

Community Corrections Act (CCA) – 407 Prison Diversion

Summary of Resources

There are currently 48 CCA Prison Diversion Programs in 45 Ohio counties with a projection of 8,441 diversions in FY 07. These programs serve as a vital component in the overall continuum of sanctions available to courts to divert offenders from prison.

CCA Probation Services provide intensive supervision for offenders placed on direct supervision by the court and may supervise offenders before and/or after being released from CBCF and Halfway Houses, to provide continuous services for successful transition into the community.

Supervision and services are also provided for offenders released from prison on Judicial Release thereby freeing up additional prison beds.

Some CCA Programs provide courts with Pre-Sentence Investigations, which assist the court in determining the most appropriate placements and services for offenders, to address the probationers' needs and thereby affect positive behavioral change. Such placements and services include, but are not limited to, Probation/CCA supervision, Halfway House Placement and CBCF placement. Other services provided by CCA Prison Diversion include: day reporting, electronic monitoring/house arrest, work release, domestic violence programs and community service.

Capability for Enhancement/Expansion

CCA Prison Diversion Programs have the potential to further reduce recidivism for offenders thereby reducing commitments to prison and benefiting the community overall. This can be accomplished through the recruitment and retention of qualified staff, trained in the elements of Evidence-Based-Practice with caseloads low enough (based on the assessed level of risk and needs) to effectively implement these strategies. Staff must be trained to conduct a validated assessment tool to use in the development of a supervision plan. The supervision plan, along with the use of motivational enhancements, will assist offenders in succeeding under supervision to make long-term behavioral change.

Research has shown that treatment in conjunction with supervision is also vital to behavioral change. Treatment must not only be available, but it must be specific to the offender population and address criminogenic needs. Contracting with local community and private treatment agencies and/or CBCFs and Halfway Houses can provide these necessary services.

If CBCF and Halfway House beds are increased, CCA Programs could expand services to supervise and provide continuation services for these additional offenders. CCA representatives could also offer assistance to communities who are experiencing high, or increased commitments to ODRC that could be diverted with the proper resources. This can be accomplished in partnership with ODRC. In addition, CCA Programs could expand to assist with initiatives proposed in the DRC Omnibus Legislation to divert additional offenders from prison.

Summary of Needs

Current salary levels in CCA Prison Diversion Programs make it very difficult to attract and retain the level of staff necessary to effectively implement Evidence-Based-Practices. Current funding levels have caused programs to go without filling vacant positions, thereby increasing

caseloads in addition to overall increases in the number of offenders placed in CCA programs. These high caseloads make effective implementation of Evidence-Based-Practices much less attainable.

Recourses are also needed to contract with agencies to provide services specific to the population we supervise. Treatment agencies are unlikely to change current practices without funding to implement these changes. Contractual services could also be developed with Halfway Houses and CBCFs to serve this CCA offender population. In addition, continued cost of living increases for salaries and treatment would be necessary to maintain these services to further reduce recidivism.

As indicated above, the three priority areas identified by CCA include: 1.) Cost of living increases, 2.) Resources for training and 3.) Resources for treatment. These components are all of equal importance in providing effective supervision services for offenders to lead to a further reduction in recidivism.