



# Ujamaa Place

## *Evaluation of 2013 & 2015 Participant Outcomes*

**J U N E 2 0 1 6**

Prepared by:  
Ryan Evans  
Nicole MartinRogers, Ph.D.  
Jose Diaz, Ph.D.

# Contents

2015 Key Findings .....	1
Overall impact of Ujamaa Place programming .....	2
What is Ujamaa Place? .....	3
Ujamaa Place Theory of Transformation.....	4
Foundational elements .....	6
Empowerment and spirituality.....	6
African American culture .....	6
High-context coaching.....	7
Community of men .....	7
Behavioral health and wellness.....	8
Study purpose and methods .....	9
Return on investment analysis methods.....	10
Limitations .....	11
Ujamaa Place activities and impact .....	12
Basic needs assistance .....	12
Enabling volunteerism .....	12
Stable housing situation .....	12
Increase educational attainment.....	14
Secure and retain a job.....	17
Connect to family and children.....	18
Eliminate contact with the penal system.....	19
For your consideration .....	22
Return on investment summary .....	22
Recommendations for program and organization development.....	23
Recommendations for data practices .....	24

# Figures

1.	Change in percentage for select 2015 participant outcomes from entry to follow-up	1
2.	Ujamaa Place Theory of Transformation.....	5
3.	Participant length of time in program at follow-up.....	9
4.	Participants' housing situation at entry and follow-up .....	13
5.	Participants' financial contribution to their housing at entry and follow-up .....	14
6.	Participants' educational attainment at entry and follow-up .....	15
7.	Participants' changes in employment status .....	17
8.	Participants' self-reported connection with their children at entry and follow-up ...	18
9.	2015 participants' financial contribution to children at entry and follow-up .....	19
10.	Yearly savings to society from participants' reduced criminal activity since program entry for 2015 participants .....	21
11.	Return on investment .....	22

# Acknowledgments

Wilder Research is greatly indebted to Ujamaa Place leadership and program staff for their involvement and assistance with this evaluation, particularly Kedar Hickman, Hafiah Gray, and Otis Zanders. In addition, Wilder Research would like to extend its gratitude to the Ujamaa Place volunteers and staff who assisted in the data collection phase of this evaluation, including Ben Buckley, Lou James, Richard McLemore II, Jamil Salaam, and Nafessa Shabazz-Brown. Without their work this evaluation could not have been completed.

Wilder Research also thanks the Ujamaa Place men for participating in this evaluation; likewise, without their participation, this evaluation could not be completed.

The following additional Wilder Research staff also worked on this evaluation: Jenny Bohlke, Rachel Fields, Matthew Koskie, and Ryan McArdle.

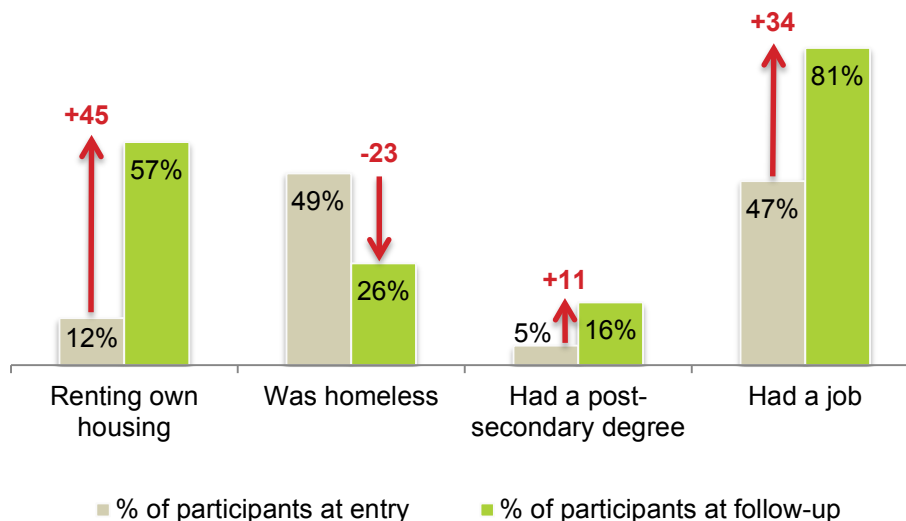
# 2015 key findings

Wilder Research examined the impact of programming delivered by Ujamaa Place, an organization that serves primarily African American men (age 17-29) who have multiple barriers to becoming stable, productive members of the community. For this evaluation, Wilder Research obtained entry and follow-up data for 59 participants who received day program services in 2015. As part of the evaluation, Wilder Research conducted a return on investment (ROI) analysis of Ujamaa Place day programming for the 90 total participants that received services in 2015 (extrapolated from the 59 participants for whom data was available, which assumes that all 90 participants received similar services). An ROI analysis suggests a return of \$5.49 for every dollar invested in Ujamaa Place, as well as an estimated net gain for society of \$3,389,594 during 2015.

<p>Overall RETURN ON INVESTMENT:</p> <p><b>\$5<sup>49</sup></b> for every <b>\$1</b></p>	<p>NET GAIN for society (during 2015):</p> <p><b>\$3.4</b> MILLION</p>
--	--

In addition, Figure 1 shows some of the positive ways in which participants' lives have changed since entering Ujamaa Place. At follow-up, more participants rented their own housing, fewer participants were homeless, more participants had a postsecondary degree, and more participants had a job (as compared with participants' status at program entry).

## 1. Change in percentage for select 2015 participant outcomes from entry to follow-up (n=17-49)



## *Overall impact of Ujamaa Place programming*

The following findings in particular showcase some of the positive outcomes that occurred in participants' lives since entering Ujamaa Place, in 2015:

- **Increased housing stability was experienced by many participants, and homelessness decreased substantially.** Despite multiple barriers to stable housing, more than half of participants (57%) were renting their own housing at follow-up (compared with 12% at entry). Moreover, almost half of participants (49%) were homeless at entry, and this decreased to about one-quarter (26%) at follow-up.
- **The percentage of participants with a postsecondary degree tripled.** The percentage of participants who had a postsecondary degree increased from 5 percent at entry to 16 percent at follow-up. Though it should be noted that, due in part to changes in the process to attain a GED and Ujamaa Place suspending their activities related to GED attainment, no 2015 Ujamaa Place participants had attained a GED at follow-up.
- **Employment rates substantially increased among participants.** About half of participants (47%) had a job at entry compared with four-fifths (81%) at follow-up. Average wage for participants who had a job at follow-up was \$12.28/hour and these participants worked an average of 33 hours per week.
- **Slightly more participants were contributing financially to their children.** While about half of participants (52%) contributed financially to their children at entry, that percent rose slightly (to 58%) at follow-up. However, it should be noted that the percentage of participants with a connection to their children decreased slightly (88% at entry to 83% at follow-up). The change in both measures are related to changes for just one participant. Wilder Research recommends further study to better define and measure participants' relationships with children and other family members.
- **Two participants with a prior felony conviction were incarcerated at follow-up; this finding is comparable to the state's 1-year recidivism rate.** While this finding is in alignment with the state's recidivism rate, Wilder Research recommends enhancing Ujamaa Place's criminal justice-related outcome measures to include more specific data regarding previous arrest, charges, and convictions as well data about parole or probation. These additional data would allow for accurate comparison with statewide recidivism rates, and to better understand other types of positive outcomes that could be measured and documented with regard to reduced involvement in criminal activity and the criminal justice system.

# What is Ujamaa Place?

Ujamaa Place is an organization focused on young African American men (primarily between the ages of 17 and 29) in Saint Paul, Minnesota, who are experiencing multiple barriers to becoming stable, productive members of the community. These barriers include being undereducated (no high school degree or GED, no postsecondary or career training), unemployed or underemployed, homeless, affiliated with gangs, having a criminal history, having mental health and substance abuse issues, no father in their life and minimal or unhealthy involvement in their own children's lives, and a general marginalization by greater society.

A similar program to Ujamaa Place called Awali Place was developed by Twin Cities RISE! and piloted in Saint Paul in 2008-2009. In late 2008, Twin Cities RISE! determined that Awali Place would be part of an overall budget reduction due to financial constraints. A group of leaders in the Saint Paul African American community and other concerned citizens decided to work together to establish Ujamaa Place to further develop the program model and to build on the good work conducted within the Awali Place program. Ujamaa Place began providing services in November 2010.

The purpose of Ujamaa Place is to foster the development of young African American men to become strong, responsible, employed, prosperous men and fathers who provide and contribute positively to their communities. The name "Ujamaa" comes from the Swahili word for extended family or familyhood, and demonstrates the concept of people working together in unity to support one another by any means available.

Ujamaa Place's core programming, or "Day Program," provides programming and other services and referrals to participants on a daily basis to address each of Ujamaa Place's outcome areas: housing, education, employment, relationships with children and family, and contact with the penal system. Ujamaa Place also manages a construction trade program specifically to train participants to work in construction trades, as well as a Rental Assistance Program (RAP) for men who are coming directly out of prison. Participants who are involved in these programs are not included in this analysis except if they are also participating in Ujamaa Place's Day Program.

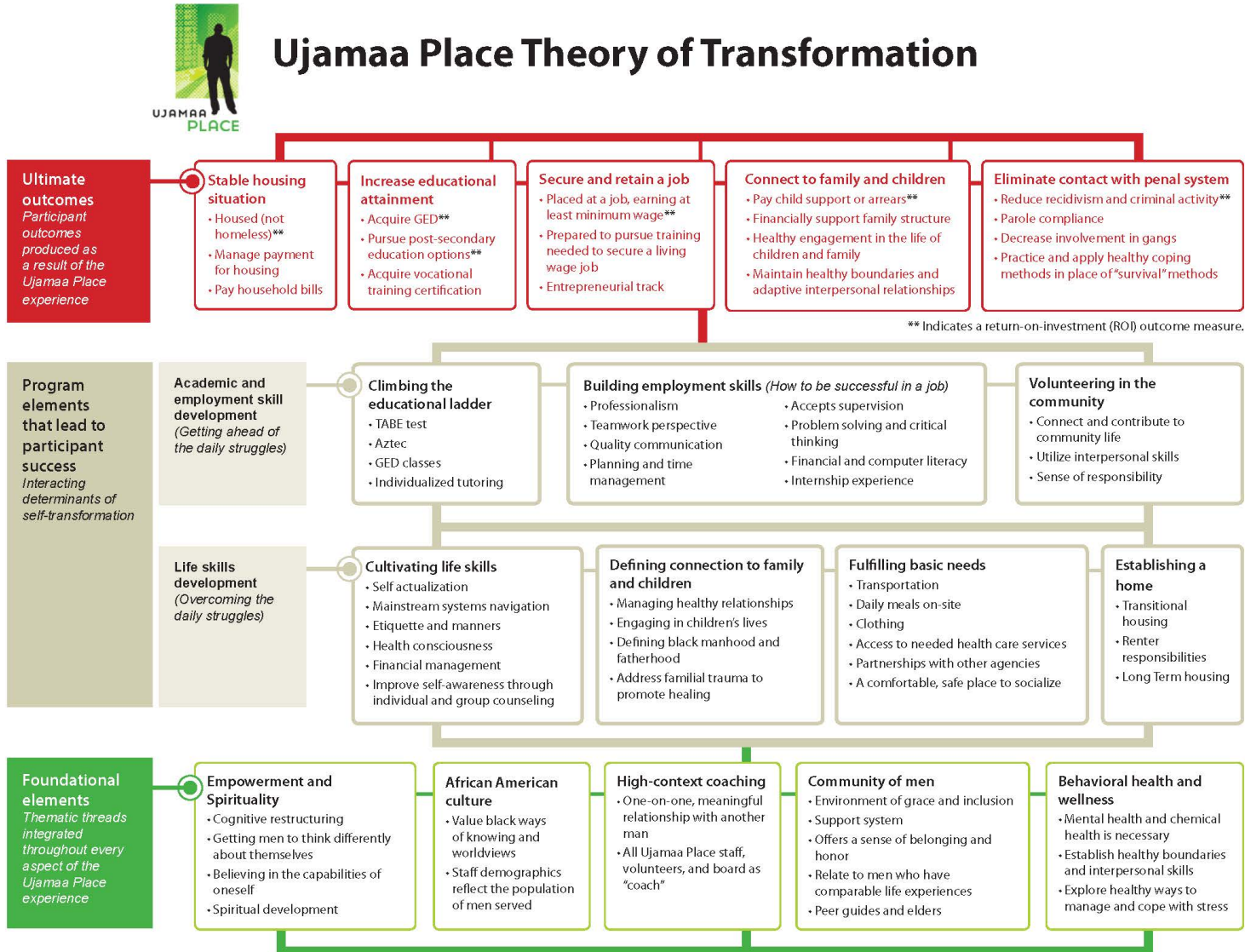
## *Ujamaa Place Theory of Transformation*

Together with Ujamaa Place leadership (board members and CEO), the program manager, program staff, and program participants, Wilder Research created the Ujamaa Place Theory of Transformation, which identifies foundational elements of Ujamaa Place programming, program elements that lead to desired participant outcomes, and ultimate desired participant outcomes.

In 2016, Ujamaa Place added “Behavioral Health and Wellness” as a foundational element to their Theory of Transformation. This change was reflective of the additional activities that focus on the health and wellness of Ujamaa Place men. The Theory of Transformation can be viewed on the next page.



## 2. Ujamaa Place Theory of Transformation



Not for duplication and distribution without permission of Ujamaa Place | © 2016 Ujamaa Place

# Foundational elements

Understanding the foundational elements of Ujamaa Place programming is critical for responsive and appropriate program evaluation as well as for helping to contextualize outcomes experienced by participants. Foundational elements include:

## *Empowerment and spirituality*

A number of characteristics of Ujamaa Place highlight the importance of empowerment and spirituality:

- **Cognitive restructuring approach.** Ujamaa Place uses “cognitive restructuring,” a proven psychological approach, to help men in their program to think differently about themselves. By guiding participants through an empowerment curriculum, Ujamaa Place seeks to help participants understand the consequences of their individual actions and for men to start believing in their own capabilities.
- **Spiritual development.** While Ujamaa Place is not a religious institution and does not promote any particular religion or doctrine, the program recognizes that a person’s spirit is a part of their reality. Ujamaa Place maintains, however, that developing and maintaining an emotional connection to some force larger and stronger than oneself can ultimately be important to emotional survival if one finds himself in positions of greater stress than he is normally accustomed to handling. As such, Ujamaa Place program staff support participants’ spiritual development.

## *African American culture*

Two characteristics of Ujamaa Place allow African American culture to be at the center of the Ujamaa Place experience:

- **Valuing black ways of knowing and worldviews.** Ujamaa Place holds the belief that African American culture and unique historical experience are often not fully appreciated by those with the power to make decisions that greatly affect the lives of African Americans. Ujamaa Place seeks to instill in participants a thorough understanding and positive valuation of African American worldviews.
- **Staff demographics reflect the population served.** Like the population of men served, Ujamaa Place’s full-time staff are fully composed of African American men and women who understand what it means to be black. Board members and volunteers of Ujamaa Place who are not African American have respect for African American

culture and provide alternative perspectives that Ujamaa Place participants can learn from. In addition, more than half of Ujamaa Place’s board members identify as African American, a goal set by organization leadership at the program’s outset.

### *High-context coaching*

Ujamaa Place provides a high-context relationship for each participant via a coach, who is an Ujamaa Place staff member. All facets of a participant’s life – mind, body, spirit – are viewed as important by the staff and addressed in the coaching relationship.

Two characteristics define high-context coaching for Ujamaa Place:

- **One-on-one, meaningful relationships with other men.** Participants are seen and treated as cultural, spiritual, and ethical people, with attention paid to each participant’s education, health consciousness, and spiritual development. In many cases, this may be the first time in a participant’s life that they have a personal, meaningful relationship with another man.
- **All Ujamaa Place staff, volunteers, and board members serve as “coach.”** When in the presence of participants, every staff member, volunteer, and board member plays the role of a coach to teach and guide the men. This is an important component to the Ujamaa Place experience because it builds mutual accountability for everyone involved in Ujamaa Place and requires that everyone steps up to the occasion.

### *Community of men*

“Ujamaa” means collective or extended family in Swahili. Ujamaa Place puts the community of men at the center of individual and group success. This is achieved through:

- **Creating an environment of grace and inclusion.** Ujamaa Place immerses participants in an environment of inclusion, as opposed to one of marginalization. Ujamaa Place staff work to establish an “environment of grace” as opposed to one of judging and condemnation.
- **Participants acting as a support system for each other.** The community of men is able to create bonds because participants are able to relate to men who have comparable life experiences. While it is not required, participants often forge relationships with each other outside of Ujamaa Place by spending time with each other and getting to know members of each other’s families.

- **Participants earning the roles of elder and guide.** *Guides* are participants who are in the last four months of the Ujamaa Place experience and have begun the volunteer or internship portion of the program. *Elder* is reserved for those participants who have displayed exemplary performance at Ujamaa Place. Elders come back to Ujamaa Place to act as peer mentors and community leaders. They are program graduates or are nearing completion of the program.

## *Behavioral health and wellness*

In 2016, Ujamaa Place added behavioral health and wellness as a foundational element to the Theory of Transformation. This addition was the result of organizational reflection regarding Ujamaa Place's values and how it might support participants. To enact this learning in the organization, Ujamaa Place hired a staff person to focus on participants' wellness.

- **Mental and chemical health is necessary for whole well-being.** Ujamaa Place men, in particular, due to the barriers and challenges they have experienced, may have a need for mental health services. Additionally, upon entry to Ujamaa Place, a majority of participants indicated that they had used illegal drugs at some point in the past, which points to the presence of chemical health needs that, if unaddressed, could impede progress to becoming stable, productive members of their community.
- **Establishing boundaries and learning interpersonal skills.** Ujamaa Place assists participants explore their values as well as ways in which to live those values in their day-to-day lives. This includes increasing awareness of rules and norms of social systems and institutions, as well as other people's boundaries. Practicing individual values in this way is a critical aspect of personal health.
- **Healthy strategies for coping with stress.** Participants learn to understand how they react and respond to stress in their lives, as well as learn adaptive ways of dealing with life stressors. These adaptive ways of dealing with stress are intended to be an alternative to harmful coping methods, such as using substances or engaging in other high-risk behaviors.

# Study purpose and methods

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess and demonstrate the impact Ujamaa Place day programming has had in the lives of its participants, and for the broader community. This report presents findings from Ujamaa Place’s previous evaluation of its day programming (which focused on participants who received services in 2013) alongside results of the organization’s current evaluation effort (which focuses on participants who received services in 2015). Using internal records collected by Ujamaa Place program staff and volunteers, Wilder Research analyzed entry (baseline) and follow-up data for Ujamaa Place participants in order to report changes over time in the five ultimate outcome areas, as defined by the Ujamaa Place Theory of Transformation (which can be viewed page 3):

- Stable housing situation
- Increase educational attainment
- Secure and retain a job
- Connect to family and children
- Eliminate contact with the penal system

For this report, Wilder Research included participants in the evaluation if they received services from Ujamaa Place in calendar year 2013 or 2015 (January-December) and had data available in Ujamaa Place’s database. Please see Figure 3 for more details about how long sampled participants had been enrolled at follow-up.

---

### 3. Participant length of time in program at follow-up

	2013		2015	
	n	%	n	%
2-5 months	12	31%	7	12%
6-11 months	10	26%	27	46%
12-23 months	10	26%	13	22%
24-35 months	5	13%	7	12%
36 months or longer	2	5%	5	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Note: The data in this table are based solely on whether participants received services during 2013 or 2015. It can be inferred that some participants who received services in 2015 also received services in 2013, based on their length of time enrolled. However, intentional examination of this phenomenon was not examined by this evaluation.*

For the data collection phase of 2013 evaluation activities, Wilder Research used participant entry data as baseline data and used a survey to obtain follow-up data, though it should be noted that self-reported, retrospective baseline data was used when entry data was unavailable.

For the data collection phase of 2015 evaluation activities, Wilder Research pulled entry and follow-up data from Ujamaa Place's client information database, which Wilder assisted Ujamaa Place to implement. Ujamaa Place contracted with MACC, which is a local vendor for ClientTrack, a nationally used social service client records data management system. Going forward, Ujamaa Place staff will continue to collect and enter participant entry and follow-up data for all of the key outcome areas of interest in the Theory of Transformation. This system will be used by Ujamaa Place staff for case management, and by Ujamaa staff and Wilder Research (and/or other evaluation contractors) for evaluation and reporting of participant status and outcomes. Using this data management system, Wilder Research obtained entry and follow-up data for and 59 participants in 2015.

### *Return on investment analysis methods*

A return on investment (ROI) analysis was also completed for this evaluation. Three measures were identified for the purposes of ROI analysis: whether a participant was employed and earning at least minimum wage, whether a participant recidivated, and whether the participants acquired additional education. These measures were identified because their outcomes may have monetary impacts to society, and because sufficient evidence of program impact in these areas was available from existing client data.

Ujamaa Place participants are more likely to find and retain jobs and increase their personal income. Some participants also earned educational degrees with the help of the program, improving their future lifetime earnings. Participants were also less likely to engage in criminal activities, which reduces the costs to society associated with law enforcement, incarceration, and victims' costs. As part of the ROI component of this evaluation, Wilder Research analyzed the potential economic impact of the program on these three outcomes and compared it to the investment made by society to achieve these benefits. The ROI is based on the total cost of the program as measured in its financial statements. These costs include personnel, operational, and other financial costs incurred by the program to generate the expected outcomes of the program and the estimated economic benefits. The result is a measure of the economic worthiness of the Ujamaa Place program, expressed as the social return on investment in the program (ROI).

The ROI is computed as the ratio between the sum of all yearly financial benefits associated with the program's outcomes and the total investment in the program. Other general assumptions and parameters used in the computations include:

- Cost data refers to actual revenues and expenses during 2015
- Crime and employment calculations refer to one-year benefits and costs.
- Additional earnings from improved education refer to future earnings from average age during participation in the program to age 65. Future earnings discounted at a 3% rate.
- Cost of incarcerations were computed by Wilder Research using annual expenditure data from the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC Performance Report from 2002-2010 – <http://www.doc.state.mn.us> )
- Victim's costs data taken from the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehensions (Unified Crime Report 2012 – <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/mnjis/pages/uniform-crime-reports.aspx> )

## *Limitations*

Although Ujamaa Place has made great strides in data quality when compared with the 2013 evaluation, data quality was still the most significant limitation for this evaluation. It should be noted, however, that Ujamaa Place implemented a new database throughout 2015 (this was a recommendation of the initial 2013 report), and this database reached full implementation in early 2016. The data quality limitations experienced during this evaluation period are not surprising considering how recently the new database reached full implementation at Ujamaa Place. **That being said, it is critical for Ujamaa Place to continue to devote significant energy to data collection and entry to ensure accurate representation of Ujamaa Place's efforts in future evaluations.** It is also important for Ujamaa Place to identify and implement ways of using their data in real-time for case management with individual participants, as well as for strategic program-level and organizational decision-making.

# Ujamaa Place activities and impact

As is reflected in the design of the Theory of Transformation, each ultimate outcome is connected to the others – while each outcome area is presented separately in this report, none of them should be thought of as stand-alone in practice. Ujamaa Place’s work in each outcome area is informed by previous research on employment, family formation and stability, desistance from criminal behavior, educational attainment, and empowerment among low-income, undereducated men.

## *Basic needs assistance*

In addition to the activities and services that relate directly to participants’ ability to achieve ultimate outcomes, Ujamaa Place program staff also help fulfill participants’ basic needs, such as transportation assistance, daily meals (which are delivered on-site at Ujamaa Place), clothing when needed, referrals to health care and mental health services, as well as a comfortable, safe place to socialize. If participants require some other type of basic needs assistance that Ujamaa Place staff are unable to provide, Ujamaa Place staff provide referrals to other agencies.

## *Enabling volunteerism*

Participants also volunteer time in their community with the goals of connecting and contributing to community life, using and strengthening interpersonal skills, and continuing to develop a sense of responsibility. Ujamaa Place facilitates group volunteer experiences for Ujamaa Place men. Some examples of Ujamaa Place’s volunteerism include: passing out flyers and staffing activity tables for community events, equipment setup/tear down and cleaning at community and school events, assisting grounds crew at churches in the East Metro area, and unloading trucks and stocking shelves at food shelves.

## *Stable housing situation*

### **Program activities and services**

Ujamaa Place provides services and training to help participants establish stable homes. During their time at Ujamaa Place, participants progress through the RentWise curriculum, which includes seven units that focus on financial management skills, and guides participants through aspects of establishing a home (finding a place, the rental process, moving in,



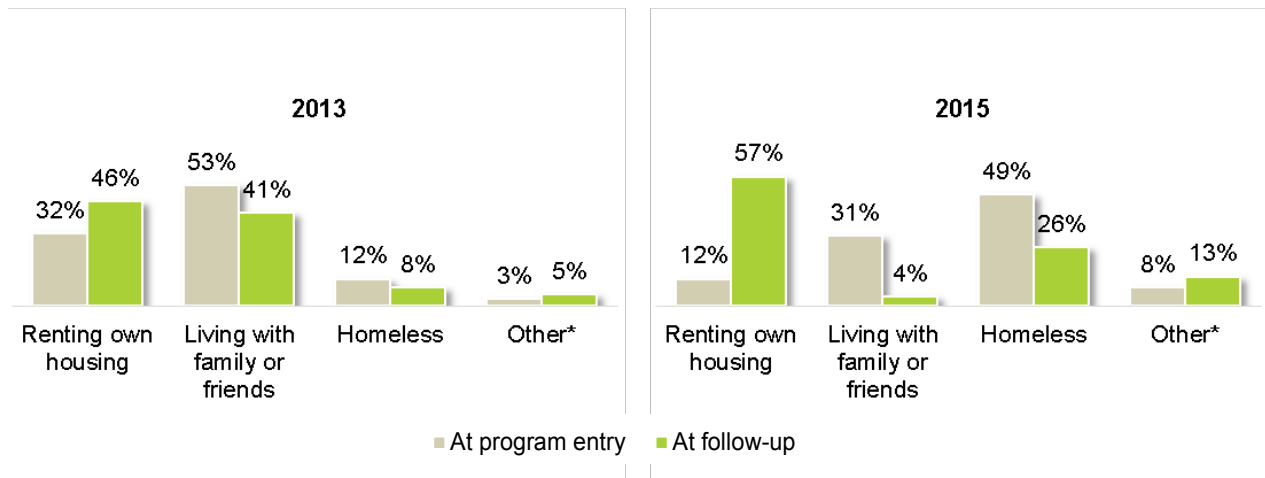
taking care of a home, and moving out). In addition, participants set individual goals with their coach pertaining to housing. Indicators of success for Ujamaa Place participants regarding establishing a home include: being housed stably (i.e., not homeless or couch hopping), managing payment for housing, and contributing financially to their living situation.

### Housing-related changes from entry to follow-up among participants

For 2015 participants, the percentage of participants who rented their housing more than quadrupled from 12 percent at entry to 57 percent at follow-up, compared with a smaller percentage point increase in 2013 (28-46%). In 2015, participants also saw a larger percentage point decrease in homelessness as compared with 2013 participants (49-26% in 2015 compared with 10-8% in 2013; Figure 4).

Based on these results, it appears that 2015 participants were more likely to be homeless at entry than 2013 participants, and also that Ujamaa Place was very effective at helping many 2015 participants begin renting their own housing. A clear strength of Ujamaa Place is their ability to stabilize participants' housing situations as well as support participants to rent their own housing.

#### 4. Participants' housing situation at entry and follow-up; n=34 (2013), n=49 (2015)



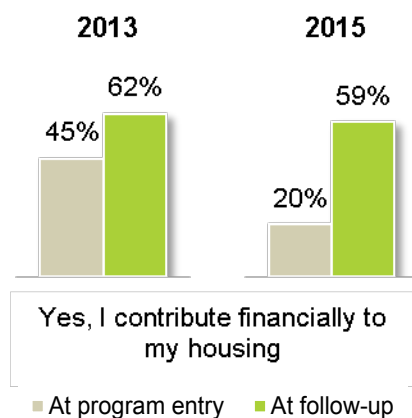
**Note:** While it is beneficial to compare 2013 and 2015 findings, there were some differences in measures used between evaluation years. Most notably, "Living with family or friends" was not a first-tier choice for 2015 evaluation efforts; rather, participants specified they were living with family or friends if they responded that they living situation was "Other." As such, 2015 participants who were living with family or friends at entry or follow-up were back coded "other" responses for comparison with 2013 findings.

\* "Other" includes: halfway houses, group homes, etc.

For 2015 participants, the percentage of those financially contributing to housing nearly tripled from 20 percent at entry to 59 percent at follow-up. This is a more drastic increase in this measure than for 2013 participants (Figure 5). Similar to Figure 4, these findings point to Ujamaa Place’s high level of effectiveness at assisting participants to contribute to their living situation. There is likely much overlap between participants who were renting and those who were financially contributing to their living situation; however, there were some participants who were staying in halfway houses or who said that they were homeless and were still financially contributing to their living situation.

---

**5. Participants’ financial contribution to their housing at entry and follow-up; n=39 (2013), n=49 (2015)**



### *Increase educational attainment*

#### **Program activities and services**

Two primary goals for Ujamaa Place participants regarding educational attainment are GED completion and/or the pursuit of postsecondary education. During their time in Ujamaa Place, participants receive individualized tutoring from Ujamaa Place program staff and/or volunteers. To assist staff and volunteers in delivering appropriate individualized learning experiences to participants, Ujamaa Place uses the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), the scores of which serve as a benchmark for participants moving toward GED completion, as well as the Aztec adult education program, which offers interactive individualized lessons for participants via computer software modules. In addition to individualized tutoring for GED preparation, Ujamaa Place provides group classroom learning that focuses on basic math, reading, and writing, as well as social studies and African American studies. When participants reach an appropriate reading level, they begin to take practice GED exams in preparation for the official Steck-Vaughn GED

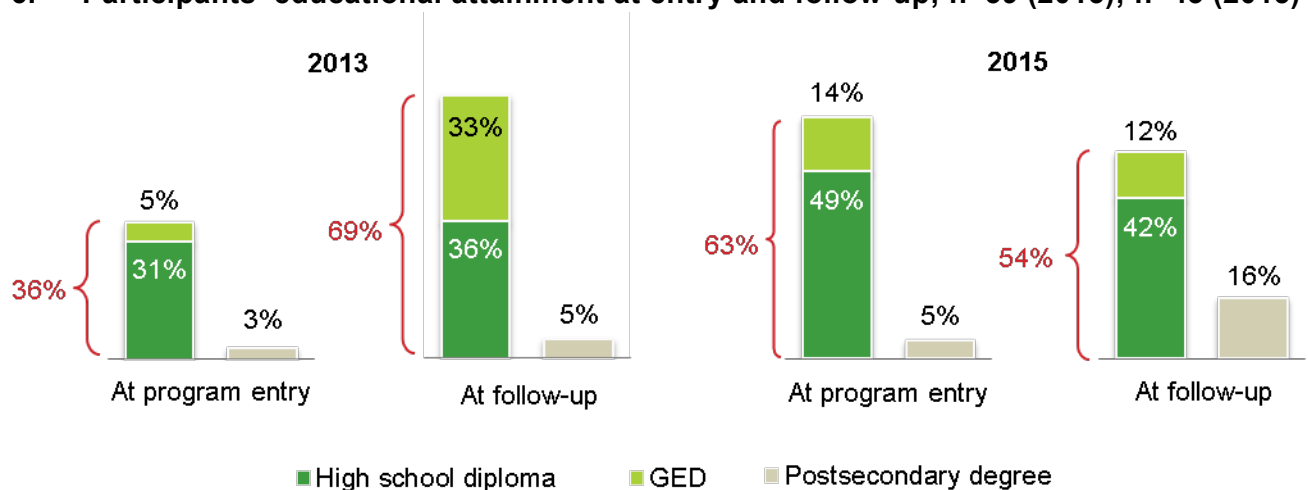
exam. Ujamaa Place then assists participants in scheduling their exam as well as assisting participants pay for the exam.

### Education-related changes from entry to follow-up among participants

Regarding education outcomes, 2015 participants showed the most change in those who attained a postsecondary degree or certification (5% at entry to 16% at follow-up; Figure 6). This increase is reflected in the decrease of participants who had a high school diploma or GED, because “educational attainment” refers to the highest degree held by participants.

That being said, in 2015, zero participations who did not have a high school diploma or GED at entry earned this degree by follow-up, compared with a drastic increase in 2013 participants who obtained their GED during the course of their participation with Ujamaa Place. This shift in participant outcomes can be explained as follows: In 2014, the process for attaining a GED changed in Minnesota. For Ujamaa Place, the biggest changes were that more rigorous questions were added, and the test was only administered via computer. Due to these changes, Ujamaa Place suspended their activities relating to GED attainment. The stark contrast in percentage of 2013 participants and 2015 participants who attained their GED is reflective of these changes (for 2013 participants, the percentage of those who had a GED increased from 5% to 33%).

#### 6. Participants’ educational attainment at entry and follow-up; n=39 (2013); n=43 (2015)



The difference in educational outcomes for 2013 and 2015 participants is worth examining. The 2013 evaluation results indicated Ujamaa Place’s effectiveness at assisting participants attain their GED; whereas 2015 results indicate the organization’s effectiveness at assisting those who already had a high school diploma or GED attain a postsecondary degree. These varied results suggest that Ujamaa Place has a range of

expertise regarding how to effectively assist young black men who experience multiple barriers in educational attainment at both the GED and postsecondary level.

Additionally, three participants are currently enrolled in education programs, including one participant who is progressing toward his GED and two participants who are in postsecondary programs. (The two participants who are currently enrolled in postsecondary programs were counted in the ROI analysis because their educational attainment changed from “high school diploma or equivalent” to “some college.”)

### **Return on investment for educational outcomes**

Society benefits from the education of its members in a number of ways. The best way to measure the economic benefit from education is through the lifetime earnings an individual receives, as well as the tax revenues derived from these earnings. In order to accurately calculate the benefit from education, Wilder Research has estimated the additional average lifetime earnings for two groups<sup>1</sup>. Separated by educational achievement, one group contains participants who achieved some college and the other group are participants who achieved a postsecondary degree or certificate. Two participants were enrolled in a postsecondary program at follow-up (and they were not at entry). Just by completing some college or postsecondary education, these participants generate an estimated additional lifetime earnings (after taxes) of \$249,864 and tax revenues of \$26,362. The estimated increase in lifetime earnings (after taxes) for the five participants who achieved a college degree is \$2,870,728 and tax revenues are estimated to be \$901,055. These lifetime earnings are estimates based on Census data for Minnesota for the average lifetime earnings of people by educational attainment and age. Tax revenues are computed using effective tax rates as reported by the Minnesota Department of Revenue. Note that the program also helps participants to finish high school or obtain their GED. These educational achievements would imply potential increases in the lifetime earnings of participants.

---

<sup>1</sup> In future iterations of this ROI analysis, we recommend establishing, if adequate data are available, the estimated additional lifetime earnings that correspond to additional educational attainment specifically for African American males in Minnesota, as opposed to using the earnings of all Minnesotans, since we expect the impact on lifetime earnings for additional educational attainment will be less for African American males than for the population as a whole.

## Secure and retain a job

### Program activities and services

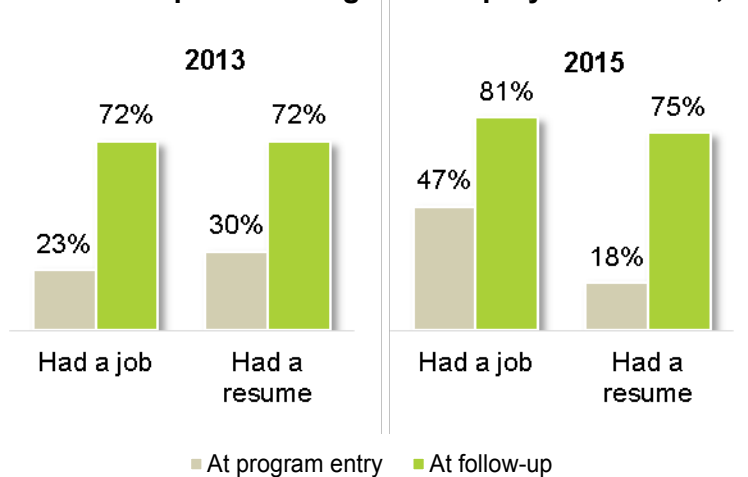
Through employment curriculum delivered by Ujamaa Place program staff, participants develop: a professional demeanor, a teamwork mentality, communication skills, time management skills, acceptance of supervision, and critical thinking skills. Participants ultimately seek a paid internship or job. Currently, Ujamaa Place is pursuing evening programming and service delivery to accommodate participants who have daytime jobs.

### Employment-related changes from entry to follow-up among participants

Employment outcomes for 2015 participants mirrored those for 2013 participants; both evaluation years featured strong results, with a large majority of participants attaining employment at follow-up, and as well as having a resume at follow-up (Figure 7). It should be noted that data were available for a relatively small number of 2015 participants; results might be different if the sample was larger.

---

#### 7. Participants' changes in employment status; n=39 (2013), n=17 (2015)



Of 2015 participants for whom hourly wage was reported at follow-up (n=7), the average hourly wage was \$12.28 (compared with \$10.46 for 2013 participants). Of those for whom part-time or full-time status was reported in 2015 (n=11), six were full-time (40 or more hours per week) and five were part-time, with average weekly hours at 33 hours (n=7).

## Return on investment for employment-related outcomes

Ujamaa Place participants and society benefit from participants' increased employment. The average personal income associated with participants who became employed during their time in the program is \$16,850 per participant per year, or \$84,250 total for the five participants with new jobs at follow-up. This benefit comes from participants finding new jobs while in the program and the assumption that the jobs will be retained for one year.

## Connect to family and children

### Program activities and services

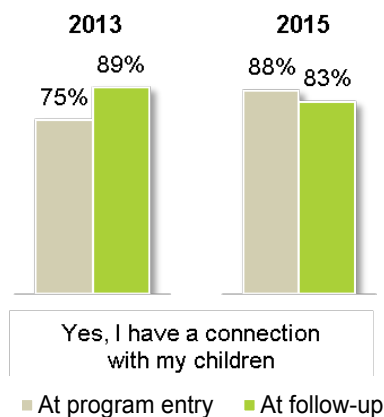
Ujamaa Place helps participants connect with their family and children through classroom curriculum that focuses on healthy relationship management skills, building employment skills, and establishing a home. A key indicator of success in this area is that participants have defined for themselves what a "healthy relationship with his family or children" means and practices that definition. Other indicators of success include: paying child support or arrears (if applicable) and otherwise financially supporting their children and other family. For future evaluation years, similar to recommendations in the 2013 evaluation, Wilder Research recommends more fully operationalizing this family connections outcome.

### Changes from entry to follow-up among participants

Regarding participants' connections to their children, there was little change between entry and follow-up in both 2013 and 2015 (Figure 8). That being said, in 2015, one participant who did have a connection with his children at entry reported that he did not have a connection with his children at follow-up, which explains the slight decrease from entry to follow-up in 2015.

---

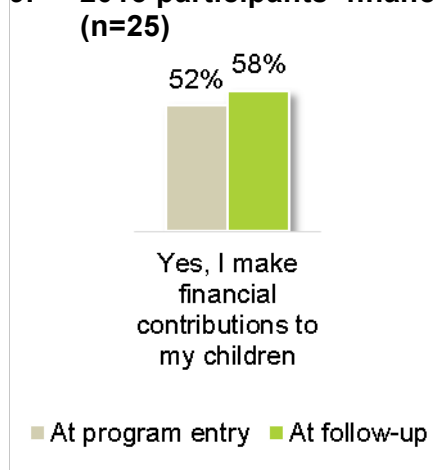
#### 8. Participants' self-reported connection with their children at entry and follow-up n=28 (2013), n=25 (2015)



In 2015, there was a slight increase in the percentage of participants who contribute financially to their children (Figure 9). Just over half of participants who have children contribute financially to their children's lives. This measure was not included in the 2013 evaluation.

---

**9. 2015 participants' financial contribution to children at entry and follow-up (n=25)**



In 2013, of the 18 participants who are required to pay child support, only six participants (33%) were current on their payments at follow-up. In 2015, of the 11 participants who are required to pay child support, only two (18%) were current on their payments at follow-up. These findings point to the possibility that, while some participants may be contributing financially to their children, this may not be in the form of legally mandated child support payments.

### *Eliminate contact with the penal system*

#### **Program activities and services**

Ujamaa Place seeks to reduce recidivism and criminal activity, increase parole compliance, and decrease gang involvement among participants (as applicable). Desistance from criminal behavior has been linked to increases in each of the already addressed outcome areas: stable housing, educational attainment, employment, and connections with family.

#### **Changes from entry to follow-up among participants**

In 2015, 59 percent of participants had been convicted of a felony prior to enrolling in Ujamaa Place. At follow-up, seven participants had undesirable contact with the penal system since starting with Ujamaa Place (16%): three participants violated their parole or probation (7%), and four participants were charged with a new crime (9%). Of these

seven total participants that violated their probation or were newly charged, three (7%) were incarcerated at the time of the 2015 follow-up data being collected. The findings regarding incarceration at follow-up are comparable to the statewide 1-year recidivism rates for those who have been convicted of a felony (the average length of time since entering Ujamaa Place for those with a felony who were incarcerated at follow-up was a little longer than 1 year, though this is not a perfect comparison to the state's 1-year rate because enrollment into Ujamaa Place may not coincide with exit from prison).<sup>2</sup>

This is similar to 2013 findings. In 2013, 69 percent of participants had been convicted of a felony prior to entry, and while none of these participants were incarcerated, two participants (5%; who had previously not been convicted of a felony) were convicted of a felony, though not incarcerated. No participants who had previously been convicted of a felony were convicted of another felony after entry.

### **Return on investment for criminal justice-related outcomes**

Savings to society from crime reduction among Ujamaa Place participants comes from at least two sources: the savings in incarceration costs from reduced number of days in jail, and the avoided costs to victims from crimes not committed. This ROI analysis only includes costs saved through a reduction in recidivism, but does not include costs or savings to society from crimes that may have been committed by Ujamaa Place participants who did not have a prior felony conviction upon program entry.

Wilder Research estimates that the occurrence of felonies among Ujamaa Place participants was reduced by 15 percent during the course of their participation in Ujamaa Place. This estimate was derived by first understanding that the average recidivism rate among those with a prior felony conviction in Minnesota is 9 percent (Minnesota Department of Corrections), which would result in 2.34 incarcerations from the 26 participants from 2015 who had a prior felony conviction, but we only observed 2 incarcerations among these participants. These avoided 0.34 incarcerations resulted in fewer days in jail and also corresponded to reduced crime and decreased victims' costs that saved society \$12,574 per year. Most of these savings come from avoided victims' costs, where society has saved \$8,413. The average savings per participant from avoided jail time is \$4,161 per year (Figure 10). It should be noted that this estimate does not take into account government personnel costs, other administration costs, or emotional costs to victims.

---

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Department of Corrections (2010). *Performance Report Fiscal Year 2010*. Retrieved from: <http://www.doc.state.mn.us/pages/files/large-files/Publications/legislative-reports/FY10PerformanceReport.pdf>



---

**10. Yearly savings to society from participants' reduced criminal activity since program entry for 2015 participants (n=44)**

	<b>Total savings</b>
Reduced number of days in jail <sup>a</sup>	\$4,161
Avoided victims' costs <sup>b</sup>	\$8,413
<b>Total savings from reduced crime</b>	<b>\$12,574</b>

<sup>a</sup> Using the recidivism rate in Minnesota of 9% (MN Department of Corrections), we estimate that without the program, 2.34 incarcerations would have occurred. Since only 2 incarcerations happened, 0.34 incarcerations were avoided. The average length of an incarceration episode in Minnesota is 107 days, and the daily jail cost is \$114 (Annual cost of \$41,747 computed using a time series constructed with annual operational cost and jail population in MN for the last 10 years).

<sup>b</sup> We use estimations of victims' costs from Vermont Center for Justice <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/reports/2014ExternalReports/301407.pdf>. In this report authors follow a standard method for estimating tangible and intangible costs developed by McCollister, French & Fang, "The Cost of Crime To Society," *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 108 (2010): 98-109. The average cost per victim is \$24,742. Savings associated with the program are:  $\$24,742 \times 0.34 = \$8,413$ .

# For your consideration

There are number of items to consider when interpreting the findings of this report. Wilder Research offers the following highlights, challenges, and recommendations as primary jumping-off points for further discussion.

## *Return on investment summary*

Based on available outcome data on employment, contact with the justice system, and educational achievement during 2015, the estimated benefit per participant is estimated to be \$46,054. The investment (program cost) per participant during 2015 was \$8,392, for an estimated return on investment of \$5.49 for every \$1.00 spent in the Ujamaa Place program. There was an estimated net gain to society of \$37,662 for every individual served. Findings from the ROI analysis imply a net gain for society of almost \$3.4 million for the 90 participants served during 2015 (Figure 11). This analysis assumes that all 90 participants received a similar level of services and had similar outcomes when compared to the sub-set of those participants for whom data were available.

---

### 11. Return on investment

	<b>Total (90 participants)</b>	<b>Per Participant</b>
Benefits	\$4,144, 834	\$46,054
Costs	\$755,240	\$8,392
Benefits minus Costs	\$3,389,594	\$37,662
Return on Investment		\$5.49

Aside from reducing crime, gaining employment, and increasing educational attainment, there are two other outcome areas currently worked on by Ujamaa Place: stable housing situation and connection to family and children. We do not currently have sufficient data for these outcome areas to be included in the estimation of the ROI. Yet, these outcomes generate economic benefits to society. Better data will allow us to include these measures in future iterations of this ROI analysis.

In addition, cost data was obtained from the total budget of Ujamaa Place, not from the budget of each individual outcome area, whereas the benefits were calculated from only three out of the five outcome areas: securing and retaining a job, eliminating contact with the penal system, and increasing educational attainment.

In other words, the measurable ROI of Ujamaa Place would possibly increase further if better data were available (showing positive outcomes) across all outcome areas and in particular the two areas that we were not able to report on here. As Ujamaa Place continues to grow and develop its data collection practices, Wilder Research expects to be better able to estimate the value of other potential outcomes and obtain a more complete ROI.

### *Recommendations for program and organization development*

Based on 2015 participant outcomes, as well as the comparison of 2013 and 2015 findings, Wilder Research has a number of suggestions for program and organization development.

- From 2013 to 2015, Ujamaa Place participants have seen positive outcomes in regards to their housing status, with a particular focus on finding housing quickly for participants who were homeless at entry. Wilder Research recommends capitalizing on this evident organizational strength, perhaps by more explicitly integrating the “community of men” foundational element in housing activities (for instance, participants who have moved from unstable to stable housing could be supported by Ujamaa Place staff to formally act as guides or elders for other participants on the path to stable housing). Speaking generally, Ujamaa Place might consider implementing their other foundational elements in tangible ways into the housing-related services it provides, or collecting data on how they are doing this if it is already occurring.
- Regarding education, outcomes for 2013 and 2015 participants are very different, with 2013 participants being more likely to attain a GED and 2015 participants being more likely to attain a postsecondary degree. It is clear that Ujamaa Place possesses a degree of expertise at assisting young African American men (many of whom have experienced extensive barriers to educational attainment) throughout their journey from GED to postsecondary degree attainment. The findings in this report suggest that if the suspended GED-related supports are revamped, Ujamaa Place will be poised to assist all program participants in their educational supports, regardless of their education level at entry. Wilder Research recommends identifying other programs or curricula that have been successful at assisting similar target populations attain their GED, and we have provided Ujamaa Place with some preliminary information on this topic.
- In regards to Ujamaa Place’s employment efforts, because the majority of participants from 2013 and 2015 had been convicted of a felony at entry (69% in 2013, 59% in 2015), a potential strategy Ujamaa Place could consider would be finding ways of financially incentivizing employers to hire Ujamaa Place participants as employees or

as paid interns, with a specific focus on participants recently released from prison with a felony conviction. Such a strategy might help to make in-roads with new employers or open other opportunities for employment for Ujamaa Place men.

- In 2015, Ujamaa Place added “behavioral health and wellness” as a foundational element to their Theory of Transformation. Wilder Research recommends intentional reflection and learning regarding how this foundational element is exhibited at Ujamaa Place. This was a strategy for developing the initial foundational elements, and it would be prudent to treat this new foundational element in the same way. Such an examination would also be an opportunity for a thorough update of the Theory of Transformation.

### *Recommendations for data practices*

The efforts made by Ujamaa Place to strengthen their data practices since their 2013 evaluation contributed to the success of 2015 evaluation activities. To further Ujamaa Place’s goals as a learning organization with a strong evaluation framework, Wilder Research has some recommendations regarding how to continue to strengthen data quality and use at Ujamaa Place:

- **Track output/service delivery using the database.** It is a strong recommendation from Wilder Research for Ujamaa Place staff to track services regularly in the database, and likewise to conduct monthly services data follow-ups and checks. This would require further developing the database to allow for easy entry of attendance at standard classes and completion of various curricula and programs within Ujamaa Place’s range of offerings. Tracking service delivery will allow us to better understand and make claims about the impact of Ujamaa Place’s services for participants, as well as help us to learn more about the ideal mix and intensity of services needed to help achieve the desired outcomes for participants.
- **Map outcomes by database form or assessment.** During this evaluation period, it became clear that multiple forms or assessments in Ujamaa Place’s database were being used to track progress for the same outcome. Wilder Research recommends specifying which forms will be used to measure which outcomes, so that Ujamaa Place staff and any parties involved in entering or pulling data from the database know which forms or assessments to access. We may also want to revisit the specific measures used. For example, with regard to participant employment status, we should include a measure of length of job retention so we can assess the degree to which the assumption that participants will retain their jobs for at least one year is accurate, or if it will need to be adjusted for future iterations of the ROI analysis. In addition, we

recommend finding better ways to track and report on the amount of child support that participants pay to the mothers of their children each month, so we can consider in future iterations of the ROI analysis if and how we can demonstrate the financial benefit to taxpayers (vs. society as a whole) for additional child support payments made by Ujamaa Place participants, which directly corresponds to a reduction in welfare (MFIP) benefits that are paid to that mother for her children at a cost to taxpayers.

- **Continue to refine monthly data follow-ups and checks for all active participants.** Because the database reached full implementation in early 2016, to Wilder Research’s knowledge, Ujamaa Place is still in the process of implementing monthly data follow-ups (checking in with each participant about their status and updating the data management system as needed, as well as using this information for case management) and checks (one Ujamaa Place staff member who has been identified as the data system lead will check the system to be sure that all staff have entered updates for all of their participants each quarter and to check for and correct any duplicate or blank entries). Wilder Research recommends that any data follow-up efforts include *all* outcome areas, rather than entering data for outcome areas that changed (even to the extent of duplicating forms or assessments in the database, to signify that “no change” in participant status is intentional). Alternatively, a “no change” indicator might be added to the database, to signify the same occurrence more directly than duplicating the form.
- **Use regular data pulls to inform ongoing practice and decision-making.** Currently, Ujamaa Place’s data is used primarily for biannual evaluation purposes. This is not using data to the fullest extent. Wilder Research recommends regular data pulls, including case management data and outcome data, and using this data to inform organizational practice and decision-making. This would also include building out and using regular/automated reporting functions in the database for use in Ujamaa Place’s required grant reporting. More conversation is necessary to determine how often these data pulls might occur and what data should be included in them. More conversation with Ujamaa Place staff may also be needed to determine if and how the organization is already using participant status updates, or how it could use these data, to help inform how it serves that particular individual.
- **Re-examination of “Connect to family and children” measures.** Similar to a 2013 evaluation recommendation, Wilder Research recommends reexamining the “Connect to family and children” measures to better capture how Ujamaa Place supports participants to connect with their families and children. This includes a re-examination of the services or activities provide by Ujamaa Place as well as the expected

outcomes. Ujamaa Place’s outcomes related to family and children have been largely inconclusive for these two evaluation periods because the current measurement approach does not adequately capture this part of Ujamaa Place’s work. It is possible that the measures are adequate, but Ujamaa Place’s data practices are not showcasing participants changes; for instance, the database is currently set up to collect child support payments and custody changes, though there was limited data for these measures. In either case, a re-examination of these measures will identify ways to strengthen the ways in which changes in “Connect to family and children” are captured.

- **Establish a data sharing agreement with the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) to access participants’ criminal justice-related data.** As part of the 2013 report, Wilder Research recommended contracting with state agencies to obtain outcomes data for participants. After conducting 2015 evaluation activities and further looking into to the availability of various data sources, Wilder Research recommends prioritizing a data sharing agreement with BCA in order to obtain a more complete and accurate record of participants’ criminal justice-related involvement, as well as to better compare participants’ criminal justice-related outcomes with statewide rates for individuals from a similar demographic group (young African American males) who are not Ujamaa Place participants.