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# Research at a glance

## Community Employment Characteristics and Conditional Release Outcome among Federal Offenders

**KEY WORDS:** *community employment, community corrections, offender reintegration*

### What it means

Results revealed that maintenance of a community job, but not skill level of the job, was related to a reduced likelihood of recidivism. This demonstrates the importance of a focus on assisting offenders in obtaining employment they can maintain. Furthermore, offenders identified as having the potential for difficulties with maintaining stable employment should be targeted for additional employment intervention to further help them with their reintegration efforts.

### What we found

After controlling for other factors related to recidivism, offenders who were not employed with a stable job were 3.6 times more likely to return to custody for any reason and 2.5 times more likely to return to custody with a new offence than offenders who were employed with a stable job. Skill level of community employment, however, was not found to be significantly related to conditional release outcomes.

In examining characteristics that best predicted an offender's likelihood of job stability, results revealed that being of Aboriginal ancestry, having a medium or high level of risk, a low level of motivation, and a moderate or high level of need in the areas of substance abuse and community functioning were meaningfully associated with a lower likelihood of having stable employment in the community.

### Why we did this study

The role employment plays in reintegration and in reducing recidivism has been widely acknowledged. Much remains to be known, however, regarding what underlies this relationship and what variables are most likely to affect success. The purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between characteristics of jobs obtained by recently released federal offenders and conditional release outcomes.

### What we did

Participants were taken from all federal offenders released into the community on conditional release between April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011. To be included, offenders had to be on the first term of their current sentence, have a follow-up time in the community of a minimum of 180 days, and be employed at least once during the follow-up period. Two community employment characteristics were examined: job stability (maintained at least one job in the community for 90 days or more) and employment skill level (had at least one job in the community that was rated as high-skilled).<sup>1</sup>

The total number of participants was 1,741; 94% were men and 13% were of Aboriginal ancestry. In terms of employment characteristics, 81% had at least one job that was considered stable, while 55% had at least one job that was considered high-skilled.

### For more information

Nolan, A., & Power, J. (2014). *Community employment characteristics and conditional release outcome among federal offenders* (Research Report R-316). Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

To obtain a PDF version of the full report, or for other inquiries, please e-mail the [Research Branch](#) or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975. You can also visit the website for a full list of research publications.

<sup>1</sup> Skill level was created by using Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's National Occupational Classification codes that are assigned to an offender's community job by his or her case management. Low-skilled jobs were considered those that usually require secondary school and/or occupation-specific training or those for which on-the-job training is usually provided. High-skilled jobs were considered management and occupations that usually require university education, college education, or apprenticeship training.