Research and program evaluation in Illinois: Studies on drug abuse and violent crime

The Implementation and Impact of Illinois' PreStart Program: A Final Report

July 1996

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

by
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The Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency and Corrections at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale recently completed an examination of the implementation and impact of Illinois' PreStart program. PreStart represents a major transformation in the philosophy, structure and practice by which inmates in Illinois are allowed to conditionally re–enter the community after their terms of imprisonment have been served.

PreStart is a fundamental reshaping of the parole system in Illinois that aims to prepare inmates for life after prison and then help them adjust to the community after release. Funded by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, PreStart was introduced on a wide scale throughout the state prison system by the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) in summer 1991.

With PreStart, Illinois introduced a bifurcated system into its mandatory supervised release program for people recently released from prison. A departure from traditional parole, PreStart de–emphasized the surveillance and supervision functions of parole for most offenders and instead emphasized referrals to social services that might help releasees integrate into society and avoid recidivism. The traditional surveillance and supervision functions of parole are now reserved for prison releasees thought to pose special threats to public safety.

PreStart contains two distinct phases, pre–release education and post–release assistance, and essentially works in the following manner: After having gone through 30 hours of mandatory, specialized classwork inside prison to prepare them for release (termed Phase I programming), most releasees are able to voluntarily use community resources brokered through a system of newly created community service centers operated by the Department of Corrections. The centers are intended to help releasees get jobs, housing and treatment assistance.

For specific groups of releasees, the IDOC planned the following inmate services: 1) four community drug intervention programs, which were to provide services and drug testing for releasees clearly exhibiting substance abuse problems; 2) contracted services for selected sex

offenders; and 3) development of a Special Intensive Supervision Unit for certain releasees thought to be especially dangerous, as well as those released from shock incarceration facilities (boot camps).

These program components were to serve as models to be expanded if proven successful. The total package of services and programs available for releasees in the community is termed Phase II programming.

Methodology

The findings of this study are based on the following sources of information:

• PreStart written documentation, such as the IDOC's internal reports and memorandums on the program;

• In–person interviews with administrators of the IDOC, facility administrators, program coordinators and instructors, external service providers, Phase II community service officers, community drug unit agents and Special Intensive Supervision Unit staff;

• Questionnaires sent to all PreStart staff in 1992;

• Questionnaires administered to selected inmates who had completed, or were about to complete, Phase I in 1992 and 1993;

• Follow–up interviews with released offenders between May and September 1993, conducted by telephone (or, if necessary, by mail);

• Site observations by evaluation staff in 1992 of 14 correctional facilities, with a second round of visits in summer 1993;

• Site observations of seven community service centers during 1993;

• Recidivism data provided by the Illinois State Police and the IDOC on a representative sample of inmates released from 14 correctional facilities in 1992 and a sample of inmates released from those same facilities in 1990, before PreStart was implemented.

Major Findings

This evaluation indicates that the Department of Corrections has done a commendable job in developing an innovative inmate reintegration program under difficult circumstances. The IDOC

had to work with inadequately allocated resources and an organizational structure and culture not previously oriented toward improving behavior among inmates. Although PreStart has not quite lived up to its potential yet, especially in terms of delivering assistance and services to prison releasees who need and seek such help, the IDOC has put together a package of correctional services that moves toward fulfilling the promises embodied in the original PreStart philosophy.

Many specific findings of this evaluation are positive, including:

• Despite the troubled environment surrounding PreStart's beginning and its development, the IDOC's leadership tended to be very supportive of PreStart. This resulted in many bona fide Phase I programs being observed during evaluation team visits to correctional institutions in both 1992 and 1993. These programs provided inmates with valuable information and skills that would ease their transition into the community;

• Inmates in PreStart programs generally reported positive feelings toward PreStart's pre-release programs and said they had helped them. Most felt PreStart was more useful than previous forms of pre-release instruction, and the majority rated PreStart's quality between "adequate" and "outstanding." With few exceptions, inmates said they believed PreStart would give them the skills and knowledge to help prepare them for life on the outside;

• Most institutional IDOC staff also expressed positive feelings about PreStart, although they acknowledged the many implementation problems in getting Phase I programming off the ground. Institutional staff displayed more positive attitudes after PreStart's introduction than community correctional (post-release) agents. Most IDOC staff in both settings showed a commitment to the reform despite scarce resources and other obstacles;

• By 1993, some prisons and community correctional centers were beginning to tailor Phase I toward the special inmate populations being served and were trying to develop stronger links between Phase I and Phase II programming;

• Most releasees expressed their support for community service centers and PreStart agents, indicating that they found the centers to be helpful after their release. They generally said their experience with the centers was positive and that they had received service referrals from PreStart agents;

• PreStart drug programs for releasees, such as the Springfield Community Drug Intervention Program, were generally seen as helpful by clients. Clients said they used controlled substances less frequently since being admitted to the program. Notably, the CDIP in Springfield was able to forge close ties with local drug treatment providers;

• After a year in society, releasees who had undergone PreStart programming in prison showed much lower return–to–prison rates than earlier groups of prisoners who had not been involved with PreStart. This appears to be most clearly true in the case of offenders who did not have high rates of arrest before their last incarceration (that is, five or more prior arrests). Not only was reincarceration markedly lower for alumni of PreStart, but inmates who did not go through PreStart returned to prison more quickly than those who had gone through the program;

• PreStart releasees returned to prison at a rate of about 11.7 percent during the first year in the community, compared to 32.3 percent for inmates released in 1990, before PreStart began. (Recidivism was especially low — as low as 5 percent — among inmates who had been placed under special post–prison care or supervision, such as electronic detention or intensive supervision, as part of the community based drug intervention program);

• Rearrest rates within one year of release were somewhat lower for inmates released under the PreStart program (40 percent) than for inmates released prior to PreStart's implementation (47.8 percent). Inmates released under PreStart and under some form of community supervision exhibited the lowest rearrest rates of all groups examined (for example, those on special intensive supervision had a 31.8 percent rearrest rate); and

• Statistical attempts to model PreStart's impact on IDOC prison populations, while not conclusive, suggest that the lower reincarceration rates for PreStart offenders — apparently the result of lower rates of technical violations resulting in re–imprisonment — have resulted in lowering the prison population growth rate.

In these and several other respects, we found PreStart to be accomplishing its mission well. In some ways, however, PreStart appears not to have yet achieved its potential:

• PreStart's success was hindered initially: during its early implementation period, many of the factors that usually help innovative programs succeed — such as a supportive political and social environment, adequate program resources, and a sense of staff "ownership" of the program — were lacking. For example, PreStart may have been encumbered in the field by strong negative feelings among some parole agents who experienced great professional and personal dislocations in the process of becoming Phase II PreStart agents;

• Phase I success varied from institution to institution, depending mainly on administrative leadership, staff commitment and the level of communication within particular facilities. Staff surveys showed a majority of PreStart staff felt burdened by the extra duty of delivering Phase I programming, and this sometimes resulted in poor levels of staff commitment toward PreStart. In

some situations, where weak staff commitment was not offset by strong administrative leadership and well–developed communication patterns, Phase I programming was quite weak;

• Though staff respondents expressed many positive attitudes regarding their jobs, most said they felt little control over PreStart's implementation. As described above, community IDOC staff (former parole agents) in particular experienced a marked decrease in job satisfaction, apparently because of significant personal and professional changes imposed by budget cuts and the introduction of PreStart;

• The IDOC's central office did not adequately exchange information on PreStart with its facilities, especially during the second year of PreStart's implementation. It also did not sufficiently use mechanisms already in place to measure and enhance those programs' effectiveness — although at this writing, performance by the central office had shown improvement in this regard;

• Because Phase II programming was rooted more in pragmatism than in a clear correctional philosophy, Phase II programming has become inconsistent in practice.

For instance, PreStart was based on a new assistance model, yet shortly after its implementation, it was accompanied by the mandate that releasees report in regularly, whether they wanted assistance or not (like the old–style parole). This overburdened staff and added to their pressures, making it quite difficult for PreStart agents to serve as referral agents to community–based services. In some community service centers, agents have adhered to an assistance model while in others they perform functions in a manner akin to what they were doing before PreStart started;

• While PreStart's implementation may have been associated with reduced recidivism rates for most offenders, this was not true for high rate offenders. High rate offenders (those with five or more prior arrests) released under the PreStart structure witnessed a higher rearrest rate after one year in the community than similar offenders released from prison before PreStart was implemented.

This troubling finding may be associated with how the Special Intensive Supervision Unit (SISU) is operating and the types of individuals placed in this program. While designed for the special and intensive community supervision of "dangerous offenders," many offenders placed in this program are not chronic or repetitive offenders, and the supervision most offenders receive while in this program is neither special nor intensive.

The following pages provide a more detailed summary of evaluative findings. In addition, some conclusions and recommendations are presented at the end of this executive summary.

The Origins of PreStart

PreStart was a response to the upward spiraling of costs associated with traditional parole supervision in Illinois and the unwillingness of the state to fund those costs. As the number of releasees subject to mandatory supervised release rose dramatically in the 1980s, the number of parole agents declined. Caseloads in the early 1990s remained extremely heavy, and it became apparent that the provision of traditional parole supervision and services could not be accomplished with current funding levels.

This trend was accompanied by a growing sentiment in the correctional community nationwide that traditional models of parole may not be effective in reducing offender recidivism rates. PreStart was seen as a way of adapting to the state's monetary problems by streamlining the parole system, redirecting its energy toward assisting inmates rather than merely maintaining surveillance on them, and using available federal dollars in an innovative yet pragmatic manner. In short, PreStart was a means of addressing various problems at once — reducing the number of layoffs of parole agents, preventing negative public reaction to a restructuring of parole, and providing services for releasees, with supervision for some, within the community.

The timing of the restructuring of parole in terms of planning, staff morale and available resources was unfortunate; it necessitated an abrupt and abbreviated planning process for PreStart. The entire planning and initial implementation process lasted only a few months. Coinciding with the beginning of a new fiscal year and parole layoffs, parole staff morale worsened during the transition to PreStart. Money was the underlying problem, and even with federal funding available to subsidize Phase II (post–release) programming, having to stay within the IDOC's budgetary constraints limited the amount of staff and equipment available, and prevented the establishment of a desired link between Phase I and Phase II programming. Programs that had not been clearly defined were to be implemented by untrained and skeptical staff.

Program Implementation Environment

In one respect, PreStart's early environment helped it to develop. Little public or media attention was paid to the new program, so it did not suffer from outside criticism or pressure. In other respects, PreStart lacked the ideal environment in which a newborn program could grow strong. These ideal circumstances would have included ample resources, enthusiasm among staff, strong interagency communication, and an organization suited for rapid change.

The only new funds for this promising program came from federal money that would not even balance the loss of state revenue dollars previously appropriated for parole functions. Because of budget cuts, there were significantly fewer parole agents after PreStart's implementation than before. Funding was insufficient both for the establishment of Phase I programming within correctional institutions and for delivery of Phase II services to parolees — although both phases were put in place. In addition, the key source of program success — the staff who would implement PreStart — exhibited fairly ambivalent feelings about the program. While most staff in our 1992 survey expressed positive attitudes regarding their current work situations, job efficacy and job satisfaction, most respondents — particularly those not in administration — said that they felt little ownership of PreStart's implementation. Those most likely to express negative attitudes were former parole agents (now PreStart agents), some of whom experienced a tremendous decrease in job satisfaction once PreStart was implemented. Moreover, most staff said that they had not been trained to perform their PreStart duties.

Despite the many barriers to success, high-level IDOC administrators worked diligently in the spirit of reform and adapted their strategies so that they could at least implement the essential elements of the program.

Phase I Programming

Despite the troubled environment surrounding PreStart's beginning and its development, many bona fide Phase I programs were observed in visits to institutions in 1992. There was, however, considerable variation in the degree to which Phase I programs were successfully implemented across facilities. At the time of our initial visits, three key factors influenced the success of Phase I implementation: (1) administrative leadership; (2) staff commitment; and (3) strength of internal communication patterns.

Between the 1992 and 1993 site visits, programs at some institutions improved considerably, others stayed the same or declined, but all were still evolving. Programs were improving through innovative problem–solving techniques, or merely surviving amid resource limitations and poor staff morale at particular institutions. Others fell into decline with little attention paid to the diagnosis and resolution of problems. An encouraging sign was that institutional staff were less resistant than when the program was being implemented originally. Facilities were also adapting Phase I (at least to some degree) toward special populations. Moreover, while a general lack of knowledge about Phase II programming still existed, facilities were trying to develop a stronger understanding of relationships with Phase II program efforts.

At the same time, central administration appeared to be putting less priority on PreStart at many institutions, creating a perception among institutional staff members that the central office was losing interest in PreStart. Between the two sets of visits, central office involvement in the monitoring and guidance of Phase I programming at facilities had decreased, statewide PreStart coordinator meetings had ended, and curriculum revisions had slowed. Although central office staff should be credited with actively communicating the continued priority of Phase I PreStart programming to higher–level IDOC staff, it was not always communicated to lower–level line staff; this resulted in morale problems.

The IDOC central office came to have minimal involvement with the institutions, turning more of its attention to Phase II (post–release) programs and leaving individual correctional facilities to face the demands of operating their Phase I programs. There has been a partial turnabout in this, however: More recently, the central office has been guiding and nurturing Phase I programs more attentively than when our preliminary evaluation was released in summer 1994.

Inmate Reaction To Phase I Programming

The vast majority of PreStart inmates held positive attitudes toward Phase I programming. General attitudes and perceptions between 1992 and 1993 were stable. (A few exceptions at the facility level were noticeable, however, indicating that some programs may have improved while some programs may have regressed.) The inmate survey data also indicated that most inmates gave similar reactions to PreStart, whether older or younger, white or black, male or female. What appeared to affect attitudes most dramatically was the particular institution in which inmates were surveyed. Inmates at some sites were much more positive toward the programs than at others. Differences in inmate attitudes toward PreStart across facilities seemed to reflect the quality of Phase I programming at those facilities. Generally speaking, most inmates said that PreStart was offering them something that would be helpful for their release.

Phase II

Phase II was made possible because external federal funds were available. It grew out of a pragmatic belief that something must be done with inmates recently released from prison. While appearing consistent with an assistance or advocacy model of parole supervision, and reflecting a marked departure from prior policies and practices in Illinois, it grew more out of a desire to spend the available money effectively rather than out of a marked change in parole philosophy among IDOC officials.

This phase was based on a voluntary model of assistance, not because it was perceived as the preferred model or because it was viewed as the most desirable way to cure the weaknesses of the existing parole structure. It was endorsed because it could be achieved with available resources. Thus, programs were driven by resources, and unfortunately, this lack of a coherent and clear philosophical basis for Phase II programming has had significant implications for PreStart Phase II programming to the current day.

Several related issues also prevented the program from reaching its potential. Funding was chief among these. It is questionable whether a meaningful service delivery program could be expected with the existing allocation of resources; in FY 1994, for instance, an average of 38 cents per released inmate per day was spent on PreStart. Importantly, the original basis of Phase II programming — voluntary use of community service centers by releasees in an assistance model of parole — was undermined by the requiring of releasees to check in with PreStart agents by telephone or mail once a month in the first six months after release. A reporting requirement appeared to serve no useful purpose for releasees and lowered staff morale because parole agents felt overworked and overwhelmed.

Lack of staff training, minimal supervision of agents, and a lack of clearly defined and articulated policy and standards aggravated the situation. Further, differing workload constraints across service centers and varying new roles for parole agents in the wake of PreStart's implementation resulted in releasees having different experiences with Phase II programs across the state and even within the same service center.

Releasees had their own pressures, even with Phase I educational preparation and the assistance of Phase II programming. Inmate survey data showed many did not make easy transitions to society. A large percentage of releasees were unemployed or were working at very low–paying jobs. Of course, this is most likely true for most recent releasees — with or without PreStart training and assistance.

Almost one–third of releasees reported both being rearrested and having used illegal drugs since their release from prison. (On average, survey respondents had been on the streets for 10.6 months.) Still, it appeared as though the existence of PreStart Phase II programs offered assistance, such as referrals to social service agencies and job counseling, that were valued by releasees. A clear majority of releasees surveyed responded favorably to community service centers and PreStart agents, indicating that they found community service centers to be helpful.

Special Intensive Supervision Unit and Other Special Programs

Under the original PreStart design, the Special Intensive Supervision Unit (SISU) was to serve releasees predicted to be of high–risk to public safety. A weakness of PreStart Phase II has been the process by which high–risk offenders are identified and assigned to SISU. The IDOC does not use an objective classification system to identify such releasees. The vast majority of individuals are assigned based on legal criteria and not behaviorally based risk factors; relatively few releasees who are actually at high–risk to recidivate find themselves on SISU. Further, once placed on SISU, most releasees are not closely supervised (defined as a minimum of one agent contact per month).

Additionally, PreStart's sex offender treatment programs were developed slowly and unevenly. The plan to develop the programs was dated August 1992, but the first contract with a treatment provider (in Madison County) did not begin until January 1993. Sex offender programs remained limited at this writing; these programs were coming on line in accordance with program models that had been developed much earlier.

Also requiring more time than anticipated was the launch of four planned community drug intervention programs (CDIPs), which would offer treatment and drug testing for releasees with clear drug dependence. Four drug units were in existence at this writing, all with contracted treatment providers to serve program clients, but the process of establishing these services took longer than first thought. The reasons for the slowness included a lack of an IDOC administrator to focus full attention on contracts with vendors, a scarcity of proposals submitted by vendors, and difficult contract negotiations once proposals were received.

The first CDIP to operate as part of PreStart, which already had been in existence as a federal pilot program, was located in Springfield and has been well received by its PreStart clients. With strong connections to local treatment providers, it provides high levels of supervision and treatment, and most clients said they felt it had helped them. Clients reported using controlled substances less frequently and that their drug problems had become less serious since their involvement in the program.

Yet even at this location many clients did not view themselves as needing substance abuse treatment, and many were unsure as to why they were in the program. Additionally, many were unsure about what was required to successfully complete the program and how long it might take. Many of the CDIP's clientele did not adapt well to the program components; in fact, about two–thirds of the clients failed to successfully complete the program (29 percent returned to prison,

while 31 percent were discharged from the drug program unsuccessfully). According to program records, many of these attended relatively few group sessions at the CDIP and apparently took drugs and drank alcohol more often than successful graduates.

The average length of time spent in CDIP for the October 1992 PreStart population was 11.5 months (while the longest time spent in the program was nearly 26.5 months). Many clients withdrew from the program's services after they had been in it for about six months.

On the other hand, a number of clients who were not participating fully in the program continued to occupy program spots long after they needed to, tying up scarce resources.

Allied Agencies and PreStart

The success of PreStart depends not only on how the IDOC staff, inmates and releasees respond to the program, but also on how outside stakeholders and allied agencies view this innovative approach to offender reintegration.

For PreStart to succeed, Phase II agents need to be closely associated with community services available locally, and they must maintain good relations with local law enforcement and court personnel. Moreover, representatives of these agencies must be supportive of PreStart programming.

In 1992 and 1994 surveys (a mailed version in 1992 and a telephone survey in 1994) of key representatives from law enforcement, prosecutorial, judicial, and social service agencies, it was shown that most allied agency staff were largely uninformed about PreStart. The lack of knowledge and low level of communication between these agency representatives and the IDOC community services staff raises serious concern about the functioning of Phase II programming.

In short, some social service agencies came to suspect that Phase II programs were failing to provide releasees the required services, and some criminal justice agencies developed suspicions that PreStart was not providing releasees the supervision and accountability necessary to maintain public safety.

Nonetheless, many social service agencies strongly seemed to want more information from parole staff about what PreStart entailed and expressed a willingness to receive referrals from PreStart community service centers. Both the social service agencies and criminal justice agencies emphasized a need for ongoing communication and often offered suggestions on how Phase II could be made a more extensive network joining releasees to services.

PreStart's Impact on Prison Populations

PreStart formally abandoned the supervision function of parole for the vast bulk of releasees. Though some supervision of these releasees continues to take place informally, it was expected that PreStart would lead to a dramatic decline in the issuance and execution of warrants for parole rules violations (as opposed for the commission of new crimes). Time–series analyses did indicate that the issuance and execution of warrants decreased dramatically after PreStart's implementation, and has remained low since. Analyses of the IDOC admissions data also indicate a marked decrease in the prison admission of community supervision violators when PreStart was implemented.

While statistical analyses did not show PreStart was a clear cause of reduced prison admissions based on technical violations, after July 1991 violation–based prison admissions plummeted and have remained low. Changes in admission rates for new felony convictions did not appear to be associated with the PreStart reforms. This decrease in prison admissions based on technical violations was overshadowed, however, by the general increase in admissions that has been taking place since well before PreStart's implementation and which continues to the current day. Because of this, statistical tests could not show conclusively whether and to what extent PreStart has slowed the rate of prison population growth.

PreStart's Impact on Recidivism

Perhaps the ultimate test of PreStart is the impact of the program on offender recidivism. In this regard, analyses of recidivism rates of inmates who experienced both Phase I and Phase II compared to recidivism rates of inmates who had not experienced Phase I and who had been supervised under Illinois' earlier mandatory supervised release structure, revealed that PreStart did not undermine public safety.

Our findings in this regard must be viewed tentatively because a number of problems were encountered during the recidivism data coding and analyses stages of this project. They were primarily due to problems inherent in the criminal justice recordkeeping practices in the state, such as missing and contradictory information contained in police and IDOC data files. These problems, coupled with weaknesses inherent in a nonexperimental study, have made it difficult to make unambiguous conclusions about PreStart's effect on offender recidivism.

With that caveat in mind, some findings with regard to rearrest rates were nonetheless evident. A random sample of inmates released in 1990, before PreStart was implemented, from the same 14 institutions that served as sites for this evaluation, had a slightly higher rearrest rate (47.8 percent) than those inmates released from these same facilities while PreStart was in effect (40

percent). Inmates released in 1990 also exhibited a much faster pace of recidivism than releasees who had undergone PreStart programming, tending to fail more often shortly after their release from prison. One–year reincarceration figures revealed that members of the before–PreStart sample were also much more likely to be reincarcerated within a year of release than members of any sample released while PreStart was in operation.

Moreover, the differences in reincarceration rates were dramatic, with almost one–third (32.3 percent) of the inmates released in 1990 being reincarcerated within a year. In contrast, other samples, all of which represent releasees under some Phase II component of PreStart, exhibit one–year reincarceration rates that varied from 5 percent (boot camp sample) to 13 percent (CDIP sample). The PreStart sample that had no supervision requirements witnessed reincarceration rates within a year of release that were only about a third (11.7 percent) of that for the before–PreStart sample. Reincarceration rates within 1.5 years of release indicate that the PreStart releasees continued to show a much lower reincarceration rate than the before–PreStart sample (18.7 percent for PreStart releases vs. 38.8 percent for before–PreStart releasees).

Two special subgroups of PreStart clients displayed especially low recidivism. All were contemporary releasees placed into a special program of aftercare services or supervision — that is, boot campers on electronic detention and releasees placed on special intensive supervision. Those in regular PreStart programming had a slightly higher one–year reincarceration rate than those releasees supervised more intensively in special programs (SISU, 6 percent; boot campers, 5 percent). The CDIP sample had a reincarceration rate (13 percent) quite comparable to members of their comparison group of drug users in Macon County.

One should question the efficacy of PreStart, however, for high–rate offender groups (those releasees with five or more prior arrests). PreStart may have been associated with reduced rearrest and reincarceration rates for most offenders, but it is doubtful based on our analysis that high rate offenders benefited in the same way. High–rate offenders released under PreStart actually exhibited slightly higher rearrest rates than high–rate offenders released before PreStart was implemented.

Moreover, because the 1990 inmate sample contained a disproportionate number of high–rate offenders compared to the PreStart sample, the discovered differences in rearrest rates across the samples may not be due to PreStart but to the types of individuals released in 1990 compared to those released in 1992 (for example, the PreStart sample contained a larger percentage of low–risk offenders).

Clearly, more recidivism analyses of the PreStart program are warranted, especially analyses with longer follow–up periods, more complete recidivism data, and samples of offenders that are representative of the entire releasee population.

Conclusions

The evaluation team found much to value in the PreStart program, which replaced a parole system that offered virtually no aid to inmates and releasees before or after leaving prison. Though far from perfect, PreStart set Illinois on a course away from an era when inmates were often released without any support whatsoever, and when the most that could be expected at parole was a little cash and a bus or train ticket home. PreStart, however, should not be viewed as a program that has fully lived up to its promises. Rather, it should be viewed as a significant step in a new and promising direction.

Members of the PreStart evaluation team had the opportunity to review an inmate–produced video designed to be an orientation to PreStart. The product was impressive and not only illustrated what can happen when the creative talents of inmates are channeled toward productive ends, but also highlighted the promise of PreStart.

With the theme of "picking up the pieces," the inmates presented a portrait of PreStart as a well–developed, integrated program that provides inmates some basic tools, knowledge and assistance to make a successful transition to the community.

While these first steps were achieved, much remains to be done. This summary of our PreStart evaluation discusses the achievements accomplished and those that were not. In addition, it attempts to explain the reasons for the uneven success that the evaluation team observed and the issues associated with the varying levels of PreStart's accomplishments. We urge the IDOC to move forward to pick up the pieces of PreStart that have not yet been put in place and to improve the delivery of services to those who need them. The following suggestions may serve as a guide and are explored in depth in our complete final report.

Recommendations

- The IDOC should continue to strengthen phases I and II of PreStart and continue to build program links between the two phases.

- The IDOC central office should continue to improve its coordination and supervision of Phase I programs within facilities, aiding individual institutions wherever needed.

- The IDOC should continue to develop effective drug treatment programming for releasees, following the example of the Springfield CDIP.

- The IDOC should develop strong information–sharing practices between its facilities and monitor them, using mechanisms such as the Curriculum Committee, to improve weak programs.

- The department should amass data on inmate reactions to PreStart Phase I programs by collecting such information on a routine, consistent basis; for example, by using a brief questionnaire administered at graduation. The data could be used to evaluate existing programs and design new ones.

- The IDOC should continuously train staff to improve Phase II programs.

- For Phase II programs, all community service centers should keep consistent, reliable records. The IDOC also should track which contacts and referrals result in service provider contacts. PreStart agents should be given greater training on and access to computer terminals.

- High–risk offenders should be placed with the Special Intensive Supervision Unit based on objective risk prediction, not legal criteria. Once placed with this unit, they should be supervised closely.

- Continued central office attention should be focused on developing sex offender treatment programming and community drug intervention programs.

- The community drug intervention programs should review their referral, intake, outflow and selection processes, and their client determination criteria and decision–making processes, so that spaces are apportioned more efficiently to clients who need them.

- The IDOC needs to pay immediate attention to the problem of poor communication between PreStart staff and allied service and criminal justice agencies. This problem inhibits agents' ability to refer clients to Phase II services effectively.

- If the state of Illinois is serious about introducing a true assistance or advocacy model of post–release community supervision, more resources must be expended for this purpose. If not, it should consider rescinding the mandatory reporting requirement that was imposed after PreStart was initiated so that PreStart agents can devote more of their time to providing releasees with the assistance and referrals from which they can benefit.

- Because it appears that PreStart may be associated with reduced recidivism for non–chronic, low rate offenders but not for more chronic, high rate offenders, this possibility should be

investigated through more impact analyses with longer follow–up periods, more complete recidivism data and larger samples of offenders that are representative of all releasees.

PREFACE

This final report is the product of more than two years of work by a host of individuals who have either worked or studied at the Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency and Corrections at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. The Center was initially developed in the early 1960s to be a training and research institute that would contribute to the establishment of more effective, humane, and just correctional policy and practices. Since then, correctional policies and practices have witnessed many changes.

Unfortunately, most of these changes have not been very desirable. The correctional system is doing more things to more people that devastate lives and families than ever before. Thus, when the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority put out a research solicitation in the fall of 1991 for a process and impact evaluation of an innovative approach to inmate reintegration in the community, a program called PreStart, the opportunity emerged to conduct research consistent with the original mission of the Center. This project might have considerable implications for parole supervision not only in Illinois, but throughout the nation. Most importantly, it reflected an opportunity to study a program that, on its face, appeared more humane, reasonable, cost effective, and less damaging than what had preceded it.

After the Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency and Correction was awarded the research grant, it began a set of formidable research tasks that would occupy a handful of researchers for most of the next two–and–a–half years. It has been a very rewarding, yet frustrating, experience for those involved in the research project. On the one hand, it gave us the opportunity to meet hundreds of inmates, releasees, and corrections staff throughout Illinois. Some of these individuals have become good friends. Many have provided us with much insight into the fundamental issues surrounding being released from prison and trying to make it in an often hostile world — a world in which being an ex–con means living on the extreme margins of society. The project thus provided us with some tremendous learning opportunities. It also allowed us to hone our research skills, and to collect and work with some very rich data sets, and paid for the graduate education of a number of students. Perhaps most importantly for the principal investigator, it gave him the opportunity to work with some colleagues and students who have become cherished friends and companions.

On the other hand, the research staff has come to realize — sometimes painfully so — that many of the promises of PreStart have not been delivered. While PreStart has clearly not "hurt" many people, including inmates, citizens fearful of unsupervised prison releasees, or the taxpayers

of Illinois (and while the only direct victims seem to be certain parole staff who witnessed great personal and professional dislocations because of PreStart), it hasn't quite yet lived up to its promise of delivering assistance to prison releasees who need and seek such heip.

For example, members of the PreStart evaluation team had the opportunity to review an inmate–produced video designed to be an orientation to the PreStart program. The product is very impressive, and serves not only to illustrate what can happen when the creative talents of inmates are channeled toward productive ends, but also to highlight the promise of PreStart. Choosing the theme of "picking up the pieces," the inmates involved in the production of the video presented a portrait of PreStart as a well–developed and integrated program which provides motivated inmates some basic tools, knowledge and assistance to make a successful transition to freedom.

This report, coupled with the earlier interim reports submitted by the PreStart evaluation team, indicates that the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) has done a very commendable job developing an innovative program in the context of a difficult and challenging implementation environment. Without the adequate allocation of resources, and facing the formidable challenge of changing an organizational structure and culture that has not tried to change the behavior of inmates, the IDOC has put to together a package of correctional services, both within and outside prison walls, that moves toward accomplishing the promises contained in the inmate–produced video.

While the first steps have been taken toward fulfilling those promises, much remains to be done. This report discusses the promises that have been kept and those that have not. In addition, we attempt to explain the reasons for the uneven success that has been observed, the varying levels of PreStart's accomplishments, and what can be done to improve the delivery of PreStart services so that all of the promises contained in the inmates' video have the chance of being kept. We urge that the IDOC move forward to "pick up the pieces" of PreStart that have not yet been put in place.

Acknowledgments

The evaluation staff would like to thank staff at both the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and the Illinois Department of Corrections for their considerable support of our research. In particular, we could not have completed this report without the gracious support that was provided by the many individuals working for the Department of Corrections who were willing to talk with us and to point us in the right direction when we weren't really sure what to look for or what questions to ask. During the course of this study, the interactions between the evaluation staff and Deputy Director Marjorie Brown, PreStart Administrator Barry Bass, and research scientist Robert Jones have been numerous and most often gratifying. The evaluation staff would like to thank them for their continued interest in and support of this project. The staff would also like to thank the Illinois State Police, and John Loverude in particular, for providing the computerized criminal history information that was requested.

Without the support of former IDOC Executive Director Howard Peters III, the PreStart program would not be in existence today. The evaluation staff sincerely thank him for his support of PreStart and of this evaluation project, and hope that this evaluation creates a stronger understanding of the dynamics and consequences of the implementation of this program.

A special thanks goes to the hundreds of correctional staff and correctional clients who were willing to be the subjects of often intrusive and time consuming interviews, questionnaires and discussions. We especially hope that, at least in some small way, this study results in some progress toward making the correctional environment more hospitable and supportive of basic human needs.

The evaluation staff would also like to comment on the remarkable amount of work that went into this evaluation. There were some staff that believed the project would never end — and perhaps it hasn't. We wish to acknowledge the efforts of the numerous people involved in collecting and analyzing data, writing and editing reports. They include, but are not limited to, the following: Cheryl Ringel, Irina Soderstrom, Susan Plant, Dr. Ernest Cowles, E. B. Cowles, Dr. M. Joan McDermott, Susan Daniel, Nikki Espie, Lee Sharp, Pia Tongsookdee, James McIntosh, Mary Carruthers and Steven Parmenter.

The principal investigator, Dr. Thomas Castellano, is responsible for any shortcomings in this report or those that may have emerged during the entire evaluation. He was involved in the writing of each chapter in this report and acknowledges the contributions of many individuals to the writing of most of the chapters. They include: Irina Soderstrom (primary author of Chapter 10,

co–author of Chapters 3 and 5, contributing author of Chapter 6); Cheryl Ringel (primary author of Chapter 2, co–author of Chapter 4, contributing author of Chapter 9); James McIntosh (co–author of Chapter 8); Dr. M. Joan McDermott (contributing author of Chapter 9); and Susan Plant (contributing author of Chapter 11).

Finally, this work is dedicated to the many individuals working within the PreStart program whose commitment and energy have made the most of a very difficult situation. Especially noteworthy have been the efforts of Barry Bass, the ultimate corrections professional, whose humanity and caring spirit is reflected in the best that PreStart has to offer; and those of Debbie MacFadden, who embodies the quintessential PreStart agent.

Tom Castellano

Carbondale, Illinois

August 1994

Chapter 1

AN OVERVIEW OF PRESTART AND CURRENT EVALUATIVE EFFORTS

The contemporary correctional era is characterized by a search for cost–effective, community–based sanctions that enhance public safety. This search has been largely motivated by a tremendous influx of inmates into the system without a corresponding increase in prison space (Morris and Tonry, 1990; Zimring and Hawkins, 1990, Irwin and Austin, 1994). In particular, the tremendous growth of prison populations and rates of imprisonment during recent years have fostered a meandering search for effective alternative sanctions. A revitalized debate on the mission and effectiveness of correctional treatment programs also has occurred (for example, Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta, Gendreau, and Cullen, 1990; Lab and Whitehead, 1990, Palmer, 1992; Andrews and Bonta, 1994).

An outgrowth of these trends has been the exploration of alternative models of parole supervision. During the 1970s and 1980s, parole practices throughout the United States generated significant debate and reform. The vast bulk of attention, criticism and policy reform during this period focused on parole as a mechanism of discretionary release from prison. But parole supervision, the "other parole" as it has been described (Wilson, 1977; Flanagan, 1985), which involves the post–prison supervision of inmates conditionally released to the community, has also been undergoing dramatic change in the United States during the last 20 years. Unfortunately, relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to this phenomenon (see Bottomly, 1992 for one recent example).

Despite the lack of scholarly attention to parole supervision during this time, the parole supervision function has come under attack from many quarters in a highly politicized and heated manner. Crime control advocates have denounced parole supervision as being largely nominal and ineffective; due process advocates have criticized parole revocation processes as arbitrary and counterproductive; and social welfare advocates have decried the lack of meaningful and useful rehabilitation services. These criticisms have acquired added forcefulness as the number of offenders under criminal justice supervision has reached new heights, straining further what many already viewed as inadequate resources.

Nationally, the parole population grew by 141 percent between 1980 and 1990 (Irwin and Austin, 1994), and during 1989 the parole population grew at a faster rate than both the probation and prison populations — 12 percent (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1991). The bulk of this increase

has been due to notable increases in the percent of inmates released into the community under mandatory supervised release rather than through discretionary parole release: 5.9 percent of prison releases in 1977 compared to 31.2 percent of releases in 1987 (see Hester, 1988: 4). Because the philosophy behind mandatory supervised release programs is not anchored as firmly in the rehabilitative ideal as are traditional parole supervision models, its ideological premises often appear relatively unclear (see for example, Schiraldi, 1991).

Three issues have led many states to re–evaluate how and under what conditions inmates released from prison are allowed to re–enter the community: 1) client population trends, 2) mounting philosophical questions about the role of post–incarceration release, and 3) increasing skepticism that traditional forms of parole are protecting the public (for example, Flanagan, 1985). Some jurisdictions have abolished parole supervision altogether, while other jurisdictions have attempted to remedy the deficiencies of the parole system in piecemeal fashion. Still other jurisdictions have called into question the traditional philosophies and premises of parole supervision and have undertaken a total reorganization of parole services.

The result has been the emergence of a patchwork of diverse parole strategies and program designs throughout the nation. Twenty years ago, one could go to any state and find a public agency charged with supervising parolees that would be quite similar in name, function, and structure to its counterparts on the other side of the nation. This is no longer the case. In effect, great strides in the social deconstruction of traditional parole supervision have been witnessed.

Illinois' PreStart Program

Illinois in an example of a state that has recently begun the re–evaluation of post–release services and supervision practices. Since the adoption of a determinate sentencing law in 1977, which ended discretionary parole release mechanisms for newly convicted offenders, Illinois has mandated supervised release of inmates released from prison. Supervision models remained similar to those found under earlier parole models, with offenders being supervised from one to three years based on the seriousness of the original conviction (Goodstein and Hepburn, 1985).

Facing significant budget constraints in the mid– to late 1980s, the Illinois Department of Corrections gave greater priority to institutional corrections and began to down–scale its Community Services Division, which administers the mandatory supervision release program. For instance, during the 1980s there were layoffs of parole staff en masse. Credible parole supervision was impossible with the level of resources that had been allocated by the state. In effect, post release services amounted to the inmate receiving a bus or train ticket to get back home, a nominal

amount of "gate money" (which decreased for most inmates during this period) and the requirement that the "supervising" parole agent be able to track the offender's whereabouts. Case management based on an individual assessment of need and risk, casework, the provision of services to parolees, and an active supervision function were not available for new releasees.

The PreStart program, which began operations on July 1, 1991, intended not to recreate the parole supervision practices of the immediate past, but to establish a novel structure and approach to inmate reintegration into the community. Illinois split its mandatory supervised release program into two parts. Radically different from most parole supervision structures, PreStart separated the surveillance and supervision functions of parole from integrative social services. After mandatory, specialized preparation for release while still in prison (termed Phase I programming), the vast majority of releasees would be allowed to voluntarily use community resources brokered through a system of newly developed community service centers. The centers were designed to promote the abilities of releasees to find jobs, housing, and treatment. (The total package of services and programs available for releasees in the community is termed Phase II programming.)

"PreStart agents" (not "parole agents") were to provide releasees with assistance on a voluntary basis in community service centers (not parole offices). Guns, badges, bullying, and threats of revocation for not playing by the rules (for example, by not meeting regular reporting requirements) and other traditional elements of parole supervision were to be replaced by community resource manuals, referral forms and a helping hand. If releasees showed "dangerous" behaviors, except in the most extreme of cases, law enforcement agencies — not corrections officials — were to respond.

This structure treats the ex–convict as a person who can make his or her own responsible choices — including the option of refusing assistance. Post–release strategies in this component of the PreStart model were designed to take on a purely facilitative role, and except for the lack of a voucher system in which ex–convicts "purchase" services in the community, resemble strongly David Fogel's proposal for a "justice" model of parole (Fogel, 1978).

For releasees who presented specific needs and risks, Illinois planned the implementation of special services. These included the following: 1) four community drug intervention programs, which were to provide services and drug testing for releasees posing clear substance abuse problems; 2) contractual services for special programs for selected sex offenders, who could get help through PreStart; and 3) the development of a special intensive supervision unit to which certain releasees who are deemed particular risks to public safety, and those released from the state's correctional boot camps, were to be assigned. The intensive supervision unit is the only

component of the PreStart program that retains the traditional surveillance function of parole supervision.

This brief description of the PreStart program clearly suggests that what the state has been attempting to do with inmates recently released from prison represents a marked departure from traditional parole supervision models. The introduction of the PreStart program represents a major correctional reform effort requiring widespread organizational and individual change. A massive organization that had been primarily oriented toward imposing punishment on prison inmates within secure prison facilities uncluttered by fanciful or expensive treatment programs, and community correctional staff who had been encouraged for the last decade or so not to confuse their roles with notions of being therapeutic agents of change, would have to make significant changes to faithfully accommodate both Phase I and Phase II PreStart programs.

In spring of 1992, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority contracted with Southern Illinois University at Carbondale to conduct a process and outcome evaluation of the PreStart program. This study builds on findings in the development and implementation of PreStart that had been presented in two earlier reports. It also presents an analysis of PreStart's impact on the recidivism of prison releasees. Findings regarding PreStart's implementation reflect the program's operations up to the end of 1993. It is hoped that improvements will be made in PreStart staffing and programs based on this report's recommendations to the Illinois Department of Corrections. These suggested changes will be discussed when applicable within particular chapters of this report.

Evaluation Plan

The development and implementation of Illinois' PreStart program can be viewed, both for descriptive and analytic purposes, as a major attempt to change a criminal justice organization. This effort involves a significant transformation in the philosophy, structure, and practice by which inmates in the state are conditionally allowed to re-enter the community. The program can be viewed as a reform which will eventually undergo all of the following distinct stages associated with planned change processes: diagnosis or conception, initiation, implementation, and routinization (Hage and Aiken, 1970). The evaluation plan was organized in a manner consistent with these stages of the reform process. In this report, we examine the public policy environment of parole in Illinois which led to PreStart, the initiation of the program, its implementation, and its impact on offender recidivism and prison populations. Methodologies are explained in the respective chapters.

The research staff feels quite confident that it has achieved a broad–based and comprehensive assessment of PreStart operations. During this evaluation there were times when respondents were not as investigators would have liked, and the project's aim to generate open, supportive, and collegial interactions between the host agency and the research staff was not fully accomplished. Still, the data presented in this report are as valid, reliable and complete as could have been collected within the research context, and the interpretations of the data have not been constrained by either the Illinois Department of Corrections or the funding agency, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

Report Organization

Chapter 2 deals with the genesis and initiation of parole reform in Illinois. National and statewide trends in prison and parole populations are examined along with responses to these trends and to harsh fiscal realities. Archival information and interviews are used to follow state–level corrections in Illinois through shifts in correctional philosophy and practice. The chapter presents a detailed analysis of the turbulent socio–political environment from which PreStart emerged, depicts the path traveled by PreStart from inception to implementation, and traces the key decisions affecting the program through its development.

Using the model developed by Van Horn and Van Meter (1977) to analyze the implementation environment, Chapter 3 notes that when PreStart was implemented, it lacked many of the key variables associated with program success (for example, a supportive political and social environment, adequate resources, favorable dispositions among implementors, clear policy standards, strong communication, and an organization suited for rapid absorption of change). This chapter presents data on staff attitudes on PreStart to analyze whether or not they were favorable.

Chapter 4 presents an implementation analysis of Phase I programming based on field studies conducted at 10 correctional institutions and four community correctional centers at two points in time: The first wave of visits occurred during the summer and early fall of 1992 and the second wave occurred during the summer of 1993. Similar measurement techniques were used to assess Phase I programming efforts at both periods. One would expect that two years after a program has been implemented, the program would be in the "routinization" stage of implementation and exhibit a maturation of program activities (Hage and Aiken, 1970), but as detailed in this chapter and much to the credit of IDOC officials, Phase I programming continues to witness significant change and improvement. Interviews and self–administered questionnaire data from PreStart staff, interview and mass–administered questionnaire data from inmates, and observational data are used.

Chapter 5 presents the reactions of inmates to Phase I programming. In both 1992 and 1993, more than 400 inmates from the same 14 facilities provided their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the PreStart program in their facility. Methodologies used in generating samples of inmates in 1992 and 1993, and related surveying techniques, are presented in this chapter. Before introducing survey data on inmate perceptions and attitudes toward PreStart, measures of self–esteem, anxiety, and depression for the inmate sample from 1992 are presented to better describe them.

Inmates are rarely asked to express what they think about correctional programming, but as illustrated in this chapter, what they say may be much more telling than what is stated by staff or external evaluators. This chapter reveals that despite the chaotic and pressured policy arena in which PreStart was formulated, and the less–than–ideal implementation environment that resulted, the IDOC has put together a Phase I pre–release program that has been very well received by the vast majority of inmates. It is generally perceived to provide inmates with practical and meaningful skills, attitudes, and information that will help them make a smoother transition into the community. This chapter also uses a variety of measures to gauge inmate reactions to PreStart, scales that more precisely and completely measure attitudes and perceptions than single–item measures. This analytic strategy allows for a rigorous examination of how inmate attitudes vary and serves to illustrate how inmate feedback on PreStart can be gathered routinely and inexpensively.

Chapter 6 presents a discussion of the Phase II program design and organizational structure, as well as detailed analysis of community service center activity. Included in this chapter is a discussion of the special intensive supervision unit and programs for special populations (that is, sex and drug offenders). Much of this information comes from IDOC documents, including human services reports, administrative directives, executed contracts and interviews with Community Services Division staff during the course of site visits. The major strengths and shortcomings of Phase II programs are highlighted.

Chapter 7 presents an analysis of releasee reactions to Phase II programming. The perceptions and attitudes of releasees are gleaned from: 1) mailed questionnaires with inmate samples surveyed in 1992 and follow–up phone interviews, and 2) interviews with releasees who walked into or called community service centers while site visits were being conducted. This chapter notes the variability of inmate reactions to the PreStart program, and how that variability is patterned across the state. It also examines how releasees adjusted to their communities and the issues they faced in adjusting to their newfound freedoms.

Chapter 8 presents a detailed process evaluation of the Springfield Community Drug Intervention Program (CDIP), the only one of the four planned community drug intervention programs that has been fully operational for an extended period. The analysis is based on staff and client interviews as well as program statistical information, and emphasizes program standards, staffing, referral and intake processes, and exit and termination outcomes.

Ultimately, the success of PreStart will be contingent upon a number of community–related variables: the range, quality and number of services that exist to meet the needs of ex–offenders; the ability to integrate local service delivery; and the acceptance of community service center clients. Even under the best conditions — fully staffed community service centers, motivated and trained parole officers, and releasees who are willing to seek assistance — reintegration efforts will fail if necessary services are unavailable to released offenders or if community–based constituents of the program are not supportive. Chapter 9 explores these issues based on the results of two surveys of representatives from a variety of allied criminal justice and social service agencies. Though many of the survey respondents had limited awareness of and information about PreStart, investigators gathered important information on the community's receptiveness to PreStart clients; allied agencies' perceptions and expectations regarding PreStart's impact on existing services; and obstacles hindering the delivery of existing community services to PreStart clients.

Chapter 10 presents an analysis of Prestart's impact on the issuance and execution of warrants and the IDOC prison population. Administrative policy regarding the issuance and execution of warrants underwent great change when PreStart was introduced. In addition, because an active supervision and surveillance function was eliminated for most releasees, the opportunities and rationales for violating releasees who have not met the conditions of mandatory supervised release were greatly restricted. It might be expected that PreStart would result in a reduced level of technical violations, and perhaps slow down the growth in Illinois' prison population. An analysis of monthly data from 1987 to 1993 in warrant activity and the prison population examines whether PreStart had these effects.

Chapter 11 presents an analysis of PreStart's impact on offender recidivism. Rearrest and reincarceration are used as measures of recidivism. The recidivism of a sample of inmates released under PreStart is compared to the recidivism of a random sample of inmates released before PreStart was implemented. In addition, the recidivism rates of samples of inmates supervised in the special intensive supervision unit and the Springfield CDIP, and those released from the Illinois Impact Incarceration Program Dixon Springs are examined to assess the impact of these programs on recidivism.

Chapter 12 presents a summary of PreStart implementation efforts and their impact, and presents general recommendations to the Department of Corrections that are considered likely to enhance the program if implemented. These recommendations relate to basic issues such as staffing and resource levels, revision of the organizational structure in which PreStart programming is offered, the need for more clearly defined policies and procedures based on a thorough reassessment of program goals, more internal communication, and better deployment of available technologies.

Chapter 2

THE GENESIS OF PRESTART

When evaluating both implementation and impact issues in large–scale reform efforts, it is necessary to understand the origins of the reform. "Social scientists concerned with criminal justice evaluations have begun to acknowledge that to better understand the nature of a reform's outcomes, it is necessary to acquire a thorough grasp of earlier stages in the reform process" (Goodstein and Hepburn, 1985: 1). The reform process is extremely complex, including a "temporal sequence of decision points through which a reform must pass before it is operational and capable of demonstrating an impact" (Goodstein and Hepburn, 1985: 2; see also Zalman, 1982; Berk, Burstein, and Nagel, 1980). Very often policy analysts examine a new policy by simply assuming that the policy creators have acted in a rational, goal–oriented manner, and so they use the explicitly stated goals of the policy or legislation as a benchmark for evaluation. If those goals are not achieved, or the targets of change do not conform to expectations, the policy will generally be considered a failure. This is a rather simplistic analysis that often has limited relevance.

The researcher must understand the motives and goals of the policy–makers and the context of policy creation to assess the consequences of reform. Further, the policy formulation process often foreshadows the nature of implementation (such as barriers to successful implementation, the extent of compliance with policy provisions and linkages between responsible actors in the implementation process). In other words, evaluators must be aware of where a program began, and where it was headed, before deciding if it actually arrived there.

The origins of PreStart stem from the process of diagnosis within the corrections policy arena in Illinois — that is, identification of problems and considerations of solutions. The process of diagnosis leads to the addition of new functions or the alteration of old practices. An important decision during this stage is, "Which of several alternatives should be adopted?"

This chapter will follow PreStart from an idea (whose inception occurred perhaps years before actual formulation of the program) to the point of implementation. This will be done in two steps: First, a look at the national and statewide context of the reform will depict the driving forces behind what eventually became PreStart; second, a "time line" will be developed, delineating the path taken by the reform. The chapter will conclude with a synthesis of events in Illinois and their influence at various stages of the policy reform.

National Trends Relating To Parole

The following overview of national trends in parole during the past two decades illustrates how the Illinois experience, though unique, reflects larger trends in parole. During the 1970s and 1980s, parole practices were rethought and changed nationwide. The vast bulk of attention, criticism, and policy reform during this time frame was focused on parole as a mechanism of discretionary release from prison. However, parole supervision, the "other parole" as it has been labeled (Wilson, 1977), has also been undergoing dramatic change in the United States during the last 20 years.

For instance, 20 years ago one could go to any state and find a parole supervision function that would be quite similar to that which could be found in any other state. This is no longer the case. Diverse parole strategies and program designs have emerged throughout the nation.

These changes stem from organizational restructuring of the correctional system, a shift in correctional philosophies as the effectiveness of current practices were questioned, and increasing correctional populations coupled with decreasing correctional budgets.

Organizational Restructuring

Over the past 20 years, numerous commissions and study groups have recommended that criminal justice agencies unify separate entities involved in corrections. These ideas assumed a need for cohesion among the components of corrections and criminal justice that were increasingly being viewed as systems (Smykla, 1984). In fact, this was a driving force in the move away from an independent model of paroling authority, one in which the paroling entity was an autonomous body with the sole authority over parole release and supervision. Rather, many states implemented a consolidated model, where the paroling authority was incorporated into a larger correctional agency as a subunit, or where the paroling authority remained autonomous but staff of a larger corrections department supervised those on community release. These changes were primarily intended to better serve the offender and also to emphasize correctional efforts in providing public safety. One result for community corrections was that parole became less of a priority program within the corrections system as its autonomous authority over releasees was diluted.

Philosophical Shifts/Questions of Effectiveness

Also exerting pressure on parole policy during this period was a growing disenchantment with the rehabilitative model and offender treatment in general. As Palmer notes:

> From the 1960s to 1970s there was a broad surge of confidence regarding rehabilitation's ability to change and control offenders on a short– as well as long–term basis. This high optimism was quickly followed by widespread pessimism from 1975 to 1981, a period that was triggered by Martinson's (1974) mid–1970s critique of rehabilitation's presumed effectiveness (1992:3).

This discontent with treatment effectiveness was accompanied by the presentation of David Fogel's (1975) justice model and Andrew von Hirsh's (1976) just desserts model, both of which called for the elimination of the indeterminate sentence and discretionary parole. Many states have heeded these calls, enacting determinate sentencing and abolishing discretionary parole.

Parole Supervision Effectiveness

It was not surprising that parole supervision as well as discretionary parole release would come under attack. Yet as the effectiveness of parole supervision was questioned, it became apparent that there were woefully few sound research studies that addressed questions of parole supervision effectiveness. While some studies existed, their results were not easily pooled. Differing definitions of parole failure, recidivism and other key issues had been applied. Even the ultimate question of what should be considered effective in supervision (for example, lower recidivism, ease of reintegration into the community, the provision of services to offenders who need them) was left unanswered.

Flanagan (1985) offers a succinct and extensive review of the parole effectiveness literature. His conclusion is not reassuring for those who strongly support traditional parole supervision strategies: The empirical research on the effectiveness of parole supervision as a method of reducing recidivism has been equivocal at best. The most that can be concluded from existing research is that traditional supervision practices may delay recidivism for a relatively short time for certain offenders. Thus, experimentation with altered parole supervision strategies has not been driven by knowledge about what works (in terms of the adjustment of released offenders into the community) any more than it has been shaped by knowledge of what does not work.

Knowing the sometimes insurmountable methodological difficulties in measuring correctional program effectiveness accurately, it is not necessarily the case that nothing works or that parole supervision is ineffective in curtailing recidivism. But common perceptions of what is or is not effective, regardless of the validity of those perceptions, help drive the political decisions which shape correctional policies.

Trends in Correctional Populations and Budgets

The third major force shaping the change in parole during this period was the growth in correctional populations and the overcrowding problem. Nationally this has been attributed to an increasing number of incarcerations under mandatory sentencing provisions. As Blumstein noted in 1988, incarceration rates had been relatively stable in the United States from the mid–1920s until the 1970s, then had climbed dramatically, nearly tripling by 1988. Following this growth in prison populations was a proportional growth in release populations (see Table 2.1). During the mid–1980s, many state correctional systems embarked on ambitious prison construction programs to deal with the population growth and overcrowding. As these building programs gained momentum, many states also faced shrinking revenues and budget shortfalls. This prompted the question: What should be done with the increasing parole population given the reductions in appropriations for parole services?

Table 2.1: Parole Populations and Rates

Year	Parole Population (as of Dec. 31)	Rate (per 100,000 Adult Residents) of People on Parole
1978	185,100	138 [1]
1981	226,200	136
1984	266,992	155
1988	407,977	201
1990	531,407	287

Source: Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, various years: 1978–1990

[1] Data for 1979 rate/1978 U.S. total unavailable

The Results for Parole Supervision

Responses to these forces, as noted above, have been varied. But definite patterns have emerged. Certain states, such as New York and Texas, have not abandoned discretionary parole

release. These states are forced to handle bulging parole populations in the face of fiscal distress, and they have responded to public demands for offender accountability by using a variety of innovative case management techniques.

New York now uses a differential case supervision strategy by which the bulk of parole resources are allocated to offenders "who pose the greatest risk to the community, those recently released from prison" (New York State Division of Parole, 1990).

Texas serves as an example for states attempting to develop innovative programming for special populations. Since the mid–1980s, Texas has introduced a variety of unique programs to most efficiently provide resources to those who need them and to provide special kinds of treatment for those with special characteristics. Included are an electronic monitoring program that aims to promote public safety by closely monitoring high–risk offenders (with reduced caseloads of 25:1 releasee/officer ratio); a large, intensive parole program; special, small caseloads for sex offenders, mentally impaired offenders, mentally retarded offenders and substance abusers; and, in an attempt to reduce prison re–admissions, intermediate sanction facilities (with 1,097 beds) designed to house low–risk releasees being held in county jails for violations of their release agreements (Texas Department of Criminal Justice, 1991).

Maine and Florida illustrate how the adoption of determinacy in sentencing and the abolition of parole supervision have resulted in the creation of little–known functional equivalents to parole supervision. For instance, Maine is often described as having eliminated parole supervision altogether without witnessing increasing crime as a result (Tonry, 1990). In reality, through the latter half of the 1980s, less than 40 percent of Maine's prisoners were unconditionally released into the community. The vast majority of those conditionally released were placed on probation after their term of imprisonment expired (this is known as "judicial parole"). Thus, an adaptation was made after the abolishment of parole supervision to ensure that at least some of the functions of parole supervision continued. Likewise, although parole supervision was abolished in Florida in 1983, a form of parole supervision was reintroduced in 1989 that covered about 70 percent of total releasees. About a quarter of releasees, however, are released without required supervision. Thus, demands for releasee accountability persist in these states and innovative adaptations have been introduced to assure that at least some releasees are supervised in the community.

Changes in Illinois' parole system, as reflected by PreStart, have been paralleled in recent attempts to reform the California parole system. In California, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Inmate Population Management recently recommended an overhaul of parole operations along similar lines to those of PreStart (Schiraldi 1991). The commission's recommendations include the following:

1) Minimize or eliminate the supervision/revocation function of parole. Post–release supervision would be abolished or shortened for all or mostly all parolees. Unsupervised parolees would be revoked and returned to prison only if apprehended by the police;

2) Reallocate the funds that were previously spent on supervision functions to pay for rehabilitative services. The community–based treatment programs would offer a variety of services including drug rehabilitation, job training, and housing assistance; and

3) Increase the use of pre–release programs in prison in order to equip inmates with basic skills for successful functioning in the community.

Although these recommendations were rejected by Gov. Pete Wilson, California has taken a number of more modest initiatives in altering parole practices and the costs they generate. Prominently included is a variety of policies that serves to reduce technical violation rates (*The Sacramento Bee,* June 6, 1992: B6). The above developments indicate that what is happening in Illinois with regard to parole supervision, as embodied by PreStart, reflects a broad, national questioning of traditional parole supervision and related experimentation and innovation.

The Context of Reform in Illinois

Methodology

The data used to analyze the policy background to PreStart came from the following sources: interviews with key decision makers, IDOC archival data, published statistical reports and newspaper coverage of correctional issues.

Face–to–face, semistructured interviews were conducted with key policy–makers who were central actors in the formulation and development of the PreStart program. Beginning with key figures in the funding agency and the IDOC, and proceeding to other key figures identified through the use of judgmental and snowball sampling techniques, about a dozen key policy–makers were asked a series of open–ended questions regarding the conceptualization and genesis of the PreStart program. Their observations were compared internally with those of lower–ranking members in the corrections organization to assess the consistency of responses. Overall, the oral histories presented by the respondents exhibited a great deal of congruence. It should be emphasized that when direct quotes are used, they reflect thoughts and feelings observed repeatedly from respondents. The particular quotes chosen for inclusion were selected on the following basis: They reflect the common responses derived from interviews, and they succinctly state the issue involved.

Four types of archival data were sought to assess the more formal history of PreStart's development. These included annual planning and policy documents made public by the IDOC, published and unpublished statistical reports generated by the IDOC, governmental task force reports, and internal memos.

The *Chicago Tribune*, from 1985 to present, was searched for articles dealing with state correctional and parole issues. A search of *The* (Springfield) *State Journal–Register* for the summer of 1991 was conducted to analyze the perspective of the correctional environment in Illinois during the time the reform was planned and initiated. Though only two state newspapers were used, it seems logical that if stories did not appear in the state's most prominent newspaper, nor in the newspaper originating in the state capital where the discussions and decisions were taking place, then chances are that related stories did not appear in other Illinois newspapers.

These sources provide a rich understanding of the context in which PreStart has emerged, the history of its inception, planning and development, and program goals and objectives; an analysis of them will delineate the program's path from idea to implementation.

The Policy Context

A closer look at how Illinois was affected by national trends and state events will provide the context in which the PreStart program was created.

Sentencing and Criminal Code Reform

A critical change affecting the contemporary operations of the IDOC was the reform of criminal sentencing laws in Illinois in the mid– to late–1970s. This period saw legislators responding to what they perceived as a public demanding tougher criminal laws which emphasized retribution over rehabilitation. Many bills were introduced into the legislature that called for mandatory minimum sentences for certain offenses and the lengthening of prison stays (Bagley, 1979, as cited in Goodstein and Hepburn, 1985). In 1975, the number of crime–related bills circulating in the legislature prompted a study by the Illinois House Judiciary II Committee, which was to result in significant revision of the Illinois criminal code.

On Dec. 28, Gov. James R. Thompson signed a determinate sentencing law, which went into effect on Feb. 1, 1978. This was generally seen as "ushering in a new era...one in which sentences would be both fairer...and, where warranted, far more severe than had previously been authorized by law" (Schuwerk, 1984: 632). With the introduction of determinate sentencing came

the abolition of discretionary parole release and many other consequences which would shape parole reform even into the early 1990s.

The end of discretionary parole release, however, was not accompanied by an abandonment of mandated terms of supervision for released offenders. The legislation mandated terms of supervision in the community for released offenders ranging from one to three years, depending on initial conviction charges (mandatory supervised release); traditional parole structures remained for those incarcerated under indeterminate sentencing.

Another related change was the abolition of the Parole Board. The board was not so much replaced as it was converted into the Prisoner Review Board (PRB), having some of the same members and functions of the Parole Board. The PRB is a state government agency autonomous from the IDOC and plays a key role in the new release/supervision system; it is the body empowered to determine the conditions of release, impose sanctions for violations, and revoke an ex–prisoner's conditional release status (Ill. Stat. Rev. 1978, Chapt. 38, sec. 1003–3–1(a)(5)).

Accompanying determinacy in Illinois, the late–1970s and 1980s have seen the introduction of a number of mandatory minimum sentencing laws (for example, Class X legislation) and other pieces of legislation targeting certain offenders.

These statutory revisions, such as the Habitual Offender Act (Illinois Revised statutes, Chapter 38 Section, 33–B–1), have resulted in more of those convicted going to prison and longer terms for those who are incarcerated.

Correctional Populations and Expenditures

As elsewhere in the nation, correctional populations in Illinois skyrocketed in subsequent years. The state's prison population doubled between 1982 and 1992, after doubling in the 10 years prior to that. Despite opening up 14 new prisons between 1978 and 1991, the prison system was more overcrowded than ever — housing more than 30,000 inmates in a system designed to hold only about 20,000, and raising cries and efforts to forestall the growth in prison populations and overcrowding (the Illinois Task Force on Crime and Corrections, 1992).

Due to population growth and concerns with maintaining the safety of prisoners and institutional staff, the IDOC's operational spending budget had more than tripled since 1975, even when accounting for inflation. Within the agency an increasing portion of the budget had been devoted to adult institutional corrections. For instance, total appropriations for FY 1992 were $567 million, nearly 80 percent going toward operating adult institutions. By contrast, less than 60

percent of the department's operating budget in FY 1975 went toward adult prisons (Illinois Task Force on Crime and Corrections, 1992: 11–12). Expenditures for community supervision remained relatively stable throughout the 1980s, increasing from $4.2 million in 1979 to $4.46 million in 1989 (IDOC, 1979; IDOC, 1989), despite the tremendous increase in the IDOC's overall budget.

Within these fiscal constraints, the Community Services Division of the IDOC has operated under the mandate of supervising an ever–increasing releasee population. As can be seen in Table 2.2, the number of admissions to community supervision between 1982 and 1991 more than doubled, while the average daily population of releasees increased 81 percent. From 1980 to 1987, however, the increase in parole populations was accompanied by a gradual decrease in the number of parole agents. Significant layoffs occurred in 1983. The rehiring of some parole agents took place shortly thereafter, but in 1987 another budget cut resulted in the laying off of half of the existing parole staff. Afterwards, the average number of parole agents gradually increased through 1991, but not at a rate fast enough to bring average caseloads to levels found in the early 1980s. In fact, the average caseload in 1991 was more than twice the caseload in 1982 and almost four times the recommended caseload of the American Correctional Association. If one considers variation in caseload size within regions of the state, the numbers are even more staggering, with some parole agents in Chicago carrying caseloads of more than 300 people.

The consequences of the above trends were reflected in the declining average cost of providing services and surveillance to releasees. For instance, the average cost per monthly population of releasees was $564 in FY 1981 and $350 in FY 1989. The average cost per releasee in FY 1981 was $319 and in FY 1989 was $196 (IDOC, 1989). In terms of potential supervision provided to releasees, the amount of hours available for supervision per releasee per month in 1985 was 1.7. By 1989 this had dropped to 1.2 hours (IDOC, 1989). In comparison to other states, the level of resources devoted to parole supervision in Illinois is strikingly low. In 1989, Illinois spent $0.96 per parolee per day. In contrast, California spent $9.86 per day, New York spent $6.58, and Indiana spent $3.75 per day (IDOC, 1991: 30). While these figures were suggestive, it was unclear whether these cost figures are directly comparable across states because of potential differences in the classification and recording of appropriation data (for example, whether figures include general state revenue dollars only). What was clear is that parole in Illinois was facing harsh fiscal realities which influenced the amount of money available for use in delivering parole services.

Table 2.2: Trends in Community Supervision Population, Failure Rates, Parole Staffing Levels, and Caseload, in Illinois, 1979-1993[a,b]

	Admissions to Community Supervision	Charged with New Offense	Charged with Technical Violation	Average Number of Agents	Average Daily Population	Average Caseload
1979	—	1,126	830	—	—	81
1980	—	—	—	125	—	66
1981	—	1,199	530	129	—	67
1982	7,522	1,299	409	121	8,247	68
1983	9,784	1,780	371	119	9,706	82
1984	6,285	1,797	440	111	9,315	84
1985	7,854	1,094	1,040	114	8,916	78
1986	8,258	1,002	1,330	122	9,731	80
1987	8,650	975	1,664	107	10,836	101
1988	10,007	1,367	1,007	46	11,997	261
1989	10,302	1,344	1,284	72	12,737	177
1990	11,568	1,779	2,773	101	12,290	122
1991	17,157	2,099	2,737	106	14,899	145
1992	14,787	2,279	847	N/A	21,953	N/A
1993 (proj.)	16,914	3,008	755	N/A	24,189	N/A

[a] Source: Illinois Department of Corrections, Human Services Plan, Various Years and Tables.
[b] Note: When conflicting data were found, the most recent numbers were used.

Philosophical Shifts Regarding Parole Supervision

The priority given to the Community Services Division within the IDOC reflects changing correctional philosophies that have influenced the policy changes in parole supervision in Illinois. Parole agents have often been noted as having the difficult position of being both advocate and enforcer for the releasees assigned them. The philosophical shifts within the IDOC concerning the appropriate role of parole — law enforcement officer vs. counselor — have been pronounced during the last 30 years.

During the 1960s, parole agents in Illinois were to serve mainly a law enforcement function, enforcing parole rules on inmates released to the community prior to the completion of their sentences (under indeterminate sentencing):

> The focus of community supervision was on the protection and safety of the community...This strict reliance on enforcement of parole rules caused some inmates to be more apprehensive of parole agents than the police. The police could detain an inmate for a violation of a law, while the parole agent could have an inmate returned to prison for violation of a parole rule which was not necessarily a violation of law (IDOC, 1982).

In the late–1960s and 1970s, the focus on law enforcement shifted toward a counseling perspective, as parole agents began to identify inmate needs (for example, suitable housing, employment opportunities, assistance dealing with alcohol and drug dependencies) that directly affected the violation of parole rules. In response to these changes, the department underwent legislated change, adding work– and day–release centers to create a "structured release environment leading to an incident–free adjustment to the community." (IDOC, 1982)

Philosophical shifts dramatically affected the operations of community supervision during the 1980s. A comparison of the mission statements of community supervision during the decade is illustrative. The 1981 Human Services Plan (IDOC, 1981) cites the following as the mission statement for community supervision:

> To maximize the probability of successful reintegration through the provision of quality community–based services consistent with the needs of the offender under state jurisdiction while protecting the safety of the public.

The related purpose statement noted that:

> Community supervision is provided for the delivery of services to offenders released from correctional facilities into the community and for the protection of that community... (IDOC, 1981).

This purpose statement had changed by 1984 to read:

> The purpose of community supervision is to monitor offenders released from correctional facilities for the protection of the community into which the offender is released and to

provide necessary services in order to assist releasees in making a successful re–entry to their community (IDOC, 1984).

Interestingly enough, this latter statement of purpose was coupled with the mission statement from 1981 emphasizing successful reintegration and delivery of services.

By 1987, further changes had been made in the mission and purpose statements of the Community Services Division. The Annual Human Services Plan stated that the departmental goal "to re–emphasize [the] public safety priority of Community Supervision" (IDOC, 1987: 128) had been met. This goal was achieved by the publishing of a mission statement: "To assist in the protection of the public by minimizing the unlawful conduct of prison releasees through a system of differential supervision" (IDOC, 1987: 127).

A system of differential supervision was first introduced by the IDOC in 1979 as part of a pilot project to explore the viability of an offender case–classification system adapted from the National Institute of Corrections. An individual's supervision level would be determined by his or her assessed risk and needs score. People with high–risk scores would be given a higher supervision level with a focus on surveillance; people with a high needs score also would be given a higher supervision level, though the focus would be on the delivery of services. The program was expanded statewide in 1980 and 1981, and was used until 1987. Changes in the correctional philosophy of parole during the late–1980s reflected the pragmatic organizational realities facing the IDOC in light of increasing parole populations and the ability of existing resources to do both surveillance and casework. Some current IDOC staff suggest that changes in correctional philosophy during this period also reflected the ability of the then incumbent director to translate his own views into correctional policy. As one high–ranking IDOC official related:

> The [correctional] era [in the mid– to late–1980s] brought order and operational cohesiveness to the department, but it also brought 'cold, logical processing.' There was no growth in programs attempting to affect behavioral change. This...era was an era of health/safety/sanitation.

Under the IDOC director in office during most of the '80s, adult institutional corrections dominated the priority structure within the department. A key concern was the amount of bed space, and much of the policy and programming of this era seem to have been based directly on monetary allocations. If a theoretical correctional model were to be applied to this period, it would most likely be the punishment model. Those who committed crimes were to serve their time in Illinois' correctional institutions under the most sanitary and safe conditions possible.

The above–mentioned re–emphasis of community safety as it related to parole supervision policies was reflected in a verbal directive from the IDOC director. Prompted by some well–

publicized incidents that depicted parole agents as unaware of where their parolees were, the directive mandated that a warrant be written up on a parolee if he failed to appear for a once–a–month report. If the warrant was not written up, it would mean a disciplinary write–up from that agent's supervisor.

Whether or not agents were disciplined because of this directive is unclear; however, it is clear that this was the perception of parole staff at the time. One staff source recalled that, "During the end of [this] era, it was a 'violate everything that moves edict.'" Another IDOC administrator pointed out that the director had gone as far as saying that until the parole supervision function was fully in place — that is, until each officer knew where each parolee was and each parolee submitted his or her monthly report — officers were not to engage in any social work. Officers took this quite literally, and parole took on a "lock 'em up" approach, with the emphasis being monitoring and offender surveillance. Under the IDOC director at this time, an emphasis was placed on offender accountability. Enforcement of the monthly report rule was emphasized. At this point neither counseling nor service delivery was practical. In a related development, the differential parole supervision system was abandoned. It simply was no longer feasible, given average parole caseloads, to vary supervision strategies based on offender risk or need.

These changes, especially the policy regarding strict adherence to the monthly report rule, had pronounced effects on technical violation rates and the rate of releasees being returned to prison. As can be found in Table 2.2, from 1979 to 1984 the number of releasees charged with a technical violation was consistently smaller than the number of releasees charged with a new offense. In 1986 and 1987, figures for both types of failures on supervision indicate that a much greater percentage of failures was the result of technical violations than the result of new arrests (63 percent in 1986 compared with 37 percent in 1987). With massive parole agent layoffs in 1988, the failure rates became more balanced between categories of failure. By 1990 — when the parole staff had returned to pre–layoff levels — almost 1,000 more parolees were charged with technical violations than with new crimes (1,779 releasees charged with new crimes compared to 2,773 charged with technical violations in 1990).

To sum up, the following resulted in a crisis for adult corrections: prison overcrowding in a system that had witnessed a major de–emphasis of behavioral change programming and offender reintegration into the community; a parole system associated with a high technical violation rate seen as contributing to prison populations; and impending statewide fiscal distress. As has been the case with many of the more dramatic reforms in corrections (for example, the deinstitutionalization of juvenile corrections in Massachusetts; Miller et al., 1977), crisis opened the system to significant system–level change.

Time Line of PreStart Development

What follows is a history of PreStart's conception and development. The origins of PreStart will be addressed from two vantage points. First, public perception is presented based on public information. Next, the perspective of top–level IDOC administrators and key decision makers closely involved in the reform is offered.

Seemingly the only sources of information from the first vantage point would be a few newspaper articles and some IDOC documents (made public annually by the department) that mention the restructuring of adult parole and briefly explain the new system.

What Did the Newspapers Say?

The one article that called PreStart by name was found in the May 10, 1991, issue of *The* (Springfield) *State Journal–Register* (Clarke, 1991). The article begins with the laments of Illinois parole agents, facing yet another severe cutback. In the article, the IDOC director is quoted as saying that:

> [Gov.] Edgar wants to upgrade a program called PreStart, which allows parole officers to focus intensively on the inmates for the 2–3 months prior to release from prison...The program would teach the convicts job and life skills to get the parolees back on their feet, reducing parole supervision (Clarke, 1991: 12).

The article notes a parole agent's argument that this program was not designed to replace parole agents but rather to augment the current system.

An article titled "Parole System a Bad Joke that May Get Worse" (Reckentenwald and Karwarth, 1991) appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* shortly before the May 10 *State Journal–Register* article (April 7, 1991). This article makes mention of PreStart, though not by name, saying only that:

> Edgar...proposed starting parole classes in prisons to tell inmates before they are released exactly what will be expected of them. The program's goal is to reduce the number of parolees returning to prison. Edgar also proposed making parole 'more intensive' in the first year...

Another article appearing in *The* (Springfield) *State Journal–Register* (Spanier, 1991) also discussed a change in the parole system. This June 30 article added a bit more information, while not mentioning the points above. It quoted the IDOC spokesperson as saying that the parole system would be restructured to cost less. This would be done by having high–risk inmates receive the most supervision while low–risk inmates would receive only occasional attention.

While the average Illinoisan would have read only a small amount about PreStart in the newspapers and would have found some of the information conflicting, there was quite a bit of coverage devoted to corrections. Articles concerning budget constraints, the ever–present threat of parole layoffs, and increasingly crowded conditions in prisons and on parole appeared almost weekly.

What Did IDOC Public Documents Say?

Information on PreStart also is available from IDOC planning documents, one of the most notable being the annual Human Services Plan. In the Plan, the steps of change could be followed, beginning with the April 1990 document which discussed possible changes in a section titled "Returning to More Manageable Caseloads." Though the section addressed "the continued hiring of parole agents during FY 1990" as a source for bringing caseloads to more manageable levels, the IDOC projected an increase of only one parole agent between FYs 1989 and 1991 (IDOC, 1990: 22).

Officials realized that it was not feasible to try to reduce caseloads by hiring more staff and assigning shorter terms of supervision for many releasees; as the document stated, "the fiscal year '91 budget will accommodate only the existence of current staff and services..." (IDOC, 1990: 23). Another option was to take seriously the recommendations of a recently issued report by the Task Force on Released Inmates. The blue ribbon task force had been appointed by the legislature to "conduct a comprehensive study of the problems facing people released from correctional facilities and to make recommendations regarding solutions to those problems..."(IDOC, 1990: iv). The task force's recommendations centered around a "standard, comprehensive release school" to be implemented in IDOC facilities and a variety of new treatment programs. It also recommended the expansion of community correctional center beds, a reassessment of parole supervision practices and a reduction in caseloads, and greater service delivery to releasees. Ultimately, and consistent with the recommendations of the task force, efforts were undertaken to enact bold policies to reduce caseloads and provide community support services to inmates in their transition into the community (IDOC, 1990).

In the following year, the Human Services Plan reported the department's strategy for a complete restructuring of adult parole, including a description of a pre–release function. It included the development of an "individualized development plan" (IDP) guided by counselor, educator and medical staff (as well as self) assessment. It also discussed the instruction and counseling that an inmate would receive prior to release. The topics to be included were as follows:

> ...independent living, life skills, self–esteem, employment counseling, job placement, residential placement, substance abuse counseling and programs, AIDS programs and services, family and individual counseling, availability of federal, state, and local agency services; and, services provided by local social and civic organizations (IDOC, 1991).

The plan described the agents' post–release function as aiding in the implementation of the individual development plan; serving as broker of services available to assist the offender for up to three months after release; and perhaps teaching classes that may be offered on some of the key areas mentioned in pre–release instruction.

The section on restructuring parole ended with a call to amend statutes governing parole and mandatory supervised release. These amendments would be important since they are necessary for the implementation of such a restructuring, and since (as the report states), "The Department will continue to refine this program for implementation in fiscal year 1992" (IDOC, 1991).

In the 1991 document there were two sections dealing with PreStart. The first discusses its implementation and gives an overview of the program. It mentions supervision only in terms of high–risk releasees who are placed under the Special Intensive Supervision Unit. Parole agents (called "Phase II" agents) are to "assist releasees...facilitate referrals...be available in their service center...[to] basically broker services by informing...inmates of the services available" (IDOC, 1991).

What Did Key Decision Makers Say?

A review of the above–mentioned public documents suggests that PreStart and the reform of adult parole in Illinois was a change that took place relatively quickly as a response to long–standing concerns about existing parole services. However, at the key policy–maker level, the picture broadens somewhat, with themes emerging that parallel those commonly identified in the criminal justice reform process. For instance, many studies suggest that criminal justice elites — who include a small number of key and interested politicians and staff, along with criminal justice personnel — typically determine changes in the criminal justice system with minimal public involvement or challenge (Berk, Brackman, and Lesser, 1977; Fairchild, 1981). This appears true in the present instance; the decision making surrounding PreStart seems to have been centered around a relatively high level of administration, including two IDOC directors presiding over the agency from late 1990 to mid–1991; a few key staff of the Community Services Division; the governor's office and Bureau of the Budget staff; and personnel at the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (PreStart's funding agency).

Where Did the Idea Begin?

The seed for the ideas incorporated in the reforms of PreStart were evident in Illinois corrections and parole long before any task force or pilot study began. Planning for parole reform was actually more elongated and oriented toward the eventual outcomes than is evidenced by a review of public documents.

Many of the goals and expectations surrounding parole reform were driven by situational factors. For example, one desire of the IDOC was a more effective use of parole agents, while another intention was to address the number of parole revocations that had been exacerbating the already insurmountable problem of overcrowding in Illinois prisons. The immediate problem, however, was the inability of the state budget to fund the IDOC so it could function at any level other than sheer maintenance — and even that was tenuous.

From Idea to Program

The seeds for such a restructuring of parole had been present for some time; they range from criticisms of parole made by an inmate advocacy group many years before PreStart's inception, to complaints from parole staff and the employee union centering around fiscal and caseload realities, to the legislature's call for a task force to study issues and problems of released inmates and parole in Illinois. The relationship of the IDOC to interest groups, to the union of its employees (AFSCME), and to the legislature that decided both budgetary issues and statutory amendments was important to the development of PreStart.

As indicated earlier, the first formulative step involved in the change was a Legislative Task Force on Released Inmates. The Task Force's unpublished report came out in December 1989; not much was initially done with the recommendations made by the Task Force. Perhaps this was due to basic philosophical differences between the recommended programmatic changes and the views of the then IDOC director. With that director's exit in 1990 and a new director in place, change was made in the underlying philosophies of the department. The new director — characterized by IDOC staff who worked under him during 1990 and 1991 as being an advocate of rehabilitation — believed that the correctional system ought to (or at least attempt to) facilitate behavioral change in offenders. This belief would affect the director's approach to the parole problem Illinois was facing, and would be a major impetus in the development of the PreStart reform by laying the groundwork necessary for the program to be realized. At this point, the director, a strong supporter of pre–release programming, directed the deputy director of community services to act on some of the Task Force recommendations, specifically the suggestion for pre–release programming. The

deputy director contracted with a former elementary school principal to develop a pre–release program that was eventually implemented as a pilot study titled "PROJECT PreStart" at the East Moline Community Correctional Center. While the program was being developed for the pilot study, the contractor, inexperienced in correctional issues, sought advice from IDOC personnel. Again, the ideological convictions of those key in the development process became apparent as the program took shape. Some of the key players assisting the contractor were advocates of an assistance model of parole, and this would be reflected in what became the PreStart program.

Although there is not much documentation of the pilot study and its results, a report authored by the contractor indicated that it hoped the pilot study would "...in some small way initiate change, innovation, and program planning..." While relevant program evaluation data were not included in the report, its author stated that "this work will amply confirm the need for a Pre–Release/Release School Program, and set the stage for more...research, development, and program/project planning" (Carr, 1990). Despite the lack of a rigorous program evaluation, this pilot project would serve as a model for a significant component of parole reform.

During this same time, it was becoming apparent that the budget crisis in Illinois could mean significant reductions for the IDOC's budget in FY 1992. Because the IDOC's primary focus is and has been security for adult institutions (reflecting about 80 percent of the budget), budget cuts meant that just about everything else was fair game for the budget ax. As a number of interviewees noted, given the fact that there was a general feeling that parole was losing its effectiveness, it was certainly thought that parole services were on the budget hit list.

Negotiations between the IDOC and the governor's office took place in the winter and early spring of 1991. During these discussions, it was indicated that the governor's office wanted changes in community supervision in a manner consistent with the general themes found in the Task Force on Released Inmates' recommendations. It also became clear that the governor's office was going to stand strong on the proposed budget cuts. One option for the IDOC was to eliminate or radically reduce parole staff. The acting IDOC director believed that the consequences within the current parole structure would be disastrous, but that a reduction in staffing could be done within a new parole structure. Either way, PROJECT PreStart (which, at the time, consisted of the pilot pre–release program at the E. Moline Correctional Center) was seen as a way to soften the potential loss of aftercare.

The governor's office was reported as being supportive of the PreStart concept from the beginning; this was due in part to the realization that otherwise, it would cost millions to bring parole caseloads down to a manageable level, and in part to the belief that current supervision practices were ineffective. It was announced in the governor's budget address, however, that

severe layoffs would hit parole services in the state. Thus, the support of the governor's office appeared more conceptual than financial in nature.

As mentioned, the original PreStart package did not involve post–release components (later termed Phase II programming). Pre–release programming (later termed Phase I programming) was intended to address inmate needs, releasing individuals who would then be less likely to recidivate. However, other states that had been developing pre–release programming all stressed the need for an aftercare component. This was also true in Illinois, as both the Task Force on Released Inmates and the East Moline Pilot Study stressed, but the critical issue in Illinois was the source and level of funding for aftercare services.

In April 1991, nearing the beginning of the next fiscal year, a new IDOC director took over. Characterized as advocating a reintegration philosophy of corrections with a major emphasis being placed on community–based change efforts in the prevention of crime and recidivism, this director had concerns about aftercare services and believed that a new approach to aftercare would be required. As a proponent of inmate advocacy, the new director believed in putting more direct responsibility on inmates and releasees in their attempts to "reform." For the latest IDOC director, corrections was more than security; behavior change was a coequal goal.

At about the same time this director took office, the IDOC apparently became aware that federal monies were possibly available from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (the Authority) to fund some aspects of parole services. The Authority became involved as the IDOC applied for federal grant money to fund PreStart. It was during this process that PreStart took the shape with which it was eventually implemented.

The new IDOC director, very early in his tenure, was active in encouraging and facilitating the transition to PreStart. While the support of the governor's office was noted above, some key respondents believed that full support came only after the new IDOC director convinced the governor's office that the program was both feasible and desirable. The director also was busy convincing legislators about the merits of parole reform. (At the same time, legislators were being lobbied by parole agents — anticipating impending layoffs — to retain parole services as they existed.) Luncheons were held with Illinois sheriffs, chiefs of police and state's attorneys to help ease their fears about this radical restructuring of parole — to let them know, for instance, that warrants would still be available and releasees would be held accountable in Illinois.

During the spring of 1991, the original PreStart concept was expanded to include community supervision components. The development of community service programming, now called Phase II PreStart, was created partially because the Authority could not use the designated federal funds

to support programs already in existence; only newly created ones could be funded. For this reason, the restructuring of parole in Illinois became Phase II PreStart, a completely new program with Authority funding. There is some evidence that the governor's office may have been influential in facilitating the process of securing Authority funding for the components of PreStart. At this time, the development of PreStart also was influenced by the Authority. Partially in response to the Authority's requirement that the program be "evaluatable," target populations were more clearly defined, and Phase II programming and training issues were addressed.

The Illinois parole reform was implemented on July 1, 1991. This meant that the entire program package that had been developed, perhaps as late as May 1991, would be translated into action within only a few months. By some accounts the decision to begin the program on July 1, 1991, was premised on the desire to save parole agents from layoffs slated to commence on that date when the state's current fiscal year would end. Obviously, not much time was available for comprehensive program planning and development.

Summary of Policy Origin

The evolutionary process of PreStart's development occurred in an environment of fiscal constraints, and amid a general dissatisfaction with aftercare services as they were operating throughout the late 1980s. These factors, combined with changing correctional philosophies, severe state budget cuts and the availability of external funding, made PreStart possible.

The components now included in PreStart were never packaged together within a coherent conceptual framework until immediately preceding its implementation in May or June 1991. What happened was incremental, with increased emphasis on pre–release planning and life skills schooling. Phase II components seem to have resulted from a loss of general revenue funds and the availability of federal dollars.

The voluntary use of community services and advocacy, coupled with intensive parole and community drug treatment on a mandated basis, reflects the abbreviated planning process. Was PreStart a well–thought–out plan to promote reintegration? While the ideological underpinnings may have reflected rehabilitative and reintegrative ideals, as one key decision maker pointed out, PreStart also was implemented as a way to reduce the number of parole layoffs, reduce the negative public reactions to a restructuring of parole, and provide some services for releasees within the community.

Implications for Implementation

The timing of the restructuring of parole in terms of planning, staff morale, and available resources was unfortunate. The dash for funding necessitated an abrupt and abbreviated planning process. The changes occurred at a time when parole staff were laid off, and although many were later rehired, staff morale sunk to an all–time low. Even with the external funding made available by the Authority to fund Phase II of the program, the remaining IDOC budgetary constraints would limit the amount of staff and equipment available to implement PreStart smoothly and to facilitate the inherent link between Phase I and Phase II program components. One administrator summarized this issue: "The biggest shortcoming associated with the program has been the time constraints. We didn't have time to work out the glitches. The first couple of months were dedicated to putting out personnel fires."

Programs that were not yet clearly defined — lacking solid program parameters — had to be implemented on a time line corresponding with the start of a new fiscal year. This hasty process of program development made it unlikely that contingencies in implementation could be identified and accommodated.

Within this context it was natural for those involved in the program, but outside of the policymaking circle, to question the legitimacy of the reform. Some of the questions were quelled by the active selling of the program by the IDOC director, but not all the internal actors were buying. While it may never be the case that all of those involved in a program's implementation are committed to the program, PreStart seems to have been introduced into a situation characterized by considerable levels of environmental turbulence and internal staff resistance. While necessity may again have proven to be the mother of invention in terms of Illinois' restructuring of parole, it has been noted in planning/implementation research that credibility and legitimacy are key factors in the process of successful policy implementation. PreStart may have been the child of necessity, but it does not seem to have been conceived in a stable environment that would foster the credibility and legitimacy to ease its implementation.

Chapter 3

SYSTEMWIDE ISSUES IN PRESTART'S IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter will examine the systemwide context in which PreStart was implemented. This is done to set the stage for the implementation analyses of Phase I and Phase II programming presented in subsequent chapters.

The success or failure of a program initiative such as PreStart, which requires major changes in organizational philosophy and operational processes, depends on many factors. In this report, some of the factors influencing the implementation of intergovernmental policy as identified by Van Horn and Van Meter (1977), are adapted as focus areas for discussion. A model of intergovernmental policy implementation is appropriate to an analysis of PreStart — even though the IDOC is a highly centralized organization — because policy directives and changes are filtered through the operations of the many facilities and offices within the IDOC organizational umbrella. These subunits have a fairly strong tradition of exercising latitude in how centralized policies are implemented at the local level and have developed local cultures and normative behavior patterns that are quite variable. Accordingly, an understanding of systemwide program/policy implementation must be sensitive to the nuances that derive from particular program implementation environments.

Among the more prominent factors within Van Horn and Van Meter's implementation model are those external to the implementing agency, such as the political, economic, and social environment; characteristics of the reform itself, including the program standards to be implemented; and characteristics of the implementing agency, such as compliance mechanisms, internal communication processes, the disposition of the policy implementors, and the general capacity of the agency to implement the reform.

The following discussion of these factors is centered on general themes that are related to the implementation of both Phase I and Phase II programming across the IDOC's entire operations. Specific focus is placed on resource levels and the disposition of the implementors.

Methodology

The process evaluation research strategy was designed to capture information that would describe three primary areas: 1) the perspectives of key actor groups, those impacting or impacted

by PreStart's implementation; 2) the program's content; and 3) the program's environmental context. Further, a goal was to generate data and perspectives on PreStart from both an overall system vantage and one that would promote an understanding of variation in implementation outcomes across various correctional settings. Accordingly, data collection efforts focused on the following areas:

- Written documentation on PreStart: policies, memorandums, curriculum and so on;
- Face–to–face and telephone interviews with selected key decision makers, including individuals both outside the department and within the IDOC's central administration;
- Face–to–face interviews, during site visits, with PreStart implementors— facility administrators; PreStart coordinators; PreStart Phase I instructors; external service providers, such as employment service representatives, Phase II community service officers, community drug unit agents and SISU agents;
- Group discussions with inmates who completed, or who were in the process of completing, Phase I programming;
- A self–administered mailed questionnaire survey of all identified PreStart staff;
- A self–administered questionnaire survey of selected inmates who had recently completed, or were about to complete, Phase I programming; and
- Site observations by PreStart evaluation staff, including visits to PreStart classes, site tours, and informal conversations with staff and inmates, at a sampling of correctional facilities.

Despite the multiple sources of data assembled for this report, the reader is cautioned to interpret the data and analysis presented in light of the inherent limitations associated with retrospective process evaluations and the particular types of data that have been collected. To minimize the potential of selective, biased or inaccurate information being included in this report, only those observations consistently made by evaluation staff — either from questionnaire or interview data — were reported. For instance, quotes from individuals are presented only when they echo a theme that was heard repeatedly.

In the next section, the primary data collection procedures used in this component of PreStart's process evaluation are reviewed briefly. Reviews of the methodologies used in the collection of data that inform other issues are provided in their respective chapters.

Staff Questionnaires

Questionnaires were mailed to relevant staff at correctional centers, community correctional centers and community service centers. The individuals included in the sample were facility superintendents and supervisors (or their assistants), clinical supervisors, in–house correctional

counselors, educators, "parole" agents, and job service personnel working with former and current PreStart enrollees. In general, an attempt was made to survey everyone involved in PreStart program implementation and service delivery. During October and November 1992, a total of 502 questionnaires were mailed to relevant staff. Due to low response rates, particularly among parole (PreStart) agents, a number of follow–up efforts (including telephone calls and a postcard mailing) were undertaken to increase the response rate. The final response rate for the survey was 62 percent. Parole agents responded at a slightly lower rate (53 percent) than did institutional staff (63 percent). Of the total questionnaires returned, 299 were considered usable (60 percent) and provide the basis for much of the data on staff perceptions included in this report.

A breakdown of the sample's demographic characteristics can be found in Table 3.1. As indicated in the table, the sample was primarily white (77.6 percent); male (59.2 percent); between 36 and 45 years old (46.2 percent) with a mean age of 43.6 years; and had obtained a bachelor's (44.8 percent) or master's degree (33.8 percent). The vast majority of respondents were institutional IDOC employees (81.3 percent) and tended to serve in primarily nonadministrative positions (71.6 percent). Additionally, the largest proportion of respondents worked at a medium–security–level site (33.4 percent), with the next largest proportion being employed at minimum–security facilities (21.7 percent). Relatively few respondents were parole agents. This limits the ability to examine in detail how these individuals responded to the program based on these data. However, most parole agents were the subjects of face–to–face interviews during the course of the evaluation, and these qualitative data will amplify the following discussion and analysis.

Respondents varied considerably in terms of the number of years they had worked in the field of corrections, with 28.8 percent indicating six or fewer years in the field, 31.1 percent indicating between seven and 12 years in the field, and another 30.1 percent reporting having worked in corrections for 13 to 33 years. The average length of time spent working in corrections was 10.2 years. However, the largest proportion of respondents indicated that they had served in their current positions for only two years or less (57.9 percent), with another 13.7 percent reporting a tenure of three to five years in their current positions. Only 22.4 percent of respondents indicated that they had been in their current position more than five years. The average length of time spent working in current positions across the staff sample was 3.8 years.

Table 3.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Staff Sample (N = 299)

Demographic Characteristics	% of Responses
Gender:	
Male	59.2
Female	35.8
Missing	5.0
Age Group:	
18–35	13.0
36–45	46.2
46–68	33.8
Missing	7.0
Average Age = 43.6	
Ethnicity:	
White	77.6
Black	16.1
Hispanic	.7
Asian	.7
American Indian	.7
Other	.3
Missing	4.0
Education Level:	
High School Graduate	2.0
Some College	11.4
Associates Degree	3.0
Bachelors Degree	44.8
Masters Degree	33.8
Ph.D./Doctorate	1.7
Missing	3.3
Basis of Operation:	
Community IDOC Staff	9.0
Institutional IDOC Staff	81.3
Non–IDOC Staff	9.7
Position within IDOC:	
Administrative Staff	18.7
Nonadministrative Staff	71.6
Non–IDOC Staff	9.7
Work–Site Security Level:	
Comm. Service Centers	7.0
Comm. Correctional Centers	16.1
Minimum–Security Facility	21.7
Medium–Security Facility	33.4
Maximum–Security Facility	8.7
Specialized Facility	5.0
Missing	8.0
Years in Corrections:	
0–6	28.8
7–12	31.1
13–33	30.1
Missing	10.0
Average No. of Yrs. = 10.2	
Years in Current Position:	
2 Years or Less	57.9
3–5 Years	13.7
6–25 Years	22.4
Missing	6.0
Average No. of Yrs. = 3.8	

Because the majority of respondents had been in their current employment positions for two years or less, implications for analyzing and interpreting responses to the survey must be considered. The primary problem with having such a large proportion of the sample occupying positions for such a short time is that many of these respondents took on their current positions after parole reform took place in Illinois (July 1991). Thus, these respondents are less likely to be aware of changes that have occurred in their positions after PreStart's implementation.

Of the 299 respondents comprising the staff sample, 29 (9.7 percent) were not IDOC employees but were involved in delivery of PreStart services. Of these, the largest percentage were employed by some other unspecified governmental agency (28.1 percent), with the next largest proportion indicating that they were employed by Job Services (21.9 percent). The remainder of this group of respondents was employed by the Safer Foundation (12.5 percent) and other charitable agencies (12.5 percent), as well as by educational programs (9.4 percent), the State Department of Health and Human Services (6.3 percent), DCFS (3.1 percent), Secretary of State Office (3.1 percent), or a mental health facility (3.1 percent).

The sample characteristics seem to reflect fairly well the general characteristics of staff involved with PreStart; however, the level of survey nonresponse bias cannot be estimated because aggregate descriptive data on the characteristics of all PreStart service deliverers are unavailable. It is interesting to note the rather sizable average length of service indicated by those returning the questionnaires. These individuals likely have seen other agency program initiatives, which suggests that the survey subjects have a fairly substantial experiential base on which to ground their perceptions of PreStart. On the other hand, however, face-to-face interview data also suggested that older and more experienced correctional staff were more likely to display negative attitudes toward PreStart than younger and less experienced staff members.

This raises questions as to whether the staff questionnaire data accurately reflect the views and opinions of the entire PreStart staff population. A variety of indicators suggests that despite attempts to ensure respondents' anonymity and confidentiality, some responses may have been contaminated by activities of a few IDOC supervisory staff. A number of returned questionnaires contained messages that the individual's supervisor attempted to review the respondent's questionnaire before it was returned to the evaluation team. Anonymous phone calls and subsequent staff interviews further suggested that this did occur at least occasionally. It was difficult to ascertain how widespread this phenomenon was and how it affected response patterns. The evaluation team assumed that these incidents were relatively few in nature and that they tended to result in fewer critical perceptions being reported by some staff than were actually held. Thus, the potential response bias associated with veteran IDOC staff disproportionately responding to the

survey (which would tend to be in a negative direction) may have been offset by contamination generated by certain supervisory staff attempting to review or censor responses (which would tend to be in a positive direction). Because of these issues, this study provides only the most obvious patterns of responses.

Site Visits

Fourteen correctional facilities were the subjects of site visits. Facilities were selected to represent all IDOC facilities in the system (for example, a mix of security levels, regions of the state, male vs. female facilities, community correctional centers vs. prison facilities). The visits lasted, on average, two days — except for community correctional centers, where visits lasted, on average, one day. At each facility, observations of PreStart instruction were made when classes were in session. Correctional staff involved in the delivery of PreStart services were interviewed, and inmates meeting the eligibility criteria were surveyed (including written questionnaires and oral interviews).

While on–site at each facility, relevant correctional staff were the subjects of half–hour– to one–and–a–half–hour face–to–face interviews. At each facility, the evaluation team sought to interview the assistant warden for programs, the PreStart coordinator, the local Job Service representative, the assigned community parole agent III, and a sampling of PreStart module presenters. In addition, the evaluators often had a debriefing with the warden at the end of the visit. While some variation occurred across facilities with regards to making contact with all of these individuals, these efforts generally were very successful. Ninety–nine formal interviews across 14 facilities were conducted during the summer and fall of 1992 — an average of more than six interviews per facility visited.

The 14 facilities serving as evaluation sites in 1992 were revisited during summer 1993. By the start of the summer of 1993, Job Service representatives were not present at the facilities except for the particular day during which they facilitated a PreStart module. Because its presence at facilities was diminished, the evaluation team did not have the opportunity to interview Job Service representatives. Likewise, the presence of parole agents III had been cut in half by the summer of 1993. While these agents were presenting two modules at each institution in 1992, by 1993 they were responsible for presenting only one module. Again, contact between the evaluation team and the parole agents while at the facility was unlikely. However, the evaluation team was able to interview some parole agents III responsible for PreStart modules during visits to the community service centers (CSCs). When this occurred, time was taken to address the issues included in the interviews with facility staff. The interview protocol used in the 1993 follow–up visits was similar

to that used in 1992. Questions addressing the same issues were asked, but at the start of the interview, the interviewer requested that the subject focus his or her answers along the lines of how things have changed in PreStart at this institution over the past year. Ninety–two formal staff interviews were conducted during the 1993 visits.

During the spring and summer of 1993, evaluation staff visited a sample of CSCs that were selected to ensure the inclusion of centers from every PreStart zone. One–day site visits took place at each of the following service centers: Lawndale, Uptown and Chatham in Cook County; Aurora in northern Illinois (a short visit also was made to the Dixon office); Springfield in central Illinois, and Marion and East St. Louis in Southern Illinois. A one–day visit was also made to the Fugitive Apprehension Unit in Chicago, which houses the Cook County SISU program. Opportunities also were taken to visit Service Center satellite offices (Decatur, Cairo and Metropolis). The evaluation staff witnessed very busy service centers as well as centers that were not that busy. Some centers were visited early in a particular month when releasee traffic was reported to be the highest. Other centers were visited during the middle of a month at slower times. When possible, some centers were visited on multiple occasions to assess variation in typical daily functioning (Springfield, Marion, East St. Louis).

While at each service center, all available staff were interviewed. Forty individuals were the subjects of half–hour– to one–and–a–half–hour semistructured interviews. Interviewees included each of the PreStart zone supervisors; 15 PreStart agents; eight CDIP agents; eight SISU agents; two Job Service employees who provide services at the service centers; and two clerical workers identified as being intimately familiar with center operations and issues. While on–site, evaluation staff also observed interactions between staff and releasees; sat in on intake interviews; answered phones when PreStart agents could not; and on occasion, helped out with agent paperwork demands. Importantly, releasees were interviewed in person and on the telephone to assess their reactions to the Service Centers. These interview results are discussed more fully in Chapter 7.

The combination of staff questionnaires and interviews with PreStart staff during the course of the site visits resulted in a wealth of data on PreStart's implementation. Coupled with regular contact with PreStart administrators during the course of the project, access to a wide variety of relevant documents, including policy directives, internal reports and memoranda, IDOC reports filed with the authority, and a variety of IDOC data files, the research staff feel quite confident that a broad–based and comprehensive assessment of PreStart activities and operations was realized.

The Systemwide Implementation Context

The Social, Political and Economic Environment

It is well known that the activities of correctional agencies are strongly influenced by the external environment. As detailed in the preceding chapter, three major external influences had a predominant influence on PreStart's development:

> 1) A dissatisfaction with the extant parole system and a desire to reduce the number of individuals being returned to prison as parole violators;
>
> 2) A lack of state resources to significantly expand or enhance the existing parole structure; and
>
> 3) The timing of budget cuts and the related desire to implement PreStart in a timely manner that would reduce the negative political and social consequences of the change, which resulted in a hasty program development and implementation process.

These three external influences initially combined to force a rapid and radical change from the existing parole system. One of the resulting impacts of this rapid transition from the previous parole system to PreStart was the massive layoff of parole agents and the subsequent rehiring of some senior officers in newly defined roles (PreStart agents). The problems caused by this layoff/rehiring procedure went far beyond the primary logistics of the event; more significantly, this created negative attitudes and expectations, which were displayed throughout the PreStart implementation process by certain staff (particularly those identified with the Phase II component) and continue today. This made the transition from a more highly structured, control–oriented, parole supervision philosophy to a more flexible assistance/community services approach problematic. This situation was described by many respondents, as is reflected in the following statement:

> After rehiring of parole officers, there was a short training program. Training was and remains lacking. Many of the agents are older and not oriented to PreStart. Many have taken advantage of (the) state's early retirement plan, others have been reassigned to (the) electronic monitoring program. Parole agents are union employees — currently they want more input into policy decisions, but (I'm) unsure if any suits have been filed. Agents are really angry...

During one institutional site visit, comments made by a parole agent who had been laid off and then rehired reflected some of the personal and family–related costs generated by the reform:

> I had been a Parole Officer for ____ years (deleted to protect identity) ... when I was let go. Since I had some seniority I was rehired but the choice was that if I wanted to work

again, I had to relocate to another part of the state. I had to get an apartment and leave my wife and children here ... I was only able to get a transfer back recently ...

This respondent's situation, while not typical, does indicate the upheaval caused in some lives by the layoff and rehiring process, and the lingering negativity that it has caused among many staff members.

A second impact stemming from the external requirements for a rapid implementation and a lack of resources was a lack of infrastructure to support the program's implementation. The absence of this supporting framework was especially evident during the early implementation period, as reflected by a lack of clear administrative direction, minimal training or staff preparation, and lack of funding for necessary program resources. These issues will be explored within the "Internal Conditions" discussion (next section). Given these significant barriers to successful implementation, it was perhaps only due to the strong support given to PreStart by the IDOC's top administrators that the program survived these initial birthing pangs.

Given the marked departure of PreStart from traditional parole supervision structures, and the potential for an assistance/advocacy model of parole to be attacked as inconsistent with a "law and order" policy agenda, it is surprising that PreStart did not become highly politicized in Illinois' policymaking arena. The turbulence of the policy environment when PreStart was originally conceived and implemented had subsided considerably in the ensuing few years. Since PreStart's implementation in summer 1991, there had been no meaningful media or political attention paid to the reform. As presented in Chapter 9, very few criminal justice and allied agency personnel even became aware that state parole supervision had undergone some transformation. Powerful political champions of surveillance–oriented parole models had not emerged in the legislature, the governor's staff or within any clout–wielding interest group. Willie Horton–type incidents involving parolees in Illinois had not yet occurred, or at least hadn't made media headlines on a regular basis. Thus, parole reform had not been put on the criminal justice policy agenda within the state, and the IDOC had been relatively unconstrained since the summer of 1991 in the pursuit of its own agenda for prison releasees.

This situation may be desirable from an organizational perspective that values stable and certain environments as a factor likely to promote effective program implementation efforts (and it is clear that the IDOC has been able to make significant progress in its implementation efforts because of this relative environmental tranquillity); however, it also implies the existence of a static external environment. If the static environment, however, is one that is not consistent with meaningful program goal achievement, then it is unlikely that the promises of the program reform will be realized.

One can use a game analogy to amplify this point. In a game of stud poker, if a player is dealt a very weak hand off the deal, she or he will win the hand only if a very adept bluff is successful. There is no chance to draw better cards. One's situation cannot be improved unless the perceptions of the other players can be manipulated to the advantage of the person holding the weak hand.

This well characterizes the PreStart situation. The IDOC was not dealt a very good hand in the summer of 1991. A potentially promising correctional program was to be implemented quickly but without adequate resources. The only new funds for PreStart would come from federal funding that would not even balance the loss of state revenue dollars that had previously been appropriated to service parole functions. There would be a significant net loss of parole agents to staff the new PreStart functions. Meaningful internal resources were not expended to commence the establishment of Phase I programming within correctional institutions or to supplement federal dollars used to deliver Phase II services. Until recently, this situation had not changed substantially. The IDOC has not been dealt significantly improved cards since 1991, and not until the beginning of 1994 has it been willing to reshuffle the cards it does have (for example, appropriate additional funds to the Community Services Division for PreStart). Nonetheless, it has stayed in the game and has done remarkably well doing so. This has been largely accomplished by the display of a good poker face to the game's few participants, and a frenetic scramble to have a minimal amount of cash (that is, resources) on hand so as not to fold. The details that support the validity of this analogy are presented in the following pages.

Internal Conditions

Characteristics of the Implementing Agency

The attributes of the organization responsible for implementation affect its ability to carry out the policy's standards. For instance, the experience and the competence of the staff to perform the tasks required of them, regardless of staff orientation to the policy, will affect implementation. Likewise, the organizational subunits primarily responsible for implementation must have sufficient financial and political support to translate the policy into action.

The responsibility for PreStart's implementation was diffused within the IDOC. Phase II programming was the domain of the Community Services Division of the IDOC; the implementation of Phase I programming was a shared responsibility between adult institutions and the Community Services Division, which was assigned the duty of administering and monitoring Phase I programming across all IDOC adult facilities. At the point of PreStart's implementation,

the Community Services Division was headed by a recently hired deputy director who had not been involved in the program's initial development. The division was also witnessing terribly low morale among many staff due to past and impending personnel layoffs. Additionally, in fulfilling its mandate to oversee Phase I programming implementation, the division had to create linkages with adult institutional staff that were not firmly in place — the division had little prior routine and formal contact with adult institutional staff. Its ability to enforce standards in the institutional setting relied on the goodwill and commitment of facility administrators; historically, the Community Services Division did not have the internal political power within the IDOC to be a major actor in determining or shaping major agency priorities or practices. Finally, the number of staff within the Community Services Division available to design, implement and monitor PreStart programming activities was very limited. This was the basic situation in which the IDOC attempted to implement the policy standards contained in PreStart.

Within the Community Services Division, the administration of PreStart implementation has become a shared responsibility between the deputy director and the PreStart administrator. Because the deputy director has so many other pressing responsibilities (for example, administering community correctional centers and the Electronic Detention program), the day–to–day activities associated with the centralized administration of PreStart programming, until quite recently, has fallen almost solely on the shoulders of the PreStart administrator. That person has had minimal resources at his disposal to fulfill his tasks (for example, the PreStart administrator has not even had the support of directed secretarial services). The tasks associated with these responsibilities have been greater than any one person can reasonably handle. Thus, when the term "Central Office" is used in this report, it does not to refer to a large conglomeration of personnel in office headquarters whose primary job responsibilities relate to PreStart's implementation, but refers to the PreStart administrator and the deputy director. This reflects a fundamental constraint on the successful implementation of PreStart: the IDOC has not developed an internal structure with adequate personnel, resources and organizational power to effectively direct and guide the many and diverse components of the PreStart program.

The consequences of the above situation are compounded by another organizational characteristic. There is no centralized unit within the Adult Division that has had the traditional responsibility of delivering pre–release programming efforts within adult facilities. Therefore, the burden of developing such efforts has fallen to a unit within the IDOC that may be both politically and organizationally ill–equipped to handle this formidable task. Clearly, the IDOC's organizational structure has hindered its ability to develop, implement and monitor PreStart programming, especially Phase I efforts.

Program Standards

Policy or program standards move beyond general goal statements and establish requirements, in varying degrees of specificity, for how those goals shall be implemented. Standards typically center on policy, procedures and directives in written form. Policy standards also provide overseers with the tools of enforcement, since they determine what behaviors are tolerable and what sanctions can be imposed for noncompliance. It is commonly assumed that consistency of program delivery hinges on the development of unambiguous guidelines.

Because PreStart was developed rather hastily, the IDOC did not have a fully developed and refined package of program standards to direct PreStart's initial implementation. Some standards were fairly specific, but many were not. This appeared to be a conscious and deliberate policy choice made by key IDOC officials. It was realized early on that enough time had not been available to think through all possible program contingencies and to develop a program model that was acceptable in all of its components. The department decided to take, for the most part, an adaptive rather than a programmed implementation approach (see Berman, 1980).

Programmed implementation approaches seek specificity on program standards before implementation is introduced. Officials using a programmed approach formulated specific, detailed, and presumably consistent objectives to be followed by lower–level personnel in routinized ways circumscribed by standard operating procedures. In contrast, the ideal of adaptive implementation is the establishment of a process that allows policy to be modified, specified and revised according to the unfolding interaction of the policy with its institutional setting (Berman, 1980: 210–211). A review of PreStart's program standards and discussions with key decision makers indicates that an adaptive or evolutionary process was used. It really could be no other way; to the unwary observer, what may have looked more like a disorderly learning process than a predictable procedure was a process demanded by the timing of implementation and a process consistent with the environmental situation at hand.

For instance, in initial communication with PreStart staff about the goals and standards associated with Phase I programming, IDOC officials presented the program as being experimental and one which had to be "massaged," modified and reworked as time progressed to make its implementation smoother and its impact more relevant to the client population. Staff feedback was allowed and encouraged at that time, but many staff did not view the program in this light and did not fully internalize the message. Perhaps accustomed to highly specified administrative directives, many staff viewed initial program standards as being overly ambiguous and initial implementation processes as being chaotic.

Policy, Procedure and Directives

The initial IDOC administrative directive(s) relating to PreStart was issued on the date of its formal implementation (July 1, 1991) and identified the two components of PreStart — the Phase I or Institutional Component, and the Phase II or Community Services Component. The Phase I component was envisioned to consist of two parts: intensified pre–release programming (Release School), which would be required for all inmates within six months of their release; and the establishment of an Individual Development Plan. An explanatory memo from the deputy director for community services, dated July 19, 1991, stipulated that the inmates in Phase I would participate in a 30–hour release school and that the program was designed to enhance job skills and self–esteem, identify post–release needs, and provide strategies to assist in the inmate's return to the community. The memo also specifically mentions an IDP, which was to identify "practical, attainable goals for release."

Much more ambiguity existed at the time of PreStart's implementation with regard to Phase II program standards. The original administrative directive specifying releasee contact requirements with service centers (04.15.105A–C, dated July 1, 1991) stated, "Inmates shall be required to contact a Community Services Zone Headquarters upon release" (p. 1). No further specific requirements for reporting were present other than the statement that during the initial reporting session, IDOC staff shall "advise the releasee of further reporting requirements" (p. 2). As detailed in Chapter 6, it took some time for reporting requirements to be better specified; this situation resulted in a Phase II implementation environment in search of an identity.

In general, the initial consequences of the IDOC using an adaptive implementation approach and issuing fairly vague directives generated a great deal of unease and consternation among program staff, especially among Phase II agents. It was commonly mentioned in interviews with staff that "Central Office didn't know what it wanted," and this allowed resistant staff to deny the credibility and legitimacy of the reform. Although the IDOC was constrained initially to take this implementation approach, an approach quite foreign to the IDOC environment, it appears that more could have been done subsequently to reduce the lingering consequences of this episode in PreStart's implementation.

Program Resources

A major component of the policy decision influential in the implementation process is the level of financial and other resources allocated for program administration. Inadequate funds and incentives are an often–cited cause of implementation failure. As mentioned earlier, PreStart's

implementation occurred without the necessary resources to accomplish tasks effectively. Additional resources were not provided by the policy to aid in the development of programs that were clearly more expansive in scope than what had existed earlier (that is, Phase I programming). Moreover, the fiscal context was one that was quite demoralizing to program staff, especially those involved in the delivery of Phase II services.

Staff

The IDOC had just undergone a loss of resources when PreStart was implemented. Half of its parole supervisor positions were eliminated, and no additional positions or monies were available to assist in the implementation of Phase I (Phase II was being funded through the Authority grant money). Consequently, staff in the institutions who were assigned the teaching of PreStart modules often felt they were shouldering additional duties without additional resources: No reduction in their regular duties occurred, nor was there any increase of personnel to help implement the program. This was despite Central Office's attempts to communicate to staff that PreStart was introduced not as an additional duty but as a reorganization of how they do some of their work. For instance, it was suggested to correctional counselors that some of their counseling could be done in the classrooms; by doing this, a more efficient use of staff time could result.

Nonetheless, PreStart staff held the common perception that there was not enough staff to properly implement the program, a view particularly common among the community services staff. Only slightly more institutional staff disagreed than agreed with the statement that there were sufficient staff to implement PreStart. This is understandable given the relatively large pool of personnel available to staff PreStart, Phase I, in institutions. This was not the case at community service centers (CSCs) and suggests why the vast majority of CSC staff disagreed with the statement. The Community Services Division of the IDOC had a tremendous challenge in providing Phase II programming, as designed, to its multitude of clients. For example, as of February 1993, a total of 39 parole agents in the SISU were assigned the responsibility of supervising the 582 high–risk mandatory supervised releasees assigned to SISU, the 185 boot camp releasees, and the 1,033 releasees on electronic detention (a total of 1,800 individuals). By August 1993, the numbers increased to 2,011 releasees to be supervised by SISU agents. The average caseload calculated from these figures was 46:1 in February 1993 and 51:1 in August 1993. These figures were fairly close to the American Correctional Association's recommended caseload size for *regular* parole. More recent staffing figures for SISU (as of July 1994) indicate that the state employed 50 field parole agents within SISU, but these figures still suggest that the

ability of these agents to provide very intensive supervision of all the releasees and inmates on electronic detention within the state remains problematic.

When PreStart was first implemented, roughly 40 PreStart agents had the task of providing assistance to more than 22,000 releasees, most of whom were individuals with multiple needs. Since then, the number of PreStart agents has increased to a total of 65 as of July 1994. The bulk of this increase has occurred only recently, however; theoretically at least, the workload burden had been even heavier for the community service center agents (PreStart agents) than for the SISU agents.

This situation created an atmosphere of perceived competition for scarce resources across organizational subunits responsible for PreStart's implementation. A statement made by a PreStart coordinator in a medium–security facility illustrates the perceived competition for resources between PreStart program components:

> When PreStart was first implemented, a parole agent came in periodically, but concern among the staff was expressed over the irregularity of his visits. Since then a different parole agent has been assigned to the institution. However, many parole agents are being pulled from the institutions to work on electronic detention, or traveling to community service centers so even more of a burden for Phase I is being placed on the institutional staff.

In fact, due to the lack of staff available to man the CSCs and as part of the revised PreStart curriculum, parole agents had been responsible for delivering the orientation module were now being relieved of that duty to devote more time to service the CSCs.

The mandate that institutional staff be primarily responsible for PreStart instruction delivery appears to have resulted in staffing deficits in other areas at particular facilities. As one institutional administrator indicated:

> Being forced to do more than one thing (teaching PreStart too) has been a problem; it causes conflict with a staffer's primary job and produces stress. Priority given PreStart by the Central Office means that in a conflict with the primary job, PreStart wins out.

Institutions with fewer staff frequently suffered the most impact; this is because the implementation of Phase I essentially required similar levels of staff presence at each institution regardless of institution size or staffing level.

Training

Beyond having the number of staff necessary to effectively implement a policy reform, implementing organizations must have staff that are competent to affect the reform. A primary way

is to train the staff who have been assigned the responsibility of implementing the program. As training relates to Phase I programming, the IDOC had no real plans to train classroom presenters until January 1992. Initially, orientations were provided to staff to inform them of PreStart and what was generally expected, but a formal training component was not in place. Although there is a training unit within the IDOC, it was not involved in developing a training program for instructors during PreStart's planning stages, and its involvement in staff training has been generally limited to the provision of "platform skills" to PreStart presenters. At this writing, all presenters are currently required to participate in a two–day platform skills program. Between January 1992 and July 1992, 25 programs were administered to a total of 548 presenters.

Consistent with the above, when staff were asked if they received PreStart training before their program involvement, 56 percent of the 225 individuals responding to this question on the staff questionnaire indicated that they had not received prior training. Surprisingly, given the mandated nature of current platform skills training, 52 percent of the respondents indicated that they had not received any specialized PreStart in–service training since their involvement in PreStart. Respondents also were asked to respond to the statement, "Overall, I received the kind of training that I need to perform my (PreStart) job well" on a scale of choices that ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." While 36 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, 43 percent disagreed. Unexpectedly, given the lack of formal training provided to CSC staff by the IDOC's training unit, little difference was exhibited in responses across CSC and institutional staff (data not presented in tabular form).

When staff were asked during summer 1993 site visits, "Are staff adequately trained ... have you noticed any changes in the amount of staff or training (since we spoke with you last year)?" their answers reflected that there had been no training offered by Central Office since the initial "platform skills" training sessions provided early in 1992. While the platform skills training is an ongoing process, respondents indicated that there was little to no PreStart–specific training provided, and there was general discontent with IDOC training efforts. Central Office staff suggested that training possibilities existed but facility level staff had not availed themselves of these opportunities.

It should be noted that this lack of ongoing training occurred despite much staff turnover in PreStart. Consequently, a number of staff serving as module presenters in Phase I have had little or no training. Even those who received training noted that more, and perhaps different, training was necessary:

> Adequate training? There hasn't been any training out of Springfield. I would like to see a workshop for bringing in new staff ... could even be 1 or 2 days [in Springfield] every 3

> months. And not just platform skills, but group dynamics and an indoctrination into the PreStart philosophy. (Education facility administrator)
>
> The platform skills [training] was a plus, people needed to grow into public speaking—learning by doing. But none of the training was PreStart–specific. Or, how about training on dealing with large groups ... especially large groups of inmates? Even to go to other institutions to see how they do it. (Correctional counselor II)
>
> [I am] dissatisfied with the training. At training in '91 everybody complained about PreStart. In '92 they gave us platform skills, but no module–specific training. There really, really should be [some]. (Correctional counselor II).

These data suggest that the IDOC had not provided PreStart training to the majority of PreStart staff before they assumed their responsibilities. Until quite recently, only limited subsequent attempts have been taken to provide staff with the skills necessary to deliver PreStart programming effectively. Perhaps prompted by feedback derived from this evaluation effort, the IDOC recently began providing specialized training for PreStart staff. PreStart agents were being provided with training that focuses on the development of communication and counseling skills, conflict resolution skills, and paradigm building (which concentrates on staff issues in adjusting to role changes associated with the implementation of the PreStart philosophy). In addition, specialized training for Phase I module presenters, which is centered on teaching the contents of each PreStart module effectively, will commence late in the summer of 1994.

Materials and Physical Plants

At the time of this study, inadequate resources in terms of materials and adequate classroom space hindered initial Phase I implementation at many facilities. Because no additional funds were provided by the IDOC, all the initial materials for PreStart (manuals, pencils and equipment) were supplied by funds from the existing institutional budgets. There was still a lack of equipment — such as film projectors, TVs and VCRs — and additional classrooms that some staff felt would enhance the classes' effectiveness.

Additionally, needed teaching materials, such as written exercises or overhead projections to illustrate module concepts, were lacking in the original curriculum. Given the immediacy with which the program was implemented, many facilities were not prepared with appropriate duplicating services, audio–visual equipment set ups, classroom space assignments, or even inmate transfer routines; shortages in one or more of these areas continued to persist well into the period during which the second wave of site visits were conducted (two years after initial implementation).

Inadequate office space and equipment was even more of a fundamental problem with Phase II programming efforts. As detailed in Chapter 6, many of the community service centers did not have the physical space or hardware (for example, computer terminals, typewriters and telephones) to accommodate the flow of individuals, telephone calls, or information that must enter and exit the office for basic PreStart functions to be accomplished. This situation improved somewhat since a number of service centers in Cook County recently started moving to more adequate office locations. However, many service centers still operated in inadequate offices.

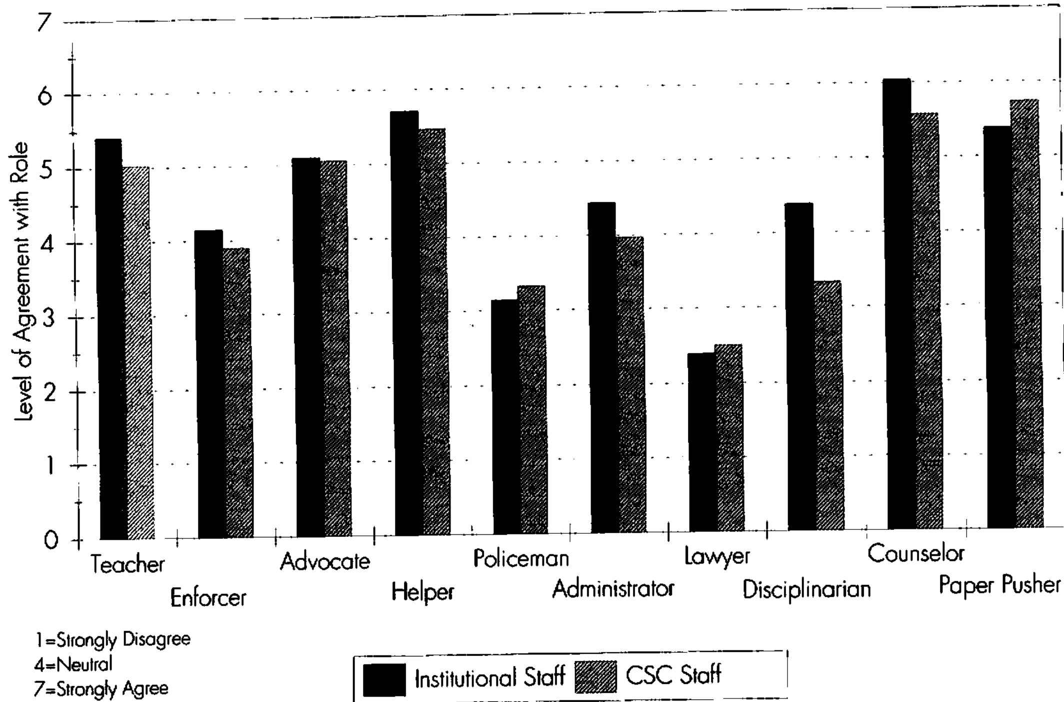
Disposition of the Implementors

Clearly, one of the most important factors affecting the success of program implementation efforts is staff attitude; that is, whether they are favorably or unfavorably disposed toward the program. Even the best–designed, resource–rich programs can fail if the implementors of the program do not like it. Unfavorable staff dispositions can result from many sources: role conflicts, a lack of a sense of program ownership, low morale, and high levels of job dissatisfaction. These can result in negative attitudes toward the program and, consequently, a general unwillingness to work and behave in a manner consistent with program standards and expectations. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to an exploration of these issues as they relate to PreStart. The data derived from the systemwide questionnaire survey and reflected staff attitudes and perceptions after PreStart had been in existence for slightly longer than one year.

Staff Role Perceptions

Correctional role orientations are potentially strong determinants of how individuals assigned the task of delivering PreStart services respond to the challenge. One of the question areas on the staff questionnaire asked respondents to indicate how strongly they identified with a variety of roles. This was to determine if the staff identified more with roles associated with control and supervision, or more with helping and counseling roles. As seen in Figure 3.1, IDOC staff seem to see themselves more in helping roles such as teacher, advocate, helper or counselor than control–oriented roles such as enforcer, police officer or disciplinarian.

Figure 3.1
Staff Perceptions of Their Role



Perhaps even more interesting is the remarkable similarity between institutional staff and CSC staff in a number of role identity areas. The only significant difference between institutional and CSC staff appears to be in the role of disciplinarian, a role with which the institutional staff identified more strongly. Since the primary purpose of PreStart is to help inmates overcome problems associated with successful reintegration into the community, these results should be considered quite positive, as the orientation of most staff would seem to favor assistance as opposed to control.

Ownership of Change

Frequently, a gulf exists between the decision makers responsible for creating a new policy and the line employees ultimately responsible for its implementation. For various reasons, organizations seem to achieve optimum performance when all levels of the organization have input regarding the general process of change. This did not occur in the PreStart situation. Because of the haste in which PreStart was designed and initially implemented, it was basically impossible for Central Office staff to collaborate with line staff in the program's development. This resulted in

fairly negative consequences and is reflected by staff comments on how many of them originally became aware of the PreStart program.

Many individuals in the IDOC organizational hierarchy complained about hearing rumors or news leaks about PreStart before being officially informed about its impending implementation. One warden complained she or he originally learned about PreStart's finished plans from a televised speech by the governor. This created resentment and anger toward the IDOC because PreStart was perceived as a political ploy rather than a serious reform effort.

Staff at the institutions were officially notified about PreStart when the wardens received a memorandum from the Central Office mandating its implementation. Most wardens had meetings with their senior staff to present the program's requirements. Educators and counselors selected by the institutional administrators to be facilitators were then sent internal memos informing them of their new duties with the PreStart program. For many of these newly designated facilitators, it was the first they had heard about PreStart. The rumors before the program's formal introduction presented PreStart as a replacement for the former parole system that could no longer operate effectively due to the severe cuts in parole staff.

Ownership Over the Change Process

Staff were asked to complete a questionnaire about the extent to which they were involved in the decisions to develop and implement PreStart. A scale consisting of six items measured the degree of ownership staff felt over the change process used to implement PreStart (see Table 3.2). Respondents who were not IDOC employees (n = 29) or who were not employed with the IDOC prior to PreStart's implementation date of July 1, 1991 (n = 29), were excluded from the analysis.

The staff sample's responses to the scale were tested for internal consistency reliability, and the ownership scale was considered to be reliable.[1] Support also was found for the construct validity of the scale by examining correlations between the scale and two single survey items that asked subjects: 1) if they were involved in PreStart planning prior to July 1, 1991; and 2) if they

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[1] Internal consistency reliability was supported with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .75 and item-to-total correlations ranging between .41 and .57 (see Table 3.2).

were ever asked for advice/opinions about parole services. Moderately high correlations provided support for the construct validity of the ownership scale.[2]

Table 3.2: Ownership of Change Scale, Scale Mean and Standard Deviation (N = 223)

Items	Scale Mean	Scale Standard Deviation
Ownership of Change Scale • PreStart reflected input of those who know most about parole services. • I contributed to PreStart consistent with my rank and experience. • Line staff provided a lot of input into PreStart. • PreStart reflects the needs and interests of staff. • Thoughts of line staff were elicited before PreStart was introduced. • I feel good about PreStart because I had a part in developing the plan.	9.93	2.99

Ownership Attitudes Observed Among Staff Sample

The ownership scale had a possible score range of 6 to 18, with higher scores reflecting greater levels of perceived ownership. The IDOC employees scored a mean of 9.93 (SD = 2.99) on the scale, somewhat below the midpoint (12) of the range of possible scale scores. The IDOC employee response distribution for this scale was somewhat positively skewed (.546), meaning that the majority of scores fell in the bottom half of the observed range. This, coupled with a relatively low mean scale score, resulted in the conclusion that IDOC employees who were

2 In testing the construct validity of the ownership scale, response options for both items were coded zero for "no" and one for "yes." The correlation between the ownership scale scores and the first item listed above was .27 ($p < .001$), and for the latter item listed above the correlation was .32 ($p < .001$). Since high scores on the single items coincided with high scores on the ownership scale, construct validity for the scale was supported.

employed at the time of PreStart's implementation generally lacked a strong sense of ownership in the change process.

Subgroup Differences on the Ownership Scale

Differences in mean scores on the ownership scale between subgroups of employees were analyzed to ascertain if particular employee groups varied in their sense of ownership regarding PreStart. All statistically significant results from these analyses are presented in Table 3.3.

Institutional IDOC staff indicated that they felt considerably more ownership of the change process (M = 10.20) than did community IDOC staff (M = 7.71). Further, administrative IDOC staff expressed having felt more ownership of the change process (M = 11.38) than did nonadministrative IDOC staff (M = 9.51). Both of these relationships were as expected, given the nature of PreStart's conception and the relative contribution of various staff in its planning.

Table 3.3: Significant Results of T-Tests Examining Mean Subgroup Differences on the Ownership Scale

(Possible Score Range = 6 to 18: Higher scores reflect greater perceived ownership)

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	T	P-Value
Basis of Operation:				-5.45	.000
Community IDOC Staff	24	7.71	1.99		
Institutional IDOC Staff	199	10.20	2.98		
Position within the IDOC:				4.02	.000
Administrative	50	11.38	3.26		
Nonadministrative	173	9.51	2.78		

Only one statistically significant multiple–subgroup difference was detected across mean scores on the ownership scale. This was found between two work–site security levels (not presented in tabular form). Community service center staff indicated much less ownership (M =

8.18) than did minimum–security facility staff, who sensed the greatest amount of ownership in the change process (M = 10.98).

Except for the worksite variable, no other multiple–subgroup variable resulted in significant mean differences on the ownership scale. Therefore, the amount of ownership in the change process felt by various employee subgroups defined by the age, ethnicity, education level, years in corrections and years in position of the respondent, was basically the same (that is, generally low levels of ownership).

Levels of Job Satisfaction

As discussed earlier, one of the major factors associated with PreStart's implementation was the parole agent layoffs right before PreStart started, with the subsequent rehiring of some as Phase II PreStart agents. Even during interviews with institutional staff delivering Phase I programming, staff complaints about the job were common. Many staff also expressed feelings that their efforts did not really seem to matter, that the subjects of interventions (that is, inmates or releasees) were fairly unresponsive to any programming or service efforts delivered. Thus, their job appeared ineffectual, reflecting a low level of perceived job efficacy. With these common observations and their negative consequences for effective program implementation on mind, the following discusses job satisfaction and perceived job efficacy among PreStart staff.

Beyond a one–item question measuring job satisfaction, additional scales measuring job satisfaction (both before and after PreStart's implementation) and job efficacy were administered to the full staff sample.[3] All of these scales consisted of positively worded items, so that high scores on any of the scales reflected highly positive attitudes, while low scores reflected less positive attitudes.

Responses to the job satisfaction and efficacy scales were tested for internal consistency reliability, which was supported for each scale. Since all of the Cronbach alpha coefficients exceeded .80, all four scales were considered to be reliable enough for use with the staff sample.

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3 The scales used to measure these constructs were adapted from the Federal Bureau of Prison's Social Climate Scale (job efficacy questions) and the Job Descriptive Survey (job satisfaction questions).

Support for construct validity was found for the only scale for which validity could be assessed (the before–PreStart Job Satisfaction Scale).[4]

Job Satisfaction and Efficacy Attitudes Observed Among Staff Sample

The before–PreStart Job Satisfaction Scale had a possible score range of 7–49 and a midpoint of 28, with high scores representing greater satisfaction with the various characteristics of the job that respondents held prior to July 1, 1991. The staff sample had a mean score of 37.21, considerably above the score range midpoint (see Table 3.4). The distribution was highly negatively skewed (–1.060), indicating that the vast majority of staff responses fell within the top half of the observed scale score range. Thus, it was concluded that the staff sample displayed very positive attitudes regarding their satisfaction with various characteristics of their jobs held prior to PreStart's implementation.

The current Job Satisfaction Scale had a possible score range of 7–49 and a midpoint of 28, with high scores representing greater satisfaction with the various characteristics of the current job. The staff sample had a mean score of 36.17, considerably above the score range midpoint (see Table 3.4). The distribution was highly negatively skewed (–1.011), indicating that the vast majority of staff responses fell within the top half of the observed scale score range. Thus, it was concluded that the staff sample displayed very positive attitudes regarding their satisfaction with various characteristics of their current jobs.

The third job–related scale, the Current Job Efficacy Scale, had a possible score range of 4–24 and a midpoint of 14, with high scores representing greater perceptions of job efficacy in working with correctional clients. The staff sample had a mean score of 18.30, well above the score range midpoint (see Table 3.4). The distribution was somewhat negatively skewed (–.696), indicating that the majority of staff responses fell within the top half of the observed scale score range. Thus, it was concluded that the staff sample displayed relatively positive attitudes regarding their efficacy in working with correctional clients.

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4 While there was no satisfactory way to test the construct validity of the job–satisfaction and efficacy scales, a survey item did exist that allowed for a validity analysis of one scale. Support was found for the construct validity of the before–PreStart Job Satisfaction Scale through a high, positive correlation (.59, $p < .001$) between the scale and a single survey item which asked respondents what their general level of satisfaction was with their job prior to PreStart's implementation.

Table 3.4: Job Satisfaction and Efficacy Scales, Scale Means and Standard Deviations

Scale	N	Scale Mean	Scale Standard Deviation
Before–PreStart Job Satisfaction Scale •Satisfaction with job security •Satisfaction with personal growth/development •Satisfaction with respect/fair trt. from IDOC •Satisfaction with independence in thought/actions •Satisfaction with chance to help others •Satisfaction with job challenges •Satisfaction with respect from clients	190	37.21	7.24
Current Job Satisfaction Scale •Satisfaction with job security •Satisfaction with personal growth/development •Satisfaction with respect/fair trt. from IDOC •Satisfaction with independence in thought/actions •Satisfaction with chance to help others •Satisfaction with job challenges •Satisfaction with respect from clients	269	36.17	8.29
Current Job Efficacy Scale •Ability to deal very effectively with problems of correctional clients •Feeling that you are positively influencing other people's lives through your work •Feeling of accomplishment after working closely with correctional clients •Feeling that you can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with correctional clients	270	18.30	3.62

Since items making up the Current Job Satisfaction Scale and the before–PreStart Job Satisfaction Scale were exactly the same, it was possible to calculate difference scores between the

two scales. This illustrates how respondents' attitudes toward their jobs had changed, if at all, since PreStart's implementation. It was possible to calculate this difference score for 182 staff respondents, with the rest of the sample being excluded either because they were not employed prior to July 1, 1991, or because they had missing data on either or both of the two scales.

The mean difference score was –1.49 (SD = 6.80), indicating that the responding sample experienced a drop in job satisfaction once PreStart was implemented. This reflects 98 respondents (53.8 percent of total responding), while the other 84 staff members (46.2 percent of the responding sample) had difference scores of zero, indicating that their levels of job satisfaction had been unaffected by parole reform in Illinois.

In summary, the staff sample displayed rather positive attitudes regarding job satisfaction (both preceding and proceeding PreStart) and job efficacy in working with correctional clients. When differences in job satisfaction levels before and after PreStart's implementation were computed, it was discovered that no changes had occurred for about half of the sample, while job satisfaction levels generally decreased after PreStart's implementation for the other half of the staff sample.

Subgroup Differences in Job Satisfaction and Efficacy

As presented in Table 3.5, significant subgroup differences were detected between "position within IDOC" subgroups on the three job–related scales. For all three scales, the administrative staff consistently indicated higher means on the scales than did nonadministrative staff. Thus, administrators indicated more current job satisfaction (M = 38.37 vs. 35.09), more current job efficacy (M = 19.09 vs. 17.94), and more before–PreStart job satisfaction (M = 40.70 vs. 36.09) than did nonadministrators.

Gender and position within the IDOC were not related to job satisfaction or job efficacy. Thus, the statistical results of these two t–tests are not presented.

Table 3.5: Significant Results of T-Tests Examining Mean Subgroup Differences on the Job Satisfaction and Efficacy Scales

Significant Results for the Current Job Satisfaction Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	T	P-Value
Position within IDOC:				3.11	.002
Administrative	54	38.37	6.13		
Nonadministrative	193	35.09	8.93		
Significant Results for the Current Job Efficacy Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	T	P-Value
Position within IDOC:				2.06	.041
Administrative	54	19.09	3.60		
Nonadministrative	194	17.94	3.66		
Significant Results for the before-PreStart Job Satisfaction Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	T	P-Value
Position within IDOC:				4.76	.000
Administrative	30	40.70	3.91		
Nonadministrative	142	36.09	7.78		

The statistically significant results from ANOVAs examining subgroup differences on the job–related scales are presented in Table 3.6. Two variables were found to be significantly related to scores on the Current Job Satisfaction Scale. Once again, community IDOC staff were found to express much lower satisfaction (M = 27.11) with their current job situation than did institutional IDOC staff (M = 36.88) or non–IDOC staff (M = 40.18). This finding was further supported by mean subgroup differences across work–site security levels. CSC staff were found to display significantly lower current job satisfaction (M = 28.40) than staff at any other type of facility (means ranged from 34.14 to 38.31).

Table 3.6: Significant Results of ANOVAs Examining Mean Subgroup Differences on the Job Satisfaction and Efficacy Scales

Significant Results for the Current Job Satisfaction Scale (Possible Score Range = 7 to 49; Midpoint = 28)					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	F	P-Value
Basis of Operation:				22.62	.000
Community IDOC Staff	27	27.11	10.47		
Institutional IDOC Staff	220	36.88	7.58		
Non-IDOC Staff	22	40.18	3.85		
Work-Site Security Level:				5.88	.000
Comm. Service Centers	20	28.40	10.74		
Comm. Correctional Cntrs	44	34.14	8.20		
Minimum-Security Facility	58	38.31	7.02		
Medium-Security Facility	93	37.23	7.69		
Maximum-Security Facility	24	37.88	7.99		
Specialized Facility	15	37.53	7.63		
Significant Results for the Current Job Efficacy Scale (Possible Score Range = 7 to 49; Midpoint = 28)					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	F	P-Value
Basis of Operation:				3.54	.0305
Community IDOC Staff	27	16.89	4.35		
Institutional IDOC Staff	221	18.35	3.56		
Non-IDOC Staff	22	19.59	2.70		
Work-Site Security Level:				3.69	.003
Comm. Service Centers	20	17.40	4.35		
Comm. Correctional Cntrs	44	16.80	3.81		
Minimum-Security Facility	58	19.57	3.25		
Medium-Security Facility	93	18.20	3.27		
Maximum-Security Facility	25	17.84	4.49		
Specialized Facility	15	19.47	2.88		

These same two variables were also significantly related to scores on the Current Job Efficacy Scale. The significant finding for basis of operation resulted from IDOC's staff indicating considerably less efficacy (M = 16.89) in working with correctional clients than non–IDOC staff (M = 19.59). Institutional IDOC staff fell in between these two subgroups in terms of the amount of current job efficacy they expressed having (M = 18.35).

The significant differences detected in current job efficacy for the various work site security levels were not driven by community service center staff, as was previously the case. This time the significant difference was found between community correctional center staff, who indicated having considerably less efficacy (M = 17.40) in working with correctional clients than did staff from minimum–security facilities, who indicated having the greatest amount of job efficacy (M = 19.57) than any of the other security levels.

The statistically significant findings for the before–PreStart Job Satisfaction Scale tended to be more a function of age or years of service, rather than institutional characteristics; therefore, the results were not included in Table 3.6.[5]

Once again, the differences in scores between the Current Job Satisfaction Scale and the before–PreStart Job Satisfaction Scale were computed (by subtracting one scale score from the other) and then analyzed (using ANOVA) to test for mean difference scores between staff subgroups. As can be seen in Table 3.7, two of the variables resulted in statistically significant difference scores.

The significant finding for the basis of operation variable resulted from the fact that community IDOC staff experienced a huge decrease in job satisfaction (M = –7.72) once PreStart was implemented (see Table 3.7). In fact, community IDOC staff scored significantly lower than institutional IDOC staff, who indicated a slight decrease in job satisfaction (M = –.58) after

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5 Three variables were significantly related to scores on the before–PreStart Job Satisfaction Scale (not presented in tabular form). Age was significantly related to job–satisfaction levels before PreStart's implementation, with the oldest group of respondents (46–68) expressing having had a considerably greater amount of job satisfaction (M = 39.02) during the period preceding PreStart's implementation than did staff who fell in the middle age group (36–45) (M = 35.93). The youngest age group (18–35) indicated having slightly more before–PreStart job satisfaction (M = 36.07) than did the middle age group.

Community IDOC staff indicated having had much less before–PreStart job satisfaction (M = 34.00) than non–IDOC staff, who expressed having had a great deal of before–PreStart job satisfaction (M = 40.17). Institutional IDOC staff fell between these other two types of staff with a mean scale score of 37.39 on the before–PreStart Job Satisfaction Scale. Finally, years in current position also was related to before–PreStart job satisfaction with staff who were in their current positions for two years or less indicating having had greater job satisfaction (M = 38.14) than those who had worked in their current position six to 25 years (M = 35.04).

PreStart was implemented, as well as significantly lower satisfaction than non–IDOC staff, who indicated a slight increase in job satisfaction (M = .33) after PreStart was implemented.

Table 3.7: Significant Results of ANOVAs Examining Mean Subgroup Differences in Job Satisfaction Difference Scores

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev	F	P-Value
Basis of Operation:				14.07	.000
Community IDOC Staff	25	-7.72	11.37		
Institutional IDOC Staff	142	-.58	3.58		
Non–IDOC Staff	15	.33	5.29		
Work-Site Security Level:				3.41	.006
Comm. Service Centers	18	-7.06	10.51		
Comm. Correctional Cntrs	33	-2.55	8.22		
Minimum–Security Facility	35	.00	2.49		
Medium–Security Facility	60	-.72	6.51		
Maximum–Security Facility	18	-.17	3.71		
Specialized Facility	7	-2.57	6.00		

This finding for community IDOC staff was further supported in the test for mean differences in difference scores computed for work–site security level subgroups (see Table 3.7). The significant finding for this variable was due to the fact that staff from community service centers indicated extremely large decreases in job satisfaction (M = –7.06) once PreStart was implemented; this is compared to minimum–security facility staff (who indicated no change in job satisfaction after PreStart's implementation) and medium– and maximum–security facility staff (both of whom indicated only slight decreases in job satisfaction).[6]

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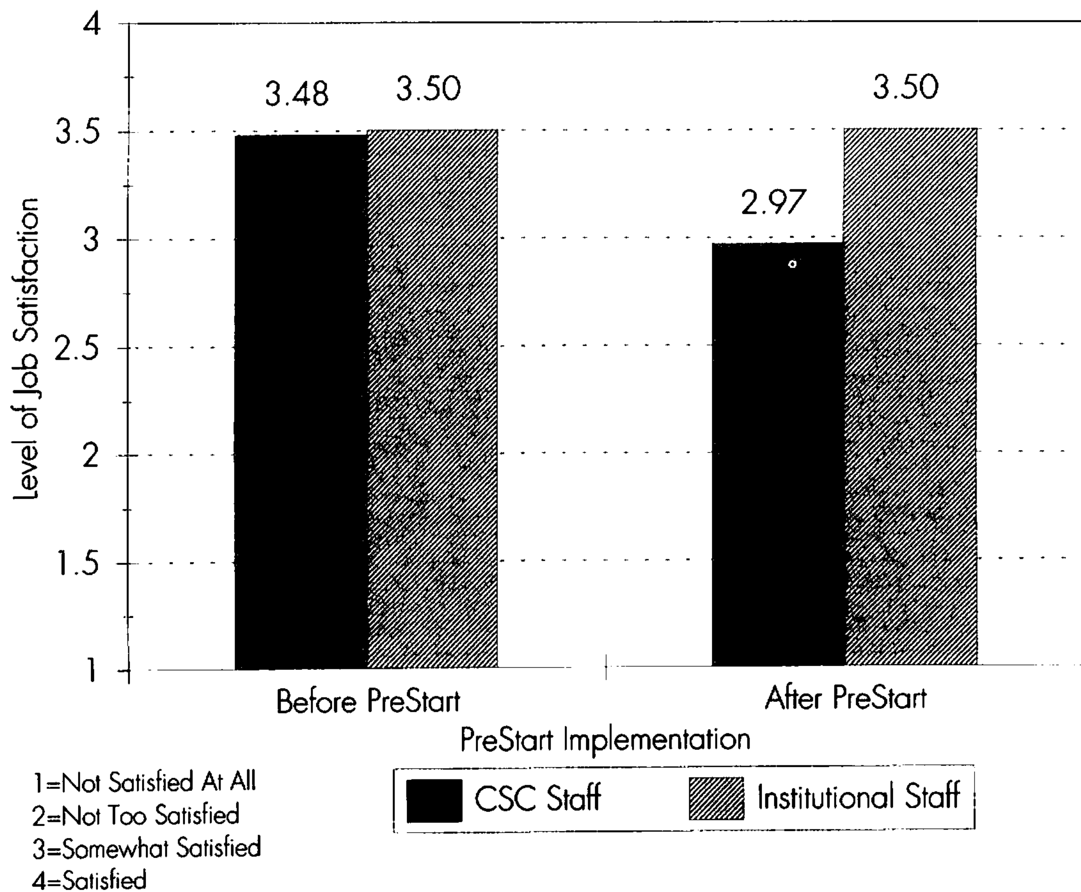
[6] While community correctional center staff and specialized facility staff indicated general decreases (means equal –2.55 and –2.57, respectively) in job satisfaction after PreStart's implementation, these values were not found to be

This basic finding is presented graphically in Figure 3.2, which indicates that levels of job satisfaction decreased among CSC staff after PreStart's implementation, while job satisfaction levels remained stable for institutional staff. Data not presented in tabular form indicate that one year after PreStart's implementation, about 63 percent of the community service center staff were extremely dissatisfied or dissatisfied with their perceived job security. Conversely, less than 75 percent of the institutional staff responded that they were extremely satisfied with their job security.



significantly different from the other four subgroups' difference scores based on conservative pairwise comparison tests.

Most variables used to test for subgroup differences in job satisfaction differences pre– and post–PreStart did not result in statistically significant findings. Thus, results of ANOVAs — using age group, ethnicity, education level, years in corrections, or years in current position as subgrouping variables — were excluded from the preceding tables.

Staff Attitudes Toward PreStart

Development of Staff Attitude Subscales

A series of 37 questions on the mailed survey inquired about the staff respondents' attitudes regarding PreStart. Some questions focused on implementation aspects of PreStart, while other questions assessed attitudes regarding the efficacy or impact of PreStart. All 37 items were scored on a continuum of one to seven, with one indicating "strongly agree," four indicating "no opinion," and seven indicating "strongly disagree." All responses were reversed for ease of interpretation; thus, a low score reflects disagreement with an item, while a high score reflects agreement with the item. From these 37 questions, five subscales were created using factor analysis.[7] See Table 3.8 for the items making up each scale and their item–to–total correlations.

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7 The 37 items were factor–analyzed to see if unidimensional scales could be formed from the data. The principal components analysis indicated that six orthogonal (that is, independent) factors, explaining 50 percent of the total variance in staff responses, were derived from the data. The items comprising each of the factors appeared to have fairly high loadings, with a moderate amount of overlap across multiple factors. When an item did load on more than one factor, it was retained only in the factor on which it loaded the highest.

Table 3.9 presents the finalized versions of the five factors which indicated their scalability on the basis of the guidelines established by the principal components analysis and the reliability item–analysis. The table reports which items make up the five resultant subscales indicating staff attitudes toward the implementation and impact of PreStart; the item–to–total correlations between each item and its corresponding subscale; and the internal–consistency reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for each subscale. It should be noted that the effective sample size for the principal components and the reliability analyses was 265, since subjects missing data on any item included in the analysis were deleted listwise from the entire analysis.

As can be seen in Table 3.9, the item–to–total correlations between subscale items and their corresponding total subscale scores are in the moderate to high range. This phenomenon, coupled with the fact that the internal–consistency reliability coefficients are fairly high, indicated that the five subscales had sufficient psychometric properties to warrant their use.

Table 3.8: Staff Attitude Subscales, Item-to-Total Correlations and Internal Consistency Reliability (N=265)

Attitudinal Subscale	Item-to-Total Correla-tions	Cronbach's Alpha
Positive PreStart Implementation Scale		.86
•PreStart better than idea of enhancing traditional parole services.	.52	
•Overall, PreStart is a good idea.	.56	
•Formal communication channels help me perform my job effectively.	.48	
•I have the necessary authority to accomplish my work objectives.	.58	
•Mostly, I have a good opinion of PreStart.	.75	
•Mostly, PreStart is run very well.	.73	
•My PreStart job responsibilities suit me well.	.68	
•I receive the necessary training to perform my work well.	.56	
•There are sufficient staff to adequately implement PreStart.	.45	
Positive Inmate Utilization Scale		.77
•PreStart helps inmates stay out of trouble.	.41	
•Inmates perceive that PreStart will help them stay out of trouble.	.64	
•PreStart teaches inmates how to find help on the outside if they need it.	.61	
•Developing an IDP is useful for inmates.	.51	
•PreStart causes inmates to utilize CSCs when they need them.	.52	
Negative PreStart Implementation Scale		.69
•Administration at this facility gives only lip service to PreStart.	.47	
•PreStart instructors ignorant about what it's like for inmates to return to their communities.	.37	
•There's a lack of adequate communication among PreStart providers.	.52	
•PreStart doesn't provide appropriate services for the unique needs of inmates and releasees.	.56	
Negative Programming Adequacy Scale		.62
•Community based drug programs are inadequate to meet the needs of drug offenders.	.46	
•Community based sex programs are nadequate to meet the needs of sex offenders.	.50	
•Institutional programming is not sufficient to prepare most inmates for release to CSCs.	.34	
Positive Public Safety Scale		.60
•Police agencies adequately support PreStart.	.37	
•PreStart sufficiently addresses public safety.	.42	
•IDOC has been effective in informing criminal justice agencies and authorities about PreStart.	.48	

In general, the subscales were found to be quite reliable and valid.[8] Table 3.9 presents the correlation matrix that was used to assess the validity of the scales.

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8 To establish support for the construct validity of the five staff–attitude subscales, interscale correlations were computed to determine if similar subscales correlated more highly than did dissimilar subscales. Also included in this validity analysis was an item that was responded to independently of the subscales. The item asked respondents to rate the effect of the PreStart experience on the lives of inmates/releasees, using an 11–point continuum with negative five representing "Extremely Negative," zero representing "No Effect," and five representing "Extremely Positive." It was hypothesized that this item would correlate positively with positive attitudinal subscales and negatively with negative attitudinal subscales.

The results of this analysis can be found in Table 3.10. The table indicates that positive subscales correlated highly among themselves. The Positive PreStart Implementation Scale correlated quite strongly ($r = .63$, $p < .01$) with the Positive Inmate Utilization Scale, meaning that staff who expressed positive feelings about PreStart's implementation tended to express positive feelings about expected outcomes of inmate use of PreStart. The Positive Public Safety Scale also correlated somewhat strongly with both of the positive scales just mentioned (.49 and .39, respectively; $p < .01$). It appears that staff who expressed favorable opinions about PreStart's attention to public safety matters tended to also express favorable opinions regarding PreStart's implementation process and outcomes of inmate use of PreStart.

The two negative subscales were correlated but not as highly as were the positive subscales. The obtained correlation between the Negative PreStart Implementation Scale and the Negative Program Adequacy Scale was .24 ($p < .05$). While this correlation is in the expected direction, it is only of moderate strength.

As would be expected, the correlation between the negative and positive PreStart implementation scales was high and negative ($r = -.54$). The correlations between the independent item regarding perceived impact of PreStart on inmates/releasees and the five subscales further support the construct validity of the subscales. Thus, it can be concluded that considerable evidence does exist for the construct validity of the subscales since all correlations were in the expected directions, and only a few deviated from expected magnitudes of relationships.

Table 3.9: Validity Matrix for Staff Attitudinal Scales (N=261)

	Positive PreStart Implement. Scale	Positive Inmate Utilization Scale	Negative PreStart Implemt. Scale	Negative Program Adequacy Scale	Positive Public Safety Scale	Impact On Inmates/ Releasees Item
Positive PreStart Implement. Scale	1.00	.63*	–.54*	–.17*	.49*	.21*
Positive Inmate Utilization Scale		1.00	–.40*	–.09	.39*	.24*
Negative PreStart Implemt. Scale			1.00	.24*	–.43*	–.19*
Negative Program Adequacy Scale				1.00	–.29*	.01
Positive Public Safety Scale					1.00	.20*

* Statistically significant at the .01 level.

Attitudes Observed Among Staff Sample

Table 3.10 presents the means and standard deviations for each of the five subscales for the staff sample. The first attitudinal subscale, the Positive PreStart Implementation Scale, had a possible score range of nine to 63 and midpoint score of 36, with high scores representing more positive attitudes than lower scores. The staff sample scored an average of 41.73, with the median and modal scores falling at 43. The response distribution was somewhat negatively skewed (–.609), meaning that the majority of the scores fell within the top half of the observed subscale score range. The interquartile range of the staff responses to the Positive PreStart implementation subscale was 36 to 49, which coincides with the third quartile of the possible subscale score range (37 to 50). Thus, it was concluded that the staff sample tended to express rather positive attitudes regarding PreStart's implementation.

Table 3.10: Means and Standard Errors on Staff Attitude Subscales

Attitudinal Subscale	N	Mean	St. Dev.
Positive PreStart Implementation Scale	276	41.73	10.04
Positive Inmate Utilization Scale	277	21.23	5.00
Negative PreStart Implementation Scale	275	15.63	4.84
Negative Programming Adequacy Scale	276	14.92	3.58
Positive Public Safety Scale	274	10.86	2.84

The second attitudinal subscale, the Positive Inmate Utilization Scale, had a possible score range of 5 to 35 and midpoint score of 15, with high scores representing more positive expected outcomes of inmate utilization of PreStart than lower scores. The staff sample scored an average of 21.23, with a median score of 22. Once again the response distribution was somewhat negatively skewed (–.620), meaning that the majority of the responses were within the top half of the observed subscale score range. The interquartile range of the staff responses to the Positive Inmate Utilization Scale was 19 to 25, which also roughly coincided with the third quartile of the possible score distribution (21 to 28). It was concluded that the staff sample tended to express quite favorable attitudes regarding perceived benefits of inmates using PreStart services.

The third attitudinal subscale, the Negative PreStart Implementation Scale, had a possible score range of four to 28 and midpoint score of 16, with high scores representing more negative attitudes than lower scores. The staff sample scored an average of 15.63, with a median score of 16. This time the response distribution had only a very slight negative skew (–.002), meaning that the distribution was fairly normally distributed about its mean. The interquartile range of the staff responses to the Negative PreStart Implementation Scale was 13 to 19, which fell within the interquartile range of the possible score distribution (10–21). Thus, it was concluded that the staff sample expressed only a moderate amount of negative attitudes toward PreStart's implementation.

The fourth attitudinal subscale, the Negative Programming Adequacy Scale, had a possible score range of three to 21 and midpoint score of 12, with high scores representing more negative attitudes than lower scores. The staff sample scored an average of 14.92, with a median score of 15. The response distribution was somewhat negatively skewed (–.148), meaning that the majority

of the responses were in the upper half of the observed subscale score range. The interquartile range of the staff responses to the Negative Programming Adequacy Scale was 12 to 18, which corresponded roughly to the third quartile of the possible score range (13 to 17). Thus, it was concluded that the staff sample tended to indicate rather negative attitudes regarding the adequacy of PreStart programming.

The final attitudinal subscale, the Positive Public Safety Scale, also had a possible score range of three to 21 and midpoint score of 12, with high scores representing more positive attitudes than lower scores. The staff sample scored an average of 10.86, with a median score of 11. The response distribution was somewhat negatively skewed (–.483), meaning that a slight majority of the responses were within the top half of the observed score distribution. However, the interquartile range of the staff responses to the Positive Public Safety Scale was 10 to 12, which fell within only the second quartile of the possible subscale score range (8 to 12). Thus, it was concluded that the staff sample tended to express only moderately positive attitudes regarding PreStart's attentiveness to public safety issues.

In summary, several patterns in the attitudes of PreStart–related staff were detected when assessed using the five attitudinal subscales developed from 37 items on the self–report survey. Generally, rather positive attitudes were detected regarding PreStart's implementation process. Also quite favorable were staff attitudes regarding expected benefits to inmates/releasees for using the programs and services offered by PreStart. However, the staff sample indicated negative attitudes regarding the adequacy of PreStart programming, especially for sex and drug offenders. The staff sample also tended to express only moderately positive attitudes regarding PreStart's attentiveness to public safety issues. Thus, it seemed that the PreStart staff looked upon the concept and the general implementation of PreStart quite favorably; yet, at the same time they indicated concerned attitudes regarding some of the specifics of PreStart, such as inadequate institutional programming and a failure to adequately address public safety concerns.

Subgroup Differences on Staff Attitudinal Subscales

The results of the t–tests of subgroup scale means are presented in Table 3.11. The data indicated that gender was significantly related to scores on only one of the five attitudinal subscales. Females displayed more negative attitudes on the Negative Programming Adequacy Scale than did males ($t=-2.17$, $p=.031$).

Table 3.11: Significant Results of T-tests Examining Subgroup Mean Differences on Staff Attitudinal Subscales

Results for the Positive PreStart Implementation Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	T	P-Value
Position within the IDOC:				4.09	.000
Administrative	51	46.39	9.29		
Nonadministrative	198	40.01	10.10		

Results for the Positive Inmate Utilization Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	T	P-Value
Position within the IDOC:				2.29	.023
Administrative	52	22.50	4.80		
Nonadministrative	197	20.69	5.13		

Results for the Negative PreStart Implementation Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	T	P-Value
Position within the IDOC				-3.65	.000
Administrative	51	13.39	4.89		
Nonadministrative	197	16.07	4.60		

Results for the Negative Programming Adequacy Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	T	P-Value
Gender:				-2.17	.031
Male	168	14.64	3.49		
Female	100	15.60	3.56		

Results for the Positive Public Safety Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	T	P-Value
Position within the IDOC:				4.19	.000
Administrative	52	12.21	2.56		
Nonadministrative	196	10.37	2.89		

While there were few statistically significant differences between gender subgroups, several significant differences were found between administrative and nonadministrative IDOC employee attitudes on the Positive PreStart Implementation Scale (t = 4.09, p =.000) and considerably less negative attitudes on the Negative PreStart Implementation Scale (t = –3.65, p=.000) than did nonadministrative IDOC staff. In a similarly positive vein, administrative staff indicated more positive expectations regarding inmates/releasees benefiting from using PreStart programming and services (t = 2.29, p = .023). Administrative staff also indicated more positive attitudes on the Positive Public Safety Scale than did nonadministrative staff (t = 4.19, p =.000). Insignificant differences occurred between the two subgroups on only one scale, the Negative Programming Adequacy Scale; this means that both groups displayed equally negative attitudes on this dimension.

One–way analyses of variance were computed for tests of means between various subgroups (that is, age subgroups, basis of operation subgroups, work site security level subgroups and years in corrections subgroups). Only statistically significant subgroup differences that were detected using the conservative pairwise comparison technique (Scheffe) were included in the results table for the ANOVAs (see Table 3.12). Thus, a few variables (race, education level, and years in current position) were left out of the table entirely since no significant subgroup differences on mean scale scores were detected for the five attitudinal subscales.

As was presented in Table 3.1, 9 percent of the sample respondents (n = 27) were community IDOC staff, all of which were parole agents. Of these 27 respondents, 21 specifically indicated that they were CSC staff. And of these 21 CSC staff members, 18 indicated that they provided their services primarily at community service centers; two at community correctional centers; and one at a medium–security facility. The other six parole agents did not indicate the type of work–site facility at which they worked. This information should help clarify where some of the significant subgroup differences occurred on the staff attitudinal scales.

As is evident in Table 3.12, not many of the subgroup differences tested were found to be statistically significant. In fact, one scale, the Negative Programming Adequacy Scale, found no statistically significant subgroup differences and was excluded from the results table altogether. The meaning that can be attached to this lack of significant findings for the Negative Programming Adequacy Scale is that all of the subgroups, no matter how defined, expressed the same (basically negative) attitudes regarding the adequacy of PreStart programming for offenders.

Table 3.12: Significant Results of ANOVAs Examining Subgroup Mean Differences on Staff Attitudinal Subscales

Significant Results for the Positive PreStart Implementation Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	F	P-Value
Basis of Operation:				7.34	.0008
Community IDOC Staff	27	35.59	10.81		
Institutional IDOC Staff	222	42.01	9.98		
Non-IDOC Staff	27	45.48	6.95		
Work-Site Security Level:				6.57	.0000
Comm. Service Centers	21	36.81	10.67		
Comm. Correctional Cntrs	47	36.11	10.32		
Minimum-Security Facility	59	45.22	8.00		
Medium-Security Facility	94	43.57	9.67		
Maximum-Security Facility	23	41.22	10.56		
Specialized Facility	15	40.27	10.67		

Significant Results for the Positive Inmate Utilization Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	F	P-Value
Age Group:				4.97	.0076
18-35	37	20.19	4.59		
36-45	135	20.53	5.29		
46-68	91	22.48	4.68		

Significant Results for the Negative PreStart Implementation Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	F	P-Value
Years in Corrections:				3.94	.0206
0-6	77	16.10	4.41		
7-12	90	16.54	5.07		
13-33	87	14.60	4.85		

Significant Results for the Positive Public Safety Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	F	P-Value
Basis of Operation:				34.54	.0000
Community IDOC Staff	27	7.04	2.95		
Institutional IDOC Staff	221	11.21	2.57		
Non-IDOC Staff	26	11.88	1.77		
Work-Site Security Level:				12.12	.0000
Comm. Service Centers	19	6.63	2.56		
Comm. Correctional Cntrs	46	10.59	2.49		
Minimum-Security Facility	59	11.80	2.27		
Medium-Security Facility	94	11.12	2.52		
Maximum-Security Facility	23	11.17	3.34		
Specialized Facility	15	11.53	3.38		

In terms of the Positive PreStart Implementation Scale, two subgroup variables (basis of operation and work–site security level) witnessed significant differences between their component subgroups. When pairwise comparisons were made between basis of operation subgroups, it was discovered that the community IDOC staff (parole agents) subgroup displayed a considerably lower level of positive attitudes (M = 35.59) regarding PreStart's implementation process than did institutional IDOC staff (M = 42.01), and even weaker positive attitudes than did non–IDOC staff (M = 45.48).

Only one subgroup variable — the staff member's age group — resulted in significant mean differences on the Positive Inmate Utilization Scale. Pairwise comparisons revealed that the significant difference occurred between older staff members aged 46 to 68; they indicated significantly more positive attitudes (M = 22.48) regarding inmates' and releasees' benefits of using PreStart programs and services, than did staff members aged 36 to 45 (M=20.53) or those aged 18 to 35 (M = 20.19).

Once again, only one subgroup variable — the number of years spent working in the field of corrections — resulted in significant mean differences on the Negative PreStart Implementation Scale. Pairwise comparisons revealed that employees who had spent the greatest number of years (13 to 33) working in corrections displayed considerably less negative attitudes regarding PreStart's implementation (M = 14.60) than did employees who had been in the field seven to 12 years (M = 16.54) and those who had been in the field six years or less (M = 16.10).

Two subgroup variables (basis of operation and work site security level) resulted in statistically significant mean differences on the Positive Public Safety Scale. Consistent with findings discussed for the Positive PreStart Implementation Scale, pairwise comparisons revealed that community IDOC staff (parole agents) displayed considerably less positive attitudes (M=7.04) regarding PreStart's attentiveness to public safety issues than did institutional IDOC staff (M = 11.21), and even less positive attitudes than did non–IDOC staff (M = 11.88). This finding was further supported by the results of pairwise comparisons between work–site security level subgroups; these revealed that CSC staff displayed significantly less positive attitudes (M = 6.63) on the Positive Public Safety Scale than did any other work site security level subgroup (means ranged from 10.59 to 11.53).

In summary, the various tests of subgroup mean differences on the five attitudinal subscales indicated a staff consensus on one issue: the programming offered for inmates/releasees by PreStart was quite inadequate (evidenced by most respondents scoring high on the Negative Programming Adequacy Scale). Females were identified as having more negative attitudes regarding the adequacy of PreStart programming than males.

No significant differences were found between race, education level and years in current position subgroups. However, age and tenure within the field of corrections did seem to matter in terms of global attitudes regarding PreStart. Respondents 46 to 68 years old tended to express more positive expectations of the benefits that inmates/releasees would receive from PreStart than did younger employees. This was further supported by the finding that employees who had been in the corrections field the longest (13 to 33 years) tended to display the least negative attitudes regarding PreStart's implementation process.

When IDOC staff were partitioned into administrative and nonadministrative subgroups, the former subgroup showed more positive attitudes regarding expected benefits of inmates/releasees using PreStart and PreStart's attentiveness to public safety concerns.

When the staff sample was partitioned three ways, significant differences were detected between community IDOC staff (parole agents) and the other two types of staff (institutional IDOC staff and non–IDOC staff). Generally, community IDOC staff displayed considerably less positive attitudes regarding PreStart's implementation as well as PreStart's attentiveness to public safety issues than did the other two types of staff. This finding was further supported when it was detected that CSC staff members displayed much less positive attitudes on both of these dimensions than did staff employed at facilities from any other work site security level.

Thus, while attitudes from all staff respondents tended to reflect generally positive attitudes about PreStart, some significant subgroup differences were detected. The exception was that most respondents were concerned about the inadequacy of PreStart programming, especially for special types of inmates/releasees such as sex and drug offenders.

Determinants of Staff Attitudes Toward PreStart:

A primary purpose of administering scales that reflect staff levels of job efficacy, job satisfaction, and ownership of change processes, was to allow an examination of relationships between these variables and attitudes toward PreStart. It was expected that staff who have the greatest levels of job satisfaction and efficacy, and who felt an ownership in the change process used to implement PreStart, would also display the most favorable attitudes toward PreStart. It also was hypothesized that staff who experienced increases in job satisfaction after PreStart's implementation also would display more positive attitudes regarding PreStart than staff who experienced decreases in job satisfaction following PreStart's implementation.

To test these relationships, stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted; the five PreStart attitudinal scales served as dependent variables. The six job–related measures served as

independent variables in the analyses. Since basis of operation and position within the IDOC were consistently found to be important factors in understanding subgroup differences on the attitudinal and job–related scales, they were included as independent variables in the multivariate analyses. Also, since the primary focus on ownership and efficacy issues were targeted at IDOC employees, non–IDOC staff (n = 29) were excluded from the multivariate analysis.

As can be seen in Table 3.13, the equations across each of the five dependent variables accounted for moderate to large amounts of total variance, with explained variances (R–squares) ranging from 5 percent to 57 percent. In fact, the greatest model confirmation occurred for the Positive PreStart Implementation Scale ($R^2 = .57$) and the Positive Public Safety Scale ($R^2=.41$). Modest confirmation occurred for the Positive Inmate Utilization Scale ($R^2=.26$) and the Negative PreStart Implementation Scale ($R^2 = .23$), while very weak confirmation occurred for the Negative Programming Adequacy Scale ($R^2 = .05$).

Table 3.13: Determinants of Staff Attitudes Toward PreStart (Betas Reported)

Independent Variables	Positive PreStart Implementation Scale	Positive Inmate Utilization Scale	Negative PreStart Implementation Scale	Negative Programming Adequacy Scale	Positive Public Safety Scale
Basis of Operation: (0=Community IDOC Staff; 1=Institutional IDOC Staff)	–.17	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.26
Position within IDOC: (0=Admin. Staff; 1=Non-admin. Staff)	–.18	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Ownership Scale	.29	.19	–.29	n.s.	.24
Current Job Attitude Scale	.19	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Current Job Satisfaction Scale	.44	n.s.	–.28	–.23	.32
Current Job Efficacy Scale	.14	.24	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Pre–PreStart Job Satisfaction Scale	–.24	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Difference Score for Job Satisfaction (Pre–to–Post PreStart)	n.s.	.24	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Equation F R^2	26.09 .57	16.60 .26	21.22 .23	8.24 .05	32.45 .41

Note: All values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

The strongest determinant of the Positive PreStart Implementation Scale (see Table 3.13) was having high levels of current job satisfaction (Beta = .44). Other strong determinants included having a strong sense of ownership over the change process (Beta = .29) and a relatively low level of before–PreStart job satisfaction (Beta = –.24).

Having a positive attitude regarding the current job situation also served as a significant predictor (Beta =.19) of positive attitudes regarding PreStart's implementation. Position within the

IDOC was an equally important determinant (Beta=–.18), with administrative staff indicating more positive attitudes on this scale than nonadministrative staff. Another equally important variable was staff member's basis of operation (Beta = –.17). Surprisingly, community IDOC staff exhibited, after adjusting for all other significant factors, more positive attitudes regarding PreStart's implementation than did institutional IDOC staff.

One final predictor of scores on the Positive PreStart Implementation Scale was scores on the Current Job Efficacy Scale (Beta = .14). After adjusting for all other statistically significant predictor variables, perceptions of being highly effective in working with correctional clients seemed to be a strong determinant of attitudes regarding PreStart's implementation process.

Only three of the independent variables served as determinants of scores on the Positive Inmate Utilization Scale. Two factors were fairly equal in importance; an increase in job satisfaction after PreStart's implementation (Beta =.24) and current feelings of job efficacy (Beta =.24) served as the most significant predictors. A sense of ownership in the change process also was a significant determinant of attitudes regarding expected benefits to be reaped by PreStart inmates (Beta = .19).

Two independent variables were significant determinants of the Negative PreStart Implementation Scale. The negative Beta (–.29) for the Ownership Scale indicated that staff who displayed the greatest perceptions of ownership in the change process had considerably lower scores on the Negative PreStart Implementation Scale. The negative Beta (–.28) for the Current Job Satisfaction Scale indicated that staff who expressed having the greatest amount of current job satisfaction also had considerably lower scores on the Negative PreStart Implementation Scale.

Only one independent variable served as a significant determinant of the Negative Programming Adequacy Scale. The negative Beta (–.23) for the Current Job Satisfaction Scale indicated that lower satisfaction with the current job situation resulted in higher levels of dissatisfaction with PreStart programming.

Three independent variables served as determinants of scores on the Positive Public Safety Scale. The strongest determinant of this attitudinal scale was the Current Job Satisfaction Scale (Beta = .32). Another important determinant was the staff member's basis of operation (Beta = .26). An equally important determinant was having a sense of ownership in the change process used to implement PreStart (Beta =.24). Generally, these values reflect that staff who indicated having greater current job satisfaction, who were institutional IDOC staff (as opposed to community IDOC staff), and who sensed an ownership of the change process, tended to display more positive attitudes regarding PreStart's attentiveness to public safety issues.

In summary, the multivariate analysis resulted in rather strong confirmation for four of the five models tested.[9] The best models resulted for the Positive PreStart Implementation Scale and the Positive Public Safety Scale, with explained variance proportions of 57 percent and 41 percent, respectively. Across all four of the explanatory models, the Current Job Satisfaction Scale and the Ownership Scale seemed to be the most consistent determinants of staff attitudes toward PreStart. The greater the level of job satisfaction and ownership of change, the more favorable were attitudes toward PreStart.

The next two most important determinants of staff attitudes toward PreStart appeared to be the staff member's basis of operation, as well as his or her feelings of efficacy in working with correctional clients. Being a community IDOC staff member and having low perceptions of current job efficacy were strong predictors of negative attitudes toward PreStart.

Summary and Conclusions

The preceding discussion has illustrated the less–than–ideal organizational context in which PreStart was implemented. Many key variables often associated with policy/program implementation success — for example, a supportive political and social environment, adequate resources, and clear policy standards — were found to be lacking.

The IDOC had the formidable task of implementing a novel program without an adequate organizational infrastructure and enough resources to support such efforts. The program was implemented rather hastily and by staff who, for the most part, were not involved in its planning and were not well trained to engage in newly designated duties. Most staff sample respondents indicated that they felt little ownership over the change process used to implement PreStart. In fact, very little subgroup variability existed in this observed attitude. However, the differences that were detected followed expected patterns. For instance, institutional staff expressed feeling considerably greater ownership of the change process than did community IDOC staff (parole agents), who were the most resistant to the parole reform from the beginning. Also, administrative staff expressed having more ownership over the change process than nonadministrative staff; that was expected since the former generally have more control over their work situation than the latter.

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[9] Attempts at model building for the Negative Programming Adequacy Scale were unsuccessful due to a lack of score variance on this scale.

Most respondents in the staff sample expressed generally positive attitudes regarding their current work situations, their current job efficacy and their before–PreStart job satisfaction levels. But some differences were observed between various subgroups on these job–related scales. The basis of operation was a key subgroup variable for many of the mean scale score differences. The general pattern detected was that institutional staff consistently indicated having more positive current job attitudes, more current job satisfaction, more current job efficacy, and more before–PreStart job satisfaction than did community IDOC staff. Another key subgroup variable for many mean scale score differences was position within the IDOC. Repeatedly, administrative staff indicated more current job satisfaction, more current job efficacy, and more before–PreStart job satisfaction than did nonadministrative staff.

When difference scores were computed between before–PreStart job satisfaction levels and current job satisfaction levels, one pattern appeared consistently: community IDOC staff experienced a tremendous decrease in job satisfaction once PreStart was implemented. Slight decreases (although statistically insignificant) were also observed for community correctional center staff and specialized facility staff, while staff from minimum–, medium–, and maximum–security facilities experienced practically no differences in job satisfaction across the two periods.

This appears to be the result of many community–based IDOC staff having just witnessed significant personal and professional dislocations due to budget cuts and the related implementation of PreStart. This translated into community IDOC staff exhibiting more negative attitudes toward PreStart than institutional staff. Institutional staff tended to be more positive about many aspects of PreStart; however, the successful implementation of the program in institutions (Phase I) would not require nearly the level of change that would be required of successful Phase II programming. These data would suggest that the implementation of Phase I programming would likely be more successful than the implementation of Phase II programming. This is the subject of subsequent chapters.

An analogy presented earlier in this chapter likened PreStart's implementation to a poker game. The IDOC was not dealt a very good hand in the summer of 1991. Subsequently, the IDOC has not been dealt any new cards, and it was not willing to reshuffle the cards it did have (for example, appropriate additional funds to the Community Services Division for PreStart). Still, it stayed in the game, and did remarkably well doing so. Despite the many barriers to successful program implementation, high–level IDOC administrators exhibited a strong commitment to the reform effort and were willing to engage in necessary adaptive planning strategies to see the essential elements of the designed program implemented.

Chapter 4

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE I PROGRAMMING: AN INTERFACILITY ASSESSMENT

Prior to PreStart's implementation, the Illinois Department of Corrections provided inmates with no meaningful pre–release programming to aid them in their transition from prison to the community. The department, however, did provide what was known as parole school to inmates facing imminent release from prison. Impending releasees were to be provided some information about what was required of them while they were on mandatory supervised release (including their special conditions, if any) and where to make their initial contact with a parole agent. This "parole school" was very limited, however, and could last anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours. It could be provided by a correctional counselor or a parole agent, or any staff person who happened to be available. It could include some information on what community resources were available if someone needed help, and some words of encouragement. Or it could be limited to a cold shoulder and a blank stare. Oftentimes, it didn't happen at all and an inmate would be released without being provided any relevant information, support or encouragement whatsoever. Parole school was not a formal program; if, when, and how it occurred was quite variable across and within facilities. Parole school, as it existed, consisted of a nominal amount of gate money and perhaps a bus or train ticket home. This constituted the IDOC's attempts to ease most inmates transition back to the free world.

Phase I of the PreStart program represents the IDOC's attempt to do more than the earlier parole school. As discussed in Chapter 2, the development of Phase I programming was spurred by the recommendations of the 1989 Legislative Task Force on Released Inmates. These recommendations, which were welcomed by the then–IDOC director, resulted in a pilot program named "PROJECT PreStart" at the East Moline Community Correctional Center. This pilot project served as the basis of what eventually became Phase I of the broader PreStart program.

The initial IDOC administrative directive(s) relating to PreStart (dated July 1, 1991) described the Phase I component as consisting of two parts: intensified pre–release programming (Release School), which would be required for all inmates within six months of their release, and the establishment of individual development plans (IDPs) for inmates. An explanatory memo from the deputy director for community services, dated July 19, 1991, stipulated that the inmates in Phase I would participate in a 30–hour release school and that the program was designed to enhance job

skills and self–esteem, identify post–release needs and provide strategies to assist in the inmate's return to the community. The memo also specifically mentioned the IDP, which was to identify "practical, attainable goals for release."

Because Phase I of the PreStart program was accomplished primarily as a classroom activity, a formal curriculum was developed by a former educator contracted by the IDOC. The 30–hour curriculum was composed of 10 modules, each of which intended to expose the participants to some basic insights, skills and information to help them in their transition to the community. Focus tended to be placed on practical issues that the releasees were likely to confront: the need to fill out job applications and complete a job interview successfully, the need to have proof of identity, the need to acquire a driver's license, the need to access community resources to obtain food, shelter, or a job, and so on. Some of the modules were less oriented to life skills development and focused more on psychological and small–group issues such as low self–esteem, faulty decision–making processes, substance abuse, and family reunification.

The IDOC developed a strict schedule for delivery of the curriculum within all facilities — two weeks of classes, one module per day, a particular module on each day and three hours of instruction per module. Unlike the situation with the earlier parole school, it insisted that this schedule be rigorously implemented and that all inmates within the release time frame be exposed to all 10 modules. Exceptions to this schedule and its all–encompassing scope could be approved only by the PreStart coordinator.

The IDP, seen as a centerpiece of the program's pre–release planning objective, was to be completed during Release School. Development of the IDP intended to transform knowledge gained in the PreStart modules into a well–thought–out plan designed to facilitate the inmate's reintegration into the community. It further served as the programmatic link between Phase I and Phase II components; it was to guide the assistance and advocacy efforts of PreStart agents in the community.

Phase I of the PreStart program thus reflected a significant departure from the practically nonexistent pre–release programming that had existed earlier. The successful implementation of Phase I programming, however, would be no small task. It would require literally hundreds of institutional staff members throughout the system, many of whom were barely able to keep up with their existing workload, to take on the additional challenge of providing some level of classroom instruction to inmates that, across the state, could number a thousand or more during any one sequence of PreStart classes. No new positions would be created to supply Phase I program services. All inmates in the system were designated to be in a PreStart classroom, and many who were in school or work assignments during the assigned PreStart times were loathe to lose pay to

attend PreStart classes but were forced to participate. Positive incentives were largely unavailable. The burden of exacting inmate compliance would fall on correctional officers who knew, and often cared, little about this new program. Once implemented, there would be little or no relief from the program's demands. As each cohort of inmates who completed Phase I would exit, a new and generally larger cohort would take its place.

This chapter addresses both systemwide and facility–level issues in the implementation and routinization of Phase I programming. It also documents the state of PreStart Phase I service delivery roughly two years after the program's implementation. The methodology and data collection efforts of the 1992 and 1993 site visits were summarized in the preceding chapter. The first interim report of this study addressed initial implementation issues surrounding PreStart at the system and the facility level. The second interim report described the changes in Phase I programming between the first and second year of the program and the reasons for those changes. The reader is referred to those sources for a more exhaustive discussion of Phase I programming. This chapter summarizes those findings and addresses issues which surfaced during the routinization phase of PreStart. The findings regarding changes in Phase I programming at the facility level from 1992 to 1993 are discussed in terms of the variables found to affect program improvement, maintenance and decline. (A complete facility–by–facility discussion of Phase I programming over time can be found in Appendix A.)

Summary of Findings: 1992 PreStart Phase I Implementation

The results of the 1992 facility visits and staff interviews (conducted during the early implementation phase of PreStart) revealed a less than ideal context in which the program was translated into action. This environment was found to have negatively impacted PreStart's implementation at the facility level in a variety of ways. For example, a quickly implemented and underdeveloped program model and curriculum aggravated existing morale and staffing problems. Implementation also was affected by inadequate resources reflected in the amount of staff, instructional materials and physical space needed to deliver the program. Two further issues affecting Phase I's initial implementation and delivery were a lack of staff training and a deficiency in communication — both within the facilities and between facility staff and Central Office.

Despite the problematic environment of PreStart's development and initial implementation, the evaluation team witnessed many bona fide Phase I programs. The 1992 site visits, however, revealed a considerable amount of variation in the degree to which Phase I programming was successfully implemented across facilities. A few facilities exhibited programs characterized by low staff morale and commitment levels, a highly disaffected inmate clientele, and weak internal

communication and service delivery structures. On the other hand, a majority of the programs reviewed were delivering instructional services with apparent effectiveness and with inmates who felt positively about the program. A few programs were doing an exceptional job, with PreStart appearing to revitalize particular staff and facility operations in a manner consistent with humanistic and therapeutic approaches to corrections.

Keys to Implementation Success

Successful program implementation was due in part to the acknowledged priority given to PreStart by the IDOC director and by efforts of Community Services Division staff to "keep things afloat." It was found that facility security level, inmate population composition and resource level were not the most important factors determining successful Phase I implementation. That is, some of the strongest Phase I programs were found at very overcrowded and understaffed maximum–security facilities while some weaker programs were found at relatively resource–rich, minimum–security facilities. Three key factors were identified as having the most influence on the successful implementation of PreStart Phase I at the facility level: 1) administrative leadership; 2) staff commitment; and 3) strong communication patterns.

Administrative Leadership

The key factor in determining implementation success appeared to be the administrative leadership exerted in the process of implementing PreStart. When administrative personnel such as the warden or an assistant warden showed support for PreStart during classroom sessions, PreStart staff meetings, and inmate graduations, inmates and staff were more accepting of the program and more cooperative in its implementation.

The presence of top–level administration at PreStart functions varied greatly across facilities. Wardens and assistant wardens clearly understood that PreStart was a departmental priority, and those who sought upward mobility within the department tended to strongly support PreStart. A number of respondents characterized PreStart as being "the director's baby." In former administrations, performance on institutional audits largely determined one's status and mobility within the agency. To many, PreStart had replaced audits in the new administration.

Departmental ambitions alone did not explain levels of administrative support for Phase I programming. Officials who were perceived by staff and inmates as being aligned with PreStart's philosophy of behavioral change were those most likely to be seen in classrooms, at graduation ceremonies and conducting PreStart staff meetings.

This difference, while difficult to detect, was evidenced through the administration's actions in assigning staff members to PreStart functions. In some facilities, staff members who were viewed by their superiors as having little to do and incompetent in their current assignments were assigned PreStart duties. At one institution, the warden delegated PreStart responsibilities to an assistant warden, who in turn delegated the responsibilities to a clinical services supervisor, who subsequently carried the title "PreStart coordinator." At this institution, however, one of the educators was the *de facto* coordinator, and there was little involvement of the institution's top administration in PreStart. The educator who served as the primary PreStart agent had a strong personal belief in the value of PreStart and was willing to take on extra responsibility to ensure that it ran smoothly.

In marked contrast, at other facilities, it was apparent that care had been given to selecting the most committed and competent staff for PreStart administrative or presenter roles. At one facility, the selected PreStart coordinator was a dynamic staff person chosen for his or her well–recognized competence. At this same facility, the warden attended each PreStart graduation ceremony. Outside speakers, who were actively solicited by members of the executive staff, attended classroom sessions and graduation ceremonies. At this institution, the administrative attitude toward PreStart was echoed by inmates, many of whom framed their graduation certificates in a display of the positive feelings they had for PreStart.

Staff Commitment

Without the support and commitment of the administration, it would have been difficult for staff to exhibit high levels of commitment to PreStart. A pattern of staff disaffection emerged where administrative support of PreStart was low, and in all likelihood was reflective of staff assignment patterns. In one facility, PreStart presenters expressed strong hostility to the program. In this facility, inmates reported that the presenters had openly called the program worthless and said in class that they did not want to be there any more than did the inmates. The instructional style of these presenters reflected their negative attitude toward PreStart programming. Reportedly, they either showed nonrelevant videos or tapes instead of teaching the modules, or read the curriculum verbatim from the manual. At this facility, most of the PreStart presenters had been IDOC employees for many years and were not enthusiastic about their PreStart assignment. This may have been a function of length of service and burnout in older staff.

A strategy which seemed to be an effective remedy to the problem of scarce staff resources and presenter burnout was team teaching and the rotation of staff presenters. Through the experience of presenting different modules, staff at some facilities developed the capacity to step in

as temporary replacements for a module's primary facilitator, providing relief and support to those required to deliver particular modules. This innovation appeared to be developed in the more successful PreStart programs first, and then disseminated to other institutions through meetings of PreStart coordinators. Staff rotation was most likely to be implemented in larger facilities having a pool of committed staff from which PreStart presenters could be selected. At one facility in which rotation and team teaching were not used, one staff person said that "the PreStart presenters were looking for a cliff." It is noteworthy that this facility had a very supportive leadership and very committed staff. However, one year of delivering PreStart without any relief, when other job responsibilities were also increasing, was beginning to take its toll. Thus, a minimal level of staff resources was found necessary for a high–quality program to endure.

Strong Communication Patterns

Institutions having extensive formal and informal communication among PreStart staff witnessed the emergence of stronger Phase I programming. For instance, at one facility, staff consistently spoke of sharing information and ideas in hallways, on the grounds, prior to or after module presentations, as well as at the formal PreStart staff meetings. When regular staff meetings among PreStart presenters were held, and the meetings were actually used to share information and insights regarding PreStart, a more vital and committed PreStart staff seemed to be in place. At a number of institutions, meetings were not commonly held and staff members did not sit in on module presentations delivered by coworkers. Communication was often lacking between educational and counseling staff. Conversely, open communication channels nurtured by the administration often generated feelings of team effort and commitment.

Where little feedback took place among the staff, there seemed to be little knowledge among presenters of material in other modules, and there was little sharing of successful presentation techniques or discussion of common problems. In the facilities where program implementation was least successful, instead of hearing about cooperation among PreStart presenters, researchers heard reports of resentment expressed by one group against another:

> The staff is divided as to Prestart. Educators find it easy. Counselors were thrust into it and find it difficult to address groups of 35 or 40. Educators try to impose their learning skills onto counselor presenters, who had no training or exposure.

Individual Development Plans

Given the intended centrality of the Individual Development Plan (IDP) — the link between Phase I and Phase II of PreStart — the evaluation examined the process and outcome of

developing inmate IDPs. A wide range of attention was given to IDPs across facilities. At some institutions with better–developed Phase I programming, more attention was given to assisting inmates in the development of IDPs, but nowhere did the evaluation team see IDPs being developed with the level of emphasis necessary for them to serve their intended role. IDPs were collected at a majority of the sites visited. For the most part, they were not tailored to individual needs and situations. In fact, they tended to be made up of fairly vacuous and nondirectional goal and activity statements, and appeared to have been completed with a minimal level of thought and effort.

The designated role of parole officers in guiding IDP development was not achieved. At a few institutions, inmates met individually with parole officers for guidance, explanation and instruction in completing the IDP. But in most institutions, no individual attention seemed directed toward inmates, and forms were filled out in groups during the PreStart module. In many instances, IDPs did not appear to be completed at all. Three hours per week is not enough time for staff to meet individually with all student inmates to complete an IDP in a meaningful way; however, individualized attention within the classroom and a presentation emphasizing the potential value of IDPs would be beneficial.

The successful development of meaningful IDPs was hindered by a lack of clear guidelines for IDP completion and a lack of consensus on the purpose of completing the form at all. Even in one institution with a well–developed Phase I program, staff were advising inmates to keep their IDPs very general and very simple so that their goals could easily be achieved. It was stated that this was the best way to be recommended for early discharge from parole. This seemed to circumvent the objective of having the IDP as a meaningful, individual life plan.

Thus, IDPs across all facilities played a limited role in Phase I. The IDPs were not taken seriously by most inmates and staff, and were not individually tailored to reflect the unique needs of individual inmates. Ideally, the newly released inmate who had carefully worked out a plan for reintegration would carry this plan to a community service center where a parole agent would assist him or her in finding the community resources necessary for achieving their goals. At least from the Phase I perspective, it was clear that this scenario was not likely to occur.

Implementation at Community Correctional Centers

A truncated 10–hour version of the PreStart curriculum was mandated to be introduced at all community correctional centers (CCCs). In addition, there was no required pattern to the scheduling of PreStart classes offered in a number of CCCs, unlike the mandate given to

institutions, which demanded a strict adherence to the Central Office dictated schedule for the delivery of PreStart classes. Despite this flexibility offered to CCCs in offering Phase I programming, implementation of Phase I programming at CCCs was found, in general, to be much weaker than at correctional institutions. This appeared to be due to CCCs perhaps being allowed too much flexibility in offering PreStart. Because CCC staff commonly viewed PreStart as redundant of existing CCC pre–release programming, PreStart wasn't taken very seriously. But the lack of seriousness was not only displayed at CCCs that provided strong programming efforts. The CCCs with the weakest PreStart programs also seemed to provide questionable levels of reintegrative efforts to their residents.

Rather surprising, given PreStart's administrative locus, was the discovery that PreStart at the CCCs exhibited a notable lack of parole agent involvement. Parole agents were not involved in IDP development or classroom instruction. In addition, facility staff tended to express little knowledge about Phase II services. Thus, while external resources often were used in the CCCs, a potentially valuable resource — parole agents — appeared to be underused.

Phase I Programming in 1993: Routinization?

Unless a reform is intended to be temporary, it must become routinized. While it is important to assess new programs during their earliest stages to identify problematic implementation issues, implementation analysis alone tells us very little about whether a program will continue to work. The data examined in the following pages were collected during summer 1993, after PreStart had been in effect for two full years. Two years after the initial implementation of Phase I, it would be expected that the program had reached the routinization stage. That is, the program would be expected to be as fully implemented as it ever would be. While the original evaluation design was based on an assumption that by then the program would be routinized, it seems that the conditions of PreStart's implementation may have limited its capacity to be routinized quickly. It appears that Phase I programming was still evolving and maturing. Accordingly, it would be premature to state that the following discussion reflects PreStart Phase I programming as it will likely look tomorrow or in the next few years.

The following pages focus on the nature of changes that transpired during the course of a year's time (between the summers of 1992 and 1993). The systemwide and facility–level factors identified as affecting implementation outcomes were of immediate consequence for the program's success. As the program becomes routinized, it becomes important to highlight positive program developments and to engage in efforts that promote the institutionalization of those factors, while factors that minimize program effectiveness can be targeted for attenuation. In fact, after the second

interim report was delivered to the IDOC in fall 1993, the IDOC made considerable effort to remedy some of the problems noted in that report as they pertained to Phase I programming.

The results of the 1993 follow-up visits to the 14 facilities follow. First, systemwide issues are presented, followed by a discussion of facility programs at Time 1 (1992) and Time 2 (1993). The PreStart programming at community correctional centers is presented separately.

Curriculum Development

As detailed in the first interim report, severe problems with the initial curriculum led to its subsequent revision. Staff interview data from the 1992 site visits suggested overwhelming dissatisfaction with the PreStart curriculum as it was *initially* implemented. Staff criticism seemed to focus on three areas:

- A belief that the IDOC had inappropriately paid someone "big bucks" to develop the curriculum when there were department staff with experience who could have designed a much more appropriate program;

- A belief that the curriculum was directed at an educational level beyond most inmates and that much of the material was targeted at areas not germane to inmates' release needs, while ignoring other critical areas; and

- A belief that the curriculum was disjointed and unconnected. In the words of one educator, it wasn't a curriculum, "just a hodge–podge of study and lecture material."

Staff dissatisfaction with the curriculum's content was compounded by the staff's perception of the rigidity of the administration regarding PreStart classes' execution. As mentioned earlier, for example, initial time frames for sessions (modules) were three hours long; as one instructor indicated, "We show videos (for example, motivation tapes) because there's no way we can stretch out the material for three hours, and if you just ask the inmates to sit there without anything to do, you've got problems."

Despite Central Office pronouncements that the curriculum was experimental in nature and simply a guide that could and would be modified, many module presenters were under the impression that they had to present the material as written. Over time, more flexibility in materials' presentation was explicitly encouraged of staff, and the materials were better communicated to the presenters, but the effects of the earlier negative perceptions lingered.

To give appropriate credit to the department's central administration, the revision of the PreStart curriculum has been a continuous process. Even before the extent of the staff's dissatisfaction with the curriculum and format of the Phase I instruction became widely known, steps were taken to establish a statewide committee to examine the curriculum and to develop

alternatives. This committee was organized the winter following PreStart's July 1, 1991, introduction. It met in March and completed the new curriculum. The assistant wardens met in early June, resulting in more revisions to the curriculum. The revised curriculum was finally printed in July 1992, one year after the PreStart program had been introduced. This timing was consistent with an original promise made by the administration that a new curriculum would be introduced within one year of PreStart's start–up date.

The revised curriculum explicitly allows individual instructors leeway in developing their own module materials, and instructor creativity and adaptation is encouraged. Much of the creative effort of the Curriculum Committee seems to have been based upon input of PreStart instructional staff. Institutions with special populations were allowed to tailor their programs, and all module presenters were allowed to add to the curriculum as they saw fit. Thus, while PreStart was initially implemented with a sense of strict enforcement, eventually, as the program matured, flexibility from Central Office was introduced.

Nonetheless, during the 1993 site visits, many facility staff responsible for curriculum presentation still felt that curriculum should be improved:

> [What would you suggest to improve PreStart (Phase I)?]: I would spend more energy on improving the content...content is extremely lacking — next to nothing — It has gotten better with the revisions. (correctional counselor)
>
> [The curriculum] has gotten better with the revisions. But some modules are still not long enough. Some do not need to be three hours long. Useful material should be covered if the class is going to be three hours...not just 'filler.' (correctional counselor)
>
> Even though there's not enough material, I'd cut some of it. Because it's not important...you don't even have enough and then some of what's there is useless. These topics are not new, I could get some resources together and put a complete curriculum down...or let me find out what others [who teach my module] are adding. (educator)

At this writing, curriculum–revision processes were continuing in a structured manner, which included the input of PreStart presenters from throughout the system. In particular, two modules were currently undergoing extensive revision under the auspices of the IDOC's Curriculum Committee, and a separate committee had been formed to continue revisions of the PreStart Curriculum delivered in community correctional centers. The IDOC should be commended for engaging in these activities.

Central Office Involvement

The increased flexibility allowed by Central Office in the delivery of Phase I programming was received positively by most staff interviewed in 1993. Staff who were module presenters from the time PreStart began to the time of the follow–up interviews cited these changes in flexibility:

> At first it was teach what you see. That's fine if your module has plenty of material. Mine didn't ... I was told I could not add [substantively]. (correctional counselor)

> It's been nice ... now we are able to bring in related materials, the staff here share a lot of the things they've had sitting around that are applicable ... there's a lot of good stuff. (educator)

However, while this shift in flexibility was noted in the follow–up interviews, another change in the enforcement of the policy/programming was noted by numerous staff. There seemed to be a general consensus (especially from middle–level administrators) that Central Office was no longer focusing attention on Phase I of PreStart. The following quotes are telling:

> PreStart is a good idea that is getting better. But don't stop now, it needs to be refined. (education facility administrator)

> [PreStart] went from "the thing" to "a program" almost overnight. (clinical services supervisor)

> IDOC [Central Office] needs to pay more attention. Stop the lip service, not just put on a show...What PreStart needs now is some "reality checking." (education facility administrator)

> There's been noticeably less of an administrative priority given to PreStart Phase I [from Central Office]. The focus must be shifting to Phase II...I hope that this means Phase I is running well enough. I hope it's not just [that they've] given up. (PreStart coordinator)

From information gathered in the face–to–face interviews, it became apparent that Central Office was no longer taking the lead in parenting Phase I programming. This was especially the perception of lower ranking personnel involved in delivery of Phase I services. However, Central Office staff appear to have been active in communicating to higher–level staff the importance of PreStart and a desire that Phase I programming continue to be given facility priority. For instance, at executive staff meetings, which included facility wardens and top–level Central Office administrators, PreStart appeared to be a regular topic of discussion. One meeting, in the fall of 1992, was primarily devoted to PreStart. Facilities perceived as having strong PreStart programs were contrasted to those believed to be weaker. Wardens of the respective facilities were in this manner being held accountable for their PreStart programs.

The decision was eventually made, however, to minimize the involvement of the Community Services Division in Phase I programming. Limited attention that could be provided by the deputy director and the PreStart administrator to any single departmental activity should be focused on Phase II programming. It was time for facilities to take responsibility for Phase I programming. This decision may have been premature, which is highlighted in the following discussion of problems that have arisen at the facility level; many of these appear to stem from Community Services Division's decision to minimize its involvement in providing leadership of Phase I programming. This necessary role, unfortunately, has not been absorbed by any other unit or group of officials in Central Office.

The lack of Central Office attention and involvement in Phase I programming was an ubiquitous concern expressed across facilities and stands in direct contrast to what was observed in 1992 (that is, that Phase I was perceived as an utmost departmental priority). By summer 1993, much of the energy that came from perceptions of Central Office support had dissipated.

In terms of Community Services Division Phase I activity in 1993 compared to 1992, specifically noted changes included: the end of statewide PreStart coordinator meetings sponsored by the division, the loss of Module 1 parole agent presenters, and the loss of ongoing staff training. Interestingly, the Curriculum Committee, which was created by Central Office to alleviate problems with the curriculum, was not actively engaging in curriculum improvements between the summers of 1992 and 1993. As a matter of fact, while some administrative staff at the institutions knew about the Curriculum Committee, many did not view this committee as a viable resource:

> There was a curriculum committee, but they revised it [the curriculum] and I don't think they still exist. (educator)
>
> Yeah, I know it [curriculum committee] existed, but I don't know if they are still active. (correctional counselor)
>
> No, no contact from the [curriculum] committee to offer or ask for help...offer assistance. We just try and handle the issues internally. (clinical services supervisor)

The diminution of Community Services Division's monitoring and guidance, occurring somewhere between June 1992 and May 1993, had significant negative impacts on Phase I programming, including aggravating facility–level problems. For instance, Central Office's decision to pull parole agents out of Module 1 placed a further burden on institutional staff members who now had to cover this module. This action was commonly perceived by local PreStart staff as an indication that they had to bear the brunt of providing a program that they did not initiate or want. The common view was that Springfield wanted this, but had dumped all responsibility on "us"; "they" — Springfield — needed to do more.

Likewise, the discontinuance of the statewide PreStart coordinator meetings not only ended Central Office's ability to monitor and guide the program, it also hindered the possibility of interfacility idea sharing (something many staff noted had been a benefit of such meetings). The end of Central Office training for PreStart presenters also had negative consequences. Not only were there current PreStart staff who had not been (and indeed wished to be) trained, but a silent message was being received by PreStart staff as well:

> PreStart has kind of lagged back ... IDOC administration used to be more interested ... you can see it in the training ... PreStart used to be a higher priority. The classes still are, but not the training and updating of it. It's the "squeaky wheel syndrome." That approach isn't appropriate if you want it [PreStart] to work ... you need to keep people fresh, keep it [PreStart] fresh, if it gets old it will fizzle out to where it isn't working. (educator)

Perhaps what is most problematic is not that the Community Services Division decided to minimize its involvement with Phase I programming, but rather that this lack of attention occurred despite the means for addressing many local facility problems already being in place. For example, a statewide troubleshooting committee already existed. While this committee (the Curriculum Committee) had been created to revise the curriculum and serve as a resource bank for appropriate materials, it also had the potential to be used as a diagnostic, or problem identification, committee.

Many members of this statewide Curriculum Committee were interviewed. These individuals explained that the committee was to be available to aid facilities in further developing and refining their Phase I programming. The committee would be directed to go to a specific facility where help with Phase I might be useful. A visit from the committee was apparently also available upon request from facilities, though all visits had to be cleared through Central Office.

After the committee had completed curriculum revisions in July 1992, Central Office decided that the committee would continue as a diagnostic tool for Phase I programming. The committee was set up to make visits quarterly, and between August 1992 and February 1993, this occurred. Three visits were made to correctional institutions to observe, evaluate and strengthen their Phase I programs. A visit from the committee would include a thorough analysis of Phase I at the institution. Visits lasted two days and addressed everything from the environment of the class (temperature, class arrangement and size), to the presenters (promptness, preparedness, vocal quality, energy level), the students (ability to understand, willingness to participate), and the overall organization (administrative support and coordination of Phase I programming). An exit meeting, or debriefing, would occur between the committee, the PreStart coordinator, the assistant warden, and the warden. A written report would be sent to the facility offering advice and constructive criticism. The facility would then be able to act on suggestions and, it was hoped, improve their PreStart programming.

The fact that such a committee exists, and that the ability to evaluate and improve PreStart programming was put into place by Central Office, stands in contrast to how the committee has actually been used. As noted above, the Curriculum Committee was set up to meet and/or visit facilities on a quarterly basis. A scheduled visit of this committee should have occurred in May 1993. As of the writing of the second interim report (October 1993), these visits had not yet taken place. This is not because of a lack of facilities to visit, or because of a deliberate decision by committee members to discontinue visits. Rather, it reflected a lack of activity by the IDOC's Central Office and an unwillingness of committee members to initiate activity on their own. Committee members noted that they had been asking about and suggesting places to go. The response by Central Office was, "We'll get back to you."

According to individuals involved in the administration of PreStart at Central Office, the curriculum committee was given blanket authority to make any institutional visits it deemed necessary. While this may be the case, the members of the Curriculum Committee stated they postponed their visits because they felt they didn't have the authority to go wherever and whenever they would have liked. This highlights some problematic aspects with regard to Phase I implementation efforts. First is the issue of clear and continued communication between Central Office (the highest levels of PreStart administration) and lower levels (such as the Curriculum Committee). Also, the issue of "organizational culture" (the attitudes, understandings and traditional behaviors of those in an organization) is raised.

Traditionally, employees from one institution have not become involved in activities at another. In other words, "the walls" have served as barriers to communication and idea sharing between institutions. Since the release of the second interim report, Central Office has attempted to modify traditional organizational barriers that impede desirable inter–institutional communication and interaction and also is in the process of reconstituting and revitalizing the Curriculum Committee.

By using this committee effectively, and by engaging in cross–facility staff training and information sharing, local facility staff may develop attitudes and values which allow them to share ideas and insights across institutions. This can result in a high quality of PreStart programming across the state. Clearly, the breaking down of interinstitutional barriers is quite desirable for the effective delivery of Phase I programming.

Other Consequences of Lessened Central Office Involvement

Staffing Issues. Another area where less Central Office involvement seems to have negatively impacted PreStart Phase I is staffing. As noted previously, by summer 1993, there were fewer staff based outside the prisons presenting modules. The parole agents, once responsible for both the first and final modules, were now only available to facilities to present the last module. In addition, officials from Job Services, who had been key actors in the presentation of an employment module, were now only intermittently involved in the presentation of this module at most facilities.

Perhaps partially as a result of this situation and the novelty of Phase I programming beginning to wane, staff dispositions, as indicated by the 1993 follow–up interviews, bordered on disenchantment in some cases. While some institutions made use of backup presenters and rotation of PreStart staff, module presenters often expressed feeling overburdened. And while many had grown accustomed to it, they felt it contributed to burnout:

> No, we don't have enough staff to do PreStart. I started, but didn't think I'd be doing it this long. I'm tired ... not so much of PreStart, but of doing PreStart on top of my other duties. (correctional counselor)

> ...sometimes you feel guilty, if you aren't there doing your counseling work. You have to try and get everything you used to do [before–PreStart duties] done, but you've added another job...I teach three modules. (correctional counselor II)

> Teaching PreStart is almost viewed as a punishment. Some staff want to get out of it ... but if you ask to get out they [facility administrators] say, "We don't anticipate any staffing changes at this time." (correctional counselor)

> I don't actually mind it. But it's hard to get worked up when others [teaching PreStart] are sick of it. They sort of bring the rest of us down ... they want out, we'd like them out ... but you can't get others to take on extra duty. (educator)

The above quotes reflect the general feeling of many staff being overburdened as PreStart presenters, and the signs of imminent burnout among many PreStart staff. Burnout was mentioned by at least some staff during interviews at all 14 facility visits. However, about as many PreStart staff approached the issue this way:

> Yeah, we need more staff. But we deal with it. We've had some presenters who didn't want to do it. Eventually they stopped and that meant more work for us. But here we'd rather have you wanting to do it. (correctional counselor)

> It used to be that two–thirds of those presenting [PreStart modules] didn't want to be there. But I guess we've gotten used to doing it. Now it's routine. It helps to have backups, that way if you absolutely can't present you don't have the pressure you used to. (educator)

Some of the negative dispositions of staff were tied to issues addressed above. For example, one staff member noted:

> A lot of resentment comes from a lack of training in teaching and in the topic. They need more training for those who don't have it. The lack of training is the source of the staff resistance to PreStart. (educator)

At another institution, the lack of communication was seen as the culprit:

> They [the administration] say they want to keep PreStart fresh, keep improving it, but they don't. We haven't had a [PreStart staff] meeting for months. And when we did, no one listened. They just want to keep it the way it is ... have gotten too set in their ways. (correctional counselor)

The discussion of facility programming found in Appendix A illustrates how some institutions had developed successful mechanisms to counter or reduce burnout among Phase I staff. However, many facilities did not seem cognizant, willing, or able to use such strategies (that is, staff rotation, team teaching and a backup system of presenters). This is another area where Central Office guidance could be invaluable.

As noted in the first interim report, there is also the issue of how staff view their role. And while that report discussed this in terms of control/supervision vs. helping/counseling roles, it was seen to apply in yet another way. PreStart staff at institutions are drawn mainly from the existing correctional counseling and educational staff, with a few volunteers, administrators and chaplains involved as well. At most of the 14 institutions visited, however, the bulk of the PreStart staff was made up of correctional counselors. Quite often these presenters stressed that they were "more comfortable in one–on–one situations" than in front of a group, and that "the educators are trained to do just what it is PreStart is doing ... teaching" (correctional counselors/module presenters at different institutions).

More and different training (that is, including both group dynamics and presentation skills as well as content specific issues) could alleviate these fears, and is now beginning to be provided in a structured manner. Central Office, however, could help in another way as well. The redefinition of the role of correctional counselor to include the type of individual casework and pre–release planning integral to the success of Phase I would also better adapt counselors to the new role of PreStart facilitator/presenter.

Communication Patterns. Within most institutions during the 1993 site visits, limited internal communication mechanisms to provide relevant PreStart Phase I information were observed. Some institutions held regularly scheduled — weekly, biweekly or monthly — PreStart staff meetings.

These meetings served various purposes, such as reviewing inmate evaluations of the first or second week of modules, reviewing audio–visual materials for use, and discussing problems associated with the current PreStart group. Many institutions, however, did not have any form of formal recurring communication among PreStart staff. At some institutions, there had been successful communication efforts in 1992, but these had given way over time, and were now viewed by staff as unnecessary and time consuming. Certain issues brought to light at the facility visits, however, highlight the necessity of formal and recurring communication efforts. It seems that the more consistent the formal communication among PreStart staff, the stronger the program.

Communication at this level can be seen as not only a facility issue, but also as stemming from a lack of adequate communication emanating from Central Office. According to information offered by facility staff during interviews, it seems that as of the summer of 1993, there had not been a statewide PreStart coordinators meeting within the previous eight to 10 months. Other forms of communication such as memos or the creation of a statewide newsletter were also lacking. Thus, the lack of meaningful communication among PreStart staff at the facility level seems reflective of a deeper lack of communication occurring systemwide.

Possibly to remedy some of these deficiencies, a PreStart orientation video was developed. Produced at one of the state's adult correctional facilities, this video was available for use at all facilities delivering Phase I programming. While institutions were initially told that it would cost $100 to purchase the video, this was later reduced to $20. However, having the institutions absorb this cost, no matter how nominal, was inconsistent with the sharing of information across facilities in a manner that promoted positive program development.

Some Facility–Based Solutions to Recurring Problems

One positive observation from the 1993 site visits was that some institutions had been taking the initiative to refine their existing programming.

For instance, some institutions had acted upon suggestions made by the PreStart Evaluation Team. At the close of each site visit in 1992, the assistant warden and warden of each institution were informed of the general findings, including staff and inmate suggestions for PreStart improvements at that facility. For example, several institutions now attempt to invite released offenders to return and speak to the PreStart class during a module or at graduation. This had been a recurring suggestion offered by inmates during the 1992 visits. Another example is a community correctional center. Worried that the residents there would "lose" PreStart over time (because there the modules are offered immediately upon arriving), CCCs initiated PreStart rap sessions. These

informal gatherings of residents dealt with issues addressed in PreStart Phase I (self–esteem, drug use, release plans). The meetings took place after PreStart had formally ended but before the individuals are released from the CCC.

The following are other examples of some of the problems concerning Phase I programming that facilities have attempted to solve:

> 1) Staff shortages and burnout: Some facilities have alleviated this problem somewhat by adding to the pool of presenters, and then rotating the staff. This lessens the burden of being involved with PreStart because each presenter presents a PreStart module every other or every third session, as opposed to every single session. Backup facilitators also serve to allay the pressure of being available for module presentation at every PreStart session.
>
> 2) Interfacility communication: With the end of statewide PreStart coordinator meetings came an end to a systematic mechanism of interfacility idea sharing. Some motivated PreStart coordinators and institutional staff have initiated their own communication, joining nearby facilities for luncheons or meetings to share PreStart–related problems and ideas.
>
> 3) Lack of knowledge about Phase II: As above, some facilities have held staff field trips to Phase II community service centers, allowing their staff to observe what takes place during a typical day in the office in Phase II.

While these problem–solving activities are encouraging, they were occurring at only a small number of the institutions visited. In the last interim report, it was suggested that a bit of initiative and guidance from Central Office could increase such positive activities and aid in improving PreStart Phase I across all institutions. It appears that this suggestion has been heeded, and in a very direct manner. Information provided in the second interim report served as feedback to Phase I Prestart coordinators during meetings held in January and April 1994. In particular, the factors that distinguished weak from strong Phase I programs (administrator leadership and presence, staff commitment and strong communication patterns) were highlighted and helped structure the discussion. Central office staff identified strategies to promote the existence of these factors at the facility level. They included, among others: 1) the formal recognition of outstanding PreStart presenters; 2) routinized inmate evaluations of PreStart classes and other structured mechanisms to gather their input; 3) bringing in former PreStart graduates to discuss their experiences with the PreStart students; and 4) having high–ranking facility administrators attend regularly scheduled PreStart staff meetings and classroom sessions. In addition, the deputy director of the Adult Division of the IDOC emphasized that PreStart is a departmental priority, not just a project of the Community Services Division. Thus, between summer 1993 and this writing, in contrast to its effort level between the summers of 1992 and 1993, Central Office has notably attempted to promote the effective delivery of Phase I programming.

Facility Comparisons Between 1992 and 1993

When examining a program over time, as was done in this evaluation, three outcomes can be expected: Either the program will have stayed relatively the same, it will have changed for the better, or it will have changed for the worse. This is the approach used to organize the findings of the 1993 follow–up visits to the 14 facilities. Based on their 1992 evaluations, programs were divided into the following three categories: strong, average or weak. Of the 10 adult institutions visited (four of the 14 institutions were community correctional centers — discussed separately here), three of the programs were categorized as strong, four as average and three as weak.

After the 1993 follow–up visits, each facility was categorized again within these three categories. In 1993, two programs fell into the strong category (one had moved up from an average program, and one had remained in that category), five programs were designated as average (two had moved down from being strong, one had moved up from being considered a weak program, and two remained the same). Three were classified as weak programs (two of these three had remained in this category from the 1992 designation, while one had fallen into the category from average in 1992). Thus, one program had improved, five remained the same, and three had worsened.

Thus, the 1993 follow–up visits allowed for observation of programs showing marked improvement and decline, as well as some remaining the same. What follows is a discussion of the key facility–level factors involved in improvement, maintenance and decline of the programs. Particular attention is paid to the three programs showing decline as each illustrates the consequences of a different programmatic issue. (For a complete facility–by–facility discussion of Phase I programming in 1992 and 1993, see Appendix A.)

Factors Affecting Program Improvement

Invigoration of Staff and Administration

One facility that improved, moving from the classification of average to strong, did so based on the support and enthusiasm of facility administration. The changes between 1992 and 1993 were mostly reflective of a new PreStart coordinator being appointed. This coordinator seemed to have energized administrators and revitalized PreStart staff. The pool of available PreStart presenters was widened to include everyone from the prison psychologist, to the assistant warden of operations, to college administrators. This in turn lessened the burden on staff, resulting in

improved attitudes. Communication patterns at this facility were also above average. Meaningful discussion about inmate evaluations of PreStart, classroom problems, and outside materials occurred at biweekly PreStart staff meetings.

This program can serve as a model for revitalization of an institution's Phase I programming. Besides the energetic coordinator, the three key issues (administrative support, sufficient and committed staff and quality communication patterns) found in the earlier interim report to be necessary for a vital Phase I program were all present at this facility, and they combined to create a strong Phase I program.

Targeting the Program to a Special Population

A second program improved from being weak to average. The improvement at this facility seemed to center around tailoring content to the specific needs at the institution. Though the new curriculum was thought to be problematic in terms of being too remedial for many of the inmates (though necessarily remedial because of the wide range of abilities represented at this institution), it was viewed as a vast improvement.

The amount of staff negativity found in 1992 had somewhat dissipated. This was related to the negativity's origin: a perceived incompatibility of the original curriculum with this institution's special population. While staff still took to task the appropriateness of the curriculum as a mandatory program for all inmates, their views focused on ways to alter it, whereas in 1992 the view was "perhaps we shouldn't be doing it." Thus, the improvement at this facility, while minimal, flowed from the decision by Central Office to explicitly encourage institutional flexibility in curriculum content.

Programs Retaining Initial Designations

The programs showing neither improvement nor decline served to reillustrate the importance of the key variables identified during the implementation analysis: administrative support, sufficient and committed staff and strong communication patterns.

The one program remaining strong had high levels of all three key variables in both 1992 and 1993. Those that remained average either had some of the necessary variables while not exhibiting others or lower levels of these key ingredients. Similarly, those facilities maintaining weak Phase I programming in 1992 and 1993 were facilities that lacked one or all of the key components to a significant degree.

Factors Affecting Program Decline

The three programs showing decline between the 1992 and 1993 evaluation visits each illustrated a different factor that caused the change, including lack of basic resources, decreased enthusiasm and approaching special populations.

Decline Due to Lack of Basic Resources

One of the institutions showing decline did so in response to an extreme lack of resources. Though this institution had a supportive administration, committed staff and communication patterns that improved from 1992 to 1993, the severe shortage of resources displaced the effects of these key variables. Resource gaps witnessed in 1992 were found in physical space, classroom materials and the number of staff available to conduct PreStart classes.

In 1993, PreStart was not only still greatly underresourced, but the prison situation was worse. The issue of resource shortages was exacerbated by the current rising inmate population, which placed a greater burden on very limited physical and staff resources both in and out of PreStart.

Decline Due to Dwindling Enthusiasm

One facility showed a decline from strong to average programming. Characterized in 1992 by relatively strong administrative support and very committed staff, staff believed internally that this program could only get better. In fact, there was a general commitment among staff to make the program the best in the state. While regular communication occurred at this institution in 1992, no strategy to monitor Phase I programming existed. Though this was not unique, the reasoning behind it was. The underlying belief was that no evaluations nor internal monitoring structures were needed because of the high enthusiasm, energy and commitment of PreStart staff at this institution. Unfortunately, when these dwindled, the program stagnated.

As of the 1993 follow-up visit, the program had "lost its shine" (correctional counselor/module presenter). The innovation seemed to have turned to routine. While support and commitment were still apparent, the levels of each had waned. Even the monthly PreStart meetings had become bimonthly or quarterly. As no formal monitoring of the program had been implemented, no mechanism was in place to carry the program once enthusiasm dropped.

Decline Due to Approach to a Special Population

The third case of losing ground in terms of Phase I quality occurred at an institution with a special population. While in 1992 this institution was classified as having an average program, it was noted that the main glue holding the program together was a middle–level administrator, who emphasized PreStart without corresponding upper–level administrative support. The institution was characterized by a PreStart staff who adhered to administrative directives and did little to innovate programming. In 1992, the special population at this institution was offered an accelerated version of the program. A full PreStart session ran for one week as opposed to two. Many staff believed that the population (mandated for electronic detention) was not an appropriate target group for PreStart because immediate post–release needs would be different.

During the revisit, the evaluation team witnessed a weaker Phase I program. The PreStart coordinator had transferred to another facility and was not replaced for six months. Staff morale was down, perhaps because the most vocal proponent of PreStart had left the facility.

Other changes at this institution included a truncated Phase I program. The original one–week length had been cut to three days. The program modification consisted of eliminating an entire module as well as eliminating certain topics covered in other modules. The truncated program was an experiment to "do more in less time." But because of the changes in materials delivered, it was obvious that the pressing employment needs of the inmates were no longer addressed.

Staff reactions to the truncated program were mixed. Some viewed it as a good thing, though their reasons varied. One staff member felt that shortening the program length was good because it allowed more time for the inmates to be involved in the facility's regular programming. Others thought because it cut down staff time, and because most of what had been eliminated was being taught elsewhere, the change was not problematic. Those staff that did not like the change to the shorter program felt that the time allotted for PreStart did not allow for the inmates to understand and synthesize the materials presented, and that inmates "failed to grasp the significance and importance of the program until after it was over." The priority given to PreStart was seen by most to have diminished.

Each of the three programs showing decline illustrate an issue that can be affected by Central Office involvement. Central Office attempts to ensure that programs have the minimal resources necessary to mount a credible Phase I program, to monitor programs at the state level, and to guide approaches to special populations that may have had the potential to ameliorate the deterioration found at these facilities.

Conclusions Drawn from Facility Changes Observed Over Time

The visits conducted in 1992 and 1993 of the 10 adult institutions served to highlight both the differences and similarities experienced by these institutions in their delivery of Phase I PreStart. The following elements seemed to have an impact not only on the success or failure of a program's initial implementation but also on its ability to maintain or improve the quality of services delivered. The elements are listed according to whether they were found to be salient over time or across facilities or both.

The key elements involved in program success (both initial and continued) were: 1) administrative support throughout the facility; 2) committed and sufficient staff; and 3) meaningful communication. Sufficient resources are also important, although it was found that most facilities had at least the minimum resources necessary to deliver a bona fide program.

Certain issues were common across all facilities in both 1992 and 1993. These include: 1) minimal staff training; 2) continued problems with the curriculum; 3) a majority of PreStart staff who feel burdened by the extra duty of delivering Phase I programming; and 4) no strong link between Phase I and II programming.

During the follow–up visits in 1993, certain patterns were evident across facilities that were not observed in 1992: 1) less staff resistance than when the program was originally implemented; 2) tailoring of Phase I (at least to some degree) toward special populations; 3) less priority placed on PreStart by the administration, reflecting a perceived priority shift from Central Office for many institutions; and 4) while a general lack of knowledge about Phase II programming still existed, attempts were made by facilities to develop a relationship with or an understanding of Phase II program efforts.

System–level factors that were seen as affecting the ability of facilities to deliver quality Phase I programming over time included: 1) an end to the statewide PreStart coordinator meetings; 2) the loss of outside presenters (secretary of state, parole agents and Job Services representatives); 3) no continued training at the state level despite significant staff turnover; and 4) in general, less Central Office attention, guidance and monitoring of Phase I programming.

As noted, these system–level factors impacted the quality of Phase I delivery over time, and generally for the worse. It was found that the programs which had deteriorated, as well as those maintaining an average or weak quality classification, may have benefited from greater levels of Central Office involvement. As mentioned above (and noted in the recommendations at the end of this report) if PreStart Phase I is to continue as a viable program in all IDOC facilities, certain

actions are required not only of each individual institution, but also of the highest administrative level within the IDOC.

Phase I at Community Correctional Centers

The earlier evaluation report observed that, in general, Phase I–programming implementation at community correctional centers (CCCs) was found to be much weaker than at adult facilities. By 1993, notable changes had begun to take place. These changes centered around Central Office's decision to take actions to more directly guide PreStart's implementation at CCCs.

The CCCs not only had a unique clientele but also physical space and daily operations quite different from adult institutions. Because many CCC residents were either involved in educational programs or are employed, it was difficult for CCCs to organize PreStart service delivery. In 1992, one CCC was doing an exceptional job at delivering Phase I services (especially in comparison with other CCCs). At the same time, the other CCCs visited seemed to have minimally meaningful Phase I programs. For instance, residents often were not aware, or were uncertain, of whether they had even gone through the program, and many staff felt that PreStart was redundant to existing programming.

Changes in CCC Phase I Delivery: 1992 to 1993

Between the 1992 and 1993 visits, a state–level PreStart coordinator for CCCs was named. This individual visited CCCs around the state to understand both their physical environment and delivery of Phase I programming. Meetings with CCC PreStart coordinators were then organized. A CCC–specific curriculum also was developed. This curriculum has been reviewed by evaluation team members and was considered to exhibit an impressive level of improvement over earlier versions.

All activities served not only to standardize Phase I programming for CCCs, but to make the format compatible with the operations, programming, and routine schedule of these facilities. For example, the CCC statewide PreStart coordinator decided that residents would be involved in PreStart upon their arrival to the CCC. Since the centers have an orientation period during which the resident does not take part in many (if any) external programs or employment, it would be possible to offer PreStart programming during this period. Thus, the first nine modules were presented during this time. The final module, Module 10 (pre–release plans), was delivered when a resident was about to leave the center. This scheduling format was well received by CCC PreStart coordinators and has been implemented statewide.

Despite this design innovation, continuing problems with PreStart in the CCC setting center around the belief among many staff that PreStart is redundant to programming already offered by the center: "It's what we've been doing with these guys all along." The scheduling of modules also continued to be an issue at some CCCs, and it was found that some facilities continued to offer PreStart classes in a haphazard fashion. This was perhaps being phased out (every CCC had a schedule showing when the classes were supposed to meet, although residents told evaluators of irregular scheduling in some cases).

At the time of the 1993 visits to CCCs, the Phase I implementation had progressed to about the point adult institutions had been in 1992. The changes were for the better, creating the beginning of bona fide programs.

Of the four CCCs visited across the state, one program was viewed as strong. This program is administered by the statewide CCC PreStart coordinator. The program at this CCC had become routinized by 1993. Two of the other three CCCs visited were showing vast improvements. One CCC used a variety of volunteer presenters, including upper–level college and graduate students. This facility had more positive staff attitudes toward PreStart programming than did the others, perhaps because staff burnout was less of a problem. Indeed, the CCC struggling the most was doing so mainly due to staff morale problems. Between 1992 and 1993 there had been a rotation of CCC administrators between CCCs, and the centers were adapting to these changes as the evaluation was taking place. One CCC's PreStart program directly improved by the change, while another CCC's program was impaired. The changes were associated with the knowledge, commitment and support of the new leadership toward not only PreStart, but reintegrative programming in general.

Summary and Conclusions

PreStart Phase I programming at both adult institutions and community correctional centers was found to be quite variable across facilities. Moreover, Phase I programming has witnessed considerable changes between 1992 and 1993. Some programs improved for the better, some witnessed decline, while others witnessed little change. Those changes that impacted positively on Phase I were quite often attempts by facilities to solve recurring problems on their own. While this is commendable, and some facilities were successful in finding workable solutions, many obstacles to strong Phase I programming still exist at the facility level.

It also was found that Central Office behavior affects many variables influencing Phase I program quality at the facility level (that is, staff training, curriculum improvements, sufficient

staff, administrative support and the link between Phase I and Phase II). Accordingly, examining Phase I programming over time reveals the potential importance of Central Office involvement in the guidance and monitoring of statewide Phase I delivery. This potential was not achieved between the summers of 1992 and 1993. For example, the need for centralized activity is highlighted by the fact that while programs at some facilities improved, in terms of the quality of Phase I programming over time, other facilities' programs remained the same or declined. Only those programs actively involved in self–help were able to maintain or improve their Phase I programming. Some facilities that retained fairly good programs were showing signs of imminent decline but easily could have been aided by Central Office actions. This is also true for the weaker programs in the state. Stronger Central Office involvement, while neither being a necessary nor sufficient cause of improved facility level programming, can serve as a catalytic agent in the improvement of Phase I programming efforts. Central Office could aid PreStart functioning at various facilities by developing stronger information–sharing practices between facilities, and using monitoring mechanisms already in place (that is, the Curriculum Committee) to improve weak programs. The continual training of staff would benefit all facilities regardless of current program quality. In general, Central Office could aid facilities — and improve the quality of Phase I programming — fairly easily, yet effectively. Importantly, since the release of the second interim report, which emphasized this finding, Central Office involvement in the guidance and nurturing of Phase I programming improved.

Chapter 5

INMATE REACTIONS TO PHASE I PROGRAMMING

An evaluation of any program would be greatly lacking if the consumers and clients were not asked about their levels of satisfaction with the products or services delivered. Thus, a systematic evaluation of PreStart must include input from the clients it serves; in Phase I programming, inmates — a captive population often seen as passively reacting to what is being presented in the correctional environment — are the clients. Inmates are rarely asked to express what they think about correctional programming, but as will be illustrated in the following pages, what they have to say may be much more telling than what is said by staff or external evaluators.

In preceding chapters, the many constraints and obstacles encountered during the development and implementation of Phase I programming have been detailed. One may wonder, given what has been reported, how could inmates possibly have much good to say about their experiences with PreStart. This chapter suggests that even in the most difficult conditions, a vital and innovative correctional philosophy of service delivery, which primarily tries to help, can generate many positive outcomes.

In the two earlier evaluation reports, detailed information on inmate reactions to Phase I programming was provided. The reader is referred to those two sources. In this chapter, the major findings contained in those two reports are presented.

Methodology

In 1992, attempts were made at each of the 14 visited correctional facilities to survey inmates who had completed at least half of the PreStart modules and who were scheduled to be released from the facility to mandatory supervision within three months. The goals of these attempts included: 1) generating information to enhance the present implementation analysis, and 2) developing a sample of inmates to be tracked for at least one year in the community for conducting subsequent recidivism analyses.

Initially, up to 50 inmates were randomly selected from each facility based on predetermined eligibility criteria for inclusion in the study. Shortly thereafter, realizing that attrition was proving greater than expected, the target sample size was increased to 65 inmates from each facility, thus further assuring that a minimum of 50 completed questionnaires would be obtained from each

facility. This also served to compensate for the relatively small number of residents at community correctional centers (CCCs) who met the predetermined eligibility requirements at any one time (on average about 15). Questionnaires were administered to the selected inmates in a group setting. Additionally, to increase response rates and the validity of the responses, attempts were made to pre–identify the reading level of inmates and to administer the questionnaire to low–reading inmates in much smaller groups (one staff to one to three inmates). These attempts proved quite successful.

Each correctional facility visited in 1992 was revisited in summer 1993. An attempt was made to survey all inmates in the current PreStart class (they were all in the second week of classes) and inmates who had completed the immediately preceding PreStart class (in some cases, the two preceding classes if class sizes were small). As in the earlier surveys, questionnaires were administered in a group setting, but no attempt was made to identify reading levels and to administer the survey to inmates with poor reading skills in a more intimate setting. This was because the questionnaire was both shorter and easier to read, making reading levels less of a concern. Also, though reading levels were not pre–identified, individual inmates were always offered the opportunity of one–on–one assistance in completing the questionnaire.

The questionnaire used at both times contained similar items; however, in the second year the questionnaire was shortened considerably to exclude items created to inform the recidivism analysis. The second–year questionnaire contained items confined to issues of participation in institutional programming and attitudes toward PreStart.

Table 5.1 details inmate response patterns from these visits by facility for each of the two years. Facilities are identified by letters instead of their names. The same letter is used to identify each facility throughout this chapter. In 1992, a total of 659 inmates were targeted for survey purposes. Seventy–seven were inaccessible for a variety of reasons (11.7 percent of total), and 21 did not meet inclusionary criteria (3.2 percent). Of those targeted for study inclusion, 424 agreed to participate in the study (64.3 percent), 131 refused (19.8 percent), and six could not be accounted for (0.9 percent). Responses from individuals who attempted to complete the questionnaire resulted in 410 fully usable survey questionnaires.

Table 5.1: Response Rates, by Facility

Facility	Year	Initial Subjects	Completed or Attempted	Refusal	Not Accessible	Ineligible	Missing	Effective Response Rate[a] (%)
A	1992	73	47	19	3	3	1	71
	1993	25	23	1	1	0	0	96
B	1992	36	21	10	1	3	1	68
	1993[b]	18	13	2	3	0	0	87
C	1992	8	4	4	0	0	0	50
	1993	9	9	0	0	0	0	100
D	1992	86	49	13	19	2	4	80
	1993	51	38	10	3	0	0	79
E	1992	61	38	7	11	5	0	84
	1993[c]	29	19	9	0	1	0	68
F	1992	64	51	13	0	0	0	80
	1993	64	37	24	3	0	0	61
G	1992	56	39	15	3	0	0	74
	1993	45	24	13	8	0	0	65
H	1992	60	46	13	1	0	0	78
	1993	61	47	14	0	0	0	77
I	1992	45	42	0	2	0	1	100
	1993	56	53	0	3	0	0	100
J	1992	61	22	24	7	8	0	48
	1993	54	27	21	6	0	0	56
K	1992	16	9	1	6	0	0	90
	1993[b]	25	15	10	0	0	0	60
L	1992	14	8	3	3	0	0	73
	1993[b]	14	8	6	0	0	0	57
M	1992	17	15	0	2	0	0	100
	1993[b]	25	25	0	0	0	0	100
N	1992	62	34	9	19	0	0	79
	1993	60	45	8	5	2	0	85
Total	1992	659	425	131	77	21	7	77
	1993	536	383	118	32	3	0	76

[a]The Effective Response Rate is the number of people who agreed to participate divided by the number of those approached who were both eligible and accessible.

[b]At all community correctional centers, the initial subject value is based on the number of residents who attended the survey administration in response to an administrative request to do so. Thus, all eligible people at the facility did not necessarily attend the survey administration.

[c]At facility E, 40 inmates from the preceding PreStart classes were solicited for the evaluation by institutional staff. Of these 40, 14 were present at the survey administration. These 14 plus the 15 from the current PreStart class make up the 29 initial subjects.

In 1993, 536 inmates were approached for survey purposes. A total of 383 agreed to complete the questionnaire (71.4 percent), while 118 inmates refused participation (22 percent), and 35 (6.5 percent) were either inaccessible (for example, a superseding inmate assignment was in effect) or ineligible (for example, inmate had not participated in PreStart yet). Of the 383 completed questionnaires, two were identified as being unusable. Survey efforts thus yielded 381 usable questionnaires.

Because of the voluntary nature of participation in the study, some nonresponse bias was expected. Evaluation team observations indicated that refusal rates were highest among the most alienated and hostile inmates, who also tended to be the youngest inmates. Accordingly, inmate responses discussed in this chapter will tend to overrepresent the views of individuals who are more likely to perceive their entire correctional experience in a positive light. The effective response rate (calculated by dividing the number of individuals who agreed to complete the questionnaire by all eligible inmates who personally heard the evaluation team's request for participation) was very high (76 percent) in both years. This suggests that biases found in the data cannot account for more than a small proportion of the variation in the reported findings. These response rates are considered to be very acceptable. Internal reliability and validity checks indicate that the data are of high quality.

Whatever biases that exist are likely to be concentrated at the facility level as response rates varied across facilities, and at some facilities there was a need to alter the sampling methodology, especially during the 1993 visits. Variation in response rates across facilities was greater in 1992 than in 1993 (46.8 percent effective completion rate for Facility J vs. 100 percent for Facility I and Facility M in 1992; 56 percent response rate for Facility J vs. 100 percent response rates for Facilities C, I, and M in 1993). However, in general, the patterning of response rates across facilities for both years was very consistent. On the basis of these response rates, there would appear to be a minimal level of differential response bias across years for the facilities examined.

There may be some exceptions, however. In 1993, Facility E was on lockdown and evaluation staff could not approach all inmates who had participated in the preceding PreStart class. The facility administration sent out memorandums to eligible inmates (40), and only a total of 16 agreed to participate. Of these, two were unable to show up at the designated classroom, and one person had not gone through the PreStart program. Table 5.1 indicates a 68–percent response rate for this facility (based on the fact that nine of the 15 inmates in the current PreStart class refused to participate in the study, and that all 14 inmates from the earlier class who heard our request for participation agreed to complete the questionnaire); however, inmates at this facility who participated in this study were unlikely to be representative of the entire PreStart student

population. Similar issues emerged at community correctional centers. At CCCs, the first nine PreStart modules were delivered during the inmate's first week of residence, so almost all CCC residents were eligible for the survey. At those facilities, an announcement was made about the research, and only those residents who voluntarily showed up at the designated room heard in detail what the research was attempting to achieve. Thus, at these facilities, possible self-selection biases are apparent in the survey methodology.

Upon completion of the group-administered questionnaires, mass interviews were conducted with the inmate samples at each facility. Following a standard protocol, inmates were asked to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of PreStart programming; to assess perceived levels of staff and administration commitment to PreStart; to evaluate the quality of instruction; and to make recommendations for improved programming. Discussion was often quite animated and telling, with sessions often lasting up to an hour. Comments varied, but were generally quite positive. Also, there was much variation in inmate responses across facilities, which tended to parallel staff assessments and evaluative staff observations, and which suggested that even very alienated inmates agreed to participate in the study.

It must be emphasized that the following program assessments as derived from these surveys are confined to Phase I pre-release. Further, these data represent reactions to Phase I programming at single points in time, by inmates whose responses may reflect the then-relevant environmental (for example, a lockdown being in place at one facility) and situational (for example, an inmate leader promoting negativity among the respondents at the time of the session) factors. Thus, response patterns may be unstable and not fully indicative of reactions that may have been generated if the surveys had been conducted at different times or under different situations. Accordingly, interpretations of the following data and the development of institutional responses to the findings that are presented should be done with these considerations in mind.

The Samples

Table 5.2 presents some basic descriptive information on the inmates who responded to the survey in 1992 and 1993. Generally, the table indicates that the aggregate characteristics of both samples are quite comparable. The average age of the surveyed inmates is 30, which is quite consistent with the average age of all inmates released from IDOC facilities between July and October 1992 (29.28 years of age). The inmate samples also contained a disproportionate number of females (21.6 in 1992, 23.6 percent in 1993) compared to their representation in the IDOC exit population (6.4 percent).

Table 5.2: Characteristics of Inmate Samples, by Year

Characteristic		1992 (N=425)	1993 (N=381)
Age	Mean:	29.99	30.87
	Std. Dev.:	8.47	9.33
Race	White:	25.1%	28.6%
	Black:	54.2%	54.6%
	Hispanic:	12.7%	11.5%
	Native American:	3.3%	1.8%
	Asian:	0.9%	0.8%
	Other:	1.4%	0.5%
	Missing:	2.3%	2.1%
Jobs 6 mo. Before Prison	Employed:	52.6%	51.2%
	Unemployed:	45.5%	48.6%
	Missing:	1.9%	0.3%
Sex	Male:	73.5%	75.6%
	Female:	21.6%	23.6%
	Missing:	4.9%	0.8%
Level of Education	Elem. School:	6.1%	7.3%
	1-3 yr. HS no GED:	32.6%	29.1%
	1-3 yr. HS & GED:	24.2%	22.6%
	H.S. Graduate:	15.5%	15.7%
	1-3 yrs. College:	15.7%	21.0%
	4+ yrs. College:	1.6%	3.1%
	Missing:	4.2%	1.0%
Job Set Up After Release?	No:	44.4%	33.9%
	Yes:	29.6%	43.8%
	Unsure:	23.2%	21.5%
	Missing:	2.8%	0.8%

Table 5.2: Characteristics of Inmate Samples, by Year (continued)

Place to Live when Released?	No:	4.2%	4.2%
	Yes:	87.8%	88.7%
	Unsure:	5.9%	6.8%
	Missing:	0.0%	0.3%
Frequency of Drug Use	Not Applicable:	36.9%	35.7%
	Daily:	6.2%	18.4%
	Almost Daily:	15.7%	12.3%
	Few Times/Week:	15.5%	13.4%
	Once a Week:	1.9%	1.6%
	Few Times/Month:	6.3%	7.1%
	Once a Month:	1.2%	0.3%
	Once/a Few Times:	2.8%	2.1%
	Missing:	3.5%	9.2%
Percent Using	Marijuana:	39.2%	41.2%
	Opiates:	14.8%	14.2%
	Cocaine:	32.4%	29.7%
	Hallucinogens:	6.1%	6.3%
	Crack:	NA	7.3%

Hispanics also were overrepresented in the inmate samples (12.7 percent in 1992; 11.5 percent in 1993 vs. 7.4 percent of IDOC exits from July to October 1992). Correspondingly, the sample underrepresents males (73.5 percent and 75.6 percent of the respective inmate samples vs. 93.6 percent of IDOC exits) and blacks (54.2 percent and 54.6 percent vs. 62.5 percent of IDOC exits).

Inmates in the research samples also clearly represent a group of people exhibiting obvious educational needs. Only 32 percent of 1992 inmates and 39.8 percent of 1993 inmates achieved an education level that at least included the completion of high school without reliance on a GED.

These figures parallel the percentage of inmates who graduated high school among all IDOC inmates released from prison between July and October 1992 (33.9 percent). Thus, the 1993 inmates seemed slightly better educated than the 1992 inmates, but both groups appear to have achieved similar levels of education as compared to the IDOC exit population. Employment needs were also high among the inmate samples — 5.5 percent of the 1992 inmate samples and 48.6 percent of the 1993 inmate samples were unemployed during the six months prior to being incarcerated. Upon release, only about 30 percent of the 1992 sample and 44 percent of the 1993 sample had jobs already lined up. Housing was a major concern (with 10 percent of inmates having indefinite or no residential plans) during both years.

That inmates' needs for rejoining society centered on economic issues is highlighted in Table 5.3; the table presents rankings of self-reported problem areas inmates expect to encounter upon release. The means are based on a scale of one to five, with one representing "not a problem at all" and five representing "a very serious problem." The table indicates that the primary concerns and needs of the soon-to-be-released inmates related to jobs and money. A large percentage of the inmates also reported having used illegal drugs during the six months before their incarceration (55.6 percent and 56.2 percent, respectively), with many of this group reporting using drugs daily or multiple times per week (47.4 percent and 44.1 percent, respectively). Further, a significant percentage reported using highly addictive drugs such as cocaine (about 30 percent) and opiates (more than 14 percent). Thus, it is surprising that the mean scores reported in Table 5.3 for "doing drugs" as a concern of inmates about to be released were relatively low (1.83 in 1992, 2.11 in 1993).

Table 5.3: Inmate Perceptions of Post-Release Problems

Source of Problem	1992	1992	1993	1993
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Finding Job	3.27	2.19	3.06	2.24
Medical/Dental Needs	2.53	2.07	2.57	1.97
Conditions of Parole	1.67	1.45	1.67	1.54
Doing Drugs	1.83	1.64	2.11	1.99
Place to Live	1.72	1.65	1.9	1.79
Family Conflict	1.83	1.60	2.08	1.81
Support Family	3.50	2.39	3.41	2.25
Bad Crowd	2.09	1.89	2.21	1.98
Labeled as Ex-Con	2.98	2.29	3.21	2.26
Not Able to Read/Write	1.55	1.31	1.81	1.75
Drinking Too Much	1.71	1.59	1.86	1.85
Being a Good Parent	1.66	1.49	1.57	1.32
Getting Legal Help	2.23	1.90	2.29	1.86
Having Someone to Talk To	2.13	1.92	2.19	1.87
Enough Money to Start	3.68	2.52	3.55	2.43
Having a Plan	1.98	1.52	2.32	1.83
Dealing with Temper	2.46	1.87	2.53	2.12
Having Good Job Skills	2.31	1.92	2.39	1.88
Going Back to Prison	2.27	2.06	2.50	2.29

The portrait of these inmates is generally quite compatible with what is known about characteristics of prison inmates nationwide, as well as within Illinois. The willingness to report on histories of substance abuse (in numbers comparable to other surveys of prison inmates), the

positive rapport that was often developed between evaluation staff and inmates, and the correspondence of the aggregate characteristics of the inmate samples with the population of IDOC exits, are suggestive that these and the following self–reported data are both valid and fairly representative measures of IDOC–inmate characteristics and attitudes.

Psychological Characteristics of the Sampled Inmates

To acquire a deeper understanding of the sampled inmates, a number of standardized psychological inventories were administered to subsamples of surveyed inmates. The 1992 inmate sample was administered the Coopersmith Self–Esteem Inventory (SEI), the State–Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), and the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES–D). The 1993 inmate sample was administered only the latter scale. All of the inventories are self–administered, paper–and–pencil instruments.

Self–Esteem

The Coopersmith Self–Esteem Inventory was designed to measure self–evaluative attitudes regarding social, academic, family and personal areas of experiences (Adair, 1984). The Adult Form, which consists of 25 items and has been found to be valid and reliable for a variety of ethnic groups and many special populations (Coopersmith, 1981), was administered to 285 inmates during the 1992 survey.[10]

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10 In scoring the adult form of the SEI, positive items were considered "correct" (that is, given a value of one) if answered "like me," and negative items were considered "correct" if answered "unlike me." A total self–esteem score was obtained by multiplying the raw score summation across all 25 items by four, thus allowing for a maximum total score of 100 points. The scale should be considered as a composite score only, since no subscales were intended on the shorter forms of the SEI. High scale scores correspond to high self–esteem, and scores have tended in the past to be skewed in the direction of high self–esteem among "normal" populations.

For the sample of PreStart inmates, a Cronbach's alpha of .60 resulted in a test of the scale's internal–consistency reliability. This alpha level is considerably lower than has been found in other applications of the SEI. Since deletion of any singular item would only raise the alpha value to a level not exceeding .62, the value of .60 was considered to be stable and realistic for this special inmate population. Correlations of single items with the total test score ranged from .06 to .48, and the average interitem correlation was .06. Since the obtained reliability coefficient was of a moderate level, and since the item to total correlations and the average interitem correlation tended to be in the moderate to low range, one may conclude that the total index must be thought of as a multidimensional and heterogeneous measure of a self–esteem construct.

A principal components analysis was conducted on the PreStart inmate data to examine the internal structure of the SEI scale. It revealed that the SEI is a multidimensional instrument which broadly samples the self–esteem content area. The analysis provided further support for the consistent finding inferred across other factorial studies of the Adult Form of the SEI, that the instrument is not the homogeneous scale that it was originally intended to be.

Mean scores on the SEI with "normal" populations have tended to range between 70 and 80 with a standard deviation between 11 and 13 (Coopersmith, 1981). In terms of a classificatory level of self–esteem, the upper quartile of scores can be thought of as representing high self–esteem, the lower quartile as representing low self–esteem, and the interquartile range as reflecting medium self–esteem. In the PreStart inmate population, the mean self–esteem score was 54.37 (with a standard deviation of 13.9), well below the range of means typically found for "normal" populations. In fact, even those respondents who scored one standard deviation above the inmate population mean (approximately 68) were still below the "normal" range of means. Accordingly, the upper quartile (representing those with high self–esteem) contained scores of 63 to 100; the interquartile range (reflecting medium self–esteem) contained scores of 44 to 62; and the lower quartile (reflecting low self–esteem) contained scores of 20 to 43. The data were slightly positively skewed (.259), once again reflecting the tendency of the inmate self–esteem scores to be lower than those found in the "normal" populations from which the SEI was originally validated.

Anxiety

Charles D. Spielberger developed the State–Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Form Y, for use by adults. It is a brief and objective self–reported measure of state and trait anxiety. Form Y of the STAI, which consists of 20 State–Anxiety and 20 Trait–Anxiety items, has been normed on working adults, college students, high school students and military recruits. Form Y of the STAI was administered to 280 inmates from the 1992 sample.[11]

Instead, all the measures of homogeneity (that is, Cronbach's alpha, interitem and item–total correlations, components analysis) show the scale to be heterogeneous and the concept of self–esteem measured by the composite score on the instrument to be general.

[11] In scoring the STAI, each item was given a weighted score ranging from one to four, corresponding to the amount of presence or absence felt by the respondent for each item. The State–Anxiety Subscale assesses how respondents felt at the moment they were taking the self–evaluation questionnaire, while the Trait–Anxiety Subscale assesses to what level respondents "generally" felt anxious. Total scores for the two subscales of the STAI were obtained by summing across the weighted item scores, thus resulting in a possible scoring range of 20 to 80 for each subscale (Spielberger, 1983).

All internal–consistency reliability coefficients reported in the past for the STAI have been exceptionally high, indicating a great deal of homogeneity and unidimensionality in the two subscales. In fact, all Cronbach's alpha coefficients reported by Spielberger (1983) for both anxiety subscales either approximated or exceeded .90. In the sample of PreStart inmates, alpha values also exceeded .90. The standardized item alpha for the State–Anxiety subscale was .91, and was considered quite stable since deletion of any one of the subscale's items failed to lower the alpha value below .90, nor would it raise the alpha value. The standardized item alpha for the Trait–Anxiety subscale was .90 and was considered quite stable.

In past applications of the STAI to collect norming data from samples experiencing neutral or relatively nonstressful testing conditions, mean State–Anxiety scores were either similar to, or slightly lower than, the Trait–Anxiety scores for these samples. But when the testing conditions were stressful (for example, administering the STAI to military recruits in a highly stressful training program), mean State–Anxiety scores were considerably higher than the mean Trait–Anxiety scores for those samples (Spielberger, 1983).

Typical mean State– and Trait–Anxiety scores for samples experiencing neutral testing conditions have centered around 35, with a standard deviation of approximately 10. In a study reported in the manual for the STAI (Spielberger, 1983), Form X (which typically has similar descriptive statistics as Form Y) was administered to an inmate sample (N=212) at a federal correctional institution in Tallahassee, Florida, as part of the institution's classification and testing program. In this study, the mean age of the prisoners was 21 years, and their mean educational level was 10th grade. The reported mean State–Anxiety score was 45.96 (SD = 11.04), and the mean Trait–Anxiety score was 44.64 (SD = 10.47), thus reflecting the more stressful testing conditions of incarceration.

With the PreStart inmates, the mean State–Anxiety score was 41.13 (SD = 12.14), the mean Trait–Anxiety score was 41.39 (SD = 10.92), and both response distributions were slightly positively skewed (.146 and .151, respectively). The obtained mean values were greater than those reported for "normal" populations experiencing neutral testing conditions and were less than those reported for the inmate sample which had been administered Form X.

Part of this result was not surprising since the stressful testing conditions of incarceration would lead one to expect mean anxiety scores above the average typically reported for "normal" populations tested under neutral conditions. The other part of this result was a bit surprising since it was contrary to the expected outcome. It was hypothesized that the PreStart inmate mean would be higher than that found for other inmate samples because PreStart inmates would be released soon; it also was expected that the fears which accompany reintegration into the community would cause higher levels of anxiety than the levels found in the general inmate population ("gate fever"). Upon further consideration, however, it seemed reasonable that the PreStart mean level of anxiety would be lower than the level of anxiety found in a sample of inmates involved in the classification stages of incarceration (fear of what is to come) in a federal institution.

However, with regard to the "normal" populations for which normed data exist on the STAI, the PreStart inmate sample indicated considerably higher levels of both State– and Trait–Anxiety. Further, little distinction can be made between the two subscales' response distributions, meaning that both State– and Trait–Anxiety levels were above "normal" levels.

Depression

The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression (CES–D) scale was designed to measure "state" (current) levels of depressive symptomatology for use in research applications within a "normal" (that is, nonpsychiatric) adult population, aged 18 and older (Devins and Orme, 1985). The instrument was developed through a process based on factor analytic techniques and face validity judgments involving the selection of items from previously validated depression scales (for example, Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock, and Erbaugh, 1961; Dahlstrom and Welsh, 1960; Gardner, 1968; Raskin, Schulterbrandt, Reatig, and McKeon, 1969; Zung, 1965). Thus, key items relevant to depressive symptomatology, which were extracted from existing depression instrumentation, make up the 20–item CES–D.

The CES–D was administered to all inmates in the 1992 and 1993 samples, resulting in 306 usable response sets from the 1992 inmates (72 percent of the total) and 253 usable response sets from the 1993 inmates (66 percent of the total). Inmates were asked to respond to the CES–D by indicating the frequency at which each of the 20 items was felt during the past week.[12]

Radloff (1977) has suggested using a cutoff score of 16 to indicate "case" levels of depression. And Barnes and Prosen (1984) suggested using the following classifications for interpreting CES–D composite scores: 0 to 15.5, not depressed; 16 to 20.5, mild depression; 21 to 30.5, moderate depression; and 31 to 60, severe depression.

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[12] A score of zero was given for each response of "Rarely or None of the Time;" a score of one for each response of "Some or a Little of the Time;" a score of two for each response of "Occasionally or a Moderate Amount of Time;" and a score of three for each response of "Most or All of the Time." The instrument was then objectively scored by reversing the scores of positive items (4,8,12,16), and then adding the raw scores across all 20 items, yielding a total scoring range of zero to 60. High CES–D scores reflected high levels of depression.

Tests of internal–consistency reliability have repeatedly provided evidence supporting the homogeneity of the CES–D. For example, Radloff (1977) reported a coefficient alpha of .85 for a general population sample and a coefficient alpha of .90 for a patient sample. Barnes and Prosen (1977) reported an alpha of .89 for a volunteer sample of family practitioner clients. In the 1992 sample of PreStart inmates, a Cronbach's alpha of .86 resulted. Since deletion of any singular item on the CES–D would only lower the alpha of the total CES–D, but not to an alpha value below .82, the value of .86 was considered to be stable and realistic for this special inmate sample. Similar findings were found for the 1993 inmate sample (Cronbach's Alpha of .84).

To investigate the structural stability of the CES–D when used with a special population such as the PreStart sample, a principle components analysis was conducted with the 1992 data. The results of a principal components analysis of the PreStart sample's responses to the CES–D supported previously reported findings concerning the structural make–up of the CES–D. The conclusions drawn from the analysis were that the scale displayed a great deal of homogeneity, and that the responses obtained from this special inmate sample reflected an underlying structure identical to those obtained from "normal" (i.e., nonincarcerated and nonpsychiatric) samples.

Most studies using the CES–D with large samples (1,000+) have yielded total score means ranging from 7.5 to 12.5, modal values centering around 8.5, and standard deviations ranging from 7.5 to 9.8, with a considerable tendency for positive skewness ranging from 1.5 to 1.69 (Devins and Orme, 1985). For the 1992 PreStart inmate population, the mean CES–D score was 17.62 with a standard deviation of 10.35 and a slight positive skewness of .468. For the 1993 Prestart inmate population, the mean CES–D score was 24.225 with a standard deviation of 10.12 and a slight positive skewness of .333. The mean depression scores were considerably higher than the cutoff score (16) defining "case" depression, and 52.3 percent of the 1992 inmate sample and 75.9 percent of the 1993 inmate sample scored above the cutoff score; therefore, the PreStart–inmate sample was determined to have depressive symptoms to a much greater degree than the "normal" populations for which the instrument was developed.

In terms of depression levels defined by Barnes and Prosen (1984), 47.7 percent of the 1992 PreStart inmate sample showed no indication of "case" depression; 14.4 percent showed "mild depression;" 25.2 percent showed "moderate depression;" and 12.7 percent showed "severe depression." When the range of scores which fell within one standard deviation of the mean were examined, 68 percent of the sample scored between 7 and 28, which covers the classifications of "not depressed" to "moderate depression." For the 1993 inmate sample, even higher levels of depression were found, with 21.3 percent indicating no depression, 17.8 percent showing "mild depression," 35.2 percent showing "moderate depression," and 25.7 showing "severe depression." The main conclusion drawn from these results was that the PreStart–inmate sample indicated higher "state" levels of depression (as might be expected) than previously tested samples from the general (nonincarcerated and nonpsychiatric) population.

Relationships Between Self–Esteem, Anxiety and Depression

The intercorrelations of the self–esteem, anxiety and depression scales were examined for the 1992 inmates to test the discriminant validity of each and to assess the degree to which self–esteem, anxiety and depression may be overlapping psychological constructs as measured by these instruments.[13] As can be seen in Table 5.4, which presents the corrected correlation coefficients

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[13] Orme, Reis and Herz (1986), in a study that closely parallels this component of the present PreStart study, assessed the discriminant validity of the CES–D by examining its relationships to three important, related constructs: self–esteem as measured by the Rosenberg Self–Esteem Inventory, and state anxiety and trait anxiety as measured by the State–Trait Anxiety Inventory. The results of the discriminant validity component were based on intercorrelations between these scale scores for a convenience sample of 116 individual parents participating in family support programs designed to prevent child abuse and neglect. The data indicated that the CES–D correlated

for attenuation due to the unreliability of the instruments (for correction formula, see Allen and Yen, 1979), the resulting maximum measurement–error–free validity estimates are all quite high. All of the scale intercorrelations fell within the moderate to strong association levels. In fact, since correlations around 0.6 are frequently used to support an instrument's convergent validity, the validity coefficients for the CES–D and the state and trait anxieties seem rather problematic for establishing discriminant validity.[14]

Table 5.4: Validity Coefficients Corrected For Attenuation Due To Unreliability

	CES–D	SEI	STATE ANX.
CES–D			
SEI	–.74		
STATE ANX.	.77	–.64	
TRAIT ANX.	.78	–.79	.88

Overall, it thus appears that PreStart inmates, as a group, exhibit much higher levels of anxiety and depression than people in the "normal" population, as well as much lower levels of self–esteem. Moreover, these characteristics seem to be concentrated among certain inmates. That is, inmates who suffer from low self–esteem are also more likely to exhibit high levels of depression and anxiety. While the PreStart pre–release program directly attempts to promote higher levels of esteem among its clients, and may indirectly affect anxiety levels, these data suggest that consideration should be given to the development of pre–release programming that directly addresses levels of inmate anxiety and depression.

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only moderately with the measures of self–esteem and state anxiety. However, the total CES–D scores correlated highly (disattenuated r=.84) with the measure of trait anxiety. The authors concluded that this final result indicated that the CES–D does not solely measure depression but trait anxiety as well.

[14] Using a convergent validity criterion of .6 would indicate that all corrected validity coefficients in Table 5.5 are problematic in terms of establishing an instrument's discriminant validity. Thus, the results lead to the conclusion that these instruments have failed the test of discriminant validity. Therefore, very little support has been provided in this analysis as to the construct validity of these instruments when used with a "special population" sample of inmates. Further, it appears that each instrument taps into a variety of noncognitive constructs such as self–esteem, anxiety and depression instead of just limiting itself to a particular content domain.

Inmate Perceptions of PreStart

Baseline Assessments

Evaluations using inherently subjective data can benefit by developing baselines to which comparisons can be made. That is, when someone is asked what she or he thinks about something, it is often useful to ask, "Compared to what?" This procedure was incorporated into the inmate questionnaire. For instance, inmates were asked to respond to the following question: "Overall, how would you describe the effect of the PreStart experience on your life?" Possible responses were framed in a Likert–type scale, with a range of five (extremely positive) to zero (no effect) to negative (extremely negative). To develop a baseline, the same question was asked with the phrase "this prison experience" being substituted for "PreStart experience."

Table 5.5 presents the resulting data broken down by facility. The first set of rows represents the 1992 data and includes a column for the percentage of inmates who gave PreStart a higher score than prison; those who gave PreStart the same score as prison; and those who gave prison a higher score than PreStart. The second set of rows presents the same data for the 1993 inmate sample, with comparisons across 1992 and 1993 allowing one to assess how inmate perceptions have changed at the same facility across years. Mean scores and standard deviations are presented at the bottom of the table. Rather surprisingly, on average, inmates reported that their present prison experience was generally something positive in their life. However, the large standard deviations relative to the reported means indicated a great deal of variability in responses. Importantly, the means for the "effect of PreStart on your life" were higher than the means for the "effect of prison on your life" in both 1992 and 1993, and the difference for the 1993 means was greater than the difference for the 1992 means. This indicates that, on average, inmates thought more favorably about PreStart than their general prison experience, and that this was even more true in 1993 than in 1992. This is further reflected in that 37.5 percent of the 1992 inmate sample reported higher scores for PreStart than for prison, while in 1993, the corresponding figure increased to 46.1 percent.

Table 5.5: Percent Distribution of Responses Comparing "The Effect of Prison vs. PreStart on Your Life," By Facility

Facility and Year		Valid N	PreStart More Positive Than Prison (%)	No Difference	PreStart Less Positive Than Prison (%)
A	1992	41	19.5	31.7	48.8
	1993	23	13.0	34.8	52.2
B	1992	20	42.1	21.1	36.8
	1993	13	53.8	23.1	23.1
C	1992	4	50.0	25.0	25.0
	1993	10	20.0	40.0	40.0
D	1992	46	50.0	32.6	17.4
	1993	34	61.8	14.7	23.5
E	1992	37	59.5	27.0	13.5
	1993	19	52.6	26.3	21.1
F	1992	47	34.0	42.6	23.4
	1993	34	55.9	26.5	17.6
G	1992	37	27.0	54.1	18.9
	1993	24	62.5	20.8	16.7
H	1992	44	43.2	18.2	38.6
	1993	43	51.2	20.9	27.9
I	1992	42	35.7	26.2	38.1
	1993	49	36.7	34.7	28.6
J	1992	20	25.0	45.0	30.0
	1993	25	32.0	36.0	32.0
K	1992	7	42.9	28.6	28.6
	1993	16	50.0	37.5	12.5
L	1992	8	37.5	37.5	25.0
	1993	7	71.4	14.3	14.3
M	1992	14	42.9	21.4	35.7
	1993	24	29.2	50.0	20.8
N	1992	29	27.6	41.1	31.0
	1993	41	53.7	31.7	14.6
TOTAL	1992	396	37.5	33.2	29.4
	1993	362	46.1	29.3	24.6

The second through fourth columns indicate that in 1992, a greater percentage of inmates reported that PreStart had a more positive impact on their lives than their general prison experience in all facilities except for facilities A, I, J and N. The differences in assessments were more pronounced in certain facilities than others, with facilities D and E standing out as having programs viewed very favorably by their clients. A disproportionate percentage of inmates at facilities A, B, H, I and M reported PreStart as being a less positive experience than their general prison experience, relative to the total percentage of inmates who responded in such a way.

The last set of rows, representing inmate perceptions in 1993, shows a certain level of stability between 1992 and 1993. For example, facility A remains the facility in which the smallest percentage of inmates view PreStart more favorably than their general prison experience. At the other extreme, high percentages of inmates continue to view PreStart more favorably than prison at facilities D and E. A number of facilities also appear to have witnessed fairly significant improvement in inmate perceptions. Especially noteworthy are Facility N (27.6 percent to 53.7 percent of inmates reporting more favorable scores for PreStart than prison from 1992 to 1993), Facility L (37.5 percent to 71.4 percent, but the numbers of inmates are small), Facility G (27 percent to 62.5 percent), and Facility F (34 percent to 55.9 percent). Only one program witnessed a significant decrease — Facility M decreased from 42.9 percent to 29.2 percent of inmates reporting PreStart as more positive than prison. The data are fairly consistent with observations made by evaluation staff in terms of the general level of inmate satisfaction regarding PreStart across facilities, and changes in satisfaction from 1992 to 1993.

Another baseline from which inmate views of PreStart can be assessed is the comparison between how repeat prisoners view PreStart relative to pre–release programs they experienced during previos incarcerations. As PreStart Phase I represents a significant increase in pre–release programming from the prior pre–release program in Illinois (referred to as "parole school"), it would be expected that PreStart inmates view PreStart as being much more helpful to them than the earlier parole school. The inmate samples included a number of individuals who reported that this was at least their second term in prison (35.9 percent of 1992 inmates and 33.6 percent of 1993 inmates). These repeat prisoners were not necessarily confined previously in Illinois prisons, so the relative comparison may not have been "parole school." These individuals were asked to respond to the following question: "How does what you have experienced from PreStart differ from what happened earlier when you were about to be released?" Inmates used a scale ranging from five (much more helpful) to negative five (much less helpful) in comparing PreStart to prior pre–release experiences.

Of the 184 responding inmates in 1992 that had a previous term of incarceration, 66 percent indicated that PreStart was more helpful than the pre–release programming they had previously experienced and only 17.4 percent indicated that PreStart was less helpful. In 1993, the percentage of relevant inmates (119) indicating PreStart was more helpful than previously experienced pre–release programming increased to 78.2 percent, with only 10.1 percent indicating that PreStart was less helpful. The mean score in response to this question for both years was roughly comparable (2.87 in 1992, 2.76 in 1993), indicating that on average, inmates found PreStart to be "somewhat more helpful" than previous pre–release programming (data not presented in tabular form). The 1993 numbers are too small to allow for a meaningful comparison in response patterns across facilities (see the first interim report for such an analysis using the 1992 PreStart–inmate data).

Table 5.6: Percent Distribution of Responses to the Question: "How Would You Rate the Overall Quality of Instruction You Received in PreStart?" By Facility

Facility	Year	Valid N	Percent Responding				
			Poor	Adequate	Good	Outstanding	Don't Remember
A							
	1992	25	32.0	36.0	12.0	12.0	8.0
	1993	20	15.0	25.0	35.0	25.0	0.0
B							
	1992	16	6.3	25.0	31.3	31.3	6.3
	1993	11	9.1	9.1	63.6	18.2	0.0
C							
	1992	3	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
	1993	9	11.1	22.2	22.2	44.4	0.0
D							
	1992	42	0.0	19.0	33.3	45.2	2.4
	1993	29	3.4	20.7	41.4	31.0	3.4
E							
	1992	36	0.0	25.0	38.9	33.3	2.8
	1993	19	5.3	10.5	47.4	36.8	0.0
F							
	1992	40	5.0	20.0	32.5	42.5	0.0
	1993	34	5.9	14.7	50.0	17.6	11.8
G							
	1992	33	0.0	9.1	60.6	27.3	3.0
	1993	17	17.6	0.0	58.8	23.5	0.0
H							
	1992	42	4.8	21.4	42.9	28.6	2.4
	1993	40	10.0	37.5	32.5	17.5	2.5
I							
	1992	41	0.0	9.8	63.4	24.4	2.4
	1993	39	2.6	15.4	48.7	28.2	5.1
J							
	1992	19	5.3	10.5	42.1	31.6	10.5
	1993	23	13.0	17.4	52.2	17.4	0.0
K							
	1992	8	0.0	25.0	50.0	25.0	0.0
	1993	12	16.7	16.7	50.0	0.0	16.7

L						
1992	6	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
1993	7	0.0	28.6	42.9	28.6	0.0
M						
1992	10	0.0	60.0	20.0	10.0	10.0
1993	15	0.0	13.3	46.7	40.0	0.0
N						
1992	27	3.7	25.9	43.1	27.2	0.0
1993	35	0.0	22.9	28.6	48.6	0.0
TOTAL						
1992	348	4.3	20.4	42.0	30.2	3.2
1993	310	7.1	19.4	43.2	27.1	3.2

Perceptions of Instructional Quality

All inmates in the samples also were asked to rate the quality of PreStart instruction received (see Table 5.6). Inmates had the option to choose either very poor, poor, adequate, good or outstanding to rate the quality of PreStart instruction.

Very few inmates rated the quality of PreStart instruction as very poor, so this category is collapsed with poor in the table. Across institutions for both years, most inmates (42 percent in 1992, 43.2 percent in 1993) ranked institutional PreStart instruction as good, and only 4.3 percent and 7.1 percent, in 1992 and 1993 respectively, referred to the instruction as poor. In both years, about 30 percent rated the instruction as outstanding, and 20 percent found it to be adequate. In 1992, at one–half of the 14 institutions, PreStart instruction was rated as outstanding by about one–third or more of the inmates (facilities B, C, D, E, F, J and L). In 1993, the same also could be said of seven facilities (C, D, E, I, L, M and N). In 1992, only one institution had a relatively high percentage of inmates rate instruction as poor (Facility A, 32 percent). In 1993, no facility had such a high negative ranking. The most improved scores, based on a relatively large number of inmates responding at the facility, were witnessed at Facility A (from 24 percent good or outstanding responses to 60 percent) and Facility M (from 30 percent to 86.7 percent). The most noticeable decline in instructional ratings occurred at Facility H (from 71.5 percent good or outstanding scores to 50 percent). Thus, in both 1992 and 1993, the quality of PreStart instruction was viewed by the vast majority of students/inmates as being high across facilities. Little patterned change appeared to have occurred within facilities.

Perceptions Regarding Preparation for Release

PreStart Phase I programming is intended to prepare inmates for release by providing them immediately practical documents (personal credentials, driver's license, job applications, resumes), planning skills (development of short– and long– term goals), self–insight and control (stress reduction, coping skills), and vital information (community resources, location of community service centers). One would expect that inmates would feel that what PreStart offered them would be helpful after release. In response to a strongly worded negative item ("PreStart offers me nothing that will help me when I get out"), inmates could respond by selecting a value ranging from one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree). Across all institutions involved in the survey in 1992, 32.5 percent of inmates strongly disagreed with the statement that PreStart offered nothing that would help them upon their release. In 1993, the comparable figure was 31.5 percent. In 1992, 39 percent of inmates disagreed with the statement, and in 1993, 43 percent of the inmates disagreed with the same statement. Thus, 71 percent of the 1992 inmates and 74.5 percent of the 1993 inmates disagreed that PreStart offered them nothing helpful (see Table 5.7). Only 20.8 percent of the 1992 inmates and 16.6 percent of the 1993 inmates either agreed or strongly agreed that PreStart offered them nothing helpful with release, and in both years a disproportionate number of these respondents came from only a few facilities (for example, Facilities A and K). Clearly, inmates have responded well to the IDOC's attempts to provide them with a variety of resources that may ease reintegration.

The second interim report of this evaluation reported on how inmates responded, across facilities, to a variety of other items designed to measure perceptions of Phase I benefits. These included items such as, "I know better how to get help on the outside if I need it because of PreStart," "Because of PreStart, I will utilize services from community service centers," and "Developing an Individual Development Plan has been a very useful experience." In general, consistent patterns emerged. These included the belief by a majority of the surveyed inmates that PreStart provided them with basic knowledge and skills that would aid them in their transition to the free world. This general finding was consistently more true for inmates incarcerated at certain facilities than at others. There was also a high degree of stability in inmate responses across facilities from 1992 to 1993.

Table 5.7: Percent Distribution of Responses to the Statement: "PreStart Offers Me Nothing to Help Me for Release," by Facility

Facility	Year	Valid N	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree
A	1992	44	22.7	18.2	4.5	36.4	18.2
	1993	21	4.8	23.8	0.0	52.4	19.0
B	1992	20	25.0	5.0	25.0	35.0	10.0
	1993	12	25.0	0.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
C	1992	4*	—	—	—	—	—
	1993	9	0.0	0.0	11.1	55.6	33.3
D	1992	46	6.5	4.3	6.5	37.0	45.7
	1993	33	12.1	0.0	9.1	36.4	42.4
E	1992	34	2.9	14.7	5.9	32.4	44.1
	1993	19	10.5	0.0	0.0	57.9	31.6
F	1992	46	8.7	10.9	4.3	41.3	34.8
	1993	36	2.8	16.7	8.3	47.2	25.0
G	1992	37	5.4	8.1	5.4	40.5	40.5
	1993	21	9.5	0.0	4.8	57.1	28.6
H	1992	46	8.7	10.9	4.3	39.1	37.0
	1993	43	9.3	7.0	9.3	39.5	34.9
I	1992	43	7.0	16.3	2.3	44.2	30.2
	1993	51	5.9	9.8	11.8	35.3	37.3
J	1992	20	0.0	5.0	10.0	35.0	50.0
	1993	25	0.0	20.0	12.0	48.0	20.0
K	1992	9	22.2	22.2	11.1	33.1	11.1
	1993	14	28.6	7.1	21.4	42.9	0.0
L	1992	8	0.0	12.5	37.5	0.0	50.0
	1993	7	0.0	14.3	28.6	28.6	28.6
M	1992	13	0.0	7.7	23.1	46.2	23.1
	1993	20	10.0	5.0	10.0	35.0	40.0
N	1992	30	10.0	13.3	10.0	53.3	13.3
	1993	38	5.3	7.9	0.0	44.7	42.1
Total	1992	400	9.5	11.3	7.8	39.0	32.5
	1993	349	8.0	8.6	8.9	43.0	31.5

*Responses not included due to small sample size.

Perceptions of Administrative Reactions to PreStart

As revealed in the preceding chapter, the level of successful Phase I implementation achieved was determined largely by the attitudes and behaviors of the institutional administrators, which tended to filter down to the inmates and influence their receptivity to correctional programming. Accordingly, many questionnaire items attempted to measure how inmates perceived the facility administration's reaction to PreStart. For instance, inmates were asked to respond to the statement: "The administration at this facility gives PreStart good lip service but little else."

Based on comments gleaned from group discussions with inmates, inmate judgments tended to be founded on what the evaluation team considers to be valid indicators of administrative support for PreStart. These include the extent to which higher level staff and administrators sat in on PreStart classes, whether the warden appeared at the PreStart graduation ceremony (if there was one), institutional priority given for inmates to get to class on time and to stay there — that is, the ease with which conflicting appointments or assignments were rescheduled — and so forth.

The responses across institutions to the above question (see Table 5.8) indicate that approximately 20 percent of the 1992 inmates and 12 percent of the 1993 inmates strongly agreed that the facility administration gave PreStart good lip service but little else. An additional 20 percent merely agreed with this statement in both years, and almost 30 percent had no opinion. Slightly more than 30 percent of the 1992 inmates and almost 40 percent of the 1993 inmates either disagreed or strongly disagreed that administrative backing was only talk. Inmates' responses to this question were often congruent with what staff reported concerning administrative support at various institutions. No institution seemed unique in terms of inmates' perceptions of administrative support. The highest percentages of inmates feeling it was mostly lip service (strongly agreeing) for both years was at Facility J (36.8 percent in 1992 and 29.2 percent in 1993). In 1992, 35.7 percent of the inmates felt this way at Facility A, but by 1993 this percentage decreased to 14.3 percent. However, it is noteworthy that in 1992, a total of 64.3 percent of the inmates at Facility A said the administrative support for PreStart was basically lip service (combining "strongly agree" and "agree" categories). In 1993, the comparable percent was still relatively high — 57.2 percent. A large institution that saw an increase in the percentage of inmates who felt that PreStart was basically being given lip service by the administration was Facility H, which increased from 35.6 percent in 1992 to 48.9 percent in 1993. The most substantial declines in this perception were at Facility I, which witnessed a decrease from 29.3 percent to 12 percent of the inmates feeling that PreStart was just getting "lip service" from the administration; Facility B which decreased from 55 percent to 36.4 percent; and Facility D which went from 36.1 percent to 15.7 percent.

Table 5.8: Percent Distribution of Responses to the Statement: "The Administration at this Facility Gives PreStart Good Lip Service but Little Else," By Facility

Facility	Year	Valid N	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A	1992	42	35.7	28.6	9.5	14.3	11.9
	1993	21	14.3	42.9	19.0	23.8	0.0
B	1992	20	35.0	20.0	35.0	5.0	5.0
	1993	11	18.2	18.2	27.3	27.3	9.1
C	1992	4*	—	—	—	—	—
	1993	9	22.2	33.3	22.2	0.0	22.2
D	1992	47	19.1	17.0	27.7	25.5	10.6
	1993	32	6.3	9.4	37.5	37.5	9.4
E	1992	34	20.6	11.8	29.4	20.6	17.6
	1993	19	5.3	31.6	26.3	31.6	5.3
F	1992	47	14.9	27.7	27.7	19.1	10.6
	1993	36	16.7	22.2	22.2	27.8	11.1
G	1992	36	11.1	22.2	27.8	25.0	13.9
	1993	21	14.3	28.6	19.0	9.5	28.6
H	1992	45	20.0	15.6	37.8	15.6	11.1
	1993	43	16.3	32.6	14.0	32.6	4.7
I	1992	41	7.3	22.0	46.3	19.5	4.9
	1993	50	4.0	12.0	34.0	26.0	24.0
J	1992	19	36.8	10.5	15.8	21.1	15.8
	1993	24	29.2	20.8	20.8	12.5	16.7
K	1992	8	25.0	25.0	37.5	12.5	0.0
	1993	12	8.3	16.7	50.0	25.0	0.0
L	1992	8	12.5	12.5	50.0	25.0	0.0
	1993	7	28.6	14.3	42.9	0.0	14.3
M	1992	13	23.1	15.4	30.8	23.1	7.7
	1993	19	15.8	10.5	31.6	31.6	10.5
N	1992	30	20.0	10.0	33.3	26.7	10.0
	1993	38	5.3	23.7	23.7	36.8	10.5
TOTAL	1992	394	20.3	19.5	29.9	19.8	10.4
	1993	342	12.6	22.2	26.3	26.6	12.3

*Responses not included due to small sample size

In group discussions with inmates, the attitude of "Why should we take it seriously, if they don't think it's important?" was echoed at several institutions. Likewise, administrative support

actions influence the behavior of front–line staff delivering Phase I programming, who are in direct contact with inmates. Inmates were highly affected by the attitudes of the staff, who in turn were affected by the attitudes of administrative personnel. Therefore, while this one question may not represent the most crucial element in programming, both the issues of administrative support and inmates' perceptions of that support have been, and will continue to be, critical to PreStart and its evolution.

A Synthesis of Inmate Attitudes Toward PreStart: Scale Development and Subgroup Differences

The preceding presentation illustrated a number of important findings. First, PreStart inmates generally held very positive attitudes toward Phase I programming. Secondly, attitudes toward PreStart sometimes varied quite dramatically across facilities. Thirdly, in general there was a great stability in attitudinal and perceptual scores between 1992 and 1993. A few exceptions at the facility level were noticeable, however, indicating that some programs may have improved while others may have regressed in terms of generating positive attitudes among program clients. These findings also indicated the limits and cumbersome nature of using single–item measures to assess program impacts on clients. For instance, some facilities consistently generated high ratings on a variety of measures (for example, quality of instruction, perception of administration support, willingness to use CSCs), while others consistently generated lower ratings. The reader must look at each response pattern separately, and then come up with a rather subjective decision on what the data really means. However, because the response patterns were fairly consistent across differing measures, the interpretational task was easier than is normally the case.

Interpretation can be made even easier if a composite measure is used to identify the nature of inmate attitudes toward PreStart. If single items measuring a particular conceptual domain are consistently related to other measures of related concepts, it is probable that a unidimensional concept may exist and that a composite measure which incorporates a number of items may more validly, reliably and parsimoniously measure the concept than a variety of single items separately. Along these lines, the following analysis presents data on scale construction efforts and outcomes with the PreStart inmate data. Importantly, the analysis focuses on how PreStart was perceived by differing subgroups of the inmate population.

Scale Development Procedure

As indicated earlier, 425 inmates composed the 1992 PreStart inmate sample. However, due to missing values on the 10 items targeted for scale development purposes (see Table 5.9), the effective sample size for this procedure and subsequent analyses was 386. Each item had a response range of one through five — one indicating strongly agree and five indicating strongly disagree.

The first step taken in the scale development process was to reverse the coding for the four negatively worded items (1, 6, 8, 9). Once scores on these items were returned to their original scoring direction, all items had their scoring reversed, so that a higher score reflected more agreement with the item. Then a principal components analysis was conducted using varimax rotation, the Kaiser–normalization criterion, and a requirement of at least three items loading at an absolute level of .35 for the factor to be considered legitimate. Table 5.9 presents the results of the principal components analysis.[15]

The first factor (called the Positive Impact Scale), which accounted for 36.2 percent of the item pool's total variance, consisted of six positively worded items that reflect positive attitudes about PreStart's impact. Specifically, all six items referred to how helpful the PreStart program had been to the inmates. High scores on this measure reflected greater amounts of agreement with the scale's items. Many items indicated a hopefulness about future success after release due to the program's impact.

The second factor (called the Negative Program Rating Scale), which accounted for 16 percent of the item pool's total variance, consisted of four negatively worded items that reflected negative attitudes about the PreStart program and its staff. Specifically, this scale contained items that negatively characterized the PreStart administration and staff, as well as the program's ability to provide any lasting help to inmates. Higher scores on the Negative Program Rating Scale indicated more negative attitudes regarding the PreStart program and staff.

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[15] The principal components analysis of the 1992 inmate sample's responses to the 10 attitudinal items resulted in two orthogonal (independent) factors, which were made up of all 10 items without using any single item more than once (see Table 5.9). The two factors accounted for 52.1 percent of the total variance of the complete item pool.

Table 5.9: Results of Principal Components Analysis

Factor 1: Positive Impact Scale			Factor 2: Negative Program Rating Scale		
Item	Description	Ldng.	Item	Description	Ldng.
2	I'll stay out of trouble.	.65	1	PreStart offers no help.	.50
3	I learned skills.	.80	6	Adm. gives lip service	.76
4	Ability to stay out of trouble	.81	8	Instructors don't know re: outside.	.75
5	Know how to get help on the outside	.81	9	Success = no parole officer.	.59
7	IDP useful	.70			
10	Will use CSCs	.68			

Once the factors were defined, an internal consistency–reliability analysis was conducted for each one. The results indicated acceptable levels of internal consistency–reliability.[16] The construct validity of the scales was then examined. To test the construct validity of the two attitudinal scales, composite scores on the two indices were correlated with three other items included in the survey questionnaire administered to the 1992 PreStart inmate sample. Validity coefficients for these items can be found in Table 5.10.

The first item used to validate the two attitudinal scales was a question asking each of the inmates to describe the overall effect of PreStart on their lives. As presented earlier, responses

16 An internal–consistency reliability analysis of the Positive Impact Scale resulted in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .85. The value was considered to be fairly stable since the deletion of any particular item would only lower the alpha value but not to a level below .80. Interitem correlations ranged from .28 to .62, and the average interitem correlation for this factor was .48, which also indicated that the scale was homogeneous.

An internal–consistency reliability analysis of the Negative Program Rating Scale resulted in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .57. This value was considered to be moderately stable, since deletion of any particular item would only lower the alpha value, yet deletion of either of two of the items would lower the alpha value to around .44. Interitem correlations ranged from .17 to .40, and the average interitem correlation for this factor was .25. Thus, this factor, while still sufficiently homogenous to warrant its use as an independent scale, did not indicate the degree of unidimensionality as was observed for the Positive Impact Scale.

ranged from "Extremely Positive" (5) to "Extremely Negative" (–5), with zero indicating "No Effect." The validity coefficient for this item and the Positive Impact Scale was .51, indicating that both measures appeared to be tapping into the same construct (that is, perceived impact of PreStart on self). The validity coefficient for this "effect" item and the Negative Program Rating Scale was –.34, indicating that the more negatively the inmate characterized PreStart itself and its staff, the less likely the inmate was to indicate that PreStart had a positive effect on his or her life.

The next item asked inmates who had been previously incarcerated (43.2 percent of the 1992 PreStart sample) to indicate the degree to which PreStart had been more or less helpful than what occurred earlier when they were about to be released (see earlier discussion). As can be seen in Table 5.10, the validity coefficient for this item and the Positive Impact Scale was .44, indicating that the more positive the inmate's attitude was regarding PreStart's impact, the more helpful he or she believed the PreStart program compared to the earlier "parole school." The validity coefficient for this "difference" item and the Negative Program Rating Scale was –.41, indicating that the more negatively the inmate characterized PreStart and its staff, the less likely the inmate saw the PreStart program as being more helpful than traditional parole services.

A final measure used to validate the two attitudinal scales was an item asking the entire inmate sample to rate the overall quality of instruction they received while completing the curriculum modules in PreStart. The validity coefficient for this item and the Positive Impact Scale was .52, indicating that the more positive the inmate's attitude was regarding PreStart's impact, the higher the rating on quality of instruction. The validity coefficient for this rating item and the Negative Program Rating Scale was –.40, indicating that the more negatively the inmate characterized PreStart and its staff, the less favorable the rating on the quality of instruction received in the PreStart curriculum modules. Once again, these validity coefficients were of moderate strength and were in the expected directions. Thus, it was concluded that the construct validity of the two attitudinal scales was established.

Table 5.10: Validity Coefficients

	Positive Impact Scale	Negative Program Rating Scale	Effects of PreStart	Helpfulness PreStart vs. Parole	Quality of Instruction
Positive Impact Scale	1.00	–.23*	.51**	.44**	.52**
Negative Program Rating Scale		1.00	–.34**	–.41**	–.40**
Effects of PreStart			1.00	.60**	.54**
Helpfulness PreStart vs. Parole				1.00	.53**
Quality of Instruction					1.00

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .10$

Attitudes Displayed by the 1992 PreStart Inmate Sample

Composite scores of the 1992 PreStart inmate sample (N = 386) on the Positive Impact Scale ranged from 6 to 30, with a mean of 21.43 and a standard deviation of 5.5. The data were somewhat negatively skewed (–.719), the median score was 22, and the modal score was 24. The lower quartile of scores fell in the range of six to 18, the upper quartile covered the score range of 26 to 30, and the interquartile range of scores was from 19 to 25. Generally, the inmates scored in the upper range of scores on the Positive Impact Scale, indicating that they held mostly positive attitudes about the impact PreStart had on them.

Composite scores on the Negative Program Rating Scale ranged from 4 to 20, with a mean of 11.90 and a standard deviation of 3.4. The data were only slightly positively skewed (.066); the median score was 12; and the modal score was 12. The lower quartile of scores fell in the range of 4.9; the upper quartile ranged from 15 to 20; and the interquartile ranged from 10 to 14. Generally, the inmates scored in the middle range of Negative Program Rating Scale scores, indicating that they felt rather neutral about overall programming and staff of Phase I programming.

Subgroup Differences Among the 1992 Inmate Sample

It was of interest to test if differences on the mean composite scores of the scales would occur across various subgroups of the 1992 PreStart inmate sample. Specifically, the data were

examined to test for differences across gender, race, age group, educational level, institutional facility, facility type and previous incarceration experience subgroups within the inmate sample.

Since three of the variables (gender, age and previous incarceration experience) are dichotomous measures, t–tests were used to examine mean differences on the two attitudinal scales (see Table 5.11). Only two significant differences were found for these subgroups. Younger inmates (25 and younger) scored slightly higher on the Positive Impact Scale than did older inmates (26 and older). Thus, younger inmates indicated that the program had more of a positive impact than did older inmates.

Also statistically significant was the relationship between gender and the Negative Program Rating Scale. Men scored higher than women on the Negative Program Rating Scale. Thus, men tended to rate the PreStart program and its staff more negatively than did women. No significant differences were found on the two attitudinal scales between those inmates who had been previously incarcerated and those who had never been incarcerated before.

Table 5.11: Results of T-Tests Examining 1992 Subgroup Mean Differences (N=386)

Results for Positive Impact Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	T	P-Value
Gender				-1.67	.095
Male	288	21.30	5.52		
Female	82	22.44	5.09		
Age Group				1.98	.049
25 & younger	142	22.13	4.84		
26 & older	228	21.03	5.82		
Previous Incarceration				1.28	.203
No	240	21.76	5.17		
Yes	136	21.02	5.81		
Results for Negative Program Rating Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	T	P-Value
Gender				2.49	.013
Male	290	12.04	3.33		
Female	81	11.00	3.31		
Age Group				-.07	.948
25 & younger	141	11.87	3.03		
26 & older	229	11.90	3.60		
Previous Incarceration				-.75	.456
No	238	11.82	3.26		
Yes	138	12.09	3.60		

Analyses of variance were conducted to examine subgroup mean differences on the two attitudinal scales for the rest of the subgroup variables (see Table 5.12). The racial grouping variable resulted in a statistically significant overall effect on the Positive Impact Scale; however, none of the pairwise comparisons (using a conservative contrast method) reached the specified level of statistical significance (.05). In terms of practical significance, it appears that blacks and Hispanics scored higher (that is, indicated more positive attitudes) on the Positive Impact Scale

than did whites and other minorities. With regard to mean scores on the Negative Program Rating Scale, no statistically significant differences were found between the racial groups.

Overall, statistically significant differences in the means occurred for the facility grouping variable on both of the attitudinal scales (see Table 5.12). On the Positive Impact Scale, pairwise comparisons revealed that the significant differences occurred between Facility A and facilities D, E, F, G and H. Facility A scored considerably lower on the PreStart Impact Scale than these other five facilities, meaning that Facility–A inmates held less positive attitudes regarding PreStart's impact on their lives than did the inmates at the other facilities. This finding agreed with observations noted by the research staff after visiting the facilities.

On the Negative Program Rating Scale, the differences between the facility means were not as significant as in the case of the Positive Impact Scale. In fact, even though an overall facility effect was detected, none of the pairwise comparisons reached the .05 level of statistical significance. However, in terms of practical significance, facilities A and B scored the highest on the Negative Program Rating Scale (meaning they rated the program and its staff the most negatively), while Facilities D, G, and L scored the lowest (meaning they rated the program and its staff the most favorably).

Once these facilities were grouped into their respective facility types, the mean differences on the two attitudinal scales became even more interpretable (see Table 5.12). On the Positive Impact Scale, the minimum–security facilities scored the lowest (that is, the most negatively). This was understandable since half of that subgroup consisted of inmates from Facility A, who by far exhibited the most negative attitudes regarding PreStart's impact on their lives. The community correctional centers (CCCs) had only slightly higher scores than minimum–security facilities on the Positive Impact Scale. This reflects the sentiment relayed by many inmates at those facilities, which suggested that PreStart was not offering anything different from what they were already receiving in the CCCs. Among the remaining facility types, the scores on the Positive Impact Scale increased (became more positive) as the security level of the facility increased. Thus, inmates from the medium– and maximum–security facilities indicated the most positive attitudes regarding PreStart's impact. In fact, the maximum–security facilities (facilities D and E) scored so much more positively on the Positive Impact Scale than the other facility types, that these differences were captured in the statistically conservative pairwise comparisons generated from these data.

Table 5.12: Results of Analyses of Variance Examining 1992 Subgroup Mean Differences (N=386)

Results for Positive Impact Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	F–Ratio	P–Value
Race				4.0190	.0078
White	117	20.47	5.76		
Black	226	22.06	5.53		
Hispanic	17	22.88	2.64		
Other	22	19.05	4.37		
Facility				5.4645	.0000
A	42	16.31	6.65		
B	18	19.50	5.48		
C	3	25.67	4.51		
D	47	23.21	4.59		
E	34	23.68	4.33		
F	46	20.59	5.30		
G	34	22.35	5.15		
H	43	22.63	5.03		
I	42	23.10	3.20		
J	20	21.40	6.25		
K	6	19.33	6.28		
L	8	21.63	3.58		
M	13	22.46	4.43		
N	30	20.13	5.79		
Facility Type				7.2541	.0001
CCC	45	20.71	5.04		
Minimum	84	19.70	6.21		
Medium	173	21.46	5.44		
Maximum	84	23.49	4.46		
Educ. Level				2.3860	.0934
< H.S. Diploma	146	21.62	5.43		
H.S. Diploma	157	21.73	5.44		
Beyond H.S.	70	20.10	5.59		

Table 5.12 (continued)

Results for Negative Program Rating Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	F-Ratio	P-Value
Race				1.3063	.2720
White	120	12.13	3.44		
Black	223	11.63	3.46		
Hispanic	17	12.41	2.90		
Other	22	12.82	2.65		
Facility				2.3983	.0042
A	42	13.62	3.64		
B	20	13.85	2.74		
C	4	12.75	2.63		
D	46	10.72	3.36		
E	33	11.55	3.33		
F	45	12.02	3.53		
G	35	11.14	3.33		
H	45	11.33	3.38		
I	40	11.28	2.44		
J	19	12.26	3.80		
K	6	12.50	2.81		
L	8	11.13	3.31		
M	13	12.54	3.86		
N	30	12.30	3.21		
Facility Type				3.5954	.0138
CCC	47	12.85	3.24		
Minimum	82	12.48	3.31		
Medium	174	11.74	3.42		
Maximum	83	11.14	3.32		
Educ. Level				1.4905	.2266
< H.S. Diploma	147	12.10	3.26		
H.S. Diploma	156	11.59	3.44		
Beyond H.S.	72	12.33	3.41		

The mean differences between facility types were not as significant on the Negative Program Rating Scale (see Table 5.12). But the trend observed above was still apparent — the minimum–security facilities and the CCCs scored higher (that is, rated the program and its staff more negatively) than the medium– and maximum–security facilities. The mean differences were small enough on this scale, however, as to not be detected by the conservative pairwise comparisons.

Interestingly, the level of education completed by the inmates was not significantly associated with the scores given on either of the two attitudinal scales (see Table 5.12). Thus, it seemed that both the most–educated and least–educated inmates held similar attitudes (generally positive) regarding the PreStart program, its impact and its staff.

A common sentiment expressed by staff at several facilities suggested that young blacks tended to be the least receptive to the PreStart program; therefore, it was of interest to examine whether this group scored differently and to a significant degree on the two attitudinal scales than did other inmates. To test this hypothesis, a two–way analysis of variance was generated, with the racial variable reflecting blacks compared with all other racial groups, and with the age variable reflecting 25 years old and younger compared with 26 years old and older. The results of this analysis (not presented in tabular form) failed to support the research hypothesis. The interaction term was not statistically significant for either scale. As the results listed in Table 5.12 indicate, blacks tended to rate the PreStart program and its staff more favorably than did other racial groups (with the exception of Hispanics who scored the highest on the Positive Impact Scale).

In summary, among the 1992 PreStart inmate sample, the most significant mean differences on the Positive Impact Scale occurred between facilities (Facility A inmates held the least positive attitudes) and facility types (inmates from minimum–security facilities held the least positive attitudes, while inmates from maximum–security facilities held the most positive attitudes). Age also appeared to be a significant factor on this scale, with older inmates indicating that they felt PreStart would have less of a positive impact on their lives than what was indicated by the younger inmates. Additionally, race seemed to be a factor on this scale, with Hispanics and blacks indicating more positive attitudes regarding PreStart's impact than was indicated by whites and other minorities. Variables such as gender, previous incarceration experience and education level did not appear to be important factors in understanding subgroup differences on the Positive Impact Scale.

As for the Negative Program Rating Scale, the key factors for understanding 1992 PreStart–inmate subgroup differences between means once again emphasized facility. Inmates in facilities A and B rated the program and its staff the most negatively, while facilities D, G and L rated them the

least negatively. Similarly, differences were seen across facility type (inmates in minimum–security facilities and CCCs gave less favorable ratings than did maximum– and medium–security facilities). Gender was also a significant factor in understanding subgroup differences on this scale, with male inmates tending to rate PreStart and its staff less favorably than did female inmates. Variables such as age, previous incarceration experience, race and education level did not seem to be important factors in understanding the mean subgroup differences on this attitudinal scale.

Attitudes Displayed by the 1993 PreStart Inmate Sample

To get a sense of the stability of the attitudinal scales over time, the same survey items were administered to the 1993 PreStart inmate sample. While the total PreStart sample for 1993 included 381 inmates, the effective sample was reduced to 337 when only the items composing the two attitudinal scales were used (due to missing data on these items).[17]

Composite scores on the Positive Impact Scale from the 1993 inmates ranged from six to 30, with a mean of 21.72 and a standard deviation of 5.0. As was reported with the 1992 inmate sample, the 1993 inmates scored in the upper range of scores on the Positive Impact Scale, indicating that they generally felt positively about the impact that PreStart had on their lives.

Composite scores on the Negative Program Rating Scale ranged from four to 20, with a mean of 11.29 and a standard deviation of 3.3. Once again, these results were strikingly similar to those obtained in the 1992 sample. Generally, the 1993 inmate sample scored in the middle range of the Negative Program Rating Scale, indicating that they felt rather neutral about overall programming and staff of the PreStart program.

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[17] An internal–consistency reliability analysis of this latest sample's responses resulted in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .82 for the Positive Impact Scale and a Cronbach's alpha of .59 for the Negative Program Rating Scale. Thus, these values were not appreciably different from the alpha coefficients (.85 and .57, respectively) obtained for the 1992 inmate sample's responses to the two scales.

The reliability coefficients for the 1993 sample were considered to be quite stable since the alpha coefficients did not vary much upon deletion of any particular items making up the scales. Therefore, the reliability results from the 1993 sample further support the conclusion made from the 1992 results; that is, the Positive Impact Scale is a homogeneous scale, and the Negative Program Rating Scale, while not as homogeneous, still reaches an acceptable level of scaling unidimensionality.

Subgroup Differences Among the 1993 Inmate Sample

Because the psychometric properties of the attitudinal scales were so similar across the two inmate samples, it was of interest to examine whether the subgroup differences varied across the two years. Thus, tests of mean differences were conducted for the 1993 inmate sample (N = 337) in a similar fashion as was conducted for the 1992 inmate sample. As was the case with the 1992 inmate sample, only two significant differences were found for these subgroups (see Table 5.13). Significant differences were found between the two age groups on the Positive Impact Scale. The younger inmates scored higher on the scale, indicating that they felt more positively about the impact that the PreStart program had on their lives than did the older inmates. Neither the gender variable nor the variable indicating previous incarceration was significantly related to the scores on the Positive Impact Scale.

Also similar to the results from the 1992 sample was the significant finding for the gender variable on the Negative Program Rating Scale. As was the case previously, male inmates scored higher on the scale, indicating that they held more negative attitudes regarding the PreStart program and its staff than did the female inmates. Neither the age group in which the inmates fell nor the inmates' previous incarceration experience were significantly related to scores on the Negative Program Rating Scale.

Table 5.13: Results of T-Tests Examining 1993 Subgroup Mean Differences (N=337)

Results for Positive Impact Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	T	P-Value
Gender				-.08	.938
Male	260	21.72	4.90		
Female	71	21.77	5.29		
Age Group				2.37	.018
25 & younger	99	22.82	3.82		
26 & older	181	21.51	5.33		
Previous Incarceration				-.29	.770
No	216	21.64	4.86		
Yes	113	21.81	5.34		
Results for Negative Program Rating Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	T	P-Value
Gender				2.73	.007
Male	262	11.54	3.28		
Female	73	10.36	3.23		
Age Group				.42	.674
25 & younger	100	11.28	3.23		
26 & older	183	11.10	3.44		
Previous Incarceration				-.64	.524
No	218	11.21	3.02		
Yes	115	11.47	3.84		

Next, analyses of variance were conducted to examine subgroup mean differences on the two attitudinal scales for the remainder of the subgroup variables (see Table 5.14). All but one of the variables resulted in statistically significant differences on the Positive Impact Scale, while only one of the variables resulted in a significant finding on the Negative Program Rating Scale (see Table 5.14). Race was a more significant factor for the Positive Impact Scale in the 1993 sample than in the earlier sample. Not only was the overall effect of race significant, but the conservative

pairwise comparisons test specifically detected where the differences occurred. This difference occurred between whites and blacks, with blacks scoring much higher (more positively) on the scale than did whites. Significant differences also were observed between other minorities and whites, as well as between other minorities and Hispanics, with the other minorities indicating the most positive attitudes regarding PreStart's impact.

Race was not significantly related to inmates' scores on the Negative Program Rating Scale. However, in terms of practical significance, it appeared that, as was observed in the 1992 sample, blacks rated the PreStart program and its staff less negatively than did the other racial groups.

The facility from which the inmates were sampled was also significantly related to scores on the Positive Impact Scale, as well as to scores on the Negative Program Rating Scale. However, the differences in mean scores on the Positive Impact Scale were not as large as observed in the 1992 sample since the conservative contrasting method did not detect where the differences occurred. In terms of practical differences, it appeared that the significant effect of facility on Positive Impact Scale scores was being driven by the very low mean score (reflecting negative attitudes regarding impact of PreStart) of Facility B, and the rather high (that is, positive) mean scores of facilities C, E and N. Note that Facility A in the 1993 sample did not indicate the very low (that is, negative) mean score on the Positive Impact Scale observed for this facility in the 1992 sample. This suggests that the 1993 inmate sample viewed PreStart's impact more favorably than did the 1992 inmate sample (perhaps reflective of program improvements at Facility A).

While the facility variable resulted in significant differences being found on the Negative Program Rating Scale, the conservative pairwise comparisons test did not specifically detect where those differences occurred. A look at the mean scores across the facilities suggested that the significant main effect observed for the facility variable was driven by low (less negative) mean scores of facilities I and N, and the high (very negative) mean score of Facility K.

Facility type was the one subgroup variable for which statistically significant differences were not found on the Positive Impact Scale mean scores; this contrasts the highly significant nature of the variable in the 1992 analysis. However, in terms of practical significance, it appears that inmates in minimum-security facilities still demonstrated less favorable attitudes regarding PreStart's impact than did the other types of facilities.

Table 5.14: Results of Analyses of Variance Examining 1993 Subgroup Mean Differences (N=337)

Results for Positive Impact Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	F-Ratio	P-Value
Race				6.1351	.0005
White	120	20.71	5.39		
Black	187	22.33	4.44		
Hispanic	9	18.44	4.42		
Other	10	25.40	4.12		
Facility				2.3474	.0053
A	21	20.38	5.22		
B	12	17.08	7.38		
C	9	23.22	5.31		
D	31	21.32	5.72		
E	19	24.21	3.03		
F	34	21.79	4.84		
G	20	23.10	4.61		
H	42	21.62	4.99		
I	49	22.12	3.46		
J	24	19.92	5.45		
K	12	19.08	3.94		
L	7	21.43	5.06		
M	19	22.89	5.33		
N	34	23.00	4.97		
Facility Type				1.8030	.1464
CCC	50	20.38	5.91		
Minimum	70	21.60	4.11		
Medium	154	21.89	5.03		
Maximum	59	22.54	5.05		
Educ. Level				4.6871	.0098
< H.S. Diploma	117	22.74	4.72		
H.S. Diploma	130	21.53	5.01		
Beyond H.S.	84	20.62	5.06		

Table 5.14 (cont.)
Results of Analyses of Variance

Results for Negative Program Rating Scale					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	F–Ratio	P–Value
Race				1.5472	.2022
White	121	11.76	3.39		
Black	191	10.98	3.29		
Hispanic	9	12.11	2.09		
Other	10	11.10	3.78		
Facility				3.1867	.0002
A	21	12.81	2.21		
B	11	12.91	3.15		
C	9	10.56	4.64		
D	31	10.32	3.43		
E	19	12.58	3.06		
F	36	11.97	3.02		
G	21	10.81	3.66		
H	43	11.65	3.44		
I	50	9.88	3.15		
J	23	12.48	3.25		
K	12	13.00	3.07		
L	7	12.57	2.37		
M	19	11.11	3.33		
N	35	9.89	2.61		
Facility Type				1.9349	1237
CCC	49	12.18	3.14		
Minimum	71	10.75	3.19		
Medium	158	11.34	3.26		
Maximum	59	11.08	3.61		
Educ. Level				1.5242	.2193
< H.S. Diploma	118	10.87	3.39		
H.S. Diploma	132	11.46	3.33		
Beyond H.S.	85	11.61	3.13		

Facility type also was not found to be significantly related to scores on the Negative Program Rating Scale. However, in terms of practical significance, it appeared that the least negative attitudes regarding PreStart and its staff were exhibited by inmates in minimum–security facilities, followed by maximum–security, then medium–security facilities. The most negative attitudes were exhibited at CCCs. The surprising change in this scoring distribution resulted from the fact that inmates from minimum–security facilities and community correctional centers indicated the most negative attitudes regarding PreStart and its staff in the 1992 inmate sample. Yet inmates from minimum–security facilities indicated the most positive attitudes toward the program and its staff in the 1993 sample. This difference appears to be the result of attitudinal improvements among inmates at Facility A and the consistently positive attitudes exhibited by inmates at Facility I.

Contrary to the lack of statistical significance observed for the education–level subgroup variable in the 1992 inmate sample, the variable was significantly related to scores on the Positive Impact Scale for the 1993 inmate sample. In fact, the conservative pairwise comparisons technique detected a significant difference between the subgroup with the least amount of education (less than a high–school diploma) and the subgroup with the most amount of education (schooling beyond the high–school level). The trend in scores for this analysis indicated that the higher the education level of the inmate, the lower the score on the Positive Impact Scale.

In summary, it was apparent that among the 1993 PreStart inmate sample the most significant mean differences on the Positive Impact Scale occurred between racial groups (blacks exhibited more positive attitudes than the other racial groups) and facilities (Facility B inmates exhibited the most negative attitudes; inmates from facilities C, E and N exhibited the most positive attitudes). The education level completed by the inmate also appeared to be related to attitudes regarding the program's impact, with the least educated indicating more positive attitudes than the most educated. The age group of the inmate also was related to mean–score differences on the Positive Impact Scale, with younger inmates exhibiting more positive attitudes regarding PreStart's impact on their lives than did older inmates.

As for the Negative Program Rating Scale, the primary factor in understanding subgroup differences was the institutional facility (Facilities I and N provided the least negative ratings, while Facility K indicated very negative ratings). The gender of the inmate also seemed to be an important factor in understanding mean differences on the Negative Program Rating Scale (male inmates provided more negative ratings than did female inmates).

Discussion

The preceding analysis indicates that two fairly simple and straightforward scales, each of which measures important attitudinal dimensions toward PreStart, were able to be created from responses to 10 easily administered questions. Both scales have strong psychometric properties, including high levels of reliability and validity, although the Negative Program Rating Scale can benefit from some refinement in terms of the former criterion of measurement quality.

The analysis also revealed in a very direct and objective manner how inmate reactions to PreStart varied across inmate subgroups and facilities. Most importantly, findings indicated that it tends to matter little who the subjects of PreStart are in terms of inmate reactions. All types of inmates, older vs. younger, white vs. black, male vs. female, tended to respond similarly to the PreStart program although some slight variations were discovered. The key factor related to inmate reactions was the facility at which the program was implemented. This is very consistent with the presentation of case–study information presented in Appendix A. In particular, problematic implementation of PreStart at various facilities has identifiable and negative effects on inmate attitudes and perceptions.

The above information can be used by the IDOC to assess, evaluate, monitor and target particular facilities for improved actions. Unfortunately, this has been only a "two–shot" effort. There is currently little in the nature of PreStart monitoring and coordinating to promote the continued provision of adequate and positive pre–release programming. An information–collection scheme that measures inmate responses to PreStart classes on a routine and consistent basis is a first step in allowing the IDOC to keep a vigilant eye on the adequacy of these efforts. For the most part, PreStart course evaluation data are being collected at a number of facilities but in a haphazard way that does not inform programming. The administration of a questionnaire, containing items similar to the ones used in this report, which takes minimal time to complete at graduation and is simple to administer and answer, should be considered by the IDOC for implementation. The introduction of such an evaluation scheme would be highly desirable from a program–development and enhancement perspective.

Ideas for Improvement: Inmates' Own Words

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were offered the opportunity to respond to an open–ended question: "Do you feel that the PreStart program could be improved in any way? If so, what would you suggest as being the keys to improved services?" The written responses that follow have not been edited. They appear as the inmates wrote them on the survey. It should be

noted that these written responses may reflect the opinions of the more educated and articulate of the respondents. However, based on verbal responses to this same question during the inmate group discussions, the evaluation team believes that the following responses are generally reflective of the feelings and thoughts of many inmates.

A number of major themes emerged from inmates' comments. Major issues seemed to be PreStart's timing, program length, quality of instruction, curricular content, and types of instructors (counselors vs. educators vs. volunteers). The nature of comments were very similar in both 1992 and 1993. The following are comments from the 1993 inmate sample.

Many inmates would prefer that PreStart start earlier during a person's term of incarceration:

> I feel PreStart should be given sooner than just prior to release, then maybe people would have a little more chance to set things up on the outside.
>
> I would give PreStart at the beginning of the bit. And try to instill some positive aspects and goals to individuals to let them know this could be the start of some things good if they would apply themselves and get involved in some educational programs or take up a trade to enhance their chances on staying out once paroled.
>
> Aspects of PreStart should be included in an orientation program, that is, some program designed to start a new prisoner thinking about what skills he or she would need when they are released and how the institution could assist them in attaining their goals.

The Department of Correction's sponsorship of an inmate–produced video orientation of PreStart, distributed across the correctional system, was a good start in better communicating to inmates early in their prison term what PreStart is all about. But active programming should also be considered. For instance, some inmates expressed this sentiment:

> Most importantly, I feel that the PreStart should be offered to guys as soon as they come to the prison and they should fill out an IDP at that time. Then during their stay in prison their IDP should be monitored and as they achieve their goals, good time should be awarded.

While such an effort does not have to be tied to good time, there are clearly many inmates who would be receptive to the idea of developing plans of action early in their prison terms and who would work toward implementing those plans. In addition, many inmates commented on the desirability of follow–up programming to the PreStart classes that occur right before release:

> This institution waits until you are three months short, to start telling you all of these things. By the time you are released, you have forgotten about all of the things that were said. Or maybe you have thrown all of your paper away.
>
> I feel right before you leave, they should sit down with you and talk with you and make sure you don't have any problems.

Such sessions have been introduced at the Decatur Community Correctional Center and seem to have produced positive results. Many inmates also commented on the nature of materials presented in the PreStart classes and the methods of presentation:

> Do not rush the program. It seemed like we rushed through everything ... didn't take time to explain thing more carefully.
>
> Prestart should be longer so an inmate could take his or her time to write resumes, fill out job applications and just time to digest information.
>
> I think the program should be a little longer than it is regularly. We don't really have enough time to really understand what we have to do when we get out. They rushed us a lot and that didn't really help us too much. The PreStart slips they give us doesn't really help me for the simple fact that I don't understand parts of them.

In a related manner, many inmates lamented the lack of individual attention received in PreStart and the large class sizes that were frequently confronted:

> Need to spend time with the individual and help them determine what job they might be qualified for when they get out.
>
> In the PreStart session I attended the size of attendance had been doubled and it's my feeling that the size affected the effectiveness of the sessions. Presenters were not able to take complete control and I feel I missed a lot because of the doubled size (40). So, I feel they should stick to the original class size of (20).

Many inmates also felt that many of the materials presented in PreStart are not as helpful as they could have been because of their lack of realism:

> Many things in the program seem to be sugar coated. The administration should deals with us realistically and truthfully. They try to make it seem as though life as an ex–con will be easy, and this as we all know is not true.
>
> I think the PreStart program should be more real. The people who conduct the class are full of fairy tales and dreams. They should let the guys know on a reality scale that everything could go wrong and you are a product of the State. I really thought the class sucked.

The most common comments related to having more diverse speakers and resources available in PreStart:

> More help from job services would be very beneficial for us. The people at the Centers such as counselors make it their business to hold you back. There's a need for the administration and the job service (Safer Foundation) to work together, because as it stands now it's just not working. That's if the intention is to help the resident re–integrate into society in a positive way.
>
> Well...the PreStart class could be improved by getting better staff members. Someone who knows what we are going through and can help us in more ways then just our imprisonment. I would add more staff and bring more people in from the outside to talk to the PreStart program, because they are in our community and they can give us a better insight on what's really going on out there, so we can better prepare ourselves for that situation.

> I also feel the people with the exception of the chaplain where not qualified to speak, because of their lack of experience. I feel to get the message across to inmates you need to have former inmates deliver it. When talking about drugs and their preventions or past usage, the best qualified person would be a former user and not some specialist who has never experienced drugs. The list could continue, but I'll verbally give the rest.
>
> I feel having people who have actually experienced PreStart and succeeded, would be better as an instructor, and could give a much better outlook on the reality of the situation.

One inmate incorporated a number of very insightful comments into his statement:

> There is a wide variety in the quality of the presenters. Perhaps some should be better trained, or given duties elsewhere. A person should be hired to be responsible for PreStart every day on full time basis, after all, the program is ran full time. As it is you are borrowing people from other responsibilities. Please consider making PreStart an integrated program throughout the period of incarceration. Many things are valuable.

Finally, many inmates spoke about the positive impact PreStart had had on their lives:

> I feel that PreStart should be a program that is available throughout the year. PreStart has made a difference in my life and made me more confident and positive.
>
> The programs they offer are to a prisoner's benefit, if used correctly. I've learned a lot which will help me to succeed once I get out. I've been in prison three times. The last two times they didn't have this program. So I went out blindfolded. I thank PreStart for all the help they have given me.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has revealed that the Illinois Department of Corrections has put together a Phase I pre–release program that has been very well received by the vast majority of its consumers. This was as true in 1993 as it was in 1992. PreStart is generally perceived by the surveyed inmates to have provided them with practical and meaningful skills, attitudes and information that will help them make a smoother transition to the community. This was perceived to be the case especially among inmates at particular facilities. Some facilities have not presented PreStart in a way that has resulted in positive perceptions and satisfaction levels among inmates, and the IDOC is encouraged to look at these programs closely. In the judgment of the evaluation team, remedial actions to improve the situation in those facilities are within the resource constraints facing the department, and that more can and should be done systemwide to improve Phase I programming. The evaluation team recommends that the department listen closely to what inmates have to say regarding to the adequacy of PreStart programming and what can be done to enhance such programming.

Chapter 6

IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE II PROGRAMMING

A full understanding of PreStart Phase II programming requires close attention to the immediate context preceding PreStart's implementation. As revealed in Chapter 2, Phase II programming was not part of the original PreStart package. PreStart was originally confined to pre–release programming, and while most responsible officials in the state favored some form of post–release supervision and service delivery for at least some inmates recently released from prison (in fact, this is required by existing state law), it was also clear that state revenue dollars would not be allocated for the provision of these aftercare services. It was only after realizing that federal dollars might be available to fund aftercare services, that Phase II programming emerged as a component of PreStart. This realization coincided with the appointment of a new IDOC director, an individual who was very skeptical of the value provided by existing parole services.

Remember that during the 1980s there had been layoffs of parole staff en masse. A credible parole supervision structure was impossible with the level of resources that had been allocated by the state. In effect, case management (based on an individualized assessment of need and risk), casework, the provision and brokerage of services to parolees, and an active supervision function was nonexistent. Parole agents were, at best, providing a limited tracking function of releasees, attempting to know where each parolee was at least one time each month while the releasee was on mandatory supervised release status.

The new director was not convinced that the existing tracking function bore any discernible relation to vital public safety concerns. While it was apparent that large numbers of releasees were being returned to prison because of technical violations generated by failures to comply with reporting requirements, the director was skeptical that existing parole structures reduced the commission of new crimes by parolees. He also was concerned about the due process and equity issues that emerge when a parolee is accused of committing a new crime (especially a nonserious crime), and whether it would be preferable to let these individuals be processed as are other citizens, rather than being confined on the basis of a warrant issued by the IDOC. Thus, Phase II programming, as it emerged, intended not to recreate the parole supervision practices of the immediate past but to experiment with a novel structure and approach to inmate reintegration into the community (personal interview, Aug. 20, 1992).

Illinois introduced a bifurcated system into its mandatory supervised release program. Radically different from most parole supervision structures, PreStart separated the surveillance and supervision functions of parole from integrative social service provision functions. After mandated specialized institutional preparation for release, the vast majority of releasees would be allowed to voluntarily use community resources brokered through a system of newly developed community service centers. The service centers were designed to be information and resource brokerage facilities, intended to promote the abilities of releasees to develop and implement effective employment, residential living and treatment plans.

The focus of the plan was for PreStart agents (not "parole agents") to provide releasees with assistance on a voluntary basis in community service centers (not parole offices). Aiding the majority of prison releasees (that is, those not identified as community risks) in efforts to succeed in the community was to be done without reliance on traditional elements of parole supervision — coercion, active offender supervision or mandated offender/agent contact. If releasees manifested "dangerous" behaviors, except in the most extreme of cases, law enforcement agencies, not corrections officials, were to respond. This structure is premised on a model of the ex-convict as a volitional actor, who is given the opportunity to make responsible choices — including the option of refusing assistance.

For releasees who presented specific needs, the IDOC planned the implementation of specialized service delivery mechanisms, including: 1) four Community Drug Intervention Programs (CDIPs), which were to provide services and drug testing for releasees posing manifest substance abuse needs; 2) contracted services for specialized interventions with selected sex offenders; and 3) PreStart's Special Intensive Supervision Unit (SISU) to which certain releasees thought to pose enhanced risks to public safety, and those releasees from the Illinois Shock Incarceration programs, were to be assigned. The Intensive Supervision Unit was to be the only component of the PreStart program premised on the traditional surveillance function of parole supervision. The CDIPs included an intensive supervision framework, but the delivery of drug treatment services was the featured program component. The total package of services and programs available for releasees in the community is termed Phase II programming.

It must be emphasized that the array of program components under the Phase II umbrella was initially conceptualized within only a few short months of PreStart's implementation. There is relatively little written documentation available relating to planning processes, descriptions of the overriding program philosophy or program components, staffing patterns, or policies and procedures. For the most part, Phase II programming and implementation was not guided by such documents or the activities normally associated with their production. Rather, Phase II

programming was being designed during implementation, shaped by only a few core ideas, which were not explicitly communicated to or endorsed by key officials in the implementation environment.

Because of this situation, Phase II programming should be considered an ad hoc program, sired by the availability of external funds and a belief that something must be done with inmates recently released from prison. Phase II programming, while appearing consistent with an assistance or advocacy model of parole supervision (or both), and reflecting a marked departure from prior policies and practices in Illinois, should not be viewed as embodying a particular philosophy of parole. Pragmatic concerns dominated the establishment of what has become Phase II programming. A voluntary model of assistance was not endorsed because it was perceived as the desirable or preferred model, or because it was seen as most directly overcoming weaknesses of existing structures, but because it was all that could be practically implemented and attained with available resources. The lack of a clear, philosophical basis to Phase II programming, structures and processes that logically derive from that basis, has had significant implications for the PreStart program to date.

This chapter presents an overview of Phase II program implementation. The focus is on the original design of Phase II programming and its evolution over time. Primary attention is placed on the CSCs and the services being provided there. Case study (observational and interview data) and automated service center data provided by the IDOC are used as a basis for analysis. Also presented is a separate description of special programs for special releasee populations, including the SISU, Sex Offender Treatment programming and the CDIP.

Methodology

During the spring and summer of 1993, evaluation staff visited a judgmental sample of CSCs that were selected to ensure the inclusion of centers from every PreStart zone (there are four in the state). One–day site visits took place at each of the following service centers: Lawndale, Uptown, and Chatham in Cook County; Aurora in northern Illinois (a short visit was also made to the Dixon office); Springfield in central Illinois; and Marion and East St. Louis in southern Illinois. A one-day visit also was made to the Fugitive Apprehension Unit in Chicago, which houses the Cook County SISU program. Opportunities also were taken to visit service center satellite offices (Decatur, Cairo and Metropolis). The evaluation staff witnessed very busy service centers as well as centers that were not as busy. Some centers were visited early in a particular month when releasee traffic was reported to be the highest. Other centers were visited during the middle of a month when they were less busy. When possible, centers were visited on multiple occasions to

assess variation in typical daily functioning (Springfield, Marion, East St. Louis). The results of these visits demonstrated a wide range of activity levels and patterns across service centers and suggest that these efforts have succeeded in generating a view of service centers that encompasses the wide degree of variation occurring statewide.

While at each service center, all available staff were interviewed. Forty individuals were the subjects of half–hour to one–and–a–half hour semistructured interviews. Interviewees included each of the PreStart zone supervisors, 15 PreStart agents, eight CDIP agents, eight SISU agents, two Job Service employees who provide services at the service centers, and two clerical workers intimately familiar with center operations and issues. While on site, evaluation staff also observed interactions between staff and releasees, sat in on intake interviews, answered phones when PreStart agents could not, and occasionally helped out with agent paperwork demands. Importantly, releasees were interviewed in person and on the telephone to assess their reactions to the service centers. These interview results are discussed in the following chapter.

During the course of the present evaluation, the research team had regular contact with the deputy director of the Community Services Division and the PreStart administrator. These officials have provided a wealth of information based on their own observations of PreStart functioning and have complied with numerous requests for program documents and archival data. In addition, staff questionnaire data from PreStart agents (presented in Chapter 3) also inform the following analyses. Overall, the evaluation team feels these efforts resulted in a fairly thorough and complete understanding of Phase II program activities and the issues surrounding them.

The Caseload Issue

The fundamental aspect of Phase II programming that drives almost every issue highlighted in this chapter relates to the extremely high volume of individuals required to be serviced or supervised by a relatively small work force. While correctional philosophies may animate programming, agent role expectations and orientations, and issues relating to organizational structure, service delivery mechanisms, or specific policies and procedures, the brute fact is this: about 80 Community Services Division staff have had the burden of managing a caseload of more than 24,000 releasees for most of PreStart's history is the overwhelming consideration that colors every aspect of program functioning. One would be hard–pressed to find any meaningful indication of success that operates under such a heavy demand and set of constraints.

The level of resources spent on the community–based programs falling under the PreStart umbrella, relative to the number of people eligible for services within the program has been the

primary constraint on Phase II programming. In Fiscal Year 1994, the IDOC has indicated that $3,383,000 was spent on Phase II programming. This includes allocations for salaries of PreStart agents, CDIP agents and the Prestart administrator, the operating costs of the CSCs and the CDIPs, and so on. Excluded are the costs generated by SISU (which as discussed below operates autonomously from PreStart) and the office of the deputy director of the Community Services Division. The majority of the dollars appropriated to Phase II programming have come from federal grants distributed by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority ($1,889,625, or 56 percent of the total). The remainder have come from state general revenue dollars, of which 42 percent are matching funds for the federal grant dollars.[18]

The average daily population under mandatory supervised release in Fiscal Year 1994 was 24,032. Based on the above figures, the average yearly cost of providing community-based services to each Illinois releasee was $140.77. The daily cost figure per releasee was 38 cents per day. This remarkably low figure should be considered in relation to what other states pay and what the IDOC paid for releasee services in the past. As indicated in Chapter 2, Illinois spent 96 cents per day per releasee in 1989. At that time, mandatory supervised release was basically confined to a tracking function. Relative to other states, many of which actually provided casework services, Illinois did not support parole services nearly as well. It thus becomes apparent that Phase II programming in Illinois is operating under tremendous financial constraints, and extensive resources are simply not available to service the needs or to manage the risks presented by the releasee population.

The following figures, reported in Table 6.1, represent the number of releasees under various forms of Phase II programming as of Feb. 16, 1993; Aug. 31, 1993; and July 18, 1994. As demonstrated in these numbers, the Community Services Division of the IDOC has a tremendous challenge in providing Phase II programming, as designed, to its multitude of clients. For example, as of February 1993, 39 parole agents in the SISU were assigned the responsibility of supervising 582 high-risk mandatory supervised releasees assigned to SISU; 185 boot camp releasees; and 1,033 releasees on electronic detention (a total of 1,800 individuals). By August 1993, the numbers had increased to 2,011 releasees to be supervised by SISU agents. The average caseload calculated from these figures was 46:1 in February 1993 and 51:1 in August 1993. These figures are fairly close to the American Correctional Association's recommended caseload size for

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18 The state share of Prestart funding has increased since PreStart was initially implemented. In FY 1992, "... seventy three percent of the personal services allocations are (were) received from grants from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority" (IDOC, 1992:70).

regular parole. By July 1994, the number of SISU field agents had increased to 54 agents (four of these positions were vacant) while the caseload had increased to 1,975 clients.

Table 6.1:
PreStart and SISU Client Totals

	Feb. 16, 1993	Aug. 31, 1993	July 18, 1994
Zone 1	15,157	15,452	17,905
Zone 2	3,480	3,416	2,936
Zone 3	2,240	2,326	2,470
Zone 4	1,724	1,627	1,706
SISU	582	793	569
Cook County Jail	50	24	0
Total ED	1,033	900	1,082
Boot Camp Releasees	185	318	324
Other Custody	331	293	275
Total	24,782	25,149	27,267

Even with this expansion in the number of agents and only modest increase in number of clients, the average caseload size is almost 40. Given the strict reporting supervision requirements for many of the releasees on SISU and the uneven caseloads of agents across the state (as of April 11, 1993, one Cook County North agent had a caseload of 81, and another had a caseload of 82) it does not seem likely that SISU agents have the time to supervise all of their clients closely.

Theoretically, the burden is even heavier for the 40 or so CSC agents (PreStart agents) who have the task of providing assistance to releasees for the bulk of time since PreStart was implemented. As noted earlier, during Fiscal Year 1994, the average daily population of mandatory supervised releasees was 24,032. By July 1994, that number had increased to more than 25,000. During this same period, the number of PreStart agents had increased to 65. This increase in the number of agents is an indication that the IDOC is now beginning to provide PreStart with some of

the human resources it requires. Twelve new positions had been added in the past six to seven months, most of them in the Chicago area where Phase II demands were the greatest. Nonetheless, if there was an even distribution of agents across the state and only 10 percent of the releasees sought the help of an agent, that would translate into an average agent workload of 38 releasees.[19] This alone would constitute a considerable workload effort (especially if agents attempted to help address the multiplicity of needs most releasees exhibit). However, because PreStart functions have expanded considerably since PreStart was first introduced (as is detailed below), the burden on PreStart agents is much more considerable.

Community Service Centers

The "Transformation" of PreStart

As originally designed, the Phase II component of PreStart was to use CSCs to assist releasees in achieving personal goals developed in their individual development plans (IDPs). Under the original PreStart design, the intent was to make almost all releasee contact with CSCs voluntary. The original administrative directive specifying releasee contact requirements with service centers (04.15.105A–C, dated July 1, 1991) stated that: "Inmates shall be required to contact a Community Services Zone Headquarters upon release" (p. 1). No further specific requirements for reporting were present other than the statement that during the initial reporting session, IDOC staff shall "advise the releasee of further reporting requirements" (p. 2). As indicated in previous reports, the original intent was not to have releasees report to CSCs on a mandated basis. A parole agent described what happened during early Phase II implementation:

> When Prestart was initially implemented, there was no information available to the agents or the releasees concerning what was expected of either. What was perhaps worse was that once information came out it was soon followed by conflicting information. When first implemented, those released to PreStart were told they did not have to make contact with any parole agents. The idea was that all services would be voluntary, and that there would be no supervision component. It wasn't until 3 or 4 weeks into the program, at the end of July 1991, that a directive came from the Deputy Director saying that releasees did indeed have to check in upon release. There was no sure way to contact those that had been

19 The concept of an agent caseload is not particularly relevant to PreStart because releasees are assigned to a PreStart zone and not to a specific agent, and because under the original design, all contact was voluntary. Subsequently, as discussed below, releasees within their first six months of release were required to report to a Service Center. Approximately one–third of all releasees have been in the community six months or less. If one were to calculate an average caseload, this one–third figure should be included in the calculations. Thus, for July 1994, the average caseload per agent would be roughly 128 (25,017/3 = 8339; 8339/65 = 128).

released with no orders for contact. Though some have been contacted, some (20 percent or so) have not been found. This was a statewide problem.

Why the apparent sudden turnaround in requiring releasees to report? A number of interviews suggested the source of the new policy was a statement made by the governor to a news reporter. In response to the reporter's statement that parolees were no longer to be supervised given budget cuts, parole layoffs and the new PreStart program, the governor said that this understanding was mistaken. He said that parolees still had to report every month for the first six months of their release.

Shortly thereafter, the IDOC director affirmed that the governor's comments were correct, although they were inconsistent with the design of PreStart. In response, the deputy director sent out a memorandum that would become the working policy of the department and which would have a major impact on the operations of the service centers. That policy, which eventually was introduced into an administrative directive dated June 1, 1992, is consistent with the statement made by the governor. Thus, releasee tracking and accountability — even in a relatively token dosage — was reintroduced into the "assistance component" of the PreStart program. It should be highlighted that while the reintroduction of a tracking function within the mandatory supervised release framework is inconsistent with the philosophy of PreStart articulated during its developmental stage, the ease of its reintroduction illustrates the lack of a firm organizational commitment to an assistance model of community supervision.

The confusion over reporting requirements continued to linger, however, and was readily apparent during the evaluation team's observations of PreStart classes and interviews with inmates during the summers of 1992 and 1993. Very different expectations were being communicated within and across facilities. The confusion over reporting requirements was also illustrated by PreStart agents' questions raised in a statewide meeting of agents held in March 1993. Even at that point, administrative policy was unclear to many agents and there appeared to be variation in de facto reporting requirements across PreStart zones in the state.

Administrative policy, in effect, states that after initial contact has been made, releasees are required to make at least one monthly contact with their service center agent (either in person or by phone) for six months, or longer, if determined necessary. This is done, theoretically, so that the releasee can inform the service center agent of progress regarding the IDP, and request services that help achieve goals listed in the IDP.

The stated primary function of service center agents is to broker services by informing releasees of the services available to them in their local communities. Some of these services are the

result of formal interfaces with community–based social service agencies (for example, Job Training Partnership Act, Illinois Job Service, and the Illinois Department of Public Aid). The assistance of numerous other formal and informal social service agencies also are to be brokered to meet the critical needs of releasees (for example, food, clothing and financial assistance programs; educational programs; counseling programs, and so on.).

Evaluation team visits to CSCs indicated that while resource brokerage and releasee assistance is being provided to some degree (especially in low volume centers), the vast bulk of parole officers' time is being devoted to the tracking function.

The fact that all releasees not assigned to other supervision programs (that is, SISU) are now required to report to service centers has radically transformed the PreStart program. PreStart can no longer be said to be based on a pure "assistance" or "advocacy" model. PreStart agent behavior and activity is overwhelmingly constrained by the need to manage the reporting requirement that was not part of the original program design. A staff of 65 PreStart agents in the state, distributed in the current manner, may have had the potential to provide meaningful services to a voluntary population of clients. However, given the current reporting demands, the number of PreStart agents, and how they are distributed across the state (averaging two agents at each of the 19 CSCs), it is nearly impossible to provide meaningful services to releasees — especially in Cook County, where about 18,000 releasees on mandatory supervised release reside and are required to report monthly. Little should be expected in this situation. Until more staff are hired, the belief that most of the CSCs can provide a meaningful service delivery mechanism is quixotic. This is especially true in light of the record keeping and residence verification functions that have been added to the duties of the service center agents.

A reasonable expectation is that most agents are serving a strictly clerical function, responding in the shortest period possible to the phone calls of releasees and releasee walk–ins who are making their required contact. To a significant degree this is the case, especially in Cook County. When monthly contact is made between a releasee and an agent, the focus of the interaction tends to be the documentation of the contact and the releasee's address. For the most part, counseling and resource brokerage activities on the part of the agent are not routine aspects of the interaction. However, a number of adaptations have been made by some PreStart agents to this situation, particularly by agents in some PreStart zones, which do result in rather meaningful services sometimes being delivered.

While worthwhile services are at times provided, there are costs as well. These costs include a significant variability in the way PreStart is experienced by releasees. This variability is not determined or constrained by law, policy or releasee behaviors. It is determined by where the

releasee lives, the first letter of his or her last name, what agent she or he happens to see during the first reporting contact, and so on. While parole supervision has long been criticized as promoting arbitrary and capricious decision making, in most instances this was an inherent result of one human being having been given lawful supervisory power over another. In the present instance, however, this was "not part of the plan." The idiosyncratic behavior of PreStart agents in this case is not constrained by meaningful administrative directives or supervision, a particular or coherent correctional philosophy of community supervision, or law. These issues will be discussed more fully later, but it is important to emphasize that the "transformation" of PreStart apparently has not been accompanied by a meaningful reassessment of correctional philosophy, program design, or intervention strategies.

Agent/Releasee Interaction Patterns

Under current administrative directives, newly released inmates are required to make an in-person initial contact with their service center agent within 72 hours of release to go over their IDP and to resolve general issues. Research team observations and staff questionnaire and interview data suggest that while the vast majority of releasees make the initial contact[20], contact does not systematically entail discussion of the IDP and release plans. It appeared to be atypical for a parole agent to have the releasee's IDP available at the initial intake. Significant information on the releasee was lacking, and in many instances, agents neither had the time nor the inclination to conduct a meaningful intake proceeding. In most instances, the intake would take a few minutes and be devoted to providing the releasee with basic information on his or her conditions of mandatory supervised release.

This pattern varied across service centers significantly, with intakes at some centers being much more assistance–oriented than at other centers. Variation within centers also was quite pronounced: At one center visited, one PreStart agent would take almost an hour to conduct an intake interview and provide the releasee a wealth of information on available community resources. At the same time, the other PreStart agent would be maintaining the office single-handedly — manning the phones, directing traffic and conducting very brief intakes with new releasees. The role orientations of these individuals differed markedly, with one agent taking on a

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20 The IDOC has reported that about 90 percent of new releasees make an initial contact at a Service Center (Illinois Department of Corrections, 1992: 71, *Human Services Plan, Fiscal Years 1991–1993*). There is little apparent attempt to identify those who do not make this initial contact and to take relevant remedial action.

therapeutic role and the other taking on a bureaucratic role. Differing role adaptations being taken on by PreStart agents in response to PreStart's implementation are not surprising. What is surprising has been the tolerance of such diversity within the same office, and how the personal experience of a releasee when she or he walks into the community service center for the first time can vary so dramatically based on whom the individual has contact with. A matter of seconds within the same office can determine whether the experience is likely to be perceived as helpful or unhelpful, positive or negative, alienating or liberating.

Variation in the Phase II experience is not only based on the role orientations of individual agents but on the region of the state in which a releasee resides. Evaluation staff witnessed very differing community supervision structures in place in various regions of the state. The high volume service centers in Cook County, and even in Aurora, resulted in the agents primarily taking on a clerical role. However, the low–volume centers witnessed much more variation in parole agent behavior because the time constraints were not nearly as great. Agents simply had more time to do different tasks — especially the types of tasks they had been accustomed to under the earlier parole structure. This allows agents in low–volume centers to engage in a variety of functions, some of which may or may not be consistent with the goals of PreStart.

At one service center, the evaluation team discovered that an agent had an informal caseload of 35 to 36 sex offenders who had not been placed on Special Intensive Supervision. The agent had flexibility to decide how often releasees report, whether they phone or come in monthly, twice a month, or once a week. During observations of initial reporting by releasees to an agent in another center, it was discovered that the agent reviewed the releasees' situation and assigned the releasees to a reporting schedule based on the former parole case classification system. In yet another center, a releasee reported to "his agent" and appeared to be under the influence of either alcohol or drugs. The PreStart agent required the releasee to submit to a urinalysis and suggested that if the sample came up "dirty" (that is, showing alcohol or drugs), he would consider pushing for a revocation. This on–the–spot monitoring did not occur in a CDIP, where such monitoring would be consistent with program expectations. Rather, it occurred in a service center, where services were supposed to have been offered to releasees on a voluntary basis.

These observations suggest that some agents have not abandoned their former supervision practices and are requiring conditions that may exceed what is authorized in administrative directives. Nevertheless, some zone supervisors appear supportive of these activities. As one officer stated, "We're not actually supposed to be doing supervision in Phase II, but we do…" Likewise, one supervisor indicated that she or he does not like to refer high–risk cases to SISU because they can and will be supervised more closely by PreStart agents than by SISU agents.

These informal policies should be reconsidered for two basic reasons. First, these practices raise the issue of a lack of equity and due process in mandatory supervised release structures and processes. Second, if allowed to continue, the deviations from administrative directives will be institutionalized and will result in very different parole systems throughout the state. High–volume centers may become "tracking" systems, while low–volume centers may become assistance/surveillance systems. In either case, the original intent of PreStart is lost, and the nature of the loss will vary across parts of the state.

The IDOC has engaged in many relatively minor efforts to deal with these issues since they were first highlighted in the second interim report of this evaluation. These include the hiring of more PreStart agents in the state, with the bulk of those agents being assigned to high–volume service centers in Cook County. In addition, three additional parole agent III positions (those agents who present Phase I modules) have been created in Zone 1 to relieve existing parole agent IIIs in Chicago of their Phase I assignments. Thus, more time can be spent by these individuals with clients in Phase II activities. The Phase I workload of these agents was transferred to the lower volume Zone 2 service centers to accomplish this reallocation of workload.

IDOC officials also have attempted to better communicate with PreStart agents the roles and authority that they should employ with releasees. For instance, PreStart agents are not authorized to visit releasees at their homes. This was done occasionally in the past, and in a manner more consistent with the surveillance than the service delivery function of community supervision. Agents who have contact with releasees perceived as requiring supervision are encouraged to refer those releasees to SISU, rather than to supervise them directly.

PreStart agents are now explicitly designated as service agents in official and unofficial communications. As mentioned in Chapter 3, training of Phase II agents now includes a focus on counseling/communications skills, conflict resolution issues and paradigm building — all of which are consistent with an assistance model of community supervision. Nonetheless, it is recognized by Central Office staff that some agents still require some releasees, perceived as community risks, to report to CSCs on an intermittent basis. Thus, while official actions have tended to emphasize the service role of agents, supervision functions are nonetheless still being tolerated.

Related Organizational and Implementation Issues

Organizational Structure

Other major issues emerged repeatedly during Phase II observations and staff interviews. One relates to certain confusions deriving from the organizational structure within the Community Services Division. Many respondents stated that there have been numerous changes in the line hierarchy within Community Services and that confusion has existed over the official table of organization. The administrative structure was perceived as "being overly loose and informal" and a number of staff urged some resolution to this problem. As an example, in the Community Services Division hierarchy when PreStart was first implemented, there was a superintendent of parole who was charged with supervising Phase II functions. The newly created PreStart administrator position had responsibilities extending to Phase II functions but was primarily focused on overseeing Phase I programming. The incumbent superintendent of parole was not philosophically aligned with the PreStart program and was fairly resistant to the entire program. That person shortly retired, but that position was never refilled. Carry–over agents, many of whom were loyal to the superintendent of parole and shared his concerns about PreStart, did not sense that anyone left in Central Office was their immediate supervisor, although the PreStart administrator began to take over the functions of the prior superintendent of parole. This situation existed for most of the last three years. In March 1994, the PreStart administrator's position was upgraded to that of PreStart superintendent. This better reflects this person's actual job responsibilities and is consistent with titles that existed under the earlier parole system (and other current units within the Community Services Division). This should reduce some of the problems identified above, but took an unnecessarily long time in coming.

The organizational structure within the Community Services Division also may have inadvertently promoted a lack of integration between PreStart and the SISU. Ideally, these programs should be working in a complementary manner with one another. Currently, SISU is separate in both program and administration from PreStart, even though in the original design, SISU was identified as being a key component of PreStart. Electronic detention (ED) agents (who are called such although they are the field agents who supervise all clients in SISU, even those who are not on electronic monitors) report directly to regional ED supervisors who report to the SISU program administrator. There is no formal link between PreStart and SISU. Temporarily and on a trial basis, ED supervisors were placed under PreStart zone supervisors in the fall of 1992.

The trial period ended without a permanent change being made. Today, SISU is a separate entity functioning within the Community Services Division.

These current reporting lines separating PreStart and SISU are problematic. Staff interviews revealed notable conflicts between PreStart agents and SISU agents. A number of ED agents said they do not identify with PreStart, and that in effect, they are not part of PreStart. One agent even suggested that she or he was a "real" parole officer, and that PreStart staff are not: "PreStart staff just answer phones all day."

A number of CSC–based agents resented that ED agents, at one point, were able to generate much overtime pay and still have limited access to overtime pay, while PreStart agents do not. For example, one staff person stated the following:

> There are 39 SISU people in the state, some of whom were parole agents. These people were making exorbitant amounts of overtime, making $50,000 a year. ED people were making that much with a regular parole agent making much less money sitting right next to them, doing more work. The ED people got our cars, and because they're handling "prisoners" they get the training and equipment.

Another agent's suspicion of ED programming was reflected in the following statement:

> The Deputy Director's thrust now is ED. Illinois is trying to get the legislature to let us use it to a bigger extent so we really have to watch and make sure nothing happens.

Thus, many PreStart staff see SISU as a greater department priority, receiving preferential treatment to PreStart. One respondent who was very complimentary of the deputy director of the Community Services Division suggested, "If the deputy director has done anything wrong, it is that she has segregated SISU agents from PreStart agents. People should be working across all phases and components."

Given existing staffing constraints, agents must be flexible not only in skills but also in correctional philosophy. They need to support each other and link the services they provide. These emerging segregated role identities, and the potential development of intradivisional rivalries, should be the focus of change efforts within the Community Services Division.

Unclear Administrative Policies

As indicated earlier, Phase II programming was implemented with a paucity of written administrative directives and policies to guide agent behavior. This situation translated into unnecessary uncertainties regarding vital policy issues. For instance, under the original design, releasees were encouraged to voluntarily use service centers. The reward would be a

recommendation to the Prisoner Review Board for early release from mandatory supervision for releasees who used available services and had lived up to their IDP. Despite the centrality of this recommendation to the success of Phase II programming, the timing of when PreStart agents would make these recommendations to the Prisoner Review Board varied across the state for most of the last three years. The original policy, which was endorsed by the Prisoner Review Board, was that if a releasee lived up to his or her IDP and stayed crime free for six months, that person would be recommended for early discharge. At the facilities visited during observation of Phase I programming, inmate and staff confusion about this policy was found — some staff told inmates this was the case, others said it was not. Similar confusion existed in Phase II programming, as different policies were employed in different PreStart zones.

Unclear policies about basic issues such as reporting and early release requirements, remaining more than two years after PreStart's implementation, were certainly problematic. While it is understood that the Community Services Division Central Office staff devoted most of its limited resources to Phase I programming out of necessity during the first year of implementation, and only began to focus on Phase II programming efforts during the second year of program implementation, the consequences have become very real. Significantly, PreStart agent morale has been negatively affected by the entire array of implementation problems that have been discussed above.

The "Morale" Problem

The following statements illustrate some of those consequences for the morale of Phase II PreStart agents:

> The problems with PreStart, implementation or otherwise, are addressed too slowly.
>
> It wasn't until February of 1992 that there was a committee appointed by the Deputy Director to address PreStart problems. This seems to have been the first time the problem of staff morale was actually raised as an implementation obstacle. While nothing formal was done about morale it served the purpose of opening up the communication and allowing for administrative understanding of low morale. By this point, also, people had begun to adjust.
>
> Staff morale, though improved, is still reflective of the feeling that PreStart Phase II is a second–class–citizen to the Phase I component in terms of resources, funding and organization.

The pace of PreStart's implementation required by the political and funding realities in the state, coupled with the extreme personal dislocations commonly suffered by Phase II staff, has resulted in a general inability of many staff to identify and internalize the changes associated with

PreStart as being positive, desirable or potentially effective. As was revealed in Chapter 2, standardized measures of staff job satisfaction indicated that Phase II agents clearly reacted to PreStart in a much more negative manner than did institutional staff. PreStart agents also witnessed much lower levels of "ownership" over the change and displayed a generally weaker sense that their efforts resulted in positive impacts among their clients than did institutional staff. The result was, on average, more negative attitudes toward PreStart among PreStart agents than among those who work within correctional institutions.

Interviews with PreStart agents in the community reaffirmed these basic findings in the strongest of terms. Most PreStart agents reported being thoroughly demoralized, exhibited high levels of role strain and ambiguity, felt low levels of job security, and displayed inadequate understandings and/or hostile attitudes toward Phase II program philosophies and structures. Some illustrative statements of how PreStart agents perceive the environment in which they work follow:

> We have two agents at an office. The problem is if people are on vacation, or sick, it leaves only 1 agent. All that person can do is answer the phone and the mail. They can't get out to the service vendors, they can't check on clients, see if their needs are being met. Budget constraints are unbelievable.

> What we have now is "stop gap." Until we get adequate staff, which we don't have here or throughout ... we can't do much. There's too much to do, even in terms of basic assistance and paperwork/tracking.

As a result, a substantial minority of staff interviewed seemed professionally and personally ill-equipped to be a PreStart agent. As one longtime parole agent explained:

> It would have helped if the implementation had been done more slowly, if they had "sold" the idea a bit. It's not that Phase II staff are against PreStart, it's just that we know the importance of supervision first hand. We have experience and know there are dangerous people out here who need to be watched, and also there are those who simply need services and help.

Another agent also elaborated on the nature of the change process and what she or he sees as the desired sequence of change:

> What we've been doing in the last two years is changing values, roles, and culture, on changing "program concepts." That is all that can be realistically expected. Putting strong parameters and regulations into place would have been ineffective and negative.

The changing of organizational values is a necessary precondition for the meaningful delivery of PreStart services. Though some fluidity is desirable during the implementation process, it is also necessary to develop an internally consistent philosophy as a foundation for these changing organizational values. Further, it is necessary to show a commitment to the philosophy in terms of displacing and/or minimizing intrusions which undermine the philosophy (that is, the reporting

requirement), as well as providing staff with the basic opportunities and resources to affect the desired changes. These prerequisites for effective program implementation have been lacking for most of the last three years, and while recently, the IDOC is doing more to address the manifold issues discussed above, these efforts have been tardy and inadequate.

This quote from a very thoughtful and articulate agent synthesizes Phase II implementation issues quite well:

> Much of the negativity surrounding the program stems from the less than perfect implementation of the program, the negative situation surrounding the implementation (layoffs, disruptions of the personnel, the characterization of the Parole system as a "failure," the blame laying that Parole was filling the prisons with violators — this was especially galling to staff who were ordered by a previous Director to violate anyone who failed to report each month regardless of other factors), the continual and chronic staffing problems, the diversion of resources to the Electronic Monitoring program etc., etc. Thus, the atmosphere coupled with the design problems of the program all served to make the start up less than perfect... I believe it is remarkable that the program has worked as well as it has, which is a testimony to the dedication and professionalism of the staff.

The PreStart evaluation staff agree fully with this agent's statement.

Measuring Service Center Agent Activity

In the second interim report, a full analysis of community service center activity data from the period between December 1991 and June 1993 was conducted. It was felt that little additional information would be gleaned by extending this analysis, so in this report the major findings from that earlier report are summarized.

Difficulty arose in using available data sources to assess the degree to which CSC staff are fulfilling their assistance function because record keeping practices, until recently, have been uneven and inconsistent. For example, in addition to the confusion over reporting requirements during the initial stages of Phase II programming, PreStart agents received no information concerning how to keep records of contacts with releasees. One respondent identified the nature of the situation and subsequent attempts to resolve the problem:

> Some agents tried to continue keeping records according to the old forms, but with the increased volume that was impossible. Other agents didn't keep records at all. It was near the end of September, 1991 that CSCs were asked for their data on the number of contacts, referrals, and follow ups. It was needed for ICJIA to generate statistics. It was then that the problem of having no official uniform way to keep records was noticed. It was not until April of 1992 (9 months later) that an official record keeping form was implemented. Within a few months of that, records became pretty good statewide (with the exception of Chicago, where the volume makes accurate recording nearly impossible). In 1993 the forms for record keeping were automated.

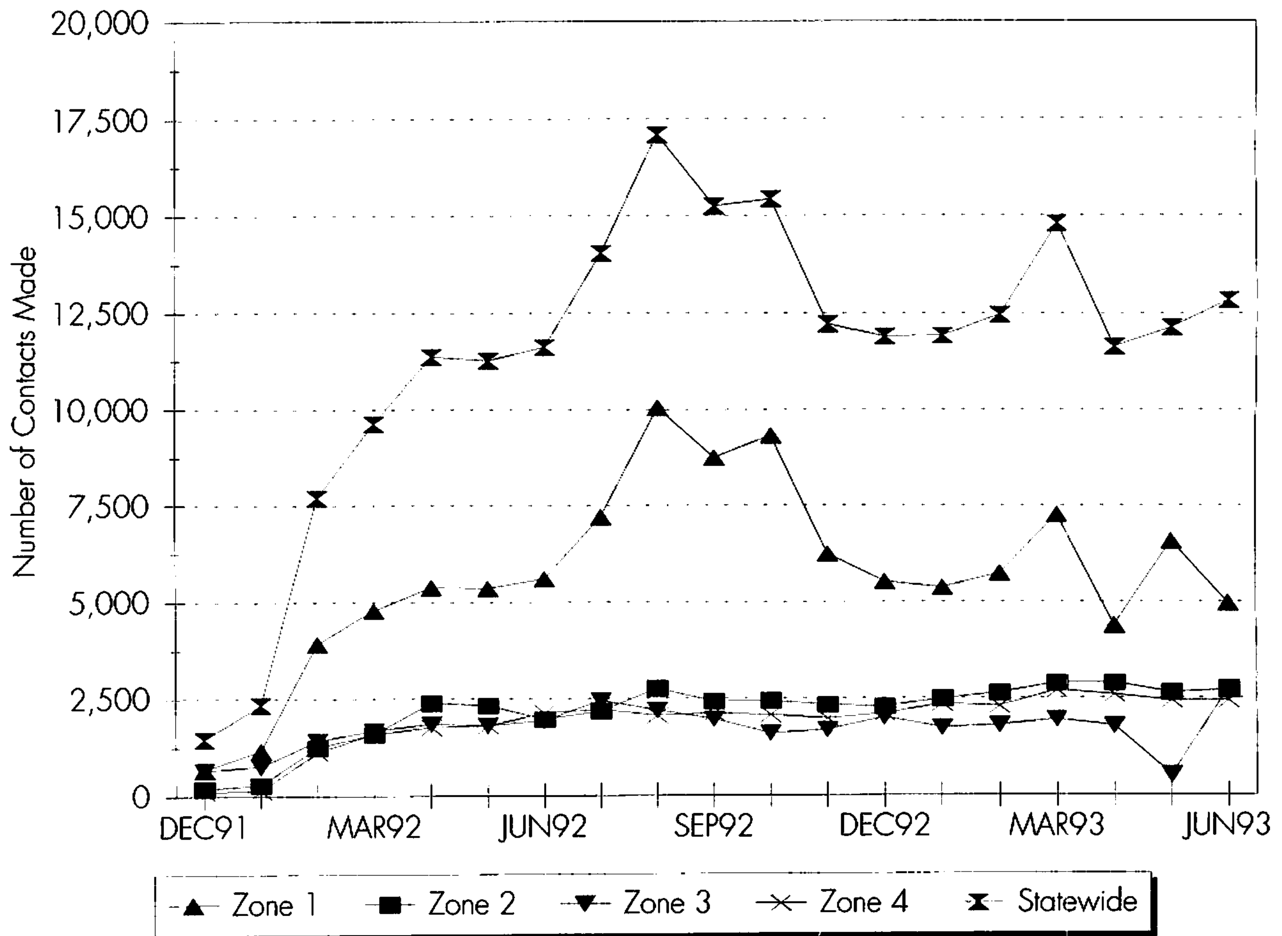
Keeping the implications of these measurement problems in mind, the following is a descriptive overview of service center activities for the months in which consistent (but not necessarily valid) data were available to the PreStart evaluation team. Data concerning the service center agent activities with regard to releasees' contacts, referrals, and delivered services are presented. Information is presented for the state as a whole, as well as for the four geographic zones in which the service centers are found. Zone 1 consists of all of Cook County. Zone 2 consists of the northern one–third of the state, excluding Cook County. Zone 3 consists of the middle one–third of the state and Zone 4 is comprised of the southern one–third of the state.

From December 1991 to June 1993, the statewide monthly counts for in–person and phone contacts (including routine as well as service request contacts) ranged from a low of 1,453 contacts (December 1991) to a high of 17,069 contacts (August 1992; see Figure 6.1). The wide fluctuations shown in the totals for the entire state were driven primarily by the fluctuations in the totals for Zone 1 (Cook County). The frequencies of total contacts made in the other three zones were much lower and more consistent across time.

Total in–person and phone contacts in Zone 1 ranged from a low of 678 contacts in December 1991 to a high of 10,051 contacts in August 1992. Zones 2–4 had fairly identical frequencies of total in–person and phone contacts which ranged from a low of 115 (Zone 4, December 1991) to a high of 2,882 requests (Zone 2, April 1993). It is likely that the low levels of total contacts which occurred in December, 1991 (the first month of automated data) are an artifact of changes in data collection procedures.

The frequencies presented in Figure 6.1 represent two types of in–person and phone contacts: routine (meaning the contact was required for supervision purposes) and service requests (meaning the contact was initiated by the releasee). The majority of these total contacts were of the routine type, but the proportions did fluctuate by zone. The proportion of statewide contacts that were for routine purposes ranged from 62 percent to 74 percent over the 15 months between April 1992 and June 1993, with the average proportion of routine contacts accounting for 69 percent of the total (routine contacts data were missing for December 1991 to March 1992).

The average proportion of total in–person and phone contacts that were routine in Zone 1 was higher (72 percent) than the statewide average. Zone 2 had the highest proportion (77 percent) of routine contacts in the state, ranging from 69 to 88 percent. Zones 3 and 4 had the lowest and the widest ranges of monthly routine contacts proportions, ranging from 15 percent to 71 percent and 47 percent to 73 percent, respectively. The 15–month averages for the monthly proportions in Zones 3 and 4 fell below the statewide average, at 55 percent and 60 percent, respectively.



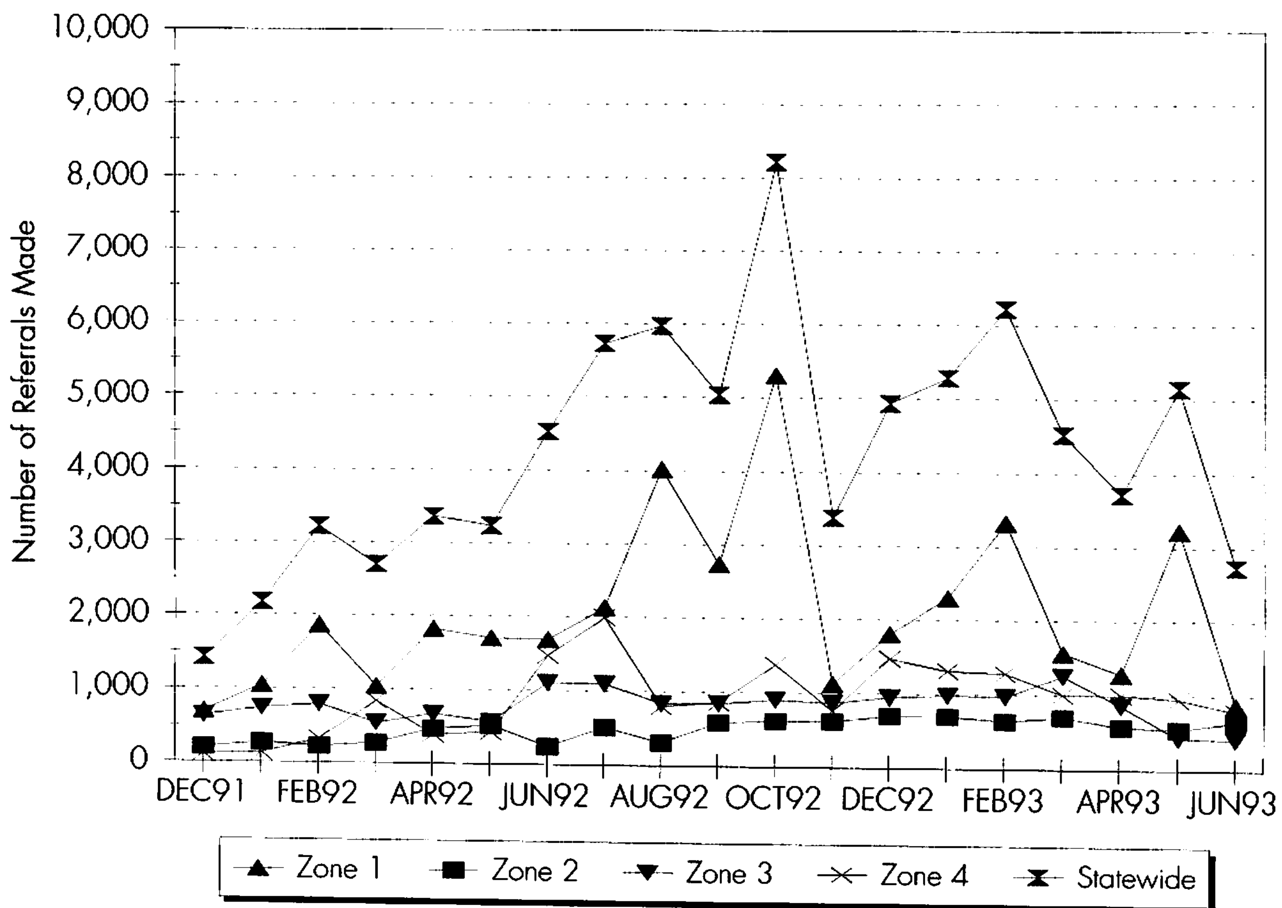
The data just described (that is, routine as a percentage of total in–person and phone contacts by zone) are not presented in a figure. However, this comparison is represented graphically for the statewide totals in a later figure (see Figure 6.5) that illustrates all of the statewide data in one frequency line graph. In general, the majority of contacts with releasees were for routine purposes, with the northern part of the state falling above the statewide average of 69 percent routine contacts, and the central and southern regions of the state falling below the statewide average. These data are consistent with observations made by research staff during site visits.

Next, monthly totals for the number of referrals made for releasee services were examined statewide, as well as for each zone (see Figure 6.2). Statewide monthly totals for referrals made ranged from a low of 1,423 in December 1991 to a high of 8,209 in October 1992.

Once again, the statewide totals appear to be driven by the higher but more erratic totals of Zone 1 (Cook County). Total referrals for Zone 1 ranged from a low of 689 referrals in December 1991 to a high of 5,309 referrals in October 1992 while totals for Zones 2 to 4 remained fairly low and consistent across time and fell within the range of 106 to 1,993 referrals.

It is likely that much of the fluctuation in the data is due to changes in the operational definitions of "referrals made" and how separate zone offices interpreted those definitions. The high absolute values for the number of referrals made may also reflect "number games" that were being played by some agents (that is, the more referrals you make, the better you are doing).

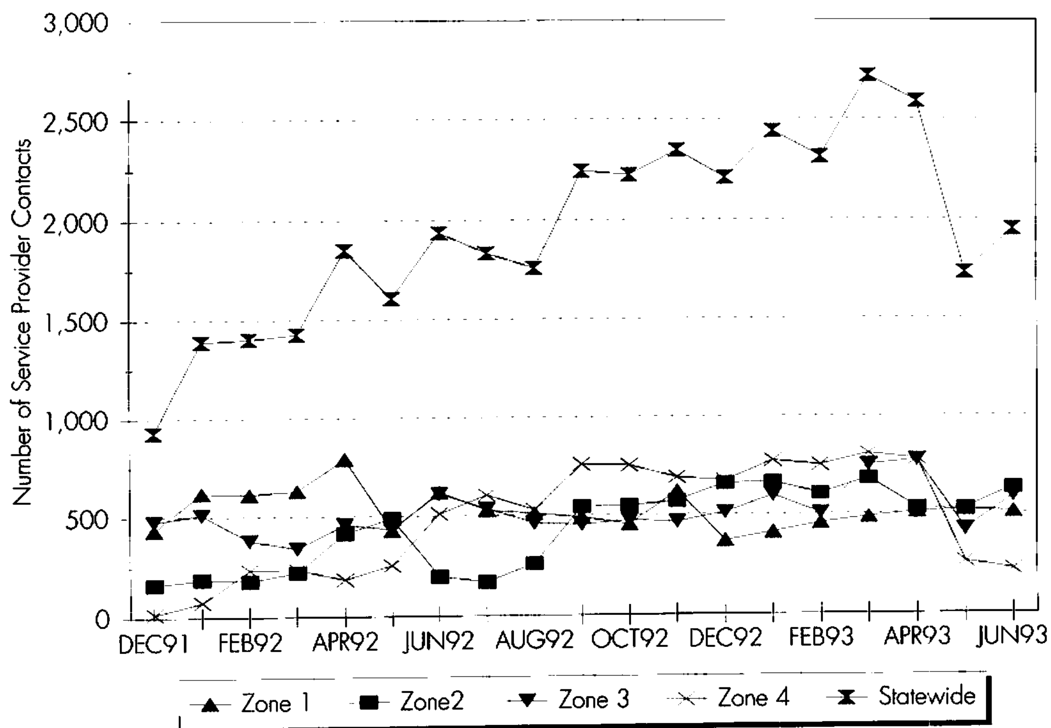
Figure 6.2
Total Referrals



Thus, some agents may have viewed it as desirable to keep the numbers up regardless of whether meaningful referrals were actually being made.

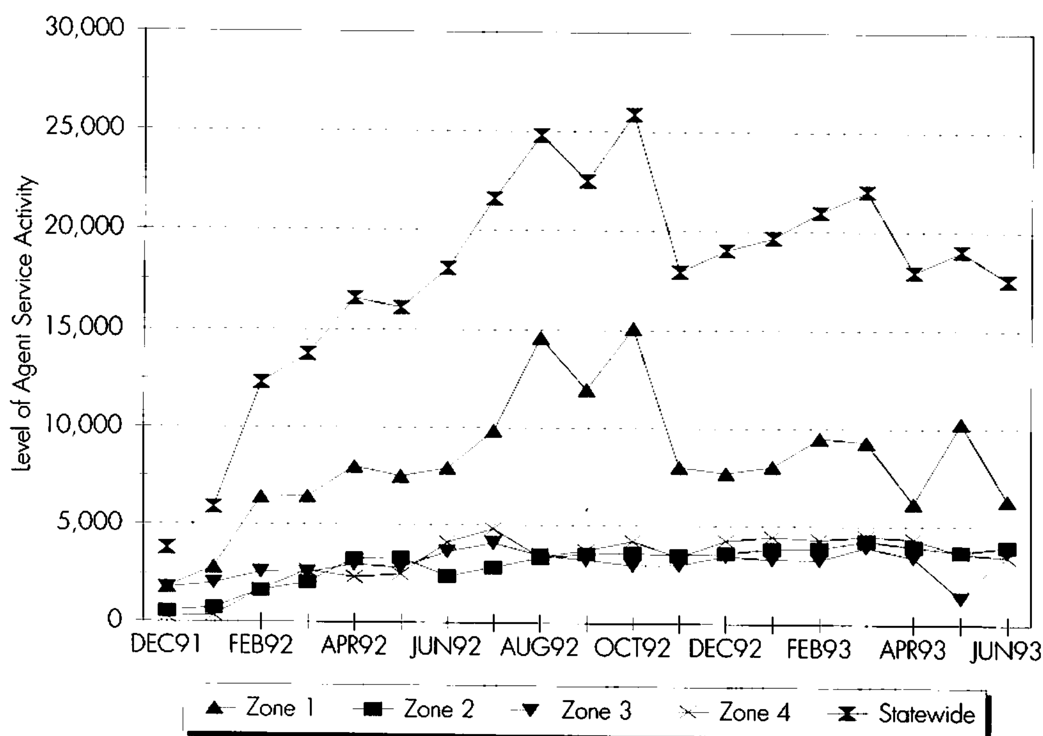
Ideally, once a referral is made to a service provider, contact between the service provider and releasee would be made. However, this is not always the case. The frequency line graph for total service provider contacts shows that there were considerably fewer provider contacts than the total referrals made by the service center agents (see Figure 6.3). Further, it should be noted that while Zone 1 (Cook County) had consistently reported greater numbers of total person and phone contacts, as well as subsequent referrals made, all four zones were surprisingly equivalent in their totals of actual provider contacts.

Figure 6.3
Total Service Provider Contacts



As illustrated in Figure 6.3, monthly total provider contacts for Zones 1–4 ranged between 15 contacts (Zone 4, December 1991) and 806 contacts (Zone 1, March 1993). Statewide monthly total provider contacts ranged from a low of 927 contacts (December 1991) to a high of 2,719 contacts (March 1993). This range differs considerably from the statewide range for referrals of 1,423–8,209. It is unclear whether this dramatic decrease in total service provider contacts occurred as a result of releasees not following through on their part in making a contact, whether the service providers simply received more referrals than they could handle, or whether record keeping practices tend to break down in this latter stage of agent/releasee contact.

Figure 6.4
Total Agent Service Activity



The frequency line graph for total agent service activity (see Figure 6.4) is a summation of the totals from each of the three types of activities just discussed (that is, total person and phone contacts, referrals and service provider contacts). Once again the statewide totals are driven by the totals for Zone 1 (Cook County). Statewide total agent service activity ranged from a low of 3,803 in December 1991 to a high of 25,860 activities in October 1992. The total agent service activity for Zone 1 ranged from a low of 1,801 activities in December 1991 to a high of 15,078 activities in October 1992.

The total agent service activity monthly totals for Zones 2–4 remained fairly low and consistent across time (compared with Zone 1), with a range of 236 to 4,813 activities. Once again, it would be interesting to know why the data reported for Zones 2–4 appear to be rather consistent across time, while the data reported for Zone 1 fluctuates so dramatically. It has been suggested that the erratic nature of Zone 1 activity figures is due to whether the external contractor that services routine phone contacts with the CSCs is able to file current monthly figures into IDOC's recordkeeping system on a timely basis.

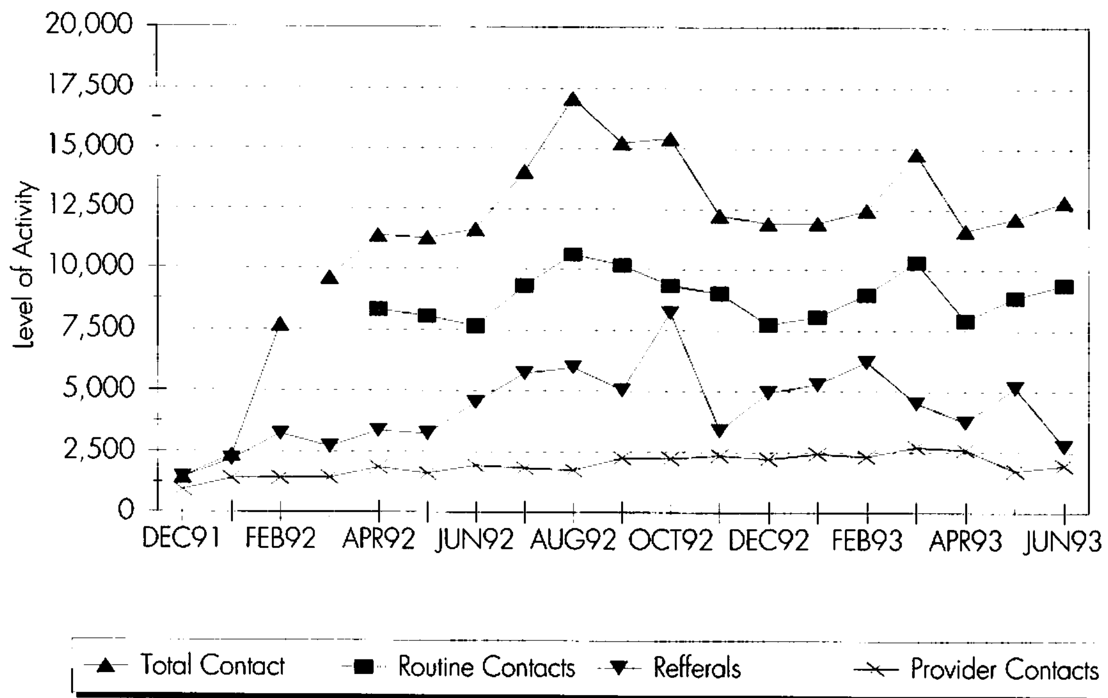
A final method used to examine the CSC activities over the 19–month period combined all four specific types of service center activities (that is, total person and phone contacts, routine contacts, referrals, and service provider contacts) into one frequency line graph (see Figure 6.5). As can be seen in the figure, statewide total in–person and phone contacts fluctuated considerably across the 19 months.

As was mentioned earlier in the discussion regarding total in–person and phone contacts, a larger proportion of total contacts were of the routine type, as opposed to releasee service requests. This fact becomes even more evident in Figure 6.5, which illustrates how the frequency line for routine contacts (data missing for December 1991 to March 1992) follows the trend of total contacts, only at a lower frequency level (roughly at the 70th percentile of the total contacts).

As is evident in the graph, only about one–fourth to one–half of total person and phone contacts resulted in referrals for services. The final frequency line presented in Figure 6.5 indicates the proportion of referrals that actually result in service provider contacts. It is apparent that the number of service provider contacts remained consistent. Thus, it appears that the number of service provider contacts remains within the confines of 1,500 to 2,500 contacts, regardless of the number of referrals being made. This is about one–seventh the level of average monthly total agent/releasee contacts.

The preceding data appear indicative of the general volume of service center activity within the state and how much of that activity is driven by routine and mandated agent/releasee contacts that do not commonly result in service delivery for the bulk of releasees. This is especially true in Zone 1, where the volume of contacts renders it quite difficult to provide meaningful service delivery. Perhaps even more clearly, these data illustrate the necessity of consistent record keeping practices across all community service centers. Accurate assessment of PreStart Phase II program activity levels requires that reliable data be collected as a routine component of the IDOC information systems. Beyond the routine collection of reliable data on service center activity, it would also be desirable for the IDOC to identify when types of contacts and referrals resulted in service provider contacts. The vast bulk of person and phone contacts are not solicitations for service. Rather, they represent routine contacts between parole agents and releasees which are required of the releasee and should be distinguished from assistance–based activity.

Figure 6.5: Statewide Community Service Center Activities



As data are currently collected, they are too incomplete to reliably determine what proportions of referrals and service provider contacts are routine and which resulted from releasees' service requests.

Based on observations made at the service centers, improved data systems would require better staff access to computers. As a CSC staff person noted:

> While all records are supposed to be kept on OTS, there are only 2 terminals available at the CSC with one of those being limited to word processing and only certain sign–ons to the OTS system working from it ... it took 5 months from the start of PreStart to have a single terminal available, it was only after they actually called Springfield that they received one. At one Service Center there is only 1 terminal and it is shared with both work release and ED.

This was a pervasive issue at all service centers visited. Providing agents terminals so that they can log entries directly into the OTS system (instead of manually recording them and then at a later time entering the data into the OTS system) would be of great benefit in freeing up agent time for the provision of services.

Summary and Recommendations

As revealed in this chapter, the original philosophical basis of Phase II programming — voluntary utilization of CSC services by releasees in an "assistance model" of parole — was irreparably bastardized by the introduction of a reporting requirement. Lack of staff training, inadequate resource allocation, minimal supervision of agents and a lack of clearly defined and articulated policy and standards further aggravated an already untenable situation.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the current reporting requirement be reviewed. The benefits of requiring monthly reporting by releasees either through the telephone or mail, during the first six months of their release, appears premised strictly on a public relations goal. Deterrence, incapacitation, rehabilitation, or retribution–based aims of criminal sanction do not appear satisfied by the reporting requirement. The information gained from such a requirement does not seem related to the achievement of either an assistance or control function for community corrections.

It is realized, however, that it is unlikely that this requirement will be rescinded. Accordingly, it is recommended that the releasee tracking efforts of Phase II programming be totally separate from service provision functions. This can be accomplished in one of two ways, either of which still allows for meaningful service delivery by PreStart agents. The first is for the IDOC to contract with a private vendor that can provide the capability to handle all routine telephone reporting by releasees and to forward calls to agents when agent contact is solicited. The IDOC has tried this on an experimental basis in the Chicago area and all indications show the experiment was successful. The experiment should be institutionalized and expanded statewide. Not only will this free up PreStart agent time so that agents can engage in meaningful service delivery, it also will result in the acquisition of an information system that allows for a more efficient tracking and monitoring function. The technology is here, and there appear to be few programmatic barriers to the implementation of such a telecommunications system.

If the IDOC does not want to pursue this option, the tracking function can be accomplished more efficiently and cost effectively if paraprofessional/clerical staff were hired to man telephone lines. It is fairly luxurious to have PreStart agents answering routine telephone calls all day long when the same tasks can be accomplished as effectively by individuals who command only half the pay. These individuals can also be charged with entering resulting contact data into the OTS system.

Either of the above options are more preferable than what currently exists, and the former is more desirable than the latter. If implemented, these options would not only allow for more effective use of valuable and scarce PreStart agent resources within service centers, they would also allow the IDOC much more flexibility in the distribution of agents across the state.

Special Programs for Special Populations

As noted earlier, for releasees who present specific needs, the IDOC planned the implementation of specialized service delivery mechanisms: 1) four Community Drug Intervention Programs (CDIPs), which were to provide services and drug testing for releasees posing manifest substance abuse needs; 2) contracted services for specialized interventions with selected sex offenders; and 3) a Special Intensive Supervision Unit (SISU) to which certain releasees thought to pose enhanced risks to public safety were to be assigned. These programs were reviewed fairly thoroughly in the second interim report. Additionally, because only SISU and one of the CDIPs have been fully implemented for any meaningful length of time, this chapter presents only a brief overview of the sex offender program and three of the four CDIPs. Issues regarding the Special Intensive Supervision program are highlighted in this chapter as well. A detailed process evaluation of the only long–term fully operational CDIP — the Springfield program — is presented in Chapter 8.

Sex Offender Programming

The planned delivery of specialized interventions with selected sex offenders through contracts with private service agencies was implemented in one jurisdiction in 1993. The IDOC has contracted with Mental Health Services of Southern Madison County to provide sex offender outpatient treatment for up to 20 releasees serviced by the East St. Louis community service center. The long delay in establishing sex offender treatment programs under PreStart suggests that more Central Office attention should have been paid to the development of necessary contracts for services to this population. The detailed and comprehensive plan developed by the IDOC for the Community Sex Offender Treatment Program (draft, dated Aug. 25, 1992) provided a very good guide for subsequent program development, and its implementation should be given priority status within the Community Services Division.

As noted above, the contract with Mental Health Services, Southern Madison County, Inc. for the provision of sex offender treatment services commenced in January 1993. The contract calls for servicing a maximum of 20 clients, and the program was full as of summer 1993. One therapist

is the sole treatment provider. Unfortunately, there has been a high level of turnover in this position, rendering it difficult for the program to mature to its desired level. Clearly, sex offender programming within the PreStart program umbrella has been and remains quite limited.

Special Intensive Supervision Unit

Under the original PreStart design, SISU was to include offenders considered to be high risks to public safety. SISU was considered to be a major component of the design, as voluntary use of community service centers will not threaten public safety measurably if the highest risk offenders are reliably identified and put under close community supervision.

A limitation of current PreStart operations is the process by which high–risk offenders are identified and assigned to Intensive Supervision. Through most of the 1980s, the IDOC used a parole case classification system in which parolees were assigned to varying levels of supervision based on assessments of offender risk and need. The system was abandoned in 1987 because it was thought that the necessary human resources were not available within the department to allow for meaningful differential supervision of parolees. Further, there was not much need for such a system if the primary operational goal of parole supervision was to simply know the location of parolees. Unfortunately, the case classification system has not been redesigned or reintroduced in even a limited fashion under PreStart. Thus, the department's current attempts to identify high–risk offenders for placement in SISU is not based on an objective assessment of risk.

The IDOC currently uses a subjective classification process to classify and assign inmates to the Special Intensive Supervision program. Assignment to Intensive Supervision is guided, but not determined, by the holding conviction charge. An initial subjective client screening regarding risk is performed by a CSC staff at the time of the release investigation. The case is then reviewed by the PreStart zone supervisor, and the SISU regional supervisor, who together make the final assignment decision. If these decision makers are unable to concur, the case is brought to either an Electronic Detention supervisor or to the PreStart administrator. Thus, while the IDOC uses a subjective classification process to assign releasees to intensive supervision, the process involves input from a variety of experienced officials.

The IDOC has indicated that there is no maximum number of Intensive Supervision slots. Theoretically, then, there is no excess population in need of supervision. That is, all of the highest risk clients thought to be in need of Intensive Supervision are said to be placed in SISU. This is perhaps an attempt to allay public fears that so–called dangerous releasees are being released to the community without supervision.

Perhaps more importantly, SISU is not serving the original function for which it was designed. As one respondent stated: "It has become bastardized; it is not dealing with high risk cases." Rather, legally defined categories of individuals are subject to automatic placement in SISU, leaving little caseload space for those even subjectively deemed to be high risk independent of their legal status. As reported in the IDOC's Human Services Plan for 1991–1993, criteria for placement on Intensive Supervision may include the following (p. 69–70):

- Was released from a specialized treatment center;
- Was released from the Impact Incarceration Program (Boot Camp);
- Was adjudicated guilty but mentally ill;
- Adjudicated a sexually dangerous person;
- Adjudicated a habitual child sex offender;
- Did not complete Phase I;
- Has an indeterminate sentence;
- Has mandatory conditions of release;
- Has substance abuse history;
- Is a sex offender.

The vast majority of people placed in SISU are individuals from the first five categories listed above, who are automatically placed in SISU, along with the increasingly large number of individuals placed on Electronic Detention (ED).

In July 1989, the IDOC initiated an electronic detention program to place eligible and carefully screened inmates under electronic supervision in the community during the last one to six months of their incarceration. Since that time, more than 3,000 inmates have been placed on Electronic Detention, with two–thirds of them completing the program successfully. The ED program is widely viewed as being successful (the Illinois Task Force on Crime and Corrections, June 1992) and is a clear priority within the IDOC. More than 1,000 of the 1,800 releasees in the SISU program are on Electronic Detention.

Between the population under mandatory placement in SISU and the population on ED, a relatively small percentage of releasees are placed in the SISU because of predicted risk. As of Sept. 17, 1993, a total of 793 high–risk releasees were in SISU, or about 30 percent of the SISU caseload.

A further complication is the concern, raised by both PreStart and SISU agents, that SISU agents, who tend to identify themselves as Electronic Detention agents, do not actively supervise releasees on special intensive supervision as closely as they do individuals on ED. This occurs because of the departmental priority given to ED, a priority that stems logically from the fact that the legal status of individuals on ED is that of inmates, not releasees. These issues also may result from the very strict contact requirements imposed on ED releasees relative to the requirements of mandatory supervised releasees who are placed on SISU (and are called parolees by agents).

The concerns reported above suggest that SISU does not have a well–defined role vis–a–vis PreStart, and that antagonistic relationships are emerging among staff. Given the releasee selection process used to place individuals on SISU and the levels of supervision being offered (or not offered), the opinions stated by one PreStart agent appear to reflect reality quite well:

> Currently this population (high–risk releasees placed on SISU) is largely ignored, yet they pose the greatest risk when released to the community. Current efforts at special supervision are inadequate, largely due to personnel/staffing problems. SIS is neither special nor intensive.

Community Drug Intervention Programs

In the original formulation of the PreStart program, the implementation of four CDIPs was planned. They were to provide services and drug testing for releasees posing manifest substance abuse needs. The program design "combines high levels of supervision and frequent drug testing with special case management services directly related to drug treatment" (IDOC, Nov. 20, 1991: 2).

The process of implementing these drug units has been slow and uneven. As of November 1993, only one drug unit was fully operational in a manner consistent with previously designated programming and staffing patterns (the Springfield CDIP). That drug unit had been in existence prior to PreStart's implementation as a federally funded pilot project. Since November 1993, two additional CDIPs have become fully staffed (this includes having a certified substance abuse counselor on staff), and all four units now have contracted treatment providers to provide services to program clients. Prior to these CDIPs becoming fully operational, agents working in some of the CDIPs were providing support services to the community service centers. In general, it appeared that agents were providing intensive parole supervision but without being directly involved in the delivery of treatment services being provided by contracted treatment agencies.

The delay in getting the planned community drug programs on line partially reflects the lack of a top or mid–level management IDOC employee, who is relatively free of other duties, being

designated as responsible for implementation. It takes considerable time to pursue and develop contracts with community–based drug treatment vendors, and to hire and train personnel to staff the Community Drug Programs. Initially, the Community Services Division did not have control over funding for the Community Drug Programs, and appropriated dollars actually lapsed because contracts were not in place. The lack of management–level attention to the development and execution of such programming, and split responsibilities across organizational subunits, resulted in prolonged delays in establishing fully operational Community Drug Programs. While human resources in the Community Services Division were allocated in the latter half of 1993 to the execution of contracts with drug treatment providers, the process had been frustrated by solicitations not generating the desired proposals, and difficult contractual negotiations emerging once proposals had been considered worthy of funding. Nonetheless, the IDOC should have moved on this front in a much more timely and aggressive manner.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has presented an implementation analysis of Phase II programming and focused on particular issues presented by CSC operations. The fundamental caseload problem associated with PreStart services was highlighted. Coupled with the transformation of PreStart that occurred as a result of a releasee reporting requirement being introduced shortly after PreStart's implementation, it was questioned whether a meaningful service delivery program can be expected with the existing allocation of resources.

High levels of variation in community service center activity and parole agent behavior were noted. Differing workload constraints across service centers, ambiguous administrative policies, and varying types of tolerated parole agent adaptations in reaction to PreStart's implementation have resulted in very differing releasee experiences with Phase II programming both across the state and even within service centers. Differing "parole" systems appear to be emerging, with Chicago–area centers being constrained as tracking centers while low–volume centers have the luxury to either be assistance or supervision centers. Administrative and implementation factors that have allowed these developments to occur were discussed.

Data measuring CSC agent activities with regard to releasees' requests, referrals, and delivered services for the first two years of PreStart operations were examined. While the volume of contacts is quite high, the apparent incompleteness of the available automated data, and the instability of the automated data series, led to the recommendation that stronger record keeping practices be developed. In particular, parole agents should be given greater training and access to terminals.

This chapter also presented an analysis of special programs designed for special populations. Included was an analysis of the Special Intensive Supervision Unit (SISU). Under the original PreStart design, SISU was to include releasees predicted to be of high risk to public safety. A glaring limit of current PreStart operations relates to the process by which high–risk offenders are identified and assigned to intensive supervision. Currently, the IDOC does not use an objective classification system to identify high–risk releasees. Coupled with the fact that the vast majority of individuals are assigned because of legal criteria and not behavioral indicators of risk, relatively few releasees who may be of high risk find themselves on special intensive supervision. Once placed on SISU, it appears that most releasees are neither specially nor intensively supervised.

Sex offender treatment programming and the implementation of CDIPs were also discussed. In general, their implementation has been slow and uneven due to a lack of needed Central Office attention concerning the development of such programming. Thus, most of the relevant programming is just coming on line in a manner consistent with program models that had been developed much earlier.

Chapter 7

INMATE REACTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTERS AND TO FREEDOM

This chapter examines the reactions and perceptions of releasees toward their experiences with community service centers (CSCs) and the PreStart agents who staff these centers. Evaluation efforts include the examination of releasees' experiences since their release from prison; the level of contact with CSCs; their perceptions of the benefits they have acquired from the services provided by CSCs; and their overall impressions of CSC services. To acquire the data needed to measure the above, contact was made with two groups of releasees. One group included releasees who walked into or phoned the CSC during one of the evaluation team's site visits. The other group was composed of individuals from the 1992 inmate sample (those interviewed while involved in PreStart Phase I) who had since been released to PreStart Phase II. Most of these latter individuals had been in the community at least nine months before they were surveyed. Below is a discussion of the methodologies employed to survey these two groups of releasees.

Survey Methodology

Follow-Up Surveys

As part of the inmate survey administered in 1992 (see Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of the methodology employed), inmates were asked to report a post-release address or phone number at which they could be contacted. As part of the information and consent form for the survey, inmates were made aware that if they provided an address or phone number and became part of the released sample, they would be given financial compensation (up to $20) for completing an interview.

Of the 425 inmates responding to the 1992 surveys, 335 provided either an address or phone number. Of those 335 providing release information, 256 provided a phone number through which they could be contacted. These individuals were the subjects of a telephone survey. Those individuals who could not be contacted by phone or who provided an address only were surveyed through the use of a mailed self-administered questionnaire that used a similar item format to that found in the telephone instrument.

Instruments

The follow–up instruments contained both open– and closed–ended questions. Because the target population, on average, exhibited low reading and writing skills, the mailed questionnaire was designed to minimize the number of open–ended items. Commonly encountered responses to open–ended items during the phone survey served as response choices in these resulting closed–ended items. Thus, strong efforts were made to assure that responses from the distinct instruments could be aggregated in a meaningful manner. The telephone interviews lasted between 10 and 20 minutes, depending on the amount of information proffered by the releasee; it was estimated that the self–administered questionnaire took a similar amount of time to complete.

The instruments examined three facets of the releasees' post–release life: 1) general information about daily life (with whom releasees are living, income, type of employment, educational involvement); 2) CSC service information (number and type of contacts, referrals made, general perceptions of services delivered); and 3) post–release criminality (police contact/arrests, drug use).

Surveying Methods

Five researchers were trained to conduct telephone interviews. A script was developed to explain who the interviewer was and why he or she was calling. Three variations of the script allowed the interviewer to adapt to the following situations: 1) a releasee who no longer lived there; 2) a releasee who lived there but was not currently home; and 3) a releasee who answered the telephone. After initial explanations, an interview was conducted, a message was left, or an update on the releasee's whereabouts was obtained.

When leaving a message for a releasee, three things were emphasized: 1) the researcher was not with the IDOC and had spoken with the releasee before; 2) there would be a $10 payment for completing a phone interview; and 3) the releasee could contact a researcher with a collect call.

After initial training and pretesting of the instrument, calls were made on a regular basis beginning in May 1993 and ending early in September 1993. It was decided there should be no fewer than five failed attempts to any one phone number before retiring that releasee to either the mailing list or, if no address was available, to the inaccessible category. When the telephone list was exhausted, mailed questionnaires were sent out on Nov. 22, 1993, to all 223 individuals who had provided an address and did not complete a phone interview. Follow–up postcards were then sent to those releasees who did not respond to the questionnaire; these people were encouraged to

complete the questionnaire or to call the evaluation team so that a telephone survey could be conducted.

The Resulting Sample

It is well known that tracking a released inmate population is not an easy task. Those released from prison often tend to live on "the fringes" of society — perhaps not having a permanent residence or telephone number. As discussed below, beyond the difficulties in making contact with these individuals lies the methodological issue of understanding how representative any resulting sample is of the larger released population.

Table 7.1 presents a breakdown of the results of trying to contact the 256 inmates who provided phone numbers. A total of 70 phone interviews were completed, which represents 28 percent of the 256 potential releasees available for telephone surveying. It should be emphasized, however, that 54 phone numbers were disconnected (21 percent); 54 releasees had moved from the residence associated with the provided phone number, and no new phone number was available (21 percent); and 33 releasees had moved from the residence associated with the provided phone number and no forwarding information whatsoever was available (13 percent). While these data are highly suggestive of the low–income levels (for example, percent phone disconnected) and the transitory living conditions of many releasees (for example, percent that moved from anticipated residence upon release), these data also indicate that when telephone contacts were made between the interviewer and the releasee, or a person who could direct the interviewer to the releasee (the sum of completed interviews, refusals to participate and phone attempts exhausted), a high proportion of the calls resulted in an interview (70 of 115, or 60 percent). It is especially noteworthy that only three individuals explicitly refused to be interviewed.

Table 7.1:
Outcomes of Attempted Phone Contacts

Outcome Associated with Each Phone Number Provided	Number	Percent of Sample (%)
Interview Completed	70	28
Phone Disconnected*	54	21
Not Living at Number/No New Phone, but Current Address	54	21
Attempts Exhausted Trying to Contact**	42	17
Not Living at Number/No New Phone or Address	33	13
Refusal to Participate	3	1
TOTAL:	256	

* Added to the list of inmates initially providing only an address. Attempts to reach this group by mail will begin in early October 1993.

** Defined by five failed attempts to contact the releasee.

The 223 mailed questionnaires elicited 38 completed returns and an additional two telephone interviews, yielding a total response rate of 18 percent (data not presented in tabular form). This, combined with the earlier telephone sample of 70, resulted in a total of 110 completed follow–up responses. This represents 25.9 percent of inmates surveyed while incarcerated and 32.8 percent of those who provided any information that would allow for follow–up contact. One completed phone interview was determined to be unusable. Therefore, the following analysis includes 109 cases.

As presented in Table 7.2, the 109 releasees with whom follow–up contact was made were released from 13 of the 14 institutions originally visited. (The four inmates from Facility C participating in the 1992 survey were excluded from follow–up attempts because their community adjustment would be expected to be vastly different from the rest of the sample.) Table 7.2 also reveals there is a strong proportionality between the percentage of inmates released from particular institutions who completed follow–up surveys (as a percent of the total completed) and the percentage of inmates from particular institutions who completed the 1992 inmate survey (as a

percent of the total completed). These data indicate that one institution's releasees were not significantly over– or underrepresented in the resulting follow–up sample.

Table 7.2: Releasees as Percent of Completed Follow–Up Interviews by Facility (As Compared To Respective Proportions of Completed 1992 Inmate Survey)

Facility	Follow–Up Survey n	Percent of Completed Follow–Up Interviews	Inmate Survey n	Percent of Completed '92 Inmate Surveys
A	12	11.0%	47	11%
B	5	4.6%	21	5%
C	0	0.0%	4	1%
D	12	11.0%	49	11%
E	8	7.3%	38	9%
F	12	11.0%	51	12%
G	10	9.2%	39	9%
H	9	8.3%	46	11%
I	15	13.8%	42	10%
J	7	6.4%	22	5%
K	4	3.7%	9	2%
L	2	1.8%	8	2%
M	2	1.8%	15	4%
N	11	10.1%	34	8%
TOTAL:	69	100.0%	425	100%

To examine how closely the characteristics of releasees in the follow–up sample matched those from the full 1992 inmate sample, the two groups were compared on various demographic and behavioral variables. Table 7.3 displays characteristics of the 109 inmates for whom follow–up data were obtained and the full sample of 425 inmates surveyed in 1992. The groups look remarkably similar in terms of their basic demographic and social characteristics. Both groups were largely male (slightly more than 70 percent) and minority (60.6 percent black, 12.7 percent Hispanic and 5.6 percent other minority for the 1992 inmate sample). Thus, the telephone sample slightly overrepresents blacks and underrepresents Hispanics. The average age for each group was very similar — about 31 years of age.

More than half of the respondents in the follow–up sample were never married (59.6 percent), and about one–fourth (22.9 percent) were divorced or separated; only 13.8 percent reported being married. For the full inmate sample, 10.1 percent of the inmates reported being married, and 64.3 percent reported never having been married, suggesting that follow–up efforts were slightly more successful with married than unmarried individuals, as might be anticipated. In terms of education level, the majority of respondents in both samples had either one to three years of high school with no GED (slightly more than 30 percent in both samples) or one to three years of high school and a GED (about 25 percent in both samples). Accordingly, educational profiles were similar across the two groups.

Both groups were similar in terms of job expectations upon release, with only about 30 percent indicating they thought they had a job lined up. A large percentage in both groups had not been employed during the six months before their incarceration (slightly more than 40 percent). Thus, individual relationships to the labor market were similar among those inmates who provided follow–up information and those that did not. The same also holds true for self–reported drug use. Almost 60 percent of the individuals in both groups reported drug use in the six months before incarceration, and comparable proportions reported use of particular drug types.

Releasees in the follow–up sample were also similar to the full 1992 PreStart sample in terms of the crime that was committed that resulted in their incarceration. In fact, follow–up efforts were quite successful among those incarcerated for a Class X felony (18.3 percent of the follow–up sample vs. 15.3 percent of the full PreStart sample). Thus, the releasee subsample that responded to follow–up efforts appear to be no less serious offenders than those who did not.

Table 7.3: Characteristics of Releasee Follow-Up Sample and PreStart 1992 Inmate Sample

Characteristic		Follow-Up Sample (N=109)	1992 Inmate Sample (N=425)
Mean Age		31.72	29.99
Gender	Male	72.5 %	73.5 %
	Female	25.7	21.6
	Missing	1.8	4.9
Race	White	27.5 %	25.1 %
	Black	60.6	54.2
	Hispanic	8.3	12.7
	Other	3.7	5.6
	Missing	0.0	2.1
Marital Status	Never Married	59.6 %	64.3 %
	Married	13.8	10.1
	Separated/Divorced	22.9	19.2
	Other	1.8	4.0
	Missing	1.8	3.1
Level of education	Elementary School	4.6 %	6.1 %
	1-3 yrs. HS/No GED	30.3	32.6
	1-3 yrs. HS/GED	25.7	24.2
	High School Graduate	16.5	15.5
	1-3 yrs. College	17.4	15.7
	4+ yrs. College	2.8	1.6
	Missing	2.7	4.2
Job Lined Up at Release	No	45.0 %	44.4 %
	Yes	28.4	29.6
	Unsure	22.9	23.2
	Missing	3.7	2.8
Employment 6 mos. prior to Incarceration	Employed	57.8 %	52.6 %
	Unemployed	41.3	45.5
	Missing	0.9	1.9

Table 7.3 (continued): Characteristics of Follow-Up Sample and PreStart 1992 Inmate Sample

Characteristic		Follow-Up Sample (N=109)	1992 Inmate Sample (N=425)
Drug Use 6 mo. before Incarceration	No	38.5 %	39.9 %
	Yes	59.6	55.6
	Missing	1.8	4.5
Percent Using:	Marijuana	44.0 %	39.2 %
	Opiates	15.6	14.8
	Hallucinogens	4.6	6.1
	Crack	6.4	—
	Cocaine	33.9	32.4
Holding Crime Class	Class 1	22.9 %	22.1 %
	Class 2	24.8	29.2
	Class 3	17.4	15.3
	Class 4	10.1	10.4
	Class M	1.8	1.6
	Class X	18.3	15.3
	Missing	4.6	6.1

However, members of the follow-up sample are not representative of the PreStart population in terms of the region of the state in which releasees live and the CSCs to which they report. As indicated in Chapter 5, about two-thirds of all releasees are in PreStart's Zone 1 (Cook County). However, only slightly more than 55 percent of the releasees in the follow-up sample report to CSCs found in Zone 1. Almost 13 percent of the follow-up releasees are from Zone 4, compared to 7.1 percent of the PreStart releasee population. Likewise, 14 percent of the follow-up releasees

are from Zone 3 (10 percent of the PreStart releasee population), and 17 percent of the follow–up releasees are from Zone 2 (15 percent of the PreStart releasee population). Thus, the follow–up sample overrepresents releasees who are not from Cook County, especially from Zone 4.

These data indicate that follow–up surveys did not result in particular types of releasees to be included in the resulting follow–up sample to the exclusion of others. Overall, the releasees in the follow–up sample appear very representative of those individuals who were surveyed one year earlier while nearing their release from prison. One exception is apparent: the follow–up sample somewhat underrepresents releasees from Cook County (Zone 1).

Community Service Center Walk–In and Phone–In (CSC) Sample

Eighty–six releasees were the subjects of completed and usable interviews while evaluation staff were conducting site visits at CSCs. Availability sampling techniques were used in this portion of the study. That is, when releasees walked into or called the service centers and a researcher was free to conduct an interview, the releasee would be approached by the researcher (either in person or on the telephone), informed about the purposes of the present study and asked if she or he were willing to be the subject of a 10– to 20–minute interview. No compensation was offered to the releasee. If the releasee agreed to be interviewed, a series of questions was posed; these paralleled the questions contained in the telephone interview schedule.

Table 7.4 presents data summarizing the results of these efforts. Ninety–one interviews were attempted with CSC walk–ins, which resulted in 56 completed interviews (62 percent response rate). Only 38 interviews were attempted on the telephone at CSCs, resulting in 31 completed interviews (82 percent response rate). Of the 87 completed interviews, one interview was full of inconsistent responses and deemed unusable for analytic purposes. Thus, these efforts resulted in a total of 86 usable interviews.

Both the total number of individuals approached and response rates varied considerably across service centers. Much of this has to do with the varying volume of "business" at the centers and the conditions in which the interviews were attempted. The number of attempted walk–in interviews is roughly proportional to the number of people available for face–to–face interviews at each center on the days evaluation staff were conducting site visits. For instance, there were very few walk–ins at the Springfield Service Center on the multiple days evaluation staff were visiting. Likewise, there also were few telephone calls.

Table 7.4: Community Service Center Phone-In and Walk-In Response Rates

Center Location	Walk-Ins			Phone-Ins		
	Completed	Attempted	Resp. Rate	Completed	Attempted	Resp. Rate
Springfield	1	2	50 %	2	2	100 %
Decatur	4	4	100	4	4	100
Lawndale	10	13	77	0	0	—
Chatham	8	11	73	2	3	67
Uptown	4	6	67	8	10	80
Aurora	1	2	50	5	6	83
Marion	5	9	56	5	5	100
Cairo	7	14	50	0	0	—
Metropolis	5	15	33	0	0	—
E. St. Louis	11	15	73	5	8	62
Total	56	91	62	31	38	82

Grand Totals	Completed	Attempted	Response Rate
	87	129	67%

The Aurora CSC did not have a high volume of walk–ins, but the telephone was ringing constantly. The same pattern was observed at the Uptown CSC. Thus, a higher number of phone–in interviews compared to walk–in interviews resulted from these contact patterns.

On the other hand, the Lawndale CSC was extremely busy with walk–ins, and it was nearly impossible to get near a telephone to conduct interviews because the telephone lines were continually tied up with normal business activity. The Decatur, Cairo and Metropolis offices are satellite CSCs at which parole agents are available only on occasion. The number of completed interviews at these locations are high because evaluation staff were present on one of these reporting days. Accordingly, the number of completed interviews across facilities should not be considered an indicator of the regular volume of releasee contact at these facilities. Nonetheless,

these surveys did result in a desirable mix of releasee interviews which appear to represent fairly well the wide range of releasee experiences with service centers across the state.

The conditions in which interviews were attempted varied considerably and affected not only response rates but also the ability to fully complete the interview in a manner associated with the acquisition of valid and reliable data (for example, attempting interviews in crowded public hallways with limited privacy proved problematic at certain facilities). Many interviews had to be hurried in the rather chaotic conditions that were often confronted. In some instances, interviews were terminated prematurely because the interviewer needed to get off the telephone to free up the line; because the PreStart agent was ready to see the releasee and the releasee had to get back to work; or because the lack of privacy caused the releasee to clam up, and so on.

Not only were the interviewing conditions often problematic in acquiring reliable and valid data, some clients who walked into the service centers were reporting for the first time to satisfy their initial reporting requirement (14 percent of the total). These individuals had often been released only a few days earlier, and thus they had little information to offer in terms of their community adjustment and perceptions of and experiences with the service centers.

Accordingly, these interview data will be used primarily to inform and supplement findings from the phone and mail survey data. The inherent weaknesses of the availability sampling design used in this survey, the research team's inability to ascertain the representativeness of the respondents in the walk–in/phone–in CSC sample in a manner consistent with what was done with the follow–up sample, and the uncontrolled conditions in which the interviews were conducted warrant such a limited role for these data. This data set will be referred to as the CSC sample in the remainder of this chapter, while the sample obtained from the 1993 follow up of 1992 releasees will be referred to as the follow–up sample.

Survey Findings

Daily Life, Conditions and Concerns

Individuals in the follow–up sample had been on the streets an average of 10.6 months since their release from prison. Releasees who responded to survey efforts by completing a mailed questionnaire had been free longer, on average, than those who responded by phone (mean of 14.3 months compared to 8.4 months). Across both groups, only a total of five releasees had been free for six or fewer months. Thus, a considerable amount of time had elapsed for most members of the

follow–up sample since their release from prison, allowing them to comment on many aspects of their transition to the free world based on numerous post–release experiences.

The former inmates surveyed by phone were asked about "how things have been" since they were released from prison. The responses indicated that few of the men and women thought things were going badly, even though they cited a range of general problems and concerns, from employment problems to contacts with the criminal justice system. For example, a typical response might be "no job, but can't complain" or "nothing extremely positive or negative." These open–ended responses were coded into three categories of "how life has been since release": good, bad and just okay. The releasees who responded to the mailed questionnaire were afforded these choices in response to the same question. Of the 104 cases for which valid data were obtained, 43.3 percent said things had been good, 49.0 percent said just OK, and only 7.7 percent (eight respondents) said that things had been bad. Of the 70 releasees from the CSC sample who responded to this question, 15.7 percent indicated that life had been bad since their release, and only 32.9 percent indicated that things had been going good. Thus, the CSC releasees seemed to be having a more difficult time than members of the follow–up sample.

The respondents in the full follow–up sample were asked about their current concerns. One year after release, the primary concerns of the former inmates were largely economic. Slightly less than 46 percent mentioned employment as being a pressing current concern. Almost 40 percent indicated that providing for themselves and their families was a pressing concern, and almost 25 percent reported issues with housing and/or having a place to live. Other common concerns identified by the releasees included concerns about reincarceration or staying out of trouble (31.2 percent), getting an education (22.9 percent), family problems (10.1 percent) and meeting parole requirements (7.3 percent).

Employment

Employment is often regarded as the key to success on parole, and its link to recidivism for adult ex–offenders is well documented (for example, see Glaser, 1964; Pownall, 1969; Waller, 1974). Accordingly, the former inmates were asked if they currently had jobs. Among the 109 respondents in the follow–up sample, 51.4 percent were employed, and 48.6 percent were unemployed. Among the CSC releasees, only 37.2 percent were currently employed. The employed respondents were asked if the IDOC had helped them in any way get their jobs. Only 11 out of 56 employed respondents in the follow–up sample (19.6 percent) and five of the 32 employed releasees in the CSC sample (15.6 percent) said that the IDOC had helped them obtain a job in some way.

Most of the employed respondents from the follow–up sample were working full–time jobs. Among the 56 respondents who reported that they were employed, 35 reported having a full–time job (62.5 percent), and 15 reported having a part–time job (26.8 percent). Eleven respondents indicated their employment as being temporary. Similar work patterns were found among the CSC sample, with most working respondents indicating that their work was full time (70.9 percent).

For most of the respondents who were working, employment was not immediate upon release. Among the 54 former inmates in the follow–up sample who reported how long they had been working, 50 percent had been employed six months or less. Only a quarter of the respondents had been employed 10 months or more. These data suggest that even among the former inmates who were able to obtain employment (only half of the group), at least several months were needed to obtain employment. This may account for the relatively higher unemployment rate among the CSC respondents, who as a group were more recently released from prison than the follow–up sample.

Forty–seven of the working respondents from the follow–up sample reported their average weekly pay. The average weekly salary reported was $229, with a low salary of $85 per week and a high salary of $600 per week. Salary structures were very similar for respondents from the CSC sample who reported their weekly salaries: Only nine of the 25 working releasees from the CSC sample who reported their weekly earnings indicated earnings of more than $250 per week. Thus, many of the employed former inmates were working jobs that paid minimum wage or slightly more.

Data from the 1992 Inmate Survey were cross–tabulated with data from the follow–up survey to see if there was a relationship between being employed at the time of the survey and whether or not the inmates at the Phase I pre–release stage stated that they had jobs lined up. As might be expected, those inmates who had jobs lined up before release were more likely to be employed one year later than those who did not have jobs lined up before release. Among the inmates who did not have jobs lined up before release (n=49), 42.9 percent were employed one year later. This compares to 67.7 percent of the total inmates (n=31) who had jobs lined up before release and 44 percent of those inmates (n=25) who at the pre–release stage were not sure whether they had jobs lined up.

To summarize, the employment situation was fairly bleak among the former inmates since their release from prison. Only about half were employed, and although most of the employed men and women were working full–time jobs, a good proportion of them had spent a number of months trying to obtain a job, and many of the jobs were low paying.

Education

Respondents were asked whether they were currently enrolled in an education program. Of the 109 respondents from the follow–up sample, 75.2 percent were not enrolled in an education program. Of the 26 respondents who reported the type of schooling in which she or he was enrolled, most were enrolled in an educational program designed to develop job skills. Eleven were enrolled in a vocational training program, while the remaining were enrolled in Adult Basic Education (1), GED programs (3), college (7), a rehabilitation/education program (2), or an unspecified type of program (2).

Enrollment in an education program (yes or no) was cross–tabulated with data obtained from the 1992 Inmate Survey in which the same individuals at the Phase I, pre–release stage were asked about whether they intended to pursue education after release. Of the 105 respondents for which data were available, 73 (69.5 percent) indicated at the pre–release stage that they intended to pursue some type of education. Of these 73, only 22 (30.1 percent) were enrolled in an education program when the follow–up surveys interviews were conducted.

Enrollment in an education program (yes or no) was cross–tabulated with employment (yes or no) to determine if there was a relationship between the two variables. There was little relationship between the two. Of 27 respondents enrolled in an educational program, 12 were employed, and 15 were unemployed. Of the 82 respondents not in a school program, 44 were employed, while 38 were not. The analysis also revealed that 38 of the respondents (or 34.8 percent) were neither enrolled in an education program nor employed at the time the follow–up surveys were conducted.

Community Service Centers

Contacts with community service centers

The respondents were asked a series of questions intended to measure their knowledge, use and opinions of CSCs.

Respondents were first asked if they had been in contact with a CSC since their release. Of the 109 respondents in the follow–up sample, 60 (55.0 percent) indicated they had not been in contact with a CSC since their release. A follow–up question asked if they had been in touch with a parole officer. All but three respondents said yes, indicating that many releasees are not familiar with the term "community service center," and that they still consider "parole" to be the term that

reflects their status and "parole officers" to be the people with whom they are required to have some contact.

Eighty–two percent of the respondents in the phone component of the follow–up sample (n = 69) said that they made contact because it was required, with the remaining 18 percent saying either they made contact because it was required and they were seeking some kind of help (6 percent), or simply saying they made contact with a parole officer to receive a referral (6 percent) or for some other reason (4.5 percent). Among the respondents in the follow–up sample who filled out a mailed questionnaire (n = 40), 57.5 percent indicated that they were told to report at least once in person to a parole agent, and 75 percent indicated that they had been told to report by phone at least once. Among those who filled out a mailed questionnaire, only 10 (25 percent) indicated they had made a contact with a parole officer when it was not required. Thus, across both samples of follow–up respondents, most of the contacts with CSCs and parole agents were made because the releasees were required to do so.

Of the 64 former inmates who were interviewed over the phone and indicated how often they had to report to a parole agent, 80 percent indicated a monthly reporting requirement. Among the releasees in the follow–up sample who completed a mailed questionnaire, 42.1 percent indicated they had to report to an agent at least monthly in person, and 71.1 percent indicated they had to report at least monthly by phone. Ninety–one percent of the CSC sample reported a monthly reporting requirement. Thus, across subsamples of releasees, a vast majority indicated that at least monthly contacts were required of them, with the majority of these required contacts being phone contacts.

Among all of the follow–up respondents who reported the total number of contacts with parole agents since their release (n = 106), 17 percent reported six or fewer contacts, 60.4 percent reported seven to 12 contacts, and 22.6 percent reported 13 or more contacts with parole officers. The average number of contacts between the releasees and their PreStart agents was 11.9. The distribution of contacts was fairly normal, with more than 50 percent of the releasees reporting between seven and 12 contacts. These data are consistent with reporting requirements for most releasees; under the new Phase II design, most releasees must report once within the first 72 hours after release, and then once a month for the first six months after release (recall that subjects had been living in the community for eight to 14 months on average).

Differences in releasee contacts with CSCs across PreStart zones were examined for the follow–up respondents. There was only slight variation among respondents based on the zone in which they lived. The 10 respondents who provided information on this variable and lived in Zone 3 averaged 13 total contacts. Respondents from Zone 4 (n = 11) averaged 10.73 contacts, and

those from Zone 1 (n = 51) averaged 10.78 contacts. Thus, across all PreStart zones, releasees were making regular contact with the CSCs in a manner consistent with their monthly reporting requirements.

However, some notable differences were found in the types of contacts releasees had with their PreStart agents across zones. The statewide average among members of the follow–up sample was 3.7 in–person contacts with their PreStart agents. The statewide average for phone contacts made was 6.7 per releasee. Consistent with reporting requirements, the modal number of in–person contacts was one (39 of the 105 reporting releasees), and the modal numbers of phone contacts were six and seven (12 of the responding releasees reporting either of these numbers). Releasees from zones 3 and 4, however, were much more likely to more often see their PreStart agents in person than were releasees from zones 1 and 2. The average number of in–person contacts for releasees from Zone 3 was 5.46. For Zone 4 releasees, the average number was slightly lower at 4.92 contacts. In contrast, releasees from Zone 1 reported seeing their agents in person almost half as often (2.57 in–person contacts). The corresponding figure for Zone 3 releasees was 3.19.

While releasees from zones 1 and 2 were least likely to see their agents in person on a regular basis, they reported more phone contacts with their agents than releasees from zones 3 and 4. Releasees from zones 1 and 2 averaged 7.06 and 8.06 phone contacts with their agents, respectively. Releasees from zones 3 and 4 averaged 6.25 and 5.83 contacts, respectively. These data are consistent with the research team's observations of the daily work activities of PreStart agents across zones: Zones 1 and 2 include the heavier volume CSCs where agents are continuously answering releasee phone calls, and the ability to make in–person contacts are heavily constrained by time and space limitations, whereas these constraints are not nearly as apparent in CSCs within zones 3 and 4.

The CSC respondents, consistent with the fact that many had been only recently released from prison, reported fewer contacts with parole agents. Twenty–one percent reported one contact, 15 percent reported two contacts, and 12 percent reported three contacts. Only 7 percent reported 12 or more contacts.

All of the follow–up releasees were asked if they were assigned to the SISU or if they had any special conditions of parole. Of the 104 releasees in the follow–up sample who responded to questions about their parole status, only five indicated they were on SISU. Likewise, only six of the 86 CSC respondents indicated they were assigned to SISU. However, a small number of the respondents from both samples (21/106 in the follow–up sample and 15/86 in the CSC sample) reported a variety of "special conditions" of parole. These included mandated sex offender

treatment (3), mandated drug treatment (18), mandated participation in an education program (2), mandated counseling (5), or the completion of some other task/requirement (5).

Perceptions of Community Service Centers

A very general question was posed to all releasees regarding PreStart. They were asked, "Overall, how would you describe the effect of the PreStart experience on your life?" Response categories included "extremely positive," "somewhat positive," "neutral/no effect," "somewhat negative" and "extremely negative." Bearing in mind that most releasees appeared to confine the meaning of PreStart to Phase I programming, the responses are nonetheless quite positive. Almost three–quarters of the follow–up releasees responded that PreStart had positive effects on their lives (20.2 percent "extremely positive" and 54 percent "somewhat positive"). Only 7.3 percent responded that PreStart had a negative impact on them, with the remaining releasees reporting neutral effects. The distribution of responses to this same question among the CSC sample was quite similar. Thus, while these data may have few evaluative implications for an assessment of the functioning of CSCs, they do suggest that well after one year of release into the community for most of these respondents, PreStart is still thought of in a positive light.

In an attempt to acquire more telling information on how the releasees were responding to Phase II programming, the releasees were asked how helpful their contacts with the CSC/parole agent had been. The resulting data suggest that most inmates found the CSC contacts at least somewhat helpful. Of the 104 follow–up respondents who responded to this question, 19.2 percent stated CSC contact had been "very helpful," 18.3 percent stated "helpful," 26 percent stated "somewhat helpful," and 36.5 percent stated it was of "no help." Only 20 percent who had had at least one contact with the CSC indicated that they thought CSC contact had not been helpful.

Table 7.5 presents responses to this question among the follow–up respondents by PreStart zone. Although there are relatively few valid responses in zones 2, 3 and 4, the data do suggest some noteworthy variation. In particular, releasees from Zone 3 seem to think their CSC experiences have been quite helpful while releasees in the other zones are much more likely to think their experiences with CSCs have not been nearly as helpful.

Table 7.5: Responses to the Question, "How Helpful Have Contacts With CSCs Been?" by PreStart Zone, Follow-Up Sample

Zone	Very Helpful	Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	No Help	Valid N
1	11.5 %	11.5 %	36.5 %	40.4 %	5
2	6.3	12.5	31.3	50.0	16
3	50.0	40.0	0.0	10.0	10
4	25.0	25.0	8.3	41.7	12
Total:	19.2	18.3	26.0	36.5	104

The releasees surveyed by phone also were asked an open-ended question about their "overall experience" with CSCs. Responses indicated an array of experiences — some good ("treated with respect," "treated me pretty good," "pretty fast") and some not so good ("jammed office," "busy phone," "impersonal treatment," "they don't seem to be concerned"). When coded as good, neutral or bad, 48.3 percent of the phone sample respondents indicated their experience with the CSC was good; 31 percent reported neutral experiences; and 19.0 percent reported bad experiences. When responses to this question were examined across PreStart zones, some notable variation in CSC experiences was found. All six respondents who answered this question from Zone 3 felt their overall experience with CSCs was good, as did slightly more than 50 percent of the 31 respondents from Zone 1. This was true of only one of the seven respondents from Zone 4, most of whom reported a "neutral" experience (5 of 7; data not presented in tabular form).

The most common complaints releasees expressed about their experiences with CSCs and PreStart agents centered on access issues and the results of staff–releasee interactions. For instance, 15 of 76 releasees (20 percent) from the full follow-up sample who reported specific problems with their Phase II Prestart experience reported trouble with getting through to their agent on the telephone. Thirteen releasees (17 percent) mentioned having to wait in long lines to make personal contact with their agent. Twenty-seven of these releasees (36 percent) mentioned their parole officer not being very helpful once contact was made. Nonetheless, 64 percent of these 76 releasees indicated that their parole officer provided them with necessary assistance.

Releasee responses from individuals in both the follow-up and CSC samples to related questions about their CSC experience are presented in Table 7.6. These data are presented for each

of the PreStart zones in which the releasee reported. The number of valid responses for the follow–up sample is less than the total number of individuals in that sample because of missing responses to some of the items and because 16 of the respondents (14.7 percent of the total) did not indicate the PreStart zone in which they reported. Despite these limitations, as can be discerned from the data, responses varied somewhat across PreStart zones.

Table 7.6 reveals that slightly more than 60 percent of the respondents from Zone 1 in the follow–up sample agreed that they use CSCs when they need help; this is slightly higher than the percentages reported elsewhere in the state. Respondents from Zone 4 in the follow–up sample were the most likely to report that they made contact with CSCs only because they were required to do so. Likewise, respondents from Zone 4 were also most likely to indicate that their IDPs had not been useful. Responses from Zone–2 releasees tended to parallel those made from Zone–4 releasees — on average, they were more negative than the statewide averages. In contrast, respondents from Zone 3 in the follow–up sample were those most likely to disagree with the statement that they "make contact with CSCs only because they have to" (40 percent) and that "staff at CSCs don't provide much assistance" (70 percent).

To assess whether the more negative attitudes (reported above) toward Phase II programming among releasees from Zone 2 and Zone 4 and the generally more positive attitudes of respondents from Zone 3 are artifacts of the small number of respondents from those zones (that is, one or two negative releasees can strongly influence the response patterns), Table 7.6 also presents responses to the same questions from the CSC sample (excluded are those releasees visiting the CSC for the first time). In general, when examination does not focus on zone–based differences, the total response patterns parallel those found among the phone sample respondents. That is, a majority of releasees agree they use CSC services when they need help and that their IDP has been useful. Conversely, a majority also agree that they only have contact with CSCs because they have to. The exception to the congruity above with regard to total response patterns is that slightly more than 50 percent of the follow–up sample respondents agreed that CSC staff do not provide much assistance, while this was true for less than 10 percent of the CSC sample releasees.

Table 7.6: Releasee Experiences with CSCs by Zone, Percent Responses to the Questions:

"I Utilize Services When I Need Help"

Zone	Follow-Up Sample				CSC Sample			
	Agree	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Valid N	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Valid N
1	60.7	7.8	31.4	51	71.4	4.8	23.8	21
2	37.5	0.0	62.5	16	60.0	40.0	0.0	5
3	50.0	10.0	40.0	10	87.5	12.5	0.0	8
4	41.7	16.7	41.7	12	73.3	6.7	20.0	30
Total	52.8	7.9	39.3	89	73.5	9.4	17.2	64

"I Only Have Contact With CSCs Because I Have To"

Zone	Follow-Up Sample				CSC Sample			
	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Valid N	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Valid N
1	68.0	0.0	32.0	50	71.4	14.3	14.3	21
2	75.0	0.0	25.0	16	40.0	20.0	40.0	5
3	50.0	10.0	40.0	10	87.5	0.0	12.5	8
4	91.7	0.0	8.3	12	73.4	3.3	23.3	30
Total	70.4	1.1	28.4	88	71.9	7.8	20.3	64

"My IDP Has Been Useful Since Release"

Zone	Follow-Up Sample				CSC Sample			
	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Valid N	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Valid N
1	59.6	7.7	32.7	52	38.1	38.1	23.8	21
2	50.0	12.5	37.5	16	100.0	0.0	0.0	5
3	70.0	10.0	20.0	10	100.0	0.0	0.0	8
4	41.7	8.3	50.0	12	63.3	13.3	23.3	30
Total	56.7	8.9	34.4	90	62.6	18.8	18.8	64

"Staff at CSC Don't Provide Much Assistance"

Zone	Follow-Up Sample				CSC Sample			
	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Valid N	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Valid N
1	50.0	1.9	48.1	52	9.5	38.1	52.4	21
2	62.5	6.2	31.2	16	0.0	0.0	100.0	5
3	30.0	0.0	70.0	10	12.5	12.5	75.0	8
4	58.3	8.3	33.3	12	10.0	13.3	76.7	30
Total	51.1	3.3	45.6	90	9.4	20.3	70.3	64

When examination turns to zone–specific responses, releasees from zones 2 and 4 from the CSC sample generally were much less negative than their counterparts in the follow–up sample. For instance, all five of the respondents from Zone 2 indicated that they agreed or were neutral on the statement that they use CSC services when they need them. Yet, more than 60 percent of the follow–up sample respondents from this zone disagreed with this statement. Likewise, respondents among the CSC sample from Zone 4 appeared more positive on the other relevant statements than their counterparts in the follow–up sample.

On the other hand, the generally more favorable attitudes of Zone 3 releasees toward their CSC experience revealed among the follow–up respondents are consistent with the responses of Zone 3 releasees from the CSC sample. For all four items presented in Table 7.6, these respondents reported more favorable perceptions than releasees elsewhere in the state. For instance, there was almost universal agreement among the Zone 3 releasees that they use CSC services when they need help, that their IDP had been useful and that CSC staff had provided assistance.

Based on the above data, it is difficult to make conclusive statements regarding the reactions of releasees from different zones to CSC services. There is the indication, however, that there may be rather pronounced differences across zones with releasees from Zone 3 generally reporting more favorable perceptions and reactions to the CSC experience than their counterparts elsewhere in the state. This conclusion must remain tentative, however, until data measuring these concepts are collected with more refined measuring instruments administered in more controlled settings to larger and clearly representative samples of releasee.

Correlates of Releasee Perceptions and Attitudes

All releasees were asked if their PreStart agent made any referrals for them to community resources. Responses to the question indicate that, consistent with an assistance model of parole, referrals were commonly made. For instance, among respondents from the follow–up sample, 57.5 percent stated that their agent had made community referrals for them. This was true for slightly less than half of the CSC respondents (48.2 percent). Consonant with economic needs dominating the present concerns of the releasees, the most common type of referral made was to Job Service. Thirty–one of the 96 releasees in the follow–up sample who identified the types of referrals made mentioned that they had been referred to Job Service. This was true for 25 percent of releasees in the CSC sample. Other common types of referrals as reported by releasees in both samples included drug treatment, public aid and educational referrals.

Referral practices as reported by the releasees exhibited some variation across PreStart zones and may shed some light on the patterns in responses among releasees regarding their perceptions and attitudes toward the CSCs and PreStart agents noted above. While 57.5 percent of the respondents in the follow–up sample indicated they had received referrals from their CSC, this was true for only 33 percent of the respondents from Zone 4 (4/12) and 50 percent of releasees from Zone 2 (8/16). Even releasees from the high volume and understaffed Zone 1 offices reported a greater likelihood of having received a referral (61 percent) than releasees from these zones. In contrast, 90 percent of the releasees from Zone 3 (9/10) reported referrals made (data not presented in tabular form).

Beyond PreStart zone, the survey data from the follow–up sample suggest that a number of other correlates of releasee attitudes toward and perceptions of CSC services exist. One example is employment status. The unemployed respondents were more likely to display favorable attitudes toward CSCs and their parole agents than those who were employed. For example, 24 percent of the unemployed former inmates in the follow–up sample said that contacts with the CSC had been "very helpful," whereas only 14.8 percent of the employed former inmates said the CSC contacts were "very helpful." In addition, employed respondents were slightly more likely to agree (71.4 percent) with the statement, "I only have contact with community service centers because I have to," than were the unemployed respondents (64 percent). The unemployed respondents were also more likely to agree (58.8) with the statement, "I utilize services from community service centers when I need help," than were the employed releasees (44.6 percent). These data make sense in light of some of the observations made during site visits to community service centers. Community service center clients who were employed were more likely to view CSC contacts as intrusions into their daily lives, especially if CSC offices were crowded or clients had to take time off from work to visit the CSCs. Because they had a job, the primary benefit that could be derived from CSC contact may have been perceived as irrelevant to them.

Race of the releasee also was related slightly to how respondents perceived the "helpfulness" of the CSCs among the follow–up sample respondents. Whites (28.6 percent) were more likely than blacks (14.3 percent) or Hispanics (11.1 percent) to say that CSCs had been "very helpful." Why this is the case is unclear, but blacks were the group most likely to state they "only have contact with CSCs because they have to" (72 percent compared 63 percent for whites/Hispanics). In addition, gender is a weak correlate of some relevant attitudes and perceptions of CSCs among the releasees. For instance, males were more likely than females to state the CSC contacts had been of no help (40 percent vs. 29.6 percent). Likewise, 72.4 percent of the males agreed with the statement that they "only have contact with CSCs because I have to," whereas only 57.1 percent of the females agreed with that statement.

In summary, the vast majority of the former inmates who responded to the survey requests stated they had some contact with a CSC or a parole agent, and the number of contacts made was consistent with reporting requirements. For most of the respondents, the contact was made because it was required, not for referral or other assistance. The survey data present conflicting findings over the perceived usefulness or helpfulness of the CSCs. While a majority of the respondents indicated that the CSCs were at least somewhat helpful, a large percentage also agreed that the CSCs "don't provide much assistance." Responses from the CSC sample have not been reported as thoroughly as those from the follow–up sample, but in general, total response patterns were quite similar across the groups. When the analysis turned to differing response patterns across zones, there was a fairly consistent indication that releasees from Zone 3 perceive CSC experiences very favorably, while releasees from the other zones (particularly zones 2 and 4) are the least likely to report favorable experiences. These findings were not corroborated by the releasees in the CSC sample indicating that future data collection and analysis is warranted in the assessment of zone–based differences in releasee reactions to CSCs.

Individual Development Plans

The releasee surveys also elicited opinions about the Individual Development Plans (IDPs) that the former inmates had completed during Phase I of PreStart in 1992 and how they have been used since their release from prison.

Of the 109 respondents in the follow–up sample, 102 (93.6 percent) said they had completed an IDP. This was true for 78 percent of the CSC respondents. Of the respondents from the follow–up sample who reported information on whether their IDP had been used since their release (106), 33 percent stated they had not used their IDP at all. Releasees who were surveyed by phone were asked how their IDP had been used. Fifteen of the 66 individuals responding (24 percent) indicated that the IDP helped the individual to focus on what was needed to be successful and to establish broad personal goals (for example, "It made me focus," "It was helpful," "It put me in the right direction"), while 18 releasees (29 percent) stated that the IDPs were used to establish specific personal goals (for example, "Look for job," "Reunite with family" and so forth).

A number of items on both the mail and telephone survey instruments attempted to assess how helpful or useful the IDP had been to the releasee. As reported in Table 7.6, a slight majority of the releasees in the follow–up sample indicated that the IDP had been useful (56.7 percent), and more than 70 percent of the CSC reported likewise. When people who did not complete an IDP are excluded from these figures (a total of 82 releasees in the follow–up sample indicated they had

between having a self-reported drug problem and drug use is strong, many of the individuals surveyed, both while incarcerated and subsequent to release, report not having a drug problem, yet engage in the use of illegal drugs.

In summary, the telephone survey respondents on the whole were having only a modicum of success avoiding criminal behavior one year after their release. Almost one-third (35 respondents) had been arrested since release. An equal number also reported using illegal drugs since release.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has revealed that inmates recently released from prison appear, as a group, to be having difficulties adjusting to life in the community. It was found that a large percentage of releasees were unemployed or were working at very low-paying jobs. (This came from both a follow-up survey that resulted in a fairly representative sample of releasees who had been out of prison for almost a year, and an availability sample of releasees who walked into or phoned a CSC when research staff were present.) Almost one-third reported both being rearrested or using illegal drugs since their release from prison.

These respondents also reported fairly frequent contact with CSCs, in a manner consistent with the IDOC reporting requirements. Some difference was noted across PreStart zones in terms of number of contacts and type (percent in person), but in no zone was anything found that was inconsistent with reporting rules or system capacities. In general, a majority of releasees responded favorably to CSCs and parole agents, indicating that they found CSCs to be helpful, that their overall experience with CSCs was good and that they had received service referrals from the CSCs. On the other hand, a majority of releasees also stated they only had contacts with CSCs because they had to. Some differences in response patterns were observed across PreStart zones; however, based on the relatively small number of respondents in all zones but Zone 1, the data should be viewed with caution. Nevertheless, it does appear that releasees in certain zones are responding much less favorably to PreStart Phase II programming than would be hoped for or expected. A stronger conclusion on this point must await the acquisition of additional relevant data from larger representative samples of releasees.

Chapter 8

A PROCESS EVALUATION OF THE SPRINGFIELD COMMUNITY DRUG INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Program Overview and History

The Springfield Community Drug Intervention Program (CDIP), which is physically housed on the grounds of the IDOC headquarters, was established in December 1989 as a pilot project funded with federal dollars. "The primary purpose of the...(program) is to reduce recidivism. The program is designed to address substance abuse issues, impose conditions for treatment, provide for follow up, encourage training for job placement, and provide an alternative to incarceration" (Illinois Department of Corrections, April 1990).

During its pilot status, the program was the subject of an impact evaluation using an experimental design. The IDOC has reported that the evaluation demonstrated that the increased supervision and periodic drug testing associated with the program has proved effective (Illinois Department of Corrections, 1990–1992: 151). New felony arrests for a group of 71 program participants were slightly lower than for a control group of 65 nonparticipants. The technical violation rate for the experimental group was, however, slightly higher than for the control group (54.9 percent vs. 49.2 percent). Positive urinalyses for program participants decreased from January 1990 through November 1990 (during the pilot phase), suggesting the increasing effectiveness of the program in promoting client sobriety (Illinois Department of Corrections, Oct. 9, 1991)

Since the Springfield CDIP completed its pilot project status and became a program under the PreStart umbrella, it has not been the subject of a formal evaluation. The Springfield CDIP, the model substance abuse treatment program in the state, has been functioning continuously for almost four years but has not been recently evaluated.

The following is an assessment of the program's primary components and the reaction of clients to the program. This process evaluation sets the stage for an outcome evaluation, the results of which are presented in Chapter 11.

Methodology for Process Evaluation

Five data sources inform this process evaluation. They include archival data on program functioning provided to the research team; observations of program activities derived from numerous visits to the program site; a series of interviews with all program staff that included both structured and unstructured question and answer sessions; self–administered questionnaire and interview data with an availability sample of program participants; and a review of all information sources available on the population of program clients as of October 1992. These data sources are described more fully below.

Observational Data and Staff Interviews

The observational and staff interview data derive primarily from two site visits conducted at the Springfield CDIP. The visits occurred on Feb. 19, 1993, and May 25–26, 1993. In February, all program staff were interviewed individually with the use of standardized, structured interviews. The primary purpose of the May visit was to administer questionnaires to releasees currently taking part in the program. Then, from January 1994 until mid–February 1994, one person from the research staff spent several days at the program site collecting data on clients in the program as of October 1992. During this time, the researcher was able to spend much time with the program staff, discussing a variety of issues with them, and observing program routines and staff/client interaction patterns. In addition, the researcher became intimately familiar with all standard recordkeeping practices associated with the program.

Availability Sample Data Collection Procedures

Before the evaluation team's May 1993 site visit, the program administrator sent out letters to 72 program clients requesting their attendance at the CDIP on the two days of the visit. Releasees required to attend the CDIP on those days for scheduled group sessions, as well as other releasees with no such requirement, were included in the administration of the questionnaire. Some of these were recent graduates of the CDIP program. Of the 72 releasees contacted, 38 (58 percent) were present during the two days of the research. Each of the available releasees was approached and asked if she or he would be willing to fill out a short questionnaire. Thirty–five releasees agreed, yielding an effective response rate of 92 percent.

The questionnaires were administered in a group setting when groups of clients were available. This occurred twice on the grounds of the CDIP: once at Gateway (a nonprofit treatment

center at which some CDIP clients were receiving treatment) and once at the Triangle Center, (another local treatment center during a group therapy session of CDIP clients. Gateway and Triangle Center are the two drug treatment centers in Springfield contracted to provide services to CDIP clients). Five individual questionnaire administrations took place at the Springfield CDIP: four were clients requested by the CDIP administrator to take part in the study, and one was a client reporting in at the CDIP that day.

After the administrations, the questionnaires were examined by the researchers. Questionnaires not answered in a logically consistent manner were deemed unusable and excluded from the analysis. Of the 35 completed questionnaires, two were considered unusable.[21]

The instrument consisted of open– and closed–ended questions concerning each releasee's background, activities in the CDIP, nature and frequency of drug and alcohol use before and during involvement with the CDIP, and reactions to the CDIP. After the questionnaire administration, group discussions with the releasees were conducted to supplement the quantitative survey data. These discussions focused on various issues and procedures within the CDIP, such as referrals to the CDIP; individual and group counseling session activities; client perceptions of parole agents and counselors; the mandatory nature of the program; Phase I of PreStart; use of the Individual Development Plans (IDPs) by releasees; and recommendations for improvement of the CDIP.

Because of the possible self–selection bias inherent in the sampling methodology used (the process of sending letters requesting releasee participation in the questionnaire administration), the resulting sample may not be representative of the entire CDIP caseload. This fact, coupled with the relatively small sample size, indicates that the questionnaire data should be interpreted with some caution.

Ninety–one percent of the 33 CDIP clients in the availability sample was male. Forty–one percent of the sample was white, 38 percent was black, 9 percent was black/Hispanic and 12 percent was of other ethnicities. The mean age of the sample at the time of the administration was 31.94, with the youngest participant being 20 years old and the oldest being 57 years old. Forty–two percent of the respondents was single, 24 percent was married, and 30 percent was divorced or separated. Slightly more than 42 percent was currently unemployed.

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21 Of the 33 usable questionnaires, two questionnaires contained a great deal of missing information regarding the respondent's self–reported drug and alcohol use. Thus, the valid sample size for much of the subsequent analyses is 31.

Three respondents had already completed the CDIP. For these three releasees, the mean length of time they spent in the program was 19.28 months, with a range of 12.17 to 26.40 months. The other 29 respondents who reported on this variable were currently in the CDIP program for an average of 6.25 months. The amount of time the releasees had been in the program ranged from 1.83 months to 18.07 months.

October 1992 Client Population Data Collection Procedures

To supplement the data derived from the availability sample, attempts were made to collect program data from the entire population of CDIP clients that had participated in the program. To accomplish this, a list of all CDIP clients actively participating in the program as of October 1992 was obtained. This population consisted of 46 clients released from prison to Sangamon County and accepted into the Springfield CDIP. For each of these clients, an attempt was made to search all available program data files to assess the individual's progress while in the program and upon his or her release from the program. In addition, these participants' criminal behavior was tracked to assess the program's impact on recidivism. The results of this impact analysis are presented in Chapter 11.

The data sources reviewed included IDOC's automated Offender Tracking System and CDIP client case files. Releasee alcohol and drug use information was provided by the PreStart agent supervising the releasee on his or her caseload. The supervising agent also reported on his or her perceptions of the progress made by each client while in the program and information on the client's community adjustment. Individual and group counseling hours at the CDIP were gathered through a review of the CDIP counselors' monthly records. Additional counseling hours at outside treatment providers were provided by the client's primary supervising agent. Attempts to receive data on each client's history of substance abuse treatment from the Illinois Department of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) proved unsuccessful. Research staff did not attempt to gather data directly from these clients.

Eighty percent of the 46 CDIP clients in the October 1992 population were male. Blacks accounted for 54 percent of the group; whites accounted for 46 percent. These were the only ethnicities present among the clients. The average age at the time of entry into the CDIP was 29.3 years (standard deviation of 6.89), with a range of 20.1 to 56.0 years. Fifty–eight percent of the clients had never married, 15 percent were married, and 26 percent were divorced or separated. Thirty–seven percent had completed one to three years of high school without receiving a GED, 25 percent had received a GED; 12 percent graduated from high school; and 25 percent had one to three years of college experience.

At the time of this evaluation, all program participants in the October 1992 client population had exited the program (this includes one client who died shortly after entering the CDIP). Seventeen of the 46 clients (37 percent) had successfully completed the CDIP. The mean length of time they were in the program was 11.5 months, with a range of 1.3 months to 26.5 months.

Thus, the client population as of October 1992 exhibited strong similarities to the availability sample that had been surveyed before. Both groups of clients had a high percentage of males, a similar percentage of whites compared to other ethnicities, and an average age of 30, with an age range from the early 20s to the mid–50s. As would be expected, the availability sample (most still in the program) had a shorter average period of time in the CDIP than the October 1992 population. These patterns suggest that, taken together, the clients included in these groups are quite representative of all CDIP clients. Data derived from both groups will inform the following discussion of the Springfield CDIP.

The Initial Impact of PreStart on the CDIP

As was the case systemwide in the initial stages of PreStart's implementation, an uncertain environment surrounding the Springfield Community Drug Unit emerged, and the program witnessed a number of disruptions in mid–1991. Unit operations became more disorganized, and staff negativity increased. The drug unit supervisor, in addition to maintaining her responsibilities with the drug unit, became a PreStart presenter for modules 1 and 10 at a nearby institution. More recently, she also has been active in trying to get other community drug units up and running, and has been a very valuable resource for the Community Services Division in meeting its need to develop and maintain adequate information systems. Thus, she is often pulled away from her CDIP duties.

The parole agents on staff at the time of PreStart's implementation were transferred, and two new agents were hired. One left shortly thereafter and was subsequently replaced. The current parole agents were not hired for their experience providing assistance to substance abusing clients or their educational background in substance abuse. As a result, some initial conflicts among staff existed, as would be expected given the need for the adoption of differing role orientations to community supervision. It has therefore taken some time to develop a stable and harmonious work force in this CDIP unit.

The program is currently staffed by two parole agents (who are both in the process of becoming certified substance abuse counselors), a certified substance abuse counselor under

contract from a local drug treatment provider, and the program supervisor mentioned above, who also is certified as a substance abuse counselor.

Recent visits to the Springfield CDIP indicate that supportive relationships between CDIP staff have developed over time and tend to be exhibited by outwardly positive interactions. The rapport among staff appears generally good, with high levels of communication between staff members. Constructive arguments and discussions concerning client treatment issues take place during the regularly scheduled staff meetings, as well as informally around the office. Conflicts based on personal approaches to supervision and treatment issues remain evident, however. Some staff mentioned the recurring problem of certain other staff members enabling clients by allowing these clients to deviate from program standards without appropriate actions being taken (for example, sanctions). Some staff felt that the clients were not being held as accountable as they should be and that this was detrimental to achieving the uniform treatment goals of the Springfield CDIP. Also, while all staff are now going through certification training to work with substance abusers, their earlier lack of formal training was resented somewhat by the staff with valid certification. Finally, with at least one staff person often being absent from the office for up to three days a week to engage in other sanctioned work activities, the resulting uneven workloads also tend to increase staff conflict at the CDIP.

These issues are amplified by the fairly amorphous program philosophy. Numerous conversations with staff indicate diverse opinions on the proper role and functioning of the program. A solid philosophy of treatment and supervision undergirding the overall activities of the unit appears lacking. This, coupled with inconsistently applied program standards, uneven staff experiences and qualifications as they relate to program functions, and perhaps inequitable efforts being exerted across staff to meet basic work requirements, has promoted the emergence of sometimes problematic staff–to–staff and staff–to–client interactions. This appears to hinder program effectiveness.

Client Referral and Selection Processes

The maximum caseload in the Springfield CDIP is 50, with 45 to 47 clients generally in the program at any one time. This allows staff to have a high level of monitoring and intervention with program clients.

The requirements for entry into the program are relatively vague, revolving around participants having a "history of substance abuse." Referrals are often received from the Springfield community service center. The entire drug unit staff reviews available information on

referrals to assess client appropriateness, and there are sometimes internal disagreements on selection decisions. The prevailing philosophy tends to be that everyone should have an opportunity to fail, and very few referrals are denied. Denial decisions tend to reflect the view that the referred releasee is mentally unstable or exhibits very low functioning abilities, and thus would be unlikely to benefit from the program.

There is no systematic link between service center referrals and whether the releasee received institutionally based substance abuse assessment or treatment. That is, individuals who have received prison–based drug treatment, who have been identified as in need of additional treatment, and who are released to Sangamon County are not "tagged" for placement in the Drug Unit. Most of the available information used in the selection decision comes from the releasees' contacts with the Springfield community service center. Exceptions to this general pattern are inmates who were involved in Gateway–provided substance abuse programs while imprisoned and who were referred to the community–based Gateway program in Springfield upon their release. Likewise, treatment rarely appears to be mandated by the Prisoner Review Board for those referred to the CDIP. Rather, clients are often mandated only after they are accepted into the program and staff requests that such a condition be imposed.

Initially accepted referrals to the CDIP are screened by the substance abuse counselor who administers the MAST and DAST assessment inventories. The client is then assessed fully by one of the program's two contracted treatment providers. If the client denies substance abuse or treatment needs, CDIP staff will administer urine testing; if the results are positive, another assessment will be conducted. Resistant individuals are often persuaded to enter the program, resulting in very unwilling releasees sometimes becoming clients of the drug unit. Referral and selection is a continuous process, and a pending list is maintained. An individual is on the list until the initial assessment is made. Most people on the list are eventually admitted into the program. Thus, current referral and selection procedures have not resulted in an excess demand for the program.

The referral and selection process reflects a number of inadequacies. The lack of information sharing with prison staff (who have at times treated clients for substance abuse problems) and the waiting for service center referrals (which are based on information received when the releasee reports after his or her release) frequently results in lengthy intervals between release and substance abuse assessment. Moreover, interventions may not be occurring with the most needy or amenable clients. This issue is explored more fully below.

Client Perceptions of Treatment Need

Releasees from the availability sample were asked multiple questions about their use of alcohol and drugs. Surprisingly, the majority (55 percent) of the program's participants felt that, in their own opinion, they did not have an alcohol problem in the six–month period before their incarceration. One releasee was not sure if she or he had an alcohol problem or not. Seven of the respondents self–reported that they did not drink at all during this pre–incarceration time frame.

This self–assessment of alcohol abuse prior to incarceration varied across subgroups of the sample. Twenty–three percent of whites said that they did not have alcohol problems, compared with 66.7 percent of blacks. While 71 percent of unmarried releasees reported not having alcohol problems, only 37.5 percent of married releasees reported not having alcohol problems before their incarceration.

Employment status was another significant correlate. Seventy–nine percent of the unemployed clients believed that they did not have an alcohol problem, while only 42 percent of the employed clients reported similarly.

In response to the question, "In your opinion did you have a drug problem (before incarceration)?" 48.4 percent of the 31 respondents said no. One person was not sure. Responses were highly related to the race of the respondents. Overall, 33 percent of whites said they did not have a drug problem, while 58.3 percent of blacks reported not having had a drug problem.

A cross–tabulation was performed for frequency of alcohol and drug use reported by the CDIP releasees for the six months prior to their incarceration (Valid N=30). These figures are presented in Table 8.1. The table indicates that 30 percent of the clients self–reported rarely or never using alcohol, with a little more than one in five self–reporting rarely or never doing drugs. Only two of the 30 respondents indicated they rarely or never used drugs or alcohol. In contrast, 40 percent of all the respondents self–reported using both alcohol and drugs on a regular basis of more than weekly. Thus, the CDIP program included a majority of clients who self–reported very frequent use of alcohol and/or drugs prior to their incarceration. A significant minority, however, self–reported infrequent (less often than monthly) drug and/or alcohol use prior to their incarceration (23.3 percent).

Table 8.1: Cross-Tabulation of Self-Reported Alcohol and Drug Use Levels Six Months Prior to Incarceration (Availability Sample)

	Rarely/Never (%)	More than Monthly (%)	More than Weekly (%)	Total (%)
Rarely/Never	6.7 [a] (2)	10.0 (3)	13.3 (4)	30.0 (9)
More than Monthly	3.3 (1)	3.3 (1)	3.3 (1)	10.0 (3)
More than Weekly	13.3 (4)	6.7 (2)	40.0 (12)	60.0 (18)
Total	23.3 (7)	20.0 (6)	56.7 (17)	100.0 (30)

[a] Cell percentages

To further explore client self–perceptions of their treatment needs, each client was asked to rate their own levels of alcohol and drug use before their involvement with the CDIP. Nine clients (29 percent) believed they were heavy or excessive drinkers; six (19.4 percent) said they drank moderately; and 16 (51.6 percent) drank lightly or did not use alcohol at all. Clients' assessments of their levels of drug use were similar to their levels of alcohol consumption. Eight (25.9 percent) considered themselves as heavy or excessive drug users before their involvement in the CDIP; four (13 percent) were moderate users; and 17 (54.8 percent) used drugs lightly or not at all.

To assess if the self–reported levels of alcohol and drug use reported by the CDIP clients differed from those reported by individuals in the general inmate population, a comparison was made between the CDIP client sample and the 1993 sample of the inmate PreStart population (see Chapter 5). The characteristics of this 1993 inmate sample were presented in Table 5.3. Of all the reporting CDIP participants, 64.5 percent reported using drugs before being incarcerated, whereas 56.2 percent of the 1993 inmate sample had reported using drugs. Fifty–eight percent of the CDIP sample reported using drugs daily, almost daily or a couple times per week, compared to 44.1 percent of the 1993 inmate sample. Frequency of drug use and types of drugs used were consistently higher and different in the CDIP sample, but only to a slight degree. Also, the

percentage of people "never" using drugs, as well as the rate of missing data, was higher in the inmate sample.

In summary, the CDIP clients surveyed reported a slightly greater use of alcohol and drugs prior to their release from incarceration than a sample of inmates that were surveyed. Nonetheless, about one–quarter of the CDIP clients who reported their substance abuse patterns indicated that they only drank or did drugs sporadically before their incarceration. About 50 percent reported they did not have an alcohol and/or drug problem. While denial is a common characteristic of substance abusers, a substantial minority of CDIP clients indicated that they did not feel in need of intensive substance abuse treatment. These data also suggest that there are at least two differing client types within the sample. The first group, those less likely to report an alcohol problem, tended to be black, unmarried and unemployed. The second group appeared to be alcoholic, disproportionately married, employed whites.

Client Perceptions of the Referral Process

Respondents from the availability sample were asked, "Who referred you to the CDIP?" A variety of sources, sometimes multiple in nature, was given in reply. Twelve respondents (38 percent) believed the Prisoner Review Board had mandated their attendance. Nine releasees (28 percent) said their substance abuse counselor from prison was the source of the referral. Sixty percent of the clients indicated that they had been referred to the CDIP by their parole agent at the Springfield CSC, while the remaining 40 percent indicated they had not been referred by their CSC.

Prior treatment for substance abuse did not appear to be related to the referral of releasees to the CDIP. For example, 55 percent of the sampled clients had not previously participated in a substance abuse program while incarcerated. Forty–five percent (15) of the sample had taken part in a substance abuse program while incarcerated, and 80 percent (12) of these releasees completed the program. However, of the 18 releasees (55 percent) that did not participate in a substance abuse program while incarcerated, two–thirds (12) indicated that they did not want to go through a drug treatment program while incarcerated. In addition, 64 percent of the clients reported never having participated in substance abuse treatment before their incarceration. Thus, a prior substance abuse treatment history appears not to be a strong factor in the referral decision.

As the above figures show, and the group discussions with program clients revealed, a high degree of client uncertainty about the referral process exists. As a group, the clients were often confused about how and why they were in the CDIP program. Releasees also were confused about

how assessments at the different treatment centers (such as Gateway and Triangle Center) affected their status at the CDIP, and how the CDIP influences their involvement in other outpatient and residential programs.

When asked why they thought they were in the CDIP, many releasees stated that it was because they were "on drugs at the time of their offense," or because they had "robbed and stole to get money for drugs." A few releasees said that they were now placed in the CDIP because they had been charged with trafficking or possession of controlled substances. Fairly surprisingly, only 21 percent of the CDIP clients were originally incarcerated for a drug charge. This figure is comparable to those found among the general inmate and releasee populations (see Table 11.2 for example).

According to the interview data, many releasees also did not understand why they were selected to go through the CDIP when they had already been mandated for extensive substance abuse treatment while incarcerated. These releasees assumed that referral into the CDIP was centered purely on their offense category. This, however, does not appear to be the situation. Accordingly, many of the CDIP clients did not perceive their current status in CDIP as being based on their current substance abuse treatment needs.

Staff Perceptions of Client Intake Processes and Client Needs

For each client in the program as of October 1992, the primary supervising agent was asked to describe the source(s) of the individual's referral and what information sources were used in the decision to accept the individual into the program. In addition, the agent presented his or her perceptions of each client's substance abuse problems at the time of the client's entry into the program. For the most part, agents tended to be comfortable reporting this information because they were very familiar with their clients. In fact, for 33 of the 44 clients (71.7 percent), agents indicated they were very familiar with the case.[22] Nonetheless, this methodology is affected by a subjects' ability to recall the information. Therefore, the resulting data should be viewed only as illustrative of intake processes and decision making. It is also a method by which to examine the accuracy and reliability of self-reports made by the program clients.

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[22] Agents reported being more familiar with cases that resulted in a successful completion of the program than with those that proved unsuccessful (for example, early termination). Accordingly, these data will tend to overrepresent the most successful of the CDIP cases.

When asked about the key factors for determining a client's acceptance into the CDIP after referral, the primary supervising agents indicated a significant reliance on the classification summary from the prison institution. The classification summary is included in the client's CSC files initially reviewed by the CDIP staff. For 81 percent of the total CDIP cases in this population, agents said the classification summary was used. Other reported factors influential in client acceptance included the mental health evaluation from the institution (36 percent of the cases); type of offense (31 percent); MAST and DAST scores (26 percent); results of assessment by contracted treatment providers (21 percent); and positive urinalysis results (14 percent). The above figures, as reported by CDIP agents, portray client acceptance decisions as being highly reliant on institutional data and less reliant on information from substance abuse treatment providers and evidence of current substance use. This is inconsistent with the program policy, which specifies that intake decision–making processes be based on objective data (for example, MAST and DAST scores). The key factors involved in clients being accepted into the CDIP seem to be institutional records, rather than actual intake assessments.

It should be noted that final program acceptance decisions are made ultimately by the program supervisor. Thus, other staff members' perceptions of the key factors for determining acceptance may differ from the key factors involved in the actual decision–making process. In the nine cases where the program supervisor was also the primary supervising agent, she or he tended to place more emphasis on MAST and DAST scores (100 percent), with support from the classification summary and mental health evaluation (both 78 percent), results of assessment by contracted treatment providers (67 percent), positive urinalysis results (44 percent), and type of offense (22 percent). This distribution of factors involved in client acceptance may be more accurate than the perceptions of other agents. The discrepancies between the figures presented by the program supervisor and other agents serve to illustrate, however, the marked differences in staff perceptions of client selection criteria and processes within the CDIP.

Primary supervising agents were asked to report their perceptions of each clients' level of alcohol and drug use at the time of entry into the CDIP for the October 1992 population. The results are presented in Table 8.2 and include agent perceptions of the 35 clients best remembered (11 missing cases). Only three clients (8.5 percent) were considered by the CDIP staff to be "heavy" or "excessive" alcohol users at the time of entry into the CDIP, while 71.4 percent of the group was reported to be "light" drinkers or nonusers at that time. Similarly, only three clients (9.4 percent) were perceived as heavy or excessive drug users at entry time, with 75 percent of the clients reported as being nondrug users or "light" drug users. A cross–tabulation between initially perceived levels of client alcohol and drug use showed that 11 clients (31.4 percent) and nine clients (28.1 percent) were perceived by the agents as light drug or alcohol users, respectively, at

the time of their admission into the program. Further, an average of 43 percent of the population was perceived as being either nonalcohol or nondrug users. These data, even more so than the client self–reported substance use levels presented above (for the availability sample), suggest that many of the clients entering the CDIP program many not have been especially chronic or problematic substance abusers.

Table 8.2: Supervising Agents' Perceptions of Client Initial Substance Use Levels: October 1992 Population

	Did Not Use	Light	Moderate	Heavy	Excessive
Perceived Initial Alcohol Use	14 40 %	11 31.4 %	7 20 %	2 5.7 %	1 2.9 %
Perceived Initial Drug Use	15 46.9 %	9 28.1 %	5 15.6 %	2 6.3 %	1 3.1 %

All information sources available thus tend to suggest that at least a substantial minority of CDIP clients may not be especially heavy substance users in manifest need of intensive treatment services. Accordingly, current CDIP referral and selection processes appear to be suspect in inadequately assessing releasees' need for treatment and in selecting those eligible individuals who may be in the greatest need of intensive substance abuse treatment.

Summary of Assessment and Referral Processes

Given the small number of clients who can be serviced by the community drug program, the establishment of a stronger referral and selection process that identifies the most serious substance abusing releasees in the area, and which allows for a more timely intervention (that is, minimizes post–incarceration/pre–program relapse potential) with an amenable clientele, should be considered. Amenability is raised as a concern not because of the difficulties associated with treating resistant clients, but because this is compatible with the aspect of PreStart's philosophy that calls for the voluntary utilization of resources. Forcing someone into a very intensive and intrusive treatment program, which has a much greater potential for technical violation than is normally the case, should be originally premised on some objective assessment of risk and need.

This would be preferred to referral and selection processes based on happenstance situations at a CSC or at the CDIP. (These would include, for example, decisions based on what information is volunteered by a releasee to an agent, the views of a particular agent that has information indicating that a releasee may be a suitable CDIP client, how many available slots are in the CDIP, and so on.)

Program Structure and Client Services

According to the official program design, clients are exposed to three well–defined supervision levels, all of which must be completed before the releasee is considered to have successfully completed the program. Required levels of supervision and contacts are reduced as the individual progresses through the program. Periods in a certain level vary according to individual behaviors. In addition, the substance abuse counselor introduces a point system in which a client gets points if she or he complies with particular aspects of the program. The focus is on incentives for clients to comply with the treatment regime. Clients will be considered for successful termination from the program if a certain point level is achieved.

To meet formal program standards, client must do the following: 1) attend group counseling sessions once a week (unless comparable interventions are taking place in the community); 2) attend a one–hour individual counseling session each month; and 3) comply with the treatment requirements of the treatment vendor. Relationships and information sharing between the vendors and program staff appear very strong; the primary components of a solid intervention program appear to be in place.

Clients from the availability sample were asked what specific activities they work on as part of the CDIP. Reported activities included: group counseling (94 percent); watching videos (82 percent); individual counseling (52 percent); fulfilling their Individual Development Plans (45 percent); working on their 12–step program (42 percent); job placement activities (42 percent); setting up a bank account (27 percent); and other activities (15 percent).

Group Counseling

Fifty–five percent (18) of the availability sample said they attend group counseling sessions once a week. Twenty–seven percent (9) reported attending group counseling "as often as the program counselor tells me." Two releasees had group sessions every other week, and four releasees specified having a required period other than weekly, biweekly or monthly to attend group counseling sessions.

Group counseling sessions were considered by eight (35 percent) releasees to be the most helpful activity in which they participated. However, a number of clients questioned the value of groups sessions held at the CDIP. A heterogeneous mix of clients in group counseling sessions is prevalent at the CDIP. One releasee said he did not enjoy or get anything out of the group sessions because he felt "uncomfortable airing personal problems in front of strangers." Many of the CDIP clients reported that the composition of groups varied greatly from week to week, reducing the potential for effective group–based change processes to develop.

Releasees in the availability sample noted that the mandatory nature of the CDIP presented many problems. Group counseling, a major segment of the treatment services provided by the program, was the area where the mandatory nature of the CDIP was most often noted as being problematic. Releasees who attended the group sessions for support, trust and fellowship reported that treatment processes are impaired; this is because counseling groups often consist of people who do not clearly understand why they are in treatment and of differing individuals from session to session. In addition, many clients stated they did not want to be in the group sessions and did not identify with those releasees seeking therapeutic help.

While these concerns expressed by clients within the availability sample are commonly articulated by newcomers to group therapy, they raise the apprehension that some basic principles of effective group therapy are not being employed or internalized by the clients of the CDIP. This is especially problematic because commonly articulated concerns were often expressed by clients who had been in the CDIP for quite a while, and by some who were able to contrast group therapy sessions held at one of the local treatment centers to those being held at the CDIP (see subsequent discussion on community treatment services).

According to program data maintained on the October 1992 clients, the average number of group counseling sessions attended by clients during the first three–month period of their CDIP involvement was 5.33 (N=45). While much lower than the once–a–week attendance mandated by the CDIP, this figure includes clients that entered residential treatment upon release from the institution and acceptance into the CDIP. These individuals receive most of their substance abuse treatment at a residential treatment center in the community (for example, Gateway) and have decreased CDIP activity levels during this time. For example, among clients not in residential treatment at Gateway, the average number of group counseling sessions attended during the first three–month period was 6.32 (N=38), a figure still much lower, however, than expected considering the program standard of weekly participation.

As time in the program increases, attendance in group counseling sessions decreases for CDIP clients not in residential treatment. Program data indicate that for clients in months four to six

of CDIP participation (N = 36), clients averaged 5.31 group sessions. During months seven to nine, clients averaged 4.74 sessions (N = 34). Clients averaged 3.81 sessions (N=31) during months 10 to 12; 3.25 sessions (N=12) during months 13 to 15; and 0.50 sessions (N=4) during months 16 to 18. These findings indicate that after month 10 of CDIP involvement, clients attend fewer than one group counseling session per month on average. A pattern of decreasing attendance at group counseling sessions for clients compliant with the treatment regime is consistent with program standards. But these data suggest that levels of attendance at group counseling sessions are much lower than program standards for most clients across their time of involvement in the CDIP.

Archival data provided by the CDIP for the period spanning August 1991 to July 1993 indicated that the number of group counseling sessions was similar to those measured by the archival data kept for the October 1992 population, and that group counseling contact hours were increasing across this time frame. For example, the number of group counseling hours increased from 273 hours during August/September/October 1992 to 662 hours during May/June/July 1993. Beginning with the three–month period of August 1991 to October 1991, and each of the seven subsequent three–month periods, the average number of group counseling hours per CDIP participant was 3.75; 3.97; 4.38; 5.02; 6.16; 4.67; 5.43; and 6.08 hours, respectively. Once again, these figures are consistently lower than those expected from stated program standards, suggesting that group sessions are either not being delivered as regularly as program standards indicate they should, record keeping practices have resulted in inadequate counts, or clients are not attending sessions.

Individual Counseling

Individual counseling sessions take place with the substance abuse counselor on site. During such sessions, issues of job placement and educational opportunities are discussed. Individual sessions were described by the releasees as "brief" and "very limited," yet releasees exhibited appreciation for the chance to develop an individual treatment plan and to work one–on–one with the substance abuse counselor. A relatively high number of clients (22 percent) said that individual counseling was the most important part of the CDIP.

Fifty–two percent of clients (17) in the availability sample said individual counseling sessions took place once a week. Four releasees said they had individual sessions every other week, and one person said once every month. Five clients reported having individual counseling sessions as often as their counselor told them, and five specified another schedule for having individual counseling.

The clients in the October 1992 population had an average of 3.16 (N=45) individual counseling sessions during the first three months of involvement with the CDIP. This figure remained relatively stable over subsequent three–month periods: 2.40 (N=43); 2.51 (N=41); 2.00 (N=36); 2.36 (N=14); and 1.17 (N=6), respectively. Researchers found that CDIP clients not involved with residential treatment at Gateway attended an average of 3.74 (N=38) sessions over the first three–month period; 2.78 (N=36) sessions over the second three–month period; 2.77 (N=34) over the third three month period; 2.16 (N=31) sessions over the fourth three–month period; 2.08 sessions over the fifth three–month period; and 0.50 sessions over the sixth three–month period. Similar to group counseling attendance records, the number of individual counseling sessions is generally somewhat lower than expected based on program standards.

The frequency of individual contacts reported by clients in the availability sample differs significantly with program data maintained for the October 1992 group. In the availability sample, more than half of the clients said individual counseling sessions took place once a week (or four times a month) whereas for the October 1992 population, an average of approximately three sessions over a three–month period (or about one individual session every month) was found. The figures representing individual counseling attendance for the October 1992 population were taken from records of individual counseling sessions maintained officially by the on–site substance abuse counselor. The reason for the discrepancy between the data reported by the availability sample and the October 1992 population records is unclear.

Archival data for the program during August 1991 to July 1993 indicated that the average number of individual counseling hours remained relatively stable over time. For the eight subsequent three–month periods over this time frame, the average numbers of individual counseling hours per program participant were 2.43; 3.90; 3.33; 3.53; 3.45; 4.28; 4.09; and 3.53, respectively. These figures were consistent with the figures derived from the October 1992 client population.

Supervision: Agent Contacts

According to releasees in the availability sample, contact with supervising CDIP agents was fairly regular. Eighty–two percent of releasees (27) in the availability sample indicated they had to report in to the CDIP once a week; four clients stated that they reported in less often (from one to three times a month); and one reported more often than once a week.

A similar pattern of contact rates with agents was found, based on program records, in the October 1992 population. Over the first three–month period of CDIP involvement, a mean of

11.36 face–to–face contacts was found. The average numbers of face–to–face contacts were 7.93 contacts during months four to six; 8.17 contacts during months seven to nine; 6.42 contacts during months 10 to 12; 6.53 contacts over months 13 to 15; and 3.71 contacts over months 16 to 18. These data indicate fairly intensive levels of contact between CDIP agents and their clients, and in a manner consistent with program standards.

In addition to face–to–face contacts, regular collateral contacts are supposed to be made by the supervising agent with people important to the client (such as family members, roommates, employers and treatment providers) when necessary. The average number of recorded collateral contacts ranged from one contact per releasee for a three–month period (for months 13 to 15 and months 16 to 18) to 2.56 contacts per releasee during months 10 to 12. Thus, the number of recorded collateral contacts across the population was generally low. These figures appear to underestimate the number of collateral contacts actually being made. Observational and interview data suggested that collateral contacts were more common than indicated by these data and suggest that greater attention be paid to the maintenance of complete records on agent/client contact levels.

Drug Testing

Staff at the CDIP are afforded the ability to conduct urinalysis drops regularly. The availability sample clients reported these drops as having a significant deterrent effect on their potential drug use. With urinalysis drops being used repeatedly, CDIP staff are able to track releasee drug use over time and to direct those in need of more acute support to additional services. In many cases, those needing additional help will be referred to the more intensive programs at Gateway and the Triangle Center.

All availability sample respondents said they were required to submit to urinalysis drops. The drops reportedly took place once a week for 69 percent (22) of the sample. Twenty–five percent (8) of the releasees reported that drops occurred either every other week or monthly. In addition, one respondent noted more than one drop per week, and one said that drops were random.

Eighteen releasees (54.5 percent) of the availability sample reported that they had a dirty drop at the CDIP. Blacks were more likely than whites to report having had a dirty drop (58.3 percent vs. 38.5 percent, respectively). Sixty–two percent of married releasees reported a dirty drop, compared with 50 percent of single releasees. The strongest and most striking disparity occurred between employed and unemployed releasees. It was found that 85.7 percent of unemployed releasees in the sample had a dirty drop, while only 31.6 percent of employed releasees reported having a dirty drop.

The October 1992 population was found to have an average of 6.37 (N=46) urinalysis drops during the initial three months in the CDIP, with a range of zero to 15 drops during this three–month period. Over subsequent three–month periods, the average number of drops steadily decreased to 4.14 (N=43); 3.49 (N=41); 2.14 (N=36); 2.07 (N=15); and 1.57 (N=7), respectively. The average number of positive urinalysis drops also decreased over the six three–month periods: 1.59, 0.98, 0.90, 0.56, 0.27, and 0.14. The resulting percentage of positive drops for the CDIP population was 25 percent during the first three–month follow–up period; 23.7 percent during the second three–month period; 25.8 percent during the third three–month period; 26.2 percent during the fourth three–month period; 13 percent during the fifth three–month period; and 8.9 percent during the sixth three–month period. These figures, for the first year of treatment (before the drop–off in percentages found in the fifth and sixth three–month periods) are comparable to, if somewhat lower than, national figures for such program testing efforts.

In relation to these findings for the October 1992 population, archival data indicate that between August 1992 to July 1993, the overall percentage of positive urinalysis tests remained consistent. For the three–month period of August/September/October 1992, 31.8 percent of the total number of urinalysis tests were positive. In the following three–month periods, the percent of positive urinalysis tests were 32 percent, 30.8 percent and 26.2 percent, respectively.

Community Treatment Services

Twenty–two releasees (69 percent) included in the availability sample reported currently attending counseling services in the community, in addition to fulfilling their other CDIP responsibilities. Of these augmentative community services used by the releasees, six reported taking part in both Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Six releasees reported they were in Alcoholics Anonymous only, and three releasees noted that they were in Narcotics Anonymous only. Seven releasees reported not being in Alcoholics Anonymous nor Narcotics Anonymous, but were involved in other substance abuse treatment provided by Gateway or Triangle Center. Alcoholics Anonymous (52 percent), Narcotics Anonymous (44 percent), Triangle Center (35 percent) and Gateway (30 percent) were reported by the 22 clients involved with outside counseling services as their community treatment providers.

The releasees in the availability sample were asked to rate their satisfaction with the treatment services they received in the community. On a scale from one (extremely dissatisfied) to seven (extremely satisfied), the majority (57.7 percent) of respondents reported being satisfied with the treatment; the mean was 4.69 (standard deviation=1.98; N=26). Nineteen percent of the respondents reported being neutral concerning their satisfaction with the treatment services sought

in the community, while 23.1 percent were dissatisfied with the treatment. White releasees were slightly more dissatisfied than blacks with the services from community providers (25 percent vs. 11.1 percent), while unmarried respondents were more dissatisfied with the treatments than married or divorced/separated releasees (36.4 percent vs. 14.3 percent/12.5 percent, respectively). In addition, all three females in the sample were satisfied with their outside treatment, compared with only 52.2 percent of the male clients.

Few major differences in satisfaction with community–based services were found across the specific community–based treatment providers in the availability sample, with the exception of clients attending Alcoholics Anonymous. They reported being more satisfied with their involvement in that program (mean = 5.75) than releasees that did not take part in Alcoholics Anonymous (mean = 3.89).

In contrast to those receiving only CDIP treatment offerings, releasees simultaneously involved with other community treatment centers (such as Gateway and Triangle Center) appeared more positive about their treatment programs. Releasees reported that group counseling sessions at outside treatment centers to be more intense, confrontational and supportive than those provided at the CDIP. Compared to these outside treatment centers, the CDIP group counseling sessions were called "lifeless," "nonstimulating" and "uninformative." One releasee described the CDIP as providing "no motivation [for releasees], only the staff threats. IDOC treats [releasees] like children."

In the October 1992 population, substantial numbers of clients were involved in community treatment services throughout their involvement with the CDIP. These community services included Triangle Center and Gateway, as well as Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous. During the initial three–month period of program participation, 65 percent of the clients attended Triangle services (four on an inpatient basis and 25 on an outpatient basis); 22 percent attended Gateway services (seven inpatient and three outpatient); and 26 percent took part in other community–based treatment (four in Narcotics Anonymous and nine in Alcoholics Anonymous). During months four to six, 45 percent of the group attended Triangle services (four on inpatient basis and 15 on outpatient basis); 26 percent attended Gateway services (eight inpatient and three outpatient); and 30 percent took part in Narcotics Anonymous (5 clients) and Alcoholics Anonymous (9 clients). As would be expected, in subsequent three–month periods, client

participation in community–based substance abuse treatment programs declined,[23] but overall these data indicate a fairly high and consistent level of participation in these programs.

In summary, community treatment services were used, in addition to services provided by the CDIP, by a significant number of CDIP clients. In fact, according to archival data between November 1992 and July 1993, outside community treatment vendors provided more total group counseling hours for CDIP participants (794 hours) than the CDIP did (650 hours). However, the total number of individual counseling hours over the same period was higher for the CDIP (479) than outside vendors (67). Based on interview data with program participants in the availability sample, it can be concluded that outside treatment services represent an integral portion of individualized treatment programming for many CDIP clients.

Program Length and Exit Procedures

Most of the availability sample clients said they had no clear idea how long they would be in the program but that it could be "anywhere from six months to a year." The mean for the expected length of involvement in the CDIP program for the sample was 12.44 months (standard deviation = 7.75), with a minimum expected program length of 3.07 months and a maximum expected duration of 30.37 months. These numbers clearly indicate a very high variation in client expectations about the CDIP's program length.

The majority of the releasees in the availability sample also said that they had no idea when they would actually graduate from the CDIP or acquire early release status, if applicable. Most releasees said that the CDIP staff are very vague about what is required of them to graduate from the program; releasees went on to describe their duties for completion of the CDIP in very general terms, such as "keeping clean and staying off drugs" and "staying out of trouble." Only one

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23 During months seven to nine, 37 percent of the population attended Triangle (four inpatient and eight outpatient); 39 percent attended Gateway (nine inpatient, five outpatient, and one both inpatient and outpatient); and 27 percent attended Narcotics Anonymous (three) or Alcoholics Anonymous (nine). During months 10 to 12, 25 percent of the population took part in Triangle services (one inpatient, seven outpatient, and one both inpatient and outpatient); 31 percent took part in Gateway services (four inpatient and seven outpatient); and 22 percent attended Narcotics Anonymous (one) or Alcoholics Anonymous (seven). During months 13 to 15, two clients (13 percent of the population) attended Triangle outpatient services, 27 percent attended Gateway services (one inpatient and three outpatient), and one client attended Alcoholics Anonymous. During months 16 to 18, three clients took part in Gateway inpatient (one) and outpatient services (two), representing 43 percent of remaining October 1992 population. No clients attended Triangle, Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous in this three month period.

releasee in the two CDIP group discussions knew what specific points were needed to be recommended for early release status.

According to program data for the October 1992 population, all clients had ended their participation in the CDIP as of February 1994. One participant died shortly after entering the program and is therefore excluded from further analysis. The average length of stay in the program for the resulting entire population of 45 clients was 11.54 months (standard deviation = 4.26), with a minimum of 1.28 months and a maximum of 26.49 months. These figures indicate a strong similarity between program records maintained for the client population as of October 1992 and the expectations of clients in the availability sample.

Thirty–eight percent (17) of the clients completed the program successfully. Of the 62 percent of the October 1992 population that did not successfully complete the program, 29 percent (13) were returned to prison because of technical violations or a new mittimus.[24] The remaining 14 clients (31 percent) were discharged unsuccessfully. Most of these individuals witnessed an expiration to their period of mandatory supervised release without having graduated from the program successfully. The specific reasons why these clients were unsuccessful were not always evident from the case files and are thus explored below. What should be emphasized from these data, however, is the fairly low success rate of this program, with almost two–thirds of the program's clients "failing" to one degree or another.

For clients completing the program successfully, the average length of stay was 13.26 months (standard deviation = 4.12), with a range from a minimum stay of 9.02 months to a maximum of 26.49 months (see Table 8.3). Thus, even within the group successfully completing the program there is wide variation in length of stay (see Table 8.3). For clients who were unsuccessful in completing the program, the average time spent in the program was 10.81 months, with a range of 7.61 to 13.02 months. Those individuals who were reincarcerated had the shortest length of stay in the program, with an average of 9.66 months.

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24 It appears that nine of the 13 clients returned to prison were returned because of a technical structure.

Table 8.3: Performance of the CDIP Clients as They Relate to Program Outcomes

	Successful Completions (N=17)	Unsuccessful Discharges (N=14)	Return to Prison (N=13)
Mean Number of Months in CDIP	13.26	10.81	9.66
Mean Number of Group Sessions	23.81	13.36	13.07
Mean Number of Individual Sessions	11.50	9.71	9.46
Mean Number of Face–to–face Agent Contacts	39.38 (2.86 per month)	27.21 (2.51 per month)	33.31 (3.47 per month)
Percent of Positive Urinalysis Tests	8.23	27.91	37.29
Mean Scores of Community Adjustment Index (Range of 1 to 10)	8.75	4.31	2.83
Perceived by Agent as Witnessing Reduced Alcohol Use (%)	56.3	18.8	25.0
Perceived by Agent as Witnessing Reduced Drug Use (%)	63.6	9.1	27.3

On site at the CDIP as of February 1994, staff had posted notices stating CDIP graduation requirements. Three mandatory requirements were listed: 1) attend counseling groups, 2) remain drug free, and 3) maintain employment. Four personal development goals also were included: 1) maintain IDOC agent contacts; 2) attend individual counseling; 3) keep scheduled appointments; and 4) maintain a savings account. A comparison of data between clients who successfully completed the program and those who did not on these factors related to program graduation is presented in Table 8.3. Specifically, comparisons across the groups are made in terms of the mean number of group counseling sessions attended; the mean number of individual counseling hours

attended; the mean number of face–to–face agent contacts; the percentage of urinalysis tests that were positive; mean scores on a measure of positive community adjustment[25]; and agent perceptions of reductions in client substance–abusing behavior. These data indicate, as would be expected, that the clients who graduated from the program attended more counseling sessions, exhibited a reduced tendency to test positive on urine drops, and were perceived by agents as having reduced their alcohol/drug intake more substantially than those clients who "failed" in the program. Rather surprisingly, those who did well in the program averaged more face–to–face contacts per month with their PreStart agents (2.96) than those who did not do as well and were unsuccessfully discharged from the program (2.51). Those people returned to prison had the highest rate of face–to–face contact with PreStart agents (3.44).

Overall, these data indicate that outcome decisions appear premised quite directly on some basic individual performance measures. The research staff, based on both interviews with staff and clients and review of case files, were of the impression that exit standards were not very well specified and that the aggregate data presented above may be somewhat misleading. Accordingly, Table 8.4 presents a more dynamic view of program performance measures for two groups: those who successfully completed the program and those who failed but were not returned to prison. The data are broken down into three–month periods starting with entry into the program.

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25 The Community Adjustment Index was completed by each client's supervising agent. Ten items, which include the individual's work status, ability to support and contribute to family finances, participation in educational programming, stability of residence, arrest–free lifestyles, etc., are found in the index. The presence of an attribute is given a score of "1," the absence of an attribute is scored as zero. The sum of the scores is calculated, and represents the person's total community adjustment score, which can range from zero, a total lack of positive scores to "10", a very positive community adjustment. See MacKenzie, Shaw and Gowdy (1993) for an example.

Table 8.4: Comparison of October 1992 Population on Graduation Requirements Performance Averages

	Months	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18
	Total						
	Population	46.00	43.00	41.00	36.00	15.00	7.00
	Successful	17.00	17.00	17.00	17.00	8.00	3.00
	Unsuccessful	14.00	14.00	14.00	10.00	1.00	1.00
Length of CDIP Stay (In months)	Total	Average		Minimum		Maximum	
	Population	11.54		1.28		26.49	
	Successful	13.27		9.02		26.49	
	Unsuccessful	10.81		7.61		13.02	
Group Counseling Sessions	Total						
	Population	6.32	5.31	4.74	3.81	3.25	0.50
	Successful	5.44	5.00	5.71	4.18	4.86	3.50
	Unsuccessful	5.57	3.57	2.29	2.60	1.00	0.00
Percent Positive Urinalysis Tests	Total						
	Population	25.00	23.10	25.80	26.20	13.00	8.90
	Successful	13.20	13.60	9.60	2.90	0.00	0.00
	Unsuccessful	31.90	25.00	19.60	30.80	0.00	0.00
Face-to-Face Contacts	Total						
	Population	11.36	7.93	8.17	6.42	6.53	3.71
	Successful	11.56	7.82	9.24	6.82	8.00	5.33
	Unsuccessful	10.57	6.50	6.70	4.70	1.00	0.00
Individual Counseling Sessions	Total						
	Population	3.16	2.40	2.51	2.00	2.36	1.17
	Successful	2.86	2.29	2.41	2.06	2.57	2.50
	Unsuccessful	3.43	2.43	2.64	1.60	1.00	0.00

Overall differences in performance on the four key graduation requirements between "unsuccessfully discharged" clients and "successful" clients were relatively small on a number of dimensions for approximately the first six months of program participation; the differences then

widened considerably over time (see, for example, individual counseling sessions, face–to–face contacts). Unsuccessful clients were much more likely to have had dirty urinalyses than the successful clients throughout their time in the program. These data suggest that clients who eventually are terminated from the program (on average at about 11 months into the program) tend to have had problems progressing satisfactorily through the program earlier on. That is, they tend to witness significantly reduced agent contact and treatment services after being in the program for about six to nine months. Nonetheless, they appear to remain on the program rolls for some time thereafter (failure time perhaps coinciding with release from mandatory supervised release). This likely accounts for the high score of minimum number of months for the unsuccessful clients, and their mean length of time in the program not being all that much lower than that of the successful clients.[26] It also may be a partial explanation of why in the context of fairly specific program performance measures, many clients suggest that they don't know what is exactly expected of them and when they will complete the program.

This latter point also is illustrated by the fact that a number of CDIP clients who appeared to comply with program standards never graduated from the program. For example, among those 14 program failures that were not returned to prison, two individuals were rated by their agents as having a perfect score in the Community Adjustment Index. Three of the these same 14 clients never had a dirty urine drop. Three attended more than 25 group sessions, which is more than the average attended by the successful clients. Thus, there do seem to be some inconsistent standards applied in the decision to graduate clients from the CDIP program, and these appear to impact the perceptions of the client population.

Additional archival data on program activities raise another issue related to program–termination decisions. In the two–year period from August 1991 to July 1993, only 42 clients successfully completed the program. The corresponding total figure for unsuccessful completions (number of closed cases minus number of successful completions) is higher but still low in absolute terms (54). It is unclear why such a large percentage of closed cases apparently include unsuccessful completions. Coupled with the proportion of urine tests that turn out positive (29.4 percent), which is comparable to national figures for such program testing efforts, one may wonder why the exit flow from the program appears so low. It is recommended that program staff

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26 This may account for some of the fairly large drop–off in reported contact hours, group counseling hours, and individual counseling hours that takes place after clients are in the program for approximately six months, as noted earlier.

examine the policies being used to terminate clients — either successfully or unsuccessfully — in the attempt to assess whether the available treatment slots are being used as effectively as possible.

Client Reactions to the CDIP

Despite all the problematic issues noted above, as a group, releasees of the availability sample appeared very enthusiastic about the role of the CDIP in their lives. Twenty–eight (85 percent) of all respondents said the CDIP had a positive effect on their lives. Fourteen releasees said the effect was extremely positive. Three releasees (10 percent) were neutral about the entire CDIP experience, and only two felt the CDIP had a negative effect on their life.

The participants were asked to rate how they felt about the CDIP program and CDIP staff. The results are presented in Table 8.5. Eighty–seven percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the substance abuse counselor was knowledgeable about the issues. Eighty–four percent agreed or strongly agreed that they had no problems getting the help they needed from CDIP staff, and 81 percent stated the CDIP staff were very helpful.

Seventy–seven percent of clients agreed or strongly agreed that they have no problems scheduling sessions with the CDIP counselor. Clients also indicated the high regularity of services rendered at the CDIP. Sixty–six percent of clients noted that staff provided referrals to outside social service agencies in the community. However, only 26 percent of clients believed CDIP staff had helped them find a job. What clients noted as helpful was information provided by staff concerning curfew changes (47 percent) and the point system used for early release (45 percent). During group discussions, some clients expressed the feeling that the CDIP staff were not always honest about early release dates and information. Still, clients remained more neutral than negative about staff involvement on these questionnaire items, as indicated by the 65 percent of respondents stating that overall, "the CDIP has been a very positive experience."

Table 8.5:
Releasee Experiences with the Springfield CDIP

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Substance abuse counselor at the CDIP is knowledgeable about substance abuse issues.	31	48.4	38.7	6.5	6.5	0.0
Parole agent sees me regularly.	31	38.7	35.5	16.1	6.5	3.2
The CDIP provides me with referrals to outside social service agencies in the community.	29	31.0	34.5	27.6	6.9	0.0
I have no problems getting the help I need from the CDIP.	31	48.4	29.0	16.1	3.2	3.2
Staff at the CDIP regularly require urinalysis drops and breathalyzer tests.	32	62.5	15.6	12.5	6.3	3.1
I have no problems in scheduling counseling sessions with the CDIP counselor.	31	35.5	41.9	16.1	6.5	0.0
The CDIP staff keep me informed of the points I have earned to be eligible for early release.	31	22.6	22.6	32.3	16.1	6.5
Staff at the CDIP have helped me find a job.	31	16.1	9.7	35.5	25.8	12.9
Staff inform me of changes relating to curfews, reporting, and so on.	30	23.3	23.3	26.7	20.0	6.7
Staff at the CDIP are helpful	32	53.1	28.1	15.6	3.1	0.0
Being in the CDIP has been a very positive experience.	31	38.7	25.8	16.1	9.7	9.7

Thirty–six percent (12) of releasees said that they had gone through a substance abuse program before they were incarcerated. These clients were then asked to rate on a scale of five ("CDIP much more helpful") to negative five ("CDIP much less helpful") how the CDIP compared to the previous substance abuse treatment program. The mean score was 2.09. Overall, the CDIP was seen as a more helpful substance abuse treatment program than programs prior to incarceration, but there was a very high level of variation (standard deviation = 2.26). In fact, 50

percent of the releasees with prior drug and alcohol treatment experience said the CDIP was more helpful than the earlier program; the other 50 percent saw no difference.

Many releasees stated that there is a need to have substance abuse counselors who have had the same experiences that they have had as addicts. The substance abuse counselor at the CDIP is seen by the releasees as a "very caring, committed and credible individual," whose personal experience with substance abuse allows him to identify with the releasees' own experiences. Almost all of the releasees said they felt comfortable working with and trusting the substance abuse counselor. Some releasees expressed concerns that perhaps more counselors were needed who had been incarcerated and had been more "hardcore" substance abusers, giving a wider base of experience for the releasees from which to learn. These very favorable impressions of the CDIP by its clients were buttressed by the apparent impact the CDIP had on their self–reported substance abuse. More than 60 percent of the clients in the availability sample indicated that they had not drank any alcohol in the last month, and more than 80 percent stated they had not done any drugs in that time. More than 50 percent reported not using any substances whatsoever. While a perfect level of abstinence was not indicated, and such a goal would be unrealistic with any client population (let alone a population in which more than 40 percent of its members reported doing drugs and alcohol on a more frequent basis than weekly before their period of incarceration), these self–reported data indicate that the CDIP may have had quite a profound impact on a significant portion of its clientele.

Springfield CDIP Summary

This review of the Springfield CDIP indicates that the program is generally well received by its clients. It provides high levels of supervision and treatment, and despite its mandatory nature, most clients feel that it has made a positive impact on their lives. Patterns of self–reported substance–abusing behavior among program clients were noted as decreasing in frequency and seriousness since their involvement in the program. In addition, treatment services provided in the community were perceived very favorably by the client group.

However, some issues also were noted, however. Many clients did not view themselves as being in need of substance abuse treatment, and many were unsure as to how and why they were in the program. Additionally, many were unsure about what was required to successfully complete the program and how long that would take. While individual program components were generally viewed favorably by the clients, some concerns were raised about the adequacy of group and individual counseling services offered within the CDIP.

A variety of data sources suggest that the concerns raised by the program's clients may be valid. Referral, selection and intake processes can be enhanced so that valuable treatment slots are reserved for the most needy clients and so that services are delivered in a more timely manner. Even agents working within the CDIP suggested that while all of the clients in the program could benefit from the experience, not all (only a minority) were perceived as being problem substance abusers at the time of their admission to the program.

Once in the program, clients receive a variety of very worthwhile services and a strong dosage of supervision. Especially noteworthy has been the ability of the CDIP to develop very strong linkages with local substance abuse treatment providers. Unfortunately, it appears that a substantial portion of the CDIP's clientele does not take well to the CDIP program components. The result is a withdrawal from program services, apparently for many after they had been in the program for about six months. Despite this, the data suggest that many of these clients remain on the program rolls for a considerable amount of time after their noncompliance has become manifest. On the other hand, the data suggest that a number of clients who have appeared to conform well with the program and to have made a positive adjustment to the community are not graduated from the program. The consequences include a number of inactive clients who eventually fail in the program despite taking up treatment slots and a number of more active clients who do well but are considered failures. The net result appears to be an inefficient use of very scarce program resources and a fairly high failure rate.

It is recommended that the CDIP carefully reassess its referral, intake and selection processes as well as its client termination criteria and decision–making processes. The basic program components of a very desirable and potentially effective treatment are in place, but intake and outflow processes should be revised. In particular, the front door needs to be better monitored, and some clients should be shown to the rear door more quickly.

Chapter 9

THE RESPONSE OF ALLIED AGENCIES TO PRESTART

The ultimate success of PreStart will depend less on how IDOC staff and its correctional clients respond to the program than on how relevant stakeholders and allied agencies in the external environment view this innovative approach to offender reintegration. As discussed in Chapter 3, PreStart has been able to develop and mature in a fairly tranquil political environment. Relatively little media attention has been focused on the program, and potentially disruptive interest group activity has been minimal. In this chapter, attention is paid to the response of important stakeholders, including allied social service and criminal justice agencies, to PreStart.

Assessment of the program from this perspective was done because the response of these agencies to PreStart will shape the immediate and future impact of PreStart on both correctional clients and the IDOC. A redefinition of the parole officer role, away from a surveillance and law enforcement focus and toward a service focus, has potentially strong implications for other criminal justice agencies. If law enforcement agencies view this shift with distaste (for example, feel that parole officers are no longer aiding police in their law enforcement activities by providing information on releasees or issuing warrants based on suspected new criminal behaviors) or feel that colleagues with whom they have worked in a professional capacity for years are just not there for them anymore, the potential fallout can be quite negative for PreStart.

In contrast, while the PreStart model does not warrant as strong a link between community supervision agents and law enforcement officials, it does necessitate a strong network between PreStart agents and community service agencies operating in local communities. Because of this, the success of Phase II is inextricably tied to the knowledge of PreStart agents about community services, their willingness and ability to perform referral services, and the extent to which releasees who need services seek and receive assistance from CSCs.

The success of Phase II efforts also will be contingent upon a number of community variables: the range, quality and number of services that exist to meet the needs of ex–offenders; the ability to integrate service delivery at the local level; and the acceptance of prison releasees by local service providers. Even under the best conditions — fully staffed CSCs, motivated and trained PreStart agents, releasees who are willing to seek assistance — reintegration efforts will fail if necessary services are unavailable to released offenders or community–based constituents of the

program are not supportive. Thus, this portion of the PreStart evaluation includes surveys of both criminal justice and service agencies to assess their knowledge of and response to PreStart.

In this chapter, the results of a survey of allied agencies conducted in November 1992 (results of which were previously presented in the first interim report) and a follow–up survey conducted in 1994 are presented. The methodology and results for each survey are presented below. Conclusions about the results of both are addressed at the close of the chapter.

Allied Agency Survey Goals

The goals of both 1992 and the 1994 assessments of allied agencies were as follows:

1) to determine the awareness of allied agencies, both criminal justice and service agencies, of PreStart programming within the community;

2) to determine the community's and/or agency's receptiveness to PreStart clients;

3) to assess allied agencies' perceptions and expectations regarding PreStart's impact on existing services;

4) to determine any regulatory, organizational or resource obstacles to the delivery of existing community services to PreStart clients; and

5) to identify significant gaps in available services for PreStart clients.

An additional goal of the 1994 survey was to determine if agency staff noticed any changes in the level and type of communication and cooperation between allied agencies and parole services based on PreStart's implementation.

1992 Survey Methods and Procedures

Because it was deemed impractical to survey all relevant allied agencies operating in all Illinois counties, the 1992 survey involved a sampling of counties and agencies. The initial sampling strategy included the selection of particular counties for analysis: 1) all counties that housed community service centers; 2) the largest counties adjacent to the CSC counties and/or had significant numbers of releasees requiring services; and 3) counties that were more than 60 miles from the CSCs designated to service releasees from those counties. This sampling resulted in 41 of Illinois' 102 counties being selected for analysis, including 15 counties where the community

service centers are located, 16 counties adjacent to the CSCs, and 10 comparison counties that are more than 60 miles from the CSCs intended to service them.[27]

The survey targets from each county were designated agency heads from social service providers and criminal justice agencies. Because of the very large number of potential respondents if all relevant allied agencies were surveyed, the social services agency sampling list included only regional Department of Children and Family Services and Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) offices, local Illinois Department of Public Aid offices, local Illinois Department of Employment Security offices, and local community mental health and substance abuse service providers. Based on information obtained from institutional respondents, specific agencies known to provide services to releasees were added to the list (including the Safer Foundation, Progressions, The Salvation Army, and so forth).

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27 The following counties were surveyed:

CSC Counties	Adjacent Counties	Comparison Counties
Cook	DuPage	Jo Daviess
Lake	McHenry	Lee
Kane	DeKalb	Alexander
Will	Grundy	Jersey
Kankakee	Kendall	Marshall
Winnebago	Stephenson	Warren
Rock Island	Henry	Clark
Peoria	Iroquois	White
Champaign	Vermilion	Lawrence
Sangamon	McLean	Bond
St. Clair	Tazewell	
Effingham	McDonough	
Jefferson	Morgan	
Williamson	Madison	
Adams	Marion	
	Jackson	

The criminal justice sample was separated into two categories, law enforcement agency representatives and criminal court representatives. Law enforcement agency representatives were to include major police departments in the counties and county sheriffs. Court representatives included state's attorneys, public defenders, all chief judges in Illinois and 24 circuit court judges with criminal division responsibilities from Cook County.

On Nov. 20, 1992, questionnaires were mailed to 177 social service agencies, 169 law enforcement and court service agencies, and 46 judges, for a total sample size of 392 allied agencies.

The response rate from the survey was poor, with an overall return rate of 33 percent (126/392). Criminal justice agencies returned 57 out of 215 questionnaires, with one return being unusable. Of those, 30 questionnaires were from police departments and sheriffs' offices. From court service representatives, state's attorneys and public defenders, 23 questionnaires were returned. Only three judges completed the questionnaire. Of social service agencies, 65 out of 177 questionnaires were returned. The results of these responses follow the discussion of the 1994 methodology below.

1994 Methodology

As indicated below, analyses of the returned questionnaires from the 1992 survey revealed a surprisingly low level of respondent awareness of PreStart. For this reason, and because previous efforts by the evaluation team to enhance returns on the staff questionnaire were of limited value, it was determined that the evaluation team would not conduct a follow–up mailing to the allied agencies to assess how knowledge levels and attitudes about PreStart may have changed over time. Instead, the 1994 survey methodology was altered so that a smaller number (up to 50) of respondents more knowledgeable about PreStart would be surveyed.

In late 1993, a list of allied agency (both service and criminal justice) officials was requested from each PreStart Zone supervisor. Zone supervisors were asked to "identify criminal justice agencies with whom you have had some routine contact regarding PreStart clients and/or issues." For the service allied agencies, they were asked to compile "a list of at least five providers...that frequently receive service center referrals." All zone supervisors provided the requested lists. From the lists provided, a stratified random sample of respondents was drawn to create the initial sample. The service agency sample was drawn by selecting six contacts from each zone along with a list of three "replacement" contact names from each zone. The criminal justice agency sample was drawn in the same manner, except that the sample was stratified not only by zone, but also by type of

criminal justice agency (for example, law enforcement, courts, community corrections, and so on) with the sample intentionally overrepresenting law enforcement agencies.

The initial listing was supplemented during the course of the survey by initial sample subjects being asked for names of other service or criminal justice agency staff that they believed would have some insight into PreStart.

The 1994 survey was administered over the telephone so that probes and more detailed information could be collected from the respondents. Interviews lasted anywhere from 10 to 25 minutes. While no respondents refused to participate in the interview, six of the service agency contacts and nine of the criminal justice contacts were eventually replaced. Subject replacement occurred for two reasons. A subject would be dropped from the sample for inaccessibility after seven failed telephone attempts to reach them. Inaccessibility accounted for two of the 15 replacements.

The other situation necessitating a subject replacement was one where the contact name and/or number were in error. This included situations of wrong telephone numbers, contact names given for people who had not worked at that agency for some time (four years in one case), and contact being made with individuals who indicated they knew nothing about releasee services or the changes in Illinois' parole system. The need to replace subjects for these reasons occurred five times for the service agency sample and eight times for the criminal justice sample. Eventually, 26 social service agency representatives and 24 criminal justice agency representatives were interviewed.

Survey Results

Awareness of PreStart

A fundamental precondition for integrated service delivery at the local level is communication among agencies, including a shared awareness of what other agencies are doing and the levels and types of services that are being provided. In the specific case of community corrections, both criminal justice and allied service agencies should be knowledgeable of changes in service delivery that have the potential to affect their operations. Thus, the surveys of allied criminal justice and social service agencies inquired about awareness of PreStart among these agencies.

1992

In 1992, most criminal justice respondents were unaware of PreStart prior to receiving the survey questionnaire. Sixty–nine percent of law enforcement respondents and 74 percent of court service representatives stated that the knowledge they had about PreStart was gleaned from the questionnaire itself. Only 31 percent of law enforcement and 25 percent of court services representatives stated that they had previously learned about PreStart through the IDOC, social service agency contacts or prison releasees. This pattern held across regions of Illinois.

Of the three judges who responded, all three stated that their knowledge of PreStart was through the questionnaire. One judge stated, "This is the first time I even heard that such a program exists and I am chief judge and handle about 30 felonies per month."

In response to an open–ended question that asked for additional comments about the PreStart program, its relation to the agencies, or its impact on parolees and communities, several law enforcement personnel expressed their unfamiliarity with PreStart and the applicability of PreStart to their agency: "Prior to receiving this survey, I had no knowledge that the program exists," one person remarked. "Being a county of less than 60 inmates we would not be in this program. I would like to learn more of this program and its impact on the communities."

About half of the social service agency representatives surveyed in 1992 were not aware of PreStart until they received the survey questionnaire. Of social service agency representatives who responded, 49 percent said they first learned about PreStart from the questionnaire. Another 49 percent reported that they had previously learned about PreStart from other sources. Respondents from Zone 3 (central Illinois) were much more likely to report having had previous knowledge of PreStart than respondents from other zones (66 percent). Of those who said they had no knowledge, a mental health center respondent said, "We had no knowledge about this program until now so we don't know how it would impact our agency." An Illinois Department of Public Aid respondent commented, "Someone from the IDOC should talk to our agency regarding this program."

1994

The original intent was for the first section of the 1994 interview to serve as screening questions to determine knowledge levels about PreStart. It was believed that since subjects were

drawn from a list of knowing respondents, a minimal level of screening out unknowledgeable respondents would occur.

At the start of the interview, subjects were told that the interviewer would like to know "what they know about the new parole system in Illinois." The first question would determine whether they had heard of the PreStart program. If they had not, subjects were asked if they had heard of "changes in the supervision of parolees in Illinois." If a subject answered no to both questions, the interviewer was to ask if another person working in their agency might be more knowledgeable about "PreStart" or "parole." Since the first three subjects appeared to exhibit little knowledge of PreStart, it seemed it would be impossible to use knowledge level of PreStart or changes in Illinois parole as a prerequisite for the interview. Indeed, some respondents were unable to recall any contact with CSC (or "parole") staff. These subjects' responses were only included if it was ascertained that they and the agency with which they were employed did have contact with releasees. Even with the supposedly more knowledgeable sample as a starting point, four criminal justice agency contacts and three service agency contacts had to be disqualified from the sample due to no knowledge of, or interactions with, PreStart or parole, and no knowledge of another individual at that agency who might have more knowledge.

Instead of screening respondents based on low levels of PreStart knowledge, level of knowledge was collected as a separate variable and the respondent was questioned about his or her own and agency's interactions with CSC staff and releasees regardless of personal knowledge regarding PreStart.

The results indicated that only eight of the 26 service agency officials had heard of PreStart, with an additional three simply knowing about or having heard that there were changes in releasee supervision. For the criminal justice agency officials, 10 knew about or had heard of PreStart, with an additional six knowing about changes in the way parolees are supervised. Thus, out of the 50 allied agency staff interviewed, only 27 indicated knowing something about PreStart and the changes in Illinois' parole system. Among respondents indicating some knowledge of PreStart, there was variation in how much knowledge they actually had about Phase I and/or Phase II programming. For example, only two of the service agency staff had a strong understanding of PreStart. The others knew only that releasees now received pre–release classes or had just heard that things have changed.

This markedly low level of knowledge about PreStart programming made it difficult to gather information from respondents concerning their impressions of PreStart, and the impact that PreStart's implementation had on their agency's interactions with releasees and parole agents. With this in mind, the following discussion details the information received from allied agency staff.

Receptiveness to PreStart

1992

The survey returns of 1992 found that despite their limited awareness of the program, both criminal justice agencies and social services agencies were relatively receptive to the concept of PreStart. For example, one county health department director commented, "I am interested in learning more, as I am sure many of the parolees are using the agency, but we are unaware and are willing to help where possible."

In addition, there was some agreement among both criminal justice and social service agencies that "PreStart was a good idea." Among the social service agencies that responded to the survey, 57 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that PreStart is a good idea, while 18 percent were unsure, and only 7.5 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

A somewhat smaller proportion of the responding criminal justice agencies agreed with the shift to a service model, although even among these agencies, 40 percent agreed or strongly agreed that PreStart is a good idea, 14 percent were not sure, 30 percent had no opinion, and only 16 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Another issue in terms of the receptiveness of agencies in the community is the degree to which they view PreStart as being compatible with their own agency in terms of its goals and philosophy.

The 1992 survey asked social service agency respondents to agree or disagree with the following statement: "PreStart's philosophy about social services is highly compatible with that of your agency." Among the social service agencies with prior knowledge of PreStart, 44.8 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that the PreStart philosophy was compatible with theirs; only 10.3 percent disagreed, and the remaining were not sure (31 percent) or had no opinion (13.8 percent). Understandably, the social service agencies which only learned about PreStart through the survey were less certain about the compatibility: 45.8 percent were not sure, and 37.5 percent had no opinion. Only 16.7 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the philosophy of PreStart was compatible with the philosophy of their own agency.

1994

In the 1994 sample, only five (19 percent) of the 26 service agency staff and nine of the criminal justice officials opted to give their opinion about the statement "PreStart is a good idea."

The responses ranged from ranking the statement as being a very good to a very poor statement. Of those that did respond to this statement, four service agency staff felt that the statement was a very good statement, while one service agency staff stated the exact opposite. A higher percentage (37.5 percent) of criminal justice agency staff were willing to give their opinion about this statement (though it was still only nine of the 24 respondents). In the case of the criminal justice officials, three felt the statement that "PreStart is a good idea" was a very good statement, two believed it was a fair statement, and four believed that it was a very poor statement.

At first glance it might seem strange that a smaller percentage of respondents held an opinion about the merits of the PreStart program in 1994 than in 1992. It should be remembered, however, that the 1992 survey was mailed and included a one–page description of the PreStart program, whereas the 1994 telephone interview merely established the respondents' level of knowledge and then continued asking questions about the agency's interactions with CSC staff and releasees. Therefore, rather than indicating much about the level of receptiveness to PreStart, the information as gathered in the 1994 interviews serves only to highlight the subjects' general lack of knowledge about PreStart.

In the 1994 interviews, allied agency officials responded to the following statement: "CSC (or parole) staff are sensitive to your agency's needs and concerns" (service agencies), or "Parole staff are sensitive to your agency's goals, concerns, and practices" (criminal justice agencies). Among the service agency sample, 77 percent of respondents felt that this statement was either a very good or a good statement — with only one service staff relating that it was a very poor statement. Among the criminal justice agency personnel, 54 percent of the respondents ranked the statement of CSC being sensitive to their agencies goals and practices as either a good or a very good statement.

When respondents did relay problems that they had with their agencies' interactions with parole services, they portrayed these as indicative of a system–level problem, not a perception of insensitivity on the part of parole staff. The following quote is illustrative:

> It's not that they aren't sensitive or won't cooperate, it's more like they can't... We might recommend that an individual's parole be revoked because he's not complying with treatment, but they tell us they can't do that. We understand that their hands are tied. (therapist, substance abuse center)

Perceptions and Expectations of PreStart

As would be expected given the variant role orientations of social service and criminal justice agency representatives, perceptions and expectations about PreStart differed markedly between criminal justice and noncriminal justice respondents.

Criminal Justice Agencies

1992. Many of the criminal justice respondents decried the absence of a supervision component for the majority of releasees. This is evident in responses to a survey question that asked: "In your opinion, does the design of PreStart ensure the adequate accountability of prison releasees? In other words, is the supervision structure adequate to ensure that prison releasees are following the conditions of release?" Forty–nine percent of the respondents said "no" and cited the reduction in parole officers as being a serious problem in the supervision and assistance of parolees. This view was more commonly expressed by criminal respondents from central Illinois (59 percent) than from respondents either in northern or southern Illinois (44 percent).

> For example, one public defender commented:
>
> I ask many of our felony clients who their parole officer is when it applies (new felony charge). Without exception they indicate that all they do is call a phone number once a month. They also indicate that they have little, if any, face–to–face contact with a parole officer. For many of our clients, they are being released back into the same environment and the State is not adequately monitoring these people.

Others were more direct, saying, "Too much unsupervised time for parolees" and "By and large, the present parole supervision is simply inadequate to deal with the very serious offenders being released."

The respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the following statement: "PreStart does not sufficiently address public safety concerns." Among the criminal justice respondents, 38 percent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, 18 percent were not sure, 34 percent had no opinion, and only 10 percent disagreed. Thus, most of the criminal justice respondents either thought that PreStart did not sufficiently address public safety concerns or were unsure if it did.

Generally, among the 1992 criminal justice respondents, expectations were low regarding the ability of PreStart to reduce the number of new crimes, reduce the number of offenders returned to prison and sufficiently address public safety concerns.

1994. In 1994, criminal justice agency officials were asked very specifically whether they felt PreStart had any impact on public safety. Ten of the 24 criminal justice personnel believed there was an impact, while the other 14 criminal justice officials said they did not know if PreStart had had any impact on public safety. The 10 that expressed an opinion felt that PreStart had had a negative impact on public safety. The following quotes reflect some of the expressed opinions:

> It doesn't take long for a guy on parole to realize what he can get away with. And if he can get away with it, without any chance of going back [to prison], he will. (county sheriff)

> Parole agents are less aware, less in touch with how things are, because they are overwhelmed. There really should be more violations [of their parole]. (probation administrator)

> Whenever you have less supervision, things are going on that the IDOC doesn't know about. That's going to affect public safety. I've found that they [PreStart agents] can't always tell me where a guy is located. (assistant state's attorney)

The 1994 criminal justice officials also gave fairly negative rankings to the statements dealing with PreStart's impact on crimes committed by releasees. Thirty–three percent of those criminal justice personnel who responded to the statement "PreStart will reduce the number of new crimes," ranked it as a very poor statement with an additional eight percent saying that it was a poor statement. When asked to categorize the statement "PreStart will reduce prison returns" again, 33 percent felt it to be either a poor or very poor statement.

In general, both the 1992 and 1994 surveys found that the criminal justice representatives' perceptions and expectations regarding PreStart were at best mixed. The 1992 sample, both in comments to open–ended questions and in responses to closed–ended questions, believed that PreStart, although a good idea, did not adequately provide for public safety. In 1994, criminal justice agency subjects were more likely not to have an opinion about PreStart's effect on public safety or even on the value of the idea itself. Two and a half years after PreStart's implementation and one year after the initial survey, the expectations that criminal justice personnel hold for PreStart remained poor.

Social Service Agencies

1992. The same concerns about the ability of PreStart to provide adequate supervision were cited by the service providers. For example, a health provider who had previous knowledge of the program wrote:

> Excluding Special Intensive Supervision, there is no supervision of releasees. Parole officers in Service Centers have no leverage on releasees. They (releasees) just do what they want. They know there is nothing a parole officer can do.

Even so, the service providers were less negative and more unsure than the criminal justice agency representatives about PreStart's impact on public safety. Seventeen disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that "PreStart does not sufficiently address public safety concerns." Only 7.6 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The vast majority of respondents were either unsure of the statement (47 percent) or held no opinion (28 percent). Likewise, most social service agency representatives were not sure (48 percent) or had no opinion (25.6 percent) regarding the statement that PreStart would result in a reduced number of offenders being returned to prison.

It appears, then, that compared with criminal justice agency representatives, most service providers were incapable of or unwilling to comment on the public protection functions of PreStart. It could well be the case that the issue of relative effectiveness of different correctional interventions is simply not something service providers tend to think about, and hence they feel hesitant to comment on such issues.

1994. In the 1994 telephone survey, service agency respondents were again more likely than criminal justice respondents to not hold an opinion about PreStart's impact on public safety, with 73 percent of the sample being reticent to respond to such questions.

Presumably, the criminal justice respondents viewed the negative impact of PreStart on public safety as a direct result of releasees having minimal supervision. However, the service agency staff were cognizant of the impact of lower levels of supervision for a very different reason. Many called for more releasee accountability within the treatment programs in which they are enrolled — accountability the service agency respondents felt could be better promoted by PreStart staff. For example:

> If [parolees] don't follow treatment recommendations it should carry weight, but nothing happens. We let the agent know and send a letter, sometimes the guy is just re–referred. I know their hands are tied. (licensed therapist, mental health facility)

> We're sensitive to recommendations they make to clients. Our treatment recommendations should carry weight...there needs to be some accountability for guys who drop out of treatment. (addictions counselor, county health department)

As will be discussed more fully subsequently, many service staff suggestions for improving parole centered around this issue. However, different issues arose when service staff were asked about obstacles to provision of services that exist within their current interactions with PreStart.

Obstacles in Interactions with PreStart

1992

The 1992 questionnaire asked social service agency personnel if there were any laws, rules, regulations or agency policies that would prevent their agencies from delivering services to releasees. The vast majority of the agencies (88 percent) responded that there were no such obstacles. Of the 12 percent that reported obstacles in law or agency policy, most often it was noted that the official agency eligibility criteria must be met.

Beyond eligibility criteria, the only law or policy that appeared to respondents to be an obstacle to service delivery is Chapter 48 of the Illinois statutes, a law which prohibits the release of information on Department of Employment Services (DES) clients. As pointed out by a DES administrator:

> If time were available it would be most helpful for local office staff to contact area employers and build a resource of prospective employers. Unfortunately, cooperation and follow up between the IDOC and the IDES is prohibited by law.

Social services agencies also were asked if there were any factors other than laws, rules or regulations that would prevent or hinder their agencies from delivering services. Eighty–eight percent of the agencies indicated that there were no such barriers. Of those reporting obstacles to service delivery, the most frequently mentioned factors involved the availability of resources. A Department of Public Aid administrator cited as obstacles "funding levels, assessment results and available funds at the time of applications." Mental health administrators reported waiting lists and slightly different problems. One community mental health director noted that "...priority clients are Medicaid/DPA eligible — and...we have a very long waiting list in the agency for services other than crisis intervention."

The 1992 data suggest that most service providers do not see any obstacles, in theory, to their delivery of services to releasees, as long as state and federal eligibility criteria are met and resources (funding, staffing, and so forth) are available.

1994

The 1994 telephone interview asked service agency staff if their agency "faces any problems or obstacles in delivering services to parolees?" A majority (16 of the 26 respondents) of the

service staff personnel did not feel there were any obstacles to providing services for parolees. The 10 service staff believing that there were obstacles to service delivery tended to note client–centered obstacles. For example, four respondents cited clients' inability to pay for treatment, and four noted clients' inaccessibility due to not having telephones or transportation.

Three other obstacles noted by service agency personnel were system–oriented: 1) problems getting timely information from parole agents (noted by two of the 10 responding to obstacles); 2) problems with clients quitting treatment once they had achieved release/early release from Mandatory Supervised Release (four of the 10 respondents); and 3) clients being extraordinarily resistant to treatment because it was of a mandatory nature (two respondents).

Thus, the 1994 survey results suggest, as did the 1992 results, that most service providers did not see any major systemic obstacles in their delivery of services to prison releasees.

Gaps in Services

The final area addressed by the 1992 and 1994 surveys dealt with the level of resources available to releasees in the community.

1992

In 1992, both criminal justice and social service respondents were asked if the existing array of community services was sufficient to meet the needs of prison releasees. Among social service agency respondents, opinion on this issue was divided: 26.6 percent reported that services were sufficient, 34.4 percent said they were not sufficient, and 39.1 percent said they did not know. Among the criminal justice agency respondents, however, a smaller percent of respondents said services were sufficient (15.8 percent), a higher percent said they were not sufficient (50.9 percent), and a somewhat smaller proportion said they did not know (33.3 percent). Thus, criminal justice respondents were somewhat less confident than service providers in the ability of communities to provide needed services to releasees.

Both criminal justice and social service agencies were asked to comment on the availability of services to meet the needs of offenders released to the community. Comments varied widely.

Among the criminal justice respondents, the most frequent comments were about lack of general services, lack of specific services, especially drug treatment services, or lack of parole services. One public defender commented:

> My feelings are that these agencies are trying but are not funded to provide specific services to parolees. The job training available is mainly for make–work, minimum wage jobs. The stigma of a prison record in the community prevents the parolees from any real chance of success.

Others commented on specific services. Another public defender noted, "Alcohol and drug treatment for the indigent is very scarce." Several other criminal justice agency respondents pointed to an insufficient number of parole officers to ensure that releasees receive necessary services.

The service agency representatives reported a broader range of specific services they perceived as being largely unavailable for releasees. A Job Training Partnership Act administrator identified housing and job services as insufficient. Another JTPA director pointed to "lack of employment and training services, transportation, counseling, housing." The most frequently cited gaps were related to employment and job training. A community mental health program coordinator observed, "Releasees need a solid economic base to start rebuilding their lives. They need a job which can support them and/or training to get that job. Counseling is not a substitute for this!"

1994

The 1994 telephone survey allowed service agency respondents to respond to the statement "Services in your area are adequate to meet the needs of releasees" by indicating whether this statement was a "very good," "good," "fair," "poor," or "very poor" statement. Fifty–four percent of service agency respondents categorized the statement as being either good or very good. Many of the respondents who answered in this manner qualified their answers. These qualifications often included statements such as, "The services are there, it's just a matter of getting the clients to them" (administrator, human services department). Another respondent said, "Someone from the IDOC really needs to know what community resources are out there, I'm not convinced that they do" (clinical supervisor, county mental health department).

Some respondents suggested some services that were not generally available or areas of releasee needs that were not being met:

> It seems that the people [being released] are changing. There are much higher numbers of drug and alcohol addictions now. This increase is not being addressed quickly enough by the IDOC. (program director, shelter and services center)

> There needs to be more transitional living environments. If the IDOC would create more halfway houses and focus on drug treatment during that time, I think it would reduce recidivism significantly. (administrator, charity organization)

> In my county — and I know there are others — we don't have anywhere to send individuals for sex offender therapy. There needs to be more [sex offender therapy]. (mental health therapist, county health department)

Six respondents lamented the lack of treatment available for inmates while they are incarcerated, which (they felt) if in place, could serve as a link to treatment on the outside. These respondents noted that if the clients came to their agency with the foundation of treatment in place, the short–term treatment received in the community would be more valuable. For example, the following ideas were noted by several service staff:

> I don't know exactly how it works, but I know that some corrections staff have knowledge of substance abuse and addictions and family dynamics so that guys can get [treatment] while they are in. Then they will be ready to get counseling when they are out. They'll be less likely to drop out of our program, and they'd probably even be more accountable to the treatment. (intake counselor, clinical services facility)

The idea that a problem exists in communication and information sharing across the IDOC and service agencies, and not necessarily in the availability of services, also was reflected by some of the suggestions made by social service agency personnel to improve PreStart.

Suggestions for Improvement

1994

Both social service and criminal justice agency personnel were asked if they had suggestions for improving parole services in Illinois or the interactions between their agency and parole. Twenty–three of the 26 respondents in the social service agency sample offered suggestions, as did 13 of the 24 criminal justice officials.

Communication and Information Sharing. The most common suggestion from service agency staff was a call for improvement in the timely sharing of information (12 of the 23 service staff). Enhanced communication also was cited as being desirable (nine of 23 service staff).

Service agency staff noted the problems in delivering services to releasees when they are unable to obtain necessary information about the client until long after treatment begins. As noted above, this was viewed more as an obstacle built into the system rather than a reflection of a lack of cooperation from CSC staff. As an example:

> I ask for the files — for any information about the person — so I can know their history and make a treatment plan. Most often I am told by the parole agent that they don't have the information, that I have to contact the prison they were released from. (counselor, county mental health department)

> We don't have the capacity to do drops [drug testing] here, parole has those facilities. It would be nice if we could get the results of those drops, but as of now there is no system

set up for this. It would make a difference in the way we approach treatment. (addictions counselor, county health department)

We were having regular "staffings" with parole officers. That ended about 8 months ago...it would be important to make this communication regular. (substance abuse counselor, mental health agency)

Criminal justice agency staff also noted the need for improved communication (six of 13 criminal justice respondents) and information sharing (three respondents). The following statements are quite reflective of the sentiments these respondents expressed:

We get information now only every 3 or 4 months. We need to know quicker when they [releasees] are out. We need to know what gangs they belong to, any special restrictions they have on their parole, etc. so that we can help enforce this behavior. (chief of police)

It is vitally important for police and parole to communicate. For example, for a while we didn't know who had parole holds placed on them, I would get addresses from their computer system that were wrong...one guy supposedly refused to give an address to his parole agent. We've worked out a system now with parole holds, but it is important that regular communication occur...need to touch base. The parole officers should come in and check the booking logs to see if their guys are on it, then we could talk and compare. (police crime analyst)

One service agency respondent linked the lack of communication and information sharing to a deeper problem — not enough parole staff.

More Parole Staff. The most common suggestion for improvement in 1994 made by criminal justice staff was adding more parole officers. Twelve of the 13 respondents offering suggestions made recommendations, such as the following:

First improve parole by funding the system, make it viable for POs to interact with releasees. Let them get them into jobs. If that occurs, then agents would have information and want to share it. (lieutenant, police department)

Fully fund it, or eliminate it. You're not serving anybody when you go less than half way with everybody. (state's attorney)

If they went back to more Parole Officers, it would mean more manageable case loads, able to maintain supervision and keep track of [releasees]. This affects communication because POs are overburdened. If you hire more guys, its more supervision, they know what's up and then they let us know...but one [communication] comes first — not the other. (state police commander)

Several themes emerged out of the call for more parole agents. The first theme was making parolees more accountable (noted by nine of the 13 offering suggestions):

Parolees need a substantial amount of support when they are out, there has to be a term of Mandatory Supervised Release. But this means letting them know — if you do X, you go back. (managing officer, county probation department)

With more POs you could up the consequences for behavior. (detective, police department)

The second theme, raised by eight of the 13 offering improvements, is a call for something like the "old parole" in Illinois:

> Parole agents need to have home visits with parolees. They need to do random drug testing if that [drug charge] was their crime. They need to make sure sex offenders are in programs. (state's attorney)
>
> Give parole officers a chance to do their job. If there are more [parole staff] they could go out and check on [releasees]. But then you need to give them more latitude as to whether a parolees' parole can be violated. (lieutenant, police department)

The third theme offered innovations for improving parole:

> It would take more manpower, but MSR should be much more crime–specific, or offender–specific. If a guy stole money for money's sake — give him job employment training. If he took money for drugs MSR should include mandated substance counseling and drug tests. (state's attorney)
>
> Give more money to the probation department. Probation seems to do a much better job of supervision than IDOC parole can. Combine the departments — you could save money and get better services. They probably even have detailed files in probation of some of the guys now on parole. (county sheriff)

Likewise, service agency staff, when asked if there were any general improvements or comments, sometimes offered innovations concerning CSC staff or the way releasees or certain populations should be handled:

> Speaking for myself, I find it easier to refer a client to a place I've seen in action. Maybe [CSC] staff should visit here so they have a definite idea of what we offer. (clinical supervisor, substance abuse counseling center)
>
> Need to create a follow–up system for those parolees needing substance abuse counseling, because [addiction] can sabotage everything else. For these people — even those on outpatient — just calling in is not enough. (intake director, nonprofit referral center)
>
> It might be possible to set up some sort of fund from a prisoner's wages that could help them with treatment once they were out. Or any general fund from the state to help pay. (therapist, county mental health department)
>
> Would be very interested if it would be a better investment of time and money to mandate treatment while incarcerated. Especially sex offender–specific treatment, because at that point you have a captive audience with some of the stressors removed. I offer services to sex offenders that the IDOC sends over. But I would be interested if there were room for creating a contract and developing more group therapy situations or long–term outpatient therapy for more of these offenders. (licensed clinical therapist, private practice)
>
> There is starting to be a need for daycare for male releasees who are the sole caregiver for preschool children. If they need to go to counseling or do have a job, they run into problems with child care. We are working on starting a day care center. (director of case management, nonprofit service agency)
>
> Sex offenders simply need to be on a longer term of supervision. This is like an addiction. Maybe the IDOC needs to set up certain facilities — half way houses, or a few minimum–

security prisons that specialize in this. Let them serve a lengthy sentence that includes treatment — failing treatment would mean being sent to a medium or max facility. Lobby for some habitual sexual offender laws — make a registry of all who commit sex offenses. If you have a second sex offense felony you have to stay registered for 10 years. Parole Officers need specific training for sex offenders so that they know what to look for — so that they take it seriously. They need to be closely monitored, that is, does their live–in girlfriend have kids? (clinical director, county mental health department)

Summary of Findings

1992

Unfortunately, the response rate to the 1992 mailed survey was poor; only about one–third of the surveys were returned, mostly by people who were unaware of PreStart until they received the survey. Against this backdrop of nonresponse and lack of knowledge, some tentative findings emerged. Even though many of the survey respondents had limited information about PreStart (that gleaned from the questionnaire itself), most seemed generally supportive of the notion that PreStart is a good idea. Primarily for the criminal justice respondents, approval of the concept was matched by a concern that PreStart does not adequately provide for public protection. Criminal justice agency representatives had mixed to low expectations of PreStart in terms of its ability to reduce new crimes or lower the return rate of releasees to prison. Slightly more than two out of five respondents saw no difference between PreStart and previous parole services in terms of helping ex–offenders reintegrate into their communities.

Probably because of their lack of knowledge of alternative correctional interventions, social service agencies were more ambivalent about their expectations of PreStart. However, of the social service agencies who did respond to the survey, the overwhelming majority saw no significant regulatory, legal or policy barriers, or any other obstacles, to service delivery for PreStart clients.

On the other hand, both criminal justice and social service agencies did identify gaps in services, primarily related to housing, employment and job training. Other needed services identified by respondents were in the areas of drug treatment and mental health.

1994

Some of the same issues arising from the 1992 survey were true for the 1994 telephone interviews. With PreStart having been in operation for more than two years, a startling number of "knowledgeable" respondents had no working knowledge of Phase I or Phase II programming.

Few respondents chose to answer the survey questions designed to measure the general acceptance of the PreStart program due to their lack of knowledge about it. Of those that did, criminal justice officials were less likely to view PreStart as a good idea than were social service agency representatives.

The 1994 survey did not measure the receptiveness of the community to PreStart clients, but did offer information about service agency personnel's receptiveness to clients. This can be seen in the number of respondents who think CSC staff should make more referrals to their agency — 61 percent were receptive to their agency being used more fully by releasees. This was often tempered, however, with a note about their agency being overburdened as it is.

Findings on allied agency personnel's perceptions and expectations also were hampered by low response rates for these survey items. Generally, criminal justice agency staff were more negative in their expectations of PreStart, believing it would not lower either the number of new crimes committed by releasees or reincarceration rates. They also felt it was having a negative impact on public safety. The service agency officials that responded to these items were more likely to believe that PreStart would lower recidivism and tended to think that it was not having a negative effect on public safety.

A variety of obstacles to services were noted, but by a minority of service staff (10 of 26 respondents). These obstacles were both client- and system-centered. The obstacles seen as system-centered (lack of communication from CSC staff and lack of information sharing) led to some of the suggestions for improvement by both criminal justice and service agency personnel.

Conclusions

The main conclusion that can be drawn from the 1992 and 1994 surveys is that allied agency staff were largely uninformed about PreStart. Nonetheless, many seem to yearn for more information and communication from parole (CSC) staff. Both the service and criminal justice agencies emphasized a need for ongoing communication. The lack of knowledge and low level of communication between these agency representatives and the IDOC community services staff raises serious concern about the functioning of Phase II programming. If community service centers are to serve as meaningful service brokerage houses for releasees, the issues raised by these findings should generate immediate attention by the IDOC.

The comments made by the service agency respondents illustrate that as it now operates, Phase II programming does not appear to be sufficiently meeting its explicit goal of providing services to releasees. In addition, at least in the eyes of many criminal justice respondents, it does

not seem to be providing releasees with the supervision and accountability that such respondents expect of mandatory supervised release.

Chapter 10

PRESTART'S IMPACT ON WARRANTS AND THE ILLINOIS PRISON POPULATION

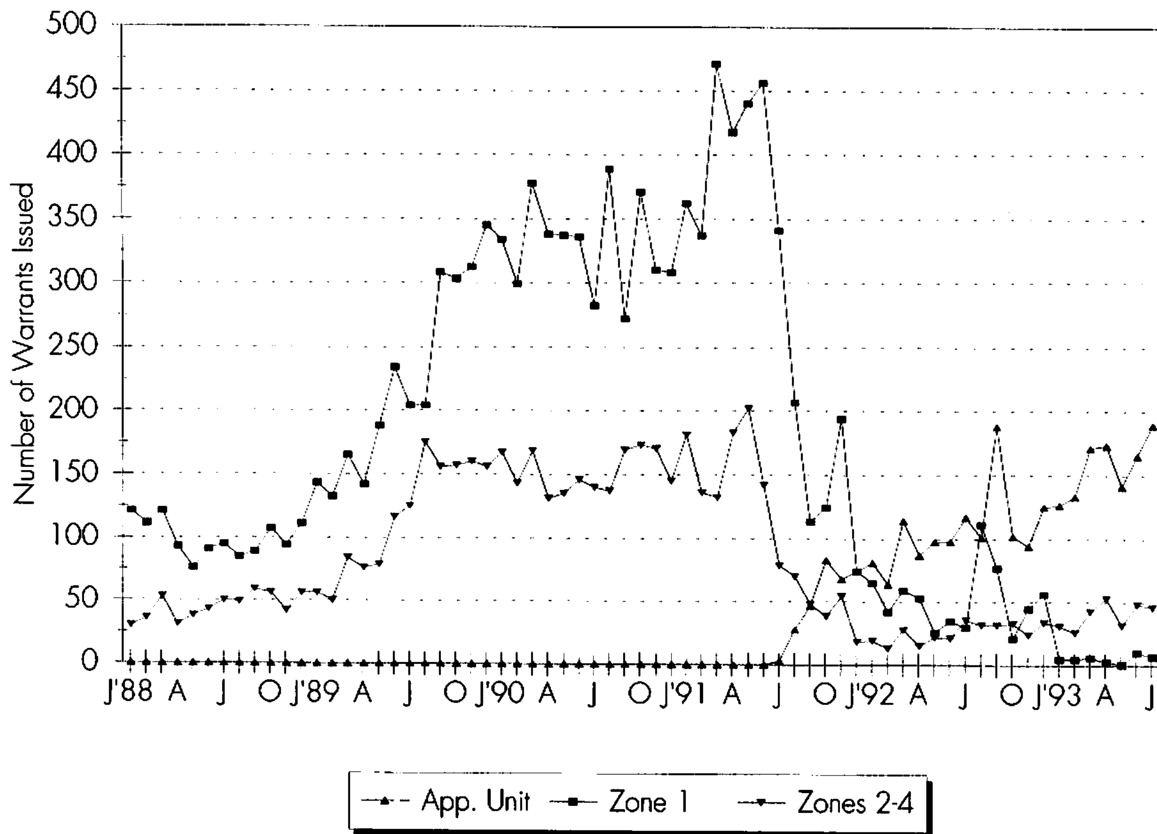
PreStart has formally abandoned the supervision function of parole services for the bulk of releasees. Though some supervision of these releasees continues to take place informally, it would be expected that PreStart's implementation would be associated with a dramatic decline in the issuance and execution of warrants. Indeed, as the following analysis indicates, this has been the case.

PreStart's Impact on Warrants

Data regarding the monthly totals for activities related to warrants (that is, number issued, withdrawn and executed) were received from the IDOC for the period of January 1986 to July 1993. The full data series were initially examined for each warrant activity, but the graphs were too compressed to be presented in a clear and meaningful way; thus, the data series were shortened to the period of January 1988 to July 1993 so that the data could be illustrated more clearly in frequency line graphs. However, when discussing each type of warrant activity, a brief discussion of what trends took place in the data prior to January 1988 precedes the discussion of the graphed data so that none of the information provided by the IDOC was lost.

The issuance of warrants is the first data series presented in graphic form (see Figure 10.1). This type of warrant activity indicates the monthly totals of warrants issued for releasees in the community at large. The data do not reflect any kind of outcome or disposition, and can be considered an index of the propensity for the use of warrant powers on a monthly basis. The series are broken into warrants issued by Zone 1 (Cook County), zones 2–4, and those issued by the Fugitive Apprehension Unit, a specialized unit located in Chicago. This unit receives calls from law enforcement officials requesting the issuance of a warrant when a parolee is arrested. An 800–telephone number is used to facilitate easy contact. Warrants also can be issued by CSC zone officials in response to law enforcement requests, or on an agent–initiated basis. In general, departmental practice is that unless a releasee is accused of a forcible violent felony, a warrant will not be issued. CSC–based warrants were broken down by Zone 1 vs. the balance of the zones because the volume of monthly warrants issued in zones 2–4 was so low that little meaningful variation over time could be discerned.

Figure 10.1
Total Number of Warrants Issued



During the two years preceding the graphed data (that is, January 1986 to December 1987), the trend of the monthly totals for issued warrants ranged from a low of fewer than 50 warrants (January 1986) issued for all zones and the Apprehension Unit, to a high of 246 warrants for Zone 1 and highs around 50 warrants for the other zones (July 1987). In general, during this time, the number of warrants issued in Zone 1 increased, while the number of warrants issued in zones 2–4 remained fairly stable in the range of 30 to 50 warrants monthly.

The data for monthly totals of issued warrants for the period of January 1988 to July 1993 were graphed longitudinally. As shown by the figure, the Apprehension Unit did not begin to issue warrants until after PreStart had been implemented. The number of warrants issued by that unit steadily increased throughout the post–July 1991 period. This is because over time, more and more exceptions to the IDOC's practice of only issuing warrants in the case of forcible violent felonies appeared to be occurring. Conversely, the number of warrants issued was increasing in all four zones (especially Zone 1) throughout the before–PreStart period but dramatically decreased throughout the period after PreStart was implemented. Zone 1 was the primary issuer of warrants during the before–PreStart period; its issuance activity approached the minimal levels of issuance indicated by zones 2–4 once the Apprehension Unit became the primary issuer of warrants in the post–PreStart period. Zone 1 and zone 2–4 levels were similar. Since December 1992, Zone 1 has issued even fewer warrants than zones 2–4. Most apparent from the graph is the significant decrease in warrants issued since PreStart's implementation.

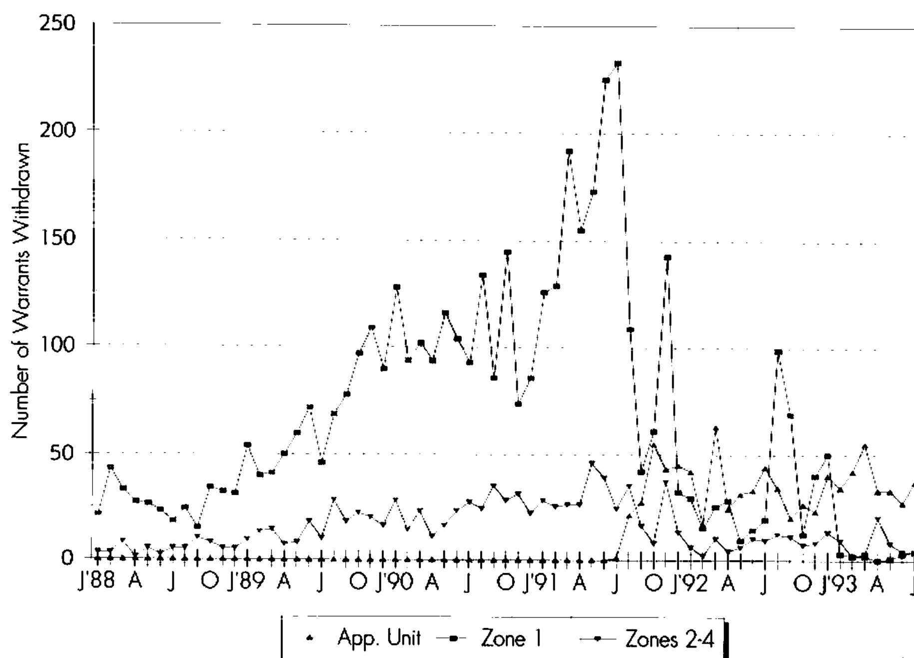
The second warrant activity examined in this section refers to the monthly totals for the number of withdrawn warrants. This measure provided one piece of information regarding the outcome of some of the issued warrants. Withdrawn warrants are those that are rescinded subsequent to issuance and typically do not result in any action against the releasee.

During the first two years for which data were available (not presented graphically), the totals were quite low. While Zone 1 withdrew 50 or fewer warrants throughout this two–year period, zones 2–4 and the apprehension unit had withdrawn almost no warrants.

The graphed data illustrate that warrant withdrawal activity generally increased from the pre–1988 period (see Figure 10.2). From January 1988 until PreStart's implementation (July 1991), Zone 1 increasingly withdrew warrants until it reached a peak of 233 withdrawals the month that PreStart was implemented. This was associated with the release of many detainees in the Cook County Jail right before the introduction of PreStart — detention based on anything other than a very serious felony allegation was inconsistent with current parole philosophy. Throughout the entire PreStart period, the number of warrant withdrawals increased only slightly for zones 2–4, and generally ranged from 10 to 50 withdrawals. The Apprehension Unit had no warrant withdrawals during this time.

The trends were not as consistent during the post–PreStart period. While the number of withdrawn warrants generally decreased for Zone 1 during this time, its decline fluctuated rather erratically. However, during the months of 1993 for which data are available, Zone 1 did not withdraw any warrants.

Figure 10.2
Total Number of Warrants Withdrawn

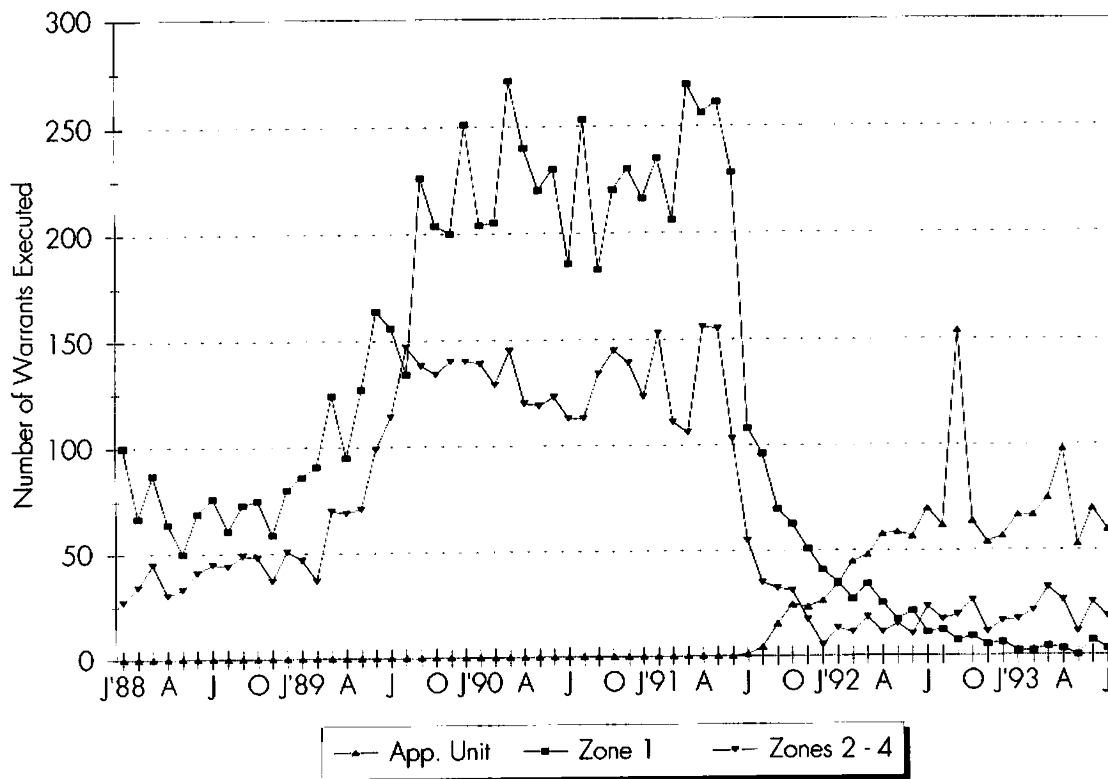


Withdrawn warrant activity did not change much for zones 2–4 during the post–PreStart period. The monthly totals decreased slightly once PreStart was implemented and then remained at very low levels. Conversely, the Apprehension Unit became the primary unit to withdraw warrants in the post–PreStart period. This was consistent with its role in the issuance of warrants.

The final type of warrant activity examined was the totals for executed warrants. This measure indicated the outcome for most of the warrants issued. Once a releasee's warrant reached the executed stage, the releasee was either reincarcerated or had his or her disposition satisfied based on warrant specifications.

During the two–year period for which data was not graphed, the general trend in warrant execution for all zones included an increase throughout the first 19 months, followed by a downward trend during the last five months. The Apprehension Unit did not execute any warrants during this two–year period.

During the before–PreStart period for which data were graphed (Figure 10.3), warrant executions for the four zones remained rather low and stable throughout 1988, generally increased throughout 1989's first half, and remained fairly high from mid–1989 until PreStart's implementation.



As can be seen in Figure 10.3, warrant execution activities decreased dramatically for all four zones once PreStart was implemented. Further, in accordance with PreStart philosophy, the Apprehension Unit became the primary unit to execute warrants.

In summary, it appeared that the general trend for the four zones, across all types of warrant activity, was for activity to either increase or remain constant during the before–PreStart period, but to decrease dramatically once PreStart was implemented. The general trend for all types of warrant activity associated with the Apprehension Unit was nonexistent until PreStart's implementation, upon which time the Apprehension Unit became the primary vehicle for all warrant activity. These findings were considered to be fairly consistent with the intent of the PreStart philosophy. Clearly, PreStart's implementation has resulted in a marked reduction in warrant activity and a likely reduction in jail and prison populations.

PreStart's Impact on Prison Admissions

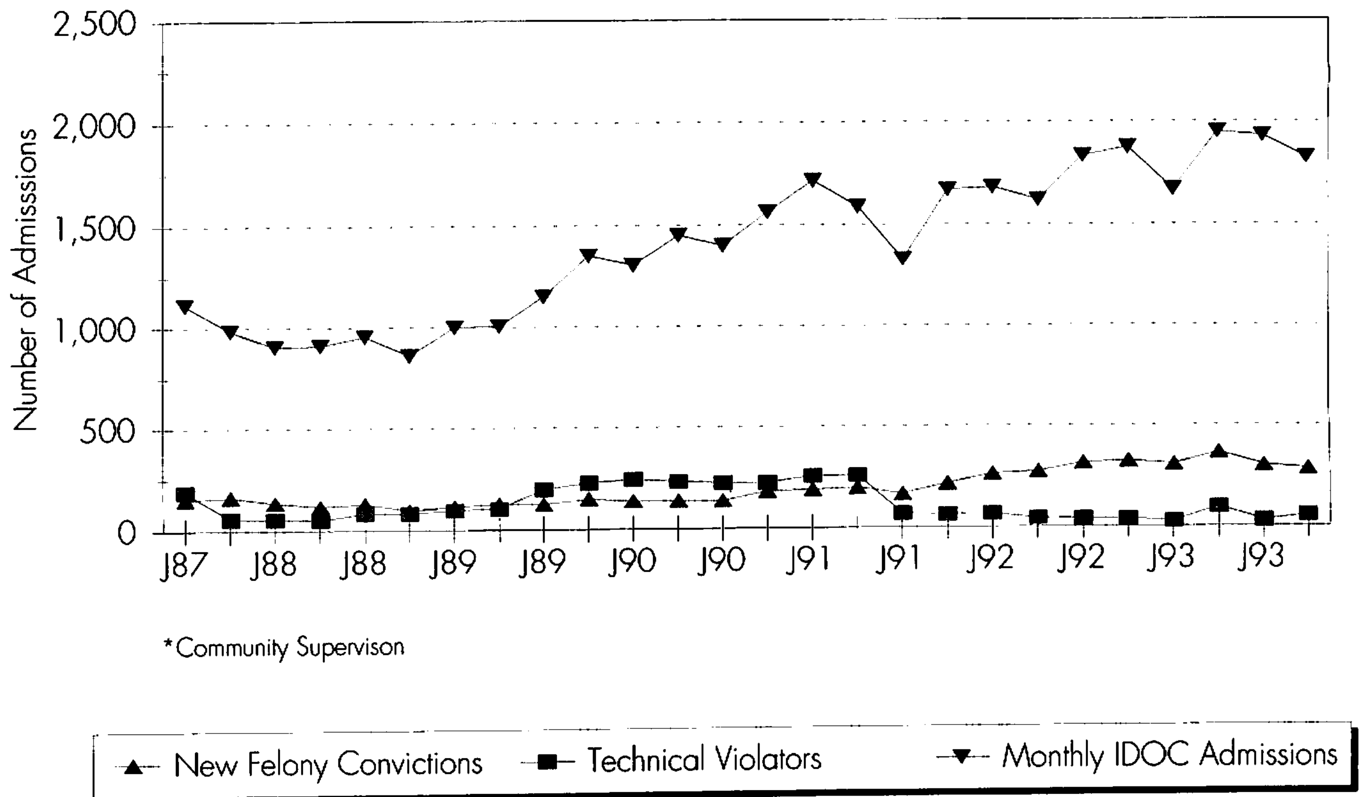
Information was obtained from the IDOC regarding monthly prison admissions from July 1987 to December 1993 to assess PreStart's impact. The following analysis includes all prison admissions, as well as the prison admissions of community supervision violators due to new offenses and technical violations. The monthly totals for these admission types were graphed in a time–series manner so that fluctuations in the totals could be more easily interpreted in terms of their temporal occurrence (see Figure 10.4). The displayed data began with July 1987 since that was the month when a major layoff of parole agents took place, thus forcing a substantial change in the level of parole services.

The monthly totals for admissions of community supervision clients due to new offenses ranged from a low of 81 admissions (November 1988) to a high of 361 admissions (October 1993). As can be seen in Figure 10.4, the new offense monthly admissions totals seem to stabilize from July 1987 until December 1991 (81 to 233 admissions per month). However, beginning with January 1992, new offense admissions increased to a much higher range of 264 to 361 admissions per month.

The monthly totals for admissions of community supervision clients due to technical violations ranged from a low of 20 admissions (May 1993) to a high of 267 admissions (March 1990). As shown in Figure 10.4, the technical violation monthly totals are fairly constant in the range of 47 to 99 admissions from October 1987 through February 1989. Beginning with March 1989 and continuing through June 1991, however, technical violation monthly totals were in a higher range of 103 to 267 admissions. The period from July 1991 to December 1993 witnessed a major decrease in the range of technical violation admissions (20 to 129 admissions).

A technique used to examine the patterns in the new offense and technical violation admissions data involved looking at the yearly averages of the monthly totals for the two types of admissions (see Table 10.1). It was expected that the yearly averages would provide an indication of the fluctuations in the data that occurred, while preventing outliers (extreme monthly values) from unduly influencing the results.

Figure 10.4: Total and CS* Violator Admissions to IDOC



As can be seen in Table 10.1, the pattern in the new offense admissions data was one of continual increases. When the data are examined in terms of their patterns over several years, it appears that PreStart's implementation had little, if any, influence on the rate of new offense admissions by community supervision violators since the yearly averages were continually increasing long before PreStart's implementation.

Table 10.1: Yearly Averages of Monthly Admissions Totals for Community Supervision Violators (July 1987 — December 1993)

Period	New Offense Admissions	Technical Violation Admissions
7/87 — 6/88	114.92	83.75
7/88 — 6/89	112.00	107.00
7/89 — 6/90	148.25	227.75
7/90 — 6/91	174.92	228.08
7/91 — 6/92	234.92	46.25
7/92 — 6/93	292.42	47.17
7/93 — 12/93	298.83	40.67

Table 10.1 helps to further clarify what was taking place in the technical violation admissions data series as well. The yearly averages continually increase until July 1991, when the yearly averages take a tremendous drop. These data led to the conclusion that admissions due to technical violations decreased considerably once PreStart was implemented.

To obtain a better understanding of the relationship between admissions due to new felonies and technical violations and the overall level of admissions into the IDOC, ratios were computed for each six–month period across the 78 months of admissions data (see Table 10.2). The specific method of calculation was to sum the admissions for the numerator, and then divide by the sum of admissions for the denominator for each six–month period.

Table 10.2: Ratios of Admissions for Community Supervision Violators (July 1987 — December 1993)

6-Month Period	New / Technical	New / Total	Technical / Total	New + Tech. / Total
7/87—12/87	1.10	.13	.12	.25
1/88—6/88	1.85	.12	.07	.19
7/88—12/88	1.21	.11	.09	.21
1/89—6/89	.94	.11	.12	.23
7/89—12/89	.65	.11	.17	.28
1/90—6/90	.65	.10	.15	.25
7/90—12/90	.63	.10	.16	.26
1/91—6/91	.91	.12	.13	.26
7/91—12/91	3.98	.13	.03	.17
1/92—6/92	6.30	.17	.03	.20
7/92—12/92	5.55	.17	.03	.20
1/93—6/93	6.98	.18	.03	.20
7/93—12/93	7.35	.17	.02	.19

The first ratio presented in Table 10.2 summarizes the number of new felony admissions for community supervision offenders relative to technical violation admissions over time. For the first 18 months of the data series, admissions due to new felonies tended to occur somewhat more than admissions due to technical violations (ratios ranged from 1.10 to 1.85). However, from January 1989 through June 1991, the ratios dropped below 1.0 (and ranged from .63 to .94), indicating that admissions due to technical violations were occurring at a somewhat greater rate than were admissions due to new felonies. A dramatic turnabout occurred with the pattern in new to technical ratios beginning with July 1991 and lasting through December 1993, when new felony admissions occurred at a much greater rate than admissions due to technical violations (ratios ranged from 3.98

to 7.35). Thus, early indications supported the interpretation that new felony admissions increased suddenly and remained elevated during the months following PreStart's implementation.

The second ratio presented in Table 10.2 summarizes the number of new felony admissions for community supervision offenders relative to total admissions over the same six–month time intervals. This ratio remained fairly constant in the range of .10 to .13 for the first 4.5 years of the data series, meaning that new felony admissions of community supervision offenders made up 10 percent to 13 percent of total IDOC admissions during this period. Beginning in January 1992 and lasting throughout the remaining two years of the data series, a slight increase in the ratios occurred, meaning that new felony admissions were making up 17 percent to 18 percent of total admissions during this latter period. While a general increase in new felony admissions occurred in the final two years of the data series, the change occurred six months after PreStart's implementation — thus, it is uncertain whether this pattern in the data can be directly attributed to parole reform in Illinois.

The third ratio presented in Table 10.2 summarizes the number of technical violation admissions relative to total admissions over the six–month time intervals. The ratios were moderately low and fluctuated within the range of .07 to .17 during the first four years of the data series, meaning that during that period, technical violations were making up 7 percent to 17 percent of all IDOC admissions. However, beginning with July 1991 and lasting through December 1993, technical violations reduced to a consistent proportion of only 2 percent or 3 percent of total IDOC admissions. Thus, this pattern in the ratio data seems to indicate that PreStart's implementation did result in technical violation admissions decreasing to a very low proportion of total IDOC admissions.

The final ratio presented in Table 10.2 summarizes the number of new felony and technical violation admissions for community supervision offenders relative to total IDOC admissions. The interesting finding associated with this ratio was the lack of a consistent pattern. The combined total of new felony and technical violation admissions fluctuated within a range of .17 to .28, meaning that across the six–month periods, admissions due to community supervision violators (including those due to new offenses as well as those due to technical violations) accounted for between 17 percent and 28 percent of total IDOC admissions. The only pattern that was detected in this particular ratio series arose from the slight decrease in the ratios occurring after PreStart's implementation; beginning with July 1991, it appears that admissions by community supervision violators decreased slightly as a proportion of total IDOC admissions.

Taken together, all of the above data interpretation techniques suggest that PreStart may have had, at best, a minimal impact on IDOC admissions. It appears that admissions of community

supervision offenders because of new offenses may have increased slightly, and admissions of community supervision offenders based on technical violations decreased dramatically because of PreStart. The net effect was a slight decrease in the total reincarceration level for community supervised offenders but a more dramatic change in the mix of reasons for a releasee to be reincarcerated.

To more fully examine if PreStart's implementation (which occurred July 1991) had an impact on monthly prison admissions, a series of interrupted time–series analyses were conducted. The first examined reincarceration for new offenses (see Table 10.3). The analysis involved regressing the new offense admissions monthly totals onto a dummy–coded variable representing the pre–July 1991 and the post–July 1991 periods. The new offense admissions monthly totals also were regressed onto a variable representing the overall linear trend of the monthly totals as well as a variable representing only the post–July 1991 linear trend of the monthly totals.

Also computed was a test statistic (Durbin–Watson) of whether an autocorrelation (that is, correlation of error terms in the regression model) was influencing the data. If the test statistic shows that an autocorrelation is present, the autocorrelation could be removed by differencing the series (that is, subtracting each monthly total from the previous month's total).

In the case of the time–series analysis for the new offense admissions data, the Durbin–Watson test did not indicate that an autocorrelation was influencing the data when the .01 level of statistical significance was used (the test was inconclusive at the .05 level of significance). Thus, the time–series analysis was conducted using the actual monthly totals for new offense admissions.

Results of this time–series analysis on the new offense admissions data indicate that the overall effect of the three time/trend variables were statistically significant (see Table 10.3). The amount of variance in the new–offense admissions monthly totals explained by the regression model was 86 percent.

However, the standardized regression coefficient (.06) for the prepost variable, which represented PreStart's impact's implementation, was not statistically significant. This was interpreted to mean that a statistically significant change in new offense admission monthly totals that could be attributable to PreStart per se was not detected in the transition from the pre–July 1991 period to the post–July 1991 period.

Table 10.3: Time–Series Results for Admissions Due to New Offenses July 1987 — December 1993 (Series Not Differenced)

Full Model	R-Square	F	P-Value
	.86	131.48	.0000
Independent Variables	**Beta**	**T**	**P-Value**
Impact of PreStart	.06	.59	.5607
Linear Trend Throughout Data Series	.55	7.01	.0000
Linear Trend After Implementation of PreStart	.39	4.37	.0000

The standardized regression coefficient (.55) for the variable representing the linear trend throughout the entire time series was statistically significant, meaning that a strong linear growth trend (that is, an average of a .55 standard unit monthly increase in new offense admissions) did occur throughout the data series, regardless of PreStart's implementation.

The final variable regressed on the monthly totals of new offense admissions represented the linear trend in the data that occurred after PreStart's implementation in July 1991. The standardized regression coefficient (.39) for this variable also was statistically significant; therefore, it can be concluded that prison admissions due to new offenses committed by community supervision violators averaged a .39 standard–unit increase with each subsequent month throughout the period after PreStart's implementation.

Another interrupted time–series anaysis was conducted to see if the change from traditional parole services to PreStart had an impact on the monthly totals for prison admissions due to technical violations committed by inmates under community supervision. The analysis was identical to the one conducted for the new offense admissions data.

The technical violation admissions data series was tested using the Durbin–Watson test statistic. The test indicated that an autocorrelation was influencing the results of the technical violation admissions data at both the .05 and .01 levels of statistical significance. The regression results indicated that the overall effect of the three time/trend variables, as well as their separate regression coefficients, were statistically significant; the data still had to be differenced (that is,

transformed to remove the autocorrelation) and reanalyzed before the results could be meaningfully interpreted.

Results of this modified time–series analysis on the technical violation admissions data indicated that the autocorrelation had been successfully removed from the data. The results also indicated that the overall effect of the three time/trend variables was no longer statistically significant (see Table 10.4), with the model accounting for only 3 percent of the variance in the technical violation admissions series.

Table 10.4: Time–Series Results for Admissions Due to Technical Violations, July 1987 — June 1993 (Series Differenced)

Full Model	**R-Square**	**F**	**P-Value**
	.03	.63	.6014
Independent Variables	**Beta**	**T**	**P-Value**
Impact of PreStart	–.34	–1.35	.1824
Linear Trend Throughout Data Series	.08	.41	.6865
Linear Trend After Implementation of PreStart	.23	.99	.3229

None of the standardized regression coefficients was statistically significant either, although the direction of the coefficients indicated what was generally taking place in the data series. The standardized regression coefficient representing PreStart's impact on the data series was –.34, meaning that the monthly totals for technical violation admissions tended to decrease once PreStart was implemented. However, the relationship was not significant at the .05 level.

The standardized regression coefficient for the variable representing the linear trend throughout the entire technical violation admissions data series was positive (.08) but not statistically significant. This was interpreted to mean that the overall data trend across the six years of monthly totals signified a slight increase in technical admissions.

The standardized regression coefficient for the final variable (that is, the post–PreStart trend variable) onto which the technical admissions data were regressed also was positive (.23) but not

statistically significant. This meant that during the period proceeding PreStart's implementation, a general increase in technical violation admissions took place.

However, a look at the raw data for monthly technical violation admissions graphed in Figure 10.4 indicates that the figures were much lower after July 1991. The regression coefficient for this post–July 1991 trend was not statistically significant (which alone warrants not interpreting the value); furthermore, the spiked increases that took place in technical violation admissions during September 1992 and April 1993 were suspected as probable causes as to why the analysis did not detect the general decrease in monthly technical violation admissions indicated by all other months in the post–July 1991 period. Thus, even if the time–series analysis was not powerful enough (probably due to an oversmoothing of the data in the process of removing the autocorrelation) to detect the decrease in technical violation admissions after PreStart was implemented, a glance at the actual data certainly indicated that a substantial decrease had taken place.

The interrupted time–series analysis of the technical violation admissions data indicated that an autocorrelation was influencing the data; this is understandable since the variation in the data across the monthly totals was not that great (indicating that one month's total could be predicted from the previous month's total). But the method used to difference the series (that is, remove the autocorrelation) was likely so aggressive that it made PreStart's impact on the monthly technical violation admissions totals undetectable.

However, an examination of the yearly averages for the monthly totals dramatically characterizes PreStart's impact on the number of prison admissions due to technical violations. Clearly, admissions due to technical violations decreased substantially once PreStart was implemented. Moreover, these decreases do not appear to be reliably associated with increases in the level of community supervision clients being returned to prison for the commission of new felonies. To determine if the transition from traditional parole services to PreStart affected total IDOC admissions, another time–series analysis was conducted (see Table 10.5). Because the statistic used to test for an autocorrelation indicated that the data were not autocorrelated, the raw monthly figures were used.

As can be seen in Table 10.5, the full regression model was statistically significant and explained 82 percent of the variance of total IDOC admissions. All three trend variables were statistically significant as well. The variable representing PreStart's impact resulted in a standardized regression coefficient of –.35, indicating that total admissions decreased considerably at the time PreStart was implemented. The variable representing the linear trend throughout the entire monthly data series resulted in a standardized regression coefficient of 1.35, indicating that total IDOC admissions increased throughout the 78 months of data. Finally, the variable

representing the linear trend during the period proceeding PreStart's implementation resulted in a standardized regression coefficient of –.23; this indicated that a decrease in total IDOC admissions had occurred since the time of PreStart's implementation, but the decrease was only two–thirds of the decrease observed at the point of PreStart's implementation.

Table 10.5: Time–Series Results for Admissions Due to Total IDOC Admissions, July 1987 — December 1993 (Series Not Differenced)

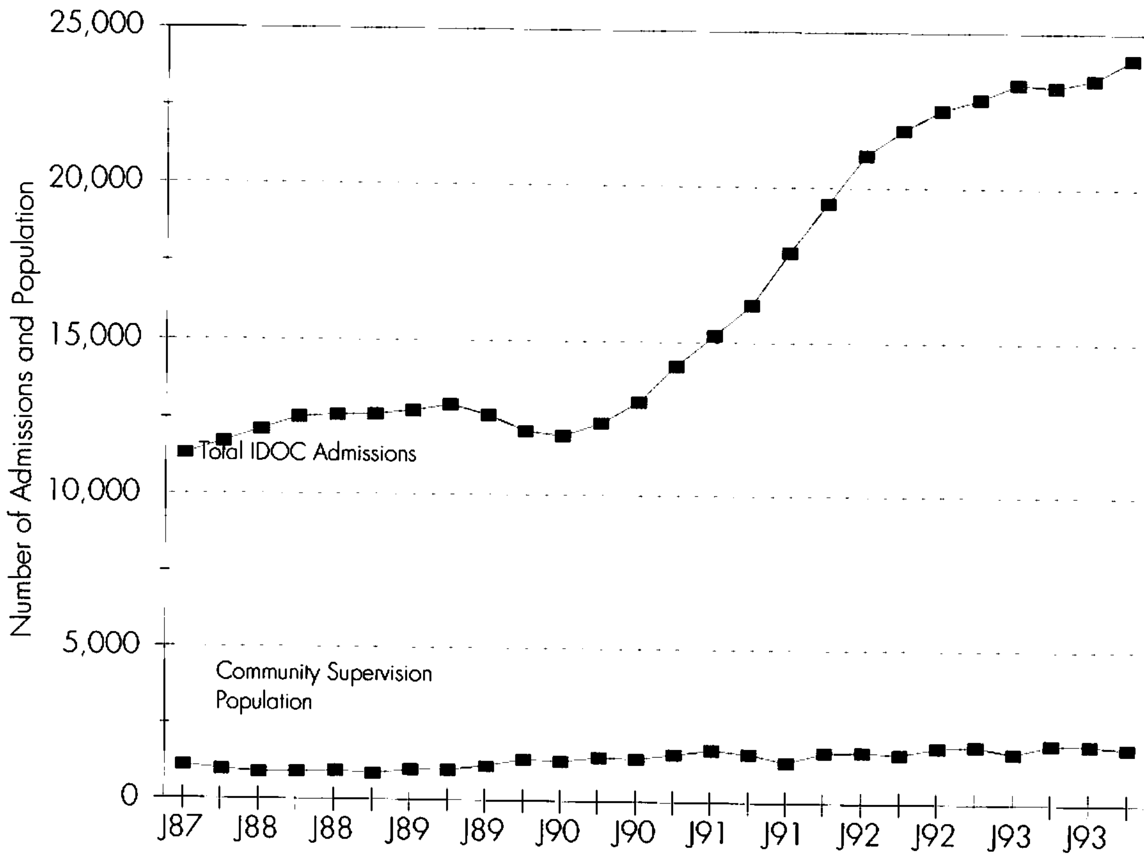
Full Model	R–Square	F	P–Value
	.82	115.87	.0000
Independent Variables	**Beta**	**T**	**P–Value**
Impact of PreStart	–.35	-3.51	.0166
Linear Trend Throughout Data Series	1.35	13.67	.0008
Linear Trend After Implementation of PreStart	–.23	-2.45	.0000

In summary, the three interrupted time–series analyses indicated that PreStart had a significant impact on total IDOC admissions; however, the decrease cannot be attributed directly or statistically to PreStart's impact on decreasing levels of technical violations among community supervision offenders. In addition, increases in total IDOC admissions and admissions based on new offenses committed by those on community supervision were increasing throughout the six–year period, in a manner suggesting that PreStart, at best, may have slowed somewhat the rate of the increase.

A plausible reason for these patterns is that the preceding analysis did not control for the size of the "at–risk" population of individuals under mandatory supervised release. This possibility is examined nest.

As shown in Figure 10.5, the community supervision population experienced a fairly dramatic increase since the beginning of 1990 and continued to increase throughout the period after PreStart's implementation. For example, in July 1987, there were 11,328 releasees on community supervision. By July 1991, there were 17,899 on community supervision.

Figure 10.5: Total IDOC Admissions and Community Supervision Population

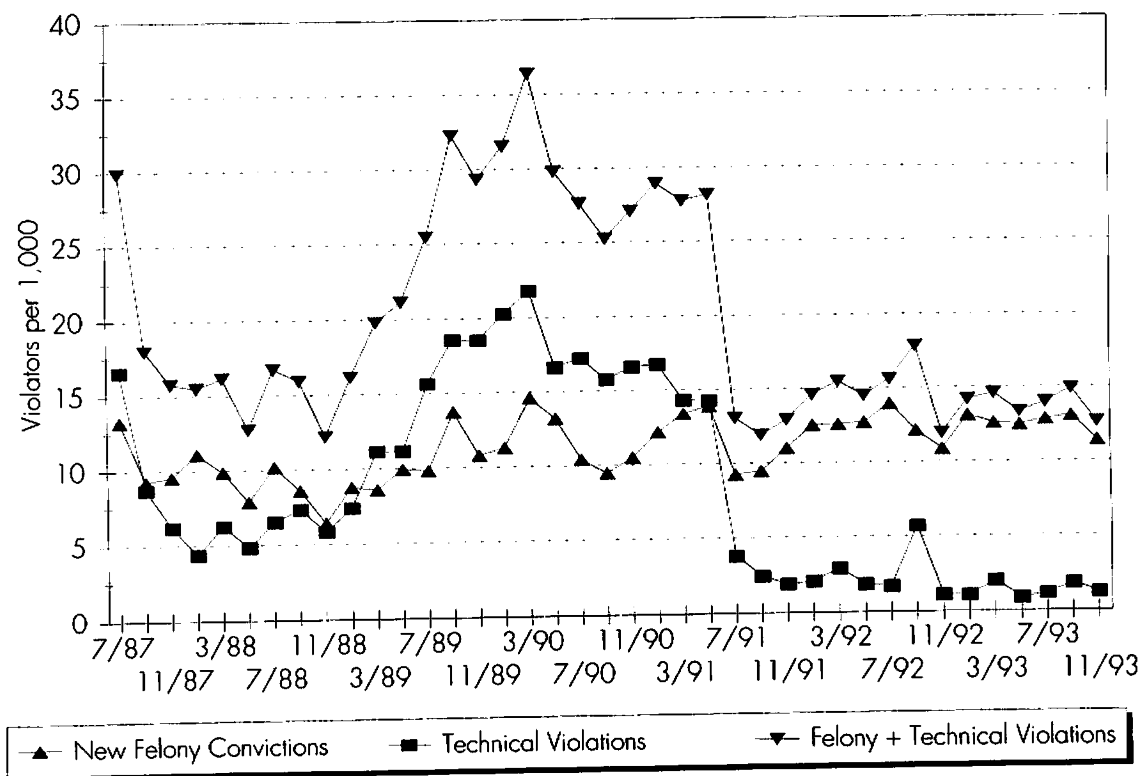


By December 1993, there were 24,177 releasees on community supervision. However, total IDOC admissions remained relatively stable (between 784 and 1,983 admissions per month) throughout the 78 months for which the data have been graphed. This suggests that the regression analysis presented above might be more meaningful if prison admissions of community supervision violators were standardized for their corresponding monthly total population size, since fluctuations in the total at risk population of community supervision offenders might account for some of the fluctuations in prison admissions of community supervision violators.

By transforming the admissions data into rates of admissions per 1,000 people in the community supervision population, an even clearer picture of PreStart's impact on prison admissions emerges. As can be seen in Figure 10.6, admissions due to new felony convictions remained relatively stable, ranging from 5 to 15 per 1,000 community supervision clients, throughout the entire 78–month data series.

Admissions due to technical violations indicated much more variation. Technical violation admissions increased from January 1989 through the first quarter of 1990, and then remained within a range of 15 to 20 admissions per 1,000 community supervision clients until May 1991. However, beginning in May, admissions due to technical violations decreased dramatically until September 1991, when the rates leveled off into a rather stable range of one to five admissions per 1,000 community supervision clients. Thus, admission rates for technical violations decreased dramatically around the time of PreStart's implementation (almost as if PreStart was being anticipated two months prior to implementation), while admission rates due to new felony convictions did not appear to be associated with parole reform.

Figure 10.6: IDOC Admisssion Rates for Community Supervision Violators



The third series graphed in Figure 10.6 represent the combined total of admissions among community supervision offenders due to new felony convictions and technical violations. When both types of admissions to the IDOC were examined in a combined manner, the detected pattern paralleled the pattern observed in the technical violation admissions data (which makes sense since the new felony conviction rates were fairly constant). Thus, while all IDOC admissions by

community supervision violators decreased around the time PreStart was implemented, that decrease was characterized by a fairly constant level of admission rates due to new felony convictions and by a decrease in admission rates due to technical violations.

Since the standardized IDOC admission rates for community supervision violators seemed to provide a more accurate and meaningful reflection of the patterns occurring across the 78–month data series, the interrupted time–series analyses were repeated using the admissions rates that were standardized for community supervision population levels.

To determine what impact the change in Illinois' parole system had on the standardized new felony admission rates for community supervision offenders, the rates were regressed into the three trend variables discussed earlier. Since the statistic used to test for autocorrelation indicated that the data were not autocorrelated at the .01 level of statistical significance, the raw data were used in the time–series analysis.

As can be seen in Table 10.6, only the variable representing the linear trend across the entire 78 months of data was statistically significant. In fact, the standardized regression coefficient of .86 indicates that a rather strong increase in new felony conviction admissions, controlling for the "at risk" population, occurred throughout the data series.

Table 10.6: Time–Series Results for Standardized New Felony Admission Rates, July 1987 — December 1993 (Series Not Differenced)

Full Model	**R–Square**	**F**	**P–Value**
	.38	14.97	.0000
Independent Variables	**Beta**	**T**	**P–Value**
Impact of PreStart	–.34	–1.84	.0698
Linear Trend Throughout Data Series	.86	4.54	.0000
Linear Trend After Implementation of PreStart	.01	.08	.9336

While the other two standardized regression coefficients were not found to be statistically significant, some practically significant interpretations can be made. The standardized regression coefficient of –.34 for the variable representing PreStart's impact on the new felony admission

rates indicates that admissions due to new felony convictions decreased at the time PreStart was implemented. And the standardized regression coefficient of .01, representing the linear trend observed after PreStart's implementation, indicates that new felony admission rates did not vary much after PreStart's implementation.

To determine PreStart's impact on the standardized technical violation admission rates, the interrupted time–series analysis was repeated again. This time the test for autocorrelation did indicate that the data were autocorrelated; thus, the data were differenced before undertaking the regression analysis.

As can be seen in Table 10.7, none of the standardized regression coefficients were statistically significant once the data were smoothed to remove the autocorrelation.

Table 10.7: Time–Series Results for Standardized Technical Violation Admission Rates, July 1987 — December 1993 (Series Differenced)

Full Model	R-Square	F	P-Value
	.02	.46	.7803
Independent Variables	**Beta**	**T**	**P-Value**
Impact of PreStart	–.24	–1.03	.3072
Linear Trend Throughout Data Series	.10	.44	.6643
Linear Trend After Implementation of PreStart	.17	.79	.4336

However, some practically significant interpretations can be made. The standardized regression coefficient of –.24 for the variable representing PreStart's impact indicates that technical violation admissions decreased at the time of PreStart's implementation. The standardized regression coefficient of .10 for the variable representing the linear trend throughout the data series indicates that a slight increase occurred in the rates of technical violation admissions across the entire 78–month period. Finally, the standardized regression coefficient of .17 for the variable representing the linear trend in the data series after PreStart's implementation indicates that a comparable average increase in technical violation admissions was detected during the months following PreStart's implementation.

As was pointed out earlier, the spiked increases that occurred during September 1992 and April 1993 are suspected as the causes of the just–discussed analysis detecting an increase during the post–PreStart period. In general, the time–series analysis of the technical violation admission rates (standardized for community supervision population size) was not powerful enough to detect a statistically significant decrease in technical violation admissions that occurred at PreStart's implementation.

A final interrupted time–series analysis was conducted to determine what impact PreStart had on the combined (that is, new felony plus technical violation) admission rates for community supervision violators (once again, standardized for community supervision population size). Since the test for autocorrelation indicated that the data were autocorrelated, the data series were differenced prior to being submitted to the regression analysis.

As seen in Table 10.8, the time–series analysis of the differenced data series was not powerful enough to detect the decreases in IDOC admissions by community supervision violators which occurred at PreStart's implementation (even though the decrease is visually evident in Figure 10.4). Although none of the standardized regression coefficients were statistically significant, again some interpretation about practical significance can be made. The standardized regression coefficient of –.18 for the variable representing PreStart's impact indicates that IDOC admissions by community supervision violators decreased considerably around the time of PreStart's implementation. The standardized regression coefficient of .08 for the variable representing the linear trend throughout the data series indicates that a slight increase in IDOC admissions by community supervision violators was taking place throughout the entire 78 months for which data were analyzed. Finally, the standardized regression coefficient of .10 for the variable representing the linear trend in the data PreStart's implementation indicates that a comparable increase occurred in IDOC admissions by community supervision violators during the time after PreStart's implementation.

Table 10.8: Time-Series Results for Standardized Combined (New Felony plus Technical Violation) IDOC Admission Rates, July 1987 — December 1993 (Series Differenced)

Full Model	R-Square	F	P-Value
	.01	.21	.8897
Independent Variables	**Beta**	**T**	**P-Value**
Impact of PreStart	–.18	–.75	.4564
Linear Trend Throughout Data Series	.08	.35	.7302
Linear Trend After Implementation of PreStart	.10	.47	.6431

Summary and Conclusions

A time–series analysis was conducted to assess PreStart's impact on the issuance, serving and execution of warrants and on IDOC prison admission figures. PreStart has clearly resulted in a reduced level of warrant–issuing behavior, which is now concentrated in the Fugitive Apprehension Unit, and in all likelihood resulted in a reduced number of releasees serving time in jails or prisons on the basis of warrants being issued.

It appears that a decrease in IDOC admissions by community supervision violators was associated with the timing of PreStart's implementation. While statistical analyses did not identify PreStart as a clear cause of reduced prison admissions based on technical violations, after July 1991, violation–based prison admissions plummeted and have generally remained low since. However, that decrease was overshadowed by the general increase in admissions taking place across the four years prior to parole reform in Illinois, and that continued to take place (albeit starting at a decreased level) during the period following PreStart's implementation.

Chapter 11

PRESTART'S IMPACT ON OFFENDER RECIDIVISM

Perhaps the ultimate test of PreStart is the program's impact on offender recidivism. This chapter examines the recidivism rate of inmates who experienced both Phase I and Phase II of PreStart; it also compares their recidivism to a comparison group of inmates who had not experienced Phase I of the program before their release and who were supervised under the earlier mandatory supervised release structure. Remember that, for the most part, offenders under the earlier parole system were not actively being supervised nor were they the subjects of parole casework. Rather, most releasees under the earlier system were being tracked by their parole officers on a monthly basis and assessed on their whereabouts and current living/employment status.

Thus, this analysis has little implication for the relative effects of a PreStart–style program on recidivism compared to those of a bona fide parole supervision program. It must be emphasized, however, that in the earlier system, warrants were routinely being executed on releasees failing to meet their monthly reporting requirements or other conditions of mandatory supervised release and on those releasees suspected and/or arrested for committing new crimes. As revealed in the preceding chapter, PreStart's implementation resulted in a marked reduction in the number of warrants issued and executed by the IDOC, and quite likely a reduction in prison admissions based on technical violations. Accordingly, while PreStart does not reflect a vastly reduced level of intervention by the IDOC into releasees' lives, it is also clear that the exercise of sanctioning powers and control over releasees was greater in the period immediately preceding the PreStart implementation.

It also should be emphasized that under the PreStart structure, some releasees are supervised in the community. Most prominently, these include releasees who are assigned to SISU and to the Community Drug Units. To assess the impacts of these program subcomponents on releasee behavior, the recidivism of samples of releasees who participated is compared to those of comparable groups of releasees who did not experience similar levels of supervision and service delivery efforts.

Background

At the time of this writing, a formal outcome evaluation of the PreStart program has not been conducted. Nonetheless, some relevant research from Illinois and other states can inform the present analysis. For instance, it is well known that high recidivism rates are often found among parolee populations. For instance, one prominent study found that among 108,580 individuals released from prison in 11 states in 1983, 62.5 percent were rearrested within three years (National Institute of Justice, 1989). Forty–seven percent were convicted of a new crime, and 41 percent were reincarcerated. Younger offenders, property offenders and prisoners with prior drug histories consistently exhibit higher rearrest rates than other groups of parolees in this and other comparable studies.

Studies of inmate recidivism in Illinois also indicate very high recidivism figures. Approximately, 46 out of every 100 inmates released from prison find their way back into the prison system within three years (the Illinois Task Force on Crime and Corrections, 1993: 5). Recidivism appears to vary somewhat by the nature of the institution from which the inmate is released. Inmates released from institutions (26 percent) and those released from community correctional centers (25 percent) have higher rates of return to prison within two years than those who have completed their sentence on electronic detention (16 percent) (Illinois Task Force on Crime and Corrections, 1993: 47). A recent study by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, which examined the reincarceration levels of inmates released in 1990, found that 54 percent of offenders released for crimes against property were reincarcerated within three years. Those released for crimes against people exhibited a 42 percent reincarceration rate, while those released for drug and sex crimes exhibited reincarceration rates of 35 percent and 31 percent, respectively (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 1994: 17).

As presented in the preceding chapter, the reincarceration of inmates recently released from prison — both for new felony convictions and technical violations — accounted for a variable percentage of all IDOC admissions over the period immediately prior to PreStart's implementation. The combined total of new felony and technical violation admissions as a percentage of total admissions fluctuated within a range of 17 percent to 28 percent from July 1987 to July 1991. PreStart's implementation also was associated with a slight decrease in the percentage of IDOC

prison admissions that were the result of the reincarceration of prison releasees.[28] While these figures suggest that PreStart has slowed the rate of prison growth in Illinois, they suggest little for the percentage of releasees who "fail" when released into the community under PreStart.

Research by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority also found that almost 60 percent of prison releasees are rearrested within two and a half years of their release from prison. Five hundred and thirty–nine inmates released from IDOC facilities between April 1 and June 30, 1993, were tracked for 27 to 29 months in this study. The analysis revealed that the critical period for rearrest occurs in the first nine months after release, with the rate of rearrest recidivism levels falling off after that period (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 1986: 5). It also was found that, generally, inmates released from higher–security prisons, those with many prior arrests, those with more extensive histories of state incarceration, and inmates convicted of property offenses are not only more likely to be rearrested, but also exhibit a faster pace of recidivism than those releasees that didn't share those characteristics.

Approximately 42 percent of the above sample was reincarcerated for either a new offense or technical violation. Interestingly, the critical period for reincarceration was between the sixth and 18th month after release, likely reflecting the time it takes to process these cases and the lag time it takes to record these transactions in Illinois' Computerized Criminal History (CCH) system.

Methodology

There are a number of methodologies available to examine offender recidivism. The preferred method is an experimental design, but this method was not possible in the current instance.[29] Thus, a quasi–experimental design that used differing releasee selection processes across various subcomponents of the study (for example, random selection and matching strategies) was

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28 Consistent with the above findings, the IDOC has indicated that for FY 1991, 25.6 percent of all prison admissions involved the reincarceration of individuals on mandatory supervised release, with the number of technical violators surpassing the number of releasees convicted of a new crime. Projected figures for FY 1993 indicated that only 19.8 percent of IDOC prison admissions were expected to included people on mandatory supervised release, and that among these individuals, technical violators would represent only 15.8 percent of the total (IDOC, 1993: 7).

29 Because this research commenced after PreStart was implemented, random assignment could not be done to compare the impact of "voluntary" use of community service centers with the earlier structure of mandatory supervised release. Random assignment was theoretically possible to examine the impact of SISU and the CDIPs on releasee recidivism, but the IDOC would not agree to such a design.

employed. Threats to the internal validity of findings are consequently of variable strength based on what types of comparisons are being made across offender groups.

Recidivism among the releasees was measured in a number of different ways. These included arrests and incarcerations subsequent to release from prison. To minimize possible misinterpretations based on a single–variable "fixed interval" analysis (for example, percent rearrested within one year), multiple measures of recidivism were used. These included the traditional dichotomous measures (for example, rearrested or reincarcerated); however, because zero–based measures of recidivism (for example, no rearrests vs. some arrest) often obscure whether program interventions are effective in reducing recidivism (often interventions reduce individual rates of offending while not totally eliminating them), survival analysis has been used. This method helps establish the time rate of recidivism (Maltz, 1984: 75), allowing an examination of whether a program has affected the timing (for example, do offenders take longer to recidivate?) and pace of recidivism (for example, do offenders recidivate at an even pace or are there critical periods witnessing higher levels of recidivism?) (see Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 1986 for an overview of the methodology). Failure rates per 90–day periods and, in some instances, in one–month periods, have been calculated to measure the pace of recidivism. This measures the percentage of subjects arrested or reincarcerated for the first time during a particular at–risk time.

Crime–specific measures of recidivism also have been generated to identify the seriousness of offending behavior. The categories of crimes are violent, property, drug, sex and other offenses. These measures were generated for all members of the different releasee samples.

Sampling Strategy

The PreStart Sample

The PreStart sample does not include a random sampling of the IDOC exit population. Rather, the PreStart sample includes the 384 inmates from 13 correctional facilities (40 inmates at the Dixon Springs Boot Camp were excluded and are analyzed separately[30]) who agreed to

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30 Boot campers are considered a group of inmates who should be studied separately from the PreStart sample for a number of reasons. These include the fact that: 1) the before–PreStart comparison group includes inmates released from prison in 1990, before the Dixon Springs Boot Camp was in operation; 2) boot campers, because of legislatively established eligibility criteria, tend to be quite different from the average IDOC inmate on a number of

participate in the 1992 inmate survey and a random sample of 75 inmates selected from the 208 inmates who either refused to participate in the study or who were inaccessible at the time of the questionnaire administrations (see Table 5.1).

As shown in Chapter 5, the aggregate socio–demographic characteristics of the inmate volunteers were quite similar to the aggregate characteristics of the inmate population released from all IDOC facilities between July 1992 and October 1992, suggesting the potential for minimal self–selection biases to have emerged from the sampling and survey methodologies employed. To assess whether this supposition was correct, and to identify whether the inmate volunteers differed significantly from the inmates who refused or were inaccessible on factors related to recidivism risk, a series of statistical analyses were conducted.

The inmate volunteer group proved to be almost identical to the refusal/inaccessible group on the following characteristics: race, mean number of charges leading to instant incarceration, instant conviction charge, mean number of prior violent arrests, mean number of prior prison admissions and mean number of arrests prior to the four–year period preceding the instant incarceration (data not presented in tabular form). Slight differences emerged across the groups with regard to gender (24 percent of the inmate volunteers vs. 19 percent of the refusals/inaccessible were women), and mean number of arrests in the four–year period immediately preceding the instant incarceration. Further analyses indicated that the two groups were almost identical in terms of their post–incarcerative criminal histories. For example, the mean period of time that had elapsed since their release from prison was identical (16.7 months), as was the mean number of arrests per year among the recidivists (.97 vs. 1.08) and the mean number of months to rearrest for each group (5.8 months). Other measures, which were quite similar, included: percent rearrested within six months (25 percent vs. 28 percent), one year (39 percent vs. 41 percent), and two years (44 percent vs. 48 percent). Thus, it was concluded that these two groups were quite similar on most measures related to recidivism risk and outcome, and members from these two groups were merged to form the PreStart sample.

Subsequent analyses indicated that recidivism outcomes were not significantly different if the merged sample reflected either weighted counts of inmates to reflect the earlier random sampling of

inmates from the refusal/inaccessible group or unweighted counts.[31] For ease of presentation and interpretation, the following analyses present unweighted counts for the 459 releasees in the PreStart sample.

A final consideration concerns the representativeness of the above PreStart sample. There is no claim made that this sample is representative of the entire IDOC inmate exit population since July 1991, when PreStart was implemented, or for all releasees from IDOC facilities in the latter half of 1992, when the sample was identified. Rather, this sample should be seen as highly representative of all releasees who exited the 13 facilities sampled during the latter half of 1992. Note that these facilities include community correctional centers, male and female facilities, and prisons at all security levels, within all regions of the state. Perhaps most importantly, the aggregate characteristics of members within the PreStart sample were remarkably similar to the aggregate characteristics of all inmates released from these facilities during FY 1992. No statistically significant differences were found across groups in terms of the holding conviction charge, race, institution of release, releasee age, educational level, marital status and number of children among the groups' members (data not presented in tabular form). The only statistically significant difference discerned among the measures available for analysis was the gender of the inmates, with the PreStart sample including 23.1 percent females, while the IDOC exit population included only 16.4 percent females. To enhance the representativeness of the recidivism results from the PreStart sample, all females in the PreStart sample were given a weight of .71 (the inverse of 1.41 or 23.1 percent/16.4 percent). This weighting procedure resulted in a final sample size of 428 inmates in the PreStart sample.

These procedures have resulted in the PreStart sample well representing all IDOC inmates released from 13 facilities in the latter half of 1992. Findings from this sample can be generalized

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characteristics predictive of recidivism (for example, age, conviction charge, prior history of institutionalization); and 3) the boot-camp experience is so vastly different than the incarcerative experience of inmates housed in traditional correctional facilities.

31 The following data are representative of the similarity of the weighted and unweighted groups in terms of key outcome measures. None of these differences are statistically significant.

	Weighted Group (N = 592)	Unweighted Group (N = 459)
Number of Months at Risk	16.73	16.72
Percent Rearrested	47.4	46.4
Mean # of Arrests in Post Period	1.12	1.08

to this subgroup of the IDOC exit population, but caution should be made in generalizing from this sample to the entire IDOC exit population.[32]

Before–PreStart Comparison Group

These inmates reflect a sample of 250 inmates randomly selected from among all of the inmates who were released from the 13 sampled facilities between April 1990 and June 1990, prior to Prestart implementation. One of these inmates was eventually reincarcerated and entered the PreStart sample. This person was excluded from the before–PreStart group, resulting in a final sample of 249 inmates.

SISU Sample

These include 100 randomly selected releasees on SISU as of October 1992. Eleven of these randomly selected individuals were identified as also being in the PreStart sample. To make comparisons between the groups more meaningful, these 11 releasees were excluded from the SISU sample, resulting in 89 individuals within this sample.

CDIP Sample

This sample includes all 46 individuals in the Springfield CDIP caseload at some point in October 1992. The vast bulk of these individuals resided in Sangamon County.

CDIP Matched Comparison (Macon County) Group

This sample includes 50 releasees who were on mandatory supervised release status in Macon County (which is contiguous to Sangamon County) during October 1992. Macon County does not have the types of drug treatment services and supervision levels for releasees that are found in Sangamon County. Accordingly, the individuals in this sample are used as a comparison group for the Springfield CDIP releasees. These particular releasees were eligible for selection

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[32] For example, earlier it was reported that inmates released from electronic detention (ED) status exhibit lower reincarceration rates than inmates released from prisons or community correctional centers. The PreStart sample does not include, in a systematic manner, inmates released to mandatory supervised release status from ED status; therefore, it is likely that the PreStart sample may actually overestimate offender reincarceration somewhat.

because they were identified by a local PreStart agent as potentially having a substance abuse problem. From among the entire caseload identified as such (approximately 380), random selection procedures were used until the aggregate demographic characteristics of the comparison group matched those of the Springfield CDIP group. One of these 50 individuals is also in the PreStart sample, and another is also in the before–PreStart comparison group.

Boot Camp Sample

This sample includes 40 inmates who were in the Dixon Springs Impact Incarceration Program while facility site visits were being conducted in 1992. All of these individuals were either in the current PreStart class or had finished the preceding class, and were approached for survey purposes. Not a single inmate refused to complete the survey. Because all individuals at this boot camp were required to participate in Phase I programming and because of the lack of refusals, this sample should be viewed as including all Dixon Springs' boot campers who were near the successful completion of the boot camp experience at the time of the survey (September and October 1992).

Data Collection Procedures

Two basic data sources on the recidivism of research subjects were used: Illinois' Computerized Criminal History (CCH) system maintained by the Illinois State Police (ISP) and the IDOC's admissions file maintained within its Offender Tracking System. The former data system was used to measure each individual's arrest history (and recidivism as measured by rearrests) and the latter was employed to measure each individual's history of state incarceration (and thus, reincarceration). While conviction data could have been used to measure convictions for a new crime after release, complete and valid conviction data are not maintained by any centralized agency in Illinois. Prior audits of the CCH system have indicated that many arrest events identified in the system witness missing dispositions.[33] These missing dispositions could have been tracked down for the current study, but time and cost constraints were prohibitive. Therefore, reconviction as a measure of recidivism is not employed in this study.

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33 In a review of rap sheets for a sample of 362 inmates in IDOC custody as of March 31, 1992, it was found that nearly half of the total arrests on inmates' rap sheets were lacking final court disposition, an average of 3.3 final court dispositions absent per inmate (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 1992: 3).

An attempt was made to compile complete criminal history information on each of the initial 946 research subjects. Arrest data were current for most subjects as of March 1994 and as of May 1994 for the admission history records. The CCH data could not be generated in automated form, thus these data were manually coded from rap sheets and entered into a computerized data file.

The data were coded using a coding scheme developed by the evaluation team. A subject's "instant incarceration period," which was defined by subsample membership, was first identified on the prison admission history record. This is the imprisonment from which the offender was released and entered into the specific form of post–release supervision being examined. Pre– and post–instant incarceration periods were then identified. The next step in the coding process involved translating arrest transactions into these same instant incarceration and pre– and post–periods. Arrest information for each of these periods were coded onto the coding form.[34] Finally, a computer program was generated that defined distinct terms of state incarceration as either falling within the "before–" or "post–" periods. This process generated the data necessary for a recidivism analysis that included measures of both rearrest and reincarceration.

Four staff members coded the data over a six–week period, following a six–hour training session. Interrater reliability was assessed after the second week of data coding, and was considered to be quite high. However, missing data and discrepancies in the data sets were commonly encountered. Most discrepancies in data coding were the result of ambiguities in the prison admission records, and more frequently, the criminal history records.

The final data file contained information on 933 of the 946 initial subjects. The minor level of missing cases (1.3 percent) occurred primarily because the CCH records of eight subjects could not be reliably linked to the individual being tracked in the study.[35]

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[34] The CCH transcript (rap sheet) is intended to be a cumulative record of a person's activities within the Illinois criminal justice system. Unfortunately, these records do not necessarily contain all the arrests for an individual, because less serious arrests are excluded (including less serious misdemeanors) and because the Illinois State Police often experience delays in receiving or posting information to the CCH system. Internal audits of the CCH system tend to indicate that the vast bulk of felonies and serious misdemeanors are reported to the state police and recorded in the CCH system. It is unclear at this point the percent of lesser misdemeanors that find their way into the system. Most recent estimates indicate that the approximate delay in posting arrests into the CCH system once they have been made is about five days for arrests made by the Chicago Police Department and up to one month for arrests made by other agencies in the state. Delays in posting arrests were much greater in the past.

[35] This 1.3 percent figure is even lower than expected. A 1992 Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority audit of rap sheets on IDOC inmates failed to retrieve rap sheets on 21 of 389 inmates in the original sample (5.3 percent) (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 1992: 10). The ability to reduce that percentage in this study was due largely to the diligence of the Illinois State Police in responding to the many data requests made during the course of this project.

Limitations of the Data

The major limitation of the data that were collected relates to missing data. As mentioned earlier, dispositional information on the outcomes of arrest are often missing in the CCH system, precluding the possibility of using convictions as a measure of recidivism. Perhaps most importantly, the CCH system does not maintain reliable or valid data on the amount of time an arrestee may spend in jail, either pretrial or subsequent to conviction, or in federal prisons. This makes it impossible to identify a releasee's true at–risk period. For instance, as an extreme example, assume an inmate was arrested the day after being released from prison, and he sits in a jail for the next 12 months. This person would have been actually at risk of recidivism for only one day; yet because this type of information is generally not found in the CCH system, he would have been considered at risk in the following recidivism analysis for the entire follow–up period and be recorded as having only one arrest. Translated into yearly arrest rates, his rate in this study would have been calculated as one, while his actual arrest rate would be 365 (one arrest for each day at risk). Clearly, the inability to measure accurately the at–risk time of subjects in this study has major consequences for the calculation of valid recidivism measures.

Fortunately, this study's focus is on the recidivism of differing groups of releasees. If missing data on local confinement is evenly distributed across the samples, the resulting error rate for each sample should be approximately constant. Nonetheless, some caution should be exercised when interpreting the following data. When indications exist that the assumption of equal error rates across samples may be erroneous, the implications will be highlighted.

The prison admission records were fairly consistent in terms of the amount of information available (most subjects had information on one or two prison admissions, and rarely did the total number of admissions exceed five). Oftentimes the prison admission or release dates were missing, making it difficult to identify into which period ("instant," before–, or post–) the admission should be coded. In addition, the level of missing data on admission and release dates made it difficult to generate reliable information on the amount of time subjects were in prison during follow–up periods. Standardizing at–risk periods by excluding prison time would have resulted in the exclusion of large numbers of cases because of the missing data. Accordingly, at–risk periods in the subsequent analyses do not standardize for prison time.

The criminal history records varied considerably with regard to the amounts of information included. Typical problems with the criminal history records included missing arrest dates and a lack of dispositional information.

Another problem encountered during the data–coding stage was the frequent inconsistency in data across the two sources of criminal history data. Sometimes the prison admission history record would indicate that an admission had taken place, while the criminal history record would be completely void of any indication of criminal behavior during the period in question.[36] In addition, sometimes the criminal history record would indicate that an offender had been incarcerated for a crime, but the prison admission history record would indicate that the incarceration had never taken place.[37] These inconsistencies were fairly common in the data[38] and were reconciled on a case–by–case basis. In some situations, the final coding decision could not be guided either by logic or knowledge of the law. In these situations, the rule of thumb was to code the relevant data element as missing.

Another issue significantly related to an assessment of inmate recidivism involves technical violations of mandatory supervised release. As reported earlier, warrants were often issued by the IDOC prior to PreStart implementation for technical violations, and prison admissions based on technical violations had been quite common. Hosts of evaluations on community supervision programs have highlighted the need to disentangle recidivism based on new offenses from those based on technical violations. Because of record–keeping practices in Illinois, the ability to do this in the present study is near zero. This is because records on the issuance and execution of warrants issued by the IDOC are not maintained in the CCH system. There were only a handful of "arrests" for "violations of parole" in the CCH system for the offenders being tracked.[39] Thus, the CCH

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36 The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority audit of IDOC inmates' rap sheets revealed rap sheets on 12 inmates (of 362 total) that contained no indication that an arrest had ever been made of that individual (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 1992: 27).

37 This could be because an offender received a prison sentence, but due to the length of time spent in county jail while awaiting trial, he may never have been received by the IDOC (credited jail time may have equaled or exceeded the prison term). Another more common cause of this situation is the backlog of nonposted custodial receipts.

38 As indicated above, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority recently conducted an audit of the CCH system that focused on the quality of the CCH data in capturing complete and reliable information on the most recent incarceration of state inmates. An audit of rap sheets on 362 inmates in IDOC custody as of March 31, 1992, indicated that more than a quarter of the inmates had rap sheets (26.2 percent) that did not convey that they had been admitted to IDOC custody for their present incarceration. Arrest data leading to the present incarceration were even more problematic, with only 36.5 of the inmates having rap sheets that clearly indicated the originating arrest that corresponded to that incarceration. Further, only one in seven rap sheets presented full information on each of the major criminal justice transactions (that is, arrest, state's attorney disposition, final court disposition, and custodial receipt) eventuating in the present incarceration (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 1992: 2).

39 In a related vein, a 1990 audit of the CCH system by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority revealed only 12 arrests for violation of probation or bail bond (of 384 arrests sampled, 3.1 percent of the total) (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 1991: 17). This is quite indicative of the fact that actions taken by criminal justice officials other than law enforcement agents, which may involve even greater consequences for both

system can be considered a source of information on offender recidivism that is independent of biases that may be interjected by correctional officials — only records of arrests for new crimes are routinely maintained in this system. Likewise, the IDOC admissions file indicates if a prison admission was the result of an accused or proven technical violation; it does not contain information on technical violations that did not result in an incarceration.

In this study, because of these and related issues discussed subsequently, the primary measure of recidivism will be rearrest. Thus, technical violations and reincarceration data will not be prominently featured in the analysis. Those who view recidivism as something that should reflect solely the behavior of offenders should welcome such a limitation of the data.

Thus, the types of problems encountered during the data–coding stage were primarily due to problems inherent in the weak and faulty criminal justice record–keeping practices in the state (which appeared to vary somewhat across jurisdictions). Table 11.1 presents some summary information that highlights the weaknesses and limitations of the data. Specifically, the percentage of cases with missing information on selected key variables is presented, by sample.

Table 11.1 indicates that the level of missing data on selected key variables tends to be highest among the before–PreStart sample. For instance, almost 7 percent of cases in this sample are missing data on the release date associated with the instant incarceration, and 8.5 percent of the rearrests for this sample are missing the date of the rearrest. In contrast, none of the CDIP cases are missing any data on these variables, while the percentages of missing cases for the other samples are quite a bit lower than those for the before–PreStart sample.

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the individual and the system than an arrest, are not routinely recorded in the CCH system. Basically, if a fingerprint card is not produced by the criminal justice transaction, that information will not find its way into the CCH system.

Table 11.1: Percent of Cases with Missing Information on Selected Key Variables, by Sample

	PreStart	Before–PreStart	SISU	CDIP	Macon County	Boot Camp
Percent Missing Release Date, Instant Incarceration	2.7 (428)	6.8 (249)	5.6 (89)	0.0 (46)	0.0 (50)	0.0 (40)
Percent Missing First Arrest Date, If Rearrested	3.0 (199)	8.5 (177)	2.3 (43)	0.0 (24)	3.64 (28)	4.5 (22)
Percent Missing Incarceration Data (Most Recent Incarceration):						
Admission Date	0.2	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Release Date	24.6	32.1	28.1	15.2	18.0	20.0
N	(428)	(249)	(89)	(46)	(50)	(40)
Percent Missing Following Incarceration Data (Second Most Recent Incarceration):						
Admission Date	23.6	9.5	30.0	17.2	21.2	0.0
Release Date	7.7	5.1	0.0	13.8	21.2	0.0
N	(207)	(157)	(30)	(29)	(33)	(9)

Table 11.1 also presents information on the level of missing information on the admission and release dates of the two most recent incarcerations for members of each sample. The data indicate that only a handful of the most recent incarcerations exhibit missing admission dates. A substantial minority of cases within each sample are missing release dates for the most recent incarceration (for example, 32.1 percent of the before–PreStart cases), but this is expected because many of these individuals still may be currently in prison for that particular admission. The next row of figures presents the level of missing data for admission and release dates associated with an individual's second most recent prison admission — an admission that clearly must have resulted in the release of all the subjects. Of the 207 admissions among the PreStart sample, 23.6 percent were missing an admission date, and 7.7 percent were missing a release date. All other samples, except the boot–camp sample, witnessed a level of missing data that could result in erroneous calculations and conclusions regarding a releasee's actual time at risk in the community, whether a

particular admission should have been categorized as a "before–" or "post–PreStart" admission, and so on.

These patterns were found for a number of other key variables. Importantly, the ability to generate time–based measures of recidivism (for example, time to rearrest) is compromised by the generally high, and uneven, level of missing data. Especially because many of the errors that exist in the data are not evenly distributed across subsamples in a random manner, the making of certain inferences about PreStart's impact on offender subgroups is problematic. Particular issues pertaining to these inferences will be discussed more fully when addressed during the presentation of the data.

Characteristics of the Sample Members

Table 11.2 presents information on some of the demographic and legal history characteristics on each sample in this study. The data indicate that there are some notable differences in the characteristics of research subjects across groups.

Turning first to the PreStart sample and how it differs from its most important comparison group — the before–PreStart sample — one should notice that the groups are very comparable in terms of basic demographic characteristics. Both groups were roughly 60 percent black, 83 percent male, and exhibited an average age of 29 at the time of prison admission. These figures approximate closely the characteristics of the entire IDOC prison population.

The PreStart sample includes a smaller percentage of individuals convicted of a property offense resulting in the instant incarceration than the before–PreStart sample (37.1 percent vs. 50.7 percent), while the releasees supervised under the earlier mandatory supervised release structure included a smaller percentage of people convicted of a crime against the person (19.4 vs. 26 percent) and drug crimes (20.9 vs. 30.2 percent). Because property offenders exhibit considerably higher rates of recidivism than either person or drug offenders, the before–PreStart sample can be considered to be of higher risk of recidivism than the PreStart sample. This is further suggested by examining prior arrest and incarceration variables. While both samples exhibited similar levels of arrests within the four–year period prior to the instant incarceration, the before–PreStart sample exhibited longer overall arrest records (mean of 6.55 prior arrests) than the PreStart sample (mean

of 5.68 arrests), and more prison admissions (mean of 2.51 vs. 2.01, respectively).[40] Accordingly, the data strongly suggest that the before–PreStart sample is more at risk of recidivism than the PreStart sample based on distributions of these well–known predictors of recidivism. Accordingly, caution must be exercised in making inferences about PreStart's impact on releasee recidivism based on comparisons made between these samples.

Table 11.2 also presents information on the characteristics of releasees placed on SISU. As indicated in Chapter 8, many of the SISU releasees are assigned to that unit because they meet certain legal criteria for such a placement (for example, convicted of certain sex crimes) rather than based on a behavioral assessment of risk. These data are consistent with that observation. Other than gender differences between the SISU sample and the PreStart sample (the SISU sample included only one female), the major difference across samples is based on the instant conviction charge. The SISU sample contains a disproportionate number of sex offenders compared to the PreStart sample (26.7 vs. 5.5 percent, respectively). Because sex offenders recidivate at a lower rate than property offenders (37.1 percent of the PreStart sample compared to 28 percent of the SISU sample), and the SISU sample is comparable to the PreStart sample in terms of offender age, total number of prior arrests, and prior number of state incarcerations, it may be argued that the SISU sample may be at lower risk of recidivism than the PreStart sample, independent of differing post–release supervision structures.

Another sample with distinctive characteristics in the present study are releasees from the Illinois Impact Incarceration Program (boot campers). They were slightly less likely to include whites than the other samples (25 percent), and included a greater proportion of people convicted of a drug offense leading to the instant incarceration (45 percent). Most notably, and due to statutory eligibility criteria, the boot campers were much younger as a group than the other sample members (average age at admission of 21.38 years), and had fewer prior arrests (mean = 1.9) and state incarcerations (mean = 1.15). Thus, the boot campers were more at risk of recidivism than other sample members based on age, but at less risk in terms of prior criminal history variables. Their distinctiveness makes it difficult to make meaningful comparisons in recidivism between this group and any other group in the study.

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40 According to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Repeat Offender Project, the average prison inmate confined in Illinois in 1983 had been arrested nine times (one–third being arrested 10 or more times), had two prior incarcerations and may have had multiple sentences of probation (Illinois Task Force on Crime and Corrections, 1993: 51). Coupled with the data presented above, it appears that a greater percentage of inmates in Illinois' prisons today have shorter arrest records than in the past. This may be due to the effects of the drug war and related mandatory minimum sentences.

Table 11.2: Demographic/Legal History Characteristics of Each Sample

	PreStart	Pre–PreStart	SISU	CDIP	Macon County	Boot Camp
Race/Ethnicity:						
White	30.7	33.7	36.0	45.7	44.0	25.0
Black	61.6	58.6	57.3	54.3	54.0	67.5
Native American	0.2	0.4	—	—	2.0	2.5
Hispanic	7.5	7.2	6.7	—	—	5.0
N	(428)	(249)	(89)	(46)	(50)	(40)
Gender:						
Male	82.4	83.9	98.9	84.8	82.0	100.0
Female	17.6	16.1	1.1	15.2	18.0	—
N	(428)	(249)	(89)	(46)	(50)	(40)
Mean Age at Admission	29.22	29.28	28.62	27.68	27.20	21.38
	(426)	(247)	(87)	(46)	(50)	(50)
Conviction Charge, Instant Offense:						
Person	26.0	19.4	21.3	23.7	27.9	17.5
Property	37.1	50.7	28.0	52.6	37.2	32.5
Drug	30.2	20.9	24.0	21.1	25.6	45.0
Sex	5.5	7.6	26.7	2.6	7.0	—
Other	1.2	1.4	—	—	2.3	5.0
N	(381)	(211)	(75)	(38)	(43)	(40)
Arrests in 4-Year Period Prior to Incarceration*:						
Mean	2.01	1.83	1.80	2.96	2.66	2.00
Standard Deviation	2.08	1.82	1.79	2.55	1.22	1.96
N	(428)	(249)	(89)	(46)	(50)	(40)
Total Prior* Arrests:						
Mean	5.68	6.55	5.62	5.93	5.60	1.90
Standard Deviation	5.30	6.20	5.44	4.50	4.58	1.32
N	(428)	(249)	(89)	(46)	(50)	(40)
Total Prison Admissions:						
Mean	2.01	2.51	1.84	2.15	2.40	1.15
Standard Deviation	1.44	1.52	1.21	1.35	1.40	0.36
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.10	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	10.00	10.00	5.00	7.00	6.00	2.00
Skewness	1.88	1.26	1.36	1.53	0.91	2.04
N	(428)	(249)	(89)	(46)	(50)	(40)

The final two samples are the CDIP and Macon County samples. As discussed above, the Macon County sample was selected using a matching scheme to make it as comparable to the CDIP sample as possible. The matching scheme was largely successful. The only notable difference between these two groups was in terms of the conviction charge leading to the instant incarceration. The CDIP sample was more likely to include property offenders than the Macon County sample (52.6 percent vs. 37.2 percent, respectively). Surprisingly, the CDIP sample contained a smaller percentage of people convicted of drug offenses than any other group than the before–PreStart sample. Overall, however, it appears that meaningful comparisons can be made between the CDIP and Macon County samples.

Mean Length of Time Since Release

Criminal case histories for the vast majority of the subjects were generated by the Illinois State Police on March 2, 1994. When the focus is on rearrests, this is considered the last day of the post–release period for each offender. Table 11.3 presents descriptive information on the follow–up periods for each releasee sample with this date used as the last day of the follow–up period. As would be expected given the sampling designs, the before–PreStart group has by far the longest follow–up period among the samples (mean = 46.06 months). The PreStart and boot camp samples have the shortest follow–up periods (means of 16.77 and 17.13 months, respectively). Members of the other three samples average almost two years since their release from prison. Because of these disparate follow–up periods, and the large range of release time exhibited within samples (for example, from six to 24 months for the PreStart sample[41]), the following recidivism analyses will focus on comparisons across releasee groups with the use of standardized follow–up periods.

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[41] It is unclear how a member of the PreStart sample could have been released from prison for more than two years as of March 1994 when inclusion in this sample required being incarcerated at some point in time during the latter half of 1992. Fortunately, only two members of the PreStart sample witnessed follow–up periods that could not have been feasible. This situation indicates that prison release dates found in IDOC's OTS system are sometimes wrong or that these two individuals may have been confined past these particular release dates because of an additional sentence that commenced prior to actual release from custody. Whatever the source of this inconsistency, inclusion of these two PreStart members in the recidivism analysis does not alter the findings.

Table 11.3:
Follow-Up Periods for Each Sample, In Months

	PreStart[a] (N=232)	Before-PreStart (N=232)	SISU (N=84)	CDIP (N=46)	Macon County (N=50)	Boot Camp (N=40)
Mean	16.77	46.06	23.83	23.94	25.18	17.13
Standard Deviation	1.68	1.09	7.21	6.25	6.13	0.37
Skewness	-0.99	-6.09	1.72	2.15	1.09	-0.01
Minimum	6.19	33.80	16.17	16.11	17.36	16.57
Maximum	24.15	49.48	47.90	51.85	45.23	17.65
Number at Risk at Least 1 Year	413	232	84	46	50	40
Number at Risk at Least 1.5 Years	83	232	75	39	43	0
Number at Risk at Least 2 Years	1	232	27	18	28	0

[a]Base figures are somewhat lower than the full sample sizes because of missing prison release dates.

Table 11.3 also presents the number of individuals within each sample that had been released from prison for at least one year, 1.5 years, and two years. It is immediately apparent that for the PreStart group, relatively few releasees (83) had been free for at least 1.5 years.[42] Moreover, these individuals are not representative of the entire PreStart sample because they tend to be those individuals released from particular facilities (that is, those prisons visited by the research team early during the course of site visits). Accordingly, most of the following analyses will use a one-year follow-up period when the PreStart sample is a prime comparison group.

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42 In contrast, except for the boot-camp sample, the other samples witness a greater proportion of their members being free for longer follow-up periods. This is a direct result of the sampling designs used. Because the sample of boot campers reflected members of particular platoons about to graduate from the program, the boot-camp sample reflects minimal variation in follow-up periods, and not a single member who had been released for at least 1.5 years.

Reincarceration as a Measure of Recidivism

Reincarceration as a measure of recidivism, more so than rearrest, will tend to reflect the policies and practices of state and local criminal justice officials as well as the behavior of releasees. This is clearly reflected in the present data set, and especially when comparisons are made between offenders released to Phase II of PreStart and offenders released under the former mandatory supervised release structure.

Table 11.4 presents reincarceration figures for each of the samples. The first row of data presents the percentage of releasees who were reincarcerated at some point in time during the entire follow–up period. As would be expected given the much lengthier follow–up period for the before–PreStart sample, this group was reincarcerated at a much higher rate than any of the other groups (50.6 percent)[43]. Surprisingly, members of the PreStart sample were reincarcerated at levels comparable to those exhibited by members of the SISU sample and boot camp sample (about 20 percent of the total), both of which are supervised upon release more intensely than most of the PreStart sample members. Members of both the Springfield CDIP sample and the Macon County sample witnessed similar reincarceration levels, despite the much greater intensity of supervision associated with the CDIP.

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43 This figure is quite comparable to the 46–percent reincarceration figure (after three years of release) reported in earlier studies conducted on Illinois inmates. Not only were the members of the before–PreStart group more likely to be reincarcerated than members of the other sample, they were also more likely to be reincarcerated more than once. Again reflecting the longer follow–up period for the before–PreStarters, 22.5 percent of this group had more than one post–release incarceration. In contrast, the greatest percentage of subjects with multiple reincarcerations among any other sample was six percent for the Macon County sample.

Table 11.4:
Reincarceration Figures for Each Sample, Full Follow-Up Periods

	PreStart	Before–PreStart	SISU	CDIP	Macon County	Boot Camp
Percent Reincarcerated, Entire Follow–Up Period	22.0 (428)	50.6 (249)	19.1 (89)	30.5 (46)	34.0 (50)	22.5 (40)
If Reincarcerated, Percent Reincarcerated Within:						
< 3 months	1.8	13.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3–6 months	13.8	19.1	5.9	15.4	6.7	0.0
6–9 months	14.4	12.7	5.9	15.4	13.3	0.0
9–12 months	25.5	14.3	17.6	15.4	20.0	22.2
12–15 months	23.7	8.7	5.9	7.7	33.3	33.3
15–18 months	8.3	3.2	17.6	15.4	13.3	22.2
18–21 months	11.5	4.8	23.5	7.7	0.0	22.2
21–24 months	1.1	3.2	23.5	7.7	0.0	N/A
> 24 months	N/A	20.6	0.0	15.4	13.3	N/A
N	(93)	(126)	(17)	(13)	(15)	(9)

The second row in Table 11.4 presents information on the timing of reincarceration for members of each sample during the course of the entire length of the variable follow–up periods. Three–month periods are used to illustrate the pace of reincarceration. The data reveal some notable patterns. Those members of the before–PreStart sample who were eventually reincarcerated were much more likely to fail early in their release period than members of the other samples. For example, among those released from prison in 1990, 13.5 percent (17 of 126) were reincarcerated within three months of release. In contrast, only one member of the PreStart sample (1.8 percent of those eventually reincarcerated) was reincarcerated within three months of release, and not a single member of the other samples was reincarcerated so quickly. Within nine months of release, 45 percent of the before–PreStart recidivists was reincarcerated compared to 30 percent of the PreStart recidivists. None of the boot campers were reincarcerated within this time frame, as were only 11.8 percent of the SISU sample who were eventually reincarcerated (two of 17), 30.8 percent of the CDIP recidivists (four of 13), and 20 percent of the Macon County recidivists (three of 15).

The variation in these figures is even more impressive than at first appearance because of the variable follow–up periods for each sample. This allows for 20.6 percent of the before–PreStarters being reincarcerated more than two years after their release. Most of the members of the other samples had not even been free for two years since their release. Thus, not only were members of each sample released under the PreStart structure less likely to be reincarcerated than those released

prior to PreStart, they were more likely to remain out of prison for longer periods of time. This even pertains to those releasees who were formally the subjects of intensive supervision within the PreStart structure.

The data presented in Table 11.5 reflect standardized follow–up periods. The first row presents the percentage of releasees in each sample who were reincarcerated within one year of release. Excluded are those who had not been released for a full year. To make comparisons between the PreStart sample and the SISU sample more meaningful, the 23 individuals who were originally in the PreStart sample and later assigned to SISU are excluded from the PreStart sample in this and subsequent analyses that involve such a comparison.[44]

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[44] The number of people in each sample for which nonmissing data were available to compute risk periods and time to reincarceration (and later, time to rearrest) differs across specific analyses. This is why, for instance, there were only 232 releasees in the before–PreStart sample reported in this row of figures (those who had nonmissing release and readmission dates), of the 249 subjects in the entire sample. The one–year follow–up period for the reincarceration data ends on April 28, 1994, the day the prison admissions data were generated. Thus, there are approximately two more months in the follow–up periods when reincarceration is analyzed than when rearrests are analyzed.

Table 11.5: Reincarceration Figures for Each Sample, Standardized Follow-Up Periods

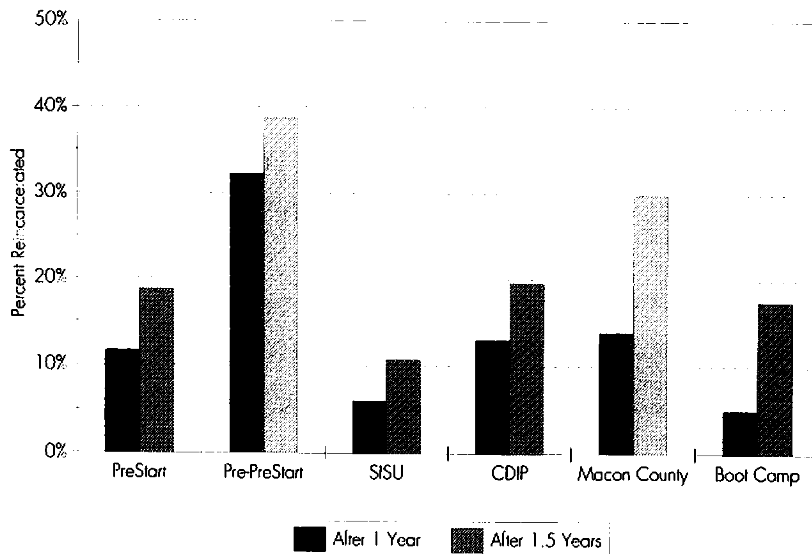
	PreStart	Before–PreStart	SISU	CDIP	Macon County	Boot Camp
Percent Reincarcerated Within 1 Year[a]	11.7[b] (391)	32.3 (232)	6.0 (84)	13.0 (46)	14.0 (50)	5.0 (40)
Percent Reincarcerated Within 1.5 Years	18.7[b] (291)	38.8 (232)	10.7 (84)	19.6 (46)	30.0 (46)	17.5 (40)
Time to First Reincarceration, If Reincarcerated (In Months) Within 1.5 Years:						
Mean	9.94	7.30	12.40	10.18	11.64	13.16
Standard Deviation	3.97	4.09	4.88	4.28	3.84	2.97
Median	10.31	6.62	11.27	9.35	12.45	12.42
If Reincarcerated Within 1.5 Years, Percent Reincarcerated Within:	(N=55)	(N=89)	(N=9)	(N=9)	(N=13)	(N=7)
< 3 months	3.1	19.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3–6 months	16.2	25.8	11.1	22.2	7.7	0.0
6–9 months	21.5	18.0	11.1	22.2	15.4	0.0
9–12 months	24.6	20.2	33.3	22.2	23.1	28.6
12–15 months	25.9	12.4	11.1	11.1	38.5	42.9
15–18 months	8.6	4.5	33.3	22.2	15.4	28.6

[a]Includes only those at risk for at least one year and those that do not have missing release or admission dates.

[b]Excludes PreStarters that were assigned to SISU.

In addition to these data being presented in tabular form, Figure 11.1 presents the primary reincarceration data in graphic form.

Figure 11.1: Percent of Releasees Reincarcerated, by Sample



When at–risk periods are standardized, it is still quite apparent that members of the before–PreStart sample were much more likely to be reincarcerated within one year of release than members of any other sample. Moreover, the differences are dramatic, with almost one–third (32.3 percent) of the inmates released in 1990 being reincarcerated within a year. In contrast, the other samples, all of which represent releasees being supervised under the PreStart structure, exhibit one–year reincarceration rates that vary from 5 percent (boot camp) to 14 percent (Macon County). In terms of meaningful pairwise comparisons, the PreStart sample witnessed reincarceration rates within one year of release that were only about a third of that for the before–PreStart sample. PreStarters had a slightly higher one–year reincarceration rate (11.7 percent) than those releasees supervised more intensively in special programs (SISU, 6 percent; boot campers, 5 percent). The CDIP sample witnessed a reincarceration rate (13 percent) quite comparable to members of their matched comparison group, the Macon County sample (14 percent).

Reincarceration rates within 1.5 years of release indicate that the PreStart sample continues to witness a much lower reincarceration rate than the before–PreStart sample (18.7 percent vs. 38.8 percent). However, the reincarceration rate at 1.5 years for the boot camp sample had increased greatly from the one–year rate (5 percent to 17.5 percent), resulting in a rate very comparable to those of the PreStarters (18.7 percent). This may be due to the intensive supervision of these releasees ending after six months. Members of the SISU sample continue to witness significantly lower reincarceration rates (10.7 percent) than members of the PreStart sample. Finally, the reincarceration rate of the Macon County sample increased from 14 percent to 30 percent in this

six–month period, resulting in the CDIP sample exhibiting a much lower reincarceration rate (19.6 percent) than members of their matched comparison group.

The second two sets of figures reinforce the notion that PreStarters are reincarcerated at a slower rate than those inmates released in 1990, and that supervision results in a slower pace of reincarceration than a lack of supervision. For instance, members of the before–PreStart sample who were reincarcerated tended to fail sooner (mean = 7.3 months) than comparable members of the PreStart sample (mean = 9.94 months). In contrast, members of the PreStart Sample fail more quickly than those on either SISU (mean = 12.4 months) or the boot camp sample (mean = 13.16). Little meaningful difference is noted in the failure time of the CDIP sample and the Macon County sample. These findings are buttressed by the three–month reincarceration rates that are presented: Almost 20 percent of the recidivists among the before–PreStarters were reincarcerated within three months. The next highest rate was 3.1 percent of the recidivists in the PreStart sample.

There are a number of plausible explanations for these findings. It may be that members of the before–PreStart sample are reincarcerated at a higher and faster rate than members of the other groups because of the strict reporting requirements in place when they were first released in the community, resulting in the greater likelihood of a technical violation being issued and executed. It also could be that, if suspected of committing a new crime, a warrant would be issued and the releasee would be returned to prison based on that warrant. These outcomes would be very unlikely under the PreStart structure. Less plausible explanations include the possibility that because the before–PreStart sample contained a greater percentage of high–risk individuals than the other samples, this sample witnessed the commission of more frequent and more serious crimes upon release than the other samples.

Table 11.6 presents some data in an attempt to address the former possibility. The latter possibility is addressed when the rearrest data are presented. The first set of figures in Table 11.6 represents the offense category for the holding offense (that is, conviction charge) associated with the first reincarceration. Three primary findings emerge from these data. First, the before–PreStart sample and the CDIP sample witness a high level of missing holding–offense data (42 and 53.8 percent, respectively). Subsequent analyses revealed that each of the missing seven cases for the CDIP sample represent not a new offense but a technical violation. Likewise, of the 55 missing cases for the before–PreStart sample, 28 represent a technical violation. These findings are consistent with the supervision structure and policies in effect with these releasees: Strict reporting requirements and revocations commonly threatened based on noncompliance for the before–PreStarters, and an intensive supervision structure with strict treatment demands on the CDIP clients.

Table 11.6: Measures of Types of Behavior Resulting in First Reincarceration, by Sample

	PreStart	Pre-PreStart	SISU	CDIP	Macon County	Boot Camp
Offense Category of Holding Offense:						
Person	17.9	15.3	17.6	7.7	13.3	11.1
Property	34.1	21.4	47.1	15.4	33.3	44.4
Drug	30.3	13.0	17.6	15.4	13.3	44.4
Sex	3.9	3.8	0.0	0.0	13.3	0.0
Other	0.7	4.6	0.0	7.7	20.0	0.0
Missing	13.1	42.0	17.6	53.8	6.7	0.0
N	(95)	(131)	(17)	(13)	(15)	(9)
IDOC Admission Type:						
Unspecified	71.0	29.1	81.3	25.0	46.7	88.9
Community Supervision Violator, New Sentence	19.4	19.7	6.3	8.3	33.3	11.1
Community Supervision Violator, Technical	4.3	28.2	12.6	66.7	0.0	0.0
Discharged, Recommitted	2.6	17.1	0.0	0.0	13.3	0.0
Direct from Court	1.9	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.8	3.5	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0
N	(92)	(117)	(16)	(12)	(15)	(9)

The second major finding from these figures was that the inmates released in 1990 were no more likely to be reincarcerated for crimes against the person or sex crimes than the individuals released under the PreStart structure. Thus, they do not appear to have been convicted of more serious crimes, which would result in a greater likelihood of reincarceration.

Finally, among the PreStart sample, 30 percent of the recidivists were reincarcerated for drug offenses, a much larger percentage than found among the other samples. These convictions

are likely to result in reincarceration given mandatory minimum–sentencing provisions for many drug offenses and this group's prior criminality. Thus, these data indicate that the higher rate of reincarceration among the before–PreStart sample cannot be explained well by the seriousness or nature of their new crimes compared to those of the other sample members.[45] Rather, the differential involvement of technical violations in generating reincarcerations across the samples may be operative.

The second set of figures in Table 11.6 are presented to address this possibility. They reflect categories used by the IDOC to distinguish between various admission types. Unfortunately, many of the admission types are unspecified, especially among those groups that witness a lower percentage of reincarcerations resulting from technical violations of community supervision. That is, while only 29.1 percent and 25 percent of the admission types for the before–PreStart and CDIP samples are unspecified — compared to a vast majority for the PreStart, boot camp, and SISU samples — almost 30 percent of the reincarcerations among the before–PreStarters were because of technical violations as were two–thirds of those for the CDIP sample. In contrast, among the PreStart sample, only 4 percent of the reincarcerations involved technical violations. This was not true for any of the subjects from Macon County that were reincarcerated and only 12.6 percent of those assigned to SISU. Accordingly, and consistent with the aggregate state–level data presented in Chapter 10, PreStart's implementation was associated with a marked decrease in technical violations resulting in reincarcerations. This explains, apparently, a considerable portion of the higher reincarceration rate found among releasees who exited prison prior to PreStart's implementation.

45 An attempt was made to examine sentence types given a post–release conviction across samples to further explore these issues. The large number of missing cases across samples made this effort unproductive. For instance, among the PreStart sample members, only 31 of the rearrests had nonmissing sentencing data. For this small and perhaps unrepresentative set of cases, 79.4 percent of the sentences included prison time. The before–Prestart sample witnessed only 59 cases with nonmissing sentencing data associated with the first rearrest. Of these, 76.3 percent resulted in state prison time. Thus, the large percentage of missing dispositions and sentences combined with the near equivalence of sentencing outcomes across these two samples makes it difficult to infer if differing sentencing practices accounted for the noted variation in reincarceration rates.

Rearrest as a Measure of Recidivism

The higher level of technical violations among the before–PreStart sample may account for some of the higher levels of reincarceration witnessed by that group compared to the other samples, but so can higher rates of new criminal behaviors. The following section of this chapter explores this possibility, and examines variation in rearrest rates across all the samples. To keep the presentation manageable and readable, comparisons will be first made between the PreStart and before–PreStart samples, then between the PreStart sample and the SISU and boot camp samples (those that involve more intensive levels of supervision), and finally between the CDIP and Macon County samples.

Analyses of the rearrest data indicated that some releasees were extremely high–rate offenders compared to the balance of the releasees. For instance, among the 474 releasees across all samples identified as being rearrested in a two–year follow–up period (23 recidivists for whom there were missing data for dates of rearrest were necessarily excluded from this analysis), one releasee was rearrested 20 times. One releasee had 19 rearrests, one had 17 rearrests, two had 16 rearrests and so forth. These high–rate recidivists were concentrated in particular samples, and for these samples, descriptive measures of central tendency (that is, mean or median) were not very telling. The means are driven by a few chronic offenders, and the medians do not exhibit much variability because the great majority of recidivists evidenced only one or two rearrests (45.8 with one and 21.5 with two). Thus, the decision was made to reduce the influence of extreme outliers on measures of central tendency that are presented in some of the more telling analyses (for example, mean arrest rate). This was done by giving scores beyond the 90th percentile the score at the 90th percentile in situations where the univariate distributions were highly skewed.

Table 11.7, which presents rearrest data throughout the entire follow–up period for each of the samples, highlights the above point and also indicates that rearrest patterns across the samples are not nearly as variable as were the reincarceration patterns presented earlier. Except for the before–PreStart sample, which has the lengthiest follow–up period (average of 46 months) and which two–thirds were rearrested in this time frame, rearrest rates for each of the other samples are quite comparable; these ranged from 45.2 percent for the PreStart sample to 54 percent for the Macon County sample. These small differences can be accounted for quite easily by factors other than the nature of aftercare services and supervision provided to the releasees — for instance, differing lengths of follow–up periods and selection biases are two very plausible alternative explanations for these small differences.

Table 11.7 also illustrates the high variability in rearrests within the samples. For example, within the PreStart sample, the distribution of rearrests was highly skewed (4.02), with the standard deviation being larger than the mean (1.84 and 1.03, respectively). A similar situation was evident with the before–PreStart comparison group (mean of 2.33, standard deviation of 3.24, and a skewness of 2.89). In the former group, these statistics were largely driven by a few offenders that had a large numbers of rearrests (for example, 19) and yearly rearrest rates of 9.44 and 7.95. In the latter group, one releasee was rearrested 20 times. In contrast, among the boot camp releasees and the CDIP releasees, the highest yearly rearrest rate was 1.99 (no more than four rearrests by any member). These data indicate that average arrest rates are not very telling measures of the overall recidivism of the entire group and that extreme caution is necessary in interpreting these figures.

Table 11.7 also presents some figures on the pace of rearrest across samples. As with the reincarceration data, PreStarters were arrested less quickly after release (27.9 percent within six months) than were those released from prison in 1990 (38 percent within six months). In contrast, PreStarters were arrested more quickly than those released to a more intensive supervision structure. That is, 18.6 percent of the SISU sample members were rearrested with six months, as were only 12.9 percent of the boot campers. Finally, individuals in the CDIP sample were rearrested less quickly (23 percent within six months) than members of their matched comparison group (32.6 percent).

The data presented in Table 11.7 are quite suggestive that the introduction of PreStart has not resulted in large hordes of releasees, unsupervised by correctional officials, ravaging the streets and homes of people living in Illinois. It even appears, contrary to the expectations of many, that PreStart may have actually resulted in less offender recidivism and a slower pace to that recidivism. This possibility is explored more fully and in a more refined manner with the data presented in Table 11.8. These data reflect standardized one–year follow–up periods across samples and include only those arrests that occurred within that one–year period. Once again, because of missing data on prison release dates and dates of rearrests, these figures will tend to slightly undercount one–year rearrest rates, especially for those among the before–PreStart sample. Accordingly, actual differences between the PreStart and before–PreStart samples will be underestimated in the following analyses.

Table 11.7: Rearrest Figures for Each Sample, Full Follow-Up Periods

	PreStart	Before–PreStart	SISU	CDIP	Macon County	Boot Camp
Percent Rearrested, Full Follow-Up Period	45.20 (428)	67.10 (249)	48.20 (89)	52.20 (46)	54.0 (50)	52.50 (40)
Number of Rearrests:						
Mean	1.03	2.33	1.10	0.93	1.20	0.90
Standard Deviation	1.84	3.24	1.80	1.18	1.89	1.12
Maximum	19.00	20.00	8.00	4.00	10.00	4.00
Skewness	4.02	2.89	2.26	1.23	2.72	1.33
Percent Rearrested Within[a]:						
< 3 months	15.4 (417)[b]	21.7 (231)	7.1 (84)	13.0 (46)	18.0 (50)	5.0 (40)
3–6 months	12.5 (351)	16.3 (178)	11.5 (78)	10.0 (40)	14.6 (41)	7.9 (38)
6–9 months	12.2 (307)	10.1 (149)	13.0 (69)	5.6 (36)	17.1 (35)	17.1 (35)
9–12 months	8.4 (268)	9.7 (134)	3.3 (60)	5.9 (34)	10.3 (29)	6.9 (29)
12–15 months	4.6 (244)	8.3 (121)	13.8 (58)	15.6 (32)	3.8 (26)	22.2 (27)
15–18 months	3.6 (207)	9.0 (111)	4.0 (50)	11.1 (27)	4.0 (25)	4.8 (21)
18–21 months	2.0 (50)	7.9 (101)	2.4 (41)	4.5 (22)	5.3 (19)	0.0 (0)
21–24 months	0.0 (1)	6.5 (93)	0.0 (22)	0.0 (19)	0.0 (15)	0.0 (0)

[a]Excludes those with missing rearrest dates.

[b]Number in parentheses are those at risk during the time interval.

The first row of figures in Table 11.8 indicates that 40 percent of the PreStart releasees, exclusive of those PreStarters who were supervised within the SISU program, were rearrested within one year. This one–year rearrest rate, although quite high, is quite a bit lower than the 47.8–percent rearrest rate evidenced by members of the before–PreStart sample. While the difference in

rearrest rates between these samples is much smaller than that reported in Table 11.7 (when follow–up periods were not standardized), the difference is still quite substantial.[46]

Table 11.8: Rearrest Figures for Each Sample, One Year Follow–Up Period

	PreStart	Before–PreStart	SISU	CDIP	Macon County	Boot Camp
Percent Arrested Within 1 Year of Release[a]	40.0[b] (395)	47.80 (232)	31.80 (85)	30.40 (46)	48.00 (50)	32.50 (40)
Of Total, Percent Arrested:						
Once	21.40	26.30	16.50	19.60	34.00	20.00
Twice	9.30	10.30	5.90	8.70	6.00	7.50
Three Times	4.50	3.40	4.70	2.20	4.00	2.50
Four or More	4.80	7.80	4.70	0.00	4.00	2.50
Number of Rearrests:						
Mean	0.83	1.02	0.61	0.43	0.78	0.52
Standard Deviation	1.67	1.73	1.10	0.75	1.18	0.93
Maximum	18.00	12.00	4.00	3.00	6.00	4.00
Skewness	4.85	3.02	1.92	1.72	2.45	2.11
Time to Rearrest, In Months, For Those Rearrested Within 1 Year:						
Mean	4.82	3.95	5.44	4.43	5.11	6.94
Standard Deviation	3.35	3.29	2.93	3.27	3.40	2.91
Maximum	12.09	11.76	11.03	11.03	11.62	11.86
Skewness	0.48	0.84	-0.11	0.90	0.35	-0.11

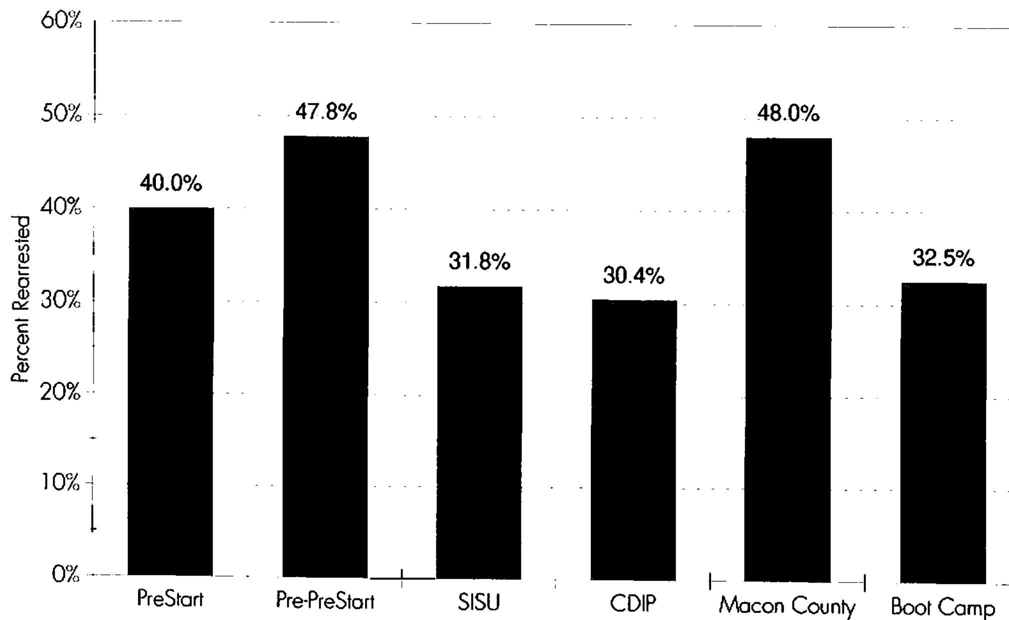
[a]Includes only those at risk for at least one year an those with nonmissing information on time to arrest.
[b]Excludes PreStarters who were assigned to SISU.

While PreStarters had lower one–year rearrest rates than inmates released in 1990, they exhibit higher rearrest rates than releasees more closely supervised within the PreStart structure. For instance, the SISU sample exhibited a one–year rearrest rate of 31.8 percent. This rate is quite

46 It has been decided to not report tests of statistical significance because these tests are premised on comparisons between independent, randomly drawn samples. Because the PreStart sample is not a random sample, nor are the CDIP, Macon County or Boot Camp samples, these tests are inappropriate. The focus is on differences that have substantive and practical significance. It should be noted that due to the relatively large sample sizes of the PreStart and before–PreStart samples, just about all differences between these two groups reported in this chapter are statistically significant.

comparable to those generated by members of the CDIP sample (30.4 percent) and the boot camp sample (32.5 percent). Thus, once again, inmates who went through Phase I programming and who were not being actively supervised in the community witnessed lower recidivism rates than those inmates released in 1990; however, they witnessed higher recidivism rates than those who also had experienced Phase I programming but who experienced some supervision or service delivery in the community. This finding also is consistent with the one-year rearrest rates of the CDIP sample (30.4 percent) and their matched comparison group — the Macon County sample (48 percent). For ease of presentation, the primary rearrest figures are presented in Figure 11.2.

Figure 11.2: Percent of Releasees Rearrested Within One Year, by Sample



The next two sets of figures in Table 11.8 represent the frequency of rearrests among each of the samples. They suggest that the inmates released in 1990 were not only more likely to be rearrested than the inmates released under PreStart, but they were also slightly more likely to be rearrested on more than one occasion. Among the before-PreStarters, 21.5 percent of the sample were arrested more than once in the follow-up period. The comparable figure among the PreStarters was 18.6 percent. The difference in this proportion between the PreStarters and the SISU sample was negligible (18.6 percent vs. 19.3 percent), as were the differences in repetitive recidivism between the CDIP sample (10.9 percent) and the Macon County sample (14 percent). The mean number of rearrests within one year were also suggestive of this basic finding, but once again, because of the few numbers of extreme recidivists (for example, 18 arrests in one year for a

PreStarter), caution must be exercised in interpreting these highly skewed data. They do suggest, however, that inmates released in 1990 had a higher rate of rearrest than members of the PreStart sample, who in turn had a higher rate of rearrest than people in the SISU, CDIP or boot camp samples.

Again consistent with earlier findings, the mean time to rearrest among those arrested within one year of release is greater for the PreStart sample (4.82 months) than for members of the before–PreStart sample (3.95 months). Boot campers took the longest average amount of time to be rearrested compared to all other sample members, with a mean time to rearrest of 6.94 months. This timing corresponds to the time they were released from electronic detention — six months. Finally, and in contrast to earlier findings, members of the CDIP appeared to take a slightly shorter period of time to be rearrested than members of their matched comparison group (4.43 months vs. 5.11 months).

Another issue that warrants attention is the seriousness of recidivism across groups. Earlier it was reported that the distributions of conviction charges associated with reincarcerations were largely quite similar across groups. Table 11.9, which reports on the distributions of charges associated with the first rearrest of sample members, suggests that the types of arrests generated by the releasees do not differ greatly across samples. Before–PreStarters were slightly more likely to be rearrested for property crimes than PreStarters (47 percent vs. 40.9 percent), as were members of the SISU sample (47.6 percent). The percentage of rearrests for crimes against the person were quite similar across all groups (27 percent to 30 percent), except among the CDIP sample (45.8 percent) and the boot camp sample (19 percent). Perhaps because of the younger age of the boot campers, a disproportionate share of the rearrests generated by this group relative to the other samples were drug arrests (33 percent). It is unclear why such a large percentage of people in the CDIP sample were rearrested for crimes against the person.

Table 11.9:
Type of Charge at First Rearrest, by Sample

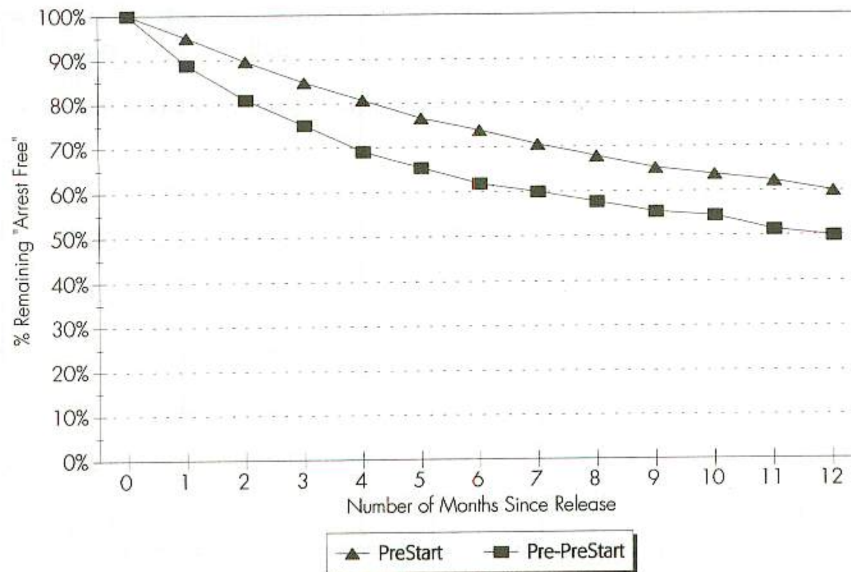
	PreStart	Before–PreStart	SISU	CDIP	Macon County	Boot Camp
Type of Charge:						
Person	27.2	26.8	28.6	45.8	29.6	19.0
Property	40.9	47.0	47.6	29.2	33.3	33.0
Drug	17.9	14.0	11.9	12.5	11.1	33.0
Sex	2.7	3.7	2.4	0.0	7.4	0.0
Other	11.2	8.5	9.5	12.5	18.5	14.3
N	(194)	(164)	(42)	(24)	(27)	(21)

Despite the slight variations reported above, PreStart's implementation and the various supervision structures within its scope don't appear to have influenced the types of crimes that are being committed by releasees.

Survival Analysis

To more fully present patterns in the one–year recidivism of members within each of the samples, a preliminary survival analysis was conducted. The following presents the descriptive information associated with that analysis. More detailed analyses will be presented in subsequent reports. The analysis uses monthly rearrest data for the first year of release among the sample members and excludes cases in which the time to rearrest could not be calculated (even if a rearrest was known to have occurred after the person's release from prison). Hazard rates (that is, the percent of people being rearrested for the first time during a particular month) and survival rates (that is, the percentage of people remaining free of arrest) for each sample are presented in Table 11.10. The data involving key comparison groups are presented in graphic form in Figure 11.3.

Figure 11.3: Percent of Releasees
Remaining "Arrest Free," by Month



The data reported in Table 11.10 indicate, consistent with the earlier time–until–rearrest analyses, that members of the PreStart sample were more likely to remain arrest–free during the first four months of their freedom than members of the before–PreStart sample. However, during months five through 12, the percentage of releasees failing within each month across samples are highly comparable. This pattern is quite evident in Figure 11.3. The slope of the line for the inmates released in 1990 is much greater than that of the PreStarters for the first few months, but then the descents of the slopes taper off and remain nearly equally apart for the remaining months within the one–year period. This means that the difference in one–year rearrest rates (10 percent) is almost wholly due to the greater failure rates of the before–PreStarters during their first few months of freedom.

Quite a different story is evident when contrasts are made between the failure patterns of the PreStarters and members of the SISU and boot camp samples As illustrated in Figure 11.4, boot campers tended to be slow in getting rearrested: After five months of freedom, only 5.1 percent of the boot campers had been rearrested. At months six and seven, coinciding with their release from electronic detention, almost 13 percent of the entire sample was rearrested. Then after a peak month at month nine (10.3 percent arrested), failure rates decline. Their critical periods — months five, six and nine — are thus quite distinct from those of the samples discussed above. Members of the SISU sample witness a more even rhythm to their rearrests, witnessing almost a constant slope of recidivism throughout the one–year period. At the end of the one–year period, members of the

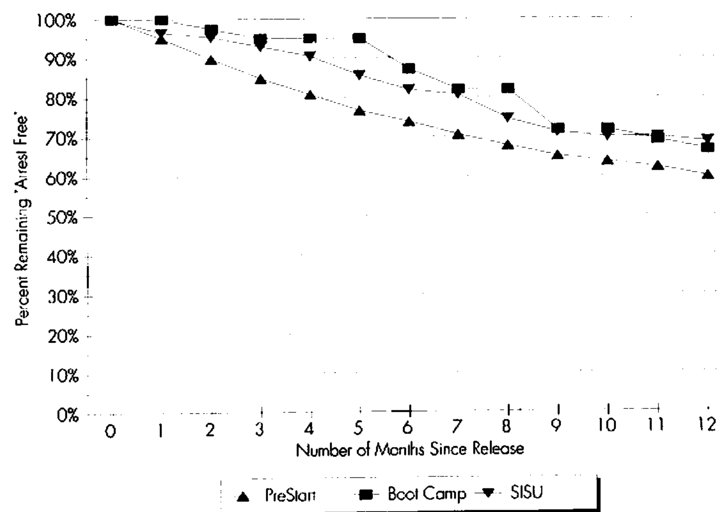
SISU sample and CDIP sample experience similar overall failure rates (31.3 percent and 33.3 percent, respectively), both of which are lower than that of the PreStart sample (40.1 percent).

Table 11.10:
Monthly "Hazard" and "Survival" Rates Based on Rearrest Within One Year of Release, by Sample

	PreStart		Before–PreStart		SISU	
Month:	Percent Failing	Percent Surviving	Percent Failing	Percent Surviving	Percent Failing	Percent Surviving
1	5.0	95.0	11.1	88.9	3.6	96.4
2	5.3	89.7	8.3	80.6	1.2	95.2
3	4.9	84.8	5.5	75.1	2.4	92.8
4	4.0	80.8	6.0	69.1	2.4	90.4
5	4.2	76.6	3.7	65.4	4.8	85.5
6	2.8	73.8	3.7	61.8	3.6	81.9
7	3.7	70.5	1.8	59.9	1.2	80.7
8	2.7	67.8	2.3	57.6	7.2	74.5
9	2.7	65.1	2.3	55.3	2.4	71.1
10	1.4	63.7	0.9	54.4	1.2	69.9
11	1.5	62.2	3.2	51.2	0.0	69.9
12	2.4	59.9	1.4	49.8	1.2	68.7
Month:	Percent Failing	Percent Surviving	Percent Failing	Percent Surviving	Percent Failing	Percent Surviving
1	2.2	97.8	4.1	95.9	0.0	100.0
2	4.3	93.5	8.2	87.8	2.6	97.4
3	6.5	87.0	6.1	81.6	2.6	94.9
4	4.3	82.6	4.1	77.6	0.0	94.9
5	4.3	78.3	2.0	75.5	0.0	94.9
6	0.0	78.3	6.1	69.4	7.7	87.2
7	2.2	76.1	4.1	65.3	5.1	82.1
8	0.0	76.1	2.0	63.3	0.0	82.1
9	2.2	73.9	6.1	57.1	10.3	71.8
10	2.2	71.7	0.0	57.1	0.0	71.8
11	0.0	71.7	4.1	53.1	2.6	69.2
12	2.2	69.6	2.0	51.0	2.6	66.7

The final noteworthy comparison involves the CDIP sample and the Macon County sample. Figure 11.5, which depicts the timing of failure for members of these two groups, indicates that releasees from the Macon County sample were rearrested more quickly than members of the CDIP sample; however, after five months, the percentage of releasees not having been arrested in each sample is nearly equal (78.3 percent vs. 75.5 percent). Starting at Month Six, however, and continuing throughout the remainder of the one–year time, the slope of failure for the Macon County sample is much steeper than that of the CDIP sample. The failure slope for the CDIP sample is almost flat: Less than 10 percent of the entire sample is arrested for the first time since release between months five and 12. The net result is a much higher overall one–year rate of rearrest for the Macon County sample (49 percent) than for the CDIP sample (30.4 percent).

Figure 11.4: Percent of Releasees Remaining "Arrest Free," by Month



Alternative Explanations for the Rearrest Findings

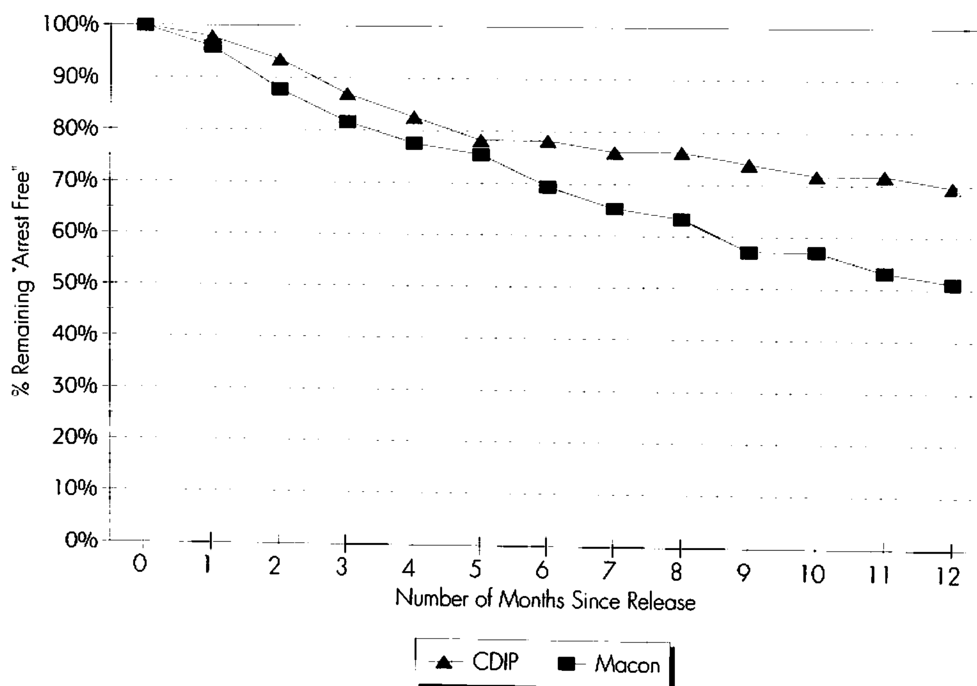
Property Offenders

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, one possible explanation for the higher rearrest and reincarceration rates in the before–PreStart sample is the overrepresentation of property offenders in that sample (50.7 percent as compared to 37.1 percent of the PreStart sample). It is well–documented in the criminological literature that property offenders recidivate at a higher rate than other subpopulations of offenders, making it useful to explore whether their presence in the before–PreStart sample is driving that group's pattern of recidivism. In an attempt to address that

issue, a separate analysis of property offenders in these two groups is presented, along with an examination of property offenders vs. other offenders in the two samples.

Property offenders in the PreStart sample have patterns of rearrest very similar to their counterparts in the before–PreStart sample. Indeed, many of the differences between the PreStart and the before–PreStart samples as a whole become negligible when one looks only at the property offenders within those two groups. Figure 11.6 indicates that within one year of release, 53.7 percent of property offenders in the PreStart sample was rearrested, as compared to 56 percent of the before–PreStart property offenders. When compared to the one–year rearrest rates for the two groups as a whole (40 percent and 47.8 percent respectively), property offenders recidivated at a higher rate than their counterparts in both groups.

Figure 11.5: Percent of Releasees Remaining "Arrest Free," by Month



The frequency of rearrest in this one–year period also suggests that the subpopulations of property offenders in these two samples are more similar than the two groups as a whole. Among the PreStarters, 25.2 percent of property offenders were arrested more than once, as compared to 26 percent of their counterparts in the before–PreStart sample. The comparable figures for the two samples as a whole were 18.6 percent for the PreStarters and 21.5 percent for the before–PreStarters, again suggesting the influence of property offenders on overall recidivism rates.

The mean number of rearrests in this one–year period among property offenders is 1.26 for the PreStarters and 1.25 for the before–PreStarters, though the presence of outliers in the two groups led to highly skewed distributions (for example, one of the PreStarters was arrested 18 times in the one–year period). However, when compared to the overall group means of .83 for PreStarters and 1.02 for the before–PreStarters, these data suggest that the differences in rearrest rates between the groups may be at least partially due to offender type.

As was indicated earlier in this chapter, the before–PreStart group showed not only a higher recidivism rate than the PreStarters, but they also failed more quickly following release. However, when one looks at the failure rates for only the property offenders in the two groups, we see much more similar patterns. For example, in the first three months following release, 24.3 percent of the property offenders within the PreStart sample had been rearrested, as compared to 26 percent of property offenders released under the earlier mandatory supervised release program. Patterns of rearrest remain similar for the two groups in the remainder of the one–year period, indicating another similarity in recidivism patterns not present in the earlier analysis that included the full samples.

Another way of analyzing the impact of property offenders on rearrest rates is to compare property offenders to other offenders within samples, to estimate their impact on recidivism for that group. Figure 11.6 indicates that within the PreStart sample, 53.7 percent of property offenders were rearrested within one year of release, while only 33.2 percent of all other offenders in that sample were rearrested in the same period. Similarly, in the before–PreStart sample, 56 percent of property offenders was rearrested within one year, as compared to 37.5 percent of other types of offenders in that same sample.

In all, it would appear that property offenders within the PreStart and before–PreStart samples are very similar on measures of rearrest and that this subpopulation of offenders differs from other offenders within each of those samples. As this is the case, it is possible that the inclusion of more property offenders in the before–PreStart sample had an effect on the overall patterns of recidivism (as measured by rearrest) for that group.

For this to be the case, we must rule out other subpopulations that also may affect the data. For example, the PreStart sample contains 30.2 percent drug offenders, while the before–PreStart sample contains 20.9 percent. It is useful to look at this subpopulation as well, to assess their impact on rearrest figures. Similarly, it is also possible that chronic offenders are driving the numbers for the two groups, independent of any particular offense category for which the offender was incarcerated. These two subpopulations are considered in the analysis below.

Drug Offenders

As mentioned above, the PreStart sample contains nearly 10 percent more drug offenders than does the before–PreStart sample. Drug offenders in the two samples have similar rearrest rates, and they are either comparable or lower than the overall rearrest figures for the samples as a whole. Figure 11.6 indicates that the rearrest rate for the PreStart drug offenders is virtually the same as the rearrest rate for the sample as a whole (40.1 percent vs. 40 percent). For the before–PreStart sample, the percent of drug offenders rearrested in one year is less than the figure for the entire sample (39 percent vs. 47.8 percent). It would thus appear that the disproportionate number of drug offenders in the PreStart sample is not affecting rearrest rates in that group, particularly since within that sample the rearrest rate is the same for that subpopulation as for the sample as a whole.

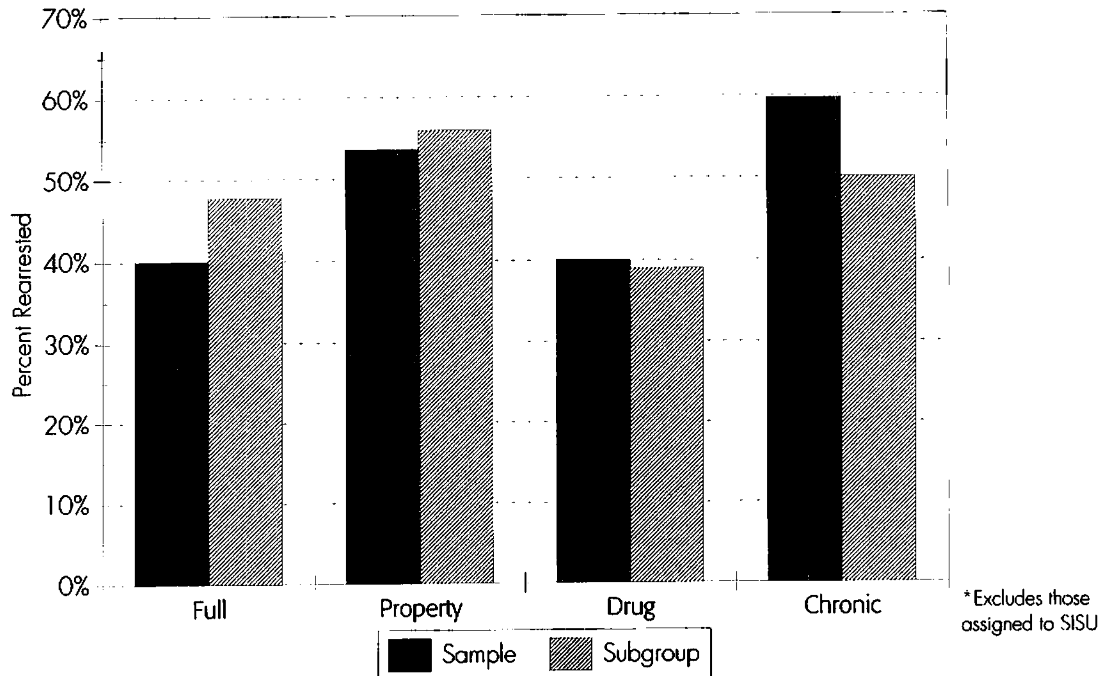
Chronic Offenders

Another source of difference between the PreStart sample and the before–PreStart sample is prior record, a commonly recognized correlate of crime. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the offenders released in 1990 under the earlier mandatory supervision structure had a higher average number of prior arrests (6.55) than the PreStart sample (5.68). It is possible that these high–rate offenders are affecting measures of rearrest following release from incarceration.

To explore this possibility, separate analyses were run for this subpopulation of offenders. For our purposes, a chronic offender was defined as having had more than five arrests prior to the arrest that led to his or her instant incarceration.

Surprisingly, the analysis presented in Figure 11.6 indicates that this subpopulation of the PreStart sample fared worse than their counterparts in the before–PreStart sample in terms of rearrest within one year (59.7 percent and 50 percent, respectively). The figure for the chronic offenders in the PreStart sample is 19.7 percent higher than for the sample as a whole, while the 50–percent figure for the before–PreStart sample is only slightly higher than the 47.8 percent for that entire sample. The percentage of chronic offenders having more than one arrest in the first year following release is 27.4 percent for the PreStart sample and 27.2 percent for the before–PreStart sample. Again, these numbers are higher than are found for the samples as a whole (18.6 and 21.5 percent respectively).

Figure 11.6
One-Year Rearrest Rates for Subgroups
Within Primary Releasee Samples*



Since these chronic offenders make up almost 40 percent of the PreStart sample (excluding SISU) and 44 percent of the before–PreStart sample, it would appear that they are impacting the recidivism rates for the two groups. These results raise serious questions about the allocation of releasees to the various caseloads in the PreStart program. From the data presented in this chapter, we have seen that level of supervision tends to have a delaying effect on rearrest in the months following release from incarceration. Given similar levels of supervision in the PreStart program in the future, we can assume that 60 percent of the chronic offenders will continue to recidivate, a figure that is 10–percent higher than for similar releasees under the previous mandatory supervised release program. Moreover, the chronic offenders in the PreStart sample exhibit a one–year rearrest rate that is almost twice that of the supposed high–risk offenders assigned to SISU. Clearly this is a problem that needs to be addressed, perhaps through assignment of offenders to SISU based on correlates of risk (such as prior record) rather than based upon statutory conviction offense.

Summary and Conclusions

One–year reincarceration figures revealed that members of the before–PreStart sample were much more likely to be reincarcerated within one year of release than members of any other

sample. Moreover, the differences were dramatic, with almost one–third (32.3 percent) of the inmates released in 1990 being reincarcerated within a year. In contrast, the other samples, all of which represent releasees being supervised under the PreStart structure, exhibited one–year reincarceration rates that varied from 5 percent (CDIP) to 14 percent (Macon County). In terms of meaningful pairwise comparisons, the PreStart sample witnessed reincarceration rates within one year of release that were only about a third of that for the before–PreStart sample (11.7 percent). PreStarters had a slightly higher one–year reincarceration rate than those releasees supervised more intensively in special programs (SISU, 6 percent; boot campers, 5 percent). The CDIP sample witnessed a reincarceration rate (13 percent) quite comparable to members of their matched comparison group (14 percent for the Macon County sample).

Reincarceration rates within 1.5 years of release indicated that the PreStart sample continued to witness a much lower reincarceration rate than the before–PreStart sample (18.7 percent vs. 38.8 percent). However, the reincarceration rate at 1.5 years for the boot camp sample had increased greatly from the one–year rate (5 percent to 17.5 percent), resulting in a rate very comparable to those of the PreStarters (18.7 percent). This may be due to the intensive supervision of these releasees ending after six months. Members of the SISU sample continued to witness significantly lower reincarceration rates (10.7 percent) than members of the PreStart sample. Finally, the reincarceration rate of the Macon County sample increased from 14 percent to 30 percent in this six–month period, resulting in the CDIP sample exhibiting a much lower reincarceration rate (19.6 percent) than members of their matched comparison group.

An analysis of plausible explanations for the variation in these reincarceration rates indicated that the higher rate of reincarceration among the before–PreStart sample could not be explained by the seriousness or nature of their new crimes compared to those of the other sample members. Rather, the differential involvement of technical violations in generating reincarcerations across the samples seemed to be operative. Consistent with the aggregate state–level data presented in Chapter 10, PreStart's implementation was associated with a marked decrease in technical violations that resulted in reincarcerations. This explains, apparently, a considerable portion of the higher reincarceration rate found among releasees who exited prison prior to PreStart's implementation.

When recidivism was measured with rearrest data, rearrest patterns across the samples were not nearly as variable as were the above reincarceration patterns. Forty percent of the PreStart releasees, exclusive of those PreStarters supervised within the SISU program, were rearrested within one year. This one–year rearrest rate, although quite high, was quite a bit lower than the 47.8–percent rearrest rate evidenced by members of the before–PreStart sample. While PreStarters witnessed lower one–year rearrest rates than inmates released in 1990, they exhibited higher

rearrest rates than releasees more closely supervised within the PreStart structure. For instance, the SISU sample exhibited a one–year rearrest rate of 31.8 percent. This rate is quite comparable to those generated by members of the CDIP sample (30.4 percent) and the boot camp sample (32.5 percent). Thus, once again, inmates who went through Phase I programming and who were not being actively supervised in the community witnessed lower recidivism rates than those inmates released in 1990; however, they had higher recidivism rates than those who had experienced Phase I programming but who received some supervision or service delivery in the community. This finding also was consistent with the one–year rearrest rates of the CDIP sample (30.4 percent) and their matched comparison group — the Macon County sample (48 percent).

While PreStart's implementation and the various supervision structures within its scope seemed to be related to reincarceration and rearrest rates, it didn't appear to have influenced the types of crimes being committed by releasees.

To more fully identify patterns in the one–year recidivism of members within each of the samples, a preliminary survival analysis was conducted. The survival analysis basically confirmed the earlier rearrest findings. In summary form, they include: 1) Inmates released in 1990 consistently witnessed the highest rearrest rates among all of the samples examined, including the PreStart sample; 2) Inmates released in 1990 also exhibited a much faster pace of recidivism than members of the other samples, tending to fail more often shortly after their release from prison; 3) Members of the PreStart sample, those individuals who were not placed under a specialized or intensive supervision or treatment program, exhibited higher rearrest rates than contemporary releasees placed into a special program of aftercare services or supervision (that is, boot campers on electronic detention, high–risk clients on intensive supervision and CDIP clients in an intensive community treatment program); 4) The timing to rearrest was generally faster among members of the PreStart sample than those in special programs, but variation based on supervision structures were noted (for example, higher failure rates for boot camp graduates upon release from Electronic Detention); and 5) CDIP clients witnessed both lower and slower (especially after the first six months of release) rates of rearrest than members of their matched comparison group from Macon County.

The data presented in this chapter are thus quite suggestive that the introduction of PreStart has not resulted in large hordes of releasees, unsupervised by correctional officials, ravaging the streets and homes of people living in Illinois. It even appears, contrary to the expectations of many, that PreStart may have actually resulted in less offender recidivism and a slower pace to that recidivism for offenders in low–risk groups. However, because high–rate offenders in the PreStart sample actually fare worse than the high–risk offenders in the before–PreStart sample, one should

question the efficacy of the PreStart structure as it relates to high–rate offenders. PreStart may witness positive impacts on the rearrest rates of nonchronic, nonproperty offenders, but these data raise serious doubts about such a program's impact on those offenders who have traditionally posed the greatest difficulty for the criminal justice system.

Further, these data suggest that aggregate differences in the rearrest rates between the PreStart and before–PreStart samples may be due entirely to the compositional mix of offenders in these samples. Clearly, more impact analyses of the PreStart program are warranted, especially analyses that have the benefit of longer follow–up periods, more complete recidivism data, and samples of offenders that are representative of the entire releasee population.

Chapter 12

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As documented throughout this report, the Illinois Department of Corrections has done a very commendable job developing an innovative inmate reintegration program in the context of a very difficult and challenging implementation environment. The IDOC has had to work with an inadequate allocation of resources and the challenge of changing an organizational structure and culture not oriented toward the production of positive behavioral change among its correctional clientele; yet the IDOC has put together a package of correctional services that moves toward accomplishing the promises embodied in the original PreStart philosophy.

This chapter summarizes the experience and consequences of PreStart. In addition, it attempts to explain the reasons for the uneven success that has been observed, the implementation issues associated with the varying levels of PreStart's accomplishments in both Phase I and Phase II components, and PreStart's impact on the IDOC and prison releasees.

The Origins of PreStart

Chapter 2 addressed the genesis of PreStart through the use of archival and published statistical data as well as face-to-face interviews with key policy-makers who were central actors in the formulation and development of the PreStart program.

Within the context of Illinois parole reform, the evolutionary process of PreStart developed in an environment of fiscal constraints and amid a general dissatisfaction with aftercare services as they were operating throughout the late 1980s. These factors, combined with changing correctional philosophies, severe state budget cuts, and the availability of external funding, are what made PreStart possible. While the ideological underpinnings may have reflected rehabilitative and reintegrative ideals, it was found that PreStart also was implemented as a way to reduce the number of parole layoffs, to reduce negative public reactions to a restructuring of parole, and to provide some services and supervision for releasees within the community.

As highlighted in the chapter, the timing of the restructuring of parole in terms of planning, staff morale and available resources was unfortunate and necessitated an abrupt and abbreviated planning process. During the transition to PreStart, staff morale sunk to an all-time low. Even with the federal funding available to subsidize Phase II programming, remaining IDOC budgetary

constraints limited the amount of staff and equipment accessible to implement PreStart smoothly and to facilitate the inherent link desired between Phase I and Phase II programming. Programs that were not yet clearly defined — that is, lacking solid program parameters — had to be implemented quickly. Thus, the bulk of the program formulation process lasted only a few months. This hasty move to finalize the reform embodied by PreStart meant that certain limitations would exist for its implementation. While necessity may again have proven to be the mother of invention in terms of Illinois' restructuring of parole, it has been noted in planning/implementation research that credibility and legitimacy are key factors in the process of successful policy implementation. PreStart may have been the child of necessity, but it does not seem to have been conceived in a stable environment that would foster the credibility and legitimacy that would ease its implementation.

The Program Implementation Environment

Chapter 3 provided a detailed examination of the implementation environment. The research strategy for this effort was designed to capture information to describe three primary areas: 1) the perspectives of key actor groups, those impacting or impacted by PreStart's implementation; 2) the program's content; and 3) the program's environmental context.

To do this, multiple data sources were used, including: written documentation on PreStart (policies, memorandums, and so on); face–to–face interviews with PreStart implementors (administrators, PreStart coordinators, Phase I instructors, external service providers, Phase II agents, community drug program agents and SISU agents); a self–administered mailed survey of all PreStart staff; a self–administered questionnaire of selected inmates who had recently completed, or were about to complete, Phase I programming; and site observations by PreStart evaluation staff, including visits to PreStart classes, site tours and informal conversations with staff and inmates at of correctional facilities. The above data sources provided research staff with a wealth of data on PreStart's implementation.

Using the policy implementation model developed by Van Horn and Van Meter (1977) to analyze PreStart's implementation environment, Chapter 3 noted that many of the key variables associated with program implementation success (for example, a supportive political and social environment, adequate resources, favorable dispositions among implementors, clear policy standards, strong communication patterns, and an organization suited for rapid absorption of change) were lacking in PreStart's implementation environment. It was highlighted that the IDOC had the formidable task of implementing a very novel program without an adequate organizational infrastructure to support such efforts and with a minimal level of available resources.

An analogy presented in Chapter 3 likened PreStart's implementation to a poker game. The IDOC was not dealt a very good hand in summer 1991. A promising program was to be implemented quickly but without adequate resources. The only new funds for PreStart came from federal funding that would not even balance the loss of state revenue dollars previously appropriated to service parole functions. There would be a significant net loss of parole agents to staff the new PreStart functions. It was found that meaningful internal resources were not expended for the establishment of Phase I programming within correctional institutions or to supplement federal dollars used to deliver Phase II services.

Subsequently, the IDOC has not been dealt many additional new cards, and for the most part, it has not been willing to reshuffle the cards it does have (for example, appropriate additional funds to the Community Services Division for PreStart). Nonetheless, it has stayed in the game, and has done remarkably well doing so. Despite the manifold barriers to successful program implementation, IDOC high–level administrators have exhibited a strong commitment to the reform effort and were willing to adapt to see the essential elements of the designed program implemented.

The chapter also closely examined results from a survey of IDOC staff — the main players responsible for the implementation of the program. The survey was mailed to relevant staff at correctional centers, community correctional centers and community service centers. The individuals included in the sample were facility superintendents and supervisors (or their assistants), clinical supervisors, in–house correctional counselors, educators, parole agents and job service personnel working with former and current PreStart enrollees.

It was found that the program was being implemented by staff who were not highly involved in the planning process or well trained to engage in newly designated duties. Most of the staff sample respondents indicated that they felt little ownership over the change process of PreStart's implementation. Institutional staff expressed considerably greater ownership of the change process than did community IDOC staff (that is, parole agents). It also was found, however, that most respondents in the staff sample expressed positive attitudes regarding their current work situations, current job efficacy and job satisfaction levels. Some differences were observed between various staff types on these job–related scales. The basis of operation was a key variable for many of the mean–scale score differences. In general, institutional staff consistently indicated more positive current job attitudes, more current job satisfaction and more current job efficacy than did community IDOC staff. For instance, community IDOC staff experienced a tremendous decrease in job satisfaction once PreStart was implemented. This appears to be the result of many community–based IDOC staff having witnessed significant personal and professional dislocations due to budget cuts and the related implementation of PreStart.

Phase I Program Implementation

Chapter 4 specifically examined the implementation of Phase I programming — addressing both systemwide and facility–level issues that grew out of the above context. Fourteen correctional facilities (selected to be representative of all IDOC facilities) were the subjects of site visits conducted in summer 1992 and summer 1993. During these visits, personnel — ranging from correctional counselors and educators responsible for delivery of Phase I programming to administrators (for example, PreStart coordinators, wardens and assistant wardens) — were interviewed, and observations of classroom instruction and interactions between instructors and PreStart students were observed. The resultant data inform the analysis of Phase I implementation.

Despite the problematic environment of PreStart's development and initial implementation, many bona fide Phase I programs were observed during the 1992 site visits. However, there was a considerable amount of variation in the degree to which Phase I programming was successfully implemented across facilities. At that point in time, three key factors were identified as having the most influence on the successful implementation of PreStart Phase I programming at the facility level: 1) administrative leadership; 2) staff commitment; and 3) strong communication patterns. Sufficient resources also are important, although it was found that most facilities had at least the minimum resources necessary to deliver a bona fide program.

Before Phase I programming was examined in 1993, it was anticipated that the program would have reached the routinization phase of its existence. Instead, the 1993 site visits revealed dynamic programs that were still evolving. Programs either were improving through innovative problem–solving techniques at the facility level, maintained despite facility–level challenges such as resource limitations and staff morale issues, or declining with little attention being paid to the diagnosis and resolution of program problems. Some of the institutions, however, had taken the initiative to refine their existing programming.

During the follow–up visits in 1993, certain patterns not observed in 1992 were now evident across facilities: 1) less staff resistance than when the program was originally implemented; 2) tailoring of Phase I (at least to some degree) toward special populations; 3) at many institutions, less priority placed on PreStart by the administration, reflecting a perceived priority shift from Central Office; and 4) while a general lack of knowledge about Phase II programming still existed, attempts were made by facilities to develop a relationship with or an understanding of Phase II program efforts.

It was observed that between the 1992 and 1993 site visits, Central Office involvement in the monitoring and guidance of Phase I programming at facilities had decreased. (For example, there

was an end to statewide PreStart coordinator meetings and curriculum revisions slowed.) This was found to have negatively affected the attitudes of PreStart staff, especially line–level staff responsible for the delivery of Phase I programming. While Central Office at that time was active in communicating to higher–level correctional staff the continued priority of Phase I PreStart programming, the minimal hands–on approach of Central Office basically left facilities "on their own" to face ongoing Phase I delivery.

This chapter also included an analysis of Phase I implementation at community correctional centers. In general, implementation of Phase I programming at community correctional centers (CCCs) was found to be much weaker than at adult facilities in 1992. By 1993, notable changes had begun to take place. These changes centered around Central Office's decision to take actions to more directly guide PreStart's implementation at CCCs. At the time of the 1993 visits to CCCs, their implementation of Phase I had progressed to about the place adult institutions had been in 1992. These changes were for the better, creating the beginning of bona fide programs.

Finally, certain issues that were similar across all facilities in both 1992 and 1993 were highlighted. These included: 1) minimal staff training; 2) continued problems with the curriculum; 3) a majority of PreStart staff who feel burdened by the extra duty of delivering Phase I programming; and 4) no strong link between Phase I and Phase II programming.

System–level factors that were seen as affecting the ability of facilities to deliver quality Phase I programming over time included: 1) an end to the statewide PreStart coordinator meetings; 2) the loss of outside presenters (secretary of state, parole agents and job services representatives); 3) no continued training at the state level despite significant staff turnover; and 4) in general, less Central Office attention, guidance and monitoring of Phase I programming. These system–level factors impacted the quality of Phase I delivery over time, and generally for the worse. If PreStart Phase I is to continue as a viable program in all IDOC facilities, certain actions are required, not only of each individual institution but also of the highest administrative level within the IDOC.

The IDOC's Central Office could aid PreStart functioning at various facilities by developing stronger information–sharing practices between facilities and using monitoring mechanisms already in place (that is, the Curriculum Committee) to improve weak programs. The continual training of staff would benefit all facilities regardless of current program quality. In general, it was found that Central Office could aid facilities — and improve the quality of Phase I programming — fairly easily, yet effectively. Importantly, since the release of the earlier report, which emphasized this finding, Central Office involvement in the guidance and nurturing of Phase I programming has improved.

Inmate Reactions to Phase I Programming

The understanding of system and staff issues surrounding Phase I implementation and delivery present only half the picture. To understand the ultimate impact of the many constraints and obstacles encountered during the development and implementation of Phase I programming, it was necessary to ask the clients of the program about their levels of satisfaction with the services delivered. Was it possible to deliver to the consumers of the program a valued experience despite the shortcomings of the program environment? Chapter 5 suggested that even in the most difficult of conditions, a vital and innovative correctional philosophy of service delivery, which primarily tries to "help," can be successful.

The data for this chapter were comprised of responses gathered on questionnaires from inmates (and group discussions) involved in Phase I programming at the 14 correctional facilities in 1992 and 1993. In 1992, responses from individuals who attempted to complete the questionnaire resulted in 410 fully usable survey questionnaires. Survey efforts in 1993 yielded 381 usable questionnaires. Many, though not all, of these same inmates took part in the group discussions following the survey administration. Analysis of the characteristics of the inmates who responded to these survey efforts indicated that they were quite representative of the IDOC inmate population.

Before analyses of inmate reactions to Phase I programming were presented, the nature of the inmates' self–reported reintegrative needs and concerns was examined. Most inmates were primarily concerned with basic economic needs, such as finding a job and adequate housing and supporting their families. Some discussed family reunification issues, substance abuse concerns and legal concerns. These issues would be confronted by individuals, who as a group, manifested significant psychological impairments. Inmate scores on several well–validated scales indicated that, overall, the PreStart inmates exhibited much higher levels of anxiety and depression than people in the "normal" population, as well as much lower levels of self–esteem. Moreover, these characteristics seemed to be concentrated among certain inmates. That is, inmates who suffered from low self–esteem were also more likely to exhibit high levels of depression and anxiety. While the PreStart pre–release program directly attempts to promote higher levels of esteem among its clients, and may indirectly affect anxiety levels, these data suggested that consideration should be given to the development of pre–release programming that directly addresses levels of inmate anxiety and depression.

Analyses of inmate reactions to Phase I programming revealed a number of important findings. First, PreStart inmates generally held very positive attitudes toward Phase I programming. Second, attitudes toward PreStart sometimes varied quite dramatically across

facilities. Third, in general there was great stability in attitudinal and perceptual scores between 1992 and 1993. A few exceptions at the facility level were noticeable, however, indicating that some programs may have improved while some programs may have regressed in terms of generating positive attitudes among program clients.

The analysis also revealed in a very direct and objective manner how inmate reactions to PreStart varied across inmates. Most importantly, findings indicated that it tends to matter little who the subjects of PreStart are in terms of inmate reactions. All types of inmates — older vs. younger, white vs. black, male vs. female — tended to respond similarly to the PreStart program although some slight variations were found. The facility at which the program was implemented was the key factor related to inmate reactions. In particular, problematic implementation of PreStart at various facilities has hurt inmate attitudes and perceptions.

The above type of information can be used by the IDOC to assess, monitor and target particular facilities for ameliorative actions. Unfortunately, the present research has been only a "two shot" effort. There is currently little in the nature of PreStart monitoring and coordinating efforts to promote the continued provision of adequate and positive pre–release programming. The introduction of a process which uses an information collection scheme that measures inmate responses to PreStart classes on a routine and consistent basis is a first step in allowing the IDOC to keep a vigilant eye on the adequacy of these efforts. For the most part, PreStart course evaluation data are being collected at a number of facilities but in a haphazard way that doesn't inform programming. The administration of a questionnaire — containing items similar to the ones used in this report — which takes five minutes to complete at graduation and is simple to administer and answer, should be considered by the IDOC for implementation. The introduction of such an evaluation scheme would be highly desirable from a program development and enhancement perspective.

The Implementation of Phase II Programming

Chapter 6 moved away from the earlier focus on Phase I programming to an examination of Phase II programming. The chapter emphasized that the array of program components within the Phase II umbrella was initially conceptualized within only a few months of PreStart's implementation. The research team was able to find relatively little written documentation available relating to planning processes, descriptions of the overriding program philosophy or program components, staffing patterns, or policies and procedures. For the most part, Phase II programming was not implemented or guided by such documents or activities normally associated with their production. Rather, Phase II programming was being designed as it was being

implemented, shaped by only a few core ideas — which often were not explicitly communicated to or endorsed by key officials in the implementation environment.

As a result of this, Phase II programming should be considered an ad hoc program, sired by the availability of external funds and a belief that something must be done with inmates recently released from prison. Phase II programming, while appearing consistent with an assistance and/or advocacy model of parole supervision, and reflecting a marked departure from prior policies and practices in the State of Illinois, should not be viewed as embodying a particular philosophy of parole. Rather, pragmatic concerns dominated the establishment of what has become Phase II programming. A voluntary model of assistance was not endorsed primarily because it was perceived as the desirable or preferred model, or because it was seen as most directly overcoming weaknesses of existing structures. Instead, it was endorsed because it was all that could be practically implemented and attained with available resources. The lack of a clear philosophical basis to Phase II programming, and structures and processes that logically derive from that basis, has had significant implications for the PreStart program to the current day.

Accordingly, Phase II program implementation analyses in Chapter 6 focused on the original design of Phase II programming and its evolution over time. Primary attention was placed on the community service centers and the services being provided there. Case study (observational and interview data) and automated service center data provided by the IDOC informed the analysis. Also presented was a separate description of special programs for special releasee populations, including the Special Intensive Supervision Unit, sex offender treatment programming and the Community Drug Intervention Program.

After a releasee reporting requirement was introduced shortly after PreStart's implementation, it was questioned whether a meaningful service delivery program can be expected with the existing allocation of resources: On average, in FY 1994, 38 cents per day per releasee was spent on the delivery of PreStart services. The original philosophical basis of Phase II programming — voluntary use of CSC services by releasees in an "assistance model" of parole — was irreparably bastardized by the introduction of a reporting requirement. Lack of staff training, inadequate resource allocation, minimal supervision of agents and a lack of clearly defined and articulated policy and standards further aggravated an already untenable situation.

High levels of variation in community service center activity and parole agent behavior were noted. Differing workload constraints across service centers, ambiguous administrative policies, and varying types of tolerated parole agent adaptations in reaction to PreStart's implementation have resulted in very differing releasee experiences with Phase II programming both across the state and even within service centers. Differing "parole" systems appear to be emerging, with

Chicago–area centers serving as tracking centers while low–volume centers have the luxury to either be assistance or supervision centers. Administrative and implementation factors that have allowed these developments to occur were discussed.

Data measuring community service center agent activities for the first two years of PreStart operations were examined; these activities included releasees' requests, referrals, and delivered services. Data supplied by the IDOC are indicative of the general volume of service center activity within the state, and that much of that activity is driven by routine and mandated agent/releasee contacts that do not commonly result in service delivery for the bulk of releasees. This is especially true in the Chicago area, where the volume of contacts renders it quite difficult to provide meaningful service delivery. Perhaps even more clearly, the data illustrated the necessity of consistent recordkeeping practices across all community service centers. Accurate assessment of PreStart Phase II program activity levels requires that reliable data be collected as a routine component of IDOC information systems. Beyond the routine collection of reliable data on service center activity, it also would be desirable for the IDOC to identify what types of contacts and referrals resulted in service provider contacts. As data are currently collected, they are not complete enough to reliably determine what proportions of referrals and service provider contacts are routine and which resulted from releasees' service requests.

While the volume of contacts is quite high, the apparent incompleteness of the available automated data and the instability of the automated data series, led to the recommendation that stronger record–keeping practices be developed. In particular, agents should be given greater training and access to terminals.

This chapter also presented an analysis of special programs designed for special populations. Included was an analysis of the Special Intensive Supervision Unit (SISU). Under the original PreStart design, SISU was to include releasees predicted to be of high risk to public safety. A glaring limit of current PreStart operations relates to the process by which high–risk offenders are identified and assigned to intensive supervision. Currently, the IDOC does not use an objective classification system to identify high–risk releasees. Coupled with the fact that the vast majority of individuals are assigned because of legal criteria and not behavioral indicators of risk, relatively few releasees who may be of high risk find themselves in the SISU. Once placed on the SISU, it appears that most releasees are neither specially nor intensively supervised.

Sex offender treatment programming and the implementation of Community Drug Intervention Programs were also discussed. In general, their implementation has been slow and uneven due to a lack of needed Central Office attention to the development of such programming.

Thus, most of the relevant programming is just coming on line in a manner consistent with program models that had been developed much earlier.

The Reaction of Releasees to Phase II Programming

Chapter 7 examined the reactions and perceptions of releasees toward their experiences with the community service centers (CSCs) and the PreStart agents that staff these centers. Evaluation efforts included the examination of releasees' experiences since their release from prison; the level of contact they have had with community service centers; their perceptions of the benefits they have acquired from the services provided by CSCs; and their overall impressions of CSC services. To acquire the data needed to measure the above, contact was made with two groups of releasees. One group included releasees who walked into or phoned the CSC during one of the evaluation team's site visits. The other group was composed of 109 individuals from the 1992 inmate sample (those interviewed while involved in PreStart Phase I) who had since been released to PreStart Phase II.

This chapter revealed that inmates recently released from prison appear, as a group, to be having difficulties adjusting to life in the community. It was found that a large percentage of releasees were unemployed or working at very low–paying jobs. Almost one–third reported being rearrested or illegal drug use since their release from prison.

These respondents also reported fairly frequent contact levels with CSCs, in a manner consistent with IDOC reporting requirements. Some difference was noted across PreStart zones in terms of number of contacts and type (percent in person), but in no zone was anything found that was inconsistent with reporting rules or system capacities. In general, a majority of releasees responded favorably to CSCs and parole agents, indicating that they found CSCs to be helpful, that their overall experience with CSCs was good, and that they had received service referrals from the CSCs. On the other hand, a majority of releasees also stated they only have contacts with CSCs because they have to. Some differences in response patterns were observed across PreStart zones. However, based on the relatively small number of respondents in all zones but Zone 1 (Chicago), the data should be viewed with caution. Nevertheless, it does appear that releasees in certain zones are responding much less favorably to PreStart Phase II programming than would be hoped for or expected. A stronger conclusion on this point must await the acquisition of additional relevant data from larger representative samples of releasees.

The Springfield Community Drug Intervention Program

The Springfield Community Drug Intervention Program (CDIP), the model substance abuse treatment program in the state, has been functioning continuously for almost four years, but has not been recently evaluated. Chapter 8 provided an assessment of the program's primary components and the reaction of clients to the program. Five data sources informed this process evaluation. They included archival data on program functioning provided to the research team, observations of program activities derived from numerous visits to the program site, a series of interviews with all program staff that included both structured and unstructured question and answer sessions, self–administered questionnaire and interview data with an availability sample of program participants, and a review of all information sources available on the population of program clients as of October 1992 (a total of 46 clients).

The process evaluation indicated that it is a program generally well received by its clients. It provides its clients with high levels of supervision and treatment, and despite its mandatory nature, most clients felt that it has made a positive impact on their lives. Patterns of self–reported substance abusing behavior among the program clients were noted as decreasing in frequency and seriousness since their involvement in the program. In addition, treatment services provided in the community were perceived very favorably by the client group.

Some issues also were noted, however. Many clients did not view themselves as being in need of substance abuse treatment, and many were unsure as to how and why they are in the program. Additionally, many are unsure about what is required to successfully complete the program and how long that might take. While individual program components are generally viewed favorably by the clients, some concerns were raised about the adequacy of group and individual counseling services offered within the CDIP.

A variety of data sources suggested that the concerns raised by the program's clients may be valid. Referral, selection and intake processes can be enhanced so that valuable treatment slots are reserved for the most needy clients, and so that services are delivered in a more timely manner. Even agents working within the CDIP suggested that while all of the clients in the program could benefit from the experience, not all, and in fact, a minority of the clients were perceived as being especially problem substance abusers at the time of their admission into the program.

Once in the program, clients receive a variety of very worthwhile services and a strong dosage of supervision. Especially noteworthy has been the ability of the CDIP to develop very strong linkages with local substance abuse treatment providers. Unfortunately, it appears that a

substantial portion of the CDIP's clientele did not take well to program components. The result was a withdrawal from program services, apparently for many after they had been in the program for about six months. Despite this, the data suggested that many of these clients remained on the program rolls for a considerable amount of time after their noncompliance had become manifested. On the other hand, the data suggested that a number of clients who had appeared to conform well with the program and to have positively adjusted to the community were not graduated from the program. The consequences include a number of inactive clients who eventually fail in the program despite taking up treatment slots and a number of more active clients who do well but are considered failures. The net result appears to be inefficient use of very scarce program resources and a fairly high failure rate.

Thus, it was recommended that the CDIP carefully reassess its referral, intake and selection processes as well as its client termination criteria and decision–making processes. The basic program components of a very desirable and potentially effective treatment are in place, but intake and outflow processes should be revised.

The Response of Allied Agency Representatives to PreStart

The ultimate success of PreStart will depend less on how IDOC staff and its participants respond to the program than on how relevant stakeholders and allied agencies in the external environment view this innovative approach to offender reintegration. As discussed in Chapter 3, PreStart has been able to develop and mature in a fairly tranquil political environment. Relatively little media attention has been paid to the program, and potentially disruptive interest–group activity has been minimal. In Chapter 9, attention was paid to the response of important stakeholders — allied social service and criminal justice agencies — to PreStart.

Key representatives from law enforcement, prosecutorial, judicial and a variety of social service agencies were surveyed in 1992 and 1994. The earlier survey included a questionnaire mailed to many of the these representatives from across the state. Because of that survey's poor return rate, the 1994 survey included more intensive telephone contact with fewer officials, selected because they identified as knowing about and having extensive contact with PreStart and PreStart staff.

The main conclusion drawn from the 1992 and 1994 surveys was that most allied agency staff were largely uninformed about PreStart. Nonetheless, many seemed to yearn for more information and communication from PreStart (CSC) staff. Both the service and criminal justice agencies emphasized a need for ongoing communication. The lack of knowledge and low level of

communication between these agency representatives and IDOC community services staff raises serious concern about the functioning of Phase II programming. If community service centers are to serve as meaningful service brokerage houses for releasees, the issues raised by these findings should generate immediate attention by the IDOC.

The comments made by the service agency respondents illustrated that as it now operates, Phase II programming does not appear to be sufficiently meeting its explicit goal of providing services to releasees. In addition, at least in the eyes of many criminal justice respondents, neither does it seem to be providing releasees with the supervision and accountability that such respondents expect of mandatory supervised release.

PreStart's Impact on Warrants and Prison Admissions

PreStart has formally abandoned the supervision function of parole services for the bulk of releasees. Though some supervision of these releasees continues to take place informally, it would be expected that PreStart implementation would be associated with a dramatic decline in the issuance and execution of warrants. Chapter 10 explored this issue as well as its impact on IDOC prison admissions.

A time–series analysis was conducted to assess PreStart's impact on the issuance, serving and execution of warrants and on IDOC prison admission figures. PreStart has clearly resulted in a reduced level of warrant–issuing behavior, which is now concentrated in the Fugitive Apprehension Unit; in all likelihood, PreStart also resulted in a reduced number of releasees serving time in jails or prisons on the basis of warrants being issued.

A decrease in IDOC admissions by community supervision violators appeared to be associated with the timing of PreStart's implementation. While statistical analyses did not identify PreStart as a clear cause of reduced prison admissions based on technical violations, after July 1991, violation–based prison admissions plummeted and have generally remained low since. Admission rates for technical violations decreased dramatically around the time of PreStart's implementation (almost as if PreStart was being anticipated two months prior to implementation), while admission rates due to new felony convictions did not appear to be associated with parole reform in Illinois. However, that decrease was overshadowed by the general increase in admissions taking place across the four years prior to parole reform in Illinois, and that continued to take place (albeit starting at a decreased level) during the period following PreStart's implementation.

PreStart's Impact on Recidivism

Perhaps the ultimate test of PreStart is its impact on offender recidivism. Chapter 11 examined the recidivism rate of inmates who experienced both Phase I and Phase II of PreStart; it also compared their recidivism to a comparison group of inmates who had not experienced Phase I of the program before their release and who were supervised under the earlier mandatory supervised release structure. Remember that, for the most part, offenders under the earlier parole system were not actively being supervised nor were they the subjects of parole casework. Rather, most releasees under the earlier system were being tracked monthly by their parole officers for an assessment of the parolee's whereabouts and current living/employment status. It also should be emphasized that under the PreStart structure, some releasees are still supervised in the community. Most prominently, these include releasees who are assigned to the SISU and to the Community Drug Units.

To assess the impacts of these program subcomponents on releasee behavior, the recidivism of samples of releasees who participated was compared to recidivism rates of releasees who did not experience similar levels of supervision and service delivery efforts. Recidivism among the releasees was measured many different ways. Two basic data sources on the recidivism of research subjects were used: Illinois' Computerized Criminal History (CCH) system maintained by the Illinois State Police (ISP) and the IDOC's admissions file maintained within its Offender Tracking System. These included measures of arrests and incarcerations subsequent to release from prison. To minimize possible misinterpretations based on a single–variable "fixed interval" analysis (for example, percent rearrested within one year), multiple measures of recidivism and a survival analysis were used. The many problems encountered during the data–coding and analyses stages were primarily due to problems inherent in the weak and faulty criminal justice recordkeeping practices in Illinois, such as missing information and information that was discrepant between the two data sources. These problems, coupled with weaknesses in the methodology, rendered problematic the making of certain inferences about PreStart's impact on certain offender subgroups.

Comparison groups included the releasees who were surveyed while incarcerated during the 1992 site visits (PreStart sample); a random sample of inmates released from the same 13 facilities in 1990 before PreStart was implemented (pre–PreStart sample); a random sample of releasees on Special Intensive Supervision in October 1992; the population of the Springfield CDIP during that same month; a group of releasees from Macon County who were matched to members of the CDIP; and a sample of 1992 graduates of the Illinois Impact Incarceration Program (boot camp sample).

One–year reincarceration figures revealed that members of the before–PreStart sample were much more likely to be reincarcerated within one year of release than members of any other sample. Moreover, the differences were dramatic, with almost one–third (32.3 percent) of the inmates released in 1990 being reincarcerated within a year. In contrast, the other samples, all of which represent releasees being supervised under the PreStart structure, exhibited one–year reincarceration rates that varied from 5 percent (CDIP) to 14 percent (Macon County). In terms of meaningful pairwise comparisons, the PreStart sample witnessed reincarceration rates within one year of release that were only about a third of that for the before–PreStart sample (11.7 percent). PreStarters had a slightly higher one–year reincarceration rate than those releasees supervised more intensively in special programs (SISU, 6 percent; boot campers, 5 percent). The CDIP sample witnessed a reincarceration rate (13 percent) quite comparable to members of their matched comparison group (14 percent for the Macon County sample).

Reincarceration rates within 1.5 years of release indicated that the PreStart sample continued to witness a much lower reincarceration rate than the before–PreStart sample (18.7 percent vs. 38.8 percent). However, the reincarceration rate at 1.5 years for the boot camp sample had increased greatly from the one–year rate (5 percent to 17.5 percent), resulting in a rate very comparable to those of the PreStarters (18.7 percent). This may be due to the intensive supervision of these releasees ending after six months. Members of the SISU sample continued to witness significantly lower reincarceration rates (10.7 percent) than members of the PreStart sample. Finally, the reincarceration rate of the Macon County sample increased from 14 percent to 30 percent in this six–month period, resulting in the CDIP sample exhibiting a much lower reincarceration rate (19.6 percent) than members of their matched comparison group.

An analysis of plausible explanations for the variation in these reincarceration rates indicated the following: the higher rate of reincarceration among the before–PreStart sample could not be explained by the seriousness or nature of their new crimes compared to those of the other sample members. Rather, the differential involvement of technical violations in generating reincarcerations across the samples seemed to be operative. Consistent with the aggregate state–level data presented in Chapter 10, PreStart's implementation was associated with a marked decrease in technical violations that resulted in reincarcerations. This explains, apparently, a considerable portion of the higher reincarceration rate found among releasees who exited prison prior to PreStart implementation.

When recidivism was measured with rearrest data, rearrest patterns across the samples were not nearly as variable as were the above reincarceration patterns. Forty percent of the PreStart releasees, exclusive of those PreStarters supervised within the SISU program, were rearrested

within one year. This one–year rearrest rate, although quite high, was quite a bit lower than the 47.8 percent rearrest rate evidenced by members of the before–PreStart sample. While PreStarters witnessed lower one–year rearrest rates than inmates released in 1990, they exhibited higher rearrest rates than releasees more closely supervised within the PreStart structure. For instance, the SISU sample exhibited a one–year rearrest rate of 31.8 percent. This rate is quite comparable to those generated by members of the CDIP sample (30.4 percent) and the boot camp sample (32.5 percent). Thus, once again, inmates who went through Phase I programming and who were not being actively supervised in the community witnessed lower recidivism rates than those inmates released in 1990; however, they showed higher recidivism rates than those who had experienced Phase I programming but who experienced some supervision or service delivery in the community. This finding also was consistent with the one–year rearrest rates of the CDIP sample (30.4 percent) and their matched comparison group — the Macon County sample (48 percent).

While PreStart's implementation and the various supervision structures within its scope seemed to be related to reincarceration and rearrest rates, it didn't appear to have influenced the types of crimes being committed by releasees.

To more fully identify patterns in the one–year recidivism of members within each of the samples, a preliminary survival analysis was conducted. The survival analysis basically confirmed the earlier rearrest findings. In summary form, they include: 1) Inmates released in 1990 consistently witnessed the highest rearrest rates among all of the samples examples, including the PreStart sample; 2) Inmates released in 1990 also exhibited a much faster pace of recidivism than members of the other samples, tending to fail more often shortly after their release from prison; 3) Members of the PreStart sample, those individuals who were not placed under a specialized or intensive supervision or treatment program, exhibited higher rearrest rates than contemporary releasees placed into a special program of aftercare services or supervision (that is, boot campers on electronic detention, "high–risk" clients on intensive supervision, CDIP clients in an intensive community treatment program); 4) the timing to rearrest was generally faster among members of the PreStart sample than those in special programs, but variation based on supervision structures were noted (that is, higher failure rates for boot camp graduates upon release from Electronic Detention); and 5) CDIP clients witnessed both lower and slower (especially after the first six months of release) rates of rearrest than members of their matched comparison group from Macon County.

It appears, contrary to the expectations of many, that PreStart may have actually resulted in less offender recidivism and a slower pace to that recidivism for offenders in low–risk groups. However, because high–rate offenders in the PreStart sample actually fare worse than the high–

risk offenders in the before–PreStart sample, one should question the efficacy of the PreStart structure as it relates to high–rate offenders. PreStart may witness positive impacts on the rearrest rates of nonchronic, nonproperty offenders, but these data raise serious doubts about such a program's impact on those offenders who have traditionally posed the greatest difficulty for the criminal justice system.

Further, these data suggested that aggregate differences in the rearrest rates between the PreStart and before–PreStart samples may be due entirely to the compositional mix of offenders in these samples. Clearly, more impact analyses of the PreStart program are warranted, especially analyses that have the benefit of longer follow–up periods, more complete recidivism data, and samples of offenders that are representative of the entire releasee population.

Conclusions

Members of the PreStart evaluation team had the opportunity to review an inmate–produced video designed to be an orientation and informational guide to the PreStart program. The product is very impressive and serves not only to illustrate what can happen when the creative talents of inmates are channeled toward productive ends, but also to highlight the promise of PreStart. Using the theme of "picking up the pieces," the inmates involved in the video production presented a portrait of PreStart as a well–developed and integrated program that provides motivated inmates some basic tools, knowledge and assistance to make a successful transition to the free world.

This report, coupled with the earlier interim reports submitted by the PreStart evaluation team, indicates that the Illinois Department of Corrections has done a very commendable job developing an innovative program in the context of a very difficult and challenging implementation environment. The IDOC has put together a package of correctional services, both within and outside prison walls, that moves toward accomplishing the promises contained in the inmate–produced video — without the adequate allocation of resources and with the formidable challenge of changing an organizational structure and culture that has not been oriented toward producing positive behavioral change among the correctional clientele.

While the first steps have been taken toward fulfilling those promises, much remains to be done. This report discussed the promises that have been kept and those that have not. In addition, an attempt was made to explain the reasons for the uneven success that has been observed, the implementation issues associated with the varying levels of PreStart's accomplishments, and what can be done to improve the delivery of PreStart services so that all promises contained in the video

have the chance of being kept. It is urged that the IDOC move forward to "pick up the pieces" of PreStart that have not yet been put in place.

While PreStart has clearly not hurt many people (the only direct victims seem to be certain parole staff who witnessed great personal and professional dislocations because of PreStart), it hasn't quite yet lived up to its promise of delivering assistance and services to prison releasees who need and seek such help.

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APPENDIX A

TIME ONE VS. TIME TWO COMPARISONS BY FACILITY

Programs Showing Improvement

Facility G

Two institutional programs were found to have improved over time. One, Facility G, is a coed facility with a population of about 900 males and 300 females. This medium–security level facility witnessed the greatest improvement among the facilities, going from an average ranking to being categorized not only as a strong program, but perhaps the strongest Phase I program observed in 1993.

Initial Implementation Findings

As an average program, in 1992, this facility had relatively strong physical resources and some formal communication among PreStart staff, but relatively weak support from high–level administration. While staff exhibited typical levels of dissatisfaction with the program's hurried implementation and lack of training, as a group they had committed themselves to providing Phase I programming as best they could. Staff attitudes, however, reflected more acquiescence than enthusiasm. Staff communication patterns were interesting in that while regularly scheduled PreStart staff meetings occurred, little meaningful communication resulted from these meetings. For example, while the inmate evaluations of the PreStart class were passed around during a staff meeting observed by the evaluation team, there was little or no communication about the results of the inmate evaluations. Staff reported that meetings mostly focused on controlling any "problem" inmates currently in the PreStart class. While sharing of materials and ideas occurred between presenters and their back–up presenters, there was little idea sharing across module presenters.

The most serious constraint to this institution's Phase I program in 1992, however, seemed to be an ill–defined internal structure of PreStart delivery mechanisms. There was a PreStart coordinator as well as an assistant coordinator. The assistant coordinator seemed to have a more active role, actually being involved in the daily operations of PreStart, while the actual coordinator

merely oversaw the assistant coordinator. Along these lines, staff reported ambivalence from some of the mid– and higher–level administrators.

Follow–Up Results

In 1993, this institution's program was categorized as strong and viewed as probably the best of the 14 institutions visited. The pool of staff from which PreStart presenters were drawn had been increased to 22 individuals and broadened to include everyone from the prison psychologist to the assistant warden of operations to college administrators. Staff attitudes had changed for the better. Some staff felt that PreStart should not necessarily be their job (that is, counselors felt it should be the educators who present the modules because of the class setting, and educators felt it should be the counselor's responsibility because the modules' content deals with interpersonal change); generally, however, there was acceptance of PreStart and a desire to deliver a quality program. Staff meetings were still being held regularly, and administrative support seemed to be strong. This last issue, administrative leadership, seemed to be a key in the improvements noted at this facility. At this facility in 1993, the warden commented on being proud of the institution's PreStart program.

The changes between 1992 and 1993 were mostly reflective of a new PreStart coordinator being in place. Highly enthusiastic, this PreStart coordinator seemed to have energized administrators and revitalized PreStart staff. If the IDOC wanted to know how to revitalize an institution's Phase I programming, this institution might be the place to look for the answers. The three key issues (administrative support, sufficient and committed staff, and quality communication patterns) found in the earlier interim report to be necessary for a vital Phase I program were all present at this facility, and they combined to create a strong Phase I program.

Facility C

The second program showing improvement had changed only minimally from being a weak program to being an average one. Facility C, an all–male psychiatric unit with a fluctuating population averaging around 400, had been plagued in 1992 by the perceived rigidity with which the PreStart curriculum had originally been implemented. Because it housed a special population, this institution found it difficult to make the original curriculum viable. This fact, along with the general process of the original implementation, had serious negative repercussions for staff morale and program support at this institution.

Initial Implementation Findings

Although every institution visited in 1992 commented on the negativity and resistance of the implementation environment, this institution felt more put upon in terms of the mandated programming. Staff and administration alike felt that their institution and its special population had not been considered when the program was developed. The fact that they initially thought they were not allowed to tailor the curriculum exacerbated the problem. In addition, mandatory staffing patterns were problematic: Assignments to PreStart resulted in a situation in which staff with highly negative attitudes and approach worked side by side with motivated and positive staff. At the time of the 1992 visit, this institution had recently been given explicit permission to revise the curriculum according to its population needs, and signs of improvement were emerging.

Follow–Up Results

When the 1993 follow–up visits occurred, a new PreStart coordinator was in place. This was an improvement because the previous coordinator had hoped to be relieved of that duty. However, many problems noted during the 1992 visit (insufficient amount of staff delivering PreStart, negativity of some presenters, minimal communication among PreStart staff) were still apparent.

In general, staff were more satisfied with the PreStart program because it had been tailored to the population. This change, however, had brought with it some new problems. Even so, while the original curriculum was deemed inappropriate for the special population, the revised curriculum was viewed by some staff as too remedial for some inmates required to go through the program.

In conclusion, this facility improved when the curriculum's content had been tailored to meet the population–specific needs. However, the new curriculum was thought to be problematic since it was too remedial for many inmates (though necessarily remedial because of the wide range of abilities represented at this institution). Regardless of these problems, the negativity among staff created by the original program, its implementation and its perceived incompatibility with the special population had somewhat dissipated. And while staff still took to task the appropriateness of the curriculum as a mandatory program for all inmates, their views focused on ways to alter it, whereas in 1992 the view was, "Perhaps we shouldn't be doing it." Thus, the improvement at this facility, while minimal, flowed from the decision by Central Office to allow institutions flexibility in curriculum content.

Programs Retaining Their Original Designation

Programs Remaining Weak

Facility J

Two of the 14 programs included in the evaluation sample were categorized as weak in both 1992 and 1993. One of these was Facility J, a medium–security all–male facility with a population of 1,500.

Initial Implementation Findings. In 1992, the PreStart program at this institution was characterized by weak administrative support, with both a warden who was not identified by staff as being involved with PreStart, and a PreStart coordinator who did not appear to be strongly committed to the program. Most staff were demoralized and attributed program problems to the weak leadership of the PreStart coordinator.

Staff were assigned to PreStart duties; they did not volunteer. A majority were dissatisfied with the additional responsibilities, and many were experiencing burnout one year into the program's implementation. Staff communication was reported as minimal, with meetings being held infrequently. Few substantive issues were being addressed. The curriculum was presented in a fairly routine and uncreative fashion, with no outside resource presenters involved.

Overall, the program was rated as one of the weaker programs due to a poor internal structure, lack of leadership, inadequate external resources, low staff morale and poor internal communication patterns.

Follow–Up Results. The follow up visit found a PreStart program that had not improved from the past year. Even though outside vendors are now involved in the program (marginally so), staff are more demoralized, and both program leadership and perceived administrative support from the warden continue to be lacking. The PreStart staff consisted of basically the same individuals as the year before. Thus, burnout was still a problem. Although some facilitators expressed an interest in giving up their PreStart assignment, they were told that it was not possible. Staff rotation was not being used to address staff burnout. A team teaching approach is used. It consists of modules being taught by two

instructors who split the periods; however, they do not coordinate their particular efforts. Many instructors are reported as frequently not showing up, releasing classes early or giving frequent breaks. Regular staff meetings are not being held because of unrealistic perceptions by the PreStart coordinator that the program is running smoothly. The one improvement noted is that contact with community service centers has occurred. Several staff members visited and observed Phase II operations.

This program was characterized as weak during both evaluation visits. Minimal to no improvements had been attempted. Again, the three necessary ingredients for success (supportive administrators, sufficient and motivated staff, and open communication lines) were weak or missing at this facility. The result was a less–than–adequate program.

Facility A

Facility A was the second program ranked as weak at both times compared to those in the evaluation sample. A minimum–security facility with a population of approximately 1,000 males, it has the reputation of being strong in rehabilitative programming, and it was expected that the Phase I PreStart program would be well developed. That was not the case. The program is one of the weakest in the evaluation sample.

Initial Implementation Findings. The warden appeared to have had no involvement whatsoever in the program. The assistant warden of programs was involved in the initial planning process through Central Office and was named PreStart coordinator. However, the day–to–day operations of program delivery were delegated to clerical staff. In 1992, staff had the opinion that PreStart was a departmental priority, but this view did not translate into action.

Monthly staff meetings were held initially and used as a forum for feedback and idea sharing. Staff morale was low during the initial visit, reflecting dissatisfaction with the amount of training, the additional burden of the job assignment (especially as back–up presenters and staff rotation were not being used), and the poor quality of the initial curriculum.

Follow–Up Results. In 1993, the program had not changed substantially, and appeared to have declined in certain areas. Though a new PreStart coordinator had been appointed, staff reported the position to be a figurehead only and contended that the assistant warden (the original PreStart coordinator) was still viewed as being in charge. Staff meetings were now

held "every once in a long while" (noted by some to be every three or four months). Staff morale was a problem attributed by staff to two factors: a lack of administrative support and friction between the educational and counseling staff. A back–up instructor system was in place. Attitudes reflected the belief that sufficient staff was available to deliver PreStart.

While some staff noted that PreStart was a top priority, they explained this more in terms of its mandatory nature and the fact that not complying with the strict schedule would result in reprimands for staff. Other staff thought that PreStart was a lower priority than it used to be (at the institution and in general), citing the decline in staff meetings, and the end of statewide training and other meetings. Staff did note that the curriculum had been improved by the curriculum revision committee and that more resources (in terms of class handouts and the like) were now available.

While many staff at this institution believed the program was running smoothly, information gathered in interviews contradicted that opinion. It may be that because there were no immediate crises, the program was seen internally as adequate. However, given the quality of programs in institutions where there were fewer staff and resources or a seemingly more "difficult population," this program has been classified as weak. It seems that stronger administrative support and refreshed communication are needed to invigorate this program.

Programs Remaining Average

Facility N

Two programs classified as average in terms of Phase I delivery after the 1992 visit remained average in 1993. An example is Facility N, a coed medium–security facility with a population of approximately 1,700, and a geriatric and psychiatric unit.

Initial Implementation Issues. Information from the 1992 initial visit revealed that upper–level administrative support was weak, with little or no involvement by the warden and only sporadic involvement by an assistant warden. In addition, the PreStart coordinator seemed to have delegated many of his responsibilities to other staff members.

Staff assignments were mandated and became a source of resentment among PreStart facilitators. This was said to negatively effect the quality of classroom presentations. Meetings were held weekly, but when problems were mentioned (for example, disciplinary problems in the classrooms), staff said no meaningful action took place. Internal resources for staffing patterns

were adequate, and team teaching was being used. There was no staff rotation, but there was a back–up system. Nonetheless, staff burnout was commonly cited as a problem.

A pervasive problem at this facility concerned the diversity of the inmate population. In delivering Phase I, this diversity had been dealt with by physically separating special treatment, female and male inmates within the classroom. Outside vendor involvement was limited, and surprisingly, contact with a regional community service center located just outside the prison grounds was minimal. Negative staff attitudes during classroom presentations illicited poor inmate reactions to Prestart.

Follow–Up Results. In 1993, PreStart had remained basically the same, with slight improvements in certain areas. PreStart coordinator functions continue to be delegated to other staff, but this has now been formalized. A high–level cohesiveness has occurred between certain staff and the inmate population because of a recently completed video–orientation project. With the sponsorship and direct aid of some staff members, inmates have produced a highly professional and motivating video orientation of PreStart. Feelings about this venture were positive at the time of the 1993 visit.

Despite the benefits of the video production, PreStart staff morale has declined, primarily due to a loss of presenters. Team teaching still occurs, but no back–up system is now in place. PreStart staff suggested staff rotation to prevent further burnout.

Instructor training is now done by the PreStart coordinator. Training is topical, consisting of basic information about the modules and what is expected of the instructor. Regular PreStart staff meetings are now being held once a month, instead of weekly. Inmate course evaluations are done irregularly, and evaluation results are not presented to staff. Involvement of presenters from outside the institution has declined and resulted in fewer pre–release services for the inmates (for example, resumes and job registration through job services are not being done). Additionally, the staff believe the IDPs are not being used as intended, and communication with the community service center is still minimal. Inmate reactions have not improved significantly. Many inmates feel that presenters are unenthusiastic and uncommitted in their roles.

While the programming was adequate in 1992, it also was viewed as not fully developed because the curriculum was not tailored to the different populations. Also, the different inmate groups, though separated by seating arrangement, were combined in the same classroom, a highly problematic classroom environment. Chances of meaningful interactions between presenters and students were minimized.

The attitude of the staff was, "We don't have the resources to deliver Phase I tailored to each group." However, few attempts have been made toward innovative Phase I delivery. This was not due to a lack of ideas, as one staff member contended. It was felt by the evaluation team that indeed it would be possible to offer Phase I programming to each distinct population at this institution. Phase I could have been offered in a rotating manner, with the two-week program being offered to each population at separate times. The scheduling of this approach would take administrative effort, but the approach of rotating populations should be examined more closely.

With staffing becoming a greater problem, administrative support still lacking, and the lines of communication faulty, this program was not likely to grow into a diversified Phase I that offers more population-appropriate materials. Program quality may even decline if staff morale continues to wane.

Facility H

A second facility was categorized as remaining average, although it had shown some decline between 1992 and 1993. Facility H is a medium-security institution with an all-male population of approximately 1,400.

Initial Implementation Issues. In 1992, this program had all the elements of an adequate program and even bordered on being a strong program. It was not considered strong because the few programs viewed as strong not only had all of the necessary baseline elements — staff communication, supportive administration and committed staff — but also that extra energy and enthusiasm that led to an innovative approach to dealing with PreStart delivery. In contrast, PreStart delivery had been rather mechanical at this facility. The most significant implementation difficulties centered around negative attitudes toward PreStart among many PreStart deliverers and inmates. Also, administrative leadership was not perceived as being particularly strong.

Follow-Up Results. By 1993, minor positive and negative changes were observed. PreStart staff noted that the revised curriculum, along with the encouraged flexibility, was an improvement. The staff also perceived that inmates were more accepting of PreStart. In 1992, there had been inmate resistance to participating in the program. However, in 1993, staff noted that inmates were generally receptive to Phase I as a way to prepare for release.

Thus, staff perceptions about inmate attitudes and what they were up against when entering the classroom had improved.

A growing concern was the shortage of staff. This institution had seen a change in PreStart coordinators between years one and two, and had been hurt by the loss of outside presenters (secretary of state, parole agent IIIs, and so on). This loss, in turn, lessened staff communications. Staff meetings were not occurring regularly in 1993, with the last one having been held three or four months prior to the evaluation team's visit. Some staff believed that presenters were overworked by covering for the loss of Phase I staff and that staff meetings would be just another burden. The meetings, if held, might have served as a forum to address morale and staffing issues. Issues of morale, staff burnout, and a shortage of PreStart staff were the most serious facing this program in 1993.

While the institution did not have an exciting and innovative PreStart Phase I program as of 1992, it already had a very solid Phase I that had become routinized within the institution. If things continue without increased, active guidance or supervision by Central Office, or a renewed spirit of commitment to PreStart by administrative leaders, the problems noted above might cause the program to deteriorate.

Programs Remaining Strong

Facility E

One program classified as strong, according to the 1992 evaluation data, maintained that classification following the 1993 visits. This was Facility E, a maximum-security all-male institution with a population of approximately 2,000.

Initial Implementation Findings. During the 1992 visit, this facility had a strong Phase I program. The priority of PreStart, viewed as a Central Office priority, also was internalized as a priority by institutional staff. This was facilitated by very strong administrative support for the program. For example, the warden showed his commitment to PreStart by responding to staff-based requests for resources.

Staff at this institution also were highly committed, though showing the signs of being burdened by PreStart: "If you are a PreStart presenter, you get no tangible benefit, no reduction in caseload, not even pats on the back." This facility dealt with those suffering from noncommitment

and burnout by dismissing them from Phase I responsibilities. By the time of the 1992 visit, negative staff were replaced with enthusiastic volunteers. The PreStart coordinator also helped by being available as a back-up facilitator for all of the modules and substituting for presenters at times to give them breaks. The coordinator at this institution is highly enthusiastic and charismatic, adding to the positive nature of the program. The coordinator is also a member of the Curriculum Committee and thus obtained outside materials and handouts. Attentiveness to detail was evident, and strong internal communication processes promoted timely discussion of issues and remedial action to solve problems.

The organization of PreStart Phase I was also strong. Clerical staff were in charge of the inmate scheduling and had worked out an efficient system. While other institutions were suffering from the loss of parole agents presenting Module 1, the agent responsible for this institution had requested to continue doing both Modules 1 and 10. She continues to do so.

Follow-Up Results. By 1993, there had been little change in the program. Clerical staff were still efficiently getting inmates scheduled and into the classes, as well as dealing with immediate tardiness or absentee problems every morning. The PreStart Coordinator continued to be highly enthusiastic about PreStart, and the program remained a priority in the institution. In 1993, PreStart staff continued to have regular meetings.

As a group, Phase I deliverers at this institution wished to maintain and improve their program. Some innovations already had been made. For example, a PreStart graduation ceremony included as the guest speaker a released offender (who had formerly gone through PreStart at the institution).

This program had been considered the best of the 14 visited in 1992 and was found to be just as strong in 1993. The administrative support, enthusiastic PreStart coordinator, a well-developed organization of service delivery, and stable ongoing communication patterns resulted in a program that is strong, stable and improving.

Programs That Declined

Three programs showed decline between the 1992 and 1993 evaluation visits. Each institution in this category represents a different pattern of change with regard to Phase I service delivery.

Decline Due to Severe Resource Shortages

Facility A

One institution showing decline did so in response to an extreme lack of resources. In 1992, Facility D, an all–female, maximum–security institution with a population of 750, was categorized as having a strong program. This was attributed to several factors: strong administrative support (the warden knew that PreStart was a Central Office priority and sought to make it a priority at the institution), an enthusiastic PreStart coordinator and highly dedicated staff.

In 1992, the institution suffered from a lack of resources and was viewed as having the lowest relative resources of the 14 facilities visited. Resources gaps included physical space, classroom materials and the number of staff available. For instance, practically no support staff (for example, clerical help) were available to schedule inmates for PreStart classes.

Although there were few external or internal resources available, the prevalent attitude was to make do with what was available and to implement PreStart in the most effective and organized way possible. Regardless, the facility summary written after the 1992 site visit stated:

> Of all the facilities visited…[this one's] PreStart program appeared to be the most under resourced. Despite the lack of resources, strong institutional leadership and a very competent staff assigned to deliver PreStart has resulted in a program that delivers clear benefits to the inmates. However, it is unclear whether the program can maintain a high level of service delivery under existing conditions.

Follow–Up Results. The 1993 visit showed that indeed it could not. It was found that the program had begun to decline despite administrative support and committed staff. The deterioration was due exclusively to issues of resource scarcity. Most staff and administrators addressed this issue in their interviews. One repeated observation was that outside presenters were being pulled from Phase I (these included the secretary of state representative, parole agents and Job Services representatives). Regarding material shortages, one staff noted that even the final curriculum, which had come from Springfield (after revisions), had ended up being a cost absorbed by the institution, because Central Office did not have the money. While some materials were provided by Springfield, the institution had to rely on its own budgetary resources and donations for many program necessities.

Not only was PreStart still greatly underresourced at this institution, in 1993, the situation was worse. The issue of resources was exacerbated by the current rising inmate population.

Because the institution was dealing with an increasing number of inmates, a larger burden was placed on both material and staff resources. While there was a back–up presenter system in place, some staff felt it was underused because of overcrowding and the amount of staff time devoted to non–PreStart duties.

The administration was as committed to PreStart as in 1992. A different person acted as PreStart coordinator (in the coordinator's absence) and was equally enthusiastic about the program. Staff appeared to be highly committed, though they also were more burdened and tired. Communication between Phase I staff had improved over time. While meetings were more informal and held biweekly, staff noted a higher level of idea sharing across presenters.

While some staff noted that the curriculum needed additional improvements, including new materials (such as temporary job information, as well as substantive additions to several modules), staff were generally content with the current curriculum. The institution had tailored the curriculum to its female population, though not fully (that is, one staff suggested a listing of shelters for women suffering from abuse). Another curriculum improvement was that the substance abuse module had been transferred to Gateway, the therapeutic community for substance abusers located within this facility.

In summary, this facility witnessed a decline in Phase I programming despite better internal communication, committed staff and highly supportive administration. A continuing strain on the institutional budget has resulted in a lack of clerical support, additional staff shortages, backup instructors for the program not being used, and generally less enthusiasm (though continued commitment) among staff. With the resource constraints, program development had slowed. Finally, the local administration perceived a laissez–faire attitude from Central Office: "We've received no direction from [the] outside concerning resources."

Decline Due to Loss of Enthusiasm

Facility F

A second facility showing a decline in the quality of Phase I programming also shifted from strong to average. This was Facility F, an all–male, minimum–security facility with approximately 858 inmates. In this instance, however, the shift was not due to being underresourced.

Interview and observational data collected during the 1992 visits showed that Institution F had a strong program with a fair level of involvement from top administrators (that is,

administrators who appeared at graduation ceremonies and occasionally attended classes). This institution also had a highly committed staff. There was no conflict over PreStart Phase I delivery between the educational and counseling staff. Regular communication between staff occurred at biweekly meetings.

There was, among many staff, a general commitment to make the program the best in the state. The staff were innovative. For example, by the 1992 visit, the staff had changed the physical environment of PreStart; a large open classroom with round tables facilitated inmate discussion.

Formal evaluations of instruction were minimal; though this was typical of most institutions visited in 1992, it reflected an underlying belief at this institution. The institution had a well–run, strong Phase I program with a supportive administration and a motivated staff. It seemed that the program was being fueled by the energy, optimism and motivation of the staff. There was a sense of pride and a strong belief that Phase I could only get better.

Follow–Up Results. Unfortunately this was not the case. In 1993, the program was found to have diminished somewhat, moving from a strong program to an average one. The main reason was that the energy and optimism had begun to decline. Because formal monitoring of the program had not been implemented, no mechanism was in place to deal with the changes. This point was driven home when one staff noted that:

> They say they want to have the best [Phase I] program…they say they want to change and improve, but they don't really. At staff meetings no one really talks, no one brings up the important issues. When suggestions [for changes] are made there's often no move to make them. Everyone is set in their ways.

Many staff had been involved in PreStart since the beginning, and some wished to end their duties. Both staff and administration at this institution noted that the "sparkle had worn off" PreStart. This was noted by staff in terms of a facility–level issue, while the administrators pointed to Central Office ("PreStart went from being 'the thing' to being 'a program' almost overnight").

This loss of enthusiasm, which had happened at many institutions without quite the same effects, was connected to the end of regularly scheduled PreStart staff meetings and a general slowing of program progress. PreStart delivery had become so routine that it became stagnant.

Decline Due to Approach to a Special Population

Facility I

The final case of an institution losing ground in terms of Phase I quality occurred at an institution with a special population. Facility I is a coed shock incarceration program with a population of approximately 200 men and the capacity for 10 women. This institution was unique in the changes witnessed from 1992 to 1993.

In 1992, Facility I was categorized as a low–average program. The main glue holding the program together was a middle–level administrator who emphasized PreStart without corresponding upper–level administrative support. The institution was characterized by a PreStart staff who adhered to administrative directives and did little to innovate programming. There were few regular meetings, with communication being minimal and informal between facilitators.

The special population at this institution was offered an accelerated version of the program. A full PreStart session ran for one week as opposed to two. Many staff believed that the population (mandated for electronic detention) was not an appropriate target group for PreStart because immediate post–release needs would be different.

Follow–Up Results. The revisit to the institution witnessed a weaker Phase I program. The PreStart coordinator had transferred to another facility and was not replaced for six months. The new coordinator handled more clerical responsibilities than leadership duties. Staff morale was down, perhaps due to the most vocal pro–PreStart individual having left the facility.

Other changes at this institution included a truncated Phase I program. The original one–week length had been cut to three days. While the memorandum instituting this change had come from the facility's parent institution, one interviewee indicated that the decision was made in Springfield. According to the interviewee, the IDOC believed the three–day program would be more cost effective. The program modification consisted of eliminating an entire module (module seven, which prepared inmates for employment and held mock interviews), as well as eliminating certain topics covered in other modules (that is, resume writing and job applications cut from module six). The substance–abuse module also was deleted because it duplicated a program taught by outside contractors. The truncated program was an experiment to "do more in less time," but it was obvious that the pressing employment needs of the inmates were no longer addressed.

Staff reactions to the truncated program were mixed. Some viewed it as a good thing, though their reasons varied. One staff felt that lessening the time was good because it allowed more time for the inmates to be involved in the facility's regular programming. Others thought it was better because it cut down staff time, and since most of what had been eliminated was being taught elsewhere, it was not problematic. Staff who did not like the change to the shorter program felt that the time allotted for PreStart did not allow for the inmates to understand and synthesize the presented materials; that it did not come close to allowing for individual IDPs; and that inmates "failed to grasp the significance and importance of the program until after it was over."

The priority given to PreStart was seen by most to have diminished, though one staff member noted that it was important and taken seriously by staff. Staff morale was lower than in 1992 primarily because of staff shortages and increased workloads in addition to PreStart responsibilities. Meetings are still irregular and are called only when changes in the program are considered. Staff evaluations that occur annually have provided minimal meaningful feedback.

Overall, the quality of this institution's program was classified as having diminished. PreStart staff meetings seemed fewer and further between, staff morale was down, and there was a more negative than positive reaction to the truncated version of the program.