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Whatcom  
County

City Gate  
Reentry  
Housing  
Project

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Final Evaluation  
December 2011

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Northwest Resource  
Associates

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evidence from the evaluation suggests that the Whatcom County City Gate Reentry Housing Project (RHP) had a positive impact on the desired outcomes of decreased homelessness, positive community involvement, and reduced recidivism. The program format and evaluation plan are outlined in the report along with results.

### Evaluation Results:

- ❖ 95 participants have been enrolled through September 2011
  - 29 participants remain active in the program
  - 12 participants have successfully completed the program
  - 54 participants were terminated unsuccessfully
  
- ❖ Whatcom County participants are similar to the state comparison group on age and gender, but appear to have fewer prior felony convictions, on average.
  
- ❖ The vast majority of participants have not displayed major disruptive behaviors in the program; however, unsuccessful termination from the program is signaled by behavior problems that warrant specific notification to program staff, community corrections officers, and law enforcement personnel.
  
- ❖ Outcome #1: Decreased Homelessness
  - Only 15.2% of all participants exited to a homeless condition.
  - 40.9% of all participants exited to permanent housing and 3.0% more exited to transitional housing.
  - 100% of participants successfully completing the program exited to permanent housing.
  
- ❖ Outcome #2: Community Involvement
  - Greater community involvement was unrelated to successful completion of the program.
  - Higher levels of volunteering, family contact, and pro-social activities was associated with less likelihood of being convicted of a new crime.
  
- ❖ Outcome #3: Recidivism
  - 27.4% of participants have been convicted of a new crime, vs the state level evaluation comparison rate of 36.8% for a homeless or unstably housed sample in large counties.
  - New criminal convictions are for crimes that are much less serious than prior criminal convictions. Less than one in five new convictions was for a violent offense.

- Behavior problems that warrant notification of program staff, community corrections officers, and law enforcement personnel are significantly related to the increased likelihood of a new criminal conviction.
- Community involvement in the form of volunteering, family contact, and pro-social activity is significantly related to decreased likelihood of a new criminal conviction.
- Participants who had been released from prison are more likely than those released from jail to be convicted of a new felony.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, prisoner reentry has been a point of focus for addressing the high rates of recidivism among those released from prison and jails. The Urban Institute Justice Policy Center reported in “Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry” (Baer, *et al.*) in 2006 that stable housing is the primary issue facing an individual being released from jail or prison who will be attempting to reintegrate into the community. In order to develop and study programming for offenders coming out of incarceration, the Washington State Department of Commerce released funding in January of 2008 for the Reentry Housing Pilot Project (RHPP.) Clark, King, and Spokane counties received grants in the initial period.

In 2009 the Whatcom County Health Department was awarded Homeless Grant Assistance Program (HGAP) funding for the project. The Washington State Department of Commerce asked that the program meet the guidelines of the Reentry Housing Pilot Project and that data be included in the statewide project. The County contracted with Pioneer Human Services (PHS) to staff this program. City Gate Apartments, a 37 unit master leased apartment building, opened in the spring of 2009 as the housing facility for this program. Case management services and a resident manager for City Gate Apartments are provided by Pioneer Human Services.

Northwest Resource Associates (NwRA) of Seattle has conducted an outcome evaluation of the City Gate Reentry Housing Project in Whatcom County.

## PROGRAM

The City Gate project is a permanent, supportive housing program, which provides housing, financial supports and case management. PHS has developed a six phase Timeline for Success to structure the participation and progression of an offender. The average length of time expected for a participant in this program is twelve months or less.

Applicants are screened based on homelessness, recent release (within 3 months) from jail or prison, prior residence in Whatcom County, low income, and willingness to participate in case management services and to develop a plan for success. Programming begins at the time the client moves into RHP housing.

Phase One is focused on case planning, establishing state assistance including income, food, medical, etc, and acquiring necessary home furnishings. Phase Two addresses chemical dependency and mental health needs—assessment and initiation of treatment services. Phase Three focuses on addressing legal commitments (past fines, payments, etc.), debts, and transportation issues.

Phase Four addresses education and job training needs, and goals ranging from work skills training through community college. Job preparation and employment are the emphasis of Phase Five, with the goal of part or full time work. And Phase Six is focused on establishing self sufficiency, transition to permanent housing in the community, and program completion.

## EVALUATION PLAN

In the fall of 2009, in consultation with the Whatcom County Health Department, Pioneer Human Services, the local Department of Corrections, and the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Corrections Bureau, NWRA established three general outcomes of interest for this project. The first expected outcome is that participants will demonstrate a decreased likelihood of homelessness as a result of participation. Second, participants will demonstrate increased community involvement and connection. Third, participants will be less likely to re-offend as a result of participation in the City Gate project.

### Outcome #1: Decreased homelessness

To assess the success of this outcome, first a housing history up to three years prior to program enrollment was obtained at the time of entry into the program. Additional items were added to the RHPP Client Information Survey (See Addendum A: RHPP Client Information Survey) for tracking housing history. Initially, the plan was to have program staff follow-up with exited clients to track their housing histories for one year after exit. Comparisons pre and post program were to indicate the achievement of this outcome. However, program staff found they did not have the resources to achieve collection of this data.

What is available from the RHPP Client Information Survey is the participant's exit destination. The housing status following exit is recorded at the time of exit and indicates whether the client is discharged to homelessness, unstable housing, stable housing, treatment, or some other option.

### Outcome #2: Increased community involvement and connection.

Homelessness is more than not having a roof over one's head. It is not having a place in the community. Ostensibly, the more an individual is involved in relationships with the larger community, the less likely he or she is to commit new crimes. Family (Hairston, 1998) and a positive community (Visher, La Vigne, and Travis, 2003) are important to successful reentry.

The indicators for community involvement and connection are: 1) number of hours in volunteer activity at City Gate and the larger community; 2) re-developing and maintaining positive family ties in the community with parents, spouses, children, extended family; and 3) joining and participating in social organizations. Items for data collection on these three indicators were added to the RHPP Survey.

Outcome #3: Reduced recidivism by participating offenders.

Reduced recidivism is perhaps the most important of the outcomes with which to demonstrate an effective program result and successful reentry into the community. No further criminal conviction means the individual does not place an obvious burden on the community through a new crime and is not re-incarcerated. Consequently, utilizing indicators and data sources that have wide applicability is important. While the standard indicator for recidivism is the conviction of a new crime, new charges are also tracked in some instances. Recidivism assessment needs to include participants who are no longer involved in the intervention program. Consequently, this measure benefits from an independent source of information to track any new criminal activity by participants.

NWRA accessed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) criminal court database to review the in-state criminal history of participants and their subsequent criminal activity. Both outcome indicators of conviction and new charges are available from the database. New convictions and new filings of criminal charges not yet adjudicated were obtained on program participants for evaluation. Comparisons are made to results from Washington State's Reentry Housing Pilot Program Evaluation: Year 3 Final Report (Lutz, Rosky, and Falconer, 2011.)

## METHOD

Design. The design for this evaluation of Outcome #1 is based on housing history prior to program involvement versus housing destination at exit. Outcome #2 is evaluated by successful versus unsuccessful completion of the program and by whether the participant committed a new crime post enrollment. Successful completion is indicated by completion of programming phases, maintaining corrections supervision guidelines, and transition to permanent housing. Unsuccessful termination can be the result of conviction of a new offense, non-compliance with program expectations, or absconding. Indicators for these outcomes are compared based on successful completion or unsuccessful termination. Outcome #3, recidivism, is evaluated based on a comparison group developed by the state level evaluation being conducted by Washington State University.

Data Sources. The data source for Outcomes #1 and #2 is the revised RHPP Client Information Survey—Amendment A. The original RHPP Client Information Survey has been completed on participants beginning in May 2009. The amended survey with additional items to answer local outcome questions was not initiated until April 2010 and the cutoff for data gathering for this report was September 30, 2011. The data set is limited by these parameters and is for program evaluation purposes only. Missing data, timing of program entry or exit,

and data initiation and cutoff dates make it inappropriate to use the data for census on any given date.

Indicators for Outcome #1, decreased homelessness, include items added to the survey for this evaluation on housing history prior to program involvement (Addendum to Section 2: Housing History, item #1), and Exit Destination, from the RHPP Client Information Survey—Section 4, Item #2

Indicators for Outcome #2 are items in Amended Section 3: Community Involvement, Items #1, #2, and #3. Consequently, this data is limited to the data gathered after April 2010.

The data source for criminal activity used to evaluate Outcome #3 is the Washington Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) database of all criminal court activity from Superior, District, and Juvenile courts throughout the State of Washington, compiled through the Office of Administrator for the Courts. This data is compiled for use in criminal justice research by WSIPP and other researchers. It is updated quarterly, and the data for this evaluation was current as of October 2011.

Data from the RHPP Client Information Survey—Amendment A was compiled and entered into an analyzable database by staff of NWRA from the monthly surveys completed by the PHS case manager.

## RESULTS

A total of 918 monthly RHPP Client Information Surveys on 95 individuals, beginning in May 2009 and continuing through September 2011 were included for this analysis. The number of surveys per individual participant ranged from 1 to 28, with a mean of 9.7, a median of 5, and standard deviation of 7.1 surveys.

### **Demographics of participants:**

Basic information on the participants is included in Table 1. Participants are overwhelmingly male by a margin of 5:1. The average age is 38.1 years. Age groups are fairly distributed over the adult age range. Both characteristics are very similar to figures from the state data of 80% male and average age of 35.4 years (Lutz, *et al.*, 2011.)

All program participants qualify as homeless in order to be eligible for the program. However, just prior to enrollment, participants were housed in a variety of circumstances. More than half were literally homeless. Homelessness for this analysis includes residing in a temporary shelter, transitional housing for homeless persons, and those residing temporarily with family or friends. One in

seven participants came to the program directly from incarceration and was imminently at risk of being homeless.

Participants have significant criminal backgrounds. Almost 90% have at least one felony on their record and more than half (51.7%) have a record of a violent felony conviction. The mean number of felony convictions prior to enrollment for participants is 5.1 felony convictions (St D = 3.9) and is slightly lower than the 6.6 mean number of felony convictions (St D = 5.3) for the state data (Lutz, *et al*, 2011.)

Table 1 Participant Characteristics

| N=95   | Male                    | Female  |
|--|-------------------------|---------|
| Gender   | 83.2%                   | 16.8%   |
| Age  | Mean                    | St D    |
|  | 38.1 yrs                | 9.9 yrs |
|  | Category                | Percent |
|  | < 20 yrs                | 2.1     |
|  | 20 – 29 yrs             | 21.1    |
|  | 30 – 39 yrs             | 33.7    |
| 40 – 49 yrs                                    | 31.6                    |         |
| >50 yrs  | 11.6                    |         |
| Incarceration prior to Enrollment              | Jail                    | 33.7    |
|  | Prison                  | 66.3    |
| Residence prior to RHPP housing                | Homeless                | 52.6    |
|  | Incarcerated            | 14.7    |
|  | Temporary housing       | 30.5    |
|  | Unknown status          | 2.1     |
| Most serious crime N=70<br>Prior to enrollment | Homicide/manslaughter   | 1.1     |
|  | Sex                     | 1.1     |
|  | Robbery/other violent   | 49.5    |
|  | Burglary/other property | 32.6    |
|  | Drug                    | 4.2     |
|  | Other Felony            | 1.1     |
|  | Misdemeanor             | 8.9     |

Thirty-two (32) participants were released from jail just prior to program enrollment and eighty (80) were released from prison. There were no demographic differences in age or gender between groups, nor was there a difference in residence prior to City Gate.

Likewise, City Gate participants released from prison were more likely to have their most serious crime of record be in the violent categories of homicide, sex, or robbery. RHPP participants released from jail prior to enrollment were more likely to have their most serious crime be that of a drug felony or misdemeanor. ( $p < .001$ ,  $X^2 = 26.7$ .)

**General Outcomes**

At the time of this analysis, 12 participants (12.6%) have completed the program successfully, 54 participants (56.8%) have been terminated unsuccessfully, and 29 participants (30.5%) are considered active (N=95) at the time of this analysis. There were no significant differences in successful completion between jail and prison groups.

Considering only those who have exited the program (N=66) gender, age, housing prior to enrollment, and most serious crime prior to enrollment do not appear to be related to whether or not a participant was exited successfully.

Period of Enrollment. The length of time an individual was actively enrolled in the program and the type of housing in which a participant lived may have some bearing on their successful completion of the program versus being terminated prematurely. Only those exiting the program are considered (N=66.) Participants who were successfully discharged were active in the program for a mean of 11.7 months, while those terminated prematurely were only active an average of 6.5 months. This is a statistically significance difference (p=.005, F=8.44.) There were no differences in length of enrollment between the jail and prison participants.

Employment/Income. Results on income and employment appear mixed. See Table 2. Income from all sources appears to be higher among those who successfully completed of the program.

A higher percentage of participants who successfully completed the program were employed at some time during their enrollment than were participants who were unsuccessfully terminated, the difference is not statistically significant.

Table 2. Income and Employment

| Variable                     | Successful Completion | Unsuccessful Completion | Significance     |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Average monthly income       | \$685                 | \$458                   | p=.056 ( F=3.79) |
| Employment during enrollment |                       |                         |                  |
| At some time      N=18       | 41.7%*                | 24.1%                   | none             |
| Never              N=48      | 58.3%                 | 75.9%                   |                  |

Behavioral Problems. The number of times that outside personnel are contacted as a result of a participant behavior problem is recorded monthly. Contacts with four types of personnel are recorded, with increasing severity of behavior precipitating the contact. (See Table 3.) In other words, behavior that warrants contacting corrections personnel is considered more serious than behavior that warrants contact of program staff. Alternatively contact with law enforcement is

considered more serious than contact with corrections personnel. The most serious behavior problems warrant a response to the scene by law enforcement.

Over the course of the program nearly one-third (31.6%) of the participants have not demonstrated any behavior problems warranting even minimal contact with program staff. 63.2% have no record of problems warranting a call to corrections personnel. More than three quarters (78.9%) have never precipitated a call to law enforcement, and 85.3% of participants have never caused a disturbance warranting the police responding to the scene.

The mean number of months in which various contacts were reported for each participant was calculated. Results of the relationship between behavior problems and successful completion of the program are reported in Table 3. On average, participants who successfully completed the program were less likely than those terminated to have behavior problems reported at each level. These differences are statistically significant for contact with staff and contact with corrections personnel. If staff or corrections are contacted more frequently for behavior problems, the participant is more likely to be terminated prematurely.

Table 3. Behavior disruptions warranting contact with law enforcement.

| Contact for behavior problem | Successful Completion Mean # contacts/mo | Unsuccessful Completion Mean # contacts/mo | Sig.     |
|------------------------------|--|--|----------|
| Program staff                | .038                                     | .422                                       | p=.001   |
| Corrections                  | .000                                     | .264                                       | p=.011   |
| Law Enforcement              | .011                                     | .141                                       | p=.060   |
| Law Enforcement respond      | .011                                     | .10  | No diff. |

**Outcome #1: Decreased Homelessness**

Housing history. It is a program requirement that participants are considered homeless prior to enrollment, which means that 100% are homeless or imminently at risk of being homeless. Follow-up data on housing is recorded in the Exit Destination when an individual leaves the program. Results are presented in Table 4. Of the 66 participants who have been discharged and have exit destination data, only 15.2% left to homeless circumstances and an additional 3.0% left for transitional or temporary housing. Transitional or temporary housing can be a prelude to homelessness or to more stable housing. Nonetheless, homelessness immediately after program involvement is less common than homelessness just prior to participation for all participants.

Table 4. Exit destination and Successful vs Unsuccessful Completion

| Exit Destination               | Successful Completion (N=12) |       | Unsuccessful Completion (N=54) |      | Total (N=66) |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|------|--------------|
|                                | N                            | %     | N                              | %    | %            |
| Homelessness                   | 0                            | 0.0   | 10                             | 18.5 | 15.2         |
| Transitional/Temporary Housing | 0                            | 0.0   | 2                              | 3.7  | 3.0          |
| Incarceration                  | 0                            | 0.0   | 11                             | 20.4 | 16.7         |
| Treatment                      | 0                            | 0.0   | 10                             | 18.5 | 15.2         |
| Adequate, permanent housing    | 12                           | 100%* | 15                             | 55.6 | 40.9         |
| Don't Know/Other               | 0                            | 0.0   | 6                              | 11.2 | 9.0          |
| Total                          | 21                           | 100%  | 61                             | 100% | 100%         |

\*p=.002, X<sup>2</sup>=21.1

There were no significant differences in exit destination between jail and prison groups.

On the flip side of the issue is the percentage of participants exiting to adequate housing. More than 40% of all participants exited to adequate, permanent housing. This includes more than half of those participants who exited the program unsuccessfully. Of those who successfully completed the program all (100%) exited to permanent housing. This is statistically significant percentage compare to the overall total of 40.9%.

Considering the more detailed data on housing history prior to enrollment (N=73) only 17.8%% report any prior history of adequate housing in the three years prior to program entry. In other words, more than 80% of the enrollees reported only homelessness, temporary housing, incarceration, or treatment during the three years prior to the program. Considering all the participants, even those who were unsuccessful in the program, the percentage of those who clearly exited to adequate, permanent housing (40.9%) more than doubled from the percentage who had ever been housed adequately (17.8%) in the three years prior to program enrollment. For those who completed the program successfully the increase to 100% exiting to permanent housing was more than five times the percentage with any prior reported permanent stability.

**Outcome #2: Community Involvement**

Data on community involvement was initiated in April of 2010. Consequently there is data on community involvement for seventy-two (72) participants. Of these forty-seven (47) completed the program, ten (10) successfully and thirty-seven (37) unsuccessfully.

Four community involvement variables were tracked: 1) volunteer activity at City Gate Apts. and the larger community; 2) positive family contacts in the community, 3) joining and participating in social organizations; and 4) educational activities. For the first three variables, the number of contacts per month was

recorded. For the fourth variable, education, a yes or no for the month was recorded. Results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Community Involvement and Successful vs Unsuccessful Completion

| Community Involvement | Successful Completion<br>Mean # contacts/mo (N=10) | Unsuccessful Completion<br>Mean # contacts/mo (N=37) |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Volunteer             | 2.67   | 2.81   |
| Family Contacts       | 3.22   | 4.24   |
| Pro-social Contacts   | 7.59   | 6.53   |
|                       | Mean # mos. With education                         | Mean # mos. With education                           |
| Education             | .36  | .24  |

There are no significant differences between the two groups on any of the four community involvement variables. No significant differences were found on the community involvement activities between the jail and prison groups.

**Outcome #3: Recidivism**

All ninety-five (95) participants have been in the community and available to commit new crimes. Consequently, all participants are included in the analysis of recidivism. New criminal activity is updated through September 30, 2011; however, some more recent activity may not yet have been adjudicated. There are some crimes on record that have been filed for which there is no final disposition.

New conviction rates. Results of the analysis of new criminal activity are reported in Table 6. Of the 95 participants for which there is follow-up data on criminal activity, twenty-six (26) persons, or 27.4% have been convicted of a new crime. Six additional participants, or 6.4%, have been charged with a new crime that has not yet been adjudicated. The charges in this latter group may, or may not, result in convictions.

Table 6. New criminal activity

| Criminal activity     | Conviction N=95 | Filed/pending |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Homicide/manslaughter | 0.0%            | 0.0%          |
| Sex                   | 0.0%            | 0.0%          |
| Robbery/violent       | 5.3%            | 0.0%          |
| Burglary/property     | 2.1%            | 1.1%          |
| Drug                  | 5.3%            | 3.2%          |
| Other felony          | 0.0%            |               |
| Misdemeanor           | 14.7%           | 2.1%          |
| Sub Total             | 27.4%           | 6.4%          |
| No activity           | 72.6%           | 66.5%         |

This data covers criminal activity over a variable period of time. The earliest participants enrolled in January 2009 and would have been in the community for approximately thirty-six months at the time of this evaluation. More recent enrollees may have exposure to risk of new activity for as little as a one month. In fact, the mean number of months from enrollment to the cutoff date for recidivism data is 18.4 months with a standard deviation of 7.8 months. Most recidivism, if it is going to occur, takes place during the first few months to a year after release from incarceration. Two thirds of the new crimes committed by participants took place within six months of program enrollment. Ninety-two percent of new crimes had been committed within one year.

All participants who were convicted of a new crime were unsuccessfully terminated from the program. No persons successfully completing the program were convicted of a new crime.

The 27.4% rate of new convictions by program participants in the City Gate RHP compares to a 33.7% rate of new convictions for the state level comparison sample for large counties (Clark, King, and Spokane.) (Lutz, *et al*, 2011)

The comparison sample includes a large number of offenders in stable housing. In fact the comparison sample is four to one, stably housed persons to homeless and unstably housed. Considering that stable housing is a primary factor in the program, the homeless and unstably housed comparison group is perhaps the better comparison. The comparison recidivism rate for the unstable housing group and homeless persons combined was 36.8%. The comparison rate of new conviction for just the unstable housing group was 40.2%.

The contrast to small county (Whatcom and Clallam) comparison data is less clear. The comparison homeless and unstable housing group (N=56) was heavily influenced by zero homeless individuals in the Whatcom comparison sample (N=12) who committed a new crime. The combined group recidivism rate was 23.2%.

Type of new crime. Another way to evaluate recidivism is to compare new crimes committed by participants to the prior criminal activity of the participants themselves. This comparison takes the form of the nature of the new conviction compared to the most serious crime of record. The median crime category prior to RHPP enrollment is robbery, or another violent offense (See Table 1.) A violent offense was committed by more than half (51.7%) of the participants prior to enrollment. Post enrollment, the most common crime is a misdemeanor and only 5.3% of participants have been convicted of a new violent offense. A new crime conviction is just as likely to be a misdemeanor as a felony. This is compared to the most serious crime of record for that individual, which is nine times as likely to be a felony, rather than a misdemeanor. In other words, the results suggest that the new crimes are much less serious than the participants'

most serious crime of record, and much less serious than their criminal history might suggest.

All new felony convictions in this study were from the prison group. Only participants who had been released from prison just prior to RHPP enrollment were convicted of a new felony. This is statistically significant at the  $p=.005$  level ( $X^2=6.98$ .)

Variables impacting recidivism. Avoiding recidivism is a succinct outcome that is one of the major objectives to the program. Consequently, we examined a number of variables to better understand what features of the program are related to the positive outcome of no new criminal activity. The data was analyzed considering any new criminal conviction (felony or misdemeanor conviction) and considering only a new felony conviction.

Employment during program involvement appears to have no significant relationship to subsequent conviction of any crime, or a felony.

Next, subsequent criminal convictions were evaluated for a relationship to program staff, community corrections personnel, or law enforcement being contacted as a result of disruptive behavior. Not surprisingly, a new criminal conviction is strongly related to a history of disruptive behavior in the program. Results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Rate of Behavior Problems Relationship to New Conviction

| Contact for behavior problem | Mean # contacts/mo |                   | Sig   |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------|
|                              | New Conviction     | No new Conviction |       |
| Program staff                | .544               | .168              | <.001 |
| Corrections                  | .349               | .093              | <.001 |
| Law Enforcement              | .230               | .022              | <.001 |
| Law Enforcement respond      | .138               | .026              | .008  |

Results for conviction of a new felony are likewise strongly related to behavior problems reported to staff. See Table 8.

Table 8. Rate of Behavior Problems Relationship to New Felony Conviction

| Contact for behavior problem | Mean # contacts/mo |               | Sig   |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------|
|                              | New Felony         | No new Felony |       |
| Program staff                | .508               | .241          | .009  |
| Corrections                  | .418               | .129          | .001  |
| Law Enforcement              | .331               | .045          | <.001 |
| Law Enforcement respond      | .195               | .038          | .006  |

Finally, recidivism was evaluated for its relationship to the community activities tracked during program involvement. While socialization activities seemed

unrelated to successful completion of the program, some activities were found to be related to recidivism.

The relationship between the frequency of socializing activities during program involvement and subsequent conviction of any new crime is presented in Table 9. Higher rates of volunteering and pro-social activities are associated with no new criminal convictions.

Table 9. Community Involvement and Conviction of a New Crime

| Community Involvement | Mean # contacts/mo |                   | Sig  |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------|
|                       | New Conviction     | No New Conviction |      |
| Volunteer             | 1.17               | 4.05              | .07  |
| Family Contacts       | 2.43               | 5.81              | .11  |
| Pro-social Contacts   | 3.34               | 8.82              | .037 |
| Education             | .16                | .21               | .66  |

The frequency of contact with family for participants not convicted of a new crime is twice the frequency for participants who were convicted of a new crime; however, the significance level does not meet acceptable standards. No differences were found in rates of educational experience between conviction groups.

## DISCUSSION

The City Gate RHP, supported by the Washington State Department of Commerce HGAP funding appears to have been successfully implemented with positive results between May 2009 and September 2011. Three intended outcomes were established for this evaluation. The results of the evaluation design and the best indicators available support the positive result of all three outcomes. Furthermore, the results suggest some program elements are significantly related to success with the third intended outcome of reduced recidivism.

For Outcome #1: Decreased Homelessness the indicators were limited to the follow-up information available to the evaluation. While we were able to obtain fairly good housing histories of participants in the three years prior to their enrollment in the program, it proved impractical to obtain equivalent post program data that would give a more complete picture of the program’s impact on homelessness.

Homelessness, or imminent likelihood of homelessness, is a necessary condition for enrollment. However, housing histories indicate that program participants have a very poor history of adequate housing and more than 80% reported having been homeless or having a very unstable housing history in the three years prior to enrollment. Consequently, any indication of participants leaving

the program for permanent or even transitional housing signals a successful outcome.

Half of all participants, even including those who exited the program unsuccessfully exited to stable, permanent housing or transitional housing. Only 15.2% exited to homelessness. Of the participants who were able to successfully complete the program, all of them exited to stable permanent housing.

Outcome # 2: Community Involvement was evaluated considering the number of times a participant volunteered within the residence or the community, the number of contacts he or she had with family in the community, the number of pro-social contacts within the community (such as clubs, organizations, or self-help meetings), and employment. The evaluation design did not provide any baseline or pre program measure for these activities; however, these activities were specifically encouraged by the programming. Their most powerful impact is found in the relationship between several of these indicators and Outcome #3, recidivism. While employment was not related to lower recidivism, volunteering, family contact, and pro-social activity were all related to a less likelihood of a participant being convicted of a new crime. These community involvement activities are about developing and nurturing social relationships within the community. When an individual is more connected to the community, has a place within that community, he or she is less likely to be convicted of new criminal activity. This result points to a specific program elements that appear to foster reduced recidivism.

Outcome #3: Reduced Recidivism was apparently successful. The 27.4% rate of new criminal conviction is lower than the state level evaluation comparison group rate of 33.7% (Lutz, *et al*, 2011.) The specific data needed for statistical evaluation of this difference was not available to this evaluation.

A closer examination of the comparison sample used for the state evaluation includes a very high proportion of individuals who were considered stably housed. In fact, it includes nearly three stably housed persons for every homeless or unstably housed individual. One of the critical program features of the Whatcom County RHPP is the stable housing it provides. A closer examination of the recidivism rates of the homeless and unstably housed comparison group finds the recidivism rate of this group to be 36.8%. Perhaps this rate is a better comparison figure for all features of the program. The difference between a 33.1% recidivism rate for stably housed persons and 36.8% for the homeless and unstable group could be attributed to the housing factor. The difference between the 33.1% rate of the stably housed comparison group and the RHPP condition could be attributed to other programming features. In fact, these are relatively small differences and unfortunately the data is not available for statistical significance testing in this evaluation.

Results of the analysis of Outcome #3 suggest that the rates of new convictions may not tell the whole story regarding the program's impact. A simple percentage of the participants being convicted of a new crime does not give a complete picture. The data on participants' prior criminal histories suggest serious criminal backgrounds. More than half of the participants have been convicted of a violent felony in their most serious crime of record. These are crimes that take a significant toll on the community and the health and well being of their victims. The results from the data on new criminal convictions indicate much less serious crimes. Only 20% of all the new criminal convictions are violent felonies. Forty-five percent (45%) of new convictions are for misdemeanor crimes. It appears that in addition to reducing the rate of new convictions, the program may also be helping to lessen the seriousness of subsequent criminal activity and its impact on the community.

The program appears to be having a positive impact in the community in inter-related ways. An important result from this evaluation is the tracking of positive community activity by program participants. A number of community involvement activities, specifically volunteerism and pro-social contacts in the community are associated with an individual remaining conviction free subsequent to program participation. Contact with family may also be associated with lower recidivism rates. The results support the idea that once an offender is better connected to the community; the less likely it is that the individual will commit another crime that will harm the community. A positive relationship to community reduces the negative impact on the community, not only in the number of new crimes but in their severity, as well.

## REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX A

## RHPP Client Information Survey – Amendment A

Please provide the following information for each individual client participating in the Reentry Housing Pilot Program. You may choose to either use your local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to collect this information (you may have to work with your HMIS provider to add certain fields and produce a customized report) OR you can use this form as it is to submit the information to the Community Trade and Economic Development Department (CTED). Whichever you choose, you need to submit this information to CTED in the timeframe specified for each section.

Thank you for your time and consideration in providing this important information.

**Section 1: Client Identification.** The following information must be provided to CTED on every client every time a report or form is submitted.

1. Date Submitted:
2. Submitted by:  
Name:  
Organization:  
County:
3. First and last name
4. Personal ID number
5. DOC Number (if available)
6. Date of birth (MM/DD/YYYY)
7. Name that client was most recently convicted under at time of program entry (if different than name above):

**Section 2: Housing and Rent.** Provide this information only at the beginning of the entry into the program for each client.

1. To what type of housing has the client been assigned?  
  
Apartment  
House
2. Date the client actually moved into the assigned housing (MM/DD/YYYY):

3. Where was the client living immediately before moving into the assigned housing with your agency?

- Emergency Shelter
- Transitional housing for homeless persons
- Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons
- Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility
- Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center
- Hospital (non-psychiatric)
- Jail
- Prison
- Juvenile detention facility
- Room, apartment, or house that you rent
- Apartment or house that you own
- Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment or house
- Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment or house
- Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher
- Foster care home or foster care group home
- Place not meant for human habitation
- Don't Know
- Refused
- Other (please explain)

4. How much was the rental deposit? \$0.00

5. Who paid the deposit (check all that apply)?

- RHPP funds
- Public funds (other than RHPP) (please describe)
- Private agency funds (please describe)
- Client

8. Has the client been informed about the rules and conditions of residency?

No            Yes

9. Has the client been informed about their rights and responsibilities as a renter?

No            Yes

### RHPP Client Information Survey Local Evaluation Addendum

**Addendum to Section 2: Housing History.** Provide this information **only at the beginning of the entry into the program** for each client.

1. Where was the client living prior to the index incarceration? [Housing History of three years, should include at least two years prior to index incarceration. (If individual had been incarcerated for, say 6 months, then the history would go back three years

from the date of the enrollment. If the individual had been incarcerated for two years, then the history would go back 4 years to include the 2 years prior to the index incarceration.) Do in reverse order and do not leave gaps.] [repeat as many times as needed]

[For follow-up post discharge from program, we will use the same history items for 6 months post discharge, and then at 12 month post discharge.]

Living circumstance:            Month/year            to Month/year

- Emergency shelter
- Transitional housing for homeless persons
- Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons
- Psychiatric hospital/Facility
- Substance abuse treatment facility/Detox
- Hospital (non-psychiatric)
- Jail/Prison
- Juvenile detention facility
- Room, apartment, or house that you rent
- Apartment or house that you own
- Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment, or house
- Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment, or house
- Hotel/Motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher
- Foster care home, or foster care group home
- Place not meant for habitation
- Don't Know
- Refused
- Other (please explain

Living circumstance:            Month/year            to Month/year

- Emergency shelter
- Transitional housing for homeless persons
- Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons
- Psychiatric hospital/Facility
- Substance abuse treatment facility/Detox
- Hospital (non-psychiatric)
- Jail/Prison
- Juvenile detention facility
- Room, apartment, or house that you rent
- Apartment or house that you own
- Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment, or house
- Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment, or house
- Hotel/Motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher
- Foster care home, or foster care group home
- Place not meant for habitation

Don't Know  
Refused  
Other (please explain)

**Section 3: Housing, Rent, and Safety Information.** Provide this information for **each offender** for **each month** they are in the program, beginning the first month of program involvement and **every month thereafter** until the participant has left your program. This information is necessary in order to report change over time for each offender related to their housing status, landlord incentives, their rent support, and their behavior.

**Housing Information:**

1. Who is the client living with?

- Alone
- 1 room mate
- 2 or more room mates
- Spouse or partner
- Children
- Other (please explain)

2. Has the client residence changed since last month?

No

Yes. Date client changed residence this month:

- If yes, why:
- New RHPP Program Participant (lived outside of program last month)
  - Moved to a new unit within your agency
  - Moved to new housing with another agency
  - Achieved self-sufficiency and remains w/ your agency housing
  - Achieved self-sufficiency and has moved elsewhere
  - Achieved self-sufficiency, has moved elsewhere, but still receives some follow-up case management
  - Absconded/unknown
  - Returned to prison or jail
  - Abandoned housing and is homeless
  - Removed from the program by the program team
  - Other (please explain)      –

3. Client's current address:

Check box if same as last month and skip to next question.

Street number:

City:

Zip code:

**Rent Information:**

4. How much is the client's rent **per month**? \$

5. How much rent **per month** is the client receiving through the RHPP? \$
6. How much rent **per month** is the client paying from their personal income? \$
7. Is the client employed this month?  
No  
Yes, how many hours **per week**?
8. What is the client's personal income **per month**? \$

**Safety Plan Information:**

9. Under what type of correctional supervision is the client?  
Washington State Department of Corrections  
County Corrections  
No correctional supervision
10. Has the **RHPP Staff** or onsite manager been contacted because of the client's behavior?  
No  
Yes. If yes, by whom? Another RHPP Program Participant  
Neighbor of the house/apartment complex in which client resides  
Resident of house/complex in which client resides (non-program participant)  
Landlord  
RHPP Staff person or onsite manager  
Local Law Enforcement  
Corrections Officer  
Other (please explain)
11. Has the **Department of Corrections staff or County corrections staff** been contacted because of the client's behavior?  
No  
Yes. If yes, by whom? Another RHPP Program Participant  
Neighbor of the house/apartment complex in which client resides  
Resident of house/complex in which client resides (non-program participant)  
Landlord  
RHPP Staff person or onsite manager  
Local Law Enforcement  
Corrections Officer  
Other (please explain)
12. Has local **Law Enforcement** been contacted because of the client's behavior?

No

Yes. If yes, by whom? Another RHPP Program Participant

Neighbor of the house/apartment complex in which client resides  
Resident of house/complex in which client resides (non-program participant)

Landlord

RHPP Staff person or onsite manager

Local Law Enforcement

Corrections Officer

Other (please explain)

13. Has local **Law Enforcement** visited the premises (check all that apply):

Due to complaints about the client's behavior by other residents of the house/complex

Due to complaints about the client's behavior by neighbors of the house/complex

For any other reason due to the client's behavior (please explain)

**14. If you answered "Yes" to any question above (#10 – 13), please provide the following additional information:**

What was the problem?:

New offense

Disorderly conduct

Noise violation

Property damage

Non-compliance with property rules

Absconded/unknown whereabouts

Complaints by other residents

Other (please explain)

15. Please provide additional explanation or comments as needed:

**Amended Section 3: Community Involvement.** Provide this information for **each offender** for **each month** they are in the program, beginning the first month of program involvement and **every month thereafter** until the participant has left the program.

Month/year of record:

1. Volunteer activity at City Gate and larger community.

How many times did the client volunteer (include required volunteer activity for clients with \$1 rent) during the month. Include work at City Gate, neighborhood, or other formal assistance given to community, or family, or friends? (Employment is counted separately.)                      times.

2. Developing/maintaining family ties in community.

How many times did the client spend with parents, spouses, children, or extended

family during the month?                      times.

N/A ( Check if not applicable, due to not having family in the county, and/or contact with family is not advisable.)

3. How many meetings did the client attend at pro-social organizations (clubs, interest groups, etc) this month?                      meetings. (Include recovery based organizations)
4. Did the client attend a formal education program this month?    YES    NO

**Section 4. Exit Information.** Provide this information for **each offender upon FINAL EXIT from the program.** Answer either question #2 **or** question #3.

1. Date the client exited the program/housing: (MM/DD/YYYY):

2. Destination of participant who exited **BEFORE COMPLETING** the program/case management plan:

- Emergency Shelter
- Transitional Housing for the Homeless
- Permanent Housing for Formerly Homeless (Subsidized)
- Permanent Housing for Formerly Homeless (**Unsubsidized**)
- Psychiatric Hospital/Facility
- Substance Abuse Treatment Facility
- Hospital (non-psychiatric)
- Jail
- Prison
- Hotel/Motel with or without a Voucher
- Room, Apt., or House you Rent (Subsidized)
- Room, Apt., or House you Rent (**Unsubsidized**)
- Homeownership
- Family Member's Room, Apt., or House (Permanent)
- Family Member's Room, Apt., or House (Temporary)
- Friend's Room, Apt., or House (Permanent)
- Friend's Room, Apt., or House (Temporary)
- Place Not Meant for Habitation
- Unknown
- Refused
- Other (please explain)

3. Destination of participant who exited **AFTER COMPLETING** the program/case management plan:

Emergency Shelter  
 Transitional Housing for the Homeless  
 Permanent Housing for Formerly Homeless (Subsidized)  
 Permanent Housing for Formerly Homeless (**Un**subsidized)  
 Psychiatric Hospital/Facility  
 Substance Abuse Treatment Facility  
 Hospital (non-psychiatric)  
 Jail  
 Prison  
 Hotel/Motel with or without a Voucher  
 Room, Apt., or House you Rent (Subsidized)  
 Room, Apt., or House you Rent (**Un**subsidized)  
 Homeownership  
 Family Member's Room, Apt., or House (Permanent)  
 Family Member's Room, Apt., or House (Temporary)  
 Friend's Room, Apt., or House (Permanent)  
 Friend's Room, Apt., or House (Temporary)  
 Place Not Meant for Habitation  
 Unknown  
 Refused  
 Other (please explain)

**Addendum to Section 4. Exit Information.** Provide this information for **each offender upon FINAL EXIT from the program.** Provide this information at the **six month** interval following discharge from the program.

1. Where has the client been living since discharge? [repeat as many times as needed]

#### POST DISCHARGE

Living circumstance:            Month/year            to Month/year

Emergency shelter  
 Transitional housing for homeless persons  
 Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons  
 Psychiatric hospital/Facility  
 Substance abuse treatment facility/Detox  
 Hospital (non-psychiatric)  
 Jail/Prison  
 Room, apartment, or house that you rent  
 Apartment or house that you own  
 Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment, or house  
 Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment, or house  
 Hotel/Motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher

Foster care home, or foster care group home  
Place not meant for habitation  
Don't Know  
Refused  
Other (please explain)

**POST DISCHARGE**

Living circumstance:            Month/year            to Month/year

Emergency shelter  
Transitional housing for homeless persons  
Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons  
Psychiatric hospital/Facility  
Substance abuse treatment facility/Detox  
Hospital (non-psychiatric)  
Jail/Prison  
Room, apartment, or house that you rent  
Apartment or house that you own  
Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment, or house  
Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment, or house  
Hotel/Motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher  
Foster care home, or foster care group home  
Place not meant for habitation  
Don't Know  
Refused  
Other (please explain)