



# Pathway Home Reentry Evaluation

## SUMMARY

In September 2020, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and commissioned contractor Mathematica, and their subcontractors Social Policy Research Associates and Council of State Governments Justice Center, to conduct the Evaluation of the Pathway Home Grant Program. The implementation and impact evaluation aims to build the knowledge base about reentry employment programs by (1) describing how the grantees implemented programs and who they served, (2) identifying successes and challenges of implementation as reported by the grantees, and (3) assessing the impact of services on participant employment, recidivism, and other outcomes.

Individuals released from incarceration face substantial obstacles to successful reentry and self-sufficiency once in the community. The [Pathway Home Grant program](#) seeks to help mitigate these obstacles by providing linked pre- and post-release employment services to improve individuals' chances of finding meaningful employment and avoiding recidivism. In 2020 and 2021, DOL awarded nearly \$113 million in Pathway Home grants to two cohorts of 42 grantees across 21 states and Washington, D.C. with the goals of increasing the provision of workforce services to eligible incarcerated individuals and strengthening the continuity of pre-release and post-release employment and other support services.

This Department of Labor-funded study was a result of the annual process to determine the Department's research priorities for the upcoming year. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform [Reentry](#) and [Employment and Training](#) programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities. In particular, this brief focuses on the first 20 Pathway Home grants awarded in 2020 and their experiences implementing their programs during the COVID-19 pandemic between January and December 2021.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

*Issue Brief: Workforce Supports for the Reentry Population During the COVID-19 Pandemic*

- Grantees that reported more established partnerships and stronger communication channels with correctional facilities appeared to be better positioned to implement their Pathway Home program during the COVID-19 pandemic, including conducting recruitment, obtaining referrals, and gaining access to the facilities.
- Grantees reported that early release policies at correctional facilities in response to COVID-19 hampered enrollment into the program and participation. Individuals were released early to reduce overcrowding, making them ineligible for the



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program or reducing their time in pre-release services. Grantees found it helpful to have a partner who would commit to providing timely information on release dates, such as someone in the correctional facility or the local prosecutor's office.

- To address COVID-19-related restrictions, Pathway Home grantees and their correctional partners reported an expansion of technology in facilities such as providing participants with tablets and using DocuSign for paperwork, to improve the virtual outreach, intake, and enrollment processes.
- Staff turnover at both grantees and correctional facilities was reported to pose substantial implementation challenges, as did social distancing restrictions. Grantees reported modifying their office layouts and policies, and updating the occupational training courses they offered through the program to adhere to social distancing policies.
- Grantees reported that the strong labor market in 2021 increased the jobs available for participants and employers' interest in Pathway Home programs (as a source of potential employees), but decreased participant interest related to training and employment services (because jobs were readily available). Grantees had to develop creative approaches to engaging participants, including providing incentives for participating in the program, and using social media to stay in contact with participants after release.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

**TIMEFRAME:** 2020-2025

**SUBMITTED BY:** Mathematica

**DATE PREPARED:** September 2022

**PARTNER AGENCY:** Employment and Training Administration (ETA)

**SPONSOR:** Chief Evaluation Office

**CEO CONTACT:** [ChiefEvaluationOffice@dol.gov](mailto:ChiefEvaluationOffice@dol.gov)

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