



# Issue Brief - 2008

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

## Community Corrections

### Overview

Oregon has approximately 35,000 felons under supervision in the community, compared with roughly 13,500 felons 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 employ sanctions such as electronic surveillance, community work crews, day reporting centers, residential work centers and intensive supervision programs. Other services such as alcohol and drug treatment, sex offender treatment, employment counseling and mental health services are also important to realize long-term behavioral change in offenders.

The Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) 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 on 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 those on supervision do not recidivate.

Probation/parole officers manage felony offenders, concentrating their greatest resources on the 31 percent of 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 are given the greatest amount of attention in the form of closer supervision and also in the level of services and

sanctions employed in their management. The attention includes home visits, office visits, employment checks and checks 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 were required to operate their own community corrections agency. Under SB 1145, the state provides funding through a grant formula; many counties add additional local funding to enhance their community corrections activities.

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

- Determining how the felons and misdemeanants on supervision will be supervised.
- Providing sanctions and programs to offenders according to locally established 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 full funding was restored in November 2004, two counties (Linn and Douglas) had already transferred community corrections to the state during

that period. DOC currently manages all of the functions of community corrections in Linn and Douglas counties, and their field staff are now DOC employees.

## Performance measures

Performance measures for community corrections are set by county community corrections directors in partnership with the DOC, and become part of the intergovernmental agreements between the state and the counties.

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.

## Funding levels

The 2007-09 LAB includes funding for community corrections activities in all 36 Oregon counties. During the 2005-07 biennium, the counties and DOC conducted an actual cost study of community corrections and adjusted funding rates to the current costs of providing probation and parole supervision, correctional programs, and community-based sanctions.

The community corrections budget is based on the corrections population forecast produced by the state Office of Economic Analysis and the average per person cost of managing offenders in two groups.

- 1) Those originally sentenced to felony probation; and
- 2) Those originally sentenced to a state prison.



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

**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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