



# Recidivism and Employment of Virginia Correctional Enterprises Participants From State Responsible FY2015 Releases

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## Introduction

In FY2015, 457 State Responsible (SR) inmates who had participated in Virginia Correctional Enterprises (VCE) were released. VCE provides inmates with workplace training as well as industry and vendor-specific certifications and apprenticeships to support successful reentry. FY2015 was chosen as the year to analyze because it is the most recent year for which a three-year follow-up is available with mature data. To assess the impact of VCE participation, baseline recidivism and job attainment by demographics, criminal history, crime type, COMPAS risk level, and COMPAS needs assessment results are examined.

## VCE Participant Characteristics

Among the 457 VCE participants released in FY2015, 57.8% were male and 16.2% were female. The racial composition of the VCE participants was 55.1% Black and 44% White. Their average age at release was 41 and they served a median sentence of 5 years, 11 months (half higher and half lower).

	VCE Participants		Recidivists		Job After Release	
	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b>Overall</b>	457	100.0%	78	17.1%	310	67.8%
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	264	57.8%	44	16.7%	181	68.6%
Female	193	42.2%	34	17.6%	129	66.8%
<b>Race</b>						
Black	252	55.1%	45	17.9%	182	72.2%
White	201	44.0%	33	16.4%	127	63.2%
Other	4	0.9%	0	0.0%	1	25.0%
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
Hispanic	12	2.6%	0	0.0%	2	16.7%
Non-Hispanic	445	97.4%	78	17.5%	308	69.2%
<b>Age Group (at release)</b>						
Under 30	64	14.0%	11	17.2%	56	87.5%
30-49	298	65.2%	55	18.5%	200	67.1%
50-59	76	16.6%	10	13.2%	49	64.5%
60-69	18	3.9%	2	11.1%	5	27.8%
70+	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Age at Release (Mean)</b>	41.0					
<b>Age at Release (Median)</b>	40.0					

At 17.1% re-incarceration within 3 years of release, VCE program participants' recidivism rate is lower than Virginia's overall recidivism rate of 23.1%. According to Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) data, 67.8% of the

## VCE Participant Characteristics (Continued)

released VCE program participants were employed during the follow-up period. Half of the released VCE participants who obtained employment did so within one quarter of release (average 1.8 quarters).<sup>1</sup> Those who were employed sustained employment for approximately 60% of the time they were at liberty (62% median) and averaged 3.4 employers during the follow-up.

Demographic factors such as gender and age are known predictors of recidivism. Among VCE program participants, there were similar rates of employment for males (68.6%) and females (66.8%). The overall recidivism rates for males and females (23.7% and 18.9%, respectively) are not comparable. However, recidivism rates between male and female VCE participants were notably similar (16.7% and 17.6%, respectively). Black inmates obtained employment after release at a higher rate than White inmates (72.2% and 63.2%, respectively). Inmates who were between the ages of 30 and 50 at the time of release had the highest recidivism rate of any age group (18.5%) followed by those under the age of 30 (17.2%) whereas inmates who were between the ages of 60 and 70 at the time of release had the lowest recidivism rate (11.1% for inmates aged 60-69 and 0.0% for the only inmate over the age of 70).<sup>2</sup> These rates were lower than the overall rates for each age group. Inmates who were under the age of 30 were most likely to acquire employment after release and there was a decreasing trend in employment with age.

### Job Information

Of the inmates who obtained employment after release, the majority found work in food service (25.2%), through staffing or job placement agencies (23.9%), in construction/contracting/supply jobs (13.2%), or in “other” employment areas (18.1%). Their average quarterly earnings were \$4,734.60 (median of \$3,898.84). Inmates who obtained employment after release had a lower recidivism rate than those who did not find employment (16.5% and 18.4%, respectively). However, this difference was not statistically significant.<sup>3</sup> After using logistic regression to control for release age and gender, the effects of employment on recidivism were still not significant.

<i>Job Type of VCE Program Participants who Obtained Employment after Release</i>		
	VCE Participants	
	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b>Obtained Job After Release</b>	310	67.8%
<b>Job Type</b>		
Food Service	78	25.2%
Staffing/Job Placement Agency	74	23.9%
Construction/Contracting/Supply	41	13.2%
Cleaning/Hotels	25	8.1%
Stores/Markets	20	6.5%
Distribution/Transportation/Moving/Storage	16	5.2%
Other	56	18.1%

Note. Job type was summarized from VEC records of the first job the released inmate earned wages from.

<sup>1</sup>Time to employment was calculated as the difference between employment quarter and year and release quarter and year.

<sup>2</sup>There were only 18 participants between the ages of 60 and 69 and 1 participant aged 70 and up. Thus, these results should be interpreted with caution.

<sup>3</sup>The chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test statistic was used to determine the statistical significance of the difference. This test yielded a p-value > 0.05.

## Crime Type

Crime type represents a VCE participant's most serious offense from the term of incarceration from which they were released in FY2015. Inmates whose crime type was property/public order had a higher recidivism rate (22.7%) than inmates with violent (14.1%) or drug (12.5%) crime types. However, when compared to the overall recidivism rates by crime type, VCE participants' recidivism rates were lower in every category. Inmates whose crime type was drugs were most likely to obtain employment after release (75.0%) followed by inmates with property/public order (72.2%) and violent crime types (60.9%).

## Incarceration History

The recidivism rates of inmates with zero to three previous incarceration terms gradually increased as the number of prior SR incarceration terms increased. However, this trend decreased with four or more previous SR incarceration terms.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, there was an increasing employment trend for inmates with zero to two prior SR incarceration terms, which declined from three to four or more previous terms.

	VCE Participants		Recidivists		Job After Release	
	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b>Overall</b>	457	100.0%	78	17.1%	310	67.8%
<b>Crime Type of Most Serious Offense</b>						
Violent	192	42.0%	27	14.1%	117	60.9%
Property/Public Order	176	38.5%	40	22.7%	127	72.2%
Drugs	88	19.3%	11	12.5%	66	75.0%
Not Reported	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Prior Terms of SR Incarceration</b>						
No prior terms	252	55.1%	36	14.3%	167	66.3%
Exactly 1 previous term	104	22.8%	16	15.4%	72	69.2%
Exactly 2 previous terms	47	10.3%	10	21.3%	36	76.6%
Exactly 3 previous terms	30	6.6%	10	33.3%	20	66.7%
4 or more previous terms	24	5.3%	6	25.0%	15	62.5%

## COMPAS Risk and Needs Assessment

The COMPAS risk and needs assessment tool is used by the VADOC to determine the risks of general and violent recidivism as well as criminogenic needs. Recidivism rates gradually increased as the COMPAS risk of general and violent recidivism levels became elevated. Employment rates increased as the COMPAS risk of general and violent recidivism levels increased from “low” to “medium” and decreased from “medium” to “high”.

<sup>4</sup>Fewer than 30 inmates had 4 or more previous terms of SR incarceration.

## COMPAS Risk and Needs Assessment (Continued)

Inmates who scored “high” risk on the general risk of recidivism scale had the highest recidivism rate (25.9%) compared to those who scored “medium” or “low” (22.0% and 8.0%, respectively) whereas inmates who scored “medium” on the general risk of recidivism scale had the highest employment rate (74.8%) followed by those who scored “high” (71.1%) or “low” (61.3%). Similarly, inmates who scored “high” risk on the risk of violent recidivism scale had the highest recidivism rate (35.4%) compared to those who scored “medium” (16.9%) or “low” (11.4%) risk. Inmates who scored “medium” on the risk of violent recidivism scale had the highest employment rate (76.6%) followed by those who scored high (70.9%) or low (62.6%).

### Substance Abuse

Inmates who scored “highly probable” on the substance abuse needs scale had the highest rates of recidivism (21.4%) compared to those who scored “probable” (15.7%) or “unlikely” (8.9%). Inmates who scored “unlikely” or “probable” were more likely to obtain employment after release than inmates who scored “highly probable” (67.3%, 74.8%, and 64.2%, respectively).

	VCE Participants		Recidivists		Job After Release	
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<b>Overall</b>	457	100.0%	78	17.1%	310	67.8%
<b>COMPAS Risk of General Recidivism</b>						
Low	199	43.5%	16	8.0%	122	61.3%
Medium	123	26.9%	27	22.0%	92	74.8%
High	135	29.5%	35	25.9%	96	71.1%
<b>COMPAS Risk of Violent Recidivism</b>						
Low	254	55.6%	29	11.4%	159	62.6%
Medium	124	27.1%	21	16.9%	95	76.6%
High	79	17.3%	28	35.4%	56	70.9%
<b>COMPAS Substance Abuse Needs Score</b>						
Unlikely	101	22.1%	9	8.9%	68	67.3%
Probable	127	27.8%	20	15.7%	95	74.8%
Highly Probable	229	50.1%	49	21.4%	147	64.2%

### Conclusions

This report examined the recidivism rates and job attainment of VCE program participants who were released from SR incarceration in FY2015. VCE program participants achieved a lower recidivism rate than Virginia’s overall recidivism rate and a high rate of job attainment. These preliminary findings suggest VCE participation may support successful reentry by promoting both job attainment and employment stability.