

Money, Work, and Crime: Experimental Evidence (Quantitative studies in social relations series)

Peter H. Rossi, Richard A. Berk, Kenneth J. Lenihan

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Money, Work, and Crime: Experimental Evidence presents the complete details of the Department of Labor's \$3.4 million Transitional Aid Research Project (TARP), a large-scale field experiment which attempted to reduce recidivism on the part of ex-felons.

Beginning in January 1976, some prisoners released from state institutions in Texas and Georgia were offered financial aid for periods of up to six months post-release. Payments were made in the form of Unemployment Insurance benefits. The ex-prisoners who were eligible for payments were compared with control groups released at the same time from the same institutions. The control groups were not eligible for benefits. The assumption that modest levels of financial help would ease the transition from prison life to civilian life was partially supported. Ex-prisoners who received financial aid under TARP had lower rearrest rates than their counterparts who did not receive benefits and worked comparable periods of time. Those receiving financial aid were also able to obtain better-paying jobs than the controls. However, ex-prisoners receiving benefits took longer to find jobs than those who did not receive benefits.

The TARP experiment makes a strong contribution both to an important policy area-the reduction of crime through reducing recidivism-and to the further development of the field and experiment as a policy research instrument.



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