

## Connections Between the Research and Our Program

Our program design is built on the strongest evidence available from quantitative evaluations (QEDs and RCTs) of employment-focused reentry programs. We have aligned each component of our model with what research identifies as essential for reducing recidivism and improving employment stability. We then paired our Christ-centered world-view in a way that elevates both heart and habit.

### 1) Pre-Release Onboarding (We Meet + Enroll Before Release)

- **Why we use it:** Continuity from inside to community improves employment and recidivism outcomes; programs that begin services pre-release and continue post-release (a continuity model) show the strongest effects. The *EMPLOY* program (Minnesota DOC), which provided institutional and community services, reduced the hazard of reoffending by 32–63% compared with nonparticipants (hazard ratio reduction).
- **How we will implement it:** We begin engagement 90 days before release, onboarding the new participant. This allows us to assign a case manager & mentor before release, and identifying job leads before day one in the community.

### 2) Soft-Skills + Cognitive-Behavioral Training (CBT) Classes

- **Why we use it:** CBT-based work-readiness programs are consistently present in effective models such as *EMPLOY*, *RecycleForce*, and *CEO*. Programs that layered CBT (decision-making, impulse control, and problem-solving) with work or rapid employer matching produced better employment outcomes and recidivism reductions than classroom-only models.
- **How we will implement it:** Participants complete 26 weekly sessions combining cognitive-behavioral and practical life-skills training that targets decision-making, impulse control, and relational responsibility.

### 3) Assigned Case Manager

- **Why we use it:** Programs that included structured case management and material supports (transportation, clothing, IDs, assistance with child-support/legal barriers) showed better retention and employment outcomes. Lack of wraparound supports is a major dropout predictor.
- **How we will implement it:** Each participant has a named case manager who:
  - addresses immediate reentry barriers pre-release,
  - coordinates referrals and benefits, and

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- runs a retention checklist during the first 12 months.

## 4) Christian Mentor (One-to-One, Spiritually Equipped)

- **Why we use it:** Peer mentoring and one-to-one mentorship are repeatedly highlighted in the evidence synthesis as promising contributors to employment stability and social reintegration. Every effective program in the research base included some mentoring or coaching component.
- **How we will implement it:** Mentors meet weekly during the first six months and then at least monthly thereafter. Mentors collaborate with teachers and case managers to provide discipleship, accountability, and spiritual care throughout the program.

## 5) Group Peer Support (Community + Accountability)

- **Why we use it:** Peer groups reduce isolation and reinforce accountability. Peers are also able to offer advice from shared lived experience. Two of the four most effective employment-based reentry programs included group support, and outcomes improved when combined with one-to-one mentoring.
- **How we will implement it:** Weekly cohort meetings include both open discussion and devotional time, designed to reinforce work habits, personal integrity, and spiritual growth.

## 6) Employer Partnerships + Immediate Job Opportunities Upon Release

- **Why we use it:** Rapid employer matching is one of the clearest predictors of recidivism reduction. Programs such as *CEO* (immediate transitional jobs) and *RecycleForce* (subsidized-to-unsubsidized transitions) achieved positive effects only when work began quickly and employers were engaged in the process. Delayed placements or weak employer pipelines did not reduce recidivism.
- **How we will implement it:** Formal and informal employer agreements that guarantee interviews and bonded hiring (government funded), when needed. We will develop a pipeline of entry roles (transitional crews or direct-hire placements). Employer coaching helps sustain employment beyond initial placement.

## 7) Twelve Months of Retention Support (Post-Placement Coaching + Problem Solving)

- **Why we use it:** Retention support is what differentiates short-term employment programs from those that produce lasting life changes. Both *EMPLOY* and *CEO* sustained participant contact for months after placement, contributing to significantly lower recidivism.

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- **How we will implement it:** A structured follow-up schedule ensures sustained engagement:
  - Contact at 1 week, 2 weeks, monthly for months 1–6, then every 6 weeks until month 12.
  - A rapid-response from the retention specialist or case manager to quickly resolve workplace issues.
  - Modest incentives for retention milestones.

## Christ-Centered Discipleship (Where Faith + Evidence Meet)

### 1) Fruit That Lasts

- Our Primary goal is spiritual formation. Employment, stronger relationships, and safer communities are the fruit, not the root. We disciple men toward repentance, responsibility, reconciliation, and worship. *“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.”* (Colossians 3:23)

### 2) Mentor as Spiritual Partner

- Mentors are trained in trauma-informed listening and Scripture application, thus serving as pastoral companions who reinforce spiritual formation while coordinating with case managers on practical barriers.

### 3) Bible study integrated with life-skills

- Group Bible study sessions deliberately link Scripture to ethics, financial stewardship, conflict resolution, and relationship restoration.

## Mentor Program, Structure + Guardrails

### 1) Selection + Training

- We view mentors as shepherds who walk beside men in their first year of freedom—guiding them toward integrity, responsibility, and the hope of redemption in Christ.
- Church volunteers complete a certification course covering boundaries, confidentiality, trauma-informed care, and mandatory reporting of safety or legal issues. Training also includes practical coaching on *how to walk alongside someone in spiritual and vocational transition*.

## 2) Match criteria

- Mentors paired by geography + available time + employment background when possible. Each commits to an initial 12-month term with monthly supervision and debriefing from program staff to ensure accountability and support.

## 3) Scope + Guardrails

- Mentors provide spiritual encouragement, accountability toward work-related goals, and relational mediation when workplace issues arise. They do not offer legal, financial, or clinical advice. Empirical guidance suggests mentors work best when they augment—not replace—case management and professional retention services.

## Implementation Fidelity and Accountability

### 1) Commitment to Measurable Stewardship

- Faithful stewardship means more than good intentions; it means measurable impact.
- Our program will track the same outcomes used in the leading evidence-based studies we reference, ensuring our results can be compared directly to national benchmarks. By using consistent definitions and follow-up windows we will produce data that are both credible and transparent.
- We will monitor:
  - **Employment**
  - **Earnings**
  - **Arrests**
  - **Convictions**
  - **Reincarceration**
  - **Supervision revocations**
  - **Job retention**
  - **Church and community engagement**

### 2) Maintaining Program Fidelity

- Quality control protects both the integrity of our outcomes and the men we serve. To ensure consistency across partner sites, we will implement:

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- Program manuals and standard operating procedures to preserve curriculum integrity.
  - Monthly fidelity audits verifying delivery, dosage, and participant engagement.
  - Partner site checklists and audits confirming adherence to our evidence-based and Christ-centered design.
- Research shows that “fidelity slippage”, when programs drift from their original model, is one of the most common reasons effective pilots fail when scaled. We intend to avoid that drift through structured accountability, transparent reporting, and continual coaching of our staff and volunteers.

### 3) Our Guiding Principle

- Money should be well spent, not just well intentioned. We believe God calls us to pair compassion with competence, tracking outcomes, learning continuously, and holding ourselves accountable to both donors and the men we serve.

## Closing

Our mission is to walk faithfully with men as they rebuild their lives through Christ and through work. By combining evidence-based practices with Christ-centered discipleship, EzerWorks bridges the gap between employment and transformation. We measure results not only in jobs retained or arrests reduced, but in restored families, reconciled hearts, and redeemed futures.

We believe accountability, excellence, and compassion belong together, and that stewardship requires us to prove impact, not just presume it.