYC Opportunity and YMI are committed to continue partnering with City agencies, service providers, and other stakeholders to develop and strengthen innovative and evidence-based services to help justice system–involved young people successfully reintegrate with their communities, pursue their education and career goals, and avoid recidivism.

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Notes

1 Career Pathways is a system-wide framework that seeks to align New York City education and training with advancement opportunities for a broad range of jobseekers. More information: https://www1.nyc.gov/site/careerpathways/index.page

2 More information: https://www1.nyc.gov/site/opportunity/portfolio/service-design-studio.page

3 Available here: https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/opportunity/pdf/Guide-to-Collaborative-Communication.pdf

Executive Summary

The NYC Justice Corps (Justice Corps) program was a workforce readiness and recidivism reduction program that served justice-involved youth ages 18–24. In partnership with the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity) and the Prisoner Reentry Institute (PRI) at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Justice Corps first launched in 2008, was expanded in 2012 with funding from the Young Men's Initiative (YMI), and underwent a comprehensive redesign in 2015. Justice Corps provided programming grounded in risk, needs, and strengths assessment; case management; cognitive behavioral development; sector-focused workforce readiness; and community engagement. Through these services, Justice Corps aimed to connect justice-involved youth and young adults to the workforce, either directly through job placements or through "bridge" opportunities such as educational programs, vocational training, or similar youth development programs in New York City. The redesigned Justice Corps operated across four sites and was implemented by three service providers:

- **The Bronx:** Phipps Neighborhoods
- **Brooklyn and Queens:** Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES)
- **Harlem:** Center for Court Innovation (CCI)

As part of the Justice Corps program, each provider offered the following services, in three main phases:

- **Program intake and orientation**, which lasted one to four weeks and during which intake occurred and program staff administered the Service Planning Instrument (SPIn) Reentry Pre-Screen, a risk, needs, and strengths assessment developed by Orbis Partners. The SPIn Reentry Pre-Screen was used to assess not only participants but also whether the program had the appropriate resources and staff capacity (e.g., a licensed clinician) to support the participant should they enroll as well as what additional resources or referrals would be needed.
- **A community benefit project**, which lasted 13 to 15 weeks. During this phase, participants underwent a full SPIn Reentry assessment, attended cognitive behavioral therapy and workforce readiness workshops, took certificate trainings, engaged in a community benefit project, and were placed in employment, educational classes, vocational training, and/or youth development programs.

- **An alumni phase**, which lasted 4 to 10 weeks, during which program graduates in need of placements were assisted with their transition into employment, educational classes, vocational training, and/or youth development programs, and received ongoing support from Justice Corps staff.

As of June 30, 2018, the Justice Corps program ceased operation upon the natural end of existing program provider contracts. The evaluation conducted by the Urban Institute (Urban) had no bearing on this decision. The evaluation was not conducted to form a basis for the decision of whether to continue funding NYC Justice Corps. Rather, the purpose of the evaluation was to cull findings from the program redesign that could inform City decisionmaking for future services for justice-involved young adults.

This report documents Urban's evaluation findings related to the implementation of the Justice Corps program launched in 2016, following a comprehensive redesign in 2015. NYC Opportunity and YMI, in partnership with PRI, initiated the redesign for several reasons. First, the Justice Corps program was nearing its contractual end. Second, an evaluation conducted by Westat (Bauer et al. 2014) showed that Justice Corps had mixed results on key outcomes of interest, including employment and recidivism. While the program showed strong impacts on employment outcomes and wages, it did not have an impact on participants' recidivism. Based on these findings, PRI, NYC Opportunity, and YMI saw an opportunity to redesign the program in an aim to improve recidivism outcomes. However, by the time PRI, NYC Opportunity, and YMI made this decision, NYC Opportunity had already made its new investment commitments that resulted in less funding available for the Justice Corps redesign.

Urban's multimethod implementation and outcome evaluation drew on various data sources, including the review of program materials; systematic observations of program activities; semistructured interviews with program staff, community and employment partners, and subject matter experts; focus groups with current and past program participants; and demographic and outcome data on program participants. Drawing on the information gathered from these various sources, researchers found the following:

- For the group of participants enrolled in Justice Corps from January 2016 to September 2017, the program **graduated approximately 61 percent** of participants. Over 25 percent of those enrolled were placed in employment and over 30 percent of enrolled participants were placed in educational, vocational, or youth development programming. For participants placed in jobs, **the average earnings were approximately $11 an hour, and the average amount of time worked was approximately 30 hours a week.**

- **The 2016 redesign of Justice Corps improved service delivery by offering early placement and encouraging providers to be flexible with implementation.** The redesign allowed staff the flexibility to leverage organizational resources to implement innovative ways to meet participants' needs. The early placement component of the redesign was valuable because it allowed staff to continue to support participants during their placement.
- **However, the redesign of Justice Corps brought some challenges around the sector focus and budget cuts.** Although it exposed youth to potential job interests, the sector focus often did not align with participants' job interests and somewhat narrowed providers' approaches to providing training or selecting community benefit project (CBP) sites. As a result of the budget cuts that were part of the 2016 redesign, providers felt limited in the breadth and depth of services they could offer participants, forcing them to partner with other organizations to provide services such as high school equivalency (HSE) classes.
- **While the program redesign and budget reductions prompted the providers to partner with external organizations, providers and participants found it challenging to manage these relationships.** Providers had to manage the expectations of their partners, who may not have had experience working with justice-involved youth. Some participants found it difficult to balance their commitments to multiple programs.
- **Group-based and individualized cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) helped teach youth conflict resolution and communication skills.** According to participants, the skills they gained through CBT positively influenced how they interacted with each other, program staff, and people in their communities. Program staff noted that this helped youth decrease their gang involvement and provided participants with tools to constructively interact with other youth in gangs.
- **Workforce readiness services and certifications were critical program components, as perceived by program participants and staff.** Participants valued the workforce readiness activities, which allowed them to cultivate a wide set of job readiness skills applicable to any job context and gave them the ability to earn certifications such as Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10, flagging, maintenance, and computer literacy. Participants reported that these skills, along with finding employment, gave them "something to live for" and reduced their interest in criminal behavior.
- **The CBPs gave youth opportunities to practice the hard and soft skills learned through the program as well as connect with their communities.** Participants appreciated the CBP

component as it offered them an opportunity to take ownership of a project and contribute to their local communities. The CBPs also allowed participants to practice the hard and soft skills they learned, as well as reflect on their own life purpose. Participants reported that the CBPs, along with self-reflection, helped them refrain from criminal behavior.

- **Participants expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the program.** They praised the broad range of services they received, from financial support to employment and education opportunities to training, and valued the chance to connect with their communities and be in a safe and supportive environment.

Based on the information collected from Justice Corps participants, staff members, and stakeholders about implementation challenges and recommended solutions, Urban proposes the following set of considerations to inform future investments for young adults in New York City, including those who are justice-involved:

- **Providing services to at-risk youth can help them connect with their communities and achieve outcomes.** By serving at-risk youth and providing holistic services to communities, future programming can connect youth to employment, educational, and training services in the community and potentially deter young peoples' future criminal activity. If the City serves at-risk youth who are not justice-involved, all youth can develop, grow, create peer networks, and contribute to their communities together.
- **Providing services to families can help provide stability for youth.** Future programming could include classes on building positive family relationships, referrals to employment resources, assistance with résumé writing and job applications, parent support groups, or other case management support for youths' family members. These services can help stabilize families and, in turn, support youths during and after their program involvement.
- **Engaging with prospective participants before programs start can bolster recruitment and enrollment.** The next phase of youth programming should identify and use techniques for engaging with youth early and keeping them interested in the program until services begin. This engagement could include completing assessments, referring youth to other services in the community, case management, mentoring, or support groups with other interested youth.
- **Providing targeted, onsite educational services can help participants stay engaged with other program activities.** Onsite educational or HSE classes would offer youth a safe environment to take classes with peers who share similar experiences (e.g., justice involvement or disconnection from school) and help them remain engaged with other program activities.

- **Internships can help youth explore job opportunities.** Because youth are often at different levels of employment readiness, internships can provide formal work experience for those lacking employment histories, and who may not be ready for full-time employment; an internship can offer youth an opportunity to try out a job.
- **Exposing youth to various industries can allow them to find their job interests.** Future programming should expose youth to a wide array of employment sectors, jobs, and careers. This will help youths identify different jobs that match their interests and skills.
- **Structured aftercare services can support participant retainment in programming and help support them after formal program completion.** Services such as mentoring or support groups can help sustain youths' engagement with program services and overcome challenges they may face after finishing the core program.
- **By building partnerships with local organizations and service providers, programs can help participants overcome barriers to engagement and provide participants additional supports.** Through partnerships, programs can fill gaps in their service offerings or provide complementary services to meet youths' needs so they can actively participate in program activities.
- **Monitoring and evaluating the program's performance will inform refinements and future investments.** To ensure programming meets its intended objectives, it is important to engage in routine program monitoring and evaluation. Program evaluation also helps practitioners identify ways to refine or improve the program to better meet participants' needs.
- **Although program fidelity is important, practitioners should be allowed flexibility when delivering services.** Looking ahead, organizations responsible for program implementation should be allowed to retain their individualized approaches to service delivery and should be encouraged to develop and adapt innovative solutions over time to continuously meet youths' needs.

New York City Justice Corps

Introduction

The NYC Justice Corps (Justice Corps) program was designed to reduce recidivism and prepare justice-involved youth for entry into the labor market, educational opportunities, vocational training, and/or youth development programs. Justice Corps was implemented in 2008 as a pilot program in two boroughs in New York City. Justice Corps served young adults ages 18 through 24 who experienced criminal justice system involvement in the year before enrollment. Through a multi-phase approach, Justice Corps provided youth cognitive behavioral development, workforce readiness, and community engagement services. Participants attended cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) groups; received one-on-one case management; completed a community benefit project (CBP); and were placed in "next level" destinations including employment, educational classes, vocational training, and/or youth development programs. The Justice Corps program was funded by the New York City Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity) and the Young Men's Initiative (YMI) and was implemented in partnership with the Prisoner Reentry Institute (PRI) at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and three local service providers operating at four program sites.

In January 2017, NYC Opportunity engaged the Urban Institute (Urban) to conduct an independent evaluation of the Justice Corps program from January 2017 through March 2019. The research team used an action research framework—through which the evaluators provided interim findings and feedback to Justice Corps providers and staff during the study—to undertake a multimethod implementation and outcome evaluation designed to document the implementation of the Justice Corps program and assess participant outcomes.[4] Urban's implementation evaluation was designed to describe strengths and challenges of Justice Corps as perceived by program staff, participants, and stakeholders, as well as identify actionable recommendations for program improvement and considerations for future programming. The outcome evaluation aimed to measure participant outcomes related to program engagement, placements, and earnings.

Urban's evaluation examined the Justice Corps program launched in 2016, after the second redesign of the program. NYC Opportunity and YMI, in partnership with PRI, redesigned the program for several reasons. First, the Justice Corps program was nearing its contractual end. Second, an evaluation conducted by Westat (Bauer et al. 2014) showed that Justice Corps had mixed results on key outcomes of interest, including employment and recidivism. While the program showed strong impacts on employment outcomes and wages, it did not have an impact on participants' recidivism. Based on

these findings, PRI, NYC Opportunity, and YMI saw an opportunity to redesign the program with the aim of improving recidivism outcomes. However, by the time PRI, NYC Opportunity, and YMI made this decision, NYC Opportunity had already made its new investment commitments that resulted in less available funding for the Justice Corps redesign. Third, PRI, NYC Opportunity, and YMI wanted to more closely align Justice Corps with New York City's Career Pathways strategy, which had been underway as a method for programs to coordinate with partners to place participants in education, skills training, or career-track jobs. For these reasons, PRI and NYC Opportunity saw an opportunity to work with the Justice Corps providers to redevelop and implement new strategies intended to improve outcomes for justice-involved youth. Information on the evolution and previous evaluations of Justice Corps is in appendix A.

As of June 30, 2018, the Justice Corps program ceased operation upon the natural end of existing program provider contracts. Urban's evaluation had no bearing on this decision; the City made the decision independent of the findings of the evaluation. The evaluation was not conducted to establish a basis for the decision of whether to continue funding NYC Justice Corps. Rather, the purpose of the evaluation was to cull findings from the program redesign that could inform City decisionmaking for future services for justice-involved young adults.

This report presents Urban's evaluation findings and is divided into the following eight sections:

- A literature review synthesizing the extant literature on the challenges justice-involved youth face around access to education, employment, and cognitive behavioral development. The literature review also describes other workforce readiness and recidivism reduction programs intended to help youth overcome these obstacles.
- A description of the Justice Corps program design, including key program characteristics such as eligibility criteria, recruitment mechanisms, the enrollment process, program phases and duration, and program activities and services.
- An overview of Urban's evaluation methodology, including a description of the action research framework used to guide the evaluation as well as the qualitative and quantitative data sources and analysis methods.
- A summary of the implementation findings related to participants', staff members', and stakeholders' perceptions of the program.
- A description of the key outcome findings related to participants' program engagement, placements, and earnings.

- Drawing on the implementation and outcome findings, the discussion of findings section assesses each group of research questions.
- A proposed set of considerations for future programming intended to inform future investments for young adults in New York City, including those who are justice involved.
- A **conclusion** that summarizes the overall evaluation findings and presents considerations for future practice.

Connecting Justice-Involved Young Adults to Employment and Education Opportunities

In the United States, millions of people come into contact with some part of the adult and juvenile justice system each year, a large proportion of whom are young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. This age group constitutes just 9.6 percent of the US population (US Census Bureau 2015), yet it accounts for 28 percent of arrests (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2013), over 25 percent of those on probation (Bonczar 1997; Bonczar and Maruschak 2013), and 21 percent of prison admissions (Carson 2014).

The rates of juvenile crime and youth confinement have steadily declined over the past decade (OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book 2017), but racial disparities in the system have increased, disproportionately impacting young men of color (Rovner 2017). These disparities begin at the point of arrest: a study examining arrest histories of teenagers and young adults between 1997 and 2008 found that 50 percent of African American males faced arrest, compared to 38 percent of white males (Brame et al. 2014). In 2015, 13.7 percent of African American males sentenced to state or federal prisons were young adults ages 18 to 24, compared with only 8.2 percent of sentenced white males (Carson and Anderson 2016).

Contact with the justice system will follow a young person through adulthood. An arrest, for example, will be chronicled among state criminal history records, whether or not it leads to an indictment or conviction.[5] These data are widely accessible to employers, academic institutions, and law enforcement agencies, and can measurably affect employment and educational outcomes (Duane et al. 2017; Kirk and Sampson 2013; Raphael 2014; Scott-Clayton 2017; US Department of Education 2016). Furthermore, a growing body of literature has documented the adverse consequences that justice

system contact has on adolescent brain development, affecting the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

The collateral consequences of justice system contact, in tandem with the labeling effects[6] of system responses to delinquent behavior (Bernburg and Krohn 2003; Lemert 1951), increase the odds that a young person will be subsequently arrested (Liberman et al. 2014). While no national recidivism rates exist, empirical evidence corroborate this claim: between half and over three quarters of youth ages 18 to 24 who are released from prison return within three years of release (Durose et al. 2014; Loeber and Farrington 2012).

Challenges for Justice-Involved Youth

Research suggests that individual-level characteristics relate to a young person's likelihood to commit violence or recidivate. Static risk factors—such as age at the time of first arrest, criminal history, prior socioeconomic status—are elements of an individual's background and environment that are related to recidivism but "cannot be altered through the delivery of services" (Casey et al. 2011). In contrast, dynamic (or "criminogenic") factors like antisocial attitudes, antisocial peer networks, substance misuse, and lack of literacy or job skills are correlated with criminal activity and can be addressed through targeted programming and altered to support law-abiding behaviors (Andrews et al. 2006; Bonta and Andrews 2007; Taxman et al. 2006). Research has demonstrated that the use of risk and needs assessments supports risk reduction by identifying factors that contribute to youths' likelihood to recidivate and the types of services that would address their reentry needs (Hiller et al. 2006; Pew Center on the States 2011).

In particular, education, employment, and factors associated with cognitive and psychosocial development (i.e., antisocial personality patterns, pro-criminal attitudes, and substance misuse) are among the "central eight" dynamic risk/needs factors[7] for recidivating (Bonta and Andrews 2010). These risks and needs are especially paramount for young adults in New York City, where nearly 60 percent of those under age 25 who served time for felony convictions were convicted of additional crimes within five years (Nemoy 2013). More broadly, another study using data on 4,656 individuals between ages 18 and 30 found that a greater percentage of younger adults (aged 18 to 21) had higher levels of need related to employment, education, and cognitive and psychosocial development than adults aged 22 to 30 (Keown and Gobeil 2014). Aligning with this body of literature, Justice Corps aims to address these three critical obstacles that young adults face after experiencing justice system involvement.

OBSTACLES TO ACCESSING EDUCATION

School attendance is a strong protective factor against recidivism (Müller 2011; Sanchez 2012). In an analysis of 1,500 economically disadvantaged youth of color, Topitzes, Mersky, and Reynolds (2011) found that high school graduation rates negatively correlated with future crime involvement. However, young adults who return from secure confinement and prisons face myriad challenges related to receipt of educational services. These challenges surface even before youth are released from prison. Although studies have found that about 65 percent of residential juvenile justice facilities offer correctional education (Hockenberry et al. 2009), youths who are placed in adult facilities may not receive any education at all, and those who do often receive less instructional time than youth in public schools (Leone and Weinberg 2012; The Sentencing Project 2010). The missed instructional time that results from time spent in secure confinement decelerates academic progress, and limits opportunities for work experience and career preparation (Zajac, Sheidow, and Davis 2015).

Failure to stay enrolled in schools is one of the most commonly reported challenges reentering youth face (Mathur and Clark 2014), and justice-involved youth who *do* manage to reenroll in schools are at particularly high risk for dropping out (Wallace 2012). In a retrospective study, Bullis and Yovanoff (2002) examined over 500 formerly incarcerated youths in Oregon, and found that only 30 percent were enrolled in school or substantially employed one year after release. Similarly, a wealth of research has linked arrests that occur during high school with increased likelihood of dropping out (Hirschfield 2009; Kirk and Sampson 2013; Majd 2011). Sweeten's (2006) analyses of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 found that a first-time arrest nearly doubled a youth's chances of dropping out of high school; subsequent court involvement nearly quadrupled those odds.

Exclusionary policies carry into higher education as well—national surveys suggest that between 60 and 80 percent of private institutions and 55 percent of public institutions require information on applicants' criminal histories during admissions processes (Pierce, Runyan, and Bangdiwala 2014; Stewart 2015). Schools have varying levels of discretion in how they use these data, but limited examples show they may be used to exclude applicants with criminal histories. Students who rely on federal student aid, for instance, are prohibited from accessing federal financial aid if they have been convicted of a felony drug-related offense (Bettinger et al. 2012; Lovenheim and Owens 2014). Moreover, research has yet to establish a measurable link between histories of incarceration and campus safety risk; research (see Olszewska 2007) has found no statistically significant difference in the rate of campus crime between schools that request applicants' criminal records and schools that do not. Thus, colleges and universities that consider applicants' criminal records during admissions

decisions may close doors of opportunity for justice-involved youth under the false premise of campus safety.

EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS

The link between justice involvement and barriers to employment is well established (Duane, Reimal, and Lynch 2017). Individuals attempting to reintegrate upon release struggle to overcome lapses in work experience (Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph 2002), financial and housing instability (Geller and Curtis 2011), increased family and childcare obligations (Hofferth and Collins 2000), transportation challenges (Zajac, Hutchison, and Meyer 2014), and increased risk of further justice involvement (Morenoff and Harding 2014; Visher and Travis 2003). A 2003 survey of California employers[8] showed that 71 percent of respondents indicated that they would "definitely not accept" or "probably not accept" applicants with criminal records; research also indicates that employers may often overstate their willingness to hire applicants with criminal records in such surveys, suggesting that this figure may be even higher than 71 percent (Pager and Quillian 2005). Taken together, these challenges may affect a reentering person's access to gainful and stable employment, making people with criminal histories among the most difficult to place in jobs (Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll 2003).

"For young people… [in many cases they] matured, came of age, during incarceration, and learned many of their values from that contained society. Employers have to be open and willing and not afraid, civic organizations have to be open and unafraid. We have to take another chance on people and give them the space to overcome that inevitable learning curve."

—Cynthia W. Roseberry, JD, Former Federal Defender and Former Manager of Clemency Project 2014

The acquisition and maintenance of stable employment is among the most important milestones of a young person's transition to adulthood. However, little is known about how youth who are approaching adulthood gain a foothold in the workforce after release. Estimates can be difficult to find because many states do not track whether youth who come into contact with the system stay in school, earn a degree, or find stable employment (Seigle, Walsh, and Weber 2014).

A growing knowledge base suggests that youth with histories of incarceration have difficulties finding employment. This is especially true for those who lack academic credentials or possess disabilities (Waintrup and Unruh 2008). Only about 30 percent of youths released from incarceration obtain employment or educational placements within one year of release (Abrams and Franke 2013). These impacts especially burden young adults of color, who already face discrimination from biased hiring practices. Because young people of color also experience incarceration at disproportionate rates (Liberman and Fontaine 2015), the likelihood they will experience employment discrimination increases.

COGNITIVE AND PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Research shows that adolescents and adults differ in their ability to control impulse in important ways: the neural networks in the brain that are responsible for self-regulation are not fully developed until adulthood, which disposes adolescents to risky behaviors (Spear 2010; Steinberg 2010). Similarly, differences in brain structure and function may be responsible for differences between adolescents and adults in future orientation, or the ability to project events into the future and determine the long-term consequences of choices (Cauffman et al. 2005; Steinberg et al. 2008). Developmental changes in brain regions related to reward motivation may also affect self-regulation and future orientation. While adults and adolescents may perceive risks similarly, adolescents may assign greater value to rewards when weighing them together (Cauffman et al. 2008; Steinberg 2004).

Recent Supreme Court rulings have held that youth under age 18 cannot be held to the same standards of culpability as adults, because their brains are still developing and they lack the capacity for self-control and self-regulation (Somerville, Fani, and McClure-Tone 2011); they are vulnerable to external influences (Figner et al. 2009); and they are less capable of responsible decisionmaking (Steinberg 2009). Courts have ruled against death sentences (Roper v. Simmons, 2005) and mandatory life without parole sentences (Miller v. Alabama, 2010) for youth under 18. These rulings have been informed by a nascent body of literature on adolescent brain development, which has uncovered correlates of criminal behavior. Studies find that the adolescent brain continues to develop well into one's twenties, meaning those between 18 and 24 who engage in risky behavior or crime are likely to age out of these characteristics as they transition to adulthood (Loeber and Farrington 2014; Snyder 1998).

This burgeoning research advances the extant body of literature on the relationship between justice system involvement and cognitive and psychosocial development. The literature underscores that both cognitive and psychosocial development are critical to averting justice system contact.

Studies find that youth significantly improve their ability to reason and process information between late childhood and middle adolescence (Kail 1997; Keating, Lerner, and Steinberg 2004), and that these developments advance a young person's ability to make more abstract and multidimensional decisions (Kuhn 2009). Although research finds that these improvements peak by age 16 (Belter and Grisso 1984; Wiethorn and Campbell 1982), psychosocial development patterns that follow youth into their twenties may impact one's cognitive progress during the transition to adulthood.

Moreover, the introduction of peer networks may heighten the weight youth attach to these rewards. Research has demonstrated that teens are susceptible to peer pressure. Gardner and Steinberg's (2005) behavior study found that the presence of same-age peers doubled the probability of risk taking among adolescents, increased the probability of risky behavior by 50 percent among undergraduates, and had no impact on adults. Evidence shows that teens are more likely to engage in behaviors like fighting or drinking in search of approval among their higher-status peers (Moffitt 1993), which may explain why adolescents commit crimes in groups more frequently than adults (Zimring 1998).

Programs and Practices

Some specific types of interventions can help address the challenges justice-involved youth face and respond to the "central eight" dynamic risk/needs factors of justice-involved youth, which include education, employment, and psychosocial development (Andrews and Bonta 2007).

CONNECTING YOUNG ADULTS TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Research shows that connecting youth to educational opportunities and gainful employment has positive impacts on recidivism. Attachment to secondary and postsecondary education, as well as the workforce, may reorient an individual toward prosocial activities, and deter them from engaging in risky behaviors and associations with antisocial peers. Many examples show that individuals released from prison who hold jobs in the community—particularly stable and long-lasting jobs—are less likely to recidivate (Laub and Sampson 1993; Visher, Debus, and Yahner 2008). Similarly, schools can introduce protective factors into a young person's life, offering a safe environment to develop positive relationships with teachers and peer groups (Sharkey et al. 2011)and reduce recidivism (Blomberg et al. 2011).

In response to this research, a wide range of educational and employment programs have been developed to connect justice-involved and disconnected youth to the workforce. While there has been

a growth in programming for justice-involved youth and young adults, there is a lack of rigorous research and impact evaluation findings on such programming's effects on youths' employment and earnings outcomes. However, Urban provides the following synthesis of programs to provide additional context for the evaluation of Justice Corps. The following summary examines programs that are structured similarly to Justice Corps and serve broader (but similar) target populations. These programs are not intended to serve as a comparison group for this evaluation.

The Massachusetts-based Roca High-Risk Young Men's Program provides programming in education, employment and life skills while conducting community outreach and relationship-building opportunities. Unlike Justice Corps, the Young Men's Program is designed to engage high-risk male participants, the majority of which have had criminal justice involvement, for up to four years. An end-of-year performance benchmark and outcomes report by Roca, Inc. using Fiscal Year 2017 program data—which served 854 participants, 94 percent of whom had histories of criminal justice involvement—found that in 2017, of the 283 participants placed in unsubsidized employment opportunities and enrolled in the program for 24 months or longer, 76 percent sustained employment for at least 90 days; 63 percent sustained employment for one year (FY 2017 Roca, Inc. report).

One program, NYC Opportunity's Project Rise, which was implemented in New York City, New Jersey, and Missouri, served youth ages 18 to 24 who lacked a high school diploma and who had been disconnected from school or employment for six months. While Project Rise was not designed to serve the justice-involved population specifically, participants could be facing barriers to school or employment stemming from histories of justice involvement. Participants received case management and high school equivalency classes and completed an internship over a 12-month period. An evaluation of Project Rise showed that more than 25 percent of participants earned their HSE or high school diploma and 26 percent participants started an unsubsidized job within 12 months of starting the program (Manno, Yang, and Bangser 2015).

While it serves a different target population and uses a different program model, the Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP), which NYC Opportunity and YMI implemented in New York City, provides disconnected youth ages 16 to 24 with a 10- to 12-week paid internship in addition to job readiness activities, individual case management and counseling, and follow-up support and services. Based on the findings from an impact evaluation led by MDRC, 95 percent of YAIP participants had been employed during the previous year, compared with 66 percent of a group of similarly-situated youths who did not receive YAIP services (Cummings et al. 2018). Moreover, YAIP participants earned an average of $6,674 over a year, compared with $3,247 for the comparison group, with $1,704 of the earnings coming from the internship (Cummings et al. 2018). Further, YAIP participants reported

working in higher-quality jobs after their internships, marked by reported work in permanent and full-time positions (Cummings et al. 2018). However, the MDRC evaluation also found there were no longer-term impacts related to employment rates and earnings for the YAIP participants, as compared with the group of similarly situated youths.

Postsecondary educational programs that focus on skills development have shown promise for reentering youths (Platt et al. 2015). While the programs that follow are not intended to serve as comparison groups or benchmarks to the NYC Justice Corps Program, they do provide insight into the greater New York City context of youth-oriented employment and education programs. Monahan et al. (2013), for example, examined the Pathways for Desistance project, a study of 1,300 juveniles who had offended and been in contact with the justice system, and found that youths who worked more than 20 hours per week reported significantly less aggressive antisocial behavior and income-related antisocial behavior (e.g., taking something from another person by force, carrying or using a weapon, stealing others' belongings to keep or sell, or using others' credit cards illegally) compared with unemployed youth over five years. However, these positive outcomes were only realized when youth were simultaneously attending school regularly. Their findings, therefore, suggest that connections to education *and* employment are critical for youth development and desistance from justice involvement. However, research does not support the claim that addressing these two factors alone will reduce the risk of recidivism for youth (Seigle, Walsh, and Weber 2014). In addition to the provision of educational and employment support, holistic initiatives that specifically address young adult's needs and risks (e.g., criminal thinking and antisocial behavior, mental health and substance use, life/adaptive skills, family involvement) have promising trajectories (CSG 2015).

"It's taking a 'whole person' approach, not just focusing on work readiness pieces, [and] making sure they have the supports they need from one-on-one relationships."
—Michelle S. Manno, MS, Research Associate, MDRC

ADDRESSING THE COGNITIVE AND PSYCHOSOCIAL NEEDS OF YOUTH

In addition to addressing youths' employment and academic needs, programs can help meet their cognitive and psychosocial needs by using risk and needs assessments to inform service delivery. The benefit of employing tools that assess risks and needs is that they identify the types of services that can

help mitigate risk factors associated with criminal behavior (Andrews et al. 1990). They are also useful because they inform case management services (Public Safety Performance Project 2011).

Programs that attempt to connect with youth may adopt a case management approach, which involves linking young people with case managers who work with them to achieve their goals. An evaluation of the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative, a program in Massachusetts that delivers targeted case management via street outreach workers, found that program participants were 42 percent less likely to experience incarceration than the control group (Petrosino et al. 2014).

Other programs may take an evidence-based approach, such as cognitive behavioral therapy. Research informing CBT-based programs indicates that once individuals become conscious of the consequences of their thoughts and actions, they can become empowered to make positive changes on their own (Lipsey, Landenberger, and Wilson 2007). Prior research suggests that CBT is effective with justice-involved juveniles and adults, and it is widely used in various criminal justice settings. A meta-analysis of 548 studies that examined the effectiveness of different interventions for young people who had committed crimes found that therapeutic approaches based in counseling, skills building, and multiple services had the greatest impact on reducing criminal behavior (Lipsey 2009). The analysis also found that behavioral and cognitive behavioral skill building approaches were most effective in reducing further criminal behavior as compared with job-related interventions. In an earlier review, Landenberger and Lipsey (2005) found that programs that incorporate CBT principles significantly reduce recidivism and are most effective as part of correctional interventions when provided to people who are at high risk of offending.

For example, the Arches Transformative Mentoring program (Arches), incorporates CBT principles into a group mentoring program for justice-involved young people ages 16 to 24 in New York City. Implemented by the Department of Probation in partnership with NYC Opportunity and YMI, Arches uses credible messengers (e.g., people living in the same neighborhoods or with similar backgrounds) to facilitate group mentoring sessions drawing on the Interactive Journaling curriculum. Credible messengers also provide participants one-on-one mentoring to achieve goals such as positive behavior change, healthier decisionmaking, improved ability to access education and employment opportunities, and stronger ties to their families. When examining justice-related outcomes, an impact evaluation conducted by Urban found that Arches participants had a 69 percent lower felony reconviction rate than a comparison group of youth within 12 months of beginning probation. At 24 months, Arches participants had a 57 percent lower reconviction rate than the comparison group (Lynch et al. 2018). The impact findings related to rearrest and reconvictions were particularly strong for participants aged 17 and younger (Lynch et al. 2018).

Looking Forward

Prior research suggests that programs that target the educational, employment, and the developmental needs of young adults are effective for reducing the likelihood of recidivism. However, understanding the success of programs seeking to reduce recidivism for youth relies on continuous evaluation and the ongoing use of data to improve program performance. Through this evaluation, Urban aims to add to the knowledge base and examine the implementation and outcomes of the Justice Corps program. The evaluation hopes to highlight what Justice Corps providers—and similar programs— might learn as they work to integrate the goals of education, employment, and cognitive and psychosocial development into program services and activities for justice-involved youth.

Justice Corps Program Design

First launched in 2008 and redesigned in 2016, the Justice Corps program served young adults ages 18 to 24 who experienced criminal justice system involvement in the year before enrolling in the program (see appendix A for the evolution of the Justice Corps program). Through a multi-phase approach (see figure 1), Justice Corps participants engaged in cognitive behavioral development (CBT), workforce readiness, and community engagement activities. These activities included CBT groups; one-on-one case management; Community Benefit Projects (CBPs); and placements in employment, educational classes, vocational training, and/or youth development programs. The four phases Justice Corps phases were recruitment, intake and orientation, the community benefit project, and the alumni phase. While enrolled in Justice Corps, participants received a stipend for their engagement in program activities. Justice Corps was implemented in four sites by the following service providers:

- The Bronx: Phipps Neighborhoods
- Brooklyn & Queens: Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES)
- Harlem: Center for Court Innovation (CCI)

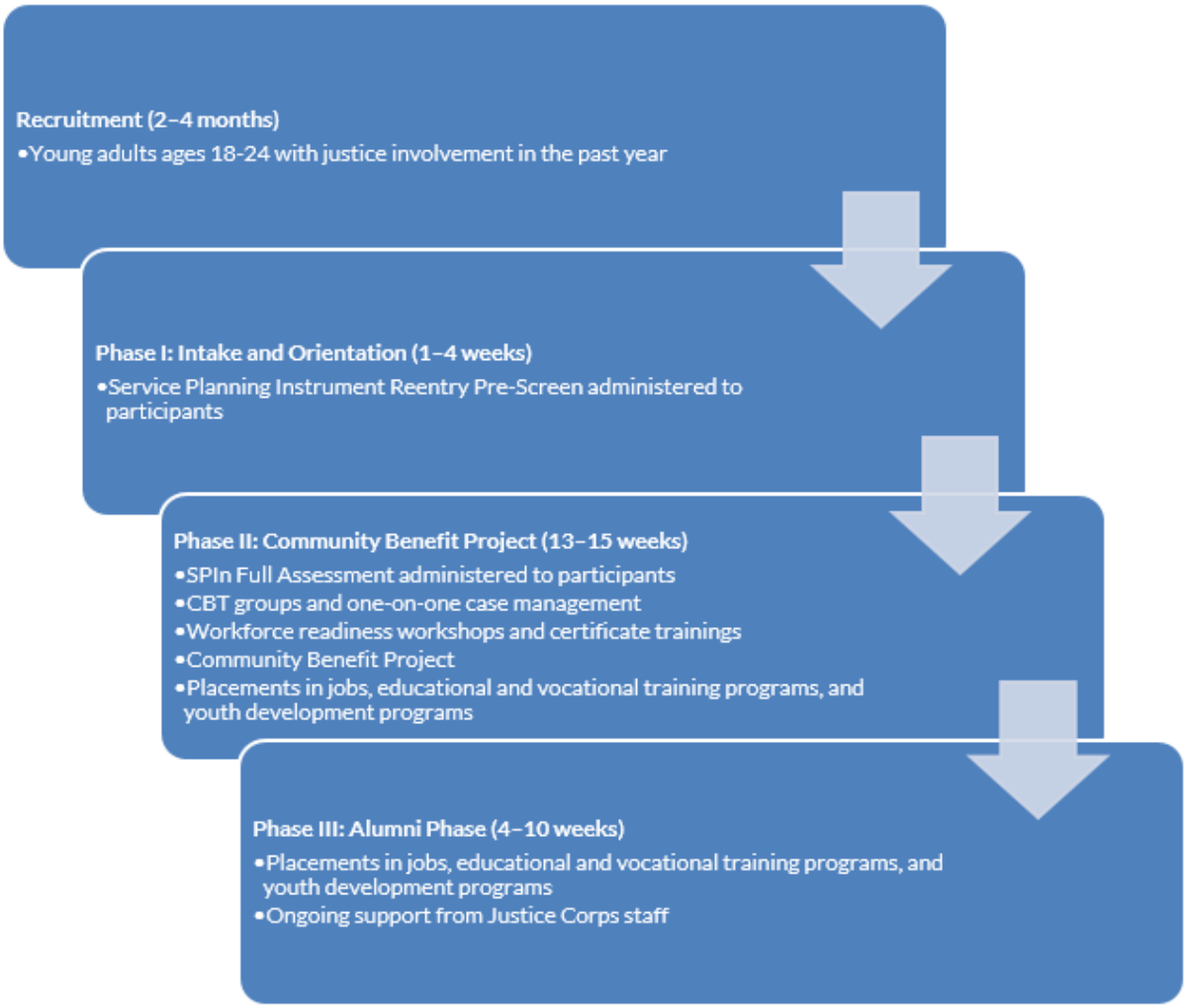
Program Eligibility and Recruitment

The Justice Corps providers recruited young adults ages 18 to 24 with prior justice system involvement who resided in each provider's respective site. Probation and parole officers were the most common referral sources across all four sites. Other referral sources included alternatives to incarceration (ATI)

programs, community flyers, and word of mouth from alumni, friends, and/or family members. Program recruitment typically lasted two to four months prior to the start of a cohort.

FIGURE 1

Justice Corps Program Phases



URBAN INSTITUTE

Phase 1: Program Intake and Orientation

Justice Corps staff administered the 35-item Service Planning Instrument (SPIn) Reentry Pre-Screen to all newly recruited participants before the four-week Intake and Orientation phase. The SPIn Reentry Pre-Screen had two primary functions: first, it was used to understand participants' risks, needs, and

strengths, and to alert program staff of any in-program resources and external service referrals they may have needed to leverage to meet participants' needs; and second, it helped staff develop relationships with participants, setting the tone for a longstanding bond built on trust. Staff in all sites noted that participants were reluctant to share their experiences during the Orientation phase and were typically more forthcoming during phase 2. In line with the design of the SPIn Reentry assessments, Justice Corps staff administered—usually after phase 1 concluded—the full 90-item SPIn Reentry assessment, which was meant to be conducted 30 days after the Reentry Pre-Screen. The full SPIn Reentry assessment provided participants and staff an opportunity to build on the relationships they initiated in phase one while linking results to an individualized case plan.

Orbis Partners developed the SPIn Reentry assessments.[9] Development of the SPIn assessments was informed by the literature on risk and needs assessments, particularly research on predictors of violence (Douglas, Cox, and Webster 2010), and included static factors (e.g., criminal history, response to supervision, aggression/violence) as well as dynamic factors (e.g., substance use, social influences, family, employment, stability, attitudes, and social/cognitive skills). The SPIn assessments aimed to link the assessment of risks, strengths, and needs to an individualized service or case plan. The SPIn's focus on participants' strengths—in addition to risks and needs—is in line with the asset-based, youth development approach of the Justice Corps program, and was a main factor in the selection of the SPIn assessments.

"Justice-involved [youth] programs need to be able to provide supports for whatever these young people need: housing, access to legal services, therapy— because trauma is very prevalent in these populations—and helping them navigate these challenges. Wraparound support is critical and not every program has that; it requires significant relationships with other providers in the community."
—Michelle S. Manno, MS, Research Associate, MDRC

Phase 2: Community Benefit Project

Phase 2, which lasted 13 to 15 weeks, included a variety of curricula, evidence-based strategies, and best practices that made up the Justice Corps experience. Phase 2 included the following three components: cognitive behavioral (or psychosocial) development, workforce readiness, and community

engagement. Within each component, Justice Corps provided wraparound services intended to stabilize participants and meet their basic needs. Further, the program provided participants a safe and structured place to create new habits and routines. What follows are summaries of the three components:

Cognitive Behavioral Development. All Justice Corps sites provided a range of case management and CBT to all program participants. The full SPIn Reentry assessment—which staff administered at the end of phase 1—guided case management and helped staff respond to the needs of individual program participants and their risk factors for recidivism and further justice-involvement. To better respond to individual participants' needs, life coaches integrated CBT and motivational interviewing practices into one-on-one case management sessions. Justice Corps staff also facilitated group CBT curriculum-based workshops, during which program participants engaged with clinical professionals around criminogenic risk factors.

Workforce Readiness. Justice Corps' workforce readiness component consisted of a series of workshops intended to prepare youth for a successful transition to the workforce during or upon completion of the Justice Corps program. The workshops—conducted by placement coordinators who also connected participants to placements—included group sessions such as career exploration, social competence, workplace math, digital literacy, budgeting, financial literacy, resume writing, and basic computer skills. Placement coordinators were also responsible for linking participants to placement destinations (e.g., educational, employment, vocational training, or youth development programs) based on their needs, strengths, and interests. Program staff often incorporated discussions of code switching (the practice of shifting the language people use or the way they present themselves in different conversations), hands-on group activities, videos, and guest speakers into the curricula to engage participants. Justice Corps also offered participants a range of professional certificates (e.g., OSHA, CPR, first aid) and legal services (e.g., record expungement) to limit the barriers they may face when entering the labor market.

Community Benefit Project. The central part of the second phase of Justice Corps was the Community Benefit Project (CBP), a local service project meant to fulfill important neighborhood needs and build connections between participants their communities.

Through the CBP, program staff reinforced the objectives of the CBT and workforce readiness curricula, providing youth an opportunity to practice the skills taught in the workshops. To begin planning the CBP, participants engaged in a "community asset mapping" activity, in which they took stock of the gaps and needs of their respective communities and which formed the basis of their ideas for the CBP. Participants organized their findings and CBP ideas into a presentation to the Community

Advisory Board (CAB)—a group of local stakeholders who represented local businesses, community-and faith-based organizations, and government agencies—which then provided feedback on the project. Based on the feedback, participants sometimes modified their CBP plans. Participants typically planned their CBP over one to two weeks at the Justice Corps provider site before beginning their service projects in the community. Following the presentation to the CAB, participants carried out their CBP for the remainder of phase t2wo, going to their CBP site one to three days per week. The CBPs varied in type and included renovating, cleaning, or repairing community spaces; painting murals; hosting clothing drives and special events at shelters; leading public information campaigns; painting church meeting spaces; building accessible tech/computer centers; and assisting at transitional housing facilities.

Phase 3: Alumni Phase

Participants who did not secure a placement before graduation were assigned to their placement sites (i.e., employment, educational or vocational training program, or youth development program) during this phase, and were continually offered support such as food, transportation assistance, career counseling, job placement assistance, social services, and case management. Alumni services were open to all alumni (not just those who were placed) and participants were welcome to return to their provider sites at any time to check in with program staff, receive job placement assistance, and access a range of other supports. The alumni phase typically lasted four to ten weeks, but alumni could have returned indefinitely.

Evaluation Methodology

To document and understand the Justice Corps program as it was redesigned in 2016, Urban applied an action research framework to its implementation and outcome evaluation. An action research framework includes two key components, emphasizing "(1) the central role of participants in researching and changing their own practices, and (2) the commitment among participants to make their own practices more coherent, just, rational, informed, satisfying and sustainable" (Hunter et al. 2013, vi). In the context of an implementation evaluation, an action research framework is most effectively employed using a participatory approach, drawing on the expertise of program stakeholders (Mills, Platts and Bourne 2003). This means continuously engaging key stakeholders in every step of the research process, from evaluation design to dissemination of findings (Elliot 1991; McNiff, Laidlaw, and Whitehead 1992; Whitehead 2001, 2017).

Using an action research framework, Urban conducted a multi-method implementation and outcome evaluation of Justice Corps between January 2017 and March 2019. Urban researchers drew on various sources of qualitative and quantitative data to document the implementation of Justice Corps and assess participant outcomes. The implementation evaluation sought to describe participants', program staffs', and other stakeholders' perspectives of the core program components, principally those that were modified in the 2016 redesign; identify strengths and challenges of the program; and identify recommendations for program modifications and considerations for future programming. The outcome evaluation assessed outcomes related to participants' program engagement, placements, and earnings. The core research questions that guided the evaluation included the following:

- **Program Model (Re)Design**: What is the value of the program redesign, and in what ways have providers leveraged the increased flexibility of the new program model?
- **Early Placement:** Were participants placed into an external education/training program or job before completion of Justice Corps? If so, what kept them engaged at Justice Corps after early placement? Did participants have to reduce their participation in Justice Corps to accommodate an early placement? If so, which specific program components at Justice Corps did they continue to engage and with which components did they disengage? What was the overall experience of balancing simultaneous participation in each?
- **Sector Focus**: How do program staff, community stakeholders, and participants view the employment sector-based approach built into the 2016 Justice Corps redesign? In what way(s) has the sector focus affected implementation?
- **Collaboration and Coordination:** What are the benefits to employers and other placement destinations when partnering with Justice Corps? How do provider staff conduct outreach to placement sites? What information do they share with sites about Justice Corps and participants? What information did they solicit from sites regarding their programs/jobs and about what makes a good candidate? Did Justice Corps providers tailor/adjust the program content to help prepare participants for placement? If so, how?
- **Participant Experiences**: What aspects of Justice Corps yield the greatest satisfaction among participants? What aspects are most challenging and should be modified/strengthened in future programming?
- **Program Design and Variations in Implementation**: What are the basic services and activities that comprise Justice Corps, and how does the program model and implementation vary across

sites? Are the dual program goals of reducing recidivism and workforce readiness mutually reinforcing?

- **Participant Outcomes**: Are youth changing (criminal) behavior? Changing how they interact with other youth in-program? Do young people think they have the ability now to change their criminal behavior? How did participants fare on outcomes targeted by the intervention? How do these outcomes vary by site and other factors (e.g., age, education and employment history at enrollment, prior criminal history, and risk assessment score)? What aspects of the program are most tied to positive outcomes for participants?

Qualitative Data Sources

Urban's implementation evaluation drew on the following qualitative data sources:

- **Review of program materials**, which included site-specific program descriptions, service provider scopes of work, workshop presentations and handouts, program schedules, the SPIn Reentry assessment tools, and evaluation reports of previous Justice Corps models.
- **Semi-structured interviews** with key Justice Corps program staff and stakeholders to learn how Justice Corps was implemented, how the redesign affected implementation, and how providers addressed implementation challenges, as well as stakeholders' recommendations for program refinements.
- **Focus groups** with current and former program participants to better understand their perspectives and experiences with the program as it related to achieving the goals of workforce readiness and reducing further justice involvement.
- **Observations** of core program activities such as the CBP, workforce readiness classes, and CBT groups to enhance the research team's understanding of the Justice Corps program.
- **Subject matter interviews** with experts in the field to inform Urban's understanding of programming for justice-involved youth, and to contextualize the findings of the evaluation within the larger body of research on similar programmatic efforts.

Table 1 displays the number of respondents who informed Urban's implementation evaluation, categorized by respondent type.

TABLE 1

Number of Interview and Focus Group Responses

Respondent type	Number of respondents
Justice Corps Service Provider Staff	
Program Directors	4
Case Managers, Life Coaches, or Life Skills Counselors	9
Placement Coordinators or Specialists	5
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Consultants	1
Program or Office Assistants	4
Community Benefit Project Staff	3
Justice Corps Stakeholders	
Probation Officers	4
Community Advisory Board Members	14
Community Benefit Project Site Staff	4
Licensing Staff	2
Current Program Participants	35
Former Program Participants (Alumni)	34
Total	**119**

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis Methods

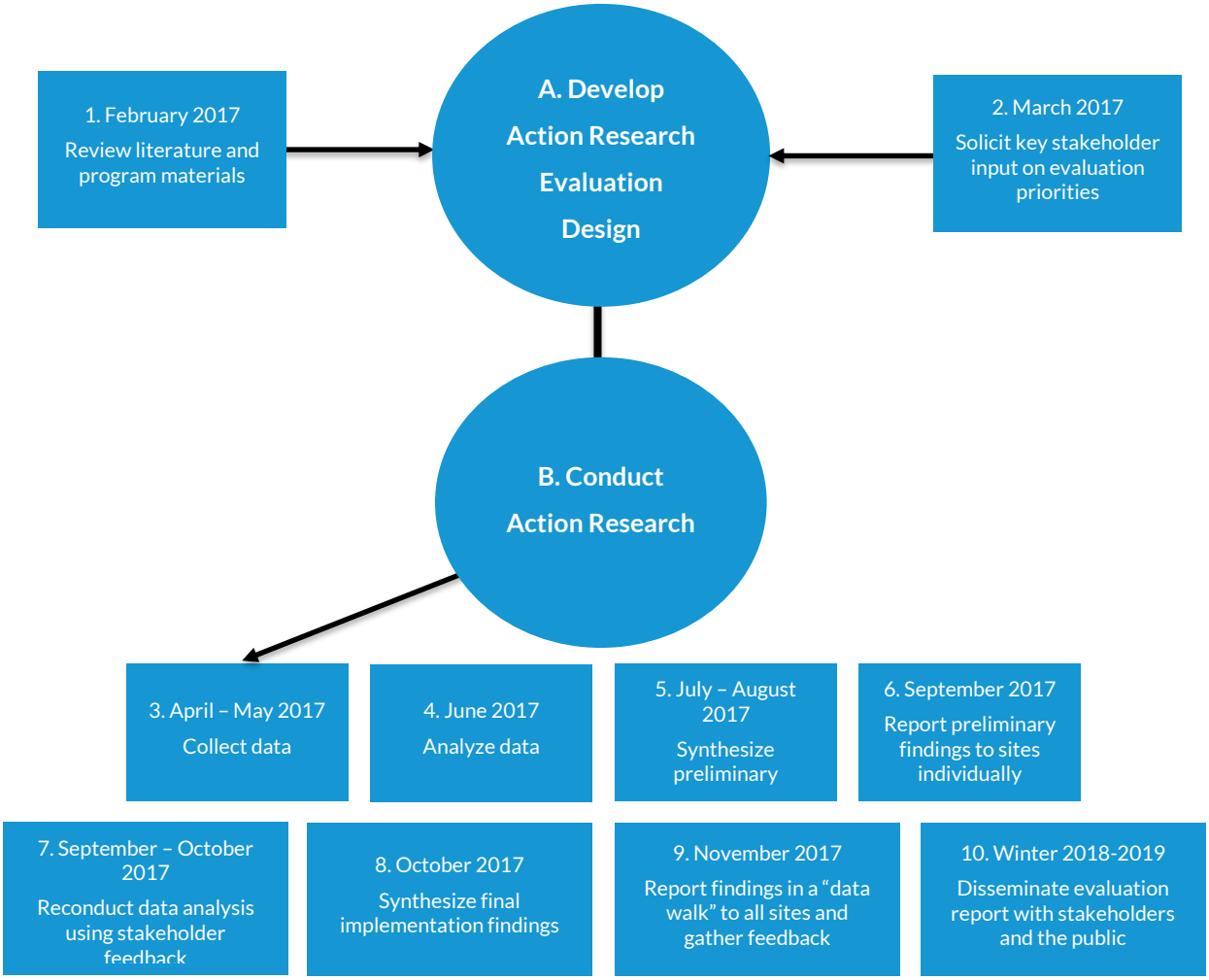
In line with the action research framework, Urban developed and applied the model depicted in figure 2 to guide its evaluation. As represented in the model, Urban's action research framework was informed by our review of the extant literature on workforce readiness and recidivism reduction programs for justice-involved youth, as well as available Justice Corps program materials. In March 2017, Urban conducted visits to each of the four Justice Corps sites to interview key program staff and identify their goals for Urban's evaluation. Between April and May 2017, Urban researchers conducted additional visits to each Justice Corps site, using data collection protocols that reflected Urban's and the service providers' evaluation priorities. As described above, these visits included semi-structured interviews with program staff and stakeholders, focus groups with current and past participants, and program observations. Following the visits, Urban coded the information gathered from the interviews, focus groups, and program observations using NVivo qualitative analysis software to identify salient themes that addressed the research questions.

Between July and August 2017, Urban researchers synthesized the qualitative findings in the form of site-specific summaries provided to the program directors. These summaries, which were shared with the directors in September 2017, were developed to establish consistency and accuracy in Urban's documentation of the Justice Corps program and clarify any remaining gaps in Urban's knowledge.

FIGURE 2

NYC Justice Corps Action Research Evaluation Model

Timeline of Urban Institute's evaluation



Urban researchers facilitated calls with each of the program directors to review the site-specific summaries and used feedback from the conversations to complete the qualitative analysis.

Following the calls with program directors, Urban compiled and presented its preliminary qualitative and quantitative findings in a presentation to NYC Opportunity, PRI, and Justice Corps program staff and leadership at a convening in November 2017. During the convening, Urban shared its findings and engaged in conversations with the program staff about their reactions and suggested edits to the findings. The convening also helped Urban identify recommendations for strengthening the implementation of Justice Corps and informing future initiatives in NYC for justice-involved youth.

Quantitative Data Sources

Urban collected demographic and outcome data on program participants though an administrative database maintained by PRI. Justice Corps program staff were responsible for uploading individual-level participant data to the PRI administrative database, and sites were asked to attest that data entry was up-to-date when submitting their monthly program reports; PRI also conducted bimonthly data quality checks. Urban's evaluation included program participants from three cohorts—enrolled from January 2016 to September 2017—across all four sites.

Quantitative Analysis Methods

For the outcome evaluation, Urban measured within-group change to determine if Justice Corps achieved its goals related to program completion, and employment, educational, vocational, and youth placements. To be included in Urban's dataset, participants must have been enrolled in Justice Corps during the study period (January 2016 to September 2017) and met program eligibility criteria (see the Program Design section above).

Descriptive analyses and within-group significance tests were conducted to examine how participants fared when enrolled in the Justice Corps program on several key outcome measures. Bivariate analyses used two-tailed t-tests, chi-square tests, ANOVA tests, and regressions to indicate whether participant outcomes varied by site, cohort, and other factors. Multivariate analyses employed logistic or linear regression with a variable for site and cohort. Sociodemographic controls included age, gender, race, ethnicity, educational level, parental status, probation status, parole status, and risk score.

Implementation Findings

Drawing on participant demographic data and participants', staff members', and stakeholders' perspectives of program implementation, the following section describes the evaluation's key findings related to the characteristics of Justice Corps participants, the implementation of key program components, variations in implementation across the Justice Corps providers, and participants' experiences and satisfaction with the program.

Participant Characteristics

The sociodemographic profile of participants at each site is shown in table 2. This profile is based on the participant demographic data that Justice Corps providers collected when participants enrolled in the program. The majority of program participants across sites were male and African American. In three of four sites, most participants were on probation or parole supervision, and across all four sites, most participants lacked a high school degree or an equivalent level of educational attainment.

Participant characteristics also varied by site. Brooklyn had the highest rate of female participants and participants with children. Harlem had the lowest rate of participants with children. Two sites, Brooklyn and the Bronx, also had significantly fewer participants with high-risk scores at enrollment.[10] Both sites also significantly differed from the others in their share of Hispanic participants and participants on parole. The Bronx had significantly higher rates of both—Brooklyn, significantly lower.

TABLE 2

Participant Demographics: January 2016–September 2017

	Brooklyn (*n* = 76)	Queens (*n* = 76)	Harlem (*n* = 68)	The Bronx (*n* = 81)
Male *	76.3%	92.1%	86.8%	91.4%
African American ***	86.5%	80.6%	86.4%	62.0%
Hispanic *	13.5%	23.6%	22.7%	37.0%
Age (mean)	20.5	20.5	20.8	21.2
19 years old and younger	38.2%	36.8%	27.9%	24.7%
20 or 21 years old	27.6%	27.6%	33.8%	28.4%
22 years old or older	34.2%	35.6%	38.3%	46.9%
High school diploma or GED	33.8%	30.3%	32.4%	36.3%
Has child t	25.0%	15.8%	8.8%	19.8%
Probation **	31.6%	50.0%	30.9%	25.9%
Parole ***	1.3%	23.7%	26.5%	40.7%
High risk score ***	12.2%	40.5%	41.9%	5.41%
Medium risk score***	73.0%	60.5%	41.8%	91.8%

Notes: Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests and ANOVA tests, as appropriate; statistically significant differences are noted by $^{t}p < 0.10$, $*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$, $***p < 0.001$. Significance tests indicate if significant differences exist between any two sites.

Key Program Components

Based on the information collected through semi-structured interviews with program staff and stakeholders, focus groups with current and past participants, and observations of program activities,

the following section synthesizes participants', staff members', and stakeholders' impressions of Justice Corps implementation. The section is organized by the main program components, which include the 2016 program (re)design, early placement, sector focus, and collaboration and coordination with program partners.

PROGRAM (RE)DESIGN

In 2015, Justice Corps underwent a comprehensive redesign coupled with a funding reduction. NYC Opportunity and YMI, in partnership with PRI, initiated the redesign for several reasons. First, the Justice Corps program was nearing its contractual end. Second, the Westat evaluation (Bauer et al. 2014) showed that Justice Corps had mixed results on key outcomes of interest, including employment and recidivism. While the program showed strong impacts on employment outcomes and wages, it did not have an impact on participants' recidivism. Based on these findings, PRI, NYC Opportunity, and YMI saw an opportunity to redesign the program with the aim of improving recidivism outcomes. However, by the time PRI, NYC Opportunity, and YMI made this decision, NYC Opportunity had already made its new investment commitments that resulted in less funding available for the Justice Corps redesign. Finally, PRI, NYC Opportunity, and YMI wanted to better align Justice Corps with New York City's Career Pathways strategy,[11] including the bridge program model, which incorporated a sectoral approach and enhanced coordination with external placement partners to prepare individuals with low educational attainment and limited skills for entry into a higher education level, occupational skills training, or career-track jobs. PRI and NYC Opportunity therefore saw an opportunity to work with the Justice Corps providers to develop and implement new strategies designed to improve outcomes for justice-involved youth.

Following the redesign process, PRI, NYC Opportunity, and YMI launched the revised Justice Corps program in 2016, which included some key changes. The redesigned Justice Corps program introduced the option of early placement and added a sector focus in each site, while placing greater emphasis on the CBT component and placing youth in "next level" destinations including jobs, educational and vocational training programs, and work readiness and youth development programs.

Along with these changes, PRI continued to allow sites to be adaptive while implementing the program and added flexibility around reengaging with participants. Program staff appreciated this flexibility and explained that it allowed them to incorporate each provider's mission and culture into the Justice Corps program. The redesigned program also reduced the hours required for program graduation and allowed for flexibility when reengaging youth. If participants disengaged from the program, they were permitted to reengage during the same cohort or reenroll in a later cohort. Program

staff reported that this flexibility allowed them to continue to engage with and provide critical resources to participants. This change stemmed from the realization that justice-involved youth frequently leave and reengage in programs. Program staff also explained that the original reporting requirements to PRI on participants' hours in the program were time-consuming and difficult to navigate. Program staff found the reporting requirements easier to navigate after the redesign.

Another substantial change in the redesign, as identified by program staff, was the reduction in program funding and resources. While the smaller program budgets forced the providers to adapt and streamline processes and services, program staff felt limited in the breadth and depth of services they could offer youth. Further, because of the decrease in resources, providers increasingly referred participants to other programs where they received additional services to help them prepare for jobs, education, or training programs. Onsite high school equivalency (HSE) classes were also removed from Justice Corps as a result of funding reductions, so participants were referred to external education providers and schools. As a result, the providers developed more relationships with schools and educational institutions such as community colleges. However, program staff indicated that when participants enrolled in offsite education or other programs, it decreased participants' availability to attend Justice Corps activities and posed challenges for them to manage their schedules and stay engaged in the program. Further, participants faced challenges when taking classes at an offsite education program because they were often not accustomed to a traditional classroom setting, according to program staff. Staff also explained that it was challenging to manage the expectations of their educational partners because Justice Corps participants oftentimes were not ready or well-prepared to engage in the classes because of their lack of exposure to traditional classroom settings.

EARLY PLACEMENT

As part of the 2016 Justice Corps redesign, participants could be placed "early" (that is, while they were still enrolled in Justice Corps) in a full-time or part-time job, educational or vocational training program, or youth development program. Participants were eligible for early placement after completing five full weeks of Justice Corps programming.

Program staff found the early placement option to be one of the most valuable parts of the program redesign. They felt that having the option to place youth early in their program tenure gave participants the opportunity to try a job or educational program to see if it was a good fit for them. If not, there would still be time within the program period to place participants elsewhere. Overall, program staff thought the early placement option made the transition to the workforce easier for participants.

With "every young person [entering the program] in a different place," staff often found that having access to early placements provided sites with improved options for a wide range of participant needs. As described by one program staff member, "we have some people who have never worked and then we have some who have been to college or some [who] have worked. And, sometimes, it felt like we were holding them back because they had to complete the whole program before we could get them a job or a placement." Staff explained that early placements may not have been ideal for every participant entering Justice Corps because not all youth had the necessary soft skills. Program staff made this determination informally, based on their own observations of participants' demonstration of skills—such as communication and time management—and their readiness for employment. If program staff deemed a participant not ready for early placement, that participant could refine their soft skills through other program components such as the CBT groups, workforce readiness classes, or CBP.

Program staff were appreciative of the ability to place participants early because of the removal of onsite HSE classes in the program redesign. One stakeholder explained, "[early placement] is one of the best things of the redesign…without having HSE onsite, it's difficult, [they] need school now, and can't wait 6 months before we give education…we would lose people if they couldn't get placed in school." Program staff also indicated that the availability of early placements helped improve retention for participants who entered the program with goals of quickly accessing to employment or educational programs.

In contrast, Justice Corps providers often needed to accommodate the schedules of the educational programs so that participants still had access to Justice Corps activities. Program staff worked to provide services at times that complemented the schedules of the educational programs so participants could attend both programs. One program coordinator explained, "[our site] worked out a schedule to allow for classes and Justice Corps (i.e., CBT groups, job readiness, CBP) [activities] – [participants] go to school in the morning, come to Justice Corps in the afternoons." For participants who gained early placements that were unpaid (typically educational placements) program staff counted their time in educational programming as part of "off-site" Justice Corps programming and participants earned the stipend for this time. Employment placements (or other paying placements) did not count toward Justice Corps programming.

Early placements also allowed sites to provide additional support and motivation for the young people during their placement. As one program director indicated, "for the young people who come to us, we're [often] building them up before getting these early placements, and while they are at these early placements, we serve as a surrogate parent…helping them with motivation…And a lot of [participants] aren't successful at their first placement, so they'll get placed somewhere else. What

happens is we've helped them become connected to these placements [and supports]" According to program staff, early placements provided sites an additional tool to support participants' needs. However, staff also emphasized the importance of youth staying engaged with Justice Corps programming to address additional academic and behavioral issues that could impede success in the workplace.

SECTOR FOCUS

As part of the program redesign in 2016, Justice Corps providers selected and incorporated a sector-focus—construction, customer service, or retail—into many of their program activities, including job readiness classes and CBPs. By implementing a sector focus, program administrators intended for participants to cultivate skills, experience, and certifications in industries with increasing demand for skilled workers. Although it was intended to guide placements, the providers were not strict about placing participants in jobs in their respective sectors, as program staff focused on meeting participants' job interests which may or may not have aligned with the sector focus.

Program staff and partners, as well as participants, expressed a great degree of uncertainty and ambivalence about their respective site's sector focus and indicated it was challenging to engage participants around sector-focused activities. The majority of program staff and partners (i.e., probation and parole officers and placement destinations) across all sites felt concerned that the sector focus was somewhat narrow and limiting in scope. Rather than cultivating participants' interests, staff suggested that the sector-based approach restricted what participants envisioned in their future and limited their opportunities to explore different sectors or industries. According to program staff, the sector focus did not allow them to respond to the unique strengths and interests of the participants. As one staff member remarked, "It doesn't work because each kid is different […] youth should say what they want to do and they should be able to pursue it; what if the sector is not what the kids want to do; we can expose them to the sector, but it isn't always a match to the youth's interests, skills, or education level."

In contrast, some staff members acknowledged the practical utility of the sector focus and explained that it helped participants explore and identify their career interests if they did not know what types of jobs they found interesting. Program staff also perceived the sector focus as beneficial for building participants' marketable skillsets in advance of their entry to the workforce. This was especially true in the sites that took on sectors such as retail or customer service, where the workforce readiness curricula were described as "broad" and "wide-ranging," and participants could transfer the skills they developed to most employment sectors.

Program participants' attitudes toward the sector-based approach depended on whether their interests aligned with the site's sector. For instance, some participants felt indifferent toward the construction sector focus; participants who enjoyed hands-on work appreciated the practical activities they were exposed to, while others who were less interested in construction suggested they were "going through the motions" to complete the program and did not feel they gained lessons from the construction skills they learned. In sites oriented toward customer service and/or retail sectors, some participants relayed a sense of confidence in the general applicability of the broad skillset they gained.

COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

In addition to the key changes to the program design, all the providers developed partnerships with various community organizations and stakeholders, including CAB members, employers, educational institutions, and other community- and faith-based organizations, to help prepare youth for placement in educational, vocational, or employment opportunities.

Some providers collaborated with CAB members on program activities. For example, one site had CAB members, community members, and volunteers conduct informational and mock interviews with participants. In addition, the CAB members or other community partners helped sites provide participants professional clothing. Several CAB members, who in some cases were also employees of placement sites, valued the program for providing much-needed support to a group of often-overlooked young adults.

Further, the placement coordinators at the sites actively built relationships with potential employers. While the placement coordinators cultivated these relationships in different ways, a common approach was to visit and speak with employers about the Justice Corps program. Placement coordinators used these conversations to gain a sense of employers' hiring needs and necessary job qualifications. Further, one site hosted employer luncheons with local store managers at its office to present on the Justice Corps program, describe its services, and explain how the employment placement worked. Another placement coordinator leveraged the partnership with the OSHA10 training instructor to connect participants to construction job interviews. Across sites, the placement coordinators seemed to use a similar message when speaking with or presenting to employers, embodied in the quote, "We ask [employers] to try [participants] out…We'll pay them from here – their stipend. And if you like them, you can hire them, and if you don't, you can let us know." Employers saw the benefit of partnering with Justice Corps sites because Justice Corps participants were oftentimes enthusiastic employees and invested in their work.

Based on employers' needs and the job requirements, placement coordinators tailored program activities to help participants become qualified by hosting new trainings, helping participants obtain the proper licenses or certificates, referring them to additional training or classes in the community, or providing work supplies or uniforms. This ranged from connecting program participants to OSHA training to earn certification to work in construction to hosting CPR, first aid, and AED training for young people interested in health care. Whereas OSHA certification is a requirement in the construction sector, CPR or first aid certifications simply made Justice Corps participants more competitive when applying to sectors like home healthcare aid.

Variations in Implementation

Based on the researchers' understanding, the providers' approaches to program implementation varied across the four Justice Corps sites. Drawing on the information collected through staff and stakeholder interviews, the following section draws on the information collected through staff and stakeholder interviews to identify key differences in implementation across the providers in each phase of the program.

PHASE 1: PROGRAM INTAKE AND ORIENTATION

Justice Corps sites took one of two approaches to participant recruitment, with half the sites following each approach. While both approaches tended to overrecruit youth to make sure they filled the allotted spaces for each cohort, two sites purposely overrecruited participants for the orientation phase and then identified the group of participants who would continue to phase 2. The other two sites recruited enough participants to fill the cohort but did not select participants to continue to phase 2; all participants who were enrolled in the intake and orientation phase continued on to phase 2.

For the two sites that purposely overrecruited participants, program staff identified the participants who would move on to phase two based on the information gathered from the SPIn Reentry Pre-Screen[12] about participants' risks, needs, and strengths; staff members' observations of the participants' readiness to engage with the program; and a review of participants' unmet needs. In these two sites, participants might not have continued to phase 2 if they were low-risk, according to the SPIn Reentry Pre-Screen, and had particular needs Justice Corps could not meet. For example, Justice Corps services were not an appropriate fit for youth who had serious and persistent mental illness or who experienced serious substance abuse. If youth demonstrated these needs, program staff referred them to other services, programs, or resources in the community that could better treat them. One program staff member explained, "I think for me one of the things that's a little bit difficult—is dealing with young

people who have mental health issues […]. We can't really deal with those kinds of services. Often what happens is if somebody's having a mental health issue, it trumps everything else."

PHASE 2: COMMUNITY BENEFIT PROJECT

In the cognitive behavioral development component of phase 2, each site used and tailored a different CBT curriculum. While nearly all sites used principles from the "Thinking for a Change" curriculum, they often incorporated content from other curricula such as "Getting Out by Going In" and other trauma-informed concepts. Moreover, two sites used interactive journaling as part of the CBT component, describing it as an opportunity for participants to reflect on their progress throughout the course of the program.

In addition to the CBT group curriculum, all providers offered individual case management using cognitive behavioral techniques. Some providers administered case management on a weekly basis, whereas others offered it on an ad-hoc basis. One program staff member reported that the interactive journaling was used during one-on-one case management sessions and helped participants identify their goals, document their progress toward achieving them, and plan next steps. Program staff in nearly all sites reported that participants were often engaged in the CBT groups, except in one site, where staff suggested participants had difficulty engaging with the group-based CBT classes because of group dynamics, and that participants were distracted by electronics and each other. This site subsequently incorporated group CBT classes into the first several weeks of the program, and engaged in the individual case management—which was more appealing to program participants—for the remainder of the program.

Moreover, in addition to workforce readiness workshops, all sites offered OSHA10 certification regardless of their sector focus, though some providers also offered flagging and maintenance certificates along with higher level OSHA trainings.[13] In all sites, participants found this component useful because it gave them tangible, practical skills they could use to advance to the next stage of their careers. Participants indicated that free access to these certificates was an important draw of the Justice Corps program. As one participant explained, "It made me who I am. I have a full resume, my communication skills are great, and I have certificates."

Some Justice Corps sites were more prescriptive with the selection of CBP locations than others. In some instances, program staff leveraged preexisting community partnerships to set up a CBP site before the start of a new cohort. In one site where the CBP was predetermined, participants worked in teams to focus on researching the CBP site's additional needs, created a budget to fulfill those needs, and developed a PowerPoint presentation to present to the CAB. Another site encouraged participants

to take ownership of the CBP and CAB presentation, identifying ways to add mini-projects to the predetermined CBP location. In other sites, CBPs were entirely participant-driven—program participants were responsible for choosing a topic, identifying a project site, and developing their presentation to the CAB.

The CBPs were implemented in varying ways across the four Justice Corps sites. Two sites worked on painting, maintenance, and construction tasks in two faith-based organizations, one assisted with various tasks at a transitional housing facility, and one hosted a special event with recreational activities for children living at a housing facility. Specifically, these projects included cleaning and painting general purpose rooms, organizing a supply room that contained clothing and hygiene donations, sorting and organizing toys and books in the children's play area, assembling toys, setting up activity stations such as basketball or bowling, and interacting with children and families at the special event. While program staff in all sites accompanied and oversaw the participants to the CBP sites, some staff took a more active role than others. For example, program staff at three of the four sites were actively engaged with the participants during the CBP and assigned and supervised the tasks, whereas at the fourth site, participants completed the tasks with oversight and instruction from the CBP site staff rather than Justice Corps staff. Furthermore, in one site, two participants were identified as team leaders who helped keep the group on task and ensured the work was getting done.

PHASE 3: ALUMNI PHASE

The final phase of Justice Corps, the alumni phase, looked different in each site. Although the alumni phase was designed to last four to ten weeks, program staff explained that it ultimately ranged from 30 days to 2 months to "forever" (i.e., participants could stay in touch with Justice Corps for as long as they wanted). All program staff provided ongoing support to participants and engaged with them as often as they needed. Staff in one site continued to meet with participants on a regular basis (i.e., weekly) and worked with them to meet their goals. Staff also invited participants to attend groups and alumni events. Uniquely, another site provided assistance that went beyond linking participants with placement opportunities—they helped cover transportation costs to work, uniforms, or work supplies. Program participants appreciated the alumni phase because it provided them with a safe place to continue to receive support from program staff. As one participant described, "It's a safe space, you can always come back here."

Participant Experiences

The following section draws on feedback gathered in focus groups from then–Justice Corps participants and alumni, and synthesizes their overall impressions and satisfaction with the program. It also describes the aspects of the program participants deemed challenging and the recommendations they identified for improving the program.

Current and former participants expressed generally positive feelings about the time they spent in the Justice Corps program. They cited program staff as a key source of satisfaction and noted that staff showed a genuine commitment to participants' growth and wellbeing. Participants were also grateful for the various amenities the program offered and indicated that those amenities incentivized program participation. They described looking forward to attending Justice Corps activities, where they could be part of a community of support, eat meals, receive transportation assistance, and access other material supports.

Further, participants reported the workforce readiness components were another source of satisfaction during their time in Justice Corps. As one participant reported, Justice Corps "teaches you to be professional in life." Most participants and alumni reported the certifications they earned, such as OSHA, first aid, and CPR, were particularly beneficial. In addition to being sources of pride and accomplishment, participants reported that certifications made them eligible or competitive for jobs.

Participants also reported that they built soft and technical skills through the workforce readiness classes and CBPs. Participants reported that program staff were key in helping them understand workforce readiness class concepts, such as resume writing, interviewing, time management, and communication. Participants also thought the staff were patient, made class material interesting and relevant to their lives, and delivered the material in a way that ensured their understanding it. Participants also reported the CBP was helpful in building technical skills and gaining hands-on experience.

While participants generally reported positive experiences with Justice Corps, they identified some challenges staying engaged with the program. Some found it difficult to juggle their placements and Justice Corps responsibilities. This was especially true for participants placed in offsite HSE and educational programming; although the MetroCard that Justice Corps provided minimized transportation barriers, participants reported challenges commuting between the Justice Corps site and their placement site in one day.

Participants also reported that child care was another challenge, particularly affording child care while they attended the program. Participants with children commonly reported child care as a reason for being absent from the program. Participants noted that the program's limited number of monthly paid sick days (two) sometimes caused them to miss a day of Justice Corps to care for a child. Therefore, program participants who were parents (25 percent or fewer in all sites) felt they were penalized for acting responsibly in circumstances beyond their control. Moreover, program staff were not able to exercise discretion when approving paid days off, which staff reported as a source of frustration.

Lastly, in some sites, the type of CBP made it susceptible to getting canceled for the day (largely because of weather). When CBP work was canceled, the participants were required to stay at the site to get paid. However, staff did not always plan an alternate activity. The young people reported being bored and frustrated if they had to sit at the site with nothing to occupy their time.

Participants identified some recommendations for program changes. Many participants reported wishing the program could serve more people in their communities; young people who did not have a history of justice-involvement should have access to the program. Additionally, current and former participants across sites reported they would have liked for the program to have more physical space; not just for official program activities, but also so current and former participants could have a place to "hang out."

THINKING AND BEHAVIORAL CHANGES

Many current and former program participants reported that Justice Corps helped them think about, and change, their behavior in positive ways. Justice Corps provided a safe and structured place where participants could form new habits and routines. As one participant reported, "I used to just be at home, doing nothing, and this program brought me back." Before participating in Justice Corps, most young people reported spending their time either at home or "on the streets." Participants explained that while it was a challenging process, the Justice Corps activities helped them create new habits and routines that helped them change their behavior.

In addition to providing participants with a safe and structured environment, participants indicated that specific program components such as the CBT curriculum, legal services (including record expungement), certifications (particularly the OSHA certification), and the CBP helped them change their criminal behavior. The cognitive behavioral skills they learned through the CBT curriculum aided them in changing how they interacted with each other, program staff, and the world around them. The legal services and certifications removed significant barriers to employment. For many, employment made criminal behavior less appealing and raised the stakes of further justice-system involvement. One

participant reported, "I've got things to live for now." Others echoed this sentiment, reporting they had an "I don't care" attitude that changed after entering the program. Further, participating in the CBP fostered a greater appreciation for their community and was another factor in shifting their behavior. One participant noted that before the program, they had a negative attitude and did not want to cooperate with others, but that the program gave them a greater sense of community and a desire to help their community and their peers. As one participant expressed, "Growing up, I always wanted to help people who were less fortunate than me, you know, see their struggles, and so I like this project because I get to give back to my community." Other participants considered the CBP a chance for them to transform their life direction and purpose, and to rethink their contribution to "the world." One participant explained that they used to "put a lot of negativity out there [in the world]" and that the CBP gave them a shot at redemption—to give back to the community and reconfigure their sense of "self."

Justice Corps participants and alumni also credited their development of conflict resolution and communication skills for transforming the way they interact with the people in their lives. In particular, program staff noted that participants affiliated with gangs improved their ability to resolve conflict and decreased their involvement in gang activity. Staff explained that Justice Corps brought youths from different gangs together without incident and helped them interact in a constructive way. As one participant stated, "I actually had problems with someone in the streets and we came here and settled it [...] I never thought I would do that. I never thought I would squash beef with my enemy." Another participant noted, "When you get into a situation you realize it's not even worth it, conflict resolution, you just walk away and get about your day." By gaining communication and conflict resolution skills, participants said they learned firsthand how they could improve their relationships outside of the program and have healthier responses to conflict.

Outcome Findings

Drawing on program data from the 301 participants who were enrolled and active in Justice Corps during the study period from January 2016 to September 2017, Urban researchers conducted an evaluation of participant outcomes. Urban focused its quantitative data analysis on the following research questions:

- How did participants fare on outcomes targeted by the Justice Corps Program?
- How do these outcomes vary by site and other factors (e.g., age, cohort, education level at enrollment, criminal history, and risk assessment score)?

Additionally, the outcome analysis examines participants' educational and professional goals and how they relate to the sector focus in each site, as well as differences in participant outcomes across the four sites, across the three cohorts enrolled during the study period, and across different demographics.

Key Outcomes

This outcome evaluation focuses on key outcomes related to (1) program engagement and (2) employment (e.g., full-time/part-time, earnings) and non-employment placement of participants. Table 3 offers a summary of key Justice Corps outcomes: nearly 61 percent of Justice Corps participants graduated from the program, with 25.9 percent receiving an employment placement and 31.9 percent receiving a non-employment placement (e.g., education, vocational training program, or youth development program). Participants who received an employment placement earned an average of nearly $11 an hour[14] and worked slightly less than 30 hours a week.

TABLE 3

Justice Corps Outcomes

	Count	Percent
Total Enrolled	**301**	--
Program status		
Graduated	182	60.5
Still engaged	11	3.7
Expired	70	23.3
Discharged/Suspended/Withdrawn	38	12.6
Placement status		
Received an employment placement	78	25.9
Share of jobs that were full-time	39	50.0
Weekly earnings (mean)	$305.97	--
Hourly wage (mean)	$10.98	--
Hours worked per week (mean)	27.86	--
Received a non-employment placement	96	31.9
Academic	63	20.9
Vocational	29	9.6
Youth	4	1.3
Received employment OR non-employment placements	146	48.5
Received employment AND non-employment placement	28	9.3
Total early placements	99	32.9

Note: Expired participants are individuals whose one-year program window has ended.

PERFORMANCE TARGETS

PRI also monitored the program's performance against a set of benchmarks for the number of participants enrolled, graduated, and placed. The performance targets that follow were intended to

examine program outcomes on an annual basis related to the number of participants enrolled, graduated, and placed:

- Number of participants enrolled: 160 per year
- Number of participants graduated: 88 per year (55 percent of participants enrolled)
- Number of placements (across all placement types): 64 placements per year (40 percent of participants enrolled)

Urban researchers analyzed data on a subset of participants—enrolled in cohorts one and two from November 2015 through December 2016—to examine outcomes related to the annual performance targets. The outcomes are presented in table 4 and demonstrate that the program outcomes were on track with the initial performance targets for enrollment, graduation, and placement rates.

TABLE 4

Performance Target Outcomes

	Count	Percent
Total Enrolled	**205**	--
Program status		
Graduated	118	**57.6**
Placement status		
Received an employment placement	59	28.8
Received a non-employment placement	72	35.1
Total participant placements (unduplicated)	122	**59.5**

Note: Performance target outcomes are in bold.

PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT

In addition to outcomes on participants' program status (see table 3), the Justice Corps sites collected participant engagement data throughout the three Justice Corps phases. Table 5 provides estimates of the total number of participants enrolled in each phase. Of the 301 participants recruited and enrolled in phase 1, 83.4 percent successfully transitioned to phase 2 when early employment and non-employment placements were initiated. Nearly 35 percent of program participants were engaged in some form of alumni services (e.g., career counseling, education training).

TABLE 5

Program Design Enrollment and Completion

	Count	Percent
Phase		
Orientation	301	--
Completed Phase 1	271	90.0
Community Benefit Project	251	83.4
Completed Phase 2	183	60.8
Alumni Services	113	34.9

Note: This does not include participants who were reenrolled into the program.

To a lesser degree, participants could reenroll in a later cohort if they could not finish the program in their current one. Justice Corps providers were permitted to reenroll up to 10 percent of participants in a later cohort. During the study period, less than 14 participants (4.6 percent of the total phase 1 enrollment) reenrolled in phase 1 services in a later cohort.

A cornerstone of the Justice Corps program was to build community service engagement among its participants. Stemming from their involvement in phase 2, participants took part in a range of types of community benefit projects, including community beautification (33.6 percent), social service (12.6 percent), space renovation (34.7 percent), and projects that combined social services/beautification (19.1 percent). On average, participants recorded 53.9 hours at their CBP site working on the community project.

Program engagement was also examined through participation in trainings, certifications, and completion of job-readiness tasks. Generally, participants had high rates of completion for trainings on budgeting and presentation skills (90 percent) and the first of two employment readiness credentials (68 percent), the second employment readiness credential had a 33.9 percent completion rate (less than half the rate of the first) which may have been because of early placement referrals or participants only needing or wanting one credential.

PLACEMENTS

Placing participants into employment and non-employment (e.g., education, vocational training, or youth development program) opportunities was a central component of the Justice Corps program. Administrative data reveals that among the 31.9 percent of participants who received a (first-time) non-

employment placement, the majority (52.1 percent) received placements that were academic in nature. Data were also collected on individuals placed more than once during their participation in the Justice Corps program.

The redesign of the Justice Corps program introduced a new component—the inclusion of early placements—intended to help participants who were ready for a job shortly after the intake and orientation phase. Program staff made this determination based on their own observations of participants' demonstration of skills such as communication, time management, and readiness for employment. Between September 2016 and May 2017, 98 participants (32.6 percent of all participants) were placed after completing at least five weeks of the program (see table 6), the majority of whom (54.1 percent of early—first time—placements) received non-employment opportunities (e.g., academic, vocational, and youth). Participants could only be placed early if they completed the first five weeks of the program, which included participation in the CBT groups and the CBP, as well as working on their case management plan with their case manager or life coach.

TABLE 6

Early Placements

	Count	Percent
Employment	45	45.9
Non-employment	53	54.1
Academic	34	34.7
Vocational	15	15.3
Youth	4	4.1
Total	**98**	

Note: This analysis only includes the first early placement on record for participants.

Participant Goals and Sector Focus

To better understand the nuances of the sector- focus (e.g., construction, customer service, retail, or technology), as well as how sites' program activities aligned with participant needs, we examined the range of participants' professional and educational goals. Box 1 provides a list of the program sites and their respective sector focus.

BOX 1

Sector Focus of Justice Corps Sites

- Bronx: Customer Service
- Brooklyn and Queens: Customer Service/Retail and Technology
- Harlem: Construction

Of the participants who indicated a primary education goal (n=270), 71.1 percent specified they wanted to complete an HSE or GED program; 18.9 percent indicated they wanted to go to college; and 10 percent said they wanted to go to a technical or trade school. For participants who indicated a single professional goal or career interest (n=194), 15.6 percent revealed they were interested in construction—Harlem's sector focus—while fewer preferred professions in business (12.9 percent) and education (10.8 percent). The overwhelming majority revealed they had "other" career aspirations (41.8 percent). Furthermore, the data did not specify goals or interests that represented the customer service, retail, or technology sectors, although these may be included in the "other" category. Based on this, the sector focus does not appear to represent participants' professional goals or career interests. With the majority of participants indicating "other" career aspirations, participants may benefit from a less specific sector focus.

Site Characteristics

To assess the degree to which the Justice Corps program sites differed in their influence on program participants, Urban examined several participant outcomes across sites. Appendix B illustrates key outcomes across the four sites. Program sites did not differ significantly in their rates of graduation, with 54 to 66 percent of all participants completing the necessary graduation requirements (e.g., work readiness tasks, résumé, NYS ID).

Data revealed that sites also did not differ in terms of their overall rate of placements, though the nature of those placements significantly did. Brooklyn participants were more likely to receive a part-time job, and, as a result, work fewer hours and receive less earnings. Bronx participants had full-time jobs that paid $12.49 an hour, significantly more (about $2 an hour more) than participants earned at other sites. In terms of non-employment placements, participants in Brooklyn and Queens were significantly more likely to receive an academic placement, while Harlem participants were more likely to receive a vocational placement. Overall, data revealed similar rates of success for primary

engagement and placement outcomes across sites, revealing relative consistency in site-specific achievement, independent of site characteristics.

Cohort Characteristics

To understand whether changes in Justice Corps program operations occurred over time, Urban also examined differences in participant outcomes by cohort. During the outcome evaluation study period, three cohorts were examined. The first cohort (cohort 1) consisted of participants whose program start date was from January 4, 2016 to February 8, 2016; the second cohort (cohort 2) consisted of participants with program start dates from July 11, 2016 to August 18, 2016; and the third cohort (cohort 3) consisted of participants with program start dates from January 17, 2017 to February 8, 2017. Based on the study period (January 2016 to September 2017), different amounts of time had elapsed for each cohort; Justice Corps staff had the longest amount of time to graduate and place youth in cohort 1, but had less time to graduate and place youth in cohort 2 and still less for cohort 3. When examining graduation rates and placements, the outcome evaluation did not control for the difference in the amount of time elapsed in each cohort. Therefore, no strict comparisons can be made across the different cohorts; Urban presents cohort differences below and in appendix B for contextual purposes only.

Data revealed that graduation rates, overall, increased over time among all three cohorts. While all three cohorts had similar graduation outcomes, cohorts 1 and 2 differ from cohort 3 in their rates of employment and non-employment placements. Participants in cohorts 1 and 2 were nearly twice as likely to receive an employment or non-employment placement as participants in cohort 3. Of marginal significance, participants in cohort 3 had higher rates of full-time employment placements, resulting in higher rates of average weekly earnings.

Additional Factors

To better understand how individual factors affected participant outcomes, Urban examined placement and program outcomes by age, education, criminal justice involvement, risk level, gender, parental status, race, and ethnicity. As shown in table 7 (see appendix C for the full bivariate results), additional bivariate analyses reveal several significant patterns. Participants who were high-risk, male, or Hispanic were statistically less likely to graduate from the program; African American participants were also more likely to graduate. Moreover, a larger percentage of enrolled males (42 percent) did not graduate

the program when compared with females. In contrast, 9 out of the 40 enrolled females did not graduate (22.5 percent).

African American and Hispanic participants also experienced significant differences in terms of employment and non-employment placements. Although the rate of employment placements for African American and Hispanic participants were statistically similar, Hispanic participants were significantly more likely to receive full-time employment, which resulted in significantly more hours and earnings per week. African Americans, however, received significantly more vocational training placements and overall (employment and non-employment) placements.

Placement outcomes by age and prior education seem to reflect a core Justice Corps principle—that program staff focus on participants' needs when providing access to placement opportunities. Participants who received education placements were significantly younger and less likely to have a high school degree or equivalent. Individuals with a high school equivalent degree were, correspondingly, more likely to receive an employment or vocational placement. Additionally, participants with a degree were also more likely to receive an employment placement, and it was more likely to be full-time, aligning with financial support needs of parents.

TABLE 7

Analyses of Outcomes, by Additional Factors

	Age (years)			HSE Degree	Parole	High Risk	Male	Has Child	Black	Hispanic
	< 20	20–21	≥ 22							
Program Status										
Graduated	53.1%	61.4%	65.8%	61.6%	52.9%	54.1%^{t}	57.9%*	64.2%	63.6%^{t}	50.7%*
Job Placement	19.8%	27.3%	29.9%	33.3%*	24.3%	23.0%	24.9%	39.6%*	2.6%	18.8%
Full-time	42.1%	41.7%	60.0%	45.5%	70.6%^{t}	58.8%	50.8%	66.7%^{t}	41.0%*	92.3%***
Earnings	$285.76	$280.13	$334.66	$286.20	$363.13^{t}	$343.74	$314.94	$296.38	$287.35^{t}	$376.92*
Wages	$10.71	$10.64	$11.36	$10.56	$10.47	$10.60	$11.10	$10.85	$10.89	$11.35
Hours worked	25.6	26.2	30.2	26.8	34.4**	31.9^{t}	28.4	27.7	26.4	33.8*
Non-employment	27.1%	18.2%	16.2%	17.2%	14.3%	12.2%*	19.5%	15.1%	21.9 %*	14.5%
Academic	24.0%***	6.8%	8.5%	5.1%**	10.0%	5.4%*	12.6%	13.2%	13.2%	8.7%
Vocational	2.1%	10.2%	6.0%	11.1%**	2.9%	6.8%	5.4%	1.9%	7.5%^{t}	4.3%
Youth	1.0%	1.1%	1.7%	1.0%	1.4%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	1.3%	1.4%
Total Placements	43.8%	38.6%	41.0%	45.5%	37.1%	33.8%^{t}	40.6%	43.4%	43.4%*	29.0%*

Notes: Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests, ANOVA tests, and t-tests, as appropriate; statistically significant differences are noted by: $^{t}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$. Bivariate analyses were also conducted for probation status but are not shown in this table because results were not significant. Bivariate results can be found in appendix C, tables 1-9.

Discussion of Findings

Drawing on the implementation and outcome findings described above, the following section synthesizes the evaluation's key findings and responds to each set of research questions. In each discussion, the researchers highlight the implementation strengths and challenges they identified based on their understanding of the Justice Corps program.

Program (Re)Design. The program redesign fostered an overall sense of flexibility with implementing the program. The flexibility was beneficial because it encouraged providers to infuse their organizational missions into the program activities and services and allowed them to more easily reengage with participants. The concept of early placement was also valuable as it provided staff an opportunity to meet youths' needs—especially youth who had shown an aptitude and readiness for employment—by placing them quickly after their enrollment in the program. Early placement was also beneficial to employers, who could employ participants on a trial basis, and to participants, who would continue to receive case management and support while they were placed.

One of the important things [for successful employment programming] is the ability to have programs that [serve as] bridges to their communities, and able to build connections into economic opportunities."
—Margaret Simms, PhD, Former Institute Fellow and Director, Low-Income Working Families Initiative, Urban Institute

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However, the program redesign presented two challenges, the sector focus and the budget cuts, which resulted in the loss of onsite HSE classes. Also, while the budget cuts forced the providers to establish new partnerships with community-based organizations to leverage external services previously provided in-program, they also created challenges for staff in managing partners' expectations and for participants in managing their commitments across multiple programs or placements (potentially limiting participants' engagement in Justice Corps).

Early Placement. Participants were placed in jobs, educational, and/or vocational training programs before completing Justice Corps. Early placement was a valuable addition to the program because it gave program staff the option to "fast track" participants who were ready to join the workforce or engage in additional programming/training. In accordance with best practices in the field, this allowed

providers to meet youths' varied needs, allocate more time to work with the higher-need participants, and provide youth with support and case management while they were placed, helping improve participants' retention in jobs or programming. However, providers had to adjust the Justice Corps schedule so participants placed early could still attend activities. and participants still found it challenging to fulfill their placement commitments while adequately engaging with Justice Corps.

Sector Focus. Participants and program staff felt the sector focus was not beneficial to program participants. The sector focus ran counter to the way providers wanted to implement the program. Program staff wanted to focus on the individual interests of participants, but also felt the need to provide training, services, or select CBP sites in line with their sector focus, which limited participants' exposure to different skill sets and jobs. While the sector focus gave participants a "starting point" when considering their job interests and helped them gain a broad skillset applicable to a wide range of jobs, the sector focuses often did not match participants' specific job interests. Program staff also expressed that the sector focus constrained their thinking around training, placements, and CBP sites. Because the sector focus was often not aligned with participants' interests, it was challenging for staff to engage youth around sector-focused activities. While some skills resonated with participants, there was sometimes a disconnect between participants' job interests and the hard employment skills and training Justice Corps provided.

Collaboration and Coordination. While all providers fostered partnerships with employers, placement destinations, and other community-based organizations, the evaluation cannot fully speak to collaboration and coordination because of the small number of referrals to placement destinations (e.g., employers, schools, training programs) Urban received from the Justice Corps providers. However, through the interviews Urban conducted with provider staff, researchers learned they built these partnerships by speaking with local employers about the Justice Corps program and asking about their hiring needs and job qualifications. A successful strategy staff used with employers was to explain that Justice Corps absorbed the risk of hiring a participant while the employer hired the young people on a trial basis. Furthermore, providers prepared participants for employment at specific businesses or industries by tailoring the program activities to meet employers' needs. This included offering employer-specific trainings, connecting youth to certification classes, or providing them with necessary work supplies or clothing.

Variations in Implementation. Program implementation varied widely across the sites, particularly around recruitment strategies, CBT curricula, CBP site selection and execution, and alumni engagement. This was a strength of the program—flexibility allowed the sites to implement innovative solutions and adapt them over time to ensure they met participants' needs. However, differences in

implementation can pose challenges to establishing a uniform theory of change for the program, monitoring providers' performance, offering staff training or support, and evaluating the impact of the program**.** While the extant literature has shown that employment decreases recidivism, the scope of this evaluation did not involve quantitatively examining justice (e.g., recidivism) and workforce readiness outcomes. Rather, according to participants' and staff members' perspectives, the dual goals of recidivism reduction and workforce readiness were mutually reinforcing. Staff conceptualized the two goals in tandem and understood the logic between placing youth in jobs, education, or vocational training programs and having them reduce their criminal behavior. Because Justice Corps provided youth with alternatives—legitimate jobs and a safe place to learn new cognitive behavioral skills—program staff perceived participants to be less interested in criminal behavior.

Participant Experiences. Participants were overwhelmingly satisfied with the program, particularly the caring staff, support services (e.g., meals, transportation assistance), and the vocational training and certification classes. Participants found the safe environment and the focus on communication and conflict resolution skills taught in the CBT component to be critical in reducing their criminal behavior and improving their relationships. The CBP also provided participants opportunities to give back to their communities and think positively about their life purpose, decreasing their tendencies toward criminal behavior. In contrast, participants found it challenging to balance their placement schedules with Justice Corps activities, find child care to avoid missing a day of Justice Corps, and fill their time when the CBP was canceled. Despite these challenges, participants viewed Justice Corps positively and indicated the program changed their lives for the better.

Participant Outcomes. While the outcome evaluation was not designed to quantitatively assess justice-focused behavior and outcomes (i.e., Urban did not collect administrative data from criminal justice agencies to analyze participants' justice-related outcomes), the analysis did examine participant outcomes related to program engagement and employment (e.g., full-time/part-time, earnings, etc.) and non-employment placement of participants. Based on the administrative data Urban analyzed on the participants enrolled and active in the program during the study period (January 2016 to September 2017), nearly 61 percent of Justice Corps participants graduated from the program, with 25.9 percent of all enrollees receiving an employment placement and 31.9 percent of all enrollees receiving a non-employment placement (i.e., education, vocational training program, or youth development program). The average person that received an employment placement earned nearly $11 an hour and worked slightly less than 30 hours a week.

When examining participant outcomes across sites and additional demographic factors, graduation rates did not significantly differ across sites—54 to 66 percent of all participants completed all the

necessary graduation requirements. Hispanic participants were significantly more likely to receive full-time employment, which resulted in significantly more hours and earnings per week. African Americans, however, received significantly more vocational placements and overall (employment and non-employment) placements. Participants who received education placements were significantly younger and less likely to have a high school degree or equivalent. Individuals with a high school equivalent degree upon enrolling in the program were, correspondingly, more likely to receive an employment or vocational placement.

Considerations for Future Programming

Drawing on the information gathered through its evaluation, Urban identified several considerations for the next phase of youth programming in New York City. Through the evaluation, Urban collected information from Justice Corps participants, staff members, and stakeholders about implementation challenges and recommended solutions. Based on this information, Urban proposes a set of considerations intended to inform future investments in young people in New York City, including those who are justice-involved. Although these considerations are presented through the lens of the Justice Corps program and are built on examples specific to Justice Corps, they are intended as broad recommendations for the City's future efforts to serve and support youth.[15]

In November 2017, Urban shared the preliminary evaluation findings with Justice Corps program staff and provider agencies to inform the final months of program operation. The dialogue that ensued between researchers and program staff—along with the information gathered through the evaluation—informed the program-specific recommendations.

Broad recommendations for the City's consideration in future programming are as follows:

- **Providing services to at-risk youth can help them connect with their communities and achieve outcomes.** A challenge that Justice Corps participants frequently identified was that they had family members, friends, or acquaintances who may have benefited from the program but were ineligible because they were not justice-involved. By serving at-risk youth and providing holistic services to communities, future programming can connect youth to employment, educational, and training services in the community and potentially deter young peoples' future criminal activity. If the City serves at-risk youth who are not justice involved, all youth can develop, grow, create peer networks, and contribute to their communities together. It is also important for future programs to use strengths, risk, and needs assessments to inform

the appropriate types and dosages of program services for each youth, and to identify additional referrals or services the youth may need.

- **Providing services to families can help provide stability for youth.** Justice Corps staff reported that participants' family members were often also in need of support around cognitive behavioral development, skills building, education, and employment. Future programming should include classes on building positive family relationships, referrals to employment resources, assistance with resume writing and job applications, parent support groups, or other case management support for youths' family members. These services can help stabilize the family and, in turn, support youth during and after their program involvement.
- **Engaging with prospective participants before programs start can bolster recruitment and enrollment.** A repeated challenge Justice Corps staff identified was their limited availability to engage with prospective program participants between cohorts. This led staff to lose contact with some of the prospective participants and fail to enroll all interested youth. The next phase of youth programming should identify and use techniques for engaging with youth early and keeping them interested in the program until services begin. This engagement could include completing assessments, referring youth to other services in the community, case management, mentoring, or support groups with other interested youth. Providing these services to prospective participants would allow program staff to better engage youth in between cohorts or before programming, and potentially serve more participants who are interested in the program.
- **Providing targeted, onsite educational services can help participants stay engaged with other program activities.** Justice Corps staff and participants repeatedly identified the need for onsite HSE classes, a core component of the initial Justice Corps models. Onsite educational or HSE classes would offer youth a safe environment to take classes with peers who share similar experiences (e.g., justice involvement or disconnection from school) and help youth remain engaged with other program activities. Because youths' educational needs and levels of readiness to engage in classes widely vary, educational services should be tailored and designed to serve those who are ready to engage in classes. Programs should also connect youth to additional educational services in the community such as tutoring, post-secondary classes, vocational training opportunities, and programs for youth with disabilities.
- **Offering internships to youth can help them explore job opportunities.** Because youth are often at different levels of readiness for employment, an internship can help "meet youth where they are at." Internships can provide formal work experience for youth who may not have

employment histories, as well as those who may not be ready for full-time employment; an internship can offer youth an opportunity to try out a job. Internships may also be attractive for employers who do not want to fully commit to hiring somebody and would prefer to hire them on a trial basis. Essentially, employers have an opportunity to try out a candidate and can hire them for a part-or full-time position should they be satisfied with their work.

- **Exposing youth to various industries can allow them to find their job interests.** Based on the challenges Justice Corps staff reported with the sector focus, future programming should expose youth to a wide array of employment sectors, jobs, and careers. This will help youth identify jobs that match their interests and skills. Moreover, partnering with businesses in the trade industries can help place youth in employment opportunities, or vocational or on-the-job training programs. This type of training can provide an alternative for youths who are not ready to engage in more traditional HSE or educational programs. Also, programs can look for ways to partner with City agencies to provide placement opportunities in government agencies or City-funded positions (e.g., public works, maintenance, landscaping, transportation).
- **Structured aftercare services can support participant retainment in programming and help support them after formal program completion.** Justice Corps participants suggested expanding the breadth of aftercare services and increasing supports for helping youth navigate additional barriers after program completion. Services such as mentoring or support groups can help sustain youths' engagement with program services and overcome challenges they may face after finishing the core program. Specifically, using past program participants as peer mentors can provide youth with insight and support during their time in the program, as well as create a support network in the community.
- **By building partnerships with local organizations and service providers, programs can help participants overcome barriers to engagement and provide them additional supports.** Participants identified challenges such as lack of child care or transportation that hindered their ability to fully engage with Justice Corps. To help participants overcome these types of barriers, future programs should collaborate with local organizations to provide participants additional support services. Through partnerships, programs can fill gaps in their service offerings or provide complementary services to meet youths' needs so they are able to actively participate in program activities. Moreover, within programs, organizations may have varying levels of capacity to provide supplemental services, and should attempt to leverage internal resources, lean on fellow program sites, and build external partnerships to fill youths' service needs.

"Targeting [young adults, ages] 18-24, is too late. I think it's worth thinking more about elementary and middle school age students who are showing risk signs…identifying youth that are exhibiting concerns and providing support at that point. I think we need to be more preventative rather than providing an intervention."
—Michelle S. Manno, MS, Research Associate, MDRC

- **Monitoring and evaluating the program's performance will inform refinements and future investments.** To ensure programming meets its intended objectives, it is important to engage in routine program monitoring and evaluation. Program evaluation also helps practitioners identify ways of refining or improving the program to better meet participants' needs. For example, capturing data on the amount of time staff engage with participants can help inform decisions around staffing—knowing how many staff members there are, at what levels, and in what structure, as well as how much effort it requires to fully engage with youth. Future evaluations of programming should use an action research approach and allow program staff and stakeholders to inform the evaluation design and research questions. This will help ensure the research is guided by an "on-the-ground" understanding of programming, and strengthen the partnership between researchers and practitioners. Finally, evaluations should not only examine longer-term outcomes, but capture participants' intermediate outcomes such as readiness to change, emotional self-awareness, capacity for conflict management, ability to address interpersonal distress, and feelings of community attachment. To assess these interim outcomes, evaluations may consider using participant surveys to document youths' perceived changes in their self-efficacy, self-esteem, or sense of belonging over time.
- **Although program fidelity is important, practitioners should be allowed flexibility when delivering services.** One of the major strengths of the Justice Corps program, as noted by program staff, was the flexibility they had while implementing the program. This flexibility created opportunities for each provider to incorporate their organizational missions into the program offerings, as well as use their staff's expertise and knowledge of local resources when implementing program activities. Looking ahead, organizations and partners responsible for program implementation should be allowed to retain their individualized approaches and should be encouraged to develop and adapt innovative solutions over time to continuously meet youths' needs.

Conclusion

The Justice Corps program was implemented in a context marked by several New York City systems-change initiatives. First, Justice Corps was originally funded by NYC Opportunity, an agency whose mission is to design, implement, and evaluate policy and program interventions intended to combat poverty and increase equity for New York City residents, including justice-involved youth and young adults. In 2012, Justice Corps was expanded with funding from YMI, a comprehensive, multi-program public-private strategy to engage boys and young men of color in achieving personal, professional, and academic goals. Launched by former Mayor Michael Bloomberg, YMI aimed to improve outcomes, decrease recidivism, and reduce criminogenic activity among the justice-involved population. Second, New York City has undergone juvenile justice system reform, including implementing the Close to Home initiative and alternative to placement (ATP) programs. Following the enactment of state-level legislation, the Close to Home initiative was designed to place incarcerated juveniles in the city so that they could be closer to their families; encourage the use of evidence-based tools to assess youths' risks, strengths, and needs; expand alternative placement options and programs; and provide residential services to youth in placement. Also, the New York City Department of Probation (DOP) expanded its continuum of ATP programs and options to offer more appropriate services to youth and families. Third, and in line with the Close to Home initiative, DOP has shifted its culture and practices to align with keeping youth closer to their homes, families, and social networks. One example of this is the Neighborhood Opportunity Networks (NeONs) where DOP is co-located alongside community-based organizations, government agencies, and employment and education organizations to better serve justice-involved youth in their communities. Together these efforts have created the backdrop against which Justice Corps was developed, implemented, and evaluated.

Using an action research framework, Urban's implementation and outcome evaluation sought to document the implementation of Justice Corps and assess participant outcomes. The implementation evaluation was designed to describe strengths and challenges of the program as perceived by program staff, participants, and stakeholders, as well as identify actionable recommendations for program improvement and considerations for future programming for justice-involved youth in New York City. The outcome evaluation aimed to measure participant outcomes related to program engagement, placements, and earnings. Based on the analysis and synthesis of the information gathered through the evaluation, the research team identified several key findings:

- **The program redesign improved service delivery by offering early placement and encouraging providers to be flexible with implementation.** Program staff thought early placement was an important improvement of the program redesign, which allowed them to

continue to support participants during their placements. The program's flexibility allowed the Justice Corps providers to infuse their organizational missions into program activities and to implement innovative solutions to meet participants' needs.

"For young people whose brains are still changing, we not only need to be able to provide them with programs, but adapt programs [to fit] those individual needs"
—Cynthia W. Roseberry, JD, Former Federal Defender and Former Manager of Clemency Project 2014

- **The sector focus and budget cuts introduced in the program redesign presented challenges to program implementation.** Although the sector focus exposed youth to potential job interests and offered participants a wide set of job readiness skills, it oftentimes did not align with participants' job interests and narrowed providers' approaches to providing training or selecting community benefit project (CBP) sites. As a result of the budget cuts, providers felt limited in the breadth and depth of services they could offer participants, forcing them to partner with other organizations to provide services such as high school equivalency classes.
- **While the program redesign and budget reductions prompted providers to partner with external organizations, providers and participants found it challenging to manage these relationships.** Providers had to manage their partners' expectations because they may not have had experience working with justice-involved youth and because some participants found it difficult to balance their commitments to multiple programs. Moreover, providers partnered with offsite educational programs to provide the high school equivalency classes. This presented challenges for providers, who had to manage the expectations of organizations who had never served justice-involved youth, and for participants, who had to juggle their educational classes and Justice Corps responsibilities.
- **Group-based and individualized cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) helped teach participants conflict resolution and communication skills.** According to participants, the skills they gained through the CBT positively influenced their interactions with program staff, people in their communities, and each other. Program staff noted that this helped youth decrease their

gang involvement and provided participants with tools to constructively interact with other young gang members in the program.

- **Program participants and staff considered the workforce readiness services and certifications to be critical program components.** Participants valued the workforce readiness activities, which allowed them to cultivate a wide set of job readiness skills applicable to any job context, and the ability to earn certifications such as Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10, flagging, maintenance, and computer literacy. Participants reported that these skills, along with finding employment, gave them "something to live for" and reduced their interest in criminal behavior.
- **The CBPs provided youth with opportunities to practice the hard and soft skills learned through the program as well as connect with their communities**. Participants appreciated the CBP component because it offered them an opportunity to take ownership of a project and contribute to their local communities. The CBPs also allowed participants to practice the hard and soft skills they learned, as well as reflect on their own life purpose. Participants reported that the CBPs, along with self-reflection, helped them refrain from criminal behavior.
- **Participants were satisfied with the program and appreciated its service offerings.** Participants felt the staff cared about them and were committed to their growth and well-being. Participants also valued the support services such as food and transportation assistance.

By building on these key findings, Urban's recommendations are intended to inform the development and implementation of youth programming more broadly in New York City. These findings and recommendations come at an opportune time as New York City looks to implement the next iteration of justice reform efforts, such as the Raise the Age legislation and the Close Rikers Island Jail campaign. The Raise the Age legislation, signed in 2017 by Governor Andrew Cuomo, raised the age at which juveniles are tried as adults from 16 to 18. This means the majority of cases involving 16- and 17-year-olds will be tried in Family Court, and youth ages 16 and 17 will not be sentenced to adult correctional facilities. The Close Rikers campaign is a 10-year strategic plan for New York City to reduce the jail population, close Rikers Island, and replace it with a smaller network of jails. In conjunction with closing Rikers, the City will implement new programs and services in the community to divert people and youth from incarceration and reduce recidivism. As City administrators and agencies look to carry out these initiatives and plan the next phase of justice services in the City, Urban hopes these findings are helpful in distilling lessons learned and supporting future programming for justice-involved youth.

Appendix A. Evolution of the Justice Corps Program

Established with funding from NYC Opportunity in 2008 and expanded with further funding from YMI in 2012, Justice Corps was designed to support justice-involved young adults through workforce development services and recidivism risk reduction strategies. Justice Corps launched as a six-month pilot program in FY 2008 in neighborhoods in the Bronx and Brooklyn. To be eligible for Justice Corps, young adults ages 18 to 24 were required to reside in "catchment areas"[16] in these neighborhoods. The program's pilot phase was implemented by two service providers: Phipps Neighborhoods (then Phipps Community Development Corporation) and Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation. The pilot phase was the first of three iterations of the Justice Corps program (for more about the three Justice Corps iterations, see table A.1).

Building off the pilot, the original Justice Corps program ("1.0 Model") was implemented in the Bronx and Brooklyn. The 1.0 Model consisted of four phases: (1) orientation, (2) community benefit project, (3) internship placement, and (4) alumni services. Services included work readiness and job placement, support services (e.g., case management and life skills workshops), and financial incentives designed to reduce the risk of recidivism and connect youth to employment, postsecondary, or vocational placements. In its second year, Justice Corps launched an education component with onsite pre-HSE courses and educational services, and extended job readiness services throughout the program cycle to enhance education gains and strengthen bridges to employment.

In 2009, Westat and Metis Associates, two research and consulting organizations, released a Preliminary Implementation Report describing the implementation of Justice Corps in the first year of operation (Tapper et al. 2009). Synthesizing data collected through interviews, focus groups, program observations, and a review of program data and materials, researchers documented program start-up and identified lessons learned from the initial program design. In particular, researchers found that although it was challenging to place participants from the first two cohorts in internships, postsecondary education, or employment, program retention was high—just over 70 percent of participants completed the program.

Building on this initial implementation assessment, Westat conducted an implementation and outcome evaluation of Justice Corps from October 2008 through August 2012 (Bauer et al. 2014). Drawing on information collected through stakeholder and program staff interviews, focus groups with

program participants and program staff, surveys of young adults, administrative databases, and program data, Westat found that the program improved participants' employment outcomes, but did not achieve the intended educational and criminal justice outcomes. Justice Corps participants were employed at higher rates and earned wages 44 percent higher during the two years post-program than a comparison group of youths in NYC.[17] However, Westat's evaluation did not show significant differences between Justice Corps participants and the comparison group on educational status, future plans for education, or justice-related outcomes (e.g., arrests that led to convictions). Moreover, the evaluation found that participants' perspectives toward the program were overwhelmingly positive. The young adults found that the community service component was most important. They also reported that they learned skills like communication, leadership, and teamwork that increased their employability.

Drawing on the key findings from the previous evaluations, NYC Opportunity and YMI funded a redesigned Justice Corps ("2.0 Model") in FY 2012. While the structure, goals, and target population of the program stayed the same, the program expanded to a target enrollment rate of 250-300 across the Bronx, Jamaica, Queens, Harlem, and neighborhoods in Brooklyn (Bedford–Stuyvesant, Brownsville, Bushwick, and East New York). Additionally, with increased funding, the program incorporated a validated risk/needs/strengths assessment and case management planning toolkit as well as cognitive behavioral intervention programming to respond to participants' growing social and emotional needs.

In FY 2016, NYC Opportunity and YMI funded another redesign ("3.0 Model"), and the program was scaled down to enroll 160 justice-involved young adults across the same sites as the 2.0 Model. The program was changed to include three phases of programming lasting three to four months with one to two months of follow-up alumni services. Together, the phases included (1) orientation, (2) a community benefit project, and (3) alumni services. In the 3.0 Model, services were expanded to include sector-focus work readiness and career exploration services; "bridges" between program and placement destinations; programming targeted at increasing literacy and numeracy; scaling up cognitive behavioral interventions; and additional emphasis on employment-readiness credentials and placement retention.

TABLE A.1.

NYC Justice Corps – Program Model Iterations[18]

	1.0 Model (FY08–FY11)	**2.0 Model (FY12–FY15)**	**3.0 Model (launch FY16)**
Budget	$3–4.9m (CEO)	$4.5–5.1m (CEO/YMI)	$2.4m (CEO/YMI)
Sites	Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem[19]	Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem, Queens	
Population	▪ Moderate to high criminogenic risk young adults 18 to 24 years old with current or recent justice system involvement ▪ FY2009 change: Enrollment criteria/orientation process refined to better target participants with motivation/commitment to complete program		
Enrollment target	250	250–300	160
Program timeline	26 weeks in program; 26 weeks in alumni phases **4 phases:** 1. Orientation 2. Community benefit project 3. Internship placement 4. Alumni services		15-19 weeks in program, with option for early placement after 5 weeks; 4-10-week alumni phase **3 phases:** 1. Orientation 2. Community Benefit Project 3. Alumni Services
Community benefit project process	**Renovation and beautification service projects conducted as follows:** ▪ Cohorts conduct community needs assessment ▪ Participants develop project scope, budget, and implementation plan for guidance and approval from Community Advisory Board ▪ Participants execute project with support from provider staff		**New additions:** Sector focus in project selection and execution, and emphasis on career exploration

	1.0 Model (FY08–FY11)	2.0 Model (FY12–FY15)	3.0 Model (launch FY16)
Services	▪ Work readiness/job placement ▪ Support services, including case management, life skills workshops ▪ Financial incentives **Year 2 changes**: ▪ Education component launched, with onsite pre-HSE courses ▪ Job readiness services delivery extended throughout program cycle	**New additions**: ▪ Validated risk/needs/strengths assessment and case management planning toolkit implemented in FY14 ▪ Cognitive behavioral intervention implemented in FY14	**New additions**: ▪ Expansion of cognitive behavioral interventions, including introduction of both individual and group interventions ▪ Sector-focused work readiness and career exploration services ▪ Strong and intentional "bridges" between program and placement destinations ▪ Limited literacy/numeracy development will remain where organic to program
Program goals	▪ Recidivism reduction ▪ Employment/post-secondary education/vocational placement ▪ Placement retention **Year 2 changes**: ▪ Education gains		**New additions**: ▪ Bridge to placement, including "next level" work readiness and youth development programs, vocational training, HSE, and post-secondary education placements, and employment ▪ Placement retention

Appendix B. Outcomes by Site and Cohort

TABLE B.1

Analyses of Outcomes, by Site

	Brooklyn (*n* = 76)	Queens (*n* = 76)	Harlem (*n* = 68)	The Bronx (*n* = 81)
Program status				
Graduated	65.8%	61.8%	54.4%	59.3%
Placement status				
Received an employment placement	28.9%	19.7%	27.9%	27.2%
Share of jobs that were full-time ***	9.1%	73.3%	63.2%	63.6%
Weekly earnings (mean) ***	$175.11	$368.22	$351.16	$355.36
Hourly wages (mean) *	$10.15	$10.28	$10.75	$12.49
Hours worked per week (mean) ***	17.5	35.5	32.4	29.1
Received a non-employment placement	23.7%	25.0%	20.6%	12.3%
Academic **	19.7%	19.7%	2.9%	8.6%
Vocational ***	3.9%	3.9%	17.6%	0.0%
Youth	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	3.7%
Received an employment or non-employment placement:				
All Participants	46.1%	40.8%	42.6%	35.8%
Graduated	54.0%	53.2%	62.2%	60.4%

Notes: Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests and ANOVA tests, as appropriate; statistically significant differences are noted by: $^{t}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

TABLE B.2

Analyses of Outcomes, by Cohort

	COHORT 1 (*n* = 107)	COHORT 2 (*n* = 97)	COHORT 3 (*n* = 87)
Program status			
Graduated	54.2%	60.8%	65.5%
Placement status			
Received an employment placement t	25.2%	32.0%	17.2%
Share of jobs that were full-time **	44.4%	35.5%	86.7%
Weekly earnings (mean) **	$302.77	$263.69	$399.27
Hourly wages (mean)	$11.29	$10.53	$11.77
Hours worked per week (mean) *	27.0	25.1	34.2
Received a non-employment placement	031.8%	39.2%	23.0%
Academic	022.4%	26.8%	14.9%
Vocational	09.3%	8.2%	8.0%
Youth	0.0%	4.1%	0.0%
Received an employment or non-employment placement ***	257.0%	60.8%	36.8%

Notes: Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed between cohorts using chi-square tests and ANOVA tests, as appropriate; statistically significant differences are noted by: $^{t}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Appendix C. Bivariate Data Analysis Tables

TABLE C.1

Outcomes by Age

	19 years old and younger (*n* = 96)	20–21 years old (*n* = 88)	22 years old and older (*n* = 117)
Program status			
Graduated	53.1%	61.4%	65.8%
Engaged	4.2%	4.5%	2.6%
Expired	29.2%	21.6%	19.7%
Discharged/Suspended/Withdrawn	13.5%	12.5%	12.0%
Received an employment placement	19.8%	27.3%	29.9%
Share of jobs that were full-time	42.1%	41.7%	60.0%
Weekly earnings (mean)	$285.76	$280.13	$334.66
Hourly wages (mean)	$10.71	$10.64	$11.36
Hours worked per week (mean)	25.6	26.2	30.2
Received a non-employment placement	27.1%	18.2%	16.2%
Academic ***	24.0%	6.8%	8.5%
Vocational	2.1%	10.2%	6.0%
Youth	1.0%	1.1%	1.7%
Received employment or non-employment placement	43.8%	38.6%	41.0%

Note: Age is defined as age at initial enrollment. Tests of statistically significant differences used the continuous age variable, rather than the categorical variable (displayed in the columns), and were assessed using t tests and regressions, as appropriate; $^{t}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

TABLE C.2

Outcomes by Education

	Less than HS degree (*n* = 199)	High school degree or equivalent (*n* = 99)
Program status		
Graduated	60.3%	61.6%
Engaged	4.5%	1.0%
Expired	25.6%	18.2%
Discharged/Suspended/Withdrawn *	9.5%	19.2%
Received an employment placement *	22.6%	33.3%
Share of jobs that were full-time	53.3%	45.5%
Weekly earnings (mean)	$320.47	$286.20
Hourly wages (mean)	$11.29	$10.56
Hours worked per week (mean)	28.6	26.8
Received a non-employment placement	22.1%	17.2%
Academic **	17.1%	5.1%
Vocational **	3.5%	11.1%
Youth	1.5%	1.0%
Received an employment or non-employment placement	39.7%	45.5%

Notes: Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests and two-tailed t-tests, as appropriate; statistically significant differences are noted by: $^{t}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

TABLE C.3

Outcomes by Probation

	Currently on probation (*n* = 104)	Other (*n* = 197)
Program status		
Graduated	65.4%	57.9%
Engaged	2.9%	4.1%
Expired	20.2%	24.9%
Discharged/Suspended/Withdrawn	11.5%	13.2%
Received an employment placement	29.8%	23.9%
Share of jobs that were full-time	45.2%	53.2%
Weekly earnings (mean)	$299.22	$310.43
Hourly wages (mean)	$11.52	$10.63
Hours worked per week (mean)	25.8	29.2
Received a non-employment placement	22.1%	19.3%
Academic	13.5%	12.7%
Vocational	6.7%	5.6%
Youth	1.9%	1.0%
Received an employment or non-employment placement	45.2%	39.1%

Notes: Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests and two-tailed t-tests, as appropriate; statistically significant differences are noted by: $^{t}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

TABLE C.4

Outcomes by Parole Status

	Currently on parole (n = 70)	Other (n = 231)
Program status		
Graduated	52.9%	62.8%
Engaged [t]	7.1%	2.6%
Expired	25.7%	22.5%
Discharged/Suspended/Withdrawn	14.3%	12.1%
Received an employment placement	24.3%	26.4%
Share of jobs that were full-time [t]	70.6%	44.3%
Weekly earnings (mean) [t]	$363.13	$290.04
Hourly wages (mean)	$10.47	$11.12
Hours worked per week (mean) [**]	34.4	26.0
Received a non-employment placement	14.3%	22.1%
Academic	10.0%	13.9%
Vocational	2.9%	6.9%
Youth	1.4%	1.3%
Received an employment or non-employment placement	37.1%	42.4%

Notes: Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests and two-tailed t-tests, as appropriate; statistically significant differences are noted by: [t]$p < 0.10$, [*]$p < 0.05$, [**]$p < 0.01$, [***]$p < 0.001$.

TABLE C.5

Outcomes by High Risk Status

	High risk (n = 74)	Low/medium risk (n = 216)
Program status		
Graduated [t]	54.1%	65.3%
Engaged	4.1%	3.2%
Expired	25.7%	22.7%
Discharged/Suspended/Withdrawn [t]	16.2%	8.8%
Received an employment placement	23.0%	28.2%
Share of jobs that were full-time	58.8%	47.5%
Weekly earnings (mean)	$343.74	$295.45
Hourly wages (mean)	$10.60	$11.09
Hours worked per week (mean) [t]	31.9	26.7
Received a non-employment placement [*]	12.2%	24.1%
Academic [*]	5.4%	16.2%
Vocational	6.8%	6.0%
Youth	0.0%	1.9%
Received an employment or non-employment placement [t]	33.8%	45.8%

Notes: Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests and ANOVA tests, as appropriate; statistically significant differences are noted by: [t]$p < 0.10$, [*]$p < 0.05$, [**]$p < 0.01$, [***]$p < 0.001$.

TABLE C.6

Outcomes by Race

	African American (*n* = 228)	Other (*n* = 63)
Program status		
Graduated [t]	63.6%	50.8%
Engaged	2.6%	3.2%
Expired	23.2%	23.8%
Discharged/Suspended/Withdrawn [*]	10.5%	22.2%
Received an employment placement	26.8%	22.2%
Share of jobs that were full-time [*]	41.0%	78.6%
Weekly earnings (mean) [t]	$ 287.35	$ 356.96
Hourly wages (mean)	$ 10.89	$ 11.36
Hours worked per week (mean)	26.4	31.8
Received a non-employment placement [*]	21.9%	9.5%
Academic	13.2%	7.9%
Vocational [t]	7.5%	1.6%
Youth	1.3%	0.0%
Received an employment or non-employment placement [*]	43.4%	28.6%

Notes: Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests and ANOVA tests, as appropriate; statistically significant differences are noted by: [t]p < 0.10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001.

TABLE C.7

Outcomes by Ethnicity

	Hispanic (*n* = 69)	Other (*n* = 216)
Program status		
Graduated [*]	50.7%	64.8%
Engaged	4.3%	2.3%
Expired	23.2%	22.7%
Discharged/Suspended/Withdrawn [*]	21.7%	10.2%
Received a job placement	18.8%	28.7%
Share of jobs that were full-time [***]	92.3%	40.3%
Weekly earnings (mean) [*]	$ 376.92	$ 283.96
Hourly wages (mean)	$ 11.35	$ 10.69
Hours worked per week (mean) [*]	33.8	26.3
Received a non-employment placement	14.5%	20.8%
Academic	8.7%	13.4%
Vocational	4.3%	6.9%
Youth	1.4%	0.5%
Received an employment or non-employment placement [*]	29.0%	44.4%

Notes: Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests and ANOVA tests, as appropriate; statistically significant differences are noted by: [t]p < 0.10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001.

TABLE C.8

Outcomes by Parental Status

	Has child (*n* = 53)	No child (*n* = 248)
Program status		
Graduated	64.2%	59.7%
Engaged	3.8%	3.6%
Expired	24.5%	23.0%
Discharged/Suspended/Withdrawn	7.5%	13.7%
Received an employment placement *	39.6%	23.0%
Share of jobs that were full-time †	66.7%	43.9%
Weekly earnings (mean)	$ 296.38	$ 309.51
Hourly wages (mean)	$ 10.85	$ 11.03
Hours worked per week (mean)	27.7	27.9
Received a non-employment placement	15.1%	21.4%
Academic	13.2%	12.9%
Vocational	1.9%	6.9%
Youth	0.0%	1.6%
Received an employment or non-employment placement	43.4%	40.7%

Notes: Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests and ANOVA tests, as appropriate; statistically significant differences are noted by: †$p < 0.10$, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$.

TABLE C.9

Outcomes by Gender

	Male (*n* = 261)	Female (*n* = 40)
Program status		
Graduated *	57.9%	77.5%
Engaged	4.2%	0.0%
Expired	23.8%	20.0%
Discharged/Suspended/Withdrawn *	14.2%	2.5%
Received an employment placement	24.9%	32.5%
Share of jobs that were full-time	50.8%	46.2%
Weekly earnings (mean)	$ 314.94	$ 261.11
Hourly wages (mean)	$ 11.10	$ 10.37
Hours worked per week (mean)	28.4	25.0
Received a non-employment placement	19.5%	25.0%
Academic	12.6%	15.0%
Vocational	5.4%	10.0%
Youth	1.5%	0.0%
Received an employment or non-employment placement	40.6%	45.0%

Notes: Tests of statistically significant differences were assessed using chi-square tests and ANOVA tests, as appropriate; statistically significant differences are noted by: †$p < 0.10$, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$.

Appendix D. Multivariate Analyses

Given the sociodemographic differences of participants across sites and cohorts, the multivariate models are more useful for isolating potential site- or cohort-level differences in outcomes (see appendix C, tables C.1–C.9 for the full multivariate models). Once the cohort and sociodemographic controls were included in the multivariate analysis, many of the significant bivariate results disappeared. Unlike the bivariate analysis, the cohort-level differences in engagement, expiration, academic placement, and vocational placement were all insignificant in the multivariate analysis.

The multivariate analyses, however, confirmed many of the bivariate results. For example, participants in Brooklyn and Harlem were significantly less likely to withdraw or be discharged or suspended. Brooklyn participants were less likely to receive a full-time job. Despite not being more likely to receive a full-time job, Queens participants were more likely to work longer hours, and Bronx participants received significantly higher wages. Unlike the bivariate results, the multivariate analysis found that Queens participants were more likely to receive a non-employment placement.

TABLE D.1

Multivariate Analyses of Outcomes by Site

	Brooklyn	Queens	Harlem
Program status			
Graduated	NS	NS	NS
Engaged	NS	NS	NS
Expired	NS	NS	NS
Discharged/Withdrawn /Suspended	Less likely *	NS	Less likely *
Employment placement	NS	NS	NS
Full-time placement	Less likely *	NS	NS
Earnings (mean)	Less earnings **	NS	NS
Wages (mean)	Lower wages t	Lower wages *	Lower wages t
Hours worked (mean)	Less hours *	More hours *	NS
Non-employment placement	NS	More likely t	NS
Academic	NS	NS	NS
Vocational	NS	NS	NS
Total placements	NS	NS	NS

Notes: NS = treatment variable is not significant. Multivariate columns note where the treatment variable (Brooklyn, Queens or Harlem site) is significantly different than Bronx participants using logistic or linear regression with the following controls: cohort, age, education, parole status, probation status, high risk status, gender, parental status, race, and ethnicity. Multivariate analysis was not conducted for youth placements because only 4 participants received a youth placement. Statistically significant differences are noted by: $^{t}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Multivariate analyses primarily confirmed the cohort-level differences revealed by the bivariate analyses (see table D.2). That is, participants in cohort 1 were more likely to be discharged, withdrawn,

or suspended. Additionally, participants in cohorts 1 and 3 were less likely to receive a non-employment placement than participants in cohort 2. Participants in cohort 2 were more likely to receive an employment placement than participants in cohort 3. However, cohort 2 participants were more likely to receive part-time employment than those in other cohorts.

Multivariate analyses also confirmed many of the sociodemographic differences revealed by the bivariate analyses (see table D.3). For example, participants who received academic placements were (1) significantly younger, and (2) significantly less likely to have a high school degree or equivalent. On the contrary, individuals with a high school equivalent degree were more likely to receive a vocational placement. This is consistent with Justice Corps' goal of aligning placement-based referral—educational and vocational—with a participant's needs.

TABLE D.2

Multivariate Analyses of Outcomes by Cohort

	Cohort 1	**Cohort 3**
Program status		
Graduated	NS	NS
Engaged	NS	Less likely *
Expired	NS	NS
Discharged/Withdrawn /Suspended	More likely ***	NS
Employment placement	NS	Less likely *
Full-time placement	More likely *	More likely **
Earnings (mean)	Higher earnings *	Higher earnings ***
Wages (mean)	Higher wages **	Higher wages **
Hours worked (mean)	NS	More wages **
Non-employment placement	Less likely ***	Less likely *
Academic	NS	NS
Vocational	Less likely *	NS
Total placements	**Less likely** ***	**Less likely** **

Notes: NS = treatment variable is not significant. Multivariate columns note where the treatment variable (cohort 1 or cohort 3) is significantly different than cohort 2 participants using logistic or linear regression with the following controls: site, age, education, parole status, probation status, high risk status, gender, parental status, race, and ethnicity. Multivariate analysis was not conducted for youth placements because only 4 participants received a youth placement. Statistically significant differences are noted by: $^{t}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Participants with a high school degree were more likely to be discharged, suspended or withdrawn. Lastly, participants with a child were also more likely to receive an employment placement, and it was more likely to be full-time. Unlike the bivariate analyses, however, the multivariate results revealed that older participants were significantly more likely to graduate.

In the multivariate analyses, most of the racial and ethnic differences were insignificant, except that Hispanic participants were less likely to receive an employment placement. Participants who were high

risk or male, or Hispanic were also no longer less likely to graduate or more likely to be discharged, suspended or withdrawn. Finally, the relationship between education and employment placements as well as the relationship between full-time employment and parole status were no longer significant.

TABLE D.3

Multivariate Analyses of Outcomes by Additional Factors

	Age	HSE degree	Parole status	Probation status	Has child	Hispanic
Program status						
Graduated	More likely*	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Engaged	Less likely ^{t}	NS	More likely ^{t}	More likely ^{t}	NS	NS
Expired	Less likely ^{t}	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Discharged/Withdrawn /Suspended	NS	More likely ^{t}	NS	NS	NS	NS
Employment placement	NS	NS	NS	NS	More likely **	Less likely ^{t}
Full-time placement	NS	NS	NS	NS	More likely ^{t}	NS
Earnings (mean)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Wages (mean)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Hours worked (mean)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Non-employment placement	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Academic	Less likely ^{t}	Less likely*	NS	NS	NS	NS
Vocational	NS	More likely ^{t}	NS	NS	NS	NS
Total placements	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	Less likely ^{t}

Notes: NS = treatment variable is not significant. Multivariate columns note where the treatment variable is significant using logistic or linear regression which included the following controls: site, cohort, age, education, parole status, probation status, high risk status, gender, parental status, race, and ethnicity. Multivariate results for site-level and cohort-level differences can be found in tables D.1 and D.2, respectively. Multivariate results for risk level, gender and race can be found in appendix C in tables 10–22; they were excluded from this table because results were insignificant. Multivariate analysis was not conducted for youth placements because only 4 participants received a youth placement. Statistically significant differences are denoted by: $^{t}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Appendix E. Program-Specific Recommendations

In addition to the Considerations for Future Programming section above, Urban identified recommendations directly relevant to the Justice Corps program based on the evaluation's key findings. From the outset, Urban's evaluation was designed to ask questions related to how to improve or modify the current iteration of Justice Corps. Drawing on the information gathered through stakeholder and staff interviews and participant focus groups, Urban developed these program-specific recommendations. Should City decisionmakers decide to fund the Justice Corps program in the future, the following recommendations are intended to inform the development and implementation of the program.

- **Remove the sector focus.** Based on Justice Corps' staff's and participants' perspectives that the sector focus oftentimes did not match participants' career interests and narrowed the types of trainings, placements, and CBP sites available to participants, Urban recommended removing the sector focus. While it offered some participants useful skills or exposure to potentially interesting careers, program staff often placed youth in jobs or programs that aligned with their strengths and interests, regardless of whether the placements were in the particular sector. Removing the sector focus could have also encouraged providers to find training or CBP sites in various sectors, exposing participants to an array of skills and industries.
- **Provide onsite educational services, namely high school equivalency (HSE) classes.** Justice Corps staff and participants repeatedly identified the need for onsite HSE classes, a core component of the initial Justice Corps models. They cited that onsite HSE classes helped participants better to engage in Justice Corps activities. Onsite HSE classes would offer youth a safe environment to take classes with peers who share similar experiences (e.g., justice involvement or disconnection from school). Because youths' educational needs and readiness to engage in classes widely vary, educational services should not be intended to meet all participants' educational needs, but designed to serve youth developmentally ready to engage in classes. Relatedly, programs should connect youth to additional educational services in the community such as tutoring, post-secondary classes, vocational training opportunities, and programs for youth with disabilities that further meet youth's educational needs.

- **Ensure participants contribute to the design of the community benefit project (CBP).** The CBP provided youth an opportunity to apply the hard and soft skills they learned in the program, as well as give back to their communities. Program staff and participants suggested that when participants played an active role in selecting and designing their CBP, through an asset mapping exercise for instance, they felt invested and committed to completing the project. However, not all Justice Corps providers involved participants the same way in the CBP design process. Based on this, Urban recommended consistently and increasingly involving participants in designing and planning the CBPs.

- **Increase the role of community advisory board (CAB) members beyond advising on the development of the CBP.** In line with strengthening community partnerships, Urban recommended involving CAB members with program activities. Some Justice Corps providers did this through inviting CAB members to facilitate mock interviews with participants; this was one way to incorporate CAB members into service offerings. CAB members could have also been invited to visit CBP sites, co-facilitate the work readiness workshops, or have participants shadow them on the job.

- **Offer optional internship opportunities for youth.** Because youth are often at different levels of readiness for employment, an internship can help "meet youth where they are at." Internships can provide formal work experience for youth who may not have employment history, and for youth who may not be ready for full-time employment; an internship can offer youth an opportunity to try out a job. Internships may also be attractive for employers who do not want to fully commit to hiring an individual, but want to hire them on a trial basis. Essentially, employers have an opportunity to try out a candidate, and should employers be satisfied with the youth's work, they can hire them in a part-time or full-time position.

- **Foster partnerships with employers in the trade industries.** Partnering with businesses in the trade industries can help place youth in employment or vocational or on-the-job training. This type of training can provide an alternative to youth who are not ready to engage in more traditional HSE or educational programs. Connections with the trade industries can also help programs tap into a potentially new network of employers, leading to new and different placement destinations. Also, programs can look for opportunities to partner with City agencies to provide placement opportunities in government agencies or City-funded positions (e.g., public works, maintenance, landscaping, transportation).

Notes

[4] An impact evaluation was not conducted because study participants lacked a comparison group or counterfactual to analyze.

[5] Matthew Friedman, "Just Facts: As many Americans have criminal records as college diplomas." New York: Brennan Center for Justice, November 17, 2015,

[6] Research rooted in labeling theory shows that an "official" response to delinquency may promote future delinquency, based on the idea that one's self-concept may be influenced by the "labels" that others use to describe or classify them (Liberman, Kirk, and Kim 2014). These higher rates of delinquency translate to more frequent interaction with the criminal justice system than those who are not labeled "deviant."

[7] Andrews and Bonta's "central eight" are widely accepted as the most important domains for assessing risk/needs (Desmarais and Singh 2013).

[8] This includes all businesses and nonprofit establishments—besides government agencies, public schools or universities, and establishments in the agricultural, forestry, and fisheries industries—with at least five employees.

[9] For more information about the SPIn Reentry assessments, please see the Orbis Partners' website: orbispartners.com/assessment/spin-re-entry/.

[10] A separate analysis conducted by Orbis Partners (the developers of the SPIn assessments) in October 2017 showed the Bronx had fewer high-risk scores at enrollment than the other four sites. Orbis Partners' analysis used SPIn assessments that were conducted between January 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017. The analysis was submitted to PRI.

[11] More information on NYC's Career Pathways initiative can be found here: https://www1.nyc.gov/site/careerpathways/index.page. More information on the Justice Corps redesign can be found in the FY 2016 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report, available here.

[12] The SPIn assessment tool builds on a validated juvenile version of the assessment, the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI).

[13] OSHA trainings provide health hazard and safety certifications required by the constructions industry; flagger trainings are also related to the construction agency and provide certification on traffic control for construction sites.

[14] New York City's minimum wage was $9 until it was raised on December 31, 2016, to $10.50 for employers with up to 10 employees and $11 for employers with more than 11 employees. It was raised again on December 31, 2017, to $12 for employers up to 10 employees and $13 for employers with more than 11 employees.

[15] In addition to this set of considerations, Urban identified the program-specific recommendations in appendix E.

[16] Community districts and zip codes that align with NYC public school zoning maps.

[17] The comparison group of youths received "standard practice," meaning services that would otherwise have been available in the absence of Justice Corps. The evaluation examined data on 372 young adults; 340 individuals were in the treatment group (i.e., Justice Corps) and 372 were in the comparison group (i.e., standard practice).

[18] This table was included in the "Request for Work Proposals: NYC Justice Corps Process Evaluation" released by the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity.

[19] During the implementation of the 1.0 Model, Brooklyn stopped participating in Justice Corps, and Harlem became a site.

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