

**Project RIO
2006-2007 Exit Cohort**

Each year, the federal and state criminal justice systems in the United States release over 650,000 prisoners back into society with the aim of successfully reintegrating them back into society and the labor market so they may become contributing members of both. The State of Texas accounts for over 10% of the returning ex-offenders, releasing over 70,000 inmates each year from Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) correctional facilities alone. These returning ex-offenders face multiple barriers to successful reintegration, including considerations such as housing, transportation, and health issues. Perhaps the most daunting of these barriers is securing employment. Project Reintegration of Offenders (Project RIO) is the State of Texas' effort to prepare for and facilitate the transition of ex-offenders and adjudicated youth into meaningful employment opportunities.

Project RIO is a collaborative partnership between three state agencies, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), the Texas Youth Commission (TYC), and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). It helps ex-offenders and adjudicated youth reenter the labor market by equipping them with the necessary skills, attitudes, and abilities, and guiding them toward post-release job opportunities.

Pre-release Project RIO services are provided by TDCJ and TYC within their respective correctional facilities to prepare offenders and adjudicated youth for their eventual return to the labor market. Services for adult offenders are prioritized based upon projected release date. In TDCJ prisons, adult offenders are offered services 24 months prior to their projected release date, while at state jails offenders are offered services 18 months prior to projected release. Offenders assigned to substance abuse felony punishment facilities are eligible for Project RIO services six months prior to release. TYC adjudicated youth are generally offered services six months from projected release. In the correctional environment, Project RIO promotes vocational, academic, and life skills preparation to releasees, refers participants to relevant correctional unit work assignments, develops reentry plans, and assists participants with obtaining the documents necessary to secure and retain employment after release.

Post-release Project RIO services are provided through cooperative agreements between TWC and the 28 Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) serving Texas employers and job seekers. These services build upon the services provided to TDCJ offenders and TYC adjudicated youth during incarceration. Post-release services are offered to adult ex-offenders for a period up to one year following the discharge of their sentence. TYC adjudicated youth ages 16 through 21 are also targeted for post-release Project RIO services. Criminal justice parole partners play a critical role in referring unemployed and underemployed ex-offenders and adjudicated youth to the Texas workforce system for services.

The goal of post-release services is to help ex-offenders and adjudicated youth gain employment as quickly as possible through employment referral services. If the ex-offender requires more intensive services to compete in the labor market, Boards provide these services through such funding streams as the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Choices.

Seed Records

The Labor Market and Career Information (LMCI) department received 58,730 duplicated records from The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST). The seed records consisted of persons with a record existing in TWIST with a TWC Project RIO flag in the record. This is an important point because it does not take into account additional ex-offenders who received a service funded by Project RIO during this report timeframe but who did not have a Project RIO flag in the TWIST databases. The records analyzed for this report by no means represent all individuals served by the many different partners in Project RIO; just those served by TWC with a RIO flag in TWIST who exited between the dates of October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007.

Each seed record represents a unique combination of a client Social Security Number (SSN) and a program service they received. Because clients could receive more than one service, the input file included the same SSN multiple times. Seed records were grouped by SSN and by service category, resulting in 38,985 usable, duplicate records. After unduplicating the file by SSN, there were 14,299 unique records.

The seed records were then linked to the UI Wage Records database for the 4th quarter of 2007 to determine employment and earnings. Earnings were summed across unique SSN and the 4-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code of the employer that paid the highest wages was retained for analysis. In the case where participants who were found working had earnings greater than or equal to \$25,000 in any target quarter were identified, these records were excluded from analysis based on the likelihood of inaccurate wage record data and to reduce the possibility of inappropriately skewing the data.

Supplemental employment linkages were performed with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), as well as the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) for linkage to the public postsecondary master enrollment records for the fall semester of 2007.

Finally, the seed records were linked to the Texas Bureau of Vital Statistics (TBVS) in order to determine if any former program participants were deceased. All records with positive matches have been excluded from further analysis. After all exclusions, the final number of records retained for analysis was 14,219. We link seed records to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) database, but we do not exclude RIO participants found incarcerated.

Results

The results for this report have been ranked in descending order *with the cohort total included*. This was done so one can see where labor market outcomes for various participant groups lie in relation to the labor market outcomes for the entire cohort.

Female RIO participants had the highest employment percentage during the 4th quarter of 2007 with 53.4 percent employed (Table 1). Excluding participants whose gender was not identified in the seed records, males had the highest median earnings in the 4th quarter of 2007 at \$3,564 (Table 2). Overall, the cohort had employment of 53.0 percent, with median earnings of \$3,360.

Table 1. Employment by Gender

Gender	N	N Working	% Working
Female	2,108	1,126	53.4
Male	11,988	6,355	53.0
Total	14,219	7,535	53.0
Unknown	123	54	43.9

Table 2. Median Quarterly Earnings by Gender

Gender	N	N Working	Median Earnings
Unknown	123	54	\$4,873
Male	11,988	6,355	\$3,564
Total	14,219	7,535	\$3,360
Female	2,108	1,126	\$2,384

Table 3 displays employment for the exit cohort by racial sub-group without regard for ethnicity. Asians had the highest employment with 65.2 percent. Participants whose racial sub-group was Unknown were second with 55.4 percent employed. Whites were the largest sub-group, with 53.2 percent employed.

Table 3. Employment by Race without Regard for Ethnicity

Race	N	N Working	% Working
Asian	46	30	65.2
Unknown	2,922	1,619	55.4
White	5,710	3,038	53.2
Total	14,219	7,535	53.0
Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander	19	10	52.6
Native American	130	68	52.3
Black	5,392	2,770	51.4

Asian participants had the highest median quarterly earnings during the study period at \$5,034 (Table 4). Whites had the second-highest median earnings, \$3,666, followed by Unknowns with \$3,542.

Table 4. Median Quarterly Earnings by without Regard for Ethnicity

Race	N	N Working	Median Earnings
Asian	46	30	\$5,034
White	5,710	3,038	\$3,666
Unknown	2,922	1,619	\$3,542
Total	14,219	7,535	\$3,360
Native American	130	68	\$2,923
Black	5,392	2,770	\$2,893
Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander	19	10	\$1,349

RIO exiters in the State Jail Division had the highest employment in the target quarter with 53.8 percent employed (Table 5). The largest number of exiters came from the Institutional Division by far, and their post-exit employment was 53.0 percent.

Table 5. Employment by RIO Correctional Division

RIO Correctional Division	N	N Working	% Working
State Jail Division	1,288	693	53.8
Institutional Division	12,644	6,706	53.0
Total	14,219	7,535	53.0
TYC	225	110	48.9
Work Against Recidivism (WAR)	24	11	45.8
ESP	38	15	39.5

Table 6 shows exiters from the WAR division had the highest median quarterly earnings, \$5,985, followed by Institutional Division exiters with \$3,425.

Table 6. Median Quarterly Earnings by RIO Correctional Division

RIO Correctional Division	N	N Working	Median Earnings
Work Against Recidivism (WAR)	24	11	\$5,985
Institutional Division	12,644	6,706	\$3,425
Total	14,219	7,535	\$3,360
ESP	38	15	\$3,022
State Jail Division	1,288	693	\$2,991
TYC	225	110	\$1,097

Excluding services with an “N” less than 100, participants receiving Case Management services had the highest employment in the target quarter at 58.7 percent (Table 7). Those receiving the Initial Assessment service had the second-highest employment at 57.3 percent. Job Search Assistance/Job Search was the service most received, and participants receiving that service had employment of 52.6 percent.

Table 7. Employment by Service Received

Service Received	N	N Working	% Working
Health Care	n/a	n/a	100.0
Job Readiness/Pre-Employment Skills	n/a	n/a	100.0
Received Case Management Services	n/a	n/a	100.0
Job Search Allowance	n/a	n/a	100.0
Job Search Basic	10	9	90.0
Work Experience/Skills Training	7	6	85.7
Job Development	47	30	63.8
Information and Referral (External)	77	49	63.6
Counseling	13	8	61.5
Work-related Incentives	38	23	60.5
Case Management	368	216	58.7
Initial Assessment	218	125	57.3
Occupational/Vocational Training	23	13	56.5
Follow-Up Services	32	18	56.3
WOTC Eligibility	26	14	53.9
Work Related Expense	13	7	53.9
Total	14,219	7,535	53.0
Job Search Assistance/Job Search	13,177	6,934	52.6
Outreach/Intake/Orientation	86	43	50.0
Other	16	8	50.0
Labor Market Information	14	7	50.0
Training - Non-TWC	n/a	n/a	50.0
Counseling	n/a	n/a	50.0
GED Test Payment	n/a	n/a	50.0
Transportation	21	9	42.9
EDP/IEP/ISS Development	17	7	41.2
On-the-Job Training	n/a	n/a	n/a
GED	n/a	n/a	n/a
Assigned Case Manager	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: Cells with values less than 5 are marked “n/a” to protect the privacy of cohort members.

RIO exiters receiving the Initial Assessment service had median quarterly earnings over the study period at \$3,801, while those receiving Case Management services had earnings of \$3,386 (Table 8). Participants receiving Job Search Assistance had median quarterly earnings of \$3,350.

Table 8. Median Quarterly Earnings by Service Received

Service	N	N Working	Median Earnings
WOTC Eligibility	26	14	\$5,604
Work Experience/Skills Training	7	6	\$5,495
Occupational/Vocational Training	23	13	\$5,395
Received Case Management Services	n/a	n/a	\$4,991
Training - Non-TWC	n/a	n/a	\$4,983
Job Readiness/Pre-Employment Skills	n/a	n/a	\$4,868
Labor Market Information	14	7	\$4,832
Work Related Expense	13	7	\$4,478
Information and Referral (External)	77	49	\$4,000
Initial Assessment	218	125	\$3,801
Work-related Incentives	38	23	\$3,681
Other	16	8	\$3,421
Case Management	368	216	\$3,386
Total	14,219	7,535	\$3,360
Job Search Assistance/Job Search	13,177	6,934	\$3,350
Outreach/Intake/Orientation	86	43	\$3,285
Health Care	n/a	n/a	\$2,964
Counseling	13	8	\$2,634
Job Development	47	30	\$2,200
Job Search Basic	10	9	\$2,064
EDP/IEP/ISS Development	17	7	\$1,887
Follow-Up Services	32	18	\$1,791
Transportation	21	9	\$1,704
Counseling	n/a	n/a	\$1,501
GED Test Payment	n/a	n/a	\$987
Job Search Allowance	n/a	n/a	\$389
On-the-Job Training	n/a	n/a	n/a
GED	n/a	n/a	n/a
Assigned Case Manager	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: Cells with values less than 5 are marked "n/a" to protect the privacy of cohort members.

Table 9 shows employment and earnings in the 4th quarter of 2007 for RIO participants by service group. Most participants received services from the Core Work Search Activity group, and that group had employment over the period at 52.7 percent. Excluding unknowns, participants receiving Marketing Incentives group services had the highest employment at 53.9 percent.

Table 9. Employment by Service Group

Service Group	N	N Working	% Working
Unknown	788	467	59.3
Marketing Incentives	26	14	53.9
Total	14,219	7,535	53.0
Core Work Search Activity	13,224	6,964	52.7
Support Activities to Work Search	45	23	51.1
Procedural	102	51	50.0
Supportive Service	34	16	47.1

Those receiving Marketing Incentives group services had the highest median earnings with \$5,604 (Table 10). Participants receiving the Core Work Search Activity service had median quarterly earnings of \$3,344 during the 4th quarter of 2007.

Table 10. Median Quarterly Earnings by Service Group

Service	N	N Working	Median Earnings
Marketing Incentives	26	14	\$5,604
Unknown	788	467	\$3,545
Total	14,219	7,535	\$3,360
Core Work Search Activity	13,224	6,964	\$3,344
Procedural	102	51	\$3,285
Support Activities to Work Search	45	23	\$2,775
Supportive Service	34	16	\$2,302

Permian Basin LWDA had the highest employment in the 4th quarter of 2007 with 68.1 percent of RIO exiters employed (Table 11). Rural Capital LWDA had 62.2 percent of their exiters employed. Gulf Coast LWDA, which had the largest number of RIO participants, had an employment rate of 45.6 percent.

Table 11. Employment by LWDA

LWDA	N	N Working	% Working
Permian Basin	342	233	68.1
Rural Capital	225	140	62.2
Golden Crescent	266	159	59.8
South Plains	537	316	58.9
West Central	305	179	58.7
Heart of Texas	262	153	58.4
Panhandle	459	266	58.0
Alamo	1,412	792	56.1
North Texas	202	113	55.9
Central Texas	312	174	55.8
North Central	885	486	54.9
Deep East Texas	176	96	54.6
Tarrant County	853	462	54.2
East Texas	504	271	53.8
Concho Valley	169	90	53.3
Total	14,219	7,535	53.0
Dallas	1,764	926	52.5
Lower Rio Grande Valley	259	135	52.1
South East Texas	803	416	51.8
Capital Area	578	296	51.2
Coastal Bend	383	194	50.7
Texoma	93	46	49.5
North East Texas	182	90	49.5
Upper Rio Grande	640	316	49.4
Middle Rio Grande	96	46	47.9
Cameron County	214	102	47.7
Brazos Valley	341	157	46.0
Gulf Coast	1,875	854	45.6
South Texas	82	27	32.9

Table 12 shows median quarterly earnings by LWDA for RIO exiters. Participants from Permian Basin LWDA had the highest median earnings with \$4,350, followed by North Central LWDA with \$4,201. Tarrant County LWDA rounded out the top three with median earnings of \$3,912.

Table 12. Median Quarterly Earnings by LWDA

LWDA	N	N Working	Median Earnings
Permian Basin	342	233	\$4,350
North Central	885	486	\$4,201
Tarrant County	853	462	\$3,912
Gulf Coast	1,875	854	\$3,895
Rural Capital	225	140	\$3,814
North East Texas	182	90	\$3,759
Panhandle	459	266	\$3,696
Concho Valley	169	90	\$3,638
Golden Crescent	266	159	\$3,593
East Texas	504	271	\$3,546
Heart of Texas	262	153	\$3,413
Capital Area	578	296	\$3,395
Brazos Valley	341	157	\$3,384
Total	14,219	7,535	\$3,360
Coastal Bend	383	194	\$3,282
Deep East Texas	176	96	\$3,162
West Central	305	179	\$3,139
Central Texas	312	174	\$3,068
South East Texas	803	416	\$3,062
Alamo	1,412	792	\$3,059
Dallas	1,764	926	\$3,025
North Texas	202	113	\$2,964
Upper Rio Grande	640	316	\$2,783
South Plains	537	316	\$2,777
Cameron County	214	102	\$2,751
Lower Rio Grande Valley	259	135	\$2,620
Texoma	93	46	\$2,561
South Texas	82	27	\$2,317
Middle Rio Grande	96	46	\$2,210

We see in Table 13 that the most prominent industry of employment for RIO participants during the 4th quarter of 2007 was the Employment Services industry (Table 13). This industry typically includes temporary agencies and other “temp-to-hire” types of jobs. The Limited-Service Eating Places industry employed the next largest group of exiters, followed by Full-Service Restaurants. Program participants employed in the Support Activities for Mining industry had the highest median earnings at \$8,988, followed by Nonresidential Building Construction with median earnings of \$5,832. Median earnings for both of those industries were well above the overall median earnings for the cohort, \$3,360.

Table 13. Top 10 Industries of Employment by 4-Digit NAICS Code

Industry of Employment	N Working	Median Earnings	NAICS Code
Employment Services	1,462	\$1,605	5613
Limited-Service Eating Places	568	\$1,872	7222
Full-Service Restaurants	368	\$2,276	7221
Animal Slaughtering and Processing	267	\$4,289	3116
Building Equipment Contractors	245	\$4,818	2382
Support Activities for Mining	208	\$8,988	2131
Automotive Repair and Maintenance	200	\$3,077	8111
Nonresidential Building Construction	198	\$5,832	2362
Services to Buildings and Dwellings	183	\$2,523	5617
Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors	146	\$4,049	2381

Table 14 shows the ten higher education institutions with the most TWC Project RIO participants enrolled in the Fall of 2008. Houston Community College had the largest number of program participants enrolled. Overall, only 1.1 percent of the cohort was found enrolled in higher education in 2008.

**Table 14. Top 10 Higher Education Institutions,
All TWC Project RIO Participants Enrolled in Fall 2008**

Institution	N	% of All Enrolled	% of Cohort
Houston Community College	29	10.7	0.2
DCCCD El Centro College	19	7.0	0.1
Austin Community College	19	7.0	0.1
Amarillo College	13	4.8	0.1
St. Philips College	13	4.8	0.1
McLennan Community College	9	3.3	0.1
DCCCD North Lake College	9	3.3	0.1
Del Mar College	8	3.0	0.1
San Jacinto College Central Campus	8	3.0	0.1
South Plains	7	3.0	0.1

Table 15 shows the ten programs of instruction with the most TWC Project RIO participants enrolled in Fall 2008, by Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) title. We see the majority of enrollees were found enrolled in General Studies. This really is not indicative of anything, and that CIP title is generally used as a “catch-all” for people who have not decided on a specific liberal arts major.

Table 15. Top 10 CIP Titles for All TWC Project RIO Participants Enrolled in Fall 2008

CIP Title	N	% of All Enrolled	% of Cohort
General Studies	25	9.4	0.2
Welding Technology/Welder	20	7.5	0.1
Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operation	18	6.8	0.1
Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies	11	4.1	0.1
Undeclared	11	4.1	0.1
Occupational Safety and Health Technology/Technician	10	3.8	0.1
Construction Engineering Technology/Technician	9	3.4	0.1
Culinary Arts/Chef Training	7	2.6	0.1
Business Administration and Management, General	7	2.6	0.1
Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General	5	1.9	0.0

References

Project RIO Program Information. <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/rio.html>

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