



Results First Mississippi

Key Point Summary of Issue Brief #1: Opportunities for Improving the Outcomes of Adult Prison-based Intervention Programs

June 2017

Note: The full text of Issue Brief #1 is available at www.peer.ms.gov, Performance Accountability, Results First Mississippi.

Key Points:

What is the primary objective of adult prison-based intervention programs?

The primary objective of adult prison-based intervention programs is to **reduce recidivism and avoid its associated costs**, including costs of incarceration, the criminal justice system, and victimization.

- There is wide variation in the intervention programs offered by each of the state’s twenty-one adult correctional facilities.

How much did the state spend on adult prison-based intervention programs in FY 2016?

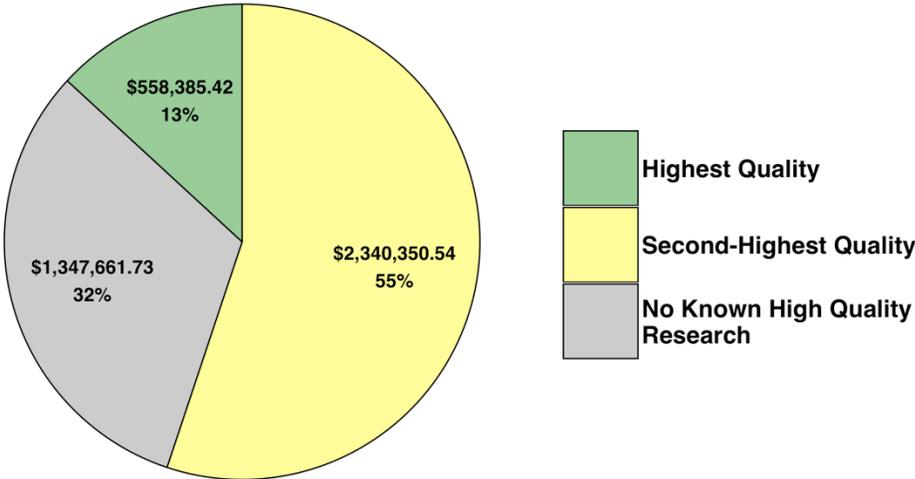
An estimated **\$4.2 million** was expended on adult prison-based intervention programs in FY 2016. Dollars invested in well-run intervention programs that high-quality research shows to be effective in reducing recidivism will likely yield benefits in excess of costs, in some cases by large amounts.

- Thirteen of the facilities reported offering vocational education in a combined total of nineteen skill areas.

What percentage of FY 2016 adult prison-based intervention program expenditures were for programs supported by high-quality research?

As shown below, approximately **68%** of estimated FY 2016 expenditures on adult prison-based intervention programs were for programs supported by high-quality research. At the time of this issue brief, it is not known whether these programs are being run in accordance with the program design evaluated in the research.

- All facilities reported offering correctional (academic) education and religious study programs.
- The program in Mississippi’s inventory backed by the highest quality research is Therapeutic Communities for Chemically Dependent Offenders, operated by the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman.



Source: Self-reported expenditure data provided by the state’s twenty-one adult correctional facilities and legislative staff analysis of published program research.

Of those adult prison-based intervention programs supported by high-quality research, which are the most cost-effective?

As the table below shows, **cognitive behavioral therapy** is the most cost-effective of those programs in Mississippi’s inventory supported by high-quality research, followed by **correctional (academic) education**. In terms of effect size alone, high quality research shows employment and job training assistance to be the most effective in reducing recidivism, followed by vocational education.

Prison-based Intervention Program	Estimated Direct Cost Per Participant	Program Effect Size¹	Cost Effectiveness Rank
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	\$ 21.52	0.151	1
Correctional (Academic) Education	\$1,061.73	0.242	2
Employment and Job Training Assistance	\$2,510.76	0.380	3
Vocational Education	\$1,785.52	0.256	4
Therapeutic Communities for Chemically Dependent Offenders	\$1,334.89	0.119	5
Correctional Industries in Prison	\$1,855.22	0.082	6

Source: Legislative staff calculations using self-reported estimated direct cost-per-participant data provided by the state’s twenty-one adult correctional facilities and program effect sizes reported by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy in its Benefit-Cost Analyses of Adult Criminal Justice programs.

How much was spent on adult prison-based intervention programs with no known research supporting their effectiveness in FY 2016?

In FY 2016, an estimated **\$1.3 million** was expended on programs with no known high-quality research supporting their effectiveness. Over half of these expenditures (approximately 60%) were on various alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs. A list of alternative alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs that high-quality research shows to be effective in reducing recidivism can be found in Appendix F on page 28 of the full text of *Results First Mississippi Issue Brief #1*.

What steps can the state’s adult correctional facilities take to improve the impact of adult prison-based intervention program dollars on reducing recidivism?

1. Move dollars out of programs that are not supported by high-quality research into cost-effective programs that are supported by high-quality research.
2. Conduct high-quality research of the effectiveness of MDOC pilot programs such as the Recidivism Reduction Program.
3. On an ongoing basis, evaluate the implementation of all programs supported by high-quality research to ensure adherence to those program components critical to achieving the reductions in recidivism reported in the research.

¹ The effect size is a measure of the degree to which a program prevents criminal recidivism following release from prison.