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### Reducing Recidivism in Hartford

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## Abstract

The act of repeat offending or recidivism has become a prevalent issue nationwide. Areas with high recidivism rates are correlated with disparities in education, minority imprisonment, and socioeconomic status. Hartford currently has a high recidivism rate of 60%. I conducted interviews with ex-offenders in Hartford, and did a comparative analysis of cities nationally. States vary in their calculations of recidivism, making comparative analysis challenging. I worked with Community Partners in Action (CPA) in Hartford which assists ex-offenders assimilating into society. End of Sentence (EOS) folks are not included in CPA's program. By addressing the diverse needs of EOS people, it could reduce recidivism rates in Hartford. Project STARR's approach of addressing multiple diverse needs of clients, showed a recidivism rate of just 9.7%. Recidivism could be reduced nationally if proven effective programs are duplicated throughout the country.

### Research Question:

How can we reduce recidivism in Hartford?

## Introduction

### Ways to Calculate Recidivism:

- Violating parole
- Duration of time (usually 3 years)
- Local prison offense
- People imprisoned out of state

### Why do recidivism rates matter?

1. Even though the way recidivism is measured lacks consistency from state to state, high recidivism rates raise concern for public safety.
2. Connecticut alone spent \$929.4 million in 2014 on prison expenditures. This is over 300 million dollars more than Connecticut's spending on higher education.
3. Time spent in prison is time away from the work force.

### Project STARR (Striving to Achieve Recidivism Reduction)

- Is a sub-group of CPA.
- The long term projected goal is to reduce recidivism in Connecticut by 50 percent in 5 years.
- Case management for at least six months following transition from prison.
- Provides one on one counseling services, provides clothes, food, licenses, employment opportunities, shelter, mental health services, and substance abuse services.

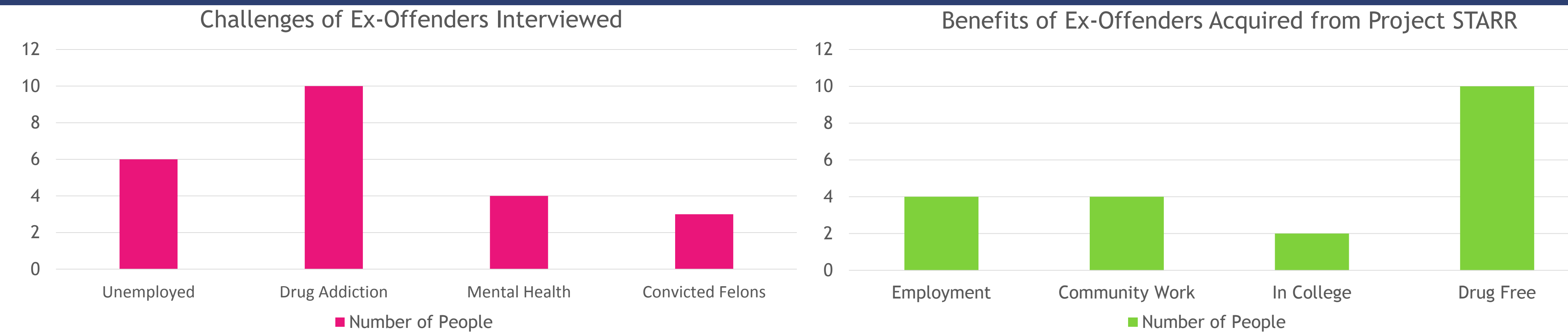
### EOS (End of Sentence) Group

- Are people released from prison without parole or probation.

### Method:

- Step 1**
  - Researched scholarly articles on reducing recidivism.
- Step 2**
  - Compared Hartford, CT with other cities that have different programs that have been shown to reduce recidivism.
- Step 3**
  - I conducted 10 interviews with clients of CPA.

## Results



The statistics could be greater if the interviewees did not disclose their mental health, or their felon status. \*

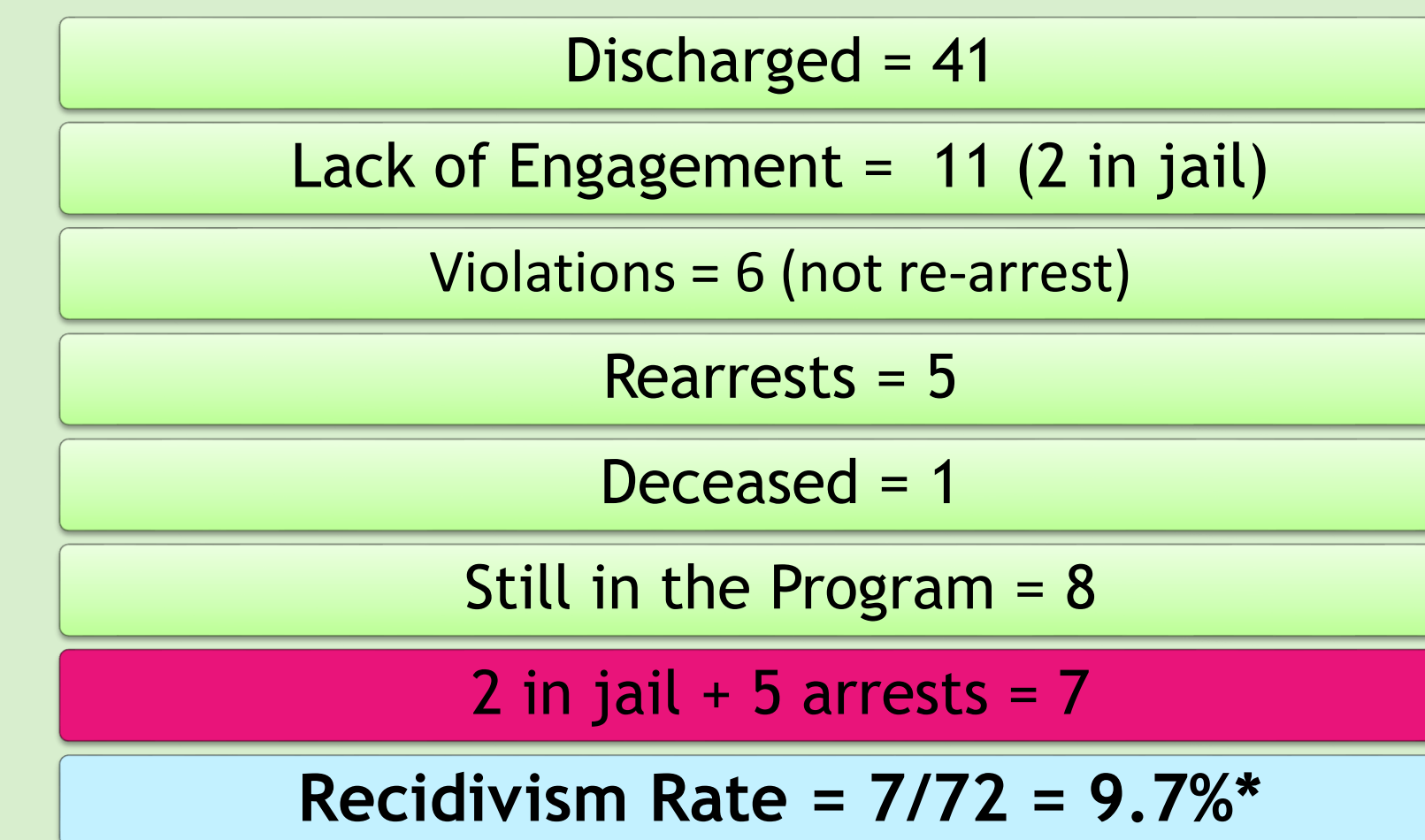
### Challenges of Ex-Offenders:

- Felony charges greatly deter housing and employment opportunities.
- A criminal record makes it extremely difficult to be hired.
- Women have generally less access to shelters, employment opportunities and less services in general.
- People with EOS status had trouble finding the Project STARR, because they had no parole officer.

### Some Comments on Project STARR from clients in the program:

"It was a gift", "Pam's direct counseling was a huge help", "Pam really cares", "The program is perfect", "I love the program".

### Calculating Project STARR's Recidivism Rate from 2014 (72 people in total)



### Clients' Suggestions for Project STARR:

1. Better outreach is needed within the community of Hartford to let folks know about Project STARR.
2. Better communications are needed among non-profits in Hartford in order to utilize limited resources to serve clients better.
3. The old program was better because the venue was nicer and the program had more money to help with basic services, like bus passes, food, clothes, and shelter.
4. They should offer more housing in Hartford, rather than outside of the city since there are more opportunities for work and activities there.

## Recidivism Rates in Cities and Project STARR, with Programs for Reducing Recidivism

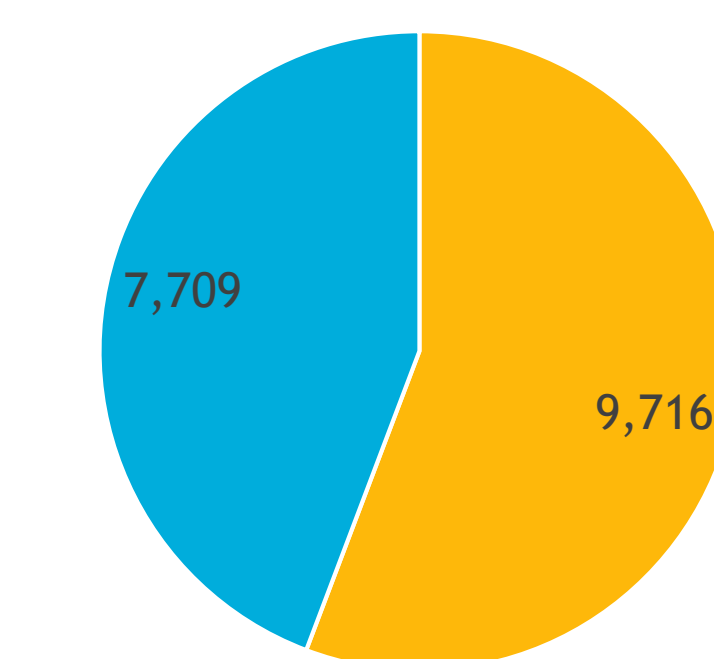
	San Francisco, CA	Hartford, CT	Richmond, VA	Dallas, TX	Project STARR
Recidivism Rates	60%	59%	28.3%	22.6%	9.7%*
Low Unemployment	X		X	X	X
Post-Prison Counseling Programs		X	X	X	X
Out-Prison Substance Abuse Programs				X	X
In-Prison Substance Abuse Programs				X	X
Self-Esteem Programs			X	X	X
Day Resource Centers			X	X	X

The X's indicate a strong number or focus in that area. The areas without marked X's may have programs, but they are extremely ineffectual or almost non-existent. An X on low unemployment indicates the employment rate is less than or about the same as the federal unemployment rate. Those without an X have a significantly higher unemployment rate than the current federal unemployment rate.\*

## Why Should EOS People Be Included in CPA?

- The first three to six months following release is the most critical in determining whether an ex-offender will relapse. About 80 percent will compose the recidivism rate for the year in this time.
- CPA is proposing to create a day resource center for EOS persons immediately after their release. It would provide social services workers, food, shelter beds, cell phones, and other basic necessities.
- Over 1,000 EOS clients would be served per year in Hartford.

Number of Prison Releases in Connecticut for 2013



EOS (End of Sentence) Conditional Releases

## Conclusions and Future Studies

1. Successful programs must address needs across the board for ex-offenders, including needs for education, employment, physical and mental health, and stable housing.
2. Project STARR's techniques should be duplicated throughout the City of Hartford in order to reduce recidivism rates.
3. Non-profits in Hartford need to make a better effort to communicate with one another in order to better utilize resources for their clients. A good start would be to create a central resource center for EOS status people to access directly out of prison.
4. Programs that have been successful across the country should be duplicated by Hartford as well.
5. The suggestions given by ex-offenders could be investigated through more comparative research and then perhaps implemented by non-profit programs.

## Acknowledgements

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**CLI Fellows**  
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