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Effective Practices to Facilitate Rural Reentry: A Policy Analysis

Alyssa P. Gretak  
East Tennessee State University

Jill D. Stinson  
East Tennessee State University

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Effective Practices to Facilitate Rural Reentry: A Policy Analysis

Department of Psychology
East Tennessee State University

Alyssa Gretak, M.A.
6,741,400 persons under the supervision of US corrections (Kaeble, Glaze, Rsoutis, & Minton, 2016)

Average of 680,000 released from state and federal prisons annually (James, 2014)
• 2/3 recidivate within 3 years (Durse, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014)

In 2008, $75 billion spent on corrections and incarceration (Schmitt, Warner, & Gupta, 2010)

Financial and societal costs
Rural Reentry
Rarely examined

Policies and programs designed for urban reentry

Unique challenges for rural returning citizens often ignored

Rural Reentry

Employment

Tx and Health Care

Cultural Qualities

Housing

Transportation
The Problem...

- Statistics for those returning to rural areas is uncertain (lack of research)
- 65 million rural citizens (1/4 of the US population; Mather, Jacobsen, & Pollard, 2015).
- Urban models may not necessarily be translatable to rural needs
Review current policies and practices in the realm of US reentry to determine applicability/fit (or lack thereof) to identified rural reentry barriers and needs.
Methods:

Rational Model of Policy Analysis (Patton, Sawicki, & Clark, 2015)

1. Intelligence gathering
   - Policy search: PRISMA method (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009)
   - Organization of data to define problems and goals
2. Identify problems
3. Identification and evaluation of alternative plans/policies
4. Choose preferred option*
Results
Employment Policies
<table>
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<th>Ban the Box</th>
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<td>Removal of criminal history box from public employment applications; limits investigations into backgrounds, and improves hiring rates (Avery &amp; Hernandez, 2018; Southern Coalition for Social Justice, 2014)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevents unlawful job applicant screenings (i.e., inquiring about history during interviews)</td>
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<td>If offer is revoked, there must be a “legitimate business reason” presented.</td>
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<td>Violations = penalties</td>
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<th>Fair Criminal Record Screening Amendment (2014)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Guides use of records for employment decisions (arrest vs. convictions)</td>
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<td>Individual screening process (naturex2; time)</td>
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<td>Responsibility on employers to justify exclusion and returning citizens offered opportunity to explain</td>
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<td>Some states have laws limiting employer liability when hiring individuals with backgrounds</td>
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<th>Equal Employment Opportunity Commission policies (EEOC, 2012)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Licensing authorities cannot deny applications because of unrelated convictions and allows for applicant petition prior to application completion to check to disqualifications</td>
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Employment Policies: Rural Fit

- Smaller ‘Ban the Box’ effects (Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2002)
  - 32% of employers don’t require background checks, but majority (62%) will not consider an individual with a criminal background
  - Anonymity of applications in rural vs. urban
  - “Off the books” jobs

- Employment at sufficient wages
  - Licensing = 10-15% higher pay (WHEP, 2015)
  - Wage disparity
  - Education disparity
Employment Policies: Implications for Change

- Education for business owners
- Increased anonymity in the hiring process (Rinne, 2014)
- Employers reported incentive from vocational training in or post-prison (Fahey et al., 2006)
  - GED
  - Training
  - Licensure
  - Consider needs of communities
- **Public Housing**: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD, 2016)
  - Makes recommendations including discouraging PHA blanket bans against tenants with arrests considering nature and time.
  - Oakland Housing Authorities: Consideration of circumstances and individual trials
    - Screen denials dropped from 12% to 0.8%; of the 0.8% denied, 64% who pursued hearing had decision reversed (OHA, 2012)
  - New York City Housing Authority: Revised background check policy and exclusionary period (Bae, deZerega, Kang-Brown, Shanahan, & Subramaian, 2016)
  - NYCHA Family Reentry Pilot Program (FRPP, 2016)

- **Transitional Housing**
  - US Department of Justice (2016): Use of halfway homes
    - Project Greenlight (NYC; Rodriguez & Brown, 2003)
    - Gwinnett Reentry Intervention Program (GRIP; GA)
      - 3-year recidivism rate for those in GRIP = 8% (Andersen, Tate, & Carr, 2015)
Public Housing Policy: Rural Fit and Implications for Change

• Public housing availability
  • Consistent decrease in federal housing investments (HAC, 2013)

• NYCHA FRPP
  • Promising for rural returning citizens
    • Utilization of existing housing
    • Social support and family reunification
  • Barrier: Case management services
Transitional Housing Policy: Rural Fit and Implications for Change?

- Lack of resources to connect
- Urban Institute examined 53 TH programs for families
  - 90 percent acceptance for families
  - Complete lack of programs from rural areas
- Funding barriers (concentrated in more urban areas)
- HUD recommendations for screening emphasized not only in public market, as private more available
- Focus on families and family reunification
- Search for alternative funding options (Wodahl, 2006)
  - USD Agriculture’s Rural Housing Services for substance use disorder (2016)
  - Grants (Fannie Mae Foundation)
- Vacant properties
  - US DOJ guideline for rehabilitating abandoned property
  - Housing and employment
Transportation
Drivers Licensees

- Automatic suspension laws (drug convictions)
  - Utah removed mandatory suspension
  - Massachusetts repealed conditions of automatic suspension and waived $500 reinstatement fee
- Better Drive Act (2017)
  - Federal funds no longer withheld from states who do not automatically suspend
  - Licenses suspension as punishment for outstanding court debts (43 states still practicing)
    - Changes include eliminations of such policies (CA), driving on suspended counted as traffic infraction vs. jail-time misdemeanor (CO); and affordable payment plans (VA)

Public Transportation

- Public Health Service Act (1944): grants to expand rural healthcare access through transport
- Mobility Services for all Americans (US Department of Transportation, 2016)
- The Ride Home Program (2013)
Drivers License: Rural Fit

- Heavy reliance on private transportation
- Opioid epidemic in rural communities related to licenses
- Low-income areas and low wages
  - Waiver of reinstatement fees
  - Affordable payment plans
Public Transportation: Rural Fit & Implications

- Dependent on existing resources and the needs of the communities (Stauffer, 2008)
- Help for all (more partnership potential?)
- Route planning
- Discounted fees
- RHP
  - Adjustments: Prioritizing needs
- Mobile units that eliminate some transportation needs
  - Community needs
  - Placement
    - Distance between services
    - Transportation hubs
    - Occupancy rate
- Telehealth & Technology
  - Wyoming: Skype-based remote law offices (WJB, 2018)
  - Reentry preparation
    - Pennsylvania: Juveniles
    - Alaska: Life skills
    - Illinois: Virtual reality practice
Treatment &
Health Care
- **Rural Health Clinic Services Act (1977)**
  - Additional reimbursements for clinicians in underserved areas
  - Increasing employment of PAs and NPs

- **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA, 2010)**
  - Expansion for insurance and Medicaid in participating states (rural and returning, depending on state)
  - Individuals with SMI enrolled in Medicaid while incarcerated are more likely to access services covered (MH and SA)
Treatment & Healthcare

**Rural Fit**
- In states with expansion, Medicaid coverage rate increased ~6% (Foutz, Artiga, & Garfield, 2017)
- ~65% of rural uninsured live in non-expansion states
- Coverage does not automatically include the addition of lacked services
  - 13% of rural counties have no behavioral health providers

**Implication for Change**
- Incentives (loan repayment)
- Tele-Health
- Communication between health care professionals and correctional facilities
  - Scheduled transition
- Integrated Health Care
Cultural Qualities
Trust in Services

• Continuity of care and building of relationships
• Increased show-rates and health outcomes for returning citizens who were connected with PCPs and case management prior to release (Vigilante et al., 1999; Wang et al., 2010; Young et al., 2015)

Social Support

• Rural value of kinship (Weisheit & Donnermeyer, 2000)
• Maintenance of social support while incarceration to reduce recidivism (Bales & Mears, 2008; Derkzen, Gobeil, & Gileno, 2009).
  • Policies vary by institution regarding length and number of visits
  • Alaska and NY encourage visitation to strengthen ties to the community and family
Trust in Services: Rural Fit & Implications for Change

- Building trust via pre-release coordination
- Information packets with all necessary information (ACA and providers)
  - Include photos if possible
- Not just limited to healthcare profession
  - Faith groups, case officers, mental health, and other community groups
- Families/Support Systems too (Martinez, 2006)
Social Support: Rural Fit & Implications for Change

- ~63% of individuals in state prison are 100+ miles from their family (Mumola, 2004)
  - Emphasis on mail, phone calls, and virtual visitation
    - Pigeonly

- Transportation for family to facilities at reduced/no cost (FairShake Reentry Resource Center)
  - Hub locations

- Prisoner Visitation and Support (PVS)
  - Increase community connectivity via coordinated visits with community volunteers
  - Operates in all federal and military prisons
Conclusions & Limitations
Summary

• Several domains of policy beneficial to rural reentry
  • ACA
  • Drivers licenses and reinstatements
  • Occupational licenses

• Improvements and expansions necessary
  • Systematic and grassroot level
  • Ex: occupational licensing opportunities
Future Directions & Limitations

• Specific offense types
  • “Hard to place”

• A more in-depth look at local policies for direct, specific changes

• Look at reentry policy/programming in other countries

• Privatized prisons
  • 7% of state; 18% of federal prisons

• General lack of research on rural communities
  • Expand research and outcome data in these areas
Questions?
References


References


