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Author(s):	**Christine Lindquist, Tasseli McKay, Mindy Herman Stahl, Ada Pecos Melton, Rita Martinez, David J. Melton**
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Cross-Site Evaluation of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Tribal Green Reentry Program

Final Technical Report

Prepared for

Sandra Meditz and Malinda Goodrich
Federal Research Division
Library of Congress
Washington, DC 20540-4840

Jennifer Tyson and Patrick Dunkhorst
Demonstration Programs Division
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
U.S. Department of Justice
810 7th St., NW
Washington, DC 20531

Prepared by

Christine Lindquist (RTI)
Tasseli McKay (RTI)
Mindy Herman Stahl (RTI)
Ada Pecos Melton (American Indian Development Associates)
Rita Martinez (American Indian Development Associates)
David J. Melton (American Indian Development Associates)

RTI International
3040 East Cornwallis Road
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

American Indian Development Associates, LLC
2401 12th St., NW, # 212
Albuquerque, NM 87104

RTI Project Number 0213042.003.001

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1

Executive Summary

1.1 The Tribal Green Reentry Initiative

From 2009 through 2014, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) funded demonstration grants to incorporate green technologies and environmentally sustainable activities in programs designed to help detained and reentering tribal youth successfully reintegrate into their communities and to prevent future juvenile justice system involvement among at-risk youth. Three American Indian tribes received Tribal Juvenile Detention and Reentry Green Demonstration ("Green Reentry") grants: the Hualapai Indian Tribe (Arizona), the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI; Mississippi), and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe (RST; South Dakota). Throughout their grant periods, the three sites received training and technical assistance from the Tribal Juvenile Detention and Reentry Resource and Technical Assistance Center, managed by the Education Development Center.

1.2 The Cross-Site Evaluation

The cross-site evaluation was led by RTI International and American Indian Development Associates, LLC (AIDA), from 2011 through 2014. The goals of the cross-site evaluation were to document the implementation of the Green Reentry programs and to determine the extent of the initiative's impact on the tribal youth and communities served. The evaluation included a comprehensive process evaluation and a mixed-methods outcome evaluation.

The evaluation team conducted a start-up site visit and four rounds of data collection visits to each site to document the evolution of the programs over the course of their grants. During each site visit, semistructured interviews were conducted with program staff, organizational partners, youth participating in the programs, and their parents. In addition, focus groups were held with tribal elders and parents. All evaluation activities were fielded with approval from the three participating tribes and RTI's Institutional Review Board. Data sources for the evaluation included

- four rounds of in-person interviews with program staff and stakeholders (n = 77),
- four rounds of interviews with youth participants (n = 56),
- three rounds of interviews with parents of participants (n = 41),
- one round of focus groups with elders (n = 32),
- one round of focus groups with parents of justice-involved youth (n = 17),
- structured program observations,

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- program documents, and
- administrative admissions data maintained by the juvenile detention centers (JDCs).

1.3 Process Evaluation Findings: The Implementation Experiences of the Green Reentry Programs

Data from the above sources were analyzed to describe the implementation of the program at all three sites. There were many similarities in how programs were administered and how they addressed barriers. All sites integrated a mix of conventional juvenile justice programming (e.g., individual assessment, reentry planning, education, counseling) with green activities. Additionally, all incorporated traditional tribal culture, all were run by tribal criminal justice agencies, and all targeted youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

Staffing and Budgeting. All three grantees had a lean staffing structure, with no more than three full-time positions supported at each site. Grant-funded staff spent the majority of their time leading green projects and engaging in intensive individual work with youth. Staff turnover and time constraints posed challenges in all three sites, causing periodic stagnation and difficulty in resolving technical issues that arose.

Developing and Maintaining Organizational Partnerships. Partnerships were key to the success of each program. Sites had approximately 14 partnerships each, the main roles of which included (1) providing direct services; (2) referring eligible youth, receiving referrals, or both; and (3) providing in-kind donations. The most common partners were government or juvenile justice agencies; green technology experts; tribal departments, particularly schools, behavioral health services, and employment agencies; and parents, elders, and cultural experts. Tribal courts and the tribal councils strongly influenced the success of the programs. In general, partnerships were viewed favorably, and the key facilitators for successful collaborations were good leadership, reciprocity, and frequent and consistent communication. The most frequently cited obstacles to collaboration were partner turnover, competing demands on partners' time, and political barriers.

Implementing Green Activities. Gardening and horticulture education were core components at all three sites. Youth were involved in all aspects of gardening, including planting seedlings, performing ongoing maintenance, and harvesting. The grantees incorporated Native plants and traditional planting techniques and used Native design principles. Sites also installed hydroponic or aquaponic units (or both) and built greenhouses using design techniques that aligned with local culture, climate, and terrain. The most complex technical challenges encountered by grantees pertained to the greenhouse component. Other green components included beekeeping, recycling, participating in equine therapy, raising chickens, and installing solar panels. Cultural components, including traditional healing, talking circles, sweat lodges, cultural excursions, and traditional crafts, were added to or infused with the green technology teachings. In addition, sites invested in case management and other individualized services to ensure that youths' holistic needs were met.

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Working Within Tribal JDC Security Constraints. The most serious implementation challenge encountered by the grantees was difficulty navigating the security constraints of JDCs. This challenge led to significant, unplanned changes in two programs that could not access youth residing in JDC facilities (because of concerns with security risks) and therefore could not provide reentry planning and services before the youths' release. The lack of time that JDC youth were available for programming and lack of JDC officer support for green activities also plagued the programs. Factors that influenced whether grantees could effectively access confined youth included JDC administration support for the program, whether green activities could be located within the secured perimeter of the JDC, and whether mechanisms existed to allow JDC youth to participate in programming outside of the secured perimeter.

Engaging Youth. Overall, the programs successfully engaged youth in program activities and taught them new skills. Having staff that built trust with youth and related well to young people was thought to facilitate youth engagement, as was selecting hands-on activities that allowed youth to learn by doing. Maintaining youths' involvement after their period of mandated participation was difficult in all three sites. Stakeholders emphasized that lengthy post-release support is needed and reentry staff should try to continue to provide support for youth for as long as possible, facilitating continued involvement by inviting youth to participate in appealing events selected with their input.

Involving Parents. Involving parents in the Green Reentry programs proved challenging, and parents and staff appeared to have disparate views about the barriers and solutions to parental involvement. Parents cited confusion about program rules or expectations, lack of communication with program and juvenile justice system staff, and many competing responsibilities, whereas staff perceptions of barriers to parental involvement focused more on parents' behavioral health issues and logistical obstacles. Staff tended to identify punitive strategies to mandate parental involvement, whereas parents emphasized improved communication.

Involving Elders and Incorporating Traditional Tribal Culture. Grantees were very committed to incorporating cultural components into their programs and generally encountered few barriers in doing so. However, elder involvement was difficult to secure because of attitudinal barriers and logistical considerations. Barriers tended to decrease when existing relationships were leveraged, outreach efforts were intensified, and youth-elder relationships were more reciprocal, such as when youth volunteered at the tribal elderly/senior center or donated produce from their gardens for elders' meals. The strategy that directly facilitated elder involvement was bringing the youth to the elderly/senior center (rather than expecting elders to come to the program site) for volunteering and participating with elders in specific activities.

Building Community Awareness and Sustainability. Grantees marketed their Green Reentry programs to increase community awareness through informal (e.g., word of mouth, youth attendance at community events) and formal strategies (e.g., making presentations to their tribal councils, disseminating newsletters and flyers, giving announcements at public events). The most effective strategy in gaining public support was thought to be having youth make

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tangible contributions to the community through community service projects. Stakeholders at all three sites reported that deteriorating economic circumstances would make full program sustainability after the end of federal funding difficult, but they reported that it would likely be possible to sustain some critical infrastructure (e.g., gardens, greenhouses, beehives), partnership networks, and service coordination for youth.

1.4 Outcome Findings: The Impact of the Green Reentry Programs on Community and Youth Outcomes

Staff and stakeholders identified several systems-level impacts that they attributed to the Green Reentry initiative. Respondents cited stronger partnerships among tribal agencies and youth-serving organizations on the reservations where they operated as an important systems-level outcome of the Green Reentry Initiative. Respondents also observed improved service coordination for individual youth among tribal courts and youth detention, probation, social services, behavioral health, education, and community organizations (e.g., Boys and Girls Club).

The analysis of interview data from youth, parents, staff, and stakeholders identified many perceived changes among youth participating in the Green Reentry program. Changes were observed across the domains of character, emotional health and well-being, cultural knowledge and identity, school engagement, community engagement, and interpersonal relationships. Parents and staff reported that youth were more respectful, helpful, and confident. Parents also noticed that their children seemed better able to manage anger, and many youth credited the program with helping them to cope better with stress and to eliminate substance abuse. Youth also reported increased cultural knowledge as a result of program participation and seemed to form or reinvigorate their cultural identities. Both parents and youth emphasized that the program helped youth to improve their school attendance, get back on track for a high school diploma, or attain a general equivalency diploma (GED). Furthermore, interviewees across all groups described improvements in Green Reentry program participants' peer relationships as well as a general increase in positive relationships with adults, including community elders and family members.

The quantitative outcome component, which was designed to document recidivism outcomes for youth who participated in Green Reentry programming, revealed that fairly high proportions of Green Reentry youth had a new JDC booking within 6 months of program participation (37% of MBCI participants, 43% of Hualapai participants, and 60% of RST participants). Within 24 months of program participation, over three-fourths of Green Reentry participants (84% of MBCI participants, 78% of Hualapai participants, and 78% of RST participants) had had a new JDC booking. However, in the two sites in which a comparison group was constructed for the purpose of determining whether recidivism was lower for Green Reentry youth than for youth who did not participate in the program, it appeared that, at least for new JDC bookings within 6 and 12 months, Green Reentry participants had lower recidivism than comparable youth not enrolled in the programs. This finding suggests that participation in Green Reentry programs may have been associated with short-term reductions in recidivism but that the effects were not sustained over time. Given the extremely small sample sizes and lack of

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data on potential confounding variables (which precluded significance tests and the use of multivariate analytic techniques) and the limited options available for identifying methodologically rigorous comparison groups, however, this finding should be interpreted with caution.

1.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

As demonstration grantees in an innovative area of programming that had not previously been attempted, the Green Reentry grantees were extremely successful at implementing a diverse set of green projects and intensively serving youth. Despite encountering numerous implementation challenges, interviewees reported that the programs were very successful at developing strong relationships with youth, teaching them new skills, and exposing them to a new way of thinking. Findings from the recidivism analysis suggest that Green Reentry participants had lower recidivism—at least in the short term—than comparable youth not enrolled in the programs. In addition, the programs built close networks among tribal agencies and youth-serving organizations on the reservations where they worked, with many staff and stakeholders feeling that service coordination for youth had improved as a result of their efforts. Increasing community awareness and support for their programs over time—achieved by a strong commitment to having youth give back to their communities, as well as the physical visibility of various green projects—was cited as another success of the Green Reentry programs. Finally, the gardens, greenhouses, and beehives developed through the Green Reentry initiative will provide an infrastructure for youth to engage in green activities in future years, even after the grants have ended.

Practice recommendations based on the evaluation of the OJJDP Green Reentry initiative include the following:

- ***Staffing and budgeting effectively.*** Ensure that sufficient staffing resources are set aside, based on the level of intensity envisioned (e.g., one-on-one work with youth, parental outreach, transportation), and that overall project management time is sufficiently budgeted. Resource sharing and leveraging partner and community infrastructure resources are also essential to maximize effective and efficient use of available resources. To ensure the long-term sustainability of green projects, budget for the ongoing maintenance required.

- ***Nurturing partnerships.*** Include collaborators in the planning process, build in reciprocal relationships, formalize agreements, and provide training for partners on an ongoing basis or as things change in the program. Establishing effective communication policies and having a qualified project manager overseeing operations is essential for effective coordination of partners.

- ***Planning for successful implementation of green activities.*** Start small and basic, building toward larger, more complex projects. Select projects with an eye toward sustainability, potential for youth to be involved in a hands-on way, and availability of educational credits. Make sure that staff have the expertise required or that paid experts or organizational partners with the needed skills can be brought in. Confirm

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that staff and youth have the time available to complete start-up and ongoing maintenance tasks.

- ***Developing effective strategies to work within the security constraints of a JDC.*** Gain top-level support from JDC administrators and staff during the program planning stage. Working together, identify what outdoor space is feasible to use for green projects and determine which youth can participate in programs outside the secured perimeter. Consider mechanisms that may be used to allow youth housed in JDCs to participate in community events. Identify tasks that may be required of correctional officers and determine whether such tasks can be included in their job descriptions.

- ***Maximizing youth involvement.*** Hire staff that sincerely care about and can effectively connect with youth. It is imperative that staff, partners, and volunteers are culturally informed and competent, will maintain youth confidentiality, and know how to treat youth with respect. In addition, tailor activities to the interest of participants and prioritize hands-on, small-group activities.

- ***Engaging parents and extended family members in meaningful ways.*** Anticipate the significant effort and persistence that will be necessary to engage parents, extended family, and elders. Maintain frequent, consistent communication with parents and other family members, and develop a variety of strategies for inviting participation in program activities. Design the program as a whole-family approach that engages siblings and extended family members.

- ***Developing effective strategies for involving elders and incorporating culture into program designs.*** Extensive outreach will also be needed to involve elders. Activities with elders often work best when youth are brought to them, youth offer some form of community service to elders, respect is extended on both sides, and appreciation is shown to elders for their valuable contributions. Also, consider cultural competence, cultural knowledge, and ability to enlist elders and other community volunteers in the delivery of cultural components when hiring program staff.

- ***Promoting program support and sustainability.*** Plan for sustainability from the beginning of the program. Gain tribal council support at the conceptual stage, during implementation, and for future growth or maintenance. Develop program policies that can sustain staff, partner, and volunteer efforts, as well as service recipients and their families. Strengthen community support by promoting the visible and tangible contributions that youth who participate in the Green Reentry program can make.

Recommendations for future research and evaluation include the following:

- ***Capturing high-quality process data.*** Use a culturally relevant approach to collecting data. Obtain evolving and well-rounded perspectives of program implementation by engaging in frequent site visits, observing program activities, and capturing the perspective of all relevant stakeholders.

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- ***Establishing a data collection infrastructure.*** Work with site staff to facilitate the collection of program data, including participant-level data on basic characteristics, program "dosage," and a broad set of relevant outcomes. Determine what data are needed, where they can be obtained, and in what format they exist as early in the data collection process as possible.

- ***Exploring new research questions.*** In addition to further research that contributes to the increasing body of knowledge about risk and protective factors for juvenile delinquency and recidivism in tribal communities, additional research is needed to explore the role of extended family in shaping outcomes for justice-involved tribal youth and to determine how the integration of tribal culture into reentry programing influences program outcomes.

In sum, the evaluation has documented the success of efforts to incorporate technology into juvenile justice delinquency prevention and reentry programming. Green components, when combined with conventional justice system services, offer an innovative approach to providing youth with employable skills as well as the life skills needed to problem solve, work well with others, and contribute productively to the community as law-abiding citizens. Infusing cultural traditions into this approach can increase the likelihood that reentry programs for American Indian and Alaska Native youth are relevant, engaging, useful in helping youth bond to the family and community, and supportive of prosocial behavior and holistic health.

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Introduction

From 2009 through 2014, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) funded demonstration grants to incorporate green technologies and environmentally sustainable activities in programs designed to help justice-detained and reentering tribal youth successfully reintegrate into their communities and to prevent future criminal behavior among at-risk youth. Three American Indian (AI) tribes received Tribal Juvenile Detention and Reentry Green Demonstration ("Green Reentry") grants: the Hualapai Indian Tribe (Arizona), the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI; Mississippi), and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe (RST; South Dakota). Throughout their grant periods, the grantees received training and technical assistance (TTA) from the Tribal Juvenile Detention and Reentry Resource and Technical Assistance Center, managed by the Education Development Center (EDC).

Because of the unique nature of the demonstration programs, particularly the incorporation of green technologies and environmentally sustainable activities in the context of a juvenile justice initiative, an evaluation was funded to comprehensively document the implementation of the Green Reentry programs and to determine the extent of the initiative's impact on the tribal youth and communities served. RTI International and American Indian Development Associates, LLC (AIDA), were contracted by the Library of Congress to conduct the cross-site evaluation of OJJDP's Green Reentry program. The evaluation, which was conducted from 2011 through 2014, had three objectives: implement a comprehensive process evaluation, conduct a mixed-methods outcome evaluation, and disseminate study findings through technical and practitioner-oriented products.

The current report summarizes the implementation experiences and program impact of the three demonstration grantees, as documented by the cross-site evaluation. After a brief literature review that provides context for the Green Reentry initiative (***Section 3***), we describe the initiative (***Section 4***) and cross-site evaluation methodology (***Section 5***) in more detail. ***Section 6*** presents the process evaluation findings, including detailed descriptions of the programs and an analysis of cross-site implementation experiences, including staffing and budgeting, building organizational partnerships, implementing green activities, working within tribal juvenile detention center (JDC) security constraints, engaging youth, involving parents and elders, incorporating tribal culture, and fostering community awareness and sustainability. ***Section 7*** presents the outcome evaluation findings, including qualitative findings on perceived community and youth impact and quantitative findings on the impact of the programs on recidivism. Finally, ***Section 8*** provides recommendations for practice and policy and outlines future research directions suggested from the evaluation findings.

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3

Background

There are 566 federally recognized tribes in the U.S., with American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) making up approximately 5.2 million of the total U.S. population (Norris, Vines, & Hoeffel, 2012). About half the AI/AN population lives on reservations, and a third are under age 18 (Norris et al., 2012). Despite facing a long history of trauma, AI/AN people are thriving. Research with AI/AN communities illuminates the protective nature of their belief in the connectedness of an individual to his or her family, community, culture, and natural environment (Mohatt, Fok, Burket, Henry, & Allen, 2011). A number of recent studies provide insight into the risk and protective factors and resiliency among AI/AN youth, as well as into promising tribal prevention practices and interventions (Costello, Farmer, Angold, Burns, & Erkanli, 1997; Dick, Manson, & Beals, 1993; LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006; Pearson, 2009; Pridemore, 2005). Understanding AI/AN youth risk and protective factors is important for policy makers, tribal service providers, and funders to understand what puts youth at risk for engaging in violence or being victimized and what strengths youth and families possess that could buffer the risks and enable more positive youth outcomes. This research on protective factors and culturally relevant approaches to interventions with AI/AN youth may offer import insights into implementing reentry programs for tribal youth.

3.1 Tribal Youth Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System

In 2008, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency reported that AI/AN youth are disproportionately involved with the juvenile justice system: they are represented among adjudicated youth at twice their representation in the general U.S. population (Hartney, 2008). Delinquency cases involving AI youth increased 52% between 1985 and 2007 (Sickmund, 2011). In 2008, AI/AN youth represented half the juvenile federal court caseload (Motivans & Snyder, 2011), and 65% of those cases comprised violent offenses, such as sexual abuse, assault, and murder (Adams et al., 2011).

As of midyear 2007, just 13% of AI youth detainees (n = 253) were held in tribal jails or detention facilities (Minton, 2008). Thus, many youth are housed at detention and long-term facilities located at a substantial distance from their home communities (Building Blocks for Youth, n.d.). In many states (including North and South Dakota, Alaska, and Montana), AI/AN youth represent more than a quarter of securely confined youth (Building Blocks for Youth, n.d.). Comprehensive and culturally competent approaches are needed to reduce juvenile delinquency and improve youth reentry experiences in Indian Country.

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3.2 Universal and Culturally Specific Protective Factors for Justice Involvement

Research on juvenile delinquency illuminates many factors that protect high-risk youth from committing crimes or recidivating. These factors occur at the individual, family, community, and cultural levels. Individual factors include life skills, aspirations, and commitment to education. Family factors include involved parental figures that display warmth combined with firm expectations for behavior and appropriate supervision. Factors that can promote well-being for youth at the community level include opportunities for prosocial involvement, healthy social norms, and mentoring by adults outside of the family. These protective factors are relevant for all youth regardless of race/ethnicity. There also are culturally specific protective factors for AI/AN youth that may buffer them from life's adversities. These include cultural identification and participation in traditional activities, bonds with extended family, and tribal and community involvement (Hawkins, Cummins, & Marlatt 2004).

3.2.1 Cultural Identification

Cultural identification offers youth the chance to connect with the strengths and resources of their indigenous beliefs. It ties them to the resilience of prior generations and commits them to the responsibilities of the next generation. Research suggests that AI/AN youth who hold onto their traditions yet can operate effectively in the majority culture are most resilient (Oetting & Beauvais, 1990–91). Thus, integrating cultural teachings into juvenile justice interventions may be particularly fruitful. Examples of traditional cultural activities include traditional language immersion, song, dance, storytelling, sweat lodge, smudging, equine therapy, and traditional crafts. These approaches are holistic; seek to restore balance across multiple domains of wellness; and fulfill fundamental human needs like belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity.

Culturally infused interventions have been associated with lower levels of dysfunction, alcohol use, and antisocial behavior, as well as with fewer suicide attempts (Chandler & Lalonde, 2008; Whitesell, 2008). Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell has spoken to OJJDP on the importance of incorporating cultural traditions into programs for AI/AN youth:

> I often speak of character being the most important trait to develop, because it helps guide people through life's downturns. Developing character means showing youngsters that they can overcome hardships and become productive members of our society and even leaders of our Nation. For American Indian youth, developing character also means making them conscious of the pride of the American Indian people resulting from our long traditions and many contributions to this great Nation. (OJJDP, 2000, p. 4).

3.2.2 Family Involvement

Family participation in justice interventions is particularly salient for AI/AN youth because the importance of family is one of strongest values in AI/AN culture (Sanchez-Way &

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Johnson, n.d.). The National Caucus of Native American State Legislators (Lohse, 2008) calls for youth-focused interventions to increase parent involvement, and those working with AI/AN justice-involved youth have urged the justice system to reach beyond the nuclear family to aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents, as intergenerational living arrangements are the norms in many tribal communities (Donelan, 1999). This extended network creates rich opportunities for youth to feel supported and compensates for situations in which a parent is unable to fulfill his or her role. Qualitative research with AI/AN youth suggests that involving grandparents is essential, as many are already performing parenting duties. Furthermore, within their role as elders, grandparents serve a key function in transmitting cultural values, histories, and norms antithetical to antisocial behavior (Weibel-Orlando, 2000). In community-based research studies, tribal members have identified parent involvement as the most important influence in addressing delinquency (Mmari, Blum, & Teufel-Shone, 2010), and studies of parenting characteristics in AI/AN families have illustrated the protective role of positive parenting in reducing youth involvement in crime and substance abuse (Kulis et al., 2006; Morris, Wood, & Dunaway, 2007).

3.2.3 Community Bonding

Finally, expanding justice-based interventions to include the larger community is consistent with AI/AN values that emphasize the group over the individual. Partnering with community members allows juvenile justice facilities to expand their resources and draw on the community's unique assets. Moreover, involvement in community events such as powwows and ceremonies offers an avenue for building resilience and restoring harmony. Contributing to the community through volunteer work or other forms of prosocial engagement provides youth with opportunities to develop job-related skills and to be viewed in a positive manner by others. Finally, in recognition of the harmful impact of historical trauma (Brave Heart, 2013), many AI/AN researchers point to the need for healing to occur at the community level.

This research speaks to the need to ensure that juvenile justice and reentry programs for youth in tribal communities operate from a Native worldview and seek to strengthen assets already existing in AI/AN extended families, community, and traditional culture.

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The OJJDP Green Reentry Initiative

In response to the high need for effective delinquency prevention programming and improvements to the tribal juvenile justice system, OJJDP established its Tribal Youth Program in 1999. With an emphasis on locally designed efforts for preventing delinquency and strengthening the tribal juvenile justice system, the program has provided a substantial amount of funding for a variety of programming efforts as well as for research and evaluation activities.

The Tribal Juvenile Detention and Reentry Green Demonstration ("Green Reentry") Program, which is part of the Tribal Youth Program, was released as part of OJJDP's first-ever funding initiative specifically aimed at supporting services for youth detained in tribal JDCs. The Green Reentry program was a novel initiative designed to provide individualized, holistic reentry programming to youth residing in or released from tribal JDCs,[1] with a focus on education, training in green technologies and environmentally sustainable activities, or both.

The Tribal Juvenile Detention and Reentry Green Demonstration Initiative fits within a wider effort by JDCs to decrease their environmental footprint, offer youth opportunities to develop life and job-readiness skills, and involve youth in innovative activities that nurture and protect animals and the earth—a cherished traditional value in many AI/AN communities. Moreover, involvement in green reentry programs has been shown to reduce recidivism among adults. Men involved in the Rikers Island GreenHouse and GreenTeam programs appeared less likely than the general population to recidivate within the first year after release: 10% compared with 21% of the general prison population. A program operated by the Safer Foundation in Chicago to prepare justice-involved men for green jobs in deconstruction work and urban landscaping showed similarly positive outcomes. Only 13% of program graduates recidivated, compared with 52% of the state prison population (Green for All, 2011).

Three tribes were awarded Green Reentry grants from 2009 through 2014 —the Hualapai Indian Tribe (Arizona), the MBCI (Mississippi), and the RST (South Dakota).

The grants provided up to $700,000 for 5 years,[2] including an initial planning year and 4 years of service delivery, with the following purposes:

- to provide services to help detained and reentering youth successfully reintegrate into their communities, using risk and needs assessments, educational and vocational programming, mental health services, substance abuse programs, family strengthening, recreational activities, and extended reentry aftercare;

[1] Youth residing in (and released from) JDCs were the original target population for the Green Reentry initiative, as conceptualized both by OJJDP and the grantees. However, in response to the difficulty accessing JDC youth (as described in ***Section 6.2.4***) and enrolling a sufficient number of youth, the focus broadened during program implementation to include other justice-involved youth or those at risk of justice involvement.

[2] The original grant period was 4 years. However, all three grantees received no-cost extensions to extend their grant period for an additional year.

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- to support the development of partnerships to help tribes implement green technologies and environmentally sustainable activities and to create long-term environmental and economic benefit to tribes; and

- to support each tribe's ability to implement, monitor, and maintain tribal juvenile detention standards.

The OJJDP funding announcement required that applicants demonstrate partnerships between the tribal agency applicant and a higher learning institution with expertise in green technology. Other partnerships to facilitate meeting the full set of needs identified among youth were expected to be developed on the basis of local needs and resources. Grantees were expected to convene an advisory board and steering committee to provide guidance and oversight for their programs.

The initial planning year was spent developing a strategic plan ("Strat Pak"), which outlined each program's logic model; vision and mission; steering committee and advisory board members; needs, strengths, and available resources; action plan; communication plan; and evaluation plan.

Tribal grantees also attended grantee conferences sponsored by OJJDP and participated in regional peer-to-peer meetings. Throughout the grant period, the grantees worked with the Green Reentry TTA provider, the EDC. Each grantee was assigned a technical assistance specialist who provided individual TTA and coordinated other resources for the grantees. The grantees had access to webinars and other TTA opportunities on numerous topics related to incorporating green technologies in tribal juvenile justice settings. A database to track services received by individual participants and to facilitate required reporting was developed by EDC and customized for each site.

Finally, the grantees were required to support a number of activities associated with the cross-site evaluation implemented from 2011 through 2014 by RTI and AIDA. These activities included facilitating tribal approval for evaluation activities, assisting with the scheduling of and participating in staff and stakeholder interviews during the evaluation site visits, participating in interim telephone interviews between site visits (program directors and coordinators), obtaining parental consent from youth to participate in interviews and scheduling youth and parent interviews for the evaluation team, identifying elders and parents to participate in focus groups and facilitating the scheduling of these focus groups, assisting with comparison group identification for the outcome evaluation, and compiling administrative data for the outcome evaluation.

Detailed information about the Green Reentry program delivered by each grantee, as well as an analysis of cross-site implementation experiences, is included in ***Section 6***.

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5

The Cross-Site Evaluation

5.1 Goals, Objectives, and Research Questions

The goals of the evaluation were to comprehensively document the implementation of the Green Reentry programs and to determine the extent of the initiative's impact on the tribal youth and communities served. Study objectives designed to achieve the goals included the following:

- *Objective 1:* Implement a comprehensive, ongoing process evaluation.
- *Objective 2:* Conduct a mixed-methods outcome evaluation.
- *Objective 3:* Disseminate study findings through technical and practitioner-oriented products.

The evaluation was designed to use a variety of data sources to address several key research questions. Because the programs were implemented as fairly small-scale demonstration grants, we emphasized the process evaluation more than the outcome evaluation, and we decided to have the outcome evaluation be informed by qualitative data rather than to rely exclusively on quantitative findings. ***Exhibit 5-1*** outlines the primary research questions for the evaluation. The research questions that guided the process evaluation cover all critical aspects of program implementation (e.g., partnerships formed, population served, services provided) and address several gaps in the research literature. In particular, little is known about culturally specific reentry programs for tribal youth and the use of green technologies and environmentally sustainable activities in a juvenile justice context. The research questions focus on the identification of key lessons learned from the Green Reentry grantees' implementation experiences that can inform future practice by allowing communities considering implementing a similar program, or adding cultural or green technologies elements or both, to design their initiatives in a manner that avoids common barriers and ensures the presence of essential ingredients.

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Exhibit 5-1. Process and Outcome Evaluation Research Questions

Process Evaluation Research Questions
1. What program components were implemented through the Green Reentry program?
2. What was the target population for the Green Reentry programs? How did eligibility criteria change over time? How many youth were served? What were the key strategies for engaging youth in the programs?
3. What organizational partners were involved in the Green Reentry programs? What level of coordination among partners was achieved? How did the Advisory Boards function?
4. What challenges did grantees encounter in developing and implementing their programs and what strategies were effective in addressing these challenges? Overall, what factors were critical to the successful implementation of an effective Green Reentry program?
5. What lessons can be learned from the experiences of the Green Reentry grantees that are relevant to future programs?
6. What were the staffing and budgeting approaches among the grantees? What cost considerations are relevant for future programs?
Outcome Evaluation Research Questions
1. What impact did the programs have on youth? Did youth who participated in the programs perceive that the programs had facilitated improvements in outcomes such as school attendance, cultural connectedness, substance use, crime and delinquency? Did youth who participated in the programs have reductions in recidivism—based on official indicators—compared to comparable youth who did not participate?
2. What was the perceived impact of the programs on the communities in which they were implemented?

5.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that guided the cross-site evaluation is illustrated in ***Exhibit 5-2***. The framework first isolates *inputs* as the key factors necessary to implement the demonstration programs, including OJJDP funding and TTA as well as other sources of funding and existing resources that, taken together, facilitate the formation of partnerships to develop and implement the programs. These inputs yield the *throughputs,* which are the specific plans for implementation. The resulting *outputs* are the youth served and the program components they actually receive. The changes observed both among the individual participants and at the community-level are program *outcomes*. The evaluation framework also recognizes and incorporates the importance of community- and individual-level *contextual* variables that influence both the design and implementation of the programs as well as the outcomes that are likely to be achieved.

The evaluation was designed to document each of these dimensions, with the exhibit illustrating the main evaluation components and data sources. The process evaluation was designed to document the inputs, throughputs, and outputs as well as the context within which the program operates. The outcome evaluation was designed to determine the impact of the program on youth and communities. Finally, the conceptual framework illustrates the dissemination of process and outcome evaluation findings through practitioner-friendly products and required deliverables.

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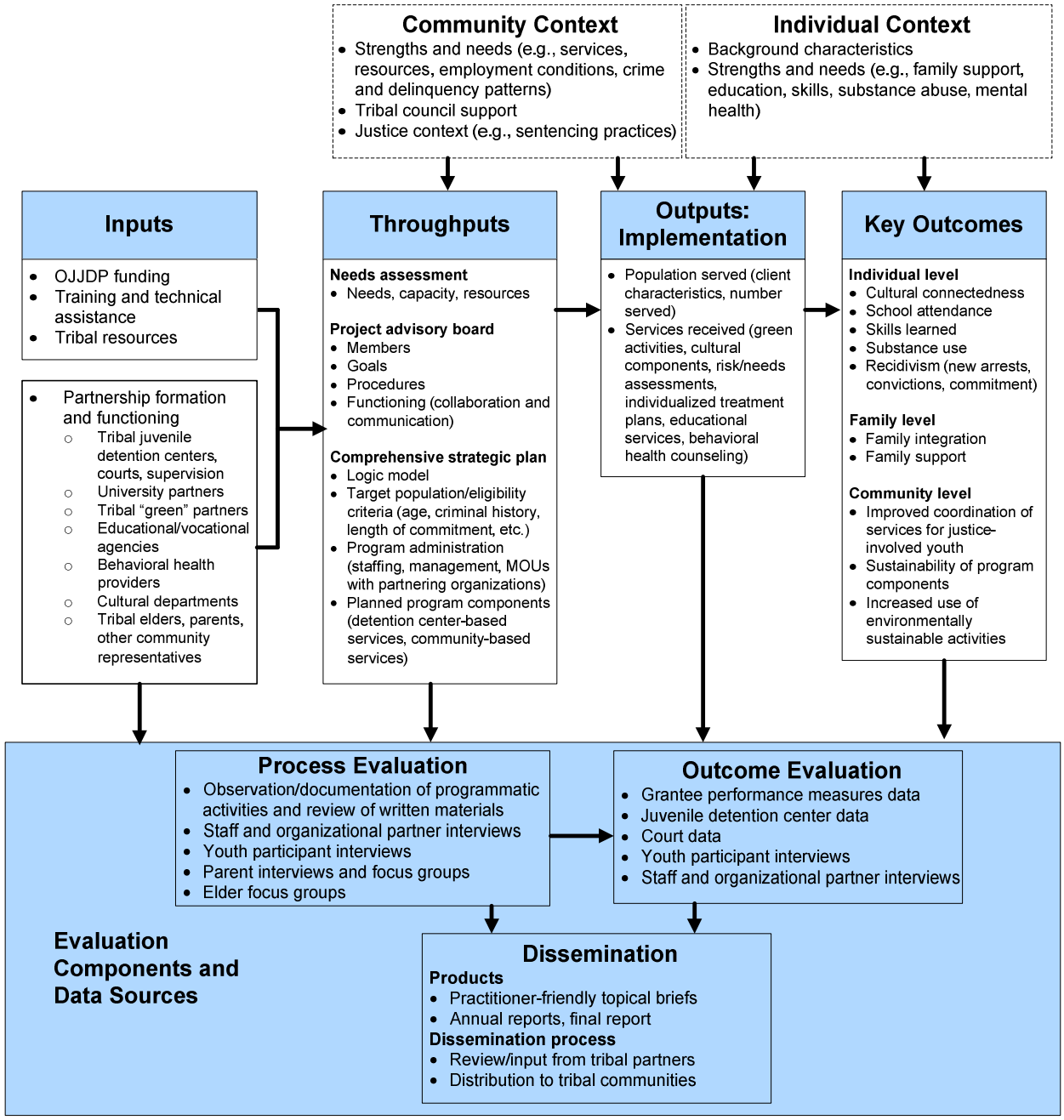
Exhibit 5-2. Conceptual Illustration of Evaluation Framework



Note: MOU, memorandums of understanding.

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5.3 Methodology

5.3.1 Foundational Activities

During the first year of the evaluation, key evaluation staff from RTI and AIDA, along with representatives from OJJDP and EDC, conducted an introductory site visit to each of the Green Reentry grantees.[3] During the introductory site visits, evaluation staff discussed the overall evaluation approach and obtained feedback from grantees. Afterward, the evaluation design was finalized and study protocols were developed. The approval of RTI's Institutional Review Board was obtained. Evaluation staff worked with each grantee to obtain approval for the planned evaluation activities from the Hualapai Indian Tribe, MBCI, and RST, along with appropriate information-sharing agreements.

In preparation for the data collection site visits, two evaluation team members from RTI and two evaluation team members from AIDA participated in telephone-based training on the site visit protocol. The training included thorough discussion of human subjects protection procedures as well as cultural issues relevant to the data collection process at each tribal site. Such issues were also discussed regularly on subsequent site visits, as relevant. Initial and ongoing guidance to the evaluation team on cultural issues was provided by the AIDA team lead, an experienced researcher and enrolled member of the Pueblo of Jemez, who has more than 30 years of experience working with tribal governments and communities.

As part of these initial preparations, the evaluation team met with program directors at each tribal site to discuss the participation of program staff in evaluation activities. Agreed-on tribal Green Reentry program site responsibilities included

- working with RTI and AIDA to obtain necessary tribal research approvals for the evaluation;
- identifying key stakeholders (including program staff and partners) for stakeholder interviews, and working with RTI and AIDA to create a stakeholder interview schedule for each evaluation site visit;
- identifying and recruiting potential participants for youth and parent interviews, obtaining and storing parental consent forms for youth interviews, and helping to schedule youth and parent interviews;
- helping to plan and recruit participants for focus groups with elders and parents;
- finding private space for stakeholder, youth, and parent interviews during site visits;
- assisting with the identification of any available sources of administrative data; and

[3] Before the introductory evaluation site visits, the grantees had already hosted site visits conducted by representatives from OJJDP and LOC.

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- coordinating the transfer of program-level administrative data to RTI.

RTI offered each Green Reentry program a $2,000-per-year honorarium for 3 years (total of $6,000 per site) in recognition of the staff time required to carry out these responsibilities.

5.3.2 Process Evaluation

The RTI/AIDA evaluation team conducted four rounds of data collection site visits to each site: May–June 2012, November 2012–January 2013, June–August 2013, and February–April 2014. Each site visit was attended by four members of the evaluation team: the RTI project director and RTI process evaluation lead, the team lead from AIDA, and a second experienced interviewer from AIDA. Experienced AIDA facilitators led all interviews and focus groups with youth, parents, and elders at each tribal site. Both AIDA and RTI led interviews with staff and stakeholders at each site. The interview lead administered informed consent before beginning each interview. During the interview, a designated note-taker took near-verbatim notes on an RTI laptop computer protected by PointSec encryption software. Focus groups were also audio-recorded to facilitate preparation of accurate transcripts. Focus group and interview participants were provided with an incentive of $20 per person in recognition of their contributions, as well as $10 in fuel compensation for those who provided transportation to an interview for themselves or their children.

During these site visits, the team collected the following sources of process evaluation data:

- individual, semistructured interviews with Green Reentry program staff, tribal juvenile justice personnel (including judges, prosecutors, public defenders, JDC administrators, and probation officers involved with youth), representatives from educational and cultural agencies, and other key Green Reentry program partners, conducted during each of four rounds of site visits (a total of 170 interviews were conducted with 77 staff and stakeholders)

- individual, semistructured interviews with youth who had participated in a Green Reentry program within the past 6 months, conducted during each of four rounds of site visits ($n = 56$)

- individual, semistructured interviews with parents of youth participants conducted during the first three rounds of site visits ($n = 41$)

- focus groups with tribal elders conducted during the third round of site visits ($n = 32$)

- focus groups with parents conducted during the fourth round of site visits ($n = 17$)

- observation of program activities and advisory board meetings, documented using structured observation forms and conducted during all rounds of site visits wherever possible

- review of grantee progress reports

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Between site visits, we conducted three rounds of interim telephone interviews with program directors at each site during August–September 2012, March–April 2013, and October–November 2013.

Data collection instruments were originally designed based on the process evaluation research questions shown in Exhibit 5-1. During the course of the process evaluation, we revised existing instruments and created new instruments to improve data quality and to explore in more depth particular implementation issues evident in early evaluation findings. As part of this effort, we

- revised the staff and stakeholder interview guide to collect more detailed information on dealing with implementation issues such as JDC security constraints, involving parents, and engaging tribal elders in program activities (implemented during rounds 2–4 of data collection);
- developed a short, optional written questionnaire for youth regarding their perceptions of the Green Reentry program to address the shyness of youth interview participants during early data collection interviews (implemented during rounds 2 and 3 of data collection);
- developed a program director cost interview to elicit information on program budgeting, staffing approaches, and the cost-benefit of various Green Reentry activities (implemented during rounds 3 and 4 of data collection);
- created an elder focus group guide to better understand the perspectives of tribal elders on participation in Green Reentry program activities (implemented during round 3 of data collection);
- created a parent focus group guide to better understand the perspectives of parents of justice-involved youth on participation in Green Reentry program activities (implemented during round 4 of data collection); and
- developed an additional youth interview guide to better understand the perspectives of youth on how parent and family involvement in their lives and activities (including Green Reentry program activities) influenced various aspects of their well-being, including juvenile justice system involvement.

Key constructs covered in the final versions of each data collection instrument are shown in ***Exhibit 5-3***.

Using the qualitative data obtained from each of these data collection activities, we conducted a systematic analysis to identify site-specific and cross-site themes regarding the target population served, strategies for engaging and retaining participants, program components implemented, implementation challenges and strategies for successful implementation, engagement of organizational partners and functioning of advisory boards, staffing and budgeting approaches, and other lessons learned that can inform future programming.

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Exhibit 5-3. Key Constructs Included in Evaluation Data Collection Instruments

Instrument	Key Constructs
Individual Interviews	
Staff and stakeholder interview	• Program context (e.g., community juvenile crime and sentencing context, JDC context) • Community awareness of Green Reentry program • Target population and enrollment • Program components (including green components, cultural components, and other components) • Implementation challenges and strategies for addressing them • Partnerships, advisory board, and steering committee functioning • Perceived program impact on youth and community • Sustainability and lessons learned
Program director cost interview	• Staffing budget (staff time, required qualifications, training) • Key contributions of consultants, partners, and training and technical assistance providers • Cost-benefit of Green Reentry program components • Overall budget lessons learned
Parent interview	• Green Reentry program context • Parent awareness and perceptions of Green Reentry program • Parent involvement in child's enrollment decision • Youth and parent involvement in Green Reentry program activities • Youth's service needs and program efforts to meet them • Perceived program impact on youth
Youth interview on Green Reentry program	• Youth perceptions of Green Reentry program • Youth and parent involvement in Green Reentry program activities • Youth's service needs and program efforts to meet them • Youth well-being before and after program initiation • Perceived program impact on youth
Youth interview on family involvement	• Parent and family support • Parent and family involvement in youth activities • Influence of family life on other aspects of youth well-being • Strategies for involving parents and family members in Green Reentry programs and other youth activities
Focus Groups	
Elder focus group	• Key issues facing young people in tribal community • Barriers to elder involvement • Culturally respectful ways for Green Reentry programs to obtain elder wisdom, cultural knowledge, and expertise and to involve elders in activities with youth
Parent focus group	• Challenges of parenting justice-involved youth • Role of parents of justice-involved youth • Barriers to parent involvement • Strategies for better involving parents

(continued)

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Exhibit 5-3. Key Constructs Included in Evaluation Data Collection Instruments (continued)

Instrument	Key Constructs
Written Questionnaire	
Youth questionnaire	• Perceptions of Green Reentry program • Impact of Green Reentry program participation • Suggestions for changes to program
Program Observation	
Meeting observation form	• Meeting context (e.g., timing, location) • Participation and verbal engagement before and after meeting • Agenda and content covered • Meeting dynamics
Activity observation form	• Activity context (e.g., timing, location) • Participation and verbal engagement during activity • Activity focus and content covered • Activity dynamics (e.g., instructor-student dynamics)

5.3.3 Outcome Evaluation

The outcome evaluation included both qualitative and quantitative components to yield a broader perspective by examining both the perceived effect of the programs on youth and communities and the impact on recidivism as demonstrated by official criminal justice data.

Qualitative Outcome Component

Impetus and Study Design. By the end of Year 1 of the Green Reentry program evaluation, it was evident that program enrollment in the three sites was too low to support the survey-based, quasi-experimental quantitative outcome study originally planned. All three sites reported small numbers of program participants due to low case flow in the tribal juvenile justice system. Program directors and other staff working with the evaluation team could not identify any additional groups of program-eligible youth for evaluation purposes. Because of these constraints, it was determined that a quantitative outcome survey would be severely underpowered and would not be a legitimate use of program staff and participant time or evaluation resources.

In this context, RTI worked with OJJDP to plan a qualitative exploration of the perceived impact of program participation on youth. To better serve this purpose, RTI developed a youth interview module that asked current and former Green Reentry program participants what things were like for them in various life domains (such as school, housing, cultural knowledge and practices, community connectedness, drug and alcohol use, and future plans) before participation in the Green Reentry program. Later in the same interview, youth were asked what things were currently like for them in each of these life domains. These questions were designed to allow comparison between their life experiences before and either during or shortly after Green Reentry program participation. Youth were also asked what they felt they most needed help or

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support with at the time they enrolled in the Green Reentry program, and which of those needs the Green Reentry program had helped to meet. Finally, youth were asked general questions about their perceptions of how the program had affected them.

An experienced AI interviewer led the youth interviews conducted during onsite visits using the protocol described in ***Section 5.3.2***. These interviews were supplemented with a brief, open-ended written questionnaire that asked youth about their perceptions of the Green Reentry program, designed to offer an additional opportunity for shy or reticent youth to share their experiences (see Exhibit 5-3).

In addition to interviews with youth, the qualitative outcome study also drew on

- individual, semistructured interviews with program directors, other project staff, and representatives from key partnering agencies (conducted during each round of site visits) and
- individual, semistructured interviews with parents of youth participants conducted during the first three rounds of site visits.

Qualitative Outcome Analysis. Our analytic approach combined two distinct elements to identify the perceived impact of program participation on youth. First, we conducted a traditional qualitative analysis of data from all four sources (staff and stakeholder interviews, parent interviews, youth interviews, and youth written questionnaires) to identify themes regarding the influence of the program on youth. This analysis entailed the following steps:

1. *File preparation:* We created an analytic file for each data source (e.g., staff/stakeholders, parents, youth) that contained a compilation of data across sites and waves, organized by item/topic.
2. *Theming:* We reviewed the data files for each source by topic/item and identified analytic themes for each topic/item. We also identified the quotes that best illustrated each theme.
3. *Comparison of interview strata:* Within each topic, we compared evident themes by data source, noting areas of convergence and divergence by data source.

Second, we used techniques from the qualitative comparative analysis method to develop a quantitative perspective summary on our qualitative youth interview data. This analytic effort used the subset of youth interview questions regarding youth quality of life in various domains before and during or after program participation. A single member of the analytic team re-reviewed youth responses to each of these questions to develop discrete, inductive categories into which responses could be grouped. (For example, the content of youth responses regarding how they felt about their communities fell into four substantive categories: “good,” “not good,” “ambivalent,” and “want more green activities.”) Another member of the analytic team reviewed and helped to refine the proposed categories. We then classified every response into one of these

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categories, tabulated the number of responses assigned to each category before and after program initiation, and developed a grid showing the distribution of such responses at these two time points. (The very straightforward nature of this analysis—which focused on very short text segments uttered in response to highly structured questions that directly corresponded to the analytic topics reported—rendered unnecessary the use of a multicoder team or formal intercoder reliability testing.) We compared response distributions at the two time points to identify patterns of perceived change in each life domain.

Quantitative Outcome Component

Site-Specific Study Designs. The quantitative outcome evaluation component was designed to document recidivism outcomes for youth who participated in Green Reentry programming. In addition, one of the original objectives was to compare recidivism outcomes for youth who participated in Green Reentry programming with those of youth who received "treatment as usual" to determine whether Green Reentry youth were less likely to engage in future criminal activity than youth who were not offered the program. However, the identification of an appropriate comparison group proved to be extremely challenging in each site. This challenge, along with the very small number of youth included in the quantitative outcome analysis, is a significant limitation of this study component. Results from the quantitative outcome analysis should therefore be interpreted as a cursory examination of the future JDC involvement of youth who participated in the Green Reentry programs.

Hualapai. In the Hualapai Indian Tribe, the target population for the Green Reentry program was youth adjudicated to the Hualapai Juvenile Detention and Rehabilitation Center (HJDRC). All youth from the Hualapai tribe who were adjudicated to the HJDRC during the period of program operation were enrolled in the Green Reentry program. Because all eligible youth were served, a contemporaneous comparison group design—which entails identifying youth from the same community in which the program was delivered and who meet program eligibility criteria but were not actually enrolled in the program—was ruled out.[4] In addition, a historical comparison group design—which entails identifying youth who went through the juvenile justice system before the inception of the program and who would have met eligibility criteria had the program been in place—was not possible because of two factors. First, the Green Reentry program was implemented immediately upon the opening of the HJDRC in 2009. In other words, no youth have ever been sentenced to the HJDRC without receiving the Green Reentry program. Second, sentencing patterns in place before the opening of the HJDRC were different because the only way that Hualapai youth could serve time in a JDC was by being sentenced to JDCs on other reservations (through intertribal agreements), which was thought to be highly undesirable and was often avoided by judges for this reason. Such changes in sentencing patterns over time mean that Hualapai youth sentenced to other JDCs before the opening of the HJDRC are not comparable to those sentenced during the program period. A final

[4] Selecting another AI reservation to serve as a comparison community was also ruled out because the unique contextual characteristics of each reservation mean that the treatment and comparison youth would be exposed to very different community contextual characteristics (e.g., resource availability, policing and sentencing patterns), which could greatly bias the results.

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challenge to comparison group identification in the Hualapai site was the fact that many of the youth who participated in the Green Reentry program were youth from other tribes, because the HJDRC has intertribal agreements that allow several tribes to send their youth to the HJDRC. Identifying an appropriate comparison group for non-Hualapai youth and tracking their recidivism in their home communities (i.e., not just rearrests and reincarcerations on the Hualapai reservation) was excessively complicated because of the need to obtain access to recidivism data for each non-Hualapai tribe. **Therefore, because of these challenges, we determined that it was not possible to identify a methodologically rigorous comparison group for the Hualapai site and that the quantitative outcome component for this site would be limited to exploring recidivism outcomes only for youth who were enrolled in the Green Reentry program.** Specifically, the recidivism analysis is limited to the 61 Green Reentry participants who were admitted to the JDC for more than 24 hours from the time the program began (the first youth was enrolled on October 12, 2009) until April 15, 2014, with this end date selected to allow for sufficient follow-up time for the recidivism analysis.[5] Although the lack of a reference against which to compare outcomes for the treatment group limits the utility of this analysis, the information can still be useful in understanding how many Green Reentry youth did and did not engage in further criminal activity after participating in the program.

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. In the MBCI program, the primary population of youth enrolled in the Green Reentry program were those who were sentenced to court supervision (e.g., probation). A small number of these youth were identified for the program while serving time in the JDC (and participated in Green Reentry after their release while under community supervision), but most did not serve time in the JDC and were simply sentenced to community supervision. Most youth selected for the program had a community service requirement. Other selection criteria were subjective and included whether the youth lacked parental support at home; needed additional support; and, for those who served time in detention, had a good attitude while in detention. Because of the subjective nature of program assignment and the small number of MBCI youth who were supervised by the MBCI juvenile court during the grant period, it was determined that a contemporaneous comparison group design was not possible (i.e., there was not a surplus of court-involved MBCI youth who were similar to those who enrolled in the Green Reentry program but did not receive it). However, it was possible to implement a historical comparison group design because of available records, continuity in court services staff, and the lack of any major changes in sentencing or supervision practices in the years before and after the grant. The design entailed having court services staff search MBCI juvenile court records for the year before the inception of the Green Reentry program (2009) to identify youth who were sentenced to either probation or detention.[6] Court services staff, who were very familiar with the court-involved youth in the community, used their collective judgment to replicate the subjective selection criteria to identify youth who were similar to the

[5] The recidivism analysis excluded Green Reentry participants who turned 18 before the time the data were abstracted (October 15, 2014) because HJDRC records are archived when a youth turns 18.

[6] To be eligible for the comparison group, youth could not have later enrolled in the Green Reentry program (i.e., if they had a later charge at some point after the program became operational, they were excluded from the comparison group because they were in the treatment group).

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youth later selected for Green Reentry. Program staff were asked to select comparison group members who represented the same distribution of sentence type (probation vs. detention), offense class, and type of crimes committed (with marijuana, burglary, runaway, and truancy the most common offenses noted) as the Green Reentry youth. After these procedures, 47 youth were selected for the comparison group. These youth experienced similar levels of supervision by the Division of Court Services as the Green Reentry youth, but they did not have access to the green educational opportunities, cultural components, and case management work offered through the Green Reentry program. The treatment group included 62 youth who participated in the Green Reentry program from January 2010 through December 2013, with this end date selected to allow for sufficient follow-up time for the recidivism analysis.

Although this historical comparison group design offers several benefits—mainly that the treatment and comparison groups were generally subject to the same community contextual conditions (e.g., policing and sentencing patterns, socioeconomic conditions), several sources of bias must be noted. First, the subjective nature of the selection process used to identify Green Reentry youth during the grant period could not be precisely replicated for the comparison group (especially several years after the fact). In other words, we do not know for certain that the youth selected for the comparison group would have actually been enrolled in the Green Reentry program if they had come to the attention of court services staff during the grant period. Second, inherent in any historical design is the possibility that temporal trends (i.e., changes in community context from the year before the grant to the 4 years of grant operations) could create lack of equivalence in the conditions experienced by treatment and comparison groups in a manner that could affect outcomes.

Rosebud Sioux Tribe. In the RST site, the primary population of youth served by the Green Reentry program was youth who were sentenced to a day-report educational program delivered at the JDC (Wanbli Wiconi Tipi or WWT).[7] Because of the large number of court-involved RST youth and the fact that the day report/Green Reentry program had enrollment caps (typically 40 youth at a time), not all youth who could have benefitted from the day-report program were sentenced to it. This "surplus" of comparable youth (i.e., RST court-involved youth who were similar to those who ended up in the day-report aspect of the Green Reentry program) afforded the opportunity to employ a contemporaneous comparison group design in this site. On the basis of detailed interviews with the youth court judge about sentencing decisions, the primary factors that led to a sentence to the day report/Green Reentry program were that (1) the child was not doing well in "traditional" county school (e.g., truancy, behavioral problems at school), and (2) the child lacked good supervision at home. However, the judge noted that while most youth who met these criteria were sentenced to the day report/Green

[7] Shifts in "ownership" of the day report program from the county schools to the WWT caused temporary periods in which the day report program was not operating. During these time periods, no day report youth were available to participate in Green Reentry activities. Therefore, youth serving sentences in the WWT (i.e., youth in the "back end" of the facility as opposed to the "front," which was used for day report) became the primary focus of the Green Reentry program. However, because of limitations in the tracking of program receipt among sentenced youth and the much larger emphasis on day report youth, the outcome evaluation focuses on the impacts among day report youth.

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Reentry program, some youth who met them were not sentenced to day report/Green Reentry because they were *already* enrolled in an alternative education program operated by the county school district and the judge did not want to remove them from this program if they were doing well. These youth were assigned to court supervision (e.g., probation) but not day report and remained in the alternative education program. The alternative education program was similar to the day report program in that it was a structured school environment providing individualized education assistance to youth, but it did not involve the green educational opportunities, cultural components, and case management work provided through the Green Reentry program and it was not located in the secure environment of the WWT. Youth in the alternative education program were identified for the program by the school district (rather than the judge) and were similar to those in day report in that behavioral problems, such as truancy, often led to the decision to remove them from the traditional school environment. **Therefore, after considering the options available, we determined that court-involved RST youth who were not sentenced to day report/Green Reentry because they were already in the alternative education group would be an acceptable comparison group.** In consultation with the judge, prosecutor, and Todd County School District, 14 RST court-involved youth who were enrolled in the alternative education program during the same academic years as those in which the Green Reentry program was in operation (the 2010–2011 school year, the 2011 summer program, the 2011–2012 school year, the 2012 summer program, or the 2012–2013 school year) were identified for inclusion in the comparison group.[8] To identify the youth, the school district provided a list of all RST youth who were enrolled in the alternative education program during the three academic years of interest, and the tribal prosecutor manually searched court case files to determine whether each youth had court involvement during that time period. The treatment group included 63 youth who were enrolled in the day report/Green Reentry program during the same academic years.

The benefits of the RST design are that both the treatment and comparison groups were subject to the same community contextual conditions (e.g., policing and sentencing patterns, socioeconomic conditions) because they were all RST tribal members residing on the reservation and they all had court involvement during the same time period. However, several sources of bias must be noted. First, the subjective nature of the judge's decisions to sentence some youth to day report/Green Reentry means that we do not know for certain that the individuals selected for the comparison group would actually have been sentenced to day report had they not already been enrolled in the alternative education program. Second, although both the youth sentenced to the day report/Green Reentry program and those enrolled in the alternative education program were not doing well in the traditional county schools, it is possible that the former were more likely to have behavioral problems (e.g., truancy, fighting) that led to court involvement whereas the latter were more likely to have academic problems (e.g., poor grades) that led to their placement in the alternative education program and that their court involvement was not directly

[8] Unfortunately, this is a very small number of comparison youth, which is a limitation of the RST design. We had anticipated that the number would be larger, but several youth who entered the alternative education program were later enrolled in the day report program; these youth had to be excluded from the comparison group because they were included in the treatment group.

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related to these academic problems. Because behavioral problems may be more strongly associated with future delinquent or criminal behavior than are academic problems, some degree of bias may be inherent with design (such that the design could possibly bias the study in the direction of showing no effect or a negative effect of Green Reentry participation on recidivism).

Outcome Measures, Data Sources, and Analytic Approach. The original intent of the outcome evaluation was to examine both rearrest and reincarceration as outcomes of interest, ideally including future arrests and incarcerations in both the juvenile and adult tribal justice systems. However, given the lack of access to adult arrest and incarceration data in the Hualapai and RST sites, the outcomes in these two sites were limited to any new bookings in the JDC that took place after program enrollment. New bookings included any new arrests, probation violations, or JDC sentences. The MBCI site was able to provide data on new bookings in both the juvenile and adult JDCs, which was of critical importance because the comparison group selection strategy unintentionally resulted in comparison group members who tended to be older—and therefore more likely to age into the adult system—than the treatment group.[9] As with the other sites, new bookings reflect new arrests, probation violations, and new JDC sentences.

Using the recidivism data provided by the sites, we created composite measures (dichotomous variables) for each youth reflecting whether he or she had any new detention center bookings within 6, 12, or 24 months of program enrollment. For the analysis of a particular outcome (e.g., new JDC bookings within 12 months), a youth was included in the analysis only if he or she had sufficient "exposure time" available to have had a new booking within that follow-up period.[10] However, given several site-specific nuances regarding the exposure periods and treatment of records after youth reach majority status, the operationalization of this principle was complex. ***Exhibit 5-4*** illustrates the specific eligibility criteria and analytic sample size for each set of outcome analyses, by site.

Because of the extremely small sample sizes and limited court and JDC data available, we had neither the statistical power nor the available data elements required to implement advanced techniques to adjust for selection bias (e.g., propensity modeling) or to conduct multivariate models (e.g., controlling for potential confounders such as criminal history). Therefore, the analytic approach simply entailed comparing the percentage of Green Reentry and comparison youth who had a new detention center booking during each follow-up period.

[9] The comparison group was older than the treatment group because youth who were fairly young at the time that they appeared in court in 2009 had more opportunities to later participate in the Green Reentry program once it became operational in 2010. Therefore, many youth who were originally identified as potential comparison group members (because they had been in court in 2009) ended up being removed from the comparison group because they were also in the treatment group. In contrast, youth who were already nearing 18 in 2009 did not have the opportunity to subsequently enroll in Green Reentry.

[10] Youth who did not have the entire exposure time available were excluded from the analysis unless they had a new JDC booking within the shortened exposure time, in which case they were counted as meeting the recidivism criterion. Youth who did not have the entire exposure time available to recidivate but did not have any new JDC bookings were removed from the analysis because the absence of a new booking could have been caused by the youth's aging into the adult system.

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Significance tests for differences in these proportions were not conducted because the available sample sizes were not large enough for robust tests.[11] As noted above, the outcomes for the Hualapai and RST sites are limited to new JDC bookings, whereas the outcomes for the MBCI site include new bookings in either the adult system or JDCs.

Several significant limitations to the recidivism analysis must be noted. First, for Hualapai and RST youth who turned 18 over the follow-up period, any arrests that led to an incarceration in the adult system were not represented. Second, only reincarcerations within the tribal JDC were documented; we were not able to determine whether youth committed any crimes outside of the reservation or any federal crimes, which could have resulted in prosecution in the federal system. Finally, it is important to note that, because we could not conduct multivariate models to control for criminal history or other factors that may have influenced a youth's selection into the Green Reentry program and that may be associated with the outcomes of interest, we cannot determine whether any differences between the treatment and comparison groups were actually due to participation in the Green Reentry programs.

[11] With very small sample sizes, significance tests become more sensitive to the assumption that both samples are drawn from populations with a normal distribution.

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Exhibit 5-4. Inclusion Criteria and Sample Sizes for 6-, 12-, and 24-Month Outcome Analyses

Site	Inclusion Criteria for Analyses	Sample Sizes
Hualapai	6M: *Green Reentry youth* must have been released from their baseline incarceration (the one that led to their initial enrollment in the Green Reentry program) before 4/15/14 (the date 6 months before the recidivism data were obtained) *and* met either of the two additional criteria: (1) at the time of their release, the youth had at least 6 months before he or she turned 18 (i.e., 6 months of eligibility for a JDC booking) *or* (2) the youth had a new JDC booking within less than 6 months. 12M: *Green Reentry youth* must have been released from their baseline incarceration before 10/15/13 (the date 12 months before the recidivism data were obtained) *and* met either of the two additional criteria: (1) at the time of their release, the youth had at least 12 months before he/she turned 18 *or* (2) the youth had a new JDC booking within less than 12 months. 24M: *Green Reentry youth* must have been released from their baseline incarceration before 10/15/12 (the date 24 months before the recidivism data were obtained) *and* met either of the two additional criteria: (1) at the time of their release, the youth had at least 24 months before he/she turned 18 *or* (2) the youth had a new JDC booking within less than 24 months.	6M: *n* = 61 Green Reentry 12M: *n* = 52 Green Reentry 24M: *n* = 49 Green Reentry
MBCI	6M: *Green Reentry youth* must have enrolled in the Green Reentry program (or, if incarcerated at the time of initial enrollment, have been released from that incarceration) before 4/22/14 (the date 6 months before the recidivism data were obtained). *Comparison youth* must have been released from the incarceration that led to their court services supervision before 4/22/14. 12M: *Green Reentry and comparison youth* must have been enrolled (or released) before 10/22/13 (the date 12 months before the recidivism data were obtained) or have had a new detention center booking within less than 12 months. 24M: *Green Reentry and comparison youth* must have been enrolled (or released) before 10/22/12 (the date 24 months before the recidivism data were obtained) or have had a new detention center booking within less than 24 months.	6M: *n* = 62 Green Reentry *n* = 47 comparison 12M: *n* = 58 Green Reentry *n* = 47 comparison 24M: *n* = 44 Green Reentry *n* = 47 comparison

(continued)

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Exhibit 5-4. Inclusion Criteria and Sample Sizes for 6-, 12-, and 24-Month Outcome Analyses (continued)

Site	Inclusion Criteria for Analyses	Sample Sizes
RST	6M: *Green Reentry youth* must have enrolled in the program before or during the 2012–2013 school year*, not have had their JDC records expunged when they turned 18 (if applicable), *and* have met either of the two additional criteria: (1) the youth had at least 6 months until s/he turned 18 between the end of the academic year in which s/he enrolled in the program (at which point the 6-month follow-up period for recidivism began) until the date the recidivism data were compiled (9/15/14) *or* (2) the youth had a new JDC booking within less than 6 months. *Comparison youth* must have had a court date before 3/15/14, not have had their JDC records expunged when they turned 18 (if applicable), *and* have met either of the two additional criteria: (1) the youth had at least 6 months until s/he turned 18 between the enrollment date and the date the recidivism data were compiled, or (2) the youth had a new JDC booking within less than 6 months. 12M: *Green Reentry youth* must have enrolled in the program before or during the 2012–2013 school year, not have had their JDC records expunged when they turned 18 (if applicable), *and* have met either of the two additional criteria: (1) the youth had at least 12 months until s/he turned 18 between the end of the academic year in which s/he enrolled in the program until the date the recidivism data were compiled *or* (2) the youth had a new JDC booking within less than 12 months. *Comparison youth* must have had a court date before 9/15/13, not have had their JDC records expunged when they turned 18 (if applicable), *and* have met either of the two additional criteria: (1) the youth had at least 12 months until s/he turned 18 between the enrollment date and the date the recidivism data were compiled, *or* (2) the youth had a new JDC booking within less than 12 months. 24M: *Green Reentry youth* must have enrolled in the program during or before the 2011–2012 school year, not have had their JDC records expunged when they turned 18 (if applicable), *and* have met either of the two additional criteria: (1) the youth had at least 24 months until s/he turned 18 between the end of the academic year in which s/he enrolled in the program until the date the recidivism data were compiled *or* (2) the youth had a new JDC booking within less than 24 months. *Comparison youth* must have had a court date before 9/15/12, not have had their JDC records expunged when they turned 18 (if applicable), *and* have met either of the two additional criteria: (1) the youth had at least 24 months until s/he turned 18 between the enrollment date and the date the recidivism data were compiled, *or* (2) the youth had a new JDC booking within less than 24 months.	6M: *n* = 63 Green Reentry *n* = 14 comparison 12M: *n* = 63 Green Reentry *n* = 14 comparison 24M: *n* = 63 Green Reentry *n* = 14 comparison

* Because the RST program did not record the specific enrollment date for the Green Reentry youth, but rather the academic term during which the youth enrolled, we considered the enrollment date for all youth to be the beginning of the term, but we did not start the follow-up period for recidivism until the term was over. For example, if a youth enrolled in the Green Reentry program in September of 2010, only JDC bookings that took place after the end of the school year (i.e., 5/30/2011) were considered to be recidivism events.

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6

Process Evaluation Findings: The Implementation Experiences of the Green Reentry Programs

6.1 Program Overviews

As described in ***Section 4***, the Green Reentry grants were intended to support the use of green technologies and environmentally sustainable activities in programs designed to help detained and reentering tribal youth successfully reintegrate into their communities and to prevent future delinquent or criminal behavior among at-risk youth. The Green Reentry programs were all run by tribal criminal justice agencies and targeted youth involved in the tribal juvenile justice system. Specific target populations varied by site, including youth incarcerated in JDCs, community-based youth court-ordered to a day report education program, and community-based youth serving probation sentences or under court supervision.

In implementing their programs, the grantees combined conventional juvenile justice programming—such as individual assessments, reentry planning, education, and counseling—with green activities such as gardening and skill development in green technologies. In addition, the three programs incorporated traditional tribal culture through cultural education, community activities, and ceremonies. Grantees' initial program designs and early implementation experiences are described in Lindquist, Pecos Melton, McKay, and Martinez (2013), available at http://www.rti.org/pubs/topicalbrief1_final_feb2013.pdf.

Before the inception of their Green Reentry programs, none of the three grantees had been involved in the delivery of green activities or had a large community infrastructure for such activities (e.g., community gardens, use of green technologies). The programs primarily built on their experiences implementing other juvenile justice programs serving tribal youth, including Healing to Wellness courts (with a focus on substance use). The grantees designed their programs to reflect local resources and the community context unique to each. For example, although truancy and substance use (underage drinking and drug use) were the crimes that led to justice involvement for most youth in all three sites, other problematic behaviors were site specific (e.g., teen suicide and gang membership in the RST site, curfew violations in Hualapai, runaways and burglaries in MBCI). Therefore, the youth served in each site had unique needs and strengths.

The **RST's** Green Reentry program was delivered primarily in the context of a day-report educational program at the RST JDC (WWT), in which youth reported to the facility each weekday to participate in schoolwork and other programming. Green Reentry activities included gardening, beekeeping, and greenhouse construction and maintenance, complemented by a strong cultural component including culturally based counseling, Lakota language education,

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spiritual ceremonies, cultural excursions, community events, and service learning projects in the community. Youth sentenced to day report were the primary recipients of Green Reentry programming over the course of the grant; however, youth committed to the JDC did participate in some Green Reentry activities.

The **Hualapai Indian Tribe's** Green Reentry program served all youth who were adjudicated to the HJDRC, which included Hualapai youth and those placed at the HJDRC by nearby tribal courts. Green Reentry activities included gardening and horticultural education, complemented by cultural activities such as Native crafts, singing, and sweat lodges. Youth who advanced to the highest behavioral status level participated in a number of additional activities such as greenhouse construction and maintenance, hydroponic gardening, beekeeping, and community service projects. Reentry planning and post-release follow-up were also provided to Hualapai youth, with some youth receiving apprenticeships or job placements with tribal departments. Gardening plots and greenhouses were located at the HJDRC and the local Boys & Girls Club, allowing youth to participate in the Green Reentry program while at the HJDRC and to continue when they returned home.

The **MBCI's** Green Reentry program was administered by the Division of Court Services and delivered primarily on the MBCI Justice Complex grounds, where a large garden plot and hoop house (with an aquaponics demonstration) were located. Youth on probation or under court supervision were the primary population served, with garden work used to fulfill community service requirements. Youth also participated in cultural crafts, attended community events, and participated in a number of field trips to engage in hands-on work with partner agencies, including agricultural demonstrations; workshops on solar panels, permaculture, and Native forestry; and volunteer work at the elderly/senior center. Youth committed to the MBCI JDC were in contact with Green Reentry staff but could not participate in program activities.

Exhibit 6-1 presents key information for each program as of the time of the final evaluation site visit, which represented a time period approximately 4.5 years into the grantees' awards. The program goals and service delivery settings were stable over the course of the programs. However, some evolution in the other aspects of the programs was evident. Over time, new partners were added to enhance the delivery of programs, and some partnerships became inactive. Partnerships are discussed in more detail in ***Section 6.2.2***. Target populations shifted in one site (RST); although community-based youth who came to the JDC for a day report educational program were the primary Green Reentry program participants, at times the Green Reentry program focused exclusively on youth serving sentences in the JDC. Not surprisingly, all three sites made program modifications to the specific green, cultural, and other program components implemented. All three programs started with basic green projects such as gardens and horticultural education and then undertook more complex projects such as greenhouse construction and operation, hydroponics, and beekeeping. Some program components were suspended or discontinued over time, as noted in the exhibit. Cross-site themes with regard to implementing green activities are discussed in more detail in ***Section 6.2.3***. Finally, although the

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number and type of grant-funded positions did not change over the course of the grants, two grantees experienced turnover in grant-funded staff (discussed in ***Section 6.2.1***).

Exhibit 6-1. Summary of Green Reentry Site Characteristics

	Rosebud Sioux Tribe (RST)	Hualapai Indian Tribe	Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI)
Program goal	• Reduce recidivism • Improve rapport with youth at Wanbli Wiconi Tipi (WWT; RST Juvenile Detention Center) • Improve youth performance relative to grade-level requirements • Increase opportunities for youth to give back to their communities • Provide opportunities for youth to connect to their culture • Increase youth knowledge and skills in green sustainable projects • Increase youth knowledge and skills in green economic sustainable technology	• Reduce number of tribal youth experiencing substance abuse issues by 4% per year • Reduce number of tribal youth truancy violations by 4% per year • Reduce number of tribal youth curfew violations by 5% each year • Increase youth employment within the community by 5% per year	• Reclaim family as a secure, trusting environment to provide a positive direction for Chahta (Choctaw) youth • Educate and train Chahta youth to embrace their heritage and build a healthier community • Reduce times in detention and redirect Chahta youth to a more wholesome and healthier lifestyle
Key partners	• Community elders • Oglala Lakota College • Rosebud Indian Health Service Mental Health Center • RST Court Services • RST Alcohol Program • RST Forestry • RST Natural Resources • RST Solid Waste • RST Tribal Land Enterprises • Sicangu Youth and Family Services • South Dakota State University Extension Office • Todd County Schools • Tree of Life • RST Wellness Court • Wiconi Wakan Healing and Health Center • Tokala Inajinyo • Christian Access to Recovery Defending Childhood program	• Hualapai Behavioral Health • University of Arizona Cooperative Extension • Hualapai Underage Drinking Prevention Coalition • Hualapai Youth Services • Hualapai Cultural Center • Boys & Girls Club of Peach Springs • Hualapai Department of Education and Training • Arizona Project ChalleNGe • Job Corps • Hualapai Housing Department • Hualapai Apprenticeship Program • Hualapai Tribal Courts • Hualapai Prosecutor's Office • Hualapai Tribal Council	• Choctaw Behavioral Health • Choctaw Boys & Girls Club • Choctaw Educational Services • Choctaw Healing to Wellness Court • Choctaw Juvenile Detention • Choctaw Juvenile Probation • Choctaw Natural Resources • Choctaw Public Safety • Choctaw Tribal Court • Choctaw Youth Court • Chahta Immi Cultural Center • Mississippi State University • Mississippi Solar • Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture Production • Choctaw Fresh Produce • Choctaw Food Distribution

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Exhibit 6-1. Summary of Green Reentry Site Characteristics (continued)

	Rosebud Sioux Tribe (RST)	Hualapai Indian Tribe	Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI)
Target population	• Youth participating in Day Report Educational Program at the WWT (including those released from detention on probation, status offenders processed through truancy court, and youth sentenced to probation) • Youth currently in the JDC (some services)	• Youth adjudicated to the HJDRC	• Youth under supervision by Court Services and with community service requirements (either participating voluntarily as an informal diversion strategy, sentenced to probation, OR released from the JDC on probation) • Youth currently in the JDC (some services)
Service delivery setting	• WWT	• HJDRC	• MBCI Justice Complex
Green components	• Gardening and planting • Greenhouse construction and operation • Horticultural education • Beekeeping • Service learning • Recycling • Raising chickens *(discontinued)* • Equine therapy *(suspended)*	• Gardening and planting • Greenhouse construction and operation (including hydroponics) • Horticultural education • Beekeeping • Green technology projects (*suspended)*	• Gardening and planting • Hoop house construction and operation • Aquaponics • Horticultural/environmental education • Green technology education • Recycling
Cultural activities	• Use of traditional healing • Culture-based counseling • Culturally relevant excursions • Daily infusion of culture in activities • Lakota culture, history, and language education	• Talking circles • Sweat lodge • Cultural events • Cultural arts and crafts • Walking the four directions • Reservation awareness	• Culturally relevant events • Cultural education
Other services	• Schooling • Job training and placement • Life skills and anger management	• Behavioral health services • Child and family teams • Reentry planning • Schooling • Substance abuse treatment • Substance abuse prevention • Anger management groups • Culinary activities • Community service • Job training and placement	• Counseling • Alcohol and drug education • School support • Job training and placement • Experiential team building • Reentry planning • Moral reconation therapy (*suspended)*
Staffing structure	• Program manager—100% • Case manager—100% • Teacher—100%	• Program manager—100% (vacant in Program Year 4)	• Project coordinator—100% • Secretary—100% • Therapist—100% (vacant in final program year)

Note. HJDRC, Hualapai Juvenile Detention and Rehabilitation Center; JDC, juvenile detention center.

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The context in which the programs operated changed slightly in all three sites over the course of the Green Reentry grants. Notably, all three grantees saw a decrease in the number of youth sentenced to their tribal JDC over the course of their grants. This was mainly attributed to an increasing emphasis on diversion and alternatives to incarceration for justice-involved youth. Turnover in chief judges and youth court judges also took place in two sites, and in one of these sites the resulting changes in judicial philosophy influenced sentencing practices and the willingness of the tribal courts to reinforce participation in Green Reentry. Other contextual changes taking place in the reservations, such as shifts in youth drug use (with increases in methamphetamine use reported in two sites) and delinquency (with two sites reporting an increase in home break-ins), had less of a direct impact on program operations but did affect the needs of the youth participating in the programs.

6.2 Cross-Site Implementation Experiences

The remainder of this section highlights cross-site themes drawn from the implementation experiences of the Green Reentry grantees. Specifically, we highlight challenges and considerations in the following areas: staffing and budgeting, developing and maintaining organizational partnerships, implementing green activities, working within tribal JDC security constraints, engaging youth, involving parents, involving elders and incorporating traditional tribal culture, and building community awareness and sustainability.

6.2.1 Staffing and Budgeting Effectively

Each Green Reentry grantee received approximately $700,000 over a 5-year period. The grants were primarily used to fund up to three full-time positions at each site, with these staff members spending the majority of their time leading green projects and engaging in intensive individual work with youth. When hiring program staff, all three Green Reentry grantees tended to prioritize hiring tribal members who had strong community connections and the skills necessary to build relationships with youth, as opposed to staff with technical green knowledge, project management skills, or both. This approach worked well as long as there were other individuals in administrative positions who could fulfill many of the project management responsibilities and a strong partnership network for the provision of green expertise. It is important to note, however, that among the grantees, many green projects were not thoroughly planned, and technical issues that arose after implementation sometimes took a very long time to resolve. In addition, partnerships that could have been

> When asked to reflect on the relative value of each program component relative to its cost, the Green Reentry program directors generally noted that every component they implemented was worth the cost. Individual work with youth, which was definitely the most labor-intensive effort, was highly emphasized as worth the resources. Program directors noted that most green projects were done very inexpensively. In addition, the most substantial costs were incurred only once, such as in purchasing greenhouse materials, setting up the beehives, and establishing gardens (labor and materials). Gardens were noted as good foundational activities that yielded many benefits relative to the costs. Greenhouses were the most expensive and complex projects. They also tended to be underutilized after they were built, which led some program directors to recommend smaller and simpler designs.
>
> Cultural components were extremely inexpensive to implement and were perceived as having tremendous value in facilitating cultural identity and increasing cultural knowledge.

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leveraged to ensure the success of some projects were not fully taken advantage of because of lack of partnership coordination efforts and guiding policies.

In addition to staffing, direct costs budgeted by the grantees included

- travel, including required travel to OJJDP grantee conferences and regional peer-to-peer training sessions, as well as local travel for transporting youth to activities;
- consultant costs (both fees and expenses) for needed expertise, which generally included beekeeping experts (additional consultants with expertise in database development and greenhouse design/planning were also heavily relied on but were provided free of charge through the TTA contract[12]);
- equipment, including a truck purchased in one site and gardening equipment purchased in others;
- construction (primarily greenhouse construction);
- supplies, including garden and greenhouse supplies such as protective clothing, tools, hoses, seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, hydroponics pumps; educational supplies such as curricula, textbooks, workbooks, and computer programs; beekeeping supplies; marketing supplies, including brochures and cameras; transportation costs, such as gas and vehicle repairs; and office supplies, such as computers, printers, postage, and copying; and
- other costs, such as rental of equipment for site preparation.

In addition to the expenses covered by the grants, all three grantees benefited tremendously from in-kind labor and consultation provided by partner organizations. In addition, several partner organizations lent equipment and donated materials, such as soil, trucks, and lumber, to the programs.

Over the course of their programs, budgeting and staffing challenges included the following:

- **Difficulty expending grant funds** due to tribal bureaucracy and regulations within tribal agencies that hampered grant activities. Examples include one tribal finance office's requirement for a grant modification for any items not included in the original budget, a cumbersome procurement process that created difficulty in purchasing supplies, and policies prohibiting Green Reentry staff from driving JDC vehicles (which limited opportunities for staff to pick up youth and take them into the community).

[12] The Green Reentry grantees also had access to training on a variety of green technologies delivered through webinars, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and OJJDP grantee conferences.

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- **Staff turnover**. All three Green Reentry grantees suffered from key staff turnover at one point in their programs. This turnover, which was often accompanied by extended vacancies, caused two programs to stagnate significantly. The lengthy vacancy period in one site resulted in very little follow-up with youth after their release (given that this work was dependent on the grant-funded position) and stagnation among organizational partners.

- **Time constraints of project staff**. All three programs had a lean staffing structure, yet the nature of direct work with youth was intensive. Staff had many competing demands on their time, including working individually with youth, engaging in technically complex tasks such as aquaponics and beekeeping, coordinating partnerships, and fulfilling reporting and grant management responsibilities. As noted above, grant-funded staff tended to prioritize individual work with youth; as a result, many green projects were not thoroughly planned, and technical issues that arose after implementation sometimes took a very long time to resolve. The competing demands on staff time due to the lean staffing structures and need to juggle the intensive individual work with youth, green projects, partnership coordination, and reporting and grant management responsibilities left little time for resolving technical difficulties.

> The Green Reentry program directors were asked whether additional grant-funded staff positions would have allowed the program to serve more youth. Although the answer was no, all program directors did identify staffing structures that might have made their programs more effective overall, such as having staff primarily work after-school and weekend hours, having an assistant to help with administrative tasks, and providing training to enhance staff skills (e.g., green skills, use of formal assessment tools, electronic data collection, grant reporting, budgeting).

6.2.2 Developing and Maintaining Organizational Partnerships

The Green Reentry grantees developed extensive partnership networks to design, implement, and sustain their programs. On average, the grantees worked with around 14 partners each; about half of these partnerships predated the implementation of the Green Reentry program. Partners generally served three types of roles: **providing direct services** to Green Reentry participants; **referring eligible youth to the programs**, receiving referrals from the program, or both; and **providing in-kind donations** such as supplies and resources that supported participant activities.

Across the grantees, four key types of partners were involved (***Exhibit 6-2***): government/juvenile justice partners, green partners, other local departments or programs, and community partners.

The Green Reentry programs were administered by tribal justice agencies with the support of the tribal councils and many justice partners. Having strong support from juvenile justice partners, particularly the tribal courts at each site, was necessary to get youth into the programs (i.e., sentencing them to participate and, for those released from JDCs, mandating post-release participation); reinforce participation; and, in some cases, mandate parent involvement. In addition, support from JDC administrators was necessary to access confined youth for green programming.

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Exhibit 6-2. Green Reentry Partnerships

Type of Partner	Examples from Grantees	Primary Partnership Role
Government/ juvenile justice partners	• Tribal council • Tribal youth courts • Tribal prosecutor's office • Probation • JDC administration • Law enforcement	• Authorizing the program • Administering the program for justice-involved youth • Court-ordering participation and monitoring compliance
Green partners	• Local universities, including agricultural extension offices • Tribal departments with expertise (natural resources, forestry, solid waste) • Local agricultural programs (demonstration farms) • Local green technology businesses • Local master gardener volunteers • U.S. Department of Agriculture staff	• Providing substantive expertise for green projects • Providing labor, equipment, or supplies for green projects • Leading workshops and hands-on activities with youth
Other local departments/ programs	• Tribal cultural department • County school district • Tribal department of education • Tribal department of behavioral health • Tribal child/family services department • Tribal employment and vocational training department • Youth programs (Boys and Girls Club, suicide prevention, alcohol/drugs, apprenticeship)	• Leading cultural activities • Sharing information about school attendance/performance and negotiating school credit for program participation • Providing complementary services such as counseling, home investigations, employment, character-based education, and substance abuse prevention
Community partners	• Parents • Elders • Culturally knowledgeable community members	• Participating with youth in program activities • Leading cultural activities • Supporting youths' progress in program

The green activities implemented by the grantees required technical knowledge far above what is typical for justice agency staff. Therefore, partnerships with agencies and organizations that had this expertise were critical to the success of each program. Green partners provided guidance on technically complex green activities (e.g., beekeeping, aquaponics) and worked directly with youth on activities in which program staff did not have expertise (e.g., solar panel installation). All three programs worked closely with their state university's agricultural extension office representative[13] and involved several tribal departments that had specific expertise and resources. The MBCI program was extremely successful in identifying other community partners and businesses that could expose youth to advanced green technologies and offer hands-on learning through agricultural projects.

[13] As noted in ***Section 3***, each Green Reentry grantee was required to have a university partner. After exploring several options, all three programs determined that their state agricultural extension officers had sufficient levels of expertise to fill this role. In addition to this partnership, the RST program also partnered with a local tribal college to provide lesson plans and expertise on gardening.

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The involvement of a variety of tribal and nontribal departments and programs was also instrumental in providing direct services to youth that complemented green programming, particularly cultural activities, behavioral health counseling, and employment assistance. Finally, the Green Reentry programs attempted to involve parents, tribal elders, and culturally knowledgeable community members when possible.

Across sites, stakeholders had very favorable views about the level of coordination and communication among partners. Staff leadership, consistent communication and contact by program staff, and consistent updates about programs through personal meetings and electronic communication were all cited as factors that kept partners involved in and supportive of the Green Reentry program in each site. Stakeholders interviewed by the evaluation team valued their involvement with the Green Reentry programs and enjoyed their individual work with youth and the fact that the program enabled youth to become exposed to new skills and opportunities that they would not have had otherwise.

Although collaboration and communication among partners was generally high over the duration of the programs, program staff in all three sites faced a lack of support from particular departments or agencies in a way that adversely affected their Green Reentry programs. Which partnerships were difficult varied, but the lists included JDC partners, youth court, juvenile probation, and a county school district.

Several partners that were not involved in the Green Reentry programs in one or more sites but were perceived to be desirable additions by stakeholders. These included tribal law enforcement, public schools, social services, mental health counselors, elder programs, tribal economic development and planning departments, and housing departments (including youth transitional housing partners).

Over time, the grantees struggled with achieving consistent involvement with an already stretched group of partners, turnover among partners, and political barriers. Other barriers to partnership functioning included

- lack of understanding and connectedness among partners not involved in the early planning of the program,
- underutilization of some partners who wanted to become more involved,
- inconsistent attendance of partners at advisory board meetings,
- inconsistent scheduling of advisory board meetings and lack of structured communication with partners and advisory board members, and
- lack of follow-through by some partners.

Stakeholders offered several suggestions for improving partnership collaboration to strengthen their local Green Reentry programs, including better outreach to tribal councils and to

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other tribal departments. Stakeholders also suggested looking for opportunities to streamline the work (e.g., identifying existing boards that are focused on justice-involved youth programs), better delegation (and follow-through) of tasks, and use of a backup system so that when a designated agency representative cannot attend a meeting, someone else can provide coverage. Over time, ensuring that partnerships remain reciprocal also emerged as an important strategy for maintaining strong partnerships. Stakeholders indicated that partnerships were stronger when both entities benefited from the partnership and that the Green Reentry programs should look for opportunities to give back to their partners.

6.2.3 Implementing Green Activities

Gardens and horticultural education were core program components in all three sites. The RST program originally established a large garden plot on JDC grounds outside of the secured perimeter but later moved the garden to an area within the fenced-in area of the JDC.[14] The MBCI program also established a large garden plot on JDC grounds outside of the secured perimeter.[15] The Hualapai program established a small garden inside the secured area of the HJDRC; small plots were also established on the grounds of a community partner facility. In all three sites, youth were involved in preparing the garden site, planting seedlings, performing ongoing maintenance (e.g., watering, weeding, mulching), and harvesting. The programs often planted traditional Native plants and implemented traditional planting techniques, such as the "three sisters" technique in the MBCI site (planting corn, beans, and squash together). Both the Hualapai and the MBCI programs also incorporated traditional principles in the design of their garden beds, including the medicine wheel and other culturally significant shapes. In addition to the main garden plots, in two sites the Green Reentry programs helped establish small planting boxes at the tribal elderly/senior centers in their communities. Throughout the course of the programs, the produce harvested from the gardens was often shared with elders as a way to allow the youth to give back to the community. The produce was also used to prepare meals at the JDC, entered for judging in state or county fairs, and sold at community events.

Horticultural education included hands-on and classroom- or workshop-based learning about planting techniques, soil quality, irrigation, and pest control. In delivering such activities, the three programs worked closely with their green partners, particularly the state university agricultural extension officers. The MBCI program also partnered with a local demonstration farm, which provided opportunities for youth to engage in hands-on learning for many of the topics listed above.

After establishing their gardens, the programs gradually undertook more complex projects. All three programs built greenhouses to extend the growing season, with the specific

[14] As discussed in ***Section 6.2.4***, the movement of the garden greatly facilitated the program's ability to work with incarcerated youth.

[15] The decision about the placement of the garden was made because of the proximity to a transitional housing unit for JDC youth who would be reentering the community. However, the transitional living unit was rarely used during the grant period, and incarcerated youth were not given permission to access the garden, which led to an early decision to focus on community-based youth under the supervision of the Division of Court Services.

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styles reflecting the local climate and terrain. For example, at the Hualapai site, a straw bale greenhouse (which is a traditional technique) was built on the grounds of a community partner's site and a conventional glass greenhouse was constructed at the HJDRC. At the MBCI site, which has a temperate climate, a hoop house (high tunnel house) was constructed. The RST site built a dome-shaped greenhouse to withstand high winds. After constructing their greenhouses, the grantees used them for starting seedlings. Two sites established hydroponics units, which entail growing plants in water (without soil). The Hualapai greenhouse also included the use of float tanks and strawberry towers to grow various plants. The MBCI program implemented an aquaponics component as well, in which water from a fish tank was fed into a hydroponic system. Youth were involved in greenhouse construction, as well as in other tasks associated with the ongoing operation and maintenance of the greenhouses.

Beekeeping was a component implemented in the Hualapai and RST sites. Hives were established on the JDC grounds, and youth were involved in monitoring and tending to the hives. Modest recycling efforts were implemented in all three sites. Other site-specific green components were engaging in equine therapy, raising chickens, and exposing youth to advanced green technology through either hands-on projects (e.g., solar panel installation [Hualapai]) or demonstrations (e.g., workshops on electric vehicles and solar energy [MBCI]).

The Green Reentry grantees supplemented their green components with culturally based activities, which included culturally based counseling, healing and spiritual ceremonies, attendance at community cultural events, traditional crafts, language education, and excursions to cultural sites. Staff, youth, and parents strongly supported the cultural components that were incorporated into the Green Reentry programs. For the most part, cultural components were implemented with few challenges. Hiring culturally knowledgeable program staff, leveraging cultural learning opportunities provided by the tribal cultural departments, and working with elders at the elder activity centers enhanced each program's ability to expose youth to a variety of cultural activities. Detailed information about the manner in which traditional tribal culture was incorporated in the Green Reentry programs is presented in Pecos Melton, Martinez, and Melton (2014), available at http://www.rti.org/pubs/greenreentryevaluationbrief3_rev.pdf.

Grantees also invested a substantial amount of time in individual case management work with youth, which included needs assessments, reentry planning, post-release follow-up contact with youth and families, home visits, transportation to activities, and other one-on-one work with youth. Individual work with youth was perceived to be a critical component because it allowed for a more holistic approach to working with the youth on a variety of their needs (and building programming around their interests), facilitated the building of trusting relationships between staff and youth (as well as parents), and promoted long-term participation from youth.

Over the course of the Green Reentry evaluation, technical challenges associated with implementing the green components were documented. Among the grantees, the most complex technical challenges pertained to the greenhouse component. **Greenhouse-related challenges** included difficulty with laying the foundation, construction problems (which can lead to insect infestation), challenges with establishing the layout and design of the interior, difficulty identifying a heat source during the winter (particularly one considered to be environmentally sound), difficulty finding an appropriate pump for hydroponics, challenges with achieving proper water quality for aquaponics, vandalism of community-based greenhouses (and delays in repairing the damage and implementing vandalism prevention efforts to deter future vandalism), and wind damage. **Gardening-related challenges** included weather (droughts, excessive rain, and early freezes), pests (insects and deer), difficulty with layouts (accessing plants), lack of a water source, poor soil quality, and sloped land. **Beekeeping-related challenges** included the

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need to negotiate tribal approval, the need for youth with bee allergies to avoid exposure, and poor hive health due to pests and potential pesticide exposure. To resolve these and other technical challenges,[16] grantees sought expertise from their green partners and TTA providers, and they reached out to new partners and consultants when needed.

In addition to technical challenges, stakeholders in all three sites reported that lack of sufficient time for youth to work in the garden or greenhouse because of school requirements was a challenge to the successful implementation of their green components. The primary conflict was that youth—whether incarcerated or living in the community—are expected to be in school for a certain number of hours during the school day. The grantees struggled not only with the limited amount of time that youth were available for programming, but also with the timing. The hours that youth were required to be in school were also the optimal times for some green activities (e.g., watering, volunteering with the elders at the tribal elderly/senior center).

Stakeholders in two sites also noted that the successful implementation of their green components was threatened by a lack of cooperation from JDC officers when garden maintenance tasks needed to be completed after hours or on the weekend. Because of the location of the gardens and greenhouses inside the secure area of the JDC and the fact that Green Reentry staff typically work normal business hours, these programs expected that corrections officers would assume responsibility for after-hours and weekend watering (ideally involving detained youth in this process). Stakeholders indicated that the lack of cooperation among JDC officers was due to **understaffing**, which limited officers' availability to assist with after-hours and weekend maintenance tasks; **rotating shifts,** which limited communication and created a lack of understanding about what needed to happen; and **the JDC officers' perception that such tasks were not part of their official responsibilities**.

6.2.4 Working within Tribal Juvenile Detention Center Security Constraints

The Green Reentry initiative was originally envisioned by OJJDP as an opportunity to work with youth who were incarcerated in (and released from) JDCs. All three grantees originally planned to work with this population. Among the perceived benefits of working with JDC youth were that engagement in green activities—working in a garden and caring for living things—would be therapeutic and that learning concrete skills such as horticultural techniques, solar panel installation, and greenhouse construction would make youth more employable and self-sufficient after release.

However, throughout the course of the Green Reentry evaluation, one of the most significant challenges that two grantees encountered was the inability to access confined youth because of concerns with security risks. Inherently, most green activities need to be implemented in an outdoor setting. This is not the typical setting for program delivery in JDCs and, depending on a facility's layout, can introduce severe constraints because facility administrators may have a

[16] Site-specific technical challenges included difficulty identifying a water source for the greenhouse and garden, an infiltration of mice in the beehive pallets, difficulty accessing plants for weeding because of the layout of the garden bed, and difficulty finding an age-appropriate and low-cost curriculum for green lessons.

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very strict interpretation of JDC policies related to youth being outside the secure perimeter and may be very sensitive about their liability for escape risk. These concerns prevented two Green Reentry grantees from being able to involve JDC youth in green programming to the extent originally envisioned (although one grantee did overcome this barrier late in the grant period). The inability to work with confined youth also inhibited reentry planning before JDC release and provision of reentry services while the youth were confined to increase their involvement in community-based reentry programming.

Several factors appeared to influence whether grantees were able to effectively engage confined youth from each JDC:

- **Whether the top administrators supported the program.** Green-oriented programming in JDCs is unique in several ways. It requires access to outdoor programming space; permission for staff from partner agencies to enter the facility; and, ideally, the ability of JDC youth to leave the facility for community service projects and cultural events. These features required a certain level of flexibility and acceptance of risk on the part of JDC administrators. Among the grantees, it was clearly evident that when the JDC administrator believed in the value of the program, resolution on security-related questions was achieved and the attitudes of other JDC staff were more positive. It is difficult to determine why some administrators were more supportive (or less strongly risk-averse) than others, but factors such as positive communication between Green Reentry staff and JDC staff, personal beliefs among JDC administrators (e.g., punitive or rehabilitative philosophy, beliefs about the importance of youth remaining connected with their community), and previous experience working in a similarly flexible correctional environments were influential.

- **Whether green activities, such as gardens and greenhouses, could be located within the secured perimeter of the JDC** (as opposed to on JDC grounds, but outside the fence). The two grantees that placed their gardens beyond the secured area of the JDC could not get permission from JDC administrators for detained youth to work in the gardens. When one of these grantees relocated its garden to an alternative location within the secured perimeter, security concerns were virtually eliminated. This change, as well as efforts to improve communication between Green Reentry and JDC staff, resulted in much better access to JDC youth. The central visibility also appeared to promote interest in the program among JDC staff not directly involved because they could see the activities progress over time and the enthusiasm of youth as they worked.

- **Whether mechanisms existed to allow JDC youth to participate in programming outside of the secured area.** In addition to on-site work with JDC youth, all Green Reentry grantees wanted to involve JDC youth in activities that took place outside of the secured area of the JDC. This could include green activities located on JDC grounds but outside the fence (among the Green Reentry grantees, this most commonly involved beekeeping) or activities in the community, such as service projects (e.g., cleaning up parks, painting over graffiti) or cultural events. These activities were perceived as adding great value to the Green Reentry programs

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because they enabled youth to give back to their communities and facilitated community awareness about the program. The two programs that were able to work with JDC youth were successful in involving them in activities outside of the secured area because they had mechanisms and policies in place to allow this: in one site, the behavioral classification system in the JDC; in the other, temporary releases issued by the court. The behavioral classification system in place in the HJDRC offered privileges to youth who achieved the highest level, which was used to allow Level 4 youth to participate in more advanced green activities located outside of the secured perimeter (e.g., beekeeping, greenhouse work, hydroponics, solar panel installation) and to go into the community for cultural events and community service projects. The RST site used the temporary release mechanism as a strategy for achieving similar results. In this site, the youth court judge regularly issued temporary release orders for JDC youth to participate in beekeeping (located outside of the secured perimeter) and to go into the community for service learning projects, cultural excursions, and community activities. Clearly, the goal of bringing JDC youth into the community was not achieved merely by the presence of one of these mechanisms.[17] Their use was possible only because of the strong support from the JDC administrator (Hualapai) and the youth court judge (RST). In these sites, such stakeholders emphasized that the benefits of incarcerated youths' remaining connected and giving back to their communities outweighed the risk of the youths' escaping.

In addition to difficulty accessing JDC youth for programming, which was the main implementation barrier associated with delivering Green Reentry programs in JDCs, other (minor) implementation barriers were related to compliance with cumbersome security requirements: inventorying every piece of equipment upon entry and exit; accommodating JDC policies that forbade girls and boys from communicating with one another; ensuring that security staff were available to escort youth to the programming site (and monitor them) during the desired time for program activities; completing background clearances for staff from partner agencies and community volunteers; and dealing with policies that prohibit nonincarcerated youth (e.g., program "alumni") from entering the secured area of the JDC to work with current youth. The lack of time that JDC youth were available for programming and lack of JDC officer support for green activities were additional implementation challenges discussed above.

6.2.5 Engaging Youth

Throughout the course of the evaluation, the evaluation team documented youth engagement in the Green Reentry programs through interviews with staff and organizational partners, youth participants, and their parents. In addition, the structured observations of programmatic activities conducted by the evaluation team during the four rounds of site visits enabled the evaluation team to document the level of interest and active engagement by youth in the observed activities.

[17] For example, some JDC administrators and judges may view that temporary release orders are intended for use only in extremely rare circumstances.

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Staff and partner agency representatives from all three sites indicated that youth were generally engaged in the Green Reentry programs. Perspectives of the youth themselves appear to be consistent with the staff reports of their level of engagement in the Green Reentry programming. Overall, most youth interviewed expressed favorable views about their participation in the Green Reentry program, noting that they learned new things and had fun. In two sites, youth specifically said that the program gave them experience and enabled them to learn new things, such as gardening and greenhouse construction. Not all youth enjoyed working in the garden, with some expressing dissatisfaction with getting dirty and working in the heat.

The following types of activities were identified as the ones most conducive to youth engagement:

- Activities that get youth out into the community and allow them the opportunity to give back and feel that they belong. Specific examples include the Positive Warrior Work Service component developed in the Hualapai site, the RST community service learning projects, and the act of giving produce from the garden to elders in the MBCI site.
- Hands-on activities in which the youth can work at their own pace to produce something, such as cultural items.
- Activities in which the youth can learn a transferable skill, such as reading a blueprint, learning to cook, building a greenhouse, assembling something, or participating in a horticultural workshop.
- Activities that give the youth a sense of accomplishment and pride in the results of their labor, such as gardening, beekeeping, and raising chickens.
- Cultural and spiritual activities (e.g., sweat lodges, cultural crafts, talking circles, community-based cultural activities, gaining cultural skills and knowledge).

Overall, youth were perceived to be much more engaged in hands-on activities (as opposed to classroom-based activities) and to learn more by doing than hearing. Some Green Reentry staff observed that the youth listened and paid more attention when staff members showed them something, as opposed to telling them. Staff also emphasized the need for selecting activities that teach the youth a skill or trade, such as construction skills and beekeeping, and allow them to assume high-level responsibilities (as long as staff can attend to them while they are working). Some reflected that contemporary youth might relate better to technology-based green projects than gardening. Even if staff or volunteers are not certain that a project is going to turn out perfectly, because of limits in their own expertise (see sidebar), youth can learn from the challenges that arise.

One stakeholder noted that some program staff have a tendency to want to figure out the solution to a technical problem themselves and then teach it to the youth, but that technical challenges offer a perfect learning opportunity for the youth. "It's like a science fair project. They are seeing what works and what doesn't work – what parameters have to be constant for it to work."

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Strategies for facilitating youth engagement reported by staff and stakeholders included tailoring activities to their interests, making learning fun, being persistent, and understanding where the youth are coming from. In addition, the RST program offered incentives (purchasing school clothes) to encourage youth to attend programming regularly, noting that once they get youth involved in the program, the youth create a bond with the staff and continue to come.

Relationships between staff and youth were perceived to be extremely critical to youth engagement. Green Reentry stakeholders indicated that, to effectively engage youth in green programming, program staff must be people who sincerely care about the youth, are willing to advocate for them, are energetic, follow through on promises, and, most importantly, are able to genuinely connect with youth and build their trust. Many interviewed stakeholders stated that tribal members or Native people with strong connections to the community were best able to connect with youth (as well as parents and other community members). Stakeholders noted that trusting relationships with youth are built by listening to them, showing patience, being informal and relatable with them, treating them with respect, and maintaining their confidences (i.e., being an advocate for them rather than "narcing them out"). Equally critical to building trust is following through on promises, given that many justice-involved youth have already had a lot of letdowns in their lives. Finally, Green Reentry stakeholders emphasized the need for staff to provide youth with the positive attention, feedback, and love that are often missing from their lives.

Despite the generally high levels of youth engagement reported by program stakeholders, a few staff said that some youth just go through the motions. Several noted that, although attendance may be required, youth cannot be forced to fully participate and take advantage of all the program has to offer. Staff at all sites noted that once youth are no longer required to participate in Green Reentry programming, keeping them engaged in community-based components is almost impossible. Indeed, very few youth remained involved with program activities after they were no longer required to do so. However, during its final year of funding, the Hualapai program made substantial progress in increasing post-program involvement. According to program staff, several youth who had completed the program asked to come back to the HJDRC to co-facilitate talking circles, sweat lodges, and counseling sessions so that they could share their experiences with youth who were currently participating in the program. These peer success stories were granted permission to enter the facility, and their work with the current participants was perceived to be very beneficial.

Stakeholders in all three sites offered several suggestions for overcoming the reluctance of youth to participate after they are no longer required to do so. The most common recommendation was to invite youth to participate in appealing events selected with their input. Staff recommended identifying and focusing on the particular interests of youth and offering activities related to those interests. Other recommendations pertaining to communication were emphasized. Staff recommended keeping an open line of communication by calling youth to see how they are doing, going to their houses, texting parents, using social media, and constantly informing them of activities that are taking place in which they can participate. Providing

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transportation for youth to get to activities and having activities in locations other than the JDC were also recommended. Finally, the strong rapport between the Green Reentry staff and the youth and families was thought to encourage continued involvement. Several stakeholders said that, given the strong relationships built between staff and youth during their participation, it was critical for graduates not to feel abandoned. In one site, the sentiment that youth do not want to complete the program because they have become so comfortable there has led to the implementation of a "releasing" ceremony to help the youth let go.

Despite the perceived merit of these strategies, many stakeholders felt that it was unrealistic to expect youth to participate in programming when they were no longer required to do so, especially if such participation meant working with criminal justice staff who had formal supervision authority over them in the past. However, respondents emphasized that youth needed lengthy post-release support. They recommended longer supervision terms after release and mandated participation in Green Reentry to ensure that youth receive the support they need.

6.2.6 Involving Parents

Parental involvement in Green Reentry programming was documented through interviews with staff and organizational partners, youth participants, and parents themselves. In addition, during the final evaluation site visit, focus groups with parents were held to discuss parent and family involvement in tribal juvenile justice more broadly. The perspectives of these groups of stakeholders offered a nuanced view of parental involvement.

Staff and stakeholders described a general lack of parental involvement in children's lives and in their dealings with the juvenile justice system (e.g., not showing up at court dates, not supporting the youth in complying with probation conditions, not visiting their children in the JDC). They characterized youth participants' family relationships as unstable and challenging and frequently recounted incidents of parental neglect, apathy, and abuse. Many youth-serving staff and stakeholders cited neglectful parenting as having contributed to the problems that brought youth into contact with the juvenile justice system. In addition, staff and stakeholders reported specific difficulties in securing parent participation in Green Reentry activities. Staff and stakeholders identified a number of barriers that interfered with parents' positive involvement with their children, including

- practical barriers, such as parents' childcare responsibilities for their other children, work schedules, and a lack of transportation;
- contextual barriers, such as lack of understanding about their roles and responsibilities as parents and reliance on "the system" (e.g., juvenile justice or public school systems) to meet their children's needs; and
- behavioral health issues, such as individual and collective histories of trauma and the prevalence of substance abuse problems among parents.

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In all three sites, Green Reentry program staff made initial efforts to contact parents about their children's participation in the program. The extent to which staff at each site persisted in reaching out to parents over the duration of their children's participation in programming seemed to differ both by site and by individual family. Still, staff and stakeholders believed that increased parent involvement in Green Reentry program activities (and in the daily lives of their children) would have a positive effect on youth outcomes.

Parents and guardians of participating youth appeared to be aware of how staff and stakeholders perceived them: many said they feared being blamed as the source of their children's challenges and were uncomfortable dealing with the justice system as a result. When it came to their involvement with their children, parents and guardians did not share the negative assessment of staff and stakeholders. Parents described being involved in their children's lives in a number of ways, including emotional support and involvement in youth activities. When asked about involvement in the Green Reentry program specifically, most parents and guardians reported that they had not participated in any program activities. They indicated that they did not know how to participate in the program or did not understand what was expected of them. When asked about challenges to participation, parents (unlike staff) did not characterize behavioral health issues as a barrier to their involvement, but they did identify practical and contextual barriers to their involvement similar to those described by staff and stakeholders. With regard to contextual barriers, they reported a lack of clarity about what was expected of them while their children were involved with the system and a sense of pain and trauma at seeing their children involved in the juvenile justice system. Parents also expressed mistrust of the juvenile justice system, a reluctance to engage with it, and a lack of communication with program and justice staff as additional barriers to their involvement. Many parents stated that they had not been informed about the Green Reentry program in general, about their child's participation in specific activities, or about opportunities for parents to participate. In addition, parents often conflated Green Reentry program staff with other justice system staff such as JDC personnel or probation officers, and they expressed frustration about a general lack of communication about their children's activities and progress.

Although parents did not participate in Green Reentry programming, parents at all three sites expressed a great deal of support for the Green Reentry program and particular enthusiasm for the green aspect of programming.

Parents named green activities such as gardening, beekeeping, and green construction as among those they felt were most positive or effective. They also expressed support for activities that gave their children new skills (such as construction) or involved service to the community (such as community clean-up). Most interviewees said that positive changes in their children's lives had occurred as a result of program participation.

Youth participants shared little about the difficult aspects of their relationships with their parents or guardians and characterized these adults as being involved and supportive. Youth had more difficulty describing their parents' or guardians' involvement in their activities. They shared many ways, however, in which family members other than their parents were involved in their lives and affected their well-being. The role of non-parent family members in their lives appeared particularly influential, given the large, intergenerational households in which most youth described being raised. When asked specifically about barriers to parental involvement,

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youth echoed many of the same challenges noted above. Youth observed that parents (their own, as well as other parents in their communities) had many demands on their time that might interfere with participation in Green Reentry program activities, but they also noted that they did not believe their parents had been invited to participate in any such activities.

When asked about ways to support involvement of parents and other family members, the feedback from youth, parents, staff and stakeholders can be categorized into two major strategies: (1) improved communication between youth-serving staff (including program staff and justice system employees) and parents or guardians and (2) a whole-family approach to programming that engages parents, siblings, grandparents, and extended family members. Specific recommendations for incorporating these strategies are discussed in detail in McKay, Lindquist, Pecos Melton, Martinez, and Melton (2014), available at http://www.rti.org/pubs/family_involvement.pdf, and summarized in ***Section 8.2***.

6.2.7 Involving Elders and Incorporating Traditional Tribal Culture

Given the natural connection between green programming and traditional tribal cultural practices, all three grantees were very committed to incorporating cultural components into their Green Reentry programs. The grantees saw tribal elders as an important resource and envisioned a large role for them in passing along cultural knowledge to the youth, including having these individuals share stories with the youth, pass on traditional horticultural knowledge, and work with the youth in the garden. Although sites were encouraged by some elder involvement during the initial planning stages, staff and stakeholders from all three programs reported that getting elders and other culturally knowledgeable community members to participate was a challenge. In addition to limited involvement from elders as the primary teachers of cultural traditions, the other main challenge to incorporating culture was limited time on the part of the tribal cultural departments. These departments have many competing responsibilities and limited availability to work specifically with Green Reentry youth at the JDCs.

> Although stakeholders at all three sites viewed elders as an indispensable resource for teaching the youth what it means to be a Choctaw, Hualapai, or Lakota, a broader concern about the small number of "healthy" elders who were left was expressed in two sites. These stakeholders noted that there is a difference between "old people" and "elders," with the latter being positive role models, and emphasized the need to identify and reach out to the elders who care about their broader community.

Interviews with staff and stakeholders and focus groups conducted with elders during the evaluation site visits identified the following challenges to elder involvement and strategies that might facilitate elders' engagement.

Green Reentry staff and stakeholders identified both logistical and attitudinal challenges that limited elder involvement. The primary logistical challenges include physical health limitations that prevent elders from getting around and being out in the heat, lack of transportation, and the limited hours at which the elders spend time at each tribal elderly/senior center (which also correspond to the hours that youth are expected to be in school).

However, attitudinal challenges were perceived to be the primary barrier to elder involvement. Stakeholders noted that the elders were reluctant to participate in Green Reentry

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programming because of several factors: apprehension about giving time to a program about which they knew little; a societal shift from focusing on the community as a whole to focusing on oneself as an individual; the perception by elders that they are not being heard or respected; negative community perceptions about the JDC (and the tribal justice system in general); elders' being judgmental of youth who have gotten into trouble; lack of confidence on the part of some elders about their own cultural knowledge, either because they suppressed their cultural knowledge because of the way they were treated when they were young or because they genuinely do not know and are concerned about saying something that is wrong; concerns that cultural knowledge will not be actually used by the person with whom it is shared or that it could fall into the wrong hands if shared with others; a variety of intergenerational differences, including the fact that many youth do not speak the tribal language (accompanied by reluctance by the elders to teach the language); and poor communication between elders and youth, including the tendency of elders to talk down to, scold, or give the silent treatment to youth.

Elders identified barriers to involvement in the Green Reentry programs (and other programs) that were related to insufficient outreach efforts, time and resource constraints, and cultural competence and cultural differences. Most elders indicated that they were generally uninformed about the cultural programing initiatives of the Green Reentry programs. Personal interaction with program staff was considered minimal; most did not know program staff or had simply never been asked or invited to participate in tribal programs. Although most elders said that they would participate if they were asked to help, elders who were already involved in programs reported burnout and said that they are the only ones being called upon by programs.

Elders expressed many of the same time and resource constraints that staff and stakeholders perceived. They indicated that their availability to participate in programs depended on the amount of time they allocated to sharing meals at the elderly/senior centers and their ability to access transportation from public or family sources. Some elders noted the need to keep working to make ends meet financially; others specifically noted that helping to raise grandchildren hindered their ability to participate in tribal programs for youth.

Finally, elders identified ways in which historical experience with contact and ongoing AI policy has affected some of the cultural strengths in the three tribal communities, including decreased fluency with language at all age levels and decreased oral passage of cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities. Such thoughts were consistent with some of the barriers identified by staff and stakeholders, including the intergenerational differences, lack of confidence in one's cultural knowledge, and concerns about how cultural knowledge will be used.

On the basis of the experiences of the Green Reentry grantees and the perceptions of elders, several strategies appeared to facilitate elder involvement. Over the course of their programs, the Green Reentry grantees employed several outreach strategies to better engage elders and other community members. One site had the Green Reentry youth give the first produce from the garden to the elders in a traditional tribal basket, as a step in fostering goodwill toward the program. Other sites also donated produce to the elderly/senior centers on their

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reservations. Although these were important symbolic gestures that helped to build awareness and trust between elders and the Green Reentry program, the strategy that appeared to most directly facilitate elder involvement was bringing youth to the elderly/senior center (rather than expecting elders to come to the program site). In the MBCI site, youth and program staff regularly went to the elderly/senior center to help serve meals and volunteer in other ways and also to participate with elders in specific activities such as dances, talking circles, and cultural crafts. The only site that had any elder come directly to the JDC to work with youth was the RST, which benefitted from an elder who served as a foster grandparent to youth in the facility.

On the basis of staff and stakeholder interviews and elder focus groups, other strategies that appeared to be successful at facilitating elder involvement include the following:

- **Leverage existing relationships.** Staff and stakeholders noted that the willingness of elders to get involved depends on who is asking. This is similar to a theme that came up in the elder focus groups, which was the importance of knowing and having personal interaction with program staff. One Green Reentry program benefited from the program director's previous relationships with the elderly/senior center; another encountered reluctance when one staff member approached the elderly/senior center but willingness when someone else asked. Both experiences suggest the need to leverage positive existing relationships.

- **Show appreciation for elder participation.** Activities designed to build positive relationships between the green program and elderly/senior center, such as sharing produce grown in the garden and cultural crafts made by the youth, and helping to serve meals to the elders, were perceived to be very beneficial. Elders suggested a reciprocal service learning approach, such that the tasks above could be provided by youth in exchange for elder's providing storytelling nights or teaching a beading class. In addition, although such strategies have not yet been implemented for the Green Reentry programs, financial stipends or nonmonetary incentives such as gift baskets may also be effective at showing appreciation for elders' involvement. Many tribal elders face serious financial constraints, particularly those who are supporting their grandchildren or other family members, and should be honored for their time.

- **Have a translator present so the elders can speak their native language.** This practice was employed in the MBCI site when the youth participated in talking circles with elders and appeared to make the elders more comfortable. The youth asked elders questions in a group setting, which facilitated lively discussion and youth interest.

In addition to better engaging elders as the primary teachers of cultural traditions, two sites also enhanced their cultural components by taking youth to the cultural center to participate in classes and other events sponsored by tribal cultural departments. As with elders, it was difficult to get the cultural department staff to come to the Green Reentry programming site and was therefore more effective to take youth to the cultural center.

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6.2.8 Building Community Awareness and Sustainability

Community Awareness. Throughout the evaluation, grantees' efforts to market their Green Reentry programs, and staff, stakeholder, youth, and parent's perceptions of community awareness of the programs, were documented. For the most part, respondents said that the general public on their reservations, particularly tribal members who lived in outlying communities, had limited awareness of the Green Reentry program. However, staff and stakeholders perceived that community awareness of their programs had grown each year of the grant and that certain constituencies were much more likely to be aware of the Green Reentry program, including

- parents and other family members of Green Reentry program participants;
- peers of Green Reentry program participants;
- tribal council members; and
- tribal agency employees in departments related to justice, natural resources, culture, education, behavioral health, and social services.

Individuals in each of these groups tended to become aware of the Green Reentry program through direct contact with Green Reentry staff or participants. For example, in all three sites, respondents cited Green Reentry staff members' personal connections to the tribal council as the main reason that the council was aware and supportive of the program. Strategies for marketing the program to the tribal council that were perceived to be effective included reporting regularly to council members and ensuring that updates included positive stories about youth in the JDC.

Formal Green Reentry program marketing efforts included

- tribal newsletters and newspapers;
- partner agency newsletters;
- informational memos and event invitations to parents, elders, and tribal officials;
- announcements at public events and meetings of other tribal programs;
- media coverage of Green Reentry projects and events;
- flyers in public locations;
- e-mail list communications; and
- Facebook posts by staff members.

Activities perceived to have the greatest impact in raising awareness about the Green Reentry program among community members were fostering word of mouth among youth, parents, elders, and organizational partners; bringing the youth into the community at highly visible events (e.g., having youth sing traditional songs, participate in service projects); and presenting at various meetings and conferences such as community development clubs. Stakeholders indicated that formal marketing (see sidebar) was effective if photographs of Green Reentry structures were included with the story to show tangible examples of what the youth had done. High-profile sales and donations of desirable items produced by Green Reentry youth, including honey, produce, and cultural crafts, also contributed to ongoing program visibility efforts. In addition, participation of youth in county and state fairs (in which youth entered produce, cultural crafts, or both) was viewed as a positive strategy for marketing the program.

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Stakeholders felt that, among community members who were aware of the Green Reentry programs, most were supportive. The factors most commonly cited as contributing to public support for the programs was the tangible contribution that Green Reentry youth made to their communities through community projects, service at community events, and green products such as garden produce. Stakeholders indicated that tribal members really liked to hear and see positive things happening in the community. Staff in all three sites expressed interest in improving community members' perceptions of youth involved in the justice system.

Sustainability. The prospects for continuation of Green Reentry activities after the end of the OJJDP grants were documented during the evaluation site visits that took place during the final 2 years of program funding. In considering potential sources of financial support for the Green Reentry program once federal funding ended, respondents identified other grant opportunities and tribal funding as the most likely mechanisms for continuing the program. Prospects for finding additional grants to continue the program seemed bleak during the final site visit, and many interviewees expressed hope that the tribes would take over the grant-funded positions. Respondents identified the most important considerations to highlight for their tribal councils, including the need for the program, the number of youth served, the skills youth learned, the positive impact the program had on youth (e.g., completing school, finding employment, not reoffending), the costs of the program, and the existing materials already available. It was suggested that if the program came up with a sound plan, tribal councils would be more likely to pass tribal resolutions that incorporated reentry planning into juvenile codes. This high-level public policy would not only promote program funding but also intensify reentry planning for youth by justice-related agencies while strengthening program sustainability efforts. However, stakeholders in all three sites indicated that their tribes' economic situations had deteriorated and that because so many budget cuts were being made, it was unlikely that continuation funding would be provided immediately for their programs.

Whether or not additional funding became available, staff and stakeholders consistently stated that the gardens, greenhouses, and beehives established by their Green Reentry programs would provide an infrastructure for youth to engage in green activities in future years, even after the grants ended. However, program directors noted that money for supplies would have to be found and that responsibilities for upkeep would need to be assumed within the job responsibilities of existing JDC or court services staff. For example, the RST program director had been trying get more JDC staff interested in and educated about how to maintain the greenhouse, garden, and beehives in the hopes that they could be sustained. However, it was unclear whether the JDC staff would be able to successfully undertake the higher-level tasks of starting seedlings and resolving technical problems. In addition, in all sites, at the conclusion of grant period, it was unclear how the overall planning and coordination of green activities and the oversight of specific green projects would be accomplished.

Respondents also felt that the partnership network developed among tribal agencies and youth-serving organizations as part of the Green Reentry program would continue to be a resource for the reservation as a whole. Indeed, some services provided by programs and

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agencies within the partnership network (e.g., educational supports, substance abuse prevention) not directly funded by the Green Reentry grant (but introduced as a result of new partnerships) were perceived as being likely to continue indefinitely. For example, in the Hualapai site, the state agricultural extension officer plans to continue the weekly horticultural classes in the HJDRC after the grant ends, and youth will still be able to receive services at the tribal education and training department and the Boys and Girls Club. Once again, however, without having someone responsible for coordinating the involvement of the partnership network and facilitating communication among the partners, the extent to which the partnership network will remain actively involved was uncertain at the conclusion of the grant period.

Finally, respondents emphasized that the improved service coordination for individual youth among tribal courts, youth detention, probation, social services, behavioral health, education, and community organizations (e.g., Boys and Girls Club) would be a lasting legacy of their programs. Although future individual work with youth is unlikely to be as intense as that provided during the Green Reentry funding, given that specific grant-funded case managers made one-on-one work with youth (e.g., needs assessments, reentry planning, post-release follow-up contact with youth and families, home visits, transportation to activities) a major priority of their role, better collaboration among youth-serving agencies on the reservations could result in sustained improvements for youth who receive services from these agencies.

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7

Outcome Findings: The Impact of the Green Reentry Programs on Community and Youth Outcomes

7.1 Qualitative Findings on Community Impact

To gain an understanding about the extent to which the Green Reentry programs had facilitated any change in the affected communities, we asked staff, organizational partners, parents, and youth about their perceptions of community impact. In general, respondents did not identify ways in which the community as a whole was affected by the Green Reentry programs. The most commonly cited community-level impact was increased interest in sustainability and environmental awareness in general and green activities in particular, such as community gardens, individual gardens, greenhouses, and farmers' markets established since the inception of the grant. However, respondents could not attribute these community changes to the Green Reentry program specifically because public support for sustainability principles (e.g., supporting locally grown food) and an emphasis on healthful lifestyles (e.g., increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables) have been increasing at the national level.

The perceived impact on community crime was also ambiguous. In each site, a few respondents indicated that the program was having a community-wide impact on (lowering) recidivism, but others disagreed. Perhaps because of increasing community awareness of the program over time (see ***Section 6.2.8***), some stakeholders implied that an important community impact was improved community views of incarcerated youth. Having community members see justice-involved youth engage in service projects such as cleaning up graffiti, serving at community dinners, and singing spiritual songs at funerals was felt to result in more positive views of youth involved in the justice system.

Staff and stakeholders did identify several systems-level impacts that they attributed to the Green Reentry initiative. Respondents cited stronger partnerships among tribal agencies and youth-serving organizations on the reservations where they operated as an important systems-level outcome of the Green Reentry initiative. Respondents also observed improved service coordination for individual youth among tribal courts and youth detention, probation, social services, behavioral health, education, and community organizations (e.g., Boys and Girls Club).

7.2 Qualitative Findings on Perceptions of Change among Youth

7.2.1 Findings from Cross-Source Qualitative Analysis

The analysis of interview data from youth, parents, staff, and stakeholders identified perceived changes among youth participating in the Green Reentry program in the areas of

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character, emotional health and well-being, cultural knowledge and identity, school engagement, community engagement, and interpersonal relationships.

- **Character.** The Green Reentry program appears to have offered youth an opportunity to cultivate positive character traits. Staff and stakeholders, parents, and youth recounted changes in respectfulness, responsibility, focus, helpfulness, and confidence that they saw as resulting from program participation.

- **Emotional health and well-being.** Green Reentry participants, staff, and stakeholders all reported that participants experienced positive emotions more often and were better able to cope with stress and difficult emotions as a result of program participation. Parents noticed that their children seemed better able to manage anger. Many youth credited the program with helping them to eliminate substance abuse.

- **Cultural knowledge and identity.** Youth who participated in Green Reentry activities reported increased cultural knowledge as a result of program participation and seemed to form or reinvigorate their cultural identities. Youth, staff and stakeholders, and parents observed that youth had strengthened their cultural identities, showed increased enthusiasm for traditional cultural and spiritual activities, and participated in (or even led) more cultural activities in the community than before participating in the Green Reentry program.

- **School engagement.** Green Reentry youth and parents each emphasized that the program had helped youth to improve their school attendance, get back on track for a high school diploma, or attain a general equivalency diploma (GED). Many indicated that access to a different learning environment, such as day school at the JDC, a boarding school, or online school, was key to these positive developments. Opportunities to explore and excel at hands-on activities, including green activities and traditional cultural arts, seemed to stimulate an interest in learning, particularly among youth whose academic achievement had been limited.

- **Community engagement.** Green Reentry youth and staff and stakeholders perceived a marked increase in the extent to which youth made positive contributions to their communities and acquired a sense of accomplishment. Parents indicated that their children showed a new pride in helping others. The community engagement activities offered to youth as part of these programs seemed to yield enormous benefits in terms of increased self-worth, responsibility, and confidence among youth. Furthermore, the highly visible positive activities that youth took part in during their Green Reentry participation were seen to rebuild feelings of trust and belonging in their communities.

- **Interpersonal relationships.** Parents, staff, and stakeholders all described improvements in Green Reentry program participants' peer relationships and a general increase in positive relationships with adults, including community elders and family members. In their peer relationships, many youth reported better boundaries, including keeping their distance from substance-involved friends and being willing to be different. Youth and parents reported that youth spent more time at home, engaged

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in more open communication with their parents, and received more approval from family members.

A more detailed discussion of the perceived influence of Green Reentry program participation on youth outcomes can be found in McKay, Lindquist, Pecos Melton, and Martinez (2013), available at http://www.rti.org/pubs/8498_report_ojjdp_storiesofchange.pdf.

7.2.2 Findings from Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Youth Perspectives

Using the approach described in ***Section 5.3.3***, we developed a quantitative summary of youth perspectives on their life experiences before and after program initiation. This analysis exclusively used youth interview responses to questions about their experiences in various life domains before and after program initiation. It provides a quantitative indicator of the relative strength (or widespread-ness) of perceived differences in various areas of participants' lives before and after they entered the Green Reentry program.

On the whole, participants' perceptions of their emotional well-being, living situations, community connectedness, and cultural knowledge and participation tended to be more positive after program initiation than before it. In addition, more youth reported having plans for their futures and being employed after beginning the Green Reentry program than before.

Participants' perceptions of their lives changed most commonly (and most markedly) from the pre- to post-program initiation period in four domains:

- **Drug and alcohol use.** Drug and alcohol use was markedly less common for the period after program initiation than for the period before program initiation. The difference in use from pre- to post-program initiation appeared more pronounced among youth who reported some drug use before enrolling, as opposed to those who reported having used only alcohol. In addition, many youth specifically indicated that substance use had been a focal problem for them before enrolling in the Green Reentry program and that the program had helped them to overcome it.

- **School engagement.** Youth reported much more positive experiences after Green Reentry program initiation than before in two dimensions of school engagement: Youth shared that they attended school more regularly after enrolling in the program, and they also reported more positive school experiences.

- **Community engagement.** Although most programs did not explicitly target community engagement, youth commonly reported feeling more positively about their local communities after program initiation than before. In addition, when asked about their communities, youth commonly volunteered that they wished there were more green activities or more environmental awareness in their communities, and they made suggestions for features such as community gardens to address this need.

- **Future planning.** The proportion of youth who reported having no particular future plans was much lower for the time after program initiation than for the preprogram time point.

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Patterns of improvement in the various life domains were consistent across the three sites, but some differences were evident. In the domain of school engagement, including both school attendance and youth perceptions of "how things were going at school," improvements were more striking among youth in the RST site. This finding is consistent with the fact that many youth targeted for the RST program had been adjudicated for truancy and were enrolled in the mandatory day reporting school program. However, across domains, differences in the life experiences of youth in the RST program were more pronounced before and after program initiation than were those of youth in the other two sites.

It is important to note that changes cannot be attributed to program participation on the basis of this analysis. Program participation overlapped for many youth with various forms of justice system sanctions (e.g., detention or assignment to a court-monitored day school program) that were also designed to influence outcomes such as school participation and substance use.

7.3 Site-Specific Quantitative Findings on Recidivism among Youth

As described in ***Section 5.3.3***, the quantitative outcome evaluation component provides a cursory examination of the future tribal detention center involvement of youth who participated in the Green Reentry programs. Using data provided by the sites, we created composite measures (dichotomous variables) for each youth, reflecting whether he or she had had any new detention center bookings (including any new arrests, probation violations, or detention center sentences) within 6 months, 12 months, and 24 months of program enrollment. For the Hualapai and RST sites, new bookings were limited to JDC bookings, and the analyses were limited to youth who had sufficient follow-up time remaining while they were still under 18. For the MBCI site, new bookings included both JDC and adult detention center bookings. In the RST and MBCI sites, a comparison group was constructed, which allows for the exploration of whether Green Reentry youth were less likely to engage in future delinquent or criminal activity than youth who were not offered the program. Additional details about the analytic sample are provided in ***Section 5.3.3***.

The results for Hualapai youth are shown in ***Exhibit 7-1***. As shown in the graph, the percentage of youth who had a new booking in the HJDRC increased over time. Within 6 months of being released from their baseline incarceration—the incarceration in which they first enrolled in the Green Reentry program—about 43% of Green Reentry participants had a new booking in the HJDRC. This percentage gradually increased over time such that 78% had recidivated within 24 months.

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Exhibit 7-1. Outcome Findings for the Hualapai Indian Tribe

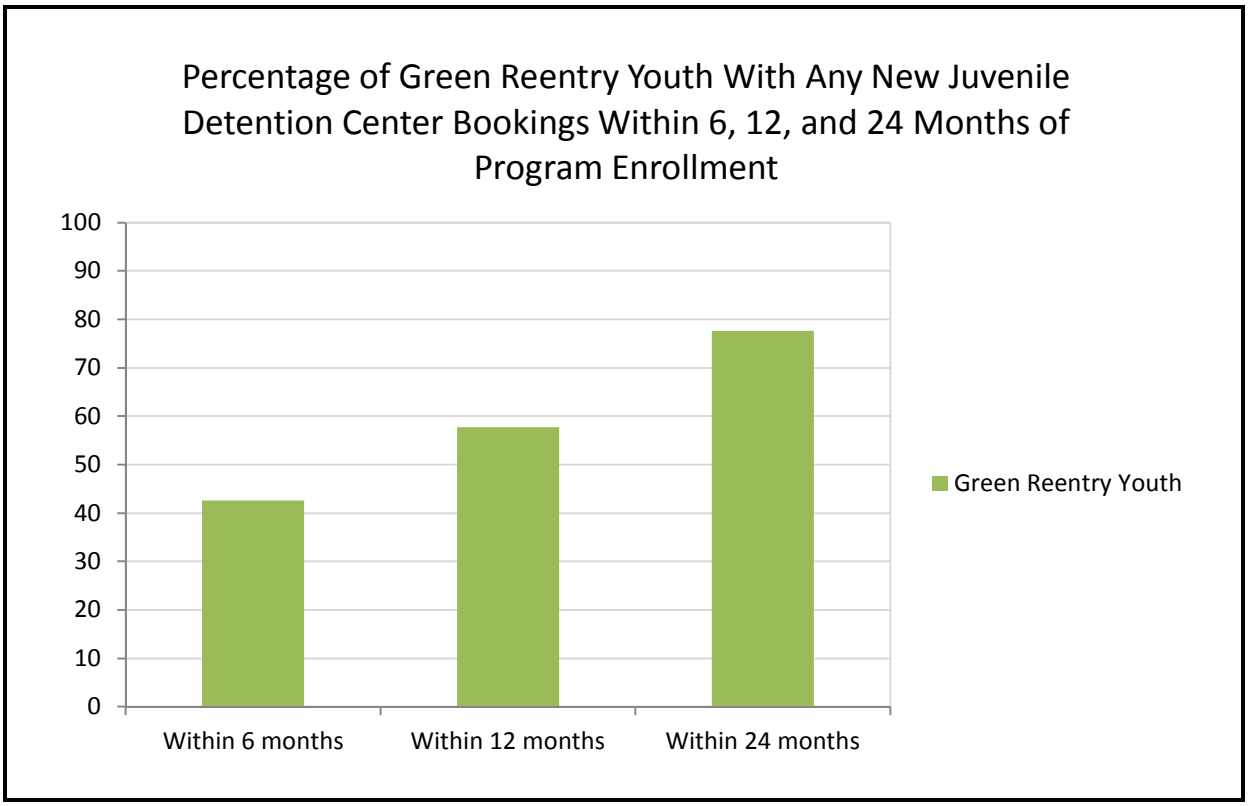

Exhibit 7-2 shows the outcome results for MBCI youth. Similar to the pattern with Hualapai youth, whereas only 37% of Green Reentry youth had a new booking within 6 months, when looking at recidivism within 24 months, the percentage had increased to 84%. The use of a historical comparison group in the MBCI site allows us to see whether Green Reentry youth were less likely to engage in future criminal activity than youth who were not offered the program because they had been supervised by the Department of Court Services before the inception of the program. The findings suggest that Green Reentry youth appeared to be less likely than comparison youth to have a new detention center booking within 6 and 12 months of program enrollment; however, by 24 months, the pattern had reversed such that a *higher* proportion of Green Reentry youth (84%) had recidivated than the comparison youth (62%). This finding suggests that participation in the Green Reentry program may have been associated with short-term reductions in recidivism but that the effects were not sustained over time. Given the small samples (the 24-month analyses were based on only 44 Green Reentry youth and 47 comparison youth) and limitations in study design, this finding should be interpreted with caution.

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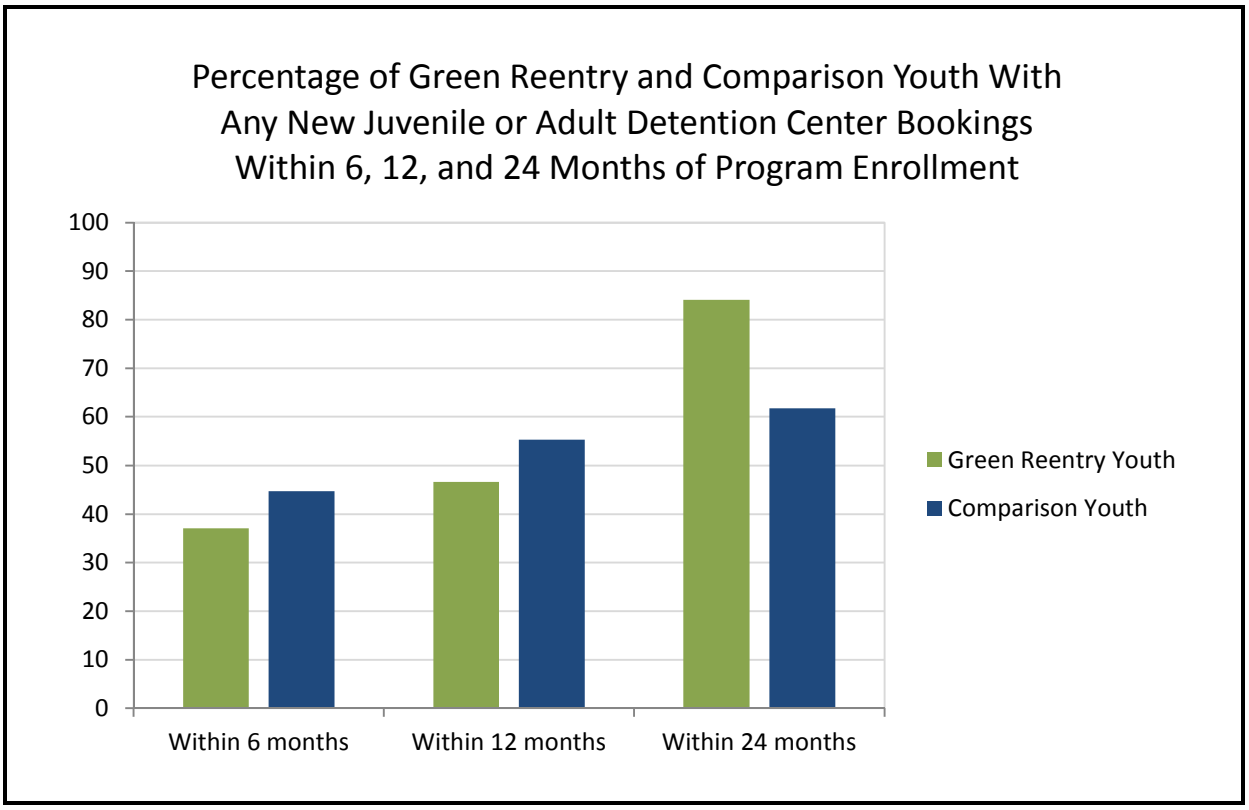
Exhibit 7-2. Outcome Findings for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians



Finally, the results for RST youth are shown in ***Exhibit 7-3***. When looking at the pattern of new bookings for Green Reentry youth within 6, 12, and 24 months, it appears that a high proportion (60%) had recidivated within 6 months and that the proportion who recidivated within 24 months (78%) was comparable to that observed in the other sites. When comparing this pattern to that among the very small comparison group of youth who participated in an alternative education program rather than the Green Reentry program, it appears that the comparison group was more likely to recidivate at all time periods. Nearly all (93%) of the comparison youth had had a new booking within 6 months and every comparison youth had had a new booking within 12 or 24 months. Once again, the extremely small number of comparison youth (n = 14) and design limitations require that extreme caution be used when interpreting these results.

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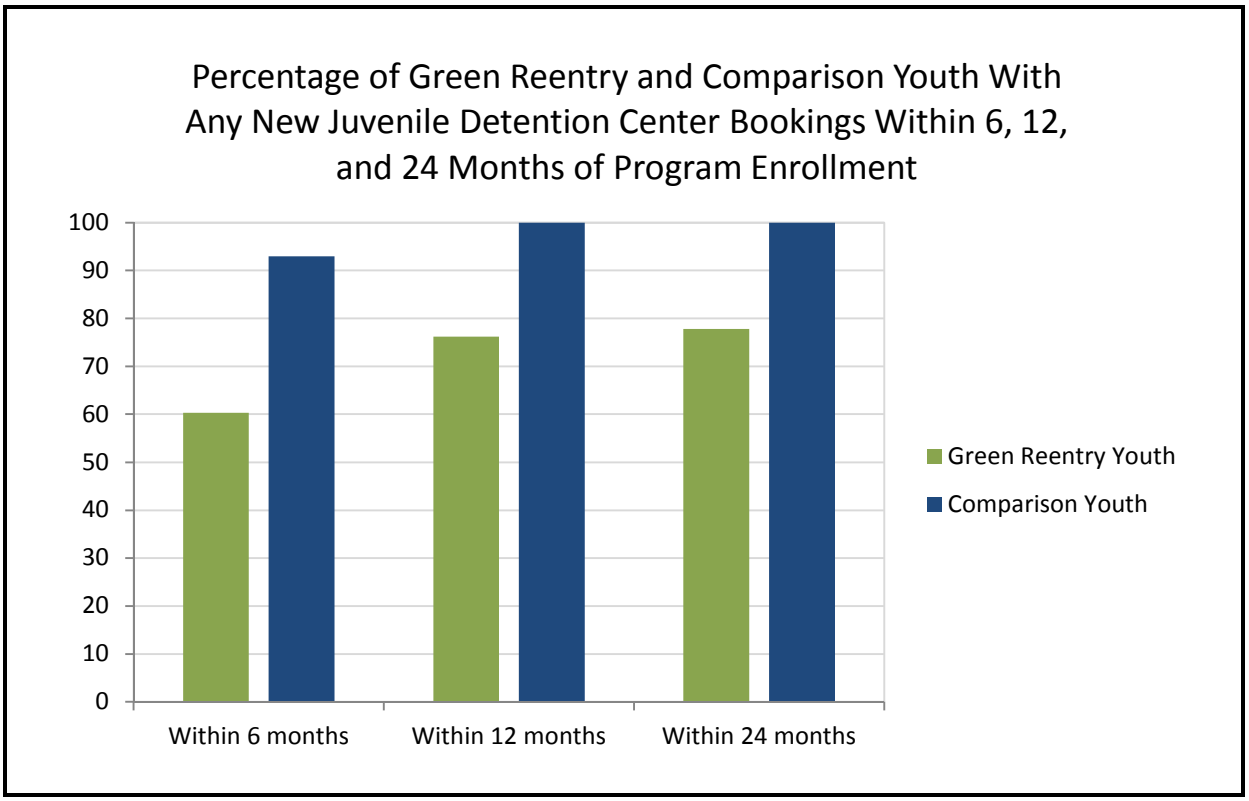
Exhibit 7-3. Outcome Findings for the Rosebud Sioux Tribe



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8

Conclusions

8.1 Summary of Findings

> Throughout the course of the evaluation, youth, parents, staff, and organizational partners saw a lot of value in the way the Green Reentry programs exposed youth to new skills, promoted self-sufficiency, and fostered the passing on of cultural traditions. They indicated that being in nature and seeing the visible results of one's hard work was very effective for youth. As noted by one stakeholder: "I still very much believe in it. It has tremendous benefits. Culturally, there is something there with connecting with growth and life." Another stakeholder emphasized the positive role of the program in the youths' lives: "These kids, coming from poor environments, need help, need protective factors. The program adds a buffer and exposes them to positive adults, reinforces their thoughts about education, work ethic, and morality. I'd recommend this type of program to any group to buffer kids from the risks that they are exposed to."

As demonstration grantees in an innovative area of programming that had not previously been attempted (the incorporation of green programming with youth involved in the tribal justice system), the Green Reentry grantees were very successful at implementing a diverse set of green projects and intensively serving youth. Despite encountering numerous implementation challenges, including technical challenges with green activities, staff turnover, and difficulty engaging parents and elders to the extent envisioned, all three programs became fully operational. Several successes were achieved by the grantees. In the opinions of staff, organizational partners, parents, and youth, the programs succeeded in developing strong relationships with youth, teaching them new skills, and exposing them to a new way of thinking. Findings from the recidivism analysis suggest that Green Reentry participants had lower recidivism—at least in the short term—than comparable youth not enrolled in the programs. In addition, the programs built close networks among tribal agencies and youth-serving organizations on the reservations where they worked, with many staff and stakeholders noting that service coordination for youth had improved as a result of their efforts. Increasing community awareness and support for their programs over time—achieved by a strong commitment to having youth give back to their communities, as well as the physical visibility of various green projects—was cited as another success of the Green Reentry programs. Finally, the gardens, greenhouses, and beehives developed through the Green Reentry initiative will provide an infrastructure for future youth to engage in green activities, even after the grants have ended.

8.2 Recommendations for Practice and Policy

This section of the report provides recommendations based on the experiences of the Green Reentry grantees for future program implementers considering the delivery of green programming for justice-involved youth. At the conclusion of their grant periods, most Green Reentry staff and stakeholders emphasized that the initiative had provided a great opportunity for their communities and that the effort was worth replicating in other communities. Specific

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recommendations based on the main cross-site implementation themes are presented, including staffing and budgeting effectively, developing and maintaining organizational partners, implementing green activities, working within tribal JDC security constraints, engaging youth, involving parents, involving elders and incorporating tribal culture, and promoting community awareness and program sustainability.

Green Reentry stakeholders emphasized the need for future programs to be tailored to their own communities, noting that the form the program takes in a particular community could be very different and that it is important to consult people in the community and listen to their ideas. They also advised future program implementers to set realistic, achievable goals and stay focused on the outcome that they want to achieve.

8.2.1 Staffing and Budgeting Effectively

Several budgeting lessons can be drawn from the experiences of the Green Reentry grantees to assist future programs in achieving cost efficiency and facilitating accurate budgeting. Developing initial budgets that are as specific and realistic as possible can help programs avoid the bureaucratic and time-consuming modification procedures that plagued the Green Reentry grantees.

When making staffing decisions, future programs should factor in the following:

- **The desired intensity of the one-on-one work with youth, the degree of parental involvement sought, and the number of families to be served.** The Green Reentry grantees invested substantial staff time in individual work with youth, which was perceived to be critical for promoting youth engagement in the program and meeting the many needs of youth. Future programs with similar goals should ensure that sufficient staff time is available for building relationships (and ideally, during the after-school, evening, and weekend hours when youth are available). In addition, future programs seeking high levels of parental involvement will need to dedicate substantial staff time to engage parents through home visits, case planning, and family-focused activities. Transportation, child care, and incentives may also need to be budgeted to facilitate a whole-family approach. Ideally, budget inputs for the intensive work with families can be guided by data-driven projections of the likely number of youth to be served by the program.

- **The need for coordination and oversight of the overall program.** Make sure that sufficient time is allocated for overall project management, including coordinating with organizational partners, planning the various schedules, monitoring the budget and timeline, and fulfilling any reporting needs. Make sure that the long-term maintenance of each project and long-term sustainability are sufficiently budgeted.

Other budgeting considerations include the following:

- **Leverage organizational partnerships** to trade expertise, including cost and resource sharing of labor, equipment, and materials with one another. Such relationships should be as reciprocal as possible to ensure sustained partner involvement over time.

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- **Determine whether paid consultants will need to be involved.** If a particular area of expertise is not represented among staff or organizational partners, it may be necessary to hire an outside consultant.

- **Leverage the existing green infrastructure in a community** to avoid having to start up every project from scratch. Consider working with community gardens, greenhouses at vocational training centers, local green technology businesses, or other possibilities for allowing youth to participate in existing projects.

- For projects that are started specifically for a new program, **identify the labor, equipment, materials, and supplies that will be needed during the start-up phase *and*** for **ongoing maintenance**. While it is easy to identify the start-up costs, it is equally important to plan for the labor and materials required for long-term sustainability (see sidebar).

For particularly time-consuming projects that require year-round planning and ongoing work, such as greenhouses, a full-time manager may be needed to ensure that the effort flourishes. Across all three Green Reentry programs, despite the substantial investments made to construct greenhouses, they tended to be underutilized because of lack of staff time to devote to their ongoing operation. Future programs should design (and budget) their programs to ensure that sufficient time is dedicated to ongoing operation. If the budget is not sufficient to support year-round management, programs should look for opportunities that allow youth to work with greenhouses that are already in operation in their communities.

- **Consider transportation needs.** Among the Green Reentry grantees, transportation costs—particularly for home visits with parents, transporting youth to and from the program setting, and field trips—ended up being much higher than originally anticipated. Future programs should consider likely transportation needs and plan for vehicle purchasing or leasing costs (if needed), as well as for fuel, maintenance, and staff time spent on transportation.

- **Include sufficient training costs.** Program staff will likely need to participate in training to develop the skills necessary for various green projects under consideration. Other training that may be of value include project management and data collection and evaluation training. These costs, including staff time, travel expenses, and training fees, should be budgeted.

- **Identify other materials and supplies.** Other costs not tied to specific green projects but that will likely be considered by future programs include educational curricula, incentives to facilitate elder and family involvement, and marketing costs for activities designed to promote community awareness and support.

8.2.2 Developing and Maintaining Partnerships

As described throughout this report, organizational partners were critical to the successful implementation of the Green Reentry programs, given the complex and diverse set of skills required to implement green projects, incorporate traditional culture, and connect youth to a variety of needed services. On the basis of the experiences of the Green Reentry grantees, several general recommendations can be made for future programs when recruiting partners.

- **Identify all possible community resources.** Early in the design phase, future programs should learn what resources are available in and near their communities.

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These resources could include governmental (both tribal and nontribal) as well nongovernmental partners. Many existing programs that work with youth could be tapped as potential partners. Green partners could include any organization that provides services in the areas of horticulture, forestry, recycling, or green technologies. Green Reentry stakeholders concurred that future program implementers should tap into all of the resources in their communities and go outside their communities when necessary.

- **Bring potential partners to the table during the planning process.** Green Reentry stakeholders consistently stated that weak partnerships could have been stronger if partners had been consulted during the program design stage. Being involved in planning creates a stronger sense of buy-in, allows for contributions from a broader set of partners (which results in a stronger program design), and creates a shared vision for the program.

- **Identify opportunities for resource sharing and reciprocal relationships.** When learning about the services and expertise of potential partners, future programs should also seek to learn what partners' needs are and whether there is anything the program can do for them. Several Green Reentry stakeholders indicated that reciprocal partnerships, in which both partners benefited from the partnership, were more successful.

- **Formalize partnership agreements.** Once the partners have been selected, the arrangements should be formalized through some type of agreement (e.g., interagency agreement, memorandum of understanding or agreement). Ideally, agreements should lay out the roles and expectations of each partner (e.g., attending advisory board meetings, providing a specific service role) and, given the turnover at partner agencies experienced by the Green Reentry grantees, a back-up plan specifying who will be responsible if the main point of contact leaves the agency.

- **Provide training to non-justice partners.** Future programs should consider providing training to non-justice partners on working within a justice setting, particularly if the service delivery setting is the JDC. Although many non-justice partners did not have difficulty working in justice settings, some service providers who worked with youth on green activities struggled to meet JDC security requirements (e.g., prohibitions against some tools or equipment, the need to have supplies inventoried in advance) and could have benefited from training on these requirements.

- **Provide written guidelines and informational materials for partners.** Guiding protocols and procedures should complement written agreements to further explain partner roles and expectations. Furthermore, informational materials about protocols explaining requirements (e.g., JDC security requirements) can help non-justice partners to understand why security measures are imposed on them.

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Once organizational partners have been recruited for participation, substantial time will need to be invested in maintaining their engagement over the course of the program. All of the Green Reentry grantees struggled with keeping partners interested and engaged in the program over time. Three recommendations for keeping partners engaged can be derived from the experiences of the Green Reentry programs:

- Have a staff member skilled at project management be responsible for coordinating partner involvement. Keeping partners engaged and coordinating their activities requires advance planning, follow-through, and frequent communication (both formal and informal).
- Maintain consistent communication through regularly scheduled meetings and frequent, informal communication.
- Strive to ensure that partnerships remain reciprocal by looking for opportunities for the green program to give back to the partner organization.

Additional recommendations specific to programs that use an advisory board to provide guidance and oversight include the following:

- Consider incorporating advisory responsibility for green programming into existing boards with related goals and shared partners.
- Ensure that advisory board members are clear on the role of the board.
- Hold advisory board meetings regularly at a consistent time, not just during a crisis.
- Have advisory board members assume responsibility for action items rather than just provide guidance or listen to updates.
- Use a formal structure, such as agendas and meeting minutes, to maximize the time available and provide accountability for completing tasks.

8.2.3 Implementing Green Activities

When selecting specific green components to implement, future programs should consider the following:

- **The technical complexity and expertise required for implementing the proposed activity.** Future programs need to make sure they have the expertise for each component under consideration. Proper planning (e.g., testing soil and water quality) can help avoid some challenges. Other strategies include networking with similar programs, using paid experts, and consulting with green partners. However, even if future programs have substantial expertise available to them and plan extensively to avoid or overcome likely challenges, it is advisable to start green activities on a small scale, with relatively basic projects. All of the Green Reentry programs began with simple projects such as gardens and then introduced more complex activities, such as greenhouses, beekeeping, and hydroponics.
- **The extent to which youth can be involved in the activity.** Because the ultimate goal of green-oriented youth programs is to use green activities to help youth make positive changes in their lives, it is critical to select hands-on activities that youth can be involved in from start to finish, as opposed to activities that need completion by highly skilled experts or require attention during times when youth are not available.
- **Whether youth can receive school credit for the activity.** Future programs are likely to encounter limited availability of youth for extracurricular activities during traditional school instructional hours. Therefore, future programs might attempt to

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establish an arrangement with the local school district such that school credit can be earned for some portion of time spent with green activities that have specific objectives related to a particular course (e.g., biology).

- **Cost.** Most of the green activities implemented by each program were done very inexpensively using materials and labor donated by partnering organizations. When selecting green activities, future programs should consider the cost implications of potential activities, including supplies, equipment, and the need for paid consultants. Both start-up and ongoing maintenance costs should be considered.

- **Time and labor required.** The green projects undertaken by grantees varied in terms of the amount of labor required, with most of the time investment in the start-up portion of the activity or during particularly intensive times (e.g., harvesting). Future programs should think carefully about the amount of time that each activity under consideration could take at the start-up and maintenance phases and make sure that they have sufficient youth and staff time to undertake such projects.

- **Potential for sustainability.** Finally, green activities should be selected with an eye toward long-term sustainability. Although much of the cost of specific green activities is incurred up front (e.g., setting up beehives, building greenhouses), the experiences of the Green Reentry grantees suggest that projects often did not flourish past the start-up stage because insufficient time was dedicated to the ongoing maintenance. Therefore, future programs should consider the likelihood that green activities that are incorporated into existing infrastructures, such as community gardens or greenhouses at a vocational training center, may provide more certainty of long-term sustainability.

8.2.4 Working Within Juvenile Detention Centers

On the basis of the experiences of the Green Reentry grantees, the difficulty in successfully engaging youth detained in JDCs in green programming cannot be underestimated. The following recommendations are relevant to future program developers seeking to work with incarcerated youth.

- **Determine the level of support from the JDC administrator.** One of the most important lessons learned from the experiences of the Green Reentry grantees is that top-level support for green programing is absolutely essential for a program to be able to access and fully work with youth detained in JDCs.

- **Identify what outdoor space is available for green activities on JDC grounds.** Future programs seeking to implement green activities in JDCs should carefully examine the intended JDC's property layout and identify possible locations for green activities to be co-located. If future programs cannot place green activities within the secured perimeter of the JDC under consideration (and out of sight from community members), the JDC may not be a feasible program setting. In such circumstances, program implementers may need to consider a community-based model (see Lindquist, McKay, Pecos Melton, and Martinez [2014], available at

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http://www.rti.org/pubs/lessons_learned_brief_link_added.pdf, for a discussion of considerations associated with community-based green programming).

- **Determine whether any mechanisms could be used to allow youth housed in JDCs to participate in programming outside of the secured area.** Programs may be able to arrange for confined youth to leave the JDC secured area for community-based programming (or other programming outside of the secured area) on the basis of behavioral classification levels or of temporary release orders issued through court orders. Such mechanisms should be supported by written policies and procedures.

- **Determine whether tasks required of JDC correctional officers can be incorporated into their job descriptions.** When designing a JDC-based green program, future program implementers should carefully think through which tasks may be required of correctional officers (as opposed to Green Reentry program staff) and identify factors that might help or hinder their completion. If specific tasks will be required of correctional officers, consider modifying the official job descriptions of JDC officers to include tasks specific to green programming. If adding duties and responsibilities in job descriptions is not an option, consider creation of intra-agency or program agreements. These agreements should outline the JDC Green Reentry roles and responsibilities and be complemented with written tasks, protocols, and procedures.

8.2.5 Engaging Youth

To effectively engage justice-involved youth in green-oriented programming, we recommend that future programs

- select activities in which youth can be actively involved in a hands-on manner, ideally using small group projects;

- tailor activities to their interests (e.g., learning cultural crafts, songs) and make learning fun; and

- understand the level of knowledge youth bring to the activity.

In addition, positive relationships between youth and program staff are critical for youth engagement. On the basis of the experiences of the Green Reentry programs, several recommendations for enhancing the likelihood of positive relationships between staff and youth can be identified.

- Hire program staff who sincerely care about youth, are willing to advocate for them, and, most importantly, are able to genuinely connect with youth and build their trust.

- Consider that tribal members or other Native people with strong connections to the community may be in the best position to connect with youth (as well as with parents and other community members).

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- When working with youth, listen to them, show patience, treat them with respect, maintain their confidences, provide positive feedback, and follow through on promises.

Positive relationships between staff and youth can encourage youth to remain connected with the program even when they are no longer required to do so, and a variety of communication strategies can be used to maintain these relationships. Another recommendation for facilitating post-program involvement among youth is to invite them to participate in appealing events selected or developed with their input.

8.2.6 Involving Parents

Key recommendations for voluntarily engaging parents in programming include the following:

- **Invest in extensive communication between staff and parents.** To fully engage parents, future programs should be prepared to make persistent and repeated contact with parents and guardians, ensure that parents receive frequent updates on their children's activities, educate parents about expectations and opportunities for them to participate, accommodate parents' schedules, be available to parents when needed, and cultivate positive, nonjudgmental relationships.

- **Design the program as a whole-family approach** that engages parents and guardians, siblings, and extended family members. Strategies such as reaching out to adult family members who are important in the youth's life (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, other adult family members), making program events fun and kid-friendly for siblings, and creating activities that are personally and culturally meaningful for families would likely encourage participation from families.

Green Reentry program staff and stakeholders often called for more formal or punitive strategies for promoting parent involvement. One site mandated various aspects of parental involvement (parent orientation, parent-teacher conferences, weekly update calls, report card pick-up, and school enrollment), while the other two used court orders to attempt to enforce the youth's participation in the Green Reentry program. Staff and stakeholders suggested consequences such as jail time (for neglect) and mandatory parenting classes for parents who did not participate in required activities. In addition to formal legal sanctions, some staff noted that clarifying program requirements and creating formal written agreements with parents could be helpful. For example, one site had parents and youth sign an agreement at the program orientation that spelled out program rules, policies, and expectations in order to promote joint youth-parent accountability.

Youth and parents did not share this perspective. In fact, youth and parent interview data suggest that the use of such strategies should be considered cautiously, given the potential to exacerbate parents' existing negative feelings about their dealings with the tribal juvenile justice system and their sense of being blamed for their children's difficulties.

Specific strategies for incorporating these recommendations, as well as other considerations for parent and extended family involvement, are described in more detail in McKay, Lindquist, Pecos Melton, and Martinez (2014), available at http://www.rti.org/pubs/family_involvement.pdf.

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8.2.7 Involving Elders and Using Other Strategies for Incorporating Traditional Tribal Culture

The experiences of the Green Reentry grantees and detailed discussions with elders yielded the following key recommendations for engaging elders in youth programming:

- **Invest in extensive outreach to elders.** For elders to volunteer their time in youth programming, it is critical that they be well-informed about the program and approached directly about their participation. In-person communication, particularly building on existing positive relationships, may be the best way to start. As with parents, fully engaging elders will likely require extensive outreach activities including varied, multiple, and continuous activities to develop awareness and provide opportunities for participation. In addition, when educating elders about the program, one Green Reentry stakeholder suggested the use of a culturally appropriate term for the program (given that "Green Reentry" sounds unusual) and the need to explain the program in easily understood terms.

- **Bring youth to the tribal elderly/senior center for activities,** rather than expecting the elders to come to the program setting. Despite the limited hours that youth are available during the school day, this strategy was the most effective at actually connecting youth with elders among the Green Reentry sites. For sites that do not have an elderly/senior activity center, provide transportation for elders and identify a location outside of the JDC, as some elders do not feel comfortable with the JDC setting or its security procedures. Elders specifically wanted some activities to occur at the tribal cultural center and suggested sponsoring more intergenerational, cultural excursions planned by youth and elders.

- **Show appreciation for elder participation.** As described in ***Section 6.2.7***, activities designed to build positive relationships between the Green Reentry program and tribal elderly/senior centers, such as sharing produce grown in the garden and cultural crafts made by the youth and helping to serve meals to the elders, were perceived to be very beneficial among the Green Reentry grantees. Elders noted that such activities could be provided in exchange for storytelling nights or a beading class. In addition, financial stipends or nonmonetary incentives such as gift baskets may also be effective at showing appreciation for elder involvement.

- To improve communication between elders and youth, **consider holding a preparatory class**. Stakeholders at one site suggested that better preparation before elders and youth come together would reduce communication barriers. They suggested informing elders about the youth with whom they will be working (e.g., where they are with their cultural knowledge) so that they know where to start, along with training both youth and elders on communication and interaction skills, including effective and respectful listening skills. It may also be useful to educate elders on the needs of justice-involved youth and protocols for working in youth detention facilities. One Green Reentry stakeholder recommended teaching kinship through a family tree exercise to show elders and youth how connected they are to one another.

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In addition to elder engagement, other recommendations for the successful inclusion of traditional tribal culture in future green-oriented programs (suggested by Green Reentry stakeholders or based on observations by the evaluation team) include the following:

- Bring youth to community activities sponsored by the tribal cultural department.
- When delivering cultural components, try to connect cultural education to contemporary youth interests, particularly music and sports. Some youth may feel that cultural knowledge is not relevant to their daily lives. It is also important to encourage youth to ask questions about their culture if they do not know something.
- Make cultural education applicable to each specific community.
- Put cultural thoughts and traditions in written, digital, or video form, and convey the meaning behind the cultural practices being taught.

8.2.8 Promoting Community Awareness and Sustainability

To build strong community awareness for green-oriented programs among justice-involved youth, future program implementers should **promote visible and tangible contributions that youth can make to their communities** through community projects, service at community events, and green products such as garden produce. To build the support of tribal councils—which may be an important strategy for sustainability in Indian Country—future programs should involve council members early in the program; provide regular progress updates; and demonstrate the need for, as well as, benefits of, the program.

Broad community support for green programming can help facilitate sustainability of the program over time. But perhaps more critical is **focusing on sustainability when designing the program**. Although much of the cost of specific green activities is incurred up front (e.g., setting up beehives, building greenhouses), the experiences of the Green Reentry grantees suggest that some projects did not flourish past the start-up stage because insufficient time was available for ongoing maintenance. Therefore, future programs should consider whether green activities could be tied into an existing infrastructure, such as community gardens or greenhouses at a vocational training center. Future green programs should look for opportunities to connect with such existing opportunities wherever possible. If such opportunities do not exist, it might be advisable to consider whether tribal policies that support specific program components could be developed or long-term maintenance efforts could be built into specific tribal employee job descriptions as additional strategies for long-term sustainability.

8.3 Recommendations for Future Research and Evaluation

The Cross-Site Evaluation of the Green Reentry Initiative yielded a comprehensive portrait of the implementation experiences of the demonstration grantees, gained from documenting the evolution of the programs over a 3-year period and capturing a well-rounded picture based on the views of staff, organizational partners, participating youth, their parents, and

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elders in each community. Several strategies employed in the evaluation appeared to be effective at capturing high-quality process data and should be considered by future researchers:

- When evaluating demonstration grants, which often change rapidly, **engage in frequent site visits and interim check-ins with key project staff**. For the process evaluation, it was extremely beneficial to be on site approximately every 9 months and to have interim telephone interviews with the program directors and coordinators between site visits, because the context in which the programs operated changed fairly substantially over even short periods of time.

- **Conduct in-person observations of program activities,** rather than relying exclusively on interview data about the activities. In-person, structured observations allow for the level of youth engagement in program activities to be documented objectively (e.g., the number of questions they ask, the degree of enthusiasm) and for the evaluators to get a subjective sense of the rapport between youth and program staff.

- **Obtain the perspective of all involved stakeholders, including youth, parents, elders, and non-core organizational partners, *in addition to* program staff and highly involved partners.** As shown by the data gathered for the current evaluation, relying on staff reports alone would have resulted in an incomplete picture of parent and elder involvement (and other topics). Also, making the effort to interview organizational partners who were not highly connected to the program provided the opportunity to learn about their reasons for their level of involvement, which was a useful perspective.

- **Use culturally relevant data collection techniques.** Having experienced AI researchers co-lead the evaluation was important in building relationships with the programs and in gathering high-quality data from local site staff. For the parent and elder focus groups, protocols found in oral tradition, including local methods for conducting discussions, were employed. Importantly, experienced AI evaluation team members collected all youth, parent, and elder data. A particularly effective technique for getting male AI youth to open up during the interviews was having an experienced young AI male interviewer lead the interviews.

Despite the team's success in obtaining high-quality, comprehensive data for the process evaluation, the evaluation also has several limitations that must be noted and could be improved upon in future studies. First, we were not able to collect detailed cost information for the process evaluation, which was an original goal of the study. We had hoped to systematically document the start-up and ongoing implementation costs, but we were challenged by a lack of available participant-level data on program dosage (e.g., number of hours each participating youth spent on various activities) and data sources for many program costs. These factors, as well as the desire to avoid placing undue burden on local grantee staff, led to the decision to rely on a qualitative assessment of budgeting considerations and the costs associated with implementing green-oriented programs, primarily through periodic cost interviews with the Green Reentry program directors.

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Therefore, we recommend that future evaluators seeking to systematically document program costs work with the sites to establish a data collection infrastructure at the beginning of the evaluation. A database designed to track services received by individual participants (and facilitate required reporting) was developed for the Green Reentry grantees by the TTA provider, but it was not in place until late in the grant period. To meet future evaluation needs, a database ideally would be used throughout the grant period to capture participant-level information on basic youth characteristics, date of enrollment, and basic dosage information about what program components each youth received (e.g., dates of participation, duration of participation, activities in which the youth participated). These data would be useful for both process and cost evaluations and, as described below, could also be used to monitor key outcomes for outcome evaluation purposes.

Second, the outcome evaluation was constrained by several significant methodological limitations. As discussed in detail in ***Section 5.3.3***, the small number of youth included in the outcome evaluation, lack of a comparison group in one site (and likely selection bias associated with the study design in the other two sites), narrow operationalization of recidivism, and lack of data available for multivariate statistical analysis made it extremely difficult to determine whether the youth who participated in the Green Reentry programs were less likely to engage in future delinquent or criminal activity than were comparable youth who received treatment as usual in the tribal juvenile justice system. The demonstration programs served very small numbers of youth (reflective of the small number of youth who were involved in the tribal juvenile justice systems in the three communities), which limited our statistical power and hindered our ability to identify a methodologically appropriate comparison group. Furthermore, the youth data could not be pooled across the three sites because of the substantial differences in the community context at each reservation and the variability in the youth served and program components delivered across sites. We were also limited in the outcome data to which we had access (e.g., adult arrest or incarceration data could not be accessed in two sites).

Future studies that evaluate a large green-oriented program or a multisite green initiative in which a fairly standardized program model is implemented in several sites might be in a better position to examine program impact, particularly if they include larger reservations or sufficiently comparable communities such that pooled analyses are possible. Given the unique context of each AI reservation and generally small number of youth involved in the justice system, however, it is likely that many of the same limitations that plagued the current evaluation may be encountered in future studies. We further recommend that, if the data infrastructure can be put into place, future evaluations should document and analyze several other relevant outcomes (in addition to new detention center bookings) that could be measured quantitatively. Ideally, the following outcomes could be tracked for program participants and a comparison group of youth identified at the inception of the evaluation (which is possible only if the target population for programming is consistent over time, which was not the case for the demonstration grantees): a quantitative assessment of green skills learned by youth, cultural knowledge gained, cultural connectedness, family relationships, school performance (e.g., attendance, grades, credits earned, graduation rates), substance use and mental health, delinquent

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behaviors, vocational certifications earned, and employment. If possible, future evaluations should follow youth for an extended period of time after program participation to document the extent to which they used the skills learned (e.g., green skills, cultural knowledge) and how green skills, in particular, affected their employment status. For justice-based programs, reductions in justice system involvement (e.g., new arrests, incarcerations, probation violations) are necessary outcomes to explore, but given the unique approach of green-oriented, culturally based programs, a broader perspective is necessary. Importantly, evaluators will need to help program staff with the collection of program data and case statistics. Given the limitations in outcome data needed for the current evaluation, we recommend that evaluators assist programs in understanding what data are needed, from whom, and in what format as early in the data collection process as possible.

Data from this evaluation also suggest some directions for future basic (i.e., non-evaluation) research. The role of the extended family in shaping outcomes for justice-involved tribal youth could be an important area of exploration, given the large, intergenerational households in which many tribal youth are raised and the perceived importance of extended family members among justice-involved youth. Research on the potential protective influence of non-parent family members is currently lacking, and findings from this study suggest that the topic is highly relevant. Using data gathered not just from youth and parents or legal guardians, but also from grandparents and other family members who play important roles in the lives of youth (e.g., siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins), would be a major contribution. Future qualitative research might explore how traditional and contemporary notions of kinship influence youth well-being in tribal communities.

More research is also needed to understand how the integration of tribal culture into reentry programming influences program outcomes. Our findings suggest that the cultural components were highly valued, cost-effective, and relatively easy to implement. It is therefore important to more fully understand and document what processes are needed to create culturally infused tribal justice programs and how these can be replicated in other settings. It also would be useful for future research to characterize common tribal community assets and resources and how these resources may be leveraged through community partnerships to maximize outcomes and build a sustainable program infrastructure. Finally, future research might aim to better illuminate risk and protective factors for juvenile delinquency and recidivism in tribal communities.

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