

**Redefining a City: The Current State of Ineffective Re-Entry Programs in Milwaukee, Wisconsin
and Modifications to Advocate Opportunity and Efficacious Reintegration**

Approved: Dr. Michael Klemp-North

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Redefining a City: The Current State of Ineffective Re-Entry Programs in Milwaukee, Wisconsin
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Abstract

Statement of the Problem

As of 2004, national data indicated that 600,000 individuals will leave state prisons and return home, breaking down to 1,600 a day, and a six fold increase in prisoner releases since 1970 (Petersilia, 2004). On a smaller scale, a 2008 Wisconsin Department of Corrections report indicates that 22,985 ex-offenders were released to Milwaukee County with approximately 4,500 of those offenders being released into the inner city of Milwaukee. With the heaviest concentrations of released inmates as well as currently incarcerated adults from the poorest neighborhoods on Milwaukee's north side and near south side communities (Pawasarat, Quinn, 2013), it can be questioned whether state re-entry programs are preparing offenders in changing criminal mentality, diverting them from potentially dangerous situations, and giving opportunity that will deter one from criminal activity.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study will illustrate in depth the practice and objective of current re-entry programs practiced under federal, state, and local levels. Additionally, accompanying statistics will evidence recidivism rates and barriers returning offenders face in Milwaukee as well as previous research that alludes to why current re-entry programs are futile. Theoretical explanations will present suggestion as to why returning offenders to Milwaukee resort back to criminal activity. Re-entry programs mandated to those in Milwaukee, in particular those who reside on the north and near south side communities where the highest sum of crime is reported,

are in need of modification in efforts to address socioeconomic barriers faced such as lack of employment opportunity, low education levels, and diversion from subcultural thought process and practices.

Method of Approach

Data collection was derived from secondary resources from the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, the Milwaukee House of Corrections, the Milwaukee Police Department, United States Department of Justice, scholarly articles, accredited journals, textbooks, and credible webpages. The data from the preceding sources are congruent to the purpose of the research that support results of recidivism, prison/community correction programming, and recommendations. Furthermore, the research will use these sources to connect theoretical perspectives of criminality through negative stimuli, institutional imbalances, and lack of opportunity.

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I. Introduction

It has been affirmed Wisconsin's criminal justice system is marked by a repetitive cycle of crime, incarceration, probation, and repeated crime. Data on recidivism in Wisconsin indicated that 38.2 percent of offenders released from incarceration are convicted of a fresh crime within three years (Lind, 2009). Likewise, approximately 25 percent of prison admissions were for offenders actively under community corrections supervision at the time of their current offense (Lind, 2009).

When treatment programs are incorporated into institutions, they raise issues that potentially contribute to relapse and recidivism (The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2005). Additionally, it is postulated that many inmates are coerced into treatment programs as a result of a sentence that requires mandatory treatment. As a result, coerced treatment has the ability to force inmates to begin a treatment regimen, but must be able to engage them in a meaningful rehabilitation process; without treatment, the likelihood of continued drug use and criminality after release significantly (The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2005). Furthermore, Dr. James Byrne (2009) supports the preceding statement along with re-entry programs in his study on prison re-entry, illustrating that the current flaws within re-entry are a result of lack of substantial studies and evidence in addition to probation and parole system that has evolved away from its initial intent. More recent evidence maintains the stance the questionability of re-entry programs. The Vera Institute of Justice (2013) indicates that the current state of re-entry programs face several barriers due to increasing population of inmates. Some of these barriers include, but are not limited to have to struggle to manage increased caseloads without the training, support, and tools they need; this is especially true for high-risk offenders that have a greater need of treatment and other assistance to curb resorting back to criminal activity.

Furthermore, it is reported that overworked and under-resourced probation officers may act more quickly to revoke to prison or jail those who do not meet conditions immediately or those supervisees whose risk they worry they cannot manage given the demands on their time (Vera Institute of Justice, 2013). More notably, it is assumed that lack of resources to adequately supervise offenders may even contribute to increased crime in the community, a concept that is applicable to the city of Milwaukee.

Lending more support to the questionability of re-entry programs, individual characteristics have a role in the influence of recidivism that includes demographic characteristics, prison experience, employment history, education level, criminal record, and substance abuse dependence (Muhlhausen, 2010). Moreover, a recent study determined that unemployed former prisoners and those without high school diplomas are more likely to drop out of reentry programs than those who are employed and have high school diplomas, in addition to recidivists tending to have begun their criminal careers at an earlier age and had more serious criminal histories than those who do not recidivate (Muhlhausen, 2010).

Taking the above into account, the preceding data represent substantial barriers offenders face once released into their respective communities within the city of Milwaukee. With an increase in criminal activity and violence in Milwaukee, specifically in Milwaukee's north and south side communities where the majority of crime is taking place, amendments curbing recidivism are critical. Modification of re-entry programs will lend better guidance to those returning to their respective communities, and have the opportunity to overcome barriers thus divert resorting to criminal activity and association with those whom maintain a criminal mentality, notably in Milwaukee's urban community.

II. Literature Review

In the United States, over 10,000 inmates are released from state and federal prisons each week with two-thirds likely to reoffend within three years from release (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.). Furthermore, many of these ex-offenders return to disparaging communities that bolster violence, endure poverty, have a nominal amount of education and opportunity, and treatment needs that are not met. Communities in Milwaukee, Wisconsin portray the aforementioned obstacles that result in increased recidivism rates and promote a continuous cycle that sets ex-offenders up for failure to reintegrate. The following sections will provide a contrast of statistics and information on inmate/offender populations across the state of Wisconsin and in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

A) Current Incarceration and Release Trends in Wisconsin

In the most current statistics reported by the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (2014), the total inmate population in Wisconsin state prisons to be 21, 844 inmates. Within the total population, admission types are predominantly Department of Community Correction holds at 38 percent, following new sentence/no revocation and revocation/new sentence, both at 24 percent (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2014). It is also reported that peak releases took place in April 2014 and July 2014, with approximately 1,250 inmates in April and approximately 1, 150 inmates in July 2014. In respect to demographics, the oldest age for male and female are 97 and 85 years old and youngest being 15 and 17 years of age, respectively; the median age for males is 37.60 and for female inmates 36.95 years. In Wisconsin prisons, white males and females hold the highest percentage of inmate population at 54 and 69 percent, respectively. Alongside

whites, black make up 42 percent of the male population and 23 percent of the female population and Hispanic/latino accumulate 9 percent of the male population and 3 percent of female inmates. (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2014). Mental health statistics indicate that 33 percent of males have a form of mental health condition with 8 percent being of serious nature (i.e. bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, severe depression, and personality disorder). Contrasting male inmates, 76 percent of the female inmate population have a form of mental health condition with 27 percent declared to have a serious mental health condition (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2014). Substance abuse statistics relay that 70 percent of the overall inmate population have alcohol or drug abuse needs. Lastly, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (2014) reports that within the educational and vocational courses offered, 1,788 inmates are enrolled into an academic course and 549 inmates are in vocational courses.

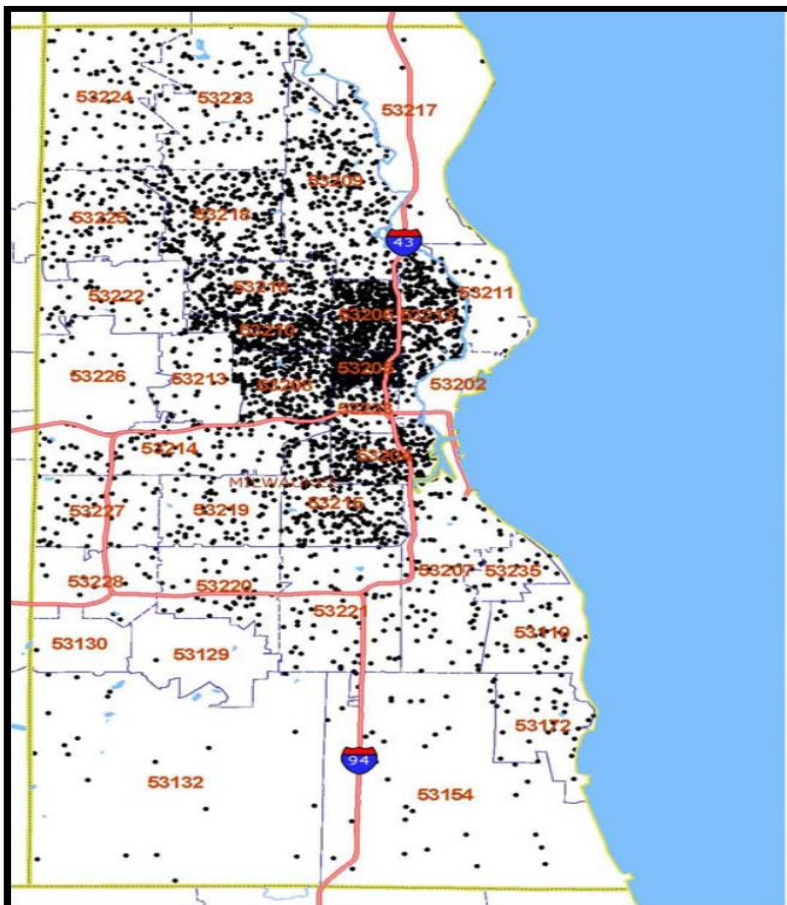
An additional report by the Wisconsin Department of Corrections' Division of Community Corrections (2013) indicate that 66,439 offenders are on supervision with 41,927 holding a felony charge and 22,885 holding a misdemeanor charge. The demographics for race and ethnicity nearly mirror institutional percentiles; the highest percentage of those on supervision are white males and females accounting for 69 and 73 percent, respectively. Trailing whites are black males representing 27 percent while black females account for 20 percent. Like institutional statistics, Hispanics rank minimal percentiles with 7 percent males and 3 percent females on active supervision (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2013). At 27 percent, the dominate age range for offenders on supervision is between 32 and 42 years of age. Following the preceding age bracket are two age ranges that tie at 18 percent: 22 to 26 year olds and 43 to 52 year olds; 27 to 31 year old offenders come in at 17 percent (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2013). Risk levels indicate that the majority of offenders on supervision account for

low risk (38 percent) with medium risk (33 percent) and high risk (23 percent) directly behind. The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (2013) also measures criminogenic needs of those on supervision. The main barriers offenders face are substance abuse (76 percent) and anti-social cognition (59 percent) which in some cases merge together. Additional barriers include anti-social personality/temperament (55 percent), lack of education and/or employment (53 percent), anti-social associations (38 percent), family and/or marital problems (34 percent), and poor use of leisure time (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2013).

B) Current Incarceration and Release Trends in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Number of Ex-Offenders Released to Milwaukee County from the Wisconsin Department of Corrections

*Note: 1 dot=5 ex-offenders released to the particular zip code

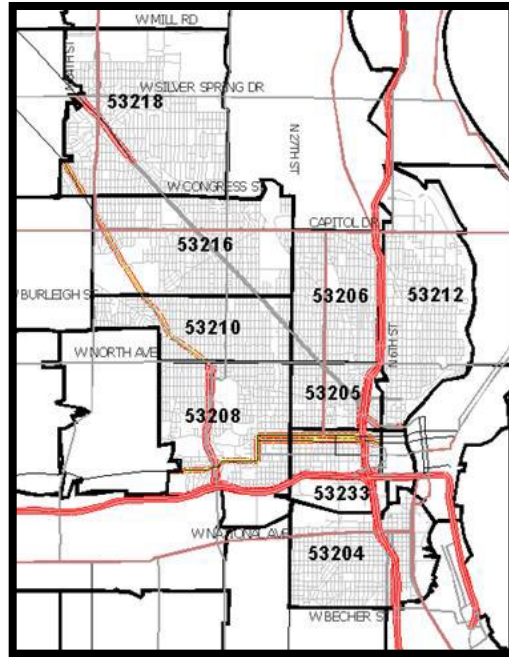


(Source: Pawasarat, 2009)

In the most current statistics on Milwaukee County, John Pawasarat (2009) illustrates that a total of 22,985 adult ex-state offenders were released into Milwaukee County in 2008 with 8,167 of those being on probation/parole in addition to the Wisconsin DOC intake of 10,894 adult offenders from Milwaukee County. Pawasarat (2009) indicates that 88 percent of ex-offenders released to Milwaukee County are male with females accounting for 12 percent of this population. In respect to race and ethnicity, Pawasarat (2009) asserts that blacks accumulate 67 percent of the Wisconsin DOC ex-offenders released to Milwaukee County, with whites following at 23 percent and Hispanics at 8 percent. Pawasarat (2009) also concludes in 2007, two-thirds (69 percent) of men and women entering Wisconsin DOC facilities were in the age range of 20s and 30s.

Coinciding with Wisconsin DOC ex-offenders, John Clark (2010) reports based from the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department that a total of 1,038,699 jail bed days utilized between the Milwaukee County Jail and Milwaukee House of Correction in 2008. Demographics in the final report were based off of an analysis of a random sample of pre-trial inmates. Clark (2010) indicates in the same year, 84.3 percent of inmates were male and their counterparts represent 15.6 percent of the inmate population. The highest percentage of race was held by blacks with 67 percent, then whites with 32.2 percent and Native Americans and Asians at 0.4 percent (note: the percentage of Hispanics were not classified in this report) (Clark, 2010). Lastly, the age for inmates incarcerated at either facility present the age range of 17-to-21 years as the highest percentage at 24.6; second to this are the ages of 22-to-25 years at 17 percent (Clark, 2010).

Expanding beyond traditional demographics, analysis was completed on the release of ex-offenders into Milwaukee by zip code.



(Source: Pawasarat, 2009)

Heavy concentration was placed on the nine zip codes that most DOC ex-offenders were released to. Results indicate since 2003, 4,500 of the 22,985 state ex-offenders were released to nine zip codes in the city limits are deemed “inner city”, located on the northern side of the city; the zip code with the most ex-offenders returning is 53206 (Pawasarat, 2009). Demographics in the nine zip code zones illustrate the primary race to be black at 65 percent, with Hispanics following at 40 percent and whites at 23 percent.

C) Overview of Re-Entry Programs offered in the Wisconsin Department of Corrections and in the City of Milwaukee

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections offers disparate programs that encompass around re-entry needs. The Wisconsin DOC extends primary treatment services that primarily aim toward cognitively-based conditions.

One program extension that the Wisconsin DOC utilizes is the Cognitive Intervention Program, otherwise known as CGIP. The CGIP Program is divided into two phases in which

teaches violent inmates specified skills that assist them in identifying, controlling, and changing the personal thinking patterns as well as concentrate on underlying beliefs that encourage their criminal behaviors (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2011). Another largely employed program is the AODA Residential Program which is a four-month program that targets inmates with more serious, chronic issues with substance abuse/dependence and criminal behavior. Based around the curriculum, *A New Freedom*, the course includes substance abuse education and relapse prevention in addition to criminal behavior, responsible self-management skills, and opportunities to gain greater self-awareness, personal control, and skills training (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2011). The Wisconsin DOC also administers violent inmate-centered programs: Anger Management (AM), Domestic Violence (DV), and Violence in Relationships (catering toward female inmates).

There are also programs that are suited toward non-violent inmates. The Challenge Incarceration Program (CIP) is a six-month program that combines treatment and discipline through military training (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2011). The treatment portion of CIP delivers counseling on personal development in rational thinking, drug and alcohol counseling, and educational material; the discipline cohort of CIP involves physical activity, manual labor training, and instruction in military bearing (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2011). As a division off of CIP, the Earned Release Program (ERP) is a six-month program offered to non-violent inmates that takes an intensive stance with an objective to reduce future criminal behavior and place a primary focus on community reintegration (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2011). ERP is divided is prorated into treatment modules comprised of drug and alcohol education, relapse prevention, modification of high risk and thrill-seeking behavior, rational behavior and responsible decision making, and restorative justice conceptions

(Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2011). Lastly, the Wisconsin DOC (2011) offers a program that combines CIP and ERP with a concentration on strictly criminality. Upon successful completion, the sentencing court is notified and reduces the length of confinement, thus being placed on extended supervision. Additionally, specialized treatments are also offered in Wisconsin DOC institutions: Operating a Vehicle While Impaired (OWI) and Sex Offender Treatment (SO-2 and SO-4 levels).

Coinciding with a plenitude of treatment programs, the Wisconsin DOC, inmates are presented with opportunities to obtain high school equivalency diplomas, education tutoring, and vocational training, among others. Inmates are afforded high school equivalency diploma testing upon TABE testing, which measures the inmate's academic skill levels, and preparation in their respective class (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2011). Once an inmate's academic level is determined, they are distributed among the following courses that cater to their academic needs: Adult Basic Education (ABE), Title 1 (for 21 years and younger that are enrolled into ABE, but need further tutoring), Special Education (SPED) (22 years and younger that have a proclaimed disability that interferes with education) and college programs through the University of Wisconsin campuses (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2011). Wisconsin DOC (2011) institutions also maintain the presence of the Wisconsin Institution Literacy Councils, Plato Educational Software, and the Perkins Grant for eligible inmates. The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) provides vocational training at all Wisconsin DOC institutions that award up to a two-year associate's degree in 30 occupational areas. Furthermore, the Wisconsin DOC (2011) upholds that inmates can still be enrolled and complete should they have to transfer to another institution or release into another Wisconsin Doc segment (i.e. halfway house).

D) Overview of Re-Entry Programs offered in Milwaukee County

The Milwaukee County jail system offers several programs that advocate for successful reintegration. Similar to the Wisconsin DOC, Milwaukee County Jail and the Milwaukee House of Correction (HOC) offer general equivalency diploma (GED) and high school equivalency diploma (HSED) assessment, preparatory, and testing through the Franklin Alternative Youth Program (Milwaukee House of Correction, n.d.). Although Milwaukee County offers work lifting vocational training, however both jails have established work crews for positions in the jails' print shop, kitchen, bakery, laundry, maintenance, painting, and lawn care that prepare inmates for future employment. The Milwaukee County Jail delivers Huber/Electronic Monitoring work release program to those inmates who are granted by the court system to be released for work and/or child care purposes only (Milwaukee House of Correction, n.d.). The Milwaukee House of Corrections (n.d.) grants non-profit agencies, Wisconsin Community Services (WCS), My Father's House, and Word of Hope ministries to operate out of both county jails to aid in re-entry to the community.

Upon release from incarceration, ex-offenders returning to the Milwaukee area have available resources that address considerable barriers they may face. Ex-offenders that transition to state probation that are moderate-to high risk can enroll in to the Open Avenues for Re-Entry Success (OARS) program which takes action toward hindrances such as housing, medical, and employment needs. Coinciding with the preceding, upon qualification by the court system, inmates have the chance to transfer to halfway houses to address re-entry barriers; Milwaukee is home to five state-contracted halfway houses and one federally-contracted halfway house (C. Carmichael, 2013). Corresponding with correctional-contracted halfway houses, multitudinous non-profit agencies provide assistance to ex-offenders reintegrating into their respective

communities. The following are localized agencies and accompanying description of services (Wisconsin Re-Entry Project, 2014):

- **ATTIC Correctional Services:** Offers transition housing options, day reporting centers, clinical services to domestic violence offenders, sex offenders, and offenders with substance abuse issues.
- **Ann E. Casey Foundation:** Assisting families in family reintegration and troubled communities to provide economic opportunity.
- **Catholic Charities of Milwaukee:** Outreach services and case management in connection to behavioral health services, affordable housing, educational and employment resources.
- **Justice 2000:** Provide outreach services to ex-offenders and address root problems/barriers to prevent reincarceration.
- **Legal Action of Wisconsin:** No-cost legal services to individuals in the low-income bracket of the city.
- **Martin Luther King Economic Development Corporation:** Provide entrepreneurial initiatives to create wealth and jobs, provides technical assistance to area businesses, and develop quality and affordable rental/housing ownership that aim to strengthen the Harambee community residents of Milwaukee.
- **Milwaukee Christian Center:** Provides housing rehabilitation in distressed areas of Milwaukee.
- **Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board:** vocational and technical training to increase employment prospects.

- **New Hope Project:** Provides full-time, low-income individuals with the objective of attaining earnings supplement to raise their income above poverty, low-cost health insurance, and subsidized child care for up to three years (Miller, et al., 2008).
- **Project Return:** Provides re-entry employment program services, Fatherhood Initiative, Jobs Task Force, and Changes Support Groups to ex-offenders.
- **Safer Foundation:** Full-range services that aid ex-offenders in becoming employed to become a law-abiding citizen.
- **Social Development Commission:** Assisting low-income individuals to advance out of poverty through various outreach services.
- **Spotted Eagle:** Employment and training program to Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian adults in Milwaukee.
- **Wisconsin Community Services:** Serves ex-offenders in providing substance abuse and mental health services through their Unlimited Potential and Wiser Choice programs, residential re-entry programs, workforce development, and court services/community alternatives.

E) The Re-Entry Process in Wisconsin Institutions

When an inmate arrives to a Wisconsin DOC institution, an assessment and evaluation is administered to identify the inmate's treatment level and barriers. Once the inmate's needs are established, institutional placement is determined; reviews are completed at the least every 12 months to examine if institutional placement was appropriate and the level of progress the inmate has made toward addressing their barriers (Carmichael, Bauer, 2008). In addition to the

preceding description, Wisconsin State Statutes mandate practices upon release of an inmate from a state institution. Kollat et al. (2008) deliver a synopsis of key barriers that are covered under Wisconsin State Statutes:

- **Food:** In each area of the state, Department of Corrections staff is aware of food pantries and to direct offenders in need to the community partners.
- **Food Share:** The state's biennial budget mandates the Wisconsin Department of Corrections to assist offenders, prior to release, in applying for assistance. Inmates are allowed to use their respective institution for their address and correctional staff is permitted to take phone calls relating to Food Share enrollment.
- **Residence:** In each area of the state, the Department of Corrections staff is aware of existing homeless shelters and direct offenders to shelters as a last resort if other suitable residency arrangements are not made.
- **Identification:** Coinciding with Food Share, the state's biennial budget requires the Wisconsin Department of Corrections to provide a state identification card to individuals released from prison who do not possess another form of identification.
- **Medical Care:** The majority of inmates do not possess insurance. In 2004, the Administrative Directive #30 policy was put into act and indicates that by agreement with the Department of Health and Family Services, completed applications for Wisconsin Medicaid benefits will be accepted and processed up to 23 days prior to an inmates anticipated release from their respective institution.

Milwaukee County jails offer similar assurance as the Wisconsin DOC in respect to confronting impediments. Aside from their aforementioned programs, the Milwaukee House of Corrections and County Jail (n.d.) offer case management services to assist in

re-entry from the correctional system by providing resources for shelter, and treatment. Supplemental to case management, both jails offer an employment training program through food service company, *Aramark* that can potentially provide employment, but is not guaranteed.

F) Barriers offenders acquire upon their return into Milwaukee and those they return to once transitioned to supervision

The most paramount barrier ex-offenders that reside in Milwaukee County face is joblessness. Comprehensive joblessness statistics indicate race and age as a translator of the significance the stained job market and overall depressed economy that exists in Milwaukee. In a study tracking the joblessness rate among race of unemployed working age males between the years of 1970 and 2009, significant increases apply to White, Black, and Hispanic races, respectively. Corresponding with the preceding findings, statistics of ages of Milwaukee males in each race category in 2009 indicate much of the same; young adults (16 to 24 years) holding significantly high percentages of unemployment (Blacks- 69.2 percent, Whites- 44.4 percent, and Hispanics- 48.1 percent) following with those of prime working age (25 to 54 years; Blacks- 44 percent, Whites, 14.4 percent, and Hispanics- 25.8 percent) (Levine, 2010). Taking into account ex-offenders from Milwaukee incarcerated at a Wisconsin DOC institution, statistics conclude that the male/female ratio is 88/12 percent in addition to a race breakdown of 67 percent Black, 23 percent White, 8 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent deemed “Other” (Pawasarat, 2009). The same report indicates that the majority of Wisconsin DOC ex-offenders released are of prime working age with 92 percent under the age of 55 years and 69 percent under the age of 45 years. For those ex-offenders that are on probation or parole, 91 percent are under the age of 55 years coinciding with 74 percent of those ex-offenders under the age of 45 years (Pawasarat, 2009).

Alas, the figures demonstrate the continuing collapse of the job market that not only offer minute opportunity for Milwaukee residents, but even more diminutive prospect for ex-offenders releasing back to Milwaukee.

In partnership with employment barriers is accrued child support. It is reported that Milwaukee, next to Madison, Wisconsin, are two Wisconsin cities that make more arrests for nonpayment of child support, principally in minority neighborhoods within the respective cities (May, 2004). In Milwaukee County from April 1999 to April 2001, approximately 6,200 individuals were booked into Milwaukee County Jail with nonpayment of child support although nonpayment was not the primary offense (some individuals were stopped by police officers during routine traffic stops) (Mallon, McCartt Hess, 2013).

In Milwaukee County, the child-support agency has suspended payments by inmates since 2005, as long as the child's custodial parent agrees; approximately 80 percent of child support cases are suspended (Yoder, 2011). Furthermore, Yoder (2011) clarifies the high percentile is initiated by custodial parents recognizing once the incarcerated parent is released from prison, they will never earn enough to equally pay off their debt and make their regular payments, thus a large deficit driving them underground. On the other side of the spectrum, it is witnessed frequently that when individuals are released from prison, coinciding with significant barriers (i.e. housing and employment), child support is always present and oftentimes makes it difficult for ex-offenders to take care of themselves.

It can also be said that educational impediments pose as a substantial barrier toward reintegration into Milwaukee. A recent *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* report on graduation rates for the class of 2013 emphasizes the average graduation rate for seniors in Milwaukee Public

Schools declined to 60.6 percent, down from 61.8 percent for the graduating class in 2012 (Richards, 2014). The report continues

Specifically with Wisconsin DOC ex-offenders, Pawasarat (2009) indicates that overall education levels are much lower than education levels of the general Milwaukee population. Records conclude that 77 percent of ex-offenders returning to Milwaukee are drop-outs or have obtained a General Education Diploma (GED) only 13percent are high school graduates and 10 percent having post-high school education; the predominate age range that has a significant drop-out rate are those 30 years and under accounting for 91 percent (Pawasarat, 2009). Viewing overall statistics based on race/ethnicity in Milwaukee, graduation rates for 2013 depict Blacks and Hispanics decreasing in graduation rates, from 59.9 percent to 58.3 percent and Hispanics having a more drastic decrease from 59 percent in 2012 to 56.4 percent in 2013 (Richards, 2014).

Whether an ex-offender directly suffers from substance abuse or distributes narcotics, substance abuse treatment plays a crucial role in the reintegration process. With Milwaukee in the epicenter between Chicago, Illinois and Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, the city is utilized as an easy access to drug distribution and weapons. Additionally, Milwaukee is home to General Mitchell International Airport and the Port of Milwaukee which also host as transportation which allow for an accessible passage for other countries that are known for drug manufacturing and distribution: Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Mexico (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). The U.S. Department of Justice Milwaukee High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HITDTA) (2007) report that powder and crack cocaine are in the most demand as well as the primary drug that contributes to the violence and overdose deaths in Milwaukee; Heroin trails as the second-greatest drug threat within demand, distribution, and overdose deaths. Interestingly, Milwaukee HITDTA (2007) describes Marijuana as the most commonly abused drug in

Milwaukee, however is not associated with property or personal crimes as the previously mentioned drugs. Holzer et al. (2003) conclude approximately three-fourths of ex-offenders in Milwaukee have had substance abuse problems.

Accompanying substance abuse is continuing mental health treatment when re-entering the community. Figures indicate that one-third of men and two-thirds of women in Wisconsin state prisons have mental health conditions with more than 5,000 taking medications to treat mental illnesses (Hertel, 2013). Moreover, once state prison inmates are released, they are given two weeks of pills and a four-week prescription; county jail inmates often get less than state inmates, allocated as little as three days of pills (Hertel, 2013). Centralizing on Milwaukee, there are non-profit programs such as *Infallible Helping Hands* and *Opening Avenues to Reentry Success* that connect males and females with psychiatric services. Despite the fact there are psychiatric programs catered to ex-offenders, there remains several issues within initiation and continuance of mental health treatment. Recently released offenders oftentimes jump through numerous obstacles and prioritize other barriers over refilling their psychiatric medications. In addition to the preceding obstacle, ex-offenders are placed on waiting lists with the minute amount of psychiatrists contracted to practice services and/or who accept state-funded insurance (BadgerCare) (Hertel, 2013). In a *National Public Radio* interview with non-profit agencies *Wisconsin Community Services* and *Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board*, Pitrof (2014) illustrates that many ex-offenders in Milwaukee and other regions have a lifetime of trauma, anger and frustration, and untreated mental health hindrances require years of rehabilitation and counseling before they are capable of addressing other barriers such as employment.

Having a criminal record provides difficulty in securing housing. Ex-offenders are categorized into different housing circumstances. The primary housing barrier is a majority of

ex-offenders returning to a family or friend's residence in their old neighborhood which are a gateway for criminal activity, thus higher chances of recidivating. In other circumstances, ex-offenders are no longer welcome to a residence due to "burned bridges" or chose not to go back to a residence due to potential negative situations. In the instance an ex-offender attempts to establish an independent residence, they are oftentimes barred as not only low-income/ low-rent housing is scarce, but many do not qualify for Section 8HUD if convicted of a drug crime (NPR, 2002).

III. Theoretical Framework

There are many theories/schools of theory that provide diverse explanations of criminal activity. Although there is not a sole interpretation to why one chooses a life path of criminality, existing criminological theories purport a foundation in conceiving ideology behind criminal activity. The theoretical framework that will be presented approaches sociological perspectives Differential Association, Social Structure, and Symbolic Interactionism. These theories provide not only an explanation to the revolving door effect of criminal activity in Milwaukee, but contribute to recommendations for efficient re-entry programs in the Milwaukee community.

A) Differential Association Theory

In the late-1930s, Edward Sutherland introduced the differential association theory which modeled a theoretical framework that explains how criminal values could be culturally transmitted to individuals from their significant others (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010). Sutherland's Differential Association Theory applies emphasis toward how one learns criminal behavior versus why one chooses a life of criminality. Within the preceding definition, Sutherland developed nine propositions (Akers, Jennings, 2009):

- 1) Criminal behavior is learned;
- 2) Criminal behavior is learned in interaction with other persons in the process of communication;
- 3) The principal part of criminal behavior is occurs within personal groups;
- 4) The learning includes techniques of committing the crime which can be very complicated or very simple, and the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes;

- 5) The specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the legal codes as favorable or unfavorable;
- 6) An individual becomes delinquent due to an excess of definitions favorable to violations of the law over unfavorable definitions to violation of the law;
- 7) The process of learning criminal behavior by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any additional learning;
- 8) Despite criminal behavior being an expression of general needs and values, it is not explained by those general needs and values because anti-criminal behavior is an expression of the same needs and values; and
- 9) Differential association varies in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity. The most frequent, longest-running, earliest, and closest influences will be most effectual or determinant of learned behavior.

Although the above nine propositions are the composition of the Differential Association Theory, Sutherland specifically illustrates that proposition six describes the general concept in which the theory is derived from: when an individual absorbs favorable definitions toward violations of the law in excess of the definitions unfavorable to violations of the law, that individual is more probable to commit the criminal act(s) (Akers, Jennings, 2009).

In the most recent U.S. Census Report (2014), 28.3 percent of Milwaukee residents were considered below poverty level, drastically higher than the state percentage of 12.5 percent. Moreover, it is reported that Milwaukee ranks 8th in poverty rates among U.S. cities with a population of 300,000 or more (Social Development Commission, 2012). It is assumed that poverty can be attributed to filtering in subdivisions of socioeconomic barriers such as to

inadequate nutrition, exposure to environmental toxins, family and street violence, residential instability, mental health issues, diminished educational achievement, and decreased access to employment opportunities (Social Development Commission, 2012).

Taking into consideration socioeconomic repercussions from poverty coinciding with the statistical evidence of poverty in Milwaukee, the premise of the differential association theory can be entrenched from socioeconomic reverberations that stimulate favorable stances toward criminalistics culture and lifestyle. An illustration of this can be observed in the 53206 area code, known as the area in Milwaukee that accounts for a significant amount of not only criminal activity in the city, but an immense amount of those residents being incarcerated. Placing aside the controversy of race-related statistics in this particular area, it is reported that by the time males are between the age ranges of 30 to 34, 38 percent of men in the 53206 area code will have not spent time in an adult state correctional institution, in other words, 62 percent of men having been incarcerated by the time they reach this age range (Leichenger, 2014). The 53206 zip code is also hindered in opportunity for ex-offenders returning to the area, as a May 2009 University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee study concluded, full-time employment was available for only one of every twenty-five job-seeking people in six of the poorest Milwaukee zip codes (Leichenger, 2014). Moreover, the zip code is prone to lack of access to treatment such as drug-related, educational, and housing programs, as they are located in other areas of the city, thus making it difficult for ex-offenders needing the assistance being as they experience transportation issues among the many other hindrances. The preceding example defines how residents segregated to the poorest areas of Milwaukee are among a community motto that utters criminogenic mentality that influences and silently reiterates to ex-offenders that the criminal lifestyle is the only route in which one can survive.

B) Social Structural Theories: Inner City Strain and Subcultural Trends

The beginnings of the strain theory, developed by Robert Merton, stem from Emile Durkheim's anomie concept which is based on the notion if the societal equilibrium is disrupted, there is no longer guidance for individuals or groups toward normalcy necessary to fit into their respective community or society (Cote, 2002). Merton redefined his own anomie alternative that focuses on the "American Dream": the image that as long as individuals work hard and pay their dues, their goals will be achieved (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010). With this idea, Merton proposed that everyone was socialized to believe in the American Dream, no matter which economic class they belong to in childhood. Despite this, Merton acknowledges that only a small percentage of people from the lower class achieve material wealth with the majority of children realistically not having much of a chance at achieving such, thus emphasis placed on material goals and minimization on the importance of conventional means causing strain and frustration as a result (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010). Merton acknowledges most people that are poor will not resort to crime to achieve materialistic goals, however individuals deal with the limited economic structure of society through a model of five adaptations to strain.

The first adaptation, the most common, is through conformity in which individuals buy in to the established, traditional goals set by society. The second adaptation, ritualism (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010), in which individuals focus on traditional goals and are content with such, but do not pursue material goals. The third adaptation is innovation (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010). Innovators are motivated by traditional goals of the American Dream, but are not willing to obtain it in the traditional ways set by society. The fourth adaptation is retreatism (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010). Retreatists do not seek to achieve materialistic goals nor do they abide by the idea of traditional achievement though hard work. The fifth adaptation is rebellion (Tibbetts,

Hemmens, 2010). Rebels recognize the idea of traditional goal of the American Dream, but do not abide by traditional achievement appointed by society. Merton also recognized that an individual can embody more than one adaption (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010).

The subcultural theories of crime are based on the concept that there are distinguished groups in society that socialize their children to certain beliefs and modes toward life as well as belief that certain activities that violate laws are acceptable and positive ways to behave (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010). Many studies have contributed to the evolution of the subcultural theory. The 1967 experiment conducted by Ferracuti and Wolfgang examining violent themes of inner-city youth in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania concluded that violence was culturally learned response to deal with negative life barriers. Moreover, violence as a norm in the environment of that particular culture will emphasize violence over other options or societal norms (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010). Walter Miller also contributed to defining a theoretical model toward the subcultural theory in which he posited that the entire lower class has its own cultural value system. Miller proposed that the cultural value system was composed of six focal concerns (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010). The first focal concern is fate which refers to luck that discounts responsibility; the second is autonomy which is the value of independence from authority; third is trouble which refers to refraining from engaging in legal problems and personal difficulties; fourth is excitement which is the engagement in activities that embolden being a part of the lower class; the fifth is toughness which is maintaining a reputation; the last focal concern, smartness, is attributed to “street smarts” and the ability to con others (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010). An additional experimental contribution by Elijah Anderson that focused on inner-city African Americans illustrate a disposition of hopelessness, segregation, discouragement, and misery (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010). Anderson’s theory further elaborated that although many African

Americans accepted middle class values and goals, those same values and goals do not exist on the street (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010).

Dr. John M. Hagedorn exemplified the abovementioned notions behind the strain and subcultural theories in his Milwaukee, Wisconsin study that, with the assistance of former gang members, analyzed drug distribution in two communities within the city as well as outer lying suburbs in Milwaukee County. Although the study is dated, many of the trends Hagedorn observed are existent in Milwaukee currently. Over a five-year span of studying neighborhoods that were deemed “in the middle” between poverty and the more affluent neighborhoods, Hagedorn found that drug distribution was regarded as a business in poor neighborhoods in Milwaukee (Hagedorn, 1998). Moreover, Hagedorn related the drug business as a demonstration of economic survival in neighborhoods which did not offer prospect of success in reaching materialistic goals the conventional way set by society. Hagedorn also illustrated other notable occurrences during the study; he observed despite some parents concentrating on keeping their children sheltered from violence and the general concept among street life, they experienced temptation of materialistic goals (i.e. money) via peers and family members, thus saw opportunity to reach those goals quickly while doing what it takes to survive in their respective communities (Hagedorn, 1998).

In the two concentrated communities in Milwaukee, Hagedorn points out that it came down to economics versus in the more affluent, suburban neighborhoods in which drug distribution and use was solely as a way to relieve stress and for socialization purposes (Hagedorn, 1998). As stated, although there is not one clear explanation for criminal behavior and lifestyle, Hagedorn’s study depicts not only strain and frustration accustomed in two communities aspiring to attain the

American Dream through unconventional ways, but subcultural trends how drug distribution and use is interpreted in different areas of the city.

C) Symbolic interactionism: Labeling Theory's contribution to recidivism in Milwaukee

Symbolic interactionism is considered to contribute to the explanation of crime and deviance in various ways. Symbolic interactionism is a theory that explains the key to understanding social behavior is founded in the processes in which individuals actively interpret situations (Birkbeck, LaFree, 1993). Interactionists seek to interpret the link between the motivation of the offender, the opportunity for the crime, and deviance is conceivably linked; interaction theorists aspire to illustrate the complex processes to successfully carry out crime and deviance (Birkbeck, LaFree, 1993).

A subdivision of symbolic interactionism, the labeling theory, was based on the previous works of symbolic interactionists George Herbert Mead and sociologist Charles Cooley. George Herbert Mead proposed an individual's sense of self is constantly constructed and reconstructed through social interactions made on a daily basis (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010). Moreover, Mead suggested that every person is always aware of how he or she is judged by others via social interactions (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010).

Other theorists have contributed to additional explanation and illustration of the labeling theory. Edwin Lemert proposed a model of "primary deviance", which is predominantly made up of youth, which describes interaction with police officers for nonviolent and non-frequent offenses, yet are labeled upon this interaction (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010). Lemert stated that the stigma resulting from that label convinces those individuals to escalate to secondary deviance in which offending become more serious and frequent (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010). The principal

belief behind Lemert's theory is if a label had not been placed on an individual in their adolescent years, secondary deviance would not be in existence for that individual (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010).

A pictorial of the labeling theory in Milwaukee can be recognized in a 2001 study conducted by Devah Pager (2007) in which the impact of a criminal record was measured against individuals who do not have a criminal record, but were equally qualified. The design of the study included four male college students as testers, two black men and two white men, who were divided into teams. Pager (2007) assigned the men fictitious résumés and one individual from each team a fictitious criminal record. The experiment proceeded to seeking entry-level jobs requiring no previous experience, no education beyond high school necessary, and those that did not involve health care, care for children or the elderly, and those that required the handling of firearms (Pager, 2007). The study concluded with the team of two white men that certain categories of employment were viewed as "appropriate" for ex-offenders (in this study, it was a cleaning company). The white male with the criminal record was found to be discriminated against once it was discovered he had a criminal background (Pager, 2007). In regards to the two black men, the study determined that callbacks from jobs were minimal and there was apprehension to hire the men because of their race and criminal record, not based on their qualifications (Pager, 2007). Although the study places a moderate amount of emphasis on race and criminal record, it was clearly found that ex-offenders are instantaneously labeled upon the employer observing a criminal record. Moreover, it was acknowledged that Milwaukee has a job market that is very miniscule in addition to hesitancy in hiring ex-offenders, thus placing a wedge between public interest and private costs that are contrary to promoting successful prison re-entry (Pager, 2007).

Through various research, the labeling theory has suggested many consequences that endorse deviancy and criminalistic behavior. The labeling theory can contribute not only to identification of oneself as a delinquent or a criminal, it can also introduce structural impediments to a conventional lifestyle (Grattet, 2011). The structural impediments generated under the life course theory are postulated to derive from labeling in adolescence partnering with strain theorists claiming that certain demographic factors (i.e. class, neighborhood, significant relationships) stimulate labeling by authority figures (Tibbetts, Hemmens, 2010).

IV. Recommendations

The revolving-door effect of offender's recidivating is an imperative issue that ex-offenders in Milwaukee have encountered in recent years. It can be challenged that current re-entry programs offered in Milwaukee be considered as discrepant within the protocol for services delivered, the limited availability of certain resources, and yearly cuts in funding and shortage in budgets. The following recommendations will reflect current programs offered in Wisconsin prisons and within social service agencies in Milwaukee that have been proven effective. Likewise, the recommendations will reflect programs adopted outside Milwaukee that have been proven effective in successful reintegration and decrease in recidivism rates.

A) Cognitive Restructuring Program/Rational Thinking Program

With escalating prison populations, cognitive behavioral therapy has transitioned into correctional entities to address underlying cognitive barriers that promote the continued cycle of criminality.

The Cognitive Intervention Program (CGIP) was developed by Sandy Reno and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections in 1994. CGIP was not implemented until March of 1998 which was aimed at the male offender demographic and consists of the following areas: Anger, Relapse Prevention, and Criminal Attitudes (Van Dieten, 1997). Since its execution, CGIP has been tailored into a more elaborate format addressing the following areas: approach phases of behavior change, alter criminal thoughts and beliefs, increase control of impulse, and increase knowledge of problem solving skills (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, n.d.). According to the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (2011), the primary goal is not to force the offender to change, but to motivate the offender to change for themselves. CGIP is an approximately

fifteen- week program that is comprised of thirty lessons. The lessons are divided into two modules: Phase I and Phase II. Phase I of the program focuses on discovering the offender's thinking pattern(s) and define how their thoughts affect their feelings, behaviors and the consequences they experience. Phase II allows for offenders to identify and evaluate personal beliefs, attitudes, and thinking patterns associated with criminal behavior and delinquency in the past (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2011). Participants meet approximately two to three times per week in which they are to participate through role playing activities and written homework assignments (n.d.).

Modern studies have concluded positive response to cognitive behavioral therapy. A recent study on adult and juvenile offenders conducted by Pearson, Lipton, Cleland, and Yee (2002) determined that cognitive behavioral approaches were more effective in reducing recidivism, when contrasted with a series of behavioral approaches. Another study by Mark Lipsey (2007) examined the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions: comparing different counseling and skill-building approaches. Lipsey concluded that cognitive behavioral skill-building approaches were more effective in the reduction of further criminal behavior than any other therapeutic interventions (Clark, 2010).

B) Workforce Programs

The avenue of employment is a substantial concern among ex-offenders returning to Milwaukee. In a 2006 job openings survey, the UW-Milwaukee Employment and Training found spatial mismatches between 15 available job openings and the job-seeking workforce where job seekers outnumbered full-time openings by a gap of 7 workers for every 1 job available (Pawasarat, 2007). In a counterpart 2009 University of Milwaukee report on

unemployment in Milwaukee County, it was illustrated that of 48, 131 unemployed Milwaukee County workers who received unemployment insurance, 6, 822 ex-offenders, 91 percent of the sample males, were receiving unemployment insurance (Celata, 2010). Moreover, it was found that the majority of those unemployed in Milwaukee County were concentrated within the most impoverished zip codes in the city (Celata, 2010).

The connotation of employment for ex-offenders establishes a foundation in the re-entry process for other barriers, but more importantly provides an avenue that deters ex-offenders from attaining their goals through criminal activity. Wisconsin's state prisons offer several employment-aimed programs and training, one being Badger Care Industries (BCI). Funded through revenue from the sales of goods produced by inmates, state statutes mandate that BCI provide training and work experience to provide the skills necessary once released (Carmichael, 2013). Wisconsin prisons also offer employment skills and training through Correctional Farms that include a creamery, crops, beef, and swine production (Carmichael, 2013). More recently, the Wisconsin DOC has established a new job training program which will aim to train thirty inmates a year in using computerized latches to make machine parts, potentially leading into entry-level positions once released (Halsted, 2014).

On a localized scale, Milwaukee County's most well-known county jail program is the Huber Program. The Huber Program is an alternative to archetypal model of incarceration in which offenders are sentenced to a modified program that grants the privilege of going to work or child care, but returning to the facility directly after their shift (Milwaukee House of Correction, n.d.). Coinciding with Huber, Milwaukee is home to non-profit agencies that assist with employment: Catholic Charities of Milwaukee, Justice 2000/Community Advocates, Milwaukee Workforce

Investment Board, Project Return, Safer Foundation, Social Development Commission, Spotted Eagle, and Wisconsin Community Services.

Two programs that have been deemed successful are New York City's Getting Out and Staying Out: Facilitating Offender Reentry and Center for Employment Opportunities: A transitional Jobs Reentry Model. Getting Out and Staying Out (GOSO) has been in operation since 2003 targeting young, incarcerated men in New York City's largest jail, Rikers Island (Solomon, 2012). Since its inception, GOSO has lowered recidivism rates with a measured 20 percent returning to jail or prison versus Rikers overall recidivism rate of 66 percent (Solomon, 2012). Upon acceptance into the program, inmates receive assistance from retired business executives with GED preparing and testing as well as one-on-one and group mentoring on living and soft skills. Upon transfer to another institution, GOSO volunteers regularly write the inmate in addition to continuously sending books and study material to assist with their respective development (Solomon, 2012). GOSO also has their own office in which ex-offenders are given a needs assessment which underlines prominent barriers, in turn, placing referrals out to various partner agencies. Additionally in the first visit, ex-offenders are given an alarm clock, a notepad, pens, a weekly planner, condoms, a metro fare card, and a resume (Solomon, 2012). Ex-offenders are to check in once a week for three months in which they meet with volunteer career counselors that link with local job finders (Solomon, 2012). The Center for Employment Opportunity (CEO) is a self-funded, non-profit organization with offices located throughout the New York City area as well as in California and Oklahoma that prepare for, locate, and retain jobs through its paid short-term transitional employment program (Solomon, 2012). CEO provides incentives that ensure employment satisfaction while rewarding ex-offenders for maintain employment through their noncash incentive Rapid Rewards Program in which they are

able to earn grocery store vouchers and fare for public transportation (Solomon, 2012). Statistics from 1992 to 1996 concluded that CEO placed 70 percent of ex-offenders in permanent, full-time positions. Furthermore, more recent statistics indicate from the period July 1, 2008 until June 30, 2009, the six-month retention rates for participants equaled 55 percent, a 22 percent increase from the previous 12-month period measured (Solomon, 2012).

C) Housing and Relocation

In Milwaukee, housing accompanies poverty hand-in-hand as many ex-offenders either return to residences in poverty-stricken areas, or inferior to that, have no stable release residence upon reentrance into their respective communities. Although federal programs such as Section 8 public housing exist, the availability remains depressed. In a 2013 report, it was estimated that 12,311 families were on a closed waiting list, while another list carries 1,903 disabled adults (Pabst, 2013). Moreover, 1,255 individuals are on a waiting list for rental assistance which gives an estimated total of 15, 400 applicants (Pabst, 2013). On a broader scale, it is estimated that in 2011, all states were at a projected loss of \$130 billion dollars in budgetary shortage (Solomon, 2012).

Despite budgetary deficiencies, particular non-profits in Milwaukee are available to ex-offenders in assisting into reintegration and transition into independent living. The Hope House of Milwaukee has several housing programs within their agency. Three of the programs: Thresholds, Surgeon's Quarters Single Room Occupancy, and Mercy Housing Johnston Center, have accommodated men and women in need of housing not only toward the housing itself, but support services such as education, mental health, and substance abuse (Hope House, 2014). Another agency that assists with housing, The Guest House, offers supportive permanent housing

to individuals in Milwaukee. Like Hope House, The Guest House provides one-on-one case management services with individuals to create a Person-Centered Service Plan with a primary goal of maintaining long-term housing, coinciding with other goals such as education, employment, medical care, mental health care, and sobriety (Guest House, 2014).

In addition to the local housing programs in the preceding paragraph, there are others that are considered successful in their respective approach. The city of Spokane, Washington developed The Spokane Homeless Assistance Response and Prevention Partnership (SHARPP) which provides services to incarcerated individuals who have no home to return to upon their release (Diaz et al., 2009). While still in custody, participants meet with the Community Re-entry Service Team to complete an in-depth application, assessment session, and “Responsible Renter Program” that will deem which type of housing is appropriate for them (Diaz, et al. 2009). Upon exiting the institution, the ex-offender moves to a transitional home and receive vocational training from Goodwill. Upon successful completion of classes and time in transitional housing, they are eligible for rental assistance (Diaz, et al., 2009). The city of St. Louis, Missouri has a non-profit program, Project Re-Connect, assist within the components deemed necessary for successful reentry: housing placement, employment assistance, substance abuse treatment, and case management (Diaz, et al., 2009). Statistics for the period of March 2007 to December 2008 concluded of the 411 ex-offenders participating in Project Re-Connect, only 34 had committed new offenses since being released from prison whereas 210 of 609 non-participants coming out of prison during the same period committed new criminal offenses (Diaz, et al., 2009).

D) Educational Programs

Milwaukee's adult population (25 and older) holds a high school diploma (80% city and 85% county) and has an undersized representation of college graduates (21.3% and 27.1%, respectively) (U.S. Census, 2013). Contrary to overall figures, the Wisconsin DOC data for released offender to Milwaukee County reveal a 77 percent rate of dropouts GED holders and 13 percent accounting as high school graduates, and 10 percent with education beyond high school (Pawasarat, 2009). Moreover, statistics are grim for men release that are 30 years of age and younger, as 91 percent are dropouts or GED holders, 7 percent are high school graduates, and 2 percent having education beyond high school (Pawasarat, 2009). A dissection for male ex-offenders 30 years of age and older illustrate 66 percent classified as dropouts or GED holders, 15 percent graduated high school, and 19 percent with post-high school education (Pawasarat, 2009).

Many education programs within local and state institutions are contracted through non-profit programs. In Milwaukee, the county's jail offers the Franklin Alternative Youth Program (FAYP) to 17 up to 21 year old inmates in addition to Word of Hope Ministries who assist inmates 18 years and older (House of Corrections, n.d.). Moreover, the Milwaukee House of Correction, in partnership with Wisconsin Community Services, conduct TABE testing in efforts to place inmates in programs tailored to their education level (House of Corrections, n.d.). Wisconsin's state prisons have established an arrangement with Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) and the Correctional Education Association (CEA) as well as Northstar Correctional Education Services (Office of Correctional Education, 2009).

In the Milwaukee community, there are several nonprofit agencies contracted to provide high school equivalent tutoring, preparation, and testing. Milwaukee Achiever provides various categories geared toward education such as literacy, accelerated learning, and English language learning (Milwaukee Achievers, 2014). Corresponding with Milwaukee Achievers, education-based programs YWCA of Southeastern Wisconsin and UMOS supply equivalent services. However, with services available at little-to-no cost, many ex-offenders do not utilize them once transitioned into the community due to lack of motivation, lack of transportation, and employment oftentimes superseding education (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). In efforts to get ex-offenders making participatory determination in addressing educational hindrances, it is proposed that court mandates impose educational obligations in conjunction with additional requirements. Furthermore, defining time frames in which a GED/HSED should be completed should be eradicated as many ex-offenders have low-literacy skills (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Institution and community collaboration is also responsible for encouraging a breach in which ex-offenders become apathetic toward educational barriers. Therefore, it is suggested that collaboration be executed to align ex-offenders in their transition into the community (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

E) Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Substance abuse and mental health account as a significant obstacle within the realm of attending to additional barriers. Similar to other cities, Milwaukee has a high proportion of residents that are in the continuous battle of substance abuse and/or suffer from mental health issues. A significant amount of those within that proportion are ex-offenders who do not have access to treatment due to lack of funds, transportation barriers, lack of knowledge as to what services are available, among other obstacles.

Milwaukee County is included in the Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) Program grant which adopts the diversion aspect of the grant. Through the court system pre-charging diversion or deferred prosecution, non-violent offenders who have a substance abuse and/or co-occurring mental health problems (Van Stelle, et al., 2011) participate in case management and treatment services. Upon successful completion of the program, no charges are filed or results in dismissal or reduction of the charges (Van Stelle, et al., 2011).

Many non-profit agencies also house substance abuse programs available for ex-offenders in Milwaukee. Al-Anon is a program tailored toward individuals with family members that suffer from substance abuse issues. Impact, Wiser Choice Alcohol and Other Drugs (AODA) Program, and Wisconsin Community Services are agencies in Milwaukee that offer screenings and from that point, place individuals into an appropriate treatment setting (Mental Health America Wisconsin, 2013).

Corresponding with substance abuse treatment is mental health. Milwaukee is known for the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Complex which aims to assist those who do not have the funds for treatment or are homeless, in developing treatment plans, medication maintenance, and if applicable, hospitalization for emergency treatment. Alas, the Milwaukee Mental Health Complex has come under scrutiny over the years due to oversight of patient treatment, misdiagnosis, and other negative factors (Kissinger, 2013). Despite the Milwaukee Mental Health Complex remains as the primary source for mental health treatment in Milwaukee, there are additional options accessible to ex-offenders. The National Alliance on Mental Illness in Milwaukee (NAMI) offers therapeutic sessions that are designed to sub groups in the community such as the African-American-based Access, Support, Knowledge, Family-to-Family which is for families that have a loved one who suffers from mental illness, In Our Own Voice introduces

mentally ill individuals to fellow sufferers of equivalent diagnosis, providing education and lifestyle to accommodate coping with the particular mental illness, and Peer-to-Peer is a program for all mentally ill individuals that delivers wellness and recovery education (NAMI, n.d.). In addition to NAMI, non-profit agency Wisconsin Community Services has a mental health clinic and offers services such as medication monitoring, housing assistance, benefit acquisition and an on-site pharmacy for patients with severe and persistent mental illness (Wisconsin Community Services, n.d.).

V. Summary and Conclusions

As recidivism rates continue to ascend in Milwaukee, the insistence of the reorganization and accessibility of re-entry programming is a necessary element in offering ex-offenders a realistic opportunity to prosper and not regress to criminal activity. In a 2009 report by the Council of State Governments Justice Center titled *Justice Reinvestment in Wisconsin: Analyses and Policy Options to Reduce Spending on Corrections and Increase Public Safety*, it was estimated that Wisconsin could save \$2.3 billion over the next 10 years by implementing the appropriate policies and conscientiously examining available resources (Lind, 2009).

As reassessment of policies and resources/programming are administered, the concern lies within the question of how ex-offenders released into Milwaukee's high crime and poverty pocket areas will overcome the obstacles faced upon their reintegration. The sole solution that is suggested is relocation, but this in itself is highly impractical in many regards. It is suggested that community risk level and community risk reduction a focus rather than offender surveillance and offender treatment (Byrne, 2009). The categories of offender location and community environment coinciding with offender risk level, timing, location, and quality of service/treatment provision signifies the alliance of community risk level and risk reduction (Byrne, 2009).

While the platform for community risk level and community risk reduction is paramount, specifically toward Milwaukee's north side neighborhoods, collaboration between existing non-profit agencies and private sectors is a contemporary ideal that can assist with ex-offender reintegration. Although it appears as a difficult partnership, public and private sectors must

establish limits of the separate programs while at the same time, contributing to the different areas in which they can assist with barriers (Solomon, 2012).

The confrontation in addressing recidivism in Milwaukee is not something private and public agencies can do alone. The general public, those who reside in Milwaukee's several communities have to also demonstrate the association between proactivity in individual offender rehabilitation programs and community protection. The bonding of individuals in the Milwaukee community and agencies can demonstrate not only a transformation for better communities, but provide ex-offenders a realistic and legitimate "second chance" in the opportunity to disconnect from a criminalistic lifestyle.

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