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# Probation Reform in New York City

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## An Outcome Evaluation (2013-2016)

By Lama Hassoun Ayoub, Jennifer A. Tallon, Sarah Picard, and Cassandra Ramdath

 Center  
for  
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Innovation

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# Executive Summary

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With over 3.5 million people under the supervision of federal, state, or local probation agencies, many jurisdictions around the country are seeking ways to integrate evidence-based practice into community supervision. In late 2012, the New York City Department of Probation launched two large-scale reform initiatives: (1) citywide adoption of a risk-needs assessment tool to support the integration of risk-need-responsivity principles into probation practice; and (2) the Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON), which established new offices and additional resources in neighborhoods with high numbers of probation clients. Using a mixed-methods design, this study examines the impact of these probation innovations during the first three years of implementation and considers the implications of these findings for community supervision agencies nationwide.

The study involves a quasi-experimental design with two major components: (1) an interview study of probation client experiences and short-term outcomes after the launch of the new initiatives, with a focus on the impact of NeON; and (2) an outcome evaluation examining criminal justice outcomes among three study groups: clients assigned to probation prior to the new initiatives (2010-2013), clients assigned to probation who received risk and need informed services via centralized probation offices (2013-2016), and NeON clients (2013-2016). An important challenge of quasi-experimental designs is that study samples may not be statistically comparable at baseline. For each study component, baseline differences between study groups were adjusted through appropriate weighting and matching strategies.

## Major Findings from the Interview Study

This study component involved 344 structured interviews with clients sentenced to probation in selected NeON and centralized probation sites across New York City. The interviews were aimed at gaining in-depth information on client experiences of probation and intermediate outcomes (e.g., service engagement, reporting challenges, perceptions of procedural justice). Recruitment was conducted by trained research assistants with support from senior probation staff and individual probation officers in the selected sites.

### Description of Interview Participants

The interview sample was predominantly male (80%) with an average age of 31. Individuals were mostly black (71%) and Hispanic/Latinx (23%). Thirty-eight percent of the sample of the sample reported being employed at the time of the interview.

## Findings

- **Probation Reporting Experience:** Probation clients in the neighborhood-based NeON initiative were less likely to have challenges related to reporting (e.g., transportation or missed work days) and had shorter commute times compared to who received RNR-informed services in centralized probation offices.
- **Probation Officer Interactions:** Most interviewees reported positive perceptions of their probation officer's accessibility. NeON clients were more likely to report that their probation officer is involved in community-based activities and events, while clients in centralized probation offices reported more positive relationships with their probation officers generally.
- **Service Linkage:** Although there were few differences in the types of services accessed by the two groups, NeON clients reported receiving significantly *more* services overall. The two groups did not differ in terms of their satisfaction with services. NeON clients were more likely to access services within their own neighborhoods and to have heard or participated in community events through their probation office.
- **Procedural Justice:** The two groups differed in terms of their experiences of procedural justice while on probation. More specifically, NeON clients were significantly more likely to report having their voice heard by their probation officer and to report greater transparency of the probation process overall.

## Major Findings from the Outcome Evaluation

The outcome evaluation was designed to assess the impact of risk-need-responsivity informed probation practices and the NeON initiative on official criminal justice outcomes, including re-arrest, re-conviction, and probation revocations. Specifically, we compared these outcomes across three matched groups: pre-reform probation clients, clients who received RNR-informed services in centralized probation offices, and NeON clients. Official criminal justice outcome data were obtained from the New York Department of Criminal Justice Services. New York City Department of Probation data on misconduct violations and risk level were also utilized in these analyses. The final study samples were originally drawn from specific neighborhoods to support a quasi-experimental design. However, as is often the case in quasi-experiments, extensive post-selection matching was required to eliminate differences in the samples and many cases were dropped. Thus, while the study samples are well matched to each other (e.g. similar criminal histories and demographics), they are likely



not fully representative of their respective study populations (e.g., NeON or pre-reform clients citywide). Generalizations should be made with caution.

After matching, the final study sample included 257 participants in each of the three groups. Clients were an average of 31 years of age and predominantly black (61%) or Hispanic/Latinx (34%). A majority of the sample had prior arrests (83%); 66% had a prior felony arrest and 74% had a prior misdemeanor arrest. Forty-four percent had a prior conviction and just over a quarter (29%) had a prior probation sentence.

## Findings

- **Recidivism:** The primary outcomes examined were re-arrest, re-conviction, and probation revocation within two years of probation sentence. Overall, the NeON group trended lower on re-arrest and revocation measures, but these differences were not statistically significant. There was no evidence of significant differences between the groups in terms of re-conviction.
- **Misconduct:** Department of probation data on court filings for misconduct were also examined. Probation clients in the NeON group were significantly more likely to have had an incident of misconduct reported to the court, when compared to other two groups, a finding likely related to the lower rates of formal revocation observed in the NeON group (NeON clients, on average, spent more time on probation rolls and thus had more opportunities for misconduct).
- **Differential Impacts among Subgroups:** Finally, we examined specific subgroups to determine whether NeON might have been effective for reducing recidivism within certain groups of probation clients, including young adults (aged 16-24), men, and higher-risk individuals. We observed no differential impacts.

## Conclusion and Policy Implications

In terms of determining the impact of NeON on criminal justice outcomes (e.g., increased compliance and reduced recidivism), we were unable to detect consistent significant differences between the study groups. It is unclear whether the null findings were due to implementation challenges, a flawed theory of change, or sampling issues and unmeasured neighborhood differences, given the limitations of the final study samples.

With that said, the evidence of improved probation experiences among NeON clients suggests that there are positive impacts (beyond recidivism) to be realized from neighborhood-oriented probation efforts. Specifically, interview results indicate NeON clients experienced benefits in terms of convenience of probation reporting, improved access to neighborhood-based services and community events, greater voice in their relationships with probation officers, and greater access to treatment and social services overall. Further research on the impact of these reforms once they are more fully established is necessary.

## Chapter 1

# Introduction

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Beginning in 2010, the New York City Department of Probation embarked on a series of policy changes intended to shift local supervision practice toward an evidence-based model. As part of this shift, probation initiated two large-scale initiatives: (1) integration of risk-need-responsivity principles (RNR) into probation practice, including the citywide adoption of a well-validated risk-need assessment tool (the Level of Services Inventory-Revised); and (2) the Neighborhood-Oriented Opportunity Network (NeON), which established new offices and additional resources in neighborhoods with disproportionately high numbers of probation clients.

The National Institute of Justice funded the Center for Court Innovation to study the impact of these two initiatives. This report presents the findings of a multi-method evaluation that sought to answer three research questions:

- 1. Probation Client Experiences:** How is neighborhood-oriented probation different from traditional, centralized probation in terms of client experiences, including service engagement, perceptions of procedural justice, and barriers to reporting?
- 2. Impact of Risk-Need Assessment:** Has the adoption of RNR-informed assessment and case management impacted criminal justice outcomes for probation clients in New York City?
- 3. Impact of NeON:** Has the Neighborhood Opportunity Network impacted criminal justice outcomes for probation clients living in selected NeON neighborhoods?

To answer questions related to probation client experiences and intermediate outcomes, we conducted structured interviews with 344 current probation clients assigned to report to a NeON office (n=239) or to a central probation office in Brooklyn or Manhattan (n=105). To answer questions regarding recidivism outcomes, we obtained official criminal justice data for all current probation clients in selected neighborhoods, as well as for a group of probation clients in these same neighborhoods who were mandated to probation *before* either of the initiatives in this study were fully implemented.

## Background

Despite steady, incremental declines in U.S. correctional populations in recent years, as of 2016 over 4.5 million—or 1 in 55 adults—remain under the supervision of federal, state, or local probation and parole agencies. Of the current community supervision population, 81%, or 3.6 million adults, are on probation (Kaeble 2018). The size of today’s probation population is primarily a byproduct of tough-on-crime policies and rising correctional populations beginning in the mid-1980s, which resulted in a near 500% increase in the number of individuals under probation supervision over a mere twenty years (Hester 1988; Glaze and Bonzcar 2008). Moreover, as the probation population has grown and diversified—and community supervision has moved toward a more punitive model—program failure and reincarceration have become growing problems (Burke, Gelb and Horowitz 2007; Corbett 2015). Nationally, only half of the individuals sentenced to probation successfully complete their probation term (Pew Center on the States 2018).

The national picture obscures substantial variation in probation trends at the state and local levels. For example, the rate of adults on probation in Georgia is one in 18, compared to a rate of one in 159 in Maine (Pew Center on the States 2018). The recent history of probation in New York City also diverges from national trends in several respects. First, the city has witnessed a more than 50% decline in probation caseloads since the mid-1990s (Jacobson et al. 2018).<sup>1</sup> Additionally, beginning in 1996, New York City’s Department of Probation embarked on a major initiative to shift the supervision of low-risk probation clients to a kiosk system, allowing resources such as in-person supervision and treatment to be concentrated on higher-risk clients. Today, approximately one-third of New York City’s probation clients are reporting primarily through a kiosk and are only required to meet with a probation officer under specific circumstances (e.g., noncompliance, service need, targeted outreach/intervention).

Despite these significant policy changes, due to the sheer population size of the city, the New York City Department of Probation remains the second-largest community supervision agency in the country. With a staff of almost one thousand—including more than 250 probation officers that supervise adult clients—the agency is responsible for supervising a caseload of more than 20,000 people. According to the department, approximately 35% of these clients are assigned to a moderate-to-high risk track (described further below), which

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<sup>1</sup> Nationally, probation caseloads have declined more slowly, but steadily, over the last decade. Between 2012 and 2016, for example, probation caseloads declined by 8% nationally (see Kaeble 2018).

includes both NeON clients and those in a “client development” track that report to centralized probation offices. These clients require regular, direct supervision by a probation officer. Among these higher-risk probationers, approximately 9% have their probation revoked because of a new arrest or as a result of a technical violation. Among these probationers who have passed or are close to their probation completion date (i.e., have had enough time to complete their sentence), approximately 76% successfully completed their probation sentence (Department of Probation, 2019).

## **Client-Centered and Evidence-Based Models**

In response to a general turn towards more punitive supervision practices, as well as persistently high caseloads and rates of probation failure in jurisdictions across the country, a growing chorus of experts has begun advocating for client-centered approaches and the integration of evidence-based practice into community supervision nationwide (Taxman 2008; Klingele 2013; Pew Center on the States 2018). Additionally, the recognition that probation and parole clients disproportionately reside in economically disadvantaged communities and communities of color has increased calls for the use of community justice in the probation arena (e.g., see Clear 2005; Lutze et al. 2012).

As major cities throughout the U.S. have witnessed significant declines in crime—which, along with policy changes, have resulted in a decline in the volume of people on community supervision—reform efforts have turned toward evidence-based approaches to reducing probation failure among higher-risk clients specifically. Increasingly, these approaches seek to inform effective practice by considering clients’ individual needs *and* their neighborhood context. For example, transportation and employment concerns have been cited in nearly every in-depth study of community supervision efforts (both probation and parole) and in both urban and rural areas (e.g., Petersilia 2003; Johnson 2014; Northcutt Bohmert 2015; Carey et al. 2018).

The reforms initiated by New York City’s Department of Probation—including implementation of the LSI-R and the NeON initiative—build off two central theoretical models in contemporary criminal justice: risk-need-responsivity (RNR) and community justice.

**Risk-Need-Responsivity** A key driver of evidence-based criminal justice policy in the United States, risk-need-responsivity theory argues for a human services-oriented approach to correctional practice. It is composed of three core principles: (1) the *risk principle*, which asserts that criminal behavior can be reliably predicted and that correctional intervention

should focus on higher-risk offenders; (2) the *need principle*, which highlights the importance of criminogenic needs (needs that can be statistically tied to recidivism) for the delivery of therapeutic intervention; (3) and the *responsivity principle*, which describes how the correctional treatment should be provided, including the use of cognitive-behavioral approaches to treatment and responsivity to the needs of individuals (Andrews, Bonta, and Hoge 1990).

Risk-need assessment tools drawing on RNR theory—such as the Level of Services Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) and the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS)—have been widely adopted in community supervision contexts in the United States and Canada.<sup>2</sup> Three decades of meta-analytic evidence suggest that these tools outperform professional judgment in classifying offenders for risk of recidivism (e.g., Gendreau et al. 1996; Smith, Cullen, and Latessa 2009; Latessa, Listwan, and Koetzle 2014). Field tests of the application of risk-need-responsivity principles to correctional practice, such as the provision of more intensive supervision and treatment to higher risk offenders, are less common and have yielded mixed results. A 2009 randomized controlled trial of RNR training of 80 probation officers found that the clients of trained officers had significantly lower recidivism rates, but only amongst those officers that adhered to risk and need principles in their case management (Bonta et al. 2009). However, several other studies demonstrate that poor implementation of RNR-based case management can lead to model failure, ultimately questioning the practical utility of the approach (Haas and Detaro-Bora 2009; Picard-Fritsche et al. 2016).

**Community Justice** A growing empirical literature supports the influence of neighborhood context on justice system outcomes, with individuals residing in disadvantaged and under-resourced areas at higher risk for a new arrest or violation of community supervision (Kubrin and Stewart 2006; Mears et al. 2008; Hipp et al. 2010). Moreover, the geographic concentration of justice-involved residents, coupled with high rates of policing and incarceration in some of these same neighborhoods, can have negative consequences for the community as a whole (Sampson and Loeffler 2010; Henmen 2017). With respect to community corrections, this implies that not just individuals, but also *neighborhoods* can be high risk (Byrne et al. 2009). Hence, a more effective supervision model may be one that takes an ecological approach, acknowledging neighborhood characteristics such as drug

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<sup>2</sup> Funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Public Safety Risk Assessment Clearinghouse provides information about risk assessments as well as a landscape map showing their use across the United States at six different decision points, including parole and probation: <https://psrac.bja.ojp.gov/selection/landscape>.

availability (Wooditch et al. 2013), depleted social capital (Rose and Clear 2002), and lack of social service resources (Hipp et al. 2010) as important risk factors.

The integration of strategies rooted in theories of community justice into community supervision has been proposed for over a decade (e.g., see Clear 2005; Lutze et al. 2012). Community justice theory suggests that criminal justice agencies work in partnership—rather than in isolation from—the communities most affected by crime and mass incarceration, with a focus on linkages between criminal justice system actors and local social service providers and community leaders (Clear and Cadora 2003). More narrowly, justice reinvestment argues for the resources traditionally focused on supervision and incarceration to be shifted toward community infrastructure and community-based programming. Probation agencies in Travis, TX; Madison, WI; Chicago, IL; and Maricopa, AZ, among others, have experimented with neighborhood-oriented probation models (e.g., Cadora et al. 2006; Puniskis 2012). Yet, apart from process descriptions, these models have yet to be studied. In short, little is known about the impact of “community justice” based supervision models on individuals or communities.

## Probation Reform in New York City

Although the New York City Department of Probation’s 1996 introduction of kiosk reporting for low-risk probation clients was a significant step forward, the real paradigm shift toward evidence-based reform was marked by the adoption of a risk-need assessment tool. In December 2012, the department implemented the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R), a broadly validated tool rooted in RNR theory, for screening and assessment purposes for all probation clients throughout New York City. Specifically, probation staff is expected to screen all probation clients with the screening version of the tool (LSI-R: SV) and complete a full assessment of clients flagged as moderate or high risk.<sup>3</sup> The LSI-R was rolled out on a staggered schedule where every month a new borough introduced the assessment alongside a new supervision structure involving caseload assignment based on LSI-R risk level. The revised caseload structure places low-risk clients on a less intensive track, with monthly remote reporting at a kiosk or by phone.<sup>4</sup> This allows probation officers to dedicate more time and resources to higher-risk clients. Officers supervising moderate- and high-risk clients

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<sup>3</sup> Initially, the full LSI-R was completed only among those who scored high-risk on the SV. The policy was extended in the Spring of 2015 to moderate and high risk for clients aged 25 and older and in January 2016, all clients aged 16-24 were to be assessed with the full LSI-R and re-assessed every six months.

<sup>4</sup> Kiosks are computer stations available at probation offices (including select NeON offices) across New York City.

typically carry caseloads of 50:1; officers supervising the very highest-risk clients carry a caseload of 25:1. Probation clients assigned to either of the more intensive tracks are assessed using the full LSI-R. During the period of this study, differential caseloads based on the LSI-R had not been fully implemented.

A second key component of probation reform in New York City, launched in 2011, is the Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON). Informed by the principles of community justice, NeON is a localized model of probation supervision in which moderate- and high-risk clients living in neighborhoods with disproportionately high rates of probation clients report to local neighborhood offices, while those living in other areas report to centralized offices. Probation officers in NeON sites are selected based on familiarity with the target neighborhood. Clients assigned to NeON receive local social service referrals, with community events and specialized services co-located in NeON offices. Table 1.1 below provides an overview of specific aspects of the NeON and RNR initiatives.

NeON sites are currently located in neighborhoods across New York City. The openings of the main offices were implemented on a staggered schedule as follows:

- Brownsville, Brooklyn (December 2011)
- Harlem, Manhattan (June 2012)
- South Jamaica, Queens (July 2012)
- South Bronx, Bronx (August 2012)
- Stapleton, Staten Island (September 2012)
- East New York, Brooklyn (May 2013)
- Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn (November 2013)

In addition, over time, several satellite locations have been opened to support the primary NeON offices in larger geographic areas. For example, in Queens, there is a satellite office at Far Rockaway (opened in November 2012), there are two satellite offices in the Bronx (opened in September 2013 and February 2015), and there are three in Staten Island (opened in September 2012).



**Table 1.1 Comparison of NeON and Centralized (RNR) Probation Tracks**

	<b>Centralized/RNR Probation</b>	<b>NeON Probation</b>
<b>Assessment</b>	○ Risk screener (LSIR-SV) to determine supervision track	○ Risk screener (LSIR-SV) to determine supervision track
	○ Full risk assessment (LSI-R) to inform case management	○ Full risk assessment (LSI-R) to inform case management
<b>Reporting Office Setting</b>	○ Central downtown offices for each borough	○ Neighborhood-based offices + Waiting rooms re-designed to increase client engagement + Co-located with community service providers
<b>Probation Officer Training</b>	○ Standard probation training	○ Standard probation training
	○ Motivational interviewing	○ Motivational interviewing
<b>Supervision Caseloads</b>	○ Low-risk: Kiosk reporting ○ Medium-risk: 1:50 caseloads (Client Development) ○ High-risk: 1:25 caseloads (Client Development OR specialized High-Risk Track)	○ Medium-risk: 1:50 caseloads (NeON) ○ High-risk: 1:25 caseloads (NeON or specialized High-Risk Track)
<b>Community Involvement</b>	None required, but offices may recommend some community events	○ NeON Stakeholder Groups solicit info on community needs and inform events/programming
		○ Officers and community leaders co-sponsor events
		○ Probation officers and clients may attend community events
<b>Service Referrals</b>	○ Based on need and availability ○ Referrals made to service providers across the city	○ Based on need and availability + Priority to neighborhood-based service providers
	<b>Approach to Supervision</b>	○ Central office visits
○ Phone calls		○ Phone calls
		○ Inclusion of client support network in supervision visits
<b>Special Programs</b>	○ Young Men’s Initiative (e.g., Arches group mentoring program) ○ Breast Cancer Awareness	○ Young Men’s Initiative (e.g., Arches group mentoring program) ○ Clothing Closets ○ NeON sports ○ NeON arts ○ NeON photography ○ Nutrition Kitchen
<p>Note: This comparison is limited to policies enacted between January 2013 and June 2016 to parallel the timeline of the data used in the impact evaluation. Information was derived through communication with the Department of Probation and McGarry, Yaroni, and Addie (2014).</p>		

Along with moving probation offices into neighborhoods with high numbers of probation clients, NeON sites underwent significant improvements in their waiting rooms and offices (e.g., painting and improved seating and shelving areas) to create a more welcoming and aesthetically pleasing environment. In waiting areas, resources have been made available that are generally not available in New York’s central probation offices. For example, clients can use on-site computers and access information about local community-based services or events. Finally, some NeON waiting areas serve as “community commons” in which neighborhood service providers may appear regularly to reach out directly to potential clients.<sup>5</sup>

As depicted in Table 1.1, the risk-need-responsivity reforms enacted by probation apply equally to both NeON and centralized probation clients. Additionally, while specialized programming is most heavily concentrated within NeON sites, many newly developed programs are also available to clients reporting to central probation offices on the “client development” supervision track.<sup>6</sup> Unlike centralized probation, however, the NeON model emphasizes community, including the expectation that probation officers will participate in neighborhood events and connect clients to local neighborhood services. The NeON model assumes such an approach to community supervision will not only remove barriers that clients face in reporting (e.g., lengthy commutes), but that it will also facilitate relationship-building and information-sharing with client service providers and families, thus resulting in a more responsive case management plan for the client and greater engagement with community (McGarry, Yaroni, and Addie 2014). To help facilitate community justice goals, local stakeholder groups were convened at each NeON site comprised of representatives from probation and local community stakeholders.

As with any new large-scale initiative, the NeON initiative underwent a slow rollout process with the potential for implementation challenges in the startup years (which overlapped with the study years). A full timeline for NeON rollout, provided by the Department of Probation, can be found in Appendix C.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Communication with Department of Probation.

<sup>6</sup> For example, NeON and centralized probation clients can access programming through New York City’s Young Men’s Initiative (YMI), a public-private partnership launched in 2011 to address the racial disparities youth face across multiple public sectors. For more information on example programs, see Lynch et al. (2018).

## About the Present Study

The present study takes a quasi-experimental approach to examine the impact of the RNR-informed and NeON probation models on client experiences and criminal justice outcomes. The study sample includes probation clients assigned to six NeON probation offices (South Bronx, Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, Jamaica, Far Rockaway) and two central probation offices (Central Manhattan, Central Brooklyn). Because clients assigned to central probation offices live in a more diverse set of neighborhoods than those assigned to NeON offices, the study was limited to centralized probation clients living in specific zip codes to increase the comparability of the NeON and centralized probation groups on factors such as neighborhood crime rates and demographics. However, since the NeON program is intentionally focused on neighborhoods with historically significant socioeconomic and justice-system related challenges, important differences between comparison neighborhoods and NeON neighborhoods persisted throughout the study.

More detail regarding the comparability of the selected neighborhoods can be found in the Appendix of this report. Specifically, Appendix B contains a map of neighborhoods included in the study and Appendix C includes a table of neighborhood-level statistics for these neighborhoods, including demographics and crime rate at the point of selection.

For the purposes of this study, January 1, 2013 was established as the baseline implementation date for both NeON and RNR-based supervision reforms. By this time, the Department of Probation had begun administering the LSI-R citywide and implemented a restructured supervision model. At the same time, six of seven “full” NeON offices had become operational, including all NeON sites selected for the study.

The research involves three specific study groups:

- **Pre-Reform (group 1):** Probation clients who lived in all selected study zip codes and assigned to the moderate-high risk supervision track prior to January 1, 2013 (specifically from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2012).
- **Centralized Probation (group 2):** Probation clients in the moderate-high risk supervision track between January 1, 2013, and June 30, 2016, who lived in selected comparison site zip codes and reporting to central probation offices in Manhattan or Brooklyn.

- **NeON (group 3):** Probation clients in the moderate-to high-risk supervision track between January 1, 2013 and June 30, 2016, who were living in selected NeON site zip codes and reporting to a neighborhood-based NeON probation office.

To examine the impact of the reforms, the study involves two major components. First, through structured interviews, we compare the experiences of clients in the NeON to the contemporaneous comparison group (those under RNR-informed supervision in central probation offices). The second component examines the impact of probation reforms on criminal justice outcomes before and after these reforms were initiated. In this component, we isolate RNR-based supervision and the NeON initiative and ask whether either initiative—or the two combined—had a significant impact on recidivism among probation clients. Through the use of official criminal justice records obtained from the Department of Probation and the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, the research team tested how the two post-reform groups differed in terms of criminal justice outcomes (re-arrest, re-conviction, and revocation) compared to each other and to the pre-reform sample.

Chapter 2 describes the first study component, including interview methods and findings, with a focus on client experiences and intermediate outcomes in two post-reform groups (Centralized/RNR and NeON). Chapter 3 describes the second study component, with a focus on criminal justice outcomes across all three groups. Chapter 4 synthesizes the results, notes study limitations, and considers implications for future research and policy related to evidence-based probation models.

## Chapter 2

# Client Experiences & Intermediate Outcomes

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This chapter presents findings from 344 structured interviews with clients sentenced to probation in select NeON and centralized probation sites across New York City. The interviews were aimed at gaining in-depth information on client experiences of probation and intermediate outcomes (e.g., service engagement, reporting challenges, perceptions of procedural justice).

## Methods

### Site Selection

At the outset of the study, we hypothesized that the NeON model would minimize barriers in reporting, facilitate better relationships between clients and officers, increase effective service linkages, and improve perceptions of procedural justice. There were six NeON sites that participated in the interview component of the study: Brownsville (Brooklyn); Bedford-Stuyvesant (Brooklyn); South Bronx (Bronx); Harlem (Manhattan); Far Rockaway (Queens); and Jamaica (Queens).

The comparison sample was comprised of clients assigned to RNR-informed probation supervision in the downtown Manhattan and Brooklyn offices, who also resided in one of five neighborhoods—Washington Heights and Inwood (Manhattan), and East Flatbush, Crown Heights, and Coney Island (Brooklyn). These comparison neighborhoods were selected for their relative similarity to the NeON neighborhoods in terms of neighborhood demographics and crime rates. As noted previously, the NeON initiative was intentionally concentrated in neighborhoods with significant historical challenges, including disproportionately high arrest and incarceration rates and relatively poor employment and socioeconomic indicators. These characteristics may contribute to important differences between comparison neighborhoods and NeON neighborhoods that cannot be controlled for in the current study.

## **Eligibility and Recruitment**

Interviewees were recruited from across the selected probation sites over an 18-month period (June 2015-November 2016). To be eligible to participate in the interviews, clients had to be at least 18 years old, sentenced to probation after 2013, and have been on probation for at least six months. Recruitment was conducted by trained research assistants with support from senior probation staff and individual probation officers in the selected sites. Recruitment flyers were used by probation officers to refer eligible clients to the study, but participation was voluntary. The flyer outlined eligibility requirements, the purpose of the interview, compensation, time requirements, instructions for scheduling, and information specifying that the research was being conducted by an external organization and would not impact their probation. Interviews took place in secure private rooms at each site. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and participants received a \$25 cash stipend to compensate for their time.

While a total of 379 probation clients completed the interview, the final sample was reduced to 344 after administrative data was merged with interview results. Of the 344 interviews completed, 239 (69%) were recruited from NeON sites and 105 (31%) were recruited from centralized probation offices in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Initially, recruitment of comparison site interviewees was slower due to stricter residential eligibility requirements applied to them when compared to NeON clients (i.e., at the outset of the study, comparison clients had to be current residents of Washington Heights in Manhattan or East Flatbush in Brooklyn neighborhoods).

To increase comparison interviewee sample size during the last nine months of recruitment, neighborhood eligibility was expanded to include the Inwood neighborhood in Manhattan and the Coney Island and Crown Heights neighborhoods in Brooklyn. Inwood is adjacent to Washington Heights and has a population with similar demographics. Crown Heights is adjacent to the original sample neighborhoods of East Flatbush and Brownsville. Coney Island, on the other hand, is geographically distant from any of the original sample neighborhoods and has distinctly different population demographics; however, it does have a similar crime rate. Ultimately, Coney Island accounted for only 4% of the comparison sample. Table 2.1 presents the percentage of interviewees included in the final sample by recruitment site.

**Table 2.1. Interview Recruitment Sites**

	Centralized	NeON
N	105	239
<b>RNR Only / Comparison Sites</b>		
Brooklyn Central	55%	3%
Manhattan Central	43%	1%
<b>NeON Sites</b>		
Harlem (Manhattan)	1%	22%
South Bronx	-	21%
Brownsville (Brooklyn)	-	17%
Jamaica (Queens)	-	13%
Far Rockaway (Queens)	1%	12%
Bedford-Stuyvesant (Brooklyn)	-	10%

Note: The presence of NeON or Centralized probation clients in sites unaffiliated with their supervision track was driven by those clients having to report to those sites on a recruitment day for a specific purpose (e.g., administrative matters associated with services). They did not regularly report to those sites.

## Interview Instrument

The interview instrument was developed collaboratively by researchers from the Center for Court Innovation and the New York City Department of Probation. It draws on a variety of sources, including original as well as existing validated scales from the criminal justice and mental health fields. The instrument included questions about participant demographics, probation requirements and service linkages, mental health (Brief Symptom Inventory 18; Derogatis 2001), current drug use and criminal activity, client perceptions of the quality of their relationship with their probation officer (Dual-Role Relationship Inventory; Skeem,

Eno Louden, Polaschek, and Camp 2007), and procedural justice. See Appendix E for the full list of interview domains.

Characteristics of the final unweighted interview sample are presented in Table 2.2. The interview sample was predominantly male (80%) and had an average age of 31. Individuals in the sample were mostly black (71%) and Hispanic/Latinx (23%). Thirty-eight percent of the sample reported being employed at the time of the interview.

**Table 2.2. Interview Sample Characteristics**

	Centralized	NeON
N	105	239
<b>Age</b>		
Average Age	31.6	31.0
Age 18-24	36%	41%
<b>Male</b>		
	81%	80%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
	**	
Black	58%	76%
Hispanic/Latinx	34%	18%
White	6%	5%
Asian/Other	2%	0%
<b>Employment</b>		
	+	
Currently Employed	45%	35%
<b>LSI-R: SV Risk Categories</b>		
	+	
Low	13%	6%
Medium	59%	66%
High	28%	27%
Highest	0%	1%
<b>Probation</b>		
Time on Probation (days) <sup>2</sup>	349.6**	430.2

+p<.10, \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

<sup>2</sup> At the time of the interview.



Prior to analysis, the NeON and centralized probation interview samples were compared on baseline demographics, criminal history, charge, and LSI-R:SV risk level. The two groups were significantly different in their racial and ethnic composition, thus compelling the use of matching or weighting techniques to achieve statistically comparable groups. Clients in the NeON group were more likely to identify as black; centralized probation clients more frequently identified as Hispanic/Latinx. We also observed that NeON clients had lower rates of employment, most frequently resided in public housing, and slightly more instances of homelessness. In examining risk categories as defined by the LSI-R: SV, when compared to the centralized probation sample, NeON clients were more frequently categorized as moderate risk or high risk. Finally, each client's self-reported probation start date was subtracted from the date of their interview in order to determine the amount of time they had been on probation; NeON clients were on probation for significantly longer.

## **Adjustment for Sample Differences**

The total sample size for the interviewed sample was too small to justify propensity score matching; however, several propensity score models were tested and a score was assigned to each interviewee. This involved entering all characteristics with any evidence of a possible difference between the samples ( $p < .50$ ) into a backward stepwise logistic regression model, for which the dependent variable was sample membership (0=RNR, 1=NeON). As displayed in Appendix F, there were 17 significant or marginally significant differences between the two interview groups. Inverse probability of treatment weighting was applied to the predicted probabilities generated by the logistic regression which reflect the statistical probability that the probation client is in one of the two study groups, given the observed baseline characteristics.<sup>7</sup> The samples were weighted with the propensity scores; baseline bivariate analyses were repeated on the weighted samples to determine whether the adjustments had effectively minimized pre-existing differences between the study groups. Ultimately, only

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<sup>7</sup> As displayed in Appendix F, 13% (n=44) of the sub-sample were missing index event variables and an additional 11% (n=36) were missing LSI-R:SV scores. We did not use missing data imputation because the variables were not randomly distributed (index event data and risk scores). Given that predicted probabilities cannot be generated by a binary logistic regression when there are missing values, the models were constructed across multiple stages (e.g., cases with complete data to generate one set of predicted probabilities, cases excluding variables in which there was missing data to generate a separate set of predicted probabilities). The predicted probabilities were then re-coded into a single variable and standardized. The model fit statistics for each step of the final model are included in Appendix F.

one significant difference (the total number of prior incarceration periods) could not be eliminated through this weighting strategy.

## **Analytic Strategy**

After coding, cleaning, and descriptive analysis of individual interview items, reliability analyses were performed on all multi-item inventories. Inventories were averaged to create composite variables; other multilevel variables were re-coded into dichotomous or summary outcome variables. The multi-item inventories used in the final analyses include the following:

- **Probation Officer Relationship:** The Dual-Role Relationship Inventory (DRI-R; Skeem et al. 2007) is a 30-item scale that measures the relationship quality between probation officers (POs) and clients across three domains: caring-fairness, trust, and toughness (total observed  $\alpha = .97$ ).
- **Mental Health:** The Brief Symptom Inventory 18 (BSI-18; Derogatis 2001) is an 18-item measure of general psychological distress including somatization, depression, and anxiety (total observed  $\alpha = .90$ ).

After weighting, bivariate techniques (e.g., t-tests, chi-square tests, correlations) were used to compare the two groups of respondents on the various interview-based measures or scales. Responses to the few open-ended questions were systematically reviewed and treated as qualitative data.

## **Other Key Variables**

The interviews also involved collecting information on intermediate outcomes, including challenges in reporting to probation; links to services such as education, employment, and housing; unmet needs; and experiences of procedural justice. Most of these were dichotomous or categorical questions.

# **Results**

## **Client Engagement**

We hypothesized that NeON clients would report measurably better outcomes in terms of their: (a) probation reporting experience; (b) specific probation officer interactions; and (c) service linkages (employment, education, housing, additional services).

**Probation Reporting Experiences** One of the underlying suppositions behind the NeON model is that neighborhood-based probation should minimize many of the practical barriers that probation clients often face in reporting (e.g., travel time, transportation, work hours lost). As displayed in Table 2.3, NeON clients had significantly shorter commutes to probation when compared to clients reporting to central probation office and were also more likely to walk rather than ride the bus or subway to probation. Anecdotally, these differences appeared to have a real effect on probation reporting experiences. For example, one centralized probation client described a long, multi-modal commute that consisted of “a bus, walk two miles to the train, then take the Q to the B [subway lines], and walk a few blocks.”

With the increased accessibility of reporting, it was expected that NeON clients would experience fewer challenges in reporting (Table 2.3). NeON clients were indeed more likely to report having no challenges (75%) compared to centralized probation clients (65%). Moreover, the challenge most commonly faced by clients traveling to central probation office—having to take time off from work or school to report to probation—were less common among NeON clients.

	Centralized	NeON
N	105	239
<b>Travel to Probation</b>		
Average Travel Time (minutes)	36.2***	23.5
How do you travel to probation?		
Subway	86%***	27%
Walking	3%***	46%
Bus	12%***	28%
Driving/Car	7%	7%
Taxi/Car Service	3%	6%
Bicycle	1%	1%
Other	0%+	2%
<b>Challenges in Reporting to Probation</b>		
No Challenges	65%+	75%
Getting Transportation Money	17%	14%
Taking Time Off From Work/School	20%**	10%
Finding Childcare	3%	4%
Other	1%+	5%

+p<.10, \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

Note: Respondents could select more than one option so percentages add up to greater than 100%.

**Probation Officer Interactions** Increased engagement between clients and their probation officers is a key component of the NeON model. Table 2.4 presents clients' perceptions of the accessibility of their probation officer, as well as the quality of their relationship with their probation officer as measured by the Dual-Role Relationship Inventory.

Across both groups, most interviewees had positive perceptions of their PO's accessibility. Specifically, the majority of all interviewees felt that their probation officer had an open-door policy (82%) and flexible hours (81% for centralized probation, 84% for NeON). In keeping with the NeON model, NeON clients were much more likely to report that their probation officer is involved in their community. However, clients reporting to central probation offices were significantly more likely to report overall positive relationships with their probation officers. In open-ended follow-up questions, some NeON clients revealed frustration with numerous probation officer changes (e.g., transfers from one officer to another, multiple times during a probation term). This issue was most frequently mentioned by clients in the NeON sites in the South Bronx and Brownsville and may explain some of the observed group differences in officer relationship quality. As described in Chapter 1, each NeON site evolved organically over a staggered implementation schedule. As a result, it may have taken some sites longer than others to stabilize staffing and consistent reporting schedules.

**Table 2.4. Probation Officer Engagement**

	Centralized NeON		
	N	105	239
<b>Probation Officer Accessibility<sup>1</sup></b>			
Officer has an open-door policy		82%	82%
Officer has flexible hours that work with your schedule		81%	84%
Officer is involved in your community/neighborhood		14%***	41%
<b>Quality of Probation Officer Relationship</b>			
Dual-Role Relationship Inventory ( $\alpha = .97$ ) <sup>2</sup>		5.2*	4.9
Caring-Fairness Subscale ( $\alpha = .96$ )		5.1*	4.8
Trust Subscale ( $\alpha = .87$ )		4.9	4.6
Toughness Subscale ( $\alpha = .76$ )		5.6	5.5

+p<.10, \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

<sup>1</sup> Responses are coded as yes or no.

<sup>2</sup> Responses are coded on a 0 to 6 likert scale, with 0 representing never and 6 representing always.

**Service Linkage** Another underlying assumption of the NeON model is that a neighborhood-oriented approach to probation should culminate in improved connections to social services and treatment, in particular, increased referrals to providers located in the client’s community. As displayed in Table 2.5, about 60% of all interviewees received services through probation. Although there were few differences in the types of services accessed by the two groups, NeON clients received significantly *more* services overall.

**Table 2.5. Services Accessed Through Probation**

	Centralized	NeON
N	105	239
<b>Number of Services Accessed (Mean)</b>	0.9**	1.2
No Services Accessed	41%	36%
1 Service Accessed	36%	33%
>1 Service Accessed	23%	31%
<b>Type of Services Accessed</b>		
Employment Services	26%	27%
Counseling or Behavioral Health Services	19%	24%
Drug or Substance Abuse Treatment	18%	19%
Social Services	12%	17%
Education Services	10%	14%
Other	1%	2%

+p<.10, \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

Note: Respondents could select more than one option so percentages add up to greater than 100%.

Interviewees were also asked to report any unmet needs, shown in Table 2.6. Social services (e.g., housing) and employment services (i.e., job training, short-term job agencies) were the top unmet needs for both groups. Significant differences between the two groups included centralized probation clients being significantly more likely to have an unmet need with employment services compared to NeON clients, who required somewhat more in the form of counseling and behavioral health services.

**Table 2.6. Unmet Needs**

	Centralized	NeON
N	105	239
<b>Number of Unmet Service Needs (Mean)</b>	1.2	1.1
No Unmet Services Needs +	23%	15%
1 Unmet Services Need	9%	15%
>1 Unmet Services Needs	69%	70%
<b>Type of Unmet Service Needs</b>		
Social Services	53%	58%
Employment Services	49%*	38%
Counseling or Behavioral Health Services	26%+	36%
Education Services	23%	27%
Drug or alcohol treatment	1%	1%
Other	5%	5%

+p<.10, \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

Note: Respondents could select more than one option so percentages add up to greater than 100%.

We next examined the location of services received, satisfaction with services, and other community engagement indicators, shown in Table 2.7. This analysis was limited to the three most commonly reported services (disaggregated from categories in Table 2.5). As expected, NeON clients were significantly more likely than centralized probation clients to access services within their own neighborhood, but the two groups did not differ in terms of satisfaction with services. In terms of community events, NeON clients were significantly more likely to have heard of or participated in community events through their probation office.

**Table 2.7. Probation Referrals to Community Based Services & Events**

	Centralized	NeON
<b>Job Training or Short-term Job Agencies</b>	n=25	n=41
Received service within your neighborhood	15%***	54%
Satisfied with the service <sup>1</sup>	83%	81%
<b>Drug or Alcohol Treatment</b>	n=25	n=36
Received service within your neighborhood	30%**	62%
Satisfied with the service <sup>1</sup>	83%	71%
<b>HSE/GED or College Classes</b>	n=10	n=24
Received service within your neighborhood	25%**	75%
Satisfied with the service <sup>1</sup>	90%	80%
<b>Community Events</b>	n=105	n=239
		***
No	79%	63%
Participated	12%	21%
Heard about, but did not participate	9%	16%

+p<.10, \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

<sup>1</sup> Includes those who reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service received.

## Procedural Justice

The community-oriented approach to supervision fostered by the NeON initiative was expected to produce a more procedurally just experience. That is people are more likely to perceive any process to be fair when they feel they have a voice in the process, are treated with dignity and respect, understand the process, and that decisions are made neutrally (Tyler, 1990). While this is also an expected difference with the infusion of RNR practices in probation, the NeON approach was hypothesized to have a greater impact on procedural justice.

Group differences across four procedural justice items are presented in Table 2.8. Consistent with initial expectations, NeON clients had significantly more positive perceptions of procedural justice, specifically driven by voice and transparency of the probation process.

**Table 2.8. Perceptions of Procedural Justice**

	Centralized	NeON	
	N	105	239
Voice: You do not feel too intimidated or scared to say what you really feel.		3.4**	3.9
Neutrality: You are treated fairly by probation.		3.8	3.9
Understanding: You understand what is going on in probation.		4.2**	4.4
Respect: Other than your PO, you feel that you are treated with respect on probation.		4.1	4.1

+p<.10, \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

Note: Responses are coded on a 1 to 5 likert scale, with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree.

## Summary

Probation clients in the NeON initiative had markedly different experiences compared to those reporting to central probation offices on the client development track. Specifically, they benefitted from shorter commutes, fewer reporting challenges, greater linkage to services overall, better perceptions of procedural justice in their probation experience, and greater awareness and interest in community-based events. While clients in both groups reported positive relationships with their POs, those reporting to centralized probation offices generally reported better overall relationships, potentially reflecting less stability in PO assignments in NeON sites during early implementation of the initiative. In conclusion, neighborhood-oriented probation appears to have successfully removed many of the practical barriers to reporting, improved client experiences in terms of process transparency and respect, and cultivated a network of services and events tailored for probation clients.



## Chapter 3

# Recidivism Outcomes

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Official administrative data were obtained from the New York City Department of Probation and the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. The data was used to test two hypotheses: (1) Probation clients who were enrolled after the introduction of RNR-informed practice and NeON (i.e., post-reform clients) would have improved criminal justice outcomes (e.g., fewer new convictions, probation revocations) when compared to those enrolled in the three years prior to these initiatives (i.e., pre-reform clients); and (2) that among the post-reform clients, those receiving a neighborhood-oriented approach (i.e., NeON clients) would show the greatest improvement in outcomes.

## Methods

It is worth noting the key differences between the samples in the interview study described in the previous chapter and those in the current recidivism study. First, due to limitations in official probation data access, the recidivism study described in this chapter excluded some sites that were included in Chapter 2. Specifically, the NeON sample in the current chapter excludes Bedford-Stuyvesant (Brooklyn) as well as satellite offices in Harlem and Queens. Also, the centralized probation sample in this chapter excludes Crown Heights and Coney Island, Brooklyn. See Appendix A for a description of sites by study components.

Before testing our hypotheses, we had to ensure that the three samples were comparable in terms of background characteristics, so that any differences in outcomes were attributable to study condition (pre-reform, centralized probation, NeON), rather than to underlying differences between the groups.

## Adjustment for Selection Bias

Propensity score matching across the three groups was utilized with the goal of reducing baseline differences between the groups. Propensity score matching is considered an effective technique in observation and quasi-experimental studies for addressing underlying differences in study groups and typically eliminate the need to control for specific background characteristics when performing the actual impact analysis (see, *e.g.*, Cochran and Rubin 1973; Bryson, Dorsett, and Purdon 2002).

To create the adjusted samples, we compared all three groups on key background characteristics and examined the p-values for each characteristic. Next, we entered all characteristics with any evidence of a possible difference between the samples ( $p < .50$ ) into a multinomial regression model, for which the dependent variable was group membership. Through an iterative manual nearest-neighbor matching process, the three groups were matched 1:1:1. Finally, any remaining baseline differences were assessed using significance testing, specifically ANOVA and chi-square tests as appropriate. Baseline differences were reduced to only one difference across 75 baseline measures at the  $p < .05$  level (number of prior youthful offender drug misdemeanor convictions).

The final samples consisted of 257 probation clients in each study group, for a total sample of 771.<sup>8</sup> Appendix G presents the baseline characteristics for the samples before and after matching. Appendix H compares the final matched samples to the original samples extracted from probation data for each of the post-reform groups. This analysis shows no significant differences between the matched and unmatched NeON samples and few significant differences between the matched and unmatched centralized probation samples (specifically, the final matched sample was more likely to be male and to have more prior arrests). With that said, important limitations inherent to the neighborhood-specific design of the study remain. Because client-level data were never extracted from many neighborhoods where NeON and centralized probation clients live, it should not be assumed that the NeON or centralized probation samples examined here are representative of these groups citywide.

## **Analysis**

All recidivism analyses involved three groups and primarily used ANOVA. The key outcome variables of interest were re-arrest, re-conviction, and supervision revocation within two years of the index probation sentence (i.e., the probation sentence that led to inclusion in our study). We also examined all available subcategories of re-arrest and re-conviction, including by charge severity (misdemeanor v. felony) and type (e.g., violent, property, drug). We conducted ANOVA to compare the three groups across recidivism measures. We also examined differential impacts based on client sex, race, age, and risk level; for these analyses, we utilized factorial ANOVA to look at the interaction between the variable of interest and study group. We examined differences by subgroup and study group, using chi-square tests as appropriate.

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<sup>8</sup> Relatively small sample sizes lead to larger standard errors in group means and less precise findings. Group means and significance results, particularly those reported in subgroup analyses, should be interpreted with caution.

## Results

After matching, the final study sample included 257 participants in each of three groups: pre-reform, post-reform centralized probation, and NeON. Clients were an average of 31 years of age, with 45% falling between the ages of 16 and 24. As shown in Table 3.1, the sample was predominantly black (61%) or Hispanic/Latinx (34%). A large majority of the sample had at least one prior arrest (83%), and two out of three clients had one or more prior felony arrests.

	Pre-Reform	Centralized	NeON
N (matched)	257	257	257
<b>Age</b>			
Average Age	30.3	29.9	31.5
<b>Age Categories</b>			
16-24 years	48%	47%	41%
25-39	28%	30%	32%
40 or older	25%	23%	28%
<b>Male</b>	84%	85%	79%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
Black	63%	53%	67%
Hispanic/Latinx	32%	40%	30%
White	5%	6%	3%
Asian/Other	1%	1%	0%
<b>Criminal History</b>			
Any Prior Arrest	82%	83%	84%
Any Prior Misdemeanor Arrest	73%	75%	76%
Any Prior Felony Arrest	66%	66%	67%
Average # Prior Arrests	7.2	7.5	7.1
Any Prior Conviction	43%	45%	45%
Any Prior Probation Sentence	30%	30%	28%
<b>Instant Probation Case</b>			
<b>Instant Charge</b>			
Felony Charge	92%	90%	91%
Violent Felony Charge <sup>1</sup>	29%	33%	32%
Drug Charge	34%	33%	34%
Property Charge	36%	36%	34%
<b>Incarcerated on this Case</b>			
Average Incarceration on Instant Case (days) <sup>2</sup>	15.9	20.7	19.0
Probation Sentence (years)	4.0	4.1	4.0

\*p<.10 \*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

<sup>1</sup>The categories violent felony charge, drug charge, and property charge are based on a top charge recode and are mutually exclusive.

<sup>2</sup>Average days incarcerated was calculated only for who were incarcerated.

In examining the case that led to study inclusion (i.e., instant case), a majority (91%) arose from a felony charge. About one-quarter of individuals had been incarcerated on the instant case prior to enrolling in probation (for an average of 19 days). Probation sentences for the current sample averaged four years. Further details on prior criminal history by study group and for the full sample can be found in Appendix G.

## Recidivism

The primary outcomes examined were re-arrest, re-conviction, and revocation of supervision within two years of the probation sentence. We also examined re-arrest and re-conviction within one year and all re-arrests and re-convictions (over as long a period as possible, based on individual sentence date). Findings at both one year and total re-arrests followed the same trends as those observed at two years; the findings presented here are therefore limited to the two-year outcomes.

As shown in Table 3.2, although the NeON group trended lower on some recidivism measures, few statistically significant differences were detected. For re-arrest, only 46% of the NeON group was re-arrested within two years, compared to 63% of the post-reform centralized probation group and 56% of the pre-reform group. The three groups differed significantly on domestic violence re-arrests and approached significant differences ( $p < .1$ ) for a number of felony re-arrests, but post-hoc tests revealed that the significant difference exists between the pre-reform group and the post-reform centralized probation group, higher rates of felony and domestic violence re-arrests in the latter group. Across most measures of re-arrest, including the number of new arrests and specific charge types (felony, violent, property, drug), the findings followed the same pattern. There was no evidence of significant differences between the groups in terms of re-conviction, either: 36% of the NeON group was re-convicted within two years, compared to 38% of the post-reform centralized group and 33% of the pre-reform group.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, the NeON group experienced fewer probation revocations within two years of their sentence, with only a 3% revocation rate, compared to 7% for the other two groups. This difference was only marginally significant ( $p < .1$ ).

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<sup>9</sup> Multivariate models (not shown) confirmed these findings. Factors expected to influence recidivism—such as prior arrests and age—emerged as significant in the regression models; however, study group assignment was not significant in any model for any outcome.

**Table 3.2. Key Recidivism Outcomes at Two Years**

	Pre-reform	Centralized	NeON
N	257	257	257
<b>Re-arrest</b>			
Any Re-arrests	56%	63%	46%
Number of Re-arrests	1.35+	1.74	1.46
Any Felony Re-arrest	32%	37%	32%
Number of felony Re-arrests	0.50+	0.72	0.58
Any Violent Felony Re-arrest	11%	16%	13%
Any Drug Re-arrest	29%	32%	25%
Any Property Re-arrest	27%+	34%	35%
Any Domestic Violence Re-arrest	7%*	12%	6%
<b>Re-conviction</b>			
Any Re-conviction	33%	38%	36%
Number of Re-convictions	0.52	0.54	0.47
Any Felony Re-conviction	4%	6%	4%
<b>Supervision Revocation</b>			
Any Revocation	7%+	7%	3%
Number of Revocations	0.59	0.38	0.44

<sup>+</sup>p<.10 \*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

To further investigate observed differences in revocation, probation misconduct data was examined. Misconduct data, obtained from the Department of Probation (DOP), refers specifically to recorded misconducts that led to formal violations filed with the court in the DOP data system. These data, although informative, have several limitations. Only some violations rise to the level of a VOP filing and court hearing. At the same time, such violations rarely lead to the court revoking probation (presented in Table 3.2). Table 3.3 presents results on the number and type of misconduct violations filed with the court by DOP.

The NeON group was more likely to have a misconduct violation than the pre-reform or centralized groups with 93% having a misconduct violation within two years. The higher rate of misconduct may be related to the lower rate of revocations shown in Table 3.2. In other words, NeON clients were retained longer on probation rolls, and therefore had more opportunities for misconduct. NeON clients were more likely to abscond and less likely to receive a technical violation or an arrest-related violation, although the differences only approached significance ( $p < .1$ ).<sup>10</sup>

**Table 3.3. Misconduct Outcomes**

	Pre-reform	Centralized	NeON
N	257	257	257
<b>Misconduct within 1 year</b>	55%	60%	69%
<b>Misconduct within 2 years</b>	75%**	80%	93%
<b>First Misconduct within 2 years</b>	+		
Abscond	12.7%	8.1%	28.2%
Arrest	13.9%	12.9%	11.5%
Technical	53.2%	61.3%	47.4%
Other	20.3%	17.7%	12.8%

+ $p < .10$  \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$

## Differential Impacts among Subgroups

We examined specific subgroups to determine whether NeON may have been effective with certain groups of probation clients, including young adults (aged 16-24), men, and individuals at different risk levels. Please note the reduced sample sizes by subgroup in each table.

**Age and Sex** There were no significant differences by study group when examining age and sex subcategories (Table 3.4). Individuals aged 16-24 had higher recidivism rates than the overall sample, but those rates did not vary significantly by study group. That is, while younger clients were *generally* more likely to recidivate, they were no more (or less) likely to have a new arrest based on their probation group (e.g., pre-reform vs. NeON or centralized).

<sup>10</sup> Overall misconduct rates among NeON and client development clients citywide are substantially lower than those observed in the current sample, suggesting that the current sample may not be representative of these groups as a whole.

Men comprised the majority of clients in the study and recidivated at similar rates regardless of which probation condition they received. For example, 61% of men in the NeON group were re-arrested within two years, compared to 57% in the centralized probation group and 65% in the pre-reform group; the small differences between groups were not statistically significant. Re-conviction and revocation followed the same trends across age and sex subgroups.

**Table 3.4. Recidivism by Select Subgroups**

	Pre-Reform	Centralized	NeON
<b>N</b>	122	121	104
<b>Age 16-24</b>			
Re-arrest within 2 years	75%	70%	73%
Re-conviction within 2 years	48%	43%	46%
Revocation within 2 years	9%	6%	8%
<b>N</b>	216	218	203
<b>Sex: Male</b>			
Re-arrest within 2 years	65%	57%	61%
Re-conviction within 2 years	39%	38%	38%
Revocation within 2 years	7%	3%	5%

<sup>+</sup>p<.10 \*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

**Risk Groups** To determine whether there were differential impacts by client risk, we utilized administrative data on LSI-R:SV risk scores.<sup>11</sup> No risk scores are available for the pre-reform group (since their probation sentence occurred prior to the universal application of the risk-needs tool). Our analysis only examined LSI-R: SV risk categories for the post-reform centralized probation and NeON groups. The results of those analyses are presented in Table 3.5. No significant differences were found by risk level or study group, although

<sup>11</sup> We tested another strategy that involved creating our own post-hoc risk scores for everyone in the full three-way sample to allow for separate risk subgroup analyses including the pre-reform group. Toward this end, we identified the factors predictive of recidivism outcomes in the full sample and created a risk score for each participant, based on these characteristics. The scores were categorized into three risk tiers: low, moderate, and high risk. This newly-created risk score was, of course, highly predictive of recidivism, since it uses actual recidivism results to create predictive scores. However, results of multivariate analyses, not presented here, indicate no significant differences across the three study groups, regardless of risk score. In other words, the null effect of probation group did not change after separating defendants by risk category.

results generally trend in favor of the NeON group. Moderate-risk NeON clients are slightly less likely to be re-convicted compared to the centralized probation group ( $p < .10$ ).

**Table 3.5. Recidivism by LSI-R:SV Risk Categories**

	Centralized	NeON
N	151	170
<b>LSI-R:SV Medium-Risk</b>		
Rearrest within 2 years	59%	51%
Reconviction within 2 years	38%+	28%
Revocation within 2 years	6%+	2%
N	61	57
<b>LSI-R:SV High-Risk</b>		
Rearrest within 2 years	66%	60%
Reconviction within 2 years	39%	54%
Revocation within 2 years	8%	4%

+  $p < .10$  \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Note: The low-risk category is excluded from this table due to a very small sample size, with 22 total and only 9 in the NeON group

## Summary

Our findings regarding recidivism suggest that New York City’s RNR and NeON initiatives had little-to-no impact on future criminal justice system involvement among probation clients. Specifically, when compared to the pre-reform group, our results indicate few statistically significant differences in re-arrest or re-conviction among centralized and NeON clients in the two years following probation intake. However, NeON clients were more likely to receive a technical violation and *less* likely to receive a formal revocation of probation, although results were only marginally significant. No differential impacts were detected by age, risk-level, or sex.



## Chapter 4

# Discussion

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This study aimed to determine the impact of two reforms—the introduction of RNR-informed practices and a neighborhood-based probation model—on probation client experiences and criminal justice outcomes among probation clients in New York City. With respect to client experiences, our findings suggest that the NeON model is beneficial to clients by reducing practical obstacles to probation reporting, increasing client engagement with local services and community events, and increasing experiences of procedural justice while on probation. While clients reporting to central probation offices reported more positive relationships with their probation officers, anecdotal evidence suggests that this finding could be related to probation officer turnover in NeON sites during early program implementation. We also found lower rates of formal probation revocation among NeON clients, but no further evidence that RNR-informed and neighborhood-based probation models had a statistically significant impact on longer term justice system outcomes (re-arrest or reconviction).

The underlying reasons for these mixed findings are unclear. The literature has long shown that the rollout of large-scale programs is rife with challenges and the anticipated impacts may fail to appear due to implementation obstacles or lack of fidelity to a model (e.g., Casper and Brereton 1984; Rempel et al. 2003). Additionally, research has shown that the time at which evaluators are brought in to study a program may play a role in the results; specifically, when researchers are brought in early, programs may be working through the challenges of startup, fidelity, and implementation, rendering null findings even in programs that may ultimately be effective once they are fully up and running (Casper and Brereton 1984). The current evaluation was initiated in 2014. While the majority of NeON sites were officially established in 2012, many of the sites were only beginning to be fully operational when the research team started outreach. For example, at the initial meeting with the research team, the Brownsville NeON had not yet established permanent probation officers or staff.

In addition to having different timelines and implementation plans for rollout, sites were not necessarily consistent in their approaches to NeON. As McGarry, Yaroni, and Addie (2014) described in their review of early NeON implementation:

Although many facets of the NeON initiative are well-established in the research literature, DOP implemented the initiative without a detailed program model, allowing each NeON site to develop organically around the needs and resources of the community and its probationers. For example, the composition and role of the community stakeholder groups vary across NeON sites, as do the services offered. This means, however, that there is no standard operating manual for a NeON site to fall back on. While this may have been a reasonable approach to initiating a program of this nature, it is a challenge for a profession that is used to doing things “by the book,” for reasons of liability, accountability, and public safety. (p. 8)

Given that each NeON site enacted different programming and approaches to serve their clients, it is unclear whether the null findings in this study are due to implementation challenges, a flawed theory of change (e.g., neighborhood-oriented probation models do not necessarily lead to better long-term probation outcomes such as lower recidivism), or study design limitations including, but not limited to, sampling issues.

## **Probation Experiences**

NeON clients reported having fewer challenges related to probation reporting, receiving more services, and being referred to more neighborhood-based service and diverse treatment options when compared a matched sample of clients reporting to central probation offices. NeON clients also had more positive perceptions of procedural justice regarding their criminal justice experiences overall. This suggests that the NeON initiative has a positive impact in terms of increased access to local services, reduced barriers to reporting, and increased sense of fairness.

NeON clients reported slightly poorer relationships with their probation officers compared to clients reporting to centralized probation offices. There are likely several reasons for this. First, based on formal discussions with probation officials during the planning period, in the first years of NeON implementation, downtown probation offices appear to have provided somewhat more stability in terms of long-term relationships with the same probation officer, compared to startup NeON offices where staff turnover was higher. Second, it is unclear whether the nature and quality of these relationships were explicitly targeted by the NeON probation model as officers appeared to have the same training regardless of supervision track. That is, placing probation officers in neighborhood-based offices and involving them in community events or programming is not necessarily, on its own, a mechanism for shifting relationships with clients.

Finally, there are aspects of specialized NeON programs that have the potential to impact relationships between clients and probation officers, but their reach may be modest. For example, NeON Arts launched in 2013 to help clients ages 16-24 explore their artistic interests while promoting positive relationships with peers, community members, and probation officers. Although a recent evaluation of NeON Arts demonstrated improvements in relationships between clients and probation officers, the program is limited in its ability to reach a large volume of clients (Metis Associates and Westat 2018). This is not to downplay the importance of such programs, but rather highlights the resource challenges and difficulties with expansion faced by any institution offering enrichment programming to limited subgroups.

## **Criminal Justice Outcomes**

Despite the positive experiential and intermediate outcome findings associated with NeON, we did not find evidence that either of the reforms translated into improved criminal justice outcomes, at least in the context of this study. When comparing the pre-reform group with two post-reform groups (centralized probation and NeON), we found no significant differences in re-arrest, re-conviction, or revocation within two years across a variety of measures (i.e., by charge type and severity). Additionally, subgroup analyses detected no differences based on client age, sex, or risk level, suggesting that none of these subgroups experience specific recidivism benefits from NeON.

What about simply the adoption of the LSI-R citywide? Does that yield significant differences in recidivism? Not necessarily. Although it is clear that most probation clients after 2013 had been assessed with a risk-needs tool, as with most large-scale institutional changes, it is unknown whether decision-making processes were in fact based on assessment results. In late 2014, probation undertook significant quality assurance practices related to the LSI-R which were characterized by regular data checks and reliability analysis. This information was used to inform booster training across all five boroughs starting in 2015, which coincided with changes in the assessment policy; the SV would only be administered during the investigation stage and anyone that scored moderate, high, or highest would be assessed with the full LSI-R at intake to inform case management.<sup>12</sup> Because these ongoing quality assurance measures were implemented after the sample for this study was sentenced to probation, the current study is unable to conclusively determine whether LSI-R results were applied to case management in a manner consistent with risk-need-responsivity theory.

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<sup>12</sup> Communication with Department of Probation.

Ideally, reducing the caseloads of probation officers overseeing high-risk clients should allow for greater time and investment in those clients, with positive impacts on recidivism. But if supervision agencies implement new tools without making the necessary staffing and decision-making process changes, the expected outcomes may be diluted (Viglione 2018; Floris et al. 2004). For example, clients flagged as low-risk should be treated accordingly; if they are not, it could actually *increase* their recidivism risk (Reich et al. 2018; Picard-Fritsche et al. 2018; Viglione and Taxman 2018). Ultimately, the use of validated risk-need tools must be paired with strong fidelity to implementation and significant investment in training, officer buy-in, and quality assurance processes.

## Study Limitations

There are several noteworthy study limitations. First, this study would have benefitted greatly from the inclusion of a process evaluation. Although the Department of Probation has been a strong partner on this study and has provided ample contextual material and formal documents and information, an in-depth process evaluation would have provided a comprehensive view of implementation challenges and successes from the perspective of senior officials, probation officers, neighborhood service agencies, and treatment providers. This is particularly important given that the study period covered the initial stages of NeON implementation. As mentioned above, there appeared to be poor consistency across NeON sites during the early days of implementation which makes the effort difficult to evaluate. A process evaluation would also have helped clarify the theory of change associated with the model. Although there is an underlying theoretical basis for many aspects of NeON programs, there does not appear to be a unified theory of change for NeON as the reforms implemented by probation impacted the entire agency.

Of significant importance to outcome studies, some of the approaches or programs in the NeON sites were also available to non-NeON clients. One example of this is the South Bronx NeON, where both NeON and non-NeON clients reported to the same office location, but simply saw different probation officers. Another example was the Arches group mentoring program which served youth ages 16-24 in both NeON and non-NeON sites through the Young Men's Initiative. This program has demonstrated positive recidivism outcomes for program participants regardless of whether they were on NeON supervision or centralized probation supervision (Lynch et al 2018). These efforts were well-intentioned and it can become an ethical issue for institutions to restrict services to only select clients for evaluation purposes. Ultimately, it made it difficult to isolate the effects of NeON when programming has the potential to spill over into other supervision tracks.

The interview study is limited by the recruitment strategies utilized and the selection bias associated with most interview studies; that is, those who agree to participate in an interview may differ in important ways from those who decline. Further, since our primary recruitment strategy relied on probation offices, the interview study does not include individuals who have absconded from probation. Although we ultimately obtained a sample size sufficient to support analysis, the interview sample was somewhat descriptively different from the larger probation sample identified for the study. First, individuals in the interview sample were more likely to be black and less likely to be Hispanic/Latinx than non-interviewed participants in the post-reform time period. Second, although criminal histories were largely comparable, those in the interview sample had more felony convictions, violent felony convictions, and youthful offenses.

Finally, the three-group recidivism analysis is limited by the nature of the program design and issues with sample selection and administrative data. The NeON initiative is implemented in neighborhoods with higher crime rates, greater police presence, and more probation clients. They are inherently different than other neighborhoods. The comparison data provided by the Department of Probation was limited to a set of non-NeON neighborhoods—not necessarily comparable to the NeON neighborhoods in terms of population demographics and neighborhood history and characteristics. This made it particularly challenging to identify a sample of non-NeON clients who were well-matched to our study groups. This means that our final samples, while well matched to each other, likely look significantly different (e.g., in terms of demographics and criminal history) from the full population of probation clients at NeON sites and citywide. Further, our analyses are limited in taking the full impact of neighborhood into account. Because neighborhood played such a large role in NeON site rollout --and program developers at DOP considered numerous neighborhood characteristics that not are controlled for in our analyses-- there are likely unmeasured neighborhood factors influence both interview and criminal justice outcomes.

Finally, administrative data from the Department of Probation has important limitations. As the NeON program itself was rolling out in the midst of the study, the DOP also started using a new data system that required a transition process, a historical data transfer, and training and adoption of new systems for probation officers across New York City. These changes mean that data obtained from DOP, in particular, may be less reliable for older years (e.g., pre-reform group) and more reliable for more recent years. There also may be differential data entry by probation officer, as is often the case with large administrative datasets. To address these issues, this study relied on multiple data sources, including official criminal

history data from New York State’s Division of Criminal Justice Services and independently collected survey data.

## Implications & Future Directions

Overall, NeON clients had a better probation experience, fewer challenges to reporting, and the potential for downstream positive outcomes that are important indicators of the success of this effort. Recidivism (e.g., re-arrests and re-convictions) are a narrow measure of success; in fact, criminal justice experts have recently highlighted the limitations of relying on recidivism as the principal metric by which reforms are deemed successful (Butts and Schiraldi 2018). Increasing evidence across studies suggests that positive experiences with the criminal justice system lead to numerous desirable outcomes, of which reduced recidivism is only one (LaGratta and Tyler 2017; Kaiser and Holtfreter 2016; Tyler 2007). At the same time, the null recidivism findings in our study indicate that further research is needed to understand how improved supervision models and client experiences may translate into reduced recidivism, especially with respect to long-term criminal justice system involvement.

Should the NeON model be expanded across New York City or to other jurisdictions? We believe that the current study is unable to conclusively answer that question. At the same time, we should ignore the potential value associated with the implementation of a neighborhood-based probation model. Our findings do provide support for NeON as a means of minimizing the challenges clients face during their probation mandates. Even though it is unclear how these experiences impact traditional criminal justice outcomes, we would encourage future research to explore how these experiences directly impact other outcomes (e.g., service engagement using official records and self-report; employment and education). New York City Department of Probation, as well as any other supervision departments wishing to engage in this work, need to monitor fidelity carefully and continue to engage researchers in looking at implementation and outcomes regularly (recidivism and beyond).

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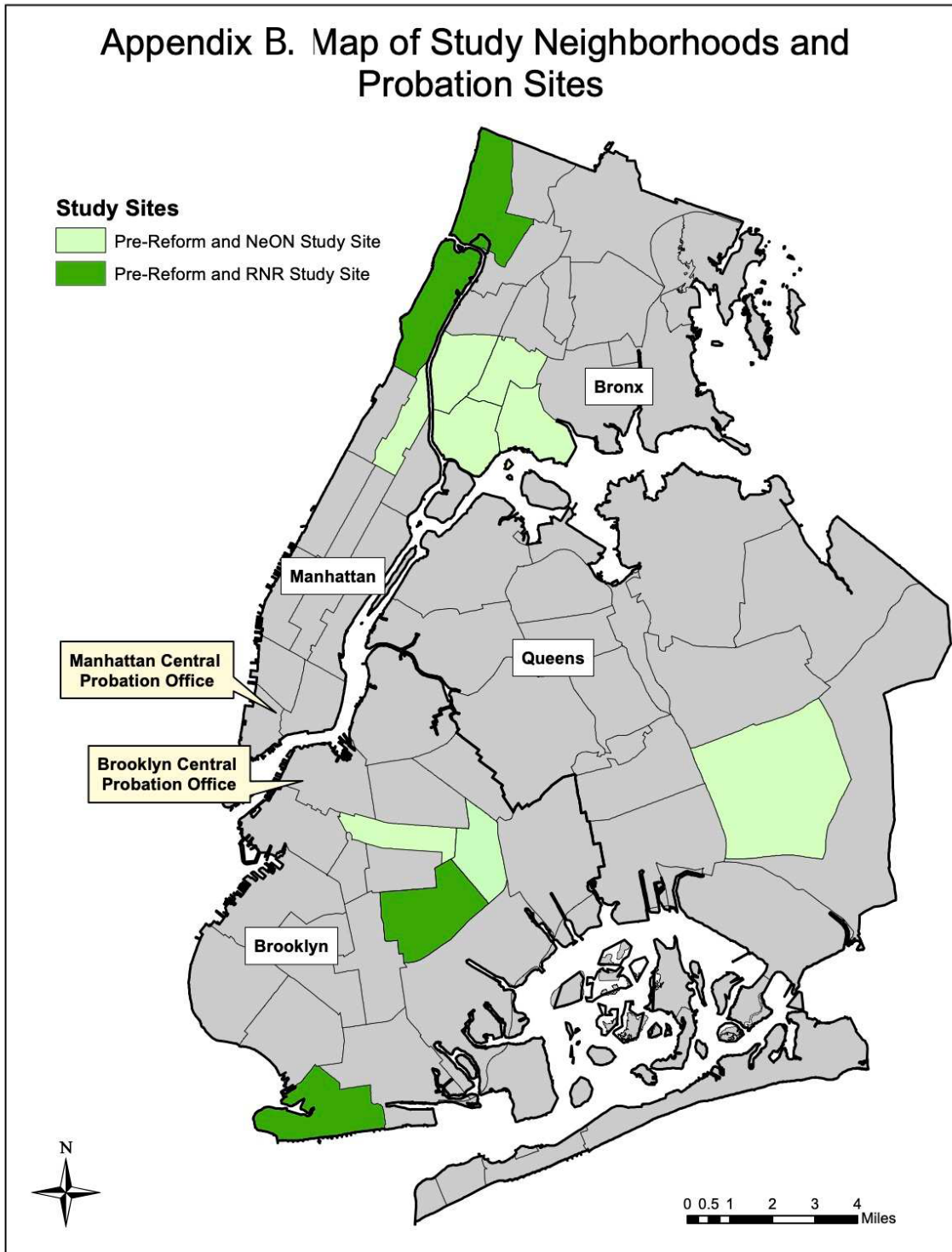
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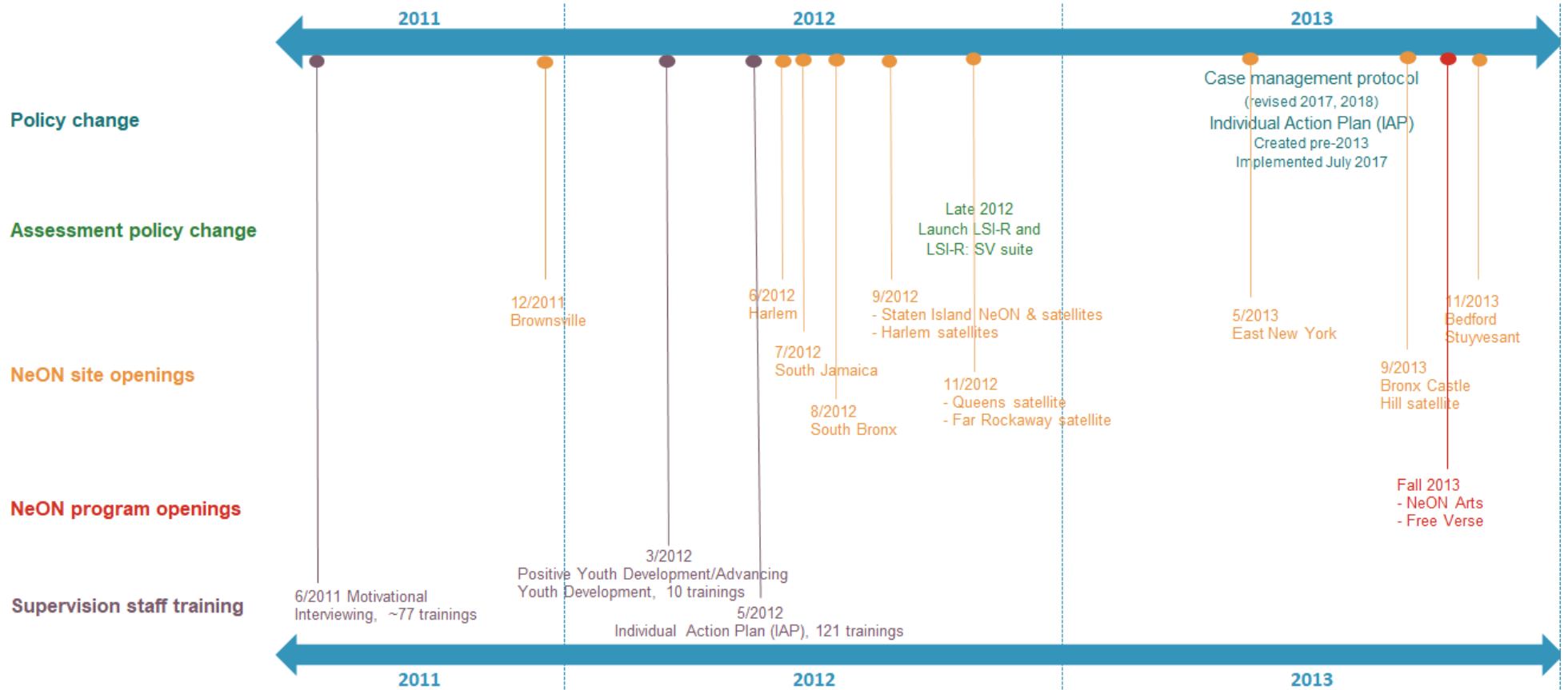
## Appendix A. Sites by Study Component

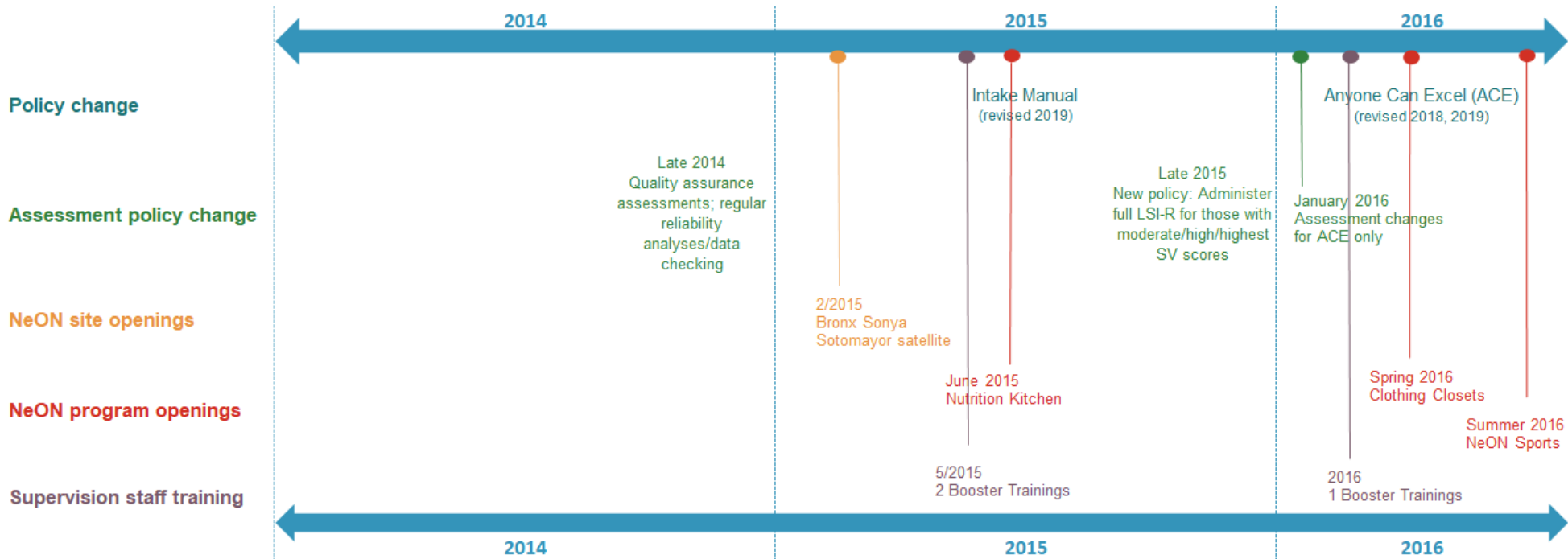
	Interview Study (Chapter 2)	Recidivism Outcomes (Chapter 3)
<b>Pre-Reform Sites</b>		
Brooklyn Central Probation Office		
East Flatbush		✓
Brownsville		✓
Manhattan Central Probation Office		
Washington Heights		✓
Central Harlem		✓
East Harlem		✓
West Harlem		✓
Bronx Central Probation Office		
South Bronx		✓
Queens Central Probation Office		
Jamaica		✓
<b>RNR-only Sites</b>		
Brooklyn Central Probation Office		
East Flatbush	✓	✓
Coney Island	✓	<i>excluded</i>
Crown Heights	✓	<i>excluded</i>
Manhattan Central Probation Office		
Washington Heights	✓	✓
Inwood	✓	✓
<b>NeON Sites</b>		
Harlem (Manhattan)		
Central Harlem	✓	✓
East Harlem Satellite	✓	<i>excluded</i>
West Harlem Satellite	✓	<i>excluded</i>
South Bronx	✓	✓
Brownsville (Brooklyn)	✓	✓
Bedford-Stuyvesant (Brooklyn)	✓	<i>excluded</i>
Jamaica (Queens)	✓	✓
Far Rockaway (Queens)	✓	<i>excluded</i>
Bedford-Stuyvesant (Brooklyn)	✓	<i>excluded</i>

## Appendix B. Map of Study Neighborhoods



# Appendix C. NeON Rollout Timeline







## Timeline Notes

<b>Policy change</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The RNR principle is applied uniformly across all levels of supervision. The difference with the NeON is that instead of working in governmental buildings, far from the communities where the clients live and work, DOP has relocated staff into the neighborhoods with a high concentration of clients, allowing them to work directly with clients and their families in a neighborhood setting. The Client Development branches (CD), on the other hand, are located within DOP governmental buildings.</li> <li>2. Between 2013 and 2018 the DOP has implemented a series of reforms to make supervision more responsive to the needs of clients regardless of their track assignment. The difference between NeON and CD clients is that NeON clients are able to access direct services and resources at their location.</li> <li>3. The RNR principles are applied through the DOP's policies and procedures, resources, services and opportunities which are frequently assessed through data management and practices. For example, our case management protocol has been implemented and revised three times in the past 5 years. ACE, which stands for Anyone Can Excel, was launched in 2016 and is in the process of being restructured. We have developed new programs based on the needs of our clients; for example, ARCHES, NeON Sports, NeON Inspires, NeON ARTS, NeON Works, and Lead by Example (anti-gun violence workshops).</li> </ol>
<b>Assessment policy change</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The LSI-R/LSI-R:SV launch happened in staggered fashion where, every month, a new borough introduced assessments. Policy was to administer the SV at the investigations stage and a second time at probation intake to determine which supervision branch to assign. If the second SV produced a risk level of High or Highest, the full LSI-R would be administered (NOTE: there were very few cases that scored High or Highest; on the order of a few hundred a year). This practice ended in June 2015, as SV results were not found to change between the two administration points.</li> <li>2. July 2015-Oct 2015 – QA launched assessment booster sessions across all five boroughs.</li> <li>3. Changes to ACE assessment: SV completed at intake to determine supervision level; full LSI-R completed on all youth, regardless of SV risk level; reassessments every 6 months.</li> </ol>
<b>Supervision staff training</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Generally, trainings to supervision staff have increased in the time since RNR was introduced and have also increased in the time since NeON was implemented.</li> <li>2. The number of trainings generally began to increase in 2003. Prior to this, Probation Officers were mandated by the state to go for 3 weeks of training once they were hired (peace officer training for 3 days and 2 weeks of fundamental training). In 2003, trainings were extended and now run for 8 weeks, with more trainings added as the year progressed.</li> <li>3. If a training is offered citywide, it is counted once. In the cases where trainings were offered in multiple boroughs over a period, each one would count separately (i.e., if an IAP training was done in Bronx this week and Queens next week, this counts as 2 trainings).</li> </ol>

## Appendix D. Neighborhood Profile of Selected Sites

**Demographic, Crime Rate, and Probation Characteristics of Study Neighborhoods**

	NeON Neighborhoods					Comparison Neighborhoods		
	South Bronx	Brownsville	Harlem	Jamaica	Bedford-Stuyvesant	Washington Heights	East Flatbush	Coney Island
Borough	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Brooklyn	Brooklyn
Community District(s)	1-4	16	10	12	3	12	17	13
Police Precinct(s)	40, 41, 42, 44	73	28, 32	113	79, 81	33, 34	67	60
<b>Neighborhood Population <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>347,346</b>	<b>86,468</b>	<b>115,723</b>	<b>225,919</b>	<b>152,985</b>	<b>190,020</b>	<b>155,252</b>	<b>102,552</b>
% of Total NYC Population (est)	4%	1%	1%	3%	-	2%	2%	1%
% of Total NYC Probation Population (est)	10%	2%	3%	4%	-	3%	2%	-
<b>Resident Demographics <sup>2</sup></b>								
Race/Ethnicity								
Black	30%	76%	63%	65%	64%	18%	88%	12%
Latinx	67%	20%	22%	17%	19%	71%	7%	14%
White and Other	3%	4%	15%	18%	36%	11%	5%	72%
% under 18 years	30%	30%	22%	24%	24%	20%	23%	17%
% Receiving Public Assistance (2012)	62%	54%	43%	39%	41%	50%	40%	48%
<b>Index Crime Rate per 1,000 residents <sup>3</sup></b>	215	242	166	91	-	110	206	112
<b>NeON/Client Development Track Caseload <sup>4</sup></b>								
2013 Intake	389	46	107	95	-	59	69	-
2013 Active Caseload	721	167	185	231	-	148	141	-

<sup>1</sup> 2010 Census Data

<sup>2</sup> New York City Department of Planning: Community District Profiles: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/ucds/cdsstart.shtml>

<sup>3</sup> New York City CompStat

<sup>4</sup> New York City Department of Probation

## Appendix E. Interview Domains

Domain	Description	Sample Items
<b>Client Characteristics</b>	Demographic information, education, employment, and income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you identify in terms of race or ethnicity?</li> <li>• What is the highest level of education that you have completed?</li> </ul>
<b>Supervision</b>	Probation history, reporting requirements, contact with probation officer, incentives and sanctions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often are you currently required to report to your PO?</li> <li>• Other than in person, in what other ways might your PO contact you?</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement with Neighborhood Services</b>	Quality of interactions with probation officer, probation's involvement in the community, reporting (travel, challenges).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you feel that you can bring your family members or friends with you to probation?</li> <li>• When you have to report to probation, do you face any challenges?</li> </ul>
<b>Perceptions of Fairness</b>	The Dual-Role Relationship Inventory (DRI-R; Skeem et al. 2007), experience of procedural justice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your PO encourages you to work together with him/her.</li> <li>• Your PO puts you down when you've done something wrong</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b>	Current living situation, housing instability, neighborhood characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where are you currently living?</li> <li>• You live in a close-knit/tight neighborhood.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Needs</b>	Current unmet service needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now I'd like to ask about areas of your life that you may need help with. From the list provided here, what are the top 3 services that you are not getting, or not getting enough of?</li> </ul>
<b>Community Involvement</b>	Involvement in local organizations (i.e., church, community groups).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the past year, have you attended a church, mosque, synagogue or any other type of religious service?</li> </ul>
<b>Substance Use</b>	History and current use of alcohol and drugs, substance abuse treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In your entire life, have you ever used drugs or alcohol, including marijuana, cocaine/crack, heroin or designer drugs?</li> <li>• How many times have you ever been in a drug treatment program? Do not include AA, NA, CA meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Health</b>	The Brief Symptom Inventory 18 (BSI-18; Derogatis 2001).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distress or bothered by feeling lonely?</li> <li>• Spells of terror or panic?</li> </ul>
<b>Criminal Behavior</b>	Recent criminal activity (self report)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How old were you the first time you were arrested?</li> <li>• At any point during the past six months, have you engaged in any drug sales, regardless of whether or not you were caught?</li> </ul>
<b>Family Relationships</b>	Relationship status, children, family dynamics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your current relationship status?</li> <li>• You consider yourself a source of emotional support for your family</li> </ul>
<b>Family Crime</b>	Family involvement with illegal activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have any close family members who have been convicted of a crime or served time? If yes, which family members?</li> </ul>
<b>Criminal Thinking &amp; Legal Cynicism</b>	Empathy, self-entitlement, violence and manipulation, perceptions of the justice system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When people tell you what to do, you become aggressive.</li> <li>• It is unfair that you have been locked-up when bankers, lawyers, and politicians get away with their crimes.</li> </ul>
<b>Readiness for Change</b>	Motivation to address needs and change behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You want to get your life straightened out.</li> <li>• You will give up friends and hangouts that get you into trouble.</li> </ul>
<b>Leisure and Peers</b>	Peer networks and the extent to which they are involved in illegal activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you have free time, who do you usually spend it with?</li> <li>• Other than family, how many of the people who you spend time with have ever served time?</li> </ul>
<b>Participant Goals</b>	Identified goals and the steps being taken to achieve them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your educational goals?</li> <li>• What are you currently doing to obtain your education goals?</li> </ul>

Note: The interview consisted of 374 questions. For a copy of the survey, please contact Sarah Picard at [picards@courtinnovation.org](mailto:picards@courtinnovation.org).

# Appendix F. Baseline Difference Interview Sample

Comparison of Baseline Sample Differences, Original vs. Weighted Interview Sample						
	Original Samples		p<.50	Weighted Samples		Included in the model?
	RNR-only	NeON		RNR-only	NeON	
N	105	239		105	239	
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>				0.318		
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>						
Age at time of arrest	31.57	30.96		31.50	31.24	
Age categories	**		✓	+		✓
17 or under	4%	16%		5%	13%	
18-24	32%	26%		31%	27%	
25-39	41%	32%		42%	35%	
40 or older	23%	26%		22%	26%	
Other age categories						
16-24 years	36%	41%	✓	36%	39%	✓
Male	81%	80%		82%	79%	
Race/Ethnicity	**		✓			✓
Black/African-American	58%***	76%	✓	65%	72%	✓
White	6%	5%		7%	6%	
Hispanic/Latinx	34%***	18%	✓	27%	23%	✓
Asian	2%*	0%	✓	1%	0%	✓
Other	0%	1%		0%	1%	
<b>CRIMINAL HISTORY</b>						
<u>Prior Arrests (All)</u>						
Any Prior Arrests	79%	83%	✓	83%	83%	✓
# prior arrests	7.12†	8.75	✓	7.38	8.48	✓
Any Drug Arrest	58%	65%	✓	62%	63%	✓
# drug arrests	2.94	3.02		3.11	2.98	
Any Firearm Arrest	26%	19%	✓	24%	21%	✓
# firearm arrests	0.37	0.26	✓	0.33	0.31	✓
Any Felony Arrest	61%	64%		65%	63%	
# felony arrests	2.55	3.22	✓	2.49	3.17	✓
Any Misdemeanor Arrest	75%	80%	✓	79%	79%	✓
# misdemeanor arrests	4.57	5.54	✓	4.88	5.30	✓
Any Violent Felony Arrest	43%	42%		43%	42%	
# violent felony arrests	0.85	1.01	✓	0.80	1.00	✓
Any Weapons Arrest	44%	42%		44%	41%	
# weapons arrests	0.82	0.93		0.75	0.94	
Any SOR Arrest	11%	11%		11%	11%	
# sex offense arrests	0.12	0.13		0.12	0.12	
Any CV Arrest	16%	17%		16%	16%	
# child victim arrests	0.18	0.21		0.18	0.20	
Any VTL Arrest	18%	22%	✓	19%	22%	✓
# vehicle traffic law arrests	0.30	0.50	✓	0.31	0.45	✓
Any DWI Arrest	13%	16%		13%	16%	
# driving while intoxicated arrests	0.17	0.25	✓	0.18	0.23	✓

	Original Samples		p<.50	Weighted Samples		Included in the model?
	RNR-only	NeON		RNR-only	NeON	
N	105	239		105	239	
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>				0.318		
<u>Prior Incarceration</u>						
Any Prior Prison or Jail Sentence	36%	45%	✓	35%	42%	✓
# prior prison or jail sentences	1.09**	2.04	✓	1.17*	1.79	✓
<u>Prior Supervision History and Violations</u>						
Any Prior Probation Sentence	29%	28%		31%	27%	
# Prior Probation Sentences	0.37	0.38		0.42	0.35	
Any Prior Probation Revocations	4%	7%	✓	3%	6%	✓
# Prior Probation Revocations	0.04	0.08	✓	0.04	0.07	✓
Prior Bench Warrant	60%	66%	✓	62%	65%	✓
# Prior Bench Warrants	2.03	2.40	✓	2.14	2.35	✓
Any Prior Open Cases	27%+	36%	✓	29%	35%	✓
# Prior open cases	0.45	0.51		0.47	0.49	
Any Prior Open Felony Cases	16%	24%	✓	17%	23%	✓
# Prior Open Felony Cases	0.24	0.28		0.22	0.28	
Any Prior Open Violent Felony Cases	5%	9%	✓	5%	8%	✓
# Prior Open Violent Felony Cases	0.07	0.10	✓	0.07	0.10	✓
<u>LSI-R Screening Data</u>						
LSI-R: SV score	3.73	3.87	✓	3.70	3.85	
LSI-R: SV category	+		✓	+		
Low	14%	6%		14%	6%	
Medium	59%	66%		57%	66%	
High	28%	27%		29%	27%	
Highest	0%	1%		0%	1%	
<b>INDEX EVENT</b>						
Disposition Year	**		✓			✓
2013	2%	12%		2%	10%	
2014	27%	38%		38%	36%	
2015	57%	43%		48%	45%	
2016	13%	7%		11%	9%	
2017	1%	0%		1%	0%	
Index Arrest Severity			✓			✓
Felony	93%	89%		91%	90%	
Misdemeanor	7%	11%		9%	10%	
Index Event Charge Type						
Assault Flag	7%	12%	✓	8%	11%	✓
Marijuana Flag	1%	0%	✓	1%	0%	✓
Property Flag	34%	36%		34%	34%	
DWI Flag	7%	7%		7%	6%	
Weapons-related Charge Flag	12%	16%	✓	13%	14%	✓
Firearms Charge Flag	5%	8%	✓	7%	7%	✓
VFO Flag	20%*	33%	✓	21%	29%	✓
Drug-related Charge Flag	40%†	29%	✓	39%	33%	✓
Jail or Prison?	26%	24%		25%	21%	
Estimated Days Incarcerated	23.99	22.75		22.48	19.06	
Years of Probation	4.05	4.03		4.00	3.98	

†p<.10, \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

Note: Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> for an alternate version of the model, excluding 44 cases for which some data was missing, was 0.242.

## Appendix G.

### Baseline Differences: Main Sample

	Original Samples			Matched Samples		
	PRE	RNR	NeON	PRE	RNR	NeON
	2301	349	758	257	257	257
<b>Demographics</b>						
Age	28.8***	30.1	30.9	30	30	32
Age categories	**					
17 or under	18%	13%	16%	18%	13%	14%
18-24	32%	32%	26%	30%	35%	27%
25-39	28%	31%	32%	28%	30%	32%
40 or older	22%	24%	26%	25%	23%	28%
Other age categories						
16-24 years	50.5%***	46%	42%	48%	47%	41%
Male	81.1%***	87%	78%	84%	85%	79%
Race/Ethnicity	***					
Black/African-American	64.1%	53.0%	66.4%	63%	53%	67%
Hispanic	31.3%	41.3%	29.7%	32%	40%	30%
White	2.6%	4.9%	3.0%	5%	6%	3%
Other	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
<b>Priors</b>						
Prior Arrest?	68.6%***	79.1%	82.5%	82%	83%	84%
Prior Child Victim Arrest?	9.1%***	12.3%	14.9%	17%	11%	12%
Prior SOR Arrest?	4.7%	3.2%	5.7%	5%	3%	5%
Prior Firearm Arrest?	11.0%**	13.8%	15.7%	16%	14%	17%
Prior Felony Arrest?	48.6%***	63.9%	65.3%	66%	66%	67%
Prior Misdemeanor Arrest?	63.1%***	72.2%	76.1%	73%	75%	76%
Prior VFO Arrest?	29.3%***	39.3%	41.8%	38%	41%	40%
Prior Drug Arrest?	47.3%***	60.2%	61.3%	61%	60%	59%
Prior Weapons Arrest?	29.2%***	41.5%	40.6%	38%	44%	42%
# Prior Arrests	4.96***	7.97	7.64	7.2	7.5	7.1
Prior Felony Arrests	1.90***	2.88	2.93	3.0	2.6	2.7
Prior Misdemeanor Arrests	3.07***	5.09	4.71	4.2	4.9	4.4
Prior VFO Arrests	0.62**	0.77	0.88	0.8	0.8	0.9
Prior Drug Arrests	1.93**	3.18	3.26	3.1	2.8	2.8
Prior Child Victim Arrests	0.11	0.15	0.20	0.2	0.1	0.2
Prior Weapons Arrests	0.57*	0.81	0.78	0.8	0.8	0.9
Prior SOR Arrests	0.06	0.03	0.06	0.1	0.0	0.1
Prior VTL Arrests (includes all levels of all VTLs)	0.23*	0.35	0.29	0.3	0.3	0.2
Prior DWI arrests (included all levels of VTL 1192)	0.09*	0.15	0.13	0.1	0.1	0.1
Prior firearm related arrests (includes all levels)	0.15*	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.2	0.2
Prior Conviction?	33.0%***	44.7%	43.8%	43%	45%	45%

Prior Felony Conviction?	15.6%***	17.2%	23.2%	21%	17%	21%
Prior Misdemeanor Conviction?	29.9%***	43.0%	39.8%	41%	42%	40%
Prior VFO Conviction?	5.1%*	3.7%	7.0%	5%*	2%	7%
Prior Drug Conviction?	23.4%***	33.8%	36.3%	36%	33%	37%
Prior Weapons Conviction?	8.1%*	10.0%	11.5%	10%	9%	13%
Prior Child Victim Conviction?	0.9%	1.1%	1.6%	2%	1%	1%
Prior SOR Conviction?	0.60%	0.9%	0.8%	0%	0%	1%
Prior Drug Felony Conviction?	8.5%***	11.2%	15.0%	16%	11%	14%
Prior Firearm Conviction	2.3%	2.9%	2.8%	2%	3%	4%
# Prior Convictions	1.74***	2.76	2.65	2.3	2.7	2.3
Prior Felony Convictions Not YO	0.3***	0.31	0.48	0.4	0.3	0.4
Prior Felony Convictions YO	0.07**	0.12	0.10	0.09	0.12	0.13
Prior Misdemeanor Convictions Not YO	1.44***	2.45	2.18	1.91	2.42	1.86
Prior Misdemeanor Convictions YO	0.07	0.1	0.08	0.11	0.08	0.09
Prior VFO Convictions Not YO	0.07	0.05	0.09	0.06	0.04	0.11
Prior VFO Convictions YO	0.04	0.06	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.07
Prior Drug Convictions	.75***	1.13	1.33	1.14	1.00	1.07
Prior Drug Felony Convictions Not YO	0.14***	0.18	0.27	0.30	0.15	0.23
Prior Drug Felony Convictions YO	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.04
Prior Drug Misdemeanor Convictions Not YO	0.48***	0.77	0.85	0.63	0.68	0.63
Prior Drug Misdemeanor Convictions YO	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.02
Prior Child Victim Convictions	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01
Prior Weapons Convictions	0.1**	0.14	0.15	0.13	0.11	0.18
Prior SOR Convictions Not YO	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01
Prior VTL Convictions (includes YO and all levels)	0.17	0.21	0.18	0.17	0.19	0.13
Prior DWI Felony Convictions Not YO	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Prior Firearm related convictions (includes all levels + YOs)	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.04
Prior probation yes/no	23.6%**	27.8%	28.1%	30%	30%	28%
Prior revocation yes/no	3.9%	3.4%	4.0%	5%	4%	4%
# prior probations	0.31*	0.41	0.35	0.41	0.44	0.33
# prior revocations	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.05
Prior YO Offenses	11.8%**	17.5%	15.4%	14%	18%	18%
<b>Instant Case</b>						
Arrest Charge - Felony	90.0%	90.3%	89.8%	92%	90%	91%
Violent Felony Offense Arrest Charge?	33.9%	32.1%	33.5%	29%	33%	32%
Weapons Arrest Charge Flag?	14.4%	16.3%	17.4%	14%	17%	19%
Firearm Arrest Charge Flag?	7.2%	7.2%	8.7%	5%+	7%	11%
Drug Arrest Charge Flag?	28.8%	33.8%	31.1%	34%	33%	34%
DWI Arrest Charge Flag?	5.6%	5.4%	7.9%	5%	4%	5%

Property Arrest?	37.9%	33.8%	34.2%	36%	36%	34%
Assault Arrest?	9.7%	10.3%	12.0%	10%	12%	8%
Marijuana Charge	1.6%	1.7%	0.8%	1%	1%	1%
Incarceration on instant case	21.3%	22.3%	23.9%	22%	21%	25%
time incarcerated on instant case	16.09	19.96	16.77	15.9	20.7	19.0
Years on probation	4.29***	4.15	3.95	4.0	4.1	4.0



## Appendix H. Sample Differences: Interview vs. Non-Interview

	Final Post-Reform Sample	
	Not Interviewed	Interviewed
<b>Number of Cases</b>	514	344
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>		
Age at time of arrest	30.70	31.15
Age categories		
17 or under	13%	12%
18-24	31%	28%
25-39	31%	35%
40 or older	25%	25%
Other age categories		
16-24 years	44%	40%
Male	82%	80%
Race/Ethnicity		
Black/African-American	60%***	71%
White	45%	5%
Hispanic	35%***	23%
Asian	1%	1%
<b>CRIMINAL HISTORY</b>		
<u>Prior Arrests (All)</u>		
Any Prior Arrests	83%	82%
# prior arrests	7.28	8.26
Any Felony Arrest	66%	63%
# felony arrests	2.67	3.01
Any Misdemeanor Arrest	75%	79%
# misdemeanor arrests	4.62	5.24
Any Violent Felony Arrest	40%	42%
# violent felony arrests	0.81	0.96
<u>Prior Adult Convictions</u>		
Any Prior Convictions	45%	44%
# prior convictions	2.50	2.81
Any Felony Conviction	19%***	28%
# felony convictions	0.36**	0.57
Any Misdemeanor Conviction	41%	40%
# misdemeanor convictions	2.14	2.24
Any Violent Felony Conviction	5%***	15%
# violent felony convictions	0.07***	0.18

	Final Post-Reform Sample	
	Not Interviewed	Interviewed
<b>Number of Cases</b>	514	344
<u>Prior Juvenile Convictions</u>		
Prior Youthful Offenses	18%	22%
# prior youthful offenses	0.33***	0.77
<u>Prior Incarceration</u>		
Any Prior Prison or Jail Sentence	39%	42%
# prior prison or jail sentences	1.55	1.75
<u>Prior Supervision History and Violations</u>		
Any Prior Probation Sentence	29%	28%
# Prior Probation Sentences	0.39	0.38
<u>LSI-R Screening Data</u>		
LSI-R SV score	3.81	3.83
LSI-R SV category		
Low	5%	8%
Medium	70%	64%
High	24%	27%
Highest	2%	0%
<b>INDEX EVENT</b>		
Index Arrest Severity		
Felony	91%	90%
Misdemeanor	10%	10%
Index Event Charge Type		
Assault Flag	10%	11%
Marijuana Flag	1%	0%
Property Flag	35%	36%
DWI Flag	5%	7%
Weapons-related Charge Flag	18%	15%
Firearms Charge Flag	9%	7%
VFO Flag	32%	29%
Drug-related Charge Flag	33%	32%
Jail or Prison?	23%	25%
Years of Probation	4.05	4.03

<sup>+</sup>p<.10, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001