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# THE POWER PROGRAM

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
WORK, EDUICATION, AND READINESS

Final Evaluation Report

December 3, 1993



Program Evaluation Team  
Information Resources Management Program  
Administrative Support Division

The Program Evaluation Team wishes to acknowledge the complete cooperation that we received from the POWER Program staff: Jon Harper, Sue Bangert, and Dana Woods. These individuals participated in the evaluation design and completed data collection protocols for all POWER Program participants served to date.

Tom Dobmeyer was the principal analyst on this project. Carol Smith and Glenn Bracht assisted with the evaluation.

# The POWER Program

## Providing Opportunities for Work, Education, and Readiness

### Evaluation Report

December 3, 1993

### Executive Summary

The Hennepin County Adult Corrections Facility (ACF) of the Hennepin County Bureau of Community Corrections was selected as a U.S. Department of Education national demonstration site to test a vocational education and training program in an adult detention facility. The model program, called POWER (Providing Opportunities for Work, Education, and Readiness), underwent a planning phase at the Adult Corrections Facility from December 1991 through May 1992 when a number of intermediate and long-term goals were specified to guide the development of the program. The program initiated services to clients on June 1, 1992. Department of Education funding for the POWER Program will end in December of 1993.

Hennepin County's Adult Correction Facility was selected as a demonstration site by CGA Consulting Services Inc., in association with Community Resource Services, Inc. These firms were awarded a U.S. Department of Education contract to demonstrate improved approaches to jail industries/vocational education by operating enhanced programs for an 18-month period. The firms in turn contracted with three counties nationally: Hennepin County, and Belknap and Strafford Counties in New Hampshire.

The POWER Program is staffed with two full-time equivalent direct service positions, a Program Coordinator and a Community Network Facilitator. In addition, the POWER Program Project Director (not grant funded) contributes approximately one-fourth of his time to the administration of the program. A one-eighth FTE clerical and support person (not grant funded) is also available. For the 12-month period ending September 30, 1993, the combined value of all staff salaries (both County paid and grant paid) was \$73,300. An additional \$20,000 was expended for support services during this one-year period.

This report was prepared to describe the characteristics of individuals served in the POWER Program through November 5, 1993, and to present information on the outcomes achieved by these individuals in the community following their release from the ACF. The report also describes the key elements of the POWER Program as it has been implemented in the ACF.

While they are in the ACF, POWER Program participants receive skills and aptitude assessments, work readiness training, education classes and support services to facilitate the transition back into the community. Upon release, participants receive additional services to support reentry. Job interviews are prearranged. Case management services

provide ongoing support for participants while they are seeking jobs, as well as during their employment. Participants may also receive assistance in locating housing, assistance in moving, and allowances for transportation and clothing. Program staff appear in court to advocate for participants when necessary.

Following discussions with program staff and a review of written materials regarding the program, the Program Evaluation Team has summarized the mission of the POWER Program as follows:

To provide work experience, life skills education, work readiness training, job development, and transitional and supportive services to incarcerated men and women:

- 1) To enable these individuals to obtain and maintain employment in the community when they are released; and
- 2) To reduce the likelihood of the individuals being reincarcerated.

## FINDINGS

A total of 148 individuals have been admitted to the POWER Program through November 5 of 1993. The data presented here were collected on the 126 participants that successfully completed the requirements of the program while they were in the ACF. Twenty-two (15%) individuals dropped out or were excused from the Program.

### Characteristics of POWER Program Participants

- Employment History: Slightly over two-thirds of the participants were either unemployed or had worked on a part-time, irregular basis during the two years prior to POWER. Only one-fourth had worked full-time on a regular basis.
- Criminal History: The current offense of 49% of the participants was of a "felony nonperson" nature. Thirty percent were incarcerated because they had been convicted of felonies or gross misdemeanors against persons.

A total of 79% had at least one prior incarceration either at the ACF or at another institution. One-third of the participants had at least one prior conviction for a felony or gross misdemeanor against a person.

Only 7% of all participants had no prior convictions.

- Chemical Use History: Substance abuse has been a problem for 75% of the 126 participants. (This finding is based on participant self-report.)

- Education History: Participants are relatively well-educated. Seventy-five percent have a high school degree. An additional 16% have at least one or more years of education beyond high school.
- Demographics: Generally the participants are:
  - Young adult (over half are 18-29 years old)
  - Male (74%)
  - Caucasian (49%) or African American (44%)

### Outcomes

- Employment-Related Outcomes:

Seventy (56%) of the 126 program participants had obtained at least one job as of November 8, 1993, the cutoff date for data collection. There was a concern that participants who left the ACF during the most recent quarter would not have had time to find jobs and to be included among those attaining successful outcomes for purposes of this study. Further analyses indicated no significant change in the overall employment outcome rate.

Of the 70 individuals who obtained at least one job, 44 are known to have been working as of November 8, 1993. Some characteristics of the employment situations of the 44 individuals are as follows:

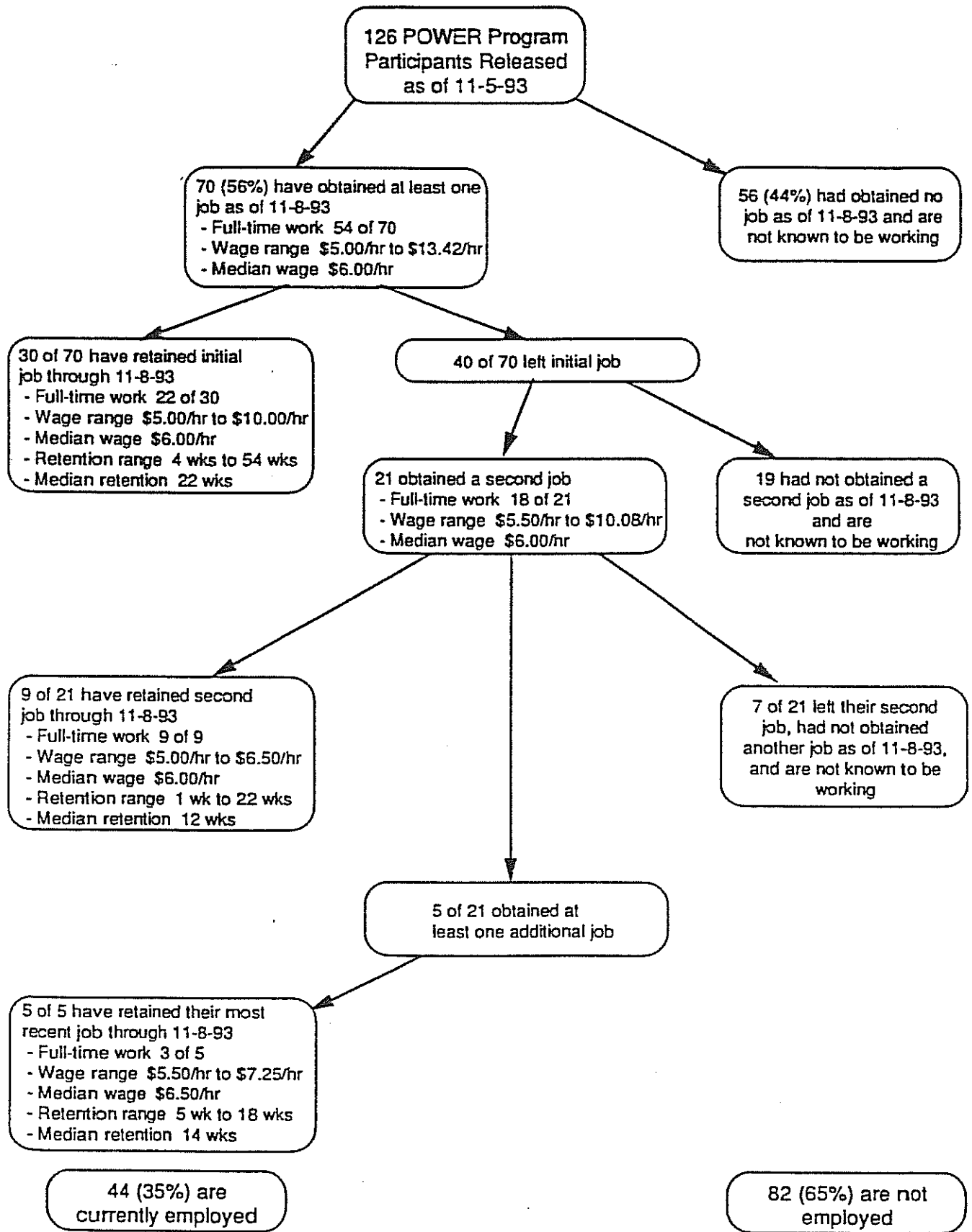
- Full-time work (i.e., 35-40 hours/week): 34 persons
- Wage range: \$5.00/hour to \$10.00/hour
- Median wage: \$6.00/hour
- Retention range: 1 week to 54 weeks
- Median retention: 18 weeks

Figure 1, which follows, summarizes the employment outcomes of all program participants.

- Recidivism-Related Outcomes:

Only 16 (13%) of the 126 program participants are known to have been reincarcerated (either in the ACF or in another institution) following their release. The length of time between release and reincarceration ranged from 11 weeks to 68 weeks.

FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES OF PARTICIPANTS



## CONCLUSIONS

The major employment-related findings of this study are that 56% of the 126 program participants obtained at least one job following release, and that 35% are currently working as of November 8, 1993. It could be expected that some individuals would have obtained employment even if they had not participated in POWER. However, neither baseline data nor a priori program expectancies on the proportion of participants who would obtain and retain jobs exist to provide a basis for comparison with actual study results. An extensive review of the literature conducted by the Program Evaluation Team provided no relevant data that might be used as a standard against which to compare the levels of employment outcomes achieved by POWER participants.

Inquiries concerning similar programs in the two New Hampshire counties that are also demonstration sites revealed that Strafford County has collected related employment outcome data. Strafford County has operated a work readiness training program for jail inmates for six years. Over this period 150 inmates (about 25 per year) have completed the program. The job placement rate for these individuals has ranged from 54% to 58% over the six years. "Placement" is defined as the individual's obtaining at least one job for a minimum of 30 days, at a minimum wage of \$5.50 per hour.

The Strafford County job placement criteria were applied to the POWER participants who had been released from the ACF for at least one year. Twenty of the 36 (56%) obtained at least one job that paid a minimum of \$5.50 per hour and that lasted for at least 30 days within the first year of their release. No information was available to determine whether relevant characteristics of Strafford County participants differ markedly from those of POWER participants.

This study also determined that 13% of program participants had been reincarcerated. Once again, there is a lack of baseline data by which to judge the quality of program performance. A search of relevant sources did reveal one related study. The Minnesota Department of Corrections (1991) reports that 34% of all felony offenders who serve their sentences in state facilities are reincarcerated within two years, either for a subsequent crime or for violating a condition of release. (The average length of sentence of these individuals is 18 months.)\*

While the recidivism rate of the POWER participants is less than the 34% figure, it should be noted that no participant has as yet been released for a two-year period.

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\*O'Brien, D., Assistant to the Commissioner, Personal Communication; November 18, 1993.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The POWER Program began serving ACF residents in June 1992 with the intent of demonstrating an improved approach to vocational education and job development. The program has successfully implemented work readiness and life skills training that provides the foundation for the participants' transition into the community. To achieve its goal as a demonstration site, the program must also document that the participants are meeting expected rates of employment and recidivism outcomes. Therefore, the POWER Program will need to continue its program development, which is still in a formative stage.

Based on the findings of this evaluation, the program staff should consider the following four recommendations in developing a strategy for shaping POWER into a model program. A time frame of six to nine months seems appropriate for accomplishing these recommendations.

1. Define the performance targets that specify exemplary levels of employment and recidivism outcomes for the POWER participants. These expectations should be justified by referring to baseline data, the outcome rates of other vocational and correctional programs, and the exemplary results intended for the POWER Program. The "new approach to targeted grantmaking" in the Outcome Funding book\* would be a useful resource for defining the performance targets and the milestones leading to the targets. This approach was introduced to Hennepin County at a workshop on November 17, 1993, sponsored by the Office of Planning and Development.
2. Develop formal linkages with other Hennepin County and community programs for collaboration and assistance in achieving defined performance targets. Specific County program areas that should be considered include: the Training and Employment Assistance (TEA) Department, the Mental Health Vocational Services Program of the Adult Services Department, and the various vocational program contracts funded through the Adult Services Department. In addition, it is recommended that the program collaborate with State of Minnesota resources which can be identified through the Department of Rehabilitation Services.

This recommendation focuses on obtaining assistance to further develop POWER's vocational training, job coaching, participant placement, and job opportunity/site development options.

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\*Harold S. Williams, Arthur Y. Webb, and William J. Phillips, Outcome Funding: A New Approach to Targeted Grantmaking. The Rensselaerville Institute, 1991.



3. Define the job responsibilities for coordinating and providing services to the POWER participants during their transition into the community. This will include: developing employment opportunities for persons with a criminal record, arranging job interviews, job coaching, housing and transportation assistance, and ongoing support.

Currently, the Community Network Facilitator (CNF) attempts to stay in contact with the POWER participants for 6-12 months following their release and has a caseload of 86 individuals. Furthermore, the CNF provides assistance and support on request to all POWER participants that were released from the ACF for more than 12 months and is responsible for enlisting new employers and arranging interviews for 8-10 participants per month. Hence the boundaries of responsibility should be defined for the CNF.

The program currently includes a mentorship service that has not yet developed to the extent intended. The staff should decide to discontinue the mentorship or implement a plan of action that will effectively develop this service for more participants.

4. Implement a comprehensive record-keeping system for all participants. The data collection protocol used in this evaluation provides a starting point for the types of data which should be collected. In addition, work needs to be completed on documenting the contacts initiated by both the CNF and the participants to enable the staff to understand the program performance.

It is recommended that the program staff consult with the Department of Rehabilitation Services regarding minimum record-keeping standards for vocational services programs. Resource help is also available through the Minnesota Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (MARF) and in the vocational evaluation, work adjustment, job placement, supportive employment, and industry-based program standards of the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).\*

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\*Standards Manual for Organizations Serving People with Disabilities, Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, 1993.

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## INTRODUCTION AND POWER PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Hennepin County Adult Corrections Facility (ACF) of the Hennepin County Bureau of Community Corrections was selected as a U.S. Department of Education national demonstration site to test a vocational education and training program in an adult detention facility. The model program, called POWER (Providing Opportunities for Work, Education, and Readiness), underwent a planning phase at the Adult Corrections Facility from December 1991 through May 1992 when a number of intermediate and long-term goals were specified to guide the development of the program. The program initiated services to clients on June 1, 1992. Department of Education funding for the POWER Program will end in December of 1993.

Hennepin County's Adult Correction Facility was selected as a demonstration site by CGA Consulting Services Inc., in association with Community Resource Services, Inc. These firms were awarded a U.S. Department of Education contract to demonstrate improved approaches to jail industries/vocational education by operating enhanced programs for an 18-month period. The firms in turn contracted with three counties nationally: Hennepin County, and Belknap and Strafford Counties in New Hampshire.

The POWER Program is staffed with two full-time equivalent direct service positions, a Program Coordinator and a Community Network Facilitator. In addition, the POWER Program Project Director (not grant funded) contributes approximately one-fourth of his time to the administration of the program. A one-eighth FTE clerical and support person (not grant funded) is also available. For the 12-month period ending September 30, 1993, grant funding for the two direct service staff positions totaled \$60,000. The dollar value of county funding for salaries for the quarter-time project director and the one-eighth-time clerical and support person was \$13,300.

In addition to the staff available to the POWER Program, grant funds are available for support services to clients. For the 12-month period ending September 30, 1993,

\$16,000 was expended for support services (e.g., transportation, clothing, housing) and \$4,000 went for staff expenses related to service delivery. The combined value of all staff salaries (both county paid and grant paid) and funds for support services for the 12-month period was \$93,300.

A third-party evaluation of the programs implemented at the three sites was proposed, but has not yet been conducted. The original grant application included an evaluation plan, but funding for the evaluation remains to be released by the National Institute of Justice. Therefore (in September of 1993), the Associate County Administrator authorized an evaluation of the program. The evaluation was planned and implemented during October and November by the Program Evaluation Team of the Information Resources Management Program. This relatively short time frame has limited the scope of the evaluation. For example, additional time could have been used to investigate the characteristics of individuals who successfully completed the POWER Program versus those who did not, and to analyze the characteristics of program completers who obtained employment versus those who did not.

The evaluation study presented here seeks to describe the characteristics of individuals served in the POWER Program through November 5, 1993, and to present information on the outcomes achieved by these individuals in the community following their release from the ACF. The report also describes the key elements of the POWER Program as it has been implemented in the ACF.

The following description of the POWER Program is organized into four sections that deal with the following: the mission of the program; staff responsibilities; program eligibility requirements; and services provided.

### Mission of the POWER Program

Following discussions with program staff and a review of written materials regarding the program, the Program Evaluation Team has summarized the mission of the POWER Program as follows:

To provide work experience, life skills education, work readiness training, job development, and transitional and supportive services to incarcerated men and women: 1). To enable these individuals to obtain and maintain employment in the community when they are released; and 2) To reduce the likelihood of the individuals being reincarcerated.

### Program Direct Service Staff Responsibilities

The POWER Program Coordinator is responsible for presenting a program orientation, selecting clients for the program, skill and interest assessment, and for case planning and management to facilitate participants' movement back into the community upon release. The Coordinator also teaches the 16-hour Life Skills course and provides supportive, follow along, and advocacy services to participants following their release.

The Community Network Facilitator (CNF) begins to work with each POWER Program participant approximately two to three weeks before his/her release. The CNF helps each resident develop an action plan dealing with the individual's financial, psychological, residential, and employment needs upon release. The CNF is a job placement specialist, and relies on a network of personally-developed informal contacts with both employers and employment programs to develop job opportunities. The CNF has referred approximately 10% of program participants to the Hennepin County Employment Brokerage at the Mall of America. An additional 10% have been referred to the Work Readiness Program. Both of these employment programs are administered by the Hennepin County Department of Training and Employment Assistance. The CNF also works with Job Training Partnership Act counselors at various community centers, vocational counselors, and the JOB Service to develop jobs and to place POWER Program participants in these jobs. The CNF attempts to stay in regular

contact with participants for a period of 6 to 12 months following their release to facilitate access to specific services such as clothing, housing, transportation, and child care. Following this time period, the CNF (like the Program Coordinator) continues to be involved with participants to provide supportive, follow along, and advocacy services as needed.

### POWER Program Eligibility Requirements

Staff of the POWER Program provide orientation sessions to acquaint individuals with the program and to determine their eligibility. Persons who meet the following criteria are eligible for the POWER Program:

- The individual's sentence is a minimum of 45 days.
- The individual has no outstanding warrant or charge.
- The individual must be working full-time within the ACF (work opportunities include: kitchen, laundry, and industry programs).
- The individual must stay out of disciplinary lock up.
- The individual must be willing to attend additional programming as needed (GED and basic skills classes, chemical dependency treatment).

### Services Provided

POWER Program participants are engaged in the following major categories of services during their final two months of incarceration:

- Skills and aptitude assessment, interest testing, and time on the Minnesota Career Information System to determine appropriate career choices.
- Development of an individual service plan to facilitate transition back into the community upon release.
- Attending a specially designed 16-hour Life Skills training course that teaches participants to interact effectively with co-workers and superiors. Among the topics are: verbal skills, resumé writing, interviewing techniques, stress management, and conflict resolution.

- Attending optional education classes (basic skills, GED) as needed. Receiving chemical health service referrals as needed, and attending optional chemical health classes.
- Receiving necessary support services to facilitate the transition back into the community. For example:
  - Obtaining a birth certificate to establish identification and credentials for employment.
  - Purchase and delivery of clothing to participants so that they have something seasonally appropriate to wear when they leave the institution.
  - Help with obtaining high school transcripts.
  - Assistance with applying to college or trade schools.
  - Assistance with filling out financial aid forms.
  - Assistance with filling out job applications and transportation to job interviews if furloughs are granted by the court.
- All program participants leave the Adult Corrections Facility with a portfolio that includes a certificate of program completion, a master copy and ten additional copies of their resume, a copy of their job performance evaluation from their correctional officer/work supervisor, an appointment/monthly planner book, a bus card, and any other important documents or certificates which have been secured during their stay at the Adult Corrections Facility.

Upon release, POWER Program participants may receive the following additional services:

- Transportation from the facility on the release date if necessary. (A first stop is often the Hennepin County Government Center to apply for a Minnesota State ID. The fee for this ID is paid for by the program).
- Pre-arranged job interviews, usually accompanied by the CNF to these interviews.
- Case management services that include:
  - Ongoing support for the participant while they are seeking a job as well as during their employment.

- Assistance in locating housing (program funds are available for a partial one-month rent payment).
  - Assistance in moving.
  - Securing bus cards.
  - Providing emergency allowances for food, clothing, furniture, day care expenses, and utilities.
  - Appearing in court to advocate for clients.
- Support from a mentor. Volunteers interested in befriending a participant are introduced to individual residents in the ACF before the release date. Ideally, mentors and participants are in contact once a week during the first two months following release, and at least once a month for up to six months after release from the institution. The mentoring aspect of the program has not been utilized by participants to the extent anticipated or hoped for by program staff.

## METHODOLOGY

After reviewing the grant application and learning about the implementation of the POWER Program from the staff, the evaluation team conducted the following activities:

- Developed the data collection protocol which was then completed for 126 participants by the POWER Program staff.
- Analyzed the participant data.
- Interviewed the program staff and followed up with additional inquiries and data collection to gain understanding about the program's implementation and performance.
- Conducted a literature search for data related to employment and recidivism outcomes of persons released from adult corrections facilities.
- Called sources in Minnesota and other states for employment and recidivism data.
- Constructed two participant case profiles to illustrate their involvement in the POWER Program, both at the Adult Corrections Facility and after their release into the community. The case profiles are contained in the Appendix.



## FINDINGS

A total of 148 individuals have been admitted to the POWER Program through November 5 of 1993. Twenty-two (15%) of these individuals dropped out or were excused from the Program. The data presented here were collected on the 126 participants that successfully completed the requirements of the program while they were in the ACF. There was not sufficient time for the collection of data on individuals who dropped out or who were excused from the program while they were in the ACF. The POWER Program Coordinator cited a number of the common reasons for individuals failing to complete the program. Among these reasons are: 1) resident placed in disciplinary lock up; 2) resident fired from her/his job in ACF; 3) resident failed to attend all Life Skills classes; 4) resident was released from the institution; 5) resident was furloughed to a treatment facility; and 6) lack of interest.

The movement of clients through the program has been steady during the program's 17 months of operation. Table 1 presents quarterly data on the number of admissions to the POWER Program and releases from the ACF for the 126 individuals. The number of admissions per quarter represents the number of participants who started the POWER Program during that quarter and then completed the ACF activities during the same or a subsequent month. The number of admissions for the period of September 1993 through November 5, 1993, shows a decline because the cutoff date for this study did not allow time for more participants to complete the ACF service regimen.

TABLE 1: NUMBERS OF POWER PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WHO COMPLETED THE PROGRAM BY QUARTER OF PROGRAM ADMISSION AND QUARTER OF RELEASE FROM ACF

QUARTER	NO. ADMISSIONS (N = 126)	NO. RELEASES (N = 126)
Jun. '92 - Aug. '92	28	9
Sep. '92 - Nov. '92	22	27
Dec. '92 - Feb. '93	20	21
Mar. '93 - May '93	27	25
Jun. '93 - Aug. '93	23	25
Sep. '93 - Nov. 5, '93	6	19

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF CLIENTS SERVED

Information on the characteristics of program participants falls into five major categories: employment history, criminal history, chemical use history, education history, and demographics.

##### Employment History

As part of the data collection process for the study, an attempt was made to quantify the participants' usual employment pattern during the two years prior to their current incarceration. Table 2 presents the judgments of POWER Program staff in this regard. Staff based their judgments on employment histories completed by participants when they made application to enter the program.

Table 2 shows that 26% of the 126 participants were classified as working "full-time" (i.e., 35 or more hours per week). Thirty-seven percent had a pattern of "part-time irregular" employment. Thirty percent of the participants were classified as "unemployed."

TABLE 2: USUAL EMPLOYMENT PATTERN OF PARTICIPANTS DURING TWO YEARS BEFORE ENTRY INTO POWER PROGRAM

PATTERN OF EMPLOYMENT	NO. (N = 126)	PERCENT
Full-time ( $\geq 35$ hrs./week)	33	26%
Part-time ( $< 35$ hrs./week)	8	6%
Part-time irregular	47	37%
Unemployed	38	30%

Additional information collected on employment histories during the study data collection period indicates that at least 67% of the 126 participants had held a full-time job at least once in their lives prior to their admission to the POWER Program. Four of the participants are known to have never held a full-time job. This information is unknown for 38 persons in the study group.

The length of the longest previous full-time job for the 84 individuals for whom data are available ranges from 2 months to 14 years. The median length of the longest full-time job held for the 84 individuals is nine months.

### Criminal History

The criminal history information collected on participants includes data on their current offense, the length of their current sentence, the number of prior incarcerations, and the types of prior offenses.

The current offense of the 126 POWER Program participants is shown in Table 3. The current offense of most (49%) of the participants was of a "felony-nonperson" nature. Thirty percent were incarcerated because they had been convicted of felonies or gross misdemeanors against persons.

TABLE 3: CURRENT OFFENSE OF POWER PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

CURRENT OFFENSE	NO. (N = 126)	PERCENT
Felony/Gross Misdemeanor Person Conviction	38	30%
Misdemeanor Person Conviction	8	6%
Other Felony Conviction	62	49%
Other Misdemeanor	18	14%

The median length of the current sentence of individuals in the study was four months. Sentences for the entire group ranged from 2 to 12 months.

A total of 79% of the 126 individuals had at least one prior incarceration either at the ACF or at another institution. Fifty-three percent had two or more prior incarcerations.

Table 4 presents data on prior convictions of the 126 individuals in the study. Thirty-three percent had at least one prior conviction for a felony or gross misdemeanor against a person. Note also that over half (58%) of the study group had prior "nonperson" felony convictions. The sum of the percentages in Table 4 is greater than 100 because some individuals have had more than one prior offense. Further analysis of the data in the table showed that only 7% of all participants had no prior convictions for any of the four types of offenses listed.

TABLE 4: PRIOR OFFENSES OF POWER PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

PRIOR OFFENSES	NO. (N = 126)	PERCENT
Felony/Gross Misdemeanor Person Conviction(s)	41	33%
Misdemeanor Person Conviction(s)	25	20%
Other Felony Conviction(s)	73	58%
Other Misdemeanor Conviction(s)	83	66%

Chemical Use History

At the time of program intake, applicants are asked whether chemical use has been or is a problem in their lives. Applicants are also asked whether they had ever been in chemical dependency treatment.

Substance abuse has been a problem for 95 (75%) of the 126 POWER Program graduates. A total of 90 of these 95 reported undergoing some sort of chemical dependency treatment. It is the opinion of the POWER Program Coordinator that these figures are conservative estimates of the incidence of substance abuse problems among participants. No data were collected concerning chemical dependency treatment completion or success rates for the participants.

Education History

Table 5 presents information on the years of education of program participants. Note that a relatively high proportion (75%) have 12 years of education or a high school degree. (This category includes individuals with a GED). An additional 16% have at least one or more years of formal education beyond high school.

TABLE 5: YEARS OF EDUCATION OF POWER PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

YEARS	NO. (N = 126)	%
10	3	2%
11	8	6%
12	95	75%
13	5	4%
14	13	10%
18	1	1%
21	1	1%

Altogether, 92% of the participants have an education equivalent to a high school degree or more. Twenty-five percent have also received formal training or technical education (such as apprenticeship training or recognized on-the-job training) beyond their academic education.

It was also determined that 32% of the 126 participants in the study group can be considered as having a "profession," "skill," or "trade."

#### Client Demographics

Table 6 presents demographic information on program participants. The age of participants ranges from 19 to 48; the median age is 28. Seventy-four percent of the participants are male; 26% are female. Caucasians make up a plurality (49%) of participants to date. Forty-four percent are African American. Only 13% of the participants are married.

Additional data (not shown in Table 6) indicate that 36% of the participants had no permanent address prior to their incarceration preceding intake into the POWER Program. A total of 68% of the participants have no dependents.

TABLE 6: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF POWER PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

CHARACTERISTICS	NO. (N = 126)	PERCENT
Median Age	28	-
Gender		
Male	93	74%
Female	33	26%
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	55	44%
Caucasian	62	49%
Native American	8	6%
Oriental/Pacific Islander	1	1%
Marital Status Prior to Incarceration		
Married	16	13%
Living w/Partner	26	21%
Separated	4	3%
Divorced	35	28%
Widowed	1	1%
Never Married	40	32%
Unknown	4	3%

#### SERVICES PROVIDED

Several items in the project data collection protocol were aimed at documenting the services provided to POWER Program participants. Table 7 indicates the frequency with which various types of support services and assistance were provided to participants -- both during incarceration and following participants' release from the Adult Correction Facility.

Inspection of Table 7 shows that a majority of the 126 participants received bus passes and assistance with clothes or uniforms. Thirty-three percent received assistance in obtaining driver's licenses or IDs. A substantial number (21%) received housing assistance, either in the form of locating housing or with a partial payment of one-month's rent. Examples of "other" types of assistance include assistance with college registration, court advocacy, and assistance in obtaining needed tools.

TABLE 7: TYPES OF SUPPORT SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

TYPE OF SUPPORT/ ASSISTANCE	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS RECEIVING (N = 126)	PERCENT
Birth Certificate	10	8%
Driver's License/ID	41	33%
Clothes/Uniforms	69	55%
Bus Passes	108	86%
Moving Assistance	9	7%
Housing Location/Rent	27	21%
Other	8	6%

Table 8 presents information on the degree of POWER staff contact with participants following their departure from the Adult Corrections Facility. The exact number of contacts per participant following release and the purpose of these contacts was not readily retrievable from program records; the data in Table 8 are based on ratings by program staff of the degree of post-release contact. As a frame of reference, the following approximate numbers of contacts guided staff in making their ratings: "High," ten or more contacts; "Medium," five to nine contacts; "Low," one to four contacts, "None," zero contacts.



TABLE 8: DEGREE OF POWER STAFF CONTACT WITH POWER PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS FOLLOWING RELEASE FROM ACF

DEGREE OF CONTACT	NO. OF CLIENTS RECEIVING CONTACT (N = 126)	PERCENT
High	43	34%
Medium	29	23%
Low	39	31%
None	15	12%

Note that over half of the participants (57%) were rated as receiving a "medium" to "high" degree of contact. Program staff had no contact with 12% of program participants.

Contacts take place both in person and over the phone. The purpose of contacts is usually to arrange job interviews, secure work clothes, or obtain bus passes. About half of the contacts were estimated by POWER staff to have been initiated by program graduates. It is the philosophy of the program that participants need to take the initiative and assure the responsibility of contacting program staff if necessary.

## OUTCOMES

This section of the report discusses the outcomes achieved by POWER Program participants following their release from the Adult Corrections Facility. The outcome data presented are of two major types: employment-related and recidivism-related.

### Employment-Related Outcomes

The following discussion presents information on the employment outcomes of all program participants. Characteristics of the employment situations are presented for

individuals' initial jobs following release as well as for all subsequent jobs. Figure 1 summarizes employment outcomes for all participants.

Of the 126 program participants that were released from the ACF as of November 5, 1993, a total of 70 (56%) had obtained at least one job as of November 8, 1993, this study's data collection cutoff date. There was a concern that participants who left the ACF during the most recent quarter would not have had time to find jobs and to be included among those attaining successful outcomes for purposes of this study. Further analyses indicated no significant change in the overall employment outcome rate.

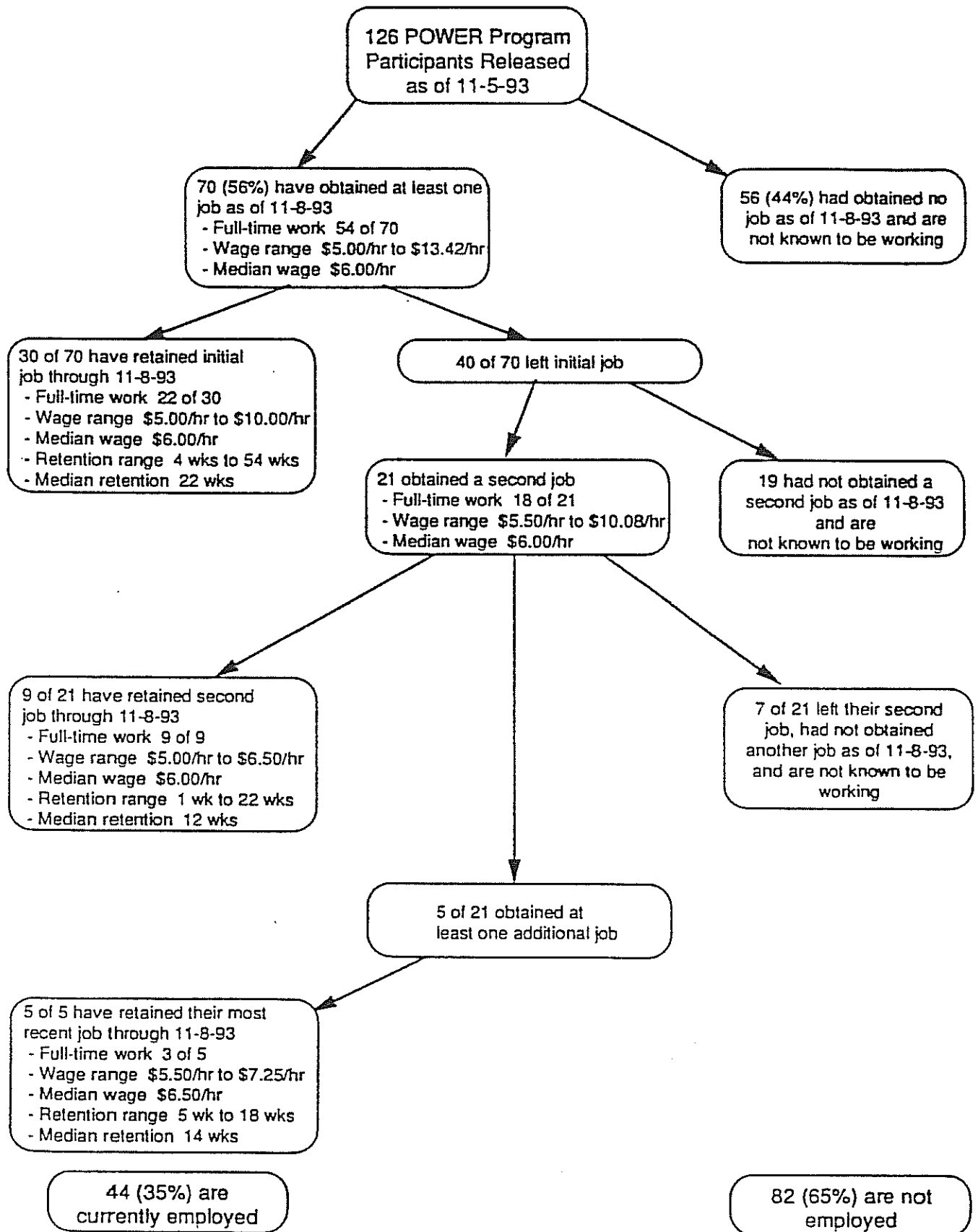
Of the 70 individuals that obtained employment, 54 are classified as having obtained full-time employment in their initial job (i.e., 35 or more hours per week) (see Table 9). Sixteen individuals obtained part-time employment (20 to 30 hours per week).

The starting wage of participants in their first job ranged from \$5.00 per hour to \$13.42 per hour. The median starting wage was \$6.00 per hour. Ten of the 70 individuals that obtained jobs received at least some benefits.

TABLE 9: AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER WEEK IN FIRST JOB OBTAINED FOLLOWING RELEASE

AVERAGE HOURS PER WEEK	NO. (N = 70)	PERCENT
20	7	10%
25-30	9	13%
35	13	19%
40	41	58%

FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES OF PARTICIPANTS



Of the 70 participants that obtained jobs, 30 have retained these initial jobs as of November 8, 1993. The length of employment for the 30 individuals that have kept their initial jobs ranges from 4-54 weeks. The average period of retention is 22 weeks.

Of the 40 participants who left their initial jobs, 21 quit of their own volition (see Table 10). Two were laid off, four left to take another job, and four were reincarcerated. Other reasons for leaving included: "returning to school," "injury," and "lack of transportation."

TABLE 10: REASONS FOR POWER PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS LEAVING INITIAL JOB

REASON FOR LEAVING	NO. (N = 40)	PERCENT
To Take Another Job	4	10%
Laid Off	2	5%
Employer Termination	3	8%
Worker Quit	21	53%
Reincarcerated	4	10%
Other	6	15%

Many of the individuals who left their initial job following release improved their employment situation. Of the 40 who left their initial job, 21 went on to obtain another job. Eleven of the 21 moved to a position that provided more hours of work per week. Altogether 18 of the 21 individuals that obtained a second job, moved to a position that provided 40 hours of work per week. The starting salary of the second job obtained ranged from \$5.50 to \$10.08 per hour, with the median hourly salary, again, being \$6.00.

Of the 21 individuals that obtained a second job following release, 9 remain in these jobs as of November 8. The median length of time that these individuals are still in their second job is 12 weeks.

Reasons why the 12 individuals left their second jobs include: employer termination - 2; worker quit - 9; and reincarceration - 1.

The flow chart in Figure 1 summarizes the employment-related outcome data that have been presented. Figure 1 also contains information for individuals that obtained a third and fourth job following release.

- Of the 70 individuals who obtained at least one job following release, 44 are known to be working as of 11-8-93.
- The following characteristics apply to the current employment situation of the 44 individuals working as of 11-8-93.
  - Full time work (i.e., 35-40 hours/week): 34 persons
  - Wage range: \$5.00/hour to \$10.00/hour
  - Median wage: \$6.00/hour
  - Retention range: 1 week to 54 weeks
  - Median retention: 18 weeks

In a related area, educational outcomes following release were also examined for the 126 program participants. Six of the individuals went on to enroll in higher education programs. Three enrolled in vocational technical school; two entered college; and one entered dental assistant training. Four of the six individuals that pursued further education are among the 70 program participants who obtained at least one job following release.

### Recidivism-Related Outcomes

A total of 13% of the 126 program participants are known to have been reincarcerated (either in the ACF or in another institution) following their release. The length of time between release and reincarceration ranged from 11 weeks to 68 weeks. Among the 16 individuals reincarcerated are 11 out of the 70 participants who obtained at least one job following their initial release from the ACF. In fact, two individuals completed the POWER Program and were released from the ACF, obtained work, were reincarcerated, obtained yet another job, and are currently working.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The major employment-related findings of this study are that 56% of the 126 program participants obtained at least one job following release, and that 35% are currently working as of November 8, 1993. It could be expected that some individuals would have obtained employment even if they had not participated in POWER. However, neither baseline data nor a priori program expectancies on the proportion of participants who would obtain and retain jobs exist to provide a basis for comparison with actual study results. An extensive review of the literature conducted by the Program Evaluation Team provided no relevant data that might be used as a standard against which to compare the levels of employment outcomes achieved by POWER participants.

Inquiries concerning similar programs in the two New Hampshire counties that are also demonstration sites revealed that Strafford County has collected related employment outcome data. Strafford County has operated a work readiness training program for jail inmates for six years. Over this period 150 inmates (about 25 per year) have completed the program. The job placement rate for these individuals has ranged from 54% to 58% over the six years. "Placement" is defined as the individual's obtaining at least one job for a minimum of 30 days, at a minimum wage of \$5.50 per hour

The Strafford County job placement criteria were applied to the POWER participants who had been released from the ACF for at least one year. Twenty of the 36 (56%) obtained at least one job that paid a minimum of \$5.50 per hour and that lasted for at least 30 days within the first year of their release. No information was available to determine whether relevant characteristics of Strafford County participants differ markedly from those of POWER participants.

This study also determined that 13% of program participants had been reincarcerated. Once again, there is a lack of baseline data by which to judge the quality of program performance. A search of relevant sources did reveal one related study. The Minnesota Department of Corrections (1991) reports that 34% of all felony offenders who serve their sentences in state facilities are reincarcerated within two years, either for a subsequent crime or for violating a condition of release. (The average length of sentence of these individuals is 18 months.)\*

While the recidivism rate of the POWER participants is less than the 34% figure, it should be noted that no participant has as yet been released for a two-year period.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The POWER Program began serving ACF residents in June 1992 with the intent of demonstrating an improved approach to vocational education and job development. The program has successfully implemented work readiness and life skills training that provides the foundation for the participants' transition into the community. To achieve its goal as a demonstration site, the program must also document that the participants are meeting expected rates of employment and recidivism outcomes. Therefore, the

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\*O'Brien, D., Assistant to the Commissioner, Personal Communication; November 18, 1993.

POWER Program will need to continue its program development, which is still in a formative stage.

Based on the findings of this evaluation, the program staff should consider the following four recommendations in developing a strategy for shaping POWER into a model program. A time frame of six to nine months seems appropriate for accomplishing these recommendations.

1. Define the performance targets that specify exemplary levels of employment and recidivism outcomes for the POWER participants. These expectations should be justified by referring to baseline data, the outcome rates of other vocational and correctional programs, and the exemplary results intended for the POWER Program. The "new approach to targeted grantmaking" in the Outcome Funding book\* would be a useful resource for defining the performance targets and the milestones leading to the targets. This approach was introduced to Hennepin County at a workshop on November 17, 1993, sponsored by the Office of Planning and Development.
2. Develop formal linkages with other Hennepin County and community programs for collaboration and assistance in achieving defined performance targets. Specific County program areas that should be considered include: the Training and Employment Assistance (TEA) Department, the Mental Health Vocational Services Program of the Adult Services Department, and the various vocational program contracts funded through the Adult Services Department. In addition, it is recommended that the program collaborate with State of Minnesota resources which can be identified through the Department of Rehabilitation Services.

This recommendation focuses on obtaining assistance to further develop POWER's vocational training, job coaching, participant placement, and job opportunity/site development options.

3. Define the job responsibilities for coordinating and providing services to the POWER participants during their transition into the community. This will include: developing employment opportunities for persons with a criminal record, arranging job interviews, job coaching, housing and transportation assistance, and ongoing support.

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\*Harold S. Williams, Arthur Y. Webb, and William J. Phillips, Outcome Funding: A New Approach to Targeted Grantmaking. The Rensselaerville Institute, 1991.



Currently, the Community Network Facilitator (CNF) attempts to stay in contact with the POWER participants for 6-12 months following their release and has a caseload of 86 individuals. Furthermore, the CNF provides assistance and support on request to all POWER participants that were released from the ACF for more than 12 months and is responsible for enlisting new employers and arranging interviews for 8-10 participants per month. Hence the boundaries of responsibility should be defined for the CNF.

The program currently includes a mentorship service that has not yet developed to the extent intended. The staff should decide to discontinue the mentorship or implement a plan of action that will effectively develop this service for more participants.

4. Implement a comprehensive record-keeping system for all participants. The data collection protocol used in this evaluation provides a starting point for the types of data which should be collected. In addition, work needs to be completed on documenting the contacts initiated by both the CNF and the participants to enable the staff to understand the program performance.

It is recommended that the program staff consult with the Department of Rehabilitation Services regarding minimum record-keeping standards for vocational services programs. Resource help is also available through the Minnesota Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (MARF) and in the vocational evaluation, work adjustment, job placement, supportive employment, and industry-based program standards of the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).\*

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\*Standards Manual for Organizations Serving People with Disabilities, Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, 1993.

## APPENDIX

### CASE PROFILES

Two case profiles were prepared with information from their data collection protocol and interviews with the two POWER staff. The case profiles illustrate the involvement of the participants in the POWER Program, both at the Adult Corrections Facility and after their release into the community. The participants' characteristics and employment outcomes are also summarized. Although the case profiles are brief, they represent the variety of participation in POWER activities and the effect of these services on their transition to the community.

Since there is considerable diversity in the 126 participant profiles, two profiles do not provide a representative picture. However, they do illustrate that the participants have numerous obstacles to overcome, including their own self-destructive tendencies. Participants often lack the basic skills to obtain and keep a job, and to interact effectively with co-workers and superiors.

## Case Profile #1

Mark (not his real name) is a success story for the POWER Program. He is proof that the program can work for those who are motivated to succeed, even when faced with tragedy and adversity.

Mark is a 36-year-old male who was serving five months for a felony conviction at the Adult Correctional Facility (ACF). He had three prior incarcerations for both felony and misdemeanor offenses. He also had a history of substance abuse, for which he has undergone chemical dependency treatment.

Prior to his conviction, Mark worked approximately 9 months out of 24, never for more than 3 months at a time. While incarcerated, Mark worked in the Industry Program doing assembly work. His workhouse supervisor said the quality of his work was above average but he also thought Mark was capable of more.

The POWER Program provided Mark with Life Skills training classes and other needed support services, such as a bus pass and identification card, and clothing for work. He was eager to leave the ACF, find a job and go to work. But Mark sometimes got upset when things did not work out and staff were concerned that he would lose his first job before he got it.

The POWER staff knew of a full-time housekeeping job, with benefits, at the Mall of America. The Community Network Facilitator (CNF) went with Mark to the interview. He related that Mark was so anxious about getting the job, he thought Mark was going to "blow up" before he even knew whether or not he would be hired. A short time later when Mark was told he had the job, he was beaming.

Mark planned to work for a few months, get settled, and then arrange for his children to live with him. However, he had been working for only 2½ months when he learned that his eight-year-old son had committed suicide. Mark was devastated.

Because Mark had been such an outstanding employee, his boss gave him a week off, with pay, to attend his son's funeral. However, when Mark came back to work, he was again using alcohol. With support from POWER staff, Mark managed to continue working because he "had to stay busy." A few months after his son's death, he was able to say, "I'm healthy, I'm sober, I'm working, I'm happy."

Mark called the POWER office to celebrate one full year on the job. In his recorded phone message he said, "It's been a year today since I left [the ACF] and tomorrow, August 20, is my year anniversary working at the Mall of America. I want to thank you for the road you put me on . . . you were a high point in my life during a year of tragedies . . . I hope you hear this tape today. Peace."

In the spring of 1993, Mark got custody of two of his children, ages four and ten. But when his child care assistance ended, his children were left alone during his 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. shift. He requested a daytime shift, but his employer was not able to accommodate his request, and Mark quit soon after his anniversary.

Mark then called the POWER Program office to tell them he had left his job and to ask for a bus card. The program offered to help him again because he had worked consistently since his release. The CNF found him a daytime shipping and receiving job where he is now employed full-time, but without benefits.

The CNF believes that he and Mark "have been through hell," but that Mark has grown and matured in the process. They are very hopeful about Mark's prospects for the future.

### Case Profile #2

The POWER Program has not worked for everyone, even when the full force of its resources were made available. Jim (not his real name) is an example of a participant who looked like he would get his life on track, but eventually did not succeed in keeping a job and staying away from criminal activity.

Jim is a 36-year-old male, divorced, with no permanent address prior to his incarceration. He was serving a four-month sentence for a misdemeanor charge. His previous criminal history included three other incarcerations for misdemeanor convictions. Jim has also abused substances and has received chemical dependency treatment.

Jim was working in the kitchen at the ACF when he began the POWER Program. He had formerly been a computer programmer, but prior to his incarceration Jim had worked only three months out of the previous two years.

While in the program, Jim attended the Life Skills classes and received assistance obtaining his birth certificate, a bus pass, and an identification card. Upon his release in November of 1992, the POWER staff arranged for his housing at the Drake Hotel. They also provided transportation for job interviews and bought Jim some work clothing. At this time, Jim met with his mentor and asked to borrow \$20, explaining that it was an "emergency." It was the beginning of a two-month cocaine binge.

When the CNF found Jim again in December, he was living on the streets. He had had a series of very brief jobs and was stealing to supply his habit. The CNF found shelter for Jim, bought him dinner, and convinced him to go into chemical dependency treatment.

Jim successfully completed a 30-day in-patient treatment program and was released. He continued with out-patient treatment and moved in with a woman with whom he had had a relationship off and on for five years. She was a stabilizing influence in his life.

Within six months of leaving the ACF, Jim has secured employment at the University of Minnesota, where he was soon earning over \$10 an hour and receiving benefits. Throughout this period, the CNF was in close contact with Jim and both were hopeful that Jim was over the hump.

Jim had been working for about three months when he had to go to court regarding a theft charge from his cocaine binge the previous fall. The CNF successfully advocated for Jim to be put on probation, rather than incarcerated, convincing the court that Jim was worth the risk. Unfortunately, Jim was not convinced and that evening, after his girlfriend left town to help her sister move, Jim stole several of her personal belongings and sold them to a drug dealer for cocaine.

Shortly thereafter, Jim was again living on the streets. He told the CNF that "life was just too comfortable." POWER staff acknowledge that they will no longer help Jim, stating that he is a capable guy when he stays away from cocaine, but he does not seem able to stay clean. Jim is working again, for a temporary agency, but he has lost everything except for a little clothing and a few personal belongings.