



A Matter of Partnership: Public Involvement in Residential Community Corrections

Margot C. Lindsay

Monda Wilson was lucky. The town selected for the new 42-bed corrections center had been so anxious to have it that new sewer and water connections had been installed in an effort to beat out two other towns that wanted the facility. In a rural area with a high level of unemployment, the townspeople saw the center as a source of jobs, income, and services. So when she arrived in Nelsonville as the coordinator for southern Ohio's correctional institutions, Wilson was entering friendly territory.

Even so, she foresaw two problems: The new facility would be Ohio's first multi-county correctional residential program, which meant Wilson had to devise ways to stay in touch with the needs and concerns of people in a large geographical area. Moreover, it would be the first institution operating under the

oversight of local judges on the Judicial Corrections Board, which made winning their confidence that the facility would be well run especially important

Wilson decided to use the advisory board required for each of Ohio's community-based correctional institutions as the mechanism for addressing these issues. Even before construction on the building began, she met with the county commissioners who would appoint the advisory board members to explain the program, outline the desired balance between treatment and custody, compare their priorities with hers, and seek appointments she felt would meet her needs. The board appointed as a consequence of these meetings includes two college professors, a social worker, a sheriff, a chief of police, a retired highway patrolman, an assistant prosecutor, and

From the Director

Residential community corrections programs have become an integral part of the criminal justice system over recent years. No single description can characterize the variety of residential programs currently in operation, as they serve diverse purposes for different components of the criminal justice system. To date, little has been written about policies and practices associated with residential programming or about how programs can be integrated effectively within the range of sanctions and controls administered by state and local governments.

To respond to these issues, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) is pleased to introduce the series *Issues in Residential Community Corrections Policy and Practice*. The papers presented in this series were developed to enhance the management and operations of community-based residential corrections programs. They were created as part of

a cooperative agreement between NIC and Brandeis University's National Institute for Sentencing Alternatives, which also provided technical assistance and training for residential community corrections policymakers and practitioners.

In this second series paper, Margot Lindsay explores the rationale for public involvement in residential community corrections and outlines various ways policymakers and administrators can involve local citizens in program development and operations. We hope those responsible for planning and managing RCC programs will find the material presented here useful.

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several private citizens--a mix that won the confidence of local officials as well as the judges to whom the board would be reporting.

"Our first job was to develop the policies and procedures. We all met together, the 17 members and I, every other week for four months. I couldn't believe volunteers would give that much time. The process went smoothly in large part because I had set out clear goals and objectives which had to be met. But the board had the feeling of 'this is our project.' Furthermore, the judges were comfortable with the results.

"Correctional institutions tend to attract negative thoughts," Wilson adds, "to have a negative image. The Citizen Advisory Board gives it a positive image. But most of all, I could never have done this alone. My board members are now my ears throughout the counties, telling me the concerns to which I need to respond."

For Eugene Larsen, Director of Field Community Services for the Idaho Department of Corrections, the issues were different but the means he chose were the same. Like Ohio, Idaho requires advisory boards for its community correctional work centers. Judges, prosecutors, and influential private citizens meet monthly to act as a sounding board for the program director, monitor the types of offenders being placed in the center, and facilitate access to community services.

Larsen wanted to open a facility in Nampa, Idaho, but to do so he needed the support of some key individuals: "The mayor was skittish, so I asked him for advisory board suggestions, people that would make him confident nothing would go on of which he wouldn't approve. And I took two of his three suggestions: a county commissioner and a local businessman. Then the facility was to be next to a state home for retarded

children, and the parents felt their children were going to be at risk. So I put the administrator of the home, a person the parents trusted, on the board and after a few uncomfortable moments the relationship has gone smoothly."

Both Wilson and Larsen know that residential programs require a partnership with people outside the corrections system who are affected by the programs. Local government officials, members of the local community, and legislators all have roles to play in the success of residential programs. This has long been recognized by such successful directors as Bryan Riley of Massachusetts Halfway House, Inc., who has established an advisory group for each of his halfway houses and never opens a new home without first walking the selected Boston neighborhood with its local state legislator.

Increasingly, states are building a role for members of the public into their statutes. Along with Ohio and Idaho, Florida, Pennsylvania, Montana, Texas, and Illinois require an advisory board for each community-based center. In states with multi-program community corrections boards, citizen involvement with residential programs is less intensive but still effective.

To advocate partnership is not to suggest that directors should share responsibility for the internal workings of their programs or corrections administrators their ultimate accountability. It is simply to recognize that the community has a legitimate role in community corrections, particularly the residential programs that most affect the daily lives of its residents. That role relates primarily to the external impact of a program: on the immediate surroundings, on taxes, on police and fire departments, on property values, and--above all--on public safety. Such a role, if well defined and understood, facilitates public acceptance of the program and a sense of investment in its success without interfering with sound management practices.

Community Corrections and Community Interests

For most states, community-based residential programs are relatively new--a response to the crisis of prison overcrowding. In establishing these programs, corrections joins a wide array of public agencies that, over the past 20 years, have been moving selected clients out of institutions and into less restricted and less isolated housing. In addition to adult offenders, community-based programs now exist for almost all categories of people with special needs:

- the developmentally disabled,
- the mentally ill,
- the infirm and not so infirm elderly,
- the physically handicapped,
- those addicted to alcohol and/or drugs, and
- status offenders and juveniles.

But while the concept of community-based care is gaining wider acceptance, the development of new programs is being hindered by stiffening resistance from the communities within

which they are to be placed. To many citizens, the community-based trend is yet another government policy, like busing and affirmative action, that subordinates the rights of "ordinary people" to the rights of special groups. Citizens see such programs as being foisted on them without their having a voice in where they will be placed or how they will be run.

By and large, the public does not distinguish between one residential program and another. And while the success of one does not seem to help the others, the failure of one certainly affects the rest. So when corrections officials face hostility towards community-based programs, their problem is one shared by officials of other agencies as well.

Considerable work has already been done around the issue of community acceptance. Successful and unsuccessful programs have been studied and manuals written on ways to deal with neighbors. Public education programs abound. In most of these

efforts, however, the public tends to be viewed as an obstacle to overcome, rather than an ally or partner. Prone to talk at rather than with the public, many corrections professionals offer an intellectual response to citizens' essentially emotional distress.

Until recently, few states have systematically addressed the fundamental issue of a community's need and a local government's right to be involved in these programs in an ongoing, formal way. Obviously this involvement must be constrained from infringing on the necessary prerogatives of state and private provider agencies for program control and accountability. But that kind of cooperative involvement is possible.

The Public Climate

The climate for accepting the principle of community corrections is more hospitable than one might think. Sentencing laws passed across the country in recent years leave the impression of a vengeful public: longer sentences, less chance for parole, and more death penalties. But another picture emerges from studies of public attitudes. It is of a public concerned first and foremost with personal safety, but not so unwilling to consider forms of punishment other than prison.

The Public Agenda Foundation, a nonpartisan research organization that uses sophisticated techniques to analyze public understanding of policy issues, discovered during a 1987 round of focus group sessions that Americans' concern about crime is personal and concentrated on potential danger to themselves and their families. Accordingly, they think the primary goal of the criminal justice system should be to discourage future crimes. This research also suggests that Americans have little regard for the nation's prison system, which they see as falling far short of meeting any rehabilitative goals. The consensus strongly supports the use of alternatives to incarceration for all nonviolent offenders except drug dealers. This attitude is intensified when participants are provided data on the cost of building and maintaining new prisons, but it is based primarily on the belief that prisons fail to accomplish their primary objective, i.e., the control of crime through rehabilitation of offenders.

A 1984 study conducted by the Center for Research in Law and Justice of the University of Illinois at Chicago found similar reactions. Researchers Doug Thomson and Anthony J. Ragona tested public support for a 1982 Illinois law requiring four years in prison, followed by two years of supervised release, for anyone convicted of residential burglary (a newly defined offense). They found that the public preferred community sentences to prison for this crime, as long as the community sentences exacted a significant reparative penalty from the offender.

And in a recent speech, the respected corrections expert Allen Breed pointed out:

History shows that unless members of the public are given a role which recognizes their own concerns and entitlements, they will respond to new or existing programs with something between caution and determined resistance. Some states have already faced that issue and are laying some solid foundations on which to build more cooperative relationships.

Corrections officials have an opportunity to lead the development of partnership between community and community-based programs, to offer local officials and neighbors a chance to share in creating a success. And there is already solid foundation on which to build.

When I reviewed the public opinion polls for the past three years, I was amazed because the findings were not what I assumed they would be, and they were not what the media had informed me they were. . . . The public, reflected in polls and surveys, is frightened, confused and angry, and wants greater protection from criminal activity. Beyond that, one cannot legitimately generalize about public opinion.

So it seems fair to assume that the public will accept criminal sentencing that appears to be safe, sufficiently punitive, and less costly than prison. In other words, if people felt their concern about their own safety was being addressed, they might well accept more community sentences than lawmakers are providing. That bodes well for the future of community corrections.

The prospect for residential community corrections programs may be more complicated. Prevailing attitudes would seem to favor their further development, but only as long as (1) adequate provisions for public safety can be clearly demonstrated, and (2) the long-term benefits to society can be shown to justify the cost.

Public involvement in residential community corrections allows people to see for themselves that supervision is adequate, which is critical to winning public acceptance. When it comes to cost, candor is critical. In one state, deinstitutionalization of juveniles was misrepresented as being cheaper than incarceration. When that argument in favor of the program was revealed to be invalid, the public became suspicious of the other--valid--arguments. The truth is that some community-based residential programs can be as expensive as prison. Costs must be explicitly justified in terms of these programs' greater social utility, i.e., their capacity to discourage future crime through rehabilitative services and to permit offenders to support their families and pay restitution to their victims while serving their sentences.

Negotiating Partnership Roles

Successful partnership requires clearly defined roles for each of the players. The exact nature of these roles can vary, but the process for defining them should not: Negotiation is the order of the day.

Getting to Yes, the invaluable primer on negotiation by Roger Fisher and William Ury, prescribes four basic rules for negotiating productively:

1. Separate the people from the problem.
2. Clarify interests.
3. Generate options for mutual gain.
4. Use objective criteria.

As long as the negotiators are truly representative of or credible to the parties, the roles relating to residential community corrections programming can be negotiated for an entire state, for a county or city, or for an individual program. Happily, in the case of a residential program, the various interests do not seem to seriously conflict.

Corrections administrators' interests center around control over the operations of the program, its staff, and its budget. Local officials' interests center around the impact of the program on the town's residents, services, and taxes. Nearby residents' interests are similar to those of local officials, heightened by worry over individual property values, personal safety, and neighborhood "ecology." And legislators want to protect the interests of constituents while still supporting sensible public policy.

All the parties, working together, can develop arrangements under which these interests can be satisfactorily served. For instance, beyond the health and safety oversight already theirs, local officials might have a say in:

- the private provider a corrections agency uses,
- the number of clients a program will house,

- the total number of residential programs of all kinds the community will be asked to tolerate,
- the payments and services the program will provide the town, and
- decisions about whether a program is to continue.

The community, and particularly the neighbors, might have a say in:

- the external appearance of the property,
- the categories of offender placed in the program,
- rules governing the behavior of the program's clients in the immediate vicinity of the residence (e.g., will they be allowed to "hang out" with radios blaring?),
- the monitoring of compliance with agreements, and
- compensation for devalued property, feared or actual.

The services the program will render the community--perhaps keeping certain areas of town free of debris or making payments to municipal government in lieu of taxes--as well as those the community will render the program can also be made part of the negotiation process. But those responsible for the program must be willing to define and defend the areas they are professionally obligated to control. For instance, corrections officials might negotiate categories of offenders allowed in a program but not, for reasons of confidentiality, individual cases within those categories. Legislators can usefully take part in these discussions and should in any case be kept apprised of the progress of negotiations and agreements reached.

No matter how far corrections administrators are willing to go to accommodate a community, some resistance to a residential program is inevitable. But the willingness to negotiate and maintain roles in good faith increases the likelihood of winning public acceptance--and perhaps even support--of a program.

Advisory Boards

Of the several frameworks within which a partnership can be created and maintained, the advisory board concept offers the most possibilities. It is already the vehicle of choice in many states, both for residential and for other community corrections programs. State legislators and local officials can serve as members of advisory boards or be dealt with through separate channels. Although successful advisory boards demand considerable time and energy of administrators, the payoff can be significant.

A good example of a board's purpose and activities is presented in the Illinois statute mandating a citizen's advisory council to "strengthen and assist" in the operations of each

community corrections center and parole district. The statute includes the following provisions:

1. The council shall be composed of individuals who represent the following areas in the community:
 - a. Local business;
 - b. Education;
 - c. Law enforcement; and
 - d. Social service.
2. Employees of the Department of Corrections shall not be members of the council. The Chief Administrative Officer shall serve as an ex-officio member.
3. The Chief Administrative Officer shall appoint council members to a one-year tenure.

4. The goals of the council shall be to:
 - a. Pursue ways and means of communicating the Community Services Division's mission to the public;
 - b. Assist in the identification of public service projects;
 - c. Develop resources which will benefit inmates/ releasees;
 - d. Assist in the development of private business enterprises to provide employment to the inmates/ releasees;
 - e. Advise the Chief Administrative Officer on policies which impact the community; and
 - f. Provide other advice and input which will enhance the Community Services Division's position in the community.

Some benefits of advisory boards have already been discussed. A brochure describing Florida's community correctional centers outlines the breadth of advisory board operations.

The most outstanding example of citizen volunteers in the community center program is the Citizens Advisory Committee, a group of local people who were appointed and have agreed to serve as liaisons between the center and the local community. The members meet regularly to coordinate programs for the inmates and projects the inmates can undertake for the community. Programs for the inmates include presentations in the pre-release orientation series, which include subjects such as credit borrowing, banking, rental agreements or leasing procedures, other consumer skills and practical information which a person needs in order to accomplish successful adjustment to society on a day-to-day basis. Citizen advisory committee members, like other citizen volunteers, frequently take the responsibility of acting as sponsors for inmates on furlough, or arranging for inmates' education, recreation, or emergency or counseling needs. They also facilitate inmates' participation in community groups which provide helpful services, such as Alcoholics Anonymous.

Experiences such as those of Monda Wilson in Ohio and Eugene Larsen in Idaho demonstrate the benefits of organizing a board before a project actually gets underway. Dennis Freaney, former director of residential services for the Texas Adult Probation Commission, agrees. Texas is another state which requires an advisory board for each of its 40 centers. Freaney found the advisory board an invaluable tool in

establishing a restitution center in Dallas. Fearing difficulties in siting the new program, he put together an advisory council whose members, selected from among Dallas civic leaders, carried weight with both the city government and the general public. The council immediately formed a number of subcommittees to deal with the individual problems involved in establishing the program: one addressed purchasing, another siting, another public relations, and still another worked with the city's planning commission. The site finally chosen was between a hotel and a conference center. The hotel managers at first objected strongly, but by the following year they had become such fans of their neighbors that they sent the program's clients turkeys for Thanksgiving dinner!

Advisory boards are not always unmixed blessings. The members need orientation--a clear understanding of their mission. Freaney tells of an advisory committee which backfired because its members felt themselves to be a board of directors rather than an advisory group, causing the staff no end of grief until the members came to understand their proper function. Ground rules, cooperatively developed when an advisory board first meets, can prevent many problems as time goes on. But advisory boards inevitably require continuing care and attention from those they are advising.

Some years ago, the Ohio League of Women Voters published a checklist of the elements critical to successful public involvement. They include:

- A clearly defined mechanism or process,
- Commitment to the mechanism or process by all parties directly concerned,
- Direct access by citizen participants to the decision making process,
- Representation of all appropriate segments of the community,
- A clear definition of the participating citizen's role,
- Adequate preparation and briefing available for citizen participants,
- In-depth information and staff help available in order for participants to carry out their assigned responsibilities,
- Well-defined procedures as to how and to whom citizen participants are accountable, and
- Procedures for reporting back the disposition of citizen recommendations.

This checklist can help bridge the gap between program and community. It can form the basis for a cooperative partnership via an advisory board or any other vehicle for community participation in government programs.

Administrative Initiatives for Strengthening the Partnership

Those responsible for residential programs can take a variety of actions to demonstrate that an agency welcomes the public as a partner. Establishing an advisory board is one such measure. Another is entering into negotiations with local officials over a broad range of topics, both as a program is conceived and at periodic intervals thereafter. But skillful administrators can build an array of additional community-oriented elements into their operations.

A CLEAR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Say “criminal sentence” and the first word that pops into a citizen’s mind is “prison.” Any other form of punishment seems not only less severe, but less safe for the public. Even the word “alternatives” misrepresents current reality, for given the proportion of offenders on probation and parole, prison is the sentence that should be termed “alternative.” And as the Public Agenda Foundation study revealed, personal safety is the first and foremost public concern.

The public needs a statement from elected officials or corrections leaders explaining why community-based programs are appropriately punitive and, above all, safe. What makes them sufficiently tough on the offender? Are they intended to reduce crime primarily through rehabilitation? Do they cost less than prisons? How can they ensure public safety without walls? One simple paragraph, if it is included in every pamphlet describing an individual program and in every speech or response, will help drive home the goals of community-based programs to legislators, local officials, community leaders, and private citizens. Repeated many times by many voices, a common theme registers. And the first issue addressed should be the program’s effect on the safety of the general public.

INTERAGENCY PLANNING

The number of state and local government-sponsored residential programs a community is asked to accept can be significant. Lack of interagency planning can lead to a concentration of programs in some communities, while none are proposed for others. A plethora of demands from different agencies generates confusion, makes neighborhood residents feel they are being treated unfairly, and adds to the reluctance of local officials to accept residential programs.

Public support depends on public perception that programs are being allocated competently and consistently. Beyond the issue of fairness, the purpose of community-based programs is to provide a “normal” environment for their clients--and a community with a concentration of group homes is not “normal.” Moreover, if a neighborhood has just successfully rejected the advances of one public agency, for another to take a similar initiative soon after with no knowledge of the earlier episode creates an image of chaos in the executive branch.

Joint planning among agencies with residential programs is therefore critical to long-term acceptance. A central file to support interagency planning can usefully include such information on individual cities and towns as:

- zoning and licensing requirements;
- the nature and track records of any past or existing residential programs;
- community and neighborhood organizations;
- important issues in the community; and
- leading political and community figures and, if possible, their positions on community-based programs in general as well as on specific programs.

SOUND COMPENSATION PRACTICES

The willingness of a corrections department to see that provider agencies are promptly and adequately paid has an indirect but critical effect on public acceptance of residential community corrections programs. Cash flow problems are a fact of life for nonprofit human service providers, and a protracted and cumbersome reimbursement process can literally put those with state contracts out of business. Poor payment practices deny programs needed resources, causing even the best-run of them to deteriorate in ways apparent--and alarming--to the surrounding community. Upfront moneys, timely payments, and a realistic roster of allowable costs are needed to keep programs operating in ways that maintain community confidence.

When service delivery becomes financially unmanageable, the most proficient and effective nonprofit providers simply cease to bid for programs. Corrections departments that fail to remedy poor payment practices may ultimately find themselves unable to contract for well-run residential programming. It therefore behooves corrections administrators to do whatever is necessary to ensure that timely and sufficient payments to provider agencies become routine.

RELIABLE CHANNELS OF INFORMATION

To win public confidence, an agency must make information readily available and respond quickly to inquiries. In regard to residential community corrections, the public needs--at various times--information both on residential programs in general and on specific incidents in specific programs.

Widespread dissemination of a statement of purpose helps meet the first need. But the best tool for public education is public involvement, and the best educators are members of the public who are directly involved. Advisory board members, local officials, and legislators may all become knowledgeable information resources for their colleagues and friends and for the local community.

Such people can also be credible spokespersons in response to the inevitable incidents--perhaps a neighborhood break-in assumed to involve the program's clients, whether it does or not, or rumors about the case history of one of the offenders--that arouse public fears. The public is much more apt to trust the explanations of local citizens who have been active in developing and monitoring a program than those of a program director or agency official.

In some cases, the public simply does not know where to turn for information about a program. There may not be an advisory board, its members may not be widely known, local officials may not be viewed as knowledgeable, and it may not be clear precisely which state agency is responsible. Citizens seeking information on a program with clients from more than one agency might be channeled into an endless chain of referrals from one department to another. One widely known central contact telephone number--perhaps an 800 number for a geographically dispersed corrections system--would make information more accessible to the public and possibly to the executive branch as well.

Finally, citizens' misgivings might be quieted and rumors nipped in the bud if written materials on all residential programs in an area were known to be available in a central spot, such as the local library or town hall. The materials would describe a program's purpose, activities, type of client, and benefits to the town; identify board members and local officials who can answer questions; and provide a number to call in case of incidents, strange behavior, or simply a desire for more information.

WELL-INFORMED PROVIDER AGENCY BOARDS

Many residential programs are run by private nonprofit agencies under a purchase-of-service arrangement. These nonprofits' board members generally have only the most superficial knowledge of the contract. This is unfortunate for two reasons. First, legal responsibility for seeing that the terms of a contract are observed lies ultimately with the board members, not the program director. Board accountability is a serious issue, and board members require sufficient understanding to make the decisions for which they will be held liable.

Second, nonprofit organization board members usually include local civic and business leaders who, as they come to understand a residential program and its mission, become potentially important allies for community corrections administra-

tors. Administrators and the program director should meet with board members to discuss the contract prior to its signing and then at periodic intervals to see how things are going. Beyond expanding the agency's pool of knowledgeable private citizens, such meetings give board members a chance to learn about the broader purposes of community corrections and the role of their particular program within that mission.

A CAREFULLY NURTURED CONSTITUENCY

Most non-corrections human service agencies have had constituencies--private citizens who serve as allies when money becomes tight, improvements are needed, or advances must be safeguarded--for some time. Community corrections agencies had virtually no such constituencies for years, but changes are on the way. Many states have established boards through which individuals outside the corrections system can work with corrections officials in planning programs, screening offenders, linking public agencies with private resources, and lobbying the legislature for resources and laws.

Some community residential programs have developed such constituencies, to good effect. In Illinois, for instance, the threat of funding cuts for restitution centers galvanized board members. And one Pennsylvania corrections administrator says of her advisory board, "I'm constantly surprised at how they rally round."

If it is to remain active, however, any constituency must be nurtured. Its members need to know they are valued and to feel they are part of a network of people with shared interests working toward a common goal. As a practical matter, constituents must be kept informed of evolving issues and included in the review of policy and plans.

A newsletter is a cost-efficient vehicle for keeping advisory board members, legislators, local officials, and provider agency board members up to date on pending legislation, innovations in other jurisdictions' residential community corrections programs, and projects undertaken by various boards that others might replicate. Newsletters help maintain constituents' sense of identity and mission.

This sense of belonging can be heightened through regional or statewide meetings at which agency officials and program administrators join individuals from the various constituency groups to discuss future plans, develop collective strategies, and share experience. Minnesota sponsors such a meeting annually for members of its community corrections boards.

Legislative Initiatives for Strengthening the Partnership

While directors and administrators can stimulate public involvement in residential community corrections programs, there is no substitute for a statutory base. Given the weight of legislative mandate, statutes assure private citizens that their interests are being considered in the forging of public policy.

ADVISORY BOARDS

Enough detail has been provided already. Advisory boards are now legally mandated in Florida, Texas, Idaho, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Montana.

EQUITABLE PLACEMENT OF RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS

The problem of uneven distribution should be examined in terms of the larger universe of residential programs, not just those involved in adult community corrections. Fairness requires all communities to assume some responsibility for such programs.

Some states have already addressed this issue. Florida law gives the governor override authority to place a facility in a community. According to one administrator, the law has helped but not totally solved the problem, for political clout can still keep programs out of a community. Another state, when confronted with a similar problem in siting low- and moderate-income housing, passed legislation requiring every city and town to assign a set percentage of its buildable land to this purpose. In both these cases, it was legislators from areas that had borne the brunt of programs who helped enact the

statutes. A solid piece of proactive legislation might well forestall the wave of restrictive zoning that threatens the future of all residential programs.

A RESERVE FUND FOR MAINTAINING PROPERTY VALUES

One area of anxiety among homeowners near the site of a proposed residential program is property values. Several studies indicate that property near such a facility in fact retains its value over time, but the national documentation of what has happened in other communities does not always quiet neighbors' fears. What might do so much more effectively would be a legislature's willingness to put state money behind its assurances that the planned facility will not undermine local property values.

This might be accomplished by establishing a reserve fund to underwrite the market value of houses in the immediate neighborhood for, say, three years. The fund would be designated to buy any nearby house whose failure to sell at fair market value over some set period of time is clearly attributable to its proximity to the corrections facility. The fund would purchase such houses and be replenished with proceeds of their subsequent sale. In practice, the existence of the fund would prevent most neighbors from putting their houses on the market in panicky--and erroneous--anticipation of declining property values. Whether or not it was ever used at all, such a fund would stand as a vivid sign that the state, while committed to community-based programs, is protective of the interests of its "normal" citizens.

Summary

Private citizens feel threatened by a residential community corrections facility in their neighborhood. Beyond their fear for the well-being of their families, they feel imposed upon, devalued, and angry. These feelings are legitimate and unlikely to be soothed by reassuring platitudes. Fairness demands that they be acknowledged; pragmatism demands that they be engaged and accommodated.

The public needs a chance help figure out how to minimize the negative impact of a program, make it work to everyone's benefit, and--optimally--turn a seeming liability into an asset. Together with local officials and legislators, local residents need to see agency officials go the extra mile to accommodate the rights of those already in the town. They need a role in monitoring the program and some say in whether or how it will continue. Public support is built on precisely this kind of public involvement and sense of ownership. Public education programs are useful for disseminating basic facts, but they are

not reliably effective in addressing a community's deep-seated concerns, building collaborative strategies, or altering a political climate.

Public involvement, on the other hand, can produce cooperation and constituencies. But the kind of public involvement that builds public support is interactive. It demands a change in the mindset of agency leaders and those who plan community-based facilities: The public must be seen as a partner to consult rather than an obstacle to overcome. However difficult it may sometimes be to believe, members of the public are willing to listen to facts and consider options.

There will always be some local resistance to residential community corrections programs, no matter how good the process, no matter how strong the role carved out for local officials and members of the public. But the partnership approach is key to the long-term success of residential programs.

Suggested Further Readings

California Probation, Parole and Correctional Association, ***The Power of Public Support***. Sacramento: California Probation, Parole and Correctional Association, 1985.

Lindsay, Margot C., and Deborah B. Stoessel, ***Your Advisory Board and You: Some Guides for Administrators and Board Leaders***. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, 1981. Available from the National Center for Citizen Participation in the Administration of Justice, 20 West Street, Boston, MA 02111. The Center's telephone number is (617) 350-6150.

Lippett, R., and E. Schindler-Raiman, with J. Cole, ***Taking Meetings out of the Doldrums***. La Jolla: University Associates, Inc., 1977. Available from University Associates, 7596 Eads Ave., La Jolla, CA 92037.

Missouri Citizen Advisory Board, ***The ABCs of the CABs: A How-to Manual on Creating Citizen Advisory Boards***. St. Louis: Missouri Citizen Advisory Board, 1981.

U.S. Community Services Administration, ***Citizen Participation***. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1978.

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (250 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017) periodically publishes papers of interest to advisory board members as well as corrections administrators. To date these include:

Crime and Punishment: The Public's View, 1987.

Time to Build? The Realities of Prison Construction. 1984.

Overcrowded Time: Why Prisons Are So Crowded and What Can Be Done, 1982.

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