

SVORI represents a significant investment of Federal resources and local efforts. It is important to carefully study the Initiative, in terms of both local efforts at funded sites and the extent to which these efforts result in improved prisoner outcomes.

RTI International is teamed with the Urban Institute to conduct the Multi-site Evaluation of SVORI. A group of senior policy experts and practitioners has also been engaged to inform the research team with insight into policy and practice, additional methodological expertise, and strategies for dissemination of findings. The goal of the evaluation is to determine whether the selected programs have accomplished the overall goal of SVORI: increasing public safety by reducing recidivism among the populations served by these programs. In addition, the evaluation will determine the relative costs and benefits of SVORI.

Evaluation Components

Following the completion of a 1-year design and assessment period in April 2004, the evaluation team began work on a 4-year comprehensive impact evaluation that will continue through the end of the evaluation period in 2008. The evaluation includes an implementation assessment of all grantees, an impact evaluation (focused on a limited number of sites), a cost-benefit analysis, and a dissemination plan.

Implementation Assessment

The implementation assessment involves the collection of information on SVORI activities in all 69 sites. During the design and assessment period, researchers defined and documented the SVORI models and programs, which included identifying the target population(s), the program elements, the timing of services and programming, the agencies involved, and the degree of systems integration. This *National Portrait of SVORI* is the initial product of the implementation assessment. Continued activities under the implementation assessment will involve annual data collection from all the sites, which will document implementation, progress, and sustainability activities. In addition, selected programs will take part in site visits and interviews with key stakeholders.

Impact Evaluation

The impact evaluation will compare outcomes for two groups of returning prisoners—a group who receives reentry services as part of SVORI prior to and during the first 2 years after release, and a comparison group. The primary data collection component is a longitudinal study of returning prisoners in selected sites. This study will include males, females, adults, and juveniles. Experimental designs will be used in several sites, with quasi-experimental approaches in the remainder.

Impact evaluation activities during the design and assessment period included site selection, instrument design, pilot testing, establishment of site evaluation protocols, and Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Implementation of the longitudinal study will involve a number of interview activities. Researchers will conduct pre-release interviews with prisoners who are SVORI participants and with those

SVORI Multi-site Evaluation Research Questions

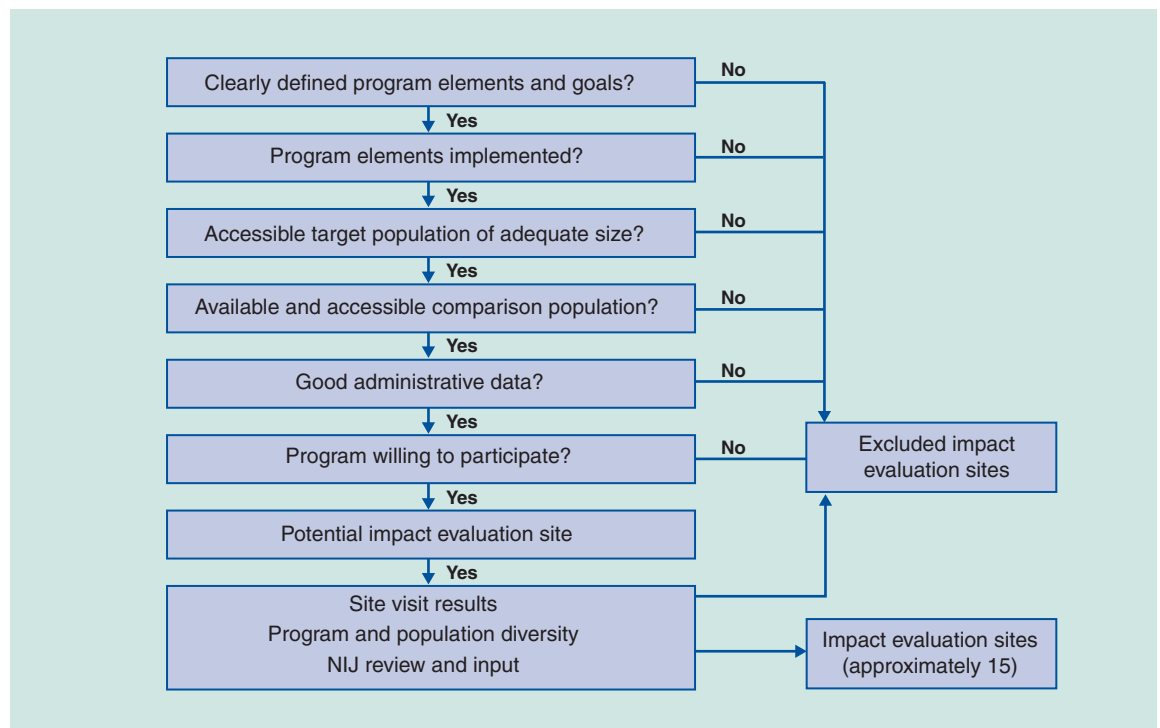
- To what extent did SVORI lead to more coordinated planning and integrated services among partner agencies?
- To what extent did reentry participants receive more individualized and comprehensive services than comparison subjects?
- To what extent did reentry participants demonstrate better recidivism, health, and personal functioning outcomes than comparison subjects?
- To what extent did the benefits derived from reentry programming exceed the costs?

who are not. These same prisoners will also be interviewed at 3, 9, and 15 months following release to determine the effects of SVORI over time. The interview instruments will address short- and long-term outcomes, including employment, education, housing, family contact/stability, health, supervision compliance, substance use, and recidivism. The interviews will also provide details on participation in programs and services by study participants before and after release.

Supplemental data that will be used to augment the prisoner interview data include State corrections and law enforcement administrative records, oral fluids testing for detection of illegal drug use, and key stakeholder interviews.

Site selection for the impact evaluation followed the decision tree shown in Exhibit 2-1. Based on information gathered during the implementation assessment, the sites (listed in Exhibit 2-2) that best met the selection criteria were asked to participate in the impact evaluation. The final selection was guided by the need to include programs offering a variety of approaches and from different regions, as well as expected case flow during the baseline data collection period.

Exhibit 2-1. Impact Evaluation Selection Criteria



Cost-Benefit Analysis

Understanding the relative costs of SVORI is critical to determining its success. The evaluation team plans to perform a cost-benefit/effectiveness analysis that will link to the impact evaluation and provide a greater understanding of the costs and benefits. The cost-benefit analysis will identify the additional expenditures and resources required to operate a reentry program and the returns on investment (ROI). Integrating findings from the implementation assessment, the impact evaluation, and cost data, the cost-benefit analysis will attempt to determine the cost-effectiveness of reentry funds. This piece of the evaluation will be fundamental in providing an ROI that will aid in the policy discussion surrounding the economics of SVORI.

Exhibit 2-2. SVORI Grantees Selected for Inclusion as Impact Evaluation Participants

State	Grantee
CO	Colorado Department of Corrections
FL	Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
IN	Indiana Department of Corrections
IA	Iowa Department of Corrections
KS	Kansas Department of Corrections Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority
ME	Maine Department of Corrections
MD	Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
MO	Missouri Department of Corrections
NV	Nevada Department of Corrections
OH	Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction
OK	Oklahoma Department of Corrections
PA	Pennsylvania Department of Corrections
SC	South Carolina Department of Corrections South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice
VA	Virginia Department of Corrections
WA	Washington State Department of Corrections

Dissemination

The evaluation team is committed to providing real-time information about SVORI and will engage and inform practitioners, policy makers, researchers, local SVORI programs, and the Federal Partners by providing frequent, useful, and accessible findings. Dissemination topics will be tailored to the issues most important to the various constituencies that make up the reentry community, and the evaluation team will enlist the help of the Reentry Policy Council² and other experts in the reentry field to determine these issues.

Future Reports

This evaluation will produce several technical reports; a hallmark of this project, however, is its focus on more immediate products of interest to practitioners. A variety of interim products will be published, including snapshots of outcomes at the early stages of release, as well as “briefs” on best practices of specific innovative reentry approaches. The evaluation team will also produce several topical reports that focus on individual and site experiences in the domains of employment, substance use, public safety, and family/community. These reports will additionally highlight the lessons learned and innovations used by the grantees.

Where to Find More Information

The SVORI Multi-site Evaluation website (<http://www.svori-evaluation.org>) is the best place to find more information about the SVORI Multi-site Evaluation. The website provides information about the SVORI grantees, current evaluation activities, and reports/presentations on evaluation findings.

The remaining sections of this report provide details on the SVORI grantees, beginning with an overview and summary of features across SVORI reentry programs. The final section includes detailed summaries of reentry activities in each State, as well as the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

² The Reentry Policy Council is a bipartisan collection of nearly 100 State and local government officials and community leaders who shape criminal justice, health, housing, and social service policy by working together to craft recommendations intended to improve reentry outcomes.