

Department of Community Corrections & Rehabilitation

Office of Strategy, Planning, and Evaluation

Evaluation of the Community Productive Day Construction Pathway Program: **Executive Summary**

Introduction

The Strategy, Planning, and Evaluation (SPE) unit's services were requested to conduct a formal evaluation of the Community Productive Day (COM PD) Construction Pathway program. The program helps participants become more independent and self-sufficient and graduates of the program can access career paths with trade unions and find long-term work in carpentry, plumbing, and other areas.¹ COM PD Pathway programs address all seven interconnected disparity domains (i.e., education, employment, income, health, housing, justice, and transportation), identified by Hennepin County as foundational to their disparity reduction work by providing structured and customized education, training, work experiences, and support services.² The goal of the evaluation was to explore the benefits of the COM PD Construction Pathway program and identify opportunities for improvement.

Program Overview

The Community Productive Day Program

The Community Productive Day (COM PD) program is offered through the Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation Client and Community Restoration (CCR) division and is designed to provide clients under supervision who participate, the skills and training needed to secure meaningful employment and a livable wage that supports them, their families, and their communities.³ The program helps motivate participants to develop basic life and work skills through training and education, eliminating barriers that could negatively impact job retention, and therefore creating opportunities and more successful integration into the community. To develop innovative program

¹ Hennepin County Public Safety and Law. *Productive Day Program*. Retrieved in 2022 from <https://www.hennepin.us/residents/public-safety/productive-day-enterprises#:~:text=The%20Community%20Productive%20Day%20program%27s%20coffered%20by%20our%20training%20pathways>

² Hennepin County Disparity Reduction Business Line. *Disparity Reduction: Vision and Priorities*. Retrieved in 2022 from [HennepinCounty_DRVision Priorities.pdf](#).

³ See Footnote 1



pathways, COM PD program staff have partnered with members of the business and labor community to create additional productive enterprises.⁴ One of those pathways is the Construction Pathway.

The Construction Pathway

The COM PD construction pathway program is a collaboration between DOCCR CCR staff and RRES TFL staff to achieve disparity reduction in communities served by Hennepin County.⁵ The COM PD Construction Pathway prepares participants for an apprenticeship and a career in the construction industry. Participants in the construction pathway earn \$15 an hour stipend while participating in the program, which is comparable to the industry standard at \$19 an hour.⁶ This helps minimize the financial barriers that many people face when trying to complete job training. Program participants earn a certificate in general carpentry skills and are eligible for union jobs after successfully completing the program training and union-approved classroom curriculum.⁷

Since its inception in 2017, the Productive Day Construction Pathway program aims to serve 24 clients on probation in Hennepin County each year. Clients between the ages of 18 and 35 years, with a minimum of 6 months left on probation, along with a few other criteria, can be referred to the program by their probation officers.⁸ There is a focus on attracting women and Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC) participants. The program takes a client-centered approach where the emphasis is on working with and serving the participant.⁹

Program Work

Participants work on-site Monday through Thursday (32 hours per week).¹⁰ They work on a variety of construction-related projects in the community. Projects range from remodeling houses the County has acquired through tax forfeiture, to public housing renovations for the Minneapolis Housing Authority, to commercial building improvements for the County's Facility Services Department. On Fridays (8 hours per week), participants work on skill building. This work involves a variety of things learned in classroom and workshop settings. Primarily, they are taught construction skills by a Journeyman Carpenter, using union-approved curriculum.¹¹ They also discuss and practice skills needed for projects

⁴ Hennepin County Public Safety and Law. *Construction pathway information sheet*. Retrieved from <https://www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/residents/public-safety/documents/construction-pathway-v2.pdf>

⁵ Hennepin County DOCCR Client and Community Restoration. *Administration: Community Productive Day Bid Policy*. Retrieved in 2022 from <https://hennepin.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/teams/cc-pap/CCRPolicyManual/Community%20Productive%20Day%20Bid%20and%20Proposal%20Policy%202021.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=rO9G2e>

⁶ Community Productive Day Construction Pathway Fact Sheet. (June 2020). Retrieved in 2022 from <https://hennepin.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/teams/cc-ccr-team/Forms/Construction%20Pathway%20FactSheet%20Final.docx?d=w641ef50a497a4d58bf650824b519d385&csf=1&web=1&e=NjcTMx>

⁷ See Footnote 6

⁸ See Footnote 4

⁹ See Footnote 4

¹⁰ See Footnote 4

¹¹ McAllister, Jim. Interview. Conducted by Jessica Wildermuth. October 2021.

they will work on the following week, such as properly insulating a home or building a roof. Classroom time is also used to work on barriers that prevent successful employment. Participants learn life skills like how to write a resume, create a budget, and read a paycheck.¹² The program utilizes resources from outside of DOCCR to provide most of the classroom training that addresses barriers. For example, Hennepin County Human Resources provides Emotional Intelligence training for the program participants.¹³

Program Support

Program participants have basic needs around housing, transportation, daycare, and other things that may need to be addressed before they can work on overcoming barriers that facilitate the growth needed to successfully complete the program and obtain and maintain employment post-program.¹⁴ Program staff work closely with participants on a daily basis which allows them to identify their needs and collaborate with the participant's referring probation officer, community service providers and agencies to ensure participants receive the resources and guidance they need to be successful.

Program Completion

At 6 months, participants graduate from the program and are referred for interviews to employers who have openings. Currently, there are two signatory companies the program works with regularly: Tri Construction and Knutson. Tri Construction is a preferred employer, which means the COM PD program has an agreement with them to take program graduates when they have openings. Program staff continue to assist and support program graduates until they have employment.¹⁵

Methods

Evaluation questions were developed to uncover the multiple perspectives and experiences within the program, to identify and define the benefits for each stakeholder group, as well as triangulate benefits across stakeholder groups. Two main questions were addressed as part of the evaluation:

1. What are the benefits/value of the COM PD Construction Pathway program at the participant, organization (county/department), and community levels?
2. What opportunities exist for improving program implementation and data collection for future learning or outcome measurement?

Multiple types of data were collected including:

- Key informant interviews with program staff and program partners
- Interviews with former program participants
- A listening session with probation officers
- Probation officer surveys
- Ripple Effects Mapping with program staff and current program participants

¹² Wright, Kari. Interview. Conducted by Jessica Wildermuth, October 2021.

¹³ Wright, Kari. Interview. Conducted by Jessica Wildermuth, February 2022.

¹⁴ Scheidemantle, Michelle. Interview. Conducted by Jessica Wildermuth, October 2021.

¹⁵ McAllister, Jim. Interview. Conducted by Jessica Wildermuth, January 2022.

- Analysis using data from the CCR¹⁶ SharePoint Referral System, CSTS¹⁷ and MNCIS¹⁸
- Data on rehabilitated homes in the community

The results from these data collection activities were synthesized to produce the key findings and recommendations included in this report.

Summary of Findings

Key Benefits

When asked about the benefits of the program, the following themes emerged:

- Both program staff and participants talked about improved relationships. Staff reported on the partnerships built across Hennepin County as an organization and the local and business communities. Participants spoke about better relationships with their families and increased awareness and empathy around personal differences which improved their working relationships.
- Program staff and participants talked about changes in participant's attitudes and behaviors that demonstrated growth and enabled them to be more successful. They reported on the value of the one-on-one mentorship and training. The wide range of support participants received while in the program was important to their success.
- The structure and empowerment the program provides was reported by probation officers to be a benefit of the program. In addition, they reported that the pro-social support their clients receive, while learning skills and getting paid, were key strengths of the program.
- Residential and Real Estate Services staff reported on the program's benefits to the community, including the reduction in property taxes, increased safety, and making dilapidated homes an asset to the neighborhood. They also talked about the program giving DOCCR clients an opportunity to change their lives.
- The program architect reported that training people in the trades, which is a high demand field, as a program benefit.

Suggestions for Improvement

Those who participated in the program evaluation recommended the program improvements below:

- Increasing and maintaining relationships
- Controlling project logistics and sales
- Providing structure and measuring outcomes
- Growing the program

Program Outcomes

Program Completion, Employment, and Community Integration

- Of the 95 clients who were referred to and started the program, 38% (n=31) completed the program.
- Of the 31 participants who completed the program, all obtained a job after program completion.

¹⁶ Client and Community Restoration

¹⁷ Court Services Tracking System

¹⁸ Minnesota Court Information System

Training and Skills

- The COM PD program was reported to help participants learn pro-social behaviors such as empathy and working as part of a team. The program trained participants in construction skills which enabled graduates of the program to be competitive in the job market and obtain employment in the construction industry.
- Of all jobs obtained by participants who completed the program (N=31), 81% (n=25) were in construction.

Disparity Reduction in HC

- Recruitment is focused on women and BIPOC individuals to add diversity to the construction industry and the union. Based on the high proportion of Black program graduates and post program employment, the program appears to be meeting this goal.
- The program aims to achieve disparity reduction in communities served by Hennepin County through renovating vacant and tax forfeited properties to provide targeted housing opportunities for residents within BIPOC communities who are impacted by housing disparities in home ownership rates. The program is partially meeting this goal by renovating properties in North Minneapolis which increases the housing stock in BIPOC neighborhoods.

Community Investment

- Participants who completed the program had a one-year recidivism rate of 13 percent. Participants who did not complete the program had a one-year recidivism rate of 44 percent. The program's effectiveness at preventing re-offenses results in savings for taxpayers by keeping people out of prison and increasing public safety.
- The County invests financially in the community through the COM PD program, and participants invest through their work to renovate properties.

Recommendations

Overall, the COM PD Construction pathway program demonstrated positive outcomes for participants. Based on stakeholder feedback, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Increase structure around data collection and accessibility, preferably storing data in the COM module to create the best environment for measuring, analyzing, and reporting on program outcomes that indicate whether the program is achieving its goals:
 - Electronically enter and store information on type of work and number of hours collected for Workers Comp and Payroll, at the participant level by entering information from daily timesheets.
 - Develop a consistent Friday curriculum, document subject matter (i.e., motivational speakers, financial/budget sessions), and electronically track activities and hours (i.e., hours in formal class instruction, the workshop, hearing speakers).
 - Examine, collect, and electronically store data on proximal measures (e.g., changes in motivation, concrete skill development) or possibly adjust existing tools (e.g., SSM, Carpenter Foremen evaluations), to incorporate these measures.
 - Gather and electronically track any information that is expected to change participants or outcomes, or that could help identify factors associated with participant and program success (e.g., SSM, Carpenter Foremen evaluations, wraparound services).
 - Reexamine staffing capacity and consider if additional support around data collection and tracking is needed.

- Continue to engage in continuous improvement processes and maximize program consistency and efficiency when appropriate, to help program staff understand and work toward larger program goals. Document changes and when they occur.
- Increase POs' awareness and understanding of the program by working with DOCCR's communication liaison or someone with similar skills to increase appropriate referrals to the program. Especially engage probation officers that work with high-risk clients, as most program participants are high-risk.
- Increase communication and continue to build relationships with employers and the unions to provide the best opportunities for participants post-program. Having agreements with additional signatory construction companies to take program graduates would provide them with a way into a union apprenticeship. Continuing to advocate for program participants with the construction labor union, would provide another way into an apprenticeship for program graduates.
- Include family members when their involvement would increase participants' social support and not be detrimental to program progress.

For questions, please contact: DOCCR@hennepin.us