



Issue Brief - 2008

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Alternative Incarceration Programs

Overview

“Alternative Incarceration Programs” (AIP) is a phrase that describes intensive prison programs offered by the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) to selected inmates who are at risk of re-offending due to untreated addictions and criminal thinking.

Oregon’s first AIP, a cognitive restructuring program, began in 1994 and continues today. The 2003 Legislature approved additional alternative incarceration programs that focus on alcohol and drug treatment along with cognitive behavioral change.

Alternative incarceration programs prevent future criminal behavior

Many Oregon prison inmates have severe substance abuse problems – a key risk factor contributing to criminal behavior. To reduce the risk that offenders will commit new crimes, the DOC designed its AIPs around treatment and programs that are proven to be effective in treating addictions and changing behavior. The programs are designed to prepare inmates to return successfully to the community after release from prison.

The cognitive restructuring and the alcohol and drug treatment AIPs all have structured 14-hour days that require treatment, physical work, exercise and service to the community. Participants live in dedicated housing units for about six months and participate in programs that stress personal responsibility and accountability. Inmates accepted into the alcohol and drug AIPs must also participate in intensive addiction treatment. The curriculum includes preparing for employment, developing good relationships and family skills and recognizing and changing criminal-thinking errors. Participants also focus on developing healthy decision-making skills and habits for successful community living.

AIP has three phases: Inmates who successfully complete the 180-day residential phase move into the community. Still under the custody of the DOC, they are tightly supervised by parole officers for 90 days

while practicing the skills and discipline learned in prison. Those who complete this “transitional leave” phase are eligible to have their prison sentences reduced. These time cuts average about 13 months. After transitional leave, offenders are supervised by parole officers while completing their post-prison supervision sentences.

Many graduates of these types of programs have gone on to be successful contributing members of society. The results of Oregon’s AIPs are carefully tracked. Outcomes of each program as well as a control group will be researched, evaluated and compared to each other and to other prison programs to guide future policy decisions.

Oregon’s four alternative incarceration programs

The men’s cognitive restructuring AIP encourages and supports new pro-social beliefs and behaviors. It focuses on cognitive skills, alcohol and drug education, work skills and ethics. The cognitive program also teaches inmates how to build and maintain positive relationships. Inmates learn to accept responsibility for their criminal behaviors and the harm they caused others. The men’s cognitive restructuring AIP graduates about 225 inmates annually.

The women’s cognitive restructuring AIP is currently being developed and will be operational in the spring of 2008.

The men’s alcohol and drug treatment AIP is an intensive residential treatment program focusing on developing personal accountability and responsibility through a structured daily routine that involves physical work, exercise, and behavioral skill development. Group and individual addiction treatment includes 12-step and other recovery activities where participants learn the skills necessary to change their behavior and increase their personal accountability and responsibility. Additional interventions prepare inmates for gainful employment and teach them how to develop and maintain pro-social relationships and family skills. They

also learn to identify and change criminal thinking errors and develop healthy decision-making skills and habits for successful community living. About 350 men will participate in the alcohol and drug treatment AIP each year.

The women's alcohol and drug treatment AIP is a learning environment where women work to develop the pro-social skills needed for life outside prison. Inmates in the program participate in intensive addiction treatment and participate in individual and group counseling. Participants learn the skills necessary to change their behavior and increase their personal accountability and responsibility. They are required to develop healthy daily routines that involve physical work and exercise. A strong emphasis is placed on preparing for gainful employment and successful living in the community. Every year the women's alcohol and drug treatment AIP will serve about 100 women.

Eligibility criteria

Qualified inmates must apply to be accepted into any of the four AIPs.

Other criteria apply, but the basic qualifications are:

- A judgment order that allows alternative incarceration programs.
- A qualifying offense (no mandatory minimum sentences or sentencing under another disqualifying law).
- Classification level 1 (one) or 2 (two).
- Enough time remaining to completed the 270-day program.
- No open detainer that would still be in effect at the time of transitional leave.
- Ability to grasp the fundamental components of the program.

The selection process

All inmates are carefully evaluated when they enter the Oregon Department of Corrections. Each inmate receives an individual corrections plan to address seven key criminal risk factors. Among those factors is alcohol and drug abuse. Eligible inmates are prioritized based on these risk factors and admitted into the appropriate program as space permits.

Active participation required

Inmates may be removed from AIP at any time for rule infractions, lack of effort or motivation, poor program progress, or lack of positive change. Inmates who fail any phase of an AIP or who voluntarily request to be

removed from the program will return to regular incarceration to serve the balance of their sentences.

Statutory authority:

ORS 421.502, 421.510, 421.512, Chapter 464 (2003 Laws), effective date: January 1, 2004.

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**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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