

# Program for offenders with mental health or addiction issues produces positive results

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A review of a state program launched two years ago to improve recovery and reduce recidivism among felony offenders who have mental health or addiction issues shows the program is producing positive results.

"There are a lot of individuals in the criminal justice system who have a mental [health](#) or substance-abuse problem who are now getting the additional services they need," said Brad Ray, co-author of the [review](#). Ray is an assistant professor in the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs at IUPUI and director of the Center for Criminal Justice Research.

The Center for Criminal Justice Research, part of the IU Public Policy Institute, conducted the review of Recovery Works for the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration's Division of Mental Health and Addiction, which manages Recovery Works.

Recovery Works was designed to provide criminal offenders with the help they need to address [mental health](#) or substance-abuse issues. Most of the offenders have no health insurance to pay for the evidence-based services they receive to aid their [recovery](#) and their ability to lead successful lives.

"Mental health or substance-abuse problems often interact with criminogenic and social risk factors that contribute to patterns of repeat offending," Ray said. "If we can address these issues as thoroughly as possible, we should see fewer of them in the system."

From November 2015 through May 2017, the [program](#) assisted 12,042 individuals. The majority were referred to the program by probation and parole agencies.

The typical client is a 34-year-old single, unemployed white male. Most clients have a high school degree or GED equivalent and an average annual income of \$7,500.

The most common substances used by Recovery Works clients are alcohol and opioids. Approximately one-third of the clients have used needles to inject drugs, and 13.4 percent have shared a needle to inject drugs; among those who reported having used opioids, 29.6 percent reported needle-sharing.

The review found that among those Recovery Works clients who remained in the program for at least six months, there were statistically significant increases in rates of employment and insurance coverage and decreases in self-reported arrests. Although not statistically significant, there were also increases in clients' average family income.

Other review findings show 7.7 percent of the program's clients were incarcerated for the first time after enrolling in Recovery Works. Clients who had been previously incarcerated in the state Department of Correction fared worse; the review found that 13.8 percent of those who were previously in the Department of Correction were reincarcerated after enrolling in Recovery Works.

Provided by Indiana University

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