



MEMORANDUM

Date: April 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Lester 
County Administrator

Re: Inmate Navigation, Enrollment, Stabilization and Treatment (INVEST) Independent Final Evaluation

Overview

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide a summary of key findings from the INVEST Independent Final Evaluation and highlight the program's impact, cost savings, and potential for expansion. The INVEST program, launched in November 2019 with grant funding, aimed to assist individuals at the Pima County Adult Detention Complex (PCADC) who exhibited co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions and were at moderate to maximum criminogenic risk. This evaluation presents programmatic data from inception through September 2024.

Key Findings

1. **Reduction in Recidivism:** The INVEST program successfully reduced felony recidivism rates, exceeding its original goal. The evaluation found a 31% reduction in recidivism among INVEST participants compared to the control group—a 55% improvement over the target reduction rate.
2. **Economic Impact:** The cost savings associated with "jail avoidance" were significant. INVEST participants, on average, spent 10.5 fewer days in custody, resulting in an estimated total savings of \$468,037.50. For those who successfully completed the program, the per-participant savings reached \$11,316, with a total estimated savings of \$486,588.
3. **Participant Outcomes:** Beyond recidivism reduction, INVEST participants experienced improved outcomes in areas such as housing stability, employment, and access to necessary documentation (e.g., birth certificates, state IDs, and Social Security cards).
4. **Ancillary Benefits:** The program's cognitive behavioral curriculum, Freedom Management (FM), was instrumental in behavioral change. Successful INVEST participants were more engaged in FM classes and reported improved confidence in navigating social and legal challenges. Jail leadership noted improved behavior among FM participants, leading to fewer security concerns.

The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors

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5. Recommendation for Expansion: Given the program's measurable success, the independent evaluation recommends scaling the INVEST program to reach more individuals within PCADC and expand services post-release.

Conclusion

The INVEST program aligns with Pima County's broader initiatives, including the Prosperity Initiative, by addressing root causes of recidivism and providing support for reentry success. The demonstrated effectiveness of INVEST underscores its value in promoting public safety, reducing incarceration costs, and fostering economic advancement for participants.

JKL/dym


Attachment

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Paula Perrera, Director, Detainee & Crisis Systems

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 28, 2025

To: Jan Leshner,
County Administrator

From: Paula Perreña, 
Director

Re: Inmate Navigation, Enrollment, Stabilization and Treatment (INVEST) Independent Final Evaluation

Background

The INVEST program was initiated in November 2019 utilizing grant funding to implement a reentry program that enrolled 300 detainees at the Pima County Adult Detention Complex (PCADC) who screened for having a mental health condition, a substance use condition, and moderate to maximum criminogenic risk. The INVEST Independent Final Evaluation includes programmatic data evaluation from program inception through September 2024, when the grant ended.

Summary of Report

I. Objectives

The [INVEST Independent Final Evaluation](#) provides a comprehensive evaluation of the Randomized Control Trial (RCT), including key findings by the third-party evaluator. Our research focused on answering several questions, a few of note are:

1. Does the INVEST program contribute to reduced rates of felony recidivism for treatment group participants, compared to the control group?
2. Is the INVEST program effective on impacting other mediating outcomes (e.g., housing, employment, mental health and substance use)?
3. What other ancillary benefits does the INVEST intervention have for the participants, and the stakeholders involved in the program?

II. Design & Description

The sample consisted of 202 participants, with 105 assigned to the treatment condition (INVEST) and 97 assigned to the control group. Each participant was randomly assigned to either group once eligibility criteria were met, which include: 1) moderate – maximum criminogenic risk; and 2) co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions. Ultimately, two-thirds of participants in the INVEST Independent Final Evaluation were identified as having maximum criminogenic risk. Further, 39% of the sample reported anticipating either being homeless once released or unsure as to where they would go.

III. Results

INVEST set a goal to reduce its target population's recidivism by twenty percent from the historic baseline. Summary findings show that INVEST exceeded their target, achieving a thirty-one percent reduction when compared to the control group – that's a fifty-five percent increase above the target. This reduction speaks to the success of the INVEST model and its staff, especially considering the high-risk nature of the target population. Of note is the independent evaluator's recommendation for INVEST to be scaled, i.e., to provide *more* INVEST. The data supports this recommendation.

Table 1 compares the six-month outcomes between the INVEST treatment and control groups. INVEST participants, on average, spent 10.4 more days in the community, 10.5 fewer days in custody, and experienced one less recidivism event when compared to the control.

Table 1: T-Test Outcomes 6-Month Follow-up

Measured 180 Days Post Initial Jail Discharge Date	INVEST Intervention Group N=105	Control Group N=97	Two-tailed p-value	Effect Size
Had a subsequent rebooking within 180 days (% No)	65.7%	57.7%	.24	.08
Days in the community within 180 days - Mean (SD)	162.7 (35.7)	152.3 (44.1)	.06	.26
Days in jail within 180 days - Mean (SD)	17.3 (35.7)	27.8 (44.1)	.06	.26
Count of recidivism charges within 180 days - Mean (SD)	1.6 (3.0)	2.6 (3.9)	.06	.27
Days from initial jail discharge to recidivism booking - Mean (SD)	147.7 (54.6)	136.9 (60.1)	.19	.19

Notes: Effect size is reported as Cramer's V for crosstabulation analysis and Cohen's d for t-test analysis.

These averages can be used to estimate the savings realized in "jail avoidance" costs. For example, PCADC jail booking costs \$495. Each subsequent day at PCADC amounts to a cost of \$125 per day. Taking the jail booking cost along with the cost per jail bed day, followed by aggregating these totals across the study can provide an estimate of total savings realized through "jail avoidance." Table 2 provides these estimates between groups, i.e., treatment vs. control.

Table 2: Estimated Savings in Jail Avoidance Costs (Between Group)

Category	Value (Per Participant)	Unit Cost	Savings (Per Participant)	# Participants	Estimated Savings
Days in Custody	10.5	\$ 125.00	\$ 1,312.50	105	\$ 137,812.50
Days in Community	10.4	\$ 125.00	\$ 1,300.00	105	\$ 136,500.00
Days from Jail D/C to Recidivism Booking	10.8	\$ 125.00	\$ 1,350.00	105	\$ 141,750.00
Recidivism Events	1	\$ 495.00	\$ 495.00	105	\$ 51,975.00
Savings per Participant			\$ 4,457.50		
Total Estimated Savings					\$ 468,037.50

The between group comparisons indicate that being involved in the INVEST program, on average, can lead to improved recidivism outcomes and estimated savings through jail avoidance. A deeper dive into the data highlights the significant differences realized by participants who truly engage in the INVEST program.

Table 3: T-Test Outcomes at 6-Month Follow-up by Successful and Unsuccessful INVEST Exits

Measured 180 Days Post Initial Jail Discharge Date	INVEST Intervention Group Successful Exit	INVEST Intervention Group Unsuccessful Exit	Two-tailed p-value	Effect Size
Had a subsequent rebooking within 180 days (% No)	83.7%	53.2%	.001	.32
Freedom Management attendance - Mean (SD)	21.1 (10.6)	10.9 (6.8)	.001	1.18
Days in the community within 180 days - Mean (SD)	174.5 (22.8)	154.5 (40.7)	.002	.58
Days in jail within 180 days - Mean (SD)	10.7 (42.1)	49.1 (81.1)	.002	.57
Count of recidivism charges within 180 days - Mean (SD)	.53 (1.5)	2.34 (3.6)	.001	.61
Days from initial jail discharge to recidivism booking - Mean (SD)	162.4 (45.3)	137.4 (58.5)	.02	.47

Notes: N=105, n=43 (successful) and n=62 (unsuccessful).

As Table 3 shows, nearly every successful INVEST exit did not experience a new booking within 180 days of release. Each participant strictly adhered to the Freedom Management curriculum (discussed further in section IV), serving as a proxy indicator for levels of engagement. Successful INVEST participants, on average, spent 20 more days in the community, 38.4 fewer days in jail, experienced 1.8 fewer recidivism events, and had 25 more days from the time of their jail discharge to another recidivism event – each of these findings are statically significant.

The estimated savings from successful INVEST participants add up quickly. Table 4 (below) provides the data, showing a per participant average savings of \$11,316 in jail avoidance costs alone.

Table 4: Estimated Savings in Jail Avoidance Costs (Within Group)

Category	Value (Per Participant)	Unit Cost	Savings (Per Participant)	# Participants	Estimated Savings
Days in Custody	38.4	\$ 125.00	\$ 4,800.00	43	\$ 206,400.00
Days in Community	20	\$ 125.00	\$ 2,500.00	43	\$ 107,500.00
Days from Jail D/C to Recidivism Booking	25	\$ 125.00	\$ 3,125.00	43	\$ 134,375.00
Recidivism Events	1.8	\$ 495.00	\$ 891.00	43	\$ 38,313.00
Savings Per Participant			\$ 11,316.00		
Total Estimated Savings					\$ 486,588.00

Although not a full cost-benefit analysis, there is strong evidence that supports real savings in the area of jail avoidance. Still, these savings do not speak to the foundational goal of the INVEST program: to change lives for the better. Given that INVEST participants have on average two children, every success has the potential to create benefits that are far-reaching beyond the six-month program. Many of the successful INVEST participants can reunify with their families actively contributing as parents and providing additional income.

IV. Ancillary Benefits

True participant success extends beyond one or two variables. Reductions in jail booking frequency and avoidance costs serve as valuable indicators, but they do not capture the *full* impact of INVEST. Summary findings show that participation in INVEST leads to statistically significant improvements in multiple areas of a participant's life. When compared to the control group, INVEST brought greater ability to acquire necessary documentation for services and employment (e.g., Birth Certificate, Social Security card, state ID). Participants in INVEST were also more likely to engage in job training, felt more confident in mobilizing resources independently, received greater social support, and felt less stress when navigating their criminal justice obligations.

Jan Leshar, County Administrator

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Equally beneficial are the impacts to the community. Given the nature of the population INVEST works with, a small effect in behavioral change can lead to noticeable improvements both in and out of custody. Again, nearly two-thirds of INVEST participants were identified as having a *maximum* criminogenic risk (in addition to co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders). INVEST utilizes a cognitive behavioral change curriculum to address this fact head on.

Freedom Management (FM) is a cognitive reconstruction and life skills curriculum that incorporates evidence-based practices with a heavy emphasis on personal accountability. FM was initially provided to INVEST clients only. As the RCT progressed, law enforcement, treatment facilities, and class attendees have all expressed a desire for more exposure to both the FM curriculum, and the facilitators who teach the lessons. At the request of jail leadership, a FM pilot was launched in September 2023 and those attendees were better behaved resulting in fewer security overrides and expressed that they were better prepared for their jail release. Currently, INVEST staff teach 9 FM classes weekly at multiple locations including PCADC, treatment facilities, and at the Abrams Public Health Center. Of the INVEST participants who successfully exited the program, 83.7% were actively engaged in FM (attending 20 classes on average), and had zero subsequent jail re-bookings at the 6-month follow-up mark.

V. Conclusion

The INVEST program has demonstrated an ability to provide a pathway out of crisis and incarceration for its participants and aligns with several county initiatives including the Prosperity Initiative. Specifically, INVEST seeks to reduce crime through targeted FM education, community resource navigation and helping to demonstrate that change is possible using forensic peer support. Regarding the Prosperity Initiative INVEST staff assist participants in addressing their housing stability, helps them attain or re-establish health insurance, and assists with enrollment into workforce development programs. The INVEST program helps to close the opportunity gap for those involved in the criminal justice system. INVEST has the dual benefit of enhancing public safety while creating opportunities for economic advancement. INVEST and DACS staff are committed to improving care for those while they are at PCADC and through INVEST demonstrate a commitment to breaking the cycle of incarceration. INVEST and DACS staff can provide a presentation of the key findings to the Board of Supervisors at the pleasure of County Administration.

Cc: Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator