

STUDY PROFILE

Individual Placement and Support in a Substance Use Disorder Treatment Setting

by Sophie Shanshory

GRAND Addiction Recovery Center (Tulsa, Oklahoma), Zepf Center (Toledo, Ohio), and Lutheran Social Services of Illinois and Impact Behavioral Health Partners (Chicago, Illinois), are offering employment services to individuals with mental health and substance use disorders. These services are being evaluated as part of the Building Evidence on Employment Strategies (BEES) Project.

Finding and maintaining employment can be a challenge for people with substance use disorder (SUD). Systemic and individual-level barriers, such as the stigmatization associated with SUD, limited work histories, and living circumstances or treatment requirements that impact work schedules, can make it difficult for people with SUD to maintain stable jobs. Notably, SUD is more prevalent among people who are unemployed or who live in communities with high unemployment rates.

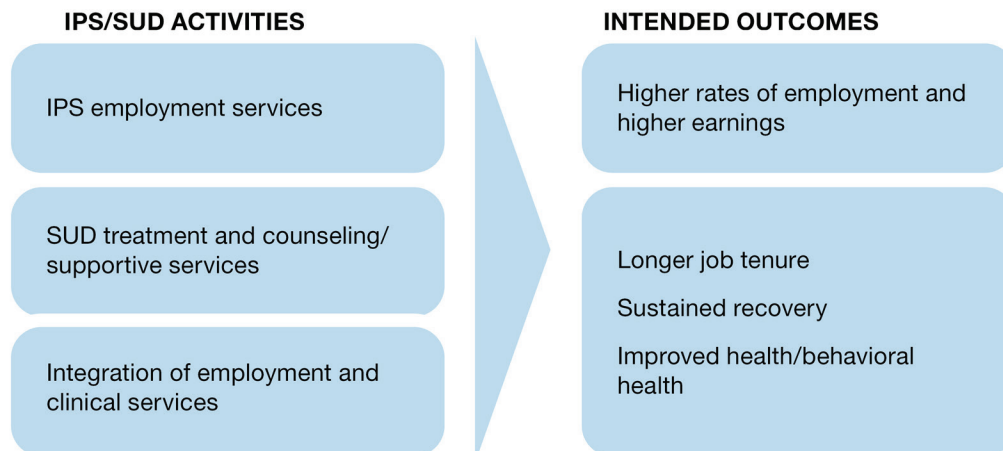
SUD treatment programs often provide services such as [medication](#), mental health counseling, peer support, and [recovery housing](#). But typically, these programs do not integrate employment services with their clinical services. As part of the BEES Project, three SUD treatment programs are offering supportive employment

services using the [Individual Placement and Support](#) (IPS) model. IPS is an employment services model originally designed for people with serious mental health illness receiving services through community mental health centers. The model has demonstrated strong evidence of effectiveness for this population in this setting.

In the three programs in the BEES study, IPS employment services are being tailored to meet the unique needs of individuals with SUD receiving services in an SUD treatment setting. The study offers an opportunity to build evidence regarding the effectiveness of IPS when implemented with this population.

GRAND Addiction Recovery Center. Based in Tulsa, GRAND Addiction Recovery Center (GRAND ARC) is one of the largest comprehensive community addiction recovery centers in Oklahoma. The organization takes a multidisciplinary approach to care that integrates medical oversight, psychiatry, nursing, counseling, and case management. In addition to its residential treatment program, GRAND ARC also operates an outpatient program and recovery housing. The organization serves an average of 2,000 clients a year across its residential, detox, and recovery housing programs. GRAND ARC is delivering IPS services directly to clients enrolled in the BEES study.

Program Logic Model



Zepf Center. Located in Toledo, Ohio, Zepf Center offers a variety of SUD treatment services through its residential and outpatient programs, including individual and group therapy, case management, and medication for opioid use disorder. The organization also operates a 130-bed recovery house. As an agency, Zepf Center serves over 2,000 people a year across its community health services. Its SUD treatment services reach over 800 people a year. Zepf Center is delivering IPS services directly to clients enrolled in the BEES study.

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) and Impact Behavioral Health Partners. Located in Chicago, Illinois, these two nonprofit organizations are partnering to serve individuals receiving SUD treatment services who are seeking employment. LSSI, a social service organization, offers a variety of SUD treatment services in various residential and outpatient facilities. The organization serves about 38,000 people overall per year across Illinois. Impact Behavioral Health Partners, a social service organization and IPS provider, offers employment services, clinical support, and permanent housing services to communities in the Chicago metropolitan area. LSSI is referring clients in the BEES study to Impact Behavioral Health Partners for IPS services.

THE EVALUATION

MDRC, in partnership with Abt Associates and MEF Associates, is conducting the evaluation of the IPS programs being implemented in these three SUD treatment settings. The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is funding the study through the BEES Project. BEES is part of OPRE’s [Innovative Strategies for Addressing Employment Barriers Portfolio](#), which seeks to rigorously evaluate the next generation of employment strategies and is partnering with the Social Security Administration on select evaluations, including this one. The IPS Employment Center, developer of the IPS model, is advising on delivery of IPS services at the three study sites.

The evaluation presents an opportunity to understand whether and how individuals receiving IPS services in the SUD treatment and recovery setting benefit from the model, including its impact on employment and earnings as well as on job tenure and overall health and well-being. The evaluation will include an impact analysis, an implementation study, and a cost study:

- The **impact analysis** will use a [randomized controlled trial design](#), which evaluates the effectiveness of a program by assigning individuals at random to a program group offered the services, or to a control group not offered services but who can access existing services in the community. The outcomes for these two groups will be compared over a 15-month period to determine whether IPS increased employment, earnings, job tenure, and SUD recovery among participants.
- The **implementation study** will use various data sources— including participant and staff interviews and participation data— to document and better understand program operations.
- The **cost study** will address the costs of implementing the IPS program in the SUD treatment provider setting.

LOOKING AHEAD

Study enrollment began in 2021 and will continue into 2023. In addition to collecting administrative data, the evaluation team will administer a follow-up survey 15 months after study enrollment to both program group members and control group members, covering domains such as service receipt, health, and material hardship. Interviews with program staff members and study participants will provide insights into how the program is being implemented at each site. Data collection and analysis will continue through 2025. The evaluation team anticipates releasing findings based on these analyses in 2026.

Anticipated Timeline of Project Activities

