

**Model Education Programs for Rikers Dischargees:
Getting Out and Staying Out (GO/SO) Program
A Program of the New York City Department of Correction (DOC)**

PROGRAM REVIEW SUMMARY

This overview of the Department of Correction's (DOC's) Getting Out and Staying Out (GO/SO) program is based on a program review conducted by Westat/Metis staff for the evaluation of the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) initiatives. The data were collected between March and June 2008 through interviews with staff of the CEO, staff of the sponsoring agency (DOC), and staff and clients of the provider agency (GO/SO), as well as observations of recruitment practices at Rikers Island's Horizon Academy and Austin H. MacCormick Island Academy.¹ Interviews and a program walkthrough were conducted in May 2008 at GO/SO's off-island center located in Harlem. In addition, the team reviewed program documents and monthly data reports from January through May 2008 and management reports from DOC from November 2007 through June 2008.

Sponsoring Agency: New York City Department of Correction (DOC)

Provider Agency: Getting Out and Staying Out (GO/SO)

Start Date: November 2007

CEO Budget: \$350,000

Target Population: Young adult males 18 to 24 years old

Statement of Need: Among young adults, aged 16 to 24, who are in poverty, those exiting detention and returning from incarceration are at particularly high risk of becoming disconnected from school and work. About 70 percent of those returning to their communities are high school dropouts and, according to at least one study, about half are "functionally illiterate." This lack of literacy skills contributes to the chronic unemployment experienced by young adults discharged back to the community. Without intervention, two-thirds of ex-offenders are likely to be re-arrested.²

Goal and Services: The goal of GO/SO is to reduce the recidivism rate of formerly incarcerated young men by assisting them in completing their high school education (i.e., GED), acquiring job skills, finding meaningful employment, and enrolling in higher education. GO/SO employs a team-based mentoring approach off-island, where a number of key staff members closely train and counsel participants, and monitor progress made toward their individual goals. By the end of FY 2008, GO/SO hopes to enroll hundreds of individuals incarcerated at Rikers and at New York's state prison, of which 150 are expected to arrive at GO/SO's off-site center after release from incarceration. The program also expects that the majority of these arrivals will pass their GED exam, find employment, and/or enroll in a job training program.

¹ Island Academy and Horizon Academy are the two high schools on Rikers Island and operate under District 79 (Alternative Schools and Programs) of the New York City Department of Education (DOE). Island Academy has three school sites and serves detained and sentenced male and female inmates ages 16-24 in three jails. Horizon Academy serves detained male inmates ages 18-24 in five jails.

² Statement of Need taken from Center for Economic Opportunity (December 2007), *Strategy and Implementation Report*. New York: Center for Economic Opportunity.

Eligibility Criteria: Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated males ages 18 to 24 who could benefit from assistance transitioning back into their communities through counseling and coaching, educational referrals, and job training and placement.³

Targets/Outcomes: The target and actual numbers for the categories presented in Table 1 below, as well as the percentage of each target obtained, are as of June 2008. As a performance-based contract, these outcomes are based on CEO's payment milestones. The enrollment targets (i.e., completion of initial assessment and transitional plan) were met by June. The arrival-at-GO/SO targets were over two-thirds of the way met and should approach completion by the end of the contract's fiscal year in October, as the number of recruited inmates released from incarceration increases. Completion of GED, enrollment in college, and placement in part-time and full-time jobs were lagging as of June, with 14 percent or less of program participants meeting these payment milestones. Data from the fourth quarter will more accurately demonstrate GO/SO's progress toward the milestones, and are expected to show an improvement as the program matures and has more time to recruit participants.

Table 1. Target and Actual Placement Numbers and Percentages of Targets Met

Category	Target Numbers	Actual Numbers*	Percent of Target Met
Initial Assessment Completed	150	150	100%
Transitional Plan Completed	150	150	100%
Court Involvement	150	150	100%
Group Counseling Participation on Rikers	150	150	100%
Confirmed Arrival to GO/SO Off-Island	150	103	69%
Counseling at GO/SO Off-Island	150	103	69%
GED Passed	50	4	8%
Trade School Enrollment	50	16	32%
College Enrollment	50	7	14%
Part-Time Job Placement	150**	3	6%
Full-Time Job Placement		6	

*Data provided by DOC.

**The combined total of job placements may not exceed 150.

Selected Key Findings

Fidelity to the Program Model. GO/SO was developed as a response to the rising jail population and the absence of programs in NYC that assist post-incarcerated young men to transition back into the neighborhoods to which they return. In addition, it was also an opportunity to combat the high recidivism rates (approximately two-thirds)^{4,5} of young adults in general. The program established an approach to the transition process that included coaching; individual and group counseling; vocational training; and referrals to educational programs, social service agencies, and employment agencies as part of a team-based mentoring model. Team-based mentoring (also known as multiple mentoring) is a contemporary model of support that uses a

³ The program's expertise lies in working with young adult males. It has discussed expanding the program to include young adult females, but does not have the capacity to do so at this time.

⁴ Brown, David; Maxwell, Sarah; Dejesus, Edward; Schiraldi, Vincent (2002). *Barriers and Promising Approaches to Workforce and Youth Development for Young Offenders*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

⁵ New York City Department of Correction CEO Contract (2007). *Getting Out-Staying Out FY 2008 Scope of Work*. New York.

team of individuals with complementary skills that are individually and mutually accountable for the success of its mentees.^{6,7} In addition to the original model, GO/SO currently provides in-house weekly math and literacy workshops, and invites outside consultants to provide vocational workshops, health information workshops, and program-relevant forums on criminal justice and financial management. The Westat/Metis team found that programmatic services generally are being delivered with a high degree of fidelity to the program's current model.

Characteristics of the Clients Served in Comparison to the Target Population. Information gathered through various interviews and program documentation demonstrates that the program is specifically only targeting age-eligible inmates from the various correctional facilities within the Rikers Island jails. The provider's demographic data also show that the program's participants fall within the target age range of 18 to 24 years old.

Service Delivery. GO/SO's programmatic implementation is divided into various on- or off-island activities, each contributing to the program's comprehensive mentoring approach to transitioning participants to their communities and helping them gain stability in their lives. On-island activities include outreach and recruitment, transitional planning, one-on-one counseling, court involvement, and the correspondence program. Off-island, center-based activities include coach support, individual counseling, vocational training, career management, and educational referrals.

Provider Capacity. Currently, GO/SO's staff consists of the program director, a licensed social worker, two career managers, two volunteer outreach counselors, six to seven volunteer center-based coaches, a program analyst (duties include data management), job developer, and a program associate. Through June, GO/SO provided services to over 150 individuals. At full capacity, GO/SO reportedly can manage a caseload of approximately 300 participants. Assuming enrollment occurs on a steady and rolling basis, GO/SO is confident that it will be able to support the 150 "confirmed arrival" target milestone by the end of the grant's fiscal year.

Agency Management. DOC monitors GO/SO's progress in various ways. DOC meets monthly with the program director to discuss the program's progress and review any issues related to visitation practices at Rikers. DOC personnel also have visited GO/SO's Harlem location to observe implementation of the program and speak with staff. Mainly, DOC continuously monitors GO/SO progress through the milestone achievements as outlined by CEO. In addition, DOC staff are in contact with the on-island school principals, through which they learn of GO/SO's ongoing efforts on Rikers.

Early Outcomes. In addition to the targets presented in the earlier table, GO/SO strives for other outcomes that they view as indicators of participant success. These include low recidivism rate, avoidance of drug/alcohol addiction, healthy family relationships, assuming responsibility for their children, improvement in physical appearance and presentation, positive relationships with successful men, participation in activities such as physical fitness and the arts, and community volunteering. Data for some of these outcomes are available through hard copy documentation, which were too extensive to be analyzed for this report. Interviews and focus groups in future evaluation studies could also assess achievement of the outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As implemented, the GO/SO program is in alignment with the CEO mission and is meeting key CEO criteria.

- 1 The program is serving an underserved population, as less than a handful of programs are providing transitional services to post-incarcerated young people.
- 2 The program is serving a population of young adults living in poverty.

⁶ Katzenbach, J. R., and Smith, D. K. (1993). *The Wisdom of Teams*. New York: HarperCollins.

⁷ Turk, R.L. (May 1999). "Get on the Team: An Alternative Mentoring Model." (Excerpt). *Classroom Leadership* vol. 2, no. 8. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- 3 The program is providing innovative programming, as few programs exist to help post-incarcerated young people with educational and career advancement.
- 4 The program appears to have a good program infrastructure and management, as well as dedicated staff.
- 5 Agency oversight is in place, enabling it to remain stable, make improvements, and be replicable in other sites.
- 6 Specific and measurable outcomes have been articulated.

Based on the program review findings, the review team recommends the following.

- The program currently employs a team-based mentoring approach off-island. The program should examine other (more traditional) mentoring models to determine if their current coaching arrangement provides participants with the most effective individualized attention.
- The program urgently needs technical assistance in various areas of data collection, coordination, recording, validation, and analysis, including quality assurance protocols for data entry, managing duplicate cases, and sharing milestone data effectively with DOC.
- Data on many of the program's projected outcomes (e.g., keeping participants off drugs/alcohol, etc.) are not currently collected in any formal way or maintained in an electronic data format. Doing so would help the program access more information about its outcomes and improve and inform decision-making.
- The program should survey longer-term participants to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the program's components and recommendations for future implementation.

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PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

1. Introduction

The Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) has funded approximately 40 initiatives across some 20 sponsoring agencies aimed at reducing the number of working poor, young adults, and children living in poverty in New York City. CEO is committed to evaluating its programs and policies and is developing a specific evaluation plan for each of its initiatives. For example, several major new initiatives will implement random assignment evaluations or other rigorous designs. Some programs are slated to receive implementation and outcome evaluations, while others may be evaluated using readily available administrative data. This differentiated approach reflects the varied scale of the CEO interventions, data and evaluation opportunities, and finite program and evaluation resources. Westat and Metis Associates are evaluating many of these programs on behalf of CEO. The purposes of the evaluations are to collect and report data on the implementation, progress, and outcomes of the programs in the CEO initiative to inform policy and program decision-making within CEO and the agencies that sponsor the programs.

The first phase of the Westat/Metis evaluation is to conduct a systematic review of selected CEO programs. The program reviews involve Westat/Metis staff reviewing program documents, obtaining available implementation and outcome data, interviewing program administrators, and, where appropriate, going on-site to observe program activities and interview direct service staff and participants. The results are used to assess the program design and implementation, develop a logic model to represent the underlying theory of each program, determine the extent to which the program meets key CEO criteria, examine the measurement and information systems for the program, and provide options for next steps. This Program Review Report provides an overview and assessment of the program on several dimensions, including its goals, fidelity to the program model, target population and clients served thus far, program services, and agency management.

The Getting Out and Staying Out (GO/SO) Program is one of three CEO Model Education initiatives sponsored by the New York City Department of Correction (DOC) through performance-based contracts that utilize payment milestones. Each program aims to improve the social and economic transitioning of young adults released from Rikers Island jails into their communities.¹ GO/SO was founded in 2003 by a retired businessman as a program that would combat the high recidivism rate of formerly incarcerated young men through various activities, including coaching, group and individual counseling, vocational training and job placement, educational workshops, and referrals to educational providers as part of a team-based mentoring model.²

Information and data for this Program Review Report are based on interviews conducted by Westat/Metis staff between March and June 2008 with staff of CEO, staff of the sponsoring agency

¹ Individuals incarcerated in Rikers Island serve up to 12 months. Those with longer sentences are transferred to a state prison facility.

² Center for Economic Opportunity (December 2007), *Strategy and Implementation Report*. New York: Center for Economic Opportunity.

(DOC), and staff and clients of the provider agency (GO/SO); and observations of recruitment practices at Rikers Island’s Austin H. MacCormick Island Academy and Horizon Academy.³ Interviews and a program walkthrough were conducted in May 2008 at GO/SO’s off-island center located in Harlem. In addition, the team reviewed program documents and monthly and quarterly data reports from January through May 2008 and management reports from DOC from November 2007 through June 2008.

This Program Review Report provides an overview and assessment of the program on several dimensions, including its goals, fidelity to the program model, target population and clients served thus far, program services, and agency management. CEO and DOC identified specific questions of interest to be included as part of this program review.

A key analytic tool in the program review is development of a logic model that serves as a visual representation of the underlying logic or theory of a program. The program logic model details the program’s context, assumptions, and resources and their relationship to one another. By examining the program’s internal logic and external context, the evaluation team and reader are able to determine if the program design is consistent with overall goals and capable of achieving its intended outcomes. Toward this end, this brief focuses on early outcomes and the challenges faced in achieving them.

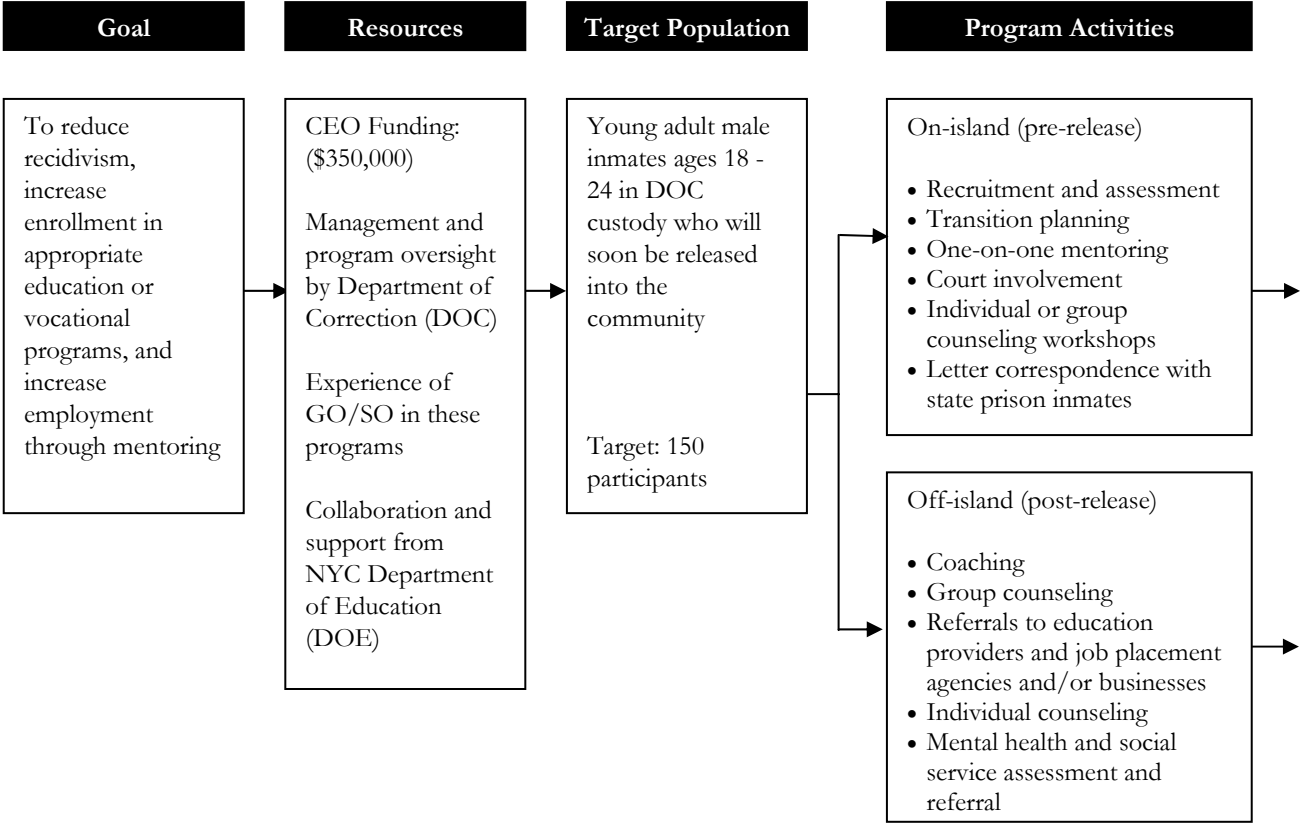
2. Overview and Assessment of the Program

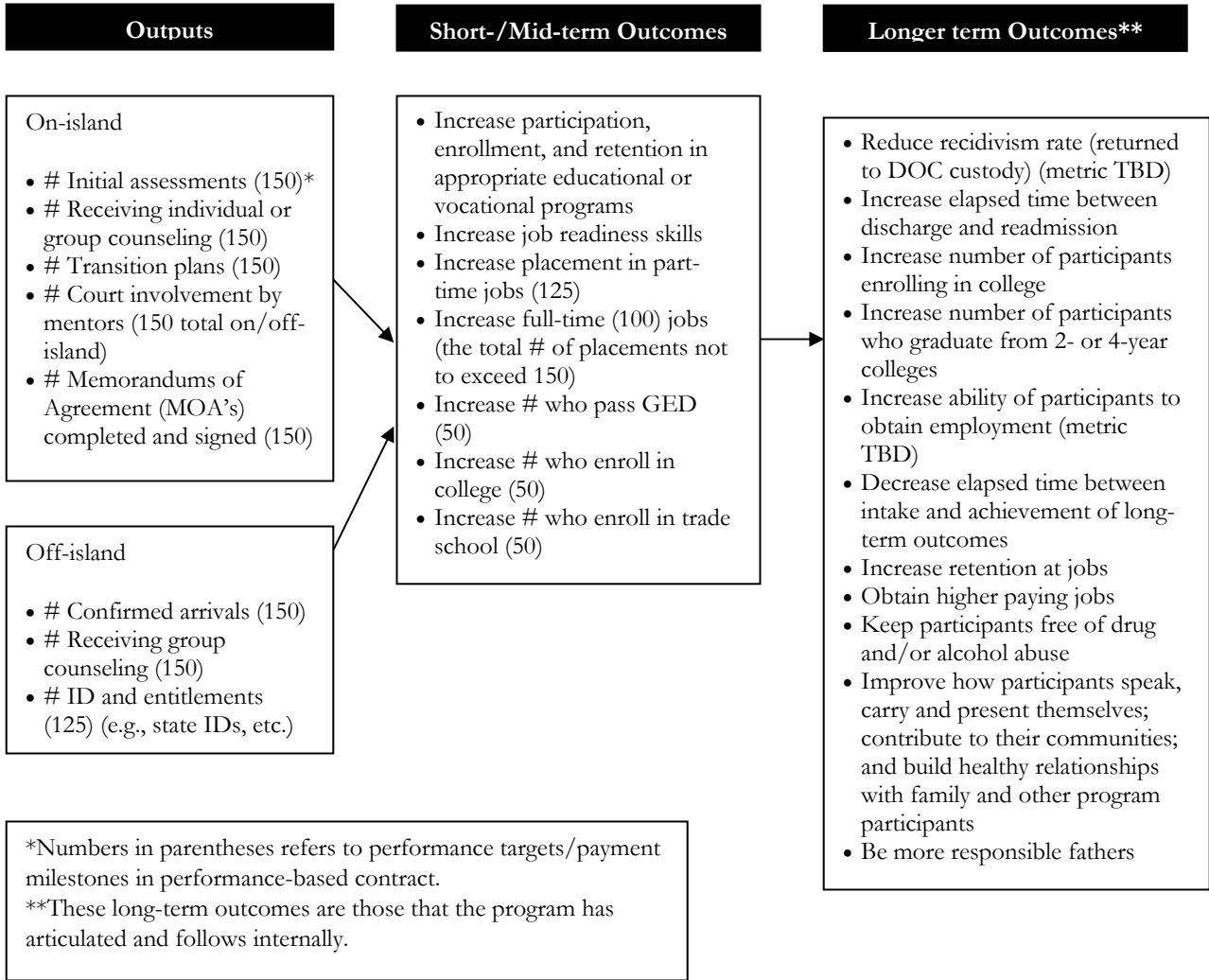
Program Goals. The main goal of the GO/SO program is to reduce recidivism among males (ages 18 to 24) who have been released from DOC custody on Rikers Island by addressing the pressing educational, employment, and social needs experienced by this target population upon their release.⁴ Recognizing the multiple challenges that these young people face in trying to successfully reintegrate into their communities, the program provides services including coaching, counseling, educational workshops, vocational training, and referrals to various services as part of the program’s team-based mentoring model. The GO/SO program model is displayed in a logic model—or theory of action—format on the following two pages. The logic model includes the program’s context, assumptions, and resources. Each activity is linked to the number of individuals targeted to participate in the different activities (outputs), as well as short- and long-term participant outcomes.

³ Island Academy and Horizon Academy are the two high schools on Rikers Island and operate under District 79 (Alternative Schools and Programs) of the New York City Department of Education (DOE). District 79 was created to help students with an array of challenges succeed by providing diverse and innovative educational opportunities combining rigorous academic instruction with meaningful youth development. Island Academy has three school sites and serves detained and sentenced male and female inmates ages 16-24 in three jails. Horizon Academy serves detained male inmates ages 18-24 in five school sites across five jails.

⁴ The program’s expertise lies in working with young adult males. It has discussed expanding the program to include young adult females, but does not have the capacity to do so at this time.

New York City Department of Correction (DOC)
Model Education Programs for Rikers Dischargees: Getting Out and Staying Out (GO/SO)





Context: (1) Approximately 70% of 16-24 year-olds who are incarcerated are high school dropouts.¹ (2) About 50% of the aforementioned young adults are “functionally illiterate.”² (3) There is a two-thirds re-incarceration rate for adolescents released from Rikers Island.³ (4) Best practices indicate that temporary employment programs should be coupled with education and a continuum of care (e.g., counseling) to be effective.⁴ (5) Rikers Island has approximately 14,000 inmates in custody on an average day.⁵

¹ Center for Economic Opportunity (December 2007), *Strategy and Implementation Report*. New York: Center for Economic Opportunity.
² Ibid.
³ Brown, D., Maxwell, S., Dejesus, E., & Schiraldi, V. (2002). *Barriers and Promising Approaches to Workforce and Youth Development for Young Offenders*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation. New York City Department of Correction CEO Contract. (2007). *Getting Out-Staying Out FY 2008 Scope of Work*. New York: Author.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Muske-Dukes, C. (July 18, 2007). "A Prison Tale Suffering From Overpopulation," a review of "Channeling Mark Twain" by Chris Bohjalian, *The Washington Post*.

Fidelity to the Program Model. GO/SO was developed as a response to the rising jail population and the limited number of re-entry programs in NYC that assist post-incarcerated youth to transition back to their communities. In addition, it was also an opportunity to combat the high recidivism rates (approximately two-thirds)^{5,6} of released individuals. The program established an approach to the transition process that included coaching; individual and group counseling; and referrals to educational programs, social service agencies, and employment agencies. Information gathered through various interviews and program documentation also confirms that the program is specifically targeting only age-eligible male inmates from the various correctional facilities within Rikers Island.

In addition to the original model, GO/SO currently provides in-house weekly math and literacy workshops and invites outside consultants to provide vocational workshops, health information workshops, and program-relevant forums on criminal justice and financial management. Information on best practices of programs that target young offenders indicates that effective programs provide a continuum of care that includes temporary employment placement, education, and counseling. Individual treatment plans associated with a continuum of care help target specific needs and provide the structure and support needed to make successful transitions into the community, educational world, and workforce.

The Westat/Metis team generally found that programmatic services are being delivered with a high degree of fidelity to the program's current model, although the original one-on-one mentoring model is instead being implemented off-island using a team-based approach. Team-based mentoring (also known as multiple mentoring⁷) is a contemporary model of collaboration and support that is used in organizations, corporate settings, and schools as a way of providing a wider range of support for program participants and/or employees.⁸ A mentoring team is comprised of a group of individuals that have complementary skills and are individually and mutually accountable for the success of its mentees.⁹ GO/SO's off-island mentoring team is comprised of the career managers, job developer, coaches, social worker, program associate and analyst, and program director who all work collaboratively to maximize the quality of support for each participant. Through the various assessment methods used, the review team gathered specific implementation progress on the program's proposed services, as described below.

Target Population and Clients Served. The program is designed to provide services to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated males 18 to 24 years old. More specifically, the program targets Rikers' male inmates 18 to 24 years old (whether sentenced or detained) who are students at the Horizon Academy and Island Academy, as well as sentenced individuals who do not attend the schools and are staying in various dorms within the facilities that house the schools. Because the Island Academy primarily serves students between 16 and 18 years old, GO/SO also recruits at the Academy's Rikers Island Discharge Enhancement (RIDE) School and at the afternoon "PM School," each serving students over the age of 18 years old. Program participants at Rikers who are

⁵ Brown, D., Maxwell, S., Dejesus, E., & Schiraldi, V. (2002). *Barriers and Promising Approaches to Workforce and Youth Development for Young Offenders*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

⁶ New York City Department of Correction CEO Contract. (2007). *Getting Out-Staying Out FY 2008 Scope of Work*. New York: Author.

⁷ Ambrose, L. (2003) *Multiple Mentoring*. Perrone-Ambrose Associates, Inc. At: <http://www.ache.org/newclub/CAREER/MentorArticles/Multiple.cfm>

⁸ Randall L. Turk. "Get on the Team: An Alternative Mentoring Model." (Excerpt). *Classroom Leadership* (vol. 2, no. 8, May 1999). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

⁹ Katzenbach, J. R., & Smith, D. K. (1993). *The wisdom of teams*. New York: HarperCollins.

sentenced and transferred to an upstate prison still continue to remain in contact with GO/SO (see “Correspondence Program” below).

Program data indicate that the characteristics of enrollees meet the program’s expectations and enrollment criteria. According to current fiscal year data through June, provided by the DOC, the program conducted initial assessments of at least 150 students on-island, the first of DOC’s contract milestones. The program also met many more milestones during its on-island recruitment sessions. Specific milestone data are presented in the Outputs and Outcomes section below.

In addition, in 2007 DOC’s CEO-funded Rikers Educational Expansion program began providing additional seats for 19- to 24-year-old inmates who wished to seek educational services within the two on-island high schools. Through this program, GO/SO has had access to a larger number of youth who are present at each high school. These youth are intrinsically motivated to take advantage of GO/SO’s services as they have already taken the step to seek out educational services on Rikers.

Outreach and Recruitment. Outreach efforts primarily target individuals who have accessed educational services at Rikers’ Horizon Academy and Island Academy. Recruitment occurs in one of two ways. First, GO/SO staff visit each site weekly to provide group presentations of program-specific services to inmates. The presentations are facilitated by the program director or one of the two outreach counselors. The sessions are structured as group career counseling sessions, where the participants are provided with a picture of the characteristics and tools needed to succeed upon returning to their communities and how the GO/SO program can facilitate this transition. These sessions include both enrolled participants and new potential recruits. The idea is to have enrolled participants connect with potential recruits and increase their interest in the program. Second, two outreach counselors also meet individually with student inmates who have been identified by the school-based Department of Education (DOE) transitional counselors as having shown interest in the program. GO/SO also has fliers and informational material posted in the hallways of the Horizon and Island Academies.

Early in the implementation stage, recruitment went well at Horizon Academy, as the program director had previously worked at the academy as a “principal for the day” before founding GO/SO. Recruitment at the Island Academy was a bit more challenging for GO/SO as the program slowly developed relationships with key personnel there (e.g., principal, correction officers). Recruitment figures were low early on and GO/SO was finding it difficult to meet its payment milestones. To ease this challenge, the DOC granted GO/SO permission to also recruit in dorm facilities within the academies and provided an officer to escort outreach staff to various facilities as they developed relationships within these facilities. This change was beyond the contractual agreement and helped GO/SO reach additional youth, and enrollment began to steadily increase.

Program Services. As shown in the logic model, the various programmatic activities are divided into on- or off-island activities, each contributing to the program’s comprehensive approach to transitioning participants to their communities and helping them gain stability in their lives. These services are:

On-Island Services (Pre-Release):

Transitional planning. GO/SO outreach staff¹⁰ are present at Horizon and the RIDE School Mondays through Wednesdays and have office time when interested students can walk in and request admittance into the program. Students meet with the outreach counselors in order to complete a GO/SO Intake Form, an Authorization for Release of Confidential Information, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), a Successful Reentry Contract, a Transitional Plan (partially), and a Court Involvement Sheet. During this session, they discuss participants' goals and begin mapping out their post-release transition plan. All participants are also required to submit an essay of intent to the program, which helps the program personnel begin to learn about the participant. Throughout their participation on the island, outreach counselors work with the DOE transitional counselors to discuss individual inmates' progress and on-island legal status. The program's two volunteer outreach counselors visit Rikers Island biweekly. These individuals from the regular community were added to the program staff by GO/SO because they had been successful businessmen prior to retiring.

One-on-one mentoring/counseling. Upon completion of the program participation forms, the outreach counselors begin meeting with participants on a weekly basis. During these sessions, they discuss students' goals in more detail and carve out a plan for achieving these goals upon release. They also provide general advice and take a mentoring role in helping students begin to think differently about their future lives in the community. The counselors share the GO/SO process with students, discussing what will be expected of them while participating in the program off-island. A "Rikers Progress Report" is kept for each participant and updated after every one-on-one session on-island. This progress report follows the individual to the off-island program when the participant arrives at the program's storefront Harlem office, where the off-island program is headquartered.

Court involvement. All Rikers inmates eventually must appear in court. During the intake process, GO/SO staff and the on-island participant both complete a "Court Involvement Sheet," which asks for information concerning court appearance dates. The participant also completes an authorization form that gives GO/SO staff permission to communicate with the participant's legal counsel. In a small percentage of cases, GO/SO is invited to appear on behalf of the participant, but the program is willing to send a program representative (e.g., program director, outreach counselor) to appear in court for all cases. For the remainder of cases, program staff members submit letters on the inmates' behalf outlining the progress they have made since joining the program.

Correspondence program. If an incarcerated participant is sentenced and sent to an upstate facility, GO/SO continues to provide services to the participant by providing educational materials and individualized letters to help maintain his focus on successfully transitioning back to the community upon release. The letter correspondence program is handled by the Program Administrator. Interview data revealed that the correspondence program is growing rapidly as more program participants are moved to upstate facilities, and additional upstate inmates learn about the program and join through correspondence. The state correctional facility also allows the program director to visit upstate GO/SO participants three times a year.

¹⁰ The outreach staff consists of two outreach counselors, the program director, and sometimes various program staff including the career manager, social worker, and program associates.

Off-Island Center-Based Intervention (Post-Release):

Individual counseling and social service assessment. Aligned with the goal of helping participants gain social stability, during the first day of program orientation¹¹ upon arrival at the GO/SO center in Harlem, the participant meets with the program's social worker who determines his housing, counseling, psycho-social, and treatment needs. Depending on the individual's needs, the social worker may refer him to another agency or program (i.e., mental health, emergency housing, drug treatment) that will help the participant begin to gain stability. As part of the process, participants complete a "General Survey" that asks them basic demographic information and open-ended questions on their educational and social interests, health-related issues, work history, legal status, and experiences while in jail.

Career management and employment services. During the first day of orientation, a career manager also meets with each participant to assess work history, skills, career interests, anticipated obstacles, and short- and long-term goals. The career manager continues to meet with each participant on a regular basis to manage progress toward the participant's career goals, logging each session into the office progress report that is maintained in each participant's file. Career counseling goes well beyond the one-on-one sessions with the career manager. GO/SO has provided training sessions for participants since the start of the program's fiscal year that have been facilitated by outside consultants. These sessions includes a banking and financial education workshop entitled "Get Your Money Right"; a session on how to interview for a job; two sessions on careers in construction and learning to read and draw blueprints; a free tax advice and tax form completion session; and information on apprenticeship opportunities with tile, marble, and iron workers, and bricklayers.

Educational referrals. Education and training is a crucial component of the program, designed to help participants improve their ability to find employment and acquire the tools needed to better communicate their skills and qualities to potential employers. Upon an initial assessment of a participant's educational history, the program will begin to provide information on GED programs around the city and assist the participant in the application process for those students who have yet to complete high school. The program has built relationships with a large number of GED programs, including the CUNY Catch programs at Bronx Community College and LaGuardia Community College, both part of the CEO Model Education Programs for Rikers Dischargees initiative. As partners, these programs will continue to provide educational services to GO/SO participants through completion of their GED and enrollment in higher education. Participants with GEDs are assisted in identifying and applying to college or a vocational program of their interest. GO/SO carries information on dozens of vocational programs around NYC. GO/SO also provides participants with subway fare (Metrocards) so that they can travel to and from school and to the program center.

Coach support. Aligned with the goal of helping participants make a smooth social transition into their communities, the program has six to seven volunteers from the greater NYC area who provide ongoing coaching and mentoring to program participants. These individuals are retired local professionals who visit the center and are available to participants any time they need to speak to someone. After program participants are released from Rikers, there is a formal transition process where the on-island outreach counselors schedule a time for the participants to appear at GO/SO's

¹¹ The initial orientation is a 3-day process that includes introduction to all program staff, a social service assessment, career and employment assessment and search, educational referral plan, provision of materials (e.g., personal calendar, alarm clock, Metrocard, etc.), and scheduling of upcoming workshops and educational sessions.

off-island Harlem center within a week after release. The counselors facilitate the entry process¹² to ease participants' transition to the center, as they have formed trusting relationships with them. Center-based coaches take an active approach in providing these young adults with support every step of the way as they meet with the career managers, social workers, and center staff. They provide counseling, career workshops, and general support on anything related to their transition process. They are present during the day on different days during the week. Although the program's original contract indicated that program coaches would be assigned to participants in the traditional individualized mentoring relationship, instead the program has used a team-based mentoring model from the beginning, in which the coaches are available to all participants at any time. According to interview data, participants meet with coaches through individual interactions or scheduled group meetings that include discussions on various topics including social behavior, career-related skills, and personal items.

Outputs and Outcomes. Table 1 presents GO/SO's target numbers, actual numbers, and percentages for key participant payment milestone achievements, ranging from completion of initial assessments to passing the GED and finding employment. These data cover through June 2008, three-quarters of the program year. As shown below, GO/SO has nearly met its first four milestones of completing participants' initial and transitional assessments, appearing with participants in court, and involving participants in group counseling sessions on Rikers Island. Data show that through June, 45 percent of recruited on-island participants had arrived at GO/SO's center in Harlem, a percentage expected to grow significantly as recruited inmates continue to gain release from incarceration (note that some of these recruits have not yet left the island). Similarly, these arrivals have all participated in group counseling at GO/SO, a number that is also expected to rise through the end of the fiscal year. Completion of GED, enrollment in college, and placement in part-time and full-time jobs were lagging as of June, with 14 percent or less of program participants meeting these milestones. Data from the fourth quarter will demonstrate more accurately GO/SO's progress toward the milestones and are expected to show an improvement as the program matures and has more time to recruit participants.

¹² The outreach/recruiting counselors begin working with the young people long before they leave Rikers. They encourage the young people's participation in school and foster attachments to transition programs such as GO/SO. One counselor conducts a support group for families in the GO/SO center while their children are at Rikers.

Table 1. GO/SO Outputs and Outcomes as of June 30, 2008*

Category	Target Numbers	Actual Numbers	Percent of Target Met
Initial Assessment Completed	150	150	100%
Transitional Plan Completed	150	150	100%
Court Involvement	150	150	100%
Group Counseling Participation on Rikers	150	150	100%
Confirmed Arrival to GO/SO Off-Island	150	103	69%
Counseling at GO/SO Off-Island	150	103	69%
GED Passed	50	4	8%
Trade School Enrollment	50	16	32%
College Enrollment	50	7	14%
Part-Time Job Placement	150**	3	6%
Full-Time Job Placement		6	

*Data provided by DOC.

**The combined total of job placements may not exceed 150. This milestone cap is in place because if the program met each of the other milestones, the payment budget would be exceeded if more than 150 participants were placed into employment.

The CEO milestones concerning GED completion, part- and full-time employment, and enrollment in vocational and higher education programs align well with GO/SO original outcomes. In addition to these, GO/SO internally follows other non-milestone outcomes that they view as indicators of participant success. The majority of these are found in narrative form in participants' progress report but the program hopes to develop metrics for tracking these in the future. These include:

- Dramatically lowering the recidivism rate of participants;
- Keeping participants free of drug and/or alcohol addiction;
- Reuniting participants with their families in healthy relationships;
- Being responsible fathers after release;
- Improving the way participants speak, carry and present themselves;
- Forming new relationships with other positive and successful young men;
- Developing extra-curricular activities (e.g., fitness training, going to theater, learning to cook, etc.); and
- Contributing to society by volunteering and giving back to the community.

An individual's progress towards most of these outcomes is currently only available in hard copy form as narrative text in each participant's off-island "GO/SO Progress Report." According to the program, however, they have recently begun looking into using a software package for organizing their client data, which would help them capture participant progress towards the above outcomes.

Provider Capacity. Currently, GO/SO's staff consists of the program director, a licensed social worker, two career managers, two volunteer outreach counselors, six to seven volunteer center-based coaches, a program analyst (duties include data management), job developer, and a program associate. Through June, GO/SO has provided services to the minimum milestone required 150

participants. At full capacity, GO/SO can manage a caseload of approximately 300 participants, according to the program director. Assuming enrollment occurs on a steady and rolling basis, the program director feels confident that the program will be able to support the 150 “confirmed arrival” target milestone by the end of the grant’s fiscal year. Based on our team’s observations and analysis of the available data, we believe that the program is capable of reaching this target by the end of contract year.

Agency Management. DOC has continued to monitor GO/SO’s implementation progress in various ways. DOC meets monthly with the program director to discuss the program’s progress and review any issues related to visitation practices at Rikers. DOC personnel also have visited GO/SO’s Harlem location to observe implementation of the program and speak with staff. Mainly, DOC continuously monitors GO/SO progress through the milestone achievements as outlined by CEO. In addition, DOC staff are in contact with the on-island school principals, through which they learn of GO/SO’s ongoing efforts on Rikers.

Conclusions. As implemented, the GO/SO program is in alignment with the CEO mission and is meeting key CEO criteria.

- 1) The program is serving an underserved population, as less than a handful of programs are providing transitional services to post-incarcerated youth.
- 2) The program is serving a population of young adults living in poverty.
- 3) The program is providing innovative programming, as few programs exist to help post-incarcerated youth with educational and career advancement.
- 4) The program appears to have a good infrastructure, effective management, and dedicated staff.
- 5) Agency oversight is in place, enabling it to remain stable, make improvements, and be replicable in other sites.
- 6) Specific and measurable outcomes have been articulated, although the degree to which they are being measured is unclear.

At this point, the data indicate that the program is achieving some of its short-term outcomes and making progress toward some of its long-term outcomes. A number of the program’s long-term outcomes described previously require additional evaluation methods in order to address their achievement. Currently, the program reports that it has a large amount of physical format data on these outcomes, but these data were not electronically maintained and could not be reviewed for this report.

Among the key research questions for this program review is the potential replicability of this program. In our estimation, the program shows a great deal of potential in continuing to grow and becoming a model of future replicability elsewhere. However, it is also our impression that GO/SO is still continuing to develop its model of services off-island, as they have modified their services since the onset of CEO funding to fit the growing needs of their clients (e.g., adding academic workshops and internal vocational training).

Nevertheless, the program director reports that he has been contacted (via email, letters, and phone calls) by dozens of individuals who have been interested in starting similar work with incarcerated and post-incarcerated youth. In response to the wide-spread interest, the program posted a document on its website entitled, “Turning Belief into Action: A Template of Getting Out and Staying Out.” This document outlines the program’s history, key steps it took in getting off the

ground (including key individuals to contact and involve in the process), strategies for developing appropriate services for the target population, steps for developing a board of directors, and key characteristics needed to make the program successful.

3. Programmatic Recommendations

The first recommendation concerns the program's coaching component. The DOC and CEO promote the program as a mentoring program. As a whole, the program employs a team-based mentoring model that includes all center-based staff who closely train and advise participants as they work towards achieving their goals. Thus far, interviews with participants indicate that they are satisfied with the support they receive from all staff. Nevertheless, the program's coaching component off-island is not being implemented as a traditional mentoring relationship, and based on interviews with key program staff (including coaches) it is our impression that the coaches are not at the forefront of the off-island intervention as envisioned in the original contract. Instead, the career managers seem to be participants' main contact and source of assistance during their time at the off-island center. The program may consider aligning the off-island coaches' roles with that of the one-on-one relationships in place on-island between participating inmates and the outreach counselors if possible. Through this method, participants will continue receiving similar one-on-one attention from one individual off-island as they do on-island. In addition, the program should examine other mentoring models to determine if their current coaching arrangement is the most effective possible or if the program should try a more traditional mentoring model.

The second recommendation addresses the program's need for technical assistance. The program urgently needs technical assistance in various areas of data collection, coordination, recording, validation, and analysis, including quality assurance protocols for data entry, managing duplicate cases, and sharing milestone data effectively with DOC. Initially, technical assistance is needed in developing a more comprehensive database system (other than the current Excel format). Technical assistance also is needed for the provider to identify additional canned reports with a broader scope of data elements that can be produced easily and consistently each month and quarter on the various program indicators and milestone targets. More comprehensive data warehousing would help the program access more information about its outcomes and improve informed decision-making.

Additionally, data on many of the program's projected outcomes (e.g., keeping participants off drugs/alcohol, forming new relationships with other successful young men, being responsible fathers, etc.) currently are not collected in any formal way or maintained in an electronic data format. Although these could be evaluated through focus groups or interviews, the program could use technical assistance on identifying or developing internal data collection instruments that will help the program track participants' progress on these outcomes, including how long it takes participants to achieve the outcomes. Also, the program should survey longer-term participants to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the program's components and recommendations for future implementation.