

**Holding Child Support Orders of Incarcerated Payers in Abeyance:
Final Evaluation Report**

Jennifer L. Noyes, Maria Cancian, and Laura Cuesta

Institute for Research on Poverty
University of Wisconsin–Madison

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I. INTRODUCTION

At the close of 2010, 1.6 million individuals were incarcerated in state and federal correctional institutions (Guerino, Harrison & Sabol, 2011). Although there is no centralized information regarding the parental status of these prisoners, periodic national surveys of incarcerated individuals completed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, indicate that a majority of them are likely to be parents of minor children. For example, the most recent survey, conducted in 2007, found that an estimated 53.3 percent of prisoners in state and federal correctional institutions reported they were parents of at least one child under the age of 18, (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). These prisoners were parents of an estimated 1.7 million minor children.

The significant number of incarcerated parents highlights a broad range of policy issues. Often, these issues focus on the consequences of incarceration for the parent-child relationship and the behavioral, social, and emotional well-being of the children (see, for example, Hairston, 1998; Lee, 2005; Nickel, Garland, & Kane, 2009). One set of concerns that has increasingly received attention relates to the subset of incarcerated parents who have orders to pay child support. While national information about the number of incarcerated parents who have open child support orders is not available, statistics provide some indication of the extent to which incarcerated individuals might be expected to have orders to pay child support. For example, of those incarcerated in 2004 who were parents, 47.9 percent reported they did not live with at least one child either in the month before arrest or just prior to their arrest (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008).

Of particular concern has been the ability of incarcerated non-custodial parents (NCPs) to meet their child support obligations. Incarceration virtually eliminates the earnings of these

parents and, therefore, their ability to pay child support, leading to an accumulation of arrears during incarceration (see, e.g., Thoennes, 2002; Pearson, 2004; Levingston & Turetsky, 2007). In turn, this accumulation of arrears may affect post-incarceration behavior related to participation in the formal economy, cooperation with the child support system and, ultimately, payment of support (see, e.g., Pearson, 2004; State of Washington Division of Child Support, 2003; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006b). Given this, one suggested policy response is to consider incarceration “a substantial change in circumstances” under 42 U.S.C. § 666(a)(10)(b) and to suspend orders during incarceration.

This suggestion is not uncontroversial. Critics of it argue that releasing incarcerated NCPs from their obligation amounts to rewarding bad behavior. Proponents argue that failing to recognize the inability of NCPs to pay while incarcerated undermines NCPs’ ability to make a successful transition and meet their obligations post-release. A key empirical question is whether reducing orders during incarceration actually improves post-incarceration payments. Little is known, however, about the impact of suspending support orders during incarceration on payment patterns post-release.

This is the final report of a series completed as part of an evaluation designed to measure the impacts of suspending orders during incarceration on not only arrears at time of release but also on subsequent earnings and child support payments. The study, which we believe to be the first in the nation to evaluate these issues rigorously, focuses on Milwaukee County’s decision to implement a policy to enable the suspension of orders of incarcerated NCPs. Previous reports completed in this series addressed a range of topics, including major policy and practice options regarding the treatment of child support during incarceration and how child support systems across the United States address issues associated with incarcerated NCPs (Noyes, 2006; Meyer

& Warren, 2011); the approach taken by Milwaukee County regarding the treatment of the child support obligations of noncustodial parents and the opportunity this approach presented for studying policy options (Cancian et al., 2007); and interim study results (Cancian et al., 2009). The purpose of this final report is to consolidate previously presented information, including a review of Milwaukee County's policy; update our study methodology; address outcomes for our entire sample; and discuss the implications of the information provided.

The outline for this report is as follows. Section II provides background information about the treatment of child support obligations of incarcerated NCPs, including information about other, related studies. Section III describes current practices in Wisconsin regarding the treatment of incarcerated NCPs' child support orders, the variation in which provided the opportunity to complete this evaluation. Section IV provides an overview of the methodology employed in the study. Section V describes our sample. Section VI addresses our findings. The final section, Section VII, discusses the implications of the information provided for policy and practice.

II. BACKGROUND

This section provides background information related to the treatment of incarcerated NCPs' child support orders, including requirements regarding notification, current policy and practice options, and other, related studies. It draws from information presented in previous reports developed as part of this evaluation (Noyes, 2006; Meyer & Warren, 2011).

Requirements Regarding Order Modification

Federal regulation requires that final judgments or orders for child support be reviewed at least every three years or upon the request of either parent or, if there is assignment of the

support to it, the State. In the case of review that occurs outside the established three-year cycle, orders can be modified only if there has been “a substantial change in the circumstances” since the entry of the last order for support [42 U.S.C. § 666(a)(10)(b)]. Any party to a child support order can file an action to modify the order. In Wisconsin, the motion must be filed in the county where the original judgment or order was rendered or in the county where the minor child resides. There are two exceptions to this general rule: all parties to the order can stipulate to filing in another county or, based on the showing of good cause, the court in the county of origin may order the action be filed in another county.

Wisconsin statutes also delineate the circumstances under which a child support order established in this state can be modified. Echoing federal requirements, s. 767.59(1f), Wis. Stats., states that an order can be modified “only upon a finding of a substantial change in circumstances.” The statutes first delineate specific situations that constitute a rebuttal presumption of a substantial change in circumstances, including:

- 1) commencement of participation in Wisconsin Works (W-2) program by either parent since the entry of the last support order;
- 2) the expiration of 33 months after the date of the last child support orders’ entry;
- 3) failure of the NCP to furnish a timely annual financial disclosure; and
- 4) a difference between the amount of support ordered to be paid and the amount the NCP would have been required to pay based on Wisconsin’s percentage-of-income standard, if the guideline was not used and the court did not explain its reasons for this deviation.

State statutes also delineate additional factors that may constitute a substantial change of circumstances: (1) a change in the payer’s income; (2) a change in the needs of the child; (3) a change in the payer’s earning capacity; and (4) any other factor the court determines is relevant.

Neither state statutes nor administrative code directly address whether incarceration constitutes a substantial change of circumstances necessary for modification of a child support

order. The courts have, however, addressed the question. Of particular relevance is the Wisconsin Supreme Court's 2003 decision in *Rottscheit v. Dumler*. This decision upheld a lower court's decision denying a NCP's motion for modification of his child support order because incarceration had reduced his income and he had no other assets that could be used to pay child support. As noted in the annotations to s. 767.59, Wis. Stats., the Supreme Court concluded that "incarceration is a change in circumstances sufficient to give a court competence to review a child support order, but should not be the sole determinative factor. Consideration of the nature of the criminal conduct is appropriate for an overall evaluation of the parent's behavior as it related to ability and attitude toward paying child support."¹

Policy and Practice Options

Whether or not incarceration is viewed as a substantial change in circumstances for the purposes of modifying a child support order varies across the United States. To a great extent, this policy has hinged on whether or not incarceration is viewed as voluntary or involuntary unemployment. Earlier reports (Noyes, 2006, updated by Meyer & Warren, 2011), characterized state policies in terms of three different categories, as follows:

- Incarceration is not a stated reason to modify an order (17 states in 2011);
- Incarceration is one possible factor that could lead to order modification (15 states); and
- Incarceration is in and of itself a reason to consider order modification (18 states).

As noted by Meyer and Warren, in recent years, there has been movement across states to allow incarceration to be considered as at least one possible factor or a stand-alone factor for the purposes of order modification. Movement within a state has most typically been driven by the judicial system, rather than the executive or legislative branches of government. (See Meyer &

¹*Rottscheit v. Dumler*, 2003 WI 62, 252 Wis. 2d 292, 664 N.W.2d 525, 01-2213.

Warren, 2011, for additional information.) Nevertheless, it remains the case that no state or locality that we could identify has adopted a policy to automatically modify a child support order upon incarceration; the burden routinely rests on the incarcerated NCP to take affirmative action to request an order modification.

Related Research

Despite the strong interest in the treatment of incarcerated NCPs' child support orders, there is very little evidence on the effects of alternative policies on outcomes for NCPs, custodial parents, the child support enforcement system, or the correctional system. As noted in prior reports (Noyes, 2006, updated by Meyer & Warren, 2011), although several studies have been undertaken, many have been descriptive, focusing on more clearly delineating the interrelationship between the child support systems and the correctional systems. Further, studies of pilot or demonstration projects that have been completed have focused on inputs and process measures. Finally, past studies have not fully considered the pre-incarceration payment patterns or arrears. The current body of evidence includes studies of:

- The support order modification process for incarcerated parents in four Colorado child support enforcement units, focusing on the extent to which modifications occurred and whether additional payments were made while in prison (Griswold, Pearson, & Davis, 2001). According to the study's authors, no report on the payment patterns after the adjustment and release from prison was possible given the study's short time frame.
- The efforts of Hennepin County, Minnesota, to work proactively with incarcerated NCPs to modify their orders, as well as to encourage timely payment of orders for recently released obligors (Hennepin County Child Support Division and Center for the Support of Families, Inc., 2003). Although information about child support payments and arrears accumulation by those incarcerated NCPs who did receive an order modification was included, the researchers note that conclusions based on these results cannot be reached based on the small sample size.
- The State of Washington's efforts to improve child support payments following release by addressing the child support issues of and providing employment assistance to incarcerated NCPs (Washington Department of Social and Health Services, 2003). Although the researchers were able to draw some conclusions from the study, the

statistical data necessary to answer the questions raised had not been obtained. Ultimately, although the study made several recommendations, those involved were “unable to make a firm recommendation to other states to adopt a high effort or low effort outreach program to incarcerated NCPs” (Washington Department of Social and Health Services, p. 18).

- Michigan’s efforts to improve judicial processing of the child support cases of incarcerated NCPs and to overcome procedural barriers (Michigan Supreme Court, 2006). The study focused on the extent to which steps taken, such as enhancing prisoner access to legal information and court forms, led to a more efficient and accessible process. Accomplishments included the number of order modifications that occurred, the number of hearings and incarcerated NCP participation therein, and the extent to which user-friendly materials were sent to inmates.

These studies, as well as other initiatives (see, for example, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006a and 2006b), have contributed to our understanding of the range of policy efforts aimed at addressing the challenges of parental incarceration for both the families involved, and the child support enforcement system. However, none of the previous analyses have been designed to test the effects of a policy to proactively and systematically modify orders. One demonstration project that might provide additional insight into the relationship between automatic order modification was funded by the federal Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement, from 2008 through 2011 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). Through the project, incarcerated NCPs’ orders were to be automatically modified to \$50 in two counties, Denver and Larimer. Additional action was to be taken in relation to existing arrears. Findings from the pilot project have not yet been published.

Overall, it is evident that additional investment is needed in determining the outcomes of efforts to modify policies and practices related to incarcerated obligors. The following sections of this report provide details of our study, which was designed to identify the impact of suspending initial orders for support when a payer is incarcerated on subsequent payment patterns. Our primary approach to the analysis takes advantage of variation in practices within

Wisconsin, resulting from Milwaukee County's development and implementation of what is known as the Milwaukee Prison Project, to estimate the effect of the policy change.

III. WISCONSIN COUNTY PRACTICE

There is substantial variation in county practices in Wisconsin with respect to the treatment of orders for incarcerated parents to pay child support. Although all counties process requests for modifications as required under the law by providing the appropriate paperwork as requested and filing requests for modifications with the court, the treatment of these requests by the courts ranges from uniform rejection to consideration on a case-by-case basis, as outlined in the *Rottscheit v. Dumler*. In addition, through their enforcement efforts, some counties identify incarcerated payers and reach an agreement, through stipulation, to suspend the order during incarceration on a case-by-case basis. Milwaukee County has taken this process of identifying incarcerated NCPs during the enforcement process an additional step. Known as the Prison Project, Milwaukee County's practice is to be proactive in the identification of incarcerated NCPs with the goal of suspending their orders during incarceration.

County Variation

When planning for this evaluation first began, it was generally believed that Milwaukee County's policy differed significantly from other Wisconsin counties; therefore, our initial analysis was limited to Milwaukee County and a group of identified control counties (Racine, Wood, Ozaukee, Winnebago, Outagamie, and Brown). (Details regarding our initial analysis are included in Cancian et al., 2007). Subsequent to our initial analysis, we contacted all other counties in Wisconsin and inquired as to their practices in relation to the child support orders of incarcerated NCPs during the time period of interest for this study. Through these interviews we

confirmed that Milwaukee County was the only county to undertake a systematic proactive approach to modify the orders of incarcerated NCPs during this time. We also determined that the remaining counties generally fit in one of two categories: those that took some sort of proactive, although not systematic, effort to inform NCPs that their orders could be modified due to incarceration, which we categorize as “mixed;” and those that did not, which we categorize as “control.” (Additional information regarding county practices in place at the time of our interviews, which were completed in 2009, is included in Cancian et al., 2009.)

We identified 12 “mixed” counties. These counties could be categorized by the type of proactive measures they generally took, none of which affected a large number of incarcerated fathers. The three categories of proactive measures were:

- contacting NCPs while in prison and informing them of the possibility of order modification, but the NCP must take the initial action himself;
- providing the necessary paperwork to an NCP at his sentencing hearing in order to modify the order simultaneous to incarceration; and
- automatically holding the order open through administrative action, with no action required by the incarcerated NCP, once he is incarcerated.

Because these practices may result in the same outcome for individual incarcerated NCPs as the more systematic efforts of Milwaukee County, outcomes in these counties do not provide a strong contrast, and cannot serve as the basis for assessing the outcomes of Milwaukee County’s policy relative to outcomes when no such policy is in place.

On the other hand, the vast majority of the counties did not seek to proactively modify the orders of incarcerated NCPs during our time period of interest and therefore, outcomes in these counties can be compared to those in Milwaukee in order to assess the policy’s effects. In these counties, individual requests for modifications—initiated by the custodial parent or the incarcerated NCP—are processed as required under the law by providing the appropriate

paperwork as requested and filing requests for modifications with the court. However, as noted above, the treatment of these requests by the courts ranges from uniform rejection to consideration on a case-by-case basis. Because the practices in these counties differ substantially from those of Milwaukee County, these counties can be treated as “control” counties for the purposes of our analysis.

Milwaukee Prison Project

As discussed in our earlier reports (Cancian et al., 2007; Cancian et al., 2009), Milwaukee County’s policy is to be proactive in the identification of incarcerated NCPs with the goal of suspending their orders during incarceration. Incarcerated NCPs are eligible for what is known as the Milwaukee Prison Project if they have an open child support order, a release date prior to the youngest child age of emancipation, a release date at least seven months in the future, and are not serving time for felony non-support or for a crime against the custodial parent or child. The county first made a concerted effort to implement this policy in 2005.

The Prison Project grew out of overall county efforts to locate non-paying NCPs. As part of this process, Milwaukee County case workers would often find a “reason to believe” the NCP was incarcerated. Based on intensive review of specific caseload information, Milwaukee County staff estimated that about 20,000 Milwaukee child support cases were associated with incarcerated NCPs. Given that, on average, two and two-thirds cases are associated with each NCP, Milwaukee County believed there were between 6,000 and 7,000 incarcerated NCPs with child support orders at any given time. According to Milwaukee County staff, it was apparent that efforts to “work” these cases in order to generate payments were futile, yet nonpayment would be reflected in efforts to measure the county’s performance. Therefore, the decision was

made to develop a policy through which these orders could be held open during the period of incarceration.

A key step in the effort to implement such a policy occurred when an initial visit designed to contact and provide information to incarcerated NCPs was made to the Racine Correctional Institution sometime in early 2004. At the time, county staff attempted to use regular *pro se* motions to make the necessary modification to the existing orders, but immediately found the forms needed to be modified to reflect the specific situation of incarcerated NCPs; they then significantly modified the forms. However, the practice of proactively identifying large numbers of NCPs who appeared to be incarcerated using these simplified forms was implemented on a broader scale in April 2005, when letters were mailed to a large number of NCPs identified as likely being incarcerated. This was followed by an automated match of all open cases in the Wisconsin child support data system known as KIDS with a current order in Milwaukee County and a zip code in which any prison was located, again in 2005; the identification of incarcerated NCPs on a case-by-case basis through working reports of all nonpayers (currently defined as those with zero payments, including tax intercepts, in the past year), identifying potentially incarcerated NCPs from these reports by mailing addresses; and visiting correctional institutions. Given the emphasis on the policy's implementation in 2005, this is the date selected for the policy's implementation for the purposes of this study.

After an eligible incarcerated NCP has been identified, the simplified forms are sent to both the NCP and the custodial parent. Rather than only informing the NCP that the opportunity exists to modify the existing child support, the letter allows the NCP to indicate he or she would like the order suspended during incarceration. The letter to the custodial parent, which is sent simultaneously, includes a simplified form that allows for the custodial parent to agree to

suspend the order. (Copies of these forms are included as appendices in Cancian et al., 2007.)

The following actions are taken in relation to an individual case, depending on the responses received to the two letters:

- If both custodial parent and the NCP agree the order can be modified, then a change to the order is stipulated. The order suspension is put in place until 60 days after mandatory release date or upon the NCP entering a work release program.
- If the NCP requests the order be modified and the custodial parent does not respond, a motion is sent to Family Court for a hearing regarding the request. If the custodial parent appears in court and protests, then the order is not held open. However, if the custodial parent does not appear, then the NCP's request is usually approved. Again, the order suspension is put in place until 60 days after mandatory release date or upon the NCP entering a work release program.
- If the custodial parent objects, Milwaukee County does not pursue the case.

There are two key aspects of the Prison Project that should be noted. First, it focuses on those NCPs already incarcerated; there is not currently a method in place to identify NCPs at the time they enter the correctional system. Second, an ongoing, automated process for identifying incarcerated NCPs has not been established. However, the process in Milwaukee County is substantially different from the approaches of other Wisconsin counties, and this difference creates a “natural experiment” that can be used to test the effects of order suspension for incarcerated parents.

IV. OVERVIEW OF STUDY METHODOLOGY

Ideally, in order to test the effect of holding orders open during incarceration, we would randomly assign incarcerated NPCs to two alternative “treatments” at the time of their incarceration: 1) doing nothing and allowing their child support order to continue without modification or 2) proactively modifying their order and relieving them of their requirement to make payments during incarceration. In this case, the primary research objective would be to

measure the effects, or impacts, of the alternative treatment. Those for whom we did nothing would serve as the control group; those for whom an order was modified would serve as a treatment group. The primary advantage of this experimental approach is that it assures participation in the program is the *only* factor that differs between those in the treatment group and those excluded from participating.

In contrast, we could estimate the effect of the treatment by comparing NCPs whose orders were modified—in any county or period—with those whose orders were not modified. We could use the simple difference in outcomes for these two groups of NCPs as our estimate of the effect of the policy of order modification. However, this difference in outcomes would be an appropriate, unbiased, estimate of the effect *only* if there were no systematic differences between NCPs with and without modified orders. If there are differences between the two groups, our estimates would be biased. For example, if NCPs with larger orders were more likely to pursue an order modification, we could find that suspending orders leads to larger arrears not because of the policy but because those fathers with larger orders who pursued a suspension were also more likely to have high arrears because of those high orders, independent of the policy. Alternatively, if NCPs who are more knowledgeable about, or more cooperative with, the child support system are more likely to seek suspension, we might inappropriately conclude that order suspensions increased post-release payments, although those differences in behavior pre-dated the suspension. Thus, we cannot be confident in drawing conclusions from the estimates from this “naïve” approach that assumes no other differences in NCPs.

In this case, incarcerated NCPs participating in the Milwaukee Prison Project were not randomly assigned, nor was the opportunity to participate in the Milwaukee Prison Project made uniformly available. However, NCPs in Milwaukee after 2005 were given, on average, different

choices than NCPs in our control counties. Thus, we can adopt what is known as a “quasi-experimental design,” comparing those in Milwaukee and the control counties, taking steps to control for other observable differences. Further, the fact that there is variation in county practices over time allows us to employ what is known as a “difference-in-difference-in-difference” (DDD) strategy.

As discussed in our previous reports outlining our methodology (Cancian et al., 2007; Cancian et al., 2009), our main strategy for completing an analysis of the effects of the Milwaukee Prison Project has been to employ a DDD strategy. Specifically, our evaluation strategy rests on comparing the differences in outcomes (1) *before and after incarceration*, observed (2) *before and after the policy change*, as observed in (3) *Milwaukee County relative to the control counties*. In this report, we have also included results of additional estimation strategies designed to assess the effects of the Milwaukee Prison Project. These strategies compare Milwaukee County fathers who participated in the project with those who did not. We incorporated these additional strategies because, while the DDD approach has a number of advantages for evaluating the causal effect of the policy change, it is also limited. In particular, because a very small percentage of those eligible for treatment in our sample actually participated in the project, any effect will be diluted, thereby making it difficult to discern any effects.

Approach

As noted, the main approach used in this evaluation is a Difference-in-Difference (DD) analysis. These methods use variation in policy as “natural experiments” with a treatment group subject to the policy change and a control group not subject to the policy change (see, e.g., Meyer, 1994; Heintz & Berger, 2007). Specifically, these methods compare “differences in

outcomes after and before intervention for groups affected by it to these differences for unaffected groups” (Bertrand, Duflo, & Mullainathan, 2002, p. 1). They are designed to account for changes over time unrelated to the intervention: the change experienced by the treatment group is adjusted by the change experienced by the control group. The underlying assumption of these methods is that the “time trend in the control group is an adequate proxy for the time trend that would have occurred in the treatment group in the absence of the policy intervention” (Athey & Imbens, 2002, p. 1). In this analysis we add the additional contrast between the first and second cohorts (i.e. before and after the policy change), a Difference-in-Difference-in-Difference (DDD) approach.

Because this study relies on a natural experiment rather than a true experiment, random assignment to the treatment and control groups did not occur and therefore, they had to be constructed. We constructed our sample through the application of a two-step process to data extracted from KIDS, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections’ master prisoner record system, and the Milwaukee County Jail inmate information system. While detailed information regarding the development of the sample is included in our other reports (Cancian et al., 2007; Cancian et al., 2009), the following are key aspects of the identification process are important to understanding our results.

All NCPs with child support orders in Milwaukee County as well as the control counties that met the Milwaukee Prison Project eligibility were identified for a specified time period, which was defined in relation to 2005 (the date we considered the policy to be implemented in Milwaukee County); informed by an interest in identifying and tracking outcomes for an adequate time period to detect trends (two years following release); and considered the availability of administrative data regarding the sample members.

Those NCPs that met the eligibility criteria and have a child support order originating in Milwaukee County constitute the treatment group—regardless of whether they were actually treated—and those NCPs that meet the eligibility criteria who have a child support order originating in the 59 “control” counties are included in our control group. Only one additional restriction not employed by Milwaukee County will apply: the study was restricted to incarcerated NCP *fathers* because there were not enough cases identified to analyze NCP mothers separately, and child support outcomes for noncustodial mothers and fathers are too different to reasonably include both in the same analysis. Detailed information regarding the sample selection is included in Appendix A.

Table 1 reflects the time frames selected, which allow us to compare outcomes for incarcerated fathers meeting the Milwaukee project criteria prior to the policy’s implementation (Cohort 1) and after the policy’s implementation (Cohort 2).

Table 1. Timing of Incarceration and Release for Research Samples

	Enter Prison	Release Date	First Year Post-Incarceration Ends	Second Year Post-Incarceration Ends
Cohort 1	1/98 – 12/02	1/03 – 12/05	1/04 – 12/06	1/05 – 12/07
Cohort 2	1/01 – 12/05	1/06 – 12/08	1/07 – 12/09	1/08 – 12/10

Table 2 reflects the distribution of the four-part sample of incarcerated fathers with child support orders selected. This sample includes fathers who were incarcerated in Wisconsin before (Cohort 1) and after (Cohort 2) policy changes in Milwaukee, in Milwaukee or in control counties (two cohorts X two samples = four subsamples).

Table 2. Final Sample of Fathers Meeting Eligibility Criteria

	Milwaukee	Control	Total
Cohort 1	1,345	1,009	2,354
Cohort 2	1,520	1,148	2,668
Total	2,865	2,157	5,022

It should be noted that within Milwaukee County, Cohort 2, of the 1,520 fathers identified as potentially eligible for the Milwaukee Prison Project, only 486, or 32 percent, were actually treated, based on records provided to us by the Milwaukee County Department of Child Support Enforcement. That so few of those eligible for treatment actually participated in the Milwaukee Prison Project substantially limits the potential for a DDD analysis to measure the impact of order modifications. In particular, a comparison between our “treatment” and control groups will involve comparing outcomes for NCPs that largely did not have their child support order modified—regardless of their group membership.

Given the limitations of the DDD analysis, we also provide estimates of the effects of order suspension comparing outcomes among the 1,520 NCPs in Milwaukee County in Cohort 2. Specifically, we estimate effects using three alternative strategies:

- 1) Estimating the effect of order modification by comparing fathers with and without modified orders, controlling for other observable differences using multiple regression. The inclusion of controls helps address some of the potential biases noted in our discussion of “naïve” estimates, above. However, the estimated effects are still subject to bias due to unobserved (unmeasured in our analysis) differences between NCPs who did or did not have their orders suspended.
- 2) Using a propensity score matching strategy designed to adjust for differences between participants and nonparticipants in Milwaukee Cohort 2, before estimating the effect of order modification by comparing the remaining fathers with and without modified orders, again controlling for other observable differences. We pair each NCP who we know participated in the Milwaukee Prison Project with a NCP who did not participate but looks similar based on characteristics we observe, and then we compare how their outcomes change. The use of propensity score matching to identify two comparable samples of NCP fathers—one with, and one without, modified orders—reduces the potential for observed differences to bias our results.

- 3) Using a propensity score matching strategy designed to adjust for differences between participants and nonparticipants is Milwaukee Cohort 2, and further “trimming” the samples to include those NCPs with the best matches, before estimating the effect of order modification by comparing the remaining father with and without modified orders, again controlling for other observable differences. The use of propensity score matching to identify two comparable samples of NCP fathers again reduces the potential for observed differences to bias our results. However, in this case, by further narrowing our criteria for the matching process, we further reduce the potential for observed differences to bias our results, even while the narrower sample raises some concerns about generalizability.

Each of our estimation strategies has limitations. However, by using these combined methods and comparing the results in light of the different advantages and disadvantages of each approach, we are able to develop a more robust body of evidence related to the effects of the Milwaukee Prison Project.

Outcomes of Interest

A key rationale for suspending, or reducing, the child support orders of incarcerated NCPs is to reduce the amount of arrears at time of release in order to, first, remove disincentives to participating in the formal economy and, second, increase payment of support given this participation in the formal economy. In addition, the possibility exists that order suspension could have a potential positive effect on the NCP’s willingness to work cooperatively with the child support system following release, which could also lead to increased formal employment and payment of support, independent of the effects on arrears.

We cannot empirically test an NCP’s willingness to cooperative with the child support system as part of this study. However, the strategies we employ are designed to test, first, whether the policy had the expected mechanical effect on the accumulation of arrears during incarceration; second, whether this reduction in arrears or other effects of the policy had an effect on participation in the formal labor market; and third, whether this reduction in arrears or other effects of the policy had an effect not only on the amount of child support paid, but also the

proportion of the amount ordered that these payments represented. This last measure is included because two NCPs could pay the same amount of support, yet have very different compliance rates. Consider, for example, the case of two NCPs who each made a \$100 child support payment. One of the NCPs had a support order of \$200/month; the other had a support order of \$100/month. The first NCP paid only 50 percent of the amount due; the second paid 100 percent. These are two different levels of compliance. The amount paid versus the proportion of the total due is an important distinction for this study.

Measures

For the models using each of our methodological strategies, we employ the following measures.

Arrears – We employ two different measures: whether or not arrears are owed (a dichotomous variable: either arrears are owed or they are not) and the amount of arrears owed (a continuous variable). In some instances, we differentiate between the amount of overall arrears owed (principal plus interest owed to the state as well as the custodial parent) versus principal (owed to the state as well as the custodial parent) only. Arrears are measured at three different points: the first month of the quarter in which the father was admitted to prison, the last month of the quarter in which a father was released, and the first through fourth quarters following the full quarter after incarceration. Information about arrears was obtained from KIDS, Wisconsin's child support data system.

Child Support Orders – We again employ two different measures: whether or not an order is in place (a dichotomous variable) and the amount of the order (a continuous variable). Child support orders are measured at three different points: five to two quarters prior to incarceration, one to four quarters following the full quarter after incarceration; and five to eight

quarters following the full quarter after incarceration. These three points in time, all relative to the date of release from incarceration, are employed for all of the remaining measures.

Information about orders was obtained from KIDS, Wisconsin's child support data system.

Earnings – Our first measure of earnings is whether or not the father had any employment as reflected in Wisconsin's Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records (a dichotomous variable). Our second measure is the amount of earnings reported (a continuous variable).

Child Support Payments – Similar to the previous measures, we again first employ a dichotomous measure—whether or not a child support payment is made by a NCP, independent of the amount paid—and second, a continuous variable—the amount of child support paid. Information about child support payments was obtained from KIDS.

Compliance – This measure was constructed using the variables of child support payments and child support orders. It is a calculation of the percentage of the order actually paid (a continuous variable). In developing this measure, we considered any payment in excess of the amount due to be fully compliant, represented by a 100 percent compliance rate. Therefore, compliance ranged from 0 to 100 percent.

Control Variables – In addition to indicators for pre-/post-incarceration status, county, and cohort, we control for father's education, age, and race; parents' marital status (whether a divorce or paternity case); number of mothers and children; the age of the youngest child; and the length of incarceration.

Data

All of our analyses rely on administrative data from four different systems: the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families' child support information system known as

KIDS; the State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Unemployment Insurance tax and wage record data base; the State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections Master Records system of offenders under control; and the Milwaukee County Jail inmate information system. Further, information regarding those fathers who actually enrolled in the Milwaukee Prison Project was provided via Excel spreadsheet from officials with the Milwaukee County Department of Child Support Enforcement.

V. SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

This section describes our overall sample of 5,022 cases as well as our subsample of 1,520 cases from Milwaukee County in Cohort 2.²

Overall Sample

Table 3 shows the characteristics of fathers in Milwaukee County and our control counties for each cohort. The first three columns show the characteristics of both cohorts in Milwaukee County and that there is no statistically significant difference between the two cohorts with the exception of the age of the youngest child at time of release. In both cohorts, most fathers in our sample are over 30 years old³ (65 percent); have never been married (85 percent); and are black (80 percent). Most fathers have only one or two children (56 percent in Cohort 1, 58 percent in Cohort 2), but 24 percent have legal obligations for four or more children.

²Given some modifications to our sample based on updated administrative records, there are slight variations to overall sample characteristics as compared to our previous reports. Our sample selection process is reflected in Appendix A.

³Father's age and the number of children are measured at father's release.

Table 3. Sample Characteristics^a

	Milwaukee			Control			Significance Milwaukee vs. Control	
	Cohorts		Significance across Cohorts C1 vs. C2	Cohorts		Significance across Cohorts C1 vs. C2	Within C1	Within C2
	C1	C2		C1	C2			
Total Number	1,345	1,520		1,009	1,148			
Age of Father at Release								
18 to 24	10.5	10.1		13.8	10.2			
25 to 29	24.6	24.9		23.4	26.4			
30 to 34	25.6	27.2		19.7	22.7			
35+	39.3	37.8		43.1	40.8			
Marital Status^b						**	***	***
Paternity	85.2	85.3		58.9	65.4			
Divorce	14.8	14.7		41.1	34.6			
Race of Father							***	***
White	11.7	11.4		60.1	57.8			
Black	80.1	79.7		27.4	30.6			
Hispanic	7.0	7.8		6.0	5.8			
American Indian	1.0	0.8		6.3	5.2			
Others ^c	0.2	0.3		0.3	0.6			
Number of Children (under 18) at Release^d							***	***
1	27.9	29.1		39.4	42.0			
2	28.0	28.6		32.3	31.5			
3	20.1	18.6		16.1	15.2			
4+	24.1	23.7		12.3	11.3			
Age of the Youngest Child at Release			**				**	
<1	7.1	3.0		4.6	2.6			
1 to 2	14.7	13.0		10.5	11.8			
3 to 4	17.1	19.5		20.1	17.8			
5 to 8	27.3	31.3		28.9	33.1			
9+	33.8	33.2		35.9	34.8			

(table continues)

Table 3, continued

	Milwaukee			Control			Significance Milwaukee vs. Control	
	Cohorts		Significance across Cohorts C1 vs. C2	Cohorts		Significance across Cohorts C1 vs. C2	Within C1	Within C2
	C1	C2		C1	C2			
Number of Female Partners with Whom the Father Had a Child under 18 at Release							***	***
1	46.8	45.5		60.3	62.9			
2	32.3	31.2		29.0	25.9			
3	12.2	12.8		7.3	6.3			
4+	8.6	10.5		3.4	5.0			
Education at Incarceration Admission								
Less than high school	57.5	59.8		48.2	45.6			
High school	25.4	20.5		36.0	37.2			
At least some college	5.7	5.3		7.3	7.3			
Missing	11.5	14.3		8.5	9.8			
Ever Enrolled in Milwaukee's Prison Project			NA			NA	NA	NA
Not participating	NA	68.0		NA	NA			
Participating	NA	32.0		NA	NA			
Years Incarcerated						**		
<1	12.2	11.8		9.1	13.2			
1	33.8	35.2		35.6	35.6			
2	26.5	23.8		25.1	25.0			
3	13.9	14.7		14.6	13.6			
4 to 5	12.3	13.2		13.4	10.7			
6+	1.3	1.4		2.3	1.8			

(table continues)

Table 3, continued

	Milwaukee			Control			Significance Milwaukee vs. Control	
	Cohorts		Significance across Cohorts C1 vs. C2	Cohorts		Significance across Cohorts C1 vs. C2	Within C1	Within C2
	C1	C2		C1	C2			
Year of Admission			NA			NA		*
1998	3.9	0.0		4.7	0.0			
1999	6.3	0.0		7.6	0.0			
2000	13.5	0.0		12.9	0.0			
2001	25.9	3.6		27.7	3.1			
2002	50.5	7.9		47.2	6.1			
2003	0.0	15.3		0.0	13.1			
2004	0.0	27.1		0.0	27.4			
2005	0.0	46.1		0.0	50.4			
Year of Release			NA			NA		
2003	54.1	0.0		49.4	0.0			
2004	30.3	0.0		34.1	0.0			
2005	15.7	0.0		16.6	0.0			
2006	0.0	57.0		0.0	56.5			
2007	0.0	27.7		0.0	28.8			
2008	0.0	15.3		0.0	14.7			

* $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

^aSample includes fathers in each cohort who entered state institutions with positive current child support owed during the 5-1 quarters prior to incarceration.

For details of sample definition, see Appendix A.

^bWhether a father ever had a divorce case.

^cCategory includes "Asian or Pacific Islander" fathers and fathers of unknown race.

^dNumber of children for a father, not a couple.

In addition, over one-half (53 percent in Cohort 1 and 55 percent in Cohort 2) of all fathers have had children with more than one mother identified in KIDS. Most fathers also have low levels of education: few had at least some college (6 percent in Cohort 1, 5 percent in Cohort 2) and the majority had less than a high school education (58 percent in Cohort 1, 60 percent in Cohort 2). Finally, although we see some differences in the distribution of the number of years the fathers had been incarcerated, these differences are not statistically significant.

We find a similar pattern when we compare the characteristics of the two cohorts in the control counties, which are reported in the next three columns of Table 3. The only statistically significant differences between the two cohorts in the control counties are marital status and the number of years incarcerated. Otherwise, the two cohorts are similar. Most fathers in our sample are over 30 years old (63 percent in Cohort 1, 64 percent in Cohort 2) and most are white (60 percent in Cohort 1, 58 percent in Cohort 2). Most fathers have only one or two children (72 percent in Cohort 1, 74 percent in Cohort 2), although a small proportion (12 percent in Cohort 1, 11 percent in Cohort 2) have legal obligations for four or more children. In addition, almost two-thirds (60 percent in Cohort 1 and 63 percent in Cohort 2) of all fathers had children with only one mother identified in KIDS. While most fathers had low levels of education, 7 percent had at least some college.

However, while there are few statistically differences across the two cohorts within Milwaukee County or the control counties, there are significant differences across Milwaukee County and the control counties for both cohorts. Fathers in the control counties are more likely to have been married, to be white, to have fewer children, and to have fewer female partners. On all of these dimensions, the contrast between Milwaukee County fathers and fathers in the control counties persists over the two cohorts.

Overall, these results suggest the need to control for observed differences between Milwaukee County and control counties, and, to a lesser extent, to changes over time. The significant differences in the observed characteristics of fathers in Milwaukee and the control counties also raises concerns about unobserved differences between these groups. The DDD approach will account for those differences, so long as the effect of any unmeasured differences between the groups does not change over time.

Milwaukee County Cohort 2

As noted above, in addition to the DDD approach that employs a sample of fathers who met the eligibility criteria of the program, regardless of county or time period, without consideration as to whether they were actually treated, we also consider estimates that rely on a comparison between treated and untreated fathers in Milwaukee County in Cohort 2. These fathers were incarcerated during the time the Milwaukee Prison Project was implemented.

Table 4 shows the characteristics of those treated versus those not treated in Milwaukee County. As can be seen, differences between the two groups are statistically significant on many dimensions: those participating in the Milwaukee County Prison Project are more likely to have never been married; black; have more than one child; have had children with more than one mother identified in KIDS; have less education; and have been incarcerated for longer. These differences make evident why a “naïve model”—employing only a simple difference in outcomes—would result in a biased result, as previously discussed. Rather, the differences suggest that adjustments for observable characteristics will be important for making comparisons of outcomes. To the extent that outcomes, and the effects of the policy, vary with father’s characteristics, these differences will make it more complex to identify the effects of the policy by comparing outcomes within Milwaukee.

Table 4. Milwaukee Cohort 2 Sample Characteristics

	Milwaukee		Significance across Treated vs. Not Treated
	Treatment Status		
	Treated	Not Treated	
Total Number	486	1,034	
Age of Father at Release			
18 to 24	7.6	11.2	
25 to 29	28.4	23.2	
30 to 34	30.2	25.8	
35+	33.7	39.8	
Marital Status^b			**
Paternity	88.9	83.6	
Divorce	11.1	16.4	
Race of Father			**
White	6.0	13.9	
Black	85.8	76.9	
Hispanic	6.8	8.2	
American Indian	0.8	0.8	
Others ^c	0.6	0.2	
Number of Children (under 18) at Release^d			**
1	26.1	30.5	
2	27.4	29.2	
3	18.3	18.8	
4+	28.6	21.6	
Age of the Youngest Child at Release			
<1	0.4	4.3	
1 to 2	11.7	13.6	
3 to 4	20.4	19.1	
5 to 8	36.8	28.6	
9+	30.7	34.4	
Number of Female Partners with Whom the Father Had a Child under 18 at Release			***
1	39.9	48.1	
2	30.7	31.4	
3	12.6	13.0	
4+	16.9	7.5	
Education at Incarceration Admission			*
Less than high school	63.6	58.0	
High school	18.5	21.5	
At least some college	6.2	4.9	
Missing	11.7	15.6	

(table continues)

Table 4, continued

	Milwaukee		Significance across Treated vs. Not Treated
	Treatment Status		
	Treated	Not Treated	
Ever Enrolled in Milwaukee's Prison Project			
Not participating	0	100	NA
Participating	100	0	
Years Incarcerated			***
<1	1.4	16.6	
1	23.9	40.5	
2	29.2	21.2	
3	21.6	11.4	
4 to 5	21.6	9.3	
6+	2.3	1.0	
Year of Admission			NA
2001	4.9	3.0	
2002	9.7	7.1	
2003	21.4	12.4	
2004	37.2	22.3	
2005	26.8	55.2	
Year of Release			NA
2006	42.2	64.0	
2007	34.6	24.5	
2008	23.3	11.5	

* $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

VI. RESULTS

We are interested in whether suspending child support orders during incarceration has an effect on post-incarceration child support arrears, employment and earnings, child support orders and payments, and compliance (child support payments as a percentage of orders). In this section we discuss the results of our empirical analysis. We first provide simple descriptive statistics comparing each outcome for Milwaukee County and control counties for each cohort. We then review estimated effects on these outcomes, employing our original DDD evaluation strategy—which rests on comparing the differences in outcomes (1) *before and after* incarceration,

observed (2) *before and after the policy change*, as observed in (3) *Milwaukee County relative to the control counties*—and the additional methods we incorporated following the completion of our 2009 interim study: a simple multivariate regression analysis and two analyses employing a matching strategy, focusing on only Milwaukee County Cohort 2.⁴ These results are summarized at the end of this section in Table 10.

Arrears

As can be seen in Table 5, virtually all the NCPs owed arrears before, and after, incarceration.⁵ In considering the mean amount of arrears post-release as compared to pre-incarceration, it is apparent that mean arrears in Milwaukee County are significantly greater than the mean arrears in the control counties across time periods and across cohorts. In Milwaukee County, the mean arrears for those in Cohort 1 was \$21,028 (all figures in 2010 dollars, adjusted for inflation). By the time of release, arrears had grown to a mean of \$32,161—a 52.9 percent increase. For Cohort 2, although means arrears at the time of incarceration were higher—\$24,595—they accumulated less quickly, such that there is no significant difference in arrears for the two cohorts at the time of release or in the second year following release. All else equal, given the implementation of the Milwaukee Prison Project and the resulting holding open of orders during incarceration, the fact that arrears accumulated less quickly for fathers in Cohort 2 in Milwaukee is expected.

⁴Simple descriptive statistics comparing each outcome for Milwaukee County cases that did and did not receive treatment (before and after matching) are presented in Appendix B.

⁵An analysis of arrears before and immediately after incarceration for our entire sample was provided in our December 2009 report reflecting interim results. We replicated the previously completed analysis for this report, using our final sample and updated administrative records.

Table 5. Arrears

	C1					C2					C v. C2			Milwaukee v. Control					
	Incarceration		Significance	Incarceration		Significance	Incarceration		Significance	Incarceration		Significance	Significance			Significance			
	Pre ^a	Post1 ^b	Pre v. Post1	Post2 ^c	Pre v. Post2	Pre	Post1	Pre v. Post1	Post2	Pre v. Post2	Pre	Post1	Post2	Pre	Post1	Post2	Pre	Post1	Post2
Milwaukee																			
% > 0	97%	98%		99%		99%	99%		99%										
Total #	1,345	1,345		1,345		1,520	1,520		1,520										
Median	\$14,745	\$24,276		\$27,536		\$16,723	\$25,229		\$27,154										
Mean	\$21,028	\$32,161	***	\$35,468	***	\$24,595	\$33,432	***	\$35,676	***	***								
Control																			
% w > 0	96%	97%		95%		97%	97%		96%										
Total #	1,009	1,009		1,009		1,148	1,148		1,148										
Median	\$8,932	\$18,161		\$19,811		\$10,251	\$19,250		\$20,752										
Mean	\$16,821	\$26,939	***	\$28,554	***	\$18,650	\$27,492	***	\$29,135	***			***	***	**	***	***	***	***

Note: Sample includes fathers in each cohort who entered state institutions with positive current child support owed during the 5-1 quarters prior to incarceration. For details of sample definition, see Appendix A. Satterthwaite tests were used to show the significance of differences in outcomes across cohorts or counties (taking into consideration possible unequal variances). Significance not calculated for any other measures, as indicated by grey shading.

* p < .10; ** p<.05; *** p<.01.

^aPre-incarceration arrears were measured at the first month of the quarter in which the father was admitted to prison.

^bPost-incarceration (Post1) arrears were measured at the last month of the quarter in which the father was released.

^cPost-incarceration (Post 2) arrears were measured 12 months after the month in which Post 1 arrears were measured.

Although the amount of arrears at incarceration, at release, and one year after release are significantly lower in the control counties, the same pattern of growth during incarceration observed in Milwaukee County is observed in the control counties.

For our DDD analysis, our primary coefficient of interest is the three-way interaction for post-incarceration in Milwaukee in Cohort 2. While the coefficient estimates from the DDD model are all negative, none of the estimated declines are statistically significant. That is, there is no discernible difference in arrears for cases potentially eligible for the Milwaukee Prison Project, net of other differences across cohorts, counties, and incarceration status. As noted above, this estimation strategy depends on a comparison between a treatment group, in which only 32 percent are treated, and the control group. The failure to detect this (mechanical) effect of the policy change may reflect this limitation.

Given this, we also estimate the difference in arrears using three approaches that compare groups within Milwaukee County Cohort 2. These estimates suggest effects that are both larger in magnitude and statistically significant. Comparing Milwaukee County fathers in Cohort 2 who did and did not participate, we find that the amount of arrears decreased with participation in the Milwaukee Prison Project, all else equal. These results were statistically significant in each of the three models we employed for total arrears as well as principal at release and one year after exit. Further, our final approach, employing a matched and trimmed sample to maximize the comparability of our treatment and comparison groups, yields the largest point estimates. These estimates suggest arrears were \$5,455 lower at the time of release for overall arrears and \$3,904 lower at the time of release for principal. These estimates remain statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) despite the smaller sample size.

Child Support Orders

As can be seen in Table 6, there are similar patterns across cohorts and counties in the proportion of fathers with orders. In Milwaukee County, 97 percent of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 fathers had an order in the year prior to incarceration. For Cohort 1, this figure fell to 93 percent one year after release and then again to 89 percent in the second year following release. The pattern was similar for Cohort 2 fathers, but the rate of decline was more dramatic. The percent of Cohort 2 fathers with a positive order in the year following release was 90 percent; it had dropped to 80 percent by the end of the second year following release. Although slightly fewer fathers had positive orders prior to incarceration in the control counties, a similar decline in the percentage with orders one and two years following release occurred.

In considering the amount of mean child support owed, there are statistically significant declines across both cohorts in Milwaukee County both one and two years after release. There are also significant declines in orders after incarceration in both cohorts in the control counties, though the decline between the first and second cohort is significant in the control counties for only the pre-incarceration orders and the first year following release. There are also significant differences in the mean amounts owed across both cohorts when Milwaukee County is compared to the control counties. In Milwaukee, for those potentially subject to the policy, the mean ordered amount declined from \$3,453 to \$2,700 to 2,536, a 26.6 percent overall decrease. The decline in the mean for the control counties was \$4,000 to \$3,316 to \$3,060, a 23.5 percent decrease.

Table 6. Orders

	C1					C2					C1 v. C2			Milwaukee v. Control							
	Incarceration		Significance		Incarceration	Incarceration		Significance		Incarceration	Significance		Significance			C1			C2		
	Pre ^a	Post1 ^b	Pre v. Post1	Post2 ^c		Pre v. Post2	Pre	Post1	Pre v. Post1		Post2 ^d	Pre v. Post2	Pre	Post1	Post2	Pre	Post1	Post2	Pre	Post1	Post2
Milwaukee																					
% > 0	97%	93%		89%		97%	90%		80%												
Total #	1,345	1,345		1,345		1,520	1,520		1,405												
Median	\$2,625	\$2,597		\$2,374		\$2,764	\$2,201		\$1,992												
Mean	\$3,667	\$3,078	***	\$2,828	***	\$3,453	\$2,700	***	\$2,536	***	***	***	***								
Control																					
% w > 0	95%	90%		88%		96%	92%		83%												
Total #	1,009	1,009		1,009		1,148	1,148		1,079												
Median	\$3,312	\$3,054		\$2,958		\$3,228	\$2,869		\$2,636												
Mean	\$4,967	\$3,528	***	\$3,348	***	\$4,000	\$3,316	***	\$3,060	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	

Note: Sample includes fathers in each cohort who entered state institutions with positive current child support owed during the 5-1 quarters prior to incarceration. For details of sample definition, see Appendix A.

Satterthwaite tests were used to show the significance of differences in outcomes across cohorts or counties (taking into consideration possible unequal variances). Significance not calculated for any other measures, as indicated by grey shading.

* p < .10; ** p < .05; *** p < .01.

^aPre-incarceration outcomes are measured as those during the 5-2 quarters prior to incarceration.

^bPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1-4 and 5-8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.

^cPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1-4 and 5-8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.

^dThe sample size for second year outcomes in Milwaukee is 1,405 and in control counties is 1,079 because the final quarter could not be observed for 184 fathers at the time our analyses were completed (115 fathers in Milwaukee and 69 in control counties).

Our DDD analysis confirms these findings: orders are lower for cases potentially eligible for the Milwaukee Prison Project, net of differences across cohorts and counties. The point estimates suggest that orders were \$919 lower one year after release and \$752 lower two years after release; both of these estimates are substantively and statistically significant, suggesting that the Milwaukee Prison Project led to lower child support orders post-incarceration.

When we estimate the difference in orders for fathers in Milwaukee County Cohort 2 using our alternative methodologies, we get similar results: participating in the Milwaukee Prison Project is negatively associated with mean child support order amounts one year and two years after release. While the results are only marginally statistically significant in the first year following release for the unmatched multiple regression analysis, they are statistically significant overall ($p < 0.05$) one year and two years after release for both of our matched samples.

Earnings

Table 7 shows simple descriptive statistics on father's earnings, as reflected in the Unemployment Insurance wage database. As can be seen, there is a wide range in the proportion of the sample that had earnings at the various points measured. The highest percentage—77 percent—occurs prior to incarceration for those members of Cohort 1 from the control counties. We can also see that the proportion of fathers working in the formal labor market declines substantially in the first cohort across all county groups. However, in the second cohort, there is no decline in the proportion with earnings in Milwaukee County in the first year post-incarceration than prior to incarceration (estimated at 57 percent post-, compared to 55 percent pre-incarceration), although it drops below pre-incarceration levels by the second year following incarceration.

Table 7. Earnings

	C1					C2					C1 v. C2			Milwaukee v. Control						
	Incarceration		Significance	Incarceration		Significance	Incarceration		Significance	Incarceration	Significance	Significance			Significance			Significance		
	Pre ^a	Post1 ^b		Pre v. Post1	Post2 ^c		Pre v. Post2	Pre				Post1	Pre v. Post1	Post2 ^d	Pre v. Post2	Pre	Post1	Post2	C1	
			Pre			Post1			Post2	Pre	Post1								Post2	
Milwaukee																				
% > 0	65%	54%		50%		55%	57%		44%											
Total #	1,345	1,345		1,345		1,520	1,520		1,405											
Median	\$872	\$127		\$42		\$0	\$39		\$0											
Mean	\$4,229	\$4,711		\$5,076	**	\$3,286	\$4,865	***	\$4,368	***	**									
Control																				
% w > 0	77%	66%		57%		74%	68%		54%											
Total #	1,009	1,009		1,009		1,148	1,148		1,079											
Median	\$3,541	\$2,210		\$1,047		\$1,280	\$1,146		\$40											
Mean	\$7,847	\$7,927		\$8,151		\$5,633	\$7,065	***	\$6,165		***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***		

Note: Sample includes fathers in each cohort who entered state institutions with positive current child support owed during the 5-1 quarters prior to incarceration. For details of sample definition, see Appendix A.

Satterthwaite tests were used to show the significance of differences in outcomes across cohorts or counties (taking into consideration possible unequal variances). Significance not calculated for any other measures, as indicated by grey shading.

* p < .10; ** p < .05; *** p < .01.

^aPre-incarceration outcomes are measured as those during the 5-2 quarters prior to incarceration.

^bPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1-4 and 5-8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.

^cPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1-4 and 5-8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.

^dThe sample size for second year outcomes in Milwaukee is 1,405 and in control counties is 1,079 because the final quarter could not be observed for 184 fathers at the time our analyses were completed (115 fathers in Milwaukee and 69 in control counties).

This pattern differs from that of the control counties, where there is a decline in the percentage of the sample with earnings pre-incarceration to a year following release and from a year following release to two years post-release.

In considering mean earnings, there is no significant difference in earnings in the year after release compared to pre-incarceration within Cohort 1 of Milwaukee, although there is a significant increase in earnings by the second year following release. In comparison, there is a significant increase between pre-release and both years post-release for Cohort 2: from \$3,286 pre-release to \$4,865 first year post-release and \$4,368 second year post-release. This same pattern holds for Cohort 2 in the control counties: the amount of earnings significantly increases in Cohort 2 from \$5,633 pre-release to \$7,065 first year post-release and—although not significant—to \$6,165 second year post-release. In addition, there are significant differences in the mean amount of earnings across both cohorts when Milwaukee County is compared to the control counties.

While the coefficient estimates in our DDD analysis are consistent with the patterns in Table 7, none of the estimated differences are statistically significant, either for the likelihood of employment or the mean amount of earnings. Further, when we estimate the difference in employment for fathers in Milwaukee County Cohort 2, we also find no statistically significant differences. In sum, none of our analytic approaches provide evidence of a discernible effect on labor market outcomes.

Child Support Payments

As can be seen in Table 8, less than 50 percent of the Milwaukee County fathers in our sample made a child support payment at any of the points at which we measured.

Table 8. Payments

	C1				C2				C1 v. C2			Milwaukee v. Control							
	Incarceration		Significance	Incarceration	Significance	Incarceration		Significance	Incarceration	Significance	Significance			Significance					
	Pre ^a	Post1 ^b	Pre v. Post1	Post2 ^c	Pre v. Post2	Pre	Post1	Pre v. Post1	Post2 ^d	Pre v. Post2	Pre	Post1	Post2	Pre	Post1	Post2	Pre	Post1	Post2
Milwaukee																			
% > 0	47%	47%		48%		39%	49%		42%										
Total #	1,345	1,345		1,345		1,520	1,520		1,405										
Median	\$0	\$0		\$0		\$0	\$0		\$0										
Mean	\$729	\$887	**	\$942	***	\$710	\$961	***	\$962	***									
Control																			
% w > 0	74%	81%		77%		73%	80%		72%										
Total #	1,009	1,009		1,009		1,148	1,148		1,079										
Median	\$785	\$1,117		\$781		\$513	\$922		\$702										
Mean	\$1,819	\$2,191	***	\$2,064	*	\$1,626	\$1,989	***	\$1,981	***			***	***	***	***	***	***	***

Note: Sample includes fathers in each cohort who entered state institutions with positive current child support owed during the 5-1 quarters prior to incarceration. For details of sample definition, see Appendix A.

Satterthwaite tests were used to show the significance of differences in outcomes across cohorts or counties (taking into consideration possible unequal variances). Significance not calculated for any other measures, as indicated by grey shading.

* p < .10; ** p < .05; *** p < .01.

^aPre-incarceration outcomes are measured as those during the 5-2 quarters prior to incarceration.

^bPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1-4 and 5-8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.

^cPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1-4 and 5-8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.

^dThe sample size for second year outcomes in Milwaukee is 1,405 and in control counties is 1,079 because the final quarter could not be observed for 184 fathers at the time our analyses were completed (115 fathers in Milwaukee and 69 in control counties).

In the control counties, the percentage of fathers making child support payments at any of the points we measured is higher, ranging from a low of 72 percent in the second year following release for Cohort 2 to a high of 81 percent in the first year following release for Cohort 1. The differences in the mean amounts paid were significant, with payments about twice as large in the control counties as compared to Milwaukee County across both cohorts and time periods.

In considering the mean amount of payments, the same pattern exists in Milwaukee County and the control counties. In Milwaukee County, the mean amount paid in Cohort 1 was significantly larger in both post-incarceration time periods compared to pre-incarceration, increasing from \$729 to \$887 in the first year post-release and to \$942 in the second year post-release. This pattern repeated for Cohort 2, increasing from \$710 to \$961 in the first year post-release and to \$962 in the second year post-release. Similarly, the mean for the cases in both cohorts for the control counties increased consistently post-release and the change was statistically significant.

For our DDD analysis, we found a 66 percent greater likelihood that a child support payment would be made in the first year following release from prison for cases potentially eligible for the Milwaukee Prison Project, net of differences across cohorts, counties, and incarceration status. This result was statistically significant ($p < .05$). Although our point estimates suggest an increased likelihood of payment in the second year post release as well, the difference did not remain statistically significant. Further, we found a marginally significant increase ($p < .10$) in the amount paid in the first year following release from prison for cases potentially eligible for the Milwaukee Prison Project, net of differences across cohorts, counties, and incarceration status. The estimated difference in amount paid in the second year was small and not statistically significant.

In estimating the differences in child support payments using three approaches that compare groups within Milwaukee, we find no evidence of a discernible difference in payments. All the estimates suggest relatively small, and statistically insignificant, differences in payment outcomes.

Compliance

As can be seen in Table 9, the mean level of compliance for our sample in Milwaukee County is never greater than 26 percent and is significantly lower compared to the control counties across time periods and across cohorts. In Milwaukee County, the mean level of compliance pre-incarceration for those in Cohort 1 was 17 percent, as compared to 34 percent in the control counties. This gap, which is statistically significant, remained one as well as two years after release.

In comparing compliance rates between cohorts within Milwaukee County, there are statistically significant differences in compliance one year post-release between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2. For Cohort 1, compliance increased from 17 to 22 percent in the first year after release, a 29.4 percent increase; for Cohort 2, compliance increased from 16 to 26 percent, a 62.5 percent increase. The same pattern does not exist in the control counties: compliance increased from 34 to 48 percent, a 29.2 percent increase, in the first year following release for Cohort 1, and from 35 to 45 percent, 28.6 percent. The increase in mean compliance percentages among cases eligible for the Milwaukee Prison Project is consistent with the aims of the project.

Our DDD analysis is consistent with these findings. We found a statistically significant increase in the level of compliance, net of differences across cohorts, counties, and incarceration status, both years post-release: 8 percent higher in the first year following release ($p < .05$) and a 6 percent higher level of compliance in the second year following release ($p < .10$).

Table 9. Compliance

	C1				C2				C1 v. C2			Milwaukee v. Control					
	Incarceration		Significance	Incarceration	Significance	Incarceration		Significance	Incarceration	Significance	Significance			Significance			
	Pre ^a	Post1 ^b	Pre v. Post1	Post2 ^c	Pre v. Post2	Pre	Post1	Pre v. Post1	Post2 ^d	Pre v. Post2	Pre	Post1	Post2	C1		C2	
Milwaukee																	
% > 0	48%	47%		49%		40%	50%		48%								
Total #	1,300	1,249		1,203		1,478	1,368		1,222								
Median	0%	0%		0%		0%	0%		0%								
Mean	17%	22%	***	24%	***	16%	26%	***	26%	***	**						
Control																	
% w > 0	77%	83%		80%		75%	82%		79%								
Total #	962	912		887		1,099	1,056		957								
Median	25%	41%		36%		22%	33%		32%								
Mean	34%	48%	***	46%	***	35%	46%	***	45%	***			***	***	***	***	***

Note: Sample includes fathers in each cohort who entered state institutions with positive current child support owed during the 5-1 quarters prior to incarceration and for whom information regarding both ordered amount and paid amount was available. For details of sample definition, see Appendix A.

Satterthwaite tests were used to show the significance of differences in outcomes across cohorts or counties (taking into consideration possible unequal variances). Significance not calculated for any other measures, as indicated by grey shading.

* p < .10; ** p < .05; *** p < .01.

^aPre-incarceration outcomes are measured as those during the 5-2 quarters prior to incarceration.

^bPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1-4 and 5-8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.

^cPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1-4 and 5-8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively

^dIn addition, the sample size for second year outcomes in Milwaukee County and the control counties does not include 184 fathers for whom information for the final quarter was not available at the time our analyses were completed (115 fathers in Milwaukee and 69 in control counties).

However, we find no evidence of a discernible difference in compliance when we compare fathers within Milwaukee Cohort 2. The estimates suggest relatively small, and statistically insignificant, differences in compliance.

Summary of Results

Table 10 summarizes our estimated effects on our five identified outcomes as discussed, employing our DDD evaluation strategy for the entire sample and a simple multivariate regression analysis and two analyses employing a matching strategy focusing on only Milwaukee County Cohort 2.

Table 10. All Model Results by Outcome

	Full Sample		Milwaukee Cohort 2				
	DDD		Multiple Regression Full Sample	Propensity Score Matching			
				Matched Sample	0.2 < Pscore < 0.8		
Sample Size^a	10,044		1,520	972		778	
1. Arrears							
Total Arrears							
At Release	-\$1,020		-\$3,011 ***	-\$3,301 **		-\$5,455 ***	
Second Year of Exit	-\$2,111		-\$4,066 ***	-\$4,475 ***		-\$6,705 ***	
Principal Only							
At Release	-\$1,171		-\$2,239 ***	-\$2,641 ***		-\$3,904 ***	
Second Year of Exit	-\$2,028		-\$2,848 ***	-\$3,342 ***		-\$4,610 ***	
2. Child Support Orders							
First Year of Exit	-\$919 ***		-\$316 *	-\$315 **		-\$415 **	
Second Year of Exit	-\$752 **		-\$156	-\$327 **		-\$445 **	
3. Earnings							
Any Employment							
First Year of Exit	1.30		1.16	0.03		0.04	
Second Year of Exit	0.93		0.87	0.03		-0.05	
Earnings							
First Year of Exit	\$1,137		\$820	\$292		-\$168	
Second Year of Exit	\$884		-\$1,020	\$760		-\$1,406	
4. Child Support Payments							
Any Payments							
First Year of Exit	1.66 **		0.93	-0.01		-0.02	
Second Year of Exit	1.31		0.97	0.00		-0.02	
Dollars Paid							
First Year of Exit	\$510 *		-\$87	\$50		-\$42	
Second Year of Exit	\$106		\$69	\$76		-\$73	
5. Compliance							
First Year of Exit	0.08 **		-0.01	-0.01		-0.03	
Second Year of Exit	0.06 *		0.01	0.01		-0.02	

* p < .10; ** p < .05; *** p < .01.

^aBecause the final quarter could not be observed for 115 fathers in Milwaukee and 69 fathers in control counties at the time our analyses were completed, the sample size for all second year outcomes in Milwaukee County is 1,405; for control counties, 1,079.

VIII. DISCUSSION

Through interviews with county officials and reviews of related materials we have documented important variation by Wisconsin county in the treatment of child support orders of incarcerated payers. Given detailed information on the nature and timing of policy changes in Milwaukee County, combined with information on other counties that have not experienced similar changes, we have been able to construct samples of incarcerated payers potentially subject to, as well as actually subject to, different policies. By tracing changes in arrears, orders, earnings, child support payments, and compliance for our large sample of 5,022 fathers as well as a subsample of 1,520 fathers in Milwaukee County during the time period in which the policy was implemented, we have derived estimates of the effect of alternative policies on post-incarceration payment patterns.

Overall, although our findings are mixed, our analysis of the Milwaukee Prison Project provides suggestive evidence that the Milwaukee Prison Project improved the child support outcomes of interest identified in this study, though we found no discernible effect on employment outcomes. Specifically, we find:

- Evidence of a significant decrease in the amount of arrears at the time of release as well as one year after exit, controlling for observed differences between those participating and those not participating in the Milwaukee Prison Project during the time period of interest. Point estimates from the DDD analysis of arrears are negative, but not statistically significant.
- Substantive and significant declines in child support order amounts net of differences across cohorts, counties, and incarceration status, as estimated in our DDD analysis, suggesting that the Milwaukee Prison Project led to lower child support orders post-incarceration. This finding is also supported by our analysis of outcomes for those participating and those not participating in the Milwaukee Prison Project during the time period of interest.
- A significantly greater likelihood that a child support payment would be made and an increase in the amount paid in the first year following release from prison for cases potentially eligible for the Milwaukee Prison Project, net of differences across cohorts,

counties, and incarceration status. We find no discernible effect in our analysis of outcomes for those participating and those not participating in the Milwaukee Prison Project during the time period of interest.

- A statistically significant increase in the level of compliance in both the first year and second years following release, net of differences across cohorts, counties, and incarceration status. We find no discernible effect in our analysis of outcomes for those participating and those not participating in the Milwaukee Prison Project during the time period of interest.

Incarcerated parents, generally with no ability to pay child support while incarcerated, face the prospect of substantial growth in child support arrears while in prison. A range of concerns motivate calls to modify, or maintain, child support orders for incarcerated parents. For example, some argue that burdensome arrears are counterproductive and will simply compound post-incarceration challenges contributing to recidivism, while others suggest that it is unfair to excuse incarcerated parents from the obligations faced by other noncustodial parents. A key question is whether child support order modifications will ultimately increase, or decrease, the support available to children.

Our findings indicate that holding open the child support orders of incarcerated parents may not only produce the mechanical effect of reducing their arrears at the time of release, it may also have an effect on the behavior of these parents in ways that are consequential to their children and the custodial parents as well as related systems. Specifically, although a custodial parent would not receive the amount due to her for support of a child as delineated in an order while the NCP is incarcerated, the likelihood she will receive payments subsequent to release may increase. Further, the child support enforcement system would also benefit from an increased likelihood of collecting current support, reducing arrears, and preventing the accumulation of additional debt subsequent to the release of incarcerated parents.

While this study provides important new evidence regarding the potential effects of modifying the child support orders of incarcerated parents, more research is needed to further

test the suggestive findings, and explore other outcomes of interest. While the contrast between policy in Milwaukee County before and after implementation of the Milwaukee Prison Project, and the contrast between policy in Milwaukee and other counties, provides a natural experiment, the contrast is limited. In particular, only about a third of eligible fathers in our sample participated in the Project and some fathers in the earlier period as well as in those counties categorized as “control” counties may also have had orders modified. This limits the contrast between our treatment and control groups and our ability to measure effects. In addition, there are a range of potentially important outcomes not considered here. For example, although we did not include recidivism as an outcome in this evaluation, the possibility exists that the correctional system, which has an interest in eliminating barriers to ex-offenders successful re-entry into society, thereby minimizing recidivism, could also benefit from efforts to hold open the child support orders of incarcerated parents. It would also be useful to collect survey data to support an evaluation of potential effects on the relationships between formerly incarcerated parents and their children. Given the suggestive finding of this analysis, the potential importance of child support for vulnerable families with incarcerated parents, and acute concerns related to the formerly incarcerated, we believe additional research, ideally using an experimental design, would be worthwhile.

APPENDIX A

Sample Selection

We have drawn our current sample from the administrative data for the Wisconsin child support system (KIDS) for all active noncustodial fathers in Wisconsin, matched (by name and birth date) with the records of inmates found in Department of Corrections (DOC) data. This appendix documents the major steps in the process of creating the merged data and selecting the samples.

I. IRP programming staff first pulled samples that meet the following selection criteria⁶:

(1) The DOC data on the date of an inmate's admission into a Wisconsin state prison show that the father was incarcerated anytime during the baseline year (2002 for Cohort 1 and 2005 for Cohort 2). Additionally, for the inmates released before 1/1/2008, the DOC data on an inmate's institutional location show the father stayed at a facility other than the temporary Sturtevant or Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility (MSDF). For inmates released during 2008, the step to select those who stayed at a facility other than the temporary Sturtevant or MSDF was taken by the project assistant (for details, see II-6 below).

(2) The DOC data show the father was incarcerated for at least 210 days.

(3) Based on the information from the DOC data, for Cohort 1, the father's admission into a state institution occurred on a date no later than 12/31/2002 and his release date is known and occurred no earlier than 1/1/2003. For Cohort 2, the father's admission into a state institution occurred on a date no later than 12/31/2005 and his release date occurred no earlier than 1/1/2006 and no later than 12/31/2008.

⁶The order described is not necessarily the order in which the sample selection itself was performed.

(4) Both the DOC and KIDS data show that the father's birth date is known.

(5) The KIDS data on birth dates of children of the court-ordered payer and the DOC data on the father's release date show that the father in Cohort 1 had at least one child who was alive on 12/31/2002 and was younger than 17 on the father's release date. For Cohort 2, the father had at least one child who was alive on 12/31/2005. The same data show that the father for Cohort 2 had at least one child who was younger than 17 on the father's release date. Additionally, for both cohorts, the father should have one child who was born at least 7 months before the father's release from prison.

(6) The KIDS data on an account status show that the father in Cohort 1 must have at least one KIDS case that opened before 12/31/2002 that was not closed or pending closed since before 1/1/2002 and that did not have collection monitoring or order establishment processing status in any part of 2002, if that could be determined. Additionally, the father in Cohort 2 must have at least one KIDS case that opened before 12/31/2005 that was not closed or pending closed since before 1/1/2005 and that did not have collection monitoring or order establishment processing status in any part of 2005, if that could be determined.

(7) The KIDS data on paternity adjudication show that the noncustodial parent must be adjudicated the father or otherwise determined to be the legal father in a paternity case. In a divorce case, the noncustodial parent must be the father participant.

(8) The DOC data on the father's release date and the KIDS data on paternity adjudication show that the father in Cohort 1 must have at least one child that was adjudicated before 12/31/2002 and at least 210 days before the release date of the noncustodial parent. For Cohort 2, the father must have at least one child that was adjudicated before 12/31/2005 and at

least 210 days before the release date of the NCP. (Fathers in divorce cases or fathers with children with missing adjudication dates were not thrown out.)

(9) The KIDS data on the termination date of parental rights show that the father must still have parental rights to at least one child as of 1/1/2002 for Cohort 1 and as of 1/1/2005 for Cohort 2.

The steps above resulted in initial samples of 4,047 fathers for Cohort 1 and 5,535 fathers for Cohort 2.

II. Additional sample criteria used for this report (by the project assistant):

(1) Of the 4,047 fathers in Cohort 1, we eliminated seven fathers whose incarceration period did not make them eligible for this project. Additionally, of the 5,535 fathers in Cohort 2, we eliminated 1,538 fathers for the same reason.

(2) Of the 4,040 fathers in Cohort 1, we eliminated 41 fathers who died within two years after being released by using the date of death of the participant from the KIDS data and an inmate's release date from the DOC data. Additionally, of the 3,997 fathers in Cohort 2, we eliminated 26 fathers who died within two years after being released, or before 1/1/2009 if the father was released after 12/31/2006.

(3) Of the 3,999 fathers in Cohort 1, we eliminated three fathers who were older than 59 on the father's release date using the date of birth of the participant from the KIDS data and an inmate's release date from the DOC data. Of the 3,971 fathers in Cohort 2, we eliminated three fathers who were older than 59 on the father's release date.

(4) Of the 3,996 fathers in Cohort 1, we eliminated 14 fathers with missing or incorrect Social Security numbers (and consequently no formal earnings information) using the Unemployment Insurance (UI) data on the fathers' quarterly earnings. Of the 3,968 fathers in

Cohort 2, we eliminated 18 fathers with missing or incorrect Social Security numbers (and consequently no formal earnings information from the UI data).

(5) Of the 3,982 fathers in Cohort 1, we eliminated 435 fathers whose admission dates were before 01/01/1998 in order to have information on child support payments for the 5 quarters prior to each father's incarceration, using an inmate's admission date from the DOC data; this is because the KIDS data were not available until the fourth quarter of 1996. Of the 3,950 fathers in Cohort 2, we eliminated 308 fathers whose admission dates were before 01/01/2001 in order to include cases for Cohort 2 with a parallel timing as used for Cohort 1.

(6) Of the 3,642 fathers in Cohort 2, we eliminated 45 fathers who were released during 2008 and admitted and released from MSDF and/or Sturtevant. Note that a related step was previously taken by the programming staff for the fathers released before 1/1/2008 (for details, see I-1 above).

(7) Of the 3,547 fathers in Cohort 1, we excluded 803 fathers who had not owed child support for the five quarters prior to their incarceration using the KIDS data on child support owed. Of the 3,642 fathers in Cohort 2, we excluded 492 fathers who had never owed child support for the five quarters prior to their incarceration. The excluded fathers in both cohorts were those with zero current child support owed or with no child support order established during the time period.

(8) Of the 2,744 fathers in Cohort 1, we excluded 8 fathers who owed child support only to the tribes (e.g., Lac Du Flambeau or Menominee tribes). Of the 3,105 fathers in Cohort 2, we excluded 5 fathers who owed child support only to the tribes.

These steps resulted in final samples of 2,736 fathers for Cohort 1 and 3,100 fathers for Cohort 2.

Table A-1. Changes in Sample Size in Each Step of Sample Selection Process

Steps	Cohort 1		Cohort 2	
	# of sample fathers at start of each step	# of sample fathers eliminated	# of sample fathers at start of each step	# of sample fathers eliminated
1	4,047	7	5,535	1,538
2	4,040	41	3,997	26
3	3,999	3	3,971	3
4	3,996	14	3,968	18
5	3,982	435	3,950	308
6	NA	NA	3,642	45
7	3,547	803	3,597	492
8	2,744	8	3,105	5
Final Total	2,736	1,311	3,100	2,435

APPENDIX B

Descriptive Statistics: Milwaukee Cohort 2

Arrears

	Incarceration		Significance Pre v. Post1	Incarceration		Significance Pre v. Post2	Significance Treated v. Not Treated		
	Pre	Post1		Post2	Pre		Post	Post2	
Treated									
% > 0	100%	100%		99%					
Total #	486	486		486					
Median	\$16,966	\$25,982		\$27,438					
Mean	\$25,049	\$34,120	***	\$35,669	***				
No Treated									
% > 0	99%	99%		98%					
Total #	1,034	1,034		1,034					
Median	\$16,639	\$24,737		\$26,991					
Mean	\$24,381	\$33,108	***	\$35,679	***				

Note: Sample includes fathers in Milwaukee Cohort 2 who entered state institutions with positive current child support owed during the 5-1 quarters prior to incarceration.
Satterthwaite tests were used to show the significance of differences in outcomes across cohorts or counties (taking into consideration possible unequal variances). Significance not calculated for any other measures, as indicated by grey shading.
* p < .10; ** p<.05; *** p<.01.
^aPre-incarceration arrears were measured at the first month of the quarter in which the father was admitted to prison.
^bPost-incarceration (Post1) arrears were measured at the last month of the quarter in which the father was released.
^cPost-incarceration (Post 2) arrears were measured 12 months after the month in which Post 1 arrears were measured.

Orders

	Incarceration		Significance Pre v. Post1	Incarceration		Significance Pre v. Post2	Significance Treated v. Not Treated		
	Pre	Post1		Post2 ^d	Pre		Post	Post2	
Treated									
% > 0	96%	85%		84%					
Total #	486	486		433					
Median	\$2,863	\$1,916		\$1,871					
Mean	\$3,459	\$2,445	***	\$2,402	***				
No Treated									
% > 0	98%	92%		88%					
Total #	1,034	1,034		972					
Median	\$2,738	\$2,308		\$2,050					
Mean	\$3,450	\$2,820	***	\$2,596	***			**	

Note: Sample includes fathers in Milwaukee Cohort 2 who entered state institutions with positive current child support owed during the 5-1 quarters prior to incarceration.
Satterthwaite tests were used to show the significance of differences in outcomes across cohorts or counties (taking into consideration possible unequal variances). Significance not calculated for any other measures, as indicated by grey shading.
* p < .10; ** p<.05; *** p<.01.
^aPre-incarceration outcomes are measured as those during the 5-2 quarters prior to incarceration.
^bPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1-4 and 5-8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.
^cPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1-4 and 5-8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.
^dThe sample size for second year outcomes for the treated cases is 433 and for the not treated cases is 972 because the final quarter could not be observed for 115 fathers at the time our analyses were completed (53 fathers in Milwaukee and 62 in control counties).

Earnings

	Incarceration		Significance Pre v. Post1	Incarceration Post2 ^d	Significance Pre v. Post2	Significance Treated v. Not Treated		
	Pre	Post1				Pre	Post	Post2
Treated								
% > 0	44%	51%		39%				
Total #	486	486		433				
Median	\$0	\$50		\$0				
Mean	\$2,543	\$4,698	***	\$3,765	**			
No Treated								
% > 0	51%	50%		43%				
Total #	1034	1034		972				
Median	\$61	\$36		\$0				
Mean	\$3,635	\$4,943	***	\$4,637	***	**		

Note: Sample includes fathers in Milwaukee Cohort 2 who entered state institutions with positive current child support owed during the 5-1 quarters prior to incarceration.

Satterthwaite tests were used to show the significance of differences in outcomes across cohorts or counties (taking into consideration possible unequal variances). Significance not calculated for any other measures, as indicated by grey shading.

* $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

^aPre-incarceration outcomes are measured as those during the 5-2 quarters prior to incarceration.

^bPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1–4 and 5–8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.

^cPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1–4 and 5–8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.

^dThe sample size for second year outcomes for the treated cases is 433 and for the not treated cases is 972 because the final quarter could not be observed for 115 fathers at the time our analyses were completed (53 fathers in Milwaukee and 62 in control counties).

Payments

	Incarceration		Significance Pre v. Post1	Incarceration Post2 ^d	Significance Pre v. Post2	Significance Treated v. Not Treated		
	Pre	Post1				Pre	Post	Post2
Treated								
% > 0	36%	49%		45%				
Total #	486	486		433				
Median	\$0	\$0		\$0				
Mean	\$608	\$912	***	\$924	***			
No Treated								
% > 0	41%	49%		45%				
Total #	1034	1034		972				
Median	\$0	\$0		\$0				
Mean	\$758	\$984	***	\$979	***			

Note: Sample includes fathers in Milwaukee Cohort 2 who entered state institutions with positive current child support owed during the 5-1 quarters prior to incarceration.

Satterthwaite tests were used to show the significance of differences in outcomes across cohorts or counties (taking into consideration possible unequal variances). Significance not calculated for any other measures, as indicated by grey shading.

* $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

^aPre-incarceration outcomes are measured as those during the 5-2 quarters prior to incarceration.

^bPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1–4 and 5–8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.

^cPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1–4 and 5–8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.

^dThe sample size for second year outcomes for the treated cases is 433 and for the not treated cases is 972 because the final quarter could not be observed for 115 fathers at the time our analyses were completed (53 fathers in Milwaukee and 62 in control counties).

Compliance

	Incarceration		Significance	Incarceration	Significance	Significance Treated v. Not Treated		
	Pre	Post1	Pre v. Post1	Post2 ^d	Pre v. Post2	Pre	Post	Post2
	Treated							
% > 0	37%	51%		48%				
Total #	467	413		365				
Median	0%	0%		0%				
Mean	13%	26%	***	26%	***			
No Treated								
% > 0	41%	50%		47%				
Total #	1,011	955		857				
Median	0%	0%		0%				
Mean	17%	26%	***	26%	***	*		

Note: Sample includes fathers in each cohort who entered state institutions with positive current child support owed during the 5-1 quarters prior to incarceration and for whom information regarding both ordered amount and paid amount was available.

Satterthwaite tests were used to show the significance of differences in outcomes across cohorts or counties (taking into consideration possible unequal variances). Significance not calculated for any other measures, as indicated by grey shading.

* $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

^aPre-incarceration outcomes are measured as those during the 5-2 quarters prior to incarceration.

^bPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1–4 and 5–8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.

^cPost-incarceration Year 1 and Year 2 outcomes are measured during the 1–4 and 5–8 quarters following the full quarter after incarceration, respectively.

^dIn addition, the sample size for second year outcomes in Milwaukee County and the control counties does not include 115 fathers for whom information for the final quarter was not available at the time our analyses were completed (53 fathers in Milwaukee and 62 in control counties).

APPENDIX C

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