

**UTAH CRIMINAL JUSTICE CENTER**

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK | THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

# **PAY FOR SUCCESS:**

*LARGE-SCALE STUDY SHOWS REDUCTIONS IN  
RECIDIVISM FOR HIGH-RISK POPULATION  
IN SALT LAKE COUNTY*

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# REACH Program

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The **REACH (Recovery, Engagement, Assessment, Career, and Housing)** program, run by First Step House in Salt Lake County, Utah, provides comprehensive services to high-risk, high-need adult men on probation. The program was created in response to data showing that 74% of high-risk offenders in Salt Lake County returned to the criminal justice system after release from jail. This innovative intervention was the subject of a rigorous evaluation, including a randomized control trial. Results showed significant reductions in recidivism when compared to treatment as usual. The treatment program and the evaluation were funded through a Pay for Success Initiative.

## ***The Pay for Success Financial Model***

Pay for Success is a form of outcomes-based financing (OBF) that allows government entities to implement innovative programs to address complex social problems. In OBF, private financial institutions pay the upfront costs of implementing a novel intervention that has been identified to address a serious community issue. The government partner, Salt Lake County, only repays the private investors if an independent evaluation shows that the intervention was successful in achieving pre-determined outcomes. Over a four-year follow-up, the REACH program was expected to achieve a 35% reduction in days incarcerated, a 35% reduction in statewide arrests, and, over a two-year follow-up, a 25% improvement in quarters employed. It was also expected to provide 200 hours of treatment provided within the first six months of enrollment.

## **Benefits of Pay for Success**

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1

**Promotes the development of innovative interventions and shifts the risk of funding services whose efficacy is unknown away from government agencies**

2

**Addresses funding silos, wherein programs cannot provide all intended services because services are not covered under various funding streams**

3

**Provides supports for evaluating and monitoring program fidelity, which is can be expensive to provide**

4

**Provides resources for conducting rigorous evaluation, which are difficult to fund in the social services**

5

**Rewards treatment providers for achieving outcomes rather than for producing deliverables**

# RANDOMIZED CONTROL INTERVENTION

REACH provided comprehensive services to **225** high-risk, high-need probationers. The program targeted criminogenic risks associated with recidivism, in line with the research on evidence-based correctional treatment (Risk-Need-Responsivity).

REACH participants received interventions to address treatment engagement, cognitive behavioral therapies, substance abuse treatment, case management, short-term housing, career development, and connection to mental health treatment.

The comparison group was comprised of 462 high-risk, high-need probationers who received treatment-as-usual, which was comprised of substance use treatment from a wide array of treatment providers. While the specific elements of that treatment is unknown, Utah has been a Justice Reinvestment Initiative state since 2015. As part of that reform, the State Office of Substance Use and Mental Health has encouraged all provider working with justice-involved persons to be adherent to RNR.

***The REACH program was more effective than treatment-as-usual. When compared to those who received treatment-as-usual, REACH participants had a:***

**22%** significant decrease in arrest rates

**40%** significant reduction in days incarcerated

**22%** non-significant increase in employed quarters

# POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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## 1 — Pilot Testing and Study Design

The availability of resources to support pilot testing and study design results in stronger research, increasing confidence in the results and more meaningful impacts.



## 2 — Stronger Service Interventions

Social service interventions are more individualized and effective when services are not constrained by funding silos.



## 3 — Enhanced Public Safety

Public safety is enhanced through implementation of interventions that are evidence-based and include supports to ensure fidelity.

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### About the Utah Criminal Justice Center

The Utah Criminal Justice Center (UCJC) has been the evaluator for two Pay for Success outcome studies in Salt Lake County and one Pay for Success feasibility study for the state of Utah. UCJC was formally authorized by the Utah State Board of Regents on March 10, 2006 as a collaboration among the University of Utah College of Social Work, S.J. Quinney College of Law, and College of Social and Behavioral Science. Located within the College of Social Work at the University of Utah, UCJC is a collaborative partnership between government and academia that supports interdisciplinary research, teaching, and training in the areas of criminal and juvenile justice. UCJC provides organizations with research, training, and technical assistance grounded in scientific evidence to prevent and reduce crime and victimization among all communities, with an understanding that approaches must be tailored to the contextual needs of organizations and the diverse populations they serve. To date, UCJC has conducted more than 100 studies in a variety of areas, including criminal and juvenile justice, homelessness and housing, substance use, and mental illness. These studies have assisted key stakeholders as they develop policy and statutes to govern the criminal justice system. *For more information, reach out to Dr. Christian Sarver, Associate*

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