



Issue Brief

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Community Corrections

Overview

Oregon has approximately 31,600 individuals under felony supervision in the community, compared with roughly 14,600 individuals serving felony sentences in prison.

Community corrections provide a cost-effective means to hold offenders accountable while at the same time addressing the causes of criminality and reducing the risk of future criminal behavior. Each aspect of community corrections – supervision, sanctions, and services – is important to this approach.

County community corrections departments use sanctions such as electronic surveillance, community work crews, day reporting centers, residential work centers, jail, and intensive supervision programs. Other services such as alcohol and drug treatment, sex offender treatment, employment counseling, and mental health services help offenders make long-term behavioral changes.

The Oregon Department of Corrections has a central role in coordinating community corrections statewide.

Reducing Future Criminal Behavior

The majority of felons managed in the community are not convicted of a new felony during or after supervision. Conviction of a new felony within three years of beginning supervision (probation or post-prison supervision) is the definition of recidivism in Oregon. About 70 percent of offenders on supervision do not recidivate.

Probation/parole officers manage felony offenders, concentrating their greatest resources on offenders who are most likely to commit new crimes. These offenders have often been in prison and have four or more previous felony convictions.

Offenders considered the highest risk receive the greatest amount of attention in the form of closer supervision and in the level of services and sanctions. This attention

includes home visits, office visits, employment checks, and collaboration with other agencies, including law enforcement and social services. Contact diminishes as risk decreases. Additionally, offenders are often subject to unannounced home visits, searches, random urine testing for drug use, and polygraph testing to monitor compliance with conditions of supervision.

The Community Corrections System

Oregon has had a community corrections system since 1977. Prior to 1997, counties could choose to operate probation and parole. As of January 1997, under Senate Bill 1145, counties are required to operate their own community corrections agencies. Under SB 1145, the state provides funding through a grant formula; some counties add additional local funding to enhance their community corrections activities.

Under the law, communities and local governments have the control, flexibility, and funding to adapt their corrections activities to local needs and priorities, including:

- Determining how to supervise felons and misdemeanants on supervision.
- Providing sanctions and programs to offenders according to priorities determined by local public safety coordinating councils.
- Determining the level of local sanctions for offenders sentenced to prison for 12 months or less.
- Moving offenders within the continuum of sanctions available locally.

Opting Out of Senate Bill 1145

The law includes an option for a county to transfer community corrections functions to the state if state funding drops below a baseline amount. That occurred following the failure of Ballot Measure 30 in January 2004. Although the legislature restored full funding in November 2004, two counties (Linn and Douglas) had already transferred community corrections responsibilities and employees to the state. DOC

currently manages all of the functions of community corrections in Linn and Douglas Counties.

For more information on the opt-outs, please see the DOC Issue Brief, "Opting Out of Community Corrections."

Performance Measures

County community corrections directors – in partnership with DOC – set performance measures for community corrections, which become part of the intergovernmental agreements between the department and each county.

The current performance measures are:

- Reduce criminal behavior, measured by recidivism rates.
- Enforce court and Parole Board orders, measured by successful completion of supervision.
- Assist offenders to change, measured by employment and participation in treatment.
- Provide reparation to victims, measured by restitution and community service hours.

Community Corrections Grant in Aid

The community corrections budget reflects the corrections population forecast produced by the state Office of Economic Analysis and the average per-person-cost of managing offenders based on risk.

The mission of the Oregon Department of Corrections is to promote public safety by holding offenders accountable for their actions and reducing the risk of future criminal behavior.



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