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Evaluation Report:
National Employability Skills Program

Evaluation Branch

Policy Sector

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**Correctional Service of Canada's
National Employability Skills Program**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Employment is a prevalent and well-documented need among federal offenders (Brews, Luong & Nafekh, 2010; Correctional Service of Canada Review Panel, 2007; Delveaux, Blanchette, & Wickette, 2005; Gillis, 2000; Gillis & Andrews, 2005; Taylor et al., 2008; Trevethan & Rastin, 2003). As one part of the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) employment continuum aimed at providing offenders with employment support from intake to post-release, the National Employability Skills Program (NESP) offers training in the generic, transferable skills necessary to secure and maintain employment in the community. NESP is estimated to have an annual budget of approximately \$442,667. The present evaluation was conducted to examine the relevance, implementation, success, and cost-effectiveness of the program.

The evaluation found that the employability skills targeted by NESP had consistently been identified as relevant and important for employers across occupational sectors, and that the program was consistent with government-wide and correctional priorities. Since the program's inception, NESP was delivered to incarcerated offenders across CSC regions by trained facilitators who reported to have performed program activities in accordance with program guidelines. The majority of NESP participants were awarded employability skills certificates from The Conference Board of Canada and improvements in offenders' employability skills were noted by program facilitators, work supervisors and program participants themselves. Importantly, skill improvements were observed in all twelve employability skills targeted by the program. Overall, NESP participants were as likely as a comparison group to find employment in the community, although women participants were more likely to gain employment than women participants in the comparison group. In addition, participation in NESP was associated with a reduced likelihood of any first return to custody and a first return for new offence. When the treatment effect of the program was examined separately for different offender subgroups, these results only held true for male participants.

Several program design and implementation issues appeared to have contributed to the limited treatment effect on examined community correctional outcomes. For example, although participants were expected to apply the employability skills they acquired through the program in their immediate work environment, some institutional work assignments did not appear to have provided such opportunity. Also, many work supervisors reported that they were not familiar with NESP and did not consistently perform program activities. Program facilitators, on the other hand, identified the need to revise the curriculum content and teaching methods to be more applicable to the offender population and the types of jobs they would likely obtain upon release, and to foster hands-on learning in the classroom. It is worth acknowledging that the scope of twelve employability skills taught as part of the NESP curriculum was deemed appropriate given the review of the literature and feedback received by program stakeholders. Additional relevant employability skills, such as computer skills, were also identified as important for meeting the needs of employers.

NESP has been mostly delivered to offenders with identified employment needs. Specifically, 77% of all program participants had their employment needs assessed as some or considerable at intake to federal custody and, when the Quebec Region was excluded from this analysis due to the apparent differences in assessment practices, the proportion of offenders with some or

considerable employment need increased to 89%. Furthermore, NESP may not be accessible by all offenders who may be in need of employability skills development. For instance, despite an identified employment need, if an offender did not have an institutional work assignment, he or she would not be eligible to participate in or access NESP services. Overall, NESP participants tended to have higher levels of motivation and reintegration potential and lower levels of overall need and overall risk compared to the general incarcerated offender population.

NESP was designed to improve participants' ability to acquire and maintain employment in the community; however, there was no formal linkage between NESP and employment services and opportunities in the community. Program stakeholders indicated that enhanced linkage to community employment opportunities would be beneficial to NESP participants.

Finally, cost-effectiveness of the program could not be examined as part of the evaluation due to a lack of accurate and reliable financial data.

In summary, the evaluation found that participation in NESP was associated with significant improvements in program participants' employability skills levels. Positive treatment effect was also observed on some community correctional outcomes, such as job attainment and decreased rates of return to federal custody, albeit not for all offender groups. Further, the evaluation identified issues related to the design and delivery of NESP, as well as program governance and financial management. To address identified program issues and thus to enhance offenders' outcomes, this evaluation report makes several recommendations, focusing specifically on the design and delivery of NESP. The implementation of the recommended changes should, however, be contingent upon full examination of the existing comparable employability programs and services offered across the regions.

KEY FINDINGS

- FINDING 1. NESP is consistent with government-wide and correctional priorities. Further, there is a continued need for employability interventions, given an increasing proportion of offenders exhibiting high levels of employment need and poor employment qualifications. The need for such interventions was also identified by program stakeholders surveyed.
- FINDING 2. Comparable skills development programs have been developed and are being offered for the general public by various organizations across the country. Moreover, some not-for-profit organizations provide employability and “soft skills” training to offenders in the community.
- FINDING 3. The employability skills that NESP was designed to develop have frequently been identified in the literature as important to employers across occupational sectors. Potential areas for program improvement include the introduction of general computer skills and customer service skills to the NESP curriculum.
- FINDING 4. Although NESP was implemented nationally, there were variations in program availability and enrolment rates across the regions. Program stakeholders identified budgetary constraints, staffing challenges, and a relatively low profile of the program in the field as factors that contributed to inconsistent program availability and delivery.
- FINDING 5. NESP has been mainly delivered to offenders with identified employment needs, assessed as some or considerable at intake to federal custody. Also, NESP participants generally had higher levels of motivation and reintegration potential and lower levels of overall need and risk compared to CSC’s incarcerated population.
- FINDING 6. Although program stakeholders indicated that employability skills were sufficiently addressed in NESP, they also suggested a need to revise the curriculum content and teaching methods to be more applicable to the offender population.
- FINDING 7. Program facilitators were satisfied with the NESP training they were provided and reported confidence in their ability to deliver the program material. Program facilitators reported performing NESP activities at frequencies consistent with guidelines outlined in the program manual.
- FINDING 8. In contrast to survey responses from program facilitators, the majority of work supervisors reported that they were not familiar with NESP. Work supervisors also indicated that they did not consistently perform NESP activities as prescribed in the program manual.
- FINDING 9. NESP was designed to utilize an integrated skills development environment, in which classroom learning was supported by immediate skill application in the

workplace. However, some NESP facilitators and work supervisors indicated that institutional work assignments did not necessarily provide opportunities to apply the skills taught in NESP (e.g., janitorial or kitchen work). In several cases, work supervisors did not have sufficient contact with offenders to reliably assess their skills and progress in the program.

FINDING 10. Program stakeholders noted that increased linkages between NESP and community employment opportunities would be beneficial to participants.

FINDING 11. The majority of NESP participants completed the program. Completion rates were higher for offenders with no or some employment needs than for those with considerable employment needs, as well as for women offenders. Aboriginal offenders completed the program at the same rate as non-Aboriginal offenders.

FINDING 12. Conference Board of Canada employability skills certificates were awarded to the majority of NESP participants.

FINDING 13. NESP participants reported positive changes with respect to understanding the role and importance of employability skills in securing and maintaining employment.

FINDING 14. NESP participants demonstrated improvements in employability skills as assessed by program facilitators, work supervisors, and the offenders themselves.

FINDING 15. Overall, NESP participants were as likely as the comparison group to find and maintain employment in the community. However, women participants in NESP were more likely to gain employment upon release than women offenders in the comparison group.

FINDING 16. For male offenders, participation in NESP was associated with a reduced likelihood of any first return to custody and with first return for a new offence; however, no treatment effect was observed for women offenders. Also, Aboriginal offenders in NESP were significantly less likely to return to custody for a new offence compared to Aboriginal offenders in the comparison group.

FINDING 17. Inconsistent financial reporting precluded cost-effectiveness analyses.

FINDING 18. No significant change in offenders' employment need or other dynamic assessment indicators was observed in Correctional Plan Progress Reports before and after the NESP intervention or from intake to release.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1. CSC should conduct an environmental scan to complete a gap analysis in relation to other skills training programs, services, and supports available in the community in order to determine whether CSC's offender

population could be effectively served, within or outside of the institution, by existing services and programs that remain within allocated resources..... 23

RECOMMENDATION 2. CSC should revise, where applicable, the NESP curriculum content (e.g., role-play scenarios) and teaching methods (e.g., poster presentations, group discussions) to increase the focus on job readiness and hands-on learning and be more applicable to the offenders' life experiences..... 34

RECOMMENDATION 3. CSC should develop a NESP skills application strategy to ensure that: a) program participants with an institutional work assignment are able to apply the employability skills taught in NESP to their immediate work environment with an appropriate level of supervision and feedback; and, b) workplace supervisors are able to provide the necessary supervision and assessment of offender progress in the program regardless of the type of institutional work assignment. 39

RECOMMENDATION 4. Commensurate with the results of the environmental scan and gap analysis and revisions to the NESP curriculum, CSC should increase awareness of the program in the field and ensure that NESP is offered consistently in the institutions. 39

RECOMMENDATION 5. CSC should establish formal linkages between NESP and employment services in the community (e.g., CECs) to increase continuity of services from the institution to the community, to potentially increase benefits to offenders..... 48

RECOMMENDATION 6. CSC should ensure that NESP is managed financially in a manner that will allow for consistent and accurate reporting of expenditures and enable future cost-effectiveness analyses..... 53

RECOMMENDATION 7. In the absence of reliable financial data, CSC should undertake an audit review of NESP expenditures to account for the program expenses incurred since fiscal year 2006/07. 53

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|---|
| CEC | Community Employment Centres |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| CIB | Correctional Intervention Board |
| CPPR | Correctional Plan Progress Report |
| CSC | Correctional Service of Canada |
| DEI | Describe-Express-Invite |
| DFIA-R | Dynamic Factor Identification and Analysis Revised |
| EEP | Employment and Employability Programs |
| ESRP | Essential Skills Research Project |
| FY | Fiscal Year |
| HRSDC | Human Resources and Skills Development Canada |
| JHS | John Howard Society |
| IFMMS | Integrated Financial and Material Management System |
| IMRS | Integrated Management Reporting System |
| NESP | National Employability Skills Program |
| NHQ | National Headquarters |
| OCI | Office of the Correctional Investigator |
| OMS | Offender Management System |
| RPD | Reintegration Programs Division |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |

INTRODUCTION

1. PROGRAM PROFILE

1.1. Background

The Canadian federal offender population is well-documented as having significant employment and employability needs (Boe, 2005; Brews, Luong & Nafekh, 2010; Correctional Service of Canada [CSC] Review Panel, 2007; Delveaux Blanchette & Wickett, 2005; Gillis & Andrew, 2005; Motiuk & Vuong, 2005; Taylor et al., 2008; Trevethan & Rastin, 2003). Research has identified that offenders with high employment needs have reoffended at higher rates than offenders with no or low employment needs (Brown & Motiuk, 2005; Gendreau, Goggin, & Gray, 1998, 2000). Strong links between reoffending and offender employment status in the community have also been documented in the literature. For instance, Gillis and Nafekh (2005) found that offenders who were able to obtain employment upon release to the community were able to successfully complete conditional release and were less likely to be readmitted for a new offence than their unemployed counterparts. More recently, Taylor and colleagues (2008) found that unemployed offenders were more likely to be readmitted to federal custody within one year of release than employed offenders.

Consistent with the research literature, recent reviews of the federal correctional system and correctional programs emphasized the link between offenders' lack of employability skills and criminality, calling for improved correctional programming to address the unique employment needs of offenders (CSC Review Panel, 2007; Office of the Auditor General, 1999, 2003; Office of the Correctional Investigator [OCI], 2005, 2007). Additionally, internal evaluations of Correctional Service Canada's (CSC) Employment and Employability Programs (EEP) pointed to the lack of a consistent approach within CSC to managing and addressing the employment needs of offenders and emphasized the need to ensure that offenders had an opportunity to develop employability skills through appropriate programming and employment activities (Carrington, 2003; Taylor et al., 2008).

In response to these recommendations, CSC¹ implemented the National Employability Skills Program (NESP) for offenders with employment and employability barriers. NESP was

¹ The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) is the federal government agency responsible for administering sentences imposed by the courts that are two years or more. Information regarding CSC, including policy and

designed to assist offenders to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to enter the workforce, thereby increasing their likelihood of safe and successful reintegration (Kitagawa, 2005).

1.2. National Employability Skills Program

The NESP provides employability skills training to incarcerated offenders with identified employment needs. The program seeks to assist offenders to develop a set of generic employability skills, attitudes and behaviours necessary to secure and maintain employment in the community (e.g., communication skills, problem-solving skills, management of information, etc.).

The program targets both men and women offenders assessed upon admission to CSC as having some or considerable employment needs, and who are eligible for release within five years. Employment need is based on factors such as an unstable work history, being unemployed at the time of arrest, and the absence of a skills area, trade, or profession. To be eligible for NESP, offenders must also have a concurrent institutional work assignment (work or school assignment).² Finally, basic literacy skills (at a Grade 8 level or higher) are desirable for participation in NESP; however, program delivery can be adapted to take into account an offender's unique literacy level.

Once eligible offenders are identified by parole officers, CSC's Correctional Intervention Board (CIB), in accordance with *Guideline 005-1: Institutional Management Structure: Roles and Responsibilities* (CSC, 2008), validates the appropriateness of referrals and approves offender program assignments and waitlists.

The NESP curriculum was developed by The Conference Board of Canada³ in collaboration with CSC, and is based on the skills, attitudes and behaviours outlined in the

legislation, can be found at <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca>.

² Although the NESP program manual (Conference Board of Canada, 2006a) describes the institutional work assignment as employment at a work site, CSC allows offenders enrolled in an educational program to also take NESP.

³ The Conference Board of Canada (CBOC) is a private, not-for-profit, independent applied research organization with the mandate to build leadership capacity for a better Canada by creating and sharing insights on economic trends, public policy and organizational performance. CBOC is an objective and non-partisan organization that does not lobby for specific interests. It is funded exclusively through the fees charged for services to the private and public sectors. CBOC experts in running conferences; at conducting, publishing, and disseminating research; helping people network; developing individual leadership skills; and building organizational capacity. It specializes in economic trends, as well as organizational performance and public policy issues. CBOC is independent from, but affiliated with, The Conference Board, Inc. of New York, which serves nearly 2,000 companies in 60 nations and

Employability Skills 2000+ Framework (Conference Board of Canada, 2000).⁴ The curriculum is comprised of 12 employability skills which are divided into three main skill categories:

(1) fundamental; (2) personal management; and (3) teamwork skills.

A NESP program session is delivered in 12 lessons of approximately two-hours' duration to a maximum 10 offenders per group.⁵ The full length of the NESP session is between 30 and 37.5 hours and includes both in-class lessons and time spent in the workplace. NESP consists of more than 100 exercises (e.g., role-plays, poster presentations, etc.) which are completed during in-class lessons and as homework assignments.

The program has a participant evaluation component built into its design. Participants' progress in NESP is monitored based on three key assessments, including participants' self-assessments, facilitators' assessments and workplace supervisors' assessments. All of the assessments are completed prior to and after program participation and are designed to assess participants' knowledge and application of the employability skills taught during NESP.

NESP was originally developed for male offenders. In 2005, the program was adapted for women offenders by modifying the program content and assessment tools.

Upon successful completion of the program, offenders qualify for a nationally-recognized certificate from The Conference Board of Canada. In order to be eligible for this external certification, participants must achieve a score of 75% in participation and 80% in class attendance.

1.3. Governance Structure

NESP is a component of CSC's EEP. The Correctional Operations and Programs Sector is responsible for community and institutional operations and correctional programs across CSC that include CORCAN.

CORCAN⁶ at National Headquarters (NHQ) is the lead for CSC's EEP and vocational training (see Appendix C for the CSC Employment and Employability Programs governance

has offices in Brussels and Hong Kong. To learn more about The Conference Board of Canada, please refer to <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/about-cboc/default.aspx>.

⁴ The Employability Skills 2000+ Framework was developed by members of the Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills Forum and the Business and Education Forum on Science, Technology and Mathematics (see Appendix A for a complete list of skills included in the Employability 2000+ framework).

⁵ For a full list of institutional sites participating in NESP, see Appendix B.

⁶ CORCAN is a special operating agency of the Correctional Service of Canada, which provides employment training and employability skills to offenders in federal correctional institutions.

structure). A National Vocational Steering Committee, chaired by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of CORCAN, has been established to provide strategic guidance, vision, direction and clarity of accountability for employment and employability programs.

In some institutional sites NESP sessions were funded through the educational programs budget managed by the Reintegration Programs Divisions (RPD; please see details in Section 1.4) and RPD is collaborating with CORCAN on integrated vocational training plans thus sharing responsibility for some EEP components. Despite the shared accountability framework for EEP (Appendix C), it remains unclear where NESP is represented in the governance structure. The current governing and financial responsibility for the delivery of NESP through EEP primarily resides with CORCAN.

At the regional level, CORCAN EEP Managers are responsible for the delivery of NESP within their respective regions. They are reporting to the Director of CSC Employment and Employability, who, in turn, is accountable for NESP to the CEO of CORCAN. The CEO of CORCAN reports to the Assistant Commissioner of Correctional Operations and Programs. Ultimately, the Correctional Operations and Programs Sector is responsible for NESP.

At the institution level, the Wardens and the Executive Directors of Aboriginal Healing Lodges and Regional Treatment Centres are responsible for the delivery of offender employment and employability programs consistent with the employment and employability framework, in collaboration with the Regional Directors of CORCAN. Within institutions, NESP is delivered by facilitators who are CSC staff members except in the Quebec Region, where NESP is delivered by facilitators from a community-based service provider (Via Travail/OPEX) on contract with CSC. Facilitators are responsible for assisting participants to understand, develop, and apply employability skills. Furthermore, both NESP facilitators and offenders' workplace supervisors are responsible for monitoring participants' progress in the program.

Finally, the Chair of the Correctional Intervention Board has the responsibility for coordinating all program assignments, including NESP assignments, in a manner that will achieve the goal of productive engagement of each offender.

1.4. Financial Expenditures

As indicated above, CORCAN is primarily responsible for NESP program delivery costs. Presently, CORCAN directly funds NESP sessions delivered in the Atlantic, Ontario and Pacific

Regions. In the Quebec Region, CORCAN funds NESP sessions through a contractual agreement with Via Travail (OPEX), which is renewed on an annual basis. In the Prairie Region, no CORCAN funding has been provided for program delivery since 2008. As a result, some institutions in the Region decided to continue funding NESP at their own expense and consequently attributed NESP expenditures to the financial code under CSC's educational program budget (A/Director, Reintegration Programs Division, Memorandum, May 12, 2010). This situation appears to have created some issues around the responsibility for the delivery and financial management of the program, which are subsequently reflected in Recommendation 6 of this report.

Overall, funding in the amount of \$8,000 is provided by CORCAN for one NESP session upon completion of delivery (A/Director, Employment & Director, Reintegration Programs, Memorandum, June 21, 2005). This NESP funding formula was calculated based on 33 days of program delivery at the Welfare Programmes Group - 3 (WP-03) level (CORCAN, 2010).⁷

The NESP funding formula, \$8,000 per program session, was used to estimate total program expenditures given that the financial information reported for the program was inconsistent and that some regions did not restructure their respective vocational budgets to include the delivery of NESP. Taking into consideration the number of NESP sessions delivered across fiscal years, the estimated NESP expenditures have increased from an estimated \$400,000 in year 2006/07 for 50 program sessions to an estimated \$512,000 in year 2008/09 for 64 sessions (with an estimated average annual budget of \$442,667). In addition to program delivery expenditures, costs associated with program development and the pilot project in 2004/05 totalled \$153,933 (as per CORCAN payments to The Conference Board of Canada).

1.5. Planned Results

There were a number of results expected for NESP. Specifically, immediate outcomes included:

- Increase in offender fundamental skills;
- Increase in offender personal management skills and attitudes;
- Increase in offender teamwork skills;

- Increased understanding of employability skills; and,
- Application of employability skills by offenders.

Intermediate outcomes included:

- Increase in offender employment rates;
- Improved offender work ethic and conduct; and,
- Decrease in employment need.

Ultimately, NESP is expected to contribute to the successful community reintegration of offenders through sustained employment and, in turn, reduced recidivism and enhance public safety.

These expected results are illustrated in the program logic model (Appendix D). The logic model provides a detailed representation of program activities, outputs, immediate, intermediate and long-term outcomes and linkages between these.

1.6. Evaluation Context and Purpose of the Evaluation

The NESP evaluation was summative in nature and was conducted by the CSC Evaluation Branch in accordance with the Treasury Board Evaluation Policy and Standards. In 2005, a preliminary assessment of the NESP pilot completed by Latendresse and Cortoni (2005) examined the effectiveness of NESP in improving offenders' employability skills and knowledge, as well as their attitudes and beliefs regarding employment. Overall, NESP participants demonstrated increased insight and understanding, as compared to their pre-program assessments, into the need for post-release planning, resolving co-worker tension, and ongoing skills development. Improvements were also noted in the areas of communication, information management, and work attitudes and behaviours.

The purpose of the present evaluation was to examine the implementation of NESP and program outcomes achieved. The results were expected to provide program managers with the information necessary to make strategic policy and investment decisions in the area of offender employment and employability programming. Specifically, the evaluation aimed to determine

⁷ The Welfare Programmes Group in CSC includes the following positions: Social Programs Officer, Correctional Program Officer, Parole Officer, etc. For the period from June 2009 to June 2010, the salary for the WP-03 level

the impact of the NESP intervention in light of the risk and need profiles of the federal offender population.

ranged from \$50,993 to \$67,179 per year (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2009).

2. EVALUATION METHOD

2.1 Scope of the Evaluation

The current evaluation focused on the relevancy, implementation, success (efficiency and effectiveness), and cost-effectiveness of NESP. The evaluation used a mixed-method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods and data analysis techniques to strengthen data triangulation. The comprehensive evaluation matrix included evaluation questions, performance indicators, and sources of data (Appendix E).

At the outset of the current evaluation, the following expected results were identified under each evaluation objective:

Objective #1: Relevancy

1. NESP is consistent with governmental priorities;
2. NESP is consistent with correctional priorities and other reintegration strategies;
3. NESP responds to identified employment needs;
4. NESP addresses the employment needs of offenders; and,
5. Offenders are actively participating in NESP activities.

Objective #2: Implementation

1. NESP operates according to guidelines identified in the strategy; and,
2. NESP is coordinated between NHQ and the regions.

Objective #3: Success (Efficiency and Effectiveness)

1. Expected outputs are being achieved as a result of the program;
2. Participation in NESP contributes to offenders' understanding and development of the skills needed to enter, stay in, and progress in the workforce;
3. NESP assists offenders in building a positive work record and ethic;
4. NESP contributes to offenders' successful reintegration; and,
5. NESP assists offenders in securing and maintaining post-release employment.

Objective #4: Cost-effectiveness

1. Expected outputs/outcomes of NESP have been effectively achieved with the allocated resources; and,
2. Costs related to NESP are lower or comparable to other similar correctional programs.⁸

Objective #5: Unintended Outcomes

1. Participation in NESP contributes to an increase in an offender's participation in correctional plans and programs;⁹ and,
2. Other unanticipated outcomes.

In all, several samples were utilized to contribute to various aspects of the evaluation: (1) NESP sample, drawn from the Offender Management System (OMS),¹⁰ comprised of all offenders assigned to NESP ($N = 3,199$); (2) a one-day snapshot of the general offender population under the jurisdiction of CSC, drawn from OMS ($N = 22,961$); and (3) a qualitative sample, resulting from the NESP survey with CSC staff members and contracted NESP service providers ($N = 158$).

2.2 Sample Composition and Participant Profiles

2.2.1 Study Groups for Quantitative Analyses

NESP Sample

Information on all offenders who participated in NESP ($N = 1,726$) was collected through OMS. NESP participants were then compared to a sample of offenders who were assigned to, but did not participate in, NESP (i.e., the comparison group; $N = 1,473$). Offender data (e.g., offender risk, need, demographic, employment history and sentence-related characteristics, and community correctional outcomes) were extracted from OMS for the NESP participant and comparison groups. Specific profiles of these groups are presented in Appendix F. The profiles

⁸ No comparative cost-effectiveness analyses were conducted due to inconsistent NESP financial data.

⁹ The relationship between offender participation in NESP and offender participation in correctional plans and programs was not examined as part of this evaluation due to the difficulties in attributing this outcome to the NESP program. As such, the present evaluation focused primarily on direct NESP outputs and outcomes.

¹⁰ OMS is an electronic filing system designed to capture offender assessment at the time of their admission to the correctional system and to monitor and track offenders' progress while under the supervision of CSC.

of NESP participants were distinguished, where applicable, between: (a) all NESP participants (NESP group; $N = 1,726$), and (b) NESP participants excluding those taking NESP in the Quebec Region (NESP, exclusive of Quebec; $N = 1,425$) due to the apparent differences in the employment need assessment in that region.

Overall, there were more women offenders in the NESP group than in the comparison group ($N = 262$ and $N = 135$, respectively). NESP participants were generally serving longer sentences (on average, 319 days longer), were more likely to have been convicted of Schedule I offences, and were less likely to have been convicted of Schedule II offences.¹¹ Furthermore, NESP participants had attained a slightly higher education level (0.6 grade level higher), were somewhat younger (0.8 years younger) at release, had higher motivational levels, but fewer offenders were identified with low risk and need ratings. There were no differences between the groups with respect to level of reintegration potential, type of release (i.e., day or full parole versus statutory release) or the proportion of Aboriginal participants in each group. Although differences between these two groups reached significance on most variables, these differences were generally negligible in terms of practical importance (see Appendix F).

General Offender Population

A one-day snapshot of the general offender population under the jurisdiction of CSC was drawn from OMS in February, 2010 ($N = 22,961$). This sample was used to conduct a more in-depth examination of the NESP selection criteria, namely to determine whether NESP participants were comparable to the general incarcerated population ($N = 13,264$) with respect to level of overall risk, need, motivation and reintegration potential, sentence-related and other correctional characteristics. Statistical analyses revealed significant differences between NESP participants and the incarcerated offender population. Namely, offenders in NESP generally had lower levels of overall risk and need and higher levels of motivation and reintegration potential compared to the general incarcerated population. Details on these statistical analyses are presented in the Key Findings Section (Finding 6).

¹¹ Offence schedules are defined in the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA; 1992). Schedule I offences are those of a violent nature, including crimes against a person. Schedule II offences include drug offences. Full text of the CCRA is available at <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-44.6/FullText.html>.

2.2.2 Key Sources of Qualitative Data

To corroborate the findings from quantitative analyses, additional information was gathered through an online survey with CSC staff members and contracted NESP service providers in the Quebec Region. The survey was distributed through CSC internal e-mail announcements (i.e., General Communication) and was made available in both official languages from December 15, 2009 to January 15, 2010. Two email reminders were distributed in an effort to increase the survey response rate. Additionally, a teleconference call was held with the evaluation's consultative group to elicit support for, and increase awareness of, the outgoing NESP survey.

A total of 488 respondents completed the NESP survey. Of those respondents, 32% ($n = 158$) indicated they were at least moderately familiar with the goals and objectives of NESP. Over two-thirds of respondents (68%; $n = 330$) reported they had no or limited familiarity with the program. Given that the survey was designed for staff members who had at least moderate familiarity with the program, only results from respondents who met this criterion were used in formulating the findings in this report.¹²

The highest proportion of survey respondents indicated that they worked in the institutions (62%; $n = 98$), followed by staff members from CSC Regional Headquarters (12%; $n = 19$), contracted NESP services providers (i.e., non-CSC employees; 11%; $n = 18$), CSC staff members who worked in the community (10%; $n = 15$), and staff members from CSC's NHQ (5%; $n = 8$).

Approximately one-third of respondents indicated they were directly involved in the delivery of NESP sessions/program facilitation (37%; $n = 59$) and participated in the program as workplace supervisors (32%; $n = 51$). Twenty-two percent ($n = 35$) were involved in program administration and management, 5% ($n = 8$) were involved in program development, and the remaining individuals reported they were involved in NESP in another capacity.

2.2.3 Document Review

To inform the development of the evaluation analytical framework and to provide context for the findings of the evaluation, a review of government documents and other published and

unpublished reports was conducted. Documentation reviewed for various components of the evaluation included:

- Department reports (i.e., *CSC Report on Plans and Priorities*, CSC, 2009a; *CSC Departmental Performance Report*, CSC, 2009b);
- *Report of the Correctional Service Canada Review Panel: A Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety* (CSC Review Panel, 2007);
- Reports of the Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI, 2005, 2007)
- *CSC Response to the Office of the Correctional Investigator's Reports* (CSC, 2005, 2007);
- *Research Report: Increasing Employability Related Skills among Federal Male Offenders: A Preliminary Analysis of the National Employability Skills Program* (Latendresse & Cortoni, 2005);
- Evaluation Reports: *Correctional Service of Canada's Employment and Employability Programs* (Carrington et al., 2003; Taylor et al., 2008);
- *Evaluation Report: Correctional Service of Canada's Community Employment Centres* (Brews et al., 2010);
- *Compendium 2000 on Effective Correctional Programming* (Gillis, 2000) and other internal research and evaluation reports (Delveaux et al., 2005; Gillis & Nafekh, 2005); and,
- Relevant peer-reviewed and grey¹³ literature on offender employment and recidivism, as well as on employer needs and hiring preferences was reviewed and is referenced in the relevant sections of the report.

¹² Survey respondents included NESP facilitators, workplace supervisors, program managers and coordinators, program developers and other CSC staff members. All respondents are referred to as "program stakeholders" in this report.

¹³ Grey literature is defined as information produced on all levels of government, academia, business and industry in electronic and print format not controlled by commercial publishing. Examples of grey literature include technical reports produced by government agencies, working papers from task groups, etc.

2.3 Measures: Procedures and Analyses

2.3.1 *Electronic Survey*

An electronic survey for CSC staff members and contracted NESP service providers was created using Snap Survey software. The survey was administered through CSC's Intranet site (InfoNet), where it could be completed online or printed on paper and returned to the Evaluation Branch via fax. An invitation letter, together with a link to the survey, was distributed in both official languages to all CSC employees through CSC's internal communication system.

Survey questions were designed to address the evaluation objectives and were comprised of a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions consisted of 4 or 5-point Likert-type scales, as well as dichotomous and categorical items.¹⁴ The survey questionnaire was piloted within the Evaluation Branch and was approved by the evaluation consultative group comprised primarily of CSC's EEP representatives at the national and regional levels.

In total, 488 individuals completed the survey online; however, only responses from those individuals who identified themselves as at least moderately familiar with the program (32%; $n = 158$) were used for analyses. The data were exported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques. Frequencies and percentages were calculated based on the number of valid responses to the question. Qualitative data were inductively and independently analyzed across survey questions by two evaluation analysts, into themes. The final list of theme codes was constructed by consensus and is reported in the relevant sections of this report.¹⁵

2.3.2 *NESP Assessment Data*

Assessments of offenders' employability skills and performance in NESP were completed by facilitators, workplace supervisors, and program participants before and after program participation. The assessments contained ratings of offenders' understanding of employability skills (namely, the importance of the skills and need for future development) and progress in the program in terms of skills development. These assessment tools were developed

¹⁴ Please note that quantitative survey data in this report are presented as a percentage of the valid responses to the question, as some questions were not applicable, or respondents were unable to answer them.

by The Conference Board of Canada and, as of fiscal year 2007/08, were submitted electronically by program facilitators (Acting Director, Employment and Employability, Memorandum, June 19, 2007).

To determine the effect of NESP, a series of pre- and post-test comparisons were conducted. The comparisons of pre- and post-test scores on individual skills were examined using Wilcoxon signed-ranks tests.¹⁶ The comparisons of pre- and post-test composite scores on all 12 employability skills were examined with *t*-tests for dependent means¹⁷ and were repeated for men, women, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offender groups. All analyses were conducted at the .05 significance level. Details on the psychometric properties of the NESP data collection tool are presented in Appendix G.

2.3.3 Program Completion

NESP completion rates were calculated using data extracted from the CSC Corporate Reporting System. Completion rates were further contrasted between male and female program participants, as well as between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants. Finally, NESP completion rates were compared to the completion rates of all CSC institutional programs.

2.3.4 Community Correctional Outcomes

In order to address the effectiveness of NESP, the evaluation examined two types of community correctional outcomes, namely, conditional release failure and post-release employment outcomes. Conditional release failure included any return to custody¹⁸ and return to custody for a new offence. A between-subjects design was used to compare NESP participants and the comparison group on community correctional outcomes. Survival analyses, and more specifically, sequential Cox regression analyses,¹⁹ were used to examine community

¹⁵ Please note that, for qualitative survey data, results are presented as a percentage of coded responses within a particular theme. As a result, no inferences could be made with regards to generalizing qualitative statements to remaining respondents.

¹⁶ The Wilcoxon signed-ranks test is designed to test whether the median differences between measurements in a single sample or two related samples is different from a median difference of zero.

¹⁷ The dependent-samples *t*-test is used to compare the means of two variables within a single sample or of two matched or paired samples (e.g., pre and post measures).

¹⁸ Any return to custody included a first readmission for a technical violation (defined as a violation of terms of conditional release without re-offence) and/or with a new offence.

¹⁹ Cox regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between the survival rate (the proportion of a sample that has not experienced the studied event over a period of time) and one or more predictor variables.

employment attainment and maintenance and failure on conditional release. The Cox regression analysis technique was chosen as it allowed the evaluation team to control for pre-existing differences between the groups in assessing the effect of the program, and it permitted the analysis of censored data.²⁰

Several sequential Cox regression analyses were conducted to examine whether the likelihood of being readmitted to federal custody differed between NESP participants and the comparison group.²¹ First, offenders' age at release, type of release, overall need and risk levels, length of time incarcerated, and employment status in the community were entered in the statistical model in Block 1, while the treatment variable (NESP vs. comparison) was entered in Block 2 to determine whether NESP significantly added to the prediction of the outcome after controlling for the extraneous variables in Block 1. Similarly, sequential Cox regression analyses were conducted to determine whether the likelihood of finding and maintaining community employment differed between NESP and comparison groups. The following differences between comparison groups were controlled for in employment outcome analyses: age at release; type of release; employment need at release; participation in CSC's Community Employment Centres; and reintegration potential levels. All group comparisons and tests of hypotheses were conducted at the .05 significance level.

2.3.5 Cost-Effectiveness

Cost analyses were conducted to examine cost of program delivery. Financial records for fiscal years 2007/08 and 2008/09 were included in the analyses. The average costs per NESP session and per enrolled offender were calculated based on average expenditures available for the Quebec and Prairie Regions only. These calculations were then compared to the NESP funding formula of \$8,000 per session.

2.4 Limitations

In order to determine the impact of NESP on community correctional outcomes, only offenders who were released to the community were examined in outcome analyses, since

²⁰ Data are referred to as censored when the time to a terminal event (e.g., readmission to custody) is unknown for a number of reasons, for instance, the event did not occur at the moment of evaluation.

²¹ The Cox regression analyses were repeated for women, men, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders to test hypotheses for those offender groups in accordance with CSC reporting requirements.

offenders who had not been released would not have had the opportunity to succeed or fail in the community. This reduced the sample sizes to 1,275 (74%) for the NESP group and to 858 (58%) for the comparison group. Also, no conclusion could be made regarding employment maintenance. Although the evaluation team was able to differentiate between two different types of employment termination – whether an offender was fired or quit, no further inferences in terms of the possible reasons for termination could be made (e.g., termination due to a lack of competencies or a career move).

It was not possible to compare the effectiveness of NESP to an alternate program as no comparable skills development program was offered to CSC offenders within the institutions. Within-program changes in employability skills development were therefore assessed using a one-group pre- and post-test design. This design did not take into account changes as a result of the passage of time (e.g., maturation) or monitoring (i.e., the placebo effect or the Hawthorne effect).²² Consequently, any change between the two assessment occasions cannot be definitively attributed to NESP. Furthermore, pre-/post-program assessments were not available for all NESP participants.²³ Specifically, pre- and post-program assessments were available for 51% ($n = 885$) of all NESP participants.

Since the reliability of the data assessment tool had not been previously assessed, the evaluation team conducted reliability analyses prior to examining pre- and post-program changes (see Appendix G). Overall, the data collection tool showed good internal consistency. The levels of agreement between NESP facilitators, workplace supervisors, and program participants were statistically significant, although the magnitude of the correlations ranged from low to moderate ($r = .20$ to $r = .56$ for overall employability scores). It was not possible to establish the validity of the tool at the time of evaluation.

Further, the evaluation team was not able to examine change in employment need indicators pre- and post-program participation, as assessed through the Correctional Plan Progress Reports (CPPR), because employment need and other dynamic assessment indicators remained largely unchanged before and after the NESP intervention. A number of factors might have contributed the lack of differences, but such an investigation was beyond the scope of this

²² The Hawthorne effect is known as a phenomenon in which research subjects change their performance in response to being studied and not in response to the experimental manipulation.

²³ Automated assessment templates were implemented in FY 2007/08 as a means to minimize the amount of missing data documented in FY 2006/07 (Director, Employment and Employability, Memorandum, June 19, 2007).

evaluation. However, future research should examine the relationships between change in dynamic needs (in this case, employment) and recidivism.

The present evaluation was not able to determine whether responses and comments made by surveyed program stakeholders with regards to program implementation and areas of improvement were related to the men's, the women's, or both versions of the NESP curriculum. Further review of program material will help clarify the nature and scope of the issues raised by program stakeholders.

Other limitations that posed minor challenges for the evaluation included: limited information on offender participation in Community Employment Centres (CECs; specifically, whether participation in CECs occurred prior to or after participation in NESP);²⁴ the number of work supervisors who participated in NESP was not available, thus limiting the ability of the evaluation team to determine work supervisors' response rates to the survey and calculate the supervisor – offender ratio; and, it was not possible to determine whether all NESP participants met the institutional work assignment admission criterion (i.e., specifically how many NESP participants were taking an educational program(s) at the time of NESP enrolment).²⁵ The latter was impossible to determine because participation in NESP was coded as participation in an educational program, thus resulting in 100% participation in educational programs among offenders enrolled in NESP.

Finally, although every effort was made by the evaluation team to obtain program expenditures, lack of reliable financial data precluded cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness analyses. Inconsistent financial reporting practices were the basis of Recommendations 6 and 7.

²⁴ In order to identify offenders who participated in CECs, the dataset provided by CORCAN and used for the 2009 evaluation of CECs was cross-referenced with the NESP data obtained from OMS. Of note, the CEC dataset only included offenders participating in the Community Employment Centres from 2000 to 2008 (Brews et al., 2010).

²⁵ Institutional work assignment was defined as a part- or full-time work or educational program.

3. KEY FINDINGS

The following results are presented under their respective evaluation objectives, namely:

(1) Program Relevancy; (2) Implementation; (3) Success (Efficiency and Effectiveness); (4) Cost-Effectiveness; and (5) Unintended Outcomes.

Objective 1: Program Relevancy:

Does NESP remain consistent with departmental and government-wide objectives and priorities, and respond to the employment needs of offenders and employers?

In considering the overall relevance of NESP, the evaluation team examined the following areas: (1) consistency of the program with government-wide and departmental priorities; (2) employment histories and employment needs exhibited by offenders; (3) availability of alternative employability interventions offered to the general public and specifically to offenders in Canada; (4) responsiveness of the program to employer needs; and, finally, (5) common factors that influence employers' decisions to hire former offenders.

FINDING 1. NESP is consistent with government-wide and correctional priorities. Further, there is a continued need for employability interventions, given an increasing proportion of offenders exhibiting high levels of employment need and poor employment qualifications. The need for such interventions was also identified by program stakeholders surveyed.

Government-wide and Correctional Priorities

Recent reviews of correctional programs and services raised concerns over the state of correctional programming available for federal offenders in Canada (OCI, 2005, 2007; Office of the Auditor General, 1999, 2003). In response, the Minister of Public Safety initiated an extensive review of CSC's priorities and operations. The resulting report, *A Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety* (CSC Review Panel, 2007), identified five areas that require strengthening in order to improve public safety results,²⁶ one of which was to improve offender employment and employability. The CSC Review Panel made several recommendations related specifically to offender employment and employability, including refocusing CSC to an

employability-employment model and “preparing offenders to be skills-ready for national and local labour market opportunities” (CSC Review Panel, 2007).²⁷

To address these five key areas, and thereby strengthen the correctional system and interventions, CSC embarked on its Transformation Agenda (CSC, 2009c). One of the key themes of CSC’s Transformation Agenda was enhancing employment and employability of offenders, both inside the institution and in the community. In 2009/10, CSC continued to focus on enhancing institutional employment opportunities; developing employment strategies for women and Aboriginal offenders; building partnerships with the community; evaluating a national vocational assessment instrument; and completing reviews of current employability policies and services in order to better integrate interventions in an enhanced correctional continuum (CSC, 2009a).

The implementation of the Transformation Agenda is also expected to contribute to the safe transition of eligible offenders into the community, one of CSC’s strategic priorities identified in the 2008/09 Departmental Performance Report (CSC, 2009b) and 2009/10 Report on Plans and Priorities (CSC, 2009a). Correctional interventions that include employment and employability programs are directly linked to this priority.

Employment and Federal Offenders

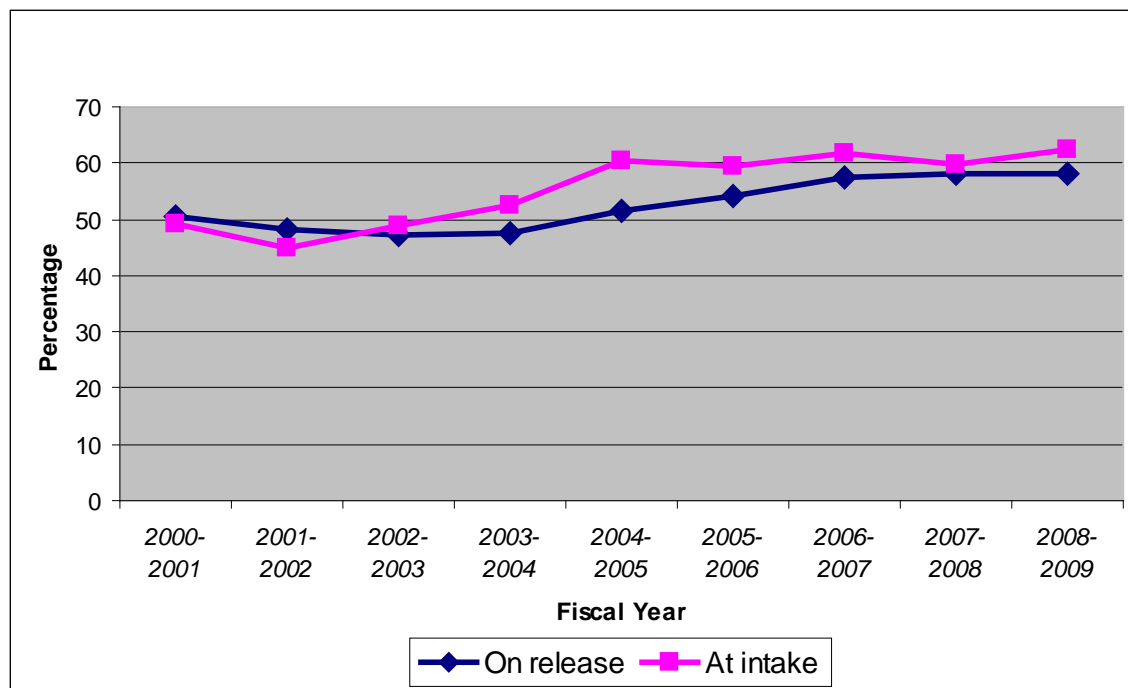
Employment is a prevalent and well-documented need among federal offenders (Brews et al., 2010; CSC Review Panel, 2007; Delveaux et al., 2005; Gillis, 2000; Gillis & Andrews, 2005; Taylor et al., 2008; Trevethan & Rastin, 2003). A one-day snapshot of the CSC population found that 59% ($n = 11,573$) of all federal offenders under the jurisdiction of CSC as of February 2010 were assessed, upon admission to CSC, as having some or considerable employment needs. Offenders also had significant deficits in the areas of employment history and occupational readiness. For example, two-thirds of offenders (63%; $n = 9,944$) had unstable job histories, 63% ($n = 9,927$) were unemployed at the time of arrest, 56% ($n = 8,995$) had no professional or skill area, and 74% ($n = 11,403$) did not have a high school diploma.

²⁶ The CSC Review Panel (2007) identified the following five areas: offender accountability; eliminating drugs from prison; employability/employment; physical infrastructure; and eliminating statutory release, moving to earned parole.

²⁷ Recommendation 23b from *Report of the Correctional Service of Canada Review Panel: A Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety* (CSC Review Panel, 2007).

The proportion of offenders identified with employment needs (assessed as some or considerable), at intake and upon release to the community, has increased over the past ten years (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Proportion of Offenders Identified with Employment Needs at Admission to Federal Custody and upon Release to the Community.



Source: OMS (2009).

Although the link between correctional programming and offenders' successful reintegration in the community has been relatively well-established (Dowden & Andrews, 2000; Gendreau, Litle & Goggin, 1996; Lipsey, Chapman, & Landenberger, 2001), the relationship between employment interventions and recidivism is less conclusive (Bouffard, MacKenzie & Hickman, 2000; Gillis, 2000; Wilson, Gallagher & MacKenzie, 2000). Nonetheless, some strong links between employment and recidivism have been demonstrated in the literature (Gendreau et al., 2000; Taylor et al., 2008). For example, a meta-analytic study by Gendreau and colleagues (2000) found employment to be significantly related to recidivism ($r = 0.13$), with education/employment, employment needs at discharge, and employment history emerging among the most significant predictors of recidivism ($r = 0.26$; $r = 0.15$; $r = 0.14$, respectively). Two internal CSC studies by Gillis and Nafekh (2005) and Taylor and colleagues (2008) further

demonstrated that offenders who were employed in the community were significantly less likely to return to federal custody than unemployed offenders.

Consistent with these findings, program stakeholders surveyed indicated that, in their view, employability and employment interventions led to reduced recidivism (16%; $n = 21$) and an increased likelihood of offenders succeeding in the workplace (22%; $n = 29$). Furthermore, the majority of program stakeholders indicated that NESP was a worthwhile initiative (87%; $n = 128$) because it addressed the employability needs of offenders (83%; $n = 128$) and provided them with the skills necessary to respond to the needs of employers (80%; $n = 119$). Program stakeholders noted that NESP facilitated offenders' skills development (88%; $n = 115$), contributed to the successful reintegration of offenders in the community (58%; $n = 76$) and helped offenders to understand behaviours and expectations in the workplace (37%; $n = 48$).

FINDING 2. Comparable skills development programs have been developed and are being offered for the general public by various organizations across the country. Moreover, some not-for-profit organizations provide employability and “soft skills” training to offenders in the community.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) is a federal organization responsible for the development of policies, programs and tools that promote job-specific and non-technical skills training for Canadians. The work performed by HRSDC focuses on both the general population and special groups identified as being in need of skills development with the goal of producing a skilled, adaptable and inclusive Canadian labour force (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada [HRSDC], 2009).

In 1994, HRSDC launched a national research study, the Essential Skills Research Project (ESRP), to examine and articulate a set of core skills and competencies required in all occupations (de Vries, 2009). As a result, the Canadian set of nine workplace competencies, called Essential Skills,²⁸ was established. Also, the Essential Skills Profiles that describe how each of the nine Essentials Skills are used by workers in a particular occupation were developed

²⁸ The nine essential skills identified by HRSDC's ESRP project are: reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, thinking skills, computer use, working with others, and continuous learning. Of significance, the profiles of HRSDC's Essential Skills and The Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills were found to be correlated (Kitagawa, 2001).

and are now being used by employers, educators, trade unions and sector councils (de Vries, 2009).²⁹

To further the goals of improving the essential skills of adult Canadians, HRSDC promotes the Essential Skills, develops assessment and learning tools and provides funding support for training. The department also partners with provinces and territories, through Labour Market Development Agreements, to design and deliver skills and employment training programs. A scan of available skills development and employment assistance programs and services revealed that various government, not-for-profit and privately-funded community organisations across the country provide skills development programs for the purposes of employment acquisition in the areas of adult literacy, essential skills development, as well as other skills (the directories of community programs are available through the Ontario Literacy Coalition, BC Literacy, Yukon Literacy Coalition, Literacy Alberta, Literacy Partners of Manitoba, Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador and others).

Some of the available community programs specifically target individuals with employment and employability barriers and provide job readiness training, including the development of essential skills, along with employment assistance to enable unemployed individuals to prepare for and acquire employment (e.g., through local employment centres). The essential skills training has also been included in trade-specific training opportunities offered by Canada's occupational sector councils, such as, for example, the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council, Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council, Canadian Automotive Repair and Service Council, and the Construction Sector Council (HRSDC, 2008).

Finally, organizations that offer rehabilitation and reintegration services for former offenders, such as the John Howard Society of Canada (JHS), also provide programs that focus on the development of the skills similar to those covered by NESP (see Appendix H for a provisional list of JHS employment skills programs). The present evaluation, however, did not examine the extent to which skills development programs and services were available within and across the regions, as it was beyond the scope of the evaluation.

²⁹ Sector councils are organizations that identify, research and coordinate initiatives that support the development and management of human resources in nearly every industry in Canada. There are more than thirty sector councils representing and working with industry. The sector councils list is available at <http://www.councils.org/sector-councils/list-of-canadas-sector-councils/>.

Overall, employability services and resources are available across the communities. Further analyses are required to determine the appropriateness of existing services to the offender population, in the community or in federal institutions, and cost associated with the delivery of these services.

RECOMMENDATION 1. CSC should conduct an environmental scan to complete a gap analysis in relation to other skills training programs, services, and supports available in the community in order to determine whether CSC's offender population could be effectively served, within or outside of the institution, by existing services and programs that remain within allocated resources.

FINDING 3. The employability skills that NESP was designed to develop have frequently been identified in the literature as important to employers across occupational sectors. Potential areas for program improvement include the introduction of general computer skills and customer service skills to the NESP curriculum.

Understanding employers' hiring priorities can assist job applicants with employment planning and inform service providers of labour market opportunities and training priorities. The latter is particularly pertinent to the correctional system, since offenders typically present with a range of employment deficits (CSC Review Panel, 2007; Gillis, 2000; Holzer, Raphael & Stoll, 2003a; Taylor et al., 2008).

Various surveys, commissioned by government, universities and industries, have been completed to help identify the skills and personal attributes that employers seek in new employees (see for example, Bloom & Kitagawa, 1999; EKOS Research Associates, 2007; Learning and Skills Council, 2005; Prism Economics and Analysis, 2008; University of Alberta, 2008). Notwithstanding differences in survey methodologies and target audiences, the results revealed remarkably similar patterns with respect to employer needs and the skill areas that employers demand.

Specifically, employers across different sectors experienced difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified employees; however, they were particularly concerned about not being able to find individuals who possessed valuable attributes and skills of a non-technical nature to meet their recruitment needs (Business Council of British Columbia, 2006; Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006; Confederation of British Industry, 2008; Conference Board of Canada, 2003; Newton, Hurstfield, Miller, Page & Akroyd, 2005; Phoenix Strategic Perspectives, 2006; Prism

Economics and Analysis, 2007). Overall, employers value and seek employability skills (i.e., skills of a non-technical nature and personal attributes) that are thematically represented in The Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills 2000+ Framework, the framework from which the NESP curriculum was developed. Of particular importance are interpersonal, communication, and teamwork skills, as well as honesty, work ethic, and responsibility (Business Council of British Columbia, 2006; Conference Board of Canada, 2003; EKOS Research Associates, 2007; Fahey, Roberts & Engel, 2006; University of Wellington, 2006). These results were consistent across different sectors, thereby emphasizing that "soft skills" and personal attributes were important to develop regardless of employment type.

Since NESP was designed according to The Conference Board of Canada Employability Skills 2000+ Framework and its 2001 national employer survey, it was not surprising that the majority of NESP program stakeholders surveyed (71%; $n = 107$) indicated that key employability skills were represented in NESP, although 29% ($n = 43$) identified the need to include some other skills in the program. The most frequently identified skills that were not addressed in, but survey respondents indicated should be included in, NESP were job searching/interviewing skills ($n = 15$), generic computer skills (including on-line job search and application; $n = 8$), and financial management skills ($n = 5$). Generic computer skills were also identified in the reviewed literature as being important to employers in addition to customer service skills and employee initiative (Business Council of British Columbia, 2006; Conference Board of Canada, 2003; EKOS Research Associates, 2007; Fahey et al., 2006; Phoenix Strategic Perspectives, 2006; University of Alberta, 2008).

Employability of Former Offenders

Former offenders are often rated by employers as one of the least attractive groups of job applicants (Graffam, Shinkfield & Handcastle, 2008; Holzer et al., 2003b; Pager, 2002; Pager & Quillian, 2005), although employment prospects appear to vary depending on the nature of the offences, offenders' personal characteristics, and job requirements (Fahey et al., 2006; Phoenix Strategic Perspectives, 2006).

In general, the literature reviewed suggested that industries with limited consumer contact and those requiring low levels of educational attainment, such as construction, manufacturing and transportation, were most willing to hire former offenders. Conversely, the service, finance,

insurance, and real estate industries were the most unwilling to hire this group (Holzer et al., 2001; 2003). That is, smaller, non-manufacturing firms that required some specific training and educational background were most adverse to the prospect of hiring former offenders.

Employers named several strategies that could help allay their concerns with respect to employing former offenders. First, most employers indicated that they would feel more comfortable hiring a former offender who had already established a positive employment history upon release, thus emphasizing the importance of transitional employment programming from an institution to a community setting (Fahey et al., 2006). Second, employers underscored the need for basic job readiness and the importance of work-related, non-technical skills and personal attributes, namely, good interpersonal skills, such as the ability to get along with others, communication skills, honesty, responsibility, work ethics, and punctuality (Holzer et al., 2003a). Offenders' "soft skills" were valued by employers above and beyond technical skills and numerous employers expressed willingness to invest in technical training for the right candidate (Phoenix Strategic Perspectives, 2006). At the same time, employers tended to have a widespread perception that offenders might not possess the skills (e.g., customer service) required for their business (Phoenix Strategic Perspectives, 2006). Generic computer knowledge also emerged as a priority since many positions that did not traditionally require technological skills now do (e.g., transportation and delivery, hotel housekeeping). Notably, employers who had previously employed former offenders appeared to place a greater emphasis on the importance of developing "soft skills" and personal attributes, compared to those employers who had not employed this group (Fahey et al., 2006).

On the whole, the literature reviewed demonstrated the applicability and relevance of NESF to the offender population. The importance of employability skills to employers was also underscored in discussions at an employment and employability symposium organized by CSC, held in Toronto (Director, Employment and Employability, personal communication).³⁰

³⁰ The Employment and Employability symposium was held in February, 2009 to better understand the needs of employers and improve post-release employment prospects for offenders. The symposium provided an opportunity for employers and union representatives from across the country to meet CORCAN, CORCAN Advisory Board and CSC staff members.

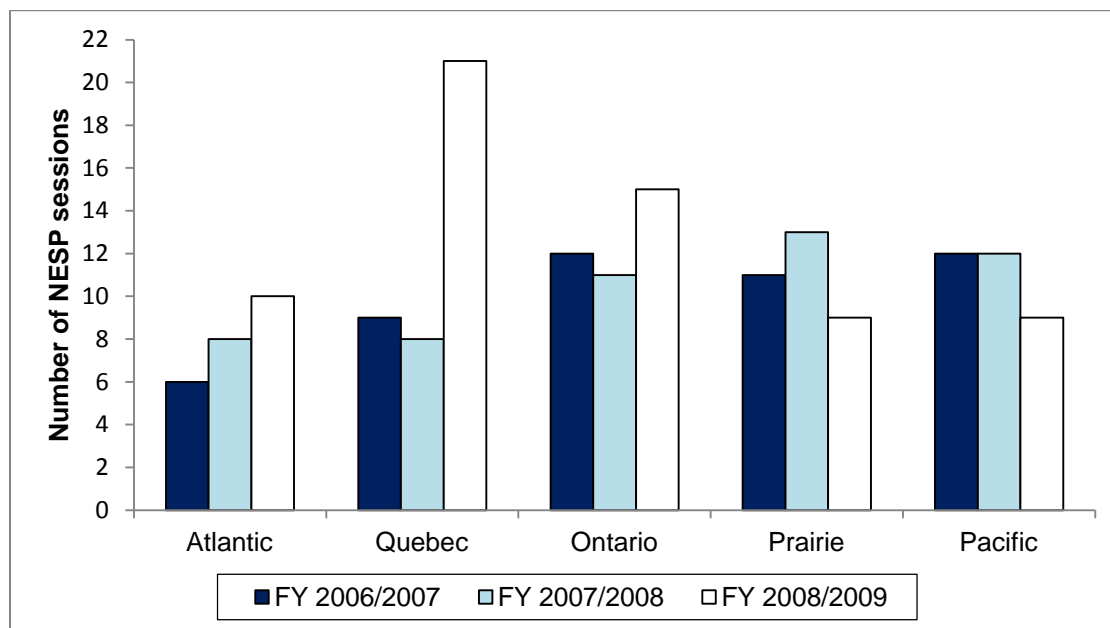
Objective 2: Implementation:

Has NESP been implemented in such a way that goals and objectives can be realistically achieved, and have implementation issues been adequately considered?

FINDING 4: Although NESP was implemented nationally, there were variations in program availability and enrolment rates across the regions. Program stakeholders identified budgetary constraints, staffing challenges, and a relatively low profile of the program in the field as factors that contributed to inconsistent program availability and delivery.

The number of NESP sessions delivered since full program implementation in year 2006/07 has varied across and within regions. Whereas the number of sessions delivered in the Atlantic Region increased steadily across a three-year period from 2006/07 to 2008/09, the total number of sessions in the Quebec Region increased by 163% in one year from 2007/08 to 2008/09. The Ontario Region also experienced an increase over the same period, although the increase was not as large (i.e., 36%). The number of NESP sessions in the Prairie and Pacific Regions decreased from 2007/08 to 2008/09 to levels that were below introductory levels in 2006/07 (refer to Figure 2).

Figure 2. Number of NESP Sessions Delivered by Region from 2006/07 to 2008/09



Source: CORCAN Data: Program and Certificates Reconciliation Summary Document (2009).

Similarly, the overall enrolment rates differed across the regions. Specifically, in the Quebec Region, over three-quarters (76.4%) of offenders assigned to NESP enrolled in the program, the highest among the regions, while the enrolment rate was lowest in the Prairie Region (42%; refer to Table 1). Enrolment rates for Aboriginal and women offenders also varied regionally. In addition, the NESP enrolment rates across the regions differed significantly from the regional distribution of CSC's incarcerated population, with the Atlantic and Pacific Regions being over-represented and the remaining three regions being under-represented (see Appendix I for details).

Table 1. NESP Enrolment Rates by Region

| Region (n) ^a | Enrolment Rates | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Overall NESP | Aboriginal Offenders ^b | Women Offenders ^b |
| Atlantic (n = 247) | 53.5% | 7.7% | 15.4% |
| Quebec (n = 301) | 76.4% | 4.7% | 11.6% |
| Ontario (n = 401) | 49.8% | 10.8% | 10.0% |
| Prairie (n = 351) | 41.9% | 53.6% | 31.9% |
| Pacific (n = 426) | 60.9% | 28.2% | 8.7% |

Note. ^a Denotes the number of NESP participants in each region. ^b Aboriginal and women offender enrolment rates were calculated out of the number of NESP participants in each region. For more details on the representation of Aboriginal and women offenders in NESP, refer to Appendix I.

Source: OMS (2009).

The inconsistencies in program delivery across the regions described above were noted by program stakeholders surveyed. Specifically, survey respondents expressed some concern with respect to the capacity and resources available to deliver NESP in the regions (43%; n = 54). Thirty survey respondents (23%) commented on inconsistent program availability. These respondents suggested that the delivery of the program could become more stable with permanent funding³¹ and dedicated staff positions to deliver NESP on a continuous basis. Other factors that may have inhibited program uptake as identified by program stakeholders included: the role of NESP in relation to other institutional programs and within offender correctional

³¹ NESP is funded through CORCAN and financial support available for the program is directly dependent upon CORCAN's revenues. After three years of revenue growth, CORCAN revenues decreased slightly in 2008/09 to \$70 million, down from \$70.6 million recorded in the previous year (CORCAN, 2009a).

plans (13%; $n = 17$); concerns over program scheduling and interference with offenders' work hours (13%; $n = 17$); issues related to program assignments (e.g., lack of clarity with respect to program assignments and referrals; 18% $n = 23$); and low awareness and understanding of the program in the field coupled with lack of communication about the program (26%; $n = 33$).³² Altogether, the issues related to NESP's inconsistent availability and enrolment across the regions formed the basis of one of the evaluation recommendations (see Recommendation 4).

FINDING 5. NESP has been mainly delivered to offenders with identified employment needs, assessed as some or considerable at intake to federal custody. Also, NESP participants generally had higher levels of motivation and reintegration potential and lower levels of overall need and risk compared to CSC's incarcerated population.

NESP is targeting incarcerated offenders with identified employment needs. In order to be eligible to participate in NESP, offenders must meet the following criteria: have an identified need in the area of employment, assessed at intake as “some” or “considerable”; have basic literacy (Grade 8 or higher) and the ability to communicate in English or French; be involved in an institutional work assignment, defined as part- or full-time work or part-time school; and be eligible for release within five years.³³ Although basic literacy and eligibility for release within five years are generally prerequisites, accommodations can be made to respond to offenders' individual needs.

Given the substantially higher proportion of NESP participants with no or low employment needs in the Quebec Region (76%) relative to the other four regions (refer to Figure 3), two types of analyses were conducted to assess the appropriateness of program assignment and implementation practices.³⁴ The first analysis focused on all offenders who participated in

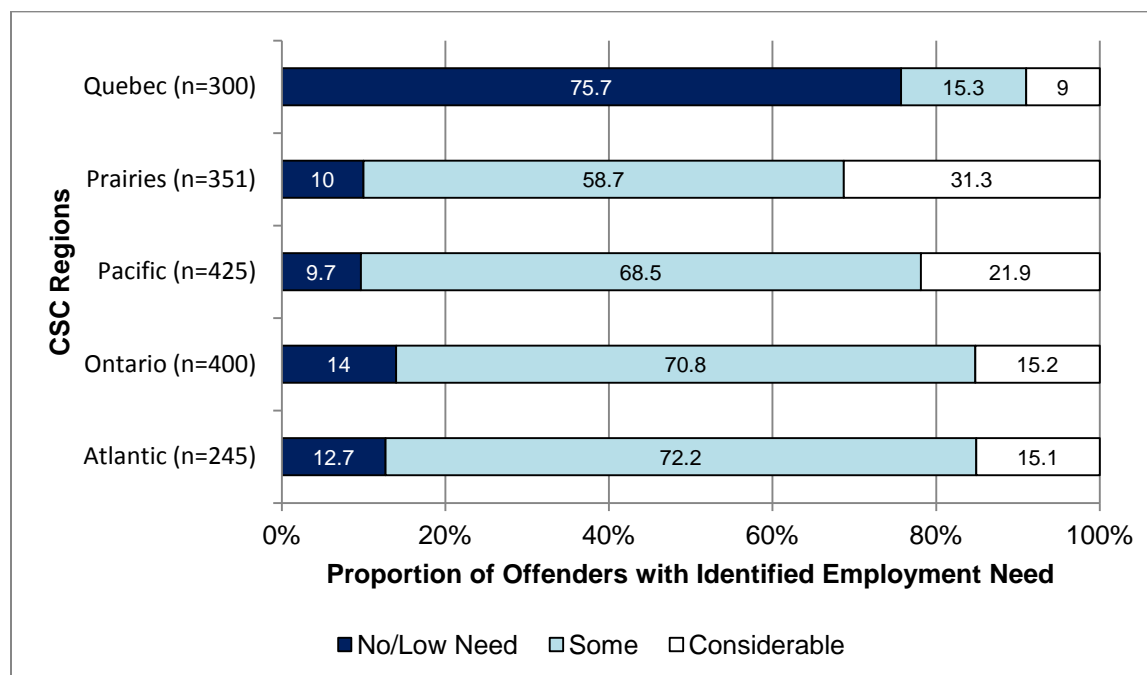
³² At the time of the NESP launch in 2005/06, CORCAN implemented a communications strategy that included training and awareness sessions with CSC staff, the development of the NESP pamphlet and ongoing communications with relevant regional committees. Of note, responses from program participants surveyed indicated low awareness of the program in the field, thus highlighting the importance of sustainable communication efforts on behalf of program management. Presently, CORCAN is working on developing a communications strategy in relation to CSC's ongoing employment initiatives (as per the EEP evaluation's recommendations [Taylor et al., 2008] and management action plan); however, the assessment of the extent to which this strategy has been implemented and is effective was beyond the scope of this evaluation.

³³ CORCAN (2009b), NESP Referral and Program Assignment Process, updated February, 2009. Please note that offenders with full-time school assignment no longer qualified for NESP as of 2009.

³⁴ Similar results were reported in the evaluation of CSC's CEC Initiative (Brews et al., 2010), which suggested that a systematic difference in reporting procedures existed between the regions. In response to the CEC evaluation recommendations, CSC is now in the process of implementing the Dynamic Factor Identification and Analysis Revised (DFIA-R) component of the Offender Intake Assessment Process in order to streamline and enhance the

NESP ($N = 1,726$), whereas the latter excluded offenders from the Quebec Region ($N = 1,425$). These analyses are presented in the following two sections.

Figure 3. Employment Needs of NESP Participants, by Region



Source: OMS (2009).

All NESP Participants

Providing services to address identified criminogenic needs (i.e., the need principle) is one of the principles of effective correctional interventions (see, for example, Andrews & Bonta, 2006). Recent evaluations of CSC's CEC Initiative (Brews et al., 2010) and EEP (Taylor et al., 2008) found, however, that employment programs were provided to offenders who had no or low employment needs. Similarly, the present evaluation found that overall, despite the some to considerable employment need program eligibility criterion, 23% of NESP participants had no or low employment needs as assessed upon admission to custody ($n = 390$) and in the CPPR reports recorded prior to NESP start date ($n = 391$). Moreover, the proportion of NESP participants with no or low employment need was significantly higher than the proportion among the comparison

offender assessment process. CSC is also undertaking a management review of the employment domain in the correctional plan to ensure compliance with the DFIA-R.

group (13%; $\chi^2 (2, N = 3,125) = 47.45, p < .0001$).³⁵ Of note, a higher proportion of offenders in the comparison group had a history of unstable employment compared to NESP participants (81% vs. 74%, respectively; $\chi^2 (1, N = 2,884) = 20.44, p < .0001$).

Several program stakeholders surveyed (18%; $n = 23$) reported concerns related to the program referral process and criteria. Specifically, 9% ($n = 12$) of program stakeholders commented on the perceived validity of program referral criteria, indicating that the criteria, on the whole, screened out offenders who had the greatest need for the program. These program stakeholders further suggested that the program should target offenders with no or low employment skills rather than those who had already acquired an institutional work assignment and it should, therefore, be expanded to include more offenders. Indeed, those offenders who did not participate in a CORCAN or institutional work assignment had a higher employment need than those who did. Specifically, 86% of offenders without a work assignment in the NESP dataset had some or considerable employment need compared to 78% of offenders who were able to secure a work assignment ($\chi^2 (2, N = 3,125) = 32.38, p < .0001$).

A series of analyses was additionally conducted to compare NESP participants and the general incarcerated offender population on a number of demographic and correctional variables. These analyses found that NESP participants generally had lower levels of risk and need and higher levels of motivation and reintegration potential compared to the general incarcerated population (refer to Table 2).

³⁵ When the employment need from the CPPR assessed prior to NESP was taken into account, the results revealed nearly identical results in terms of the employment need breakdown as at intake assessment.

Table 2. Levels of Overall Risk, Need, Motivation, and Reintegration Potential of NESP Participants and the General Incarcerated Population

| | Frequency | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------|--------|
| | Incarcerated Population | NESP Participants | |
| | % | <i>n</i> | % |
| Risk χ^2 (2, <i>N</i> = 1,559) = 147.49, <i>p</i> < .0001 | | | |
| Low | 9.14% | 184 | 11.80% |
| Moderate | 32.09% | 694 | 44.52% |
| High | 58.77% | 681 | 43.86% |
| Need χ^2 (2, <i>N</i> = 1,560) = 70.21, <i>p</i> < .0001 | | | |
| Low | 4.81% | 72 | 4.62% |
| Moderate | 25.76% | 546 | 35.00% |
| High | 69.43% | 942 | 60.38% |
| Motivation Level χ^2 (2, <i>N</i> = 1,559) = 157.17, <i>p</i> < .0001 | | | |
| Low | 19.18% | 152 | 9.75% |
| Moderate | 66.59% | 1,048 | 67.22% |
| High | 14.23% | 359 | 23.03% |
| Reintegration Potential χ^2 (2, <i>N</i> = 1,559) = 117.83, <i>p</i> < .0001 | | | |
| Low | 44.44% | 487 | 31.24% |
| Moderate | 27.42% | 488 | 31.30% |
| High | 28.14% | 584 | 37.46% |

Source: OMS (2009).

Although 23% of participants had no or low employment needs, suggesting that NESP may not be delivering its services to offenders with greatest need for employability skills development, results from the Quebec Region appeared to have significantly contributed to this proportion of offenders with low employment needs. Specifically, 58.2% (*n* = 227) of all offenders with no or low employment need in the program were from that one region. As a result, additional analyses were conducted on the NESP sample that excluded participants from the Quebec Region.

NESP Participants Excluding Quebec

When participants in the Quebec Region were excluded from the analyses, a higher proportion of offenders with some or considerable employment need (88.5%; *n* = 1,258) was provided with NESP services. Although this proportion was significantly higher than the proportion of offenders with some or considerable identified employment needs in federal institutions (63.4%; χ^2 (2, *N* = 1,421) = 389.54, *p* < .0001), it was still somewhat lower than that

of the comparison group (i.e., offenders who were assigned to, but did not take, NESP; 91%; $\chi^2(2, N = 2,736) = 7.98, p < .05$).

When the participants from the Quebec Region were excluded from the analyses, similar patterns emerged with respect to levels of overall risk, overall need, motivation and reintegration potential. Specifically, NESP participants excluding those from the Quebec Region still generally had lower levels of overall risk and overall need and higher levels of motivation and reintegration potential compared to CSC's incarcerated offender population (Table 3).

Table 3. Levels of Overall Risk, Need, Motivation, and Reintegration Potential of NESP Participants Excluding those from the Quebec Region and the General Incarcerated Population

| | Frequency | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|--------|
| | Incarcerated Population | NESP Participants, exclusive of Quebec | |
| | % | <i>n</i> | % |
| Risk $\chi^2(2, N = 1,309) = 111.44, p < .0001$ | | | |
| Low | 9.14% | 170 | 12.99% |
| Moderate | 32.09% | 557 | 42.55% |
| High | 58.77% | 582 | 44.46% |
| Need $\chi^2(2, N = 1,309) = 49.93, p < .0001$ | | | |
| Low | 4.81% | 63 | 4.81% |
| Moderate | 25.76% | 448 | 34.22% |
| High | 69.43% | 798 | 60.96% |
| Motivation Level $\chi^2(2, N = 1,309) = 148.45, p < .0001$ | | | |
| Low | 19.18% | 114 | 8.71% |
| Moderate | 66.59% | 892 | 68.14% |
| High | 14.23% | 303 | 23.15% |
| Reintegration Potential $\chi^2(2, N = 1,309) = 72.77, p < .0001$ | | | |
| Low | 44.44% | 436 | 33.31% |
| Moderate | 27.42% | 395 | 30.18% |
| High | 28.14% | 478 | 36.52% |

Source: OMS (2009).

In summary, NESP has been mostly delivered to its target audience – offenders whose employment needs had been assessed as “some” or “considerable”, with an exception of the Quebec Region. At the same time, NESP participants had generally lower levels of overall risk and overall need and higher levels of motivation and reintegration potential than the general incarcerated population, suggesting that the program may not be delivered to offenders with the

greatest need for intervention services. Further analyses are required to determine whether the current set of NESP admission criteria appropriately identifies offenders with employment and employability barriers.

FINDING 6. Although program stakeholders indicated that employability skills were sufficiently addressed in NESP, they also suggested a need to revise the curriculum content and teaching methods to be more applicable to the offender population.

NESP facilitators reported that each employability skill was sufficiently covered in the program, ranging from 84 % ($n = 48$) to 90 % ($n = 51$). Program facilitators also indicated that the objectives of lessons were clearly defined (93%; $n = 62$) and were relevant (84%; $n = 56$), that the program activities were interactive in nature (89%; $n = 59$), that the material in the lessons was comprehensive (82%; $n = 54$), and that participants were engaged in the activities (79%; $n = 53$). A smaller proportion of respondents (69%; $n = 45$) indicated that the content material was appropriate for the target group, while nearly one-third of respondents (31%; $n = 20$) indicated otherwise.

Eighty-four (66%) respondents identified a number of areas for modification and improvement, including increasing opportunities to practice the skills developed in NESP (18%; $n = 23$), adapting the program content (e.g., scenarios) to be more reflective of the offenders' life experiences and jobs for which they would apply (23%; $n = 30$),³⁶ and ensuring that there is sufficient variability in the exercises and that they are appropriate given the length of the program (16%; $n = 20$). Respondents also suggested augmenting the program to increase the focus on job readiness (29%; $n = 37$; e.g., resumé and cover letters, interview skills, job search techniques, information about pay scales and labour market, and job choices for offenders) and increasing community involvement (16%; $n = 21$; e.g., inviting local employers and guest speakers from the community to discuss the need for employability skills). As was indicated in the Limitations section of the report, it was not possible to differentiate whether the above-listed comments, particularly those in relation to program content, were applicable to the men's, women's or both versions of the NESP curriculum.

Some program facilitators surveyed identified specific ways to enhance the program, such as including guest speakers as part of the NESP lessons, with many indicating that they had

³⁶ The scenarios for role-play exercises in NESP were developed in consultation with offenders.

already done so (16%; $n = 21$). Nineteen (15%) individuals further highlighted the need to introduce specific certificate training as part of the NESP program delivery to supplement the NESP curriculum and to enhance offenders' employability and job readiness upon release, such as First Aid, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), fall protection, food safety, forklift operation, warehousing and others. While some certification is already offered as part of CSC's vocational training opportunities, this observation made by program stakeholders suggests that there may be a greater need to ensure better linkages between employability and vocational interventions and services offered to offenders within CSC and ensure that CSC staff members are aware of other available services offered through EEP.

RECOMMENDATION 2. CSC should revise, where applicable, the NESP curriculum content (e.g., role-play scenarios) and teaching methods (e.g., poster presentations, group discussions) to increase the focus on job readiness and hands-on learning and be more applicable to the offenders' life experiences.

FINDING 7. Program facilitators were satisfied with the NESP training they were provided and reported confidence in their ability to deliver the program material. Program facilitators reported performing NESP activities at frequencies consistent with guidelines outlined in the program manual.

From FY 2005/06 to FY 2008/09, 18 NESP facilitator training sessions were delivered to, and were successfully completed by, 111 CSC staff members and contracted providers. The Prairie Region had the highest proportion of successful program completions (33.3%), followed by the Quebec (20.7%) and Ontario (15.3%) Regions. Approximately 14.4% were from the Pacific and the Atlantic Regions each and a small proportion (1.8%) worked at NHQ (refer to Table 4). As can be seen in Table 4, more training sessions were delivered in the first years of the program's full implementation. Of note, approximately 24.3% ($n = 27$) of trained staff members were no longer CSC employees at the time of the evaluation.

Table 4. Successful Facilitator Training Completions by Region and Fiscal Year

| Region | Total | | Fiscal Year | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | <i>n</i> | % | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 |
| Atlantic | 16 | 14.4% | 2 | 8 | 5 | 1 |
| Quebec | 23 | 20.7% | 1 | 14 | 8 | 0 |
| Ontario | 17 | 15.3% | 10 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Prairie | 37 | 33.3% | 1 | 28 | 7 | 1 |
| Pacific | 16 | 14.4% | 2 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| NHQ | 2 | 1.8% | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total Number of Trainees ^a | 111 | 100% | 17 | 59 | 25 | 10 |
| Number of Training Sessions | 18 | | 2 | 8 | 5 | 3 |

Note. ^a Trainees included CSC staff and contract service providers. Please note that the regions are represented not by the location of training, but rather by staff affiliation. Also, the numbers presented in the table are those recorded in the CSC database system. The responsibility for accuracy in data entry resides with program management at the national and regional levels.

According to survey data, the majority of the facilitators who received training were satisfied with the training (89%; *n* = 59) and indicated that they were provided with sufficient training (87%; *n* = 60). The majority also reported that they possessed the skills necessary to deliver the program material (96%; *n* = 63) and that adequate resources were available to deliver the material effectively (88%; *n* = 59). Importantly, nearly all facilitators indicated that they felt confident in their ability to teach employability skills to offenders (94%; *n* = 64).

To determine the extent to which program facilitators applied program implementation guidelines, facilitators³⁷ were asked to complete a series of questions related to program delivery that were informed by implementation guidelines listed in the NESP program manual (Conference Board of Canada, 2006a). According to their survey responses, the majority of facilitators (73% to 96%) indicated that they always conducted pre-program interviews with referred offenders, ensured that offenders signed consent forms, and completed pre-NESP Facilitator's Assessments in a timely manner prior to the program start date. Furthermore, the majority of respondents indicated that they generally adhered to the contents of the lesson plan (94%; *n* = 50) and provided participants with opportunities to practice the employability skills through role-play exercises during each lesson (89%; *n* = 47).

The majority (79% to 100%) of facilitators also indicated that they frequently provided an overview of the program to participants in the first lesson, offered constructive feedback to

participants on an ongoing basis, shared final reports with participants for further consideration prior to finalization, and took into account attendance and participation scores to determine whether to issue The Conference Board of Canada's certificate to NESP participants.

One area that may require improvement in terms of NESP implementation is communication between facilitators and workplace supervisors. Although approximately 61.5% ($n = 32$) of facilitators indicated that they had regular and ongoing contact with workplace supervisors throughout the duration of the program, 38.5% ($n = 20$) indicated that they rarely or sometimes had such contact with offender supervisors. Similarly, 30% ($n = 12$) of supervisors indicated they did not or rarely had consultations with NESP facilitators.

FINDING 8. In contrast to survey responses from program facilitators, the majority of work supervisors reported that they were not familiar with NESP. Work supervisors also indicated that they did not consistently perform NESP activities as prescribed in the program manual.

According to the NESP work supervisor's assessment brochure (Conference Board of Canada, 2006b), workplace supervisors are responsible for assessing NESP participants' employability skills prior to the start of the program and to monitor their progress throughout the program. Work supervisors are also encouraged to provide constructive feedback to participants using the Describe-Express-Invite (DEI) tool.³⁸ Although work supervisors participate in general staff awareness sessions regarding employment and employability programming for offenders and also learn additional information about the program from NESP facilitators, no formal workplace supervisor training is provided as part of NESP.

Approximately one-third (32%; $n = 51$) of NESP workplace supervisors surveyed indicated that they had at least moderate familiarity with the program, which is considerably lower than 89% ($n = 59$) of facilitators who indicated they were familiar with NESP. Moreover, the majority of work supervisors (79%; $n = 118$) indicated that they did not receive NESP training and 43% ($n = 45$) indicated that they would not be interested in receiving NESP training.

³⁷ Of the 97 individuals who were trained in the delivery of NESP and who worked at CSC at the time of the evaluation, 67 (69%) responded to the NESP evaluation survey.

³⁸ The Describe-Express-Invite (DEI) tool is intended to be used to provide developmental feedback and support open communication, when giving or receiving feedback. DEI focuses on: 1) describing the situation; 2) expressing the effect the situation is having on a person(s); and 3) inviting other individuals to share their perspectives of the situation.

With respect to ongoing participation in the delivery of NESP, some work supervisors indicated that they were not regularly informed, in writing, about offenders' involvement in NESP (28%, $n = 11$). In addition, they infrequently, rarely or never, completed work supervisors' pre-program employability skills assessment of NESP participants (35%, $n = 14$) or provided ongoing feedback to program participants (31%; $n = 12$). Although a suggested practice for NESP, the majority of workplace supervisors reported that they did not use the DEI tool to manage their feedback (55%; $n = 16$). Finally, some supervisors also indicated that they did not regularly complete post-program assessments (18%; $n = 9$). It was, therefore, not unexpected that 14.9% of pre-program and 16.4% of post-program work supervisors' assessments were missing in the dataset used for this evaluation compared to 3.8% and 4.2% of facilitators' assessments, respectively. Work supervisors also commented that, depending on the type of work assignment (e.g., janitorial work, kitchen work), they had limited contact with offenders, which created difficulties assessing offenders' skill progress ($n = 9$). Furthermore, some workplace supervisors indicated that the offender assessments were time-consuming, confusing, and difficult to complete in a timely manner ($n = 9$).

FINDING 9. NESP was designed to utilize an integrated skills development environment, in which classroom learning was supported by immediate skill application in the workplace. However, some NESP facilitators and work supervisors indicated that institutional work assignments did not necessarily provide opportunities to apply the skills taught in NESP (e.g., janitorial or kitchen work). In several cases, work supervisors did not have sufficient contact with offenders to reliably assess their skills and progress in the program.

FINDING 10. Program stakeholders noted that increased linkages between NESP and community employment opportunities would be beneficial to participants.

NESP plays a part in CSC's employment continuum³⁹ which begins during the offender intake process, continues through institutional programming to improve offender employability, and extends to employment services in the community. According to the employment continuum, offenders should be placed in jobs that are linked to vocational assessments and that enable opportunities to apply the skills learned in NESP. However, some survey respondents

³⁹ For a schematic representation of the CSC employment continuum, refer to <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/corcan/pblct/continuum-eng.shtml>.

(16%; $n = 20$) indicated that institutional work assignments often did not provide opportunities for offenders to apply the skills attained through NESP. Some types of institutional jobs available for offenders (e.g., janitorial, kitchen work, etc.) do not necessarily lend themselves to the NESP curriculum. Of note, a lack of meaningful employment opportunities for offenders within CSC has been underscored in several reports (OCI, 2005, 2007; Taylor et al., 2008). Further, some workplace supervisors indicated that they did not have sufficient contact with NESP participants to enable them to assess their employability skills ($n = 9$).

It is also worth mentioning that 32% of NESP program participants did not have a work assignment at the program start date, but rather were involved in an educational program.⁴⁰ The evaluation was not able to determine the suitability of educational assignments to the need for hands-on application of the skills taught in NESP. The latter could be further addressed through subsequent program reviews and evaluations.

In addition to these findings, at the time of the evaluation there was no formal link from NESP to employment services in the community (e.g., CECs or other community services), although NESP facilitators were encouraged to introduce the concept of these centres at the end of the NESP session. The recent evaluation of CSC's CEC initiative (Brews et al., 2010) found that CEC participants were more likely to obtain employment compared to a group of CEC non-participants and were more likely to be satisfied with their employment than their counterparts who found employment on their own. Furthermore, CEC participants were significantly less likely to be readmitted to federal custody compared to non-participants. In light of the positive results of the CEC evaluation, and the overarching goal of EEP to link employment-related activities throughout the offender's federal sentence (both incarceration and community), formal linkages between NESP and community employment services may be beneficial to the offenders as well as the overall employment continuum. Indeed, program stakeholders surveyed indicated that CSC should provide a full spectrum of the employment intervention continuum. More specifically, 9% ($n = 11$) of respondents identified the need to link NESP to offender employment assessment, thus helping them choose a career and one-quarter (24%; $n = 31$) of respondents emphasized the need to link offenders with employment opportunities in the community, particularly work release.

⁴⁰ In 2009, NESP admission criteria were revised to exclude offenders participating in full-time school assignments from being eligible for NESP.

Overall, a number of program design and implementation issues were identified in this evaluation which may have had an impact on the treatment effect of the program on participants' employment and community correctional outcomes (discussed in the Success Section below). Specifically, in examining the profile of NESP participants, the evaluation found that offenders with no or low employment needs had participated in NESP, although some or considerable employment need was a main criterion for admission. In addition, the criterion for a concurrent institutional work assignment may have excluded offenders who had the greatest need based on the fact that they were not able to acquire a work assignment. Furthermore, as previously noted, work supervisors reported that they were not familiar with NESP, nor did they consistently perform NESP activities. Program facilitators and work supervisors also indicated that the types of work assignments available for offenders within CSC institutions (for example, kitchen work, janitorial work) did not necessarily provide participants with the opportunity to apply the skills that they acquired through NESP. These program stakeholders suggested including formal linkage to employment opportunities in the community.

RECOMMENDATION 3. CSC should develop a NESP skills application strategy to ensure that: a) program participants with an institutional work assignment are able to apply the employability skills taught in NESP to their immediate work environment with an appropriate level of supervision and feedback; and, b) workplace supervisors are able to provide the necessary supervision and assessment of offender progress in the program regardless of the type of institutional work assignment.

RECOMMENDATION 4. Commensurate with the results of the environmental scan and gap analysis and revisions to the NESP curriculum, CSC should increase awareness of the program in the field and ensure that NESP is offered consistently in the institutions.

Objective 3: Success (Efficiency and Effectiveness):

Is NESP producing expected outputs in relation to expenditure of resources and meeting expected results?

The purpose of the following section was to systematically assess the success of the NESP. As such, this section focused on two broad evaluation objectives – program efficiency and effectiveness – and was respectively divided in two segments.

Efficiency:

The extent to which a policy, program or initiative is producing its planned outputs as a result of the initiative and in relation to resources used.

FINDING 11. The majority of NESP participants completed the program. Completion rates were higher for offenders with no or some employment needs than for those with considerable employment needs, as well as for women offenders. Aboriginal offenders completed the program at the same rate as non-Aboriginal offenders.

At the time of this evaluation, 80% ($n = 1,380$) of program participants had completed NESP, whereas 16% ($n = 277$) had dropped out from the program. The proportion of population management cases⁴¹ was 4% ($n = 69$). In comparison, the overall completion rate for all correctional programs delivered across federal institutions since 2006/07 was 49%.⁴² Although the dropout rates were similar in both cases (17% overall and 16% for NESP), the proportion of population management cases for NESP was low compared to that of all institutional programs (34%).

Program completion rates also differed as a function of employment need ($\chi^2(4, N = 1,721) = 10.37, p < .05$). The program completion rates were highest for participants with no or low employment needs (84%), followed by offenders with some employment needs (80%). The lowest completion rates were observed for offenders who had their employment needs assessed as considerable (74%). The dropout rates increased as employment needs

⁴¹ Population management cases refer to the following situations: when an offender was transferred, released, temporarily reassigned or paroled, a program was cancelled, offender completed their sentence (i.e., Warrant Expiry Date reached), or an assignment was transferred.

increased (considerable employment need [21%]; some employment need [16%]; and no or low employment need [13%]).

Program completion also differed significantly for women and men participants ($\chi^2(2, N = 1,726) = 17.7, p < .0001$) in that completion rates were higher for women than men participants (89% vs. 78%). There was no statistically significant difference in completion rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants (82% vs. 80%, respectively; $\chi^2(2, N = 1,717) = 0.84, p > .05, ns$). See Appendix J for the breakdown of program outcomes by fiscal year.

FINDING 12. Conference Board of Canada employability skills certificates were awarded to the majority of NESP participants.

The Conference Board of Canada employability skills certificate is a nationally-recognized certificate. To be eligible for this certificate, NESP participants must receive an overall score of at least 75% based on class participation and homework completion (Conference Board of Canada, 2006a). In addition, a minimum of 80% attendance is required in order to receive the certificate, which corresponds to no more than two unexcused absences from the program. Finally, offenders must complete their skills portfolio and program self-assessments.

As previously noted above, the majority (80%) of NESP participants completed the program. Of those, nearly all offenders (98%; $n = 1,382$) satisfied the requirements of the program and were awarded The Conference Board of Canada employability skills certificate.

According to the program participation data maintained by NESP facilitators and that were available for the evaluation,⁴³ 97% ($n = 856$) of offenders were absent for no more than 2 NESP lessons, thereby meeting the 80% program attendance requirement for certification. Overall, 98% ($n = 865$) of participants received program component scores greater than the 75% program participation requirement for certification.

⁴² Source: Corporate Reporting System – Program Analysis Table, January, 2010.

⁴³ Data were available for 885 NESP participants.

Effectiveness:

The extent to which a policy, program or initiative is meeting its planned results.

FINDING 13. NESP participants reported positive changes with respect to understanding the role and importance of employability skills in securing and maintaining employment.

According to behavioural change theories (e.g., Theory of Planned Behaviour, Ajzen & Fishbein (1980); Stages of Change, Prochaska & DiClemente (1986); Theory on the Diffusion of Innovations, Rogers (1983), an individual's awareness of, and intentions to improve, personal behaviour are regarded as stepping stones to changing the behaviour. Personal attitudes and knowledge of the desired outcomes have, therefore, become one of the commonly assessed outcomes in skill development and training programs (Kirkpatrick, 1994).

NESP participants were asked to rate how important further development of employability skills was to them and their comfort level in applying the skills.⁴⁴ These self-assessments were completed prior to and after program participation. To determine whether participation in NESP had an impact on offenders, a series of pre- and post-test statistical analyses were conducted.

Overall, offenders provided high ratings on the importance of each employability skill prior to program participation (mean ranks ranging from 3.91 to 4.11) and higher after participating in the program (mean ranks ranging from 4.06 to 4.21). Mean rank scores for the post-program assessments of skill importance were found to be significantly higher than those on the initial self-assessment on 10 employability skills. The notable exceptions were problem-solving skills and learning continuously, where no significant change was observed (see Table 5).

⁴⁴ The importance of skill development was assessed on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1=low to 5=high importance. Level of comfort in applying employability skills was assessed on the following 3-point scale: 1= I am really good at this; 2 = I am okay at this for now; and, 3 = I need to improve the skill.

Table 5. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests on the Offender Self-Assessment, Mean Ranks.

| Employability Skills | Importance of Future Skill Development | | | Comfort Level in Applying Skills | | |
|---------------------------|--|------|--------|----------------------------------|------|---------|
| | Pre | Post | z | Pre | Post | z |
| Communication | 4.09 | 4.21 | 3.0** | 1.97 | 2.37 | 12.6*** |
| Managing Information | 4.01 | 4.11 | 2.8** | 1.89 | 2.29 | 12.4*** |
| Using numbers | 3.95 | 4.06 | 2.9** | 1.99 | 2.31 | 10.1*** |
| Problem-Solving | 4.11 | 4.17 | 1.8 | 2.02 | 2.33 | 9.9*** |
| Managing Emotions | 4.09 | 4.19 | 2.5* | 1.99 | 2.24 | 8.3*** |
| Positive Attitudes | 4.03 | 4.12 | 2.6* | 2.14 | 2.36 | 7.6*** |
| Responsibility | 4.02 | 4.20 | 4.3*** | 2.11 | 2.40 | 9.0*** |
| Adaptability | 3.91 | 4.07 | 3.4** | 2.09 | 2.35 | 9.2*** |
| Learning Continuously | 4.09 | 4.15 | 1.3 | 2.12 | 2.39 | 9.1*** |
| Working Safely | 3.93 | 4.13 | 4.4*** | 2.28 | 2.51 | 8.7*** |
| Working with Others | 3.99 | 4.10 | 2.6** | 2.11 | 2.34 | 7.6*** |
| Participation in Projects | 3.99 | 4.09 | 2.6** | 2.11 | 2.36 | 8.1*** |

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

With respect to offenders' comfort levels in applying employability skills, it was interesting to note that, at pre-test, the offenders generally rated their ability to apply employability skills as good. At post-test, however, offenders were more likely to indicate they needed to further improve their skills. One could hypothesize that participants may have become more aware of their limitations in personal skill competencies once they began to review and practise employability skills during NESP lessons. Statistical analyses ascertained that the differences in the mean ranks of comfort level scores were statistically significant on all 12 employability skills (Table 5).

These findings related to offenders' improved knowledge of, and attitudes towards, employability skills were consistent with the results from the preliminary examination of the NESP pilot that found positive increases in offenders' employability attitudes and beliefs related to employment and the workplace (Latendresse & Cortoni, 2005).

Finally, the survey data provided by NESP facilitators and other program stakeholders also supported offenders' pre- and post-program assessments. The majority of survey respondents indicated that NESP contributed to offenders' improved understanding of employability skills and attitudes (93%; $n = 128$), as well as behaviours among offenders (87%; $n = 116$). In addition, NESP facilitators' post-program ratings of offenders' understanding of

work importance was significantly higher than the pre-program ratings ($\text{mean}_{\text{pre}} = 3.07$, $\text{SD}_{\text{pre}} = 0.97$; $\text{mean}_{\text{post}} = 3.42$, $\text{SD}_{\text{post}} = 0.70$; $z = 8.8$, $p < .05$).

FINDING 14. NESP participants demonstrated improvements in employability skills as assessed by program facilitators, work supervisors, and the offenders themselves.

As part of the program design, NESP facilitators and workplace supervisors assessed the employability skills of participants before and after their participation in NESP in order to establish baselines for each offender and determine progress in developing employability skills. Program participants were instructed to conduct self-evaluations on employability skills.⁴⁵

Generally, offenders, work supervisors, and program facilitators alike reported improvements in participants' skills development. The largest mean difference in pre- and post-program scores was noted by NESP facilitators, while somewhat smaller improvements were reported by workplace supervisors and offenders. Offenders commonly rated themselves in the "maturing" category before the program but their ratings increased to a higher "leading" category after the program (Table 6).

Table 6. Pre- and Post-Program Employability Skills Scores.

| | Total Employability Skills Scores | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| | Mean Pre-Program Scores | Mean Post-Program Scores | t-value |
| Facilitators ($n = 854$) | 19.2 | 26.7 | 44.05*** |
| Work Supervisors ($n = 732$) | 21.3 | 26.1 | 26.02*** |
| Offenders ($n = 826$) | 21.6 | 26.5 | 20.92*** |

Note. Correlations scores between different respondent groups are presented in Appendix G.

*** $p < .001$.

The improvement in the total employability skills scores, as assessed by three different rater groups, remained significant for men, women, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders.

⁴⁵ As part of the NESP program manual, a skill assessment tool was developed to be completed by program facilitators, participants and workplace supervisors. In addition to assessing each employability skill separately (on the scale of 0 to 4), a total employability skill score was to be computed and interpreted as follows: 1-12 = developing; 13 – 24 = maturing; and 25-36 = leading. Overall, this data collection tool showed good reliability, as judged by internal consistency scores. The evaluation team was not able to ascertain the tool's validity, as no other well-established tool was available to correlate test scores. For details on the properties of the NESP skill assessment tool, please refer to Appendix G.

Moreover, significant improvements were also observed for individual employability skills (refer to Appendix K for details on statistical analyses).

In addition to employability skills development, NESP facilitators provided ratings on offenders' work performance. NESP facilitators' post-program assessments of offenders' work performance was significantly higher than their assessments prior to offender participation in NESP ($\text{mean}_{\text{pre}} = 2.12$, $\text{SD}_{\text{pre}} = 0.61$; $\text{mean}_{\text{post}} = 2.5$, $\text{SD}_{\text{post}} = 0.56$; $z = 14.3$, $p < 0.05$).

The survey data provided by program stakeholders offered additional support of offenders' skill progress. A large majority of respondents indicated that NESP contributed to offender improvements in all 12 employability skills areas, ranging from 74% ($n = 96$) in using numbers and 79% ($n = 107$) in problem-solving to 90% ($n = 131$) in positive attitudes and behaviours and 91% ($n = 130$) in communication skills.

Overall, these results are consistent with the preliminary results obtained in Latendresse and Cortoni's (2005) assessment of the NESP pilot, where participants' ratings on employability skills improved after program participation.

FINDING 15. Overall, NESP participants were as likely as the comparison group to find and maintain employment in the community. However, women participants in NESP were more likely to gain employment upon release than women offenders in the comparison group.

NESP was intended to enhance offenders' ability to find and maintain community employment through the development and application of generic competencies required to be employable in the community. This evaluation, therefore, examined the impact of NESP on offenders' ability to find employment in the community. Employment data were available for 2,055 offenders in the NESP and comparison groups,⁴⁶ constituting 96% of all individuals released into the community in the dataset used for the evaluation.

Although a higher proportion of NESP participants were able to obtain employment upon release in the community (54%), compared to offenders in the comparison group (45%), further statistical analyses revealed that this difference between the two groups was not associated with participation in NESP. More specifically, statistical analyses examined the impact of several

⁴⁶ 78 (3.7%) offenders who were not employed in the community, but who were attending school were excluded from all calculations examining job attainment and maintenance presented in this section.

covariates⁴⁷ on job attainment and the overall statistical model was fitted so that it only included covariates that were found to be significantly associated with the employment status in the community. That is, age at release, type of release (parole or statutory release), employment need at release, participation in community employment centres, and reintegration potential scores were included in the analyses,⁴⁸ in addition to the NESP intervention. Additionally, statistical analyses were performed to examine the difference in job maintenance patterns between the NESP and the comparison groups.

Job Attainment

Overall, NESP program participants were as likely as the comparison group to find employment in the community (please refer to Table 7). This held true for Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, and male offenders. NESP participation was a significant predictor of employment for women offenders; specifically, women NESP participants were 1.6 times more likely to secure a job upon their release to the community than those who did not participate in the program.

Table 7. Odds Job Attainment by Gender and Aboriginal Status

| NESP vs Comparison | Overall | Gender | | Aboriginal Status | |
|--------------------|---------|--------|--------|-------------------|----------------|
| | | Men | Women | Aboriginal | Non-Aboriginal |
| Odds Ratio | 1.060 | 1.020 | 1.559* | 1.188 | 1.048 |
| <i>p</i> -value | .373 | .777 | .048 | .277 | .519 |

Note: Significant at * $p < .05$.

Job Maintenance

In terms of maintaining community employment, no difference was observed between NESP participants and the comparison group. That is, the likelihood of maintaining employment within a six-month period was comparable between the two groups (refer to Table 8).⁴⁹ The

⁴⁷ In statistics, a covariate is a variable that is not part of the experimental manipulation (i.e., treatment) but has a potential effect on the outcome under study.

⁴⁸ All five covariates were found to be significantly associated with the employment outcome (see details on statistical analyses in Appendix L).

⁴⁹ Considering the sample size available for this analysis, the observation period for presentation was limited to 6 months in order to arrive at a reliable estimate of the survival function at each time interval.

median survival time (i.e., the time at which one-half of offenders were still employed in the community) was 164 days for the NESP group and 210 days for the comparison group.

Table 8. Proportion of Employed Individuals at the End of Time Interval (or a graph)

| Time Interval | NESP Group | | Comparison Group | |
|---------------|------------|---|------------------|---|
| | N | Proportion of Offenders Maintaining Job | N | Proportion of Offenders Maintaining Job |
| 1 month | 399 | .84 | 233 | .83 |
| 2 months | 268 | .74 | 152 | .73 |
| 3 months | 193 | .67 | 112 | .66 |
| 4 months | 146 | .62 | 83 | .61 |
| 5 months | 118 | .55 | 63 | .59 |
| 6 months | 90 | .48 | 52 | .58 |

Survival analyses further confirmed that NESP participants were as likely to maintain employment as the comparison group (Appendix L). It is worthy to mention, however, that no inferences could be made in terms of the job maintenance outcome, as no information regarding the reasons for job termination was available to the evaluation team. For example, of those 193 individuals (31%) who quit their respective jobs, some may have pursued alternative career paths. On the other hand, the number of individuals fired from their positions was too small to conduct any analyses on that specific outcome (7%; $n = 43$).

Community Employment Centres

Participation in CECs was a significant predictor of employment where offenders who received services from CECs were nearly twice as likely to secure employment as offenders who did not receive CEC services (odds ratio = 1.9, $p < 0.05$). This finding is consistent with the recent evaluation of the CEC Initiative (Brews et al., 2010) that found significantly higher employment rates among CEC participants than in the comparison group (78% and 53%, respectively).

Despite the positive results associated with CEC participation, only a small proportion of released NESP participants (30%; $n = 385$) received employment support services through CECs.^{50,51} Positive results could have potentially increased if offenders participated in both

⁵⁰ From the data available, it was not possible to determine whether or not NESP participation preceded CEC participation.

NESP (in the institution) and CEC (in the community). NESP is already strategically positioned as one component of CSC's employment continuum that extends from intake to the community. From an implementation perspective, survey respondents suggested that NESP participants may benefit from increased linkage between NESP and employment opportunities in the community.

RECOMMENDATION 5. CSC should establish formal linkages between NESP and employment services in the community (e.g., CECs) to increase continuity of services from the institution to the community, to potentially increase benefits to offenders.

FINDING 16. For male offenders, participation in NESP was associated with a reduced likelihood of any first return to custody and with first return for a new offence; however, no treatment effect was observed for women offenders. Also, Aboriginal offenders in NESP were significantly less likely to return to custody for a new offence compared to Aboriginal offenders in the comparison group.

NESP participants and the comparison group (i.e., offenders who were referred to, but did not enrol in, NESP) differed on a number of demographic, criminogenic and other correctional attributes that have been found to be related to recidivism among adult offenders (e.g., Gendreau et al., 1996). It was, therefore, necessary to control for these pre-existing group differences in outcome analyses concerning failure on conditional release. Sequential Cox regression analyses were conducted controlling for the following covariates: age at release; risk and need levels; type of release (parole or statutory release); length of time incarcerated; and employment status in the community. Two measures of conditional release failure were examined, namely, any first return to custody (as a result of technical revocations or new offences) and a first return to custody for a new offence.

After accounting for pre-existing differences between the NESP and comparison groups, there was a significant treatment effect in favour of NESP for any return to custody as well as returns for a new offence. Specifically, NESP participants were 0.86 times less likely to return to custody for any reason and 0.73 times less likely to return for a new offence than the comparison group. Results differed, however, when analyses were conducted for men, women, Aboriginal, and non-Aboriginal offender groups (Table 9).

⁵¹ The proportion of offenders receiving these services in the comparison group was somewhat lower at 26% ($n = 219$).

Table 9. Odds of Return to Custody by Gender and Aboriginal Status.

| NESP vs Comparison | Any Return to Custody | | Return for New Offence | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------|------------------------|----------------|
| | Odds Ratio | p-value | Odds Ratio | p-value |
| Overall | 0.862* | .042 | 0.731** | .010 |
| Gender | | | | |
| Men | 0.830* | .016 | 0.722** | .009 |
| Women | 1.273 | .323 | - | - ^a |
| Aboriginal Status | | | | |
| Aboriginal | 0.820 | .141 | 0.576* | .014 |
| Non-Aboriginal | 0.878 | .134 | 0.786 | .095 |

Note: ^a – Given the small number of events (19; 4.8%), it was not feasible to fit Cox regression analyses for this category of correctional community outcomes.

Significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Gender

Male NESP participants were 0.83 times less likely to return to federal custody for any reason and 0.72 times less likely to return for a new offence than male offenders in the comparison group. For women offenders, there was no significant treatment effect; women NESP participants were as likely to return to custody as women in the comparison group. Mixed results have been reported in the research literature with respect to the relationship between employment and recidivism for women offenders (Bonta, Pang & Wallace-Capretta, 1995; Lambert & Madden, 1976). For instance, Bonta and colleagues (1995) reported that none of the employment variables was predictive of recidivism, although having non-employment sources of financial support (e.g., welfare or income from illegal sources) was related to higher risk of recidivism. However, research on female offenders is limited compared to the male offender population (Dowden & Andrews, 1999; Stuart & Brice-Baker, 2004). Finally, the effect of NESP on returns for new offences for women offenders could not be examined due to the low occurrence of this event.

Aboriginal Status

For non-Aboriginal offenders, there was no significant treatment effect. Non-Aboriginal NESP participants were as likely to return to custody for any reason and to return for a new offence, as non-Aboriginal offenders in the comparison group. Conversely, Aboriginal NESP participants were 0.58 times less likely to be readmitted for a new offence than their counterparts

in the comparison group; however, there was no significant treatment effect on any return to custody for Aboriginal offenders.

Employment Status

Employment status emerged as a significant predictor of failure on conditional release across all outcome analyses including analyses for subgroups of offenders. On the whole, offenders who were able to find employment in the community upon release were 0.33 times less likely to return to custody than those who were not able to secure employment. Of note, comparable results were reported in the evaluation of CSC's Employment and Employability Programs (Taylor et al., 2008) and the CSC study of community-based outcomes for all federally sentenced offenders (Gillis and Nafekh, 2005), which both found job attainment to be significantly associated with recidivism. More specifically, Taylor et al. (2008) reported that unemployed offenders were 2.89 times more likely to be readmitted within one year of release compared to those who were employed. These findings underscore the importance of employment in the community in the safe reintegration of offenders.

In summary, the present evaluation identified significant improvements in program participants' employability skills levels. Offender learning gains were achieved in all twelve employability skills targeted by NESP; however, these gains did not fully translate into successful community correctional outcomes, such as increased job attainment and decreased rates of return to federal custody. Positive treatment effect was, however, observed for some offender groups on certain correctional outcomes, for example, a reduced likelihood of return to custody for men offenders or increased likelihood of finding community employment for women offenders.

Objective 4: Cost-Effectiveness:

| |
|---|
| <i>Have the most appropriate and efficient means been used to achieve outcomes?</i> |
|---|

FINDING 17. Inconsistent financial reporting precluded cost-effectiveness analyses.

In 2003, CSC undertook a restructuring exercise to reorganize its vocational training and related activities, which included employability skills training, to be incorporated under CSC's

Employment and Employability Programs (A/Assistant Commissioner, Memorandum, March 18, 2003). In response, regional strategies for vocational training were to be developed, including a resource plan based on the current funding available within the vocational training budget. To initiate the restructuring and move the EEP agenda forward, CORCAN provided funding in the amount of \$1.5 million; however, it was also indicated that CORCAN might not be in a position to continue to provide funding in the coming years (Senior Deputy Commissioner, Memorandum, November 27, 2003). No evidence was available to the evaluation team to support that the vocational training resources plan was properly implemented. Consequently, CORCAN has continued to support employability skills training (i.e., the National Employability Skills Program) as it has been the lead of the EEP portfolio.

Presently, CORCAN directly funds NESP sessions delivered in the Atlantic, Ontario, and Pacific Regions. In the Quebec Region, CORCAN funds NESP sessions through a contractual agreement with Via Travail (OPEX), which is renewed on an annual basis. As no funding was provided to the Prairies Region, individual sites continued offering NESP sessions at own expense, recording NESP-related expenditures under the educational programs budget.

To record program-related expenditures, unique program codes were created in CSC's Integrated Management Reporting System (IMRS) and CORCAN's financial system,⁵² however, these codes have not been used consistently across the regions. The evaluation found that having two financial responsibility centres for NESP might have contributed to identified difficulties in financial management and reporting for the program. As a result, it was not possible to conduct cost-effectiveness analyses for NESP on the whole for fiscal years 2006/07 to 2008/09.

Financial data, nonetheless, were available for the Prairie and Quebec Regions (through IMRS and contract details, respectively) for fiscal years 2007/08 and 2008/09.⁵³ In addition, according to CORCAN documentation,⁵⁴ an estimate of \$8,000 is allocated for the delivery of

⁵² NESP expenditures in CORCAN's financial system were coded under vocational training (cost centre 392). It is worth mentioning that in fiscal year 2009/10 a separate program code was established in order to track NESP expenditures in detail.

⁵³ Financial information available for fiscal year 2006/07 was not used in this evaluation due to significant inconsistencies. Year 2006/07 was the first year of NESP implementation and it appears that the allocated program code was not properly used and the resultant recorded numbers did not seem reliable. A publication by the Conference Board of Canada (2009) reported CSC expenditures per enrolled participant in NESP to be \$58.41, based on fiscal year 2006/07.

⁵⁴ Director, Employment and Director, Reintegration Programs. Memorandum, June 21, 2005.

one NESP session based on 33 days of program delivery at the Welfare Programmes Group-3 level (WP-03; CORCAN, 2010).⁵⁵

The NESP funding formula was used to estimate annual program expenditures across three fiscal years at \$442,667. This constituted 10.7% of the 2008/09 CSC vocational trainings expenditures (\$4,132,247) and 0.6% of CORCAN revenues in 2008/09 (\$70.0 million).

Based on the available data, the evaluation team conducted a series of analyses to examine the cost of program delivery; however, a number of discrepancies between the financial and service delivery data were identified. First, the Prairie Region expenditures reported for 2008/09 were \$215,115.33 which was approximately five times more than the expenditures for the previous year (\$42,208.81). Despite the substantial difference in expenditures, more NESP sessions were delivered in 2007/08 than in 2008/09, and the number of participants enrolled in the two years was comparable. Second, in the Quebec Region, funds for FY 2007/08 were provided in December, 2007 which limited program delivery to the four-month period from December, 2007 through to March, 2008 whereas the data for the following year accounted for activities delivered during the entire fiscal year. In light of these two factors, the evaluation team utilized the average yearly expenditure and program enrolment data based on the two-year period for which data were available (refer to Table 10).

Table 10. Program Expenditures and Enrolment (FY 2007/08, 2008/09, and Average)

| | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | Average |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Prairie Region | | | |
| Expenditures | \$42,208.81 | \$215,115.33 | \$128,662.07 |
| Number of sessions delivered | 13 | 9 | 11 |
| Number of offenders enrolled in NESP | 89 | 91 | 90 |
| Average cost per session | | | \$11,696.55 |
| Average cost per participant | | | \$1,429.58 |
| Quebec Region | | | |
| Expenditures | \$144,000 | \$108,000 | \$126,000.00 |
| Number of sessions delivered | 8 | 21 | 14.5 |
| Number of offenders enrolled in NESP | 74 | 114 | 94 |
| Average cost per session | | | \$8,689.66 |
| Average cost per participant | | | \$1,340.43 |

⁵⁵ The Welfare Programmes Group in CSC includes the following positions: Social Programs Officer, Correctional Program Officer, Parole Officer, etc. For the period from June, 2009 to June, 2010, the salary for the WP-03 level ranges from \$50,993 to \$67,179 per year (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2009).

On average, the costs of delivering one NESP session in the Prairie and Quebec Regions were \$10,969 and \$8,690, respectively. The average cost per offender enrolled in NESP was comparable for the two regions (Table 10).

To calculate the estimated cost of program delivery per offender in the remaining regions – Atlantic, Pacific and Ontario Regions - the evaluation team used the estimated expenditures for one NESP session in the amount of \$8,000 and divided the estimate by the average number of program participants in those regions from fiscal years 2006/07 to 2008/09 (i.e., 8.7 offenders/session; 8.4 offenders/session; and 9.3 offenders/session, respectively). As a result, the estimated costs of delivering NESP to offender totalled \$920 in the Atlantic Region, \$952 in the Pacific Region and \$860 in the Ontario Region (average of \$911 across the three regions).

Altogether, the estimated program delivery costs in the Atlantic, Pacific and Ontario Regions were significantly lower than the expenditures in the Quebec and Prairie Regions, presented in Table 10. Finally, the costs across all regions were higher than the originally estimated cost of \$800⁵⁶ per offender.

RECOMMENDATION 6. CSC should ensure that NESP is managed financially in a manner that will allow for consistent and accurate reporting of expenditures and enable future cost-effectiveness analyses.

RECOMMENDATION 7. In the absence of reliable financial data, CSC should undertake an audit review of NESP expenditures to account for the program expenses incurred since fiscal year 2006/07.

Objective 5: Unintended Outcomes:

| |
|--|
| <i>Did NESP create or encounter any positive or negative impacts that were unintended?</i> |
|--|

Although not an unintended outcome of NESP, the present evaluation revealed issues related to offender assessment processes. Specifically, limited variability in change scores on

⁵⁶ The estimated cost was derived by dividing the estimated expenditures per NESP session (\$8,000) on the maximum number of participants allowed by NESP session (i.e., 10 offenders).

dynamic assessment indicators, including employment need, was observed throughout offender assessments documented in CPPRs. While this issue is discussed in greater detail below, it is worth acknowledging that it extends beyond the level of individual programs' impacts and appears to be related to the process and measurement of offender change.

FINDING 18. No significant change in offenders' employment need or other dynamic assessment indicators was observed in Correctional Plan Progress Reports before and after the NESP intervention or from intake to release.

The evaluation team was not able to examine change in offenders' employment need indicators pre and post-program participation, as assessed through offenders' CPPRs. The levels of employment need, as well as other dynamic assessment indicators remained largely unchanged, as assessed before and after the NESP intervention. For example, 95.9% of NESP participants ($n = 1,433$) had their employment need assessed at the same level before and after the program. When individuals with no or low employment need were excluded from this calculation, the proportion of individuals with unchanged levels before and after the NESP intervention remained consistently high at 95.2% ($n = 1,100$). Similar observations were made with regards to offenders' levels of overall risk and overall need. Table 11 provides a detailed breakdown of levels of offenders' employment need, overall risk and overall need from intake assessment through to progress report assessments before and after participation in NESP and at release.

Table 11. NESP Participants' Employment Need, Overall Risk and Overall Need Levels from Intake to Release

| | At Intake | Before NESP | After NESP | At release |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Employment Need | | | | |
| No or low | 22.7% | 23% | 23.3% | 22.4% |
| Some | 58.3% | 61.5% | 63.6% | 63.1% |
| Considerable | 19.1% | 15.5% | 13% | 14.5% |
| Overall Risk | | | | |
| Low | 11.8% | 9.8% | 10.7% | 10.9% |
| Moderate | 44.5% | 45.9% | 46.4% | 49.1% |
| High | 43.7% | 44.3% | 42.9% | 40.0% |
| Overall Need | | | | |
| Low | 4.6% | 4.6% | 5.3% | 4.71% |
| Moderate | 35.0% | 41.1% | 43.6% | 42.9% |
| High | 60.4% | 54.3% | 51.1% | 52.4% |

Source: OMS (2009).

Low levels of variability in change scores on the employment need indicator have previously been observed in CSC's evaluations (Delveaux et al., 2005 Taylor et al., 2008) and have inhibited the evaluation team's ability to examine this change as an outcome variable within quantitative analyses. A number of factors may have contributed to the lack of differences, including the sensitivity of the measures for the assessment of change, time frames at which offenders are assessed or differences in assessors' judgment processes. Such an investigation, however, was beyond the scope of the evaluation. Future research should further examine the full process of offender change, focusing specifically on change across time and the relationship between change in offender dynamic needs and recidivism.

No other unintended outcomes were found as a result of the current evaluation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills 2000+ Employability Skills 2000 plus

The skills you need to enter, stay in, and progress in the world of work – whether you work on your own or as part of a team.

These skills can also be applied and used beyond the workplace in a range of daily activities.

| Fundamental Skills | Personal Management Skills | Teamwork Skills |
|---|--|---|
| <p>The skills needed as a base for further development.</p> <p><i>You will be better prepared to progress in the world when you can communicate, manage information, use numbers and think and solve problems.</i></p> | <p>The personal skills, attitudes, and behaviours that drive one's potential for growth.</p> <p><i>You will be able to offer yourself greater possibilities for achievement when you can: Demonstrate Positive Attitudes and Behaviours, Be Responsible, Be Adaptable, Learn Continuously and Work Safe.</i></p> | <p>The skills and attributes needed to contribute productively.</p> <p><i>You will be better prepared to add value to the outcomes of a task, project or team when you can: work with others and participate in projects and tasks.</i></p> |
| <p>Communicate Read and understand information presented in a variety of forms (For example, words, graphs, charts, and diagrams)</p> <p>Write and speak so others pay attention and understand</p> <p>Listen and ask questions to understand and appreciate the points of view of others</p> <p>Share information using a range of information and communications technologies (For example, voice, e-mail, and computers)</p> <p>Use relevant scientific, technological and mathematical knowledge skills to explain or clarify ideas</p> <p>Manage information Locate, gather and organize information using appropriate technology and information systems</p> <p>Access, analyze and apply</p> | <p>Demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours Feel good about yourself and be confident</p> <p>Deal with people, problems and situations with honesty, integrity and personal ethics</p> <p>Recognize your own and other people's good efforts</p> <p>Take care of your personal health</p> <p>Show interest, initiative and effort</p> <p>Be Responsible Set goals and priorities balancing work and personal life</p> <p>Plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals</p> <p>Assess, weigh and manage risk</p> <p>Be accountable for your actions and the actions of your group</p> <p>Be socially responsible and contribute to your community</p> <p>Be adaptable Work independently or as a part of</p> | <p>Work with others Understand and work within the dynamics of a group</p> <p>Ensure that a team's purpose and objectives are clear</p> <p>Be flexible: respect, be open to and supportive of the thoughts, opinions and contributions of others in a group</p> <p>Recognize and respect people's diversity, individual differences and perspectives</p> <p>Accept and provide feedback in a constructive and considerable manner</p> <p>Contribute to a team by sharing information and expertise</p> <p>Lead or support when appropriate, motivating a group for high performance</p> <p>Understand the role of conflict in a group to reach solutions</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>knowledge and skills from various disciplines (For example, arts, languages, sciences, technology, mathematics, social sciences, and the humanities)</p> <p>Use Numbers Decide what needs to be measured or calculated</p> <p>Observe and record data using appropriate methods, tools, and technology</p> <p>Think and solve problems Assess situations and identify problems</p> <p>Seek different points of view and evaluate them based on facts</p> <p>Recognize the human, interpersonal, technical, scientific and mathematical dimensions of a problem</p> <p>Identify the root cause of a problem</p> <p>Be creative and innovative in exploring possible solutions</p> <p>Readily use science, technology and mathematics as ways to think, gain and share knowledge, solve problems and make decisions</p> <p>Evaluate solutions to make recommendations or decisions</p> <p>Implement solutions</p> <p>Check to see if a solution works, and act on opportunities for improvement</p> | <p>a team</p> <p>Carry out multiple tasks or projects</p> <p>Be innovative and resourceful: identify and suggest alternative ways to achieve goals and get the job done</p> <p>Be open and respond constructively to change, learn from your mistakes and accept feedback</p> <p>Cope with uncertainty.</p> <p>Learn continuously Be willing to continuously learn and grow</p> <p>Assess personal strengths and areas for development</p> <p>Set your own learning goals</p> <p>Identify and access learning sources and opportunities</p> <p>Plan for and achieve your learning goals</p> <p>Work Safely Be aware of personal and group health and safety practices and procedures, and act in accordance with these.</p> | <p>Manage and resolve conflict when appropriate</p> <p>Participate in projects and tasks Plan, design or carry out a project or task from start to finish with well-defined objectives and outcomes</p> <p>Develop a plan, seek feedback, test, revise and implement</p> <p>Work to agreed quality standards and specifications</p> <p>Select and use appropriate tools and technology for a task or project</p> <p>Adapt to changing requirements and information Continuously monitor the success of the project or task and identify ways to improve</p> |
|--|---|--|

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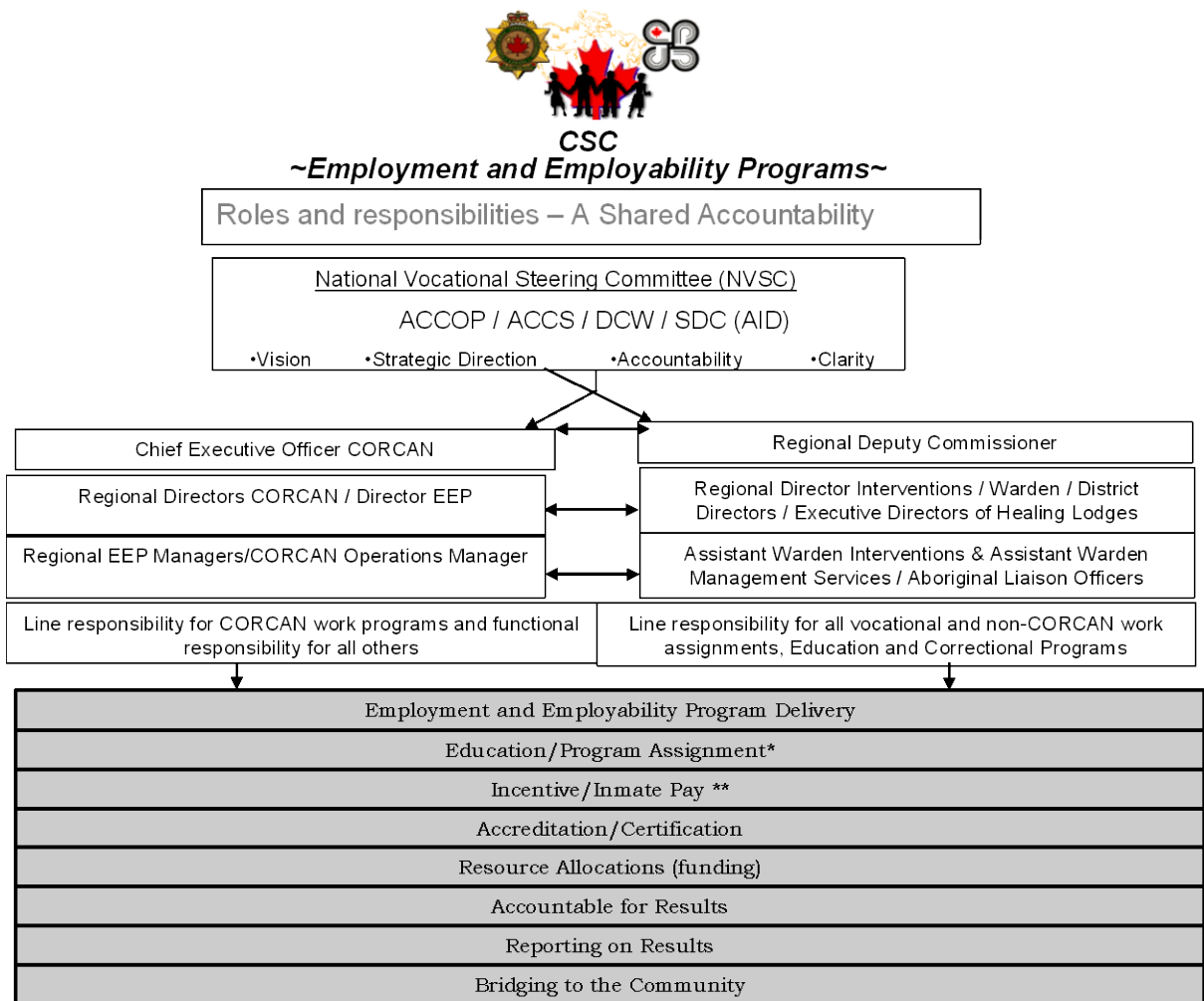
Source: Conference Board of Canada (2000).

Appendix B: List of Participating NESP Sites

| Region | Security Level | Institution | 2006/2007 | 2007/2008 | 2008/2009 |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| ATLANTIC | Maximum | Atlantic Institution | | ✓ | |
| | Medium | Dorchester Penitentiary | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Springhill Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Minimum | Westmorland | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Multi-level | Nova Institution for Women | ✓ | | ✓ |
| QUEBEC | Medium | Archambault Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Cowansville Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Drummond Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Leclerc Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | La Macaza Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Minimum | Federal Training Centre | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | | Montée St.François Institution | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | | Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Multi-Level | Joliette Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ONTARIO | Medium | Bath Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Collins Bay Institution | | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Fenbrook Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Joyceville Institution | | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Warkworth Institution | ✓ | | |
| | Minimum | Beaver Creek Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Frontenac Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Pittsburgh Institution | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | Multi-level | Grand Valley Institution for Women | ✓ | | ✓ |
| PRAIRIES | Medium | Bowden Institution | | ✓ | |

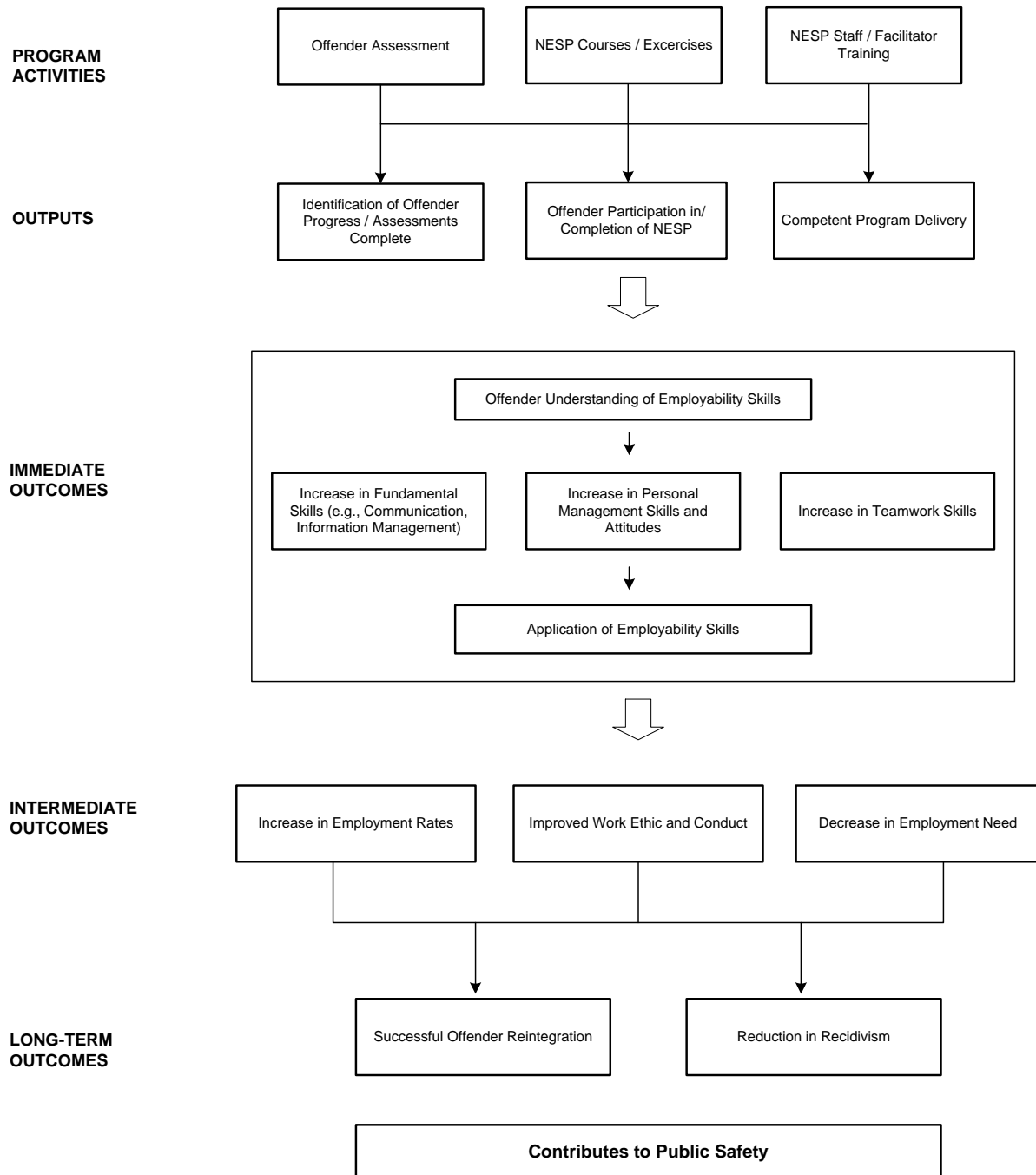
| | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| | | Drumheller Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Saskatchewan Penitentiary | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Minimum | Grande Cache Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Pê Sâkâstêw | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Riverbend Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Rockwood Institution | ✓ | | |
| | | Willow Cree Healing Lodge | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Multi-level | Edmonton Institution for Women | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge | ✓ | ✓ | |
| PACIFIC | Maximum | Kent Institution | | ✓ | |
| | Medium | Matsqui Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Mission Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Mountain Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Minimum | Ferndale Institution | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Kwîkwèxwelhp Healing Lodge | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | Multi-level | Fraser Valley Institution for Women | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Regional Treatment Centre | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Appendix C: Employment and Employability Programs Governance Structure



Appendix D: NESP Logic Model

National Employability Skills Program (NESP) Logic Model



Appendix E: NESP Evaluation Matrix

| Evaluation Objective 1: <u>Relevance:</u> Does NESP remain consistent with departmental and government-wide objectives and priorities, and respond to the employment needs of offenders and employers? | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | Key Results | Performance Indicators | Lines of Evidence |
| i) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NESP is consistent with government priorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation substantiating the alignment of NESP with Government of Canada Priorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document Review |
| ii) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NESP is consistent with correctional priorities and reintegration strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation substantiating consistency of NESP with correctional priorities and reintegration strategies Staff and stakeholder opinions on relevancy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document Review Staff and stakeholder survey |
| iii) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NESP responds to identified employer needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NESP activities respond to identified employer needs Staff and stakeholder opinions on NESP responding to identified employer needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document Review Literature Review NESP Data⁵⁷ Staff and stakeholder survey |
| iv) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NESP addresses the employment needs of offenders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NESP activities respond to offenders' identified needs Participating offenders have an identified employment need Levels of change (pre/post program) in the employment needs of offenders Ability of offenders to obtain and maintain employment in the community Staff and offender opinions on NESP addressing the employment needs of participating offenders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document Review OMS NESP Data Staff and Stakeholder survey |
| v) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offenders are actively participating in NESP activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offenders' access to and involvement in NESP activities Staff perspectives on participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OMS NESP data Staff survey |

| Evaluation Objective 2: <u>Implementation:</u> Has NESP been implemented in such a way that goals and objectives can be realistically achieved, and have implementation issues been adequately considered? | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | Key Results | Performance Indicators | Information Sources |
| i) | NESP operates according to guidelines identified in the strategy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NESP is compliant with relevant documentation and guidelines Staff opinions on whether NESP operates according to identified guidelines and whether appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Staff survey |

⁵⁷Offender Self-Assessment, Facilitator's Assessment and Work Supervisor Manual, National Employability Skills Program, Conference Board of Canada (2006).

| | | | |
|-----|--|--|---|
| | | training is provided | |
| ii) | NESP is coordinated between NHQ and the regions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff opinions as to how NESP is coordinated between NHQ and the regions ▪ Staff opinions whether NESP is being effectively and appropriately coordinated between NHQ and the regions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Staff survey |

Evaluation Objective 3: Success: (Efficiency & Effectiveness)

Is NESP producing expected outputs in relation to expenditure of resources and meeting expected results?

Efficiency

| | Key Results | Performance Indicators | Information Sources |
|----|---|---|--|
| i) | Expected outputs are being achieved as a result of the initiative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of offenders participating in the program ▪ Number of offenders successfully completing the program ▪ Number and type of completed assessments identifying offender progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OMS ▪ NESP data |

Effectiveness

| | | | |
|------|---|---|---|
| ii) | Participation in NESP contributes to offenders' understanding and development of the skills needed to enter, stay in, and progress in the workforce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level of offenders' understanding of employability skills ▪ Offender employment attitude ▪ Level of employability skills development among offenders ▪ Staff and offender opinions of the impact of NESP on the offenders' understanding and development of employability skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NESP data ▪ Staff and stakeholder survey |
| iii) | NESP assists offenders in building a positive work record and ethic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offenders' awareness and understanding of their work record and ethics ▪ Offender employment attitude ▪ Staff and stakeholder opinions on offender attendance and work ethic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NESP Data ▪ Staff and stakeholder survey |
| iv) | NESP contributes to the offender's successful reintegration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lower recidivism rates between offenders participating and not participating in NESP ▪ Decrease in employment need indicators ▪ Offender post-release employment rates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OMS ▪ NESP data ▪ Staff survey |
| v) | NESP assists offenders in securing and maintaining post-release employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of offenders obtaining and maintaining employment, compared with those who have not participated in NESP ▪ Number of offenders referred to, and found employment through, the Community Employment Centers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OMS ▪ Staff survey |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offender opinions that NESP contributed to their securing and maintaining post-release employment | |
|--|--|---|--|

Evaluation Objective 4: Cost-Effectiveness:

Have the most appropriate and efficient means been used to achieve outcomes?

| | Key Results | Performance Indicators | Information Sources |
|-----|---|--|---|
| i) | Expected outputs/outcomes of NESP have been effectively achieved within allocated resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NESP has contributed in cost savings related to offender reintegration/lower recidivism rates/reduced incarceration times Staff and stakeholder opinions as to whether NESP has been cost-effective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFMMS Document review Staff and stakeholder survey |
| ii) | Costs related to NESP are lower or comparable to other similar correctional programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NESP is able to achieve similar or better outcomes with equivalent or lower funding allotments. Staff and stakeholder opinions as to whether NESP has been cost-effective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review IFMMS Literature review Staff and stakeholder survey |

Evaluation Objective 5: Unintended Outcomes:

Did NESP create or encounter any positive or negative impacts that were unintended?

| | Key Results | Performance Indicators | Information Sources |
|-----|---|---|---|
| i) | Participation in NESP contributes to an increase in the offender's participation in correctional plans and programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate of offender participation in and completion of correctional plans and programs Staff and offender opinions on participation and completion of correctional plans and programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OMS Staff survey |
| ii) | Other unanticipated outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD |

Appendix F: NESP and Comparison Group Profiles

Quantitative methods were used to compare offenders in the NESP and the comparison groups on a number of demographic and correctional variables (e.g., age, Aboriginal status, risk and need ratings). For each variable, NESP participants were compared to a group of offenders who were assigned to, but did not participate in, NESP. The details of these statistical analyses are presented in the tables below.

Age at Release

| | <i>N</i> | Mean Age (in years) | <i>SD</i> | <i>t-value</i> |
|------------------|----------|------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| NESP Group | 1,275 | 33.6 | 9.2 | -2.32* ^a |
| Comparison Group | 858 | 32.8 | 9.4 | |

Note. * $p < .05$.

^a – The t-test was performed using the log transformation of age at release to improve the distribution and reduce the influence of outliers.

Gender

| | <i>N</i> | Male | Female |
|--|----------|-------|--------|
| $\chi^2 (1, N = 3,199) = 26.45, p < .0001$ | | | |
| NESP Group | 1,726 | 84.8% | 15.2% |
| Comparison Group | 1,473 | 90.8% | 9.2% |

Aboriginal Status

| | <i>N</i> | Aboriginal | Non-Aboriginal |
|---|----------|------------|----------------|
| $\chi^2 (1, N = 3,176) = 2.89, p > .05, ns$ | | | |
| NESP Group | 1,717 | 22.3% | 77.7% |
| Comparison Group | 1,459 | 24.8% | 75.2% |

Educational Attainment

| | <i>N</i> | Mean Grade Level | <i>SD</i> | <i>t-value</i> |
|------------------|----------|---------------------|-----------|----------------|
| NESP Group | 1,549 | 10.3 | 3.6 | -4.37*** |
| Comparison Group | 1,287 | 9.7 | 3.2 | |

Note. *** $p < .001$.

Employment Need at Intake

| | NESP Group | | Comparison Group | |
|--|------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| | <i>n</i> | % | <i>n</i> | % |
| $\chi^2 (2, N = 3,125) = 47.45, p < .0001$ | | | | |
| Considerable Need | 328 | 19.1% | 329 | 23.4% |
| Some Need | 1,003 | 58.3% | 889 | 63.3% |
| No or Low Need | 390 | 22.7% | 186 | 13.3% |

Offender Risk, Need, Motivation and Reintegration Potential Levels

| | NESP Group | | Comparison Group | |
|--------------------------------|------------|---|------------------|-------|
| | <i>n</i> | % | <i>n</i> | % |
| Risk Levels | | $\chi^2 (2, N = 2,918) = 10.59, p < .01$ | | |
| High | 681 | 43.7% | 579 | 42.6% |
| Moderate | 694 | 44.5% | 564 | 41.5% |
| Low | 184 | 11.8% | 216 | 15.9% |
| Need Levels | | $\chi^2 (2, N = 2,965) = , p < .01$ | | |
| High | 942 | 60.4% | 824 | 58.7% |
| Moderate | 546 | 35.0% | 479 | 34.1% |
| Low | 72 | 4.6% | 102 | 7.3% |
| Motivation Levels | | $\chi^2 (2, N = 2,918) = 16.37, p < .001$ | | |
| High | 359 | 23.0% | 236 | 17.4% |
| Moderate | 1,048 | 67.2% | 958 | 70.5% |
| Low | 152 | 9.8% | 165 | 12.1% |
| Reintegration Potential Levels | | $\chi^2 (2, N = 2,918) = 0.17, p > .05, ns$ | | |
| High | 584 | 37.5% | 513 | 37.8% |
| Moderate | 488 | 31.3% | 407 | 30.0% |
| Low | 487 | 31.2% | 439 | 32.3% |

Sentence Length ^a

| | <i>N</i> | Mean (in days) | <i>SD</i> | <i>t-value</i> |
|------------------|----------|----------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| NESP Group | 1,567 | 1,719 | 1,148 | -6.52*** ^b |
| Comparison Group | 1,394 | 1,400 | 1,447 | |

Note. ^a – Offenders with indeterminate (i.e., life) sentences were excluded from the calculation.

^b – The t-test was performed using the log transformation of sentence length to improve the distribution and reduce the influence of outliers.

*** $p < .001$.

Sentence Types

| | NESP Group | | Comparison Group | | Chi-square |
|------------------------|------------|-------|------------------|-------|------------|
| | <i>n</i> | % | <i>n</i> | % | |
| Indeterminate Sentence | 159 | 9.2% | 79 | 5.4% | 17.10*** |
| Schedule I Offence | 997 | 57.8% | 767 | 52.1% | 10.41** |
| Schedule II Offence | 347 | 20.1% | 374 | 25.4% | 12.72*** |
| Sexual Offence | 144 | 8.3% | 89 | 6.0% | 6.23* |

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Type of Release

| | <i>N</i> | Day Parole | Full Parole | Statutory Release | Chi-square |
|------------------|----------|------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| NESP Group | 1,274 | 37.4% | 1.8% | 60.8% | 3.30 ^a |
| Comparison Group | 857 | 33.6% | 1.8% | 64.6% | |

a – To perform the Chi-square test, day parole and full parole were combined into one category. The test was not statistically significant.

Appendix G: Properties of the NESP Skill Assessment Data Collection Tool

To assess the effect of NESP on program participants' understanding and development of employability skills, offenders, program facilitators and workplace supervisors completed pre- and post-program assessments of offenders' performance and skill development.

The twelve employability skills were assessed on an ordinal scale, with scores ranging from 0 to 3 (0 = unaware of the skill; 1 = aware and understands the skill; 2 = comfortable with and demonstrates commitment in applying the skill; 3 = consistently applies the skill and demonstrates leadership in the area). Individual items were then summed to create the total scale score. To help interpret the total score, the following classification was proposed: 1-12 = developing; 13-24 = maturing; 25-36 = leading.

When the initial descriptive analysis was performed by the evaluation team, the '0' response (unaware of the skill) was singled out as an irregular category (with frequencies around or less than 5% on all skill variables). To address this issue and improve the distribution of scores, the scores were recoded into a 3-category scale by way of combining '0' and '1'. As a result, all statistical analyses on individual skills were conducted using the new 3-point scale, whereas the total scale scores remained unchanged (range 0 – 36).

To determine the properties of the NESP data collection tool, the following common item statistics were computed:

- Level of agreement between respondent groups (correlations of pre and post-program ratings);
- Scale reliability (Chronbach's alpha); and,
- Item-total correlations;

Finally, criterion validity was tested by measuring the level of agreement between the NESP assessment scores and the employment/education need domain.

Overall, the data collection tool showed good internal reliability; however, the evaluation team was not able to establish the tool's validity. Specifically, the levels of agreement between respondent groups, particularly between facilitator and workplace supervisor assessments, were significant and positively correlated ($r = 0.51$ at pre-test and $r = 0.59$ at post-test). Conversely, the results between offender ratings and supervisor ratings, and offender ratings and facilitator

ratings, although increasing in the positive direction from the initial to the final ratings, indicated much less agreement (i.e., $r = 0.31$ at pre-test and $r = 0.38$ at post-test between offender and facilitator, and $r = 0.22$ at pre-test and $r = 0.25$ at post-test between offender and supervisor). The low level of agreement between offenders and other respondent groups could be explained by offenders initially overrating themselves (as judged by some negative pre-post differences, as well as the significant increase in the need to develop employability skills indicated by offenders at post-test). The details on the NESP data collection tool's psychometric properties are presented below.

I. Level of Agreement between Respondent Groups

To determine the level of agreement on pre- and post-ratings between the three respondent groups and to increase our confidence with respect to assessment results, a series of correlation tests was performed. Spearman rank-order correlation coefficients were computed for each individual employability skill item. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed for the total employability skills scale pre- and post-scores. Results are presented in the table below, by respondent group pairs.

| Skills | Offenders/ Facilitators | | Offenders/ Supervisors | | Facilitators/ Supervisors | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------|------------------------|------|---------------------------|------|
| | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| Communication | 0.32 | 0.33 | 0.16 | 0.14 | 0.40 | 0.41 |
| Manage Information | 0.28 | 0.30 | 0.09 | 0.20 | 0.36 | 0.40 |
| Use Numbers | 0.29 | 0.28 | 0.14 | 0.18 | 0.43 | 0.42 |
| Think & Solve Problems | 0.22 | 0.26 | 0.10 | 0.14 | 0.32 | 0.44 |
| Manage Emotions | 0.18 | 0.27 | 0.10 | 0.12 | 0.39 | 0.46 |
| Positive Attitudes | 0.24 | 0.30 | 0.17 | 0.17 | 0.43 | 0.42 |
| Be Responsible | 0.21 | 0.25 | 0.14 | 0.17 | 0.45 | 0.45 |
| Be Adaptable | 0.23 | 0.25 | 0.13 | 0.17 | 0.37 | 0.42 |
| Learn Continuously | 0.24 | 0.33 | 0.14 | 0.19 | 0.32 | 0.44 |
| Work Safely | 0.23 | 0.19 | 0.14 | 0.21 | 0.40 | 0.43 |
| Work with Others | 0.20 | 0.29 | 0.15 | 0.12 | 0.34 | 0.44 |
| Participate in Projects | 0.20 | 0.24 | 0.11 | 0.12 | 0.34 | 0.42 |
| Total Score | 0.33 | 0.39 | 0.20 | 0.23 | 0.49 | 0.56 |

Note: all correlations were significant at the .001 level

II. Scale Reliability and Item-Total Correlations

Scale reliability and item-total correlations were performed separately for pre- and post-ratings across three respondent groups. Overall, these analyses revealed a high degree of consistency in the employability skills scale ratings across respondent groups, with all achieving overall Chronbach's alpha coefficients greater than 0.9. The widely-accepted social science cut-off is that alpha should be at least 0.7 for a set of items to be considered a scale. Coefficients greater than 0.8 indicate good reliability. Detailed summaries of the results are presented in the following tables.

Program Participants Self-Assessments

| Scale Statistics | <i>N</i> | Mean | Variance | SD | N of Variables | Alpha |
|------------------|----------|-------|----------|------|----------------|-------|
| Pre | 861 | 21.59 | 46.99 | 6.86 | 12 | 0.91 |
| Post | 835 | 26.43 | 46.49 | 6.82 | 12 | 0.93 |

Workplace Supervisor Assessments

| Scale Statistics | <i>N</i> | Mean | Variance | SD | N of Variables | Alpha |
|------------------|----------|-------|----------|------|----------------|-------|
| Pre | 760 | 21.25 | 48.86 | 6.99 | 12 | 0.92 |
| Post | 747 | 26.08 | 46.137 | 6.79 | 12 | 0.93 |

Facilitator Assessments

| Scale Statistics | <i>N</i> | Mean | Variance | SD | N of Variables | Alpha |
|------------------|----------|-------|----------|------|----------------|-------|
| Pre | 860 | 19.22 | 41.60 | 6.45 | 12 | 0.93 |
| Post | 856 | 26.70 | 28.27 | 5.31 | 12 | 0.91 |

III. Criterion Validity

To establish the validity of the NESP skill assessment data collection tool, the evaluation examined the correlation between the tool and the CSC employment domain measures. All 35 employment domain measures taken at offender intake assessments were summed up to create one composite employment domain score (range 0 – 35, with the higher scores indicating greater employment and employability barriers).⁵⁸ The composite employment domain score was then correlated with NESP pre-program assessments. Although statistically significant, the strength of the correlations between the scores was low.

| | NESP Assessments | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------|----------|
| | Facilitator | Supervisor | Offender |
| Employment Domain Score (<i>r</i>) | -0.21*** | -0.16*** | 0.15 *** |
| <i>N</i> | 583 | 514 | 594 |

Note. *** $p < .001$.

⁵⁸ Scores on three employment program participation measures were reversed so that all measures were congruent with each other.

Appendix H: John Howard Society Skills Development Programs

A review of skills development programs offered in the community revealed that some not-for-profit organization provided skills development services specifically to released offenders. The present section describes some of these programs, focussing primarily on those addressing life skills, “soft skills” and employability skills, offered by the John Howard Society.

Ontario: Full program list is available at

http://www.johnhoward.on.ca/pdfs/JHS_Provincial_Adult_Program_and_Service_Inventory.pdf

- **Durham- Learning Alternatives Program and the ACE Literacy program:** To improve basic literacy skills in reading, writing, and math, to enhance skills to improve the possibility of employment or access other education based initiatives and computer based learning tools;
- **Hamilton/Burlington Career Links Employment Services:** Career counselling, certification;
- **Hamilton/Burlington Workpath:** Career decision making, job search, job skill enhancement, employment maintenance;
- **Hamilton/Burlington Breaking the Cycle: Youth Leadership Ambassador Program- YLAP:** Prosocial, leadership and employment skills, vocational training, personal goals, social learning strategies;
- **Kawartha Lakes/Haliburton Outreach Literacy Program:** Reading, writing, math, computers, employment;
- **Kawartha Lakes/Haliburton Institutional Services:** Institutional visits to assist with resume writing for employment attainment upon release and basic life-skills workshops;
- **Ottawa Early Intervention Employment Skills Training:** Literacy, employment and life skills;
- **Ottawa Skills Plus – A Pre-Employment and Training Program:** Employment skills/essential skills training - self-advocacy, public speaking and surviving in the Workplace;
- **Ottawa: A Communication, Computer, Employment Skills Space:** Computer and employment skills;
- **Peterborough Successful Achievement in the Fundamentals of Employment:** Employment skills: literacy, volunteerism, life skills, work placements, HRSDC essential skills;
- **Sault Ste. Marie Options to Employment:** Social skills training and workplace readiness.

Alberta: Full program list is available at <http://www.johnhoward.ab.ca/serv.htm#calgary>

- **Adult Literacy Program:** Reading, writing, numeracy, life skills;
- **Learning Employment Enhancement Program:** Self-management, job preparation, computers, self-awareness, self-esteem, problem solving, cooperation and decision making;
- **Adult Transition Learning Centre:** Creative writing, literacy, language arts, math, computer skills; job preparation; life skills: addiction, self-esteem, anger management, healthy relationships, mental health community supports.

Manitoba: Program list is available at <http://www.johnhoward.mb.ca/pages/home.php>

- **Employment Assistance:** Acquiring skills and tools to find employment;
- **Pre-employment Skills Program:** Skills and tools while still imprisoned;
- **Literacy:** Reading, writing and math skills, educational, social and emotional development.

Newfoundland: Program list is available at <http://www.johnhowardnl.ca/>

- **Employability Skills Development:** career self-exploration/personal evaluation, skills enhancement, and job maintenance skills; computer tutoring program.

New Brunswick: Program list is available at <http://www.jhssj.nb.ca/content/216386>

- **ACTION Network:** Career decision-making, job referrals, self-esteem, information on bonding/pardons, interview techniques for offenders, resume and cover letter preparation, effective communication, peak performance, assertiveness, goal setting, keeping a job;
- **Community Maintenance Program:** Goals, problem solving, dealing with emotions, high-risk thinking, communication, self-management.

Prince Edward Island: Program list is available at <http://www.jhs-pei.ca/>

- **Employment Assistance Services:** Human relationship, self-management, planning and goal setting, employment skills (basic skills, job-specific skills, a positive work attitude, independence, initiative, dependability, commitment and the ability to recognize personal strengths), job search skills (preparation for the job search, job interview skills, and the ability to identify and understand the job).

Appendix I: Population and Regional Representation of NESP

Aboriginal and Women Offender Representation in NESP

Aboriginal offenders represented 22% of all NESP participants although Aboriginal offenders constitute approximately 19.6% of CSC's incarcerated population.⁵⁹ This difference was small, although statistically significant ($\chi^2(1, N = 1,717) = 7.64, p < .01$). Furthermore, the proportion of Aboriginal offenders enrolled in NESP was consistently high across the years of full implementation (refer to Table I1) and more Aboriginal offenders had some or considerable employment needs, compared to non-Aboriginal NESP participants. More specifically, 89% of Aboriginal offenders in NESP had some or considerable employment needs, compared to 74% of non-Aboriginal offenders; $\chi^2(2, N = 1,712) = 60.71, p < .0001$.

Table I1 Enrolments for Aboriginal, Non-Aboriginal, Men and Women Offenders

| | Pilot | | | | Full Implementation | | | | | | Total | |
|----------------|----------|-----|----------|------|---------------------|-----|----------|-----|----------|-----|----------|-----|
| | 2004/05 | | 2005/06 | | 2006/07 | | 2007/08 | | 2008/09 | | | |
| | <i>n</i> | % | <i>n</i> | % | <i>n</i> | % | <i>n</i> | % | <i>n</i> | % | <i>n</i> | % |
| Aboriginal | 11 | 26% | 26 | 27% | 121 | 26% | 83 | 20% | 87 | 18% | 388 | 22% |
| Non-Aboriginal | 31 | 74% | 69 | 73% | 347 | 74% | 335 | 80% | 399 | 82% | 1,373 | 78% |
| Men | 36 | 85% | 95 | 100% | 402 | 86% | 372 | 89% | 400 | 82% | 1,487 | 84% |
| Women | 6 | 14% | 0 | 0% | 66 | 14% | 46 | 11% | 86 | 18% | 274 | 16% |

Note. ^a None of the six women who enrolled in the pilot NESP program completed the program.

Source: CSC Corporate Reporting System (2009).

Although NESP was originally developed for male offenders, a version for women offenders was created in November 2005 and implemented in 2006/07 (CSC, 2005). Since that time, the proportion of women offenders enrolled in NESP (15%) has remained higher than the proportion of women incarcerated under CSC jurisdiction (3.7%)⁶⁰ across all regions. This difference was statistically significantly ($\chi^2(1, N = 1,726) = 638.36, p < .0001$). Finally, women offenders in NESP also tended to have higher employment needs than their male counterparts

⁵⁹ The average was calculated based on data on incarcerated offenders reported in Public Safety Canada (2009, Table C11) across the 3-year period from FY 2006/07 to FY 2008/09.

⁶⁰ The average was calculated based on data on incarcerated offenders reported in Public Safety Canada (2009, Table C11) across the three-year period from FY 2006/07 to FY 2008/09.

(i.e., 88% of women offenders in NESP had some or considerable employment needs, compared to 75% of male offenders; $\chi^2(2, N = 1,721) = 24.24, p < .0001$).

Regional Representation

The regional distribution of NESP enrolments differed from the regional distribution of CSC's incarcerated offender population ($\chi^2(4, N = 1,726) = 223.72, p < .0001$).

| Region | % of NESP Participants | % of Incarcerated Offenders |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Atlantic ^a | 14.31% | 9.71% |
| Ontario ^b | 23.23% | 27.39% |
| Pacific ^a | 24.68% | 14.25% |
| Prairies ^b | 20.34% | 24.85% |
| Quebec ^b | 17.44% | 23.79% |

Note: ^a – denotes the regions over-represented in NESP relative to the proportion of incarcerated offenders in those regions; ^b – denotes the regions under-represented in NESP relative to respective proportions of incarcerated offenders in those respective regions.

Appendix J: NESP Participant Outcomes by Fiscal Year, in Percentages

| | 2006-2007 | 2007-2008 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Men | | | | |
| Completions | 79% | 74% | 81% | 73% |
| Drop-Out | 19% | 23% | 16% | 22% |
| Population Management | 2% | 3% | 3% | 6% |
| Women | | | | |
| Completions | 89% | 75% | 87% | 93% |
| Drop-Out | 10% | 15% | 12% | 5% |
| Population Management | 2% | 10% | 1% | 2% |
| Aboriginal | | | | |
| Completions | 81% | 73% | 85% | 83% |
| Drop-Out | 15% | 22% | 12% | 14% |
| Population Management | 3% | 5% | 2% | 3% |
| Non-Aboriginal | | | | |
| Completions | 80% | 74% | 81% | 76% |
| Drop-Out | 18% | 22% | 16% | 19% |
| Population Management | 2% | 4% | 3% | 5% |

Source: CSC Corporate Reporting System, December 13, 2009.

Appendix K: NESP Learning Outcomes.

I. Results of the paired-sample *t*-tests on the total employability skills score.

Aboriginal Offenders

| | DF | <i>t</i> -value | Pr > <i>t</i> |
|------------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|
| Facilitators | 182 | 22.74 | <.0001 |
| Work Supervisors | 147 | 14.04 | <.0001 |
| Offenders | 167 | 10.20 | <.0001 |

Non-Aboriginal Offenders

| | DF | <i>t</i> -value | Pr > <i>t</i> |
|------------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|
| Facilitators | 667 | 37.79 | <.0001 |
| Work Supervisors | 580 | 22.50 | <.0001 |
| Offenders | 654 | 18.35 | <.0001 |

Women Offenders

| | DF | <i>t</i> -value | Pr > <i>t</i> |
|------------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|
| Facilitators | 124 | 15.78 | <.0001 |
| Work Supervisors | 97 | 9.70 | <.0001 |
| Offenders | 124 | 11.44 | <.0001 |

Men Offenders

| | DF | <i>t</i> -value | Pr > <i>t</i> |
|------------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|
| Facilitators | 728 | 41.23 | <.0001 |
| Work Supervisors | 633 | 24.13 | <.0001 |
| Offenders | 700 | 18.20 | <.0001 |

II. Results of Wilcoxon tests on individual employability skills.

| Employability Skills | Facilitator | | | Supervisor | | | Offender | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|------|------|------------|------|------|----------|------|------|
| | Pre | Post | z | Pre | Post | z | Pre | Post | z |
| Communication | 1.61 | 2.25 | 21.4 | 1.75 | 2.18 | 16.2 | 1.81 | 2.25 | 13.9 |
| Managing Information | 1.50 | 2.16 | 21.4 | 1.71 | 2.14 | 16.0 | 1.59 | 2.12 | 15.2 |
| Using numbers | 1.54 | 2.02 | 18.6 | 1.72 | 2.03 | 13.1 | 1.63 | 2.15 | 14.8 |
| Problem-Solving | 1.47 | 2.16 | 21.9 | 1.61 | 2.04 | 16.0 | 1.78 | 2.15 | 11.9 |
| Managing Emotions | 1.56 | 2.16 | 20.0 | 1.74 | 2.14 | 15.9 | 1.72 | 2.09 | 11.4 |
| Positive Attitudes | 1.74 | 2.30 | 18.9 | 1.85 | 2.22 | 14.1 | 1.86 | 2.20 | 11.2 |
| Responsibility | 1.69 | 2.31 | 20.1 | 1.86 | 2.23 | 14.0 | 1.87 | 2.24 | 11.8 |
| Adaptability | 1.51 | 2.18 | 21.9 | 1.74 | 2.11 | 13.7 | 1.78 | 2.18 | 12.7 |
| Learning Continuously | 1.69 | 2.32 | 21.0 | 1.78 | 2.17 | 15.1 | 1.86 | 2.21 | 11.5 |
| Working Safely | 1.79 | 2.29 | 18.2 | 1.92 | 2.24 | 12.6 | 2.03 | 2.33 | 9.9 |
| Working with Others | 1.52 | 2.25 | 21.8 | 1.79 | 2.21 | 16.2 | 1.80 | 2.18 | 12.3 |
| Participation in Projects | 1.60 | 2.30 | 21.2 | 1.83 | 2.24 | 15.2 | 1.78 | 2.17 | 11.8 |

Note: All tests were significant at $p < .001$.

Appendix L: Community Correctional Outcomes

Job Attainment Outcomes

1. Cox regression analysis - Odds of Job Attainment (Overall)

| | β | SE | Wald | df | Sig. | Hazard ratio |
|---------------------------------------|---------|------|---------|----|------|--------------|
| Block 1 | | | | | | |
| Age at Release | -.014 | .003 | 15.633 | 1 | .000 | .986 |
| Employment Need At Release | -.274 | .056 | 23.721 | 1 | .000 | .760 |
| Type of Release | -.382 | .071 | 28.851 | 1 | .000 | .683 |
| Participation in CECs | .649 | .064 | 102.840 | 1 | .000 | 1.914 |
| Reintegration Potential at Release | .169 | .052 | 10.483 | 1 | .001 | 1.184 |
| Block 2 | | | | | | |
| NESP (NESP Group vs Comparison Group) | .058 | .066 | .795 | 1 | .373 | 1.060 |

Note: The first model (variables in Block 1) was statistically reliable (-2 log likelihood: 14393.115, χ^2 (5) = 237.65, $p < .0001$). Model 2 (variables in Block 1 plus the NESP variable in Block 2) was also statistically reliable (-2 log likelihood: 14392.316; χ^2 (6) = 238.77, $p < .0001$); however, the NESP variable did not significantly add to the model after controlling for the variables in Block 1 (see Model 2 parameters above).

2. Cox regression analysis - Odds of Job Attainment by Gender

| | Women Offenders | | Male Offenders | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|
| | Wald | Hazard Ratio | Wald | Hazard Ratio |
| Block 1 | | | | |
| Age at Release | .767 | .990 | 15.120 | .986*** |
| Employment Need At Release | 1.137 | .824 | 20.372 | .764*** |
| Type of Release | 3.567 | .678 | 28.398 | .667*** |
| Participation in CECs | 23.635 | 2.501*** | 77.555 | 1.824*** |
| Reintegration Potential at Release | .148 | 1.068 | 11.521 | 1.206** |
| Block 2 | | | | |
| NESP (NESP Group vs Comparison Group) | 3.915 | 1.559* ^a | .080 | 1.020 |

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; Block 1 and Block 2 Models were statistically reliable for both women and men offenders. Model 2 parameters are presented in the table.

^a – Change from Block 1 in χ^2 (1) = 4.192, $p < .05$.

3. Cox regression analysis - Odds of Job Attainment by Aboriginal Status

| | Aboriginal Offenders | | Non-Aboriginal Offenders | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| | χ^2 | Hazard Ratio | χ^2 | Hazard Ratio |
| Block 1 | | | | |
| Age at Release | .497 | 1.006 | 26.333 | .980*** |
| Employment Need At Release | .158 | .945 | 18.607 | .763*** |
| Type of Release | 1.002 | .843 | 29.115 | .651*** |
| Participation in CECs | 33.078 | 2.397*** | 74.386 | 1.847*** |
| Reintegration Potential at Release | 2.391 | 1.212 | 5.213 | 1.144* |
| Block 2 | | | | |
| NESP (NESP Group vs Comparison Group) | 1.182 | 1.188 | .415 | 1.048 |

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; Block 1 and Block 2 Models were statistically reliable for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders. Model 2 parameters are presented in the table.

Job Maintenance Outcomes

4. Cox regression analysis - Odds of Job Maintenance (Overall Model)

| | β | SE | Wald | df | Sig. | Hazard ratio |
|---------------------------------------|---------|------|-------|----|------|--------------|
| Block 1 | | | | | | |
| Age at Release | -.013 | .008 | 2.844 | 1 | .092 | .987 |
| Employment Need At Release | .145 | .107 | 1.828 | 1 | .176 | 1.156 |
| Type of Release | -.188 | .148 | 1.613 | 1 | .204 | .828 |
| Participation in CECs | -.084 | .133 | .399 | 1 | .527 | .919 |
| Reintegration Potential at Release | -.250 | .113 | 4.892 | 1 | .027 | .778 |
| Block 2 | | | | | | |
| NESP (NESP Group vs Comparison Group) | .028 | .139 | .040 | 1 | .841 | 1.028 |

Note: The first model (variables in Block 1) was statistically reliable ($-2 \log \text{likelihood}$: 2636.332, $\chi^2 (5) = 12.186$, $p < .05$). Model 2 (variables in Block 1 plus the NESP variable in Block 2) was marginally statistically reliable ($-2 \log \text{likelihood}$: 2636.292; $\chi^2 (6) = 12.213$, $p = .057$) and the NESP variable did not significantly add to the model after controlling for the variables in Block 1 (see Model 2 parameters above).

Conditional Release Failure Outcomes

5. Cox regression analysis - Odds of Any Return to Custody (Overall Model)

| | β | SE | Wald | df | Sig. | Hazard ratio |
|---------------------------|---------|------|---------|----|------|--------------|
| Block 1 | | | | | | |
| Age at Release | -.025 | .004 | 34.871 | 1 | .000 | .975*** |
| Type of Release | .473 | .092 | 26.217 | 1 | .000 | 1.604*** |
| Time Incarcerated | -.009 | .002 | 17.458 | 1 | .000 | .991*** |
| Risk Level at Release | .264 | .065 | 16.743 | 1 | .000 | 1.302*** |
| Need Level at Release | .252 | .088 | 8.172 | 1 | .004 | 1.286** |
| Community Employment | -1.107 | .074 | 225.707 | 1 | .000 | .331*** |
| Block 2 | | | | | | |
| NESP vs. Comparison Group | -.148 | .073 | 4.142 | 1 | .042 | .862* |

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The first model (variables in Block 1) was statistically reliable (-2 log likelihood: 10660.131, $\chi^2(6) = 438.182$, $p < .0001$). Model 2 (variables in Block 1 plus the NESP variable in Block 2) was also statistically reliable (-2 log likelihood: 10656.024; $\chi^2(7) = 442.877$, $p < .0001$) and the NESP variable did significantly add to the model after controlling for the variables in Block 1 (see Model 2 parameters above). Change from Block 1 in $\chi^2(1) = 4.107$, $p < .05$.

6. Cox regression analysis - Odds of Any Return to Custody by Gender

| | Women Offenders | | Male Offenders | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|
| | χ^2 | Hazard Ratio | χ^2 | Hazard Ratio |
| Block 1 | | | | |
| Age at Release | .606 | .990 | 36.287 | .973*** |
| Type of Release | 3.561 | 1.616 | 20.017 | 1.562*** |
| Time Incarcerated | .246 | .997 | 16.584 | .990*** |
| Risk Level at Release | 5.550 | 1.522* | 10.840 | 1.259*** |
| Need Level at Release | .001 | 1.006 | 9.659 | 1.345** |
| Community Employment | 19.744 | .409*** | 209.987 | .315*** |
| Block 2 | | | | |
| NESP vs. Comparison Group | .997 | 1.273 | 5.848 | 0.830* ^a |

Note: ^a – Change from Block 1 in $\chi^2(1) = 5.797$, $p = .016$.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Block 1 and Block 2 Models were statistically reliable for both women and men offenders. Model 2 parameters are presented in the table.

7. Cox regression analysis - Odds of Any Return to Custody by Aboriginal Status

| | Aboriginal Offenders | | Non-Aboriginal Offenders | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| | χ^2 | Hazard Ratio | χ^2 | Hazard Ratio |
| Block 1 | | | | |
| Age at Release | 4.928 | .980* | 24.182 | .976*** |
| Type of Release | 7.033 | 1.538 | 18.388 | 1.625*** |
| Time Incarcerated | 2.310 | .994 | 15.578 | .989*** |
| Risk Level at Release | 1.267 | 1.155 | 13.788 | 1.328*** |
| Need Level at Release | .621 | 1.147 | 7.352 | 1.321** |
| Community Employment | 39.815 | .410*** | 176.337 | .312*** |
| Block 2 | | | | |
| NESP vs. Comparison Group | 2.168 | .820 | 2.249 | .878 |

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Block 1 and Block 2 Models were statistically reliable for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders. Model 2 parameters are presented in the table.

8. Cox regression analysis - Odds of Return to Custody with New Offence (Overall Model)

| | β | SE | Wald | df | Sig. | Hazard ratio |
|---------------------------|---------|------|--------|----|------|--------------|
| Block 1 | | | | | | |
| Age at Release | -.050 | .008 | 39.987 | 1 | .000 | .951*** |
| Type of Release | .595 | .159 | 13.937 | 1 | .000 | 1.813*** |
| Time Incarcerated | -.012 | .004 | 8.670 | 1 | .003 | .988** |
| Risk Level at Release | .360 | .109 | 10.993 | 1 | .001 | 1.434*** |
| Need Level at Release | .281 | .149 | 3.566 | 1 | .059 | 1.325 |
| Community Employment | -.944 | .121 | 60.657 | 1 | .000 | .389*** |
| Block 2 | | | | | | |
| NESP vs. Comparison Group | -.313 | .121 | 6.712 | 1 | .010 | .731** |

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The first model (variables in Block 1) was statistically reliable (-2 log likelihood: 3759.026, $\chi^2 (6) = 179.127$, $p < .0001$). Model 2 (variables in Block 1 plus the NESP variable in Block 2) was also statistically reliable (-2 log likelihood: 3752.398; $\chi^2 (7) = 186.838$, $p < .0001$) and the NESP variable did significantly add to the model after controlling for the variables in Block 1 (see Model 2 parameters above). Change from Block 1 in $\chi^2 (1) = 6.627$, $p = .01$.

9. Cox regression analysis - Odds of Return to Custody with New Offence by Gender

| | Women Offenders | | Male Offenders | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|
| | χ^2 | Hazard Ratio | χ^2 | Hazard Ratio |
| Block 1 | | | | |
| Age at Release | - | - | 42.833 | .948*** |
| Type of Release | - | - | 12.730 | 1.825*** |
| Time Incarcerated | - | - | 7.140 | .989** |
| Risk Level at Release | - | - | 6.087 | 1.326* |
| Need Level at Release | - | - | 4.489 | 1.393* |
| Community Employment | - | - | 56.278 | .385*** |
| Block 2 | | | | |
| NESP vs. Comparison Group | - | - | 6.774 | .722** ^a |

Note: ^a – Change from Block 1 in χ^2 (1) = 6.704, $p = .010$.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Block 1 and Block 2 Models were statistically reliable for men offenders. Model 2 parameters are presented in the table. Analyses for this category of correctional community outcomes were not conducted for women offenders, given the small number of events ($n = 19$).

10. Cox regression analysis - Odds of Return to Custody with New Offence by Aboriginal Status

| | Aboriginal Offenders | | Non-Aboriginal Offenders | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| | χ^2 | Hazard Ratio | χ^2 | Hazard Ratio |
| Block 1 | | | | |
| Age at Release | 9.420 | .949** | 26.778 | .954*** |
| Type of Release | .235 | 1.137 | 16.058 | 2.226*** |
| Time Incarcerated | 3.253 | .986 | 6.668 | .988** |
| Risk Level at Release | 1.441 | 1.287 | 8.101 | 1.443** |
| Need Level at Release | .128 | 1.108 | 3.475 | 1.382 |
| Community Employment | 10.688 | .467*** | 46.009 | .378*** |
| Block 2 | | | | |
| NESP vs. Comparison Group | 5.981 | .576* ^a | 2.790 | .786 |

Note: ^a – Change from Block 1 in χ^2 (1) = 5.938, $p = .015$.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Block 1 and Block 2 Models were statistically reliable for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders. Model 2 parameters are presented in the table.